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Chapter 5  Contested Spaces: Wenchang Temple and Meng Da Shrine

Various new buildings, built in or near the walled city of Dongchuan from the mid-eighteenth century onward by new Han Chinese immigrants, especially powerful Han Chinese officials, testify to the area’s impressive economic and social development of the time, as analysed in some details in Chapter 2. As a frontier where indigenous and immigrant communities had the chance to meet, conflict and interact, the new buildings in Dongchuan created a contested space for people of different areas, occupations, and social classes. In this chapter, I analyse the architectural space of the ritual buildings in Dongchuan in order to discover how the immigrants created special spaces for consolidating their beliefs and identities, and in what way these ritual spaces at the same time brought about changes in local society. These new spaces and landscapes were created not only by the builders, but also by the people who, depending on their social and economic situation, engaged with them consciously or unconsciously in their everyday existence. A diversity of people coexisted in Dongchuan, and they created multiple interpretations of their landscape and space, instead of simply accepting official practices and representations. This chapter looks at two types of buildings in Dongchuan: temples for the deity Wenchang, and shrines devoted to the local hero Meng Da. Focusing on these buildings, I examine the situation of natives and immigrants in Dongchuan in the early Qing period during the process of reconstructing local ritual space and representing new landscapes.

1. Scholastic fortune? Wenchang temples in Dongchuan

1.1  Wenchang Palace on Golden Bell Mountain
During China’s imperial period, the most important thing in the lives of scholars and students was to pass the civil service examination. This provided a chance for upward social mobility; appointment to a career in the civil service meant a rich and noble life. They believed that this achievement was not just the result of their hard work and study, but was also affected by the ‘scholastic fortune’ (wenyun 文運) of the town or city where they lived. Coming from a town with great ‘scholastic fortune’, scholars were more likely to succeed both in the examination and in a future career. In a broad sense, this scholastic fortune did not just benefit the individual but also ensured a long period of peace and prosperity for the town or city, as emphasized in the writings of scholars and students throughout China.

According to these writings, Wenchang 文昌 and Kui 奎 are the most important deities for scholastic fortune. The Wenchang cult originally derived from the local deity Zitong 柘潼 of Sichuan in early China. After the adoption of the civil service examination by the state in the eleventh century, Zitong became popular among examination candidates and the educated elite because he answered their prayers with excellent exam results and successful careers. The constellation of six stars near the Big Dipper called Wenchang had also represented the scholastic achievement since the Tang dynasty. Beliefs in Zitong and the Wenchang constellation merged together after they received official recognition as Divine Lord of Wenchang Zitong in 1316 during the Yuan dynasty. Wenchang was worshipped in schools in addition to Confucius temples throughout the country from the fifteenth century. The other deity closely associated with Wenchang worship was the Kui star. As the star in the Big Dipper located furthest from the handle, Kui was treated as an associate of Wenchang, and was also worshipped throughout China. The Kui pavilion (kuige 奎閣 or Kui Star pavilion (kuixing 奎星閣) became an essential building in a Wenchang temple compound.

Buildings designed for worshipping these deities, such as Confucius temples, Wenchang temples (wenchang miao 文昌廟 or wenchang gong 文昌宮), the Kui Pavilion and the Peak of Literacy Pagoda (wenfeng ta 文峰塔) or Literacy Brush Pagoda (wenbi ta 文筆塔), all of which were expected to increase scholastic fortune, became the essential ritual buildings to establish in cities and towns. More importantly, such a building should not just be built to provide worshipping space for officials and aspiring elites, but the

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building itself should also be located in the ‘right’ place, as determined by geomantic observations. These typical buildings can also be found in Dongchuan. Around 1746 during the reign of Qianlong, a local official called Xu Zhaokun 許肇坤 ordered the construction of the Wenchang Temple and the Kuixing Pavilion on top of Golden Bell (jinzhong 金鐘) Mountain. Golden Bell Mountain is located just outside the southwest corner of the walled city (see Figs. 5.1 and 5.2). The name Golden Bell comes from the shape of this mountain, which rises sharply from the ground in the shape of a big bell. Based on a local geomancer’s suggestion, Xu Zhaokun believed these buildings on Golden Bell Mountain would increase the scholastic fortune of this city. Adding the Wenchang Temple on top of the mountain was a way of locking in the scholastic fortune of Dongchuan. Xu hoped that the temple would inspire students in the local community. Since then, thousands of people join the beautiful scene atop Golden Bell Mountain every third day of the second month for a large-scale annual temple festival to celebrate the birthday of the deity Wenchang. Walking up the winding stone staircase, visitors can enjoy the entire cityscape and the surrounding landscape, making Golden Bell Mountain the city’s most popular place to visit to this day.

However, what went on behind the story of Wenchang Temple is more complicated. Considering the new territory of Dongchuan a former ‘barbarians’ nest’, the Qing government’s purpose in promoting the Wenchang cult went far beyond increasing people’s chances in the civil service examinations. Geomantic theory could be easily manipulated by the government to fit its specific needs. Buildings related to scholastic fortune such as Wenchang Temple did not just allow local elites to feel connected to other civilized areas of the empire, but also represented the local government’s determination to build a new standard of morality. Having a look at local officials’ arguments surrounding the reconstruction of Wenchang Temple during the reign of Qianlong will reveal more clues as to how the Qing rebuilt the landscape in Dongchuan.

1.2 Geomancy? The Relocation of Wenchang Temple

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2 Elman, Benjamin A. A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 312, 326.
3 Xu Zhaokun 許肇坤, the magistrate in Huize county in Dongchuan between 1745 and1747 during Qianlong’s reign, who came from Zhejiang 浙江 province, DCFZ, 1761, juan 14: p. 3b.
5 DCFZ, 1761, juan 9: 1b.
Around 1757, during the reign of Qianlong, a controversy arose over the location for worshipping the deity Wenchang. According to the new prefect of Dongchuan prefecture, Fang Gui, Wenchang did not seem to give his blessing to students in Dongchuan, because few students had passed the imperial examinations during the ten years after Wenchang Temple was built. Local students started to complain that Golden Bell Mountain might not be a suitable location for the Wenchang cult. Fang Gui did not want to claim that geomancy alone was to blame for the disappointing examination results; he still believed that it might be a good idea to use the language of geomancy to convince and encourage local people to study assiduously. When a group of students came to beg of him to choose a new location for the Wenchang cult, he decided to fulfil their request.5

Based on classical geomantic works which he found suitable, Fang Gui claimed that Golden Bell Mountain was indeed not the proper location for the Wenchang cult. He then stated that the best location was described by the geomantic phrase ‘a dragon turns back to care for his mother’ (lailong gumu 來龍顧母), which refers to a mountain range turning back on itself at one end like a hook, resembling a dragon turning its head. Fang Gui recognized this location in Huayizhai 华宜寨 (which means a village suitable for Han Chinese), on the northeastern side outside of the walled city. He chose an auspicious day and had a new Wenchang Temple erected. Fang Gui was quite confident that with the help of this new Wenchang Temple, combined with hard work by the students themselves, they definitely would succeed in the examinations.7

Immediately after building the temple, Fang Gui also built an additional pagoda to increase the town’s scholastic fortune. This new pagoda was located ten li north of the walled village of Fish Cave (Yudong 魚洞). Fish Cave was named after local geographical features: ‘Water often flows out from inside the mountain, and there are fish inside.’8 In Fang Gui’s opinion, the two mountains that stood on either side of the Yili River near the village were very close together, which seemed an auspicious geomantic site, except for the fact that these mountains did not contain a high peak.9 In the eyes of Fang Gui, they were ungraceful and had a desolate and barren atmosphere. He and another local

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5 Fang Gui, ‘Yijian wenchanggong kuige yu huayizhai xu’ 修建文昌宮魁閣于華宜寨序, DCFZ, 1761, juan 20b: 44a–45a, especially 44a.
6 DCFZ, 1761, juan 4: 19a.
7 About the basic mountain situations in geomancy, see Feuchtwang, pp. 121-127.
official, Wang Zhuangtu 王壯闖, each donated part of their salary to build a pagoda on top of one of the mountains, presumably to make it taller and look like a high peak. The mountain after building the pagoda resembled the high mountain peak near Fish Cave village, and so made up for the geomantic defect of the low peaks of the two mountains. The height of this pagoda was four zhang and it had seven floors (see Fig. 5.3). The pagoda sat opposite the Kui Star Pavilion in Huayizhai, so that the two sites supported each other. Also, the shape of the pagoda resembled a huge skyscraping writing brush, was and it became Dongchuan's pride. Fang Gui wished that the students of Dongchuan who passed the imperial examinations would all gather at this pagoda and inscribe their names on the wall, which would make their stories and the pagoda an unforgettable legacy.

Fang Gui apparently was very satisfied with the two new buildings. As chief compiler of the 1761 Dongchuan gazetteer (although this might have been just a ceremonial title), Fang Gui’s opinions definitely influenced the content of the gazetteer since he was the prefect at that time. On the map of the prefecture in the gazetteer (Fig. 5.3), the new Wenchang Temple and the pagoda were both emphasized and drawn carefully. Thanks to these official buildings, the north side of the walled city seems to have become an important area with symbolic meaning in terms of scholastic fortune (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).

It seems that Fang Gui convinced himself to build the new temple of Wenchang and the pagoda based on geomantic theory, and he also gained a sense of pride from this project. However, most students in Dongchuan during that time were in fact not that interested in preparing for the examinations, but instead focused on the mining business. As I mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, in the early eighteenth century, the Qing government turned its attention to the copper mines of Yunnan for supplies to the imperial mints, and almost seventy percent of the country’s copper mines came from Dongchuan. During Dongchuan’s mining boom in the 1750s, the number of miners was estimated at ‘several tens of thousands’.

Yan Liang 嚴烺 was a teacher at the Xilin school (xilin shuyuan 西林書院) in Dongchuan during Qianlong’s reign (1735-1796). He observed that many people in

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10 DCFZ, 1761, juan 14: 4a.
12 Liao Ying 廖隱, ‘Dongchuanfu zhi shu xu’ 東川府志書序, DCFZ, 1761, xu, pp. 1a–4a, especially 1b–2a.
Dongchuan, including scholars and students, were all eager to work in the copper mining business instead of studying. To show his disdain about this state of affairs, Yan wrote a piece of calligraphy on a tablet entitled ‘Correct decorum’（zhengyi 正綂）and hung it on the wall in the classroom. The title comes from Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BC), who is traditionally seen as a leading Confucianist of the Han period. Yan stated that people should accept their moral responsibility instead of chasing profit and calculating their gains and losses. Yan Liang’s worries tell us that many students were attracted to the huge benefits of the mining business and had lost their enthusiasm for studying. Did Wenchang Temple or the choice of a proper location for it still have any meaning for any of them? Is it possible that the pursuit of scholastic fortune perhaps only stemmed from the personal interests of a few local officials and students, or perhaps only of Fang Gui himself?

1.3 Stories of Western and Eastern Wenchang Temple

According to Fang Gui, the new Wenchang Temple in the northeast replaced the old one in the west. However, it turns out that not only was the Wenchang Temple on Golden Bell Mountain not abandoned, but it has also been continually rebuilt and visited until the present day. A famous local tale about the Wenchang Temple on Golden Bell Mountain has been passed down through oral tradition. This story starts with a flood disaster in Dongchuan. It tells that once upon a time there were nine dragons that stirred up trouble and caused floods. The deity of the temple, Grandfather Wenchang (wenchang yeye 文昌爺爺), felt much sympathy for the people there. He transformed himself into an old man selling soybean-flour soup (xidoufen 稀豆粉), a typical local dish in northeastern Yunnan) on the streets. The nine dragons transformed themselves into nine young men who conspired to destroy the imperial examination hall. They stopped at Grandfather Wenchang’s booth and ordered some soybean-flour soup. Wenchang seized this opportunity and threw the soup pot over the nine dragons, covering them with it. The pot with the dragons inside later became Golden Bell Mountain. Wenchang sat on top of the mountain to hold them down in case they ran off. Since that time, there have not

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13 Dongchuan fu xuzhi, 1897, juan 3: pp. 15b–16a.
been any flood disasters.\textsuperscript{14} In another version of this tale, one detail about the iron pot is further emphasized. It is said that after Grandfather Wenchang suppressed the dragons with the iron pot, the iron pot gradually became a mountain. Local people considered that ‘Iron Pot Mountain’ was not a nice name for it, so they changed it to ‘Golden Bell Mountain.’\textsuperscript{15}

This well-known local story does not mention anything about scholastic fortune, but it emphasizes Wenchang the deity as protector of villages against floods. This story shows some similarities to tales of Zitong, who was a local deity in Sichuan before becoming a nationally recognized deity. The people of Zitong town believed that Zitong lived as a viper in a cave in Sevenfold Mountain and that he could summon thunder and storm. But if Zitong received adequate homage and worship, he would use his power against invaders instead of harming the locals.\textsuperscript{16} In the story of Wenchang in Dongchuan, dangerous and wicked dragons were seen as the cause of floods, and floods could be avoided by worshipping Wenchang on top of Golden Bell Mountain.\textsuperscript{17}

A similar story about a Wenchang temple in Huayizhai is still told today by people who live there. This story begins with an assassination. Once upon a time there was an incompetent Emperor in the capital. An old Taoist with hair flowing over his shoulders decided to assassinate the Emperor. He came to Wanizhai and lived in a stone cave to forge three swords with which to kill the Emperor. One day, however, an old Yi woman in this village was cursing a cockerel (\textit{zhouji}), which disturbed the swords in the stone cave. The swords, not yet finished, flew out of the cave, directly to the capital, dropping in front of the Emperor himself. And so the assassination attempt failed. The swords then flew back to Wanizhai. The old Taoist had left and was nowhere to be found. Later, a flood raged in Wanizhai and the Yi people who lived there figured out a solution by building a Wenchang temple on the mountain which had the cave where the swords were located. Wenchang kept the swords locked in the cave, and the

\textsuperscript{14} Wenchang fulong’ (文昌伏龍) collect by Li Kejin 李科金, in, \textit{Huize yiwen qüshi} (會澤瑣事), ed. by Guo Tianxi 郭天喜 (Huize: Huize xian jiansheju and Huize xian laonian shuhua shi xiehui, 2002), pp. 37-38.
\textsuperscript{15} Jinzhong shan qütan’ (金中山題訓), in \textit{Yunnan sheng huize xian diming zhí} (雲南省會澤縣地名志), ed. by Li Chunyi 李春毅 (Huize: Huize xian renmin zhengfu chuban, 1987), pp. 277-278.
\textsuperscript{16} Kleeman, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{17} Similar stories can be found in northeastern Yunnan during the Qing dynasty. One example comes from Zhenxiong, located to the northwest of Dongchuan. In the description of Hong hua gu 鴻六關 Mountain in Zhenxiong, it is said that the indigenous chieftain used to worship on this mountain by offering cattle. There is a stone plate and a stone axe on top of this mountain. The stone axe was used to butcher the cattle, whose blood was placed on the stone plate as an offering to a gigantic black snake, who would come to drink the blood; if the snake was offended, the growing crops would be crushed by hailstones. Zhenxiong shoushi, 1784, juan 5: 49b.
flood waters that had threatened the village retreated. According to this local story, many years later the people who lived in the walled city of Dongchuan built another Wenchang Temple on Golden Bell Mountain, and they moved the Wenchang statue which used to be in Wanizhai into this new Wenchang Temple on Golden Bell Mountain. This new temple was named Western Wenchang Temple (xi wenchang gong 西文昌宮); the Wenchang Temple in Wanizhai was named Eastern Wenchang Temple (dong wenchang gong 東文昌宮). The Eastern Wenchang Temple was built by the Yi people, while the Western Wenchang Temple was built by Han people. After that, the main street passing through the centre of the walled city marked the boundary between two Wenchang cults. The people that lived on the east side went to Eastern Wenchang Temple, the people on the west side to the Western Wenchang Temple. 18

This story comes from the oral tradition of people who live in Wanizhai. In fact, the names Huayizhai 華宜寨 and Wanizhai 拢泥寨 both refer to the same village located northeast of the walled city. Qing official records are not consistent in writing the name of this village, spelling Wani two different ways (捞泥, literally ‘digging out mud’, or 拢泥, literally ‘tiles and mud’). Nowadays it is known as Huan 华ian village. 19 These names all come from similarly pronounced words in the Yi language, ‘ɤo nê’ meaning ‘mountain’ and ‘community’. The name Huayi 华宜 is only mentioned in the 1761 gazetteer. Since Fang Gui put so much emphasis on this village, he is very likely the person who invented this name as a way of promoting his plan of building the new Wenchang Temple and the pagoda. As the new prefect of Dongchuan prefecture, Fang Gui probably wanted a more elegant name for this village. In the 1761 gazetteer, he used Huayizhai, meaning a village that is suitable for Han Chinese. 20

In this story from oral tradition, instead of bringing scholastic fortune to the students of Dongchuan, the Wenchang Temple in Huayizhai is a ritual space belonging to local Yi people that protects them from floods. In order to emphasize the importance of Eastern Wenchang Temple, Western Wenchang Temple is described as an imitation, which is a totally opposite story to the official version in the Dongchuan gazetteers. In fact, Wanizhai and other areas north of the walled city all used to belong to the chieftains of the indigenous communities. Wanizhai was one of the indigenous villages

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20 DCFZ, 1761, juan 8: p. 2b.
reported in E’ertai’s memorials to the throne at the time of the revolt during Yongzheng’s reign. According to the memorials of E’ertai, those villages near the Dongchuan walled city, such as Wani, Yishi, Daibu and Awang, contained fierce barbarians who were waiting for the opportunity to take over the walled city. In the ninth month of 1730, indigenous forces attempted to wrest control of Dongchuan from the Qing government. Although they did not manage to take the walled city in the end, they successfully took over the Qing garrisons in surrounding villages. According to E’ertai, they brutally killed the Qing soldiers and set fire to the villages. Food supplies to the walled city were disrupted, and government services and public utilities were seriously impaired. Not long afterwards, however, the Qing government defeated the indigenous tribes in a fierce battle. On the fourth day of the tenth month of 1730, the Qing army attacked Wanizhai and its surroundings, where the indigenous tribes were camped. After several battles, the Qing army defeated the indigenous tribes and they also set fire to the thirteen indigenous villages surrounding the walled city. This extremely tragic episode may very well have been the main reason for Fang Guí’s changing the name of Wanizhai to Huayizhai after the Qing army won this campaign.

Apart from Wanizhai, Fish Cave village where the pagoda was built was also a critical place for the indigenous community. One of the mountains of Fish Cave, ‘ungraceful’ in Fang Guí’s eyes, was called Flea Mountain (gezao). Local scholars thought that the reason for Flea Mountain’s name was that all the plants and grass that covered the mountain were being eaten by fleas and small insects. From the perspective of the indigenous community, gezao actually comes from the similar dezao which bears another meaning in the Yi language: de means ‘mountain’ and zao means an area for stationing troops. Therefore, the compiler may have invented a similar name gezao, perhaps making up the story about the fleas, thereby creating a misunderstanding, deliberately or not, about the history of this mountain.

The area north of the walled city, including Wanizhai, Gezao Mountain, and Fish Cave village, had been full of garrisons for the indigenous troops. These sites contained the memory of brutal battles between Qing and rebellious indigenous forces. Wanizhai

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22 YZZPZZ, vol. 19, p. 299. (YZ. 8/10/17)
23 Later, it was also given another beautiful name, Ricui Mountain (ㄖ薃亁, literally ‘this green mountain in daytime’).
24 DCFZ, 1761, juan 4: p. 6b.
25 DCFZ, 1735, p. 6.
and its surroundings to the north particularly drew the attention of Qing authorities because of their close relation to indigenous chieftains. After the Qing took control of Dongchuan, rebuilders such as Fang Gui not only gave this village a new, ‘nicer’ name relating to Han Chinese, but also drew upon geomantic theory to build a new Wenchang Temple in the area. Here, geomancy may have just been an excuse to support Fang Gui’s renaming and rebuilding actions, while his real intention was to impose a new ideology on locations associated with the former indigenous chieftains, both by reconstructing the ritual space and landscape and by representing them in images and essays in the local gazetteers. As a result, the landscape in which the indigenous community lived vanished from the official written records, although it no doubt remained alive in local people’s memories. A hidden reference to the notion of rebellion survives in the story of Eastern Wenchang Temple, in which the reason given for building a temple to Wenchang is to immobilize the swords which were intended to kill the Emperor.

This memory is also preserved in another local legend, about the Yelang 閠郎 princess of Golden Bell Mountain and Stone Drum Mountain, which stand facing each other. Yelang is recorded in the Shiji as the biggest indigenous regime in third-century Southwest China. In this story it is said that, during the Han dynasty, the princess of Yelang met and fell in love with a young man when she was visiting Golden Bell Mountain. This young man was the son of a Han official who had settled in Yelang. His surname was Shi 石 and he always took a small drum with him, which led the princess to call him by the nickname Shigu 石鼓 (Stone Drum). Their relationship was soon noticed by the son of the indigenous chieftain in Wanizhai. He thought that Shigu was trying to interfere with the marriage arrangement between him and the princess. So, he forbade the princess and Shigu to see each other. In the end, Shigu died on the mountain which faces Golden Bell Mountain, for he was never able to see his lover again. The princess, too, committed suicide by jumping from the top of Golden Bell Mountain. The mountain where Shigu died was named Stone Drum Mountain after him, and Stone Drum Mountain and Golden Bell Mountain would face each other forever. Later, when the Heavenly Jade Emperor heard of this story, as a punishment he made all the cockerels in Wanizhai forget how to crow in the morning and the people of Wanizhai could therefore never again see the daylight.

27 ‘Yeliang gongzhu’ 夜郎公主, in Huize yiwen qüshi 保澤逸文録, ed. by Guo Tianxi, pp. 33–35.
At the end of this story, because of the misconduct of the indigenous chieftain’s son, the people of Wanizhai received the punishment of losing their sunlight, which is possibly connected to the name ‘Black’ (wu or hei 黑) given to the indigenous people by the Qing government. More importantly, this story is closely connected to the religious space at the foot of Golden Bell Mountain as well. Associated with this religious space are less well-known stories about local events in earlier times, before the Qing reforms removing indigenous chieftains, as shown in the next section.

2. Meng Yan or Meng Da? The indigenous ritual space at the foot of Golden Bell Mountain

2.1 The cult of Meng Yan: indigenous general who surrendered to the Han

At the foot of Golden Bell Mountain, a shrine called Meng Yan 孟琰 is mentioned in the 1761 Dongchuan gazetteer. Meng Yan and Meng Huo 孟獲 were two famous indigenous chieftains of northeastern Yunnan in the third century. After the Han dynasty had gradually declined, Shu Han 蜀漢, one of the Three Kingdoms that claimed to have inherited the Han dynasty, established its reign based in Sichuan. In order to try and wrest control over China, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234), the chancellor of Shu Han, decided to start a campaign against the indigenous tribes in the south and eventually had this area under his control in 225. One of the rebellious indigenous tribes was led by the Meng family. A well-known tale about them says that Meng Huo was arrested and released seven times (qiqin qicong 七擒七縱). After his seventh release, Meng Huo, finally moved by Zhuge Liang’s talent and tolerance, submitted himself and took a vow of loyalty to the Shu Han. The Meng family was thereupon appointed to govern this area for the Shu Han until the Western Jin 西晉 dynasty ended the competition between the Three Kingdoms in 265.

Zhuge Liang’s southern campaign is emphasized as one of the important moments in the early history of interaction between Han Chinese and indigenous peoples in

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28 See Chapter 4.
Southwest China. Various stories about Zhuge Liang circulate in most parts of Yunnan. Wuhou shrines (wuhouci 武候祠, memorial shrines to Zhuge Liang) were established in many towns and villages. It is difficult to determine precisely when these shrines were built; they were probably built during the Ming dynasty in the sixteenth century. In any case, the dramatic story of how the rebellious Meng family achieved local leadership under the Shu Han, who claimed to be the successors of the Han dynasty, gradually became a popular story about how indigenous people living in Southwest China were willing to cooperate with Han Chinese officials.

Meng Yan, another indigenous leader of the Meng family, also surrendered to the Shu Han and was appointed by Zhuge Liang as a general to assist the Han army (fu han jiangjun 資漢將軍), which was, according to the compiler of the 1761 Dongchuan gazetteer, the reason for building a Meng Yan Shrine in Dongchuan. In its account of the Meng Yan Shrine, in the section about ‘ethnic groups’ (zhongren 种人), the 1761 gazetteer characterizes the people who came to worship Meng Yan as a group of indigenous people called ‘Meng people’ (mengren 孟人). The gazetteer says that Meng people were descended from the Mimo 莫族 race, and links this to the ethnic group of this name mentioned by the Han-dynasty historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. BC. 145-BC. 86, who wrote the earliest standard history of China) as belonging to the Meng Yan tribe. After Meng Yan became a general in the Han army, the gazetteer says that he gathered his people and granted them ten different Han Chinese surnames. The people from these ten families built the Meng Yan Shrine and have been worshipping together at the foot of Golden Bell Mountain ever since.

In this way, the compiler of the 1761 gazetteer indicates the connection of this shrine to the early history of the third-century surrender of rebellious indigenous tribes in northeastern Yunnan. He points out that an earlier version of the gazetteer from 1735 had mistakenly called this shrine Meng Da 孟達 instead of Meng Yan. The compiler argues in the section about ‘cults’ that although many people thought that this shrine was for worshipping Meng Da, that was a misunderstanding. From the story of Meng Da that he had heard, Meng Da was not a decent man because he had committed adultery.

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32 The ten surnames are Zhao 趙, Su 苏, Li 李, Qian 钱, Feng 冯, Bu 卜, Jin 金, Yang 杨, Zhang 张, Wang 王, Wu 吴.
33 DCFZ, 1761, juan 8: p.18b.
34 DCFZ, 1735, p. 17.
with a married indigenous woman and eventually caused her death (Da yin yifu zhisi 违淫夷婦致死). The compiler is quite convinced that Meng Da did not deserve to have a shrine at all. Meng Yan should now be seen as the one who supported the Han army, instead of Meng Da. This argument shows that the name of this shrine 'Meng Yan' was actually given by local officials to replace its former name. It reveals that Meng Da was an earlier name for this shrine at the foot of Golden Bell Mountain.

A conflicting version of this history shows up in the section on 'ethnic groups' in the 1735 gazetteer. Although the 1735 gazetteer mentions the same ten Han Chinese family names as the 1761 gazetteer, instead of being indigenous people of Meng Yan's tribe, the 1735 gazetteer identifies them as descendants of Han Chinese people who had been the followers of a Han Chinese official called Meng Da. During their long settlement in the area, they gradually transformed into an indigenous community (jiu, bianweiyi 久變為夷), and they still regularly worshipped Meng Da at the foot of Golden Bell Mountain. According to the 1735 gazetteer, it was these ten families who together rebuilt the cult of Meng Da in the thirteenth year of Yongzheng's reign in 1735 (Fig. 5.1).

This, then, is a different version of the early history of the ten families, in which they are claimed to be descendants of the Han Chinese official Meng Da, instead of the indigenous general Meng Yan as reported in the 1761 gazetteer. Unfortunately, official records give no further details about the connection between Meng Da and these ten families. But who was Meng Da? What was his relationship with the local indigenous woman? Was it Meng Da or Meng Yan who was worshipped by a group of people carrying ten Han Chinese surnames?

35 DCFZ, 1761, juan 7, p. 4a.
36 DCFZ, 1735, p. 17.
2.2. Meng Da and Shesai: the story about the origin of the Lu family

The gossip about the affair between Meng Da and an indigenous married woman, an affair that the compiler deplores in the 1761 gazetteer, can be found in more detail in the 1735 gazetteer. It turns out that Meng Da was closely involved with the chieftain of the indigenous Lu family in Dongchuan and he appears in the story about the ‘origin of the Lu family’ (lushi yuanliu 禄氏源流) which was recorded by local officials in the 1735 gazetteer.

According to this story, Dongchuan had been in the hands of the Lu family since the Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368-1398), the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, granted the title of indigenous prefect to the Lu family. After ten generations, Lu Xin 許信 inherited this official title and became the indigenous chieftain of Dongchuan. At that time, Meng Da, a Han assistant prefect, was sent to Dongchuan charged with collecting taxes (naliang tongpan 納糧通判). Shortly afterwards, Lu Xin noticed that his wife Shesai 播賽 was having an affair (sizhi 私之) with Meng Da. Offended and humiliated by Meng Da’s behaviour, Lu Xin ordered his subordinates to kill him. This action was treated as a rebellion against the Ming government and the Ming army soon crushed the ‘uprising’.
Lu Xin finally committed suicide and Shesai was then sent to the capital Beijing, where she lived for nine years. In Beijing, Shesai committed adultery again with some officials of the Imperial Bodyguard (yu jingyiwei mou sitong 廂揎凘歨等) and gave birth to two sons, the first son called Geshe 靄敧, the second one Yishi 彦式. After Shesai was pardoned and came back to Dongchuan, she had another son called Guni 古你, who was considered the eldest son of the Lu family and later inherited the title (Table 5.2).37

Table 5.2: The origins of the Lu family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lu Luzu</th>
<th>Ten generations (around 200 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An officer in Beijing</td>
<td>lover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unknown indigenous man in Dongchuan</td>
<td>couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meng Da</td>
<td>lover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yishi</td>
<td>Geshe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Xin [around 16th century]</td>
<td>Guli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unknown indigenous man in Dongchuan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The throne was not simply handed to the oldest male child. The one who would inherit the title needed to be born in Dongchuan and to prove his pedigree as chieftain of the Lu family. Considering that Shesai had had affairs with Han Chinese officials, some of her sons lost their right to inherit the title. In the eyes of indigenous groups, children that shared blood with Han Chinese were not suitable to inherit indigenous positions of power.

37 DCFZ, 1735, p. 9.
Similar controversies surrounding the inheritance of the title of indigenous prefect of Dongchuan can be found in other Ming dynasty records. In Tuguandibu (records of indigenous officials), Shesai is recorded as one of the earliest indigenous prefects of Dongchuan, in the late thirteenth century. These records say that the first indigenous prefect of Dongchuan was a woman named Gushenggu whose son Afa died very young, so the title of indigenous prefect was inherited by her son’s wife Shesai in 1387. After she died, her son Puhe inherited the title.

A complicated power struggle unfolded after Puhe’s death. At that time, his son Ade was very young. According to the records, the community had a meeting and decided to let Puhe’s brother Abo temporarily inherit the title until A’de had grown up, and then transfer power back to him. But their proposal was refused by the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1424). In 1412, the Yongle Emperor sent an order which said: ‘only his son [A’de] is allowed inheritance even if he is under ten years old. Since the brother [A’bo] has the trust of the barbarian people, he may be appointed as a leading official [shouling guan tou ming]’ which means an official subordinate to the prefect.

Later, in 1438, Pude, a paternal cousin of Ade, was recommended to inherit the title. After Pude died, his son Wubo, who could still trace his lineage back to the same paternal line, inherited the title, but in 1526 Lu Qing became the indigenous prefect. The central government’s opinion is recorded as: ‘Since Lu Qin also agrees to pay tax (nagu), he should be allowed to inherit the title by substitution (xiti).’ The word ‘substitution’ implies that Lu Qing was not a son or brother of Wubo, which suggests that another indigenous family had acquired enough power to take over the title of indigenous prefect. (See Table 5.3.)

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39 It is not clear who Pude’s father is, which may have caused the Ming state to hesitate about Pude’s legitimacy: Zhentong said later that ‘we still need to send an envoy to review. If anything was not true, it needs to be reported to me so I can make another decision.’ Tuguandibu, p. 65b
40 Tuguandibu, ca. 1520, in SKQS, vol. 599, juan b, p. 66a.
Table 5.3 The indigenous prefects of Dongchuan (Tuguandibu)

Mother: Gushenggu (r. 1387)

A Fa (?-?)

Wife: Shesai (1387–1406)

A’bo (? - ?)
Pu he (1406-141?)

A’dé (1412-?)

Cousin Pu de (1438–?)

Wubo (1459–?)

Lu Qing (1526- ?)
The list of Dongchuan indigenous prefects in Tuguandibu ends with Lu Qing. This indicates that there was controversy surrounding the title of indigenous prefect in Dongchuan in Lu Qing’s time. Indigenous political history after Lu Qing can be found in Mingshi (see Table 5.4), which shows similar internal disorder. When Lu Qing died, Lu Qing’s wife whose surname was An and her young son competed with an indigenous headman (yingzhang 营长) Adege 阿得革 and his son A’tang 阿堂 for the title of indigenous prefect. Ming officials intervened in this conflict in 1527 and took the decision which of them would be the next indigenous prefect by checking their parentage and background. A’tang then changed his younger son’s name to Lu Zhe 龙哲 to trick the Ming officials into believing that his son was a descendant of the Lu family. In this way, A’tang’s son was recognized by the Ming officials as the new indigenous prefect. But A’tang and his son’s behaviour was unacceptable to the other indigenous groups, which caused further internal conflict in Dongchuan.

This time, the Ming government had to send forces to put down the conflict. After this, a young boy called A’cai 阿采 was recognized by the Ming government as the new indigenous prefect. The government claimed that he was a sixth-generation descendant of the Lu family, which suggests that the legitimacy of A’cai’s inheritance of the title had been questioned. Considering that A’cai was still a young boy, it is very possible that there were other powerful indigenous headmen who took control of Dongchuan, claiming to act on behalf of A’cai. In short, all these internal conflicts in Dongchuan show that power was moving back and forth between the different indigenous groups, and that an important way to prove the legitimacy of their rule was to trace ancestral descent.

42 Adege then set fire to the headquarters of the indigenous prefect (but the location of the headquarters is not clear). And then he ran away, but was killed in Wuding. Mingshi, v.26, juan 311, p. 8009.
43 Mingshi, v.26, juan 311, p. 8010.
Table 5.4 The indigenous prefects of Dongchuan in *Mingshi*

- Lu Qing (ca. 1521-1557)
- Ms An (ca. 1521-1567)
- A dege (ca. 1557-?)
- Lu Wei (ca. 1521-1567)
- A tang (ca. 1557-?)
- Lu Zhe (ca. 1559-1561)
- A cai (1561-?)
- Lu Qianzhong (ca. 1620-1643)
- Lu Wanzhao (ca. 1643-1659)
In the early Qing dynasty, when the Qing army came to Yunnan in 1659, the indigenous prefect Lu Wanzhao of Dongchuan surrendered himself to the Qing army and told his own version of the lineage of the Lu family. This is the clearest version, because he established a continuous lineage of twelve generations including the names and ages of his ancestors (see Table 5.5). Interestingly, he mentioned that there had been a rebellion led by another indigenous headman (yingzhang) when Lu Xin was the indigenous prefect (1542–1556). And in the end, Lu Xin suppressed this rebellion. In Lu Wanzhao’s account, a woman named Shesai appears, but she is not the fourteenth-century indigenous prefect mentioned above, but is the wife of Lu Qing, who was the son of Lu Xin. Instead of being sent to Beijing and having a affair with Han officials, this Shesai is portrayed as a respectable indigenous chieftain who had a chance to go to the capital to pay tribute to the Emperor and came back proudly with lavish presents from the Emperor.

Comparing these different versions, the early history of powerful indigenous families proves to be tangled and complicated. Except in Lu Wanzhao’s account from his own perspective, the other versions describe political power moving around among different families. In the 1761 gazetteer, the compilers observe that the history of the Lu family is not clear, and they highly suspect that the story of Shesai’s affairs might have come from other indigenous tribes who made up these gossip stories to disgrace the Lu family in order to gain power for themselves. In the eyes of other indigenous tribes, since the Lu family had a disgraceful history, they should not be the only family who controlled power in Dongchuan. Therefore, it does not really matter whether these affairs actually happened or not. These stories reveal intense controversies surrounding power and prestige in the Dongchuan indigenous community.

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44 DCFZ, juan 14, pp. 16a-17a.
45 In the 1761 Dongchuan gazetteer, it says that Shesai died in the fortieth year of the reign of Longqing in the Ming dynasty. But Longqing’s reign was only six years in total (1567-1572). This could be a mistake made by the compiler, but it also reflects the ambiguous history of Shesai. DCFZ, 1761, juan 14: p. 16a.
46 DCFZ, 1761, juan 14, p. 17a.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefect</th>
<th>Start Year</th>
<th>End Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lu Shenggu</td>
<td>1383</td>
<td>1435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Duzai</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>1462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Luzu</td>
<td>1462</td>
<td>1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Xin</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>1542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Qing</td>
<td>1542</td>
<td>1556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu A' se</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Tianbo</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Yong</td>
<td>1603</td>
<td>1610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Tian'en</td>
<td>1610</td>
<td>1620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Chengzu</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>1628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Qianzhong</td>
<td>1628</td>
<td>1643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Wanzhao</td>
<td>1643</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shesai</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>1570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Yangu</td>
<td>1578</td>
<td>1587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 'Fake' Han Chinese people

Apart from illuminating the inheritance of the title of indigenous prefect, the story of Shesai also illustrates the history of relationships between Han Chinese immigrants and indigenous women, relationships which were very common throughout Southwest China. A similar narrative can be seen in the story of the ‘Yelang princess’ mentioned above: the son of the indigenous chieftain of Wanzhai interfered with the relationship between the indigenous Yelang princess and the son of the Han Chinese official. As discussed above, the ten families, who were classified by the government as an indigenous group of ‘Meng people’, worshipped a Han Chinese official named Meng Da, who had had a relationship with a noble indigenous woman. This suggests that the ten families were descendants of the intermarriage of Han Chinese and indigenous people. Therefore, the situation of Han Chinese people who were involved in the indigenous community needs to be discussed further.

In the story of the ‘Yelang princess’ and the gossip about Shesai, Shi Gu and Meng Da are both portrayed as Han Chinese officials who were sent by the central state. In fact, almost no Han Chinese officials were sent to northeastern Yunnan before the reform of the indigenous chieftain system started. Most Han Chinese officials stayed in the provincial capital or other big cities to supervise northeastern Yunnan area at a distance.47

Only a few Han Chinese scholars voluntarily came to live in the indigenous community. As newcomers, they served the indigenous regime instead of the Ming state. These scholars had failed to succeed in passing the imperial examination, so they grabbed a new opportunity by serving the indigenous regime. Indigenous chieftains were in need of Han Chinese scholars to assist with the diplomatic service to the central government. The Han Chinese scholars who worked for indigenous chieftains are referred to in the official records as Han Chinese heads of indigenous groups (Hanmu 漢目 or Hanba 漢把). The most successful of them was He Ruohai 何若海, who came from Zunyi 遵义 in Guizhou province. His initial aspiration was to enter politics in the capital Beijing. He indeed got an official position in the Ministry of Personnel (libu 吏部), but soon felt that his talents remained unnoticed, so he quit his job in Beijing and found

47 DCFZ, 1761, juan 20a: p. 47a.
employment with the indigenous regime in Yongning 水宁 of Guizhou province to help them deal with the Ming government. He later was appointed prime minister (chengxiang 秩相) by the joint indigenous chieftains of Yongning, Shuixi, Wusa, Wumeng, Dongchuan and Mangbu.⁴⁸

Among these Han Chinese scholars in the indigenous community, only a few are recorded in official Dongchuan records in the early Qing dynasty, such as Yu Lianjia 余联甲, Chen Qing 陈清 and Wu Yingxuan 吴应选, who was employed by Widow Lu and supported her in the bitter internal strife for the title of prefect and later convinced her to surrender to the Qing dynasty in exchange for her safety in 1697. These scholars are praised as ‘loyal’ (zhongyi 忠義) in the local gazetteer for assisting the Qing government during the reform of the indigenous chieftain system.⁴⁹ Of course, whenever the indigenous regimes were too weak to defend themselves against the Qing army, the local Han Chinese scholars chose the side of the Qing.

Along with the Han Chinese scholars, who belonged to the upper class of the indigenous community, another group of Han Chinese immigrants came into this area to cultivate new lands and to start new families. Similar to the ‘Meng people,’ ‘fake Han Chinese people’ are mentioned in the Zhaotong gazetteer in the section on ‘indigenous groups’. This group consisted of Han Chinese vagrants from other provinces who had no home and who came to the indigenous tribes. They had been accepted by the chieftains and married local girls. They had children and adapted to the lifestyle of the indigenous community. When the indigenous chieftain system was ended, they adjusted their dress, utensils and tools to the customs of Han Chinese people. Their wedding and funeral rituals were similar to those of Han Chinese people. However, this group of people is recorded as ‘fake Han Chinese people’ and they roused deep suspicion in the Qing government: ‘This group of people is the craftiest compared to other barbarians.’⁵⁰

The stories of the ‘Meng people’ and ‘fake Han Chinese people’ in the official records point to early immigrants coming into this difficult area. For all kinds of reasons, many of them could not afford to pay the taxes and corvée in their hometowns. They therefore had to give up their land and leave their hometowns to look for other places to survive. Having been through great hardship on their travels through this difficult environment,

⁴⁸ Wen Chunlai, pp. 122–123.
⁴⁹ DCFZ, 1761, juan 16: pp. 1b-2a.
⁵⁰ En'an xianzhi, 1762(1911), juan 5, p. 57.
they arrived in the sparsely populated, infertile mountainous landscape and settled with their new indigenous families. As a result, they abandoned their identity in the household registration system of their hometown, and became part of the local indigenous community.\(^{51}\) Thus, when Qing government officials arrived in the area to assess the new territory, this group of people was classified as a type of indigenous people. Moreover, the Qing considered them even more difficult to deal with than other indigenous groups because of their craftiness in making use of their dual identity.

Apart from looking for new land, another thing that convinced Han Chinese migrants to take the risk to come into indigenous mountain areas was the presence of all kinds of rich mineral resources.\(^ {52}\) According to Zhang Yunsui, the indigenous people that lived in the mining area did not know how to exploit the mines and obtain metal from rock by heating and smelting. Most of the mine workers, therefore, were Han Chinese who were quick to arrive whenever a new mine was discovered. The enormous profits of mining became the most important way of gaining a livelihood and thus attracted people from Jiangxi, Hubei, Guangdong, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Guizhou provinces, and other parts of Yunnan. Indigenous people assisted the mine workers by making charcoal for smelting. Their business was to provide supplies to the mine workers, such as vegetables, livestock and fowls.\(^ {53}\)

However, despite being profitable, the mining business was also enormously risky. Apart from the difficult environment and the complex indigenous society, the mineral deposits were not as rich as to ensure continuous business for the mines. In the worst case, the investor and his workers failed to locate a suitable mineral deposit after having spent all their funds. When the deposits of their mines ran out, they did not even have enough money to go back to their hometowns. Some of them had to stay in the mountains to live with indigenous tribes. For example, the ‘Bo people’ (boren 鴻人), mentioned in the 1761 Dongchuan gazetteer, were ‘the descendants of the furnace workers and miners from Jiangxi and Huguang (Hubei and Guangdong) provinces.

Although they live with their Bo wives’ families, they are not real Bo people.’\(^ {54}\) Thus,

\(^{51}\) Apart from voluntary immigrants, there are also stories telling that Han Chinese people, who were just passersby or travelling merchants, were sometimes kidnapped by the indigenous tribes and made their slaves, \textit{DCFZ}, 1761, \textit{juan} 8, p. 15a.

\(^{52}\) Wu Daxun 吳大勤, \textit{Diannan wenjian lu 滇南文獻錄}, 1792, in \textit{YSC}, vol. 12, p. 25.

\(^{53}\) ‘ZYSZG’ , p. 683. (QL. 11/5/9)

\(^{54}\) \textit{DCFZ}, 1761, \textit{juan} 8, pp. 64b-17a.
ironically, this group of people were not only considered ‘fake Han Chinese people’, but also ‘fake barbarian people’.

Similar situations arose in the entire Yunnan area in the eighteenth century, especially in areas with a high indigenous concentration, and became problematic for the Qing government. In the eighteenth century, a proposal was brought to the Qianlong Emperor to forbid marriage between Han Chinese and indigenous people in the western border area between Yunnan and Burma. The governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou, Li Shiyao 李侍堯, suggested that government officials should be placed along the frontier between Yunnan and Burma to check on the population. If there were people who had recently immigrated from Jiangxi and Hubei, they should immediately be forced to go back home. For the Han people who had always lived in these areas, it was necessary to register the households according to the household registration system (baojià 保甲). It should be strictly forbidden for these people to marry their indigenous neighbours.55

This strong policy forbidding intermarriage was aimed at the situation in the western border area, and shows the fear of losing control of the Qing government, which was obviously not happy about people living outside the reach of the household system. The government realized that intermarriage between Han Chinese and indigenous people placed these people and their descendants beyond government control, which meant these people could escape the tax system.

Although no strict official rules against intermarriage were proposed by the government of Dongchuan, local officials did not encourage intermarriage. Furthermore, they did not want to admit the possible existence of a Meng Da shrine, and tried to prove that Meng Yan was the proper ancestor to worship. Naturally, the story behind the shrine changed along with its name. Stories of romantic relationships between Han Chinese and indigenous women were no longer acceptable. Now, the story of a rebellious indigenous leader who surrendered to the Han kingdom became very suitable for this shrine. The change of the shrine’s name in 1761 reveals local officials’ intention of reconstructing the ritual landscape.

During the same time that some Han Chinese immigrants were becoming part of indigenous society in northeastern Yunnan, other groups of immigrants, who were lucky enough to succeed in their careers in mining or other forms of business, had different

55 ‘Daoguang Yunnan tongzhi shihuo zhi’ 道光雲南通志食貨志, 1835, comp. by Ruan Yuan 蘇元 and others, in Yunnan shilù congkan, ed. by Fang Guoyu and others, vol. 12, p. 271.
experiences in Dongchuan local society. As discussed in Chapter 2, the flourishing associations of travelling merchants built guild halls, a separate one for each province from which the merchants originated. They based their ritual activities, business and annual social meetings around these guild halls. The merchants thus kept their provincial identity, such as Jiangxi people, Huguan (Hubei and Guangdong) people, or Guizhou people, instead of becoming ‘barbarian’. Apart from the merchants’ associations, there were craftsmen’s associations based on occupation, such as carpenters and miners. In the case of Dongchuan, the guild halls therefore became an important architectural space where each association could supervise the travelling merchants from that particular province. These associations cooperated with local Qing officials and helped the government to supervise Han people coming to the city from outside.

In 1823, the Qing state decided to investigate the situation of Han immigrants. In his memoirs about his administrative career in southeastern Yunnan, Yibuli (伊布里 [1772-1843]), the governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou from 1833 to 1838, distinguished three kinds of immigrants in the borderlands. Some of them were farmers who moved there to work new land, and who made a living with their families in small agricultural villages. Yibuli said they should be registered in the household system and managed by the chiefs and officials of the village (lizhang xiangyu 督長鄉約). Those Han farmers who were tenants should be supervised by their landlords. Other immigrants had scattered across remote forests and valleys and did not have families. As they were difficult to register in the household registration system, they should be registered as individuals in the adult labour booklet (dingce 丁冊) and overseen by headmen (huotou 部首). Travelling merchants and craftsmen, finally, should be checked by the supervisors of affairs of the merchants’ associations (kezhang 客幫). Yibuli’s report provides evidence for Qing administrative strategies used to control the different groups of Han Chinese immigrants who lived in indigenous areas. These Han Chinese created living and ritual spaces for themselves, such as the guild halls of the travelling merchants. In the

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56 The title of the inscription on one of the steles in the Jiangxi Guild Hall reads: ‘Wanshougong yongqi cunshou souben 萬壽宮用其存守示本’, dated 1927. It describes the revision of the rules of association of Jiangxi Guild, and the whole text on that stele can be found in Huize wenwu zhi, ed. by Tao Zhengming and Mei Shibing, pp. 138-139.

57 Yibuli 伊布里, ‘Zhi ji cha liumin zhuan yi zhangcheng zou 重紀查流民轉宜長城走’, Weiyuan tingzi 衛院廷志, 1838, in Yunnan shilia congkan, ed. by Fang Guoyu and others, vol. 9, pp. 11–14. The editors state that this memorial was written by Yin Jisan 陰建善 (p. 11). However, Yin Jisan (1695-1771) could not possibly have written it down in 1838 (QSG, vol. 35, juan 307, pp. 10545-10549). It should be Yibuli (1772-1841), who was the governor-general of Yunnan province between 1833 and 1838. (About Yibuli, see QSG, vol. 38, juan 370, p. 11503-11505)
case of Dongchuan, Meng Da Shrine was a ritual space that served a group of people who were not registered with the travelling merchants’ or crafts associations. These worshippers at the shrine were the ‘ten families’. The deity they worshipped may have been either a noble Han official, as stated in the official version, or else a Han man who, according to oral tradition, married an indigenous woman. The ten families may have been descended from earlier immigrant men coming to Dongchuan to work the new land who started intermarrying with indigenous women before the Qing government took control of Dongchuan. Clearly, the Qing government could not accept that people were worshipping someone who was said to have married an indigenous woman. Therefore, they rewrote the story of Meng Da Shrine.

Conclusion

Located in a remote and complex area, the different groups of people in the walled city of Dongchuan can be described by Giersch’s term ‘motley throng’, which he uses in his observations on the towns on the southern frontier between China and Southeast Asia. He also illuminates the process of frontier urbanization: building, refurbishing and changing the ‘urbanscape’. Giersch also points out the symbolic meanings of official buildings such as Wenchang Temple. He states that the Wenchang cult was encouraged by the Qing with the aim of building up a cultured environment in which to introduce civilization to the local ‘barbarians’. Meanwhile, Giersch indicates that indigenous ritual space, such as the Tai temples in cities on the border between Yunnan and Burma, also kept their important role in the urban landscape and that Tai indigenous inhabitants developed their own institutions while participating in the establishment of imperial cultural institutions. By connecting the different buildings with different ethnic groups, Giersch portrays a crowded coexistence along the frontier. 58

However, the case studies in this chapter of the Wenchang temples and the Meng Da Shrine show that this coexistence of ethnic groups was more complex and subtle in terms of urbanscape. In Dongchuan, even in the case of an official building such as Wenchang Temple and its location on Golden Bell Mountain, which seemed to be completely based on its function as a temple for ‘scholastic fortune’, the story of the building from the local, indigenous perspective can be retold as a totally different

58 Giersch, pp. 127-158.
narrative. More importantly, this chapter has shown how those diverse interpretations of space and landscape ended up as a single, standard official version, for example, how the Meng Da Shrine was redefined by the imperial government as the Meng Yan shrine. The chapter has also shown why rich immigrants were encouraged to build their magnificent mansions (which can still be seen today: the Jianxi Guild Hall and the Huguang Guild Hall) in Dongchuan to clearly assert their Han identity instead of falling into the ambiguity of a mixed identity between 'barbarian' and Han Chinese.