

Jing provides a vivid and relatively comprehensive introduction to the social customs of ethnic groups. He introduces the Bai, Luoluo, Jinchi Baiyi (the Gold-Teeth Barbarians), Moxie, Tuliao, Yeman (literally, "the savages"), Woni, and Pu people.³

Li observes many native customs that sharply contrasted with those of the Chinese, the most striking of which is probably the role of women, in terms of their dress, social and economic roles, and marriage. In the case of the Bai people, girls and widows would freely have sex with men as and when they liked. As for the Luoluo, women let their hair down and wore cotton clothes; the wealthy wore embroidered clothes, while the commoners put on sheepskins, and the skirts of girls hardly covered their knees. Women of the Gold-Teeth Barbarians plucked their eyebrows and eyelashes and wove their hair into two coils. They wore embroidered clothes and adorned them by sewing on small shells. And it was women instead of men who worked very hard at farming. Virginity was not important, and girls had the freedom to have sex with men; virginity may even have been a barrier to marriage. If a girl died before marriage, all the men who had had relations with the girl had to hold up a banner to see her off. If the banners numbered 100 (or more), the girl was considered to have been especially beautiful. Her parents would cry and lament: "How could we have known that our daughter who is loved by so many men would have died so young?"

5

The Moxie women in the Yunnan-Tibet border area wore felt wraps and black clothes. They went barefoot, and wore their hair in buns. Women wore wool yarn as a skirt, with much of the body uncovered. Even when married, they were not restrained from having sex with other men.⁴

6

Native marriage rituals were distinctive, too. Unlike the Chinese, who forbade marriage within the same clan or lineage, the Gold-Teeth people did not make distinctions between lineage and clan. Before their marriages, the Luoluo women first had to have relations with the shaman, and then dance with the groom's brothers. Only after that could she be married to her husband. If one brother refused to dance, he would be considered unrighteous and could threaten the relationship among his brothers. Women played important and influential roles in tribal politics. If a Luoluo chieftain died without a male heir, his wife or daughters would take the position. The female chieftain often had a dozen male attendants, with whom she could have sex. Moxie women in northwestern Yunnan sometimes acted as mediators when a war between tribes broke out.

7

Li Jing also records the different customs of birth, death burial, and food. After delivering a baby, a Gold-Teeth woman would immediately take it up in her arms, and wash it in the river. She would then give the baby to the father, and return to work as usual.⁵ As for food, the indigenous people loved to eat raw meat or fish, mixed with garlic paste.⁶ Body tattoos were prevalent.

8

Some of Li Jing observations had been shared by Marco Polo, who had traveled through Yunnan to Burma about a half century before.⁷ Li Jing's vivid images of the indigenes and their social customs describe a society that varied sharply from that of the Chinese. The indigenous dress, festivals, foods, gender relations, and social hierarchy were so different that they were thought to be "barbarian," uncivilized, and savage according to Confucian ethics. To be sure, the Moxie people in northwest Yunnan were greatly influenced by Tibetan culture, and many other peoples described by Li Jing were Southeast Asian, as revealed by their funeral and marriage customs, and the role of women. 9

Chinese rituals of funerals and marriage called for the deceased to be placed in a coffin and buried, while in Yunnan, cremation seems to be the dominant funerary ritual, which violated the Confucian sense of piety. In addition, the behavior of women in Yunnan differed from their counterparts in China proper where virginity and chastity were valued. Unlike in China proper, Gold-Teeth society women played an important role in economic activities, dealing in cowries and taking care of the farming. Local women's right to inherit the position of their husbands or fathers was abolished by the Ming-Qing state. These social customs, especially the status of women, reveal the fact that Yunnan in general was more Southeast Asian than Chinese. However, the mass flow of Han Chinese immigrants gradually changed Yunnan's social and cultural landscape. 10

Chinese Immigration to Yunnan: A Historical Review

Chinese states encouraged migration to frontier areas by making it a state project and policy from early times.⁸ No sooner had the Chinese conquered Yunnan than migrations sponsored or forced by imperial states took place. Although an estimate of the Han population specifically in early Yunnan is impossible, the presence of the Chinese was often recorded in textual sources, since in keeping with Confucian moral principles, imperial authors and editors clearly distinguished the indigene (*y*) from the Chinese (*min*).⁹ 11

Chinese immigrants to Yunnan in the early period included three types: military colonists, people of war (usually captives), and spontaneous migrants. Zhuang Qiao and his army were the earliest recorded military immigrants to Yunnan. One source states that the Chu forces consisted of 20,000 soldiers, and Fang Guoyu thought it reasonable.¹⁰ Zhuang's long-distance expedition, according to Fang, possibly followed the trading route pioneered by merchants,¹¹ so there might have been merchant sojourners in Yunnan before Zhuang Qiao's settlement. 12

Large-scale immigration to Yunnan was initiated in the Western Han.¹² The first immigrants were military colonists who arrived when the Western Han established military garrisons in important passes and cities to protect administrative offices and to contain local threats. Gradually some of them were absorbed into local societies.¹³ The Han state also moved other people by force into the Southwest. In the Yuanfeng reign (110 BCE–105 BCE), Emperor Wu moved the convicted and unscrupulous wealthy (*jianhao*) to fill in Yizhou.¹⁴ Buwei County, for 13

example, was named after Lü Buwei, whose clan was exiled there.¹⁵ By doing so, the Han court not only got rid of local power elites and extended central penetration in China proper but also resettled Chinese migrants, albeit criminals or other dangerous people, to implant Chinese culture and help stabilize the frontier.

The Han period witnessed over a dozen military expeditions in the Southwest. One campaign recruited at least several thousand soldiers, and at most several hundred thousand. Based on several campaigns that were recorded with the number of troops involved, about four hundred thousand soldiers and laborers were mobilized.¹⁶ While many of them were killed or returned home, some were captured or escaped into local societies. Hence, the number of military refugees and of captives cannot be taken lightly. 14

The Nanzhao period witnessed military colonists resettled by the Tang court in the Southwest.¹⁷ Five hundred soldiers each year after 664 were recruited to garrison Yaozhou Military Prefecture.¹⁸ The Yaozhou station existed over eight decades, and the total number of soldiers stationed there in this period reached over 40,000. While many soldiers died in their service either of diseases or of battle, quite a few may have ended their serves in local societies, voluntarily or by force. 15

Wars between Nanzhao and China also brought a lot of people to Yunnan. It was recorded that over 200,000 Chinese soldiers were recruited, and most of them failed to return.¹⁹ The number probably was an exaggeration, but the scale of the military clash was confirmed by its adverse effect on the Tang Empire. Bai Juyi, the famous Tang poet, wrote a poem that spoke of a man who broke his arm in order to be exempted from military duty.²⁰ A Song story told how Guo Zhongxiang was captured and sold many times by native chieftains in Nanzhao, and was finally bought back, thanks to his faithful friend.²¹ Such a record could be true, as in 795, a Tang envoy brought back to Chang'an a couple of Tang generals who had been captured over four decades before.²² 16

Nanzhao also plundered neighboring areas and took many Han Chinese back as slaves. The battle at Chengdu Plain was probably worst of all. In 829, Nanzhao troops occupied Chengdu and took several tens of thousands of residents, including many weavers who greatly increased the textile industry in Nanzhao.²³ About 4,000 captives were released the next year, including artisans and monks.²⁴ It could be imagined that more people were probably kept by native chieftains. Guo Zhongxiang, mentioned above, in fact had been sold by native chiefs many times. Among the captives were some famous people, for example, Yong Tao, a poet who managed to return, and win a Jinshi degree in 834.²⁵ But most well known was probably Zheng Hui, who served as *qingpingguan* (prime minister) in the Nanzhao court, and played a crucial role in the Nanzhao court, as has been discussed in chapter three. 17

Nanzhao's conquests of Annam brought back a lot of Han Chinese as well. *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* states that 150,000 Chinese were either killed or captured in the Annam campaigns.²⁶ This number, again, could be an overestimate. Among the captives was Princess Li Yao from the Tang imperial household. Li's husband served in Annam. Later she was sent back.²⁷ 18

In addition to government-sponsored migrations such as military colonists or prisoners of war, other unorganized migrations took place all the time²⁸ consisting mainly of Han Chinese who were fleeing famine, war, or intolerable state exploitation, or were merchants enticed by exotic goods and remarkable profits. Zhang Jianzhi, a Tang prime minister at the end of the seventh century, mentioned that terrible exploitation drove over 2,000 Han households to Yaozhou.²⁹ 19

Many local native people indeed were descendents of Han Chinese. *Man Shu* mentions that the tribe in northeast Yunnan, called Shangren, were originally Han people (*ben hanren ye*).³⁰ *Tong Dian* mentions that local peoples either included many Han Chinese (*huaren*)³¹ or regarded themselves as descendants of the Han (*ziyun qixian ben hanren*).³² In 1074, when Yang Zuo volunteered to travel into Yunnan to purchase horses, he met an old woman who stated that she had moved from Sichuan over two decades before, fleeing famine. 20

In conclusion, numerous Han Chinese moved to Yunnan before the thirteenth century, either voluntarily or by force. While they contributed to the development of local societies, in most cases, they were also absorbed into native societies. The wave of assimilating Chinese immigrants was only reversed by the large scale of Han migrations sponsored by states of the Ming and Qing empires. 21

Han Chinese Migrations and Population in Yunnan during the Ming Period

The Mongol conquest in the mid-thirteenth century not only brought Han Chinese to Yunnan but also Muslims, who comprised the major demographic mark left by the Mongol rule. Unfortunately, there are no Mongol sources that provide the numbers, but the Ming state provided a few figures for us to sketch out the number of Chinese migrations.³³ 22

Military colonists of the Ming state in Yunnan were of a large number. The Wei-Suo system, or military garrisons protecting key cities, towns, and passes, distinguished itself by making garrisons permanent homes for soldiers. Soldiers and their wives and children were ordered to stay on their colonial farms permanently, and they were registered as hereditary military households. The number of military households in Yunnan was extremely large, because this frontier was vast in territory and diverse in topography. The first military colonization took place just after the Ming conquest. Nearly 90,000 soldiers were stationed in the nine *wei*.³⁴ However, this force was still unable to stabilize Yunnan. In the Hongwu reign (1368–1398), Zhengtong reign (1436–1449), and at the end of the sixteenth century, the Ming launched several campaigns to pacify uprisings, and more soldiers were dispatched. All these campaigns left 23

about 280,000 soldiers in Yunnan.³⁵ This figure, nonetheless, only constituted about one-third of military immigrants, in that each soldier brought his wife and children to the garrison (it is fair to estimate that each soldier was the head of a three-person family). A rough estimate of the first generation of Ming military households in Yunnan would be over 800,000.

Other immigrants included exiles, peasants, merchants, and refugees, which may have included scholar-officials, military officials, soldiers, and criminals. Some of them arrived in Yunnan with their families. Xu Xiake, a famous traveler at the end of the Ming period, was well received by many local scholars and members of the gentry, who were descendants of Chinese scholar-officials. The Ming state also encouraged peasant immigration. Some sources state that the Ming moved peasants and the rich from populous Jiangnan to Yunnan.³⁶ Frontier trade attracted Chinese merchants from Jiangnan, too, as revealed by the large number of *huiguan* (association halls for people of the same profession, business, birth place, surname, and other affiliations) in Yunnan. Finally, some Han Chinese migrated because of natural or man-made disasters. A major migration took place at the end of the Ming when the Ming loyalists followed Emperor Yongli to Yunnan and Burma. However, these forms of Han immigration did not leave enough information for us to make a rough estimate of their figures. 24

All these forms of migration indeed made up what James Lee calls the "first immigration to the Southwest." Lee has estimated that military colonization may have brought over a million settlers, which made it one of the largest and most sustained government migrations in Chinese history.³⁷ Lu Ren has estimated that by the early sixteenth century Chinese migrants and their descendants would have reached about 3 million.³⁸ It is hard to compare Han population with that of the natives, but James Lee has cautiously concluded that the population of Yunnan during the early sixteenth century was over 2 million³⁹ and that Han population probably would have reached about one-third of that in the Southwest.⁴⁰ Although native people still by far outnumbered Han Chinese, the latter was probably the largest ethnic group in Yunnan.⁴¹ 25

There is a big gap between James Lee's 1 million and Lu Ren's 3 million, but the former can be regarded as the lower end of the range and the latter as the upper. Over 1 million Han Chinese, though scattered throughout the large frontier area, initiated tremendous transformations. First of all, Chinese immigrants enhanced political ties between the Southwest and China, and they also created "a deep and long-lasting cleavage in southwestern society" by introducing Chinese culture.⁴² Before the thirteenth century, almost all Han Chinese immigrants were absorbed into the indigenous population. From the Ming period onwards, this trend was reversed. Chinese immigrants began to exert an unprecedented influence on local societies in a process of sinicization. In this sense, the large number of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in the Ming period embarked on a new era in Yunnan history. 26

Sinicization of the Indigenous Population

Sinicization had occurred in Yunnan since early times. Chinese conquest and loose rule of Yunnan, which occurred before the Mongols arrived, imposed Chinese institutions, introduced the Han agrarian economy, and spread Confucian ethics. Wen Qi, for example, completed many irrigation projects, reclaimed land, and cultivated rice paddies when he took the office of Yizhou prefecture in the early first century, which was welcomed by the local people.⁴³ Indigenous peoples borrowed many Chinese cultural elements that they thought were useful. As a result, many Chinese cultural factors can be found in Yunnan before the Mongols, and are often cited by scholars of China to exaggerate China's influence. This section will highlight the expansion of Han agricultural institutions, Confucian education projects, and the transition of social customs to exemplify the process of sinicization in the Ming period. 27

The Expansion of the Han Regime in Urban and Rural Yunnan

Before the inflow of a large number of Han immigrants, indigenous peoples had practiced agriculture for centuries, and they had developed their own ways that were in tune with local topography and climate. Most of the population lived in compact communities in *bazi*. During the Nanzhao period, they were already using oxen-drawn ploughs, and they were already planting rice (*dao*), wheat (*mai*), beans (*dou*), and millet (*su*).⁴⁴ In the largest *bazi*, such as the Erhai and Dian Lake areas, agricultural production was relatively advanced. Both Fan Chuo and Li Jing compared the Dali area with Jiangnan.⁴⁵ 28

James Lee points out that between 1250 and 1600, population in the Southwest increased from 3 to 5 million, and that this increase resulted from the agricultural expansion sponsored by the Yuan and especially the Ming state.⁴⁶ Military colonization in the Ming period was the key to population settlement and growth. To cite from a Ming source, 29

Military colonies in Yunnan were the most important, because there the Indigenous outnumbered the Han, and mountains outnumbered fields, so that military forces in Yunnan were unable to be fed. . . . Now these guards like stars are stationed throughout departments and counties, and military colonies stand in the plains. The rich harvest, on the one hand, is able to meet the demand of troops; the military companies, on the other hand, are able to defend against bandits.⁴⁷

By the late fifteenth century, the pattern of military presence in Yunnan was fixed. Under the Regional Military Commission of Yunnan were seventeen *wei*, three military-civilian commanders (*junmin zhihuishis*), and six defense battalions (*shouyu qianhusuo*).⁴⁸ Figures of military guards (*wei*), battalions (*qianhusuo*), and military villages (*tun*) that appeared in *Yunnan Zhi*, a provincial gazetteer compiled in 1510, reveal the scale of the military colonies. *Yunnan Zhi* listed over 300 *tuns* in Yunnan, and for most of which he provided names, locations, and in some cases distances to the nearest major city.⁴⁹ In addition, several dozen *tuns* were mentioned not by name but by general location, for example, *tuns* in Beishengzhou and Lancangwei. There were even some areas where military colonies were supposed to exist but 30

had no records, for example, in Xinhua Zhou and Jinchi. Each *tun* was indeed a military farm, providing provisions for the troops. Military granaries (*tuncang*) served as complementary evidence to highlight the achievements of military farms. *Yunnan Tongzhi* (Comprehensive record of Yunnan), compiled in the 1570s, listed about 165 military granaries by name.⁵⁰

Although the *wei*, battalion (*qianhusuo*), and company (*baihusuo*) were the basic units of the military system, even smaller units were created to meet the demands of defense and geographical conditions. General banners (*zongqi*) that consisted of fifty soldiers as well as small banners (*xiaoqi*) that consisted of ten soldiers were put in some places. 31

Military colonization first changed the urban population pattern when the Wei-Suo system accompanied and defended the administrative hierarchy. In each major city or town troops were stationed and lands were occupied or cultivated to support them. In some cases, walled cities were strengthened or rebuilt. In other cases, where there originally were no walled cities, new ones were built. In total, the Ming state built nearly seventy cities of department/county level.⁵¹ Consequently, many Han immigrants lived either in or around cities. Kunming, the major city in Yunnan, once saw six *wei* inside the city.⁵² During that time, the Han population in Kunming may have reached 100,000.⁵³ Dali, Qujing, Chuxiong, Jingdong, Yongchang, Lin'an, Heqing, Menghua, and Yaoan all saw the *wei* and the prefect in the same city. The Han population in those cities varied from several thousands to tens of thousands. Wei was also set up in the department or county seats, for example, in Beisheng (Yongsheng), Binchuan, Yongping, Yiliang, Anning, Malong, Luoxiong, Ningyuan, and Dayao. Troops were stationed in large numbers in towns or frontier key posts to aid in military defense, for example, in Tengchong, a frontier walled city in western Yunnan. As a result, the military and administrative presence in cities and towns facilitated urbanization, and began the pattern of urban demography in Yunnan. Consequently, the Han population began to dominate urban Yunnan. 32

After 1386, when major campaigns were over, Ming troops devoted much energy to agricultural colonies. About 70 percent of the soldiers in each unit were expected to be farming while the remaining 30 percent performed duties of a military nature.⁵⁴ When arable lands near cities ran out, they began to penetrate areas far from urban areas. As described by a contemporary witness: guards like stars in the sky decorated the prefectures and counties while military villages (*tun*) lined the plains.⁵⁵ 33

Other semimilitary infrastructures contributed to agricultural expansion as well, including the postal network (*yi*). The Yuan Dynasty imposed the *zhanchi* (postal stations) system in Yunnan. There were seventy-eight *zhanchi* in Yunnan, providing horses, carts, boats, housing, and provisions. When the Ming state resumed the postal networks, it also added *bao* in major communication routes, a supplement to the postal service. For example, in 1387 one *bao* for every sixty *li* was established between Yongning and Dali.⁵⁶ While *yi* in the Ming Dynasty replicated the Yuan counterparts, *bao* was a Ming invention. There were thirty-nine *bao* in Yunnan, twenty-seven of which were seated with *yi*, while the rest twelve in the new place.⁵⁷ 34

Each *bao* was a company (*baihusuo*) of soldiers.⁵⁸ Like in the Wei-Suo system, these positions were hereditary and were provided with land.⁵⁹ The number of soldiers in each varied from several dozens up to a couple of hundred. In Anning Bao, for example, about 200 soldiers were assigned, which meant that 200 households lived there. Certainly it was a village of a fairly large scale.⁶⁰ Consequently, land assigned to each *bao* varied, based on the scale of the *bao* and the access to land. Lühe Bao in Chuxiong, for example, held 430 *mu* with 52 soldiers, while Shezi Bao in Guangtong had 480 *mu* with 50 soldiers.⁶¹ Since *bao* was set up on major communication routes, quite naturally some of them developed into market towns as more and more people settled in them.

In addition to *yi* and *bao*, there were *pu* and *shao*, similar posts but on a smaller scale. *Pu* were postal stations set in the branches of communication routes. Based on incomplete statistics, there seem to have been about 300 *pu* in Yunnan, although many of them were apparently stationed in the same place as *yi* or *bao*.⁶² Unlike in China proper where *pu* were staffed by civilians, both civilians and hereditary soldiers were assigned to *pu* in Yunnan, along with land.⁶³ *Shao* was military garrisons designed to protect communications and local security simultaneously. It did not appear until the mid-Ming.⁶⁴ *Yunnan Zhi* records that the

35

... Han and the Yi are living mixed together and bandits appear randomly, so that *shao* were built each ten, twenty, or thirty *li* along each route with soldiers to guard them. The large *shao* contain fifty people, while the small *shao* twenty to thirty people, directed by commanders. Both officials and soldiers brought their families with them.⁶⁵

While a few of them were served by local civilians, most *shao* were military in nature.⁶⁶ *Yunnan Zhi* records about 190 *shao* throughout Yunnan. With land provided by the state, these garrisons became self-sufficient and exempt from taxation. For example, in the Zhengde reign (1506–1521), 11 *shao* in the Mile Department, with 550 soldiers, were given 11,000 *mu* of dry land, an average of 20 *mu* per person.

36

Shao symbolized the furthest reach of Chinese presence, as it was located in remote and mountainous areas where minority peoples were overwhelmingly outnumbered. Some *shao* reached far beyond the Wei-Suo system, entering native chieftain areas where no Han people had been before. According to Xu Xiake, the Weimo Department, where neither military guards nor any Han community had existed, once held at least five *shao* at the end of the Ming, each with fifteen soldiers and fifteen militias.⁶⁹ Being military and cultural frontier posts, *shao* proved to be a force to control native peoples and a base to expand the Han cultural regime. Some *shao* took roots in the new, sometimes, harsh environment, and reproduced Han culture, while in most cases they were incorporated into the native societies.

37

All these military and postal farms became a sort of agricultural pioneering venture, and gradually turned into civilian villages, as the Wei-Suo system became corrupted from the mid-Ming period on. So it is not an exaggeration to conclude that Ming military farms set the

38

foundation of rural Yunnan that yielded tremendous impact in the Qing period and onward. A quick look at the names of villages in Yunnan illuminates the legacy of the Ming military colonization. Many villages and market towns were named after *bao* (fort), *suo* (station), *shao* (post), *ying* (camp, battalion), *zhuang* (military farm), and *tun* (military village). Some villages were even named after military officials' surnames or military households. Xu Xiake, during his Yunnan travels, recorded many villages with such names. County gazetteers compiled in the Qing period contained many records, too.⁷⁰ In Xundian during the Ming period, for example, the ratio of military to civilian villages was 1 to 2.⁷¹ Luliang, the largest *bazi* in Yunnan since the establishment of Luliangwei, was swarmed with military migrants, while the indigenes had been the majority until the early Ming. With the dramatic increase of villages, ethnic patterns were transformed. The gazetteer compiled in the Daoguang reign (1821–1850) listed over 220 villages in Luliang, among which nearly half were named after the above military terms.⁷²

The Ming colonization greatly increased agricultural expansion, as revealed by arable land. By 1605, Yunnan had over 10 million *mu* of cultivated land.⁷³ But what were the sources of farmland? First, the Ming military authority confiscated cultivated lands, either from the Yuan government or officials, or from local owners. When the Ming army conquered Yunnan, the Yuan government properties were confiscated and much land was devoted to the military colonies. When guard posts were set up, lands nearby were confiscated from their owners who were relocated. In some cases, native chieftains presented land to military guards. For example, Atao, a native chieftain in Jingdong, presented his house as a guard post and his land as a military farm when Jingdong Wei was established.⁷⁴ *Jingdongfu Zhi* confirmed this fact, as it pointed out that paddies were originally called *yitian* (barbarian paddies) and *tumi* (native rice).⁷⁵

Expropriation of arable land was a common phenomenon. Most arable land in Yunnan was located in *bazi* that had been inhabited by the indigenous populations. The Bai, Yi, and Tai peoples in the valleys and basins had already practiced agriculture. When their land was confiscated, they either moved out to the hilly or mountainous areas, or were forced to change their vocation. In fact, the Ming colonization initiated a new demographic geographic pattern as Han population began to dominate urban Yunnan and spread to the rural areas. Here emerged a kind of ethnic territory. Urban areas and suburb areas were called Han territory (*hanjie*), while rural and especially hilly and mountainous areas were dominated by indigenous peoples, as was the case in southern Sichuan of the Song period.⁷⁶ When Wu Daxun served in Yunnan between 1772 and 1782, he was astonished to see that "inside cities are all the Han people, while the indigenous live in valleys and wide fields. [The Han people], originally guests of Yunnan, now are masters, making [Yunnan] a happy land."⁷⁷ Wu was remarking on an eighteenth-century picture, which had its origins in the fifteenth century.

The other way to gain arable land was reclamation. The Ming state encouraged soldiers to open up new lands. Mu Ying had reclaimed over 1 million *mu* before his death in 1393.⁷⁸ His son Mu Chun continued to reclaim over 300,000 *mu*.⁷⁹ Although some land might have been taken from local owners, the effect of reclamation was phenomenal. 41

In response to military colonies, peasants strived to reclaim land, although their achievements cannot be measured. But a comparison of land figures between the Yuan and Ming will be helpful to illustrate the scale of the Ming reclamation. The Yuan government made an effort to enlarge agricultural production and to build military colonies in Yunnan. In Zhongqing (Kunming), there were about 22,500 *shuang*, or 112,500 *mu*, in 1290.⁸⁰ In 1510, the state land (*guantian*) and civilian land (*mintian*) in Kunming amounted to over three times that number, amounting to 367,186 *mu*, which did not include military farms and the Mu farms.⁸¹ In the case of Lin'an prefect, it is recorded that during the Yuan Dynasty the Lin'an circuit had arable land of 25,760 *mu*,⁸² but in the Ming the number increased sevenfold.⁸³ These figures suggest that the Ming reclamation was of a large scale. 42

At the end of the fifteenth century, the reclamation effort reached a climax. In 1510, 1,727,912 *mu* were under the control of the Yunnan Civilian Commission; and 1,276,631 *mu* under the Yunnan Regional Military Commission.⁸⁴ In 1575, there were 1,788,450 *mu* under the Civilian Commission, 1,107,880 *mu* under the Military Commission.⁸⁵ At the same time, the Mu farms amounted to nearly 1 million *mu*.⁸⁶ 43

Underlying the expansion of arable land was irrigation projects, since the Han agricultural regime required water control and irrigation. The indigenes had a lot of experience with rivers and lakes. Many irrigation channels had been built before the arrival of the Mongols. Sayyid' Ajall Shams Al-Din launched a large-scale irrigation project at Dian Lake, not only reducing the flooding but also making available over 10,000 *qing* of fertile fields.⁸⁷ Many other relatively small projects were completed in the Yuan period to increase agricultural production. 44

Likewise, the Ming government spent a lot of energy on irrigation projects. In the Dian Lake and Erhai Lake areas, the original irrigation infrastructures were either repaired or improved, while new channels and dams were built to meet the demand of rice production in new fields.⁸⁸ In 1396, Mu Chun mobilized 15,000 soldiers to build the Tangchi Channel in Yiliang, which was 36 *li* long and 12 *chi* wide.⁸⁹ In the Jingtai reign (1450–1456) a large project was launched to make use of Dian Lake.⁹⁰ In the Hongzhi reign (1488–1505) soldiers and laborers worked together to drain Dian Lake, and its level was lowered several *zhang*. As a result, several thousand *qing* of fields were created.⁹¹ All these efforts not only created fertile fields; they also improved the quality of cultivated land where drought and flooding were reduced. 45

Similar irrigation projects were launched in other areas. Many dams, channels, and man-made reservoirs were built, and many rivers, lakes, ponds, and fields were improved. These water systems created many mini-Han agricultural regimes in Yunnan. For example, in the Luliang 46

Bazi originally only desert plants could grow, with low output. As soon as military farms were established, an irrigation system was gradually completed, making Luliang into a storehouse of rice.⁹²

The reclamation of land and the improvement of irrigation greatly increased the number of agricultural products. In the early Ming period Yunnan could not produce enough grain for itself. In 1431, over four decades after military colonization, Yunnan almost reached self-sufficiency, according to Mu Cheng, the regional commander, who reported that grain produced by the Military Commission could support troops for eleven months.⁹³ It was, however, only during the Zhengtong reign (1436–1449) that Yunnan achieved self-sufficiency.⁹⁴ 47

Taxation helped to confirm the achievement of agricultural expansion. In 1393, the grain tax of Yunnan by the Provincial Administration Commission was as follows: wheat (summer tax) 18,730 *shi*, and rice (autumn tax) 58,349 *shi*.⁹⁵ In 1502, both figures were nearly doubled (wheat 33,708 *shi*; rice 106,913 *shi*).⁹⁶ The 1502 tax figures seemed to be maintained in the following years, as those of 1575 suggest (wheat: 36,019 *shi*; rice: 106,990 *shi*),⁹⁷ indicating that agricultural production reached its limit at the time. 48

Confucian Education: Imperial Schools and Degree Holders

While the Chinese agricultural regime dramatically transformed demographic, economic, and ecological patterns, education, another tool for transformation sought to "civilize" the minds, ideas, and social rituals of the indigenes.⁹⁸ Confucianism had already been introduced to Yunnan long before the Ming period. During its reign, the Tang Empire (618-906) had established a school in Chengdu for the royal youth of Nanzhao and later the merchants of the Dali Kingdom who traveled to Yongzhou brought back not only Buddhist sutras but also Confucian texts. It was the Yuan state, however, that launched a comprehensive education project in Yunnan by creating education officials (*tixue*) in each circuit,⁹⁹ establishing schools, building Confucian temples, and advocating Confucian rituals and ethics. Sayyid'AJall Shams Al-Din pioneered the education effort. He pointed out that education was the only way to civilize native "barbarians," and so he donated his salary to build a school in Kunming.¹⁰⁰ Scholars in Sichuan were invited to teach, youth were encouraged to study, and officials led these students to perform Confucian rituals during ceremonies.¹⁰¹ Other circuits followed Kunming, and it was ordered that Confucian schools be established in each circuit.¹⁰² To sustain schools, education farmland (*xuetian*) was also provided. For example, in the beginning eight *shuang* were bought as education field in the Zhongqing Circuit (Kunming); later its number was increased up to 592 *shuang*.¹⁰³ In 1356, when the Yuan rule was fundamentally shaken, Pu Ji, a commissioner to examine governance in Yunnan, paid primary attention to schools and their farmlands.¹⁰⁴ 49

The establishment of schools eventually led to imperial examinations, a key symbol of imperial rule. It was unclear when Yunnan initiated these examinations. In 1313, the Yuan court stated that among the seventy-five Mongol candidates for the imperial examination (*huishi*), one should come from Yunnan; among the seventy-five Semu (non-Han people originating in 50

northern China) candidates, two from Yunnan; among the seventy-five Han candidates (Han people originating in northern China), two from Yunnan; as to the seventy-five southerners (*nanren*, Han people originating in southern China), Yunnan was not mentioned, probably because in the Yuan rulers' eyes, there were no Han people in Yunnan before the Yuan Dynasty.¹⁰⁵ Although the quota given to Yunnan was quite small, it was a milestone in Yunnan's Confucian education course. During the Yuan period, five *jinshi* degree holders were produced in Yunnan.¹⁰⁶

The Ming rulers were concerned with the establishment of schools in Yunnan as much as they were with military colonies. With a series of measures, they pushed education in Yunnan into a new epoch. Education commissions were first established in the administrative hierarchy to promote schooling; then a systematic school infrastructure was created in most areas of Yunnan; and finally, students and scholars as a social group emerged, a product of the above efforts. No sooner had the Ming authority come to Yunnan than state schools (*guanxue*) were resumed or established. State schools in Yunnan consisted of two kinds, one under the regular administrative units, namely, prefecture (*fu*), department (*zhou*), and county (*xian*) for the imperial subjects, and the other under the Wei-Suo system, called *guard school* (*weixue*), exclusively for military households.

51

The Ming state assigned education commissioners (*jiaoshou*) and instructors (*xundao*) in the prefectures, departments, and counties. They were based in Confucian temples (*wenmiao* or *xuegong*); they were in charge of state schools and students and promoted local education. As for the Wei-Suo unit, the situation varied. If it shared the same seat city as the prefecture or department, no guard school was thought necessary, but if the Wei unit had its own seat city, a guard school was built and assigned one commissioner (*jiaoshou*) and two instructors (*xundao*).¹⁰⁷ The hierarchy of education posts was accompanied by a quota of students in state schools. Each prefecture school allowed forty students each year; each department school, thirty; and each county school, twenty. School fields were provided to pay teachers and support students financially. As for guard schools, the quota varied from forty to eighty, according to the rank of the host guard unit.

52

By the end of the fourteenth century, state schools ruined during the Yuan-Ming transition had been restored, and new ones began to spread to other areas under regular administrative rule. During the Jingtai reign (1450–1456), nine prefectural schools (in Yunnan, Qujing, Lin'an, Chuxiong, Yaoan, Dali, Menghua, Heqing, Chengjiang, and Jinchi), eleven county schools (in Jianshui, Ningzhou, Zhennan, Nan'an, Beisheng, Zhaozhou, Jianchuan, Chuxiong, Taihe, Yunnan County, and Liangqiong), and one guard school (in Jingdong) appeared.¹⁰⁸ Schools were also established in the native chieftain territory. During the 1410s, several reports proposing that schools be built for indigenous peoples in Wuding, Xundian, Guangxi, Lin'an, Heqing, and Lijiang were approved,¹⁰⁹ leaving only about twenty native prefectures and departments without schools.¹¹⁰ State schools were required to select outstanding students to study at the Imperial University (*guozijian*). These students were called *jiansheng*. From 1389

53

to 1416, it is recorded in *Ming Shi Lu* that almost every year emperors distributed gifts to Yunnan *jiansheng*, and these sources also showed the increasing number of Yunnan *jiansheng* at the Imperial University.¹¹¹

State schools had their quotas, and could not meet the increasing student figure. The Ming state realized the limit of government resources, and encouraged local resources to be used in education. Supplemental community schools (*shexue*) appeared like mushrooms after rainy days. Community schools were usually built in towns below county level to prepare students for higher study in state schools. They did not begin until the Chenghua reign (1465–1487), after almost one century of Ming rule. They emerged first in urban areas where Han people were relatively populous and where the economy was relatively developed. In Kunming County, there were thirty-one community schools, which meant that education penetrated the very basic unit of local society; Heqing prefecture had thirty-five, and Yaoan prefecture had twenty-eight community schools.¹¹² These three cases were certainly exceptional, since Yunnan had about 165 community schools in total.¹¹³ Obviously, community schools rarely existed in the native chieftain territories. 54

To make students more competitive in imperial examinations, private academies (*shuyuan*) sponsored by the state were built and prospered in Yunnan and elsewhere.¹¹⁴ *Shuyuan* appeared at the end of fifteenth century, a bit later than community schools. By the early sixteenth century, Yunnan had fifty-six *shuyuan*.¹¹⁵ 55

Native chieftains were encouraged to send their children to school. In the beginning of the Ming their children were encouraged (in part because there were no quotas) to go to Imperial University. In the Hongwu reign (1368–1398), many native chieftains did send their children to school.¹¹⁶ Later, many schools were created in the native chieftain territories: Xie Zhaozhe in the early seventeenth century noticed that occasionally there were some "barbarian" students in schools.¹¹⁷ 56

Throughout the Ming period, education institutes in Yunnan numbered about 300. During the Tianqi reign (1621–1627), more than 12,000 students were already studying in schools.¹¹⁸ As a result, Confucian students and scholars as a social group emerged. One key sign was the increasing number of *jinshi* in Yunnan. 57

Yunnan did not launch its own provincial examination (*xiangshi*) until 1411, which was a symbol of the relative underdevelopment of Confucian education. Before 1411, Yunnanese students had to go to Nanjing for their exams. In 1389, when Yunnan was first given a quota of two to attend the imperial exam, nobody was selected.¹¹⁹ The breakthrough came with the 1393 examination when Li Zhong and Yang Song, two Kunming residents, passed the Nanjing *xiangshi*, becoming *juren* (graduates). Li Zhong then passed the metropolitan examination, becoming the first *jinshi* from Yunnan during the Ming period. With the progress of education, from 1411 onward Yunnan was permitted to hold its own provincial examination, with a quota of 58

ten for the metropolitan exam. Twenty-eight scholars passed, and two of them later won the *jinshi* degree. However, the quota was too small for the quickly expanding student group. The state had to increase the quota again and again, from fifteen in 1429, to twenty-five in 1453, to thirty in 1473, to forty in 1535, to forty-five in 1573, and finally leveling off at forty-seven.¹²⁰ Still, this number hardly met the need. In 1621, Fan Liangshu, vice education commissioner (*tixue fushi*), proposed that the quota be increased to fifty.¹²¹ During the Ming Dynasty, Yunnan produced over 2,000 *juren* and 236 *jinshi*.

Such a remarkable achievement could not have been made without the many Confucian scholars who immigrated to Yunnan from China proper. Although the Yuan Dynasty launched successful education projects, Yunnan had a huge shortage of well-trained scholars to teach students. During the Ming period, many scholar-officials came to Yunnan; some came for their imperial posts, while many other were exiles. Their presence contributed a great deal to the spread of Confucian knowledge and ethics. Officials spent a lot of resources in creating schools, instructing students, and encouraging study. The exiles quite often served as professors, teaching either in state schools or private academies. Their literary works as well as their oral teachings, seminars, and cultural activities, created and improved the academic atmosphere and inspired local students.

59

The most well known official-scholar exile was Yang Shen, a Sichuanese master of Confucianism, *zhuangyuan* (judged to be number 1 in the court exam) of 1508, and a most productive writer. He spent his last twenty-three years in Yunnan. He traveled throughout Yunnan, delivering lectures, teaching, writing, and making friends with local scholars. Seven scholars were called the Yang's seven disciples (*yangmen qizi*), including Li Yuanyang, the well-known Bai scholar and *jinshi*. Yang's influence on Yunnan was long lasting, not only because he was regarded as the most knowledgeable and productive scholar in the Ming Dynasty but also because he was regarded as part of Yunnan, as most gazetteers suggest.¹²²

60

Impact of Confucianism on the Indigenes

The education projects not only affected the immigrants but also greatly transformed the indigenes. The Yuan Dynasty began to advocate changing native customs. The introduction and intensification of Han agricultural production and Confucian education marked the beginning of many significant changes in Yunnan society. Confucian ideas, dress, rituals, ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, and festivals were sponsored by the imperial state and gradually took root. For instance, Sayyid'Ajall Shams Al-Din taught indigenous peoples to perform the Confucian rituals of kneeling (*kowtow*), match-making for marriage, marriage ceremonies, funerals, and ancestral worship. He also presented native chieftains with clothes, hats, socks, and shoes to replace their "barbarian" dress.¹²³ As a result of state efforts, not only the Mongols, Muslims, and Han people but also indigenous people went to school.¹²⁴ Native elites started to send their children to school, pursuing political interests for the family. The Wang family seemed to be such a case.

61

Wang Hui was born in a Bo (Bai) elite family. His ancestor surrendered to the Yuan and was awarded with an official post. Wang Hui himself served in many posts in Yunnan. Before his death, he instructed his sons and grandsons to observe loyalty and piety (*zhong xiao*), and ordered that his funeral conform to "ancient ceremony, instead of the Bo custom" (*sangli yi ze gu, wu cong bosu*), revealing that Wang had accepted Confucianism.¹²⁵ One of his sons, Wang Sheng, studied *jing* (classics), *shi* (poetry), and *wen* (literature) with different teachers, and was selected as a Confucian instructor (*ruxue jiaoshou*) to guide students. His most important achievement was in the field of education, as his epitaph reveals.¹²⁶ The Wangs demonstrated the impact of Confucianism on native elites, especially the Bo people who had the most contacts with Han culture. As a result, in the Yuan period people in Yunnan "studied rituals, and customs were changed little by little" (*ren xi lirang, fengsu shaobian*).¹²⁷

62

Demographic, economic, and educational changes continued into the Ming Dynasty and naturally led to observable transitions of social customs in native societies. In the mid-fourteenth century, it was quite common to see Han immigrants and the indigenes, particularly the Bai, living together. *Yunnan Tujingzhishu*, the earliest provincial gazetteer compiled in 1455, noticed that in urban and suburban areas, Han and Bo usually mixed (*han-bo zachu*), or the "barbarians" and Han mixed (*yi-han zachu*). For example, about Qujing prefecture, it stated, "The barbarians and Han people mingled in this prefecture. Housed near the seats of prefecture, guard, department, and county mainly were Han and Bo people" (*Junzhong yi yi han zachu, lie wu yu fu, wei, zhou, xian zhi jinzhe, dadi duo han bo*).¹²⁸ Such a description vividly illustrates the situation of the mid-Ming when Han people settled down in urban Yunnan and fertile *bazi* and competed for advantageous living spaces with the indigenous population. In the Hongzhi reign (1488–1505), Yang Nanjin, a Bai scholar, wrote a poem about the loss of land by the Bo people to the Han military officials and merchants.¹²⁹ As a result of this shift, a dramatic demographic change occurred in urban Yunnan by the second half of the sixteenth century. *Yunnan Tongzhi* compiled in the 1570s records that, in Yunnan prefecture (Kunming), "The native people are the minority; officials and soldiers are mainly from areas east and south of the Yangzi River."¹³⁰

63

By the early sixteenth century, native customs had been largely transformed, as revealed by *Yunnan Zhi*, which indicates that "of the Han-Bo people in [Dali] prefecture, a relatively small number has careers in artisan and business while more people are scholars; they enjoy Confucian classics, respect teachers and friends; many more candidates [from this prefecture] than in any other prefecture passed exams."¹³¹ This paragraph explains how Confucianism affected the Bo (Bai) people. They now studied Confucian classics, followed Confucian ethics, and took an active part in imperial civil examinations. Indeed, many native families, especially elites, sent their children to school, encouraging them to pass their exams with an eye on the government positions that the state promised them. They began to see education as an

64

investment in their children's future. For example, in Ejia county (Chuxiong Prefecture) in 1551, Yang Jiangyong, the magistrate, rebuilt schools and hired scholars to teach "barbarian youth" (*yifang zidi*).¹³²

Changes of social custom also took place in remote areas. In Qujing, although "the mountains, rivers, and the barbarians were vast, the scholarly atmosphere began to prosper" (*shanchuan yi guang shifeng jiansheng*), and candidates taking civil exams could be compared with inland prefectures.¹³³ In Chuxiong, where the Yi dominated, the "lands are fertile and scholars were devoted to study" (*turang feirao, shiren wuxue*).¹³⁴ In the Yaoan Prefecture, since the establishment of schools, "the customs have been gradually transformed. Scholars focus on literature, and the number of degree holders is rising" (*qixi jianqian, shiren wuwen, kedi riqi*).¹³⁵ *Dian Zhi*, the last Ming gazetteer, compiled in 1632, recorded the changes of the Bai people: "The Bai people lived throughout most of western prefectures; their customs were not far from those of the Han people, and their elite members can read" (*Bairen, yixi zhujun qiangban youzhi; xisu yu huaren bu shenyuan, shangzhe neng dushu*). Because they mingled with Han Chinese, many ethnic peoples became bilingual. They spoke their own language among themselves, and they spoke Chinese to the Han people. The Bai people certainly were the most sinicized ethnic group in Yunnan. Several reasons account for this fact. First, historically, the Bai had the most frequent contacts with Han people, and adapted many Han cultural elements; second, the Bai people were the most urbanized people in Yunnan. They either lived in cities and towns or fertile *bazi*. Hence, they had daily contact with the Han immigrants, and had more access to Chinese educational institutes. Francis L. K. Hsu on a field trip noticed that the Bai people observed Han customs with local variations.

65

Other ethnic peoples were also influenced by Chinese culture. *Dian Zhi* recorded that the White Luoluo (*bai luoluo*) in Chengjiang gradually became accustomed to civilization (*jianxi wanghua*) and were similar to common imperial subjects (*tongyu bianmang*).¹³⁹ The native Luoluo and the Woni people in southern Lin'an originally did not have names, or, they followed the patronymic system (*fuzilianmingzhi*). In the Hongzhi reign (1488–1505), Cheng Cheng, the new prefect, gave them family names after *Baijixing* (A hundred surnames), a book of Chinese last names.¹⁴⁰

66

Compared with the common people, native elites seemed to borrow more Han cultural practices and hence were more "civilized," partially due to the fact that the Ming court required native chieftains to send their children to school. One could assume that these Confucian-educated elites would enjoy some exotic Chinese cultural practices. The most well-known were the Mus in Lijiang. As the chieftain of the Moxie people on the Tibet-Yunnan-Sichuan border, the Mus surrendered first to the Mongols, and then to the Ming. Zhu Yuanzhang awarded them a family name of Mu. Although there were no Confucian schools in Lijiang native prefecture, the Mus seemed to be well educated according to the Confucian way. Several Mu chieftains were famous because of their Chinese cultural achievements. For instance, they were able to write fine Chinese poetry and essays, a few of them even produced their own collections of works,

67

and a family library was built. Mu Gong produced *Xueshan Shiyuan* (Selected poems of Snow Mountain); Mu Zeng not only had his own works but also exchanged works with major contemporary scholars such as Li Yuanyang;¹⁴¹ Mu Zeng invited Xu Xiake, the famous traveler, to instruct his son.¹⁴² Hence, *Ming Shi* (History of the Ming Dynasty) commented that the Mus had been the best among native chieftains in Yunnan to perform Confucian culture.¹⁴³ The Mus exemplified other native elites who "over three hundred years, had gradually taken Chinese customs; especially those native chieftains who lived in cities seemed no different from Han Chinese" (*sanbai nian lai, jianran huafeng, Tusi zhi ju chengguo zhe, yu Hanren wuyi*).¹⁴⁴ Native chieftains in Yaoan and Menghua, for instance, like the Mus, tended to show off their achievements by producing Chinese poetry and other literary writings.¹⁴⁵

Essential Confucian ideology such as loyalty (*zhong*), filial piety (*xiao*), and chastity (*jie*) were accepted by some native elites. The case of the Gaos, native chieftains in Yaozhou, is quite revealing. Gao Dong was killed in the suppression of a rebellion in 1503, and Gao Hu died in an attempt to save Xu Yue, the civilian commissioner, in the rebellion of 1541.¹⁴⁶ The A clan in Dengchuan was comparable to the Gaos. A Yu, the native prefect (*zhizhou*), helped to put down the Yue Feng rebellion and contain the Burmese invasion.¹⁴⁷ A Tianqi died in the fight against rebels in his post in Guizhou in the Wanli reign (1573–1619).¹⁴⁸ Na Song, the native prefect of Yuanjiang, for example, refused to surrender to Wu Sangui, the commander of the Qing forces, and burned himself in resistance.¹⁴⁹ The idea of loyalty seems to have been accepted by this native chieftain, as he satirized Wu Sangui's betrayal of the Ming court by referring to Wu's Ming post, general commander of Shanghai Pass. The loyalty of native women (usually elites) was also recorded in *Dian Zhi*. For instance, A'nang, the grandmother of Tao Zang, the native prefect of Jingdong, instructed Tao Zang to suppress the Luchuan invasion.¹⁵⁰ And Madame Luo, the wife of Mu Qing, native prefect of Lijiang, led a campaign and drove the enemy away from the border when Mu Qing was ill in bed.¹⁵¹ Native women (wives or mothers of native chieftains) were similarly loyal in Tengyue during the Ming period.¹⁵²

68

Filial piety was also practiced in the indigenous society. Gao Zitongci, a Yaozhou native chieftain, was commended by the imperial court in the Chenghua reign (1465–1487) for his filial piety.¹⁵³ A Chaofan, A Tianqi's father, was well known for honorable behavior toward his stepmother and for his charitable activities in the community as well.¹⁵⁴ So were the Mus in Lijiang.¹⁵⁵

69

The chastity of native women also emerged during the Ming.¹⁵⁶ They refused to remarry, even under great pressure from their parents, after the deaths of their husbands, and occasionally committed suicide to avoid remarriage. In some cases, they raised children alone.¹⁵⁷ Sometimes a chaste woman helped to change local ethnic customs, as demonstrated by an Achang widow. The native customs of the Achang people declared that a new widow be made wife of her husband's son or brother. However, Zaozheng's wife, who was a daughter of the native head, refused to follow the tradition and committed suicide by starving herself; her self-

70

sacrifice ended this remarriage practice.¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that these were not isolated cases, rather, that they represented a new trend. That is why in his collection of poems on Yunnan, Zhang Lucheng, an eighteenth-century scholar, titled a chapter *bian yifeng* (changing barbarian customs) on chaste native women.¹⁵⁹

In addition to Confucian culture, Chinese customs such as festivals became practiced. *Dian Lue* recorded that festivals in Yunnan were celebrated in a similar way to those in China proper. Important festivals included New Year's Day, the Lantern Festival, the Qingming Festival, the Duanwu Festival, the Moon Festival, and New Year's Eve.¹⁶⁰ In some places, because of the large number of immigrants, Chinese practices dominated. For example, Yongchang, the frontier city, saw a large number of Han soldiers and immigrants during the Ming period, and most of them were from Jiangnan. These immigrants brought their Nanjing customs, and in the Qing time Yongchang won the nickname "Little Nanjing" (*xiao nanjing*).¹⁶¹ In fact, the Bai people in the Dali area invented a legend that their ancestors were from central provinces, and that most of these were from Nanjing.¹⁶²

71

When Western explorers arrived in Yunnan in the end of the nineteenth century, they were surprised to find that many ethnic peoples were heavily influenced by Chinese culture. For example, Major Davies, who traveled through Yunnan at the turn of the nineteenth century, described the process of sinicization:

72

As the influence and civilization of the Chinese have spread, the neighboring tribes have found it convenient to learn to speak the Chinese language, and to adopt to some extent Chinese customs. A time eventually comes when some of them began to despise their own language, customs, and dress, and to take a pride in adopting Chinese ways. When this idea once got hold of them, the time is not far distant when they will call themselves Chinamen. A race of Chinese thus grows who have really no Chinese blood in them.

This process can still be seen going on in Western China. One comes across tribes in all states of transformation. . . . The great majority . . . of the men of the tribes of Western China have so far come under the influence of the Chinese as to adopt their dress. With the women the case is different and the women's dress usually forms the distinctive mark by which tribes can be told apart.

After the adoption of Chinese dress by the men, their next step is the learning of the Chinese language. After a few more generations perhaps even the women will learn to speak Chinese. This stage once reached, it does not take long for the tribe to become thoroughly Chinese in their ways, and when the women take to Chinese dress and to binding their feet, the transformation is complete . . .

I have watched this process going on with Lo-Los, Shans, Las . . . and no doubt it has taken place with nearly every tribes of Western China . . .

This process of absorbing of other races by the Chinese had undoubtedly been going on all over China ever since the Chinese entered the country.¹⁶³

In conclusion, by the early seventeenth century Chinese culture had penetrated urban Yunnan and the most fertile lands in Yunnan, namely, the *bazi* areas. The most sinicized ethnic group was the Bai, and the most sinicized class was the native elites. On the other hand, native culture also affected Han immigrants, especially in the hilly areas where the native people dominated and where the Han population was scattered. Immigrants indeed took on many native practices, and in many cases, native societies absorbed isolated Han communities, a process I call "indigenization." 73

Forces of Indigenization

Paradigms of Sinicization and Barbarization

In the field of Chinese frontier studies, the giant influence of Chinese culture on the frontier "barbarians" has been overwhelmingly admired. Such a perspective ignores the fact that any interaction is essentially two-sided. While Chinese culture transformed frontier societies, indigenous cultures had a similar impact on Chinese people, therefore adding, transforming, and altering Chinese culture and Chinese identity, especially when frontier ethnic groups were incorporated into the Chinese empire. Such a process has been examined by Yu Yingshi in his study of trade and expansion in the Han Dynasty.¹⁶⁴ 74

Yu Yingshi has described the two aspects of the interaction between the Han Empire and frontier "barbarians": sinicization and barbarization. With the expansion of the Han Empire into the north, west, and south, various "barbarians" were put under Chinese political, economical, and cultural influence, which began a process of sinicization, albeit with pains and difficulties. On the other hand, the "barbarian" ways of life also transformed the Chinese, a process Yu calls "barbarization."¹⁶⁵ Chinese elites, including emperors, liked exotic things. Emperor Ling favored "barbarian" music, clothes, curtains, beds, chairs, and dances.¹⁶⁶ And it was during the Han period that Buddhism, a "barbarian" religion, was adopted by the Chinese, first by nobilities and then by the masses. 75

If borrowing some "barbarian" cultural elements in social life was not rare and so should not be surprising, the extent of the political, ethnic, and cultural shift of loyalty by some Chinese people underlines the scale and depth of barbarization. Many Han Chinese lived on frontier areas, and quite often served "barbarian" lords. Even some Han subjects in China proper ran to serve the Xiongnu. Prince Han and Prince Yan in the early Western Han period both surrendered to the Xiongnu.¹⁶⁷ A strong case was Zhonghan Yue, who betrayed the Han emperor and submitted to the Shanyu of Xiongnu. In his famous statement he declared that the Xiongnu culture was not lower than that of the Chinese, and he even justified so-called "barbarian" customs by analyzing reasons behind these practices.¹⁶⁸ 76

Yu Yingshi's study of the Han period indeed raises a crucial question for the definition of Chinese: what was the role of frontier ethnic groups in forming, developing, and transforming Chinese culture and Chinese identity/Chineseness? Barbarization took place in the Han period, 77

and certainly did not stop as Chinese empires continued to expand, extract, and expand again. Recently, in her study of the Ming migration to Yunnan, Lu Ren began an interrogation of the term *yunnanren*, and used the term *tuzhuhua* to conceptualize the settlement of immigrants.¹⁶⁹ The word *tuzhuhua* literally means "indigenization" or "indigenizing." Unfortunately, she simply explains it as "[Han migrants] attached to lands" (*fuzheyutu*), which underplays dimensions of cultural interaction that could yield rich information about the dynamics and vigor of indigenous culture and its impact on Han population.¹⁷⁰ After all, the indigenous population in Yunnan at the end of the Ming Dynasty still exceeded that of Han Chinese, and native chieftains still ruled a large part of Yunnan. Therefore, it is too simple to discuss the formation of local identity without scrutinizing the impact of the indigenes.¹⁷¹ Fang Guoyu, the eminent scholar of Yunnan, noticed indigenization, but failed to explore the phenomenon and bring more attention to it.¹⁷²

Here I will extend Yu's model of sinicization and barbarization to account for the fluid, flexible, and dynamic features of Chinese identity, only replacing the term *barbarization* with *indigenization*. I argue that in the long run sinicization and indigenization are two aspects of one process and that they added new dimensions to and thus transformed Chinese identity. In this section, I will illustrate how indigenous peoples indigenized the Han population, and as a result a complex new society began to emerge in Yunnan during the late Ming period.

78

Indigenization before the Thirteenth Century

Generally speaking, all Chinese migrants before the Yuan Dynasty were absorbed into the indigenous society. Zhuang Qiao had to adopt native customs to rule. His soldiers lived within local society and married indigenous women, therefore diminishing the Chu identity of their descendants. The Han period saw the first wave of Chinese immigration to the Southwest, in which almost all were absorbed by the giant population of native peoples. It was the increasingly frequent military, political, economical interactions in the Han period that created many local chieftains and clans, the so-called *yishuai* and *daxing*. *Yishuai*, or native chieftains, were those who increased their power through their contact with Chinese authority, and *daxing* were mostly powerful immigrants who took advantage of Han authority to increase their voice in local affairs. Indeed, they were descendents of Han officials or elites but had become accustomed to local society. The case of *daxing* strongly revealed the power of native culture that forced Chinese migrants to take native ways in order to survive and to accumulate influence. Considering the vast majority of the indigenous population at the time, no wonder indigenization overcame sinicization.

79

Indigenization continued to dominate in the Nanzhao period. *Tong Dian* recorded that some people near the Dali region claimed to be descendants of Han Chinese though their Chinese was rusty because of indigenization.¹⁷³ *Man Shu* made a similar statement by claiming that some local people originally were Han people. In addition, some Han people had begun to

80

