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# The ‘*Cuàn Lóngyán Stele*’

*An Annotated Translation of the 458CE 《爨龙颜碑》*

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LUDWIG M BRINCKMANN

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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.

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# 1 Introduction

The ‘*Cuàn Lóngyán Stele*’ 《爨龙颜碑》 is the most important textual relic of the Cuàn clan 爨氏, the powerful family who ruled eastern Yúnnán for several centuries after Zhūgé Liàng 诸葛亮 began the policy of appointing local strongmen to administer China’s border regions.

The 《爨龙颜碑》 is a large funerary stele erected in 458 CE to honour Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, a clan elder who had died twelve years earlier.<sup>(1)</sup> It purports to record the clan’s history as descendants of Chinese emperors and scholars who, after encountering hardships at the end of the Hàn dynasty in their homeland of Hédōng 河东, migrated to the remote borderlands to dedicate themselves to government service on behalf of the emperor.

Whatever the merit of that claim,<sup>(2)</sup> by the middle of the 4th century the Cuàn had become hereditary rulers of what is now eastern Yúnnán.<sup>(3)</sup>

The earliest mention of the 《爨龙颜碑》 in Chinese records is in the Yuán dynasty ‘*General Record of Yúnnán*’ 《云南志略》,<sup>(4)</sup> which notes:

今陆凉州有爨府君碑，载爨氏出楚令尹子文之后，受姓班氏，西汉末，食河南邑，因以为氏，为镇蛮校尉宁州刺史，晋成帝以爨深为兴古太守，之后爨瓚，爨震相继不绝。

唐开元初，以爨归王为南宁州都督，理石城部，即今曲靖也，爨人之名原此。

然今日白人为白爨，罗罗为黑爨，字复讹为寸矣。👁️

Today in Lùliáng prefecture is a stele of a Cuàn commandery governor, recording that the Cuàn clan are the descendants of Chǔ minister Zǐ Wén, they received the clan name Bān, at the end of the Western Hàn [they were granted] a fiefdom in Hénán, so they became a clan, they were appointed as commandants to suppress the Mán, Níng prefecture regional inspectors, **during the time of Jìn emperor Chéng** Cuàn Shēn was appointed as grand protector of Xīnggǔ, afterwards Cuàn Zàn and Cuàn Zhèn continued without interruption.

**At the beginning of the Táng Kāiyuán period**, Cuàn Guīwáng was appointed as commander-in-chief of Nán níng prefecture, administered the Shíchéng region, today’s Qūjìng, the reputation of the Cuàn stems from there.

So today the Bái people are known as white Cuàn, the *luōluō* as black Cuàn, this character is frequently misread as *cùn*.

爨龙颜碑 5

爨龙颜碑 10

爨龙颜碑 15

[15: 👁️ ] Source text: Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 3, p. 129

r6–7: during the time of Jìn emperor Chéng ] 325–342 CE.

r10: At the beginning of the Táng Kāiyuán period ] 713–741 CE, second reign period of Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗, so after 713.

<sup>(1)</sup> in 446, Chén Xiàoníng 陈孝宁 (1993), actually it must have been in January 447.

<sup>(2)</sup> Backus (1981), pp. 6–8 gives many reasons to disbelieve this official history. The wider historical background narrated here is based on Backus (1981), pp. 6–8, Yang (2004), pp. 77–83.

<sup>(3)</sup> The Cuàn clan is first mentioned in the ‘*Records of the Three Kingdoms*’ 《三国志》, and there is also a reference in the ‘*Book of Jin*’ 《晋书》: ‘永和元年 ... 冬十二月，李势将爨頽来奔。’, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1982).

<sup>(4)</sup> Yáng Jiè 杨玠 (1977).



Illustration 1:  
Replica of the 《爨龙颜碑》 in the Yunnan Provincial Museum

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The stele received significant interest not only for its historic value, but also for its calligraphic style and was included in the first group of relics placed under Chinese national protection in 1961.

The original stele remains in Dǒugé temple 斗阁寺 in Xuēguānbǎo 薛官堡, a village south-east of Lùliáng 陆良 county town;<sup>(5)</sup> a replica is exhibited at the Yúnnán Provincial Museum 云南省博物馆, see illustration 1.

## 2 About this Translation

Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 236–239 provides the full text, Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 232–236 gives an introduction. The source text of the 《爨龙颜碑》 is also available online.<sup>(6)</sup>

A rubbing of the stele is archived at the Harvard-Yenching Library,<sup>(7)</sup> see illustration 2.

The stele has a number of variant Chinese characters 别字, where scholars do not agree on their meaning, these are indicated in the notes.<sup>(8)</sup>

A very good translation into English with copious annotations is published in Gāo Yúnzhù 高云柱 (2016).<sup>(9)</sup>

## 3 Annotated Translation

### 碑面 Front Side

At the top of the stele is its ‘title’, listing the various titles that Cuàn Lóngyán had received.

宋故龙骧将军护镇蛮校尉宁州刺史  
邛都县侯爨使君之碑

Stele of **his excellency** Cuàn, the former *Sòng lóngxiāng* general, ‘defender and subduer of the *Mán*’ commandant, regional inspector of Níng prefecture, and marquis of Qióng district county.

君讳龙颜，字仕德，建宁同乐县人。

His excellency Lóngyán, courtesy name Shìdé, was from Jiànníng’s **Tónglè county**.

爨龙颜碑 5

其先世则少昊颛顼之玄胄，才子祝

His ancestors were descendants of **Shǎohào and Zhuānxù**, and

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r1: his excellency ] the term *shǐjūn* 使君 could also be literally be translated, but since the title is not qualified in any way, here it seems just a honorific.

r1: Sòng ] The term Sòng 宋 here refers to the Liú Sòng dynasty 劉宋, 429–479 CE.

r5: Tónglè county ] county in Jiànníng 建宁, today in the north-east of Lùliáng 陆良 county, see Xīn Kuípéng 辛魁鹏 (2008)

r6: Shǎohào and Zhuānxù ] ancient, mythological emperors.

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<sup>(5)</sup> at ㊦ 24.92N 103.69E

<sup>(6)</sup> <https://baike.baidu.com/item/爨龍顏碑/308433>.

<sup>(7)</sup> <https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:2062961> or <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/curiosity/chinese-rubbings-collection/6-990095845610203941>.

<sup>(8)</sup> Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011).

<sup>(9)</sup> A translation into modern Chinese was available at <https://highzou.com/postdetail-9235.html>.



Illustration 2:

A rubbing of the top of the 《爨龙颜碑》

Source: Harvard Yenching Library <https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:2062961?n=3>.



Illustration 3:

Variant characters on the 《爨龙颜碑》

Source: Harvard Yenching Library <https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:2062961?n=10>.



融之渺胤也。

清源流而不滞，深根固而不倾。

夏后之盛，敷陈五教，勋隆九土，纯  
化洽于千古，仁功播于万祀，故乃  
耀辉西岳。

霸王郢楚，子文铭德于春秋，斑  
朗绍纵于季叶。

阳九运否，蝉蜕河东，逍遥中原。

班彪删定《汉记》，班固述修《道训》，  
爰暨汉末，采邑于爨，因氏族焉。

姻娅媾于公族，振纓蕃乎王室。

乃祖肃，魏尚书仆射，河南尹，位  
均九例，舒翻中朝，迁运庸蜀，流薄  
南入，树安九世，千柯繁茂，万叶云

also the distant offspring of the outstanding Zhùróng.

Their clear source flowed without ever stagnating, their deep roots  
were solid without ever yielding.

Prospering after the Xià, well-versed in the **five teachings**, of noble  
service in the **nine lands**, skillfully enlightening and administering  
for thousands of years, sowing benevolent achievements over ten  
thousands of years, shining radiance over the **western mountain**.

**For the hegemon king of Yǐng of Chǔ**, Zǐ Wén engraved his vir-  
tue during the spring and autumn period, **Bān Lǎng** continued the  
work in the late period.

Suffering misfortune for a long time, they emerged from Hédōng  
wandering around the central plains.

**Bān Biāo established the 'History of the Hàn Dynasty'**, Bān Gù re-  
vised the '*Principles of Dào*', all the way to the end of the Hàn their  
fiefdom was in Cuàn, hence the clan [name].

They married with nobility and prospered at the royal court.

His ancestor Sù was a minister and *pūshè* in Wèi, administrator  
of Hénán, his position equal to the **highest rank**, they spread  
**their feathers throughout the dynasties**, fortune brought them to

爨龙颜碑 10

爨龙颜碑 15

爨龙颜碑 20

爨龙颜碑 25

l7: 渺] One of the variant characters written in a form not found in dictionaries, meaning 'distant'. However, Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011) argues that it is a variant of 渺.

l15: 绍] see Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011) for discussion.

l15: 纵] One of the variant characters here, for the original form see Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011).

l24-25: they spread their feathers throughout the dynasties] unclear

r7: Zhùróng] god of fire, mentioned in the 《史记》: '重黎为帝誉高辛居火正，甚有功，能光融天下，帝誉命曰祝融'

r10: five teachings] The term *wǔjiào* 五教 refers to the Confucian relationships governing state and family (and not a Buddhist term). The term appears in the '*The Zuǒ Traditions*' 《左传》: 举八元，使布五教于四方，父义，母慈，兄友，弟共，子孝，内平，外成。 In the translation by Stephen Durrant, Wai-Yee Li and David Schaberg: 'He employed the Eight Exemplars and had them promulgate the five precepts to the four quarters. Fathers were dutiful, mothers kind, older brothers fraternal, younger brothers respectful, and children filial. In court there was peace, and beyond the court there was accord', Durrant, Li and Schaberg (2016), p. 573.

r11: nine lands] Jiǔtǔ 九土 = nine divisions 九州.

r13: western mountain] Xiyuè 西岳 is the western-most sacred mountain of China, also known as Huáshān 华山. The lands to the south of it were covered in the early gazetter '*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*' 《华阳国志》.

r14: For the hegemon king of Yǐng of Chǔ] A reference to Xiàng Yǔ 项羽, a warlord during the Qín dynasty.

r15: Bān Lǎng] Claiming an ancestor of this name, they declared themselves descendants of Bān Biāo 班彪 and Bān Gù 班固, the historians who compiled the '*History of the Hàn Dynasty*' 汉书, see below.

r17: for a long time] The '*History of the Hàn Dynasty*' 《汉书》 has a passage: '易九厄曰：初入元，百六，陽九；次三百七十四，陰九；次四百八十，陽九'. This is likely also the reference for the term 百六 later.

r17: they emerged] the Chinese term is a cicada pupating, i.e. something beautiful emerging.

r18: wandering around the central plains] the term used seems to imply that they were not flourishing at the time.

r19: Bān Biāo established the '*History of the Hàn Dynasty*'] The text says '*Records of Hàn*' 《汉记》，which is a different work.

r23: *pūshè*] a historic title, literally meaning 'charioteering archer', but was used as title of particularly capable officers in charge of temporary assignments.

r24: the highest rank] there were nine ranks in the administrative system of Wèi, called Jiǔpǐnguānrénfǎ 九品官人法.

兴；乡望标于四姓，邈冠显于上京，  
瑛豪继体，于兹而美。

祖，晋宁、建宁二郡太守，龙骧将  
军，宁州刺史。

考龙骧辅国将军，八郡监军，晋宁、  
建宁二郡太守，追谥宁州刺史、邛都  
县侯。

爨龙颜碑 35

金紫累踪，朱黻充庭。

君承尚书之玄孙，监军之令子也，  
容貌玮于时伦，贞操超于门友，温  
良冲挹，在家必闻。

爨龙颜碑 40

本州礼命主簿不就，三辟别驾从事，  
史正式当朝，靖拱端右，仁笃显于  
朝野，清名扇于遐迩。

爨龙颜碑 45

举义熙十年秀才，除郎中、相征西  
镇，迁南蛮府行参军，除试守建宁

爨龙颜碑 50

**Yōngshǔ**, were exiled to **Bónán**, peacefully established nine generations, sprouting into a thousand stalks, ten thousand leaves of prosperity, their local prestige marked them as among the four families, as faraway officials they were noticed at court, their fine jade and grandness continued its beauty today.

His grandfather was grand protector of **Jìnníng** and **Jiànníng**, *lóngxiāng* general and regional inspector of **Níng** prefecture.

He passed the exam for *lóngxiāng* general and 'sustainer of the state' general, army supervisor of the eight divisions, grand protector of **Jìnníng** and **Jiànníng**, and posthumously appointed regional inspector of **Níngzhōu** and marquis of **Qióng** district county.

Golden and purple accumulated in their families, vermilion brocade filled their halls.

The nobleman was the great-grandson of a minister, distinguished son of an army supervisor, his looks rare amongst his generation, his moral integrity surpassing all friends, kindhearted and submissive, those in his family inevitably consulted him.

He was appointed and designated recorder in his native prefecture, but did not take up the post, **refused three times** to be appointed as administrative aide, official historian for the present dynasty, respectfully saluting the **highest official**, his sincere benevolence visible to court and people, his unimpeachable reputation fluttering near and far.

**In the 10th year of Yìxī** he was nominated a **a gifted scholar**, was appointed as director, participated in the campaign to guard

*l*38: 踪 ] This is another variant character, Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 237 takes it as *jī* 跡, the old form of *jī* 迹, Qín Jiàn wén 秦建文 (2011) contests this. For this part of the stele, see illustration 3.

*l*38: 黻 ] A character that is unclear on the stele, various readings, all somewhat at odds with the relic, exist. Qín Jiàn wén 秦建文 (2011) agrees with the choice in Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 237. See illustration 3.

*l*50: 征 ] Character difficult to read, in other texts as 国

*r*26: **Yōngshǔ** ] term used in the 《三国志》 as a collective name for Sìchuān, ?? being in the east, Shǔ being in the west (成都). Gāo Yúnhù 高云柱 (2016), p. 72 places Yōng in present-day Húběi 湖北, where early a state of that name was existed, however, this interpretation does not fit the timeline presented here and the Cuàn clan moving into Sìchuān makes more sense.

*r*26: **Bónán** ] at the time a remote outpost part of Yǒngchāng 永昌, present-day Bǎoshān 保山.

*r*35: **Jìnníng** ] south of Diānchí 滇池.

*r*45: **refused three times** ] I think this is an allusion to Zhūgé Liàng 诸葛亮, who according to legend was visited thrice by Liú Bèi 刘备 before he took up his post.

*r*47: **highest official** ] The term *duānyòu* 端右 seems to refer to the director of the imperial secretariat 尚书令, see Gāo Yúnhù 高云柱 (2016), p. 73.

*r*50: **In the 10th year of Yìxī** ] Yìxī 义熙 was the last reign period of Jin emperor Ān, 405–419 CE, so 414 CE.

*r*50: **a gifted scholar** ] The imperial examinations, which had Xiùcái 秀才 as a rank, only began in the Suí dynasty, but the term was already used much earlier in the 'Records of the Historian' 《史记》: '年十八，能诵诗属书，闻于郡中，吴廷尉为河南守，闻其秀才。', this passage is translated in Nienhauser (1994), p. 302.

太守。

剖符本邦，衣锦昼游，民歌其德，士咏其风，于是贯伍乡朝、本州司马、长史。

而君素怀慷慨，志存远御，万里归阙，除散骑侍郎，进无佞容，退无愠色，忠诚简于帝心，芳风宣于天邑。

除龙骧将军，试守晋宁太守，轺车钺斧，金章紫绶，紫戟幢盖，袭封邛都县侯。

岁在壬申，百六遘衅，州土扰乱，东西二境，凶竖狼暴，緬戎寇场；君收合精锐五千之众，身伉矢石，扑碎千计，肃清边隅。

君南中磐石，人情归望，迁本号龙骧将军、护镇蛮校尉、宁州刺史、邛都县侯。

君姿英雄之高略，敦纯懿之弘度，独步南境，卓尔不群，虽子产之在郑，蔑以加焉。

是以兰声既畅，福隆俊嗣者矣，自非恺悌君子，孰能若斯也哉！昊天不吊，寢疾弥笃，享年六十一，

the west, moved to the regions of the southern *Mán* to serve as adjutant, and was appointed temporary grand protector of Jiànníng.

He received insignia in his hometown, parading dressed in splendid robes, the people singing his virtue, the scholars singing his *fēng*, so he was versed in army, hometown and court, adjutant of his hometown, and administrator.

Then lord hoped fervently to rule the faraway lands, ten thousand *lǐ* to return to the court, he was appointed as Sànrqí vice minister, he was without anger in advance, without indignation in retreat, sincerely loyal to the emperor, for his excellent work summoned to the capital.

He was appointed as *lóngxiāng* general, temporary grand protector of Jìnníng, [received?] a light-carriage battle axe, golden seal and purple band, a tallied halberd, banner and canopy, and inherited the title of marquis Qióng district county.

In the year of *rénshēn*, misfortune resulted in unrest, the lands were thrown into disorder, on the eastern and western borders wild men were untamed like wolves, Miǎn and Róng were battle fields, the lord gathered five thousand elite men, their bodies withstanding arrows and stones, engaging in a thousand battles, eliminating the enemy posts.

The lord was Nánzhōng's bedrock, the people pinned their hopes on him, his title was promoted to *lóngxiāng* general, 'defender and subduer of the *Mán*' commandant, regional inspector of Níngzhōu, marquis of Qióng Dū county.

The lord's demeanor was of a hero with great strategy, generous to an extraordinary degree, standing alone on the southern border, excellent and unrivalled, even Zǐ Chǎn of the state of Zhèng had could hardly surpass him.

So the orchid sound was unimpeded, his heirs enjoyed great fortune, if he was not a great nobleman, who could come close to him? Heaven does not have compassion for the blessed, illness confined

爨龙颜碑 55

爨龙颜碑 60

爨龙颜碑 65

爨龙颜碑 70

爨龙颜碑 75

爨龙颜碑 80

l59: 里] in other texts as 国

l68: 百六] meaning 'misfortune' here, Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011)

l68: 遘衅] two unclear characters, Qín Jiànwén 秦建文 (2011)

l69: 戎] Other text as 成

l82: 俊] 后

l83: !] ?

r65-66: [received?] a light-carriage battle axe, golden seal and purple band, a tallied halberd, banner and canopy] all insignia of high office.

r68: In the year of *rénshēn*] 432 CE, *rénshēn* signifies the 9th year in the traditional sixty-year cycle.

r70: Miǎn and Róng] Miǎndiàn 緬甸 and Róngzhōu 戎州 are the western and eastern borders of Yúnnán.

r80: Zǐ Chǎn of the state of Zhèng] famous chief minister of state of Zhèng during the Zhànguó 战国.

<p>夔龙颜碑 85 岁在丙戌十二月上旬薨。</p> <p>黎庶痛悼，宋夷伤怀，天朝远感，追赠中牢之饗也。</p>	<p>him ever more, he <b>died at the age of sixty-one years</b> and passed away in the first days of the <b>12th month of <i>bǐngxū</i></b>.</p> <p>The common people mourned, <b>the Sòng and the Yí</b> grieved, the heavenly court court felt it from afar, and posthumously made <b>great sacrifices in his honour</b>.</p>
<p>夔龙颜碑 90 故吏建宁赵次之，巴郡杜长子等仰怀仁德，永慕玄泽，刊石树碑，褒尚杰烈。</p>	<p>His former subordinates Jiànníng Zhào Cìzhī and Bā prefecture Dù Chángzǐ respectfully cherishing his benevolence, remembering forever his graciousness, engraved this stone and erected this stele, to praise him profusely.</p>

Then follows his eulogy, composed in a structured form. The translation in Gāo Yúnzhù 高云柱 (2016) takes a much more artistic approach to the translation.

<p>夔龙颜碑 95 其颂曰： 巍巍灵山，峻高迢遰； 或跃在渊，龙飞紫闕。 邈邈君候，天姿英哲。 缙绅踵门，扬名四外。 束帛戈戈，礼聘交会； 夔龙颜碑 100 优游南境，恩沾华裔。 抚伺方岳，胜残去煞。</p>	<p>His Eulogy: A lofty spirit mountain, towering in the distance, excelling the profound, a dragon flying <b>to the purple gate</b>. visiting the faraway emperor, his nature of courage and wisdom, high officials calling at your gate, well-known everywhere. Accepting little himself, richly rewarding those in your service. Southern borders free of worry, imperial favours from the empire. Softly serving all regions, victorious over the vicious, driving out evil.</p>
<p>夔龙颜碑 105 悠哉明后，德重道融。 绸缪七经，騫騫匪躬， 凤翔京邑，曾冈比踪。 如何不吊？遇此繁霜。 良木摧枯，光辉潜藏，  在三感慕，孝友哀伤，  铭迹玄石，千载垂功。  祖已薨背，考志存铭记，  夔龙颜碑 115 良愿不遂，奄然早终。</p>	<p>A carefree ruler, strong in virtue and the Dào in harmony. Affectionate for the seven classics, upholding loyalty. A flying phoenix to the capital, always leaving his trace. How can we not express our sorrow, encountering this terrible loss, the wood of conscience withers and falls, his radiance has gone into hiding. Commanding respect and admiration of all, grieving sons and friends, Sons and friend bereaved, interred him near this black stone, passing down his achievements for a thousand years. The patriarch had already turned his back to the ridge, examining the will to remain, He could not follow his fine intentions, and suddenly came to an</p>

l90: 杜长子] I assume that this is the same as the below-mentioned Dù Chángzǐ 杜莛子, just with one character written slightly differently.

l101: 胜] unclear character

l101: 煞] unclear character

r85: died at the age of sixty-one years] so he must have been born in 386 CE.

r86: 12th month of *bǐngxū*] January 447 CE.

r87: the Sòng and the Yí] i.e. the Liú Sòng 劉宋 standing for China and Yí 夷 for the local people.

r89: great sacrifices in his honour] the expression 中牢 implies that goats and pigs were sacrificed.

r96: to the purple gate] *zǐtà* 紫闕 stands for the imperial palace.

嗣孙硕子等及乎哀感，  
仰寻彝训，永慕高踪。  
控勒在三，仲秋七月，  
登山采石，树立玄碑，

表殊勋于当世，  
流芳风于千代，  
故记之。

early end.

We his grandsons, lamenting our loss,  
looking up for his advice, remembering forever his noble deeds,  
gathering our strength, in midautumn of the seventh month  
we climbed the mountain to gather this stone, setting up this pro-  
found stele,  
he was a model of outstanding merit in this world,  
he leaves a scented *fēng* for a thousand generations.  
So this is recorded here.

爨龙颜碑 120

The colophon gives the exact date, a list of his sons, and the name of the stonemason and the person composing the text.

宁州长子麟弘早终，次弟麟绍、次  
弟麟暄、次弟麟崇等，建树此碑。

大明二年，岁在戊戌，九月上旬壬  
子朔，嗣孙硕瑞、硕才、硕纘、硕万、  
硕思、硕罗、硕闼、硕俗等立。

匠碑，府主簿益州杜苕子。  
文，建宁爨道庆作。

As his eldest son Línhóng passed away early in Níng prefecture,  
his younger brothers Línshào, Línxuān, and Línchóng erected this  
stele.

**On the *rénzǐ* day in the beginning of the 9th month of the  
2nd year of Dàmíng, the *wùxū* year, erected by his grandsons  
Shuòruì, Shuòcái, Shuòlín, Shuòwàn, Shuòsī, Shuòluō, Shuòtà,  
and Shuòsú.**

Stonemason: Dù Chángzǐ, prefecture recorder of Yìzhōu  
Text: Cuàn Dàoqìng from Jiànníng.

爨龙颜碑 125

爨龙颜碑 130

## 碑阴 Back Side

The back side of the stele is a rollcall of dignitaries paying their respect to Cuàn Lóngyán:

府长史建宁爨道文。  
司马建宁爨德泯。  
录事参军武昌郡刘覲。  
功曹参军建宁孟庆伦。

Cuàn Dàowén, garrison administrator of Jiànníng  
Cuàn Démin, adjutant of Jiànníng  
Liú Jǐn, administrative supervisor of Wǔchāng prefecture  
Mèng Qìnglún, merit *cáo* adjutant of Jiànníng

爨龙颜碑 135

/117: 及] 友

/125: 麟] 麟

/125: 麟] 麟

/126: 麟] 麟

/126: 麟] 麟

/128: 太] 大

/129: 瑞] in the Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 237: □

/129: 才] in the Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 237: □

/129: 纘] in the Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, p. 237: □

r128–129: On the *rénzǐ* day in the beginning of the 9th month of the 2nd year of Dàmíng, the *wùxū* year ] Dàmíng 大明 was reign period of Liú Sòng 劉宋 emperor Xiàowǔ, 457–464, so 4th October 458.

r129–131: his grandsons Shuòruì, Shuòcái, Shuòlín, Shuòwàn, Shuòsī, Shuòluō, Shuòtà, and Shuòsú ] The use of the same character as start of their given name indicates they all belong to one generation, so are all his grandsons.

	仓曹参军建宁爨硕登。	Cuàn Shuòdēng, granaries <i>cáo</i> adjutant of Jiànníng
	户曹参军建宁周贤。	Zhōu Xián, revenue <i>cáo</i> adjutant of Jiànníng
爨龙颜碑 140	中兵参军雁门郡王令文。	Wáng Língwén, central military adjutant of Yànmén commandery
	府功曹建宁爨毅。	Cuàn Yì, prefecture merit <i>cáo</i> of Jiànníng
	主簿建宁赵道才	Zhào Dàocái, recorder of Jiànníng
	别驾建宁爨敬祖。	Cuàn Jìngzǔ, administrative aide of Jiànníng
	治中晋宁赵世伐。	Zhào Shìfá, vice official of Jìnníng
爨龙颜碑 145	主簿建宁爨德融。	Cuàn Déróng, recorder of Jiànníng
	主簿建宁孟叔明。	Mèng Shūmíng, recorder of Jiànníng
	西曹益宁杨琼子。	Yáng Qióngzǐ, western <i>cáo</i> of Yìníng
	西曹晋宁路雄	Lù Xióng, western <i>cáo</i> of Jìnníng
	镇蛮长史建宁爨世明。	Cuàn Shìmíng, <i>Mán</i> suppression administrator of Jiànníng
爨龙颜碑 150	司马建宁爨顺靖。	Cuàn Shùnjìng, adjutant of Jiànníng
	录事参军建宁毛玮子。	Máo Wěizǐ, administrative supervisor of Jiànníng
	功曹参军朱提李融之。	Lǐ Róngzhī, merit <i>cáo</i> adjutant of Shūshí
	仓曹参军牂柯谢国子。	Xiè Guózi, granaries <i>cáo</i> adjutant of Zāngkē
	户曹参军南广杨道育。	Yáng Dàoyù, revenue <i>cáo</i> adjutant of Nánguǎng
爨龙颜碑 155	中兵参军建宁爨孙记。	Cuàn Sūnjì, central military adjutant of Jiànníng
	蛮府功曹建宁李延祖。	Lǐ Yánzǔ, <i>Mán</i> prefecture merit <i>cáo</i> of Jiànníng
	主簿建宁孟令孙。	Mèng Língsūn, recorder of Jiànníng
	主簿建宁孟顺德	Mèng Shùndé, recorder of Jiànníng
	门下建宁爨连迫。	Cuàn Liánpò, palace official of Jiànníng
爨龙颜碑 160	录事弋阳郡舒征。	Shū Zhēng, office manager of Yìyáng prefecture
	西曹建宁周令活。	Zhōu Líng huó, western <i>cáo</i> of Jiànníng
	户曹建宁陈世敬。	Chén Shìjìng, revenue <i>cáo</i> of Jiànníng
	省事安上輿稚圭。	Yú Zhìguī, departamental clerk of Ānshàng
	书佐建宁孟罗。	Mèng Luō, administrative clerk Jiànníng
爨龙颜碑 165	干张孙明。	Zhāng Sūnmíng, clerk
	录事孟林。	Mèng Lín, office manager
	西曹刘道善。	Liú Dàoshàn, western <i>cáo</i>
	户曹尹仲常。	Yǐn Zhòngcháng, revenue <i>cáo</i>
	记室张叔熬。	Zhāng Shūáo, record keeper
爨龙颜碑 170	朝直张世保。	Zhāng Shìbǎo, assistant
	麾下都督王道盈。	Wáng Dàoyíng, Huīxià commander-in-chief
	□□彦头。	Yàn Tóu, □□
	书佐□文。	□ Wén, administrative clerk
	干□康	□ Kāng, clerk
爨龙颜碑 175	门下张寻。	, palace official
	录事万敬。	Wàn Jìng office manager,
	西曹尹开。	Yǐn Kāi, western <i>cáo</i>
	户曹来叔子。	Lái Shūzǐ, revenue <i>cáo</i>
	省事李道学。	Lǐ Dào xué, departamental clerk
爨龙颜碑 180	书佐单仲	Dānzhòng, administrative clerk
	干盛庆子。	Shèng Qìngzǐ, clerk

## 4 Glossary

- Ānshàng** 安上: county name – see page 14
- Bā** 巴: name of a state during the Warring States period, later used to refer to the eastern part of present-day Sichuan – see page 12
- Bājùn** 八郡: eight divisions, possibly a reference to the tribal regions in southern Sìchuān – see page 15
- Bājùnjiānjūn** 八郡监军: army supervisor of the eight divisions, military title – see page 10, 15
- Bái** 白: white, – see page 5, 15
- Bān Biāo** 班彪: historian who began to compile the 《汉书》 – see page 9
- Bān Gù** 班固: historian who compiled the 《汉书》 – see page 9
- Bān Lǎng** 斑朗: ancestor of the Cuàn clan – see page 9
- Bān Shì** 班氏: Bān clan, historic clan name – see page 5, 15
- Bǎoshān** 保山: present-day important city, the historic Yǒngchāng 永昌 – see page 10, see 永昌
- Biéjià** 别驾: administrative aide, literally means someone who ‘rides apart’, it means a sort of assistant to a regional head, see Hucker (1985), 4623 – see pages 10, 14, 15
- Bónán** 博南: – see page 10
- Bù** 部: region, a very generic term, ‘principally suggests a part, section, or division of a whole’, see Hucker (1985), 4764 – see page 5, 15
- Cānjūn** 参军: adjutant, ‘title of aides to regional military authorities’, see Hucker (1985), 6876 – see pages 11, 13–15
- Cāng Cáo** 仓曹: granaries *cáo*, ‘a provisioning unit’, see Hucker (1985), 6910 – see page 14, 15
- cáo** 曹: *cáo*, Nánzhào term unit of government, akin to a department, apparently modelled on the Táng dynasty administrative system – see page 15
- Chāngyì** 昌意: eldest son of the Yellow Emperor –
- Chángshǐ** 长史: administrator, literally ‘senior scribe’, see Hucker (1985), 185 – see pages 11, 14, 15
- Cháo zhí** 朝直: assistant, ‘low official inferior to Xicao, Hucao and Jishi’, Gāo Yúnzhù 高云柱 (2016), p. 77 – see page 14, 15
- Chén Shìjìng** 陈世敬: – see page 14
- Chéngdū** 成都: capital of Shǔ 蜀, during the Táng dynasty center of administration for Jiànnán 剑南 –
- Chǔ** 楚: – see page 9
- Chǔ Guó** 楚国: kingdom of Chǔ, ancient Chinese state before the Qin dynasty, 704–223BCE – see page 5, 15
- Chūnqiū** 春秋: spring and autumn period, 770–475BCE – see pages 9, 15, 23
- Cìshǐ** 刺史: regional inspector, regional chief, a title commonly awarded to important heads of aboriginal tribes in South and Southwest China – see pages 5, 7, 10, 11, 15

- Cuàn** 爨: surname, name of powerful clan in the east of Yúnnán before Nánzhào – see page 5, 9
- Cuàn Línshào** 爨麟绍: second son of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Dàoqing** 爨道庆: author of the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13, see 爨龙颜碑
- Cuàn Dàowén** 爨道文: – see page 13
- Cuàn Démǐn** 爨德泯: – see page 13
- Cuàn Déróng** 爨德融: – see page 14
- Cuàn Guīwáng** 爨归王: tribal leader – see page 5
- Cuàn Jìngzǔ** 爨敬祖: – see page 14
- Cuàn Liánpò** 爨连迫: – see page 14
- Cuànlínchóng** 爨麟崇: fourth son of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Línghóng** 爨麟弘: eldest son of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Línxuān** 爨麟暄: third son of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Lóngyán** 爨龙颜: clan leader, honoured on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see pages 5, 7, 13, see 爨龙颜碑
- Cuàn Lóngyán Bēi** 《爨龙颜碑》: ‘Cuàn Lóngyán Stele’, one of the oldest steles found in Yúnnán – see pages 5, 7, 16
- Cuàn Shēn** 爨深: Cuànshì 爨氏 clan elder – see page 5
- Cuànshì** 爨氏: Cuàn clan, powerful clan that ruled eastern Yúnnán 云南 prior to Nánzhào – see pages 5, 10, 16, see 爨龙颜碑
- Cuàn Shimíng** 爨世明: – see page 14
- Cuàn Shùnqìng** 爨顺靖: – see page 14
- Cuàn Shuòcái** 爨硕才: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòdēng** 爨硕登: – see page 14
- Cuàn Shuòlín** 爨硕麟: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòluō** 爨硕罗: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòruì** 爨硕瑞: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòsī** 爨硕思: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòsú** 爨硕俗: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòtā** 爨硕闾: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Shuòwàn** 爨硕万: grandson of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 13
- Cuàn Sù** 爨肃: grandfather of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜 – see page 9, see 爨龙颜碑 & 爨龙颜
- Cuàn Sūnjì** 爨孙记: – see page 14
- Cuàn Yì** 爨毅: – see page 14



- Cuàn Zàn** 爨瓚: Cuànshì 爨氏 clan elder – see page 5
- Cuàn Zhèn** 爨震: Cuànshì 爨氏 clan elder – see page 5
- Dàmíng** 大明: reign period of Liú Sòng 劉宋 emperor Xiàowǔ, 457–464 – see page 13
- Dānzhòng** 单仲: – see page 14
- Dào** 道: circuit, Táng dynasty administrative division, akin to a province, first created 627 – see page 12, 17
- Dàoxùn** 《道训》: ‘Principles of Dào’, a non-existent book mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 9, 17
- Diānchí** 滇池: Lake Dian, large lake in the center of Yúnnán, south of present-day Kūnmíng 昆明 – see page 10, 17
- Dōng Hàn** 东汉: Eastern Hàn, Chinese dynasty, 25–220 – see page 17
- Dǒugé Sì** 斗阁寺: Dǒugé temple, temple where the 《爨龙颜碑》 is today – see page 7, 17
- Dǒugǔyútù** 斗谷于菟: Chūnqiū official for Chǔ Guó – see page see 子文
- Dūdū** 都督: commander-in-chief, ‘chief of military forces in a prefecture’, see Hucker (1985), 7311 – see pages 5, 14, 17
- Dù Chángzǐ** 杜衰子: name mentioned on the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 12, 13
- Dù Chángzǐ** 杜长子: officer of Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜, erected the 《爨龙颜碑》 – see page 12
- duānyòu** 端右: director of the imperial secretariat, reference to the Shàngshūlǐng 尚书令 – see page 10, 17
- 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, Xīěrhé 西洱河 – see page 17
- fēng** 风: *fēng*, poetry form – see pages 11, 13, 17
- Fǔ** 府: prefecture, – see pages 13, 14, 17
- Fǔchángshǐ** 府长史: garrison administrator, literally, ‘senior scribe’, see Hucker (1985), 185 – see page 13, 17
- Fǔguó Jiāngjūn** 辅国将军: ‘sustainer of the state’ general, honorific – see page 10, 17
- Fǔjūn** 府君: commandery governor, ‘unofficial reference to a Commandery Governor’, see Hucker (1985), 2051 – see page 5, 17
- Gān** 干: clerk, ‘Gan was a kind of Administrative Clerk who was a minor subofficial functionary in a unit of territorial administration’, Gāo Yúnzhù 高云柱 (2016), p. 77, see Hucker (1985), 3138 – see page 14, 17
- Gōng Cáo** 功曹: merit *cáo*, ‘designation of staff agencies in Regions (chou), Commanderies (chūn), and Districts (hsien) in charge of assembling and overseeing labor gangs as needed’, see Hucker (1985), 3489 – see pages 13, 14, 17
- Guǎngxī** 广西: southern Chinese province –
- Guìzhōu** 贵州: today a province in south-west China –
- Hàn Cháo** 汉朝: Hàn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 202 BCE–220 – see pages 5, 9, 17
- Hàn** 汉: Hàn, main ethnic group of China – see page 17
- Hàn Shū** 《汉书》: ‘History of the Hàn Dynasty’, one of the twenty-four Chinese histories, covering the Hàn dynasty – see page 9, 17

- Hànjì** 《汉记》: ‘Records of Hàn’, – see page 9, 18
- Hàn Wǔdì** 汉武帝: Hàn emperor Wǔ, Hàn dynasty emperor Wǔ, 140–87 BCE – see page 18
- Hédōng** 河东: – see page 5
- Hénán** 河南: – see page 5, 9
- Hóu** 侯: marquis, ‘Marquis, a title of nobility, usually next in prestige only after Prince (wang) and Duke (kung), sometimes hereditary, sometimes conferred for special merit; usually prefixed with a geographic name designating the noble’s real or hypothetical fief,’ see Hucker (1985), 2205 – see pages 7, 10, 11, 18
- Húběi** 湖北: Chinese province – see page 10
- 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 14, 18
- Hùzhèn Mán Xiàowèi** 护镇蛮校尉: ‘defender and subduer of the *Mán*’ commandant, honorific title given to Cuàn Lóngyán 爨龙颜 – see pages 7, 11, 18
- Huáshān** 华山: Mt. Huá, one of the five sacred mountains of China – see pages 9, 18, 21
- Huáyáng Guó Zhì** 《华阳国志》: ‘Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá’, – see page 9, 18
- Huángdì** 黄帝: Yellow Emperor, mythological ancestor of the Chinese emperors – see page 18
- Jìshì** 记室: record keeper, ‘lowly clerical official,’ Gāo Yúnzhù 高云柱 (2016), p. 77, see Hucker (1985), 568 – see page 14, 18
- Jiānjūn** 监军: army supervisor, ‘army supervisor, a rank below Dūdū 都督,’ see Hucker (1985), 815 – see page 10, 18
- Jiànníng** 建宁: an early administrative district in present-day eastern Yúnnán – see pages 7, 11–14
- Jiànníng commandery** 建宁郡: Jiànníng commandery, commandery established by Zhūgé Liàng 诸葛亮 – see page 10, 18
- Jiāngjūn** 将军: general, ‘throughout history the most common term for the commander of a substantial body of troops, whether a regular officer of the standing army or the ad hoc commander of a special force organized for a campaign; occurs with many kinds of prefixes,’ see Hucker (1985), 694 – see page 18
- Jìn** 晋: Chinese dynasty –
- Jìnnǎndì** 晋安帝: Jìn emperor Ān, Jìn emperor Jìnnǎndì, ruled 396–418 – see page 18
- Jìn Cháo** 晋朝: Jìn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 266–420 – see page 18
- Jìchéngdì** 晋成帝: Jìn emperor Chéng, Jìn dynasty emperor, 325–342 – see page 5, 18
- Jìnníng** 晋宁: present-day town south of Kūnmíng Shì 昆明市 – see page 11, 14
- Jìnníng commandery** 晋宁郡: – see page 10
- Jìnshū** 《晋书》: ‘Book of Jìn’, – see page 5, 18
- Jiǔzhōu** 九州: nine divisions, a classic term for China as the country was thought to be made up of nine parts – see page 9, 18
- Jūn** 君: lord, ‘Throughout history a broad generic term for rulers and other official superiors: Lord, often used in contrast to Minister (ch’en),’ see Hucker (1985), 1729 – see page 11, 18

- Jùn** 郡: prefecture, historic administrative area, term in use before the Táng – see pages 12–14, 19
- Kāiyuán** 开元: 713–741 BCE, second reign period of Táng Xuánzōng 唐玄宗 – see page 5
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- Lùliáng** 陆良: present-day county in eastern Yúnnán – see page 5, 7
- Lùshì** 录事: office manager, someone who ‘manages affairs’, see Hucker (1985), 3856 – see page 14, 19
- Lùshì Cānjūn** 录事参军: administrative supervisor, , see Hucker (1985), 3860 – see pages 13, 14, 19
- Lù Xióng** 路雄: – see page 14
- Lùnyǔ** 《论语》: ‘*Analects*’, a collection of sayings attributed to Confucius, one of the ‘Four Books’, for a translation, see Legge (1861b) – see page 19
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- Miǎn** 緬: Miǎn, present-day Myanmar – see page 11, 19
- Miǎndiàn** 緬甸: Miǎndiàn, present-day Burma, the lowlands west of Yúnnán – see page 11, 19
- Nánmán** 南蛮: southern *Mán*, – see page 11, 19
- Nánning** 南宁: city in present-day Guǎngxī 广西 – see page 5

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- Qūjìng** 曲靖: – see page 5
- Róngzhōu** 戎州: historic administrative district, present-day Yíbīn 宜宾, prefecture in north-eastern Yúnnán, established in 649 as ??, in 652 it became 戎州, in 742 it became 南溪, then in 758 it became 戎州 again before being disbanded in 907 – see page 11
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- shǐjūn** 使君: envoy, honorific title – see page 7, 20
- Shìláng** 侍郎: vice minister, ‘2nd executive post in each of the standard Six Ministries (liu pu) of the central government’, see Hucker (1985), 5278 – see page 11, 20
- Shū Zhēng** 舒征: – see page 14
- Shūzuǒ** 书佐: administrative clerk, ‘lowly or unranked aide in many Sections (ts’ao) of various government agencies, especially units of territorial administration down to the District (hsien) level’, see Hucker (1985), 5464 – see page 14, 20
- Shǔ** 蜀: name of a state during the Warring States period, later used to refer to the western part of present-day Sìchuān –
- Shǔ Guó** 蜀国: state of Shǔ, one of the states of the Sānguó 三国, later also used as a term for present-day Sìchuān – see page 20

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- Yǐn** 尹: administrator, ‘Administrator of a Superior Prefecture (fu) and normally its active head’, but also used as ‘common element in merit titles’, see Hucker (1985), 7969 – see page 9, 22
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- Zhōngyuán** 中原: central plains, term for the Chinese heartlands, the middle and lower regions of the Huánghé 黄河 – see page 9, 23
- Zhōu** 州: prefecture, administrative unit – see pages 5, 10, 23
- Zhōu Lìng huó** 周令活: – see page 14
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- Zhūgé Liàng** 诸葛亮: historic and legendary official of Shǔ 蜀, see Crespigny (2007), p. 1172 – see page 5, 10
- Zhǔbù** 主簿: recorder, literally, ‘to be in charge of records’, see Hucker (1985), 1413 – see pages 10, 13, 14, 23
- Zhùróng** 祝融: god of fire, mentioned in the 《史记》: ‘重黎为帝尝高辛居火正，甚有功，能光融天下，帝尝命曰祝融’ – see page 9
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- Zuǒchuán** 《左传》: ‘The Zuǒ Traditions’, ancient text, translated in Legge (1872) and Durrant, Li and Schaberg (2016) – see page 9, 23

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