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# THINKING ABOUT "MING *CHINA*" ANEW: THE ETHNOCULTURAL SPACE IN A DIVERSE EMPIRE —WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE "MIAO TERRITORY"*

**Abstract**

By examining the cultural identity of China's Ming dynasty, this essay challenges two prevalent perceptions of the Ming in existing literature: to presume a monolithic socio-ethno-cultural Chinese empire and to equate the Ming Empire with *China* (*Zhongguo*, the "middle kingdom"). It shows that the Ming constructed *China* as an ethnocultural space rather than a political entity.

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In essence, *China* was defined as a Han domain that the Han people inhabited and where Han values were produced, practiced, and preserved in contrast to those of non-Han "barbarians," be they domestic or foreign. The "Great Ming"—the dynastic title—cannot be confused with *China*, the ethnocultural space. For the Ming ruling elite, the "Miao territory" in western Huguang and eastern Guizhou provinces represented a land "beyond the pale of civilization" (*huawai*), which was outside and different from *China*. The Ming construction of the ethnocultural *China* connects the imperial heritage to China's modern identity.

In recent decades, scholars have expressed strong interest in understanding modern China's identity in terms of ethnic components and nation-state status.[1] And, to assess the historical process of nation building in the Han-dominated contemporary China, scholars often trace it back to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the last Han ruling house that recovered the central land from centuries of foreign rule. Indeed, the Ming dynasty's special position in modern Chinese history is indisputable. After toppling the Mongol conquest regime, the Ming engaged in a series of sociocultural reforms to reorient values and reinstitute their sociopolitical order. A particularly important issue for the ruling elite was to define and construct *China* (*Zhongguo* 中國, middle kingdom or central country): What was *China*? Where were its boundaries? What was its relationship with the Ming Empire? What kind of entity should it be? What values should be embraced? What was the relationship between "*China*" and "Han" 漢? And who should be included—Who were the *Chinese* (*Zhongguo ren* 中國人)?[2] Such a

[1]The literature is immense. For some examples, see Melissa Brown, ed., *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, UC Berkeley, 1996); Wang Ke 王珂, *Mingzu yu guojia* 民族與國家 (Beijing: Zhongguo sheke chubanshe, 2001); William Kirby, "When Did China Become China? Thoughts on the Twentieth Century," in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, edited by Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 105–16; James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Become Chinese* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Pamela Crossley et al., eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhaizi Zhongguo: Chongjian youguan "Zhongguo" de lishi lunshu* 宅茲中國:重建關於 "中國"的歷史論述 (Living in *China*: Reconstructing the historical discourse on "*China*") (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), and *Hewei Zhongguo: Jiangyu, minzu, wenhua yu lishi* 何為"中國": 疆域,民族,文化與歷史 (What is "*China*"?—Territory, nationality, culture and history) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2014); Kawashima Shin 川島真, "Tencho kara Chugoku he: Shinmatus gaiko bunsho ni miru `Chugoku' no shiyorei," 天朝から中國へ：清末外交 文書にみられる「中國」の使用例 (From heavenly court to *China*: The uses of "*China*" as seen in the late Qing diplomatic documents), *Chugoku: Shakai to bunka* (1997), 41–54; Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Gan Huaizhen 甘懷真, ed., *Dongya lishi shang de tianxia yu Zhongguo gainian* 東亞歷史上的天下與中國概念 (The concepts of all under Heaven and *China* in East Asian history) (Taibei: Taida chuban zhongxin, 2007); Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Susan Blum and Lionel Jensen, eds., *China off Center: Mapping the Margins of the Middle Kingdom* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

[2]In this essay, I borrow Gang Zhao's English treatment of "China" and "*China*" and intentionally render them differently. "China" refers to the country under the governments such as the Ming, Qing, Republic of China, and the People's Republic of China; whereas "*China*" (or "the central/middle country/kingdom/lands" as many scholars render it in English) is an English equivalent of the Chinese "*Zhongguo*," which often had vague and multiple connotations in Chinese history. Correspondingly, "Chinese" and "*Chinese*" refer to the people living within the border of "China" and "*China*," respectively. When I use the words inside quotation marks,

quest for a new identity in the Ming left a remarkable legacy for modern China's identity search and construction. In his study of the Ming expansion into the Guangxi borderland, Leo Shin maintains that the "five major nationalities" discourse in the early Republic and the official classification of fifty-five minority nationalities by the People's Republic are in essence "a continuation of the exercise of demarcation in imperial times"—particularly the Ming as his study shows.[3] Peter Bol also finds that the Ming saw a period when the concept of *China* was perceived as a place that was "surrounded by foreign states on all sides" and belonged to a particular group (Han) and their civilization.[4] Edward Farmer argues for both symbolic and practical links between Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–98), the founding emperor of the Ming, and Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the provisional president of the Republic of China: Zhu's Han-centered concept of China and his mission of expelling "barbarians" and restoring Han people's China had a clear impact on Sun's Han-led revolutionary principles and practices; and "the redefinition of China begun at the turn of the [twentieth] century is still underway."[5] Such studies have undoubtedly enriched our understanding of the Ming construction of ethnicity and empire and its connection to China's modern identity.

Meanwhile, however, when scholars look at the construction of *China* and the empire during Ming times, they tend to misrepresent its nature and historical process. Specifically, two problems seem prevalent. The first is to presume a monolithic socio-ethno-cultural identity of the Ming Empire, and use it as an analytical and epistemological Other to attest other scholarly claims. This can be traced back at least to over one-half century ago, when the prominent historian John K. Fairbank summed it up in his exposition of Ming "culturalism":

> We may say, in short, that the Chinese state [during Ming times] was regarded as coterminous with Chinese culture. The spread of one carried the other with it. In Chinese thinking they were not distinguished. In Chinese "culturalism" there was such a close identification of the entire way of life with the unified empire that the one implied the other.[6]

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I am either directly quoting a source, or referring to the words as words; otherwise I am using the words to refer to the concepts they denote. See Zhao Gang, "Reinventing *China*: Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 32.1 (2006), 3–30, at 24. In Ming cultural-political discourse, as in previous dynasties, "*Zhongguo*" was often interchanged with other concepts such as "*Hua*" 華, "*Xia*" 夏, "*Zhonghua*" 中華, "*huaxia*" 華夏, "*zhongxia*" 中夏, "*Hanxia*" 函夏," and "*zhongtu*" 中土. In his proclamation denouncing the Yuan regime, for example, the Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang repeatedly and loosely used the phrases "*Zhongguo*," "*Zhonghua*," "*huaxia*," "*zhongxia*," and "*zhongtu*" to designate the land lost to the Mongols. See *Ming Taizu shilu* 明太祖實錄, ed. Huang Chang-chien 黃彰健 (Taibei: Academia Sinica, 1962), 401–4. But to clarify the precise use of *Zhongguo* and to avoid any confusion, in this essay, while I will render "*Zhongguo*" as "*China*," I will Romanize the Chinese pronunciations of other characters even though they were used to mean "*Zhongguo*" in the context.

[3]Leo Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.

[4]Peter Bol, "Geography and Culture: The Middle-Period Discourse on the *Zhong* guo—the Central Country," in *Kongjian yu wenhua changyu: Kongjian zhi yixiang, shijian yu shehui de shengchan* 空間與文化場域:空間之意象,實踐與社會的生產 (Space and cultural place: The image, practice, and social production of space), edited by Huang Ying-kuei 黃應貴 (Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), 61–106, at 98, 99.

[5]Edward Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation: The Reordering of Chinese Society Following the Era of Mongol Rule* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 1–4.

[6]Edwin Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 293.

Apparently, the so-called Ming culturalism assumes that China embraced the homogeneous (Han) "*Chinese*" people and culture and presents the Ming Empire as a homogeneous (Han) "*Chinese*" cultural and political entity.

In recent decades, this intellectual tradition has received enormous challenges. Studies by scholars such as Leo Shin, John Herman, and C. Patterson Giersch demonstrate diverse cultural developments on Ming borderlands.[7] At a more general level, the new scholarly paradigm called "New Qing History" challenges the "monolithic China" that has been portrayed in standard scholarship and makes "China" only a part of the diverse Qing Empire.[8] In Chinese scholarship, the study of non-Han "nationalities" during the Ming has gained popularity.[9] Nevertheless, Fairbank's assertion on the Ming is still echoed by some recent works. Almost sixty years later, for example, some scholars still use the same word, "coterminous," to interpret the people and culture in the Ming, a land "where the physical extent of China was coterminous with the reach of Chinese culture and the inhabitation of Chinese people."[10] In his brilliant study of Qing Central Asia, for another example, James Millward specifically examines the concept and boundaries of "China." While he correctly challenges the "earlier assumptions of a monolithic 'China'" and points out that "the places beyond the Ming boundaries were not 'China,'"[11] he himself assumes "a monolithic China" during the Ming:

[7]See Leo Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*; John Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007); and C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[8]The terms of "Manchu/Qing-centered" "New Qing History" are put forward by scholars such as Evelyn Rawski, Mark Elliott, James Millward, and Joanna Waley-Cohen. The number of works in this field is growing rapidly. For some fundamental features of the new approach, see Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of the Qing Imperial Institution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republic China, 1861–1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); and Elliott, *The Manchu Way*. These works are so well received that they are acclaimed as "*the* Four Books of Manchu Studies" (R. Kent Guy, "Who Were the Manchus? A Review Essay," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61.1 (2002), 151–64, at 152). For some other studies and reviews, see James Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 13–15, 264n25; James Millward et al., eds., *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 3–4; Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The New Qing History," *Radical Historical Review* 88 (2004): 193–206; Sudipta Sen, "The New Frontiers of Manchu China and the Historiography of Asian Empires: A Review Essay," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61.1 (2002), 165–77; Liu Fengyun 劉鳳雲 and Liu Wenpeng 劉文鵬, eds. *Qingchao de guojia rentong: "Xin Qingshi" yanjiu yu zhengming* 清朝的國家認同: "新清史" 研究與爭鳴 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2010); and Hsu Hung, "'Xin Qingshi' lunzheng: Cong He Bingdi Luo Youzhi lunzhan shuoqi" "新清史"論爭: 從何炳棣羅友枝論戰說起 (The debate over "New Qing History": Starting with the debate between Ho Ping-ti and Evelyn Rawski), *Shoudu shifan daxue xuebao* 228 (2016.1), 1–13.

[9]See, for examples, Yang Shaoyou 楊紹猷 and Mo Junqing 莫俊卿, *Mingdai minzu shi* 明代民族史 (History of nationalities in the Ming dynasty) (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1996), and Liu Xiangxue 劉祥學, *Mingchao minzu zhengce yanbian shi* 明朝民族政策演變史 (Changes of nationality policies of the Ming dynasty) (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006).

[10]Yongtao Du and Jeff Kyong-McClain, "Introduction," *Chinese History in Geographical Perspective* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 1–13, at 2.

[11]Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 15, 37–38.

> [T]hink of the… answers a scholar in the late Ming… would give to the questions, "Where is China" and "Who are the Chinese?" We can readily guess how… [he] would respond: The Ming scholar would most likely exclude the lands and peoples of Inner Asia.[12]

That is to say, in the Ming worldview, while some areas and peoples in Inner Asia (even occasionally) fell within the domain of the Ming Empire, they still did not belong to "China." In other words—although this is not explicitly stated—the land outside Inner Asia was "China" within the Ming. Here, I believe, Millward uses the word "China" to designate the Chinese concept of "*Zhongguo*" (which is often dubbed "China proper"). Here, Millward utilizes an "Inner Asia/*China*" dichotomy to analyze the Ming territory and somehow draws a boundary line between the two. When he treats "*China*" as a unitary place opposite Inner Asia, he overlooks the diverse "non-*Chinese*" peoples and cultures in the envisioned "*China*," especially on the borderlands.

This position is also taken strongly by Chinese scholars. Let us take the outstanding intellectual historian Ge Zhaoguang 葛兆光 as an example. Ge has zealously articulated his assessment of the problems concerning "*China*" throughout Chinese history, including the Ming. He argues that since the Song dynasty (960–1279), a "cultural community" has developed in China. In it, the "Han-centered civilization space and worldview" expanded from center to peripheries, from cities to countryside, and from high strata to grassroots. This applied to the Mongol Yuan, Manchu Qing, let alone the Han Ming.[13] Ge argues for the "identity" (*yizhixing* 一致性) of "the living space of Han nationality and the space of various dynasties" (*Hanzu shenghuo kongjian yu lidai wangchao kongjian* 漢族生活空間與歷代王朝空間) in Chinese history,[14] and asserts that in the Ming Empire, unlike the Yuan and the Qing, [Han] ethnicity and the state were identical in the Han-founded space,[15] or, "the nationality (Han) and state (*China* 中國) were coinciding (*chongdie* 重疊)."[16] While Ge also discusses and even emphasizes the "plurality" (*fushuxing* 複數性) of "*Chinese* culture" and "*China*,"[17] he basically refers to the absorption of non-Han cultures by the Han people in general and the incorporation of the non-Han nationalities such as Man, Meng, Zang, Hui, and Miao during Qing and modern China in particular, which does not conflict with his argument that in the Ming and earlier dynasties with a Han ruling house, the political states embraced a homogenous and unitary Han ethnicity within their territory.

In terms of the other problem—the proposition that equates the Ming to *China*—it is shared more widely by China historians. Peter Bol argues that during the Ming, *China* was perceived as a spaciocultural entity; and as a place, it denoted the Ming Empire.[18]

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[12]Millward, *Beyond the Pass*, 18.

[13]Ge Zhaoguang, "Chongjian guanyu 'Zhongguo' de lishi lunshu" 重建關於 "中國" 的歷史論述, in *Qingchao de guojia rentong*, edited by Liu and Liu, 245–66, at 260–65.

[14]Ge, *Hewei Zhongguo*, 22.

[15]Ge, *Zhaizi Zhongguo*, 19.

[16]Ge, *Hewei Zhongguo*, 11.

[17]Ge, *Hewei Zhongguo*, Chapter 4.

[18]Bol, "Geography and Culture," 98. In fact, compared to other scholarly works that equate *China* to the Ming state, Bol's argumentation is more insightful in stressing the spaciocultural nature of *China*. The problem with his observation, as shown in the following sections, lies in the lack of attention towards the "non-*Chinese*" domains inside the empire. I benefited from our personal conversations in 2006 as well as his written works.

In exploring the Ming expansion into Guangxi, while pointing out the diverse ethnic landscape of the Ming, Leo Shin still uses "the term 'China' to refer to both the polity of *zhong guo* (literally, 'central dominion') and the territory under its actual and apparent rule."[19] And in his study of the late Qing discourse on *China*, Gang Zhao states that:

> [During] the formative period of the Manchu state,… the Manchus adopted the official Ming understanding of *China* as referring to China proper [i.e., the eighteen provinces] and to the Han people…. Under the Ming, *China* referred to both to fifteen provinces [i.e., the Ming Empire] and to the Han people living in them. This usage was common among the Han elite by the early fifteenth century; it had reached a wide audience through the circulation of popular and official maps and geographic works…. Early Manchu rulers simply adopted the Ming view, treating *China* as equivalent to both the Ming empire and to the Han group.[20]

Here, Zhao repeatedly asserts that during the Ming, "*China*" was envisioned to be identical to the Ming Empire. And he claims that his argument purports to enrich Mark Elliott's statement that prior to 1700s the meaning of *China* was "confined to China proper and the people living there."[21]

In Chinese scholarship, while the writers acknowledge the change of the meaning (and scope) of *China* over time (from the Zhou through the Qing dynasties) and the multiple number of *China*s during a same time period (e.g., during the Liao, Jin, and Song dynasties), they tend to take it for granted that in Ming times, *China* and the Ming were viewed as the same scope of territory with interchangeable names. The historian Ge Zhaoguang, again, articulates the identity and exchangeability of "*China*" and "Ming":

> In the Ming dynasty, the Chinese [*Zhongguo*] territory was basically still the fifteen provinces in [China] proper[.] During that time, most people acknowledged that "Jiuquan" 酒泉 was "the important place at the extremely remote area of *China* [*Zhongguo*];" "[the land] beyond the Jiayuguan 嘉峪關 Pass does not belong to us" any more.[22]

In this statement, Ge uses the phrase "*Zhongguo*" twice: one in his (modern) sense, the other in Ming terms. In his eyes, therefore, the present-day *China* and Ming *China* refer to the same concept—a political state; their difference lies only in different scopes—in the Ming, *China* was those fifteen provinces, whereas in modern days it extends to certain Inner Asian areas. He further argues that in Chinese history, "whichever dynasty was established, they [*sic*] would all identify themselves as '*China*,'" which demonstrates a continuous "state notion" (*guojia guannian* 國家觀念). In a word, "*China*" (*Zhongguo* 中國) represented "state" (*guojia* 國家).[23]

[19]Shin, The Making of the Chinese State, 17.

[20]Zhao, "Reinventing *China*," 5, 6–7.

[21]Zhao cites Mark Elliott, "The Limit of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies," *Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (2000), 603–46, at 638.

[22]Ge, *Hewei Zhongguo*, 10. Here, in the second sentence, Ge quotes a Ming text on the "Map of Suzhou" (*Suzhou tushuo* 肅州圖說).

[23]Ge, *Hewei Zhongguo*, 23–24, 31. At one place, Ge does state that "*China*" to "*ancient* Chinese" meant "a space of civilization" rather than a modern "state" (*Hewei Zhongguo*, 43; emphasis of "ancient" is mine), but he does not discuss or elaborate on this statement, neither does he define what "ancient" refers to. In all his works,

In short, in the scholarship on Ming empire-building and *China* construction, two issues require further deliberation. One is the assumption of a "monolithic" sociocultural entity of the Ming Empire, and the other, the equivalence of *China* to the Ming empire, and, consequently, asserting that the name "*China*" was used as an official title of the dynasty and thus exchangeable with the title "Ming." These propositions miss the essence of the concept of *China* and misinterpret the ethnocultural meaning of the Ming empire, which could be liable to be used as an example of "self-imposed cultural parochialism and isolationism"[24] in scholarly undertakings.

Before I move on to specific argumentation about the formation of *China* and ethnocultural borderlands, it should be useful to lay out my understanding of the concept "ethnicity." To be sure, there is no consensus about what the elusive word "ethnicity" means. In recent decades, scholars have emphasized the historical, relational, transactional, and subjective aspects of the concept.[25] When applying this concept in the study of China, scholars debate its nature and applicability in Chinese history.[26] Some view "ethnicity" a useful category of inquiry in understanding dominant sociopolitical groups (such as Han and Manchu) prior to the nineteenth century.[27] Others argue that "ethnicity" makes sense only in the study of "marginalized" groups and after the nineteenth century when the Chinese imperial system started to decline and the concept and institutions of "modern" nation-states emerged.[28] Despite their differences, however, I find that each side provides valuable and insightful arguments for understanding ethnicity in general and the Miao ethnicity in particular. Marc Abramson's "four-theme discourse"

Ge has forcibly argued for an identity of "*China*" and the "Ming." For some other examples of Chinese scholarship, see Ge Zhaoguang, *Zhaizi Zhongguo*, 19; Hu Axiang 胡阿祥, *Weizai si ming: "Zhongguo" gujin chengwei yanjiu* 偉哉斯名: 中國古今稱謂研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 273; and Zhao Yongchun 趙永春, "Cong fushu Zhongguo dao danshu Zhongguo: Shilun tongyi duominzu Zhonguo jiqi jiangyu de xingcheng" 從複數中國到單數中國: 試論統一多民族中國及其疆域的形成, *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 中國邊疆史地研究21.3 (2011), 9–21.

[24]Lynn Struve, ed., *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 6.

[25]For some theoretical critiques of the problem, see G. Carter Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29.1 (1987), 24–55; Virginia Tilley, "The Terms of the Debate: Untangling Language about Ethnicity and Ethnic Movements," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20.3 (1997), 497–522; and Jack David Eller, "Ethnicity, Culture, and the Past," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 36.4 (Fall 1997), 552–600.

[26]For some issues on the application of the term in the study of China, see Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, "Introduction," in *Empire at the Margins*, 1–24; and Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?"

[27]For some studies of ethnicity in pre-19th-century China, see Marc Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*; and Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[28]Nicole Consfiguretable, *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits: A Hakka Community in Hong Kong* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 20; Pamela Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11.1 (1990), 1–35, at 13, 27. For some studies of China's post-1800 ethnicity and "peripheral" ethnic groups, see Pamela Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); Dru Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities and Other Subaltern Subjects* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2004); and the seven books reviewed in Susan Blum, "Margins and Centers: A Decade of Publishing on China's Ethnic Minorities," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61.4 (2002), 1287–1310.

(genealogy, culture, the body, and politics) in constructing ethnicity is useful.[29] Mark Elliott's definition of "ethnicity" as "the social organization and political assertions of difference perceived to inhere in the culturally bounded, descent-based categories" seems also resourceful; and I particularly agree to his statement that ethnicity historically is "a way of constructing identity (i.e., 'selfness') whenever and wherever human groups come into contact and discover meaning in the differences between each other, which they may then turn to various purposes."[30] Meanwhile, in studying the Miao ethnicity in the "Miao territory," Pamela Crossley's summary of the "historical essence of ethnicity" as being "local, particularist, minor, heterodox, marginal"[31] and Stevan Harrell's narrative of "civilizing projects"[32] are also helpful notions. Drawing on the existing scholarship, I tend to adopt a working definition of "ethnicity" as the traits shared by a given sociocultural group whose members are conscious of their own identity defined by such values and practices as a sense of membership, historical continuity, common descent, culture (language, religion, dress, food, architecture, etc.), and space. As a product of historical process and group interaction, it can be found in China's imperial times as well as the modern era.

## "*CHINA*" IN MING OFFICIAL WORLDVIEW AND STATE POLICIES

The fallacy of the "monolithic Han China/*China*" during the Ming is evinced forcefully in the values and policies of the Ming ruling elite regarding *China* and "barbarian" domains in the empire and non-Han agencies in preserving their non-*Chinese* identities. In Chinese history, the phrase "*Zhongguo*" appeared as early as the mid-eleventh century BCE, in the early Zhou Dynasty (1046?–256 BCE).[33] Since then, the concept had developed into a variety of meanings, including the capital city, the royal domain, the Central Plains, political regimes, and ethnocultural space.[34] During Ming times, the ruling elite also made enormous efforts to create boundary lines for their Han ruling house, especially the definition and demarcation of "*China*." In the early Ming, for example, during the process of overthrowing the Mongol regime, the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang proclaimed his representation of "the people of *China*" and his mission to "expel barbarians and restore *Zhonghua*" (*quzhu dalu huifu Zhonghua* 驅逐韃虜恢復中華), and to make the

[29]Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, xii–xiii.

[30]Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 19. It seems to me that the debate over whether or not "ethnicity" was developed in premodern societies is similar to those over whether or not "state" or "justice" were developed prior to modern times. While we need to be cautious in identifying their various meanings in different historical periods, they all can be used as analytical categories in imperial China.

[31]Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," 13.

[32]Harrell, "Introduction," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, 3–36.

[33]The earliest archaeological evidence appears in the bronze inscription on the "He *zun*" 何尊 vessel made in the fifth year of King Cheng's reign (1038 BCE?), which supports the ancient textual evidences in *Shangshu* 尚書 (Book of documents) and *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of odes). See "He zun," in Christophe [no surname], *bronzes chinois antiques*, bronzeschinois.wordpress.com/alcool/zun/he-zun/, accessed July 24, 2017; and Hu, *Weizai siming*, 255–57.

[34]Hu, *Weizai siming*, 253–74; Zhao Yongchun 趙長春 and Jia Shurong 賈淑榮, "Zhongguo gudai de `guohao' yu lishi shang de 'Zhongguo,'" 中國古代的"國號"與歷史上的"中國" (The "dynastic titles" in ancient China and "*China*" in history), *Jilin shifan daxue xuebaou* 2009.5, 1–8; at 3; and Bol, "Geography and Culture."

*Chinese* people live in peace as *Chinese* persons (*Zhongguo zhi min tian biming Zhongguo zhi ren yi anzhi* 中國之民天必命中國之人以安之).[35] As a critical concept in political discourse, "*China*" provided the ruling elite with a profound source of legitimacy, and became a rallying force for engaging in sociocultural reforms and forming a new imperial identity.[36] But what did the Ming mean by "*China*"?

Throughout the dynasty, the Ming government used the term "*China*" differently for two different audiences: foreign countries, and domestic groups (discussed below). Addressing foreign countries in diplomatic documents, the Ming court often "instructed" them to serve "*China*."[37] When present-day scholars assume a monolithic cultural identity of the Ming and equate the Ming Empire to *China*, they tend to base their assumptions on such uses of the term.[38] Nevertheless, although the Ming seemed to have envisioned "*China*" equivalent to the Ming government/Empire in those diplomatic communications, in actuality what they asserted was a *China* as a "civilized" place of the Han people and values as distinct from "barbarians," rather than their country.

Let us take some official exchanges between the Ming court and Japanese authorities as an example.

In the second year of the Hongwu reign (1369), Zhu Yuanzhang had an imperial letter delivered to the king of Japan:

> In the past, our *China* was lost during the Song dynasty of the Zhao family; and the northern barbarians entered and seized it. They spread the barbarian customs and thus polluted the central land (*zhongtu* 中土), which weakened the *Hua* customs (*Huafeng* 華風). Who with a heart will not be angered?! Since the year of *xinmao* (1351), the Central Plains (*Zhongyuan* 中原) have been in a state of unrest. You dwarf Japanese came to attack Shandong simply because you were taking advantage of the decline of the barbarian Yuan. As a *Chinese* person, I was ashamed by the previous rulers' humiliations, and thus mobilized troops to wipe out the Mongol barbarians. I have worked diligently for twenty years. Since last year, I have exterminated the northern barbarians, and ruled *China*….[39]

The next year, because Japanese pirate harassments continued, Zhu Yuanzhang again sent an imperial proclamation to Kanekana to instruct him of "*Chinese*" power and virtue:[40]

> I have heard that those who comply with Heaven will thrive and those who resist Heaven will perish. This is the established principle that has never changed in all time. Since antiquity, rulers have resided in *China* and ruled the barbarians in the four directions. The succession of all generations was based on this way. Those Yuan rulers used to be Mongol barbarians from the northern deserts. It has already been one hundred years since they illegitimately

[35] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 402–4, 1614, 1752.

[36] Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation*.

[37] See, for examples, *Ming Taizu shilu*, 827, 1574–75, 1581–82, 1936, 2017, 2125, 2169, 2187–88; *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), eds. Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., 8407.

[38] Zhao Gang, "Reinventing China;" Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 10.

[39] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 786–87.

[40] John Langlois, Jr., "Hung-wu Reign," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, pt. 1, edited by F.W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 107–81, at 128. In *Taizu shilu* and *Mingshi*, the Japanese prince Kanekana (Huailiang 懷良in Chinese) is called Lianghuai 良懷. See *Ming Taizu shilu*, 987–98; *Mingshi*, 8342–44.

> ruled *China*. They polluted and damaged humanity, which led to the disorder of fundamental principles. Therefore, heroes raised armies and fought against the Mongol barbarians for twenty years. Thanks to the blessings of Heaven and ancestors, and efficacious assistance of all the spirits, and the diligence of all generals, I subdued all the heroes within the seas and recovered the territory of previous times. I have occupied the imperial throne for three years…. Ah! my becoming the ruler of *China* is all due to Heaven and Earth and based on the Hua-barbarian distinction….[41]

Facing the blame of failing to serve as a loyal vassal, Kanekana responded:

> Although my country is located east of Fusang, I have always admired *China* (*Zhongguo*). [In the past,] the Mongols were the same barbarians as we, but wanted to subjugate us!… Now, [after] a new Son of Heaven becomes the emperor of *Zhongxia*,… are you also going to cajole us with fine words but to attack us [like the Mongols]?

The Ming envoy refuted this: "The Son of Heaven of our Great Ming is sacred with civil virtue and military power! He cannot be compared to the Mongols!" [42]

In 1381, when reprimanded again by the Ming court, the Japanese authorities replied with a more resolute "Letter to the Hongwu Empire [*sic*] of the Great Ming" (*Zhi Da Ming Hongwu diguo shu* 致大明洪武帝國書):

> I heard that "[Successively,] the Three Sovereigns took the throne, and the Five Emperors transmitted the rulership. It is true that [your] *Zhonghua* has a sovereign, but how do barbarians (*yidi* 夷狄) not have rulers?!… [Now] Your Majesty sits as the sovereign of *Zhonghua*…. In the past, when Yao and Shun had virtue, all those within the four seas came to submit themselves; when Tang and Wu applied benevolence, all those in the eight directions presented tributes…. [If you want to invade us, we are prepared with] the moral literature of Confucius and Mencius on the civil side and strategic art of war by Sun Wu and Wu Qi in the military aspect…. May you, the superior country, think of this again!"[43]

These passages are quoted at length because they illustrate some shared understandings between the Ming and foreign governments about "*China*." First, "*China*" was a common and loose name for a civilization rather than a proper name for a country. It was exchangeable with other names such as "*Zhonghua*," "*Zhongxia*," "*Huaxia*," "*zhongtu*," and "*Zhongyuan*" (as seen, for examples, in the phrases of the "ruler of *Zhongguo*," the "emperor of *Zhongxia*" and "the sovereign of *Zhonghua*"). The proper name that specifically indicated the country was the "Great Ming" (as the Ming envoy declared). All these were shared in the Ming and Japanese communications. Second, "*China*" was a general cultural and historical heritage rather than the newly founded Ming Empire. To the Ming, *China* had existed since antiquity, and been held by the Han people until the Song dynasty. By recovering it from foreign invaders, the Ming only inherited it from previous generations (rather than creating it). For the Japanese, they had "admired *China*" prior to the Mongol conquest, and they also viewed the Mongols as the "barbarians" who illegitimately seized *China*. They urged the Ming to

[41] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 987–98.
[42] *Mingshi*, 8342.
[43] MS, 8343–44; http://miko.org/~uraki/kuon/furu/text/kanbun/kaneyosi.htm.

continue the *Chinese* virtues and benevolence that had been handed down from the sage kings in ancient times. Third, "*China*" was a space rather than the Ming political regime or state. People could hold or lose it, enter or get expelled from it. Political regimes such as dynasties rose and fell, got created and destroyed, but *China* as a space was always there, waiting to get seized, occupied, reformed, and redefined. Fourth, this space was ethnocultural in nature. The Ming had the right to reclaim it simply because the ruling house and the residents were Han and they upheld a cultural mission to cleanse the Mongol "barbarian pollution" so as to purify this Han society. And finally, "*China*" and outsiders constituted a hierarchical relationship, one between lord and vassal, civilization and barbarism, and center and periphery. One can sense a set of meanings of *China* in these communications. Often when the Ming court communicated with foreign countries using the "*China*" discourse, they did not use the term to designate the Ming state or Empire; instead, they only pointed to an ethnocultural space that was transmitted from ancient sage kings against "barbarians," and was or should be held by the Han inhabitants. While this "ethnocultural *China*" was mostly articulated from the Ming perspective, it was often shared by Ming's foreign counterparts, at least in some of their official communications.

Indeed, China's neighbors, especially the so-called Confucian countries of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, not only dealt with (accepted, resisted, or negotiated) the Chinese claims of cultural centrality and superiority, but also employed the discourse of "*China*" and "*Hua-yi* distinction" to construct their own world order. Prior to the twentieth-century, these countries intended to view themselves as "*China*" as well, and structured and practiced their relations with other regions accordingly. In Japan, as early as 740, the official Fujiwara no Hirotsugu 藤原広嗣 at the Nara court memorialized the emperor, arguing for the differentiation of Japan's own "civilized *China*" (*Zhongguo* 中國) and the "barbarian" Emishi/Ezo 蝦夷 in the north and Hayato 隼人 in the west.[44] In some other early Japanese historical texts, such as *Chronicles of Japan, Continued* (*Shoku Nihongi*, 續日本紀, 797),[45] *Later Chronicle of Japan* (*Nihon Koki*, 日本後記, 840),[46] and *Collected Commentaries of the Statutes* (*Ryo no shuge* 令集解, late ninth century),[47] the terms *China* 中國, *Huaxia* 華夏, *Zhongzhou* 中州 and *Hua* 華 are often used to designate the centrality of Japanese authority against surrounding "barbarians," facilitating the formation of the ideology and institution of emperorship. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the wake of the Ming-Qing transition in China, the Japanese scholarly elite maintained that the Manchu Qing regime destroyed *Chinese* civilization on the mainland; it was Japan that took the status of *China* and continued the

[44] *Dai Nihon shi* 大日本史 (*History of Great Japan*, composed and published during the Edo period, 1603–1867), *juan* 117. See http://miko.org/~uraki/kuon/furu/text/dainihonsi/dns117.htm#02 (in the online text, the "西戎華俗" should be "西戎隼俗"). For an introduction of the historical record, see Herschel Webb, "What is the Dai Nihon Shi?," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 19.2 (1960), 135–49.

[45] Fujiwara Tsuginawa 藤原継縄 et al., *Shoku Nihonggi* 續日本紀 (*Chronicles of Japan, Continued*), ed., Kuroita Katsumi 黑板勝美 (Tōkyō : Kokushi Taikei Kankōkai, 1935), 92, 114.

[46] Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu 藤原冬嗣, et. al., *Nihon Koki* 日本後記 (Later chronicle of Japan), eds. Kuroita Nobuo 黒板伸夫 and Morita Tei 森田悌 (Tōkyō : Shūeisha, 2003), 18, 48, 58, 181, 206, 216, 506, 582.

[47] For example, "The 'Emperor' is used to address *Hua* and *yi*" 皇帝, 華夷所稱, in *Ryo no shuge* (Kogaku sosho 皇學叢書, ed., Mozime Takami 物集高見 [Tōkyō : Kōbunko Kankōkai, 1927–31], 2 vols.), 622.

civilization.[48] Viewing Japan as "*Hua*" and emphasizing the "*Hua-yi* distinction" were still the official mentality in the Meiji era (1868–1912). In 1871, when Japan and the Qing governments negotiated the *Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty* (*Zhong-Ri xiuhao tiaogui* 中日修好條規 in Chinese, or *Nisshin shukō jōki* 日清修好條規 in Japanese), the Japanese caused a controversy: they insisted that the Qing government use "Qing" instead of "*China*" in the treaty title. They argued that "*China* referred to a 'self' [central] country versus ["barbarian"] frontiers and remote regions" (*Zhongguo xi dui jibang bianjiang huangfu eryan* 中國系對己邦邊疆荒服而言); after the Manchus replaced the Ming, "*China*" was dead in China, so only "Qing" could be used in the title! As a result, while "*China*" was used in the Chinese version of the treaty, "Da Qing" appeared in its Japanese version.[49]

Korea's Choson dynasty (1392–1910) also witnessed a development of the conviction that *China* was a civilization and that Korea could obtain that status as well. At the court of King Seongjong 成宗 (1457–95; r. 1469–94), which was profoundly influenced and transformed by Chinese customs, Korea was called the "Small China" (*Sojunghua* 小中華),.[50] When the Qing replaced the Ming, the Korean scholars also believed that *China* had died on the mainland. In other words, after the "barbarian" Manchus' regime destroyed civilization, the place where the former Ming occupied ceased to be *Chunghwa*, and the Qing dynasty did not belong to *Chunghwa* anymore. To the Korean cultural elite, *Chunghwa* in essence meant civilization, and every place could become "*China*" as long as it absorbed the Confucian traditions. It was Korea, therefore, that continued the *Chinese* cultural values and practices and thus inherited status of *China*.[51]

[48]See Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行, *Chūchō jijitsu*, 中朝事實 (The truthful matters of the central court, 1669) (Kogaku sosho 皇學叢書, ed., Mozime Takami 物集高見, [Tōkyō : Kōbunko Kankōkai, 1927–1931]), vol. 12), 5–26, on "*Chugoku*" 中國, "*koto*" 皇統, and "*jinki*" 神器; Hayashi Harukatsu [Gahō] 林春勝[鵞峰] and Hayashi Nobuatsu [Hōkō] 林信篤[鳳岡], *Kai hentai*, 華夷變態 (Metamorphosis from civilized to barbarian, 1732, prefaced 1674) (Tokyo : Tōyō Bunko, 1958–59); Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 203–04.

[49]Guan Jie 關捷, etc., eds., *Zhong Ri Jiawu zhanzheng quanshi* 中日甲午戰爭全史 (Complete history of the Jiawu War between China and Japan) (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanse, 2005, 6 vols.), vol. 1, 188–91. For a brief description of *ka-i* 華夷 and "middle kingdom" discourses in Japanese history, see Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 205–10. In Huang Chun-chieh's 黃俊傑 narrative of Japanese self-reference as "*China*," he asserts that in early modern times, Japanese Confucian intellectuals purposefully reinterpreted the Ming "political *China*" to the Japanese "cultural *China*." To me, Huang takes it for granted that "*China*" during the Ming denoted a political entity, which also confuses "*China*" with the "Ming." See Huang, "Lun Zhongguo jingdian zhong 'Zhongguo' gainian de hanyi jiqi zai jinshi Riben yu xiandai Taiwan de zhuanghua" 論中國經典中"中國" 概念的涵義及其在近世日本與現代臺灣的轉化 (The meanings of "*China*" in Chinese classics and their changes in early modern Japan and contemporary Taiwan), in *Dongya lishi shang de tianxia yu Zhongguo gainian*, edited by Gan Huaizhen, 325–37, at 328–32.

[50]*Choson wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄 (The dynastic records of Choson) (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1968–70), vol. 8, 670–71.

[51]Jeong-mi Lee, "Chosŏn Korea as Sojunghwa, the Small Central Civilization: Sadae kyorin Policy and Relations with Ming/Qing China and Tokugawa Japan in the Seventeenth Century," *Asian Cultural Studies* 36 (2000), 305–18; Song Yubo 宋玉波 and Peng Weimin 彭偉民, "Chaoxian yanxing shijie Zhonghua renguan de dishan" 朝鮮燕行使节中华认同观的递嬗 (The change of identity of *Chunghwa* among Korean envoys to China), *Xinan daxue xuebao* 40.5 (2014), 153–60; Sun Weiguo 孫衛國, "Shilun Chaoxian wangchao zun Ming bian Qing de lilun jichu" 試論朝鮮王朝尊明貶清的理論基礎 (The theoretical basis for revering the Ming and belittling the Qing in Choson Korea), *Shixue yuekan* 2004.6, 44–50; Sun Weiguo 孫衛國, "Shilun

After becoming independent in the tenth century, Vietnam also strongly valued the concepts of "*China*" (*Trung Qu* 中國) and the "*Hoa-di* 華夷 distinction." In the Vietnamese version of "Sinocentrism," "*China*" and "*Hoa*" both referred to Vietnam, and *di*, their neighboring regions. In Vietnamese history, the self-appellation of "*China*" can be traced at least back to 1300, when Emperor Anh Tông 英宗 (1276–1320; r. 1293–1314) of the Trần 陳 dynasty (1235–1400) urged his generals to fight against "barbarians" (*yi*) for "*China*." After Vietnam regained independence from the Ming occupation (1407–27), its self-identification as *China* became stronger. According to the *Complete Book of the Historical Records of Đại Việt* (*Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, or *Daietsu shiki zensho* 大越史記全書, 1479–1697) and other historical records, the Later Le 後黎 dynasty's court (1428–1788) repeatedly lauded its *Chinese* centrality and values and denounced outer "barbarians," be they the Ming in the north, Champa 占城 in the south, or Ailao 哀牢 in the west.[52] During Vietnam's last dynasty, the Nguyen 阮 dynasty (1802–1945), its founder Nguyen Phuc Anh 阮福暎 (1762–1820; r. 1802–20 as the Gia Long emperor), not only called Vietnam "*China*" (*Trung Quố*), but emphasized "Han-barbarian distinction" (*Hán di hữu hạn* 漢夷有限), calling the Vietnamese "Han people" ("*Hán nhân*" 漢人) and Han Chinese "the Qing people" (*Thanh nhân* 清人).[53] In so doing, as Alexander Woodside puts it, "[t]he conventional Chinese term for China thus became, in Vietnamese hands, an abstraction devoid of any geographic reference. It changed into a phrase capable of being used to refer to any kingdom, founded upon the principles of the Chinese classics, which felt itself surrounded by unread barbarians."[54] In fact, the meaning of the term *China* did not really change in the Vietnamese context. Even in Chinese history, the name in essence referred to a central cultural place, which could be claimed by different regimes over time (as seen in consecutive "Chinese" dynasties) and space (as claimed simultaneously by the Song and Liao dynasties[55]). When the Vietnamese believed that their culture was "more authentic than the northern Chinese, especially after the Mongol conquest and also when the Manchu Qing dynasty ruled China,"[56] they readily took over the banner of "*China*" for their own cause.[57]

Chaoxian wangchao de muhua sixiang 試論朝鮮王朝的慕華思想 (The thought of admiring China in the Choson dynasty), *Shehui kexue jikan*, 174 (2008.1), 109–15; Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 215–17."

[52]Ngo Silien 吳士連, *Daietsu shiki zensho* 大越史記全書 (Complete book of the historical records of Đại Việt), ed., Chin Keiwa 陳荊和 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Fuzoku Tōyōgaku Bunken Sentā, 1984–86, Tōyōgaku Bunken Sentā sōkan, vols. 42, 44, 47), vol. 44, 681, 706–7, 708.

[53]Andrew Abalahin, "Realms within Realms of Radiance, Or, Can Heaven Have Two Sons? Imperial China as Primus Inter Pares among Sino-Pacific Mandala Polities," in *Imperial China and Its Southern Neighbours*, edited by Victor Mair and Liam Kelley (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015), 338–370, at 345.

[54]Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: The Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), 18–19.

[55]Jing-Shen Tao, *Two Sons of Heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao Relations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988); Zhao Yongchun 趙永春, "Shilun Liaoren de Zhongguo guan" 試論遼人的中國觀 (Liao people's view on China), *Wen shi zhe* 318 (2010.3), 78–90.

[56]Wang Gungwu, "Introduction: Imperial China Looking South," in *Imperial China and Its Southern Neighbours*, edited by Mair and Kelley, 1–15, at 8.

[57]For a detailed treatment of the Vietnamese perception and self-use of "*China*," see Lee Cheuk Yin (Li Zhuoran) 李焯然, "Yuenan shiji dui 'Zhongguo' ji'Huayi' guannian de quanshi" 越南史籍對"中國"及"華

That *China* and the Ming were not identical is evinced more forcefully and clearly in the second kind of audience for the term, i.e. the domestic "barbarian lands" within the Ming Empire. To the Ming government, mainly because of cultural and demographical features, the non-Han "barbarians" and their territories did not belong to *China*, the cultural center of the realm. Indeed, when addressing its own subjects, the Ming court used "*China*" only to differentiate regions of Han people and non-Han "barbarians" and to exclude the latter from the *Chinese* domain. The late Ming official Liu Zhang 劉漳 (dates unknown), in his memorial to the imperial court, theorized *China*'s position in the Ming empire with a body metaphor: The imperial court was the vitals; *China*, the body; and frontiers, the four limbs. To pacify the realm, all the three sectors should be invigorated.[58] Differing from the frontier regions where most non-Han ethnic groups resided, *China* served as an essential protective screen for the court.

Let us again look at some specific cases where "*China*" and "barbarians" were treated differently within the Ming Empire.

Guangdong: In the mid- and late Ming, four non-Han communities living in the mountains in Qinzhou 欽州 not only practiced "barbarian customs" (*yifeng* 夷風) and rejected Han law (*Hanfa* 漢法), but revolted against the Ming and joined Annam during the Xuande reign (1426–35). The Ming did not recover the region into the "domain" (*bantu* 版圖) until 1542, more than one hundred years after the loss of the territory. In order to stabilize the area, in 1610, the former Minister of War Dai Yao 戴燿 (1542–1628) suggested that aboriginal offices be established so that local people would control themselves. By doing this, Dai hoped, the court would prevent "evil persons of *China*" (*Zhongguo jianmin* 中國奸民, i.e., Han criminals) from seeking to serve as tribal heads to stir up trouble.[59] To Dai, clearly, non-Han communities were separated from *China*.

Guangxi: In 1527, when the imperial court deliberated on filling the post of Regional Commander of Liangguang,[60] the Grand Secretary Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454–1530) emphasized that the position should be granted to a high-ranking and prestigious official; otherwise, the rebellious "barbarians along the borders" (*bianyi* 邊夷) in Tianzhou and Sien would not take *China* seriously.[61] Yang pointed to the confrontation between *China* and non-Han areas.

夷"觀念的詮釋 (Exegeses of the concepts of "*China*" and "*Huayi*" in Vietnamese historical records), in his *Zhongxin yu bianyuan: Dongxi wenming de hudong yu chuanbo* 中心與邊緣: 東西文明的互動與傳播 (Center and periphery: Interaction and dissemination of the eastern and western civilizations) (Nanning: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015), 13–25.

[58] *Ming Shizong shilu* 明世宗實錄, ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taibei: Academia Sinica, 1965), 90.

A slightly different version of the metaphor is articulated in Tian Rucheng's 田汝成 *Yanjiao jiwen* 炎徼紀聞: "It is just like a body: The Central Plains [*Zhongyuan*] are the vital organs; and distant places [the frontiers], the four limbs." See *Yanjiao jiwen*, in *Jilu huibian* 記錄匯編, ed. Shen Jiefu 沈節甫 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 1994), 547–596, at 547. It seems that "*China*" and the "Central Plains" are loosely exchangeable here.

[59] *Ming Shenzong shilu* 明神宗實錄, ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 8918–21.

[60] The Regional Commander of Liangguang was in charge of military affairs in Guangdong and Guangxi. The position was split into Regional Commander of Guangdong and Regional Commander of Guangxi in 1566. See *Mingshi*, 1870.

[61] *Ming Shizong shilu*, 1799.

Sichuan: In 1586, the Ming central government rewarded Vice Surveillance Commissioner of Sichuan Zhou Jiamo 周嘉謨 (1546–1629) for his achievements in suppressing the "barbarian" revolts in Baicao, Songpan, and Maozhou. The Ministry of War further instructed the Sichuan government to incorporate the "surrendered barbarians" into the Ming's jurisdiction (*banji* 版籍) but not to accept their tributes because the essence of *China*'s rule over "external barbarians" (*waiyi* 外夷) lay in the subjugation of their wills rather than the acquisition of their goods.[62] Here, entering the Ming's jurisdiction would not automatically change the "barbarian" nature of the locale, which remained "external" to *China*.

Yunnan: In 1582, Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–82) memorialized the throne, opposing the levy of gold in Yunnan in part because Yunnan had not entered the "domain" until the Ming dynasty and the "barbarian Lolo" (*Yiluo* 夷猓) had no history of paying taxes in cash or in kind; the levy might cause them—especially those in Longchuan and Mubang—to rebel, which would in turn make *China* waste financial resources to pacify the areas.[63] To Zhang, entering the "domain" of the Ming Empire did not necessarily mean becoming part of *China*.

Guizhou: In the early Ming, when the Commissioner of the Guizhou Pacification Office, Aicui 靄翠, petitioned the court to send Han troops to attack other local aboriginal forces, Zhu Yuanzhang declined: "How could *China*'s troops be used as tools of revenge among 'external barbarians' (*waiyi* 外夷) [i.e. the "barbarians" outside *China*]?!"[64] The emperor clearly treated the non-Han groups inside the empire as "outside"/non-*Chinese* forces.

The government's different treatment of *China* and "barbarian" areas in the empire is most vividly evinced in the stance and policies of the imperial court in handling the Azhe 阿哲 patriclan in Guizhou.[65] The Azhe clan had ruled over northwest Guizhou for centuries. In the early Ming, they accepted both the title of Pacification Commissioner of Guizhou and the Chinese surname of "An" 安 bestowed by the Hongwu emperor.[66] From 1570–77, the fourteenth Pacification Commissioner, An Guoheng 安國亨, killed a former leader's son; the victim's brother An Zhi 安智 then accused Guoheng of rebellion before the imperial court. The court responded by sending a military expedition against An Guoheng. The Grand Secretary Gao Gong 高拱 (1512–78), however, did not see it a wise idea for the court to intervene directly. His basic standpoint was that the homicide committed by Guoheng was "a mutual killing among barbarians," which was different from the act inside *China*. Since these "barbarians" were "not our kind" (*fei wo zulei* 非我族類), although Guoheng committed a crime, sending out troops to fight was not the right way of "driving out the barbarians and bringing peace to *China*." After all, Gao asserted, the disorder between the Ans was "their family matter" (*bi zhi jiashi* 彼之家事), which differed from "rebellion." So Gao strongly

[62] *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 3349.

[63] *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 2313–14.

[64] *Mingshi*, 8168. For some other examples, see *Ming Taizu shilu*, 853, 1599–1600, 2210, 2213, 2747–48, 2874, 2936–37, 3475–76.

[65] John Herman deals with the interaction between the Azhe patriclan and the central government in his *Amid the Clouds and Mist*.

[66] The An family was in charge of Miao people in Guizhou. It is said that they belonged to the Yi 彝 group.

opposed "expending the financial resources and employing the manpower of *China*'s people to exterminate the aboriginal barbarians who engaged in mutual killing but dared not to offend us." Eventually, despite the loss of some troops, the Ming court pardoned Guoheng on the condition that he compensate the government for grain and properly settle with the victim's mother and brother.[67]

Some twenty years later, in 1599, after An Guoheng's son Jiangchen 疆臣 inherited the title of Pacification Commissioner, the new leader was again accused by the Ming authorities of murdering his rival tribesman An Ding 安定. Song Xingzu 宋興祖, the Regional Inspector for Guizhou, found the prosecution equally ill-grounded. For one thing, Jiangchen had been loyal to *China*. More importantly, the crime committed among the "barbarians" had nothing to do with *China*. Therefore, Song urged, the case should not be judged by Han law (*Hanfa*), and the prisoners should be released, so that the local people would not be agitated.[68]

By that time, Yang Yinglong 楊應龍 (d. 1600), the Miao leader at Bozhou 播州, Sichuan, was launching serious military attacks against the Ming forces. The Ming court then pardoned Jiangchen so that he could "render meritorious service" by fighting Yang. Guo Zizhang 郭子章 (1543–1618), the Grand Coordinator of Guizhou, even promised Jiangchen that his former land that had been seized by Yang would be returned after Yang was suppressed. And Guo did keep his promise, allowing Jiangchen to "separate the land" (*lietu* 裂土) and "recover his former territory" (*fanduo qi gudi* 反奪其故地). Guo's rationale was again to make non-Han groups outside *China* attack each other: "It is a normal state for aboriginal leaders to kill each other in revenge; and it is beneficial to *China* if barbarians attack each other. When the barbarians in Sichuan attack Guizhou, if [the Han government in] Guizhou then fights Sichuan for the barbarians in Guizhou, it is to exhaust *China* for the benefit of barbarians." After heated debates at the imperial court, the Ming eventually not only allowed Jiangchen to keep the land, but also raised his official rank.[69] The unfolding of these stories in Guizhou illustrates the Ming official vision of the empire: it differentiated *China* from the "barbarian" regions, which often led to the adoption of pragmatic and even hands-off measures towards the "barbarian" peoples.

The Ming government consolidated this worldview with political and sociocultural mechanisms on the southwestern borderlands. First, continuing the Yuan legacy, the Ming adopted the "aboriginal office" (*tusi* 土司) system in governing aboriginal peoples outside *China*.[70] A part of the "loose-rein" (*jimi* 羈縻) policy of the Ming court,[71] this system incorporated the unassimilated "barbarians" into the Chinese

[67]*Mingshi*, 8171; Gao Gong, "Jing yi jishi" 靖夷記事, in *Jilu huibian*, ed. Shen Jiefu, 525–30.

[68]*Ming Shenzong shilu*, 6164–65; *Mingshi*, 8172.

[69]*Ming Shenzong shilu*, 8037–39; *Mingshi*, 8172–73. For an account of the interaction among An Guoheng/An Jiangchen, Yang Yinglong, and the Ming court, see Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist*, 158–71.

[70]For some treatments of the "aboriginal office" system in the Ming, see Li Lung-hua 李龍華, "Mingdai tusi zhengce xilun" 明代土司政策析論, *Dalu zazhi* (Taibei) 86.1 (1993), 1–12; Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1992); and Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist*, 103–88.

[71]For a concise historical survey of the "loose-rein" policy, see Yang Lien-sheng, see Yang Lien-sheng, "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, edited by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 20–33, esp. 31–33.

empire by granting tribal chiefs official titles and leaving them with considerable authority over their local people. The Ming court, meanwhile, stationed military forces to maintain order and resist aggressions, and demanded tribute and taxes from local peoples.[72] In addition, the Ming established an elaborate "tributary system" (*chaogong* 朝貢). Only regimes outside *China* were "required" to pay tribute to the Ming court. In the process—at least in the ideal Ming order—the tributary entities would present various materials and acknowledge the superiority of the Ming court (representing *China*); whereas the Ming court would then return gifts and confer relevant titles and positions on their chiefs. The institution identified aboriginal offices inside the Ming with foreign countries (*fanguo ji siyi tuguan* 番國及四夷土官)—these "outsiders" in turn defined where and what *China* was.[73] Furthermore, in the Ming official literary practice, the words of "*man* 蠻" and "*yi* 夷" (lit. barbarians) were only used for non-*Chinese* peoples. People of *China*, no matter how "evil" or "ugly" the state perceived them as being, would not be considered "barbarians." Indeed, as attested in the aforementioned memorial by Zhou Hongmo, although bandits caused unrest and refugees were likely to make troubles in the Han domain, they were still "*Chinese*" rather than "barbarian" problems. The location of the events defined the nature of their crimes.[74] These values and institutions strengthened the perceived differences between *China* and other parts of the Ming realm.

In short, the perusal of the use of "*China*" in Ming documents addressed to both types of audience (*China* vs. foreign countries, mostly in diplomatic documents, and *China* vs. "barbarian" areas within the Ming Empire) indicates that the Ming imperial court saw *China* as a Han domain in contrast to non-Han "barbarians" and their cultures.[75] At the center of the world, *China* represented the cosmic *yang* force, and "barbarians," the *yin*.[76] *China* was conceptualized and institutionalized solely against "barbarians," be they foreign or domestic. In other words, "*China*" was different not only from foreign countries but also from regions inhabited by non-Han peoples under the Ming government. Spatially, therefore, *China* only constituted part of the Ming Empire, although it was deemed as the core part. Not only were foreigners excluded from it, but the non-Han socioethnic groups within the empire had no space in it either. Within the Ming empire, *China* (or *Zhonghua*, *Zhongxia*, or *Zhongtu*) and "barbarians" are separate entities, which stood against each other. Getting incorporated into the empire politically would not automatically guarantee "barbarians'" membership of *China*. According to this scheme, the Ming ruling elite envisioned a world as three interrelated yet distinctive domains: *China*, the central dominion at the center; inner "barbarian" areas, the regions around *China* where most of the non-Han ethnosocial groups within the

[72]For detailed description of the practice, see *Mingshi*, 7981–8277.

[73]For the Ming regulations on the tributary system and a detailed list of the tributary regions and their tribute, see Shen Shixing 申時行, ed., *Ming huidian* 明會典 (Beijing: Zhonhua shuju, 1989), 571–87.

[74]*Ming Xiaozong shilu* 明孝宗實錄, ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 971–76.

[75]For instance, among the nearly 1,300 uses of "*China*" in the official document of *Ming shilu* (Veritable records of the Ming), except for three times, all the other occurrences fall into those two categories. The three exceptions occur on one occasion where Zhu Yuanzhang used "*China*" to denote the "the Central Plains" (*Zhongyuan*) in the history of Three Kingdoms (220–265).

[76]*Ming Shizong shilu*, 1602; *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 6–7.

empire resided; and foreign lands. And for each domain, the Ming designed different agendas: to purify *Chinese* people after the Mongol rule, to transform inner "barbarians," and to guard against foreigners.[77] This view of "*China*" was shared and used by China's neighboring countries that were under heavy Chinese influence: Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. According to their worldview, the Chinese regimes' status as representatives of "*China*" changed from time to time: these regimes (be they Ming or Qing or any other) could be called *China* if they upheld the Confucian values and practices; otherwise, they turned into "barbarians." Meanwhile, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam would each view themselves as "*China*" too. They could either be paired with Chinese regimes, both as representatives of "*China*" (albeit occasionally they might accept a lesser status); or they saw themselves as the sole agent of "*China*" after, in their view, the Chinese regime lost its "civilized" nature. These non-Chinese countries, in other words, also upheld a "Sinocentric" worldview. They used it, on the one hand, to deal with the discourse and claims of Chinese regimes, and on the other, constructed their own—they were the civilized "*China*" in the "Sino-barbarian" world order. Among the four "Confucian countries," therefore, a common conviction developed: "*China*" and "*hua/hwa/hoa* people" were cultural concepts; political regimes could keep or lose them; and any regime might claim them, all of which depended on the values and practices that were established and maintained.

## "*CHINA*" AS AN ETHNOCULTURAL SPACE OF THE HAN

If the Ming imperial court saw "*China*" as a space standing opposite to the "barbarians" (*yi*), both foreign and domestic, what differentiated the two (or, what constituted the basis of "*China*")? And where was "*China*" located? It is my contention that it was the Han 漢 ethnicity (i.e. the special cultural traits carried by a particular group of people in a given space) that served as the foundation of Ming "*China*." In other words, "*China*" was an ethnocultural space of the Han: it was Han land, which the Han people inhabited, and where Han values and norms were produced, practiced, and preserved. At this point, before we move on to the specifics of the Han-*China* relationship and spatiality of "*China*" in the Ming, it should be necessary and useful to narrate a brief account of the Ming perception of "Han," although the scope and length of this essay prevent detailed study.

In the Ming construction of its worldview and imperial order, the concept and discourse of "Han" played a critical role. After all, the dynastic building involved the central question of—in the imperial discourse—whose country it fought for and whose interest it ought to serve. At the outset, the dynastic founder Zhu Yuanzhang made clear the purpose of his uprising: he embarked on the mission to "recover our old country of the Han people and unify *Zhongxia*" (*fu wo Hanren guguo tongyi Zhongxia* 復我漢人故國統一中夏).[78] He thus declared an unequivocal connection between the Han, *China*, and the imperial domain.

[77]Jiang Yonglin, *The Mandate of Heaven and the Great Ming Code* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 103–12.

[78]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 1614.

The *Han*, or *Hanren*, referred to a very diverse ethnosocial group of people, deriving its name from the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220CE). While it is difficult to speak to its definite origins, components, and the time when it became an "ethnic group" or "nationality" (*minzu* 民族), scholars tend to believe that its identity formation can be traced back to at least over four thousand years ago, when this people might have acquired the name "*Xia*" 夏 (lit. the grandeur of ceremonies) or "*Hua*" 華 (lit. the beauty of clothes and ornaments), which later were combined as *Huaxia*. Living in the middle and lower regions of the Yellow River drainage basin, these societies expanded to include a variety of peoples and underwent tremendous transformations. Several historical periods witnessed their critical development. In the Zhou dynasty and Warring States period (1046–221 BCE), the so-called one hundred schools of thought flourished, which not only established the country's intellectual foundation, but also laid out the blueprint for institutions and rituals and the principles of "inner-outer domains" and the "*Hua*-barbarian distinction." During the Han dynasty, a number of achievements, including the long-lasting ruling house, effective government institutions, powerful imperial expansion, making Confucianism an orthodox and state ideology, and constructing the Confucian classics, all contributed to the major transformation of the group identity, such as the name "Han" and fundamental values and practices. In the period of disunity (220–589 CE), "Han" became the self-appellation of the diverse group; the group was further integrated with other ethnosocial groups, particularly the so-called *Hu* 胡 barbarians in the north and various *Man* 蠻 barbarians in the south; and non-Han cultures—particularly Buddhism—were absorbed as part of Han civilization. By the Tang (618–906) and Song (960–1279) eras, the concept of "Han" as an ethnosocial group with "superior" cultural traits had been firmly established in official discourse. Even during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), when the imperial course divided the subjects into northern "*Hanren*" 漢人 and southern "*Nanren*" 南人 (southerner, or "Manzi" 蠻子, "barbarians") according to political history, the imperial court tended to view them as the same "ethnic" group in terms of language and customs.[79]

The Ming was another critical time period for the formation of the "Han" ethnicity after overthrowing the alien Mongol regime. In the early Ming, the imperial court already explicitly and purposefully defined the "Han" as a special category of people. The founder Zhu Yuanzhang's proclamation of his mission to recover the Han people's old country from the Mongols both defined the nature of the empire and signified the ethnic category of the "Han." The imperial court viewed and treated "*Hanren*" as a special "kind" (*zhonglei* 種類) that differed from various "barbarians" (named, in Chinese, "*fan*" 番, "*yidi*" 夷狄, "*man*"蠻, or "*hulu*" 胡虜, etc.). Along the western borderlands, civilians were divided into *fan* 番 and *Han* 漢.[80] If *fanren* stole *Hanren*'s property, they could be pardoned on the basis of "ignorance" of the law.[81] In the northwest

[79]For some general accounts of the evolution of the "Han" people, see Xu Jieshun 徐傑舜, *Han minzu fazhan shi* 漢民族發展史 (History of Han nationality) (Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2012); Cho-yun Hsu 許倬雲, *Wozhe yu tazhe* 我者與他者 (Who am I? Who are the others?) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2009); and Thomas Mullaney et al., eds., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[80]*Ming Taizong shilu*, 1278–79, 3641–42.

[81]*Ming Yingzong shilu* 明英宗實錄 (Veritable records of Ming Yingzong) (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966), 2384.

and north, *Hanren* were often attacked and captured by "*da* bandits" (*dazei* 達賊) or "*hu* barbarians" (*hulu* 胡虜).[82] In the southwest, when the "Miao" peoples rebelled, the Han and *tu* and *da* troops would form combined forces to suppress the unrest.[83] In the northeast, *Hanren* and Jurchen (*Nüzhi* 女直) criminals tended to flee to Korea and thus presented some threats to the Ming order.[84] And in less peripheral areas, such as Zhejiang, *Hanren* were often bribed by the "surrendered *hu* " (*guifu huren* 归附胡人) to fraudulently take provisions and funds.[85] Across the empire, therefore, "*Hanren*" and other ethno-social groups were perceived as different kinds of subjects.

In the eyes of the Ming ruling elite, what differentiated Han and others was a set of fundamental cultural traits. Han people spoke a unique language—"Han language" (*Hanyu* 漢語), which was considered to be a major carrier of the Han civilization and superior to and more beautiful than the "barbarian" languages such as "*fanyu*" 番語.[86] While "barbarians" could grasp the Han language, they would only employ it as a practical tool rather than an ethnic status marker.[87] Han people carried their own surnames (*Hanxing* 漢姓); bestowing Han surnames to non-Han peoples became a display of imperial grace.[88] The Han cherished "civilized" values and practices, particularly the Han "ritual and law" (*lifa* 禮法)[89] and life style (e.g., agricultural farming [*shuyi* 樹藝] of the Han vs. animal husbandry [*xumu* 畜牧] of the "*hu* barbarians")[90]. The Han also upheld a spatial concept: the territory where the Han people lived and Han values were institutionalized and practiced became known as "Han domain" (*Handi* 漢地) against the non-Han areas such as the "*fan* barbarian domain" (*fandi* 番地).[91] Over time, some elements might change (such as the scope of the "Han domain"), but the "Han" as an ethnic group were considered to cherish these essential cultural traits.

In the Ming, the "Han" was not just a perception; it was fully institutionalized as well. In law, the Han people would be subject to "Han law" (*Hanfa*); whereas the non-Han, to either special imperial regulations or their own "aboriginal regulations" ("*tusu shili*" 土俗事例) (see below). In government agencies, officials were categorized into "Han

[82] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 5474.
[83] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 5566, 5580, 5593.
[84] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 1857.
[85] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 1333.
[86] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1815–16; *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 1380–81.
[87] *Ming Taizong shilu* 明太宗實錄 (Veritable records of Ming Taizong), ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 1763; *Ming Xuanzong shilu* 明宣宗實錄 (Veritable records of Ming Xuanzong) ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 1401.
[88] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1815–16. Bestowing the surname of "An" 安 on the Commissioner of the Guizhou Pacification Office was a well-known example. See Yu Hongmo 余宏模, "Mindai Guizhou xuanweishi 'cixing Anshi' lizheng" 明代貴州宣慰使"賜姓安氏"例證 (Evidence of "bestowing the surname of An" on the Commissioner of the Guizhou Pacification Office in the Ming), *Guizhou wenshi congkan* 1998.1: 5–7. Hongxiang 張鴻翔 finds that the Ming court bestowed names on 512 non-Han people, mostly to Mongols and Jurchens. See his "Ming waizu cixing kao" 明外族賜姓考 (An investigation of bestowing names to outer nationalities), *Furen xuezhi* 輔仁學誌 3.2 (1932); "Ming waizu cixing xukao" 明外族賜姓續考 (A second investigation of bestowing names on outer nationalities), *Furen xuezhi* 4.2 (1934).
[89] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 1380–81.
[90] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 2758–59
[91] *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 1352–53.

officials" ("*Hanguan*" 漢官) and "aboriginal officials" (*tuguan* 土官).[92] In military, the personnel were organized into Han and non-Han troops (such as "*Hanjun*" 漢軍, "*tubing*" 土兵, "*fanjun*" 番軍, and "*dajun*" 達軍).[93] In religion, the imperial government divided religious personnel and facilities into Han and "*fan*" officials, prefectural Buddhist registries (*senggang si* 僧綱司) and monasteries.[94]

All in all, the Ming perceived and created the "Han" with particular cultural, spatial, and institutional meanings. This was the time period, as Mark Elliott argues, that witnessed the important development of the unified ethnonym "Han." By including Southerners and excluding those who were perceived to be not sufficiently acculturated (such as Mongols, Semu, Jurchens, and Khitans), the Ming established "a general identification" between the Ming realm, the central kingdom (*Zhongguo*, or *China*), *Chinese* people (*Zhongguo ren* 中國人), and Han people (*Hanren* 漢人).[95] To be sure, "Han" was a historical construct, with its cultural, demographical and geographical components constantly changing; and the Ming did not give it a strict definition. Nevertheless, all their renderings and institutions pointed to a special ethnic group, with "superior" values, languages, customs, and institutions in a particular "central" space. Han existed and carried meanings only because the existence of its counterparts: the "barbarians" in different forms and from different places. In other words, the presence of and interaction with the "barbarians" became an essential precondition for the formation of the Han ethnicity.

The Ming closely tied "Han" to its concept of "*China*," making the former the ethnocultural foundation of the latter. Essentially, then, three crucial elements defined *China*: Han people, Han culture, and Han land. First, it must be a place where the Han people inhabited. It belonged to the Han, who could not be confused with "barbarians." To emphasize the Han-"barbarian" distinction, the well-known early Ming Confucian scholar Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357–1402) at the Jianwen emperor's court (1377–?; r. 1398–1402) articulated very harsh views on "barbarians":

> To elevate them to a position above the *Chinese* people would be to lead the world to animaldom. If a dog or a horse were to occupy a human's seat, even small boys would be angry and take a club to them…why? Because the general order would be confused.[96]

As the masters and owners of *China*, therefore, the Han could not be lumped together and confused with "barbarians."

The demographical landscape of Guizhou province displayed the separation of Han and non-Han and the connection between the Han and *China*. Guizhou was the last province to be established in 1413 under the Yongle emperor, Zhu Di 朱棣 (1360–1424;

[92]*Ming Yingzong shilu*, 2961.

[93]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 3036; *Ming Xunzong shilu*, 1768; *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 3792–93.

[94]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 3307–08; *Ming Yingzong shilu*, 634, 2165.

[95]Mark Elliott, "Hushuo: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese," *Critical Han Studies*, edited by Mullaney et al., 173–90, at 188–89.

[96]Fang Xiaoru, *Xun zhizhai ji* 遜志齋集, ed. Xu Guangda (Zhejiang: Ningbo chubanshe, 1996), 59. The quotation is translated by John Fincher in his "China as a Race, Culture, and Nation: Notes on Fang Hsiao-ju's Discussion of Dynastic Legitimacy," in *Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture*, edited by David C. Buxbaum and Frederick W. Mote (Hong Kong: Cathay Press Limited, 1972), 59–69, at 59. The italicization of "Chinese" is mine.

r. 1402–24). In the main, it functioned to secure the pathways between Yunnan and *China*. Throughout the dynasty, most parts of Guizhou were home to non-Han peoples; the Han immigrants (civilians and military personnel and their families) by and large lived in the military facilities of guards and battalions (*weisuo* 衛所), especially along the pathway between Pingxi 平溪 in the east and Puan 普安 in the west, the corridor that connected Huguang and Yunnan. Even in the late Ming, scholar-officials still saw the sharp division between Han/*Chinese* and "barbarians." Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547–98), for instance, mapped Guizhou through the *China*-"barbarian" perspective: the province was mostly occupied by "Miao barbarians," leaving merely one narrow path connecting *China* and Yunnan. In this place, *Chinese* persons could be administered (and protected) only by military garrisons and battalions; the civil offices could deal only with the various "Miao barbarians."[97] Guo Zizhang 郭子章 (1543–1618), who dealt intensively with the minorities on the southwestern frontiers, also argued that in Guizhou, there was only a narrow corridor connecting *China* and Yunnan; almost all the province was inhabited by the "Miao barbarians."[98] The area of the province that could be called "*China*" was so small that Guo saw it a daunting task for the province to disseminate *Chinese* virtues,[99] and thus proposed a gradual strategy to achieve the goal of "ruling the barbarians at the four directions with the governance of *China*" (*yi Zhongguo zhi zhi dai siyi* 以中國之治待四夷).[100] He believed that *China* and Guizhou were so different that they could not be treated with the same rules: "If all [the Miao barbarians] were governed with Han law, they would definitely be frightened and thus cause disorder. When dogs bark and sheep butt, how can only the dogs and sheep be to blame?"[101] More than two hundred years into the Ming dynasty, the ruling elite still sensed powerful alien non-Han cultural and social forces.

The second defining factor for *China* was the set of values, norms, and practices of the Han people. On many occasions, the Ming ruling elite emphasized the significance and specific components of *Chinese* culture. In the very first year of the dynasty (1368), claiming that the former Mongol Yuan dynasty "replaced all *Chinese* institutions with barbarian customs" (*xiyi husu bianyi Zhongguo zhi zhi* 悉以胡俗變易中國之制), Zhu Yuanzhang decreed to prohibit the one-hundred-year-long "barbarian" practices such as dress style, hair style, naming, and language, and to restore the *Chinese* ones.[102] In addition to purifying Han culture, the dynastic founder also urged transforming non-Han peoples with *Chinese* customs, the policy of "transforming the barbarians with Xia (culture)" (*yi Xia bian yi* 以夏變夷). In 1382, for example, when the aboriginal official named Zhe'e 者額 from Puding 普定, Sichuan, came to pay court audience, Zhu Yuanzhang instructed him:

[97]Wang Shixing, *Guangzhi yi*, 133.

[98]Guo, *Qianji* 黔記, in *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng: Guizhou fuxian zhiji* 中國地方志集成: 貴州府縣志輯 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2006; part 1, in vol. 2: 1–598, and part 2, in vol. 3: 1–461), part 1, 304, part 2, 404, 412.

[99]Guo, *Qianji*, part 1, 312.

[100]Guo, *Qianji*, part 1, 510.

[101]Guo, *Qianji*, part 2, 404.

[102]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 525.

> The ruler takes the realm as his home. His prestige and teachings should reach everywhere, whether near or far, especially considering that the districts of Puding are close to *China*. It is indeed laudable for you to adore righteousness and come to pay court audience! Now when you return, you should advise the various chieftains that they should all have their children educated at the Imperial Academy, and thus make them know the way of ruler-minister and father-son and the matters of ritual, music, and moral transformation. Later on, when they finish their learning and return [home, they can then] be able to change their aboriginal customs (*tusu* 土俗) to those of *China*. Isn't it beautiful?[103]

To Zhu Yuanzhang, apparently, although those non-Han peoples had become the subjects of the Ming ruling house, they had not been turned into real *Chinese*, and their domains had not become real *China*. The *Chinese* (Han) cultural education should serve as a key measure to lead them to the successful transformation. Later on, Zhe'e and some other aboriginal officials did send their children to the imperial capital Nanjing to study *Chinese* culture.[104]

Fang Xiaoru, although disagreeing with many aspects of Zhu Yuanzhang's governmental philosophy,[105] defined *China* in "culturalist" terms just like the dynastic founder:

> What makes *China* so worthy and different from the barbarians is that she has the distinction between ruler and subject and the teaching of propriety and righteousness. Had she not the distinction between ruler and subject she would be counted among the barbarians. Were she among them, she would be almost the same as wild beasts.[106]

Such a view was further echoed by many other officials such as the mid-Ming Investigating Censor Yu Shousui 虞守隨 at the Wuzong emperor's court (1491–1521; r. 1505–21): "The reason that *China* is *China* is that it has the customs of propriety and righteousness and the beauty of clothing and various institutions" (*Gai Zhongguo zhi suoyi wei Zhongguo zhe, yi you liyi zhi feng yiguan wenwu zhi mei ye* 蓋中國之所以為中國者以有禮儀之風衣冠文物之美也).[107]

In short, the Ming ruling elite envisioned a *China* where Han people lived and that embraced a system of Han values, institutions, and practices, including "sages' teachings," socio-moral principles, written characters, Han language, law, rituals, music, medicine, clothing and ornaments, and tea. *China* and Han culture could not be separated. With such cultural development, the Ming perceived, *China* would differ from "barbarian territories" whose inhabitants—like "birds and beasts"—could only practice inhuman customs.[108]

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[103] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 2366.

[104] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 2517, 3018, 3025.

[105] Jiang Yonglin, "In the Name of 'Taizu': The Construction of Zhu Yuanzhang's Legal Philosophy and the Chinese Cultural Identity in the *Veritable Records of Taizu*," *T'oung-pao* 96 (2010), 408–70, at 453–57.

[106] Fang, *Xun zhizhai ji*, 57. The quotation is translated by John Fincher in his "China as a Race, Culture, and Nation," 61. The italicization of "China" is mine. The "culturalist view" is argued by John Fincher.

[107] *Ming Wuzong shilu* 明武宗實錄 (Veritable records of Ming Wuzong), ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 3285.

[108] *Ming Shizong shilu*, 4186–88; *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 72; Fang, *Xunzhizhai ji*, 58–59; *Ming Wuzong shilu*, 3285.

In the Ming scheme, "*China*" had a third component: the place (of the Han people). Where was Ming "*China*"? The first spatial hint derived from the Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang. In his denunciation of the Mongol regime, he proclaimed the "inner-outer" distinction of "*China*" and "barbarians" based on the age-old tradition: "Since antiquity, when rulers governed all under Heaven, *China* was located inside to control the barbarians, and the barbarians lived outside to serve *China*."[109] But still, where was the "inside" and where were its boundaries against the "outside"? In the Ming geopolitical discourse, the ruling elite often used two phrases to describe *China*'s relations with others: "entering *China*" (*ru Zhongguo* 入中國) and "having no communications with *China*" (*butong Zhongguo* 不通中國). The former term further described two scenarios: the first is that non-Han "barbarian" peoples came to *China* from all directions—the Mongols from the north and northwest, the "*fan*"番 from the west, the Koreans from the northeast, Japanese and Liuqiu people 琉球 from the east, Vietnamese from the south, and "western *Huihui*" (*xiyang Huihui* 西洋回回) from Siam in the southwest. The other is concerned with some geographical features such as the Yellow River that originated in the far west and then "entered *China*"[110] and the "three major mountain systems" (*sanda ganlong* 三大幹龍).[111] The second phrase has to do with the non-Han places having no contacts with *China*, be they "foreign" entities such as the Netherlands, the Hanthawaddy Pegu Kingdom (Ch. *Da gula* 大古剌; 1287–1539) in the southern part of present-day Myanmar, the former tributary domain of Laos (*Laowo* 老挝), or the "domestic" region of Guizhou. Both renderings indicate a strong sense of spatial *China*: a physical place where outsiders entered.

Where was *China*, then? The Ming offered several lines of narrative about its scope and boundaries, albeit they were often vague. At the founding of the dynasty, the Ming court envisioned a space that could be called the "old territory of *China*" (*Zhongguo jiujiang* 中國舊疆), and Zhu Yuanzhang saw his mission to "recover" the territory and thus become the "ruler of *China*" (*Zhongguo zhu* 中國主). The dynastic founder did not proclaim his accomplishment of the mission until his troops defeated the Mongols in the north eight months into his new reign. Only then did he declare that his "*China*" also covered Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Beiping in the north and Huguang (Huxiang 湖湘 and Hanmian 漢沔 areas) in the west, in addition to southern and eastern regions of the country.[112] At first, Zhu Yuanzhang did not view Ming Sheng's 明昇 (1356–91; r. 1366–71) Great Xia (*Da Xia* 大夏) dynasty as part of *China*. In his early communications with Ming Sheng, Zhu Yuanzhang treated the Great Xia as a separate and independent state (*guo* 國), and Ming Sheng its ruler.[113] When some Ming officials advised Zhu Yuanzhang to conquer the Great Xia with force, Zhu Yuanzhang was concerned that there was no "just cause" (*ming* 名).[114] Even when Zhu Yuanzhang finally dispatched his troops to attack the Great Xia, his prayer to gods only listed the provocations by

[109]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 401.
[110]*Ming Shenzong shilu*, 3644, 3799.
[111]I will treat the problem of "*sanda ganlong*" in next section.
[112]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 482–83, 632, 750; Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Taizu ji* 明太祖集 (Collected essays of Zhu Yuanzhang), ed. Hu Shie 胡士萼 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1991), 1.
[113]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 301–02, 751–52.
[114]*Ming Taizu shilu*, 936.

Ming Sheng's evil officials as an excuse; the discourse of "*China*" was not utilized.[115] It was not until three months after the military expedition when Zhu Yuanzhang still had not received a report of victory, he—while sending military reinforcements—started using the "*China*" concept to invoke the gods' blessings. But he did not claim that Ba-Shu 巴蜀 (Sichuan) was part of the "old territory of *China*"—like the region "illegitimately occupied" by the Mongols; instead, he just stated that western Shu was "originally under the rule of *China*" (*ben Zhongguo zhi suotong* 本中國之所統), and made this only a secondary reason for destroying the Great Xia, next to the charge that Ming Sheng's evil officials had taken the young ruler hostage in order to exercise power and advance their own interests without authority.[116] Only after Ming Sheng surrendered did the Ming court add Ba-Shu to the list of regions that were part of "old territory of *China*."[117]

After seizing the Great Xia in Sichuan, the Ming turned its attention to Yunnan, which was under the rule of the Mongol Prince of Liang, Basalamarmi (Ch. Bazalawaermi 巴匝剌瓦爾密, d. 1382). In this case, in contrast to the Great Xia, from the beginning to the end the Ming never identified Yunnan as part of the "old territory of *China*." The Ming defined Yunnan as a home to "various southwest barbarians" (*xinan zhuyi* 西南諸夷). They saw it as place that had never "communicated" (*tong* 通) with *China* until the Han dynasty, when the imperial court appointed certain officials to some local areas. Since the Han dynasty, according to the Ming court, Yunnan had submitted to and been affiliated with (*fushu* 服屬) *China*; but its relationship with the *Chinese* government was no more than one of "accepting the status of vassal and paying tribute" (*chengchen chaogong* 稱臣朝貢), like any other foreign or domestic "barbarian" entities.[118] By the 1370s, therefore, the Ming just urged Basalamarmi to do the same, allowing him to maintain his independent political status.[119] Meanwhile, interestingly enough, the Ming proposed to the Duan 段 family at Dali the same tributary relationship. In his proclamation to Dali, Zhu Yuanzhang stated that he had already recovered the old country of his Han people and unified *Zhongxia*. All the "barbarian countries of the four directions" had submitted themselves to the Ming court and paid tribute—except for Dali, Zhu stated. If Dali would accept vassal status and send envoys to pay tribute to the Ming court, Zhu Yuanzhang promised to confer the title of "King of the Dali State" (*Dali guowang* 大理國王) together with seals and a title certificate to the Duan family, as had been done during the Tang and Song dynasties. Otherwise, Zhu threatened, the Ming would send punitive expeditions to destroy the local power.[120] Apparently, this was similar to the discourse with which the Ming addressed the rulers of neighboring foreign countries such as Annam, Korea, and Japan. It simply treated the political regimes in Yunnan as a foreign entity, not even part of the Ming realm let alone "*China*." In the Ming founder's geopolitical landscape, Yunnan—either before or after the conquest—had never been part of the "old territory of *China*."

[115] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1167–68.
[116] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1214–15.
[117] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1266–67.
[118] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1608–09, 2179; Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Taizu ji*, 24–25.
[119] *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1608–09.
[120] Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Taizu ji*, 25–26; *Ming Taizu shilu*, 1614–15.

When Basalamarni and the Duan family refused, tensions heightened. Eventually, Yunnan was captured by the Ming in 1381 (just as the early Ming threatened to do against Japan, and did act towards North Vietnam from 1407–28 when it established the Chochin Provincial Administration Commission [*Jiaozhi chengxuan buzheng shhisi* 交趾承宣布政使司]). Let us look at the Ming justification:

> You southwestern barbarians are close to civilization but instead rely on dangerous and difficult terrain and do not come to pay court audience and tribute (*buting* 弗庭). You recruit deserters and shield criminals, readily accept appointments from Sichuan, and thus willfully humiliate *Zhonghua*.[121]

Here, the critical issue was Yunnan's contempt and humiliation towards the Ming. The Ming court did not blame Yunnan for occupying *China*'s territory; instead, they put Yunnan parallel to (or, outside of) *China* (called *Zhonghua* in this case). The military expedition, therefore, served as a punishment of Basalamarmi's refusal to accept the status of tributary state.

The above two cases reveal important messages about Ming *China*. The first case displays the fluidity of *China*. In the Ming worldview, Sichuan changed from an independent "state" to part of the "old territory of *China*." The Yunnan case indicates that the Ming did not treat this "barbarian" region as a component of *China*, even after it was annexed into the Ming empire. In "provincial terms," then, the "old territory of *China*" discourse depicts a changing and blurred picture of the *Chinese* space.

Meanwhile, the Ming also attempted to draw some clearer boundary lines for *China*. Comparatively, they had indicated a more straightforward picture in the north than in the south. Following ancient records, the late Ming scholar-official Chen Quanzhi's 陳全之 (1512–80) stated that, in the north, the northwesternmost point of *China* was located at Lintao 臨洮, a strategic point south of Lanzhou; the northeasternmost point at Liaodong 遼東; and in between Daixian 代縣 in Shanxi and Yuzhou 蔚州 west of Taihang 太行 Mountain formed the northern border—"the land of *China* would not go beyond this" (*Zhongguo zhi di buchu ciwai* 中國之地不出此外).[122] Generally speaking, then, the boundary line separating *China* and the "barbarians" in the north stretched along the defensive Nine Border Commands (*jiubian* 九邊 or *jiuzhen* 九鎮) together with the Great Wall, or the ecological belt of mountains, deserts, and steppe that roughly separated sedentary agriculture and pastoral nomadism.

The northern boundary line for Ming "*China*" was also shared by the Mongols. This was evinced in the "treaty proposal" offered by the Mongol prince Anda 俺答 (or Altan-qa-yan).[123] In 1547, when Anda requested tribute trade with his southern neighbor, he proposed to the Ming court:

> Let land be cultivated with in the border, and horses be herded outside the border. Barbarians (*yi*) and Han do not harm each other. From Liaodong in the east to Gan-Liang 甘凉 in the

[121]Zhu Yuanzhang, *Ming Taizu ji*, 35.

[122]Chen Quanzhi 陳全之, *Pengchuang rilu* 蓬窗日錄 (Collected writings of Chen Quanzhi, 1565) (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2001, Gugong zhenben congkan, vol. 476), *juan* 2, "Changcheng" 長城 (The Great Wall), 40.

[123]For a brief narrative of Anta's life, see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 6–9.

> west, we will not invade along all [the borders]. Now I make an agreement with *China*: If *dazi* 達子enter the border wall [the Great Wall] to pillage, *China* could seize them and hand them over to me; I would take all their property and horses to compensate *China*. If the criminals do not obey, I will then kill them. If Han people enter the steppe to pillage, I will seize them and hand them over to *China* for punishment. If they do not obey, I will also kill them. We will be good forever.[124]

This passage reveals critical messages about *China*-Mongol relations. An entity against "barbarians," *China* set up the northern border from Liaodong to Gan-Liang, along the Great Wall. When Mongols dealt with *China*, they were communicating with the Han, its ethnic core. And *China* and Mongols represented different ways of life, sedentary agriculture and animal husbandry. This short proposal, therefore, pointed to some critical elements of *China* and its "others." Although the Ming Jiajing court did not accept this as a state policy, they shared with the Mongol regime an understanding of the essence of *China* and spatial concept.

The Ming northwestern boundary for *China* is partly supported by their perception about where Yellow River "enters *China*" (*ru Zhongguo* 入中國). In fact, Ming records point to different locations of the Yellow River's entrance to *China*, including Jishishan 積石山 Mountain (i.e., Animaqing 阿尼瑪卿, or "a myes rma chen" in Tibetan) in Xifan 西番 (present-day southeast Qinghai),[125] Lanzhou 蘭州 (or Lanxian 蘭縣) of Shaanxi,[126] and Datong Prefecture 大同[127] and Daning 大寧[128]of Shanxi. Jishishan Mountain, according to various myths, was the starting point of Da Yu's "taming of the floods" (*Da Yu zhishui* 大禹治水). From there, it is said, the Yellow River entered Yongzhou 雍州, one of the "Nine Domains" (*jiuzhou* 九州) of ancient *China*.[129] Lanzhou was located at the eastern end of the Hexi 河西 Corridor connecting to the Western Regions and the western end of the Loess Plateau which nourished the ancient *Chinese* civilization, and thus essentially "standing between the Rong 'barbarians' and Xia *Chinese*" (*jie Rong Xia zhijian* 介戎夏之間).[130] And Datong and Daning stood out because they were viewed as

[124]*Ming Shizong shilu*, 5983.

[125]Xun Hongzu 徐弘祖 placed Jishishan as the Yellow River's entrance to *China*, but also stated that "the River that enters *China* runs through five provinces" (*Zhongguo ru He zhi shui wei sheng wu* 中國入河之水為省五): Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, Shandong, and Nanzhili. See his *Xu Xiake youji* 徐霞客遊記 (Travels of Xu Xiake), ed. Chu Shaotang 褚紹唐 and Wu Yingshou 吳應壽 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 1127.

[126]Zhang Dai 張岱, *Yehang chuan* 夜航船 (The boat sailing at night), ed. Liu Yaolin 劉耀林 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanse, 1987), 80–81; Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 1372; Wang Qi 王圻 and Wang Siyi 王思義, *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會 (Illustrated compilation of the three powers, c. 1607) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 182.

[127]*Qinding gujin tushu jicheng* records: "According to *General Gazetteer of Shaanxi*: The Yellow River enters *China* at Shaanxi Province from Xifan 西番. After running through the areas of Taozhou 洮州, Hezhou 河州, and Lanzhou 蘭州, it turns northeast, exiting the frontiers for more than 2,000 *li*, and reentering *China* in the region of Datong Prefecture of Shanxi Province." See Chen Menglei 陳夢雷, et al., *Qinding gujin tushu jicheng* 欽定古今圖書集成 (Imperially approved compendium of writings and illustrations, past and present) (Shanghai : Tu shu ji cheng qian ban yin shu ju, 1884), vol. 201, 1a.

[128]Wang Qi and Wang Siyi, *Sancai tuhui*, 183.

[129]Li Daoyuan 酈道元, *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 (Commentaries on the "Classic of Waterways"), edited and annotated by Chen Qiaoyi 陳橋驛 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 1999), *juan* 2, *juan* 4.

[130]Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹, *Dushi fangyu jiyao* 讀史方輿紀要 (Essentials of geography for reading history) (Taipei: Hongshi chubanshe, 1981), 2622.

the returning points after the Yellow River flowed "beyond the frontiers" for more than 2,000 *li* 里. Although the Ming saw different points for the Yellow River's entrance in to *China*, they held a common criterion for choosing those entrances: they were the points of demarcation that separated *China* and "barbarians." The mid-Ming scholar-official Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1421–95) summed it up: "The Yellow River originates at Xingsuhai 星宿海, and flows east to enter *China*. It stretches for more than ten thousand *li*, with nine turns. It absorbs thousands of waterways of *Hua* and barbarians (*he Hua yi zhi shui* 合華夷之水) and runs into the sea."[131] The Yellow River, that is to say, was not just a *Chinese* river; it ran through the territories of both *China* and "barbarians." The Yellow River discourse, therefore, supports the Ming perception of China's northern boundary line.

The Ming military presence and tributary arrangement in the northwest (mostly present-day Gansu and Qinghai and part of Tibet) enriched the concept of the "*Chinese* domain" from an outside perspective. Since its founding, in order to control and stabilize the northwestern regions, the Ming court had established, though occasionally and loosely, a number of "guards and battalions" (*weisuo*) by either sending its own forces or accepting local submissions. Generally speaking, four types of arrangements were made in the Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission 陝西行都指揮使司 and Xifan 西番: First, "regular" guards and battalions (such as Xining 西寧 Guard and Gui'de 歸德 Independent Battalion, which were manned by military personnel from the "inner domains" of the empire; Second, the "loosely reined" guards and battalions (such as Duogan 朵甘 [Tib. mdo khams] Reginal Military Commission, and the so-called "seven guards west of the [Jiayuguan] Pass" (*guanxi qiwei* 關西七衛) of Anding 安定, Aduan 阿端, Quxian 曲先, Hanwei 罕衛, Shazhou 沙洲, Chijin Menggu 赤斤蒙古, and Hami 哈密,[132] where aboriginal officials governed their own forces with their own rules; third, "theocratic" temple regimes such as Qutan Si 瞿曇寺 and Honghua Si 弘化寺, which served as regional government agencies; and fourth, "tribal" (*zu* 族) organizations such as the Chen 陳 family slightly north of Xining (at present-day Huzhu 互助 county, Qinghai) and Zhao 趙 family slightly east of Xining (at present-day Ledu 樂都 county, Qinghai), who governed their tribespeople with titles granted by the Ming court.[133] All located west and southwest (outside) of Lanzhou, the so-called "entrance to *China*," these units were all excluded from the "*Chinese* domain."

[131]Qiu Jun, *Daxue yanyi bu* 大學衍義補 (Supplement to the "Expounded Meaning of the 'Great Learning'") (Beijing: Jinghua chubanshe, 1999, 3 vols.), 174.

[132]Later on, by 1529, one after another of these guards were relocated eastwards and eventually withdrawn; the Ming lost control of these places. See Gao Zihou 高自厚, "Mingdai de guanxi qiwei jiqi dongqian" 明代的關西七衛及其東遷 (The seven guards west of the Pass and their eastward relocations in the Ming dynasty), *Lanzhou daxue xuebao* 1986.1, 42–48; Cheng Liying 程利英, "Mingdai guanxi qiwei neiqian quxiang he neiqian renshu tan" 明代關西七衛內遷去向和內遷人數探 (The whereabouts and number of people regarding the inward relocations of the seven guards west of the Pass during the Ming dynasty), *Guizhou minzu yanjiu* 25.104 (2005.4), 158–61; and Yang Linkun 楊林坤, "Lun Mingdai xibei jimi weisuo de minzu guanxi" 論明代西北羈縻衛所的民族關係 (Ethnic relationships in the loose rein guards and battalions in the northwest during the Ming dynasty), *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 24.2 (June 2014), 146–54.

[133]Cui Yonghong 崔永紅, "Lun Qinghai tuguan tusi zhidu de lishi yanbian" 論青海土官土司制度的歷史演變 (The historical changes of the aboriginal officials and offices in Qinghai), *Qinghai minzu xueyuan xuebao* 30.4 (2004), 102–09.

Indeed, the above institutions had various connections with the Ming; their exclusion from "*China*" attested to the Ming perception of the nature and scope of the ethnocultural "*China*" and political "Ming Empire." Specifically, at least four kinds of relationships emerged between these frontier units and the Ming dynasty. The first has to do with the Han guards in the Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission. Centered at Ganzhou 甘州 Guard (present-day Zhangye 張掖, Gansu), the Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission was established to sever the connections between the Mongols and Tibetans, and controlled the corridor west of the Yellow River.[134] Under the jurisdiction of Gansu Command (one of the Nine Border Commands in the north) and protected by the Great Wall from Lanzhou to Jiayuguan Pass, this region had been viewed as an important part of the Ming Empire.[135] Stretching from Lanzhou all the way westward to Suzhou 肅州 Guard, it governed twelve guards and two independent battalions. Of these units, at least several of them were manned and governed by Han people, including the aforementioned Xining Guard, Gui'de Battalion, and Chen family aboriginal office.[136] In addition, in the Shaanxi Branch Commission, many guards were governed collectively by both Han and non-Han officers. According to a record of the Wanli reign (1573–1620), for example, at Zhuanglang 莊浪 Guard, there were fifty-nine Han officers and twenty-six aboriginal officers, many of whom held hereditary positions.[137] Indeed, a basic institution in those borderland guards was "collective governance of aboriginal and circulating officials" (*tuliu canshe zhi* 土流參設制), with circulating officials being Han people.[138] A second type of relationship had to do with Han people in the guards of Xifan, including the so-called seven guards west of the Jiayuguan Pass. To be sure, guards in Xifan were by and large controlled by non-Han personnel. But Han people did provide certain services.[139] At Hami Guard, for example, Han officials served as administrator (*zhangshi* 長史) and moral mentor (*jishan* 紀善) to guide and advise the Mongol leader, the Prince of Loyalty and Obedience (*Zhongshun wang* 忠順王).[140]

The third kind of relationship existed between non-Han guards and the Ming court. Most of the guards established by the Ming in the Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission and Xifan were filled by non-Han peoples. In the early Ming, for instance, the bulk of the defensive forces at Gansu, Zhuanglang, and Liangzhou 凉州guards

[134]*Mingshi*, 8549.

[135]Ma Shunping 馬順平, "Mingdai Shaanxi xingdusi jiqi weisuo jianzhi kaoshi" 明代陝西行都司及其衛所建置考實 (An investigation of the establishment of the Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission and its guards and battalions in the Ming dynasty), *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 23.2 (April 2008), 109–17.

[136]Cui Yonghong, "Lun Qinghai tuguan tusi zhidu de lishi yanbian;" Li Yucheng 李玉成, "Qinghai tusi zhidu xingshuai shilüe" 青海土司制度興衰史略 (Brief history of rise and fall of the aboriginal office system in Qinghai), *Zhongyang minzu xueyuan xuebao* 1987.4, 22–26.

[137]Wang Jiguang 王繼光, "Shilun Gansu tusi de xingcheng jiqi lishi beijing" 試論甘肅土司的形成及其歷史背景 (The formation and historical background of the aboriginal offices in Gansu), *Shehui kexue* 1985.4, 77–84.

[138]*Mingshi*, 8549; Zhang Weiguang 張維光, "Mingdai He-Huang diqu 'tuliu canzhi' qianshu" 明代河湟地區"土流參治"淺述 (On "collective governance of aboriginal and circulating officials" in the areas of Yellow River-Huang River during the Ming dynasty), *Qinghai shifan daxue xuebao* 1988.3, 108–14.

[139]Yang Linkun, "Lun Mingdai xibei jimi weisuo de minzu guanxi," 151.

[140]*Mingshi*, 8512.

consisted of Mongol soldiers who had surrendered to the Ming regime.[141] And the people who governed the guards in Xifan were predominantly Mongols, Tibetans, Huihui, and Uyghurs.[142] And the fourth kind of relationship was concerned with non-Han peoples in Xifan copying Han culture. Huozhou 火州 provided a case in point. The former state of Gaochang 高昌, Huozhou was located about 15 kilometers east of present-day Turpan. Because of its intensive contact with China in the past, Huozhou witnessed comprehensive adoption of Han culture:

> [Their customs are] very similar to (*potong* 頗同) those of *Huaxia*: According to *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (*Compendium of Historical Institutions*, 1307), [for dress,] the husbands [follow the barbarian style], but women's skirt, jacket, and topknot are roughly similar to (*lüetong* 略同) *Huaxia*. For weaponry, they have bows, arrows, knifes, shields, armor, and lances. Their writing system is also the same as (*yitong* 亦同) *Huaxia*, but concurrently uses barbarian writing (*hushu* 胡書). [In classical studies,] they have the *Book of Odes* edited by the Maos, the *Analects*, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, and the texts of philosophers, history, and collected writings from previous dynasties. [School teachers and students teach each other; when they study the texts, they all compose poems.] In taxation, they pay silver based on the calculation of land; if they do not have silver, they pay sackcloth. Their [law, customs,] marriages, and funerals are very similar to (*datong* 大同) *Huaxia*. Their appearance resembles that of the Koreans.[143]

This account presents the adoption of a whole package of Han cultures by a "barbarian" people, especially the commonly viewed "key" elements of written language, Confucian studies and values, customs of dress, marriage, and funeral, and government institutions. Even the physical appearance leaned towards—in modern terms—the "East Asian" category rather than the "Inner Asian" type.

From outside Lanzhou—the entrance to *China*—these four types of relationships attested to the space of "*China*" and its relevance to the "Ming." The non-Han communities (third category) did not belong to *China* whether they lived inside or outside the Ming empire. Inside the Ming (Shaanxi Branch Regional Military Commission), their culture would be best described as "claiming to possess the *Hua* customs" (*haoyou huafeng* 號有華風);[144] outside the Ming (in Xifan), as "foreign barbarians" (*waiyi* 外夷) they led a radically different life, "living in yurts, rulers and ministers being friends, and having no written languages in governance,"[145] which was clearly non-*Chinese*. Even those who seemed to have fully adopted the culture of *Huaxia* (fourth category) were still excluded from the *Chinese* sphere.[146] With regard to the Han communities and personnel west of Lanzhou (first and second categories), their

[141]Ma Shunping, "Mingdai Shaanxi xingdusi jiqi weisuo jianzhi kaoshi," 111.

[142]Cheng Liying 程利英, "Mingdai Guanxi qiwei tanyuan" 明代關西七衛探源 (The origins of the seven guards west of the Pass in the Ming dynasty), *Neimenggu shehui kexue* 27.4 (July 2006), 45–49.

[143]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 1374. The texts in "[]" are added according to Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, *Wenxian tongkao* (Hangzhou: Zhejing guji chubanshe, 2000, 2 vols.), vol. 2, 2638. Ma's account is based on various historical records.

[144]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 653.

[145]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 1365, 1372.

[146]The same can be said more broadly of Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, which heavily borrowed *Chinese* culture and referred to themselves as "*China*" as discussed above.

ethnicity (physical and cultural features) was not able to transform their places into *China*, even though they lived in and worked for the Ming Empire.[147] All these confirmed the Ming conviction that "*China*" essentially referred to "Han land" (*Handi* 漢地), which was a different entity from the "Ming" realm.

If we say *China*'s northern borders were relatively straightforward, its boundaries on west and southwest borderlands seemed more blurred, winding and zigzagging. Mention has been made that in Guizhou, throughout the Ming, "*China*" referred only to a couple of corridors that connected Yunnan hinterland and where Han people (civilians and soldiers) lived. In Sichuan, in 1547, the Ming general He Qing 何卿 built a wooden "border wall" (*bianqiang* 邊牆) over one thousand *li* along the waterways of Minjiang 岷江 and Fujiang 涪江. Its purpose was precisely to protect "*China*," a "narrow lane" connecting Weizhou 威州, Maozhou 茂州, Songpan 松潘, Zhangla 章臘, Xiaohe 小河, and Longan 龍安 to prevent the danger of the invasions and harassments by the "barbarian cavalries."[148] There, *China* became a thin strip "penetrating into the barbarian domain" (*shenru fanjing* 深入番境).[149] Indeed, in the eyes of the Ming court, Songpan—located at the very center of the Sichuan border wall—was "an isolated city protruding into the extremely remote region" and depending on the one thin line of communication for its supplies. As a matter of fact, the city was so difficult to defend against the "barbarian" attacks that several times the Ming founder wanted to abandon it. Although the Ming held on to it because of its strategic value, their military presence could do nothing but pacify the "barbarian masses" by allowing their own chieftains to govern based on their own customs.[150] The wooden boards flanking the narrow riverways, it turned out, became the boundary lines for *China*. At any rate, unlike its relatively "straightforward" northern boundary lines, "*China*" on the west and southwest borderlands was demarcated by different kinds of mechanisms: parallel "lines" for a thin strip or a wider belt (corridor), or "circles" for large areas or small pockets. Their presence would be sporadic, and their locations among various "barbarian" peoples "a domain within domains."

In the Ming, of course, "*China*" and "*Chinese*" were historical categories. For one thing, *Chinese* (territory) and "barbarian (lands)" could transform into each other. It is true that the Ming emphasized the distinction of *Chinese* and "barbarians," but on the other hand, they held the Confucian view that *Chinese* culture could potentially become "barbarian," and "when 'barbarians' come to *China* they will become

[147]This proposition can also be applied broadly to the great number of overseas *Chinese* (*Zhongguo ren* 中國人) from other parts of Asia during the Ming. See Chan Hok-lam 陳學霖, "'Huaren yiguan': Mingdai waifan huaji gongshi kaoshu" "華人夷官": 明代外蕃華籍貢使考述 ("Sino-Barbarian officials": Chinese natives serving in tributary missions to China during the Ming dynasty), *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 54 (January 2012), 29–68.

[148]The length of the border wall varies in different records. See Fu Chongju 傅崇榘 and Xu Xiang 徐湘, *Songpan xianzhi* 松潘縣志 (Gazetteer of Songpan district) (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1967), 428, 810; *Sichuan zongzhi (Jiajing)* 四川總志 (嘉靖) (General gazetteer of Sichuan, Jiajing) (Ming Jiajing edition), *juan* 16, 36b; *Sichuan zongzhi (Wanli)* 四川總志(萬曆) (General gazetteer of Sichuan, Wanli) (Ming Wanli edition), *juan* 22, 2a.

[149]Gu Zuyu, *Dushi fangyu jiyao*, 3126.

[150]*Mingshi*, 8031.

*Chinese*" (*yi er ruyu Zhongguo ze Zhongguo zhi* 夷而入於中國則中國之).[151] For the former, the Ming ruling elite was acutely aware of the radical changes of the "*Chinese*" culture under the Mongols' rule; and when they endeavored to "recover the old territory of *China*," they aimed to eliminate the "barbarian" cultural pollution as well as to re-take the *Chinese* domain. In fact, the "barbarian" transformation of the Han under the Ming was an ongoing process. For instance, a *Chinese* lady named Zhao Tianxi 趙天錫 traveled to Guangxi and became the concubine of the aboriginal subprefect of Sicheng. She poisoned the subprefect and his principal wife and succeeded to the position of aboriginal subprefect according to the "barbarian law" (*yifa* 夷法). The Ming scholar Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642) found this a most surprising story: a "*Chinese* person left [*China*] to serve as aboriginal official," thus becoming a "barbarian transformed from *Xia* 夏!"[152] In the Ming worldview, a Han could become a "barbarian" and give up his/her membership in *China* if this person chose to join a "barbarian" community and adopt their way of life (but Han would never become "barbarian" if they stayed within Han places no matter how "evil" they might be!).

At the same time, "barbarian" places and persons could become *Chinese* when they were conquered by the Han and adopted *Chinese* values and cultural practices. This could happen in two ways. First, the migrants of the Han people (civil and military) could change the local ethnic landscape. Located at one of the entrances into Yunnan, for example, the Pijie Guard 畢節衛 was viewed as a "communications center of Huaxia" (*Huaxia yaochong* 華夏要衝)—"Those who came to defend this place are all the people of Zhongzhou (*Zhongzhou ren* 中州人). Their rituals of capping, marriage, funeral, and sacrifice can be distinct from the local customs."[153] During Ming times, some 360,000, 430,000, and 100,000 people migrated into Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi respectively. They brought with them Han cultural values, institutions, lifestyles, and agricultural technology.[154] The arrival of the Han planted the seeds of *China*.

Second, because of the government's efforts and Han migrants' influence, some local non-Han territories and peoples gradually transformed into *Chinese*. This was most vividly evinced in the imperial measure of *gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流 (changing the posts held by aboriginal officials into those for court-appointed circulating bureaucrats). In 1413, for example, taking advantage of the internecine fighting between the Sizhou 思州 and Sinan 思南 Pacification Commissions, the Yongle court abolished these two powerful aboriginal offices, and divided their domains into prefectures and subprefectures, which

[151] *Ming Taizong shilu* 明太宗實錄 (Veritable records of Ming Taizong), ed. Huang Chang-chien (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1966), 1641–42. Confucius also expressed the concern that without Guan Zhong's 管仲 (725–645 BCE) protection, the Hua-Xia people would have become "barbarians." See *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯註 (*Analects, Annotated*), ed., Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 151.

[152] Shen Defu, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Random gleanings from the Wanli period) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989, 3 vols.), 763. Shen also noted the "strange barbarian surnames" that would not be found in "*Zhonghua*." See Ibid., 759.

[153] Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, *juan* 88, 1362.

[154] Chen Zhengping 陳徵平 and Liu Hongyan 劉鴻燕, "Shilun lishi shang huangchao zhongyang dui xinan bianjiang shehui de neidihua jinglüe" 試論歷史上皇朝中央對西南邊疆社會的內地化經略 (Interiorization of southwest frontier societies by imperial central governments in history), *Sixiang zhanxian* 2012.2 (38), 115–20; Chen Guoan and Shi Jizhong, "Shilun Mingdai Guizhou weisuo" 試論明代貴州衛所 (On the guards and battalions in Ming dynasty Guizhou), *Guizhou wenshi congkan*, 1981.3, 92–100.

started the transformation of Guizhou into part of the "inner domain" (*neidi* 內地).[155] In 1601, for another example, after suppressing Yang Yinglong's rebellion, the Ming Wanli court divided Yang's former domain into Zunyi 遵義 and Pingyue 平越 tribal offices (*junmin fu* 軍民府).[156] In these new institutions, the Ming not only appointed circulating bureaucrats, but also introduced the Han ways of life and established Confucian schools. To be sure, even after the so-called *gaitu guiliu*, most non-Han peoples still practiced their own cultures, and their places would not be readily accepted as *China* by the Ming. But the Ming saw it an important step towards making them *Chinese*.

In addition to the fluidic nature of the "*China*" and "barbarian" categories, their demarcation line was by no means clearly-cut either, featuring an overlapping status. For one thing, surrounded by and interacting with non-Han communities, the Han settlers were liable to catch "barbarian" customs. In Guizhou, for example, the military personnel in the guards basically migrated from the "central plains" (*zhongyuan* 中原), and were expected to "transform the [local] barbarians with [the customs of] Xia," just as Jizi 箕子, the uncle of the last Shang King, "transformed the Korean customs with propriety and righteousness." Nevertheless, those "ignorant" migrants tended to be changed by the "barbarians."[157] In Anzhuang 安莊 Guard, for a specific example, the military stronghold was surrounded by a variety of "barbarians," who practiced "vulgar" customs, wore "weird" clothes, and spoke "bizarre" languages. Even though they lived close to the guardsmen (*weiren* 衛人), they refused to change their customs lightly. Those guardsmen in the garrison were all "Chinese persons" (*Zhongguo zhi ren* 中國之人). After they had been stationed there to defend the border regions for so long, they themselves picked up the "barbarian" practices and developed a ferocious disposition. It was only after Confucian education institutions were established that they started to return to their simple and honest nature, and their clothes, caps, rituals, and music appeared "refined" (*binbin ran* 彬彬然).[158] Here, we see the Han forces' struggle in battling against "barbarian" practices.

Meanwhile, the non-Han peoples also made their own changes, gradually adopting Han customs. At Dixie 疊溪 Battalion in west Sichuan, for example, by the mid-fifteenth century, according to the Ming record, the "barbarians had a rough nature and an intrepid disposition and were not familiar with [the Confucian classics of] *Book of Odes* and *Book of Documents*." Particularly, those who were farther from the battalion station did not know the "Han language," wore clothes made of goat skin and wool, and cremated corpses instead of using coffins in funerals. Those who were close to the military center, however, because of more ethnocultural interactions, "were gradually influenced by the imperial majesty and transformation, customs, and dresses."[159] In Zhenning 鎮寧subprefecture of southwest Guizhou, for another example, by the mid-fifteenth century, the "barbarians" and Han civilians mixed together and practiced their different customs.[160]

[155]*Mingshi*, 8178

[156]*Mingshi*, 8049.

[157]Xie Dongshan 謝東山 and Zhang Dao 張道, *Guizhou tongzhi (Jiajing)* 貴州通志(嘉靖) (General gazetteer of Guizhou) (Bashu shushe, 2006), 191–506, at 266.

[158]Xie Dongshan and Zhang Dao, *Guizhou tongzhi (Jiajing)*, 272.

[159]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 1139.

[160]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, 1358.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the cultural division still existed: the migrants from Sicheng 泗城 subprefecture of Guangxi practiced land cultivation; whereas the "barbarian" hunters still lived a life of "eating birds and animals raw." Nevertheless, under the gradual influence of the "*Chinese* customs" (*Huafeng* 華風), the non-Han people had slightly changed their "bad" (*lou* 陋) habits in marriage.[161] Towards the end of the sixteenth century, while the "barbarians" still practiced "different customs" and were even still "eating birds and animals raw, with the passing of time, they changed more: they devoted themselves to study and agricultural production, and considerably followed Han rituals (*pozun Hanli* 頗遵漢禮)."[162]

The ambiguity and blurredness of the boundaries between *China* and non-*Chinese* domains is best illustrated in the territories that underwent the reform of *gaitu guiliu*. The defining nature of *China* lay in its Han culture as opposed to the "barbarian" customs. *Gaitu guiliu*, while politically aiming to expand Han imperial rule by restricting native non-Han forces, functioned to transform non-Han spheres into *Chinese* domains in ethnoscultural terms. After replacing the hereditary aboriginal officials with "circulating officials," however, in a great number of areas under the imperial government, non-*Chinese* cultures were still dominant throughout the Ming. This occurred at several administrative levels. At the provincial level, although Yunnan—an "extraterritorial barbarian land" (*jiaowai yidi* 徼外夷地) in antiquity—was changed into an imperial administrative unit headed by a commissioner for "undertaking the promulgation of imperial orders and disseminating government policies" (*chengxuan buzheng* 承宣布政) and guarded by the successive "Marquis of Pacifying the West" (*Pingxi hou* 平西侯) of the Mu 沐 family, it was never considered part of *China* in the Ming. Even by the mid-fifteenth century, when the Ming court compiled the general gazetteer of the empire, they saw only "barbarian kinds and their customs" in Yunnan prefecture, the political center of the province.[163] Guizhou started the transformation of becoming part of the "interior domain" (*neidi*) in 1413 when it was established as a province. But throughout the dynasty, Guizhou's "*Chinese* territory" was mainly limited to the Han population spots along the two major transportation routes. In the province, although the Sizhou and Sinan Pacification Offices had been converted to imperially appointed offices, their "barbarian customs remained the same" (*yifeng pibian* 夷風丕變), including the practices of carving wood for contracts, making divinations with chicken or tiles in curing diseases, invoking ghosts to eliminate disasters, and speaking different languages; only a small number of "Han people" (*Hanmin* 漢民) advocated a simple lifestyle, with their institutions of "marriage, rituals, clothes, and foods being mostly similar with those in the 'middle domains' (*Zhongzhou* 中州)."[164] In the Guizhou Pacification Office (*Guizhou xuanwei shisi* 貴州宣慰使司), similarly, the gazetteer described mainly "the various kinds of barbarians practicing different kinds of customs," although among them "Confucian teachings gradually began to take hold; their rituals of capping, marriage, funeral, and sacrifice tended to follow *China* (*xiaomu Zhongguo* 效慕中國); and occasionally some were interested in learning the

[161]Xie Dongshan and Zhang Dao, *Guizhou tongzhi (Jiajing)*, 271.
[162]Wang Leixian et al., *Guizhou tongzhi (Wanli)*, *juan* 7, 150.
[163]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, *juan* 86, 1311.
[164]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, *juan* 88, 1351–53.

*Book of Odes* and *Book of Documents* and thus passed the civil service examinations and served as officials."[165] The predominant values and cultural practices in Yunnan and Guizhou were still non-Han by nature, and such places, by and large, were not viewed as part of *China* in spite of their status as two of the fifteen "regular" provincial/metropolitan units of the Ming Empire.

Below the provincial level, although the provincial administration was in the hands of the Han and the province was considered *Chinese*, some areas were still not incorporated into *China* even after they had gone through *gaitu guiliu*. The Bozhou Pacification Office (*xuanweishi si* 宣慰使司) and the Zunyi Tribal Office (*junminfu* 軍民府) in southern Sichuan were cases in point. Bozhou was home to many non-Han peoples.[166] In the early Ming, the Sichuan area was generally accepted as part of the "old territory of *China*," and Bozhou under the Yang family submitted to the imperial domain (*bantu*). Subsequently, Han cultural influence increased both in Sichuan in general and Bozhou in particular, as non-Han peoples adopted Han names and customs.[167] Bozhou, however, had always been viewed as a "barbarian land" (*manyi zhi di* 蠻夷之地) by the Ming.[168] Even towards the end of the sixteenth century, only a sociocultural elite of the region practiced customs that were similar to those of *China*; its "barbarian land" still saw the prevalence of non-Han cultures, including the hair style of *chuiji* 椎髻 (mallet-shaped topknot), dress style of *pizhan* 披毡 (covered by felt), livelihood of hunting and lumbering, marriage rituals of presenting gifts of bronze utensils, felt knife, and bow and arrow, and "banquet music" of playing bronze drums and gongs and horizontal flutes.[169] In 1600, the last Bozhou leader, Yang Yinglong, was defeated in his armed rebellion and executed, and the next year, Bozhou was abolished and its territory was divided into two prefectures under the *gaitu guiliu* reform: Zunyi (Sichuan) and Pingyue (Guizhou).[170] A purpose of the reform was to "transform the barbarian customs" (*yibian yisu* 以變夷俗),[171] and the local society did change towards Han customs:

[165]LI Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, *juan* 88, 1349–50.

[166]For a brief history of Bozhou, see Ma Guojun 馬國君 and Chen Dongmei, 陳冬梅 "Cong Bozhou Yangshi xiaqu bianqi kan Yuan Ming Qing zhu wangchao dui xinan de jingying" 從播州楊氏轄區變遷看元明清諸王朝對西南的經營 (The governance of the southwest under the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties seen from the changes of the Bozhou areas under the Yang family," *Zunyi shifan xueyuan xuebao* 17.2 (2015): 7–12.

[167]For a narrative of the Confucian influence in the Yang family Bozhou, see Dang Huixian 黨會先, "Shilun Bozhou Yangshi tongzhi xia de Rujia wenhua chuanbo" 試論播州楊氏統治下的儒家文化傳播 (The propagation of Confucian culture in the Yang-family Bozhou), *Changchun ligong daxue xuebao* 8.2 (2013), 50–51 +75.

[168]Luo Yuejiong 羅曰褧, *Xianbin lu* 咸賓錄 (Record of all guests) (*Zhongguo shaoshu minzu guji jicheng* 中國少數民族古籍集成, vol. 8, 346.

[169]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, *juan* 72, 1129; Luo Yuejiong, *Xianbin lu*, 346. It is interesting to note that, in relating the customs of the sociocultural elite, *Da Ming yitong zhi* uses the phrase "*Hansu*" 漢俗, and *Xianbin lu* refers to "*Zhongguo*" 中國, which indicate the "Hanness" of *China*. These customs are recorded in the *Zunyi fu tujing* 遵義軍圖經 (Illustrated gazetteer of Zunyi military prefecture) of the Song dynasty. But by the 1590s, the compilers of the Ming imperial gazetteers still accepted such an assessment.

[170]James Parsons, "Yang Ying-lung," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, edited by Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1553–56.

[171]Li Hualong 李華龍, "Bozhou shanhou shiyi shu" 播州善後事宜疏 (Memorial on dealing with the matters after pacifying Bozhou), in his *Ping Bo quanshu* 平播全書 (The complete book of pacifying Bozhou) (Beijing: Dazhong wenyi chubanshe, 2008), 192.

> Since the *gengzi* 庚子year [1600] of the Ming Wanli reign, the land [of Bozhou] has opened up, and the people converged on [this place]. Customs are changed and habits are transformed. Farmers only practice a little silkworm breeding and mulberry growing, but devote themselves mostly to land cultivation. Scholars are willing and fond of learning; and women are chaste and hard-working.[172]

Nevertheless, the geopolitical reform did not alter the perceived ethnocultural identity of the region. At Zunyi, generally speaking, "from the Han through the Ming [dynasties] the customs of the prefecture had descended to be barbarian." Even after the pacification of 1600, since the place was neighboring the "barbarian" Shuixi 水西 in Guizhou, its "barbarian" nature did not change. Even those "prominent families" (*zuxing* 族姓) who migrated from the Bayu 巴渝 (present-day Chongqing 重慶) areas and settled down at Zunyi "were gradually contaminated with the customs of arrogance and coercion (*xiaoqi* 囂欺)." The social customs of Zunyi, at best, could be viewed as "admiring *hua* customs" (*mu huafeng* 仰慕華風), "becoming the same as the Han customs" (*tong Hansu* 同漢俗), and "being the same as the middle land" (*yu zhongtu tong* 與中土同).[173] In other words, it was still a cultural alien that was trying to copy the *Chinese* essence; no matter how closely it imitated *China*, it was still considered an outsider.

Let us look at the four subunits under Zunyi prefecture. After *gaitu guiliu*, in addition to Zunyi district of the prefectural seat, Zunyi prefecture governed Tongzi 桐梓 district and Zhen'an 真安 subprefecture (which in turn controlled the districts of Suiyang 綏陽 and Renhuai 仁懷). Among these four units, in terms of the transformation of "barbarian" cultures, only Suiyang had a good record: people embraced honesty and simplicity, and advocated Confucian values of propriety and righteousness; "barbarian customs were completely eliminated" (*yisu xichu* 夷俗悉除). In the other three units, more or less, "barbarian customs" still prevailed:

Tongzi: Because of its proximity to Qijiang 綦江 district to its north, Tongzi "was close to the transformation of *China*" (*jin Zhongguo zhi hua* 近中國之化). Although the people "admire *Hua* customs," they performed different practices in spiritual worship, marriage, funeral, and other social activities.

Zhenzhou (renamed as Zheng'an 正安 in the Qing): The "simple and honest" people were devoted to the livelihood of "cultivation," which was "roughly" (*dalue* 大略) similar to the Han customs. But the "aborigines" (*turen* 土人) "have not completely changed their old customs"—they took the fifteenth day of the first month as the beginning of the year, and practiced their own rituals of god worship and food consumption.

Renhuai: There were four kinds of people, who were all "wild and fierce." Being bellicose, they "devoted themselves to robbery and homicide." They still engaged in "slash-and-burn farming, but were not good at silk-textile-weaving and silkworm-breeding. They seldom used medicine when ill but depended on witchcraft. They concluded marriages (between the same families) in generations, and played music in funerals."[174]

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[172]Huang Lezhi 黃樂之 and Zheng Zhen 鄭珍, *Zunyi fuzhi (Daoguang)* 遵義府志 (道光) (Gazetteer of Zunyi) ( Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968, 2 vols.), vol. 1, *juan* 20, 419.

[173]Huang Lezhi and Zheng Zhen, *Zunyi fuzhi*, vol. 1, *juan* 20, 419.

[174]Huang Lezhi and Zheng Zhen, *Zunyi fuzhi*, vol. 1, juan 20, 419–20. While all these "barbarian customs" (*yisu* 夷俗) are narrated in Huang and Zheng's gazetteer of 1841, according to the compilers, they had already been recorded in the earlier gazetteer "on the basis of contemporary facts" (*shishi* 時實) by Zunyi magistrate

The discourse on the "barbarian" practices in Zunyi prefecture after *gaitu guiliu* demonstrates that while some people and places adopted *Chinese* customs, Zunyi was viewed as being outside the *Chinese* domain. Although Sichuan had generally become part of *China* in the early Ming and Zunyi had been particularly placed under the direct imperial governance by the turn of the seventeenth century, this prefecture by and large remained an ethnocultural "barbarian land" throughout the dynasty. The direct political administration of the Ming court over Zunyi did not make it part of *China*.

What made the *tu-liu* relationship more complicated was that from time to time the circulating and aboriginal offices often replaced each other back and forth. In Guangxi, for example, sixteen aboriginal offices were reformed into circulating offices, but a dozen of them were restored at least once back to aboriginal governance. Some of them, such as Yangli 養利 and Zuo 左 subprefectures, changed back and forth several times. Some, like Li 利 subprefecture, never changed back to the "circulating" system. Ironically, in Guangxi, although *gaitu guiliu* had already started in the early years of the dynasty, the number of aboriginal offices increased rather than decreased towards the late Ming.[175] The repeated restoration of aboriginal offices on the borderlands indicates an ongoing process of transformation (towards either Han or non-Han identities) on the Ming borderlands. When an aboriginal office was changed into a circulating one, it would not be assumed to have become a *Chinese* domain. Its status could be viewed as ambiguous, and it certainly had the possibility of changing back.

All the above paragraphs on *China*'s spatial boundaries on the west and southwest borderlands indicate that there were no clear-cut, definite, and everlasting demarcation lines to separate *China* and "barbarians." The *Chinese* and non-*Chinese* domains appeared in different forms and shapes. They had the potential to become transformed into each other and did repeatedly change back and forth on occasion. And in many locations, the *Chinese* and non-*Chinese* elements overlapped each other. On the other hand, however, the Ming upheld a strong conviction that *China*—within the Ming Empire—represented the cultural core that defined the nature and identity of the dynasty.

To sum up this section, one finds that the Ming envisioned a *China* with Han ethnicity as its essence: it was an ethnocultural space of Han people and Han culture. To be sure, over time the "*Huaxia*/Han" absorbed a variety of peoples and essentially became an umbrella category, and by Ming times "pure" Han hardly existed. Similarly, "Han culture" also embraced a very wide spectrum of values and practices that constantly changed (say, to include Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, among a great many others), and one can readily make the case for "Han cultural diversity." Nevertheless, in Ming official discourse, "Han" ethnicity served as a touchstone of "*Chineseness*" throughout the dynasty. As an ethnocultural space, *China* did entail a spatial dimension.

Chen Xuan 陳瑄 in 1685. Chen's gazetteer, in fact, was based almost verbatim on the Ming Wanli edition (1612) by Zunyi Prefect Sun Minzheng 孫敏政 (see Wan Caixia and Lin Yan, "Daoguang *Zunyi fuzhi* chutan" 道光遵義府志初探 [An initial investigation of *Zunyi fuzhi (Daoguang)*], *Guitu xueyuan* 2015.4, 21–22+29). I therefore regard them as the Ming official view.

[175]Lan Wu 藍武, "Rentong chayi yu 'fuliu weitu'—Mingdai Guangxi gaitu guiliu fanfuxing yuanyin fenxi" 認同差異與"復流為土"—明代廣西改土歸流反复性原因分析 (Different identities and "restoring aboriginal offices from the circulating ones"—An analysis of the causes of the repeatability in *gaitu guiliu* in Ming dynasty Guangxi), *Guangxi minzu yanjiu* 101 (2010.3), 134–40.

Indeed, the Ming spoke of a *Chinese* territory with certain boundaries, albeit the lines were often broken, vague, blurred, and changing. Its east side was bounded by the oceans. Its north was roughly bordered along the ecological borderlands marked by the Nine Border Commands and the Great Wall. The boundary lines in other directions appeared more complicated. There, *China* excluded not only the lands outside the Ming realm such as Sifan 西番 and Burma 緬甸 (by the late Ming), but also those non-Han communities inside the Ming empire. Under the Ming political jurisdiction on the borderlands, *China* took several shapes—in metaphorical terms. It could be a "dot," an isolated force protruding into an alien society; a "line," a series of Han communities (military or civilian) penetrating into a larger alien region, to be flanked by non-Han societies; or an "area," a relatively larger Han community surrounded by non-Han forces. The "barbarian lands," meanwhile, took similar shapes in relations to *China*. In political and cultural discourse, the Ming upheld the traditional "inner-outer" distinction between *China* and "barbarians": the former occupied and ruled at the inner center of civilization, and the latter looked up to *China* from the outer peripheries of the realm. As a matter of fact, the "inner-outer" positions of *China* and "barbarians" on the Ming borderlands had always been relational and situational. That is, peripheral areas could be either "inner" or "outer," depending on their sociopolitical environment. Metaphorically, the landscape was like a piece of Swiss cheese—if we view the Ming empire as the cheese, both *China* and "barbarian lands" could be cheese holes on the borderlands, making a setting of "'barbarians' and civilians living together" (*yimin zaju* 夷民雜居)[176] or "interlocking like dog teeth" (*quanya xiangcan* 犬牙相參).[177] To be sure, the Ming ruling elite maintained strongly the *China*-"barbarian" division based on Han ethnicity, and the boundaries and scopes of these territories changed constantly and the *Chinese* and "barbarians" could transform into each other, but such a general pattern remained throughout Ming times.

## "*CHINA*" AND "MING" IN MING CULTURAL CONSTRUCTS

The *China*-"barbarian" distinction and the difference between *China* and the Ming Empire can be also seen in Ming cultural products. Let us examine several genres of literature: law, map, and documentary style.

### *The* Chinese-*"Barbarian" Distinction in Ming Law*

The distinction between *China* (or "*Zhonghua*," "*Xia*," etc.) and "domestic barbarians" was not merely an ethnocultural discourse, it also informed the dynastic legal institution. Indeed, even at the very founding of the dynasty, the concept of *China* was already incorporated into the first imperial law codes. In the *Grand Pronouncements* (*Dagao* 大誥, three compilations, 1385–87), for example, in addition to the phrase "*Huaxia*," "*China*" (*Zhongguo* 中國) appears six times. The first time designates a ethnocultural space that was "entered" (*ru* 入) by the "barbarian Yuan" who "were not our kind (*zulei* 族类), whose customs were also different, and whose language could not be

[176] *Guizhou tongzhi (Jiajing)*, 271.
[177] *Sichuan zongzhi (Wanli)*, *juan* 22, 2b.

understood." All the other five times point to the cultural ancestors of *Huaxia*/Han people —"the earlier kings/sages of our *China*" (*wo Zhongguo xianwang/shengren* 我中國先王/聖人), whose institutions/teachings should be restored to transform the "barbarian customs" (*yifeng* 夷風 or *husu* 胡俗).[178]

If the *Grand Pronouncements* only lays out the cultural concept of *China* in principle, the *Great Ming Code* (*Da Ming lü* 大明律, 1397)[179] stipulates a specific rule regarding "*China*." Article 122 of the *Code* reads:

> Mongols and *Semu* 色目 people shall marry with *Chinese* persons [*Zhongguo ren* 中國人]. (It is essential that both parties be willing.) They shall not marry within their own race…. If [, however,] *Chinese* persons do not wish to marry Qincha 欽察 (Kipchaks) and Huihui 回回 people [two specific ethnicities within the *Semu* group], the latter may marry among their own race; the above prohibition shall not be applied.[180]

While the *Code* does not define who the *Chinese* persons are, it clearly demonstrates a distinction between *Chinese* persons and the non-*Chinese* persons such as the Mongols and *Semu* (including Kipchaks [*Qincha* in Han language] and Huihui people), who were all Ming subjects under the imperial regime. This indicates that *Chinese* persons and Ming subjects were not the same category of people.

The exegeses to the *Great Ming Code*, especially those in the late Ming, offer more informed propositions about the status of *Chinese* persons. First, they articulate a strong sense of "*Hua/Xia*-barbarian distinction." The difference lies in both racial and cultural aspects. To the Ming, "barbarians" are different kinds (*zhonglei* 種類). They could have "ugly and different appearances and shapes" (*xingzhuang chouyi* 形狀醜異) as Kipchaks and Huihui people do: yellow hairs/blue eyes and curly hair/big noses, respectively—as claimed by the Ming jurists. Culturally, "barbarians" have different customs. As "leftover barbarians" inside the Ming Empire, Mongols and *Semu* people are treated differently from Kipchaks and Huihui people because, after having received "sagely education" for a long time, their customs are closer to those of *Xia*. The very purpose of the interracial marriage is to transform the barbarians so that they can adopt the "*Zhonghua* customs" and thus return to the "Kingly way," including the values and practices of *Hua-Xia* clothing, filial piety and brotherly affection, and propriety and righteousness. Without such an injunction, *China* could end up practicing the customs of "barbarian" Mongols.[181]

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[178]Zhu Yuanzhang, *Yuzhi Dagao*, in Yang Yifan 楊一凡, *Ming dagao yanjiu* 明大誥研究 (A study of the "Grand Pronouncements") (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1988), 205, 215, 257, 420.

[179]For some studies of the *Great Ming Code*, see Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang and Early Ming Legislation*; Huang Chang-chien, "*Da Ming lü gao* kao" 大明律誥考 (An investigation on "The Great Ming Code" with pronouncements), in his *Ming Qing shi yanjiu conggao* 明清史研究叢稿 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1977), *juan* 2, 155–207; Yang Yifan, *Hongwu falü dianji kaozheng* 洪武法律典籍考證 (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, 1992); Jiang Yonglin, *Great Ming Code/Da Ming lü* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005); and Jiang Yonglin, *The Mandate of Heaven and the Great Ming Code*.

[180]Gao Ju 高舉, *Da Ming lü jijie fuli* 大明律集解附例 ("The Great Ming Code" with collected commentaries attached by regulations) (Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1969, 5 vols.), 709–10; Jiang, *Great Ming Code*, 88.

[181]He Guang 何廣, *Lüjie bianyi* 律解辯疑, ed. Wu Yanhong 吳艷紅 and Yang Yifan, in *Zhongguo zhenxi falü dianji xubian* 中國珍稀法律典籍續編, edited by Yang Yifan and Tiantao 田濤 (Haerbin: Heilongjiang

Secondly, the exegeses also point to a spatial dimension of the *China* concept. It is said that Mongols and *Semu* people were originally "outside" *China*. After they "entered" and ruled the land, they resided everywhere "inside the Nine Domains (*jiuzhou* 九州),"[182] which signified a position of "inward submission" (*neifu* 內附). In particular, a "model verdict" (*panyu* 判語)[183] connects the institution of marriage to the "Central Plains" (*zhongyuan*), which is closely associated with the "imperial majesty and transformation" (*shengjiao* 聲教).[184]

And finally, some exegeses stress the distinction between *China* and the "land beyond the pale of civilization" (*huawai* 化外). The Mongols and *Semu* people, it is said, used to be "barbarian people in the land beyond the pale of civilization"; the rule that makes them marry *Chinese* persons intends to "transform their evil hearts" (*geqi feixin* 革其非心).[185] In fact, as a legal category in the *Code*, *huawai* refers to either "surrendered barbarians" or "captured barbarian bandits."[186] In essence, then, *huawai* is tied to "barbarianism" and goes opposite to *China*.

After 1500, the Ming added another dimension to the legal concept of *China*—Hanness—in their new pieces of legislation, the *Itemized Regulations for Trying Penal Matters* (*Wenxing tiaoli* 問刑條例; codified in 1500, 1555, 1585). The *Itemized Regulations* ostensibly uses the concept of "*Hanren*" and differentiates them from "others." In its 1585 version, for example, four articles prohibit *Hanren* from, respectively, leaving families to learn "barbarian teachings" (Art. 127), entering "barbarian" domains to evade taxation (Art. 131), colluding with "barbarians" (Art. 227), and entering "barbarian" places to make trouble (Art. 306). In addition, in twenty-two other articles, the *Itemized Regulations* punishes crimes by "aboriginal" (*tu* 土), "*fan*," and "*yi*" peoples. Most of these articles refer to the non-Han peoples within the Ming territory; some of them specify the non-Han victims of "Miao" 苗, "Yao" 猺 and "Tong" 獞 criminals.[187] In

renmin chubanshe, 2002), 1–296, at 105; Gao, *Da Ming lü jijie fuli*, 710–12; Xiao Jingao 蕭近高, *Xintai falü* 刑臺法律 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1990, 2 vols.), vol. 1, *juan* 3, 13b–14a. To explicate the article "Expelling Sons-in-law and Marrying off Daughters" (*zhuxu jianü* 逐婿嫁女) of the *Great Ming Code*, a "model verdict" (*panyu* 判語) explains why the crime shall be punished: it changes "*China*" to "barbarians"夷戎 and thus confuses the human way with that of "oxen and horses," which cannot be tolerated by principle and sentiment. See Yu Yuan 余員 and Ye Ji 葉伋, eds., *Santai Minglü zhaopan zhengzong* 三臺明律招判正宗 (collected at the Gest Library, Princeton University), *juan* 3, 41b.

[182]The "Nine Divisions" refers to the nine regions under the legendary Yu the Great 大禹, namely, Ji 冀, Yan 兗, Yu 豫, Qing 青, Xu 徐, Yang 揚, Jing 荊, Liang 梁, and Yong 雍.

[183]"Model verdicts" intended to provide model case rulings for law court officials.

[184]Xiao, *Xingtai falü*, *juan* 3, 14a; He, *Lüjie bianyi*, 105.

[185]Xiao, Xingtai falü, juan 3, 13b.

[186]He, *Lüjie bianyi*, 56; Xiao, *Xingtai falü*, *fujuan*, 51b.

[187]It is said that "Yao" 猺 and "Tong" 獞 were pejorative words of the Ming for non-Han groups of "Yao" 瑤 and "Zhuang" 僮/壯. The "Miao" 苗, "Yao" 瑤, and "Zhuang" 僮/壯 in the Ming, of course, were not the same as those ethnic groups in present-day China. For the "Yao" in the Ming and its transformation, see Tang Xiaotao 唐晓涛: "Shilun 'Yao,' min, Han de yanbian—Difang he jiazu zhong de lishi biaoqian" 試論"猺",民,漢的演變—地方和家族中的歷史標籤 (On the evolution of Yao, civilians, and Han—The historical labels of locales and lineages), *Minzu yanjiu* 2010.2, 57–67. For the "Zhuang" in the Ming, see Tsukada Shigeyuki 塚田誠之 and Qin Yisheng 覃義生, "Mingdai Zhuangzu de qianxi yu shengtai" 明代壯族的遷徙與生態 (The migrations and livelihood of Zhuang nationality in the Ming dynasty), *Guangxi minzu yanjiu* 1987.1, 68–81; K. Palmer Kaup argues that the so-called Zhuang nationality was constructed only in the 1950s. See her *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

particular, Article 306 stipulates that if "aboriginal officials" violate lawsuit procedures, they shall be judged in accordance with "regulations of aboriginal customs" (*tusu shili* 土俗事例).[188] Differentiating "Han people" from the non-Han categories points to Han uniqueness and supremacy and attests to the Han essence of *China*.

The regulations in and commentaries to the Ming law codes provide us with a package of information about the ethnocultural *China*. They make clear *China*'s cultural traits, educational functions, spatial feature, and racial Others, and tie all these to Han identity; non-Han peoples would not be considered as the bearers of those elements or agents to carry out those missions.[189] In legal institutions, therefore, the Ming promoted the *Chinese* identity in Han ethnicity and fortified the *China*-"barbarian" distinction.

### "China" *and the "Ming" in Ming Cartography*

Mapping is a critical strategy to create meanings. In reviewing China's world maps in late imperial times, Richard Smith emphasizes the "cultural data" in Chinese *mappaemundi*, including "values and attitudes, aims and aspirations, hopes and fears."[190] In his important study of "Siam as a cultural construct," Thongchai Winichakul points out that the map has served as a prime technology in shaping the "man-made territorial definition"—the geo-body. Ming cartography may be seen as an instrument that combined the two—cultural and territorial—dimensions of map-making to generate a special entity—the geo-ethno-body, the imagined space of Han ethnicity (Han people with perceived particular [and "superior"] culture). While it is certainly impossible to engage in detailed study of Ming cartography here, for the purpose of this study, suffice it to say that Ming maps precisely attest to the two major themes of this essay: the difference between "*China*" and the "Ming," and "*China*" as only one part of the diverse Ming Empire. For the first theme, the Ming map titles provide strong and unequivocal evidence. To indicate the imperial identity of the territory, the mapmakers would use "(Da) Ming" (大)明 in the titles, such as *Da Ming hunyi tu* 大明混一圖 (Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming, c. 1390).[191] In some late Ming maps and their explanations, cartographers might use *China* to describe the geographical or sociopolitical relationships towards foreign countries in written texts, but they would always designate "Ming" on the map. In Wu Guofu's 吳國輔 *Jingu yudi tu* 今古輿地圖 (*Geographic Maps, Past and Present*, 1638), for example, while "*China*" is often used to contrast the foreign territories beyond the borders, it is the "Ming" that is labeled in the title of the map: *Da Ming wanshi yitong*

[188]Huang Chang-chien 黃彰健, *Mingdai lüli huibian* 明代律例彙編 (Compilations of the code and regulations of the Ming dynasty) (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1979), 864.

[189]For some more discussions of the legal status of "*Chinese* persons" and "those beyond the pale of the civilization," see Jiang, *The Mandate of Heaven and the Great Ming Code*, Chapter 4.

[190]Richard Smith, "Mapping China's World: Cultural Cartography in Late Imperial China," in his *Mapping China and Managing the World: Culture, Cartography and Cosmology in Late Imperial Times* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 48–88, at 48, 50. For Smith's similar ideas in his earlier work, see *Chinese Maps: Images of "All under Heaven"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For a great collection of Ming maps, see Cao Wanru 曹婉如 et. al., eds., *Zhongguo gudai ditu ji: Mingdai* 中國古代地圖集: 明代 (An atlas of ancient maps in China: The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1994).

[191]See Richard Smith, "Mapping China's World," 60.

*tu* 大明萬世一統圖 (The Eternal and Universal Map of the Great Ming).[192] Likewise, Chen Zushou's 陳祖綬 *Huang Ming zhifang ditu* 皇明職方圖 (*An Administrative Map of the August Ming*, 1636) also discusses the significance of *China* against "four barbarians" in the world, but still uses the "august Ming" in his work title and labels the map of the realm as *Huang Ming dayitong ditu* 皇明大一統地圖 (A Map of the Great Unity of the August Ming).[193] In Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu wanguo quantu* 坤輿萬國全圖 (A Complete Map of the Myriad Countries of the World, 1602), a product of Ming and western joint efforts,[194] although Ricci and his Chinese collaborators (such as Li Zhizao 李之藻 and Wu Zhongming 吳中明) used "*China*" (or "*Zhonghua*") in implying the relationship between the Ming and the rest of the world,[195] they still formally called the empire "Great Ming Unity" (*Da Ming yitong* 大明一统). And they specifically pointed out the geographical scope of the empire:

> The Great Ming is renowned for the greatness of its civilization (*shengming wenwu* 聲名文物). It comprises all between the 15th and 42nd parallels, and the other parts of the world that are tributary to it include a very large number of countries.[196]

And based on Matteo Ricci's map, Wang Qi and Wang Siyi directly placed "the Great Ming State" (*Da Ming guo* 大明國) on his map of *Shanhai yudi quantu* 山海輿地全圖 (Complete Map of Mountains, Seas, and Geography, 1609).[197] Obviously, as an official title, "Great Ming" cannot be confused with and replaced by "*China*."

A seeming (and rare) proof of "*China*" as the "Ming" Empire in cartography is that some geomantic maps of mountains and waterways use "*China*" in their titles. Such maps center on the so-called tripartite mountain system (*san ganlong* 三幹龍) or "land patterns" (*dili* 地理, or geography). Some examples include "General Map of the Three Main Dragons of *China*" (*Zhongguo sanda ganlong zonglan zhi tu* 中國三大幹

[192]Wu Guofu, *Jingu yudi tu* 今古輿地圖 (Geographic maps, past and present, 1638), in *Siku jinhui congkan, bubian* 四庫禁燬叢刊補編 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005), vol. 26, 393–528, at 513.

[193]Chen Zushou, *Huang Ming zhifang ditu*, in *Siku jinhui congkan, bubian*, vol. 26, 227–392, at 228–30, 233.

[194]J.F. Baddeley, "Father Matteo Ricci's Chinese World-Maps, 1584–1608," *The Geographical Journal* 50.4 (1917), 254–70; Pasquale M. D'elia, "Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938–1960) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci SJ," *Monumenta Serica* 20 (1961), 82–164; Ann Waltner, Linda Pearse, and Qin Fang, "Performing the Map and Music of Matteo Ricci," *Ming Studies* 62 (2010), 1–20; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 52–56; and Shijian Huang, "The Exploration of Matteo Ricci's World Map," in *New Perspectives on the Research of Chinese Culture*, edited by Pei-kai Cheng and Ka Wai Fan (New York: Springer, 2013), 119–36.

[195]For instance, it is said that Europeans came to *China*, Europe was 80,000 *li* away from *China*, and Korea was part of *China* in Han and Tang times and became a tributary country [during the Ming]. For translations of the Chinese inscriptions on the map, see Matteo Ricci and Lionel Giles, "Translations from the Chinese World Map of Father Ricci," *The Geographical Journal* 52.6 (12/1918), 367–85, and 53.1 (01/1919), 19–30. I speculate that such uses of *China* might have been influenced by the European concept of "China."

[196]The translation is adapted from Ricci and Giles, "Translations from the Chinese World Map of Father Ricci," *The Geographical Journal* 52.6, 384.

[197]Wang Qi and Wang Siyi, *Sancai tuhui*, 93; Wang Yiming 王逸明, *1609 Zhongguo gu ditu ji: Sancai tuhui dilijuan daodu* 1609 中國古地圖集—三才圖會地理卷導讀 (Atlas of Chinese ancient maps of 1609—A guide to the geography section of "Illustrated encyclopedia of Heaven, Earth, and humans") (Beijing: Shoudu shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010), 18–19.

龍總覽之圖) and "General Map of the Land Patterns, Seas, Mountains, and Rivers of *China*" (*Zhongguo dili haiyue jianghe dashi tu* 中國地理海嶽江河大勢圖). And along with such maps, there are certain essays expounding the meanings of the maps, such as "On the Mountains of *China*" (*Lun Zhongguo zhi shan* 論中國之山) and "On the Waters of *China*" (*Zonglun Zhonguo zhi shui* 總論中國之水).[198] In fact, these works were part of the traditional Chinese divination system. In that system, to understand the formations, secrets, and thus good omens of the land patterns, one had to learn about the major and minor mountain ranges (*longmai* 龍脈, "dragon veins") together with other related forms and features: lairs (*xue* 穴, lit. den or cave, referring to the site where *qi* 氣 energy was collected), arms (*sha* 砂, lit. sand, referring to surrounding smaller mountains or hills), waters (*shui* 水, which divided and guided dragon veins), and directions (*xiang* 向).[199] The "three main dragons" referred to the three major mountain systems (north, middle, and south) which originated from the Kunlun 崑崙 Mountains: the northern dragon between the Yalu River and the Yellow River, the middle dragon between the Yellow River and the Yangzi River, and the southern dragon between the Yangzi River and the South Sea. During the Ming, a major function of the tripartite mountain system was to demonstrate the legitimacy and predict the prosperity and longevity of the ruling house: the birthplace of the Ming founder was on the middle dragon, the first capital of the ruling house (Nanjing) on the southern dragon, and the Yongle emperor moved the principal capital to Jingshi on the northern dragon, —the history, prosperity, and future of the dynasty had been closely connected to the land patterns.[200]

The question is, what does "*China*" refer to in these works? I contend that it still demonstrates an "ethnocultural space" rather than a "geopolitical state" as often misperceived.

First, the maps and essays confine *China* in a limited area distinct from the "barbarian countries" (*yiguo* 夷國). They state that as the "ancestor" of all mountains, the Kunlun Mountains are the origin of all "dragon veins" in both *China* and "barbarian countries." *China*, according to the Ming perception, is located about 20,000 *li* to the southeast of Kunlun, an area from the center of the landmass. Particularly, Kunlun "only sent three main systems into *China*" (*wei pai sangan yi ru Zhongguo* 惟派三幹以入中國). These maps and essays, therefore, envision a specific and limited scope of *China* against "barbarian" lands. Second, these works define the scope of *China* on the basis of the traditional *Chinese* concept of "Nine Domains" (*jiuzhou* 九州). They articulate that among the three mountain systems in *China*, the northern system starts at Baideng 白登 (Datong, Shanxi) and covers the regions of Ji 冀 and Yan 燕; the middle system between the Yellow River and the Yangzi River starts at Taozhou 洮州 (Shaanxi) and

[198]See, for example, Zhang Huang 章潢, *Tushu bian* 圖書編 (Collection of books with illustrations) (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1971, 30 vols.), 4034–35, 4047–48, 4049–54.

[199]For a concise English treatment of the divination culture and a "Comprehensive map of the division and unity of the three main dragon systems and mountains and waterways of *China*" (*Zhongguo san ganlong yu shanshui fenhe qizhi zhi tu* 中國三幹龍與山水分合起止之圖), see Steven J. Bennett, "Patterns of the Sky and Earth: A Chinese Science of Applied Cosmology," *Chinese Science* 1978.3, 1–26.

[200]For the Ming perception of the such a system, see Xu Shanji 徐善繼 and Xu Shanshu 徐善述, *Chongkan renzi xuzhi zixiao dili xinxue tongzong* 重刊人子須知資孝地理心學統宗 (Comprehensive learning of land patterns) (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 2000), vol. 411, 29–36.

covers the regions of Yong 雍, Yu 豫, Qing 青, and Xu 徐; and the southern system starts at Minshan 岷山 Mountains (Sichuan) and covers the regions of Liang 梁, Jing 荊, and Yang 揚.[201] This is like the aforementioned Yellow River: the Yellow River was not exclusively a *Chinese* river; rather, it combined waterways in both *Chinese* and "barbarian" territories; similarly, among the great number of mountains that originate from the Kunlun Mountains, only those "three major dragon systems" "enter *China*." In other words, *China* is the site of their location and operation. I therefore argue that the "*China*" in the maps and their exegeses concerning the "three main dragon systems" is still concerned with an ethno-cultural space that is distinguished from the "barbarian land" and inherits the historical meaning of Han-dominated territory.

Ming cartography also reveals the second theme of this study: the ethnocultural *China* in the diverse Ming Empire. This can be seen in the maps that deal with "*Hua*" 華 and "*yi*"夷. In the late Ming, some cartographers did intend to denote "*China*" in their maps. In those cases, they would use the word "*Hua*," and usually combine *Hua* and *yi* 夷 to demonstrate either the tributary relations between the Ming and "barbarians" or the Ming empire itself. The former is seen in Zhu Siben 朱思本 and Luo Hongxian's 羅洪先 *Hua-yi zongtu* 華夷總圖 ("General Map of *Hua* and Barbarians"). The map shows *China* and the representative "barbarian" countries/regions which are said to have paid tribute. The text lists those tributary "barbarians" in six directions of *China*: east: Korea and Japan; southeast: Great Liuqiu; south: Annam, Champa, etc.; southwest: Brunei, etc.; west: Xifan, Samarkand, etc.; and northwest: Chijin Mongols, Hami, etc.[202] In the map and descriptions, while *China* and the "foreign barbarians" are separated, *China* and the "domestic barbarians" are not marked off. But the concept and image of "*Hua-yi* distinction" are clearly illustrated. Using "*Hua-yi*" to show the Ming empire can be seen in Wang Qi's *Huayi yitong tu* 華夷一統圖 ("Map of *Hua-yi* Unity"). The map exhibits *Hua* and the surrounding "barbarians," but its purpose is to glorify the territorial achievement of the Ming realm:

> Our august Ming received the Mandate of Heaven and unified *Hua* and *yi*. Its territory is vast: reaching Liaozuo 遼左 (i.e. Liaodong) in the east, moving sands (i.e. deserts) in the west, seas in the south, and deserts in the north. All those from extremely remote areas in all directions have come to pay court audience![203]

*Hua-yi yitong tu* maps the Ming Empire (bordered by foreign countries such as Japan, Korea, Jurchens, Turpan, Burma, and Siam); it also attests to the significance of "*China*" in several ways. First, by combining "*Hua-yi*," the map acknowledges the fact that the Ming realm consists of both "*China*" and "barbarian" areas rather than being a "Han" domain. Second, in the north, it clearly marks the boundaries with the Great Wall and Nine Border Commands. And third, on the Ming southwest borderlands, the map

[201]Xu Shanji and Xu Shanshu, *Chongkan renzi xuzhi zixiao dili xinxue tongzong*, 30, 34–35.

[202]Zhu Siben and Luo Hongxian, *Guang yutu* 廣輿圖 (Enlarged territorial atlas) (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1969), 419–27. The Mongols in the north are not listed probably because they were not viewed as tributary entities.

[203]Wang Qi and Wang Siyi, *Sancai tuhui*, 95. The description copies Li Xian's "Da Ming yitong zhi tuxu" 大明一統志圖敘 (Preface to the "Map of the Great Ming Unity"), but the map is retitled "Huayi yitong tu." See Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, after 8.

labels the non-Han regions in unusual detail, including Tongren 銅仁, Shiqian 石阡, and Sinan 思南 in Guizhou, Zhenxiong 鎮雄, Wumeng 烏蒙, Qiongbu 邛部, Dongchuan 東川, and Wusa 烏撒 in Sichuan, and Lijiang 麗江, Dali 大理, Yongchang 永昌, Menggen 孟艮, and Jingdong 景東 in Yunnan. The detailed mapping of non-Han units affirms the Ming perception of the imperial nature of the realm and consolidates the distinction between "*China*" and "barbarian territories" within the empire.[204]

### "China" *and the "Ming" in the Official Documentary Style*

One also has to note that even though "*China*" often appeared in official diplomatic documents, it by no means embodied the official title of the Ming Empire. Indeed, contrary to what Gang Zhao claims,[205] "Ming" and "*China*" were not interchangeable concepts. Like other names such as "*Zhongxia*" and "*Zhonghua*,"[206] "*China*" was only a commonly used unofficial name. Zhu Yuanzhang made it abundantly clear in his imperial proclamation that the official title of the empire ("*tianxia zhi hao*"天下之號) was "Da Ming" 大明 (lit. great Ming), not *China*, although he mentioned the latter several times in the same proclamation.[207] The alternative dynastic names were "Huang Ming" 皇明 (lit. august Ming) and its shortened rendering, "Ming." These terms—"Da Ming," "Huang Ming," or "Ming"—are reflected in a number of official (esp. legal) document titles,[208] and are adopted in a large number of unofficial document titles.[209] "*China*" never appeared in a Ming text title to indicate the empire or dynasty.

The Ming textual format also points to the difference between the two concepts. In order to show respect for and emphasis on the present dynasty, when authors and publishers wrote and printed their books, they tended to treat some selected characters such as "*shang*" 上, "*huangdi*" 皇帝, and emperors' names/titles (Taizu 太祖, etc.) differently: these characters were placed either at the top of a line, above the normal margin, or after a space in the text. The official titles of "Da Ming," "Huang Ming," and "Ming"

[204]In his works on Chinese maps, Richard Smith does point to the terms of "*Zhongguo*," "*Zhonghua*," "*zhongtu*," and "*jiuzhou*," and displays and discusses some "*Hua-yi*" maps, but he fails to connect these two sets of concepts and engage in deeper analysis. Instead, he indistinguishably treats "*Hua*" as "China," as in the renderings of "Huayi tu" 華夷圖 (Map of China and the barbarians), "Gujin Huayi yuqu zongyao tu" 古今華夷區域總要圖 (General map of Chinese and barbarian territories, past and present), and "Sihai Huayi zongtu" 四海華夷總圖 (General map of Chinese and barbarian lands within the four seas) (Smith, "Mapping China's World," 48–56). It appears that Smith also equates the ethnocultural "*China*" to the geopolitical "Ming."

[205]Zhao Gang states that the title "Ming" was an alternative name for "*China*;" and "[b]y the Ming, *China* was commonly used as the state's official title on edicts and other official documents" ("Redefining *China*," 6).

[206]See, for example, *Mingshi*, 8342–43.

[207]Zhu Yuanzhang, "Chuji diwei zhao" 初即帝位詔, in *Huang Ming zhaoling* 皇明詔令, edited by Fu Fengxiang 傅鳳翔 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1967), vol.1, 26.

[208]A number of examples can be found in Wolfgang Franke, *Annotated Sources of Ming History, including Southern Ming and Works on Neighbouring Lands, 1368–1661* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2011, 2 vols.). See, for examples, *Da Ming lü* 大明律, *Da Ming ling* 大明令, *Da Ming guanzhi* 大明官制, *Da Ming jili* 大明集禮, *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典; *Huang Ming zuxun* 皇明祖訓, *Huang Ming tiaofa shilei zuan* 皇明條法事類纂; *Ming lü* 明律, and *Ming huidian* 明會典.

[209]Such as Li Xian's *Da Ming yitong zhi*, Deng Qiu's 鄧球 *Huang Ming yonghua leibian* 皇明泳化類編, Zhang Lu's 張鹵 *Huang Ming zhishu* 皇明制書, and Tan Xisi's 譚希思 *Ming dazheng zuanyao* 明大政纂要.

often enjoyed this privilege; whereas "*China*" never received such a treatment.[210] Clearly, *China* cannot replace the political meaning of "(Da/Huang) Ming." When the Ming court used "*China*" in diplomatic documents towards foreigners, the essence of the concept is the Han domain based on Han civilization; non-Han regimes and cultures within the empire were not part of its connotation.

## THE "MIAO TERRITORY": A "LAND BEYOND THE PALE OF CIVILIZATION" OUTSIDE *CHINA*

The Ming worldview of a "*China*-barbarian" distinction is vividly illustrated in their perception and treatment of the "Miao territories" (*Miaojiang* 苗疆). The term "Miao," as rendered by outsiders,[211] has been given different meanings by present-day scholars in, ranging from an objective description of their lifestyle (agriculture relating to "sprout"), to derogatory connotations (e.g., "barbarians"), and to a simple phonetic transcription of Miao self-appellations (e.g., "Hmong," "Mong," and "Hmu").[212] Although many people trace them back to the Jiuli 九黎 tribes headed by the legendary figure Chi You 蚩尤 and their descendants San Miao 三苗 in North China[213] or the Maoren 髦人

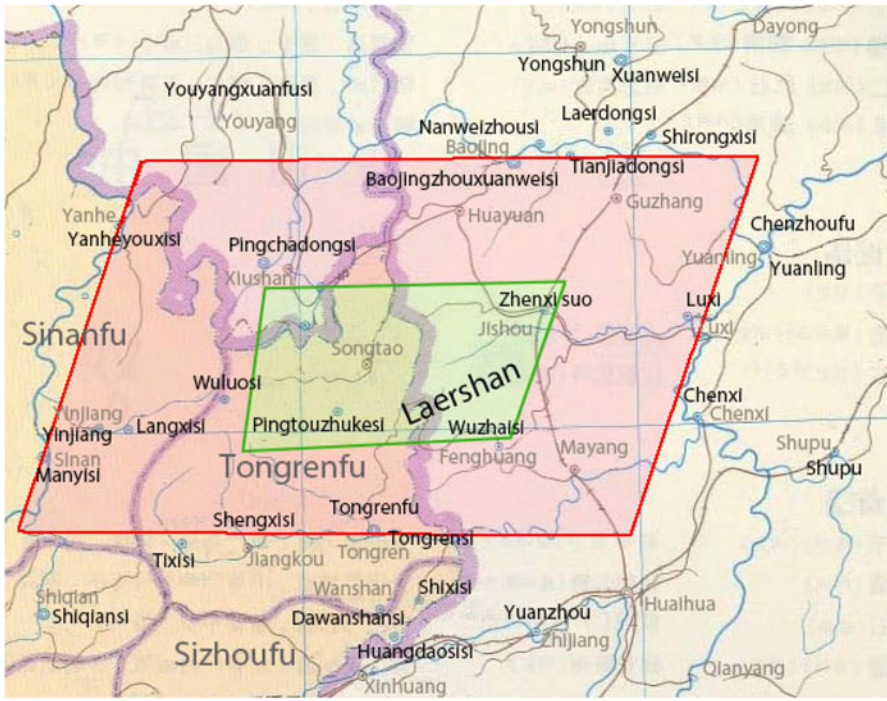
[210]In Li Xian's *Da Ming yitong zhi*, for example, "Huang Ming" is elevated in the text; whereas "*huaxia*," "*Zhonghua*," and "*Zhongguo*" are rendered in an ordinary way. (*Da Ming yitong zhi* [Xian: San Qin chubanshe, 1990], "Preface," and 1370.) In *Ming jingshi wenbian* 明經世文編 (Collected works on statecraft during the Ming), for another example, in the "prefaces" to the collection, the dynastic title "Ming" is always elevated, but "*Zhongguo*" is not used at all; and in the text, "Huang Ming" and "Da Ming" are placed after a space, whereas "*Zhongguo*" is printed without special treatment. (See, e.g., *Ming jingshi wenbian*, ed. Chen Zilong 陳子龍 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962, 6 vols.], vol. 1, "prefaces" and 10, 13, 15, 19, 94.)

[211]Outside China, the ethnonym "Miao" is considered to include at least three distinct ethnocultural groups in China: Hmu (southeast Guizhou), Khoxiong (west Hunan and east Guizhou), and Hmong (Guizhou, Sichuan, Guangxi, and Yunnan). The Hmong outside China, meanwhile, regard "Miao" as a pejorative term and advocate the use of "Hmong" to designate the peoples who are called "Miao." The Miao in China, however, have accepted "Miao" as their ethnonym. For some studies of certain Miao groups in China, see Nicholas Tapp, *The Hmong of China: Context, Agency, and the Imaginary* (Boston: Brill, 2001), Simon Siu-woo Cheung, "Subject and Representation: Identity Politics in Southeast Guizhou" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1996), and Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000). For a study of the historical process of categorizing ethnic groups, see Thomas Mullaney's *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

[212]For the meanings of the term "Miao" and the Miao autonyms, see Torii Ryuzo 鳥居龍藏, *Miaozu diaocha baogao* 苗族調查報告 (Shanghai: Guoli bianyiguan, 1936), 16–49; Yang Tingshuo 楊庭碩, *Renqun daima de lishi guocheng: Yi Miaozu zuming wei li* 人群代碼的歷時過程—以苗族族名為例 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1998); Norma Diamond, "Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing, and Contemporary Views," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Harrell, 92–116, at 92; Schein, *Minority Rules*, 37–41; David Deal and Laura Hostetler (trans.), *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese "Miao Album"* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), xxiv–xxv; and Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, 106–07.

[213]Shi Qigui 石啟貴, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族實地調查報告 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2008), 32–37; Wu Xinfu 伍新福 and Long Boya 龍伯亞, *Miaozu shi* 苗族史 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1992), 1–14; Suzuki Masataka 鈴木正崇 and Kanamaru Yoshiko 金丸良子, *Seinan Chūgoku no shōsū minzoku: Kishū-shō Miyaozoku minzokushi* 西南中国の少数民族: 貴州省苗族民俗誌 (Tokyo: Kokon Shoin, 1985), 13–15; Wu Rongzhen and Wu Shuguang, eds., *Miaozu tongshi* 苗族通史 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2007, 5 vols.), vol. 1, 15–36, 182–246.

**FIGURE 1 The Miao Territory and Laershan Platform in the Ming context. The Ming place names (in darker font) are accompanied with their present-day names (in lighter font). Adapted from Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, ed., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集, vol. 7, pp. 8–81. Assisted by Jin Xue 金雪.**




people[214] during prehistoric times, it might be possible that "Miao" did not become a label for certain particular groups until after the Tang-Song transition in the tenth century.[215] The Miao were historical peoples; they did not carry a single identity through China's long history. Over time, the name was used to designate different social groups. In the Ming, it was often perceived as a category that included a wide range of peoples such as Lolo 羅羅 and Gelao 仡佬.[216] By the mid-Ming dynasty, after centuries of warfare and migration, most of the Miao lived in the southwestern areas of the empire, especially Huguang, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan.[217] One such

[214]Ling Chunsheng (Ling Shun-sheng) 凌純聲 and Rui Yifu (Ruey Yi-fu) 芮逸夫, *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族調查報告 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), 8–10.

[215]For some English literature on the origins of the Miao, see Schein, *Minority Rules*, 36–54; Christian Culas and Jean Michaud, "A Contribution to the Study of Hmong (Miao) Migrations and History," in *Hmong/Miao in Asia*, edited by Nicholas Tapp, Jean Michaud, Christian Culas, and Gar Yia Lee (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2004), 61–96, at 63–65.

[216]Wang Shixing 王士性, *Guangzhi yi* 廣志繹 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p.133.

[217]Wu and Long, *Miaozu shi*, 171–90; Ling and Rui, *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao*, 15–25. For a map of distribution of the major Miao groups in the southwest, see Diamond, "Defining the Miao," 93; for a map of distribution of Miao in China, see Schein, *Minority Rules*, xviii.

Miao area was located at west Huguang, east Guizhou, and southeast Sichuan (see map, Figure 1). Centered at Wuzhaisi 五寨司, the "Miao territory" stretched to the north at Yongshun 永順 and Baojing 保靖, northeast at Yuanling 沅陵, east at Luxi 瀘溪, southeast at Chenxi 辰溪, and south at Mayang 麻陽 in Huguang, southwest at Tongren 銅仁 (including the chief's offices of Pingtou zhuke 平頭著可, Zhiguzhai 治古寨, and Dayi 答意 of the Ming, all in the present-day Songtao Autonomous County of Miao Nationality) and west at Wuluo 烏羅 in Guizhou, and northwest to the Youyang 酉陽 pacification office, and the chief's offices of Shiyedong 石耶洞, Pingchadong 平茶洞, and Yimeidong 邑梅洞 in Sichuan, with a total circumference of over 800 *li*.[218] It was mostly surrounded by the Youxi 酉溪 River on the north, the Yuanshui 沅水 River on the east, the Chenshui 辰水 River on the south, and the Wujiang 烏江 River and Fanjingshan 梵淨山 Mountain on the west, situated roughly at 108″47′~110″22′E and 27″42′~28″45′N. Its estimated population ranged from 100,000 to 150,000.[219]

In this Miao territory, "a single society"[220] with distinctive ethnic characteristics developed. Donald Sutton suggests that by the eighteenth century, the Miao in west Hunan had coalesced into an ethnic group through the interactions with Han and other migrants and the Qing government.[221] I would argue further that at least by about 1500, the Miao in this territory had developed a cohesive and distinct culture. The local Miao, using the autonym "Khoxiong" 果雄, "Ghexiong" 仡雄, or "Xiong" 雄, shared a common language (which is now known as Xiangxi dialect of the Miao-Yao or Hmong-Mien language family) and considered it an essential marker for their group identity. As Sutton points out, by the late Ming the ancestors of the Miao had occupied the territory for centuries as their homeland.[222] Mary Rack, while questioning the clear "Miao" identity, still acknowledges that by the fifteenth century, the term "Miao" "was used to denote the people sharing particular cultural and linguistic features" in west Hunan.[223] Indeed, among the Miao in the three provincial borderlands, "there were no obvious differences in their disposition and customs (*xingqing fengsu* 性情風俗),"[224]

[218]Hou Jiadi 侯加地, "Bianshao jiangyu kao" 邊哨疆域考, in *Miaofang beilan* 苗防備覽, by Yan Ruyi 嚴如熤 (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1969), 914–29.

[219]For some discussions of the Miao territory, see *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 10160; Wu and Long, *Miaozu shi*, 225–27; Tan Biyou 譚必友, *Qingdai Xiangxi Miaojiang duominzu shequ de jindai chonggou* 清代湘西苗疆多民族社区的近代重构 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2007), 2–7.

[220]Donald Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century," in *Empire at the Margins*, edited by Crossley et al., 190–228, at 190.

[221]Donald Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire: The 'Miao Uprising' of 1795–1797 Reexamined," *Asia Major* 16, pt. 2, 3rd ser. (2003), 105–52. In our personal communications, Donald Sutton also points to three key elements in assessing the Miao as an ethnic group: "self-consciousness (resulting from degree of interaction); a name used by the group (whether it has been adopted from others or not); and shared cultural traits (and especially local religious and intermarrying practices)" (personal email exchange on October 2, 2012).

[222]Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier," 190.

[223]Rack, *Ethnic Distinctions, Local Meanings*, 18, 24.

[224]Yan, *Miaofang beilan*, vol. 1, 353. Based on the same edition of the text (published in 1843), Luo Kanglong 羅康隆 and Zhang Zhenxing 張振興 render "*xingqing fengsu*" as "*xing feng su* 性風俗" and particularly interpret them as three important aspects of governing the Miao territory: disposition, habits, and customs (*xingqing fengshang fengsu* 性情風尚風俗); but they neither point to nor explain the textual difference. See Luo and Zhang, eds., *Miaofang beilan Fengsu kao yanjiu* 苗防備覽風俗考研究 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 2011), 30. I am grateful to Tan Weihua 譚衛華 for making this book available to me.

and their way of life such as foods, clothes, and houses was "utterly different from the Han people" (*yu Hanmin jiongbie* 與漢民迥異).[225] They gained their livelihood in their own place and in their own ways, and maintained their own sociopolitical institutions free from the control of imperial governments.[226]

For the Ming ruling elite, this "Miao territory" represented a land "beyond the pale of civilization" (*huawai* 化外), i.e. outside and different from *China*.[227] Indeed, in official discourse, the Miao territory exemplified the "uncivilized domain" outside *China*. The prefect of Chenzhou 辰州 Qu Ruji 瞿汝稷 (1548–1610) articulated that within the Miao territory, even the "cooked Miao" who adopted Han law could not be considered part of *China*, but only ruled by *China* by means of the loose-rein mechanism.[228] Some of Qu's colleagues at the imperial court straightforwardly proposed that the "raw Miao" in the mountains should not be treated according to Han law.[229] The Education Intendant of Guizhou Xie Dongshan 謝東山 (dates unknown) saw the handling of the Miao at Tongren (the Guizhou section of the Miao territory) as a confrontation between *China* and "barbarians."[230] The Supervising Secretary of the Office of Scrutiny of War Song Yihan 宋一韓 advocated that against the rebellious Miao, the Ming should mobilize forces and launch deadly strikes, which, he hoped, would "shake the power of *China*" (*zhen Zhongguo zhi wei* 振中國之威).[231] Cai Fuyi 蔡復一, the Administration Vice Commissioner of Huguang concurrently in charge of the Chenyuan Military Defense Circuit of Chenyuan (*Chen-Yuan bingbei dao* 辰沅兵備道), specifically created a border wall to divide the "evil Miao" (*Miaonie* 苗孽) and "*Hua*-Han 華漢," and to contain the Miao encroachment.[232] Wu Guoshi 吳國仕, who headed the Chenyuan Military Defense Circuit from 1615 to 1617, also saw fundamental differences that separated the "Miao domain" (*Miaojie* 苗界) and Han "inner domain" (*neidi*), whose residents were labeled, respectively, as "Miao ghosts" (*Miaogui* 苗鬼) and "Han people" (*Hanmin*). If some Han people entered the Miao territory but were unable to come out,

[225]Xu Hong 徐鋐 and Xiao Guan 蕭琯, eds., *Songtao tingzhi (Daoguang)* 松桃廳志(道光), in *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng Guizhou fuxian zhiji* 中國地方誌集成: 貴州府縣誌輯 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2006), vol. 46, 441–693, at 505.

[226]For some key Miao beliefs and practices in this borderland, see Zhang Ziwei 張子偉 and Shi Shougui 石壽貴, *Xiangxi Miaozu gulao gehua* 湘西苗族古老歌話 (Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2012); Tan Weihua 譚衛華, "Miao Drum Culture and Its Social Function," *Fourth World Journal* 7.2 (2007): 54–61; Alin 阿琳, *Hong Miao guiliu tu* 紅苗歸流圖, in Duan Rulin 段汝霖 and Xie Hua 謝華, *Chu'nan Miaozhi Xiangxi tusi jilüe* 楚南苗志湘西土司輯略 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2008), 231–59, at 239–40, 242; Liu Qing 劉慶, ed. *Fenghuang ting zhi* 鳳凰廳志 (Hong Kong: Tianma tushu youxian gongsi, 2003), 61–62; Zhang Ziwei 張子偉 and Zhang Ziyuan 張子元, *Xiangxi Miaozu zhuiniu ji* 湘西苗族椎牛祭 (Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2012); and Rack, *Ethnic Distinctions and Local Meanings*.

[227]Wu Guoshi 吳國仕, *Chubian tiaoyue* 楚邊條約 (Regulations on the Chu borderland) (Ming edition, 1617), 15a.

[228]Yan, *Miaofang beilan*, 701.

[229]*Ming Shenzong shilu*, 8078.

[230]Xie Dongshan, "Yichu Tong Miao shiyi" 議處銅苗事宜 (On dealing with the Miao at Tongren), in *Guizhou tongzhi (Wanli)* 貴州通志 (萬曆) (Guizhou daxue chubanse, 2010), 465.

[231]*Ming Shenzong shilu*, 8080.

[232]Cai Fuyi, "Tiaoyi bingzheng xiang" 條議兵政詳, in *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書, Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, Xuxiu Siku quanshu edition, 2002, vol. 579), 220, 228; Yan, *Miaofang beilan*, 703. For the border wall in the Ming, see Jiang, "The 'Southern Great Wall of China' in Fenghuang County."

Wu urged them to behave like "good people in the land beyond the pale of civilization" (*huawai liangmin* 化外良民), i.e. not assisting the Miao to attack the Ming borders.[233] Indeed, in the Ming, "borderland" by nature testified to the Ming's perception of "Otherness." The late Ming scholar-official Wu Guofu explicitly pointed out that "the dynasty established borderlands (*bianjiao* 邊徼) because outside the borders are all 'barbarians' (*yi di qiang rong* 夷狄羌戎) who are not our kind (*feiwo zulei* 非我族類)"; and the "barbarians have been troubling *China* since ancient times."[234]

Particularly, Tian Rucheng 田汝成 (1500–1563?), the Ming scholar-official who managed ethnic minority affairs in the southern and southwestern frontiers, presented a typical Han official view of the Miao cultural traits. Tian once served as the Vice Commissioner of the Military Defense Circuit of Sishi and opened his office at Tongren.[235] He elaborately articulated the Miao-*China* distinction in part based on his experience at the Guizhou section of the Miao territory. According to him, the Miao "barbarians," who mostly lived in the mountainous areas, had given names but no surnames. Being crafty, deceptive, and cruel by nature, they did not have any sense of propriety and ethical principles: they looked like humans when they were happy and turned into beasts when they were upset. Indeed, they did look like beasts when they traveled in the mountains and climbed the cliffs. Their language sounded strange and often required repeated translations. Their foods combined miscellaneous weeds and rotten meat, giving off an unbearable stink. They developed a strange calendar: without knowing the Han calendar, they took winter as the beginning of the year. They were very fond of divination with chicken bones, and good at making *gu* 蠱 poison. They depended solely on ghosts in curing illness, without resorting to medicines. When young men and women dated, in the practice known as "moon dance" (*tiaoyue* 跳月, or dancing in the moonlight), they acted promiscuously and contacted each other directly with "lewd words." At funerals, they did not wear mourning garments, and did not care whether or not the corpses should be buried. In terms of dispute resolution, revenge was very popular. A trivial matter could lead to homicide, and the victim's family would mobilize the whole clan for revenge. The mutual resentment and killing could last a long time, as expressed in their adage: "The hatred of the Miao families could not stop until after nine generations." In legal procedure, without a ruler and written language, the Miao did not rely on government offices and their cases were not tried with the dynastic law codes. They would only choose an upright and eloquent person as the "judge" (*hangtou* 行頭) to handle the cases. All of these, to Tian, differed from and were inferior to the Han values and practices in *China*.

Unlike Han people (*Hanren*), Tian concluded, the Miao failed to develop moral and reasonable institutions. Knowing no Han language (*Hanyu*), they could not have access to the societal principles and systems handed down by the sage kings of *China*, including benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, and the administration of justice. Traveling with demons and monsters and living with jackals and wolves, no wonder they could engage only in "ugly and disgusting customs." To Tian, therefore,

[233]Wu Guoshi, *Chubian tiaoyue*, 14b-16b.

[234]Wu Guofu, *Jingu yudi tu*, 421, 422.

[235]Zhan Mingyu 詹明瑜, "Tian Rucheng yanjiu" 田汝成研究 (Master's thesis, Shanghai shifan daxue, 2012), 15.

this land and culture could by no means belong to *China* (or *han Xia* 函夏, *zhongtu* 中土). He only hoped that after one hundred generations, the cultural values and practices of *China* would cover and transform this "barbarian" territory.[236] In the eyes of the Ming ruling elite, apparently, the Miao constituted a collective Other in opposition to *China* and Han culture.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Throughout Ming times, the ruling elite perceived and defined *China* as an "ethnocultural space" that Han people inhabited and where Han values and customs were upheld and practiced. While the "Ming" was created as the political title for the ruling dynasty, denoting the geopolitical scope of the empire ("all under Heaven"),[237] "*China*" was used only to indicate a "civilized" place as distinct from "barbarians," be they foreign or domestic. Three sets of elements defined Ming *China*: The Han people, Han culture, and Han space. In addition to nature and connotations, the Ming and *China* also differed in scope. In the Ming imperial landscape, *China* was not a unified "area;" instead, it could exist as a "line" or a "dot," surrounded by "barbarian" territories on the borderlands. For the Ming imperial court, it was only their "dream" to transform the non-*Chinese* societies with Han culture and thus make *China* identical to the Ming realm.

The "Miao territory" exemplified a non-*Chinese* domain in the Ming empire. Neither the Miao nor the Ming saw the territory as part of *China*. To the Miao, the mountainous region became their homeland, the sacred space they inherited from their ancestors and the sociopolitical domain where they practiced autonomous institutions and customs. To the Ming, the territory ostensibly signified a "barbarian land" outside *China*. While they occasionally endeavored to control and transform it, they failed in their mission to turn it into part of *China*. When they could not endure the Miao attacks, the best plan they could come up with was to construct a physical earthen border wall to separate the "Miao territory" from *China*. The "Miao territory" witnessed to a fragmented political landscape in a diverse empire.

The "Miao territory" also represented an ethnic space. In the greater Miao areas, to be sure, ethnic identity was in flux. On the one hand, the Ming court endeavored to transform non-Han values and practices, and on the other, a number of Han became Miao.[238] The name "Miao" itself was an "umbrella category" that embraced very diverse ethnosocial groups in the Ming. The Miao territory, however, stood for a relatively homogenous ethnic domain. The "Khoxiong" people in the region developed their distinct cultural values and practices. They consciously viewed themselves as different from the Han; and the Han and other outsiders saw them as an ethno-cultural Other. I would therefore contend that Miao ethnicity did develop in this region by at

[236]Tian's perceptions are summarized from his *Yanjiao jiwen*, 589–96. For some discussions of Tian Rucheng's work and thought on demarcating *Hua* and *yi*, see Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*, 140–42.

[237]Li Xian, *Da Ming yitong zhi*, Imperial Preface, 1; Zhu Siben and Luo Hongxian, *Guangyu tu*, 34.

[238]Yan, *Miaofang beilan*, vol. 1, 359; Luo and Zhang, *Miaofang beilan fengsu kao yanjiu*, 63–66. In the greater Miao areas, apparent examples included Songjia Miao 宋家苗 and Caijia Miao 蔡家苗 in Guizhou, who were believed to the descendants of *China* in ancient times. See Tian, *Yanjiao jiwen*, 592; Deal and Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 8–11; Li Delong 李德龍, *Qiannan Miaoman tushuo yanjiu* 黔南苗蠻圖說研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2008), 78–79.

least 1500. And the formation of Miao ethnicity was a result of historical processes to which various ethnosocial groups made contributions. Norma Diamond defines the Miao during the Ming and Qing "as a Chinese category," emphasizing a product of civilizing projects by outside forces.[239] I see two problems in Diamond's thesis. The first is concerned with the opposition of the Miao—"Chinese." Diamond fails to clarify who the "Chinese" were. It seems to have excluded Miao; but does it include both the Han and Manchus—the main official forces that shaped the Miao identity during the Ming and Qing? The second and more serious problem has to do with her emphasis on the outsiders' role in making the Miao's identity. It is true that the name "Miao" was given by the Han and continued by the Manchus and then consolidated by the Han again in the twentieth century, but the essential traits of the Miao ethnicity in this area were primarily created by the Miao themselves, albeit they did not develop a written language. The Miao gained their ethnic group consciousness through economic, cultural, political, and military conflicts with the outsiders.

I now end the essay by reiterating the significance of Ming experience in understanding the diverse imperium in Chinese history. In the existing literature on the changes of "*China*," scholars tend to pay more attention to the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing, overlooking or mispresenting the Ming Empire in between. They either presume a homogenous "Han" country—as a "monolithic Other" to deploy in scholarly inquiries on the diverse Yuan or Qing—or confuse it with the different entities of "*China*" and "Ming." This essay demonstrates that "*China*" as an ethnocultural space of the Han underwent noteworthy historical development. It incorporated earlier tradition with new circumstances in which a Han ruling house overthrew the alien Mongol regime but constantly faced threats and challenges from both domestic and foreign non-Han forces. "*China*" as a Han space occupied by a particularly "superior" group with "civilized" cultural development and commonly shared history reached its peak in Chinese history during the Ming. The values, discourses, and institutions on Han-based "*China*" not only legitimized and consolidated the Ming ruling house, but also provided a driving force and rallying cry in the early course of the Republican revolution led by Sun Yat-sen.[240] The Ming, in Edward Farmer's words, gives "modern China an indelible identity that [has] persisted into the twentieth century and elements of which to this day continue to assert themselves as contributions to contemporary Chinese nationalism."[241] The non-Han regions and peoples, even after submitting to Ming political rule, would not automatically "qualify" to be *China* or *Chinese*. The ethnocultural diversity of the Ming appeared to be a "precursor of" rather than "contrast to" of the Qing, which differed only in scope rather than in nature. By critiquing the misperception of a monolithic Ming entity and confusion of the ethnocultural *China* with the political Ming, this study supports the general thesis about "*Zhongguo* as a changing symbol"[242] in the "New Qing History" with Ming evidence and extends inquiries about "*China*/China" into contemporary times.

[239]Diamond, "Defining the Miao," 99–106.

[240]Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang & Early Ming Legislation*, 1–2.

[241]Farmer, *Zhu Yuanzhang & Early Ming Legislation*, 100.

[242]Mark Elliott, "Guanyu 'Xin Qing shi' de jige wenti" 關於新清史的幾個問題 (On several issues in New Qing History), in *Qingdai zhengzhi yu guojia rentong*, edited by Liu Fengyun et al., 3–15.