
The ‘*Memorial to Cancel the Quarrying of Stone Screens*’

An Annotated Translation of the 1561CE 《奏罢屏石疏》

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The Yúnnán Papers

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 ‘*Memorial to Cancel the Quarrying of Stone Screens*’ 《奏罢屏石疏》 is a 1561 CE memorial by Jiǎng Zōnglǔ 蒋宗鲁, *1521–†1588, then grand coordinator 巡抚 in Yúnnán 云南, a position akin to provincial governor, to the Míng Jiājìng Emperor 嘉靖, ruled 1521–1566 CE, requesting that an onerous order of Dàilǐ Stone 大理石, i.e. marble from the Diǎncāng Mountains 点苍山, be rescinded as it was too hard to fulfill causing much hardship to the local population.

While the official court documents making the order are lost, other records show that in 1557 CE a fire had destroyed much of the imperial palace in Běijīng 北京, causing the court to embark on an ambitious rebuilding program. Apparently marble was requested as a prized decorative stone.⁽¹⁾ However, as Jiǎng Zōnglǔ’s memorial records, requests for marble had also been made previously (in 1539 CE), suggesting that the 1557 fire required a particularly large scale reconstruction.

Overall, text shows that marble had become a prized item that was shipped at great expense all the way from the Lake Ěrhǎi 洱海 region to the capital Běijīng for court construction projects and that demands on the local population to mine it were extremely harsh, causing even a provincial administrator to intervene on their behalf.

2 About this Translation

I came across this document through its mention in the 1621 CE ‘*A Brief Outline of Diān*’ 《滇略》, where marble from the Diǎncāng Mountains 点苍山 is discussed as a prized item.

The text of the memorial was preserved in the 1625 CE ‘*Diān Gazetteer*’ 《滇志》,⁽²⁾ and later also in the 1736 CE ‘*Qiánlóng “Yúnnán General Gazetteer”*’ 《乾隆云南通志》⁽³⁾ and other works.

Jiǎng Huī 蒋晖 (2018) provides an overall history marble 大理石 during the Míng dynasty. Wáng Guótiān 王国天 (2022) comments on the text’s style.

Punctuation: early editions lack any punctuation, but in the hand-written ‘*Diān Gazetteer*’ 《滇志》 edition, the text is broken by the beginning of new columns, which to me suggests that the clerk copying the text saw it so segmented. However, the printed version in Liú Wénzhēng 刘文征 (1991), pp. 739–740 does not follow this at all and adds punctuation at odds with the hand-written copy. The copy of the text in Wáng Guótiān 王国天 (2022) adds yet another different punctuation.

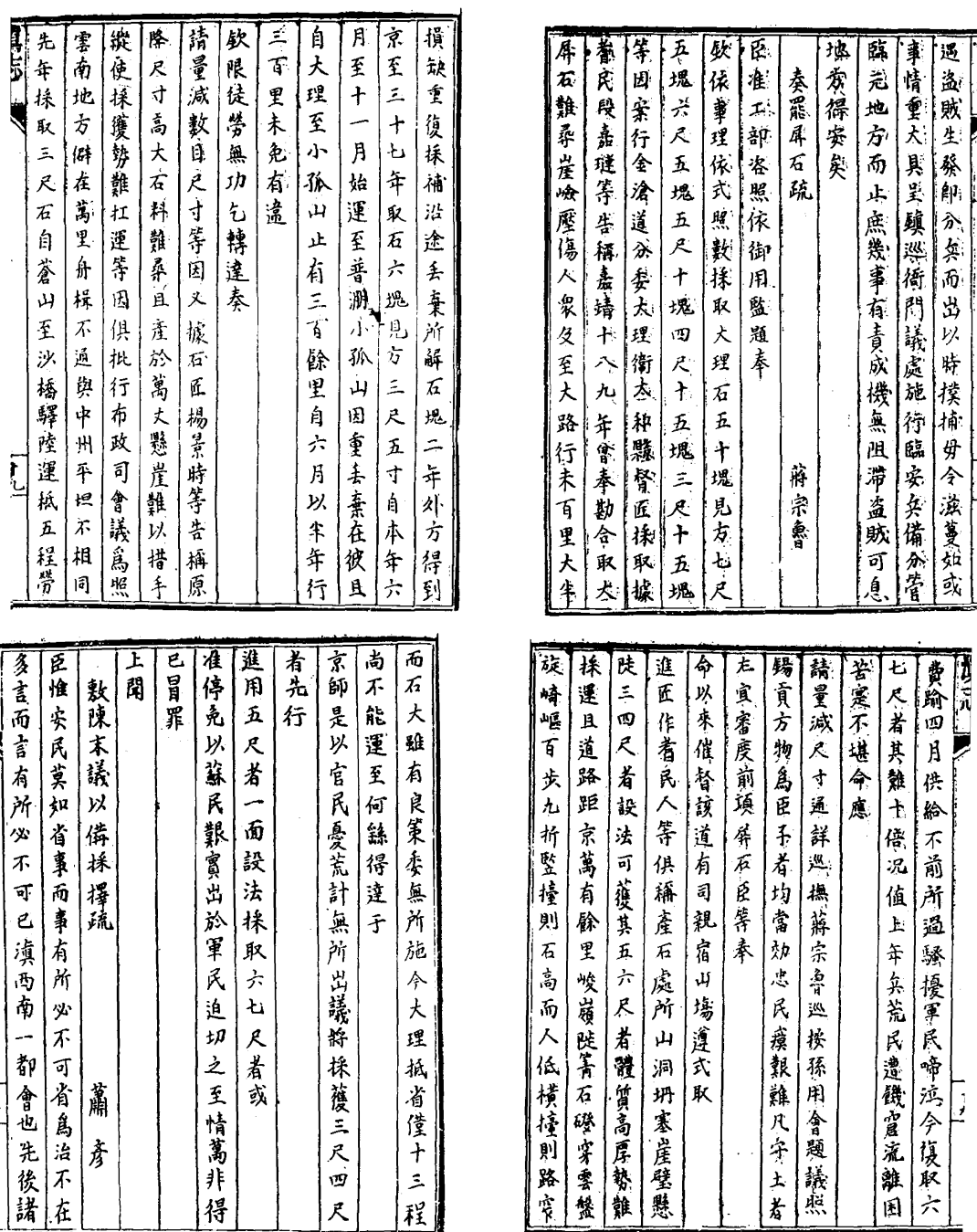


Illustration 1:

The 《奏罷屏石疏》 in an early copy of the 《滇志》

Source: 《滇志》 copy held at the Běijīng University 北京大學, see
<https://ia601308.us.archive.org/27/items/02085533.cn/02085533.cn.pdf>.

3 Annotated Translation

The Memorial 《奏罢屏石疏》

奏罢屏石疏

蒋宗鲁

臣准工部咨照依御用监题奉

钦依事理依式照数采取大理石五十块，见方七尺五块，六尺五块，五尺十块，四尺十五块，三尺十石块等因。

案行金沧道，分委大理卫太和县督匠采取。

据耆民段嘉琰等告称，嘉靖十八年，曾奉勘合取大屏石，难寻崖险，压伤人众。及至大路，行未百里，大半损缺，众复采补。沿途丢弃所解石块，二年外方得到京。

至三十七年，取石六块，见方三尺五寸。自本年六月至十一月，始运至普溯小孤山，因重丢弃在彼。且自大理至小孤山止有三百余里，自六月以半年行三百里，未免有违钦限，徒劳无功。

‘Memorial to Cancel the Quarrying of Stone Screens’

Jiǎng Zōnglǔ

Your humble servant according to consultations with the ministry of works and supervising on behalf of the emperor politely submits this letter.

Based on the court’s administration of issues and following procedures, the original order was to obtain fifty pieces of marble, of these five seven *chǐ* square, five six *chǐ* square, ten five *chǐ* square, fifteen four *chǐ* square, and ten three *chǐ* square.

Annotation: the current Jīncāng circuit entrusted Tàihé county of the Dàlǐ Guard to supervise the craftsmen in carrying out the order. According to the testament of elder villagers like Duàn Jiālián, in the 18th and 19th year of the Jiājìng Emperor, they had received the order to prospect and quarry large stone screens. The dangerous cliffs made the survey difficult, crushing and injuring many. When they reached the main road they had not even travelled one hundred *lǐ*, more than half had been broken and they had to find replacements. Along the way, many stones were abandoned and only after two years reached some the capital.

In the the 37th year, only six stones, measuring three *chǐ* five *cùn*, had been quarried. From the 6th to the 11th month of that year, they had only been transported to Pǔpéng’s Xiǎogū mountain and were abandoned there due to their weight. Furthermore, from Dàlǐ to Xiǎogū mountain is just three hundred *lǐ*. As it took them half a year to travel three hundred *lǐ*, the imperial deadline could not be

奏罢屏石疏 5

奏罢屏石疏 10

奏罢屏石疏 15

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奏罢屏石疏 25

[13: 臣准工部咨照依御用监题奉] This is all written in one column in the BCE 滇志 and in my view is an opening salutation. The punctuated versions in Liú Wénzhēng 刘文征 (1991), pp. 739–740, Wáng Guótiān 王国天 (2022), p. 52, and Jiǎng Huī 蒋晖 (2018), p. 103 all consider it to run together with the following passages. I think that is wrong.

[23–24: 自六月] These three characters are missing in the ‘*Qiánlóng “Yúnnán General Gazetteer”*’ edition.

r12–13: in the 18th and 19th year of the Jiājìng Emperor] 1539–1540 CE.

r20: the 37th year] 1558 CE.

(1) My narrative here is based on Jiǎng Huī 蒋晖 (2018), pp. 101–109. The fire at the capital is recorded in the 《大明世宗肃皇帝实录卷四百四十六》。

(2) Liú Wénzhēng 刘文征 (1991), pp. 739–740. A copy of the text, which I believe is a scan of the early edition held by Běijīng University 北京大学 is available at <https://ia601308.us.archive.org/27/items/02085533.cn/02085533.cn.pdf>. (The text of concern here is on page 37–40 of the PDF copy, the original numbering is cut off, it should be 十八–二十) The same text also appears to be contained in the 《续修四库全书》(2002), vol. 862, pp. 236–237, however, this copy has a number of seals that are missing in the other edition.

(3) An electronic copy of the ‘*Qiánlóng “Yúnnán General Gazetteer”*’ is available at <https://www.shidianguji.com/ens/book/SK1018/chapter/ikgadzhshoouug?paragraphId=7430369023449235456>.

乞转达奏请量减数目尺寸等因。

奏罢屏石疏 30

又据石匠杨景时等告称，原降尺寸，高大石料难寻。且产于万丈悬崖，难以措手。纵使采获，势难扛运。等因。俱批行布政司会议为照。

奏罢屏石疏 40

云南地方僻在万里，舟楫不通，与中州平坦不相同。先年采取三尺石，自苍山至沙桥驿，陆运抵五程，劳费踰四月，供给不前，所过骚扰，军民啼泣。今复取六七尺者，其难十倍。况值上年兵荒，民遭饥窘，流离困苦，实不堪命应。

奏罢屏石疏 50

请量减尺寸通详。
巡抚蒋宗鲁、巡按孙用会题议，照锡贡方物为臣子者，均当效忠民瘼。艰难凡守土者，尤宜审度前项屏石。臣等奉命以来，催督该道有司亲宿山场，遵式取进。

奏罢屏石疏 55

匠作耆民人等，俱称产石处所山洞坍塌，崖壁悬陡。三四尺者，设法可获。其五六尺者，体质高厚，势难采运。且道路距京万有馀里，峻岭陡箐，石磴穿云，盘旋崎岖，百步九折。竖抬则石高而人低，横抬则路窄而石大，虽有良策，实无所施。今大理抵省仅十三程，尚不能运至，何由得达于京师。是以官民忧慌，计无所出。

奏罢屏石疏 60

honoured and all effort had been in vain.

I humbly request to convey my petition to reduce the quantity and size of the stones, awaiting a reply.

Furthermore, according to the testament of stone mason Yáng Jǐngshí, the originally mandated size is very large and such stone material difficult to find. Moreover, quarrying them on cliffs ten thousand *zhàng* high is difficult to carry out. Even if they can be quarried, transporting them is very difficult. Awaiting a response. This was endorsed by the provincial administration commission for deliberation.

Yúnnán is a remote region ten thousand *lǐ* away, where boats cannot travel, unlike the flat lands of the central provinces. In former years, three *chǐ* stones were quarried and transported from Cāngshān to Shāqiáo post station, five stages by land, costing over four months. The supplies were insufficient and the places it passed were troubled with soldiers and civilians complaining. To order stones of six or seven *chǐ* would be ten times as difficult. It also happened that **last year there was a military uprising** and the people suffered famine, many displaced and in distress. The situation is unbearable.

I request to reconsider and reduce the size. Submitted.

The grand coordinator Jiǎng Zōnglǔ and the regional inspector Sūn Yònghuì submitted for deliberation, that the officials in charge of **special tribute** items also need to be attuned to the hardships of the people. As all the soldiers and civilians suffer great hardship, it is particularly appropriate to carefully consider the above order of stone screens. Since your humble servant has received the order, we have urged and supervised the officials of this *circuit* to personally reside on the mountain to advance the order accordingly.

The craftsmen and the village elders have all said that the caverns where the stones are quarried have collapsed and been blocked, with the cliffs being steep and precarious. For stone of three or four *chǐ*, attempts will be made to quarry them, but those five or six *chǐ*, which are tall and thick, are difficult to transport. Furthermore, the road to the capital is more than ten thousand *lǐ* through mountains and valleys with paths traversing the clouds, winding and rugged, in one hundred steps nine stumble. For carrying the stones upright, they are too tall for the people, for carrying them horizontally, the roads are too narrow for the roads. Even if there is a plan, it cannot be put into practice. From Dàlǐ to the provin-

r 43: last year there was a military uprising] This could refer to the Dōngchuān Ātáng Uprising 东川阿堂之乱, a rebellion by a local ruler in 1560 CE. This rebellion is mentioned in Jiǎng Huī 蒋晖 (2018), p. 104.

r 49: special tribute] The Chinese term is Xígòng 锡贡, which denotes a special tribute requiring a request by the emperor.

议将采获三尺四尺者，先行进用；五尺者，一面设法采取；六七尺者，或准停免，以苏民艰。

实出于军民迫切之至情，万非得已，冒罪上闻。

cial capital it is only thirteen stages, but this is still impossible to accomplish, let alone reaching the imperial capital. This causes worries and anxiety among officials and people, leaving them with no way out.

I suggest to quarry stones of three or four *chǐ*, to transport them first and put to use. Five *chǐ* ones, we will think of solutions to quarry them, the six or seven *chǐ* ones should perhaps be cancelled out of consideration for the people's hardship.

This arises from the soldiers' and people's urgent feelings, I cannot but act so, risking punishment I submit this memorial.

奏罢屏石疏 70

奏罢屏石疏 75

This is also recorded in the Qīng dynasty 'An Investigation of Diān' 《滇考》:⁽⁴⁾

四十年，又行取五十块，高六七尺不等。巡抚蒋宗鲁抗疏谏止，然当时取办尤不论何项石纹。

至万历二十一年，为两宫铺地，诏取凤凰石百余。求之益艰，供役者十死八九，惟高不过三四尺。人犹以为蒋公之力焉。

右志乘所载皆止行之自上者耳。其他长吏之馈遗权要之，悉索不可胜计。民穷思乱亦孰能禁之哉？👁

In the 40th year, another order was issued for fifty stones, ranging from six to seven *chǐ* in height. The grand coordinator Jiǎng Zōnglǔ opposed this and wrote a memorial pleading for the order to be rescinded. However, at the time the order did not touch upon the quality of the stone's patterns.

Then, during the 21st year of the Wànlì Emperor, an edict was issued for more than one hundred phoenix stones to pave two palaces. The search became increasingly difficult, eight or nine out of ten men procuring the stones died, even though the stones were not taller than three or four *chǐ*, which the people attributed to Jiǎng's influence.

The official documents only record the court orders. Gifts by high-ranking officials and extortion by influential officials are too numerous to be recorded. When people are exhausted they consider rebellion, what could possibly restrain them?

奏罢屏石疏 5

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奏罢屏石疏 15

3.1 Additional Material

Dismissal

Jiǎng Zōnglǔ 蒋宗鲁 fear of punishment expressed at the end of his memorial was not unfounded. In 1562 CE, an edict was issued dismissing him from office:⁽⁵⁾

[14: 👁] Source text: [https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E6%BB%87%E8%80%83_\(%E5%9B%9B%E5%BA%AB%E5%85%A8%E6%9B%B8%E6%9C%AC\)/%E5%8D%B7%E4%B8%8B](https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E6%BB%87%E8%80%83_(%E5%9B%9B%E5%BA%AB%E5%85%A8%E6%9B%B8%E6%9C%AC)/%E5%8D%B7%E4%B8%8B)

r1: In the 40th year] of the Jiājìng Emperor, i.e. 1561.

r6: during the 21st year of the Wànlì Emperor] 1593 CE.

(4) 《滇考卷下》九十四-九四五.

(5) Together with Jiǎng Zōnglǔ 蒋宗鲁 a number of other officials are indicted and punished.

嘉靖四十二年三月 dots 乙酉，吏科都给事中沈淳等以考察拾遗，劾奏...原任云南巡抚金都御史蒋宗鲁...宜议处。

得旨：...宗鲁...俱闲住。👁️

On the *yǐyǒu* day in the 3rd month of the 42nd year of the Jiājìng Emperor, the supervising secretary of the office of scrutiny for personnel Shěn Chún and others – through inspection and investigation into shortcomings – submitted an impeachment memorial that ...the former Yúnnán grand coordinator and assistant censor-in-chief Jiǎng Zōnglǔ ...receive appropriate punishment.

It has been decreed: ...Zōnglǔ ...is to resign and return home.

Posthumous Appreciation

Jiǎng Zōnglǔ's biography in the '*Kāngxī Period Dàlǐ Prefecture Gazetteer*' 《康熙大理府志》 however remembers his stance against the order positively, as this entry shows:⁽⁶⁾

蒋宗鲁...嘉靖仕巡抚，精明严毅，弭盗爱民，时诏取点苍山石，百姓苦无宁。字公疏请罢免。民至今德之。👁️

Jiǎng Zōnglǔ ...served during the Jiājìng Emperor as grand coordinator, he was astute and principled, suppressed banditry and loved the people. At the time an edict was issued requesting stone from the Diǎncāng Mountains, the local people suffered hardship. He wrote a memorial asking for the order to be rescinded. The people to this day remember his virtue.

Illegal Marble Mining

The '*Veritable Records of the Míng*' 《明实录》 for Shìzōng 世宗, i.e. Jiājìng 嘉靖, contains an entry for the year 1529 CE that mentions unofficial mining of the stone causing great harm.⁽⁷⁾

嘉靖八年十一月壬子...云南巡抚右金都御史欧阳重奏：「大理府太和苍山故产奇石，可作石屏、石床，黔国公沐绍勋、镇守太监杜唐、知府刘守绪、去任副使邵有道擅发民匠攻山取石，土拓，压死不可胜计。请永为封闭，不许复开，仍切责绍勋及唐，逮问守绪等以惩贪残。」从之。

奏罢屏石疏 5

On the *rénzǐ* day of the 11th month in the 8th year of Jiājìng, ...the Yúnnán grand coordinator and the censor of the Right Treasury Bureau Ōuyáng Zhòng submitted a memorial, saying 'In Dàlǐ Prefecture's Tàihé the Cāngshān Mountains produce a marvellous stone, suitable for making stone screens and stone beds. The duke of Qiánguó Mù Shàoxūn and the grand defender 太监 Dù Táng, the prefect Liú Shǒuxù, the former assistant Shào Yǒudào have illegally raised civilians and craftsmen to invade the mountains and quarry the stones. The hillsides have been opened up and countless have been crushed to death. I petition that they are permanently closed and not be reopened. Further, to severely reprimand Shàoxūn and

l7: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?chapter=374349>

l4: 👁️] Source text: <https://ctext.org/library.pl?file=175226&page=48>

r1-2: On the *yǐyǒu* day in the 3rd month of the 42nd year of the Jiājìng Emperor] 30th March 1563.

r1: On the *rénzǐ* day of the 11th month in the 8th year of Jiājìng] 1529 CE.

(6) This text is also included in Jiǎng Huī 蒋晖 (2018), p. 104.

(7) This text is included in the Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 4, p. 277.

Táng, and to arrest and interrogate Shǒuxù to punish their greed and cruelty.' This was approved.

4 Glossary

- Běijīng** 北京: present-day capital of China, – see page 5
- Běijīngdàxué** 北京大学: Běijīng University, main university in Běijīng 北京, – see pages 6, 7, 12
- Bùzhèngsī** 布政司: provincial administration commission, , , see Hucker (1985), 4770 – see page 8, 12
- Cāngshān** 苍山: Cāngshān, mountain range west of Ěrhǎi, – see pages 8, 10, 12
- Dàlǐ** 大理: , – see page 7, 8
- Dàlǐ superior prefecture** 大理府: Dàlǐ Prefecture, later name of the Dàlǐ administrative region, – see page 10, 12
- Dàlǐfǔ Zhì** 《大理府志》: ‘*Dàlǐ Prefecture Gazetteer*’, title of a number of local histories for Dàlǐ 大理, such as the 《嘉靖大理府志》 and the 《康熙大理府志》, – see page 12
- Dàlǐ Shí** 大理石: marble, Chinese term for marble as it is found on Diǎncāng Shān 点苍山, – see pages 5, 7, 12
- Dào** 道: *circuit*, Táng dynasty administrative division, akin to a province, first created in 627 during the Táng dynasty, – see page 8, 12
- Diān** 滇: one of the earliest polities known to China in present-day Yúnnán, later also a geographical term for the region, – see page see 滇国
- Diān Guó** 滇国: kingdom of Diān, historic polity in Yunnan, centered around Diānchí, flourishing at the time of the Hàn dynasty, – see page 12
- Diānkǎo** 《滇考》: ‘*An Investigation of Diān*’, Qīng dynasty history of Yúnnán, compiled by Féng Sū 冯甦, – see page 9, 12
- Diān Lüè** 《滇略》: ‘*A Brief Outline of Diān*’, work by Xiè Zhàozhì 谢肇淛, completed in 1621, – see page 5, 12
- Diān Zhì** 《滇志》: ‘*Diān Gazetteer*’, Míng 明 Yúnnán Gazetteer, compiled by Liú Wénzhēng 刘文征 around 1625, – see page 5, 12
- Diǎncāng Shān** 点苍山: Diǎncāng Mountains, mountain range west of Dàlǐ 大理, – see pages 5, 10, 12
- Dōngchuān** 东川: eastern part of Jiànnán, –
- Dōngchuān Ātáng Zhīluàn** 东川阿堂之乱: Dōngchuān Ātáng Uprising, uprising in 1560 CE in eastern Yúnnán, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 3, p. 433, – see page 8, 12
- Dù Táng** 杜唐: , – see page 10, 11
- Ěrhǎi** 洱海: Lake Ěrhǎi, highland lake in western Yúnnán with the center of Nánzhào on its western side. It was also called Xiě 西洱, Xiě Hé, – see page 5, 12
- Féng Sū** 冯甦: compiler of the 《滇考》, –
- fǔ** 府: prefecture, administrative unit during the Yuán Cháo 元朝, – see page 12
- Fùshǐ** 副使: assistant, , – see page 10, 12
- Gěishìzhōng** 给事中: supervising secretary, , see Hucker (1985), 587 – see page 10, 12
- Gōng** 公: duke, ‘(1) Duke, from high antiquity the highest title of nobility after wang, normally reserved for members of the ruling

- family; ... Commonly prefixed with territorial names, ... (2) The Honorable or His Honor, polite term of indirect address applied to someone considered deserving of respect', , see Hucker (1985), 3388 – see pages 10, 12, 13
- Gōngbù** 工部: ministry of works, 'ministry of Works, one of the top-echelon agencies', , see Hucker (1985), 3462 – see page 7, 13
- Guìzhōu** 贵州: province in south-west China, –
- Hàn Cháo** 汉朝: Hàn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 202 BCE–220, – see page 13
- Hàn** 汉: Hàn, main ethnic group of China, also name of early dynasty, – see page 13
- Jiājìng** 嘉靖: Jiājìng Emperor, Míng 明 emperor, 1521–1566, ruled 1521–1566 CE – see pages 5, 7, 9, 10, 13
- Jiājìng Dàilǐ Fǔzhì** 《嘉靖大理府志》: *Jiājìng Gazetteer of Dàilǐ*, first gazetteer of the Dàilǐ 大理 region, compiled by Lǐ Yuányáng 李元阳, published 1563, see Sūn Péng 孙鹏 (2014), – see page 13
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- Shāqiáo** 沙桥: postal station in Yúnnán, – see page 8
- Shìzōng** 世宗: frequently used temple name for deceased emperors, – see page 10
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- Wèi** 卫: guard, ‘N-S DIV-MING: Guard, standard term for a large military organization normally in garrison but available for active defense duty’, , see Hucker (1985), 7658 – see page 7, 14
- Xiěr** 西洱: shorter form of Xiěr Hé, a reference to Ěrhǎi, –
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- Xúnfǔ** 巡抚: grand coordinator, ‘sent out as delegates from the central government to coordinate and supervise provincial-level agencies’, – see pages 5, 8–10, 14
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- zhào** 诏: zhào, term for a local ruler or his realm, – see page 14

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- Zhì** 志: *gazetteer*, term for official regional records, – see page 15
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