11

Historical Process in the *Bazi* Basin Environmental System during the Ming Period: A Case Study of the Zhaozhou *Bazi* Society in Western Yunnan Mountains Area, Southwest China*

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Abstract

This paper examines the *Bazi*-based cultural system of the Southwest frontier of China, and uses the case-study of Zhaozhou to demonstrate that the social reconstruction from the previous Dali kingdom system is formed at the frontier of the Ming dynasty through government sponsored Fengshui geomancy, military pressure, Confucian education and state promoted worship. During this process of state penetration, the effectively formulated space usage also highlighted the reconstructed social categories of groups and ethnic identities and the political background of the environmental and social landscapes in the Ming. All these changes have shown a process of ideological cooperation, political interaction and resistance with the Ming government, as well as cultural negotiation with the state power in the reconstruction of social groups, but it was also based on the environmental features and marks of the *Bazi* basins and their surrounding mountains. Without checking the environmental demarcation and its meaning reconstruction, we could not truly understand the historical reformation of China's frontier from a particular social, political and cultural system into a part of the Ming state, and the impact of this reform on local people. Because the changes in the transformation of local settlements were related, the reshaped social relationships were affiliated with environmental demarcations and people's interdependency.

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Introduction

The specific local term *Bazi* was originally linked with a Tai-Shan language term BA, meaning the flatland in the mountains area.[1] From Ming (1368-1643) to Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, *Bazi* (written in Chinese as 壩子) had become a popular geographical and social term used by ordinary people to describe local social and cultural systems in Yunnan and other provinces of southwest China, as well as in the highlands of Southeast Asia. In the southwest frontier, *Bazi*, therefore became a general term for basins or plains in this mountainous area.

This paper aims to study the *Bazi*-based cultural system of the border region in Yunnan and Guizhou plateau, and uses the case-study of Zhaozhou 趙州 to demonstrate the social reconstruction and its impact on space in the Ming Period. The southwest China frontier is a crossroad and cultural transition ground between Tibet, inner provinces in China, and Southeast Asian states. As a local term, *Bazi* refers to basins surrounded by mountains and is also a geographic term concerning "small basins and relatively flat sectors in a mountainous area." In Yunnan, there are 93 *Bazi*s which are larger than 50 km^2 in size, but there are also 1,635 other *Baz*is, which are smaller than 20 km^2. However, the total area of all *Baz*is in Yunnan occupies just 6.52 per cent of the total area of this province.[2] Today, two thirds of Yunnan's population and one third of its farmland are concentrated within some 19 *Bazi*s. It is clear that, as a mountainous region of China, Yunnan is famous for its valuable *Bazi* basins, because economic resources are concentrated in *Bazi*s and almost all cities are located in *Bazi*s, thus *Bazi*s are the center of local society.

The culture of *Bazi* is based on the historical legacy of Nanzhao 南詔 (738-937) and Dali 大理 (937-1254) kingdoms and the penetration of Chinese empires since the 13th century. Beyond that, geographical and ecological conditions also have shaped the social features of local agencies in different native societies and the hierarchy of political power over local resources. By investigating the case of Zhaozhou *Bazi* through its

[1] Li Fuyi 李拂一, *Fulu cundu* 復廬存牘 (*The Letters of Fulu*), (Taipei: Furen Publishing House, 2005), 128.

[2] Tong Shaoyu 童绍玉 and Chen Yongsen 陳永森, *Yunana Bazi yanjiu* 雲南壩子研究 (*Study on the Bazi of Yunnan*), (Kunming: Yunnan University Press, 2007), 22-23.

historical process of transportation networks, agricultural communities and religious festivals in different ethnic groups, and their interaction with the Han majority, we shall be able to understand the historical structure of *Bazi* beyond the models of regional markets suggested by Skinner, or simple relationships between the highlands and the lowlands suggested by Leach, or the model of Zomia or "refuge zone" suggested by James Scott.[3]

The environment is affected by both natural and human conditions, and because people construct their settlements, the main concern of environmental history is to see how people form and transform their settlements.[4] Therefore, some landmarks reflect these relationships between people and their changing settlement styles. In this paper, the author not only regards *Bazi* as a concept of geographic, environmental and ecological fact, but also considers this term as one of social and historical process in the shaping of history. On the one hand, people changed their settlement styles; on the other hand, the natural environment also set the framework of social constructions of settlements and social categories in this *Bazi*-based environmental system.

In the southwest frontier in Ming China, the Han Chinese migrants came with the Ming state to a new frontier. It was a historical reform, the reconstruction of an existing social and cultural order based on environmental and local material legacy, rather than a way to exploit a new, natural environment. Thus, besides the space and the settlement reformation, cultural meanings based on the environment had also been reshaped. Studying the social features of *Bazi*-based societies provides us with a new perspective from which to better understand social organizations, ethnic politics and economic relations bound with the geographic space and settlement style of the Ming southwest frontier. We can also have a historical view on settlement and space reconstruction with the social changes.

Some theoretical discussions about the space and environment point out that on the frontier, the traditional Chinese style was a practice of Chinese colonialism, such as in

[3] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southwest Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 14.

[4] Liu Ts'ui-jung, "Han Migration and the Settlement of Taiwan", in *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*, ed. Mark Elvin and Liu Ts'ui-jung (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165.

Guizhou and the Miao ethnic minority.[5] According to Herman, the Ming or Chinese state expansion into the southwest showed that transforming non-Han civilization into Han civilization was exceedingly difficult in Shuixi 水西 area in northwest Guizhou, and the Ming officials were largely uninterested in "civilizing" or "transforming" the non-Han into Han. To Herman, the perception of the "Confucian civilizing mission" must be measured against the reality of the entire colonial project.[6] In this article, the author argues a very different point of view; the social transformation of the previous capital area of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms occurred when Yunnan became a part of the Ming state.[7] The situation should be very different and very diverse. Different native communities practiced different strategies in response to the political pressure of the Ming state, but any group in the Zhaozhou basins and mountain valleys showed that there was neither simple colonial expansion nor clearly separation. The Shuixi area in Guizhou was far away from the main transportation routes between Yunnan and Hunan in the Ming period, and at the same time, Guizhou used to be regarded as the passage toward Yunnan.[8] The case of Shuixi or the Miao in Guizhou should be put into the larger context of the southwest frontier of the Ming state as a whole.

The basins system shows that the methods of state penetration were very diverse, especially in the central area of the previous Dali kingdom. The local transformations to the state penetration were diverse too. However, it should be very difficult to define a pure "Han civilization" here. Han military migrants were gradually localized, while local Neo-Confucian elites became powerful. As local agents, they effectively participated both in state and local affairs, making the frontier an integrated part of the Ming state construction as well. When the Fengshui 風水 (or fengmo 風脈) geomancy system became established, local communities were also using Nanzhao history to resist state power.

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[5] Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 216-272.

[6] John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200-1700* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asian Center, 2007), 15.

[7] Yang Bin, *Between Winds and Clouds: The Making of Yunnan (Second Century BCE to Twentieth Century CE)*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 18.

[8] Wang Shixing 王士性, *Guangzhi yi* 廣志繹, in *Wuyue Youcao and Guangzhi Yi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2006), 324-325.

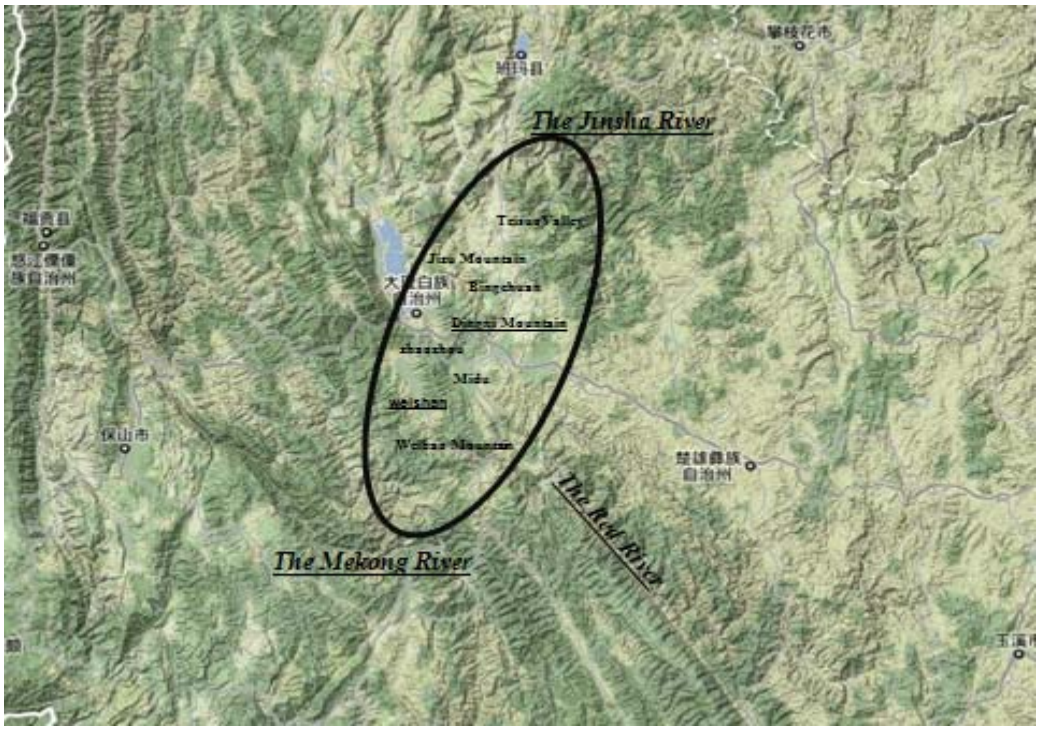
In general, this paper shows a very different case focusing on how local society responded to the coming of the Ming state, showing that their efforts were not as simple as the demarcation of the dualism of the "civilized Han" and the "uncivilized barbarians". In the whole process, due to the environmental condition and local historical legacy, the social reconstruction was complex. To become the Southwest frontier also means to join with a state sponsored project of social re-demarcation, but through cooperation between different interested parties, such as the officials, local elites, and chiefs of the ethnic groups, as a long term collusion during the whole period of Ming. But the environmental space changed step by step, while many new ethnic identities were created. This research is mainly based on local historical archives including local gazetteers and inscriptions, as well as official Ming records. The most important part of this research is the collection of local Ming stele inscriptions found in Zhaozhou area in recent years during the long term field work of the author, supported by many local friends. This is the precious written data on which this paper is based.

The region of Zhaozhou was a central area of the former Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms in Yunnan history.[9] Therefore, it was important to the Ming government if they wanted to integrate Yunnan into its imperial administrative system. Besides this, it was also important if the new agricultural, trade and ethnic orders were to be successfully established in order to integrate a complex social-ecological system into the Chinese empire as its new southwest frontier, to replace the previous social relationship style of non-familiar politeness, based on Buddhism and native chieftaincies. In brief, the reconstruction of local social relationships and its relationship with the state in western Yunnan were important ways to understand Chinese unification and Chinese cultural reconstruction from the stand point of its southwest frontier.

The author reviews the historical process of social reconstruction in three basins and their surrounding mountains in the Zhaozhou area as Zhaozhou County was set up in the 1380s to check the state penetration of the Ming. This area includes three *Bazi*s of Zhaozhou, Midu 彌渡 and Weishan 巍山 and the mountains of Dingxi Mountains (定西嶺) and the Tiesuo Valley (鐵索箐), to the south of Erhai Lake (洱海) in West Yunnan (see Map 11.1). All these three *Bazi* basins shared rivers for their irrigation systems and

[9] Yang Bin, *Between Winds and Clouds*, 82.

were linked together by the mule caravan transportation routes. The Dingxi Mountains are the main link for these three basins, and the Dingxi Mountains also linked with the Tiesuo Valley in the north. The Dingxi mountain range is at the juncture of the Jinsha River (金沙江, the upper Yangtze River), the Red River (Honghe 紅河) and the Mekong River (the portion in China is known as Lancang River 瀾滄江).



Map 11.1: The *Bazi*s and Mountains around the Zhaozhou in West Yunnan

During the period from the mid-Ming to the mid-Qing, societies in the three basins of Zhaozhou *Bazi*s and their mountain link, the Dingxi Mountains, had been reconstructed from their former systems into a new ethnic politic among the *Bazi* societies. One important social change was the establishment of a group of local Neo-Confucian gentry due to long-term social mobilization in the basin and the efforts of the Ming government, such as the new policy of land measurement during the Wangli reign (1573-1620) and the setting up of the household registration (Lijia 里甲) system. Another important social construction in the *Bazi* was the renovated irrigation system and the religious belief linked with these irrigation cannels. The third social construction was the mutual creation of the identities of the Bai 白 natives as the registered commoners, and

then the Han military households followed as a newly developed local identity. Meanwhile, during this transformation, the mountains people were demarcated into different groups. After the coming of the Ming armies, the mountain tribes were divided into two parts: one part was the rebellious group based in the Tiesuo Valley, determined to resist the Ming government; the other part or group was made up of the chieftaincies who cooperated, or were represented with the Ming government, to fight with the rebels in the Tiesuo Valley, or to cooperate with the government some times. After more than two hundred years of conflict, in 1573 the rebels finally failed. Those two groups were also mutually constructed to be the Lisuo 傈僳 (Lisu) and the Laluo 臘俫, but they also lost their competition with the *Bazi* people, to certain degree. During this period of social reconstruction, both the mountains and *Bazi* societies were seriously mobilized politically, and their cultures were also reshaped, in terms of the meanings of ethnic identities being different from the Han and the Bai in the *Bazi*.

In this historical process, the most important cultural change related to the mid-Ming was the disarming of the local noblemen's families in the early Ming period in the basins through excluding them from local religious linked resources, meanwhile the Fengshui ideology was promoted as an alternative. Since the Jiajing reign (1521-1567), some influential local Neo-Confucian scholars had woven powerful networks among the basin communities, and had intervened deeply into local official affairs. All of these efforts had reshaped the social landscape of the basin space. Meanwhile, the Ming state also pushed the official worship of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234) in Yunnan, due to the endless local resistance against the Ming government in the mountain areas in central Yunnan, such as in the Wuding 武定 chieftain area. The purpose of promoting Zhuge Liang worship was to pressurize political resistance culturally by quoting the history of conflicts between the Han and the natives in 225 during the period of Three Kingdoms.[10] Briefly, the use of space in the basins had been effectively reformed through the collusion of governmental officials and the gradually cultivated local Neo-Confucian elites and Fengshui masters, since the mid-Ming. However, during this process, the Ming officials and military migrants also faced fierce, continual resistance from the Lisu rebellions

[10] Ni Tui, 倪蛻 ed., *Dianyun linian zhuan* 滇雲歷年傳 (*The Chronicle of Yunnan*), (Kunming: Yunnan University Press, 1992), 52.

along the Tiesuo Valley for almost the whole of the Ming period. Therefore, the separation of the *Bazi* basins and the mountain areas affiliated the environment and social groups.

In this case study the author argues that, historical reconstruction based on the *Bazi* basins system had deeply transformed the social hierarchy and ethnic politics at the Southwest frontier of China in the Ming period. Moreover, this change also highlighted the different styles of space usage referring to the shifting of local religious tradition and political structure. The reconstruction of local elites had shown their cooperation or resistant styles to be based on different environmental characteristics, linking with the agricultural space, transportation routes and holy sites, which had been shaped and reshaped again and again by different political powers. Thus, activities of the basins' elites or rebellious leaders also produced a re-construction process of frontier ethnicity. For the mountain people, their resistance had been a long term mobilization against the coming and penetration of the Ming state; but for the basin elites, who had integrated with the state ruling power, they gradually accepted and participated in the practice of Fengshui and the civil examinations, became very active in a national level of Neo-Confucian movement, and extended their influence through their networks of kinship, scholarship and political participation. In this case, the process of frontier formation in the Ming state was rooted at a local level, but was very diverse in communal movements and beyond the concerns of military conquerors or direct Sinification or colonialism. Clearly, an integrated part of Ming state formation was to become a frontier society. It also meant that environmental reconstruction was also bound with social division, conjunction and interaction pushed by different social actors. The space, settlement and meanings were also restructured in this process.

1. Social Reconstruction Process in Bazis of Zhaozhou

As a *Bazi* basin, Zhaozhou is located to the south of Erhai Lake in West Yunnan, with an area of 319.7 km^2 and an altitude of 2,100 m above sea level. In the basin, there are about 73,643 *mu* (about 49.1 km^2) of farming land. [11] The Weishan *Bazi* is to the south of

[11] Yang Jiajing 楊嘉靖 ed., *Fengyi zhi* 鳳儀志(*The Fengyi Gazetteer*), (Kunming: Yunnan University Press, 1995), 71.

Zhaozhou, with an area of 148 km^2 and an altitude of 1,700 above sea level. To the east of Weishan and south of Zhaozhou is the *Basi* of Midu, with an area of 179.13 km^2 and an altitude of 1,800 m above sea level.[12] Both the *Bazi*s of Weishan and Mudi were originally loyal to the Nanzhao kingdom and Zhaozhou used to be a prefecture of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms before 1253 when Kublai Khan (1215-1294) occupied the capital of Dali Kingdom and settled at Zhaozhou. In 1381, the Ming army arrived at Dali and destroyed two big temples, the Huazang Temple (華藏寺), controlled by the Dong 董 family and the Xianguo Temple (相國寺), controlled by the Zhao 趙 family, both were powerful noblemen of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms. But the Ming army encountered continued resistance. The most serious resistance against the Ming army was from the mountain people in the northeastern Zhaozhou area, in Tiesuo Valley. In order to protect the transportation routes between West Yunnan and the provincial capital, Kunming 昆明, the Ming government built the city wall of Zhaozhou in 1498. As late as in 1582, the Zhao County (Zhaozhou) was registered into fifteen *li* (里) and the farming land was measured in the two *Bazi* basins, the Zhaozhou *Bazi* and the Midu *Bazi*.[13]

The Ming government tried to push native noble families like the Zhao and the Dong in Zhaozhou basin to cooperate with the state, for instance, to cooperate in the civil examinations, but the Dong family was not willing to give up their control over religious affairs, because a large amount of farming land was under the name of big Buddhist temples.[14] In Zhaozhou *Bazi*, the Zhao family shared parts of the north and the south with the Dong family. The Dong family members had been long-term religious masters of secret rituals to promote the kings of Dali kingdom to be the Buddha-king, following the Acharya Buddhism tradition.[15] Even in the early Ming, the Dong family still practiced their Acharya Buddhism and Dong Xian 董賢 was called on by the Ming court to hold rituals for the Yongle emperor (reign 1403-1424), then he was appointed to be the

[12] The Compiling Committee, *Weishan Yizu Huizu zizhi xianzhi* 巍山彝族回族自治縣志 (*The Gazetteer of Weishan Autonomous County for the Yi and the Hui*), (Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 1993), page number.

[13] Liu Wenzheng 劉文徵 ed., *(Tianqi) Dianzhi* (天啟)滇志 (*The Tianqi Yunnan Gazetteer)*, (Kunming: Yunnan Education Publishing House, 1991), 701.

[14] See *Inscription of the Fazang Temple in Southern Zhaozhou*; *Inscription of the Tomb of Zhao Chan*; *Inscription of the Renovated Bianzhi Temple*.

[15] *Inscription of the Preface of Local Dong Family Genealogy*.

Buddhist monks' official, an hereditary position in Dali prefecture.[16] But, the Zhao family took a different strategy. Zhao Shen 趙昇 was commended a *jinshi* 進士 title, held officially without attending the national examination when the Ming army occupied Zhaozhou; later, another member of the Zhao family, Zhao Yan 趙彥, participated in the civil examination and was promoted to be an official in southern Sichuan, to lead the Ming army to attack the mountain peoples at Sichuan and the Guizhou frontier, in the Mangbu 芒部, Junliang 筠連 and Gongxian 珙縣 areas. Based on his high prestige among the minorities, many of the mountain tribes surrendered to the Ming army.[17]

When Herman discusses relationships between the Ming government and non-Han groups at the boundary between Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou, he points out that the Ming government totally rejected the idea of non-Han ethnic groups integrating with the state, because the Ming officials were uninterested in "civilizing" or "transforming" the non-Han into Han and "the moral tone of bringing civilization to the barbaric southwest frontier masked the brutality of the Ming colonization of this region".[18] However, if we take the case of Zhaozhou *Bazi* as an example, the Ming officials actually tried to integrate the former nobles into the imperial system, and even allowed them to practice their Buddhist tradition for a very long time, but they practiced a different policy toward the mountain societies in west Yunnan. From this situation it can be understood that the Ming government considered its ability and resources were invested into the *Bazi* and the mountain areas in different ways. We cannot regard the so-called "southwest frontier" of Yunnan and Guizhou as a unique system in the process of integrating the non-Han natives into Ming bureaucracy. In this sense, some important elements should be put forward for our consideration, such as the environment, the strategies of transportation maintenance and the political calculations to integrate different natives into the state in different historical times in the Ming, through which, the whole southwest frontier was formed.

[16] Zhuang Cheng 庄誠 ed., *(Wangli) Zhaozhou zhi* (萬曆)趙州志 (*The Wanli Zhaozhou Gazetteer*), (Dali: The Cultural Bureau of Dali, 1983), 83.
[17] Liu Wenzheng ed., *The Tianqi Yunnan Gazetteer*, 489.
[18] John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist*, 15.

1.1 The Construction of Bazi-based Fengshui Geomancy Space

According to local gazetteers and some inscription texts, after the Ming army occupied Dali in 1381, the Ming army destroyed the old county city in the north of the basin, and moved from the Zhao family controlled area to a new location at the western margin of the basin in 1383, until the city wall was built in 1489. Also, in the early-Ming, the two big Buddhist temples controlled by the Dong and the Zhao families were destroyed, but another temple that used to be controlled by the noble Gao 高 family in the middle of the *Bazi* was supported by the Ming officials and this temple was renovated many times by the Ming officials, because the Gao family was not the controlling power in this region.[19] However, we can regard the Ming officials as trying to compete with local powerful families in the control of religious resources, until the new state ideology was well established among the natives from the early to the mid-Ming period. It shows that, even though it was in a *Bazi* that the Ming government set up their military and administrative bases in the newly built cities or residences, the control of cultural meaning, based on a native traditional orientation, used to be a strategy until a new local cultural system was gradually accepted. It was a dynamic process from the early to the late Ming. Subsequently, the Dong family changed their role from Buddhist masters to Fengshui geomancy masters in the late Ming, and the superiority of the Zhao family in the *Bazi* was then totally destroyed.

In order to establish a new political base in the core region of the previous Dali kingdom controlled by the noblemen of the Zhao and Dong families, the Ming officials quickly promoted a new space reconstruction which relied on Fengshui geomancy. After the big Buddhist temples like the Xiangguo Temple and the Huazang Temple were destroyed, the Bianzhi Temple (遍知寺) replaced them as a new religious base. Moreover, some dragon temples were built, supported by officials, to be the places to control the irrigation channels.[20] Even at the Dong family's home village, a dragon temple was built based on Fengshui theory by the county magistrate, Pang, in the 1540s.[21] During this

[19] *Inscription of Innovation of Bianzhi Temple*.
[20] *Inscription of Newly Built Puji Dragon Temple*.
[21] *Inscription of Renovation of Dragon Temple*.

period of time, the Dong and the Zhao family had lost their control over local politics, but the Dong shifted their role to become Fengshui masters, Confucian scholars and officials.

Almost all of the mountains, rivers and irrigation channels were renamed. For instance, the Kunmi 昆彌 Mountains and the Jiulong 九龍 Mountains (the Nine Dragons Mountains) were renamed the Dingxi Mountains, and Three-ear Mountain was renamed the Phoenix Mountains as the backdrop of Zhaozhou City. This whole geomancy construction was to make the Dragons Mountains, on the other side of this *Bazi* basin, into a male and female pair according to Fengshui theory, which was not a traditional, local Buddhist idea.[22] Finally, as late as in the late Ming, the construction of a new meaningful space had been finished: dragon temples were built at the mouth of irrigation streams toward the basin fields; the location of the northern basin, where the Zhao family settled in Dali Kingdom, became the gate of water (*shui kou* 水口) because the river runs toward Erhai Lake. A pair of mountains were renamed the Mountain of the Turtle and the Mountain of the Snake, that is, the pair of Xuanwu 玄武, holding the northern river mouth of the *Bazi* basin; and a Fengshui pagoda was built here. Meanwhile, after the Three-ear Mountain was renamed the Phoenix Mountian, as the backdrop of the county city, another mountain was renamed from the Elephant Mountain to the Mountain of Kylin, to pair with the Phoenix, to hold the west part of this *Bazi* basin. Facing the western Phoenix and Kylin mountains were the renamed Swimming Dragon Mountains (Yulong Mountains).[23] The whole space of a *Bazi* basin, surrounded by mountains and crossed by rivers, had been reorganized into a new meaningful space by the end of the Wangli reign (1573-1620).

1.2 The Construction of Neo-Confucian Scholarship among the Elite

Besides the government sponsored promotion of Fengshui geomancy, a Neo-Confucian elite group had gradually developed. The new style of local elite grew up and later

[22] Chen Wen 陳文 ed., *(Jintai) Yunnan tujing zhishu* (景泰)雲南圖經志書 (*The Jingtai Yunnan Gazetteer*), (Kunming: Yunnan Nationalities Publishing House, 2002) and Zhuang Cheng, *The Wanli Zhaozhou Gazetteer*, 83; Cheng Jinren, 程近仁 ed., *(Qianglong) Zhaozhou zhi* (乾隆) 趙州志 (*The Qianglong Zhaozhou Gazetteer*), in *The Forbidden City Precious Literature Series, Volume 231* (Haikou: Hainan Publishing House, 2001), 30.

[23] *Inscription of the Tiansheng Temple*; *Inscription of the place of Red Mountains.*

developed in the Zhaozhou and nearby basins into a local gentry class which linked with wealthy families including the transformed noblemen and localized military Han people. But a Neo-Confucian identity was established through their activity in local education, scholarship and Taoism religious practice combined with Buddhism, as well as their intermarriage network between basins in western Yunnan.

The most significant social reform to happen in the late Ming was the growth of the local Neo-Confucian elite. The local elite, combining Han settlers with native intellectuals, took the role of local representatives for the *Baz*i society due to the development of local education and their participation in the civil examination. Local religious rituals seriously changed due to the penetration of Confucian education pushed by local elite, and supported by the Ming officials with the corporation of local intellectuals. On one hand, the city wall of Zhaozhou was built by the vice provincial governor, Lin Jun 林俊, a native of Putian 莆田 County in Fujian; on the other hand, Lei Yinglong 雷應龍, a student grew up in Weishan, was entitled as *jinshi* and then became the administrator of Putian, the hometown of Lin Jun. In Yunnan, Lin Jun ordered the destruction of more than 380 Buddhist temples in West Yunnan basins, in order to develop Confucian education. Meanwhile, Lei Yinglong also ordered to destroy more than 800 Buddhist temples at Lin Jun's hometown, based on the same logic of Neo-Confucianism, because it was the time when Neo-Confucianism was developed in Ming China.[24] Here we have learned that, both at the frontier and in eastern parts of China, local societies were experiencing similar social reforms. It is also notable that after his retirement as an official, Lei Yinglong was an active Neo-Confucian scholar at Weishan and Zhaozhou. Together with his son-in-law, Liu Hui 劉揮, who earned titles through civil examination and promoted to be an official in Sichuan and then came back to Weishan, they established the first Neo-Confucian school at Midu. Based on their efforts, they educated many famous students, who were entitled *juren* 舉人, and they were active officials in the Ming politics of their time.[25]

[24] Jiang Xu 蒋旭,(*Kangxi*) *Menghua fuzhi* (康熙) 蒙化府志, *The Kangxi Gazetteer of Menghua Prefecture* (Mengshi: Dehong Nationalities Publishing House, 1998), 135.
[25] Ibid, 134.

Another important case of a rising gentry elite in the *Bazi*s was Zhu Ji 朱璣 (?-1520) who came from Weishan. He got his *jinshi* title in 1487 and was promoted to be the judge of Dalisi (大理寺評事) in Beijing, then became the vice governor of Guizhou province. As in the case of Lei Yinglong, Zhu Ji was not excluded from the state policy due to his originating from west Yunnan. Moreover, when Zhu Ji was the vice governor of Guizhou, Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), the most important Neo-Confucian master in the late Ming, was also in Guizhou and educated his followers there. Zhu Ji therefore sent his son Zhu Guanji 朱光霽 to study with Wang Yangming. Later, after they had returned to Weishan, Zhu Ji and his son interacted closely with Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488-1559), who was relegated by the emperor to Yunnan. Another famous Yunnan scholar, Li Yuanyang 李元陽 (1497-1580) joined their group, and it became a high level, Neo-Confucian study group, but they also made an effort to change local customs as well as educate students.[26] After the Wanli reign, not only the Han settlers based in the military households but also the native intellectuals combined together and participated in the Neo-Confucian movement; but the social consequence of their effort was the construction of some new institutions in *Bazi* society.

Due to the rise of gentry power outside the military and administrative systems, the retired officials worked with the local administrators to establish systems of Confucian education in Zhaozhou, Weishan and Midu basins based on their social ideals, and they themselves also performed the role of teachers. They also built some Taoist temples, and since then the Weibao 巍寶 Mountain between the two *Bazi*s of Weishan and Midu was promoted as a new Holy Mountain based on Taoism, rather than the traditional Buddhism. They also established a communal charity granary (shecang 社倉) system, pushed forward the establishment of the *lijia* system and, most crucially, their social reforms which were bound with the *lijia* system. For example, they carried out the reform of abolishing the Buddhist cremation funeral and putting the Confucian burial funeral in its place, to change local customs. But this change was based on the *lijia*

[26] Ibid, 135.

household registration, which means the punishment for violators should have been related to the neighbors on the same *lijia* list. [27]

The change of local culture in the *Bazi* was successful, but it happened only in the late Ming. In general, "Since the Dian (Yunnan) was exploited, before the reigns of Hongzhi (1487-1505) and Zhengde (1506-1521), the education and culture (of Chinese) was not prosperous. Therefore, the common people (*min* 民, as the registered households) were the non-Han barbarians (*yi* 夷) and the military households (*jun* 軍) were organized soldiers of the Han, due to the fact that the customs and the education had not yet been changed. Until the early Jiajing reign (1522-1566), because of the push of Mu Wenlou 沐文樓 (as the entitled king of the Qian), the local scholars cooperated with the famous Confucian scholar, Yang Shen, who stayed in Yunnan for a long time. Yunnan scholars like Li Yuanyang, Gao Feng 高封, Zhang Han 張含 and so on, as a group, became rising Confucian scholars and their influence could almost be compared with the Central Plain." [28] The development of a local gentry group, as educated elite, had pushed local society to be reconstructed into a system combining local tradition with Confucian education. But, this gradual reform was based on *Bazi* society, and the changes included some elements like the building of cities and markets, public education schools and the innovation of irrigation systems for the agriculture in the basins. All of these changes have shown the deep penetration of the Ming government, but it was impossible without the local elite's cooperation.

1.3 Reconstruction of Social Categories and Ethnicity in the Bazi Basin

Long term social changes in the mid to late Ming in the *Bazi* also created another social and cultural result, the identity categories of people as the Han and the Bai. Certainly, due to the social reconstruction the Han military households and natives had cooperated together as a single *Bazi* group and they supported the Ming government for more than two hundred years. On the other hand, the identities of the native Bai people and the Han migrants also highlighted the distinctions between the natives and the new settlers. Even

[27] Cheng Jinren, *The Qinglong Zhaozhou Gazetteer*, 35.
[28] Zhuge Yuansheng 諸葛元聲, *Dian shi* 滇史 (*The History of Yunnan*), (Mangshi: The Dehong Nationalities Publishing House, 1994), 339.

though both of them participated in the Ming state, the two types of identities were linked by their historical legacy and their styles of household registration as military households or common people households due to the range of taxes and corvée.

The Han identity in the *Bazi* was created as the Han, which meant "The descendants of military households of the early Ming and the descendants of the migrant officials from other provinces" in the late Ming. The Han was the "Other" to the Bai in the *Bazi*, while the Bai means the *min*, the common people. The identity of the native Bai people showed that the registered common people in west Yunnan were not necessarily equal to the Han, which is different from the case of Guangxi, as reported by Shin.[29] For the Bai people, or the *min* family (*minjia* 民家), "They are the descendants of the king of Zhangle Jinqiu 張樂進求 of the Bai kingdom, including the Zhao family, the Yang 楊 family and the Duan 段 family. They have their writing system known as the Bai characters, and speak their own language. They are Buddhists but also practice certain animist rituals. They are hardworking farmers and also study and practice the Confucian rituals and education. In terms of education and pursuit of official positions, they are the same as the Han."[30]

In the other words, from the stand point of the local gazetteers, the reasons for the different identities of the native Bai and the Han settlers are based on two facts: the one is that the Han are new comers, carrying out military tasks for the Ming government; the other is that the Han pushed forward the civil examination and got the natives involved. But, for most of the population in the *Bazi*, because of the limited farming land, they relied on and adopted survival skills to do long distant trade.[31] These features and this style of living in the *Bazi* made them different from the neighboring mountain people.

2. Ethnic Conflicts and Social Mobilization along the Tiesuo Valley

When the societies in the *Bazi* were reconstructed, from the mid to the late Ming dynasty, the surrounding mountains of the Zhaozhou *Bazi*s were also experiencing serious social reformations. The most important changes for the mountain residents came in the form of

[29] Leo K. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 18.
[30] Cheng Jinren, *The Qinglong Zhaozhou Gazetteer*, 34.
[31] Zhuang Cheng, *The Wanli Zhaozhou Gazetteer*, 24.

new identities. They became the Lisu and the Laluo during the long term ethnic conflicts between the mountain communities and the *Bazi* communities. In the early years, when the Ming army occupied Yunnan, the main efforts of the Ming generals went into controlling and maintaining the transportation lines between the capital Kunming and cities on the Burma and Vietnam borders, and also Lijiang 麗江 on the Tibetan border. One of the most important transportation routes was between Kunming and Dali, as it is today, and Zhaozhou was the key state political link of the main transportation routes to Tibet and Burma: "To the east, the road goes to the capital city of the country, so it is the passage for the exterior tributaries and for the interior traveling officials."[32]

Due to this situation, most Ming military forces were allocated along the transportation routes passing by Zhaozhou, which linked Kunming with Chuxiong 楚雄, Dali 大理, Lijiang, Yongchang 永昌, and Tengyue 騰越. After the Jiajing reign, two regional military commands at Tengchong and Lancang 瀾滄 (today's Yongsheng 永勝 on the traditional Sichuan road) were established, and took responsibility for the control of the military household stations.[33] Before the 1520s, military control over the transportation routes was the main task of the Ming government, but it was weak because of the long distances between one station and another on the road, especially for ordinary businessmen and travelers. This situation was not changed until the mid-Qing period, due to the state policy towards the mountain communities. In the period for about two hundred years from the early to late Ming, the mountain areas along the Tiesuo Valley, which is the valley along the Yupao 漁泡 River, a southern branch of the Jinsha River, had become a deep mountain base where many ethnic groups concentrated to resist the Ming government. More and more tribes came to this long valley with its more than 100 km of deep forests, and set up their fortresses along the river side.

The Dingxi Mountains is the southern part of the mountain range of Tiesuo Valley where the mountain area runs from north to south. Not only the transportation routes from Kunming to Chuxiong, then on to Dali, must cross these mountains, but also the

[32] *Inscription of the place of Red Mountains*.

[33] Fang Guoyu 方國瑜, "Mingdai zai Yunnan de juntun zhidu yu hanzu yimin" 明代在雲南的軍屯制度与漢族移民 [The Military Households *Juntun* System and Han immigration in Ming's Yunnan], in Fang Guoyu ed., *The Collection of Fang Guoyu, Volume 3* (Kunming: Yunnan Education Publishing House, 2003), 145-332.

transportation routes between west Yunnan and the Chengdu plain in Sichuan. The mountain tribes in Tiesuo Valley could easily block these routes. Because the concentrated mountain tribes had frequently broken the links between the *Bazi*s for about two hundred years, the conflicts between the Ming government and the resistant groups in the mountain areas had also been maintained for the same period of time, but the Ming army had never had control over these groups until 1573, the first year of the Wanli reign. Between 1522 and 1572, the Ming government twice sent troops from nearby counties to attack the Tiesuo Valley base, but failed both times because of very large, mountainous terrain and the people were strong enough to resist. Also, the Ming officials could only command military household based soldiers, which numbered only 700 in total. But their opponents, the mountain people, were composed of more than 20 tribes and they also had long guns and other superior weapons which the Ming army did not have. [34]

The original purpose of building the city wall of Zhaozhou was to protect the city from attacks by the mountain people in Tiesuo Valley. Ever since they arrived in Yunnan, the Ming army had never been able to control the northern mountain area, from the *Bazi* basins between Yaoan 姚安, Zhaozhou and Binchuan 賓川. The natives resisted the Ming army in the beginning, and the Ming government could not penetrate further than the transportation routes and *Bazi*s. Gradually, the Tiesuo Valley became a resistant center in the west Yunnan for a period of two hundred years, during which time the political system inside the Tiesuo Valley was developed. Their method of resistance was generally to attack travelers and businessmen, so the government tried to isolate the mountains' residents from the markets in the *Bazi* cities.

According to Li Yuanyang, in a normal situation, without military protection, businessmen could not cross the mountains controlled by the Tiesuo Valley people. Among the Tiesuo Valley people, the majority of the tribes were the Lisuo 力些 people, who were known as the Lisu later. In 1488, the king of Burma wanted to present tribute to the emperor in Beijing. Therefore, the protection of this traveling group was a challenge for local officials, and this event stimulated the Ming government to take

[34] Li Yuanyang 李元陽, "Tiesuo chuan pingzei ji 鐵索川平賊記 [The Records about Suppression Bandits in Tiesuo Vallay]", in Zhou Yue 周钺, (Yongzheng) Binchuan zhouzi (雍正) 宾川州志 (*The Yongzheng Binchuan Gazetteer*), volume 12, In *The Dali Series, Volumes of Gazetteers*, volume 5 (Beijing: The Nationalities Publishing House, 2007), 574.

military action against the rebellious Tiesuo Valley. The following year, Lin Jun built two cities at Zhaozhou and Binchuan, from which then sent troops to Tiesuo Valley in 1490, but this war was lost. According to Zhuge Yuanshen's records, the Lisuo tribes in the Tiesuo Valley were a part of the Mosuo 摩梭 people. So, originally, the Lisuo was a subgroup of the Mosuo, but because these tribes were more militarized, or more powerful, they were known more as "Li 力", neither the officials nor the native officials entitled chieftains could control this group. As early as in 1478, the government forces lost the wars when they fought to control the Lisuo groups. The officials arrested some Lisuo heads in the military action of 1490 led by Lin Jun, but all the Lisuo disappeared into the forest and after the government army withdrew, they reorganized. Even if their threat to travelers and cities became less after these official attacks, they never surrendered.[35]

It was not until 1573 that the Ming government decided to mobilize a final attack against the Tiesuo Valley's Lisuo people. In the winter of 1573, under the command of the Yunnan military governor Mu Chanzhuo 沐昌祚 and the administrative governor Zou Yinglong 鄒應龍, the official military forces including Han soldiers and native chieftain armies destroyed the Tiesuo Valley fortresses. The official armies attacked the Lisuo from the eastern Dayao 大姚 county and the western Binchuan and Zhaozhou. The Lisuo villages were burned, most of the heads of the Lisuo escaped although more than 100 were killed, but the remaining residents of about four hundred households surrendered to the Ming officials. It was more than a month before the war was over.[36]

Based on historical documents, Li Yuanyang and other scholars reported that the Ming government defined all mountain peoples as the Cuan 爨, and they knew that the Cuan was an ancient term for the natives. But within these Cuan people there were many different ethnic groups, and therefore, the Ming scholars used the term Cuan as the term Yi was used in general, meaning that all non-Han people where in the same category.[37] Even though the boundary of the Tiesuo Valley is the Dingxi Mountains, in those days it

[35] Zhuge Yuansheng, *The History of Yunnan* (Mangshi: Dehong The Dehong Nationalities Publishing House, 1994), 325.
[36] Li Yuanyang, "Records about the Military Station of the Erhai Military Division at the Tiesuo Valley", in Zhou Yue, *The Yongzheng Binchuan Gazetteer*, in *The Dali Series, Volumes of Gazetteers*, Volume 5 (Beijing: The Nationalities Publishing House, 2007), 573.
[37] Ibid., 573.

was really a boundary between three prefectures in Yunnan, including Chuxiong, Dali, Lijiang, and because it was along the tributary of the Jinsha River, and therefore in the north of the Jinsha River, it was the Da Lianshan 大涼山 region of Sichuan province.

In short, this area of mountains was a boundary between two provinces and three prefectures of Yunnan. Geographically, through the Tiesuo Valley's mountain range, people could move to other mountain terrains in the south, the Ailao 哀牢 Mountains, and the valleys along the Mekong River. At its margin, there are three *Bazis*: the Zhaozhou, the Midu and the Weishan. Outside the Tiesuo Valley, to the east, were the Yaozhou, Chuxiong and Wuding Prefectures. Other powerful chieftaincies and tribes were challenging the Ming government, including the Feng 鳳 family in the Wuding as the political chieftain of the Luowu 羅婺 people, and there were others, known as the Pula 僕喇, who cooperated with the Lisuo. In total, there were more than seventy political tribes who were hostile towards the Ming government, but at their core was the Lisuo of the Tiesuo Valley. After the official occupation, most of the Lisuo left and migrated toward the southern mountains and we now know that the Lisu people came from this region.[38]

In Ming times, for the Lisuo communities of the more than 20 tribes in Tiesuo Valley, when the organized Lisuo people encountered the Han settlers or the *Bazi* residents, according to Li Yuanyang, "They liked to steal rice from the field and took it away in the beginning but nobody could stop them; then they liked to steal the herded cattle on the mountain side, but nobody could stop them; then they liked to darken the doors of villages, but nobody could stop them at all. They robbed on the roads as bandits, killed travelers and kidnapped men and women to ask for ransom, and transportation was controlled by them. In terms of organization, in the beginning, they worked as a group of about twenty to thirty people; then they were organized into groups of hundreds of people; then they became thousands. They were organized and running from one county to

[38] Li Yuanyang, "The Preface of the Collection of Pressure the South", in Zhou Yue, *The Yongzheng Binchuan Gazetteer*, Volume 12, in *The Dali Series, Volumes of Gazetteers*, volume 5 (Beijing: The Nationalities Publishing House, 2007), 573. In Chinese writing, if we write the title of this group as Lisuo, which is based on a local Yunnan Han dialect pronunciation, sometimes the characters 栗梭 or 力所, or sometimes, 傈僳 are used. But, when written as the 傈僳, its official title, using mandarin pronunciation, will be the Lisu. In other words, the Lisuo or the Lisu were based on different contexts, but for local communities, the Lisu are the Lisuo, and this is still true today in Yunnan.

another and appointed their officials, issued their seals and made their flags, which meant that nobody could defeat them." [39]

With admittedly limited historical sources, we can still find that the Lisuo was a politically organized system with its own internal hierarchy in one or two hundred years when they were in Tiesuo Valley. They had political seals for their positions, with flags, and were able to effectively mobilize for military actions with their powerful weapons. The archives reported that, the Lisuo mobilized their political resistance, were not just acting as "the bandits", because they set up some long term bases along the mountain roads, they trained their warriors to be skillful in the use of weapons and cross-bows with rank poison arrows, and their targets were mainly the military Han households and common people in the *Bazi*s. Studying historical sources, we can find that, before 1573, some small chieftains in the mountains were accomplices to the Lisuo of Tiesuo Valley. When businessmen were robbed and officials asked these chieftains to protect the businessmen, they made excuses about the Lisuo being stronger than themselves; but the officials found that stolen goods were sometimes stored at the chieftains' residences. In this situation, the Ming officials could not organize enough military force to fight with the Lisuo. Therefore, the political leader of Tiesuo Valley, Luo Lefu 羅勒扶, announced that he was the king and his army was supported by seventy-two tribes, including the Lisuo in the Tiesuo Valley and some tribes outside the valley. In general, based on the Tiesuo Valley, the Lisuo were mobilized as a political system, with their king and military forces, to fight with the Ming government as a rebellious group. [40]

Li Yuanyang also recorded that, because the Lisu society was seriously militarized, young girls, when considering marriage, placed a lot of emphasis on their future husbands' fighting skill, and it would be even better if a young man was skillful at robbing businessmen. Li provides a case to support this. Once a provincial official passed through the mountains of the Tiesuo Valley territory, unfortunately he and his guards encountered a robbery. Some Lisuo people were robbing two businessmen, and the two ran to the official's procession immediately to ask for help. However, the official

[39] Ibid., 573.
[40] Zhuge Yuansheng, *The History of Yunnan*, 364.

dared not say a word and just watched the robbers taking the goods away. Then the robbers killed the two businessmen in front of him.[41]

However, after the official's forces occupied the Tiesuo Valley, when they began to deal with problems arising from the war, some issues were made known. Before then, in order to stimulate local chieftains to join the official military forces in attacking Tiesuo Valley, the vice provincial governor, Jiang Mengbin 姜夢賓, called a meeting of local chieftains and asked them to tribute their warriors. He said, "I know that the Lisuo have stored their contraband at your places. If my investigations show that it is true, all of you will be put into jail due to your collusion with the Lisuo and you will be sentenced and judged under the same criminal charges. You are all heirs of many generations. Do you really have to collude with the Lisuo? Why do you have no idea of how to deal with the Lisuo? If I do not take your criminal evidence, how can I make my report to the court?" He punished some chieftains by taking such kinds of excuses; then the military attacks began. This strategy was very successful. All local chieftains tried their best to lead their warriors to attack the Lisuo because they had a great fear of being punished. The nearby chieftains of Tiesuo Valley therefore performed key roles in occupying the valley and arresting King Nilong 尼龍 of the Lisuo. The transportation routes between Yaoan and Dali were safe.

After the war, Jiang Mengbin went to comfort the surrendered Lisuo people who had not been killed or escaped. His speech touched the Lisuo people very much. He said, "It was the officials who compelled you to become robbers before. Now I come to compensate all of you and my task is to convert you from being compulsive robbers to ordinary men. That means you will have good clothes, and have your meat and vegetables at meals, you are free now. You can go freely to market places everywhere. Do you like this?" The Lisuo villagers answered, "Previously, when we went to the *Bazi* from the mountains, the government officials always claimed that we were robbers. If we just hide in the mountains, there is no way to survive. In order to live, the only way was to be a robber. There was no alternative for us." In this way, the officials allowed the

[41] Li Yuanyang, "Memories about Official Jiang", in Zhuang Cheng, *The Wanli Zhaozhou Gazetteer* (Dali: The Cultural Bureau of Dali, 1983), 106.

mountains people of Tiesuo Valley to trade with people in the *Bazi*, and established substantial guard stations along the road, and so the transportation routes were opened. [42]

According to these inscriptions, the Lisuo people in the Tiesuo Valley were isolated by the Ming government, they were excluded from the local market system, so they could not get their essential resources, like iron for tools and salt for food, and they could not sell or exchange their products. The political mobilization among the Lisuo as an identity for a mountain system was due to the long-term isolation and mutual construction between the *Bazi* government and the mountain rebels. To a certain degree, the Lisuo had to collude with other mountain groups, like the Laluo, to get living resources, but finally they were attacked by these people because they also stood on the side of the Ming officials. That was the reason why the Ming government could not control the mountain communities for a very long time but the cooperation of the mountain people could also be demarcated once the Ming officials changed their polices in 1573.

In this way, we realize that there were two kinds of mountain people in the late Ming, the first group was the Lisuo based on Tiesuo Valley, who had conflicts with the *Bazi* society; the second group was made up of the communities under the hereditary chieftains in the mountains, who were the middlemen between the deep mountain communities and *Bazi* communities. The Ming government really controlled the *Bazi*s by way of controlling the market places for trade, and they had to protect the transportation routes between *Bazi* markets. The most important functional linkages between the *Bazi* and the mountain communities were the markets, and the routes through which the markets in the *Bazi* could be linked as a network. Without the market, the mountain communities could not survive, but in the hierarchy of the trades, the mountain community was on the side of the weak.

3. The Ethnic Demarcation and Cultural Meaning Negotiation Affiliated with Bazi Basins and the Mountain Valleys

In the process of social reconstruction in the *Bazi* and the mountain areas in Zhaozhou during the late Ming, communities were demarcated into different categories of ethnic

[42] Ibid., 107.

identities, including the Han as the localized identity, and this process went on in the early and mid-Qing period. Two types of identities of the Bai and the Han arose in the *Bazi* as two sub-groups of *Bazi* people; meanwhile, two types of mountain identities also arose in the process when the state power pushed the reconstruction of the *Bazi*. The results of political conflicts between the *Bazi* society where the officials resided and the mountain communities which were integrated or excluded by the *Bazi* system were two types of mountain identities, the Lisuo and the Laluo. The Lisuo in Tiesuo Valley and the Laluo in Dingxi Mountains represented two types of mountain identities, which means they cooperated with the state or rejected it, were excluded but fought with the state. The relationship between the two mountain communities was complex, they needed to collude or to fight, which was defined by the changing official strategies.

However, without discussing about wars and political mobilization in Tiesuo Valley, the history of the Lisuo (Lisu) could not be understood. As a wide scattered ethnic group in Yunnan, Burma and Thailand, the study of the Zhaozhou *Bazi* system helps to recover the historical formation of the Lisuo identity and their historical suffering as a mountain group. Taking the example of the Lisuo, we can review James C. Scott's theory about the escape culture of "Zomia" in mountains due to their shifting agriculture choice.[43] But the case of the Lisuo (Lisu) in the Southeast Asian highland and in Yunnan shows that, the establishment of cultural subjectivity is not due to the willingness to "escape from the state" or to keep the state at a distance, and the "egalitarian" social structure is not due to cultural and identity choices. The history of Zhaozhou *Bazi* and the Tiesuo Valley tells us that, identities formation was predominantly due to the penetration of the state in different periods and also due to the reaction of communities toward dynamic state strategies. Before their escape or cooperation, the groups and identities had not yet arisen, the reconstruction of identities and cultural systems were mutually shaped with the state, and a frontier society was also shaped in this historical process as well.

Another society, the Laluo community in the Dingxi Mountains, also arose from their contact with the Lisuo and with the *Bazi* people. And the Laluo people tried to

[43] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southwest Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 178-219.

interpret their history and their identity into a middle position between the Lisuo and the Han in the *Bazi*, which is also fixed with the historical reconstruction of the Dingxi Mountains community from the Ming to the mid Qing. In this case, the myth of Guzhe Liang, the wise Kongming 孔明 in the period of Three Kingdoms, became the meaningful shaping power in a context of cultural competition and negotiation.

In order to promote official Han cultural legitimacy and Confucian ideology in the non-Han frontier in Yunnan, the Ming government faced serious challenges from the Feng chieftain in Xundian 尋甸 and the Wuding areas since the 1470s.[44] The Ming government issued an official requirement in Yunnan to ask for the establishment of Zhuge Liang worship and to build official Wuhouci 武侯祠 temples for this officially promoted deity during the Zhengde reign (1506-1521). The deity of Zhuge Liang seemed important to the Ming officials in Yunnan, because according to historical records, as the Prime Minister of Shu Han 蜀漢 kingdom in Sichuan, Zhuge Liang led the Shu Han army to attack non-Han barbarians in Yunnan in 225A.D. The native chieftain, Menghuo 孟獲 fought with Zhuge Liang using very wise tricks, but was arrested by Zhuge Liang seven times. However, Zhuge Liang always released him, allowing him to organize his army to try to defeat him again. Based on the great wisdom of Zhuge Liang, there was no way for a barbarian leader to fight with the Han. Therefore, based on this mythological history recorded in Chinese history, Zhuge Liang was the representative of the undefeatable Han culture and the fundamental superiority of the Han over the non-Han groups. The Ming officials tried to promote the Zhuge Liang myth in Yunnan by "borrowing the gods to suppress the barbarians" and through this movement, a great number of Wuchouci temples were built.[45] According to some inscriptions and official archives related to the Tiesuo Valley rebellions, the Lisuo kings claimed that they were the descendants of Menghuo opposing the official Kongming.

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[44] Mao Qiling 毛奇齡, Yunnan mansi zhi 雲南蛮司誌 (*The Gazetteer of Chieftains in Yunnan*), in Wang Song ed., *The Literature Collection of Yunnan* (Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 2010), 858-860.

[45] Wang Qingxian 王清賢, *(Kangxi) Wudingfu zhi* (康熙)武定府志, (*The Kangxi Gazetteer of Wuding Prefecture*) in Yang Chengbiao edited, *The Series of Ancient Gazetteers of Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture*, *Volume of Wuding* (Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 2005), 196.

As the story said: “In the Tiesuo Valley there are tribes of the Luo barbarian species. During the Hongzhi reign, some of them surrounded, but did not specifically belong to any counties. During the time of the Feng chieftain in Wuding rebelled, they cooperated with the attached Menghua (Weishan) area, but after the failure of the Feng, the Tiesuo Valley bandits escaped, never to be arrested. Some communal chiefs (*hou tou* 火頭, namely “the fire heads”) frequently consider rebelling, because they had many villages along the valley, and they could rely on natural barriers. The fire head, Luo Si 羅思, had a friend, Luo Qinkuai 羅勤快, who was a One-Hundred Men head (*bai fu zhang* 百夫長), who wanted to rebel but was waiting for an opportunity. Once a magic specialist, Immortal Li 李僊子, visited them and suggested to them that ‘you guys had the power to fight with the Han, why don’t you claim to be kings?’ Then, ten of them as local chiefs, including Luo Si, Luo Qinkuai and Luo Ge 羅革, claimed that they were the descendants of Menghuo, declaring their title of “the ten iron-face kings against the sky” (沖天鐵面十大王), appointed Yang Guisan 楊桂三 as the prime minister, and Zi Sa 子撒 as the general, made their official seals, organized their army.”[46] The brave claim to be the descendants of the barbarian Menghuo, to their mind, highlighted a very strong emotional resistance to the Ming official ideology of pressuring the non-Han mountain people to accept the worship of Zhuge Liang. This style of opposition, making the myth, became a significant boundary through a cultural mobilization between the identity as the mountain residents and the Han taken by the Lisuo and Laluo communities in Tiesuo Valley, and this idea was also shared by communities of the Laluo in Dingxi Mountain as well.

The battle about the meaning of Zhuge Liang and Menghuo happened around the Iron Pillar Temple at the margin of Midu *Bazi*, linked with the mountain communities. On the mountain side of the west Midu basin, the Iron Pillar Temple was a historical site related to the history of Nanzhao kingdom today. According to some written and pictorial archives (*nanzhao tuzhuan* 南詔圖傳), the basin Midu was a kingdom of the Bai people before the Nanzhao kingdom was established. The king of this basin was Zhangle Jingqiu

[46] Mao Qiling, *The Gazetteer of Chieftains in Yunnan*, in Wang Song ed., *The Literature Collection of Yunnan* (Kunming: Yunnan People’s Publishing House, 2010), 863.

張樂進求. Once, when the king of the Bai came to worship the iron pillar with Xi Nuluo 細奴邏, the chieftain of Weishan basin, a holy bird flew from the sky and stood on the pillar and finally stood on the shoulder of Xi Nuluo. Everybody regarded this event as an oracle to appoint Xi Nuluo as the king of all tribes, therefore, Zhangle Jingqiu gave his power to Xi Nuluo and since then, the Nanzhao kingdom was gradually developed in these basins and mountains.[47] In 859, the king Shilong 世隆 re-melted an iron pillar to make the current one in the temple, and this temple was the place for natives to worship the Nanzhao king in the mid and the late Ming. A local gazetteer published in the 1570s reported that, some scholars began to claim that this iron pillar might have been originally built by Zhuge Liang, but this is not accepted by local people.[48] Later, more local gentry were planning to destroy the old idols of Nanzhao kings, and replace it with the idol of Zhuge Liang, but this was rejected by both the communities of basins and mountains, and thus the project failed.[49] Today, the Iron Pillar temple is still there but the Laluo set up the images of Menghuo and his wife there rather than Zhuge Liang, regarding this temple as the ancestral hall for all the mountain peoples in this area.

During the Ming period, the demarcation of basins and mountains was not clearly set in terms of recalling history to highlight a common ancestral worship and to maintain communal temples in certain ways. The transportation routes always crossed the mountains and valleys, and the Ming armies also attacked and successfully suppressed local resistances concentrated along the mountain valleys again and again, maintaining the safety of the transportation system and markets (see Map 11.2). However, on the one hand, the space highlighted by specific localities like temples, mouths of streams and rivers, as well as mountains could be reshaped as a new space, with its new cultural meaning and new ways of usage and management, like the Fengshui system constructed in Zhaozhou basin. On the other hand, this kind of change has never been completed because the mountains and the valleys provided a large resistance base for native tribes and different communities, who were not willing to cooperate with the Ming government,

[47] "The Brief History of Zhao Jian", in Zhuang Cheng, *The Wanli Zhaozhou Gazetteer* (Dali: The Cultural Bureau of Dali, 1983), 88.
[48] Ibid., 105.
[49] Cheng Jinren, *The Qinglong Zhaozhou Gazetteer, volume 3*, in *The Forbidden City Precious Literature Series, Volume 231* (Haikou: Hainan Publishing House, 2001), 88.

and it was difficult for the Ming government to totally change the cultural meaning of history. Even if the Neo-Confucian scholars followed Wang Yangming to extend the cultural border at the state border, like in Zhaozhou, and they were partly successful, because they themselves cooperated with this movement as a local representatives from frontier. But they failed partly because the cultural border was still linked with the establishment of the political border between the basin officials and the mountain resisters.[50]

Map 11.2: The *Bazis* of Zhaozhou in the Early Qing

Source: *The Qianglong Zhouzhou Gazetteer.*

Besides, many Neo-Confucian scholars also like to claim their ancestral myth is linked with Indian original Buddhist masters, or their more ancient Han origins.[51] These

[50] Timothy Brook, "What Happens When Wang Yangming Crosses the Border?" in *The Chinese State at the Borders*, ed., Diana Lary (Vancouver, Toronto: UBD Press, 2007), 75-90.

[51] Zhao Yuzhong 趙玉中, "Wenben, qingjing yu zuqun renting: Daili Erhai diqu yi ge cunluo de shenfen caoyan 文本、情景與族群認同：大理洱海地區一個村落的身份操演(Text, Context and Ethnicity: The Performance of Identities in a Community in Dali Erhai Lake Area)", (Kunming: PhD dissertation of Yunnan University, 2009); Lian Ruizhi 連瑞枝, *Ying cang de zuxian* 隱藏的祖先：妙香國的傳說和

strategies allowed them to show their boundaries with the Ming military migrants, or their cultural superiority over the Han military settlers in Yunnan. For the local leading Neo-Confucian elite, to develop historical theories about their ancestors meant to set up a boundary of identities and spaces considering that the frontier people could also have been equal or even higher than the Ming military settlers in the *Bazi* basins, and have actively participated with the Ming state through their own missions.

Thus, the case of the iron temple shows that, the history of Nanzhao had never been covered by a state sponsored myth of the Han-Barbarian hegemony of "Menghuo was arrested seven times by Zhuge Liang". The natives both in the mountains and in the basins somewhat cooperated around the iron pillar temple, doggedly resisting the coming of Zhuge Liang worship. The Ming state cultivated local, Neo-Confucian elite, however, it could not stop the local community from recalling the history of the last kingdoms of Nanzhao and Dali. One of the important reasons was that the demarcation of communities and ethnicity affiliated the mountains and basins. Even in the basins, the natives still negotiated with the Ming state by setting their ancestor, Menghuo, at the side of the Nanzhao kings, to make the Han Wise Zhuge Liang transparent. Therefore, the locality of the temple had been used as a resistance mark against the myth about the unbeatable Han and the Ming state in a Fengshui geomancy controlled space. Mueggler argues that local Yi 彝 people (actually, his field site is at the eastern margin of the Tiesuo Valley) could imagine the penetration of the state into an intimate everyday space, but this study provides a previous stage of ethnic mobilization before this contemporary imagination about the state, about where the Yi came from in its earlier version.[52]

Conclusion

The reconstruction of settlements and social relationships around the Zhaozhou *Bazi*s in the Ming period had reshaped cultural meanings as well as ethnic identities based on the new demarcation of *Bazi* basins and their surrounding mountain areas. The ecological

社會 (*The Hidden Ancestors: Legends and Society of A Buddhism Kingdom* (Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2005).

[52] Erik Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence and Places in Southwest China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 12.

features of *Bazi* basin and the mountains clearly set the natural environment for the social and historical dynamic. The natural ecological elements provided a set of physical conditions and a transformation framework for different cultural meanings, the living style of communities and their relationships with the state in the southwest frontier of China.

In the Ming period, both in the *Bazi* basin and in the mountains societies, different groups experienced the same processes of state penetration, but their reactions and the cultural-social outcomes were different. One element in the creation of differentiations was the ecological fact of the *Bazi* basin and the rugged mountains, as a natural environment for people to settle. The ethnic identities construction was the most important outcome of this history, but it also created, with struggles and competitions of meaning, the "Self" and the "Other" for different groups to interpret where they come from the who they are. However, the details of local space and landmarks are linked with and are shaped by a bigger picture of state power, which not only shaped people's daily life, everyday meanings and the frontier, but also shaped our understanding about what is Chinese, even if they are not the Han. Following this process, the social hierarchy between the people living in the mountains and the people living in the *Bazi* became established as a structure, and is explain in a common saying: "The people in the mountains are looking up at the people in the *Bazi*, the people in the *Bazi* are looking up at the people in the villages, but the people in the villages are looking up at the people living in the cities." In this way, the environmental history of *Bazi*s is highlighting the way of people's reconstruction over the environment in the Southwest frontier highlands, and reorganized settlements and landmarks are also highlighting a social hierarchy reflecting this frontier environment.

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