

Chapter 7

Classification into the Chinese National Family

Introduction

Previous chapters examined the creation of Yunnan before the twentieth century. The milestone in this development was the emergence of the so-called Yunnanese, a self-conceived, local identity that marked the success of the long-term imperial colonization of Yunnan. This chapter will turn the attention from imperial China to modern China and from the periphery to the center, that is, how Chinese rulers perceived, labeled, named, and categorized frontier ethnic groups.

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The Chinese view of frontier ethnic peoples was fundamentally determined by two factors: state ideologies and pragmatic considerations. By *state ideologies*, I mean specifically Confucianism and neo-Confucianism in imperial China and Chinese Marxism in contemporary China. By *pragmatic considerations*, I mean in particular the political and socioeconomic elements that determined the management of the frontier peoples, for instance, the process that was designed for their incorporation and the degree of incorporation that they were made to undergo. Examining the two intertwined elements—state ideologies and pragmatic considerations—suggests that the Chinese attitude toward native or local ethnic peoples in Yunnan has undergone dramatic changes over the centuries. By the early Han Dynasty, Chinese attitude was more accomodating, although it still displayed some degree of discrimination. Ban Gu's *Han Shu*, of the latter Han first century, set the typical Confucian tone of the time that denigrated non-Chinese peoples by drawing cultural distinctions between them and the Chinese. One would assume that Song China (1127-1279) would have most despised native peoples since neo-Confucianism emerged at the time, but it turns out, however, that the Song rulers' pragmatic approach outweighed their neo-Confucian ideology and compelled them to maintain quite an egalitarian stance with the native populations. A turnaround occurred during the Yuan-Ming-Qing period when Yunnan was considered a part of China and the emperors of the Ming and Qing began to see, to some extent, native ethnic peoples as imperial subjects, and as junior members of the Chinese national family rather than as inferior Others.

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When the Communists took power, they continued the incorporation project. Equipped with Chinese Marxism, they claimed to see and treat all ethnic minorities equally. Launching their equality principle, a large state project of ethnic identification was carried out in order to classify ethnic peoples into different *minzu* (Chinese nationalities¹) as representatives and constituents of the Chinese national family. As a consequence, ethnic groups were selected by the state to represent themselves on the national stage. At the same time, their entrance onto the stage

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was a symbol of their agreement to be integrated into the larger Chinese family. Such a deal illustrates the success of Chinese state in incorporating the frontier areas and ethnic peoples. In essence, the Communist projects were a continuation and development of imperial efforts.

From Barbarians to Imperial Subjects to Younger Brothers

Peoples from different cultures have historically often seen each other as savage or barbaric; this was how the Chinese saw indigenous peoples around Yunnan. Assuming that they occupied the center of the world, Chinese people believed in their cultural superiority and regarded all non-Chinese peoples as uncivilized. The Chinese felt a deep moral and ethical commitment and responsibility to civilize those peoples and save the world by spreading Chinese culture. This is truly the case of Yunnan. Seen as barbarian, savage, uncivilized, rude, bellicose, dangerous, and exotic, Yunnan, with its abundant resources desired by the Chinese, was described as female, childish, and ancient, but educable.² According to Chinese historical writings, frontier Yunnan was attractive but dangerous, and required Chinese dominance to be civilized. 4

While such a cultural bias featured the Chinese attitude toward non-Chinese peoples, it is too general and too simplistic to conclude that the Chinese always discriminated against others, as the flexibility of Chinese culture and complexity of historical process were often underestimated. Images and representations are determined by not only who the subjects are but also who the observers are, what the observers want to see and not to see, and what the observers expect, desire, and despise. Therefore, to examine the Chinese image of Yunnan peoples, we have to ask questions such as: Where was China? Who were the Chinese? What was Chinese identity? What changes of the Sino-Yunnan relationship have taken place over the past 2,000 years? 5

It is true that the Chinese used categories of *hua* (Chinese) and *yi* (barbarians) to distinguish themselves from others. They regarded themselves as civilized, and others as uncivilized, semi-animal, or animal-like. However, the long-term and continuous expansion of the Chinese empire brought many ethnic peoples under its surveillance, which consequently led to many questions, such as: How did Chinese rulers regard these new conquered ethnic people? What terms were used to refer to these peoples? Were these ethnic peoples treated the same as Han subjects? And what happened when these peoples were sinicized? The following section will take Yunnan as a case study to illustrate how Chinese rulers saw native peoples on frontiers. I argue that in the long run, the Chinese tended to perceive these ethnic peoples as gentle and equal when these peoples and their territory were incorporated into the Chinese empire. 6

The first Chinese record of the Southwestern Barbarians was *Shi Ji*. Although Sima Qian used the character *yi* to refer to these peoples, his tone was quite equitable, and his record of local society and life was descriptive and fairly objective, with little cultural judgment or bias. Sima 7

Qian called native peoples *xi'nanyi*, namely, "Southwestern Barbarians," but the word *yi* did not suggest the contempt that it would come to denote when Confucianism became a state ideology. The character *yi* consists of two radicals, "people" (*ren*) and "bow" (*gong*), originally referring to hunting peoples. In early times, the word *yi* did not express the later-assumed "barbarian" context. For example, the Zhou rulers were traced to the *yi* origin by Mencius. Indeed, both *dongyi* (Eastern Barbarians) and *xiyi* (Western Barbarians) contributed to the creation of the Huaxia people, the origin of Han Chinese. Nonetheless, things began to change as Confucianism was systematized and the meaning of *yi* gradually became deprecating.

Ban Gu, the author of *Han Shu*, set the tone for later Confucian scholars by seeing the "Southwestern Outer Barbarians" (*xi'nan waiyi*) as "a different kind [of creature] in a different territory (*zhongbie yushu*)."³ His record concerning the Southwest Barbarians was entirely copied from *Shi Ji*, but the tone changed dramatically as he criticized Sima Qian's egalitarian attitude toward non-Chinese peoples. The reason was that ethnocentric Confucianism had been accepted as a state ideology in Ban Gu's time.⁴ Since then, many humiliating terms had been invented to describe Yunnan and its peoples, such as *man* and *liao*, which contain contemptible radicals of "worm" and "dog." Cultural bias was added to many words, as I have explained with regard to the word *yi*. In addition, many absurd legends and stories containing cultural judgments and prejudices were invented to describe native peoples. For example, stories of ethnic peoples with tails and people who could turn into tigers after death were found in many imperial sources. Some authors claimed that they had actually witnessed these absurd things. Finally, imperial scholar-officials tried to fit Yunnan into the Chinese tributary language, seeing local peoples and their kingdoms as part of Chinese tributary system, even when Yunnan and its ethnic peoples were beyond Chinese boundaries.

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The Mongol conquest fundamentally changed the trajectory of Yunnan, as for the first time from the Han Dynasty onward, Yunnan and China proper were put under one central authority. In his talk with Sayyid'AJall Shams Al-Din, Khubilai Khan used the word *yuanren* ("people afar" or "subjects afar") to refer to ethnic peoples in Yunnan, which suggests that the Yuan rulers regarded Yunnan as part of its empire and Yunnan's ethnic peoples as its subjects. Unlike the Ming and Qing rulers, the Mongols did not distinguish between Han Chinese and non-Chinese in Yunnan. There were two reasons for this. First, there were very few Han Chinese in Yunnan during the Mongol time. Second, the Mongol rule in Yunnan was relatively lax. Vast territories and peoples were controlled by native chieftains.

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The Ming and Qing periods were crucial to Yunnan's transformation. First, a myth that Yunnan had always been part of China was created and held to be true. Zhu Yuanzhang, in his edicts, took the tone that Yunnan had been part of China since the Han period via the period of the Sui and Tang dynasties.⁵ Second, ethnic peoples in Yunnan were gradually taken as imperial

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subjects. The following tables display the references used by Yuan, Ming, and Qing courts for the native peoples in Yunnan. Scrutinizing the list suggests that the imperial court's opinion of its subjects in Yunnan gradually became milder.

Table 7.1 Official Terms for the Yunnan Indigenes in the Yuan Period
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Table 7.2 Official Terms for the Yunnan Indigenes in the Ming Period
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Table 7.3 Official Terms for the Yunnan Indigenes in the Qing Period
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These three tables convey a lot of information. First, as the characters *man* and *yi* were both used as general terms, *man* gradually appeared less, probably because *man* uses a radical of "worm" (*chong*), while the character *yi*, uses a radical of "people" (*ren*). Second, many new words were created and many neutral terms were used more and more often, such as *yiren*, *yimin*, *manmin*, *turen*, *tumin*, or *tuzhu*. By combining *ren* (humans, people) or *min* (people or subject) with *yi* (barbarian), *man* (barbarian), or *tu* (native, local), the contemptible tone expressed by *yi* and *man* were much neutralized, since the characters *yi* and *man* were used as adjectives, and more or less referred to the geographical remoteness instead of animals or a semi-animal nature. To some extent, *yiren*, *yimin*, and *manmin*, were used like *tumin* or *turen*, which meant, literally, "native people/subjects" on the recently conquered frontier.

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Finally, some words usually reserved for Han subjects were used to label ethnic peoples as well, for example, *baixing*, *chizi*, *lixian*, and *bianmeng*. If Ming emperors used them subconsciously, Qing rulers, such as the Yongzheng emperor, indeed felt a deep ethical and moral responsibility to treat ethnic subjects as equals to his Han subjects. In 1659, the Shunzhi emperor clearly stated that "Yun-Gui has recently entered the territory, and all *baixing* there are my *chizi*" (*Yun-Gui xinru bantu, baixing jie zhen chizi*).⁶ *Gaitu guiliu*, Yongzheng claimed, was a project to "free" ethnic subjects from the brutal rule of native chieftains. While ethnic peoples might have suffered more, Yongzheng's sincerity seems to be beyond doubt. In his edicts, Yongzheng clearly stated that the indigenes, just like Han Chinese, were his subjects.⁷ The belief that indigenes were imperial subjects was in accordance with the intellectual trend represented by Yang Shen, as he commented that as long as ethnic peoples accepted imperial governance, they were Chinese.

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The trend of recognizing ethnic peoples as equals was also reflected by imperial rulers' criticism of the supposedly treacherous Han Chinese (*hanjian*).⁸ Just like on the Taiwan frontiers, the Qing emperors and local officials were very concerned with Han merchants and sojourners who abused their knowledge and resources to take advantage of ethnic peoples. In the Southwest, for instance, the Qing state forbade Han migrants, including merchants, to

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purchase lands from ethnic peoples, not just once, but many times. Although the fundamental aim of these regulations was to secure the frontier society, some of the interests of ethnic peoples were protected by imperial governments.

As the incorporation process went on, local people were seen as imperial subjects not only by imperial governments and Confucian elites, but also by themselves. This trend and heritage was developed in the twentieth century by the Chinese state, which claimed that all ethnic minorities were treated equally. A major measure to launch the equality principle was the Minzu Identification (*minzu shibie*) project (1950s–1980s), which classified ethnic minorities from imperial subjects as younger brothers within the large Chinese family in which the Han Chinese have dominated. 14

Controversies over Minzu Identification

The People's Republic of China claims to be a unitary multinational state (*tongyi de duominzu guojia*). Since the 1950s, fifty-five minority *minzus* have been assigned in the Minzu Identification state project. The invention and introduction of *minzu* has been one of several key terms adopted in twentieth-century China, as *minzu* not only serves as a key feature to identify individual Chinese but also has greatly shaped contemporary Chinese society.⁹ When an ethnic group is officially assigned with the title *minzu*, it is automatically and officially inaugurated into the large Chinese national family. Since Han Chinese is the majority group, the other fifty-five *minzus* are called "minority *minzus*" (*shaoshuminzu*). Moreover, minority *minzus* have been granted special, sometimes favorable treatment and policies,¹⁰ while vested with presumably "equal" political, economic, and cultural rights, for example, as representatives in Chinese government at all levels. Whereas certain minority *minzu* constitute the majority in a certain area, minority autonomous governments (province, city, county, or *xiang* or rural towns) are allowed to be established. Therefore, *minzu* is a unique and fundamental social construction created in China. In fact, *minzu* "is institutionalized as the basic unit" of China's "sociopolitical system."¹¹ 15

The word *minzu* is a modern invention; it did not appear in China until the late nineteenth century. Some say that it was borrowed from the Japanese by Liang Qichao; others believe it derives from English-Chinese translations. *Min* in Chinese means people, but can also refer to a kind of community, for example, a tribe. *Zu* literally means "human community or group."¹² Officially *minzu* translates as "nationality," but more often than not, it means "ethnic groups." The actual treatment of the word is quite complex. In a broad sense, it means the whole Chinese nation, that is, *zhonghuaminzu*. Officially, it includes all people who live within China's territory, which is comprised of fifty-six officially recognized *minzus*. In a narrow sense, *minzu* refers to a subgroup of the Chinese nation, for example, the Han, Mongols (*Mengguzu*), Tibetans (*Zangzu*), Muslims (*Huizu*), and so on. 16

Nonetheless, it would result in much confusion if we considered *minzu* to mean both "nationality" and "ethnicity." Steven Harrell has classified "three languages" in terms of defining *minzu* by the three actors: the discussed ethnic group, neighboring ethnic groups, and the state. Among the three kinds of "interactive languages," Harrell points out that the state language has the final word¹³ as only those ethnic groups acknowledged by the state would be given privileges of membership within the Chinese nationality family. Here arises the critical difference between *minzu* and *ethnicity*: the former is a state invention and construction while the latter is usually defined as a group with a distinct ethnic identity. Therefore, while ethnicity is shifting and flexible, *minzu* is fixed and exclusive.¹⁴ 17

But what are the criteria of *minzu*—what constituents qualify as *minzu*? Scholars logically turn to examine Stalin's theory of nationality, since it was regarded as the guideline in the *Minzu Identification Project*. It is hard to exaggerate Stalin's influence on the Chinese Revolution and "Socialist Building"; on the other hand, it is worth noting how Chinese Marxists have interpreted and reinterpreted Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism and, in turn, how they have implanted and transformed those theories and ideas into China's soil. Stalin's theory of nationality highlighted both the influence of Stalinism and China's pragmatic and flexible application. 18

The often-quoted definition of *minzu* by Chinese Marxists is the so-called four commonalities by Stalin. In "Marxism and the National Question," Stalin summarizes these as such: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."¹⁵ In the same article, Stalin asserts that none of the "four commonalities" taken separately was sufficient to define a nation and that if one of the four disappeared, the "nation" would cease to exist.¹⁶ Furthermore, Stalin claimed that the "nation" was a historical phenomenon that was formed only in a period of rising capitalism.¹⁷ Based on this statement, his concept of nationhood did not exist until the arrival of capitalism. But since capitalism did not take roots in China, does it mean there was no *minzu* in China before 1949, when the Communists took power, or before 1956, when socialist China was claimed? A heated discussion on this topic took place in the mid-1950s. 19

In 1954, Fan Wenlan, an influential historian, stated that Han nationality (*Hanminzu*) was formed when the Qin state united China in 221 BCE. He argued that Qin's policies of standardizing roads, characters, and measures agreed with the "four commonalities."¹⁸ Some scholars, however, citing Stalin's statement that *minzu* was a product of capitalism, accused Fan of having violated Stalin's conclusion, and concluded that *Hanminzu* could not have been formed until after the Opium War, when capitalism began to spread in China. Therefore, all the ethnic units in China, including the Han, were not *minzu* but *buzu* (*narodnost* in Russian), a stage between tribe (*buluo*) and nation (*minzu*) in the linear Marxist social trajectory, because 20

China before 1949 was labeled as "semi-feudal and semi-colonial,"¹⁹ a precapitalist society. But ethnic peoples felt so insulted by this hierarchy that these scholars were forced to reconsider their stance.²⁰

To bridge the gap between Marxist theories and Chinese reality, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) felt it necessary to strengthen research on minzu and religion, especially on how Marxist classic writings expounded on these issues. In 1958, the Institute of Minzu Studies (Minzu Yanjiusuo), devoted to translating and studying classic Marxist texts on nationality, was established. Minzu studies operated under the premise and assumption that the Marxist theories on nationality raised and elucidated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, constituted an integrated whole. If there were some differences or contradictions, it was because of people's different understandings and translations, since Marx and Engels wrote in German, while Lenin and Stalin wrote in Russian. As a result, any theoretical tension was easily simplified into a technical issue: inaccuracies of translation. **21**

Ya Hanzhang, a Marxist expert on minzu and religion, was a strong supporter of the above opinion. He and other scholars found that Engels had already presented the answer for the origins and formation of minzu. In his article "The Role of Labor," Engels concludes that nations came into being a long time before the emergence of capitalism. Was he in disagreement with Stalin who claimed that minzu was a product of capitalism? **22**

Ya certainly did not think so. After reviewing Stalin's other articles, Ya as well as his colleagues pointed out that when Stalin wrote that a nation was formed during a time of rising capitalism, he was referring specifically to the modern nation (*xiandai minzu*), and that what Engels discussed was the ancient nation (*gudai minzu*) and a universal law of nationality (*minzu de yiban guilü*). Hence, Ya argued that had previous translations treated *buzu* as ancient minzu, there would have been no contradictions.²¹ In a word, this theoretical issue was nothing but technical. **23**

This conclusion was presented by the Institute of Minzu Studies, and relevant translations thereafter were standardized.²² To Ya and his school, there were many minzus in China, but all ancient, and only after the establishment of People's Republic of China did those minzus become modern (socialist). Ya sticks to Stalinism strictly, but his school is not influential in practice.²³ Many other scholars do not agree with Ya. Liu E points out that the word *buzu* in Chinese was different from what Stalin meant, and that the translation of Stalin's *buzu* into *minzu* might not be appropriate.²⁴ **24**

Since there is a unified and consistent theory on minzu from Marx and Engels, via Lenin, to Stalin, the preceding issue was overtaken by the question of its application to China. Moreover, it was the application of Stalin's four commonalities that scholars of China have found the most difficult and scholars of the West have largely criticized. Here I turn to introduce the Minzu Identification Project, as it is because of and by this project that fifty-five minority minzus were **25**

designated and that the word *minzu* has been defined as distinct from both Western "ethnicity" and Soviet "nationality." The theories and classifications of this project also formed the basis of ethnology in China and thus is largely responsible for the sinicization of modern anthropology.

Southwest China was one of the two foci of the identification project (the other was Central China), due to its ethnic complexity, and because the most unresolved and debated problems of ethnic identity revolve around Southwest China. 26

Minzu Identification in Yunnan²⁵

The First Stage, 1949-1953

Map 7.1 Administrative Map of Yunnan Province 27

As soon as the CCP took over power in 1949, it began to establish its own political agenda. "Common Program," the provisional constitution of 1949, stipulated the equality of all minzus. In its Party Constitution, the CCP claimed itself to be the loyal representative of all Chinese minzus, in addition to being the vanguard of the proletariat. Under such an ideology, the CCP supposed itself to be the liberator and distributor of equal rights among previously exploited minority minzus. To put this ideology and policy into effect, it was first necessary to ascertain how many minzus were living in China before the equality principle could be instituted.²⁶ In short, the crucial issue challenging the CCP's equality declaration was to classify component minzus of the Chinese national family. However, among all the different groups, what kind of ethnic group qualified to be minzu, which would supposedly become an official participant in local and national political, economic, and cultural arenas?

Because of their relative dominance and historical significance, there were some self-evident minzu candidates—for example, the Han, Mongols, Muslim, Manchus, and Tibetans—but other minorities needed to be more carefully ascertained. From 1953 onward, a large movement for minzu identification was launched to decide what kind of ethnic groups should officially be labeled *minzu*. 28

No sooner had the CCP succeeded in consolidating its power and reviving China's economy than the minzu identification began in 1953. But indeed, minzu works (*minzu gongzuo*) started as soon as the CCP took over Southwest China in late 1949 and early 1950 because the control of these frontier areas required the cooperation of ethnic groups. As a result, by 1953 a national administrative hierarchy of minzu affairs (*minzu shiwu*) had been established. Many minzu colleges and cadre schools were set up, and many ethnic policies and rules were proposed, passed, and put into effect. 29

To reduce and eliminate the suspicions and resistance of ethnic peoples, the CCP dispatched several visiting delegations (*fangwentuan*) between 1950 and 1952 to ethnic areas to explain the CCP's minzu policy. While comforting the local minorities, especially the local elites, these 30

groups collected local social information such as categories and names of ethnic groups, populations, languages, histories, economy, and trade, education and hygiene, and cultural characteristics.²⁷ Following the central pattern, some provinces sent their own delegations to local ethnic areas.

The Southwest Delegation, the first central delegation, which set out in June 1950, included more than 120 members from over twenty ministries. Later they were joined by local cadres and scholars. Liu Geping, a senior revolutionary was the head, and Xia Kangnong and Fei Xiaotong were deputies. They each led one branch: Liu went to Xikang Province, Fei to Guizhou, and Xia to Yunnan.²⁸ Simultaneously, the CCP organized local elites into "visiting groups" (*canguantuan*) or "representative groups" (*daibiaotuan*) and invited them to visit Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and other cities where they were supposedly impressed by the development and progress of New China.²⁹ The Yunnan visiting group included over thirty members. They went to Beijing, attending the ceremony of the first anniversary of the People's Republic of China and interviewing leaders such as Zhu De, father of the Red Army. Following this, they left for other large cities.³⁰

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When Fei Xiaotong and his team arrived in Guizhou, over thirty ethnic units asked to be recognized as minzu, partially due to the goodwill shown by the CCP.³¹ Members of the visiting group in Guizhou would not have complained about the confusion had they known about the ethnic complexity in Yunnan where over 260 ethnic groups applied. When the Yunnan branch arrived in Kunming in June 1950, it was joined by more than thirty local cadres and scholars, including a vice president of the Yunnan provincial government. While taking the chance to interview the ethnic people, they launched case surveys. As soon as they arrived, they interviewed minority peasants who were attending the first provincial peasant conference. They were then divided into several working teams, each assigned to local investigations. From August 1950 to May 1951 these teams went to Yiliang, Lijiang, Baoshan, Dali, Chuxiong, Wuding, Mengzi, Puer, and Wenshan, visiting over 230,000 ethnic people. In addition, they helped local governments hold four minority representative meetings and two workshops for ethnic cadres.³² As a result, twenty village surveys and over ten studies were completed. These data, plus other local sources that were collected, were compiled into *A Draft of Collected Minzu Information in Yunnan* in July 1951.³³ Although the main goal of the central visiting delegations was to explain the minzu policy of the new regime, their investigations more or less touched on minzu issues, and sometimes on minzu identity. This approach and research style (case studies) later characterized the Minzu Identification Project. Hence, it is fair to conclude that the central visiting delegations were a rehearsal for minzu identification.

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Local governments in Yunnan had their own role in minority affairs. Yunnan was not only a minority province but also a frontier province where numerous ethnic groups lived within and across boundaries. Besides bandits, remnants of the Guomindang army were active in Burmese tropical forests, which made minzu works in Yunnan even more sensitive. Correspondingly, the CCP's initial steps were just as cautious. In general, the CCP emphasized

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the necessity and importance of investigation and study of local situations before any decision regarding ethnicities were made. In Yunnan this idea was regarded as a guideline. In February 1950, the Yunnan party branch passed its working principle, emphasizing slow movement, advocating unity, and opposing anxiety, struggle, and radicalism.³⁴ In short, in the beginning, the CCP tried to control and stabilize rather than transform the locality.

At the end of 1950, a conference on minzu projects was held in Yunnan. Based on preliminary investigations, the party branch divided the whole province into two areas: inland zones, where ethnic peoples lived in compact groups, and the frontier area (*bianyanqu*), where the native chieftain system still existed. Different policies were implemented in these two zones. In the first one, the CCP immediately launched land reforms and other movements that had already been implemented in inland China. By 1952, land reforms there had been completed. 34

The sixteen counties of the frontier zone (including Lijiang, Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Diqing, Lincang, Simao, mostly located along boundaries) underwent a rather different experience. Tai, Hani, Zang (Tibetans), Yi, Bai, Jingpo, Lisu, Va, Bulang, and Han people, with a combined population of 2 million (nearly one-eighth of Yunnan's population), were under the rule of local chieftains.³⁵ When land reforms were postponed in the frontier zone, investigations were carried out. The main goal from 1950 to 1952 was the so-called sorting out of minzu relationships (*shutong minzu guanxi*). Basically, the party branch sent out working teams to negotiate with the upper classes of ethnic groups, to ally with them, and to reach out to the masses through them. In essence, the CCP attempted to win the cooperation and support of ethnic elites. Ma Yao's experience in Dehong illustrated the necessity of this policy. 35

In summer 1952, Mao Yao, deputy secretary of minzu affairs, in charge of minzu investigations and studies in Yunnan, led a working team of more than 200 people to Dehong. In many villages, they found men running away, women hiding, children crying, chickens flying, and dogs barking. Ma and his team were forced to make the announcement that the native chieftain system would not be changed and no reforms would be launched unless approved by local ethnic leaders. The suspicions gradually diminished, and with the help of the elite members of the communities Ma began to reach out to the common people. Ma's experience explains why the systematic minzu investigation, namely, the Minzu Identification Project, did not begin until 1954.³⁶ 36

After a series of steps, the timing for minzu classification was thought to be ripe in 1954. First, the CCP managed to consolidate its regime; second, bureaucratic hierarchies were created from top to bottom; finally, the CCP had gained some experience, information, and personnel through early exercises. That is why the period from 1950 to 1953 (the year 1953 saw the first national census) is commonly recognized as the first stage of minzu identification. In this stage, among more than four hundred minzu candidates, thirty-eight minzuz were identified.³⁷ 37

The Second Stage, 1954-1963

The period from 1954 to 1963 (the year 1963 saw the second national census) was the second stage when further large-scale investigations and identification sessions were launched. The Central Minzu Affairs Commission (Zhongyang Minzugongzuo Weiyuanhui, "CMAC" hereafter) was in charge of this huge ethnological project, and local ethnic groups were invited to apply for the status of minzu. Over 1,700 scholars and students of ethnology, history, and linguistics were mobilized and dispatched to local areas, providing "scientific" reports for the central state to use in making final decisions. 38

Southwest China and Central China were the two foci, while small teams, when necessary, were dispatched to Northeast, Northwest, and East China. In Southwest China, Yunnan won major attention, thanks to its complexity. The year 1954 witnessed over 400 ethnic groups applying for recognition as minzu, among which more than 260 were from Yunnan. From May to October 1954, the Yunnan Investigation Team of Minzu Identification sent by the CMAC launched a large-scale survey and research project. Team members included Lin Yaohua, Shen Jiaju, Liu Yaohan, Wang Wenqing, Shi Lianzhu, Wang Xiaoyi, and many other famous scholars. For example, Lin Yaohua was a Harvard Ph.D. and had published an article in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. They visited various areas including Wenshan, Mengzi, Yuxi, Lijiang, Dali, and Puer, studying Yi, Zhuang, Dai, and Hani ethnic groups. Their research was in cooperation with the United Front Department of Yunnan Party Branch, Minzu Affairs Council, Institute of Language (Chinese Academy of Science), Yunnan University, Yunnan Minzu College, and Kunhua Hospital. As a result, sixty-eight ethnic units were identified.³⁸ 39

Thirty years later, Lin Yaohua recalled that thirteen units were first approved as minzu, and then sixty-eight more units were classified. The thirteen minzuz were Yi, Bai, Dai, Miao, Hui, Va, Hani, Lisu, Lahu, Naxi, Jingpo, Zang, and Yao.³⁹ Other units belonged to the following two categories. The first category was determined to be branches of existing minzuz. Lin Yaohua listed Tujia and Menghua as examples. These two groups had small populations (Tujia: 170,000; Menghua: 40,000), and were scattered over a dozen counties. Lin found that their languages were very similar and their customs, rituals, and economy were the same as the Yi minzu. As a result, they were classified into the Yi.⁴⁰ Some other ethnic groups were also classified as Yi branches, mainly based on languages and customs. In total, forty-three units were classified into twenty branches of the Yi.⁴¹ The second category was recognized as Han Chinese. Lin listed the Zheyuan (sugarcane farm) people in Funing County. The Zheyuan were so named because they made living by planting sugarcane. Their population was around 1,000. Lin's research found that they were descendents of Han migrants, who spoke Cantonese.⁴² Shi Lianzhu, Lin's colleague in this project, has detailed the classification of applicants into several major minzuz, for example, Zhuang, Yi, Hani, Minjia (Bai) and Va.⁴³ As a result, twenty-two minzuz in Yunnan were identified.⁴⁴ 40

The identification project in Yunnan could not have been carried out without the assistance of local governments. By early 1951, both in the provincial government and in the party branch the Yunnan Minzu Affairs offices had been established.⁴⁵ Before the arrival of the central team, many local teams already had been dispatched for case surveys. These local teams were shocked by several hundred ethnic names in Yunnan. Some names were what they had given themselves; some were what they were called; some were named after their professions; some were named after their hometowns; and some were named after their sub-branch of ethnicity.⁴⁶ The first task of the Provincial Minzu Affairs Commission was to find out the composition of ethnic minorities.⁴⁷ Ma Yao's office examined these names and straightened out more than a dozen ethnic groups with large populations. Ma's decisions on names for these ethnic groups, as he stated, were based on their own wills.⁴⁸ On another occasion, he said that the above several hundred names were classified into 132 categories.⁴⁹ 41

Linguists contributed a lot to the identification project.⁵⁰ As early as 1952, Fu Maoyong led his linguistic team to Yunnan for ethnic language survey and reform. The team studied the languages of Dai, Hani, Va, Lahu, Jingpo, Achang, Lisu, and Nu minzu and they helped create fourteen scripts for ethnic groups,⁵¹ just like some Christian missionaries had done in Guizhou and Yunnan. In 1955, when a nation-wide survey of ethnic languages was launched, another working team with more than a hundred members arrived in Yunnan. They were joined by over 200 local people, and investigated over a dozen ethnic groups. These linguistic studies to a large degree shaped the classification of ethnic applicants. Both Lin Yaohua and Shi Lianzhu list language as a vital criterion of classification,⁵² which confirms Norma Diamond's conclusion that language was taken as a "key feature" in the identification.⁵³ Sometimes, as has been criticized, emphasis on language tended to go too far.⁵⁴ 42

By 1956, when land reform was finished in most areas in Yunnan, China launched the so-called socialist reforms. Leaders of the CCP envisioned that these reforms in ethnic areas would cause the disappearance of precapitalist societies in which ethnic groups were living. So they decided to launch another survey, one of ethnic societies and history. Because ethnic societies were regarded as backward and as "vivid fossils of social history," the slogan of this survey was, "Save the Backward" (*qiangjiu luohou*).⁵⁵ 43

The Investigation Team of Minority Society and History in Yunnan was led by Fei Xiaotong. They arrived in Kunming in August 1956, and local scholars such as Fang Guoyu, Hou Fangyu, Yang Kun, and Jiang Yingliang worked with them. Under the guidelines of Marxism, this survey made a comprehensive investigation of ethnic groups. The data produced focused on productivity, relations of production, class structure, religions, and customs.⁵⁶ However, this survey was disrupted by the 1957 "anti-rightist movement," for which Fei Xiaotong was summoned back to Beijing and criticized. The radical ideology that prevailed in the following years greatly reduced the reliability of sources and researches of the time. 44

The Formula of Chinese Nationality: 56 = 1

By the second national census in 1963, ethnic minorities had been classified into fifty-three minzhus. The Keba group was recognized in 1965 and Jinuo in 1979. Since the Jinuo, no more new minzu have been designated. Twenty-five minzhus have officially been identified in Yunnan: Yi, Bai, Hani, Zhuang, Dai (Tai), Miao (Hmong), Jingpo, Lisu, Hui (Muslim), Lahu, Va (Wa), Naxi, Yao, Zang (Tibetan), Bulang (Blang), Primi (Pumi), Nu, Achang, Deang, Jino (Jinuo), Shui, Man (Manchus), Menggu (Mongolian), Buyi, and Dulong. There are some unidentified peoples, for example, the Kemu people and Kucong people.⁵⁷ 45

Since the identification of Jinuo, the project has been frozen. In 1987, the state announced that the project was "basically completed."⁵⁸ The word "completed" implies that no new minzu will be recognized in the future,⁵⁹ although the word "basically" betrays that there are still remaining issues (*yiliu wenti*). These issues are of two types: one is identifying the unidentified; the other is re-identifying those ethnic groups dissatisfied with their designation.⁶⁰ Since the recognition of the Jinuo, the number of the large Chinese nationality family has been fixed, although research and work continue. 46

During and after Deng Xiaoping's era, the fifty-six minzhus have been written into textbooks and deployed in the media as fifty-six flowers of the Chinese nation. For example, in the annual Central China TV's (CCTV) annual Spring Festival Show, the most popular show in China, one inseparable theme is the unity of fifty-six minzhus. People in exotic clothes perform special dances and songs that are supposed to represent their unique ethnic cultures and traditions, symbolizing the happy lives of minorities within the Chinese national family under the leadership of the CCP. Through media, propaganda, and education, the formula 56 = 1 and the idea of fifty-five "younger brothers" to the Han Chinese "older brother" have been effectively instilled. 47

The Soviet Model: Problems with Application

While the Minzu Identification Project has turned into a kind of neotradition and has been regarded as scientifically sound by the government, the criteria for minzu identification have been questioned since the very beginning. Western scholars have felt confused because they have not found consistency in the criteria of identification. For instance, in 1971, Henry Schwarz complained, "In the issuing of laws, regulations, policy statements, and work reports, they have never publicized their definition of a minority."⁶¹ Western students often criticize Stalin's four-commonalities theory for leaving out self-consciousness in favor of externally imposed values and for its rigid application by the Chinese.⁶² Thomas Heberer concludes that the application "seems absurd," because each of China's minzu lacked common language, 48

territory, economic life, and culture.⁶³ Scholars in China, however, have been generally proud of their practice of Marxist theories, although they have noticed and acknowledged some shortcomings and problems.

My view differs from scholars from both the West and China. It differs from Western scholars because I argue that the application of Stalinism was rather pragmatic and flexible. My view departs from that of Chinese Marxist scholars because I do not agree that the identification project was as scientific as they claim. In fact, I do not think that the identification was solely guided by Marxist ideology. Rather, it should be put into historical context, regarded as a continuity and development of imperial heritage. Imperial traditions and legacy played an easily ignored role. In essence, with the Minzu Identification Project the CCP continues the imperial goal to penetrate ethnic frontiers. **49**

During the identification process, scholars of China, partially due to thought reforms launched by the CCP in the 1950s, claimed that Marxist theories on nationalities were the guideline and that Stalin's four commonalities were the criteria.⁶⁴ However, as soon as scholars launched investigations and case studies, they immediately found an unbridgeable gap between theory and reality: "Firstly, situations in China and in Soviet Union are different. Most minzus (in China) are in the pre-capitalist stages. Stalin's definition of minzu refers to modern minzu, so how to apply in the Identification in terms of those pre-modern minzus?"⁶⁵ **50**

In fact, what they could have done was to "continuously define, redefine, interpret, reinterpret, confirm, and reconfirm" the four commonalities, especially the last one, "psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."⁶⁶ Debates took place in the 1950s, 1960s, 1980s, and 1990s. Different views of the four commonalities have resulted not only from the degree of Marxism that scholars accepted but also from which ethnic groups they studied. **51**

Scholars felt it was the most difficult to grasp the psychological make-up component in Stalin's definition. Colin Mackerras has classified Chinese responses into two groups. Among the first group, Stalin's statement that none of the four commonalities could be omitted from any identification is ignored or downplayed; among the second group, the concept of four commonalities is itself challenged to some extent.⁶⁷ Indeed both responses attempted to reinterpret, to fix, Stalinism into China. For example, some scholars argued that the psychological make-up criterion was identical to ethnic features (*minzu tezheng*), ethnic consciousness (*minzu yishi*), and ethnic sentiment (*minzu ganqing*); some argued that it was more than the above three qualities; others insisted instead that equating psychological make-up to ethnic features, consciousness, and sentiment made no sense.⁶⁸ The efforts to add or incorporate ethnic consciousness to Stalin's definition were best revealed in Fei Xiaotong's address in 1978.⁶⁹ Fei, trained in London, was the first to realize that Stalin's definition ignored ethnic consciousness. **52**

In the beginning, Fei, like other scholars, accepted the four commonalities, but he immediately noticed their limitations. That was why Fei concluded in 1978 that the application of Marxist theories was the key to the success of identification.⁷⁰ Though in this address, Fei still mentioned that Stalin's definition was a "scientific generalization" (*kexue zongjie*) of Western nationalities formed in the capitalist period that should be taken as "guiding thought" (*zhidao sixiang*), he also emphasized the limitations of the theory and the particularity of the Chinese case. Although Fei referred to the four commonalities as the "guiding thought," overall I feel this was not his true evaluation, considering the historical and political circumstances he endured during the Cultural Revolution.⁷¹ Indeed, Fei's later addresses reflected his attitude more accurately. In his 1996 lecture in Japan, he no longer used "guideline" or "guiding theory" / "guiding thought." He frankly stated, "The four features in our minzu identification can only be used as a reference."⁷² In addition to serving as a "reference" (*cankao*), Fei thought that the contribution of the four criteria was to inspire the Chinese people's own thoughts about the characteristics of Chinese minzu (*zhongguo minzu de tese*).⁷³ It is in this way that the Chinese *minzu* differs both from Western ethnicity and the Soviet model of nationality. Indeed, as early as his 1978 address, Fei emphasized the distinctive Chinese approach that might provoke Western criticism, and he cautioned that his use of the word *minzu* was based on Chinese tradition, although China never used the two characters *min* and *zu* together until the late nineteenth century.

Furthermore, in his 1996 speech, Fei Xiaotong denied that the common psychological makeup proposed in Stalin's four commonalities was applied to the Minzu Identification Project. Fei claimed that Stalin's assertions about communal psychology were neither tangible nor coherent. In contrast to Stalin, Fei gave a great deal of space to ethnic consciousness, as he discussed concepts such as "in-group" and "we-group," arguing that the so-called common psychology was actually ethnic consciousness.⁷⁵

The Stalinist common-language criterion also does not work in the Chinese case since many minority minzusu do not even have their own languages, and some use other ethnicities' languages. Hence, Fei refined the linguistic classification by asserting that common language in China only applied to minority minzusu who were living in a compact area and speaking similar or intelligible languages, although languages of different branches within one minzu may be unintelligible to everyone there. In terms of a common territory, Fei supported the concept of compact areas (*jujuqu*) shared by many ethnic groups. In terms of a common economy, Fei frankly responded that it was not applicable to China. Therefore, Fei implied that none of Stalin's four commonalities had actually been rigidly applied.

Fei's assertions are reflected in the minzu-classified groups, in which none of the 400-plus ethnic units or the fifty-six minzusu possessed the four commonalities.⁷⁶ Statistics by Chinese scholars have shown that only twenty-one of fifty-five minzusu have their own written languages, and that fifty-three have their own spoken languages.⁷⁷ Only a few minzusu have their own territories, most sharing with others. For example, the Hui minzu spread from northwestern

grasslands to southeastern coastal areas.⁷⁸ And almost no minzu has had an independent economy due to long-term interactions with other peoples. As such, how could the identification project be accused of "rigid application" of the Stalinist model?

The concept of minzu is distinguishable from Stalin's idea of nationality because minzu includes diverse ethnic or pro-ethnic groups, regardless of the rung they occupy in the Marxist social ladder (be it a "modern" or "ancient" society). It differs from Western ethnicity because it is designated by the state. In fact, a certain minzu could be a mix of several ethnic groups; it could be one single ethnicity; it could be a subethnic unit or just a tribal community. The distinctness of minzu begins the process of sinicizing anthropology in China. It is during the long process of ethnic identification that Chinese ethnology emerged.⁷⁹ 57

The process of identification is indeed a complex one. Though results had to be approved by the state, many unexpected elements played roles, which were sometimes decisive. Consequently, it is very hard to find the criteria of identification, since such criteria varied from case to case. 58

Problems with Implementation of Minzu Identification

The identification project has left both positive and negative legacies. It yielded positive influence especially for some small and disadvantaged ethnic or subethnic groups. Theoretically, all minzu members of the Chinese national family are legally equal, and many minorities take advantage to pursue their interests. They welcome the advocacy of equality, and it benefits them to accept state decisions because, more or less, they have been provided with opportunities, resources, and potential space on a national stage, an offer never made before. These reasons partially account for the fact that over 200 ethnic/pro-ethnic groups in Yunnan applied in 1953 to be minzu. And it was in this process that many ethnic minorities created or strengthened their ethnic consciousness. 59

The Daur people in Northeast China serve as a good example. Before 1949, the Daur people made a living by hunting and gathering, were often abused and exploited by the Mongols, and never shared a common ethnic awareness. However, the identification project investigation team reconstructed their history in light of Marxist ideology and decided that the Daur qualified to be a minzu. It was during this identification process that a common identity was formed among the Daur people. The Daur welcomed the decision and thought highly of the CCP because they had never been treated so well before. The She people in Zhejiang and Fujian provinces are another such case. They live in mountainous areas, while the neighboring Han Chinese occupy fertile lands. Their classification as a single minzu has brought them many advantages, which gradually helped them shed their reluctance to accept categorization as She. 60

It is hard to estimate exactly how many ethnic units have accepted state classification, but it seems that in general they are satisfied. For example, two of the three ethnic units classified into the Yi minzu that Stevan Harrell has examined have accepted the result.⁸⁰ And there are only a few cases of ethnic units that appealed their identification or applied for reidentification. In some circumstances, the units in question were wrongly classified, but the irony is that a common awareness among groups has been formed during the five-decade period. For example, the Yi, Yao, and Miao (Hmong) include many ethnic units who live far away; sometimes their languages are not intelligible to each other, so they could have been labeled as several different minzus. However, the classification into one minzu has helped to create a common consciousness among those scattered units.

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In short, the state policy encourages ethnic awareness while granting ethnic groups rights and benefits. It is widely noted that before 1949, Chinese ethnic minorities tended to hide their identity and claimed they were descendents of Han migrants. For example, many minorities in Yunnan insisted that their ancestors were military colonists, originating from Nanjing, the capital of the Ming Dynasty. By remarkable contrast, over 400 units applied to be minzu in the early 1950s. Although their consciousness was repressed during the Cultural Revolution, ethnic minorities now are proud of their non-Han identity.⁸¹ Since the 1980s, a nationwide ethnic nationalism has emerged, and, as Gladney has concluded, it is sometimes an unexpected challenge to the state authority.⁸² For example, the Deng people, who are classified as Tibetan minzu, have asked for reidentification, threatening its secession from China if they are not officially recognized as a single minzu.⁸³ The case of the Deng people is totally an unexpected result of the state policy, and their actions show how ethnic units make use of this system to struggle for their own interests and how they negotiate with the state.

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While the majority accepted their categories, the identification remains problematic in terms of both the process and the result. Whereas fifty-five minzu have been constructed among over 400 group-applicants, many other ethnic or subethnic groups have been forgotten, especially those in remote jungles, let alone those wrongly classified. The Limi people in Yunnan have voiced this concern. At first, they were ignored and then in the 1980s they were put into the Yi minzu, from which they think they are different.⁸⁴ Today, hundreds of thousands of people are waiting for identification, and unfortunately, even when some of them think that they are culturally different and distinctive, they likely will not become a new minzu. Rather, they are going to be classified into the existing minzu categories.

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Therefore, Henry G. Schwarz is partially correct: *minzu* lacks a clear definition, and the Minzu Identification Project lacks a clear standard. Scholars applied different criteria to different groups. After reviewing the application of Stalin's "four commonalities," Hsieh Jiann concludes that "the approach towards ethnic identification in practice is more dependent on traditional uncritical enumeration rather than on the academic analysis of the ethnic construction," as there is little evidence to show that the four commonalities has been applied.⁸⁵

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Hsieh's conclusion may go too far, but his suggestion that historical ethnic patterns have influenced the identification is correct. Western scholars criticized the identification process for overstressing historical origins while ignoring historical transitions, as well as they indicated other problems such as the overemphasis on language, influence of Marxist dogma, simplistic application of the four commonalities, and insufficient respect for the will of communities in question.⁸⁶ To a great degree, all the above problems result from the nature of this project: it was a centralized, state maneuver. 65

Localizing the Project: Local Governments, Ethnic Units, and Ethnic Elites

While I agree with Stevan Harrell's claim that the state had the final word in classifying ethnic applicants, many other factors and players were intertwined in this project. David Wu concludes, "These newly created fifty-six ethnic categories are therefore the results of national politics, official-scholars' research and interpretation, and minority groups' self-awareness and contesting of ethnic identity."⁸⁷ Wu's list needs to be expanded and the relationship among these elements elaborated. Besides the central state, scholars who conducted investigations and provided proposals, ethnic groups, and local governments were of significance in the identification. And in terms of ethnic groups, there were many questions. For example, did the neighboring ethnic groups affect the discussed unit? And what was the role of ethnic elites and masses, who had provided scholars with information and had expressed their will? Hence, while it is generally true that the state had the final word, their conclusions were drawn after a series of interactions and negotiations among ethnic units, scholars, local governments, and the central state. 66

Respect for the will of a group was an interesting issue in the identification, especially when few people have ever discussed how the principle was implemented. Fei Xiaotong vaguely stated that the final decisions were approved by ethnic representatives and the masses (*minzu daibiao ji qunzhong*) of discussed units.⁸⁸ Here I identify ethnic representatives with ethnic elites, but we still do not know the details. Shi Lianzhu mentioned that the identification asked for opinions from the masses of the ethnic units concerned, "especially intellectuals, cadres, and patriots of the upper class."⁸⁹ Her address seemingly implied that ethnic elites played more important roles than the masses, which can be supported by the case of Pingwu Zangren. 67

Pingwu Zangren ("Tibetans" in Pingwu County), or Baima Zangren (White Horse Tibetans), live in Sichuan Province (Pingwu County and Nanping County) and Gansu Province (Wen County). They were classified as Tibetans because their Tibetan chief reported in 1951 that his group was one of his people, but they later asked the state for reconsideration. Scholars discovered that their customs and religions were different from those of the Tibetans. The case of the Qiang people in Heishui County in Sichuan was almost the same case. They were identified as 68

Tibetans because of their Tibetan chief while the Qiang in other places were classified as Qiang minzu. These cases underline the argument that the "people's will" to a great extent was the elites' will.

The role of the local governments is another intriguing issue. Local governments were crucial because they functioned as the bridge between ethnic units and the central state. Ethnic applicants had to deal with local governments in the beginning. They had to present applications to local governments and to gain their approval for further procedures. Local governments also organized their own investigations or sometimes joined or cooperated with central teams. Ma Yao, an important leader of minzu affairs in Yunnan, categorized ethnic units before the arrival of the central team. From 1951 to 1953, several hundred names of minorities were reported to the Provincial Minzu Affairs Commission. Ma and his colleagues classified them into 132 groups, which provided a basis for further work by the central team.⁹⁰ Early surveys and studies by the local governments certainly yielded influence in terms of which area or ethnic group investigation teams were dispatched to investigate. 69

Tensions between ethnic and administrative boundaries, which the Ming and Qing states made considerable effort to deal with, were largely ignored in the identification. Many ethnic units lived across administrative boundaries, while the national investigation was conducted based on administrative units so that the lack of cooperation among local governments (mainly provinces) contributed to some incorrect classification.⁹¹ The Xifan (Western Barbarians) is such a case. The Xifan live both in Sichuan and Yunnan.⁹² In Yunnan they were labeled *Pumiminzu* and in Sichuan as the *Zangminzu* (Tibetans). The Zhuang people (Tai) are another example. In Guangxi they are called the *Zhuangminzu*, in Yunnan the *Buyiminzu*. The Nasuo people in Sichuan are regarded as the Monggu minzu (Mongolians), in Yunnan as the Naxi minzu. 70

Tensions among various ethnic units served as another subconscious element of identification. Large and powerful ethnic groups certainly enjoyed some advantages, for example, the Han, Tibetans, Mongols, Zhuang, and so on. First, while other units needed to be identified, these groups were assumed to be minzu without any investigation or research. That they were automatically seen as minzus more or less confirmed Hsieh's argument of historical enumeration. In Yunnan thirteen ethnic units were regarded as minzus with little research, because they had been publicly acknowledged for a long time (*lilai gongren*).⁹³ Their self-evident candidacy was closely associated with their relative dominance. The thirteen minzus in Yunnan included those powerful and influential groups such as the Yi, Bai, Naxi, Dai, Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus. 71

The relative domination and power of large ethnic groups not only affected their own classification but also those of the neighboring ethnic peoples. The case of the Deng people in Zayu (Tibet) is very illustrative. When the Deng threatened their recession from China if their 72

appeal was denied, the Tibetans resorted to the same strategy, arguing that the Deng would split the Tibetan minzu if the former are approved as a different minzu. Considering the special significance of Tibet, there is nearly no chance for the Deng people.

The closeness of their relationship with the CCP may have been another factor in their identification. For example, Wulanfu, a Mongolian and a senior Communist Party member, facilitated the strong voice of the Mongols in the state. The Zhuangminzu group is probably another product of minzu identification. Katherine Kaup points out that the Zhuang was a creation of the Communist Party in the PRC, because there had been no ethnic awareness prior to this.⁹⁴ But why did the CCP create Zhuangminzu? She cautiously states that maybe the CCP just took a risk to convince other minorities to accept the CCP's policy, using the case of Zhuang.⁹⁵ However, why did the CCP choose the Zhuang rather than other minorities, for example, the Yi, Miao, or Yao? One possible explanation is Zhuang's participation in the Chinese Revolution. Local people (labeled the *Zhuang* in 1958) actively took part in the 1929 Bose Uprising in Guangxi (Deng Xiaoping was a major leader in this series of uprisings and was one of those behind the creation of the local red army). 73

In some cases, decisions were made purely by chance. The Jinuo people in Jinghong County (Yunnan) are such a case. Du Yuting, the scholar who first investigated the Jinuo people in southern Yunnan in 1958 and took charge of the final proposal that was approved by the state in 1979, concludes that the "identification of Jinuo as minzu results from an element that cannot be ignored, that is, opportunity or contingency,"⁹⁶ because his visit in 1958 was dispatched by chance. The Jinuo people, the last minzu assigned, are just lucky, whereas many other small ones are not, such as the Limi people in Yunnan, who have been classified into the Yi minzu. In fact, the Jinuo are not the only lucky ones, and similar cases are found in Guangxi.⁹⁷ 74

Imperial Legacies in Minzu Construction

It is striking that Fei Xiaotong points out that his use of *minzu* is based on Chinese tradition although the term did not appear until the late nineteenth century. His statement suggests the persistent influence of imperial heritage on the modern efforts of state building. While the CCP claims its ethnic policies are unique in the world and unprecedented in history, contemporary ethnic approaches, policies, measures, and regulations, to a great degree, can be traced to imperial times. 75

The CCP regards the Minzu Identification Project as an unprecedented undertaking (*chuangju*), as it states that for the first time, all minzus within China have been treated equally in the Chinese nationality family and that minority minzus have been masters and decision makers in their internal affairs. All these achievements have been attributed to Marxism, the "scientific truth" on behalf of the exploited. It is dangerous to ignore Marxist influence on China, as well as to ignore the sinicization of Marxism (*makesi zhuyi zhongguohua*). On the other hand, it is dangerous to ignore the imperial heritage that shaped modern China's trajectory. Joseph W. 76

Esherick in his "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution" concludes, "1949 was a watershed, not an unbridgeable chasm," since the large structures of China's state and society "imposed significant constraints on the agents of revolution and counterrevolution."⁹⁸ I want to push his statement a little further: the imperial structures and traditions not only constrained the revolution but also greatly affected the aftermath, namely, modern state building.

William Skinner, more than thirty years ago, elaborated on the marketing systems in rural imperial China that the CCP attempted, but failed, to transform in the Great Leap Forward. The collapse of the People's Commune was convincing enough to reveal the imperial constraints on China's modernization efforts.⁹⁹ Vivienne Shue has discussed the negotiation and mediation between rural societies and the central state when the CCP tried to penetrate rural China.¹⁰⁰ Huang Shu-min's *The Spiral Road* serves as an annotation of her theoretical analysis, as Huang's book relates how traditional institutions have survived in socialist China.¹⁰¹ 77

Similarly, the CCP's "unprecedented" minzu policies had to confront imperial legacy and historical patterns. Hsieh Jiann argues that the identification was "more dependent on traditional uncritical enumeration,"¹⁰² which is interesting and insightful since he compares ethnic categories of the socialist state and traditional empires. If a long-term approach is deployed, the gap between modern nation-state and traditional imperial state is perhaps not as large as was commonly thought. After all, contemporary efforts and imperial projects share the aim to centrally control frontier peoples. 78

First, unlike what the CCP has claimed, contemporary ethnic projects are not liberating. The Communist regime did not emancipate, but has dominated differently.¹⁰³ Minzu identification, political participation, and special economic subsidies are not processes of increasing rights for ethnic minorities, but what Michel Foucault calls a process of delimitation that designates what could and could not be done.¹⁰⁴ 79

Second, while fifty-five ethnic minzhus have their representation in all levels of government, their presence has been a kind of political ornament for the authoritarian hall. It is true that the number of ethnic cadres has corresponded to that of the ethnic population, which has been set up as an important principle by the CCP. However, the role of ethnic cadres in politics is not correspondingly powerful or influential, neither in the local nor the national arena. Notably, it is the Han cadres who usually take critical offices. 80

Furthermore, the Minzu Identification Project in nature was a well-motivated and organized top-down state project. Essentially, it was an indivisible part of state-building launched by the CCP as part of its vision of a better world. It is the central state that has successfully set up an arena, for and imposed a designed order and system on, its chosen ethnic minority players. It is the central state that decides who to play, how to play, and what to play. In this sense, I have found many similarities between the imperial exam system and the minzu system. While the former presented social elites with access to power (potential leaders of future rebellions, in another 81

words), it greatly reduced the likelihood of future rebellion by harnessing their ambitions into the growth and fortification of the existing regime. These strategies also enhanced the legitimacy and flexibility of the ruling regime. That was why over a thousand years ago Tang Taizong exclaimed with great relief and happiness when he saw candidates entering the exam hall: "All the heroes under the Heaven are now within my hands" (*tianxia yingxiong jinru wo guzhong*).¹⁰⁵ Similar to the exam system, the *minzu* system, while providing space for the ethnic minorities to voice their opinions, delegitimizes other spaces and practices that they had previously enjoyed. Although this system helped the state establish the parameters of the game ethnic peoples, it resulted in the latter's loss of self-representation, especially among small groups such as the Limi people.

Wang Ningsheng, an archaeologist, visited the Wumulong People's Commune (Yongde County, Yunnan) in October 1981. There lived 1,514 Limi families with a population of 7,301, which made up 40 percent of the population in the commune. Answering Wang's questions, local people sighed: 82

We these small "minzus" are so meager. [We are said to be] minority *minzu*, but obtain no special treatment. Nobody at the top speaks for us. Good things never come to us. You ask how many people have studied colleges? None! For decades [there have only been] three high school students (two have not graduated) among our Limi people.

Our population is small, [so we] dare not (*bugan*) think to constitute a single *minzu*, unable to expect to form an autonomous county, but at least should establish an autonomous *xiang*. Among the Limi people here are the most populous. The Limi people are just the Limi. We are different from any other *minzu*.¹⁰⁶

Although the Limi people thought they were different, ironically, they were classified with the Yi *minzu* and an autonomous *xiang* (rural town) was established in March 1988.¹⁰⁷ The story of the Limi people shows how they were mistreated in the official space, and how little space the state leaves for those small and disadvantaged ethnic groups. But the Limi people are by no means alone (note that they refer to themselves as, "we these small minzus"); similar situations have certainly been experienced by many other small ethnic units in Yunnan. 83

Therefore, the *minzu* system in the People's Republic of China constructs new regulations for ethnic minorities, a continuation of the central government's advancement into the peripheries. Though many remarkable transitions and developments have been achieved, many contemporary practices have imperial counterparts that the CCP and its scholars, intentionally or not, avoid mentioning. 84

It is true that imperial China had never assigned titles such as *minzu* to all ethnic minorities, but official and honorable titles were given to chieftains, and similar projects were launched to classify ethnic peoples. The most eminent evidence may be the compilation of *Huang Qing Zhigongtu* (Illustration of all tributary peoples in the imperial Qing) under the edict of the 85

Qianlong emperor. To be sure, the rendering of tributary rituals, which had become a kind of tradition, was a responsibility of court artists. Many drawings of tributary missions have been carefully preserved, among which *Huang Qing Zhigongtu* was the largest.¹⁰⁸ In 1750, the Qianlong emperor ordered local officials to draw pictures of diverse ethnic peoples, flaunting the vastness and virtue of the Manchu rule. All drafts were sent to Beijing in 1757 and the project, containing nine chapters (*juan*), was completed in 1761. The Yunnan *juan* included thirty-six drawings. Each drawing includes one man and one woman (sometimes three people), with different clothes and engaged in customs representing their distinctive ethnic identity. It is hard to know the criteria by which these peoples were selected, but *Huang Qing Zhigongtu* was created in exactly the same way that the five series of minzu data were produced in the Minzu Identification Project.¹⁰⁹ These projects and collections became the process of categorization and systemization, which subjugated local knowledge. And those drawings were no different from CCTV's New Year's Eve Show, in which actors and actresses with supposedly distinctive minzu clothes performed on stage, thus making for a centralized idea of the ethnic minorities.

However, the most striking fact is the figure of twenty-five state-designated minority minzuz in Yunnan. The figure twenty-five, the result of "scientific" research, basically matches the categorization of Ming and Qing imperial works or gazetteers. Yang Shen mentioned over twenty native ethnic peoples in mid-sixteenth-century Yunnan. *Dian Zhi* by Liu Wenzheng, of the early seventeenth century, listed around thirty ethnic peoples in the category of *zhongren* (types of peoples), which was confirmed with the thirty categories in Fu Heng's *Huang Qing Zhigongtu* of the 1770s. The figure of around thirty, again, agrees with the "scientific" identification by the CCP that has classified the twenty-five minzuz in Yunnan. In a sense, Hsieh Jiann is correct to conclude that the identification was "more dependent on traditional uncritical enumeration."¹¹⁰

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Other practices also carry historical stamps. For example, in the end of 1950 the party branch of Yunnan classified the province into two areas, one where land reforms were immediately launched, and the other where land reforms had to be postponed and the CCP promised no change of the native chieftain system.¹¹¹ Such a classification was indeed shaped by *gaitu guiliu* in the Qing. The first category used to be under the direct administration of the Qing local government, while the other was under the rule of native chieftains.

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It is logical to compare the Minzu Autonomy System with the native chieftain system. In the 1990s, the Chinese state and its scholars began to emphasize historical and realistic elements of the Minzu Autonomy System to distinguish China from the Soviet Union.¹¹³ However, when discussing historical reasons, they never mentioned the native chieftain system. The underlying reason is that the native chieftain system in Chinese state language was backward, protecting backward modes of production and a potential breaker of the unity of China.

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The guiding official idea of minzu autonomy is to "let minority minzusun administrate their own affairs," a modern, mediated version of "rule based on local customs," while under the native chieftain system, native chieftains ruled their ethnic groups or communities. To some extent, the two systems share the same premise: the acceptance of central surveillance and superiority. Therefore, both of them were forms of regulating ethnic peoples with some respect for the local authorities. Under the native chieftain system, native chieftains enjoyed much autonomy, since the central state rarely intervened in internal affairs. The power and authority of some local chieftains in Yunnan lasted at least until the early period of the PRC. In the early 1950s, many native chieftains were incorporated into local communist governments, occupying nominal seats. Without allying with local elites, the CCP would have faced many more troubles in frontier areas.¹¹⁴ Even in the 1960s and 1970s some native chieftains and their family members still held government positions. Furthermore, I believe that this is more or less the case now. In this sense, the native chieftain system has influenced and will continue to influence minzu affairs. Of course, the degree of its influence is declining, but the role of local elites, no matter what it is labeled, will continue.

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The principle of equality is often officially cited: it is said that historically, no country has really treated its ethnic minorities as fairly as the People's Republic of China. Such a statement aims to increase the legitimacy of the CCP by erasing historical and cultural experience. In general, the Chinese regarded others as uncivilized, but they did not exclude the notion of an occasionally equal and peaceful coexistence. Tai Taizong, claiming himself as "Khan of the Heaven," prided himself on treating all peoples of the four seas equally. Once he stated, "The Yi and Di are also just human beings, and their natures are not different from those of the Chinese. A ruler's concern is that the beneficence of his virtue may not extend to them and he should not suspect them because of racial difference. If the beneficence of his virtue harmonizes them, then the four barbarians can be made into one family; if suspicions are many, even family members cannot avoid being enemies."¹¹⁵ On another occasion he proclaimed, "Emperors from ancient times all appreciated the Chinese and held disdain for the barbarians. Only I view them as equal. That is why they look upon me as their parent."¹¹⁶

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The above discussion of the Chinese official terms for the indigenes in Yunnan also shows that Chinese rulers gradually began to see ethnic peoples as their subjects. Their relatively accommodating attitude resulted partially from their moral beliefs and partially as a consequence of the brutal local resistance. The Qianlong emperor, after tasting the bitterness of the Jinchuan Wars (western Sichuan), issued a decree that all discriminative names of ethnic peoples in imperial documents and archives be deleted or changed,¹¹⁷ a practice both the Guomindang and the CCP followed.¹¹⁸ The moral similarities between Confucianism and Chinese Marxism provided a large capacity for the CCP to continue and develop imperial practices.¹¹⁹

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In conclusion, the CCP's minzu policies are neither unprecedented nor a simple application of Marxism or the Soviet model. Imperial heritage has marked contemporary China's strategy and management of ethnic minorities and frontier areas such as Yunnan. While ethnic problems more or less contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Empire, conventional wisdom over two thousand years, to a large degree, accounts for China's relative success, for example, in Yunnan. 92

Creating the Chinese Nation (*Zhonghuaminzu*): Theories and Processes

To an extent, the European nation-state has become a synonym for modern government. The European model of the nation-state is limited in non-European countries such as China. 93

In a nation-state, the nation and the state are like twins, each relying on the other's existence. In postcolonial Asia, states such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Burma have struggled to create their own nation. In the case of China, John Fitzgerald believes that "the state which is China has" "no given nation."¹²⁰ He points out that the continuity of Chinese history "derives less from the preservation of the Chinese nation than from the idea of the unitary state."¹²¹ As a result, "the Chinese nation has been created, and recreated in the struggle for state power, and it has ultimately been defined by the state as a reward of victory" in the twentieth century.¹²² 94

Just as Mao Zedong said, from Hong Xiuquan, Kang Youwei, Yan Fu, to Sun Yat-Sen and Mao himself, the Chinese repeatedly introduced, reintroduced, interpreted, reinterpreted, implanted, and reimplanted European thoughts and systems, in the process of "learning from the West." While what to learn has been debated again and again, what was learned seldom succeeded in solving China's problems. The implantation of Western ideas and systems reflects the anxiety of scholars and peoples in the peripheries of the modern world-system. Fortunately, local scholars have begun to indigenize Western thoughts, and have started a China-based (*zhongguo benwei*) approach. The use of Chinese minzu in the identification, I think, is a good example to show how scholars of China manage to sinicize Western concepts. Fei Xiaotong's recent theory of "plurality and unity of the Chinese nation" (*zhonghuaminzu de duoyuanyiti*) has been a further attempt to shed light on indigenization and systemization. 95

As early as the 1950s scholars involved with the Minzu Identification Project were confused, because each minority minzu was supposed to have its own history,¹²³ which more or less ignored interactions among ethnic and Han peoples.¹²⁴ Hence, some scholars in the 1960s advocated studying minzu relations. The study of minzu relations is aimed to reveal long-term ethnic interactions; nonetheless, it overlooked the formation of the Chinese nation as one whole unit.¹²⁵ 96

In 1988, Fei was invited to deliver a lecture in Hong Kong, where he elaborated his theory of "the plurality and unity of the Chinese nation." In Fei's 1988 lecture, he argued that the Chinese nation (*zhonghuaminzu*), as a self-conscious (*zijue*) unit, emerged from China's struggle with the Western challenge; but as a unit-in-itself (*ziza*), has been the product of several thousands of years of history and ethnic interactions in the discussed territory. Furthermore, Fei stressed that while the Chinese nation comprises fifty-six minzus, it was not a simple result of addition. Rather, fifty-six minzus have become a unitary and indivisible body (*tongyi er bukefenge de zhengti*).¹²⁶ Fei's theorizing effort was largely based on historical sources with a long-term approach, and this theory has been welcomed by the Chinese government and scholars. Dozens of articles and books have been produced in the last decade to illustrate this theory. A few questions may arise: Does Fei's theory reflect the existence of the Chinese nation? Is there a real Chinese nation? Here I attempt to give a tentative but affirmative answer in the terms of Yunnan's historical experience. 97

Before the Yuan-Ming-Qing period, many Han migrants arrived in Yunnan, but all were incorporated into native societies. The Ming state moved about one million Han Chinese into Yunnan, which dramatically changed the ethnic composition and the context of ethnic interactions. Although many Han were indigenized as before, ethnic peoples were greatly sinicized in an observable way. Norma Diamond generalizes that waves of migration "engulfed the indigenous peoples," "assimilating them to Han Chinese culture patterns yet at the same time creating regional subcultures marked by languages and customs."¹²⁷ By the end of the Ming period, the concept that Yunnan as part of China had taken roots among the Ming elites, and a new local identity—the Yunnanese—had emerged. The concept of the Yunnanese existed under the premise that they were, first and foremost, subjects of the Son of Heaven. As such, the incorporation of Yunnan added new dimensions to Chineseness: the Chinese not only included Han but also other regional or ethnic peoples. 98

Yang Shen, of the late sixteenth century, observed interactions between ethnic peoples and Han immigrants in Yunnan, and commented that the 99

Chinese are a truly cosmopolitan people, the heirs of all mankind, of the entire world. The Han are just one of the ethnic groups in the empire, and we include many different types of people. In Yunnan alone there are over twenty other non-Han native peoples. So long as they accept the emperor's rule, they are Chinese.¹²⁸

James Lee argues that Yang's view had Confucian influence, and was later utilized by Mao and others for the new China. He further points out that "this definition of nationality, transcending ethnic boundaries, has since become a part of modern China's national self image."¹²⁹ This is why in the Ming and Qing periods, emperors began to consider the Yunnanese indigenes as *baixing* and *chizi*, terms that usually referred to Han subjects. Therefore, interactions between

Han and non-Han peoples, especially the incorporation process, have continuously transformed the meaning of Chineseness or of Chinese identity, which confirms Fei's argument of the existence of the Chinese nation.

Cheng Meibao's study on the regional Cantonese identity in the nineteenth and twenties centuries examines a similar case, that is, the rise of local identity consciousness did not challenge the Chinese identity; in contrast, local identity served as a key attachment to, and facilitated the Chinese identity in, the society that was experiencing the dramatic transformation from empire to modern nation-state.¹³⁰ 100

Fei Xiaotong and other scholars also emphasize the significance of the Sino-Western conflicts in the formation of Chinese national consciousness. The case of Fang Guoyu, the pioneering scholar of Yunnan studies, may illustrate how ethnic people accepted their identification as Chinese during the crisis of China. Fang was in fact a Naxi in Lijiang, but received Confucian education at home, went on to gain a college education in Beijing, and was heavily influenced by the New Cultural Movement in the 1920s. His first academic achievement was in linguistics, but his concern with the frontier crisis, resulting from the British encroaching in Upper Burma, moved him to Southwestern frontier studies, and he became the founder of this field. It seems that there is no controversy between his Chinese identity and Naxi identity, which affirms Fei's idea of multistratum identification (*duocengci rentong*): which allows that one can in the first place, be one of fifty-six minzus, and also part of the Chinese nation as a whole.¹³¹ 101

The Minzu Identification Project facilitated and enhanced such identifications. As soon as ethnic minority peoples were allocated minzu status, they would have lost their right to secede from China. Their access to power and resources was the reward for their staying on as younger brothers in the Chinese family. It was during this negotiation and within the corresponding system that minority peoples have begun to accept Chinese identity, although we have seen rising ethnic nationalism in China since the 1980s, an unexpected byproduct of minzu identification.¹³² 102

Conclusion

The creation of minzu is a vital part of state building in contemporary China, a transition from a "traditional empire" to a "modern nation-state."¹³³ In this transition, the imperial legacy, to a large degree, shaped contemporary policies, institutions, and practices. The minzu system in China symbolized the deep penetration of central state into ethnic and frontier areas. On paper, all minzus are equal and many ethnic minorities have access to resources on the national stage, where the Han Chinese have dominated. In reality, because the state penetration has reached ethnic minorities and areas to an unprecedented degree, thanks to the long-term management of imperial China, a new hierarchical system has been introduced, which, 103

surprisingly, has been accepted by most ethnic minorities. In this manner, ethnic peoples in Yunnan have been transformed and incorporated from "barbarians" via imperial subjects into members of the Chinese nationality family, but not without having paid a price.

The long-term incorporation of Yunnan has not only created a local and sub-Chinese identity but also has driven the center to change its perspective of the indigenes from outsiders to insiders, either as imperial subjects, or as junior members of the large Chinese family. In short, what Yunnan has contributed to China is by far more than mere materials. The key contribution of Yunnan to China is its role in the creation and development of Chinese people and the Chinese state as multiethnic. The long process of constructing Yunnan accompanied the long process of creating China as we know it today.

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Notes

Note 1: This term is discussed in depth below.

Note 2: Stevan Harrell, introduction to *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3-36.

Note 3: *HS, juan* 100, 4248.

Note 4: Ban Gu even criticized Sima Qian for his lack of Confucian criteria. Although it is during the period of Sima Qian that Confucianism was accepted as state ideology, obviously, Confucianism did not guide *Shi Ji*.

Note 5: *YNSLCK* 4: 7; Zhang Shen, *Yunnan Jiwu Chaohuang*, in *YNSLCK* 4: 556.

Note 6: Cheng Xianmin 1988, 3.

Note 7: Cheng Xianmin 1988, 27-28; 29-30.

Note 8: The term *Hanjian* in imperial sources indeed held two different meanings. One is well known to people, and is still in use today, referring to traitors of the Han people. The other is almost totally overlooked; it was used quite often in the Qing sources to refer to evil Han people, such as merchants who took advantage of and abused ethnic peoples. Qing emperors and officials concerned these people very much, and often warned local officials to contain and keep an eye on these *hanjian*.

Note 9: Hsieh Jiann, *The CCP's Concept of Nationality and the Work of Ethnic Identification Amongst China's Minorities* (Hong Kong: Institute of Social Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1987), 1.

Note 10: Special treatment includes, for example, economic aid, education quotas, and exemption from the one-child policy.

Note 11: Hsieh Jiann, 24.

Note 12: For discussions on the origin of the word *minzu*, see Han Jinchun and Li Yifu, "Hanwen 'Minzu' yici de Chuxian jiqi Chuqi Shiyong Qingkuang" (The appearance of *minzu* in Chinese and its early uses), *Minzu Yanjiu*, 2 (1984), 36-43; Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China*, 1990, 11 (1): 20.

Note 13: Stevan Harrell, "Languages Defining Ethnicity in Southwest China," in *Ethnicity Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, ed. Lola Romanucci-Ross and George A. De Vos (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1993), 97-114.

Note 14: Harrell 1993, 102.

Note 15: J. V. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," in *Works*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing, 1954), 307.

Note 16: *Ibid.*, 307.

Note 17: *Ibid.*, 313.

Note 18: Fan Wenlan, "Zi Qinhan yilai Zhongguo Chengwei Guojia de Yuanyin" (Reasons for China being a *minzu* since the Qin-Han period), *Lishi Yanjiu* 1954, 22-36.

Note 19: Maoism sees China between 1840 (the Opium War) and 1949 as "semi-feudal and semi-colonial," which has been the official interpretation of modern China society.

Note 20: Ya Hanzhang, *Minzu Wenti yu Zongjiao Wenti* (The issues of *minzu* and religion) (Chengdu: Zhongguo Shehuikexue Chubanshe, 1984), 3-14.

Note 21: Ya 1984, 3-14.

Note 22: *Ibid.*

Note 23: Ya was responsible for the entry of *minzu* in *Zhongguo da Baikequanshu* (Encyclopedia of China), in which he gives his opinion, but as far as I know, neither did he actively take part in the *Minzu Identification Project*, nor had he much influence on this project. In Huang Guangxue's *Zhongguo de Minzu Shibie* (The *minzu* identification in China), the only book that introduces and

discusses the Minzu Identification Project, Ya's opinion is unanimously criticized. This book, which specifically states that it only represents scholarly studies, is in fact sponsored by the state, and because it is the only book that has ever been allowed to publish, it definitely represents the official language.

Note 24: Liu E, *Zhongguo de Minzushibie* (The minzu identification in China), ed. Huang Guangxue and Shi Lianzhu (Beijing: Minzu Press, 1995), 48-50.

Note 25: For some recent studies on minzu identification in Yunnan, see Kevin Caffrey, "Who 'Who' Is, and Other Local Poetics of National Policy," *China Information* 18 (July 2004): 243-274; Stephane Gros, "The Politics of Names," *China Information* 18 (July 2004): 275-302; Collin Mackerras, "Conclusion: Some Major Issues in Ethnic Classification," *China Information* 18 (July 2004): 303-313; Thomas S. Mullaney, "Ethnic Classification Wirt Large," *China Information* 18 (July 2004): 207-241.

Note 26: Fei Xiaotong, "Guanyu Woguo Minzu de Shibie Wenti" (On the minzu identification in our country), *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* 1 (1980): 98.

Note 27: Fei Xiaotong, "Wo de Minzuyanjiu Jingli he Sikao" (My experience and thoughts on minzu studies), in Ma Rong and Zhou Xing, eds., *Zhonghua Minzu Ningjuli de Xingcheng yu Fazhang* (The formation and development of cohesive force of the Chinese nation) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1999), 3. Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao, *Zhongguo Minzuxueshi* (History of Chinese ethnology), Vol. 2 (Kunming: Yunnan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1997), 54.

Note 28: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 51. In fact, Fei Xiaotong attended two visiting delegations, both Southwest and Central China.

Note 29: Ma Ya, "A Review of the Nationality Identification Investigation of Yunnan," in *Yearbook of Chinese Nationality Studies (1999)* (Beijing: Minzu Press, 2000), 60.

Note 30: Ma Yao, "Zhou Baozhong yu Yunnan Tongzhang Gongzuo yu Minzu Gongzuo" (Zhou Baozhong and the United Front work and Minzu Works in Yunnan), *Ma Yao Xueshu Lunzhu Zixuanji* (Self-selected works of Ma Yao) (Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe, 1998), 861-881.

Note 31: Lin Yaohua, "Zhongguo Xi'nan Diqu de Minzu Shibie" (Minzu identification in Southwest China), *Minzu Yanjiu Lunwenji* (Collected papers on minzu studies) (Beijing: Zhongyang Minzuxueyuan Minzuyanjiu suo, 1984), 1.

Note 32: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 51.

Note 33: *Ibid.*, 54.

Note 34: Ma Yao 2000, 60.

Note 35: Ma Yao 2000, 60-61.

Note 36: Ma Yao 2000, 61. Ma Yao's experience was not an exception. Other working teams had similar experiences. See Wang Lianfang, *Wang Lianfang Yunnan Minzugongzuo Huiyi* (My memoirs of Yunnan minzu affairs) (Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), 16. Wang was a senior cadre on the minzu works in Yunnan.

Note 37: Huang Guangxue, "Woguo de minzu Shibie" (Minzu identification in our country), in Huang Guangxue and Shi Lianzhu, eds., *Zhongguo de Minzu Shibie* (The minzu identification in China) (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1995), 366.

Note 38: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 122.

Note 39: Lin Yaohua 1984.

Note 40: Lin Yaohua 1984, 5-6.

Note 41: Shi Lianzhu, chapters three and four in *Zhongguo de Minzushibie* (The minzu identification in China), ed. Huang Guangxue and Shi Lianzhu (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1995), 93-173, 211-217.

Note 42: Lin Yaohua 1984, 7.

Note 43: Shi Lianzhu 1993, 208-218.

Note 44: Shi Lianzhu, "Zhongguo Minzushibie Yanjiu Gongzuo de Tese" (Characteristics of China's minzu identification and study), *Zhongyang Minzudaxue Xuebao* 5 (1989): 18.

Note 45: Ma Yao 2000, 60.

Note 46: Lin Yaohua 1984, 1. Li Shaoming classifies the registered four hundred odd names of units into eight categories. See Li Shaoming, "Woguo Minzu Shibie de Huigu yu Qianzhan" (Review and prospect of minzu identification in our country), *Minzuxue Yanjiu*, Vol. 12 (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1998), 201-211.

Note 47: Ma Yao, 1998, 867.

Note 48: Ma Yao 2000, 59.

Note 49: Ma Yao 1998, 867.

Note 50: For the role and problems of language, see Charles Keyes, Presidential Address: "The Peoples of Asia"—Science and Politics in the Classification of Ethnic Groups in Thailand, China, and Vietnam," *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 4 (2002): 1163-1203.

Note 51: Ma Yao 2000, 63.

Note 52: Lin Yaohua 1984; Shi, Lianzhu 1995.

Note 53: Norma Diamond, "Ethnicity and the State: The Hua Miao of Southwest China," in *Ethnicity and the State*, ed. Judith D. Toland (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 58.

Note 54: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 129.

Note 55: Yi Mouyuan, "Wuliushi Niandai Minzu Diaocha de Pianduan Huiyi" (Recollections of the minzu surveys in the 1950s-1960s), in *Tianye Diaocha Shilu* (Records of field works), ed. Hao Shiyuan (Beijing: Shekewenxian Chubanshe, 1999), 319.

Note 56: Ma Yao 2000, 65.

Note 57: The size of these ethnic groups differs variously: the Yi, Bai, Hani, Dai, and Zhuang, each over one million; Miao, Lisu, and Hui between half million and one million; Lahu, Va, Naxi, Yao, Jingpo, and Zang are over 10,000 but under half million; other are under 100,000. Right now, fifty-two of the fifty-six minzusu of China can be found in Yunnan. Of the fifty-two, twenty-six minority minzusu have a population of over 5,000 and are located in concentrated areas; sixteen are located across provincial boundaries; fifteen minzu are located across the boundaries; and fifteen minzusu cannot be found in other areas of China. Two-thirds of minorities are living along boundaries. In 1998, the minority population was nearly 14 million, about one-third of the entire population in the province, which means that Han Chinese are the majority.

Note 58: Cf. Shi Lianzhu 1995, chapter 4, 157.

Note 59: The CCP classifies Taiwan indigenous peoples into one category, "Gaoshanzu" (high hill minzu), as one of the fifty-five minority brothers, but Gaoshanzu alone includes several ethnicities. Considering the special role of Taiwan after the unification (if so), it is reasonable to conclude that the CCP would open its door to accept new members. Fei Xiaotong in his 1980 article indeed lists three reasons to explain why the Minzu Identification Project has not been completed, one of which is that no work has been done for Taiwan indigenes.

Note 60: About 800,000 people were left to be identified in 1982. See Fei 1989, 17.

Note 61: Henry G. Schwarz, *Chinese Policies toward Minorities: An Essay and Documents* (Bellingham, WA: Western Washington State College, East Asian Studies, Occasional Paper, No. 2, 1971), 15.

Note 62: For example, see Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Note 63: Thomas Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities: Autonomy or Assimilation?* (Armonk and New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1989), 31-32.

Note 64: The degrees of Marxist influence on scholars vary individually. Generally speaking, some Western-educated scholars are quite conscious of the rigidity of Stalin's "four commonalities," for example, Fei Xiaotong.

Note 65: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 112.

Note 66: David Wu, "Chinese Minority Policy and the Meaning of Minority Culture: The Example of Bai in Yunnan, China," *Human Organization* 49, no. 1 (1990): 2.

Note 67: Mackerra 1994, 141-142.

Note 68: Xiu Shihua, "Guanyu 'Gongtong Xinli Suzhi' de Sikao" (Some thoughts on "common psychology"), *Zhongyang Minzudaxue Xuebao* 1 (1995): 48-52.

Note 69: Fei Xiaotong 1980.

Note 70: Fei Xiaotong 1980. Fei was labeled "rightist" in the 1957 "Anti-Rightist Movement" and disappeared from the academy until the late 1970s.

Note 71: Fei's address took place at the 1978 National Political Consultative Conference, when the Cultural Revolution was just over and the so-called Thought Liberation had not yet been fully launched.

Note 72: Fei Xiaotong 1999, 5.

Note 73: *Ibid.*, 5-6.

Note 74: Fei Xiaotong 1980, 4.

Note 75: Fei Xiaotong 1999, 5-10.

Note 76: In fact, the review of identification by scholars of China is made case by case, investigating how a minzu was decided by certain criteria. See Fei Xiaotong 1980, Lin Yaohua 1984, Huang Guangxue and Shi Lianzhu 1995, 2005.

Note 77: Shi Lianzhu 1995, 143.

Note 78: Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, Harvard East Asian Monographs 149, 1991).

Note 79: For a study on the sinicization of anthropology in China, see Gregory Eliyu Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China: From Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

Note 80: Stevan Harrell, "Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State: Yi Communities in Southwest China," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 32, no. 3 (1990): 515-548.

Note 81: Colin Mackerras 1994, 144.

Note 82: Dru C. Gladney 1991. Also see Mette Halskov Hansen, "'We Are All Nazi in Our Hearts': Ethnic Consciousness among Intellectual Nazi," in *Cultural Encounters: China, Japan, and the West*, ed. Soren Clausen, Roy Starrs, and Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1995), 58.

Note 83: Colin Mackerras 1994, 143.

Note 84: Wang Ningsheng, *Xi'nanfanggu Sanshiwunian* (Thirty-five-year visit of the Southwest) (Ji'nan: Shangdong Huabao Chubanshe, 1997), 262-264.

Note 85: Hsieh Jiann 1987, 9.

Note 86: Wang Jianmin, Zhang Haiyang, and Hu Hongbao 1997, 127-129. Almost all Western works mention these problems. For example, see Harrell 1990, 1993, 1995, Brown 1996, Mackerras, and Gladney.

Note 87: David Y. H. Wu, "Chinese Minority Policy and the Meaning of Minority Culture: The Example of Bai in Yunnan, China," *Human Organization* 49, no. 1 (1990): 3.

Note 88: Fei 1980, 150.

- Note 89:** Shi Lianzhu 1995, 146.
- Note 90:** Ma Yao 1998b, 867.
- Note 91:** Ma Yao 1998a, 254.
- Note 92:** It is said that Xifan was brought into Yunnan in the Mongol campaign.
- Note 93:** Shi Lianzhu 1995, 208.
- Note 94:** Katherine Palmer Kaup, *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder, Colo., and London: Lynne Rienner, 2000).
- Note 95:** Ibid.
- Note 96:** Du Yuting, 227.
- Note 97:** Ma Rong, "Guanyu 'Minzu' de Dingyi" (On the definition of "minzu"), *Yunnan Minzuxueyuan Xuebao* 17.1 (2000), 12.
- Note 98:** Joseph W. Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," *Modern China* 21, no. 1 (1995): 48, 56.
- Note 99:** William Skinner, "Marketing System and Social Structure in Rural China. I, II, & III," *Journal of Asian Studies* 24, nos. 1, 2, 3 (1964 and 1965); "Rural Marketing in China: Repression and Revival," *China Quarterly* 103 (1985): 393-413.
- Note 100:** Vivienne Shue, *The Reach of the State: Sketches of the Chinese Body Politic* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).
- Note 101:** Huang Shu-min, *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998).
- Note 102:** Hsieh Jiann 1987, 9.
- Note 103:** Joseph Esherick, 48.
- Note 104:** Barry Allen, "Power/Knowledge," in *Critical Essays on Michel Foucault*, ed. Karlis Racevskis (New York: G. K. Hall, 1999), 72.
- Note 105:** Wang Dingbao, "Shujinshi Shangpian," in *Tang Shu Yan*, *juan* 1 (Beijing: Gudianwenxue Chubanshe, 1957), 3.
- Note 106:** Wang Ningsheng 1997, 262-263.
- Note 107:** Ibid., 264.
- Note 108:** The earliest is *Zhigongtu* by Xiao Yan in the Southern Dynasty (420-588).
- Note 109:** *Journal of Central Nationality University* of the 1990s have attributed most of their inside front covers to drawings of minority clothes, supposedly distinguishable from each other, a modern version of *Huang Qing Zhigongtu*.
- Note 110:** Hsieh Jiann 1987, 9.
- Note 111:** Ma Yao 2000, 60-61.
- Note 112:** Jiang Yingliang 1958.
- Note 113:** Recent examples are Wang Zhanying, "Qian Sulian yu Zhongguo Minzu Zhengce zhi Bijiao" (Comparison of minzu policy in China and in the Soviet Union), *Zhongyang Minzudaxue Xuebao* 1 (1997): 18-22; and Mou Benli, "Minzuquyuzizhi Zhidu de Bijiao Yanjiu" (Comparative studies of the minzu autonomous system), *Minzu Tuanjie* 5 (2001): 1-8.
- Note 114:** Ma Yao 2000, 61.
- Note 115:** *ZZTJ*, *juan* 197, 6215-6216. The imperial Li household of the Tang Dynasty had its Xianbei blood linkage. For discussions, see Ho 1998, 132-136.
- Note 116:** *ZZTJ*, *juan* 198, 6247.

Note 117: Chen Shisong, ed., *Sichuan Tongshi* (History of Sichuan), Vol. 5 (Chengdu: Sichuan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), 160-161.

Note 118: For the GMD, See Ruey Yih-fu "On the Origin of the Tribal Names in Southwestern China with Insect-Beast-Radical Characters," in *China: The Nation and Some Aspects of Its Culture, A Collection of Selected Essays with Anthropological Approaches*, Vol. 1 (Taipei: Yenwen), 73-117; For the CCP, see *Dangdai Zhongguo Minzu Gongzuo Dashiji* (Records of major events of minzu works in contemporary China) (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe 1989), 10.

Note 119: Stevan Harrell has insightfully compared the three civilizing projects by imperial China, Christian missionaries, and the CCP. See Harrell, "Introduction," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995), ed. Steven Harrell, 3-36.

Note 120: John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 57.

Note 121: John Fitzgerald 1996, 57.

Note 122: Ibid.

Note 123: In the identification, scholars wrote a book of history for each minzu.

Note 124: Fei Xiaotong 1999, 12-13.

Note 125: Ibid. Here I find the similarity between historiography of Chinese ethnology and of world history: first, both studied assumed units (civilizations or minzus), then moved to relations or interactions among units, and finally noticed the emerging ecumene (world-system, or the Chinese nation).

Note 126: Ibid., 13.

Note 127: Norma Diamond, 58.

Note 128: Yang Shen, "Lun Min" (On people), in *Sheng'an Quanji* (Complete works of Yang Shen) (1795 ed.) 48, 6b-9a. Cf. James Lee 1982, 279-304.

Note 129: James Lee 1982, 292.

Note 130: Cheng Meibao, *Diyu Wenhua yu Guojia Rentong: Wanqing yilai Guangdongwenhuaguan de Xingcheng* (Regional culture and national identification: The formation of concept of the Cantonese culture from the late Qing period) (Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2006).

Note 131: Fei Xiaotong 1999, 13-14.

Note 132: The emergence of the Taiwanese identity seems to be an exception, but the context is very different from that of Yunnan.

Note 133: Minzu Regional Autonomy (*Minzu Quyu Zizhi*) has been labeled as one of the three fundamental political systems (*jiben zhengzhi zhidu*) in the PRC. The other two are People's Congress (*Renmin Daibiao Dahui Zhidu*) and Political Consultative and Multiparty Cooperative System (*Zhengzhi Xieshang yu Duodang Hezuo Zhidu*). I believe that this system will contribute to, and thus turn into, a part of any pro-democratic reform. In this sense, it would reveal the so-called Chinese characteristics.