

# **The Transformation of Yunnan in Ming China**

From the Dali Kingdom to  
Imperial Province

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First published 2020

ISBN: 978-0-367-35336-0 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-33078-0 (ebk)

## **5 Upland leaders of the internal frontier and Ming governance of western Yunnan, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries**

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Funder: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

# 5 Upland leaders of the internal frontier and Ming governance of western Yunnan, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

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## Introduction

Since the publication of James C. Scott's controversial *The Art of Not Being Governed*, scholars have increasingly situated Yunnan within the sprawling region known as Zomia.<sup>2</sup> The term Zomia refers to a stateless mountainous area that functioned as a place of refuge for ethnic groups attempting to escape encroachment by lowland states. In Zomia, communities preserved their autonomy by resisting incorporation into state administrative systems, avoiding paying taxes and refusing to provide lowland states with labour services. Relatively large polities emerged in Dali, the political and religious centre of Yunnan in pre-Ming times, the most renowned being the Nanzhao (649–903) and the Dali (937–1253) kingdoms, with their capitals beside Lake Erhai. These lowland polities existed within a framework similar to the lowland–upland dichotomy found in the northern mainland of Southeast Asia. After the Ming conquest of western Yunnan in 1382 and until 1574, upland communities remained outside the ambit of the state in a vast mountainous tract known as Iron Chain Gorge.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I investigate why the Ming required nearly 200 years to control these upland communities. Adopting the case of Iron Chain Gorge as a means to begin this discussion, I focus on the agency of the upland leaders in maintaining the autonomy of their communities and analyse why their fierce opposition to outside interference restricted Ming governance of western Yunnan before 1574. The purpose is to examine the extent of upland influence on lowland dynastic power.

The upland communities of Iron Chain Gorge constituted an internal frontier (*neidi bianjiang* 內邊) because the area they occupied was one over which the Ming could not exercise direct control and one which they could not administer indirectly through hereditary native officials (*tuguan* 土官). Internal frontiers were not unique to Yunnan. Guangdong, Guizhou and Hunan also had them. We possess no information concerning autonomous communities in western Yunnan during the pre-Ming period. In addition, the scanty sources provide insufficient evidence to delineate the history of these communities during the first 200 years of Ming rule. The establishment of institutions, such as Guards and Battalions

(*weisuo* 衛所) for defence, hereditary native officials for the management of ethnic peoples, and a household registration system to define the local population, initiated a state-induced transformation of local society. By examining how the internal frontier centred on Iron Chain Gorge resisted the introduction of these institutions, we can verify differences between lowland and upland societies in this process of transformation and highlight how the tightening of governance by the Ming during the sixteenth century shaped the history of upland communities.

The Mongol-Yuan governed local society in western Yunnan from c.1256 to 1382 through the agency of the Duan Family General Administrators, descendants of the Dali kingdom royal family.<sup>4</sup> The Ming abolished this strategy of reliance on a single powerful intermediary, choosing to administer prefectures, sub-prefectures and counties directly through regular imperial bureaucrats (*liuguan* 流官) and to oversee ethnic peoples indirectly through numerous hereditary native officials. The change to direct administration entailed the registration of the population. However, the complexities of ethnic political power and the region's terrain prevented complete registration and ended up creating three types of administrative status: (1) lowland communities under direct administration, (2) ethnic communities administered by native officials, and (3) autonomous communities inhabiting the internal frontier in upland western Yunnan. In the case of (1), the Ming registered the forebears of today's Bai 白 and other ethnic groups dwelling on the lowlands as tax-paying subjects (*min* 民). For defence purposes, Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming Emperor, introduced a new Han in-migrant population into the lowland ethnoscape, garrisoning Han soldiers and their families within the jurisdictions of imperial bureaucrats and native officials. A strong military presence and the direct administration of lowland communities formed the backdrop for local elites, mainly consisting of scholar-officials, to initiate projects to reconstruct local society during the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Created by the examination system and in many cases having served as imperial bureaucrats, the new Confucian local elite set out to re-shape local culture and religion to accord more closely with Ming norms from the late fifteenth century. Their agenda in the sixteenth century included re-writing local history and reforming ideology and beliefs, a process that Ma Jianxiong describes as social reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> The inability of the Ming state to penetrate type (2) and (3) communities restricted the range of social reconstruction. Since ethnic communities under the jurisdiction of native officials retained their status as *yi* 夷, or non-registered barbarian people, the Ming could not classify them as subjects directly paying tax to the state.<sup>7</sup> Residents in autonomous upland communities remained unregistered, a fact that reflects their ability to isolate themselves from state power. Such communities associated with the main stronghold at Iron Chain Gorge remained largely ungovernable by both imperial bureaucrats and native officials alike until 1574.

Iron Chain Gorge was a place name of wide application. The area under its influence encompassed a broad upland frontier measuring approximately 200 kilometres in a north/south direction, stretching from the south bank of the

Jinsha 金沙 River (the upper reaches of the Yangzi River) in the north to Yunnan county 雲南縣 (today's Xiangyun county 祥雲縣) in the south, Binchuan sub-prefecture 賓川州 and Zhaozhou 趙州 in the west, and bordering on Beisheng 北勝 sub-prefecture and Yaozhou 姚州 in the east. Protected by precipitous terrain (see Figure 5.1), Iron Chain Gorge formed a natural barrier separating Dali in the west from Chuxiong in the east.

Historical sources testify that these autonomous communities possessed their own leaders (over twenty), indicating that they did not constitute one of the acephalous upland societies of Zomia envisaged by James Scott. Ming sources refer to them as bandits (*dao* 盜) and outlaws (*zei* 賊) because they periodically plundered lowland villages, waylaid travellers and terrorised vital communication routes linking Dali with the provincial capitals of Yunnan in the east and Sichuan in the north.<sup>8</sup> Their disruption of lowland communities under both direct and indirect administration lasted for approximately 200 years.

Autonomous communities also existed on the Miao frontiers (Miaojiang 苗疆) in Guizhou and western Hunan and on the Yao frontier (Yaojiang 猺疆)



*Figure 5.1* The deep gorge of the Yupao River.

The deep gorge of the Yupao River 漁泡江 demarcates the border between Binchuan county and Dayao county 大姚縣. This photo taken from the Dayao side shows the steep mountains on the Binchuan side. Iron Chain Gorge communities lay scattered over the mountains on both sides of the Yupao River until the Ming conquest of 1574.

Photograph: Christian Daniels, 18 June 2019.

centred at Great Vine Gorge 大藤峽 in Guangdong. In his analysis of the Ming's long wars with the Yao of Great Vine Gorge (c.1446 to 1576), David Faure (2016) identifies three types of village community in the Pearl River Delta: (1) lowland communities populated by registered tax-paying households under the administration of imperial bureaucrats, (2) lowland and upland communities governed by native officials, and (3) communities located within an internal frontier outside the ambit of Ming jurisdiction.<sup>9</sup> State registration of populations recently brought under direct administration created configurations of registered and unregistered households similar to those in western Yunnan. The expansion of Ming and Qing administration into internal frontier areas challenged the autonomy of upland communities across Southwest China. Historians have studied assimilation and other ethnicity issues in internal frontier areas.<sup>10</sup> However, they have hesitated to investigate the role played by autonomous communities in defining the extent of state control over local society.

Lian Ruizhi's study on Iron Chain Gorge focuses on elucidating how the Ming incorporated the upland leaders of the internal frontier into the Ming administrative system. She argues that the extension of Ming administration into the margins of the frontier caused the intensification of raiding from the late fifteenth century and culminating in the Ming conquest in 1574. She empirically demonstrates that the Ming split the internal frontier into three separate communities following the conquest. The first constituted a lowland-type community of households registered under the *lijia* system. The second was a community of native troops (*tubing* 土兵) subordinate to native police chiefs. While the third community retained its non-registered status, the Ming placed it under the jurisdiction of the Gao Family Native Official of Yao'an 姚安高氏土官.<sup>11</sup>

To investigate the nature of political organisation within the internal frontier and to explain how upland leaders constricted Ming governance in western Yunnan, I address the following questions. First, did upland leaders maintain regimes that involved a degree of political organisation, or did they merely gather followers attracted by the prospect of plunder? Second, why did the Ming require nearly 200 years to conquer Iron Chain Gorge? Third, how did the persistence of an impenetrable internal frontier affect Ming governance of western Yunnan during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? By treating Iron Chain Gorge communities as the inhabitants of an internal frontier, I aim to view the interaction between upland political power and Ming governance in western Yunnan from a new perspective. The answers to the research questions will increase our understanding of the process by which the Ming transformed communities in western Yunnan into communities more akin to those of other provinces.

## Sources

Since the upland communities left no documents of their own, information concerning them must be gleaned from accounts written by bureaucrats and *literati*. I mainly draw on two different sources. Regarding the raiding of lowland areas

and the reasons for the failure of Ming officials to establish control until *c.* 1574, I largely rely on the writings of Li Yuanyang 李元陽 (1497–1580) and to a lesser extent on memorials by He Mengchun 何孟春 (1474–1536), who served as the Grand Coordinator of Yunnan 雲南巡撫 during the Zhengde era (1506–1521). Li Yuanyang, a native of Taihe county 太和縣 in Dali prefecture, received his metropolitan degree (*jinshi* 進士) in 1526 and enjoyed a successful bureaucratic career with appointments as the Magistrate of Jiangyin county 江陰縣, Secretary in the Ministry of Revenue, Investigating Censor and Magistrate of Jingzhou 荊州. After withdrawing from official life in 1542 at the age of 44, he retired to Dali and devoted the rest of his long life to writing prolifically on local history and society.<sup>12</sup> He re-interpreted the pre-Mongol-Yuan history of the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms to accord with the Ming view that Chinese dynastic administration of Yunnan commenced during the Han dynasty.<sup>13</sup> His retirement coincided with the intensification of raiding by the Iron Chain Gorge leaders. Thus, he wrote as a contemporary of the events he describes.

According to late Ming writer Zhu Guozhen 朱國禎 (1558–1632), Li Yuanyang hailed from an ancient family of “sorcerers” capable of quelling dragons but by his day his family had lost the art. Zhu records that Li’s renovation of numerous Buddhist temples in Dali prefecture between 1542 (Jiajing 21) and 1579 (Wanli 7) aimed to prevent flooding wrought by unruly dragons. Apparently, the people around Lake Erhai “dwelt in safety in the past because they worshipped the Buddhist *dharma* (*fafa* 佛法), and constructed temples and pagodas 塔 to suppress” these dragons. However, following the abolition of Dali kingdom-style Buddhist *dharma* by the Ming state, the curse of the dragons returned (*long fu zuochong* 龍復作祟), causing calamities. Lacking the magical powers of his forefathers, Li Yuanyang chose to subdue the dragons by the renovation of temples. He “restored anew the ruins of the Chongsheng temple and altars (*tanyu* 壇宇) within the prefecture” 崇聖遺墟及郡中壇宇, 煥然一新.<sup>14</sup> In remaking local society, Li Yuanyang invoked pre-Ming Buddhist practices, thus revealing deep familiarity with traditions dating to the Mongol-Yuan period. Intimate knowledge of traditional practices aided him in re-writing local history and in re-arranging customs and habits to accord with new sixteenth-century norms.

As a scholar-official steeped in the traditions of his native Dali, Li Yuanyang was well positioned to update earlier accounts of Mongol-Yuan period local histories, such as the late-thirteenth-century *Jigudian shuoji* 記古滇說集 (Collected Records of Ancient Dian Stories) by Zhang Daozong 張道宗 and the now lost *Bai Gu Tongji* 白古通記.<sup>15</sup> According to Hou Chong 侯冲, Dali intellectuals began to remake Bai identity in Mongol-Yuan times. Therefore, the “updating” of the contents of historical legends by Li Yuanyang can be construed as a continuation of an identity-making process already underway. Megan Bryson considers Li Yuanyang the first Ming writer to furnish detailed accounts of the legend concerning Cishan 慈善 (Charity), also known as Baijie Furen 柏節夫人 (Lady of Cypress Chastity), a goddess associated with Baijie Shengfei 白潔聖妃 (Holy Consort of White Purity), whom Dali kingdom-period Buddhist

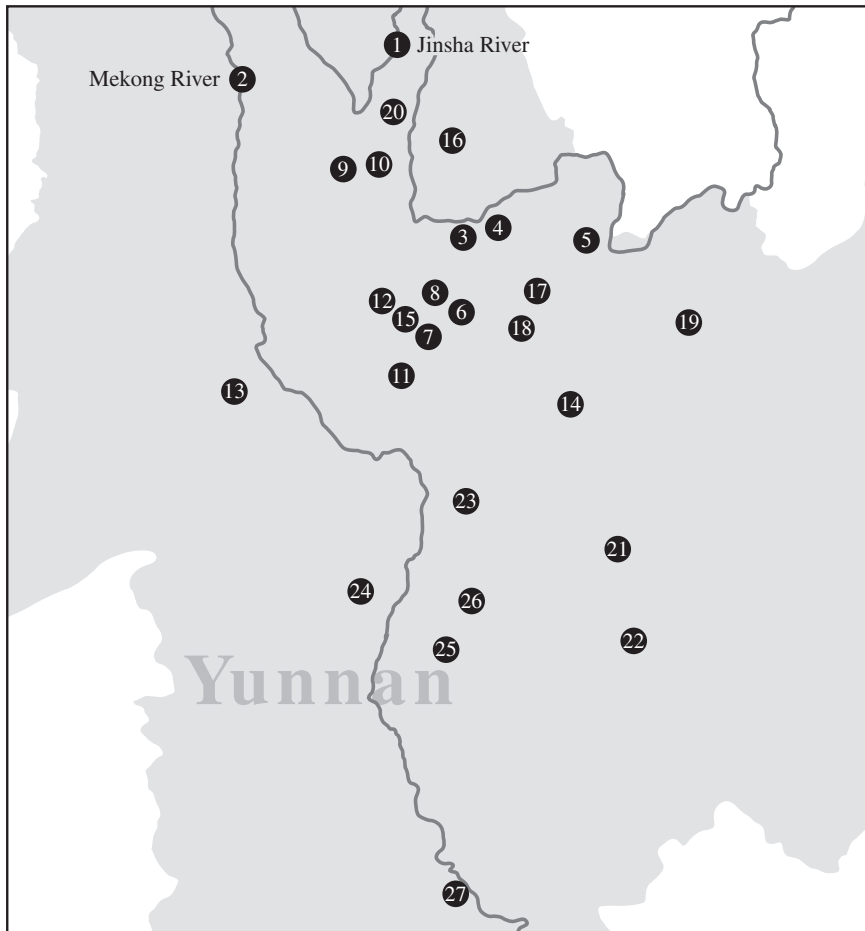


ritual texts depicted as a consort of Mahākāla.<sup>16</sup> Bryson argues that both local and non-local scholar-officials altered the stories of the goddesses to accommodate the changing concepts of gender, particularly the chastity cult, espoused by the Ming and Qing states.<sup>17</sup> This example testifies to the contribution of Li Yuanyang's literary activities to the construction of a new identity and reflects the enthusiasm of intellectuals for reform. Li Yuanyang was not the only local scholar-official who attempted to reconstruct local society to suit the changed circumstances of the mid-sixteenth century. Lian Ruizhi observes that Yang Shiyun 楊士雲 (1477–1554) advocated reform of marriage, burial and ritual practices to align local customs with Ming norms.<sup>18</sup> Scholar-officials became engines for generating new standards of knowledge while local village elites served as the stewards of their thought who implemented change. The process termed social reconstruction by Jianxiong Ma impinged on all aspects of social life.

The only Ming source that delineates the contours of the internal organisation of upland society is the *Biographies of Luo Si and the Various Barbarians of Iron Chain Gorge* 鐵鎖管羅思諸夷列傳 (hereafter *Biographies*), which is included in the *Wanli Wugong Lu* 萬曆武功錄 compiled by Qu Jiushi 瞿九思 (1546–1617) in 1612.<sup>19</sup> *Biographies* provides a detailed account of the events surrounding the large-scale military campaign of 1573/74 led by Censor-in-chief Zou Yinglong 鄒應龍 (who received the metropolitan degree in 1556). This source records the number of troops deployed, the strategy of the offensive, and the numbers of casualties and captives. It also describes in detail the planning and execution of the campaign. Despite its decidedly pro-Ming stance, it provides information concerning the history and organisation of upland leaders collected by bureaucrats.

### Ten self-proclaimed kings

On the eve of the campaign of 1573/74, the political organisation within the internal frontier (see Map 5.1) consisted of an alliance of ten self-proclaimed kings. Luo Si 羅思, an ethnic headman (*huotou* 火頭), played a central role in the formation of this alliance. *Biographies* records the genesis of the Ten Kings as follows. In the beginning, it was Luo Qinkuai 羅勤快, a Company Commander (*Baifuzhang* 百夫長) stationed with troops at Red Rock Cliff, who urged the internal frontier leaders to proclaim kingship. However, he soon abandoned the idea because of opposition by Luo Si and Luo Ge 羅革, who thought it “wildly ambitious, and detrimental to our main objectives 狂妄沮吾大事”. However, these leaders changed their minds after a shaman (*wuren* 巫人), Li the Immortal 李仙子, described as “adept at magic and deluding people”, announced after a prophetic vision that “the life force (*qi* 氣) of a king lies in the gorge”. According to Li's forecast, “a king is sure to rise to rule over Nanzhong 南仲 [today's Yunnan] (管中有王者氣, 此必有興者, 當制南仲矣)”. Certain that their time had finally arrived, the ten upland leaders, including Luo Si and Luo Ge, themselves proclaimed “we possess Nanzhong in the present age,



- |                                    |                                       |                                  |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ① Jinsha River 金沙江                 | ⑩ Heqing 鶴慶                           | ⑲ Wuding 武定府                     |
| ② Mekong River 瀾滄江                 | ⑪ Menghua 蒙化                          | ⑳ Lijiang 麗江                     |
| ③ Red Rock Cliff 赤石崖               | ⑫ Dali 大理                             | ㉑ Xinhua 新化                      |
| ④ Iron Chain Gorge 鐵索箐             | ⑬ Yongchang 永昌                        | ㉒ Yuanjiang 元江府                  |
| ⑤ Juque 苴卻                         | ⑭ Chuxiong 楚雄                         | ㉓ Jingdong 景東                    |
| ⑥ Nidian 你甸                        | ⑮ Zhaozhou 趙州                         | ㉔ Meng Mian 猛緬                   |
| ⑦ Yunnan 雲南                        | ⑯ Lancang Guard (Beisheng)<br>瀾滄衛/北勝州 | ㉕ Weiyuan 威遠土州                   |
| ⑧ Daluo Guard (Binchuan)<br>大羅衛/賓川 | ⑰ Dayao 大姚                            | ㉖ Zhenyuan 鎮沅府                   |
| ⑨ Jianchuan 劍川                     | ⑱ Yaozhou 姚州 (Yao'an)                 | ㉗ Cheli (Sipsong Panna)<br>車里宣慰司 |

Map 5.1 Internal frontier and centres of administration in western Yunnan, 1582.



twenty generations after Meng Huo” 孟獲二十世後，當世有南仲”。 Assuming the title “the skyward soaring, iron-faced ten great kings” (*chong tian tiemian shi dawang* 冲天鐵面十大王), they appointed Yang Guisan 楊桂三 and others as ministers (*xiang* 相). In addition, Yang Che 楊撤, the son of Yang Guisan, served as the great general. “Making tallies and casting seals of office”, warriors escorted the leaders when travelling “as if they were kings”.<sup>20</sup> Inspired by the legend of Meng Huo, the ten leaders embraced the idea of kingship. Therefore, the question arises whether this new ideology changed the original configuration of political power within the internal frontier.

Previous research has demonstrated that political power in upland societies typically lay in the hands of numerous individuals and that although certain of them may have wielded more power than others depending on circumstances, particularly in emergencies, no single person enjoyed life-long paramount leadership.<sup>21</sup> The appointment of ministers to administer and generals to command military forces as well as the taking of tallies and casting of official seals creates a semblance of unified political power. However, rather than indicating substantive change, these acts may have merely reflected a desire to enhance prestige by displaying Chinese statecraft practices. It seems that the concept of royalty did not completely replace former structures, and, in essence, the political organisation of the Ten Kings continued as an alliance of leaders.

Jianxiong Ma argues that by invoking Meng Huo as a key symbol, the Ten Kings articulated their belief that external powers, such as the Ming state, were incapable of governing them. Explaining why the Ten Kings chose Meng Huo, Ma maintains that their claims to descend from him arose in the context of the replacement of the old image of the Nanzhao King with a new one of Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 at Iron Pillar Temple 鐵柱廟 in Midu 彌渡 and the spread of the construction of Zhu Geliang temples.<sup>22</sup> Here, to investigate different possible interpretations, I scrutinise the original sources that record encounters between Meng Huo and Zhu Geliang. I argue that from the standpoint of internal frontier leaders Meng Huo can be construed as a protector of Yunnan from Chinese dynastic power.

Meng Huo was an indigenous leader in Yunnan during the Three Kingdoms period 三國 (220–280), at the time when the Shu kingdom 蜀國 held suzerainty over Nanzhong. According to the written version of the story, Meng Huo finally submitted to the resourceful strategist of Shu, the renowned Zhu Geliang, in 225 (Jianzhou 建周 3) after being captured and released seven times (*qiqin qizong* 七擒七縱). Following his pledge of allegiance, Zhu Geliang returned to Shu, leaving some troops to safeguard against future unrest.<sup>23</sup>

To Chinese readers, this story illustrates the acumen of Zhu Geliang in overcoming an ethnic leader through superior strategy: he attained victory without heavy fighting. The *Sun Zi Bingfa* 孫子兵法 encapsulates the ultimate stratagem of warfare in the phrase “a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the best of the best; bringing the troops of others to their knees without battle is the best of the best”.<sup>24</sup> Zhu Geliang triumphed by stabilising Nanzhong without waging full-scale war, a tactic that preserved his military resources for fighting the

kingdom of Wei 魏國 in the north. However, one source which articulates the perspective of Nanzhong gives a completely different picture, i.e., that it was Meng Huo who outmanoeuvred Zhu, not the other way around. Historical evidence to support this notion appears in the *Han-Jin Chunqiu* 漢晉春秋 (Spring and Autumn between the Han and Jin Periods) by Eastern Jin-period 東晉 (317–420) writer Xi Zaochi 習鑿齒 (died 384). According to the *Han-Jin Chunqiu*, Zhu Geliang withdrew all his troops and officials due to the difficulties of governing Nanzhong:<sup>25</sup>

If we leave outsiders, then we must leave troops, but if we assign troops they will have no food. This is the first reason for not being easy to govern. In addition, we have recently defeated the barbarians (*yi* 夷), and their people have been killed. Disasters will certainly arise if we leave outsiders [Shu officials] without assigning troops. This is the second reason for not being easy to govern. Again, petty officials (*li* 吏) have repeatedly transgressed by terrorising and killing (*feisha zhi zui* 廢殺之罪), and the local people detest the serious nature of their crimes (*xinzhong* 釁重), so if we assign outside people, [the local people] will never trust them. This is the third reason for not being easy to govern. This is why now I want to establish general control (*gangji* 綱紀) and to some degree stabilise relations between barbarians and Han [dynasty subjects] so that we will not have to station troops and transport grain.

According to this version, the failure of Zhu Geliang to establish direct administration over Nanzhong can be construed as a victory for Meng Huo. It was irrelevant that unstable local political conditions and insufficient numbers of troops and grain supplies made it prudent for the quick-witted Zhu Geliang to appease Nanzhong rather engage in warfare. For indigenous people, his cleverness did not matter. It was Zhu's ultimate withdrawal that counted. Retreat signalled triumph for Meng Huo and underscored the fact that in the end he had succeeded in protecting his land and people from outside interference. By interpreting events this way, Meng Huo emerged as the champion. A home-grown leader had prevailed over a strategist from distant lands.

I cite the *Han-Jin Chunqiu* version not to argue for a new reading of the historical events, but to illustrate that some literary sources recorded non-conventional interpretations of Meng Huo. According to *Biographies*, Meng Huo was a model for upland leaders. Therefore, by claiming to be reincarnations of Meng Huo, the Ten Kings identified themselves as successors to this historical legacy and expressed their resolve to oust the Ming from the internal frontier. By invoking this indigenous historical figure, the Ten Kings created an ideology that re-positioned them vis-à-vis the Ming state and emboldened them to believe that, similar to Meng Huo, they too would be protected from outside governance by the difficult terrain of the internal frontier.

These concepts of kingship emerged among communities in the internal frontier against a backdrop of mounting interference from Ming bureaucrats and

native officials. The Ming originally appointed two local men as native police chiefs as early as 1383<sup>26</sup> but only achieved a strong military presence near the internal frontier after the founding of Daluo Guard 大羅衛 and Binchuan sub-prefecture 賓川州 in 1494. These measures were aimed at curbing raiding and at governing the registered households relocated to newly founded Binchuan sub-prefecture from Taihe county 太和縣, Zhaozhou 趙州, and Yunnan county 雲南縣. In addition, the Ming established a Military Defence Vice-Commissioner 兵備副使 to oversee several areas surrounding the internal frontier in 1499.<sup>27</sup> Luo Si and Luo Qinkuai understood Ming intentions. They both held minor official positions in the very institutions that the Ming established to control the internal frontier. As a Company Commander, Luo Qinkuai may even have been responsible for restraining his own people from exiting the uplands. However, as Lian Ruizhi has shown, the military build-up failed to safeguard lowland populations. On the contrary, the presence of Ming troops only hardened the resolve of upland leaders to defend their autonomy and tighten alliances among themselves. Thus, the build-up resulted in an intensification of raiding during the sixteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

Attempted governance by two native officials increased the complexity of relations between upland leaders and Ming bureaucrats. *Biographies* records the autonomous nature of the internal frontier, remarking that no part of it owed labour service (*yishu* 役屬) to the Ming before the late fifteenth century.<sup>29</sup> However, the situation altered after the Native Prefect of Yao'an prefecture, Gao Feng 高鳳,<sup>30</sup> and the Native Vice Magistrate of Yaozhou, Gao Chun 高椿,<sup>31</sup> began to administer the eastern fringes around Juque 苴卻 (in today's Yongren county 永仁縣) from the Hongzhi era (1488–1505) onwards. Although both native officials took turns managing this marginal area, neither established an exclusive jurisdiction (*zhuan shu* 專屬). During the Zhengde reign (1506–1521), the area came under Gao Bi 高弼 of Yaozhou.<sup>32</sup> However, during the Jiajing reign (1522–1566), jurisdiction reverted to Yao'an prefecture, with Gao Qidou 高齊斗 being placed in charge.<sup>33</sup> With the dismissal of Gao Qidou from office for criminal offences, the task fell to Gao Hu 高鵠. After the death of Gao Hu, Qidou's son Gao Qin 高欽 exercised jurisdiction. In approximately 1567–1569, Gao Qin 高欽 and his younger brother Gao Diao 高鈞 became embroiled with upland leaders in a deadly struggle for the leadership of another position, the Native Prefect of Wuding 武定.

This struggle may have prompted upland leaders to proclaim kingship. Therefore, I will briefly describe it. The Native Prefect of Wuding was a hereditary position passed through the Feng family line 鳳氏. Madame Qu 瞿氏, who had been appointed Native Prefect in 1537 after the death of her son Feng Zhao 鳳詔, became dissatisfied with the behaviour of Suo Lin 索林, the wife of Feng Zhao 鳳詔, who succeeded her as Native Prefect in 1563. Madame Qu mobilised troops from native officials in neighbouring Guizhou and Sichuan in an attempt to install her adopted son, Feng Jizu 鳳繼祖, as a replacement for Suo Lin. The conflict between the two women triggered prolonged regional warfare.<sup>34</sup> Gao Qin drew the internal frontier into this deadly conflict by instigating upland leaders to fight for the cause of Feng Jizu. He persuaded them to deploy

“the bandits from the gorges (*qingzei* 箐賊)” to attack Menghua prefecture. These forces were dispatched by Gao Qin’s “arrogant bondservant (*hanpu* 悍僕)” Gao Xiaosan 高小三, who administered the eastern fringe of the internal frontier at the time. After the execution of Feng Jizu, Gao Xiaosan was dismissed from office, and, according to *Biographies*, it was from this time onwards that “the various leaders at Iron Chain” became “increasingly active, cruel and disorderly 益剽桀亂”.<sup>35</sup> The rebellion by Feng Jizu broadened the range of alliances to encompass upland leaders from throughout the internal frontier of western Yunnan.<sup>36</sup>

These intrigues alerted upland leaders to the dangers inherent in associating with native officials. The events demonstrated that appointees to jurisdictions at the margins of the uplands could manipulate upland leaders for their personal benefit, underscoring the largely perfunctory nature of administrative control by the Gao Native Prefect. The Gao Native Prefect failed the Ming on two accounts: first, by neglecting to avert the build-up of political and military power within the internal frontier; second, by not preventing his family members from colluding with upland leaders. Such plotting resulted in certain members of the Gao family turning against the Ming in 1573. *Biographies* records that Gao Xi 高熙, the family member responsible for handling upland affairs, secretly dispatched Luo Mingfeng 羅鳴鳳, a Company Commander (*Baifuzhang* 百夫長) with 1,400 of his own men to help internal frontier leaders fight against the Ming.<sup>37</sup> The relationship between members of the Gao family and internal frontier leaders indicates collusion for mutual benefit rather than top-down administration. In reality, the Gao Native Prefect exercised limited control over the internal frontier, and the machinations of his family members may have emboldened upland leaders to be more receptive to a millennial ideology that promised protection of their autonomy.

### *Ethnic groups and villages within the internal frontier*

The inhabitants of the internal frontier were known to Li Yuanyang as Cuan 爨, an ethnonym of wide application that implied a variety of ethnicities. Remarking that these inhabitants “are not all of the same stock (*zhongzu* 種族), but comprehensively known as Cuan”, Li described them as “tough and dauntless (*guanghan* 獷悍) by nature”, and noted that lowland people avoided association with them due to their “regular use of sturdy cross-bows with poisoned arrows that resulted in instant death when hit”.<sup>38</sup>

Table 5.1 lists twenty-four leaders within the internal frontier. *Biographies* uses the common ethnic designation of the Iron Chain Gorge group as “wild unregistered Luoluo 猓獠野夷 [forebears of today’s Yi 彝]” and classifies the twenty-three other leaders as “all mostly unregistered Boren 爨人 [forebears of the Bai 白] and Luoluo”. Therefore, constituent groups of the internal frontier comprised a multi-ethnic mix of Luoluo and Boren.<sup>39</sup> The Gao Native Prefect failed to transform them into his obedient subjects, let alone register them as tax-paying subjects of the Ming. They patently remained outside the orbit of control by both native officials and the Ming state alike.

Table 5.1 Leaders in the internal frontier, c.1572–1573

<i>Number</i>	<i>Name of Sub-prefecture/County</i>	<i>Name of Leader's Territory</i>
1	Yao'an	Iron Chain Gorge 鐵鎖箐
2	Binchuan	Red Rock Cliff 赤石崖
3	Binchuan	Tanglang 螳螂
4	Binchuan	Gudi 古底
5	Binchuan	Wulong Ba 烏龍壩
6	Yunnan	Dabona 大波那
7	Yunnan	Nidian 你甸
8	Yunnan	Hedian 和甸
9	Yunnan	Chuchang 楚腸
10	Yunnan	Gezuo 各左
11	Yunnan	Muchala 木茶喇
12	Yunnan	Dasong Ping 大松坪
13	Yunnan	Qianglang 羌浪
14	Yunnan	Jinqie 金且
15	Yunnan	Edala 俄打喇
16	Yunnan	Xiao Chala 小茶喇
17	Dayao	Lamo 喇摩
18	Dayao	Waining 歪寧
19	Dayao	Mozhi 摩只
20	Dayao	Juzhi 苴只
21	Dayao	Moduola 摩朵喇
22	Dayao	Xiao Chishi 小赤石
23	Dayao	Anila 阿你喇
24	Dayao	Piaoju 瓢苴

Source: *Tiesuoqing Luo Si Zhuyi Liezhuan* 鐵鎖箐羅思諸夷列傳), Qu Jiusi 瞿九思, *Wanli Wugong Lu* 萬曆武功錄, p. 568b.

Mid-sixteenth-century estimates of the number of upland villages within the internal frontier range from seventy to eighty.<sup>40</sup> The territories of the twenty-four leaders extended across the boundaries of two counties and one sub-prefecture (Table 5.1).<sup>41</sup> Excluding Iron Chain Gorge, which fell under Yao'an, a breakdown of the others by sub-prefecture/county indicates there were four leaders within the jurisdictions of Binchuan, eleven in Yunnan (today's Xiangyun 祥雲) and eight in Dayao. These data reveal two facts regarding the extent of upland political power. First, Iron Chain Gorge already maintained alliances with upland leaders over a broad area before the foundation of the Ten Kings alliance. Second, the territories of certain leaders included stretches of the lowlands as well as upland tracts. The terms *ba* 壩 (a flat or undulating plain surrounded by mountains) and *dian* 甸 (flatland only) in toponyms no. 5 Wulong Ba, no. 7 Nidian and no. 8 Hedian refer to land suitable for lowland-style cultivation. Therefore, we can conclude that the upland leaders held sway over these three locations in Binchuan sub-prefecture and Yunnan county.

Although Binchuan sub-prefecture was founded in 1494 (Hongzhi 7) for the specific purpose of preventing raiding, leaders of the interior frontier continued to claim authority over lowland strips nearly eighty years later. As shown later, they raided lowland societies adjacent to the uplands in parts of Binchuan up to 1573.

### **1573/74 campaign against the internal frontier**

In a memorial to the throne dated 7 July 1479 (Chenghua 15/6/18), Mu Cong 沐琮, Regional Commander of Yunnan 雲南總兵官, reported the success of the military campaign against Wang Tonghai 王通海 and other barbarian bandits (*manzei* 蠻賊) of Iron Chain Gorge, who “assembled in large numbers to raid and to plunder 羣聚劫掠”. Ming forces captured 309 people, beheaded 139 and took 133 as captives. These figures do not include the exceptionally large numbers of those who died jumping off cliffs and starving to death from deprivation.<sup>42</sup> However, this campaign failed to eradicate raiding, and, as noted earlier, depredations escalated in the sixteenth century. The campaign of 1573/74 was far larger and far more decisive than that of 1479. It resulted in a 400 per cent increase in the number of individuals captured alive and a six-fold increase in severed heads. In the subsequent section, I begin with a brief outline of the campaign and the role played by native officials and then proceed to examine the infrastructure for governing conquered uplands in the aftermath, particularly the construction of government offices.

#### *Account of the campaign*

According to *Biographies*, the campaign meticulously planned and co-ordinated by Zou Yinglong lasted for two months, from 8 November 1573 (14 day/10 month/Wanli 1) until 14 January (22 day/12 month/Wanli 1) 1574.<sup>43</sup> Zou Yinglong completed positioning troops at the four cardinal points of the internal frontier to block escape routes by 21 November 1573 (27 day/10 month/Wanli 1). Then, he travelled to the front line in disguise to avoid upland leaders learning of his plans through their connections with local officials. Following military tradition, on 29 November 1573 (6 day/11 month/Wanli 1), Zou led officers and troops in making sacrifices to the god of the commander's banner (*qidao zhi shen* 旗纛之神). They consecrated the banners and drums (*xin qigu* 馨旗鼓) with the blood of a beheaded traitor named Yang Xiande 楊獻德.<sup>44</sup> Zou launched the attack after the completion of this ceremony and required approximately one and a half months to overcome the strongholds. Ming forces apprehended several of the Ten Kings and other officials, such as Luo Qinkuai 羅擒快, Yang Guisan 楊桂三, the General Yang Che 楊撤 and Li the Immortal, but failed to capture the central figures Luo Si and Luo Ge. The latter may have been among the several hundred who perished from starvation while fleeing to the Jinsha River. The Ming army captured 1,287 men and women and severed a total of 836 heads.



Native officials provided most of the combat troops. Table 5.2 reveals that Zou Yinglong mobilised 6,400 soldiers from native official jurisdictions in today's Chuxiong, Lijiang and Dali prefectures to fight at the front line in mountainous terrain. *Biographies* does not mention Ming army regulars serving within the internal frontier although it records in detail how the Ming deployed native troops. When commanded by native officials, Ming bureaucrats served as supervisors. However, when native officials did not come in person, Ming bureaucrats served as both commanders and supervisors. The total number of troops personally led by native officials only amounted to 2,500, less than half. Certain native officials were prevented from appearing by other duties. For instance, Zou Yinglong instructed Gao Chengzu 高承祖, the Native Official of Beisheng 北勝, to lead his own troops at the Jinsha River to prevent escape via the northern route.<sup>45</sup> To this end, he appointed Li Chaochen 李朝臣 and Li Zhongxing 李中行 to command another 1,000 men dispatched by Gao and assigned Hu Song 胡崧, the Prefect of Yao'an, to supervise them. Therefore, if we add the native official troops mobilised to guard escape routes, the actual count exceeds the 6,400 men recorded in *Biographies*.<sup>46</sup> For the conquest of Iron Chain Gorge, the Ming relied on the mobilisation of large numbers of native official troops. This approach was common in the southwest, where native officials provided 70 per cent of the 240,000 troops mobilised to quell the massive rebellion at Bozhou 播州 by the incumbent Native Official Yang Yinglong 楊應龍 in 1599.<sup>47</sup>

### *Construction of administrative centres within the internal frontier*

Establishing an intra-structure within the internal frontier was essential for effective administration after the conquest. In the past, the Ming had stationed bureaucrats in the lowlands but achieved little success in extending control into the internal frontier. Li Yuanyang enthusiastically endorsed the erection of bureaucratic edifices. As early as c.1559 (Jiajing 38), he applauded the construction of a strategically located official residence-cum-office (*gongguan* 公館) at Juque 苴卻 in Yao'an.<sup>48</sup> Bureaucrats built this edifice within a wall attached to a Buddhist temple on a thoroughfare at the eastern margins of the internal frontier. Li Yuanyang emphasised that by "raising the gates high and making the doors magnificent", bureaucrats were now able "to overawe traitors and to provide the honest and the good with something reliable (高其閤闕, 壯其門閭, 以威反側, 以怙善良)"; he remarked that fortified within an encircling wall, the building complex "resembled a small city".<sup>49</sup> Li clearly viewed bureaucratic edifices as instruments for impressing upland peoples and as a means to display the might of the Ming while cowing the vanquished into submission. He recognised their multi-purpose functions. In his own words, "normally used for hearing court cases, they can serve as places for commanding troops in times of emergency (建之棟宇, 居常為聽訟之所, 應變為治兵之地)".<sup>50</sup> These structures doubled as administrative and military bases, and it was for this reason that he regarded their construction as an essential expenditure for good governance.



Table 5.2 Native official troops mobilised in the 1573/74 campaign against Iron Chain Gorge

No.	Name of Native Official	Native Official Ethnicity	Place Name	Troop Numbers	Official Leading and/or Supervising Native Troops
1	Zheng Shao 鄭韶	Not identified	Wuding 武定	1,600 men	Led by Lu Yun 盧雲, Zhang Cai 章采, Zhou Shi 周詩, and Zhao Nie 趙臬.
2	Ni Jiguang 尼繼光	Not identified	Juque 苴卻 <sup>1</sup>	500 men	Supervised by Sun Guangzu 孫光祖, Assistant Prefect ( <i>tongpan</i> 通判) of Dali
3	Gao Jinchen 高金宸	Not identified	Yao'an 姚安	1,300 men	led by Hu Han 胡瀚 and Wang Siwen 王思問
4	Zhang Jiang 章講	Mongolian 蒙古人 <sup>2</sup>	Beisheng 北勝 <sup>3</sup>	500 men	Supervised by Liu Ren 劉仁, the Prefect of Yunnan 雲南 county.
5	Gao Chengzu 高承祖	Bo ren 爨人 <sup>4</sup> (Bai白)	Beisheng 北勝	1,000 men	Led by Li Chaochen 李朝臣 and Li Zhongxing 李中行, and supervised by Hu Song 胡崧, the Prefect of Yao'an 姚安守
6	A Chaoyong 阿朝用	Yi <sup>5</sup>	Langqu 浪渠 <sup>6</sup>	500 men	Led by Li Chaochen 李朝臣 and Li Zhongxing 李中行, and supervised by Hu Song 胡崧, the Prefect of Yao'an 姚安守
7	A Rongzong 阿榮宗	Xiao Baiyi (Tai 傣族) <sup>7</sup>	Dengchuan 鄧川	1,000 men	Led by Chen He 陳合 and Liu Shaoxian 劉紹先, and supervised by Liu Pu 劉朴, the Judge of Dali 大理 推官
TOTAL				6,400 men	

Source: *Tiesuoqing Luo Si Zhuyi Liezhuan* 鐵鎖營羅思諸夷列傳 in Qu Jusi 瞿九思, *Wanli Wugong Lu* 萬曆武功錄, pp. 574a.

Notes

- 1 According to Fang Guoyu, Juque was part of Yao'an in the Ming and is now the county seat of Yongren county 永仁縣 in the Chuxiong Yizu Autonomous Region; see Fang Guoyu 方國瑜, *Zhongguo xinan lishi dili kaoshi* 中國西南歷史地理考釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), p. 1192.
- 2 Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo Tusi Zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1992), p. 709.
- 3 Beisheng is today's Yongsheng county 永勝縣 in the Lijiang District.
- 4 Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo Tusi Zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1992), p. 703.
- 5 Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo Tusi Zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1992), p. 705.
- 6 Langqu 浪渠 (mistake for 菴葉) is present day Ninglang county 寧蒗縣 in the Lijiang District.
- 7 Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo Tusi Zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1992), p. 472.

Li Yuanyang wholeheartedly supported the erection of a government office at Yangbi 漾濞 in 1574 (Wanli 2) as a strategic base for administering the vast uplands overlapping the three prefectures of Dali, Menghua and Yongchang. He explained his logic as follows:<sup>51</sup>

Since its establishment during the Jiajing reign period, only three people have been appointed as Commandant of the Jinsha and Lancang rivers. ... Prior to the time of the incumbent Li Hou 李侯, officials possessed no permanent office. They travelled back and forth between the three prefectures [of Dali, Yongchang and Menghua]; their horses never rested their hooves, and officials never sat [in one place] long enough to warm their seats. Affairs appeared to be executed exceptionally diligently, but [always] at lightning speed, as fast as the autumn wind blows away fallen leaves. Then, why were officials unable to thoroughly investigate evil elements and hidden conspirators? It was due to the lack of a residence from which to arrange [official affairs] and a shortage of spare time. Troops were not well organised because there was no residence from which to command them; there was no spare time to [investigate] affairs because official business was handled from horseback ...

... This official has to lead troops on campaigns of one thousand *li* in order to defend fortresses, to control barbarians (*yi* 夷) far away at the margins and to subdue evil elements and conspirators close at hand. Clearly, the duties are not light. By simply having him roam around the uplands, without any administrative office to work from, how can he sit down to plan negotiations and watch over [an area as extensive as] one thousand *li*? Lack of a residence and shortage of spare time are precisely the reasons why [office buildings must be constructed].

To transform upland society to accord with Ming norms, officials needed to reside at permanent offices to administer and supervise newly incorporated ethnic groups. Therefore, the erection of offices constituted an integral part of Li Yuanyang's agenda for establishing administration over the internal frontier. In addition to functioning as organs for administrative, legal and military control, the offices simultaneously served as symbols of Ming triumph. It was only through on-the-spot administration that Ming bureaucrats could prevent upland communities reverting to their former ways.

### **Extent of Ming control over the internal frontier**

Organised raiding activities by upland leaders severely disrupted lowland life in western Yunnan during the fifteenth century. Although the campaign of *c.* 1479 marked an attempt to resolve this problem, it failed to curb raiding in the long term. Therefore, why did imperial bureaucrats require until 1573, nearly 190 years after the conquest of Dali, to conquer the internal frontier stronghold at Iron Chain Gorge? By way of answer, first, I demonstrate the scale of disruption, and then, I investigate the reasons for the Ming failure to take decisive action.

**Raiding in the sixteenth century**

Leaders of the internal frontier raided broadly over the lowlands of three prefectures during the sixteenth century: Menghua, Yao'an and Chuxiong.<sup>52</sup> In 1555 (Jiajing 34), Li Yuanyang lamented raiding as the terrible curse of Yunnan, remarking, “half of the province, has suffered from the calamities of bandits from the various gorges in Binchuan (賓川諸箐之盜, 滇西半省被其患)”<sup>53</sup> (see also Figure 5.2). The raiding impinged on many aspects of lowland life:<sup>54</sup>

There are twenty-odd barbarian bandit villages between Iron Chain Gorge in Yao'an and Red Rock Cliff in Binchuan. Armed with long spears and sturdy crossbows, the bandits rove, pillaging villages and military colonies (*cuntun* 村屯). Their raiding has become increasingly audacious (*chi* 熾) over the past two hundred years; they murder people on major thoroughfares, and do not flinch at flags and banners [of imperial troops]. They capture the



Figure 5.2 Sketch map of the mountains of Iron Chain Gorge.

Painted on a wall in Pingchuan 平川 (Binchuan county), this sketch map illustrates the precipitous mountains of the internal frontier in the background and settlements under Ming jurisdiction scattered at different elevations throughout the lowlands in the foreground. Painted in 2006 by a local man named Zong Qi 宗齊, this mural bespeaks the longevity of the lowland memories of raiding by Iron Chain Gorge inhabitants over 450 years after the Ming conquered this internal frontier.

Photograph: Christian Daniels, 22 June 2018.

households of scholar-officials and common people, advance on walled cities and rampage everywhere, so no one dares to touch them.

Li Yuanyang documented the escalation in the scale of cruelty and despoliation since the fifteenth century:<sup>55</sup>

In the beginning, they robbed and plundered merchants, then they torched and captured villages and military colonies (*cuntun* 村屯), and their brethren have grown by the day. Possessing a penchant for killing people wherever they pass, they run wild doing as they please on the major thoroughfares. Carriages carrying officials cannot travel to the prefectures and counties without protection from command posts (*shao* 哨) and lookouts (*wang* 望). Outside walled cities, all people who have over one foot (*chi* 尺) of housing and agricultural land pay [grain tax] in rice, or wheat, so they beg the raiders for special dispensation. [If they have no grain] the raiders take at will household effects, clothes, felt, cotton, silk, fowls and pigs, and nobody dares to interfere, even in the smallest way. Great disaster immediately befalls anyone who defies their wishes. Over the past two hundred years, all strategies have involved constant deployment of troops to guard against them, and continual increases in taxes payable in grain (*liang* 糧) to meet the costs. Also, relying on native officials (*qiuzhang* 酋長) we have recruited native troops to deal with them. Government coffers suffer losses daily, while the bandits benefit from robbery day by day.

By the sixteenth century, Ming officials understood that things had slipped beyond their control. They had never exercised effective authority in the internal frontier, mollification policies had failed, and now they were losing some of the lowlands, while the raiders stood to gain everything at their expense.<sup>56</sup> Li Yuanyang's account documents the extent to which western Yunnan was riven by the leaders of the internal frontier. Communities near the frontier feared for the safety of their lives and property. When raiders descended to the lowlands, they came to wreck and to steal, to take away all the comfort that villagers had made for themselves. Plundering villagers and waylaying travellers heightened the sense of insecurity. Even officials could not travel without military escorts.

Lian Ruizhi observes that the limiting of upland access to lowland food supplies aggravated the situation in the internal frontier. Traditionally, lowlanders exchanged excess grain with upland communities. With the extension of administration into marginal areas, the lowland populace now had to pay grain tax in kind to the state, an arrangement that diminished the amount of grain available for trade with the uplands. A reduction in food supplies to the uplands caused deprivation in the internal frontier. Alterations to lowland-upland exchange practices precipitated by the introduction of tax-grain obligations compelled upland leaders to raid more frequently and more intensely than before to obtain food. Therefore, as recorded in the passage cited above, raiders

now plundered for anything of value, i.e., “household effects, clothes, felt, cotton, silk, fowls and pigs”, to support their livelihoods. Policies adopted to extend administration towards the upland, such as the mollification of ethnic leaders, the recruitment of native troops (*tubing* 土兵), establishing garrisons and collecting tax grain had backfired. Rather than stabilising marginal areas, these measures ended up exacerbating tension between the lowlands and the uplands.<sup>57</sup>

Murderous destruction by the raiders was not haphazard. Li Yuanyang makes this point in his *Record of Pacifying the Bandits at the Tiesuo River* (probably written in 1573):<sup>58</sup>

Wet-rice fields at the border in northeast Chuxiong prefecture are fertile, and the people are good and honest. They dwell in expansive houses and have fine clothes for outings, but unable to enjoy ordinary life they all feign simplicity and poverty. Since the place adjoins the Tiesuo river 鐵索川, bandits come and go, pillaging and harming, and they do not enjoy a single year of peace. Residents dash into hiding to evade them, abandoning their livestock and granaries, so when they resume their occupations they start [again] with nothing. They consider themselves fortunate if [the raiders] do not destroy their dwellings. It has been the same every year since the foundation of the prefecture. Those in authority have pitied the hardships of the people and have been agonised by the situation, but the territory of the bandits is expansive, and due to its location at the margins of three prefectures they are able to march unhindered between two sub-prefectures and four counties,<sup>59</sup> where mountains rise rugged and steep, and gorges run as deep as wells. Shady trees tower high into the sky, and bramble and hazel obstruct roads on dangerous and precipitously high mountains. The location has made it difficult to take any action.

Raiders must have left some houses intact. Without a roof over their heads, villagers would be displaced. To ensure that they stayed, upland leaders had to leave them with resources to recover. In this way, they had something to plunder the next time. Revenue derived from looting spoils, levies and “protection money” helped sustain communities within the internal frontier. Long-term raiding depended on constant access to lowland communities. It was not ad hoc but planned and organised by upland leaders through alliances, such as that of the Ten Kings. Therefore, raiding became even more important as a method of sustenance when the lowland–upland exchange system collapsed.

### ***Factors hindering the elimination of raiding***

Why did the Ming require 200 years to conquer the internal frontier? Multiple factors, many closely related to Ming state policy, were at play. Here, I discuss three of these factors: inaccessibility and state policy, change in lowland–upland exchange, and the attitudes of imperial bureaucrats.

*Inaccessibility and state policy*

Upland communities across Southwest China and Southeast Asia were located distant from the centres of state power in lowland areas. The internal frontier in western Yunnan was no exception, and Li Yuanyang documented inaccessibility as a factor hindering the elimination of raiding. He explained as follows:<sup>60</sup>

Administrative orders do not reach the borders of two adjoining provinces, or the junctures of various prefectures, nor do the carriages of officials pass through these places. Relying on easily defendable strategic positions, [leaders in the internal frontier] gather the multitudes and assemble them into bands, so invariably, fierce monsters (*xiongnie* 兇孽) and numerous bandits lurk here.

Rugged terrain prevented bureaucrats from constructing administrative infrastructure within the internal frontier. To prevent intrusion from outside, upland leaders utilised countless “easily defendable strategic points” at the precipitous mountain junctures with provinces and prefectures. In the previously cited *Record of Pacifying the Bandits at the Tiesuo River*, Li Yuanyang remarks that “the territory of the bandits is expansive” and notes that the upland leaders exploited their location at the margins of Ming administration. This strategy enabled them to target the weak spots in the vulnerable lowlands at the peripheries of Ming control. Alternatively, from their bases, the raiders could easily slip away into mountainous terrain impenetrable to Ming forces. Upland leaders sustained their autonomy by remaining inaccessible. Topography hampered the enforcement of Ming standards of law and order.

Closely co-ordinated operations by upland groups from different strongholds presented insurmountable challenges. In a memorial of 21 June 1521 (17/5/ Zhengde 16), He Mengchun 何孟春 (1473–1536) explained that when sallying forth to raid, the raiders “banded together as kin, and no one could withstand the sharpness of their blades” but “dispersed to live in their hideouts, making it hard to track them down” afterwards.<sup>61</sup> The guerrilla tactic of disbanding immediately after the completion of concerted action made it even more difficult to trace their whereabouts.

*Adjustments to lowland–upland exchange*

We have already noted that the extension of administration into the marginal parts of the internal frontier and food shortages resulted in stronger opposition, compelling upland leaders to raid more frequently and with greater intensity during the sixteenth century. In this section, I provide evidence to support the argument that these shortages resulted from adjustments to lowland–upland exchange arrangements. I attribute the causes of these shortages to the introduction of new land-tax systems and restrictions on trade that accompanied the extension of administration.



Lowland people traded rice for salt at the margins of the internal frontier during the Ming. Upland peoples supplemented their food supplies through this system of exchange.<sup>62</sup> According to Li Yuanyang, “unregistered people close to [Yao’an] prefecture known as Luoluo 儻儻, Boyi 僂夷, and Sanmodou 散摩都 who are fierce and have a passion for fighting used salt and rice for trading, and small markets (*xiaoshi* 小市) opened daily, and large markets every five days”.<sup>63</sup> He also records that “local people treated salt as treasure (*bao* 寶)” and even named a strategic pass only one *li* distant from the [Yao’an] prefectural seat Treasure Pass (Baoguan 寶關) because it served as a vital thoroughfare for transporting salt.<sup>64</sup> That people used mountain pathways in Yao’an prefecture at the margins of the internal frontier for transporting salt reflects the importance of salt to upland communities. Although common in the lowlands surrounding the internal frontier, this pattern of exchange broke down when the Ming burdened newly conquered areas with the payment of grain tax.

Certain sources mention restrictions on lowland and upland trade during the Jiajing period. In his stele to commemorate the deeds of Jiang Long 姜, Vice-Commissioner of the Lancang Military Defence Circuit 瀾滄兵備副使, Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559) lauded Jiang’s courage in venturing into the internal frontier of Yao’an to pacify and soothe (*zhaofu* 招撫). Yang Shen records the upland people as testifying that food shortages drove them to robbery and stressed that lack of access to Ming bureaucrats deprived them of the means to express their grievances.<sup>65</sup>

Previously, when we went down from the mountains [into towns] we were apprehended, and falsely accused of being bandits. Dwelling deep in secluded gorges food was difficult to obtain, so we had no way of seeking survival other than robbery. Since birth we have never seen bureaucrats present at this place, nor have we ever heard of them visiting, so we had no means of making our hardship known.

This stele reveals that lowland peoples stigmatised upland peoples as bandits and blocked their access to grain. Imperial bureaucrats remained unaware that the need for food fuelled raiding because they never set foot in this part of the internal frontier prior to the conquest. The bureaucrats only perceived this causal relationship after visiting upland communities. Therefore, it was the arrival of Ming administration that improved the access of upland residents to markets because the state now treated them the same as the registered populace. Yang Shen applauded the change.<sup>66</sup>

The various barbarians have come out of the gorges to participate in markets and are no different from registered people (*bianmin* 編民). Travelling merchants journey at night, and outposts (*shao* 哨) and forts (*bao* 堡) sleep in tranquillity. This has never been seen during the past hundred years.



The opening of markets to upland peoples alleviated food shortages, eradicated raiding and brought security. How long this peaceful situation lasted or whether it was merely a fancy of Yang Shen's imagination is irrelevant to my argument. What is relevant is that interference in lowland–upland trade resulted in food shortages among upland residents.

Further evidence for the role of markets appears in a stele by Li Yuanyang that chronicles the conquest of the southwest tract of the internal frontier. Known as *A Record of Quelling the Bandits of Binchuan*, dated 3 July 1555 (15 day/6 month/Jiajing 34), the stele details the construction of government offices at former bandit lairs (*chaolu* 巢廬) and the measures designed to transform former raiders into loyal subjects:<sup>67</sup>

We can use these people as our soldiers and educate their young as if they were the same as our own sons. On the outside we can use tax-grain supplies (*liangxiang* 糧餉) to reward their commendable hard work, while on the inside we can use them to restrain and prevent any evil scheming. We have set up markets (*lishi* 立市) for them so that they can exchange what they have for what they do not have. We permit them to trade in salt and allow them to transport it on their shoulders and heads. We start fresh and new again, and do not investigate [the past]. With adequate food and sufficient troops, we can also issue orders for the establishment of community granaries (*shecang* 社倉).

The first measure was the recruitment of upland males to serve as native soldiers (*tubing* 土兵) to guard against raiding by upland groups from unconquered parts of the internal frontier. The second measure aimed to introduce an exchange mechanism to alleviate food shortages, and the agenda included establishing markets and permitting trade in salt. Lian Ruizhi argues that this stele indicates that the Ming obstructed the rice and the salt trade prior to 1554/55, thereby preventing upland residents from participating in the lowland trading network.<sup>68</sup> We possess no evidence for the Ming placing a total prohibition on trade with the internal frontier. Thus, the obstruction may have only applied to salt. Restricted access to salt would have deprived upland peoples of essential commodities for trading with lowlanders for rice.

#### *Attitudes of imperial bureaucrats*

In the eyes of Li Yuanyang, the negative attitude of bureaucrats contributed to the prolongation of raiding. Although the strongholds located deep in mountainous terrain presented logistical challenges, that fact in itself was not an insurmountable problem given the large number of troops garrisoned in western Yunnan from the early Ming. In the stele *A Record of Quelling the Bandits of Binchuan*, Li Yuanyang explained the mind-set of the Ming officials. In view of its importance for my argument, I cite it at length:<sup>69</sup>

When considering matters, excessive concern with profit and loss causes people to ignore the crucial in favour of the trivial. If it is clearly an emergency situation, but difficult to render meritorious service, [people will choose] the easy way out. Western Yunnan, which constitutes half of the province, suffers from the peril of the bandits from the various ravines in Binchuan. Merchants travelling on the roads are terrified of them, and peasants in the fields resent them. Assisting the aged and leading the young, they shoulder their cauldrons and follow each other to take refuge in village markets. This happens repeatedly throughout a single year. Is it a crucial or a trivial matter?

The state has established watches and guards (*jianhou zhishou* 建侯置守), constructed walled cities and set up Guards to deal with the bandits. Many native officials (*qiuling* 酋領) have been captured and arrested on account of them. Also, sentries on rotation (*fanshu* 番戍) and watches (*yu* 御) have been set up to guard against them, but their tasks are so demanding (*ququyingying* 瞿瞿營營) that they go without sleep and rest. Is it easy, or difficult, to render meritorious service in this situation? Tightening restrictions creates more bandits. Regret comes as soon as the method for dealing with them is formulated. What is the reason for this? It derives from a mistaken, excessive concern with profit and loss.

When the bandits first emerged, some suggested mobilising the populace, while others said, “we have no means to pay for the cost”; some suggested suppressing them, while others remarked, “who is going to bear the blame?”; some suggested going deep into their territory, while others pointed out, “instigating conflict invites disaster”. Subsequently, this caused wise men to miss the [opportunity] to strategise, and caused the courageous to lose morale, and for the time being they concealed the reality when writing (*miwen* 彌文) in order to absolve themselves of responsibility. For this reason, bandits escape unnoticed by watches (*yu* 御) positioned over a hundred *li* away. They blame (*buyu* 捕於) officials in adjacent jurisdictions, but the bandits have already left by the time officials go out on patrol. If you block the east, they slip out from the west; if you focus on the front they vanish from behind. In the end, the desire to economise on funds, contrarily made it twice as expensive; the desire to save labour actually created more work; and the inclination to avoid disaster resulted in endless disasters. It is for this reason that I say, “when considering matters, excessive concern with profit and loss causes people to ignore the crucial in favour of the trivial.”

Stated simply, the febrile worries of the Ming bureaucrats were not accompanied by firm plans and concerted efforts. Li Yuanyang offered two reasons for their inaction. First, as noted in the phrase “we have no means to pay for the cost”, the bureaucrats claimed a lack of funds. This excuse was a weak one because the Ming invested in local defence by establishing Watches and Guards and even constructed walled cities for protection against raiders from the internal frontier. One particularly notable instance was the addition of a defensive perimeter wall

with four gates for the Daluo Guard 大羅衛 in 1494 (Hongzhi 7) at Zhoucheng 州城 in the lowlands in today's Binchuan county.<sup>70</sup> A stele by Xiao Jin 蕭縉 erected in 1555 (Jiajing 34) records the establishment of civil and military administration for the express purpose of putting an end to raiding:<sup>71</sup>

The inhabitants suffered grievous hardship during the exceptionally wild despoliations of 1490 (Hongzhi 3). They complained to the local authorities over and over again, but the emperor only heard their case after it was pushed up to higher levels (*shanggan chenting* 上干宸聽). The emperor ordered the judges in the military guards<sup>72</sup> and various offices (*si* 司)<sup>73</sup> to jointly discuss the case, and they established [Binchuan] as a sub-prefecture and set up the garrison at this place. They transferred [troops from] the Lancang and Erhai Guards, divided them into left and right,<sup>74</sup> and shifted the entire army to protect the sub-prefecture. Registered households (*min*) were moved from Zhaozhou, Taihe and Yunnan [counties], and divided into twelve *li* 里.

One *li* comprised 110 households. Thus, the bureaucrats moved 1,320 civilian households. The 1510 *Yunnan Gazetteer* records the places of origin of the transferred households as follows: 990 households from Taihe county (9 *li*), 110 from Zhaozhou (1 *li*), and 220 from Yunnan county (2 *li*).<sup>75</sup>

The *Veritable Records of the Xiaozong Emperor* describes the trouble caused by non-registered Luoluo on 23 April 1493 (8/4/Hongzhi 6):<sup>76</sup>

Various types of Yiluo [夷羅 = barbarian Luoluo] gather around the walled city of Daluo, and bandits make lairs there. State troops are exhausted guarding against them, and civilians on corvée service are tormented while transporting goods and materials.

The ever-present threat of attacks from Luoluo resulted in the creation of Binchuan sub-prefecture in 1494. To establish law and order, bureaucrats constructed a military infrastructure by transferring troops from garrisons in neighbouring Yunnan county (Erhai Guard) and Beisheng sub-prefecture (Lancang Guard). They even populated the new sub-prefecture with registered populace from today's Dali, Fengyi and Xiangyun, organising them into *lijia*, an arrangement in which groups of ten households equitably shared taxes and labour services. However, walled fortifications and garrisons alone proved inadequate. Secure defences had to be accompanied by well-planned military campaigns into the internal frontier to eliminate raiding.

The second reason was fear of failure. The thought of debacles terrified the bureaucrats and deterred them from launching military campaigns. They voiced their trepidation regarding responsibility, querying, "who is going to bear the blame?" The cited statement by Xiao Jin, "the emperor only heard their case after it was pushed up to higher levels", reflects the reluctance of bureaucrats to respond to the crisis promptly. In fact, they required four years (1490 until 1494)

to fortify Binchuan sub-prefecture. As observed in the 1573/74 campaign, mounting large-scale expeditions into the internal frontier entailed close co-ordination between civil, military and native officials and depended on well-organised logistical support for success. Li Yuanyang singled out fear of failure as a cause of bureaucratic apathy precisely because such operations were complex, involving synchronisation between bureaucrats and native officials. By choosing the safe strategy of not doing anything that might jeopardise their careers, the bureaucrats inadvertently preserved the *status quo*. The cautiousness of bureaucrats impeded the eradication of raiding.

Although trenchantly critical of bureaucrats, Li Yuanyang acknowledged deserving individuals. For instance, in his *Record of the Earth-walled City of Baiya*, he narrated the efforts of an energetic bureaucrat named Zhang. The Ming stationed bureaucrats at Baiya dian 白崖甸, located in today's northeast Midu county, to supervise the capture of bandits and to oversee native officials (*du bu dazei kongyu tuguān* 督捕盜賊, 控馭土官) in 1522 (Jiajing 1). Contrary to expectations, this measure ended up aggravating the situation. Raiding escalated, and despite countless petitions to construct a wall around Baiya, no bureaucrat took up the task until the arrival of Zhang forty years later in 1564 (Jiajing 43). Zhang fortified Baiya with a wall, armed the populace, and trained 1,000 able-bodied men for defence. According to Li Yuanyang, his measures, particularly the organisation of local defence, ensured that "the bandits dared not approach within 300 *li* of Baiya" that year.<sup>77</sup>

It was the negative attitudes of bureaucrats that perpetuated raiding. Ostensibly valid concerns, such as the need to save on expenditure, reduced morale and created a milieu in which bureaucrats "absolved themselves of responsibility" by simply doing nothing. Although not their original intention, tardiness, caution and inaction on the part of bureaucrats worked to the benefit of the upland raiders, allowing them time to escape. This situation led Li Yuanyang to conclude, "the desire to economise on funds, contrarily made it twice as expensive; the desire to save labour actually created more work; and the desire to avoid disaster resulted in endless disasters." The attitude of Ming bureaucrats themselves contributed substantially to the prolongation of raiding.

### **Upland leaders of Lukui Mountain: c.1671 to c.1724**

The arguments presented by James Scott in his *The Art of Not Being Governed* are founded on the premise that upland societies in South China, Southwest China and Southeast Asia share a universal political and social culture that transcends differences in ethnicity and the size of the lowland polities that they resist. Scott assumes that this universality makes possible the writing of a comprehensive history of upland peoples. I have noted that diversity in the scale of lowland political power, not to mention the structures of upland societies themselves, render Scott's claim highly questionable.<sup>78</sup> By studying case histories of upland–lowland relations and tabulating empirical evidence, we can identify features common to upland societies in circumscribed contexts. In addition to

Iron Chain Gorge, other internal frontiers of varying size within Yunnan troubled the Ming state. For instance, two Pu 蒲 (Mon-Khmer speaking ethnic group) villages located only a hundred *li* from the walled city of Yongchang prefecture, an important administrative centre on the route to Myanmar, remained outside the orbit of Ming governance for two centuries. Although these two villages raided the lowlands, the Ming only conquered them in 1586 (Wanli 14), eleven years after the demise of Iron Chain Gorge.<sup>79</sup>

To enhance our understanding of the nature of the internal frontier in western Yunnan, I compare it with the case of Lukui Mountain 魯魁山 (hereafter Lukui), a stronghold of Yi (Luoluo) leaders located deep in the mountains near Xiping county 新平縣. The purpose of this comparison is to place the political organisation that supported the upland leaders at Iron Chain Gorge within a broader context and demonstrate the prevalence of organised raiding by upland leaders in Yunnan.<sup>80</sup>

Lukui lay in the Ailao mountain range that skirts the border of Xiping county. Situated at the margins, it constituted an internal frontier at the boundary of land directly administered by imperial bureaucrats and territory under the jurisdiction of native officials. It had been renowned as a hotbed of agitation since the early seventeenth century, if not earlier.<sup>81</sup> The Luoluo leaders of Lukui raided lowlands under imperial administration to the north, east and west of their mountain. When imperial bureaucrats launched attacks, they slipped away south into territories under the jurisdiction of native officials, and other non-Han leaders, where imperial bureaucrats could not track them down.<sup>82</sup> In my 2004 study, I note two factors that prevented Qing forces from apprehending the Lukui leaders. First, the Lukui leaders maintained escape routes to places of refuge. Second, because the Qing state established no permanent government offices at Lukui, the leaders returned to continue raiding after imperial troops withdrew.

Within the internal frontier of western Yunnan, the Ming only succeeded in appointing a limited number of leaders to official positions, the most notable being Luo Qinkuai, one of the Ten Kings. At Lukui, all four upland leaders held appointments as Native Officials of the Qing state. Their association with the Qing dated back to 1672, prior to Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612~1678) rebelling against the Qing and declaring himself Emperor of his own Zhou 周 dynasty in 1674. Raiding by these leaders continued from 1671 to 1724, a fifty-year period spanning the transition from Wu Sangui's regime to the tightening of administrative control over non-Han societies by E'ertai 鄂爾泰 as Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou. The Lukui leaders appear in official sources during an era of political turmoil.

Attempting to control raiding, Wu Sangui issued military titles to the four Luoluo leaders of Lukui in 1672. After the collapse of the rebel Zhou dynasty, Qing authorities re-issued all four leaders with Native Official titles in 1682. They appointed Yang Zongzhou 楊宗周 as a Native Vice General and Pu Weishan 普為善, Fang Conghua 方從化 and Li Shangyi 李尚義 as Native Brigade Vice Commanders. Fan Chengxun 范承勳 (?~1714), the new Governor-general of

Yunnan and Guizhou, ratified their positions in the hierarchy of native officials by assigning new seals and new titles sometime between 3 January and 1 February 1688 (12/Kangxi 26). Yang Zongzhou now became Native Vice Magistrate of Xiping county, and Pu Weishan, Fang Conghua and Li Shangyi became Native Police Chiefs.

The incorporation of the four leaders into the native official system did not put an end to raiding. Fang Jingming and Pu Youcai (presumably related to Fang Conghua and Pu Weishan) even had the audacity to besiege the walled city of Yuanjiang prefecture 元江府 and commit several murders to square a personal debt in 1723. Lukui leaders understood subordination to the Qing as a ritual gesture. Therefore, their submission to the Qing as the dominant lowland political authority did not guarantee compliance. With a very different mind-set from that of Qing bureaucrats, the leaders did not regard ritual subordination as incongruous with raiding. Even the annulment of the Native Official title of Li Shang in 1691 for expropriating commodities from the local populace failed to discourage other leaders from collecting levies from lowland villagers.

At Lukui, we observe a similarity with Iron Chain Gorge. Upland leaders sustained their livelihoods through raiding. The Lukui leaders obtained revenue from levies imposed on the populace. This practice originated in Wu Sangui's policy of issuing military titles in return for annual payments, known as leather helmet silver (*pikui yinliang* 皮盔銀兩). This arrangement resembled tax farming. Wu sanctioned the collection of silver from the local populace to pay for the helmets, allowing them to keep any silver left after payment as their own "income". Military titles undoubtedly bolstered the status and prestige of Lukui leaders, and Wu Sangui's authorisation facilitated their access to lowland resources.

Cai Yurong 蔡毓榮 (?–1699), the Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou (1682 to 1686), left a detailed description of the collection of levies by Lukui leaders during the early 1680s:<sup>83</sup>

The bandits freely go out to the four quarters and issue each village with one piece of engraved wood. They collect protection silver (*baotou yin* 保頭銀), which varies in amounts from over ten *taels* to twenty or thirty *taels* and are insatiable in their demands for swine, sheep, fowls and rice wine. Any slight failure to satisfy them, leads to arbitrary plundering and murder. As a result, destitute and homeless people, along with those in the vicinity of the wild bandits, gladly join them and become robbers. For as long as eight years [upland leaders] have enlisted even larger numbers of desperadoes, and eighty to ninety per cent of the villages and estates in all the prefectures, sub-prefectures, and counties in Yunnan comply with their extortions.

The Qing regarded the Lukui leaders as intractable, rapacious strongmen. They persisted in their collection of imposts and random pillaging after the defeat of Wu Sangui in 1681 because they interpreted the reinstatement of their

Native Official titles as an endorsement of past practices. They required raiding and “protection silver” to support their increasing numbers of followers, and they could not mobilise men without a source of revenue. At that time, the Qing lacked sufficient resources to take decisive action against Lukui.

Topography, intermarriage with native officials, and amnesties constituted the three main factors that enabled Lukui leaders to evade apprehension by Qing armies. Gao Qizhuo 高其倬, Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou, identified these factors in a secret memorial to the throne dated 11 May 1724 (19/04/Yongzheng 2). He noted that although the Qing had encircled Ailao Mountain on three sides, the leaders easily escaped from the fourth side into territory under the jurisdiction of the native officials of Weiyuan 威遠土州, Zhenyuan 鎮沅土府 and Cheli 車里宣慰司 (Sipsong Panna). Gao explained how the upland leaders manipulated topography, intermarriage and amnesties to remain outside the orbit of the Qing state:<sup>84</sup>

In times of peace, the bandits enter into marital relations, take out father/son relationships or swear oaths as brothers with the native officials, their children and headmen. As soon as trouble arises, government troops attack the bandits from three sides, but they escape from the direction of the native officials. The native officials either hide and conceal them or allow them to pass freely to places in the miasma-ridden lands beyond the border, where it is difficult for government troops to go to arrest them. Governors-general and Grand Coordinators being afraid of meting out punishment always delay, and [end up] offering amnesties, exempting them from penalisation as an expedient measure. This acknowledges the current situation, and as a result the fugitives take the opportunity of amnesties to return to Qing administered territory (內地) again and harm the people as before. It is precisely because no one has been willing to directly investigate the situation thoroughly in the past that we have been left with a legacy of disaster now.

Whether real or fictive, marital relationships guaranteed Lukui leaders protection from native officials in times of emergencies, either in the form of harbouring them or by facilitating their flight to refuges located further south in today’s northern Myanmar and Northern Laos. Gao Qizhuo emphasised that by pardoning renegade leaders Qing bureaucrats sustained an endless cycle of escape/return/raiding. From the viewpoint of the Qing court, it was reluctance to take decisive action that perpetuated the cycle. Qing bureaucrats resembled their sixteenth-century Ming counterparts in their negative attitudes regarding dealing with upland leaders. They all choose the easy way out.

The cases of Lukui and Iron Chain Gorge reveal features common to leaders in both internal frontiers. First, both groups of leaders possessed inaccessible strongholds and the capability to organise large-scale raiding over broad tracts of the lowlands. Topography made Iron Chain Gorge so impenetrable that it functioned both as a place of refuge and an internal frontier for nearly 200 years. In the case of Lukui, Qing forces did penetrate this internal frontier but only



temporarily, failing to conquer it for fifty years because of the existence of escape routes leading to refuges in marginal areas of Southeast Asia lying outside imperial jurisdiction. The imperial state only managed to establish control over internal frontiers when strong-willed bureaucrats, such as Zou Yinglong and E'Ertai, who possessed the energy to co-ordinate large-scale military action, appeared on the scene.

Scott emphasises inaccessibility and state evasion as universal features of upland societies. The data concerning the organisation of raiding at Iron Chain Gorge and Lukui expose the dependence of uplands on lowlands for survival, despite inaccessibility. Leaders at Iron Chain Gorge and Lukui commanded large numbers of armed men, raided lowlands systematically, and persistently demanded payments in grain and silver from villagers for "protection". Lukui leaders facilitated the collection of levies by issuing "each village with one piece of engraved wood". Scott's agenda downplays the dependence of upland on lowland.

Contrary to Scott's depiction of upland peoples as evasive and passive, Iron Chain Gorge and Lukui leaders exuded dynamism and manifested an ability to organise their populaces to collect revenue from lowland areas as a survival strategy. The Ten King Alliance revealed the existence of a regime replete with ministers and generals at Iron Chain Gorge, one that even mimicked Chinese dynastic practice by issuing seals and tallies. Kataoka Tatsuki has empirically demonstrated through a case study on a Lahu regime in present-day Menglian 孟連 (Tai: Mäng<sup>2</sup> Lēm) in Yunnan that upland peoples did create their own polities after the eighteenth century.<sup>85</sup> Further evidence from Northern Laos and Dehong in Yunnan has revealed that upland ethnic groups participated in the foundation and administration of lowland Tai polities.<sup>86</sup> The data presented in this study reveal a situation opposite to Scott's scenario of lowland regimes raiding upland societies for slaves and other resources. In western Yunnan, it was the upland leaders who plundered the lowlands. The case of Iron Chain Gorge represents an attempt (despite its futility) by upland leaders to resist control by imperial bureaucrats and native officials alike. As in the instance of Kataoka's Lahu, concepts of kingship among the upland leaders of Iron Chain Gorge arose in the context of outside pressure from changed politico-economic conditions in sixteenth-century Yunnan.

## **Conclusion**

Order was brought to Yunnan through the agency of Ming rule after 1382. However, this order was an agency dispersed among the worlds of Ming bureaucrats, native officials and upland leaders of the internal frontier in a way that defies simple labelling. The Ming's inability to independently govern the province forced it to co-administrate with ethnic leaders. It is possible to think of co-administration not simply as a product of a hodgepodge of regular bureaucrats and hereditary native officials but as the Ming state's recognition of the limited reach of its governance. This administrative infrastructure prolonged the

existence of the internal frontier of Iron Chain Gorge and helped upland leaders retain their autonomy from the Ming for the first 200 years of the dynasty. The retention of autonomy by Iron Chain Gorge for 200 years indicates that the extent of Ming control in western Yunnan was not simply a function of Ming colonial policies, but also varied depending on the structure of internal frontiers.

The survival of internal frontiers negates the idea of an undifferentiated mass of upland peoples bent on evading the state. Their existence also defies blanket categorisation of upland societies as void of political control. Upland communities at Iron Chain Gorge and Lukui possessed a degree of political organisation. Their leaders organised them to actively engage with lowland communities to procure vital resources. This engagement involved violence, particularly at times when Ming and Qing bureaucrats restricted upland people's access to lowland resources. Upland leaders resorted to raiding to support their communities. However, in doing so, they expressed no aspirations to overthrow the Ming state and establish a new dynasty. They merely sought to maintain the livelihoods of their communities without becoming subordinate to outside political power. The embracement of concepts of kingship arose as a response by the leaders to mounting threats to their lifestyles. By creating their own regime, upland leaders sought to protect themselves from encroachments by the Ming. It was not until the raiding intensified and upland leaders of Iron Chain Gorge proclaimed themselves kings that the Ming finally took decisive action. The numerous rebellions that broke out in Southwest China during the latter half of the sixteenth century altered the bureaucratic milieu that had nurtured negative attitudes towards military action against the internal frontier. By this time, the Ming no longer tolerated widespread raiding that disrupted lowland societies. Therefore, it launched a military campaign to extend regular administration to the internal frontier.

It should be clear from this study that internal frontiers matter profoundly to the history of western Yunnan. First, the internal frontier of Iron Chain Gorge restricted the reach of social reconstruction promoted by the new Confucian elite. This study confirms similarities in Ming governance in western Yunnan with coeval internal frontiers in Guangdong, Guizhou and Hunan. After 1382, the Ming gained direct control of lowland power bases of the Mongol-Yuan and the Duan Family General Administrator and transformed the members of lowland communities into registered populaces (*min*). However, the dynasty failed to extend household registration and the *lijia* system to the jurisdictions of native officials and upland communities within the internal frontier. With direct administration confined largely to lowland registered populace for the first 200 years, the pattern of social reconstruction by the new Confucian elite of western Yunnan resembled that in the Pearl River Delta during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Second, the case of Iron Chain Gorge illustrates the impenetrability of internal frontiers and at the same time exposes the drawbacks of attempting to govern them through the agency of native officials. The ethnoscapes of western Yunnan compelled the Ming to appoint native officials to govern local populations unsuitable for direct administration by regular bureaucrats. However, the societies within the internal frontier remained so far removed from dynastic

norms and practices that the Ming had difficulty even contacting their leaders. Invoking the age-old principle of “using barbarians to control barbarians”, Ming bureaucrats charged the Gao Native Official of Yao’an prefecture with the task of managing the margins of the internal frontier adjoining Iron Chain Gorge from the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century onwards. Because the upland communities did not recognise the Gao Native Official as their overlord, this arrangement miscarried. Gao family members appointed to manage the internal frontier ended up embroiling the leaders in the power struggles of other native officials between 1567 and 1569. This outcome testifies to the dangers inherent in governing internal frontiers through native officials: kinsmen of native officials could manipulate upland leaders for their own personal gain, causing widespread unrest in the process.

Third, the 1573/74 campaign against Iron Chain Gorge exposed how heavily the Ming relied on native officials. The large number of native official troops that fought at the front line in the campaign underscores the extent of the reliance. Native officials gathered soldiers from among their own populaces, and their armies constituted the main body of the mobilised Ming forces. The Mongol-Yuan utilised the power and prestige of the deposed Duan royal family of the Dali kingdom to administer ethnic societies in western Yunnan. Their appointment as the Duan Family General Administrator transformed them into the most powerful native official in western Yunnan.<sup>87</sup> The First Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang abolished this office, choosing not to administer ethnic peoples via the mediation of the Duan. Although he placed most lowlands around Dali under the jurisdiction of regular bureaucrats, the ethnoscape forced him to appoint ethnic leaders as native officials to administrate both uplands and lowlands in certain locations. The Mu 木 family of Lijiang and the Zuo 左 family of Menghua represent well-known examples. Native officials constituted the mainstay of Ming rule in western Yunnan.

Fourth, the persistence of internal frontiers shaped the history of Han settlement. Internal frontiers functioned as barriers to Han in-migration. The garrisoning of Han military personnel and their families in the lowlands of western Yunnan reflects the limited reach of Ming control during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Ming established garrisons at strategic locations, occasionally even within native official jurisdictions. However, it could not position itself within the internal frontier. The permanent settlement of Han military personnel undoubtedly lubricated the transition from the Mongol-Yuan period to the early Ming by exerting a stabilising effect on lowland communities. However, as noted by Lian Ruizhi, troops from the Guards and native police chiefs proved ineffective at safeguarding vital points along communication routes and failed to eradicate raiding during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>88</sup> Large-scale Han migration to the uplands of Yunnan only became possible after the state gained administrative jurisdiction over internal frontiers. Historians have emphasised the role played by American crops, such as maize and the sweet potato, in “opening up” the uplands of Southwest China for cultivation and settlement by the Han after the sixteenth century, and they cite

the cultivation of these crops as a factor enabling Han in-migration.<sup>89</sup> This study highlights that Han in-migration to the uplands could only occur after the elimination of internal frontiers. As basin populations in Yunnan reached saturation levels due to large-scale migration resulting from the eighteenth-century population explosion, sizeable numbers of Han settlers out-migrated from the basins to uplands under the jurisdiction of native officials on the Yunnan frontier, and some eventually passed over into Upper Burma and Northern Laos.<sup>90</sup> Such migration only became possible after the state gained the power to govern internal frontiers and uplands, either directly through imperial bureaucrats or indirectly through native officials. The conquest of Iron Chain Gorge in 1574 marked the beginning of this process in western Yunnan.

## Notes

- 1 This research was supported by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council (RGC) General Research Fund Project (No. 16642516).
- 2 James Scott (2009). Recent studies that position Yunnan in Zomia include Megan Bryson (2017), p. 12, and Kataoka Tatsuki (2013), p. 1.
- 3 Iron Chain Gorge (Tiesuoqing 鐵索箐, also written as 鐵鎖箐) is today's Tiesuo Township 鐵索鄉 on the east bank of the Yupao jiang 漁泡江 in the western part of today's Dayao county. Another stronghold, known as Red Rock Cliff (Chishiya 赤石崖), lay in today's Pingchuan xiang 平川鄉, situated on the west bank of this river in today's Binchuan county. Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 8092, records: "during the Hongzhi period some [upland communities] slightly obeyed orders, and they were respectively subordinate to Yao'an 姚安 and Yaozhou 姚州. During the Jiajing period they became solely subordinate to Yao'an". For the sake of simplicity, I use the term Iron Chain Gorge to collectively refer to all the upland communities because historical sources refer to this place as the major centre of their resistance against the Ming.
- 4 Regarding the Duan Family General Administrator, see Christian Daniels (2018), pp. 69–111.
- 5 Historians have found little evidence for widespread social reconstruction in native official jurisdictions. For instance, although communities around the prefectural city in Menghua adopted certain Confucian norms and customs by the late fifteenth century after the establishment of a Confucian school by the Native Official, this development did not result in large-scale reconstruction, as posited by Jianxiong Ma. Regarding the case of Menghua, see Tang Li (2015), p. 7. Additionally, see Tang Li (2016), pp. 48–49.
- 6 See Ma Jianxiong (2014), pp. 131–155, and Ma Jianxiong (2017), pp. 229–262.
- 7 It seems that certain native officials in the Dali basin did register the population within their jurisdictions. After being appointed Native Magistrate of Dengchuan Zhou 鄧川州土官知州 (in today's Eryuan county) in c.1383 for meritorious service, A Zhe 阿這, a Tai aristocrat, "founded the sub-prefecture seat, registered the households (*bian hukou* 編戶口), constructed a school ..."; see the tomb inscription *Dengchuan Zhou Tuguan Zhizhou A Shi Wushi Mubiao* 鄧川州土官知州阿氏五世墓表 of 1508 (Zhengde 3) written by Yang Nanjin 楊南金, a native of Dengchuan Zhou, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang (1993), Vol. 10, p. 71. For a fuller account of the registration of upland people by the A Native Official, see Jianxiong Ma's chapter in this volume.
- 8 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 8092. Additionally, see Ma Jianxiong (2014), pp. 141–145 for an account of these raiding activities.
- 9 David Faure (2006), p. 171, pp. 185–186.

- 10 For instance, Donald Sutton studies the changes wrought on Miao society in western Hunan by the appointment of native officials within the internal frontier and in-migration by Han, paying particular attention to the settlement of disputes between Miao and Han; see Sutton (2003), pp. 41~80.
- 11 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 46–51.
- 12 A woodblock reprint of the collected works of Li Yuanyang was published in the *Yunnan Congshu* 雲南叢書 in 1914 under the title *Li Zhongxi Quanjì* 李中谿全集. The text was based on a manuscript copy of the edition printed by Liu Wei 劉維 and Hu Xi 胡僖 in 1580 (Wanli 8); see the preface by Zhao Fan 趙藩 in *Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan* (2009), Vol. 21, p. 11063. Liu Wei served as Regional Inspector (Xun'an yushi 巡按御史), and Hu Xi was in charge of the Military Defence Circuit of the Jinsha and Lancang Rivers (金滄道兵備道). Thus, Li Yuanyang's views carry official imprimatur.
- 13 Li Yuanyang was not the only local scholar-official determined to reconstruct local society to suit the changed circumstances of the sixteenth century. Yang Shiyun 楊士雲 (1477–1554) also promoted reforms of marriage, burial and ritual practices to align local customs with the Ming norm; see Lian Ruizhi (2018), pp. 39–70.
- 14 Zhu Guozhen, *Yongchuang Xiaopin*, p. 679.
- 15 According to Hou Chong (2002), pp. 68–81, a member of the Xizhou Yang family wrote the *Bai Gu Tongji* 白古通記 in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.
- 16 The accounts appear in the two gazetteers edited by Li Yuanyang: the Jiaping-era (1522–1566) *Dali Fuzhi* and the Wanli-era (1573–1620) *Yunnan Tongzhi*; see Megan Bryson (2017), pp. 116–117.
- 17 Megan Bryson (2017), pp. 107–135.
- 18 Lian Ruizhi (2018), pp. 39–70.
- 19 See Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu* for the text. The account of the conquest of Iron Chain Gorge recorded in Mao Qiling, *Mansi Hezhi* is based on the text of *Biographies* in the *Wanli Wugong Lu*.
- 20 Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 569a–569b. Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 8092 writes disapprovingly that Luo Si “possessed magical abilities, made false seals and proclaimed rebellion”.
- 21 E. R. Leach (1954) and James Scott (2009).
- 22 Ma Jianxiong (2017), pp. 256–257.
- 23 The written version appears in Chen Shou, *Sanguo Zhi*, pp. 919–921, and Luo Guanzhong, *Sanguo Yanyi*, p. 1175.
- 24 Li Ling 李零, Translator and Annotator, *Sunzi Bingfa Yizhu*, p. 13. The original in the *Mou Gong pian* 謀攻篇 reads: “是故百戰百勝，非善之善者也；不戰而屈人之兵，善之善者也。”
- 25 This passage is cited in Chen Shou, *Sanguo Zhi*, p. 921, and Huang Shi, Ed., *Huangshi Yishu Kao*, Vol. 1210, p. 313. The original text reads: “亮曰：「若留外人，則當留兵，兵留則無可食，一不易也。加夷新喪破，父兄死喪，留外人而無兵者，必成禍患，二不易也。又吏累有廢殺之罪，自嫌繁重，若留外人，終不相信，三不易也。今吾欲使不留兵，不運糧，而綱紀粗定，夷漢粗安故耳。」”。 The text of the *Han-Jin Chunqiu* only survives in fragments. It records the history of the Later Han period to the reign of Emperor Min 晉愍帝 (reigned 313–316) of the Western Jin from the standpoint of Shu-Han as the righteous successor to the Han and regards the Cao-Wei dynasty (220–265) rulers as usurpers of the Han throne.
- 26 The two men from Zhaozhou 趙州 near Dali appointed Police Chiefs in 1383 were Li Yi 李義, who served as the Nidian Xunjian 你甸巡檢, and Li Nalin 李納麟, who served as the Annanpo Xunjian 安南坡土巡檢. Their descendants were later classified as native police chiefs (*Tu Xunjian* 土巡檢); see *Tuguan Dibu*, Shang 上, pp. 17a–18b.
- 27 In an entry for 12 October 1499 (Yichou 9/Hongzhi 12) the *Xiaozong Shilu*, p. 2737, records:
 

there are six, or seven bandit lairs in the areas of Yao'an prefecture, Daluo Guard and Binchuan, and military personnel and civilians have suffered immense

damage. We request to establish a Military Defence Vice Commissioner (Bingbei Fushi 兵備副使) at the walled city of Lancang 瀾滄城, and place the prefectures, sub-prefectures and Guards of Yao'an, Daluo, Binchuan, Daluo Heli, Lijiang, Dali, Erhai and Jingdong under its control.

又姚安府，大羅衛，賓川州地方有賊穴六七處，軍民受害甚切。請添設兵備副使於瀾滄城，以又姚安，大羅，賓川，鶴麗，麗江，大理，洱海，景東府州衛所屬之。

Regarding the foundation of Binchuan sub-prefecture, see Peng Gang and Zhou Jifeng, *Zhengde Yunnan Zhi*, p. 161.

- 28 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 39–40.
- 29 *Biographies* records the administration of the marginal area at Juque 苴卻 and the disturbances there; see Qu Jiusi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, p. 568a.
- 30 Gao Feng assumed the office of Native Prefect in 1496 (Hongzhi 9) and died in 1530 (Jiajing 9); see *Tuguan Dibu*, shang, 59a.
- 31 Gao Chun served as Native Vice Magistrate of Yaozhou from 1506 (Zhengde 1) to 1530 (Jiajing 9); see *Tuguan Dibu*, shang, 59b–60a.
- 32 Gao Bi succeeded to the office of Native Vice Magistrate of Yaozhou in 1537 (Jiajing 16); see *Tuguan Dibu*, shang, 60a.
- 33 Gao Qidou assumed the office of Native Prefect of Yao'an in 1530 (Jiajing 9) after the death of Gao Feng; see *Tuguan Dibu*, shang, 59b.
- 34 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 8096. Mao Qiling, *Mansi Hezhi*, juan 10, 3b–4a, p. 417, also provides an account of the collusion between Gao family members and Feng Jizu and their incitement of the Iron Chain Gorge leaders to raid Menghua.
- 35 Qu Jiusi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, p. 568a.
- 36 Lian Ruizhi (2015), p. 42.
- 37 Gao Xi dispatched 800 men from the jurisdictions of the six ethnic headmen (*huotou* 火頭) of Tanglang 螳螂 (Table 5.1, no. 3) and 600 men from the five ethnic headmen at Gudi 古底 (Table 5.1, no. 4), who were all under his jurisdiction; see Qu Jiusi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, p. 576a.
- 38 *Erhai Bingbei Dao Tiesuoqing Junying Biji* 洱海兵備道鐵索箐軍營廳壁記; see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7: 21a, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11262. The original reads: “其蠻夷種族不一，統名之曰‘爨’。爨性獷悍，業習強弩，以毒塗矢鏃，中人立死，莫敢撓其鋒。部落七十餘，而鐵索箐，赤石崖其魁也。地屬賓川州，而蒙化，姚安，楚雄諸郡咸被其害，...”
- 39 Qu Jiusi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 568a–568b. Ma Jianxiong (2014), pp. 142–145, and Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 21–22, also mention the Lisuo 力些 (Lisu 傈僳 in today's PRC classification) and the Mosuo 麼些 (Mosuo 摩梭 in today's PRC classification). However, *Biographies*, the most detailed contemporary report available, does not record these terms.
- 40 *Erhai Bingbei Dao Tiesuoqing Junying Biji*; see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7: 21a, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11262, and Qu Jiusi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, p. 568b. According to the Qianlong era scholar-official Zhang Licheng 張履程 (*Ming Qianning Wang Mu Ying Shi Shixi Lue* 明黔寧王沐英氏世襲畧), Mu Changzuo 沐昌祚 and Zou Yinglong 鄒應龍 pacified seventy-two villages of the Lisuo at Iron Chain Gorge; see Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 13, 21:66a, p. 6837.
- 41 The figure of twenty-four leaders is approximately corroborated by Li Yuanyang in *Shoubei Chenjun shanzhi xu* 守備陳君善職序 (undated), in which he mentions “twenty-odd barbarian bandit villages” around Iron Chain Gorge and Red Rock Cliff; see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 6:4b in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11227.



- 42 *Xianzong Shilu*, juan 191:4b–5a, p. 3400. The original reads: “癸卯，雲南總兵官黔國公沐琮等奏鐵索箐蠻賊王通海等羣聚劫掠，臣等將兵討之，分道而迫連戰累捷，生擒三百九，斬首一百三十九，俘獲一百三十三。其投崖及餓斃者甚眾，獲畜產兵仗無算，湊之上賜初獎屬之。”
- 43 Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 572a, 577b. The account of the campaign provided below is also based on *Biographies*; see *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 569b–578b.
- 44 Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 573b–574a. Regarding temples for making sacrifices to the god of the commander’s banner in Yunnan during the Ming, see Tang Li (2016), pp. 31–58.
- 45 Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, p. 572b.
- 46 *Biographies* does not record the number of regular Ming army troops serving under Mu Changzuo 沐昌祚, the Zhengnan Jiangjun 征南將軍, positioned at Weichu 威楚 (today’s Chuxiong) to prevent flight to the east, those serving under Tang Yang 湯仰 at Dayao blocking the southern escape route, and Tian Rubi 田汝弼 at Binchuan, who guarded the western escape route; see Qu Jiushi, *Wanli Wugong Lu*, pp. 572b–573a.
- 47 Only 30 per cent of the 240,000 troops were Ming regulars. The forces were commanded by Li Hualong 李化龍 (1554–1612), Governor of Sichuan, and Guo Zizhang 郭子章, Guizhou Provincial Governor; see John Herman (2007), pp. 162–168.
- 48 Now within the jurisdiction of Yongren county 永仁縣.
- 49 *Yao’an Zhidao Gongguan Biji* 姚安職盜公館壁記 (undated); see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:24b–25a, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, pp. 11263–11264. The relevant passage reads:

They cleared the site for the foundations on the mountain 通山辟址, hauled stones and cut timber for constructing halls (*tang* 堂), bedrooms (*qin* 寢), corridors (*lang* 廊), and quarters (*she* 舍). They raised the gates high and made the doors magnificent in order to overawe traitors, and to provide the honest and good with something reliable. It was intended that they must choose a site close to the Fengshan Buddhist temple, and that it must be encircled with a wall like a small city ...

於是，公與分巡衡陽易公協心經始，通山辟址，輦石伐木，為堂，為寢，為廊，為舍，高其閤閫，壯其門閫，以威反側，以怙善良。然選地必以鳳山佛寺為依，而繚垣必如小城者，楊侯蓋有微意焉。

- 50 *Yao’an Zhidao Gongguan Biji* 姚安職盜公館壁記 (undated); see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:23b–24a, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11263.
- 51 *Jian Yangbi Shoubei Shu Ji* 建漾潯守備署記 (undated); see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:26a in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11264. The original reads:

稽金蒼守備自嘉靖間建設以來，前后才三人。初吳侯子忠，次元侯位，相繼升都司。今為李侯，前此駐無定所，往來三郡之間，馬不停蹄，侯不溫席，事若甚勤而風掃電掣。其於伏匿隱奸不能悉察，何也。無整暇之素也。治旅無地，故眾不整；馬上應酬，故事不暇。今夫樞檢郵滯，稗官也。必為廢以鑰之，然後啓閉留縱司焉。守備金緋重職，提千里之兵以守扼塞，遠控徼夷，近壓奸宄，其為任不輕也明矣。而廢宇弗置，萍寄無方，豈所以坐策折衝而觀示千里也哉。不整不暇，職此之由矣。

- 52 *Erhai Bingbei Dao Tiesuoqing Junying Biji*; see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:21a, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11262.
- 53 *Binchuan Pingdao Ji* 賓川平盜記, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang (1993), Vol. 10, p. 91.
- 54 *Shoubei Chenjun shanzhi xu* (undated); see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 6:4b, in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11227. The original reads: “姚安之鐵索箐，賓川之赤石崖，其間夷賊部落二十餘處，長槍勁弩，流劫村屯。二百年來，為盜益熾，殺人孔道之上，不避旌旆。虜士庶之家，迫臨城郭，蔓延四出，莫之敢攖。”



- 55 *Erhai Bingbei Dao Tiesuoqing Junying Biji*; see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:21a–21b, in *Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11262. The original reads:

地屬賓川州，而蒙化，姚安，楚雄諸郡咸被其害，始而劫掠商賈，中而焚虜村屯，既而族黨日眾。所過殺人無厭，孔道之上橫行自恣。輜輶經由，非哨望擁護則不可行郡縣。自城郭之外，凡有室廬田土者，自一尺以上皆輸穀麥，以丐寬免。家蓄器物，衣毡，布帛，雞豚，恣其櫻取，不敢少撓。苟違其意，大禍立至。二百年來，百爾運籌，為之調軍監衛不已，又為之增糧置禦不已，又為之募士兵，倩酋長。公帑日見其損，寇偷日見其益。諺云：“苟非其人，貓鼠相狎”。此之謂也。

- 56 Difficulty guaranteeing the safety of merchants was not limited to the areas afflicted by raiders from the Iron Chain Gorge. It was also common in other parts of western Yunnan. He Mengchun 何孟春 reported in a memorial to the throne that on the border between Jianchuan and Heqing sub-prefectures bureaucrats had “to hire Luoluo from the frontier-barrier at Xuanhua 宣化關 in Dali prefecture to serve as *shouba* 守把 to safeguard upland thoroughfares in the area and make them passable for merchants” 顧募本府宣化關羅羅守把，保障一帶山路，商賈始通。He concluded that Police Offices (*Xunjian si* 巡檢司), originally established to apprehend bandits at frontier-barriers, could no longer be relied on because they have “become nominal 而巡司竟為虛設”; see He Mengchun, *He Wenjian Shuyi*, 7:3b. Lian Ruizhi argues that the inability of native police chiefs to maintain the safety of upland thoroughfares arose in response to the introduction of the tax reform known as the combined land and poll tax (*diding yin* 地丁銀) during the Wanli period, which encompassed a shift from collecting labour in kind towards taxes linked to land. This measure is commonly known as the Single Whip reform). According to Lian, native police chiefs could no longer muster men to serve as bowmen (*gongbing* 弓兵) because the men paid their labour tax with money rather than serving in person; see Lian Ruizhi (2015), p. 30.
- 57 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 39–40.
- 58 *Tiesuo Chuan Pingzei Ji* 鐵索川平賊記, *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:22b–23a, in *Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11262–11263. The original reads:

楚雄郡東北界，其田腴美，其人善良，其有廣室以居，鮮服以遊，然皆做陋窮蹙不能安其生者。以地鄰鐵索川，寇盜出沒，標掠傷害，無有甯歲。居人奔走避匿，家蓄藏積，委而去之，既而復業，生計已空。但得不毀室廬斯幸矣。蓋自有郡以來，歲歲恒然也。當路憫民疾苦，未嘗不以為憂。然賊地廣臨三郡之界，縱橫二州四縣之間，亂山如沸，邃箐如井，林樾參天，荆榛塞路，巖嶮險阻，勢難馳騁。

Ming officials launched two campaigns against the bandits, one in the last year of the Longqing period (1572) and one more in 1573 (Wanli 1).

- 59 These were the three prefectures of Dali, Chuxiong and Yao'an 姚安軍民府, the two sub-prefectures of Yaozhou 姚州 and Binchuan 賓川州, and the four counties of Yunnan 雲南縣, Dayao 大姚縣, Wuding 武定縣 and Yuanmou 元謀縣.
- 60 *Yaoan Zhidao Gongguan Biji* 姚安職盜公館壁記 (undated); see *Li Zhongxi Quanji*, 7:23b, in *Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, p. 11263. The original reads: “然而兩省接壤之處，列郡交界之區，政令之所不及，輜輶之所不經。阻險負固，協眾聚黨，必有兇孽巨盜潛伏乎其間。”
- 61 He Mengchun, *He Wenjian Shuyi*, 7:7a. The original reads: “各巢素皆結親黨，出則彼此相應，其鋒莫敵。入則散居巢穴，其蹤難追。”
- 62 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 23–27.
- 63 Li Yuanyang, *Wanli Yunnan Tongzhi*, *juan* 3:45b, p. 324. The original reads: “近郡之夷，名儼儼，焚夷，散摩都，強悍好鬥。交易用鹽米，一日一小市，五日一大市”。

- 64 Li Yuanyang, *Wanli Yunnan Tongzhi*, juan 3:44b. The original reads: “寶關山: 在司治西一里, 勢高百仞, 以其通鹽路之要路, 土人名曰寶關, 蓋以鹽為寶也。”
- 65 See *Bingbei dao Jiangong qusibei* 兵備道姜公去思碑 in Yun Long, Ed., *Minguo Yao'an Xianzhi*, p. 1898. The original reads: “前此我輩下山即執, 誣指為賊, 閉箐深居, 又難以得食, 求活之道, 非劫無由也。生未嘗見官蒞此地, 亦不曾聞此言, 有苦莫伸。”
- 66 See *Bingbei dao Jiangong qusibei* in Yun Long, Ed., *Minguo Yao'an Xianzhi*, p. 1898. The original reads: “自是, 群蠻出箐為市, 無異編民。行商宵征, 哨堡晏寢, 百年來未之前見也。”
- 67 *Binchuan Pingdao Ji* 賓川平盜記 in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang (1993), Vol. 10, p. 91. The original reads: “藉其人以為我兵, 教其幼有同己子。外以糧餉答其功, 內以拘致訪其邪計。為之立市, 以通有為。許以行為鹽, 任其負載。自新更始, 則立罷追之條; 足食足兵, 再下社倉之令。”
- 68 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 43–44.
- 69 *Binchuan Pingdao Ji* 賓川平盜記 in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang (1993), Vol. 10, p. 91. The original reads:  
 事有大而眩於利害者, 以小忽之: 功有難而明於緩急者, 以易成之。賓川諸箐之盜, 滇西半省被其患。商旅恐於途 農民怨於野, 扶老攜幼, 負釜而建避匿者相屬於村墟。一歲之中, 蓋一再焉。茲其事大乎, 小乎? 國家為之建侯置守, 築城設衛, 又為之酋領擒捕不已, 又為之番戍立御, 瞿瞿營營, 不遑寢息。茲其功難乎, 易乎? 然而, 禁越密而盜越滋。法方立而悔已至。此其何故哉? 眩於利害之過也。方盜之起也。有言動眾, 則曰: “費無從出。” 有言誅剿, 則曰: “咎將誰任?” 有言深入, 則曰: “啓釁速禍。” 遂使智者失謀, 勇者喪氣, 姑為彌文以自塞責。是故, 戍御於百里之外, 盜逸而御不知: 責捕於鄰境之官, 官旋而盜已出。塞東漏西, 顧前失後。卒之, 欲省費而費反倍, 欲省力而力愈勞, 欲免禍而禍不已。故曰 “眩於利害, 忽大為小” 也。
- 70 *Xiaozong Shilu*, p. 2737, records that approval for the establishment of Binchuan sub-prefecture 賓川州 and the Daluo Guard 大羅衛 was issued on 23 April 1493 (8/4/Hongzhi 6).
- 71 The stele is *A Record of the Renovation of the Daluo Garrison (Congxiu Daluo Wei Ji* 重修大羅衛記) in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang (1993), Vol. 10, p. 93. The original reads: “弘治庚戌, 大肆猖獗, 居民甚苦之, 屢有辭於當路, 繼而上干宸聽。乃命撫鎮諸司僉議之, 於地建州設衛, 調瀾滄洱海衛所, 分布左右, 全師徙守州。割趙州, 太和, 雲南附近之民, 分里一十有二。” The 1510 Yunnan Gazetteer also records the construction of this city; see Peng Gang and Zhou Jifeng (1990), p. 177.
- 72 Fuzhen 撫鎮 in the original. However, this term is a mistake for zhenfu 鎮撫.
- 73 Here, “office” refers to the Provincial Administration Commissioner (Buzheng shi 布政使) and the Surveillance Commissioner (Ancha shi 按察使).
- 74 *Xiaozong Shilu*, p. 1385, in an entry dated 23 April 1493 (8/4/Hongzhi 6), records the addition of “one garrison and left and right battalions 左右千戶所”.
- 75 See Peng Gang and Zhou Jifeng (1990), p. 161.
- 76 *Xiaozong Shilu*, p. 1385. The original reads: “大羅城諸種夷羅所聚, 盜賊所穴, 官軍疲於戍守, 民夫困於轉輸。”
- 77 *Baiya Tucheng Ji* 白崖土城記 (undated); see Li Zhongxi *Quanji*, 7:52a–53a in Yunnan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan, *Yunnan Congshu*, Vol. 21, pp. 11277–11278.
- 78 Christian Daniels (2013), “Introduction”, pp. 7–8.
- 79 The subjugation of these two villages is recorded in an addendum to a stele of 1587 known as the Xuzhong Ciji (恤忠祠記 The Epitaph on the Shrine for the Repose of the Souls of the Loyal) authored by Li Shida 李士達, an Assistant Surveillance Commissioner for the Jinsha and Lancang (Mekong) Rivers 按察司分巡金滄簽事; see text in Tang Li (2011), p. 249, and in Baoshan Shi Wenhua Guangdian Xinwen Chubanjū (2008), pp. 134–137.

- 80 The account of Lukui Mountain is based on Christian Daniels (2004) pp. 694–728, in Japanese. For an English translation, see Christian Daniels (2019), pp. 188–217.
- 81 In the memorial to the throne known as *Xinping Jiaozei Baojie Shu* 新平剿賊報捷, dated the tenth day of the tenth lunar month of Tianqi 4 (1624), Min Hongxue 閔洪學, Grand Coordinator of Yunnan (*Xunfu* 巡撫) reported the pacification by the Ming army of the Lukui bandits, who resisted for approximately an entire year between late 1623 and 1624. The disturbances started with a raid by approximately 600 men from Xinping county on the area around the Baoxiu market 寶秀街 in Shiping sub-prefecture 石屏州 on 27 November 1623 (6/10 intercalary month/Tianqi 3); see Min Hongxue, *Fu Dian Zoucao*, 5:60b–62a. *Xiaozong Shilu*, pp. 2492–2496, contains a digest of this memorial.
- 82 Cai Yurong 蔡毓榮 (?–1699), a Han white banner man 漢軍正白旗人 who served as Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou from 1682 to 1686, described how the upland leaders (he refers to them as bandits) used their strategic position at Lukui Mountain to sally forth to raid and then escape when pursued by Qing troops:

Lukui is located in the middle of the myriad mountains, and overlaps with the borders of Xinping County, Xi'e County, Menghua, Yuanjiang, Jingdong and Chuxiong [prefectures]. It stretches far and wide, and has deep forests and thick ravines. The bandits can enter the areas of Xinping, Xinhua, Yuanjiang, Yimen, Ejia, Nan'an and Jingdong, all of which lie on its inside, and escape out into the areas of Sipsong Panna (Cheli), Pu'er, Cengtung [Kengtung], Zhenyuan, Mǎng Mēn (Meng Mian 猛緬: Lincang county 臨滄縣), and Vietnam (Jiaozi 交趾) which lie on its outside. For this reason, it is very difficult to guard against them, and also not easy to suppress them.

魯魁在萬山之中，跨連新嶺蒙元景楚之界，綿亙廣遠，林深箐密，其內則新平，新化，元江，易門，石十粵嘉，南安，景東一帶地方，賊皆可入，其外則車里，普洱，孟良，鎮沅，猛緬，交趾一帶地方，賊皆可出。故防之甚難，而剿之亦不易也。

See Cai Yurong, “Chou Dian Di Ba Shu 籌滇第八疏 (Eight Memorials Presenting Plans for Yunnan)” in Fan Chengxun, Wang Jiwen *et al.*, Eds., 1691 *Yunnan Tongzhi*, *juan* 29, *yiwen* 藝文 3:36a.

- 83 Cai Yurong. “Chou Dian Di Ba Shu”, in Fan Chengxun, Wang Jiwen *et al.*, Eds., 1691 *Yunnan Tongzhi*, *juan* 29, *yiwen* 藝文 3:35b–39b. The original reads: “縱賊四出，每村給一木刻，派定保頭銀十數兩，二，三十兩不等，豬羊雞酒，索取無厭，稍有不遂，劫殺隨之。於是，流離之民暨相近野賊之民樂於附賊為盜。八年之久，招集亡命愈多，全滇各府州縣村莊聽其索保者十之八，九。”
- 84 Guoli Gugong Bowuguan, Ed., *Gongzhongdang Yongzheng Chao Zouzhe*, Vol. 2, pp. 498–499. The original reads:

哀牢一山，各州縣營汛環其三面，其西南一面，則係威遠土州，鎮沅土府及車里宣慰司之地。而威遠尤當衝要。賊人無事之時，與土司及其子弟頭人皆結婚姻，或拜為父子，或盟為兄弟，一經有事，官兵三面進攻，賊即從土司一面逃出，土司即行護庇藏匿，或縱出境外煙瘴之地，令官兵難以前往查捕。督撫亦往往以曠日持久，恐干處分，姑以免罪招安。且了目前之局，而此輩借此一招復歸內地仍前害民。皆因從前不肯直窮到底，是以貽串至今。

- 85 Kataoka Tatsuki (2013), pp. 69–94.
- 86 Nathan Badenoch and Tomita Shinsuke (2013), pp. 29–67, and Christian Daniels (2013), “Blocking the Path of Feral Pigs with Rotten Bamboo”, pp. 133–170.
- 87 Regarding the foundation of the Duan Family Administrator, see Christian Daniels (2018), pp. 69–111.
- 88 Lian Ruizhi (2015), pp. 19–56.
- 89 This viewpoint originated with Ho Ping-ti (1955), pp. 191–201.
- 90 Nomoto Takashi and Nishikawa Kazutaka (2008), pp. 15–34.

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