

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

From the Dali Kingdom to  
Imperial Province

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## **1 Salt, grain and the change of deities in early Ming western Yunnan**

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## Introduction

The Ming conquest of 1382 marked the beginning of the transformation of local society in Yunnan. The Mongol-Yuan relied heavily on the Duan 段, descendants of the royal family of the Dali kingdom (937–1253), to administrate local society in western Yunnan. The first Ming Emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, continued many Mongol-Yuan administrative policies in Yunnan. His practice of appointing local ethnic leaders as native officials (*tuguan* 土官) to administer ethnic populations is well known. In addition, he implemented novel measures that became catalysts for change at the level of local society. One such case was the establishment of Guards and Battalions (*weisuo* 衛所) to control local society and to prevent unrest by indigenous peoples, particularly those inhabiting the borders with Southeast Asia. The Mongol-Yuan had also stationed troops in Yunnan. However, the Ming innovated by establishing a system for delivering grain to the troops. The early Ming state solved the problem of provisioning the Guards and the Battalions in border areas through two methods. The first was to set up military colonies (*tuntian* 屯田), while demobilising seven out of every ten soldiers to grow food for the army. The other method, known as the salt-barter system (*kaizhong fa* 開中法), involved incentivising merchants to deliver grain to Guard granaries in return for lucrative licences to sell government salt. The salt-barter system triggered a series of changes that played a part in the transformation of pre-1382 local society into something more akin to that of other Ming-administered provinces in Southwest China.

This chapter traces the introduction of the salt-barter system, paying particular attention to the way in which external factors, such the war with the Tai polity of Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> (Ch: Luchuan 麓川) and the price of grain, required the Ming to improvise and compromise with local elites to maintain food supplies to the Guards and Battalions. I argue that the solution for provisioning the military adopted by the Ming, particularly the mobilisation of local power holders in western Yunnan to maintain the system, inadvertently created a new political, social and economic environment in local society. Through a case study on the changed identity of a tutelary deity in Yunlong county 雲龍縣 known as Sanchong 三崇, I demonstrate that the transformation of local society extended to the sphere of local religious beliefs.

## The salt-barter system and the military in Yunnan

Chinese dynastic states monopolised the production and sale of edible salt from ancient times. Recognising salt as a commodity essential for human existence, the state of Qin monopolised its production from the Warring States period (480–221 BC). The Chinese state oversaw salt production in Yunnan from early times. The Western Han dynasty (202 BC–AD 9) appointed officials to oversee salt production at Lianran 連然 (today's Anning 安寧 near Kunming). During the Eastern Han (AD 25–220), Zheng Chun 鄭純, the Governor of Yongchang 永昌, exacted taxes from salt wells located along the River Bi 氾江 in Yunlong and Lanping 蘭坪. Zheng Chun compelled local magnates (*yihao* 邑豪) to submit two sets of pull-over shirts (*guantou yi* 貫頭衣) and one *hu* 斛 (100 litres) of salt every year as regular tax.<sup>1</sup> The Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms regulated the supply of salt to maintain a tight hold over the indigenous population. The Nanzhao kingdom gained dominance over the salt pools (*yanchi* 鹽池) in Yanyuan 鹽源 county in today's Sichuan in 794 (Zhenyuan 1) after a long struggle with the Tang dynasty and the Tubo 吐蕃.<sup>2</sup> The Mongol-Yuan established a Commissioner for Salt Transit Taxes (*Yanque shi* 鹽樞使) on the Dali Route 大理路 to collect tax on salt and a Supervisor of the Salt Commission (*Tiju Yanshi si* 提舉鹽使司) on the Weichu Route 威楚路 to administer the Black Salt Well 黑鹽井. However, the various dynasties that controlled Yunnan had not formulated a comprehensive system for regulating salt production before the Ming.

As elsewhere in the country, the early Ming used the salt-barter system to deliver grain to the Guard and Battalions in Yunnan. The Ming mobilised 300,000 soldiers to conquer Yunnan, and the military soon faced food shortages. The situation proved so desperate that during the second lunar month of 1382 (Hongwu 15), Zhu Yuanzhang, the founding Emperor, instructed the Ministry of Revenue “to order merchants to deliver grain to Yunnan in exchange for salt in order to supply” the military with food.<sup>3</sup> The Ministry of Revenue clearly stipulated the exchange rate of grain for salt for different delivery points in the province at that time as follows:

For transportation to Yunnan, 200 catties (*jin* 斤) of Huai salt 淮鹽 will be issued for bringing 6 *dou* 斗 of rice; 200 catties of Zhejiang salt 浙鹽 will be issued for bringing 5 *dou* of rice; and 200 catties of Sichuan salt 川鹽 will be issued for bringing 1 *shi* 石 of rice. For transportation to Pu'an 普安, 200 catties of Huai and Zhejiang salt will be issued for bringing 6 *dou* of rice; 200 catties of Sichuan salt will be issued for bringing 2 *shi* 5 *dou* of rice. For transportation to Puding 普定, 200 catties of Huai salt will be issued for bringing 5 *dou* of rice; 200 catties of Zhejiang salt will be issued for bringing 4 *dou* of rice; for Sichuan salt the regulation used in Pu'an applies. For transportation to Wusa 烏撒, 200 catties of Huai and Zhejiang salt will be issued for bringing 2 *dou* of rice; for Sichuan salt the regulation used in Pu'an applies.<sup>4</sup>

The *Ming Shi* records the personal role played by Zhu Yuanzhang, noting particularly his instructions “for drawing up regulations for controlling salt, for establishing government organs and setting up officials”. It specifically mentions him “decreeing that the state would take one-twentieth of the sales by merchants to provide supplies for the armies”.<sup>5</sup> These regulations were aimed to systematise the salt-bartering method that supported the Ming military in extending and maintaining control in Yunnan.

The salt-barter system commenced in Shanxi province in 1370 (Hongwu 3), twelve years before the conquest of Yunnan. Zhu Yuanzhang approved a request to make merchants responsible for delivering grain to state granaries in exchange for salt licences (*yanyin* 鹽引). Merchants could obtain salt when they presented the licence slips (*yinpiao* 引票) issued by officials at designated locations. Since this system saved the state the cost of transporting grain and supplied the military with food at the same time, Zhu Yuanzhang ordered its implementation empire-wide.<sup>6</sup>

In essence, the salt-barter system enabled the Ming state to closely control the production and sale of salt while ensuring the provisioning of the military. The system functioned in the following way. The state issued salt licences, and every licence (*yin* 引) entitled the merchant to sell a certain amount of salt while at the same time requiring him to deliver a specific amount of grain. After delivering the grain to the designated granary or yamen, the merchant received the salt licence in exchange and proceeded to the location designated on the licence to collect the stipulated amount of salt. Then, the merchant sold the salt for profit in the area designated on the licence. The state issued standard licences for 400 catties of salt although it issued smaller licences for 200 catties during the Hongwu reign (1368–1398). The exchange rate of grain to salt in the licenses fluctuated depending on the distance travelled and licence type.

To ease the difficulty of supplying food for the large numbers of troops sent to suppress rebellions by ethnic peoples, the Ming state made officials in border areas responsible for the salt licences. This arrangement aimed to encourage merchants to transport grain to distant locations and profit from selling salt there. To function successfully, the arrangement depended on the taste of merchants for profit. Since the Ming state benefitted from not having to bear the transportation costs of both the rice and the salt, it continued to use the salt-barter system in conjunction with the institution of military state farms (*juntun* 軍屯) to ensure that the Guards and Battalions had sufficient food supplies after the conquest of Yunnan.

The influx of soldiers into Yunnan placed pressure on food supplies during the early Ming. After establishing the Yunnan Provincial Administration Commissioner (Yunnan Dengchu Chengxuan Buzheng Shishi 雲南等處承宣布政使司), Zhu Yuanzhang settled Mu Ying 沐英 and several hundred thousand soldiers in Yunnan as a defence force and established large numbers of military state farms to provide food for them. However, the grain produced at military state farms proved insufficient. Therefore, the state had to rely on the salt monopoly as a solution and began to recruit merchants to deliver grain in exchange

for salt from 1382. In a memorial dated the second lunar month of 1382, Fu Youde 傅友德, the General for Conquering the South 征南將軍, suggested a number of ways to feed the soldiers. Fu Youde requested the garrisoning of soldiers in Yunnan to guard strategic positions. The soldiers came from Jiangxi 江西, Zhejiang 浙江, Huguang 湖廣, Henan 河南 and Sichuan 四川. However, noting the inadequacy of the grain reserves at the Guards and Battalions, he suggested a number of means to make up the food shortage as follows:

Turning [the land of] former state monasteries and cloisters (*guansiyuan* 官寺院) into state land (*guantian* 官田), appropriating the taxes collected from the prefectures, sub-prefectures (*zhou* 州) and counties this current year, as well as making use of taxes paid by native officials, grain delivered by salt merchants, and the harvests from military farming colonies of garrison troops (*shubing tuntian* 戍兵屯田).<sup>7</sup>

Fu Youde's request to use all available state income and resources indicates the severity of the food crisis in 1382.

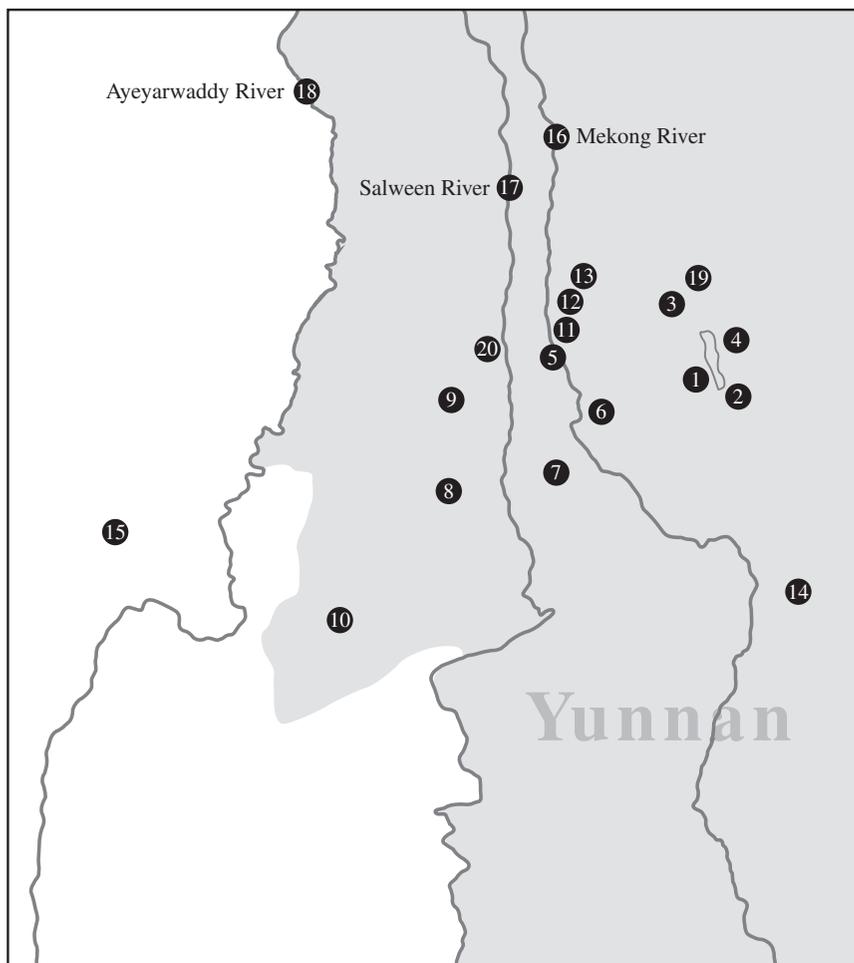
To make the salt-barter system function, the Ming had first to secure control over the salt production in Yunnan. The Ming established four Salt Distribution Supervisorates (*Yanke Tiju Si* 鹽課提舉司) at Black Salt Well, White Salt Well 白鹽井, Anning Salt Well and Wujing 五井 (located in Yunlong county: see Map 1.1). The Ministry of Revenue determined that the salt-barter system would be implemented first at the Anning Salt Well, stipulating as follows:

Two hundred catties of Anning salt will be issued to recruited merchants who transport 3 *shi* of rice to Yunnan and Lin An, 2 *shi* 8 *dou* of rice to Wusa and Wumeng 烏蒙, 3 *shi* 5 *dou* of rice to Zhanyi 沾益 and Dongchuan 東川, 2 *shi* 8 *dou* to Qu Jing and 1 *shi* 8 *dou* of rice to Pu'an.<sup>8</sup>

At that time, the Ming had six Salt Controllers (*Yanyun Si* 鹽運司) and seven Salt Distribution Supervisorates over the entire country, with four Salt Distribution Supervisorates located in Yunnan. Merchants transporting grain to Yunnan traded salt produced at the wells in Anning, Wujing and the Black Salt Well and only sold it within Yunnan.<sup>9</sup> The Ming court utilised Yunnan salt as part of an exchange system to support the military forces that guarded against intrusions by ethnic peoples on the southwest border.

### **The Māng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> campaigns, the grain supply and local magnates**

At first, the Ming restricted the use of the salt-barter system to Guards and Battalions in eastern and central Yunnan, at locations such as Lin'an, Wusa, Wumeng, Zhanyi, Dongchuan and Qujing. These military institutions occupied vital positions on the transportation routes and served as strategic sites for pacifying the entire province. In time, large numbers of Han troops from Central China settled



- |                        |  |                                   |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| ① Dali 大理              | ⑧ Tengchong Guard (Tengyue)<br>騰衝衛/ 騰越 | ⑮ Meng Yang 孟養                    |
| ② Zhaozhou 趙州          | ⑨ Mingguang 明光                         | ⑯ Mekong River 瀾滄江                |
| ③ Langqiong 浪穹         | ⑩ Māng² Maaw² (Luchuan)                | ⑰ Salween River 怒江                |
| ④ Mt. Chicken Foot 雞足山 | ⑪ Wujing 五井                            | ⑱ Ayeyarwaddy River 大金江           |
| ⑤ Yunlong 雲龍           | ⑫ Shijing 師井                           | ⑲ Foguang stockade 佛光寨            |
| ⑥ Yongping 永平          | ⑬ Shundangjing 順蕩井                     | ⑳ Gaoligongshan Mountains<br>高黎貢山 |
| ⑦ Yongchang 永昌         | ⑭ Jingdong 景東                          |                                   |

Map 1.1 Western Yunnan, 1582.

in Yunnan, placing pressure on the living space of indigenous people. During the Xuande era (1426–1435), the focus of the salt-barter system shifted from eastern and central Yunnan to Dali, Yongchang and Tengchong 騰衝 on the military front in western Yunnan in preparation for punitive expeditions against the belligerent Tai polity of Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>. At that time, although merchants found the transportation of grain to border areas under the salt-barter system increasingly less attractive, they continued to transport salt to Yunnan. Thus, the barter system remained strong there. As a result, the Ming court used the salt-barter system as a crucial strategy for managing Yunnan and an indispensable means to provide food supplies to troops in the province for an extended period of time. During the fifth month of 1427 (Xuande 2), the Ministry of Revenue received a document from the Yunnan Provincial Administration Commissioner reporting a shortage of grain for the troops in Yunnan. The document explained that this deficiency arose because of an increase in the price of rice and a decrease in the price of salt as follows:

In the past, the salt-barter method was used to exchange Anning Well salt [for transported grain]. One *yin* was issued for 2 *shi* of rice received. Now that the price of rice has risen and that for salt has gone down, travelling traders no longer come. It is requested that the amount could be lowered. For salt produced at Anning, one *Yin* would be issued for every 1 *shi* 2 *dou* of rice instead, and 1 *shi* of rice for salt produced at the Black Salt Well and the White Salt Well. The grain had to be delivered to the granary at the Jinchi Military-cum-Civilian Military Command 金齒軍民指揮司, and salt could be claimed at any time.<sup>10</sup>

This request was approved and put into practice. However, in 1431 (Xuande 6), the Ming discontinued the salt-barter system in the entire country with the exception of Beijing. Facing an acute shortage of grain, the Yunnan Provincial Administration Commissioner petitioned the court for special consideration. The request read as follows:

The border areas of Yunnan used to annually issue salt licences to travelling merchants who delivered rice to granaries in places such as Dali and Jinchi in exchange for salt produced at Anning and other salt wells. Now that this method has been discontinued, the supply [of grain] is no longer sufficient to meet the demand. We request that [Yunnan] still be permitted to recruit merchants to transport rice to exchange for salt and that [the exchange rate] at Anning and other salt wells follow the regulations laid down in 1428 (Xuande 3) and that [the exchange rate] at Huai and Zhe follow the regulations of the Hongwu era.<sup>11</sup>

The granting of special approval by the Xuanzong Emperor ensured the continuation of the salt-barter system in Yunnan. The Emperor's decision may have been influenced by the constant threat of war with the Tai polity of Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> that dominated parts of southwest Yunnan and northern Myanmar.

Si Renfa 思任發, the paramount leader of Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>, attacked parts of Yunnan where the Tai resided in 1439 (Zhengtong 4). His forces raided Jingdong 景東 and plundered Meng Ding 孟定, killing over a thousand people, including Dao Fenghan 刀奉漢, the Prefect of Dahou 大侯. The Native Chief's office at Meng Lian 孟璉長官司 and several stockades at Meng Lai 孟賴 even surrendered to him.<sup>12</sup> The Ming responded by dispatching punitive expeditions against Si Renfa, which expended large amounts of food and provisions and depleted grain supplies available to the military. The increase in rice prices made it unprofitable for merchants to engage in the salt-barter system. This circumstance prompted the Yingzong Emperor to approve the Yunnan Provincial Administration Commissioner's request to "transport silver notes" (*yinchao* 銀鈔) from the Commission's treasury to Jinchi and Dali for purchasing grain to keep in reserve. Additionally, Yingzong also approved the request to lower the exchange rate for rice to salt at Dali and Jinchi to benefit merchants. The new arrangement was as follows:

At Dali, one *yin* of salt from the four wells, including the Black Salt Well, was exchanged for 2 *shi* of rice; now it has been reduced to 1 *shi* 5 *dou* instead. At Jinchi, one *yin* of salt from the five wells of Anning was exchanged for 1 *shi* 2 *dou*; now it has been reduced to 1 *shi* instead. One *yin* of salt from the Black Well and White Well was exchanged for 1 *shi*; now it has been reduced to 8 *dou* instead.<sup>13</sup>

The Ming court appointed Mu Ang 沐昂 General for Conquering the South and Regional Commander (*zongbingguan* 總兵官) of the punitive expedition sent against Si Renfa, on the third day of the fifth lunar month in 1439 (Zhengtong 4).<sup>14</sup> In the sixth lunar month, the Ming reinstated the salt-barter system in Yunnan. To meet the needs of the expedition, the Ming recruited merchants to transport rice to Dali and Jinchi to exchange for salt. However, the price of rice rapidly increased because of the prolongation of the campaign and the reluctance of merchants to transport grain. To alleviate the situation, the relevant officials adjusted the exchange rate: "one salt *yin* from Salt Distribution Supervisorates at the White Salt Well and the Wujing Salt Well would be issued to merchants who transported 2 *dou* of rice to Dali or 1.5 *dou* of rice to Jinchi."<sup>15</sup> During the eleventh lunar month of 1439, the Ming was forced to reduce the exchange rate of rice to salt to an even lower level to ensure the delivery of grain. Now, merchants received one *yin* of salt from Sichuan for transporting only 1.5 *dou* of rice to Dali and the same amount of salt for transporting only 1 *dou* of rice to Jinchi.<sup>16</sup> This change represented a reduction of 0.5 *dou* rice for delivery to both locations within five months. The Ming desperately tried to attract more merchants to participate in the salt-barter system by lowering the ratio of rice to salt. It also emphasised how the immense cost of the military campaigns against Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>, with large numbers of troops garrisoned in western Yunnan, aggravated the food shortage in the province.

Ten years later, the price of salt licences again increased to a great height. Local magnates in western Yunnan seized the opportunity to monopolise the sale of salt licences and rice. They found the salt-barter system appealing. A report from Yongping county in the sixth lunar month of 1449 (Zhengtong 14) reveals that merchants bought salt licences with silver, a practice condoned by Ming authorities. The report stated as follows:

The salt from the Wujing is exchanged for rice by magnates (*haoyou* 豪右) from Jinchi and other places. Every salt licence is worth 2 to 3 *shi* of rice, even though only 5 to 6 *dou* are delivered. Recently, soldiers and civilians in Yongping willingly pay 3 *taels* of silver for every salt licence, and the purchased rice is delivered to the Jinchi granary.<sup>17</sup>

The salt-producing area closest to the war zone was the Wujing wells (literally Five Wells) in today's Yonglong county. It was administered by the Salt Distribution Supervisorate. The exchange rates for salt and rice at the Wujing wells, which were close to Yongping county, were far better than at the Black Well and the White Well salt areas and infinitely superior to the salt hauled long distance from Huai, Zhejiang and Sichuan. At that time, a licence for Wujing salt was "worth 2 to 3 *shi* of rice". However, in reality, licence holders only delivered 5 to 6 *dou*; thus, profits reached as high as 2 *shi* 5 *dou*. The lucrative exchange of Wujing salt for grain was monopolised by magnates from Jinchi (today's Baoshan 保山). In essence, this phenomenon reveals that the escalation of warfare with Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> and the increasing costs of provisioning the military with grain under the salt-barter system caused a sharp increase in both salt and rice prices. Holding surplus silver, local civilians and military households in the vicinity of Yongping county found it lucrative to purchase rice to participate in the salt-barter system.

### **Native officials and local magnates as grain suppliers**

By monopolising salt production, the Ming did not intend to protect the interests of consumers. Rather, the state aimed to recruit merchants to distribute salt on their behalf to reduce transportation costs. This arrangement enabled the Ming to regulate salt supplies to the civilian population and at the same time aided the provisioning of armies at border regions. Merchants willingly accepted the task of supplying grain to troops in border areas because the state granted them the right to sell salt and most importantly because they could profit from price margins. The delivery of a specific amount of grain for the military by state-recruited merchants was known as *baozhong* 報中 (reporting for exchange). During the mid-to-late Ming, the sites for *baozhong* in Yunnan were the farming colonies (*tun* 屯) attached to the Guards and Battalions (*weisuo* 衛所), whose sites could change according to the location of military campaigns undertaken to suppress revolts by ethnic peoples and the places in which disturbances arose in border areas. The need for suppliers to traverse high mountains and cross deep valleys

to reach the border regions of Yunnan increased the price of rice. The longer that the journey was, the higher the price. The salt-barter system undeniably contributed immensely to the provisioning of the military and fostered economic growth at the borders in Yunnan. However, we should not overlook that the salt-barter system was unable to supply the military there with sufficient grain. Under the salt-barter system, the motivation for merchants to deliver could easily change according to economic conditions. In a memorial of 1437 (Zhengtong 2), the Yunnan Provincial Administration Commissioner reported as follows:

Vast amounts of food and provisions have been consumed during the military campaigns against Luchuan, but the transport of warehoused grain has failed to cover the losses. Though there are regulations for the grain/salt exchange rate, soaring rice prices have reduced the number of merchants coming to exchange [grain] for salt.<sup>18</sup>

With fewer merchants delivering grain, large quantities of salt lay in store for a long time, which rendered the salt-barter system increasingly less sustainable.

To relieve the worsening problem of grain shortage created by the campaigns against Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>, the Ming court adopted the exceptional measure of rewarding and promoting those who donated grain to the military with official posts. Lai Xun 賴巽, the Surveillance Commissioner of Yunnan, requested the implementation of this arrangement in a memorial dated the seventh lunar month of 1439 (Zhengtong 4), in which he provided the following detailed description:

Recently, it has become difficult to deliver provisions to the army fighting Si Renfa, the rebel bandit of Luchuan, so we have already started to recruit merchants to deliver grain in exchange for salt. The [Yunnan] Provincial Administration Commissioner has already been instructed to use military silver (*junyin* 軍銀) for purchasing rice. Nevertheless, the price of rice is high, and few merchants come to exchange for salt. At present, troops in the Guards (*Wei*) and local people (*turen* 土人) at Dali and elsewhere stockpile great quantities of grain at home. Henceforth, military officers and native officials who are able to deliver 200 *shi* of rice to the granaries at Jinchi will be promoted one grade, and those who deliver 300 *shi* will be promoted two grades. Local people who deliver 200 *shi* of rice will be rewarded with official positions such as Aides to Postal Relay Stations (Yicheng 驛丞) and Fishing Tax Offices (Hebo 河泊), while soldiers who deliver the same amount will be given positions as Judges (Zhenfu 鎮撫) in the Guards. Those who deliver 300 *shi* will be appointed as Vice Magistrates (Xianzuo 縣佐) and Military Inspectors (Xunjian 巡檢) if they are local people, and Probationary Company Commanders (Shi Baihu 試百戶) if they are soldiers. In this way, people will be spared the trouble of transporting the grain, the state will not lose money, and the supply of grain and provisions will be sufficient [for the needs of the army].<sup>19</sup>

Because of the emergency situation, the Ming offered rewards to military officers in the Dali Guard, as well as native officials and local magnates, if they delivered grain for the army. The state rewarded them with official positions and promotions to different grades according to the quantities of grain delivered. Imperial bureaucrats introduced these desperate measures at Dali due to its proximity to the front in the war against Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>.

Fifteen years later, in 1454 (Jingtai 6), fifty-four powerful officials (*guanhao* 官豪) at Tengchong, including Commander Chen Sheng 陳昇, “appropriated and cultivated military farming colonies (*tuntian* 屯田) in the vicinity of the walled city”. After an investigation into this malpractice, the state pardoned the officials involved and distributed the land to soldiers for cultivation.<sup>20</sup> This incident reveals the contradictory situation created by the campaign against the Tai polity. While the state faced an emergency in provisioning the army and Yunnan suffered from an increasingly acute shortage of food, military officers in the Guards and Military-cum-Civilian Military Command prefectures, native officials and local magnates in western Yunnan took advantage of their power and influence to seize military farmland laid waste by the mobilisation of the soldiers for battle. By false reporting, these individuals secretly amassed large quantities of grain at their homes, and because of the short supply, they sold grain at highest price only. They turned a blind eye to the urgent needs of the state for grain.

The practice of rewarding individuals with official positions for delivering grain to the military was tantamount to the state procuring grain by the sale of ranks and titles. The Ming court had increasingly become dependent on military officers in the Guards and Battalions, native officials and local magnates for the supply of military power and provisions. As the main suppliers of grain to the military, native officials and local magnates rose to prominence and later became an influential socio-economic force in Yunnan. Although the Ming court knew that certain native officials oppressed their people, it took no action against them because of anxiety over the vitally important issue of provisioning the military. For instance, in 1451 (Jingtai 2), Mu Lin 沐璘, the Regional Commander and Vice-Commissioner-in-chief, promoted Dong Zhen 董禎 “the Native Police Chief” (*Tuguan Xunjian* 土官巡檢) of Zhaozhou 趙州 (today’s Fengyi zhen 鳳儀鎮) in Dali prefecture, to a higher rank despite complaints from 750 individuals that Dong had treated them brutally and unreasonably. Mu Lin ignored these protests by local people because Dong Zhen and his brother had donated grain to Guizhou.<sup>21</sup> From the outset, official magnates (*guanhao* 官豪) gained power and influence because of the state’s urgent need for rice and provisions. An ethnic Tai family, the A 阿氏, acquired the hereditary post of sub-prefectural Native Magistrate in Dengchuan Zhou 鄧川 (in today’s Eryuan county) during the Hongwu period because a family forebear “led his people in transporting grain”.<sup>22</sup> The Shi family 施氏 attained its position as hereditary Native Company Commander (*Tu Baihu* 土百戶) in Dengchuan sub-prefecture because an ancestor provided “truly commendable meritorious service” to the Ming by “transporting provisions” at the time of the conquest.<sup>23</sup>

With their eyes fixed on the opportunities, imperial rotating officials (*liuguan* 流官) also joined in the scramble. Colluding with native officials and local magnates, they distorted facts to suit their own purposes and sought large profits and agricultural land to appropriate. For instance, take the case of Yongchang prefecture. The throne approved the request by Hu Yuan 胡淵, the Commander of the Jinchi Guard, to convert the Guard into a Military-cum-Civilian Military Command responsible for administrating both the military and the civilians. Hu Yuan based his request on the claim that Jinchi had a small population and insufficient supplies of grain. However, officials and eunuchs who arrived later profited from resources there. This fact casts doubt on the veracity of his claim. He Mengchun 何孟春 (1474–1536), who served as Grand Coordinator of Yunnan 雲南巡撫 during the Zhengde era (1506–1521), recorded the arrival of the first eunuch Mao Sheng 毛勝 at Jinchi and the activities of other eunuchs who followed in his wake as follows:

At the end of the Jingtai era, Mao Sheng, the Commissioner-in-chief (Dudu 都督) came with the punitive campaign against Luchuan, and he ensconced himself as the Grand Defender (Zhenshou 鎮守) because he noticed that Jinchi had abundant [taxable] resources under its jurisdiction. Seeing that Mao Sheng had profited greatly, other eunuchs came following on his heels. They appropriated many wet fields from the indigenous people (*yitian* 夷田) and turned them into official manors (*guan Zhuang* 官莊), and they used the property of the indigenous people (*yicai* 夷財) to pay for their own expenses.<sup>24</sup>

Although Hu Yuan claimed a shortage of grain and provisions as the reasons for the administrative reform, his real motive lay in expanding the scope of his powers of governance as Commander of the Military-cum-Civilian Military Command, a hereditary position. By invoking the need to ensure the delivery of grain to the military as a valid justification, he was able to exploit the situation for his own benefit. The eunuchs dispatched by the court to attend to political, military and economic activities at Jinchi and Tengyue also took advantage of the situation to line their pockets. Because the post of Grand Defender (Zhenshou 鎮守) at Jinchi became a lucrative post, eunuchs at court vied with one another for appointment to the position, and with no one on the spot to control their behaviour, they appropriated agricultural land from the indigenous people in the border area.

### **Impact on local society**

The salter-barter system linked the two basic commodities of salt and rice, thus giving the Ming state control over people's livelihoods. For reasons already explained, the use of the salt monopoly to deliver grain to the military in western Yunnan resulted in high prices for both these commodities. In the process, the significance of salt underwent a drastic change at the Wujing salt wells in

Yunlong county. Although the state controlled the salt, it was the merchants who had come to profit by selling it through the salt-barter system, which resulted in intensified competition in society for these commodities. Since both salt and rice were expensive commodities, certain individuals generated wealth by hoarding rice, while others became rich because they had access to salt.

The Ming established a Salt Distribution Supervisorate at Langqiong county 浪穹縣 in Dali prefecture in 1383. Since this Supervisorate administered five wells, it was known as the Wujing (literally Five Wells) salt-producing area. The Supervisorate was subdivided into five Salt Tax Offices (*Yanke si* 鹽課司), many of which were located in Yunlong county: Nuodeng 諾鄧, Dajing 大井, Shijing 師井, Shundang 順蕩 and Luoma 落馬. Li Yuanyang (1497–1580) described the organisation of the staff, the location of each well and the annual revenue in the sixteenth century as follows:

There is one Supervisor (Tiju 提舉) and one Chief of Police (Limu 吏目) [at Langqiong]. The Salt Tax Offices at Nuodeng, Dajing, Shijing and Shundang each have one Commissioner (Dashi 大使). For the location of the wells, Nuodeng well lies in front of the Salt Distribution Supervisorate yamen; Dajing lies 10 *li* southeast of the Salt Distribution Supervisorate yamen; Shimen well 石門井 lies ten *li* southeast of the Salt Distribution Supervisorate yamen; the Luoma, Shifeng 石絳井, and Hebian 河邊井 wells all lie 50 *li* south of the Salt Distribution Supervisorate yamen. The annual tax collected by the Salt Distribution Supervisorate totals 4475.5465452 *taels* (in leap years) and 4131.2725 *taels* (in non-leap years).<sup>25</sup>

The 1694 Dali prefecture gazetteer recorded that the prospect of profits had lured Han people from all four quarters of the empire to come and settle at the Luoma well in Yunlong county. After time, they became local people (*tuzhu* 土著), and “their talented descendants gradually immersed [themselves in education], becoming official families of civil and military scholars (*yiguan wenwu zhi shi* 衣冠文武之士)”.<sup>26</sup> Merchants visiting the Wujing salt wells under the salt-barter system boosted the scale of salt production and attracted more people to the area, thus promoting economic and cultural interflow between Yunlong and Central China. Profits generated from salt altered the population structure; Han migrants became indigenous people, while the indigenes imitated the Han. Male family members of local magnates could rely on capital accumulated from salt trading to compete in the civil service examinations. Through this process, local magnates transformed themselves into “official families of civil and military scholars”, thus gaining admission into the hierarchy of the privileged group.

Native officials enthusiastically engaged in the tribute system, travelling to the capital to pledge their allegiance by paying tribute. The *Veritable Records of the Ming* record that even low-ranking native officials in charge of salt wells in Yunlong submitted tribute. Yang Sheng 楊勝 and Sun He 孫和, native officials at the Police Office (*Xunjian Si Tuguan* 巡檢司土官) at the Shijing well, and

Yang Jian 楊堅, a Native Official at the Salt Tax Office at Shanjing 山井 well (today's Shanjing village 山井村 in Yunlong county) arrived at the capital bringing horses as tribute during the eighth lunar month of 1425 (Hongxi 1).<sup>27</sup> Yang Xingyong 楊星勇 and Sun Chun 孫春, former Native Official Vice Commissioners (*Tuguan Fushi* 土官副使) of the Salt Tax Office at Shundang, arrived at the capital to offer horses as tribute during the second lunar month of 1431 (Xuande 6).<sup>28</sup> Duan Jie 段節, Native Official of Zhennan sub-prefecture 鎮南州, and Li Xiang 李祥, a Bashi 把事 in Yunlong sub-prefecture, submitted horses as tribute during the second lunar month of 1435 (Xuande 10) and were provided various gifts in return.<sup>29</sup>

The Ming court clearly understood the characteristics of the native officials and their niche in Yunnan. The authors of the *Ming Shi* explain that the Ming expanded on the Yuan dynasty's policy by appointing native officials in prefectures, sub-prefectures and counties and drawing up regulations concerning quotas for the submission of land taxes and labour service, as well as the deployment of troops. While recognising the merits and demerits of the native official system, they noted its value as a method for restraining the indigenous leaders of the southwest as follows:

The way lies in the halter-and-bridle method (*jimi* 羈縻). The great surnames act as they please and have used force to threaten [to abrogate] agreements for generations. We must confer our titles and ranks on them, favour them with official names, in order to easily dominate them. In this way, they serve us in compliance with our commands.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the transition from the Yuan to the Ming, social stratification in local society remained unshaken. As a privileged group, the new dynastic rulers and the local magnates joined together to gain benefits from vital material resources. Although the Ming expanded on the native official system practised during the Yuan period, it did not make significant changes to the social structure that allowed upward movement in society. The *Ming Huiyao* states as follows:

In 1374 (Hongwu 7), the barbarians from the southwest came to pay tribute. [The state] conferred on most the titles that they held during the Yuan period and attempted to restrain them by laying down regulations on the collection of labour and conscript service.<sup>31</sup>

In 1381 (Hongwu 14), when Ming armies marched towards Yunnan, the native officials under Mongol-Yuan rule successively surrendered. The Ming court reappointed most of them to their original posts, generously "conferring [previous] titles and ranks on them" and "favouring them with official names". Many indigenous magnates of the Mongol-Yuan period willingly submitted to the Ming because the new dynasty recognised their roles as leaders of local society. The halter-and-bridle method (*jimi* 羈縻) policy used by the Ming in Yunnan was essentially aimed at containing and restraining indigenous magnates.

The Ming widely adopted the salt-barter system in Yunnan to aid the pacification of the indigenous peoples and bring order to border areas. However, when the barter arrangement failed to function as expected and the continuance of the war with Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> caused the prices of both rice and salt to escalate, the Ming sought ways to persuade local magnates to co-operate by parting with the grain they stockpiled at home. It was only by “conferring titles and ranks” on native officials and local magnates and through the purchase of grain with silver that the Ming could relieve food shortages at the front. In this sense, the native official system proved highly successful for the Ming.

### Changed identity of the Sanchong Deity

After the conquest of 1382, the Ming state did not seek to overturn the social structure of indigenous society in western Yunnan. Instead, it increasingly came to rely on the power of local magnates to control the indigenous people. This practice forced local magnates to realise they needed to reconstruct and redefine their legitimacy as new power holders in changed times. For the new magnates at the Wujing salt wells in Yunlong, which was the main group providing grain through the salt-barter system to the army campaigning against Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>, the re-interpretation of their legitimacy as power holders became a particularly urgent issue because they desperately needed to secure support from the area’s local people. The way the new Wujing magnates re-interpreted history was truly amazing. They quietly replaced the existing protective god in the territory of the Zuo Family Native Official 左氏土官 with a completely new deity. Local magnates replaced the original god, known as the State Founding Chicken Foot Emperor (Jianguo Jizu Huangdi 建國雞足皇帝), with Wang Ji 王驥 (1378–1460), the celebrated Minister of War (Bingbu Shangshu 兵部尚書) who defeated Mǎng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>. Wang Ji had a long military career serving in punitive campaigns at the borders in both North and South China. He became Right Vice-Minister of War in 1427 and was formally promoted to Minister of War in 1434. He appeared as a new deity in areas administered by the Zuo family in the Wujing salt zone, at the Yunlong sub-prefecture seat located at Caojian 漕澗, and in parts of Tengchong sub-prefecture. As a deity, Wang Ji left a deep mark on the respective local societies, which has lasted until today. At the Wujing salt well at Jiuzhou 舊州 (marked as Yunlong on Map 1.1) and at Mingguang 明光 (Tengchong), people still worship Wang Ji as their tutelary deity, and they regularly repair his temples, which are never short of worshippers who come to pay their respects by burning incense to him.

In his 1573 *Comprehensive Gazetteer of Yunnan*, Li Yuanyang recorded that the State Founding Chicken Foot Emperor was the original deity in Sanchong temples 三崇廟 as follows:

The Shrine of the Sanchong Deity 三崇神祠 rested on the slope of Sanchong Mountain in Yunlong sub-prefecture. It was built by Duan Wenxian 段文顯, the native magistrate during the Jiajing era (1522–1566), and sacrifices are made in spring and autumn twice every year.<sup>32</sup>

By the mid-Ming, Duan Wenxian, the Native Official of Yunlong sub-prefecture, had endorsed the Sanchong deity as the tutelary god of the area. The temple was constructed at the sub-prefecture seat (today's Jiuzhou, renamed Gongguo Bridge Town 功果橋鎮) on a slope at the foot of Sanchong Mountain on the west bank of the Mekong (Lancang) River (see Figure 1.1).

The following passage in the *Sanchong Hao* 三崇浩, a ritual text (*keyi* 科儀) from the Wujing salt well area, traces the origin of Sanchong to the Tang period:

Jizu 雞足, a spiritual peak set among lofty mountains and magnificent scenery, was born during the Tang period. Jizu supported the fortune of the country with unswerving loyalty and manifested itself as a divine being (*sheng* 聖) in Ming times. The utmost inner powers (*zhide* 至德) of Jizu constantly enrich the livelihood of the people, create abundant produce in the spring, mend damage wrought by disasters, and joyously fulfil numerous wishes. Jizu declares the transformability of all things (*hua* 化) on behalf of Heaven, supports good and eradicates evil while harmonising the sentiments of the people. Its merits are recorded on the watchtowers (*que* 闕) in the north, and it suppresses the southern lands from its position (*wei* 位). It possesses great pity, an immense ability to fulfil wishes, vast holiness and enormous compassion. The emperor has issued an edict conferring on it the title “Sanchong State Founding Chicken Foot People Protecting Emperor 三崇建國雞足佑民皇帝”.<sup>33</sup>

The Sanchong deity was a divine god originally viewed as the founding Emperor of the Dali kingdom (937–1253). According to this text, the deity was born during the Tang period and had “supported the fortune of the country with unswerving loyalty” ever since. Therefore, Sanchong must have been Duan Siping 段思平 (938–944), the founding Emperor of the Dali kingdom. During



*Figure 1.1* Jiuzhou nestled beside the Mekong River encircled by Sanchong Mountain.

The sub-prefecture seat of the native official of Yunlong was located here at Jiuzhou 舊州 at an elevation of 1,440 metres above sea level on the west bank of the Mekong River during the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The Shrine of the Sanchong Deity 三崇神祠 rested on the slope of Sanchong Mountain. Protected by Sanchong Mountain from behind and facing the Mekong, Jiuzhou was a strategic point on the route from western Yunnan to northern Myanmar.

Photograph: Zhao Min, 2019.

the Ming, the Sanchong deity once again “manifested itself as a divine being” but this time as Wang Ji 王驥, the Minister of War, not as Duan Siping. The text cited above indicates the substitution of Wang Ji for Duan Siping. Wang Ji rendered meritorious military service in the campaigns against the Mongols in the northwest on the Gansu frontier. Thus, the phrase “merits are recorded on the watchtowers (*que* 闕) in the north” refers to his role in these campaigns. The *Ming History* recorded that Wang Ji led a punitive expedition of 150,000 soldiers against Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> in 1441 (Zhengtong 6).<sup>34</sup> The phrase “suppresses southern lands from its position” refers to the campaigns that Wang Ji led against the Tai polity of Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> that lay south of Yunlong and Tengchong.

Though no extant historical sources mention consanguinity between the Duan native officials of Yunlong and the Duan royal family of the Dali kingdom, the former were closely associated with the swapping of the deities. To understand the connection, we must review the background to the appointment of the Duan as native officials in Yunlong. According to an account titled *Yunlong Ji Wang* 雲龍記往 written by a native of Yunlong named Dong Shanqing 董善慶, a tribute student (*gongsheng* 貢生) of 1710, the Tai (Baiyi 擺夷) ethnic group originally exercised power and influence along the Mekong (Lancang) River in Yunlong.<sup>35</sup> At an unknown point, the Achang 阿昌 replaced the Tai as local leaders and won over the Puman 蒲蠻 people residing there as well. All residents accepted Zao Kai 早慨, a man of the Achang ethnic group, as their leader. Zao Kai’s descendants held power for more than ten generations: “They expanded their territory and the population grew, and they traded with the Jinchi (Baoshan) and the Bo Kingdom 楚國 (Dali prefecture).” After another four or five generations of the Zao had passed during the Dali kingdom period, the Duan Emperor sent his men to soothe the Zao. The Zao surrendered and after “receiving the imperial mandate, submitted tribute annually”.<sup>36</sup> The Mongol-Yuan may have appointed the Zao family to serve as the Commander of the Yunlong Dian Military-cum-Civilian Route Command 雲龍甸軍民總管府. Because Zao Bao 早褒, the leader during the latter half of the fourteenth century, was negligent and proved inept at handling political affairs, the Zao appointed two sojourners (*kemin* 客民), named Li Guanzhang 李貫章 and Duan Bao 段保, to govern on his behalf. Later, Li Guanzhang plotted to usurp the power of his master, and by dishonesty and trickery, he seized Zao Bao’s iron seal of office (*tieyin* 鐵印) and then massacred nearly all the members of his family. Duan Bao fled from Yunlong and rendered meritorious service to the new dynasty by leading forty-plus indigenous men to fight at Dali on the Ming side. After the Ming conquest of western Yunnan, Duan Bao returned to Yunlong to help reinstate the Zao family. However, the indigenous assembly (*yizhong* 夷眾) elected him as their leader because no Zao survivors could be found. In appreciation for his service, the founding Ming Emperor appointed Duan Bao the Seal-holding Native Sub-prefect of Yunlong 雲龍州掌印土知州. Duan Bao rose to power as the first Native Official of Yunlong in the Ming because of his close association with the Zao family.<sup>37</sup>

The *Yunlong Ji Wang* testifies that the Duan Native Official of Yunlong worshipped Duan Siping 段思平 (938–944), the founder of the Dali kingdom, as the Sanchong deity from c.1380. The text reads:

When [Duan] Bao still served [the Achang leader Zao] Bao, the indigenous people were horrified to hear that a dignitary in military uniform mounted on a white horse covered by a yellow canopy was passing through their territory with an entourage of several tens of attendants. Thinking this strange, Zao Bao sent Duan Bao to meet him, and enquire about the purpose of his visit. The dignitary bowed and said, “The emperor of the new regime will govern this land together with you someday in the future.” Then, he vanished from sight.<sup>38</sup>

This was the first time Duan Bao encountered the divine dignitary. The second time occurred after his appointment as the Native Official of Yunlong and on the battlefield in 1383 (Hongwu 16) while fighting Pu Yandu 普顏篤, the rebel ensconced at Foguang stockade 佛光寨 near Dali.<sup>39</sup> Just when the battle was not proceeding in his favour, the dignitary suddenly appeared in military dress with 300-plus surprise attack troops. With their aid, Duan Bao managed to capture Pu Yandu and take the stockade. When questioned regarding his place of residence, the dignitary replied, “I live on Jizu Mountain.” The *Yunlong Ji Wang* recounts the circumstances that led Duan Bao to worship the dignitary on Jizu Mountain and finally adopt him as the protective deity of Yunlong as follows:

When Duan Bao journeyed to Jizu Mountain to visit the dignitary, the local people explained, “The deity of this mountain is Emperor Jizu”, so Duan Bao went to worship him. On returning home, he painted an image of Emperor Jizu, and used it as the territorial god of Yunlong (*Yunlong tuzhushen* 雲龍土主神).<sup>40</sup> People with illnesses recovered, if they prayed to it. Even now, the local people still worship it.<sup>41</sup>

According to these records, Emperor Jizu helped Duan Bao fulfil his duty to the Ming General Fu Youde and quell the rebellion. The implication is that Duan Bao only managed to capture Foguang stockade with his assistance. Emperor Jizu foretold that Duan Bao would become the future Native Official of Yunlong while he was still serving the Achang leader Zao Bao. Emperor Jizu prophesied that “the emperor of the new regime will govern this land together with you someday in the future”. Having enjoyed the protection of Emperor Jizu at critical points in his life, Duan Bao worshipped him as a deity. His journey to search for him on Jizu Mountain can be construed as a pilgrimage. With his deep faith, it was only natural that Duan Bao, as the Native Official of Yunlong, adopted Emperor Jizu as the territorial god of his domain. Emperor Jizu was the first god worshipped as the Sanchong deity and probably had associations with Buddhist beliefs dating back to the Dali kingdom era. The “manifestation of a divine being in Ming times” accorded with the belief in the samsāra, or repeated cycles of birth, misery and death caused by karma.

After the appointment of Duan Bao as the Native Official of Yunlong, the Achang Zao family moved southward and settled in the area around Caojian 漕澗. As in the Wujing salt-producing area and as at Jiuzhou, the residents of Caojian worshipped Sanchong as their territorial god. At Caojian, the Sanchong deity referred to Wang Ji, not Emperor Jizu. The following legend presently circulating among the local people of Caojian provides background on the deification of Wang Ji as the Sanchong deity. The legend commences with the Minister of War drawing up plans to construct a walled city at Tengchong on land overgrown with rattan plants. To obtain labourers to clear the ground, he shaped silver bullion into beads and then threw the beads amidst the rattan. Attracted by the high value of the silver (one bead was equivalent to one silver *yuan*), the local people eagerly chopped down the rattan to gather the beads. By the time that they had collected all the silver beads, no rattan remained standing. By subsequently burning the chopped rattan, Wang Ji obtained a piece of flatland suitable for constructing a walled city. Before the lunar new year, Wang Ji returned to his native home, leaving his eldest son to supervise the soldiers in the construction of the city. Being kind by nature, the eldest son granted the soldiers a holiday, allowing them to spend the New Year with their families too. On his return, Wang Ji killed his son because he thought that the soldiers would not come back to continue with the city's construction. However, all the soldiers resumed work after the New Year holiday out of fear that Wang Ji would execute them and their families if they did not. After all, the only person Wang Ji killed was his own son. After completing the construction of Tengchong city, the third son of Wang Ji erected a walled city at Caojian. He chose a site at a village known as Rende 仁德 in today's Caojian township. Because subordinates of the third son were evil, the angered local people retaliated by poisoning the food and water wells of Wang Ji, his family and his subordinates. Except for the third son, everyone died instantly. The third son did not, however, probably because he had eaten very little. He eventually died at Wangjiang Slope 望江坡 in Jiuzhou while attempting to report the poisoning to local officials. To commemorate him, a statue was made. This legend holds that Minister of War Wang Ji died after being poisoned by disgruntled local people.<sup>42</sup>

After the Zao migrated to Caojian, they changed their family name to Zuo 左. Descendants of the Zuo of Caojian at Tengchong branched out into two lines: the Zuo of Mingguang 明光左氏 and the Zuo of Cizhu 茨竹左氏. Southern Ming bureaucrats posted Zuo Wenwei 左文偉 to guard Mingguang in 1655 (Yongli 8) to prevent plundering by people known as "wild men (*yeren* 野人)". His mother Madame Liu 劉氏 and more than a hundred families of crossbowmen settled in Mingguang. Later, the Qing appointed Zuo Wenwei Native Company Commander of Mingguang (Tu Qianzong 土千總) in recognition of his meritorious service. The Qing commended his descendant Zuo Daxiong 左大雄 for resisting the British invasion of the Yunnan-Burmese border. For this meritorious service, the Qing conferred on him the title of Hereditary Native Assistant Brigade Commander of Mingguang 明光關世襲土守備. He gained jurisdiction over a larger area than before, his control now extending for more than 210 *li* and including

locations such as Dajiang 大江, Xiaojiang 小江, Chashan 茶山, Langsu 浪速 and Lisu 傣僳.<sup>43</sup> The Qing also rewarded Zuo men from Cizhu for good service to the state. For instance, Zuo Zheng Bang 左正邦 was awarded the title Native Squad Leader of Cizhu village (Cizhuzhai Tu Bazong 茨竹寨土把總) for meritorious service in the campaign against Cheng Jia 秤戛.<sup>44</sup> In 1747 (Qianlong 11), Zao Ke, a descendant of the original Senior Official at the Chashan Chief's Office (Chashan Zhangguan Si Zhangguan 茶山長官司長官), attacked Pianma 片馬, Yudong 魚洞 and other places to recover land that belonged to his ancestors when the Lisu ethnic group revolted at Chengjia 秤戛. Zuo Zhengbang was appointed hereditary Native Squad Leader for suppressing the Lisu rebellion, and he fought in Yunzhou during the Daoguang era. The Zuo family in Tengchong, who traced their line of descent to the Zuo Native Officials at Caojian, worshipped Wang Ji as the tutelary deity of their land.

The entry on local customs in the Kangxi edition of the Yunlong sub-prefecture gazetteer identifies the Sanchong deity as a Han General 漢將:

Ailing people sacrifice offerings, swine and sheep to thank their deity. They prepare distilled alcohol and paper ingots. They invite shamans (*wu* 巫) who say, "several scented boys dance and sing to amuse the god ... the sacrificial offering and the wine must be tasted before presentation to the god". According to legend, Sanchong was a Han General 漢將 who had been poisoned by indigenous people at Caojian; therefore the sacrificial offerings had to be presented in this way. This deity was extremely efficacious, and people came to give their thanks for answering their wishes every day.<sup>45</sup>

Sanchong worship became highly popular in Yunlong during the Qing dynasty. The Kangxi gazetteer notes that the Han General Sanchong had been "poisoned by indigenous people" and was later transmuted into a local tutelary god. The Guangxu edition of the Yunlong sub-prefecture gazetteer provides a more detailed account of the origin of Sanchong as follows:

The Sanchong Shrine 三崇祠, located on the slope of Delong Mountain 德龍山, was repaired by Gu Fangzong 顧芳宗, the sub-prefecture magistrate. Every year, sacrificial offerings were made in the spring and the autumn. Now, it has been shifted to the left of the sub-prefectural seat (*zhoushu* 州署). It was destroyed by bandits and rebuilt by the local people in 1875. The origin of the deity is reproduced here: the surname of the Sanchong deity is Wang 王 and his posthumous name was Ji 驥. He fought in the three campaigns against Longchuan 隴川 [Māng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup>], which was administered by Tengyue 騰越 but was located in today's Longchuan 隴川. In the first lunar month of 1441 (Zhengtong 6), Si Renfa, the Pacification Commissioner (*Xuanweishisi* 宣慰使司) of Longchuan, revolted and captured Tengchong. [The court] ordered Mu Sheng 沐晟 and Mu Ang to quell the rebellion, but they failed. The next punitive expeditions led by Jiang Gui 蔣貴 and Wang Ji ended in victory. [The Emperor] encoffed Jiang

Gui as the Marquis of Pacifying the West 定西侯 and enfeoffed Wang Ji as the Earl of Jingyuan 靖遠伯. During the third lunar month of 1448 (Zhengtong 13), Si Jifa 思機發, the younger brother of Si Renfa, occupied Meng Yang 孟養. He sent tribute but refused to pledge allegiance to the Ming court. So [the Emperor] ordered Wang Ji to take charge of military affairs with the title “General of Pacifying the Barbarians 平蠻將軍”, and he led 150,000 soldiers on a punitive expedition against Si Jifa. The army crossed the Jinsha River 金沙江 [Ayeyarwaddy River] in the spring of the following year and arrived at Guiku Mountain 鬼哭山. Though the army captured more than ten fortified stockades, Si Jifa managed to escape. The army passed through Meng Yang and arrived at Meng Nahai 孟那海, located west of the Jinsha River and over a thousand *li* from Longchuan. Si Jifa occupied Meng Yang again. So, assuming that he could not capture Si Jifa after all, Wang Ji erected a stone column (*shibiao* 石表) at the Jinsha River and made a vow regarding Si Lufa 思陸發 saying: “Only when the stones crumble and the river dries up will you be able to cross.” He then gathered his troops and returned. Today, [people] in Tengyue [Tengchong] worship Wang Ji as their deity.<sup>46</sup>

After the sub-prefectural seat of Yunlong shifted from Jiuzhou to Luoma salt well (today’s Baofeng Township 寶豐鎮), a Sanchong temple was constructed at the new location. Subsequently, Sanchong came to be worshipped as the local tutelary deity protecting the Luoma salt well. People in Tengchong also worshipped Wang Ji as the Sanchong god.

## Conclusion

The use of the salt-barter system to maintain the military in western Yunnan combined with the emergency situation created by the war with the Tai polity of Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> transformed local society. Salt and grain transportation served as catalysts for change. The early Ming state transformed salt, originally a commodity produced within the binary structure of state/state taxation and salt-makers, into a vital link in a complex system to support defence in western Yunnan. The Ming implemented the salt-barter system to feed the Guards and Battalions located in areas both under native official and under direct imperial administration. This arrangement provided the military with grain and local civilians with salt. However, it was founded on the premise that merchants from outside Yunnan would profit from delivering grain to the Guards and Battalions in return for the right to sell salt produced in western Yunnan. Thus, when the war with Mäng<sup>2</sup> Maaw<sup>2</sup> adversely affected the exchange rate between salt and grain, making the system unprofitable for merchants, the state had to turn to local magnates and in certain cases to local military officials for grain supplies. State incentives provided to local magnates to encourage them to sell grain ended up creating wealth among magnates and other groups with access to salt at the points of production. The prospect of opportunities in the new political and economic environment at

the local level attracted migrants. Changed circumstances caused indigenous people to leave Yunlong during the late fourteenth century. The *Yunlong Ji Wang* describes the circumstances after Duan Hai 段海 succeeded his father Duan Bao as Native Official in 1397 (Hongwu 30) as follows:

At the time, more and more wet fields were opened, and the numbers of merchants from outside (*keshang* 客商) grew daily. Indigenous people were inept at calculation, and the merchants from outside encroached on their interests, escalating the distress of the indigenous day by day; some died, and some moved out. The merchants from outside grew numerous, while the numbers of indigenous people gradually shrank.<sup>47</sup>

The proliferation of migrant merchants changed the ethnic composition of the local population. The new social environment created by the Ming state played a part in transforming local society in Yunlong during the late fourteenth century. The intricate interconnection between the state, merchants and native officials transformed the delivery of grain for the military and the sale of local salt into catalysts for change in western Yunnan local society.

The substitution of new gods for old in Yunlong and Tengchong illustrates how the early Ming state triggered a transformation in local religious beliefs. The replacement of the Dali kingdom deity Emperor Jizu, the original tutelary god of Yunlong, with the Ming official Wang Ji in Sanchong temples represented a substantial departure from past tradition. Emperor Jizu symbolised strong connections with the Dali kingdom that survived through Mongol-Yuan times. However, Wang Ji, as Minister of War and Regional Military Commander of Yunnan 雲南總兵官, represented the conquering Ming dynasty. A series of mergers and mixings occurred, and although the name Sanchong remained the same, the identity of the deity worshipped changed. This transmutation of divine identity testifies to the incorporation of Yunnan into Ming territory. Before 1382, most Chinese regarded Yunnan as an alien land inhabited by barbarians. However, the Ming displaced the boundary with the barbarians to more distant lands in Southeast Asia. In the Ming punitive campaigns against “indigenous rebellions” (*yiluan* 夷亂), local magnates displayed no empathy towards indigenous people. Instead, these magnates co-operated enthusiastically with the Ming, competing with rotating officials for official positions and emoluments. The strategy of using military campaigns to complement the tribute system in controlling ethnic groups in borders areas exerted a far-reaching effect on the history of Yunnan during the Ming period.

## Notes

- 1 Fan Ye, *Hou Han Shu*, p. 2851.
- 2 Pan Chuo, *Manshu*, *juan* 7, p. 189.
- 3 *Taizu Shilu*, p. 2240.
- 4 *Taizu Shilu*, pp. 2240–2241.

- 5 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 1931.
- 6 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 1935.
- 7 *Taizu Shilu*, pp. 2258–2259.
- 8 *Taizu Shilu*, p. 2370.
- 9 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 1934.
- 10 *Xuanzong Shilu*, p. 732.
- 11 *Xuanzong Shilu*, p. 1793.
- 12 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, pp. 8116–8117.
- 13 The memorial was submitted in the second lunar month of 1439; see *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 362.
- 14 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 130.
- 15 *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 1068.
- 16 *Yingzong Shilu*, pp. 1160–1161.
- 17 *Yingzong Shilu*, pp. 3455–3456.
- 18 *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 1000.
- 19 *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 1090.
- 20 *Yingzong Shilu*, pp. 5432–5433.
- 21 *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 4348.
- 22 Yang Nanjin 楊南金, “Dengchuan zhou Tuguan Zhizhou A Shi Wushi Mubiao 鄧川州土官知州阿氏五世墓表”, in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, Eds. (1993), Vol. 10, p. 71.
- 23 “Longmen Yi Shixing Sixi Canbei 龍門邑施姓世系殘碑” in Yang Shiyu and Zhang Shufang, Eds. (1993), Vol. 2, p. 110.
- 24 He Mengchun, “Qing Fuzhi Yongchang Fuzhi Shu 請復置永昌府治疏”, in Fang Guoyu, Ed. (1998), p. 644.
- 25 Li Yuanyang, *Wanli Yunnan Tongzhi*, *juan* 3, 4a–4b.
- 26 Li Siqian and Huang Yuanzhi, Eds., 1694 *Dali Fuzhi*, 12:7a–7b; 142. The original has 文物 for *wenwu*. I have corrected it to 文武.
- 27 *Xuanzong Shilu*, pp. 204–205.
- 28 *Xuanzong Shilu*, p. 1769.
- 29 *Yingzong Shilu*, p. 58.
- 30 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 7981.
- 31 *Ming Huiyao* 明會要, p. 770. Mao Qiling 毛奇齡:  

In the early years of Hongwu period, [the Emperor] conferred the official titles already held on the barbarians from the southwest who came to pledge allegiance, and investigated the troops, land taxes and conscript services, military guard and defence systems of the native officials.

See Mao Qiling 毛奇齡, *Mansi Hezhi* 蠻司合志, *juan* 1, 2a in Mao Qiling, *Mao Xihe Xiansheng Jingji*.
- 32 Li Yuanyang. *Wanli Yunnan Tongzhi*, *juan* 12, 10b.
- 33 *Taishang Shuo Sanchong Jing* 太上說三崇經, p. 9. The original text of the citation is as follows:  

崇山勝景，雞足靈峰。唐代出生，能以孤忠開國運，明時顯聖，恒將至德裕民生，與物為春澤沛，彌災歡眾志。代天宣化，扶良除暴洽輿情。功標北闕，位鎮南邦。大悲大願，大聖大慈，敕封三崇建國雞足佑民皇帝。
- 34 Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, p. 8117.
- 35 The text of the *Yunlong Ji Wang* 雲龍記往 is included in Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, pp. 1055–1065. According to the introduction to this text, a Qing man Wang Fengwen 王鳳文 revised and re-arranged Dong Shanqing’s original text into four *juan*. This text traces the history of the Duan Native Official in Yunlong from Duan Bao until 1707 (Kangxi 46).
- 36 Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, pp. 1059–1061.
- 37 Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, pp. 1059–1062.

- 38 Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, p. 1062.
- 39 Foguang stockade lay on the boundary between Eryuan and Heqing counties. Duan Bao led 1,000 indigenous troops to fight against Pu Yandu, and the Ming army conquered Foguang stockade during the seventh lunar month of 1383.
- 40 *Tuzhu* literally means “master of a certain territory”. Such territorial gods were very popular in the Dali area and remain so even today.
- 41 Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, pp. 1062–1063.
- 42 He Jianhua 何建華 (age 71) recounted the legend to me in July 2016. A Bai 白 person and a native of Caojian Township, He Jianhua was the caretaker of the Sanchong temple 三崇廟 in Caojian at the time.
- 43 Zuo Daxiong 左大雄, “*Mingji Gaofeng Shishou Caojian Wujie Jiangjun Muzhi Ming* 明季誥封世守漕澗武節將軍墓志銘”, in *Yunlong Wenshi Ziliao*, Vol. 1, p. 64.
- 44 Wang Song, *Daoguang Yunnan Zhichao*, p. 362. In addition, Zuo Zhengbang was awarded a Pacification Commission (*Xuanfu Si* 宣撫司) title for suppressing a Lisu 傣僳 rebellion in Diantan Shangjiang 滇灘上江 during the Daoguang era and for fighting at Yunzhou 雲州 (today’s Yun county in Lincang); see the *Tusi kao* 土司考 in the *Xinzuan Yunnan Tongzhi* 新纂雲南通志, p. 687.
- 45 Kangxi *Yunlong Zhouzhi*, 康熙雲龍州志, *juan* 5 Fengsu, p. 5.
- 46 Zhang Dexu *et al.*, Revised., Yang Wenkui, Ed., *Guangxu Yunlong Zhouzhi*. *Cisi* 祠祀, no pagination.
- 47 Wang Song, Ed., *Yunnan Beizhengzhi*, pp. 1063.

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