

**The Study of Miao Albums:  
The Purposes of the Compilation and the Image of the Miao People**

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**Abstract**

This article aims to investigate the functions of Miao albums (百苗圖, C. *Baimiao tu*, or 苗蠻圖, C. *Miaoman tu*) and the purpose of their compilation. It analyses one of the albums which was published as a reprint in David Michael Deal and Laura Hostetler's book, *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese "Miao Album"*. By studying the album texts and illustrations, the article explores Chinese and official Qing views on the Miao groups and speculates about why the Qing government adopted policies aimed at the Miao, such as "changing chieftains into officials" (改土歸流, C. *gaitu guiliu*). As Miao albums were compiled by Chinese officials, both the texts and illustrations were presented in a Chinese angle. This article attempts to find out the reasons why the Qing as a Manchu dynasty studied the Miao peoples through Chinese eyes, as well as assimilated them into Chinese culture rather than their own Manchu culture.

**Keywords:** Miao albums (*Baimiao tu*, or *Miaoman tu*); changing chieftains into officials (*gaitu guiliu*); civilization; assimilation; Sinicization

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## Introduction

Miao albums (百苗圖, C. *Baimiao tu*, or 苗蠻圖, C. *Miaoman tu*) are official productions of pictures, accompanied by texts about diverse people living in the southwestern mountainous regions of China proper<sup>1</sup>, often simply called Miao (苗) or Man (蠻).<sup>2</sup> More than 180 Miao albums can be found in libraries and museums in Europe, the United States and Asia. According to the extant prefaces, some of the Miao albums were made by low-level officials in frontier regions during the Qing Dynasty (1636/1644-1912).<sup>3</sup> They combined their own and other officials' firsthand experience and the records in local gazetteers of the province, compiling several Miao albums. The manuscripts were then distributed to local government offices or stored in the Royal Library. Both the texts and pictures were revised regularly.

Ethnographic descriptions of non-Chinese peoples in southwest China appeared as early as 1560.<sup>4</sup> During the following more than two and a half centuries, more and more descriptions and drawings of the ethnic minority groups were published in official local gazetteers as well as private writings. In *Record of Guizhou* (黔記, C. *Qian ji*), published in 1608, 13 Miao groups were recorded. In the three editions of *Guizhou Gazetteer* (貴州通志, C. *Guizhou tongzhi*) published in 1673, 1692 and 1741, there were 30, 31 and 38 different Miao groups respectively. This shows that gradually, the Chinese authors expanded their knowledge about southwestern non-Chinese peoples. As will become clear in the following, the texts, paintings, and even the format of Miao albums were inspired by *Guizhou Gazetteer*.<sup>5</sup>

The Miao album analysed in this paper was published as a reprint by David Michael Deal and Laura Hostetler.<sup>6</sup> Apart from the original album, the book also contains English translations of the texts. This paper investigates into the uses of Miao albums and the purpose it was compiled for. By analysing the album texts and illustrations, it explores Chinese and official Qing views on the Miao groups, and also speculates about why the Qing government adopted policies aimed at the Miao, such as “changing chieftains into officials” (改土歸流, C. *gaitu guiliu*). Miao albums were compiled by Chinese officials and therefore represent a Chinese viewpoint. Why did the Qing as a Manchu dynasty study the Miao peoples through Chinese eyes? This question, among others, will be discussed in the following chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> China proper refers to the areas of China within the Great Wall in the Qing dynasty. These were the regions where the Han Chinese mainly settled in and included a total of eighteen provinces, which were Zhili, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Sichuan, Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi. In frontier provinces such as Shaanxi, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan and Guangxi, lived dozens of ethnic groups. They mainly settled in peripheral areas while the Han Chinese lived in the core areas of China proper (Richard Joseph Smith, “The Qing Political Order”, in Richard Joseph Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 86-89).

<sup>2</sup> According to Laura Hostetler, there are also Miao Albums without texts. The texts may have been cut off when the albums were rebound and then sold to foreign countries, because foreign buyers could not read Chinese (Laura Hostetler, “Introduction: Early Modern Ethnography in Comparative Historical Perspective”, in David Michael Deal & Laura Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao Album”* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), xvii-lxvii, lxiii, note 33).

<sup>3</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxii.

<sup>4</sup> *Record of the Tropical Southern Frontier* (炎徼紀聞, C. *Yanjiao jiwen*), which was written by the Ming scholar Tian Rucheng (田汝成, 1503-1557) and published in 1560, is the earliest ethnographic descriptions of non-Chinese peoples in southwest China. It not only records Tian's experience in the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou when he was an official there but also contains articles on the Miao groups in the southwest.

<sup>5</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxii-xxvi.

<sup>6</sup> Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*.

## *Miao and Chinese*

In classical Chinese, Miao has two general meanings. In a narrow sense, it refers to the Miao people as a concrete ethnic group, which can be subdivided into Songjia Miao (宋家苗), Caijia Miao (蔡家苗), Hua Miao (花苗), Hong Miao (紅苗), Yao Miao (天苗) and so on. In a broad sense, Miao refers to all non-Chinese peoples living in the south and southwest China and includes other ethnic groups such as Gelao (仡佬), Zhongjia (侗家), Luoluo (猓人), Yaoren (瑶人), Longjia (龍家) and others.<sup>7</sup> The Miao albums apply the broad sense and record diverse non-Chinese peoples mainly in Guizhou.

When used in Miao albums, the term *Han* (漢) refers to the (Han) Chinese people. It is used to distinguish the Chinese people in the core areas of China proper from people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds living in frontier provinces and peripheral areas.

### **“Change chieftains into officials” and “enroll households and register people”**

Most Miao albums do not give the authors, painters, or dates of publication. However, it seems certain that Miao albums first appeared after the implementation of *gaitu guiliu* in the late Yongzheng period (1722-1735). Before this time, only 31 Miao ethnic groups were officially known.<sup>8</sup> The Miao albums list many more Miao groups; for example, the one analysed here identifies 82 different ethnic groups in Guizhou.

In 1726, Ortai (鄂爾泰, C. E’ertai, 1677-1745) was appointed as the Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou (雲貴總督, C. *Yun-Gui zongdu*) and vigorously implemented the policy of *gaitu guiliu*—native chieftains (土司, C. *tusi*) were appointed as civil officials. They remained in charge, but their title was not hereditary anymore and needed to be confirmed by the emperor. The strategy of *gaitu guiliu* was introduced already in early Ming times, but many areas in southwest China continued to be ruled by chieftains. Ortai pointed out that “ruling barbarians with barbarians” (以夷待夷, C. *yiyi daiyi*) was no different from “ruling theft with theft” (以盜治盜, C. *yidao zhidao*) as he thought that native chieftains who had not yet changed to be civil officials were still barbarian and untrustful.<sup>9</sup> Because of the lack of supervision, law enforcement failed, and chieftains were corrupted. Consequently, Ortai implemented the strategy of *gaitu guiliu* in his sphere of influence. Parallel to this, the Qing Empire began to establish the *Baojia* system (保甲制, C. *baojia zhi*)<sup>10</sup>, measure farmland, audit the amount of money and food owned by the government, establish schools, repair riverbanks and roads as well as “enrol households and register people” (編戶齊民, C. *bianhu qimin*).<sup>11</sup> *Bianhu qimin* is an efficient method of governing, monitoring and organizing people. Once a person is registered as a resident, he or she has an obligation to pay tax and participate in corvée duties. For men, they may also need to join the army during the wartime. Registered residents are considered to be of great importance to keep a country moving.<sup>12</sup> The strategies of *gaitu guiliu* and *bianhu*

<sup>7</sup> South and southwest China include Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangdong, Hunan, Taiwan and Hainan.

<sup>8</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxvi.

<sup>9</sup> Ortai, *Fenbie liutu kaocheng yizhuan zhishou yijing bianfang shi zou*, in *Siku quanshu, Zhupi yuzhi*, vol. 125, no. 02, 14a, dated 1726, “Chinese Text Project”, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&res=6403>.

<sup>10</sup> It is a community-based system of law enforcement and civil control. The leaders of the *bao* 保 were given authority to maintain local order, collect taxes, and organize civil projects.

<sup>11</sup> Zhuang Jifa, ed., *Yongzheng shidian* (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 2005), 106-107.

<sup>12</sup> Du Zhengsheng, *Bianhu qimin: chuantong zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi xingcheng* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1990), iv-v; Xu Zhuoyun, *Zhongguo gudai wenhua de tezhi* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1988), 25-27.

*qimin* were thus not only for governance issues, but also for economic reasons: land of native chieftains was confiscated, and Chinese people were allowed to claim it. People from the overpopulated central provinces of China proper migrated to the southwest and cultivated the land, thus relieving the pressure in China proper and bringing economic benefit to the local governments.

### ***Publishing time***

Miao albums were regularly revised by officials who adjusted for example place names. Besides, with increasing knowledge of the Miao, the album texts had to be changed accordingly. By comparing different versions of Miao albums, it is thus possible to establish an approximate time of origin. In the Miao album analysed here, some passages suggest its publishing time. Text 6 mentions that the group Kayou Zhongjia (卡尤种家) “is located in Guiyang, Pingyue, Duyun, Anshun, and Xingyi (興義).”<sup>13</sup> Xingyi was a place name only announced in 1797, the former name being Nanlong (南籠).<sup>14</sup> Text 20 mentions, “the Yao Miao are [...] located in Pingyue Department (平越州, C. *Pingyue zhou*).”<sup>15</sup> Pingyue, was originally a prefecture (府, C. *fu*) and became a department only in 1798.<sup>16</sup> It can thus be concluded that the Miao album analysed here was produced in 1798 or after.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Format***

In the Miao albums analysed here, 82 Miao groups are recorded. Each group is described by a picture and a text passage.<sup>18</sup> The text is written in the regular script and easy to read. Next to each group’s name is a seven-character quatrain, which summarizes the group’s main features. The subsequent text describes the group’s costume, burial and nuptial rituals, livelihood and so on in more detail. The pictures which are drawn in traditional Chinese painting style depict some specific customs of each group, mostly courtships and sacrifices. They also present the dressing and facial features, and landscapes where the group is located. The paintings are not sophisticated but clear and meticulous.

Painters and writers used the texts and illustrations of previous Miao albums for reference, and some even used the same pictorial compositions.<sup>19</sup> For example, the pictures of the Datou (Large-Headed) Longjia (大頭龍家) in two Miao albums held by the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the British Library respectively both show three people in similar costume and with the same facial expressions and postures. Only the backgrounds differ: one is of forest scenery; the other is blank.<sup>20</sup> The pictures of Turen (土人) in the Miao album analysed here and the one in the British Library both depict the Turen performing music and

<sup>13</sup> 卡尤种家在貴陽、平越、都勻、安順、興義。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 12-13).

<sup>14</sup> Zhao, *Qingdai dili yangge biao* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1979), 163-170; Wei Zhongcai, “Nanlong qiyi ji qi lishi yiyi”, *Qianxinan ribao*, August 13, 2012: 7.

<sup>15</sup> 天苗 [...] 在平越州。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 40-41).

<sup>16</sup> Zhao, *Qingdai dili yangge biao*, 163-170.

<sup>17</sup> Hostetler also claimed that this Miao Album was published sometime after 1797 but did not clarify how she confirmed the year (Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxii).

<sup>18</sup> The texts on the Chezhai Miao (車寨苗) (listed as no. 73) and the Liudong (Six-Cave) Yiren (六洞夷人) (listed as no. 82) are missing from the Miao album analysed here. Deal and Hostetler found texts on them in other albums and translated them into English. For these two groups, therefore, there are only pictures and English texts (Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 146-147; 164-165).

<sup>19</sup> Hostetler points out that no two Miao Albums are identical, but the composition of the illustrations can be quite similar. It shows that painters had used the previous Miao Albums for reference and reproduced the illustrations (Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxviii-xxix).

<sup>20</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xxxvi-xxxvii.

drama. They have identical postures and play the same musical instruments but wear different items of clothing. The landscape also has slight changes such as the former one has more rocks while the latter more trees and plants.<sup>21</sup>

### The Purposes of Making Miao Albums

As officially issued productions, Miao albums had no intention to exaggerate. The readers were officials and even the emperor. Probably, the authors and illustrators had to follow some guidelines, for examples, which information they should record and what format they should use. Therefore, Miao albums were written more systematically than private travel writings, the other main genre that paid attention to non-Chinese groups in the south and southwest.<sup>22</sup> One of the practical purposes of Miao albums was to indicate the places of settlement of the diverse Miao groups. Another purpose was to help officials in situ identify different Miao groups. The texts contain the names of Miao groups and describe their appearances and costumes. The images depict men and women from the respective Miao group. For example, in the text about the Luoluo, their appearance and dressing styles are described in detail:

[they are] tall with black faces, set-in eyes, and aquiline noses [...]. They partly shave their hair, but wear beards. They use a dark-coloured cloth to wrap up their hair. Some bind it to their forehead in the shape of a horn. They wear short tunics with long sleeves.<sup>23</sup>

The picture of the Luoluo shows a hunting scene. Just like the description, a man on a horse has a beard, and a man who is running in front of the horse has an aquiline nose. Their hair is wrapped in dark cloth, and they dress in short tunics with big sleeves. Picture and text provide concrete images of the Luoluo and other people as useful tools for local officials.

Laura Hostetler refers to Miao albums as ethnographic catalogues and cultural maps.<sup>24</sup> The information given about each Miao group in the pictures and texts are the following: names; places of living; surnames; costumes; facial features; historical backgrounds; languages; nature; livelihood; customs and habits; religious practices and rituals; and festivals. Based on this information, four main purposes of the Qing court to order the production of Miao albums can be summarized as follows.

The first purpose was to deepen the understanding of the Miao groups in the southwest. In fact, officials who had not been in contact with Miao people before, could gain a preliminary

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<sup>21</sup> Hostetler, "Introduction", xxxv; Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 66-67.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Qing travel accounts of Taiwan were sort of private travel writings. The readers not only included officials serving in Taiwan who used them as a reference but also audiences in China proper who read them for entertainment. Due to less limitation and different types of readership, the authors tended to explore the strangeness and savagery of Taiwanese indigenes (Emma Jinhua Teng, "An Island of Women: The Discourses of Gender in Qing Travel Writing about Taiwan", *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (1998): 353-370, 353-356; Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 14).

<sup>23</sup> 人皆長身、黑面、探目、鈎鼻、雜髮、留髯。以青布為囊，籠髮其中，束於額，若角狀。短衣大袖。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 2-3).

<sup>24</sup> Hostetler, "Introduction", xxii-xxvi.

understanding of the Miao through the albums when they were transferred to a post in one of the southwestern provinces. For example, the text about the Kayou Zhongjia mentions their costumes: “the Kayou like to wear dark garments and bind their heads with kerchiefs. Women, most of whom are slim, favour long, finely-pleated skirts made from as many as twenty or more panels.”<sup>25</sup> The accompanying picture shows three men and three women who “dance on moonlit grounds and toss a bright-hued ball”.<sup>26</sup> The clothes worn by the women in the image are just like in the description. Officials could identify the Kayou Zhongjia through their clothes and also the bright-hued ball they are playing with.

The text about the Madeng (Stirrup) Lonjia (馬鐙龍家) also refers to their dress: “they favour white clothing, but when in mourning change into a dark colour. Married women use black silk cloth to make stirrup-shaped caps.”<sup>27</sup> The picture shows a family of four, their clothes all in white. The woman wears a stirrup-shaped cap. The man holds a hoe and the woman a rake, which implies that they do not only engage in weaving as mentioned in the text but also farming. The picture thus complements the information given in the text.

Although we do not know the instructions for compiling Miao albums issued by the Qing court at the time, some clues can be found in an edict issued by the Qianlong Emperor to the Governor of Sichuan (*Sichuan xunfu* 四川巡府) in 1751. The edict contains instructions how to collect information about the Miao groups to produce the *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples* (皇清職貢圖, *C. Huang-Qing zhigongtu*): “take [...] the Luoluo with which you are familiar, and make illustrations and commentaries concerning the appearance of men and women, their dress, ornamentation, clothing, and customs.”<sup>28</sup> In addition, the edict specifically prohibited the governor from sending informants to hitherto unfamiliar groups, but collect information from the ones they already knew. This cautious attitude reflects that even though the court did not know much about the western Miao, it assumed the Miao groups were fierce and warlike. In order to avoid conflict, it was better to keep some distance.<sup>29</sup>

The second purpose of the Qing court to order the production of Miao albums was to help Chinese officials facilitate the ruling of the Miao and avoid conflict with them. Generally, Qing officials changed their position every three years. Therefore, every three years, new officials who did not know much about the Miao took over local affairs. In order to let the new arrivals have some understanding of the Miao and avoid conflicts or misunderstandings, Miao albums served as essential guidebooks.

Miao albums record the customs and rituals of the Miao groups, especially regarding marriage and funeral. As some of their customs seemed weird in Chinese eyes, conflicts could arise if officials did not know about this and maybe tried to intervene or block them. For example, the Songjia Miao had a custom called “capturing the bride”. The text on them stipulates that “before a wedding, the bridegroom and his family go to greet the bride, but the bride’s family gathers all the relatives together and beats up the bridegroom’s family. This custom is called capturing the bride”.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> 衣尚青，以帕束首。婦女多織，好長裙，細褶多至二十餘幅。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 12-13).

<sup>26</sup> 跳月場中擲綵毬。(Ibid., 12-13).

<sup>27</sup> 衣尚白，喪則易之以青。婦人以縑布作冠，如馬鐙狀。(Ibid., 22-23).

<sup>28</sup> 訪所知西番、獯獯男婦形狀，並衣飾服習，分別繪圖注釋。(Gongzhong dang *Qianlong chao zouzhe*, dated 1751 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1982-86); see also Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 45).

<sup>29</sup> *The Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples* was published in 1761. It was organized by Yongxuan (永璇, 1746-1832), Qianlong’s eighth son, and compiled by Dong Gao (董誥, 1740-1818) and Fuheng (傅恒, 1720-1770). It records 41 Miao ethnic groups in Guizhou, three more than *Guizhou Gazetteer* (1741) did.

<sup>30</sup> 將嫁，婿家往迎，女家率親戚箠楚之，謂之「奪親」。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 8-9).

The Qing poet Shu Wei (舒位, 1765-1816) composed a poem about this custom:

They know writing and farming, but don't know the year.  
The ritual of marriage makes people confused.  
Don't laugh at them even if they beat each other as if beating ducks.  
It is much better than asking money for opening the bride's door.<sup>31</sup>

In his *Collection of Poems from the Bottled-Water Room* (瓶水齋詩集, C. *Pingshuizhai shiji*), Shu Wei called this custom “absurd 可笑”. He also used the opportunity to criticize the current Chinese marriage custom: “that [Miao custom] is really absurd. However, today's people even ask money for opening the door of the bridal room. Their behaviour is actually no different from the Miao's.”<sup>32</sup> Shu Wei used Miao customs to judge whether a behaviour was savage.<sup>33</sup> He was one of the aides of Wang Zhaowu (王朝梧), the Governor of Hebei (河北太守, C. *Hebei taishou*). In 1797, a rebellion led by the Miao woman Wang Nangxian (王囊仙) broke out in Nanlong, the west of Guizhou.<sup>34</sup> Wang Zhaowu and his army were sent to assist the suppression led by Leboo (勒保, C. Lebao, 1740-1819), the then Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou. Shu Wei thus followed Wang's army to Guizhou and stayed there for many years. During that period, he wrote several poems titled “Poem about the Miao in Guizhou” (黔苗竹枝詞, C. *Qian Miao zhuzhi ci*), including the one above. As an aide, he probably had the opportunity to read one or more Miao albums. His poems seem to show that he was not surprised by the marriage custom of the Songjia Miao and might be an example of how vital Miao albums were for Chinese officials getting posts in Guizhou.

The third purpose of ordering the production of Miao albums was that local officials could use them as maps. The illustrations show the Miao people's living environment as well as the landscape nearby, sometimes the landmarks in the regions. For example, the image of the Datou Longjia shows a family of three crossing a brick bridge with a range of mountains in the background. A willow tree stands at the end of the bridge, and mist covers the near shore. In addition, the text records that they live in the Zhenning (鎮寧) and Puding (普定) Districts.<sup>35</sup> The place names and the scenery in the picture both helped local officials to find the settlements of the Datou Longjia.

<sup>31</sup> 識字耕田不記年，男昏女嫁兩茫然。似渠打鴨休相笑，勝索開門一種錢。(Shu Wei, *Qing Miao zhuzhi ci* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1989)).

<sup>32</sup> 誠可笑。然今人嫁女之家，有索開門錢者，竟至攘臂請益。則其異於苗子也幾希。(Shu Wei, *Pingshuizhai shiji* (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939)).

<sup>33</sup> Not only Shu Wei, but also people in the Ming and Qing dynasties had the habit of using “Miao” to describe uncivilized behaviour or things that were bad, ugly and crude. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, “Miao” was defined as a synonym for barbarism. Some ethnic groups, such as the Dong (Cave) Miao and the Zhongjia, felt angry when people called them “Miao”. Some Miao people in Hunan even changed their surnames or bribed local officials to change their household registration in order to remove the Miao identity (Shi Qigui, *Xiangxi miaozu diaocha baogao* (Hunan: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1986), 207-212; Yang Zhiqiang, “Cong Miao dao Miaozu: lun jindai minzu jituan xingcheng de ta zhe xing wenti”, *Xinan minzu daxue xuebao* 6 (2010): 1-7, 3-5).

<sup>34</sup> After the eight-month battle, the rebellion was pacified by capturing the leader Wang Nangxian and some other main rebels. The place's name, Nanlong, was then changed to Xingyi on August 2, 1797 (Wei, “Nanlong qi yi ji qi lishi yi yi”). The changed name also indicates the possible publishing time of the Miao album analysed here (see above).

<sup>35</sup> Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 24-25.

Apart from the geographical features shown in some of the pictures, some unique rituals could also be used to determine the settlements of certain Miao groups. For example, the Mulao (木佬) held a ceremony called “releasing the ghost” after the death of a relative. Text 30 on the Mulao says: “whenever sacrifices are made to ghosts, they fashion a dragon from grass and insert five coloured flags into its back. They go out into the wild to sacrifice to it.”<sup>36</sup> The picture shows a man worshipping a grass dragon which has inserted five coloured flags into its back. A man dressed in white who holds a bell in hand is probably a sorcerer. Again, taking text and image, the grass dragon becomes specific and unmistakable and could help officials to identify the Mulao (at least when they had lost a relative).

The Luoju (Stored-House-Dwelling) Hei (Black) Miao (樓居黑苗) also had a special custom when a family member died. Text 57 on the Luoju Hei Miao says: “when someone dies, they dress the corpse for burial but then delay for up to twenty years. The whole village selects an auspicious date on which to bury a great number of coffins. They collectively build an ancestral temple called the ghost hall.”<sup>37</sup> Therefore, when officials saw a ghost hall, they knew that a settlement of the Luoju Hei Miao was nearby. According to the landscape and unique customs depicted in the texts and pictures, the officials could identify the living places of the Miao groups as well as avoid intruding into their settlements and causing conflict.

Laura Hostetler points out the fourth purposes of the Miao albums: “the texts served as a kind of indicator of where the groups fell on a cultural continuum from ‘like us’ (與漢人同, *C. yu Hanren tong*) to savage or in some way ‘Other’.”<sup>38</sup> The Miao albums thus helped to distinguish between assimilable Miao and Miao who were not assimilable, so that the Qing could adopt different strategies to control and govern them.

The texts and images in the Miao albums show a wide range of diverse Miao groups with different characters and customs. Most of them are depicted as fierce and warlike, for example, the Qingjiang (Clear-River) Zhongjia (清江狃家) “are pound and cruel; by nature, hard to tame”;<sup>39</sup> the Dongren (Cave People) (峒人) are “suspicious and envious. [...] always carry a spear or crossbow”;<sup>40</sup> and the Zhushi (Pig-Filth) Gelao (豬屎狃佬) “carry swords and crossbows whenever they go out. If they have an enemy, they will certainly take revenge.”<sup>41</sup> Few are described as honest and careful by nature. Among 82 ethnic groups, only Pipao (Cape) Gelao (披袍狃佬) and Yaoren received this compliment. The text on the Pipao Gelao says that they are “honest and careful, [...] work diligently at weaving and tilling”.<sup>42</sup> The text on the Yaoren says they “are respectful and sincere. If they find an object on the road, they do not pocket it”.<sup>43</sup> Some Miao groups are said to be good at farming and weaving, some can speak Chinese, and some work as servants in Chinese families, such as the Dong (Cave) Miao (洞苗). The text about them mentions that they “understand Chinese. They [...] cultivate cotton for a living. The men’s clothing is like that of the Han Chinese, therefore many hire themselves out to work for the Han”.<sup>44</sup> Once a group was found to have the same religion as Chinese, the author could not conceal his surprise. For example, the text about the Boren (懋人) writes:

<sup>36</sup> 凡祀鬼，束一草龍，上插五色紙旗，往郊外祀之。(Ibid., 60-61).

<sup>37</sup> 人死殮而停之，以二十年為期。合寨共卜吉，以百棺同葬，公建祖祠，名曰「鬼堂」。(Ibid., 114-115).

<sup>38</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xli.

<sup>39</sup> 男兒驕悍性難馴。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 126-127).

<sup>40</sup> 性猜忌 [...] 手不離鏢弩。(Ibid., 70-71).

<sup>41</sup> 男子出入必佩刀弩，有仇必報。(Ibid., 48-49).

<sup>42</sup> 性淳慎，勤耕織。(Ibid., 58-59).

<sup>43</sup> 風俗謹厚，路不拾遺。(Ibid., 72-73).

<sup>44</sup> 通漢語 [...] 以種棉花為業，男子衣服與漢同，故多為漢人傭工。(Ibid., 88-89).

“surprisingly, they devote their lives to Buddha, some become priests. [...] They often hold beads and recite Buddhist prayers and charms”.<sup>45</sup>

Because of the diversity of the Miao groups, the Qing Empire had to adopt different strategies for better governance. Therefore, certain expressions to describe the Miao groups’ adaptability and level of civilization from a Chinese perspective often appear in the album texts: “like the Han people” (與漢人同, *C. yu Hanren tong*)<sup>46</sup>, “to understand the Chinese language” (通漢語, *C. tong Hanyu*)<sup>47</sup>, and “to imitate the Chinese superior manner” (倣漢威儀, *C. fan Han weiyi*)<sup>48</sup>. The descriptions provided in the Miao albums could help officials in situ decide how to deal with the different groups, for example, if a more stringent or a relaxed attitude was in order. Accordingly, Ortai wrote in his *Memorial on changing chieftains into officials* (改土歸流疏, *C. Gaitu guiliu shu*, 1726), “[the policy of] *gaitu guiliu* is to capture the powerful and aggressive [chieftains] one by one, and replace the cowardly and weak [chieftains] one by one with regular officials.”<sup>49</sup> In another memorial he presented to the Yongzheng Emperor in the same year, Ortai said:

In short, in order to control the Miao, both the carrot and the stick should be applied judiciously. However, being kind does not mean to be over-tolerant; being strict does not mean to be over-fierce. When the time is come, it should be done clearly. Execute one as a warning to a hundred, then no one dares to violate the law again. Therefore, the number of the sticks should be more than that of the carrots.<sup>50</sup>

The album texts often point out whether a group understood Chinese. Language is an important element of communication. It is also one of the primary factors that Qing officials considered which group was closer to the cultural centre and easier to incorporate into their side when necessary.<sup>51</sup>

When Qing officials wanted to cooperate with Miao people, they paid attention to several factors. They established whether a group descended from earlier Chinese. The Songjia Miao and Caijia Miao, for example, were described as descendants of the Chinese family clans Song and Cai respectively who were said to have been captured by the state of Chu 楚, and

<sup>45</sup> 樊子居然釋子家 [...] 佞佛，常持珠誦梵咒。(Ibid., 64-65).

<sup>46</sup> Text 27 about the Shui (Water) Gelao (水獠) says, “the clothes of the men are like those of the Han Chinese” (男子衣服與漢人同) (Ibid., 54-55). Text 38 on the Yanghuang Miao (羊獍苗) says, “their clothing is similar to that of the Han people” (服飾與漢人同) (Ibid., 76-77). Text 44 on the Dong Miao mentions, “menfolk wear clothing that is the same as the Han” (男子衣衫與漢同) (Ibid., 88-89). Text 64 on the Liminzi (里民子) says, “their New Year’s rites and festivals are similar to those of the Han” (歲時禮節與漢人同) (Ibid., 128-129).

<sup>47</sup> Texts about the Songjia Miao (text 4), the Zhushi Gelao (text 24) and the Dong Miao (text 44) mention these groups could “speak Chinese” (通漢語) (Ibid., 8-9; 48-49; 88-89).

<sup>48</sup> Text 66 about the Bai (White) Longjia (白龍家) mentions, “why is it that they customarily wear white, yet in weddings and funerals imitate the Han?” (底事衣衫常着白，婚喪略倣漢威儀) (Ibid., 132-133).

<sup>49</sup> 改土歸流，將富強橫暴者漸次擒拿，懦弱昏者漸次改置。(Ortai, *Gaitu guiliu shu*, in *Huangchao jingshi wen bian*, vol. 86, 14a, dated 1726, “Chinese Text Project”, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&res=83088>).

<sup>50</sup> 總之，制苗之法，固應恩威並用，然恩非姑息，威非猛烈，到得用着時必須窮究到底，殺一儆百，使不敢在犯，則威仍是恩所全實多。(Ortai, *Qing suqing wan miao yijing bianfang shi zou*, in *Siku quanshu, Zhupi yuzhi*, vol. 125, no. 01, 37b, dated 1726, “Chinese Text Project”, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&res=6403>).

<sup>51</sup> Hostetler, “Introduction”, xli.

banished to the southern frontier during the Spring and Autumn period. Another consideration was whether they could speak Chinese and thus were civilized, such as the Dong Miao. Finally, if a group followed customs and habits that were considered Chinese and thus civilized, such as “diligently farming or weaving” (勤耕織, *C. qin geng zhi*)<sup>52</sup>, “employing a matchmaker” (用媒妁, *C. yong meishuo*) for marriage<sup>53</sup>, etc., this group could be considered as “cooked barbarians” (熟番, *C. shufan*); if not, it belonged to the “raw barbarians” (生番, *C. shengfan*).<sup>54</sup> For example, the Gulin Miao (谷蘭苗) women “spin and weave. Their cloth is especially fine”<sup>55</sup>, and the Liminzi 里民子 women “are diligent at agricultural work. In their spare time, they weave wool for clothes. They like to raise animals and often lead them into the mountains.”<sup>56</sup> According to the degree of the sinicisation, both the Gulin Miao and the Limizu could be probably regarded as “cooked”.<sup>57</sup>

In 1795, a rebellion led by Shi Liudeng (石柳鄧, d. 1797), a Miao man, broke out in Guizhou. To subdue it, the Qing adopted a strategy called “using the Miao to control the Miao” (以苗制苗, *C. yi miao zhi miao*). They bribed some Miao people, granting them official titles and gold, so as to divide the group. Tempted by money and posts, a large number of Miao surrendered, including Wu Longdeng (吳隴登), who led the main Miao force. This was a massive blow for the Miao rebels. However, in 1796, the White Lotus Rebellion broke out in Hubei, and the Qing had to mobilize troops from other provinces to help fight the rebellion. This gave the Miao rebels a chance to rest and rebuild their force. As a result, the rebellion in Guizhou lasted for twelve years and was only suppressed in 1806.<sup>58</sup>

This historical event shows that the survey of the Miao groups conducted on Qing orders was useful. Based on their understanding of the Miao, the Qing knew that most of the Miao groups were fierce and warlike and always carried spears, knives or crossbows whenever they

<sup>52</sup> Text 29 about the Pipao Gelao says: “by nature honest and careful, they work diligently at weaving and tilling” (性淳慎, 勤耕織); “casting ploughshares by trade, they are the most hardworking” (鑄犁為業最殷勤) (Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 58-59). The author of the Miao album shows his stance that people are honest and careful if they are hardworking on weaving and farming. Compared with the description of the Hulu (Gourd) Miao 葫蘆苗, it shows the author’s viewpoint rather clearly. In the text 70 on the Hulu Miao, it says: “the nature talents of this kind distinguish them: they don’t till or tend mulberries, but burgle homes” (此輩由來賦性殊, 耕桑不事事穿窬) (Ibid., 140-141). Work diligently at weaving and farming became one of the main factors to consider if the group was reliable.

<sup>53</sup> Text 37 on the Yangbao Miao (楊保苗), it says, “in marriage the Yangbao Miao use a matchmaker, and their sacrifices are also like Han rituals” (婚姻媒妁, 祭亦如漢禮) (Ibid., 74-75). Text 42 on the Gulin Miao, “in marriage, they use a matchmaker” (婚姻亦用媒妁) (Ibid., 84-85).

<sup>54</sup> “Raw barbarians” and “cooked barbarians” are the categories that Chinese used to differentiate non-Chinese who lived in the south and southwest China. The “cooked barbarians” are the ones who were civilized and sinicised, while the “raw barbarians” refer to the ones who were uncivilized and not sinicised. (Magnus Fiskesjö, “On the ‘Raw’ and the ‘Cooked’ Barbarians of Imperial China”, *Inner Asia* 1, no. 2 (1999): 139-168; Ge Zhaoguang, “Hua ‘sheng’ cheng ‘shu’? – Cong Qing dai ‘miao man tu xiang’ sikao minzu shi yanjiu zhong de wenti”, *Gujin lun heng* 33 (2019): 3-33, 21-25).

<sup>55</sup> 工紡織, 布極精密。 (Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 84-85).

<sup>56</sup> 勤於耕作, 暇則織羊毛布為衣, 好養牲畜, 常帶入山。 (Ibid., 128-129).

<sup>57</sup> The actual classification of cooked and raw barbarians may be more complicated. According to the texts in Miao albums, Qing officials examined the degree of sinicisation of the groups by observing various aspects of their behaviour. In *Record of the Tropical Southern Frontier*, there is a passage about the definition of raw and cooked barbarians in the Ming Dynasty. It shows a very different approach from that in the Qing Dynasty. It says, “cooked barbarians are the ones who live near the frontier, pay tax and do corvée duties. [...] The ones who have not enrolled households and registered are raw barbarians. There are many raw barbarians but only very few cooked barbarians.” 近省界者為熟苗, 輸租服役。[...] 不與是籍者, 謂之生苗。生苗多而熟苗寡。 (Tian Rucheng, *Yanjiao jiwén*, vol. 4, 13b, dated 1560, “Chinese Text Project”, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&res=91557>). When Ming officials classified raw and cooked barbarians, they only considered whether the group had household registration or not.

<sup>58</sup> Zheng Tianting, *Qingshi* (Taipei: Yunlong chubanshe, 2003), 457-486.

went out. They still followed Miao customs and only complied with the village elders' decisions. Once a rebellion broke out in the Miao regions, the best way to overwhelm them was not to fight with them in the battlefields but to capture the leaders, such as Wang Nangxian, the female leader of a rebellion in 1797, or to divide the groups by bribing the main Miao force, a strategy the Qing used to suppress the rebellion led by Shi Liudeng in 1795. If the White Lotus Rebellion had not broken out, the strategy "using the Miao to control the Miao" would probably have worked.

## In the Eyes of the Chinese

### *Writing in a pragmatic style*

Miao customs and rituals were profoundly different from those of the Chinese. Seen from a Chinese perspective, some of them were rather strange. For example, when the Songjia Miao practised the custom "capturing the bride", the bride's family gathered all the relatives to beat up the groom's family.<sup>59</sup> The custom may have confused the Chinese since the Confucianism advocates that a wife should obey her husband, and the two families should be in harmony. The same confusion occurred when the Louju Hei Miao dressed the death and postponed the burial for up to twenty years because the Chinese believe that the deaths can rest in peace only after buried in a grave.<sup>60</sup> Still, the authors of Miao albums usually wrote in a pragmatic, mostly non-judgemental style. Sometimes they could barely conceal their surprise about strange customs, but their evaluation was still fair. For example, text 17 on the Hei Miao (黑苗) writes that "only when [the meat] is rotten and full of maggots, it is ready to serve."<sup>61</sup> Apart from referring to the "unusual flavour" (珍為異味, *C. zhen wei yiwei*), the author refrains from any comment. In the case of the custom of "chiselling teeth" of the Daya Gelao (打牙犵猯), the author expressed his opinion more freely but still controlled his tone properly. Text 22 records: "before a woman marries, her two front teeth must be knocked out because of the fear that she could bring trouble to the groom's family."<sup>62</sup> The author wrote in the accompanying poem that "the custom of breaking teeth is preposterous!" (打牙風俗太荒唐).<sup>63</sup> This was the only comment that the author has given to this unusual custom.

The expressions used in Miao albums are mostly careful and restrained, especially compared to Taiwan travel reports. For example, the famous Taiwan traveller Yu Yonghe (郁永河, b. 1645) described the courtship custom of Taiwanese indigenous people in a gossipy way:

In marriage, they have no go-betweens; when the girls are grown, their parents have them live separately in a hut. The young males who wish to find a mate all come along, playing their nose flutes and mouth organs. When a young male gets the girl to harmonize with him, he goes in and fornicates with her. After they have fornicated, he goes home of his own accord. After a long time, the girl

<sup>59</sup> Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 8-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-115

<sup>61</sup> 俟螂蛆臭腐始告釭成。(Ibid., 34-35).

<sup>62</sup> 將嫁必打去門牙二齒，恐妨害夫家。(Ibid., 44-45).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

picks the one she loves and ‘holds hands’ with him. The ‘hand-holding’ is to make public the private commitment.<sup>64</sup>

The two indigenous youths are depicted as beastlike having intercourse on their own account and unrestrained by social customs. The term “to fornicate” (亂, C. *luan*) implies that Yu Yonghe thought the relationship between indigenous girls and young males abnormal. This description imagines Taiwanese indigenous people as promiscuous and immoral.

The description of a similar custom in Miao albums is relatively plain. Text 20 records that the girls of the Yao Miao, “upon reaching the age of fifteen or sixteen, usually build bamboo structures in the fields. Unmarried men come play bamboo pipes to induce them into making a match.”<sup>65</sup> The tone is relatively mild, and their behaviour is not referred to as immoral or profligate. In the accompanying poems, the author summed up the custom with elegant words,

Don’t say that her room is still and solitary;  
Xiao Shi, on his phoenix, has come to pass the night.<sup>66</sup>

In contrast to Miao albums which were official productions, travel writings are private reports. When they were compiled and published, their readers were literate Chinese in China proper who bought them and read them for their entertainment.<sup>67</sup> The authors of Miao albums, in general, used neutral expressions that merely described customs, etc. that might be considered strange. One passage on the Bai (White) Luoluo (白裸羅) can be considered abusive: “they collect and cook any animal that wriggles or moves, including rodents, birds, and insect larvae. This is eaten straight from a three-footed pot; they do not use dishes for eating and drinking.”<sup>68</sup> Deal and Hostetler’s English translation actually omits the crucial last sentence of the text: “they eat like pigs” (食若彘, C. *shi ruo zhi*). Describing someone as a pig is an insult not only in Chinese culture. The metaphor that the author used reflects his unpleasant feeling towards the Miao people.

<sup>64</sup> 婚姻無媒妁，女已長，父母使居別室中，少年求偶者皆來，吹鼻簫，彈口琴，得女子和之，即入與亂，亂畢自去；久之，女擇所愛者乃與挽手。挽手者，以明私許之意也。(Yu Yonghe, *Pihai jiyou* (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1950), 35; Teng, “An Island of Women”, 359.)

<sup>65</sup> 女子年十五六，即構竹樓野處，未婚者吹竹笙誘之成配。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 40-41).

<sup>66</sup> 莫道秦樓多寂寞，乘鸞蕭史夜來過。(Ibid., 40-41). According to legend, Xiao Shi was a musician who was good at playing pan pipes (*xiao* 簫) in the Spring and Autumn Period. Because of that, Duke Mu of Qin (秦穆公, d. 621 BC) not only built him the Phoenix House but also let him marry his daughter. Xiao then taught his wife playing pan pipes every day. The music attracted the phoenixes from Heaven and gathered in their garden. In the end, the couple rode on the phoenixes and flew to Heaven, becoming immortals. There is a record about him in *Biography of Immortals* (列仙傳, C. *Lie xian chuan*) written by the Han scholar Liu Xiang (劉向, 77-6 BC).

<sup>67</sup> There are five famous Taiwan travel writings, which were written in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties: Chen Di (陳第), *Record of the Eastern Savage* (東番記, C. *Dongfan ji*, 1603); Lin Qiangui (林謙光), *Brief Record of Taiwan* (臺灣紀略, C. *Taiwan jilue*, 1685); Yu Yonghe (郁永河), *Small Sea Travelogue* (裨海紀遊, C. *Pihai jiyou*, 1697); Huang Shujing (黃叔璥), *Record of a Tour of Duty in the Taiwan Strait* (臺海使槎錄, C. *Taihai shicha lu*, 1736); and Wu Ziguang (吳子光), *Taiwan Memoranda* (臺灣紀事, C. *Taiwan jishi*, 1875).

<sup>68</sup> 無論鼠雀蜚蠊蠕動之物，攫而燔之。飲食無盤盂，以三足釜攢，食若彘。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 6-7).

*People outside civilization*

The album texts imply that the Miao people were not regarded as “registered residents” (齊民, C. *qimin*). As mentioned earlier, registered residents are people who were officially registered as tax-paying subjects. They are under the jurisdiction of the Qing government, protected and monitored by Qing law. People who live outside officially administered regions are not registered. Their houses, farmland, hunting grounds, etc. don’t appear in official accounts. Although living in the Qing Empire, they are considered as “people outside civilization” (化外之人, C. *huawai zhi ren*). Already the *Law of the Tang Dynasty* (唐律疏議, C. *Tanglü huyi*) says, “regarding all those people who are outside civilization, when they violate each other, they are punished according to their own customs”.<sup>69</sup> This strategy of not applying imperial law to “people outside civilization” dates back at least to the Tang Dynasty.<sup>70</sup>

In the 82 album texts, the Miao people are mostly called persons or people (人, C. *ren*), not citizens (民, C. *min*) which shows a sense of alienation and exclusion. The character *min* is used only six times. The first five of them are:

- 1) “They [Daya Gelao] are the so-called chiselling teeth people” (所謂鑿齒之民也).<sup>71</sup> Here, *min* simply means people;
- 2) “Another name for them [Shui Gelao] is Raojia Tumin” (一名「擾家土民」).<sup>72</sup> Here, *min* is part of the name of the group itself;
- 3) “The Yanghuang Miao are the descendants of Yang Huang” (羊<sup>73</sup>獐苗即楊荒播之遺民也).<sup>74</sup> Here, *min* is part of the binomial *yimin* meaning “descendants”;
- 4) Liminzi (里民子)<sup>75</sup>, in which *min* is part of the name of the group itself;
- 5) “The [Sheng Miao (生苗)] people’s provisions are just like as of old” (火食民間自古同).<sup>76</sup> Here, *min* means people as part of the binomial *minjian*, “among the people”.

In all five instances listed above, *min* does not refer to the subject people of the Qing Empire. In the sixth instance, *min* is used to clarify the distance between the author and the Miao: “*Turen* are found in many different localities. Those in Guizhu, Guiding, and Guangshun intermarry with both soldiers and commoners” (土人所在多有, 在貴築、貴定、廣順者, 與軍民通婚姻).<sup>77</sup> Here, the term, “soldiers and commoners” (軍民, C. *jun min*), refers to Chinese soldiers and Chinese ordinary people who migrated to Guizhou during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Obviously, *turen* were excluded from these two groups.

<sup>69</sup> 諸化外之人同類自相犯者, 各依本俗法。 (Zhangsun Wuji, *Tanglü shuyi* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987)).

<sup>70</sup> Jiang Yonglin points out that the Ming ruling elite classifying the “Miao territory” in western Huguang and eastern Guizhou provinces as “beyond the pale of civilization” (*huawai*) was to promote the Chinese identity of the Chinese people and fortify the distinction between China and the “barbarians” (Jiang Yonglin, “Thinking about ‘Ming China’ Anew: the Ethnocultural Space in a Diverse Empire – with Special Reference to the ‘Miao Territory’”, *Journal of Chinese History* 2 (2018): 27-78, 64-67).

<sup>71</sup> Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 44-45.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>73</sup> Originally written with the dog radical *quan* 犴.

<sup>74</sup> Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 76-77.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 128-129.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-149.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

Text 37 provides an additional hint: “However, by nature the [Yangbao Miao (楊保苗)] are cunning and boorish. They resist fiercely and refuse to leave with Qing officials when arrested. They only comply with what the village elder decides.”<sup>78</sup> It shows the Yangbao Miao were considered to be positioned outside the law and thus outside civilization. In 1798, when this Miao album was probably produced, the policy of *gaitu guiliu* had been implemented in Guizhou for more than 70 years. However, its implementation did not run smoothly. The officials did not regard the local Miao as part of *min* and within civilization. Probably the Miao people did not consider themselves as part of a Chinese *min* either. This comes to the fore when they rather tended to comply with “what the village elder decides”, not the Qing law.

### “Self” and “other”

The texts of the Miao albums usually imply a sense of alienation and exclusion. In fact, when Chinese scholar-officials recorded the customs and rituals of the Miao people and compared them with Chinese culture, they inevitably produced images of “self” and “other”. On the one hand, they observed that some Miao people began to change their customs and follow Chinese culture. On the other hand, however, they found that most of the Miao groups retained some customs which they found appalling. In order to clarify the dichotomous relationship between Chinese self and Miao other, the authors emphasized the differences to avoid being regarded as similar or identical.

Text 21, for example, reports that the Nong Miao (農<sup>79</sup>苗) “men shave their heads and dress just like Chinese people.”<sup>80</sup> However, it also says that the Nong Miao “still follow Miao customs. Their nature is fierce and cruel. They enjoy killing.”<sup>81</sup> The author shows that even though the Nong Miao had changed their outer appearance, they had not changed their inner nature. Text 37 tells a similar story of the Yangbao Miao: “for marriage, the Yangbao Miao use a matchmaker. Their sacrifices are also like Chinese rituals. However, by nature they are cunning and boorish. They resist fiercely and refuse to leave with Qing officials when arrested. They only comply with what the village elder decides.”<sup>82</sup> Text 27 on the Shui Gelao says that “the clothes of the men are like those of the Chinese, but the women wear finely-pleated skirts, still conserving Miao custom.”<sup>83</sup> Here, the different degree of sinicisation is not regarding outer appearance versus inner nature, but between male and female fashion, the women preserving Miao style, while the men adapted to Chinese garments.

### Adding “a dog’s claw”

It has been an old Chinese writing custom to add the dog radical, the so-called “dog’s claw” (犭, C. *quan*) to non-Chinese people and group names. This radical indeed represents a certain contempt for these people and intends to insult them. The authors of Miao albums, too, used ethnonyms with dog radicals. This undoubtedly indicates a generally negative attitude of the Chinese scholar-officials towards the Miao groups. The Miao people as well as other non-Chinese people were regarded as uncivilized, or even animalistic.

<sup>78</sup> 但性狡而獷，凡官司差拘，輒抗拒不出，惟聽鄉老決之。(Ibid., 74-75).

<sup>79</sup> Originally written with the dog radical *quan* (犭).

<sup>80</sup> 男子薙髮衣冠，俱效漢人。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 42-43).

<sup>81</sup> 尚循苗俗，性獷悍嗜殺。(Ibid., 42-43).

<sup>82</sup> 婚姻媒妁，祭亦如漢禮，但性狡而獷，凡官司差拘，輒抗拒不出，惟聽鄉老決之。(Ibid., 74-75).

<sup>83</sup> 男子衣服與漢人同，惟婦女穿細褶裙，猶沿苗俗。(Ibid., 54-55).

Text 24 is about the Zhushi (Pig-Filth) Gelao (猪屎狃佬).<sup>84</sup> The character *zhu* (猪) is part of the ethnonym. Unusually, the character *zhu* (猪) is written with dog radical *quan* (豕) and not with the common pig radical *shi* (豕) as *zhu* (猪). The characters *zhu* (猪) and *zhu* (猪) have the same meanings, being variants of the same character. According to the oldest Chinese dictionary, the *Shuowen jiezi* (說文解字, Explaining Graphs and Analysing Characters, by Xu Shen (許慎, c. 58-c. 148 BC), “pigs (猪, C. *zhu*) are domestic animals, sparsely haired. [The character *zhu*] is written with the pig radical (豕, C. *shi*) and pronounced *zhe* (者).”<sup>85</sup> Although imperial scholar-officials generally used the original with the pig radical and only sometimes the variant with the dog radical when writing articles, there was apparently room to choose when naming a newfound ethnic group. The Zhushi Gelao (猪屎狃佬) had not yet been recorded when the *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples* was compiled in 1761. Therefore, their written name was probably established by the author of Miao album or the officials who were responsible for this project. Although it is impossible to know the exact reason for the choice of ethnonym and in particular why the author or officials chose the character with the dog radical instead of the common one, we may speculate that they classified the Zhushi Gelao as uncivilized as wild animals that are not yet domesticated according to the group name that they had chosen. The name, Zhushi, which means pig filth, exemplifies the disrespect of the group even further. The text on them says, “during the course of a full year they never wash their bodies or faces. Their dwellings are unbearably dirty and smelly; they live together in the same sheds with dogs and pigs”.<sup>86</sup> Due to their bad smell and unsanitary living conditions, the author or the officials chose that group name and also the character with the dog radical to show their uncivilization.

### Why did the Qing Observe the Miao with the Chinese Eyes?

The information collected in the Miao albums, both texts and illustrations, were produced and collected by Chinese officials. Therefore, the Miao customs and traditions were described from a Chinese perspective and cultural background, and much attention is given to the Miao-Chinese relationship and comparison. Why did the Qing rulers as a Manchu people choose the Chinese cultural standard and moral norm to observe and record Miao customs? The Qing rulers adopted the same strategies as their Ming predecessor to manage non-Chinese (or for that matter, non-Manchu) people in the southwest. They applied the policy of *gaitu guiliu*, established Confucian schools there and tried to sinicise the local non-Chinese people. Why did the Qing promote Chinese education and assimilation of non-Chinese people in the southwest rather than assimilating them into their own Manchu culture? Did not only the Chinese Ming but also the Manchu Qing think that as long as the southwestern non-Chinese people were sinicised, they were easy to manage? These questions are not yet answered, and in the following, four possible answers are discussed.

When the Miao album analysed here was produced, many Chinese people had been settling in Guizhou for a long time, and some Miao groups had been influenced by Chinese culture. Thus, one possible answer is that the Qing court made use of this given situation in order to pacify the southwest and put the local non-Chinese tribal groups under their jurisdiction

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>85</sup> 猪，豕而三毛叢居者。從豕，者聲。(Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi*, vol. 10, 6a, “Chinese Text Project”, accessed January 10, 2021, <https://ctext.org/shuo-wen-jie-zi/shi-bu9>).

<sup>86</sup> 身面經年不洗，所居穢臭不堪，與犬豕同牢。(Deal & Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, 48-49).

as far as possible. Therefore, it was not of primary importance based on which culture these people were educated as long as this education led to a firmer integration of the non-Chinese people.

The second possible answer is that the Qing acknowledged the benefits of Chinese, in particular (Neo-)Confucian culture. Neo-Confucian principles emphasized that ministers and other officials are subordinate to the monarch and must help consolidate his governance. Although the subordination in Manchu culture is as severe as or even more severe than that in Chinese culture, the history of the previous dynasties proved that Neo-Confucian principles had efficiently helped to avoid usurpation and keep society stable. Chinese historical narrative had it that cases of usurpation occurred significantly often in dynasties that did not support Confucian principles. For example, three of the eight emperors of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty who did not employ Confucian principles in their rulership in the 1320s and 1330s lost their power within less than one year.<sup>87</sup> In the Spring and Autumn Period,<sup>88</sup> when Confucianism was not established as the state philosophy, as well as in the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms,<sup>89</sup> most of which were ruled by non-Chinese people who were less influenced by Confucianism, cases of patricides and matricides allegedly happened constantly.

A third possibility is that the Qing court, being proud of its Manchu culture, thought that only Manchu people were eligible to learn it. People of other cultures governed by the Qing were not supposed to adapt to the Manchu culture in order to highlight the power of the court. One may argue that the Qing court had forced the Chinese men to adapt to Manchu culture, such as wearing Manchu clothing and the Manchu queue. However, it seems to show one's authority rather than promote one's culture. When Dorgon (多爾袞, C. Duo'ergun, 1612-1650) first arrived in Beijing in May 1644, he immediately ordered "all surrendered officials, soldiers and civilians shave their forehead hair and wear the Manchu queue. The clothes and hats that they wear also need to follow the Qing regulations."<sup>90</sup> In the following days, several edicts were released and repeatedly stated that changing clothing and hairstyle was a symbol of loyalty.<sup>91</sup> Apparently, both the clothing and hairstyle were an indicator for the Manchu to identify who had already surrendered and who continued to resist.

<sup>87</sup> The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) lasted 97 years and had a total of eleven emperors. However, of the eight emperors ruling in the 25 years from 1307 to 1332, three reigned less than one year, four were only in power for three to five years, and only one reigned for nine years. Of the three emperors who reigned for less than a year, two lost the throne due to usurpation, and one's death was doubtful. (*Yuanshi*, comp. by Song Lian & Wang Yi (Taiwan: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2010)).

<sup>88</sup> According to *The Records of the Grand Historian* (史記, C. *Shiji*) by Sima Qian (司馬遷, 145-85 BC), in the 294 years of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), 52 ancient Chinese states (*zhuhou guo* 諸侯國) were perished, 36 rulers of ancient Chinese states (諸侯, C. *zhuhou*) were killed by sons, relatives or ministers, and more than 480 battles broke out.

<sup>89</sup> The Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-979) which began with the fall of Tang Dynasty was an era of political upheaval and division. In those 79 years, the usurpations occurred frequently. In the Central Plain, five states succeeded one another in a short time and had a total of 14 rulers. Meanwhile, ten concurrent states were established in southern China, and 41 rulers ascended the throne.

<sup>90</sup> 投誠官吏軍民皆著薙髮，衣冠悉遵本朝制度。(*Qing shilu shunzhi chao shilu*, vol. 5, "Shunzhi yuannian wuyue gengyin" 順治元年五月庚寅 (The Day of Geng Yin in May of the First Year of Shunzhi), dated 1643-1661, "Chinese Text Project", accessed December 21, 2020, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=541757>).

<sup>91</sup> "That's why I immediately delivered this edict and urged all of you to correct your mistakes. You should follow the regulations to shave the forehead hair and wear a braid, and then you can settle down and return to your own business. If anyone remains doing bad things, the court must eliminate his base and put him to death." (以故先行馳諭。其速改前非。遵制薙髮。各安生業。儻仍怙惡。定行誅巢 [?] 刀。) (*Qing shilu shunzhi chao shilu*, vol. 5, "Shunzhi yuannian wuyue renchen" 順治元年五月壬辰 (The Day of Ren Chen in May of the First Year of Shunzhi).)

Last but not least, some Qing emperors and officials indeed admired Chinese culture and concurred that Chinese culture could be used to educate the Miao, who were often hostile, and initiating a process whereby they would become docile, civilized and obedient to the law.

## Conclusion

The earliest Miao albums were compiled either in the late Yongzheng or early Qianlong periods. Miao albums were actively produced for a period of at least 150 years. During this period, they were revised many times, and the number of recorded Miao groups was increasing. In the latest Miao album, a total of 82 Miao groups were recorded. This increasing number shows that the Qing's understanding of the Miao people also increased, allowing the Qing to decide whether it should enlarge or narrow its control of the Miao. The Miao albums were tools used by the Qing to facilitate the colonization of the southwestern provinces. The albums helped the Qing to gradually learn more about the diverse Miao groups so that they could decide which governing strategies were best for which group, for example, which Miao group should be treated conciliatory and which one should be dealt with strictly. This is precisely what Ortai pointed out in his *Memorial on changing chieftains into officials*. The policy of *gaitu guiliu* introduced in the Yongzheng period was not fully implemented until the end of the Qing Dynasty.<sup>92</sup> Battles and rebellions kept occurring in the southwest after the policy had been implemented in 1727. In some regions such as Danjiang (丹江) and Jigou (雞溝) in Guizhou, where settlements of several raw Miao groups including the fiercest Jiugu Miao (九股苗), had been incorporated into the new southwestern frontier region since 1729, Qing officials continued to deal with the Miao groups cautiously.<sup>93</sup> In 1734, when Yengişan (尹繼善, C. Yinjishan, 1694-1771), the Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou, reported on the situation in the southwest to the Yongzheng Emperor, he suggested officials should only visit the groups which were considered good and mild and avoid contacting the Jiugu Miao.<sup>94</sup> Seventeen years later, in 1751, when the Qianlong Emperor decided to send officials to the southwest and investigate the Miao groups, the edict to the Governor of Sichuan was almost in the same cautious tone. In the regions where the policy had been adopted for years, some groups such as Yangbao Miao continued to comply with village elder's orders only. Recognizing differences in the social customs between the Chinese and the Miao, Qing officials decided to cope with Miao cases by adopting indigenous laws to avoid struggles. Summarizing, Qing rule in the southwest did not always go as planned.<sup>95</sup> When the Rebellion of Baoli (包利起義, C. *Baoli qiyi*) and the Rebellion of [Zhou] Hongyin (紅銀起義, C. *Hongyin qiyi*) broke out in Guizhou in 1735, both left unforgettable memories for the Qianlong Emperor because he had to deal with them immediately after ascending the throne.<sup>96</sup> After suppressing the rebellions, the

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<sup>92</sup> Liang Xizhe, *Yongzheng huangdi* (Taipei: Zhi shufang chubanshe, 2001), 255-258.

<sup>93</sup> *Qingshigao*, vol. 288, "Liezhuan qishiwu E'ertai Zhang Tingyu" 列傳七十五鄂爾泰張廷玉 [Biography no. 75 Ortai and Zhang Tingyu, 10230-10233], "Scripta Sinica database", accessed December 21, 2020, <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw>.

<sup>94</sup> Jiang Liangqi, *Donghua lu*, vol. 32 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2005), 496.

<sup>95</sup> Donald S. Sutton, "Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier: Customary and Statutory Law in the Eighteenth-Century Miao Pale", *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2003): 41-80, 42-43.

<sup>96</sup> The rebellions also led Ortai to tender his resignation to the Yongzheng Emperor and ask for the deprivation of his title. He thought that the rebellions were caused by his previous imperfect work in Yunnan and Guizhou. Before the death of the Yongzheng Emperor, the rebellions had been continuing. (*Qingshigao*, vol. 288, 10235; Ge, "Hua 'sheng' cheng 'shu'?", 15).

Qianlong Emperor apparently adjusted the policy towards the Miao groups. Apart from the ongoing policy of *gaitu guiliu*, he initiated the collection of information about the Miao groups in order to compile the *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples* and the diverse Miao albums. The project shows his intention of enhancing knowledge about the groups.

In the album texts, most of the Miao groups are described as fierce, warlike and hard to tame. Less than 10% are classified as honest and kind by nature. Those who could speak Chinese, followed Chinese customs and were law-abiding were even rarer. Probably as a result, after many years of investigation, there was a clear shift in the Qianlong Emperor's policy towards the Miao: from the careful and cautious manner shown in the edict to the Governor of Sichuan in 1751, when he avoided causing conflicts, to the strategies he used in 1795 for fighting back against the Rebellion of Shi Liudeng, when he applied a carrot and stick approach. In 1797, the Qianlong Emperor did not hesitate to send troops to suppress the rebellion, and also bribed some of the Miao people with gold and official positions. That the Qianlong Emperor was able to adjust his Miao policy was also facilitated by the investigations of the Miao, captured in the Miao albums.

In addition to deepening the understanding of the Miao people, the compilation of Miao albums helped the Qing to incorporate gradually the southwestern regions into its imperial administration. Using pictorial and written records to transform exterior people not under direct imperial rule into interior people is an alternative mode of *bianhu qimin*. Similar to the tradition that a new dynasty is entitled to write the history of the late dynasty, ordering officials to make maps of newly incorporated regions and records of newly incorporated people is also a way of demonstrating supreme power over these regions and people. Miao albums also helped readers, especially officials, to build up a sense of “imagined geography”<sup>97</sup> and recognize the recorded regions as belonging to the empire. Although the Miao costumes were different from those of the Chinese, the forests, mountains and rivers in the background, drawn in the traditional Chinese painting style, let the landscapes in Miao albums seem to be located somewhere where the Han Chinese settled. The painters applied the same painting style, which is commonly seen in paintings depicting sceneries in the core areas of China proper, to draw the landscapes in the southwest. Even though there are special buildings in some illustrations, such as the ghost hall in settlement of the Louju Hei Miao, and officials sometimes used those landmarks to locate where certain groups lived, they may still unconsciously consider that the places in the paintings were actually in the core areas of China proper. Because of that illusion, the Miao, wearing strange costumes, seemed outlandish. The Chinese backgrounds made the Miao people look like outsiders, waiting for sinicisation or expulsion.

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<sup>97</sup> This concept borrows from Benedict Anderson's concept “imagined communities” and was first introduced by Emma Teng (Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, 16-17; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso 2016)).

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