Creating a ‘New Yi’ for the Chinese Nation. Rethinking Modernity and the Yi during the Republican Period.

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**Creating a ‘New Yi’ for the Chinese Nation. Modernity and the Yi during the Republican Period.**

This paper proposes to re-examine the relationship of the Yi people of southwest China with the many aspects of modernity that began to imbricate China’s southwest borderlands during the Republican period (1912-1949). This repertoire of Chinese Republican modernity which emphasized anti-imperialism, ethnic equality, modern education and warfare among others were key elements in the shaping of a modern Yi identity among a young elite that was brought into the Guomindang orbit. This paper in particular focuses on the career of a young Yi *tusi*, Ling Guangdian, who was trained under the Guomindang and then served in the Liangshan region. Ling’s career and actions during this period evidenced the ways in which ethnic minorities in China could use these discursive elements of modernity for the benefit of their own people conceived as a nation (minzu) albeit within the confines of the Chinese nation-state.

Keywords: China, ethnic minorities, ethnicity, Guomindang, Liangshan, Ling Guangdian, modernity, post-war period, Republican period, Sichuan, Sino-Japanese War, Xikang, Yi, Yunnan.

**Introduction**

In 1955, the *Journal of American Folklore* published a translation of a Yi legend (referred to at the time as the Lolo) titled ‘The Great God O-Li-Bi-Zih.’ In the short preface to this text written by the sinologist Wolfram Eberhard it was noted that the source possibly dated from the wartime period or soon after owing to its ‘poor brownish paper and blurred print’. Emphasizing the anti Han-Chinese tone of this legend Eberhard added that the text clearly showed the “tragedy which an acculturation process of this type always brings.”[[1]](#footnote-1) A statement that undoubtedly reflected the often trodden view of troubled Han and non-Han relations that dated back to the imperial period.

Yet Eberhard’s words overlooked the fascinating background of the two figures that gave form to such an extraordinary source. On the one hand, Ling Guangdian (1913-1989), a Yi native chieftain (*tusi*) trained under the Guomindang and who later became an ardent supporter of Yi rights in the early postwar period. On the other hand, American Baptist missionary David Crockett Graham (1884-1961), mostly known for his anthropological and archaeological activities in Western Sichuan and for his close links to the Chuan Miao and the Yi in the region.

This paper argues that Ling and Graham’s encounter was a significant example of the many changes taking place among the Yi elite in the southwest borderlands. Far from being an isolated society on the margins of modernity, Ling’s conscious decision to circulate the story of his people revealed an insight into the ways non-Han communities grappled with modernity during China’s Republican period (1912-1949). Through the study of his career as a Guomindang official, this paper aims to demonstrate how Ling incorporated the ideological repertoire of modernity of the Nanjing regime to the advantage of his own people during this period. Such a repertoire that emphasized anti-imperialism, ethnic equality, modern education among others were key elements in the shaping of a new Yi identity conceived as a nation (*minzu*) albeit within the confines of the Chinese nation-state.

This paper is divided into four parts: the first part inserts the Yi within the wider context of transformations surrounding the Chinese borderlands and its effect on the understanding of Republican modernity. The second part then focuses on the efforts of the Guomindang state to establish its influence in the region and the ways in which it attempted to create a new Yi elite that would further its agenda of integration. The third part discusses the impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) on the mobilization of the Yi population and how these efforts were mediated by Ling Guangdian. Finally, the fourth part analyzes the rise of ethnic activism during the post-war period and the ways in which Ling Guangdian adapted to a rapidly changing political order.

**Ethnic Minorities and Republican Modernity**

Borderland studies on the Republican period have invariably focused on the fluxing nature of Chinese territoriality that eventually gave way to the present boundaries of the People’s Republic of China. As a process of both contestation and negotiation many of these works have studied the strategies that were deployed seeking to incorporate the borderlands and its inhabitants within the realms of an ever-morphing *Zhonghua minzu*.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The status of non-Han minorities during this period was a crucial issue that surfaced during the period. Seeking to make them citizens of the Chinese Republic was in effect a revolutionary step which at least in theory recognized a status of equality for all nations (*minzu pingdeng*). However, ‘awakening’ and leading them towards the paths of citizenship became an issue fraught with problems where competing actors vied over the ways in which they would become part of a wider national community.[[3]](#footnote-3)

During this period global forces on the borderlands were reshaping identities and interethnic relations at both a local and national level. Imperialism for example prompted a growing discourse of Pan-Asianism on behalf of the ruling (Republican) Han elite which sought to empathize with ethnic minorities as fellow oppressed brothers. Yet this Republican-era discourse, which stressed the concepts of self-rule and autonomy, were far from being a one-way channel. They were also appropriated at the local level among the West Hunan Miao and the Khampa self-rule movement to further their own interests as well.[[4]](#footnote-4) Christianity on the other hand introduced by missionaries had an empowering effect on groups such as the Hua Miao leading to a conscious appropriation of ethnic categories with transnational connections which defied national borders.[[5]](#footnote-5) Thus Republican modernity in China laid out a series of values and ideologies which different actors saw fit to select and appropriate for their own benefit. Foremost among them was ethnic equality, which would in fact become a powerful banner of modernity unfurled by both the state and ethnic minorities across the borderlands.

Studies on the Yi who inhabit the border areas of Sichuan and Yunnan however, have tended to emphasize the isolated character of this group prior to 1949. Chinese ethnographic accounts as well Western ones wrote up meticulous reports emphasizing the feudal stage of Yi society based on a chaste system of noble Black Yi and on a lower rank White Yi and (for the most part Han) slaves.[[6]](#footnote-6) Any cultural differences that could be noted among the Yi were attributed partly to differential contact with an advanced Han civilization.[[7]](#footnote-7) As Stevan Harrell has noted “the Yi have not effectively spoken for themselves” in the understanding of their history.[[8]](#footnote-8) While studies exist on indigenous attempts of the Yi to recreate their history and identity, these are for the most part found in contemporary accounts in a post-cultural revolution setting.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In the early twentieth century the area inhabited by the Yi nestled between Sichuan and Yunnan province known as the Liangshan area and its surroundings was known to foreigners as ‘Independent Lololand’ eliciting a sense of the noble savage which taunted civilization. Few Chinese or Westerners dared to venture in these territories fuelling images of a land frozen in time. Yet it is important to recall that the region had in fact become subject to global currents of trade and technology. Imperialism not only had allowed the venturing of Christian missionaries particularly under the auspices of the *Mission Etrangères de Paris*. The opium trade translated into an important source of revenue for the Yi in 1917-8 allowing them to lay hands on modern rifles which were traded at a military post in Leibo.[[10]](#footnote-10) The whole frontier area was in fact in Richard White’s words a ‘middle ground’, which despite the recurring outbursts of violence was also rife with relations of exchange and interdependency. A wide network of cooperation thus existed between Han officials and the Yi elite eschewing facile images of mere Han-Yi rivalry.

Ling Guangdian, a *tusi* from Tianba county on the outskirts of the Liangshan area was a good example of the above picture of complex relationships that shaped the lives of the Yi elite. Having lost his parents at a young age Ling was eventually adopted by a Han official Yang Ren’an who had been good friends with his father. The relationship stemmed back to the days when Yang peddled opium from Yunnan to Sichuan allowing him to build a series of networks with other *tusi* such as Guoji A’yue and Shate.[[11]](#footnote-11) Ling’s relationship with Yang thus allowed for an exposure to ‘new learning’ (*xinxue*) schools in Xichang and later on in Chengdu which were shaping China at large during this period. Yet this was far from being a process of acculturation where Ling was to be ‘Sinicized.’[[12]](#footnote-12) Exposed to a new canon of modernity and far from renouncing to his Yi heritage, Ling was in fact in a unique position of becoming himself a conduit of modernity for the Yi in the familiar world of the Han under which he had grown up. Despite the violence he confronted as a youngster in a society dominated by warlords he eventually made his way to Nanjing opening his eyes to a new way of envisaging both himself and the Chinese nation.

**Nanjing and the New Yi**

The Guomindang regime in Nanjing set up in 1928 had indeed inherited a plethora of problems associated with a series of territorial disputes that threatened its own legitimacy as a party who aspired to unite China as a whole. Despite the seemingly weak position of the regime at the time, it is now recognized that this was in fact an active period where policymakers sought to either reform or create specialized institutions that could deal accordingly with these new challenges. Foremost among these institutions was the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (hereafter MTAC) which Hsiao-ting Lin argues “played a significant role in Chiang Kai-shek’s networking and dealing with provincial warlords whose sphere of influence was adjacent to the frontier territories.”[[13]](#footnote-13) The active recruitment of ethnic minorities as part of its ‘frontier bureaucracy was also a key component of this enterprise. [[14]](#footnote-14)

The name of the MTAC is however misleading as it referred to a much larger cohort of non-Han societies during this period. Mongolia and Tibet were indeed a vital part of its machinery owing to the historical role the regions had played in imperial China. Yet within its trappings were other groups such as the Yi and the Miao who utilized its settings as a way to position its niche in the nascent Guomindang regime.

In effect, during this period a select group of young Yi had been recruited in order to study and later work as part of the Guomindang regime. Not only did this period of time provide them with valuable connections and networks in both government and military circles. Exposed to a new barrage of ideas such as race, nationalism, and anti-imperialism, the Nanjing experience also contributed to the ways in which this particular group made sense of their role in modern Chinese society as a nation of Yi (*Yizu*).

One of its leading members was the White Yi Qumu Zangyao who embarked on an educational mission in Yi territories in the early 1930s. Having successfully graduated in 1931 from the Central Government Political Academy (*Zhongyang Zhengshi Xuexiao*) in Nanjing, Qumu laid out a motion to the party seeking to advance the cause of the Yi and their livelihood under an educational project to be developed in the border area of Sichuan and Yunnan.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Qumu’s expedition was approved that same year and was thus dispatched to the region by the Guomindang as a member of the Yi People Party Affairs Publicity (*Yizu Dangwu Xuanzhuan*). His mission was one imbued by principles of nationalism and party doctrine seeking to transform both the region and its Yi inhabitants as loyal citizens of the nascent Guomindang state. As he recalled in the preface to his book which recounted his findings, his main objective was that of “dispelling the boundaries between nations, facilitate the great unity of the nation, and build the protective screen of the national defense of the southwest.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

Such objectives indicated the difficult circumstances surrounding the penetration of the border provinces of Sichuan by the central government during this period. Great agitation existed for example between the interests of warlord Liu Wenhui and the attempts by the MTAC to make inroads into the area of Kham. Qumu Zangyao’s expedition was one of many tactics deployed by the Guomindang seeking to establish a series of networks and influence in the region. It was no coincidence that the two important political figures writing prefaces to his book *Xinan Yizu Kaochaji* [Records of a survey among the Southwest Yi], Ceng Kuoqing and Shi Qingyang, were both from Sichuan and endorsed his enterprise extolling the martial values of the Yi and the promise of education.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Envisaging an educated Yi populace as a bulwark against imperialism was in fact an important aspect of Guomindang doctrine. It revealed the extent to which Pan-Asianist ideology shaped a new nationalism in China “which reflected an unstable mix of racialist ideas and an anti-imperialism that validated a unity based upon a shared culture and history (of anti-imperialism).”[[18]](#footnote-18) This was evident as well in Qumu’s own writings when he discussed the racial origins of the Yi and its tight-knit historical relationship with its fellow Han brothers. Dismissing any possibility of genetic evidence that might prove non-Chinese ancestry of the Yi as suggested by Western theorists at the time, Qumu argued that his people were all descent of the Yellow Race [*Huangse Zhong*] with no evidence among them of “foreign devil tall noses, blue eyes and white skin.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Qumu Zhangyao’s journey through the borderlands of Sichuan not only left a legacy of so-called ‘frontier schools’ being founded for the education of the Yi. It was also important in bringing together a network of influential Yi within GMD circles. An example of this was Qumu’s encounter with Ling Guangdian, an aspring student at the time in Sichuan. Ling acknowledged Qumu Zangyao as the person who had introduced him to the word ‘imperialism’, and thus became resolved to go outside and broaden his knowledge.[[20]](#footnote-20) This included moving to Chengdu’s military academy and eventually to Nanjing in 1933. He thus became the first Yi to be accepted in the Huangpu Military Academy as well as bearing witness to the onslaught of Japanese attacks on both Shanghai and Fujian.

Figures such as Qumu Zangyao and Ling Guangdian were only but a few examples of the many non-Han cadres who moved within the political circles of Nanjing in the 1930s. An example of how these circles operated could be found in the creation of the Society for the Promotion of Culture of the Southwest Yi (*Xinan Yizu Wenhua Cujinhui*) in 1934. The society was established by Qumu Zangyao who sought to connect the growing community of Yi people who were temporarily living in Shanghai and Nanjing.[[21]](#footnote-21) Other members involved in its foundation included Ling Guangdian, as well as An Tengfei, and Wang Fenfei; both Yi professionals living in the city at the time.[[22]](#footnote-22) Thus it becomes clear that a sense of a cohesive Yi community was emerging in times of rapid transformations in China’s cities. Schooling and professional development under the Guomindang or in other circles had clearly not defaced a sense of Yi identity but rather heightened it.

The active Yi society soon sought an outlet for their activities and petitioned the starting of a journal to the respective authorities. This led to the creation of a journal appropriately called *Xin Yizu* (The New Yi) whereby the notion of ‘new’ reflected the appropriation of a term which had become an important signifier of modernity in Chinese semantics.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The journal, published between 1936 and 1937, sought contributions on any aspect related to southwest China and particularly on the Yi people. Its opening statement revealed the influence of Sun Yat-sen’s ideas on racial equality and the daunting themes of survival underlying a Social Darwinist world order. It stated that: “its duty is to endorse self-evident truth and support orthodoxy in line with the sincerity of the belief that human species are one family (*renlei yijia*)” as well as to “collaborate with the development of survival for all nations.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

The issue of their ethnic origins was also discussed attempting to reveal the fallacies behind the attempts of scientists to classify them. An Cheng for example stated in his article “Isn’t the Yi race part of the native Chinese race?” that there were various competing theories over the origins of the over 200,000 Yi people which ultimately sought to divide them from their Chinese roots. The British, he argued believed that the Yi were part of the Burmese Tibetan family, and when doing so “they once again moved eastward.” [[25]](#footnote-25)

Evolutionary discourse was very much present throughout the journal as well. In the search for defining the future role and identity of the Yi within the Chinese nation it was also important to look back at its historical origins. When attempting to place the Yi as a vital component of national defense in southwest China it was important to show that in the past the Yi, just like the Han, had embarked on an ‘evolutionary pathway.’ As Qumu Zangyao argued, it was the positive environment of the latter which had allowed the Han to move faster along the way. Thus the Yi for a long period of time “could not seize a good opportunity to advance society, and thus became stuck at a non evolutionary level, and could not carry on with the vitality (*shengji*) of the nation (*minzu*).”[[26]](#footnote-26) As a result great parts of its society were mired in a ‘primitive feudalistic situation’; an argument that mirrored the impact of the Morganian evolutionary paradigm in Chinese political discourse.

Photographs of the society’s members were also indicative of what the embodiment of the ‘new Yi’ consisted of. Namely, an urban based identity which sought to fit in mainstream fashion found in places like Shanghai. Qumu Zangyao for example portrayed himself in slick Western clothes and the donning of a hat in his book on the Yi. (See figure 1) The founding members of the Society posed for their official picture in Western attire with the exception of Ling Guangdian who donned his Huangpu academy military uniform. (See figure 2) Both civilian and military spheres in government provided new outlets of identity which empowered the self-identity of its beholders.

[Place Figure 1 here]

[Place Figure 2 here]

Yet there was much ambiguity underlying the modern niche that the young ‘new Yi’ had sought to carve out for themselves in the metropolis far from their homeland. While Ling Guangdian was proud to pose in his military uniform he now realized how his ethnic identity and family background (that of Yi nobility) had now been revealed to the wider circles of his military contacts by exposure to the media.[[27]](#footnote-27) The Guomindang officer and native chieftain inside Ling were in fact two separate aspects of his identity which would shape much of his career during the 1930s and 1940s. Upon graduating in the summer of 1936 he was assigned as an interpreter for the Frontier People Survey Group (*Bianmin Diaochatuan*) in the Liangshan region. He thus reflected back on this moment in his memoirs stating: “I thus held two important identities at the same time. Belonging to the GMD as an administrative official and that of a Yi native chieftain.”[[28]](#footnote-28) The contradictions that would emerge hereafter were to have an important consequence on Ling’s actions during the war and ensuing activism in the early post-war period.

**Drawing the Yi into a Global Conflict: The Second Sino-Japanese War**

The Second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) cast a new light on the meaning of inter-ethnic unity which went beyond the forceful political ties underlying the Second United Front (1937-1945). China as a ‘nation of nations,’ united against adversity and imperialism, emerged as a driving message among scholars and officials who discussed the ways on how to commit the non-Han peoples of the north and southwest to the war effort and by doing so strengthening the integration of the nation.

The war brought China’s southwest under the spotlight for a number of reasons accentuating its strategic value not only for Guomindang policymakers but also for its western allies. Prior to the outbreak of war in 1937 Guomindang officials had already considered the region as a natural bulwark against full-scale war against the Japanese drawing up on the wealth of its natural resources and the geographical advantages brought about by its relatively isolated location. Later on as Japan occupied the whole of eastern China and French Indochina, the building of the Burma road and later its alternative, the Ledo road, became an essential conduit of Allied supplies to bolster Chinese resistance in the southwest region.

The borderland region of Xikang and Sichuan province, which concentrated an important part of the Yi in the southwest, did not escape the scrutiny of wartime policymakers and strategists. In 1941 the Guomindang dispatched a survey group towards to the area meticulously noting the economic aspects of the region.[[29]](#footnote-29) Strongly embedded in the language of the Three People’s Principles, the survey argued that the economy and people’s livelihood (*minsheng*) in counties where both Han and Yi inhabited were rooted in its rich mineral deposits which “could in the future be at the center for the national defense industry.”[[30]](#footnote-30)

The important question of ‘national unity’ in the region was also urgently raised in light of a continuous tug-of-war of ethnic loyalties with empires at different ends of the rope. The Chinese journalist Liang Oudi recalled in his travels across the Liangshan area during the period his encounter with an Yi who confronted him over the nature of the war: “You Han people strike the enemy, strike the Japanese. However, the Japanese have already [entered] Xichang. Their air force has arrived. We [the Yi] are their family relatives.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Other ethnic groups in the region such as the Dai in Yunnan also became of grave concern for the GMD in 1939 with the officialization of Siam as Thailand. This event with its ethnonationalist implications seemed to suggest the possibility of the Dai joining its Thai neighbors with whom they had historical linguistic connections.[[32]](#footnote-32)

In view of this, the so-called frontier peoples (*bianmin*) were now suddenly viewed as being a potential asset for the war effort. Zhang Guorui praised the bravery of the Yi and the Miao adding that given a proper military training “they will surely become the sturdy race (*jingzu*) of our national defense.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Hu Hsien-chin, an anthropologist working in the Sino-Burmese areas, expressed a similar view on the Yi by first highlighting the danger posed by the Japanese on what she argued was the “softest spot of the Chinese people’s front against the Japanese.”[[34]](#footnote-34) The Yi, she argued, could be organized into one of the world’s best guerrilla fighters if they only seized their internal feuds.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Key figures of the Yi elites with links to the GMD regime also seemed to echo similar feelings of nationalism when discussing the significance of the war for their own people. Those involved in the 1930s journal *Xin Yizu* in Nanjing were in effect mobilized and voiced these views through the press and journals. Gao Yuzhu, a female *tusi* from Yunnan, spelled out the implications of the Sino-Japanese war for the interests and future of both the Yi and the Miao. She stated, “We believe that joining the War of Resistance is our duty while at the same time it is our privilege. Struggling for the Chinese nation’s freedom and liberation is at the same time the obtaining of our own, the Miao-Yi’s freedom and liberation!”[[36]](#footnote-36)

Liberty and equality were indeed powerful discursive elements that pervaded the writings of the wartime period both within China and its Western allies. By fomenting the incorporation of non-Han peoples as equal allies in the war effort it presented the conflict as a unique instance for redefining interethnic relations albeit within a the confines of the Chinese nation-state. Such lofty values were necessarily linked to the perceived need of modernizing the region and its inhabitants supported not only by a wide range of Han Chinese scholars and officials but also by the likes of Ling Guangdian himself who called for the Yi to voluntarily seek evolution and development in order raise the culture of the Yi during these challenging times.[[37]](#footnote-37) Such an issue led to a series of debates on what modernization in the region actually entailed as these undoubtedly impinged on local interests and politics as well.

Owing to the strategic nature of the region surrounding the completion of essential road supplies, both the Western Allies and the GMD agreed that fostering an active modernization policy towards the Yi was essential for securing their loyalty. In this respect, Ling Guangdian emerged as a central figure in the mediation of Yi and Han Chinese interests in the region against a backdrop of international concerns for stability in the region. Thus, it comes as no coincidence that Ling’s presence was championed by Chinese propaganda in the Western press to the extent of being the subject of an article in the New York based *Asia* magazine. Alongside praising Ling for his efforts in mobilizing the Yi in the construction of the Ledo highway it argued “given proper authority and government backing, this promising young man may yet render an even greater service to China as a whole by improving the lot of the Lolos in Sikang.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Later on such an enterprise also allowed for the global exposure of the Yi as an important western ally with a starring role within the multiethnic cast of Chinese nationhood fighting for freedom in Asia. Images of heroic Yi workers could be found on the cover of *Asia* magazine with the heading ‘Builders of the New China-India road.’[[39]](#footnote-39) (See figure 3)

[Insert figure 3 here.]

Ling’s role in the region was apparent to the many actors present in the region. The prestige attached to his being a *tusi* along with being a graduate from Huangpu enhanced his stature among fellow Yi leaders. Even British military intelligence reports identified Ling as a “counselor to the provincial government and to General [Zhang Dulun]. His job involves his going to and fro between the [town] of Fulin and his tribe.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

Military training and education were at the core of efforts to foster a sense of allegiance to both the Guomindang state and the Chinese nation among the Yi. Official press reports stated the success of such efforts in ‘civilizing’ Yi territory through the establishment of 17 schools and the training of 600 Yi to take part in political administration.[[41]](#footnote-41) Yet as Ling Guangdian’s memoirs reveal here was a good example of the complexities that emerged as local politics became involved. Military training was indeed aimed at the sons of the Yi elite which were duly sent to Chengdu. Far from being signs of loyalty they were in fact a product of negotiations led by himself under which families guaranteed their protection from the incursion of local Han troops by committing their sons.[[42]](#footnote-42) Another attempt of training the Yi led by Ling in Xichang was held in derision by Han settlers who referred to them as the ‘barbarian troops’ (*manbing*) of the Colonization Committee.[[43]](#footnote-43)

Ling’s task was a delicate one in which he attempted to keep a balance between the Guomindang and his own people’s interests to which he both professed loyalty and sympathy. This did not deter him from making scathing criticisms to both sides when assessing the results of military training among the Yi youth. In 1943 he noted that the Yi youth performed poorly due to great gaps in their education which made it difficult for them to follow basic instructions.[[44]](#footnote-44) However he also criticized military training personnel noting their lack of knowledge of frontier affairs and the bias of textbook material which only referred to subjects on China proper (*neidi*).[[45]](#footnote-45) Such criticisms were not unique to Ling as they echoed similar voices of concern among Han scholars involved in the Borderlands Education Committee (*Bianjiang Jiaoyu Weiyuanhui*) during the wartime period.[[46]](#footnote-46)

Despite the shortcoming of this particular educational enterprise among the Yi, Ling Guangdian strongly believed in the power of schooling that would allow the Yi to elevate their status within China. In 1937 he personally saw the establishment of the Sibu Border People School (*Sibu Bianmin Xuexiao*) where Yi children would both study Chinese and the Yi culture. Tuition and materials were all free through a series of subsidies from fellow Yi leaders and the provincial government.[[47]](#footnote-47) Ling wanted a Yi nation that could feel proud of its achievements, noting how in contrast Long Yun, the Yi governor of Yunnan province did not dare reveal his Yi roots.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The anxieties that Ling held over the future of the Yi were not unfounded amidst the constant barrage of official Guomindang propaganda which emphasized the fusion of all races into a single Chinese nation. One policy that reflected this vision was the fomenting of ethnic intermarriages between the Han and other ethnic groups. Such a practice mirrored the influence of racial ideas and eugenics on a number of Chinese intellectuals dealing with borderland issues. Scholars such as Gu Jiegang and Pan Guangdan both promoted the inter-ethnic mixtures in the borderland regions “in order to rejuvenate the national stamina and improve the genetic makeup.” [[49]](#footnote-49)

Ling Guangdian’s response to this policy revealed a deep understanding of the problems surrounding this issue. Ling recognized the entrenched cultural prejudices of his own people who kept strict boundaries between the Black Yi, White Yi, and slaves. Yet Ling’s own argument against intermarriage was not the upholding of such beliefs which he regarded as mere superstition. Eschewing all racial arguments he strongly believed that the current economic and cultural gap between the Han and the Yi made any type of marriages prone to conflict. For a harmonious relationship to develop it was essential to have a common language and customs and that “husband and wife should match each other in intelligence and ability.”[[50]](#footnote-50) Ling’s argument seemed to suggest that the only way to avert interethnic conflict was that the Yi would have to follow a separate path of development until conditions were more equal. Such an argument was all the more remarkable in that it echoed similar debates on assimilation and cultural conflict taking place during the same period in Brazil and the United States.[[51]](#footnote-51)

It is perhaps no coincidence that during this period Ling Guangdian also began to write on the customs and history of the Yi people recasting them as a historical subject with their own voice. This included the translation of Yi folktales, songs, as well as pieces of ethnographic nature.[[52]](#footnote-52) The deployment of ethnology as a means of empowerment was of course not exclusive to the Yi. Han Chinese ethnographers in the 1930s carried out surveys in the southwest region to make claims upon contested borderland areas under discourses of cultural affinity and shared historical links.[[53]](#footnote-53) Expeditions into Yi territories included Yang Chengzhi’s trip in 1929 as well as Ding Wenjiang’s collection of ancient Yi engravings in 1930.[[54]](#footnote-54) The appropriation of both Yi artifacts and folklore in hands of Han ethnographers as well as missionaries in the past was now being taken over directly by the Yi themselves.

Ling Guangdian’s pieces were significantly written in Chinese seeking to reach an ethnic Han audience ranging from scholars to those workers in frontier administration posts. References to his services and writings by various ethnographers give evidence to the ways in which he cemented his links to scholars along the likes of Wei Huilin and Siang-Feng Ko.[[55]](#footnote-55) There was a global scope to this enterprise as well very much overlooked in the contacts Ling made with foreign missionaries working in the region such as David Crocket Graham and Archie Crouch. Both were involved in scholarly studies of ethnic minorities of the region combined with missionary activism under the auspices of the Chinese run Christian Border Service Department (*Bianjiang Fuwubu*).[[56]](#footnote-56) Crouch recalled in his writings that Ling had personally presented him with a copy of his 1943 *Luoqing Shulun* (Discussion and narration of Lolo affairs).[[57]](#footnote-57) On the other hand Graham received a copy of Ling’s Chinese translation of a Yi story tellingly autographed by the author in Yi script. Ling’s efforts did not go unrewarded as the story was translated into English by Graham thus reaching a wider audience through its publication in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1955.[[58]](#footnote-58) The story titled ‘The Great God O-Li-Bi-Zih’ as discussed by Eberhard in the introduction revealed the many influences of Han Chinese culture yet in essence expressed “Lolo values, and the general tendency is anti-Chinese.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Such an expression of the historical plight of the Yi seemed to mark a strong turning point on Ling Guangdian’s views on reforming Yi society. Although acknowledging the so-called backwardness of his own people and the need for modernization, the paths for development were soon to be openly contested in the new political arena that would emerge in the early post-war period.

**Representing the Yi in the Early Post-war Period**

The end of the wartime period in August 1945 heralded a new, albeit uncertain period for China as a whole. Far from being a period of stability, old and new actors began vying for positions in the new emerging political order. The early post-war period ushered in a series of expectations in both China and the world of a more just and equal society. The Chinese borderlands were no exception to this trend in light of the promises of the wartime period. If equality (*pingdeng*) and freedom (*ziyou*) were indeed to be the outcome of victory as suggested in wartime propaganda, what options were now available for China’s non-Han communities such as the Yi to make good of this promise?

Despite the resistance for the recognition of ethnic diversity in GMD ideology, it is important to recall that legal pathways for ethnic equality were already being put into place. Magnus Fiskesjo for example has studied the efforts of ethnographer Ruey Yih-fu in rectifying the traditional derogatory animal names used in the official classification of ethnic minorities in the southwest under the auspices of the Guomindang in 1939.[[60]](#footnote-60) Yet another commonly overlooked instance of ethnic equality could also be appreciated in the promulgation of the 1946 constitution. Special provisions for borderland territories were also included granting lawful protection to all peoples in the borderland regions and support for self-government activities.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Such an array of legal pathways reflected the greater debates on the unfolding form and nature of the Chinese nation. Would China be conceived as a grand melting pot where all diversity was to be melded into a single nation? Or was China to be conceived as a multi-ethnic nation of nations where diversity was both accepted and protected by the state? Such debates had acquired great strength during the wartime period; particularly under the auspices of ethnographers who sought the acceptance of the Miao, Yao, Li and the Yi as officially recognized ethnic categories. Cen Jiawu for example had argued for the expansion of the officially sanctioned Five Peoples to that of a Republic of Nine Peoples.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Despite the limited impact of such proposals at the time, it became clear that demands for both political and cultural autonomy of non-Han societies were to become ever more vocal in the post-war period against a backdrop of global decolonization and national liberation movements. The shockwaves of victory had indeed reached China’s borderland territories on all its edges. Facing the loss of Mongolia on its borders in 1945 a number of requests for high degrees of political autonomy emerged from other ethnic within China such as Mongols, Tibetans, and Uighurs.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Discontent on China’s borderlands could also be found in Xikang province where issues of interethnic rivalry were even more volatile. Doak Barnett, who travelled around China as a reporter for the Chicago Daily News during this period, noted these mounting tensions in his writings on Xikang in 1948. Among the many people he interviewed was the Assistant Pacification Commander for the province who boasted that the only solution to these problems lay in educational policies which eventually would make people “even forget the names of the minority groups.”[[64]](#footnote-64) Barnett, ever skeptical about the officer’s claims, added in his writings: “There is no indication that his enthusiasm is justified, however, for the minorities resent the Chinese intrusion into their lives and have no desire to be Sinicized. What they want is autonomy, which the Chinese are unwilling to grant.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

Feelings of discontent among the elites of non-Han communities however were not lost upon local and provincial commanders. Liu Wenhui for example was in fact very receptive to local demands of autonomy of both Yi and Tibetans under his rule. Barnett himself witnessed an example of such an instance in June 1948 as he attended a conference for ten Yi native chieftains in Chengdu. Despite the Yi leaders praising Liu’s views on equal education and the curbing of excessive taxation, they “complained that not enough attention was being given to their standard of living, and they accused two men – one a Chinese general, the other a tribal leader – of being oppressive.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Such a meeting offered a fascinating insight into the language of the period where notions of equality and development had notably pervaded political discourses on ethnic issues in China.

Local meetings were but one of many instances in which a growing number of Yi began to plead for wider recognition within the Chinese Republican nation-state. Various platforms such as the media and political representation in the guise of the National Assembly (*Guomin Daibiao Dahui*) and the Legislative Council (*Fayuan Huiyi*) made such a struggle a nationwide issue with its ensuing detractors and allies. The years between 1947 and 1949 saw a powerful campaign led by Ling Guangdian seeking political rights for the Yi. Ling of course was not alone in his struggle in southwest China. Cheung Siu-woo has studied the career of Miao scholar and activist Liang Juwu in Guizhou who also sought the recognition of the Miao as an official and equal ethnic category.[[67]](#footnote-67) Yet a notable difference emerged in their political paths despite holding similar views that sought the end of the marginalization of ethnic minorities in southwest China. Ling Guangdian made the most of his political connections as an insider to secure concessions for the Yi he represented. On the other hand, Liang Juwu fared poorly in his attempts to access the National Assembly and later on the Legislative Council during this period.[[68]](#footnote-68) Having been an open critic of the government in the media and a member of the Democratic League no doubt contributed to his defeat in a system very much dominated by GMD connections.

An important ally that emerged during this period were a number of Han Chinese anthropologists who very much sympathized with culturally sensitive issues underlying the various modernization efforts in the borderlands that begun in earnest during the war.[[69]](#footnote-69) As Thomas Mullaney has pointed out, this particular group of scholars engaged in ‘ethnological activism’ which sought to use the tools of their discipline in the incorporation and development of those peoples inhabiting southwest China.[[70]](#footnote-70) Later on Ling would recall how his contacts in academia allowed for a number of invitations to Chengdu where he gave a series of public talks on the plight of the Yi at both Sichuan and West China Union University.[[71]](#footnote-71)

In 1947 these scholars pledged their explicit support for Ling Guangdian’s efforts in the form of a special issue on the Yi in the journal *Bianjiang Tongxun* [Frontier Report]. These included well known anthropologists such as Ma Chanshou, Xu Yingtang, Ma Xueliang, Zhang Xueben among many others.[[72]](#footnote-72) Ren Naiqiang, the Tibetologist from Sichuan, denounced the culturally insensitive policies of officials for the Liangshan region such as Han-Yi intermarriages and the building of toilet facilities. Such policies he argued were tyrannical forms of government (*nüezheng*) with no regard for indigenous customs despite the good intentions of the Han.[[73]](#footnote-73) He then added:

At present, this country has implemented a constitution together with the creation and exercising of a legislation in which we have people who supervise and exercise it. However, we have no Lolo (i.e. Yi) brothers or someone who thoroughly understands their customs taking part in this power. Rather people who interfere with these customs.”[[74]](#footnote-74)

Ren Naiqiang’s words were in effect pointing to a major flaw within the policy making process of the borderland regions. Despite the existence of representative and legislative bodies in the Chinese political system, these were for the most part inaccessible to non-Han communities. Ren of course was no stranger to the works of policy making in the region. Alongside his role as a Tibetologist he had also served as a member of Liu Wenhui’s reconstruction committee for Xikang province between 1934 and 1938.[[75]](#footnote-75) He now suggested that the Yi be granted quotas to take part in a legislative supervisory body which would allow for a stronger position against policy errors.[[76]](#footnote-76)

The 1947 National Assembly elections are perhaps one of the most overlooked instances of competing pathways for political recognition and participation in Republican China. Previous studies on this period for the most part have viewed this instance with great skepticism owing to the huge number of documented cases of coercion leading to the electing of (for the most part GMD) candidates in urban areas of China.[[77]](#footnote-77) In this context, the Liangshan region was far from being isolated from these political developments that had already begun to gain momentum during the wartime period. Li Shi’an, a white Yi working for the GMD had been assigned the task of setting up the local party committee with its branch campus in Liangshan itself.[[78]](#footnote-78) Yet the task of political indoctrination and mobilization was not wholly successful during the election campaign. Local reports from the Three Peoples Principles Youth Corps (*Sanmin zhuyi qingniantuan*) indicated for example that “[i]n Zhaojue county, owing to the Yi brother’s low knowledge, there was a lack of interest in politics. Thus the atmosphere of the elections was extraordinarily faint.”[[79]](#footnote-79) Nevertheless, despite the marked apathy as well as arbitrariness involved in election procedures, the case of Ling Guangdian seems to show that certain political gains could in fact be gained *within* a system which at least in principle rested on the basis of popular representation.

Contemplating the elections that would take place in November 1947 for delegates attending the National Assembly, Ling formed in spring of that year the Petition Delegation for the Political Participation of the Yi People of Xikang (*Xikang Yizu Canzheng Qingyuantuan*). It sought to arouse public opinion before venturing to Nanjing itself in order to begin a series of lobbying efforts to further its cause of political participation. Summoning a press conference in Chengdu it laid out its petitions demanding that the Yi be allowed to participate in Xikang province’s Political Participation Assembly (*Xikang Canzhenghui*), the enlargement of quotas for the Legislative Council and National Assembly, and the establishment of a quota for the Supervisory Committee (*Jiancha Weiyuan*) for the province.[[80]](#footnote-80) The delegation’s demands were then endorsed by Xikang’s provincial governor Liu Wenhui in June of that year who also supported its members as the nominated candidates for the National Assembly elections. Upon arrival in Nanjing intense meetings took place with other key figures of the GMD regime such as Bai Chongxi (National Defense Ministry) and Sun Ke (Legislative Council) receiving their endorsement as well.[[81]](#footnote-81) Not satisfied with the level of contacts Ling Guangdian presented a petition to Chiang Kai-shek himself in August 1947. Chiang accepted to meet Ling and accepted his petition in that he openly support the election of a Yi representative to the National Assembly.[[82]](#footnote-82) Such a masterful strategy was to prove successful and soon afterwards in November 1947 Ling Guangdian and his fellow Yi comrades were duly elected.

The expanding presence of the Yi in representative bodies of the Chinese Republic was no minor feat. Yet the effectiveness of such achievements not only rested on the virtue of having been elected. The inside world of politics and negotiation in Nanjing required that its players know how to deal their cards effectively. Ling’s presence in the Legislative Council opened a series of networking opportunities that allowed him to play his hand. His Huangpu military pedigree gave him access to a tight circle of military and intelligence officers led by Mao Fengren who was also a member of the Legislative Council. In May 1948 Mao invited Ling together with seven other members of the council to meet Chiang Kai-shek to discuss intelligence matters. Much to the chagrin of Mao Fengren, Ling admonished Chiang on the need to rename the MTAC as the Border Administration Department (*Bianzhengbu*) as it dealt with the whole of China’s border people’s affairs and not only Mongols and Tibetans as the institution’s name suggested. But most importantly he added was the need to include Yi people within his ranks by which he recommended that a fellow Yi, Yang Dizhong be admitted.[[83]](#footnote-83)

The issue of quotas for non-Han communities in provincial and county representative bodies also dominated the discussions within the Legislative Council. At heart of this debate was how to reconcile the principle of self-government (*zizhi*) and equality (*pingdeng*) in regions where both Han and non-Han citizens lived together. The ethnographer Rui Yifu recognized the potential of cultural conflict in this dilemma when he wrote: “the racial equality of the self governed frontier regions that we advocate, is not merely that of ‘submitting to the majority’ and ‘sacrifice the minority’, but rather that of ‘submitting to the majority, respecting the minority.’”[[84]](#footnote-84)

Ling Guangdian recalled in his memoirs how a network of non-Han members of the Legislative Council all rallied together on reaching a formal agreement of quotas for minorities including Miao delegates from Hunan and Yi delegates from Guizhou and Yunnan.[[85]](#footnote-85) However, one Han member, Luo Jinghua, argued that these areas were not inhabited by nationwide peoples, nor were they major inhabited regions. Due to their low level of culture he argued such a proposal could not be enacted. An outraged Ling Guangdian thus rebuked:

Non-nationwide ethnic groups cannot draw up quotas. With the exception of Han people, how many other ethnic groups are nationwide ones? It has been said that size of residence and population is too small. For the Daxiao Liangshan area, vertically 800 *li*, horizontally 400 *li*, population of 4,000,000. Can it be said this is small and few? Writing this off is truly mistaken. Low culture will not do, what is the criterion for cultural superiority and inferiority? Does low culture [make us] non-Chinese?[[86]](#footnote-86)

Yet a wider battle underlay the aforementioned debate over quotas and political representation. Despite all the rhetoric of ethnic equality and self-rule a deep entrenched prejudice against the Yi as a whole still pervaded most of China’s Han society. Images of a slave society mired in feudal ways and the constant pillaging of the Yi into Han Chinese settlements led many to consent to extermination campaigns as a final solution to this conflict.[[87]](#footnote-87) On the other hand educated Yi fought back denouncing the inequities of a system that gave lifetime sentences to the Yi for harming Han people but not the other way around.[[88]](#footnote-88) Within a few months however the battle of words over the Yi soon gave way to major events and disruptions as the Chinese Civil War began drawing to an end. To the Yi elite it became clear that new positions and allies, particularly the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would have to be contemplated in light of the inevitable regime change that lay ahead.

**Conclusion and the End of an Era**

Major fighting in the region between the CCP and the last remaining GMD troops ended in March 1950 when the strategic city of Xichang in Xikang province finally fell to the People’s Liberation Army. Prior to the fall of Xichang negotiations continued at different levels between Yi clan leaders such as Buyu Wani and CCP underground agents positioning him later on favorably in the ensuing new political order as head of Ninglang county.[[89]](#footnote-89) During those last fateful months Ling Guangdian had been appointed by GMD general Hu Zongnan himself to take charge of a training unit that sought to educate and mobilize fellow Yi native chiefs against the CCP. Despite taking on this task Ling voiced his frustration over the many empty promises of ethnic equality of the GMD. Although admitting that the GMD had always been good towards him as an individual, it hadn’t necessarily been good towards the Yi people.[[90]](#footnote-90)

As the CCP took over the region its integration into the national polity became a key priority. Modernization and development once again became the key issues of propaganda albeit under a socialist agenda. Anti-opium campaigns began in earnest in July 1950 undermining one of the most valuable sources of income for Yi society yet reforms dealing with slavery and land tenancy did not take place until 1956.[[91]](#footnote-91) A new chapter in inter-ethnic relations was proclaimed placing the Yi as equal partners in this new enterprise despite the many gaps surrounding the (re)construction and recognition of the Yi category itself.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Despite the radical changes that were announced for the region, continuities with the old regime could still be observed through the likes of the career of Ling Guangdian. Ling was duly appointed to the Nationalities Cadre Training Team Work (*Minzu Ganbu Xunlianban Gongzuo*) carrying out a similar task of leadership during his days under the GMD. Naturally this did not stop Ling form stating that in effect, “Under the leadership of the CCP, a new life had begun.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

What was truly significant of Ling’s career however was his pursuit for the recognition of a ‘New Yi’ people and its rightful place within the Chinese nation-state. Those who clearly understood the cultural and political mechanisms of both Han and Yi societies could only carry out such a pursuit. Ling Guangdian’s identity, like other educated Yi of this period who experienced both the urban culture of Nanjing and the local culture of Liangshan, was no doubt the product of a “dialectical interaction between local, national, and cosmopolitan discourses [that] shape[d] their lives as ethnic citizens of modern nations.”[[94]](#footnote-94) Yet it is telling that Ling the unflappable modernizer of the Republican Period was remembered at the end of his life by younger generations of Yi as the elder who taught them their traditions and history.[[95]](#footnote-95)

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Figure 2. “Commemorative Photo of Yi Association Anniversary Celebration” (Nanjing). From left to right: (top row) A Bi, An Tengfei; (bottom row) Ling Guangdian, Qumu Zangyao.

Source: *Xin Yizu* [The New Yi] 1, no.1 (1936).

Figure 3. “Builders of the New China-India Road.” Source: Cover of *Asia* Magazine (June 1942)

1. Lin Kuang-Tien, “A Lolo Story: ‘The Great God O-Li-Bi-Zih.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Works on the contested nature of borderlands include Prasenjit Duara, *S*overeignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern, James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenes Became Chinese*. Other works such as Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, focus on the articulation of Tibetan Buddhism as a cohesive factor of national unity for the period. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. On the notion of ‘awakening’ the Chinese populace see John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China. Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution*, On ethnic minorities in particular see Stevan Harrell, “Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. On the Miao see Edward A McCord, “Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China: The 1937 West Hunan Miao Abolish-Military-Land Resist-Japan Uprising.” On the Kham region see Peng Wenbin, “Frontier Process, Provincial Politics and Movements for Khampa Autonomy during the Republican Period.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Cheung, Siu-woo, “Millenarism, Christian Movements, and Ethnic Change among the Miao in Southwest

China.” Also Norma Diamond, “Christianity and the Hua Miao: Writing and Power.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See for example Lin Yaohua, *The Lolo of Liang Shan* Racialist accounts of the Yi are found in A.F.Legendre,

“Far West Chinois. Races Aborigenes. - Les Lolos – Etude Ethnologique et Anthropologique.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Stevan Harrell, “The History of the History of the Yi”, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Stevan Harrell, “The History of the History of the Yi”, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Bamo Ayi, “Growing up Half Yi.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Jiang Yingliang, “Liangshan Yizu de Nuli zhidu” [The Slavery System of the Yizu], 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For a series of works criticizing the notion of assimilation see Melissa Brown ed., *Negotiating ethnicities in*

*China and Taiwan*. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hsiao-ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China’s Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-49*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Hsiao-ting Lin, *Modern China’s Ethnic Frontiers* *A Journey to the West,* 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Gongwen: Guanyu zuzhizhe: 25, han Zhongyang Zuzhibu: wei ju Qumu Zangyao qing zhun yu daibiao Yizu liexi si quan dahui bing jianyi xuanhua yizu an, han jiao jihua yi fu.” [Official Document: Regarding Organization Department. [Doc No] 25: Letter from the Central Party Organization Department: According to the case put forward by Qumu Zangyao requesting that he be permitted to represent the Yi people as a non voting delegate at the Fourth National Assembly proposing to diffuse elevating influence among the Yi people. Letter handed in response with proposed plan.], 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “Zixu” [Author’s Preface] in Qumu Zangyao, *Xinan Yizu Kaochaji* [Records of a survey among the

Southwest Yi] (Nanjing: Fati Shudian, 1934), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Shi Qingyang, “Xu” [Preface] in Qumu Zangyao, *Xinan Yizu Kaochaji*, 1 and Ceng Kuoqing, “Xu Yi”

[Preface Number One] in Qumu Zangyao, *Xinan Yizu Kaochaji*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Prasenjit Duara, *S*overeignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern, 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Qumu Zangyao, *Xinan Yizu Kaochaji*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Zhu Qixuan, *Kangchang Kaochaji* [Survey Records of Xikang and Xichang], 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “Xinan Yizu Wenhua Cujinhui Jianzhan” [Outline for the Society for the Promotion of Culture of the Southwest Yi], 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ou-fan Lee, "The Cultural Construction of Modernity in Urban Shanghai: Some Preliminary Expositions”, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Fakan ci” [Words for the New Publication], 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. An Cheng, “Xinan Yizu Bu Shi Zhongguo Tuzhu Minzu ma?” [Isn’t the Yi race part of the native Chinese race?], 1. Please note, each article has been page numbered individually within the journal. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Qumu Zangyao, “Guonan Yanzhong xia zhi Xinan Guofang yu Yizu” [The Yi People and the Southwest’s National Defense under grave danger and national crisis], 48. According to the preface the article is taken from a lecture the author gave in Yunnan province to committee workers. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, p.77. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, p.79. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Zhu Qixuan, *Kangchang Kaochaji*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Zhu Qixuan, *Kangchang Kaochaji,* 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Liang Oudi, *Wo Zenyang Tongguo Daxiao Liangshan* [How I crossed the Daxiao Liangshan], 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation. Ethnic Classification in Modern China.* 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Zhang Guorui, “Ruhe Jianshe Xinan” [How to Reconstruct the Southwest], 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Hsien-chin Hu, “Frontier Tribes of Southwest China”, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Hsien-chin Hu “Frontier Tribes of Southwest China”, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Gao Yuzhu “Dongyuan Yi Miao Minzu yu Kangzhan qiantu” [The Mobilization of the Yi Miao Nations and the Future of the War of Resistance] in *Xinan Daobao* 1, no.4, (1938), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ling Guangdian, *Luoqing Shulun* [Discussion and narration of Lolo affairs], 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Sun Keewong, “When Lolos Meet Chinese”, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Asia* (June 1942), cover. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The National Archives (TNA): War Office (WO) WO 208/450: “Road Communications in Yunnan”

(Feb.1944). Zhang Dulun was the commander for Chiang Kai-shek’s headquarters in Xikang province. The

report makes a note of the rivalry between Zhang and Liu Wenhui and the support of the Yi for the latter. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. “Tribesmen trained to govern.”, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Zeng Zhaolun, *Daliangshan Yiqu Kaochaji* [Notes on the Survey of the Daliangshan Yi region], 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ling Guangdian, *Luoqing Shulun*, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ling Guangdian, *Luoqing Shulun*, 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Andres Rodriguez, “Building the Nation, Serving the Frontier: Mobilizing and Reconstructing China’s Borderlands during the War of Resistance (1937-1945)”, 357. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Yuehtsen Juliette Chun, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts. 1896-1945,* 18.

On Gu Jiegang see James Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China. From the

Yellow Emperor to the Peking Man”, 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ling Guangdian, *Luoqing Shulun*, p.75. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See for example Samuel Harman Lowrie, “Racial and National Intermarriage in a Brazilian City”, 684-707,

and Milton L. Barron, “Research on Intermarriage: A Survey of Accomplishments and Prospects”, 249-255. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See for example his translations into Chinese of “Luoluo Chujia Ge” [The Marrying of a Woman Song], 29 and *Kuangzhe Riji. Yiren Gushi* [Diary of a Deceiver. A Tale of the Yi People]. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Prasenjit Duara, *S*overeignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern, 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. See Ma Xueliang ed., *Cuanwen Congke* [Stone Engravings of the Cuan (Yi) Culture]. This is an extended edition of Ding Wenjiang, *Cuanwen Congke* [Stone Engravings of the Cuan [Yi] Culture] originally published Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936) and by Academia Sinica’s Philology and History Institute Special Number 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Siang-Feng Ko, “Marriage Among the Independent Lolos of Western China”, 487-496. Wei Huilin hosted a speech delivered by Ling at Jinling University. His preface to Ling’s speech is found in “Yuesui Tianba tusi shehui jianshe gongzuo gaikuang”, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. On the role of foreign missionaries in the Christian Border Service Department see Deng Jie, “Waiji

Chuanjiaoshi yu Zhongguo de Bianjiang Fuwu Yundong.” [Foreign Missionaries and the Chinese Border

Service Movement],1-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Introduction by Archie Crouch to English translation by Archie R. Crouch of Chapters I and II of "The Facts

About the Lolos" by Ling Kwang-tien (Kai Ming Book Co. Chengtu, Sze., 1943) Folder 3–53, Border Service

Department, Church of Christ in China, RG 17, Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. “A Lolo Story: ‘The Great God O-Li-Bi-Zih’ by Lin Kuang-Tien”. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “A Lolo Story: ‘The Great God O-Li-Bi-Zih’ by Lin Kuang-Tien”, p.175. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See Magnus Fiskesjo, “The Animal Other. China’s Barbarians and Their Renaming in the Twentieth Century”, 57-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Deng Chonglu, *Zhongguo Xianfa lun* [A discussion on China’s Constitution], 243. The precise item referred

to in the constitution is article 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*, p.80. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See Hsiao-ting Lin, *Modern China’s Ethnic Frontiers,* 99-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of Communist Takeover*, 224. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of Communist Takeover*, p.224. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. A. Doak Barnett, *China on the Eve of Communist Takeover*, p.226. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Cheung Siu-woo, “Miao Identities, Indigenism and the Politics of Appropriation in Southwest China during

the Republican Period”, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Cheung Siu-woo, “Miao Identities, Indigenism and the Politics of Appropriation in Southwest China during

the Republican Period”, 111 and 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo Minzuxue Shi (1903-1949)*,[History of Chinese Ethnography] Volume 1, 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 201. One of his contacts at Sichuan University, Li

Weipin, was a local student from Leibo and a member of the CCP. Ling would then recall how he helped protect

Li from persecution owing to his contacts within the GMD. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, p.103. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ren Naiqiang, “Wo suozhidao de Yizu Tusi Ling Guangdian Xiansheng”, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ren Naiqiang, “Wo suozhidao de Yizu Tusi Ling Guangdian Xiansheng”, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Liu Shoulin (et.al), *Minguo zhiguan nianbiao* [Chronology of Republican Official Posts], 787. According to

this source Ren was appointed on 3 August 1934 and remained in this post until 17 December 1938. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ren Naiqiang, “Wo suozhidao de Yizu Tusi Ling Guangdian Xiansheng”, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China. The Political Struggle, 1945-49*, 139-140. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Zeng Zhaolun, *Daliangshan Yiqu Kaochaji* [Notes on the Survey of the Daliangshan Yi region], 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. ‘National Assembly and Legislation Committee Campaign’ [Guodai ji Liwei Jingxuan] (1947). In Sichuan Provincial Archives Min 199 [Republican Era Files Section 199], 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 103 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Rui Yifu, “Bianjiang Jianshe yu Minzu Pingdeng de Bianjiang difang zizhi”[Frontier Reconstruction and Equality of Nations of Frontier Self Government”, 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, p.106. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. See for example Luo Zhiting, *Luoqu Han nu yutian lu.* [A record of appeals made by Han slaves in the Lolo

region] Ling recalled how this book was circulated in the Legislative Council prompting him to write his own

version of events on Han Chinese massacres of the Yi. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*,

p.107. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Fu Zhengda, “Yiren Lun Yiwu [An Yi on Yi Affairs]”, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Alan Winnington, *The Slaves of the Cool Mountains: Travels Among the Head-hunters and Slave-owners of South-West China,* 49-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Yongming Zhou, *Antidrug Crusades in Twentieth Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*,

156. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. See Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation* and his study on the many complexities and

negotiations underlying the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project in Yunnan. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ling Guangdian, *Yiwangjian yige Yizu tusi de Zizhu*, 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China*, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Bamo Ayi, “Growing up Half Yi”, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)