5 From Woman's Fertility to Masculine Authority: The Story of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings in Western Hunan

Xie Xiaohui

This chapter has been inspired by Donald S. Sutton's (2000) efforts to relate legends to the history of local society in Hunan. By studying the transformation of myths and relating them to the local context, Sutton succeeds in constructing a nuanced discussion of respective Han, Miao, and Tujia interests in perpetuating the tradition of the Heavenly Kings. This chapter follows very much the same methodology. However, by setting the legends into a context going back to the Ming dynasty, by relating them to records of the temple at the time of the Qing conquest, and by delving into the rituals in which the legends played a part, this chapter argues that the subplot to the legends incorporates the history not only of conquest but also of the transformation of all of western Hunan society from a structure in which the mother figure played a pivotal role in the lineage to one that adopted the Han mode of unilineal male descent.[1] The pivotal role of the mother figure among the Miao of western Hunan does not imply that descent had necessarily been matrilineal. The Miao practised patronymic naming, which suggests that descent had followed the male line.

The transformation in the perception of the descent line goes far beyond references to the binaries of "tamed" *(shu)* and "untamed" *(sheng)* commonly used in the literature.[2] Although the "untamed" versus "tamed" distinction can be read into the records, the subplots to these legends show that frontier ideology far transcends the simplified classification such terms imply.

Western Hunan (Xiangxi) and the Heavenly Kings

Western Hunan, immortalized by the novelist Shen Congwen as "Xiangxi," has a complex history. From the Song dynasty to the Qing, the imperial government had expanded into the region that had been settled by the Miao and the Tujia, the latter referred to then only as *turen* (native people).[3] During the Song, this was "bridle and halter" *(jimi)* territory, a term implying that the Song government recognized it had no direct control over the local people yet was drawn into their affairs. By the Yuan and Ming, some local chieftains *(tuqiu)* had been awarded the title of *tusi* (native official) by the imperial

authorities.[4] This was a hereditary position, but each appointment had to be awarded by imperial authority. By recognizing the tusi, the Ming and Qing governments maintained a hands-off approach in the areas they controlled, without losing their claim to their suzerainty. The history of the succession of tusi and their relations with the Ming and Qing state makes complicated reading(Xie 2012a and b), but the general observation can be made that by the Qing dynasty, in a gradual process known as "replacing native with circulating officials" *(gaitu guiliu),* many tusi had been dislodged from their hereditary posts (Herman 1997, 2007; Wen 2008; Xie forthcoming). The process was not by any means completed in all of China during the Qing dynasty, but in western Hunan the essential changes were made in the early years of the eighteenth century.

As Sutton (2000) argues, to understand western Hunan's local society, one must understand the White Emperor Heavenly Kings (Baidi tianwang) (Lu 2002; Wang 2004; Rack 2005; Xiang 2007). These were three brothers who, in various legends that are the subject of this chapter, appeared essentially as native heroes and helped in the imperial effort to pacify the region but died from treachery exercised by the imperial officialdom. Sutton (2000) is no doubt correct in identifying these gods as having had an indigenous origin and, through the centuries, as having been laid claim to by different parties, be they Miao, Tujia, or the advancing imperial government. A great part of the difficulty in interpreting the hagiography of these gods, however, lies in the uneven representation of these parties in the written records, the primary sources from which the present-day historian draws. The Miao left few written records,[5] and the imperial government or its surrogates, the scholars, left plenty. The Miao voice, therefore, is easily drowned in the imperial discourse, which, understandably, dealt with the history of conquest. It is thus important to read the legends with an awareness not only of what was *said* about the gods but also of what was *done* by different parties at their ritual celebrations.

The principal temple for worship of the Heavenly Kings is located in Yaxi, outside what is now the city of Jishou. No one knows when the Yaxi Heavenly Kings Temple (Yaxi tianwang miao) was built, but the record about the Yaxi Temple in the Huguang gazetteer of 1522 shows that it was built no later than 1522 (*Jiajing Huguang tujing zhishu* 1522, 17/10a-b). In the Ming and early Qing dynasties, Yaxi would have been located at the junction of four different types of societies. Yaxi itself was located near the Zhenxi battalion *(suo),* nominally governed by the Ming military-garrison *(weisuo)* system. The garrison town became present-day Jishou city. To its north were two of the most powerful native officials in western Hunan, who were given charge of the

Yongshun Pacification Office (Yongshun xuanweisi) and the Baojing Pacification Office (Baojing xuanweisi) to keep the local Miao people under check. To the east was Luxi county, governed by a magistrate. Beyond was the Miao homeland (Miao *jiang*), divided into two parts by its geography. The northwest was relatively fertile and densely populated, inhabited by the "tamed" Miao. It came under the purview of the Baojing Pacification Office, under which the offices nearest to Zhenxi, run by two small native officials, were the Wuzhai Chief's Office (Wuzhai zhangguansi) and the Ganziping Chief's Office (Ganziping zhangguansi). The southwest was dominated by the famous La'er Hills (La'er shan), which was the most barren of all places in western Hunan and inhabited by the "untamed" Miao, who were beyond the control of even the native officials. To this day, in the so-called untamed Miao villages *(zhai)* of this area, permanent buildings are scarce, and there are no ancestor halls and few temples. During the Ming and much of the early Qing, the garrison, tusi, magistrate, and Miao were subject to widely different administrative arrangements, which were reflected in the ways of life and the ethnic identities of different peoples as events unfolded (Xie 2012a).

The difference between the untamed Miao and the people who would, in time, claim Han descent, including the people known nowadays as the Tujia, begins at the temple. At the temple, it can be seen that religious ceremonies are directed by different masters practising different ritual styles and speaking different languages. The "guest master" (in Chinese "*ke laoshi,*" in Miao "*ba daizha*") bases his ceremonies on religious texts that appeal to Buddhism and Taoism, and he speaks the dialect referred to as the "official dialect of the southwest" *(xinan guanhua).* The "Miao master" (in Chinese "Miao *laoshi,*" in Miao *"badai xiong"*), also known as the "ghost master" *(guishi),* does not make use of written texts and usually invites to the ceremony – symbolically – spirits of all kinds, including ancestors, when he conducts his ceremonies in the Miao dialect. The "Tu master" (Tu *laoshi*), sometimes known as the *tima,* practices in Tujia villages, conducts his ceremonies in Tujia, and invites the spirits of several ancient native chieftains in the region. He uses no written texts. Then there are also the "fairy ladies" *(xianniang)* in charge of the daily management of the temple (Rack 2005, 83-127). These women come from Miao or Tujia villages and are ceremonial specialists in their own right.[6] They sing and dance before the gods and chant in different dialects without the use of texts. The difference between the Miao and the Tujia reflects the difference in literacy between the two ethnic groups. Texts are far more common among the Tujia and practically nonexistent among the Miao, be they religious, genealogical, or administrative. The Miao, especially those on the La'er Hills, largely kept away from Han society, in which the magistrate held

central, if sometimes only nominal, authority. The Tujia, however, even as they maintained their independence under the rule of the tusi, had close contact with the Chinese imperial state, serving as mercenaries in the Ming and holding military positions in the Qing. By the nineteenth century, more and more Tujia had genealogies and ancestral halls, practised ancestral sacrifice, and were actively enrolled in the Hunan militias, which were formed to counter the Taiping armies. In many ways, the Tujia way of life was no different from that of the Han.

Nowadays, despite their differences, Han, Tujia, and Miao meet at the Yaxi Temple. In the three most important festivals at the temple, celebrating the marriage of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings' mother, her birthday, and the day the kings died, believers descend on the temple from the city of Jishou itself and from surrounding counties, including Luxi, Fenghuang, Yongsui, and Guzhang. Many of them are middle-aged or elderly women who speak only Miao. They come singly or in groups, usually led by their fairy ladies or Miao masters. At the temple, they experience different religious traditions and, no doubt, bring some of them back to their own villages. In scrutinizing the legends of the gods for a historical reconstruction of the conversion process in the Miao homeland, we have to bear in mind the very close interaction of the different societies that have been meeting at the temple for some centuries. We must remember that the religious practices of a people who at one time had little access to writing shifted as they came in touch with literate society and that the divisions imposed by administrative differences provided only porous boundaries.

Han Surnames and Native Chiefs: The Yang Surname under the Ming Dynasty

From at least the nineteenth century, it was widely known and commonly agreed that the White Emperor Heavenly Kings had the Yang surname. The Yang surname was commonly adopted by native chiefs in the southwest. Yang was a Han surname, so the further back one reads in the historical records, the less frequent its occurrence in the Miao homeland (Li 1981). If a Wanli-period (1573-1619) record included in the 1765 Chenzhou prefectural gazetteer is to be relied on, some time in the Hongwu era of the early Ming dynasty (which may be dated in the *Ming shilu* to 1397), the first native appointed to a commanding position in Zhenxi was known as Yang Number Two (Yang Er), who was given the post of company commander *(baifuzhang)* (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 40/35b-36b; *Ming shilu* 1962-68, 250/2b). According to this source, the garrison had been founded at the request of Miao people who

had submitted to Ming rule in response to an appeal by the Luxi county assistant magistrate *(zhubu)* against the heavy taxation imposed on them. The appeal is interesting because it illustrates the tax implications of Ming administrative measures. The Luxi county magistrate governed under the imperial administration, and the households under his jurisdiction would have been subjected to registration *(lijia),* taxation, and corvée service (Liu 1997). The Zhenxi battalion was a military establishment and, as such, was made up of military households, which owed military service and were given military land. Obviously, in this instance, the military arrangement was regarded by the locals as an advantage over the civilian arrangement. The passage notes that "originally," as part of a county, the region paid a tax of 13,000 piculs of grain. Under the military arrangement, 10,000 piculs were remitted. The Luxi county assistant magistrate who had made the appeal to the Miao to surrender was appointed, no doubt in his personal capacity, as the battalion commissioner *(zhenfu),* but the local chief, Yang Number Two, was appointed company commander. The garrison embraced 124 villages divided into ten li, as would have been fitting for the household registration, but 132 men from outside the li were designated as "indigenous troops" *(tujun)* and charged with patrolling the city.[7] A side remark that most of these people were descended from Panhu, the well-known dog-headed ancestor, and that they were "extraordinarily wild" makes it clear enough that these were Miao.[8]

The post of company commander would have been low on the military hierarchy in most parts of Ming China, but in these frontier areas, this might not have been so. The 1751 Luxi county gazetteer noticed the anomaly: "In recognition of his achievement in dispatching troops, the captain might be awarded titles that exceed those held by garrison officials, and for this reason, commands are not followed" (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 23/4b; *Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 40/36a-b). This implies that the company commander, effectively the native chief of the Yang surname, had considerable leeway. In addition, records show that some officials in the Zhenxi battalion held hereditary positions. Sometimes they were called *tuguan* (native officials) by contemporaries (*Qianzhou zhi* 1739, 2/44b-45a; *Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 23/5a; *Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 40/36a-b; Yan 1843, 15/12a).[9]

Aside from Yang Number Two, references are extant in the gazetteers to other chieftains who had adopted the Yang surname:

> At Tiger Head Cliff ... during the military turmoil at the end of the Yuan dynasty, a local man by the name Yang Tianni set up a village to defend the people. (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 3/8b)

> At the Liyan Pass ... from Hongwu (1368-98) to Xuande (1426-35), when the Miao often came out to loot, the magistrate appointed some righteous men *(yiyong),* Yang Xuanyue, Yang Mingzu, Yang Zhizhang, and Yang Teng, for defence. They gathered stones and stationed bowmen in ambush. (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 2/10a)

> Xianchangping police chief (*xunjian* si): from the time of Zhengtong (1436-49), a local man by the name of Yang Wenju held this post by inheritance. He had command of twenty-six bowmen. Like a native official, his salary was extra-establishment, and he was not given supplies. (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 12:27a-b)

By the middle of the Ming dynasty, Tiger Head Cliff had become the location of Luxi county city. The Liyan Pass overlooked a deep ravine fifteen li to the west of Luxi county city. It seems from the first two of these three passages that the appointed "righteous men," a common term for appointees taking up public duties, were of the Yang surname. Xianchangping was located on the Wuxi River, which linked Zhenxi battalion and Luxi county. Although it is not possible to tell from the records whether police chief Yang Wenju was descended from the Yang-surnamed "righteous men" appointed to garrison duties, these three passages together do indicate that military service had continued among Yang-surnamed military men. That is, from the very beginning of the Ming dynasty to at least the first half of the fifteenth century, some powerful native officials of the Yang surname played a very active role in control of the Wuxi River.

Of course, the rivers running between hills were all important in this regime. In this hilly terrain, the largest river flowing down to the Miao homeland, the Wuxi, was joined by the Yaxi, on the bank of which stood the White Emperor Heavenly Kings Temple, and the Wuxi flowed into the Yuan River, which led to Chenzhou city. In 1707 the Luxi magistrate Wang Guangkui noted that the Wuxi River went "from Zhen'gan to Chenzhou and Changde, facilitating merchants carrying cargo in the boats, grain collected in rent, and food and military supplies for Miao troops on the frontier" (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 4/5b-6a). Wu Yiben, who assumed the position of Luxi magistrate in 1580, observed of the trade downriver:

> Luxi produces many of the same products as other places. Its people value food and goods. On its hills and barren land, grain is scarce. Even in bountiful years, the harvest provides only enough for food and clothing so that there is neither hunger nor cold. No goods that can be exchanged for silver, which

> might be used for private or public services, are more important than tung oil and castor oil. For this reason, the merchants contract in advance to fix their prices or work out what they are worth as they are ready to be sold. Their boats crowd the Yuan and Wu Rivers. The people of my county who wish to participate in trade and pay their taxes have nothing else to turn to. (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 7/16b)

The same magistrate noted on another occasion, in an essay commemorating the building of the Quiet Imposing Cloister in the county, that the leaders of the effort included "the proposer of the project, elder Yang Bian, native officer *(tushe)*[10] Yang Zongmeng, and the contributor elder Yang Rui" (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 2/11a-12a). It should be noted that the project initiated and supported by people of the Yang surname in the region was not ordinary; it involved building a Buddhist temple and a road beside the newly established government offices. That is, at least until the Wanli period (1573-1619), people of the Yang surname were still in a leadership position in the county. Quite a few were referred to as native officers (*tushe* or *tuguan*).

It is not clear how the influence of people with the Yang surname in the area might have changed by the later years of the Ming dynasty. The second half of the sixteenth century was a period of tension in the Miao homeland. Before more than 100,000 soldiers from three provinces were assembled to pacify the tremendous rebellion in 1552, the Luxi gazetteer had already noted a change in the air:

> This county had an initial seventy-two barbarian soldiers to defend the cliff. They are drawn from the barbarians ... in the county. They are practised in the use of sword and bow, and they are courageous and therefore useful. They are given tax remission so that they might serve as braves to defend the county city ... In the Jiajing era (1522-66), when the Miao rebelled, barbarian troops were sent to man the guard posts at the villages, and sixty Han were temporarily employed as braves to defend the county city. (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 12/2a-b)

Expediency probably dictated the substitution of Han braves for native braves. However, by 1552, when the Ming government sent in troops to extend its authority in the area and, as a result of the effort, set up thirteen guard posts (including Zhenxi battalion) on La'er Hills, the increasing outside presence was noticeable. To begin with, the government dispatched to the area two commanders *(canjiang),* one posted at Mayang and the other at Tongren. Two years later, the Mayang deputy commander's office was located right at

the Wuzhai Chief's Office, which, in 1700, became Fenghuang subprefecture city. The 1765 Chenzhou prefectural gazetteer notes that the guard posts were well staffed. Furthermore, among the total number of 6,000 men, there were some native officials, some command headmen, and *xiangtu* (natives), including Bo, Kai, Ge, and Miao soldiers (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 12/28a-b). Bo were natives recruited from the Bozhou tusi territory, and Kai were from Kaili, a tusi territory in Guizhou. A more detailed document made by Hou Jiadi, an official of Chenzhou prefecture in the Wanli era, shows that natives *(turen)* from Yongshun and Baojing tusi territories played an active role in manning guard posts (Yan 1843, 20/7b-16a). These reports indicate that many of the troops continued to be natives – that is, members of Miao, Ge, or other local ethnic groups. Moreover, many of these natives were recruited from tusi territories. In other words, the Miao homeland was experiencing a process of dislocation no later than the middle of the sixteenth century (Xie 2012a).

Tension increased through the second half of the sixteenth century. A possible contribution to this tension was the registration of land by the county magistrates, an administrative reform mandated by the imperial centre under the impetus of Minister Zhang Juzheng. The 1685 Mayang county gazetteer, in particular, includes the complete documentation of the land record recently compiled (*Mayang xianzhi* 1685, 10/27a-64b). Another source of heightened tension was the rebellion of Yang Yinglong, the tusi of Bozhou (present-day Zunyi county) in 1599. In this incident, famous for its bloodshed, the Guizhou capital of Guiyang was besieged for 296 days, and the imperial government dispatched to its rescue 300,000 men drawn not only from nearby areas such as western Hunan but also from provinces as far away as Gansu, Zhejiang, and Sichuan. The Bozhou tusi was one of the most powerful in the area and among the most powerful in the entire country. His demise broke up the tusi's control in the part of Sichuan bordering Guizhou and Hunan. Against this background, one has to read the records, also contained in the Mayang gazetteer, of native agitation for expansion into the Miao homeland. The propaganda directed against the Miao in this age is too rich to be detailed here. A descendant of the native chiefs in Mayang, Tian Yingchan, wrote,

> Let those who are devoted to loyalty and bravery, pay their price and provide the food supply, cultivate land that they would freely be given, assume [the service rendered by] able-bodied males, register their households, and deliver tax and service levies to repay the government. (*Mayang xianzhi* 1685, 9/47a)

In other words, this says, give us the land now occupied by the Miao, and we shall swear loyalty to the state and pay the tax.

Local officials would have agreed with this demand, for they would have seen no reason to leave the land in the hands of the treacherous Miao. Cai Fuyi, the Chen-Yuan military administrative taotai *(bingbeidao),* said of the Miao, "At one moment they appear as tamed Miao to collect their military pay, and just as quickly, they become untamed Miao to loot" (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 40/19a). In 1615 the imperial government, at a cost of 40,000 taels, acceded to the request of Cai Fuyi in building an earthen wall for defence that stretched for 300 li within the Miao homeland. In 1622 it added another 60 li, this time extending straight from the Zhenxi battalion city (Yan 1843, 15/18a). The extension into the Miao homeland further divided the native population. Some were now in imperial service with the local military as it expanded into the newly exploited Miao homeland, others were tamed Miao who had come over to the government to obtain land, and many remained untamed Miao who had been driven out to remote and sterile mountains, where they continued to inhabit unregistered land. Many more local chiefs now appeared with many more surnames. The dominance of the Yang surname as a favourite to be adopted by the tusi began to fade into history.

The Lineage and the Surname Connection into the Qing Dynasty

In the Qing dynasty, we come closer to the legends of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings that make up the heart of Sutton's (2000) analysis. Obviously, as Sutton points out, there was an element in these legends that related the biographies of the kings to the experience of the local people. Different versions of the stories attempted to link the origin of the kings to references in early Chinese texts, recorded the heroism of the local leader, acknowledged the kings' loyalty to the imperial authorities, and mourned the tragedy of betrayal by these same authorities, who were ultimately at the head of an invading force. One can detect in these stories the input of the natives who surrendered, of the literati, whether Han or Tujia, and of the natives who lost. One can also dispute whether the stories fitted neatly into the ethnic differences between the Han, the Tujia, and the defeated Miao, as Sutton has argued. However, the point to be made here is that the frontier society was too complicated to be divided into the victor and the vanquished. The imperial conquest had brought with it changes that were far more subtle, and far more extensive, than those suggested by the notion of a political divide. The conquest introduced a new idea of genealogy, and although the lineage practice – as I shall show below – was not universally accepted, it brought about changes in the conception of history.

The fine points in the sources describing the legends are important. The 1739 Qianzhou gazetteer provides the earliest source of what Sutton (2000,

458-59) calls the "bamboo kings" story, which links the account of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings' mother being impregnated at the river to a reference in the standard Chinese *Later Han History* (*Qianzhou zhi* 1739, 2/27b, 4/32b). Qianzhou subprefecture was set up in 1708, and as Sutton (2000, 466) points out, the gazetteer writer, who was the subprefecture magistrate, included the reference in an attempt to increase the kings' respectability. However, this was not the first such attempt. The same passage from which Sutton draws his translation continues, "It is popularly said that they [the kings] were eighth-generation descendants of Yang Ye. This is not true. The Yuanling county gazetteer calls them 'Huan Dou.' That is also not true." (*Qianzhou zhi* 1739, 2/27b).

Huan Dou was a rebel identified in the historical record as early as the ancient legendary Shun era (reputedly 2044-3 BC), and reference to him might have been a means of claiming heroism but probably not respectability. Yang Ye, however, was the patriarch of the Yang family generals of theatrical fame, loyal defenders of the Song dynasty realm against barbarian invasion. We can date the origin of this connection. By the middle of the Ming dynasty, the Yang family generals had been identified as the forebears of the inhabitants of Lutijian village in Dai county, Shanxi province, and a version of the Lutijian Yang-surname genealogy is extant that includes an essay detailing the Bozhou Yang making the genealogical claim in 1607 – that is, fairly shortly before their uprising (*Yangshi zupu* 1847, preface/2a; Han 2008). Even then, this was not the first time that this claim was made, for the early Ming scholar Song Lian had written an essay to demonstrate that Yang Ye's grandson had been posted to the south and, while there, had allowed his own son to be adopted by the Bozhou tusi, thereby making the Bozhou Yang his descendants (Song 1987, 10/34a-47b). That the claim gained some currency can also be attested to by a tattered manuscript genealogy I collected in Shujiatang village in Fenghuang county, which likewise alleges descent from Yang Ye (*Yangshi zupu* n.d., preface/n.p.). In a vaguer sense, the existence of lineages is also corroborated by the fact that, while interviewing in Yaxi, I was told that nearby was a village inhabited by people of the Yang surname known as Yangjia zhai, a claim that may be corroborated by the 1877 account "Miscellaneous Notes on the Three Kings," which refers to the village as a clan *(zu)* (*Qianzhou tingzhi* 1877, 4/38a). I was also told that in the late-Qing and Republican periods, there had been Yang-surname ancestral halls in Qianzhou, Fenghuang, and Luxi.

Other stories were told of the kings: the 1751 Yongsui subprefecture gazetteer spoke of Song dynasty commanders who had fought the Miao, and the

1765 Chenzhou prefecture gazetteer referred to them as the three sons of one Tian Jiang, who had refused to take orders from Han dynasty usurper Wang Mang. However, again, it is the contrast of what happened at the White Emperor Heavenly Kings Temple as recorded in the Qianzhou subprefecture gazetteer of 1739 that is most interesting. A section describing the customs of the Miao notes,

> The Miao people worship and venerate gods known as the White Emperor Heavenly Kings. It is said they were [descended from] the Song dynasty warriors of the Yang surname. This is not true. Every year before the *xiaoshu* festival (mid-summer, two weeks before summer solstice), starting on the *chen*-day and ending with the *si*-day, they ban hunting and fishing, do not dress in red, and do not play music. Only after they have offered meat sacrifice do they lift the ban. If they are not careful, there will be disease, and this is why they take it so seriously. When there are grievances, they always go to the temple and swear oaths in front of the gods. They prick the cat for a drop of blood to mix with wine, which they drink to build up a bond of common hearts. This is known as "eating the blood." Three days after blood is eaten, it is necessary to offer an animal in sacrifice to thank the gods. This is known as penance for the ghosts. When they enter the temple, their knees tremble and they dare not look up. Those who feel guilty hesitate and dare not drink ... People who live too far away to go to the temple build a pavilion on the roadside and swear in front of it. All riders must dismount at the pavilion as a sign of respect to it. For matters big or small, eating blood is the only solution that leaves no regret. Otherwise, even an official ruling cannot cure the situation. This is because the Miao people fear their ghosts more than they fear the law. (*Qianzhou zhi* 1739, 4/32b)

This very lively passage goes beyond the legends; it describes how the Miao treated the Heavenly Kings. There is no sense in the passage that the Miao supplicants regarded the kings as ancestors. Instead, the passage portrays the Miao as fearing them. The kings protected and meted out justice, but if sacrifice was not handled with caution, diseases prevailed (Katz 2001). This perception of the kings persisted until the twentieth century. When ethnographers Ling Chunsheng and Rui Yifu visited western Hunan in 1933, the secretary at the Fenghuang county government told them, "The Heavenly Kings Temple is the supreme court of the Miao homeland. When a Miao will not accept a ruling by the county government, we order him (or her) to eat blood at the temple. Disputes big or small can be solved that way" (Ling and Rui 1947, 153).[11]

The sense of fear of the Heavenly Kings is nowadays ritualized in ceremonies at the temple. When I observed the festival at the Yaxi Temple in recent years, I was struck by worshippers kneeling in front not of the Heavenly Kings but of another altar set up in the temple at which a guest master was officiating.[12] To this altar, the guest master, wearing a cap on which the character *fo* (Buddha) was written and using several religious text books, had invited Buddhist and Taoist deities. All of the worshippers, individually, carried on their back a wicker basket bearing a written prayer that stated their name and address and asked for the Buddha's blessings, as well as a paper horse to carry the prayer to wherever it was meant to go. The most important part of the ceremony was for the guest master to read out all of the names so designated and to burn the contents of the baskets. After that, he sent the deities away, removed the altar, and changed into another costume. He explained to me that the Jade Emperor, to whom they had directed their prayers, occupied a higher position than the kings. At this point, they made an offering of a slaughtered pig to the kings and threw the divining blocks in front of them. The ceremony in front of the Jade Emperor lasted ten to twelve hours, but the offering and divining in front of the kings did not take much more than ten minutes. Outside the Heavenly Kings Temple may now be found a Jade Emperor's Pavilion, which houses statues of the Jade Emperor and the bodhisattva Guanyin. As the woman who sold incense outside the temple explained to me, the guest masters said prayers and burned candles for other deities, not the kings. The kings preferred offerings of meat.[13]

Although the ceremony I witnessed was conducted by a guest master, I also saw Miao masters and fairy ladies in action, and I learned more about them from interviews. In Heku township of Fenghuang county, which in the Qing dynasty was inhabited by "untamed" Miao, I was told that Miao masters could invite the Heavenly Kings back to the villages from the temple. After the kings had been ceremonially received from the temple, offerings of pigs and sheep would be made to them by those travelling along a designated path. No appeal was made to Buddhist or Taoist deities.

Contemporaries knew that the Miao did not practise ancestral worship in the way Han people did. The 1755 Luxi county gazetteer says, "As for setting up ancestral halls, providing common meals for main lines and secondary lines of descent, in an order that reflected seniority, that is unheard of. They [the Miao] believe in the sorcerers. They have no use for medicines" (*Luxi xianzhi* 1755, 8/3b). The 1765 Chenzhou prefecture gazetteer says, "In this prefecture, we do not have ancient lineages that built ancestral halls and compiled genealogies before the Ming dynasty" (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 1765, 14/5b). The 1778 *Little Gazetteer of Qianzhou* makes the Miao practices even more

explicit, "[The Miao] do not set up spirit tablets when someone dies or use coffins for burial. They throw the divining blocks to locate a spot where they heap earth over a shallow grave, they kill animals for grave sacrifice, and after three years, they do not look at the grave any more" (*Qianzhou xiaozhi* 1833, 5a). One could have gone further. The Miao did not have surnames but were given patronyms that linked their own names to the names of their fathers. For this reason, the 1755 Qianzhou subprefecture gazetteer said, "The Miao of Qianzhou do not practise the taboo of denying marriages among common surnames, but they do not marry within the clan (*zu*)" (*Qianzhou zhi* 1739 4/30a). Indeed, through their naming system, they had a genealogy, based on oral memory, hence the reference to the clan by the gazetteer writer, but it was a clan without a surname.

The point here is that two traditions were emerging in the descriptions of the eighteenth century. One of these employs a language of the lineage derived from written texts, including genealogies, to describe the origins of the Heavenly Kings. The other employs an oral tradition in which sacrifice is direct and the gods are both feared and revered. In the following account of an event at the temple in 1729, the two traditions met:

> In the sixth year of Yongzheng (1728), [Commander Zhou Yide] received an imperial rescript, which said, "The Miao at Sixth Li are creating trouble; that is near Yonggan. You are hereby ordered to go with the Chen-Yong-Yuan military administrative taotai *(bingbeidao),* Wang Rou, to conduct there what was conducted to the Rongmei native official."
>
> The commander had learned that at Yaxi there was a Heavenly Kings Temple. The kings were three brothers of the Yang surname, known respectively as Yinglong, Yinghu, and Yingbiao. They had respectively red, white, and black faces. The Miao treated them with respect, not daring to look straight when they passed by the temple. The door of the temple was always locked; it had not been opened for decades. The cow offering and annual sacrifices were all made outside the door.
>
> The commander knew that the Miao believed in ghosts and were not afraid of being killed. So he sent some strong men to climb over the temple walls at night in order to find out what the gods looked like and what ritual objects were about. They returned and reported to him, saying that behind a screen that looked like a cupboard were three flags, still in good condition. The commander said, "We have won."
>
> He [commander Zhou Yide] then announced that the Heavenly Kings appeared to him in a dream, dressed in robes of whatever colour, and said to him, "Now that the Son of Heaven is of boundless virtue, we should take our

> Miao multitude and submit to you so that we might take advantage of the blessing. I offer you three flags, so that all those who do not obey you will be destroyed at their sight. I order you to obey the gods, choose a propitious day to enter the temple, take the flags, and go forward."
>
> When the Miao chiefs heard this, they all came out to see. At the right time, the commander slaughtered a cow for sacrifice, broke the lock, opened the door, and entered. The Miao chiefs were too frightened to follow. The commander walked up to the gods, bowed deeply, and came out again. He called the Miao chiefs over and told them not to be afraid, and they followed him in. The commander went behind the cupboard-looking screen and found the flags. He took them out, opened them, and saw that they were bright and coloured like the gods' faces. Only then did he order music to be played, wine to be offered, and incense to be burned in an offering of thanks. He gathered the flags and returned to his camp.
>
> The Miao people were strikingly impressed. They went as a group to drink blood and surrender. The commander ordered his eldest son, Zhongyue, in accordance with Miao custom, to take blood from a cat at home and enter into a bond with the chiefs. The chiefs said, "Whoever betrays this alliance will be infected by the big-headed heavenly pestilence, and ninety-nine generations will die." After the oath, they shaved their foreheads, changed into the caps and gowns of the imperial dynasty, and wore ribbons to signify their positions other than chiefs. On learning about the event, the Miao of [sixteen place names given] came to swear by the blood-tainted drink. The commander pitched his camp by the side of Chong Hill and invited the people from [eight place names given] to surrender (*Fenghuang tingzhi* 1756, 20/20b).

This remarkable passage shows that the temple had inspired two separate followings. In 1705, just over twenty years before this event, Zhenxi battalion had been abolished and, with it, the tusi's office. Five years earlier, imperial forces had been sent over to be stationed at Zhen'gan, where the tusi had been located. Obviously, removing the tusi had not meant the surrender of the Miao population over which he had purview, hence the expedition of 1728. As the passage makes clear, the Miao prayed to the gods outside the doors of the temple. Who, then, managed the temple from the inside? It is useful to recall that the native official in Zhenxi battalion was of the Yang surname and had been deposed by the administrative change of 1705. The genealogical connection between the gods, the native official, and the populace, which, out of fear, could worship only outside the temple, symbolized the social and ethnic divide of this frontier.

The Heavenly Kings' status, and legends, would also have been affected by events toward the end of the nineteenth century, notably the Miao wars of 1795 to 1799. In 1797 the kings were awarded the title of marquis, and annual sacrifices were offered to them by local officials, as required by statute (*Qinding Da-Qing huidian shili* 1963, 445/11a).[14] Another significant development was the granting of an examination quota to the Miao homeland in 1808 (*Hunan tongzhi* 1967, 141/2a). According to the Hunan provincial gazetteer, between 1805 and 1882, a total of sixty-eight *juren* were registered in Qianzhou, Fenghuang, Yongsui, and Baojing, all administrative districts in the Miao homeland. Under the influence of this policy, the government cultivated and lassoed a number of Miao literati in the Miao homeland. The number of holders of low or middle degrees in the Miao homeland was rapidly increased after this policy. Many of them had the Yang surname, including the first registered juren in Qianzhou subprefecture (*Hunan tongzhi* 1967, 142/43a). As Sutton (2000, 469-71) has argued, the process of imperial recognition privileged some versions of the Heavenly Kings' origin legends over others. Since the official view supported the notion that their surname was Yang and that they were, in their own right, local men, gazetteer writers abandoned those legends that alleged they might have been sons of Tian Jiang or affiliated with ancient Chinese texts and instead favoured the story that gave them a local origin. A version of the origin legend that gained currency had the kings born of a woman of the Yang surname who was impregnated on a river by the Dragon King. Yet, as one might expect, the transformation was not total. Even this story incorporated many elements from past practices.

The Position of Mother: The Latent Female Tradition

In temples devoted to the Heavenly Kings, one may not find the figures of the Jade Emperor or the Dragon King (father of the kings), but one surely finds a figure of their mother, referred to as the lady mother *(niangniang)* (see Figure 5.1). The lady mother plays a crucial and indispensable role in the events at the temple. Of the three festivals celebrated at the temple, two of them relate to her. On the third day of the third month, worshippers celebrate her wedding in a ceremony known as the lady mother "wearing flowers" *(niangniang daihua)*. On the seventh day of the seventh month, they celebrate her birthday *(niangniang dan)*. On this day, they offer her red silk cloth. Only on the first day of the sixth month is the celebration devoted to the Heavenly Kings, this being the day they died. On this day, they "open the sacred doors" *(wangye kai shenmen)*. For the festival, worshippers offer straw sandals, feed

for horses, bows and arrows, and knives. The kings and their mother form an interesting diad comprising the warriors and their progenitor. The nineteenth-century version of the legend combines the two.

Sutton (2000, 471-72) has translated in full the nineteenth-century account, taken from the text "Miscellaneous notes on the Three Kings," which is included in the 1877 Qianzhou prefecture gazetteer. I take the following from a very recent stele set up in 2003. The two are close but not identical. The writer of the 2003 account, Mr. Yang, was an elderly Miao doctor practising in Jishou. He told me that he read many early texts before he wrote his account, but he found them too brief, so he added stories he had heard from his elders. According to this account,

> The White Emperor Heavenly Kings are gods who drive away evil spirits and prevent disasters. Some call them the Three Bamboo Kings, some the Three Marquises, or White Emperor Heavenly Kings. They are all the same.
>
> Origins: According to the chapter on the Southern Barbarians in the *History of the Later Han,* during the Eastern Han dynasty, the Three Bamboo Kings were the White Emperor Heavenly Kings.
>
> As for their legend, in days of old, they were grandsons of Old Official Yang Dong (Yang laodongguan) and his wife, nee Luo, by their daughter *(waisun)* at Yaxi in Qianzhou. Old Yang had a daughter by the name of Muying. During a drought, she was washing clothes in the Yaxi River. When her body was immersed in water, the Dragon King appeared and had intercourse with her. She conceived and gave birth to three sons. They grew up and served the country, becoming famous generals. After they died, they became deities as Heavenly Kings. For this reason, their father had the Long (Dragon) surname and their mother the Yang surname, and they are known as the Long Family Holy Master (Longjia shengzhu) and Yang Holy Lady (Muying shengpo). When people repay their blessings in the *nuo* ceremony, they are known as the nuo father and nuo mother. In the house, the sacrifice offered in the name of the Heavenly King gods is known as "repaying the pledge."
>
> When the three brothers grew up, they were glorious without rival. They were trusted by the imperial court because of their achievements in "pacifying the Miao." Later, some ministers, jealous of them, wanted to kill them. However, they did not have the chance to do so until the emperor, in his grace, summoned them to an audience. After the audience, they returned. When they reached the White Horse Crossing, they poured half the smooth wine the emperor had presented them onto the crossing in sacrifice to ancestors who had contributed to the country. Then they poured some into the river, so that it would flow into the Dongting Lake and from there to the imperial river,

> in gratitude for the boundless grace of the emperor. Afterward, the three brothers drank the rest. Not to their knowledge, the wine had been poisoned. The three brothers died an instant death. Their bodies were sent home, and their mother was so pained that she spit blood and died. The people mourned them. Wherever the Three Kings had been, they built the Three Kings Temples and offered sacrifices in the four seasons. Their temples dot all of the frontier of Hunan and Guizhou like the stars. In the faraway place of Luxi, where the Three Kings had visited seeking their mother, the people set them up as models of filial sons, and the name "seeking their mother" has remained as a place name to this day. The land of Yaxi is propitious, and its people are talented; its temple is the grandest and widest. It is known as the Yaxi Temple, the Bamboo Kings Temple, or the Kings Temple ...
>
> Throughout the dynasties, the White Emperor Heavenly Kings were honoured. In the time of Xiaozong in the Song dynasty, they defeated powerful opposition and opened the Nine Rivers and Eighteen Valleys. In recognition of their achievement, Xiaozong awarded them titles as marquises, the eldest being Marquis of Suppression Afar, the second Marquis of Conquest Afar, and the third Marquis of Pacification Afar. By imperial rescript, their temples were built and repaired, and annual spring and autumn sacrifices to them were listed in the Statute of Sacrifice.[15]

The inscription is valuable for the indications it gives of the ritual practices around the kings and their parents. Aside from the festivals at the temple, the villages held celebrations, probably around the New Year, in which masked performers were employed. These *nuo* processions were common in many villages. From the description on this stele, it can be visualized that during these village processions, the kings would have appeared to suppress evil spirits and their father and mother to offer blessings. As was customary with village processions, masked performers dressed as the father and mother would have entered individual households to offer their blessings, especially of wealth to the family and good health to the children. In this manner, their connections to the kings would have been perpetuated.

The structure of the essay can also be noted. A distinction is made between the kings' "origins" and their "legends," and the final paragraph concludes with references to imperial awards. It is the section under "legends" that incorporates stories the author had heard. Two motifs in the legends stand out, one having to do with the rivers and the other with the kings' mother.

The rivers led to the outside world. They linked the ancestors to the emperor, hence the libation of wine first to the ancestors at White Horse Crossing and then to the river in gratitude to the emperor; only the rest was drunk by the

Figure 5.1 A White Emperor Heavenly Kings Temple in a Miao hamlet, Luxi county, with only the statues of the Three Kings and their mother on the altars. Photo by Xia Xiaohui.

living. The Dragon King came out of the river, an event that the 1522 Huguang gazetteer tied to a specific spot, for where the confluence of the Yaxi and the Wuxi Rivers flowed into the Yuan River, seven caves existed of immeasurable depth, and the area was known as the Dragon's Well. On its bank there was a temple, said to be, even then, dedicated to the White Emperor Heavenly Kings (*Jiajing Huguang tujing zhishu* 1522, 17/10a-b). It was the river, in the form of the Dragon King, who impregnated Madam Yang so that she could give birth to the Three Kings. When the kings died on the river, their bodies were, in all likelihood, thought to have been sent back on the river. It is significant that there were no graves, even as history was being retold. This was a belief directed not at bodies but at spirits. There could not have been graves for the kings when most of their worshippers had little care for graves after initial burial.

Having played his part in producing the offspring, however, the Dragon King was essentially nonexistent in the history of the kings. I was told by a woman at Yaxi that before Liberation, there was not even the earthen figure of the Dragon King on the altar. She recalled figures of the Three Kings and their mother, whereas the Dragon King was represented by a drawing on the wall behind the altar (see Figure 5.2; 5.3). Most temples of the Three Kings that I have visited in the villages, especially the extraordinarily scarce temples

Figure 5.2 The parents of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings in their principal temple at Yaxi, showing the dragon father represented with a dragon head, 2004. Photo by Chen Chunsheng.

Figure 5.3 The parents of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings in their principal temple at Yaxi, showing the dragon father represented with a human head and dressed in imperial robes, 2008. Photo by Xia Xiaohui.

in what would, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, have been untamed Miao villages, do not have a figure of the Dragon King (see Figure 5.1). The "Miscellaneous Notes on the Three Kings" states,

> The sacrificial hall at the back of the Yaxi Temple is dedicated to the lords' mother. In Yaxi she is the closest and most intimate [to the people]. Old and young call her 'old grand aunt' *(lao gupo)*. She wears a flowery crown and embroidered shoes, and she allows children to play in front of her, not regarding this as desecration. (*Qianzhou tingzhi* 1877, 4/38b)[16]

This account includes a description of sacrifices made to the kings' mother, not to the Dragon King. Some versions of the legend make the specific point that the Dragon King left the family after the kings were born (Shi 1986, 247-52). The kings bore the mother's surname, not the Dragon King's. It is significant that no part of any legend questions why this should have been the case: among a people who had adopted Han surnames, it probably mattered little that these names came from the mother's lineage. When the kings died, it was their mother who was pained and who spat blood and died, and afterward, the spirits of the kings went looking for her and finally found her at a place that continued to bear a name reflecting the incident.

Sutton (2000, 475) is probably correct to point out that the legends referred to the regional topography, that their symbolic values were appropriated by locals, and that they might well have predated the written records. However, in that case, they did not tell a story of conquest. Instead, they were about the humanization of power and procreation, about the male and the female, about birth and rebirth. The conquest, interestingly, harnessed these images and turned the legends into a saga centred on the male and passed on through unilineal descent.

It may be added that the connection with the mother was retained in rituals of sacrifice. In 1933, when Shi Honggui, very much a native of the region, wrote about the Miao's idea of gods and ghosts in western Hunan, he noted that the most important ceremony they practised for the treatment of serious illness was the sacrifice of a cow to the kings and a pig to the kings' mother (Shi 1933, 12).

Conclusion

It is necessary to return to the history of the temple in order to see how the process of appropriation of the legends of the Three Kings came about. One might think of the process as having been made up of three stages. In the first stage, the indigenous people sacrificed to various "kings" – whether singly

or together – along with female deities, some of whom had been linked through family relationships. These deities might have been ancestral figures and might have represented topographical points that for one reason or another stood out in their lives. The second followed when, with imperial expansion, some of the natives adopted ways that were gaining currency in the empire, which included redefining their relationships with their ancestors in terms of the lineage. That is, unilineal descent came to be privileged, and sacrifices began to take place within structures fitting for temples *(miao)*. Some time in the last half of the Ming dynasty, the shrine for the Three Kings and their mother at Yaxi was converted into a temple by the native official. Nevertheless, this was the temple specific to the official's lineage. The people who were his subjects sacrificed to the gods outside the gate. In the third stage, with the Qing conquest in the eighteenth century, the temple was opened to all, and, as might be expected, rather than unifying all practices of worship, it came to be the focal point where different ritual traditions were practised. Meanwhile, in response to the need to integrate the region's history into the history of the state, gazetteer compilers chose from among local legends to arrive at a version that might, on the one hand, give respectability to the gods and, on the other, retain enough of the local legends to allow the gods to be recognizable.

Despite long years of contact with the imperial state, western Hunan never lost its frontier character. If it had, there might have been a fourth stage of the story, when the kings would have been redefined and brought within the pantheon that was supported by dynastic ritual. Indeed, in the early Qing, local magistrates and their supporting literati attempted to do so, but the stories linking the kings to references in classical Chinese texts did not catch on.

It is characteristic of ritual changes that, very often, rather than replacing an earlier ritual, the later reforms merely added layers of interpretation to the earlier ritual. Thus, in the very long oral tradition that has remained to the present day, as well as in ritual performances that are still extant, the connection between the kings and their mother is retained. A very obvious feature of this connection is the kings' adoption of their mother's surname rather than their father's. It was when the genealogical connection had to be made to the Yang family generals, who traced their descent and surname through the male line, that descent through male ancestors began to sit uncomfortably alongside a surname that originated with a female ancestor. Any contemporary incongruence, however, rests only in the outsider's observation. In western Hunan, no native suggested to me that the two might be incompatible.

Glossary

badai xiong	巴岱熊	Miao *laoshi*	苗老師
badai zha	巴岱扎	Muying shengpo	穆英聖婆
Baidi tianwang	白帝天王	Luo	羅
baifuzhang	百夫長	*niangniang*	娘娘
Baojing xuanweisi	保靖宣慰司	*niangniang daihua*	娘娘戴花
bingbeidao	兵備道	*niangniang dan*	娘娘誕
Bozhou	播州	*nuo*	儺
Cai Fuyi	蔡復一	Panhu	盤瓠
canjiang	參將	Rongmei	容美
Chen-Yong-Yuan	辰永沅	Shen Congwen	沈從文
dan	石	*sheng*	生
du	都	Shi Honggui	石宏規
dubei	都備	*shu*	熟
Fenghuang	鳳凰	Shujiatang	舒家塘
fo	佛	*shun*	舜
gaitu guiliu	改土歸流	Song Lian	宋濂
Ganziping zhangguansi	竿子坪長官司	*suo*	所
Ge	仡	*Tianwang ke*	天王科
Guanyin	觀音	*tima*	梯玛
guishi	鬼師	Tongren	銅仁
Guzhang	古丈	Tongting Lake	洞庭湖
Heku zhen	禾庫镇	Tu *laoshi*	土老師
Huan Dou	歡兜	*tuguan*	土官
jimi	羈縻	Tujia	土家
jingzhou	靖州	*tujun*	土軍
Jishou	吉首	*tumu*	土目
juren	舉人	*tuqiu*	土酋
Kaili	凱里	*turen*	土人
ke	客	*tushe*	土舍
ke laoshi	客老師	*tusheng tuzhang*	土生土长
kemin	客民	*tusi*	土司
La'er shan	腊爾山	*tuwang pusa*	土王菩薩
lao gupo	老姑婆	*waisun*	外孫
li	里	Wang Guangkui	王光夔
lijia	里甲	Wang Mang	王莽
Longjia shengzhu	龍家聖主	Wang Rou	王柔
Lutijian	鹿蹄澗	*wangye kai shenmen*	王爺開神門
Luxi	瀘溪	*weisuo*	衛所
Miao *jiang*	苗疆	Wu Yiben	吳一本

Wuxi	武溪	Yanglao Dongguan	楊老棟官
Wuzhai zhangguansi	五寨長官司	Yaxi	鴉溪
Xianchangping	縣場坪	Yaxi tianwang miao	鴉溪天王廟
Xiangtou	香头	Yingbiao	應彪
xiangtu	鄉土	Yinghu	應虎
xiangxi	湘西	Yinglong	應龍
xianniang	娘娘	*yiyong*	義勇
xiaoshu	小暑	Yongshun xuanweisi	永順宣慰司
xinan guanhua	西南官話	*zhai*	寨
xuanweisi	宣慰司	Zhang Juzheng	張居正
xunjian si	巡檢司	*zhangguansi*	長官司
Yang Er	楊二	*zhenfu*	鎮撫
Yang Tianni	楊添輗	Zhen'gan	鎮筸
Yang Wenju	楊文舉	Zhenxi *suo*	鎮溪所
Yang Ye	楊業	Zhou Yide	周一德
Yang Yinglong	楊應龍	*zhubu*	主簿
Yangjia zhai	楊家寨	*zu*	族

Notes

1 For comparison, see Lian (2005) and Csete (2001).
2 These terms are often translated as "raw" and "cooked," but there is no indication that the food analogy applies to natives any more than to domesticated and wild animals.
3 "Tujia," as a name of the ethnic group, was used only after the national ethnic identification in the 1950s. Before that time, the word *turen* was widely used to describe people living in the region now inhabited by the Tujia minority. Howerever, *turen* in Ming and Qing documents refers to "people in the domain of the *tusi* (native officials)," who were locals, or natives, rather than outsiders (*ke, kemin*). The relationship between Tujia and turen is very complicated and not readily reduced to ethnicity. Not even all of the descendants of people who were ruled by tusi are Tujia. When the Baojing and Yongshun tusi were abolished in 1727 and 1728, the local people were registered under three catagories: turen, Han, and Miao. It is often incorrect to relate the ethnic label of today directly to these historic terms (Xie forthcoming).
4 The term *tuguan* was also used to describe native chieftains appointed by the state. According to the research of Du (1987), the term *tusi* was never used to describe native chieftains until the Jiajing reign. Before the Jiajing reign, the term *tuguan* contained a meaning similar to that of the term *tusi* in most situations.
5 The Miao had no writing until the twentieth century. I refer here to rare texts in Chinese that were written or held by Miao people.
6 In very rare cases, they are men known as "fairy ladies" in Western Hunan.
7 Although this area is recorded to have been divided into ten li in the early period of the Ming dynasty, no positive clues show that the Ming government could really execute the *lijia* (household registration) and tax collection system in this area. In most conditions, the area came under the control of Yang-surnamed chieftains during the Ming dynasty, even after the Zhenxi battalion came into existence (Xie forthcoming, chapter 7).
8 Substantial documentation is extant in western Hunan that describes the worship of Panhu by the Miao, and to this day Panhu is still worshipped in some Miao hamlets in

western Hunan. In legends and rituals, Panhu is portrayed as an important god or remote ancestor.

9 In these contexts, the terms *tuguan* and *tusi* both describe a native who held an official position. The common term *tusi* was applied to native chiefs who were given imperial appointment. The tusi usually held hereditary posts. In this chapter, where the text refers to a native offical, the term *tusi* will be used.

10 The term *tushe* seems to include members of the tusi's family (Li 1998; Cheng 2001).

11 Pan Guangdan, who played an active role in the identification of the Tujia minority in the 1950s, regarded the White Emperor Heavenly Kings as icons of Tujia rather than Miao culture (Pan 1955). I have found no indication, in ritual or literature, to show that the Tu masters played an active role in the ceremonies of the Yaxi Temple.

12 I visited the Yaxi Temple six times between 2006 and 2008.

13 The need to invite the Jade Emperor to the celebration is also corroborated by the *Heavenly Kings Text* (*Tianwang ke*), shown to me in a Miao village on the bank of the Wuxi River in Luxi county by a Taoist who had hand-copied it from his own master's copy. He told me that the ceremonies at the temple needed this text.

14 From 1797 to 1863, the kings were awarded higher and higher titles five times. Four of these titles were awarded to the kings of the Yaxi Temple, whereas the first was awarded to the kings of the Yongsui White Emperor Kings Temple, which was built by the official Zhou Yide, who conducted the expedition of 1728.

15 Stele inscription seen at the Yaxi temple, entitled "Baidi tianwang huanyuan ji" ("The Origins of the Baidi Heavenly Kings").

16 A woman of the Yang surname at Qianzhou is cited as follows in Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou minjian wenxue jicheng bangongshi (1989, 83): "The daughter of the Yang surname is also sacrificed to in 'the Three Kings Temple,' and people call her '*niangniang*' with respect. She is in charge of obliging people with children."

Bibliography

Brown, Melissa J. 2002. "Local government agency: Manipulating Tujia identity." *Modern China* 28, 3: 362-95.

Cheng Zhenming. 2001. "Lun Mingqing shiqi de tushe" [A discussion on the native officers in the period of the Ming and Qing dynasties]. *Mingzu Yanjiu* [Ethno-National Studies] 3: 65-73.

Cheung Sui-woo. 2003. "Miao identities, indigenism, and the politics of appropriation in southwest China during the Republican period." *Asian Ethnicity,* 4, 1: 85-114.

Chenzhou fuzhi [Gazetteer of Chenzhou prefecture]. 1765. Reprint, Nanjing: Jiangsu Ancient Books Press, 2002.

Csete, Anne Alice. 2001. "The Li Mother Spirit and the struggle for Hainan's land and legend." *Late imperial China* 22, 2: 91-123.

Du Yuting. 1987. "Tuguan tusi liangleishuo kaoyi" [A study on the debate of *tuguan* and *tusi*]. In Institute of Nationality Studies eds., *Zhongguo Mingzushi Yanjiu* [Studies on Chinese Ethnic History]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe. 474-81.

Fenghuang tingzhi [Gazetteer of Fenghuang subprefecture]. 1756. Reprint, Haikou: Hainan Press, 2001.

Han Chaojian. 2008. "Zhonglu: Yuan Ming shiqi Daizhou Lutijian Yangshi de zongzu jiangou" [Loyalty village: The lineage construction of the Yang surname of Lutijian in Dai county in the Yuan and Ming dynasties]. Paper presented at the Conference on Comparative Studies of Chinese Local Society in Historical Perspective, Taipei, Academia Sinica, 17, December.

He Xi. 2011. *Yishen Yizu: Guangdong xinan diqu de defang xiyang yu quyu shehui* [Ancestor and deity: local religion and regional society in southwestern Guangdong], Beijing: Sanlian shudian.

Herman, John E. 1997. "Empire in the southwest: Early Qing reforms to the native chieftain system." *Journal of Asian Studies* 56, 1: 47-74.

–. 2007. *Amid the clouds and mist: China's colonization of Guizhou, 1200-1700*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Hunan tongzhi [Gazetteer of Hunan province]. 1885. Reprint, Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1967.

Jiajing Huguang tujing zhishu [Gazetteer of Huguang province]. 1522. Reprint, Beijing: Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1991.

Katz, Paul R. 2001. "Divine justice: Chicken-beheading rituals in Japanese Occupation Taiwan and their historical antecedents." In Wang Qiugui, Zhuang Yingzhang, and Chen zhongming, eds., *Shehui Mingzu yu wenhua zhanyan guoji yantaohui lunwenji* [Proceedings of the International Conference on Society, Ethnicity and Cultural Performance], 111-60. Taibei: Hanxue Yanjiu zhongxin.

–. 2007. "Indictment rituals and the judicial continuum in late imperial China," in Robert E. Hegel and Katherine Carlitz, eds., *Writing and Law in Late Imperial China: Crime, Conflict, and Judgment,* 161-85. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

–. 2009. *Divine justice: religion and the development of Chinese legal culture,* London: Routledge.

Lee Chiao-Hung. 2008. "Tuwang de ziming: Zhongguo tujiazu de lishi yu wenhua yanjiu" [In the shadow of native officials: History and culture of Tu-ja in northwest Hunan]. PhD diss., Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan.

Li Jiu. 1981. "Miao zu xingshi de laiyou ji qita" [The origin of the Miao surname and other related problems]. *Guizhou mingzu xueyuan xuebao* [Journal of Guizhou University for Ethnic Minorities] 1: 64-65.

Li Shiyu. 1998. "Tushe kao" [Textural research on native officials]. In *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao* [A study on the system of native officals in the Qing dynasty], 187-202. Beijing: Zhongguo sheke chubanshe.

Lian Ruizhi (Lien Jui-Chih). 2005. "Nuxing zuxian huo nushen? Yunnan Erhai diqu de shizu chuanshuo yu nushen xinyang" (Female ancestors or goddesses? Legends of primordial ancestors and beliefs in goddess]. *Lishi renleixue xuekan* [Journal of History and Anthropology] 3, 2: 25-57.

Ling Chungsheng and Rui Yifu. 1947. *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* [Report on an investigation into the Miao people of western Hunan]. Nanjing: Guoli Zhongyang Yanjiu Yuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiusuo.

Liu Zhiwei. 1997. *Zai guojia yu shehui zhi jian: Ming-Qing Guangdong lijia fuyi zhidu yanjiu* [Between state and society: A study of household-registration tax and service in Ming and Qing Guangdong]. Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe.

Lu Yangzheng. 2002. "Xiang-E xi Miaozu chongbai 'Baidi tianwang' Kaobian" [A study on the White Emperor Heavenly Kings worshipped by the Miao in the west of Hunan and Hubei]. *Zhongyang mingzu daxue xuebao* [Journal of Mingzu University of China] 29, 1: 88-91.

Luxi xianzhi [Gazetteer of Luxi county]. 1755. Reprint, Haikou: Hainan Chubanshe, 2001.

Mayang xianzhi [Gazetteer of Myang county]. 1685. Reprint, Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1992.

Ming shilu [Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty], multivolume reprint, 1962-68. Nangang: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo.

Pan Guangdan. 1955. "Xiangxibei de 'Tujia' yu gudai de baren" [Tujia in northwest Hunan and ancient Ba people]. In *Zhongguo minzu wenti yanjiu jikan disiji* [Studies on minorities in China 4], 1-134. Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan minzu yanjiusuo.

Qianzhou tingzhi [Gazetteer of Qianzhou subprefecture]. 1877. Reprint, Nanjing: Jiangsu Ancient Books Press,2002.

Qianzhou xiaozhi [Little gazetteer of Qianzhou].1833. Reprint, Taibei, Xin Wenfeng, 1989.

Qianzhou zhi [Gazetteer of Qianzhou]. 1739. Reprint, Beijing: Beijing Library Press, 2005.

Qinding Da-Qing huidian shili [Imperially Ordained Statutes and Substatutes of the Qing Empire]. 1899. Reprint, Taipei: Qiwen chubanshe. 1963.

Rack, Mary. 2005. *Ethnic distinctions, local meanings: Negotiating cultural identities in China*. London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto.

Shi Honggui. 1933. *Xiangxi Miaozu kaocha jiyao* [A summary report on an investigation into the Miao people of western Hunan]. Changsha: Feixiong yinwu gongsi.

Shi Qigui. 1986. *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao* [Report on an on-the-spot investigation into the Miao people of western Hunan]. Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe.

Song Lian. 1987. *Wenxian ji* [Song Lian's collected essays]. Fourteenth century. Reprint, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe.

Sutton, Donald S. 2000. "Myth making on an ethnic frontier: The cult of the Heavenly Kings of west Hunan, 1715-1996." *Modern China* 26, 4: 448-500.

–. 2003. "Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier: Customary and Statutory Law in the Eighteenth-Century Miao Pale." *Modern Asian Studies,* 37,1:41-80.

Tan Qixiang. 1987. "Bozhou Yangshi kao" [A study of the Yang surname at Bozhou]. In Tan Qixiang ed., *Changshui Ji* [The Long Water Collection (Selected papers of Tan Qixiang)], 262-97. Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe.

Tianwang ke [Heavenly Kings text]. N.d. Unpublished manuscript. Ritual text hand-copied from the Taoist's master's copy at Luxi county, Hunan province.

Wang Aiying. 2004. "Wenhua chuancheng yu shehui bianqian: Xiangxi Baidi tianwang xinyang de yuanyuan liubian" [Cultural heritage and social transformation: The origin and transition of the Heavenly Kings]. *Jinan daxue xuebao* [Journal of Jinan Uiversity]14, 2: 33-37.

Wen Chunlai. 2008. *Cong yiyu dao jiujiang: Song zhi Qing Guizhou xibeibu diqu de zhidu kaifa yu rentong* [From foreign land to civilized domain: Institutions, developments, and identity of northwest Guizhou from the Song to Qing dynasties]. Beijing: sanlian shudian.

Xiang Chunling. 2007. "Xiangxi Fenghuang cheng Tianwang Xinyang de lishi kaocha" [A historical survey of the Heavenly Kings in Fenghuang city, western Hunan]. *Xinan mingzu daxue xuebao* 187, 3: 17-23.

Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou minjian wenxue jicheng bangongshi [Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture Literature Collection Office] ed. 1989. *Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng: Hunannan Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou fenjuan* [Collection of Chinese folktales, Hunan province, western Hunan, Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture volume]. Jishou: Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou minjian wenxue jicheng bangongshi.

Xie Xiaohui. Forthcoming. "*Yanxu de bianyuan: Cong Song dao Qing de Xiangxi*" [The lingering frontier: Western Hunan from Song to Qing dynasties]. Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe.

–. 2012. "'Zhiyuan zeizai, qiken miezei': Mingdai Xiangxi Miaojiang kaifa yu bianqiang xiuzhu zhi zairenshi" [Re-considering the Development of the Miao Territory and the Establishments of the Frontier Walls during the Ming Dynasty], *Mingdai Yanjiu* [Ming Studies] 18:1-35.

–. 2012. "Hunyin lianmeng yu puxi chuancheng: Mingdai Xiangxi miaojiang tusi de bianqian" [Intermarriage alliance and genesis of lineage among the Tujia: transformation of native chieftains in Western Hunan during the Ming Dynasty], *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* [Chinese Social History Review] 13:306-37.

Yan Ruyi. 1843. *Miaofang beilan* [Conspectus of the Miao defence area]. Shaoyi Tang edition.

Yangshi zupu [Genealogy of the Yang surname]. 1847. Printed at Lutijian village, Daizhou, Shanxi province, and held at Wuhan University Library.

–. N.d. Unpublished manuscript. Held at Shujiatang village, Fenghuang county, Hunan province.