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## Accommodation and Conflict: The Incorporation of Miao Territory and Construction of Cultural Difference during the High Qing Era<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract** Past studies of southwest Guizhou during the Qing dynasty tend to focus on the policy of “abolishment of the native chieftainships and extension of direct bureaucratic control” (*gaitu guiliu*) pursued under the Yongzheng emperor, and also to emphasize the correlation between state expansion and Miao revolts as a political process of institution building. Based on personal memoirs and ethnographic accounts of the Qing dynasty, this study focuses on the Qing incorporation of Miao territory (*Miaojiang*) in southeast Guizhou, where there were not even native chieftainships but only unorganized, or “raw,” Miao indigenes; it also examines the incorporation as an interactive process of cultural understanding and construction among the Yongzheng emperor, Governor-General Ortai, a group of local officials, represented by Zhang Guangsi and Fang Xian, and local Miao people, who had already interacted with Han migrants and started to seek the protection of the central government. The paper calls attention to the contribution of lower level Qing officials made in the decision-making process, the formation of knowledge by the Chinese about the long-ignored Miao territory, and the significance of mutual understanding of cultures. It argues that the tragic confrontation between the Miao people and the Qing state building was not necessarily inevitable, but contingent on the officials’

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<sup>1</sup> For the definition of the High Qing era (1683–1839) as a “prosperous age” of the Qing dynasty, see Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century*, 20. I want to thank Professor Shu-Hui Wu for providing research articles upon learning of my research on this topic. Professor Jennifer Rudolph commented on the draft of this paper and provided insightful suggestions. Professor Pamela Crossley’s remarks on the paper when it was presented to the annual meeting of the American Historical Association were extremely helpful in my thinking about concepts such as “ethnic culture.” I am also very grateful of the anonymous reviewers of the *FHC*, whose meticulous reading and critiques helped me rethink my main argument and substantiate it. This research was supported by the Academic Support Fund and the Helmreich fund of Allegheny College.

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perception of the minority people's culture and the handling of the relationship between the state and local indigenes.

**Keywords:** Yongzheng, Ortai, Fang Xian, Zhang Guangsi, Miao, Guizhou

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## Introduction

In September of 1726, Ortai, governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou, submitted several memorials to the Yongzheng emperor, calling for *gaitu guiliu*—the “abolishment of the native chieftainships and extension of direct bureaucratic control” in Southwest China.<sup>2</sup> The implementation and completion of the campaign was a long process of cultural negotiation, political maneuvers, and military actions, and it eventually expanded the administration of Qing rule and reinforced its centralization. Previous studies of Qing-frontier relations have undergone a transition from imperial policy, state-frontier relationship, eventually to a more bottom-up approach in order to examine local chieftainship. More recent research has paid attention to the interaction between Han migrants and non-Han communities, and their relationship with the Qing governments, and challenged the conventional “Sinicization paradigm.”<sup>3</sup> Examining the practices of governance of the Qing state in the Miao frontier as a process of interaction, this article distinguishes the incorporation of the Miao frontiers from the *gaitu guiliu* campaign, and sees it not as a top-down implementation of the imperial policy but as a two-way process of influence from the prefectural level officials to governors and the emperor, and from the emperor down to the lower levels.<sup>4</sup> Some local officials played a key role in their accommodation policies as well as building up a less culturally chauvinistic ethnographic knowledge of the ethnic minorities; thus they increased Qing understanding of the cultural difference between the Miao and the Han. They also effectively influenced the Yongzheng emperor to adopt a moderate policy in handling the Miao frontiers.

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<sup>2</sup> Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng zhuan*, 330–34.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of local chieftainships and how Qing government changed its policies, see John E. Herman, “Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing Reforms to the Native Chieftain System,” 47–74. For a survey of the state of the field and a new focus on the Han migrants in non-Han southwest regions, see Pat Giersch, “‘A Motley Throng’: Social Change on Southwest China’s Early Modern Frontier, 1700–1880,” 67–94. For China’s expansion to the southern borderlands in the Ming dynasty, Leo Kwok-yueh Shin, *The Making of The Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands*. For a recent study of the British colonial state’s expansion as a cultural process, see Kathleen Wilson, “Rethinking the Colonial State: Family, Gender, and Governmentality in Eighteenth-Century British Frontiers,” 1294–1322. Although this article is not on imperial China’s expansion, it provides a valuable cultural perspective on the cultural strategies of colonial state-making.

<sup>4</sup> For this negative impression, see Kent Clarke Smith, *Ch’ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China: Aspects of Ortai’s Governor-Generalship, 1726–1731*, 57.

But the reconciliatory policy was thwarted by some government officials and some military generals' dehumanizing views of the Miao and Qing generals' abuse of military force. In addition to relying on imperial edicts and memorials and official writings such as gazetteers, which provide illustrations of non-Han peoples for administrative purposes, this article also utilizes the available private travelogues and memoirs that expressed more sympathy to non-Han cultures and even reflection on the Han culture.

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## The *Gaitu Guiliu* Campaign vs. the Incorporation of Miao Territory

Historically, Miao territory (*Miaojiang*) was a loosely defined phrase. Its broader meaning included the entire Southwest Chinese ethnic minority region, and, in a narrower sense, it only indicated southeast Guizhou, northeast Guizhou and western Hunan, where there was a big concentration of the Miao people who were not ruled by either local government or Miao chieftains, i.e. the so-called raw, or wild, Miao (*shengmiao*).<sup>5</sup> The term *Miaojiang* appeared in the Yongzheng reign and indicated the special administrative regions of the wild Miao, who were newly put under the governance of the Qing.<sup>6</sup> Traditionally, Han observers of the Miao culture followed a Sino-centric mindset and classified the Miao people into two large groups based on the degree of their acculturation and politicization. As noted by the Qing scholar Yan Ruyi, who was a western Hunan native and very familiar with the Miao culture, the Miao people living outside of the walled fortifications are called *shengmiao*, or unacculturated, “uncooked” Miao, while those who mixed with the local Han people and rented their land, paid tax and offered labor service to the government were *shumiao*: “cooked Miao.”<sup>7</sup> Another local administrator of the Kangxi-Yongzheng period, Lan Dingyuan, emphasized the political relationship between wild Miao and the state. For him, non-Han indigenes whose households are not registered with the government (*buji yousi*) were *sheng*, while those who paid tax grain to the government were *shu*.<sup>8</sup> For Chen Ding, “uncooked” Miao were those who “have no headmen and did not follow the discipline of local chieftains,” and they burned, looted, and easily hid in the mountains.<sup>9</sup>

The central government of China started exerting its military rule over

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<sup>5</sup> See Ma Guojun, *Ping Miao jiliè yanjiu*, 37. This article will use its narrowest sense and focus on southeast Guizhou where “uncooked Miao” lived.

<sup>6</sup> Qi Qingfu, “Xuanli duocai de Qingdai minzu huajuan: Miao man tu yanjiu shulüe,” 109.

<sup>7</sup> Yan Ruyi, *Miaojiang Fengsu kao*, 6629. For a study on Yan Ruyi's involvement in the Qing frontier policy, see Daniel McMahon, “Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland: Yan Ruyi and the Recruitment of the Gelao during the 1757–97 Miao Revolt,” 53–86.

<sup>8</sup> Lan Dingyuan, “Bian sheng Miao jiang shiyi lun,” in *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao*, vol. 11, 6685.

<sup>9</sup> Chen Ding, *Qian Youji*, n.d., in *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao*, vol. 11, 6313.

Guizhou province in the Ming dynasty by replacing the conditional framework of obligations under the rule of the Yuan dynasty to “an unconditional set of state-sponsored regulations.”<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the state-designed decrease of native chieftains in Guizhou had already been under way since the Ming dynasty, when the Wanli, Tianqi and Chongzhen emperors abolished several leading chieftains in northern and western Guizhou. The Qing dynasty continued to set up four prefectures in western Guizhou in 1665 under the regency of Obai.<sup>11</sup> Under the rules of Shunzhi and Kangxi, though all local affairs at the grassroots level were taken care of by hereditary and largely autonomous chieftains,<sup>12</sup> the government had exerted control of Guizhou through a dual government system by combining government officials and the local chieftains, who were appointed and controlled by central government but enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in their internal affairs. The local tribal authorities were considered hereditary frontier nobilities; and their title “*tusi*” implied a military rank granted by the central government.<sup>13</sup>

The culmination of the *gaitu guiliu* policy under the Yongzheng emperor changed the less aggressive incorporation policy of Kangxi into an activist and thorough one, which was protested by a few Qing officials, and eventually caused violent confrontation between the Qing state and the frontier Miao people in Guizhou.<sup>14</sup> The Yongzheng emperor justified his decision by emphasizing the abuse of power by the local chieftains in 1724, the second year of his reign, and appointed his protégé, confidant and policy adviser on southwest affairs, the Manchu general Ortai, as the governor-general of Yunnan-Guizhou. Ortai defined the purpose of *gaitu guiliu* as “to ‘free’ ethnic people from the brutal rule of native chieftains and enhance central control of the frontier society.”<sup>15</sup> In a memorial submitted to Yongzheng in 1724, Ortai also pointed out another reason for state intervention: the relationship between the Miao and the Han inhabitants. He said that “the biggest hidden danger in Yunnan and Guizhou is no more than the Miao barbarians. If we want to protect the people (*min*, i.e. the Han people), we must control the barbarians, but if we want to control the barbarians we must

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<sup>10</sup> John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200–1700*, 225.

<sup>11</sup> For the abolishment of northern Guizhou's chieftainship in the Ming, see Fan Tongshou, *Guizhou lishi biji*, 163–66. For the establishment of the four prefects in western Guizhou in the Kangxi reign, see Zhongguo kexueyuan minzu yanjiusuo etc., eds., *Qing shi lu Guizhou ziliao jiyao*, 313–18.

<sup>12</sup> Jing Daomo et al., *Guizhou tongzhi*, 6. Wu Zhenyu, *Qianyu*, in Luo Shuqin et al., eds., *Qianshu Xu Qianshu, Qianji, Qianyu*, 330.

<sup>13</sup> John E. Herman, “The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China's Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontiers,” 137–42. For the definition of *tusi*, see E-tu Zen Sun, trans. and ed., *Ch'ing Administrative Terms: A Translation of the Terminology of the Six Boards with Explanatory Notes*, 140.

<sup>14</sup> Herman, “Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing Reforms to the Native Chieftain System.”

<sup>15</sup> Bin Yang, *Between Wind and Clouds: The Making of Yunnan (Second Century BCE to Twentieth Century)*, 132.

implement *gai tu guiliu*. This will be a once-and-for-all method.”<sup>16</sup> In the Yongzheng emperor’s 1727 edict to the Ministry of Defense formally abolishing the native chieftainship, he mainly accused the chieftains of hostility to each other and cruelty to the local minority peoples, whom Yongzheng called his “innocent children.”<sup>17</sup>

It is notable that the Qing expansion into southeast Guizhou’s Miao territory, i.e. *Miaojiang* in the narrow sense, was not identical with the grand scheme of *gaitu guiliu*, though the former can be seen as a part of the latter. The uniqueness of the Miao territory lies in that there were basically no native chieftains in the area, which was inhabited largely by “wild Miao” and was usually referred to as the “wild territory” (*shengjie*).<sup>18</sup> Hence, in this region, the Qing government did not need to deal with powerful native chieftains but had to negotiate with individual villages, and the rhetoric of liberating the Miao indigenes from tyrannical local lords was irrelevant. A closer look at the motivation and purpose, as demonstrated in the accounts of Guizhou governors and prefects, shows that the expansionist policy of the Yongzheng emperor into Miao frontiers was motivated by a series of concerns beyond the tyranny of local chieftains. Since the later years of the Kangxi reign, the Mongol army’s southern expedition to Yunnan province raised the concern of Qing rulers, who started considering putting Southwest China under the centralized control. And Southwest China had been used by Ming loyalists and the defected Ming general Wu Sangui as a bastion of anti-Qing activities in the seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup> The strategic importance of Guizhou and its relevance to Qing control of the entire Southwest was delineated by Tian Wen, the provincial governor of Guizhou in his *Qianshu* (The book of Guizhou), published in 1690.<sup>20</sup> Southeast Guizhou, which was linked with Hunan and Guangxi by two major waterways, thus became important for the national security of the entire empire. For some contemporary Qing scholar-officials, the takeover of the Miao frontier was more cultural and political than territorial. Wang Baixin said, “Our country owns a large area, and its territory is far larger than that of the Han and Tang dynasties. How can we really aspire to acquire this rugged and narrow area of two or three thousand *li*?” Wang Baixin believed that the Yongzheng emperor’s plan was to transform the aborigines in Guizhou and to promote public order: “At the outset, the Miao people were very tough and never subjugated. The people living in local counties and prefects have long suffered from the cruelty of their greediness and violent killing. Their own people suffered, too. Seeing this situation, the Yongzheng

<sup>16</sup> Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuanji*, 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Qing shilu*, 1964, 319, cited from Herman, “Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing Reforms to the Native Chieftain System,” 47.

<sup>18</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 117.

<sup>19</sup> For the Ming loyalists and Wu Sangui’s challenges of the Qing government from the Southwest, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-century China*, vol. II, 1034, passim 1101.

<sup>20</sup> Herman, “The Cant of Conquest,” Crossley et al., eds., *Empire at the Margins*, 160.

emperor began to have the intention to take over the land and rectify the people. At this time, the ministers in the frontier region just also submitted memorials to suggest conquest.”<sup>21</sup> The Qing government also saw, based on the report of grassroots-level officials, that the Miao frontiers in southeast Guizhou was a region rich in natural resources and significant in developing transportation between Guizhou and more developed Hunan, Guangxi and Guangdong.<sup>22</sup> It is clear that the motivation for tightening the central control over Guizhou included building a direct relationship between the state and its subjects, strategic concerns, transportation, and cultural transformation.

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## The Role of Local Officials in Understanding the Miao Territory and Its Culture

During the process of Ortai’s conquest of Guizhou, two local officials, Zhang Guangsi and Fang Xian, contributed to his decision making by investigating and understanding the Miao territory and its culture. After Ortai assumed office in Kunming as the governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou in 1725, he abolished three native chieftainships in Yunnan: Dongchuan, Wumeng, and Zhenxiong, but did not immediately take Guizhou’s Miao frontiers into account.<sup>23</sup> Zhang Guangsi, the then prefect of Liping, and Fang Xian, who was appointed as the prefect of southeast Guizhou’s Zhenyuan in 1726 and assumed office in the third lunar month of 1727, played major roles in the Qing government’s decision and implementation of the incorporation of the Miao territory in southeast Guizhou. Zhang Guangsi purchased the rank of a prefect and was appointed magistrate of Sizhou, Guizhou province in 1722, and assumed the office as the prefect of Guizhou’s Liping prefecture in 1726. Zhang assisted Ortai in repressing the rebellion of the Changzhai chieftains in southern Guizhou in 1726, and from then on became a protégé of Ortai and later confidant of Yongzheng.<sup>24</sup> In the fall of 1727, Zhang was dispatched by Ortai to investigate the situation of the Miao territory in southeast Guizhou. After taking up the onerous job of going deep into the wild Miao communities and talking to the indigenes, Zhang was convinced that the Miao were willing to accept the direct rule and acculturation of the Qing government. He reported to Ortai that the Miao had welcomed him enthusiastically though they had had no contact with Qing officialdom.<sup>25</sup> According to Zhang himself, it was this report that helped Ortai make the final decision to submit the memorial to the emperor concerning the opening of the

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<sup>21</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 78–79.

<sup>22</sup> Wu Zhenyu also emphasizes that the pacification of the Guizhou region in southeast Guizhou was significant in the transportation between Guizhou and Guangdong. See Wu Zhenyu, *Qianyu*, in Luo Shuqin et al., eds., *Qianshu Xu Qianshu, Qianji, Qianyu*, 330.

<sup>23</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 93.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period (1644–1912)*, 43, 601.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Ch’ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China*, 256.

Miao territory.<sup>26</sup>

Fang Xian “donated” in order to be recommended, first, as a subprefecture Director of Learning (*jiaoyu*), and was promoted to the status of magistrate of Gongcheng district, Guangxi. Completed in 1733, Fang Xian’s memoir *A Brief Account of Pacifying the Miao (Ping Miao jilue)* confirmed Zhang Guangsi’s contribution in proposing the incorporation of the uncooked Miao in southeast Guizhou in 1727 to Ortai. After reviewing Zhang’s suggestion, Ortai did not give it immediate approval but instead called Fang Xian to Kunming and sought his opinion about whether or not the Miao frontiers in southeastern Guizhou should also be incorporated into the scheme of *gaitu guiliu*. Fang Xian gave a similarly positive answer by emphasizing the benefits of incorporation for public safety, transportation and local resources. Fang Xian replied: “Uncooked Miao people are not registered with the government and there is even no rule of local lords. Officials and civilians in Guizhou cannot enter Guangdong and Hunan via the Miao region. When there are bad people fleeing to the Miao area, no one can catch them. The Miao people also loot itinerant merchants and inland merchants have suffered a lot.... If this region can be developed, the harm will be eliminated.” Fang Xian also pointed out the existence of good water and rich soil in the region in spite of its rugged terrain, and predicted the benefits of conquest: “The area produces tung oil, white wax, cotton, bamboo, etc. If the communications are unblocked and the circulation of money and goods are permitted, both Han people and Miao people will benefit. This should become a large profit for Guizhou province.”<sup>27</sup> Here Fang emphasized the need for the penetration of Qing state power as well as the economic benefits of putting southeast Guizhou under central control.

During the process of conquest, Fang explained to the local Miao inhabitants that the purpose of incorporating the Miao territory was simply to open the channel of Clear Water River (*Qingjiang*), which runs from southeast Guizhou to Hunan province. Fang then followed up with a sixteen-point proposal for pacifying the Miao in southeast Guizhou in which he pointed out the need to distinguish good Miao from bad Miao, to be patient, eliminate Han traitors (*Hanjian*), confiscate the weapons in Miao villages, clear water ways, sign treaties, register households, and levy taxes, etc.<sup>28</sup> This concern for natural resources, transportation, and economic development initially raised by Fang Xian was later included by Ortai in his memorial to the Yongzheng emperor.<sup>29</sup>

As Fang Xian suggested, the raw Miao were people who lived in the territory

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<sup>26</sup> Zhang Guangsi, “Zhang Guangsi zou xixin chouhua Miaojiang shiyi zhe” [Zhang Guangsi’s memorial to the Emperor regarding his dedication to the pacification of the Miao frontier], in *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan* etc., eds., *Qingdai qianqi Miaomin qiyi dang’an shiliao huibian*, 112.

<sup>27</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilue yanjiu*, 117.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 130–31.

<sup>29</sup> Ma Shaoqiao, *Qingdai Miaomin qiyi*, 22.

of the Qing Empire but were not under its direct governance. This lack of governance was later commented on by the prominent reformer and thinker Wei Yuan around 1839, who saw the current term “Miao,” which we now use as the name of the ethnic group, as simply generic and derogatory: “people who do not have a monarch and live in segments are called *miao*; those who live in tribes and follow separatism are called *man*.”<sup>30</sup> Wei Yuan attached great importance to the political relationship between the indigenous people and the state and paid attention to whether they recognized the imperial authority and whether they paid tax.<sup>31</sup> The condition of anarchy was actually the hallmark of minority people’s barbarity, and it was the reason that most Han scholar-officials’ had contempt for them.<sup>32</sup> To tackle this problem, Fang Xian took field trips to the northern bank of Clear Water River in the third and fourth lunar months of 1728, and announced the emperor’s intention of protecting the Miao indigenes. It was not unusual for the uncooked Miao to have an acquiescent attitude toward Qing governance. In fact, there had been a precedent in 1702 of the wild Miao people’s taking the initiative to seek the protection of the Qing government, when some Miao tribes in western Hunan volunteered to surrender to the Qing government. Though the Kangxi emperor did not implement a more activist approach to govern and to transform them, he granted direct central governmental administration to these Miao people.<sup>33</sup> But this time, it was the Qing officials who reached out to the Miao community.

During the process of negotiating with the Miao people in 1728, Fang Xian showed a cultural awareness about the cultural differences as well as respect for Miao customs. His announcement of Qing governance was followed by an oath-taking ceremony on the “alliance ground” (*kuanchang*), in which Fang Xian called the headmen of the Miao villages and established an alliance between the Qing state and the Miao villages by following Miao people’s oath-taking (*zai kuan he lang*) rituals. Fang Xian understood the Miao oath-taking and alliance custom as the same as the Han people’s culture of alliance through blood-oath (*shaxie mengshi*).<sup>34</sup> Twenty-four Miao villages that Fang visited agreed to enter the alliance, to be organized into the household registration and mutual surveillance (*baojia*) system, and to pay taxes and grain to the government.<sup>35</sup> By implementing the *baojia* system and levying taxes, Fang Xian grasped the main

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<sup>30</sup> Wei Yuan, *Sheng wu ji*, vol. 2, 283.

<sup>31</sup> The same problem in defining the Miao can be found in the naming of the ethnic group “Qiang”—only after the ethnic classification issued by the PRC was Qiang, a formerly generic term to address the tribes on the upper Yellow River valley, used to name a specific ethnic group. Wang Mingke, *Youmuzhe de jueze: Miandui Han diguo de beiya youmu buzhu*, 157. Also see his *Qiang zai Han Zang zhijian: chuan xi Qianzu de lishi ren leixue yanjiu*, 10–11.

<sup>32</sup> This can also be found in Han scholar’s attitude toward the Qiang. See Wang, *Youmuzhe de jueze: Miandui Han diguo de beiya youmu buzhu*, 191–92.

<sup>33</sup> Ehai, *Fu Miao lu*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 146–51.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

point of making the uncooked Miao constituents of the Qing state.

Fang Xian attributed the major hindrance of the Qing-Miao relationship not to the Miao but to defected Han immigrants, the so-called “Han traitors.” Large-scale Han migration to the Miao region as a refuge started from the transitional period between the Ming and Qing dynasties, with three million Han people arriving in the southwest from central China from 1700 to 1850. Inter-marriage, markets, and language all became sites where the Han culture negotiated with the Miao culture, and many fleeing Han people adjusted their cultural norms to adapt to the new environment.<sup>36</sup> One Miao headman (*Miaotou*) told Fang that his group resisted Qing incorporation at the instigation of a Han national named Zeng Wendeng, who told the Miao villagers that “it is a tradition since the time of Zhuge Liang<sup>37</sup> that the Han troops will not cross the river. And you guys better not pay grain tax, because once you pay one tael (of silver) this year, you will need to pay ten taels next year.” The headman apologized to Fang, and turned in Zeng Wendeng, who was later executed.<sup>38</sup> The Zeng Wendeng case exemplified an age-old tradition of the undermining role Han defectors played in dynastic China’s foreign relations that can be traced back to the Former Han dynasty, when defecting Han generals violated treaties between the Han and Xiongnu.<sup>39</sup> Prior to Fang Xian’s arrival at the wild Miao villages, there had been a high degree of mixed inhabitation in the border region, and some Han migrants who were fugitive lawbreakers were integrated to Miao society and became speakers for Miao interests. In addition, there was a phenomenon of reverse cultural influence. Han defectors could play such a significant role in influencing the political decision of the Miao community with their knowledge of both cultures that they were always regarded as the biggest menace to the Qing’s incorporation of the Miao territory. As early as the Kangxi period, the then Guizhou governor Tian Wen had already concluded that “the trouble of Miao bandits was largely instigated by *Hanjian*.”<sup>40</sup>

The information reported by Zhang Guangsi and Fang Xian based on field trips transcended the limits of imperial knowledge about the Miao frontier and directly influenced the Yongzheng emperor. Upon reading the very detailed

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<sup>36</sup> Giersch, “A Motley Throng,” 74–88. *Hanjian*’s collaboration with the rebellious Miao and their arrest and execution can be also found in Ortai, *Ping man zoushu*, 49. For Han migrants’ adoption of the Miao culture, see Herman, “Empire in the Southwest,” 56. Also see Donald S. Sutton, “Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier: Customary and Statutory in the Eighteenth-century Miao Pale,” 61–63.

<sup>37</sup> Zhuge Liang was a famous statesman of the Later Han period (25–220 BCE) and Three Kingdoms (220–265 BCE) and the premier of the Shu state. It is believed that Zhuge conquered southern Chinese non-Han groups in building the Shu state.

<sup>38</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 176.

<sup>39</sup> Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, 217.

<sup>40</sup> Tian Wen, *Qianshu* (Guizhou), in Luo Shuqin et al., eds., *Qianshu Xu Qianshu, Qianji, Qianyu*, 35.

introduction about southeast Guizhou by Ortai based on the report of Zhang Guangsi, the Yongzheng emperor made a written comment: "All previous knowledge about this area was nothing more than speculation. Now we understand; we did not anticipate so many details there. I also have never heard until now that the local customs are pure and simple like ancient people, and the people there all know rituals and propriety."<sup>41</sup> Based on the report of Fang Xian, Yongzheng decided that it was understandable that some Miao people were sincere in surrendering to the central government, but some were just not ready due to fear and suspicion. The emperor thus cautioned against any hasty use of military force against the Miao, when he replied to Zhang Guangsi's request of incorporation of Guzhou, a region on the "uncooked" Miao frontier in southeast Guizhou as opposed to north and southwest Guizhou.<sup>42</sup>

To be sure, the Yongzheng emperor was willing to accept an appeasement policy in southeast Guizhou not only because of the first-hand observations of Fang Xian and Zhang Guangsi, but also because he did not see Miao groups without hostile chieftains as a particular military and political threat, so he planned to avoid military action and rely on indoctrination and adoption of benevolent and virtuous policies. When force had to be used to subjugate some recalcitrant Miao groups in southeast Guizhou, the Yongzheng emperor would show restraint. In his reply to the memorial of Ortai later in 1727, the emperor said, "I noticed that when Zhang Guangsi just entered that area, he was much respected. It seems that it suffices to only use accommodation, and there is no need for force. Now since military force has been used, you should be more cautious in the future. In all these newly taken places, never be too fussy about profit, and never be sparing in giving money and grain. Remember! Remember!"<sup>43</sup> Overall, Yongzheng was not particularly aggressive or brutal in his military policies in spite of his expansion into Guizhou.<sup>44</sup>

That the Yongzheng emperor deemed the use of force against southeast Guizhou's aborigines as unnecessary can be partially attributed to the fact that in contrast to Mongols and Tibetans, the Miao people in Guizhou did not have a strong self-government or cultural, religious tradition of their own, nor did they have political and religious leaders, such as the Dalai Lama. As Wei Yuan pointed out a century later, "All tribes in *Huijiang* (Muslim frontiers) had Khans, who were all descendants of Kublai Khan," and "Tibet was not an ancient state of Buddhism, yet since the Yuan and Ming dynasties, it has become a strongly Buddhist area. At first it received investiture from the inland and treated China as a brother state. Since the rise of Tsongkhapa, Tibet no longer needed the

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<sup>41</sup> Ortai, "Ortai zou Guzhou yidai Miao min Qingxing zhe" (Ortai's memorial concerning the situation of the Miao people in the Guzhou region), in Zhongguo kexueyuan minzu yanjiusuo etc., eds., *Qing shi lu Guizhou ziliao jiyao*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Jing Daomo et al., *Guizhou tongzhi*, 651.

<sup>43</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 305.

<sup>44</sup> William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing*, 66.

investiture from central China.”<sup>45</sup> According to the study of anthropologist Wang Mingke, northwestern and southern Chinese minorities differed from northern nomadic peoples in that the former barely established any centralized state organization or produced a charismatic leader, while the latter such as the Xiongnu had its own state apparatus.<sup>46</sup> This can definitely be applied to the situation of the segmentary Miao frontier.

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### Other Eighteenth-Century Observations of Cultural Difference

Zhang Guangsi and Fang Xian were not alone in their understanding of Miao culture. Many Chinese officials with experience and knowledge of Miao affairs were convinced that the Miao character contained both obedience and rebellion, and this justified the combined use of acculturation through education and brutal force. This attitude can be categorized as a “transformative” or “culturalist” tendency.<sup>47</sup> One prefect of the Kangxi period named Huang Yuanzhi, who worked in Guizhou from 1683 to 1684, wrote in his memoir that although he had worked in the Miao region for only a hundred or so days, Miao people felt sad when he left. “[The Miao people] pretend to be cautious and humble when seeing officials, but their hearts are too cunning to understand. Yet once they are taught by honesty and faith, they would all be impressed.”<sup>48</sup> Another Qing official of the Yongzheng period, Wang Lǜjie, said that ever since the Song and Yuan dynasties the Miao people have been good at observing the attitude of the central government, and they were “sometimes obedient and sometimes rebellious (*shi fu shi pan*)” depending on the strength of the central government. Wang refuted the notion that Miao should not be acculturated because of their distinct language and customs. The Miao should be acculturated, however, Wang also emphasized the need of protecting the Han Chinese migrants who were living in the Miao region, and for hundreds of years had been harmed by the recalcitrant and violent Miao people and consequently the good farms and natural resources in the region were wasted.<sup>49</sup>

From various eighteenth-century ethnographic writings about the Miao territory, we find that some Han observers’ depiction of the Miao people went beyond simple classification by developing a rational and respectful representation of the Miao people and their culture. For instance, Wang Lǜjie challenged the traditional accusation of the Miao’s robbery of Han travelers and merchants and concluded that the pillaging by the Miao was caused by unfavorable local natural conditions.<sup>50</sup> Wang Lǜjie critically reflected on the

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<sup>45</sup> Wei Yuan, *Sheng wu ji*, vol. 1, 169, 218.

<sup>46</sup> Wang Mingke, *Youmuzhe de jueze*, 157.

<sup>47</sup> See Peter Perdue, “Nature and Nurture on Imperial China’s Frontiers,” 253.

<sup>48</sup> Huang Yuanzhi, “Qian zhong zaji,” 6319, 6320.

<sup>49</sup> Wang Lujie, *Gaitu guiliu shuo*, in *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao*, vol. 11, 6687.

<sup>50</sup> This environmental-economic rationalization of plundering has recently been expounded by

Qing policy toward the Miao and proposed several areas that the government needed to reconsider: first, the government should send in troops and build fortresses; second, the government should take advantage of the timber resources in the region, third, the government should exploit medicinal herbs and mine ores; fourth, the government should believe that the power of moral virtue can move even animals. Wang said, “Though the Miao people are tough, they are also human beings. All human beings have the same heart, and all hearts have the same principle. [The Miao] also know about respecting their fathers and elder brothers and revere their superiors. If [we] follow the policy of accommodation, how can they afford to stay outside of our culture?” Here Wang confirmed that the essential criteria for judging humanity can be applied to the Miao, because as the *Classics of Rituals [Liji]* states: “endearing families, respecting superiors, honoring the old, and distinguishing man and woman—that’s the main aspect of the human way.”<sup>51</sup> Wang went on to say that if the officials took nothing more than regular tax, the Miao people would be grateful.<sup>52</sup> This sentiment of Confucian humanism was echoed by Fang Xian, who also stressed the human disposition of the Miao people in his policy suggestion: “The Miao are also human beings. If we only use violence, we might hurt the harmony of Heaven and Earth; The Miao [also] have some barbarian characteristics. If we only use accommodation, we can hardly deter them. These two things should be balanced, but appeasement (*fu*) should follow suppression (*jiao*). Once suppression is done, we should still end up with appeasement.”<sup>53</sup>

Chen Ding epitomized the reverse cultural influence of the Miao on a Han man. Born in 1650 and a native of Jiangsu province, Chen followed his father to Yunnan and Guizhou when he was ten years old. Married to a Miao wife and concubines, Chen Ding wrote favorably of the Miao culture and largely challenged the cultural stereotype of Miao being barbaric. In his *Wedding Rituals of the Local Chieftains in Yunnan and Guizhou [Dian Qian tusi hunli ji]*, Chen detailed his cordial relationships with his Miao wife and concubines and how Miao women behaved at home: concubines were not allowed to get up during the night once sleeping; wife, concubines and servant girls were not allowed to snore in their sleep; concubines were to stand all day long to wait on the husband, and if they were permitted to sit they could only sit on the bed with the husband, not on a chair. After listing various wifely rituals Chen commented: “these are truly the rites of the Three Dynasties. They are unexpectedly discovered in the frontier but lost in central China.” He further modified Confucius’ famous quote in the

Wang Mingke in this study of the nomadic culture; Wang believes that raiding was just a means for nomads to gain extra economic resources. See Wang Mingke, *Youmu zhe de jueze*, 124, 134.

<sup>51</sup> *Liji*: *sangfu xiaoji*, 1496.

<sup>52</sup> Wang Lujie, *Gaitu guiliu shuo*, in *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao*, vol. 11, 6687.

<sup>53</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilue yanjiu*, 126.

Analects and said “Miao barbarians have rituals, unlike the Chinese who have lost them.”<sup>54</sup> Here Chen showed a typical Han scholar’s concern about the maintenance or loss of rituals as a mark of civilization, and he not only saw the Miao as an equal civilization but a society that the Han might need to turn to for relearning the rites.

Another Qing scholar saw one of the Miao people’s different cultural practices as more humane than the Han’s. As Yan Ruyi wrote, “[Miao] do not have the Chinese frontier people’s culture of female infanticide.” But Yan also showed his ambiguity when saying “[They] do not emphasize the human way and thus do not prohibit unauthorized sex. [Their] wedding rituals are simple and convenient... and there is no need to have matchmakers.”<sup>55</sup> Yan Ruyi also thought that the local Miao people were simply ignorant, but the settlers from outside were crafty.<sup>56</sup>

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### Tackling Cultural Difference after Territorial Consolidation

By 1730, the Qing government had established six subprefectures (*ting*) in southeast Guizhou: Danjiang, Bazhai, Dujiang, Qingjiang, and Taigong, known as the Six Districts on the New Frontier (*Xinjiang liu ting*).<sup>57</sup> Confucian education followed the conquest and political integration. Also in 1730, a local official, Chen Derong, established twenty-four schools, with the result that “[Miao people could] distinguish the old and the young and changed their customs.”<sup>58</sup> The incorporation of the Miao territory and the increasing accessibility of the area in the Yongzheng period expanded future Han scholar-officials’ knowledge of Miao culture, and effected the production of a large amount of “Miao Albums,” in which Miao and other non-Chinese tribes and their customs and festivals are carefully classified, illustrated, and briefly introduced. Though most Miao albums are anonymous and undated, it is asserted that they first appeared “toward the end of the Yongzheng reign and during the implementation of *gaitu guiliu*, or during the early years of the Qianlong reign.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Chen Ding, *Dian Qian tusi hunli ji*, in Luo Shuqin et al., eds., *Qianshu Xu Qianshu, Qianji, Qianyu*, 413.

<sup>55</sup> Yan Ruyi, *Miaojiang fengsu kao*, in *Xiaofanghuzhai yudi congchao*, vol. 11, 6637, 6650.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 6650.

<sup>57</sup> Miao zu jianshi bianxie zu, *Miaozu jian shi*, 110. A *ting* was equivalent to a *xian* as a subprefectural administrative unit, but a *ting* was usually set up in newly conquered ethnic minority areas and it was unique to the Qing dynasty.

<sup>58</sup> Chen Shilie’s preface to *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, see Ma Guojun, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 57.

<sup>59</sup> David M. Deal and Laura Hostetler, eds. and trans., *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao Album,”* xxiv. One illustration included in Deal and Hostetler’s book mentioned the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Yongzheng reign, equivalent to 1732, and another illustration used the phrase “during of the reign of the Yongzheng emperor,” which suggests the time of the compilation was after the Yongzheng reign ended. One Chinese scholar suggests that the earliest Miao album illustration should be dated in 1761, the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the Qianlong reign.

In fact, many of the illustrations depict in a matter-of-fact way the Miao groups living in the areas that Fang Xian and Zhang Guangsi had pacified, such as Jiugu, Guzhou, Taigong, and Qingjiang. One textual entry about the custom of a Black Zhongjia group living in the Clear Water River area carries a laudatory tone: “Whether regarding trade, lending money, or transacting business there is no request they will not honor. If the surety is lost, it does not matter; as long as the truth is told directly, they are allowed to borrow money again.”<sup>60</sup> Classification of the Miao was now based on the color of their dress, costume, dwelling places, or hairstyle, and various subgroups were identified and named, such as Red Miao, Short Skirt Miao or Pointed Hat Miao.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, some hardliners in the Qing government exaggerated the difference and went as far as to dismiss the Miao’s common human nature. It is true that “indigenous beliefs and festivals were attacked as vulgar and worthy of suppression” in Guizhou following bureaucratization,<sup>62</sup> and some higher-level Qing commanders held negative and dehumanizing notions that the Miao were like animals and their “bandit nature” (*zei xing*) was hard to eliminate.<sup>63</sup> Ortai himself harbored a “burning desire for extraordinary achievements” and tended to resort to “ferocious means” as soon as the expansion was resisted.<sup>64</sup> Zu Binggui, a Han bannerman and deputy governor of Guizhou believed that the Miao were by nature wolves and could not adopt the human way, and he saw the acculturation of the Miao and making them taxpayers as impossible as “to expect wolves to act according to human ways.”<sup>65</sup> Once, Zu Binggui went as far as to send troops to handle a local robbery case. His attitude hindered Ortai’s and Fang Xian’s plan to negotiate with the Miao villages on the northern bank of Clear Water River in 1727, until Ortai persisted in pushing the campaign in 1728. When Zu Binggui himself submitted a memorial to the Yongzheng emperor in 1728 that emphasized his concern about the large expenditure and lack of economic return in taking over Guizhou, and the emperor reprimanded him as “petty-minded.” “If you cannot transform the wolves and let them go wild,” Yongzheng retorted, “then they will be a harm upon the local place forever.”<sup>66</sup> In his 1729 memorial to the emperor, a local official named Yang Tianzong accused Zu Binggui of being “obtuse,” and Yang revealed his suspicions about Zu’s true intention. Yang made it clear that it was after hearing Zu Binggui’s hostility that

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<sup>60</sup> David M. Deal and Laura Hostetler, eds. and trans., *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao Album,”* 59.

<sup>61</sup> Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprises: Ethnography and Cartography Early Modern China*, 124.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ehai, *Fu Miao lu*, 27.

<sup>64</sup> For the aggressive attitude of Ortai, see Yingcong Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in Early Qing*, 102.

<sup>65</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 143, and Smith, *Ch’ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China*, 260.

<sup>66</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 299–300.

the Miao indigenes in the Jiugu and Danjiang areas resorted to violent resistance to protect themselves from the assault of the Qing army.<sup>67</sup>

Undoubtedly, Fang Xian was also involved in military actions against rebellious Miao villages and he did not challenge the conflation of extermination and appeasement, but he usually followed military victory with tolerance and pacification. In 1729, after Fang put down the insurgency of the Jihudang village rebellion, he declared to the people that “if you really repent, then [you should] surrender weapons right away, pay tax grain, and become ‘good people’ (*liangmin*) in this prosperous age.”<sup>68</sup> In the aftermath of the military suppression and pacification of Miao resistances in the regions of Qingjiang, Danjiang, Jiugu, Guzhu, and Bawan, the Yongzheng emperor issued a series of imperial edicts that stationed more troops in the Miao frontiers, but also emphasized that “any bullying [of the Miao] should not be allowed, [and you] must be dedicated to [the Miao’s] education and cultivation and must make Miao and Han coexist peacefully.”<sup>69</sup> In concluding his experience of exploring and pacifying the Miao frontier, Fang Xian was realistic in acknowledging that “It is even difficult for inland Chinese people to have sufficient food and clothing and good customs. [In the Miao territory] this cannot be achieved in a short period. To utilize resources to enrich their lives, and to spread benevolence and gauge righteousness is what I expect from future gentlemen.”<sup>70</sup> Fang Xian made it explicit that the fundamental solution of the Qing/ Miao conflict lay in improving the standard of living as well as moral education, a Confucian principle that was believed to be able to apply to the whole of humanity.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh lunar month in 1736, the Qianlong emperor, who was in the first year of his reign, issued an edict concerning the Qing policy towards Guizhou’s non-Han people. In it, Qianlong admitted that his late father, the Yongzheng emperor, implemented the bureaucratization policy after approving the request of governors and ministers to incorporate the non-Chinese residents into Qing political rule. Yet, Qianlong also decided in the same edict that from then on the Miao and the Han should be handled separately in lawsuits, and that the Qing Code should no longer be applied to the disputes amongst Miao people.<sup>71</sup> Without proactive social transformation, however, Qianlong’s legal segregation failed to put an end to the Miao insurgencies. The taxation following the conquest and politicization became the key reason of a large-scale Miao uprising that started in 1735, before Qianlong was enthroned, to 1736, the first year of his reign, against the Qing state, which caused the deaths of 18,000 local

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<sup>67</sup> See “Zhupi yuzhi—Yang Tianzong zou Miao zhai zi shi yuanyou zhe,” in *Qingdai qianqi Miao min qi yi dang’an shiliao huibian*, *shangce*, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Ma, *Ping Miao jilüe yanjiu*, 195.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>71</sup> Jing Daomo et al., *Guizhou tongzhi*, 660.

people and the torching of 1,224 villages.<sup>72</sup> One short historical account of the Qing, written under a pseudonym by a Republican-period author, pointed out that the riot of the Miao people in southeast Guizhou in the early Qianlong years was caused solely by mismanagement in the collection of grain taxes, and the Qianlong emperor responded by ordering a thorough suppression of the Miao.<sup>73</sup>

Seeking explanation for the debacle in 1736, Zou Yigui, the Director of Studies (*xuezheng*) of Guizhou, attributed the Miao people's "sometimes obedient and sometimes rebellious" character to the fact that they had long been abused by troops and civilians in Guizhou: "In Guizhou province there are more Han people than Miao, and once there is need for hard labor, then the Miao are required to take it up, and soldiers and civilians all enjoy leisure. Whenever the Han are not satisfied, they proceed to abuse and whip the Miao." Zou also pointed out that rich Han people appropriated the farms cultivated by the Miao and forced Miao to sell goods to them at lower prices but sell other goods back to Miao at higher prices. "There is a saying in Guizhou," Zou said, "which goes: no one can get rich without [taking advantage of] the Miao (*wu Miao bu fu*)."<sup>74</sup> Zou went on to articulate his own opinion: "I think that the Miao are stubborn in nature but they are also part of the human race. They are not without the hearts of gratitude and resentment. When they are bullied, they harbor their resentment without speaking it, or they speak out but no one listens. After long days of accumulation, their pent-up grievances burst all of a sudden. This is how things are; it is inevitable."<sup>74</sup> Here again, Zou attributed the revolt of the Miao to the lack of respect for their human dignity.

In that same year, Fang Xian, who had been promoted to the position of judicial commissioner (*anchashi*) of Guizhou, submitted his memorial to Qianlong calling for establishment of the *baojia* system in the newly incorporated Miao area. Fang Xian suggested organizing every 10 households into one *jia* and every 10 *jia* into one *bao*, and the government-chosen *bao* chief should assume the duty of going to the nearest local government office on the first and fifteenth day of each lunar month to hear the lectures about imperial edicts, then transmit them to the Miao villagers. Still, Fang Xian believed that this approach could "teach and transform" (*jiaohua*) the Miao people in a few years.<sup>75</sup> Fang Xian's consistent emphasis on acculturation through education demonstrated over the years that his culturalist stance, which acknowledged cultural difference between the Han and the Miao, nonetheless trusted the power of education and transformation.

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<sup>72</sup> Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 80.

<sup>73</sup> Anonymous, *Qingdai xingwang shi*, in Meng Sen et al., *Qingdai yeshi: yige wangchao mohu de beiyin*, 62–63.

<sup>74</sup> Zou Yigui, "Zou Yigui zou Miao min bei qi jiyuan zhe," in Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan etc., eds., *Qin dai qianqi Miaomin qiyi dang'an shiliao huibian*, 229.

<sup>75</sup> Fang Xian, "Fang Xian zouqing yu Miao jiang bianli baojia zhe," in Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan etc., eds., *Qingdai qianqi Miaomin qiyi dang'an shiliao huibian*, 132.

The Qianlong emperor's handling of the southwest minority issue returned to a laissez-faire style without attempting to understand and accommodate the cultural differences. While he excluded the Miao from the Qing Code as an acknowledgment of the difference of the two cultural traditions, Qianlong "poured cold water on the feasibility of educating the Miao of the southwest."<sup>76</sup> At the same time, Qianlong favored Manchu and Chinese bannermen and usually reserved the higher-level provincial and military positions for them.<sup>77</sup> These Manchu and Han bannermen, however, were overwhelmingly advocates of a policy of segregation or "quarantine," while the Qianlong emperor himself held an indifferent and pessimistic attitude towards the prospect of the Miao's acculturation.<sup>78</sup> The eminent Qing history specialist Meng Sen also asserted that the Qianlong emperor failed to discipline corrupt officials at the local level, and he was not consistent in his policy. On the one hand, Qianlong knew very well that the disorder of the Miao area was caused by local officials' abuse of power, but on the other hand, he ordered military suppression of the Miao people to cater to the desires of certain nobles. Among these Manchu aristocrats were Fukang'an, relative of Qianlong, and He Lin, the younger brother of the notorious minister He Shen. Fukang'an was an able military commander but "his use of public office to further his own political and financial fortunes gave him a reputation for unscrupulousness second only to that of Ho-shen (Heshen)."<sup>79</sup> Meng Sen argued that it was absurd for Qianlong to announce the punishment of abusive local officials after he had completed the suppression in which Fukang'an had already slaughtered thousands of Miao people.<sup>80</sup> Meng Sen's assessment of Yongzheng and Qianlong was echoed by another Qing historian, Xiao Yishan, who also praised Yongzheng's political philosophy of "appropriateness" (*yi*) while questioning the overall creativity and ability of Qianlong.<sup>81</sup>

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## Conclusion

Greater intervention and direct management of Guizhou's chieftains and tribes by the Qing "modern state," to use the term of Francis Fukuyama, an influential

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<sup>76</sup> Donald Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire: The Miao Uprising of 1795–1797 Reexamined," 115.

<sup>77</sup> Dai, *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet*, 159–60.

<sup>78</sup> Donald Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century," in Crossley et al., eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, 196, 204–5.

<sup>79</sup> Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)*, 254.

<sup>80</sup> Meng Sen, *Qing shi jiangyi*, 328–29. For Fu Kang'an's brutality in slaughtering Miao ringleaders of the uprising, see Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire: The Miao Uprising of 1795–1797 Reexamined," 145–46.

<sup>81</sup> Xiao Yishan, *Qingshi dagang*, 45–46.

political thinker of today, was inevitable as a process of building a centralized state.<sup>82</sup> It was necessary due to the strategic concerns of the Yongzheng emperor and the government's plan of promoting local safety and communication, the need for further administrative integration and the assimilation of the uncooked Miao people as the subjects of the Qing emperor. The process of consolidating and extending Qing authority in the Miao frontier was a combination of military repression and moderate persuasion, but more importantly a process of cultural negotiation and mutual understanding. During the process, various local Chinese officials developed a sympathetic view of the Miao people and appreciation of their distinct culture. As observers of the Miao culture and critics of the violent subjugation of Miao by some Qing commanders, local Chinese officials' presence and articulation not only provided the earliest ethnographic observation of the Miao as a people and helped the higher authorities and the throne in decision making, but also demonstrates that a respect for difference, equal treatment, and economic prosperity was the solution to the ethnic issue in a large empire like the Qing.

While it seems that the centralization process alone made the conflict, instability and violence inevitable, I argue that the Miao people did not necessarily oppose or resist the Qing state intervention at the outset, especially when it was executed in an equal and respectful way. They changed from acceptance to resistance and rebellion largely because of the overreaction by Qing military generals who dehumanized the non-Han indigenes.<sup>83</sup> The situation was exacerbated by some officials' misconceptions that all Miao were intrinsically stupid, aggressive and violent, and their blind labeling of all rebels as "Miao."<sup>84</sup> In this sense, the bureaucratization in the Miao frontier of southeast Guizhou implemented by the Qing government was not only a question of building institutions, but also, more significantly, a question of understanding an important difference, while acknowledging the humanity of the different group and respecting its own culture and dignity.

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<sup>82</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The Origin of the Political Order: From Prehuman Times to The French Revolution*, 92–93.

<sup>83</sup> Here Nicola Di Cosmo's study on the break-up of Han-Xiongnu relationship can be used as an explanatory tool to interpret Miao people's violation of the alliance treaty they signed with the Qing government. Like the Xiongnu but in even a worse situation, the scattered Miao never had a political authority of their own that could truly honor the treaty, and the Miao's rebellion was usually a contingency and reaction to circumstances. See Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemy*, 227.

<sup>84</sup> Perdue, "Nature and Nurture on Imperial China's Frontiers," 266.

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