

**From Millenarians to Christians:
The History of Christian Bureaucracy in Ahmao
(Miao/Hmong) Society, 1850s-2012**

by

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Anthropology)
in the University of Michigan
2014**

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Acknowledgements

I began working on this dissertation project in 2008, but the seed was planted in 1999, when I first encountered a former Ahmao teacher-pastor in a village near Kunming. He showed me three manuscripts written in the Pollard Ahmao Hmong script that recorded details of ceremonies specific to the Long clan. With his permission, I brought the manuscripts back to Kunming, made three photocopies, and returned to him the original text and the three photocopies. Teacher Long was pleased. I then asked for his permission to keep one of the photocopies and promised him that I would eventually learn to read the Pollard script. When I returned to formally start my dissertation project, I learned from the villagers that Teacher Long had passed away the year after we met. I will not have the opportunity to personally thank Teacher Long and tell him that I have kept my promise. This experience and countless others across the dissertation project have taught me that anthropologists do not do ethnography. It is rather the other way around.

I accumulated many other debts over the course of my dissertation research and writing. One debt is to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. Another is to Academia Sinica in Taipei. I am grateful for the opportunities that both sources of funding provided me during my dissertation project. Also, many faculty contributed substantially to my dissertation project. Erik Mueggler, my dissertation chair, patiently coached me in writing and in better understanding the art of ethnography. Bruce Mannheim, a committee member, inspired me to see the dialectic relation between

society and state. His thoughts on the dialogic emergence of culture that he introduced in the seminar class of 2004 continue to fascinate and inspire me. Webb Keane, another committee member, introduced me to the matrix of the semiotic. As signs never stop creating new meanings, an anthropologist's work never ends. I never had the privilege of being in the classroom of the remaining committee member, Christian de Pee. His insights as a historian contributed vitally as I gradually came to understand the importance of bureaucracy for my dissertation. My appreciation of the contributions of the Michigan faculty to my training is not just personal, but also collective. Michigan anthropologists provided me with what for me was the perfect environment my doctoral training in anthropology.

Ethnography always includes cooperation that goes beyond the limits of any single society. My initial anthropological training was in Taiwan at the Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University. The anthropology faculty at Tsing Hua collectively provided me with a background in anthropology and the personal confidence that allowed me to survive the rigors of Michigan anthropology. In particular, many thanks go to Lin Shurong and Huang Shuming, who introduced me to ethnographical fieldwork in Southwest China. My MA advisor, James Wilkerson, stimulated my willingness to entertain novel ideas and has since then provided years of moral support when the going got tough. One of my MA committee members, Ho Ts'ui ping, shared with me both her knowledge of Southwest China and her enthusiasm for anthropology. Classmates and friends at National Tsing Hua have continuously offered their generous support both socially and intellectually.

I can never repay the Ahmao people in Southwest China for their help during my

dissertation project. Over the years of learning their language and carrying out my dissertation research, we have developed an intimacy and trust without which this dissertation would not have been possible. My wholehearted gratitude goes to my language teacher, Tao Shaohu, whose knowledge of the Ahmao language and its literacy has provided to be a never-ending source of insight and inspiration. His commitment to the Ahmao literacy campaign is happily beginning to make real difference in the Ahmao community.

Finally, family has always been and still remains the most important part of my life. Words cannot express my appreciation. This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Frank, my son James, and to my parents and parents-in-law.

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List of Abbreviations

APS	Ahmao Pollard Script
LAO	Latin Ahmao Orthography
FAO	Formalized Ahmao Orthography
CNLY	Committee of Nationality and Language of Yunnan
CXMZSL	楚雄苗族史略
GMZW	貴州省民族指導委員會編
KMJDS	昆明基督教史
PQJL	平黔記略
QXBMYSLDC	黔西北苗族彝族社會歷史調查
TBZ	陶氏兄弟與豬拱箐
WDXZ	武定縣志
WMBSL	威寧苗族百年實錄
XBMZGG	西部苗族古歌
XZJWT	小眾教問題調查報告選編
YNJDS	雲南基督教史
YNJDJSL	雲南基督教史料

Abstract

This dissertation describes the role of bureaucracy in Ahmao society during the conversion of the Ahmao from millenarianism to Christianity. These transformations importantly included the introduction into Ahmao society of a new functional role for teachers/pastors which came to form an elite social status for Ahmao Christians. From the late imperial era to the present post reform PRC era, the social history of the Christian Ahmao divides into four periods: The first period began in the late imperial China with mass Ahmao conversions into missionary-led denominational congregations. The second period began in the 1920's during the Republican era as the authority of the missionaries in the reproduction of Christian knowledge weakened and the authority of Christian Ahmao teachers/pastors expanded. The third period began early in the PRC era during the revolutionary decade of the 1950's and lasting into the 1980's as the communist state destroyed Christian denominational congregations and replaced them with patriotic congregations. The fourth period began early in 1990s as the effect of Ahmao identity became salient in organizing Ahmao congregations. In each period, there was a distinctive process of bureaucratization that provided a context that fixed literacy-as-value in such a way that it in turn reconfigured the relationship between the Chinese state and Ahmao society. The major finding of this ethnography is that the history of bureaucratizing among the Christian Ahmao was dialectical insofar as it was driven by a pursuit of literacy-as-value at the same time that the literacy-as-value

changed the process bureaucratization. It is suggested that Christian Ahmao found it difficult to achieve consensus about decisions on how to change their lives until they reached a consensus within their Christian bureaucracy about how consensus was to be achieved.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Christianity and Bureaucracy

This dissertation describes Christian bureaucratization in Ahmao society. This process began with the mass conversion movement in 1903 when the Ahmao millenarians flowed into missionary stations in southwest China. In this process, missionaries served as social engineers who designed a new social system for Ahmao converts through a process of bureaucratization that was comprised of two parts: First, Christianity was introduced as a new form of knowledge that was not only religious but also secular. A single building served as both a church and as a classroom. Second, converts were organized into Christian bureaucracy into a large number of congregations led by clergy that the missionaries appointed. I argue that it is this bureaucratization process that facilitated the mass conversion movement as the Ahmao shifted away from tribal society, expunged their millenarian tendencies, such that, within a few years, the Ahmao who had previously remained for centuries beyond the sway of imperial China quickly became organized into congregations and ushered into a rapid process of modernization.

Christian bureaucracy is rarely examined in anthropological studies of Protestant Christianity. Historically, Protestant ideology emerged in opposition to the monopoly and domination of Catholic bureaucracy. Hence, conversion to Protestant Christianity, for example, has been attributed mostly as an agent of emancipation and has rarely if even

has Christian bureaucracy been seen as agent of domination. As such, Christian bureaucracy remains out of sight from Protestant scholars and invisible to anthropology of Protestant Christianity in general.

A history of Christian bureaucracy may be counterfactual to Protestant Christianity, it is important to contextualize Christian bureaucracy to refer only to specific ethnographic cases, rather than being uncritically generalized as typical of Protestant denominations or Churches in other regions of the world. Nevertheless, by referring to Christian Ahmao's denominational system as a Christian bureaucracy, I mean to emphasize the fact that this system has been conceived by Christian Ahmao as something intended to and which in fact did organize Ahmao society, and that it did so very much in the way that Max Weber described for Chinese bureaucracy.

In Max Weber's writings on China, state authority manifest charismatic features that were inherit in China's written legacy and embodied by generations of literati (Weber 1964[1920]). Again for Max Weber, Chinese bureaucracy created Chinese society, which in turn sustained Chinese bureaucracy, so that each is by design integral to the reproduction of the other. Given the nature of Chinese bureaucracy, the relation between the Chinese state and Chinese society is distinct from that of European states and societies.

In this relation between the Chinese state and Chinese society, bureaucratization is a key concept of Max Weber's theory of Chinese bureaucracy. In his discussion, Confucianism is a value system through which Chinese bureaucracy legitimizes state authority to regulate interactions between the Chinese state and its society. In this sense, bureaucratization refers to the penetration of bureaucratic values into local value systems.

To ensure the reproduction of bureaucracy, an imperial exam system was established to recruit bureaucrats. Chinese literati who trained to take the exam internalized Confucianism regardless of whether they were or were not bureaucrats. They thus became the mediators between the bureaucratic state and the local society, integrating Confucianism into everyday life and helping the state to align Chinese society with Confucian doctrines. For historians of China and East Asia, Weber's insights highlight the role of literati or elites in this process. Yet, anthropologists appreciate less Weber's insights regarding bureaucratization, perhaps due to their reluctance to study literati or other elites. This is to be regretted insofar as such elites have played a key role in the bureaucratization of national minorities.

In recent anthropological studies, bureaucracy that was reified through the existence of bureaucrats, institutions, and legal documents served as an agent of bureaucratization. James Wilkerson's discussion of the "academies" (or schools) and literati in late imperial China elaborates a Weberian notion that bureaucratization reproduces bureaucratic values in the Penghu Islands over the Qing dynasty (Wilkerson 2004). He shows that, while local actors actively participated in the reproduction of bureaucracy, they also transformed the bureaucratic institution to serve local purposes. When the bureaucrats appointed by the upper bureaucracy came to perform their administrative duties, they were forced to share their bureaucratic authority with local elites. By considering the localization of bureaucracy in terms of reproducing bureaucracy in local society, Wilkerson effectively documents how the school, a site of both bureaucratic domination and local resistance, became a site where state bureaucrats and local literati competed for authority.

Similarly, concerned with how bureaucratization reproduces bureaucratic value in local society, Kregg Hetherington discusses how land records imposed by the government altered Paraguayan peasants' relationship to land, to settlements, and to physical activity in nature (Hetherington 2011). Through their participation in producing land records and actually putting those official documents in circulation, the peasants reworked existing concepts and values to constitute new hybrids and political practices. Though it is true that their ownership of land became restricted as the land records replaced the traditional system, Paraguayan peasants also discovered the possibility of extending their land ownership beyond their traditional territory. Again, despite the fact that the bureaucratization of land ownership serves state administrative interests, the peasants who participated in the system were also able to make the records work for their interests.

Then there is Mathew Hull (2012), who ascribes to documents a centrality in the reproduction of Pakistan's bureaucracy. By bringing the visibility of writing in the bureaucratic process to the fore, Hull raises an epistemological challenge to the Weberian assumption of bureaucratic rationality. That is, Hull's revelation of the astounding complexity and subtlety of bureaucratic actions and inactions establishes the diversity of bureaucratic rationalities such that they appear as situational, emotional, inconsistent, and, sometimes even irrationally rational. While shaking out the epistemological groundings of bureaucracy, Hull proposes the notion of "participatory bureaucracy" that would decentralize the authoritative voice of state in the bureaucratic process.

Drawing from these various scholarly insights on bureaucratization, the relationship between state and society that is mediated by bureaucracy is much more complicated than suggested by a domination-resistance model. Bureaucracy is not just an

agent of domination, but the “constitutive site” or the “interface” where state and society meet to work out their relations (Hull 2012). Nevertheless, the state-society relation is bureaucratized, for only certain modes of communication are allowed (Shih 2013). As a result, it is impossible to generalize about the state-society relation; rather we need to contextualize the mediums through which bureaucratic value are reproduced.

The relation between Ahmao congregations and the Chinese state involves a double irony. The first irony is that, prior to the conversion, the Ahmao lived for centuries outside of imperial China, yet surrounded by the Chinese state, as an enclave that closely resembled what Crossley et al. (2006) describe as living on the other side of an “internal frontier.” The Ahmao only became visible to the Chinese state when the former engaged in millenarian uprisings. Via their conversion to Christianity at the turn of twentieth century, however, Ahmao converts in foreign denominations began relating themselves to Chinese state. The second irony is that, given their selection by the communist state as “martyr” Christians during the revolutionary decades, and then “model” Christians in post-revolutionary decades, Ahmao Christians and Christianity have been prominently exhibited by the Chinese state to national and international publics. Yet, Ahmao churches themselves identify their origins of Christianity with foreign missionaries and, in doing so, distinguish their Christianity from Chinese Christianity.

The Ahmao are one of many non-Chinese tribes in southwest China. The Ahmao who speak one of the Miao-Yao languages belong to the Miao nationality.¹ According to

¹ Outside of China, Miao languages are more often referred to as Hmong or Hmongic. Western countries’ relative acquaintance with this group of Southeast Asian peoples is due to the Indo-Chinese wars

the 2000 census more than 8 million Miao are scattered over southwest China, and of these, about 200,000 are Ahmao speakers (Gerner and Bisang 2008, 719). Though the Ahmao identify themselves as culturally and linguistically distinct from other Miao tribes, the Miao people in southwest China have been generically addressed as *miaozi* (苗子), a degraded ethnyne used before the 1950s, or *miaozu* (苗族), an official name for the Miao nationality used after the 1950s, by their Han Chinese neighbors. Despite this tendency to refer to them as a homogenous group, there were no indications that the Ahmao maintained any substantial relations with other Miao tribes. Like many of the Miao tribes, the Ahmao were formally referred to in terms of their exotic appearance as *dahuamiao* (大花苗) in Chinese, literally meaning Big Flowery Miao, referring to the colors and patterns embroidered on their clothes. But the use of the formal ethnyne was not consistent in historical archives, and references to the Ahmao can be traced only in the late imperial Qing dynasty (Yang Tingshuo 1998, 102–109). Though the Ahmao were invisible to the Chinese imperial state for much of history, at the turn of the twentieth century, literate Ahmao elites emerged after the Christianization of Ahmao tribes, and began actively participating in constructing the Miao nationality. Until recent years, these Ahmao elites have increasingly referred themselves as *amao* (阿卯) in Chinese. The word *amao* does not make any sense in the Chinese language but is just a name phonetically representing the pronunciation Ahmao in Chinese. While referring to themselves as *amao* in Chinese, instead of Miao, the Ahmao identity has been constituted apart from the

(1962–1975), in the aftermath of which more than 100,000 Hmong fled to the United States, France, and Australia. The homeland of this group is Southwest China. Miao migration began in the eighteenth century to neighboring Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma. In fact, taking intelligibility as the base, one can estimate that there are perhaps 100 Miao languages in Southwest China (Gerner and Bisang 2008, 719–32).

national discourse of contemporary China (Schein 2000).

Though Ahmao villages have always been relatively small and widely dispersed, and the Ahmao have long been known for their frequent migrations. The distribution of the Ahmao population concentrates in two geographical regions across northwest Guizhou and north Yunnan provinces: one is the Northern region located in the Wumeng Mountain area, including most areas in Weining and Yiliang counties and some of Zhaotong and Hezhang counties across the border of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces; the other is the southern region located in the Xueshan Mountain area between the valley of the Jingsha River and the Erhai basin. The Northern region was within the territories of the Wumeng and Wusa Yi chieftains (or sub-bureaucracies), while the southern region was within the territory of the Wuding Yi chieftain. Though the chieftainships were formally ended in the early Qing dynasty, the Yi dominant classes continued to dominate the region through a complex system that combined Yi hierarchy and land ownership until the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the degree of Yi domination over the Ahmao varied. Whereas the Yi dominant classes effectively retained control over land ownerships in most parts of the region throughout most of the Qing dynasty, the Yi dominant classes in the southern region had gradually lost their control over the lands since the late Ming dynasty and continued to decline throughout the Qing. In the nineteenth century, only a small part of the southern region surrounding the Xueshan Mountain was controlled by the Yi dominant classes. Though both Chinese and Miao historians tend to see the Ahmao or the Miao as migrants from Northern China, Ahmao oral history and folklore record no events that took place beyond their contemporary distribution (Wu and Long 1992; Huang 2013). While the Northern region has long been

home to the Ahmao, the Ahmao only began populating the southern region in the nineteenth century. In particular, the number of Ahmao migrants who fled from the Northern region to the southern region increased significantly after the Qing rebellion and reached a peak between the 1920s and 1940s (WMBSL 2005, 13–15). Today, about one-fourth of the Ahmao live in the southern region (CXMZSL 2005, 33).

While residing in the Yi territories, the Ahmao did not hold any land ownerships but worked instead as serfs to the Yi chiefs or landlords (who were referred as *nos* (C◦) in the Ahmao language, meaning “the master”). Given their location at the bottom of the hierarchical Yi system, there was no way for the Ahmao to claim any land ownership, nor were there any opportunities for upward social mobility. They were essentially ignored and invisible. It is generally accepted that it was this excluded social status that led to the Ahmao’s involvement in various local disturbances in late imperial China and, later, the mass conversion movement in the early twentieth century (Diamond 1996).²

In general, however, little is known about the Yi-Ahmao relation given the scarcity of historical records. Relying on Ahmao folklore and contemporary studies of the Yi hierarchy, we can begin to piece together an understanding of the Ahmao’s sometimes voluntary, sometimes forced migration and settlement patterns. Some Ahmao folklore tells of a Yi *nos*’s generosity in receiving the Ahmao, who fled from their homeland after being defeated in wars, to work on his lands. But other folklore portrays the Ahmao as

² So far no further elaborations of the relation between the Ahmao and the Yi dominant class have been done in scholarly works. Relying on Ahmao folklore and the contemporary study of the Yi hierarchy, I propose a sketch of the Yi-Ahmao relation.

victims who suffered at the hands of the unreasonable *nos*. Compare, for example, just two migration events recorded in Ahmao folklore. In the first, a group of Ahmao refugees desperately wandered the region, searching for a place to settle. The Yi Lady *byul nos* (𐄂𐄃𐄅𐄆𐄇) encountered the Ahmao refugees and her heart was moved by their misfortune (XBMZGG 1992, 219–226). She invited the Ahmao refugees to visit the manor of her father, *byul nos* (𐄂𐄃𐄅), a well-known chief of the region. He was kind enough to give the Ahmao permission to work on his lands near the place *dib hxus zhol* (𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋). The refugees eventually settled in *Gid chil nak lul dib* (𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑). Though the exact place of *Gid chil nak lul dib* is still unknown, both scholars and Ahmao agree that it is somewhere in Hezhang county, the borderland between the territory of Shuixi tusi and that of Wusa tusi.

The second migration event recounted in folklore, however, tells how the Ahmao were eventually forced from *byul nos*'s territory, moving instead to *saus nos*'s (𐄒𐄓) territory (XBMZGG 1992, 255–261). Since their first arrival at *byul nos*'s lands, many generations had passed and the new *byul nos* chief was brutal and greedy, using tricks to extract excessive taxes from his tenants. The Ahmao were suffering. At this time, the daughter of *byul nos* was going to marry the son of *saus nos*, and three hundred Ahmao decided to follow the daughter in her migration to *saus nos*'s place. But this had to be done secretly, for *byul nos* would surely oppose the move and, if captured, the Ahmao would be severely punished. Fortunately, the daughter of *byul nos* was very supportive and helped the Ahmao to work out a plan. On the day of the marriage, *saus nos*'s people came to receive the new bride. *Byul nos* hosted a big feast but the new bride

was gone. She and her Ahmao followers had already begun their journey to *saus nos*'s place the day before the marriage. Discovering he had been fooled, *byul nos* was furious. His militia caught the Ahmao and the new bride somewhere just across the border of *saus nos*'s place. But the daughter persuaded the militia not to take the Ahmao, thus enabling them to begin their new life in *saus nos*'s lands.

The comparison of these two events provides an insight into the *nos*-Ahmao relation. In the first event, *byul nos* was a good friend to the Ahmao. His generosity allowed the scattered Ahmao to rebuild their community. Nevertheless, the Ahmao did not receive the land for free; rather, they were in service to the *nos* and had to pay tax and contribute their labor. Compared to those other serfs who were included in the Yi hierarchy, albeit in the lower ranks, the lands given to Ahmao were often far away from the *nos*'s seat. It is very likely that the Yi *nos* actually “used” the Ahmao to open up “new” land for him.³ In the second event, the *byul nos* was described as a greedy and nasty landlord. Under him, taxes increased while access to land actually decreased. Fewer and fewer “newly” reclaimed lands were available to the Ahmao exempt from taxation. The Ahmao decided to migrate because they could not suffer him anymore.

It seems the Ahmao's decision to stay or leave a place depended on the amount of land they could access. The amount of virgin land would have been their biggest concern and seems to have been the most significant fact in their relations with the Yi dominant classes (Wen Chulai 2011, 224–231). Historians have shown how the Chinese state

³ There was an agreement between tenants and landlords in the *tusi* era: the landlord might grant his tenants a domain of territory where they were free to open up “new” lands, and this newly reclaimed land was them exempt from taxation for three or five years (QXBMYSLDC 1986, 55)

intervened in the Yi territory in southwest China—in this case, the Northern region of Ahmao settlement—by bureaucratizing the Yi native chieftains, first through the *tusi* system (the sub-bureaucracy) in the Ming dynasty, and then through the *liuguan* system (the mainstream bureaucracy) in the Qing dynasty (Herman 2006; Wen Chulai 2011). The intervention of the Chinese state brought both Han migrants and additional taxes to the region. In particular, the reformation of the native chieftain system (*Gaitu Guiliu* 改土歸流) in northwest Guizhou and northeast Yunnan in the early Qing dynasty dramatized the effect of the Chinese state intervention. Though the Ahmao were neither landholders nor registered citizens (*min* 民) and were never directly ruled by the imperial Chinese state, they were affected by this bureaucratic reform through their relations with the Yi dominant classes.

The Shuixi and Wusa *tusi* were transformed with the establishment of the administrative offices in Dading, Pingyuan, Qianxi, Bijie, and Weining between 1677 and 1698, after Wu Sanggui's military operation removed the military forces of the Shuixi and Wusa chieftains in 1664. The newly imposed Chinese bureaucracy removed the military authority from the Yi Tumu, but granted them administrative authority over their inherited territories in exchange for revenues. Although they retained their high status in local society, within the Chinese bureaucracy the Yi dominant classes were held responsible for collecting taxes and were forced to share their revenues with the Chinese state. The result was twofold: on the one hand, the Yi dominant classes were forced to extract more taxes from their subordinate tenants and serfs; on the other hand, the Yi dominant classes were put in an awkward position as they were still in an antagonistic relationship with the Chinese state, but they also had to collaborate with it in order to

sustain their land ownership. It is very likely that this awkwardness contributed to transform the Yi *zexi* bureaucracy into the hierarchy that was later taken as the most important feature of the Yi as ethnic category (Wen Chunlai 2011, 275–308). The Qing bureaucrats understood the Yi and Miao relation correctly by identifying the key factor as whether or not the tribes had developed affiliation beyond tenancy with the Yi dominant classes (Diamond 1995). Those who were within the kin-based hierarchy were Yi and those who were not were Miao (Hill 2001). The transformation from the Yi *zexi* bureaucracy to the Yi kin-based hierarchy also transformed the Ahmao relation with the Yi dominant classes. As seen through the Ahmao's eyes, the dominant Yi masters suddenly became greedy landlords who exploited their tenants for their own purposes. It was no surprise, then, that after the 1700s, there were no Yi rebellions in northwest Guizhou, but the Miao rebellions continued. The Yi dominant classes, as well as the Han landlords and bureaucrats, were themselves targets of the Miao rebellions.

However, in reality, it is likely that the transformation of the Yi-Ahmao relations had begun even earlier, namely, since the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644), about two hundred years ahead of the reformation of the Yi chieftain system in the early Qing era (1644–1911). The major cause of this transformation was the Han Chinese migration to this region. The Ming dynasty established 26 military stations in Guizhou, a newly built province. Six out of the 26 military stations were located in Wusa and Shuixi territories. To guard and support the military stations, the state relocated Han immigrants from Hebei into Guizhou. The number of Han immigrants grew quickly as the trade road across the six military stations became the most important line connecting Yunnan and Beijing. According to Wen Chunlai's estimate (2011, 224–231), the number of Han immigrants

may well have exceeded the number of indigenous people in the Wusa and Shuixi territory in the late Ming dynasty, with the former outnumbering the latter about three times in the late eighteenth century. Throughout the Qing era, Han immigrants continued to flow into indigenous domains. The effect was twofold: on the one hand, by the late nineteenth century, the indigenous chieftains had lost almost two-thirds of their inherited territories. The newly emergent Han landlords replaced the Yi dominant classes as the landowners of the region. On the other hand, those who were not landowners were now forced to compete with Han immigrants for land resources. This meant that they would have to pay more rent in order to be able to work on the lands. In short, both the Yi dominant classes and the Ahmao tenants were forced to adapt to the new economy and to confront the challenges posed by the Han immigrants.

With the influx of Han immigrants to the traditional Yi territories, inter-tribal relations were gradually transformed from hierarchical domination to ethnic discrimination. By the nineteenth century, ethnic conflicts had become the most serious “social issue” of the local society. The kin-based hierarchy that had previously organized local society after the decline of *zexi* bureaucracy now confronted increasing challenges from the Han immigrants, as the intrusion of Chinese bureaucratic values transformed every aspect of social life. In short, whereas the hierarchy of the Yi kin-based hierarchy had attributed the purity of blood the most value, the bureaucracy of the Han Chinese state attributed the highest value to the civility of culture. The former system organized value in terms of affinity; the new regime organized value in terms of literacy. And as the Chinese state took over the authority of local politics in early Qing, Han immigrants increasingly came to dominate local politics. As the new value system took hold, ethnic

discrimination increased. Those who had been at the bottom of the former hierarchy because of their impure blood were now at the bottom of the new bureaucracy because of their savageness. The Ahmao, however, were in a unique position: excluded from the previous Yi kin-based hierarchy, they now also remained outside of the Chinese bureaucracy.

Perhaps the most devastating result of ethnic discrimination were the disturbances of those being discriminated against, revolting against those exercising discrimination. Yet, there are no historical studies documenting this history of ethnic discrimination in southwest China. This lack of research reflects the absence of non-Chinese perspectives within the historical archives written in Chinese. Though there are numerous records of the disturbances and revolts of non-Han tribal peoples, the conflicts are often represented as revolts against exploitation or the simple banditry of rebels. However, if the ethnic discrimination was so real, it seems very likely that the uprisings and revolts since the late eighteenth century were less revolts against state domination than revolts against the dominant value that alienated the tribal society. As a matter of fact, many of those social disturbances actually allied both the Yi dominant classes and their subordinate tribes from both Miao and Yi categories. Such revolts against discrimination were not easily tamed in the new political landscape over the course of the Qing dynasty because they sought not just to overturn a particular group of people, rather they challenged the entire (new) basis of regional society. What the disturbances challenged were the dominant values underlying the Chinese bureaucracy and military in their effort to bureaucratize local society. Nonetheless, the revolts against bureaucracy were often misunderstood by mainstream society as simply rebellions. When the local bureaucracy failed to cope with

the disturbances, this often served to actually reinforce discrimination. Eventually, these small and local disturbances overturned local society. The consequence was seen in the Qian Rebellion, “a decentered” but continuous set of disturbances that spread throughout the Guizhou provinces between 1854 and 1873.

The Ahmao as well as other Miao tribes in this region were dragged into the Zhugongqing Revolt. Historians have long noted the apparent contradiction that the scale of the revolt did not match its relatively minor political impact. It was recorded that the rebellion led by the Tao Brothers in 1860 attracted three hundred thousand non-Han Chinese tribal followers, but this supposedly huge rebellious force failed even to occupy the major fortress or cities for longer than a couple weeks. Instead, the Tao Brothers and their followers fled to the mountain and built up their own fortress. There, they maintained a self-sufficient community for eight years until the official military marched into the area and destroyed the fortress. Jenks (1994, 193 fn.148) raises doubts about the scale of the Zhugongqing revolt described by Chinese historian He Guojian (1979, 1984, 1988), but the historical documents and archaeological findings released in recent years support He’s estimate (TBZ, 2008).

The relatively minor political impact of the Tao Brothers’ rebellion reveals that their revolt was not so much against the dominant state as against society writ large. It is crucial to note the millenarian elements embedded in their uprising, such as the promise of ascending to heaven, the practices of cults, the escaping community, and so on. Though those millenarian elements were apparently influenced by Han Chinese sectarians, the fact that there were only non-Han Chinese tribal people involved in the rebellious groups indicates that ethnic discrimination must have been an important factor

motivating the followers. The effect of the Zhugongqing Revolt can be seen most clearly in its aftermath, specifically, the Miao migration toward the south. Scholars of the Hmong in Southeast Asia trace the Hmong arrival back to the nineteenth century and agree that the Qian Rebellions and their aftermath were the most important factors that drove the Hmong (or the Miao) out of southwest China.

The Ahmao, as well as other Miao tribes who were deeply involved in the Zhugongqing Revolt, vividly remember the Tao Brothers as the Miao Kings in their folklore. Miao Kings folklore has been identified by scholars of Miao or Hmong as evidence of the Miao millenarian tradition that encouraged the Hmong rebellion in early twentieth-century Southeast Asia, and the mass conversion movement at the turn of twentieth century that is addressed in this dissertation (Cheung 1995; Tapp 1989). However, this dissertation will argue that, while not carrying the bureaucratic ideology, the Miao millenarian tradition actually has a much longer history. The Miao tribes in this region were highly susceptible to millenarianism and had frequently engaged with the millenarian uprisings in nineteenth century, and the Miao millenarianism in this region in the nineteenth century appeared to appropriate the most heterodox elements of the Han Chinese sectarian movements that circulated at the time. Moreover, while the mass conversion movement at the turn of the twentieth century took the form of a millenarian movement, the subsequent Christianization of Ahmao society needs to be contextualized in terms of the bureaucratization of local society.

Throughout the course of imperial history, the Ahmao as well as many other Miao tribes in the Northern region, remained un-bureaucratized until the modern nation-state granted the Miao tribes citizenship. The Ahmao who began engaging with Christianity,

however, walked away from millenarianism through their participation in Christian bureaucracy. Through their participation in Christian bureaucracy, Ahmao converts established relations between the Ahmao and the Chinese state, as well as between the Ahmao and other tribes. And eventually, the Ahmao, formerly the most ignored group, came to be recognized as the most prominent modernist voice of the region.

This dissertation begins by contextualizing Christianity within the millenarian history of this region. In the second chapter, I trace the Miao millenarian history back to the Qian Rebellion (1854–1873). I explain how the government’s hostility to the millenarian movement spurred anti-foreignism in local society. Arriving after the Qian Rebellion, Protestant missionaries were dragged into a millenarian-like conversion movement. They introduced Christianity as a form of anti-millenarian knowledge that would enable Ahmao converts to reject their millenarian tradition and begin receiving education. Thereafter, Shimenkan, a small Ahmao village, developed into a modern center of this region. Through Shimenkan’s centralized church and school system, the region’s population of previously illiterate tribal people were transformed over the course of a single decade into literate Christians.

Chapter Three describes the crisis that arose from the reproduction of Christian literacy in Shimenkan between 1920s and 1950s. The crisis was both internal and external to the Methodist bureaucracy in Shimenkan. Its internal elements included the uneasy relation between teacher-pastors and village congregations; while its external elements included the growing alienation of Christian Ahmao who became elites through their participation of Chinese bureaucracy, and the subsequent collapse of the Methodist

bureaucracy, which failed to ensure its own reproduction of knowledge.

Chapter Four shifts to the community of Sapushan Ahmao converts in north Yunnan province. While it was impossible to maintain a centralized church school system under the framework designed by CIM missionaries, the Christian Ahmao community in Sapushan had been gradually decentralized as the increasing demand for knowledge spurred the congregational movements between 1920s and 1940s, as congregations sought greater control over the reproduction of knowledge. The demand for knowledge grew and eventually forced the denomination to respond. By the end of the 1940s, Christian Ahmao took over the leadership of the bureaucracy and directed the bureaucratic reform.

In Chapter Five, I describe how Christian Ahmao became Ahmao Christians in post-denominational China. The ethnification of Christianity is regarded as an effect of Ahmao Christians' increasing participation (sometimes active, sometimes passive) in the nation-state. This process can be seen most clearly with the persecution of Christian Ahmao during the revolutionary decades of the 1960s and 1970s, and their subsequent re-bureaucratization into the Two Associations, the nationalist Christian bureaucracy that has transformed Ahmao congregations into patriotic churches since the 1980s. As the process of bureaucratization has progressed, Ahmao Christianity has become increasingly entangled with Ahmao ethnicity.

The effect of identity has been revealed in the reproduction of knowledge. In particular, it raises concerns regarding the promotion of Ahmao literacy. Two specific sub-groups, Ahmao elites and Ahmao Christians, are addressed in Chapter Six. They both promote the Pollard script, but they have different purposes as they conceive Ahmao

literacy differently. Moreover, while promoting the Pollard script as the writing system of Ahmao, both contribute to re-connect the Ahmao and the Shimenkan. Though the history of Christian bureaucracy in Shimenkan ended in 1950s, the history of Shimenkan continues to be relevant to Ahmao Christianity as a renaissance among the elderly renaissance merges with the growing evangelism of young Christians in the promotion of Ahmao literacy.

The last chapter is an ethnography of the Ahmao patriotic church in the 2000s. The congregation is in crisis, riven by a schism in which different groups attribute varied significance to Pentecostal practices in relation to the expression of their Christian faith. The schism cannot be resolved in religious terms since Pentecostal practices have been shadowed by state regulation seeking to root out religious heresy. While it seems impossible to ignore state regulation, the congregation continues to redefine itself as it copes with the schism that has developed around Pentecostal disputations.

Overall, the six chapters link the history of Ahmao Christian bureaucracy over the last century to changes in the value and significance of literacy, along with changes in the process of bureaucratization.

Chapter 2

Contextualizing Christianity

Rebellions and Conversions, 1850s–1915

Many scholars have discovered that mass conversions among ethnic groups in highland Southeast Asia shared features similar to millenarian movements (Cheung 1995; Culas 2004; Gunn 1986; Keyes 1977; Lee 2005; Scott 2008; Smalley 1956; Tãm 2011; Tapp 1989, in press; Tien 1993). However, their approaches explain millenarian movement, by reference to either cultural or social factors that drove conversion and thereby drove social change. The problem with these approaches as applied to highland Southeast Asia and Southwest China is that each assumes social change to be a result of a millennial movement, but also assume that either the millennial tendency of the culture or society toward millennialism remains unchanged.

The cultural explanation of the millenarian movement tends to emphasize the distinctive feature of the “message” that promotes other worldly prophecy. The message circulates and began to make sense in cultural terms. The millenarian message attracts followers to join the millenarian movement. Some societies are more accessible to Christianity, since they inherit the “cultural core” or “symbol” which allow them to make sense of Christianity in their own cultural terms (Cheung 1995; Tapp 1989, 2014[in press]). While Cheung would identify the historical or mythical figure of the Miao King as a symbol that pre-adapted the Miao to recognize Jesus as the Miao King, Tapp

concludes from his comparison of Hmong millenarianism with Christian millenarianism among Hmong communities in Southeast Asia that the latter is a modernizing project for the former. Nevertheless, the approaches of Cheung and Tapp share the common implicit assumption that Christianity had a serendipitous congruence with a Hmong cultural tendency toward millenarianism.

The social explanation of millenarian movement tends to emphasize the conditions conducive to millenarian movements. Though millenarian movements are distinctive because of their prophecies, the form of these millenarian movements are similar to large scale anti-social or anti-state rebellions. In particular, those who were involved in rebellions were attracted to millenarianism. James Scott thus assumes there is a millenarian tendency that is deeply grounded in human consciousness. States go to great extremes in their efforts to suppress the human tendency toward millenarianism. Millenarian movements resist the state, destroy the established order, and attempt to escape control (Scott 2009). Once circumstances permit, the millenarian calling is given voice. Millenarian movements drive social change as an inevitable consequence of the human condition caught in the social circumstances of a state presence. The specific message of millenarianism is secondary. Those who are subordinated are always desperately in need of salvation, and Christianity is one way to fulfill that need (Tien 1993). A mass conversion that was the realization of the millenarian tendency expects a dramatic rupture before and after conversion to Christianity, but it does not expect that this dramatic rupture will alter the constant human tendency toward millenarianism.

Thus, cultural and social explanations of Hmong millenarian movements supply an explanation for participation in a millenarian movement. However, this falls short of

explaining the cultural and social changes that emerge from a millennial movement. This is because the pre- and post-millennial movement cultural and social continuities that these approaches insist upon likewise insist that cultural and social change as one of the outcomes of conversion. I suggest that, while a mass conversion movement that takes the form of a millenarian movement may be explained by cultural and social explanations, the expectation of directed social change that is implicated in the social explanation of millenarian movement should be seriously reconsidered. It is this expectation of social change that prevents us from understanding the recurrence of indigenous millenarianism after conversion as simply another repetition of the “cultural core”. While a mass conversion that results from a millenarian movement may be triggered for cultural or social reasons, in the case of the Ahmao Hmong Christian conversion it is certain that the message of Christianity began to make sense culturally and even socially well after the phase of initial mass conversion. While anthropologists elsewhere in the world also theorize that discontinuity is indeed an intended social consequence of conversion (Robbins 2004), this does not mean that a revival of a post Christian conversion indigenous millenarianism is impossible, which is especially salient among Christian Hmong communities (Lee 2005; Tâm 2011; Tapp in press).

As an alternative, this chapter suggests a context-dependent explanation of mass conversion movements. That is, while mass conversion as a millenarian movement can be understood in cultural terms, the millenarian message of Christianity is still distinct from the messages of indigenous millenarian movements. Therefore, it is important to see the circumstances within which Christianity was introduced to potential converts, not just how the potential converts made sense of Christianity in their own cultural terms. In

order to identify how the message of Christianity is different from that of the indigenous movement, this chapter contextualizes Ahmao/Miao mass conversion at the turn of twentieth century with millenarian movements in late imperial China. As the latter would serve as the context of the former, there is a tendency that the message of Christianity would be mixed with regional or indigenous millenarianism. Christianity was introduced to the region against regional or indigenous millenarianism, but with radically difference consequences from other indigenous millennial movements.

Beginning with the millenarian uprisings, the Qing state began to falter in effectively reproducing its bureaucracies in many tribal societies over the course of the Qian Rebellion (1853–1874). During this historical process of de-bureaucratization, millenarian uprisings spread across tribal societies but they manifested in regionally specific forms. In particular, the millenarian rebellious group led by the Tao Brothers, which later became the most influential rebellious force of the northwest region and was known as the Zhugongqing Revolt (1860–1867), mobilized several major rebellious groups from nearby regions, attracting thirty thousand non-Han Chinese tribal followers, especially the Miao. Unlike the millenarian groups led by the Chinese, which were active in north and south regions, the Tao Brothers' millenarianism was more anti-society than anti-state, with Miao millenarians seeking to build a self-sufficient community in the mountains, away from the overcrowded populated lands. With the Zhugongqing community as well as many other millenarian groups destroyed by the 1870s, the provincial government eased its hostility to millenarianism, and anti-millenarian sentiments were now redirected towards Catholics and taken up in the form of anti-foreignism.

The Protestant missionaries from the China Inland Mission entered the Guizhou province in the late nineteenth century but their mission was seriously constrained by anti-foreign sentiments and also complicated by the ethnic hostility between the Han Chinese and the Miao tribes. As a result, the first two decades of the Protestant mission in Guizhou met with little success. Surprisingly, however, once the missionaries reached the Miao in the northwest region in the 1890s, the Gospel began to spread in ways similar to a millenarian movement. Even before the missionaries realized this tendency, they had been dragged into the mass conversion movement of the Miao tribe. Samuel Pollard, the Methodist Missionary known for his mission in southwest China and his work with Ahmao, never stopped expressing his concern that the millenarian tendencies of the converts might obscure their real understandings of Christianity. To combat this, the foreign missionaries fought against rumors of a conspiracy between the Ahmao and the missionaries, and emphasized that there was to be no rebellion. Missionaries also made sure to introduce Christianity using classroom settings, highlighting its status as a form of true knowledge, thereby emphasizing that conversion was nothing like a millenarian event. In short, the missionaries took pains to oppose Christianity and millenarianism, an effort that eventually succeeded as Ahmao learned that becoming Christians meant they were no longer millenarians.

The Qian Rebellion (1854–1873) and Millenarianism

Guizhou province can be divided geographically in terms of its history of rebellions. In the first half of the Qing dynasty, the military and rebellions divided Guizhou into two distinct regions: the New Territory (*xinjiang* 新疆) versus the Old

Territory (*jiujiang* 舊疆).⁴ The Old Territory refers to the regions that had long been governed by native chieftains since the Yan dynasty (1271–1368), and that later began the long process of *gaitu guiliu* (replacing native officials with state-appointed circulating officials) in the period from the mid-Ming dynasty (1368–1644) until the early Qing dynasty (1644–1911).⁵ The six major native chieftains in the early Ming dynasty were: Bozhou (播州), Sizhou (思州), Sinan (思南), Shuidong (水東), Wusa (烏撒), and Shuixi (水西) Tusi (土司). When the Manchurians took over this region in 1664, only the Shuixi Tusi still retained their prestigious official status. After the last Shuixi Tusi, An Shengzu (安勝祖), died in 1698, the Shuixi Tusi disappeared into history (Wen 2011, 166–69), and the native chieftain system in Guizhou was completely replaced with the state bureaucracy.⁶ In the reports to the central court, the Old Territory was also divided into *xiaoyou* (Downstream 下游) versus *shangyou* (Upstream 上游).⁷ As part of the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau, which slopes downward from the Yunnan highlands toward the southeast through Guizhou and into Guangxi, the division of the territory into Upstream and Downstream reflected the effective geographical division of the province going from the northwest to the southeast.

⁴ Though the New and Old Territories were relative concepts in Qing dynasty, the difference was drawn since relatively loose laws and punishment were applied to the non-Han residents in the New Territory, showing the emperor's understanding of the native cultures. The distinction between the New and Old Territories was raised as an issue by Zhao Yin, then the governor of Guizhou province in 1762, considering the law enforcement on Miao people (Wen 2011, 212–13).

⁵ For Shuixi Tusi, see Herman (2007) and Wen (2011). For the history of Tusi in China, see Wu 1988. For individual cases, also see Sutton (2006), and Faure (2006, 2013).

⁶ For the co-existence of and interaction between the native chieftain system (or “sub-bureaucracy”) and state bureaucracy in local society, see Wilkerson (2013).

⁷ The geographic distinction between Upstream and Downstream was not a new creation resulting from the Qian Rebellion but had been used even before the New Territory was established. Upstream referred to Guiyang, Dading, Anshun, and Nanlong; while Downstream referred to Pingyue, Duyun, Zhenyuan, Sizhou, Tongren, Liping, Shiqian, Sinan (趙英，跪奏為苗人犯罪以肅法紀事，大清律例，卷五，名例律下) (Wen 2011, 212–13).

The New Territory literally means the territory that was newly incorporated into the state in the early Qing dynasty. Unlike the Tusi in the Old Territory, which had been in existence for several hundred years before being removed, the region that was later referred as the New Territory was not incorporated into the Tusi system. The region had remained out of the state's direct and indirect governance, meaning that the residents in this region were subject to neither taxes nor forced labors. It was not until E'ertai (1680–1745), appointed by Yongzheng, intervened in the region with military forces in 1726–1731 that the region was brought under imperial control (Ma 1956, 21). In Guizhou, six new departments (廳) were established in 1730 and another two in 1737.⁸ The New Territory in Guizhou was part of the *miaojiang* (苗疆 Male Pale), located in east Guizhou across the border of west Hunan, isolated by the *miaoqiang* (Miao Wall).⁹ The non-Chinese who lived in this region were categorized as the Raw Miao in contrast to the Cooked Miao living in the Old Territory.¹⁰

The state's attention was focused on the conflict of interest with the Yi dominant groups in the Old Territory, which were recorded as *yiluan* (夷亂 Yi rebellion) over the course of *gaitu guiliu* since the fifteen century to the early Qing regime.¹¹ After E'ertai's military intervention, disturbances occurring in the New Territory were recorded as *miaoluan* (苗亂 Miao rebellion). Two revolts were particularly noteworthy. The first took

⁸ The six departments in the New Territory established in 1730 were: Guzhou(古州/榕江), Taigong (台拱/台江), Qingjiang(清江/劍河), Dujiang(都江), Danjiang(丹江/雷山), and Bazhai(八寨/丹寨). The four departments in the New Territory established in 1737 were Kaili(凱里), Jijiang(雞講), Langdong(朗洞) and Liulou(柳羅)(Ma 1956, 23, 28).

⁹ For details of the regional history of the Miao Pale in west Hunan from Yuan dynasty to Qing, see Xie Xiaohui's dissertation (2011).

¹⁰ For the difference between and definition of Raw and Cooked Miao, see Diamond (1995, 99-100), Wu and Long (1992, 221–35).

¹¹ For the Yi disturbances in Ming and early Qing dynasty, see Herman (2007) and Wu (2011).

place 1735–1740, four years after Ertai’s military intervention; the second occurred in 1795–1806, more or less parallel to the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1820), precipitating a genocide that caused the death of three million Miao.¹² In the end, the Qing court’s promise “No Tax-Raised Forever (永不加稅)” was given in exchange for peace in the New Territory. Yet, for the next fifty years, Guizhou province, which was known for its rebellious history and then in the latter half of the Qing dynasty ranked as the eighth most unruly province in China, enjoyed a far from peaceful era.¹³

Though the history of pacification in the Old and New Territories followed different routes, their rebellious histories were merged into one and recorded as *qianluan* (黔亂 Qian Rebellion) in late Qing, 1854–1873, which has also often been referred to as *miaoluan* (苗亂 Miao Rebellion).¹⁴ Nevertheless, the name Miao Rebellion suggests that disturbances were limited to the non-Han minority people, which was apparently inaccurate.¹⁵ Instead, the Qian Rebellion was highly diverse in terms of its

¹² For details of the two revolts, see Ma (1956), Wu and Long (1992).

¹³ “For the latter half of the dynasty, from 1796 to 1911, C. K. Yang has compiled a list of what he terms ‘mass action incidents’ drawn entirely from the Veritable Records of the Qing. He found 350 such violent incidents in Guizhou—the eighth largest number among all the provinces of China. ...the number of incidents reported for Guizhou in the Veritable Records is considerably understated” (Jenks 1994, 66).

¹⁴ There were at least three books (those are 咸同貴州軍事史，平黔記略，欽定平定貴州苗匪記略) compiled in the early twentieth century specifically devoted to recoding *qianluan* in chronological style.

¹⁵ Robert D. Jenks (1994), probably the first author to discuss the rebellion in Guizhou in a Western language, adopted the name *miaoluan* (Miao Rebellion) with a contingency. He puts quotation marks around the word “Miao” to indicate that the disturbances involved both Han and non-Han people. Though Jenks is right to emphasize that the rebellion was not restricted to the Miao people, he seems to fail to recognize that the rebellion in Guizhou, 1854–1873, is not referred to as the *miaoluan* but as *qianluan* in the Qing historical archive. Indeed, *miaoluan* referred to the rebellions that occurred in the New Territory, in particular, in the eighteenth century. The rebellion in Guizhou, 1854–1873, is only referred to as *miaoluan* after the 1980s, when Miao historians began constructing Miao history. The rebellion I am addressing is regarded as the fourth wave of the Miao rebellion, which caused the Miao migration toward Southeast Asia. Instead of replicating the terminology with contingency as Jenks does, I follow Qing historians and refer to this rebellion as *qianluan* (rebellion in Guizhou).

composition.¹⁶ As Jenks points out, “No single group dominated this revolt throughout its course. It involved more than a score of important rebel groups, and significant rebel leaders numbered several times that figure” (1994, 5). Despite its diversity and lack of centralized organization, the disturbances suddenly spread in 1855 to multiple places, including many tribal communities. Thereafter, disturbances continued throughout the next two decades. Almost every township in the province was involved in one way or another.¹⁷

To conceptualize the geographic complexity of the phenomenon, Jenks asserts that the Qian Rebellion inherited the geographical divide of the Guizhou province. Before being established as a province in 1413, the province was divided into three geographical regions. The north and northwest parts were associated with south Sichuan and northeast Yunnan; the northeast and southeast parts were associated with west Hunan; and the west and southwest with north Guangxi. People would have more interactions with those who

¹⁶ Historians have long suspected a relationship between the Qian Rebellion and Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864). Some think that there were direct and indirect connections between the rebellious groups in Guizhou and the Taiping rebels (Luo 1988, 4). However, the fact that there is no indication that any rebellious groups in Guizhou were mobilized by the Taiping religion seems to call that argument into question. It seems more reasonable to see the Qian Rebellion as an indirect social effect of the Taiping Rebellion. For example, Jenks, who contextualizes the Qian Rebellion within the specific governmental history of Guizhou, argues that the direct cause of the Qian Rebellion was a newly imposed tax communication policy that required that all taxes be paid with money. Inflation in the late Qing made the tax increase over three times (1994, 2–3). Moreover, since the Taiping uprising in 1850, the provincial government in Guizhou made strenuous efforts to raise money for defense. Their fundraising generally took the form of sub-taxes or contributions. The tax extraction raised dramatically during the rebellious years (ibid., 47–57).

¹⁷ Though reliable figures on the cost of the Qian Rebellion in terms of lives, property damage, and funds required for suppression are difficult to find, a rough estimate made by Lin Tian (田林), the author of *xiantong Guizhou junshi shi* (The Military History of Guizhou during Xianfeng and Tongzhi Regimes) provides a frightening figure. Tian believes that about 4,900,000 people died out of a total population of perhaps 7,000,000 (Jenks 1994, 164–65). I am not convinced of this estimate, however, due to the fact that a large part of the tribal populations were driven out by the disturbances from Guizhou toward Southeast Asia. Thus it is more likely that Tian’s estimate reflects the depopulation of Guizhou province, rather than a death toll.

resided in the same region in another province than with those who resided in a different region in the same province (Jenks 1994, 28). However, though it is certainly the case that the current administrative territory of Guizhou province was not formed until 1727, Jenks failed to recognize the fact that since the Yuan dynasty, the geographical divisions of the province were the consequence of governance by the native chieftain systems.

To conceptualize the diversity of rebellious groups, the two authors of *ping qian ji lue* (平黔記略, PQJL), Lou Wenbin (羅文彬) and Wang Bingen (王秉恩), provide an overview, in which ethnic identifications and folk religious practices were employed to categorize rebellious groups.¹⁸

There are numerous rebellious groups in Guizhou. *Miao* (苗) and *jiao* (教) are two primary groups; *zhong* (仲), *gang* (杠), and *loulou* (侏儸) are the secondary; and the next is *tuanlian* (團練). *Yuezei* (粵賊) sometimes appears at the passages of the margin. *Miao* can be further divided into *heimiao* (黑苗) (i.e. *qingmiao* 青苗), *shuimiao* (水苗), *yazai* (鴉崽), and *hongmiao* (紅苗). Among the subgroups of *miao*, *heimiao* is especially the most crafty and dastard one. Conversely, *hongmiao* in *gelao*, *mulao*, and *wucha* are vagrant but cooperative. Who says aliens are all unscrupulous? ... *Hui* (回) and *zhong* are especially tough and good at defending. *Miao*, *zhong*, *hui* are cruel and abhorrent killers. *Jiao* and *gang* are Han Chinese and merely looters. In addition, *jiao* is also as vegetarian bandits because they beguiled ordinary people and the gentry by appropriating and conflating Buddhism and Daoism. The heresy is more dominant than orthodoxy. It is our responsibility to rectify this problem.

黔賊名目最夥，以苗、教為兩大宗，仲與杠與侏儸次之，叛練強團又次之，粵賊則出沒邊隅往來假道耳。苗有黑苗(即青苗)、水苗、鴉崽、紅苗諸目，而以黑苗為最，外愚內黠，服勝侮弱，天性然也。然如革老、木老、五岔紅苗顛沛流離，皆不為逆，猶為我用，誰謂異類盡無良哉。撫綏之道，良可省已。回、仲強悍特甚，尤善御守。苗、仲、回殺戮慘酷，實由積怨。教與杠皆漢民，意主剽掠而已。教有齋匪、緣匪、黃、白諸號名目。假神佛，托乩符，拜燈，圓光，頌經，食素，種種怪誕，惑在庸愚，而孝秀紳耆亦為風靡。經術不興，異說斯熾。崇正辟邪，責誠亟已。

As the above passage shows, the rebels were divided into seven categories as *miao*(苗), *jiao*(教), *zhong*(仲), *gang*(杠), *loulou*(侏儸), *tuanlian*(團練), and *yuezei*(粵賊).

¹⁸ The book records the disturbances that occurred within the province in chronological fashion and accounts for the rebellion as a dynamic between the Han and non-Han. The book was compiled in just a few years after the Qian Rebellion by Lou Wenbin (羅文彬) and Wang Bingen (王秉恩) who were known literati living in the provincial capital. The book was not published until 1919, however. The materials referred to in this chapter are based on the volume published in 1988.

Besides the *miao* and the *jiao*, the *zhong*, the *gang*, the *loulou*, and the *tuanlian* were discontinuous, and most of their disturbances were inspired by the *miao* or the *jiao* disturbances. The *yuezei*, meaning the Taiping rebels, were even rarer since they did not mean to stay in Guizhou but took the route through Guizhou to somewhere in the far west. The authors provide further descriptions to distinguish between the *miao* and the *jiao*. The *miao* were varied; some were good and some were bad, depending on their “natures (天性).” The black *miao*, red *miao*, magpie *miao*, and water *miao* were deceitful in their nature but others like *gelao*, *mulao*, and *wucha hong miao* were less deceitful. The *jiao* were all bad. The degraded literati abused their ability to read and write, and appealed to the commoners with deviant teachings. Therefore, the governance of this region in the aftermath of the Qing Rebellion should have, on the one hand, tamed the *miao* nature, and on the other hand, imposed orthodox Confucius teaching to expel heterodoxy.

In other words, there was something in common between the *miao* and *jiao* as they were both “difficult to be governed.” Whereas the *jiao* teaching were heterodox (異教) and the *miao* were hetero-species (異類), the *jiao* altered the Han’s nature (*tianxing*) and the *miao*’s nature was inherently bad. Viewed from the imperial perspective, the two authors of *ping qian ji lue* saw no millenarian movements but only bandit rebellions in the Qian Rebellion. The *miaofei* and the *jiaofei* were alike as they all embodied the potential rebelliousness in their natures.¹⁹

Whereas the geographical divisions and rebellious categories seem to overlap

¹⁹ The White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1804) is the watershed of the Qing governance in Gouzhou and nearby regions. The White Lotus Teaching, though the rebellion was officially ended in 1804, spread from the north to southwest region and continued causing disturbances for the following two decades (Naquin 1985; Ter Haar 1999).

with the geographical distribution of non-Chinese tribal populations in Guizhou, with the *jiaofei* they did not. The Qing historians were especially cautious regarding the sectarian practices involved in the Qian Rebellion. The millenarian rebels were pursued by the local authorities and punished quickly after uprising. In other words, those millenarian rebels did not turn out to be engaging with huge sectarian movements. But they were so many and the connections between the rebellious groups were unclear. Thus, the role of sectarian belief in the Qian Rebellions has since become the subject of much debate. Though his study does not in any way relate to the Qian Rebellion, Ter Haar (1996) represents the extreme position which argues that the sectarian descriptions in historical archives after the White Lotus Rebellion (1797–1804) may not reflect any historical reality. It is possible that Qing historians appropriated the conventional narratives to stereotype the rebellious groups in order to blame everything on the evil sectarians.²⁰ Jenks, though agreeing with Ter Haar that millenarian rebels might not be involved in sectarian movements, leans towards admitting the sectarian reality in the Qian Rebellion. In his account of the Qian Rebellion, Jenks notes that “[m]illenarian folk religion was certainly an important factor in the rebellion. It not only offered an additional justification for revolt, but provided ready made organizational forms that helped to mobilize the rebels effectively” (1994, 170–71).²¹ Though it is not clear to me what “ready made

²⁰ The government tended to “look upon these rebellious groups, particularly when they had millenarian beliefs, as part of a vast, interconnected conspiracy and lump[ed] them all together as followers of the White Lotus teaching when the people involved did not use the term to describe themselves.” This was despite the fact that “the much vaunted potential rebelliousness of religious groups is basically the product of a stereotype, like their supposed lack of sophistication, or their divergence from established tradition within Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism” (Ter Haar 1996, 302–304).

²¹ Jenks identifies four causes of the Qian Rebellion: the deviant and exotic culture that developed out of conditions of hardship; the low quality of government; the ethnic frictions between Han and non-Han as well as within non-Hans; and millenarian religions (1994, 4–7).

organizational forms” Jenks has in mind, he does clearly highlight the fact that many of the recorded rebellious leaders were inaugurated through varied millenarian movements and had effectively mobilized followers across ethnic lines. In other words, Jenks agrees that there is a millenarian aspect to the Qian Rebellion, as has been emphasized repeatedly by Qing historians.

The initial spark of the Qian Rebellion, highlighted in PQJL and followed by Jenks, certainly did have a millenarian aspect. Led by Yang Yuanbao, more than two thousand rebels attacked the government office of Dushan in March 25, 1854. Though the rebels were unable to take the departmental seat, the turmoil caught Beijing’s attention, where authorities demanded to know how more than two thousand rebels could have gathered so suddenly. The blame was placed onto “the shadowy secret society and sectarian networks with which Yang Yuanbao and his colleagues were involved” (Jenks 1994, 76). Details about the background of the rebels were not provided but the blame was placed on Shu Ceifeng, a native of Zunyi prefecture who traveled about as a diviner and folk religious preacher. It was reported that Yang Yuanbao came under the influence of Shu Ceifeng and became a vegetarian (Jenks 1994, 75).²²

In May, Yang Yuanbao was captured in Guangxi but Shu Ceifeng escaped. He made his way back to Zunyi prefecture and soon became involved in Yang Longxi’s revolt. Shu Ceifeng sought out Yang Longxi (also known as Yang Feng, ?–1855) at his house since Yang was chosen to be the leader. Yang Longxi was convinced. He and his

²² The authors of PQJL did not provide any millenarian detail of Yang Yuanbao’s revolt but they did indicate that the revolt might have been influenced by early sectarian movement in 1838 ([1919]1988, 10–11).

thousands of followers seized control of Tongzi city on September 27, 1854. It is also reported that Yang Longxi himself was a shaman in the tradition of Mu Jixian, and Yang's followers consulted planchette and chanted the *wugong jing* (五公經 Sutra of Five Lords) (Jenks 1994, 79).²³ Pursued by the authorities, Yang Longxi and his followers travelled from the north to the south, across several prefectures and counties (ibid., 83). Yang Longxi was killed in Gezhuangsi in southwestern Shiqian prefecture on April 22, 1855; Shu Caifeng was captured on his way back to Tongzi on June 2. Nevertheless, Yang's rebellious group was survived by Zou Shenbao and remained active in Tongzi until mid-1859 (ibid., 85–87).

In the wake of the rebellion led by Yang Longxi, there was the *zhaipei* uprising in Bazhai in June 1855. Led by Lou Gongming (羅光明) and Yu Laoke (余老科), both the Miao and the Han were recruited in the *zhaipei*'s revolt and began to participate in heterodox cults and recite *wugong jing* (PQJL [1919]1988, 30). The *zhaipei*'s rebellion spread quickly (PQJL [1919]1988, 52).²⁴ Within just a few months, the *zhaipei* rebels had spread across southeast Guizhou, from Lipo, Liping to Guiding. In the northeast Guizhou, there were the *honghao* (Red Signal) uprising in Tongren (銅仁) on October 1855 (Jenks 1994, 98; PQJL, 34–35). The Red Signal's revolt was led by a member of the local literati named Xu Tingjie (徐廷杰) and Mei Jinie(梅濟鼎) and a magician Mao Daxian (毛大仙), both of whose ethnicities were unknown. Mao was known for his magic writings and use

²³ The text of this sutra was reported to predict the advent of disastrous change in kalpa, the calamities of which could only be avoided by intoning the sutra. It is mentioned among prohibited apocryphal books as early as the Song dynasty (Jenks 1994, 79).

²⁴ Jenks made a mistake in claiming that *zhaipei* later had connected with the Spark from the Lamp sect (灯花教) (1994, 90–91), though their followers were vegetarians and some of their followers did overlap. According to PQJL, the Lamp sect and Liu Yishun emerged in Sinan in late 1857 and later received the name of the White Signals ([1919]1988, 81).

of the planchette (授乱笔咒).²⁵ Though Xu and Mei were killed on January 1856, Liu Shimei and Tian Ruilong succeeded them and rebelled again with similar millenarian claims in 1857 (PQJL [1919]1988, 46).

While Jenks provides an informative account of how sectarian leaders were responsible for opening up the Qian Rebellion, Chinese historians, especially Miao historians, tell a very different story that emphasizes the role of Miao rebels, rather than sectarian rebels.²⁶ Consider, for example, the two non-sectarian movements that occurred in April 1855 and are categorized by Jenks as “under the wake of Yang Longxi’s revolt.” One was the Bouyei rebels (or *zhongfei*) who rose up in Langdai; another was the Miao rebels who rebelled in Taigong. Unlike Jenks, the two authors of PQJL relate the two uprisings in 1855 to local disturbances prior to the Qian Rebellion ([1919]1988, 10–11, 28–29). Though little information related to the Bouyei disturbances in Langdai and nearby regions is provided, a great deal of information on the uprising in Taigong is provided by Qing historians and has attracted much attention from those studying the Miao rebellion. This is probably because the Bouyei disturbances were intermittent and on a small scale, which resulted in their rebellions hardly being noticed. In contrast, the Miao uprising in Taigong continued and by 1862 the Miao rebels had taken control over

²⁵ Jenks notes that there are two opposite accounts recorded in historical documents about how Xu and Mei were involved in the Red Signals revolt. One account indicated that Xu and Mei were disciples of Moa and had been involved in sectarian practices before the uprising. Another account indicated Xu and Mei were not voluntarily involved in the uprising but were forced to be involved. Jenks argues for the latter account. The description cited from PQJL, however, is consistent with the former account. Jenks is right to point out the opposition and to note the dilemma of the literati involved in sectarian rebellion. I am not convinced, however, since it is also possible to argue the opposite and to consider the possibility that the latter account was falsified in order to save face for the literati. Regardless, there is no doubt that Xu and Mei were involved in sectarian revolt and engaged with millenarian beliefs.

²⁶ Given the fact that the Qian Rebellion is referred to as the Miao Rebellion among Miao historians, the initial spark of the Miao Rebellion is identified as Gao He and Jiu Song’s uprising in 1851.

the whole southeast region.

The later development of the Qian Rebellion since 1860 proved to be a decline of the sectarian rebellious groups but increasing disturbances by the Miao and other indigenous rebels. The development could be anticipated as most of the sectarian rebels were destroyed before 1860. The sectarian uprisings after 1860 were limited to north Guizhou. Nevertheless, the Guizhou authorities were hardly relieved. Just as sectarian rebellious groups declined, rebellious indigenous groups rose up and divided the rebellion's landscape. In addition to the Miao rebels in the southeast and the northwest, Muslim rebels emerged from the southwest, and Buoyei rebels continued disturbances in the middle of the province. What seems to be missing from these indigenous rebels but which re-emerged later in the Qian Rebellion is the sectarian element. Given the range and scale of the early sectarian rebellion, it seems fairly reasonable to doubt that early sectarian rebellions had *zero* influence on the later indigenous uprisings. Though there is no indication that the later indigenous uprisings were involved in sectarian movements, the influence could certainly be seen in another way.

In the following discussion, I focus on the Tao Brothers' revolt as an example of an indigenous millenarian uprising. The Tao Brothers' revolt is particularly informative because it was so successful. As has been reported, the rebels fought against their dominators but they did not occupy the land. They destroyed the tenant system but they did not become new landlords. Rather, several hundred thousand rebels enjoyed their victories by becoming self-isolated in Zhugongqing for seven years. During those years, about one third of the non-Han of the Dading Fu (大定府) gathered in the mountains of Zhugongqing and nearby areas. Eventually, a "*miao jiao*" (Miao millenarian sect) was

established as the rebellious group grew. As millenarians came from the entire northwest region to reside in Zhugongqing, the region was deeply influenced by the *miao jiao*. Even after the rebellious group was destroyed, the millenarian practices pertained. And even after the millenarian practices were seemingly discontinued, Zhugongqing millenarianism remained deeply rooted in the area. Thus, when Christianity was introduced to the region a few decades later, the missionaries had to confront this legacy of Zhugongqing millenarianism.

Miao Millenarians and the Zhugongqing Revolt (豬拱箐事件), 1860–1867

At the end of 1854, Yang Longxi and his followers fled into Dading prefecture. Allied with Wang San Zhaba's millenarian group in Qianxi, the millenarian rebels swept the eastern part of the Dading prefecture, including Dading, Bijie, Qianxi, and Pingyuan, across more than a hundred miles (PQJL [1919]1988, 22). The local authorities responded quickly. Yang and his followers fled toward the south, but the region had already been disturbed. The millenarians fled separately into the villages.

A Han with the surname Li who called himself the reincarnation of the *yi* star (翼星) disappeared for unknown reasons. Rumors about his ascension (升天) circulated and took hold among his ethnic followers. It was reported that in the few years before his death, Mr. Li lived with the Miao in Pingshanpu (平山鋪) village and was known for his witchcraft and healing power. The villagers were intrigued by the two “Heaven Scriptures” (天書) he had, and they were told that Mr. Li received these two Heaven Scriptures directly from the celestial (神仙). Before his ascension, Mr. Li left the two scriptures to one of his followers, and taught him everything he needed to know in order to succeed to

Mr. Li's power. The successor of Mr. Li turned out to be the famous Miao King Tao Xinchu.²⁷

Though he inherited Mr. Li's two scriptures, the life of Tao Xinchun didn't seem to change that much at first. Though he was known for his literacy and called by the respectful name Mr. Tao (陶先生), it seems that it was his mother, Madam Wang (王氏), who was responsible for taking care of the villagers' religious needs. Madam Wang was a famous shaman in nearby villages.²⁸ People came to her for advice and healing. During those years, the region seemed haunted by all kinds of rumors and disturbances. As a tenant of Yijiake (以機阿克) Tumu, Tao and his fellow villagers could no longer ignore the rumors of outside disturbances when the news arrived that Tumu An Lutai (安履泰) had been killed. They had also heard that *gangfei* (杠匪) went everywhere to assault landlords and officials. Perhaps they were too poor to be the target of the *gangfei*. But fears and anxiety seemed to overwhelm Tao's fellow villagers; they expected something without knowing what it would be (Yu Zhao in TBZ 2008, 86–87).

One day, Madam Wang was possessed by a spiritual being who named himself *da er shen xian* (a celestial with big ears 大耳神仙). Through Madam Wang's mouth, the spiritual being announced the news that he would descend on Jiucaiping (韭菜坪) in March, the day when the Ahmao were having their traditional court-mating festival.²⁹ The spiritual being claimed that the purpose of his arrival was to save his followers. They

²⁷ The original description was recorded in 平定豬拱箐苗匪始末記 by Yu Zhao, and reprinted in *The Tao Brothers and Zhugongqing* (*taoshi xiongdì yu zhugongqing* 陶氏兄弟與豬拱箐) (2008, 87). Though Yu Zhao did not specify the name, He Guojian referred to one of the Tao brothers (He 1987, 85). For the biography of Tao brothers, see Wu 1988 (also reprinted in TBZ 2008, 36–48) and He 1987.

²⁸ See Chen Benming (1984, 88) and Ma Shaochiao (1956, 66–67).

²⁹ The place was located in Weining department, also called Weishe (威奢), in Qing era, and is at the border of Weining and Hezhang counties today (TBZ 2008, 2).

would ascend to become celestials living in Heaven forever. The news soon spread throughout the area (He Guojian, reprinted in TBZ 2008, 3–4).

When the day came, fourteen hundred more people, including both men and women, male and female, old and young, and Miao, Bouyei, and Lolo, gathered in Jiucaiping. Everyone was instructed to bring a chicken, a hundred sticks of incense, and a bottle of oil. When they arrived, they saw a big house, the place where the Celestial with Big Ears was meant to show himself. Madam Wang was waiting inside the house. Tao Xinchun and his brother Tao Sanchun were inside and helped translate Madam Wang's instructions as they usually did. It was reported that the people waiting outside were convinced that the King was inside the house and that his voice sounded like thunder. After waiting for an untold number of hours, suddenly, a huge fireball appeared in the sky and began a speedy descent. The sky was simultaneously lightening up. A huge and loud thundering sound shocked the mountain. Before long, the sky was black again, and the mountain regained its quiet and calm. Having witnessed the whole scenario, the congregation was disturbed. Madam Wang was possessed in a trance. She came out of the house and announced that the Celestial of Big Ears had arrived and left instructions through her. According to the records, the congregation was informed that there was a well with Holy Water on another side of the mountain. Anyone who drank the Holy Water would ascend to Heaven. The Tao Brothers then led a group of followers to search for the Holy Water. Though they searched, they did not see any well. The congregation was disappointed, but then Tao Xinchun dug in the soil and water appeared. At first, the flow was small, like a finger, but soon it had expanded to the size of bowl. The congregation was surprised and rushed to drink the Holy Water. According to reports, those who drank

the Holy Water began dancing as if they were drunk and ecstatic (婆娑跳舞，如痴如醉).

At dawn, Madam Wang was possessed again by the Celestial of Big Ears. After being taught a spell and an incantation, Madam Wang became invulnerable to any weapon. To fulfill the Celestial's promise, Madam Wang would teach the congregation what she had learned from the celestial. Madam Wang baptized the congregation one by one with mud, as if the incantation was written on the believer's hand, and whispered the spell to him or her. The congregation was informed that they had learned the secret of ascension, and they would wait for the call from Heaven. Before the congregation was dismissed, people came to where the water flowed, to replace bottled oil with the Holy Water. As the call came, they would drink the Holy Water and make the incantation and the spell effective. According to reports, those who partook in this millenarian event that night freed themselves from productive work. Cattle, sheep, pigs, chicken and all livestock were eaten. They lived as if they were in the carnival (DFXZ 1985, 10, 86).

After that day, the Tao Brothers lived a completely different life. The news that Tao Xinchun was the King quickly spread. As the congregation was expecting the call, the Tao Brothers could not be just waiting like others. In their village, Pingshanpu, the relation between the Han and the Miao had become more and more tense since the day of the millenarian event. The Han could not help but suspect that the Miao were planning some kind of conspiracy. When the day came, the Han feared that they would all be killed.

In September, a serious gang fight happened between the Han and the Miao in Pingshanpu. The head of Bijie *longgang*, Di Si (翟四), led hundreds of his gang members to chase after the Miao everywhere in the name of justice (He 1988, 87; TBZ 2008, 5–6).

The Miao were called to fight back. Hundreds of the Miao came to the Tao Brothers. The government soon felt the threat of the Tao Brothers as they led five hundred males on a march toward the administrative site in Bijie, and enjoyed great success in that attack. Once the rebellion was sparked, there seemed no way to stop the fighting. Subsequently, the rebels attacked several other districts and Tumu administrative sites. The number of Tao's militia increased significantly. In less than six months, the militia had established connections with several other rebellious groups across the border in Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan provinces, ultimately growing to become a militia of ten thousand more males. At the end of 1860, the rebels controlled the bottleneck of transportation across the three provinces and invited serious military action from the central government.

Indeed, the Tao Brothers's followers were a lot more than just a militia. According to Yu Zhao, the Tao Brothers attracted three hundreds thousands of followers in just a few months. Though historians might be skeptical, I would tend to accept Yu Zhao's report not just because Yu was deeply involved in the pacification, but also because of the millenarian event prior to the Tao Brothers' uprising (Jenks 1994: 193, fn.148).³⁰ It is reported that fourteen thousand people gathered for the millenarian event in March. From March to September, no serious uprising was reported. In September, the Tao Brothers had only five hundred followers. But by December, the Tao Brothers had three hundred

³⁰ The story told above is based on Yu Zhao's *ding zhugongqing miao shimo ji* (定猪拱箐苗始末记) (TBZ 2008, 86–105). Yu Zhao himself was a victim of Tao Brothers' revolt as his office was destroyed by the rebels. He was also deeply involved in the pacification. As the one who was closest to the rebels, Yu was consulted by local officials and cooperated with official troops to pacify the revolt (He 1987, 87). Therefore, Yu Zhao's report is particularly valuable as a first-hand description. Though the scale of the Tao Brothers' rebellion, as described by Yu Zhao, is larger than that of most millenarian rebels, the revolt drew little attention from local authorities and Qing historians. Another document that describes the revolt in detail is Song Xu's *pingding zhugongqing miao yi jilue* (平定猪拱箐苗夷纪略), reprinted in TBZ (2008, 71–85).

thousand followers. If not because of the millenarian event described above, it seems very unlikely that the Tao Brothers would have been able to attract three hundred thousand followers in three months.³¹ We must not forget the Miao villages in this region have always been relatively small and dispersed. Many scholarly works have particularly emphasized that Miao tribes in this region did not establish any inter-village institutions. In other words, the Tao Brothers relied on no institutional base to mobilize people. The only possibility is that the news that Tao Xinchun was the chosen king must have spread all over the region during those six months of seeming quiet. When the Tao Brothers lit the spark, the congregation gathered with astonishing speed.

The rise and fall of the rebellious forces in this region before and after the uprising of the Tao Brothers makes it evident that the news that the Tao Brothers were kings had been widely spread. In general, there were several rebellious forces in this region before the Tao Brothers' uprising. Most of them were just small rebellious groups and were not even named before being destroyed. The Tao Brothers seem to have attracted many of these small rebellious groups. According to reports, Xiong Laosi, whose uprising was inaugurated by a female shaman in 1859, led his small militia with hundreds of people to the Tao Brothers because the latter were said to be greater kings than he (Chen Benming 1984, 89). It seems that the Tao Brothers' uprising also seriously undermined the He Brothers rebellious force. The He (何) Brothers were the first named Miao rebellious group to emerge in 1857 in Shucheng (水城). Their uprising was inaugurated by a female shaman called He *xiangu* (何仙姑) (GZTZ 1988: 930). Before

³¹ The number is recorded differently, varying from a hundred thousand to three hundred thousand. I adopt Yu Zhao's estimation (TBZ 2008, 87).

the Tao Brothers' uprising, the He Brothers' rebellious force was the famous one. Nevertheless, their militia did not grow beyond twenty thousand, even at its greatest size. But after the Tao Brothers' uprising, the He Brothers' rebellious group soon declined. They eventually surrendered to the government in 1861. Though the He Brothers' rebellious force in the south of the region was succeeded by Huang Jinyin (黃金印), it is very likely that the He Brothers' decline was due to the uprising of the Tao Brothers (Yang Yougeng 1982, 69–74). According to reports, the Zhang Brothers in Shuicheng also led a group of five hundred more people to join the Tao Brothers. Their group was joined by another five hundred more people when passing Nayong (納雍) (TBZ 2008, 67–68). If not because the He Brothers could not compete with the Tao Brothers, it seems that the Zhang Brothers and their followers would not have to search such a long way from the south to the north of the region to reach the Tao Brothers. Clearly, when the greater king appeared, the small kings could not compete with the greater one but either converted to the greater king or were degraded.³²

When the Tao Brothers' rebellious group grew and became the most sizable in the region, the relationship between the Han and the Miao was dramatically reformed. As mentioned above, the Tao Brothers rose up to fight against *longgang* or *gangfei* who chased back the Miao. *Longgang* is a kind of village-based rebellious group. Most of the

³² Another rebellious force was called the Hongqi soldiers (黃旗軍), led by Yan Dawu (岩大武), who revolted in yongning (永寧) in 1862. Yan's militia was known for its mobility but its size did not grow beyond ten thousand (He 1984, 35–40). There was also the rebellious group led by Li Kaijia (李開甲) and Qi Laoxin (漆老新) that revolted in Zhenxiong (鎮雄) in 1862 (Chen Defang 1981, 28). Both Yan's and Li's militias were formed after that of the Tao Brothers. Though their militia did not come under the Tao Brothers, they did in many cases help the Tao Brothers, especially in protecting the Zhugongqing fortress.

longgang rose up in Han villages.³³ The name *longgang* refers to a specific custom: at a funeral, several groups would fight for the right of holding the coffin, as an indication of the right to inherit the deceased's property. During the rebellious decades, it was not usual for villages to have their own military forces, either in the name of *tuanlian* or in the name of *longgang*. Particularly, in this northwest region of the province, the local government recruited *tuanlian* to fight against Yang Feng's rebellious group. Having destroyed Yang's rebellious force, the newly recruited *tuanlian* were dismissed, which meant that a number of military-trained villagers were then living outside of official control. Many of them later became the leaders of *longgang*. As was reported in PQJL ([1879]1988, 62), the first *gangfei* was assaulted in 1857. Several appeared in Dading, Pingyuan, Weining, Shuicheng, and Zhaotong. Thereafter, *longgang* became the most troublesome bandit forces in the region. Ironically, during the years of the Tao Brothers' revolt, *longgang* seem to have developed a sort of uneasy friendship with the Miao rebels despite being rivals. It was reported that the *longgang* and the Tao Brothers' rebellious group fought together against the official militaries. In addition, when the Tao Brothers' rebellious group was detained by the government, *longgang* members went across the detention line to trade all kinds of supplies. Despite the rivalry, the alliance with the *longgang* was certainly one of the most important reasons that the Tao Brothers could become so successful.

The size of the rebellious group does matter. As has been reported, three hundred

³³ The origin of the custom and who owns the custom is attributed to the Han military migrants. According to《大清畿辅先哲传》第 35 卷贤能传八《袁开第》，the custom occurred in Han migrants as the descendants of the deceased competed for the right to hold the coffin in the funeral. In the name of *longgang*, they established their own military forces and fought against Tumu for lands and tenants. (始于客籍大姓发丧争抬柩，遂以龙杠名。与土目为敌，动辄数千人夺田争佃，杀人如草芥。)

thousand men and women, elders, and children came from Dading, Weining, Shuicheng, and Zhenxiong to follow the Tao Brothers (Chen Defang 1981, 27; He Guojian 1988, 110–12). It is important to note that the majority of those attracted by the Tao Brothers were tenants or serfs, which means they did not own land. Because of their poverty, it was likely not such a difficult decision for them to give up everything to follow the Tao Brothers. However, as those poor followers came to the Tao Brothers, the question that immediately arose was what they would eat. It seems very unlikely that the Tao Brothers would have been able to feed all their followers simply by pillaging and robbing. Even if they did plan robberies, the region into which three hundred thousand people suddenly poured could hardly have enough food and goods for everyone. We might assume, then, that the followers knew that if they were going to survive, they would have to feed themselves.

Ultimately, the sheer numbers of people who came to follow the Tao Brothers led the Brothers made an important decision to withdraw backward rather than marching forward. After successfully controlling the bottleneck of transportation, Qixingguan (七星關), the rebellious force of the Tao Brothers was ranked as the number one bandit force that the state sought to destroy. However, as more and more followers came, the place was too full to receive any newcomers. The Tao Brothers thus withdrew from Qixingguan and divided their group into several troops. Each troop contained thirty to forty thousand people, and was relocated to nearby mountains, including Fengdingshan (鳳頂山), Haimagu (海馬姑), Hongyanjianshan (紅岩尖山), and Gudongshan (骨董山). Tao Xinchun himself and his troops were relocated at Zhugongqing, which thereafter became the center of the community (He Guojian 1987, 88; 1988, 111–12). Of course, not all of

their followers were organized into troops; those who were not in troops scattered into the mountain areas and built up their residences. Eventually, the whole mountain area was occupied by the Tao Brothers' followers. According to Yu Zhao, there were 30,000 houses scattered in the mountain area across the provincial border of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan, ranging across 300 more *li* (里, about a hundred miles). The Maio villages were located in the central area, and other ethnicities including the Yi(夷), Tuliao(土僚), Ke(克), Zhong(仲), and Cai(蔡) villages were scattered around the Miao villages. But the Yi Tumu, the dominant groups, were excluded from the whole region (Chen Defang 1981, 27; He Guojian 1988, 112). The number of households was close to one third of the demography recorded in Dading fu (大定府) in the 1820s (Wen 2006, 224–31).

Though there is no indication about how the Tao Brothers led their followers, the encounter with the Taiping rebels was certainly a turning point (He Guojian 1988, 112–13). In March of 1861, the advance troop of the Taiping army, led by Zeng Guangyi (曾廣依) attacked Bijie. The Tao Brothers and their followers seemed to have made a favorable impression on the Taiping army. They not only allied with the advance troops to lay siege to the authorities, but also provided substantial backup supplies as the Taiping main force was approaching. By 1863, the Taiping army had nearly collapsed. Li Fuyou (李福猷), who led troops of thirty thousand soldiers, lost connection with the main force as they fled from Zhaotong to Guangxi. The Tao Brothers thus invited Li and his troops to reside in Zhugongqing. Repaying the Tao Brothers' for their hospitality, Li and his troops helped to build a munitions factory to manufacture iron tools and weapons. They taught the militia to use gunpowder, and helped impose a guardian system to reorganize the troops. Though the Taiping regime was at the end of its rope, the Tao Brothers were

ordained as commanders of the Taiping Heavenly State (太平天國總兵元帥) and the core members of the Zhugongqing rebels were ordained as Taiping bureaucrats. Though it seems very unlikely that the Tao Brothers received their title from Shi Dakai (石達開), there should be no doubt that the Tao Brothers' rebellious force submitted to the Taiping system. What remains unknown is how deeply they were influenced by the Taiping philosophy and religion.

Unlike the Taiping rebels who were a traveling force, the Zhugongqing rebels resided as a self-sufficient community. According to Yu Zhao, throughout the years, the provincial army blocked all the connections between the rebels inside and the civilians outside. However, the confinement did not work (TBZ 2008, 103). The community fed itself by working on the newly reclaimed lands and the available natural resources. Moreover, the Tao Brothers had established a market to allow the community to trade goods with the “traitors (奸).” In that market, silver or copper money had no use; instead, grains, salts, tools and so on were exchanged in accordance with rules set up by the Tao Brothers. The community even recruited Han craftsmen and Han teachers. In short, Zhugongqing was not just a military fortress, but also a self-sufficient community.

Though there is no indication that the Zhugongqing community practiced the Taiping religion, the community did have its own religion. Recently, a local official of the religious bureau of Nayong County, Kang Danyin (2007), published a report based on his decade-long survey of Miao religion in Nayong County. In that report, Kang proposes a link between the Zhugongqing revolt and the Miao of Nayong County. According to Kang, the Miao in Nayong are diverse in languages and customs. Nevertheless, they seem to share one thing in common. The villagers claim that their ancestors moved from other

places to join the Zhugongqing revolt. After the pacification, their ancestors were forced to leave Zhugongqing. On their way home, they found a place with abundant water and natural resources in Nayong, and decided to stay. More importantly, Kang discovered that the villagers still practice “ascension.” For the purpose of analysis, I provide the whole conversation between Kang Danyin and his informant, Li Longyou.

Li: We were also believers when we were young. We practiced ascension and read the scriptures everyday on the mountain peak. I had to follow other people because I was illiterate. It made me feel down when I saw other people seemed to experience ascension.

Li: 我们年轻的时候也信教。信得好后也是要到山顶去升天的，每天都在念，有经书的，因为我认不得字，只好跟人家念，见别人家像要升天的样子，心里特别难过。

Kang: Where did you practice it? Who were also believers? Are they still alive?

问：是在那儿信呢？还有那些人信？他们还在吗？

Li: When I still lived in Shangzhai (上寨), I practiced it with Ma Degui's father, Tao Ronghui's father, and so forth. There were about thirty-four believers. We sometimes read the scriptures, burned incense and bowed at home. We sometimes practiced it inside the cave. When we went into trance, we started to mumble, dance, and jumped uncontrollably. Ma Degui's father is still alive now, but I am not sure if he is too old to remember this. This practice was prohibited by the state at that time.

答：我那时还住在上寨，和马德贵的父亲，陶荣辉的父亲等人信，大约有三四个，我们有时在家里，有时到岩洞里，在家只是念经，烧香磕头。在洞里念，有时神来了，就念着什么，狂跳起来，现在马家老人还在，不知道记得没有，人都老了，当时国家又不允许。

Kang: Was there a leader? What is the leader's name? Why did you practice it? Did other villages also practice it?

问：信的有教主吗？名叫什么？信来做那样？在那些地方做过？其它村寨也信吗？

Li: I cannot remember. I heard some zealous believers said they would solicit General Tao and General Ma to possess their bodies. I did not know their names. Elders said we had to burn incense to ascend to Heaven. It is different from Christian practices. We had practiced it in the cave behind Shangzhai. We read the scriptures, and then started to dance and jump while entering ecstatic trance. Many of them could jump as high as several stories. I cried because I was too young to remember the scriptures and to jump that high. I had not heard of other believers. There were not many Christians either, except for Wang Mark and Yang Moses.

答：记不得了，好像信到狂起来时，说要请陶元帅和马元帅来降神，他们的名字我们不知道，是老人说的，信好要升天，要烧香，不像信教的（基督教）。在上寨后面的岩洞，夹沟仰天麻窝的岩洞里做过，先是念经，神来了开始跳，好多人都跳有楼高，我自己年纪小，

记不得经，又跳不到楼高，过哭啊，其它的没有听说信，那时候信教（基督教）的，也不多，只有王马可和杨摩西。

Kang: When did you become a believer? Where are these scriptures? Do you still remember?

问：是从什么时候信的？经书在哪里？您老还记得一些吗？

Li: I am 74 year-old now, born in 1933. I became a believer when I was 17 or 18 year-old (during 1948 -1950) after the arrival of the Communist Party. These scriptures were originally kept by the only literate, the old Mr. Ma, but they may be gone now. Mr. Ma is in his seventies and eighties. He may not remember any texts in the scriptures.

答：我今年 74 岁，生在 1933 年，十七八岁去信（大约 1948 年—1950 年）。共产党来后就信了，那些书都是马家老者收装着，只有他会读会写，可能不在了。七老八十的，像梦一样，一句也记不清。

Kang: I have read something about General Tao in books. It is said that General Tao was originally a believer in He Xiangmu. He danced in trance after drinking the Holy Water. Is it true?

问：我看了一些书，说陶元帅原来是信仙姑的，舀水喝后就跳神，是不是有这回事呢？

Li: This is what we did. We practiced it in order to ascend to Heaven with He Xiangmu.

答：我们就是这样。就是要和仙姑上天的。

In the above conversation, Kang's informant Li Longyou describes the ascension as an ecstatic experience that he witnessed in his childhood. According to Li Longyou, the believers in this teaching shared ecstatic experiences. They had their own scriptures, which are nothing like the Bible. By reciting the scriptures, the believers would be able to achieve ecstasy. Nevertheless, it requires much practice for someone to facilitate reading the scripture and become ecstatic. Li Longyou claims that the community has kept this "teaching" since their ancestors fled from Zhugongqing. There was someone in the village responsible for keeping the scriptures, and he was the only person who was able to read and write. In their "ascension" practices, General Tao (of the Tao Brothers) and General Ma (an ancestor of the Ma family who is responsible for taking care of the scriptures) possessed their bodies. Those in ecstasies were empowered with extreme

energy and able to jump as high as several stories.

The religious life of their descendants provides a snapshot for us to reconstruct that of the Zhugongqing community. Li Longyou's report is particularly informative. It shows that the Zhugongqing religion continued long after the Zhugongqing revolt described above. In the case described in above, the followers were baptized by the female shaman (*xiangu*), and experienced ascension after drinking the Holy Water. But according to Li Longyou, those who would like to experience ascension gathered in the cave, read the scriptures to invite the spirits, and drank holy water to become possessed. Though the scriptures did not appear in the millenarian event that spurred the Tao Brothers' revolt, they later became the most essential element of the religious practice of the Zhugongqing community. According to Li Longyou, followers read the scriptures both at home as a daily practice and in the cave as "ascension" practice. It is very likely that the scriptural reading was imposed by Tao Xinchun, who was known for his literacy and scriptures before his rebellious uprising. Though we do not know when the scriptural reading was adopted into the community, it is very likely that their encounter with the Taiping army would have reinforced the value of the scriptures. As the Tao Brothers made the community read the scriptures, drink holy water, and practice ascension, the Tao Brothers transformed the rebellious group to a millenarian community.

The millenarian community led by the Tao brothers is noteworthy for its exodus, rather than its rebellion. After spending time in their fortifications in Zhugongqing, the Tao Brothers and their followers only fought in order to fulfill the needs of the community and to protect the fortress from disturbances. In other words, to the extent that there were rebellions, they arose not to overturn the regime, but to fight for space for an

exodus. Once the Tao brothers turned the revolt toward millenarianism, the millenarians continued rebellious activities only as needed to continue living apart from contemporary society. Though the millenarianism could not last for long, the millenarians who wanted to break from society were always looking for a safe place where exodus was allowed. Nevertheless, the Zhugongqing millenarian community did not collapse along with the ruin of the fortress in 1867. The millenarians were not gone. They kept practicing ascension, believing in *xiangu*, and reciting the scriptures. A few decades later when foreign missionaries encountered the region in the early twentieth century, they tried very hard to “discipline” the millenarians in order to distinguish their Christian conversion from indigenous millenarianism.

Protestant Missions and Anti-Foreignism, 1870s–1900s

After the Rebellion of the White Lotus Teaching, the emperor Jiaqing (嘉慶) showed zero tolerance toward Christian millenarianism. From 1811 to 1842, Catholic Christians were seen as criminals in China. They were seen as potential rebels; specifically, they were daring enough to disbelieve in ancestors and gods.³⁴ Even the emperor believed in ancestors and gods; how dare they disbelieve what the emperor believed? Especially in the first decade after the emperor’s law was inaugurated, local officials preyed on Catholics. If one failed to “clean out” Catholics from his administration, he could be punished, regardless of how small that Catholic population might be. In Guizhou, the provincial governor Yan Jian (巡撫顏檢) was forced to resign

³⁴ For issues regarding the early encounter of Catholics and China in general, I rely on Zhang Guogang’s 《從中西初識到禮儀之爭—明清傳教士與中西文化交流》(2003).

in 1812 because the emperor blamed him for failing to destroy the Catholic congregation in Guiyang (Zhou 1988, 52). Yan may have felt himself to be mistreated. Since 1800, more than twenty Catholic Christians had been arrested in Guiyang, which was about one fifth of the Catholics in Guiyang. Yet apparently these measures still fell short (Cheng 2004, 71). The situation in Guizhou was not eased even after the Opium War (1840–1842), when the court was forced to grant Catholics legal status and allow French missionaries to conduct their missions in coastal areas. Even more serious persecution was imposed on Catholic Christians in the first two decades of the opening (1845–1862), which were also years when the number of Catholics seemed to grow quickly, from fewer than six hundred in 1800 to thirty-five thousand in 1870 in Guizhou (Ming 2002, 111; Zhang 1992, 35).

The year after the Guiyang parish was established in 1847, several Catholic Christians were arrested in Guiyang. The arrest was meant as a warning, though it does not appear to have been effective enough to stop the spread of Catholic Christianity in Guizhou. By 1853, one third of the counties in the province had Catholic churches, and most of them were located in the north region or nearby Guiyang (Ming 2002, 111). In 1855, when the provincial government had just retreated from Yang Longxi's revolt but more and more revolts were developing everywhere in the province, the provincial government seemed badly frightened and conducted an even more strict ban to prevent Catholic Christianity in several of its districts, especially those that were seriously affected by Yang Longxi's revolt. As the disturbances everywhere became more and more chaotic, more and more people were drawn to Catholic Christianity. The new governor He Guanyin (何冠英), who took office in 1861, immediately gave a secret order

instructing local officials to expel Christianity using whatever means necessary. Though He's order obviously violated the Beijing Treaty (北京條約), which was newly cited by the court and which granted the right of foreign missionaries to conduct their missions in inland China, the treaty did not stop the governor from expelling Catholic Christianity from the province. Instigated by the government, serious conflict occurred between the local militia and the Catholic Christians in Qingyan (青岩) in 1861 (Zhang Pengyuan 1992, 13–14). As a result, four Chinese Christians were killed and several church buildings were destroyed. Subsequently, in 1862, a more serious conflict occurred at Kaizhou (開州), a hundred kilometers away from Guiyang, in which five Christians were publically executed, including one foreign missionary.

He's secret order to expel Catholic Christianity was regarded as a response to the improper behavior of the foreign missionaries. However, Catholic Christianity was regarded as a threat not because of its foreignness but because of its millenarianism. During the two decades of the Qian Rebellion, Christian millenarianism as well as many other forms of millenarianism(s) were banned. After the Opium War, though, it seemed impossible to ban Catholic Christianity any longer, and while the government was forced to ease regulations, its anxieties were not relieved. Though the local governments could not stop Catholic missionaries from establishing new churches, they could stop their people from becoming Christians. In this way, foreign missionaries were isolated from local societies, either stigmatized as evil or consecrated as saviors. I suggest that anti-foreignism actually provided a discourse that allowed the public to express local anxieties about Christian millenarianism. This was particularly true in Guizhou during the Qian Rebellion, as the whole province was beset with millenarianism and rebellion. In

the province, whereas anti-millenarianism was regarded as a political position of anti-rebellion, anti-foreignism was more than just an expression of loyalty to the government; it too was a political position of anti-rebellion. Even though the intervention of international society after 1862 forced the provincial government to convict anyone who attacked Christians, the conflict between Christians and local society did not ease but became more and more intense (Zhang Pengyuan 1992, 15–17; Zhang Xiangguang 1982, 161–73; Zhou Jianzhong 1989, 56–57).

Since the beginning of their mission in Guizhou, or West China in general, Protestant missionaries were forced to see the possibility of Christian millenarianism through anti-foreign sentiments. They kept a distance from Roman Catholic missionaries, and avoided regions such as Zunyi and Sizhou, where Catholic churches were well established and the conflicts between Christians and local society were particularly intense. Nevertheless, the Protestant missions proceeded slowly during the first two decades. The only exception was the mission among the non-Han population, especially in the region where the Miao uprising was highlighted during the rebellious decades. The contrast between the region with the Miao (*miaofei*) and that with the sectarian (*jiaofei*) uprisings was important after the Qian Rebellion. Whereas the gulf between the Miao and the Han in the former region became even deeper, the political position of anti-foreignism seemed to be shared by both Han and non-Han in the latter regions. However, the Protestant missionaries who achieved great success in the former regions were soon drawn into the conflict between the Miao and the Han. The Panghai persecution (旁海教案) in 1898 and the Kaili persecution (凱里教案) in 1900 occurred within this context. Even the mass conversion in the northwest region in 1900s occurred within a similar

context. I suggest that whether or not the mission was successful depended on the position that the foreign missionaries took when the Miao-Han conflicts occurred. Whereas the Protestant mission in the northwest region turned out to be the most successful one in China because the missionary Samuel Pollard decided to stand with the Miao, the mission in the southeast region was successful in the beginning but proceeded with difficulty simply because the foreign missionaries stayed aside as they became involved in the Miao-Han conflicts.

The first two decades of the Protestant mission in Guizhou were far from successful. Nevertheless, James F. Brounston (~1910), who began his mission in Guiyang in 1878 and continued into the 1890s, certainly showed the missionary society that there was a great opportunity to develop a mission among the non-Han population in Guizhou. Though there were Samuel Clarke (~1946) in Guiyang approaching the Black Miao and Zhongjia, as well as James Adam (~1915) in Anshun approaching the Hua Miao and Shuixi Miao, the CIM mission among the non-Han population did not really open up until 1896. Mr. and Mrs. Webb were assigned a pioneer mission to build a station in the Miao region. The idea was a radical one. Even those who had been working with the non-Han people for many years did not actually reside with the non-Han people. The reasons preventing the missionaries from residing with the non-Han population outside of the cities were complicated. The fact that the foreign missionaries were not free to reside anywhere they wanted had forced them to begin their mission from cities instead of townships, from marketplace rather than villages.³⁵

³⁵ In general, when the missionaries arrived in a new place, their biggest challenge was to find a place where they could live and start their mission. However, that was never easy. Even in the big cities, most

Before actually residing within the Miao region, Webb paid two preliminary trips to Qingping county (清平縣), assisted by Pan Xiushan (the Miao missionary). The Webbs eventually rented a place in a small Miao village with eighty more households. The village was located at Panghai township, about half a mile away from the marketplace. In the beginning, the Webbs found no difficulty being accepted by their Miao neighbors. But they got into trouble as the Han living downtown learned that the foreigners were with the Miao villagers. The county government conspired with the Han to try to threaten the foreigners and pressure them to leave. The Webbs' Miao neighbors stayed out of the business, waiting to see what happened. Eventually, the Han gave up and the foreigners stayed. After this, the Webbs earned the trust of their Miao neighbors, who soon began to visit the Webbs' house. Within a few months, the Webbs were known throughout the entire region. Reportedly, the mission went very well. Prayer meetings were held every night and the missionary had to host three services every Saturday. The Webbs' house, which then became the church, was often full of over a hundred Miao catechumen (Clarke 1970, 142–49).

If a mission went smoothly, without interruption, the missionary might witness a mass conversion in the Black Miao region. Unfortunately, the Webbs had to retreat from the Miao station when Mrs. Webbs became seriously ill. Their successors, H. E. Bolton and W. S. Fleming, who had been working among the Chinese until then, continued to do a good job and even built a school. But then they made a serious mistake in late 1898 that

house owners would not lend their places to foreigners. Outside of those cities, the discrimination was even worse. Therefore, the Protestant missionaries who arrived in West China after the 1860s began their missions in big cities. In 1895, there were four stations in Guizhou, located in the downtowns of Guiyang, Anshun, Xingyi, and Dushan (Clarke 1970, 139–40).

not only resulted in the death of two missionaries, but also destroyed the trust between the foreign missionaries and the Miao (Clarke 1970, 149–50).

The beginning of the event was a dispute between the Miao and the Han about the location of the market. In the past, the market had been located in downtown Panghai. According to the custom, everyone who sold a *dou* (斗) of grain would have to donate a cup of grain to the temple. After being influenced by the missionaries, the Miao were no longer willing to do this. Besides, they were already unhappy with the tax and the portion they paid to the officials and the Han place owners. Thus, the Miao decided to make use of the bank of the Qingshui River as the new marketplace. Since the majority of villagers were Miao, the Han could not stop the relocation of the marketplace. The Han asked the county government to intervene. The county officials came and destroyed everything in the new marketplace. The Miao were furious. The conflict between the Han and the Miao escalated as several villages, both Han and Miao, were set on fire for unknown reasons. Under these circumstances, the missionaries decided that they should stay out of the business, and fled back to Guiyang. On their way to Guiyang, they were assaulted in Chonganjiang (重安江). The foreign missionary Fleming and the Miao missionary Pan Xiushan were killed (Clarke 1970, 150–59).

The missionaries' mistake was in fleeing back to Guiyang instead of standing alongside their Miao followers. They mis-conceptualized the event as just another Miao–Han conflict, and ignored the fact that the conflict had arisen because their Miao followers refused to donate to the temple. Once the missionaries stayed aside of the Miao-Han disputes and fled to Guiyang, the Miao, in turn, betrayed the missionaries. The Miao knew that the Han would assault the missionaries in Chonganjiang, and they

decided not to get involved. Though the missionaries were compensated and the church was rebuilt after the disturbance, the trust between the Miao and the missionaries was gone. None of the foreign missionaries were willing to reside again in the Miao station, and the Miao seemed less enthusiastic than they were before the disturbance. The situation became even worse after the Kaili disturbance in 1900.

The Kaili disturbance was a case of injustice in which thirty-four Miao villagers were accused of being involved in a robbery that caused 150 deaths. The Miao villagers claimed that they were Christians, which also meant they were protected by foreigners. Thus, the missionary society was forced to intervene in the case. They sent out an investigator to reconstruct the event, and came to the conclusion that those villagers involved in the Kaili robbery were not Christians because they were not yet baptized. But the missionaries also claimed that those Miao villagers were not part of the robbery gang, rather they had been forced to serve the gang members' breakfast. The county government did not accept this conclusion and insisted that the Miao villagers were part of the robbery gang for having served the gang members breakfast. All the Miao villagers were jailed and tortured, and thirty-two were executed. Though it seems that the missionary society could do nothing to prevent the Miao villagers from being arrested, the Miao villagers felt betrayed because the missionary society had claimed that none of the villagers were Christians. Thus, no Christians were involved in the Kaili robbery. In this way, the missionary society thought they could at least keep the church-station out of the business. The strategy succeeded, and the county government accepted the missionaries' appeal. However, the missionaries' strategy did not ease the Hans' hostility toward Christians and, furthermore, it alienated the Miao (Clarke 1970, 161–70). Three

years after the Kaili event, Samuel R. Clarke visited the Miao villages near Kaili and learned that both the Miao and the Han were full of anti-Christian sentiments. It was unsurprising, then, that following these two events, the mission in southeast Guizhou among the Black Miao achieved little success.

But while the Protestant mission in southeast Guizhou failed, its northwest counterpart was more successful. At first, the mission was merely promising. James Adam was able to gain the acceptance of the Miao near Anshun, just as the Webbs had in southwest region. If the mission in the southeast region eventually failed because the missionaries did not fulfill their promise to the Miao, the mission in the northwest region was successful simply because the missionaries there kept their promises.

Strictly speaking, no stations or outstations were established in the northwest region before the Boxer Rebellion. The CIM missionary station in Anshun was established in 1888, and the Methodist Church missionary station in Zhaotong was established in 1883 (Clarke 1970, 172). Both Anshun and Zhaotong are major cities at the outskirts of the northwest region. In the first decade of their mission, the CIM missionaries approached only the Han population in nearby regions and were rewarded very little. Though the missionaries in Anshun and Zhaotong had some interaction with the Miao, the Miao could hardly gain their favor. The missionaries preferred to approach influential people rather than those they regarded as less important. Samuel Pollard of the Bible Christian Church (later merged with the Methodist Church) in Zhaotong had also become aware of the tribal people in the mountains since 1892, but no direct evangelical missions targeted them until 1902 when Pollard paid his visit to the Nosu in Liangshan (涼山) (Pollard 1954, 21, 55–67). Though Adam was hesitant in the beginning, the

Webbs' success in Panghai was certainly inspiring and encouraging (Clarke 1970, 172–73). Adam began visiting the Miao villages in 1895 and spending more and more time with the villagers as he learned the basics of the Miao language. His work with the Miao was quickly rewarded.

The first village church was established in 1899 at a Miao village about two miles away from Anshun. In the same year, the first Miao boys' school began recruiting students. Thereafter, the news that a foreigner was offering literacy to the Miao quickly spread from one village to another. If not for the Boxer Rebellion that forced all the foreigners in West China to leave, Adam might have been able to baptize hundreds, even thousands, of Miao converts in a ceremony he held in 1902. However, when Adam left during the Boxer disturbance, it had a very bad effect on his Miao followers. A rumor that Christians would all be put in jail was spread, and thus Adams' followers thought that he had fled just to avoid this. When he returned the following year, Adam found that his Miao followers were no longer interested in his teaching. As a result, there were only twenty more Miao converts baptized in that ceremony (Clarke 1970, 175–77).

Though his first Miao mission was not very successful, Adam learned from that experience and realized that as long as he could break through the Han's blockade of the Miao region, there would be no difficulty for him in gaining acceptance by the Miao. On the other side of the Sancha River (三岔河) where the Old Territory had been, according to the early Qing history, there were many Miao who called themselves Shuixi Miao (水西苗). The Han living in the Anshun area described the place as an outlaw region, which Miao bandits were said to haunt. But the Han living in that region were even more afraid of the foreign missionaries. They believed that the Miao would be empowered to rebel if

they received the foreign missionary's teaching. They proclaimed that they would kill the foreign missionary as well as anyone who brought him across the river. Nevertheless, the threat did not deter Adam. With the help of his Miao followers, Adam began to reach out to the Shuixi Miao residing on the other side of the Sancha River. Adam's breakthrough impressed the Shuixi Miao, and news about his teaching and heroic behavior spread across the villages. More and more Shuixi Miao came across the river to the station in Anshun. A few months after his breakthrough in 1902, a Miao chapel was established in Ten-ten (等堆) village. Many hundred Miao attended the service regularly (Clarke 1970, 177-78).

Unlike his Miao mission near the Anshun, Adam made his Shuixi Miao itinerary strictly a Miao one as he travelled with the Miao, visited only Miao villages, and lounged only in Miao households. The following two years were the most successful years of Adam's entire missionary career. In 1903, Adam made his first trip to Shuicheng, where he found that the Shuixi Miao sang Christian hymns using their own melody (Clarke 1970, 178-79). Later that year, Adam was invited to Lanlongqiao (懶龍橋) because the Dahua Miao there had built a church by themselves and they wanted the missionary to hold the opening ceremony (Clarke 1970, 185-85). In 1904, Adam made his trip to Gepu (葛布), and he found that the Dahua Miao (Ahmao) congregation there had as many as a thousand or more members (Clarke 1970, 186). In 1905, Adam and Pollard traveled across most of the northwest region, and they were surprised to find that the whole region had been taken over by the Gospel.

Though Adam's commitment to the Miao mission promised an even more successful mission in subsequent years, the fact that the Gospel spread without the

missionaries seemed beyond his conception of reality. For the missionaries, if not because the Miao were in need of the Gospel, it seemed no other reason could explain the reality they had seen. However, instead of saying that the Miao were in need of the Gospel, it might be more accurate to say that the Miao had transformed the Gospel to accommodate their millenarianism. As this transformation happened, it seems that the missionaries were of little significance, serving only as witnesses to what was happening. It was not missionaries but the natives who were the experts who coordinated this transformation. There are two specific cases documented in Adam's mission that support this interpretation of the Miao's transformation.³⁶

The first case is that of Mr. Shuixi Miao, a school teacher from Heo-er-kuan (猴兒關) in Langdai. He came to visit Adam in Anshun, and received Adam's mentoring on Christianity. After staying for a few days, he left with Adam's gift of two books, *The Gospel of Luke* and *The Question in Christianity*. With these two books and the very limited knowledge of Christianity he gained during his stay in Anshun, Mr. Shuixi Miao

³⁶ At the very early stage of the Protestant mission in West China, the spread of the Gospel without missionaries was intended. Early missionaries believed that the spread of Christian literature and tracts would be the most efficient way to get people, especially the literati, interested in the Gospel. Thus, not only would the missionary societies encourage their foreign missionaries to distribute Christian literature and tracts, but Bible Societies hired native Chinese as colporteurs to sell Christian literature and tracts at very cheap prices in the markets. In order to reach as many as villages, the colporteurs would cooperate with the missionaries at stations, but most of the time they went on their selling trips alone. Their work was very successful and made both the missionary societies and the Bible societies believe that there was a strong demand for Christian literature in West China. In 1903, there were seventy registered colporteurs in West China, and the number increased significantly year by year. It is very likely that the colporteurs would have gone on their selling trip across the northwest region before the foreign missionaries reached there. Though the Miao were hardly readers of Christian literature, they would learn from the market the unexpected added value of the Christian literature and tracts. Though they might not have had spare money to buy the literature, they would be happy to have a free one even if they did not read. In short, Adam's mission with the Miao was preceded by the circulation of Christian literature and tracts. As Adam began approaching the Miao, the foreign missionary was then recognized as an expert in that special literacy. Thus, it is not surprising that Adam would receive people who came to the expert for further instruction.

began teaching his fellow villagers. His teaching was very creative; Adam was impressed, for example, that Shuixi Miao's congregation sang to remember the teachings of Christianity. It is worth noting, too, that this tradition of singing to remember Christian teachings is still actively performed in the area among contemporary Christians (Clarke 1970, 179–80).

The second case is that of Paul, who was the first baptized Ahmao Christian in Gepu in northwest Guizhou. Before coming to Adam in Anshun, Paul and his fellow villagers learned that their fellow Ahmao residing in Lanlongqiao had followed the Miao King named Jesus. He and another villager were appointed by their fellow villagers in Hezhang to investigate the truth. They travelled for six days to Anshun to verify what they had learned from their fellow Ahmao in Lanlongqiao. Apparently, Adam was impressed by their abundant knowledge of Christianity. Paul was baptized during his stay in Anshun. Back in his village in Gepu, Paul was known as the ordained congregation leader. Hundreds of Miao came from nearby villages to attend his services (Clarke 1970, 184–86).

It is likely that there were more cases like these that simply weren't documented. Both cases clearly show that the Miao were active subjects spreading the Gospel; indeed, they did not simply receive the Gospel, but through their own agency and creativity, turned it into Miao millenarianism. When Adam was invited to the Shuixi Miao village in Langdai in 1903, he was invited not to teach but to witness their devotions. Similarly, when Adam began receiving the Ahmao from the far northwest part of the province in 1904, they did not come to learn, but to verify what they had already learned. In short, even before the foreign missionaries realized what was happening, the millenarian

movement was already underway. If they were forced to respond to the persecution of the Miao, the missionaries would just ignore the fact that it was the Gospel that the Miao had transformed into native millenarianism. They were fairly cautious about the motivation that people had for suddenly getting interested in Christianity, and often postponed the baptism of newcomers in order to investigate their real intentions. Nevertheless, just as had happened in the southeast region, their responses entailed the future of the Christian millenarianism in the northwest region.

There is no direct record indicating when the persecution of the Miao began. It seemed to get worse when the rumor that the Miao had rebelled (苗亂了) caused a serious disturbance in the downtown of Zhaotong city. That event was due to the Miao coming to visit Samuel Pollard (1864–1915) in groups, one after another. As recorded, Adam began receiving Ahmao coming from Weining, a place in the far northwest of the province, in 1904. Considering that the trip from Weining to Anshun was long, many of them could not make it. Adam suggested that his Ahmao visitors visit Pollard in Zhaotong. A few days after, on July 12, Pollard received four Ahmao visitors in his mission house (Pollard 1954, 73). Thereafter, the Ahmao visitors came and went in groups of a handful to a dozen. The mission house was full of Ahmao visitors. This scenario made the residents in Zhaotong very uncomfortable. In late August, everyone in the city of Zhaotong was talking about a supposed conspiracy between the foreign missionary and the Ahmao. They were told that the missionaries would transfer power to the Ahmao in secret gatherings at the mission house. One of the rumors was that when the Ahmao came to the city, the missionary would put a drop of water into their mouths and then they could read splendidly. Another was that the missionary would stroke the

Ahmao's hair once or twice, after which the Ahmao subject's memory would become perfect (Pollard 1954, 76). The Han and the Nosu were disturbed by such rumors, which fuelled fears that the Ahmao would eventually overtake the Han governmental office and the Nosu landlords (Pollard 1928, 42–45).

The rumors spread throughout the entire region. City residents began to reject Ahmao visitors at the gates of city. Han villagers harassed Ahmao villagers and Yi landlords threatened and persecuted Ahmao residents. Pollard realized that the situation was getting worse and worse as he noted that the Ahmao had stopped coming to the city. He then was told that several Ahmao were seriously injured as they were on their way to Zhaotong, and many were jailed by their landlords for having visited the foreign missionary. The foreign missionaries thus felt forced to speak out. On September 5, two months after his encounter with the Ahmao visitors, Pollard, accompanied by Adam, paid a visit to the district office (Yamen 衙門) in Weining County. He hoped that the government would intercede to protect the Ahmao. The district office issued an announcement regarding the recent Ahmao persecution and warned that anyone who harassed the Christians would be punished (Pollard 1928, 47–54). With that announcement, the two foreign missionaries travelled from village to village and from market to market, showing people that the persecution of the Ahmao was illegal. They spoke for the Ahmao in front of their landlords. They asked the landlords to release the jailed Ahmao and made them promise not to stop the Ahmao from going to Church. At least at first, given the foreign missionaries' forceful intervention, the persecution of Ahmao did not get worse.

Nevertheless, ongoing resentment of the Ahmao visiting Zhaotong forced Pollard

to stop receiving Ahmao visitors and to begin visiting Ahmao villages himself. In November of 1904, Pollard's trip to the Ahmao villages began. He was accompanied by several Ahmao followers. They travelled across Yiliang, Weining, Hezhang, and Bijie. In the spring of 1905, a new chapel located in a small Ahmao village was built, and Pollard began to reside in that small village. The place was called Shimenkan (石門坎), and soon became the most important missionary station in all of Southwest China (Pollard 1954, 66–68).

The two missionaries, Pollard and Adam, probably did not know how important their actions could be in fighting against the persecution of the Ahmao. Fighting against the persecution of Christians was strictly politics. It forced the society to accept the fact that some people were more like foreigners than Chinese. Fighting against the persecution of the Ahmao was completely a different thing. The Ahmao were persecuted because of their millenarianism, which was known as potential rebellion, and not because of their foreignism. Thus as the two foreign missionaries were fighting against the persecution of the Ahmao, they were fighting to open up a religious space outside of the millenarian realm. In short, they were not fighting for Christianity as form of foreign ideology, but as a religion. Though what they were doing would not stop the resentment toward the foreign missionaries, it made a religious space for Christianity in the local society. The effect was essential, for it contributed to easing some of the social anxiety about Christian millenarianism. As a result, it made it possible for Ahmao Christians to be incorporated into the local society.

Christianity against Millenarianism, 1905–1915

Not only was Christian millenarianism considered a threat to the local society in the late nineteenth century, but Christianity was also under threat from native millenarianism. The threat that the native millenarianism posed to Christianity appeared in two forms: on the one hand, there was the danger that the Gospel would be read as an expression of the native millenarianism; on the other, there was the danger that the Christian God would be perceived as a substitute for the native God.

The responses of foreign missionaries to this threat took varied forms, however, as the line between Christian millenarianism and native millenarianism was not clear cut. As mentioned above, Mr. Shuixi Miao held his congregation after a short visit with Adam in Anshun. He preached before being baptized. Rather than dismissing Mr. Shuixi Miao and his congregation, Adam was willing to baptize twenty more people as they requested. Before baptizing each person, Adam did make sure that they had basic knowledge of Christianity. But when he learned that Jesus was referred to as the Miao King, he was happy to hear it and did not even bother to explain otherwise. Adam recognized that the Miao might misconceptualize the Holy Spirit as an expression of a native spiritual being, but he simply appreciated that the Holy Spirit had done remarkable work with the Miao millenarians.

Pollard, on the other hand, was much more concerned that the Gospel was being received as native millenarianism. A simple fact clearly represents the difference between the two missionaries' approaches. Though impressed by the Ahmaos' enthusiasm, Pollard refused to baptize any Ahmao until November 5, 1905 (Pollard 1928, 95–96)—a full year

and a half after his first encounter with the Ahmao visitors in Zhaotong, and eight months after residing with the Ahmao in Shimenkan. Unlike Adam, who baptized Paul during his first visit to Anshun, Pollard's postponement of baptism suggests that he viewed the danger of millenarianism as much greater than Adam did. This difference alone would have made the Shimenkan mission a very different place from that of the CIM Miao mission.

Pollard was recruited to China first as a missionary affiliated with the Bible Christian Church. His mission in Zhaotong began in 1892 (Pollard 1954, 21). As one of the missionaries who arrived in West China in the 1880s, Pollard was actively involved in the Tract Society of West China.³⁷ Before devoting himself to the Ahmao mission, Pollard had showed an extreme interest in languages. He introduced a good reference book—titled *A Causal Talk of Mandarin Chinese* (官話漫談)—to missionaries who were “in search of pure and elegant mandarin which can be used wholesale in sermons,” gave suggestions to his fellow missionaries regarding language acquisition, and especially emphasized the value of the tracts in missionary encounters.³⁸ From his writings in the *West China Missionary News*, we can conclude that Pollard paid special attention to languages and literature during his missionary career. It is likely that he was fluent in both mandarin Chinese and the southwestern dialect, and that he was well-informed about issues relevant to Bible translation.

Soon after his first encounter with the Ahmao visitors, Pollard began learning the Ahmao language. A month later Pollard had already learnt a great deal and he began to

³⁷ *The West China Missionary News*, 1904 (Nov.), 1-3; 1906 (6), 143.

³⁸ *The West China Missionary News*, 1901 (1 and 2), 25–26.

host Ahmao services with less and less language assistance (Pollard 1954, 74). In October of the same year, a draft of the writing system was developed (Pollard 1954, 82). A few months later, the writing system was introduced to the Ahmao in the day school in the summer of 1905 (Grist [1920]1971, 208–09). In early 1906, Pollard began translating the Gospel of Mark with James Yang (Yang Yake), an Ahmao (Pollard 1954, 103). In the autumn of 1906, Nicholls was able to bring with him copies of the Ahmao Gospel for the Ahmao converts in Sapushan (Clarke 1970, 288). For Pollard, Ahmao Bible translation was the first priority of his Ahmao mission, even before the literacy program and school education.

In his *Story of the Miao* (1928), Pollard recorded several difficulties he encountered while translating Christian terminology into the Ahmao language. The word Pollard seemed to be especially proud of translating was “comfort.” He had studied several Ahmao words but none of them could represent the meaning of “comfort.” One day, Yang Yake told Pollard that a woman had just lost her child and he was going to give her his regards. Through this conversation, Pollard realized the word “to comfort” could be best translated to Ahmao as meaning “to get the heart around the corners” (Pollard 1928, 138). In his diary, Pollard wrote about the struggle of “getting out their language.” On October 12, 1905, Pollard wrote about his frustrated efforts to find words for “prayer” and “sin” in the Ahmao language (Pollard 1954, 82). He noted, “those occasions are part teaching and part learning, for when I learn a word I put it down.” Such occasions clearly showed that Pollard put much thought and effort into getting the “correct” expression of Christianity in the Ahmao language.

For Pollard, the goal was to ensure that the Ahmao conceptualized Christianity in

the proper way, even if this meant simplifying the message somewhat. As he recorded in his writings, Pollard avoided using difficult words to portray God to his Ahmao visitors. He told them that Shangdi (上帝 the God) is our Father living in Heaven (Pollard 1928, 28–29). He loves us just like a father loves his sons and daughters. Because we were from Him, we are all brothers and sisters. This simple and straightforward analogy seems to have worked very well, and it continues to be the most important guideline of Ahmao theology. Pollard himself remembered that his Ahmao visitors could easily grasp the analogy. They told him that he was just like them because they were all brothers from the Heavenly Father. It seems very likely that Pollard taught the Ahmao to pray to the Heavenly Father beginning with his first encounter with the Ahmao visitors. To this day, Ahmao Christians say “Heaven Father” instead of “God” in their prayers.

To avoid confusing the Christian realm with the folk religious realm, several Christian terms were introduced into the Ahmao language without translation. The first Ahmao translation of the Gospel of Mathew was published in 1906. In that translation, God was recorded in its Chinese translation as Shangdi (上帝).³⁹ In many places, the *tu vai* (Heavenly father (T^uV, 天父)) was used instead of Shangdi. The Holy Spirit was recorded as Shengling (J^eL^{ne} 聖靈), and Jesus was recorded as Yesu (耶穌). The Chinese word for God (*shen* 神) was not used, except in one place, where it was recorded with the Chinese word 神 instead of the phoneme. In contrast, Christian evils were translated

³⁹ The terminology did not change in the following publication of the Ahmao Bible, except the word Shangdi. In the 1930 version, which was mainly authored by Ahmao literates, Shangdi was translated into Ahmao words as *tu gyumu* (T^uΓ^oƆ^o), literally meaning the Heaven Emperor. The Ahmao translation was coincident with the meaning of the Chinese translation of “God.”

into the Ahmao language. For example, Satan was translated as *bidla* (𐌆𐌆𐌆), which literally means the wide ghost. The Ahmao word *dla*, which was a neutral word, literally meaning the soul, now became a bad word used to translate “evil beings.” And a new word, *dlazo* (𐌆𐌆𐌆), which literally means energy and power, was introduced to translate the soul that man receives from God. In short, the translation of the Ahmao Bible created a new set of Christian words to represent the Christian realm as standing for good, in contrast to the folk religious realm, which stood for evil.

Moreover, the church as the place where people gather to worship God was called *gaji* (𐌆-𐌆), which literally means the house of teaching principles. In contrast, the temple was called *gabeu* (𐌆-𐌆), which literally means the house of worshipping. This name *legakaji* appeared after the chapel was established. It clearly delivers the message that the church gathering is for teaching, not for worshipping. What was taught in the church was called *kaw ji* (𐌆𐌆𐌆), which literally means the true principles. The gathering was called *hizi* (𐌆𐌆), which means gathering, and the choir was called *hungao* (𐌆𐌆𐌆), which means singing the song. To pray was translated as *a kw dra* (𐌆𐌆𐌆), which literally means to request. Through a brief review of how Christian terminology was translated into the Ahmao language, we can conclude that Pollard consciously designed a specific semantic realm for Christianity in the Ahmao language. Moreover, Christian liturgies were named in secular and daily-life Ahmao languages to ensure they carried no sacred and mystified meanings. As a result, Christianity was to be received as a new kind of knowledge. In that epistemological realm, becoming Christian did not necessarily require

one to experience millenarianism, but it was necessary to develop Christian literacy in order to become a Christian.

What Pollard had done in translating Christian terminologies into the Ahmao language was contribute to defining Christian literacy in Ahmao. On the one hand, it delineated Christianity from other folk religions; on the other hand, it contextualized Christianity with secular activities. As a result, a Christian could be empowered through reading, writing, singing, eating, drinking, and talking, as long as the content of what they read and wrote was from God, the songs they sang and the words they said were devoted to God, and the substances they ate and drank were purified by God. The chain effect of Pollard's definition of Christianity in the Ahmao language was that secular activities could be judged in terms of Christianity. And once one strove to be a good Christian through one's daily activities, it was a small step from there to being more amenable to other modernization projects, including modern education, medicine, hygiene and development, than others.

Whereas Christianity was received by the Ahmao as a specific epistemological realm, Christian literacy was coached in classroom settings. In his documentary writing, Pollard described how the Ahmao visitors flew into the missionary house in Zhaotong station (Pollard 1928, 32–41). They were so many, crowding every corner of the yard. Though Pollard did not say anything about the chapel, we can imagine that it probably was the only quiet place. The chapel would be reserved for the service or the gathering. Perhaps it was too small to accommodate every visitor. Perhaps not all the visitors felt comfortable sitting quietly inside the chapel. Some of them would have had to stay in the yard, where they could casually talk to each other, eat some food, or take a nap. Pollard's

description clearly made a sharp distinction between the inside and outside of the chapel. Inside the chapel, there would be a priest either hosting the service or preaching the Gospel. Those who were interested in the teaching would sit down quietly. The priest would teach them how to sing a song and how to pray. He would introduce them to God, Jesus, the Heavenly Father, and so on. While sitting inside the chapel, they were coached in Christian literacy. While listening, they received the true knowledge. For the Ahmao visitors, this was a completely new experience. Perhaps for most, it was the first time in their life that they were acting like students sitting in a classroom, reading books, listening to a teacher and singing songs.

The chapel was the first building built in Shimenkan, which had previously been covered with forest (Pollard 1928, 66–77). The nearest village was two miles away. A spiral road went across the forest connecting Zhaotong and Weining. Occasionally, travelers or businessmen passed through. In March 1905 Pollard received the place as a gift from An-Kuan, a Nosu Tumu who promised Pollard that “You may build a church anywhere on my land, so long as you do not touch my ancestral graves” (Pollard 1954, 91, 93). It took only a few weeks for the villagers to build the chapel at very little cost. Pollard made great use of the chapel. In the evening, people from nearby villages gathered there to praise God. On Sunday, hundreds of people from this area gathered in Shimenkan to worship God. In the daytime, the chapel was a classroom. Pollard also began training Ahmao evangelists. Twenty-two Ahmao adults were in the first class (Zhang Tan 1992, 77). Pollard and another two Chinese missionaries spent a whole summer training them to facilitate Christian literacy. By then, Pollard had begun his Bible translation project, and the writing system he designed for the Ahmao language was in

use. These twenty-two Ahmao students became twenty-two Ahmao missionaries. Some travelled across Ahmao villages to spread the Gospel, while others hosted congregations in the villages. In the spring of 1906, another three chapels were built in the Ahmao villages of Miergo (咪耳溝), Changhaizi (長海子), and Banludian (半路店) (Pollard 1928, 103–13).

Like the chapel in Shimenken, the village chapels were multi-functional. At first, there were not enough teachers to lead classes. In September 1905, the church school in Shimenkan began its first academic year and nineteen Ahmao teenagers were recruited to study there (Zhang Tan 1992, 78). It would take them four years to acquire a modern education, but the wait was rewarded as the Ahmao graduates then became teachers for the village schools as well as preachers for the village congregations. During the days, the village chapels were filled with young students who were provided with two years of education. After class, the chapels then filled with Christians who came to worship. By the 1920s, there were about seventy chapels as well as schools in Ahmao villages (Zhang Tan 1992, 91).

Though the Bible described the space inside the chapel as “sacred,” the Ahmao may have had a different understanding of what this sacredness meant. In the Ahmao language, there is not a word “sacred,” but the word *hlu jia* (l̥' ㄟ) literally means all clean, representing sacredness. The opposite is the word *hi ghe* (ㄏㄩ ㄍㄝ), which literally means dirty, representing to profane the sacredness. The *hi ghe tw nw* (ㄏㄩ ㄍㄝ ㄊㄨ ㄋㄨ), literally means the bandit is the man who is not “obedient (*nao zo* ㄋㄠ ㄗㄛ ㄟ),” because he or she is not obedient, he or she would do things wrongly. The word “sin” in

Ahmao language is translated as *ya* (Λ.), which literally means wrong and is used to describe someone performing a ritual or worshipping wrongly, or taking the wrong road. In short, just as obedience is the morality of the Ahmao (Huang 2013), sin is immoral as it is anti-obedience. As something that is dirty could be washed clean in water, the man who is dirty *hi ghe tw nw* could be washed clean, too. To wash out the sin is to become obedient.

As the chapel is described as a place where all is clean, something or someone that is dirty would profane the chapel. Therefore, those in the chapel would be “cleaned” as the new (Γ¹⁵)) men or women. A “clean” man or woman is twofold: on the one hand, he or she is physically clean; on the other, he or she is morally clean. Many observers recorded that the Ahmao Christians looked clean, unlike other Miao. They wore clean clothes whenever they gathered in the chapel. The Ahmao Christians themselves said that they learned to wash their faces and hands while becoming Christians. Moreover, to be physically clean also indicates that one is not fallen to something which might pollute his or her mind. Ahmao Christians thus strictly abstained from drugs, smoking, and alcohol, and they were taught that temperance showed a strong mind and confidence in God. In terms of moral cleanliness, obedience is addressed to God. Moses’ Ten Commandments should be obeyed. But the rule that “Thou shalt not commit adultery” was widely discussed due to the custom that adolescents were free to have sex before marriage (Pollard 1928, 127–34). In every village, there was a place or a shed reserved for adolescents, where they could court and sleep overnight. That custom apparently violated the Ten Commandments, and was discussed in annual religious meetings by the Ahmao converts. While becoming new men and women, they believed that when the chapel was

built in the village, the courting shed should be torn down. As recorded by Pollard, Ahmao converts were more eager to fight against their customs than he expected.

In short, while the translation of Christian terminology into the Ahmao language was a necessary step for the Protestant mission, *how* terms were translated had an important impact on how Christianity was understood by the Ahmao converts. Whereas Christianity was received as a new kind of knowledge which should be delivered and coached in particular classroom settings, the building of the chapel realized the Christian epistemology in the living world. The enlightened man lived within a divided reality in which cleanness was threatened with pollution. In order to protect themselves from the profane, Ahmao Christians continued to reinterpret their traditions in Christian terms and maintained temperance to show their confidence in God. As a result, the subsequent social transformation from traditional to modern moved forward internally rather than externally.

Pollard's Ahmao mission was distinct in its effort to make education essential to Ahmao Christianity. Over the following two decades, dozens of chapels as well as church schools were established in villages. Shimenkan eventually became the center of both the churches and the church schools, as I will discuss further in the next chapter. By saying that education was essential to Ahmao Christianity, I should emphasize that Pollard did not so much "use" education to attract people's interest; rather, he carefully sketched out the idea that Christianity *is* education. As discussed above, the Ahmao conversion began in the classroom. Though it is hard to say that the idea that Christianity is education originated from Pollard, it is certainly true that Christianity is conceived as education by the Ahmao, and it is clear that the transition was made by Pollard and not Adam. Though

Adam established the first Miao boarding school in Anshun in 1904, the purpose of that church school was primarily just to attract people's interest. Through the school, the missionaries would be able to reach more people and more villages. To put it another way, the school was a means for the mission rather than the mission itself.

From 1905 to 1908, Pollard and Adam, representing the Bible Christian Church and the CIM, respectively, worked closely in a united Ahmao mission field. In 1908, the two missionary societies divided their territories at Dajie (Weining county). East of Dajie was the CIM's mission field and west of Dajie was the Bible Christian's mission field. While the former centered around Gepu, the latter's center was Shimenkan. Despite the fact that the education systems were formed differently by the CIM and the Bible Christians and the subsequent development of Christianity in both regions was different, Pollard's input on translation and education had effectively shaped Ahmao Christianity across the missionary divides. Along with the spread of the Gospel in the northwest region, "Ahmao Christianity" was spread across ethnic and social boundaries. In the 1910s, the Shimenkan union included Nosu, Laka, Chuan Miao, Kopu, and Ahmao, distributed across the border of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Guizhou provinces.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to contextualize Christianity within the local millenarian history. As described, Christianity was introduced to Ahmao as anti-millenarianism, even though the Ahmao mass conversion movement spurred by the Gospel was essentially, itself, a millenarian uprising. Though millenarianism had varied meanings and forms among the Han Chinese and the tribal societies in Guizhou province, when the mass

conversion to Christianity occurred, it was another form of millenarianism, for Christianity promised converts a way to escape the local context in which they suffered ethnic discrimination and social distress. In the missionaries' eyes, Ahmao millenarianism was rooted in ignorance and threatened to obscure their understanding of the true Christianity. Thus, the primary aim in introducing the Ahmao to Christianity was to put them in the classroom where they could learn to read. This mundane setting categorized the epistemology of Christianity as secular knowledge and sought to distinguish it from the very millenarianism that gave Christianity such significance to Ahmao converts. In the following two chapters, I will describe how this particular Christian epistemology turned out to be an Ahmao dilemma that eventually undermined the significance of Christianity for Christian Ahmao.

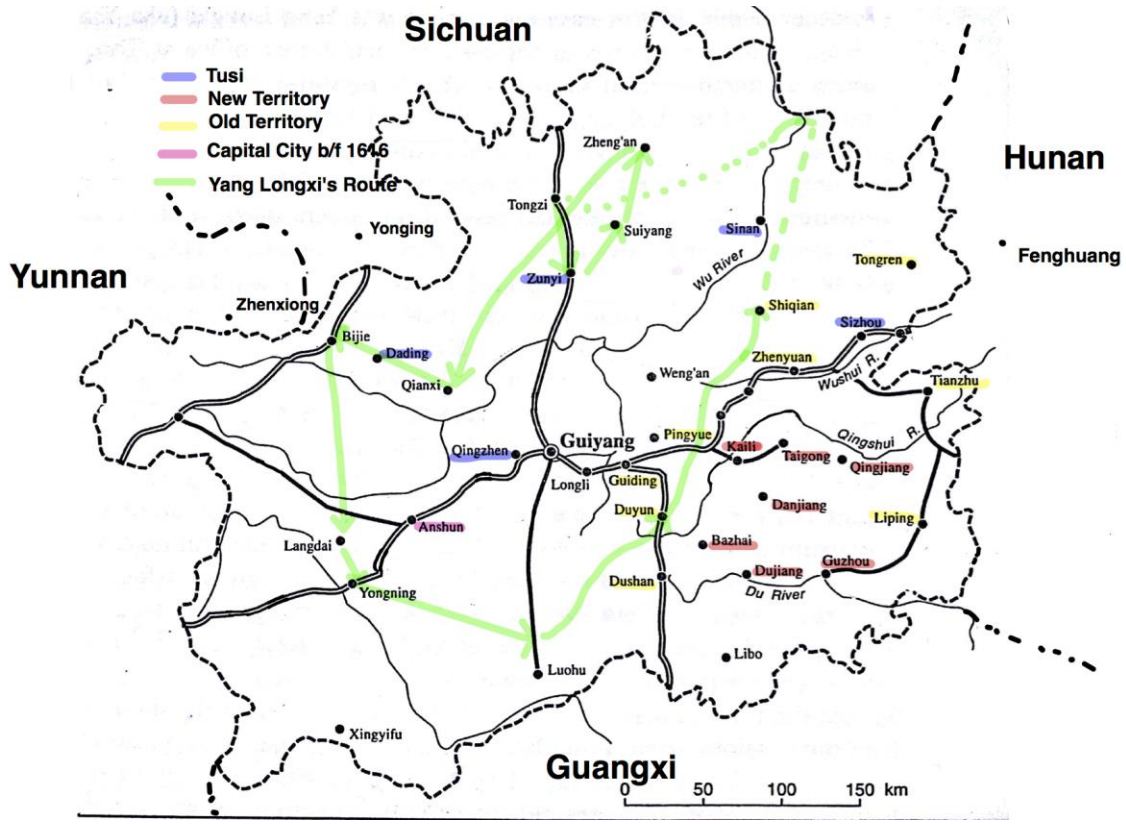


Figure 2.1 The Geographical Divide of Qian Rebellion (1854-1873) in Guizhou

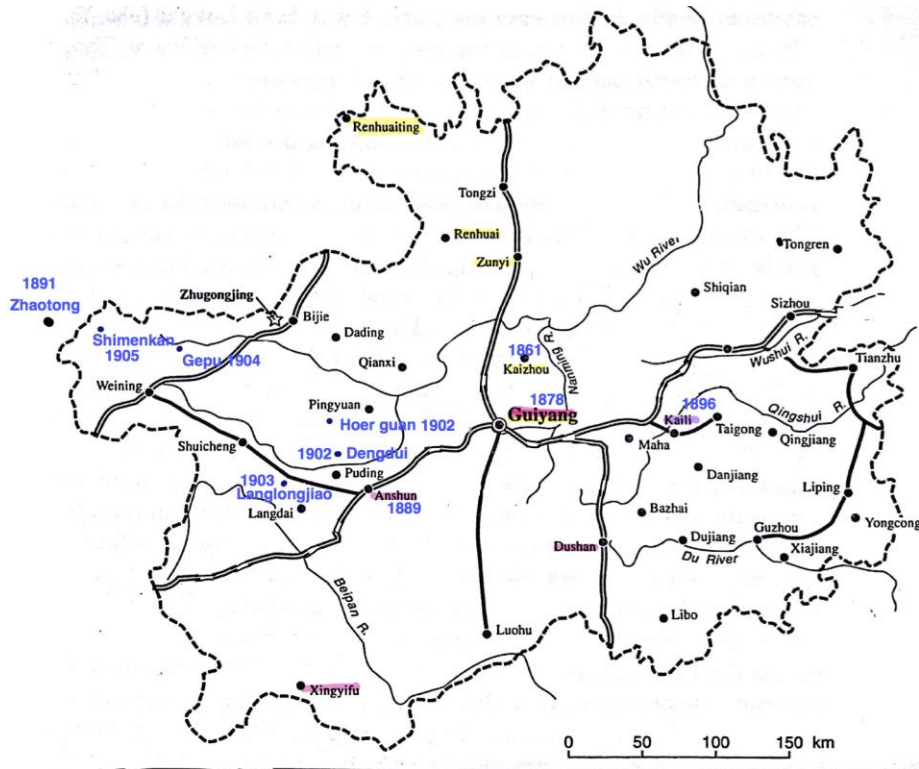


Figure 2.2 Early Protestant Missions in Guizhou

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Chapter 3

Literacy as Value

The Crisis of Methodist Bureaucracy in Shimenkan, 1920s–1950s

This chapter describes the fall of the Methodist Church in Shimenkan as a consequence of two value crises resulting from state intervention between the 1920s and 1950s. The first value crisis was the crisis of the republic orthography, specifically, the replacement of Ahmao Pollard Script (APS) with Latin Ahmao Orthography (LAO) in the 1950s. Given the fact that the majority of Ahmao in 1940s were literate in Ahmao Pollard Script, the shift to LAO essentially meant sacrificing Ahmao literacy in order to ensure that all Miao subgroups shared the Latin script. Nevertheless, given the increasing devaluation of Pollard Script, along with state intervention into Ahmao Christian community, the replacement received widespread support from Ahmao community. The devaluation of Pollard Script turned out to be a crisis of Ahmao literacy—a crisis that eventually destroyed the Ahmao literacy tradition.

The second value crisis I describe in this chapter is the crisis of the republic church, specifically, the termination of the centralized church school in 1952. This crisis had been developing within the republic church ever since Ahmao congregations began to organize through the centralized church school system. Tensions between teacher-pastors and village congregations contributed to the continuous alienation of Ahmao literate elites and widened the gap between village congregations and the republic church. Most

of the time, tensions were eased on a case by case basis, but once the government took over the church school in 1950s, the republic church lost its platform to manage such tensions. The former teacher-pastors of the republic church were forced to choose between state-run public schools and village congregations, and many chose to leave the congregations. Failing to reproduce literacy as value, the republic church suddenly fell apart.

These two value crises were, in fact, a single crisis—namely, the alienation of literacy as value in Methodist congregations. The replacement of Pollard Script with the Latin script uprooted Ahmao literacy from its Christian context and re-contextualized it in terms of Miao nationality. The replacement of the centralized church school system with the state-led public school system, too, withdrew the right of reproducing literacy as value from the republic church. The results of alienating literacy as value from Methodist congregations were far-reaching. On the one hand, Methodist Ahmao Christians who were the leading figures of modernity of the region were marginalized within the newly established nation-state. On the other hand, the incompatibility between the atheist state and the Christian congregation forced the Ahmao literate elites into exile. As a result, the Methodists began disappearing from the region in the 1950s and, even after the revitalization in 1980s, the Methodist congregations failed to resume.

The Crisis of Republic Orthography

Since Pollard's script was introduced to Ahmao converts in 1905, it spread widely across tribal congregations in both Methodist Church and CIM parishes along with the circulation of Christian literatures. There were roughly several hundred thousand tribal

Christians facilitating Pollard's script in the 1940s, including Ahmao, Hmong, Nosu, Kopu, Lesu, Laka, etc. It was the most popular script, other than Latin, of tribal languages in southwest China, especially in the border region of the Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan provinces. The script served to separate tribal Christians from non-Christians, and fostered a sense of Christian community across tribal boundaries. Chinese ethnographers first noticed the Pollard script and its circulation in the 1930s. Though no systematic survey was conducted before 1950, the ethnographers' interest can be seen in their collection of Christian literatures written in Pollard's script, as well as their curiosity about the history of Miao writings. However, with the rise of the communist state in the 1950s, the significance of Pollard's script was undermined by its Christian origins and eventually limited to only Christian literatures. Chinese linguists in the 1950s tended to overlook its cross-linguistic applicability, treating it instead as just another Miao writing system created by the missionaries. Other than the Ahmao writing system, none of the other tribal orthographies using Pollard's script received Chinese linguists' attention in the 1950s. Thereafter, the Pollard script has been referred to only in relation to the Ahmao writing system in Chinese linguistic writings.

Though they denounced and largely ignored Pollard's script, Chinese linguists were rather ambivalent about the future of the Ahmao Pollard Script (APS) in the early 1950s (Enwall 1994, 53–58). On the one hand, they criticized the Ahmao Pollard Script as being “impractical,” “difficult both to write and print,” and “fail[ing] to “give a correct representation of the Miao [Ahmao] spoken language” (Ma Xueliang 1954; cf. Enwall

1994, 39).⁴⁰ Wang Fushi, noting that the writing already existed and was rather widely spread, rationalizes that the script was so welcomed by the Ahmao simply because Pollard and others had “boasted about it,” and because the Miao (Ahmao) was so desperately in need of writing (Wang Fushi 1954; cf. Enwall 1994, 38). On the other hand, Chinese linguists concluded that the writing system was sufficient for writing the Ahmao language, and encouraged all Chinese cadres in the Ahmao area to learn it. Obviously, the Chinese linguists did not mean to decide the future of the Ahmao Pollard Script but simply acknowledged that the majority of Ahmao were literate in it.

Nevertheless, Chinese linguists’ projects to develop Miao orthographies encountered a challenge. Even if Pollard’s script was ignored in the course of developing the Miao orthography, its spirit was still inherited by the Miao elites. While appropriating the Latin script to represent the Miao languages, Chinese linguists were forced to confront the challenges of the Miao orthographic ideology and to negotiate with Miao elites regarding the representation of the Miao languages as both knowledge and means of writing.

⁴⁰ Wang Fushi analyses the deficiencies of the Pollard Script, such as “insufficient means for indicating the tones, lack of different signs for voiced and unvoiced consonants in most cases, and the lack of a marker for voiced aspiration” (Enwall 1994, 54). Though Wang Fushi’s assessment is reasonable, he does not take into account the efforts of the Ahmao teacher-pastors to reform the writing system in 1949, instead basing his assessment on the “older” writing system. According to Joakim Enwall’s analysis (1994, 19–23), the 1949 reform of the Pollard Script proposed solutions for precisely those deficiencies that Wang Fushi identified later. I cannot help but think that Wang Fushi, like many other Chinese linguists, was simply unconvinced that the Ahmao themselves were capable of “reforming” the writing system. From a linguist’s perspective, linguistic work is a profession requiring scientific training and hardly something that mere amateurs could get right.

Ahmao Orthography and the Classification of Miao Languages in the 1950s

Two competing classification systems of the Miao languages coexisted in the 1950s: the three-dialect-system and the four-dialect-system⁴¹ The most salient difference between the two systems is that the latter treats Ahmao as a dialect, while the former treats it as a sub-dialect. There are linguistic rationales for both systems. Those who prefer the three-dialect-system emphasize the similarity between the Western (or Hmong) dialect (西部方言) and Diandongbei (or Ahmao) sub-dialect (滇東北次方言). Those who prefer the four-dialect-system highlight the grammatical differences between the Western and Diandongbei dialects. Linguists' professional assessments, however, can be affected by non-linguistic factors, such as political, economic, or social factors. Indeed, the two “final reports” on Miao language and writing systems, co-authored by Ma Xueliang (馬學良 1913–1999) and Wang Fushi (王輔世 1919–2001) in the 1950s, suggest that the classification of Miao languages involved more than linguistic factors.⁴²

The first report was presented at the first nationwide minority language and writing conference, held in Beijing, in December of 1955. The report was titled “The Survey Report of the Miao Dialects” (苗語方言調查報告). It was based on three professional linguistic field surveys between 1953 and 1955, covered most Miao areas in

⁴¹ Dialect is a specific creation of Chinese linguistics that serves to construct nationality in China in terms of language communities (Keeler 2008). With more than thirty languages categorized as the Miao language in China (or the Hmong language in western linguistics) in 1958, languages are ranked as dialect (方言), sub-dialect (次方言), or local speech (土語).

⁴² Ma and Wang were colleagues at Central Minority College (later Central Minority University) for many decades. Both were trained by Chinese linguist Lou Changpei before 1949. Ma specialized in Yi languages, while Wang specialized in Miao languages. Together, they organized the 1950s survey of Miao languages, with Ma as the captain and Wang as the vice-captain.

Guizhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan. The second report, “The Classification of Miao Dialects and the Problem Underlying the Development of Miao Orthographies”(苗族方言的劃分與創立苗文的問題), was presented at the first Miao language and writing conference, in Guiyang, in October of 1956. This report was based on a seven-month survey of more than 200 Miao villages, involving more than 120 professional and amateur survey workers, covering the Miao in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Guangxi, Hunan, and Hainan (GMZW1957, 13).

Though they had different emphases, the two reports shared the same purpose—the development of Miao orthographies. While the first report served as a proposal to develop the orthographies, the latter presented the outcome. At the Beijing conference in 1955, Ma and Wang proposed a three-dialect-system of Miao language classification. They highlighted the lexicon and phonetic differences among three dialects and proposed to develop orthography for each dialect. But in their report presented at the Guiyang conference in 1956, they proposed a four-dialect system of Miao language classification, and presented the newly developed three orthographies for the Western, Central, and Eastern dialects, and the reformed Ahmao orthography.⁴³

It seems unlikely that new data emerged from the 1956 survey that led Ma and Wang to treat Ahmao as one of the Miao dialects, rather than just a sub-dialect. Wang had already completed his Master’s thesis in 1952 on Ahmao language with the help of Ahmao linguist Wang Dequang, and was thus familiar with Ahmao language and its

⁴³ In Chinese, there are different names of the dialects. The Western dialect is also referred to as the Chuanqiandian dialect; the Central dialect as the Qiandongnan dialect; and the Eastern as the Xiangxi dialect.

relation to the Western dialect even before the 1956 survey. But if not because of new data, why did Ma and Wang revise the three-dialect system to a four-dialect one in the final report presented at Guiyang? What happened in between the two conferences?

The Development of Miao Orthographies in the “Contact Zone”

According to the Chinese constitution, all minorities are free to use their languages and develop writings.⁴⁴ The emphasis, however, is on the fact that minorities are *granted* these rights of language and writing. The 1954 policy issued by the state council proposed that the state should “help” national minorities develop their orthographies. It was orthographies developed by Chinese linguists that were presented at the national minority’s conference, to be discussed and approved by that language community. This is the crucial context to keep in mind for both conferences. The 1955 Beijing Conference set up the plan for the development of the orthographies, while the 1956 Guiyang Conference presented the newly developed orthographies to the Miao language community. In a sense, then, the Guiyang conference served as a “contact zone” in which the linguists were to present their findings on Miao languages and the orthographies they had developed for the Miao attendees to then approve or disapprove.⁴⁵

Before the second conference, the linguists met with over twenty literate Miao

⁴⁴ In his recent book, Zhou Minglang (2003) provides a thorough assessment of the impact of minority languages and writing policies in PRC China between 1949 and 2002.

⁴⁵ The notion of the “contact zone” is proposed by Mary Louise Pratt (2003) to refer to the specific moment of encounter between colonial travelers and colonized subjects and its impact on the production of knowledge.

elites in Guiyang at the end of August.⁴⁶ Together, they spent a week discussing the problems related to the development of Miao orthographies. In that pre-conference symposium, the linguists presented two conclusions of developing Miao orthographies to the Miao elites: first, they proposed that the Miao languages were too diverse to have only one orthography, instead each dialect required an orthography; second, they rationalized their selections for the standard variant of each dialect that would serve as the templates for developing the orthographies—these selections needed to be approved by the Miao elites. These topics had already been pre-determined in Ma's presentation on Miao languages at the 1955 Beijing conference.

The symposium did not go smoothly. Though the Chinese linguists were likely expecting the Miao elites to disagree with their selections of standard variants, the challenges the elites raised were more fundamental than the linguists anticipated. In terms of developing multiple orthographies, the Miao elites disagreed with the Chinese linguists and voiced their preference to have just one Miao orthography, rather than many. For the Miao elites, it was hoped that the use of a single orthography would help to integrate the diverse tribes into the Miao nationality and reduce divisions within the group. With more than one Miao orthography, it was feared that the Miao would be divided. Furthermore, the Miao elites didn't just disagree with the linguists, they were furious. They condemned the linguists for actually attempting to divide the Miao with this proposal of multiple orthographies (GMZW 1957).

⁴⁶ No separate documents for the pre-conference symposium are found in the archives. Nevertheless, in Ma and Wang's final report in 1956 and in newspaper articles before the Guiyang conference, the symposium was referred to several times.

Ma and Wang were forced to respond to the Miao's request to represent the Miao as a language community with only one orthography. They either had to convince the Miao elites of their theory rationalizing three orthographies, or be held responsible for dividing the Miao nationality. As there were three major dialects, it was necessary to develop three Miao orthographies. Unfortunately, the Ahmao's request to romanize the Ahmao Pollard Script put the Chinese linguists in an even more awkward situation by challenging their theory with yet another non-dialectic Miao orthography.

The Ahmao elites who participated in the pre-conference symposium claimed that a romanized Ahmao Pollard Script was necessary since the Ahmao would be excluded from the Miao nationality if they continued using the Ahmao Pollard Script.⁴⁷ Their rationale was that the majority of Ahmao had used the Ahmao Pollard Script for several decades, and that failure to take this into account and simply telling people to learn non-Ahmao orthography would, paradoxically, result in the continuation of the Ahmao Pollard Script. Over time, as the Miao who learned romanized orthographies would be gradually integrated as a Miao nationality, the Ahmao who continued using Ahmao Pollard Script would be left behind by other Miao (GMZW 1957, 62).

But in order to meet the Ahmao's request, the Chinese linguists would now have to argue for four Miao orthographies. The number of the Miao orthographies would be extended to the number of Miao dialects, meaning that either their classification of the Miao languages or the theory serving as the ground for developing Miao orthographies

⁴⁷ The Ahmao elites who participated in the pre-conference symposium included Wang Deguang, Han Shaochang, and Zhang Feiran, all of whom were in the survey team of Miao languages (GMZW 1957, 293).

was wrong. If they did not answer the Ahmao's request but insisted that both their classification of the Miao languages and their theory for developing Miao orthographies were correct, Ma and Wang then would be held responsible for excluding Ahmao from the Miao language community. What happened subsequently proved that the theory for developing the Miao orthography could not be wrong, but that system of Miao language classification could be adjusted.

After the symposium, just a few days before the Guiyang conference in 1956, Ma and Wang coauthored a newspaper article titled “Why We Developed More than One Orthography for Miao Nationality” (為什麼要給苗族創立一種以上的文字), published in the *New Guizhou Daily* (新黔日報).⁴⁸ In the article, the theory for developing Miao orthography was clearly explained via a question-and-answer dialogue, as if the two authors were answering the questions raised in the pre-conference symposium in August. The first half of the article explained why it was necessary to develop four orthographies for the Miao literacies. According to the authors, it was unrealistic to expect that all the Miao would use just one Miao dialect and give up their own native local forms of speech (土語), since the four dialects had little in common. For a Miao fluent in one dialect to speak in another was tantamount to translating their words into the *Putunghua* (普通話 Mandarin Chinese).

The second half of the article was divided into six question-and-answer paragraphs. The questions were presented as anonymous challenges to the linguists'

⁴⁸ The newspaper article was co-authored by three linguists— Wang Fushi and Ma Xueliang and a third author, but the third remains anonymous, as his name was purposely erased by black ink (GMZW 1957, 332–37).

decision to develop three Miao orthographies. The first question challenged the linguists by arguing that Han dialects are also diverse, but the Han have only one writing system. Why shouldn't the Miao similarly have one only collective orthography? The linguists defended their position by pointing out the unique quality of Chinese characters, which are not contained in Miao orthography. Thus what works for the Chinese as a scriptural community does not work for the Miao scriptural community. The second "question" argued that learning to facilitate one orthography might take time, but would be worth the result of all Miao learning to write in the same way. The linguists defended their position by arguing that if the Miao were willing to put so much effort into learning one standard dialect and orthography, then why not just put that effort into learning the *Putunghua* (mandarin Chinese)? The third question argued for the convenience of having only one orthography in publications. The linguists countered by arguing that the circulation of such publications would be limited anyway. The fourth question suggested a universal Miao orthography that could be used to write all Miao languages. The linguists rejected the idea, arguing that all orthographies should be developed based on real languages. The final two questions raised the issue of whether multiple orthographies would obstruct Miao unity in the future. The linguists argued from the modernist perspective and suggested that as long as the Miao began to facilitate literacy, they would be able to progress toward development and become enlightened. And because enlightened people value the unity of nationality, the Miao would be united as one nationality once they were able to improve their cultural and political accomplishment through literacy.

These interchanges between the Chinese linguists and the anonymous questioners, and the different interpretations of the functionality of orthography presented therein

reveal how Miao orthography was being framed and valued differently by the two groups in the 1950s. On the one hand, for Ma and Wang, the ultimate purpose for the development of Miao orthography was to familiarize the Miao with Chinese literacy, which could, in turn, smooth their transformation from tribal subjects to national minority subjects and help to develop Miao society. In other words, from the linguists' perspective, literacy, whether, Chinese or non-Chinese, is conceived as an agent of both nationalization and modernization. From their perspective, it mattered little which language the Miao developed literacy in; indeed, it would be even better if the Miao simply learned to communicate through mandarin Chinese. On the other hand, from the Miao elites' perspective, though they recognized literacy as an agent of both modernization and nationalization, they also expected the Miao orthography to bring unity to the Miao nationality.

This disjuncture in how the two groups viewed the ultimate aim of the orthography project made it impossible for the Chinese linguists and Miao elites to reach a consensus. The latter did not challenge the linguists' efforts or professional opinions; rather, they challenged the very ideology of orthography underlying the linguists' theory of developing the Miao orthography, that is: what the orthography should represent. From the linguists' point of view, orthography represents the phonemes of a language. From the Miao's point of view, orthography represents the people of a nationality. The disagreement thus brought to the fore differences between the value each group accorded to Miao literacy. Whereas Ma and Wang subordinated Miao literacy to Chinese literacy, the Miao elites expected the Miao literacy to have its own value, independent of Chinese literacy.

Despite the disagreement, the purpose of the newspaper article was, nonetheless, to set the tone for the Guiyang conference. The linguists' approach to developing Miao orthographies was defended, but as a result, they also had to revise their classification of the Miao languages in response to the Ahmao's request to romanize the Pollard Script. Thus, in the final report presented at Guiyang, Ma and Wang presented a proposal for orthographies for each of the Eastern, Central, and Western dialects, and the romanized Ahmao Pollard Script (GMZW 1957, 211–13). The report was divided in two parts: the first presented the system of classification of Miao languages, the second introduced the orthography for each dialect in detail. The structure of the report reinforced the linguists' theory: the Miao include four dialect-groups, therefore, four independent and correlated orthographies are developed for the Miao nationality.

However, Ma and Wang's report was also intended to be “ambivalent” in its classification of the Miao languages. A diagram in the report shows five branches, with each representing a dialect-group, and then sub-dialects categorized under those dialects (see Figure 3.1). The fourth branch represents, however, only the Diandongbei (Ahmao) dialect without any other sub-dialects in that category. The fifth branch represents the “languages in [the] Qianzhongnan area” without specifying dialect or sub-dialects that might be included in that category. The Chinese linguists claimed that the languages spoken in the Qianzhongnan area were too complicated to specify the relation between languages, and promised to conduct further research after the Guiyang conference.

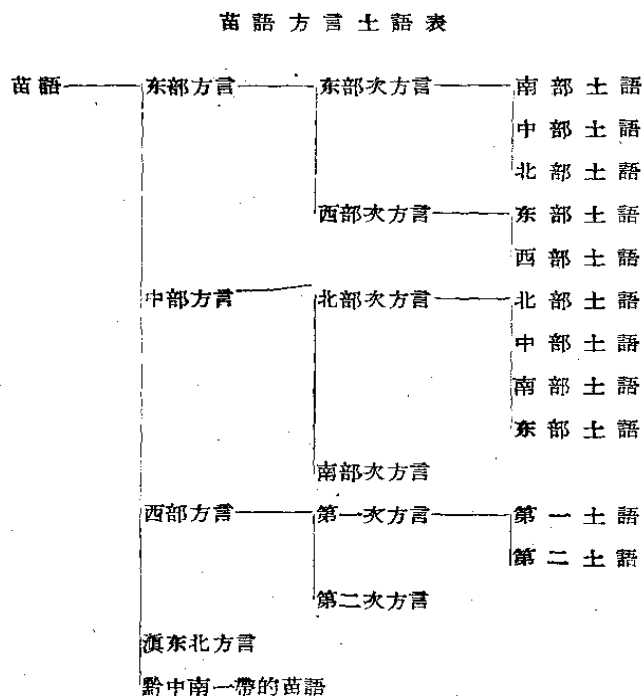


Figure 3.1 Diagram of the Miao Languages in 1956 Report

Though it is certainly true that the languages spoken in the Qianzhongnan area are quite diverse and complicated, the ambivalence of the linguists' Miao language classification only reinforced the logical connection between dialects and orthographies. The Ahmao orthography became necessary as the Ahmao were represented as the fourth dialect-group of the Miao languages, though no other Miao language was categorized in the Ahmao dialect-group. But by hedging the issue of whether the languages in the Qianzhongnan area constituted a fifth dialect-group, the linguists simply put aside the question of developing any other orthographies until the system of classification could be completed. In short, the report left problems unsolved but left no room to falsify the linguists' theory. As a result, the linguists' ideology underlying their conception of literacy as value was taken for granted and reinforced through their production of

knowledge regarding the Miao languages.

At the end of 1956, after the Guiyang conference, the linguists spent another four months conducting a language survey of the Qianzhongnan area. The final report documenting the last two years (1955–1957) of work on language surveys and the development of orthographies was produced in March 1958. The report was supposed to be presented at the second conference on minority language and literacy in April 1958, but the political scene shifted and suddenly national minority policy and all works related to developing national minorities were terminated. Though the conference was held in Beijing as scheduled, it became an occasion instead to denounce the earlier 1955 conference and the work on minority languages and writings that occurred under its guidance. It is very likely that the Chinese linguists did not even have a chance to present their final report on the Miao languages and orthographies. As indicated on its front page, the 1958 report was circulated as a manuscript only among scholars and researchers.

In the 1958 report, the problem that had been left unsolved in the 1956 report was given much consideration. Chinese linguists identified fourteen dialects in the Qianzhongnan region. The size of the language community for each dialect ranged from 1,300 to 80,000. These dialects were different not only from the previously identified four dialects, but also distinct from one another. As stated in the report: “If the previously identified four dialects are too diverse to have only one orthography, then these fourteen dialects are also too diverse to have only one” (Ma and Wang 1958, 45). Nevertheless, the authors concluded that the Miao in the Qianzhongnan region did not need another Miao orthography. Their rationale was the following: except for those who speak the Qiannan dialect, more than fifty percent of the population in Qianzhongnan

area are Han and Miao bilinguals, and the percentage of bilinguals has been gradually increasing since 1950s. Thus, the linguists argued, “under this circumstance, the Miao in Qianzhongnan region will improve their society through facilitating Chinese literacy” (ibid., 45). Rather than arguing for the advantages and utilities of the Miao orthography, the linguists identified several disadvantages of having one orthography for each dialect. Overall, they suggested that the speech community in Qianzhongnan area was too small to ensure the reproduction of a specific Miao literacy. Even if the Miao learned their specific orthographies, they would still have to learn the Chinese literacy in order to reach higher education.

Unfortunately, the 1958 report was not shared with the Miao.⁴⁹ The linguists’ solution for the orthography of Miao dialects in Qianzhongnan area was given no opportunity to be discussed in the “contact zone.” But in 1959, when Ma Xueliang and Wang Fushi finally published their introduction to Miao languages based upon the survey done between 1955 and 1957, the classification was different yet again. The book, titled *Brief Introduction to the Languages of Chinese Minorities: the Miao-Yao Language Family* (中國少數民族語言簡志：苗瑤語族部分), Miao languages are classified according to a three-dialect system, with each dialect including several sub-dialects. In particular, the Chuanqiandian dialect (or the Western dialect) includes seven sub-dialects. The languages spoken in both Qianzhongnan and Diandongbei (or Ahmao) regions are categorized as sub-dialects of Chuanqiandian. Foregrounding the description of languages, only a few pages in the end of the book are devoted to introduce the Miao

⁴⁹ It was not until the 1980s that the minority language policy resumed and the Miao orthographies were promoted to the Miao people. I take up that story in Chapter Six.

orthographies. Apparently, since the classification of Miao languages was not served by the development of the Miao orthographies, the Chinese linguists decided to limit their theory of Miao orthography to the production of linguistic knowledge.

In summary, if not for the development of the Miao orthographies, the Chinese linguists would not have bothered to negotiate with the Miao elites over the number of dialects. Moreover, if not for the Ahmao's literacy in the Ahmao Pollard Script, the Chinese linguists at the Guiyang conference would not have had to revise their classification of the Miao languages in order to reconcile the number of dialects with the number of orthographies. Therefore, it is important not to overlook the fact that it was Ahmao elites, not the Chinese linguists, who proposed the replacement of the Pollard Script with Latin Ahmao Orthography (LAO).

The Ahmao Elites and the Crisis (or Future) of Ahmao Literacy

The 1956 Guiyang conference was not just intended, however, to discuss the linguistic diversity of the Miao; it was also meant as a pan-Miao conference that would consolidate the Miao as one of the Chinese nationalities. As an important milestone toward the construction of the Miao nationality, the presentations at the conference, including the proposal for Miao orthographies, were later published in 1957, along with the speeches of provincial and academic leaders, feedback from the Miao representatives, editorials from newspapers, and a list of all the Miao representatives and linguists present. This list provided an important resource for looking up the Ahmao elites who then proposed to replace the Pollard Script with the Latin orthography.

In total, there were 215 names on the list of attendance, including both Chinese

and Miao from five provinces, and 36 names on the list of survey workers. The majority of the attendees were from Guizhou province. While ethnicity was not indicated in both lists, I was able to identify 23 Ahmao individuals with the help of Ahmao friends. Compared to the total number of attendees, the number of Ahmao representatives was small, but proportionally, their attendance was actually high. According to the estimate of the 1958 report, Ahmao speakers constituted only four percent of Miao language speakers, or 100,000 out of 2,500,000. Ahmao representation was even higher on the list of survey workers: though the majority were Chinese linguists, there were four Ahmao names on the list of 36 survey workers. Given their disproportionate attendance at the conference and involvement in the survey works, then, it seems fair to conclude that the Ahmao elites played a prominent role in the production of Miao language knowledge and the development of the Miao orthographies.

This prominent role of Ahmao elites in constructing the Miao nationality is not actually surprising, despite of the small size of the Ahmao population (Cheung 2012). Given the attention the Ahmao received from Chinese officials and scholars in the 1940s, the Ahmao had come in many ways to represent the Miao nationality, and the model of Miao modernity. The development of modern education in the Shimenkan parish and widespread Ahmao literacy contributed to the Christian Ahmao being recognized as the literate class of the Miao people. Since the 1930s, through the reproduction of Chinese literacy, Ahmao elites introduced the idea of the nation to Christian Ahmao. Through the participation to Chinese literate cultures, Ahmao elites introduced the Miao to Chinese society. They represented the Miao nationality in nationalist politics and likewise brought national politics into the Christian Ahmao community (Diamond 1996; Dong and Zhu

2006; Zhang Huizhen 2012; Zhang Tan 1992).

Taking a close look of the twenty-three names of the Ahmao representatives, however, gives us a sense at least of the Ahmao “elites” who represented the Ahmao and the Miao at the 1956 Guiyang conference. With only three exceptions, all of the representatives were alumni of the Shimenkan school, and all had at least completed their high school education in Chinese cities between the 1930s and 1950s. Most of them had even taught in the Shimenkan school for some years, but only five out of the twenty attended the conference as Shimenkan school teachers. Others were invited because of their professions as linguists, scholars, and officials. But none of the twenty-three Ahmao were invited to the conference because of their leadership in Ahmao congregations.

People who have some background in the history of Ahmao Christianization would soon notice this absence of Christian leaders among the representatives at the Guiyang conference. Back to the 1940s, Ahmao congregations were divided into three denominational parishes. There was the Methodist center in Shimenkan, the CIM center in Shapushan, and the CIM center in Gepu. Each center administered and ministered a parish with several dozen Ahmao congregations. And yet these were the very Christians who were also the primary users of Ahmao Pollard Script and would, thus, be the most affected by the reform of Ahmao orthography. Given the robust numbers of Christian Ahmao, it sounds unbelievable that the lack of congregational participation in the Guiyang conference raised no doubt on the representability of Ahmao representatives.

Though it is true that the communist state would not recognize the Christian leadership, it is also true that all of the Ahmao who were at the 1956 conference and ready to represent the Ahmao. For the newly established atheist state, it is very likely that

those Ahmao representatives were elected to participate the conference because of their Christian identities were less significant than Ahmao clergies. But for those Ahmao congregations, their representability of Christian Ahmao did reduce because of their less involvement to Ahmao congregations. Rather, their representability lies on the fact that the Ahmao representatives of the 1956 conference were, indeed, role models for young Christian Ahmao and their families were considered the elite families of Christian Ahmao congregations. A Christian Ahmao villager who commented on one of the elite families and whose comment was recorded by one of the elite's in his autobiography used the word “saved (得救)” to describe the achievements of the elite family's members (Yang Zhongxin 2007). In other words, it was thought that Ahmao elites embodied the future of the Christian Ahmao. In a conference that was aimed to decide the future of Ahmao literacy, those who embodied the future of Christian Ahmao were entitled to realize their vision of the future of the Ahmao society. Thus, one can hardly disqualify the representativeness of the Ahmao elites at the Guiyang conference just because they might appear “less” Christian than other Christian Ahmao; rather, they saw themselves, and, indeed, were seen by others as elites of the Christian Ahmao in the 1950s.

At the turn of communist state, Ahmao elites were relentlessly advocating the reform of Ahmao Pollard Script. At each Christian center, there were projects for improving Ahmao Pollard Script to better represent Ahmao language in accurate. Thus applauses to the decision of replacing Ahmao Pollard Script with LAO seemed to dominate the public opinions after the Guiyang conference, and created a sense of consensus that the replacement of APS by LAO is necessary due to the progressive feature of LAO as a writing system and its potentiality of unifying the Miao nationality.

Unfortunately, the hopes for nationalizing Ahmao literacy with the LAO were never realized, as all national minority policy was suspended over the course of the revolutionary decades. The following political campaigns torn down Ahmao elites in public, so also was the future of the Christian Ahmao represented by those elites torn down. The future then in 1950s became the past in the 1980s when the national minority policy was resumed. The LAO could no longer represent the future of the Ahmao literacy, and the Ahmao orthography turned out to be highly controversial between those Christian and non-Christian Ahmao in the national minority discourse of the post-revolutionary era. I will return to this topic in Chapter Six.

In summary, the Guiyang conference of Miao language and writing is crucial to understanding how the newly established state attempt to secure consent for the social and political transformation that took place around the development of Miao writing systems. What lies at the center of attention is the process by which consent is constructed, maintained or challenged. In this process, the Ahmao representatives played the decisive role on replacing Ahmao Pollard Script by LAO, and on representing the Miao nationality as a scriptural community. What remains vague is how to delineate the “elites”, and to what extent that Ahmao elites were thought to have played the roles as securing consensus in Ahmao society.

In this particular case, Ahmao representatives in the Guiyang conference were Ahmao elites. Surficially, the state decided who were going to represent the Ahmao in the conference. But the state selection of representatives must be built upon the fact that those representatives were able to influence Ahmao society. In other words, before proceeding to delineate the “elites,” we first have to understand who were “the people”

that were able to exercise the most influence on Ahmao society.

For those Christian Ahmao, the people who were able to exercise the most influence on Ahmao society were those people who desired the title “teacher-pastor”. In Ahmao words, a teacher-pastor is addressed using the unique phrase *khabndeut-khabgit* (ᠬᠠᠪᠨᠳᠦᠲᠦ ᠬᠠᠪᠭᠢᠲᠢ). Literally, *khabndut* means someone who teaches books and *khabgit* means someone who teaches manners. The phrase was a creation of Methodist missionaries and was meant to highlight the dual-function of the Methodist clergy who served both as a pastor in the congregation and as a teacher in the school.⁵⁰ In terms of the dual function that implied in the phrase, a teacher/pastor, if not referring to a specific institutional position, referred to someone who is entitled of a specific social status. And his or her entitlement is based upon his degree of competence on reading and writing both Ahmao and Chinese. Generally speaking, the more his or her competence is, the more fame he or she would expect to have, and the more influence he or she would have on Ahmao society.

It is generally agreed that the degree of literacy competence can be assessed in terms of the educational level or years of formal education someone has received. In 1940s, Shimenkan had become a place known for its secondary school and middle school. The Shimenkan school guaranteed the quality of education for many of its school teachers were either high school graduates or college graduates. Thus it is not surprised

⁵⁰ The phrase “teacher-pastor” first appeared in Hudsepeth (1937). The contemporary Ahmao Christians, however, seldom use this conjoined phrase but refer to a school teacher as *khabndut* and to a pastor as *khabgit*. As the school and the church are no longer conjoined, the two phrases are referring to positions in different institutions. Nevertheless, it is still true that a pastor would be called a teacher and a school teacher who believes in Christianity would be entitled of being a good preacher.

that the majority of Ahmao representatives in Guiyang conference were alumni of Shimenkan. Nevertheless, educational levels or years of education should not be taken for granted to substitute Ahmao conception of literacy competence, especially when the educational resources were extremely scarce in the first half of the twentieth century in China.

The difference between a teacher/pastor and an elite lies on the fact that a teacher/pastor embodies literacy as value and an elite embodies literacy as currency. A teacher/pastor is known for his or her literacy competence but he or she is not yet known as an elite if he or she does not participate state bureaucracy. Through their participation in state bureaucracy, a teacher/pastor is able to cash out literacy as currency in Chinese society and began to move upwardly, and become known as an elite of Ahmao society. Though it is true that Christian Ahmao would conceive literacy both as value and as currency, it cannot be overlooked that literacy as currency destabilizes the reproduction of literacy as value in Christian Ahmao society for those who entitled teacher/pastors would expect to move socially upward in Chinese society. The higher degree of literacy competence is, the more significant that the outcome from cashing out literacy as currency can be seen. As a result, the more likely a teacher/pastor with higher degree of literacy competence would leave Christian Ahmao community. The Methodist republic church in Shimenkan is certainly the case, that is, literacy as currency that had been overly emphasized since 1920s eventually developed into the crisis of republic church.

In the second half of this chapter, I then turn to the description of the crisis of republic church in Shimenkan that had begun developing before the 1950s. This will allow us to ponder how a particular understanding of literacy as value was both shaped

by and shaping of the Methodist bureaucracy in Shimenkan, and how literacy as currency became an obstacle for the reproduction of literacy as value in Christian Ahmao society.

The Shimenkan Center

In the centennial ceremony of Guanghua elementary school held in 2006, many of the alumni who graduated in the 1940s and 1950s and subsequently pursued higher education in the 1950s and early 1960s were invited. Many had not visited Shimenkan since their graduation.⁵¹ A strong sense of nostalgia was expressed in the ceremony. In particular, many discussions compared Shimenkan before the 1950s with the contemporary Shimenkan. In the alumni's eyes, the Shimenkan of today now appears backward and underdeveloped, given the fact that less than twenty out of the several thousand alumni of Guanghua elementary school since 1960 have pursued a college degree (Shen Hong 2006). The number is even lower than that of the fifty or more alumni of the 1940s and 1950s who received a college degree. The alumni expressed their wish that the government would provide resources for development, and that contemporary Ahmao villagers would pay more attention to educating the younger generation. After the ceremony, a fund was established with the purpose of providing financial support for students with outstanding academic records and for alumni to pursue college or university degrees.

The alumni's nostalgia for the Shimenkan of the past is shared by Chinese historians, writers, journalists and others who have written about Shimenkan from

⁵¹ A more detailed discussion of the centennial ceremony is provided in Chapter Six.

various perspectives, with various interests. Over the last two decades, three Ahmao ethnographies, three books on the history of Ahmao Christianity, three edited volumes on Ahmao history and literatures, and dozens of academic papers have been published that explore the “Shimenkan phenomena.”⁵² And this isn’t even including the books and articles that have been written specifically about Pollard and his mission in Shimenkan. If we include the reports from religious groups and NGOs, as well as articles that have appeared in newspapers, journals, and online blogs, the list would be even longer. Across all these sources, however, the recurrent theme is the significant decline of the literacy rate of the region compared to that in the early 1950s and the framing of this as explaining the reversed development of the region (Shen 2006, 2009; Zhang 1992). While the comparison of the literacy rate before and after 1950s is saturated with a modernist nostalgia for “the good old days,” Shimenkan is remembered both as the place where the most dramatic mass conversion in the history of the Protestant mission in China took place, and as the site of an educational center and effective village-school-system. But for all the praise given to Shimenkan’s achievements in literacy in much media and scholarly analysis, most authors have, regardless of intention, overlooked the fact that Shimenkan was established to be at once a modern center of Christianity and a center of modern education.

As any kind of modern center, Shimenkan was an odd location to choose, for it was geographically remote and economically marginal all the way back to the early twentieth century. While many other centers were established along with the growing

⁵² There is an open access website with a collection of multi-media documents about the Shimenkan available at: www.shimenkan.org (last accessed March 29, 2014).

importance of trade and the growing demands of administration, Shimenkan was never a commercial or traffic center even in its best years. Located at the top of the Wumeng mountain, even in the “good old days,” only traders and travelers seeking a detour between Zhaotung and Chongqing would pass Shimenkan on their way. Even today, it still takes at least three hours by bus to reach any of those county headquarters. Because it is so remote, only two buses each day leave town. Every year, there are at least two to three months of no bus service while the only road connecting the township is covered with frozen snow. And yet, Shimenkan was the modern center of the mountain area populated by non-Han tribal people at the turn of twentieth century. With so many of the residents there living in poverty today, it is hard to imagine that any economic activity beyond filling basic needs ever occurred in this “modern center.” Nevertheless, it deserved the name of “modern center” for it was a place packed with modern institutions and the people who lived here were affiliated with those modern institutions in one way or another. As the place where modernity first took root in this pre-modern region, Shimenkan provided the Ahmao villagers an alternative conception of what a center ought to be.



Figure 3.2 Shimenkan in 1926

A photo taken in 1926 exhibits the modern landscape of Shimenkan. In this photo, several white-colored buildings with distinct “modern-house” styles are built on the hillside.⁵³ The focus of this photo is a complex containing the chapel, the Arithington house, the classroom, and a long-house. The complex was the core of Shimenkan. The long-house was the office of school-teachers, the Arithington house was the office of missionaries, and the classroom was the place where students received western-style education. The chapel would be packed with students and villagers when there was a service on Sunday. Every year both the entrance and graduation exams were held in Shimenkan, with students and prospective students coming from all the other branch-schools to take the exam. Every morning students gathered in the courtyard of the

⁵³ Photo is reproduced from <http://www.shimenkan.org/light/ship/> (last accessed May 20, 2014).

complex for the flag-raising ceremony. And about two hundred meters east of the classroom, there was a clinic, in which western medicine made its first appearance in the region.

The circle extended from this complex included the dormitories for the missionaries, schoolteachers, and students. Near the missionaries' dormitory, there used to be a garden and a swimming pool. In the garden, the foreigners grew flowers and vegetables, something that appeared strange to the villagers. Like the swimming pool, using a garden to grow flowers seemed wasteful. For the villagers, the flowers looked like a waste of land and labor, and they definitely couldn't understand why the foreigners didn't just swim in the river, preferring instead a little pool.

Between the student dormitories and the classrooms, there were basketball and soccer courts. Sports had always been the most pronounced tradition shared by students of Guanghua elementary school and villagers of the Methodist congregations. Students and villagers from the branch-schools and villages gathered at Shimenkan for the first sport games in 1912. Competitions included basketball, football, sprinting, javelin throwing, high jump and so on. Since then, games were held annually in Shimenkan until 1952. Throughout the forty years, the games were not held only three times. In the 1930s and 1940s, the annual games usually attracted thousands of people to join. These games replaced the old tradition of the *abtlillaos* (flower mountain festival 花山节) as the most important social event where young boys and girls courted one another.

On the outskirts of Shimenkan were the fields. There was also an Ahmao village hidden behind the forest, located in the Northern part of the hillside, not visible in the photo. As the population grew to five hundred in the 1930s, far exceeding the regular size

of an Ahmao village at that time, the center's need for land increased greatly. The village was removed and the mountain hills nearby Shimenkan were then populated with several Ahmao villages. Many Christian Ahmao moved with their kids from other places to reside in those nearby villages simply for the convenience of sending them to school. As the population grew, a small weekly market was established to meet the substantial needs of the population in Shimenkan, as well as the nearby villages. Between 1910 and 1950, during the semester, there were about five hundreds students in both primary and secondary schools, as well as teachers, clergies, medical workers and missionaries (Wang Xingzhong 1986).

Just like the Ahmao village hidden behind modern institutions and not shown in the photo, Shimenkan was a modern center that foregrounded educational and religious institutions, and put Ahmao villages and outlooks in the background. The center was meant to represent the Ahmao future—a future with two faces: education and Christianity, represented by the school and the chapel, respectively. The two faces of Shimenkan further reflected the double-institution—both church and school—of the Methodist Church's denominational bureaucracy. As the villagers themselves simply put it, “the church was the school and the school was the church.” Extending outward from the Shimenkan center, Ahmao congregations were bureaucratized through this double institution.

The Crisis of the Republic Church

The central Church of Shimenkan was able to establish a centralized inter-village congregation since the Methodist bureaucracy made good use of the school system. The

central Church of Shimenkan controlled the allocation of teachers to the branches of the Shimenkan school. A teacher would both serve the congregation as a pastor and the school as a teacher. Each year, a few of the best students from the graduating class of the secondary school in Shimenkan would be selected to conduct services in branches. They would receive financial support from the central Church, and they would serve the village congregation as a pastor and the school as a teacher (Zhang Tan 1992). Through those teacher-pastors, the central church ministered to all its village congregations and village schools directly throughout the four decades between 1909 and 1952.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the authority to regulate the flow of teacher-pastors belonged to the central council and all the double institutions affiliated with the Shimenkan central church have their representatives in the council. Each year the council would hold an annual meeting in Shimenkan. As the teacher-pastors were the primary delegates, village congregations would also send their delegates to the meeting. The council would elect a small group of people from its members to form an executive council with a one-year term. During the year, members of the executive council would oversee the double institutions. In addition to the election of the executive council, the delegates would also update the profiles of congregations and students and send their evaluations of teacher-pastors' work to the council. Sometimes they would also bring up other concerns for discussion in the annual meeting.⁵⁵ After all the reports and elections were done, the

⁵⁴ In 1952, the provincial government of Guizhou took over the church school system. All church schools become provincial-government-funded public schools (Shen 2006, 67–78).

⁵⁵ This system had been established since 1910s. Pollard has a vivid description of how the Ahmao themselves had a meeting to discuss issues such as abstinence, customs, and marriage reforms, etc., and reached a consensus (1928, 114–23). Pollard claimed that the missionaries only assisted at the meeting, and

job-assignments for school-teachers were the most important and time-consuming task of the central council. Wang Xingzhong, the former principle of Shimenkan school, vividly described the meeting:

Before the annual meeting, the Chair of last meeting held the opening ceremony [a worship service] and a new chair of this year's meeting would be elected in the end of the ceremony. After the ceremony, the newly elected chair pronounced the opening of the meeting, and took over the procedures till the end. The first issue was to elect 11 to 13 delegates of the places(地點委辦), and one of them would be responsible for taking minutes. The meeting would last for seven days. Most of the time was spending on allocating teachers for each church school, and "delegates of the places" would be responsible for the allocations and sketching the conclusion for major issues. First of all, the delegates of the places would provide the first version of the job allocation by considering the feedback from village church representatives. If the village church representatives gave good reviews of their teacher-pastors [school-teachers], the teacher-pastors would then serve in the same school for another year. If giving worse reviews, the delegates of the places would assign new teacher-pastors for the village church schools. If a teacher-pastor has been working in the same community for many years, the delegates of the places would also relocate the teacher-pastor. In general, like playing chess, the delegates of the places would need to consider many factors in order to assign teacher-pastors to village church schools. The first version was more like a try. Usually, both church representatives and teacher-pastors would continue providing different opinions by handing their opinion-notes (意見條) to the delegates of the places. The second version would incorporate those opinions, so less opposition would be expected. The third version would be pronounced as the final version. After finalized, those who were not happy with the decisions would also have to accept the decisions. Then there would be free hours for those teacher-pastors and church representatives to understand each other. They would set up the schedule for the incoming year. The community would sent someone to receive the new teacher-pastor in his place, and brought him to the village school by the date they set up in the meeting, usually one or two days before January 15th in lunar calendar. If a teacher-pastor could not meet the date for any reason, it would be considered as he had turned down the offer. The central church would then find someone else to replace him...After the allocation of teacher-pastors were completely finalized, the delegates of the places would proceed to other issues. Usually, the delegates of the meeting could reach consensus quickly. The chair would then report the meeting and propose the budgets to foreigners God of Wealth(財神爺)After the budget was confirmed, the chair would pronounce the opening date of the new school year, and the conclusions for the major issues. The meeting was ended here. (Wang 1986, 91)

Wang Xingzhong's manuscript was written in the 1980s. Though cynical about the foreign missionaries and undermining the church authorities in his description, Wang showed clearly that the central church of Shimenkan that was directly administered by

knew enough not to intervene in the discussion. Wang Xingzhong (1986) also makes a similar claim in his manuscript.

foreign missionaries held the budget for running the double institutions, even though it did not directly administrate the village churches. The central church supervised the village congregations through the allocation of teacher-pastors, but village congregations did have the right to turn down a teacher-pastor they did not like. In short, the central council served as a counterbalance to the central church, sharing a certain amount of bureaucratic authority with it. Thus through the participation of the council, the village congregations together with the central church formed a “republic church” that had the central church as the lead of the village congregations.

Though the republic church created the occupation of teacher-pastor, it was the role that a teacher-pastor played in the congregation that gave the occupation its specific social status. In general, a teacher-pastor played a role in the village congregation similar to that of “ritual specialist” in a non-Christian Ahmao community. When the well-being of the Ahmao congregations was a concern, the teacher-pastors shared the role of ritual specialists as the carriers of knowledge, but in a manner different from that of ritual specialists, for teacher-pastors were carriers of the literacy-related knowledge. Viewed from the perspective of functional comparison, just as the reproduction of ritual knowledge reproduced the role of the ritual specialists as a specific social status in non-Christian Ahmao community, the reproduction of literacy related knowledge reproduced the role of teacher-pastors as a special social status within Christian Ahmao community.

As the Ahmao community was transformed from patrilineal-based society to congregational-based society, the division of labors between “ritual specialists” and “ritual experts” was inherited in that between teacher-pastors and deacons (Huang 2013).

Within this newly established context, a teacher-pastor, unlike the deacons, was not associated with the village congregation he served but with the republic church that assigned him. In other words, a teacher-pastor was an outsider to the village congregations. His job was renewed year to year, and if he failed to maintain a good relationship with the village congregation he served, he could hardly stay for another year.

In his manuscript, Wang Xingzhong described the delicate relationship between the allocated teacher-pastor and the village congregation. According to Wang, members of an Ahmao village congregation never tired of keeping their eyes on the conducts of the teacher-pastor because it was expected for him to be the moral figure of the community, as well as a mentor to the youth and a servant of God. A teacher-pastor, in other words, could have no secrets at all. Wang Xingzhong explained that a teacher-pastor could make no mistakes nor could he have any private life in his working place. Students would provide grains to the teacher-pastor, but he would have to grow vegetables by himself. And yet, he would feel embarrassed by the villagers' gazes and words when he was covered with dirt and muck. To avoid the embarrassment, many of them would only work in their garden after sunset. Wang had sympathy for the teacher-pastors, especially those who were in their twenties, for the village congregations did not always treat those young teacher-pastors well, constantly suspecting them of having affairs with their female students. Indeed, if a teacher-pastor talked to any female students or women outside of the classroom, the villagers would not fail to gossip about it. Many teacher-pastors were turned down by the village congregations once that kind of gossip started to circulate. Many of them resigned from their positions and left the republic church simply because

they were not strong enough to confront such gossip.

Within two decades after Pollard began receiving the first Ahmao students in Shimenkan, the community had produced three college graduates and a dozen high school graduates. In addition, one hundred more youth graduated from secondary school. Since the 1920s, the republic church not only had a sufficient pool of teacher-pastors, but also some leading literary figures. Nevertheless, among the approximately three hundred teacher-pastors who ever served as such, only a small portion served village congregations for more than ten years. The high attrition rate of the teacher-pastors indicated that the republic church was not as stable as it appeared.

The tensions between teacher-pastors and the village congregations also created tension in the relation between the central church and the village congregation. The fluctuation of church schools constantly threatened the stability of the republic church. By the 1930s, the branches of the Shimenkan school reached its maximum number of seventy-five. By the time the provincial government took over all private schools in 1952, there were only fifty-two branches left, including thirty-seven branches in the Ahmao region and fifteen branches in the Chuan Miao region. In other words, one-third of the village congregations left the republic church in 1940s.⁵⁶ The tensions between the teacher-pastors and the village congregation had, in fact, ushered in the internal crisis of the republic church.

By “internal crisis” of the republic church, I refer to the crisis that occurred in the

⁵⁶ The decline in church school numbers was usually read as an indication of religious backsliding (Zhang Tan 1992). However, though such “backsliding” did occur, this was not the reason for the decline of the church school system.

“value system” that constituted the republic church as a Christian bureaucracy and the teacher-pastor as a specific social status. But the teacher-pastor as a specific social status could only be reproduced within the republic church, not within the village congregation. And when tensions in the relationship between the teacher-pastor and the village congregation threatened the stability of the republic church, the reproduction of literacy as a value was threatened also.

In general, the literacy tradition adhered to by the republic church was bi-literal. By the 1930s, it was said that most Ahmao Christians, about 20,000 people, could use the Pollard Script with fluency, and several thousand Ahmao youth had received at least two years Chinese literacy training in school (Zhang Huizhen 2009, 95). In other words, the system had transformed the Ahmao from an illiterate to a literate language community in two decades. Subsequently, the Chinese literacy campaign launched by the Ahmao elite, Zhu Huanzhang, in the late 1920s also markedly increased the circulation of Chinese literacy among Christian Ahmao. In his proposal, Zhu Huanzhang expected that in five years, from 1936–1941, the Ahmao Christian community in Shimenkan district would have 15,000 literates who could contribute to spread Chinese literacy.⁵⁷ By 1940, Wang Jianguang (1938) reported that there were 16,000 literates who could roughly recognize at least some Chinese words.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Zhu Huanzhang was the second Ahmao to receive a college degree, and a lifelong educator. After graduating from West China University in 1935, Zhu was assigned to be the principal of Guanghua Elementary School. He held this office until 1939, when he resigned and then taught in Mingchen High School until 1943. Zhu then came back to Shimenkan, established Shimenken High School, and was the principal there until 1950. He was the key figure who led the community to confront the KMT and PRC governments.

⁵⁸ Wang Jianguang graduated from the Guanghua elementary school in the early 1930s. He was classmates with Zhang Feiran, and both of them were funded by the KMT provincial government to go to Central

The two literacies, however, divided Ahmao sociality, as inside was separated from outside. Whereas Ahmao literacy was situated as inner-community communication that worked to consolidate the community, Chinese literacy was not internalized simply because the majority of the community was far from being Chinese-Ahmao bilingual. Thus the distribution of Chinese literacy was limited to those who frequently interacted with non-Ahmao. As a result, those with full Chinese literacy were very likely those who were also leaving the community, simply because there were more opportunities outside of the community for upward social mobility. Zhang Huizhen (2009, 109) discovered that the Ahmao Christian community had difficulty keeping their literate members within the community. Wang Hanxian (1982) recorded the “migration fever” of Ahmao literates moving to Kunming since the late 1920s. Wang Xinzong (1986) also recorded several cases of teacher-pastors leaving the republic church to become private teachers for the landlords. In short, Chinese literacy continued to facilitate social mobility, while Ahmao literacy was primarily a means of social coalition. By opening to out-group social mobility, the community had created a dilemma for its own reproduction, and this dilemma became an obstacle for self-reproducing Chinese literacy.

Increasingly, those who had Chinese literacy and those who did not become alienated from one another and the republic church became more and more stratified. The teacher-pastors with Chinese literacy held a form of currency allowing them to move in and out of the republic church, and the deeper they participated in the Chinese scriptural economy, the farther away they they moved from the village congregations. The tension

Political College in Nanjing in 1936 in exchange for the alliance of the Ahmao Christian community in Shimenkan.

between the teacher-pastors and the village congregations only increased as Chinese literacy was emphasized more and more in the republic church. As a result, the village congregations continued to push more and more teacher-pastors out of the republic church.

As a specific social status in the republic church, the teacher-pastors became the icons of value, with themselves representing the highest achievement of the community. However, as the foci of tension between the central church and the village congregations, the teacher-pastors also inherited the dilemma of value as Chinese literacy was reproduced in the republic church. The teacher-pastors who kept one foot outside and another foot inside of the village congregations represented the vulnerability of the republic church. It was not surprising, then, that the republic church ceased to function when the church school system was taken over by the provincial government. And what happened to the Ahmao Christian community after the collapse of the republic church only ensured the further alienation of literacy that drove the Ahmao elites out of the village congregations.

The Collapsed Center (or Future)

In 2010, I travelled to Anshun with a group of Guanghua alumni who graduated in the 1950s and received fellowship to go to colleges in the 1960s. The convener Wang Wenxian showed me a photo taken in front of Huanggoushu Falls in Anshun in 1962. There were eleven young men and women in the photo. Wang Wenxian told me that they were all Ahmao college students studying in Guiyang at that point. One day he saw the photo and decided to call everyone in the picture to see how they were doing after

retirement. This led to the reunion trip to Huangguoshu Falls after more than forty years.

During the trip, Wang Wenxian, Tao Shaohu, Yang Zhiguang, and I stayed up one night, arguing about why the Methodist Church as well as the Ahmao literacy tradition did not revive after the 1980s. The three Shimenkan alumni mourned the lost glory of Shimenkan but could not reach any consensus explanation. But they were more interested in another question anyway: Wang and Tao disagreed over whether the current educational system could enable the Ahmao community in the Shimenkan region to return to its past glory. On the one hand, Wang Wenxian criticized the current educational system for neglecting the rights of the rural population; on the other hand, he argued that the Ahmao Christian community in Shimenkan was deceived by false religious beliefs and confused about the benefits of education. For Wang, the Ahmao Christian community in Shimenkan had degenerated to uncivilized illiterates. In contrast, Tao Shaohu insisted that Christian beliefs did not deceive the Ahmao Christians' minds; they understand well the benefits brought by the education. However, Tao argued that the government had done everything to discourage people from receiving education. He thus believed that the more people devoted to rural education, the more likely it was that the Ahmao Christian in Shimenkan could return to their former glory. Wang teased Tao for his naïve and simple-minded belief; Tao criticized Wang for having forgotten the good thing of being a Christian.

I must confess that I found the discussion that night totally disorienting. The two good friends disagreed with and criticized each other. Yang, for his part, seemed to agree with both, but he did not join the fight. I listened with confusion because their arguments were not well-articulated, and I had trouble understanding the nature of their

disagreement. Still, I realized that for both Wang and Tao, the fight was a sort of relief. Wang Wenxian and Tao Shaohu are sons of the most respected teacher-pastors in Shimenkan, and for the first time in years, they finally had a chance to speak about their anxieties regarding their Christian past, their memories of the glorious past, and their grief for the present and future. They had trouble articulating their argument just as they have had trouble articulating their fragile lives. Wang was right that the wounded Shimenkan could never regain its past glory, as Wang and Tao could never return to the Ahmao Christian community in Shimenkan.

On the train back to Kunming, Tao Shaohu and I eventually had a chance to have an “honest talk” without being interrupted. He apologized that he did not answer my question the night before and told me that he had thought through my question. Tao said in all earnestness that the Methodist Church had lost all its teacher-pastors in the revolutionary years. Without those teacher-pastors, there was no Ahmao literacy tradition and no republic church. Tao told me that his father was forced to resign in 1958 since he was a Christian. So did other teacher-pastors. The Chinese teachers began coming to Shimenkan in 1952, and more and more rushed into the place. They appeared in every corner of Shimenkan, seizing the school, the church, the medical center, the hospital, the field, and so on. Tao’s father and many other Ahmao teacher-pastors were forced to leave Shimenkan. They hid in small villages away from Shimenkan and never thought of returning. Tao himself hid his Shimenkan background and Christian faith throughout his career, and only began to face his own past after his retirement in 1998. Tao’s life story is not unusual. Almost every Ahmao college graduate of his age who graduated from Shimenkan Guanghua elementary school shared with him a similar experience. They

were given the chance to receive higher education and to pursue higher official rank, but only in exchange for leaving the Ahmao community and Christianity.

After the forced departure of foreign missionaries in 1949, the office of the central church, which had been occupied by foreign missionaries since 1912, was succeeded by the former principal of Guanghua School, Zhu Huanzhang. Zhu Huanzhang had not received any theological training nor had he held any Church duty before taking over the Central Church Office. Zhu had been the most influential teacher-pastor and his fame was widely accepted by the Ahmao Christian community. At that critical point, Zhu was the one who could possibly lead the community through such a political upheaval, as Zhu had done in the 1940s. But even Zhu was unable to survive the political movements of the 1950s. Zhu was forced to leave Shimenkan for Guiyang in 1955, and within a few months, he committed suicide. Many people told me that if Zhu had not gone to Guiyang, he would not have died because the Ahmao would have protected him through all the political movements. But who knows? The central church in Shimenkan closed even before Zhu left, and many teacher-pastors had already left the schools and churches. The Ahmao Christians were themselves victims of the political movements of the following decades. No one has any idea how many Ahmao Christians died or were jailed during the revolutionary decades. The archives are still classified.

The republic church was too deeply damaged to recover but the Ahmao Christian community did not disappear from the Shimenkan region. I visited Shimenkan in 2011 with a group of Ahmao Christians from Kunming, and witnessed what Wang Wenxian called the “Christian superstition.” We arrived on a Saturday evening. My Kunming friends were complaining about not being well received by their Ahmao Christian

brothers and sisters in Shimenkan. The Sunday service in the late morning was not special and my Kunming friends were a little disappointed. They could not believe their eyes that the congregation of the Shimenkan central church had only a few Bibles. Their preachers didn't even seem to be preaching the Bible, but instead were just preaching randomly from their inspirations. Nevertheless, the evening congregation was quite heartwarming. My Kunming friends were impressed by the congregation's energetic prayers, praises, and preaching. The service went on through midnight. It only stopped at three o'clock in the morning when my Kunming friends apologized that they had to leave in order to ensure they could drive safely the next morning.

Wang Wenxian is right that the congregation of the Shimenkan church today is disordered and illiterate. It seems that no one is leading the congregation, and no one is interested in reading the Bible. But Wang is also wrong, because that the congregation is led by the Spirit, and everyone who is so inspired can speak out to lead the congregation. No one may be reading the Bible, but everyone remembers some of the proverbs written in the Bible. As my Kunming friends were still looking for the proverbs in Bible, the Shimenkan congregates had already recited the words. Many of them are life-long Christians. Before the congregation restarted in the early 1990s, they held services in their homes for many decades. The revival of Christianity in Shimenkan has been deeply influenced by the CIM church in Gepu. An elder told me that, during the revolutionary decades, they thirsted for God's words but they did not have the Bible. Their teacher-pastors lived incognito and left the community. The Christians later received preachers from CIM churches, and learned the words of God through these sojourning preachers. They identified themselves as a CIM church rather than a Methodist one.

In her recent survey, Shen Hong (2006) provides a contemporary overview of the “Shimenkan community,” the former parish of the Methodist Church. Shen estimates that one-third of the Ahmao population in the Shimenkan community are Christians. Though there are only a few people in the community who have received more than nine years of school education, Shen found that the Christians have significantly higher graduation rates from elementary school, but disproportionately lower graduation rates from middle school. It is even more surprising to learn that the majority of the Ahmao Christians over thirty continue to write and read the Pollard Script with fluency. I think the Ahmao Christian community has shown us clearly that Chinese literacy is just a means for pursuing something else. Ahmao literacy is closely linked to their Christian faith. As they inherited their faith from their parents and grandparents, they also received Ahmao literacy from them. In short, the community has not become illiterate, but rather, has found a way to cope with the dilemma of Chinese literacy. They do not overestimate the value of Chinese literacy; instead, they exploit only its use-value and otherwise limit its circulation. It turns out that the Christian community in former Shimenkan parish has no elites in this contemporary.

The history of the republic church in Shimenkan is also the history of constituting the teacher-pastor as a specific social status. Within the republic church, the value of Chinese literacy was part of that social status. But given the dilemma of Chinese literacy in the Ahmao community, the republic church continued to struggle for stability. When it became impossible to balance between internal and external pressures, it was perhaps inevitable that the republic church fell apart. Once it was gone, the republic church vanished and no one even tried to save it.

I have emphasized the internal rather than external pressures, in order to avoid presenting this story as one of simple political persecution, and yet it *was* a political persecution. I believe that Ahmao Christians are political victims—and, indeed, I argue they always have been. The republic church first emerged because the Ahmao were suffering from persecution from Tusi or Tumu; it fell apart because the Ahmao Christians were persecuted by the PRC state. As a minority group, the Ahmao have internalized their persecution in order to survive. For those viewing from outside, the development of the republic church in the first place was a surprise in Ahmao history that scholars and outsiders are eager to rationalize. But in reality, it was not a surprise. The community just made the best use of the resources it had and proved that they could have the same success as the dominant group if allowed the resources. With the abundance of resources poured into the church school system, there was an inflation of the value of Chinese literacy in the republic church. But the PRC government came and took over the church school system and took control over the resource again. The inflation turned into a big bubble, the bubble exploded, and the republic church collapsed. Indeed, there was no surprise.

The Shimenkan community today appears completely different. There are no literary figures, no political leaders, and no specialized social status; but there is a community with bilingual literacies, and with extreme familiarity with the Bible in both languages. There are no specialized experts of God's words, but they coordinate preaching and prayers in a collective manner. Within the community, literacies have value, but do not produce social stratification. Ironically, those associated with republic church, like Tao and Wang, the so-called Ahmao elites, have been left out of the Ahmao Christian

community. It is not because they left the community but they were not owned by the community. Almost all of them still possess a strong Ahmao identity, and they have been identified as the official representatives of Ahmao in Chinese sociopolitical space. However, their status is shaped by the fact that the Ahmao are inevitably subordinated to the Chinese nation given their identification with the Miao nationality, and Ahmao literacy is inevitably subordinated to Chinese literacy.

Conclusion

The history of Ahmao Christian bureaucracy ended when the republic church collapsed, and it seems that Christian bureaucracy will not return again until the value crisis around literacy is resolved—something that looks unlikely in the near future. The current village congregations in the former Shimenkan parish are in exile as they continue to value Ahmao literacy, but have no bureaucratic space in which to anchor this value. By saying they are in exile, I mean to emphasize that, though the Christian Ahmao were bureaucratized through the patriotic church in post-revolutionary China, they do not participate in the sub-bureaucracy of Chinese Christianity like their fellow Christian Ahmao in Sapushan. In the next chapter, therefore, I shift to the history of the Christian bureaucracy in Sapushan, where a completely different process of bureaucratization occurred.

Chapter 4

Bureaucratizing Ahmao Converts

Schools and Congregations in the CIM Sapushan Parish, 1900s–1950s

In the immediate aftermath of the Ahmao mass conversions, the missionaries organized congregations that would teach Christianity in line with Christian denominational standards. An inter-congregational system was also organized in the years immediately following the mass conversions and organization in congregations. These efforts resulted in the integration of tribal converts into a specific sort of denominational bureaucracy. By denominational bureaucracy, I refer to a social system that valued literacy in the reproduction of knowledge and established literati as elites that enjoyed a special status. Like a state bureaucracy, the denominational bureaucracy was an *episteme* that “define[d] the conditions of possibility of all knowledge” (Foucault, 1969: 168).

As described in Chapter Two, the Christian knowledge introduced into the Ahmao was decidedly anti-millenarian. The Christian epistemology opposed “true” knowledge to “false” knowledge. In the first decade of conversion, the foreign missionaries dictated the denominational bureaucracy through dictating knowledge. Next, as described in Chapter Three, the 1920s became the decisive turning point in Shimenkan Christian Ahmao community. As the pursuit of Christian knowledge fuelled an increase in both Chinese and Ahmao literacy, a separate status of Ahmao Christian with direct access to Christian

knowledge came into being. The new Ahmao elites began to challenge the domination of foreign missionaries over the reproduction of Christian knowledge.

This chapter moves to the community of Sapushan Ahmao converts. While it was impossible to maintain a centralized church school system under the framework that was designed by CIM missionaries, the decentralized school also decentralized the reproduction of knowledge in the Christian Ahmao community in Sapushan. Congregational movements in the decentralized Sapushan community eroded the stability of the Sapushan bureaucracy. These congregational movements were stirred up by the Ahmao's increasing demand for knowledge, and the purpose of the congregational movements was to allow the congregations greater control over the reproduction of that knowledge. However, the uncontrolled introduction of this Christian knowledge into the congregations resulted in schisms opening up within and between the various congregations. Schools that the village congregations established outside of the denominational bureaucracies were an important portal for this schismatic process.

Whether in the Shimenkan Ahmao community as described in Chapter Three or in the Sapushan Ahmao community as described in this chapter, by the end of the 1940s Christian Ahmao elites had replaced the missionaries in leadership of the congregational bureaucracies and instigated bureaucratic reforms. In short, the congregational movements rose to challenge the missionaries' domination of knowledge and sought to reinforce the Ahmao's own participation in that bureaucracy. Thus, although following a significantly different route and otherwise with significantly different consequences, spreading knowledge of Christianity transformed the Christian community in Sapushan just as it had transformed the Christian community in Shimenkan.

The Sapushan Parish

By the time the mass conversion movement gathered momentum in Shimenkan in 1905, there were only two or three Protestant missionaries in Kunming. Though a CIM missionary arrived in Yunnan province as early as 1878, there were only nineteen baptized Han Chinese in the whole province from 1881–1900, according to CIM records (Tien 1992, 5, f.n. 4). It was not until 1903 that the first Protestant station was founded in the capital city. In 1904, the CIM missionaries Arthur G. Nicholls and Samuel Adams established the first Protestant mission station in downtown Kunming. Adams went back to Anshun, Guizhou, afterward and continued his Miao mission in northwest Guizhou. Nicholls stayed in charge of the Kunming station. From the denominational point of view, the Kunming station was a strategic move for the CIM mission to open up the mission field in Yunnan, which was considered to be the most inaccessible and remote province in late imperial China.⁵⁹ The missionaries had no idea that just one year later they would be dragged into a tide of mass conversion to which they would be forced to respond.

It is doubtful even whether Adams or Nicholls realized there were Ahmao residing near Kunming until the Ahmao visitors came to seek Nicholls out in his station in early 1906. The missionary's lack of knowledge of the Ahmao in Kunming was certainly understandable, as the Ahmao were almost invisible to the Han Chinese majority in capital city. They were the most recent residents to begin migrating from the northeast

⁵⁹ China Inland Mission was an interdenominational Protestant missionary society, founded by J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) in 1865. The priority of the mission was to reach inland provinces. The CIM missionaries entered this province from the border between Yunnan province and Burma. Prior to Kunming station, there were the Bamo, Dali, and Tengchong stations in the west of the province (KMJDJS 2005, 17–20).

provincial border of Yunnan and Guizhou to the region north of Kunming during the decades of the Qian Rebellion (WDXZ 1990, 132). Throughout the decades, there was a continuous, albeit small stream of Miao migration toward the south and Ahmao migration was part of that trend.⁶⁰ Sapushan and the nearby regions were at the far reach of the Ahmao migration in late nineteenth century. By the 1900s, there were only a couple thousand Ahmao in northern Yunnan province (WDXZ 1990, 97–98). Their villages were small and scattered across the border region of Kunming city and Wuding prefecture.⁶¹ Because they frequently migrated from one place to another seeking more productive lands, they developed neither inter-village organizations nor significant intra-village organizations. Even the village itself was just a residential site without stable intra-village organizations. An outsider could hardly gain access to the Ahmao and the Ahmao themselves did not bother to be integrated into the regional majority. But though they were largely unknown to the majority of this region, the Sapushan Ahmao nonetheless kept current with the news from their homeland due to the constant migration trend.

In early 1906, a group of Ahmao villagers came to Nicholls's station in Kunming. They came to invite him to visit their villages in Sapushan, about a three-day walk north of the capital city (Clarke [1911] 1970, 278). Nicholls learned the story of their search for the Saviour all the way from Sapushan to Zhaotong until finally arriving in Kunming. He later recorded in his unpublished manuscript:

At the beginning of 1906 two Miao, one a leper, set out from Sapushan.... They

⁶⁰ For details regarding the general trend of Miao migration, see Wu Xinfu and Long Boya 1992.

⁶¹ “The most pronounced case was that of the Miao in Wuding. This group of habitually migratory minorities, numbering in all no more than 1089 households, divided into 126 insular hamlets, mostly small units of less than ten households, were scattered over the whole of Wuding and the surrounding districts, having no contact whatsoever with each other or with the outside world” (Tien 1993, 41–42).

had heard that hundreds of their fellow tribesmen in Kweichow[Guizhou] were seeking the Heavenly Father and JESUS the Saviour, so [they] made their preparations and with the good wishes of their friends took 15 days walk to see what it was all about, and perhaps the leper could find healing. Arriving at Chaotung [Zhaotong] city they met and conversed with S. Pollard and Dr. Savin, nothing could be done for the leper, but these good men told them of JESUS the Mighty Saviour, and they believed.... The men were advised to return, but not before they extracted a promise that a missionary would be sent. (Nicholls cited in Enwall 1994, 114)

Instead of continuously receiving Ahmao visitors in his Kunming station or accepting the Ahmao's invitation immediately, Nicholls travelled with several Sapushan Ahmao back to their homeland in Zhaotong and stayed in Shimenkan for several months.⁶² Accompanied by four newly ordained Methodist Ahmao missionaries from Shimenkan, the missionary party arrived in Sapushan in the autumn of 1906. Prior to their arrival, the Ahmao in the region had heard the news and expected the missionaries that were sent to them. As recorded by the CIM superintendent of Yunnan province, John McCarthy, in 1907, it appeared that the mass conversion movement was already

⁶² Shimenkan Ahmao remembered Nicholls and Sapushan Ahmao as well. Yang Hanxian's father Yang Yage left a manuscript written about the early history of the Ahmao conversion. In that manuscript, Yang Yage indicated that Sapushan Ahmao had heard of the Gospel and came to believe in Christianity. The original wording is “苗家信教的聲浪遙遠的傳到了中國的內地城市，甚至到了國外，雲南武定州也知道了，雪山那面的苗家來信教了” (Yang Hanxian 1984, 19). Another manuscript, a recorded interview with Yang Zhi by Zhang Rongxin and Zhang Wenpo in 1954, clearly indicated that Nicholls was the one who took the Kunming trip: the original wording was: “雲南洒普山的苗族知道了信教的好處之後，使人來到了石門坎找伯格理牧師，伯格理派馬牧師（澳大利亞人在石門坎學苗語）到洒普山傳教，到二月初二，馬牧師帶了王道元王德道到洒普山去傳教” According to these two manuscripts, it is important to note that the Shimenkan Ahmao had remembered Nicholls and his Sapushan mission as one of several missionary trips that Shimenkan Ahmao missionaries had opened up among non-Chinese people in the provincial borders of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan.

underway among these people. Many of them “had abandoned some of their sinful habits and were seeking to live more upright lives” (Enwall 1994, 114). In anticipation of the instruction of the things of God, representatives from between fifty and sixty villages awaited the missionary party’s arrival in Sapushan. They came to invite Nicholls and Shimenkan Ahmao missionaries to their villages. As there were quite a few of these, they eventually set up an itinerary for the missionaries. Thereafter, the missionary party travelled from one place to another, fulfilling the invitations, and bringing with them some of the books Pollard had printed for the Ahmao. After a few months of such traveling, the missionary party was back in Sapushan by the end of 1906. In the early summer of 1907, a chapel was built there that could accommodate nine hundred people standing (Clarke [1911] 1970, 285–89). After that, Nicholls was stationed in Sapushan until 1944. The village became known as the place where the mass conversion among several tribes began in northern Yunnan province.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1909, two years after the mass conversion movement, that the first baptizing ceremony for Ahmao converts was held in Sapushan. Nicholls believed that it was better to postpone the baptism, citing the same reasons given by Pollard regarding their tribal converts. The examination of the candidates for baptism extended over a period of three months in 1909. Eventually, 473 Ahmao catechumen were baptized in the ceremony, and “all but the oldest of those baptized can read the Gospel of Mark in Hua Miao [Ahmao] version” (Enwall 1994, 115). Nicholls compared this with Pollard’s first baptizing ceremony in November 1905, a few months after his arrival in Shimenkan (already described in an earlier chapter), in which the examinations were less strict and it was unlikely that all nine hundred of the Ahmao who were baptized

were able to read the Gospel of Mark, as the full Ahmao translation of Gospel was not yet available.

Though Nicholls inherited many of his predecessors' insights regarding the Ahmao or Miao mission, his tribal mission in Sapushan was much more advanced as he did not just regulate the mass conversion movement but also intended to evangelize the region across varied tribal populations. As he had spent several months in Shimenkan, learning from Pollard, Nicholls eventually developed a clear picture of his tribal mission and was more certain about his evangelical maneuvers.⁶³ Soon after the Sapushan headquarters were built, Nicholls and his CIM colleagues began seeking other tribal villagers to convert and left the Ahmao mission to Shimenkan Ahmao missionaries. In 1908, foreign missionaries were dispersed to outstations. As Nicholls stayed in Sapushan, George E. Metcalf was in Tagu taking care of the Lesu and Laka, and Gladstone Porteous was in Salaowu working with the Nosu villagers (Clarke [1911] 1970, 287). In 1909, Nicholls got in touch with Kopu in Xinshao, Xundian county. The tribal congregations of the parish grew rapidly.

In Clarke's book published in 1911, there is a map, probably produced before 1910, that illustrates the places where chapels were built in the Sapushan parish. The map shows twenty-seven chapels in Ahmao, Laka, Lesu, Kopu, Shan, and Nosu villages (see Map 1, reprinted from Clarke [1911]1970). The tribal variety of chapels erected in this newly established parish was certainly impressive. It shows that Nicholls and his

⁶³ Pollard wrote to Clarke in 1910 and referred to Nicholls' work in the following way: "May I say that I think the work which Mr. Nicholls is doing with his fine colleagues, to the north of Yunnanfu, is the finest story I have yet seen in Kweichow or in N.E. Yunnan" (Pollard cited in Clarke [1911] 1970, 285). Pollard's praise of Nicholls' work was more than just politeness; he was referring to Nicholls' multiethnic tribal mission.

colleagues had managed to spread their Gospel to all the tribal varieties in Sapushan parish in three to four years.

In the late 1910s, the parish was divided into six tribal stations: Ahmao in Sapushan (1907), Nosu in Salaowu (1916), Lesu in Taogu (1914), Siam in Laoba (1917), Kopu in Xinshao (1917) and Laka in Aguomi (1917). Within just a few decades, the system had grown quite robust. By the 1940s, there were six tribal stations, fifty-one outstations, and 182 sub-outstations, with approximately thirty thousand adult members (KMJDJS 2005, 145).⁶⁴

Since the congregations were linguistically divided, sometimes there were even two chapels in one village or in nearby villages, something not seen in the Shimenkan parish. Even today, it is still not unusual for people living in the same or nearby villages but having different tribal affiliations to go to different churches. The use of tribal language rather than the *lingua franca* of the region was meant to accommodate tribal catechumens who spoke only their native languages and were seldom exposed to the southwest Mandarin dialect. The congregations would hold Sunday service in their tribal languages. Meetings, prayers, as well as worships were also conducted in tribal languages. The linguistically divided congregations expressed strong demands for native literacy and literatures. Though the Pollard script was an invention of Pollard, Nicholls and his CIM colleagues appropriated it for translating Laka, Kopu, Lesu, and Shan Gospels in the Sapushan parish, which had much extended the use of the Pollard script (Enwall 1994,

⁶⁴ The statistic does not include the Han Chinese station and its affiliated outstations and sub-outstations that were affiliated with Bethlehem and integrated into the Sapushan system in 1949. In the following discussion, the Sapushan system will not include the Han station.

116, 137–39).

Besides his attempt to build up the Sapushan parish as an inter-tribal mission, Nicholls also imposed the “denominational bureaucracy” to administer tribal congregations. Theoretically, the congregations in the Sapushan parish were integrated into CIM denomination. In practice, the CIM headquarters in Shanghai as well as the provincial headquarters in Kunming only administered the Sapushan parish indirectly. Except for the appointment of foreign missionaries, the distribution of limited funding, and occasional visits of the superintendents, the Sapushan bureaucracy was highly localized and independent as the tribal congregations were financially self-sufficient, administratively self-organized, and religiously self-ministered and self-evangelized. Nevertheless, throughout the denominational decades, the Sapushan bureaucracy continued functioning effectively as an administrative system that organized all the Sapushan converts, despite their tribal diversities and geographical dispersions, into a “collective church” and formed a distinctive non-Chinese Christian community.

The “collective church” was composed of hierarchically ranked branches as tribal stations (總堂), outstations (分堂) and sub-outstations (支堂) or chapels (聚會點) that were overseen by tribal deacons, ministered by tribal clergies, and supervised by Nicholls and his missionary colleagues. At the top of the system was the inter-tribal Church Council, which oversaw inter-tribal business. The Sapushan Church Council, which was officially established in 1923 and whose predecessor was the accountant office, was located in Sapushan under Nicholls’ management. The leader of the Council was equal to the bishop of the parish. The Council itself was composed of missionaries, clergies, and representatives of tribal congregations. Nevertheless, the Council did not intervene in the

administration of the tribal congregations; rather, the tribal stations were in charge. While there were not many inter-tribal businesses except the few distributing the denominational funds and administering the Sapushan school, the inter-tribal Council contributed to enhance inter-tribal cohesion by organizing an extended thanksgiving ceremony.⁶⁵ Each year the Council would select a tribal station to host the extended ceremony and invited another five stations to join the ceremony. This tradition continued throughout the denominational decades and effectively constituted the dispersed and diversified tribal congregations into a whole.

Below the Council, there were six tribal stations that divided the parish congregations in accordance with tribal identifications. A tribal station supervised by one or two foreign missionaries independently administered a number of outstations that divided the tribal congregation into several territorially bounded congregations.⁶⁶ By definition, an outstation was designed as the basic unit of administration in the Sapushan bureaucracy, as it contained both a board of deacons that was elected by the outstation

⁶⁵ From the start, the CIM was a “faith mission”—that is, it had no guaranteed finances or real budget; all confidence was placed in God’s provision (Bays 2012, 68–69). Financially, the denomination distributed very little money to the Sapushan parish, likely only sufficient funds to pay the foreign missionaries’ salary. Clarke described the first thanksgiving ceremony in 1907 in Sapushan. The tribal catechumens were generous to give grains, money and other things, which “would supply the needs of the preachers sent from Shimenkan for a year, and other Church needs were also supplied” (Clarke [1911] 1970, 290–91). From Clarke’s description, we could possibly assume that tribal stations in the Sapushan parish relied on few outside financial supports from the start.

⁶⁶ The “Golden Age,” as defined by Daniel H. Bays, was between 1902 and 1927, roughly after the Boxer Uprising and before the storm of mass nationalism hit. “Protestant growth between 1900 and 1915 was impressive by all indices. Foreign missionaries numbered about 3500 in 1905 and 5500 in 1915, well on the way toward their eventual high-water mark of more than 8000 in the 1920s. Chinese Protestants, about 100,000 in 1900, numbered almost 270,000 communicants (and 330,000 baptized) in 1915; this growth would also continue into the 1920s, reaching about 500,000 before the storms of mass nationalism hit” (Bays 2012, 94). Nevertheless, throughout those decades, there were not enough foreign missionaries to supervise the tribal congregations in the Sapushan parish, which had only four to six foreign missionaries to supervise a parish with more than eighteen hundred baptized converts.

congregation and ordained by the foreign missionary, and a clergyman who was assigned by the foreign missionary and financed by the denomination. An outstation thus administered and ministered a territorially bounded congregation whose members were scattered across dozens of villages. Nevertheless, chapels were gradually erected for the convenience of evening prayer meetings, though members of the congregation would gather in an outstation for Sunday service. During the 1910s, an outstation usually contained several to a few dozen such chapels. From the 1920s onwards, many of those chapels developed into full-scale congregations. To accommodate the development, some of the newly established congregations were officially recognized as sub-outstations whose deacons were largely ordained, but some were not. But the geographically divided outstations that administered and ministered over affiliated chapels and sub-outstations remained unchanged throughout the denominational decades.

Ministerial responsibility was relocated to tribal clergies while the administrative responsibility was re-distributed to deacons of outstations. The appointment of the clergies resulted in the emergence of literate tribal elites who were paid for their service to the congregations and known for their knowledge. The clergies replaced the role of the ritual specialists in traditional communities and were similar to the position of teacher-pastors in the Shimenkan parish. They were the carriers of Christian literacy who were later deeply involved in the transmission of different views in Christian knowledge in tribal congregations. The deacons, however, were responsible for the direct oversight of their members, and for evangelical work among the as-yet unreached and unresponsive inhabitants. Two to four times each year, the foreign missionaries of tribal station would call a meeting of deacons from all its affiliated outstations to discuss not only religious

affairs but also many other matters as well. They were asked to have enrollees, deaths, and declensions reported to the foreign missionaries. The redistribution of supervisory responsibility and the established meeting “resulted in the deacons being unofficially entrusted with the administration of local affairs. The group of clergies, together with their supervisory deacons as a kind of executive, formed an effective system to bind the divided minorities into a social unity” (Tien 1993, 42).

In sum, the Sapushan bureaucracy relied on the clergies and the deacons to run the tribal stations and outstations. Both clergies and deacons were the mediators of the denominational bureaucracy and the congregations, and contributed to integrate the diverse tribal congregations into a “collective church.” From the administrative point of view, the tribally divided stations and geographically divided outstations constituted a superstructure of the bureaucracy that was stable and inflexible. The foreign missionaries dictated the tribal congregations as they withheld the religious authority for the ordination of deacons and the appointment of clergies, and left no room for those clergies and deacons to agree or disagree with the foreign missionaries. From the congregational point of view, the Sapushan bureaucracy failed to accommodate the rapidly changing congregational landscapes. Though this failure to cope with the rapidly changing congregations did not destroy the bureaucracy, it did lead to the emergence of religious schisms and the increasing independence of the village congregations (to be described later in this chapter) that ultimately undermined the bureaucratic authority.

On the surface, the missionaries failed to maintain their dictatorship over tribal congregations because they failed to recognize the increasing demand of clergies that emerged within the tribal congregations. But their misrecognition was an effect of a

structural deficiency that was deeply grounded in the Sapushan bureaucracy. The structural deficiency of the Sapushan bureaucracy was the contradiction between the CIM's faith mission and Pollard's anti-millenarian Ahmao mission. Nicholls mixed principles from both the CIM's faith mission and Pollard's anti-millenarian mission in his designation of the Sapushan bureaucracy. While it inherited principles from the faith mission, the Sapushan bureaucracy undermined the significance of school education.⁶⁷ It was not until 1913 that a Sapushan primary school was established, and not until 1924 that the secondary school was built. Though the congregations were not discouraged from running church schools, with little financial support the schools in the Sapushan parish could hardly develop; instead, they remained small and informal. Throughout the decades, the Sapushan parish strived for sufficient literate Christians who were capable of teaching and preaching. And though Nicholls and his CIM colleagues shared with Pollard's tribal mission its anti-millenarianism, the former put an extreme emphasis on Christian literacy, as it had been reported that those to be baptized must facilitate the Pollard script and Gospels, and those who were to be ordained clergies and deacons were required to take several months of training program in Sapushan before being ordained. Summer schools were held in tribal stations almost every year. Deacons and preachers were encouraged to attend summer school regularly where they would learn more and refresh their faith, which in turn would make them better equipped to lead the congregations (Enwall 1994,

⁶⁷ Since the beginning, the CIM was a faith mission which literally meant its missionaries trusted in God to provide necessary resources for evangelism. Despite being one of the most successful Protestant missions in China in the early twentieth century, the denomination continuously struggled for financial scarcity and provided few financial supports to its affiliated congregations. Perhaps due to this, the CIM developed relatively few schools, hospitals, printing establishments, and other institutions (Bays 2012, 68). It was often criticized for failing to recognize the secular needs, such as education and medication, that would improve the living conditions of their affiliate congregations.

137–38). As a result, while the tribal mission raised the demand for Christian knowledge, the faith mission underplayed school education and thus the reproduction of knowledge in congregations was unbalanced as the supply of knowledge was far less than the demand. Nicholls and his missionary colleagues could hardly dictate the reproduction of knowledge, but they were inevitably challenged by other resources of knowledge that were introduced to tribal congregations along with the increasing contacts between Sapushan converts and other Christians.

In the following sections, I describe the challenges that arose from Christian Ahmao who challenged the missionaries' dictatorship over the reproduction of knowledge. Given the fact that the headquarters were located in an Ahmao village and Nicholls was both the chair of the Council and the supervisor of the Ahmao station, the Ahmao congregation enjoyed a position of centrality among the tribal congregations and was deeply involved in the denominational bureaucracy among those tribal congregations in the Sapushan parish.⁶⁸ Besides, because they constituted a community in diaspora and remained in close contact with Christian Ahmao back in their homeland, Christian Ahmao in the Sapushan parish traced the origin of their Christianity back to their encounter with Pollard in Shimenkan and conceived Nicholls and his CIM colleagues as having being appointed by Pollard to minister the Ahmao congregation in Sapushan. Having direct access to the origin of Christianity, the Sapushan Ahmao congregation constantly challenged Nicholls' control over reproducing knowledge. And given their

⁶⁸ In 1919, Nicholls reported that there were seven outstations among the Miao around Sapushan and that most of them had a resident evangelist and family, who were half-supported by the people. The teachers of primary school were also supported in the same way. But Nicholls did not specify how many primary schools (Enwall 1994, 137).

centrality to the Sapushan bureaucracy, the Sapushan Ahmao congregation's influence extended to other tribal congregations, especially the Kopu and Nosu congregations.

Ahmao resentment of missionary control over reproducing knowledge reached a climax in the late 1910s. Several factors undermined the missionaries' control. First, the Sapushan school established in 1913 produced its first graduates in 1917. These newly educated tribal Christians were deeply engaged with Christianity as a public sphere for customary reform as well as other issues related to the development of congregations. Second, increasing migration from the north to the south had dramatically changed the congregational landscapes in the southern region of the parish. In particular, the migration of Christian literates from Shimenkan to Sapushan introduced Shimenkan influence to the Ahmao congregations. Third, the encounter with other Chinese Christians as well as Chinese nationalists spurred anti-foreign sentiments among tribal congregations that were already challenging the missionaries' dictatorship of the Sapushan bureaucracy. These factors were illuminated in three events: the schisms that developed in the 1920s and continued throughout the denominational decades, the grassroots congregational movements of the 1930s, and the bureaucratic reform of the 1940s. All three eventful challenges appealed to the demand for education. I examine each of these in turn in order to show that the Ahmao congregations became increasingly bureaucratized as they became more and more deeply involved in the reproduction of knowledge.

The Schisms, 1920s–1940s

The year has been one of much interruption with a certain measure of fear, and

the station had to be evacuated just when they were ready for a Bible school....Two special difficulties are connected with the aggressions of the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Independent Miao [Ahmao], who, though few, are led by a family which declare for the “no GOD” policy. These people are out to capture our scholars. (Enwall 1994, 138)

In 1936, Nicholls reported the Ahmao mission back to the CIM headquarters in London. Two difficulties were highlighted: one was the aggression of the Seventh Day Adventists; another was the Independent Ahmao that decreed a “no God” policy. Both difficulties, from the perspective of the CIM missionaries, obscured the Ahmao mission. But what Nicholls did not say in his reports was that both the Adventists and the Independent Churches appealed to the popularity of church schools that provided affordable primary education to Ahmao converts. Their appeal to education reflected not only the demand of the Ahmao congregation but also the structural deficiency of the Sapushan bureaucracy that I discussed above.

The two Ahmao figures that arose to challenge Nicholls’ dictatorship were Wang Youdao (1899–1955) and Han Jie (1895–1959). Though the two challengers did not share similar theological views and eventually went their separate ways, in the beginning of the uprising, they joined together to promote an Independent Church that would grant the right for education to members of the congregation. They accused Nicholls and other foreign missionaries of controlling the Ahmao’s access to education in order to maintain foreign control over the reproduction of knowledge and, in turn, over the congregations in general. Wang and Han promoted a version of primary education that was based upon Chinese Nationalist curriculum issued in 1913, but their agenda was less nationalistic than evangelical; their goal was to promote literacy in Ahmao congregations. Inspired by the independent movement of Chinese Protestant churches that began to prosper in the

1920s, their eagerness to reproduce knowledge in Ahmao congregations distinguished their Independent Christianity from both Chinese nationalism and Chinese Christianity. As I will show, their efforts should be understood as the beginning of a schism between Ahmao congregations and the missionaries, a schism that resisted the latter's wholesale domination over Ahmao congregations through knowledge.

In 1917, a Chinese Christian, Xie Hongzhen (or Xie Hozhai), affiliated with the CIM station in Kunming, began advocating for an independent church among Chinese Christians. As an activist, Xie did not have many followers. His works were eventually forgotten, and little evidence of them has survived. In 1925, thirty-seven Chinese Christians, including Xie Hongzhen, founded the Self-Independent Church in Kunming. Though Kunming was one of the most important fortresses of Chinese military nationalism in 1920s, their independent movement was not particularly anti-missionary in motive or in action but more or less a response to the widespread anti-Christianity sentiments spurred by the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and its aftermath.⁶⁹ The most prominent principle of the Christian independent movement in Kunming was to build a self-supported Chinese congregation that could grant Chinese Christian leaders equal status with the foreign missionaries. Without support from the Kunming Protestant community, however, the independent congregation could not support itself through voluntary donations. As a result, the independent movement from the grassroots of the

⁶⁹ Daniel Bays (2012, 95–97) reached a similar conclusion when accounting for the general trend of independent movement uprisings before Chinese nationalists launched serious attacks on Christianity as a form of cultural imperialism in the 1920s. Though the overall independent movement among Chinese Christians was not successful, the indigenization of Chinese Christianity had already been on the way since the May Fourth Movement in 1919. In particular, the increasing anti-Christianity among Chinese intellectuals stimulated the indigenization of Chinese Christianity.

Kunming Chinese Christians eventually died out. The Kunming Independent Church survived in name only until 1928 and had completely disappeared by 1931.

Though the independent church failed to appeal to the Chinese Protestant community, some of its members developed fairly strong connections with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, whose missionaries had just arrived Kunming in early 1928. The alliance of these two groups was foreseeable as both were forcibly excluded by members of the Kunming Christian Association from the Kunming Protestant community.⁷⁰ As the Independent Church struggled to raise financial support, the Adventist Church sought to establish connections that could introduce it into local society. Though the two groups did not establish any official alliance, the leaders of the Independent Church, who were Kunming natives, played an important role introducing Adventists into Yunnan society. Even after the Independent Church ceased to function, some of its former members were later active in the Adventist mission. In particular, Xie Hongzhen helped the Adventist missionaries connect with Christian Ahmao, and Hu Gechang proselytized and served as the Adventist missionary working with Nosu congregations (KMJDJS 2006, 63–64).

The connection with members of the Independent Church paved the way for the Adventist Church to enter the Sapushan parish. Indeed, this later developed into the most successful Adventist mission in Yunnan province. But the beginning was just a

⁷⁰ Kunming Christian Association was a Christian association established by foreign missionaries in 1921 that aimed to negotiate the increasing tension among missionary societies. The first initial members were the CIM, the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church, the Pentecostal Church, the YMCA, and the Bible Society—the four evangelical denominations among the missionary societies. Thus the establishment of the Independent Church in 1925 and the arrival of Adventist Church in 1928 were recognized as potential threats disturbing the stability of the protestant congregations that had begun evangelizing the province in the 1900s. Another missionary group that arrived in Kunming in 1920s was the Chinese Home Missionary Society (KMJDJS 2005, 27–29, 47–48, 63–66).

coincidence, as Xie Hongzhen happened to have an Ahmao servant whose name was Wang Youdao. Wang Youdao was baptized in his childhood. His father Wang Zaiyou was the first convert of the village. The villagers of Shihuaqing and nearby villages used to gather in Wang Youzai's house for prayer and singing during the week and then attended the Sunday service in the chapel at Dashuijing. Prior to Kunming, Wang Youdao was the first villager of Shihuaqing to complete the four-year primary education in Dashuijing and then pursue secondary education in Sapushan. But he was expelled from the school after a year. People remembered his confrontations with Nicholls as the reason for his forced expulsion. Instead of going home directly, Wang Youdao went to Kunming in 1917. It is not clear how he met Xie Hongzhen but it turned out that Wang Youdao worked for Xie as a servant for three years. Later, because of illness, Wang Youdao left Kunming and returned to Shihuaqing, but the two men maintained a lifelong connection.⁷¹ And it was through Wang Youdao that Xie Hongzhen was able to connect with other Christian Ahmaos.

Though Xie's independent movement among Chinese Christians in Kunming was not successful, with Wang Youdao's help, the movement reached the Sapushan Christian Ahmao in 1920. After his illness, Wang Youdao began advocating independence to his fellow villagers in Shihuaqing. As the only literate person in the village, he started a day school that provided primary education. He criticized Nicholls' provisional education as intending to restrict Christian Ahmao from pursuing higher education in order to limit their access to the power of knowledge, and proclaimed that the Ahmao congregation

⁷¹ This information was provided by Wang Hancheng, Wang Youdao's son, and his manuscript *Genealogy of the Wang Family* (王家祖譜), in an interview conducted in May 2011.

should become independent from the Sapushan bureaucracy in order to widen their access to knowledge. Wang Youdao's preachings soon attracted hundreds of followers from nearby villages. A new chapel was erected in Wang's village a few months later and Wang named his congregation the "Ahmao Independent Church (苗族自立會)."

It is certainly true that Xie Hongzhen's independent movement influenced Wang Youdao's in Shihuaqing. But there was a huge difference between Xie's and Wang's social standings that resulted, in turn, in a huge difference between the independent movements they advocated. We know little about Xie's independent movement in the early 1920s, but judging by his later relationship with the Adventist Church, it is fairly safe to conclude that Xie himself was not a hardline anti-foreigner nationalist. Rather, Xie's advocacy that congregations become self-supporting and have Chinese leaders was as much a response to the new legal provision granting religious freedom as well as an expression of confidence in the emergent Chinese protestant community. Wang, on the other hand, as a servant of Xie, did not share Xie's social position and was not even involved in Xie's independent movement. In Xie's eyes, Wang Youdao was not a nationalist Christian but just an Ahmao who believed in God. As a former student of the Sapushan school who left the school and the congregation because of conflict with the missionaries, Wang Youdao must have recognized that the status difference between the master and the servant obscured the commonality between Xie and Wang as Christians, just as it was obscured between the missionaries and the Ahmao converts. Though Wang Youdao was saved by Xie and adopted Xie's "independent movement," the distance between the master and the servant must have disturbed Wang Youdao's faith in Christianity as the redemption of the Ahmao.

In March 2011, I interviewed Wang Youdao's son, Wang Hanchen, who was in his eighties at the time. Wang Hanchen confirmed that Wang Youdao was indeed “less” Christian than he might have appeared.⁷² When I asked about the independent church that Wang Youdao established in the 1920s, Wang Hanchen was not interested at all; he simply commented that “the church was just a cover [of the school] (教會只是個皮皮而已).” According to Wang Hanchen, Wang Youdao had realized that Christianity is just a superstition since he was in Sapushan school. Wang Youdao was not like other students who only read the Bible and the Christian literature that Nicholls allowed; instead, he also introduced himself to a wide variety of literature, including the sciences. Wang Youdao was expelled from the Sapushan school because Nicholls regarded him as a threat to the school and worried that Wang would be a “bad” influence on the other students. Wang Hanchen said:

Nicholls was angry with my father [Wang Youdao] because my father taught true knowledge, which could prove that Nicholls was wrong. But the villagers were deeply poisoned by Nicholls' Gospel; they did not know the true knowledge. My father had to preach Christianity, even though he knew Christianity was not the true knowledge. He preached Christianity just to attract villagers but he never believed it.

郭秀峰生氣我爸爸，因為我爸爸有知識知道郭秀峰是錯的。但是苗族不知道真正的知識，他們被郭秀峰搞的中毒太深。我爸爸只能是講一點基督教，他知道基督教不是真正的知識，他講道就只是把人吸引過來，我爸爸是不信那些的。

In Wang Hanchen's retrospective description, Wang's anti-Nicholls position turned out to be even more progressive as anti-Christian. Judging from this retrospective point of view, just like Wang Hanchen's comments on Wang Youdao's faith and his independent church,

⁷² I put quotation marks around the word “less” to indicate that the description is provisional, taken from an orthodox viewpoint of Christianity.

Nicholls was right to accuse Wang Youdao for declaring his “No GOD” policy to Ahmao congregations.

Nevertheless, what is missing from this retrospective account is the fact that Wang Youdao’s followers did not follow him only because of his emphasis on education. Even Wang Hanchen had to agree that Christianity was the only way to get Ahmao converts interested in education. Wang Youdao may have denounced Nicholls’ Christianity, but Wang Youdao’s followers did not walk away from their Christianity; rather, they continued to identify themselves as Christians, despite the fact that Nicholls refused to recognize their congregations as Christian congregations. Throughout his career as a teacher, Wang Youdao was highly respectful and maintained good relationships with Ahmao congregations of CIM. Wang Youdao’s brother, Wang Hongdao, was even ordained as a Reverend by the Chinese Christian Church in 1951 (KMJDJS 2005, 148). All of this speaks to the fact that both Wang Youdao and his followers were, indeed, Christians and considered themselves Christians. Therefore, while criticizing Wang Youdao’s split from Nicholls as anti-Christian from the orthodox viewpoint of Christianity, the criticism that falsely reinforces the line between Christian and non-Christian Ahmao would miss the “hierarchy of knowledge” that the Ahmao converts employed to deal with an “epistemological slippage” that the missionaries failed to understand.

By “epistemological slippage,” I am referring to the slippage of knowledge rooted in the encounter between Christianity and the nationalist propaganda of education. From the missionary’s point of view, the slippage was often understood as a secularization of Christianity that undermined their denominational authority. The underlying assumption of secularization is that there is a range of knowledge with Christianity on the one side as

“religion,” and nationalist propaganda on the other side as “secular.” Both are true in their own terms, but are conceived in different realms. Thus, secularization does not necessarily take away from or reduce the truth of Christianity.⁷³ Nevertheless, the notion of secularization in religion is provisional, as it is emergent from the Christian world in order to reflect the declining importance of Christianity in social life (Asad 1993).

Given its specific context of emergence, Christian Ahmao neither shared with the missionaries the distinction between the “religion” and the “secular” nor their anxiety regarding of secularization of Christianity. Rather, the epistemological distinction that the Ahmao received through the process of Christianization was that of “true” versus “false” knowledge—more specifically, the distinction between Christianity as true knowledge and millenarianism as false knowledge. The Ahmao were taught that while millenarianism destroyed social order, Christianity redeemed it. But in order to redeem social order through the reproduction of their congregation, it also became necessary for the congregations to reproduce true knowledge. That is to say, for the Ahmao converts, the encounter of Christianity and the nation-state had nothing to do with the secularization of religion, but rather pitted two regimes of truth against one another. Given this understanding of knowledge, Wang Youdao’s “true knowledge” was by no means anti-congregational. Rather, his propaganda of education was meant to introduce the true knowledge that was necessary to reproduce congregations. Therefore, though

⁷³ Nicholls and his CIM colleagues were particularly aware of secularization, as they would identify themselves as fundamentalist Christians in contrast to the liberalist or modernist Christians. Though it seemed inevitable with the spread of Chinese nationalism, the CIM missionaries went against the unification of the Chinese Church in the 1930s, as they thought that the unification would lead to the secularization of congregations and would undermine their religious authority. To stop the secularization, Nicholls and his CIM colleagues imposed strict secularism as separating the religion from the state and restricted the congregations from being involved in nationalist movements.

Wang Youdao was not interested in Christianity at all, his influence was *only* seen in Christian congregations as he was invited to teach in several congregations.

This epistemological slippage, however, resulted in tension between the missionaries' secularism and Ahmao Christianity. The fact that there is no epistemological space that allows Christian knowledge to simply be different from the secular knowledge in Ahmao Christianity has forced Christian Ahmao to hierarchize Christianity and nationalist education as inferior and superior, and vice versa. In short, this hierarchy of knowledge is how Christian Ahmao handled the relation between the state and the Christianity, which might be called "Ahmao secularism." The emergence of Ahmao secularism, in turn, challenged the missionaries' dictatorship of knowledge. Wang Youdao's "true knowledge" was extreme insofar as it posited that Christianity was not just inferior, but false. It is doubtful that Wang Youdao was always such a hardline activist of knowledge. Rather, the subsequent development of the independent movement as shown in his alliance with Han Jie indicated that the Ahmao congregations took the liberty of organizing the hierarchy of knowledge in their own way.

As the villagers from Shihuaqing and other villages stopped going to Dashuijing for Sunday service but began to worship in Wang Youdao's newly built chapel instead, the congregation of Dashuijing to which those villagers were affiliated did not stop Wang Youdao but invited him to serve the congregation.⁷⁴ The congregation of Dashuijing

⁷⁴ Dashuijing was one of the villages where Nicholls and the missionary party stopped on their 1906 trip. The chapel was built before 1910, and was one of the earliest Ahmao chapels in central Yunnan region. Located between Zhaotong and Kunming, any Ahmao who travelled between these two cities stopped by either Dashuijing or nearby villages. Because of this important location, Dashuijin was also the place where the CIM and the Methodist Church divided their parishes. North and east to Dashuijing was the Methodist parish; south and west to Dashuijing was the CIM parish. It was one of the first chapels providing

sub-outstation was officially affiliated with the CIM in Sapushan, but Shimenkan's influence was also present. The congregation offered to join Wang Youdao's independent movement and actually renamed itself as the Church of Love. The name "Church of Love" in Ahmao simply means a house of caring. It reminded the congregation that God takes as much care of the congregation as He does of the Jews, and Jesus takes as much care of the congregation as He does of his apostles. Together with Han Jie, an Ahmao teacher-pastor trained in Shimenkan who had just begun his service in Dashuijing, Wang Youdao began offering education to the congregation and reformed the school in accordance with the curriculum of the Shimenkan church school system. In 1925, there were more than eighty students in the church school, while the Sapushan school had only twenty to thirty students. The congregation of Dashuijing was also expanded from a hundred to three hundred and fifty members. In the following few years, the Church of Love expanded so rapidly that by 1928, it already had several branches in Xundian and Fuming counties (Han Xingde 2004, 247–48).

As the congregation and school grew, their financial need became more than the congregation could support. In order to ease the financial pressure, Han Jie borrowed money to start a small business. Both Wang Youdao and Han Jie agreed that once the business started getting money back, the income should repay the debt first and the profit would then be divided into two parts. One would be used to print hymns and Gospels, while the other would be used to compensate the school finances. A couple months later,

introductory education in the early 1910s. Though Dashuijing was officially affiliated with the CIM in Sapushan, the Shimenkan's influences could also be seen. Since the mass conversion movement, it was recorded that several Ahmao teacher-pastors from Shimenkan had been in this village performing various duties. Some of them stayed for years (KMJDJS 2005, 169; Yang Hanxian 1984).

the business was earning money but Wang Youdao had spent all of it to run the school. Han Jie accused Wang Youdao of having pilfered the church money, but Wang Youdao argued that all the money had been used to compensate the school's expenses. Han Jie was furious because he thought Wang Youdao violated their agreement regarding the distribution of church money and left him, Han Jie, holding the debt. Wang Youdao was forced to leave, but Han Jie could not stay any longer either. The debt weighed heavily on Han Jie and his family, forcing him to seek help from elsewhere, since the congregation was unable to provide more financial support. By the end of 1928, both Han Jie and Wang Youdao left Dashuijing and both the Church of Love and the school were closed. Wang Youdao went back to Shihuaqing and continued his teaching and his school there. Han Jie left Dashuijing in despair; now an exiled teacher-pastor from Shimenkan, he did not return to his hometown but eventually settled down in Dalongtan. It is not clear what led Han Jie there, but he and his family have continued living there since 1928. And due to Han Jie's involvement, the village developed into the center of the Adventist Church in northern Yunnan (ibid., 249).

The encounter of Han Jie and the Adventist Church was a milestone of the Adventist mission in Yunnan. It started when Han Jie asked Xie Hongzhen for financial help. Xie then introduced Han to Feng Desheng, the newly arrived Adventist missionary in Kunming. Feng promised to ease Han's debt in exchange for his proselytization to the Adventist Church. In 1929, Han Jie was in an Adventist training program in Kunming for three months. After returning from Kunming, Han Jie began preaching Adventist Gospel in Dalongtan. Though Han Jie was not the first Christian Ahmao proselytized to the Adventist Gospel, he was definitely the most important figure.

On the advice of Han Jie, the Adventist Church modeled its mission on both the Methodist Church in Shimenkan and the now defunct Church of Love in Dashuijing. Through Han Jie's introduction, Feng Desheng stationed himself in Dashuijing and the Adventist Church strategically took over the vacancies when the Church of Love left after 1928. By 1937, there were more Adventist Ahmao than CIM Ahmao in Xundian and Songming. The Adventist Church also adopted the Shimenkan model that administered the congregations through a centralized church and school system, with the leadership of the Adventist Church in Kunming appointing "missionaries" to build a congregation and start a village school. The role of the missionary in the Adventist Church was similar to the role of the teacher-pastor in the Shimenkan Methodist Church. Each Ahmao missionary was in charge of an outstation and a church school. People and positions rotated every couple of years, in order to prevent the missionaries from becoming too involved in local politics. This system did differ from the Shimenkan system in that the congregation did not have any input into the missionary appointments (CXMZSL 2005, 165–66).

In 1946, the Adventist Church in Yunnan was divided into four parishes, and the central parish, which was the most prosperous mission, was centered in Dalongtan. In 1950, Han Xingde, Han Jie's son, was ordained as Reverend and put in charge of the northern Yunnan parish, which overlapped with the southern region of the CIM Sapushan parish. By the 1940s, the CIM and the Adventists divided the Ahmao congregations in the southern region of Sapushan parish in half, and the majority of Ahmao Christians in Anning and Xundian were Adventists. By then, the Adventist Church had established seventeen churches, supported more than thirty teachers, and had more than seventeen

hundred members (*ibid.*, 166). To compensate for the lack of literate Christian Ahmao in the Sapushan parish, the Adventist Church even actively recruited Ahmao teacher-pastors from Shimenkan by offering them better salaries than they received from the Methodist Church, and by continuing to recruit promising young literates and sending them to Kunming or Shanghai to receive advance training.⁷⁵

Han Jie and Wang Youdao's conflict over the proportion of funding to distribute to the school versus the congregation reflected a broader disagreement over the "hierarchy of knowledge" between Christianity and the nationalist propaganda of education.⁷⁶ Unlike Wang Youdao, Han Jie did not regard Christianity as inferior in terms of true knowledge. Though both men agreed that education was developed for the benefit of congregations, Han Jie disagreed with Wang Youdao that public education should replace Bible teaching. Han Jie intended instead to redeem the congregation with a better understanding of the Bible. Indeed, Han's proselytization was not just because of his debt but also because of the promise that the Adventist Church made to print the Bible and Hymns that Han Jie had translated. The promise was fulfilled in 1933 as Han Jie was appointed to the translation project (Han Xingde 2004, 252, 256). Han Jie's work marked the full independence of the Ahmao Adventist from the CIM and Methodist Church, and set up the foundation for the continuation of the Adventist Church in Ahmao.⁷⁷ In other

⁷⁵ It was reported that the Adventist Church poached teacher-pastors in Shimenkan parish with much higher salaries for Ahmao elites (Wang Xinzong 1986).

⁷⁶ Interview with Wang Hanchen, May 13, 2011.

⁷⁷ Though the denominational separation was eliminated after the 1950s, the Adventist Church has been showing signs of re-appearance since the late 1990s. Though there is no indication of the denominational divide on the official registration; the Adventist Church had found its way to re-established Ahmao Adventist congregations before the 1950s. This emerging phenomenon has not yet received any official or scholarly attention. It is neither illegal nor legal. The emergence of Adventist Ahmao congregations has

words, Han Jie found his independent movement of the Church of Love resonance in the Adventist Church's *sola scriptura* movement. While deviating from the CIM, Han Jie and his followers rationalized their deviations as they went for the Adventist Church since Adventist missionaries knew the Bible better than CIM missionaries. The Adventists would say that Nicholls was furious over the deviation only because they, the Adventists, knew something Nicholls did not know.

It was not just through the church, but also through the school that knowledge was reproduced. Whether the school was a Bible school or a church school, both contributed to the reproduction of the congregation by reproducing knowledge. For the congregations of the CIM in the Sapushan parish, Wang Youdao's Independent Church and his progressive notion of true knowledge were not as threatening as Han Jie's Adventist Church. Wang Youdao's Independent Church was less threatening simply because his congregation did not have enough resources to run the school. But the Adventist Church was a real threat as its congregation systematically grew by extending its church school system. To confront this challenge posed by the Adventists, the CIM congregations allied with Wang Youdao. In 1937, the Adventist Church appointed Long Changde to Dasongyuan, a village near Xuanwotang outstation, where he started a primary school and began teaching the Adventist Gospel. Long Changde was a charismatic preacher and teacher. His school and congregation soon attracted many villagers and seriously undermined the Xuanwotang outstation. To compete with Long Changde, the Xuanwotang outstation invited Wang Youdao to hold an advanced program to train

been carefully coped with by the main congregations. Nevertheless, Adventists have distinguished themselves by the Ahmao Bible and Hymn books they use, and of course the Sabbath they witness.

prospective Ahmao teachers. The alliance could not be approved by Nicholls who criticized Wang Youdao for spreading his “No GOD” policy in his 1936 report. Nevertheless, the foreign missionaries’ could hardly maintain their control over the tribal congregations as the latter had stopped receiving any funds from the denomination since 1935. Even the Sapushan bureaucracy continued existing, its administrative and ministerial authority strived to be effective. During the 1930s and 1940s, the Xuanwotang outstation, which faced the greatest threat from the Adventist Church, took up the lead of the Ahmao congregations in this region. Its alliance with Wang Youdao was informative, for it showed that the congregation had developed its own solution to the problem and that Nicholls could no longer dictate to the congregation.

Unfortunately, the alliance did not last long. One year later, in 1938, Wang Hongdao, Wang Youdao’s brother returned from Kunming after three years of studying in the KMT school and renamed Wang Youdao’s Independent Church of the 1920s as the Shihuaqing Division of the Chinese Christian Church. Wang Youdao was forced to leave Xuanwotang and went back to Shihuaqing. In 1939, the newly organized Chinese Christian Church established its Frontier Division focusing on missions among tribal Christians in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces. The Wang brothers and their newly re-started Shihuaqing congregation resumed connections with the Chinese Christian Church. In 1940, Wang Youdao made the Shihuaqing school the first officially registered/approved elementary school in the Sapushan parish. This gesture made graduates of the Shihuaqing school eligible to pursue higher education. Nevertheless, when the communist state took over public education in 1952, the Wang brothers’ Independent Church lost its justification as a Christian church in the “hierarchy of

knowledge.” Though Wang Hongdao was ordained as the first Ahmao priest in 1951, the congregation of the Independent Church disappeared soon after the school was taken over by the provincial government. Throughout the decade, the congregation had no more than a couple hundred members from nearby villages located along the county border of Fumin and Songming (CXMSL 2005, 167).

The schisms that bothered Nicholls were not so much problems of secularization, as problems related to the emergence of Ahmao secularism and a hierarchy of knowledge that challenged Nicholls’ monopoly over Christian knowledge. Both Wang Youdao’s independent movement and Han Jie’s proselytization to the Adventist Church were justified through claims to offer superior forms of knowledge. But ultimately, what the popularity of the schisms really reflected was the increasing demand for education that arose from the rapidly changing socio-economic conditions that had dramatically weakened the domination of the Sapushan bureaucracy over the southern congregations. That is to say, the schisms were part of a broader response of grassroots congregational movements responding to the growing demands for education. As the schisms arose, the Ahmao congregations in the southern region of the Sapushan parish were inevitably dragged into the politics of the missionary societies. Besides the schisms, those congregations that stayed in the CIM denomination could not ignore the demand of education, either, but also developed their own congregational movements to promote education. As a result, the congregational landscape of the Sapushan parish divided into southern and Northern regions. Having describing the schism that emerged, I will now discuss the congregational movements that developed from the CIM congregations in the southern region of the Sapushan parish and that eventually transformed the Sapushan

bureaucracy.

Dividing the Parish

The Sapushan parish had been divided since the 1920s. Throughout the decades, the congregational landscape of the southern region was very different from that in the Northern region. Geographically, Sapushan was at the center. The region north of Sapushan in Wuding and Luquan counties was characterized by highly concentrated tribal populations, while the region south of Sapushan, extending to Kunming, featured less concentrated tribal populations. The southern boundary of the parish was not firm, instead loosely extending to south Lufeng and Kunming. Around Kunming, the southern region developed quickly. On the one hand, it became an important mission field that attracted missionaries from varied mission societies.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the region became an important hinterland of the capital city whose increasing demands for wage labors attracted new migrants (CXMZSL 2005, 196). During the 1920s–1940s, the development of Ahmao congregations in the south was tightly connected to the socio-economic conditions there. The schisms occurred in the southern region reflected the increasing demands of education that arose from the demographic as well as economic development of the southern congregations. But while the southern congregations were dragged into the politics of missionary societies, the relatively remote and isolated Northern congregations managed to remain unaffected. For their part, the

⁷⁸ The Ahmao villages had been rapidly dispersed beyond the territory of the Sapushan parish since the 1920s. The region was a virgin mission field. The CIM, CHMA, and the Adventist Church were all eager to find a way to reach the Ahmao congregation (KMJDJS 2005, 47–54).

southern congregations became increasingly independent of outstations despite affiliating with the CIM denominational bureaucracy. Generally speaking, there were three factors that contributed to undermine the domination of the CIM bureaucracy over Ahmao congregations in the south.

First was the factor of migration. The numbers of Ahmao migrants from Shimenkan increased rapidly between the 1920s and 1950s due to several natural disasters and political disturbances in the Northern provinces (WMBSL 2005, 13-15). Along with this increase in migration, the Sapushan Ahmao congregations grew rapidly over the decades, too. By the early 1950s, there were approximately ten thousand Ahmao Christians in central Yuunan affiliated with the CIM in Sapushan, about three times the number reported in the 1920s.⁷⁹ Moreover, as Yang Hanxian ([1979]1982, 26) noted, the emerging trend in the 1920s was the migration of Shimenkan literate Christians to Kunming for economic opportunities. Many of them ended up teaching and preaching in Sapushan Ahmao villages (KMJDJS 2005, 36).

In addition to this inter-parish migration, the natural growth of the population also pushed Christian Ahmao to migrate toward the southern parish. The two Ahmao outstations in the Northern parish were Shilata and Mulian. The three outstations in the southern parish were Xuanwotang, Muyang, and Daqing. Sapushan station was located in the central area but its affiliated sub-outstations were all in the south. Compared to the Northern parish, the outstations in the south were more widely dispersed across five counties—Wuding, Lufeng, Luquang, Fuming, and Songming—while the two outstations

⁷⁹ Fifty thousand in north provincial borders affiliated with the Methodist Church (雲南民族情況匯集(下) [1950] 1986, 16)

in the north were both in north Wuding county. The Northern parish used to be the main settlement of Ahmao migrants in northern Yunnan, but the southern parish began to grow in the late nineteenth century, and the population grew rapidly from the 1900s through the 1950s. Though I am not able to provide precise data, my own fieldwork—which covered more than thirty Ahmao villages, including twenty villages located in the southern region—suggests that most of the villages in the south were established in the late nineteenth century throughout the first two decades of twentieth century. Many of them, especially those residing in the area across the borders of Wuding, Luchuan, and Fuming, reported that their ancestors came from the north, and that reverse migration from the south to the north was unheard of.⁸⁰ The increasing number of migrants in the southern parish, on the one hand, raised the needs for new congregations, while undermining old congregations. This demographic reality provided the conditions for the schisms described above.

The second factor was the militia. From the 1920s to the 1940s, joining the militia was the most promising career plan for young Ahmao in terms of providing upward social mobility. The Ahmao militia was deeply involved in the militant nationalist movement in Yunnan province. In the 1930s, the militia had more than five hundred Ahmao enlisted (CXMZS 2005, 196–97). Those who were able to play important roles in the militia benefited from their education in Christian schools. Many of them received military ranks and enjoyed veteran benefits during the nationalist regime. In particular,

⁸⁰ Both Nicholls (1946) and Cyril Edwards (1947) reported a similar tendency that Christian Ahmao did not fraternize with non-Christians. In many cases, they formed Christian villages apart from those who continued in the old ways (Enwall 1994, vol. 2, 220). This tendency was consistent with the general trend of migration from the north to the south that accelerated in the early twentieth century.

the militia leader Zhu Youlin (1897–1982) was named as Lieutenant Colonel in 1934.

However, upward social mobility through the militia was incompatible with the interests of Ahmao congregations. The paid military service and upward social mobility attracted young men to leave the congregations, many of whom did so permanently. Indeed, some villages that were deeply involved in the militia left the congregations entirely. For example, Zhu Youlin was from Ganba, a small village in Lufeng. The village was among the first converted villages in 1906. Zhu Youlin spent a few years in Sapushan but dropped out in 1919 before graduating. The reason for his dropping out was attributed to a confrontation with Nicholls. Later, Zhu joined the military in 1924. In 1925, General Long Yun of the Yunnan military force—a Nosu landlord from Zhaotong who later became the governor of Yunnan province—appointed Zhu Youlin to establish an Ahmao militia. The Ahmao militia was supported by the Yunnan government with the purpose of fighting against an uprising of bandits in Wuding and Lufeng. It is not clear when Zhu Youlin was proselytized but it turned out that the whole Ganba village became a non-Christian village. Nevertheless, the village school continued running throughout the decades and most of its graduates served in the military.

The third factor was the schisms themselves. The CIM denomination was never affluent in terms of its finances; indeed, it had stopped funding any congregations in 1935. Though the decision of stopping funding was expected, it was like the last straw for the already weak denominational bureaucracy in Sapushan. Unlike the CIM congregations, which relied only on members' volunteer works and donations and were thus financially struggling, the newly arrived Adventist Church was much more affluent. The church schools affiliated with Adventist stations were very well-funded (Han Xingde 2004,

256–57). Outstanding students would receive fellowships to go to Adventist theological programs in Shanghai, and later they would be appointed to village congregations, where they received good stipends from the denomination for their services. But the competition between CIM and Adventist congregations was not just a matter of resources; it was also a matter of reproducing knowledge that was related to the congregations' well-being. The CIM congregations in the south were most vulnerable to Adventist "poaching." The Muyang outstation and its affiliated villages were almost taken over by the Adventist Church. Xuanwotang and Daqing outstations were also seriously affected. While the denomination was unwilling to improve school education and was plagued by its lack of resources, the grassroots inter-congregational networks played an increasingly important role in responding to the schisms brought by the Adventist Church.

The fact that the Sapushan bureaucracy gradually lost control over the southern congregations reflected the de-bureaucratization of the southern congregations over the past two decades. The denominational unit—either outstation or sub-outstation—was split into village congregations, and became smaller and smaller. A village congregation was a congregation that developed in a grassroots fashion. As long as there was a chapel and a preacher who could lead the worship, then there was a village congregation. A village congregation attracted members from nearby villages. Since the village congregations might or might not be ordained, some were invisible to the denomination and its members were officially affiliated to sub-outstation or outstation. It is possible that a village congregation might be integrated into the denominational bureaucracy as a sub-outstation after years of development. But as the administrative authority of the Sapushan bureaucracy declined, both outstations and sub-outstations became more and

more like village congregations.

From the 1920s onwards, there were more and more village congregations, splitting off from the outstations or sub-outstations in the southern region of the parish. In many cases, a village congregation that continued functioning as a church for many years would replace the role of outstation or sub-outstation in its members' daily lives. The positive effect of the congregational split was the increasing participation of members in the village congregation. Members' daily activities were largely intertwined with the village congregation. The negative effect of the congregational split was the isolation of the village congregation that might reduce the quality of the congregation. With both the positive and negative effects of the congregational split, the extended thanksgiving ceremony became more and more important in the southern region.

While the denominational bureaucracy was weak in the south, the inter-congregational cohesion was maintained and strengthened through the extended thanksgiving ceremony. Each year, a village congregation would invite its fellow congregations to join the extended thanksgiving ceremony. The ceremony took place during the winter season when people were not occupied by their agricultural work, usually from early November through end of the year. Unlike the inter-tribal/congregational cohesion that centered around the station or outstation, the inter-congregational grassroots network was a decentralized one. A village congregation developed its inter-congregational network by holding an extended thanksgiving ceremony and consolidated solidarities by participating in others' ceremonies.

In sum, since the 1920s, the congregational landscapes of the Northern and southern regions of the Sapushan parish increasingly diverged. Whereas the village

congregations were prosperous in the south, the north was still governed by territorially divided outstations. On the one hand, the schisms diversified the southern congregations; on the other hand, the CIM congregations went through the process of de-bureaucratization. There were no personnel or congregations or events that ousted the village congregations from the Sapushan bureaucracy, but the congregational movement had been emerging in the south since the late 1920s.

The Church School Boom, 1930s–1940s

Compared to Han Jie and Wang Youdao's schisms in the 1920s, the movement developing among CIM congregations was modest and practical. It began with the congregational split of outstations and the rise of village congregations, followed by a boom in church schools among the village congregations. As outstations gradually lost their centrality in the south, inter-congregational networks increasingly defined extended sociality beyond a village congregation. Along with the rise of village congregations, the church school boom of the 1930s and 1940s seriously challenged the denominational monopoly of knowledge.

In the 1910s, only the Sapushan station and a few of its seven outstations had church schools providing primary education in Chinese to Christian Ahmao. It was not until 1923 that the first secondary school in Sapushan began recruiting students. But all of a sudden in the 1930s, schools popped up throughout the south, coordinated by villagers and organized in the name of village congregations. The contrast in the numbers of church schools established before the 1910s and those established after 1930s is sharp enough to make the church school boom a significant phenomenon of the congregational

movement that developed among the Christian Ahmao in the south.

Below is a chart including the church schools started by Ahmao CIM congregations in the Sapushan parish before 1950. The data was recorded from two recently published histories co-authored by local researchers. While the data is incomplete and its accuracy can be questioned, it does at least confirm that there was a church school boom in the 1930s.

Sources: (CXMZSL 2005, 77–78) and (KMJDJS 2005, 235–36).
Sapushan (1911), Manpo (1941), Cizhuqing(1930), Maidichong(1932)
Fenshuiling(1941), Xinzhuang (1943)
Daqing (1916), Pengzitian(1936), Xiaodongqing(1937), Baiyilongtan(1944), Baishiyan(1945)
Gudongpo(1937), Zhaigohe(1931)
Xuanwotang(1936), Xiaoshuijing(193?), Shaojiwa(193?), Shilipo(193?)
Muyang(1913), Duomude(1938);

Table 4.1 CIM church schools in Sapushan parish before 1950

We can draw at least two conclusions from the above chart. First, church schools were not consistent with the denominational hierarchy, as there were schools that were not affiliated with outstations and there were outstations that had no schools. For example, the outstation at Mulian (a.k.a. Tangli) did not have church schools; but there were church schools in Shilipo, Baishiyan, and Xiaoshuijing—even though those village congregations were neither outstations nor sub-outstations. It is also important to note

that church schools established in the 1930s and 1940s were neither approved nor supervised by denominational bureaucracies. In some cases, the church school was run by another inter-village cooperation independent of the village congregation, though there was some overlap in terms of leadership. In other cases, the church schools were supervised by the village congregations without forming independent school committees. Second, with only three exceptions, the schools were established in the two decades between the 1930s and 1940s.⁸¹ Moreover, seventeen out of the nineteen schools were located in the southern region of the parish, meaning that those congregations had a much higher demand for schools than the outstations and sub-outstations in the north. In sum, the data shows that the schools were a response to the emergence of village congregations in the southern region of the Sapushan parish.

If the inter-congregational grassroots networks gradually flattened the denominational hierarchy, the advent of church schools challenged denominational authority.⁸² Take the Shilipo school as an example. Shilipo was a village near Dalongtan. Christian villagers nearby Shilipo were affiliated with the Maidichong sub-outstation,

⁸¹ The reported data here indicates there were only three church schools in Ahmao congregations. The numbers might not be accurate as there were seven outstations and we could possibly expect that there was a church school in each outstation. Nevertheless, there were no materials clearly indicating that each outstation had one church school. Nicholls' own report in 1919 left the number of church schools unclear. Furthermore, the church school in Dashuijing where Wang Youdao received his primary education in the early 1910s is not listed in the table since Dashuijing was not affiliated with the CIM since the early 1920s.

⁸² The two outstations in the Northern region of the Sapushan parish were least influenced by the grassroots congregational movement. In particular, the Tangli outstation remained intact to the outstations. The outstation had a church school, chapel, and clergies. There were chapels erected for the purpose of convenience but only a liturgist was appointed to the chapel by the outstation. The clergies of the outstation would supervise the chapels as every week there would be one preacher from the outstation providing Sunday service in each chapel. The system that I believed was closest to Nicholls' original designation remained in Tangli until 1950s but had collapsed in other outstations. None of my informants in the south region, even a former priest who was in his late eighties, had ever heard of this circuit system being practiced in his Muyang outstation.

which was officially administrated by Sapushan station. There was no independent village congregation in the 1920s, but the villagers had still established a school by the early 1930s. The demand for a school arose from anxieties regarding the aggressive Adventist Church whose center in Dalongtan was nearby.⁸³ After establishing the school, Shilipo and nearby villages, including Dashuijing, Dahualishu, Dapingtai, Moyilong, Zixuquan, and etc., formed a village congregation and set up a committee to run the school and recruited both Christian and non-Christian students. Throughout the decades, the Shilipo village congregation was never officially recognized as a sub-outstation of the denominational bureaucracy.⁸⁴ But the Shilipo church school remained independent of the Sapushan bureaucracy until 1952 when the government took over. Another example was the advance school in Xuanwotang. Xuanwotang was an outstation established in 1916. It was located in the region where the majority of Christian Ahmao was affiliated with the Adventist Church in the 1930s and 1940s. The congregation established an advance school and invited Wang Youdao to teach a dozen prospective teachers from Wuding, Luquan, Lufeng, Songmin, and Xundian. The teachers came because they wanted to upgrade their knowledge and teaching skills. Though Xuanwotang's school survived for only two years, it is evident that the advance school was an attempt to be the authoritative organization for which village congregations were looking.

Though the church schools listed above confirmed the rising trend of public

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Pan, who was the deacon of Dashuijing church (former Shilipo church) in May, 2011.

⁸⁴ The establishment of the Shilipo school was an important milestone that granted Christian villagers, most of whom were recent settlers, with independence from both the Xuanwotang outstation and the Sapushan station, both of which were far away from the area.

education in the ROC regime, none of the schools were officially registered in the early 1940s. Instead, the informal schools provided four-year primary education that was supervised by neither the government nor the denomination. The schools were small, and usually had one teacher and a dozen students. Since the textbooks were easily bought in the bookstores in Kunming, the teacher could design the schedule and syllabi for each class according to the curriculum issued by the ministry of education. Student attendance was not regular, and the majority of the students dropped out after the first year or two. Even if they did complete all four years, they did not receive any certificate. If the graduates wanted to pursue secondary education, they went to either Sapushan or Daqing; their “diploma” had no use beyond the parish. In short, the informal primary education provided little in terms of upward social mobility. Nevertheless, it provided Christian Ahmao with an effective method to facilitate Chinese literacy and thus extended their access to Christian knowledge.

Although the Adventists, the Independents, and the CIMs identified themselves differently and their congregations competed for members, all three denominations shared similar concerns regarding the reproduction of literacy. Challenges developed within each group that had but one purpose: to build schools where Christian villagers could learn to facilitate Chinese language and literacy, which would, in turn, ensure that true knowledge could be reproduced in village congregations. From the tribal Christians’ point of view, both ministration and administration were meant to ensure successful reproduction of congregations. The congregations reproduced through gatherings, where knowledge was transmitted. In the beginning stages of bureaucratization, missionaries were able to dominate the congregations through their control of knowledge by limiting

the access to literacy. But as the Sapushan bureaucracy gradually lost control over the southern congregations, this control was usurped by the emergence of Christian Ahmao elites who directly administered and ministered to tribal congregations.

From the administrative as well as the ministerial point of view, Christian Ahmao elites were in charge of transmitting knowledge. But their significance to village congregations were more than just transmitting knowledge—they were crucial to the reproduction of village congregations. Though it would be too much to claim that Christian Ahmao elites in the early twentieth century developed their own novel theology or pedagogy—they only were newly literate and converted—but they were certainly capable of reproducing the knowledge that they received from the missionaries and through other mediums. Importantly, the process of reproduction was itself creative. The Ahmo elites' reproduction of knowledge was not simply a copy of what they received, but a process that involved adapting the materials to best fit their congregations: they were re-contextualizing the knowledge. And while Ahmo elites re-contextualized the knowledge they received from the missionaries and other mediums, their congregations embodied the re-contextualized knowledge and thus re-defined their own existence. That is to say, the congregation came to exist through the reproduction of knowledge. In this process, Christian Ahmao elites played the most decisive role. The emergence of Christian Ahmao elites undermined the dictatorship of the missionaries, as their presence ultimately came to substitute for the absence of the missionaries in the reproduction of congregations.

Christian Ahmao elites in congregations replaced the authoritative voices of missionaries and they did so via schools, sites where the authoritative voice was

reproduced. Theoretically, a school is not necessary for the reproduction of the congregation. But since the beginning, Christianity was introduced to the tribal populations through classroom-like settings and the establishment of a school was often necessary to transmit authoritative knowledge. A school attracted Ahmao converts for it provided access to learn or grasp authoritative knowledge, whereas a congregation was a site for the exercise of existing knowledge. The existence of a school was for the future of the congregation, whereas a congregation revealed itself as an institution of the here and now. In short, establishing a school soon became a symbol indicating a congregation's capability to transmit knowledge and, thus, reproduce itself. Thus the emergence of the church school boom in 1930s reflected not only the decline of the missionaries' dictatorship over knowledge, but also the demand of southern tribal congregations for authenticity and self-sufficiency in light of the schisms.

The boom in church schools and village congregations together formed a symbiosis as the congregation supported the school and the school lent authenticity to the village congregation. While the southern congregations were gradually de-bureaucratized, the symbiosis of the school and the village congregation rendered the absent bureaucracy a continuous presence in congregations through the reproduction of literacy. The fact that even today the Ahmao congregations that were previously affiliated with Sapushan bureaucracy continue to identify themselves as CIM congregations in the post-denominational revival of Christianity proves the continuous presence of Sapushan bureaucracy in Ahmao congregations. As described above, the congregational movements—whether they manifested as schisms or as the emergence of village congregations—were rooted in the emergence of church schools. Schools, by engineering

authoritative knowledge without being supervised by the missionaries, entailed an epistemological effect as re-defining true knowledge from false knowledge. As a result, the emergence of the Ahmao's secularism that suppressed the missionary's secularism in the congregational movements in turn re-defined the authoritative knowledge upon which the reform of Sapushan bureaucracy progressed in the 1940s.

Denominational Reform, 1940s

The grassroots congregational movement that developed in the south set the stage for the denominational reform in the 1940s. The denominational reform involved a general attempt to promote higher education while reinforcing inter-congregational alliances among tribal congregations in the Sapushan parish, which was spurred by the increasing significance of Chinese nationalism to tribal congregations, especially those in the southern parish. Nevertheless, the denominational reform should not be lumped together with the nationalist movement among Chinese Christians since the 1920s. Rather, it was both a continuation and an extension of the congregational reform that attempted to re-bureaucratize tribal congregations. With this political agenda, the reform could not avoid the tension between the missionaries and tribal congregations. Though the tension was perceived as a leadership conflict between Christian Ahmao elites and the foreign missionaries in Sapushan bureaucracy, it actually reflected the epistemological slippage engendered by the conflict between the missionaries' and the Ahmao's versions of secularism; the same slippage could be seen in the schisms that seriously undermined the bureaucratic authority. Thus the consequence of the denominational reform was not simply the transition of the leadership from the missionaries to Christian Ahmao elites

but an emergence of the tribal secularism that redefined the relation between tribal Christianity and the nationalist state.

Generally speaking, Chinese nationalism was introduced to the Sapushan bureaucracy through the encounter of Christian Ahmao elites and Chinese nationalists and Christians. It was disseminated through the primary education curriculum and the church school boom among Ahmao congregations in the south. That is to say, the grassroots congregational reform was not an effect of Chinese nationalism. Rather, the congregational reform provided a stage for Chinese nationalism to manifest itself in village congregations through the establishment of church schools. Thus, the same schools that granted Ahmao elites legitimacy to disseminate authoritative knowledge turned Chinese nationalism into the voice of authority for village congregations. As denominational reform was taking place, missionaries and Christian Ahmao elites conflicted over where and how to draw the line between the denominational Christianity and Chinese nationalism. The dispute could hardly reconcile, as the two sides did not share similar epistemological ground. Though the tribal congregations took over the leadership of the Sapushan bureaucracy in late 1940s, the newly emergent tribal secularism could hardly win as the Chinese nation-state was in transition.

Denominational reform was stirred up by Long Fuyi (1908–1989), a Sapushan native whose family was one of the first to follow Nicholls; indeed, several members of Long's family had been deeply involved in the station and the Council. Long Fuyi began advocating denominational reform after being appointed as the principle of Sapushan school in 1939. Though Long Fuyi became a notorious figure due to his persecution of Christian Ahmao over the course of revolutionary decades, in the early 1940s he was a

respected Ahmao teacher and the strongest advocate of denominational reform. Even today, Long Fuyi is remembered for his enthusiasm in promoting higher education and his courage on public opposition of Nicholls (CXMZSL 2005, 191–92).

Long's vision of denominational reform was shaped during his years of study in a teacher's training program, but his decision to detour from the career of clergyman was influenced by the grassroots congregational movement. Long received his primary and secondary education in the Sapushan school during 1917–1925. In 1929, he began his career as a clergyman appointed to the Tangli outstation in the Northern region of the Sapushan parish. In 1931, he left the outstation after getting married and migrated to his in-law's village where land was more abundant. In 1934, the villagers of Shilipo had just built their new chapel. The newly emergent village congregation invited Long Fuyi to start a school. It was during those three years of teaching in Shilipo that Long Fuyi became aware of the congregational movement in the south. His experiences in both the Tangli outstation and the Shilipo village congregation created a strong contrast. Compared to Shilipo, the Tangli congregation was remote and ignorant and the villagers were hardly aware of the rapidly changing social world. Long Fuyi felt strongly that Nicholls' teachings and his Sapushan bureaucracy were out of date. In 1936, Long Fuyi applied to the Wuding Teacher's program (武定簡師, equivalent to a middle school degree) at the age of twenty eight, and became the first Sapushan Ahmao who ever pursued education in middle school. During those three years of study, Long Fuyi bought into the nationalist propaganda of education and citizenship. After graduating, Long Fuyi succeeded Zhu Mingli as the principal of the Sapushan school. He was the first Sapushan Ahmao to become the principal. As a Sapushan native, Long Fuyi benefited from his familiarity with the denominational politics and became eager to mobilize more resources and support from his fellow villagers. He soon made himself the opinion leader of the

Ahmao congregation and extended his influence to other tribal congregations (*ibid.*, 191–92).

In July 1940, Long Fuyi and Pan Wenhao called an inter-tribal meeting to discuss the issue of denominational reform—something that would enhance the inter-congregational alliance they thought necessary for promoting higher education. Pan was Long’s brother-in-law and the clergyman of the Sapushan station. The meeting was quite unusual for it bypassed both Nicholls and the Council. More than seventy clergies and deacons from varied tribal congregations, mobilized through Long’s and Pan’s social network, gathered in Sapushan. The meeting proved to be the milestone of denominational reform.

Long Fuyi, the host of the meeting, appropriated the nationalist propaganda of the “New Life Movement” to call for the strengthening of the Sapushan congregations as a whole. During his years of study in the teacher’s training program in Wuding, Long had apparently been influenced by the KMT government’s “New Life Movement.” He urged the clergies and deacons to lead the congregations by living a “correct life,” one that was revealed in their moral behaviors, such as being courteous to neighbors, following rules set by the government, keeping clean, abstaining from premarital sex, and so forth. For the tribal attendees, Long’s tenets of the New Life Movement sounded familiar because they echoed what it was to be Christians in contrast to non-Christians. The tribal Christians quickly bought into the New Life Movement.⁸⁵ By combining the New Life Movement with Christianity, Long had made the newly built nation-state more accessible and relevant. Granted by the authority of the nation-state, citizenship was now understood

⁸⁵ Interview with Long Fuhua, December 20, 2008.

as an upgraded version of denominational membership. Following Long's lead, the discussion of denominational reform heated up among tribal attendees. In the end, the meeting reached two agreements that would transform Nicholls' denominational bureaucracy.

The first agreement related to the reform of the Council, namely: the tribal congregations in the Sapushan parish would thereafter be called "church (*jiaohui*)", a Chinese term referring to a Christian congregation. The agreement proposed that all congregations, regardless of their place in the denominational bureaucratic hierarchy, should be called *jiaohui*. To enhance inter-tribal cohesion, Long Fuyi promoted a Church Union that would include all *jiaohui* in the parish. Every year, the Union would hold an annual mass meeting. All the *jiaohui* affiliated with the Union would send their representatives to a meeting hosted by one of the Union *jiaohui*. The host *jiaohui* would rotate among the six tribes. The 1940 meeting decided the next annual meeting would be held by the Kopu church in Salaowu.⁸⁶

The Church Union was not approved by the missionaries, but coexisted with the denominational bureaucracy throughout the decade. Long Fuyi and his tribal followers empowered the annual meeting of the Union with authority beyond the denominational bureaucracy. The decision would be made by the *jiaohui* representatives of the annual meeting instead of just the members of the Council. The Council was excluded from the decision-making process and the foreign missionaries were only included as

⁸⁶ The 1941 meeting was hosted by the Kopu church in Salaowu; the 1942 meeting was hosted by the Lesu church in Taogu; the 1943 meeting was hosted by the Laka in Xishan; and the 1944 meeting was hosted by the Ahmao in Sapushan (YNJDJSL, manuscript)

representatives at the annual meeting. Nevertheless, the Union expected that the Council would be held responsible for the execution of the decisions, even if it wasn't involved in making the decisions. The significant authority of the annual meeting inevitably undermined the authority of the Council and had foreign missionaries who were then *the ex officio* members of the Council in an awkward position. A few years later, Nicholls resigned from the head of the Council. It is unclear whether the Church Union was the direct cause of his resignation, but it is doubtless that his conflicts with Christian Ahmao elites, especially Long Fuyi, had escalated over the years. Nicholls was the first and the last foreigner to serve as the head of the Council. After Nicholls' resignation from Sapushan in 1944, the head of the Council was to be elected in the annual meeting. Though the Council continued functioning until the early 1950s, the administrative authority shifted from the foreign missionaries to tribal Christian leaders after the establishment of the Church Union.

The second agreement related to the promotion of education. The rising demand for education in the southern region of the parish was another important issue for most attendees of the meeting. Representatives of tribal congregations requested an institution that would provide the opportunity for tribal students to pursue higher education. The analogy used by Long Fuyi was Shimenkan. Long advocated that the Union should develop education just as the Shimenkan Church had done. Though Long's proposal was not adopted, the missionaries responded to the demand for education by extending the Taogu Bible School into the North Yunnan Seminary (YNJDJS 2007, 246–47). The Taogu Bible School, established in 1939, provided a year-long Bible reading program for Christian Lesu, and prepared them with advance Bible literacy for their services to Lesu

congregations in the future. Though it was far from being a qualified institution for theological education in 1940, the missionaries promised to extend the curriculum to a three-year program that would provide both theological and secular education.

As the principal of the Sapushan school and a pronounced nationalist Christian, Long Fuyi wanted more than just theological education, he wanted higher education in accordance with nationalist propaganda. The agreement to develop seminary education was a compromise between foreign missionaries and Long Fuyi and his tribal followers. But in the end, it marked a setback for the development of nationalist education in the southern region of the Sapushan parish. Given the denomination's lack of financial resources, the foreign missionaries failed to spend any money to promote higher education in accordance with the nationalist agenda of education and, ultimately, the compromise turned out to be a failure.

In 1942, the North Yunnan Seminary in Taogu began receiving students. The principal and teachers were foreign missionaries. Students were required to have received primary education prior to seminary education, and had to be recommended by the congregations (YNJDJS 2007, 237–38). The first class had only seven students, who would receive three years theological training in the Seminary. After graduation, they were expected to serve the congregations. Ironically, the Taogu seminary was not successful. Until 1943, there were less than a dozen students in the North Yunnan Seminary. Meanwhile, however, there were more than twenty Christian Ahmao studying in the CHMS's (Chinese Homeland Missionary Society) Bible School in Lufeng. In 1944, after Nicholls left and Wang Zhiming was elected to be the head of the Council, the principal of the CHMS's seminary proposed an inter-denominational seminary in

Salaowu. In a 1946 meeting, attendees voted to terminate the Taogu seminary and authorized the CHMS to establish the seminary in Salaowu. In 1947, the Southwest Seminary began receiving students from both the Sapushan parish and other places in Yunnan province. The first class had more than more than eighty students (KMJDJS 2005, 225–27). Compared to the Taogu seminary, the Salaowu seminary was quite successful. Until 1950, there were more than a hundred alumni. Although we do not know in any detail what the differences were between the curriculums in the Taogu and Salaowu seminaries, the contrast between the failure of the former and the success of the latter suggests that the nationalist influence had fermented among tribal Christians. Not only were the resources provided by the foreign missionaries less and less attractive to tribal Christians, but the Christianity that the foreign missionaries once represented was seriously undermined by the increasing popularity of Chinese Christianity among tribal Christians.

Though the influence of Chinese Christianity on the parish seemed irreversible, it would be too much to conclude that the increased awareness of citizenship and the popularity of Chinese Christianity were indications of an increasing trend of anti-foreignism. Long Fuyi must have been aware of anti-foreignism in nationalist doctrine, which perhaps motivated him to call for the 1940 meeting. However, for those tribal Christians, anti-foreignism was more extreme than the commonalities that they found that Christianity and Chinese nationalism shared in the New Life Movement. Though it is very unlikely that Long Fuyi would have positioned Nicholls as his political rival in early 1940s, what did seem to be predictable was the increasing tension between Long Fuyi and Nicholls, which eventually pushed Long Fuyi out of Sapushan. It is even

more possible that the conflicts between Long Fuyi and Nicholls forced Long Fuyi to become an extreme Ahmao nationalist who would publically denounce foreignism and Christianity in 1950s. But Long's tribal followers did not share his anti-foreignism. In 1944, Nicholls left Sapushan to go back to Australia after his nearly fifty-year missionary career in China. Before Nicholls left, the head of the Council to succeed him was to be elected in the 1943 annual meeting.⁸⁷ The fact that Long Fuyi failed to be elected showed that his anti-foreignism was not appreciated by tribal Christians. Long Fuyi resigned as the principal of Sapushan school in 1945 and began studying in the Wuding teacher's school (武定中師, equivalent to high school degree). Though he dropped out after a year, he was the first Sapushan Ahmao to pursue a high school degree.

Nevertheless, Long Fuyi's resignation did not stop the denominational reform as it was continued by Wang Zhiming (1907–1973), the successor to Nicholls as the head of the Council. Unlike Long Fuyi who was deeply influenced by Chinese nationalism, Wang Zhiming was a southerner and had been educated in church schools. His growth and career were deeply intertwined with the grassroots congregational movement. Wang's father, who was known by his baptized name Wang Sashi, was a new migrant from Zhaotong, who arrived in Bajiaoqing a few years before the mass conversion movement. When the missionary party passed by the village in 1906, Wang Sashi received them in

⁸⁷ Long Fuhua talked about the election and Nicholls' appointment to the head of the Council in an interview conducted in December 2008. There is another version of the story indicating that Nicholls was appointed head of the Council before his leaving. I am inclined to believe Long Fuhua's version of events, since he was the only person I interviewed who could clearly describe the relationship between the annual meeting and the Council. Long Fuhua was not actually at the meeting since he was away studying at the Chongqing Seminary. Nevertheless, Long Fuhua was a notorious figure among the Christian Ahmao for his atheism and persecution of Christians during the revolutionary decades. Some of his story can be found in Tien's *Peaks of Faith* (1992, 92–96).

his house. Thereafter, Wang's father started the village congregation at his own house until the family migrated to Dahualishu, Fuming, in the early 1920s. As the oldest son of the new migrant and new convert, Wang Zhiming spent his entire childhood in migration from Bajiaoqing to Dahualishu, arriving in Dapingtai as a teenager. He received his primary education in Daqing school and secondary education in Sapushan. He began his teaching-and-preaching career in Songming in 1926, and later took up the post in Daqing until 1935. Wang Zhiming's early career in Songming overlapped with Han Jie's Church of Love. Han Jie stayed in Daqing for a short period of time after leaving Dashuijing in 1928. Wang Zhiming was teaching-and-preaching in Daqing when Han Jie was there.⁸⁸ Wang Zhiming's interest on translating Ahmao texts was initiated by Han Jie. Even before taking up the post in Sapushan, Wang Zhiming had built up a reputation through his work on Ahmao translations. In 1940 (or 1941), a few months after the 1940 annual meeting, Sapushan preacher Pan Wenhao became seriously ill and had to resign. Wang Zhiming, who was then the clergy of the Meidichong outstation affiliated with the Sapushan station, was recruited by Nicholls to succeed Pan Wenhao (CXMZSL 2003, 195).⁸⁹ As someone who was new to Sapushan, Wang Zhiming was not as active in

⁸⁸ According to Long Shengzhong, Han Jie and Wang Zhiming maintained a lifelong close relationship. When Han Jie left Dashuijing in desperation, Wang Zhiming invited him to stay in Daqing. People in Daqing remembered that Han Jie lost his mind because of his serious financial debts. Wang Zhiming was kind enough to take care of him and his family. With Wang's care, Han Jie gradually recovered. Later, through Wang's introduction, Han was able to teach in Dalongtan, Fuming, where he began preaching the Adventist Gospel.

⁸⁹ Some of the materials recorded Wang Zhiming's inauguration as the head of Sapushan Council in 1941 based upon their interviews with Wang Zisheng, who is Wang Zhiming's son. In my interview with Wang Zisheng, I asked him to clarify this. Wang Zisheng confessed that he was not sure since he was too young to remember the details. Wang Zisheng was a young teenager when his father Wang Zhiming began working in Sapushan. The family did not move to Sapushan with the father. As Wang Zisheng remembered, his father was usually not at home. Every time his father came home, his mother would make a big homecoming feast for the family. Given the distance between father and son in 1940s, it is very likely that

politics as Long Fuyi. Instead, Wang Zhiming continued to cooperate with Nicholls, translating more Christian literature into Ahmao. Because of his work on Ahmao translation and his relationship with Nicholls, it was not surprising that Wang Zhiming was elected to succeed Nicholls as the head of the Council in 1944.

Unlike Long Fuyi who pitted the nationalist's propaganda of education against the missionaries' Christian education, Wang Zhiming was less interested in nationalism but much more aware of the anti-Christianity tendency that had gradually developed in nationalism since late 1920s. After becoming the head of the Council, instead of promoting nationalist education, Wang Zhiming concentrated on developing the theological education in the Sapushan parish that was a continuation of the agreement reached at the 1940 meeting. Moreover, Wang Zhiming made the development of theological education a priority for the regeneration of the unity of the CIM congregations. Soon after his inauguration, Wang Zhiming established an Ahmao evangelical party and expected this model evangelical party would be applied to other tribal congregations. Instead of asking that the congregations send representatives to Sapushan to study, the evangelical party reached out to village congregations and held Bible training programs lasting from a week to several months in village congregations.⁹⁰

Wang Zisheng could have been confused between Wang Zhiming's inauguration as the head of the Council and his service as the clergyman of the Sapushan station.

⁹⁰ Unfortunately, there is no written data allowing us to get into details of the tribal evangelical party. My description is highly limited as I rely on only the memories of one of the former members of the Ahmao evangelical party and that of two elders who remembered the evangelical party. Their memories prevented me from describing any further details, such as how many evangelical parties were sent out from the Sapushan parish. All I can say is that in Ahmao, there was an evangelical party composed of a dozen young individuals around 1947, and Wang Zhiming himself was the leader. Most of the members of that evangelical party were recruited from the Salaowu seminary. They would travel across Ahmao villages, either in a group or separately, hosting Bible training programs. Even Wang Zhiming himself spent several months in a year on itinerary trips.

Besides the evangelical party, the tribal seminary drew the most attention of the congregations. After coordinating with the CHMS and moving to Salaowu, the seminary rapidly extended in both size and scale. Though it lasted for only five years before being disbanded in 1952, during that time, the Salaowu seminary developed into the most established seminary in Yunnan province and had students from most of the provinces (KMJDJS 2005, 225–26). To improve the quality of the theological education, the Union began to fund outstanding seminary graduates pursuing higher theological education in prestige seminaries. To name just a few who received this support: Long Fuhua, who was the younger brother of Long Fuyi, studied in Chongqing seminary for four years in 1945–1948; and Long Yueha (1923–1999) went to Bethel seminary in Shanghai from 1943 to 1945. The theological education of both men allowed them to play important roles in the revitalization of Christianity in post-revolutionary decades (CXMZSL 2005, 194–95).

In 1949, one year before the evacuation of foreign missionaries from China, Wang Zhiming was ordained as a reverend and took up the position as the superintendent of the parish (Wickeri 1998). His inauguration indicated the end of the missionary era in the Sapushan parish. Though the missionaries had very limited influences of the tribal congregations in 1940s, the superintendent of the parish who was similar to the “bishop” of a parish and stood for the authoritative voice of CIM Christianity was still a position held by the missionaries. Throughout those years of denominational reform, however, the Sapushan bureaucracy was transformed and was no longer the same one that Nicholls created in the 1910s. Rather, it had shifted from a denominational bureaucracy to a tribal one. That tribal bureaucracy was opened to the influence of Chinese nationalism but

initially kept the nation-state at a distance and accepted nationalist propaganda with caution. But as the communists took over the nation-state, the tribal congregations in the Sapushan parish were dragged into the nationwide patriotic movement of Christians in 1950. Representatives of the congregations voted to dismiss the Council as well as the Church Union in the annual meeting of 1952 because there was only supposed to be one Church Union in China (WDXZ 1990, 354–55). Though Christian Ahmao as well as other tribal Christians could not have been unaware of the political implication of the patriotic movement, the declaration signed by tribal leaders of the Sapushan parish in 1951 was named the Declaration of Religious Reform Movement, instead of a patriotic movement. In the declaration, the “three-self patriotic movement” was rationalized as necessary to “reveal the true face of Christianity and clean up the stains (使基督教露出聖潔的本來面目，洗淨一切汙點)” (WDXZ 1990, 356).⁹¹ Once dragged into the patriotic movement, the tribal converts encountered the “patriotic secularism” that gave rise to another new concept of religion and Christianity. Unfortunately, Christian Ahmao soon became the political target of the newly established atheist state in the late 1950s. The history of the Christian Ahmao in the Sapushan parish after 1950s will be taken up in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Foreign missionaries conquered the tribal populations in the Sapushan parish with Christianity. Tribal converts were organized into congregations that were both

⁹¹ 《滇北基督教聯合會為響應宗教革新運動實行自治、自養、自傳，割斷教會與帝國主義聯繫的宣言》，公曆 1951 年 2 月 17 日。

administered and ministered to by the Sapushan bureaucracy. The relation between the bureaucracy and the congregations described in this chapter, particularly among those Ahmao congregations in the south, was a dialectical one, as the bureaucracy defined the congregations and the congregations constituted the bureaucracy. Though the bureaucracy appeared stable under the dictatorship of the foreign missionaries, it proved to be just as dynamic as the congregations that it administrated.

This chapter traces the history of Ahmao Christianization in the first half of the twentieth century as a dialectic between the Sapushan bureaucracy and Ahmao congregations. As I have shown, Christian Ahmao were deeply involved in the politics of missionary society, as well as influenced by the widespread nationalist propaganda. Nevertheless, neither the politics of the missionary society nor the conflicts between nationalism and Christianity are sufficient to contextualize the Christianization of Ahmao converts. Rather, the Christianization of Ahmao converts serves as the context in which missionary politics and Chinese nationalism became significant in the dialectics between the Sapushan bureaucracy and the Ahmao congregations. In the following chapter, I will describe the “de-Christianization” of the Ahmao converts throughout the revolutionary decades as well as their “re-Christianization” over the course of the revival. As the communist state took power, the de-Christianization and the re-Christianization of Ahmao converts were dialectics between the state-led associations and the Ahmao congregations.

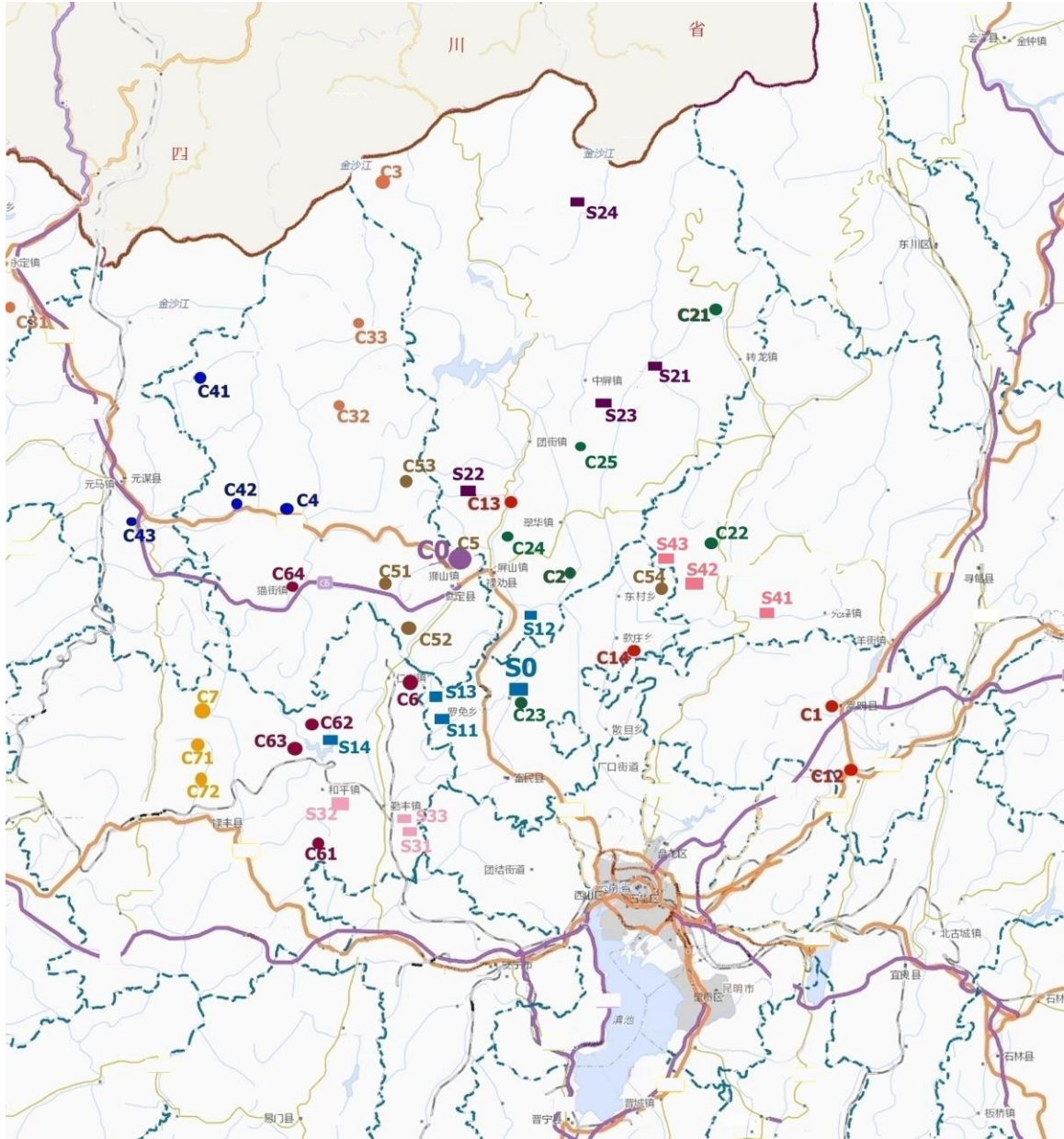


Figure 4.1 Distribution of CIM and Adventist Churches before 1950s

CIM Outstations and Sub-outstations of Sapushan Station

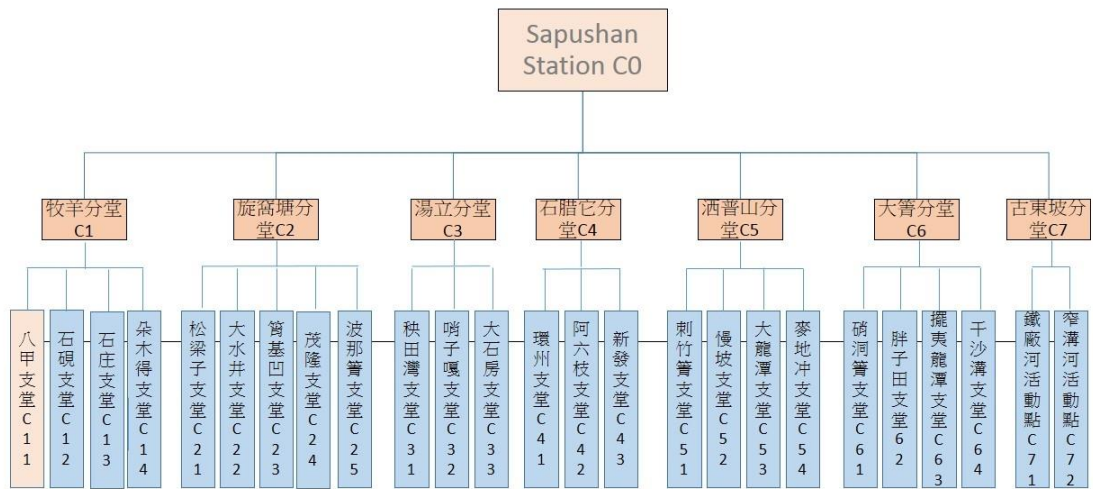


Figure 4.2 CIM Outstations and Sub-outstations of Sapushan Station

Adventist Church in “Sapushan Parish”

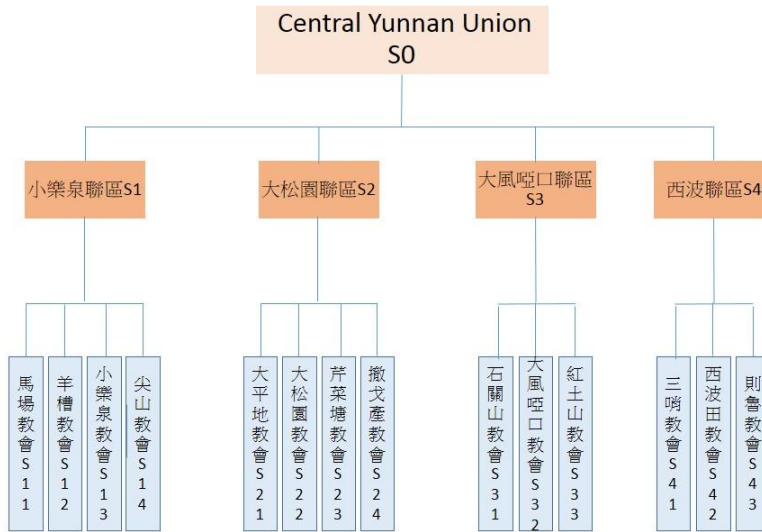


Figure 4.3 Adventist Church in “Sapushan Parish”

Chapter 5

Nationalizing Christianity

The Persecution and Ethnicity of Ahmao Christians after the 1950s

In the last chapter, I relied primarily on missionaries' accounts to describe the mass conversion movement among the Sapushan Ahmao in the early twentieth century. However, the conversion history represented in Chinese writings differs from that offered in missionaries' accounts. In Chinese writings, the origin of Sapushan Ahmao Christianity is traced back to their encounter with Methodist minister Samuel Pollard in Shimenkan, and these accounts go on to tell a very different story of interaction with the CIM missionaries. This version of Ahmao conversion history first appeared in several Chinese articles written by Chinese scholars of Ahmao Christianity in the 1980s and 1990s, and has continued to be widely cited by both Chinese and Ahmao authors since the late 1990s. Indeed, it has become the “standard history” of the Sapushan Ahmao conversion.⁹² Below, I review this history, as presented in the article “The Introduction of Christianity to Wuding,” written by an anonymous author and published in *Wuding Xian*

⁹² Thus it is fair to conclude that the Shimenkan Ahmao had remembered Nicholls and his Sapushan mission as one of several missionary trips that Shimenkan Ahmao missionaries had opened up among non-Chinese people in the provincial borders of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan. A similar account was repeated in later publications, such as Zhang Enyao (1988), Zhang Tan (1991, 1992), Qin Heping (1996), *Lue tan miaozu diqu de jidu jiao* (Li Guangliang 2004, 175), *Yunnan jidu jiao shi* (Xiao Yaohui et al. 2007, 45-46), *Chuxiong miaozu shi lue* (2007, 163-64), etc., and several other manuscripts.

Zhi (1990, 355–56).

In this article, the encounter of Sapushan Ahmao and Christianity is recorded as a desperate father's search for healing of his son's illness, just like the story that Nicholls was told and then related in his unpublished manuscript. After an unsuccessful search, the desperate father decided to bring his son back to their hometown, Zhaotong. The father had heard from people that the foreigner in Zhaotong built a school and a clinic and was treating Ahmao for a reasonable cost. The father and son arrived at Zhaotong and were received by Samuel Pollard at his station. So far the missionary and Chinese versions share the same plot, but it is after the meeting with Pollard that the accounts diverge. In the Chinese version, the son was cured and both father and son were converted to Christianity. The son received his baptized name Long Xiya, the name recorded in Chinese documents. In the missionary version of the story, the son was not cured but the father brought Pollard's message and Jesus back to the Sapushan Ahmao. One day, the father came to Nichols's station in Kunming and asked Nicholls to become involved in the tribal movement in the Sapushan region. In the Chinese version, however, Nicholls played only a limited role and it is Pollard who is identified as the foreign missionary who brought the Gospel to the Sapushan Ahmao. The Chinese version describes Pollard's trip to Kunming: to express their gratitude, the father and son invited Pollard to visit their village in Wuding, a county next to Kunming. Pollard accepted and took his first trip to the Ahmao villages in Kunming with the father and son.

In the *Wuding Xian Zhi* article, Pollard's first trip to Kunming is recorded in great detail. Accompanied by four Ahmao missionaries, Pollard travelled from Zhaotong and took the route across Huize and Dongchuan to arrive at Kunming. Afterwards, the

missionary party visited the nearby Ahmao villages Xuanwotang and Chadian, eventually arriving at Sapushan. There, they helped the Ahmao villagers to build a chapel. But Pollard could not stay to see the chapel finished. Before leaving for Zhaotong, he appointed Nicholls to take care of the Ahmao in Sapushan. Accompanied by the four Ahmao missionaries, Pollard took a long route back to Zhaotong. He travelled across villages in Luquan, then took the Northern route to visit villages in Wande, Huanzhou, and north Wuding, leaving two Ahmao missionaries there to build up the Ahmao congregation in Mulian and Shilata. Later, Pollard continued travelling south to Lufeng, and left another Ahmao missionary at Daqing village. As Pollard traveled across Songming to Xundian, he then took the route from Xuanwei to Weining. He left another Ahmao missionary at Muyang village. Pollard's first trip to north Yunnan province had covered almost all the places, though not all the villages, where the Ahmao resided.

The article goes on to relate that in 1908, Pollard had to take a second trip to Sapushan in order to supervise the churches there. This time, Pollard brought with him six Ahmao missionaries to replace the previous four Ahmao missionaries. Four new Ahmao missionaries took up the four congregations in Mulian, Shilata, Daqing, and Muyang; one was left in Sapushan to assist Nicholls' work, and another stayed in Xuanwotang. In total, there were five outstations and one station in the Ahmao region. Given the distance between the Sapushan parish and Zhaotong, Pollard could not supervise the region on a regular basis. Thus, Pollard appointed Nicholls to take over the Sapushan station and its affiliated outstations. A year later, the Ahmao missionaries from Shimenkan returned to Shimenkan as several preachers among the Sapushan Ahmao Christians, trained by the Shimenken Ahmao missionaries, were able to take up services

independently. After that, the Sapushan Ahmao and Shimenkan Ahmao went on to develop different church-systems and were supervised by different denominations.

It is very unlikely that Pollard, a Methodist missionary, would take up a missionary trip in a CIM parish. Pollard himself, a diligent writer, did not record anything close to the Kunming trip described above in his dairy or other writings. Thus it is fair to conclude that the foreign figure described in accounts of that trip cannot have been Pollard. It is even doubtful that the Kunming trip described above actually happened. Despite my efforts to find out more about the origins of this Chinese version of events, I was unable to locate an original text. Instead, this version just seems to appear, suddenly, in the late 1980s.

Written by Chinese authors, this version of the Ahmao conversion history reveals a rift between the published works and manuscripts being written by Ahmao authors before and after 1980. The famous Ahmao intellectual, Yang Hanxian, for example, who has done much influential historical and ethnographic research on Ahmao history and Christianity mentions nothing about Pollard's Kunming trip. Though, in his article "The Brief History of Christianity in the Provincial Border of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan (基督教在滇、黔、川交境一带苗族地区史略)" written in 1979 and published in 1982, Yang Hanxian, citing his father, Yang Yake's, manuscript, does indicate that the Sapushan Ahmao encountered Pollard in Shimenkan. Long Fuyi, one of the few Sapushan Ahmao whose written pieces have survived, wrote the history of Sapushan church and school in the early 1980s, but he too mentioned nothing about Pollard's Kunming trip. It wasn't until the late 1980s that the two Chinese authors, Zhang Tan (1992) and Zhang Enyao (1988), clearly asserted that Pollard made the Kunming trip. Both Zhang Tan and Zhang

Enyao indicated that they based their accounts on interviews with Ahmao. And since then, all the Chinese writings that I have found on this topic have adopted this version without any apparent doubts. Yet, given the fact that no sources were cited or specified and Zhang Tan and Zhang Enyao referred only vaguely to fieldwork, it seems reasonable to conclude that these authors constructed the Chinese version of conversion history.

Nevertheless, given its popularity after the 1990s, what's significant about this constructed history is no longer whether it accords with historical facts, but how it constitutes identity embedded in contemporary Ahmao Christianity. The framework of ethno-history transcends the denominations that divided the Christianization of the Ahmao and identifies Pollard as the common origin of both Shimenkan and Sapushan Christianity. From that single origin, the initial converts were the religious parents or grandparents of those Christians in the present. Christian Ahmao who inherited Christianity from their parents and grandparents become Ahmao Christians whose Christianity is characterized as ethnically Ahmao, rather than denominationally Christian. The Christian Ahmao are no longer portrayed as tribal Christians whose reproduction of Christianity is assigned no significance in terms of representing their tribal features—as it was understood within Nicholls' denominational bureaucracy; rather, they are now ethnic Christians whose ethnicity is reproduced through the reproduction of Christianity. In other words, this reconstructed version of Ahmao Christianity is not so much about Christianity per se, as it is about Ahmao identity and distinguishing Ahmao Christians from other Chinese Christians. The story is transformed from one about Christian Ahmao - the Ahmao who believe in Christianity - to one about Ahmao Christianity - Christians who are Ahmao.

This paradigmatic shift from Christian Ahmao to Ahmao Christianity as shown in the Chinese version of the conversion history emphasizes that Ahmao Christians are capable of participating in national discourse by representing their Christianity in terms of ethnic difference. However, while they have enjoyed being the Ahmao among those Christians, their participation in the nation was by no means a smooth development of their Ahmao identity. Rather, when the anti-Christianity campaign was fomented during the revolutionary decades, their Ahmao ethnicity was overshadowed by their Christian background. If their participation in national discourse in the post-revolutionary decades contributed to constitute Ahmao Christianity, then that of the political campaign during the revolutionary decades equally contributed to constitute Ahmao Christianity.

In this chapter, I describe how Christian Ahmao became Ahmao Christians through their increasing participation in the nation-state. This process has been highlighted with the de-bureaucratization of Christian Ahmao during the revolutionary decades and the re-bureaucratization into Two Associations that has transformed Ahmao congregations into patriotic churches in post-revolutionary China. As the process of nationalization has progressed, Ahmao Christianity has become increasingly entangled with Ahmao ethnicity. In the last section of this chapter, I describe how this entanglement of Christianity and ethnicity contributes to reframe Ahmao congregations as a whole.

Persecution, 1960s–1970s

Above the Great West Door to Westminster Abbey in central London stand ten statues recognizing Christian martyrs of the twentieth century from around the globe. One of those statues is of Wang Zhiming, who lived and preached in Wuding County in

China's Yunnan province and served the ethnic Miao. Arrested in 1969 for his religious work, he was executed in 1973. He was sixty-six years old. Wang Zhiming's story was well known within the Christian community in Yunnan, but outside the circle most Chinese have never heard of him. His family members, many of whom have continued his cause, rarely talk to the mainstream media. (Liao Yiwu 2011, 97)

Above, Liao Yiwu, a famous critic of the Chinese regime whose works are mostly banned in China, describes the martyr Wang Zhiming in his recent work. Liao, transcribing from his interview with Wang Zisheng, the son of Wang Zhiming and also a respected Ahmao preacher, records in heartbreaking detail the last few days of Wang Zhiming's life (2011, 97–116). The martyr's assurance and calm stood as a powerful critique of the absurdity of the revolutionary state. Just like the statue of Wang Zhiming standing above the Great West Door to Westminster Abbey in central London reminding the world of the persecution of Chinese Christians in revolutionary China, the name of Wang Zhiming is remembered by the Sapushan Ahmao as representing the tragedy of their predecessors.

Almost four decades after Wang's execution, I spent three months visiting two dozen Ahmao churches in the Chuxiong region, across the Fumin, Songming, Wuding, Lufeng, and Luquan counties.⁹³ Over and over again, the histories related to me of Ahmao churches began with the persecution of their church predecessors. Almost every Ahmao church has its martyrs. Everyone I interviewed knew or had heard of someone

⁹³ The trip took place from March 7 to June 1, 2011, and I was accompanied by two Ahmao brothers. One is an Ahmao pastor ordained in 2012, and the other is a seminary student who just completed his theological training in Shanghai.

who had been jailed or persecuted, though it is still unknown exactly how many Ahmao Christians were jailed or persecuted during the revolutionary decades. Even the official record is unreliable and many official documents remain encrypted. I could only faithfully record several dozen names in my notebook, but so many more are not recorded; the work is far beyond the scope of my project.

I did not realize the full significance of those stories until I met Reverend Long Shengzhong. Rev. Long Shengzhong was one of the first two Ahmao reverends ordained after the Cultural Revolution, but he has not served a church since 2006. He gradually parted ways with the mainstream church in the late 1990s when he refused to denounce the Ahmao Pentecostalism as requested by the provincial Christian leaders.⁹⁴ As someone who has faced his own share of controversy within Ahmao churches then, Long Shengzhong expressed his sincere and urgent critique of the Ahmao churches, and advised the young pastor who accompanied me to always remember the history of persecution. Long Shengzhong said: “The revival of the Ahmao church in the 1990s was built upon the tears of the persecution in 1970s. If we don’t remember the tears, the Ahmao church is going to fall again.”⁹⁵ The subtext underlying his words is the backsliding of the Ahmao churches in recent years. Implicitly, Rev. Long Shengzhong

⁹⁴ Another Ahmao reverend who was ordained in 1985 is Rev. Wang Ziwen. Rev. Wang Ziwen has been deeply involved in Ahmao Bible translation project since its initiation and later became the coordinator of that project in 1992. Though Long Shengzhong is known as the one who started the choir in the Ahmao church, his work promoting the Pollard Scripts started as early as 1991. It is no accident that the two reverends ordained in the 1980s are devoted to either Bible translation or Ahmao literacy, as necessity shaped both their paths. Though Long Shengzhong was pushed out of the Christian leadership because of his position on Pentecostalism, his devotion to the Pollard Scripts showed that both Biblicism and Pentecostalism have substantially contributed to Ahmao Christianity. Why Pentecostalism becomes controversial in Ahmao churches will be discussed in Chapter 7.

⁹⁵ The interview was conducted on May 10, 2011.

directed his critique toward the increasing dependence of the Ahmao churches on the Two Associations, the nationalized Christian association in China that has resulted in the suppression of disagreements with the communist state, as well as the intentional downplaying of persecution in the “official” history of the Ahmao church. Emphasizing the significance of persecution to the Ahmao church, Long Shengzhong cited a Bible verse and drew an analogy between the “persecution” in the history of the Ahmao church and the “good ground” where Jesus advised his disciples to sow the seed of faith.⁹⁶ In his words, neither the “correct line” of the patriotic movement nor the policy of religious freedom can account for the prosperity of Ahmao churches in 1990s; rather, it is attributable only to the faith in God that was realized in the sufferings that their predecessors experienced when they were persecuted by the revolutionary government. Whether one agrees with his analogy or not, Long Shengzhong’s comment indicates the significance of persecution in constituting understandings of Ahmao Christianity in post-revolutionary China.

The persecution of Ahmao Christians began as early as the late 1950s when the revolutionary government launched its Anti-Rightists campaign (1957–1959). Throughout the first decade of the revolutionary era, Ahmao Christians were among the anti-revolutionary classes. But the persecution became more and more directional in the early 1970s when the provincial government decided to clean out the “imperial poison”

⁹⁶ In the interview, Rev. Long cited the following verse: “And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold” (Mathew 13:3-8, KJV).

from the former Sapushan parish. From the government's point of view, Wang Zhiming was a perfect figure to target in order to intimidate the population, given his high profile and recognition among Ahmao Christians; what exactly he was convicted of was unimportant.⁹⁷ By revealing God's inability to save Wang, the government sought to show people the ridiculous of their Christian faith. Thus staged by the revolutionary government, Wang's execution was highly politicized and publicized. Seventeen thousand people were mobilized by the revolutionary government from Ahmao villages in Wuding, Lufeng, Luquan, Fumin, and rural Kunming, and brought to a stadium in downtown Wuding to witness his execution on December 29, 1973. If all of the people present were, indeed, Ahmao, it means that half of the Ahmao in the region witnessed the execution. In the end, however, the execution of Wang Zhiming proved to be a big mistake with consequences that the government never intended.

The communist cadres were too proud to understand the Christianity of Ahmao politics, the major theme discussed in Chapter Four. They falsely identified the conflict between Wang Zhiming and Long Fuyi as if the former was anti-revolutionary and the latter was pro-revolutionary, and made the latter stand up against the former. In the first decade of the communist state, Wang Zhiming had been the most supportive figure of

⁹⁷ According to Wang Zisheng, Wang Zhiming was convicted of five crimes, including: (1) being both a lackey of the foreign imperialists and an incorrigible spy; (2) using spiritual opium to poison people's minds; (3) consistently boycotting the government's religious policy; (4) being a member of a local landlord gang; and (5) leading a large group of evil landlords and their followers to ambush the Communist Red Army when they passed through Lufeng in 1930s, killing seven Communist soldiers (Liao 2011: 106–107). There is no officially documented decision of the court and it's possible that there never was one. One has to rely on people's memory to recall what Wang was accused of and why he was sentenced to death. Furthermore, different people remember the details differently (Wang Aiguo 2004). My key informant, Long Shenghua's father, who was jailed for 11 months, commented on Wang Zhiming's case as well as his own by saying, "the only reason we were arrested is we believe in God."

state policy among Ahmao Christians, whose gestures were considered as showing the Christian virtues of obedience and humility. Meanwhile, in contrast, Long Fuyi could hardly be praised in terms of the Christian doctrine of obedience. He was known for his disagreement with the foreign missionaries as a public figure of resentment. When the latter stood up against the former, for the Ahmao Christians, the event was prophetically understood as having been revealed to Nicholls in his dream:

Just few days before his leaving, Nicholls continued dreaming the same thing for many days. In that dream, the Ahmao Christians were in danger. It was not clear what the danger was but Nicholls could clearly vision that a dog was bravely fighting with the wolf. Nicholls prayed to God and God inspired him to look inside the dog and the wolf. He then had the vision that someone who is going to protect the Ahmao Christians like the dog fighting with the wolf is Wang Zhiming, and someone who is going to put Ahmao Christians in danger like the wolf threatens the sheep is Long Fuyi. Thus Nicholls appointed Wang Zhiming rather than Long Fuyi to take the office. The disturbance of the Ahmao Christianity in the later two decades proves that Nicholls' vision is from God. Whereas Wang Zhiming was sacrificed for the sake of Ahmao Christianity, Long Fuyi betrayed God for the sake of the communist state.

郭秀峰離開以後，本來是要傳給龍福義的。就在他要離開前沒多久，郭秀峰每天都做同樣的夢。他夢到我們苗族基督徒有危險了，他不知道是什麼危險。他每天都夢見有一隻狼要吃羊群，有一隻狗很勇敢的保護羊群。郭秀峰就每天禱告，求神給他啟示。有一天禱告完後，神給他一個啟示，他知道那個會保護苗族[基督徒]的是王志明，那個會吃掉苗族[基督徒]的是龍福義。郭秀峰就臨時改變主意，讓王志明當總堂牧師。後來發生的事，證明郭秀峰得到的啟示真的是來自上帝。王志明為我們苗族基督徒被槍決，龍福義卻為了共產黨背叛上帝。

Above, the story is recorded in my own words since it is widely known among Sapushan Ahmao Christians. I first heard the story from Wang Zhiming's niece and then heard it told every time I asked someone about Wang Zhiming's martyrdom. In this story, the conflict between Long Fuyi and Nicholls in the late denominational decades becomes relevant to the Ahmao persecution during the revolutionary decades. Whereas Christian persecution was foreseen, Wang Zhiming's appointment as the head of Council was God's choice. Whereas Wang Zhiming represented obedience, Long Fuyi represented

betrayal, like the traitor Judas who betrayed Jesus. Both Wang Zhiming's sacrifice and Long Fuyi's betrayal were parts of God's salvation plan for the Ahmao. Thus, for Ahmao Christians, the execution of Wang Zhiming was seen as the completion of God's plan. All of a sudden, their persecution began to make sense; it was reinterpreted as the test of fire that would discern the true from the fake Christians. As written in Revelation, at the end of time, only the true Christians will be received in Heaven and rewarded by God. Once God's plan was completed, it was then the time that the true Christians should follow the steps of the disciples of Jesus to break with the secular state and expect their rewards in Heaven.⁹⁸

Thus from Ahmao Christian's point of view, Wang Zhiming was a chosen martyr of Ahmao Christians, chosen by God. They began embracing Christian millenarianism, for they felt that God's plan of salvation had been completed by Wang Zhiming's sacrifice. What became disputed and uncertain was how exactly they should live until the arrival of God's kingdom. Much hinged on how to align the contemporary world with the historicity of the Bible. The debate centered on whether the contemporary world was recorded in Acts or in Revelation.⁹⁹ If the persecution is the test of God, does the Lord of the Heavenly Kingdom have domination over the secular world? Has God's judgment begun? Has the prophecy revealed in the Bible been completed yet? For those who did not embrace radical millenarianism, salvation was a matter of time. Congregations would still be needed. Christians would wait for the day to come. However, for those who

⁹⁸ There are reports of how the Ahmao Christians used the teaching of the Bible to understand the Cultural Revolution, though the phenomenon is not taken seriously in governmental reports (中共云南省委统战部编印 1983, 3; Zhou Ziren 2008, 5).

⁹⁹ In the survey report of the *The Report of Xiaozhongjiao Questions* (小众教”问题调查报告选编), the debates over the millennium among Ahmao Christians are recorded (中共云南省委统战部编印 1983, 7).

embraced radical millenarianism, they proclaimed a radical break with the contemporary world. As God had taken over the world, congregations were no longer needed (Revelation 13:16).

The most dramatic break between the Ahmao Christians and the communist state began at a small village of seven households named *xiaoshiqiao* (小石橋) in Wuding county, and later spread quickly among Ahmao Christians as well as nearby tribal Christians from the late 1970s to 1980s. The villagers began to pronounce Christian millenarianism a political movement by denying their secular citizenship. They claimed that God had begun his judgment of the secular world, and identified themselves as the “little flock (*xiaoqun* 小群)”, to whom the Heavenly Father is pleased to give the kingdom (Luke 12: 32). They withdrew from the communes and production brigades, refused to join political campaigns, stopped paying taxes, and denied the authority of the law and the state. In so withdrawing, the millenarians were not so much indicating their opposition to the secular state as signaling the beginning of their exile from it. In exile, church, money, electricity, education—all these things would be useless. They chose an austere, self-isolated life, rather than being contaminated by secular powers. Though the official reports in the early 1980s are vague, it is clear that the “little flock’s” millenarian movement spread quickly among the ethnic Christians who resided in the north Sapushan parish. Without any significant figures or organizations, the number of little flocks increased rapidly in the first decade of the post-revolutionary era.

Though the Cultural Revolution officially ended in 1975, the provincial government did not ease its hostility toward Ahmao Christians, particularly the millenarian little flocks. It was anticipated that religious policy would resume in late 1978,

but millenarianism jeopardized the provincial government's transition vis-à-vis its regulation of Christianity. From the officials' point of view, before religious regulation could be implemented, they first had to identify who were and were not Christians. However, the distinction between those who did and did not embrace millenarianism was blurred, or at least less clear-cut than conceived by the officials. As the number of reported millenarian withdrawals in the region rapidly increased in the late 1970s, it began to seem as if all Christians, especially Ahmao Christians, were potential little flocks.¹⁰⁰ As the new religious policy was almost on its way, the debate over the regulation of Christian millenarianism between moderates and radicals heated up in 1978—a conflict only further dramatized as moderates and radicals also conflicted in the transition of governmental power.

In early 1978, the moderates dominated religious and political discourse. The provincial government in transition began to impose a system of identification onto Christians. It was called “line-up (排隊).”¹⁰¹ Christians were classified as members of *dazhong jiao* (大眾教 mass church), members of *zhongjian jiao* (中間教 intermediate church) or members of *xiaozhong jiao* (小眾教 local church), in accordance with the degree of their cooperativeness with the government. Members of *dazhong jiao* were generally willing to cooperate and were thus considered the “good” Christians. Members of *zhongjian jiao* were in the middle, as they partially cooperated. For example, they did not send their children to public school, but they did pay tax in exchange for the lands.

¹⁰⁰ The above comment was made by Rev. Wang Ziwen on an occasion when we were casually exchanging ideas about “the problem of xiaozhong jiao” on our way from Kunming to Wuding on July 15, 2009.

¹⁰¹ The information is recorded from the memory of the former county official Li Yuanliang, who was interviewed by Wang Aiguo in December 2002 (Wang Aiguo 2004, 5).

Members of *xiaozhong jiao*, however, the little flocks, were considered the “worst” given their refusal to cooperate with the government. Beginning in Wuding County and soon extending to nearby regions, training programs were held to “line-up” Christians. Members of communes were called up to attend the program of two to three days of intensive learning about the religious policy of the state. They were encouraged to identify themselves as well as others in one of these three categories.

However, this moderate regulation was suddenly dropped as the radicals took over the government in May of the same year. The radicals launched another new political campaign entitled “The Sixth Battle (第六战役)” that targeted Christians, particularly Ahmao Christians.¹⁰² It was intended to “mop” or wipe out Christians in the region. The campaign received overwhelming support from the local governments of Wuding, Luquan, Fumin, and Lufeng—all of which had failed completely to halt the spread of Christian millenarianism in their administrative regions. The grim irony is that Christians previously identified as such for the “line up” training programs were now also targeted for the “mopping-up” campaign. Unfortunately, there are neither official reports nor serious historical studies of Christian persecution in China’s post-revolutionary period. Even the gazetteers mention The Sixth Battle only in passing, providing no further details beyond the name of the campaign. I have only been able to assemble a vague picture of what happened by drawing on fragments of reports and memories. I was told that police began arresting “hardcore” Christians, especially clergy, as the battle

¹⁰² The Sixth Battle has been mentioned in several historical studies on Christianity in Yunnan in passing (CXMZSL 2005, 169; Han Junxue 1988; Wang Aiguo 2004; Zhang Yongde 1999, 3), but it is not recorded in gazetteers. It may be that more information can be found in internal documents (*neibu ziliao*) whose accessibility is restricted to outsiders. The few details of The Six Battle I provide in this chapter are mainly drawn from oral histories—some collected by myself, others by other authors.

began. Some of the victims I interviewed remembered that they were interrogated in court, and convicted for spreading anti-government superstitions, and sentenced to periods of imprisonment from a few months to a couple years. Many more people were arrested during the five months of the Sixth Battle campaign than during the Cultural Revolution.

Long Ronghua, a retired teacher, vividly remembered the day in 1978 that troops numbering perhaps three hundred or more from Kunming were stationed in the downtown of Kuanzhuang township, and prepared to march to Duomude, a small Ahmao village of ten households located at the top of mountain. The police department in Kunming was tipped off that there would be a rally of anti-revolutionists from the nearby Christian villages in Duomude preparing to take over the township. Having the benefit of numbers and weapons, the government militia planned to arrest all the anti-revolutionists and resume the governance of the Christian villages in this area.¹⁰³ The militia got as close to the village as they could and then waited for two days for the rally to begin. In the end, there was no rally at all; instead, the villagers simply seemed to enjoy their lives, singing hymns to every corner of the mountain all day long. The militia retreated back to Kunming. But the Ahmao Christians were not free from attack. A few days after the militia left Kuanzhuang, dozens of armed police invaded Ahmao villages nearby and arrested the deacons and clergies of the congregations. Long Ronghua remembered that about forty Christians in the area were arrested within a week.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ This area is not restricted to the boundaries of the Kuanzhuang township, but generally includes the former parish of the Muyang church and that of the Dawuotang church.

¹⁰⁴ Some of them were sent to the detention center of Fumin, and some were in Kunming. They were brainwashed, tortured, and threatened in various ways to compel them to give up Christianity. Most of them

Five months later, the Sixth Battle was abruptly stopped as the post-revolutionary central government reasserted control over the provincial government. The radicals were removed from power, and moderate regulation was resumed. At the end of 1978, the provincial government confessed that the Battle was a political mistake, and immediately released all Christians in jails (CXMZSL 2005, 170). One year later, Ahmao Christians of this region were informed that they could restart their congregations and were encouraged to either rebuild a chapel on the old site or find a site to start a new church. Despite the fact that the mandate for managing and administering religious sites was not issued until 1994, congregations were called on to register at local police departments in exchange for rights to claim property ownership and rights to worship God on church properties.

The newly imposed policy of religious regulation—the formal name of the policy in Chinese literally means “the policy of religious freedom”—began to separate Christians from the little flocks via registration. By definition, those who did not register were non-Christians whose religious activities were strictly banned, while those who registered were Christians whose religious freedom was protected by law. During the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, the post-revolutionary government played the “two-hand” strategy (兩手策略) to regulate Ahmao Christianity. On the one hand, the government helped to build up the leadership among registered Christians, in particular Ahmao Christians. Several known Ahmao Christians were recruited to the leadership of the Two Associations, with some even elected to be the members of the Political Council. On the other hand, non-registered Christian activities were strictly forbidden. Local policemen

were released within a year of being arrested for unknown reasons. Information was provided by Rong Rongsheng in Xishan, who was arrested in 1978 and released four months later.

harassed non-registered Christians, intervened in their worships, removed the cross from their churches, and arrested their leaders. As even stricter social control was imposed upon non-registered Christians, it was reported that the number of little flocks' uprisings increased rapidly in the first decade of the religious opening. That is to say, the newly imposed religious regulation not only divided Ahmao Christians in terms of their legal status but also radicalized the two extremes. On the one hand, some of the registered Christian congregations became more and more deeply involved in Two Associations while enjoying the benefits that came with their legal status. On the other hand, non-registered Christians were suppressed; some were then forced to commit to radical millenarianism and became precisely the "little flocks" that the government sought to suppress. According to the official report, the number of registered Christians increased from 10,000 to 30,000 and the number of radical millenarians also went from several hundred to several thousand during the first two decades of the post-revolutionary era. Though the estimated number of little flocks fluctuated, their numbers generally increased whenever there was an increase of social controls such as birth control, mandatory education, taxes, and so on.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the most dramatic effect of the state's religious regulation was the transformation of Ahmao Christianity from millenarianism during the revolutionary decades to anti-millenarianism in the post-revolutionary era. Revolutionary

¹⁰⁵ The official report on the number of villagers involved in millenarianism is vague and inconsistent. According to the report in 1983, there were 2,800 more millenarians, and 16 people's communes and 57 production brigades in Wuding and Luquan were seriously affected. But the survey conducted by the county officials in Wuding in the same year indicated that there were 3,700 more millenarians in Wuding that had negatively affected 10 people's communes and 41 production brigades. The numbers should be even higher than those indicated in the official report though, as the Ahmao Christians in Fuming and Lufeng counties were also involved in the movement (Wang Aiguo 2004).

millenarianism grew out of the belief in the Christian millennium. Though Christians engaged with the varied historicity of the contemporary world, they generally agreed that the millennium was arriving and the revolutionary state would be replaced by God's kingdom. As the revolutionary state was torn down and replaced by the post-revolutionary government, the newly imposed regulation turned out to be a denial of the millennium. Indeed, once the new order arrived and registration was required for Christians wanting to partake in the new order, post-revolutionary Christianity took the form of anti-millenarianism. Both registered Christians identified themselves as Christians against little flocks—though they themselves (registered and non-registered Christians) were divided by a theological debate over the morality of obedience, completely aside from their stance vis-à-vis the little flocks.¹⁰⁶ Christians criticized little flocks for not being in congregations and criticized their commitment to the radical millenarian movement, and declared that they did not even deserve the name of Christians. The little flocks, however, criticized those who obeyed the communist rule, whom the little flocks argued would receive the beast mark on their right hands or on their brows and would eventually be excluded from God's salvation. As a discursive effect, the divide between the Christians and the little flocks was strengthened by the imposed religious regulation. During the first two decades of the post-revolutionary era,

¹⁰⁶ As described in above, the difference between millenarians and Christians was conceived as a difference in terms of how they conceived the contemporary world in Biblical history. Thus their difference was a matter of degree, with millenarians representing the extreme aspect of Christians. However, the core of the disagreement between registered and non-registered Christians was not just about whether or not to obey the atheist government, but about whether or not the atheist government had been placed in power by God. Those who did not register insisted on zero obedience to the government since those who bowed to the beast would be marked and thrown into fire in the millennium (Revelation 20). In contrast, registered Christians quoted Romans (13: 1-2) and argued: Since all governments have been placed in power by God, those who refuse to obey the government are refusing to obey God.

little flocks and Christians became rivals. The former became a category referring to deviant or heterodox Christianity, whose followers were criminalized for having engaged with anti-governmental political actions.

Ironically, in contrast to the increasing hostility between little flocks and Ahmao Christians, local governments began to ease their regulation of the former in the late 1990s, after several uprisings of little flocks were reported. Instead of further enforcing the line between “legal” and “illegal” Christians, local officials were advised not to convert the latter but to be patient with them. It was said that the little flocks’ resentments were understandable given their mistreatment during the revolutionary decades.¹⁰⁷ Since the 2000s, the tensions between the government and the little flocks have eased as the number of the latter has gradually decreased. Christians’ hostility to little flocks, however, has not decreased as the latter refuse to affiliate with any church and continue to challenge the legitimacy of patriotic churches. They have continued to isolate themselves from the Christian majority and refuse to be included in the nation-state.

In short, over the course of the revolutionary decades, Ahmao Christians were forced to participate in the Chinese nation. The result was not the de-Christianization of Ahmao, but a de-bureaucratization of Christian congregations that, in turn, gave rise to the Ahmao millenarian movement when Wang Zhiming’s execution was seen as a sign of the millennium. The resumption of religious policy in post-revolutionary China, however, immediately placed Christian congregations under the administration of the Chinese

¹⁰⁷ This was seen in several surveys that have all reached the conclusion that the question of millenarianism is neither a religious question nor a political question but a historical question (中共云南省委统战部编印 1983; Han 1993).

national bureaucracy. The re-bureaucratization project of Christian congregations that was imposed by the Chinese state proceeded as anti-millenarianism, which, in turn, sharpened the division between Christianity and millenarianism and led to a re-definition of Christian congregations themselves.

Resuming Congregation, 1980s–1990s

How can we define the post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity that emerged from state-imposed religious regulation? While it has been generally agreed that religious revitalization in China began in the 1980s when the communist state began to loosen its regulation of religious practices, the revival Christianity of Ahmao Christians should be traced back to the millenarian uprising of the late 1970s, which had nothing to do with the easing of religious regulation. In the Ahmao words, revitalization or revival means *shenxnzib* (J^ε (†^r), literally translated as “waken up.” In the Christian context, it refers to the experience of being empowered by the Holy Spirit as someone is lifted up by God. Over the decade of Christian millenarianism, when there was no hostility between the little flocks and the Christians, Christians were engaged with a revival of Christianity that highlighted a strong sense of the millennium and suffering. And Ahmao Christians continued engaging with this revival Christianity, though it later became anti-millenarianism, in order to rebuild their congregations. This can be seen in the most popular hymn book that was compiled in the late 1970s and widely circulated in the 1980s and 1990s among Ahmao Christians, and that bears the name *shenxnzib linkgnaox*

(Jε (†^rL_{ne} (□)), literally meaning “spiritual songs that waked up [Christians].”¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, as described in above, during the first two post-revolutionary decades, Christian congregations organized against millenarianism, and as I will discuss in later chapters, since the late 1990s, revival Christianity has come to the center of debate within Ahmao congregations. In other words, for Ahmao Christians, post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity has been conceived as a bureaucratized Christianity, that is the Ahmao patriotic Christianity. Along with the process of bureaucratization, Ahmao patriotic Christianity has been increasingly shaped as opposing Ahmao revival Christianity. Thus, when it becomes necessary to describe Ahmao Christianity in the 1980s, it is important to keep in mind that Ahmao patriotic Christianity began to form through bureaucratization, not revitalization.

Strictly speaking, the process of re-bureaucratization began in the early 1980s, when religious regulation was imposed to bring Christians and churches under the governance of Chinese state. Based upon the policy of religious freedom/regulation, congregations were required to register at the local police office and then allowed to perform their religious function. Through this process, congregations were held responsible for monitoring their own members. Occasionally, the congregation would then be asked to report its membership, either at the request of the local police office or that of the bureau of religious affairs. Nevertheless, instead of administering or

¹⁰⁸ The author is unknown. I was told by an informant who was in his fifties that this hymn book was the first hymn book he had and that he had hand copied himself at the turn of the 1980s. He recalled that everyone his age who was active in the church choir in 1980s would have done the same thing. The circulated version I collected in the 2009 is still handwritten. This version, according to the informant, is an extended version of the old hymn book they had in the 1980s.

supervising the congregation directly, local police offices as well as the bureau of religious affairs was advised not to intervene directly in religious activity but to mediate through the Two Associations.¹⁰⁹ It is within this context that Ahmao congregations began to be bureaucratized since the 1980s.

Scholars of Christianity in China who are interested in human rights and theology have long sought to examine state-church relations as a way to evaluate religious freedom in China. However, these relations have also been the source of major disagreement between western and Chinese scholars and Christians.¹¹⁰ The disagreement centers around the fact that the system of religious regulation is for the purpose of both religious control and religious freedom (Kindopp 2004). While western scholars tend to reject the legitimacy of the state's religious control and tend to address state-church relations in terms of domination and resistance, Chinese scholars and Christians do not simply view the state as impinging on their religious freedom. Rather, they tend to agree that it is necessary to draw certain lines around religious freedom, and they make sense of state domination by contextualizing Christianity within Chinese society (Ding 1998).

¹⁰⁹ The Two Associations literally means two associations, one is the patriotic committee that was established in the early 1950s but ceased to function during the revolutionary decades and resumed only after the 1980s; the other is the Chinese Christian Association, a newly established Christian association formed after the 1980s. By definition, the former association is a political organization that advocates patriotism among Christian congregations, while the latter is a religious association that manages Christian affairs. However, since the two memberships and the leaderships of the two associations overlap, Christians in China conceive the two associations as a single entity—hence the name, Two Associations (Leung 1996).

¹¹⁰ The distinction of western versus Chinese is not quite precise. The best way to make the distinction, perhaps, is between the speeches and publications of those inside China and those outside China (For more discussion of this, see Leung 1999; Kindopp 2004; MacInnis 1996; Wenger 2004; Wickeri 1988; Wielander 2013; Ye 1997; Zhao 1983). Recently, a collection of papers entitled *Christianity in Contemporary China* provided a focused discussion on the issue related to church-state relations (Lim 2013). None of the authors in the collection accept as taken-for-granted the applicability of the domination-resistance mode to church-state relations in contemporary China; instead, they all, in various ways, situate the church-state relation within the context of civil society.

Unfortunately, disagreement over this issue generates much miscommunication and misunderstanding between Chinese and western Christian communities. Recent studies have provide detailed ethnographic descriptions that help to complicate understandings of the state-church relation by contextualizing that relation within local society, and propose to understand the state-church relation as more constitutive or participatory (Cao 2011; Harrison 2013). Those ethnographic studies also bring to the fore the necessity to distinguish Chinese Christian bureaucracy from European Christian bureaucracy.

In 1980, Ding Guangxun, then Bishop of the Two Associations, commented on Chinese Christian bureaucracy in an interview. He said:

The committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement is an organization initiated by the Chinese Christians. In order to manage issues related to Christians and Christianity, Christian delegates decided to establish Chinese Christian Association in the third nationwide delegate meeting. But the association and the committee are not part of the government. Those outside China create the terms like official church and underground church make us feeling disgusted because their intend to say that the opening church is the government's church. Perhaps they are against the new China so they fail to support the churches of new China.

三自愛國運動委員會是基督徒自己的組織。為處理教會內的教務，在中國基督教第三屆全國代表大會中，決議成立了中國基督教協會。但是，這協會和三自委員會都不是政府內的一個部門。國外那些創造出 Official Church (官辦教會)和 Underground Church (秘密教會)名詞的人，很使我們反感，因為他們的含意是把開放的教會當做是政府的。大概他們是反對新中國，所以反對支持新中國的教會。(〈丁光訓主教訪問記〉, Chiu 1981, 5; quoted in Leung 1999, 39).

In this interview, Bishop Ding did not hesitate to express his disgust of those westerners and overseas Chinese who describe the registered church vs. non-registered church distinction as an official versus underground distinction. According to Ding, a registered church is an “open church (開放的教會),” that is a church that is open to the

public. But Bishop Ding ignored the unregistered churches in his comments.¹¹¹ Judging from his later publications, Bishop Ding has never in his life denounced non-registered churches but has always shown an understanding of their situations and withheld judgment over non-registered churches. Though not many scholars agree with his assertion that the Two Associations is just a non-governmental civil organization, Ding's distinction provides a different perspective on how the Chinese Christian bureaucracy should be seen, reminding us that stark binaries rarely capture the complexities of the situation.

Instead of opposing official church to underground church, Bishop Ding distinguishes registered churches from non-registered churches by noting that the former are open to the public, while the latter are not. Ding's distinction, of course, has a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, it shows his rejection of the notion of an official church; on the other, it limits the effect of registration for a church to its legal status. The implicit meaning of his distinction is: whether or not a church is open to the public depends on whether a church is registered or not; but whether or not a church is registered has nothing to do with the religious practices of the church and, of course, the Two Associations does not represent non-registered churches. This representability is the key to understanding the Two Associations as a mediating body between the church and

¹¹¹ Leung, an ardent critic of the binary category of "official versus underground," defends calling the patriotic church the official church in China (1999, 38–45). His argument is that even though the registered church is not directly governed or administered by the government, and the Two Associations is not part of the government, the fact that a registered church is allowed to enjoy a legal status that is not allowed to other churches is adequate for it to be identified as an official church. Though scholars of the local church disagree with Leung's reduction by opposing the official church to an underground church, I agree with Leung's definition of "official church," as the term reveals the most important characteristics of those registered churches. Nevertheless, I would like to adopt Leung's term only in a limited sense as it simply referring to a specific category of church, but not necessarily opposing the term "underground church."

the state in China. That is, for Christians, the Two Associations represents the government; for the government, the Two Associations represents Christian congregations. As an institution of representation, the Two Associations is neither part of the government nor part of a Christian church but a sub-bureaucracy—that is, it functions as a bureaucracy under the administration of the state bureaucracy, but it is functional in its own right and distinct from the state bureaucracy.

As a sub-bureaucracy, the leaderships of the Two Associations is approved by the state bureaucracy. In particular, the bureau of religious affairs and its responsible district is the same as the government's administrative district. In other words, the Two Associations parcels up Christians and congregations from other non-Christians, keeping them from being directly administrated by the state bureaucracy; but the Two Associations is, as an organization, itself under the supervision of the state bureaucracy. Despite this supervision, the Two Associations does enjoy autonomy as a religious bureaucracy. Indeed, the notion of “official” fails to capture the subtlety of the Two Associations, for the organization has no intention of making itself “official” or becoming part of the government. Rather, as a sub-bureaucracy, the existence of the Two Associations is meant to separate Christians and congregations from the atheist state bureaucracy. It is this functionality as an autonomous and isolated realm of Chinese bureaucracy that constitutes the significance of the Two Associations to Chinese Christianity.

This sub-bureaucracy could not be more important and necessary for the purpose of reproducing Ahmao congregations. The demand that Christians register at local police offices and apply to the bureau of religious affairs in order to establish congregations

dragged Ahmao Christians into Chinese bureaucracy. As described above, the divided regulation of registered and non-registered churches strengthened the divide between Ahmao Christians and millenarians in the 1980s and 1990s. In the process of being bureaucratized by the Chinese administrative system, churches have been subordinated to the village administrations—something that conflicts with the Ahmao sense of congregations as inter-villages alliances. Thus, the post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity that has emerged from the newly imposed bureaucratization project embodies a very different sense of Ahmao congregations. Congregations are now limited to specific sites and divided by villages, producing a completely different congregational landscape to that of the 1950s. For the purpose of distinguishing between churches under the denominational administration before 1950 and those under the supervision of Two Associations, the former are referred to as “denominational churches” and the latter as “patriotic churches.” Nevertheless, for Ahmao Christians, a patriotic church is not patriotic, it is just a registered church, and the name is used by Ahmao Christians only to differentiate it from a “house church” or non-registered church.

The Ahmao sense of congregations in post-revolutionary Christianity has been shaped by a policy of religious regulation that reduces a Christian congregation to a religious site and a religious corporation. A brief comparison of denominational and patriotic churches helps to highlight this new sense of Ahmao congregation. First, a patriotic church is registered with the local police office as a religious site located in a village. By law, the site is the only place where Christians can gather to worship God. Christian activities beyond this site or that may include or affect people beyond the site require approval of both the local police and the bureau of religious affairs. Though not

completely restricted, such extended activities do require a certain amount of manipulation and negotiation to be approved. This spatial isolation of the church as a site and the requirement of approval for Christian activities and events has rendered Christianity into something that can only be public within a specific space-and-time. The result is that Christianity has gradually become more and more socially irrelevant as religious business is dealt with inside the church and administered by the deacon, while everything else that happens outside of the church is conceived as non-religious and is overseen by the state-appointed village officials.

Second, by law a patriotic church is registered as a corporation, that is, a separate legal entity that is eligible to hold properties. Dispute over church properties has become one of the major social disputes in villages since the 1980s as the church has become more and more socially irrelevant, especially within those villages whose Christian congregations were seriously damaged over the course of revolutionary decades. The disputes developed as the property of denominational churches confiscated in the 1950s began being returned to patriotic churches in the 1980s. The process was particularly complicated in those villages where “old” denominational churches were located. Though the old denominational church was dissolved, according to the policy of religious regulation, once a new patriotic church is re-built in the village, it would be entitled to the properties once belonging to the old denominational church. Land re-distribution in the 1980s was based upon the amount of land that was owned by the commune during the revolutionary decades. This included all church properties. The land was then to be divided equally among members of the commune. Once re-established, however, a patriotic church entitled to reclaim properties previously owned by a denominational

church would inevitably reduce the amount of land to be re-distributed among members of the commune. Thus, those villages where the old denominational churches were located were reluctant to re-build the church. To comprise between the church ownership and the village membership, many of the patriotic churches were forced to give up their claims to property, and relied instead on villagers' donations to rebuild the churches. As a result, the patriotic churches should not be seen as a continuation of the denominational churches; rather, they are entirely new congregations established after 1980s. In many cases, even when the new patriotic church is in the same village as the previous denominational church, it neither bears the same name nor occupies the old spot.

The effect of the imposed policy of registration after the 1980s completely destroyed the congregational memberships and networks that organized Ahmao society during the denominational era. Throughout the decades of development, the number of Ahmao Christians did not increase significantly in the 2000s compared to the 1980s, but the number of patriotic churches increased from eight in the 1980s to eighty in the 2000s. Small, village-bound patriotic churches now constitute the congregational landscape of post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity. Isolation and social irrelevance have become urgent challenges, with the reproduction of Ahmao congregations increasingly at stake.

In short, bureaucratizing Ahmao congregations through the policy of registration did not foster inter-congregational relations; instead, it resulted in the destruction of old denominational congregations and the emergence of patriotic congregations subordinate to village administrations and constrained by village memberships. The existence of the Two Associations thus became indispensable to Ahmao congregations, as the organization counters the negative effects of administrative bureaucratization by imposing a religious

bureaucracy.

But while the Two Associations offers a new form of bureaucratization, it also undermines the significance of Ahmao ethnicity, which raises, in turn, concerns about the acculturation of Ahmao Christianity to Chinese Christianity. Ahmao congregations are divided by administrative districts and forced to share the leadership of Two Associations with non-Ahmao Christians. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on this point and show how Ahmao ethnicity has been reproduced through the reproduction of literacy in Christian congregations. But first, in the last section of this chapter, I discuss a ceremony that was held in the name of the Two Associations in order to celebrate the release of the Ahmao Bible in 2009. I show that in this ceremony, we can see how Ahmao Christians participate in religious bureaucracy not only to reverse the negative effects of administrative bureaucracy, but also to (re)define post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity.

Exhibiting Sub-Bureaucracy

On September 6, 2009, more than a thousand Ahmao Christians came from throughout Yunnan province to gather in Daqing, a small village church located up in the mountains near the county borders of Lufeng, Wuding, and Fumin. They gathered for a ceremony organized by the provincial Two Associations of Yunnan to celebrate the publication of the Ahmao Bible. As described in the literature of the Provincial Two Associations, this ceremony was the most important gathering of Ahmao Christians in post-revolutionary China. With the support of the Provincial Two Associations of Yunnan, the Ahmao Christian pastors in charge of the ceremony saw the moment as a significant opportunity to construct the Ahmao Christian community as a whole and intended to use

it as such.

The Ahmao Christian community as a whole was formerly divided into two denominations—the Methodist Church and CIM—before 1950, and was then re-divided into two provincial Two Associations—Yunnan and Guizhou—after the 1980s. Whether divided into counties, prefectures, cities, or provinces, the Ahmao Christian community has always been torn apart—a feature that has made individual Ahmao churches particularly susceptible to “deviant” Christian teachings.¹¹² For the purpose of governance, the Provincial Two Associations of Yunnan has made the Ahmao mission a high priority since the late 1990s, helping to coordinate the Ahmao Bible translation project, recruiting Ahmao pastors into Two Associations leadership, promoting seminary education among Ahmao Christians, and so on.¹¹³ Nevertheless, its influence is highly constrained within a small group of Ahmao Christians, mainly those residing in nearby Kunming (more discussion later in this chapter). Through the distribution of the Ahmao Bible, it is very likely that the provincial Two Associations of Yunnan would be able to extend its influence over the majority of Ahmao Christians. Thus, the ceremony was intended to be a huge ceremony. All Ahmao churches were invited, including those in northwest Guizhou and northeast and central Yunnan.

However, the authority of the Ahmao Bible was itself in question, which, in turn,

¹¹² This comment was made to me in several interviews with different Ahmao pastors who serve in the Two Associations. The subtext of this comment is the increasing connections of Ahmao churches with other Christian communities around the world, especially those in Korea, the U.S., and Hong Kong since the late 1990s. Most of these connections have been established through “underground channels,” meaning neither arranged nor approved of by the Two Associations.

¹¹³ The provincial government of Yunnan has paid special attention to the increasing numbers of ethnic Christians, especially those border ethnicities, including the Miao, the Kachin, the Dai, the Wa, etc., during the last two decades. The provincial Two Associations has a national and international reputation for its Christian missions among the ethnic minorities in China.

seriously undermined the religious authority of the provincial Two Associations of Yunnan.¹¹⁴ In particular, the new Ahmao Bible was beset with two specific problems. First, there were widespread critiques of and doubts about the Ahmao Bible translation project. Critiques had been provoked by a group of Ahmao literate elites since the late 1990s, reaching a peak in 2008; while other doubts were intertwined with growing anxieties regarding the increasing intervention of the state in the Ahmao church since the late 1990s. (The last two chapters discuss these critiques and doubts in detail.) The other problem was the circulation of the unchecked version of the Ahmao Bible, called the “Red Cover Bible” (紅皮聖經). Released by an unknown Christian agency, thousands of copies of the Red Cover Bible had been given to Ahmao Christians for free since early 2008, one year before the Two Associations officially released the new Ahmao Bible.¹¹⁵ Though the Red Cover Bible was later proved to be a print based on an early draft of the “official” Ahmao Bible, its circulation posed a huge challenge to the authorship of the provincial Two Associations. The concern was that the existence of two Ahmao Bibles

¹¹⁴ For the history of Ahmao Bible translation and controversies therein, see Jiang 2011 and Yu 2011.

¹¹⁵ Though the provincial Two Associations was not held responsible for the distribution of the unchecked Ahmao Bible, the organization’s reputation was seriously damaged as Ahmao Christians gossiped and a rumor spread that police had begun confiscating the Ahmao Bible. Despite the fact that there was no evidence supporting this rumor, the provincial Two Associations of Yunnan was forced to confront a dilemma in terms of its religious authority. On the one hand, the distribution of the unchecked version seriously undermined its religious authority since it looked like another Christian agency had embarrassed the provincial Two Associations by releasing and distributing the Ahmao Bible early. On the other hand, if the government proceeded with administrative intervention and confiscated the unchecked Ahmao Bible, it would mean that the government was asserting its authority over the Two Associations. In the worst case scenario, the provincial Two Associations would lose its reputation of being able to mediate between the government and the Ahmao Christians, and its inability to protect the Christian Bible would remind Ahmao Christians of the organization’s inability to protect Christians from political persecution during the revolutionary decades. This failure to mediate communication between the government and the Ahmao Christians would result in the Two Associations losing its position of leading the Christian community. By subordinating the Red Cover Bible as a pirated version through the inauguration of the new Ahmao Bible, the Two Associations could at least save face in its relations with the government and defend its religious authority from being taken over by some other “unknown” Christian agency.

would cause a lot of confusion among the Ahmao Christians and raise suspicions about the authority of the “official” Ahmao Bible. Eventually, critiques, doubts, and challenges targeting to the Ahmao Bible would undermine the religious authority of the provincial Two Associations of Yunnan. Thus, the ceremony for the inauguration of the new Ahmao Bible was explicitly intended to provide a “spectacle” that aimed to confirm the authority of Ahmao Bible.

As a spectacle, the ceremony certainly impressed participants with its appearance. Organized according to the “Chinese bureaucratic style,” which contrasted greatly with Ahmao standards, the ceremony clearly indicated that the authority of the Ahmao Bible was ordained by the highest authority of the Two Associations. The “Chinese bureaucratic style” highlighted the spatial arrangement of the ceremony, which was organized in terms of inside versus courtyard, as well as stage versus bench. All the church representatives were invited to sit inside of the Daqing church, and those who were associated with Daqing were arranged to sit in the courtyard. The majority of the church representatives were male, and men don’t wear traditional costumes. Instead, the majority of those sitting in the courtyard were females who were dressed in Ahmao costumes, while the Ahmao males were either sitting inside the church or busy preparing the feast for after the ceremony. The contrast between the inside and outside spaces, therefore, was sharp, with the inside effectively turned into a Chinese space and the outside an Ahmao one. Inside the church, “guests of honor” sat on the stage, including the leaderships of the national and provincial patriotic churches, representatives of the Bible Society and Amity Foundation, and Ahmao Christian leaders, facing the Ahmao audience seated on the benches. For the Ahmao on the benches, it appeared extremely odd to have

people simply sitting on the stage, or in the front, facing the audience but doing nothing in terms of any kind of service, meeting, or worship. As they would say: “we Ahmao are too shy to be put on the spot.” To avoid that feeling of awkwardness, in Ahmao church services, only the one who is taking the floor as the speaker shows him/herself on the stage or in the front, facing the audience. For this ceremony, however, the spatial arrangement foregrounded the Chinese outsiders sitting on stage, and put the Ahmao audience, both in the courtyard and inside sitting on benches, in the background.

The Ahmao Christians were wary of this spatial arrangement, as they do not use the distinction between foreground and background, instead conceiving of space arrangement in terms of formality. According to the ceremonial coordinator, Ahmao pastor Wang Ziwen, the purpose of the arrangement was to make the inside a “formal” ceremonial space. The word “formality” in Chinese is *zhengshi* (正式) but the Chinese word does not have an Ahmao synonym. Rather, the Ahmao borrows the Chinese word and conceives it as distinct from the Ahmao formality *kha*. The Ahmao formality *kha* refers to ritual formats, which are conceived as ancestral heritages containing supernatural powers. The Ahmao conversion means a transformation from the *kha* to Christianity. Thus whereas the discontinuity of the inside and outside in the ceremonial space realized the conceptual discontinuity of the formal and informal, the hierarchy between the stage and the bench realized the hierarchy between the Two Associations and the Ahmao churches.¹¹⁶

Another aspect of formality was revealed in the use of language, that is, the use of

¹¹⁶ For further anthropological discussion of formality, see Bloch [1974] 1989, and Irvine 1975.

formal Chinese in the foreground versus the use of informal Ahmao in the background. Despite the fact that the majority of the Ahmao audience was not fluent in Mandarin Chinese, this was the dominant language of the ceremony. Its dominance appeared in both written and spoken forms. In terms of written dominance, though the Ahmao Bible is written in Ahmao, the slogans were all written in Chinese and posted in Chinese couplet manner, composed with two vertical stripes on the wall of the stage and the horizontal piece posted across the top of the stage wall. The right side of the vertical stripes was written as: “Jesus said: I am the Road, the Truth and the Life (耶穌說:我就是道路真理生命);” the left side was written as: “The God’s words are the lantern in front of my feet and the light on my way (神的話:是我的腳前燈路上光).” The horizontal piece summarized the theme as “Centennial Ceremony—the Rite for the Release of Ahmao Bible (百年慶典:苗文聖經發行儀式).” Though not exactly opposing in the two vertical pieces, they were written following the unique style of Chinese poetry, paralleling with exact numbers of character and contrasting what Jesus said with God’s words. In order to make that contrast work as a parallel, an “extra” colon was added to break down the sentence in the left piece, which made the sentence grammatically odd in Chinese. In short, the Chinese poetry style was utilized to display the formality in writing that would make Chinese look more prestigious.

In terms of spoken dominance, the ceremony was monolingual in Mandarin Chinese, except very few occasions when the moderator would switch to Ahmao in order to keep the Ahmao audience informed. Though the ceremony included talks, choir performances, and the rite of Bible giving, the talks took up two-thirds of the schedule. To start, Rev. Wang Ziwen announced the opening of the ceremony in perfect mandarin

Chinese, and briefly welcomed everyone and introduced the “guests of honor” one after another to the Ahmao audience. Subsequently, Dr. You Chunran of the United Bible Society, the consultant for the Bible translation project, expounded on the value of Ahmao Bible translation. Followed by a dozen rhetoric-heavy speeches given by the guests of honor, Dr. You was more like a keynote speaker setting the tone for the ceremony than a preacher advocating God’s message. The talks ended with two speeches given by Ahmao representatives. One represented the Ahmao Christians as a whole to express their delight and appreciation; the other represented the Ahmao Bible translation team to introduce the history of the translation project. They read from the prepared notes in perfect Chinese, imitating the style of Chinese narrators in Chinese official ceremonies. The rhetorical style of the guests of honor’s speeches contrasted with the narration style of the Ahmao representatives’ speeches in terms of formality. While the rhetoric-style entails formality in content, the narration-style entails formality in voice. The guests of honor, whose authority was embodied in their status, conveyed formality through their abundant use of “official” rhetoric. The Ahmao speakers conveyed formality by exaggerating the pitch and punctuation of their voices in order to imitate “official” narration.

A third aspect of formality was revealed in the display of Ahmao ethnicity through the choir performance. In this instance, it was the Ahmao Christians who were the agents exercising formality. Confirmed with the Chinese bureaucratic style, Ahmao Christians were intended to be represented as a collective whole in the choir performance. The individual identity of each presenting Ahmao church was downplayed, instead highlighting Ahmao costumes and hymns as representing Ahmao ethnicity.

The choir performance has been the most prominent feature distinguishing Ahmao churches from other Chinese churches. It is generally agreed that an Ahmao choir represents its church and an Ahmao church is represented by its choir. Thus, once a church is invited to visit another church, the choir of the host church is in charge of receiving the guests, and the guest church pays tributes with its choir performance. This particular ceremony, which was claimed to be an Ahmao ceremony, did include choir performances, but only two choir performances were featured—far fewer than the number of Ahmao churches present for the ceremony. In other words, the choir did not represent any one church or even all the churches together; rather, it represented Ahmao Christians in general. The first choir performance was presented by the choir of the host church, Daqing. The second choir performance was presented by a “united” choir whose members were recruited from several different churches. It was a huge choir, including eighty singers, organized and funded by the county Two Associations of Fumin. To prepare this performance, the conductor Pan Wenguang, a famous musician and composer among Ahmao Christians, convened the best singers of the churches to his church a week before the ceremony. In the ceremony, the united choir performed four hymns perfectly. Though the choir performance was stylistically Ahmao, the composition of the choir itself undermined the identity of each individual church, and removed the choir performance from the context of interchurch interaction. As a result, its function was to display Ahmao ethnicity and its appearance was confirmed by the Chinese bureaucratic representation of ethnicity in China.

In short, formality was constituted through the spatial arrangement, linguistic dominance, and ethnic representation, and defined by the Chinese bureaucratic style at

the expense of Ahmao participations. The Chinese bureaucratic spatial arrangement rendered those in the background informal and subordinate to those in foreground. The linguistic dominance of Chinese muted Ahmao voices in speeches and writings. And the choir performance, by presenting Ahmao Christians as a collective whole, superimposed the authority of the provincial Two Associations over Ahmao ethnicity writ large, not just those who were present.

Finally, in the “book-giving-rite (贈書儀式),” the bureaucratic authority that backed up the religious authority of the provincial Two Associations also backed up the authority of the Ahmao Bible as official by subordinating the Red Cover Bible as a pirated version. The rite, which was the last program on the schedule, involved two scenes: one was on the stage, another took place among the benches. On stage, the “guests of honor” symbolically gave the Ahmao Bible to the five Ahmao leaders who coordinated the ceremony. This symbolized the giving of the Ahmao Bible by the Two Associations to the Ahmao Christians, thus confirming this version of the Bible as the official one. The guests of honor then stepped down from the stage and approached the audience sitting on the benches, handing out Ahmao Bibles one by one until everyone inside the church had received a copy. Standing among the benches, the givers shook hands with the recipients and blessed them in God. In this brief encounter between the guests of honor and the members of the Ahmao audience, the Ahmao Bible as the gift was the only “connection” between the giver and the recipient demonstrating that the encounter ever occurred. Nevertheless, the gift carried neither individual identity nor the personality of the giver; what it carried was the authority of the Chinese sub-bureaucracy. As both a collective whole and as individual recipients, Ahmao Christians were ritually

subjugated to the Two Associations and its sub-bureaucratic authority.

The book-giving-rite was, thus, an ultimate deconstruction of the Ahmao church identity, as church representatives were reduced to a count of the total numbers of Bibles distributed. In other words, the ceremony inaugurated the Ahmao Bible as an object representing the dominance of the sub-bureaucracy. If the ceremony had simply ended at this point, perhaps there would not be many things to be said about it among the Ahmao—it was just another ceremony hosted by the Two Associations. One could easily find a ceremony like this among other Chinese Christians in Kunming and in many other places in China. But though the formal part of the ceremony ended at this point, the ceremony was not over. There were the informal parts of the ceremony that would indeed be organized and carried out in Ahmao style.

After the “book-giving-rite,” the ceremony was formally ended with a prayer to thank God’ s mercy. It only lasted for two and half hours, even shorter than the regular Sunday service in any Ahmao village church. But the people, except those sitting on the stage, did not leave the room right after the ceremony ended. They were called to stay, a request announced by the deacon of the Daqing church in the Ahmao language, for an additional program that was not on the schedule. Once all the guests of honor had left the room, the deacon of the Daqing church began to host the additional program. He first thanked everyone for coming and for their support of the Daqing church. Then he reported that the Daqing church received a total of 31,079 RMB in donations from fellow churches, and 10,000 RMB from the provincial Two Associations to conduct the ceremonial service. Later, he called the name of each church one by one, and invited the representative of the church to come to the front in order to receive gifts. Each received

twenty copies of the Ahmao Bible and a thermos. The twenty copies of the Ahmao Bible, of course, were the gifts of the Two Associations, and the thermoses were the gifts of the Daqing church. Nevertheless, just as all the donations and funding converged as a flow of money to Daqing in order to conduct the ceremony, so did Bibles and the thermoses converge as a flow of gifts from Daqing to the presenting churches.¹¹⁷

In Ahmao thanksgiving services, a similar “rite of exchange” would be scheduled as the concluding program before the ending prayer. In this particular ceremony, the concluding program was not included as part of the formal schedule. I asked about this and Rev. Wang Ziwen explained: “Those invited guests [of honor] were not necessary involved in the Ahmao business.” His explanation highlights the fact that the “gift exchange” should be based upon the church-to-church relationship, which is exclusively Ahmao business. The formal part of the ceremony, however, was removed from this context of Ahmao church-to-church interactions, as individual church identities were obscured and church representatives were reduced to receivers. It is only beyond the realm of the formal ceremony that the Daqing church was able to own the ceremony and interact with its guests in the Ahmao way to reproduce church-to-church relations through the individualized gift-exchange and through the feast that they provided their guests before they left.

Given its historical and religious significance, it is not surprising that Daqing was

¹¹⁷ In one day, 3,000 copies were distributed to Ahmao Christians. The church representatives not only brought the twenty copies of the Ahmao Bible that they were given back to their churches, but they also transmitted the message and information about Ahmao Bible they learnt from the ceremonial service to their fellow congregations. In a week, the remaining 7,000 copies of the first print were sold out in Kunming. My friends in Xishan, which is only an hour’s drive to Kunming, bought a hundred copies for their congregation at only 10 RMB (\$1.5 US) per copy.

selected to host the ceremony for the inauguration of the new Ahmao Bible in 2009. Yet, I hesitate to refer to Daqing as the newly emergent center of Ahmao Christianity in central Yunnan. Neither my Ahmao Christian friends nor Christian leaders would agree that Daqing has replaced Shapushan as the Ahmao religious center. They would reject a description of the relation between Daqing and other Ahmao churches as one of center-periphery, and they attribute no higher significance to Daqing than to other Ahmao churches. I was told that the size of the congregation was the only consideration for choosing the host church. The Daqing church contains twelve meeting points (or churches) and has a congregation of up to twelve hundred baptized Ahmao Christians.¹¹⁸ With such a huge congregation, Daqing could easily meet the logistical needs of such a ceremony, such as space, food, accommodation, equipment, and so on. Indeed, this emphasis on Daqing as a logistical but by no means symbolic center was confirmed when the ceremony for the release of the second printing of the Ahmao Bible was hosted by the Xiaoxin Zhuang church in Wuding in 2012. Thus it seems that the Ahmao Christian community in central Yunnan has consciously prevented the emergence of any particular church as the center of the community. The awareness of not having a “center” might be understood as a response to the administrative strategy of the Two Associations, which remains suspicious of any such center that would challenge the religious authority of the

¹¹⁸ In the Two Associations, a registered site is categorized as either a church or a meeting point depending on the size of the congregation. A meeting point is like a chapel that is regarded as a branch of the church. The congregation of the meeting point performs the limited function of a church and usually has an elected liturgist to hold responsible for business of the chapel. In the beginning of the 1980s, there were patriotic churches. As time went on, there were more and more meeting points. Gradually, those meeting points began performing the functions of churches, even though they were ordained as such by the Two Associations. The twelve churches or meeting points are all located within Renxing Township, the former parish of the Daqing outstation in the early twentieth century. The number of Ahmao Christians is an estimate made by the elder of the Daqing church in 2009.

Two Associations.

As the host of the ceremony, the Daqing church was able to treat representatives of other Ahmao churches as their guests, but they were not able to “own” the ceremony. To welcome their guests, the choir of the Daqing church, dressed-up and lined up on the two sides of the dirt road leading to the church and sang the “welcome song” accompanied by applause. Other church members helped to prepare food and perform other logistical tasks. Their services to their guests were relevant to their reputations among Ahmao Christian community. Overall, there were fifty-eight Ahmao churches present at the ceremony.¹¹⁹

County	Luchuan	Lufeng	Songming	Xudian	Fumin	Wuding	Xishan	Qujing	T-A
#church	13	16	3	1	12	5	6	1	9

Table 5.1 Churches Participated in the Ceremony in 2009

The geographical distribution of the churches that were present is surprisingly uneven. Though the ceremony was presented as a pan-Ahmao event, only Ahmao churches in central Yunnan sent their representatives. Representatives from northeast Yunnan and northwest Guizhou—where the majority of Ahmao Christians reside—were missing but the (city or county) Two Associations sent their representatives too. Besides, there was a disproportionate number of churches from the southern region at the ceremony. The result probably reflects the disproportionate growth of churches and Christians in the southern region of central Yunnan. And this disproportionate growth of

¹¹⁹ This data is taken from the attendance sheet of the ceremony on September 6–7, 2009.

churches and Christians in the southern region reflects their extraordinary level of participation with the regime of Christianity in post-reform China. In other words, the degree to which Ahmao congregations participate in this regime reflects how well the congregations have adjusted to the transformation from the denominational regime of Christianity in pre-communist China to the post-denominational regime of Christianity in post-reform China.

In short, in the foreground, the formal ceremony was an exhibition of the sub-bureaucracy; in the background, the informal and unscheduled “after” ceremony served to constitute Ahmao inter-church relations. While exhibiting the sub-bureaucracy, on the one hand, the Ahmao Christians showed their knowledge of “Chinese bureaucratic style” and pleased their guests; on the other hand, they proceeded to define Ahmao Christianity within the sub-bureaucratic context by exhibiting a collective version of Ahmao ethnicity in the ceremony. In the background, the degree of the participation to the sub-bureaucracy has become one of the most factors through which the patriotic church establishes their inter-church network. Though the form that the inter-church network was expressed in this ceremony is still a denominational remain, the content—the inter-church network—has been adjusted to the sub-bureaucratic reality in the post-revolutionary China.

Conclusion

Persecution over the course of the revolutionary decades created Ahmao Christianity and the subsequent process of bureaucratization under the policy of religious regulation in China has defined post-revolutionary Ahmao Christianity in both national

and local contexts. In the next two chapters, I first describe how Ahmao Christians participate in the reproduction of Christian knowledge at the national level through the reproduction of Ahmao ethnicity; I then examine the perspective of village Christians who also actively participate in the sub-bureaucracy and show how their participation inevitably raises the concern of Christian knowledge that in turn resulted in the schism of a village congregation.

Chapter 6

An Identity Effect

The Return of the Pollard Script, 1980–2000s

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Ahmao representatives requested that LAO replace Ahmao Pollard Script (APS) at the 1956 Guiyang conference. Thereafter, the Ahmao community in Shimenkan began using LAO in campaigns to eradicate illiteracy and bilingual education, and the Ahmao literate elites began writing in LAO in the late 1950s. If not for the subsequent two-decades-long political campaigns suspending the installation and development of LAO in the Ahmao community, it is very likely that APS would have been completely replaced by LAO in the Shimenkan Ahmao community, and there would be no need for APS anymore.¹²⁰ Along with the collapse of the Shimenkan center, the Ahmao literary tradition has fallen apart. Neither practitioners nor modern institutions survived in Shimenkan. Nothing of the Ahmao literary tradition is left, except a broken tablet commemorating Pollard, other missionaries, and the once thriving Ahmao

¹²⁰ In July, 2009, I interviewed Yang Zhongxin, who received his early education in Shimenkan and was appointed as the chief editor of the Ahmao-Han dictionary by the county government in his seventies. He explained to me that LAO is so far the best Ahmao writing system. He believed that if not for the political campaigns, LAO would have replaced APS as the only Ahmao writing system. Yang Zhongxin thinks that there is no reason that Ahmao should retrieve APS and turn down LAO. Therefore, the dictionary compiled by Yang Zhongxin and his co-workers in Weining is written in LAO.

literary community.¹²¹

The return journey of APS did not originate from the ruined center of the Ahmao literary tradition, Shimenkan. Rather, it began in the remote region of Chuxiong, which is located at the southwest edge of the Ahmao language community, with only one-fourth of the Ahmao population (according to the census in 1990), the minority of minorities populated in the central region of Yunnan province.¹²² In Chuxiong and its nearby regions, the Ahmao community was lucky enough to be excluded from orthographic reform in the 1950s.¹²³ Having no commitment to LAO, the prefectural government of Chuxiong reinstalled APS with modifications in public discourse and renamed it Formalized Ahmao Orthography (FAO) in the early 1980s.¹²⁴ In 1992, the prefectural

¹²¹ On the campus of Guanghua elementary school in Shimenkan, there is a tablet that was raised in 1916, a year after the death of Samuel Pollard (1864-1915). The tablet inscribed the transition of Ahmao from being primitive and ignorant to becoming civilized and literate, in remembering the work of Samuel Pollard and several other missionaries. The tablet was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and was repaired in 1995.

¹²² The former CIM parish of Shapushan contained approximately 50,000 more Miao in the 1990s, and the majority are Ahmao (CXMZSL 2005, 33).

¹²³ In 1957, LAO began being used in Ahmao communities in Guizhou provinces through bilingual classrooms. Unlike the CNLG (Committee of Nationality and Language of Guizhou), the CNLY (see note 8) showed little interest in Miao language and literacy but devoted efforts to developing orthographies for other minority groups instead. In the 1950s, there was no LAO literacy classroom in central Yunnan province. The Ahmao Christians of CIM continued publishing Christian literatures using APS (滇中苗族教會史料 2006, 19-20).

¹²⁴ In 1980, a young Ahmao official, Long Deyi, was appointed to his new post as the vice-chair of the Committee of Nationality Affairs of Chuxiong autonomous prefecture (CNAC). Soon after Long took office, the CNLY and CNAC coordinated an extended meeting for permitting the use of the Pollard Script. Ahmao officials from different regions of Yunnan province were invited to the meeting. The meeting authorized the CNLY to organize the executive committee for “reinstallation of APS to Ahmao bilingual education.” Three months later, the CNLY hosted a professional meeting inviting twelve “professionals,” including school teachers and officials but no linguists, to improve the Pollard Script. The professional meeting finally proposed the “formalization project of Ahmao orthography” after a twelve-day discussion. A few days later, the CNAC coordinated another workshop on Ahmao language and orthography at Wuding. The meeting was held in the name of the Minority Committee of Chuxiong autonomous prefecture, and both Ahmao officials from Kunming city and Christian leaders were invited. The meeting approved that the formalization project proposed by the CNLY was quite feasible and decided to use the “Formalized Pollard Script” for bilingual education in Chuxiong prefecture. After the Wuding meeting, the CNAC took the lead to coordinate literacy programs to introduce “the Formalized Pollard Script” to the Ahmao community in

government of Chuxiong took a step forward by expanding the usage of FAO in bilingual education. Though not exactly the same, APS—the significance of which to the Ahmao community had been undermined since the 1950s—was once again highlighted as a valued part of Ahmao tradition and culture.

Regardless of the fact that many thousands of copies of primers were distributed to Ahmao communities and dozens of literacy classes for training bilingual teachers have been held since 1981, the FAO failed to be approved by the state council as the official orthography of Ahmao in 1998 due to its limited circulation.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, as more resources are being contributed to bilingual education and literary publications to meet the goal of the state-led bilingual campaign on minority languages and literatures, the Ahmao elites gradually intensified their resentment to FAO, resulting in more radical action against the promotion of FAO in 2008. Since the late 1990s, recent grassroots

Chuxiong. The promotion of FAO reached its zenith in 1992, when the prefectural government of Chuxiong took a step forward to legislate the use of FAO as the official orthography of Ahmao and issued a mandate to expand its usage in bilingual education. The CNAC was complacent with its achievement, and decided to appeal to the state council for the recognition of FAO as the official orthography of the Ahmao language in 1995. Unfortunately, its appeal was formally rejected in 1998. After this, the CNAC and its FAO became the target of public criticism, and the 1999 Kunming conference was coordinated to “release” resentments.

¹²⁵ Over thirty years, several dozens of literacy programs, ranging from teacher training to eradication of illiteracy, coordinated by the CNAC and the CNLY, took place in Chuxiong and Kunming. Thousands of students passed the exam as if they had facilitated FAO. The total amount of published Ahmao literature written in FAO exceeds that in Pollard Script before the 1950s. Theoretically, FAO should be well-popularized, and ready to be recognized as the “official orthography” of the Ahmao language. However, there were two blind spots in its promotion. The first blind spot is that no literacy program was held in the Zhaotong area until 2005. The CNAZ, compared to the enthusiasm of the CNAC, responded passively to the promotion of the FAO probably because the Zhaotong Ahmao were uncooperative and they could not fail to express their resentment and rejection of FAO. The CNLY intends to identify the resentment as the consequence of an inherited regional conflict between Zhaotong Ahmao and Chuxiong Ahmao, rather than recognizing it as the failure of the formalization project. Second, the Ahmao Christians, though they do not reject the Formalized Pollard Script, still stick to APS in their religious literature. The Christians in Chuxiong did not promote FAO but excused themselves due to the unfamiliarity of that new orthography.

literacy campaigns implicate that the Ahmao language community may have avoided using both FAO and LAO. Ironically, APS, which was abandoned in the 1950s, has gradually increased its appearances in public discourse.

How should we understand the failure of FAO? Did it happen only because officials failed to implement the project properly? Was it because FAO is not a good writing system? Is it because FAO too complicated to be facilitated easily? While the above deficiencies are highlighted by both the Ahmao literary elites and professional linguists to justify their rejection of FAO as the official Ahmao orthography, the return of APS in grassroots literacy campaigns has, ironically, proved that none of those “deficiencies” can actually explain the failed promotion of FAO. At least, for the officials involved in the formalization project and the promotion of FAO, the failure of FAO is still a mystery, and no one has actually been held responsible for that failure. To solve this mystery, we need to take into account the return of APS in grassroots literacy campaigns despite its linguistic disadvantages. The fact that the Ahmao Christians turned away from FAO and the Ahmao elites eventually embraced APS might appear to explain the return of APS to the Ahmao language community. However, this really only increases the mystery: if APS is not irreplaceable, why are the Ahmao so eager to re-claim their ownership of APS in post-reform China despite all of its “deficiencies”?

To answer this question, I draw from the common saying that APS represents Ahmao identity. Intuitively, this means that there is a certain connection between APS and Ahmao identity that allows the former to stand for the latter. The connection can be iconic, indexical or symbolic, according to Charles Sanders Peirce’s classic definition of representation. The power of the representation is that a representation mediates. Because

it mediates, it alludes, alters, defines, extends, and so on, our perception of the object. It seems that there is no way to perceive the object without it being mediated by its representation. In that sense, Ahmao identity cannot be known in and by itself without any mediation, and Pollard Script (APS or FAO) is one of the mediators that can represent Ahmao Identity. Nevertheless, there must be an a priori object known as Ahmao identity that is represented as such by the Pollard Script. Thus, awareness of Ahmao identity is a necessary condition for the return of the Pollard Script.

The return of Pollard Script to Ahmao community in recent years, after several decades of suppression by the revolutionary regime in China, is a sociolinguistic phenomenon that reflects the recurrence of Ahmao identity that is different from the Miao identity. As an identity effect from grassroots, the promotion of Ahmao literacy and the distribution of Ahmao literatures have been highly independent of the state-led campaign of minority literacy and language. In the following discussion, I begin with the failure of the state-led Ahmao literacy campaign, which indicates that the state could not play a decisive role in the development of minority language and literacy. While the role of the state is disenchanted in the promotion of Ahmao literacy, Pollard Script is thus conceived through the lens of Ahmao identity, entangled with the past and future of Ahmao Christian society. Two specific sub-groups, the Shimenkan elderly and Chuxiong Ahmao Christians, that hold different visions of the future of Ahmao society are addressed in this chapter. The Shimenkan elderly are the successors of the collapsed Shimenkan center. They embrace Pollard Script to bring the most refined Ahmao voice back to the Ahmao community. The Chuxiong Ahmao Christians promote Pollard Script along with the propaganda of evangelical mission against Christian backsliding. Though the two

sub-groups could hardly reach any consensus in terms of standard orthography, both promote Pollard Script as means to reunite the Ahmao community in the aftermath of Cultural Revolution.

The Protest in Zhaotong (昭通), 2008

In the summer of 2008, I conducted fieldwork collecting Ahmao kinship terminology.¹²⁶ A friend of mine, Wang Chaohei,¹²⁷ who works on the Committee of Nationality and Language of Yunnan (CNLY 雲南省民語委) invited me to visit her hometown, Yiliang (彝良) county, home to the largest Ahmao population in Yunnan province.¹²⁸ Because the county is poor and remote, Yang thought I would be able to interview the most “authentic” Ahmao speakers and collect the “purest” linguistic data. Though I did not agree with her that the Yiliang Ahmao speak the most authentic Ahmao language, I did take up her suggestion because she said she could introduce me to several Ahmao language experts. If possible, she said she would also help with data collection. I travelled 300 miles from Kunming to Yiliang alone, and expected to meet her at the bus station, collect kinship terminology, and quickly complete the project. Much to my

¹²⁶ The project of kinship terminology is a long-term collaborative project, coordinated by James Wilkerson and sponsored by the National Science Committee in Taiwan. I joined this project in 2001 as a research assistant. My role on this project was to design the chart for data collection as well as assist and train other researchers collecting data from varied field sites. The fieldwork on Ahmao kinship terminology in Yiliang in 2008 was accompanied by Chen Meiwen, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology, University of Leiden.

¹²⁷ Pseudoname.

¹²⁸ The full name of the CNLY is (云南省少数民族语文指导工作委员会办公室). The office is affiliated with (云南省民族事务委员会) and is in charge of the administration of minority languages and literatures. The administration of minority cultures, religions, languages and literatures is a delicate science in Chinese bureaucracy and academics. In recent years (approximately since 2000), the CNLY has devoted most of its resources and interests to computing and standardizing minority languages and literatures, and editing primers for bilingual education (www.ynmyw.cn).

surprise, however, it was this trip that ended up fuelling my commitment to this current project on Ahmao orthographies.

I planned to stay in Yiliang for three weeks but Yang had only one week. She had been on her field trip in the Zhaotong region for three weeks. As a member of the CNLY, she came to Zhaotong for her reports on the language conditions of Hmong speakers.¹²⁹ She apologized that she could not stay any longer than a week because her field trip had been arranged in advance. Yang told me that she had not had a chance to visit her hometown, Yiliang, for ten years. If not because I was there, she would hardly have found a reason to come. Yet, she was happy to adjust her own project from four weeks to three weeks and spend the week with me, visiting her old friends in Yiliang. Yang began to introduce me to Ahmao people right after my arrival in the evening. We had dinner with the officials of the bureau of nationality and religious affairs (民宗局), and several Ahmao language experts were also invited.¹³⁰ There was a nice dinner, and of course,

¹²⁹ The project with which Yang Zhaofei was affiliated is entailed *Yunnan sheng shaoshu mingzu chuluo yuyan shiyong qingkuang diaocha* (Surveys on Language Conditions in Ethnic Minority Villages in Yunnan Province 云南省少数民族村落语言使用情况调查) (2008). This state-funded project includes 60 more linguists, students as well as officials, and surveyed 79 villages across 22 ethnicities, which is the largest-scale language survey in Yunnan since 1999 (CNLY 2001). As a follow-up to the 1999 language survey, the 2008 language survey adopts a more holistic concept of *yuyan guoqing* (語言國情) as elaborated by Chinese linguists Wu Guohua (吳國華), Dai Qingxia (戴慶夏), and others in the last decade. “Language conditions,” by definition, is the “white book of language” documenting “language conditions” within the state and from the state’s point of view (Dai Qingxia 2010, 2-3; Wu Guohua 2001). The 2008 survey, with the purpose of accounting for the language conditions in Yunnan province, thus includes the pragmatic and social aspects of language uses, revealing the functionality, features, and usages of languages in a village, as well as the villagers’ attitudes toward both spoken and written languages. In particular, the 2008 survey aims to advise the state regarding the future development of minority languages and literacies by evaluating the implementation of state-led language and literacy policy at the community level and identifying language and literacy needs from the villagers’ point of view.

¹³⁰ *Min zong ju* is an abbreviation of *minzu zongjiao shiwu ju* (民族宗教事務局 Administration of Religion and Nationality Affairs). The administration of religious and nationality affairs of Yiliang is a county-level organ under the Committee for Nationality Affairs of Yunnan (CNAY). The CNLY is a provincial level organ subordinated to the CNAY. Therefore, though the administration of religious and nationality affairs of Yiliang is not subordinated to the CNLY, it is directly under it.

Yang was the center of the dinner talk. I was surprised that Yang seemed to have a lot to say about Ahmao orthography and bilingual education. But she emphasized throughout that she spoke as a sincere friend of the Ahmao people and not as an official of the CNLY.

Over the following days, we met several Ahmao language experts in their houses. Yang brought me to their homes, introduced me, asked them to assist me in my work, and then she began to say something about Ahmao orthography and bilingual education again. Usually, I was just forced listen and was only able to begin collecting data after their discussions. During the first couple of visits, I was extremely bored and could not help but complain about my friend silently in my mind. Gradually, I realized that Yang was repeating her arguments again and again, and she intended to repeat her arguments to make sure that the Ahmao language experts we met understood her points. I was also surprised that she was saying something very important in these very informal settings.

In three days, we had met Dr. Zhang Jianming, Principle Wu Yaohua, and Officer Yang Jiankang¹³¹, all of whom were in their seventies and had been devoted to Ahmao language issues for decades. Wang Chaohei and these three elders had known each other for many decades, and Yang treated them as her mentors on work related to Ahmao languages and literatures. We also met the deputy director of the county bureau of minority and religion, who is Yang's nephew, in his house. Yang left on the fourth morning after my arrival in Yiliang; she had already met the people she wanted to meet and said what she intended to say.¹³² Strangely, despite being a relatively high-level

¹³¹ These are pseudonyms

¹³² Though I was present for these conversations, I was not included and no one told me the background necessary to understand what they were discussing. I did not grasp the whole picture of their conversations until I was in Kunming, digging deeper into the controversy over Ahmao orthography. Only then did I

official, she did not even step into the administrative building of the county.

Wang Chaohei's conversations with the elders often began with greetings and remembering the 1999 conference in Kunming where they had met each other. The 1999 conference was held by the CNLY to evaluate the efforts to improve Miao literacy over the last few decades, to resolve contemporary controversies regarding Miao orthography, and to plan for the development of Miao languages and literatures in the future. At that conference, the Ahmao representatives from the Zhaotong region publicly voiced their disagreement with representatives from Chuxiong, and refused to back up the Ahmao orthography formalization project. At the conference, the Zhaotong and Guizhou representatives distributed a petition requesting to replace FAO by LAO in bilingual education. Though that kind of informal petition could not be officially recognized, the purpose of forcing the CNLY to turn down FAO was more than explicit. After the conference, the CNLY sent one of its officials to Yiliang to appease the community's unruly response. However, no further action was taken.

The CNLY still continues promoting FAO in bilingual education and literatures. The voices of Zhaotong Ahmao never seem to be heard. The Ahmao-Han dictionary, published in 2007, stoked the resentment.¹³³ Many language experts found enormous

finally realize that even if I was not there, Yang Zhaofei would still have visited her hometown Yiliang and met those Ahmao language experts on a detour from her field trip, and they would still have had the same conversation.

¹³³ The first printing of the dictionary entitled *Miao Han ciyu duizhao zonghui* (苗漢詞語對照總匯 Miao-Han Thesaurus) was published by *kexue chuban she* (科學出版社 Science Press) in 2007. The Science Press is a first tier publishers with a nation-wide reputation. Many language experts of Zhaotong Ahmao whom I interviewed were encouraged by the indication that the state did pay particular notice to the Ahmao language. However, they were also upset by the misinterpretations and sloppy translations of Ahmao vocabulary in this dictionary. Their distress over the contents triggered their resentment of FAO. They took that dictionary as evidence that the Chuxiong Ahmao were incompetent at Ahmao language.

errors in the dictionary and felt the Ahmao were insulted by this insincere publication, which claimed to “inherit and develop” Ahmao tradition. At the end of that year, Zhang Jianming initiated a petition again addressed to the CNLY, asking to stop the promotion of FAO, and urging a conference to discuss issues related to Ahmao orthography again. With no feedback from the CNLY, the Zhaotong Ahmao gradually lost their patience. In the summer of 2008, only a few months before my arrival in September, the Zhaotong Ahmao forced the county government to turn down a training program for teachers of “bilingual education.”¹³⁴ The CNLY could not ignore the petition and it was forced to respond.

While visiting those language experts as a friend and doing something for the CNLY, Wang Chaohei had essentially kept her visits “under the table.” By first reminiscing about the 1999 conference, Yang contextualized the present conversation with the controversy raised at the 1999 conference, but without addressing what actually happened at that conference. By confessing to Ahmao language experts that the formalization project was a disaster and that none of the professional linguists supported that project, Yang showed her agreement with Ahmao language experts and clearly

Thus FAO, which is a product of the Chuxiong Ahmao-led formalization project is ill-designed and cannot represent the Ahmao language.

¹³⁴ Bilingual education, in this case, is defined as teaching with Chinese and Ahmao languages in classrooms. Though bilingual education is a subfield of compulsory education, which is under the administration of the provincial department of education, the CNLY is assigned to work with the department of education on pedagogy, teacher training, and teaching materials. In “*shi yi wu* (十一五 the eleventh five-year plan, 2006–2010)” and “*shi er wu* (十二五 the twelfth five-year plan, 2011–2015),” promoting bilingual education was the most important nationality policy in Yunnan. Roughly speaking, there has been an increase of 150,000 more students receiving bilingual education in school, mainly in elementary school, each year since 2006, and it is very likely that the number will be boosted over the next few years (Zhu Hong and Yuan Changlin 2011). As eight training bases for teachers in bilingual education have been established in the provinces since 2011, it is expected that all elementary schools in minority regions will be equipped with bilingual teachers in the near future (昆明日報 2011, 9–16).

delivered the message that their appeals had been heard. As someone who facilitates negotiations between Zhaotong Ahmao and the CNLY, Wang Chaohei came to propose a “win-win” solution.

The conversation continued with the assessment of the state policy. Speaking as an official of the CNLY, Yang clearly made the point that for anyone concerned with the development and reproduction of both Ahmao culture and language, the state policy on bilingual education was meant to be helpful.¹³⁵ Resources and funding were available for minority communities to train bilingual teachers, produce bilingual materials, and support bilingual education in elementary school. Both the CNLY and the Zhaotong Ahmao could benefit if the two parties could cooperate with each other. If the Ahmao refused to cooperate with the CNLY, the provincial government would take back the budget. Not only would the CNLY be punished for the failure to implement state policy, but the Ahmao community in Zhaotong would also lose a great chance to promote Ahmao

¹³⁵ It is important to understand Yang Zhaofei’s point within the context of promoting literacy in China. According to Minglang Zhou (2007), since the mid-1980s, China has taken two steps to legislate literacy: legislating compulsory education as the mainstream approach and illiteracy eradication as the supplementary approach. However, literacy as represented in the legislation is mono-lingual, specifically meaning Chinese literacy in compulsory education. As a result, minority literacies are put in an awkward position. To facilitate compulsory education as well as protect the language rights of minorities, local governments issued their administrative laws (or mandates) independently to combine compulsory education and minority language rights. Local administrative laws adopt stances varying from “promotion” to “permission” to “tolerance,” with the focus on the relative status of minority literacies in education. In 2012, the CNLY presented Yunnan Provincial Regulations for National Minority Language and Literature Work [DRAFT](云南省少数民族语言文字工作条例 (草案)), which is expected to be issued as the administrative law by 2013. According to Zhou’s categorization, the legislation of minority literacy in Yunnan adopts the stance of “permission,” which explicitly assumes the dominance of Chinese and defines the role of minority languages under this dominance. To put it another way, though bilingual education in Yunnan province is meant to promote Chinese literacy in minorities, it also grants minority literacy a presence in compulsory education. Instead of justifying minority language and literacy as an assistant kit for minority students to facilitate Chinese, the newly issued administrative law justifies bilingual education in terms of language preservation. If there is no bilingual education, minority languages and literacy will be gradually overridden by Chinese language and literacy as compulsory education becomes more and more popular.

literacy. In the end, that would be the loss of the Zhaotong Ahmao, not the CNLY, not even Chuxiong Ahmao. While making this argument, Wang Chaohei intended to make sure that the negotiation would proceed on common ground; that is, that bilingual education should be conducted in the Zhaotong Ahmao community.

Further, Wang Chaohei implied that the CNLY did not want to back FAO, but had no choice. Thus, as an official of CNLY, Wang Chaohei asked for reciprocal understanding from Ahmao language experts. She told them that the CNLY did not have the authority to turn down the use of FAO in bilingual education since that was the decision made by the Ahmao people of Chuxiong region. By law, Chuxiong as *zizhizhou* (autonomous prefecture) could have its official languages and orthographies as long as they did not violate national policy.¹³⁶ The fact that FAO was recognized as an official orthography of Ahmao by the Chuxiong prefecture government and was passed as a mandate could not be overridden by the CNLY. In other words, there was no way to solve the controversy, unless the Chuxiong prefecture government overrode that mandate. Meanwhile, the CNLY could only cooperate with the minority committee of Chuxiong to produce bilingual materials for their needs.

Nevertheless, Wang Chaohei also hinted to her friends that there was a “gray” area with regard to the state policy. That is, by law, the Zhaotong Ahmao were also granted the constitutional right to have their orthography, and they could make their

¹³⁶ *Zizhizhou* is a *zizhiqu* (meaning autonomy) at prefecture level. In China, there are autonomies at provincial, prefectural, county, and township levels. Theoretically, the autonomy officially predicates the right of each nationality group to develop its own culture and language (Quan 2003), to exercise self-government, and to determine the use of natural resources and the group’s course of development (Wang and Phillion 2009). In the PRC Regional Autonomy Law for Minority Nationalities enacted in 1984, six articles address minority groups’ rights and those of language use (Zhou 2004).

choice of orthography as the Chuxiong Ahmao had done. Though it was very unlikely that the city government of Zhaotong would legislate the Zhaotong Ahmao's choice of orthography as an official one, no one, even the state government, would be allowed to constrain their choice of orthography. As both a friend of Zhaotong Ahmao and an official of the CNLY, Wang Chaohei implied the possibility that the CNLY might not force the community to use FAO in bilingual classrooms as long as the state council did not legislate FAO as the "*zhengshi wenzi* (正式文字 formal orthography)" of the Ahmao.¹³⁷

However, within this informal setting, Wang Chaohei also avoided promising that such a possibility would be realized in the future. Rather, Yang invited her interlocutors to join her "complicity." The plan is that the CNLY would provide the bilingual materials written in FAO, and the Zhaotong Ahmao would have those materials. The teachers in the bilingual classrooms would not "use" those materials but they would have their own teaching materials and evaluations would be based on the teachings in the classroom. As the supervisor, the representative of the CNLY would not "dictate" teachings and evaluations in the classroom. Reports for the upper-level supervisor would include the bilingual textbooks provided by the CNLY, as well as the classroom scenarios and the exam scores. As long as the requirements were fulfilled, no one in the upper level of the bureaucracy would ever care which orthography was used in the classroom. As long as efforts to promote bilingual education were seen, both the CNLY and the Zhaotong

¹³⁷ The legislation of a writing system as a formal orthography is meant to grant that writing system a legal status. Once a minority's writing system is recognized as a formal orthography, it then can be used to effectuate documents with legal force. Therefore, a formal orthography must be a standardized one as opposed to a vernacular writing system. It can be regarded as the final "step" of standardization. Though legislation could be done by the autonomous governments at varied levels, the state's recognition of a writing system as a formal orthography is the ultimate end of standardization, especially when there are several dialects and autonomies involved.

Ahmao would benefit from their “complicity.” The worst thing that could happen would be a leak. In that case, the CNLY representative and the project official of the Yiliang government might be punished for failing to supervise the bilingual education, which would not really be that serious an offense. Neither the Zhaotong Ahmao community nor the teachers would be punished because the minority community is granted the language right to choose the orthography and the teachers have the right to organize their teachings and exams in the classrooms.

In those several conversations, I witnessed Yang’s enthusiasm in promoting her “win-win” solution. Lots of words were exchanged but no promise was made by either side. As an outsider, I got a strong impression that the purpose of Wang Chaohei’s informal visiting was just to “communicate” with the Zhaotong Ahmao community, to “inform” them of what was going to happen next. As the right of having orthography is granted to those who use the orthography by law, it is impossible that the CNLY would suspend the use of FAO in bilingual education. Rather, the CNLY would continue to supply the bilingual materials written in FAO and it would be up to the Zhaotong Ahmao to choose the orthography they wanted to use. Nevertheless, the under-the-table “complicity” raised people’s hopes, leading them to expect that the CNLY might yield its authority to supervise, even though, in fact, the CNLY had promised nothing.

After Wang Chaohei’s trip, the CNLY would assume that the community was informed and it would be their turn to make the right decision, by which the community would benefit most. Whereas the authority yielded itself, the message was clear enough that the CNLY could not be held responsible for the choice of Ahmao orthography. Indeed, as far as Wang Chaohei and her colleagues in the CNLY are concerned, the

controversy over Ahmao orthography is closed, and there is no need to recast the same issue in bilingual education. If the Zhaotong Ahmao are dissatisfied, the resentment should be addressed to their fellow Ahmao, not the CNLY, not the state.

In the summer of 2009, the training program for teachers of bilingual education was held in Zhaotong as scheduled. The training program was hosted by the Ahmao Association of Yiliang county, which is a commissioned organization of the county government. Both the local government and the CNLY sponsored the program but did not organize it. Unfortunately, I did not attend the training program because I was expecting my first baby in November. Afterwards, Wang Chaohei told me that Officer Yang was appointed as the principle of the training program and Dr. Zhang was the lecturer. I did not ask Yang what materials were used in the classroom but it was clear to me that Officer Yang and Dr. Zhang would have their own materials for teaching, other than those provided by the CNLY.

I have related the protest of Zhaotong Ahmao in 2008 as a relatively long and concrete story of the three-day encounter between the CNLY official and the language experts of the Zhaotong Ahmao community and how a state of complicity (not a consensus) was reached regarding the promotion of Ahmao literacy. The story can be read (or interpreted) in many ways. It might be read as evidence of the failure of the state with respect to implementation of its language and education. The failure of the state is evident in the discrepancy between the policy and the practices, which have been documented by different scholars from varied disciplines (Wang and Phillion 2009; Zhang 2009; Zhou 2010). Alternately, the story might be read as revealing the geopolitics of orthographic standardization in terms of who is able to represent the Ahmao—the

Chuxiong or Zhaotong, the current center or the previous one. It seems that when orthographic standardization bears the burden of representing ethnic identity, the state is never activist enough, but is blamed for either failing to exercise or having over-exercised its authority (Bradley 2009; Grose 2012). Finally, the story might also be read as the corruption of the bureaucracy in which the “community of complicity” defeats the state (Steinmuller 2010). While this does happen, the Zhaotong Ahmao community is actually gaining benefits from the failure of the state-led formalization project.

Though all of these readings seem interesting and productive, I cannot help but suspect that the state has been scapegoated for the failure to promote minority language and literacy. By saying the state is scapegoated, I simply mean that the state should not be held responsible for failing to promote Ahmao literacy. The only reason to hold the state responsible for the failure is that the state is thought to have the ultimate authority in language planning through its policymaking, allocation of resources, education guidelines and so on. However, while promoting minority language and literacy is intended to “add” value, the future of minority language and literacy ultimately depends on how the value is perceived rather than added. The logic defeats itself, for it has been proved that the authority of the state does not always count when language planning is oriented to minority languages (Bradley 2009; Grose 2012; Xiao 1998; Zhou 2001, 2007, 2010). In other words, if the state is meant to be helpful in promoting (or preserving) minority languages and literacies, its failure simply explicates its incompetence in administrating minority languages and literacies. The fact that we have put too much burden on the role of the state in minority language planning dims our perception of the future of minority language and literacy. It seems to me that a disenchantment with the role of the state is

necessary for perceiving the contemporary state of minority languages and literacies.

To speak precisely, the failure of FAO in Zhaotong is due to the fact that the Ahmao language experts, who are also Elites, disagree with FAO and embrace instead the Pollard Script. Though the language experts do provide sound professional and rational reasons to turn down FAO, the fact that APS did not actually fit their professional opinions about what qualifies as good Ahmao orthography indicates their disagreement is rooted not in reason but in sense. To reveal how APS makes sense to them, we need to know who they are.

The Elderly of Shimenkan

Zhaotong is the most northeastern prefecture of Yunnan province, where the biggest population of Ahmao in Yunnan province lives, in the southeast side of the prefecture. Across the provincial border, the Weining county of Guizhou, located southeast of Zhaotong prefecture, is the place from which the ancestors of Zhaotong Ahmao originated. The southeast county under the administration of Zhaotong prefecture is Yiliang, where the densest Ahmao population in Yunnan province lives. Located at the western border of Weining, the Yiliang Ahmao considered themselves as genealogically closer to the Weining Ahmao, especially those living near Shimenkan, than Ahmao living in other places. During the denominational era, Yiliang was the hinterland of Shimenkan where transportation was facilitated and communication between Shimenkan and its affiliated churches in Zhaotong region was moderated. Due to its geographical importance and historical contiguity with the Shimenkan, the protest against FAO in Yiliang involved not only those Ahmao living in Yiliang, but also those living in the

region that was once under the administration of the Methodist Church in Shimenkan.

The three Ahmao language experts I encountered in Yiliang, as well as other Elites whom I met and interviewed later in Kunming, Weining and Guiyang, share similar backgrounds of having received the first four to nine years of formal education in one of the branches of Guanghai elementary school. Though it seems unsurprising that minority elites would serve as the intermediaries between the government and minority villagers, the three Yiliang Ahmao elites, as well as many others who share similar backgrounds, have their own agenda. A friend of mine who has been deeply involved in the community developmental project of Ahmao since 2002 called those Ahmao elites “the elderly of Shimenkan” (石門坎的老人們). Though the term is only shared between scholars and NGO workers and is perhaps unknown to the Ahmao, I found that the term has both advantages and disadvantages and “cynically” describes the Ahmao elites. On the one hand, the term is not an accurate description because the Ahmao elites do not live in Shimenkan anymore. They belong to the Shimenkan of the past but not the contemporary one. On the other hand, the term highlights their self-identification as the successors of Shimenkan and their privileges as the alumni of the Guanghai school. The cynicism refers to the fact that, though they were no longer part of Shimenkan after graduation, part of Shimenkan has haunted them, bothered them, become their burden for their entire lives. Their destiny has been written since the day they left Shimenkan. As they were used to being the best students in the school, they were proud of Shimenkan for enabling them to pursue higher education. However, their Shimenkan background also caused them trouble during the revolutionary decades. Many of them worked for the government and became officials in the 1960s, but they could hardly be promoted because of their

Shimenkan background. They did not ask to receive this broken crown, but no one has asked whether or not they agree to accept it. They became the successors of Shimenkan since the day the center collapsed. With no hope of rebuilding the center, the body of Shimenkan is extinct but its spirit still disturbs “the elderly of Shimenkan.”

Year 2005 was the centennial birth year of the Shimenkan church. Christians, including Ahmao and Yi, had a centennial ceremony on November 15, 2005. All the Ahmao churches were invited, including those formerly affiliated with the CIM, but the county government seemed to withhold its approval. Encouraged by the Christians, the elderly of Shimenkan thus began pushing the idea of a centennial ceremony for the school and the county government in 2005, but the county government did not buy in. Rather, to avoid the possibility that the ceremony might be misunderstood as a celebration of the centennial of the birth of Christianity in Shimenkan, the county government offered the excuse that there was no budget that year to hold the ceremony and politely promised there would be enough funds to hold the ceremony in 2006. But the elderly of Shimenkan were furious. They thought that suggestion was ridiculous because no one celebrates the 101st birthday but not the 100th birthday. Without the permission of the county government, the elderly of Shimenkan established their own committee to coordinate their own ceremony. They claimed that no one could stop the alumni visiting their school. They invited scholars from Beijing and Hong Kong who had written about Shimenkan, as well as the missionaries’ descendants from the UK, in the name of the centennial ceremony of the Shimenkan school. The ceremony became an international event and there was talk that it might be broadcast abroad. The county government confronted a dilemma: if the ceremony was not approved, would the police arrest those

elderly and foreigners for violating the law? As the date scheduled for the alumni visit to Shimenkan drew closer, the county government eventually approved the centennial ceremony, but in the name of the centennial ceremony of the Christian church and the alumni meeting of Shimenkan Guanghua school. The centennial ceremony of the school coordinated by the school and the county government would be held in November of 2006.

It turns out that the centennial ceremony of the Christian church was a huge success. Thousands of Christians crowded into the Shimenkan church to attend the ceremony. Visitors invited by the elderly of Shimenkan attended the Christian ceremony on November 15, and had their own ceremony at the school on November 16. Though it seems hard to discern whether they were there to attend the centennial ceremony of the school or that of the church, it is important to make clear that the alumni were not invited by a Christian church to attend a Christian ceremony. They were there for the centennial ceremony of the school, and they happened to be with the Christians for the centennial ceremony of the church. Others, including the scholars, journalists, and foreigners were invited by the alumni. They also came to attend the centennial ceremony of the school and happened to be with the Christians. Therefore, the elderly of Shimenkan did, indeed, end up coordinating the centennial ceremony of the school. As all the Christians were hosted by the church, the visitors and the alumni were hosted by the school. For the school, they were welcoming the alumni and the visitors back and their visit was not necessary for the centennial ceremony of the school. The school would coordinate another centennial ceremony in 2006.

It looks like the elderly of Shimenkan should not have been there for the Christian

centennial ceremony; at least, neither the school nor the Christian church invited them to be there. Their presence was redundant. However, it is this redundancy that made the elderly of Shimenkan a unique group whose presence could not be ignored by either the Christians or the officials. There were fifty more people, including the elderly and their invited guests, who showed up for the event. They held their ceremony the morning after the Christian one. Students lined up on both sides of the road to welcome their visitors. The ceremony was held in a small classroom. The secretary of the party of the school and an official representing the county bureau of education were invited to give a talk, then the floor was opened to everyone in the classroom. The scholars, journalists, the elderly, and the missionary's daughter in attendance were all welcomed to take the floor. Whereas the visitors expressed their admiration for the achievement of Guanghua school, the elderly gave suggestions. They especially urged the school to protect the remains of the 1940s Shimenkan and inherit the spirit of Shimenkan. After the meeting, the alumni and their invited guests took a tour of Shimenkan. The alumni became the hosts, introducing their guests to the history of the school and its remains. In the evening, a reception was held at Yang Minghua's house. Thirty more villagers came to join the party. Yang's small house, where he displayed his collections on Shimenkan, including photos, manuscripts, documents, and so on, was packed with people. Without planning in advance, villagers, elderly and visitors shared songs with each other, one after another, including hymns and popular songs sung in English, Chinese, and Ahmao. The elderly's centennial celebration of the Guanghua school was not a grand festival but it was rich in nostalgia: though it took several decades, they finally went on a pilgrimage to recollect their memories of the past.

Though the elderly of Shimenkan are not present in contemporary Shimenkan, they make their memories of the past relevant to the future of Shimenkan through scholarly works and journalistic reports. Over the last two decades, the elderly, thanks to their fluency in Chinese, memories, writings and social connections, have become the best informants of outsiders who are interested in Shimenkan. They have been interviewed in documentaries, invited to conferences and workshops, and consulted regarding history, culture and education. The elderly who now serve as the spokespersons of Shimenkan present a specific understanding of Shimenkan's past that locates it firmly as what's missing yet essential in Shimenkan's present and future.¹³⁸

It turns out that remembering is crucial to the identity of the elderly of Shimenkan. As someone who was born in Shimenkan and had spent the first fifteen years of his life living in Shimenkan, Tao Shaohu, the coordinator of the alumni's centennial ceremony in 2005, decided to walk on his personal journey of nostalgia after retiring in 1997. He set up three projects that aimed to recapture the Shimenkan of his childhood, and which he thought he would spend the rest of his life completing. Those three projects were, first, compiling a book of biographies of what he called the "predecessors" of Shimenkan; second, rescuing the old buildings built before 1950, as these stand as evidence of the place's past glory; third, revitalizing APS as the writing containing the wisdom of Ahmao predecessors. Tao Shaohu's projects reflect what many consider to be the three essential

¹³⁸ Propagated through the Christian community, the story of Shimenkan has spread from Hong Kong back to China, and attracted media attention. In 2007, the story of Pollard and his Shimenkan was made into a drama broadcast on CCTV. Several elders were interviewed to recount the missionary's story and to talk about the spirit of Shimenkan.

aspects of Shimenkan: the school, the people, and the Pollard Script.¹³⁹ Many of his contemporaries share similar concerns about Shimenkan and have created their own memorial projects. Though few of their works have been made public, they share with each other their memories, their works, and their comments. By doing so, the elderly of Shimenkan have established their networks based on their shared alumni status and have continued working individually on the collective project of remembering Shimenkan.

Moreover, how Shimenkan is to be remembered is also how the elderly conceive themselves in relation to their Christian background. Though Shimenkan used to be a Christian center, it is now remembered as an educational center. The elderly dedicate the achievements of Shimenkan to “teachers”—the missionaries and Ahmao predecessors. Whereas the present Shimenkan is absent from memory, the Christianity of Shimenkan is locked in the past. Similarly, the elderly have locked their Christian faith in the past. Many of them are not Christians, but they were all Christians back in the 1950s. They could hardly agree with the communists that Christianity is bad; but they also could hardly admit that they did once believe in God. Even if they did/do believe in God, they keep their faith to themselves. They discern “good” Christianity from “bad,” as if there is a “right” attitude toward believing in God. As summarized by Wang Wenxian (Chapter 3), the right attitude toward believing in God is to believe, but not exclusively. “God is not

¹³⁹ A book project entitled “The Predecessors of Shimenkan” was undertaken in 2007 and has been a completed manuscript since 2011. The editor Tao Shaohu sent out a request for photos and articles to everyone whose names and contact information were recorded in the alumni list compiled for the centennial ceremony and more were added after the ceremony. In two years, Tao Shaohu received responses from a hundred more alumni or successors of alumni. As a result, the book contains 72 short articles and 123 plates, remembering 65 individuals and 5 branches of Shimenkan school. Though the Nationality Press of Yunnan promised to publish this book, the publication has been held back since 2010 and there is no indication as to when it will be resumed.

the only thing all we need in order to live in the world. We need knowledge, education, technology and so on. We do not believe in God because we need nothing else but God.”¹⁴⁰ In public, they show no religious enthusiasm, but rather, a rejection of contemporary Ahmao Christianity. A paragraph from Wu Yaohua’s manuscript about the history of Christianity in Yiliang explicates their ambivalence:

How many people did the Methodist Church have converted in Shimenkan? My opinion is that the Ahmao Christians who had learned culture and knowledge because of the enlightenment of the Methodist Church are no longer stupid and ignorant. They have learned how to distinguish the false from the true, the wrong from the right. They understand what is worth doing and what is not worth doing. Their beliefs have transformed in qualities...The complete meaning of religious freedom includes “the freedom of believing and not believing in religion.” The Ahmao Christians of the Methodist Church chose to free themselves from religion. They are not the same as the Christians of the China Inland Mission who have chosen to revive their Christianity. We should thus recognize the fact that the Christians of the Methodist Church do not believe in Christianity like the CIM Christians is an effect of enlightenment which they received from the Methodist Church (Wu Yaohua and Wang Jianwen 2006, 66).

This is a former Christian’s confession but he does not betray his religion. Wu identifies himself as a Christian of the Methodist Church. He confesses that he walked away from the church, just as many other Christians of the Methodist Church did. They gave up Christianity, ironically, because the Methodist Church led them to go on the path of enlightenment from which they received culture (文化) and knowledge (知識). In other words, they were enlightened by the Methodist Church and then they gave up Christianity because their quality of faith was transformed to a modern one. In short, Wu argues that the Christianity of the Methodist Church has converted to modernity, and

¹⁴⁰ Interview was conducted at Wang Wenxian’s house in Anshun in August 11, 2009. “我們人生活在世上不是只需要上帝而已，我們需要知識、要受教育、要學習技術等等，不是說信了上帝就不要其他的了。”

contemporary Ahmao Christianity, which is not yet converted to modernity, could hardly be recognized as “good.” The elderly rather believe there are two Christianities—that of the Methodist Church, the modern one in the past, and that of the China Inland Mission, the superstitious one in the present.

In short, the elderly of Shimenkan must be seen as a unique community whose identity is constituted through remembering Shimenkan. Approximately two hundred elderly are connected through this alumni social network, and fifty more are actively involved. Though this number compared to the number of Christians is small, the elderly of Shimenkan stand out because of their “literary” background. They are elites of the Ahmao and life-long officials. They know how to make the government, scholars, journalists, and NGO workers listen. They speak for the Ahmao as they speak of Shimenkan. Through their commemorative projects, they construct the Ahmao as an imagined community shared by both Ahmao and non-Ahmao as well as Christian and non-Christian Ahmao.

The Ahmao Renaissance

The elderly of Shimenkan by no means constitute a homogenous community, and many members have different opinions on Ahmao orthography. Some prefer using LAO; some devote their efforts to improving the Pollard Script, and some insist on using the Pollard Script—but none choose FAO. Though they have different opinions when the orthographic issue is public and political, it is important to note that none of them use LAO as the only Ahmao orthography in their personal and private writings. Moreover, it seems that more and more elderly have begun embracing the Pollard Script. Though there

is no statistical evidence that the trend is real, the following example speaks for the tendency. At the 1999 conference on Miao languages and literatures held by the CNLY in Kunming, a petition appealing for LAO as the “official” Ahmao orthography was signed with thirty names and distributed at the conference. The two elderly who initiated the petition in 1999 are now pronounced supporters of the Pollard Script. The three elderly whom I met in Yiliang also signed their names on the 1999 petition, protesting on behalf of APS in 2008. The change of position raises an interesting question: what does APS mean to them?

To answer this question, it is important to notice that most of the elderly were hardly competent Ahmao readers. The elderly we addressed in this context were students of the Guanghua school in the 1940s–1950s. They might have learned Ahmao orthography either with APS or LAO in their early education, but they can hardly remember the script, having not used it for several decades. They learned to facilitate APS again after several decades of forgetting. The motivation derives from their nostalgia, arising from their devotion to remember the old Shimenkan. To put it another way, it is nostalgia that has fuelled their desire for the Pollard Script.

For the elderly, the Shimenkan of the 1940s–1950s stands for the highest achievement of Ahmao culture that ever occurred. For that reason, the dialect of Shimenkan from 1956 was selected as the standard of the Ahmao language. It is said that people who lived in Shimenkan during this period spoke the most refined Ahmao dialect. That sociolinguistic claim is twofold: on the one hand, it speaks to the linguistic reality that the intonation of the Shimenkan dialect is highly complicated because the intonation of a word shifts in sentences and phrases. Therefore, it requires a lot of training and

practice to master the intonation. Compared to other dialects that are “sloppy,” the Shimenkan dialect is well-regulated. Second, it proclaims that the Shimenkan dialect is distinct for its use of “polite language,” which does not occur in other dialects. Linguistic study has shown that the grammar of the Ahmao language contains gender differentiation. This trait should be shared by all dialects. However, as the male language is used in writing, it is less gender-specific but becomes the language of the literates. As a result, the differentiation of gender in the Shimenkan dialect is then recognized as the social differentiation between literates and illiterates, and the indices of gender become the indices of politeness.

The Pollard Script, which was designed in accordance with the dialect of Shimenkan, thus represents the most refined Ahmao language, which is regulated and polite. For the elderly of Shimenkan, returning to APS represents a renaissance, a return to the finest Ahmao voice. In general, the Ahmao renaissance is considered to have started in late 1990s. Unlike a renaissance that occurs as a cultural or artistic movement, however, the Ahmao renaissance takes the form of a sociolinguistic movement and occurs in literature as the trend of lexiconism. The elderly of Shimenkan have shown extraordinary interest in making dictionaries. In Weining, Yang Zhongxin and his friends have spent almost ten years editing the dictionary in the name of the Miao association, adding 200,000 more entries; the Nationality Press of Guizhou has promised to publish the dictionary once it is completed. In Yiliang, Yang Jiankang began compiling his vocabulary book, including 80,000 more entries since 1995 when he began his project of translating the Ahmao Bible. In Kunming, Tao Shaohu has just completed his vocabulary book entitled “Lexicon of Ahmao New Testament (1936) (苗語新約全書詞彙)” in 2012,

a project that took him five years. Many other small projects are not recorded here.

Though their devotion to making the Ahmao dictionary might be seen as part of the nationwide campaign to develop minority languages and literatures, it is important to note that the elderly are not interested in compiling an Ahmao-Chinese dictionary in order to provide an Ahmao translation of modern Chinese vocabulary. Rather, almost all the elderly I met had their own vocabulary books of Ahmao words. They dug into folklore, talked to rural residents, and consulted cultural and oral experts, to collect as much vocabulary as possible. They took notes of vocabulary as they learned Ahmao words from folklore, the Bible, conversations and so on. Many of those individually compiled vocabulary books include only several hundred to a few thousand entries. All of them are handwritten and neatly lettered in the Pollard Script. Some provide Chinese translations annexed to Ahmao words, some did not. Though the vocabulary books they personally keep can hardly be called dictionaries in terms of their completeness, the form matters as an indication of lexiconism in Ahmao language. Through compiling vocabulary books, they take a personal journey to discover the Ahmao language and culture. Though they do not produce new Ahmao literature, the renaissance has shown its path as returning to the “good old” language through making dictionaries or vocabulary books.

Moreover, the Ahmao Renaissance has extended its social impact through grassroots literacy campaigns. Even villagers who are literate in neither Chinese nor Ahmao recall the old Shimenkan as the “good old” days of Ahmao civilization and regret not being able to use the Pollard Script, as if the latter demonstrates the degradation of Ahmao culture and society. The grassroots literacy campaign for APS is often recognized

as the counter-discourse to the state-led campaign for FAO. While beginning with the assumption that APS is insufficient and thus deficient, the state-led campaigns on FAO intend to modernize the Ahmao language through the “formalization of Ahmao orthography.” As a counter-discourse, the grassroots literacy campaign begins by defining APS as a sufficient writing system, followed by developing pedagogy, and is eventually realized in the classrooms of rural villages. To account for how the Ahmao renaissance intertwines with the sociolinguistic movement, I discuss Tao Shaohu’s work in detail.

After his retirement in 1999, Tao Shaohu began his research project to define APS as a writing system. He intended to demonstrate that the writing system was complete and sufficient to record any word in Ahmao language. He spent three years reading the Ahmao New Testament published in 1936, in order to figure out the rules and principles of the composition of words. Then he spent another five years producing three levels of primers at the entry-level, the intermediate, and the advanced. While doing all this writing, Tao Shaohu also devoted himself to teaching the Pollard Script. He travelled through Ahmao villages in the Chuxiong, Zhaotong, and Weining regions and asked church and school leaders for permission to hold free literacy classes in their respective churches or schools. Since 2005, he has held several dozen literacy classes in Ahmao villages. His work was noticed by the volunteers who have been involved in several NGO projects in 2007. They then began funding Tao Shaohu’s literacy classes. However, Tao refuses to be paid for his teaching and insists that all funds should go to classrooms. He often relates his work to the evangelicalism of the Ahmao predecessors in Shimenkan in the early twentieth century who built up the congregation and the church-school with only a few financial resources. Throughout the decade, Tao Shaohu has become known

among the Ahmao people as “the missionary of the Pollard Script,” who has extraordinary enthusiasm for promoting Ahmao literacy, and whose pedagogy has been widely distributed in the Ahmao speech community.

According to Tao Shaohu, the idea that APS is insufficient for writing the Ahmao language has seriously obscured the improvement of the Ahmao writing system over the last few decades. While the APS is regarded as insufficient of a written Ahmao language, the problem is often resolved by “adding” more letters and markers. This solution has been repeatedly adopted in different projects, including a slight modification in the 1940s, Latinization in the 1950s, and formalization in the 1980s. However, adding letters and markers enhances accuracy at the expense of the simplicity of the APS as a writing system. Thus, instead of adding letters and markers to the Ahmao writing system, Tao Shaohu takes a different approach by revealing the “spelling rules” of the Pollard Script. He insists that APS is sufficient to represent all Ahmao words. What remains unclear and thus becomes controversial is that APS does not represent all the consonants and tones in individual letters and markers, but rather, one letter represents both voiceless and voiced consonants and one marked position represents either one or two intonations. After carefully examining the written words in the Ahmao New Testament published in 1988 [1936], Tao Shaohu concluded that the writing system is governed by certain rules and those rules have been faithfully applied to compile the Ahmao New Testament.

Having gone without practice for more than half century, Ahmao literates, even those experienced writers, have only “vague ideas” of the spelling rules of the Pollard

Script.¹⁴¹ According to Tao Shaohu, though there are people who are experts at writing, they did not “learn” the spelling rules correctly but were self-taught. Most of them learned only a partial set of spelling rules, not a complete one. As a result, they could not even write correctly. Because they did not know the complete rules, they thought APS was insufficient as a writing system. To make spelling accessible to every Ahmao, Tao Shaohu began developing a pedagogy for Ahmao literacy based upon his findings regarding the “spelling rules” of the Pollard Script. By the end of 2010, there were literacy primers for beginners and advanced readers. The former, entitled “The Beginning of Ahmao Orthography (Y⁻ 'ᵀ" (ᵀ̄ ᵀ̄ ᵀ̄) includes only eight classes as the introduction of Ahmao phonemes, intonations and the Pollard Script. The latter, entitled “The Introduction of Ahmao Orthography (Y⁻ 'ᵀ" (ᵀ̄ ᵀ̄)ᵀ̄ ᵀ̄) includes forty-one classes divided into two sections. The first section includes eight classes that are similar to “The Beginning of Ahmao Orthography.” The second section includes thirty-three selected Ahmao poems and essays.

In his introduction of Ahmao orthography, Tao Shaohu puts special emphasis on the transformation from the phonemes to the letters. The class begins with the introduction of the phonetic structures of Ahmao language, which includes six classes on consonants, two classes on vowels and six intonations. Each phonetic category and class

¹⁴¹ Many Ahmao told me that they never learned the spelling rules of Ahmao orthography. Some of them confessed that they learned but could not remember anything. In the old times, they learned to read and write by memorizing and replicating written words. The teacher led them, reading the Bible word by word in class. After class, they were assigned homework memorizing and replicating one or two paragraphs from the Bible. Even having become fluent readers of the Ahmao Bible, they still insist that they do not spell the words but read the words.

is represented in letters and markers, and many “words” are provided as examples for students to practice the phonemes and the intonations. Then the classes move forward to the composition of the words. This is the beginning of facilitating written words, which includes the practice of spelling and the rules of writing. This design is intended to provide the students with an overall picture of the Ahmao phonetic structures and writing system. It expects students to grasp the phonemes and the intonations first, and then the letters and markers. Tao Shaohu’s pedagogy is different from that of the bilingual primers produced by the CNLY. The latter begin with the introduction of letters and markers as if letters and markers would be sufficient to provide an overview of Ahmao phonemes. It is important to note that Tao Shaohu develops his pedagogy with the purpose of revealing the complete rules of spelling, not just providing mere instruction for people to remember the letters. The difference is that while orthographic writing represents a word in composition of phonemes and intonation, facilitating orthography requires only recognition of letters and markers, which by no means indicates full competence or literacy. Rather, full literacy requires someone to internalize the phonetic structure of a language. By so doing, competent literates are not only capable of writing and reading APS correctly but also speaking the most refined Ahmao language as represented in the Pollard Script.

The thirty-three selected texts are all short writings containing less than 500 words. In addition to four Bible verses, three pieces of folklore, one letter and one script, another twenty-four texts are songs. Eighteen out of the thirty-three texts were written by former teacher-pastors of Shimenkan before 1950, and nine were written or translated by the elderly of Shimenkan in the past two decades. While the classes of the curriculum are

not sorted in accordance with the years of the literature, the curriculum reveals Ahmao historicity as each class contributes to characterize the Ahmao in chronological fashion.

The major theme of the texts is nostalgia. Beginning with Tao Shaohu's translation of Zhu Hanzhang's Chinese "Patriotic Song" (Class 9, 愛國歌), the song contains only forty-eight words and addresses a space as big as Asia, a demography as huge as the four billion Chinese people, a history as long as five thousand years. It implicitly lays out the historicity of Ahmao, as if they were going a long way to become part of the nation-state. The following two classes written by Zhu Hanzhang and Wang Mingji share the same theme, pity for the Ahmao in the past when they were like the "orphans" (Class 10, 孤兒淚) and the "blind" (Class 11, 可憐盲人). Even though they worked so hard (Class 12, 鋤禾), they were ignored and ignorant. Fortunately, the missionary Samuel Pollard came (Class 13, Jesus's prayer), and changed the Ahmao's life. Unfortunately, Pollard could not stay longer but left the Ahmao (Class 14, 送別). However, the Ahmao who were inspired by the missionaries were encouraged to change themselves (Class 15, 應樹好風氣). They would help each other (Class 16, 攜手並進), and they knew that ties of friendship could last for a long time (Class 17, 花帶不長情義長). Life in Shimenkan during those few decades was beautiful (Class 18, 寬讓的苗家女) and bright (Class 19, 花季年華). But the Ahmao were still too weak to protect themselves from nationalistic intruders (Class 20, 莫氣餒□應奮進). Their struggle for the right to live continued (Class 21, 我的苗族). The predecessors of Shimenkan were away from their hometown (Class 22, 何日再相會) for the brighter future of the Ahmao (Class 23, 苦命的苗家). The communists came (Class 24, 喜鵲鳴報貴客來). As disciples of Jesus (Class 25, 神愛世人), the Ahmao knew to love their rivals and to live

with the atheists (Class 26, 同一首歌). Unfortunately, the revolution began (Class 27, 國際歌) and Shimenkan was severely attacked. The Ahmao whose homeland was lost could only live in diaspora now (Class 28, 旅居他鄉). The revolution was too bloody (Class 29, 映山紅) to be forgiven (Class 30, 神所恨惡的). However, the Ahmao cannot be defeated as long as there is an Ahmao (Class 31, 狗去討糧種). Just like their ancestors (Class 32, 神話詩兩首) and their predecessors of Shimenkan (Class 33, 紀念先輩的詩), the Ahmao will not only survive in the future but they will raise their civilization up from the ruins (Class 34, 花苗騰起的地方). Remembering the name (Class 34, 吾名謂苗), the teaching (Class 35, 進窄門□遵教誨□出成果), and the friendship (Class 36, Letter from Kieth Parson), the Ahmao will move forward (Class 37, 渡走). Though the past is too bitter to forget (Class 38, 松花江上), may the bitterness remain in the past (Class 39, 浪淘沙—讀《溯源》碑文有感). Let the Ahmao say farewell to the past and look forward to the future (Class 40, 握別). One day the Ahmao will rise again, just like their predecessors (Class 41, 歡迎朱代表榮返).

Overall, Tao Shaohu's pedagogy of promoting APS is contextualized by his nostalgia for Shimenkan. In his primers, APS is neither a way of gaining access to the Bible's teaching nor a transition to Chinese literacy, but a means to becoming an Ahmao. While learning APS through reading the texts, students internalize nostalgia for Shimenkan as a specific Ahmao historicity. Shimenkan is not just an object of memory but also the place where Ahmao history began. The students of APS are told that from thereafter, their present as Ahmao is related to Shimenkan, whose language and past have survived in the Pollard Script, and will now continue to survive into the future. In short, the renaissance as a sociolinguistic movement transforms the relation between the past

and the present into the relation between the Shimenkan and the Ahmao. In the literacy class where APS is promoted, students of Ahmao literacy are transformed into disciples of Shimenkan. They speak and write in the dialect of Shimenkan, knowing themselves as Ahmao by referring to Shimenkan.

In 2010, an association called “The Committee for the Promotion of Universal Education in APS (石門坎苗文教育普及促進會),” coordinated by Tao Shaohu, was established. Though this association is coordinated under the name of the Academy of Miao Nationality (苗學會), it is financially and administratively independent. At the inaugural meeting, twenty-four Ahmao elites from Bijie and Zhaotong prefectures gathered in Yiliang. Fourteen out of the initial twenty-four members are alumni of the Guanghua school and are currently in their sixties or seventies. Another ten members, who are in their thirties or forties, do not have any personal direct connection to the Guanghua school. The twenty-four initial members were invited by Tao Shaohu because they have showed their devotion to promoting Ahmao literacy. After a long day of discussion, the draft of a declaration written by Tao Shaohu was then voted to be the official declaration with only a few changes of words from the initial draft. The declaration of Ahmao orthography announces that APS is the only Ahmao orthography and the Shimenkan dialect is the only standard of Ahmao language. It also proclaims that promoting APS is the responsibility of the Ahmao people. Thus, the Ahmao villages should start their own Ahmao literacy classes as soon as the situation allows. In conclusion, the declaration appeals to all Ahmao people to take responsibility as that is the place where they should begin to realize the best hopes for the Ahmao future.

Nevertheless, this declaration might have only limited significance if the

association does not develop well in the future. The association, which is intended to transform the alumni-relationship into association-membership, aims to promote the sociolinguistic movement beyond the elderly of Shimenkan and to reach the Ahmao speech community in general. However, the Ahmao Christian community in Chuxiong stays away from this sociolinguistic movement, and has shown no interest in being involved in the association.¹⁴² For them, the promotion of APS is not about Shimenkan but is all about Christianity. They would rather start their own literacy campaign as that is part of their Christian evangelicalism.

Christian Literacy

To argue that the promotion of APS is an evangelical movement, I draw on ethnographic descriptions based on the Ahmao Christian community in Chuxiong and nearby regions. As described in Chapter 5, the Chuxiong Ahmao Christian community has become the center of Ahmao Christianity in post-revolutionary China. Briefly speaking, there are three advantages for the Chuxiong Ahmao Christian community where the relationship between APS and Ahmao Christianity is concerned in post-revolutionary China. First, the community has been deeply involved in both the project of formalizing Ahmao orthography and the translation project of the Ahmao Bible since the 1980s. In particular, its involvement with the translation project has led to the community becoming known as the model of Ahmao Christianity for its literary

¹⁴² Among these twenty four initial members of the association, there is only one Christian, Wu Chengxue, who is known for his criticism of the Ahmao Christian community. Although both the Christians' evangelical program and the association's literacy campaign help to promote the Pollard Script, their reluctance to co-operate with each other has obscured the standardization of Ahmao orthography.

development. Second, their devotion has attracted enormous attention from Christian communities both inside and outside of China, especially since the 1990s. Christians from all over the world have made their way to Ahmao churches. Many of them are not just visitors but intend to help develop their Christian fellows. They give financial support to rebuild village churches and provide theological classes and evangelical and musical programs. Third, given its international and national visibility and popularity, the community remains in a delicate relationship with the government. On the one hand, it is intensively overseen. By law, any religious activity involving “outsiders” is supposed to be reviewed by the government, though law enforcement is not efficient enough to monitor every case.¹⁴³ On the other hand, they enjoy relative openness that allows them to connect with the national and international Christian community. Overall, throughout those decades, the community has gradually established its literary tradition, which begins with the Ahmao Bible translation project, continues with input from the international Christian community, and becomes salient as literate elites pursue higher education through the theological track.

Strictly speaking, there was no specific occasion when the Chuxiong Ahmao Christians turned down the Pollard Script. During the revolutionary decades, they were prevented from reading the Bible and using the Pollard Script, but that did not stop them from reading and writing the Pollard Script. Since the religious policy was resumed in 1980, Christian literature written in APS was reproduced at the grassroots level and

¹⁴³ In their own words, because of its relative religious and ethnic homogeneity and geographical remoteness from the political and economic center, the Ahmao village is the safest place to hide. The Ahmao village church seems to have developed a certain sense of mutuality and understanding with law enforcement. The law enforcement would “oversee” only reported cases.

widely circulated. Moreover, to fulfill the need for a Bible, the Ahmao New Testament (1936) has been reprinted again and again, and the Ahmao Bible translation project began in the early 1990s.¹⁴⁴ It was not until the late 1990s when drafts of the new Ahmao translation of the Bible were in print that the Ahmao Christians had to defend themselves for having turned down FAO and LAO in the Ahmao Bible translation project.

Though APS has always been an integral part of Ahmao Christianity, Chuxiong Ahmao Christians did not intentionally promote APS until the early 2000s. Since they did not conceive of APS as a writing system separately from Christian literature, there was no need to hold classes introducing APS as a writing system. It was not until 2001 that the first primer for APS appeared in the Chuxiong Ahmao Christian community.¹⁴⁵ While travelling to Ahmao churches and talking to the elders of Church, I got an impression that the idea of promoting APS only became popularized recently and relatively suddenly. Though the popularity of that idea might be attributed to the increasing awareness of Ahmao identity among Christians, it is important to note that the desire for accuracy in reading and writing APS is often contextualized with the quality (素質 *suzhi*) of Ahmao Christians. Whereas the notion of *suzhi* has been used to justify “any sort of hierarchy”

¹⁴⁴ According to Jiang Zhuling (2011), the 1936 version of the Ahmao New Testament was reprinted in 1948, 1951, 1955, 1986 and 1988.

¹⁴⁵ Though there were official primers introducing FAO in the late 1980s and 1990s, the primer for the Pollard Script did not appear in 2001. I found this primer from the author Rev. Long Shengzhong. Long Shengzhong told me that he compiled this primer because he felt such pity that most of the Ahmao could not write Ahmao words correctly. He claimed that this primer is the first primer for the Pollard Script in Chuxiong and nearby regions. I also confirmed this with Zhang Zhiui, one of the core members of the formalization project. Zhang Zhihui agreed with uncertainty. Though Zhang Zhihui did not agree that Long Shengzhong’s primer was the first primer for the Pollard Script made by Chuxiong Ahmao Christians in post-revolutionary China, he did agree that Ahmao churches put no effort into promoting correct Ahmao writing until recent years. In Zhang’s words, the Christian villagers were too ignorant to know the correct Ahmao writing.

and recast inequality through education in post-reform China (Kipnis 2006, 310), it seems that there is no way that Ahmao Christians can live “outside” of that discourse. Rather, the promotion of APS is not just an identity project but also a literacy campaign that entails a strong desire to become cultivated and educated.

The implication, however, is that Ahmao Christians are not yet cultivated and educated enough. Despite the fact that they are the most experienced writers and readers of the Pollard Script, they do not appreciate their own literary achievements. The Ahmao Christian community has been haunted by the deficiency of APS since the 1950s. They believe that APS is not a sufficient writing system and that the Ahmao language is not adequate to explicate Christianity. Having been suspended by the revolution for several decades, neither Ahmao writing nor Ahmao Christianity have been improved. Therefore, they think Ahmao Christianity is “backward” compared to Chinese, Korean, or Western Christianities. Viewing it as backward, Ahmao Christians conceive their own Christian literacy as incompetent. Two subtexts reveal how this sense of incompetence shapes Ahmao Christianity in post-revolutionary China.

First, while positioning themselves as backward in relation to the world’s Christian community, being backward does not stop Ahmao Christians from believing in God but keeps their churches open to different Christian teaching. Almost without exception, Ahmao churches welcome all kinds of Christians from everywhere in the world.

When using the phrase “Ahmao churches,” it is important to note that the village church is the only legitimate congregation of Christians living in nearby villages. The Christian villagers have a strong affiliation with the village church. They did not “shop”

for a church. If someone seldom worshiped go to the church, he or she would be considered as being weak in faith. If someone did not go to church, he or she would not be considered Christian anymore. The verse from Hebrews (10:25)— “Not giving up our meetings, as is the way of some, but keeping one another strong in faith”—is often quoted by Ahmao Christians to show the importance of the meeting to keeping one’s faith strong. To put it in another way, if someone did walk away from the village church because of disagreement with the teaching, the effect would not just be that of someone leaving the congregation, but a split in the congregation which would be considered a crisis of the village church (more discussion of this will be provided in next chapter). While the congregation is localized and deeply rooted within the village community, it is democratic, as everyone can have different inspirations and every inspiration is equally important to the congregation. Upon this understanding of the Ahmao church, their hospitality to fellow Christians and their acceptance of all kinds of Christian teachings are all oriented to one common goal, that is, to move the congregation upward spiritually and materially.

Wang Huizhong, the only Ahmao teaching theology at the Yunnan Seminary, once made fun of Ahmao Christians as “omnivores.” As he put it, over the last few decades: “We Ahmao Christians have shown extraordinary welcome to all kinds of Christians all over the world. The good thing is we do learn from them. The bad thing is we do not know if what they gave us is good or bad. We sometimes get sick because we ate the wrong food. But we still eat everything we are given simply because we do not yet have

the ability to discern the good from the bad.”¹⁴⁶ As the most pronounced literary figure among Ahmao Christians, Wang Huizhong’s comments on Ahmao Christianity contain a strong sense of self-deprecation, something deeply planted in their self-conception. They see themselves as the ignorant, the naïve, and the “little” ones, who have nothing to boast of but their faith in God. Moreover, from their perspective, their incompetence only further highlights God’s compassion, which is unconditional, and God’s salvation, which is a gift, not a reward.

It is within this context that the Christian virtue—humility—is understood. Though there is not an exact Ahmao phrase or word referring to humility, the virtue of humility is contextualized with *xiexdraot* (S^{nc} J^u) in the Ahmao Bible.¹⁴⁷ Literally, *xiexdraot* describes a person whose mind is so little to others. By definition, humility is the quality of being modest and respectful. In Ahmao, being modest and respectful is the character of those who are subordinate. Therefore, a humble man or woman should not ask for special treatment, should not look down on anyone, should not judge people, should not criticize people, should not self-promote, and so on. In a word, he or she should not let people feel uncomfortable, as if he or she is doing better than them.

The Ahmao see literacy as a gift from God, but they also hold that one does not choose what he or she is given. Though he or she can ask for certain things, ultimately, it

¹⁴⁶ This comment occurred during our conversation at Wang Huizhong’s office at the Yunnan Seminary on May 24, 2009. Similar comments also occurred in interviews with Long Shenghua, Long Yanming, Zhang Shaohui, and Wang Ziwen. The four interviewees shared similar backgrounds, all having been trained at the Yunnan Seminary and deeply involved with the Two Associations. They have served as the mediators between the Ahmao churches and the “outside” Christian community since the late 1990s, when the community began receiving visitors.

¹⁴⁷ In Ahmao Bible (2009), the phrase S^{nc} J^u occurs in Mathew 5:3.

is up to God to decide what to give and to whom it is given.¹⁴⁸ Literacy is like another gift which is indispensable to the congregation, but it does not make the literate a better Christian than others. Neither should those who have literacy be proud because of their ability to read and write, nor should those who do not have literacy be ignored because of their inability to read and write. Therefore, they do not comment on one's literacy, but one's behavior when they are asked to comment on one's preaching. There were several occasions when the villagers of Xishan complained to me that visitors are too proud to be respectful. They did not comment on his or her sermon or preaching as good or bad but they commented on his or her behavior as "having said many bad words (太愛罵人)." They thought that if an Ahmao preacher or teacher behaved like those arrogant visitors, he or she would not be considered a good Christian and his or her teaching would be described as useless. Rather, people who behave modestly and respectfully produce good quality teachings, and vice versa.

In short, while Ahmao Christians conceive of themselves as backward, they re-deploy Christian humility as a virtue that justifies their incompetence and limits the extent to which literacy (or lack thereof) produces a hierarchy within the Ahmao Christian community. As a result, self-renunciation is required for an individual or a congregation in order to advance Christian literacy. I believe the proclamation of self-renunciation is not just lip-service meant to flatter others, but the ontology upon

¹⁴⁸ A well-known example was told to me by several different people on various occasions. That is, the wife of Rev. Wang Ziwen, who did not receive any school education, was so very desirous of Chinese literacy that she prayed to God day by day. Eventually, she was able to read the Chinese Bible. Though there are some words she did not recognize, she had no problem in understanding the Chinese Bible. There was an occasion when the wife of Rev. Wang Ziwen and I were sitting together and reading the Bible. She repeated the same story and encouraged me, saying that if I prayed to God hard enough, I could receive Ahmao literacy as a gift.

which an Ahmao Christian begins to know him/herself.

Second, while positioning themselves as backward in relation to China as a multinational state, Ahmao Christians, being constituted of the Ahmao (Miao) nationality, are self-marginalized in nationality discourse and self-excluded from the Ahmao orthographic debate. Though Christians are known to be the most experienced readers and writers of the Pollard Script, they neither support making APS the official Ahmao orthography nor do they conceive of APS as the only Ahmao orthography. Rather, they conceive of themselves as incompetent literates whose Ahmao literacy needs to be cultivated and educated in order to advance their Christianity.

At the 1999 conference organized by CNLY to resolve the controversy over the Ahmao orthographies, the Christian representatives excused themselves for using APS in the Ahmao Bible. In their report, they especially highlighted the fact that Ahmao does not have an official orthography and thus Christians do not know what to do, other than to keep to the old way. If the state council issued an official Ahmao orthography, the Ahmao Bible would be reprinted in that.¹⁴⁹

This report was divided into three sections: the first section cited the speech of General Secretary Jiang Zemin, which was delivered at the first plenum of the 14th central committee of the Chinese Communist Party, to argue that Christianity is an essential

¹⁴⁹ At the 1999 conference, the two Ahmao Christian representatives Wang Zhonglin and Zhang Xuesheng, who were then two of the seven core members of the Ahmao Bible translation team asked to give an oral presentation on the use of Ahmao orthography among Ahmao Christians. Unlike other presenters whose presentations were typed, printed, distributed and archived, their presentation was oral and handwritten. The handwritten draft, which was not distributed in 1999 conference but archived in the Bible translation project, was cosigned by the two representatives. There were three other draft versions which were not signed. Each sentence has been carefully contemplated by the two authors. In order to produce this report, a survey on Christian literatures was conducted by the team members.

component of the Ahmao culture. The second section stated the fact that Ahmao Churches have put much effort into the transmission of Ahmao heritages by producing, distributing, and revitalizing Ahmao literature. The third section promised that Ahmao Churches would continue their devotion and excused the use of APS as a strategic choice since the Ahmao heritage could not be transmitted without being mediated by Ahmao orthography.

To support their argument, Rev. Wang Zhonglin and Priest Zhang Xuesheng provided an approximate calculation of the amount of Ahmao literature circulated in the Chuxiong and Kunming regions. Soon after the congregations were resumed in 1978, the immediate need was for the hymn book and the Bible, which had to be written in the Pollard Script. To facilitate this immediate need, the Ahmao Churches began replicating their own hymn books and Bibles. In particular, they highlighted the fact that those hymns and Bible sections were self-made and hand-printed, and that even more of this literature was produced than what was included in their calculation. It was not until 1985 that the national patriotic church answered the need by reprinting the Ahmao New Testaments (1956) and Ahmao Hymns (1955). Overall, there were several hundred thousand copies of Ahmao texts written in APS circulating in Christian churches, and the number of copies increased significantly as the tentative versions of Bible books and chapters were in press.

The number of copies estimated in their report should be enough to impress any reader. The Ahmao population was just about to reach 200,000 in the early 1980s. There were approximately 30,000 Christians in Chuxiong and nearby regions (CXMZSL 2005, 33). That is to say, almost every Christian family could have a copy of the hymns and the

New Testament. Those Ahmao Christians in Chuxiong and nearby regions would have a variety of Christian literature. In particular, several different versions of hymn books with different titles were compiled after the revolution, and many hymns had been composed by Ahmao musicians in recent years. Though I do not have any statistical data to draw a precise picture of the distribution of Christian literature, my own fieldwork with Ahmao Christians in Chuxiong can provide a general impression.

In Xishan village, there are sixty households. Except for three, they are all Christians. By the time I was there, every household had at least four Ahmao texts, which were often referred to in service. The Ahmao New Testament and the Song for Praising God were replicated using plate printing. The Song of Praise and the Song of Rouse were directly printed from handwritten manuscripts. Besides those four books, occasionally, the congregation might compile their own hymn book for special events. Those newly compiled hymn books included original works as well as selections from the existing hymn book.

Though the effect of the Christians' orthographic choice on the distribution of Pollard Script cannot be over-emphasized, the Christian representatives were appealing that Christians should not be held responsible for the failure of either FAO or LAO. In the report presented at the 1999 conference, the two Ahmao Christian representatives did not highlight but undermined the significance of APS for Christianity. They claimed that the use of APS was tentative, and that it should be replaced in order to improve the literacy of Ahmao Christians. At first glance, it seems that the claim was strategically made in order

to prevent Christians from being blamed.¹⁵⁰ However, it was more than just a strategic claim. Ahmao Christians do not see themselves as competent literates whose literacy is adequate to manifest the beauty of God. Even the most experienced writers, such as the members of the Ahmao Bible translation team, underestimate their capability to write, and assert that there will be better Ahmao writing in the future.¹⁵¹

To put it another way, the report presented at the 1999 conference was less a self-defense against their choice of APS than a self-deprecating claim about their incapability to produce good writing. Unlike supporters of either FAO or LAO, who pledged to represent either orthography as standard, scientific and universal, Christian representatives on the contrary indicated that the Christian literatures were informal and sloppy, arising from the grassroots and restricted to only Ahmao Christians—as if the limited and constrained circulation of Christian literature was due to the deficiency of APS as a writing system and the incapability of its practitioners as competent literates.

¹⁵⁰ While doing fieldwork, I conducted several interviews with the elderly of Shimenkan, amateur Ahmao linguists and officials of the CNLY in several different places. None of them blamed the Christians. They did not agree that the Christians' choice of orthography would be essential to the distribution of Ahmao orthographies but regarded Christians as followers who would accept any decision. They generally think the Christians were incapable of producing good Ahmao literature due to their lack of education. To put it differently, for those activists and officials, Christians were not involved in the controversy, despite the fact that the majority of orthographic users were Christians.

¹⁵¹ In the summer of 2009, I spent a week staying with the Ahmao Bible translation team in Wuding. After the final editing of the Ahmao Bible in February, the team was working on another editorial project. As requested by the author of *Ahmao-Han Dictionary* (2007), who is a retired Ahmao official, they read through the dictionary collectively, checked the spelling word by word, and corrected the spelling if necessary. Though the dictionary has been proved to contain enormous mistakes with respect to definitions and translations, the team did not correct any of its contents. I asked the team how they thought about the contents. They said: "Teacher Wang Yingxue will have his own judgment. He is more knowledgeable than any of us. We are not good enough to correct the contents." I was so surprised by their answer. Even I as a beginner in Ahmao language and literacy could see the problems and the mistakes in that dictionary, yet the team that had translated the whole Bible into Ahmao hesitated to correct the mistakes in the contents. The only reason I can think is that the team was not authorized to do so, which is probably true. However, even if the team was not authorized, it was still very unreasonable that the team would refrain from giving any suggestions as simple as marking the mistakes.

Overall, the two subtexts provide a sketch of the view of literacy in Chuxiong Ahmao Christians. As described above, they perceive the world with the sense of inferiority, conceiving themselves as incompetent literates and inadequate Christians. Having internalized this backwardness, Christian virtue—humility—is contextualized by these people to moderate the effects of literacy on social status within Ahmao Christian community. To put it another way, literacy is “deterritorialized” in Ahmao Christianity, as a literate Ahmao Christian would down-play the importance of his or her literacy and put more weights on humility for reputation. Following this logic of deterritorialization, it is not surprising that Ahmao Christian representatives did not boast about Christians’ literary achievements to make APS indispensable, but instead undermined the significance of APS by questioning the quality of their own Christian literary tradition.

In other words, Chuxiong Ahmao Christians neither conceive of APS as crucial to their Christianity nor do they conceive of APS as necessary for Ahmao literacy. According to the report presented at the 1999 conference, the use of APS was just tentative and the Christian community seemed to expect a better Ahmao orthography to replace the Pollard Script. However, the trend in Ahmao Churches in recent years runs contrary to that expectation. The point of departure is that along with the increasing awareness of Ahmao identity, the significance of APS is boosted as significant to Ahmao Christianity. For Ahmao Christians, the promotion of APS is now increasingly seen as aiming to re-territorialize Christian literacy with the Ahmao Identity against backslides. If the significance of APS is undermined as the result of the deterritorialization of literacy in Ahmao Christianity, the promotion of APS should be contextualized with the reterritorialization of literacy in Ahmao Christianity.

Ahmao Evangelicalism

It is necessary to differentiate the transmission of the Pollard Script from the promotion of it. By definition, the transmission of APS simply means passing it from one generation to another. The promotion of APS refers to both the encouragement to use the script and the advancement of Ahmao literacy. While transmission of APS is itself a territorialization of literacy in Ahmao Christianity, the significance of the script is undermined as de-territorialization is necessary to attenuate the effect of literacy. The promotion of the Pollard Script, however, arises from the failure of the territorialization of literacy in Ahmao Christianity. It highlights the rupture between the revitalization and the post-revitalization of Ahmao Christianity, which entails the denial of being backward as well as the assurance of competence.

Traditionally, the transmission of APS takes place in the choir, where the youth receive Ahmao literacy. The choir was re-established soon after the congregation resumed in the early 1980s. Most choir members are between fifteen to thirty years old but there is no restriction on age. Usually, for those growing up in a Christian village, Ahmao Christians have gone to church since the day they were born. But they are not involved in the church until they become members of the choir. After serving in the choir for a couple of years, they then are eligible to be baptized and become full members of the church. Even today, being a choir member is still regarded as a requirement for baptism, despite the fact that the social function of the choir has gradually declined since the late 1990s. Those who are in or beyond their thirties remember the choir as the site where they developed their social network as teenagers—a network that stays with them for their

whole life. As recalled, there were not many modern attractions in those old days. When the youth did not leave the village for school or work, they gathered from nearby villages to the village church in the evening. Besides the congregational meetings on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, they would spend other evenings hanging out together, either singing hymns, reading the Bible, playing instruments, or simply praying. The elderly still remembered that when Xerox copying was not yet available in the 1980s, they transcribed the songs into their own notebooks. Though they did not receive any systematic instruction on spelling, they gradually grasped the letters and the rules.

However, the mechanism of transmission could not be sustained through the economic and educational booms. In recent years, the number of choir members dropped to half of its maximum in the late 1990s. Take Xishan church as an example. In the 1990s, there were about sixty to seventy members in the choir. Among those, two-thirds of the members were unmarried adolescents. By the time I visited the church in 2009, the choir had only thirty members, and most of them were married and in their twenties to thirties. Only three unmarried adolescents would regularly show up for choir practices. This simple statistic suggests that the choir has been facing a huge difficulty in recruiting youth members in last few years. The situation seems to be getting worse as all the youth go away from the village to either study or work in big cities.

Even more importantly, the choir ceased to function as an educational site for transmitting Christian literacy. Over the last ten years, there have been five leaders of the Xishan choir who resigned from the leadership. The current leader, who is in his thirties, was elected in 2011. His predecessor was only in the position for two years. As the leader of the choir, one must be responsible for supporting the members. When I was living in

the village, I saw the leader of the Xishan choir ride his motorcycle travelling from one village to another, visiting from one house to another, just to ask the choir members to participate the upcoming choir practice. If he did not reach each member in person, many of them would not go to the practice. Gradually, the choir would lose that member. Thus, the choir leader confronts a lot of pressures while keeping members in the choir as well as in the church.

While there is very little incentive to motivate choir members, the choir meets only once a week before the regular Sunday service begins and usually only one-third of the members show up at the choir practice. With this limited time, the choir members can hardly learn anything decently except one or two hymns. The familiarity of Christian literacy declines significantly. In the Xishan church, men who are in their thirties and have been in the choir since the 1990s all have learned to play instruments, and facilitated reading in the Pollard Script. Women who are in their thirties and have been in the choir since the 1990s are especially good at reading the Ahmao Bible and singing hymns. Those who are in their early twenties, both men and women, are all illiterate in APS and show very limited familiarity with the Ahmao Bible and hymns.

Whereas the traditional mechanism seems in danger, a new alternative, the “training program (培訓班)” has developed and is now in charge of transmitting Christian literacy. The training program, an educational system that emerged in the Chuxiong Ahmao Christian community in the 2000s, has profoundly transformed the nature of Ahmao Christianity, the context within which the significance of APS is redefined. The decline of the Ahmao choir is seen as the direct cause of the decreasing familiarity with Christian literacy among the young Christian villagers, which reflects the

backsliding of Ahmao Christianity. To counter the decline, the training program aims to take up the educational function of the choir.

The training program is like a boarding school providing Christian literacy training. While affiliated with the village church, each training program has its own academic committee that operates independently from the village church. The academic committee includes the principal, staff, and teachers. All of these positions are voluntary and are compensated only one or two hundred RMB per month. Program finances come from donations and tuition. Students are recommended by their affiliated churches and pay as little as one hundred RMB per semester. But usually the church that recommends the students will donate a grant of as much as five hundred to one thousand RMB as soon as the students are accepted. Occasionally, the church and the student's family will also donate agricultural produce.

The interval of a training program can vary from several months to one year or two years, even three years, depending on the decision made by the academic committees. Each year is divided into two semesters. Each semester has three to four months. The program schedule can be varied but usually avoids the season when intensive agricultural labor is needed. Each year, a training program receives approximately thirty students. Even the biggest training program will not have more than fifty students. The students are required to go to class six days per week, but they are not required to go to Sunday service. The class usually dismisses on Saturday afternoon. Students then are free to leave the school and will come back to school by Sunday evening. During a day, the class starts with the morning prayer at six o'clock in the morning followed by an hour of Bible reading. After a short break, two lecture classes are provided in the morning. Later,

students have brunch at eleven o'clock and take a break until one o'clock in the afternoon. Another two lecture classes are provided until three o'clock. After a short break, students come back to the classroom and take their time doing homework, studying, or practicing. After five o'clock, students are allowed to leave the classroom and do their own chores. At six o'clock, they eat dinner. At seven o'clock, students gather in the classroom again. The evening class is more flexible. The student advisor, usually one for each year's class, who is required to stay on campus six days a week, is in charge. Before going to bed at nine o'clock, there is another Bible reading and a night prayer.

This kind of training program has become popular in recent years. Unfortunately, it is impossible to find an exact statistic since most of the training programs are not approved by the Two Associations but are conducted "under the table." For example, there are two "major" training programs in Fumin, which have continuously operated since 2004. In addition, another five registered churches in Fuming also have hosted their own training programs at intervals. But one of the one major training program is legally approved. A young priest, Long Tiancai, who has many outside connections and frequently takes visitors to different Ahmao churches, claimed that there were eight training programs operated by Ahmao churches, which he either visited or heard about in the year 2011.

The idea of a training program cannot be realized without sufficient and qualified teachers. Seminary graduates have constituted a great pool of teachers. The Yunnan Seminary re-opened in 1998. During the first decade, at least one-third of the fifty students of each year's class were Chuxiong Ahmao. There are about one hundred seminary graduates in the Chuxiong Ahmao community. Those who are in their late

twenties to early thirties and graduated in the early 2000s are mostly active in training programs. Most of them came to study at the Yunnan Seminary in their twenties after being in the choir for many years. They belong to the generation that has witnessed the rise and the fall of the choir from 1990s to 2000s, and they share an awareness of Ahmao identity during their seminary years. After graduating, they remain in close contact with the seminary network and support each other to fulfill the need of teachers in training programs. Indeed, with little support outside of the seminary network, they can make a training program happen as long as there are students. Because of their devotion to training programs, they are known by the Christian villagers as the Ahmao teachers.¹⁵²

I regard the training program as a form of emerging evangelicalism in the Chuxiong Ahmao Christian community since it aims to reach out and broaden the community. Unlike the choir recruiting members from the congregation, the training program recruits students from everywhere. Each year, the academic committees go on a recruitment trip. They travel from one church to another, from near to far, to recruit students. As the training program continues with one class after another, the established reputation attracts students from as far as Zhaotong and Weining, from Christians as well as non-Christians. For example, the training program held by the Xishan church had thirty-five students in 2011. Only seven out of the thirty-five students were from Fuming county, and the others were from Wuding, Songming, Yiliang, and Weining. The training program held by Moyilong had twenty-three students in 2011. None were from Fuming county, and two-thirds of the students were from Guizhou province. Though the training

¹⁵² It is important to note that for Ahmao Christians, “teacher” is a respectful title. Someone who is called a teacher must be known for his or her literacy.

program is not Ahmao exclusive, it usually turns out that the majority of students are Ahmao. Occasionally, there are one or two non-Ahmao students but almost none of them make it through the end of the program. Both the Xishan and Moyilong training programs show similar trends as the non-Ahmao students decrease year by year and the non-Christian students increase. In 2011, there were no non-Ahmao students in either program, but five non-Christian students in Xishan's program and eleven non-Christian students in Moyilong's program.

The classroom setting of the training program has led to novel methods for transmitting Christian literacy. Unlike the members of the choir who facilitate Christian literacy from practice and appendices, students in the training program learn Christian literacy in the classroom. According to the curriculum of the Xishan training program from 2009 to 2011, though it varied yearly, students were taught the History of Israel, the Geography of the Old Testament, Church in the New Testament, Introduction to the New Testament, Introduction to the Old Testament, Introduction to Religious Policy in China, and so on. In short, the curriculum more or less mimics that of the seminary. The seminary graduates teach their students what they were taught in the seminary. Students of the training program are not just "reading" the Bible but "studying" it. Recently, written midterm and final exams have been implemented in several training programs with the purpose of evaluating the quality of faith. Students are required to answer exam questions. By requiring this, teachers track the spiritual development of their students. I was told that the exam system is running very well. Teachers are very encouraged by seeing their students developing spiritual strength.

Though the training program seems to take up the function of the choir as far as

the transmission of Christian literacy is concerned, it cannot function in the same way that the choir did in terms of “keeping the youth in church.” In fact, it is doing exactly the opposite. Unlike the choir, whose members facilitate their training by getting involved in the church, students of the training program are uprooted from their affiliated church during their training interval. Even after they have completed the program, they usually have difficulty developing a sense of belonging in their affiliated church. I conducted seven interviews with members of the 2009 class of the Xishan training program in 2012. They do not go to church more often than they did before taking the training program. Moreover, they remain in close contact with their classmates from the training program. They report that they would call each other at least once a week and would always find a chance to get together. When asked how the training program helps, they all stated that the training program strengthened their faith and confidence, and more importantly made them better Christians. When asked how they will serve God, they all express their wish to go somewhere to evangelize.

Despite the fact that there few Ahmao missionaries, the seed of evangelicalism has been planted in Ahmao churches and the training programs have contributed to nourishing its growth. Indeed, it is just a matter of time before the church, the congregation as well as the individuals, will begin their evangelicalism as long as the calling is heard. In 2012, the idea of evangelicalism came up repeatedly in my encounters with Ahmao Christians. Elders preached the importance of evangelicalism in congregational meetings and Sunday service. The Xishan villagers were eager to tell me about their evangelical trip when I came to visit them. And new and old friends shared with me their vision and devotion to the evangelical mission. The evangelical trend is

increasingly real, and the idea of evangelicalism is fermenting among the younger generation of Chuxiong Ahmao Christians.

In 2012, I received an invitation from a young Ahmao teacher, Pan Xuewen¹⁵³, to participate in “The First Gospel Festival of Ahmao Churches” in Lufeng, Chuxiong prefecture.¹⁵⁴ The Festival was coordinated through website titled *Yunnan Miao zu Jidu Jiao Wang* (Miao Christianity in Yunnan).¹⁵⁵ Pan Xuewen and his colleagues from the Lufeng training program were the coordinators of this Gospel Festival, which they began coordinating in early 2011. This was the first “big” event coordinated by neither a church nor the Two Associations,¹⁵⁶ and the organizers faced a challenge of how to motivate Ahmao churches to support the festival.¹⁵⁷ As it turned out, the festival was a great

¹⁵³ Pseudoname

¹⁵⁴ Pan Xuewen, who is in his twenties, was the coordinator of this Gospel Festival. After graduating from Seminary in 2008, Pan Xuewen was devoted to developing the website. The website has become the platform for young Ahmao Christians to exchange ideas as well as get to know past and contemporary Ahmao churches. Besides this job, Pan Xuewen works for the Bible translation project, helping the team solve any problems related to computers. Since 2011, he has also volunteered to be a teacher in the training program in Lufeng. We met in 2009 through a common friend who works for NGO projects in the Ahmao community and who has assisted Pan’s works since 2008.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.ynmzjdj.com/> (last accessed May 13, 2014).

¹⁵⁶ It is not unusual that an Ahmao church would host an event with more than a thousand visitors. During the past two decades, the most common event in Ahmao churches has been the opening ceremony. A medium-sized church would host more than a thousand guests from twenty more churches on the event day. A large church could host more than 1,500 guests. Besides the opening ceremony as the special event, the thanksgiving ceremony is another inter-church event held every year. Usually, a medium sized church would host five hundred guests from ten churches.

¹⁵⁷ As I know, Pan Xuewen and his colleagues travelled to the churches to invite their guests in person. It is important to note that they did not invite their guests in the name of any church but in the name of the website, which means this festival has been handled outside of the reciprocal circle of the Ahmao church. However, Pan Xuewen and his colleagues still need a church to provide the logistical support for the event. It is very interesting that guests were informed that the festival would be held in Daqing church, Lufeng when they were invited in advance but in fact the festival was held in Baishiyan church. Pan and his colleagues intended to make this confusion since they were afraid that the police would intervene in this event. Without being approved by the authorities, Pan and his colleague kept the “real” location of the festival secret until it happened. Moreover, the guests were all cautious of the fact that the festival would not be held in the place they were originally told. They knew they would have to ask for further instructions once they arrived at the township.

success. A thousand people from fifty Ahmao churches in the Yunnan provinces gathered at a small village church for a two-day festival. The festival was exclusively Ahmao. All the presenters and all the presented churches were Ahmao. Ahmao was the primary language used in the Gospel festival. The theme of the festival was evangelicalism. Pan Xuewen and his colleagues invited several Ahmao missionaries to share their experiences. They showed videos on evangelicalism and how the world is in need of Gospels. They prepared themselves to lecture on the importance of the Ahmao church to fulfill the evangelical mission. They also had some students of their training programs witness the young generation of Christians' desires to become missionaries, and to witness non-Christian Ahmao's desires for Gospel.

During the two-day festival, I met several teachers who are/were in charge of training programs in different churches. They came to the festival not only because they were friends of Pan Xuewen, but also because they shared similar evangelical concerns. Due to the constraints of time, I did not have a chance to interview them individually, but we did have a chance to sit together and exchange visions of Ahmao churches. When asked about evangelicalism, they were eager to share their ideas. But the topic did not persist long enough to deepen the discussion. The discussion was soon dominated by critiques of the contemporary Ahmao churches. Two "deficiencies" were identified as problems standing in the way of Ahmao evangelicalism: first, the church is far from being financially independent. Some think that is because Ahmao is economically backward, and some think it is because Ahmao Christians are not generous enough to make donations. Second, the church is so conservative and afraid of the "outside" world. The church wants to keep everyone in the church so it asks its members not to go out

seeking a job and condemns those who put effort into making money. They complained that the church does not realize that the backsliding is due to its conservativeness.

Though it is still too early to evaluate the effect of the Gospel Festival described above, the training programs have been the places nourishing this emerging Ahmao evangelicalism. Though it sounds like there is a huge generation gap between the young and the old generations of Ahmao Christians, it is important to note that those young teachers who are currently in charge of the training programs do not set themselves against the current church or the old generation of Christians. Rather, they see themselves as the future of the Ahmao churches, who are going to make the transition sooner or later. Just within a few years, the Ahmao churches have gradually been making transitions as more and more seminary graduates are now taking positions in their affiliated churches. Though it might take another decade to complete this process of transition, the future Ahmao churches have slowly but surely revealed themselves as evangelical churches.

Sure enough, APS has been endorsed with a new significance at this transition of Ahmao Christianity. Though the rising evangelicalism is not necessarily Ahmao-centered, the promotion of APS is conceived as an evangelical mission with the purpose of re-territorializing Christianity with the Ahmao Bible. Along with the increasing awareness of identity in recent years, the re-territorialization of literacy in Ahmao Christianity is colored by the Ahmao identity. The young Ahmao teachers are hardly literate in the Pollard Script. While growing up in the 1990s, they witnessed the prosperity of choirs in Ahmao churches. But unlike other members who did not have chances to pursue higher education, they received higher theological training at the expense of Ahmao literacy. After graduating and beginning their service, they become

pioneers of promoting the Pollard Script. According to Long Shengde, from the academic committee of Xishan's training program, "We, most of the teachers, are illiterate in APS but our best wish is that our students can facilitate Ahmao literacy and read the Ahmao Bible fluently. We are overwhelmed by regret for leaving our Ahmao heritage behind, and we hope our students will not make the same mistake." In short, the promotion of APS reveals the identity aspect of the newly emerging Ahmao evangelicalism. For the young generation of Ahmao Christians, the newly released Ahmao Bible entails the future of Ahmao Christianity, and APS is the key to accessing the promised future.

After the two-day festival, I visited Pan Xuewen and his colleagues at the training program in Lufeng. Compared to other training programs, theirs is much better financed. The principal of the Lufeng training program, Long Yuanming¹⁵⁸, told me that they are determined to make their training program the educational center of Ahmao Christianity. According to Long Yuanming, the educational center is defined as the place where Ahmao literature is produced and Ahmao teachers are trained. Though it is very unlikely that the idea of an educational center will be approved by the bureau of religious affairs and the provincial Two Associations in the near future, they have begun translating some Chinese Christian literature into Ahmao and have compiled evangelical materials in APS. During the two days of my visit, I was asked to provide suggestions on how to promote the Pollard Script. I suggested that they could establish an Ahmao essay award and invite elders to be the reviewers. Doing so, I argued, would not only motivate students to learn APS, but would also provide the elders with an opportunity and a platform to pass down

¹⁵⁸ Pseudoname

their knowledge. A few months later, Pan Xuewen sent me an e-mail announcing the Ahmao Christian essay contest of 2012. The case is evidence of how these young Ahmao teachers take seriously the promotion of APS as their evangelical mission, and have tried hard to propagate the importance of Ahmao literacy.

Overall, the promotion of APS in the Christian community is a sub-project of promoting Christian literacy. Whereas the latter has given birth to evangelicalism, the former has colored the rising evangelicalism with an Ahmao accent. Through the promotion of the Pollard Script, Ahmao Christianity is essentialized along with the revitalization of the Ahmao Bible. For those Ahmao evangelists, the Ahmao Bible is not just a Bible but the icon of Ahmao Christianity. Its completion indicates the sufficiency of Ahmao Christianity, and its literary achievement indicates the competence of Ahmao Christians. Thus, the increasing evangelicalism reflects the transformation of Ahmao Christianity in a twofold way: on the one hand, Ahmao Christian literacy has been upgraded from deficient to sufficient, from incompetent to competent. On the other hand, the Ahmao teachers, who are preaching through teaching as well as teaching for evangelizing, are the emerging "Ahmao elites".

Conclusion

Though the history of Christian bureaucracy in Shimenkan ended in the 1950s, the history of APS continues as the Ahmao renaissance promoted by the elderly merges with the emerging evangelicalism of young Christians promoting Ahmao literacy. I have used Deleuze's notion of "territorialization" to explain the recurrence of Ahmao literacy in the Ahmao Christianity (Deleuze [1980]1987). The territorialization of Ahmao literacy,

however, has been realized in the elderly's sociolinguistic renaissance project which brings Shimenkan back to the Ahmao language community through APS at once bring the Ahmao literacy back to Shimenkan. As Shimenkan becomes relevant once again to the future of Ahmao Christianity, I cannot help but wonder to what extent the deterritorialization of Ahmao literacy was a form of resistance to the sub-bureaucracy. As described in former chapters, the encounter of Chinese literacy and Ahmao literacy is a competition of value that at once put Ahmao Christian bureaucracy in crisis and drove its development of it. While the Ahmao congregations were re-bureaucratized in post-revolutionary China, there is no such thing as Christian bureaucracy but only a sub-bureaucracy that is subordinate to Chinese bureaucracy. The sub-bureaucracy, indeed, leaves no room for Ahmao literacy as value independent to Chinese literacy, which in turns it also leaves no room for Ahmao congregations that is not subordinate to Chinese congregations. Thus the territorialization of Ahmao literacy is in itself a value of resistance, which indeed attempts to be a solution to the crisis of Ahmao Christianity that is caused by the increasingly intensive sub-bureaucratization of Ahmao congregations throughout the last decade. I describe this crisis in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Literacy and Illiteracy

An ethnographic study of “word and spirit” in an Ahmao village church

The Schism of the Dongshan Church

In 2005, the county Two Associations organized a three-day cleric meeting during the Chinese New Year’s holidays. This meeting took place in Dongshan¹⁵⁹ church. All clergies and deacons affiliated with the Two Associations of Fumin were asked to attend the meeting. The officials of the bureau of religious affairs and religious scholars were invited to give lectures. The purpose of the meeting was to teach the deacons how to identify "evil cult", because the bureau of religious affairs had learned that some foreign Christians were misleading people with vague references to heresy. Every attendant received a small book entitled “The Manual for Identifying Evil Cult (識別冒用宗教名義邪教工作手冊),” which was published as “internal material” (內部資料) and “limited to internal use” (限內部使用). During the three-day meeting, the book was used as the

¹⁵⁹ Pseudoname

guideline for detecting evil cults in forms of Christian heresy.¹⁶⁰ The officials clearly announced the newly imposed regulation that all the named evil cults in the book would be forbidden, and those who spread or practice them would be arrested by the local police, and either jailed or fined. If a church was reported to be practicing heresy, it would be closed and its deacons would be held responsible for violating religious regulations.

The Ahmao deacons and deacons immediately challenged the heresy regulations. They were intrigued by the definition of evil cult explained at the meeting and in the book. At the public forum on the last day of the meeting, many participants raised doubts that the definition of evil cult was directed against Pentecostal practices. They criticized the religious scholars and the officials for having misunderstood spiritual engagement as either illusion or superstition. Eventually, the audience became enraged. Many took the regulations as specifically targeting Ahmao churches, and associated the regulations with religious persecution during the revolutionary era. In the end, the secretary of the Two Associations of Fumin, Long Shenghua, was forced to promise that the regulations were not addressed to Ahmao churches, nor would the Ahmao churches be punished for Pentecostal practices so long as those practices were not evil cults named in the book. Though Long Shenghua's promise temporarily eased tensions, it did not remove the fear that Pentecostal practices would be deemed heretical and banned in the near future.

Their worries were not groundless. The representatives of the Two Associations did not know how to differentiate between Ahmao Pentecostal practices and evil cults. After the meeting, the Dongshan church continued to receive police warnings forbidding

¹⁶⁰ The book does not mention orthodoxy nor does it attempt to present an accurate understanding of Christianity.

religious evil cult, though neither the deacons nor the congregation saw their Pentecostal practices as evil. To avoid further harassment, the church deacons decided to reorganize the church worship. They asked the congregation, for security reasons, not to engage in Pentecostal practices at Sunday services. If individual believers were touched by the Holy Spirit and felt a strong need to carry out Pentecostal practices, they could do that at the evening sessions but not during Sunday services. The Pentecostal practices in Ahmao church include speaking in tongues and spiritual dancing. In fact, the deacons discouraged Pentecostal practices and did not think that Pentecostal practices were necessary for spiritual enlightenment. The deacons's decision was consistent with the general guideline set out in 1998 by the National Two Associations for "theological thought construction (神學思想建設)." "Theological thought construction" takes the theological position known as Biblicism, and seeks spiritual enlightenment through Bible readings because God talks to humanity through the Bible.

Though the refinement of the Sunday service was seldom challenged, not everyone was happy. The proponents of the change were happy to see that the Sunday service was proceeding in order and on schedule. They claimed to be able to enjoy Sunday services without being disrupted by sudden outbursts. The opponents complained that the Sunday services were boring and they felt spiritually untouched. They suspected that the elimination of Pentecostal practices from the Sunday service constrained the work of the Holy Spirit in the congregation. The disagreement between the two camps continued to cause friction between members of the congregation. Eventually, some of those in favor of Pentecostal practices left the church and established their own

Pentecostal gatherings after the sudden outbreak of a quarrel between Long Ronghua¹⁶¹ and Long Caiming¹⁶² at a Sunday service. Many villagers still vividly remember the quarrel.

Long Ronghua is a retired schoolteacher. He is the elite of the congregation. When it comes to legal, regulatory, and educational issues, he is regularly consulted by members of the congregation. In villagers' eyes, Long Ronghua is a good Christian, a good preacher, and a wise elder, though he never actually served as the church deacons given his long career as a schoolteacher. Long Caiming is Long Ronghua's younger cousin. Since the early 1980s, he has served as the church's deacon. He is known for his enthusiastic preaching and energetic prayer. Many villagers believe that his prayers have the power to heal. Long Ronghua is a member of the older generation who spoke up in support of the decision on the part of the young generation deacons to reorganize Sunday services. Long Caiming, on the contrary, is the one of the older generation who spoke against the reorganization.

The quarrel broke out during a preaching session in a Sunday service. Long Caiming preached in favor of Pentecostal practices in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. Long Ronghua interrupted Long Caiming and called him to come down from the pulpit because his preaching would put the church at risk of being closed. Long Ronghua argued that Long Caiming's pro-Pentecostal preaching advocated the evil cult of Free Grace (*jiuen pai* 救恩派).¹⁶³ Long Caiming defended himself by cursing Long Ronghua as

¹⁶¹ Pseudoname

¹⁶² Pseudoname

¹⁶³ During those few years, the missionaries of "Free Grace" travelled across Yunnan Province recruiting new members. Ahmao Christians were targeted. Several young Christians were recruited and sent to

having the “beast’s mark” (Rev. 13:16). Long Caiming claimed that when the time of God’s judgment comes, Long Ronghua and his followers shall “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:10). Many alleged that Long Ronghua and Long Caiming actually wrestled and the Church Service was interrupted. After that Sunday, both Long Ronghua and Long Caiming stopped attending church services.

I brought up this quarrel in an interview with Long Caiming in 2009, about four years later. I confirmed with Long Caiming whether he believed in “once saved, always saved (一次得救，永遠得救)”, the doctrine of "Free Grace". Lacking theological training, Long Caiming referred to no doctrine but summarized his understanding of the “perseverance of the saints” in favor of “being filled with Spirit” (Ephesians 5: 18):

我們都是罪人，都要懺悔。信了上帝，就是要懺悔要受洗。讓聖靈帶領我們，我們就不會犯罪，就成為義人。住在神的家裡，我們時時都被聖靈充滿，講方言、唱靈歌、跳靈舞、擊掌，都是為了彰顯神的榮耀。

Before repenting, we are all sinners. We believe in God, repent and are baptized. The Spirit takes over our mind and body, and guides of our lives and conduct. We will not sin, and we will always be righteous. In God’s House, we will be filled by the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues, enthusiastically dance, and happily applaud. Everything we do is meant to reveal the glory of God.

Though the point Long Caiming intended to make was that Pentecostal practices meant to be moved by the Holy Spirit and those who are filled with the Spirit would

Guangzhou or Shandong for three-month long intensive training programs. They then received financial support from the Free Grace Gospel to spread their teachings.

never sin, his vague theological claims about “sin” and the “righteousness” might be misunderstood as staking out a claim for “carnal Christians.” That is, since they are eternally secure, they can live whatever licentious lifestyle they wish and still be saved. In hindsight, it is unsurprising that someone like Long Ronghua, who is especially on guard against heretic teaching, charged Long Caiming with evil cult.

So far as I know, Long Caiming was not one of them. He might have learned something about the Free Grace in one or two gatherings held by the missionary of Free Grace, but had no any further contact with the group. Long Ronghua’s over-reaction shows a fear of evil cult among at least part of the congregation. The community started scrutinizing preaching for signs of evil cult. In Long Ronghua’s words, “evil cult always claims that the Holy Spirit lives beyond rationality, and attributes enlightenment to the work of the Holy Spirit as if it could occur separately from the Bible.” As a result, self-examination leaves no rooms for Pentecostal practices at church services because anything beyond rationality is potentially evil cult.

After the quarrel, Long Caiming began to host Pentecostal gatherings at his house. In the beginning, most of his followers who attended the Pentecostal gatherings at his house also continued to attend Sunday services with the main congregation. Gradually, however, the Pentecostal gatherings became not just additional gatherings where people sought spiritual fulfillment, but magnets for critics of the main congregation. Long Caiming and his followers began to identify with the House Church movement and with that movement’s counter discourse to the Dongshan patriotic church. They claimed that the church had become polluted beyond repair and that those who attended Two Associations church services would not receive salvation. In 2008, Long Caiming and his

followers broke from the main congregation. As of 2009, there were more than thirty who identified themselves as House Church followers.

The schism within the Dongshan church can be summarized as follows: the bureau of religious affairs launched its anti-evil-cult campaign among its registered churches. The deacons of the Dongshan church were afraid that Pentecostal practices might result in accusations of evil cult. To avoid police harassment, the deacons discouraged Pentecostal practices, which alienated some believers. These believers left the church, and began to hold their own Pentecostal gatherings, at which they expressed their discontent with the church deacons. In other words, if the deacons of the patriotic church had not overreacted to the anti-evil cult campaign and had not banned Pentecostal practices, it might have been possible for the church to avoid the schism. There was a difference between Pentecostal practices and evil cult. That the Ahmao deacons of the Dongshan church overlooked this difference seems odd and instead engaged in something akin to “hyper-correction.” Consideration of the details of this process reveals what was really at work.

Seminary Students, the Two Associations, and the “Regime of Preaching”

The Dongshan church was but one of many Ahmao congregations in northern Yunnan threatened by schism. Indeed, the conflict of interest behind the “interaction” between the church and the Two Associations drove events relentlessly in the direction of schism. With the help of a friend who teaches at the Yunnan seminary, I conducted an informal interview with thirty-five Ahmao students. Among those, eight were from Zhaotong district in northeast Yunnan, and twenty-three were from either Chuxiong or

Kunming in northern Yunnan. It came as a surprise to learn that the Ahmao Christians from northeast and northern Yunnan confronted very different circumstances. Those from northern Yunnan claimed that schism had arrested church expansion, while those in northeast Yunnan often expressed admiration for the Ahmao churches in northern Yunnan. These regional differences revolved around how students from the two regions differed in their understanding of the challenges facing the churches in their respective regions in terms of differences in the operation of the Two Associations.

Though the sample is small and its representativeness is questionable, I found the possibility that schism was possibly regionally-specific to be quite suggestive. The brief encounter with the Ahmao seminary students left me with the strong impression that the more contact a congregation had with the Two Associations, the more likely that congregation would be threatened with schism. In, I suggest that schism might itself be a form of resistance, that is, a refusal to be assimilated by the Two Associations. To contextualize this refusal, I begin by explaining how assimilation has become perceived as a serious threat to Ahmao Christianity in northern Yunnan.

In 2010, the county Two Associations began to search for good candidates for training as pastors of the Two Associations, and asked the affiliated churches to prepare a list of recommended candidates. Though it is not written down, the congregations and the Two Associations have a tacit agreement that only seminary graduates would be on the list. There were two good candidates in Dongshan. One is Pan Shengmei¹⁶⁴, a female who graduated from seminary in 2001 and currently serves the Dongshan church as

¹⁶⁴ Pseudoname

libaizhang. Another is Long Shenghua¹⁶⁵, a male who graduated from seminary in 2004 and currently serves as a Dongshan church *chuandao* (傳道 preacher). The congregation settled on recommending Pan Shengmei. This recommendation surprised me, as Long Shenghua was better known and showed more ability. I suggested that, if I did the recommending, Long Shenghua would surely be my first choice. Almost everyone agreed with me, but explained that the recommendation of candidate for preacher involves much more than being better known and showing more ability. No one would explain to me what the other considerations involved, but instead simply said that Long Shenghua had asked the congregation not recommend him.¹⁶⁶

The Dongshan congregation expressed their resentment toward the Two Associations during the ordination. According to regulations, it is the Two Associations and not the congregation that has the right to ordain a church's deacons and preacher. The procedure goes like this: the congregation votes for a deacons appointment according to their needs. The one who receives the higher votes immediately fills the position and begins his or her service. Thereafter, the representative of the church reports the name of the newly elected deacons to the Two Associations. The Two Associations then organizes a conventional ceremony to ordain the newly elected deaconsmen for all its affiliated churches. However, approval must first come from the bureau of religious affairs before

¹⁶⁵ Pseudoname

¹⁶⁶ After a long and time-consuming examination process, the Xishan congregation expressed satisfaction with the outcome. Among the seven names on the list, the Two Association informed the congregation in early 2011 of the approval of Pan Shengmei as one of three new pastors. The ordination ceremony was carried out two weeks later. Pan Shengmei becomes the first female pastor in the history of Ahmao Christianity. By the time I visited Dongshan in March, 2011, I was told the news before it was publically announced. Pan is female, the granddaughter of one of the first generation Ahmao preachers, and a seminary graduate.

ordination can take place, and this can take months, even years, and might even be turned down without explanation. The congregation just could not understand why the pastors of the Two Associations could not conduct the ordaining ceremony in the church as the request of the congregation.

Long Shenghua's reluctance to be ordained was due to the fact that a pastor is not free to exercise a pastor's religious duties as he or she sees fit. Long explained,

我做夢都希望能像我伯父一樣當一個牧師。我讀神學院，後來又在教會當傳道，還是可以的。我們苗族基督徒特別尊敬牧師。歷史上來講，苗族牧師還不到十個。現在我們只有七個牧師，要牧養八十多個苗族教會。就像你知道的，只有最好的傳道才能當牧師。沒當祕書以前，我也是想要當一個牧師。不過現在我有一點怕當牧師。好像每天都有開不完的會。宗教局每個星期都會組織一些會議，要兩會的牧師去參加。有一次我偷偷地替王牧師算了一下他兩個星期參加了多少會，你真是不敢相信，兩個星期他有五天的時間是在開會，還有三天的時間陪領導下鄉，只剩下四天的時間牧養教會，照顧家裡的時間都沒有。我就在想到底現在當個牧師是在當甚麼呢？

I have always dreamed of becoming a pastor like my uncle. I went to seminary and served to the congregation as a preacher. I am so proud of being able to serve God and the congregation. We Ahmao Christians respect pastors very much. Throughout history, less than ten Ahmao have been ordained as pastors. Currently, there are seven Ahmao pastors, but more than eighty Ahmao churches. As you can see, only the really good preachers become pastors. Before taking the secretary position in the [Fumin] County Two Associations, I hoped that I could become one. But now, I am afraid of being a pastor. Endless meetings. The Two Associations organize pastor meetings every week. The bureau of religious affairs calls every pastor to attend these meetings. One time, I secretly counted the number of meetings that Rev. Wang attended over a two-week period. You won't believe it. In two weeks, Rev. Wang spent five days attending meetings in the administrative building of the county government. He also spent another three days accompanying officials on visits. He was left with only four days to serve the congregation. He does not even have time to take care of his family. I begin to doubt what it means to be a preacher under this current regime.

Though not being explicit, Long Shenghua is suggesting that a pastor of the Two Associations is more a government servant than a servant of his or her congregation. By attending meetings with the bureau of religious affairs whenever that bureau requires, the pastors are not free to fulfill their religious duties. According to regulations, to hold an

ordination or baptism ceremony requires the approval of the bureau of religious affairs, and only the Two Associations can process these applications. In other words, by monitoring the ordination and the baptizing ceremonies, the bureau of religious affair supervises and controls the “growth” and the “administration” of every church under its jurisdiction. As noted above, Long Shenghua’s concerns were directed toward the endless meetings a pastor is called to attend. Perhaps, however, what Long Shenghua was really concerned with was the brainwashing that takes place at these endless meetings. If someone is willing to put up with the endless meetings, how could one be sure a pastor would be strong enough to refuse being brainwashed?

To put it slightly differently, Long Shenghua was saying that pastors were simply ordained bureaucrats. Ordinations require approval by the bureau of the religious affair, salaries come from the state, one reports to the state, and only then can religious duties be performed. In short, the post-reform state not only intervenes in the ordination of pastors and such and so on, but the pastors are essentially administrating the Christian community on behalf of the state. A comparison between the role of pastors in the post-reform state and the role of native officials (*tusi*) in the late imperial state helps to highlight this similarity. Whereas the imperial state modified the native officialdom system by imposing academy educations and granting official ranks, the post-reform communist state modifies the Christian hierarchy by requiring and controlling seminary teaching, and establishing and empowering the Two Associations. Whereas, as part of the civilization project, academy teaching focused on literacy, seminary teaching focuses on specific speech styles. Throughout the past two decades, the Yunnan Seminary has produced over five hundred graduates, about four hundred of these alumni are currently

ordained deacons, and 25 of these alumni are ordained pastors. About one-sixth of all alumni are from Ahmao. Except those who have left the church and turned to serve the “underground” Christian community, all Ahmao alumni are serving as clergies. Moreover, the seven Ahmao pastors ordained since 2000 are Yunnan Seminary alumni. In other words, the deacons trained during the post reform era who serve in Ahmao churches in northern Yunnan have been taught to preach at the Yunnan seminary and they have gradually replaced the previous generation of deacons who are not trained and ordained under the community regime. Through the Yunnan seminary, the new generation of deacons in the post-reform era are as much the voice of the regime as they are the voice of Christianity.

In 2011, the Two Associations in Yunnan province organized a “sermon contest (講道比賽)” to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party. Unsurprisingly, the contest is highly politicized and has as its purpose the declaration of the loyalty of the Christian community in Yunnan to the Chinese Communist Party. Preliminary contests were sponsored at the district- (or city-) level Two Associations for Kunming, Chuxiong, Dali, Simao, and Dehong. About forty or so contenders participated in each of the five district-level competitions. Most were seminary graduates. The senior pastors served as the reviewers. At each of these preliminary contests, four contenders were chosen to advance to the provincial finals. The final contest then selected the best five preachers of the year and their sermons were published in the *Newsletter of the Provincial Two Associations* (雲南省兩會通訊).

The preliminary contest of Kunming district—urban churches in Kunming city were not included—was held in Chenggong(呈貢), where the District Two Associations

is located.¹⁶⁷ The forty contenders were all affiliated with rural churches, and, with only one exception, all were Yunnan Seminary graduates in their twenties or thirties. Half of the forty contenders were Ahmao, and another third were Yi or Lisu. These three ethnic minorities constitute 80 percent of the rural Christian population in Kunming district. Four of the seminary graduates participating in the competition were from Dongshan Church. Two of these Dongshan Church participants are well-known locally for their eloquent preaching. As described by the chairperson of the District Two Association, only those who are good preachers are invited to compete, and only those who are exceptional preachers make it into the finals. According to the chairperson, a good preacher means someone who has received complete theological training in seminary and has established fame for his preaching in his own congregation. However, my friends described the contest as an alumni reunion for Yunnan Seminary graduates. All Yunnan Seminary alumni from Kunming district are invited to the contest. The District Two Associations provided free accommodation and food. Overall, besides the forty contenders, 110 additional alumni audited the two-day preliminary contest.

The forty competitors in the preliminary contest were divided into four subgroups. Each subgroup contained ten competitors and three reviewers. Each competitor had thirty minutes to complete his or her sermon. After the sermon, one of the reviewers would use ten minutes to summarize the three reviewers' comments. The first round took a whole day. Each subgroup recommended three competitors for a total of twelve to advance to

¹⁶⁷ I was in the audience for the preliminary contest held by the city Two Associations of Kunming. Many of my friends were invited contestants. Thus I had a chance to witness the whole process from preparation to completion.

the second round of the finals, which took place on the same day during an evening session and this time included eight reviewers. Late into the evening, the eight reviewers selected the four finalists to represent the Kunming district in the provincial wide contest. In the chairperson's words, "we have the most seminary graduates in our district, so those who represent our district should be the best." The chairperson's confidence was confirmed; three out of the five best preachers of the year were from Kunming district.

The setting of the sermon contest was in many respects different from preaching in a church. While the church sermons are religious, the sermons for the contest have to re-produce their sermons outside of a religious context. This displacement and decontextualization has two effects: first, the sermon is seen as the work of a person, not of God, and this means that people can evaluate the sermons. Second, because the sermon is the product of a person, it also loses its perceived power to create a reality. Preaching a sermon in the context of the contest is no longer preaching about God, but rather becomes an exercise whose purpose is to refine the appearance of God. That is, the displacement of the preaching of the sermon suggests that it is human beings who control when God does and does not appear. How exactly they do this is revealed in the criteria used to judge the contest.

The criteria using for judging the sermons was sub-divided into: (1) deportment (20%), (2) delivery (50%), and (3) the written text (30%). Deportment included dress, gestures, and standard Mandarin. Both the spoken and written versions of the sermon were evaluated for structure, completeness, fluency, and logical coherence. Participants were required to submit the written versions of their sermons before the contest and so the judges had copies of the text before their oral delivery. The judges usually referred to

the written version of the sermon as the perfect one and addressed their comments to the spoken sermon as if the spoken sermon was an inadequate performance of the former.

Evaluation of the sermon was in terms of the standards of seminary school training. In the seminary, homiletics is a two-semester required course. Moreover, the Two Associations purposively promote the homiletics of the seminary in other training programs or deacons meetings. In the seminary education, writing sermons is the most important training. Throughout the three-year long seminary training, students are required to write one sermon per month, though they are given only one or two opportunities per semester to deliver their sermons. They are taught that a good sermon starts out as a written one rather than a spoken one. In his opening lecture at the preaching contest, the chairperson of the District Two Associations, who for many years had been the instructor of the seminary homiletics course, described the sermon contest as “a follow-up” for alumni to the seminary course. His assumption was that seminary alumni would be applying the homiletics learned at seminary to their sermons at the contest. With a few years of practical experience after graduation, the chairperson expected to see the seminary alumni demonstrate the benefits of that practical experience in homiletics in their preaching performances.

However, as far as the participants in the contest were concerned, delivering a sermon in the contest was certainly not the same as preaching in church. Both Long Shengde and Pan Shengmei expressed their nervousness over the contest, though both are experienced preachers. They were especially nervous about three things: first, neither thought that writing and delivering a sermon were equivalent. After graduation from seminary, they “skipped” writing out their sermons because they are too busy. Second,

giving a sermon in Chinese—though both speak fluent Chinese—was vastly different from giving their sermons to their congregation in Ahmao. They found preaching in Chinese constraining. Third, the imposition of a time limit on delivering the sermon meant that, unlike when they were preaching to their own congregation, they had to keep an eye on the clock when delivering their sermons. As a result, they both failed to fully develop the theme of their respective sermons and had to race to the conclusion because of running out of time. The reviewers commented on the fact that their nervousness detracted from their delivery and suggested that more practice was necessary to overcome such nervousness.

In short, to discipline “preaching” is similar to disciplining the “body.” Through the “regime of preaching,” which is presupposed by the sermon contest and contextualized by the seminary, the Two Associations and the churches aim to produce “a new kind of linguistic subject”; a subject predisposed as easy to control. However, this is exactly the new kind of linguistic subject that some Ahmao Christians are rejecting and their refusal of this subject is, I argue, reflected in the congregation’s schism.

Time, Holy Spirit, and Sermons

By the time I did fieldwork in Dongshan village, the congregation had already divided into a “big church” and a “house church.” It seems that in the “big church” people have grown accustomed to “not having Pentecostal practices.” In the last few years, three of the four seminary alumni have take up deacons positions in the Dongshan church. Long Shenghua is the pastor, Pan Shengmei the deacon, and Long Shengde the elder. They are eager to apply what they learned at the seminary about how to correct the

“bad habits” of the Ahmao congregation. One of these bad habits is delivering “pointless” sermons. Also, some members of the congregation who have not read the Bible take the floor, claiming to have received divine inspiration from the Holy Spirit. They talk about their dreams from the previous night or interpret the omens they have seen. The young deacons think that “pointless” sermons and misguided testimonials share the common defect of not being grounded in the Bible. The young clergy attribute ignorance of the Bible as a shortcoming of the Ahmao congregation. Trained in the seminary, they take it as their responsibility to uplift the congregation’s knowledge of the Bible with “good” sermons.

The four seminary graduates have begun to collaborate in “teaching” the Bible at the Sunday services. I was told during my visit in 2011 that each person chooses one book from the Bible and contextualizes his or her sermon by selecting appropriate verses and chapters. They plan for a whole year, with fifty-two Sunday services. Subtracting special holidays, each of is responsible for twelve sermons. In other words, each uses twelve sermons to “teach” one book from the Bible. By the end of the year, the congregation will have been exposed to four books from the Bible. Over the course of about five years, the congregation will have been exposed to the entire New Testament. It seemed like a good plan. They launched this preaching schedule beginning on the first Sunday of September, 2010. By the time I visited the church in March, 2011, the schedule was still running, but Long Shenghua had withdrawn from the collaboration. The other three showed their sympathy for and understanding of Long Shenghua’s dropping out of the rotation. He was simply too busy to devote adequate time to the preaching plan. At the end of September, 2011, I learned that the plan had be dropped altogether because

both Pan Shengmei and Long Lanfang had also withdrawn for their own reasons. When I paid my third visit to the church in June, 2012, it seemed that everything had reverted to the sermons in the Sunday services in 2009, when I made my first visit to Dongshan.

Indeed, it is not surprised that the “preaching plan” eventually failed. Unless there is a whole system to backup this sort of collaboration, there is little hope that such a plan can succeed. Be that as it may, however, the congregation reacted to the new plan for preaching with enthusiasm. Though I was not in Dongshan for most of 2011, Long Lanfang regularly reported to me the progress of their “preaching plan” through e-mails and text messages. I remember her initial excitement and enthusiasm for the plan. In one e-mail, Long Lanfang wrote:

我們幾個神學生準備從下個月開始，負責講道的工作，我們要在主日禮拜中，講授聖經的內容。我們希望通過這個方式，讓禮拜更有內容，讓每一個信徒都能領受更多神的話語。... 很多人批評我們苗族教會：講道不好、聚會時間太長。因為講道不好，聚會的時候很多人在睡覺。所以，我們現在就規定講道時間不要超過一個小時，.....過去老一輩的信徒還不太能接受我們的做法，衝突肯定是會有的，但是我們愛神愛教會愛聖靈的信心是相同的。我們這麼改革，無非是希望我們苗族教會能夠更進步，擺脫一些舊的不好的習慣。

We seminary students plan to shoulder responsibility for the sermons beginning next month. Each Sunday there will be a sermon from the Bible. Our hope is to improve the content of the church services so that each Christian hears more about the Word of God. ...Many people criticize our Miao congregations: the quality of the sermons is poor, and the services too long. Because the quality of the sermons is poor, many members of the congregation fall asleep. For this reason, we are presently setting up the rule that a sermon should last no longer than an hour. ...In the past, the Christians in the older generation had trouble accepting this practice. There will be disagreement, but as Christians we are all the same in loving God, loving the Church, and loving the Holy Spirit. We undertake this reform with the firm hope that our Miao congregation can make progress and leave behind some of its previous bad habits.

Here, Long Lanfang attributes the preacher’s failure to engage the congregation to the quality of the sermon, and she expects that the homiletics taught in the seminary will help one to better engage with the congregation. Moreover, Long Lanfang also indicates that the disagreement between the seminary students and the older generation is a simple unavoidable obstacle. In her view, sermons go on interminably for a reason. On the one

hand, the imposition of a time limit is part of the solution. On the other hand, there needs to be an upgrading in the Christian content of the sermons by anchoring them in the Bible. Even Long Lanfang herself did not fully appreciate the apparent contradiction between the congregations' perception of a good sermon and the length of a sermon. In another e-mail, she described the feedback of the congregation:

上個星期日龍長老講哥林多前書第四章，講到保羅對教會的期望。...大家都很感動，很想聽，要龍長老多講一點。龍長老又講了.....，很多人都哭了。

Last Sunday Long Shengde spoke on the fourth chapter of 1 Corinthians, where Paul talks of his hopes for the Church. ...All were very moved, wanted to listen, wanted to hear more. Long Shengde went on, many people were crying.

In that Sunday Service, Long Shengde had prepared a one-hour sermon, but in the end spoke for two and half hours. According to Long Lanfang's description, Long Shengde's sermon went overtime because the congregation asked him to continue. In other words, one hour for a sermon is not enough for some in the congregation. A lengthy sermon is by no means a failure of the structure and content; rather, it is a manifestation of the power of language to hold listeners for a long period of time. The former seminary students' conception of what counts as a good sermon—i.e., one that fits into time constraints—actually contradicted the congregation's perception of a good sermon—i.e., one that holds the congregation's attention for a long period of time. This contradictory sense of time is deep and fundamental. It seems that the Pentecostal activist, Long Caiming, anticipated that seminary homiletics would not work with the Ahmao congregation.

I met Long Caiming, who lives in another village, in 2009, just a few days before leaving Dongshan, where I learned Ahmao language. Before then, circumstances had prevented me from contacting him. For security reasons, my mobility was restricted to

the village I lived in; contact with people in the “house church” would have, at that time, aroused undue attention, and the deacons in the “big church” might have misinterpreted such contact. An opportunity to meet Long Caiming arose when members of the “big church” were invited to *tonggong hui* (同工會 a mass meeting of the “house church” members) from nearby regions. The mass meeting was hosted by Long Caiming. Four people from a coastal region brought charity goods. Accompanying the members of the “big church” on their visit, I was introduced to Long Caiming. Able to observe the interactions between the “big church” and “house church” congregations, it quickly became clear to me that Long Caiming might be a controversial figure, but that he was also a really good preacher and I began to suspect that the heated criticisms against him had boiled up out of frustration over the schism. In terms of faith, Long Caiming is certainly a powerful figure. Many came to him to have him pray for healing and blessing. They also felt moved by the enthusiasm of his preaching. In an interview, I asked him to defend himself against all the allegations set against him for his Pentecostal practices. Responding to my questions, Long Caiming said:

教會裡的人說我離開教會是因為喜歡出頭，喜歡講道，教會不給講，就到家庭教會裡講個夠。他們說在我們這裡聚會的，都是這樣的，一直講一直講，講到半夜十二點還在講。神不讓我批評教會的弟兄姊妹，我就指出一點。那些批評我的人不像我們總是聖靈滿滿，因為我們是神所揀選的，我們聖靈充滿，內心時時充滿喜樂。有沒有被聖靈充滿是看得出來的，被聖靈充滿的人都是紅光滿面，笑笑的。我不是愛出頭喜歡講道，是聖靈帶領我，用我的口說神所喜悅的話語，見證神的大能。他們有些不明白，以為我們只是追求聖靈充滿不讀聖經。不是這樣的。...我們讀聖經不是向人學習，是讓聖靈親自當我們導師，來領受神的話語。所以，我們讀聖經是有感動的，神讓我們感動，我們就開口讚美神，就開口講神要我們說的話。

The members of the [“big church”] congregation say I left the church because I like to stand out, and that I like to preach, [but] the church wouldn’t let me. So, it was enough for me to come to the “house church” and preach. They say that those of us here in the “house church” are all this way. We preach and preach until midnight and still keep on preaching. God does not allow me to criticize our brothers and sisters in the [“big church”] congregation. [However,] let me make one point. Those who criticize me are different from us [at the “house church”] insofar as we are allowed full of the Holy Spirit. This is because God has chosen us. We are full of the Holy Spirit. Our hearts are always full of joy. It is possible to see whether [a person] is full of the

Holy Spirit. Those who are full of the Holy Spirit have faces that beam and smile. I am not [a person] who likes to stand out and likes to preach. It is the Holy Spirit that guides me. [The Holy Spirit] uses my mouth to say what God pleases and to witness God's greatness. They do not fully understand and think that we are only pursuing the fullness of the Holy Spirit and do not read the Bible. It's not like that. ... We don't read the Bible like others study it. [Rather, we read the Bible] to let the Holy Spirit become our advisor and to receive the Word of God. For this reason, we are moved when we read the Bible. God lets us be moved. When we speak we Praise God. We open our mouths and speak what God wants us to say.

Long Caiming summarized the talk against him as involving the claim that he “likes a lot of publicity.” In a community where humility is a virtue, to say someone “likes a lot of publicity” usually means he or she is a blowhard. In particular, a good preacher should be humble, whereas a blowhard is never anything that is decent and valuable. Therefore, the church would not allow a blowhard to take the floor and preach. Those who like publicity and like to command the floor to preach in order to satisfy their own selfish desires are thought to be immoral. Indeed, Long Caiming took this moral judgment seriously. Defending himself against this accusation, he emphasized the significance of the issue of time. By ascribing the agency of preaching to the Holy Spirit, Long Caiming argues that time should not be a measure for the quality of a sermon. That the Holy Spirit has taken over and empowered a person is visible in that person's appearance. If someone is not constrained by the Holy Spirit, then he or she would not be constrained by the morality of man. In other words, they are transcendent because of being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The second point Long Caiming made in his defense was to point to the question of Bible reading. In his views, Bible reading is one of the Pentecostal practices. Unless one is directed by the Holy Spirit, what is written in the Bible are just words of people, not the Word of God. Thus Bible reading cannot be scheduled and planned by man. Long Caiming's advice to me was that the best way to read the Bible is to pray before reading.

In the prayer, you express yourself to God. Let God know your problems, your deficiencies, and your needs. Let him know everything, just ask God. Then God will speak to you while you are reading the Bible. Because the Holy Spirit is inside of you, it will lead you to realize the words that God prepared specifically for you. However, if the Holy Spirit is not inside you, you will not realize God's words just by reading the Bible. To put it another way, the seminary canon for Bible reading and teaching is illegible because it has put external frames onto the words of the God and constrained the Holy Spirit's works from the inside.

After making these two points in his self-defense, Long Caiming went on to critique the seminary canon for preaching. He claimed that the homiletics abused the Word of God. That is, it imposes an outline written by human beings to organize the Word of God and, as such, makes the mistake of putting the agency of people above that of God.

在神學院裡神學生所受的講道訓練，就是要他們提一個主題，從聖經當中去尋找和主題相關的內容，組織一個提綱，最後就是根據提綱來寫講章。講道的時候，只要照著念就好了。.....講章是人寫的、提綱是人組織的，如果說這樣就能把神的話講得清楚，那就錯了。神難道不能清楚的表達他自己嗎？人的講章如何可以表達神的訊息呢？

The training in homiletics the seminary students receive at the seminary is that come up with a topic, locate related passages in the Bible, organize an outline, and then finally write out a homily based on that outline. ...People write the homilies and people organize the outlines. If anyone says that this can clearly express the Word of God, then they are just wrong. Is God not able to clearly express himself? How could a person's homily convey God's message?

Preaching a sermon aims, on the contrary, to bear witness to the glory of God. As God reveals himself through everything, a person is constrained by his human nature to see the revelation. Therefore, human beings require the lead of the Holy Spirit to be inspired to see the revelation of God. Long Caiming claims that it is absolutely essential that a preacher share the inspiration he or she receives rather than to just share the

revelation.

講道的時候是聖靈通過我們的口和身體在見證神的榮耀。我們要和信徒分享的是神通過聖靈給我們的啟示。因此上台講道要告訴信徒我是在甚麼情況下獲得神的啟示，要把來龍去脈交代清楚，聽的人就可通過我的講道和我一同見證神的榮耀，和我一同領受神的啟示。

When preaching it is the Holy Spirit that, through my mouth and body, bears witness to the Glory of God. What we need to share with Christians is that God, through the Holy Spirit, gives us a sign. Because of this, when one takes the pulpit to preach, it is necessary to tell the Christians how [this] sign came to us, and we need to clearly indicate [its] source. Then, listeners can, through my preaching, witness the Glory of God together, and receive the sign of God with me.

Overall, there is a disagreement between Pentecostal preaching and homiletic preaching, and that disagreement lies in “the ultimate location of agency.” For Pentecostal preaching, authority comes from the Holy Spirit, and people are not authorized to limit the length of a sermon. For homiletic preaching, according to Long Caiming, it is the preacher who limits the length of a sermon. It is the split between these two understandings that lies behind the schism of the congregation. That is, different subjects are ascribed different authorizations and agencies in the Pentecostal versus homiletic approaches. Pentecostal preaching foregrounds direct, personal “inspiration,” while homiletic preaching highlights preacher-mediated “revelation.”

The Holy Spirit drives Pentecostal preaching. This makes it impossible for the preacher to plan or organize sermons before they take place. While preaching a sermon, the preacher contextualizes for the listeners the inspiration he receives from the Holy Spirit in order to bear witness to God. To contextualize his or her inspiration, the preacher provides detailed information regarding where, when, and how he or she receives inspiration. On the one hand, Pentecostal preaching emphasizes the condition and believes that condition is repeatable. The listeners can receive similar inspiration by replicating the condition, but the inspiration does not guarantee the same revelation.

Revelation is specific to each person. On the other hand, homiletic preaching is driven by topic. Therefore, the preacher must assume responsibility for selecting the topic, organizing the outline, and writing the sermon in order to reveal the revelation. In the sermon, the preacher contextualizes the revelation of God in order to manifest the will or word of God. Thus he or she will provide the context of a revelation that includes what the revelation is, where and when the revelation is produced, and how that revelation is relevant. In short, homiletic preaching assumes that the listeners will receive the inspiration from the revelation of the God if they know the context of that revelation. Thus, the inspiration is personal but not intrinsically shared.

The difference between inspiration and revelation requires further investigation. In the 1936 version of Ahmao Bible, when it comes to describe God’s revelation, which would be revealed through someone, the word *mwlkhet* (ᠮᠤᠯᠬᠡᠲᠡ) (ex. Corinthians 14:26) or *mwlkhwt* (ᠮᠤᠯᠬᠠᠬᠤᠲᠡ) (Acts 21:4) is used. *Mwlkhet* or *mwlkhwt* is an abbreviation of *mwl gul khet ab siet* (ᠮᠤᠯᠭᠤᠯᠬᠡᠲᠡᠠᠪᠰᠢᠲᠡ) or *mwl gul khwt ab siet* (ᠮᠤᠯᠭᠤᠯᠬᠠᠬᠤᠲᠡᠠᠪᠰᠢᠲᠡ), literally means “inspiring influence” (*mwl* literally means influence, or to influence, usually for good; *khet* means to show or to point out and *khwt* means to open; *ab siet* means heart or mind). The use of *khet* or *khwt* in semantic context is not well defined but exchangeable. In the 2009 version of the Ahmao Bible, neither *mwlkhet* nor *mwlkhwt* is used to describe God’s revelation but is replaced by the word *khwtkhet* (ᠬᠠᠬᠤᠲᠡᠬᠡᠲᠡ), which is a combination of *khwt* and *khet* used only in Christian contexts. Though the word *khwtkhet* is not a new invention of the 2009 version, it is used only once in the 1936 version as the translation of the Book of Revelation. It is very likely that both *mwtkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) and *khwtkhet*

were co-invented by Samuel Pollard and his Ahmao followers in the early twentieth century. The distinction is consistent in the 1936 version as *khwtkhet* was intended to function as a proper name. However, as *mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) is replaced by *khwtkhet* in the 2009 version, the distinction has not persisted. *Khwtkhet* functions as a noun instead of a proper name in the 2009 version.

The semantic transformation of *khwtkhet* reflects the transition of the context of translation. As the translation of the 2009 version took place between the 1990s and 2000s, sponsored by the Yunnan Seminary and supervised by the provincial Two Associations, the Ahmao meanings of words are conceived to be as close the Chinese as possible. According to Zhang Shaoming, a former member of the Ahmao Bible translation team, *mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) was abandoned because the combination of *mwl* and *khet* (or *khwt*) makes no sense in Ahmao. Though the same could be said about the word *khwtkhet* as the combination of *khwt* and *khet*, the quality of the referring object “the Book of Revelation” becomes the semantic value of *khwtkhet* which is literally translated as revelation. What is even more surprising is that the use of the word revelation in Chinese *qishi* (启示) is highly consistent in the Chinese-language Bible as referring to a specific genre of speech of God. Those who receive that specific genre of speech are in charge of revealing its meanings to those who do not have it. The semantic value of *qishi* in Chinese Bible is transmitted to the semantic value of *khwtkhet* in the 2009 version of Ahmao Bible, which shows similar consistency of appearance as the former. *Mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) in the 1936 version, however, does not share similar consistency. Rather, it refers to a specific genre of speech that is produced, not by God, but by those whose hearts are influenced by God. The phrase *khwt* (or *khet*) *ab siet* is

used separately from *mwl gul khet ab siet* as referring to the state of mind that is incited by the Holy Spirit. In the 2009 version, that specific state of mind is described as *zyubhleud* (𑜏𑜢𑜤𑜂𑜫)(*zyub* means to incite; *hleud* means to set on fire). *Zyubhleud* literally means to incite in the 2009 version, despite the fact that its ordinary use has negative implications and usually describes the state as stirring up troubles.

In other words, while *mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) is a specific speech genre characterized by a specific state of mind (*khet ab siet*), *khwtkhet* is not semantically related to *zyubhleud*. While both refer to a specific speech genre, it is conceived differently as there is a difference between the patient and object. Whereas the Holy Spirit acts on the patient, the object reveals God. *Mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) as an object revealing God prescribes those who are revealing God as the patients of the Holy Spirit. *Khwtkhet* as an object revealing God does not prescribe those who are revealing God as the patients of the Holy Spirit but separates the object from its agent. Thus, the difference of *mwlkhet* (or *mwlkhwt*) and *khwtkhet* in Ahmao Christian context is similar to that of inspiration and revelation. Though revelation prescribes no agency, inspiration does.

For Long Caiming and many Ahmao Christians, to be the patient of the Holy Spirit is evidence of “being chosen” by God. Moreover, it is because of the inspiration that the first generation of Ahmao converts received that they believe that the Ahmao are the chosen ethnic minority among other ethnic minorities.

我們苗族每次講道都是淚流滿面，他們很多都說我們苗族感情豐富，很愛哭。我們哭是因為聖靈在我們裡面運行，感動我們。以前聽老人講，傳教士來到苗族當中，向苗族傳福音，講的就是神愛世人。外國傳教士帶我們苗族讀聖經，每一次讀到神愛世人這節聖經，都是淚流滿面。因為聖靈進到苗族裡面，讓苗族人想到了以前生活很苦，當地主的奴隸，被漢人看不起，受到聖靈感動的苗族人，知道神是愛我們苗族人的。所以，以前苗族人一聽到福音就接受福音，我們是被神所揀選的民族。

Every time we Miao preach, tears will cover our faces. Many say we Miao are full of sentiment. We love to cry. The reason we cry is because the Holy Spirit is alive within us. It moves us. In the past, people said that the missionaries came to the Miao to spread the gospel. What they said was that God loves the people of the world. Foreign missionaries led us Miao to read the Bible. Every time the reading came to the passage in the Bible that God loves the people of the world, tears covered our faces. Because the Holy Spirit came to the Miao, the Miao recalled how difficult their lives had once been. [We were] slaves to landlords, and the Han Chinese despised [us]. The Miao who were moved by the Holy Spirit knew that God loves us Miao. Hence, in the past whenever the Miao heard the gospel, they accepted the gospel. We are an ethnic nationality that has been chosen by God.

Long Caiming repeated the above story to emphasize his argument that inspiration is the key to preaching, and that it has made the Ahmao the chosen ethnic minority. According to him, an Ahmao is humble in expressing himself or herself in public. If not empowered by the Holy Spirit, an Ahmao Christian would not be strong enough to speak in public. Ironically, the seminary training changes this mentality. Teachers at the seminary teach students to explicate revelation written in Bible. For Long Caiming and many of his followers, seminary students are not humble like the Ahmao; they lose the good virtue of Ahmao. As a result, the younger members of the congregation criticize the older members of the congregation. Long Caiming takes this generational disagreement seriously and he thinks that it is a sign of the depravity of the Ahmao Church.

Conclusion

The story I recounted begins with a quarrel over “heretical language.” The attempt to identify evil cult results, ironically, in precisely the kind of internal church schism that efforts to eradicate evil cult aim to avoid. However, schism has nothing to do with orthodoxy, but everything with Holy Spirit; the more germane question is thus whether or not Pentecostal practices do, indeed, constitute evil cult. This question cannot be resolved

in religious terms. Instead of arguing for or against Pentecostal practices, the congregation refines the worship to discipline these Pentecostal practices. Schism becomes inevitable, as it is a resistance to the intervention of the state. Whether one agrees with this mode of dealing with the issue or not, the schism that has emerged among Ahmao congregations represents their effort to cope with conflict while also being deeply involved in the patriotic sub-bureaucracy.

Conclusion

This dissertation describes the process of Ahmao Christianization as the history of bureaucratizing Ahmao congregations. The process of Ahmao Christianization has been and still is both partly in conformity to and yet also at odds with both state and denomination this worldly authority. Bureaucratic authority always included and includes an otherworldly God given authority. Still, in practice, Christian Ahmao have and still are reconciling these this-worldly and other-worldly forms of bureaucratic authority. However, there is another broader historical context. This context is the millenarian history of the region and its relationship to the additional presence of native officialdoms. Millenarian uprisings were common and related to the failure of Chinese state to effectively bureaucratize tribal societies. From one angle, the tribal mass conversion movement was just another in a long line millenarian uprisings. Nevertheless, from another angle, Christian bureaucratization subsequent in Ahmao and elsewhere in this region for the various tribal congregations was decidedly anti-millenarian.

As earlier chapters have detailed, whereas there had been centuries of more-or-less successful reproduction of Chinese bureaucracy over the Ming and Qing dynasties where this reproduction often included the replacement of the bureaucracies special to the tribal officialdoms with the bureaucracies that came with direct rule through the regular Chinese bureaucracy, beginning with the millenarian uprisings in Guizhou over the course of the Qian Rebellions (1854-1873) the Qing state began to falter in effectively reproducing its bureaucracies in many of these tribal societies. One important reason these tribal societies became susceptible to millenarianism during this historical

process of de-bureaucratization was because of the loss of the counterweight of the anti-millenarian ideology embodied in and transmitted through the Chinese bureaucracy. Instead, the anti-state millenarian movements attracted members of de-bureaucratized tribal societies. This was especially true during over the course of Qian Rebellions for these prophet led millenarian uprisings in this remote, yet still partially-bureaucratized, region.

As already described, the millenarian uprisings in Guizhou could be traced back to the sectarian movements in late eighteenth century, upraised in north China and spread into south, which besieged the superiority of Qing empire with either the emergence of new emperor or the predication of the catastrophe. From the imperial eyes, those millenarians were not just banditry rebels but heterodox practitioners whose human natures were distorted by the millenarian teachings and should be eradicated to prevent the spread of influences. Chased after by the official militaries, Chinese millenarians fled into Guizhou where Chinese bureaucracy were obscured by tribal sovereignty and struggled to be reproduced in local societies. As the millenarianism spread across this region, it extracted varied responses from those bureaucratized Chinese and those non-bureaucratized tribal people in nineteenth century in Guizhou province.

For those bureaucratized, Chinese millenarianism was dangerous and catastrophic as it often undermined the superiority of Chinese state. But it was also seductive and practical, since it provided an access to power as well as an escape from miserable lives. Thus the Chinese millenarians were often highlighted by their dramatic break with the contemporary order, and their exclusions from previous social networks. Throughout the course of the Qian Rebellions, there were millenarian uprisings particularly in northeast

and central-south Guizhou province. Those millenarian uprisings were fragmented and dispersed, which by no means engaging with any sectarian movement.

Nevertheless, and despite official efforts to eradicate the millenarians, small millenarian groups continued to seriously disturb the region. There were apparently some connections between those millenarian groups and the specifics of their millenarian uprisings, but up to the present these connections have been little studied, including especially their relationship to and the consequences of the history of bureaucratization in the region.

On the contrary, for those non-bureaucratized tribal people, millenarianism was not even less dangerous and catastrophic but somehow more describable and seductive, as they were indeed living in a clasping native officialdoms and expecting the new order to stop the domination going wild as well as bringing the domination in control. The region referred to the geographical area located in northwest Guizhou and extended across the provincial border of Yunnan and Sichuan. Politically, the region was *de jure* administrated by Yi chieftain system, or the Yi sub-bureaucracy, till early eighteenth century but the Yi sub-bureaucracy dominated the region *de facto* through land control until early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the Yi domination went wild and weak without proper supervision of Chinese bureaucracy. The tribal subjects under the administration of Yi sub-bureaucracy were dispersed, suppressed and fragmented, which means they were granted with no accessibility to bureaucratic authority but loaded with sub-bureaucratic obligations. Thus when the messiah leaders, the Tao Brothers in northwest Guizhou, started an insurrection in 1860, their millenarian movement soon attracted hundreds of thousands of non-bureaucratized tribal followers from the region.

Instead of just over turning the Chinese bureaucracy, the Tao Brothers revolt at the same time instituted a political project of building up a community of Exodus that was both outside of the Chinese bureaucracy as well as outside of Yi native officialdom domination. Though the Tao Brothers millenarian uprising collapsed a few years after its start, their non-bureaucratized tribal followers remained millenarian insofar as they lived beyond bureaucratic rule.

As also noted in earlier chapters, Protestant missionaries arrived two decades after the Collapse of the Tao brothers revolt and promptly began to introduce Christianity to those non-bureaucratized millenarians. More accurately, the missionaries found themselves dragged into a mass conversion movement even before they fully realized what was happening. These non-bureaucratized tribal millenarians still awaited the arrival of the New Order. As they were converted to Christianity, they had nothing to lose but a project of redemption, *dlangx kwat*, which they had kept secretly for them to be released from domination after death as well as for them to manage domination by keeping intrusion away from the realm of social reproduction. Nevertheless, the project of redemption could be replaced by Christianity for Christianity promised the redemption that the tribal subjects needed to manage the domination. But it was the missionary's social engineering project as Christian bureaucratization following the mass conversion movement that had transformed those millenarians into Christians. Otherwise, the mass conversion movement is very likely just another millenarian movement that uprisen with the expectation for new order and fallen for failing to install that new order. Given the flexibility of tribal social organization and the rigidity of the redemption project, I suspect that those millenarians would rather not retrieve their old *dlangx kwat* after the fall of the

millenarian movement but turn the public millenarianism to secrete redemption as their new *dlangx kwat* that would serve for the same purpose of redemption. Further historical investigations are needed to be done before either falsifying or approving this extended argument.

The process of Ahmao Christianization had been progressed along with, not spreading Gospel among Ahmao but the reproduction of Christian bureaucracy through the reproduction of Ahmao congregations. In this process, the missionaries were the social engineers that designed the new order for the Ahmao converts. Their social engineering project was composed with two parts: First, Christianity was introduced, as a new set of knowledge that was secular rather than religious, in a mundane classroom rather than at a sacred religious site. Second, the converts were organized into congregations and the congregations were encompassed by the denominational bureaucracy. For the perspective of the Ahmao converts, the missionary's congregation involved the invention of a new social organization. The congregation started as gatherings to worship the Christian God about whom they knew little but at the same time held high hopes for. That is, these gatherings appeared soon after they received Gospel from the missionaries, and had been opened up to recruit new members even before the missionaries proceeded to organize congregation along with the social engineering project. Nevertheless, for the missionary, the congregations were demarcated by the chapel and the Bible, and by memberships and clergy-ships, and constituted to supervise the faithful. Unlike the missionary who utilized congregation for administrative purposes, congregation was the mediation between God and believers as well as the site where God redeemed Ahmao sociality. Thus they expected to reproduce the congregation

through the weekly Sunday Service, as there would be no congregation if no one went to Sunday service. There would be no redemption if there was no congregation. The missionary social engineering project then proceeded to organize the congregations into denominational bureaucracy.

The maneuver of the project was divided by both denominations and parishes. The congregational landscape for each denomination and parish differed in its bureaucratic outlook. The two denominations—Methodist Church and China Inland Mission—divided the Ahmao converts and re-organized them into territorial divided congregations. As the Shimenkan parish was administrated by the Methodist missionaries, the Sapushan parish was administrated by the CIM missionaries. The social engineering projects as Christian bureaucratization thus were executed by these two different denominational agents. Beginning with cooperating congregations, the congregations were integrated to “republic church” through a centralized church-school system. Through the system, the central church in Shimenkan assigned teacher-preachers to serve the congregations. The appointment of teacher-preacher would be renewed each year as a way to bring the congregation in denominational supervision. The Ahmao converts in Sapushan, however, were geographically divided by territorial congregations. The territorial congregations were ranked in hierarchy as station, outstation or sub-outstation. At the top of the system, it was the inter-tribal Council as the top administrative office that coordinated inter-tribal business but indirectly supervised the congregations through tribal stations. The tribal station was a mediation between the Council and the tribal congregations, and the semi-independent administrative office that coordinated intra-tribal business. Outstation was the administrative and religious center of the local

that was obligated to supervise the sub-outstations as well as mediating the station and the congregations. Unlike the “republic church” in Shimenkan, the CIM denominational bureaucracy only ministered the congregations in Sapushan parish indirectly. As the Christianization progressed, the two missionary-designed versions of bureaucratic mechanisms confronted serious challenges as Ahmao congregations encountered with Chinese nationalism in 1920s.

The Chinese nationalism was introduced to Ahmao congregations in Shimenkan parish as Ahmao nationalism through the mediation of the centralized church-school system. The “republic church” in Shimenkan was under the threat of secularization as Ahmao nationalism spurred up reforms in curriculum in church-schools and marginalized Christianity. Though the effect was not seen until the arrival of Chinese communist regime, it was as lethal as the clasp of republic church in Shimenkan and no Methodist congregation survived throughout the revolutionary decades. On the contrary, the Ahmao congregations in Sapushan encountered with Chinese nationalism through the mediation of deviated Christian Ahmao. The deviated Christian Ahmao referred to those who were not affiliated with CIM congregations but their deviations should be recognized as reposes to the inadvertent failure of reproducing CIM bureaucracy in Ahmao congregations. The congregational hierarchy in Sapushan, however, was destabilized as a outstation, a local administrative and religious center, split into village congregations. The upraising inter-congregational network suppressed the congregational hierarchy and the church-school boom upraised from grassroots challenged the religious authority of the missionaries. The result was the reform of inter-tribal Council that suppressed denominational bureaucracy by an independent Church Union. Though the revolutionary

state disbanded the Church Union, the congregations survived the ensuing political campaigns by going underground.

The comparison of the two Christian Ahmao communities that were regenerated through bureaucratization of Christian Ahmao congregation offers two conclusions: First, instead of regarded bureaucratization as a one-way process, both cases reveal the reproduction of denominational bureaucracy as a dialectic process between the Ahmao congregations and their respective denominational bureaucracies. Second, the reproduction of denominational bureaucracy was, in turn, implicated in the reproduction of knowledge. In particular, both cases have shown how Ahmao congregations participated in the reproduction of bureaucracy through the reproduction of knowledge. That is to say, through the reproduction of Christian knowledge, the Ahmao congregation was not just a congregation but a congregation in relation to the denominational bureaucracy. The bureaucratization of Christian Ahmao had, on the one hand, extracted a certain part of the congregation to constitute the bureaucracy as a whole; on the other hand, a certain part of the bureaucracy had penetrated the congregation and become part of the congregation. As a result, the reproduction of a congregation would simultaneously reproduce the bureaucracy in the congregation. There was thus a relational yet holistic “congregation-hood” that rendered the existence of congregation in early twentieth century and has continued functioning as the congregational identity in post-denominational Christianity. Even today, the congregations in Sapushan parish identify themselves as either CIM or Adventist Church, despite the fact that both denominational bureaucracies collapsed during decades of the revolutionary era. The congregations and certain parts of the denominational bureaucracy survived the

revolutionary era and formed the social basis for the revival. On the contrary, the congregations in Shimenkan parish failed to reproduce themselves during the revolutionary decades, and the congregations that reappeared during the revival of Christianity did not continue to identify themselves as Methodist.

In sum, bureaucratization was an invitation for Christian Ahmao to participate, not just be involved, bureaucracy through the reproduction of knowledge. Though this argument is similar to Cohn's argument on British colonization of India through the command of English, the effect is not just producing new colonized subject as being described by Cohn but a "total system" that both the dominant and the subjugated produced and reproduced each other. The production and reproduction of knowledge is dynamic and creative. As the system of knowledge become accumulable, those who participate in the production/reproduction of knowledge are indeed free to integrate information. So did the Chinese nationalism could leave its footprints in the reproduction of Christian knowledge. So, too, did the bureaucratic outlooks could be as different as denominational diversities. Therefore, instead of over-generalizing the diversity of Christian bureaucracies, I have shown in chapter 4 that the reproduction of Christian bureaucracy in congregations was composed of three stages: (1) en-bureaucratization, (2) de-bureaucratization and (3) re-bureaucratization. En-bureaucratization refers to the process of organizing subjects into congregations (a), which are the social units created by the denominational bureaucracy (A). De-bureaucratization refers to the process whereby congregations moved away from the denominational bureaucracy to become independent social units (b). Re-bureaucratization refers to the process whereby the congregations re-organized within a denominational bureaucracy (B). While dividing

bureaucratization into three-stages, my purposes is to view the dynamics of the bureaucracy. This three-stage model of bureaucratization is crucial as it provides an entrée into how “society” and “state” reproduced one another.

The central idea of this three-stage model of bureaucratization is that: the local society and the bureaucracy reproduce each other. First, on the one hand, the bureaucracy is the site where the local society encounter the state as these locals began seeing each other through the mirror of bureaucracy. Second, on the other hand, as the locals are reorganized within the bureaucracy, the bureaucrats’ view of themselves is altered. That is, as mirrors for one another, both local society and the state see themselves differently through the process of the other. The upshot is to realignment the difference between the local society and the bureaucracy as well as the bureaucracy and the state. This is usually what we have seen while opposing the state and the local society as two entities. Third, and lastly however, the presence of bureaucracy, which is one mirror, provokes further reflection on the relationship between the state and the local society, and reshape “bureaucracy” upon what the state and the local society have seen in each other and for their own purposes. This is the stage that the bureaucratic value became the essential element of local society as the local actors are now acting upon it to reshape their relationships with the state. Conceiving bureaucracy as a mirror is similar to the “interface” suggested by xx or “constitutive site” proposed by Hull, but it is also a courtesy, not a rejection, to Weberian machinery “bureaucracy”. Bureaucracy, though created by the state (or those with power), is not a representation of those who created it. Rather, both the state and local society are situated in the bureaucracy. While seeing the three-stages of reproducing bureaucracy in local society, the process of bureaucratization

is dialectical insofar as it is constantly shaping and reshaping the relation between the state and the local society.

The history somehow repeats itself if we see the pattern of how it progressed. The revolutionary state went wild as it was not meant to dominant but to destroy the society. Throughout the two decades, bureaucracy was not meant to produce but to destroy the order. Christianity was the target of revolution as it was both judged imperialist and superstitious. The clasp of order reminds us the Qian Rebellion and how the persecution of Christians is reminiscent of how Qing officials pursued the millenarians. It is also not surprising that the revolutionary state has produced its own millenarian uprisings. The millenarian uprising among Christian Ahmao was spurred up by the persecution of Ahmao Reverent in 1973. The eventful execution was recognized as a sign of the completion of redemption as Jesus had completed God's plan of redemption and would be upraised from the death. Christian millenarians proclaimed the arrival of Heavenly Kingdom that would bring the New Order on Earth. In the millennium, Christians have direct access to redemption without being mediated by the congregation. While being in the interim, millenarians deny the congregation as well as the state, and remained living out of the bureaucratic realm. Nevertheless, the post-revolutionary communist state did not chase after the millenarians. Rather, the millenarianism was identified not as a religious problem but as a historical problem. That is to say, because they were mistreated during the revolutionary decades, they distrust the state.

With the return of United Front policies, the post-revolutionary state undermines religious authority in two ways: on the one hand, it regulates religion through bureaucratization as Christian congregations were organized into Two Associations—a

top-down Christian administrative organization; on the other hand, the state particularizes religion by its apartheid policies for the segregation of religious activities from other social activities. As a result, the Christian administrative organization is regarded as a sub-bureaucracy of Chinese bureaucracy, distinguished by the people it administrates but whose authority is constrained within the apartheid religious realm. That is to say, the secular state supervises bureaucratization but let the Christian leaders take up the lead of the social engineering project in post-revolutionary China. Yet the scope of this dissertation is not allowed to address the issues as how Chinese bureaucracy reproduces in Christian congregations in general.

The Ahmao congregations in the former Sapushan parish that survived the revolutionary decades were dragged into this apartheid sub-bureaucratization project. Though not without resistance, instead of being passively bureaucratized, those Ahmao congregations have taken the lead to reproduce the sub-bureaucracy through the reproduction of their congregations. Their enthusiasm was evident in the prosperity of Ahmao congregations in 1990s. It is important to note that a certain part of the denominational bureaucracy that was internalized through their participation in denominational bureaucracy and had been carried through the revolutionary decades was en-capsulized in Ahmao congregations. Thus the reproduction of Ahmao congregations in former Sapushan parish has been a reproduction of both denomination and national bureaucracies, despite the fact that the former was replaced by the latter in post-revolutionary China. The denominational bureaucracy is the inner layer of Ahmao congregations, while the national sub-bureaucracy is the outer layer of these congregations. The ceremony for releasing Ahmao Bible shows how the Ahmao

congregational landscape is layered as the national sub-bureaucracy in the foreground and the denominational bureaucracy in the background.

Bureaucracy left its footprints in congregations through the mediation of knowledge. The knowledge, however, refers to not just specific knowledge but to the epistemology that foregrounds the truth quality of knowledge. It is in this sense that the bureaucracy is a domination through knowledge. There are two effects of Chinese bureaucratization: First, while being bureaucratized by Chinese authorities, the Ahmao facilitate Chinese language and literacy. Ahmao language and literacy become subordinate and have less use in the reproduction of knowledge. This in turn stimulates an awareness of Ahmao identity among Christian Ahmao. Second, as the revival progressed alongside its Chinese bureaucratization, Ahmao priests and clergies were trained in recent established Chinese Seminary or relevant theological programs. They are the mediators of the Two Associations and Ahmao congregations, and have brought Chinese state authority to Ahmao congregations. The presences of new generations Christian Ahmao elites have speeded up the secularization of Ahmao congregations. The two effects of Chinese bureaucratization as increasing awareness of identity and secularization have inadvertently fueled the schism of the Ahmao congregations since late 1990s.

The responses of Ahmao congregations to the effects of Chinese bureaucratization can be summarized as follow: On the one hand, the increasing awareness of Ahmao identity has an effect as reproducing Ahmao ethnicity in Ahmao congregations. In particular, there are congregations that have developed their own formal or informal training programs that are annexed to the congregations and similar to the symbiosis

between religion and education that occurred in the 1930s. The symbiosis of church and school allows Ahmao congregations to reproduce the knowledge along with the reproduction of Ahmao congregation. On the other, there is an increasing tendency as secularization advance that pushes some Christians into evangelical underground activities. The secularization in this case means imposing state legitimacy over the reproduction of knowledge and the imposing regulation over the congregational activities. Those include liturgical reform of Sunday services, the campaign against heterodox Christianity, replacement of spontaneous preaching by well-planned sermon, and so on. Those rules or regulations have spurred endless debate in congregations over the suppression of the Holy Spirit and the legitimacy of state authority over those congregations. Nevertheless, whereas the effects of Chinese bureaucratization have grown deeper and deeper over the last decade, the landscape of Ahmao congregations have been dramatically altered. Still, Ahmao Christians appear to never doubt that the reproduction of Ahmao congregations is the first priority for sustaining Ahmao Christianity and thereby retaining Christian Ahmao sociality.

As there is an increasing concern in scholar works that Christianity seems to merge with ethnicity in China, this dissertation has paid special attention to situating Christianity and ethnicity in the reproduction of congregations. This dissertation disagrees with the increasing tendency in scholar works on either showing Christianity as ethno-religion that contributes to constitute ethnicity of tribal converts or emphasizing conversion and Christianization as spurring up the awareness of ethnic identity among tribal population (Constable 1996; Zhang 2007; Lim 2013). At first glance, this line of reasoning seems to make perfect sense. It explicates the contradiction of how to be

Christian as well as be a member of the PRC's non-Han nationalities. As to being a non-Han nationality in China means to live up ethnic traditions, including religion, culture, language and so on. To be a Christian, however, means someone has given up most of their traditions. Though the constructionist view of ethnicity leaves room for Christianity to replace other elements as constituting ethnicity, it is nothing about Christianity but everything about ethnicity and identity. While it creates a provisional discourse that allows Christianity to be part of the tradition that constitutes ethnicity, it suppresses ethnographic particularity of conversion and the subsequent Christianization.

To avoid those distortions in the study of Christianity among ethnic minority in China, this dissertation provides an experiment to mingle with the Christianity and ethnicity along with the process of bureaucratization. I have argued thoroughly against either substantializing ethnicity with Christianity or essentializing Christianity with ethnicity. As I have shown, there is nothing essential to Ahmao Christianity, except Ahmao congregations, which could be employed to define Ahmao Christianity as distinct to other Christianities around the world. Christian Ahmao themselves have shown no intentions to make their Christianity different but have actively opened up their congregations to different Christian theologies and actively participate in the reproduction of Christian knowledge through the reproduction of Ahmao congregations.

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