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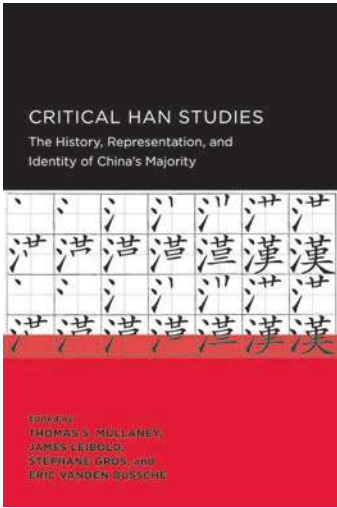
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Critical Han Studies

The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority

Edited by Thomas S. Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche

Published in association with the University of California Press

"This deeply historical, multidisciplinary volume consistently and fruitfully employs insights from critical race and whiteness studies in a new arena. In doing so it illuminates brightly how and when ideas about race and ethnicity

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"Offers a responsible, informative deconstruction of a monumental yet murky category. It is certain to have an enormous impact on the entire field of China studies." **VICTOR H. MAIR**, University of Pennsylvania

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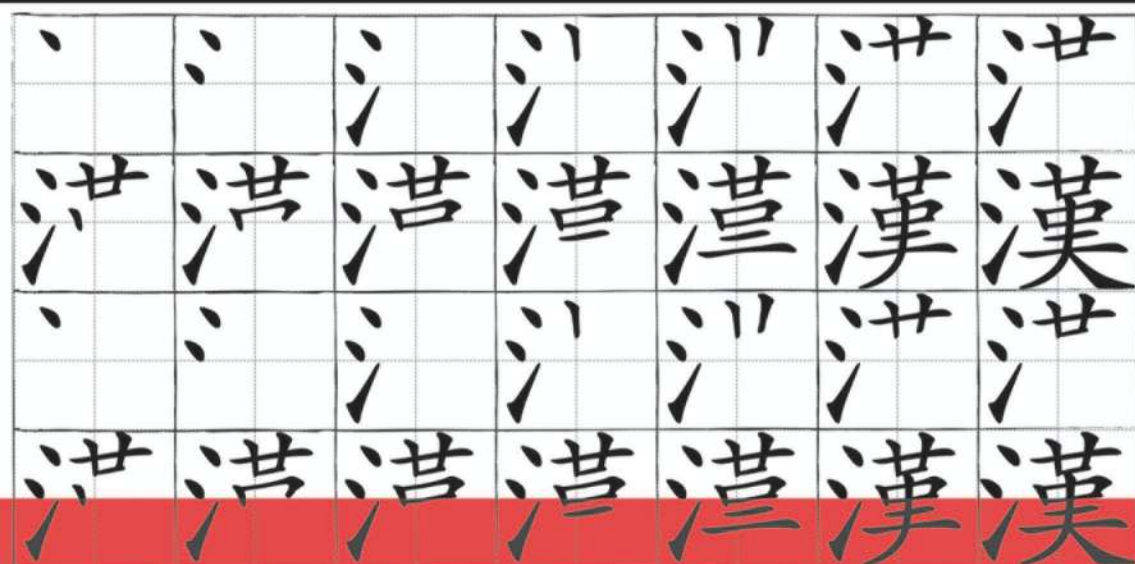
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New Perspectives on Chinese Culture and Society, 4

CRITICAL HAN STUDIES

The History, Representation, and
Identity of China's Majority



Edited by

THOMAS S. MULLANEY,
JAMES LEIBOLD,
STÉPHANE GROS, and
ERIC VANDEN BUSSCHE

Critical Han Studies

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and Identity of China's Majority*

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THOMAS S. MULLANEY

JAMES LEIBOLD

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ERIC VANDEN BUSSCHE



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Critical Han Studies

Introduction and Prolegomenon

Thomas S. Mullaney

Encompassing more than 90 percent of the populations of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, "Han" is one of the largest categories of collective identity in the world. On the mainland, Han is understood to be a type of *minzu*, or ethnonational group, a categorical designation that places it alongside the country's fifty-five other officially recognized *minzu*: the Zhuang, Yi, Uyghur, Bai, Tibetan, Miao, Lisu, and so forth. The category of Han, however, is of a size and constitution that sets it apart quite starkly from its "sibling nationalities." First of all, it claims among its members some 1.2 billion people, making it roughly seventy-six times larger than mainland China's next largest *minzu*, the Zhuang, and over *four hundred thousand* times larger than its smallest, the Lhoba. Whereas ethnic groups no doubt vary greatly in size, the incomparable immensity of Han—a category whose subethnic and geographic "branches" dwarf in size the population of some European countries—prompts us to reconsider the appropriateness of treating Han as the same type of collective identity as those with which it is normally compared. To compare Han to any given Non-Han *minzu* is in certain respects akin to comparing a phylum with a class, a class with an order, or an order with a family—that is, across entirely different taxonomic registers. Within China, Han is on a scale all its own, on par with such global categories as race, religion, and even continents.

The internal composition of the Han also raises questions as to its coherence as a single, unified category. Han encompasses eight immense speech communities—Guan (Mandarin), Wu, Yue, Xiang, Hakka, Gan, Southern Min, and Northern Min¹—which, although referred to as "dialects" (*fangyan*) in Chinese parlance, exhibit levels of mutual unintelligibility that would likely be treated as differences of language were they observed in the European context. As John DeFrancis has argued, the con-

cept of a singular Chinese language is an “abstraction” that contains a host of “mutually unintelligible forms of speech.”² And as Jerry Norman has argued, “There is probably as much difference between the dialects of Peking [Beijing] and Chaozhou as there is between Italian and French; the Hainan Min dialects are as different from the Xi’an dialect as Spanish is from Rumanian.”³

When we take these issues of scale and composition into account, the group now referred to in the singular as “Han” appears less like a coherent category of identity and more like an umbrella term encompassing a plurality of diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities. Confronted with this tension between its putative unity and empirical diversity, then, one might expect Han to have long been the object of critical and deconstructive analysis, akin to that which scholars have brought to bear on national, racial, ethnic, and even continental categories.⁴ If categories of race constitute inventions; national categories, imaginations; and continents, myths, then surely we can expect the same of Han. However, with the exception of a very limited number of studies, which will be addressed forthwith, our expectation would not be met. The category of Han has in large part managed to pass through the epoch of deconstruction largely unscathed if not fortified. On the whole, the traditional understanding of Han continues to echo the highly questionable idea that, as Eric Hobsbawn has phrased it, China is “composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogenous.”⁵

In an effort to conceptualize new approaches to the question of Han, some scholars have suggested looking outside of China for methodological inspiration and theoretical guidance. In particular, Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies have been invoked as potentially profitable sites of exploration, with scholars such as Dru Gladney, Stevan Harrell, and Susan Blum bringing into play an analogy of sorts between Han and White.⁶ While each of these scholars readily acknowledges the vast differences that separate these two categories of identity, and cautions us against facile or distorting comparisons,⁷ nevertheless there are certain concepts and methodological approaches that have been developed as part of the study of whiteness that encourage scholars of China to view the Han category in radically new ways. One family of concepts pertains, for example, to forms and phenomena of transparency, nonreflexivity, and dys-consciousness, central features of white self-conceptualization by which, as Barbara Flagg has argued, “whiteness attains opacity, becomes apparent to the white mind, only in relation to, and contrast with, the ‘color’ of non-whites.”⁸ Such concepts resonate powerfully with the practice of Han identity, one

that enjoys a powerful and hegemonic neutrality all its own. In many ways, the category of Han is, like that of white, “not only an identity, but the power to name and shape identities.”⁹ As Blum has shown, mainstream (Han) ethnic discourse has the power to designate certain Non-Han groups as more and less civilized, more and less dangerous, more and less exotic, and so forth, establishing a hierarchy in which each group is defined relationally to the Han apex. Whereas the Zhuang are often considered innocuous and more or less “just like Han,” for example, Islamic groups such as the Uyghurs are described and governed in far more aggressive and anxiety-ridden terms and methods. Moreover, these stereotypes have come to shape, not only Han perceptions and expectations of different Non-Han groups, but also the perceptions and expectations that different Non-Han groups maintain with regard to each other.¹⁰

In an effort to initiate a conversation about this category of identity, the Critical Han Studies Conference and Workshop was organized by Thomas S. Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Vanden Bussche. Hosted at Stanford University in April 2008, the conference brought together more than fifty scholars from eight countries. This gathering was simultaneously a venue for the presentation of new scholarship and a workshop for conceptualizing a new interdisciplinary field of study. It was out of this academic collaboration that the present volume emerges, not so much as a microcosm of the conference, but rather as an initial wave of new scholarship on the Han category designed to define certain key issues and to help inspire further research.¹¹ The eleven chapters featured in this volume represent the first step toward the creation of a new area of analysis, one provisionally titled “Critical Han Studies.”

To frame the overall volume, the balance of this introduction examines three thematic issues that factor heavily in the chapters herein: the relationship between the category of Han and those of China and Chinese, the origins of the Han category, and the historic formation of the Han category. While these three issues by no means exhaust the Han problematic, nevertheless they constitute foundational questions with which any investigation of Han will have to grapple.

HAN AND CHINA: THREE AMBIGUOUS RELATIONSHIPS

“Is it possible to be Chinese without being Han?” This question, posed by Joel Thoraval in his 1980 article, “Is the Chinese Concept of Nation ‘Obscure?’” encapsulates the first issue we will engage with here: the relationship of the category *Han* to those of *China* and *Chinese*.¹² There are at

least three ways in which Han and China are entangled: the long-standing commensuration between Han and “Chinese culture”; a similarly long-standing equivalence between Han and “the Chinese people”; and the intimate relationship between Han and the political-geographic concept of China. Each of these threads tugs at our analysis of Han, pulling us in directions that, if we are not chary, would make our examination of Han merely an examination of China by other means.

Han as Chinese Civilization. In 1952 Herold Wiens published his influential study *China's March into the Tropics*, charting the history of the southward expansion of Chinese culture and civilization into the Jiangnan region and the present-day territories of southwest China. For Wiens, the “China” in his title is contrasted against a second category appearing in the subtitle of the book: *Non-Han-Chinese*.¹³ In 1967 Wiens republished his study under a slightly different title, one that made this connection between the categories of Han and Chinese more direct. Renamed *Han Chinese Expansion in South China*, Wiens’s inclusion of this new qualifier “Han” made explicit the first of the three conceptual pairings with which we are concerned here: namely, Han as “Chinese civilization,” “Chinese culture,” and the like.¹⁴ As Wiens explains, the term *Han-Chinese* in his study is “used to mean what Li Chi [Li Ji] has called ‘sons of the Yellow Emperor’; that is, descendants of the earliest Wei and Yellow River Chinese, and, more loosely, Chinese and people of China long assimilated to and identified with the Yellow River civilization.”¹⁵ Well aware that *Han* was not the relevant ethnonym for many of the groups encompassed by this definition, he goes on to explain:

It is noteworthy that the people who call themselves “Han-jen” [Hanren], or “Han people” are those living in North and Central China to whom the Han Dynasty appeared to have contributed most in the way of a glorious heritage. The Chinese of Ling-nan (Kuang-tung [Guangdong] and Kuang-hsi [Guangxi]) call themselves “T’ang-jen” or “T’ang people”, because it was during the T’ang Dynasty that orthodox Chinese culture most deeply transformed the people of this region. Our term Han-Chinese, in its specialized use here, will be applied to orthodox Chinese from the time of the Yellow Emperor down, and therefore, includes the pre-Han orthodox Chinese as well as the orthodox culture adherents in Ling-nan.¹⁶

For Wiens, “Hanren” is a proxy, not only for all “orthodox Chinese” at a given moment in history, but all orthodox Chinese at all stages of history—even before the origination of the moniker “Hanren” itself. It is

at once a historically specific term (connected to the Han dynasty) and a transhistorical term that can be applied across the entire span of history from the second millennium B.C.E. to the present. The “Han” in “Han Chinese,” one might say, is redundant.

Since the publication of Wiens’s study, the use of the ethnonym *Han* has made deeper inroads into global discourse, both academic and popular. If travelogues at the turn of the twentieth century made only infrequent references to “Han” and absolutely none to “Non-Han”—preferring instead terms such as *Chinese*, *Chinamen*, and *Celestials*, on the one hand, and simply *Non-Chinese* on the other—those from recent years use the terms extensively.¹⁷ Far from detaching the category *Han* from that of Chinese, however, the overall effect has been to repackage “Chinese history” as “Han history.” In the reference work *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China*, for example, the entry for “Han” contains all the historical periods and person-ages traditionally associated with “Chinese history” more broadly. These include not only the Shang and Zhou dynasties but also twentieth-century periods and political formations such as the May Fourth Movement, the United Front, the Chinese Communist Party, and even post-Mao reforms.¹⁸ Suddenly, it would seem that everything from the Four Modernizations to the Tiananmen Square massacre has been ethnicized as Han. This commensuration of Han and Chinese has led to a virtual silence over the formation of Han identity as something apart from the overall discussion of “Chinese nationalism” more generally. As Dru Gladney has argued, “Few have questioned how the Han became the 91 percent majority in China,” with most “merely accepting the Han as representative of the Chinese in general.”¹⁹ One of the most vivid symbols we have of this commensuration is the linguistic term *Hanyu*. Although translated into English as “Chinese,” *Hanyu* translates more literally as “Han language,” precisely in the way that *Baiyu* translates as “Bai language,” *Miaoyu* as “Miao language,” and so forth. The fact that we so readily pair it not with a Han ethnocultural group but with China itself indicates the degree to which the connection between Han culture and Chinese culture has been naturalized.

The pervasiveness of the Han-Chinese identification obscures a host of issues, one of which is whether Han itself constitutes anything like a coherent category of identity in the first place. In the opening chapter of this volume, “Recentring China: The Cantonese in and beyond the Han,” Kevin Carrico questions this coherence through the example of regional identities below the surface of the Han, calling attention to an issue that few if any scholars have seriously addressed before: the simultaneously commonsense yet problematic location of the Cantonese within the Han.

Despite the fact that the Cantonese exhibit a host of cultural features that distinguish them from other subsets of the Han category, possess qualities that would seem to qualify them as a full-fledged *minzu* in their own right (shared territory, language, culture, and so forth), and have historically referred to themselves, as Carrico notes, as “Tang people” (Tangren/Tongyahn) rather than “Han people” (Hanren/Hohnyahn), their status as Han has been so thoroughly naturalized that it has failed to register as a problem in need of consideration. In the case of the Cantonese, then, the types of questions that Noel Ignatiev and Karen Brodtkin ask of Irish American and Jewish American communities—namely, how each came to be considered part of the category *White* from which they were originally excluded—have simply gone unasked.²⁰ No one has truly pursued the question of how the Cantonese became Han.²¹

Despite their categorization as part of China’s majority, are the Cantonese fully Han? Posing this question, Carrico’s chapter furthermore considers the underexamined yet easily perceptible products of this uncertain or anomalous integration—the persistent tensions between unity and differentiation that characterize Chinese national, ethnic, and regional imaginaries, represented in his chapter by Northern imaginings of a “wild” South, Southern marginalization of a “backwards” North, and an emerging material enactment of Han homogeneity in Han clothing. By analyzing these centrifugal and centripetal tensions dwelling below the surface of a seemingly homogeneous Han, Carrico’s study resonates with the work of Emily Honig on the Subei people, a group that, although officially recognized as Han, remains subject to a host of prejudices that, under any other circumstance, we would expect to be called “ethnic discrimination.”²² However, by virtue of the shared *minzu* status of those discriminating and those being discriminated against, at best we are permitted to use altogether confusing terms like “intraethnic discrimination.” Like Honig’s work, Carrico’s chapter alerts us to the complex internal structure of the Han category, one in which certain subsets of the Han occupy the peripheries of the category—liminal positions that call into question our oversimplified Han/Non-Han dichotomy.²³ Furthermore, Carrico’s chapter lends support to ongoing interventions made by Fred Blake, Dru Gladney, Jonathan Lipman, and Emily Honig, among others: namely, that it might be more accurate to think of “intra-Han” divisions and Han “subsets” in terms of ethnic difference and ethnic groups.²⁴

Han as the Bioracial Category of Chinese. To compound the complexity of its relationship with “China,” the category of Han is also frequently

commensurated with the bioracial concept of the Chinese people or the Chinese race. In her chapter, "On Not Looking Chinese: Does 'Mixed Race' Decenter the Han from Chineseness?" Emma J. Teng explores the powerful yet largely unexplored bioracial dimensions of the putatively ethnic Han category, weighing it against the category's more frequently discussed cultural aspects. Teng focuses on the experiences of Eurasian individuals, so-called biracial figures, to ask the question: "Does the Eurasian disrupt conventional notions of Chinese identity, decentering the Han, or does this marginal figure simply help to define the center, establishing the 'pure' Han Chinese subject as the embodiment of quintessential Chineseness?"²⁵

As Teng demonstrates through her treatment of two prominent Eurasian women, Irene Cheng and Han Suyin, cultural factors such as proficiency in the Chinese language and the ability to navigate the complex and rule-governed playing field of Chinese familial relations weighed heavily in the experience of both women in their attempts to identify with their Chinese heritage. Both Cheng and Han made concerted efforts to perform Chineseness, a complex process that involved speaking Chinese, using Chinese names, attending Chinese schools, eating Chinese food, demonstrating loyalty to China, and other activities geared toward the acquisition of what Teng calls "Chinese cultural capital."²⁶ Assessing the powerfully cultural focus of such activities, Teng explains that we might conclude that "it is not necessary to 'look Chinese' to be Chinese." Phenotype, it would seem, is trumped by "claims of cultural affiliation (demonstrated through practices such as clothing, ancestor worship, or even drinking green tea), language, hometown, and political allegiance." All of this would lead us to conclude that Han, as well as the category *Chinese* with which it is so intimately connected, is fundamentally different from American conceptions of whiteness, insofar as "'impurity' does not automatically exclude one from we-group membership."²⁷

As Teng proceeds to explain, however, the cultural dimensions of Han Chinese take us only so far, as evidenced by the experience of both Irene Cheng and Han Suyin. For both women, biological concepts of pure and impure blood factored heavily. Among the most important factors determining whether others accepted them as Chinese was that of paternal inheritance, that is, the central importance of whether one's father was or was not Chinese. Despite her complete fluency in all things Chinese, for example, Han Suyin nevertheless encountered those who used her "foreign blood" as a means of excluding her (either wholly or partially) from the category with which she identified. She was, at the end of the day, a *hunxue'er*—a person of "mixed blood."

The experience of the Eurasian, Teng concludes, demonstrates that the categories of Han and Chinese are not simply cultural and that the biology/culture dichotomy is a false one. For Teng, the “mixedness” of the Chinese Eurasian “only serves to underscore the importance of ‘blood’ and descent in defining group membership.” “Moreover,” Teng continues, “Chinese concepts of identity often implicitly link cultural inheritance to genetic inheritance.”²⁸ Han is a fugitive concept, one that can retreat into biology when pursued from the side of culture, and can retreat into culture when pursued from the side of biology. It straddles the ethnoracial divide, and from this ambivalence derives an elusive resilience.

Han as the Political-Geographic Category of China. If the putatively ethnic category of Han has long been infused with a distinctly bioracial discourse, so too has it been intimately connected to the political-geographic concept “China.” Unlike the two relationships outlined above, however, this particular Han–China connection is not one of interchangeability or transference. On the contrary, the relationship between Han and the Chinese polity is one in which Han derives immense support from its association with Chinese state power, and at the same time finds itself closely monitored and even bound by this very same state power.

To understand the first half of this ambivalent relationship, one in which the category of Han derives resilience through its deep connections with the political-geographic concept of China, we are guided in this volume by Zhihong Chen and her chapter, “‘Climate’s Moral Economy’: Geography, Race, and the Han in Early Republican China.” Chen investigates the role that the discourse of environmental determinism played in the ethnoracial ideology of early twentieth-century Chinese social scientists and nationalists. Drawing on the work of two influential early geographers—Zhu Kezhen (1890–1974) and Zhang Qiyun (1900–1985)—Chen traces the links these and other thinkers drew between bioracial concepts of a Han Chinese people and the territory of China itself, through the bridging concepts of climate and topography. As Chen demonstrates, the discourse of environmental determinism was central to the racial discourse of Han. Chinese geographers drew upon notions of environmental “endowment” popularized by such figures as Robert DeCourcy Ward (1867–1931), with some portraying the “Yellow” Han Chinese race as superior to that of the “white” Euro-Americans in its natural capacity to settle in a wide variety of climates. Unlike the white race, some argued, the Han was endowed with the capacity to weather starkly different environments, ranging from the brutal cold of the northern steppe to the tropical zones of Southeast

Asia. Some nationalists took this idea as an omen of an Asian future, dominated by Han.

To the extent that Han derives political and symbolic power from its deep connection to the Chinese “geo-body,”²⁹ so too is it bound and confined by this geo-body in ways that require our attention. The clearest way to witness such confinement is by considering what happens to the Han category when we try to take it beyond the political boundaries of either the People’s Republic of China or the Republic of China, or to recently reacquired territories such as Hong Kong and Macau. In a word, it disappears. For example, were one forced to assign an ethnonymic term to American Chinatowns, urban enclaves with deep historical connections to traditionally “Han” areas of southeast China, the operative term would not be Han but Tang or Hua (we see this, for example, in the Chinese term for “Chinatown,” *Tangren jie*, or Tang People Street). In Vietnam, ethnically Chinese citizens are categorized, not as “Han” or as its Vietnamese analog, but rather under the rubric “Hoa” or “Hoa Kieu” (derived from the Chinese terms *Hua* and *Huaqiao*). In fact, nowhere besides mainland China and Taiwan does the term “Han” function as an ethnonymic designation. There exists no such thing as “overseas Han.” By contrast, the other categories with which “Han” is so often commensurated—such as “ethnic Chinese”—travels widely and freely across the globe. The same is true of related terms, such as “overseas Chinese” and the “Chinese diaspora.”

The strict political-geographic parameters of “Han” are further illustrated when we consider its counterpart, “Non-Han.” Whereas one might expect “Non-Han” to apply to any and all groups that are not Han—a category that would include not only Chinese minorities but also, let us say, Irish communities in New York—we find that it too is confined to the political territories of mainland China and Taiwan. As a person of mixed western European heritage, for example, I the author am *not Han*, but I am most certainly *not Non-Han*. Were I to identify with the identity of Non-Han, I would at the same time be identifying myself implicitly as a citizen of China or Taiwan, insofar as the political and ethnonational concepts are inseparable. By contrast, the category *Non-Chinese*—which, based on the simple principle of transitivity, theoretically should behave along the same lines as “Non-Han”—is not confined in the same manner. “Non-Chinese” can refer both to Non-Han Chinese minorities and to communities without any political or cultural connections to China.

To understand this second half of the ambivalent relationship between the category of Han and the political-geographic entity of China, we are

guided in this volume by Uradyn E. Bulag and his chapter, “Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China.” As he argues, turn-of-the-century revolutionaries and post-imperial state builders had a troubled and tenuous relationship with the very idea of Han. Initially, revolutionaries fostered and employed it as a radical discourse by which to marshal support against the Manchu Qing. After the revolution, however, the imperatives of consolidation called for the attenuation if not neutralization of Han chauvinism and jingoistic fervor lest these alienate the many other groups in China who were both Non-Han and Non-Manchu (such as the Tibetans and Mongols).³⁰

Following the revolution of 1949, which ushered in Communist rule on the mainland, CCP leaders maintained this vigilant concern over the threat of what they termed “Great Han Chauvinism” (modeled after the Russian-Soviet concept “Great Russian Chauvinism”). Indeed, it is fair to say that “Han Chauvinism” was considered equally if not more threatening to political stability than “Local Nationalism” (i.e., minority nationalism or separatism). As Mao articulated the problem in 1956: “We say China is a country vast in territory, rich in resources and large in population; as a matter of fact, it is the Han nationality whose population is large and the minority nationalities whose territory is vast and whose resources are rich.”³¹ Confronted with this inescapable political reality—that wherever went China’s Non-Han peoples, so too went vast expanses of territory—the Chinese Communists adopted a posture that, at first glance, seems like an oxymoron: a vociferous opposition to Han hegemony, mounted and policed by a single-Party hegemonic political regime that, by any demographic measure one could imagine, was itself a Han regime. Not only were Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping all members of the Han nationality (as are Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao), but so too has the overwhelming majority of members of the National People’s Congress hailed from the country’s majority nationality.³² Was this not a contradiction in terms?

The Party’s answer to this, as Bulag explains, is in the negative, a stance that they are able to make by way of their invention of a novel ethnopolitical subject position: the “Good Han.” “Good Han” (*hao Hanren*) was part of what Bulag describes as the Party’s attempt to practice “good ethnicity”: a progressive, cosmopolitan, even transcendent type of Han ethnonational identity that stood apart from its perceived opposite, that of the “Bad Han” (*huai Hanren*). If “Bad Han” was the Han of assimilationism, bigotry, and chauvinism, “Good Han” was the Han of multinational camaraderie and multiculturalism, of mutual respect and collaborative development, and one that made possible a new form of political alliance: an alliance between

Good Han and Good Non-Han against a common set of politically refracted ethnic enemies, namely, the “Bad Han” or “Great Han Chauvinists” that would seek to make China a country of Han and the “Bad Non-Han” or “Local Nationalists” that would follow the path of “separatism” and “split-tism.” Despite the clear and long-standing complicity between “Han” and the political-geographic entity that is “China,” we can never lose sight of the ways in which the concept of Han has threatened (and continues to threaten) Chinese state stability. It is not a purely symbiotic relationship, insofar as the host is often at risk of being overtaken.

ANCIENT HERITAGE VERSUS INVENTED TRADITION: THE ORIGINS OF THE HAN CATEGORY

Having analyzed the ties that bind the category of Han to those of Chinese ethnicity, race, and polity, we turn now to consider Han as a category unto itself—one that, although intimately connected to China, cannot be understood simply as a proxy for China. In doing so, one of the central questions is that of Han origins. Did the category of Han as we understand it today originate in distant antiquity or in the recent past? Does it enjoy an ancient heritage, or is it an invented tradition?³³ This pair of questions can be parsed further to ask: to what extent should we limit our investigation of the “Han minzu” to the specific components that form the compound: Han and *minzu*. Is it justifiable to seek Han origins *avant la lettre*, before “Han” was used to refer to, as Elliott phrases it in this volume, “a label for people who, by descent, language, and cultural practice, were recognized as Central Plains dwellers (or their descendants),” and before the rather recent neologism *minzu*?³⁴ Is it fair to search through the annals of history in search of categories that “behave” in ways comparable to the modern-day Han, even if they are called Hua, Min, Neidiren, or otherwise? Or, on the other hand, must we place a certain emphasis on discourse, and set our threshold of similarity such that it disallows all but the precise terminological compound “Han minzu”?

In China, the most long-standing and dominant paradigm regarding Han origins is represented in this volume in the chapter by Xu Jieshun, “Understanding the Snowball Theory of the Han Nationality.” Xu, who is the founding director of the Han Nationality Research Center in Guangxi, has long argued on behalf of the antiquity of Han, tracing its origins to the distant recesses of the Chinese past—well before the terms *minzu* and *Han* existed or were used in the manner one sees in the contemporary period.³⁵ In his chapter in this volume, which for many readers will likely

be the most conservative and perhaps controversial piece in the collection, Xu traces what he regards as the origins of Han over three periods. The first encompasses the Xia dynasty (21st c.–18th c. B.C.E.), the Shang dynasty (17th c.–1027 B.C.E.), and the Western Zhou (1122–771 B.C.E.). The second stretches from the Spring and Autumn period (772–476 B.C.E.) to the Qin (221–206 B.C.E.). The third is roughly coterminous with the Western Han (206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.). Dividing his narrative into this tripartite chronology, Xu describes the origins of Han as a process of accretion in which increasing numbers of groups undergo a process of sinicization and amalgamation. Xu Jieshun is not alone in advocating this theory. To the contrary, he has been careful to present himself, not as the originator of this idea, but merely as a vehicle for its elaboration. In particular, Xu cites the eminent sociologist and ethnologist Fei Xiaotong as his intellectual forebear, attributing the name of his theory—the “snowball theory of Han”—to an analogy first made by Fei Xiaotong.³⁶

One of the key dimensions of Xu’s approach to Han is his highly permissive treatment of the term *Han* itself. Xu does not limit his examination of the “Han minzu” to either of the component terms *minzu* or *Han* (the first of which did not appear in Chinese until around the turn of the twentieth century, and the latter of which did not stabilize until the late imperial period). In the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, for example, Xu focuses primarily on the “Huaxia,” a category of identity he regards as the original nucleus of the later Han category. Xu assigns precise populations to the group at different phases of China’s imperial history: 80 million to 90 million in the early Tang; exactly 104,410,000 in the year 1109; 150 million in 1601; and 400 million in 1851.³⁷

Whereas the snowball theory of Han has long enjoyed dominance in mainland Chinese scholarship, serious challenges have been raised. Kai-wing Chow has argued that the Han category of today is just over one century old, having originated in the discourse of antidynastic revolutionaries in the late Qing (1644–1911). Thoroughly disillusioned with the ailing Qing state—headed by Manchu rulers who had conquered the territories of China in the first half of the seventeenth century—radicals such as Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong openly proclaimed their goal of expelling the “barbarians” and restoring China to its rightful owners: the ethnic Chinese, newly conceptualized under the moniker “Hanzu.”³⁸

Unlike Xu and Fei, then, Chow places particular emphasis on what Pierre Bourdieu has called the “symbolic power” of naming.³⁹ For Chow, the neologism “Han minzu” is not a neutral or passive descriptor by which an already existing community was finally referenced but rather an active

ingredient in the formation of this community. For all their resemblance, “Hanmin” and other earlier categories were quite unlike that of “Han minzu,” Chow argues, with the former categories being understood as highly malleable and which permitted the inclusion of members based on their ability to master certain cultural practices. By contrast, the new concept of Han minzu, or “Hanzu,” exhibited the sort of biological essentialism and exclusionism characteristic of racial categories. Frank Dikötter has argued along similar lines, portraying late imperial revolutionaries as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei as having “reconfigured folk notions of patrilineal descent into a racial discourse which represented all inhabitants of China as the descendants of the Yellow Emperor.”⁴⁰ Dru Gladney has also made such claims, arguing that, while the “notion of Han ren (Han person) has clearly existed for many centuries . . . the notion of Han minzu (Han nationality) is an entirely modern phenomenon, which arose with the shift from Chinese empire to modern nation-state.”⁴¹

Chow ties this conceptual invention to the political exigencies of the late imperial period, and most directly, to the activities of anti-Manchu/anti-Qing revolutionaries. The concept of Hanzu enabled anti-Manchu radicals to articulate a form of essentialized, unbridgeable difference between the Manchu ruling elite and the non-Manchu imperial subjects that was impossible to argue using the logic and terminology of either traditional, cultural notions of identity or recently imported Social Darwinist conceptualizations in which the world’s population was understood as a hierarchy of white, yellow, black, brown, and red races. The Manchus, as many scholars have observed, had in large part mastered the forms and vocabulary of traditional Chinese regimes, securing their legitimacy through an active patronage of, for example, Confucian ethics and the civil service exam.⁴² As such, their rule was difficult if not impossible to delegitimize using culture-based arguments. At the same time, other available avenues of revolutionary discourse—in particular the increasingly global concept of race war articulated in the Social Darwinism of Huxley and others—were similarly insufficient, due to the Manchu’s and Han’s common designation as members of the same “Yellow Race.”⁴³ To articulate their anti-Manchu stance, Chow argues, the revolutionaries imagined into existence the novel, culturalist-cum-racial concept of Hanzu, a form of “Han racism,” designed to “undermine the reformists’ ground for continual support for the Manchu regime.”⁴⁴ Outfitted with this amalgamated idea of culture-race, Liang Qichao and others were able to articulate their opposition to Manchu rule as the cultural equivalent of racial struggle.⁴⁵

Here we arrive at an impasse, with one group of scholars arguing for

the ancient origins of Han and the other for quite modern ones—arguments articulated, as we have seen, via the former camp’s highly flexible treatment of discourse and the latter camp’s emphasis on the symbolic and causal power of language. In our attempt to navigate this highly polarized historiography, we are helped by two of the authors in this volume. First, in her chapter, “Antiquarian as Ethnographer: Han Ethnicity in Early China Studies,” Tamara Chin draws upon the insights of both sides of this debate to offer a bifocal analysis of Han origins. Through one lens, Chin focuses on the *longue durée* of Chinese history, employing the same ancient Chinese sources that one finds in the work of Xu Jieshun and his cohort. Through her second lens, however, Chin also investigates the history of discursive and epistemological paradigms through which, at different points in history, such questions of origin and ancient identity have been posed and answered. In particular, she examines classical studies, archaeology, and ethnology. Drawing insight and inspiration from Jean Comaroff, Chin argues on behalf of “a dialogic ethnographic relation between the observer and the observed” in which we focus, not exclusively on either discourse or practice, but on the relationship between “the antiquarian and the archive.”⁴⁶ Scholars within the tradition of classical studies developed theories based on their own assumptions about cultural transformability, as well as on their own assumptions about what dimensions of experience did and did not constitute evidence worthy of analysis. In later periods, archaeologists and ethnologists developed still different theories of origin and ancient identity, ones grounded in their own particular sets of assumptions. As this bifocal analysis reveals, the question of Han origins can never be separated from its historical context and should always be considered as a function of a relationship between presents and pasts. In this respect, Chin does not refute so much as reconcile the observations of Fei Xiaotong and Xu Jieshun, on the one hand, and those of Kai-wing Chow and Dru Gladney, on the other.

A similarly bifocal approach is advocated by Nicholas Tapp in his chapter, “The Han Joker in the Pack: Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature.” Like Kai-wing Chow, Dru Gladney, and others, Tapp emphasizes the significance of the modern provenance of the term *minzu*, proposing that this new concept “changes the nature of the playing field entirely”—a claim that is well supported when one considers the history of the term and its East Asian analogs (*minzoku* in Japan, *minjok* in Korea). In Japan, as Kevin Doak explains, the term *minzoku* underwent important and sometimes thorough transmutations, at one point used to legitimate the Japanese colonial empire and then, after 1945, repurposed by

scholars in an effort to distance the discipline of ethnology (*minzokugaku*) from the legacy of Japanese militarism. For turn-of-the-century Korean nationalists such as Sin Ch'ae-ho, the articulation and narrative elaboration of *minjok* represented what Andre Schmid has described as "the rediscovery of an objective unit that centuries of historians before him had failed to recognize," and an entity without which history itself did not exist.⁴⁷ In China, the term "*minzu*" was at the center of a fierce ethnopolitical struggle between Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists over the essential nature of the Chinese nation.⁴⁸ For all of these reasons, the history of the discourse of *minzu*, *minzoku*, and *minjok* constitutes a vibrant and highly contested conceptual terrain in its own right. These terms are not simply neutral nomenclature through which "real" histories were articulated. Rather, discourses of race and ethnicity, and in particular the historical vicissitudes of load-bearing concepts such as *minzu*, have to be considered in our analysis of the people and communities whose lives are being described and prescribed by such discourses.⁴⁹

While recognizing the significance of the neologism *minzu*, however, Tapp ultimately stands at a critical distance with respect to both Chow and Gladney. Rather than portray the emergence of *minzu* as a break with the past—as a discursive formation that completely displaced earlier modes of collective identity—Tapp argues that the fuller significance of *minzu* is the way in which it has formed the governing logic of a new ethnopolitical environment in which "prior forms of social difference rearrange themselves in relation to the new terms."⁵⁰ This new discourse of *minzu* permeates, fuses with, and in some cases entirely refashions on-the-ground cultural relations to the point where, as Tapp contends, "a new configuration of cultural identity and social difference is brought about, in which ethnic and *minzu* identity is almost inextricably intertwined."⁵¹

With such considerations in mind, then, the present volume represents an attempt to move beyond the binary "new Han" and "ancient Han." For those who emphasize the centrality of discourse, this volume challenges us to engage seriously with the idea of Han *avant la lettre*. At the same time, it cautions us to avoid simplistic commensurations between "Han" and premodern categories of identity that bear some relation with it (e.g., Hua, Huaxia, Min). The same holds true for the category of *minzu*, a modern neologism whose historical significance is occluded when we commensurate it with earlier notions of collectivity (*zhong, lei*, etc.). Incorporating both approaches, then, the goal of a Critical Han Studies subfield is to take these premodern categories seriously while critically investigating their historical relationship to the contemporary category of Han.

CONVERGENCE VERSUS DIFFERENTIATION:
THE PROBLEM OF HAN FORMATION

Closely connected to the problem of Han origins is the problem of Han formations. To understand the dominant paradigm of Han ethnogenesis, we must return once again to the chapter in this volume by Xu Jieshun. As noted above, Xu is among the most recent and prolific members of a long scholarly lineage, one that traces the origins of Han to the most distant recesses of the ancient past. Within this paradigm, Han ethnogenesis is understood as a multi-millennium process of aggregation (hence the image of an ever-rolling, ever-expanding snowball that is formed through its encounter with, and interiorization of, once exterior entities). Among Xu's intellectual forebears, this same theory has been framed in slightly different terms, sometimes as "plurality and unity" (*duoyuan yiti*),⁵² other times as "integrated ethnic heterogeneity" (*heji cuozu zhi zu*), and elsewhere simply as "sinicization." Specific terminology notwithstanding, such descriptions of Han ethnogenesis are based on the idea that Han possesses what Xu describes as the "rare ability to absorb"⁵³—a unique magnetism whereby, to borrow the language of one of Xu's intellectual predecessors, increasing numbers of "you-groups" are gradually enveloped and made part of the ever-expanding Han "we-group" category.⁵⁴

Among those who argue on behalf of a more recent provenance of the Han category, we encounter a remarkably different set of paradigms, orientations, and commitments. One of the most important is the idea that, when examining the emergence, formation, and stabilization of a given identity, it is necessary to, as Fredrik Barth has framed it most succinctly, "shift the focus of investigation from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance."⁵⁵ As another scholar has framed it, identity is "essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group."⁵⁶ A set of people who, to an outsider, might appear to share a great deal in common linguistically, culturally, or otherwise can through acts of "ascription and identification"⁵⁷ just as readily organize themselves into a multiplicity of communities. And for those who, from an exogenous perspective, might seem to differ markedly from one another, can just as readily converge upon a common identity. From this perspective, identity formation is a process that takes place "between and not inside"⁵⁸ communities of people, with stable categories of identity being the products of interaction wherein selves and others form through simultaneous processes of identification and differentiation.

For scholars who regard ethnicity from this vantage point, the question

of Han ethnogenesis takes shape very differently than in the “magnetic Han” paradigm. Rather than ask, Who has been absorbed to create Han? the question becomes, In response or contradistinction to whom was Han first articulated as a relevant category? While scholars have proposed different answers to this question, nevertheless there exists a certain basic consensus: namely, that the category of Han has taken shape by means of a “default contrast with all other ethnic groups,”⁵⁹ is a by-product of “internal orientalism,”⁶⁰ and is a “residual category comprised of all those who were not barbarians.”⁶¹ In this way, Han representation of non-Han groups “reflects the objectivizing of a ‘majority’ nationality discourse that parallels the valorization of gender and political hierarchies.”⁶² Phrased differently, this approach views Han, one might say, as “Non-Non-Han”: a formation of selfhood achieved by means of the representation of one’s Other.⁶³

As the reader no doubt gleans from these passages, this approach to Han draws heavily upon Edward Said’s seminal text *Orientalism*, applying Said’s analysis of the West/East binary to that of Han/Non-Han. In much the same way that Said’s Orientalists were, through their representations of the “Orient,” engaging in the formation of “a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans as against all ‘those’ non-Europeans,”⁶⁴ members of the Han majority are understood here as constituting their own identity by means of representing their imagined alter ego, the Non-Han. Whereas Han stereotypes may differ depending on the particular Non-Han group in question—with some groups being considered “colorful” and “harmless” (the Yi and Naxi) and others troublesome and “resistant” (Wa, Hui, and Tibetan)—nevertheless, all of these representations of minorities are, for scholars who advance this theory of Han, ultimately Han imaginings projected upon minority communities for the purpose of an inverted self-representation.⁶⁵

In our attempt to navigate these competing views of Han ethnogenesis—one that portrays it as a *long durée* process of coagulation extending back many millennia, and the other locating it in a much more contemporary process of differentiation—we are guided by four of the contributing authors. Taken together, these chapters trace a long historical arc that in many ways reconciles, not only the opposing sides of the convergence-differentiation binary, but also the ancient-modern binary around which it is centered. In the first of these chapters, “*Hushuo*: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese,” Mark Elliott places the Barthian problematic familiar to the “new Han” or “Han as Non-Non-Han” school within a historical period more typically associated with the “ancient” or “magnetic Han” approach of Fei Xiaotong, Xu Jieshun, and others. Adopting Barth’s approach to boundary formation, Elliott poses the ques-

tion: “who is (or was) the Other to the Han Self?”⁶⁶ The Other he has in mind is not a generic or transtemporal “Non-Han” identity, however, but rather the foundational Other, the first Other in contradistinction to which the category of Han began to take shape along the lines we now recognize as ethnic.

In his search for the original distinction, Elliott identifies as the most likely candidate the “Northern Other” around the time of the Wei dynasty (386–534), the “nomadic pastoralists living north of the central plains, in early times known in the Chinese language most familiarly as *Hu*, and by other names as well, such as *Fan*, *Yi*, and *Lu*.”⁶⁷ He proposes that the use of “Han” in an ethnonymic rather than political sense—that is, as a community sharing certain perceived connections of language, culture, and so forth, rather than simply political subjects of a particular dynastic regime—was not an invention of those who would come to be designated as Han. Instead, Elliott argues that “*Han* was a *Hu* proposition” and that “the ethnic unity of the Chinese as seen in the adoption of *Han* to describe themselves is really more the *product* of repeated efforts to create and foster political unity than it is the *source* of that unity.”⁶⁸ Elliott does not permit his concern with origins to become a preoccupation, however, and is quick to point out that Han-as-ethnonym, while first proposed by the *Hu*, fell out of use in the centuries following. Displacing “Han” was the category “*Hua*,” which, like Han, was also not restricted to political subjects but designated a community of people conceptualized along linguistic, cultural, and genealogical lines.

In his chapter, “From Subjects to Han: The Rise of Han as Identity in Nineteenth-Century Southwest China,” C. Patterson Giersch picks up on the story of Han where Elliott leaves off, albeit in a different part of the empire and many centuries later. Building on his pathbreaking work on the southwestern-most corner of the empire in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Giersch shows how the category of Han came to be used by immigrant groups during the course of their competition with indigenous communities for economic resources.⁶⁹ Originally, these communities had identified not as Han but as people of particular native places back in the Chinese interior. It was only when these native-place communities saw the strategic value of a pan-regional alliance that they began to employ “Han” in a broader, ethnonymic manner similar to that of the contemporary period, and the period outlined by Elliott. Taking account of both Elliott’s and Giersch’s insights, then, we begin to appreciate how the formation of a Han category at a given point in history did not ensure its even persistence through time. In Elliott’s historical period, we witness a time

before the inception of Han-as-ethnonym, its early formulation, and then its subsequent disappearance. In the later period examined by Giersch, we also witness a time when Han-as-ethnonym was not a salient category of collective identity, followed by its emergence under a very particular set of political and economic circumstances.

In his chapter, "Searching for Han: Early Twentieth-Century Narratives of Chinese Origins and Development," James Leibold offers an analysis that in many ways connects the imperial periods addressed by Elliott, Giersch, and Xu and the post-imperial period examined by Gladney, Chow, and others. In the work of the early twentieth-century theorists addressed by Leibold, we begin to see the bridge between the inchoate collectivities that were invoked and abandoned situationally by the actors in Elliott's and Giersch's chapters and the more vociferously articulated, elaborated, and defended concept examined by those who emphasize the modern provenance of the Han category. The category that Leibold's theorists were engaged in building was no longer a matter of temporary, political expediency—a way of marshaling greater forces for the purposes of expropriation. While no doubt still grounded in this network of political and economic relationships, in the early twentieth century the categories of Han, Hua, and others begin to take on much deeper symbolic meanings. In fleshing out what they saw as the essence of this category, the theorists in Leibold's study were engaged in what might be termed the "ideological work" of fortifying the Han category.

At the same time, this emerging family of categories was by no means standardized, even at this late date. Leibold traces three forks in the road where theorists of this massive collectivity debated its attributes and arrived at different conclusions. Was it of foreign origin, or was it indigenous to the soil of modern-day China? Was it monogenic or polygenic? Was it singular or plural? In each case, the diversity of responses outlined by Leibold prompts us to view the early twentieth-century concept of Han as unstable, one that had yet to acquire a definite shape. At the same time, this diversity of conceptualizations of Han was undergirded by a shared and expanding consensus about the existence of some sort of massive category of collective identity, the contours of which coincided to a significant extent with the boundaries of the Han category as it is understood today. There was by this time, it seems, an imagined community in search of a name.

Finally, Christopher Vasantkumar encourages us to reconsider long-held assumptions regarding the unidirectionality and inevitability of Hanization, training his focus on subsets of the Chinese majority he describes

as culturally, linguistically, and regionally “out-of-place.” Centered in northwest China, Vasantkumar’s chapter, “Han at *Minzu*’s Edges: What Critical Han Studies Can Learn from China’s ‘Little Tibet,’” concentrates on those members of the Han who operate in social and cultural contexts where they constitute the minority, and where divisions between Han and Non-Han are far more ambiguous than in “China proper.” Inspired by the work of Robert Ekvall, Vasantkumar emphasizes the importance of examining cultural relationships “not just between people who would now be classed as members of separate *minzu*, but, compellingly, between peoples who would now be classed as members of the same ethnic grouping.” By doing so, the author argues, one finds “complex ways in which inter- and intra-*minzu* relations and distinctions result in the emergence of unstable blocs of sentiment, belonging and exclusion.” One such complex bloc is the important common ground Vasantkumar discovers between local Han and Tibetans, one founded positively via each community’s reliance on the local lingua franca of the Amdo Tibetan dialect, as well as negatively by means of their shared distrust and prejudice toward the local Hui community. As Vasantkumar argues, such common grounds would likely escape our analysis should we adhere to the strict, *minzu*-based model that prompts us to assume that “ethnic relations” always entails those relationships that obtain between the different, recognized *minzu* of the PRC. Vasantkumar’s fieldwork also highlights what he terms the “differences between local Han and their more urban(e) coethnics,”⁷⁰ differences that derive from matters of economic class and region. As the author argues, there are strong cultural, even ethnic, differences between urban and rural Han, with the latter often being “lumped in with minorities in contradistinction to developed urbanites.”⁷¹ The study of Han therefore depends upon examining this category in situ rather than in abstraction.

The three issues examined here are central to the analysis of Han, but by no means do they exhaust the problematic in its entirety. There remain vitally important problems that will require our attention, not the least of which center on questions of gender, language, diaspora, and comparative studies of Han alongside other global majority and/or hegemonic categories of identity. The scope of any one volume is necessarily limited, however, and thus we leave this essential work to others. With these issues and caveats in mind, then, we now turn to the eleven studies that together comprise our exploration of this new domain of critical inquiry.

PART I

Han and China

1. Recentering China

The Cantonese in and beyond the Han

Kevin Carrico

Why have the Cantonese people been labeled Han? When you fill out an official form, don't you hesitate to check the "Han" box? Actually, the Han nationality doesn't even exist! . . . Any and all of our concerns are justified, for there have been cases throughout history of great races such as our own [the Cantonese] disappearing from the face of this earth. If Guangdong continues to be held under Northern rule, it will become just another place where everyone speaks their Northern hick dialect!

"Independence for the Outstanding Cantonese Nationality!"¹

Who are the people of Guangdong Province? Despite differences according to the Stalinist standards of nationality applied in the People's Republic of China, why are the Cantonese considered Han citizens of Guangdong Province and not members of a Cantonese minority nationality? Although labels of nationality, identity, and majority or minority status are imagined as expressing some sort of essential or primordial character, nothing in these domains should be taken for granted as natural. This chapter aims to reassess the idea of a singular Han nationality by considering the underexamined factor of regional identities, with a focus upon the status of the Cantonese people within China. A review of Guangdong's shifting relations with the historical centers of the Chinese polity provides a framework for considering three distinct manifestations of Cantonese-ness in the present (external marginalization, self-differentiation, and willed assimilation). These examples, ranging from the past to the present, serve to provide a new perspective on identity and majority-minority relations by demonstrating (1) how national macro-narratives, such as those associated with "the Han" (Hanren or Hanzu) or indeed "the Chinese" (Zhongguoren or Zhonghua minzu), overlook the multidimensional nature of identity, as well as (2) how the contested and power-laden nature of identity drives the perpetual reproduction of this form of recognizing the self and the other.

REASSESSING IDENTITY

According to official characterizations, the Han is China's majority nationality, comprising roughly 94 percent of the total populace.² Guangdong Province, located in the south of China, is described as a 99 percent Han province, not unlike many of the country's other coastal provinces.³ Each of these claims appears to present an authoritative picture of reality; however, upon closer examination, such one-dimensional, statistical, and thus static portrayals conceal more than they reveal. Historically, the notion of Hanren, or Han people, has existed for centuries as a culturalist label differentiating the descendants of the "great" and "benevolent" Han dynasty (ca. 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) from the purported barbarians on the peripheries of the empire.⁴ However, as Mark Elliott shows in his chapter in this volume, our present conceptualization of the Han cannot simply be projected backward throughout history. The Han as we perceive it today (Han minzu) is in fact a recent development, first promoted by nationalists in the waning years of the Qing dynasty (late 19th–early 20th century) as a means of articulating and differentiating a seemingly singular Chinese majority from its Manchurian rulers. This Han, while purportedly homogeneous, was in reality a massive melting pot, attempting to join peoples with vastly different local identities, customs, and dialects under a singular and one-dimensional label. The current Han nationality, in fact, does not even correspond to the four Stalinist standards of nationality employed by the Chinese state, namely, a common territory, language, economy, and psychological nature.⁵ Rather, the Han's sole uniformly distinguishing feature seems to have been its labeling as "Han."

It is thus time to reconsider the category of the Han and the homogenizing discourses of identity that accompany this label, which have been almost unanimously accepted as a given fact over the past century not only in China but also abroad in the field of Chinese studies. Considering the broad and indistinct nature of Hanness, it is necessary to look beyond reified ethnic markers to understand the construction of this group: this chapter first proposes that Hanness is not a primordial or intrinsic essence within those labeled Han but rather the historical product of power relations between a self and an other. The concept of a Han race was, for its nationalist proponents in the late Qing, a means of imagining a seemingly unified Chinese interest group, in contrast to their "barbarian" or Manchurian rulers, as a vanguard for realizing a new, more powerful, and unified nation under their leadership.

The Han was thus from its very inception intertwined with issues of

hierarchy and power: yet besides uniting, power can also divide. Once the Qing dynasty fell and those who were called the Han assumed the role of national vanguard, similar concerns of hierarchy and power drew various internal interest groups to clash with one another across numerous lines of division, as can be seen in competition between warlords in the Republican era, the Nationalist-Communist rivalry of the Civil War, factional struggles under Mao, and regional competition during reforms. These tensions within a purported Han unity raise a second point: although relations within a nation-state are generally perceived in terms of the single dimension of race or nationality (e.g., the Han and the minorities), identities are in real life constructed and enacted across a much more intricate variety of multiple axes of identification. Despite the assumed primacy of Hanness, equally prominent forms of identification are in fact apparent in China along divisions of urban and rural, rich and poor, male and female, as well as between regions, provinces, languages and dialects, cultural backgrounds, political viewpoints, and countless other perceived and imagined lines of differentiation, thus infinitely problematizing the common vision of a single and unitary Hanness. This chapter, for example, is the product of extended stays in coastal regions of both northern and southern China, all populated by a purportedly singular Han majority, during which time I noted that from the North the South was imagined as a chaotic and lawless cultural desert, while in the South the North was similarly imagined as a violent land populated by oversized hoodlums: a unifying Hanness was not a salient form of commonality in these imaginings. Examining the realities and contestations of various forms of identity in practice, it quickly becomes evident that, beyond the idealized fantasies through which its labels are produced, identity in practice is always much more complex than any single label can communicate.

Although labels of identity do not contain any mystical primordial essences to describe those whom they mark, the general structure of their creation and deployment is nevertheless far more telling. In light of Stevan Harrell's analysis of the center's civilizing mission toward the periphery,⁶ it becomes apparent that both a center and a periphery are present in each of the layers of identity cited above: the Han is the center to the archaic "little brothers" of the minority periphery; the North is the cultural and political center to the purportedly uncultured southern periphery, yet from another perspective the South is the economic center to the underdeveloped and rough northern and western peripheries; and developed urban China is the center to the rural peripheries. These same features can also be inverted to represent a romanticized rural China as a center of more

authentic Chineseness, free from the stresses of modern life. A third point thus asserts that amid the multiple and ever-shifting layers of identification available, relations of centeredness and marginality, perceived in terms of space (center and periphery) as well as time (present and past), constitute a universal structural trait.

Based upon identity's intertwining with power, its multidimensional character, and the ubiquity of a center-periphery binary, this chapter calls for a new conceptualization of identity beyond a one-dimensional vision of seemingly primordial races and totalizing majorities: identity is defined herein as a process of constructing and appropriating multiple layers of labels or imagined boundaries through which people come to express their desires for centeredness and thus imagined power. This is achieved either by appropriating particular fetishized group features that portray an in-group as a glorified center in an act of positive self-identification (as in the construction of "national characters" in both majority and minority nationalisms) or by attributing negative features to a peripheralized other in order to create a particular image of the self through differentiation. Although the state often takes the lead in constructing the dominant forms of ethnicity and identity, people on the ground also engage in similar state-like constructions of the identities of multiple selves and others for their own fantasies of power. Identification is thus a multilayered act of distinction across multiple axes, either through positive self-identification or negative othering, in a process that is neither solely top-down nor bottom-up but always relational, dynamic, and laden with the shifting imagining and exercise of power. While this definition accounts for the creation of idealized dominant centers across numerous sites of identity (the modern Han center, the spiritual Tibetan center, the business-savvy Cantonese center), it also takes into account the formation of counterexamples in corresponding peripheries (the underdeveloped wild lands of the minorities, the imperialist central government, or the backward and impoverished Northerners). Beyond China, similar power-based binary structures of center and periphery can be seen in the "Wild West" of the American imagination, the highlands of the Thai imagination, or the northern and southern peripheries of Hokkaido and Okinawa in the Japanese imagination: this reassessment thus provides a broad framework for examining the creation of labels and perceptions of identity.

Upon these theoretical foundations, Hanness can be seen as one layer of identification historically constructed as a central vanguard to the barbarians of the past; yet beneath the meta-narrative of Hanness, there has existed a continual subtext of tensions in other layers of identity, perhaps

the most prominent being North-South differentiation, which has similarly been manifested in complex power relations and shifting visions of centrality throughout history.

GUANGDONG: HISTORY OF AN INTEGRAL PERIPHERY

Reconceptualizing identity as more than a one-dimensional, static, primordial essence can bring us beyond the official vision of Guangdong as just another Chinese province with a 99 percent Han population. By right of its distance from the traditional centers of Chinese political power and its proximity to the ocean, where civilization meets the barbarians, present-day Guangdong has historically had a complicated and perpetually shifting relationship with China proper. Although subjugated in periods of heightened central power, Guangdong has repeatedly reemerged throughout history as an alternative center, providing a home to outcast pioneers and revolutionaries, as well as their ideas, at times when the imperial center has been largely stagnant, producing a cycle of incorporation, marginalization, and recentering that has continued into the present era.

The area known as Guangdong is geographically separated from the Central Plains of China by the Nanling Mountains, which served as a natural boundary until the area's tenuous military conquest under the Qin dynasty.⁷ Nominally incorporated into the empire, Guangdong nevertheless remained marginalized on the edge of civilization, viewed largely as a terra incognita from the center.⁸ Reifying and exaggerating difference perceived in cross-cultural interactions on the borders of "civilization," the people of this liminal realm were viewed throughout the centuries from the center as "exotic, strange, fearful, and disease ridden";⁹ were believed to live in "rugged mountains and unhealthy swamps";¹⁰ spoke a reportedly birdlike language, excelled at the impure practice of trade (in contrast to the idealized image of the agrarian imperial subject), and gave off a sense of general uncleanness. The *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* (Shanhaijing) famously described the people of the South as at once human and inhuman, possessing "a human face, wings, and a bird beak."¹¹ Hence, despite their tenuous territorial incorporation into Chinese civilization, the Cantonese have long remained anomalies within this civilization, similar yet different, and thus impure and dangerous.¹² This perception of anomaly, once created in the reified differences of many centuries ago, has reproduced itself in popular lore to the present day: tellingly, the character *Guang* in the modern name Guangdong Province itself means broad, expansive, or vast, conjuring images of an expansive and uncertain frontier on the

periphery of the empire or nation. A comprehensive study of Chinese regional stereotypes conducted with emigrants in Taiwan in 1965 found that the Cantonese were among the most frequently stereotyped provincial groups, consistently described as small, sly, and fond of strange foods.¹³ Throughout the centuries, such stigmatizing imaginings gave present-day Guangdong a unique place in imperial history, first making it the ideal location for a penal colony for centuries of exiles,¹⁴ creating “a kind of tropical ‘Siberia’,”¹⁵ and later for contaminating trading outposts housing “red-haired barbarians”¹⁶ during the Ming and Qing dynasties. At the same time, however, its marginalization also made Guangdong the ideal location for revolutionaries and other outcasts, living on the peripheries of central control, to challenge the prevailing order. If Guangdong was a place of disease and decay, it was also a place of iconoclasm and resurgence.

In accordance with this ambivalent position, local politics from a Cantonese perspective have leaned at times toward integration in a recognized Chinese center while at other times reestablishing the region itself as a new center. Guangdong’s initial incorporation into the Qin dynasty was followed by a century of autonomy under the Nanyue kingdom, only to be replaced by central control in the latter part of the Han dynasty.¹⁷ Nevertheless, as the old Cantonese adage says, “the mountains are high and the emperor is far away”:¹⁸ central control collapsed again with the fall of the Han dynasty,¹⁹ and remained sporadic amid the massive shifts of power throughout history,²⁰ allowing for the appearance over the centuries of at least fifteen kingdoms or regimes in present-day Guangdong that exercised *de facto* independence from weak central authorities. Although the majority of these Southern regimes are, like other non-mainstream powers, unsurprisingly excluded from contemporary official outlines of Chinese history, most in fact remained dedicated to the imperial ideal, imagining their regimes as new centers of civilization that could eventually revitalize the empire.²¹ Such recentering continued into the modern era, when Guangdong became the point through which new ideas were introduced to challenge a crumbling imperial tradition in the late Qing: the province was in fact the birthplace of modern Chinese nationalism, as the home of such prominent reformers and nationalists as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Sun Yat-sen.²² Thus despite, or perhaps in response to, Guangdong’s often marginalized status within the Chinese polity, many of its residents have strived to relate themselves to a transcendent center, either through loyalty to a recognized imperial center or through the recreation of this center in Guangdong, thereby creating a frequently shifting vision of North-South power relations throughout history.

Following the transition to the modern nation-state with clearly delineated borders and a single sovereign government, however, such fluidity and ambiguity became problematic. The end of the most recent era of Cantonese detachment from the center, in which the warlord Chen Jitang ruled Guangdong essentially independent of the faltering Republican government, heralded the arrival of the aggressively integrationist Maoist regime. As had been the case throughout the imperial era, the people of Guangdong were incorporated into the vision of the state, yet not fully: although the Maoist ideology of a unified “people” drew the primary axis of identification and distinction across lines of class in so-called Han-majority regions, local identity remained a primary concern in the central government’s Guangdong policy due to suspicion of the province’s “unique sub-culture, customs, and dialects, its history as a commercial center and treaty port, its distance from the national capital, and its closeness to Hong Kong and Macao.”²³ The establishment of Communist power in Guangdong Province thus consisted of parallel processes of homogenizing incorporation and marginalization, seeking an all-encompassing unity through a Beijing-centered national discipline.

From our present location, much as Han often appears to be a natural identity marker, or as Beijing seems to be the natural capital of China, so Mandarin is naturally perceived to be China’s national language.²⁴ Yet these are in fact quite recent developments following centuries of multiple dialects, shifting capitals, and repeatedly disintegrating central control. As the most totalizing central power in Chinese history, the Maoist regime was not particularly enamored of leaving anything beyond its control, and a campaign for the enhanced study of the national language of Mandarin (as opposed to Cantonese and other “dialects”) was initiated just months after the “liberation” of Guangdong,²⁵ ensuring Mandarin’s standing as the “language of status, power, and career prosperity” in Maoist China.²⁶ In the present, the often-cited nonstandard pronunciation of Mandarin by Cantonese speakers and the popular Chinese saying, “I fear not the heavens, nor the earth; I only fear Cantonese speaking Mandarin” (*tian bu pa, di bu pa; zhi pa Guangdongren shuo Putonghua*), signal a return of the repressed artificiality of the purportedly naturally unifying “mother tongue” of Mandarin, known in Chinese as Hanyu, the language of the Han.

Beyond language, a similarly unificationist ideology was apparent with regard to policy, as shown in the land reform process of the early 1950s. Although the Guangdong provincial government was initially composed of local cadres in the aftermath of “liberation,” the seemingly slow pace

of land reform in the province²⁷ soon heightened the increasingly fundamentalist central government's suspicions of the same-but-different Cantonese, bringing North-South tensions to a new height. Mirroring the discourses encouraging purportedly backward minorities on the peripheries to look up to their "big brothers" in the Han, a May 1951 editorial in Guangzhou's *Southern Daily* suddenly urged local cadres to rely on the guidance of their "big brothers" from the North in implementing policies.²⁸ Beijing soon sent a Southbound Work Team to remove the majority of locals from prominent government positions, replacing them instead with politically reliable administrators from the North²⁹ who could ensure that no mercy would be shown to the supposed enemies of the people. The northern shift resonated throughout Guangdong's Party hierarchy: local Party leader Fang Fang was replaced by an outsider, Tao Zhu, who remained a central player in Guangdong politics for decades; throughout the state hierarchy "80 percent of the local cadres of the rank of county-level leaders or above" lost their positions to Northerners in the first few years of the People's Republic.³⁰ Much as in Manchuria, Tibet, Xinjiang, and other peripheral and formerly independent regions, loyalty was clearly not assumed. Yet somewhat ironically for a nominally Han-majority province, Guangdong was largely denied even the illusion of self-rule offered to Tibetans and Uyghurs through the practice of showcasing local cadres in symbolic positions.

This tradition of incorporation combined with ostracism continued throughout the "Northern invasion" of the Maoist era, with the issue of Cantonese localism joining the ever-expanding plethora of imaginary enemies of this period. The Anti-Rightist Campaign in Guangdong, unlike in other Han-majority provinces, included the condemnation of localism and the forced reassertion of support for central control following an armed uprising in Hainan by a so-called anti-party localist group³¹ of Cantonese guerrilla veterans ousted in the Northern takeover.³² The determinedly homogenizing Cultural Revolution a decade later brought youths from the ideologically pure center to "exchange revolutionary experience" throughout Guangdong, inevitably decrying any seemingly heterodox local elements as either bourgeois or feudal. Under the salvationist "great unity" and radiant red sun imagined to be emanating from Beijing in the Maoist era, Cantonese difference was both naturally assumed and rigorously suppressed, as the people of this province were simultaneously incorporated into the People's Republic and marginalized from its supposedly revolutionary mainstream.

Such a situation, however, could not be maintained indefinitely; and as

the tides shifted in national politics in the late 1970s, Guangdong reemerged to remake the mainstream in response to a center weakened and demoralized from decades of fundamentalist policies: once severely disadvantaged in terms of government assistance under Maoism,³³ Guangdong Province was re-created as a center of economic dynamism, transforming itself into the locus of a new and admittedly more colorful vision of Chineseness. The historical trends described above, namely, incorporation, marginalization, and recentering, have come to manifest themselves in unique ways and in multiple directions in this new era of reform, in which regionalist ambitions have reached new heights, matched only by ever-growing nationalist aspirations and the simmering social tensions produced by the transition to a market economy.

PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (I):
CAPITALIST PERIPHERY, CULTURAL DESERT

With the shift from ascetic-revolutionary fundamentalism to economic-nationalist ideology in the late 1970s to early 1980s, Guangdong's status as a polluted periphery suddenly had its advantages: three of the initial four experimental Special Economic Zones were located in Guangdong Province (i.e., Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou).³⁴ Its distance from the center and its status as the already tainted former home of imperial exiles, traders and sailors, and other unseemly types earned the province a leading role as an economic laboratory in the reform process, turning the Pearl River Delta of the 1980s into a primary symbol of the new national narrative of strength through economic development.³⁵ However, as suggested above, marginalization tends to cyclically reproduce itself, and thus, while re-creating and even recentering Guangdong, the province's central role in the untidy process of reform and opening may have also accelerated and enhanced its marginalization within the national imagination, creating a popular vision of a wild and even foreign capitalist frontier on the southern edge of the nation.

Behind reliably laudatory official proclamations, one can easily sense a marked ambivalence within contemporary Chinese society toward the post-Mao market transition and its effects. Much as there is no singular and homogeneous Han, so there is no singular and homogeneous reform: and although the reforms of the past thirty years have brought economic dynamism and the expansion of some social freedoms, they have also vastly altered the social landscape, as a number of previously absent (or more likely previously unacknowledged) phenomena, such as materialism,

deception, adultery and divorce, corruption, and crime, have reappeared within the public eye. The resulting ambivalence of this reemergence splits the reforms within the popular imagination into a good reform, a source of positive changes and economic development, and a bad reform, a source of negative changes and general social chaos.

Within this split, Guangdong as a center of economic development represents, on the one hand, the beneficial effects of the policies of reform and opening, as its people are attributed a number of economically positive traits, such as “a good competitive consciousness, creativity, and [openness to] a free exchange of information.”³⁶ Yet, on the other hand, the well-established collection of stereotypes about the similar-yet-different Cantonese has combined with ambivalence about the social effects of the good-yet-bad reforms, producing a compounded marginality by which Guangdong becomes an expansive projecting screen for anxieties about the course of contemporary society. Such anxiety is writ large in a vast collection of literature and folklore in recent decades, seemingly descended from the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* noted above, which objectifies and sensationalizes regional and provincial traits, with a particular focus upon the purportedly unique characters of such central players in the reforms as the Cantonese, Shanghainese, and Wenzhouese.³⁷ Within these portrayals, the Cantonese are still, as in the past, described as speaking a funny-sounding (“birdlike”) language and are widely regarded as short, dark, and ugly; yet in the reform era the residents of this distant and different “cultural desert” (*wenhua shamo*) are also perceived as particularly sly and unwholesomely business savvy, uncultured and uneducated,³⁸ obsessed with money, superstitious, and arrogant,³⁹ as well as hedonistic: they are known for a fondness for contaminating animals⁴⁰ on their kitchen tables and second wives in their bedrooms. Most important, however, they are everything that their detractors (supposedly) are not. At once Han yet different, many have in fact noted a foreign nature about the Cantonese:⁴¹ mixing Han Central Plains civilization, local Cantonese impurities, and foreign pollution, the amalgam of Cantonese society is imagined as an alloy or even alien culture⁴² that comes to affect (or threatens to infect) the rest of “pure” Han China.

As anomalous mixtures of sameness and foreignness,⁴³ the imagined traits of the Cantonese (slyness, hedonism, obsession with money, and a general corrupting aura) are eerily reminiscent of anti-Semitic discourses. Analyzing such pejorative constructions of “the Jew,” Slavoj Žižek has employed the apt metaphor of body snatchers, creatures from outer space that assume human shape and are thus undetectable at first sight: the

imagined combination of both uncanny similarity and essential difference makes the potential misrecognition of these contaminating and foreign bodies all the more dangerous.⁴⁴ This mixture of sameness (Hanness) and difference (Cantonese) is also reminiscent of Mary Douglas's reinterpretation of the abominations of Leviticus. In Douglas's analysis, the animals biblically proscribed from consumption were deemed abominations by right of their anomalous transgressions of the schematic boundaries of earth, water, and firmament: the anomalous animals that Douglas deals with include "four-footed creatures that fly" or animals that "creep, crawl, or swarm upon the earth,"⁴⁵ not unlike the Southerners of the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* with their "human face, wings, and a bird beak."⁴⁶ Yet Douglas emphasizes that such creatures, because of their anomalous nature, not only present an uncontrollable danger or pollution but also a potent form of power.⁴⁷ Accordingly, many of the traits that supposedly negatively distinguish the Cantonese from Northerners, such as slyness, calculation in human relations, or a fascination with money, can nevertheless be manifested as twisted forms of power in contemporary Chinese society, and might thus be viewed as at once corrupting and empowering by their critics. The peripheries occupied by these anomalous beings are then at once lands of a redeeming freedom and a potentially destructive chaos: Guangdong thus becomes the ultimate Han periphery in the popular imagination in the contemporary era, a land of hyper-reform and openness at once similar but also different, at once Chinese but also foreign-influenced, at once alluring with its economic success but also revolting and potentially contaminating.

This splitting is most apparent in popular imaginings of the powerhouses of China's economic development, the ultimate terra incognita of the four Cantonese Special Economic Zones: Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Hainan Island.⁴⁸ These borderlands are on the one hand envisioned as sources of economic prosperity and on the other imagined as chaotic capitalist frontiers devoid of morals or security. Horror stories of charming con men, conniving pickpockets, brazenly aggressive prostitutes, motorcycle-driving purse-snatchers, gang rapes in the middle of busy streets, and even the boiling and consumption of human babies characterize some of the claims about Guangdong that I have heard from "compatriots" farther north. And while Guangdong remains a terra incognita within the modern imagination, the Nanling Mountains no longer serve as a barrier as they did in the imperial era: as a result, concerns about the potentially contagious power of Guangdong's anomalous alloy culture are widespread. Such concerns can be seen in national policy, with the prov-

ince's four main economic powerhouses having been appropriately cordoned off from the rest of the nation until recently by the *hukou* system as powerful yet contaminated centers of economic activity; the possibility of overflows of social chaos following the downfall of this cordoning system of control is now a frequent point of concern in the public imagination.⁴⁹ Yet, as with many aspects of China's transition, ambivalence reigns, and Guangdong's mix of danger and glamour, or death and rebirth, continues to attract countless non-Cantonese hoping to make their fortunes in the "wild South": China's rapidly expanding Internet is home to countless question-and-answer groups in which newcomers planning to move to Shenzhen or Guangzhou seek information about the extent of chaos in these cities and advice on safety precautions for their new frontier homes.⁵⁰ There is also an extensive collection of sites bemoaning Guangdong's social disorder and the character of its residents. Prominent among the complaints of the frequently male and Northern writers are the debauchery of Cantonese society and the promiscuity of the contemporary urban female: in characterizing these women, the term *open* is frequently used, yet clearly without the positive connotations of the official discourse of reform and opening.

The stigmatization of Guangdong and concerns about its ability to literally infect the national body reached a peak during the SARS epidemic. Fueled by the speed of modern tools of communication, as well as the political convenience of scapegoating Cantonese hedonism rather than reflecting upon the central government's ruinous cover-up of the epidemic, the province's traditional image as a place of disease and death⁵¹ reemerged prominently within the popular imagination. While residing in Nanjing during what I call the "SARS spring" of 2003, I noted widespread discussion of the supposedly dirty and diseased nature of the Cantonese, as well as frequent jokes to steer clear of anyone speaking with an easily recognizable Cantonese accent. Some saw a link between the contamination of the market economy and the contamination of SARS: one Internet commentator brazenly claimed that SARS was "the revenge of the heavens" for the Cantonese people's decadent lifestyles.⁵² Furthermore, some Northerners jokingly advocated Cantonese independence on-line, suggesting that a China without the frightening Cantonese would naturally be healthier and thus stronger.⁵³ Again demonstrating the cyclical nature of marginalization, especially since the outbreak of SARS, the people of Guangdong have come to be remembered more for their unique culinary habits than for their role in leading the national economic transition: no matter how the residents of Guangdong may contribute to the "glory" of

the Chinese nation in strict accordance with the official economic ideology, and, in the end, no matter how similar the admittedly untidy social situation in Guangdong may actually be to that of the rest of the nation, this province and its people remain stigmatized and excluded from the imagined vision of a unified vanguard Han, mainly for the purpose of differentiating and reaffirming those imagining them. In the words of a Shanghai taxi driver who brought me to the airport for a flight to Guangzhou, "Here in Shanghai we are developing even faster than Guangzhou, but we don't have all of their crime and problems."

PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (II):
MIRRORING MARGINALIZATION

Despite such marginalization, however, identity is always a relational and dynamic phenomenon: once the frameworks for imagining identities are created, these conceptualizations circulate throughout the social world and take on a life of their own, being appropriated by different parties for vastly different goals. Thus, when considering the place of the Cantonese within the Han and the Chinese nation, it is also crucial to consider what the Cantonese have to say about themselves and their others, revealing a process of recentering and countermarginalization in the self-construction of Cantonese identity in the reform era.

A recent article in Hong Kong's *Open Magazine* told the story of a confrontation between a Cantonese man and a surly Northern bully on a Guangzhou bus.⁵⁴ The Northerner was purportedly unhappy with the quality of the air conditioning on the bus and began to arrogantly berate the lowly bus driver. As the author watched this confrontation unfold, he reflected upon the humiliations inflicted upon the Cantonese people by the "Northern colonists" sent to oversee government functions during the Maoist era. These functions, as mentioned above, frequently included such admittedly contentious duties as pushing for a harder line on land reform or the outing of the ever-expanding ranks of imagined counter-revolutionaries. Yet, the author reflected, the dynamics of the contemporary reform era favored the "smarter" locals who led the transition to a market economy and thus the revitalization of China, inverting power relations and depriving these officials of their former supremacy and the privileges of colonial grandeur. Northern officials, once the masters of Guangdong Province, were now left with no choice but to briefly recapture their power through such petty means as picking on local bus drivers.⁵⁵ Much as Guangdong has emerged from its Mao-era passivity, the author

emerges from his seat to stand up to the Northern bully as a crowd of local passengers gather to support him; his concluding words are, "Do you think this is still the Maoist era?"

Indeed, it is no longer the Maoist era, and some in Guangdong have a few words to say about their place within the Chinese nation. One mode of response to Guangdong's marginalization is a mirrored marginalization of the North, rebutting and even inverting denigrating stereotypes as a means of reaffirming a leading Cantonese identity within the Chinese polity. In contrast to the allegations of dangerous "openness" in Guangdong, the people of the North are characterized as "indigent, insular, and ignorant,"⁵⁶ indolently relying upon the forward-thinking nature of the South to realize national development. And just as non-Cantonese frequently imagine Guangdong as a land of urban chaos in contrast to a superior North, Southern mirroring displaces local chaos onto an out-group of workers from other provinces,⁵⁷ who purportedly spread a less sophisticated and even criminal Northern culture as they steal jobs and get rich in Guangdong. Such assertions achieve a sense of self-reaffirmation and even create a victim narrative;⁵⁸ victimization, however, is combined with victory by emphasizing the economic success of the Pearl River Delta and the supposedly outstanding character of its people. The breakdown of the *hukou* system can thus be invoked as a traumatic moment by both non-Cantonese and Cantonese, as both sides perceive themselves as potentially being contaminated by the other. Marginalization breeds countermarginalization, as self-aggrandizing centering is met with recentering: a recent publication titled "You Don't Really Understand the Cantonese" follows precisely such a formula by rebutting, point by point, the many stereotypes directed toward the Cantonese before concluding with a haughty declaration that some people will just "never be able to understand" the Cantonese people's talented and pioneering ways.⁵⁹

These pioneering ways, believed by their proponents to be based in both distinct primordial characters and unique modern experiences, reveal a second response to marginalization, namely, separation or differentiation. Just as the modern nation-state creates primordial visions to concretize ethnic categories, counternarratives use the past to create a primordially distinct and proud self in the present. One example of such differentiation is the recent fascination with the tomb of the King of Nanyue in Guangzhou,⁶⁰ a veritable case study in how seemingly bland disciplines like archaeology can garner widespread attention through romantic imaginings of a glorious and unique past. Discovered in 1983, the tomb of the Nanyue king displayed a marked level of cultural sophistication in its

artifacts while also quite conveniently placing the center of this ancient kingdom directly in downtown Guangzhou.⁶¹ Furthermore, the kingdom existed during the Han period from which the Han nationality supposedly takes its name: this distant past thus raises a central issue in the present. Although the Cantonese are now classified as Han, this is not a locally derived appellation: geographically and socially distanced from the Han mainstream throughout the centuries, most Cantonese have long referred to themselves as either Yue people or Tang people, seeing themselves respectively as descendants of either the Nanyue or the Tang dynasty, thereby tracing their roots to a different “great” and “benevolent” past. While interestingly explaining the often-cited tendency for Tang dynasty poetry to rhyme in Cantonese, unlike in Mandarin, as well as the use of the term *Tangren jie* (Tang People Street) rather than, for example, *Hanren jie* in the largely majority-Cantonese Chinatowns across the world,⁶² this trend even more importantly points to the eternally shifting, contested, and inherently man-made nature of labels of identity: whether historically considered a descendant of the Tang or not, 99 percent of Guangdong residents are now classified on their official identity cards as simply “Han.” It is thus not surprising that traces of the past, such as the tomb of the King of Nanyue, the symbol of an independent local society that had “a free and expressive culture quite distinct from the Han culture,”⁶³ have been employed as a popular means of recapturing the proud distinction of a previous era.

In the present, another relatively free and expressive culture in the South serves as a similar source of differentiation for the Cantonese people: the metropolis of Hong Kong. Undoubtedly, Guangdong’s intimate relationship with Hong Kong helped to bring the province to the forefront of economic reforms in the 1980s. However, this broader Cantonese region is differentiated not only by economic dynamism but also by an innovative cultural power, which is fueled by the speed and reach of modern technologies and media to create an alternative pan-Cantonese center within the Chinese nation. In contrast to the unyielding conservatism of the Northern political center, Guangdong’s proximity to Hong Kong and its vibrant civil society often make the emperor again seem quite far away, placing the region on the cutting edge of the nation: one need only consider the associations that arise around the respective terms Chinese Central Television (CCTV) (*Zhongguo Zhongyang Dianshitai*) versus *Southern Metropolis Daily* (*Nanfang Dushi Bao*). A recent Internet posting, “Why Cantonese Don’t Watch Chinese Central Television,” generated controversy by asserting to the utter surprise of many that “the majority of Cantonese haven’t

even watched the last decade or two of the annual Spring Festival Special on CCTV.”⁶⁴ Although this is likely a case of hyperbolic differentiation, the author’s far more grounded assertion that “Hong Kong cable television is both more entertaining and more truthful than CCTV”⁶⁵ clearly challenges the once-unquestionable centrality of central television. Similar differentiating trends, whether conscious or unconscious, can also be detected in the proliferation of Cantonese writing in recent decades: in addition to a Cantonese spoken language that is distinct from official Mandarin, a written language based upon colloquial Cantonese has been developing in popular Hong Kong newspapers, as well as on the broader Cantonese-language Internet.

However, beyond providing a platform for the further development of a unique written language, the Internet, known around the world as a safe haven for extremist viewpoints, has provided space for far more consciously confrontational efforts at Cantonese differentiation. One example is the website of the group Hong Konger Front, which advocates Hong Kong independence as well as a broader Cantonese independence from the PRC.⁶⁶ As suggested in the above analysis of power and centeredness in the construction of identity, the commentaries on this site re-create the relationship between the Chinese political center and the Cantonese center by separating the Cantonese people not only from the Han but also from the entire entity of China historically, linguistically, culturally, and ethnically. Stereotypes are inverted to re-create the marginalized Cantonese as vastly superior to the “dead weights” of the North, who are unfairly occupying their land and hindering their potential. One article reads:

It would not be an exaggeration to say that modern China has been built by our Cantonese people. The Cantonese brought China from an imperial system to a modern republican system. No other province or region has contributed anywhere near as much to China. However, not only have the Northerners failed to recognize the Cantonese people’s contributions to the Chinese nation, they have even engaged in the systematic exclusion of our people from the political system and turned us into second-class citizens in our own homes. The Northern cadres sent down to Guangdong enthrone themselves proudly upon the heads of our people, bringing all of their trashy friends along with them to Guangdong. All of the senior positions in government and state enterprises were handed over to these Northern pigs, who have a love-hate relationship with Guangdong: they love the money that they can find here, but they hate the fact that we are always more successful than them. . . . [T]he people of Beijing are good for nothing but serving as eunuchs and imperial concubines.⁶⁷

Taking Guangdong's power within the Chinese polity and channeling it through his own rage at Cantonese marginalization, the author asserts that the nation of China would remain trapped in the imperial age were it not for the diligence and daring of the Cantonese people. While the Cantonese have been imagined as diseased and birdlike, this article transforms Northerners into pigs; and while the Northern capital of Beijing is portrayed in official discourses as the center and even the savior of the nation, this commentary reinvents Guangdong as the region that has made the greatest contribution to the development of the Chinese nation, so as to separate it from this nation.

Another article, "Independence for the Outstanding Cantonese Nationality!" similarly imagines a pan-Cantonese identity distinct from the Han through the assumption of an authoritative state-scientific discourse:

Many assume that Cantonese is a dialect of Chinese just because it is not the official language! This is a serious error! . . . The Cantonese people's physiques are in fact vastly different from those of the Northerners. Also, psychologists have provided us with a thorough comparison of the behaviors of Cantonese and Northerners. While they are still in the process of conducting their research, their preliminary conclusions show that the Cantonese people are an independent race.⁶⁸

The author of this passage appropriates the sort of scientific and primordialist viewpoints presented in state definitions of race (such as the common references to "the blood running through the veins of our compatriots") in order to challenge precisely such a taken-for-granted state definition, naturalizing difference in order to denaturalize the common assumptions of Chinese identity. Such reappropriations at once undermine and re-create the sort of labels that established Cantonese marginalization in the first place, thereby demonstrating how the concept of identity and its attendant labels are reproduced so tenaciously.

Although Cantonese independence is admittedly a nonmainstream viewpoint, pride in Guangdong's accomplishments in the reform era and the differentiating embrace of a glorious past and unique cultural heritage are popular trends giving voice to the tensions that have dwelled beneath the imagining of a unitary Hanness while also demonstrating again the inherently power-laden nature of all labels and identifications. Giving voice to these trends as this chapter is being completed in summer 2010, thousands of young Guangzhou residents are gathering in rare protests to protect Cantonese-language programming from a state-proposed transition to Mandarin during the city's 2010 Asian Games: as is so often the case, the government has unfortunately responded with a media lockdown, surveil-

lance and detention of participants, and dismissal of the movement as having been organized by “people with ulterior motives.”⁶⁹ By incorporating the Cantonese into the Han and its nation-state while at the same time subjecting them to repeated marginalization, a flattering self-image of the North as the political and cultural center of the nation is created; yet in these recent Cantonese social trends, one witnesses attempts to recapture Cantonese difference and to build upon Guangdong’s growing economic and cultural power to create a new value system that would enable distinction from the dominant visions of Hanness and a Beijing-oriented polity. Some even re-create the Cantonese as a nationality (*minzu*) but never, of course, as a minority nationality (*shaoshu minzu*) within the PRC, imagining instead the attainment of the ultimate power as a majority nationality independent from the angrily objectified “Northern country bumpkins,” who then come to embody a newly inverted periphery.

PERCEPTIONS FROM THE REFORM ERA (III): EMBRACING THE CENTER

Countermarginalization and differentiation are not, however, the sole Cantonese responses to marginalization. In fact, despite all the polarization discussed above, Guangdong’s place within the Chinese nation and the Cantonese people’s place within the category of Han are largely taken for granted in everyday life in China. Helen Siu has noted that from the Song dynasty onward, aspiring centralists in the Guangdong region have fashioned myths and genealogies to demonstrate a common ancestry with the North.⁷⁰ Today, some go to similar lengths to mask tensions between Southern and Northern identities, embracing the broader prevailing center of pure Hanness, the official vanguard of a rising China nominally backed by millennia of history and tradition. Yet, as mentioned above, the Han is a massive melting pot of an ethnic label ambiguously joining individuals with massive linguistic differences, local identities, and life experiences. While its apparent lack of distinct ethnic markers makes it the majority “default ethnicity,”⁷¹ in contrast to the marked minorities of contemporary China, it also poses a problem for those interested in better articulating their membership: how can one make one’s Han identity known? In recent years, some have resolved this dilemma of Hanness with the standard and markedly unsubtle Chinese way of representing an ethnic group: clothing.

The recent Han clothing movement did not emerge from the Central Plains, which produced the ethnonym *Han* itself, but rather in the quite unexpected location of the Cantonese capitalist frontier. In 2003 the Han

Network (Han Wang), a website dedicated to the revitalization of “traditional” Han clothing, was registered at the fitting address www.han-minzu.com. One of the founding members of the Han Network, a forty-something male in Shenzhen who goes by the not so subtle pseudonym Dahan (translated, in a telling case of polysemy, as either “Great Han” or “big dude”), had purportedly long bemoaned the fact that “among the 56 ethnic groups in China, the Han is the only one that doesn’t have its costume.”⁷² Resolving this conundrum, the Han Network website and others like it promote the purportedly ancient ethnic dress of the Han. Characterized by broad sleeves and flowing robes decorated with brilliant colors, Han clothing was purportedly worn for millennia, from the time of the Yellow Emperor through the many great dynasties of Chinese history, until its suppression under the Manchu Qing dynasty. Reproducing the trend of objectifying external representations of ethnicity first developed for “colorful” minorities in official settings, and seemingly taking a cue from prime-time costume dramas’ equally colorful portrayals of a glorious and exciting past, while at the same time declaring an essential superiority over these forms, the Han Network website has become a driving force in resolving this dilemma of ambiguous Hanness by providing a singular and seemingly eternal manifestation of one’s purported Han essence.

There are hundreds of people who regularly wear these supposedly traditional Han outfits in Guangzhou,⁷³ and even more throughout the Pearl River Delta cities of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Dongguan. According to Guangzhou’s *Yangcheng Evening News*, Han clothing has already spread and developed into a rising subculture throughout the Southern metropolitan regions of the province, as a means of “learning from and re-creating the outstanding rites and culture of the *Huaxia* [Chinese] nationality, and making these part of our life again by wearing traditional Han clothing.”⁷⁴ While those wearing their purportedly ancient national outfits continue to receive stares on the streets of metropolitan areas,⁷⁵ a group of young Guangzhou residents recently traveled around Guangdong Province in hopes of demonstrating and revitalizing Han clothing,⁷⁶ as ever more citizens throughout the province show an interest in this performative reconnection with tradition.

Although the Han clothing movement is not based solely in Guangdong, its prominence in this region merits attention. It is not by coincidence that the dilemmas faced by the contemporary Cantonese in asserting their Hanness, namely, a perceived difference and a stigmatizing pollution, are precisely the dilemmas resolved by the purportedly uniform and eternal nature of Han clothing. First, Han clothing provides a singular and

instantly recognizable manifestation of “being Han” to performatively realize the elusive myth of ethnic homogeneity. As the Beijing government appropriates the symbolic capital of economic development driven by the Pearl River Delta, there is pride to be found not only in the countermarginalization discussed above but also in unambiguously embracing the broader Han vanguard of a rising China and its accompanying emotive nationalism: an equal degree of self-flattery is apparent in each. As such, the appropriation of this purportedly traditional clothing in Guangdong seems to be an attempt to cover over the imagined differences and tensions between the Northerners and the Cantonese so as to create an instantly recognizable, aesthetically pleasing, and even enjoyable image of a truly unified Han, of which the Cantonese become an inalienable part.

Second, considering the Han clothing trend’s rise in the hectic metropolises of the Pearl River Delta, the appropriation of such supposedly ancient clothing can also serve as a means of imagining oneself and one’s nationality outside of the alienation and contamination associated with this hyper-modern capitalist periphery, through the embrace of an alternative center descended directly from an idealized primordial “Great Han” tradition of innocence and purity. One proponent of Han clothing commented, “We wear T-shirts and jeans, eat McDonald’s and drink Coca-Cola, watch American films, listen to jazz and rock, speak all types of foreign languages, and study Western etiquette. . . . In the midst of all of this globalization, some of us have begun to wonder, why is it that Indians can ever so naturally wear their saris, Scottish people can wear their kilts, and the Japanese are on the cutting edge of Oriental style with their kimonos, yet we don’t have a single form of clothing that can represent our uniqueness?”⁷⁷ Han clothing embodies this sought-after uniqueness, and the entire movement is laden with symbols of not only distinctiveness but also purification within a globalizing world: the Han Network’s calendar renders the year 2008 C.E. as “the 4705th year of the Yellow Emperor,” while essays on the site call on members to take pride in the beauty of the unique Han tradition and to wear traditional Han dress to revitalize a past unity, glory, majesty, and, thus, power. The Han clothing movement and the desires underlying its rise thus alert us to the fact that although states often impose visions of unitary, homogeneous identities in a top-down process, responses to and deployments of these visions on the ground show these labels to also have a bottom-up component, appealing to individuals by providing a sense of comfort and even reassurance through personal ties to an imagined glorious past and the promise of an even grander future. As suggested by the sight of groups of young people parading down the

hectic streets of Guangzhou in imaginarily ancient national clothing, the attribution of identity to others as well as oneself is always a case of the desire to see and to be seen, as well as to know and to be known.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking aspect of the Han clothing movement is the selection of this particular form of representing a unitary and primordial Hanness, seemingly modeled upon the minority clothing so fetishized within the Chinese imagination. Although clothing is exterior to the self, it is obviously meant, in the case of national clothing, to present the "illusion of an interior and organizing core,"⁷⁸ seemingly expressing an essence at once intrinsic and eternal, detached from the fluctuations of social and historical experience. It is essentially the denial of the fluctuating power relations and tensions analyzed above that extend throughout the multiple layers of identity, instead embodying an integrated Han identity in a single, simple, and seemingly eternal marker. The gaze directed at the minority other is redirected to the self, borrowing the practice of external objectifications of identity so as to take the lead in a pure Chineseness before the nation and the world, as members of a unified Han embodying the power of an untainted past and the promise of a majestic future, thereby simultaneously masking the complexities and tensions within the multiple layers of identity while also reproducing, much like the many other forms of identity described above, the practice of identification through empowering differentiation.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, "who are the people of Guangdong Province," any answer will inevitably depend upon whom one asks: are they members of the Han or of their own Yue or Baiyue nationality?⁷⁹ Are they leaders and pioneers or cunning and dangerous hedonists? Or are they all and none of the above? This chapter has aimed to question the supposed unity of the Han, as well as all identifications of the self and others, proposing instead a multilayered and power-based definition of identity as shown in the case of the Cantonese within and beyond the Han. Either as a distant and impure hinterland or an at once praised and stigmatized capitalist frontier, in all cases and from all directions, Guangdong and its people have been imagined as similar to yet different from their Northern compatriots, playing a crucial role in the construction of Chineseness while also complicating the vision of primordial or homogeneous Han identity.

Yet beyond simply questioning the notion of the Han, this chapter has attempted to question the very notion of identity itself by showing how actors on the ground experience as well as deploy multiple and often

conflicting manifestations of identity as nexuses for fantasizing, exercising, and resisting power while complicating its categories. States often construct and impose visions of unitary ethnicities in a top-down process (such as “the Han”), but the deployment of labels on the ground show how the imagining of identity also has a prominent bottom-up component: through multiple layers of identity, individuals and groups attempt to either relate themselves to an imagined powerful center or re-create themselves as a new center, investing emotions in and seeking reassurance through personal ties to an imagined glorious past, a promising present, and the image of an even grander future. Such a desire to attain centeredness and imagined power through the construction of the self and the other then accounts for the persistent reproduction of the idea of identity itself: in the nationalist exaltation of a unitary majority identity, majority nationalisms produce minority nationalisms, which then dream of becoming majority nationalisms in their own right. Groups oppose others’ marginalizing labels through a self-imposed relabeling of their own group as a superior alternative center rather than by questioning the act of labeling itself. Judging from the historical cycle of power relations in China and the examples of perceptions from the reform era cited above, the multiple imaginings of identities across countless axes, such as “Chinese,” “great Han,” “Northerner,” “Southerner,” “Cantonese,” “Chaozhouese,” “urban resident,” “proletariat,” or even “citizen of the Republic of Guangdong,” among many others, will continue to be reproduced and through their perpetuation provide a space for people to envision themselves as centered and thus superior to others, as this is ironically always easier for one to imagine than a world without such essentially artificial labels.

2. On Not Looking Chinese

*Does “Mixed Race” Decenter the Han
from Chineseness?*

Emma J. Teng

What do you mean you feel Chinese in your heart? You don't look Chinese.

LISA SEE, “The Funeral Banquet”

In an essay published in *Half-and-Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* (1998), the best-selling author Lisa See recounts the above reaction from readers of her epic account, *On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred-Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family* (1995).¹ With her red hair and freckles, it is perhaps not surprising, on the face of it, that See frequently encounters this reaction from Chinese and non-Chinese observers alike. Yet such a charge—“You don't look Chinese”—deserves to be interrogated, for it can only be understood given an a priori assumption of who is Chinese and who is not. What does it mean to be Chinese? And who defines it? Does red hair (or black skin) make one any less Chinese than any other “Descendant of the Dragon” (*Long de chuanren*)?²

A great deal has been said on the subject of Chineseness in the years since the publication of Tu Wei-ming's seminal edited collection, *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (1994), as suggested by the introduction to this volume, and yet the question of what constitutes Chinese identity remains a vital arena of contention: in conference rooms, in the classroom, and on the Web. Is it primarily a matter of race (biology) or of culture (behavior)? Is such a dichotomy between “descent” and “consent”—to borrow from Werner Sollors—even a productive way to think about the question?³ How can Critical Mixed-Race Studies in tandem with Critical Han Studies shed light on these issues?

One approach to defining group membership is exemplified in the mission statement of the global Internet-based organization Huaren.org: “Huaren are people of Chinese origin by birth, descent and heritage inside and outside China.”⁴ This is a notably primordialist vision of Chinese iden-

tity—one that emphasizes birth, descent, and putative shared ancestry. These primordialist ties serve to produce an imagined global community of ethnic Chinese, linked by little else except “blood.” As noted elsewhere on their website, “Huaren” outside of China may not use Chinese names, may not know the Chinese language(s), and may be citizens of other nations. “Furthermore, ethnic Chinese do not share a common religion, we do not practice a prescribed set of customs or culture, and we certainly do not subscribe to any given set of political ideology.”⁵ In the absence of common customs and culture, language, territory, political loyalty, and even names, the belief in common descent assumes primary importance in defining Chinese identity.

A somewhat different perspective is offered by See’s meditations on her own experiences grappling with Chinese identity. Although she has frequently been told that she doesn’t “look Chinese,” as a fourth-generation descendant of the Chinese immigrant Fong See (ca. 1857–1957), See considers herself Chinese not by physical appearance but by cultural heritage, and in her “being.” As she puts it, “I am Chinese in my heart.”⁶ For See, this sense of identity has been constructed “from the outside in,” just as it was for her Euro-American grandmother, Stella, who married into the See family and embraced Chinese customs.⁷ Paying tribute to Stella in “The Funeral Banquet,” See describes her own sense of Chinese identity as having been shaped by her experiences growing up in a large, old-time Los Angeles Chinatown family, by years of eating the food, learning the traditions, attending weddings and funerals, practicing respect and honor for her elders, and mastering the complex rules of Chinese kinship relations. Chineseness, then, is not a given of inheritance; it is not defined by genetics but by everyday practice and family ties. It is a matter of “heart” and not “blood.”

Can we really reduce Chineseness to a matter of either biological descent or of culture, as these examples might have us believe? And if it is a matter of descent, does blood quantum matter (1/2? 1/4? “one drop”?)? The question of so-called mixed-race Chinese, people of partial Chinese heritage like Lisa See (“1/8 Chinese” by blood quantum), brings these issues to the fore as it challenges the boundaries of what we consider “Chineseness.”⁸ To take one specific example: can Eurasians be considered “Chinese,” and if so, under what circumstances? Within the old American tradition of hypodescent, epitomized by the infamous “one-drop rule,” any “taint” or “trace” of nonwhite descent eliminated one from the category “white.” In the British colonial context, the “touch of the tar brush” could similarly disqualify one from the classification “of pure European descent” and

hence restrict one's rights. What about in the Chinese case? Is Chineseness equally reliant on the idea of purity?

If the notional "pure blood" Han Chinese subject is at the center of many commonplace understandings of Chineseness—as is evident in the remark "You don't look Chinese"—then the "mixed-blood" Eurasian is decidedly at the margins.⁹ Does the Eurasian disrupt conventional notions of Chinese identity, decentering the Han, or does this marginal figure simply help to define the center, establishing the "pure" Han Chinese subject as the embodiment of quintessential Chineseness? A consideration of the Eurasian as a "mixed-race" subject allows us to revisit debates in the field concerning the question of whether Chinese identity is best described by models of Confucian culturalism or by descent-based models of "we-group" definition, and to probe some of the limitations of Han as Chineseness.¹⁰

This chapter takes up these issues by examining the case of Chinese-identified Eurasians who lived in China and Hong Kong during the twentieth century. While drawing on important insights developed by cultural anthropologists and social historians in Chinese ethnic studies, my interest lies not so much in the sociocultural *process* of "becoming Chinese" through intermarriage, as theorized by Melissa Brown and others, but rather on a discursive analysis of the *grounds* on which Chinese-identified Eurasians attempted to "claim Chineseness" and what such claims can tell us about culturalist versus descent-based models of Chinese identity.¹¹ Although much of what I have to say may also apply to other "mixed" or "creole" Chinese populations, including the Peranakans of Malaysia, for example, my conclusions do *not* apply to other examples, such as the Afro-Chinese, who are equally interesting in their own right.¹² Hence my discussion is limited to the particular case of Chinese Eurasians, with a focus on the twentieth century.

My discussion is divided into three sections. The first introduces general background and considers the question of whether Eurasians were considered Chinese by the Chinese state. Second, I examine the terms on which Chinese-identified Eurasians themselves attempted to claim Chineseness, focusing on the specific examples provided by two Eurasian life narratives: the first by Hong Kong-raised Irene Cheng (He Ailing, b. 1904) and the second by China-born Han Suyin (Zhou Guanghu, b. 1917). A comparison of these two case studies allows us to juxtapose a Eurasian of Chinese descent in the maternal line with a Eurasian of Chinese descent in the paternal line, as well as the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese contexts. In the final section, I turn to the question of reception and examine how contemporary Chinese critics have attempted to claim Han Suyin, a

globally acclaimed Anglophone writer, as a “Chinese author” in the post-reform era. On what terms do they measure her Chineseness, and what are their motivations for doing so? Together, my analysis demonstrates that in different times and in different places other categories of Chineseness have been more salient than “Han,” despite the contemporary reification of this category as the “majority” ethnic group of China, the “black-eyed, black-haired, yellow-skinned” Descendants of the Dragon.¹³

1. THE “MIXED BLOOD” (*HUNXUE’ER*) IN THE CHINESE NATIONAL BODY

The term *Eurasian* first emerged in British colonial India in the early nineteenth century as a more euphemistic term for “half-caste.” From there, its usage spread to other parts of the globe, including China. The British defined “Eurasians” strictly as the offspring of European men and Asian women, considering the offspring of Asian men and European women as statutory “natives.”¹⁴ In China, however, the term was also used to describe the children of Chinese fathers, like Han Suyin, for example. Here I therefore define “Eurasian” as people tracing descent from both European and Asian ancestry, inclusive of the maternal and paternal lines.¹⁵ The boundaries of the “Eurasian” category in China and Hong Kong were never strictly policed (therefore including people like Sir Robert Kotewall [1880–1949], who was of partial Parsi heritage), and I follow this practice.

Although people of so-called mixed European ancestry in China certainly predated the Treaty Port Era (1842–1943), the heightened East-West contact of this time gave rise to new populations labeled “Eurasian.” (In Chinese: *Ou-Ya hunxue’er*, “Eurasian mixed-bloods,” or *huangbai hezhong*, “Yellow-White amalgamates.”) Broadly speaking, these populations can mostly be traced to three distinct phenomena: Western imperialism, which brought traders, consuls, sailors, missionaries, and others to China; the return migration of Chinese (merchants, laborers, students, diplomats) who had married Western women overseas; and the influx of White Russian refugees into China after the Russian Revolution. According to Xing Long, by the late Qing interracial families were increasingly common in Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, Tienjin, Beijing, and other large cities, many of them the families of “returned students.”¹⁶ In addition, the numbers of Eurasian children born to Western fathers in places like Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Macau had reached significant numbers by this time, necessitating, for example, the founding of a Eurasian school in Shanghai in 1870. Although most Eurasians were urban dwellers, one could also find cases of Chinese

men returned from abroad with their interracial families in the villages of Guangdong and Fujian.¹⁷ In Harbin there grew up a significant population of Sino-Russian children after the Russian Revolution.¹⁸ Unfortunately, as the American sociologist H. D. Lamson lamented in the 1930s, no reliable statistics exist concerning the Eurasian population overall historically in China, and the same is true for Hong Kong.¹⁹

Were such children considered Chinese nationals? Chinese nationality law, first promulgated under the Qing in 1909, followed the bloodline principle in decreeing that any children born of Chinese fathers regardless of birthplace were Chinese (*Zhongguoren*). In addition, children born on Chinese soil to Chinese mothers could be considered Chinese if their fathers were unknown or without nationality.²⁰ The question of blood quantum was never addressed. With the fall of the Qing, the new Chinese Republic promulgated a nationality law in 1912, basically affirming the same principles.²¹ A revision of the nationality law in 1929 removed the old gender bias. Current nationality law in both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China allows for children born to either a Chinese mother or a Chinese father to equally claim Chinese nationality, thus eliminating the earlier patrilineal bias. Nonetheless, the notion of defining nationality primarily through paternity has had a continuing legacy, as I discuss below. From this legal perspective, therefore, Eurasians (especially those with Chinese fathers) could be considered members of the Chinese national body.

Eurasians born in Hong Kong faced a different legal regime. In contrast to the Chinese privileging of *jus sanguinis*, British law privileged *jus soli*. As a result, Eurasians born in the colony were "technically" considered British subjects. However, not being of "pure European descent," Eurasians had ambiguous legal status, and they did not enjoy the full rights and privileges of British citizens. Within the race-stratified colonial order of Hong Kong, they were generally treated as "natives," or Chinese. The category "British Protected Person" was also applied in 1898 to illegitimate children born outside the colony to British subject fathers and Chinese subject mothers.²² In general, as Robin White has discussed, nationality law in Hong Kong was imprecise, giving rise to various ambiguities concerning the status of the colony's inhabitants.²³ Eurasians sometimes opted to obtain Chinese nationality instead.

The ability to claim Chinese nationality, however, important as it was, did not automatically translate into social acceptance as Chinese. Eurasians faced prejudice from both Europeans and Chinese, though this prejudice could be mitigated by Eurasian privilege, as I elucidate below.

Their “ambiguous and uncertain” status, as Henry Lethbridge characterized it, was perhaps most aptly expressed by the Shanghai-born Eurasian Joyce Symons (née Anderson): “I was not totally accepted at best by either culture, nor totally despised at worst.”²⁴

According to Lamson’s study of Sino-American contact in Shanghai during the 1930s, the Chinese (especially college-educated, urban Chinese) were relatively tolerant of intermarriage and interracial children compared to Western expatriates. In particular, Lamson found his interviewees more willing to accept intermarriages between Chinese men and Western women and subsequently more favorably disposed toward Eurasians born to Chinese fathers. Even Eurasians with Western fathers faced less discrimination if they chose to identify themselves with the Chinese, while those who sought to identify with the foreign communities were scathingly derided as “imitation foreigners.”²⁵ Various sources suggest that Eurasians faced more discrimination in Hong Kong than in China, where Chinese-Western intermarriage was predominantly viewed as a phenomenon initiated by overseas students and diplomats and hence had an elite aura.²⁶ In Hong Kong, Eurasians were stereotyped as the children of Western fathers and Chinese “protected women,” who did not have the legal status of wives.²⁷ Hence the prejudice against Eurasians during this time stemmed not only from the “impurity” of foreign blood but also from the stigma of illegitimacy that was rightly or wrongly imputed to them. In addition to the class factor, gender dynamics come into play, since the majority of Eurasians in Hong Kong were descended from Chinese mothers and Western fathers.²⁸

The status and prospects of Eurasians in both China and Hong Kong varied widely according to such factors as the class backgrounds of their parents, their educational opportunities, the degree of support offered by their fathers, and whether their fathers were Western or Chinese. The child of a Chinese official and an educated French woman, for example, had entirely different status from the child of a British sailor and a Chinese prostitute. The position of Eurasians also varied widely between locations—between Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Sichuan, for example.²⁹ Furthermore, there were divisions among Eurasians based on subgroup affiliations that do not map cleanly along lines of paternal descent or nationality. As C. G. Alabaster wrote of Hong Kong Eurasians in the *Eugenics Review* (1920):

Before 1911 the Eurasians in the colony fell into three distinct groups—the Portuguese, the Chinese and the British. The grouping would depend on many things, the least of which would be the quantum of blood admixture. . . . [O]ne would have no difficulty in giving a Chinese classification to a half-caste, even though his father were

English, who wore Chinese clothes and the queue, who passed under the name of Wong or Chang, who had married according to Chinese custom a "Kit Fat" (wife) and three concubines. . . . At the same time a Eurasian with an English surname who dressed as a European and lived as such, both in business and in his home life, would not be regarded legally as a Chinese, although his parentage might affect him socially.³⁰

Alabaster suggested a distinction between "Portuguese Eurasians," "British Eurasians," and "Chinese Eurasians" based on cultural practices, not paternal inheritance or blood quantum. He furthermore asserted that distinctions were not based on racial phenotype. As he continued: "A man with such a name as Remedios, Xavier, or Silva, who was a Roman Catholic, educated at St. Joseph's College[,] . . . besides being a member of the Club Lusitano, would never be regarded as Chinese, even though he was Oriental in feature and had only a fraction of European blood in his veins."³¹ Alabaster's account suggests that surnames provided a key to reading the ethnic affiliation of individual Eurasians—to sorting out the Wongs from the Smiths and the Xaviers. While the reality was more complex, as I discuss below, surnames do play an important role.³²

Although the lives of Eurasians in pre-World War II China and Hong Kong are not well documented, various sources suggest that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the majority lived as Chinese and eventually became assimilated into the Chinese population.³³ They used Chinese names, they were integrated into Chinese kinship networks, and, until the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the men wore the queue and higher-class women had their feet bound. In his comparative work on interracial contact, Cedric Dover (1937) asserted that prior to the 1911 Revolution many Eurasians in Hong Kong chose to class "themselves as Chinese, though paternally allied to the British, to avoid prejudice and gain economic opportunity."³⁴ In other words, despite British colonial privilege in Hong Kong, Eurasians found it better to identify with the Chinese than to endure the degraded position of "half-caste," which was their lot if they allied themselves with their European paternal groups. One might add that since many Hong Kong Eurasians were raised within their mother's natal families (especially after their European fathers returned home), this identification may not have been a matter of "choice" per se but a product of early childhood socialization. A similar phenomenon appears to have taken place in China, where Lamson asserted that untold numbers of Shanghai Eurasians had "blended back" into the Chinese community, living with their mother's kin. In addition, the children of Chinese fathers,

who counted as “Chinese” through paternal descent and nationality, also added to the numbers of Chinese-identified Eurasians.³⁵ Some Eurasians even tried to pass as Chinese, denying their “foreign blood.”

Even in the face of prejudice and the widespread poverty of untold numbers of “mixed-bloods,” a significant cohort of Eurasians managed to achieve middle- or even upper-class status, earning the admiration of reform-minded Chinese intellectuals like Kang Youwei and Wu Tingfang. As Wu declared in 1914, “The offspring from such mixed unions inherit the good points of both sides. . . . Not only in school but in business also they have turned out well. It is well known that the richest man in Hongkong is a Eurasian.”³⁶ In Hong Kong, Chinese-identified Eurasians, who were among the first cohort of “natives” to gain access to government-sponsored English-language education, were often able to fulfill a special role in colonial society: serving as intermediaries between the British and the Chinese. In particular, educated and bilingual Eurasians easily found work as compradores (liaisons between foreign firms and Chinese merchants and banks), and many rose to wealth and power through this avenue. Hence, as Dover argued, many Eurasians were able to become “leaders of the local Chinese.”³⁷ Indeed, Peter Hall has demonstrated that many Eurasians in the early twentieth century rose to prominence in the Chinese community, taking leadership positions in various banks and trading firms, as well as organizations such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.³⁸ John Carroll notes that Eurasians actually took the lead in founding the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (1896), as well as the Chinese Club (1899) and the Chinese Recreation Club (1912).³⁹ Although Eurasians in China also played similar roles as intermediaries, using their bilingual and bicultural skills to work as compradores or in the Chinese Customs Service, for example, they did not become leaders of local Chinese society.⁴⁰

The particular success of Eurasians in Hong Kong was enabled by many of the unique features of colonial society, including the British tendency to rely on Eurasians as “trustworthy” middlemen, and the greater opportunities for upward mobility for “self-made men” in the absence of a traditional local elite and of established gentry institutions. In contrast, in mainland China, where the traditional gentry was more entrenched, Eurasians were less able to step into this leadership position, though individual Eurasians, like Morrison and Bartlett Yung, Toney Afong, Chun Wing-sen, and General Robert Ho Shai-lai, did rise to prominence in the service of the Republican government after the 1911 Revolution. Yet Eurasians in China did share some of the privileges of those in Hong Kong. For example, Western employers paid Eurasians above the rate for Chinese, though

below the rate for Europeans.⁴¹ While these privileges enabled Eurasian social mobility, they also aroused the ire of Chinese who accused them of being colonial lackeys. The contempt for “imitation foreigners” became particularly acute with the rise of Chinese racial nationalism in the early twentieth century.

The 1911 Revolution in China served as an important watershed event for Eurasians, as both Alabaster and Dover noted, even in the British colony of Hong Kong. According to Alabaster, after the revolution the boundary between Chinese Eurasians and Westernized Chinese began to erode, as distinctions of dress and the queue (and bound feet, we might add) were eliminated, and more Chinese began to pursue Western educations: this undermined the privilege of the bilingual and bicultural Eurasian in employment and business. Perhaps more important, both asserted that rising Chinese nationalism led to some backlash against the Eurasian community. As Alabaster wrote, the rise of nationalism in the wake of the 1911 Revolution engendered “the idea that the Eurasian Chinese should no longer be classed as Chinese, or at any rate as the leaders of the Chinese community and the exponents to the British of Chinese thought and sentiment.”⁴² The advent of modern Chinese nationalism, and more specifically modern Chinese racial nationalism, thus appears to have had a negative effect on Eurasians, calling into question their Chineseness and making issue of their “mixedness” and foreign connections.

As many of the chapters in this volume make clear, the invention of the Hanzu (Han race or lineage) as a modern, racialized concept was crucial to the formation of modern Chinese racial nationalism. Although the term *Han* had a long and varied history in China—a history that Elliott, Giersch, Leibold, and others demonstrate was unstable and far from linear—Frank Dikötter argues that the modern idea of the Hanzu as an explicitly racialized construct did not emerge until the early twentieth century.⁴³ Beginning in the first years of the twentieth century, anti-Manchu revolutionaries like Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong began to use terms such as Hanzu and Hanzhong (Han race) to construct the Han Chinese as a unitary race, appealing to primordial notions of identity in order to mobilize the general populace against the Manchu Qing dynasty. Drawing on the powerful traditional discourse of lineage affiliation, racial nationalists promoted the notion of the Hanzu as a lineage sharing common descent from the mythical ancestor Huangdi, or Yellow Emperor—an age-old idea that was given a modern twist. Revolutionaries not only insisted on a categorical racial distinction between Han Chinese and Manchu but also used the Hanzu construct to bolster their claim that China, as a territory and

nation, belonged not to the Manchus but to the “Chinese race.” And who was this Chinese race? In 1903 Wang Jingwei explicitly defined this entity as the Han race: “China (Zhongguo) belongs to the Chinese people; who are the Chinese? They are the Han race (Han renzhong).”⁴⁴ The appearance of a racialized discourse of Hanzu in the early years of the twentieth century marked the revolutionaries’ rejection of the Confucian model of culturalism, which was predicated on the notion of Chineseness as a universal civilization, open to all who would embrace Chinese culture, submit to Confucian moral rectification, and tender allegiance to the emperor. The result was what Rebecca Karl has called a “narrowed recentering of ‘Chinese-ness’ around ethnicity.”⁴⁵

In their appeals to primordialism, revolutionaries placed putative notions of shared descent, blood, and kinship at the center of the ideology of Chinese racial nationalism (*minzu zhuyi*).⁴⁶ As Sun Yat-sen wrote, for example, “The greatest force is common blood. The Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the blood stock of the yellow race. The blood of ancestors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force.”⁴⁷ Blood and kinship were thus mobilized as compelling metaphors of group unity. Yet, as Peter Zarrow notes, revolutionaries like Zhang Binglin based the notion of Hanzu not solely on descent, but on a linkage between blood, land, and culture.⁴⁸

In tandem with the rise of racial nationalism, this era witnessed a surge of nationalist rhetoric against Chinese-Western intermarriage as a form of cultural-national betrayal and a source of pollution (especially of the purity of the Chinese female body). Racial nationalism’s privileging of purity was furthermore obviously at odds with the Eurasian’s notional “mixedness.” In addition, revolutionary anti-imperialism and xenophobia fueled suspicion of Eurasians, with their “foreign blood” and their familial and business connections to the “foreign devils.”

Yet, as James Leibold and Tamara Chin demonstrate in this volume, hybridity actually coexisted with purity in modern formulations of Chinese national identity. For example, they note that the notion of hybridity or hybrid vigor played a crucial role in particular articulations of the Hanzu construct both before and after the Republican revolution. Leibold’s chapter argues that a melting-pot-style “broad nationalism” was a cornerstone of Liang Qichao’s thought and was similarly embraced by several early Republican intellectuals, including the eminent historian Gu Jiegang, who argued that the Hanzu had originally been formed through the historical intermixing of various frontier peoples with the people of China proper. Instead of the fictive “purity” of the Han race, then, these thinkers

emphasized the already hybrid nature of the Han as a conglomerate race, incorporating and containing difference within itself. They further called for future intermarriages between Han and non-Han frontier peoples in order to revitalize the Chinese race through “hybrid vigor.”

Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, various figures from the late Qing and early Republican era, including Kang Youwei, Tang Caichang, Yi Nai, Wu Tingfang, and Zhang Jingsheng, embraced the notion of racial amalgamation as a means of racial regeneration.⁴⁹ These thinkers did not limit their vision of eugenic intermixing to the “amalgamation” of Han and non-Han Chinese subjects but extended it to Chinese-Western intermarriage. Against those who viewed such unions as a form of pollution, they advocated Euro-Asian intermixing both as a resolution to the global race war of yellow and white and as a eugenic tool for the racial improvement of the Chinese race through “hybrid vigor.” We thus see the emergence of two strains of thought concerning Eurasian hybridity: one that privileged a notional Han Chinese racial purity and another that privileged a notional eugenic amalgamation.

2. CLAIMING CHINESENESS: EURASIAN LIFE NARRATIVES

In this context, what were the mechanisms by which Chinese-identified Eurasians claimed their Chineseness? Did they appeal to culturalist or descent-based conceptions of Chinese identity? In this section I turn to the life narratives of Irene Cheng (née He/Ho) and Han Suyin (née Zhou) and examine how each claims Chineseness “in her own words.” Although Cheng and Han are broadly representative of two important types—Cheng the descendant of a Western trader established in Hong Kong; Han the daughter of a Chinese overseas student who married in Europe—the opinions they express must be understood as highly individual and not as representing Eurasians in general. Indeed, both the Ho family and the Zhou family are excellent examples of the range of individual identifications displayed by Eurasians, even within the same family. In the Ho family, Irene identified with the Chinese, while her sister Jean identified strongly as British; the Zhou family exhibited a similar split. This fact makes individual choices to “claim Chineseness” even more striking.

Irene Cheng: “Ostensibly We Were Brought Up in the Chinese Tradition”

Irene Cheng (He Ailing) was born in 1904, the fifth daughter of Sir Robert Ho Tung—arguably the most famous Eurasian in Hong Kong history—

and his second wife, Lady Clara (also Eurasian). She has written two books on her family, *Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times* (1976) and *Intercultural Reminiscences* (1997). Two of her sisters, Jean and Florence, also wrote memoirs, providing interesting comparative perspectives on their family life.⁵⁰ Since Irene is the most insistent on her Chinese identity, my discussion here focuses on her works.

The Ho Tungs were an eminent family, the first “Chinese” family to be allowed to live on the Peak in an era when this district was restricted to Europeans. The family patriarch, Sir Robert Ho Tung (He Dong, 1862–1956), was the eldest son of a Chinese woman surnamed Sze and a Dutch man named Bosman. He joined Jardine Matheson & Company as a clerk in 1880 and quickly rose to the position of chief comprador. By 1900 he had resigned and established his own business empire. He soon became one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Hong Kong, and a generous philanthropist. In 1915 he was knighted by King George V.⁵¹

As Ho Tung’s daughters have testified, despite their father’s strikingly “Western” appearance (in terms of physical stature, facial features, and hair), for all his adult life he presented himself as Chinese. As Jean wrote, “He decided to claim Chinese nationality—possibly because he knew that the Chinese would not be so discourteous as to disown him openly.”⁵² Florence explained his decision thus: “Eurasians were not accepted well in society in those days, and to be successful one had to make a choice to be Chinese or European. Father chose to be Chinese so he took on a Chinese name—Ho Tung.”⁵³ Florence not only notes the monoracial logic of the era, which forced the Eurasian to “choose sides,” but also highlights the pivotal role of the surname in this process.⁵⁴

Numerous sources suggest the crucial role of the surname in establishing a Han Chinese identity.⁵⁵ Eurasians born to European fathers had two options open to them: they could use their Chinese mother’s surname or assume a new surname, generally choosing one that resembled their European father’s surname or given name in sound. The surname Ho (He), for example, apparently derived from a Cantonese transliteration of Bosman (Ho-si-man).⁵⁶ This practice confirms Patricia Ebrey’s contention that ties of patrilineal kinship, as signified by surnames, have operated as a key metaphor of Han Chinese ethnic identity historically.⁵⁷ In order to support this claim to Chineseness, which was based on maternal descent but assumed the guise of patrilineal descent, some Eurasians even went so far as to fabricate Chinese lineages for themselves, giving Chinese names to their European ancestors and placing these names on ancestral tablets and gravestones. According to Irene Cheng, the Ho family would make

regular ritual offerings according to Chinese custom at the grave site of the "Ho family ancestors" in the Chiu Yuen (Eurasian) cemetery.⁵⁸ The imposing joint tomb (*hemu*) is actually the burial site for Madam Sze, and while the inscription implies that Bosman is also interred there, in fact the tomb contains only a few articles of his clothing as proxy for his body (as per Chinese custom), which was buried in England. Surnames are thus crucial because they are wrapped up with lineage and ancestor worship, two foundational aspects of Chinese identity.

In keeping with this Chinese identification, Sir Robert always wore traditional Chinese clothes, as well as the queue in his youth. Ho Tung ran his family as a strict Confucian patriarch and according to traditional mores, taking two equal co-wives and a concubine. Since Lady Clara was a devout Buddhist, the family ate vegetarian food on the first and fifteenth of every lunar month. Ho Tung's business success, wealth, and philanthropic activities allowed him to become a leader of the Hong Kong Chinese community.⁵⁹ However, this did not mean he was uniformly accepted as "Chinese" by other Chinese, and his daughters have recorded various incidents of discrimination he encountered.⁶⁰

Irene Cheng inherited her father's legacy and accomplished numerous achievements of her own. Pursuing the field of education, she earned degrees from the University of Hong Kong, Teachers' College of Columbia University, and London University (Ph.D., 1936). Like her father, she was recognized for her service to Hong Kong, and she was granted the O.B.E. by Queen Elizabeth in 1961. Cheng begins her memoir, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, with an assertion of her family's Chineseness, even as she discusses the topic of interculturalism. Her narrative opens with her declaration, "My earliest intercultural reminiscences relate to my family and closest friends. Although we were Eurasians, ostensibly we were brought up in the Chinese tradition. We spoke Cantonese at home, honoured Chinese festivals, and lived according to the lunar calendar."⁶¹ Cheng had earlier set forth the same claim in her biography of Lady Clara but on a broader sociological scale. Cheng explained that due to European prejudice "the majority [of Eurasians] therefore identified themselves with the Chinese and tried in every way to be as 'Chinese' as possible. They wore Chinese clothes, ate Chinese food, went to Chinese schools and used Chinese names. The rarely seen European parents of Eurasian children were provided with Chinese names to be used on family ancestral tablets and on tombstones."⁶² We have already seen how the creation of a Han Chinese genealogy was carried out in practice within her own family with the joint tomb of the "Ho ancestors." Hence metaphors of descent (even

fictive) feature alongside cultural practices in the process of “becoming Chinese.”⁶³

If metaphors of descent are important, Cheng also emphasizes the role of education in “attaining” (to borrow from Tu Wei-ming) Chineseness, particularly stressing the mastery of the Chinese written language and the Chinese classics—which we might call the acquisition of Chinese cultural capital. As Cheng writes, “The families which identified themselves with the Chinese usually sent their sons first to Chinese schools where the curriculum was based on a study of the Confucian classics.”⁶⁴ In this passage, “Chinese” identification is signaled by putting Chinese education ahead of English education, classical education ahead of the vernacular, and sons ahead of daughters. With a private tutor at home, Cheng’s own family emphasized classical Chinese education—a fact that she notes with pride in both her works.

In her memoir Cheng further represents her thorough understanding of the intricacies of Chinese kinship networks and relations, which she explains in ethnographic detail, as a cornerstone of her own Chineseness. Unlike the ethnographer, however, Cheng represents herself as deeply embedded in these relations, which structure her sense of who she is in the world. In addition, she invokes the Confucian principle of filial piety in order to justify her father’s taking two wives and a concubine in his quest to produce an heir. Filial piety is also key to Cheng’s self-representation, as she continually highlights her role as a filial daughter.

Cheng places great emphasis on Chinese customs in her work, which again reads like a virtual ethnography in certain passages. In fact, despite the importance her parents placed on Chinese culture, the family was gradually becoming more Westernized as the twentieth century advanced. After the move to the Peak in 1906, the children began wearing European clothes. With their entry into school they began using their English first names and became avid players of European sports like tennis, even the girls. Fortunately, although Lady Clara had bound feet, she did not bind the feet of her daughters. The Ho household became bicultural in numerous respects, including diet, language, and furnishings, and both Chinese New Year and Christmas were celebrated. Yet Cheng represents these changes as consistent with her own Chineseness. As she writes, “Hong Kong at the time was becoming cosmopolitan, and many Chinese families were accepting Western influences.”⁶⁵

One aspect of culture that features especially prominently in Cheng’s representation of her family’s Chineseness is religion. Cheng proudly claims that despite the urgings of British missionaries, the family reso-

lutely refused to convert to Christianity. Lady Clara, a devout Buddhist (and also a “good Confucian”), staunchly rebutted any assertions of Christian superiority.⁶⁶ Cheng identifies herself as a Confucianist, her eldest sister, Victoria, as a devout Buddhist, and her Fifth Uncle as an expert geomancer.⁶⁷ Interestingly, she makes no mention of the fact that her sisters Jean and Florence became devout Christians. Perhaps Cheng fears that such an admission would disrupt the representation of her family’s essential “Chineseness,” which she is at special pains to emphasize because of their acknowledged “mixedness.”

Indeed, a painful episode concerning identity from the sisters’ youth is recalled (twice) in the narrative. Apparently, while teaching at Lingnan University in Canton during the 1930s, Cheng attempted to pass for “pure Chinese,” hiding her Eurasian identity. This created difficulties for her youngest sister, Florence, who was attending Lingnan at the time. Years later, by way of apology, Cheng quotes from Florence’s memoir, *My Memories* (1989). As Florence recalled:

There was a great problem welling up within me [at Lingnan]. At school in Hong Kong, I was known to be Eurasian and not pure Chinese. But my family, especially Irene, told me to say that I was pure Chinese. This puzzled and confused me. . . . I had light brown hair and brown eyes, my skin was fairer, whereas Chinese people have black hair and black eyes. Chinese people can be very snobbish about race and I was made to feel an outcast.⁶⁸

During their Lingnan years, Cheng was unaware of these feelings and was shocked to learn of her sister’s dilemma only sixty years later. In her memoir, Cheng apologizes to Florence but does not reflect much on her own act of racial passing. Cheng’s desire to pass as “pure Chinese” while at Lingnan was probably related to her burgeoning Chinese nationalism, which was awakened by political events in China during the 1930s, and perhaps also by her location in “Chinese proper” away from the British colony.

China, as a place, plays a distinct role in Cheng’s self-representation of her Chineseness, which is crafted in a tension between Hong Kong and China. Earlier on, Cheng’s identification with China, as a geographic territory and a source of culture, had been spurred by a “grand tour of China” that she completed in summer 1926. It was on this trip that young Irene met her future husband, H. H. Cheng, a Northern Chinese. Significantly, whereas her mother’s youth in China and the family travels to China are highlighted, Cheng omits any mention of the fact that she herself was born in Japan. If birth in China is one criterion for claiming Chineseness,

perhaps birth in Japanese territory would be a further signal of her “inauthenticity.” Cheng’s identification with China as a source of “roots” is revealed most explicitly in chapter 18, “Return to the New China,” where she links “home” and “roots” to mainland China, not to Hong Kong, and proclaims China as her “mother country.”⁶⁹ This notion of “return” is a critical concept in discourses of Chinese identity, as Elizabeth Sinn, Andrea Louie, and others have noted. An important way of performing one’s Chineseness is to “return”—*fanxiang* (return to the hometown), *fan Hua* (return to China), *huiguo* (return to the nation), *guigen* (return to roots), *huijia* (go home)—to a territory or place viewed as the ultimate source of Chinese and familial identity.⁷⁰

Cheng opens this chapter by explaining that her Chineseness derives not just from “blood,” but from her cultural learning and patriotism:

Ultimately I regarded myself as a Chinese who through exposure had become something of a citizen of the world. The Chinese side of my personality was not simply a matter of genetics. It had been developed through the influence and example of my parents during my formative years and through the early training I received from old Master Chiu. One way it manifested itself was a genuine concern I felt for the welfare of China and its people.⁷¹

In this chapter, Cheng’s loyalty to China takes the form of a defense of the PRC; she presents numerous favorable firsthand observations of the “New China” in order to counter Western “misunderstandings” of Communist China. For Cheng, Chinese identity is thus ultimately a matter of early childhood socialization, education, and patriotic sentiment; “genetics” and paternal inheritance are deliberately deemphasized. On this score, Cheng serves as a sharp contrast to Han Suyin.

Han Suyin: “It Is almost Biological”

Han Suyin (the pen name of Dr. Elizabeth Comber, née Rosalie Elizabeth Mathilde Clare Chou/Zhou Guanghu) was born in Henan, China, in 1917 to a Chinese father and a Belgian mother.⁷² A native of Sichuan province, her father had been sent to Belgium during the late Qing to study engineering. After marrying a Belgian woman, he returned to China to work as a railway engineer. The Zhous raised their family to be bicultural and bilingual (Chinese and French), and the children also studied English at school. Their mother attempted to raise the children Roman Catholic, but Han rebelled. Han spent most of her childhood years in Beijing, where she later attended Yenching University before pursuing medical studies in the West. Returning to China to practice medicine, Han simultane-

ously became an author, writing in English to introduce the situation of wartime China to the Western world. Leaving China as a refugee after the Communist Revolution, Han lived and worked in Hong Kong before departing for the West. Han became a prolific and world-renowned author, perhaps most famous for the best-seller *A Many-Splendoured Thing* (1952), and she wrote a five-volume autobiography, subtitled *China, Autobiography, History* (published 1965–80).

Like Irene Cheng, Han Suyin grew up in a large family and had siblings who chose different cultural orientations—some identifying primarily as Europeans and others as Chinese. Han's own identification underwent various changes over the course of her lifetime, as she grappled with the ambiguity of Eurasianness, but she ultimately chose to proclaim her Chineseness and took on the role of a spokesperson for China to the West. This assumption of a "Chinese" identity was not at all a straightforward path for Han Suyin, and her works recount discrimination from both sides. She also expressed repugnance at having to masquerade as either "pure" Chinese or "pure" European and to hide her Eurasian identity, which she came to embrace with defiance. As it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss Han's voluminous autobiography and her complex and evolving struggle with identity in any depth, I want to analyze key passages relating to her attempts to claim Chineseness. I concentrate on four central features: paternal inheritance, blood/biology, culture, and patriotism, all of which are intertwined.

Throughout the five volumes of her life narrative, Han defines herself as Chinese by virtue of her father's nationality. This is both a legal condition and a matter of social status. In *A Mortal Flower* (1965), for example, she writes of a Eurasian coworker, "she counted as German, through her father's nationality, as I was a Chinese, through my father."⁷³ Later, in *Phoenix Harvest* (1985), Han represented Chineseness as a cultural legacy from her father: "but it is from Papa, from being born in China, from all my childhood and growing up there that I have this inescapable passion and obsession with China. In this I have been . . . a Chinese intellectual of my generation."⁷⁴ In this passage Han conceptualizes her Chineseness as a constellation of factors: paternal descent, birth on Chinese soil, and early childhood socialization. Similarly, Han's first husband, Tang Paohuang, an ultra-nationalist GMD (Nationalist Party) officer whom she married in 1938, would declare that he considered his wife fully Chinese due to paternal inheritance: "your blood is Chinese, blood comes from the father, the mother is only a receptacle."⁷⁵ Here, the notion of blood is interwoven with the privileging of paternal inheritance, which is regarded not as a matter

of cultural transmission but of biological transmission. In both cases, the mother is rendered irrelevant.

If "blood" defines her Chineseness, it also becomes a source of anxiety for Han and her Nationalist husband. As Han recounts, some people among their GMD associates called her "mixed-blood" in a derisive manner, while others jeered at her for having "foreign blood." Tang worried that this would jeopardize his career chances within xenophobic circles of the GMD and urged his wife to either masquerade as a "pure" Chinese or to hide herself away. On one occasion Tang's friends confronted him: "'there is foreign blood in her, one can see that . . . ' 'Not at all, she is pure Chinese,' retorted Pao."⁷⁶ The idea of "blood" can thus be used alternatively to signify Han's Chineseness, on the one hand, or her "impurity" and foreignness, on the other.

In order to compensate for this impurity, Tang exhorts Han to act more "Chinese." As Han writes: "I was too European, I must learn to become more Chinese. . . . I must also learn these Ancient Virtues, and one of them was obedience."⁷⁷ This exhortation to "act Chinese" functions as an appeal to culturalist arguments of Chinese identity. However, the vague rubric "Chinese culture" deserves to be unpacked in this context. As we have seen, Irene Cheng defined "Chinese tradition" in concrete terms such as speaking Cantonese, celebrating Chinese festivals, living according to the lunar calendar, studying the Chinese classics, and obeying precepts of filial piety. For Tang, "acting Chinese" means adhering to the "Ancient Virtues" of conservative Confucianism as defined by Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement of the 1930s, with its four pillars of propriety, righteousness, integrity, and chastity (*liyi lianjie*). Earlier (1935–38), when Han was living as a student in Belgium, she had been complimented by a Chinese Nationalist for having kept up her Chinese (Mandarin). In the eyes of this man, her linguistic abilities translated into patriotism. He declared, "You are patriotic. We must always remember that we are Chinese."⁷⁸ Based on this encounter, the local branch of the Fu Hsing (Resurrection) Society in Belgium enrolled Han as a member: "we have decided . . . that you are a patriotic and upright spirit, and that you can be of great use to your Motherland."⁷⁹ Hence when "Chinese culturalism" is invoked as a model of Chinese identity, it is important to interrogate the contents of the black box known as "Chinese culture." In short, "acting Chinese" means different things to different people. Ultimately, Han Suyin could not accept Tang's version and divorced him.

Finally, patriotism becomes a predominant theme in Han's self-

representation as Chinese, especially in the final three volumes of her life narrative. Her patriotism drives her to wish to “do” something for China, to serve the people—both as a doctor and as a writer. In *Birdless Summer* (1968), Han expresses the hope that she will be able to “accomplish something, prove my usefulness, and especially prove myself a Chinese, ready to die for China . . . even though, at times, a wince, a twinge, from deep down within me reminded me that to many Chinese I was a Eurasian, and not always acceptable.”⁸⁰ Mixedness, therefore, necessitates “proving” her Chineseness.

Han links this sense of patriotism and duty once again to the notion of “blood” or biology. As she writes in *Phoenix Harvest* (1980), “But the Japanese invaded China, and this old biological stir took over: I could *not* stay in peace in Europe, studying, when there was war in China. I gave up scholarship, studies and a boy friend. I returned to China. I was twenty-one”;⁸¹ and “It is almost biological; only later would come reinforcing knowledge and understanding. But I had to live by what was imprinted in my cells . . . totally engaged to that smell and savor and warmth, that feel of the tide, blood beat, which is for me the people of China.”⁸² If being “half-blood” problematizes Han’s Chineseness, then it is also this very “blood” that underlies her claim to inherited, essential, even genetic ties to China.

The notion of racial blood is also linked to concepts of Chineseness as a territorialized identity. At various stages of her life, Han would describe the “call” of China to her, especially in times of national crisis. For her, this “call” is not only a matter of duty but also a matter of “love,” of affective ties to place. Without China, she declares herself lost, deprived, “an inelastic living mummy,” and hence she must return to China, again and again, despite the risks, in order to come alive again.⁸³ Once more we see the notion of return playing a central role in her diasporic imagining of Chineseness, reinforcing the territorial aspects of Chinese identity. Like Irene Cheng, Han imagines herself linked or tied to the “millions” of Chinese people. It is first to this imagined community of “Chinese people” and second to “the land,” more than to the state, that she renders her ultimate allegiance. China, as a nation, is thus both place and people. The notion of Chineseness as a territorialized identity is also consistent with Han’s emphasis on her birth in China as one reason for her continuing “obsession” with China. Han thus bases her claim to Chineseness on both the principles of *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*, a matter of both ancestral and territorial origin.

3. CLAIMING HAN SUYIN AS A "CHINESE WRITER": QUESTIONS OF RECEPTION

In this section I turn from the question of Eurasian self-representation to reception. Due to the relative lack of critical work on Irene Cheng, my analysis is limited to Han Suyin, a writer of tremendous global celebrity, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite the fact that Han is no longer popularly read in the West, in the post-1980s Chinese reform era there has been a significant move from Chinese critics, and even local publicists from Sichuan Province, to reclaim Han as a "Chinese author." A survey of Chinese academic journals between 1980 and 2008 revealed a large corpus of articles related to Han Suyin, with a significant number addressing the question of her Chineseness or biracial/bicultural identity.⁸⁴ The authors of these articles used a wide range of terms to refer to Han Suyin's ethnic identity: Zhongguoren (Chinese), Huaren (Chinese), Huaqiao (overseas Chinese), Huayi (Chinese descent), Huayi Yingji (English national of Chinese descent), Huayi Yingguoren (English[wo]man of Chinese descent), Dongfang nüzi (Oriental woman), Sichuanren (Sichuan native), Kejiaren (Hakka), ban ge Zhongguoren (half a Chinese), Ouya hunxue (Eurasian mixed blood), Ouya hunxue de Zhongguo nüzi (Eurasian mixed-blood Chinese woman), and *hunxue'er* (mixed-blood). Zhongguoren was by far the most often employed term. None used the term *Hanren*. This again suggests the limitations of "Han" as a category of identity, especially in the transnational context and vis-à-vis hybrid identities. In these cases, the more flexible and dynamic labels "Huaren" and "Zhongguoren" are called up. Interestingly, one might note that both transnational forms of identity (Huaqiao and Huayi) and local or subethnic forms (Sichuanren and Kejiaren) come into play here, reminding us again that individuals have multiple levels of identity.

Despite this variation in terminology, Han Suyin's Chineseness was a constant theme among these writers.⁸⁵ A number of writers employed the formula of introducing Han as an author who at first superficially strikes one as Western—her physical appearance is "European," she writes in English, she has English nationality, and/or she lives in the West—but who upon closer inspection turns out to be "really" Chinese in heart, soul, or mind. The outer is thus contrasted with the inner, formal notions of citizenship with affective ties. In addition, various critics invoke the discourse of "roots" to reclaim this "global" writer as a "Chinese author," despite the fact that she lives abroad and is primarily an Anglophone writer. In the eyes of Chinese critics, what is it that makes Han Suyin "Chinese"?⁸⁶

I have identified several general themes, many of which echo those in Han's own writing: blood, paternal inheritance, affective territorial ties, culture, early childhood socialization, education, and patriotism. Again, these themes are often intertwined in a discourse of Chinese identity that links race, culture, nation, and territory.

In terms of blood, various critics emphasize that the "Chinese blood" or partial Chinese blood flowing through Han Suyin's veins makes her Chinese and draws her to China. Several quoted Han herself as saying, "in my body flows Chinese blood (*Zhongguoren de xue*), I belong to China."⁸⁷ As another wrote, "Almost every year she wants to return to the embrace of her ancestral land. This is not only because half the blood that runs through her veins is a Chinese person's blood (*Zhongguoren de xuetong*), but also because her entire life has been bound together with the joys and sorrows of China."⁸⁸ Similarly, other writers invoked the notion of Han's "Chinese bones," again locating Chineseness in the physical body—despite her lack of "black eyes and yellow skin."

Paternal inheritance is also a key theme: numerous critics assert that Han is Chinese by virtue of her father's nationality. Some even claim Han as a Sichuan native based on paternal inheritance, despite the fact that she was born in Henan and raised mostly in Beijing. In the words of one writer, "She is a native of Pi county, Sichuan, because her father was born there."⁸⁹ In Sichuan today, there are also efforts to claim this famous writer as a "native daughter." Again, such discourses render the mother irrelevant, a mere "receptacle."

Critics have thus mobilized a "roots" discourse that emphasizes affective ties to native place, a concept that once again links the importance of the lineage to a territorialized identity. We see over and over references to the following facts: Han was born in China; her "hometown" (*guxiang*) is in China; her "ancestral land" (*zuguo*) is China; her extended family (*jiazu*) is in China; she returns to China regularly; and, finally, the straightforward claim that her "roots" are in China. Several praise Han as someone who understands the value of not "forgetting one's roots" (*wangben*). For these critics, Chineseness is a matter of primordial ties, something into which one is born, and which goes back in history and lineage, which is transmitted through the paternal line. It is also territorial, as suggested by the metaphor of "roots" sinking down into the soil, as well as the emphasis on birth in China, the hometown, and the act of return. There are two aspects of this territorialized identity: the first is belonging to a native place (local); the second is belonging to the "ancestral country" (nation). Within this territorialized concept of identity, return

is a ritual act that confirms one's Chineseness: "return" links territory, as native place, with family and lineage. As one critic claims: "Every time [Han] comes back to China now, she always wants to find an opportunity to go back [to Sichuan] and visit her extended family (*jiazu*). This shows that she has a deep native soil (*xiangtu*) consciousness, and also that she is someone who grew up under Chinese traditions."⁹⁰

In contrast to critics who emphasize Han's "Chinese blood," or paternal inheritance, there are those who emphasize the fact that Han was raised and educated (through college) in China, which suggests Chineseness as an attainment or process rather than a given of birthright. Similarly, various writers stress Han's understanding of Chinese culture and tradition (Confucian values, fluency in Mandarin, love of green tea [!]), as a measure of her Chineseness. Her purported respect for elders, for example, is taken as an index of her inheritance of "the superior traditions of the Chinese people (*Zhongguo renmin*)."⁹¹ To be Chinese, then, is rooted in a particular value system and set of behaviors.

Most important of all, however, is Han's patriotism, an idea that is hammered home by critics time and again. This patriotism is described not so much in terms of loyalty, sacrifice, and duty (as in Han's own works), but predominantly in terms of sentiment and affective ties. Writers employ terms such as "obsession with China," "passion" or "ardent love" for China, "Chinese heart," or "Chinese soul"; for example: "Her ardent love for China has long been a deep feeling. Although she lives overseas (she has residences in both New York and Lausanne, Switzerland), she has always had a deep and everlasting sentiment for the ancestral country that gave birth to her and raised her up";⁹² and "She has attached her own Chinese heart (*Zhongguo xin*) to the fate of the Chinese nationality (*Zhonghua minzu*). Every year she must return to China, if she does not, she will feel uncomfortable, as if she were sick."⁹³ Longing for China is thus a physical condition, and absence from the territory becomes a pathology. Critics credit Han's patriotism with driving her to return to China during the war with Japan, and later, after the Communist Revolution, in order to "do" something for China. Hence it is not enough to have Chineseness "in the heart": true dedication to China must be confirmed through the ritual act of return. Ultimately, it is this patriotism and devotion to China, I would argue, that makes Han a true "Zhongguoren" in the eyes of her admiring critics.

As mentioned above, much of this discourse is aimed at recuperating Han as a Chinese writer, despite outward characteristics that would seem to tie her to the West or to the realm of the "global." As one critic writes:

She is an Anglophone author, a part of Western literature. But, deep in her soul she is Chinese (*Zhongguoren*), one who possesses the attainments of traditional Chinese culture, and China is also the foundation of her emotional sustenance. In this way, her works of literature can also be considered a part of Chinese literature.⁹⁴

In the words of another: “Americans call her a ‘Global Woman,’ but she herself actually declares: ‘my roots are in China!’”⁹⁵ Cultural authenticity and racial primordialism are thus invoked to expand the canon of modern Chinese literature. The rhetoric employed by these literary critics and biographers echoes the official “roots” discourse adopted by the PRC government after the launch of the Open Policy in the 1980s to encourage the “overseas Chinese” to develop ties (and remit contributions) to their native place.⁹⁶

Indeed, as scholars from Tu Wei-ming to Ling-chi Wang and Ien Ang have argued, hegemonic discourses of Chineseness can be alternatively narrowly exclusionary (Han Chinese chauvinistic) and coercively inclusionary—claiming as “Chinese” various people (Tibetans, Americans or Indonesians of Chinese descent, etc.) who may not necessarily identify with this label.⁹⁷ This tendency in canon formation appears to be particularly pronounced in the current era of “Rising China,” moving outward to claim for the motherland as much as it can from the global diaspora, subsuming Anglophone writers like Han Suyin, Shirley Geok-lin Lim, and Ha Jin and Francophone writers like Shan Sa in a new canon of “World Chinese Literature” (*shijie Huaren wenxue*).

PUTTING THE “BLOOD” BACK IN “MIXED BLOOD”

As we saw in the second part of this chapter, although both Irene Cheng and Han Suyin assert their Chineseness as Eurasians, they do so on rather different terms. On the face of it, we might expect “mixed-bloods” to invoke the broadly inclusive discourse of Chinese culturalism, placing emphasis on “acting” Chinese rather than on descent. This is precisely what we see with Cheng, who repeatedly emphasizes her cultural credentials, both in terms of what we might call everyday practices (the lunar calendar, ancestor worship, etc.) and in terms of elite Chinese cultural capital (knowledge of the Chinese classics, calligraphy, etc.). She does not emphasize paternal descent, or the notion of “Chinese blood”; in fact, she deliberately downplays her “genetic” inheritance in favor of her cultural attainments. Moreover, relative to Han Suyin, territorial ties to China and the notion of a territorialized identity play a very minor role in Cheng’s life narrative.

Similarly, although Cheng stresses her patriotism (and that of her parents) to China, it never becomes a cornerstone of her identity, as it is balanced by loyalty to Hong Kong. In short, we might summarize Cheng's claim as, I am Chinese because I act Chinese.

In contrast, Han Suyin bases her claims to Chineseness primarily on paternal descent, blood, and affective territorial ties. Her relationship to "Chinese culture" was quite different from Cheng's, since her father, a "returned student," was quite Westernized, and Han was raised a Roman Catholic with relatively little understanding of Chinese kinship relations and ancestor worship. French was the language spoken in the home since her mother's Chinese was very limited. Hence the Chinese language plays a secondary role in Han's claims to Chineseness, though she does emphasize an early love of calligraphy and her efforts to study Mandarin Chinese for the Yenching University entrance exams. Han further invokes her childhood experiences growing up and attending school in China, her familiarity with the streets of Beijing and the old Hutongs, and a host of childhood memories that tie her to China as a territorialized entity. Finally, compared to Cheng, patriotism and loyalty to the nation play a much larger role in Han's life narrative, as does the notion of Chinese nationality (despite the fact that she later became a British subject). Han's overlapping claims to Chineseness might best be summarized as, I am Chinese both by birth (place and paternal descent) and by allegiance.

What can this comparison tell us about the tension between "consent" and "descent"? Before addressing this issue, let us first return to the question posed at the outset of this chapter: does the Eurasian decenter the majority Han subject from conceptions of Chineseness? Indeed, in my sources I found that instead of the narrow racialized terms "Hanren" and "Hanzu," the broader and more dynamic labels "Zhongguoren" and "Huaren" or "Huayi" were employed to denote the Chineseness of the Eurasian. This is probably not surprising given that the "mixedness" of the Eurasian stands in direct contrast to the putative "purity" of the Han Chinese racial subject as conceived by modern Chinese racial nationalists like Zou Rong. To be clear: I am not arguing that the Eurasian is *not* Han. Indeed, as both Patricia Ebrey and Melissa Brown have demonstrated, "mixed-bloods" (Han-Taiwan Aborigine, Han-Mongol, Han-Malay, etc.) have conventionally been considered Han if their paternal inheritance is Han.⁹⁸ What I am arguing is that this category of identity appears not to be particularly germane in the necessarily transnational context of Eurasian identity, where "Hanness" is effectively displaced at the discursive level.

Hence, while there may be little room for the "mixed-blood" Eurasian

in the Hanzu concept, other forms of Chineseness are expansive enough to incorporate the mixed-race subject, even if at the margins (a space also occupied by Chinese Muslims, Hong Kong Chinese, and diasporic Chinese, among others). An interrogation of Eurasian Chineseness helps to shed light on the varied and situational criteria for inclusion in this imagined community (perhaps we should say “communities”).

As we might conclude from the examples of Ho Tung, Irene Cheng, and Han Suyin, it is not necessary to “look Chinese” to be Chinese. Rather, claims of cultural affiliation (demonstrated in practices such as clothing, ancestor worship, or even drinking green tea), language, hometown, and political allegiance outweigh those of phenotype. Chineseness therefore differs from the historical U.S. concept of “whiteness” in that “impurity” does not automatically exclude one from we-group membership.⁹⁹ This has been reflected historically in Chinese nationality laws (Qing, ROC, and PRC), as well as various informal contemporary “membership rules” (Miss Chinatown rules, Chinese-American volleyball team rules, Overseas Chinese programs, etc.) that include those with “one Chinese parent.”¹⁰⁰ One can therefore be “mixed” and still be “Chinese,” whereas in the U.S. context one cannot be “mixed” and still be “white.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, as is evident in their life narratives, Irene Cheng and Han Suyin represent their “mixedness” as coexisting with their “Chineseness.” As Ebrey has argued, “The issue was origins, not purity; emphasis was not on keeping others out, but on knowing who you were and how you were connected to others.”¹⁰² Nonetheless, the life stories examined here also indicate that the Eurasian might be considered by others a lesser or diminished form of “Chinese,” one who must work extra hard to prove her or his Chineseness and loyalty. In the words of Han Suyin’s Belgian mentor, “You want to be more Chinese than the Chinese themselves.”¹⁰³

We might say, therefore, that to be a Chinese of “heart,” “mind,” or “soul” is more important than biology and blood—vindicating the culturalism model. Yet, at the same time, the examples considered here suggest that while *blood quantum* has never been a particular Chinese concern, *blood* is in fact important. As we have seen, the Eurasian’s notional “Chinese blood” plays a vital role in definitions of Chineseness (both for the state and for the society), even if this blood is “mixed” or “half.” Indeed, the most common Chinese appellation for a person of mixed heritage, “*hunxue*” (lit., “mixed-blood”), calls attention to the notion of blood. Without this idea of “blood,” it is doubtful that the Eurasian, however steeped in Chinese culture, fluent in the language, and loyal to the political regime, could be considered authentically Chinese. “One Chinese parent”

therefore serves as the minimal criterion for we-group membership. (Note that this leaves the question of blood quantum—perhaps a uniquely North American obsession—unresolved.)¹⁰⁴ Current nationality laws of the PRC and ROC still make it extremely difficult for a person of non-Chinese descent to naturalize as a Chinese citizen.

In addition, paternal inheritance (which carries with it the Han Chinese surname and lineage affiliation) emerges as a crucial factor in delineations of we-group membership, again a factor linked to descent and not consent. Hence, ideologically, a sharp line is drawn between “half-bloods” with Chinese descent in the paternal line and those with Chinese descent in the maternal line. As Bartlett Yung, the son of the pioneering Chinese overseas student Yung Wing and his American wife, Mary Kellogg, recalled of his experiences in China in 1912–13: “The Chinese disregard almost entirely the maternal side of the family, so that . . . I was looked upon by the Cantonese as one of their own people.”¹⁰⁵ This privileging of paternal over maternal heritage is so embedded in Chinese culture that despite the egalitarian move to the “one parent” rule in contemporary Chinese nationality law, the convention remains in informal practices. Witness, for example, the qualification rules of the Miss Chinatown USA pageant, which stipulate, “You must be of Chinese ancestry, meaning your father must be of Chinese descent.”¹⁰⁶ Presumably, again, the mother is just an empty “receptacle.”

The importance of paternal descent is also underscored by the Eurasian practice of assuming Han Chinese surnames and inventing fictive lineages. In such cases, we see Eurasians of Chinese maternal descent couching their claims to Chineseness in the *form* of paternal descent, once again confirming Ebrey’s contention that patrilineal kinship served as a key metaphor in conceptualizations of Chinese identity.¹⁰⁷ By this means of accommodation to the Chinese privileging of the patrilineal descent group, and the practice of ancestor worship, a “mixed” family could effectively “become Chinese” within a generation or two as the invented surname becomes inherited.¹⁰⁸

Descent, ancestry, lineage, and “blood” are therefore crucial criteria in the Eurasian’s “Chineseness,” which becomes a matter not just of culture but also of race. Physical appearance, or phenotype, however, seems to be of relatively less importance than claims of paternal inheritance and “blood.” In this sense, again, “Chineseness” is unlike the U.S. concept of whiteness, which historically placed enormous emphasis on “purity” of appearance, fetishizing the “trace” or “taint” of nonwhite blood as a physical manifestation.¹⁰⁹ We might say, then, that the notion of race as lineage outweighs that of race as phenotype—though phenotype does retain some impor-

tance.¹¹⁰ As we saw in the examples of Ho Tung, Irene Cheng, Florence Yeo, and Han Suyin, not “looking Chinese” (or, conversely, showing the evidence of “foreign blood”) created dilemmas at various points of their lives—marking them as anomalous or marginal despite their cultural fluency. Indeed, the very notion that an individual does not “look Chinese” due to white skin, brown eyes, brown hair, or even red hair and freckles, simply recenters the Han Chinese with “black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin” (as opposed to the brown-skinned Tibetan, for example) as the paradigmatic “pure Chinese.” As the anthropologist Andrea Louie found in the fieldwork she conducted in Canton Province during the 1990s, the two physical characteristics “black eyes and yellow skin” were continually referenced in both official and informal discussions to explain “why overseas Chinese would wish to return to China, and what, if nothing else, remained essentially Chinese about them. Derived from these physical characteristics were patriotic sentiments, attachments to one’s native place[,] . . . and respect for Confucian values.”¹¹¹ Nonetheless, in comparison to historical Anglo-American conceptions of race, the body appears to be of less importance as the primary criterion for group membership or classification.

In this way, perhaps, Chinese ideas of racial identity parallel modern Jewish ideas about membership in the Jewish people. As Steven Kaplan has argued, despite various attempts to assert that Jews are not a “race,” arguments concerning descent, genetics, and historical continuity remain potent in contemporary discussions of Jewish identity, which cannot be reduced to religious affiliation.¹¹² Kaplan’s study of the discourses concerning the incorporation of Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society reveals the persistence of ideas concerning appearance, skin color, descent, and genetic heritage as key markers of Jewish identity. In particular, the notion of “blood,” whether as a metaphor for descent or as literal DNA, plays a vital role in defining Jewish racial identity. As in the Chinese case, the mythical idea of historical descent from a common ancestor, or group of ancestors, is also a crucial factor in delineating membership in the Jewish people. (Note one important difference: Jewish tradition privileges maternal descent over paternal descent.) If, as Kaplan writes, “it is precisely because Ethiopian Jews appear to challenge existing racial categories, that they serve to illuminate them so well,”¹¹³ then I would argue that the Eurasian similarly serves to illuminate commonplace assumptions concerning Chinese racial identity. Like the Ethiopian Jew, who does not “look Jewish” and yet is Jewish, the Eurasian, who does not “look [Han] Chinese” and yet is Chinese, disrupts the assumption of homogeneity within a “race.”

On first glance, the “mixed-blood” Eurasian helps us to decouple “blood/biology” from “culture” in long-standing debates about Chinese identity, demonstrating the importance of culture and patriotism over physical appearance and racial “purity”—of “consent” over “descent”—in defining Chineseness. However, I would argue that the Eurasian actually demonstrates the impossibility of decoupling “blood” from “culture” in historical and contemporary conceptions of Chinese racial identity. Like the Ethiopian Jew’s blackness, the Chinese Eurasian’s “mixedness” only serves to underscore the importance of “blood” and descent in defining group membership. Moreover, Chinese concepts of identity often implicitly link cultural inheritance to genetic inheritance. Hence, for example, as Jen Ang notes in her *On Not Speaking Chinese* (2001), there is a widespread assumption that people of Chinese descent should automatically be able to speak Chinese, and they are often regarded as deficient if they cannot.¹¹⁴ The biology/culture dichotomy thus proves to be a false one. The case of the Eurasian furthermore demonstrates that the fetishization of “blood” as a criterion for group membership does not necessarily entail a concomitant fetishization of “purity.” In other words, “mixedness” can coexist with models of identity founded on race as biology or lineage. The contemporary celebration of “hybridity” per se as a value, then, does not automatically lead us away from biology and genetic determinism to a postracial future.

Nonetheless, despite the persistent importance of “blood” and descent in concepts of Chineseness, I would argue that the Chinese Eurasian does ultimately decenter the Han by reinforcing the social reality that there are many different ways of being—and “looking”—Chinese. In disrupting the equation Chinese = Han, the Chinese Eurasian reminds us of the limits of Hanness as a category, especially in transracial and transnational contexts beyond (and within) the geographic and political boundaries of the PRC. In short, we would do well to keep in mind that if Han = Chinese, Chinese ≠ Han.

3. “Climate’s Moral Economy”

*Geography, Race, and the Han
in Early Republican China*

Zhihong Chen

“The water and soil in one region nurture a people distinctive in this region” (*Yifang shuitu yang yifang ren*). This often-heard modern Chinese proverb conveys a long-held conviction among many Chinese that geographic environment plays a role in the development of human physiology and spirit and local culture. While such an idea had been expressed by various scholars in the past under various contexts, it became prevalent among Chinese intellectuals in the early twentieth century—this time coated with a modern “scientific” aura under the name of the newly developed geographic theory of environmental determinism. Geographic knowledge about climate and topography was heavily invested with a particular significance in the process of defining “Chineseness” and “Hanness,” at a time of great nationalist struggle under the context of foreign imperialism and frontier localism in early Republican China.

Instead of offering a solution to the old question of to what degree geography matters in human development, this chapter concerns itself with how geographic knowledge was deployed to authenticate racial ideologies and ethnic definitions in China from the 1910s to the 1930s. It argues that Chinese intellectuals (especially geographers) at this time engaged in a two-pronged enterprise: on one hand, in the face of foreign derogative discourse on “Chinese characteristics,” they presented the Chinese as the environmentally “best endowed” people, indicated by their unusually strong ability to expand to new places. In this context, they often generally used the term *Zhongguoren* (Chinese) without feeling a need to make a distinction between the Chinese and the Han. On the other hand, in comparison to what they often considered as less cultured nonagricultural peoples on the margins, they defined an exclusive category, “pure Han,” proclaiming them a special “middle” people who were more “progres-

sive" and were capable of expanding into areas that non-Han could not. During this definition process, which was wrought with contradictions, geographic knowledge of climatic zones and their distributions were cast in racial and moral idioms and were used to justify not only overseas Chinese expansion but also Han colonization of the frontier regions in China.

PLACE AND RACE: A DEVELOPING DISCOURSE

The idea that geographic environment affects human character has deep roots in both Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. Frank Dikötter traces the origin of such a belief in China to Yin and Yang Confucianism and demonstrates that the ancient classic *Liji* (Book of Rites) contains passages stressing environmental influences on people.¹ Another ancient Chinese text, *Guanzi*, has the following statements: "The water in Qi has a rash and tortuous course, so its people are greedy and unrefined, but brave; The water in Chu is soft and clear, so its people are spry and resolute, but wicked; The water in Yue is muddy, turbid and thin, so its people are sincere and quick, but dirty."² Moreover, the understanding that certain environmental factors, such as water, soil, climate, or *qi* (psycho-physical energies), have an impact on human physiology and character persisted, more or less, throughout Chinese history. Geography often served as one factor for the demarcation between Chinese (*hua*) and "barbarian" (*yi*). The late Ming–early Qing philosopher Wang Fuzhi (1619–92), for example, asserted that the Chinese and barbarians were born under different geographic conditions, so their *qi*-constitutions were different, which led to different customs, behaviors, and natures. Therefore, he argued, lines of demarcation between the Chinese and the barbarians should be maintained and not transgressed.³ During the Qing (1644–1911), regional geographic differences were deployed, not only by the Qing state to reinforce the ethnic administrative spaces in southwest Yunnan,⁴ but also by Chinese physicians in the Yangtze River Delta (Jiangnan) to invent a southern medical tradition to resist the claim of universality by the medical tradition in the North, where Manchu rulership was centered.⁵

Similar ideas also occurred in ancient Greece. An anonymous medical treatise suggested that human character was determined by climate and water.⁶ As Greek philosophies were largely preserved in Arabic writings before they were passed on to Europe, some Arab scholars were also influenced by such ideas. Ibn Kaldūn (1332–1406), for instance, discussed dif-

ferent climatic zones and their influence on human character in his famous work *Muqaddimah* (An Introduction to History).⁷ European historians and philosophers, such as Montesquieu (1689–1755) and Henry T. Buckle (1821–62), provided further speculation on the influence of the physical environment on human behavior following the enlargement of their geographic horizons during the Age of Exploration.⁸

However, as a modern geographic theory, environmental determinism was first developed by the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). Ratzel was deeply interested in Darwin's theory of natural selection and evolution. He was also influenced by the Lamarckian emphasis on migration and environmental conditions as agents for inducing and preserving variation in evolution.⁹ In his monumental 1882 work, *Anthropogeographie*, Ratzel traced the effects of the environment on individuals and societies.¹⁰ His ideas about the relationship between nature and culture spread widely outside Germany. His student Ellen Churchill Semple (1863–1932), among others, played a significant role in propagating his ideas in the United States.¹¹ As a result, environmental determinism occupied the mainstream of American geographic thought and practice during the early twentieth century. Ratzel's ideas were first introduced to China by Chinese students in Japan in 1903. However, due to his abstruse writing style, his ideas did not become particularly influential in China.

Among those whose works were highly influential in China was Ellsworth Huntington (1876–1947), a professor of geography at Yale.¹² While acknowledging heredity and culture as important factors in human development, Huntington stressed the influence of climate on racial constitution and human civilization. He formed the idea that the temperate climate zone was the best environment for human development,¹³ and suggested that a very hot, or a very cold, or a monotonous (nonchanging) climate might impair release of the highest energies of the human race. As such, the temperate climate of northern Europe produced greater human efficiency.¹⁴ More important, Huntington's interpretation of the relationship between place and race was cast into a moral idiom. Geographic knowledge of the climate was deployed for moral appraisals of racial differences. Huntington suggested that after the Glacial Age, a series of human migrations followed. Those who ended up in tropical or arctic zones had stagnated or degenerated in their evolution because their environments lacked great climatic changes and stimuli for human advancement. The tropical or arctic climates had "handicapped" the evolution of the natives and impaired their mental quality.¹⁵ In this narrative, certain regions in

the world were relegated to the lower stages in evolution and the moral margins of history, due to their unfavorable climates.

Huntington was certainly not alone in constructing what David N. Livingstone has referred to as “climate’s moral economy” in his discussion on Western geographic tradition. As Livingstone argues, during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, “the idea that climate had stamped its indelible mark on racial constitution, not just physiologically, but psychologically and morally, was a motif that was both deep and lasting in English-speaking geography.”¹⁶ The Harvard geographer and the first American climatologist, Robert DeCourcy Ward (1867–1931), was another example. Similarly to Huntington, Ward believed that the temperate climate zones nurtured civilizations. “From the temperate zones,” Ward theorized, “have come the explorers and adventurers of the past, and are coming the exploiters and colonizers of today. In the occurrence of the temperate zone seasons lies much of the secret—who can say how much of it?—of the energy, ambition, self-reliance, industry, thrift, of the inhabitant of the temperate zones.”¹⁷ In contrast, in the tropics development was retarded because of its “debilitating and enervating climate,” and “voluntary progress toward a higher civilization is not reasonably to be expected. The tropics must be developed under other auspices than their own.”¹⁸ Therefore, Ward suggested that white colonization of the tropics had climatic legitimacy. In this context, geographic conversations about climate worked hand in hand with colonial enterprises. Geographic knowledge provided a “scientific” basis and authoritative credibility for otherwise contentious claims about racial or ethnic difference and colonial exploitation based on these differences.

Today, geographers often treat geography’s engagement with environmental determinism during the nineteenth and early twentieth century as “geography’s distant and shameful past.”¹⁹ By the mid-1920s the theory has already lost much of its academic currency, although its influence has persisted in other academic disciplines (such as history) and among the wider public.²⁰ However, in its time environmental determinism had attracted many serious minds. It provided many students of society, geographers as well as nongeographers, with a synthetic interpretation of human living patterns and their relationship to the environment. Its claims to modern science also proved practically useful for political causes. Under such circumstances, the spread of environmental determinism in China reflects what Prasenjit Duara describes as “a regional mediation of the global circulation of the practices and discourses of the modern” in his discussion of the “East Asian modern.”²¹

THE SPREAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM
IN CHINA

The modern scientific discourse of environmental determinism was first introduced to China during the late Qing, largely by way of Japan. Despite voices of criticism,²² the theory gained considerable popularity among Chinese intellectuals. Many of its ideas were not completely new to the Chinese minds, as they resonated with certain persistent currents in traditional Chinese thinking.²³ Moreover, the wide spread of Darwinism and Lamarckism (though filtered through Spencerian and Huxleian ideas) in China at this time also prepared many Chinese intellectuals for the acceptance of the "scientific" theory of environmental determinism. Under the influence of both indigenous thinking and the Western discourse on race, some prominent Chinese intellectuals spilled out many of what we would consider today as utterly "racist" remarks.²⁴ Kang Youwei (1858–1927), for example, suggested that in the utopian world of *Datong* (Great Harmony), only white and yellow races would exist; black and brown races would be eradicated based on the law of natural selection. He suggested relocation of the blacks to cooler places like Europe and Canada where they would become "whitened."²⁵ Xue Fucheng (1838–94) similarly held climate responsible for what he saw as the "racial inequality" between the "ugly and savage" aborigines in the tropics, the "refinement and elegance" of the Chinese, and the "whiteness and tall stature" of the Europeans.²⁶ Echoing Japanese translators of European scholarship, Liang Qichao (1873–1929) suggested that the reason for European prosperity was to be found in Europe's geography. He also asserted that Chinese topography determined that China was a naturally unified country.²⁷ Zhang Xiangwen (1866–1933), one of the earliest modern Chinese geographers, claimed in his widely circulated 1908 textbook, *Xinzhuan diwen xue* (New Writings on Physiography), that different climates produced different races, with those in the temperate zone developing qualities superior to those in other zones.²⁸ Some authors found in environmental determinism echoes of traditional Chinese geomancy. For example, Ding Yiming wrote in 1912 that the rise and fall of civilizations was based on the *dimai* (earth pulses). National prospects relied on the nation's nurturing of *diyun* (earth fortune). When the *diyun* shifted to the West, Western countries prospered. As the *diyun* crossed the Pacific Ocean, Japan seized the opportunity to become powerful. The next evident beneficiary, Ding claimed, should be China. The many new things occurring since the Republic were all signs of this prospective prosperity.²⁹

If earlier Chinese introduction of environmental determinist ideas was

from multiple sources (foreign and indigenous, historical and geographic), during the 1920s and 1930s, as modern Chinese geographers attempted to reform the old dynastic geography (*yange dili*) and create modern scientific geography, they relied more and more on the research of professional geographers. Zhu Kezhen (1890–1974), a founder of modern Chinese geography and climatology, studied with Ward at Harvard. Ward's influence was evident in Zhu's works. Huntington's works were especially popular in China, not only because Huntington was a professor of geography, but also because of their relevance to China. Huntington had conducted field studies in Xinjiang and had traveled to east China in 1923.³⁰ As articles grounded in environmental determinism were featured in major English-language geographic journals at the time, especially the *Geographical Review* (published by the American Geographical Society since 1916) and the *Geographical Journal* (published by the Royal Geographical Society in Britain since 1831), Chinese translations of these works quickly appeared in Chinese geographic magazines such as the *Shidi Xuebao* (Journal of the Historical & Geographical Society, 1921–26, Nanjing), *Dixue zazhi* (Geo-Science Magazine, 1910–37, Beijing), and others. The role of Western geographers working in China was not negligible, either. For example, the American geographer George B. Cressey taught at Shanghai Hujiang University from 1923 to 1929. His book, *China's Geographic Foundations*, which became one of the most popular geography books in China during the 1930s, was deeply influenced by Huntington's ideas.³¹

The appeal of environmental determinism to early twentieth-century Chinese geographers was easily understandable. The theory offered a panoramic view of the relationship between humans and their physical environment. It conformed to the already well accepted Darwinian idea of natural selection and evolution. Its claim of modern science, established through emphasis on fieldwork and new cartographic and statistical skills, attracted Chinese geographers who were concerned with the formation of a modern "scientific" geographic discipline.³² More important, it was enlisted to serve Chinese nationalist claims. As environmental determinist ideas traveled globally within a colonial framework, Chinese geographers' interpretation and rethinking of these ideas constituted one part of the international conversation about geography and race.

THE PEOPLE "BEST ENDOWED" BY ENVIRONMENT

One central task for Chinese geographers was to figure out how to relate the Western discourse on environmental determinism to China. The

theory had often been deployed to legitimize Western colonialism and white supremacy. It did not automatically carry a favorable implication for the Chinese. Furthermore, there was an influential discourse on the "deficiency" of the Chinese in Western publications. Negative descriptions by Western colonists and missionaries about "Chinese characteristics" caused deep anxieties among Chinese nationalists.³³

Another problem that rose to national attention was the discrimination Chinese emigrants faced overseas, especially in Southeast Asia (Nanyang). For centuries, Chinese emigrants in Nanyang had been regarded as a successful example of Chinese overseas expansion. However, during the 1920s and 1930s reports about discrimination and maltreatment of Chinese by colonial governments appeared repeatedly in Chinese publications. As one article stated, "Maltreatment toward overseas Chinese has become almost an epidemic in Nanyang in recent years. . . . U.S.-controlled Philippines, British-controlled India, Myanmar and Malaysia, French-controlled Vietnam, and Dutch-controlled Indonesia all discriminated against Chinese."³⁴ The Chinese were charged heavy taxes and subjected to discriminatory checks at borders. The Chinese language was banned in some schools. Many Chinese were expelled and driven back to China, poor and bankrupt. What was most humiliating was the Siamese government's discrimination against the Chinese. Siam was one of the very few countries in Asia that had largely resisted Western imperialism. If discrimination by other Southeast Asian countries was goaded by Western colonial powers who were eager to squeeze out Chinese influence in this region, the Siamese government's discrimination was done by one Asian country against another. Given the fact that Siam had historically been in a tributary relationship to China and that many Chinese believed the Siamese to be descendants of the Chinese, Siamese discrimination against Chinese seemed unusually humiliating, provoking a sense of racial crisis.³⁵

Environmental determinism provided Chinese geographers with what they believed to be a scientific tool to confront this sense of racial crisis, although they had to wield it creatively. Zhu Kezhen parroted Huntington's ideas about climate and civilization. He elaborated on how climates affected peoples' lifestyles, customs, skin colors, and characteristics and asserted that the temperate zone was the stage for civilization. Frigid climates restricted people's attention to intellectual activities; hot climates, on the other hand, "debilitated" people and "handicapped" their potential for progress. "The French are vigorous people in Europe. Once they come to Mauritius in the South Pacific, however, they become dispirited and lose

their ambitions, just like the natives. The British in India and in Africa are following the same pattern."³⁶

According to Zhu, China's current weakness resulted from poor politics and backward education. But China had been one of the cradles of world civilization. Furthermore, in terms of topography and climate, since China mostly fits into the temperate climate zone, it retained the ability to once again become one of the most civilized countries in the world. Environment had blessed Chinese (*Zhongguoren*) with an intermediate skin color and an unusually strong ability to adapt to all kinds of environments:

People who are used to tropical climates cannot bear winter in the temperate zone. African blacks, for example, cannot live well when the temperature is below 40°C. Those who are used to temperate climates cannot stand tropical or frigid weather. For example, white people who live in India must go back to their home countries every two to three years. The West African coast is called "the Tomb of the Whites." . . . But we Chinese (*wo zhongguoren*) are exceptional! No matter how hot or cold an environment is, there are Chinese footprints. . . . [W]hen the Panama Canal was excavated, only our Chinese people kept working tirelessly and efficiently, when foreign workers could not even work. This is why foreigners call the Chinese "the yellow peril." This is also a ray of morning sunshine for us Chinese in the future!³⁷

Refuting the implications of white superiority in Western environmental determinism and drawing on the existing discourse on skin color and "yellowness" that had been built up over the past several decades in China,³⁸ Zhu emphasized the "exceptional" quality environment bestowed on the Chinese. The "yellowness" of their skin color was understood to be a special favor from the environment, an auspicious sign for the future, and an environmentally sanctioned foundation that legitimated the Chinese overseas expansion.

Zhu was certainly not alone in praising the Chinese as the "best endowed" people environmentally. Another influential geographer, Zhang Qiyun (1900–1985), also suggested that "the tropics did not contribute to human civilization. . . . Most of the powerful states and superior nations in the world have been located in the temperate zone in the Northern Hemisphere."³⁹ Among them, in terms of latitude, China was right at the center. China's supreme geographic location ensured its lofty position in the scale of civilization globally. At the same time, Zhang also mobilized environmental determinism to explain the superior position of its Han ethnic core domestically. He noted that in southwest Yunnan, the natives (*turen*) lived in the valleys below the altitude of four thousand *chi*,⁴⁰ where

the climate was hot and humid all year long; the Han people (*Hanren*) lived on the plateau above the altitude of four thousand *chi*, where the climate was cool and good for health. The situation was the opposite in the mountains in northwest Yunnan, where even the lowest altitude was seven thousand *chi* and the climate was generally cold. Here the natives lived above the Han people. Zhang concluded, "So the Han lived in the middle, between the extremely high and extremely low, and exerted its influence on them. As I have said, in terms of latitude, the *zhongguo ren* [Chinese] are the real *zhongguo ren* [people of the middle realm]; in terms of altitude, the *zhongguo ren* [Chinese] sometimes are also the real *zhongguo ren* [people of the middle realm]."⁴¹ Here Zhang used the two terms, *zhongguo ren* and *hanren*, inconsistently. When comparing China to other countries, Zhang generally referred to everybody who lived in China as *zhongguo ren*; however, within China he differentiated between the *hanren* and *turen*. Whereas the *turen* were physically attached to their native places, the *hanren* resided in the most favorable place (horizontally and vertically), the middle realm between extremes, and thus were free of any "degenerating" or "repressing" environmental influence.

Many Chinese intellectuals demonstrated a condescending attitude toward the aborigines in the tropics, assuming that the climate had inevitably caused their regression. Zhang Qiyun suggested that the hotter the climate, the less civilized the people, and the monotonous tropical climate in Nanyang made every native a lazy person.⁴² Shen Meizhen depicted the Dayak people (in Chinese, *Laozai*), an aboriginal group in Southeast Asia, in the following language: "These monsters all live in the deep mountains in Borneo. . . . One glance at their appearance suffices to tell us that they are at a stage that is still quite close to the apes. Children in their teens look especially like apes. They all have prominent foreheads, narrow craniums, and very protruding chins."⁴³ Many essays described the "savages" (*fanzu*, the aborigines) in Taiwan. As Han Mansheng said, "The savages in Taiwan have not been influenced by civilization until today, so their actions are completely controlled by their subconsciousness. This is why their actions are blind and rash."⁴⁴ Hotter climates were associated with animal natures, savageness, and immorality.

Climate's moral economy was also applied to the nomadic peoples in China, albeit in a different way. Here the cold and harsh climates fostered a different character: crudity, roughness, conservatism, and superstition. As one author wrote, "The Mongols live in frigid zones. . . . The Mongols are choleric people. . . . Most of the Mongol lamas, merchants, and servants are taciturn, serious, and cold-faced. They are drastically different from

the Han who chat and argue loudly after tea and drinks."⁴⁵ Wu Pufan summarized the difference between the Han and the Tibetans as follows: "The physical environment of the Tibetans is dramatically different from that of the Han. So their cultures are very different. . . . Tibetan society is tribe-centered, the Han society is kinship-based; Tibet has theocratic, despotic politics, the Han have ethical politics. In spiritual life, the Tibetans follow a shadowy, mystical teaching, the Han practice pragmatism. These differences result from different views on life and the world, the formation of which was inevitably influenced by physical environment." Although Wu praised the directness and simplicity of the Tibetans, he focused more on their conservatism, superstition, uncleanness, and backwardness and exhorted them to learn more from the Han.⁴⁶

There exists a logical contradiction in Chinese intellectuals' discussion about the environmentally "best-endowed" people: on the one hand, favorable environment determined that the Chinese/Han occupied an advanced position on the scale of civilization; on the other hand, the Chinese/Han seemed to be able to break the law of environmental determinism, escape climatic destiny, and move around without suffering any negative influence from the environment. Whereas the natives seemed to be "trapped" in their unfavorable environments, the Chinese/Han appeared immune to environmental influences and remained prosperous. Such ideas, contradictory as they were, gave rise to another discourse about the Chinese aptitude for migration and served to legitimate Han migration and colonization of the frontier.

CHINESE APTITUDE FOR MIGRATION

A recurring theme in geographic discussions in the early Republic was the notion that the Chinese/Han had an exceptional ability to settle in areas beyond the sedentary core of Han cultural and political influence. China's geographic environment had endowed Chinese with this special quality, as Zhu Kezhen suggested. The notion was repeated by many other authors. For example, Zhuang Xinzai wrote, "Just look at the Chinese emigrants in Nanyang and those who secretly migrated to the northeast beyond the Shanhaiguan pass. Despite numerous hardships during migration and foreign oppression, they persevered. Therefore, it is evident that Chinese people have strong ability to migrate and extend their area of habitation, and this is something also recognized internationally."⁴⁷

The notion was indeed shared among some Western geographers. New anthropobiological and geographic data, which was collected mainly for

colonial purposes, seemed to provide some "scientific" proof. For example, Ward suggested that since tropical climates were "harmful" and "enervating" for whites, and "white men cannot with impunity do hard manual labor under a tropical sun," whites needed slave labor in order to develop the tropical colonies. He was especially impressed by the accomplishments of the Chinese contract labor in the world. "The best development of many tropical lands depends today upon Chinese labor," he observed.⁴⁸ During the 1920s Griffith Taylor (1880–1963), a famous geographer, suggested that because the Chinese are brachycephalic, Chinese migrants might help solve the settlement problem in Australia.⁴⁹

More important, this discourse served a practical purpose. The population problem in China at the time was severe. The distribution of the population was extremely uneven, with Jiangsu and Zhejiang the most densely populated and the frontier regions sparsely inhabited. Overpopulation led to unemployment and instability. Years of warlord fighting and recurrent natural disasters left many people homeless and on the road. Under such circumstances, many Chinese intellectuals and officials turned to China's vast frontier regions to relieve the population pressure. Slogans like "Go to the Frontier" (*dao bianjiang qu*) flooded scholarly publications. As Ma Hetian, a Guomindang official and an expert on northwest affairs, argued, "At present, China's big problem is that it has 'three manys' (*sanduo*): many soldiers, many bandits, and many vagabonds. All of them are merely consumers, or elements for social instability. . . . Now in order to eliminate them, and to make sure that their number will not increase in the future, we must find a fundamental solution. What is that solution? I say, 'Go to the northwest.'"⁵⁰ Here Ma offers the migration of Han farmers and administrators to the northwest as a solution for the population problem.

Migration to the frontiers also assumed significance for national defense. Since the late Qing, the northeast had become the "New World" (*xin dalu*) for peasants from Zhili and Shandong Provinces fleeing disaster. However, since Japan gained control in this region, Chinese migration to the northeast had been seriously obstructed. In order to relieve Japan's own population pressures, Japanese authorities had sponsored massive Japanese immigration to Manchuria, especially after 1922, when Japanese immigration to the United States became illegal.⁵¹ According to one source, the Japanese population in Manchuria increased dramatically from 5,025 in 1905 to 204,429 in 1929.⁵² During this time, the Japanese government also adopted a new strategy to speed up immigration: it promoted Korean immigration to Manchuria in order to create space in Korea for Japanese relocation.⁵³ By July 1929 there were already over 893,000 Koreans in

Manchuria and the east Mongolian region.⁵⁴ The Japanese government's enormous success in immigration to Manchuria astounded the Chinese. Many felt that in order for China to maintain its influence over the frontiers, it was urgent to organize large-scale Han Chinese migration to the frontiers. Human bodies were to be used as vehicles for territorial infiltration and political consolidation.

Han migration to the frontier regions was not a new phenomenon.⁵⁵ What was new, however, was the way in which Chinese intellectuals legitimized it under the new political context. Now the Han expansion into the frontiers gained a "scientific" justification: The geographic discourse about Chinese aptitude for migration provided a "scientific" basis for Han colonization, and this "scientific" conviction ignited unprecedented enthusiasm. Numerous articles discussed practical measures for migration to the frontiers. Although some of them did not explicitly use the term *Han*, it was understood given the context. The frontier regions were often depicted as "virgin lands" that were rich in natural resources and awaiting Han development. Many frontier migration and wasteland reclamation teams or study societies were established. Some private land reclamation companies were also founded.⁵⁶ The Nanjing government established special offices in charge of migration and land reclamation and allocated funds for these purposes. The Judicial and Administrative Department (Sifa xingzheng bu) made specific plans to relocate criminals to frontier regions.⁵⁷ People who made outstanding contributions to frontier land reclamation were glorified as national heroes.⁵⁸ These policies further accelerated the long process of "Hanization" of the frontier regions in modern China.

Despite much one-sided, wishful thinking, the discourse on Chinese aptitude for migration was not always supported by evidence. The success of Han colonization in the frontiers depended on a range of factors, including transportation, stable governance, financial support, economic markets, and so on. While colonization schemes were in the long run fairly successful, it was not always the case in the early Republican years, and the results varied from place to place. In some cases the result was total disaster. For example, in 1914, with the support of Zhang Jizhi, director of the Agriculture and Commerce Department in the Beiyang government, Zhang Xiangwen established the Xitong Kenmu Gongsi (Opening the West Land Reclamation and Animal Husbandry Company) in the Hetao area (the area around the great bend of the Yellow River). In 1915 the company recruited peasants from Jiangsu to reclaim wasteland in Hetao. Despite strenuous efforts by Zhang Xiangwen, the project lasted only six years and ended a failure.⁵⁹ In 1930 the Zhejiang provincial government

mobilized a group of people and shipped them to the northeast to reclaim the wastelands. But within three months, all of them abandoned their work and returned south.⁶⁰

In analyses of the reasons for such failures, most Chinese authors blamed bad politics (lack of planning on the part of the government, local corruption) or backward facilities (lack of transportation infrastructure).⁶¹ Only a few acknowledged the difficulty of Han acclimatization in the frontier regions. This acknowledgment, or rather the lack of it, highlights the inherent tension within the discourse of Chinese aptitude for migration: While environmental determinism seems to suggest that the people who are most fit to live in the frontier regions were perhaps the non-Han natives rather than the Han people, Chinese nationalism presupposed a quest for Han expansion to the frontier regions. A question arises here: What is it about the Han that allows it (but not the frontier minorities) to escape climatic destiny?

THE SOUTHWARD MIGRATIONS OF THE "PURE HAN"

For some environmental determinists, China presented a "curious anomaly."⁶² "In most parts of the world," Huntington explained, "a region in low latitudes is less progressive than a corresponding region in higher latitudes, provided the high latitudes are not so cold that life becomes difficult. . . . But in China the opposite is true: the south is progressive and the north backward."⁶³ He did a comparison between people in Shandong and those in Canton (Guangzhou): "So far as climate, diseases, and man's physical health and vigor are concerned," wrote Huntington, "Shantung [Shandong], with its cold bracing winters, seems to have a distinct advantage over Canton with its many months of damp heat during the summer."⁶⁴ But the reality seemed to be the opposite. He saw much "life," "activity," and "progressiveness" among people in south China, especially among the Hakkas, whereas the people in the north looked "incompetent, dull, conservative."⁶⁵

Based mainly on descriptions by Western missionaries in China, Huntington concluded that the secret lay in the process of natural selection during long-term migration. The Hakkas were initially from north China. In three southward migrations, respectively during the fourth, ninth, and thirteenth centuries (when north China was invaded by the nomads or stricken by severe famines), the Hakkas drifted south and eventually settled in areas around Guangzhou and Fuzhou. "During the process they have apparently suffered natural selection in such a way that the weaker

or more conservative elements have been left behind, while only the most able and energetic have finally settled in the new home."⁶⁶ In other words, the Hakkas inherited "progressive" qualities from their ancestors who survived harsh natural selection during migration.

The Hakkas, according to Huntington, were "the most pure Chinese." They had preserved their biological, linguistic, and cultural "purity" by not mixing with other people. Huntington likened them to the Puritans in New England. Among them, "one finds the highest development of those qualities which cause south China to be more progressive than north China."⁶⁷ However, if they intermarried with local Southerners, their strengths were endangered. Such was the case with one branch of the Hakkas, the Hoklos, who had mingled with the earlier inhabitants on the coast after one of their migrations and therefore "lowered their innate ability."⁶⁸

Among the "progressive qualities" of the Hakkas that Huntington listed were unbound feet in women, no queue in men, cleanliness, prevalence of education, and, quite important, light complexion. He noticed that the school girls in Guangzhou looked "very pretty. . . . Their fair round faces, *only faintly yellow* under the smoothly combed black hair which hangs down in a long braid behind, are often pretty, and show quite charming dimples when they smile. . . . Among the older women, also, the majority are quite *light in complexion*, unless tanned by the sun, and have on the whole the appearance of leading lives that are by no means wholly unhappy."⁶⁹ "The upper classes," he continues, "those who give character to the country, are quite *light, lighter* than the people of the north. As I looked at them, especially the clerks and the women and girls who had not been tanned by the sun, I repeatedly said to myself, 'These people are *not really colored. They are scarcely even yellow.* Look at that pale face and those cheeks with pink in them.'⁷⁰ In contrast, according to Huntington, "the women of Shantung [Shangdong] . . . whether rich or poor, are generally of *darker complexion* than are the Cantonese, as is true of the men also. And the women and girls are not so pretty or bright-looking as their Cantonese sisters."⁷¹

Huntington's assessment of the Hakka was based almost entirely on the accounts of some Western missionaries in China, who necessarily framed their descriptions based on Christian values.⁷² Therefore, the "progressiveness" that Huntington saw in the Hakka partly reflects his own Western standards. Nonetheless, his hypothesis about migration, war, and famine as agents for natural selection and evolution triggered a small upsurge of studies by Chinese geographers on climate and migration in Chinese history. Many tended to, more or less, verify Huntington's idea, but many

explicitly extended the migration tale to the Han. In this fashion, the tale of Hakka migration transformed into one of Han migration, and the "progressiveness" of the Hakka became a means of redeeming assessments of a Han race. For example, Zhang Qiyun investigated the details of the historical ordeals of migration. The first massive Han migration, began Zhang, followed the "Yongjia Chaos" (Yongjia zhiluan) in the fourth century.⁷³ More than half of the notable Han families fled south of the Yangtze. This began the development of south China. The second massive Han migration followed the "Jingkang Chaos" (Jingkang zhiluan) during the twelfth century.⁷⁴ Further absorption of Han culture and talent from the north created the prosperity of the south. In contrast, north China fell under non-Han rule and declined. "The excellent elements among the Han people either died martyrs or migrated to the south. The rest submitted [to alien rule] after repeated humiliations; furthermore, they mixed and intermarried with the non-Han peoples, so their *qi* declined further."⁷⁵ Thus, the "pure Han" had migrated to south China, bringing prosperity to the south because of their progressive qualities. The people of north China, because they had mingled with the nomadic peoples from the north, were no longer "purely" Han, even though they were often called "Han."⁷⁶ Zhang's ideas were confirmed by studies on historical migrations by Tan Qixiang (1911–92), who would become a prominent historical geographer. In his 1934 article, based on massive historical data, Tan suggested that within the century after the "Yongjia Chaos," about 900,000 people (roughly one-eighth of the total population in the north under the Jin dynasty at that time) migrated to the south of the Yangtze River. As a result, Xuzhou in Jiangsu developed a highly talented population that produced many prominent people during the Five Dynasties period.⁷⁷

The new science of statistics provided a useful technique for Chinese intellectuals to understand general trends in climate and population in history. Zhu Kezhen did a statistical survey on droughts in Chinese history, based on two voluminous historical texts—the *Tushu jicheng* (Imperial Encyclopaedia) and *Donghua lu* (Records from within the Eastern Gate).⁷⁸ Zhu found that there were more droughts during the following historical periods: the Eastern Jin and Six Dynasties, the Song and early Yuan, and the late Ming. This largely verified Huntington's opinion that the great outpourings of nomadic peoples from Central Asia were related to the drying up of the pastures on which the nomads were dependent.⁷⁹ Droughts led to nomadic invasions in China, which in turn caused massive Han migrations to the south. Thus the southward migration of the "pure Han" found support in geographic evidence.⁸⁰

The narrative of southward migration of the “pure Han” was also supported by Ding Wenjiang (1887–1936), who studied the distribution of “eminent people” in history (*lishi renwu*) in China. Ding charted the occurrence of eminent people in different places in several major dynasties, based on the *Ershisi shi* (The Twenty-four Histories). He noticed that China’s cultural center had moved from the north to the south. During the Eastern Han (25–220 C.E.), the number of eminent people in Henan was 170 (37.20 percent), and that in Zhejiang was 14 (2.99 percent). During the Ming (1368–1644), Henan had 123 (6.94 percent), whereas Zhejiang had 258 (14.51 percent). Although Ding proposed numerous reasons for this change, he emphasized Han migration: “All of those who migrated to the south during the Eastern Jin and Southern Song were scholar-officials who were unwilling to be ruled by alien people (*waiguoren*). Civilization and prestige were in their hands. They stimulated the development of Jiangsu and Zhejiang since the Song. The north fell under alien (*waizu*) rule, and its civilization inevitably declined.”⁸¹ Noticing that at least 11 of the 98 prime ministers during the Tang dynasty were non-Han, Ding concluded, “It is clear that after the racial mingling during the Period of Disunity in China, the people in the north were no longer pure Han.”⁸² The connection between the “pure Han” and the south even found medical support. Liang Boqiang conducted medical research on the Han people, finding that the blood of the southerners was “purer” than that of the northerners, based on a comparison of the blood’s “index of agglutination.”⁸³ This was explained by the fact that the northerners had absorbed much non-Han blood in history, whereas the southerners maintained their “purity” by avoiding mixing with non-Han peoples. The search for “purity” was also reflected in the works of Zhang Junjun (b. 1897), a fervent eugenicist and a popular writer.⁸⁴ As Frank Dikötter demonstrates in his book, Zhang actively advocated the discourse of the Han in certain parts of the south (especially Jiangsu and Zhejiang) as the purest and the most superior, drawing on medical research on blood type as well as statistics on the distribution of “genius” in different locales.⁸⁵ Here nature made its “moral” choice through migration and famine: the “pure” Han in the south were chosen as progressive (*jিনbu*), whereas the “impure” Han in the north were largely left to desolation.

ENVIRONMENT OR HEREDITY?

The idea that progressive qualities acquired during migration could be passed to later generations inspired some interest among Chinese in the

role of heredity in racial constitution. Was racial character something inherent, or was it the result of environment?⁸⁶ In China there had been a growing interest in the global literature on eugenics since the beginning of the twentieth century. Ding Wenjiang's article titled "Eugenics and Genealogy" was published in 1919.⁸⁷ And a small book titled *Jinhualun yu shanzhongxue* (Evolution and Eugenics) in 1923 also caused considerable intellectual interest.⁸⁸ But it was through the U.S.-educated Pan Guangdan (1899–1967) that eugenics was popularized in China.

Like other eugenicists of his generation, Pan believed that the best qualities of human character and intelligence, as well as those of physical appearance and health, were inherited. To improve the genetic stock of the Chinese population, the superior men in the society should be encouraged to have many children. Marriage should be for the benefit of the society rather than for merely personal happiness. Pan looked favorably at traditional Confucian standards for seeking spouses. In addition, urbanization should be limited as it was harmful to racial hygiene. A strict talent recruiting system should be institutionalized in the society.⁸⁹

Although Pan's biological approach was quite different from the environmental one, geographic influence also surfaced in Pan's ideas. When looking for models with "superior qualities" in China, Pan turned to geographic discussions on place and race. He was persuaded by geographers' emphasis on migration as an agent in natural selection and the connection between migration and superior qualities. The few "genetically superior" areas in China that Pan had chosen, including the area around Lake Tai, the provinces of Guangdong and Hunan, and northern Manchuria, had high percentages of Han migrants.⁹⁰ Pan believed that migration required and fostered some extraordinary qualities: "Only people who have independent minds and enterprising spirits are willing to migrate; only those who are adventurous and persevering can survive the migration; and only those who are smart and capable can create a new world."⁹¹

Pan was especially interested in a relatively recent migration phenomenon in China: the migration of people from Hebei and Shandong to northern Manchuria. Intrigued by Huntington's claim that northern Manchuria was the only other region beyond Guangdong in China that showed signs of "progressiveness," Pan devoted himself to the question of to what degree migration had endowed people in this region with superior qualities.⁹² In summer 1929 Pan conducted an investigation in this region. He was impressed with the efficiency of urban construction in Shenyang. Harbin also appeared to him to be a very lively city, especially the part managed by Han Chinese migrants. Pan was not able to go to the town

of Yuanhui, but he had heard from a friend in Heilongjiang that “the women in Yuanhui were extremely pretty. They are the prettiest in the whole northeast.”⁹³ Based on these slim observations, Pan became firmly convinced that the people in northern Manchuria were among the “genetically superior” groups in China.⁹⁴ Pan’s pleasure was “beyond description” when his idea about the “superior qualities” of the people in the northeast seemed to be confirmed by the impressive performance of athletes from the northeast in a recent national athletic meeting.⁹⁵ In 1930 Pan designed a series of survey questions for the migrants in northern Manchuria, asking them about the time, reasons, and specific routes through which they migrated to the northeast, their family histories (whether their families had produced notable persons in the past, whether they had any connection with the Manchus), and their current family backgrounds.⁹⁶ The purpose of this survey was to determine the extent to which environment and heredity mattered for the production of superior qualities.

Pan’s research on the migrants to northern Manchuria was inevitably halted by the Japanese occupation, but it was evident that the moral discourse of geography made its way into Pan’s eugenic ideas. In fact, even though Pan emphasized human selection through eugenic programs, he maintained the importance of natural selection through famine and disease. He criticized Zhang Junjun’s monistic opinion that all talents came only from heredity. Geographic environment, suggested Pan, was equally important for the production of genius.⁹⁷ Han migrants who had survived natural selection in the south, for instance, were rewarded by environment with stronger immunities (*weiyu*) and healthier bodies.⁹⁸

As I pointed out earlier, there were some contradictions in the ways in which Chinese intellectuals deployed geographic idioms and ideologies for the construction of “Chineseness” and “Hanness” in early Republican China. Geography, race, and nationalism were complexly interwoven during this definition process. While Western environmental determinism suggested a Eurocentric understanding of the world, Chinese intellectuals subverted the racial hierarchy by presenting the Chinese as the people “best endowed” by environment. At the same time, they constructed a racial hierarchy among the Chinese, defining an essentialized group of “pure Han” through a range of selection processes. Whereas the logic of climate/geography suggested that northern China should be home to the most superior elements of the Han, the logic of race suggested that southern China possessed the most racially pure and hence superior Han people. Whereas the law of environmental determinism suggested that the fron-

tier minorities were the people best fit to reside in the frontiers, Chinese nationalist sentiments presupposed a quest for Han colonization of the frontiers. The moral discourse of climate provided Chinese intellectuals with a useful language through which they conversed about place, race, and virtue, and it is not clear that this practice is extinct in China today.

4. Good Han, Bad Han

The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China

Uradyn E. Bulag

Studies of ethnicity have been beset with a contradiction between searching for the universal truth and a desire to transcend it. The truth, it has been asserted, is that everyone in the world has an ethnic identity by virtue of group relationships, and ethnic identity always has the potential to become violent, increasingly so as human groups have come to interact more closely. Studies of ethnicity have tried to overcome such Hobbsian “truth” by denouncing ethnic bigotry and jingoism, frowning upon ethnic discrimination, and blaming the state for inventing ethnic groups, including giving them formal definition and institutional expression. We are now told that ethnicity ought to be ethical, nonantagonistic, that ethnic groups ought to be mutually supportive and live in harmony, because they all belong to the same humanity. With the “truth” firmly established to be negative, as a lethal “problem,” studies of ethnicity have now taken on a new mission to promote interethnic cooperation, hospitality, or tolerance. An extreme version of the mission, driven by a radical cosmopolitan vision, sees no value whatsoever in ethnic or even national identity.

The moral imperatives of scholarly studies and their promotion of interethnic reconciliation are laudable, but both the projected temporality of the resolution of “ethnic problems” and the assigned agents to accomplish the task are questionable. Rather than posit an end to ethnicity or project ethnic harmony as a goal to be accomplished in the future, mediated by cosmopolitanist academics, one might explore whether and how “good” ethnicity has been imagined and pursued by ethnic agents in the past. If this proves to be the case, then our task should be to examine whether such “good” intentions have produced the anticipated “good” ethnic relations.

In this chapter I examine the emergence and practice of a new moral category of Han Chinese—“Good Han” (*hao Hanren*) as opposed to “Bad

Han" (*huai Hanren*)—in twentieth-century China. To be sure, the Chinese, as any human group, always have had their own moral system to distinguish good people (*junzi*) from bad people (*xiaoren*), and the Chinese have a powerful sense of moral righteousness and superiority over the neighboring peoples. The Chinese might also be judged as good or bad by the Inner Asian conquerors-cum-rulers on the basis of their loyalty. The Manchu rulers, for instance, labeled Han who had gone over to the Miao people in southwestern China as "treacherous Han" (*Hanjian*) for causing difficulties with the Miao or for acculturating the Miao.¹ I argue, however, that the Chinese *self*-distinction between "Good Han" and "Bad Han" is a product of the twentieth century and that it has given rise to a new political subjectivity in China.² This distinction was an emergence, which according to Foucault "designates a place of confrontation but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals. Rather, as Nietzsche demonstrates in his analysis of good and evil, it is a 'nonplace,' a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space."³ Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is not to challenge the centrality of Han Chinese in the constitution of the newly promoted "Chinese nation" (*Zhonghua minzu*). Neither will I resort to the social construction theory to deconstruct the Han as an invented category, for all ethnic groups or nations are socially and intersubjectively constructed. My aim is rather to find a way to deal with the "truth" of ethnicity without, however, putting it out of business. One way to do this is to argue that an ethnic group/nation is shaped by a process of internal conflicts over priorities, values, and societal meanings. This approach runs parallel to the "transactionalist" one that Giersch develops in his chapter for "ethnicity" drawing on Elliott's previous research.⁴ However, instead of treating an ethnic group as internally undifferentiated and focusing on ethnic "identity" by measuring its degree of salience based on the amount of "difference" it embodies thereby determining how ethnic consciousness and boundaries might wax and wane, here my interest is in how "commonality" is used strategically in conjunction with "difference" to demarcate or transcend ethnic boundaries according to political exigency.

The ontological division of one Han group into two as "good" and "bad" complicates our notion of ethnicity as a relationship between Self and Other, for "Good Han" or "Bad Han" alone is not an ethnic group assuming the role of the Self contesting another ethnic group as its alterity. The Other of the "Good Han" is not necessarily a separate ethnic group, but the "Bad Han." With the division of Han into Good and Bad, ethnicity in China has attained a new structure, from a binary opposition between

Han and non-Han⁵ to a triadic interaction: Good Han, Bad Han, and Non-Han. In fact, it might even take on a quadriadic structure as a Non-Han can also be internally divided into good and bad categories.

Georg Simmel identified two types of groups—a dyadic group consisting of two members and a triadic group consisting of three or more members.⁶ According to Simmel, a dyadic group is characterized by extreme intimacy, wherein one's identity is completed by the other, and the withdrawal of one member would destroy the whole group. In other words, the dyadic group depends on the presence of both members to constitute itself. Such a group structure constrains individual freedom in self-expression and behavior, and a dyadic society is very much like Durkheim's mechanical solidarity that is sustained by retributive law. Adding one more member to the dyadic group, however, would bring about radical changes to the structure, the resultant triadic group no longer being dependent on the individual members but standing above them. In a triadic group, which is like Durkheim's organic solidarity characterized by restitutive law, an individual also has an option to form a relation with a third member without being penalized.⁷ "The essential point is," Simmel argued, "that within a dyad, there can be no majority which could outvote the individual. This majority, however, is made possible by the mere addition of a third member."⁸

Simmel's numerical sociology provides a fruitful way to treat ethnicity in twentieth-century China not primarily as dyadic, that is, oppositional, but more as triadic, that is, providing possibility for alliance. But the triad is not necessarily free of morality, which is believed to be endemic only in a dyadic relationship.⁹ In the Chinese case, introducing a new morality (the Good and Bad Han vis-à-vis non-Han) is a means to contest the morally charged dyad (Han against non-Han). As I show below, "Good Han" is a category that has been promoted to have better relations with non-Han ethnic groups, often in alliance against the "Bad Han." Moreover, "Good Han" is not a stable category, for it shares one essential identity with "Bad Han," that is, "Han"; thus Good Han and Bad Han can always collapse into one Han in opposition to a non-Han ethnic group in concern, thereby reducing the triadic ethnicity to a dyadic one. Conversely and in parallel, a non-Han group can also be divided into the binary categories "bad" and "good," as did the Manchu rulers distinguish between treacherous and nontreacherous Han subjects during the late imperial period. Thus, ethnicity in twentieth-century China is a field of moral and political contention involving at least three players, often more, even when it involves only two ethnonymical groups.

The genealogy of “Good Han” forming alliance or friendship with ethnic minorities is, in my view, one of the attempts to practice “good” ethnicity in China; as such it affords a unique opportunity to study Chinese ethnopolitics. By “ethnopolitics,” I mean a political possibility for avoiding total polarization between ethnic groups, a possibility for the weaker to mitigate the threat from a more powerful one. It pertains to a practice of distinguishing friend from enemy, less in the style of Carl Schmitt¹⁰ but more that of Mao Zedong. Mao wrote as early as 1926, “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies.”¹¹ The essential difference between Schmitt and Mao, for all their similarities, is that Mao’s distinction between friend and enemy is not only triangular with the Self as the subject allying with friend against enemy, but it also aims to neutralize the enemy by dividing it/him into two (*yifen wei'er*).¹² In other words, the ethnopolitical and its practice—ethnopolitics—lie in the ability not just to identify an enemy, but, more important, to make the enemy into a neutral force if not a friend. Ethnopolitics is a political act to avoid total confrontation, not to make oneself the total Other.

HAN NATIONALISM AND ITS INTERNAL DISCONTENTS

Han nationalism has been a violent force since the late nineteenth century, and it remains so even today. But it was not unchallenged in the twentieth century, and the challenges came also from inside the Han. Understanding this Han voice critical of Han nationalism toward non-Han peoples is crucial to capturing the nature of ethnopolitics in China. Such internal criticisms often led to different political regimes of China, reshaping inter-ethnic and intraethnic dynamics.

There were at least two voices within Han nationalism in the early twentieth century. One strand was vehemently anti-Manchu, bent on expelling “barbarians” to make China a “Han” country. The other was more moderate, fearful that extremist Han nationalism might fragment China territorially. The Mongolian declaration of independence in December 1911 confirmed the worst fear of the moderate Han nationalists. The subsequent proclamation of the Republic of China as a union of five nationalities (*wuzu gonghe*) was as much an attempt to curb extremist Han nationalism as a way to keep the large territories inhabited by non-Han peoples,¹³ but the effort was simultaneously undercut by the new Republican Constitution,

which stated that “citizens of the Chinese Republic are all equal, and there shall be no racial, class or religious distinctions.”¹⁴ This constitution became a source of Chinese advocacy for outright assimilation of non-Han peoples, further provoking non-Han nationalism to secede from China.¹⁵ There is no need to rehearse the well-known historical fact here, but it is important to note that the Han were divided over how to treat non-Han peoples. Such division was emblematic of new national politics characterized by a process of internal disagreements over societal meanings and visions.

The founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921 was a significant event for ethnopolitics in China. Unlike the moderate nationalists in the preceding generation and the liberal nationalist intellectuals such as Gu Jiegang in the succeeding generation who debated about the moral and practical worthiness of non-Han to be included in the Chinese nation, as Leibold has masterfully documented and analyzed in this volume and elsewhere,¹⁶ the CCP introduced a new Han ethnic sensibility that was self-reflexive and self-critical rather than being simply paternalistic. This has had a revolutionary effect on China’s ethnic relations. Instead of imagining a homogeneous nation and thereby retreating from the *wuzu gonghe* system as did the Chinese Nationalist Party (GMD), and instead of treating non-Han peoples in terms of how to “rule” them,¹⁷ the CCP granted prominent place for non-Han in their political thinking.

Following the Comintern, the CCP began to see non-Han peoples as being oppressed and exploited by the Han, that is, seeing the relationship in class terms, distinguishing ethnic groups into oppressor and oppressed nations (*minzu*). More important, this class analysis informed the policies taken by the Communists who took on the duty to oppose their own national oppression of another group and to promote friendship between the laboring people of their own nation and the laboring people of the colonized and oppressed nations, as well as the working class of the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. Let us examine the logic of this new moral and political imperative.

First, the fledgling CCP, far from viewing Han nationalism as an unmitigated good, evaluated it in light of new universal values. Specifically, Han nationalism, like any nationalism, contained multiple and contradictory potential: nationalism is just if it opposes imperialist oppression, but it becomes imperialistic if it serves to oppress a weaker nation. Second, for the CCP, nationalism or ethnicity is no longer structured in the binary opposition self and other but is multilateral: one’s nationalism is set in relation to both oppressor imperialism/colonialism and oppressed nations. Since Communists are required to join forces with the oppressed nation

against imperialist tendencies within one's own nation, it is also incumbent on Communists to distinguish themselves from oppressor nationalists to prove to the oppressed that they are genuinely "different" from their coethnics. Third, the notion of difference has two dimensions here: difference within a powerful nation with regard to the manner of treating a subordinated nation/ethnic group; and difference between nations. Put this way, "difference" is no longer the property of identity; rather it has attained an organizational capacity to transcend the binary opposition to reach out to embrace another nation. Conversely, an oppressed nation has to determine whether the first difference is genuine enough to warrant an alliance and to determine the practical consequence of such an alliance to the boundary between the two allied parties.

In any case, I argue that the fundamental "event" in the field of ethnic relations in twentieth-century China was the emergence of a group of "Good Han" who presented themselves as sympathetic to the oppressed smaller nations and ethnic groups, and who opposed Han nationalist extremists or "Bad Han." The term *Good Han* is one used by the Communists to describe themselves in dealings with non-Han peoples. The emergence of "Good Han" thus ushered in a new kind of ethnopolitics in China, which was no longer binary and oppositional. In other words, "Good Han" and "Bad Han" constituted two political factions within the Han ethno-nation who contended over how to deal with other ethnic groups in the building of modern China. Below, I examine a few manifestations of "Good Han."

"GOOD HAN" IN DEFENSE OF MONGOLIAN AUTONOMY

The earliest manifestation of Good Han, I believe, was the CCP defense of socialist Mongolia, established in 1921. The CCP's Second Congress held in 1922 declared in its manifesto that the ultimate goal of the CCP was unification of China under a federal system with Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang forming autonomous states (*zizhi bang*) federated with China proper (*Zhongguo benbu*):

- In the interests of the workers and poor peasants, the goals of struggle for the CCP in this united front are: 1) Eradicate internal chaos, overthrow the warlords, and build domestic peace. 2) Overthrow oppression by the international imperialists and win the complete independence of the Chinese nation. 3) Unify China proper (including the three provinces in the northeast) and establish a real democratic republic. 4) Establish autonomous rule in Mongolia, Tibet, and Muslim Xinjiang

to turn them into democratic autonomous republics. 5) Use the free federal system to unify China proper, Mongolia, Tibet, and Muslim Xinjiang in order to establish a Chinese Federal Republic.¹⁸

As is evident, the CCP initially supported autonomy as much because of ethnic difference as because of the perceived existence of injustice and oppression. In a separate document written in 1923 outlining the Party's plan, the CCP justified its defense of Mongolia's autonomy thus: "on the basis of China's political reality, further following the spirit of respecting national self-determination, we should not force those people *who are different from us* economically, in national history, and linguistically, to suffer with us from the pain of imperialist and warlord rule."¹⁹

The CCP's support for non-Han national self-determination was controversial, bordering on heretical to some nationalists, especially the GMD, which accused them of treason, of destroying China. In 1926 Hui Daiyin, a leading CCP intellectual, wrote:

Mentioning national self-determination, many more people do not understand, some students often angrily ask me why I support national self-determination, encouraging Mongolia and Tibet to secede from China's rule. In fact, I want to ask them, why not support national self-determination? . . . Why do you think that national self-determination would separate Mongolia and Tibet from China? Didn't the Soviet Union allow national self-determination for its numerous internal small and weak nations, but these nations are all willing to unite to form one country?²⁰

Hui Daiyin's polemical defense of the CCP position points to an internal split among the Han regarding how to treat ethnic groups such as Mongols and Tibetans. This was not a total split; certainly the Communists were not bandits having no sense of ethnic belonging, as their coethnic Han opponents would portray them. The contention between the CCP and the GMD or other nationalists was not one between non-nationalists and nationalists but rather between two strands of Han nationalism, differing primarily in the method or manner of building a new China.

The above-mentioned CCP polemic unequivocally follows the logic that advocacy for non-Han self-determination was not based primarily on recognition of their national difference but rather on the existence of inequality and discrimination. It is worth noting that this "position" was not a blind copy of the Comintern policy but achieved as a maneuver of the weak CCP within the "field of vision" set by the GMD and the larger Han nationalist atmosphere that was hostile to Mongolian and Tibetan

independence. It follows that however ideologically committed the CCP might be to non-Han self-determination, it must strike a balance between its ideology and its existential imperative to strategically position itself in a vantage point outside of “the enemy’s field of vision.”²¹ In the event, the CCP’s goal was not non-Han minority independence but Chinese national unification, and this would be achieved not by invading and conquering the Mongolian People’s Republic but rather by eliminating the underlying cause for Mongols’ quest for independence, that is, discrimination, inequality, and oppression. This much is common knowledge, but what needs to be appreciated is that unlike the Chinese nationalist or GMD rhetoric and the current semiofficial view that squarely blame the Mongols for treason in establishing a Mongol state, or for being gullible enough to be lured away by Russian imperialists, the CCP discourse in the 1920s through the 1940s was that the achievement of eventual unity was predicated on the Han eliminating all those underlying causes. Herein lies the strategically motivated ideological-cum-moral basis of “Good Han.”

THE RULES OF SYMPATHY

The CCP support for Mongolian autonomy or national self-determination was arguably premised on dictates of a new moral law or universal duty based on class interest. But its effectiveness could not be achieved by abstract reason but by the sentimental approach whereby the CCP demonstrated its sympathy to the Mongols, sharing their pain. In doing so, the CCP projected a new imagined community—Chinese people (*Zhongguo renmin*), with the oppressed peoples like Mongols as “one of us”—a community of “good people” but of different ethnic identities, freed from discrimination and oppression. This new imagined community was different from another newly imagined community the CCP endorsed—Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*)—beginning in 1935. Whereas the former was arguably an “imperial” community geared toward accommodating different nationalities, the latter was primarily a “national” community delineated against external “imperialists.” The CCP kept the two largely separate, using them to appeal to different audiences: the former the non-Han minorities, the latter the Han. But it was a separation fraught with tension.

Semiotics is an important front of the CCP’s struggle to build a better ethnic relationship. Among the measures taken by the CCP was an explicit ban of ethnic slurs or insults. As early as 1926, the CCP made an attempt to ban ethnic slurs during the first Hunan Province peasant representative conference in which a resolution on liberating the Miao

and Yao people was passed. The resolution noted that the Miao and Yao, peaceful peoples, suffered from exploitation by their internal leaders and massacres by Chinese feudal lords: "Based on legends, the Chinese people regard the Miao and Yao as extremely savage people, and would not refrain from exterminating them." For its part, the CCP pledged to "liberate the Miao and Yao," declaring that "the Han nationality must not deliberately slander the Miao and Yao in insulting words."²² By the beginning of the 1930s, the CCP began to deploy Great Hanism or Great Han Chauvinism (*da Hanzu zhuyi*), which was undoubtedly a new conception inspired by the Bolshevik denunciation of Great Russian Chauvinism.²³ This term was conspicuous in the scathing criticism made in 1931 by Wang Ming, who became the highest leader of the CCP in the Comintern, against his predecessor Li Lisan for his adventurism, especially his neglect of anti-imperialism and his failure to support non-Han peoples' national liberation movements. Wang Ming called this neglect a manifestation of the "remnants of the narrow traditional thought of 'Great Hanism'" (*da Hanzu minzu zhuyi*). Wang's criticism was significant because it was the first time that the CCP acknowledged the difficulty of overcoming its own Han nationalist predisposition.²⁴

The term *da Hanzu zhuyi* was extensively used during the Long March, as Red Army forces, retreating after the loss of the Central Soviet, encountered tremendous difficulty crossing territories of the Miao, Yi, and Tibetans in Sichuan and elsewhere. Disputing over where to find sanctuary, either in the south among these minorities or in the north among the Han,²⁵ Mao Zedong and Zhang Guotao, the two CCP leaders contending for power, traded criticisms, each denouncing the other for committing "Great Hanism." In 1935, for instance, Mao denounced Zhang for insulting non-Han peoples: "in addition, he treated weak and small nationalities in the manner of Great Hanism."²⁶

What are we to make of these semiotic clashes within the CCP? Juxtaposing Althusser's notion of interpellation and Austin's theory on speech act, Judith Butler argues against censoring hate speech as called for by its antagonists or victims. In her view, hate speech hurts, but it also constitutes the subject, as its addressee acquires an identity by being so addressed. In other words, hate speech is the voice of the other, which is vitally essential for giving the self or subject an identity. "Thus," Butler writes, "we sometimes cling to the terms that pain us because, at a minimum, they offer us some form of social and discursive existence."²⁷

There is a certain advantage in following this line of argument to suggest that the CCP's attempt to ban Han insult of non-Han peoples, and

its injunction against Great Hanism, if successful, would eliminate the boundary between Han and non-Han peoples. Nonetheless, I suggest that the CCP's criticism of its own Great Hanism was more a concern about its own failure to distinguish itself from the warlords and the GMD, the enemies of the CCP. This self-criticism was meaningful in the 1930s because the CCP's survival hinged on cultivating and maintaining friendly relations with non-Han peoples in the face of relentless GMD pursuit, and later Japanese invasion. Driven from its base in south-central China, the CCP had to find sanctuary in non-Han areas where government control was weak. Thus, the semiotic affirmative action toward non-Han peoples through curbing its own Great Hanism was meant to repackage the Red Army as "Good Han," establishing a moral basis for appealing to non-Han peoples for mutual protection from their putative common enemies. The Red Army was not only represented but also proffered to non-Han people as "the people's army," thereby endowing it with a quality both to transcend ethnic cleavages and to serve their interests as well. To say the least, they had to overcome a proverb prevalent among the Miao, Yi, and Tibetans whose territories they had trespassed during the Long March: "Stone cannot be used as a pillow; Han cannot be relied on as a friend" (*shitou buneng dang zhentou, Hanren buneng zuo pengyou*).

To be sure, the CCP was not the only Han who tried to improve relations with the non-Han minorities, using new morality to serve their own more pressing existential exigency. As Magnus Fiskesjö aptly observes, "Abstract assimilationism now gave way to a *realpolitik* for the reformulation of old relations: as part of the anti-Japanese war effort, patriotic intellectuals had urged the central Nationalist government to take measures to enlist even the southern minority ethnic groups, encouraging them to aid China and not Japan."²⁸

In January 1939, shortly after relocating to Chongqing in southwestern China in the wake of Japanese invasion of China proper in 1937, the social department of the central executive committee of GMD ordered Academia Sinica, the national Academy of Sciences, to review and rectify the derogatory ethnonyms Chinese used for the officially unrecognized local ethnic groups such as the Yao, Zhuang, and Lolo. Mobilizing China's best anthropologists and historians, in January 1940 the Nationalist government published a list of sixty-six ethnonyms of southwestern minority nationalities (*xinan shaoshu minzu*) with insect-beast-signified radical Chinese characters and replaced them with different characters or removed the insect or beast radicals.²⁹ The official rationale for correcting these names was to eliminate the cause of discrimination against the borderland nationalities

by the Chinese (*guoren*), but it was significant that this rectification project simultaneously legitimated the existence of these minority groups, which the Chinese government had never officially acknowledged. The real reason apparently lay not in a morality of ethnic equality and recognition but a state of emergency; that is, the survival of the Chinese state in the face of Japanese invasion was at stake.

This cursory examination of the moral self-cultivation of “Good Han” shows that it was a political project of building a new community, guided by a strong need for alliance with non-Han peoples that had life and death consequences for the CCP’s (and to a limited extent the GMD’s) own survival. Thus “Good Han” was a Han in need, looking for a friend against an existential enemy. Being “good” was then a cultivated virtue for this purpose. Below, I provide a case involving CCP projection of its “Good Han” identity to the Mongols in the 1930s. It was a case to “prove” to the Mongols they were different from other “Bad Han.”

“GOOD HAN” AND THE QUESTION OF MATERIAL INTEREST

In 1935 a much weakened CCP and its Red Army arrived at Yan’an in Northwest China, an area populated with significant numbers of Hui to the northwest and Mongols to the north. The Hui Muslim regimes in Qinghai, Gansu, and Ningxia were an integral part of the GMD government, as was the Ordos region in northwestern Inner Mongolia (then Suiyuan Province) controlled by the GMD. In the eyes of the CCP, Mongols were potential allies, not least because the CCP and the Mongolian People’s Republic belonged to the same ideological camp. Ordos was geo-strategically important to the CCP, for it was rich in natural resources that were essential for the survival of the Red Army. The Red Army thus lost no time in invading southern Ordos, occupying part of the Ushin banner where they planted opium, and taking over three salt lakes in the Otog banner. Here I focus on the latter incident, because it is a diagnostic case for understanding the operation of “Good Han.”

The southern part of the Otog banner has numerous salt lakes. In 1933 Ma Hongkui, the newly appointed Hui Muslim governor of the adjacent Ningxia Province, took over and taxed three Mongolian salt mines, Yekhe Chikher (Chinese, Beidachi), Baga Chikher (Chinese, Gouchi), and Oboon Toirom (Chinese, Aobaochi), though Mongols had retained the ownership of the lakes. In general, Hui and Mongols in the region maintained a delicate balance, alternating between cooperation and confrontation. In June

1936 in its “western expedition,” the Red Army defeated Ma Hongkui’s garrison army and seized control of the lakes. Aiming to impress on the Mongols its difference from the GMD and especially the Hui warlords, the Red Army sent Mao Zedong’s brother Mao Zemin, minister of the economy of the Chinese Soviet Government, and Liu Xiao, director of the political department of the Western Route Army, to return the lakes to the Otog banner administration. This followed the spirit of Mao’s December 1935 Declaration to the Inner Mongolian people in which he promised to return all the Chinese-occupied Mongolian territories to the Mongols. The Declaration called on Mongols to oppose the GMD and the Japanese simultaneously, as well as to work with the CCP with an aim to deliver the emancipation of Mongols.³⁰

Ironically, the Red Army decision was strongly opposed by some in the Party, who thought that the Mongols were backward and that Mongol management would deprive the CCP of a crucial source of income. They suggested amalgamating the Mongol and Han salt lakes and organizing a joint Mongol-Han salt company to ensure steady revenue. This half-hearted measure won no Mongol friends. Without Mongol cooperation, and surrounded by the GMD army, the CCP found itself in deep danger. In 1937 the beleaguered CCP, recognizing that it could ill afford total confrontation with the Mongols, sought to make “Inner Mongolia a buffer zone, so that they [the Mongols] would treat us the Red Army *with deep sympathy and friendship*.”³¹ In a drastic attempt to convince the Mongols of their sincerity, the CCP decided to return the salt lakes to the Mongols unconditionally, relinquishing all control over them. “We must prove our sincerity to them with all real and concrete facts,” Liu Xiao tried to persuade his reluctant comrades, arguing that returning the salt lakes was a “very good fact to tell them [the Mongols] that the Red Army sincerely and earnestly respects their independence and freedom.” In his report to the CCP Central Committee, Liu wrote:

Now some comrades, in order to increase state income, suggested combining the Mongol and Han salt lakes and organizing a Mongolian-Han salt company to manage them. I think it is inappropriate. For although there would be Mongols in the Mongol-Han Salt Company, the main leadership rights would still be in our hands, so the Mongols (being quite simpleminded [*naozi hen jiandan*]) would see it as a trick of changing soup but not changing the medicine, and would think that the so-called returning of the salt lakes and helping Mongols to become independent are all false. Now if counterrevolutionaries conducted activities, the results would be very bad. I thus suggest [that we] resolutely and unconditionally return the salt lakes to the Mongols.³²

As this case shows, the CCP's self-projection to the Mongols as "Good Han" was more strategically motivated than ideologically determined. To be "Good Han" to the Mongols was above all a means to be "good" to the CCP themselves. It follows that the problem was how to be "good" enough to be accepted by the Mongols caught between the GMD and CCP. In order to assuage the Mongol fear of CCP (and Han) treachery, the CCP came up with a new strategy. In a 1937 report on Mongol work (*menggu gongzuo*), Liu Xiao examined the failure to make headway in winning over the Mongols thus: "the most important [shortcoming] is that we have not carried out work in the name of Mongols, as we still do Mongol Work standing on the Han side (*zhanzai Hanren fangmian*)."³³

Liu's statement was extraordinary, as it was a tacit acknowledgment that regardless of how sincerely the CCP treated the Mongols, they did so as Han, albeit "Good Han," and in the interest of the Han. Opening up the Ordos Mongol region successfully would now have to be done "in the name of Mongols." With this policy change, Mongol cadres began to be recruited, trained, and dispatched with Mongolian-language propaganda materials to wage a Mongol struggle against such GMD anti-Mongol policies as replacing Mongol banners with Chinese counties, appointing Han county magistrates, reducing the privileges of Mongol aristocrats by issuing new seals to replace old ones, and so on. Put differently, the struggle was to be presented as all-out support for Mongol interests, a job carried out by Mongol cadres but directed and controlled by CCP Han leaders in the background.

The recruitment and deployment of Mongol cadres in the CCP's work in wartime Inner Mongolia would have far-reaching consequences for ethnic relations in China. These were not just individual CCP members who happened to be Mongols, and who would be pressured to transcend their ethnic identity. Rather, they constituted a "Good Mongol" moral category, and their ethnic identity became an asset to the CCP in its penetration into Inner Mongolia. In other words, the CCP projection of "Good Han" to the Mongols required dividing the Mongols into several categories, winning over some while defeating or isolating others.³⁴ I illustrate this point through analyzing some Inner Mongolian Communist literary representations of the *raison d'être* for Inner Mongolian "minority nationality revolution."³⁵

"GOOD HAN" VIA "GOOD MONGOL"

"Good Han" is a key figure in the postrevolutionary literary and artistic representations of Mongol (and other non-Han peoples, for that matter) acceptance of the CCP and its rejection of GMD rule. In numerous nov-

els, movie scripts, and memoirs written by Mongols about the revolution, there is often one or a group of CCP members who command towering respect from the Mongols and is contrasted with the bad warlords, GMD, or Japanese. On the Mongol side are usually three kinds of people: a Mongol Communist cadre, who is nevertheless subordinate to Han leaders, some Mongol activists or ordinary herders receptive to Communism, and the “Bad Mongols,” whether princes, high lamas, or “Mongol traitors” (*Mengjian*) supporting the Japanese, the warlords, or the GMD, depending on the historical era. In many representations, the senior CCP leader is introduced to the Mongol activists by the Mongol cadre as a “Good Han.”

A famous film titled *Storm over Ordos* (E'erduosi Fengbao) made in 1962 depicts how the Mongols were helped by the CCP in the 1920s.³⁶ The protagonist is a Mongol rebel called Öljii who opposes the Mongol aristocrats' selling of Mongol land to Han warlords. He goes to Beijing to seek justice. There he meets Lao Liu, a Han Communist, through Batu, a Mongol Communist who introduces Liu as a “Han friend” (*Hanren pengyou*) who is helping the Mongols. Later, this Han friend goes to Ordos to carry out underground work to help the Mongols. When Öljii decides to return to Ordos, Batu asks him to take a letter to Liu. The following conversation illustrates the semiotic value of “Good Han” who is a friend.

Batu takes out a letter: “Do you still remember that Han friend?”

Öljii does not understand what Batu means: “How can I forget? He is a good man, whoever Mongols oppose, he also opposes. He is a Han, but he is also against bad Han (*huai Hanren*) . . . [he] is a good man.”³⁷

After hearing that Liu is a revolutionary, Öljii is exhilarated.

Friend, no, he is a *xiansheng* [Chinese, teacher], a *bagshi* [Mong., teacher]. Mongols now have hope, we have friends. There are more good people under heaven; we will fight the bad eggs. I'll go find Lao Liu, go find Lao Liu!³⁸

Back in Ordos, Öljii tells his Beijing experiences to his buddies.

After drinking a mouthful of thick tea, Öljii says: “. . . in this way, we lost the case and were also beaten up. There is no place under heaven where you can reason things out.”

Nayantai: “Han are even less reasonable . . .”

Möngkhe: “Among the garlic-eating stinking Han, there is not a single good person.”

Öljii patiently says: “No, Möngkhe, at the beginning, I was like you, thinking that no cat would not like to eat meat, no Han would not bully Mongols. After getting to Beijing, I realized . . . that there are good people and bad people; they cannot be divided by Mongol or Han.”

Nayantai: "Then Cheng Daquan, Jing Yuexiu . . ."

Öljii seriously says: "Cheng Daquan and Jing Yuexiu are Han, they are bad people. The prince and butler Qi are not Han, and are genuine Mongols, but are they good people?"

The conversation goes on to identify who Bad Mongols are and who Good Han are.

Mönkhe stubbornly says: "Good Han (*hao Hanren*)? They may have shining faces, but their smiles are false, they harbor evil intentions in their stomachs."

Öljii is not angry, but patiently says: "Those harboring evil intentions are warlords, landlords, and people like Cheng Daquan, they are bad people, and they grow black hearts. Good Han (*hao Hanren*) grow red hearts, and more (Han) have red hearts."

Nayantai sits up, blurting out: "Hey, who cares whether it is a red heart or a black heart, whoever treats us as humans is a friend; whoever bullies us, humph, whoever it is, is a baddie."³⁹

The episodes above interestingly illustrate the fact that the CCP needs a Mongol cadre as a middleman to make gains among the Mongols. In literary representations, the CCP is a Han figure. And this Han identity presents a serious problem for the Mongols (and of course other nationalities), who tend to think in binary ways of self and other. For the CCP, it is paramount to overcome Mongol hostility toward the Han, under whom Mongols have suffered. The debate in the movie *Storm over Ordos* about "Bad Mongol" and "Good Han" is pedagogical, a major role of revolutionary literature. Note that here the CCP Han is not articulate but a doer, and it is the Mongols who carry out the persuasion work on behalf of the CCP by presenting a Han revolutionary as a friend, a "Good Han." Not just an ordinary "Good Han" but *bagshi* or *xiansheng*, teacher, a superior friend. And together "Good Mongols" and "Good Han" march out to fight "Bad Mongols" and "Bad Han" to build a new classless utopia or moral ecumene where *minzu* are all equal and good and live in friendship with each other devoid of all the causal factors for discrimination and oppression.

THE "BAD" POLITICS OF "GOOD" ETHNICITY

This chapter is an attempt to move away from understanding ethnicity in terms of zero-sum identity politics of self and other. I have suggested using the notion of ethnopolitics to capture interethnic movements, crossovers, and collaborations, which are unimaginable in a total binary opposition. In

modern China, I have argued, the emergence of the category “Good Han” has made Chinese ethnopolitics possible and distinctive.

This Good Han category involves not just social interactions but also mind and affect. The “Good Han” is not just a group of Han; it also involves a promise to treat non-Han peoples well, a capacity to feel pain and suffering of other ethnic groups, especially caused by the behavior of one’s coethnics, and a willingness to redress wrongs. Arguably, these sentimental dimensions of the “Good Han” are modern, influenced as they have been by modern moral ideas such as equality and nondiscrimination.

Significantly, this Good Han category has enabled an alliance with non-Han groups, which are often internally differentiated as good and bad as well, leading to interesting ethnic dynamics, making possible cooperation and coexistence, and producing new affective relations infused with feelings of intimacy and friendship, at the expense of both “Bad Han” and “Bad Non-Han.” This collaboration was responsible for the survival and growth of the CCP and the defeat of the GMD, and for non-Han minorities to attain nominal autonomy within the People’s Republic of China as opposed to either total assimilation or full independence—a new polity that proclaimed itself free from interethnic discrimination and oppression. A new ethnic relationship was born thereupon, and it has been characterized as *minzu tuanjie*, which has the double meaning of national unity and amity among ethnic groups.⁴⁰

However, such a development has been both a blessing and a nightmare for ethnic minorities. For the defeat of the “Bad Han” along with “Bad Non-Han,” both as a category and as an affective sentiment, reduced the original triad or quadriad to a dyad. The founding of the People’s Republic thus ushered in a new dyadic relationship. This time, it was not a binary opposition between the Han and the non-Han minorities but a relationship between “good” minority nationalities and the “good Han” majority represented as *minzu tuanjie*, and it was not to be oppositional but free of all the negative “othering” feelings that were characteristic of ethnicity. This has been touted as the “good” new socialist ethnicity.

Contrary to the desired “good” effect that such new ethnicity might bring about, China’s ethnic relations since 1949 have been punctuated by animosity and violence. Initially the CCP denounced both the Great Han chauvinism and the narrow minority nationalism as bourgeois sentiments that should have no place in a socialist state of people, but gradually nationalism has become an exclusive trait and negative property of minorities, while Han chauvinism has been equated with legitimate patriotism.

Minorities have often been criticized for loving their own groups too much. Their self-love has been denounced as *minzu qingxu* (nationality/ethnic sentiment), manifesting “splittism,” harboring ill will toward the Han, the chosen people upholding the interests of China. Such splittism must be ruthlessly crushed, but many Han often feel bewildered even as they celebrate their victory over minority splittism. The intensity of affective ethnic relations was recently displayed by the widespread puzzlement felt by many Han at the riots in Tibet and Tibetans demand for greater autonomy in March 2008: “Why do they hate us so much after we have done so many good things to them?”

This Han frustration and puzzlement is symptomatic of contemporary Chinese ethnicity. Today it is no longer possible for minorities to draw a boundary with the Han, because this Han is no longer “bad” or the Other but *prima facie* “good” Han. Minority criticism of China and the Han is now taken to mean rejection of Han, who are good. Their demand for genuine autonomy is interpreted as a moral affront to many Han who believe they are “good.” As is clear, in China’s “good ethnicity,” “difference,” the vital property of ethnicity, does not have a place, and it is the minority demand for difference and boundary that draws the ire of the “Good Han,” who feel a compulsion to teach the ungrateful minority a good lesson.

In this intensely affective ethnicity, minorities cannot afford to be “different” from the Han without being seen as “bad” to the “Good Han.” In fact, minorities themselves have also come to believe that they are “good.” Paradoxically, minority resistance in China can be characterized by protesting Han discrimination, being mistreated as “bad.” In doing so, minorities project themselves as “good” people, not just as rights-bearing citizens. Thus both Han denunciation of minority nationalism and minority criticism of Han chauvinism are characterized by a common resentment against being treated as enemies or “bad,” but for different reasons and consequences. Chinese concession to minority characterization of Han as “bad” is tantamount to admitting to an ontological difference between Han and minority, thereby providing a legitimate foundation for genuine autonomy or independence, which is of course not permissible. If a minority is designated as “bad” as a result of its quest for autonomy or independence, it will invite the wrath of “the people” and the iron fist of the Chinese state machine. So no minority will afford to admit to being “bad” without preparing to face the consequences.

At the center of this new Chinese ethnicity is the difficulty of dealing with the original friendship pact between the CCP and ethnic minorities

against their common enemy—both bad Han and bad ethnic attitudes of discrimination and oppression. The friendship pact contains promises from both sides to be “good” to each other, and not only to distance from but also actively oppose the othering “bad” attitudes from their own coethnics. Promises produce a new community of promisers, but the problem is what or who can guarantee this promise to be good. Like the signers of the American Declaration of Independence, who needed an external authority to guarantee their own promises,⁴¹ but unlike the God in the American case, it is the “bad” Han in the Chinese case who served this vital function, ensuring that the CCP would be on its best possible behavior as Good Han. With the demise of Bad Han, for “good” minorities, Good Han promises have become memories of unfulfilled promises. And this inevitably leads both “good” Han and “good” minorities to mutual disappointment, disillusionment, and feelings of betrayal and resentment, which are now the affective property of China’s ethnicity.

PART II

The Problem of Han Origins

5. Understanding the Snowball Theory of the Han Nationality

Xu Jieshun

In the preface to *Snowball: An Anthropological Analysis of the Han Nationality*, I proposed the “snowball theory” of Han Studies.¹ The formation and development of the Han nationality, I argued, bears strong resemblance to that of a snowball in the sense that as it moves through time and space it grows more dense and compact. How should we understand this theory? In what ways can the Han nationality (*minzu*) be compared to a snowball? When Fei Xiaotong proposed his famous “plurality and unity” (*duoyuan yiti geju*) theory of the Chinese nation, he used the same metaphor: “From an ethnic (*minzu*) perspective,” Fei contended, “the Han, throughout the entire process, just like a snowball, gets bigger the farther it rolls.”² Beginning in ancient times, the Han’s varied ancestors labored, lived, and propagated on the fertile and vast Chinese land (*Zhonghua da di*). Its cradle was the basins of the Yellow, Yangtze, Liao, and Pearl Rivers. Undergoing changes over vast periods of time, from a point to a line, from a line to a plane, it rolled across China like a snowball. Through the assimilation of numerous ethnic groups, the Han formed and eventually developed into the most populous nationality in the world. Expanding upon Fei’s idea of plurality and unity, we may thus refer to the Han nationality metaphorically as an immense snowball: a singularity when viewed from a macro perspective but from a micro perspective the fusion of countless snowflakes.

With this metaphor as our starting point, the Han nationality can be defined as a national community of diversified origins with the structural, processual, and cohesive features of a snowball. It is the combination of these three unique elements that has made the Han nationality the world’s largest, most populous national community—which, while diverse, also shares a strong sense of identity. In this chapter, I seek to examine

the scholarly implications of the snowball theory of the Han nationality, addressing the theoretical aspects of holism, structuralism, process, cohesion, adaptation, and momentum. I discuss the ways in which the Han is an integrated whole exhibiting plurality and unity and the ways in which this integrated whole formed and developed. By way of this analysis, I also examine why the Han is the world's largest nationality.

THE HAN NATIONALITY AS A WHOLE COMPOSED OF "HARMONIOUS DIFFERENCES"

Despite its internal variation, the Han nationality is a whole composed of "harmonious differences" (*he er butong*). From the standpoint of anthropological research, the operative concept here is that of holism, one in which humankind and society are characterized as a multifaceted whole.³ By means of holism one can obtain a firmer grasp on the characteristics or features of a culture by investigating the interrelationships of all its parts.

To witness examples of such "harmonious differences" within the Han, one can compare the customs and lifeways of different communities as one travels from the northern to the southern part of China. The Han communities in each region exhibit their own flavor and style: from language to culture, from subsistence strategies to economic life, from attire to cuisine, from marriage customs to burial rituals, and from holidays to etiquette. For example, Beijingers and Cantonese communicate in their own distinct dialects, which are mutually unintelligible. Beijingers are known to be skillful government officials, while Cantonese boast the reputation of being shrewd businessmen. Furthermore, differences in attire attest to differences in climate, with Beijingers tending to dress in a more formal manner due to cold weather, and Cantonese enjoying a more laid-back lifestyle and a warmer climate. Beijingers' marriage customs are also comparatively traditional, whereas Cantonese marriages typically have a Western flavor. Beijingers' Spring Festival celebrations revolve around temple fairs; in Guangzhou, on the other hand, flower shows rule the day. While Beijingers display greater concern with family status, Cantonese emphasize respect for ancestral clans. Such profound differences between Beijingers and Cantonese might cast doubt on their common Han identity. However, drawing on a common Chinese idiom, even though with the Han "you go ten miles and habits change; you go a hundred miles and the customs change," one never leaves the realm of high-level identity that encompasses these "harmonious differences."

An even more striking example is that of the "ancient Romans" of Yong-

chang County, in Gansu Province. Despite a great deal of evidence that the “Yongchang Romans” did not in fact exist, the Classics are replete with stories of this region being ruled by a major non-Han power, variously named Qian, Ligan, Qinhu, and Lushuihu. As participants in the building of the regimes of Beiliang and Houzhao, they were gradually assimilated into the local Han population after the Sui dynasty (581–618 C.E.). The academic community has always been divided about their blood lineage. Two of the more influential theories that have emerged from this debate are those that argue that they were either Persian Cypriots or the Greek Parthians. Despite these disagreements, both agree on their Indo-European, or Caucasian, origins. The details surrounding the true origins of this intriguing ethnic group, and their millennia-long struggles with and ultimate assimilation by the Han, are unlikely to be fully known. But regardless of how different these so-called ancient Romans were from the Han, the resident of Yongchang County today—in their customs, language, and even the simplicity or garishness of their physical being—are no different from any other Chinese peasants. In fact, when filling in any forms, they always neatly write Han as their nationality.⁴ They are not alone. This is also the case of the “Jews” of Kaifeng, Henan,⁵ the descendants of King Xilan in Quanzhou, Fujian,⁶ and those of the Sarbi ethnic group in Heshan, Guangdong.⁷

Countless examples like these show that the diversity within the Han nationality belies a high degree of commonalities worthy of being referred to as “harmonious differences.” The “plurality” of Han origins, after long periods of interaction, refining, integration, and identification, eventually, through “mixed blood,” consolidated into a “unity” with a high order of shared ethnic identity. The internal variations of the Han can be best understood through an analysis of its structure—that is, the grouping and ordering of its constituent parts.⁸ In the past, due to theoretical and methodological limitations, no one was able to undertake an exploration and analysis of the complex structure of the Han nationality. Now, through the “microscope” of ethnicity theory (*zuqun lilun*), it is not difficult for us to engage in this task. In the same way that matter is composed of molecules—which in turn are composed of atoms—the Han, as one of the world’s nationalities, is composed of ethnic groups of varying sizes and cultures. These ethnic groups are geographically dispersed throughout China. Some live in one particular region, such as the southern Fujianese or the Cantonese. Others, like the Hakka and the Pinghua, are not concentrated in one particular geographic location. Some are “ethnic group islands” surrounded by minority nationalities, such as the “Gaoshan Han” of Guangxi.

Some are defined by urban centers, like Beijingers and Suzhounese, while others are rooted in the countryside, like the Tunbao of Guizhou.

Categorizing ethnic groups within the Han constitutes a Herculean task. Still, in broad strokes, we may divide them according to four sets of criteria. One way to divide them is by dialect, such as the Hakka and the Cantonese. Another way is by geographic regions, such as Hubei, Jiangxi, and so on. Yet another method is to divide them by urban centers, such as Beijing, Nanjing, and Suzhou. Finally, they can also be categorized according to customs, such as the “Gaoshan Han” of Guangxi or the Tunbao of Guizhou. In this way, the Han nationality, which is actually composed of many micro-ethnic groups, exhibits a structural pattern of “plurality and unity.” In this pattern, the micro-ethnic groups are the “plurality”; the Han nationality is the “unity.” The plurality and unity structure of the Han has been molded by three factors: the diversity of Han origins, its formation, and its development.

The Han has two main origins—the Yanhuang ethnic community and the Dongyi ethnic community—and three subsidiary origins: the Miao-Man ethnic community, the Bai-Yue ethnic community, and the Rong-Di ethnic community. This diversity established a base for the “plurality and unity” structure of the Han nationality. In regard to its formation, the Han nationality underwent three stages. The first corresponds to the successive rise of the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Chu, and Yue ethnic groups of the Yellow and Yangtze River valleys during the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties. The second stage witnessed the great assimilation of the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Chu, and Yue and parts of the Man, Yi, Rong, and Di groups into the Huaxia people, from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods to the Qin dynasty. During the third stage, the Huaxia people developed and transformed into the Han nationality, through the “grand unification” of the Western Han dynasty. Thus diversity was central to the formation of the plurality and unity of the Han during its embryonic phase.

As in the formation stages, diversity played a key role in the development of the Han nationality. Beginning in the Qin-Han period, and persisting throughout the Han’s development over two thousand years, gravitational, centripetal, and cohesive forces have shaped the interactions among ethnic groups. These forces have caused minority groups that have appeared throughout Chinese history—the Xiongnu, Sarbi, Wuwan, Jie, Di, Qiang, Khitan, Dangxiang, Jurchen, and parts of the Man, Li, Liao, and Xi—to become largely “sinicized” (*hanhua*), providing fresh blood (*xinxian xueye*) for the Han nationality. The Classics have documented

this process by recording innumerable phrases that reflect the sinicization of these groups, such as “the same as the Qi people,”⁹ “the same as the Chinese [Hua] people,”¹⁰ “similar to the Shu people,”¹¹ “as dangerous as the Chinese [Hua] people,”¹² and “indistinguishable from the Chinese [Hua] people.”¹³ Consequently, the Han nationality has grown “bigger and bigger, like a rolling snowball,”¹⁴ resulting in a solid core for the Han nationality, based on plurality and unity.

In sum, it is only through the diversity of the origins, formation, and development of the Han nationality that the formation of the plurality and unity pattern of the Han has been brought about. How, then, was the plurality and unity structure formed? From an anthropological standpoint, a “plurality” of ethnic groups coalescing into a “unity” must undergo a process of adaptation. During this stage, the plurality is refined and integrated into a unity. “Refining” should be understood as the process of mutual interaction in which two or more ethnic groups develop mutually reliant social intercourse through cultural transmission—through the exchange of both culture and thought and feeling. In this way they link up their psychologies in order to reduce and adapt to contradictions and conflicts that stem from cultural differences. This results in mutual adaptation and the attainment of harmony and uniformity. When we examine ethnic relations in China, everywhere we look we can see the refinement of interactions between the Han and other ethnic groups. And the result of this refinement is an integration stemming from the gradual maturation of interactions among ethnic groups: from incompatibility to mutual interaction to refinement and eventually integration and identification.

Based on present research, the ethnic group structure of the Han may be divided into three levels. First, based on cultural geography, we may divide the Han into South China Han, East China Han, Central China Han, North China Han, Northeast China Han, Northwest China Han and Southwest China Han. Beneath this first level, we may further divide as follows. The Han of South China may be divided into the Cantonese, Hakka, South Fujianese Hoklo, Fujianese, Pinghua, and Guilin–Liuzhou ethnic groups. The Han of East China may be divided into the Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Huizhou, Suzhou, Ningbo, and Wenzhou ethnic groups. The Central China Han may be divided into the Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi ethnic groups. The North China Han may be divided into the Hebei, Henan, Shandong, and Shanxi ethnic groups. The Northeast China Han may be divided into the Shenyang, Dalian, Harbin, and Changchun ethnic groups. The Northwest China Han may be divided into the Hehuang, Hexi, Guanzhong, Xi’an, Northern Shaanxi, and Qinzhou Tianshui

ethnic groups. Finally, the Southwest China Han may be divided into the Yunnan and Guizhou ethnic groups. The third level of subcategorization mainly refers to “ethnic islands,” such as the “Gaoshan Han” of Guangxi, the natives of Fuchuan, the Tunbao of Guizhou, the Hui’an of Fujian, and the Dan. These three levels make up the immense ethnic group system known as the Han nationality.

FORMATION OF THE IMMENSE SNOWBALL

At present, the Han is the world’s largest nationality. The growth of its population occurred gradually, however, through a process that spanned several thousand years. The Han became, to draw upon one definition of unifying processes, a “dialectical unity, in time, space and circumstance, of the finite existence and infinite development of objects,” and is “the manifestation of the inevitable integration of the basic forms of objects’ existence.”¹⁵ Like all concrete objects in the universe, all of which have origins followed by histories of formation, evolution, and development, the Han nationality underwent a similar process of formation, evolution, and development, during which its plurality gradually coagulated into a unity.

The Han nationality can be traced to around the twenty-first century B.C.E. with the rise of the Xia nationality in the loess belt of the middle reaches of the Yellow River valley. Thereafter, many sources contributed to the formation of the Han. From the sixteenth century to 770 B.C.E. the Shang and Zhou ethnicities in the Yellow River valley, and the Chu and Yue ethnic groups in the Yangtze River valley succeeded each other. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the scope of the Han’s formation intensified, encompassing not only the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Chu, and Yue ethnicities but also parts of the Man, Yi, Rong, and Di. More important, as the Han snowball rolled across the Yellow and Yangtze River valleys, the ethnic boundaries among different communities gradually disappeared, assimilating into a new macro-ethnic group: the Huaxia people. The size of this rolling Han increased from just over two million people during the Xia to around 20 million during the height of the Warring States period.¹⁶

The Huaxia people of this period were the forerunners of the Han nationality and were composed of the Qin, Qi, Chu, Zhao, and Yan ethnic groups. With great talent and bold vision, Emperor Qin Shihuang pushed the Huaxia onto the track of unification. When the Han dynasty succeeded the Qin, the Huaxia developed into the Han nationality during the “grand unification.” Its population soared to around 32 million in 87 B.C.E., after

the reign of the Han emperor Wu and to 59 million in 2 C.E., during the reign of the Han emperor Ping.¹⁷

The rapid assimilation of minority ethnic groups into the Han persisted throughout the following centuries, a process that accelerated with the successive wave of northern minority tribes entering the Central Plains and the southward migration of the Han. During the turmoil that marked the closing years of the Eastern Han dynasty, the minorities of the north entered the Central Plains, one after the other. This triggered massive Han migrations from the Central Plains to the south. From the time of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern dynasties up until the Sui–Tang period, as the Han developed, it absorbed many in the North who had entered the Central Plains to rule: the Xiongnu, Sarbi, Wuwan, Jie, Di, and Qiang, along with elements of the Man; in the South it absorbed parts of the Man, Li, Liao, and Xi. This caused the Han population to grow from the 59 million of the Han dynasty to 80 million to 90 million in the Tang dynasty.¹⁸

Different periods of historical development often share striking similarities. In the last years of the Tang dynasty, the minority tribes of the North once again invaded the Central Plains to establish successive dynasties. The South once again received a massive influx of Han migrants. Likewise, during the Song, Liao, Xia, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, the Han continued to gain size. In the North it absorbed the Khitan, Dangxiang, and Jurchen minorities; in the South it incorporated various other minorities. Now the Han grew to 100 million, reaching over 104,410,000 in 1109, during the third year of the Daguan era of the Northern Song.¹⁹

The political and military turmoil of the late Han and Tang dynasties did not cause the Han snowball to shrink, even less so to disappear; on the contrary, it experienced periods of rapid growth. This continued after the Yuan, given the post-Yuan trend toward unification. In year 28 of the Ming emperor Wan Li (1601), the population reached 150 million;²⁰ and during year 30 of the Qing emperor Daoguang (1851), it topped 400 million.²¹ This trend has persisted in modern times. When the People's Republic of China was established, its population was over 600 million; by the end of the twentieth century it had reached about 1.2 billion, and its territory had spread from the Yellow and Yangtze River valleys to the Pearl River valley, and on to Hainan and Taiwan, and in the Northeast to the Amur River valley.

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL COHESION

Shared cultural traits have also acted as a key force in fusing the diverse micro-ethnic groups into today's Han nationality. Throughout history,

ethnic cohesion has contained a duality: one type is extrinsic, formed through historical, territorial, or externally mandated factors; the other is intrinsic, a spiritual cohesion resulting from cultural psychology, generational transmission, mutual interaction, and mutual attraction. This duality is unified through historically and socially cohesive activities.²²

The Chinese writing system and cultural identity constitute the most striking expressions of Han cohesion. The Chinese writing system has played a unique and important role in shaping Han unity. A nationality's language is a symbol and expression of its essence, its most vital bond. Chinese characters, especially, have the characteristic of "the forefathers bequeathed so that future generations would know the ancient." This has bridged the past, present, and future of the Han, enabling this nationality to systematically record their entire history in documents written in Chinese characters. This inexhaustible supply of documents has left the Han's historical achievements as an immortal heritage for one generation to pass on to the next. And the stable, concise, and square form of Chinese characters helped to temper the Han nationality throughout its five thousand years of gradual development.

The ancient and modern usage of Chinese characters attests to their enduring nature. For instance, the "Thirteen Classics" totaled 589,283 characters, though only 6,544 of those were unique. This provides an estimate of the maximum number of characters in use in ancient times, which is approximately the same as today. The "Chinese Character Frequency Table," compiled by Xinhua Press in Beijing, based on materials totaling 21,629,372 characters, notes that only 6,335 are unique.²³ This illustrates the stability of Chinese characters. For exactly this reason, the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978) once wrote:

Once a Chinese person has mastered them, if he reads a poem, it does not matter if the poem was written in the time of Jesus (1st century C.E.) or after the year 1,000, or yesterday. From a linguistic perspective they are all the same to him. No matter when it was written, he is still able to understand and appreciate it. But in other countries, where written language follows the evolution of spoken language, within a few short centuries it can actually become an entirely different written language. A typical Englishman of the present can scarcely comprehend an English document of 300 or 400 years ago. The earliest documents can only be understood after a special course of research in linguistics. For Chinese people, several thousand years of documents can be understood. The special nature of the Chinese writing system is the main reason for the people's unparalleled love and understanding of their country's ancient culture.²⁴

In ancient times, the limitations in writing tools and materials—whether notched into tortoise shells, cast in bronze, carved in bamboo, or written on silk—led to a written language fundamentally different from the spoken form: what is commonly called Classical Chinese (*wenyanwen*). The most distinctive characteristic of Classical Chinese is its brevity and concision. The shortest passages can contain the richest meanings. Anyone who has read Classical Chinese has experienced this. More important, as a general pattern, Chinese lacks morphology, and is largely based on monosyllabic morphemes. This makes each Chinese character a symbol, expressing both a syllable and a morpheme, as well as a meaning. Thus Chinese has become “a complex of form, sound, and meaning.” Chinese characters are therefore well suited to the Chinese language, with its strong suit of brevity and clarity. Compared to English, French, Russian, and Spanish, Chinese not only avoids the awkwardness of too many words but is also written clearly and concisely. For instance, among the five working languages of the United Nations, the Chinese editions are the thinnest.

The square form of Chinese characters is one of the most striking features distinguishing it from most other languages. Not only do these characters possess the linear and rhythmic beauty of calligraphy, but their square “shape” can convey rich information: it is not only possible to guess the meaning, which is conducive to reading, but there is also room for association and imagination, which is helpful in developing thinking capacity. It is precisely because Chinese characters exhibit stability, clarity, and square form that there is a strong sense of identity in the psychology of the Han, serving as a cohesive force. Despite the variety and complexity of Han dialects, Chinese characters are used throughout the country. Regardless of the region, once a dialect is conveyed through Chinese characters—with the exception of a few colloquial expressions—there are no obstacles to communication. Hence the unifying power of the Chinese writing system among the Han. Without Chinese characters there would be no Han nationality, as they serve as a symbol of the soul and root of this group.²⁵

The cohesion of diverse micro-ethnic groups into a single Han nationality is not limited to the development of a common writing system. It also lies in forging a common cultural identity among its constituent parts. Thus cultural identity should be viewed as an underlying force that enabled the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Chu, and Yue ethnicities to cohere into an ever more solid singularity. During the pre-Qin period, the formation of a shared cultural identity was rooted in the emergence of an irrigation-based agriculture economy among the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties

of the Yellow River valley. The Classics mention that the Great Yu of Xia tamed the waters and “held the plough and the spade to put the people first.”²⁶ Even Qi, distant ancestor of the Shang among whom animal husbandry was always relatively developed, once said that “it was good to assist Yu in taming the flood waters.”²⁷ And by “drowning while busy with his function,”²⁸ Ming, great grandson of Xiangtu (of Shang) became the “Yu” of Shang. The “good farmer” Qi, the first ancestor of the Zhou ethnic group, was once Yao’s “farmer” and believed to be the spirit of grain, thus respectfully acknowledged as “Prince Millet.”²⁹ The *Book of Odes* contains several poems that describe the formation and development of an irrigation-based agriculture economy and culture of the Zhou. Even the slash-and-burn and fishing-based cultures of the Chu and Yue³⁰ should be viewed as similar in essence to the agriculture-based cultures of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, thereby establishing the economic foundation of their shared cultural identity.

The *Book of Odes* provided an underlying foundation upon which the the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Chu, and Yue erected their cultural identity. A product of a fusion of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties of the Central Plains, the *Book of Odes* was regarded as representative of the Zhou culture and widely disseminated throughout the Central Plains in the Spring and Autumn period. As early as 544 B.C.E. (the first year of King Jing of Zhou), the year Prince Jizha of Wu went to Lu to hear the music of Zhou, there was already a profound understanding and a well-articulated commentary on poems that were essentially similar to the *Airs of States* in the *Book of Odes*. Self-styled “barbarians” (*manyi*) of Chu, influenced by Zhou culture, were already able to read aloud from the *Book of Odes*. The *Zuozhuan* records that in the seventh year of Prince Zhao, “[Yu Yin] replied: ‘As the ancient poem says: In the entire world there is nothing but the king’s land. In the whole world there are only kings and officials.’” The identity around the culture of the *Book of Odes* is also reflected among portions of the Man, Yi, Rong, and Di ethnic groups, such as the western Jiangrong chieftain Ju Zhi, who had proclaimed, “I and all the Rong are not the same as the Chinese. Our gifts are of no use, and our language is not understood.”³¹ After denouncing the high Jin official Fan Xuan Zi for not allowing him to participate in the alliance’s attack, Ju Zhi recited “The Slanderer,”³² then left. “The Slanderer” is a portion of the “Minor Odes” in the *Book of Odes*. It contains the passage, “amiable gentleman, untrustworthy and slanderous.” Ju Zhi’s citation of this passage was entirely appropriate in addressing Fan Xuan Zi, and thus Fan Xuan Zi “asked him to stay, and allowed him to participate in the business of the

alliance, smoothing everything over."³³ Thus Fan Xuan Zi apologized at once for his careless remark and invited Ju Zhi to participate in the alliance, to ensure his own reputation as an amiable gentleman. We can see that Ju Zhi, of the Rong ethnic group, not only is able to speak "Chinese" (Hua), but can also recite from the *Book of Odes* to convey his thoughts. This displays a shared cultural identity.

The prominence of the *Book of Odes* and the development of a writing system dating to the pre-Qin period buttressed the emergence of a cultural identity that acts as a unifying force among the Han nationality. These strong cultural foundations not only facilitated the incorporation of other micro-ethnic groups in the Han but also are responsible for its historical longevity.

ETHNIC POLICIES: STRENGTHENING SINICIZATION

Throughout its history, China has been a multiethnic state (*duo minzu de guojia*). Regardless of its ethnic background, China's ruling dynasty understood the necessity of enacting ethnic policies (*minzu zhengce*) as a means of achieving social control and unity of the state. Such policies were not only aimed at governing ethnic relations, but, more important, were adapted to conform to the sinicization trend, further strengthening the cohesion of the core Han nationality.

Take for instance the mixed-marriage policies implemented under the Han dynasty. These policies originated in intermarriages between the tribes of the Yellow Emperor and Shen Nong and developed down through the Zhou dynasty. Not only those with the surnames Ji and Jiang were married; mixed marriages had already become traditional among nobles of many ethnic groups, to the point that the nobles of Jin often intermarried with the Rong and the Di. By the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, mixed marriages with the Man, Yi, Rong, and Di had already become an important ethnic policy implemented by all the Chinese states. This kind of policy adaptation was key in the formation of the Han nationality.

The policies implemented during the rule of minority ethnic groups also accelerated the sinicization process of these ethnic groups. Adhering to the "'eternal historical principle' of uncivilized conquerors themselves being conquered by the relatively high civilization of the conquered nationality,"³⁴ many minorities who ruled over the Central Plains carried out sinicization policies, such as mandating the speaking of Chinese (*Hanyu*) and the use of Chinese characters (*Hanwen*), and shifting allegiance to

the Chinese language (*Hanyu*); dispersing the tribes and implementing “household registration for the masses” and living among the Han; encouraging farming and sericulture, trading a nomadic economy for an agricultural one; initiating Han studies, intermarrying with Han, wearing Han dress, and assimilating into Han culture. A typical example that reflects this sinicization trend can be observed in the policies of Emperor Xiao Wen of the Northern Wei. Such polities prohibited Northern barbarian clothing (*hufu*), banned Northern languages (*beiyu*), changed surnames, fixed family status, changed marriage customs, extolled Confucian learning, and divided cropland equally. Such practices of social control ensured the continued development of the Han.³⁵

In addition, there were a series of other policy interventions—the loose rein (*jimi*) policies, hereditary headman policies, conciliatory policies, tribute policies, fiefdom policies, internal migration policies, educational enlightenment policies, and religious policies—which, on different levels and in different respects, strengthened the predominance of the Han nationality in government, solidifying the Han snowball’s cohesion as it continued to expand.

FORGING THE IDEA OF “GRAND UNIFICATION”

As the Chinese ethnospace moved from plurality to unity during the Spring and Autumn period, the concept of grand unification (*dayitong*) emerged among rulers and government officials. Coined in Confucius’s *Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*, this idea of unification is not limited to Chinese territory but also encompasses the aim of promoting peaceful relations among all ethnic groups. Throughout the ages, this concept has acted as the driving force behind the development of the Han.

While compiling the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Confucius noted that whenever a Zhou king ascended the throne, the label “king’s rectified month” was used. The *Gongyang Commentary, Year One of Duke Yin*, explained this as follows: “What is the origin year? The first year of the sovereign. What is spring? The beginning of the year. To whom does ‘king’ refer? To King Wen. Why does it first say ‘king’ and then say ‘rectified month’? The king rectifies the calendar. What is meant by saying ‘king’s rectified month’? The grand unification.”³⁶ Here, the unification of the calendrical system is used to emphasize the king’s merger of absolute power and universal decrees. This consolidated the widely accepted view by the monarchs of ancient dynasties that the goal of governance should

be to possess “all under heaven” (*tianxia*). When King Hui of Liang asked Mencius, “How can the world be settled?” Mencius answered “Through unification.”³⁷ Li Si said to the king of Qin, “Exterminate the princes, become Emperor and unify the world. This is the crucial moment for you to do this.”³⁸ In essence this means taking the emperor as the core, organizing society in an orderly way, and bringing unity to the world, thus building a unified China (*Zhongguo*).

Confucius’s concept of grand unification is closely connected with his ideals about government. In the *Analects*, he pointed out, “[When good government prevails in the empire,] ceremonies, music and punitive military expeditions proceed from the Emperor. When bad government prevails in the empire, ceremonies, music and punitive military expeditions proceed from the princes. . . . When right principles prevail in the empire, government will not be in the hands of the great officers. When right principles prevail in the empire, there will be no discussions among the common people.” The influence of the grand unification so emphatically esteemed in the *Gongyang Commentary* is deep and far-reaching. Not only did it begin as a profound cultural concept, but it also ultimately became deeply rooted in the culture.

Centuries later, as the Huaxia people were transforming and developing into the Han nationality, Dong Zhongshu of the Han dynasty further elaborated on the meaning of the “grand unification” of the Spring and Autumn period. In a question-and-answer session with Emperor Wu about able and virtuous men and about literature, he said, “The ‘grand unification’ of the Spring and Autumn period is an eternal principle of the universe and a concept for all times.”³⁹ Here, Dong Zhongshu proclaimed that the meaning of the grand unification put forth in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* refers not only to a political “grand unification” of territory but also to an incontrovertible principle of the highest order, the eternal way of the world, from ancient times to the present. We can see that the connotations of the “grand unification” are rich: clear government, peaceful society, prosperous economy, and peace among all ethnic groups. Thus, on the recommendation of Dong Zhongshu, Emperor Wu esteemed only Confucian learning. Under the flag of Confucius’s grand unification and in the name of the *Gongyang Commentary*, he unified every school of Confucianism and the doctrines of various other schools of thought. For instance, he merged the Confucian theories about Tang and Wu and the Mandate of Heaven with theories of Yin and Yang, the Five Elements, and the cyclical theories of the Five Virtues; the Confucian benevolence with the theories of the Yellow Emperor, Lao Zi, and the Legalists of the

Warring States period; the Confucianism with Mohist argumentation; and the Mencian theory of innate human goodness with Xun Zi's theory of innate human evil. This kind of "grand unification" of a "hundred schools of thought," with Confucian learning as its backbone, only weakly differentiates among ethnic groups and has a particularly transethnic nature. This offered a theoretical foundation for the centralized power of China's imperial structures while at the same time providing the driving force for the formation of the Han.

The historical trend of the grand unification created a shock wave of extreme intensity, continuously shattering ethnic boundaries and "distinctions between the Chinese and barbarians" (*hua-yi zhi bian*). Therefore, after Emperor Wu accepted Dong Zhongshu's recommendation to "expel all other schools and esteem only Confucian learning," and achieved the grand unification of the border regions, of institutions, and of ideology, the ethnic thinking of "one family, Chinese and barbarian" (*hua-yi yi jia*) was manifested in every dynasty. For instance, Emperor Taizong of Tang proclaimed, "From ancient times all have valued China (Zhonghua) and looked down on barbarians (*yi*). I take care of them all equally, and so all races (*zhong*) and tribes rely on me as they would their parents."⁴⁰ Successive Ming emperors stressed, "There is nothing between Chinese (*hua*) and barbarian (*yi*). Though surnames differ, they are all treated with the same kindness."⁴¹ And: "At root Chinese (*hua*) and barbarian (*yi*) are one family. I have been given the Mandate of Heaven as Emperor . . . all are my children."⁴² This idea was prevalent among both Han and minority rulers. For instance, Xizong of Jin once said, "All my officials within the four seas, if they treat their subjects unequally, how can they rule with unity?"⁴³ In a similar manner, the Mongol Kublai Khan noted, "The sage takes the four seas as his home. If we don't treat everyone equally well, how could we live as a family?"⁴⁴ The Manchu Yongzheng emperor said, "Since my dynasty came to rule China (*zhongtu*), we have reigned over the world, and have become unified with the far reaches of Mongolia. All tribes have returned to their territory. The broad expansion of China's (Zhongguo) territory is the great fortune of China's subjects. What good would it do to maintain divisions between Chinese (*hua*) and barbarian (*yi*), between center (*zhong*) and periphery (*wai*)?"⁴⁵

Such views illustrate how deeply ingrained the concept of grand unification was in the minds of the Chinese. Over the course of several millennia, this idea has become the guiding principle of fusion and fission among China's ethnic groups.

WILL THE SNOWBALL MELT?

First, in this chapter I have generalized about the Han nationality, comparing it to a snowball. Here its basic features are enormity, complexity, and shared identity. To elaborate on each of these, this is to say: it is the largest nationality in the world; it exhibits great internal variation; and because it is integrated as a whole, it shares a strong collective identity. Second, I have explored an essential pattern of Chinese history: the fusion and fission of China's ethnic groups, with the Han as the "cohesive core" (*ningju hexin*)⁴⁶ of the snowball. This is also referred to colloquially as the sinicization of minority ethnic groups in Chinese history. This "sinicization" is a characteristic historical phenomenon in relations among China's minorities and is a Chinese expression of the function of acculturation. Third, I have developed a model of ethnic assimilation that takes the Han nationality as an example: the model of a rolling snowball. This can offer great insight into building a world of "harmonious differences." Finally, the Han nationality's movement from plurality to unity allows us to predict that a similar trend will persist in the future of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*).

The objection might be raised that if the Han nationality is figuratively seen as a snowball, then conceivably it could melt. In one respect, we need not concern ourselves with this question too literally, insofar as the snowball metaphor is being employed here as a heuristic device to enrich scholarly reflection. One comparison might be to the work of Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) and her description of the Japanese people by means of the metaphors of "the chrysanthemum and the sword." Only a literal interpretation of such a metaphor prompts us to ask if such chrysanthemums might wither, swords rust, or snowballs melt. From an academic standpoint, however, we may respond in two ways to this problem of the melting "Han snowball." First, part of the snowball could indeed melt. The Han nationality's minoritization (*shaoshu minzuhua*) has occurred frequently throughout history. Some important examples are the Bai, Maonan, and Hui minorities, all of whom still contain elements of Han identity. Second, the entire snowball could melt, which would mean the end of Han history.

6. Antiquarian as Ethnographer

Han Ethnicity in Early China Studies

Tamara T. Chin

I stare into the black lenses. He goes on. "A reasonable inference is that the wooden slips contain messages passed between yourself and other parties, we do not know when. It remains for you to explain what the messages say and who the other parties were."

J. M. COETZEE, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Modern archaeology and ethnology have transformed the once largely literary study of the early Chinese and their Others. Twentieth-century excavations of Han and non-Han tombs, of desiccated "Mongoloid" and "Caucasoid" corpses, and of wooden slips bearing the humdrum minutiae of frontier administration have supplemented the received tradition and invited its reassessment. We now look to Chinese frontier archaeology to enrich, to decenter, and to positively correct the worldviews circumscribed by the classical Confucian canon. At the same time, the twentieth-century Chinese institution of ethnology has helped to refashion the people of Chinese classical texts into the denizens of this enlarged antiquity. With the establishment of official nationalities (*minzu*), the ancients, too, became reconstituted as "ancient nationalities" (*gudai minzu*). Amid the burgeoning interest in ethnic history in China, the *idea* of ancient ethnicity and of ancient Hanness in particular have attracted insufficient attention. Despite its lexical debt, the ancient *minzu* lacks the classificatory coherence of the modern *minzu*. Modern China, since the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project, has comprised fifty-six modern nationalities, including the majority Han. Ancient China has benefited from no such consensus. If the calculus of contemporary Chinese nationhood can be reduced to $55 + 1 = 1$, that of "contemporary" ancient China might best be expressed as $10,000 + 1 = 1$, to borrow the classical Chinese figure for the incalculable.¹ That is, which names found in classical texts identify an ancient nationality—versus, say, a clan, a genetic population, or an archaeological culture—and which groups survive, assimilate, or simply disappear within the history of a multinationality paradigm of China remain contradictory or contested. Whether approached as an etic

(objective) or emic (subjective) category, the eponymous Han dynasty Han generally remain subsumed within narratives of either the ancient Huaxia (Chinese) or the modern Han majority. Nor has the introduction of the Anglophone idiom of Han and ethnic minority, alongside that of Chinese and non-Chinese, helped to clarify ancient from modern terms.

This chapter offers a preliminary account of the emergence of ancient Han ethnicity in the modern negotiation of ancient materials, addressing in turn classical studies, ethnology, and archaeology. Given the pervasive interdisciplinarity of modern antiquarian scholarship, the distinction made below between disciplinary approaches to ancient ethnicity is primarily for heuristic purposes.² It serves, first, to historicize the twentieth-century rise of *nonclassical* knowledge and practices for interpreting ancient intercultural history; and, second, to help clarify the particular global processes of translation through which equivalences in meaning across languages, media, and historical cultures continue to be made. For this reason, I do not—as others have productively done—propose a universal definition of ethnicity in order to assess its currency in, or availability for, Chinese antiquity. Nor do I present an evolutionary account of a peculiarly Chinese notion of ethnicity. Rather, I examine competing ideas that have animated the antiquarian's *minzu*, *zuqun*, or *ethnos*—ideas that may have taken the name *ethnicity* or ethnic group but that at other times, or simultaneously, may have been interpreted or translated as race, culture, or nation. A discipline is provisionally defined here as a set of intellectual practices with a named institutional framework. While a discipline cannot be fully reduced to a belief, content, or method, the regulatory constraints of the three disciplines below have historically privileged a material interpretation of ethnicity precisely when placed in interdisciplinary contexts.³

CLASSICAL STUDIES (*JINGXUE*)

The Han dynasty gave its name to Han ethnicity retroactively. As Mark Elliott argues in this volume, the term “Han” did not begin to emerge as an ethnonym until the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) and did not begin to approach its modern meaning until the Ming dynasty (1366–1644). Before this, Chinese classical texts refer to the Han River, to the pre-imperial state of Han, and to the subsequent Han dynastic state (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) but never to a culturally or ethnically defined Han people (Hanren or Hanzu). In this wise, Han and pre-Han dynasty antiquity plays no part in Han ethnogenesis, except through later appropriation. If indeed ancient Han ethnicity is an anachronism, then antiquarians should

properly only discuss Chinese, Sinic, Sinitic, Zhongguo (Central States), or Huaxia (lit., “flourishing greatness”) identity (the historical construction of which is more commonly studied than Hanness).⁴ Elliot’s account is a useful point of departure for two reasons: first, because it privileges the canonical *literary* tradition, tracing Hanness via the classically preserved ethnonym; and second, because it does so in defense of a nuanced definition of ethnicity dependent on the *linguistic* record of a subjective assertion and social recognition of group identity.⁵ Antiquarian scholarship on the pre-imperial and Qin–Han periods has, by contrast, come to accommodate the ethnic Han and diverse definitions of ethnicity precisely because the classical canon has been reread in light of twentieth-century ethnology and archaeology. I return here to the literary archive not to dispute the absence of the Han ethnonym but rather to pursue the participation of classical studies in producing competing meanings of ancient ethnicity despite that linguistic absence.

Practices of glossing, commentary, and literary citation sustained China’s traditional political idiom because from 136 B.C.E. to 1905 the imperial examination system credentialed officials based on their mastery of a Chinese-language Confucian canon. Such traditions provided the apparatus and, as I argue below, naturalized the processes by which the archive could be translated into modern ethnological terms. At the same time, the classical archive itself provided an archetypal ancient Chinese worldview, which was appropriated for the interdisciplinary writing of ethnic history. Sometimes called sinocentrism in English, this model proposes a normative Chinese ideal of moral and political superiority over foreigners, as laid forth in the pre-imperial classical texts. In this binary worldview, the foreigner stands outside of a civilizationally conceived China, with the possibility of transformation through submission. Since Western sinology and early ethnology and archaeology were themselves shaped by the classical studies pedagogy, debates over this archetype abounded. Building on recent critiques of sinocentrism (as an Anglophone neologism, and as an ideal), I use the archetype to illustrate how classical studies norms enabled and shaped interdisciplinary appropriations of the classical archive.

Consider the life of a verbal tag, which has become emblematic of sinocentrism:

fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi

If they are not of our *zulei*, they are sure to be of a different mind.

The modern translation of the term *zulei* as race or ethnicity is an anachronism, but it is an anachronism with a history. The historical fate of this

TABLE 6.1 Historical Usages of *zulei*

| Date | Work | Usage |
|---------------|--|---|
| 4th c. B.C.E. | <i>Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals</i> (Cheng 4.4) | [Ji Wenzhi:] "The Historian Yi says: 'If he is not of our <i>zulei</i> , he is sure to be of a different mind.' Although [the state of] Chu is great, it is not of our branch-lineage (<i>zu</i>). |
| 3rd c. C.E. | Du Yu, <i>Annotations to the Zuo Commentary</i> | (gloss) "[Chu] is of a different clan (<i>xing</i>) from Lu." |
| 10th c. C.E. | <i>Old History of the Tang Dynasty</i> (<i>Jiu Tang shu</i>) | "The Xiongnu have the faces of men and the minds of beasts; they are not of our <i>zulei</i> ." |
| 1872 | James Legge, <i>The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen</i> | [trans.] "If he be not of our kin, he is sure to have a different mind." |
| 1903 | Zou Rong, "For Revolution Race Must Be Clearly Distinguished" | "There were numerous clashes between Ireland and England due to their differences in race (<i>renzhong</i>) that continued until the Irish obtained self-rule. There is a saying: 'If he is not of our <i>zulei</i> , he is sure to have a different mind . . .'" |
| 1981 | Yang Bojun, ed., <i>Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals</i> | [gloss] " <i>Zulei</i> refers to race (<i>zhongzu</i>)." |
| 1992 | Frank Dikötter, <i>The Discourse of Race in Modern China</i> | "If he is not of our race, he is sure to have a different mind.' This sentence seems to support the allegation that at least some degree of 'racial discrimination' existed during the early stage of Chinese civilization." |

saying exemplifies modern ethnology's debt to three traditional classical practices addressed below: glossing, citation, and canon formation (see table 6.1). As this highly schematic chronology shows, the line is first attested in the fourth century B.C.E. *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuo zhuan*) to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), one of the Confucian Classics canonized during the Han dynasty. In it, an adviser to the ancient state of Lu, Ji Wenzhi, seeks to dissuade the king of Lu from allying with the state of Chu against

another rival state. The Chu cannot be trusted as military allies, Ji argues, because they are not of the same *zulei* as the Lu, and hence the aspirations of their hearts/minds (*xin*) will not be the same.

How do we translate *zulei*? Ji Wenzhi's juxtaposed assertion, "Although Chu is great, it is not of our *branch-lineage*," effectively begins a tradition of *zulei* glosses, for which Yang Bojun's interpretation, using the modern Chinese neologism "race" (*zhongzu*), marks just one recent stage.⁶ In Ji Wenzhi's originary case, the more familiar term "branch-lineage" (*zu*), distinguishing Chu from Lu, stands as a synonym for *zulei* of the maxim. *Zu* was the more familiar term for a small kinship unit or a low-level descent group, and archaically could form the basis of a military unit.⁷ Important to note is that Ji resorts to a language of kinship difference, not of *civilizational* difference (e.g., *Xia* vs. *yi*). And if we turn to the only other instance of *zulei* in the *Zuo Commentary*, ancestral lineage, not ethnicity (as Yang Bojun there points out), is at stake.⁸ The third century C.E. annotator Du Yu emphasizes this by recasting "lineage-group" (*zu*) as *xing*. By Du's time, *xing* meant "surname," although he might also be drawing on its archaic reference to a larger descent group above the lineage level (i.e., *xing* as "clan"). James Legge's nineteenth-century missionary translation concurs with the English word *kin*: "If he be not of our kin, he is sure to have a different mind." The gap between *zulei* (lineage-branch) and *zulei* (race) may be large, but this chronological table highlights the role of the *classical tradition of glossing* itself—of updating the translation for each generation—in naturalizing any new equivalences in meaning.

Second, the tag is, at its locus classicus in the *Zuo Commentary*, already a political citation. Ji Wenzhi foregrounds the pedigree of the line ("The Historian Yi says") to legitimate his broader argument. We can, in other words, recover the tag's earliest attested *usage* but not its original or authentic *meaning*. In the *Book of Wei* (Wei shu), the *Book of the Jin* (Jin shu), and other post-Han dynasty Standard Histories, the line was invoked as an "ancient saying" or was not attributed at all. The tenth-century *Old History of the Tang Dynasty* (Jiu Tang shu) provides one of the most explicit early examples of an ethnic appropriation. For his jingoistic argument that the Tang emperor Taizong (626–649) should keep the ("Turkic") Tujue people outside of the Central States, instead of having them settle within, the chancellor Wei Zheng (above) fuses two archaizing phrases: "the Xiongnu have the faces of men and the minds of beasts" (*ren mian shou xin*) and "they are not of our *zulei*." The "minds of beasts" plays on the elided "they are sure to have a different mind" of the original *Zuo Commentary* formula, transforming the nature of difference from one

of military and clan loyalty to one of civilizational inferiority. By Wei Zheng's time, the Xiongnu no longer existed, but the Han dynasty Han–Xiongnu encounter still provided the archaizing template for relations with the northwest (and would continue to do so even for the modern spaces of Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia). Wei's four-character anti-Xiongnu invective draws directly from a xenophobic rhetoric of immutable difference, which only arose during the Han dynasty period, that is, *after* the *Zuo Commentary* was composed.⁹ The tenth-century *Old History of the Tang Dynasty's* narration of Wei Zheng's seventh-century conflation of fourth century B.C.E. and first century C.E. utterances illumines just one layer in the historical palimpsest of political citation through which the original proverb became proverbially ethnographic. During the early twentieth century, the nationalist revolutionary martyr Zou Rong (1885–1905) was among those who mobilized the proverb as a slogan for anti-Manchu revolt.¹⁰ Just as the Irish had prevailed in their racial struggle against their English rulers, so, he argued, the Han race (Han minzu) would prevail against the racially alien Manchus through violent conquest. While Yang Bojun and Frank Dikötter's more recent interpretations of the *Zuo Commentary* remain anachronistic, their anachronism is thus enabled and naturalized by the long political afterlife of the citation.¹¹

Third, the proverb—and the sinocentric model it came to exemplify—became representative of antiquity because it belonged to the *canonical* Confucian tradition. If we return to the broader literary archive of antiquity, sinocentrism (or Zhou- or Huaxia-centrism) forms a dominant, *but not the exclusive*, model in early texts. Even setting aside recently excavated texts, and the biases of a received tradition largely shaped by male elites, the pre-imperial classical tradition offers no single “Chinese” worldview. The classical philosophers of the fifth to third centuries B.C.E. who later came to be translated as Confucians generally distinguished between those within and without the Central States according to their adherence to Zhou ritual norms and not to their ethnic, racial, or even geographic identities.¹² The cultural superiority of Zhou culture and of those born into it is generally, but not always, assumed. One does repeatedly find in the *Zuo* and *Gongyang* commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Mencius*, and other classical texts, an often militarized rhetoric of civilizing those outside the Zhou realm, whether foreign states or benighted commoners.¹³ But even within a single text of this classical tradition, one finds competing rhetoric. The *Zuo Commentary*, for example, also includes ethical appeals to, and historical examples of, those “outside” improving the Zhou realm or becoming its leaders.¹⁴ Other pre-imperial

thinkers, such as Mozi, would even challenge the assumption of Central States ritual superiority.¹⁵ Universal transformability, rather than Chinese superiority, is the common denominator across this broader archive of competing pre-imperial views.

Not all early Chinese thinkers accepted a world map dominated by the Central States and its peripheral Yi. The philosopher Zou Yan (ca. 250 B.C.E.) presented an alternate vision of the world in which “the so-called Central States constituted only one of eighty-one parts of the world” and renamed it the “Red District’s Sacred Region (Chixian Shenzhou)” (see table 6.1).¹⁶ Zou Yan decenters the world he inhabits by renaming it, and by reducing it to only one-ninth of nine independent, noncommunicating, continental masses. Zou Yan gained popularity and influence in his own day, and the *Shiji* contrasts the unhappy lives of Confucius and Mencius with the lavish welcome that Zou Yan received in courts throughout the Central States.¹⁷ Han dynasty officials pitted Zou Yan’s disarticulated world directly against the Xia-centered “Tribute of Yu” model espoused by the followers of Confucius and Mozi.¹⁸ The *Tribute of Yu* (Yu Gong) chapter of the Confucian *Book of Documents* (Shang shu) provides the locus classicus for the tributary world map in which concentric domains of increasingly foreign subjects radiate from a single political center. With the rise of Confucian classical studies, this latter model would prevail and Zou Yan’s writings survive only in fragments.

The radical philologist Gu Jiegang (1895–1980) and his “doubting antiquity” (*yigu*) collaborators later sought to recover these non-Confucian traditions and to undermine the authenticity of dominant models, asking suggestively, “Did Zou Yan’s great nine lands precede the [*Book of Documents*] *Tribute of Yu*’s nine lands?”¹⁹ By redating the textual “layers” of classical texts, Gu pushed the date of the *Shang shu*’s “Tribute of Yu” model forward to the Warring States period and reduced its historical geography to only one competing hypothesis of that era. As Gu argued, millennia of classical studies, and especially the faction popular in Gu’s day that valorized Han dynasty learning (Hanxue), perpetuated historiographic myths of race-lineage (e.g., the Yellow Emperor) in the political service of their self-interested imperial and aristocratic rulers.²⁰ The classical studies (*jingxue*) tradition was thus the “idol of scholarship” (*xueshu de ouxiang*), whose “layer-by-layer falsification” of ancient books had lengthened Chinese history from 2,500 years to over 5,000 (or to 2,276,000 years, according to the apocrypha).²¹ Although interdisciplinary scholars have long overturned Gu’s chronology, they have embraced his attention to the non-Confucian traditions, and to the historical participation of clas-

sical scholars in (what is now seen as) the “layer-by-layer composition” of ancient books.²²

In this light, the *centrality* of the sinocentric model derives from the historical success of the canon to which it belonged within both classical studies and sinology. The term “sinocentrism” was itself an English neologism, not a translation of a Chinese term. Gaining currency in Cold War sinology, the term drew from an older nineteenth-century ethnological discourse, recently explored by Lydia Liu and others, *about* the Chinese that took ethnocentrism as their characteristic relation to foreigners.²³ More recently, historians have faulted the model for inadequately representing foreign policy ideals and practice during the Han, the Song, the Qing, and other dynasties.²⁴ Contemporary literary and cultural critics continue to argue the need to analyze sinocentrism on a world stage, as a legitimizing claim available to oppositional politics.²⁵ Important here is the classical studies apparatus facilitating the historical rise of “If he is not of our *zulei*, he is sure to be of a different mind,” as representative of China. Ethnology and archaeology would draw on these traditional practices of glossing and citation, and on classical debates over sinocentrism, even as they introduced a new lexicon, archive, and material technologies to undermine classical authority.

ETHNOLOGY (*MINZUXUE*)

Academic ethnology and anthropology (*renleixue*) reorganized literary antiquity around a new discursive subject: the *gudai minzu*. The two translations that continue to circulate for *gudai minzu*—“ancient ethnic group” and “ancient nationality”—usefully index an often overlooked distinction between two ethnological discourses. The *ancient ethnic group* emerged from the *ancient race*, a product of early twentieth-century engagements of the classical archive with European and Japanese racial theories. The *ancient nationality* (which sounds foreign to the English reader) emerged in 1950s reappraisals of Chinese economic history in light of Soviet nationalities theory. The former dominates Anglophone scholarship, while the latter circulates in translations of mainland Chinese scholarship. The distinction was never clear-cut: both sets of scholarship drew from debates about the *modern* living *minzu*; both agree upon the anachronistic nation-based locution of the “ancient minority” or “minority nationality” (*gudai shaoshu minzu*); and both increasingly engage the same diversity of theories. In giving the *minzu* a history and a meaning, both ethnologies also reorganized antiquity around a new historical period and set of texts.

The eponymous Han dynasty displaced the pre-imperial antiquity of the Confucian Classics as the most formative stage for the ethnic Han nation; Sima Qian's *Shiji* provided the locus classicus for a modern ethnogenealogy of the Chinese as the "descendants of the Yellow Emperor" (Huangdi zisun), and for an indigenous tradition of ethnography.²⁶ Ancient Hanness subsequently became a critical site for contesting the general meaning of *minzu*. In returning to the residual distinction between ethnicity and nationality, I highlight two problems that ethnology brought to the classical archive: the politics of ethnic self-determination and socioeconomic history.

Antiquarian scholarship cannot be divorced from, or fully explained by, state definitions of the modern *minzu*. As in Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union, Chinese academic ethnology belonged to the state's administrative and cultural technologies of domination from its institution in the 1920s.²⁷ For antiquarians, ethnology promised a scientific mode of "reorganizing the nation's ancient past."²⁸ As recent scholars have shown, the *minzu* was made meaningful through and for the nationalist, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary politics of modern China. *Minzu* itself was a Sino-Japanese-European loanword, coined in the 1880s using the two Chinese characters of the Japanese kanji term *minzoku*, which translated the German word *Volk*.²⁹ As in Europe and Japan at that time, Chinese intellectuals began to use *minzu* in the early twentieth century interchangeably with *zhongzu*, another such loanword, and its multiple meanings spanned race, nationality, culture, and, later, ethnic identity and minority.³⁰ These translated terms were not simply domesticated; they were redefined to politically intervene in the same global ethnological discourses *about* the Chinese race and nation from which they came.

The original theory of the Han race-lineage (Hanzu or Hanzhong) emerged in the anti-Manchu rhetoric of the eminent philologist Zhang Taiyan (Zhang Binglin, 1868–1936), preceding the 1911 overthrow of the Manchu-led Qing empire. Zhang brought modern racial theories to bear on the Chinese classical tradition. He used recorded surnames to construct racial genealogies and targeted the racial differences between Han and Manchu rather than those between yellow (which included both) and white. In explicit opposition to the constitutional reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, who grounded their politics in the textual authority of the *Gongyang Commentary* (to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), Zhang promoted the *Zuozhuan* for his racial revolution (or "Glorious Restoration," as he called it).³¹ Zhang had influenced, and written the preface for, Zou Yan's *Revolutionary Army* (cited above), and both men were

imprisoned in 1903 in a crackdown on radical journalism by the Qing government. Only Zhang survived prison, from where he published a letter calling for political rule by the four hundred million members of the Han race (Hanzhong). Just as Zou had invoked the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to explain race, so Zhang denounced the “barbarian rebels” who “are not of our *zulei*” (*fei wo zulei*).³²

Zhang’s anti-Manchu Hanzu circulated alongside, not in place of, earlier notions of the Chinese “yellow race,” first popularized by European missionary publications.³³ When Sun Yat-sen’s nationalist government argued that the Chinese nation-state essentially comprised only one race, the Sons of the Yellow Emperor bound by common blood, it celebrated the *Zhonghua minzu* (Chinese race) as one of the five *world* races.³⁴ Many, though not all, nationalists treated *Zhonghua minzu* and Hanzu as interchangeable names for this world race into which allegedly non-Han groups had been or would be “melded.” Ethnogenealogy, traced as a biological or cultural heritage through a literary and material archive, has since produced competing narratives of the origins of the Chinese. From the pioneering studies of Fu Sinian and Xu Xusheng in the 1930s to those of contemporary scholars as diverse as Lin Gan and Victor Mair, the question of monogenetic origins, polygenetic origins, and western migration continues to be debated.³⁵

Within these early debates, Gu Jiegang’s *minzu* history stands out because it took the ideological substance of the *minzu* as its point of departure. He rejected the model of the “struggle of races” of Zhang Taiyan (his former teacher), in favor of a “cultural history of alliances” that was in some ways closer to the language of Liang Qichao. Drawing upon a classical erudition rivaling his teacher’s, he could argue, “China does not have a so-called Han nationality (Hanzu); *Hanzu* simply denotes the use of a kind of cultural unity of several small *minzu*”; and again, in a 1932 letter to a friend: “In fact, there is no such thing as Han people, it is a combination of many minor ethnic groups. One such as you belonged to the Eastern Yi (Dongyi). I was a man of the Yue [people] (*Yueren*).” At a time when politicians and intellectuals sought to rally a fragmented nation around a Han Chinese collectivity, Gu was renouncing his Han identity with a self-mongrelizing pedigree.³⁶ Gu effectively presented two histories. First, classical scholars had for two millennia fabricated textual lineages going back many more millennia in time. In so doing, they had erected an “idol” of monogenetic race for the self-legitimizing ruling elites. Second, Gu presents a positive history of *Hanzu* polygenesis. He emphasizes the cultural nature of these alliances but elsewhere tabulates

the intermarriages of the *yi* (foreigners) in classical texts with the Hanzu (or Chinese).³⁷ Miscegenation produced, in his view, cultural advancement, and he blames the degeneration of the so-called Hanzu on the Han dynasty rise of an inward-looking xenophobic Confucian classicism.³⁸ Gu's aptly named 1930s geography journal, *Yu Gong* (Tribute of Yu), was at the forefront of collective antiquarian attacks on the Republican-era orthodoxy of a monoracial history of China.³⁹ The replacement of the Republican era "Sons of the Yellow Emperor" genealogy with a celebration of polygenesis would, he argued, help to reform the ongoing racist Republican policies toward frontier peoples. *Minzu* history was for him de facto ideological, and he explicitly presents its purpose in generating popular beliefs that would serve to unite the nation.⁴⁰

The 1950s invention of "ancient Han nationality" was revolutionary because it replaced a *minzu* rooted in race with a *minzu* born out of capitalist modernity, and because it argued the exceptionalism of Chinese antiquity *within* the Marx-Engels paradigm. Mao Zedong redefined the People's Republic of China, founded in 1949, as a "multi-*minzu* state," and the 1954 Ethnic Classification Project (*minzu shibie*) looked to Stalin's criteria of nationality in identifying the *Hanzu* and the fifty-five minority *minzu*.⁴¹ State-sponsored efforts to periodize the past according to the evolutionary stage theory of Henry Lewis Morgan and Friedrich Engels rescued the Chinese from the Asiatic mode of production and redressed China's "blank page" in Marxist world history.⁴² Within most, though not all, of these accounts, the Han were at the racial core or the socioeconomic vanguard of the evolution. Where Zhang Taiyan, Gu Jiegang, and the first generation of ethnologists had engaged with notions of race largely from Western Europe and Japan, the PRC historians returned to the classical archive with a *minzu* formally defined by Joseph Stalin's four criteria: common language, common territory, common economic life, and common psychology (manifested in culture).⁴³ Within Stalin's nationality discourse, a nationality was essentially a "modern nationality" (*jindai minzu*) because it was the product of capitalism. As a result, Soviet sinologists and some Chinese antiquarians dismissed the possibility of "ancient nationalities" in China's feudal antiquity. They located the origins of the Hanzu in the modern development of Chinese capitalism in the aftermath of Western imperialism.⁴⁴

The leading state historian Fan Wenlan returned to the classical archive to argue the existence of ancient Hanzu (but not of other ancient nationalities). In so doing, he elaborated the exceptionality of Chinese history within the Marxist paradigm and the problem of the European historical

basis of Marx-Engels theory.⁴⁵ Fan Wenlan accepts Stalin's four principles of nationality in tracing the Hanzu back to the Qin–Han period: common language, as evidenced in the Qin–Han standardization of the written script of the classical books; common territory, enclosed by the Qin–Han Great Wall; common psychology, embodied in the Confucian principles of ancestor worship and filial piety, which were propagated through the Han dynasty bureaucracy and its canonized Confucian Classics; and common economic life, found in the noncapitalist circulation of goods and currency through the marketplaces and the administrative districts of empire, especially as depicted in the *Shiji*. Fan's recovery of the Hanzu in the *Shiji* depended upon his contrast between the history of Europe and the history of China. Unlike in Europe, the Chinese market did not herald the arrival of capitalism. Although Stalin's four criteria could be adopted, the economic underpinning of Stalin's *minzu* was inappropriate for China. The *Shiji* revealed a common economic life in the Han dynasty, despite the absence of capitalism. His account of the formation of the ancient Hanzu proved that a *minzu* could form in Chinese antiquity and as such exemplified Mao Zedong's call to heed the particularity of Chinese history. Important to note is that the idiom of ancient nationalities is smuggled back into antiquarianism, although Fan presents only the Han as attaining *minzu* status. Economics, not demographics, determines "minority" status. In this Han-centric rewriting of a Eurocentric model, the economic life of ancient minority nationalities belongs to an earlier historical stage, and thus the ancient non-Han remain the allochronic primitive.⁴⁶

Fan Wenlan's economic model of ancient Han nationality stands in contrast to the models of ancient ethnicity inspired by recent anthropology (*renleixue*) and ethnic studies (*zuqun lilun*, theories of ethnicity). The work of the contemporary Taiwanese anthropologist Wang Ming-ke exemplifies the recent labor of cultural anthropology on the interdisciplinary archive. Drawing from Fredric Barth among others, Wang defines the ethnic group (*zuqun*) not by its cultural contents or as an objective set of connotations; rather the Huaxia's ever-shifting temporal, geographic, ecological, and identificatory borders are constructed by the group's subjective sense of difference toward others and a primordial sense of attachment to its members. According to Wang, the Huaxia reached their ecological frontiers during the imperial expansions of the Han dynasty. Individual and collective memories or legends of hero-ancestors constitute the fictive genealogy (*xugouxing puxi*) that shapes Huaxia ethnicity.⁴⁷ The *Shiji*'s opening account of the Yellow Emperor thus provides the first "primordial

history" for the Hanren (the Han dynasty Huaxia), not for its chronological truth, but precisely for its mythic appeal.

Han ethnicity has become quietly naturalized within the once racialized Anglophone discourse of ancient Chinese and non-Chinese.⁴⁸ While *minzu* was originally a Sino-Japanese-European loanword, Han ethnicity or "Han Chinese" is essentially an English translation of the Chinese neologism *Hanzu* (or *Han minzu*). The use of the term is not consistent and partly reflects the diverse interpretations of ethnicity or culture, and the kinds of materials analyzed. Chinese and non-Chinese—rather than Han and non-Han—relations are generally at stake in the most carefully historicist and interdisciplinary accounts, which emphasize the diachronic shifts in notions of alterity (political, cultural, or ethnic) from pre-imperial to early imperial times, the synchronic and regional divergences across philosophical traditions and epigraphic sources, the different rhetorical contexts in which a term might or might not be used as an ethnonym, and the continuing importance of textual analysis in the interdisciplinary study of excavated materials.⁴⁹ Archaeologists have also greatly enriched the theoretical discussion of ancient alterity, and pay ever greater attention to dynamic historical and regional processes of (not necessarily "ethnic") identity formation.⁵⁰ At the same time, there are ways in which archaeological discourse continues to affirm and redefine notions of ancient Han ethnicity.

ARCHAEOLOGY (*KAOGUXUE*)

Thus far, both Han ethnicity and the Hanzu have figured as linguistic products of "translingual practices"—that is, of the processes by which a new word or discourse has acquired legitimacy and produced new meanings in both the guest and host languages.⁵¹ As we have seen, the translation process has occurred across both time and space, as modern antiquarians have brought their competing meanings of *minzu* to bear on the classical archive, from which they took the "original" term *Han*. *Hanzu* was also produced through interdisciplinary negotiations across *media*, in ways that both reflect and diverge from the ethnological distinction between ancient races and ancient nationalities.

Modern archaeology (*kaoguxue*) began to overtake classical studies for questions of ethnogenesis and ethnic relations from its establishment in the 1920s. Its institutional development reflected the shift from *ancient races* to *ancient nationalities* paradigms addressed above.⁵² The 1920s pioneers of modern Chinese archaeology followed their European and Japanese counterparts in endowing ancient cultures with biological identities and

histories drawn from the taxonomies of physical anthropology and paleontology.⁵³ Initially, they were influenced by European historical models, especially that of civilizational diffusion from the Near East into China. With the early discovery of *Homo erectus pekinensis* ("Peking Man") near Beijing in 1921, of early hominids of around 400,000 to 200,000 years ago, and of Shang dynasty oracle bones at Anyang, archaeologists began to challenge both European theories of western diffusion and Gu Jiegang's philological doubts about the longevity of Chinese history.⁵⁴ By the 1960s and 1970s Chinese archaeologists had affirmed China's longevity on a competitive world stage with a theory of the *independent* monogenetic origins of Chinese civilization. It centered Chinese civilization on the middle reaches of the Yellow River (the Central Plains, Zhongyuan) and within a Marxist social developmental theory. The ancient nationalities model emphasized economic status over heritage, and within it, the Han ethnonym served as a temporal and spatial marker for the consolidation of Chinese civilization through the establishment of the Han dynasty state. A third phase after the 1980s saw the rise of regional archaeology away from the Yellow River center.⁵⁵ With the reorganization of archaeology under provincial auspices, archaeological studies have emphasized the cultural contributions of various regions and ancient "minority" nationalities to the ancient Han Chinese "civilizational core." More recently, international and frontier archaeology (*bianjiang kaoguxue*) have compelled antiquarians in China and abroad to renegotiate the historical map of the multi-*minzu* Chinese nation-state with that of a multiethnic Eurasia.

Contradictions between theories of *minzu* and ethnicity cannot, however, fully account for the ways in which the ancient Hanzu emerges or disappears in these material contexts. There are at least three ways in which archaeological analysis itself has produced a Hanness independent of the criteria used for living populations. First, archaeologists excavate "archaeological cultures," which are not the same as a *minzu* or ethnic group. An archaeological culture refers to "an assemblage of artifacts found over a restricted area and within a restricted time period, and to the people who produced the assemblage."⁵⁶ Ethnonyms, whether seen as referring to emic or etic categories are derived from ancient written texts. The difficulty of applying historical ethnonyms to frontier archaeological cultures can be illustrated by the archaeology of Sichuan, which the Qin–Han empires incorporated as its southwestern frontier. Archaeologists still differ over whether the term *Shu* (commonly used then) properly refers to a Shu state, a Shu culture, a Shu ethnic group, a Shu nationality, or a Shu tribe emergent around 700 B.C.E. in the Chengdu Plain.⁵⁷ Sichuan

archaeology and Inner Asian archaeology (along the frontier with the Xiongnu) exemplify processes of mutual influence and hybridity in material cultures, especially during the period of early Han dynasty expansion. These contexts complicate and destabilize non-Han identities, challenging the usefulness of *minzu* as a classificatory tool. They help archaeologists to define the contrastive patterns of the archaeological culture(s) of the Central Plains and to associate it with the specifically *nonminority* Chinese population.

Second, archaeological discourse—rather than modern *minzu* theory—has strengthened the association of the ancient Han with the literary archive. The classical tradition had long propagated the notion that writing is a marker of Chinese civilization, with a (self-celebratory) discourse of *wen* as writing and civilization. With the emergence of the ethnic Han in antiquarian discourse, and the new “voice” given to ancient oral cultures through archaeology, archaeologists often explicitly or implicitly attribute the authorship of the written archive to the nonminority or Han Chinese. As one archaeologist put it, “Archaeologists usually have two kinds of data in their research on the history of the Han people, namely, archaeological finds and historical records. But in southwest China, most minority peoples have no written language, and the historical records written by the Han people about them are usually not adequately detailed, so we have to rely on ethnographical traditions, such as legends and myths . . . [whose] cores may be based on historical facts.”⁵⁸ Ethnoarchaeology (*minzu kaogu xue*), which from the 1950s to 1980s sought to bring the living oral traditions of minorities who had not lost their “primitive” state to bear on the analysis of local archaeological materials, no longer flourishes.⁵⁹ However, the archaeology of nonscribal cultures has helped to strengthen the importance of writing to the interpretation of ancient (but not modern) ethnicities.

Third, the excavation of hundreds of desiccated corpses across China’s western regions has occasioned the recent reemergence of material definitions of ancient peoples. Among their analyses, one finds an ancient Hanness that exceeds contemporary formulations of ancient nationalities or ancient ethnicity. Dating from several millennia B.C.E. to the post-Han dynasty period, these arrestingly well-preserved “Tarim basin mummies” and their archaeological cultures have attracted an array of material technologies. Archaeologists have had to negotiate classificatory terms derived from metallurgy, textile studies, climatology, paleobotany, paleozoology, and linguistics.⁶⁰ In addition, some scholars have drawn from physical anthropology and population genetics, engaging some of the well-known

difficulties and dangers of bringing material categories to bear on ethnonyms.⁶¹ For example, the notion that “the ancient opening of the ‘Silk Road’ was made by the migration of the Caucasoid population eastward to Xinjiang” and that the mitochondrial haplogroup H of a desiccated mummy from Qizilchoqa, Xinjiang, or the red hair and blue eyes of another, somehow affirms a genetic relationship with modern “Europeans,” or “proto-Europeans,” *not* “Asians,” pervade popular and academic accounts.⁶² From the perspective of physical anthropology, prehistoric Xinjiang was populated by “three groups of Caucasoids: Proto-Europoids, Indo-Afghans, Pamir-Ferghanans; as well as two groups of Mongoloids: eastern Tibetan *and Han (ethnic Chinese).”*⁶³ The appeal here to modern ethnonyms in the pursuit of biologically determined kinship engages the new “hard data” of Silk Road archaeology within older debates about Western diffusion and civilizational origins. When one cranium is perceived as “proto-European” (*yuanshi ouzhou renzhong*) and another Mongoloid cranium resembles that of a contemporary Han person (Hanren), two processes of translation are occluded: across media (e.g., the Mongoloid cranium as a sign of the Hanren); and across historical languages (e.g., introducing the modern European into antiquity through the term *proto-European*). Finally, art history has also contributed to the interest in physical anthropology, but for different reasons. While literary scholars often emphasize a relative disinterest in physical differences in the classical tradition, visual studies of the differentiation between “Han” and non-Han through clothing and facial form have argued that perceived physical differences did matter to Han dynasty artists.⁶⁴

EPILOGUE: WAITING FOR THE ANTIQUARIANS

Despite the absence of the classical Han ethnonym or of Han dynasty accounts of the Han people, ancient Han ethnicity has reemerged in recent Anglophone literary studies of Chinese ethnography. Most of the ethno-genealogies discussed so far draw on notions of ethnicity as a nameable cultural or biological heritage, or on political formulations of ethnicity as a historically situated, asymmetrical relation of power. The focus on ethnography as the discursive site of ethnic formation assumes the sociopolitical production of ethnicity but foregrounds the role of *representation* in that production.⁶⁵ According to an approach that I call the “imperial ethnography hypothesis,” the interpretive paradigms elaborated for analyzing European imperial ethnography can also be useful for Chinese antiquity. Within postcolonial studies, imperial ethnography generally refers to a

representational mode of establishing a binary structure of hierarchical oppositions between the imperial Self and the Other. Ethnography prepares the way for political domination through empirical information gathering and through implicit or explicit rationalization. Sima Qian's Han dynasty *Shiji*, and especially its account of its foremost enemy, the Xiongnu, resurfaces in this scholarship as offering the earliest paradigm of such ethnography, differentiating ancient Han and non-Han.⁶⁶

This literary approach, with which I end, is important for two reasons: first, it stands at the furthest remove from the more influential interdisciplinary negotiations across *media*; and second, although it emerged from a non-PRC rethinking of race and ethnicity, and generally elides the economic questions posed by the ancient nationalities framework, it ultimately reaffirms a traditional but still prevalent Chinese ethnological appropriation of classical texts. In the nineteenth century, the New Text scholars Wei Yuan (1794–1856) and Gong Zizhen (1792–1841) called for expansion westward, turning philology to practical purposes by methodically mapping the modern topography of Xinjiang onto that of the *Hanshu*, and by comparing Qing activities with those recorded by the *Shiji* over the Xiongnu and the western regions.⁶⁷ This approach belongs to the imperial ethnography hypothesis because it finds in Han texts a differentiation between Han and non-Han peoples, which it historically attaches to a project of geopolitical expansion. In this case, however, it recalls Han ethnography in a commemorative mode of imperial legitimation and not of postcolonial critique. I briefly return to the status of the *Shiji*'s "Account of the Xiongnu" as the formative account for Chinese ethnography in light of one strain of recent postcolonial theory, which has worked to highlight the failure of the imperial will to difference and polarization and to explore the persistent "contrapuntality" between the cultures of conqueror and conquered.⁶⁸

The following passage from the *Shiji*'s "Account of the Xiongnu" illustrates the frailty of the imperial ethnography hypothesis. As I have argued elsewhere in greater detail, the term *Han* uniquely comes to approximate a foreign cultural entity in the following use of the phrase "Han customs" (*Hansu*).⁶⁹ The passage comes midway through the chapter, after the opening description of Xiongnu customs, as part of a conversation recorded between an unnamed imperial Han envoy and a Han traitor who speaks for the Xiongnu.

One of the Han envoys said:

"According to Xiongnu customs (*Xiongnu su*), they dishonor the elderly."

Zhonghang Yue interrogated the Han envoy:

"But according to Han customs (Hansu), when those joining the military are sent out to be stationed in garrisons, do they not have their elderly kin set aside their own warmest layers and richest and finest [food] in order to send food and drink to those working in the garrisons?"

The Han envoy said:

"It is so."

Zhonghang Yue said:

"The Xiongnu make it clear that they take warfare and attack as their business. Their elderly and weak are unable to fight, and therefore they give their richest and finest food and drink to the strong and vigorous. And because [the strong] make themselves the protectors and defenders so fathers and sons both protect each other in the long term. How can you say the Xiongnu dishonor the elderly?" (Sima Qian, *Shiji* 110.2899–2900)⁷⁰

In Han historiography, the term *su* (customs) generally refers *either* to foreign practices (in opposition to those of the Central States) *or* to dynastic norms and popular domestic conventions.⁷¹ However, the traitor Zhonghang Yue here pits Han customs directly against Xiongnu customs, and not with the customs of another era or dynasty. While Han itself is the name of the political state, the formulation serves to rhetorically press the state into an ethno-cultural template. This section of their longer dialogue has a formal and topical coherence, beginning with the envoy's opening accusation about Xiongnu mistreatment of the elderly, and ending with Zhonghang Yue's "How can you say the Xiongnu dishonor the elderly?" Zhonghang effectively echoes and reverses the envoy's ethnographic gaze with the novel phrase, "Han customs."⁷² The phrase "Han customs" thus occurs within a rhetorical defamiliarization of the Han as a culturally inferior entity to the Xiongnu. As with the sixth-century example of Han'er, analyzed by Mark Elliot in this volume, the quasi-ethnonymic use of the term *Han* here arises pejoratively and in the confrontation with the northern Other (here, the Xiongnu). In this limited sense, Zhonghang Yue's phrase serves as a kind of shadowy prelude to the earliest Northern Wei dynasty uses of the Han as a name for Chinese people (*Zhongguo ren* or *Hua ren*). But in the Han dynasty case, the speaker does not explicitly interpellate the Han people into existence as Hanren.

What is the significance of Sima Qian's inclusion of this parodic reversal of the ethnographic mirror back at Han customs? First, Zhonghang Yue undoes both the superiority of the Han in their relation to the Xiongnu, and the very conceit of ethnographic difference (e.g. he shows that Xiongnu customs are also filial). Second, the *Shiji* names the imperial Han envoy as the

source of ethnocentric discourse against which Zhonghang Yue militates. In so doing, Sima Qian does not simply transmit the phobic ethnography from the imperial archives (and its denunciation); he also depicts the ethnographic scene of his own ethnography of the archive. Despite occupying a position (of Grand Astrologer) at the imperial court, his account does not fully align with that of the Han imperial envoy.⁷³ His sympathetic portrayal of Zhonghang Yue's defection to the Xiongnu illumines the messier, more conflictual "contact zone" in which ethnographic representation "fails" its presumed function of polarization. A deeply xenophobic strain of representation did emerge in the Han dynasty, which demands further attention. However, this cannot be fully conflated with "Han ethnography," especially if it takes the *Shiji* as its proclaimed foundation. If we take seriously the "minor" subjugated narratives of cross-cultural sympathies in the writing of history, then the *Shiji*'s inclusion of Zhonghang Yue's refusal to polarize Han and Xiongnu offers a case in point.⁷⁴ Within the literary archive, ancient Han ethnicity first surfaces only at the moment Chinese imperial ethnography *fails* its ideological purpose—at its very beginnings.

This chapter presents two arguments. First, the historical account of the idea of the ancient Hanzu forwards a broader argument for analyzing antiquarianism as a productive form of ethnographic discourse. The Han dynasty Hanzu are not simply a modern anachronism; they endure as a site for refining competing theories of ancient *and* modern race, ethnicity, and nationality. As one contemporary anthropologist observes, "It has often been noted that, to the degree that they treat the past as 'another country,' historians work very much like participant observers, practicing what amounts to an 'ethnography of the archives.'" ⁷⁵ Conceived in this way as an *intercultural* encounter between the ethnographic observer and the observed, the antiquarian's relation to the archive is, notwithstanding her own efforts toward a positivist objectivity, dynamic, situated, and dialogic. Second, I argue that this cultural distance between the antiquarian and the archive needs *disciplinary* clarification. The ancient Hanzu were indebted to the twentieth-century rise of nonclassical forms of knowledge, and we return to the classical archive armed with glosses and interpretive theories, which were themselves shaped by a global and *interdisciplinary* history of the *minzu*. Rather than approach ancient texts like the imperial interrogator of J. M. Coetzee's fiction—with a mystifying "reasonable inference" about their (ethnological) nature—I have attempted, instead, to illumine the effect of the interrogation room on the messages that the slips are made to convey.

7. The Han Joker in the Pack

Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature

Nicholas Tapp

In this chapter I wish to consider the *minzu* category in relation to what we call ethnicity. The *minzu* formulation covers and conceals an enormous array of social and cultural diversity in China, making uniform what are in fact vast differences, in particular between the dominant category of the Han and those who are classed in relation to the Han as minority nationalities, or *shaoshu minzu*, but also within the Han category itself. My experience has been with the Hmong, one of several ethnically distinct groups who are classed under the *minzu* category of Miao in China and who for several centuries have also inhabited the neighboring mountainous regions of Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos besides, since the ending of the Indochina Wars, occupying an important position as an overseas diaspora. I start with some general remarks on the Han category, as seen from a minority, Hmong, and Miao viewpoint. The remainder of the chapter comprises a selective consideration of some of the literature on the minority nationalities in China, in an attempt to elucidate some of the various approaches that have been made to the understanding of the relationship between *minzu* and ethnicity.

In this endeavor I have been struck by a remark made by Jacques Lemoine, who has said that the Chinese conception of *minzu* is a unique one, which has nothing to do with ethnicity. To cite his exact words, "To this day China has still not recognized any kind of (H)mong ethnicity nor any other ethnicity at all. The Chinese version of minority nationalities is an original construction based on historical, linguistic, cultural, economic criteria, and the assumption that the group gathered together into one nationality would be happy to integrate into such a political entity."¹ It seems to me that this remark is both right and wrong, in important ways. It raises complex issues of subjectivity, language, and cultural politics, which I want to tease out here.

In a sense, *minzu* and ethnicity do take place in entirely different semantic domains, as much of the literature on this has shown. However, such an extreme view, which may depend on a more culturalist understanding of ethnicity as opposed to a recognition of its more political aspects, runs the danger of invoking the specter of an imaginary Subject lurking behind all possible summonses to it, in a way that invites false and invidious historical detective work aimed at showing the invalidity of the *minzu* category in its local applications, and the reality of some ethnic essence that the *minzu* formulation is supposed to have betrayed.² Much of the work on the southern minorities, my own not exempted, has been of this latter type. What we need, I feel, is a more sophisticated approach that would be able to consider *minzu* identity as one among other possible modes of identity and in its coexistence and entwinement with other types of social difference (Vasantkumar, this volume). The enormous power of naming, as I argue below, changes the nature of the playing field entirely; prior forms of social difference rearrange themselves in relation to the new terms, and a new configuration of cultural identity and social difference is brought about, in which ethnic and *minzu* identity is almost inextricably intertwined. Nor is it sufficient merely to show how, over historical time, a *minzu* category is slowly filled with local meanings and thereby becomes a valid form of identification, a social reality. For this too assumes that the *minzu* category is an empty one from the start. Yet despite the radical novelty of the *minzu* project, many *minzu* categories, like Miao and Yi, came loaded with a certain historic burden of meanings and connotations from the start.

For the category “Miao,” under which the ethnic group “Hmong” are classed, this is particularly true. Since the Yellow Emperor, the mythical ancestor of today’s “Han” nationality, is supposed to have originally based his claims to authority on the conquest of the “San-Miao,” taken to be the ancestors of the “Miao” today, in a sense the very origins of the Chinese state are imagined as predicated on the subjugation of the “Miao” by the dominant people of that state.³ From the inception of the Chinese state imagined by the Han, then, “Miao” has consistently referred to an unruly category of rebellious subjects, that which needed to be repressed for the forces of order and harmony to triumph and prevail. The relationship of the traditionally unlettered Miao to civilization (*wenhua*), understood in Chinese terms as implying a mastery of or facility with writing, in fact closely mirrors the classical assumption that speech is somehow more natural than writing, which Derrida attacked when he showed that Rousseau’s “supplement” of writing was indeed fundamental to that which

it was supposed to supplement.⁴ The suppression of the Miao gives rise to the appearance of civilized, and literate, order. Yet in the course of history it is somehow “Han” that comes to be seen as the original, authentic, superior, and natural term, as that which is “complete in itself,” to which the Miao become the “dangerous supplement,” excluded from the logic of formal discourse.

We need to remind ourselves that the Han of China occupy the same position, ethnically, culturally, politically, and economically, as do the Kinh of Vietnam, the Burmans of Burma, the Malays of Malaysia, or the Thais of Thailand. In all these cases there is an ambiguity between the national identity and the majority dominant ethnic group. Let us consider Thailand and Vietnam, as Keyes does, as particularly close and apposite examples for China.⁵ To be Vietnamese may often mean not to be Hmong or Cham, although in the political sense of the term both the latter are Vietnamese citizens; to be Thai may well mean, and often does, not to be Lisu, Lahu or Hmong, although many if not most of these are now Thai citizens, and similarly to be Chinese may mean not to be Tibetan, despite the use of *Zhongguoren* to cover them all. From a minority point of view, these are the “big boys” muscling in on the nation-state and claiming it as their own prerogative. This is of course a factor of modern nationalism and the Herderian myth or dream it embodies of a single cultural group forming a homogeneous political unit that has caused such unintended havoc since the mid-nineteenth century. Until quite recently, the tendency has been to depict the history of China in largely “Han” terms without much questioning of this nationalist paradigm.

Over the past fifteen years, however, such questioning has become more and more common. Mueggler has pointed out how recent scholarship has shown us that “the cultural features we identify as ‘Chinese’ have multiple historical origins, including contributions from different ethnicities, and many recent historical works have now addressed the question of ethnicity in China’s past.”⁶ He was referring, among others, to Rawski, who famously argued that sinicization was “a twentieth-century Han nationalist’s interpretation of China’s past” and called for a new evaluation of the contribution of non-Han people to China’s history, such as the Manchu.⁷ This approach deconstructs the notion of Chinese culture, Mueggler says, “as a unity belonging to Han people” who over history have been converting others to their ways; “it allows us instead to think of an open and flexible field of cultural practices, fashioned in the interactions of many different peoples.”⁸

This is exactly how I think we should proceed, and indeed I was fum-

bling toward such an approach in my doctoral thesis where I tried to deal with the apparent mystery of why the Hmong should not only regard their practice of *feng-shui* (Chinese geomancy, known as *saib loojmem* in Hmong) as indigenously Hmong but also have frequent recourse to the symbols and idioms of Chinese geomancy to explain their historic differences from and competition with the Han Chinese.⁹ I hypothesized there that geomancy, besides many aspects of the patrilineal naming and burial system practiced in south China and the ethnic distinctions themselves between people who today identify as Hmong or Miao and those who identify as Han Chinese, “must have been formed out of complex historical processes of integration, incorporation, and assimilation associated with the formation of the Chinese state.”¹⁰ It was through manipulating this system of symbolic correspondences between man and nature that, many Hmong still believe, the Chinese attained their present mastery over the lands of China, and the Hmong lost out.

I postulated that far-reaching contradictions must have been introduced into their social organization by their violent and bloody encounter with these powerful Han others. We know of fierce clashes and rebellions of Miao since the Han dynasty, particularly during the Ming and Qing.¹¹ I suggested that where a more powerful culture comes into violent conflict with the members of a weaker culture in this way, the second may bifurcate to form on the one hand those members of minority cultures in southern China who became sinified, adopting Chinese manners and language, paying tax, and practicing sedentary forms of agriculture, and on the other hand a kind of reactionary reinforcement of the threatened culture, which we could identify with those “Wild Miao” who stayed up in the hills speaking their own languages, practicing shifting cultivation, and mounting savage raids on the lowlands from time to time.¹² We are confronted, then, with a most dynamic and flexible, changing interactional ethnic field, well before the advent of the blanket *minzu* formulation.¹³

I do not want to revisit those arguments overmuch, but the data I must consider for myself when reflecting on how the category “Han” may appear from a Hmong, or Miao, point of view (and therefore how it may have been constructed in relation to such other *minzu* categories) include very real evidence of this schism from the Han within Hmong society today—in the form of founding legends of Hmong patrilineal clans that often speak of their formation through the in-marriage of a Chinese male to a Hmong woman, or in one case to the marriage of an ethnically unmarked ancestral male to two wives, the Chinese descending from the first, the Hmong from the second wife, or the fact that the Hmong clans all bear

Chinese-type surnames but also have Hmong equivalents that sound nothing like these and are used internally.¹⁴ Some Hmong clans are even internally divided according to whether they follow the “Hmong” style of burial or the “Chinese” kind. And then there are distinctions between endogamous Hmong cultural divisions to consider, such as between the White Hmong and the Green Hmong, with some accounts suggesting that the White Hmong conformed to a more sinified group in the past, the Green Hmong to a less acculturated one (reflected in the much more sinicized dialect of the White Hmong). Many southern minority groups have had similarly complex and ambiguous historical relations with the dominant majority.

The Hmong, however, in China and beyond its borders, do not use the term *Han* for the Chinese but rather the term *suav*, which may have derived from the more common “Hua” used as a we-identification term by Han Chinese today.¹⁵ Today the term *suav* is used to refer exclusively to the Han Chinese, although there is also a wider sense of the term in which it may mean “those not Hmong.”¹⁶ In ritual and stories of the past, the term is often coupled with another, *Maj*, so, *Maj-Suav*, where *Maj* may refer to the Nosu (Yi) people. Whatever its derivation, it is clear that the term the Hmong commonly use for the Han in their own language is the primary term in their language for expressing radical alterity and difference. It also has some supernatural connotations, as is the case in other languages for terms fundamentally referring to otherness.¹⁷

While the terms *Han* and *Miao* may have historically formed opposing categories within a particular (southern) discourse of sovereignty and rebellion, of state power and resistance, the fact that historically both terms were confined to the Chinese language, which most Miao could never have spoken or been familiar with, would argue against any elaboration of how these terms historically constituted the subjects they spoke of. If the Hmong did not recognize the term used for them, much less accept it, we do not have a situation of an identity being posited by the category that seeks to represent it at all. It is only since the *minzu shibie* project of the 1950s that that kind of analysis starts to make sense, in terms of how subjects of a particular kind may have been constituted by the act of classification that brought them into being. That project is indeed an example of a state “technology of power,” as Keyes has described it in Foucauldian terms.¹⁸

Further considering the category of Han, while it may often be thought of as a natural and uncontested unity, diametrically opposed to such categories as “Miao,” we know that in fact the term covers a huge amount of

ethnic and cultural diversity, and probably always has done so. There are subethnic divisions of great importance among the Han, and radical divergences in the contextual use of the term *Han* as Barbara Ward showed for folk models of the Tanka, or Dan-jia,¹⁹ and Emily Honig did for the Subei people of Shanghai.²⁰ In one attempt I have found useful for dealing with the diversity in usages of the term *Han*, Guldin, working with data from the Fujianese community in Hong Kong, produced a useful diagram of seven potential criteria for local Chinese ethnic identifications.²¹ These criteria were the national, nationality (Han), regional (Southern or Northern), provincial, regional grouping (such as the interprovincial Hakka and Min speakers), ethnolinguistic, and locality (as in county or major city) levels.²² The provincial was not always a means through which identities were structured; it was in the case of the Cantonese but not for the Fujianese, where no single ethnic group dominated the province.²³ He showed the ways in which these levels could be nested hierarchically within each other as levels of a typical Chinese identity, or alternatively formed branching trajectories, beginning from local attachments and working outward through linguistic and regional affiliations toward the wider "Han" nationality identity.²⁴ Chinese group identities are never "single-stranded ethnic ones," he insisted, since they can be based on surnames or occupations, political factions, language/dialect, or native place.²⁵ The levels are fairly self-evident but do give some idea of the complexities of local Chinese ethnic identifications, albeit in terms of a branching taxonomic understanding of classification that may itself need to be more socially situated and organized.²⁶

The Han category also seems to have had other refractions, particularly if we look beyond the current national boundaries of China. Yunnanese Chinese (with whom the Hmong have had very close relations) in the northern parts of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Burma) are importantly divided not only by their home counties but also into those who are Muslim and those who are not. Probably in history it was the Muslim traders who were dominant in the area, and they have been known widely in Southeast Asia as Ho or Haw (another term that possibly derives from Hua). The old derogatory term for them (in Chinese) was *Hui-Hui*, and the *minzu shibie* project of the 1950s picked up this formerly derogatory term (like Miao, like Yi), in order to recode it, transmuting it into the Hui *minzu* category of today, as Gladney has described.²⁷ Ann Hill's work among these people in Chiangmai, northern Thailand, showed clearly that those who remained outside China after the Revolution disliked any such term as *Hui* but insisted they were "Hua ren" rather than "Han."²⁸ It is

perhaps not surprising that they did not claim to be Han, since it seems to me that that term not only had a particular geographic significance historically (as opposed for example to the “Tang ren” of the South)²⁹ but also has had quite limited currency in ordinary conversation, except perhaps where distinctions are specifically being drawn between oneself and others.³⁰

Yet for the term *Han*, Mark Elliott (this volume) shows that historically it depended on various other categories of the marginal or dangerously excluded (such as the Miao) without which it could not itself have existed. Under modern conditions, the ideological attempt to present that dominant and dominating historical category as just one among another fifty-five similar categories of equal weight is so compelling as almost to disguise the extraordinary way in which *minzu shibie* has not only concealed enormous differences among the “Han” but also classified people like the Tibetans together with people like the Hezhen.³¹ These are terms that do constitute social subjects as aspects of disciplinary power and powerful discourses of governance. And they are relative, contrastive terms; you can only have Han identity or be Han provided there are also Miao who are not Han, or provided there are fifty-five other categories who are also not Han. If we return to Lemoine’s claim at this point, it may seem that that’s an end to the story. If these terms really have absolutely nothing of ethnicity about them, then ultimately it is quite idle for me to complain that actually the category “Miao” in China includes some four different ethnic groups, all with their own ethnonyms and mutually unintelligible languages and separate histories, like the Hmong, because I would be comparing apples to pears, and moreover assuming a univocal and fixed relationship between a category and the identity it supposedly points to. Locally used ethnonyms and official *minzu* identifications may just be terms that take place in different taxonomic universes and entirely different social contexts, and indeed to compare them may be to risk serious category error. It may not be, then, that the Hmong have slowly adjusted to being called “Miao” together with other unlike people, and in the process formed a new kind of identity for themselves, at all. The official imposition of the term *Miao* may be considered to have brought about a new category of being, which had little or nothing to do with the ethnic sense of being Hmong, or of not being Hmong. It would be tempting to argue that something of the same may be true for the term *Hua*, which is (if my etymology is correct) indeed the term the Hmong still use, in China, for the “Chinese” known in other contexts as “Han.” In other words, being “Han” has absolutely nothing to do with being “Hua.”

So that *minzu* and ethnicity take place in entirely different semantic domains.

Yet this would be to ignore altogether the entwinement I have spoken of between the *minzu* category and various kinds of ethnic, religious, linguistic, occupational, or local identities. This chapter is a preliminary exploration of these issues, based on some of the relevant literature.

MINZU CATEGORIES AND ETHNICITY

Much depends on the approach we take toward what we call "ethnicity." It would be a huge mistake to see ethnicity in solely cultural terms,³² and to assume that on these grounds an ethnic identity must be something radically different from the more "political" construction of the *minzu*. Abner Cohen, an early member of the Manchester school of social anthropologists, usefully defined ethnicity as the "strife between ethnic groups," seeing an ethnic group as an "informal interest group" within a wider society, formed in a situation of competition over resources, and urged us to distinguish between the ethnic category or label, the ethnic group, and ethnicity itself,³³ in a way that reflected or anticipated many of the later "instrumentalist," "constructivist," or "situationalist" approaches to ethnicity. All ethnic groups, he said, were therefore "political groupings."³⁴ It is appropriate to consider the emergence of historic ethnic terms in southern China in these terms, as the products of a two-thousand-year-old struggle for scarce resources in the form of land and water, a struggle often expressed by the Hmong today in geomantic tales about the conflict between two brothers over the grave of their father, from whom the present-day Hmong and Chinese descend. It is not on the grounds of its apoliticality, then, that an ethnic group could be distinguished from a *minzu*. Indeed questions of power and the struggle for resources are fundamental to the formation of modern ethnic groups, as Abner Cohen showed, and this was the case well before the *minzu* project ever began.

Most modern approaches to ethnicity, whether the more situationalist or more "primordialist" and essentialist ones,³⁵ have emphasized a degree of conscious self-mobilization among the group defining itself as an ethnic one. Here J. A. Ross may serve as an exemplar of the classic evolutionary approach, for he distinguished communal from minority from ethnic from national groups largely in terms of their degree of self-awareness based on the nature of their relations with other groups.³⁶ From this point of view the imposition of a *minzu* identity is clearly an aspect of power, and an act of classificatory naming of enormous discursive compulsion, and in that

sense may be contrasted with an ethnicity that lacks that power to name itself. If we were looking at *minzu* identity in relation to ethnic identity, therefore, as a matter broadly of its more active or passive nature, then we must be struck by the way in which modern state-sanctioned discourses, or powerful "dominant ideologies," constitute the subjects of governance, how they "hail" them, to use Althusser's term,³⁷ in ways that go to the heart of current discussions of the politics of identity and difference, raising issues of recognition and misrecognition.

Keyes argued that "a discourse of ethnicity would eclipse premodern discourses of cultural diversity,"³⁸ and that the use of ethnic classification as a technology of power is peculiar to modern nationalism. This has been a common view in discussions of the relations between ethnicity and nationalism.³⁹ It represents a kind of historical constructivism, which itself emerged from an earlier "situationalist" approach to ethnicity based on the recognition that cultural features are only loosely associated with an underlying sense of identity (and therefore separable from it). In his wide-ranging discussion of the scientific classification of ethnic groups in Thailand, China, and Vietnam, Keyes noted, for example, that the Kachin are an ethnic group in Burma today directly "because of the politics of ethnicity"⁴⁰ and as a result of their political relations with other groups in that country. That example could be multiplied many times from the region. Delang's collection on the Karen,⁴¹ similarly, sought to show very clearly that, as Keyes's own afterword to that collection put it, "The Karen are an invention of the modern world."⁴² Renard's opening historical essay in that collection harks back to Peter Hinton's well-known article, "Do the Karen Really Exist?"⁴³ to show there were hardly any references to them before the early nineteenth century and argues for an identity that appears to have been largely historically constructed.⁴⁴ Another well-known example of an identity assumed to have been historically fabricated out of particular cultural features are the Uyghur.⁴⁵ Newby warns, however of the dangers in the extremes of either "essentializing" or "fictionalizing" Uyghur cultural identity, and this is a warning we should take to heart in such cases.⁴⁶ As Harrell once put it, an artificial identity is "not less real than an artificial lake."⁴⁷ But let us look, then, at the potential power of classifications from this point of view.

THE POWER OF CLASSIFICATION

Judith Butler takes an approach to such problems of category and identity that I see as instructive.⁴⁸ Classification, in her attempt to account for the

power of what she calls “injurious” speech, is importantly illocutionary and performative. The notion of a verbal threat, for instance, assumes “the gap between the originating context or intention by which an utterance is animated and the effects it produces,”⁴⁹ but such illocutionary speech actually produces its effects simultaneously; “the saying is itself the doing.”⁵⁰ Thus “hate speech” actively subordinates, “objects” the person to whom it is addressed, at the very moment of its utterance. This is what she calls “injurious efficacy.”⁵¹ In terms of naming, we assume a subject who is there before she is named, but that is actually nonsense, and this is terribly important; if the naming constitutes the named, there can, in a sense, be nothing before that act of naming.⁵² Hence the “terrible power of naming.”⁵³ Following such a point of view, it would seem that it could have only been when officially named by the state-sanctioned discourse of the *minzu shibie* project that the “Miao” began to exist as subjects of that discourse, and that they were thereby immediately empowered with agency, albeit a subordinate agency by definition, by that act of naming. It then becomes idle (although irresistible for most ethnographers) to discuss what it was to which the category was applied, since in a very real sense it was not possible for anything to have existed before it was so categorized. Moreover it would be idle to discuss how over the course of historical time the concept gradually took root in some social reality assumed to be at some distance from it, so that the category eventually became meaningful in a way it was not from the start—for it was meaningful from its inception, indeed. There could be no meaning of that sort without it. From this point of view Lemoine, given what I suspect is his fundamental understanding of ethnicity in culturally essentialist terms, would paradoxically be in a sense quite right to separate discussions of ethnicity from the notion of *minzu*.⁵⁴ *Minzu* can have nothing to do with the ethnic, considered as something necessarily separated from it, precisely because the ethnic could not possibly exist without it. To put it more clearly, we need to free our minds of ethnic assumptions, particularly those couched in cultural terms, when we think about *minzu*. Nor is this a merely academic or philosophical point; this is actually how language works, and moreover how governmentality works, and to a large extent exactly how social subjects are constituted in the political/civil sense.

As William Hanks puts it, we cannot “treat meaning as the correspondence between linguistically encoded sense and the world of objects.” What is important is that “what makes meaning possible is the anchoring of utterance forms *both* in language form and in the phenomenal field.” It is, he says, “*the relation between these two* that is the starting

point from which literal meaning arises."⁵⁵ We should not be looking for gaps and disparities between *minzu* categories and the ethnic groups to which we assume they refer, considered as their objects. This is exactly what Brubaker refers to as "groupism," or the tendency to take bounded, homogeneous groups as the "basic constituents of social life."⁵⁶ Rather we should be searching for the kind of meanings that are generated through their interaction, and that generate both.

Butler makes the point, which seems apposite regarding the pressure of an ethnic classification apparently imposed on a subordinate subject, of how both Nietzsche and Foucault sought to account for how "power that at first appears as external, pressed upon the subject, pressing the subject into subordination, assumes a psychic form that constitutes the subject's self-identity."⁵⁷ Much has been written about the intermediary ethnic minority subjects who play an active part in inscribing their own histories into the narrative of the nation.⁵⁸ Thus it seems there can be no self-identity of this kind without the imposition of a powerful classification that first constitutes it, which brings us into what Butler sees as a "tropological quandary."⁵⁹ As she says, "We cannot assume a subject who performs an interiorization if the formation of the subject is in need of explanation."⁶⁰ Yet this is of course what we constantly do in our folk notions of subjectivity and ethnicity, and indeed what follows once we strictly separate our understanding of ethnicity from our understandings of *minzu* identities, since we resurrect precisely that subject who could not have previously existed. Butler proceeds to argue that it is this very process of internalizing a norm that "fabricates the distinction between interior and exterior life."⁶¹ It should be this "abjected consciousness"⁶² that concerns us, the "subjectivation" (*assujettissement*)⁶³ in which "one inhabits the figure of autonomy only by becoming subjected to a power, a subjection which implies a radical dependency."⁶⁴ Perhaps that abjected consciousness, inextricably caught in the *minzu* formulations that define and constitute it, is all that is meant, ultimately, by "ethnicity."

In terms of the "abjected consciousness" Butler talks of and the issues of differential power that Lemoine's distinction of *minzu* from ethnicity raises, it is interesting to speculate on how much actual autonomy there was in the *minzu shibie* project of the 1950s. In fact the strict criteria derived from Stalin for defining a "nation" (a common language, territory, and economic life and a common psychological makeup expressed in a common culture) do not seem to have been very rigorously applied. Heberer noted that, because of the difficulties of applying the criteria, an additional criterion of "national consciousness" was resorted to, and in

many cases it seems that quite a lot of attention was paid to local views and opinions about who constituted what kind of a group, although not necessarily to the members of the classified group alone, or to its most disadvantaged members.⁶⁵ Indeed we know of cases where in fact the formal classification project paid particularly close attention to local feelings and perceptions.⁶⁶ Guldin makes a similar point.⁶⁷ He notes that to the four criteria, researchers added historical origin, migration history, and “agreement by the people themselves.” But then, what was, what can have been, the basis of that agreement?⁶⁸ Where does self-ascription end and the hailing of the self by more authoritative others begin? Can they indeed be separated, or must they always occur in tandem? If the latter, then whenever we discuss ethnicity in such terms, we are always and only talking about issues of power, as Cohen foresaw: the power to determine one’s future destiny (cultural autonomy) is the same as the capacity to name oneself rather than to receive the name given by others.

Magnus Fiskesjö’s work has pointed us in the direction in which I think we should go to appreciate the power of naming, as well as its limitations, in China.⁶⁹ Fiskesjö is here concerned with the imposition of Han-style patronymics on a minority, the Wa of the Burmese borderlands. He shows how the memorized names of Wa patronymics stake their claims to be original inhabitants and therefore with a rightful claim to the lands they possess today.⁷⁰ Wa names traditionally combined birth order with days of the week in a complex system. After the 1950s, when collecting and recording names became crucial for “the modern nation-state project,”⁷¹ at first somewhat inaccurate phonetic transcriptions of Wa names were made with Chinese characters. Then there was a period in which the better-known neighboring Lahu naming system was used for Wa names. The Lahu system involved assigning a single term for all males and another for all females as part of their names. Finally *xing* (surnames) and *ming* (given names) were assigned, so that Chinese names replaced Wa ones. The process has resulted in a complete rearrangement of the traditional jigsaw with, for example, members of the Wa patrilineal “Yam” being assigned “Yang” as a surname, while sometimes various Wa clans got the same surname (the Zhang now include twenty-three “central Wa clan names”), or were divided between Chinese names. Currently in the rural areas a dual system obtains, Chinese names being used alongside Wa names. Slowly this new configuration comes to be accepted. Naming thus functions as an aspect of the imposition of power and fundamentally reshapes the nature of identity.

Although rarely so well reported, these practices of the adoption of Chi-

nese patronymics (and other characteristics) have been common among most of the southwestern minority peoples in late imperial China and show us something of the local complexities and difficulties of the imposition of Chinese names at an individual level. What is interesting about this case is that it is so late, and so well reported; for the Hmong, Yao, and some other people like Lisu and Lahu, the more active process of accommodating, coming to terms and compromising with Chinese patronymics, has been continuing for several centuries—albeit without the direct sanction of state authority, which is so important an aspect of the passive case of imposition Fiskesjö describes. Still we have a direct parallel here with the imposition of *minzu* ethnonyms as social categories.⁷² Autonomy, as Fiskesjö remarks, resides at least partly in the power to name, and there is a constant struggle as to who should have the power to determine this.

Stephane Gros has shown us how even in those cases where the adoption of an ethnonym appeared particularly unproblematic, in fact a number of other alternative outcomes (Qiu, Nu, or even Rawang) could have been possible for the Drung (Dulong) of northwestern Yunnan.⁷³ Like many commentators, he draws comparisons between the colonizing Confucian project of “rectifying names” and follows Keyes to argue that “ethnic classification has been deployed as a technology of power only by modern states.”⁷⁴ Wang Ming-Ke’s account of the historical genesis of the term *Qiang* shows a similar historical depth in the way it describes the gradual evolution of an accepted and recognized local identity.⁷⁵

SHIFTING IDENTITIES IN RELATION TO FORMAL CLASSIFICATIONS

So ethnicity cannot be merely reduced to its more cultural components but is a process associated with political and economic relations with others, and of course there is often a dialectical and convoluted interweaving between the formal and the folk, the imposed and the self-ascribed, the internal and the external.⁷⁶ Let us consider some more concrete examples of the complexity of this process, which show the arbitrary and historically contingent relationship between inherited culture and ethnic identity that so much work in this region of southern China and the adjoining parts of Southeast Asia has demonstrated.⁷⁷ There is much truth in these generally situational views, yet at the same time they have led to a situation in which cultural features come to be seen as signifiers, however variable they themselves may be, of an underlying ethnic signified. As Brubaker notes, “we often find an uneasy amalgam of constructivist language and

essentialist argumentation."⁷⁸ In the constructivist literature, it is the "soft attributes" of identity, such as its fluidity, that are emphasized, while the identity they predicate is often "taken for granted."⁷⁹ Take the Yao category, which we can usefully think of as divided into six or seven main branches in China.⁸⁰ The origin of the term *Yao* itself most likely referred to a particular category of subjects who received exemptions from taxation and corvée labor under the household registration system of the Song dynasty,⁸¹ and was thus not "ethnic" in any "cultural" sense at all. At the same time the close association of the Mien branch of the Yao with a school of Daoism has led some to see them as more of a religious community.⁸² One of the Yao branches speaks only Han, one speaks a Miao-related language (*punu*), another a Tai-related one (*lakkia*). Only four of these main branches speak languages actually linguistically classified as Yao, one of which is "Mien," yet the sense of a Yao identity among all the branches is not wholly the result of a recent national invention but corresponds to the way these people have been locally referred to for several centuries by the Han and to a large extent to how they identify themselves.⁸³

The Na Mieu case in Vietnam⁸⁴ is particularly interesting in offering an example not only of the kind of dissonance between cultural features and ethnic identity that ethnographers since Leach have insisted on,⁸⁵ but also of the vexed and troubled relationship that may obtain between a group's self-identification and its official classification. Although today in China the category "Miao" has become an official mark of ethnic distinction and is sought after and appreciated by many, historically the term was much resented as one of contempt. Its Southeast Asian equivalent, "Meo," generally adopted by Southeast Asian governments and majority populations to describe the Hmong group of the "Miao" who have settled there, has however continued to be resented, and from the early 1960s the Hmong of Laos mounted a campaign to have their name changed from Meo to Hmong, which has been largely successful in that ethnographers and the general public have mostly all used the term *Hmong* for them (and it would now be a serious insult to call an American Hmong "Miao" or "Meo"). The group known as the Na Mieu in northern Vietnam, however, were not Hmong but originated from another "Miao" group of Southeast Guizhou, the "Hmu."⁸⁶ Highlanders, they had immigrated into Vietnam from Guangxi some two centuries previously.⁸⁷ They were classed, however, with the Hmong groups who had also settled in Vietnam as "Meo" by the Vietnamese government until 1979 when, in an extraordinary act of ethnographic wisdom, the government agreed to change the official term *Meo* to *Hmong*. However, Thang shows how the Na Mieu refused to accept

this reclassification of themselves on the grounds that they were not and never had been Hmong and, although some of them speak Hmong now, did not wish to be classed under their name, while, apparently, they had no objection to the "Mieu" appellation. Moreover, Thang shows how after the end of the Indochina Wars the Na Mieu had become largely acculturated to the more dominant Tai-speaking Thay, speaking their language, wearing their costume, and designing their houses after their fashion, so that they had become effectively "bilingual," as Thang puts it.⁸⁸ Now that since 1993 the Na Mieu have come into much closer contact with the dominant Kinh majority of Vietnam, they have become more and more Vietnamized and have effectively become "trilingual."⁸⁹ Their identity, says Thang, has thus become "ambiguous." An example like this does seem to show clearly not only how very situational ethnic identity is in the region but also that however important it may seem to prove and demonstrate the "real" original identity of the Na Mieu (as indeed Thang also does very ably), it hardly seems to matter in the light of all the changes and transformations this society must have undergone in relation first to the Thay and then to the dominant Kinh. So does it matter at all who people "really" might have been?⁹⁰ Is it important at all to locate some more culturally oriented understanding of identity prior to or "behind" formal ethnic classifications? Is it not sufficient to limit ourselves to "constructions" of the minorities taken from the Chinese imagination, as workers of black magic,⁹¹ or as feminized or masculinized, for example, as much of the more sinocentrically oriented literature has done?⁹² In what ways should the rather frequent refusals to accept formal *minzu* categories concern us? It was the Yao on Hainan Island who refused to accept their classification, which led to their classification as Miao, and Cheung has provided an in-depth study of the Gejia of Guizhou who conversely have refused for some decades to accept being categorized as Miao and refused to pay their grain taxes in 1986 for this reason.⁹³

FROM CATEGORY TO IDENTITY?

The assumption of the intrinsically cultural nature of ethnic identity has proved a persistent one despite its many refutations. The tendency to depict ethnicity in primordial, cultural terms and consider *minzu* as somehow a more political category is closely mirrored in the debates that have taken place about the culturally rooted, or politically contingent, nature of nationalism. Just as ethnicity tends on account of its more cultural "stuff" to be contrasted to a nationalism seen as based on a political principle,⁹⁴ so

nationalism tends to be viewed as a cultural phenomenon when it is seen as an aspect of the “nation” and contrasted with the state but as a “political” form when contrasted to an ethnicity understood in more culturalist terms. But there is a strong case to be made for considering ethnicity and nationalism together, as inherently both political and cultural processes.⁹⁵ We need indeed to overcome the division of labor between historians and anthropologists as Fiskesjö points out there has been in the matters of nationalism and ethnicity.⁹⁶ If it is actually unfeasible even to think of an ethnicity defined apart from *minzu*, then we need not to separate nationality (or *minzu*) as political and ethnicity as cultural in the way that Gellner and Lemoine seem to do,⁹⁷ but to *confront squarely their dangerous ambiguity*.⁹⁸ This is where Ma Rong’s attempt to insist on the difference between “nation” and “ethnic group” in the Chinese context misses the mark.⁹⁹

The sharp distinction Ma Rong insists on drawing between the concepts of nation and ethnic group¹⁰⁰ seems to me, in the China context, to run the risks of underplaying both the inherently political nature of ethnicity and the unavoidably cultural aspects of nationality. Ma Rong argues that the use of *minzu* in the phrase *Zhonghua minzu* to refer to the “Chinese nation” and the use of *minzu* (as in the *minzu shibie* project, for example) to refer to the fifty-six different “nationalities” in/of China is a “confusion,”¹⁰¹ but it is in my opinion really no confusion at all. It is a very deliberate conflation, and entwinement, of political with cultural meanings, which we need to confront rather than dodge. From the very beginning of New China “questions of minorities” (*minzu wenti*) have been understood as “problems of nationality”—and, surely, they are! It is not hard to understand why this should be so, given the strategic location of many minorities across China’s territorial borders and the issues of religion so often associated with non-Han status.¹⁰² Fiskesjö makes a similar point in noting the ambivalent position of the (often transnational) ethnic minorities with regard to the otherwise strict division in Chinese policy between “foreign” and “internal” affairs.¹⁰³ Many minority issues, such as those connected with Tibet, are as international as they are national. Merely changing the category of *minzu* to *zuqun* as Ma Rong suggests, and as has now become more common in Chinese ethnographic writings, cannot seriously address the coincidence of political with cultural issues that is of concern here.

Ma’s main argument is that in order to forestall the sort of strengthening of ethnic consciousness that has threatened nation-states elsewhere, ethnic policy in China should revert from “politicization” back

to “culturalization.”¹⁰⁴ This is a paradoxical argument, since it seems to appeal to nationalist fears of ethnic consciousness and separatism. Ma Rong’s assumption that globalization has strengthened ethnic groups¹⁰⁵ also deserves reexamination since it takes no account of their frequent deterritorialization.¹⁰⁶

The argument that “culturalization” typified Chinese ethnic policy in the past is also problematic, both generally and more specifically in the context of China. Following Ambrose King, Fairbank, and other sociologists, and to some extent paralleling the argument of Keyes,¹⁰⁷ Ma Rong argues that in traditional China a kind of culturalism (or “culturalization”) obtained that encouraged the non-Han to become Han with little regard to distinctions of physical appearance or language.¹⁰⁸ This is a hoary view in the Chinese context, and would generally support the common view that a modern construct known as “ethnicity” has replaced an older traditional emphasis on merely cultural differences. This is an argument, be it noted, that logically predicates that modern ethnicity is political in origin and nature and therefore sits uncomfortably with implicit assumptions about the “cultural” nature of ethnicity, and it is one that is not unique to China. This is almost exactly Keyes’s argument about ethnic classification and ethnicity itself, and indeed a very common view.¹⁰⁹ An older awareness of cultural differences somehow becomes politicized under the nation-state. However, Keyes’s general view was criticized by Proschan, who argued, with reference to myths of the origin of people from gourds widespread in Southeast Asia and southern China, that people have *always* been “thinking” cultural difference.¹¹⁰ The general argument that ethnicity is a modern project associated solely with the origins of the nation-state reflects the argument of “modernists” like Gellner and Hobsbawm that the *nation* itself is a modern (and therefore constructed) phenomenon rather than the “perennialist” argument that the nation is based on older, more primordial loyalties of ethnicity and culture.¹¹¹ Calhoun too accepts that “the discourse of nationalism is distinctively modern” with reference to theorists like Hobsbawm and Gellner.¹¹² Smith takes partial exception to this, arguing for an appreciation of nations as emerging from older, more primordial forms of ethnicity and culture,¹¹³ again reflecting the dissonance between the more culturally and more politically inflected points of view and, I think, a kind of (essentialist) reification of both culture and ethnicity as underlying essences on which the artificial political form of the “nation” is imposed. The real difference between, say, Smith and Gellner is the more historical, cultural (and continuist) approach of the former as opposed to a more political or sociological (and discontinuist) approach of the latter. I

want to insist (as Calhoun does) that we consider ethnicity and nationalism together, as inherently both political and cultural processes.

So there are some general questions to raise about a too easy acceptance of ethnicity as a modern phenomenon inevitably associated with the modern nation-state.¹¹⁴ Even accepting this “modernist” view, though, should lead to some recognition of the close relations between ethnicity and the project of modern nationalism and the origins of ethnicity in a political project. Besides these general problematizations, there are serious questions to be raised about the assumption that “culturalization” at some point gave way to “politicization” in the specific history of China. Ebrey and others have very cogently questioned this view of a benign Confucianism in the China context,¹¹⁵ stressing the actual exclusiveness of culturalism and its coexistence with the patrilineal ideology of “a vast ‘we’” group based on ancestry and on what was inherited rather than merely acquired.¹¹⁶ Why did people bother to make up genealogies proving their Han origins? she asks, and stresses that “Chinese did not feel entirely comfortable with the idea that others could be transformed into Chinese.”¹¹⁷ Becoming accepted as Han was a matter of ancestry as well as performance (what Duara in 1995 would call a “narrative of descent,” combining “dissent” with “descent”), so that there were clear barriers to assimilation here. I myself (among others) have also pointed out the force of ethnic prejudice and discrimination throughout “traditional” China from a number of clear written historical examples,¹¹⁸ an ugly feature of China in the past that such culturalist views seem determined to downplay or disguise.¹¹⁹

Following Gellner’s insistence on understanding nationalism as a “political principle,”¹²⁰ Ma argues that ethnicity has become “politicized” under the modern nation-state.¹²¹ But if you *start* from an understanding of the political nature of ethnicity, then such an argument becomes redundant, just as Lemoine’s argument regarding ethnicity and *minzu* is, given an assumption of ethnicity in largely cultural terms.¹²²

In contrast to Ma Rong’s argument, Melissa Brown’s work shows us clearly both the political aspects of ethnicity and the cultural aspects of “nationality.” Her examination of the classification of the Tujia in Hubei shows us what appears to be an extreme disjuncture between “officially assigned ethnic categories, culture and local ethnicity,”¹²³ or what Mary Rack’s study of the importance of locality in Hunan calls an “ideology of separateness.”¹²⁴ Here what was felt to be a Han identity, although one with striking variations from cultural Han practices elsewhere, was arbitrarily transmuted into a Tujia one, leaving many locals insisting they

were actually Han.¹²⁵ This insistence on Han origins by people classified as minorities may be a very generalizable process; it seems particularly close to the Bai identity forged for the *minjia* as described by a number of people¹²⁶ and the historical situation of an intermediary identity emerging from the colonizing encounter of militia with local civilians in the south from which a category divided as either Han or *minzu* may also be very generalizable. Bai's remark that in many ways, and as considered by themselves, the Bai were "more Han than the Han"¹²⁷—they tend to refer to their calligraphy and splendid vernacular architecture—is extremely indicative here, since it clearly points to Han-ness as an aspirational point of desire, the epitome of civilization, against which other formal identities arrange themselves.¹²⁸

But Brown's conclusion to the article echoes Stevan Harrell's, and brings us back again to the question of the relation between category and substantiated identity; she says that when powerful outsiders tell people who they are, eventually the classification changes "local socio-political experience" and this changes the sense of identity, but of course this is only true if one assumes a dichotomy between category and categorized of an essentializing kind in the first place.¹²⁹ While practical conditions, of the kind so well described by Brown and other ethnographers, might well seem to lead us toward such a view, at the same time the moment we do this we are replicating all sorts of distinctions we would not wish to, such as between official and folk categorizations and understandings, which arises from separating *sense* from *sign* in precisely the same way as the act of classification itself does.¹³⁰ And it is not surprising that we should do so, for we are heirs to precisely the same legacy of romantic nationalism as that informing the classification project and enterprise, as I want to highlight below. To recognize the socially contextual nature of the act of classification should mean to go beyond merely showing how an external and largely meaningless-in-local-terms category was first imposed, then became imbued with new meanings through local agency over the course of time owing to local political and social processes, but to recognize that the act of classification itself constitutes its subjects and continues to do through what Butler calls "iteration." From this point of view Lemoine may have hit the exact spot in his remark that *minzu* is a category that has absolutely nothing to do with (what is often understood as) ethnicity.¹³¹ Indeed it is a unique construct (although, we should note, it is *not* its politicality that marks it as different from the ethnic) that should be understood in terms of the constitution of a particular kind of citizenry in terms of *romantic* notions of nationalism, which I approach shortly.

Another example of the movement from category to identity I am talking about is given in the work of Louisa Schein, who aptly discusses the classification exercise as a process of the creation “of state subjects” in a chapter also aptly titled “Making Minzu,”¹³² yet the “disjuncture” she notes between “peoples’ experiences of ethnic difference on the ground and the formal categories into which they were fitted” raises similar questions about how we conceptualize this. She too follows Harrell in assuming that “these categories, through the articulation of state and non-Han peoples’ practices, became significant dimensions of ethnic agency.”¹³³ Thus the section “From Category to Identity” begs the question of who the subjects are. So (she says) a *habitus* has been formed, but at the same time she paradoxically refers to Stuart Hall’s view of identity as the meeting place of interpellating discourse and psychic processes that produce us as subjects, stressing the “inseparability of ideology and practice.”¹³⁴ Taken to its logical conclusion, such an argument (which I agree with) would go against the attempt to chart a clear road from imposed category to felt identity, and to separate the *minzu* category from a felt ethnicity.

ROMANTIC ANTECEDENTS

But let us search out some of the roots of this ethnic classification enterprise in China. Mullaney’s work has been pathbreaking in doing what has sorely needed to be done,¹³⁵ considering the ethnic classification project as indeed, as he puts it, an all-too-“human” endeavor and looking at its actual embeddedness in local social practices; but also in showing us the extraordinary influence of a colonial text such as Davies’s on these scientific classifications and the importance of linguistic research as a defining influence on the classification.¹³⁶ We can also understand this, I would suggest, in terms of the power of romantic notions of cultural heritage.

These ethnic classifications are about the construction of a “radical otherness” that has its clearest roots in the romantic legacy and its rebellion against Augustan enlightenment values of universalism and cosmopolitanism. Murphy, in a relevant discussion of the South Asia subaltern studies movement, contrasts the reconciliation of balanced opposites in a harmony of diverse elements characteristic of the Augustan Age of Reason against the emphasis on cultural specificity, originality, and unique historical development of the romantic reaction.¹³⁷ Romantics “reacted violently against Roman cosmopolitanism and the practice of ‘cultural loans,’” seeking an *authentic* rather than a *syncretic* past, finding a symbol of purity in a particular idea of Greece as a self-realized, autochthonously developing

society. The threat posed to the self by the other can only be overcome, for the romantic, if self and other are made to stand to each other “in a relationship of unbridgeable difference.”¹³⁸ Creativity had to be that which is self-generating; any culture that borrowed from others was seen as stagnant, not self-determining, and cultures had to be treated on their own terms. Whether in biology, in language, or in creative life, “originality” implied an active subject that changes according to its own laws. Murphy argues that it was the Augustan spirit that was mimetic, unconcerned with notions of particular authorship, embracing of the imitative, which is being restored today through the new emphasis on synthesis and hybridity in the cosmopolitan postmodern.

If this view is right,¹³⁹ then we are faced with a strange confusion in the case of Chinese ethnic classifications. In the first place, we should see them as surely having very little in common with older Confucian attempts to fix and reify cultural essences and “rectify names.”¹⁴⁰ We should see them as more firmly located *within a romantic stream* of the European tradition, a romantic stream that was irrevocably opposed to the kind of Universal History associated with Enlightenment thinking. Murphy refers to Castoriadis and to the argument that if rationality is not the same in different societies, if ultimate values (in a Weberian sense) are incommensurable, then the whole notion of a “progress in history”—which was of course at the heart of Chinese/Stalinist five-stage theory¹⁴¹—must be rejected. As he notes, radical alterity, understood as the core of the differences between societies, is at heart a romantic notion, and it was “first applied by the Romantics to language ‘families’ and biological ‘types.’” Different language families were understood to each have their own unique and incommensurable “grammatical structures and patterns of development,” with no genetic connections between them, just as Cuvier had argued for biological species.¹⁴² Jonathan Friedman has understood this clash of epistemologies very well, when he talks of the “ladder” (progress, evolutionist) and “mosaic” (cultural relativist) theories of cultural difference.¹⁴³ It follows from all this that we must move beyond a consideration of Chinese approaches toward ethnicity as merely embodying *either* a traditional culturalist Confucianist civilizing framework *or* a Western type of “scientific” outlook, to look more closely at the deep contradictions there are and have been in the Chinese situation between the five-stage theory of the closely associated social history (*shihui lishi*) project (universalist, cosmopolitan, the “ladder”) and the *minzu shibie* project of nationality identification (relativizing and romantic in inspiration, the “mosaic”).

Sydney White, somewhat similarly to what I am trying to do here, dis-

tinguishes a state discourse in China based on “hierarchy” from a state discourse based on “authenticity,” arguing that whereas the first points toward the importance of the future and modernity through its evolutionist assumptions, the latter implicates notions of tradition and the past.¹⁴⁴ We might then locate White’s “hierarchy” discourse within the progressivist Augustan framework Murphy (1993) talks about, and White’s “authenticity” discourse within the relativizing romantic tradition Murphy so clearly distinguishes from it.¹⁴⁵ It seems clear that the *minzu* project, like the ethnographic work that preceded it in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s had much in common with the classic colonial anthropological project, and shared with it a belief derived from the romantic movement in the importance of reified cultural essences.¹⁴⁶

EXCLUSIONS

We can ask again, does it matter who people “really” are? It matters only, surely, because of the power of classifications that constitute a citizenry in a particular form and in that sense define identity and the need to delineate alternatives from those classifications that are imposed, accepted, consented to, or, on the other hand, contested and resisted. But in a sense such resistance is impossible, and can never be thought outside the terms that constitute it. This is where the notion of any ethnic identity constituted completely outside the *minzu* category really falls down. Ellen says all classifications are “social contextual” in their origins and one must insist on this.¹⁴⁷ It would seem tempting to see ethnic categories, or even ethnic groups (Lehman’s 1979 “genetic-linguistic” groupings), as the bases of our classifications, which then adopt or retain particular cultural markers in a flexible, situational way. Indeed this is what most of the work on Southeast Asian ethnicity since Leach, Lehman, and Moerman would have us do. And it is the point of the Na Mieu example given above. To add to the complexity of that example (the non-Hmong Miao beyond the borders of China in Vietnam), let us remember that the Kinh, the dominant majority of Vietnam to whom Thang shows the Na Mieu are rapidly assimilating,¹⁴⁸ are classified as a *shaoshu minzu* in China under the rubric “Jing.” To some extent Keyes’s attempt to overcome the divisions between culturally oriented and situationalist approaches to ethnicity through the notion of an ethnic group as a group based around the cultural recognition of common descent¹⁴⁹ also assumes a primordial entity that adopts various cultural markers of place, language, religion, custom, costume, and so on,

as its distinctive symbols. Then it does not matter if these markers are not exclusive possessions of the group, although like a unique "history" they may be claimed as such; we have a kind of polythetic classification in which certain characteristics are shared at upper levels that may not be at shallower levels of a taxonomy (this was Lehman's argument in 1979). But I think this may be a huge mistake in terms of theories of language that warn us against precisely this kind of fallacy. For classification cannot really be considered in isolation from the process or objects of classification. So that to adopt a "cognitive" understanding of classifications as somehow merely socially contextualized, or importantly embedded in social realities, does not take us far enough. We need to consider classification itself as a deeply political and inherently social process arising from certain practices but not abstract markers of them in a merely representational way, as cultural features might similarly be thought to be markers of particular ethnic identities. It may, then, be too easy to assume cognitive difference from an actuality and then seek to show how the category has become socially substantiated (as Harrell did in an argument that has proved extremely influential for a generation of researchers on southern Chinese minorities). Moreover, doing this is, as I have shown, a way of buying into the very theories of representation, with their ancestry in romanticism, on which those kinds of classifications were based.

So that *minzu* and ethnicity have nothing to do with each other in one sense and yet at the same time everything to do with each other. What we do need to do is to move away from the (doomed) historical attempt to resurrect a past that is always altered by the present, from the attempt to locate a "real" identity behind a fictional *minzu* one that has haunted so much of the ethnography of the southern Chinese minorities.

Finally, we may note that the traditional exclusion of categories such as Miao, in particular, the term *Miao*, but at times other categories such as Hu or Fan (Elliott, this volume), from the discourse of civilization, still leaves Han as the dominant term in terms of a relatively simple binary. The construction of a chain of fifty-six signifiers supposedly of equal weight in which "Han" is supposed to function as just one marker among many others, however, is an entirely modern event. Here the Han category corresponds perfectly to Lacan's *point de capiton*, that anchoring point of a chain of signifiers in which, as Žižek describes it, one signifier acts as the "filler," the empty category, in a classificatory system, which "poses" as one among others, but actually is a "negative container," a "catchall" for whatever doesn't fit in the general scheme.¹⁵⁰ This is indeed the sense in

which “Han” acts as a Master (or “empty”) Signifier for all the other, quite anomalous, categories, herded together by political might into one scheme of apparently scientific and neutral classification. Han appears, then, to be the joker in the pack, the one that supports all visible categories through its own hidden dominance.¹⁵¹

PART III

The Problem of Han Formations

8. *Hushuo*

The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese

Mark Elliott

Historians face a challenge in trying to understand the recurrent unity of *Zhongguo*, or of what in English we call “China.” When compared with the failure of other antique empires to maintain their existence into the modern age, the longevity of the Chinese state seems to be something of an anomaly. For this very reason, it demands our attention; indeed, it is the basis for that oft-asked question, How is it that China lasted when Greece and Rome (or Egypt, or Parthia) did not? One may be inclined to frame a response in terms of the enduring qualities or customs believed to define the *Hua*—a kind of cultural core of “Chineseness”—and the close connection seen to obtain between it, a geographic core (what is often called “China proper” or in older Chinese documents *neidi*, the “inner lands”), and a demographic core made up of the people who have historically inhabited China proper, that is, the group typically referred to as *Han*. But this response raises further uncertainties as to these various core notions: What set of beliefs, values, or practices makes Chinese culture “Chinese”? Where precisely do its geographic sources lie? And who, exactly, are the Han?

As part of the effort made in this volume to develop a critical approach to the study of the Han, this chapter seeks to address the last of these questions: Whom or what are we talking about when we talk about some group of people identified, whether by ourselves, by others, or by themselves, as “Han”—that is, Hanren, Hanzu, or Han minzu? The challenge is greater than it might at first seem. For as will become apparent, the historical usage of the term *Han* is highly unstable, and even in the contemporary world the term can be slippery. Sometimes it is used synonymously with “Chinese,” sometimes not; people who might be considered Han in some contexts might not be in others—they might call themselves

Tangren, for instance, as is very common among Cantonese speakers still today; and there is a long and lively debate over who the “true” Han people are and where they came from. In short, it is hard to escape the conclusion that *Han* is just one of many untidy terms that encumber the world we live in.

The goal of this chapter, therefore, is not to answer the question, Who are the Han? but to ask, Why is *Han* used to talk about the people we know as the Chinese? In other words, how has *Han* acquired the sense of an ethnic identifier? What does this category mean today, and what has it meant in the past? What can we learn about the Han, or, more precisely, about *Han* as a classificatory imperative, by understanding its origins and evolution? To address the above questions, I offer a preliminary investigation of the history of the term *Han* and how it came to be applied to the Chinese, that is, to the people of the Central Plains. This is not to say that the matter of the actual origins of the Han people themselves—as represented by the question, “Who are the people who now make up the majority population of China?”¹—is not an important one. But it would seem that this is a problem more for geneticists than for historians. We are already getting parts of the answer, and more will come as new techniques involving DNA analysis become more widespread.² Instead, for historian and anthropologist alike, a critical approach to *Han* means investigating the complicated processes of definition, discrimination, and identification—as well as, crucially, the discourse on these processes—all the different things people do as part of forming into larger, more or less discrete entities we now call ethnic groups. Assuming, that is, we agree that the Han constitute an ethnic group—a problem to which I shall shortly return.

This chapter offers two main conclusions. First, the development of *Han* as an ethnonym owed greatly to the intervention of the Hu, the nomadic and seminomadic peoples living to the north of the Central Plains. I propose that just as the name *Hu* was an invention of the people of the Central Plains, so the name “Han”—that is, a label for people who, by descent, language, and cultural practice, were recognized as Central Plains dwellers (or their descendants)—was largely the invention of the people of the steppe. In short, *Han* was a Hu proposition—hence my title. Second, I would suggest that the ethnic unity of the Chinese as seen in the adoption of *Han* to describe themselves is really more the *product* of repeated efforts to create and foster political unity than it is the *source* of that unity. For while *Han* as an ethnic term can be dated at least as far back as the sixth century C.E., its meaning and usage varied greatly over the succeeding millennium, stabilizing only in the fifteenth century or so, after the founding of the

Ming dynasty. In the interim, *Han* was applied to all kinds of people, some of whom we would regard as “Chinese” and others decidedly not. In other words, the notion of a durable, unified conception of the Han people as a people dating back millennia is largely a myth; for much of Chinese history, divisions of various sorts—both those between Chinese and non-Chinese and those between northerners and southerners—prevented such an idea from taking hold.

ON “ETHNICITY”

Before going further, it is worth saying something about terms and concepts. This would seem to be a necessary step if we wish to avoid accepting existing labels or classification schemes as in any way given or obvious. We must remember to ask why *this* term and not *that*, and at the same time move beyond mere words to understand not just what is being described but why it is being described in a particular way at a particular time and by whom. We are obliged, moreover, to exercise a certain reflexivity in questioning our own ability to pose questions objectively, given the limitations placed upon us by the time and place framing our own inquiry.

The principal term that demands our attention is *ethnic*. It is sometimes claimed that the Han is “the largest ethnic group on earth.” Is this true? Not, but is it an ethnic group at all? The answer to this question will depend greatly on what one means by “ethnic group” and how one understands ethnicity and other kinds of processes of identity formation. Whole books have been written on this subject, which is obviously far too complicated to fully treat here. Though I do not expect universal agreement with my position, let me summarize my own views in an attempt to offer at least a working definition of the term and to raise some issues for consideration.³ I have elsewhere defined ethnicity as “the social organization and political assertion of difference perceived to inhere in culturally bounded, descent-based categories.”⁴ This short definition might be amplified by the observation that ethnic categories are understood by the scholar as historical constructions, which arise in particular contexts and change as those contexts change. This is as much to say that though ethnic phenomena are found in many places in the human historical record, including in the pre-modern era and even antiquity,⁵ individual ethnic formations themselves do not in fact constitute unchanging and archaic social facts, despite assertions of the antique, even primordial, qualities of one or another ethnic group of the sort that people frequently make.

Two other important points that are fundamental to this interpretation

of ethnicity are, first, that, as a highly elaborated expression of social difference, ethnicity requires not just the assertion of difference but also its recognition by others; and second, to be “ethnic,” a group must lay down certain expectations of its members in terms of action, expectations that are not applied to those outside the group (and may even be forbidden to them). Ethnicity is, in other words, transactional and exclusive in nature: it depends on the delineation and maintenance of boundaries, and the mutual acknowledgment that such boundaries exist, whether or not they are in fact respected; it depends, too, on the creation and continuation of certain practices and institutions, and on the broad, though not necessarily universal, recognition that such practices and institutions belong to, and define, that group and no other—whether this is in fact true, again, being largely irrelevant. This is not to say that people do not move in and out of ethnic groups, whether temporarily or for their whole lives. Of course, this happens all the time. But doing so involves costs—losses as well as gains (and in this double sense is also “transactional”)—and is subject to the same conditions of recognition and delineation.

The above approach to ethnicity, as both subject of analysis and as critical concept, is echoed in a wide range of works by anthropologists⁶ and has gained wide currency among historians, to judge from the increasing frequency of its use in book and article titles.⁷ The problem of identity formation in the Ming and Qing periods is prominently featured, for instance, in many of the essays in *Empire at the Margins*, including, notably, the introduction, where it is observed that ethnicity “is relative in the deepest sense,” “ephemeral,” “constructed,” and may either be “imposed by state machineries or asserted by local populations . . . to mark boundaries and to highlight differences,” all phrases one is likely to encounter in the broader literature.⁸ This trend appears to suggest a movement away from earlier formulations, in which ethnicity was understood specifically as a modern phenomenon, too problematic to be applied to the era preceding the rise of the nation-state⁹—though even here, as the editors of *Empire at the Margin* caution, “all historians who project ethnic phenomena back to the period before the nineteenth century do so as a matter of interpretation.”¹⁰ One might reasonably extend this caution to any discussion of ethnicity before the 1950s, when the word first enters common discourse.¹¹ But it must be noted that at that time, the meaning of *ethnic* differed from that proposed above, as it tended to be restricted to marginalized groups in society—that is, it was understood sociologically, as a way of speaking of minoritarian status, not anthropologically, as a way of

treating identity discourse generally.¹² If current scholarship is any guide, it is no longer the case that an interest in ethnicity implies an exclusive concern with marginalized or subjugated groups, or just the modern era, however defined.¹³

Yet if one were to search for an explanation as to why Han “ethnicity” has so far eluded careful scholarly examination, this might well be because, as the dominant group, the Han were by definition denied the possibility of being ethnic at all. We find that that this older paradigm prevails still in work by Chinese scholars, where to be “ethnic” is to be a *minzu*, or, more precisely, a *shaoshu minzu*, formerly translated uniformly into English as “minority nationality” and now, in a significant shift that began in 1995, as “ethnic group.”¹⁴ Generally, *minzu* and related terms tend to reflect the older English meaning of “minority-ethnic,” while the newer, constructionist (or circumstantialist) notion of ethnicity is signified by a different word in Chinese, the neologism *zuqun*.¹⁵ This term might be applied even to dominant groups, which, no less than minority groups, also engage in identity-making that can legitimately be regarded as ethnic in nature. The definition I advance is thus not predicated on where a group might be positioned within social, political, or economic hierarchies; that is, one can legitimately speak of Japanese, not just Korean or Ainu, ethnicity in Japan; French, not just Algerian or Vietnamese, ethnicity in France; and so on. Nonetheless, it is perhaps suggestive that, as will become clear below, the group that came to be known as the Han began to acquire this identity in a cumulative process during periods, beginning in the sixth century C.E., when they actually *were* marginalized, at least politically. This is as much to say that even if one did not want to foreclose the possibility that a socially or politically powerful group, such as the Han, might have something that could be called an ethnic identity, one would still need to consider the significance of that group’s relative place in political, economic, or other hierarchies.

In short, ethnicity as defined here acknowledges a link between power and identity; but it is not so simple or straightforward, and rejects any implicit inverse relation between ethnic identity and access to power or prestige. History shows, it seems, that the powerful are as capable of rousing ethnic sentiments among their number in the defense of privilege as the weak are in the protest of it; and that the ruled are as liable to find themselves the objects of ethnic classification schemes conceived by their rulers as the latter are of seeing the terms of their own identity shaped and limited by the governing institutions they purport to control.

WHICH OTHER?

To propose, as above, that ethnicity is created transactionally is to say that it emerges only when there is interaction between two groups. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the group presently calling itself the Han is no exception to this general rule, the question then arises, Who is (or was) the Other to the Han Self? Seeking an answer to this question must be regarded as an important part of developing a critical approach to the study of the formation of Han identity. We know that the popular idea of a China cut off from the world, hiding behind walls great and small, is an utter myth. China, or what would later become China, has known many Others.¹⁶ Conversely, many Others have known China—or perhaps we should say, “many Chinas,” lest we be suspected of positing an essentialized, unchanging “China” through time. Not being separated by impassable natural barriers, interaction on or near Central States territory between peoples on all sides, living different lifestyles, speaking different languages, and possessing wholly different cultures was an integral part of their lived experience for all of recorded history, and no doubt for much of the period before that, before we can even begin to speak in terms of “China.” Thus the earliest opportunities for ethnic formation are lost in the very distant past, though what little we can glean about this seems to suggest an extended process of amalgamation and acculturation that eventually produced something recognizably “Chinese,” called by various names, most commonly *Hua*.

Among China’s various Others, the most important in terms of understanding the story of Han ethnogenesis have been nomadic pastoralists living north of the Central Plains, in early times known in the Chinese language most familiarly as *Hu*, and by other names as well, such as *Fan*, *Yi*, and *Lu*. As I attempt to show, the initial work to transform *Han* from a political to an ethnic term was done by the *Hu*, and the further development of the term owed much to its use by later *Hu* groups. While the basic trajectory of the story is fairly straightforward—the label *Han* starts out as a political designation and ends up an ethnonym—this development was anything but. In fact, it was quite tortuous, owing in no small part to a deep and irreconcilable division among Chinese elites as to who could become like them (i.e., the *Hua*) and whether such people could legitimately claim, as many did, to hold the Mandate of Heaven. For these reasons, the evolution of the name *Han* is closely intertwined with China’s political and intellectual history, especially concerning issues having to do with defining who and what the “Chinese” and “China” were, and with

the historical relationship between Central States dwellers and the people living to the north, a notoriously ambiguous relationship that became more fraught over time.

To avoid being dismissed as nonsense (in the usual, colloquial, meaning of *hushuo*), the claim that *Han* was a Hu proposition must immediately be qualified by the insistence that the Hu alone could not have accomplished this construction. Two parties were required to pull it off, the Hu and the Hua, that is, the future Han.¹⁷ (I address below the question of why *Han*, not *Hua*, came to be an ethnic categorization, while *Hua* continued to function as a broader ethnocultural category.) *Han* began to be used as a label for Central States people in the fourth century, during the Northern Wei (386–534). Over approximately the next millennium, *Han* evolved into a kind of ethnic supersign, as the interaction between the inhabitants of the Central States and the inhabitants of the territories on its northern borders led to its adoption by the Han themselves. The term was variously employed in the Tang and Song, and used with different meanings again under the Liao, Jin, and Yuan, until by the Ming *Han* had begun to acquire something like its modern meaning, in that it had become a single referent for southern and northern Chinese alike. Even then, however, the term remained somewhat in flux, as is borne out by the creation of the *Hanjin* identity category in the Qing, or the various proposals put forth in the early twentieth century that aimed to define who the Han really were. Ultimately, the process of generating Han can be seen as one that permitted the bridging of the long-standing divide between north and south. In other words, the emergence of the Han as a single ethnic group was not so much the basis for Chinese unity as a consequence of it.

Given the complexity of these various issues and the long time span involved, there is not the space to do more than outline the case. I will therefore focus on the early stages of the process of Han ethnogenesis—understood here in the strict sense of the evolution of the label *Han*—during the Northern Wei and succeeding northern dynasties prior to the establishment of the Sui (581–618), with briefer treatment of the term's changing meanings up to the Ming, when usage appears to have stabilized.

INITIAL MOVES FROM HUA TO HAN

The name *Han*, as is well known, derives from the Han River (Hanshui), which flows from modern Shaanxi through to Hubei, where it joins the Yangzi at Wuhan. It became the name of the state founded by Liu Bang (256? 247?–195 B.C.E.), known after its successful reunification of the old

Qin empire as the Han dynasty, and which, according to conventional dating, lasted from 206 B.C.E. until 220 C.E., with a brief interregnum between 9 and 24 C.E.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, the first historical references to *Hanren* are found during this period, and they are abundant. However, examination of these references makes it quite clear that *Han* was purely a dynastic referent: *Hanren* meant the “people of Han,” the subjects of the Han emperor, with no reference to culture, descent, language, or anything we might understand as indicating ethnic identity. Historians are mostly in agreement on this point: *Han* originated in the Han period but as a political identifier, not an ethnonym. Other words existed that carried a sense of the group’s cultural self-definition—most especially *Zhongguo*, *Hua*, *Zhonghua*, and *Xia* (often used in combination, e.g., *Huaxia*), all of which could be combined with *ren* (person) and which enjoyed high classical associations—but not *Han*.¹⁹ After the fall of the Han in the early third century, then, those terms persisted, while *Hanren* largely fell out of use, replaced instead by *Weiren*, *Jinren*, *Wuren* (people of Wei, etc.). The only people who remained *Hanren* were the subjects of the rump Han state that arose in Sichuan.²⁰ Amid this political flux, the term that perhaps enjoyed the greatest favor as an ethnicized autonym was, it seems, *Hua*.²¹

The revival of the term *Hanren*, and its earliest use with a meaning synonymous with *Huaren* or *Zhongguo ren*, seems to have occurred under the Sārbi (Xianbei) rulers of the state of Wei, known to history as the Northern Wei. As is well known, the ruling clan, the Tabgach (Tuoba), were from the north, outside the Hua ecumene. The Sārbi pastoral economy and daily customs were close to those of the Xiongnu, the old nemesis of the Han, and their language, what we have been able to recover of it, was proto-Turkic, with Mongolic elements.²² In short, the Northern Wei, one of a number of northern regimes, represented the resurgence of Hu power in the Period of Disunity that followed the collapse of the Three Kingdoms—a resurgence commonly and tellingly described in traditional Chinese historiography as “the five Hu disordering China” (*wuhu luanhua*)—a phrase invented by southern writers unhappy with this turn of events.

To meet the challenge of ruling a large part of *Zhongguo* (also called *Zhongtu* or *Zhongyuan*), the historical Hua heartland, the Northern Wei ruler Xiaowen (r. 471–99) adopted a policy of wholesale acculturation, moving the capital south to Luoyang, promoting the wearing of Chinese-style clothing, changing Sārbi names to Chinese names, embracing the literary heritage of the Central Plains, and advocating intermarriage between Chinese and Sārbi.²³ At the same time, some Central Plains dwellers who remained (many families had fled to the south) acculturated the other

direction, wearing Sārbi clothing and embracing military careers rather than depending on noble connections in earning their livelihoods.²⁴ A distinct northern culture arose as a result of this synthesis, characterized, among other things, by the patronage of Buddhism, which was adopted earlier and more universally among Sārbi than among Chinese, even those in the north.²⁵ The result, as more than one scholar has observed, was a kind of “hybrid vigor” that reflected as much the sinicization of the Hu as it manifested what I would propose calling the “borealization” of the Hua.²⁶ Such hybridity is amply attested, for example, in the tomb art of the period, which shows how fluid the boundaries were between “Chinese” and “foreign” styles.²⁷

Under these conditions of confidence and prosperity, Northern Wei emperors conceived the plan of expanding beyond the Central Plain southward, to reconstitute a greater empire and reunify the world, that is, *tianxia*. To do this, however, required considerable political leverage. The chief disadvantage they faced was that, even in the eyes of many of their own subjects—not to mention southerners, for whom the “barbarian” North had taken on the appearance of a cold, forbidding, and distant foreign country, at least to judge from how they wrote about it in their poetry²⁸—the Northern Wei regime remained, despite broad evidence of acculturation, alien and mistrusted. At least some (it is impossible to say how many, especially since we know that many Chinese officials actually took Sārbi surnames)²⁹ leading Northern Wei Chinese elites shared the general attitudes of people such as Jiang Tong and chafed at Sārbi rule, leading to political insecurities on both sides.³⁰ It was in part out of a desire to address these issues—and not owing to an irresistible urge to “become Chinese,” as so much thinking on sinification might suggest—that Xiaowen promulgated his acculturationist policies, which were part of a larger effort to reshape thinking about the empire. The move was based in part on a selective reinterpretation of the classics, whereby the ethnic exclusivism found in such texts as the *Zuozhuan* was downplayed in favor of the sort of cultural universalism prevalent in such texts as the *Mencius*, whereby the possibility is admitted that the Other can become civilized, can become part of Zhongguo, if by their actions they manifest virtue and righteousness.³¹ Hence the Northern Wei adoption of the *Rites of Zhou* should be seen as a consciously archaizing maneuver.³²

A key element of this universalizing program was to find a proper place for the Sārbi in a Chinese world. Beginning with Emperor Xiaowen, Northern Wei rulers employed the terms *Hu* and *Hua* carefully, aiming to stress the pre-Han significations of each term. With respect to *Hua*,

the idea seems to have been to shift its meaning away from the narrower, quasi-ethnic sense it had acquired since the Han back to a more general meaning that included all who lived in the Central Plains and the lands surrounding them. As for *Hu*, this was a term that the Northern Wei scrupulously avoided using to describe itself;³³ from the Sārbi point of view, *Hu* were *other* Others, less civilized and deserving of a lower place in the hierarchy. Their establishment of a “Barbarians’ Hostel” (*siyiguan*) in Luoyang was one sign of this attitude: an acknowledgment of the existence of a difference between *Hua* and *Yi*, and an assertion that they, the Northern Wei, belonged to the world of *Hua*, even if they had not been part of the original Han order.

The fact was that the conquest and permanent occupation of the Central Lands by Northerners in the medieval period greatly complicated any project of imperial restoration, since any such reunification could not be accomplished on the pretext of a restoration of the Han. That world lay in the past: the last attempt, in the early 400s, quickly failed.³⁴ Instead, the reimagining of a Greater Chinese world required a reconceptualization of empire and political legitimacy in the old Han geographic heartland that was not predicated on the old Han order—an epoch-making moment that, distant in the past though it is, may still be recognized as “a vital prelude to the formation of the modern Chinese nation-state.”³⁵ The inspiration for this reconceptualization lay in the pre-Qin corpus of historical commentaries, in which *Hua* remained a culturally defined category. This had obvious appeal to the Tabgach, who “had begun to form a consciousness of *Zhonghua* that was distinct from a worldview that had Han at its center.”³⁶ The success of this enlarged vision of empire required not only resolving the lingering tension between *Hu* and *Hua* but also dissolving the identification between the terms *Hua* (which was meant to apply to all civilized men and women) and *Zhongguo ren* (which applied only to those who originally hailed from the Central Plains and their descendants). Since Sārbi, like *Zhongguo ren*, also wanted to make a claim to belong to the civilized world of the *Hua*, a different word was needed to describe that latter group, the Chinese living under Northern rule: one that differentiated the two, not according to region and not according to their place as either “barbarian” or “civilized” people but according to original descent (real or putative), language, dress, and custom. That word was *Han*.

Though they have not done as much with the information as they might have, historians have known for a very long time that *Han* as a name for the Chinese—that is, a name for *Zhongguo ren*, not a name for the subjects of the Han dynasty—surfaced as early as the sixth century.³⁷ It

appears a number of times in contemporary histories, such as the *Weishu*, *Nanqi shu*, *Beiqi shu*, and the *Beishi*, as in these examples:

The emperor said, "Commander Gao [Ang] wants to use solely Han men, but I am afraid they will not be able to complete the job. We should separate out a thousand or so Sārbi troops to intersperse among them. What do you think?"³⁸

Now if you take me to be your commander, things will be different than before. There will be no maltreatment of Han and no violations of military orders. Decisions of life and death will be left to me. Then I will agree [to be your commander].³⁹

It is apparent here that *Han'er*, "man of Han," means inhabitants of the Central Plains, that is, Chinese. *Hanren* also shows up in a discussion of Buddhism in the *Weishu*:

From now on, if anyone dares to serve the Hu gods by making statues of clay and bronze, they will be executed along with their entire family. Although they are said to be Hu gods, when you ask Hu people today, they say they have no such gods. This [the spread of Buddhism] all owes to those Han scoundrels of former times, Liu Yuanzhen and Lü Boqiang and their followers, who invoked the absurd sayings of those Hu beggars [i.e., Buddhists], embellished by the falsehoods of Laozi and Zhuangzi. None of it is true.⁴⁰

In his study of the emergence of the ethnonym *Han*, Shaoyun Yang has found other evidence to suggest that Northern Wei literati were aware of this meaning of *Han* and that they used it in speaking about their language, that is, as *Hanyu*.⁴¹ Certainly this was the impression held by scholars during the Song dynasty. In *Zizhi tongjian*, Sima Guang refers to the wish of the Northern Wei ruler to remove the crown prince because "he is no longer like us and has taken on the qualities of the Han." In his commentary, Hu Sanxing (1230–1302) explained to the reader, "The Xianbei called the people of the Central Country 'Han.'"⁴²

So it seems that the adoption of *Han* as a term for "the Chinese" was indeed well under way by the mid-sixth century. By virtue of these semantic shifts, *Hua* could also not conveniently be used by northerners to talk about Chinese in the south, so a new word, *Nanren* (Southerner), was introduced around this same time as a means of speaking about them.⁴³ Southerners, on the other hand, continued to refer to themselves freely as *Hua* and to nomads (former nomads, really), as *Yi*; the term *Beiren* (Northerner) also emerged, but as a purely regional referent, applicable to anyone, Chinese or Sārbi.⁴⁴ The long life enjoyed by all these words,

which remained part of the Chinese political vocabulary for centuries, is testament to the fundamental divide between north and south, a divide eventually papered over by *Han*.

The quotation from the *Weishu* cited above, in particular the phrase *qianshi Han ren*, offers a clue as to the transformation of the term *Han*. One possible understanding of this phrase is that it means “a Han person of a former age,” that is, a former Han subject. However, since the figure of Liu Zhenyuan mentioned in the passage is identifiable as a Buddhist monk of the late fourth century, he was clearly not alive during the Han and therefore not a former Han subject. One is therefore led to conclude that *Hanren* here is an ethnic, not a political, label, an attempt by the author to draw attention to the fact that while Buddhism was originally a teaching of the Hu it was propagated by non-Hu followers such as Liu, who were manifestly *Hanren*, that is, Chinese. One imagines that the habit of referring to the Chinese as *Hanren*, “people of the Han,” remained in use in at least some circles and led to the kind of shorthand we see here, where it came to refer to latter-day descendants of former Han subjects who obviously no longer owed any political allegiance to the Han but were connected in other ways (descent, language, residence, custom) with people who had lived under the Han.

As we have few attestations of *Hanren* being used in this way before this time, it is difficult to know among which circles this habit may have been sustained. At a minimum, however, these citations make clear that distinguishing between *Hu* and *Hua*—or, from the point of view of the Northern Wei, distinguishing between *Sārbi* and *Han* within the *Hua* ecumene—was everyday practice. It may have been the continuation of old practice: Just as *Rum* and *Frank* continued to be widely used in the Arab world to refer to regimes of Asia Minor and Europe, respectively, long after the demise of the Roman and Frankish empires, so *Sārbi* people simply carried over the custom of referring to Central States people as *Han*.⁴⁵ They did add a disrespectful twist, it seems, since the term *Han'er* is generally regarded as having carried pejorative connotations.⁴⁶ And after all, ethnic groups often name each other in not very complimentary ways. The terminological evolution we observe in the north in the fifth and sixth centuries is, by this logic, a “natural” outcome of the intensified interaction between peoples who, on both sides, saw themselves as quite different from each other and were poised in distinctly unequal relationships. We can think of *Hu* (or the much more offensive *Lu* or *Yi*) as Chinese names for the Northern Other, while *Han* (or the less complimentary *Han'er*) was the *Sārbi* name for the local Other in the Central Lands. We should also expect that the *Sārbi* had

another name, in the Särbi language, for the Chinese, which name corresponded to *Han*.⁴⁷ Indeed, early on the need to communicate in the Chinese language may well have suggested the need to find a suitable corresponding term, with *Han* emerging as the most obvious choice.

Northern dominance over the centuries, and the switch by elites to exclusive use of the Chinese language, assured the rise of the ethnonym *Han*. But the Northern Wei attempt to reframe the discourse of “civilization” was only partially successful, and they certainly never managed to reunify the world, a task that fell to the Sui and the Tang—not coincidentally, both states that, like the Northern Wei, had strong connections to the world beyond *tianxia*, that is, to the northern steppe. If one can make a judgment on the basis of the use of terms in the dynastic histories, it seems that *Hanren* was not very widely used in the Sui. There are only three occurrences of the word in the *Suishu*, all clearly associated with stories from the Han period; when the meaning was “Chinese,” it seems, *Hua* remained the word of choice.⁴⁸ *Hua* continued in use in the Tang and the Five Dynasties period, but *Hanren* in the meaning of Chinese came to be used with increasing frequency, usually in a pairing with *Fan*.⁴⁹ This same use continued under the Song, when Ma Yongqing, writing in the early twelfth century, could simply remark, “the Yi and Di today call the Chinese ‘Han.’”⁵⁰ Yet the situation was not so simple, and *Han* did not stabilize nearly so quickly. Nor was it universally applied. As in earlier periods, it was at least as common to refer to people as *Tangren* (men of the Tang) or *Songren* (men of the Song) as it was to refer to them as *Hanren*; but when *Hanren* was used, it did not mean “men of the Han.” It meant “Chinese.” The tendency seems to have been to turn to this word when the subject at hand required drawing attention to ethnic or “national” distinctions that otherwise remained unsaid, whether because they were unimportant or because they were obvious.⁵¹ But beginning in the tenth century, *Han* took on new meanings that considerably exceeded those it had acquired up to that time. To some degree, one can characterize this as the unfolding of a bifurcated discourse, whereby on the one hand administrative exigencies prompted the assignation of the label upon new groups, usually politically defined, while on the other hand the memory of the earlier meaning of *Han* for “the Chinese” persisted, especially in popular usage.

HANREN AND NANREN IN THE LIAO, JIN, AND YUAN

The employment of the terms *Han* and *Hanren* in the cismural states (or “conquest dynasties”) of Liao, Jin, and Yuan, is much better known and

more widely studied than it is in preceding periods, in part because historians in the Qing took an interest in the matter beginning in the eighteenth century.⁵² The major reorganization of identity categories occasioned by the dramatic political shifts of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries suggests that there were significant incongruencies with preceding as well as later norms.⁵³ It is important to be mindful of such discrepancies and of the ways in which notions of who was and was not “Chinese” depart from modern expectations. These incongruencies appear particularly obvious in the meanings assigned to *Han* by the Liao, Jin, and Yuan regimes anxious to impose greater legibility over local populations newly brought under their control.

According to one recent scholar, early in the dynasty the Liao began to use *Han'er* to describe ethnic Chinese whether or not they were Liao subjects. Later on they discriminated more carefully, using *Hanren* or *Han'er* only for former Song subjects whom they had captured and brought under their authority.⁵⁴ At this time, it appears that *Han'er*, which was in fairly common use, lacked the negative meaning it had once had; moreover, the word was routinely used by Song officials in their communication with Liao officials to refer to Chinese subjects of the Khitan ruler and by Song writers describing the activities of ethnic Chinese at the Liao court, though *Hanren* is seen, too.⁵⁵ (*Hanren* is much more common in the *Liaoshi* than *Han'er*, the latter being totally absent in the *Songshi*.) As for Song, they regarded the Liao *Han'er* as little better than the Khitan themselves, and often lumped them all together as *Fan* or, less offensively, *Beiren*, “Northerners.”⁵⁶

Thus in the Liao usage of *Han* and its variants there is a perceptible “northward creep,” as the word that was previously applicable to all Song subjects came to be used in a more restricted sense for just those Song subjects living under Liao rule, or for Song subjects dealing directly with the Liao. This development was carried further in the Jin, and then the Yuan. When the Jin defeated the Liao and drove back the Song armies, according to the treaty of 1142 they also took over those territories north of the Huai River that had once belonged to Song, meaning that, in addition to the Chinese population concentrated around Yan (the Liao Southern capital, modern Beijing), they administered another sizable group living in modern Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, and parts of Shaanxi. In these altered circumstances, the new Jin rulers continued Liao usage by calling the Chinese subjects of the Liao they inherited (i.e., the descendants of former Song subjects who were now former Liao subjects) *Hanren*, and sometimes *Yanren*, but former Song subjects who had *not* been part of the

Liao were called *Nanren*.⁵⁷ This distinction, which was quite clearly maintained, made for an even further narrowing of the meaning of *Han*, which excluded them from the category *Zhongguo ren*.⁵⁸ The overwhelmingly preferred term for the Chinese living under Song rule was, in a pattern we have seen before, *Songren*.⁵⁹ *Nanren* and *Hanren* were differentiated not just by the Jin regime but by the Song government as well: *Hanren* refugees from the north who returned to Song territory were classified separately as *guizheng ren*. Zhu Xi explained the difference as follows:

Guizheng people are those who were originally from the Central Plain and who fell under barbarian [rule] but then returned to the Central Plain; they have escaped wickedness and returned to rectitude.⁶⁰

From this, it seems clear that, whereas from the modern perspective one would instinctively tend to see all these people as “Chinese,” in the Song the *guizheng ren* were viewed as belonging to a slightly different group. Once again, as in the Northern Wei, the fact of Northern rule had forced a redefinition of who the *Han* were.

Further complications were introduced in the Yuan period, particularly after the fall of the Song in 1279, when the Mongols assumed control over all of China proper. Much has been written about the Yuan status system, with its four categories: Mongol, *Semu* (Central Asian), *Hanren*, and *Nanren*. It is the last two categories that really interest us here. The basic division between them depended, as before, on who was on which side before military conquest brought about a political reorientation. Thus *Hanren* in the Yuan included all those who had been *Hanren* or *Han'er* in the Liao and Jin plus those who had been *Nanren* in the Jin (Yuan *Nanren* were former Song subjects now under the sway of the Mongol khan).⁶¹ But *Hanren* meant more than just this: It included essentially *everyone* who had been a Jin subject. This meant an assortment of at least eight different groups—including Khitans, Jurchens, Bohai, Koguryo, and the old *Hanren*—a conglomeration that was totally at odds with previous interpretations of *Han*. As such it conveyed more forcefully than ever before the idea that *Han* was a fungible and capacious term that could be expanded according to administrative need—such needs, after all, being the primary motive behind classifying populations in the first place—and lacked any firm ethnic connotations. We can say, I think, that for the Mongols, *Han* was synonymous with *Beiren*, “Northerner.” It was a supra-ethnic rubric, reminiscent of the encompassing category *Hua* introduced by the Northern Wei, except that, unlike *Hua*, it did not include everyone in the empire; there were limits, and former Southern Song subjects were outside

those limits (as were, of course, Mongols and Semu, too). In sum, then, in the Yuan, *Nanren* meant “Chinese” and *Hanren* meant “Northerner.” Had Yuan rule lasted longer, or had the Mongols not defeated the Song, it is conceivable that Chinese people today would be calling themselves the “*Nanzu*” or “*Songzu*.”

THE UNIFICATION OF THE HAN

The reassertion of southern political power in the shape of the Ming dynasty overturned once and for all the onomastic conventions of the Yuan world. Mongols and Semu were banished from the realm, as was—nominally, anyway—everything to do with the *Hu* (as the Mongols were frequently called by their Chinese enemies, reviving a term that had all but disappeared from use by the fifteenth century). Led by a former *Nanren*, Zhu Yuanzhang, the Ming, as is well known, championed a chauvinistic cause to defame the Mongols and gain legitimacy for himself.⁶² He had a difficult job, especially in the northern territories, which had not been part of “China” for at least two hundred and in some cases three hundred years. The local population had acculturated along the lines of a northern cultural synthesis, and it is open to question if they thought of themselves as “Chinese”—that is, in the sense of being *Zhongguo ren* as we mean it today—at all. To what degree the categories imposed by the Yuan for administrative purposes had come to affect individual identities is something we know little about and deserves further study. In any event, it must have been quite disorienting to northerners to discover that *Hanren* suddenly meant not just them but all the *Nanren*, too, whose speech they could not understand and various of whose customs differed quite considerably from their own.

Apart from the various military challenges that confronted him, the main task that lay before Zhu was to unify the country, not just in the sense of bringing all the provinces of China proper under his control, but more important in the sense of reintegrating Northerners and Southerners into a single group. Various ideological tools lay at his disposal, which have been exhaustively studied, but one way of going about this task that has not been much dwelt on was the deployment in the Ming of a single ethnonym, *Han*, for everyone in north and south alike.⁶³ *Nanren* might have been chosen for this, but the Han imperial model was one that Zhu consciously followed; plus, using this name would potentially make it easier for him to draw in the north, which to him was essentially alien territory. The Mongols had prepared the way by pushing a broadening of *Han* a

century earlier; now Zhu was broadening it yet again in one direction—by expanding *Han* to include Southerners—and tightening it in another—by excluding Mongols, Semu, and those in the *Hanren* group who had not been Song subjects, or who were as yet insufficiently acculturated (or motivated) to claim that identity. While usage in the early years of the Ming seems to have vacillated between Yuan and Ming norms, within a generation or so Jurchens and Khitans and Bohai and other Yuan-era *Hanren* were *Hanren* no longer, and a general identification reached between the Ming realm, the Central Lands (i.e., “China,” *Zhongguo*),⁶⁴ the “Chinese” (*Zhongguo ren*), and *Hanren*. A more detailed review of this process (beyond the scope of this chapter) would show how the situation eventually returned roughly to that of eight hundred years before, with *Hanren* reverting to mean “Chinese” in an ethnic sense. In the establishment of a kind of equivalence between *Han* and *Hua*—the later term enjoying very broad use in the Ming—we see the closing of the distance between ethno-cultural and political-administrative terms. A further adumbration of the term along these lines occurs in the seventeenth century, when *Han* was used as an ethno-administrative classification applied to the Chinese forces fighting with the Manchus, the so-called *Hanjun*.⁶⁵

I would close with two main points. First, I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter that we cannot refer unproblematically to the “Han” before the fifteenth century, nor can we assume that we are dealing with one people or a geographic center continually occupied by any such group. For these reasons, it is very difficult to argue that the putative unity of the “Han people” as such was a factor in maintaining the Chinese empire on the old Qin-Han model. If the story presented here is approximately correct, it is probably sounder historically to regard the common identity shared by *Hanren* today very much as an early modern artifact, the result of the Ming imperial enterprise, made urgent because of, and enabled by, the persistent occupation of significant parts of the Central Lands by Northern Others and the repeated challenge they threw down as to who the *Hua* or *Han* were.

The second point is simply to emphasize that the evolution of the term *Han* is by no means linear. I have focused here on the twists and turns taken by *Han* before the Ming. This convention of naming remained subject to further change in the Qing and later periods, however, owing, among other things, to the dramatic expansion of the borders of the empire under the Qing beyond those of the “Central Lands” and the renewed prominence of non-Chinese populations in national politics. As I hope to

have shown, the incongruencies raised in later imperial times were by no means new, and the difficult and sometimes contradictory negotiations that continue today between being “Han” and being “Chinese” are but the latest twist in a historical process stretching back to the sixth century, a process in which now, as then, the Other has played a role that is, in every sense, critical.

9. From Subjects to Han

The Rise of Han as Identity in Nineteenth-Century Southwest China

C. Patterson Giersch

Most Chinese today are Han, but what is “Han” and how did this come to be a powerful political category and ethnic identity? This chapter takes a historical approach to the problem, attempting to analyze why Han ethnicity became salient in Qing-era Yunnan Province only during the nineteenth century. In its most provocative form, the chapter’s argument is simple: despite the fact that millions had migrated from central China (*neidi*) to the Southwest during the Ming and early Qing periods, there were no Han in Yunnan until the nineteenth century.

The validity of this statement rests on a number of theoretical assumptions, supported by a range of documentary evidence. First, the theory. To claim that there were Han in Yunnan, we need to demonstrate that Han ethnicity was salient enough to organize people’s thoughts and actions. In other words, there must be a demonstrable sense of ethnic consciousness or, in Stevan Harrell’s formulation, “a sense of relatedness as a people.”¹ Both Harrell and Mark Elliott, who has articulated the usefulness of using ethnicity for understanding Qing China, propose that certain cultural practices and alleged common descent provide that sense of solidarity. As Elliott defines it, ethnicity is the “social organization and political assertion of difference that is perceived to inhere in culturally bounded descent-based categories.”² As such, ethnicity is a historical construction, not a primordial category, and it is created under certain historical conditions. It follows that specific ethnic formulations, including Han, need not be a constant. In addition to emphasizing ethnic consciousness’s historical construction, both Harrell and Elliott define it as transactional or oppositional in nature. Ethnicity is produced through intergroup contact, often under conditions of competition. The ethnic group uses its perception of shared culture—reinforced through rituals, common myths, and so on—

to mobilize in times of competition with other groups. It is an identity that requires the marking of boundaries by one group *and* their recognition by at least one other group. When speaking of the Han in Yunnan, then, we need to be prepared to demonstrate the existence of (1) conditions of competition; (2) the mobilization of a Han social group—identified by both insiders and outsiders—through rituals, institutions, and myths; and (3) the recognition and use of the Han ethnonym.

As we will see, this is more difficult than we might imagine, for the people of the Southwest often thought to be Han were much more likely to be labeled according to and to create institutions and communities that relied on native-place identities, not a collective Han identity. At this point it is helpful to note that the most compelling theories of collective identity suggest that humans often harbor multiple identity commitments, some more salient than others. Salience, moreover, is subject to change, and the level of commitment to one identity may increase due to external contingencies, such as the rise of intergroup competition.³ Based on these assumptions, it is quite possible for Han identity to be salient at one time period, or in one part of the empire, but to be latent, or nonexistent, at a later period or in another part of the empire. In other words, the salience of Han identity need not be a linearly dependent or spatially all-encompassing historical variable, always increasing in comparison to other identities or having an impact on all geographic regions.

If ethnicity is constituted through contact and competition, and if its salience might wax and wane, then we need to be clear about when and where Han identity was operative. We also need to understand how it might be constituted, particularly because it represents a majority identity, meaning that many disparate groups—Cantonese, Sichuanese, Hunanese, and others—have to be knit together to share such an identity. Since Han is a majority identity, it is helpful to turn to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and its offshoot, Whiteness Studies, to identify broader issues that might influence majority group identity formation.

Critical Race Theory is both a diverse intellectual field (much of it devoted to analyses of race and U.S. law) and a movement against inequality and racism. In summing up this complex area of research, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic have argued that CRT's crucial contributions have been to reveal how the differences between white and nonwhite are significant and reinforced through everyday actions woven into the fabric of American institutions and life.⁴ As such, CRT clearly occupies a space in the academy and society that makes it specific to the United States. In particular, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century American preoccupa-

tion with biological difference (race) made their approaches to identity somewhat, but not entirely, different from Qing China, where cultural practice and genealogy were stressed.

Nevertheless, some CRT findings may provide points of comparison for those working on identity, law, and inequality in China. Historians have made major contributions to CRT through the subfield of “critical white studies,” helping to map the creation of whiteness as a constructed social identity. Since the early years of the American Republic, the concept of whiteness has fluctuated, based on historical contingencies, but the general trend has been expansion to include new groups and individuals. While the somewhat linear nature in which Americans have expanded whiteness differs from the more complex fluctuations found in the history of Han-ness, there is one characteristic that both categories share: much like the Han, white Americans are an amalgam of peoples from backgrounds once considered distinct. One of the seminal works, Matthew Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color*, adopts the basic CRT assumption that races are not born but made. Jacobson examines the circumstances under which American definitions of whiteness expanded (ca. 1790 to 1960s), finding that the crucial historical processes driving these changes included state definitions of citizenship, large-scale movements of people (Celtic, Slavic, Mediterranean immigration; the northern migration of African Americans), and intellectual trends (from scientific racism to early anthropology). A variety of contingent developments, for example, caused Americans to first see immigrants from places such as Ireland and Italy as separate races but in the twentieth century to gradually acknowledge these people as white. Jacobson’s concern with identifying the processes by which Irish and others became white is shared by other scholars, including David Roediger.⁵

The concept of a constructed majority race is nothing new to China scholars, of course. Kai-wing Chow and Dru Gladney, to name two scholars, have written on the construction of a racialized identity (or “Han lineage,” Hanzu) in the period circa 1890–1924. Both scholars note that the construction of a modern Han identity was a major new development, but it was achieved in the context of an existing concept of *Hanren*, or Han people.⁶ But who were these Han people of imperial times? The answer to this question may require complex analysis of the past. Mark Elliott in this volume and Gang Zhao in his conference paper came to differing conclusions about the salience of Han ethnicity during the Ming period. If we evaluate other recent studies, moreover, it becomes even clearer that the effort to understand the historical development of Han is remarkably difficult.

Our efforts to chart the creation of premodern Han identity are still developing, as exemplified by three important recent studies. While earlier scholarship emphasized “culturalism,” the tried and true metaphor for premodern Chinese identity that posits a common loyalty to shared culture (which, in some formulations need not exclude converts born outside the Chinese world), Patricia Ebrey has argued that the “‘we group’ labeled Xia, Hua, or Han” was linked through the myth of shared descent as well. “This ethnic dimension of Chinese identity was rooted in the habit of thinking of the largest we-group in terms of patrilineal kinship, that is, imagining the Hua, Xia, or Han, metaphorically at least, as a giant patrilineal descent group made up of intermarrying surname groups.”⁷ Such an understanding is reflected in lineage construction and rituals, including the tracing of surnames into the remote past. Ebrey’s insights are important because she reveals that myths and rituals, including concepts of common descent, underpinned an ethnic Han identity before the modern period. Yet her approach is not historical in that it does not explain the events or causes of ethnic identity formation. Much like the “culturalism” thesis it purports to challenge and supplement, these ideas reveal a static understanding. While Ebrey certainly demonstrates that for the “huge but vaguely defined category of Han Chinese, descent and kinship provided a framework for grasping the whole in a structured way,”⁸ we are not sure who might do this grasping or under what conditions it might be necessary.

Far more historically grounded is Naomi Standen’s recent book, *Unbounded Loyalty*, which demonstrates how in early tenth-century China “loyalty” was subordinate to neither state nor ethnicity. Stable territorial states did not exist as one regime followed another in rapid succession, and contemporary people did not possess politicized ethnicities. *Kitan* and *Han*, for example, were terms that served as cultural makers (though under Elliott’s definition they may qualify as ethnic markers) but did not necessarily dictate political loyalties; one could be Han and yet serve a Kitan ruler. These circumstances were transformed by centralizing states (Liao and then Song), which clarified political borders and intensified central government control over frontier administrative regions and subjects. By the mid-tenth century, rulers were able to make more permanent the boundaries between South and North, and there emerged an increasing recognition that cultural identity might be linked to political loyalty, with Song sources suggesting that Han people owed their primary loyalty to the South, not to the Kitan Liao in the North. By historicizing loyalty and identity, and identifying the state building and military competition that gave rise to politicized ethnicities, Standen forces readers to recon-

sider how allegiances are chosen and ethnicity becomes politicized. If in the early tenth century the linkage between cultural identity and political loyalty was weak—if ethnicity was not particularly salient to politics because political boundaries were distinct from ethnic boundaries—then we are, perhaps, a step closer to developing the critical tools for analyzing the construction of a politicized Han identity, which emerges here as a resource that could be accessed in times of conflict and competition but one that was not constant throughout imperial history. In the case of Standen's study, however, it is still not clear how *Han* as an ethnic—or, in her words, cultural—category first emerged.⁹

Even if the ethnic concept of Han became politically salient in the borderlands of Song-Liao China, however, it does not seem to have been a stable and consistent identity throughout the Jin, Song, and Yuan periods. As Elliott's chapter and Zhao's paper argue, it was not until the Ming, perhaps, that a concept of Han somewhat similar to the modern understanding emerged,¹⁰ and it was not until the Qing that the ethnically conscious Manchu court frequently used the term *Han* as the oppositional other for its Manchu bannermen.¹¹ In the Northeast, as the Qing state was formed, I am convinced by Elliott's argument that the Jin/Qing founders Nurhaci and Hong Taiji came to think in ethnic terms and conceived of both Jurchen/Manchu and Han (*nikan*) as separate ethnicities linked through descent, geography, language, and shared customs. In slightly later times, it seems that the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong courts were places in which Han and Manchu identities were, at times, rallying points for factional competition. At the elite level, some officials probably found Han identity at least as salient as the broader identity of serving the empire as top ministers.¹² However, Elliott is careful to point out that, outside the court arena, "Manchu-Han antagonism does not leap out of the historical record and that it does not seem that late imperial Chinese society was wholly riven by ethnic strife;"¹³ in fact, the best evidence for ethnic conflicts that were articulated as Manchu-Han seems to come from court sources, Manchus, and elites. Everyday conflicts between bannermen and civilians in the provincial garrisons suggest that Manchus continued to think of the Han as a group, though the evidence is not entirely clear for claiming that the Han felt the same.¹⁴ I take this point to mean that we cannot assume that civilians who confronted bannermen automatically conceived of themselves as participating in a conflict between Manchus and Han. They might have had other collective identities that were more salient, and it is important to articulate when and where people were actually thinking in terms of or acting on a collective Han ethnicity.

Recent work has charted the strategic deployment of Han identity during Ming-Qing times in Guangdong. Writing on Chaolian Xiang, a community on an island in the Pearl River, Liu Zhiwei and Helen Siu have investigated the disappearance of many original inhabitants called the Dan. Rather than being subsumed by migrants from the North (as local genealogies suggest), some Dan seem to have become Han by responding to broad state definitions of “Hanness.” They settled on the land, registered their households, established lineages, and claimed cultural ascendancy by preparing sons for the exams. In doing so, they appropriated the label *Han* for themselves as part of a strategy of local competition that included the type of ritual and descent group creation that Ebrey claimed as crucial to Han identity. Other groups remained on the water living in boats, did not transform themselves in these ways, and thus remained categorized as Dan.¹⁵ The important realization is that Han culture was not brought to the Delta by population migration but was seized upon by locals who created that identity from the ground up rather than having it implemented from the top down. This is interesting work, and Siu and Liu have begun to suggest how certain strata in one part of the empire might appropriate the label *Han* for themselves. In this case, the specific locale and its conditions of competition as well as the mechanisms for claiming Han status were crucial factors. Based on this information, it is quite possible that Han identity became salient in certain parts of the empire at different times, under different circumstances of competition, and that different methods of drawing boundaries were used. The rest of the chapter explores these possibilities in Qing Yunnan.

BORDERLAND SUBJECTS

In the eighteenth century, many areas of South and Southwest China received large influxes of migrants who hailed from central and eastern China (*neidi*, China proper). Many historians of the borderlands, including myself, speak of these migrants as Chinese or Han. Surprisingly, very few Qing officials share our terminology, and, if there were Han in the eighteenth-century South and Southwest, then they seem to have been remarkably infrequent visitors to the discourse of Qing officials, who were charged with controlling these migrants. To the best of my knowledge, this terminological inconsistency was first pointed out by Dan McMahon in his work on the Miao of Hunan.¹⁶ McMahon cautioned against a simplistic understanding of the Miao frontier, even during the Miao revolts of 1795–97, as one divided by basic ethnic identities and conflicts (a concern that

echoes much of the work on Taiwan, the South, and the Southwest), and he noted that few Hunan officials, including Yan Ruyi who was quite familiar with the region, used the term *Han* for migrants, preferring instead to use “subjects” or “people” (*min*), “good subjects” (*liangmin*), or “guest subjects” (*kemin*). The term *min*, moreover, was sometimes applied to Miao or others who were clearly not culturally Chinese.¹⁷ Donald Sutton has challenged McMahon’s understanding of the Miao revolts, arguing that in 1795 the Miao rebel leaders were mobilizing Miao compatriots to consciously target Han people for occupying Miao lands. For them, Sutton points out, this truly was an ethnic conflict, and, writing against primordialist and ahistorical notions of identity, Sutton compellingly suggests that Miao cohesiveness was structured by decades of evolving competition with migrants, mobility and kinship formation, patterns of worship, and the experience of being treated differently by the Qing state.¹⁸ While Sutton’s evidence for the origins of Miao ethnicity is clear, there is little discussion of Han identity. It is noted that migrants and their descendants were “not divided by conflict before, during, or after the revolt” and that their unity seems to have emerged from decades of joint exploitation of Miao resources,¹⁹ but missing from this analysis are clear examples of “a sense of relatedness” and its origins, the cultural markers used to assert difference from others, and the mechanisms for group mobilization. Did the migrant families think of themselves as Han? If so, how did they mobilize and reinforce that identity through ritual or perceptions of shared descent and culture?

Histories of the borderlands often seem to assume an a priori ethnic consciousness for frontier “Han.” But the question remains: In regions of large-scale migration, when and how (if at all) did some groups come to construct or deploy a Han identity? If they acted as an ethnic group, did they bring this capability with them? Or did they create it anew in ways that are similar to the Guangdong case? This question will require more research, but my work on Yunnan suggests that the second situation—invention or re-creation in novel ways (by both migrants and some indigenous peoples)—will be the more accurate response.

In many of the archival documents I reviewed for my work on the Yunnan frontier, Qing officials often referred to migrants or those under direct imperial administration (as opposed to those under indigenous client rulers) as a collective group, but the selected terms tended to be “migrants” (*keren*, *kezhong*), “subjects” (*min*, *minren*), or “subjects from the interior” (*neidi minren*). These people were sometimes identified as different from and perhaps pitted against other groups, which were sometimes labeled with

specific names such as Woni, Baiyi, Kucong, or Luoluo but in many other instances—despite the acknowledged diversity of Yunnan’s peoples—were lumped together and referred to simply as *yi* (or equivalents such as *fan*, *fanyi*, or *manyi*), which is a term that is often translated as “barbarian” and, in the Southwest context, connotes geographic and cultural distance from the imperial center and its Confucian practices.²⁰ However, it was not unusual for *yi* peoples to be identified as subjects, either by officials such as Yue Zhongqi, who sympathized with the subjects under the control of notorious tribal chieftains in the Liangshan region of Sichuan-Yunnan, or by *yi* themselves. Much like Hunan’s Gelao people, who claimed to be *min* (while also recognizing a cohesive Gelao identity),²¹ the Bairen of western Yunnan referred to themselves as *min* households (*minjia*). The terms *subject* and *migrant*, then, were not necessarily equated with Han, suggesting that the terms might not be associated with specific lifeways or cultures; they probably were not terms that referred to groups who developed cohesive cultural boundaries. Instead, for state officials, these were primarily administrative terms that differentiated certain groups who were to be governed by imperial officials (*liuguan*), relying on the Qing Code, whereas *yi* subjects (*yimin*) were administered according to their customs by indigenous leaders recognized by the state as “native officials” (*tusi*).²²

Of particular interest, I think, is that someone such as E’ertai, one of the Yongzheng emperor’s favorite officials, rarely used the term *Han* in his reports from the Southwest. Like other bannermen, E’ertai was well aware of the possibilities for Han collective identity, and, upon his return to court after his southwestern stint, he was at the center of court discussions about Manchu and Han factionalism under two different emperors.²³ Since E’ertai certainly knew Han when he saw them, he must not have seen them in Yunnan for he rarely referred to Han in his reports, preferring to employ the terms mentioned above or to identify migrants by home province.²⁴ Overall, E’ertai infrequent references to Han suggest that he did not consider Han identity to be important in the Southwest. Other officials apparently agreed.

This is not to say that E’ertai or others *never* employed the term *Han* in their reports. At one point, E’ertai referred to merchants in southern Yunnan as *Hanmin*, or Han subjects; the context of his reference was a discussion of miasma (*zhang*) levels in the Tea Hills of southern Yunnan.²⁵ And the most frequent references to Han were to those criminals who crossed into *yi* areas. These were the notorious “Hanjian,” about whom much has been written in terms of noting Qing fears—particularly the Qianlong emperor’s fears—about their penchant for stirring up trouble

among indigenes. While this fear was frequently voiced, *Hanjian* tended to be a stock phrase that described (often imaginary) close interactions between people from the interior and indigenes but did not reflect any sort of commitment to Han identity among the Hanjian themselves. Similarly, officials such as Yue Zhongqi often referred to the armies sent after frontier bandits as “Han tu guanbing” (Han and native officials and troops), meaning that the troops deployed included centrally appointed officials (*liuguan*) leading Green Standard soldiers and native officials (*tuguan, tusi*) leading their militias (*tubing, tulian*).²⁶ Like Hanjian, *Han tu guanbing* was a phrase describing the state’s relationship to the various groups of people involved: imperial (Han) officials and troops were appointed and deployed by the state; native (*tu*) officials and militias were led by hereditary elites, most of whom may have been *yi*, some not. These were not terms that connoted a collective Han identity.

At times, some Yunnanese might employ the concept of being Han in order to influence court policy. I have written about a Yunnan native named Zhang Han, a high official in the censorate in 1742 who challenged the use of native officials in his home region of Shiping. Zhang had grown up with stories of native officials and barbarians oppressing and attacking Shiping’s Han subjects, and he was adamant in believing *yi* to be naturally violent and unfit for rulership. He therefore lobbied the throne to remove hereditary indigenous officials from power.²⁷ While Zhang’s proposal was rejected by Yunnan officials—most specifically by the bannerman Zhang Yunsui—and the throne, Zhang had tapped into the elite, court-centered discourse of Han identity and applied it to what he saw as competition among *yi* and Han for control of the frontier. But his approach to frontier identity was not shared by other elite Yunnanese, suggesting that Han ethnicity was not a common organizing principle in the borderlands. In the 1760s another official, Zhou Yuli, also a native of Yunnan, memorialized his concerns about frontier disturbances to the throne. Zhou had heard through contacts that it was subjects (not foreign bandits) who were leading massive attacks on southern Yunnan (he ended up being quite wrong—it was Burma’s Kon-baung forces). In describing these subjects, Zhou never classified them as Han but identified them instead as “drifters” (*liumin*) from Jiangxi, Huguang, and Yunnan.²⁸

Zhou Yuli, like many officials, tended to focus on identifying migrants and settlers by home province, a designation related to the Qing desire to locate individuals with their place of registration but also a designation that reflected the salience of native-place identities for migrants and native Yunnanese. In describing the booming Yunnan mining industry,

for example, Zhang Yunsui might mention how Han were the ones to open mines because *yi* people (*yiren*) did not have the technical knowledge, but he was also careful to identify the origins of miners—Jiangxi, Huguang, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Shaanxi—because it was these identifications that actually mattered much more: mining teams were organized according to native place, as were some of the living arrangements near the mines.²⁹ Merchants who worked in Yunnan also organized themselves through their native-place associations (*huiguan*).³⁰ As migrants moved into eighteenth-century Yunnan, they created communities and identities that revolved around native place much more than any collective sense of being Han. Thus, the official terms *migrant* and *subject* were not simply unmarked terms that actually referred to Han.

During the eighteenth century, then, the discourse of officialdom rarely used the term *Han*. Instead, officials spoke of subjects or migrants and then qualified this by explaining the native places of those people. This seems to reflect the relative salience of native place and Han identity on the contemporary frontier. Migrants hailed from places of diverse origins, and we should not assume that they shared a group identity. Unlike officials at court or Cantonese elites intent on establishing their power and wealth in the Pearl River Delta, frontier migrants did not reveal a strong commitment to Han identity. Within the frontier environment, moreover, they often faced multiple choices for connecting to others, through intermarriage with indigenes, building native-place connections for business, or participating in the emerging cultural institutions in frontier towns. I believe the Southwest provided relatively complex and diverse environments in which the patterns of cultural change and cross-cultural connections were multifaceted.³¹

Despite this complexity, an important change in official discourse began to emerge in the nineteenth century. Unlike during the eighteenth century, officials increasingly labeled subjects as Han people. Although the use of more neutral terms such as *subject* or *migrant* were still common, officials, for the first time, also began to refer to Han as if they were a cohesive cultural group capable of coordinated actions. An early example comes from the brushes of Yongbao and Wudajing in 1803, the eighth year of Jiaqing.

There are subjects (*minren*) who have gone to *yi* areas (*yidi*) to plow and plant. There are also *yi* people (*yiren*) who are very similar to Han people (*Hanren*) and come to the interior to trade and live. In the past, they have united in marriage; their clothing and headwear styles have become mixed up, and they learn each other's languages. In a little while, it becomes impossible to distinguish the *yi* from the Han.³²

The original provocation for this comment was a case in which *yi* highlanders (Lahu, Wa) in southern Yunnan were learning Chinese (*Hanyu*) and Mahayana scriptures from “Han people,” and this was in turn helping to fuel bloody conflicts between highlanders, Han, and the local Tai elite, who patronized Theravada Buddhism and also sought to control the highlands.³³ While official reports explained the complexity of this conflict, Yongbao and Wudajing also felt compelled to describe Han culture as if it were a cohesive package of language, clothing, headwear, and economic customs that might be adopted by others. In other cases as well, officials surveying the frontier now saw Han where they once saw Yunnanese, Hunanese, Jiangxi people, and Sichuan people, and they increasingly evaluated conflicts over land, for example, as conflicts between Han and *yi* rather than as conflicts between *yi* and specific groups of migrants or subjects.³⁴

Why did this terminology begin to change? Was it merely a product of changes in discourse among officials themselves, or was it a reflection in actual changes in southwestern society? Pamela Crossley’s work suggests that an important source of these changes may lie in the ideologies of the Qianlong court (1736–95), which sought to articulate a genealogically based segregation of its various peoples, including the Han.³⁵ However, the timing of the change in Yunnan, which postdated the Qianlong emperor’s death, suggests that local developments were also important. Working from some of the insights offered by CRT and building from an important set of observations made by David Atwill in *The Chinese Sultanate*, I propose that this change in discourse both reflected and spurred on changes in Yunnan society. In other words, as this society emerged from a century and a half of rapid change, it appears that new methods for social organization led officials to employ the term *Han* to describe groups; this trend was in a dialectical relationship with people’s own claims, as some began to construct and use Han identity. The origins of change lay within a framework of political and social transformation, including Qing policies that sought to clarify and codify its increasing control over the Southwest’s many peoples. Throughout the eighteenth century, as migrants and the state became an increasing presence, there were ongoing projects to categorize peoples, mark territories, and articulate state control over the diverse geographies and communities of the Southwest.³⁶ During this process, the Qing state treated groups of people unequally, while ordinary people developed new strategies for mobilization in the face of increasing economic hardship. The contingent combination of these developments provides clues to the origins of Han consciousness in the Southwest.

EMERGENCE OF HAN

Qing emperors liked to pronounce, with appropriate gravitas, that they “looked upon all with equal benevolence” (*yishi tongren*). It did not matter whether one was Han or Hui,³⁷ *yi* subject or subject from the interior.³⁸ As others have pointed out, it is also clear that equal benevolence did not translate into equal treatment. Both Sutton’s work on the Miao statutes in Hunan and Jonathan Lipman’s work on the Qing Code and the Hui in Northwest China are meticulous investigations into legal inequalities. Sutton demonstrates how, under the Qianlong emperor, banner men such as Gao Qizhuo helped implement a dual legal system in the Miao areas of Hunan: Miao would be governed by Miao statutes, which were based on indigenous practices, while the subjects (*minren*) would be governed by ordinary Qing Code. In 1743, just a year after Zhang Yunsui defended the native official system in Yunnan, Mingde (who later contributed to policies of segregation in Yunnan) justified the dual legal system as appropriate for Miao because their character made them different from ordinary subjects. In general, Sutton finds that the unequal legal system tended to “discriminate” against subjects and that this gave Miao “a certain degree of freedom of action.”³⁹

Lipman, on the other hand, explains how understandings of Hui as naturally “fierce and brutal” were, from the Qianlong period forward, translated into discriminatory laws that punished Hui more severely than others. In my reading of *Familiar Strangers*, Lipman is arguing that such unequal treatment, when combined with the rhetoric on Hui violence as inherent to the Hui “nature,” contributed to non-Muslim calls for and the Qing state’s use of high levels of violence against northwestern Muslim communities in the ghastly 1860s.⁴⁰

In both Hunan and the Northwest, popular narratives about difference shaped imperial officials’ outlooks, and they in turn shaped official policies that reinforced important inequalities between subjects and Miao/Hui. Thus, the everyday workings of rhetoric and law helped to structure profound differences between the normal (subjects) and the abnormal (Miao/Hui)—a situation somewhat analogous to the ways in which CRT theorists believe American legal and rhetorical practices have, even after the adoption of “color-blind” policies, structured difference between people of color and whites. We might think, for example, of the discrimination against Hui and discrimination in favor of Miao as somewhat similar to the concept of “differential racialization,” a situation in which “the laws and legal structures society devises for each group—such as English-only laws for

Latinos, alien land laws for Asians, and Jim Crow laws for blacks—operate differently in the case of the various groups.”⁴¹ There is no need to overdraw the parallels because they are somewhat tenuous. Whiteness in the United States was once considered central to citizenship and democratic practice, and thus differential racialization, as conceived by CRT theorists, always privileged whites. The authoritarian Qing, run by a Manchu imperial line, acknowledged no citizens, and differential treatment before the law was designed for stability and order and (except in the case of the bannermen) not necessarily for the promotion of one group’s interests over all others. Nevertheless, differential treatment before the law was significant in the Qing case. Even though Qing subjects on the eighteenth-century frontier rarely perceived themselves as a unified group, their shared legal status certainly provided one possibility for constructing a group identity.

In the construction of different legal standards, Qing officials responded to practical considerations (it was difficult to manage acephalous Miao communities) but also to intellectual concepts that explained human diversity as emanating from fundamental differences in human nature (*xing*). Members of individual *yi* groups were frequently thought to share the same nature, and their nature was assumed to be different from those of subjects. Whether an *yi* group’s nature could be transformed through education and exposure to Confucian teachings and proper rituals was open to question. Some believed that the fundamental differences between *yi* and Chinese were too great; others believed all people were similarly human, and thus education could civilize *yi* (and commoners).⁴² Nevertheless, since *yi* were not educated and their natures were not transformed, they required unequal treatment before the law, including, where possible, segregated living space.

In the Southwest, the concept of human nature was often deployed to explain violence. Peoples who resisted the state were often singled out as having “fierce and ferocious natures (*xing ji xionghan*),” as Hao Yulin once attributed to Woni who attacked soldiers and merchants in the Tea Hills of southernmost Yunnan.⁴³ In 1729 the Yongzheng emperor argued that “the [Southwest’s] Miao, Man, Nong, and Tong ‘types’ (*zhonglei*) are numerous, cruel in nature, violent and enjoy killing,” and he blamed them for robbing travelers and plundering loyal subjects (*liangmin*).⁴⁴ In addition to conceiving of *yi* peoples as different in nature, officials described the areas in which they lived as spatially distinct, a trend Sutton has examined in relation to Hunan’s “Miao borderlands” (*Miaojiang*). Because the *Miaojiang* people and spaces were distinct, they were thought to need special handling.⁴⁵ Throughout the Southwest, *yi* regions were labeled as dis-

tinct and policies were developed in order to manage them differently than the interior, although it must be noted that some *yi* were deemed perfectly suitable for standard administration.⁴⁶ In my earlier work, I sought to explain how officials such as E'ertai envisioned a three-tiered spatiality in the Southwest: the interior (*neidi*), outer areas under native official (*tusi*) rule, and outer areas deemed foreign. E'ertai conceived of imperial officials (*liuguan*) relying on the Qing Code to administer subjects in the interiors, while *yi* subjects were administered according to their own customs by native officials in *yi* lands (*yifang*, *yidi*, Miaojiang).⁴⁷ Despite frequent challenges to this vision,⁴⁸ large parts of the Southwest were subjected to different sets of laws and administration throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth.

In practice, rule by native officials was more than a simple administrative variation. It was also a mechanism for regulating access to resources, particularly land. Because native officials were not salaried, the Qing state sought to guarantee that they would control enough land to pay their expenses. In the 1740s and 1770s the state intervened in Yunnan land markets in order to prevent or even reverse land transfers between indigenes and subjects, who were identified not as Han but as migrants from Jiangxi and Huguang or as "wealthy subjects of the interior" from western Yunnan's Yongchang and Tengyue regions.⁴⁹ Such policies did not altogether prevent migrants from gaining access to indigenous lands, but it did slow the process because the state was willing to make remarkable interventions, in some cases requiring that land mortgaged to migrants be returned to *yi*. Some native officials leveraged their legal privileges and administrative control over indigenous spaces to reclaim new agricultural lands that remained off Qing tax books. They sometimes invited migrants to settle and work these lands, a relationship that could and did result in conflict since state laws and power did not apply to *yi* lands in the same ways they did to the interior. In 1808, for example, the Yunnan provincial government dealt with a settler's complaint of exploitation by a native official in Kaihua's Wenshan region; this native official had extended his patrimony, sought out tenants who were *min* (in addition to his hereditary lands occupied by *yimin*) and provoked enough anger among his new tenants that he was investigated by provincial officials.⁵⁰

The conflict over land, then, was structured in part by the differential legal systems designed to protect native official holdings. This differential treatment, moreover, emerged as a point of contention between nineteenth-century borderland communities. As mentioned above, officials increasingly viewed land conflicts as being a confrontation between

Han and *yi*, and local people seem to have agreed. In western Yunnan, around 1830, locals complained that native officials held too much power and were treated too leniently by the state. They also complained that *yi* peoples wasted the many rich and fertile lands to which they alone had access, with one writer, a man named Zhao Jinsheng, estimating that *yi* wasted 80 to 90 percent of their land. What was needed, he argued, was the court to take charge by dispatching bold officials (he specifically mentions Zhuge Liang as a model) who would remove native officials from power and mobilize Han subjects to settle the land.⁵¹

As relatively privileged literate men such as Zhao Jinsheng were beginning to think in terms of the need for Han reclamation of empty *yi* lands, relatively poor men such as peddlers and miners were beginning to construct organizations that linked subjects from different native-place backgrounds. In his superb study of the patterns of violence against Yunnan's Muslim Chinese (Hui), David Atwill has argued that a profound social change began to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century. Before this time, Atwill perceptively notes, conflicts, such as those at the Xiyi mine in 1800, did not pit "Han" against Muslims because the conflicts were between Muslims and people from particular native-place backgrounds, in this case Hunanese.⁵² In 1821, however, the Baiyang mine erupted in violence initially patterned along traditional lines: Yunnanese from Lin'an, organized by their mine boss (*kezhang*) at the Lin'an mining association, fought against Muslim Chinese miners, who were organized through their local mosque. Finding themselves short on numbers, the Lin'an toughs sought to recruit Hunanese for support. Although Atwill argues that this request produced a transprovincial anti-Hui coalition, which represented a new level of consciously Han organization,⁵³ the evidence strongly suggests that the Hunanese leaders initially did not see the Lin'an men as their compatriots; the Hunan mine boss saw no reason to help the Lin'anese against the Hui. It was only through trickery—the Lin'an boss fabricated a claim that the Hui sought revenge for the Xiyi violence and would come for the Hunanese next—that the two groups joined together to oppose the Hui.⁵⁴

In the end, we cannot conclude that the Lin'an and Hunan men organized themselves as Han in any premeditated way. There seems to have been little initial commitment to a collective consciousness. As Qing officials investigated the violence, however, they rounded up suspects and witnesses for interrogation, and their interviews with Muslim victims produced records that identified the attackers as "Han." This suggests that in recalling the violence and recasting it through the mediation of the state's investiga-

tion, Muslim Chinese were grouping together collections of Hunanese and Yunnanese (and Jiangxi and Sichuanese men, too) and labeling them Han. Of course, the *Han* label may well represent the intervention of imperial officials in the interrogation process (it is difficult to tell from interviews and interrogations which were likely to be edited). Nevertheless, the interrogations of Hunanese and Yunnanese suspects produced a similar outcome: men from various native-place backgrounds were identified with the collective moniker *Han*, and, increasingly, the Baiyang conflicts were labeled as “Han-Hui” violence, a term that was later applied repeatedly to other conflicts leading up the devastating Hui uprising (1855–73).⁵⁵ While not conclusive, the evidence suggests an important but complicated source of emerging Han consciousness; the experiences of mobilizing for violence against Muslims and facing imperial investigators provided ordinary people with a way to describe their experiences: Han-Hui violence.

Over the next two decades, there emerged in Yunnan—and particularly in the mines—a new organizational vehicle for linking non-Muslim men who had migrated from other provinces. These were the rituals and institutions of the secret societies, particularly the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandi hui). Emerging from the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods, mutual aid societies such as the Tiandi hui spread from Fujian and Guangdong through Guangxi and into Yunnan. The earliest evidence for a Heaven and Earth Society in Yunnan comes from the Jiaqing reign (1796–1820) as itinerant men, who migrated up the West River and its tributaries, brought with them the concepts of blood oaths and anti-Qing activity. In passing along these practices, it is clear that those who created new secret society cells brought together men from different backgrounds and different native places, whether to organize for economic competition, self-protection, or criminal activity.⁵⁶ In the mining areas, secret society activity was particularly strong, and it was precisely in the mines that violence, increasingly articulated as Han against Hui, originated and spread.⁵⁷

Secret society organization was not limited to mining areas, however. It spread to western Yunnan, where secret societies linked men through powerful clandestine rituals and hierarchies. Atwill has demonstrated that it was these organizations, combined with tacit Qing state support, that were responsible for escalating attacks on Muslim Chinese in the 1830s and 1840s.⁵⁸ It is clear from other case studies that secret societies and sworn brotherhoods were increasingly common throughout peripheral Yunnan. These brotherhoods, moreover, united people from different native-place backgrounds, and they were often organized for economic competition in an increasingly tough economy. However, in some cases,

they were also created in order to inflict violence on Muslim Chinese or *yi* groups. One example comes from Mianning, where locals and migrants combined to kill hundreds of Hui in 1839. As Atwill has pointed out, the murderers came from various backgrounds—Hunan, Yunnan, Sichuan, and Jiangxi.⁵⁹ They were accused by a local Muslim notable of meeting at a temple and “forming an alliance” (*jiemeng*), a term often associated with secret society formation. The evidence does not specifically mention rituals associated with the Tiandi hui, but it is clear that these men from disparate native-place cultures, under their local leaders, mobilized to kill Muslims and at least two other non-Han groups (identified by their lack of queue and labeled *yimin*) who were unfortunate enough to get in their way.⁶⁰ The Mianning case demonstrates that collective alliances and action against perceived outsiders—whether Hui or *yi*—were now possible. The lines of demarcation were increasingly clear, and in at least one case a Muslim Chinese woman disguised herself as a Han in order to escape persecution.⁶¹ The new modes of mobilization therefore transcended the native-place organizations of old, and it is possible to describe these groups, from the point of view of victims, perpetrators, and Qing officials, as Han.

Other secret society organizations also targeted *yi* and their specially segregated territories. A detailed example comes from an 1848–49 case in which laborers from Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Hunan gathered together in Talang, a town in southern Yunnan.⁶² These men numbered well over one hundred, and they conspired to produce their own firearms and swords. To secure their illegal pact, they pooled money to buy liquor, went to an empty temple, arranged themselves by seniority, and then pledged loyalty to their leader, Huang Yingchang. Though their original goals seem to have been economic survival, these men targeted various *yi* lands (*yidi*) and people, mostly notably extorting food from intimidated villagers and setting up an illegal mine within a native official (*tusi*) jurisdiction. The group initially had some *yi* members, suggesting that ethnicity was not the only organizing logic, but the most prominent of these, Yang Bula, turned on Huang, leading to a conflict that culminated not only in direct fighting between Yang’s and Huang’s men but also in Huang leading attacks on indigenous villages, where he and his men terrorized and brutalized local *yi*. As reported in Qing records, this case seems to reflect a society increasingly divided between *yi* (or Hui) on the one hand and Han on the other. The Han, moreover, were linked together through the rituals and practices of sworn brotherhoods or secret societies. The brotherhoods and societies did not necessarily reveal a belief in biological common descent, of course, but they certainly appropriated the language

of fictive kinship when ritually acknowledging the leadership of their “elder brothers” or “fathers.”⁶³

By the mid-nineteenth century, Southwest society was complex and diverse. And yet a number of contingent factors had combined to make Han identity increasingly salient. These factors included increasing economic competition, which led to new forms of association for poor men; the state’s long-term trends of differential treatment of *yi*, which made *yi* lands an enticing target for rich and poor Han; intellectual discourses and popular narratives that identified *yi* or Hui as violent and different, which increasingly justified violence against them; and—perhaps crucially in connection to the violence at mines—the way that Qing officials, perhaps influenced by Qianlong-era approaches to genealogy, began to label subjects as Han. These contingent factors are reflected in the writings of local elites such as Zhao Jinsheng, who called for state-supported Han settlement of non-Han lands because, in Zhao’s opinion, *yi* did not know how to exploit their resources properly. They are reflected in secret society activity, which provided the ritual and organizational mechanisms to mobilize men from diverse backgrounds to attack Muslims or to take resources from *yi* lands. They are reflected in the discourse of Qing officials, who in the early nineteenth century began to use *Han* as a label for subjects whose ancestors had allegedly moved from the interior to the Southwest. And they are reflected in Qing officials’ increasing willingness to conceive of Muslim Chinese as fierce in nature and thus deserving of violent suppression.⁶⁴

For some time now, social scientists specializing in post-1949 Chinese identity and ethnicity have focused on the importance of state discourses and policies in shaping or even creating categories of ethnic affiliation, particularly those of minority nationalities.⁶⁵ More recently, Leo Shin has argued that late Ming Chinese state building and expansion emphasized the creation of discursive and physical boundaries between subjects and *yi*; rather than think of assimilation as the dominant state policy in the Chinese past, this interpretation suggests, we should acknowledge the many instances when the late imperial and modern Chinese states sought to create boundaries between groups through textual and visual representations of difference. In the Ming, as in the People’s Republic, these policies of categorization and segregation had significant implications for the policies used to govern frontier peoples.⁶⁶ The process of categorizing and segregating, moreover, was employed by the Qing state, particularly in the Qianlong reign, and Sutton’s analysis of this process takes us even further, suggesting that, for the Miao of western Hunan, the differential treatment

before the law as well as “decades of . . . dealings with Han merchants, soldiers and moneylenders . . . intensified a sense of identity.”⁶⁷

The creation of local identities in opposition to the Han was shared by Yunnan indigenes such as Gao Luoyi, who attracted numerous followers in 1817 by proclaiming himself “King of the Woni” and rallying people behind the slogan, “Expel the Han.” After he was caught, Gao was interrogated before being put to death. In his interrogation he alleged that his actions were provoked by “Jiangxi and Hunan Hanren who traded in the *yi* lands and took profits that caused tremendous suffering.”⁶⁸ That Gao (and his interrogators) would identify Jiangxi and Hunan people as Han should not be taken as an indicator of a timeless Han ethnic consciousness. This chapter suggests that if we are to historicize Han in the Qing period, both as a category of imperial subjects and as an ethnicity, we need to take into account both chronological and spatial variations. Han—and the ideas that lay behind it—seems to have become salient at different times and under different conditions, depending upon the region of the empire. In Ming-Qing Guangdong, Siu and Liu found that some Dan became Han by settling on the land, registering their households, establishing lineages, and claiming cultural ascendancy by preparing sons for the exams. In doing so, they appropriated the label *Han* for themselves as part of a strategy of local competition. David Faure has written about Ming Guangxi, where warfare and the differential legal and administrative systems shaped the boundaries between Yao and Han—boundaries that became ethnic categories in the Qing.⁶⁹ When compared to these cases, this study points to certain historical conditions that might produce ethnic identification among the Han: economic competition, warfare, pejorative labeling, differential legal and administrative treatment, and transformation of social organization initiated by ordinary people. These contingent factors would have differed across the empire, of course, and thus the history of claiming to be Han will most like prove to differ across time and space as well.

10. Searching for Han

Early Twentieth-Century Narratives of Chinese Origins and Development

James Leibold

For most mainland Chinese, the Han (Hanzu, Hanren, Hanmin, or Han minzu) are envisioned as a massive rolling snowball (*xueqiu*)—a dense, domineering geo-body that literally steamrolled across the Chinese ethnoscape as it expanded and consolidated over time. The eminent ethnologist Fei Xiaotong was one of the first Chinese intellectuals to compare the Han to a snowball when he sketched out in 1988 his “out of many, one” (*duoyuan yiti* or *e pluribus unum*) formulation of the Chinese nation/race (Zhonghua minzu). For Fei, the Han *minzu* (nationality, ethnic group, or race) was the “coagulative core” (*ningju hexin*) of China’s multiethnic mosaic: a sticky and superior racial nucleus that literally fused (*ronghe*) disparate historical constituencies as the Han snowball rolled across “this piece of land” which was and remains “China.”¹

Inspired by Fei, Chinese scholars have attempted to add “scientific evidence” of this shared narrative of national becoming. Making extensive use of archaeological evidence, the historian Chen Liankai outlines the growth of an indigenous, sedentary Huaxia culture and people in the Central Plains regions of the Yellow and Yangtze River valleys around 3000–2000 B.C.E. Its advanced culture and size drew in and “polymerized” (*juhe*) surrounding nomadic and seminomadic peoples, producing first the Han *minzu* following the Qin dynasty unification of 221 B.C.E. and then the even larger Zhonghua *minzu* following the humiliation of the Opium War in 1840 and the consolidation of a new Republican state after the collapse of the Qing empire in 1911.² Similarly, a group of Chinese geneticists now argue that “Y chromosome and mitochondrial (mt)DNA data have demonstrated a coherent genetic structure of all Han Chinese,” which is the result of a five-thousand-year history of “demic diffusion” and “assimilation of minorities” by the numerically superior Huaxia-

cum-Han people and their advanced agriculture, technology, and culture.³ Others find a similar pattern in the dermatoglyphics (fingerprints) of the Chinese people.⁴ Fei's snowball analogy is central to Xu Jieshun's comprehensive anthropological analysis of the Han minzu's origins and development. As the founding director of the Han Research Center at the Guangxi Nationalities Institute, Xu has played a central role in the post-Mao development of Han studies on the mainland, which rests on the claim, in Xu's words, that "from a single dot to a line, and from a line to an entire area, [the Han minzu] rolled like a snowball fusing many other *minzu* as it coagulated and formed; like a snowball, it grew larger and larger and more dense and compact, producing the world's most populous *minzu*."⁵ In short, adopting a primordialist approach, most mainland Chinese scholars view Han (and its corollary, *Zhonghua minzu*) as an innate, fixed, and firmly bounded identity—an ancient yet evolving group that can be traced directly back to the very roots of Chinese soil, civilization, and blood.

Outside of China, however, much of the recent academic literature, inspired by postcolonial and postmodern critical theory, has set its sights on deconstructing, dislocating, and unpacking this "imagined community,"⁶ seeking to reveal the fragmented and atomized "snowflakes" that belie the illusory unity of the Han snowball. In his landmark 1991 study, *Muslim Chinese*, Dru Gladney suggested that the notion of a distinct Han minzu was "an entirely modern phenomenon," arguing that it was invented by Sun Yat-sen and other late Qing revolutionaries in an effort to draw together the empire's parochial and polyglot communities into a single national imaginary.⁷

Gladney and others subsequently argue that Han is an unmarked, empty, or even invisible designation fashioned in "relational alterity" with the colorful, backward, and exotic/erotic national minorities through a process of oriental or internal orientalism.⁸ It is also suggested that the Confucian rhetoric of culturalism seeks to paste over the ambiguities and diversities inherent in this "ephemeral" category,⁹ concealing the deep fissures that run along religious, economic, linguistic, and cultural lines among the numerous "subethnic" groups positioned uncomfortably beneath the Han ethnonym. In short, adopting a constructivist approach to identity and a deconstructivist method of analysis, many of these foreign-trained scholars remain suspicious of the perception of a common (yet nested) cultural and ethnic identity among the so-called Han nationality of today, instead choosing to view Han (and *Zhonghua minzu*) as an inauthentic, or even fictitious identity, which pastes over the deeper and often repressive structural features of nation and state building in modern China.¹⁰

In this chapter I seek to negotiate a path between these two metaphors: the snowball and the snowflake. One that aims to, at least partially, historicize and contextualize the category of Han by exploring some of the ways in which early-twentieth-century male urban elites in China sought to make sense of the origins and development of their “people” (*renmin*, *minzu*, *zhongzu*, *guomin*, *guozu*). In particular, I seek to flesh out some of the latent tensions embedded in the ideological work of these authenticators of identity, between (1) competing autonyms for the Chinese people; (2) a cosmopolitan, transnational origin and an indigenous, firmly bounded creation myth; and finally (3) a singular, arrowlike homogeneity and a multiple, arabesque-style heterogeneity. While accepting that these narratives are the result of elite production, I do not wish to discount either the role of historical memory or the cultural parameters within which knowledge is produced and finds widespread social meaning and practice, what Bourdieu called “the silences, ellipses, and lacunae of the language of familiarity.”¹¹ As a dynamic and chameleon-like category, Han was in a constant state of modification, with its boundaries and membership altering from one historical context to another, as the chapters of this volume clearly reveal; yet, at the same time, the perception of who was Han or who could become Han was built on a set of inherited cultural practices and institutions, which while flexibly interpreted were limited by social reality.

Is it possible that a more fully nuanced and historicized approach can help reveal both the durability of the Han snowball—that is the continuity of the ethnic category of Han over time—and the contingency of its snowflakes—that is the diverse meanings invested in the Han idiom at any point in time? In seeking a critical approach to the study of the Han, one starting point seems to be Roger Brubaker’s provocative suggestion that “ethnicity is fundamentally not a thing *in* the world, but a perspective *on* the world.”¹² In other words, fluid signifiers—like Han, Zhongguoren (Chinese), or Zhonghua minzu—become meaningful and articulated only when they assist people in making sense of their world and place within it. So while the search for an archetypal, unchanging Han “essence” will remain illusive, we can seek to explore those specific contexts in which the category becomes meaningful. Here, it seems to me, we can most profitably search for the origins, significance, and limits of Han.

THE SEARCH FOR WHOM: HAN OR ET CETERA?

The modern discourse on Chinese origins was intimately tied to the rise of political nationalism in the late Qing period. As the Manchu empire

unraveled under foreign and domestic pressures, a group of nationalist elite started searching for new discursive frames to rally the sedentary communities of China proper against the decaying Manchu court. Quite naturally, they turned to the past in their efforts to define a distinct national people. Yet this search for roots was now interpreted in the light of the Social Darwinian discourse of the struggle for survival among transnational “races” (*minzu*, *zhongzu*, or *renzhong*). Yan Fu, one of the earliest translators of Darwin’s message in China, argued that “groupism” (*qun zhuyi*) was the key to racial survival, but there was little agreement among the Chinese intelligentsia over both the boundaries and the autonomy of the group that mattered most in “their” evolutionary struggle.¹³ While all agreed on the importance of searching for the origins and essence of the “we-group” in its struggle against outsiders, there was deep discord over which *qun* should be united—was it the Yellow, Han, Hua, Huaxia, Chinese, or Zhonghua people?—and, moreover, how this autonomy was to be scientifically classified—was it a *renzhong* (race), *minzu* (nation/nationality/ethnic group), *guojia* (state), or *guozu* (race-state)?

For the anti-Manchu revolutionaries, the “Han race” (Han *minzu* or Han *renzhong*) was the key to evolutionary survival. In the words of the eighteen-year-old revolutionary Zou Rong: “China belongs to the Chinese people. Our compatriots must all recognize themselves as the Han race, the Chinese people, and China.”¹⁴ In their attempt to drive a wedge between the sedentary constituencies of Zhongguo/China and the alien, nomadic Manchu court, the revolutionaries resignified the ancient appellation *Han* (Hanmin or Hanren). As Mark Elliott’s chapter in this volume demonstrates, Han was first employed as an ethnonym during the sixth century by the formerly nomadic Särbi rulers of the Northern Wei to refer to those inhabitants of the Central Plains region (Zhongguo or Zhongyuan) who were perceived to be culturally “Chinese” (Huaren or Zhongguoren).¹⁵ These early constructs of what we might term a Sinic identity were fungible and fluid, defined primarily by the soft and breechable boundaries of language, culture, surnames, and physical environment that caused it to function as a “residual category comprised of all those who were not barbarians.”¹⁶ While the rulers of both the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing dynasties sought to codify and institutionalize the Han category, its boundaries remained anything but stable.¹⁷ In the hands of late Qing revolutionaries like Zhang Binglin, Han was transformed yet again into a biological descent group with a new, hard boundary of blood cast around “the unsullied descendants of the Yellow Emperor” (*qingqing baibai huangdi zhi zisun*).¹⁸ This new formulation explicitly excluded the

Manchus and other northern nomadic peoples, who were now deemed part of the “Siberian branch” of the yellow race.¹⁹

Yet, for others, this interpretation of Han seemed too narrow to encompass the territorial and cultural diversity of the “Chinese empire,” as it became known in the West. Reformers like Liang Qichao, Kang Youwei, Yang Du, and others searched for a more inclusive category, one broad enough to include the nonsedentary communities that they argued were intimately tied to both the past and the future of the Chinese nation. As early as 1901, Liang Qichao expressed frustration with the lack of a clear and consistent autonym for the Chinese people, with various dynastic names used alongside competing ethnonyms like Zhuxia, Hanren, and Tangren inside China, while foreigners used either China (*zhendan*) or Cina/Shina (*zhina*).²⁰ A year later, in 1902, Liang appeared to coin yet another autonym, *Zhonghua minzu*, for his people.²¹ Initially, he used the term as a synonym for the Hanzu, but in his highly influential writings he boldly rejected the revolutionaries’ attempts to exclude the Manchus and other non-Han peoples from this topos of Chinese identity. His call for a more inclusive, melting pot-style “broad nationalism” (*da minzu-zhuyi*) was echoed by Yang Du, who advocated the assimilation of non-Han minorities so that in the future “not only will there no longer exist the names Manchu or Han but also no terms for the Mongol, Hui, and Tibetans; but rather, the *Zhonghua minzu* which has blended numerous different races over thousands of years will become even greater and more advanced.”²² Kang Youwei went a step further in his *Datongshu* (Book of Great Unity) envisioning a Confucian-style global ecumene, one that would fuse together different races, classes, cultures and states into a single harmonious whole.²³

Following the 1911 revolution, the governments of Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai were quick to claim sovereignty over all the peoples and territories of the Qing empire. Attempting to make Liang’s broad nationalism a reality, they termed the new state a free and equal “republic of five races” (*wuzu gonghe*) symbolized by a new five-color national flag with separate stripes for each of the main races.²⁴ Others, however, scoffed at the thought that the ten million or so non-Han peoples could be considered equal partners with the massive and cultural superior Hanzu, dismissing them as evolutionarily unfit and destined to literally, in the words of both Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen, “smelt together in a single furnace” with the Han in creating a unitary and indivisible *Zhonghua minzu*.²⁵ For Sun Yat-sen, China was unique among the family of modern states in that it

alone comprised a single *minzu*, or what Sun termed a *guozu* (race-state). In his 1924 Three Principles of the People lectures, Sun stated:

With regards to China's *minzu*, altogether there are 400 million people. Among them there are a few million Mongols, a million or so Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and a few hundred thousand Muslim Turks. All together these non-natives (*wailai*) do not exceed ten million people. Thus, the vast majority of the four hundred million Chinese people are entirely Han people: sharing a common bloodline, language, religion, and customs—entirely a single *minzu*.²⁶

Following his death in 1925, the new Central Government set up by Chiang Kai-shek formally abandoned the five-color emblem and called instead for “the uniting of our 400 million people into a single, large *guozu*.”²⁷ In many of the history textbooks written in accordance with the new regime's curriculum guidelines, ethnic diversity faded into the background of the nation's story, with the origins of a unified and homogeneous Zhongguo *minzu* or Zhonghua *minzu* traced back thousands of years to the legendary five kings and three emperors or the first Xia dynasty.²⁸

When searching for their *minzu* wellspring, most late Qing and early Republican writers failed to make a clear distinction between Hanzu, Huazu, and Huaxia when discussing the core (*zhuti*) or backbone (*gugan*) around which the Chinese nation/race coalesced. In his influential and often reprinted study on ancient Chinese history, Xia Zengyou, like Liang Qichao, expressed frustration over the level of confusion surrounding the autonym for the Chinese people and suggested that perhaps *Huazu*, a term that had never been associated with a single dynasty, was “the real name of our race,”²⁹ while the prominent Qing diplomat and intellectual Huang Zunxian preferred the appellation *Huaxia* when speaking about China's core ethnic and cultural element.³⁰ In 1923 the historian Lü Simian called for greater clarity, arguing Han was the most appropriate autonym:

Recently, there are those who claim that the character Han represents the name of a dynasty and is not the name of a race (*zhongzu*), and thus advocate changing our name to either “Huazu” or “Zhonghua *minzu*”; yet they really don't seem to understand that the Han character has already been used as a racial term for over 2000 years. Take for example, the soldiers of the Tang dynasty; when they used troops from our country and those from foreign countries, they referred to them as “Han infantrymen and Fan barbarian cavalrymen” (*han fan bu qi*). This is one bit of evidence that the Han character was used as a racial term.³¹

Claiming that Huazu was often used as a synonym for nobility (*guizu*) and that the four-character phrase “Zhonghua minzu” was inconvenient, Lü argued that it would be difficult to arbitrarily replace this age-old Han character with an alternative ethnonym, and thus began his new vernacular history textbook by narrating the origins of the Hanzu: “For if we are to study a country’s history, we must first know its earliest *minzu*.”³²

The tendency to either ignore or downplay the role of the frontier minorities in the history of the Chinese nation/race was fraught with political problems for the new Zhonghua Republic. Not only did many of its frontier peoples seek independence from the hegemony of the Han center, but imperialist powers like Japan, England, and Russia were attempting to carve out spheres of influence along the Republic’s periphery. In seeking to justify their succession from China, the Mongols, Tibetans, and others staked out an independent origin from the Han, and instead cast the Chinese as foreign occupiers from whom they sought self-determination. The fracturing of “China” reached a new level of intensity following the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1931 and Japan’s active support of other secessionist movements in Mongolia, Tibet, and the Muslim areas of the Northwest.³³

In seeking a solution to this political problem, Chinese elites looked to the scientific disciplines of the West and their new methodologies and analytical concepts for identifying and categorizing this diversity within the state. In particular, many followed Liang Qichao in making a distinction between *zhongzu* (race) and *minzu* (nation). In an influential 1922 essay, Liang claimed:

Nation and race are different. Race is the object of study for anthropologists (*renzhongxue*) who use differences in skeletal and other physiological features to categorize races, which can then be divided into numerous nations, like how the Teuton race is divided between England, Germany and other nations and the Slavic race is spread across Russia, Serbia and other nations. Similarly, a single nation can also contain numerous races, like how the Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu*) includes the Qiang and Di races and the Japanese nation contains the Chinese and Ainu races.³⁴

Liang made a further distinction between *minzu* and *guomin* (citizenship), arguing that *guomin* is the object of study for lawyers who use it to distinguish those that share a common territory and have a fixed nationality (*guoji*). As a result, a single nation (*minzu*) can contain numerous nationalities (*minzu*), as was the case with the three states and six kingdoms of the Warring States period, or a single citizenship (*guomin*) can

include two or more nationalities (*minzu*), like how Chinese citizenship (Zhonghua guomin) is formed from the Mongol, Hui, Tibetan, and other nationalities.³⁵ Following this logic, the long history of China exhibited in Liang's view both racial (*zhongzu*) and ethnic (*minzu*) diversity but today comprised a single nation (*minzu*) with a shared citizenship (*guomin*).

As he grappled with these new concepts, Liang and others saw no problem with using *minzu* in both a singular and plural inflection, applying it equally to the shared polity of the Republic's citizens (*minzu* as nation) and its individual ethnic and racial components (*minzu* as nationalities). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, a number of scholars followed Liang in arguing that the unitary yet multiethnic nature of the Zhonghua *minzu* was defined by a complex, unfolding national consciousness (*minzu yishi*) rather than a shared descent or common culture, with Liang identifying six distinct *minzu* components, Lü Simian twelve, and the Academia Sinica anthropologist Lin Huixiang sixteen historical and eight contemporary *minzu* in their respective analyses of this diversity.³⁶ Yet, for all these intellectuals, the Han majority remained not only the cultural core of the Zhonghua *minzu* but also a sort of biological microcosm of its diversity following the long history of blood swapping among the various peoples of China. "Thus," the historian Lai Xiru concluded, "the Hanzu is actually the mother body (*muti*) of the Zhonghua *minzu* and could be said to represent the entirety of the Zhonghua *minzu*."³⁷

Others, such as a group of cultural nationalists with some ties to the conservative wing of the Guomindang, were concerned by the political consequences of all these new identity categories and called with increasingly clarity for either their abandonment or limiting the concept of *minzu* to the collective identity of the Chinese nation/race. They argued that the "excessive and abusive use" of the *minzu* label by Chinese scholars assisted foreign imperialists in sowing seeds of division among the frontier minorities, thus undermining the nation's putative homogeneity and unity.³⁸ And with the publication of the Guomindang's new political manifesto, *China's Destiny* (Zhongguo mingyun) in 1943, all non-Han minorities were recast as "lineage branches" (*zongzu* or *zhizu*) of a single, consanguineous Zhonghua *minzu*.³⁹ Political considerations aside, most researchers privately rejected the value of such a designation, and some like the Academia Sinica anthropologist Rui Yifu continued to probe the diversity of the nation. In a 1942 article, Rui admitted that discipline-specific terms were responsible for much of the confusion surrounding Chinese identity, with anthropologists and biologists preferring the term *race* (*zhongzu*); the sociologists, ethnologists, and cultural anthropologists using the term

nation (*minzu*); and the political scientists and lawyers referring to the state (*guojia*).⁴⁰ The solution, he argued, lay not in the abandonment of these terms but rather their consolidation. Combining *Zhonghua minzu* (Chinese nation) with *Zhonghua guojia* (Chinese state), Rui put forward yet another neologism, the *zhonghua guozu*, as the most appropriate ethnonym for incorporating each of the above connotations, making it the most inclusive and accurate autonym for the Chinese mosaic. For Rui it was a self-evident fact that China could not be divided into separate political components, yet he insisted there remained scientific value in analyzing its ethnic components. In a 1944 essay, he went on to identify sixty-six different branches of the *Zhonghua guozu*, stressing the importance of distinguishing between its “collective appearance” (*gongxiang*) and the “individual appearances” (*zixiang*), for “everyone knows that a single embryo never produces completely similar brothers.”⁴¹

As should be clear by now, one finds a good deal of terminological slippage in Republican-era exploration of the origins, composition, and history of their people. On the one hand, this reflects an inherent tension between the ability of the Han or Hua ethnonym to satisfy the desire for a more compact and homogeneous identity and the reality of the state’s political claim over the vast territorial boundaries of the Qing empire, and the resulting necessity to create a more inclusive (yet less clearly defined) melting pot identity that could include all the ethnic constituencies of the Qing empire under a single rubric. At the same time, however, this also represents the gradual course by which Western-derived scientific disciplines, and their related concepts and methodologies, were introduced into China and then creatively adapted to suit the political and intellectual needs of Chinese elites in the sort of “translingual practice” identified by Lydia Liu.⁴² Underlying this creative mediation is an “assumption that differences can be determined *scientifically*” and labeled accordingly, a belief that Charles Keyes argues is deeply flawed.⁴³ Yet the defining of new identities, in modern China at least, was both a scientific and a political act: one part empiricism, two parts pragmatism. Throughout this process Chinese elites negotiated their way through myriad indigenous categories as well as the globally circulating norms of Western modernity to fashion an authentic, meaningful, and practical form of identity. This is where the search for roots becomes a performative process of mythmaking and boundary drawing: the selective remembering and forgetting of past events; the inclusion and exclusion of ethnic components. In other words, the search for identity in modern China began in the present with the territorial boundaries of the Chinese geo-body and then proceeded backward

through the historical canon—folding as it went the diverse ethnonyms of the past into evolving narratives and categories of national becoming.

THE SEARCH FOR A BIRTHPLACE: FOREIGN OR INDIGENOUS?

Surprisingly, most turn-of-the-century Chinese intellectuals located the birthplace of the Han people and their culture outside the current boundaries of the People's Republic of China.⁴⁴ In his 1903 *Inquiry into the Chinese race* (*Zhongguo renzhong kao*), Jiang Zhiyou claimed that the ancestors of the Chinese people had migrated into the Yellow River valley from ancient Babylon. Introducing both his own evidence and the research of the French sinologist Albert Terrien de Lacouperie, Jiang sought to demonstrate the deep similarities between the ancient cultures of China and Mesopotamia.⁴⁵ In his 1892 tract, *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilization*,⁴⁶ Lacouperie claimed that the Yellow Emperor led his people, the Bak tribe, or *baixing* in the Chinese record, on an epic hegira from Mesopotamia into China around 2300 B.C.E., where they defeated the indigenous Miao people before spreading throughout China. Sino-Babylonianism was only the latest in a long line of “western origin” (*xilaishuo*) or “foreign origin” (*wailaishuo*) theories, which located the birthplace of the Han and its culture in Egypt, Babylon, India, Central Asia, Malaysia, America, and elsewhere.⁴⁷ First introduced in Japan around 1896,⁴⁸ Lacouperie's version of this hyper-diffusionist paradigm proved extremely popular among turn-of-the-century Chinese intellectuals, including the reformers Liang Qichao and Jiang Zhiyou and the revolutionaries Zhang Binglin and Liu Shipai.

These diffusionist theories not only possessed unquestionable “scientific” authority in the eye of early Chinese nationalists but also satisfied their patriotic inclinations. By locating the birth of Chinese/Han civilization and its race alongside that of the West, these intellectuals staked out a position of primordial equality with the advanced European civilization of the day while suggesting that a future revival of their lost “national essence” (*guocui*) would one day restore this natural position of harmony between East and West. In these early narratives, local or indigenous time was associated with the backwardness of the primitive Miao people and other non-Han peoples, such as the Manchus and Mongols, while the Han Chinese were identified as a world “historical race” that shared a common past and future trajectory on a par with the advanced races of the world. Keen to be seen as a part of world history,⁴⁹ early-twentieth-century elites

in China tended to think more in terms of transnational races and civilizations than firmly bounded nation-states.

Yet the collapse of the Qing empire and the inherent fragility of the new Republican state caused Chinese thinkers to gradually reconsider and reconfigure their views on Han origins. In his 1922 essay Liang Qichao equivocated on the issue, stating that “based on all the evidence currently available, this question can only be considered an unsettled issue.”⁵⁰ He admitted that both the classical canon and recent cultural comparisons lent support to the foreign origins of the Chinese, and the fact that some recently unearthed artifacts, chiefly jade, were not indigenous to China proves at the very least that China had close contact with the peoples of the West during its prehistoric age. Admitting that he once enthusiastically supported the nonindigenous origins of the Huazu and thus did not want to adopt an overly conservative stance on the issue, Liang expressed frustration that insufficient evidence existed to settle the issue for once and all. Similarly, Lü Simian acknowledged the lack of conclusive evidence in 1923 but also suggested that there were plenty of clues pointing in the direction of the Western origin of the Hanzu, making it the “most convincing” theory at present.⁵¹ Others continued to wholeheartedly support the foreign origins thesis, with the opening lines of Wang Chuanxie’s 1922 *Vernacular History of China* (Baihua Zhongguo lishi) boldly declaring:

In the ancient times, our country’s inhabitants lived in the Yellow River valley. However during this period, these people were the Miao race and not our Huazu. The Miao race is related to what are called the Malay race today. Our Huazu’s ancient home was among the Pamir highlands beyond the Kunlun mountains. By chance they began to migrate eastward along the Yellow River where the two races eventually mixed together.⁵²

A similar sentiment was echoed by Sun Yat-sen in his now-famous Three Principles of the People lectures of 1924 in which he claimed that the ancestors of the majestic Three Emperors and Five Kings were emigrants from Mesopotamia.⁵³

By the late 1920s the foreign origins theory came under closer scrutiny as the emotional appeal of Chinese nationalism intensified. In a 1929 article in the popular journal *Eastern Miscellany* (Dongfang zazhi), the historian He Bingsong attacked Henri Codier, a Jesuit sinologist, and other “imperialist scholars,” who perpetuated what he considered unscientific theories about the nonindigenous origins of the Chinese.⁵⁴ The fiercest critics were a group of scholars loosely associated with the magazine *Critical*

Review (Xueheng), such as Miao Fenglin, Lu Maode, Liu Yizheng, and Zhang Qiyun. Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, they drew on archaeological and other evidence to both challenge the theory and attempt to demonstrate the indigenous origins of the Han race and culture.⁵⁵ They followed He Bingsong in calling for a broadening of historical methodology to include new insights from archaeology, ethnology, philology, and other new scientific disciplines, arguing that by applying different approaches to the question of historical change one could arrive at different conclusions.⁵⁶

Archaeology, with its ability to unearth material evidence from the pre-historic past, proved especially popular among those intellectuals who were interested in tracing Chinese origins. Several history textbooks published under the new curriculum guidelines of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government made extensive use of archaeological discoveries to push back the scope of human activity in the Central Plains region thousands of years, if not hundreds of thousands of years in the case of the Paleolithic remains.⁵⁷ In the 1933 *Junior Middle School History Textbook* (Chuzhong benguoshi), recent anatomical comparisons between Neolithic remains discovered in Gansu and modern northern Chinese were interpreted as scientific evidence that "the Hanzu made its ancient home in the Yellow River Valley."⁵⁸ Yet these textbooks were cautious when speculating about the ultimate source of the Han people, either side-stepping the issue altogether⁵⁹ or claiming that insufficient evidence existed to locate the actual birthplace of the Han.⁶⁰

This uncertainty reflected the fact that the archaeological evidence was far from conclusive. The sparse nature of archaeological evidence leaves it open to a wide range of interpretations: for some it proved the indigenous origins of the Han culture and race; for others it only complicated the matter further. This was especially the case with the Neolithic remains unearthed at Yangshao in Henan Province and Shaguotun in Liaoning Province under the direction of the Swedish geologist Johan Gunnar Andersson during the early 1920s. In his analysis of these fossil assemblages, Andersson noted similarities between Yangshao painted pottery and pottery recently unearthed in the Central Asian cities of Anau and Tripolje, suggesting the possibility that Yangshao culture was carried into the Yellow River valley by a migrating race.⁶¹ In order to test this hypothesis, he directed a series of excavations in Gansu and Qinghai during 1923 and 1924 and claimed to have discovered further evidence linking Yangshao culture with Central Asia. And by the late 1920s a consensus had emerged among most Western scientists: Yangshao culture represented an advanced late Neolithic agricultural group, of either Turkic or Germanic racial stock, which invaded the Yellow River valley and merged with the

indigenous “Chinese race” to give rise to its civilization.⁶² In the words of a leading American scholar, Carl Whiting Bishop: “Without aid from abroad, civilization could never had developed in China at all.”⁶³

The scientific weight of this “new Western origin thesis” (*xin xilaishuo*) continued to influence the Chinese discourse well into the 1940s. While the doubting antiquity movement (*gushibian*) caused Chinese scholars to develop a much more critical attitude toward the textual evidence in the classics, the archaeological record seemed to possess a higher level of scientific empiricism, lending it greater credence in the eyes of most intellectuals. Drawing on Andersson’s findings, a 1934 teaching aid for Chinese history treated the ancient migration of the Hanzu from the West as fact, arguing that while previous attempts to prove either that the Han came from the East over the sea or over the mountains in the West were forced and unconvincing. Yet this new theory of their migration from the Central Asian plateau along the Yellow River valley was deemed “a highly reasonable hypothesis.”⁶⁴ Others cited Andersson’s findings to substantiate the ancient legends about the Yellow Emperor’s eastward migration in the historical canon, with the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP’s) first official history textbook linking these myths with Andersson’s assertion that “the Yangshao culture’s race developed from the West towards the East,” until they encountered and defeated the indigenous Qiang and Man races in what were known as the legendary battles between the Yellow Emperor and his enemies Yandi and Chiyu.⁶⁵

Seeking to wrestle back the archaeological agenda and its conclusions from foreign control, the Archaeological Unit of Academia Sinica’s Institute of History and Philology made the search for the indigenous origins of Chinese culture one of its top priorities following its establishment in 1928.⁶⁶ The new head of the unit, Li Ji, had already expressed his skepticism about the nonindigenous origins of the Yangshao-style painted pottery he discovered while excavating Xiyin village in Shanxi in 1926.⁶⁷ Similarly, the institute’s director, Fu Sinian, lamented that “foreign archaeologists in China do not pay any attention to the material which represents indigenous Chinese culture, but are only interested in the remains which indicated cultural connections between China and the West.”⁶⁸ Thus, when Chinese archaeologists unearthed a distinct black-style pottery in Longshan township in Shandong in 1930 many thought they had finally discovered scientific evidence of an indigenous Han culture and race. By linking the development of Neolithic Longshan culture with the remains of the ancient Shang state unearthed at Anyang, Chinese archaeologists attempted to shift the focus of Chinese origins to the East and away from

any Western or foreign contaminants.⁶⁹ Without denying the possibility that some elements of Chinese culture might have derived from the West, Fu Sinian's 1934 "East Yi West Xia theory" (Yixia dongxi shuo) put forward the Yi people and their Longshan assemblage as native Chinese, arguing that in the prehistoric period the main geographic division was between the indigenous, superior, and sedentary Longshan culture centered in the Bohai Sea basin area and the nomadic or seminomadic culture of the loess plateau surrounding the upper reaches of the Yellow River and represented by Yangshao culture.⁷⁰

Yet the East Yi–West Xia theory also raised new questions and problems. When Liang Siyong excavated a site at Anyang that exhibited successive layers of Yangshao, Longshan, and Shang culture, it became clear that all three shared a close relationship.⁷¹ And as Yangshao culture appeared to be the oldest of these assemblages, the possibility remained open that "Chinese civilization" originated with an eastwardly migrating race as Andersson and other foreign scientists had suggested. Similarly, the attempt by Fu Sinian and others to shift the focus of Han origins eastward to the Bohai Sea and away from the tainting influences of the West was also fraught with other political sensitivities. As early as 1895, the Japanese ethnologist Torii Ryūzō had linked prehistoric remains he unearthed in Liaoning Province and elsewhere in the Northeast with a distinctly non-Han people called the "Tungusic race." Following Japan's occupation of Manchuria in 1931, Japanese propagandists seized on his research to argue that both the Manchus and the Mongols were racially distinct from the Han and thus deserved their own independent homelands free from Chinese interference.⁷² Although Fu's theory remained the dominant paradigm among Chinese scholars throughout the Republican period, it left both the ultimate origins of the "Han" and the role of foreign influence largely unresolved. "In the end, we still cannot determine the origins of the Han," a widely used 1947 Central Government–approved history textbook concluded after presenting recent scientific evidence in support of various hypotheses.⁷³

Despite its distinctly non-*Homo sapiens* features, the physical evidence associated with the Paleolithic remains of Peking Man (*Beijingren* or *Sinanthropus pekinensis*) seemed to suggest a more secure basis for proving the indigenous origins of the Chinese race and its culture. Throughout the late Republican period, a group of Chinese intellectuals spoke with increasing clarity about the significance of these 500,000-year-old hominid remains and followed Davidson Black and his successor, the German scientist Franz Weidenreich, in identifying various unique morphological features (namely a shovel-shaped incisor and hyperostosis of the jaw)

that linked, in their eyes, Peking Man and contemporary Han residents of northern China.⁷⁴ In his pathbreaking 1937 *History of the Chinese minzu* (Zhongguo minzu shi), an Institute of History and Philology ethnologist, Lin Huixiang, acknowledged the scientific weight and feasibility of Andersson's new Western origin thesis but also suggested that the Peking Man fossils opened the door on an alternative hypothesis. "Early on the indigenous theory [of Chinese origins] lacked any dependable evidence," he wrote, "but the recent discovery of Peking Man has added no small bit of evidence [to the theory], and in the future it is hoped that new evidence will come forward to either confirm one theory or wipe the other out."⁷⁵

By the early 1940s, leading historians on both sides of politics had either declared Peking Man the ancient progenitor (*zuxian*) or forerunner (*qianshen*) of the Chinese people, or at the very least used these fossils as scientific proof of the indigenous origins of the Han.⁷⁶ Noting the morphological analysis of Black and Weidenreich, Qian Mu declared in his 1940 *Outline of National History* (Guoshi dagang): "The Mongoloid race of East and Central Asia today are the direct descendant of Peking Man and the theory about the Han race coming from the West put forward by European and Western scholars has been thoroughly smashed."⁷⁷ A year earlier, He Bingsong echoed Franz Weidenreich in claiming that "he [Peking Man] was not only the first Chinese man but also the first human on the planet."⁷⁸ Yet, as I have pointed out elsewhere,⁷⁹ not all shared this sentiment about the relationship between this band of primitive "ape-man" (*yuanren*) and the glorious Han race. A degree of cultural sensitivity to the barbaric depictions of Peking Man meant that many Republican-era history texts failed to mention Peking Man. Furthermore, unlike Black and Weidenreich, most Chinese natural scientists downplayed the significance of Peking Man to the origins of the Chinese race, choosing instead to follow the internationally respected anthropologist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith and other European- and American-based experts who suggested that Peking Man represented a now-extinct offshoot from the main branch of human evolution.⁸⁰ Adopting a more cautious approach than many of their historian colleagues, they seemed reluctant to challenge the consensus view held in the West, with one leading evolutionary biologist, Chen Jianshan, admitting that the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology were still in their infancy in China and thus lacked the necessary skills and resources to challenge these findings.⁸¹ The more conservative historian Zhou Yutong concluded in his 1947 history textbook that it was still too early to clearly determine the relationship between Peking Man and the Chinese race and its history.⁸²

The Chinese desire to locate an indigenous origin for its culture and people was a natural reaction to the ongoing threat of foreign imperialism. Yet one also finds here a latent tension between scientism and nationalism, or a globally valid yet hierarchical universalism and a primordial and wilfully more authentic form of particularism, and the attempt by Chinese intellectuals to navigate their own path in between these two poles.⁸³ On the one hand, Chinese intellectuals introduced new scientific methods and disciplines while breaking down the wall of isolation between the larger scientific community and themselves through new academic exchanges and joint projects with the West. This engagement with the West is reflected in the near-universal citation of foreign sources as empirical evidence and scientific authority for various positions. On the other hand, Chinese intellectuals also became increasingly sensitive to their perceived backwardness and inferiority in the eyes of their international colleagues and longed to promote their own people's interests. As the eminent geologist Weng Wenhao lamented in 1933, "Foreign scientists still can't help but have a degree of habitual disdain for Chinese scientific research."⁸⁴ Desiring to be both modern and patriotic, they sought to creatively "indigenize" (*bentuhua*) scientific categories and theories in order to apply them to the practical and everyday concerns of national development in China. This dilemma intensified throughout the course of the twentieth century as the Chinese state and its elites drew on the new technologies of state building to saturate and enclose national space while seeking to mobilize the masses against foreign encroachment (both physical and ideological). "Scientific truths do not have national borders," Weng Wenhao wrote again in 1938, "but scientific personnel, scientific data, and scientific workplaces all do."⁸⁵ In short, the search for indigenous roots in early twentieth-century China accompanied what Hon Tze-ki has astutely identified as the shift from "a hierarchy in time" to "a hierarchy in space,"⁸⁶ where the escalator-like evolution of transnational races toward civility and modernity was gradually complicated, and to some extent supplanted, by a fully bounded and mapped nation-state system in which individual countries struggled to either protect or expand their borders and resources while walling off their identity, culture, and history from outside influence.

THE SEARCH FOR UNITY: SINGULAR OR PLURAL?

In the West the monogenesis of mankind was the dominant paradigm until the mid-1800s. The rise of the modern discourse of race and Social Darwinism challenged this position, opening up the possibility that differ-

ent races descended from different sets of ancestors or even a different species of apes.⁸⁷ Once again, Liang Qichao led the way in introducing different theories of monogenism (*yiyuanshuo*) and polygenism (*duoyuanshuo*) to Chinese audiences, writing in a 1901 essay that while anthropologists claim the Christian creationist myth is nonsense (*wuji*), there remains considerable uncertainty, especially when one considers the difficulty of distinguishing individual races due to the long history of blood mixing through intermarriage and migration; but he admitted the following year that it was most common to divide the world's people into five distinct races (white, yellow, brown, black, and red).⁸⁸ For Liang the crux of the evolutionary struggle was the world's two main "historical races" (*lishi zhi renzhong*), the yellow and white races, and in particular their two most dynamic branches, the Teutons (Tiaodunren) and Chinese (Zhongguoren). In contrast, the anti-Manchu revolutionaries spoke of the monogenesis of a single, consanguineous Han race from the descendants of the ancient Yellow Emperor, purposefully excluding the Tungus, Mongols, Turks, and other nomadic "races of Siberia" in Zou Rong's 1903 classification but, interestingly, including the Tibetans, Siamese, Japanese, and Koreans as part of the "races of China" (Zhongguo renzhong).⁸⁹ From its inception, the modern articulation of Han was fraught with ambiguity. What was its relationship with the other "races" of China? Did it somehow include other lineages (*zu*) or even races (*minzu* or *renzhong*) in its own physical makeup, or was it racially pure? Did it evolve separately or as a part of some larger Chinese race/nation (Zhonghua minzu)? These questions had important political implications for the Chinese nation-state and were rigorously debated throughout the early twentieth century.

In his 1907 investigation into the history of the Chinese *minzu*, Liang drew on the authority of the German philologist Max Müller, in particular his famous quote that "blood is thicker than water, but language is thicker than blood," to argue that language is a better marker of human diversity than blood. Based on his analysis of linguistic as well as cultural differences among the ancient peoples of China, he concluded: "From its origins, today's Zhonghua minzu was never a single lineage (*zu*) but rather formed through the mixing of numerous different *minzu*."⁹⁰ He went on to identify eight distinct lineages that he contended gradually merged with the Yellow Emperor's Huazu lineage as it spread out from the Yellow River valley.⁹¹ Following the 1911 revolution, Liang Qichao continued his investigation into the composite nature of the Chinese people, stressing in 1922 that today's Zhonghua minzu was formed through a centuries-long process of natural assimilation as the superior Hua culture and people drew

neighboring peoples together in an organically evolving mosaic. Liang blamed Sima Qian's *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian) and other "old histories" for creating the false impression that all the descendants of the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties were "the blood posterity of a single common ancestor" and thus possessed a "single, pure bloodline."⁹² Yet, if one looks more closely at the historical record and considers the issue according to reason, Liang claimed that one discovers that each of the dynasties originated with different "small tribes" (*xiao buluo*) that eventually joined together in a tribal alliance to form the dynasties that became the "backbone" (*gugan*) of the Zhonghua minzu.⁹³

The following year, when outlining his provocative new research agenda for the study of ancient Chinese history, Gu Jiegang listed the destruction of the myth of common racial origins, what he later termed the "idol of race" (*zhongzu de ouxiang*), as the first item on his agenda.⁹⁴ Admitting that more work was required by anthropologists and archaeologists to sort out the actual origins of each ancient clan, Gu nevertheless claimed that the pre-Han dynasty classics made it clear that during the Zhou dynasty, various *minzu* worshiped their own ancestors and the Zhou and Shang dynasties did not consider themselves to be descendants from the same line. A pioneering deconstructivist of sorts, Gu claimed that the idol of race arose only after the forced political unification of the various Zhou kingdoms under the Qin and Han dynasties when political elites manufactured a myth of shared descent from the Yellow Emperor.⁹⁵ Republican-era historians constructed elaborate taxonomies of the complex ethnic composition of the Chinese nation-state. Building on the scholarship of Liang Qichao and Gu Jiegang, Lü Simian identified five nomadic and five southern minority lineages together with the Han majority and a few scattered Caucasoid lineages which formed China's unique "integrated ethnic heterogeneity" (*heji cuoza zhi zu*) in his 1934 study on the Chinese race. Due to its size and superior culture, the Han expanded centrifugally from their home in the Yellow River valley and absorbed and assimilated other lineages as the scope of its superior culture expanded. Despite the fact that Lü Simian's lineages covered the whole of the Republican geo-body, he did not attempt to link them together into an overarching narrative of common descent; rather, in the case of the Xiongnu, he explicitly rejected Sima Qian's claim that they were the descendants of the Xia and instead attempted to demonstrate the historical processes by which each region and its people "came onto the Chinese map" (*ru zhongguo bantu*) over the long course of Chinese history.⁹⁶

As noted previously, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and

then China proper in 1937 placed enormous political and psychological pressure on Chinese intellectuals to demonstrate the unity of its increasingly fractured polity. For many it seemed that the “saving of the nation” (*jiu-guo*) needed to take precedence over “personal enlightenment” (*qimeng*), legitimating a more overtly utilitarian and entrepreneurial form of scholarship.⁹⁷ In Lin Huixiang’s 1937 history of the Chinese *minzu*, for example, he explicitly linked the eight “contemporary *minzu*” in China with sixteen “historical *minzu*” weaving them together in an arabesque of biological and cultural links with the majority Huaxia-cum-Han *minzu* at its core (See Fig. 10.1).⁹⁸

Although Lin’s history sought to explicitly demonstrate the long history of racial melding that bound the Republic’s *minzu* together into an organic whole, he saw no need to link their ultimate origin back to a single *minzu*, clan, or prehistoric hominid. Here a latticework of physical connections overshadowed any single point of origin or purity. He joined other Chinese intellectuals in citing Peking Man as a possible indigenous source of Chinese origins, but there was little agreement on whether this provided evidence, as Qian Mu argued in 1940, for the plural origins of mankind, or its single origin, as Zhang Xuguang claimed in 1942.⁹⁹

At this stage, although most Chinese scholars agreed on the indigenous origins of the Chinese race, they remained sharply divided over the nature, meaning, and composition of its ancient beginnings. As the historian Zhang Xuguang noted, they were divided into two camps:

One group that argues that the Zhonghua *minzu*’s trunk and branches (*ganzhi*) shared a common progenitor in antiquity, and despite being referred to by different names throughout the course of its over 5,000 years of development, one can still trace its blood back to a single point of origin[.] . . . and another group that argues that today’s Zhonghua *minzu* can be traced back through history to different *minzu*, but as a result of their mutual contact and the gradual and natural trend of their molding together, they today comprise a single, large *minzu*.¹⁰⁰

Zhang Xuguang acknowledged that the reclusive Confucian philosopher Xiong Shili was the leading advocate of the former group, suggesting that his 1939 lecture series on Chinese history at the Guomindang Central Military Academy in Chongqing had a significant impact on the scholarly community.¹⁰¹ In his first lecture, Xiong cited the *Shiji* and other classical texts in fashioning a new ethnogenealogy linking each of the Zhonghua *minzu*’s five lineages (*wuzu*) back to the descendants of the Yellow Emperor while also mentioning that morphological comparisons of Peking Man and Beijing people today provide modern, scientific evidence of the shared

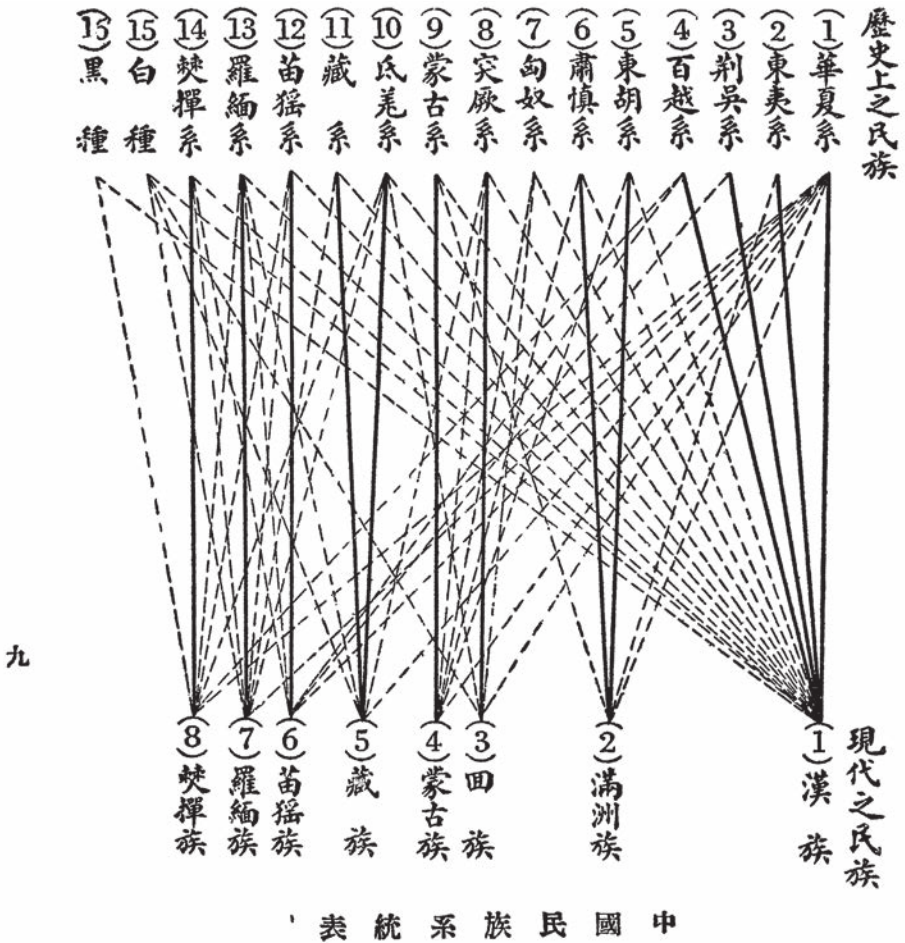


Figure 10.1. "Chart of the Chinese *minzu* tree." From Lin Huixiang, *Zhongguo minzu shi* (History of the Chinese *minzu*), 1937 (reprint, Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1996), vol. 1, 9.

genealogy founded in the Classics.¹⁰² While he did not name any individual or group in particular, Zhang Xuguang claimed the latter position was advanced by "a group of historians" who claimed that the Zhonghua *minzu* was the product of the accumulated melding and fusion of different *minzu* bloodlines throughout history and thus could not be traced back to any single point of origin.¹⁰³

Despite claiming neutrality in the debate, Zhang asserted that the former theory was having a positive impact on national unity and cohesion,

while the latter theory could easily result in ethnic strife and conflict by creating both consciousness and resentment of the Hanzu's natural ability to assimilate outside lineages. For Zhang, more than the shared genealogy contained in the Classics, the discovery of Peking Man and other fossilized remains in China convinced him of both the monogenesis of mankind and the Zhonghua minzu. While Gu Jiegang and other "doubters of antiquity" had torn holes in the myths and textual authority of the classics, Zhang claimed that the scientific weight of the archaeological evidence had already caused the monogenesis theory to become a "fixed conclusion" (*dinglun*).¹⁰⁴ Others, however, continued to ridicule this position, with the Paris-educated historian Li Dongfang asserting in 1943 that "it is impossible for such a large *minzu* to proliferate from a single person."¹⁰⁵ For Li both the Yellow Emperor and Peking Man were better thought of as symbols of the Chinese people's unity, suggesting instead that the Zhonghua minzu descended from a number of different patrilineal clans (*shizu*) that shared a common race. Similarly, the historian-turned-archaeologist Xu Bingchang claimed that the origins of both Chinese history and its *minzu* were plural rather than singular, and could be located with the ancient Yanhuang, Fengyan, and Miaoman clans who each possessed their own origins but met, struggled, merged, and assimilated until they gradually formed the Zhonghua minzu.¹⁰⁶

The gap between these two positions was echoed in *China's Destiny*, with the opening chapter of this widely read manifesto contending that all Chinese citizens shared a bond of consanguinity, ensuring that they "belong to not only the same *minzu* but also the same race."¹⁰⁷ This common bloodline was forged throughout history as the various lineages "were *either* descendants of a common ancestor *or* interrelated through marriage."¹⁰⁸ Although *China's Destiny* asserted that "the main and branch lineages all belong to the same bloodline,"¹⁰⁹ it also accepts the motley nature of Chinese blood. Rather than create some sort of myth of racial purity, like those popular in widely admired Nazi Germany,¹¹⁰ most Guomindang officials and theoreticians simply wanted to downplay or erase the contemporary and historical diversity of the Chinese citizens in order to promote national unity in the face of the Japanese invasion. Yet more extreme elements continued to insist that all the Republic's citizens ultimately arose from a single wellspring. Referring to the Zhonghua minzu as a "five-generation family living under the same roof with numerous concubine sons" and the "world's largest agnate," the Party propagandist Yu Jianhua asserted in his book-length study guide to the first chapter of *China's Destiny*: "In sum, although the Zhonghua minzu is like a very

complex patriarchal clan, the vast majority [of its complexity] disappeared without a trace very early on so that it now seems very pure."¹¹¹ Yu and others within the Party were attempting to stretch Sun Yat-sen's 1924 claim that the Han comprised a single, homogeneous *guozu* (race-state) around the entire, multiethnic body of the *Zhonghua minzu*.

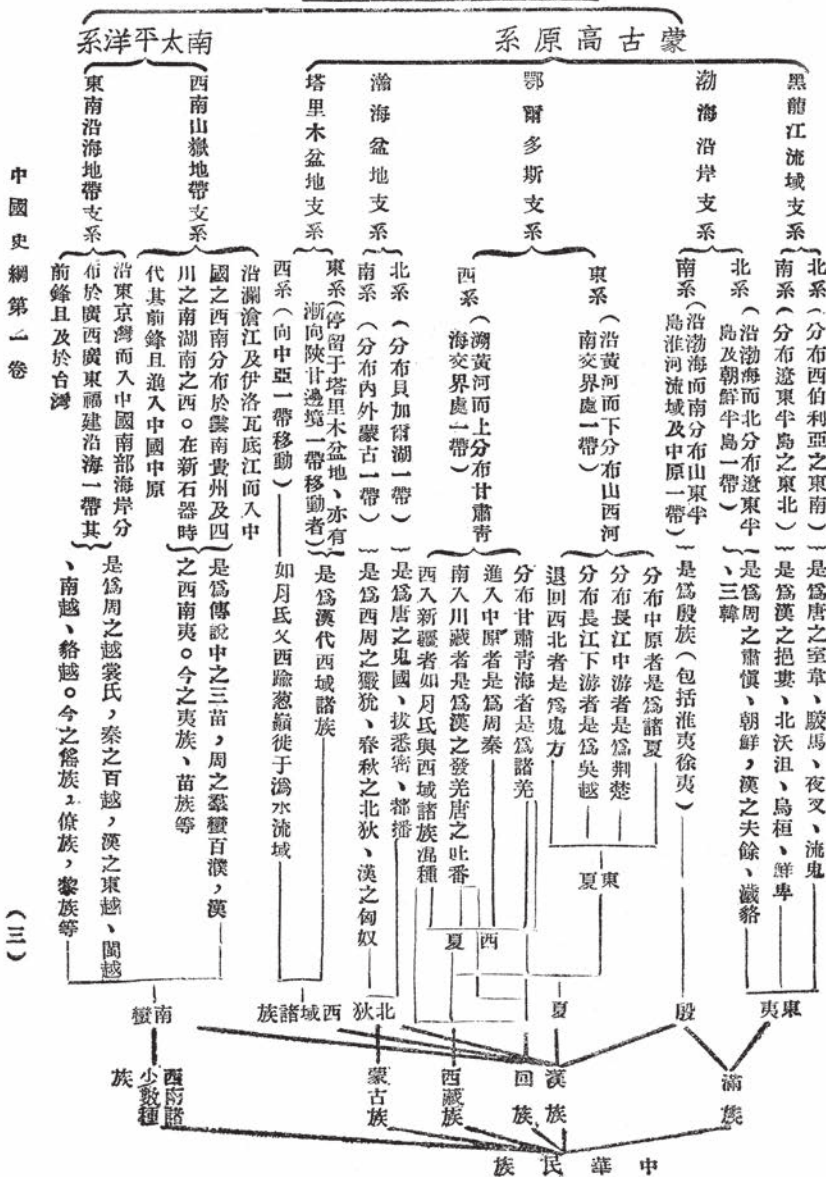
As a part of their critique of what the Communist ideologue Chen Boda identified as the fascist "racial blood-lineage theory" contained in *China's Destiny*,¹¹² Communist historians followed Lin Huixiang and Lü Simian in stressing the polyphyletic origins of the Chinese people. In an essay published in *Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang ribao*) shortly after the publication of the GMD manifesto, Lü Zhenyu declared, "There is no such thing as a racially pure *minzu*. Only the most primitive of men were able to preserve the purity of their blood. As a result, the racial theories of Hitler and the Japanese fascists are completely without historical or scientific basis."¹¹³ In contrast, he argued that the *Zhonghua minzu* were primarily the descendants of the Mongoloid race but also contained elements of the Malay and Caucasoid races among its non-Han minorities. Although they continued to stress the centrality of Peking Man to the monophyletic origins of the Han majority, Lü Zhenyu and fellow Communist historian Jian Bozan drew on the discovery of other ancient hominids, namely, Java Man and Hetao Man, to trace China's racial diversity back to separate Paleolithic sources.¹¹⁴ Yet, as Jian Bozan's 1943 chart, the "Chinese Racial Tree" (*Zhongguo renzhong xitong*) reveals, this diversity was contained within a firmly bounded and integrated racial schema that overshadowed any outside influences (See Fig. 10.2).

Several years later, Lü Zhenyu argued that class bias had distorted the historical analysis of Guomindang and foreign imperialist scholars. As such, it did not matter whether they argued for the monogenesis or polygenesis of mankind—both represented shoddy scholarship, with the former claiming that Chinese culture and civilization did not originate in China and the latter asserting that different races descended from different color chimpanzees. Lü contended that while man did not originate from a single source, he did develop through the same historical stages in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist theory of monism (*yiyuanlun*).¹¹⁵

Although Republican-era historians disagreed on whether the Chinese people shared a singular or plural origin in antiquity, they shared a common belief in the fact that the long history of physical interactions (migration, trade, war, sex, and marriage) between the sedentary "Han" peoples of the Central Plains and the nomadic, seminomadic, and swidden communities of the periphery forged a solid genetic, cultural, and psychologi-

中國人種的系統

附表二 中國人種系統表



中國史綱第一卷

(三)

Figure 10.2. "Chinese Racial Tree." From Jian Bozan, *Zhongguo shigang* (Outline of Chinese History) (1943; reprint, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1950), vol. 1, attachment 2.

cal foundation for the national unity of the current Chinese nation-state. Much of the debate centered on the temporal and spatial location of this unity—whether one chose to trace its roots back to a single, prehistoric, and indigenous hominid/mythical ruler or the gradual convergence of different transnational races around a firmly bounded “Chinese” geo-body. Here they put forward two competing paradigms for historicizing the political unity they all desired: some hoped that by locating this unity with a single ancient progenitor or a homogeneous Han race, they could paste over the ethnic cracks of the contemporary nation and contribute to its future cohesion; others argued that the nation’s ancient diversity was the source of its greatest strength and called for another round of assimilation, or, literally, “the infusion of fresh blood” (*xin xuetong de hunru*), as both Gu Jiegang and Lin Yutang termed it,¹¹⁶ to strengthen the physical virility and subjective consciousness of the Han core during its moment of greatest challenge.

In the end, it seems that we can best locate the modern discourse on Chinese origins somewhere in between the temptation to read Western notions of “race” into the rich taxonomies of human difference in China’s past and the expectation that culture would gradually displace race as the dominant hermeneutic of national unity in the “East Asian modern.”¹¹⁷ Republican intellectuals continued to imbricate analytical concepts such as *zhongzu*, *minzu*, *guomin*, *guozu*, and *renmin* as well as classificatory labels like *Han*, *Hua*, *Zhongguoren*, and *Zhonghua minzu* as they searched for the secret elixir of national awakening. This quest manifested a series of latent tensions as they sought to produce what Edward Bruner provocatively termed an “authentic reproduction,”¹¹⁸ one that sought to simultaneously locate Chinese national identity in the bounded, non-Western traditions of the past and the emergent, circulating categories of the modern.

11. Han at *Minzu's* Edges

*What Critical Han Studies Can Learn
from China's "Little Tibet"*

Chris Vasantkumar

I have tried to maintain the gap I perceive between the certainty encompassed by experts' designations of "racial" and the uncertainty or instability of deployments of the term by "natives." Certainty established one day could dissolve the next. This instability in local readings of the racial leads me to suspect that people are provisional in their racial assessments in a way that is missed, overlooked, or underestimated by most social scientists.

JOHN HARTIGAN JR., *Racial Situations*

CHINAS (IM)PROPER AND HAN OUT OF PLACE

Anthropologists of China's fifty-five minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*) have, over the last twenty years or so, often been confronted by accusations of impropriety—in the sense of divergence from accepted practice—the likes of which their counterparts who study the fifty-sixth *minzu*, the majority Han, have rarely been forced to confront. Even as scholars such as Patricia Berger, Pamela Crossley, Prasenjit Duara, Mark Elliott, James Millward, and Peter Purdue have foregrounded the degree to which the contemporary human landscape of the People's Republic is the complex product of the transition from the Manchu-ruled Qing empire to a formally multi-national but in practice Han-dominated nation-state, many anthropologists have remained wedded to Cold War-era notions of an isomorphism between Han culture and China.¹ Such visions of Chineseness as Hanness with local characteristics emerged in the context of research conducted by scholars such as G. William Skinner, Maurice Freedman, and Myron Cohen in the "residual Chinas"² that remained open to foreign fieldworkers after the fall of the Bamboo Curtain in 1949: Taiwan, the New Territories of Hong Kong, and the overseas communities of Southeast Asia, or the *nanyang*. By the time mainland China reopened to foreign anthropologists

in the early 1980s, a disciplinary common sense had emerged that held that an essentialized vision of Chinese culture as primarily encapsulated in family structure, lineage organization, ancestor worship, and other traditional religious practices was the proper object of anthropological study.

When anthropologists returned en masse to the PRC in the 1980s they were confronted with a version of Chineseness, the multi-"ethnic"³ legacy of Qing state building, that bore very little resemblance to Cold War visions of essentialized (Han) Chinese culture. One of the consequences of this disjuncture for the nascent field of Chinese minority studies was a constant questioning of the fundamental appropriateness—the propriety, in other words—of such inquiries by more established sectors of the discipline. Indeed, the frosty response to anthropological studies of Chinese minority nationalities has become something of a recurrent trope in the various monographs that have emerged on the subject since the publication of Dru Gladney's pathbreaking *Muslim Chinese* in 1991.⁴

The following example from the introduction to Erik Mueggler's superb ethnography, *The Age of Wild Ghosts*, is representative enough. Mueggler recounts some of the rejoinders leveled at his project by unnamed doyens of the China Studies establishment. "'Why study a minority when we know so little about the Han?' an eminent economic historian of China asked me," he writes. "'It's all very interesting, but is it China?' commented an ascendant anthropologist of China after a presentation on ritual in Zhizuo [his field site]."⁵ Mueggler suggests that this sort of suspicion about the appropriateness of studying China's minority nationalities has been fostered by a sense that the study of any locale or people is relevant only insofar as it sheds light on an implicitly Han Chinese cultural whole. "Studies of people now identified as 'minority nationalities,' it is assumed, can make little contribution to this enterprise. These peoples are either culturally distinct and thus not 'Chinese,' or they are in the process of being 'sinicized' and thus neither reliable representatives of Chineseness nor very interesting on their own."⁶

Alongside this wariness regarding the ability of anthropological studies of minority nationalities to contribute to understandings of Chinese culture as a whole—the notion that only studies of the Han can contribute to knowledge of "China Proper"⁷—there is also a parallel if less commented upon sense that the proper subject of anthropological studies of minority areas—of "China Improper" if you will—are minorities exclusively and not local Han who may happen to dwell in such regions. Compare Mueggler's account with the following passage from Mette Hansen's recent book, *Frontier People*, about Han settlers in minority areas.

Most Chinese ethnologists working in minority areas are concerned with minorities' cultural practices, and when presenting and explaining my topic of research in minority areas, or to people engaged with local minority policy and research, I often met reactions of surprise as to why I would not rather choose to focus on a minority. Minorities, I was often told, were "interesting" because they had "rich and colorful customs" which were unlike those of the Han and unlike my own—in other words, they were not "modern." One Han cadre explained [to] me that the Han "were nothing special" (*mei shenme teshu de*). One American anthropologist on the other hand laughingly said that he felt sorry for me having actually to do fieldwork among Han.⁸

At least two things should be readily apparent here. First, the division of labor between Han studies and minority studies that has historically shaped Chinese social science has to some degree been perpetuated in the practices of foreign scholars. Second, Han living in minority areas are the group that is rendered most invisible by the intersection of these disciplinary senses of propriety. Han in such places are, by virtue of their being out-of-place, unable to tell us anything about normative Hanness or Chineseness, nor can they be seen as contributing in any meaningful fashion to our understanding of minority places.⁹ This chapter seeks to both redress this invisibility of marginal Han in minority places and to argue for the importance of such interstitial groups to Critical Han Studies as an emergent intellectual project in no small part because they push us to reevaluate the usual forms of groupness (i.e., *minzu*) used to make sense of difference in contemporary China.

In this chapter I hope to accomplish two related but relatively distinct tasks: first, I seek to push China anthropology in general and Critical Han Studies in particular past a rigidly *minzu*-centric framework toward a more supple understanding of the textures and contexts of social difference in contemporary China that conceptualizes *minzu* as one of several crucial elements in composite, shifting, and situational constellations of social difference. Second, I want to bring recent work on the analytic dangers of abstract racial categories in the United States to bear on nascent projects of thinking through the racialness¹⁰ (or at least the *minzu*-ness) of the Han as an unmarked, majority category in the contemporary PRC. Doing so may help us avoid some of the more totalizing errors that have dogged Whiteness Studies in the United States. The element that binds these two projects together is an emphasis on the "local settings in which racial [and other intersecting] identities are articulated, reproduced, and contested."¹¹ This is not to suggest that *minzu* or race is inherently local¹²

but to note instead that translocal theories and practices of social difference are localized in particular ways; that accommodations with national policy or transnational terms are made on local among other terrains.

The balance of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first counterpoises John Hartigan Jr.'s recent work on whiteness in Detroit with ethnographic examples drawn from my fieldwork in northwest China. Read together, these different cases highlight the complex ways in which inter- and intragroup¹³ relations and distinctions result in the emergence of unstable blocs of sentiment, belonging, and exclusion. I focus particularly on how the processes by which local Han and Tibetans come to recognize common ground in their mutual distrust of the Hui simultaneously highlight the differences between local Han and their more urban(e) coethnics. The second half of the chapter employs a description of the sites and practices in which we can see the emergence of a tentative, ad hoc regional identity based on locally specific linguistic competence as an entry to an elaboration of a possible methodology for treating such emergent communities of sentiment or practice that goes beyond *minzu*-centric typologies to analyze the manifold factors of social difference that shape participation in new composite "units of common participation."

THEORETICAL DIS-ORIENTATIONS: WHITENESS OUT OF PLACE

John Hartigan Jr.'s work on whiteness in Detroit has compelling resonances with my studies of quotidian interethnic interaction—of the Han, that is, as one *minzu* among many—in Xiahe,¹⁴ a small, primarily Tibetan, Han, and Hui town in Gansu Province's Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Hartigan focuses on whites in a context where whiteness is not hegemonic: blackness is locally dominant. Hartigan is careful to note that "this is not to make the absurd assertion that whiteness is irrelevant in Detroit." Instead, he suggests, "its operations do not possess a generically 'unmarked' or 'normative' character." As a result, the out-of-placeness of whiteness, the markedness of the usually unmarked,¹⁵ highlights the degree to which normative, totalizing abstractions of black and white fail to capture the complex lived experience of what he calls the "racial-ness of whites,"¹⁶ not just in Detroit, but in America more generally.¹⁷ "Since whiteness assumes a static order of white dominance and black subordination," he writes, "I find the racialness of whites to be a more relevant subject of inquiry."¹⁸ For Hartigan, the move from whiteness to the racialness of whites is meant to denote a movement from static abstractions to

dynamic, lived, provisional workings out of social difference in particular contexts. The import of this shift is twofold: it bears both specifically on my own research in an out-of-the-way,¹⁹ minority-Han place on China's northwest periphery and more generally on the matter of what the vicissitudes of whiteness as an analytic of social differentiation in America can teach scholars attempting to construct Critical Han Studies on an analogous basis. In place of static abstractions of Han and non-Han, Hartigan's example suggests that sinologists might benefit from addressing the dynamic and disordered *minzu*-ness of the Han.

Hartigan seeks to trouble static, settled conceptions of racial categories in the United States, suggesting that "considering the specific circumstances of racial situations . . . can counter the allegorical tendencies that render people's lives as abstractions, such as 'white' and 'black.'"²⁰ I propose that heeding Hartigan's suggestion may be of assistance in unpacking what Stevan Harrell has called the "'thusness' about Hanness that resists analysis or even data-gathering."²¹ Harrell himself notes the parallelism between the categories in question: "Hanness is like Whiteness in the United States; it is an unmarked characteristic that can be delineated only in contrast to an ethnic other."²² Yet Hartigan departs from Harrell's formulation on two significant counts. Where the latter focuses specifically on intergroup distinctions in a primarily ethnic idiom, the former argues cogently for an attention, first, to class²³ and other forms of difference that are complexly entangled with ethnoracial²⁴ categories—attention, in other words, to composite idioms of intergroup distinction—and, second, to the role played by *intra*-racial distinctions in the constructions of notions of self and other, of marked and unmarked.

Ethnoracial forms of identification such as *minzu* are fundamentally not disentangle-able from other manifold axes of differentiation that co-occur in locally conditioned contexts. Yet, Hartigan laments, analysts of whiteness in the United States have been far too hasty to buy into the "abstract racial figures" that dominate thought on race in the United States, "condensing the specificities of peoples' lives into strictly delimited categories—'whites' and 'blacks,' to name the most obvious."²⁵ In place of these received abstractions, Hartigan argues for "grasping the instances and situations in which the significance of race spills out of the routinized confines of these absolute figures" in order to "begin to rethink the institutionalization of racial difference and similarity."²⁶ In place of an uncritical use of received categories, he proposes an inductive method that "resist[s] the urge to draw abstract conclusions" about social categories.²⁷

While he refers to whiteness and blackness, his insights can be profitably extended to Hanness, which, Harrell reminds us, is besieged by similar sorts of conceptual absolutes. Adapting Hartigan's project to the terrain of Han Studies involves replacing (or at least supplementing) efforts to "establish what makes Whiteness [Hanness] unique," with attention to its heterogeneity and implication in larger matrices of social differentiation.²⁸ In doing so we can prevent Critical Han Studies from being burdened with totalizing categories that overdetermine local instances of ambiguity. We can keep the categories from preforming the terrain of inquiry. If we fail in this endeavor we will not so much be analyzing as producing a particular vision of the topography of human difference in contemporary China.

In advocating this sort of approach, I am not suggesting that racialized abstractions like black and white, Han and minority, can simply be dropped from the picture. The local negotiation of racial, or *minzu*, meanings is itself shaped by the abstractions of received categories. The point, instead, is to note that these abstractions are not the only game in town and indeed that local social interactions can "reveal the wide gap between the clarity of racial [or *minzu*] abstractions and the often confusing contingencies of everyday life."²⁹ Anthropologists and other scholars of China would be well served to open their analyses to the possibility that much like race in Hartigan's account,³⁰ *minzu* "is negotiated through rhetorical identities and labels that hold 'open an interpretive space in which everyday events are taken as a test of principles, and . . . "meanings" are asserted not in the certainty of an indicative mode that claims to fully represent objects but in the indeterminacy of the subjunctive mode of 'as if.'"³¹ In such a situation, the "ability to think through or negotiate the significance of race [*minzu*] . . . develops out of *recursive* readings of events in everyday life. . . . [W]hat [one] find[s] out about race in one situation shapes how [one] engage[s] in subsequent social interactions."³² In place of a hard-and-fast coherence of abstract categories, Hartigan proposes a situational and case-based approach to make sense of racial (and, by extension, *minzu*) discourses and processes.

Below, I present an extended treatment of what one might call "*minzu* situations," which I then analyze with an eye toward the ways in which the contingencies of everyday life and of "local sociality"³³ muddy the abstractions of received categories. Before I turn to an extended treatment of ethnographic examples, however, a further word about the local is in order. In *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China*, Stevan Harrell notes the following evolution in his understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and the local.

When I first wrote, in a very formulaic and simplistic manner about the specific local contexts of ethnic relations [“Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State”], I ended up by paraphrasing the former U.S. House Speaker Tip O’Neill, proclaiming that “all ethnicity is local.” Like O’Neill discussing politics, I suspect, I was speaking a half-truth to emphasize a point. All ethnicity *is* local, in the sense that every person who considers him or herself a member of an ethnic collectivity does so in the context of interaction in a local community. But at the same time, all ethnicity, like all politics, is not *just* local. People in the modern world of nation-states are members of nationally—and often internationally defined ethnic collectivities of which their local communities are a part, and the dialectical interaction between local, national and cosmopolitan discourses is what shapes their lives as ethnic citizens of modern nations.³⁴

I dwell on this point at length because I want to be very careful to emphasize in my discussion of the contingencies and complications of Hanness and other *minzu*-nesses on local terrain that I am conceptualizing the local not as characterized by separation from the wider world but as signaling particular instances of the localization of thoughts, practices, and institutions that exist and circulate simultaneously on a multiplicity of spatial scales. As Harrell notes later in *Ways of Being Ethnic*, “ethnic identity and ethnic relations for the Han communities around Liangshan are compounded of local, everyday relations between themselves and their *minzu* neighbors, mixed with their ideological connection to that billion-strong constructed entity known as the Han people.”³⁵ Hanness and other *minzu*-nesses are negotiated dialectically in the context of particular articulations between local and more-than-local frameworks—at the intersection, in Andersonian terms, of imagined and face-to-face communities.³⁶ Indeed, a salient feature of the *minzu* situations I detail below is the way in which local and translocal frameworks do not simply crosscut but actively short circuit each other such that the factors that shape comities between Han and Tibetans in Gannan are used by cosmopolitan Han from elsewhere as evidence of their fundamental difference from and superiority to both minority nationalities and their own peasant coethnics. Local inter-*minzu* comities in other words can be productive of (and be products of) translocal intra-*minzu* distinctions. With this caveat in mind, I now turn to ethnographic examples of *minzu* situations in and around Gannan.

LOCAL ENMITIES AND COMITIES

First, a comment on the nature of these ethnographic examples. Below I present multiple incidents in succession with a minimum of intervening

analysis. I do so for a number of reasons. First, I defer more formal discussion of each incident in order to, as Hartigan puts it in the epigraph to this chapter, “maintain the gap I perceive between the certainty encompassed by experts’ designations of ‘racial’ and the uncertainty or instability of deployments of the term by ‘natives.’” Second, rather than immediately “cooking” these relatively “raw” ethnographic moments into familiar, formalized abstractions, I want to let the contours of locals’ racial understandings emerge through an accumulation of detail, piling multiple cases up against each other to give the reader a sense of the confluences and divergences of local *minzu* situations.

One evening in mid-November 2003, I was sitting in an Internet café on the main street in Xiahe, talking, in Mandarin, to the Han *laoban* (boss) and a Tibetan policeman, both in their early to mid-twenties, both fluent in Amdo Tibetan (though only the latter was able to read it). They were asking me about studying Tibetan in America, and I told them that in most instances what was taught was not the Amdo but the Lhasa dialect. In response to this, the *laoban* observed, “When *we* speak [Amdo dialect], Lhasa people can understand a little bit, but when they speak we cannot understand at all.” He and the policeman both agreed that Amdo-ge is the “Mandarin (*putonghua*, lit., “common language”) of this region. After this discussion, I turned to e-mail, and the policeman watched the *laoban* play a medieval quest-themed game. After a few minutes, two foreigners came in and promptly left in a huff when they weren’t able to be seated next to each other (because one of the computers wasn’t working properly). Before they stormed out, they asked in Chinese, “Why are all Chinese people no good?!” (*Wei shenme suoyoude Zhongguoren buxing?!*).

Naturally this prompted the *laoban* and the police officer to try to figure out where these impatient foreigners were from. Despite my protestations that they in fact had been speaking Spanish to each other, after some deliberation the cop and the *laoban* reached the conclusion that they had to be Israelis.³⁷ From there, my attention waned, though I was vaguely aware that the conversation had turned to Arabs, Palestine, and Arafat. Eventually, the cop turned to me, drew my attention, and whispered conspiratorially, “The Hui are the ones we Tibetans dislike the most” (*Women Zangzu zui bu xihuan de shi Huizu*). When queried as to why, his reply was to the point: “Religious differences” (*zongjiao butong*).

Around the same time, I discussed intermarriage and other aspects of interethnic relations with Wenhe, a Han hotel caretaker married to a Tibetan woman.

CV: How did your parents react to your wanting to marry Drolkar? Did you have any trouble?

WH: At first they were opposed, my father especially, but I said, “Han-people are people, and Tibetans are people too! We’re basically the same.” Eventually my family welcomed her, but by that point, my father had died.

CV: Would it have been possible for you to marry a Hui?

WH: No, not at all! Han marrying Tibetans is very common, but both Han and Tibetan steer well clear of such interactions with the Hui.

CV: Why?

WH: Because of religious differences: Han are Daoist, Tibetans are Buddhist, Hui are Muslim. You could even marry a Christian but not a Hui.

CV: Why not?

WH: Well, for starters they are different from us—we don’t have culture. We aren’t worldly wise. Their brains on the other hand are sharp (*Women meiyou wenhua, meiyou jianshi. Tamen naozi hao*). And . . . they don’t eat pork! The Han eat pork. Do *you* eat pork? [You eat pork, don’t you?]

CV: Yes, of course I eat pork. But you have Hui friends, don’t you?

WH: Yes.

CV: Well, what are they like?

WH: They’re okay, I guess, but their hearts are all about money. Money is their real friend (*Qian shi tamen de pengyou*). They are like Easterners in the sense that they will swindle you (*qipianle ni*) and then act as if nothing happened. Han and Tibetan aren’t like that: friendship comes before money.

Later, we shifted to talking about Iraq and the terrible stories of American soldiers dying every day. And he talked about China being peaceful:

America seems so violent, but China is peaceful. To keep it this way it is important to have a Han ruler. All the emperors and chairmen have been Han, and that is important because we Han (*women da Hanzu*; lit., “us folks of the great Han nationality”) are honest (*chengshi*) and treat all people the same. Now if you had a Hui in charge [as was the case in the warlord era of the early twentieth century] they would put the Hui first and everyone else second. Some minority nationalities are fierce or hard to deal with (*lihai*) because their brains are so simple (*jiandan*). They just do as they please and only listen to authority when it suits them (*suibian bu ting hua*).

CV: I'm surprised you feel such enmity towards the Hui. Where does that all come from?

WH: Well, they are fierce: in 1923 when my grandfather was young, they came down from Linxia and killed many Han. And nowadays they make a killing in business.

Xiao Liao is a Han teacher in his mid-twenties who originally hails from near Linxia—the center of Islamic culture in Gansu. Linxia and its environs are places that Xiahe Tibetans experience with uniform discomfort: cultural differences and Hui hard-sell commercial tactics combine to inculcate a powerful dislike. Xiao Liao on the other hand thinks of Linxia as home. Still, he could confirm the powerful social strictures that keep Han and Zang separate from the Hui. The village where his family currently lives is split roughly fifty-fifty between Han and Hui, and the relationship between members of the two *minzu* is “peaceful.” The Hui there don’t celebrate Spring Festival (Chunjie); “They have their own New Year.” Even though the relationship between *minzu* is peaceful, intermarriage between Han and Hui simply does not happen. When queried as to why not, he replied, “They have their own way of life. They don’t eat pork.” And it’s hard to overcome the weight of custom—the long tradition of Han marrying Han. “Even a very modern person” would find it too hard to contemplate. Xiao Liao had been teaching English and Chinese at the Tibetan middle school in Xiahe for over a year (in fact he attended Gansu College of Technology at the same time as Teacher Dorje) and had gained some insight into local conditions. I asked him about Han-Tibetan intermarriage in Xiahe, and he said examples were “very few,” but he was quick to add that Han and Tibetan life is very similar. “We both believe in Buddhism,” he said. The only difference is the extent or depth of belief (i.e., Tibetans believe more).

Dorje, a Tibetan primary school teacher in a nearby village, described a similar sense of “religious comity”³⁸ between Tibetans and local Han, though he qualified this observation with the suggestion that despite such a convergence, intergroup boundaries remain difficult to overcome. Still, relations between Han and Tibetans were far more amicable than those between Tibetans and Hui. Teacher Dorje told me that in the town where he grew up, in nomad country, there used to be several Hui families who ran restaurants. When they spoke they sounded just like Tibetan nomads. They even looked like nomads. Now his hometown is purely Tibetan; once transportation improved, the Hui moved to larger population centers. He

had a friend he went to school with who was Hui. His family moved to Labrang (i.e., Xiahe) a while back. In places with small populations, *minzu* are often schooled together because it would be too difficult logistically to set up parallel school systems for such a small number of people.

We talked more about Hui–Tibetan relationships. On an individual basis, Hui are fine and can even be pleasant: Lao Ma, who runs the shop that backs onto the Drolkar Guesthouse, for example, is a good guy: “Whenever I go to buy something, he is always joking.” Problems arise in Teacher Dorje’s estimation when you have to deal with people on a collective basis because of “religious differences.” With regard to religion, Tibetans and Han are the same: both are Buddhist. But the Hui have their own thought (*sixiang*) and habits (*xiguan*). As a result there is room for misunderstanding. There is no attempt at conversion, but still there is little understanding on either side. Interestingly, this rhetoric of clear differences in thought (and in kinds of thought) and habit as the basis for the failure of intergroup communication is strikingly similar to that used by Han urbanites to explain the backwardness of Tibetan nomads and nomad places.

In terms of the connections between the Han and Tibetans, the differences are less pronounced. Still, very few people have any understanding that can cross the boundaries between communities. When I ask about differences within the Tibetan community, Dorje plays them down—“First is religion”—as all Tibetans here are, by definition, Buddhists.³⁹ This in turn goes a long way toward promoting unity. True, there is linguistic difference between Lhasa and Amdo and small differences in the style of local dress that the educated eye can pick out as marking place of origin. Customs can differ slightly as well, but the differences in his opinion are certainly less pronounced than the similarities. I ask about differences, here in Xiahe, between city folk and nomads, and he says people who live in the cities are more “with it” (*bijiao xianshi*) and relatively Hanified (*bijiao Hanhua*), whereas the lives of herdsmen have not changed that much. I ask whether life is better in Xiahe or Lanzhou, and without hesitation he says Lanzhou, because facilities and technology are both superior, as are educational opportunities.

INTRAETHNIC DISTINCTIONS ON TRANSLOCAL TERRAIN: PEASANTS, MINORITIES, AND COSMOPOLITANS

Seventy years ago Ekvall noted, “The Chinese of the border country—possibly influenced by the religious fervor of the Tibetans—appear more

religious minded than their fellow countrymen" in areas closer to China "proper."⁴⁰ This seems to be true to some extent even today. Thus while Han (and Tibetan) informants from southeastern Gansu were often quick to signal the shared beliefs of Han and Tibetan, Han from metropolitan areas outside the region distinguished themselves from minorities (and, by extension, from their peasant coethnics) in a different manner—stressing the ability of the Han to transcend the local or ethnic beliefs that imprisoned less enlightened others. Often these comments incorporated both religious and dietary elements.

On the train returning from Shanghai to Lanzhou, I met a graduate student at the Gansu Social Science Institute who said the Hui, as a shop owning class, are "China's Jews" (*Zhongguo de Youtai ren*): "They don't eat pork for religious reasons just like the Tibetans don't eat fish for religious reasons. Us Han, we don't have any religion, so we can eat anything."

These comments echoed the words of two high-level administrators at Lanzhou University who at a dinner hosted by my local adviser had this exchange in the course of a discussion of minority life in Gansu.

A: "All Hui believe in Islam, all Tibetans believe in Buddhism. Us Han, we're free to believe whatever we want—"

B (interrupting): "Or disbelieve whatever we want."

Further, even when educated Han discuss matters that in a minority context would be mapped as "religion"—such as burnt offerings as an effective means of mediating between the material and spirit realms—they will gloss these with different terms. During one of my stints in Lanzhou around the time of *Qingming Jie* (Tomb Sweeping Day), I was walking with a Han academic colleague whose father had recently died. As we were crossing the street he pointed to a store we had just passed and noted that it was selling money that people burn to send to their relatives in the other world. "I just sent some to my father the other day; it's a good way of connecting the two worlds," he commented. After sitting through so many conversations between educated Han about how they are free to disbelieve whatever they want, I was astounded by his statement but hid my surprise well enough to ask, "Is this practice considered religion (*zongjiao*) or culture (*wenhua*)?" He replied that it's neither but instead is folk custom (*minsuo*). The occasional dabbling in (Han) folk culture, however, does not seem to imperil the cosmopolitan status of the educated (Han) urbanite. By contrast, minorities and Han peasants are much more likely to find themselves imprisoned by essential notions of their irrational proclivities.

This distinctive sense of the cosmopolitan freedom of the Han extends to matters of diet. One day in February 2004, on my way to a friend's home in rural Qinghai, I was given a lift in a truck in which one of the other passengers was an extremely garrulous fellow who proceeded to harangue me about the glories of the Maoist era, the coming class war, and laterally the *minzu*-scape of northwest China and the world in general: "You know, the great Han people (*da Hanzu*) are China's most ancient people (*zui gualao de minzu*). We go all the way back to the Tang and the Song!" Of course, he is himself Han; his family's *laojia* (ancestral home) is Kaifeng in Henan Province. His parents came out west to Qinghai in the 1950s to work in the oil fields and will return to Henan when they retire. At a certain point he turned to the topic of the worst (*zui xiade*) *minzu*.

"I'll tell you: the worst *minzu* in the world has to be the Muslims (*yisilan minzu*, "Islamic nationalities"). All the places they run outside of China are poor; the people have nothing to eat because all they care about is making war. Also, they don't eat pork!" We pass a boy with a large dog on a leash.

The driver, who had remained silent until now, says, "Some dog!"

The Henanese fellow retorts, "Looks tasty!" He pauses to think for a moment and continues, "You Americans don't eat dog, huh?"

"No, not so much."

"Well, we Han eat whatever meat we want."

At this, the driver jokes, "It's almost unseemly to eat that way" (*chide tai luan le*).

The knife of dietary distinctions cuts both ways. On the one hand, it can imprison minorities in irrational beliefs and practices. On the other hand, it can free the Han from the constraints of localized or particularistic folk culture (*fengsu*) or superstition and hence allow them to be fully realized, cosmopolitan members of Chinese society. Or at least this is how it can work in theory. In practice this freedom is curtailed by economic constraints and regional particularities such that only urban Han are truly cosmopolitan enough to break free of the shackles of tradition.

ANALYSIS

It is useful at this point to contrast the sorts of distinctions, both inter- and intraethnic, drawn by Han from urban areas to those made by their rural coethnics. Where the latter are keen to emphasize their commonalities with local Tibetan populations, stressing among other things their

shared belief in Buddhism and the relative ease of intermarriage compared with similar unions with Muslims, urban Han draw more absolute lines between the prison of minority superstition and the cosmopolitan ease of metropolitan life. Urban Han usually frame distinctions between cosmopolitanism and rural idiocy in ethnic terms. In many pronouncements concerning religious, dietary, and other restrictions, urban Han distinguish between the ability of Han *in general* to transcend local particularisms and minorities' inabilities to do the same. By virtue of being Han, their argument runs, we can eat what we want, we can believe what we choose, whereas non-Han are subject to the dictates of tradition, dietary prohibitions, or religious proscription.

Yet it also seems clear that pronouncements of cosmopolitan freedom have not only ethnic but also regional and class components. That is, poor and/or rural Han are as likely as not to be lumped in with minorities in contradistinction to developed urbanites. The same sorts of classlike processes that have pushed some Han into marginal lives on the grasslands⁴¹ are brought into articulation with subtle indices of Quality (*suzhi*),⁴² and with the topography of official development schemes that map people and places in terms of their relative advancedness and backwardness (*fada* and *luohou*, respectively). As a result, understanding these pronouncements solely in *minzu*-centric terms fails to capture the composite constellations of social difference actually being mobilized. Comments about disbelief and access to strange epicurean delights index not just *minzu* boundaries, traditionally construed, but a whole series of allied but shifting elements of larger constellations of social difference. Ethnicity is not the only axis of belonging and exclusion.

Further, on a local basis, marginal Han may see themselves as more effectively disempowered by their location on terrains of class and region than empowered by their *minzu* locations. The behindness that local Han feel so acutely is composed of a complex amalgam of regional, moral, and economic assumptions. A framework that would seek to understand all Han from a notion of original Han privilege clearly would obscure more in this instance than it would reveal. Further, rather than subsume all other modes of differentiation within a notion that *minzu* is what really matters, it is incumbent upon scholars of China in general and of Critical Han Studies in particular to expand our analytic compass beyond the narrow confines of official *minzu* categories. In doing so it becomes clear that Han/non-Han distinctions are not merely about *minzu*. Such an approach pushes us to attend not just to received abstractions but also to emergent forms of belonging and exclusion, constellations of social differentiation in

which *minzu* may or may not centrally figure. It is to one such emergent form to which this chapter now turns.

LOCAL COSMOPOLITANISMS AND TRANS-MINZU CONTEXTS

During my fieldwork in Xiahe conducted episodically between 2003 and 2007, I noticed that something interesting was going on in terms of a local refiguring of metropolitan language ideology. If one looked closely, one could see a regional speech community that transcends ethnic identification coalescing around the Amdo dialect of Tibetan (Chinese, *Anduohua*; Tibetan, *'A-mdo-skad*). In this refiguring, Amdo Tibetan may be circumscribed geographically and marked in important ways by class inequality (in some ways it is the shared language of the poor), but it has come to mirror Mandarin, the national language, in at least one important way: it is relatively open in terms of its possible constituencies. To be able to speak Amdo dialect is to be marked as a local.⁴³ Many (but not all) individuals who deem themselves "locals," whether Hui Muslim storekeepers, Han hoteliers, laborers, and waiters, or Tibetans of various stripes, can speak Amdo dialect and almost all outsiders cannot. Or at least this is what locals liked to tell me. Yet I think it is important to take their claims seriously because they can help undo romantic nationalist notions of China (i.e., of the fifty-six *minzu* living together in harmonious and distinctly non-hierarchical bliss) and begin to provide critical perspective on the sort of politics of the national-linguistic possible that conspires to prompt local Han to say things like, "Hearing our Amdo Tibetan dialect spoken makes me feel at ease" (*Ting women anduo zangyu jue de hen shufu*).

Recall the conversation with the Tibetan policeman and the Han Internet café manager in which both agreed that "Amdo dialect is the *Putonghua* of this region." As readers of this chapter will likely be aware, *Putonghua*, the official term for Mandarin, means "common speech." What we generally call "Mandarin Chinese" (and is often termed *hanyu*, or the language of the Han, in everyday speech), then, is officially ethnically unmarked. In theory, as a national language, it is open to all who can master it.⁴⁴ In practice, many on China's margins often speak it as a second language or not at all. While it is explicitly the language of technology, tourism, and development and has colonized these aspects of local Tibetan vocabulary, it does not always serve as the basis for quotidian interaction. That is to say, common speech is not held equally in common by all its potential speakers. A language ideology in which there is a one-to-one mapping

between “the Chinese language” and the Chinese nation-state conceals what Michael Silverstein has called “everyday plurilingualism.”⁴⁵

The prevalent language ideology⁴⁶ of China in the era of the “Harmonious Society” (*hexie shehui*) is one that seeks to eliminate the barriers presented to communication by recondite topolects (*fangyan*, lit., “place or locality speech,” so termed because place rather than ethnicity is the salient axis of differentiation). In most mappings of these topolects, speaking infra-standard versions of Chinese is the primary cause for developmentalist concern. Minority languages rarely figure in such schemas but are at least afforded some measure of legitimacy by virtue of their association with valorized forms of (consumable) traditional culture. Further, almost invariably, minority languages are assumed to be the particular province of minorities, left unspoken by Han. The many (but not all) *fangyan* that are mapped as substandard versions of Mandarin on the other hand are thought to be “hard to listen to” (*hen nanting*), as well as emblematic of an overabundance of particularism that can only stand in the way of unfettered communication across distances in contemporary China. But on a basic level, both minority languages and substandard Mandarin are not thought to be potential bases for communication between multiple constituencies. In contrast to Putonghua, which is thought to be productive of an ethnically unmarked public, minority languages and Mandarin topolects are thought to be imprisoned within their particular settings, unable to speak across boundaries of ethnicity or place.

This, then, is precisely why the suggestion that Amdo Tibetan is to some degree the Putonghua of the region is so provocative. Such a claim highlights the degree to which “local” languages⁴⁷ can be productive of particular, situated, discrepant *cosmopolitanisms* that exist in tension with official mappings of ethnically marked and unmarked spaces. Further, it suggests that an overreliance on *minzu*-based typologies that take for granted the ways in which official categories carve up marginal populations can potentially obscure tentative but real movements toward “units of common participation,”⁴⁸ based as much on the flows across ethnic and other boundaries as on the maintenance of those boundaries. This is emphatically not to say that *all* locals get along or that this emergent sense of an Amdo dialect-based regional speech group opens up some sort of utopian space for the reworking of cultural domination. Rather it is to foreground the need to attempt to understand the warm feelings some Han and Hui profess toward a Tibetan language. It is to question the primacy of the relationship between one language and one people by attempting to push the national and regional landscapes of social difference beyond *minzu* politics.

To illustrate the form such trans-*minzu* contexts may take, I present the example of the Labrang Monastery Restaurant (since closed), which occupied a prime space at the eastern edge of the eponymous monastery during my stay from summer 2003 to spring 2004. If one ventured across its threshold on a cold autumn or winter night, as I came to be in the habit of doing, one would have been confronted by a scene illegible under a *minzu*-centric lens. One would have been greeted and seated by a Han waiter from Khajjar near Hezuo; one would have dined on *qingzhen* (Muslim) noodles prepared by a Hui cook from Linxia (who would sit and eat with the staff and chat with the customers when he was finished for the night but might perhaps quarrel with their television viewing choices, especially if they involved pairs figure skating); and when one rose to settle one's accounts, one's bill would be tabulated by a middle-aged Tibetan from Ganjia. The clientele consisted almost entirely of Tibetan nomads who conversed with the staff almost exclusively in Tibetan. As Gombo, one of the regular customers was wont to say, "We have all three *minzu* here."

This is not always how things happen in Gannan: there is certainly tension and a fair amount of mistrust between members of different *minzu*,⁴⁹ just as there is between city folks and pastoralists, and so on. Yet we, as anthropologists of China, and of Hanness, have to adjust our expectations so that this vision of Han, Hui, and Tibetan working together, eating together, and communicating in Amdo dialect, as rare and ephemeral as it may be, is intelligible within our understandings of how China works. The larger question then becomes how best to go about doing so. The approach I suggest is a mixture of old and new. I bring Max Gluckman's notion of "social situation" into articulation with a modified version of Meyer Fortes's "units of common participation." I supplement these with a latent post-Marxist emphasis on the manifold, powered nature of the axes of social difference that enable and constrain contexts of commingling, conceptualizing social conjunctures as "consisting of multiple axes of oppression which create blurred, shifting, contextual boundaries between dominant and subordinate."⁵⁰

THEORETICAL REORIENTATIONS: FROM *MINZU* POLITICS TO "UNITS OF COMMON PARTICIPATION"

Let us pause here to consider the ways in which dominant Cold War-era anthropological approaches to China—especially those shaped by the influence of Maurice Freedman—were modeled on mainstream structural-functional work on Africa, on the lineage paradigm in particular.⁵¹ Even

when the barriers to foreign research in the People's Republic started to crumble in the 1980s, the new projects and concerns that resulted from the new research (minorities studies among them) have had to reckon with the legacies of the Cold War. Where totalizing models derived in no small part from Freedman's classic work on the lineage system have proved problematic to apply in studying the PRC as a "unified, multi-ethnic state," I suggest that another model of inquiry derived from the African contexts of British social anthropology can help us to reenvision the study of China, Chineseness, and the Han in important ways. By departing from Gluckman's work on social situations and from early efforts to understand "culture contact" in colonial Africa rather than from more orthodox structural-functionalist genealogies, we can formulate an approach to the peoples of China that takes as its focus the situated interrelationships between the members of multiple groups, ethnic and otherwise, that crosscut, refigure, or reinforce the boundary work that shapes contemporary Chinese society.

Thus in place of recent studies that have taken official ethnic categories, their limits and their productivities, as their central focus, I argue for the usefulness of revisiting older ways of making sense of social situations that took as their purview the complex interrelationships between groups freighted in studies of culture contact. Early anthropological studies of culture contact in Africa emerged out of the colonial milieu of the 1930s, replacing an exclusive focus on African social systems with an a posteriori attention to a composite colonial landscape. Where first-generation anthropologists had scrupulously expunged all vestiges of Western influence from their accounts, this new work on culture contact took the confrontations and compromises of colonialism as its purview. For the purposes of this chapter, two key texts from this period are Max Gluckman's analysis of social situations and Meyer Fortes's description of units of common participation.⁵² A method inspired by Gluckman's analysis of the social situation that presented itself at the Malungwana drift one morning in 1938 does not seek to police the borders of identity and difference but rather to trace them, to tease out their disjunctures and intersections. Thus the object of study is not some Uber-Chineseness (whether cast as culture or society) that can be discovered to varying degrees in "Chinese" populations; instead, the point is to construct provisional and limited understandings of what Chineseness (and laterally Hanness) can mean in particular social situations.⁵³ Thus Freedman's observation about the overseas Chinese, that "countries contain and condition their Chinese,"⁵⁴ can be expanded to the PRC itself.

Here, Fortes's notion of units of common participation can be of use.

"To study culture contact as a dynamic process," Fortes writes, "the anthropologist must work with communities rather than customs. His unit of observation must be a unit of life and not of custom—a village, a town, a settlement, a unit of common participation in the everyday political, economic and social life."⁵⁵ This focus on units of common participation rather than on presumptively shared customs or traits has relevance even today for the anthropology of Chinese nationalities.⁵⁶ Where Fortes seems to be predisposed to favor certain normative kinds of community (i.e., the village) as being a priori worthy of study, I seek to open up the notion entirely by allowing units of common participation to emerge in the context of field research.

In place of a fixation on the cultural stuff that marks populations as distinctly "Chinese," anthropologists of contemporary China would do well, whether they study minorities, the Han, or both, to pay attention to the units of common participation—now no longer conceived in exclusively geographic or communitarian terms—that bring together (or compel apart) members of diverse groups, ethnic or otherwise, in Chinese society. Precisely by attending to these sites of flows across the boundaries of collective identity that a more culturalist paradigm would identify as delimiting the limits of Chinese and non-Chinese can we begin to get at both the complexity of a Chineseness that incorporates Han and non-Han alike and, crucially for the purposes of Critical Han Studies, at the degree to which notions and practices of Hanness are both locally articulated and entangled in other matrices of difference.

In this vein, there are interesting resonances between early work on the China-Tibet borderlands and the first anthropological ventures into the studies of complex societies in Africa.⁵⁷ Writing roughly at the same time as Gluckman and Fortes, the missionary and Chicago-trained anthropologist Robert Ekvall penned an important early work, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibet Border*.⁵⁸ Ekvall's work is, on the whole, surprisingly relevant to contemporary inquiries. Interestingly, the criteria he employs to distinguish between the cultural groups whose relations he seeks to map are composite and do not conform precisely to apparent ethnoracial boundaries. Livelihood and geography in his mapping are as important as "ethnic" distinctions in coordinating the relative position of various social groups. The four groups on which he focuses are the Chinese, the Chinese-speaking Muslims, the sedentary Tibetans, and the nomadic Tibetans. Ekvall is thus interested in "cultural relations" not just between people who would now be classed as members of separate *minzu*, but, compellingly, between peoples who would now be classed as members of the same

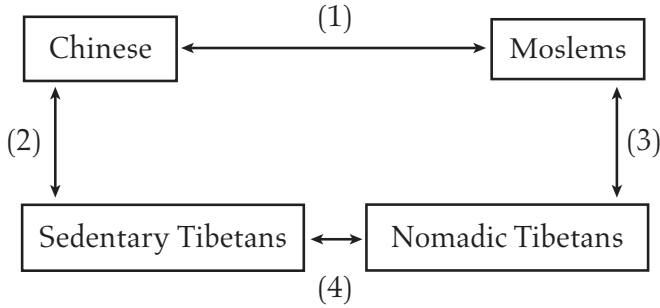


Figure 11.1. Ekvall's aspects of cultural interaction. From Robert B. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 13; numbers added for clarity.

"ethnic" grouping. As a result of this approach, Ekvall is able to take stock of the unexpected convergences and divergences that emerge in practice. Writing before the contemporary *minzu*-based classificatory framework had been put in place, Ekvall can show contemporary scholars of "other Chinas" one way out of the comfortable prism/prison of *minzu* studies.⁵⁹

Ekvall does not attempt to approach the matter in a comprehensive way. Instead of attempting to describe the relationships between all these groups, Ekvall focuses on four key relationships—"arbitrarily limiting the discussion to four aspects of cultural interaction which are not only the most important ones but differ sharply in kind and degree."⁶⁰ The four relationships he describes are those between

1. The Chinese and the Chinese-speaking Moslems (descendants of Arabs)
2. The Chinese and Sedentary Tibetans
3. The Moslems and the Nomadic Tibetans
4. The Nomadic and Sedentary Tibetans

These relationships can be indicated graphically as a rectangle, with the four groups at the corners and the relationships indicated by lines which form the sides [see Fig. 11.1].

Ultimately Ekvall describes these relations as characterized by, in his words, (1) "segregation and hostility"; (2) "'infiltration' of the sedentary Tibetans by the Chinese";⁶¹ (3) "trade and mutual diffusion of traits"; and (4) "differentiation or super- and subordination, respectively."⁶²

In his analysis Ekvall is quite careful to stress the strategic nature of

the reductionism of the method he is practicing: "We must remember that the words similar and dissimilar represent two extremes, and all the facts that we label one or the other may lie, in reality, at any distance from those two extremes and may, in addition, show infinite variations of both kind and degree."⁶³ Of religion he writes, "When we say the Chinese and the Tibetans have the same religion we mean that because of mutual tolerance, the differences in their beliefs have no fundamental effect on the cultural relationship between the two groups."⁶⁴ Yet Ekvall's project belies this caution. Returning to his rationale for selecting the four relationships on which he focuses, he writes, "I am arbitrarily limiting the discussion to four aspects of cultural interaction which are not only the most important ones but differ sharply in kind and degree."⁶⁵ For him, the importance of the four relationships lies precisely in the clarity of the difference between them. The distinctiveness of the four ideal typical relationships is itself an artifact of the analytic framework of culture contact or cultural relations (a point that was not, to be sure, lost on Gluckman). The analysis of group contact is, of course, premised on and to a degree productive of a heightened sense of distinction—in order to measure contact, one has to start with discrete groups, after all. Ekvall's analytic focus on interrelations is thus both a departure point and a cautionary tale.

In my own work, I attempt to cast doubt on the coherence of received notions of collective identity and on the discreteness of preexisting groups—and to highlight the importance of paying as much attention to the diagonals as to the sides of Ekvall's quadrilateral. Especially since the founding of the PRC and the institution of centralized control over the formerly restive border regions of Gansu and Amdo, the relationships, both material and ideational, between sedentary Tibetans and Hui and between Han and Tibetan nomads have increasingly come to the fore. In addition, as this chapter has detailed, despite officially sanctioned and touristic constructions of Xiahe as a quintessentially Tibetan place and of different *minzu* as separate, distinct, and the basis for iron-clad social distinctions, one can trace at least provisionally the emergence of something approaching a local market culture that turns on the ability to speak the local dialect of Tibetan fluently. In all this I don't mean to imply that language has trumped *minzu* or other axes of difference or that this provisional local sensibility is not shot through with its own sorts of dire conflicts but instead seek to highlight the ways in which an overweening attention to either the isomorphism of Hanness and Chinese culture or to *minzu* as the silver bullet that can explain everything can blind us to the subtler and more tenuous forms of community that can emerge at *minzu's* edges. It is in such emergent forms of community that

Han and non-Han find themselves interacting in emergent units of common participation.

I have attempted in this chapter, through the juxtaposition of several cases, to demonstrate the ways in which the terrain of human diversity in the PRC in general and the dynamics of Hanness in particular go far beyond *minzu* politics. *Minzu*, now in the guise of ethnicity, is, in practice, one of many factors that can be brought into conjunctural constellation in the service of reckoning difference. Yet if we, as scholars, wish to gain some purchase on the workings of inclusion and exclusion in various Chinese contexts, we need to bring ethnicity's *entanglements* into sharp focus and in doing so push our analysis beyond simplistic minority/majority distinctions while remaining attuned to continuing structural inequalities that sometimes work in an idiom of *minzu*/ethnicity but just as often exceed or crosscut such typologies. Minority and majority, Han and Tibetan, city dweller and peasants alike are swept up together, albeit differentially, within national developmentalist projects. In this light, Critical Han Studies as an emergent field of inquiry cannot be only about the Han or only about *minzu* (or ethnoracial distinction more generally) if it is to capture a nuanced picture of the dynamics of belonging and exclusion in the Chinese world.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

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6. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 63; Susan Blum, *Portraits of "Primitive": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) 57–59; Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 295.

7. Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives,"* 57–59.

8. Barbara J. Flagg, "The Transparency Phenomenon, Race-Neutral Decisionmaking and Discriminatory Intent," in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., *Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 221. See also Barbara J. Flagg, "Foreword: Whiteness as Metaprivilege," *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy* 18 (2005): 1–11.

9. Flagg, "Foreword: Whiteness as Metaprivilege," 1–11.

10. Still other comparisons can be profitably made employing Mia Tuan's conceptualization of white "cosmopolitanism" and the concept "white ethnics" or "not-yet-whites," as examined by Michael Novak, John Bukowczyk, and Stefano Luconi. See Mia Tuan, *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites? The Asian Ethnic Experience Today* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999); Stefano Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics: The Italian Experience in Philadelphia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001). For an overview of the concept of white ethnics, see Joseph Ryan, ed., *White Ethnics: Their Life in Working-Class America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

11. The authors, it should be noted at the outset, were not required to make explicit connections between Han and white in their work, although a number did. Rather, each author draws upon his or her own disciplinary perspective, including history, anthropology, comparative literature, and cultural studies.

12. Joël Thoraval, "Le concept Chinois de nation est-il 'Obscur'? À propos du débat sur la notion de minzu dans les années 1980," *Bulletin de Sinologie* 65 (1990): 26.

13. Herold J. Wiens, *China's March into the Tropics: A Discussion of the Southward Penetration of China's Culture, Peoples, and Political Control in Relation to the Non-Han-Chinese Peoples of South China and in the Perspective of Historical and Cultural Geography* (prepared under the auspices of the Office of Naval Research, U.S. Navy, Washington, DC, 1952).

14. Herold J. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion in South China* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1967).

15. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, xiv.
16. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, xiv.
17. See, e.g., Samuel R. Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-west China* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Co., 1970); Archibald R. Colquhoun, *The "Overland" to China* (London: Harper, 1900); Henry Rodolph Davies, *Yün-nan, the Link between India and the Yangtze* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909).
18. James T. Olson, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of China* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 100–132.
19. Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 13.
20. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999). See also Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
21. The closest we have to an attempt to pose and answer this question is an argument made by Dru Gladney. Gladney suggests, but does not pursue in any thorough way, the idea that the novel concept of the Han Nationality was a "brilliant attempt" by figures such as Sun Yat-sen "to mobilize other non-Cantonese, especially northern Mandarin speakers, and the powerful Zhejiang and Shanghaiese merchants, into one overarching national group pitted against the Manchu and other foreigners threatening China during the unstable period following the Unequal Treaties." See Dru C. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (1994): 99.
22. Emily Honig, "The Politics of Prejudice: Subei People in Republican-Era Shanghai," *Modern China* 15, no. 3 (July 1989): 243–74; Emily Honig, "Invisible Inequalities: The Status of Subei People in Contemporary China," *China Quarterly* 122 (June 1990): 273–92; Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850–1980* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
23. See Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics*; and Ryan, *White Ethnics*.
24. Fred C. Blake, *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1981); Emily Honig, "Native Place and the Making of Chinese Ethnicity," in *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain*, ed. Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N. Lipman, and Randall Stross (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 143–55; Jonathan N. Lipman, "Hyphenated Chinese: Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern China," in Hershatter et al., *Remapping China*, 97–112; Dru C. Gladney, *Ethnic Identity in China: The Making of a Muslim Minority Nationality* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998).
25. See Teng, this volume. Analogous questions have been posed in other East Asian contexts, as in Robert Fish's study of "mixed-blood" Japanese. Focusing on the phenomenon of biracial identity in Japan, Fish investigates the ways in which it subverts Japan's discourse of homogeneity. See Robert A. Fish,

“‘Mixed-Blood’ Japanese: A Reconsideration of Race and Purity in Japan,” in *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, ed. Michael Weiner (New York: Routledge, 1997), 40–58.

26. See Teng, this volume.

27. See Teng, this volume.

28. See Teng, this volume. Teng’s observations connect, moreover, with those of Barry Sautman on the PRC. Despite official claims to the contrary, PRC discourse on *minzu* is still characterized by a powerfully racial discourse centered on blood, consanguinity, and descent. See Barry Sautman, “Myths of Descent, Racial Nationalism, and Ethnic Minorities in the People’s Republic of China,” in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), 75–95.

29. Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).

30. Uradyn Bulag’s analysis of the 1911 revolution and the post-imperial transition draw support, and in large part recapitulates, those made by other scholars of the period. See Joseph W. Esherick, “How the Qing Became China,” in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 229–59. For more on this troubled transition from empire to nation-state, see Pamela Crossley, “Nationality and Difference: The Post-Imperial Dilemma,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 138–58. With regard to the Nationalist regime’s postrevolutionary retreat from pre-1911 forms of Han racism—a retreat undertaken reluctantly by some—see James Leibold, “Positioning ‘minzu’ within Sun Yat-sen’s Discourse of ‘Minzuzhuyi,’” *Journal of Asian History* 38, no. 1–2 (2004): 163–213. In some respects, the transition from empire to nation-state brought with it similar challenges in the case of Japan as well. Having inherited the territories of the Tokugawa, territories managed according to a very different frontier logic, the Meiji Japanese state opted to extend undifferentiated sovereignty over a historically other and excluded part of the Japanese imperial domain. See David L. Howell, “Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State,” *Past and Present* 142 (February 1994): 69–93.

31. Mao Zedong, “On the Ten Major Relationships,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), 295.

32. Thomas S. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). See chapters 1 and 5.

33. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1–14.

34. See Elliott, this volume.

35. Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu: Han minzu de renleixue fenxi* (Snowball: An

Anthropological Analysis of the Han Nationality) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999).

36. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989).

37. See Xu, this volume.

38. Kai-wing Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining the Hanzu Identity in Modern China," in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 47–83. Tsou Jung [Zou Rong], *The Revolutionary Army: A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903*, trans. John Lust (The Hague: Mouton, 1968).

39. Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

40. Frank Dikötter, "Racial Discourses in China: Continuities and Permutations," in Dikötter, *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, 15.

41. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China," 98. This view of Han, it bears pointing out, has since been picked up by other scholars. In his examination of Chinese nationalism, for example, Suisheng Zhao echoes this argument that "the creation of an ethnic Han identity goes back only to the late nineteenth century." See Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 21–2.

42. Beyond Confucian and Chinese practice, the Manchus had positioned themselves as patrons of their other imperial subjects as well, including the Mongolians and Tibetans. See Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5–34.

43. Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture," 54–56.

44. Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in Dikötter, *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, 39.

45. Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861–1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 291. This subversive discourse of *minzu* found its way into late Qing native-place textbooks as well. For a fascinating recent study, see May-bo Ching, "Classifying Peoples: Ethnic Politics in Late Qing Native-Place Textbooks and Gazetteers," in *The Politics of Historical Production in Late Qing and Republican China*, ed. Tze-ki Hon and Robert Culp (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 55–77.

46. See Chin, this volume.

47. Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 182.

48. Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation*.

49. Kevin M. Doak, "Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 1–39; Henry H. Em, "Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 336–61; Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

50. See Tapp, this volume.

51. See Tapp, this volume.

52. Fei Xiaotong, "Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese People," Tanner Lecture, Chinese University of Hong Kong, November 15 and 17, 1988; Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu*.

53. See Xu, this volume.

54. Li Chi [Li Ji], *The Formation of the Chinese People: An Anthropological Inquiry* (New York: Russell and Russell, [1928] 1967).

55. Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, [1969] 1998), 10.

56. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 12. Whereas Eriksen is referring specifically to ethnicity in this passage, I consider the observation relevant to all nonethnic forms of identity as well, which also depend upon such relationships for their emergence, constitution, and stabilization.

57. Barth, "Introduction," 10.

58. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 12 n. 2.

59. Melissa J. Brown, "Local Government Agency: Manipulating Tujia Identity," *Modern China* 28, no. 3 (July 2002): 363.

60. Louisa Schein, "Gender and Internal Orientalism in China," *Modern China* 23, no. 1 (January 1997): 69–98. Dru Gladney has described a similar process in terms of an "oriental orientalism." See Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 53.

61. Patricia Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1996), 26.

62. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China," 93.

63. Techniques of indirect or differential self-identification are by no means limited to Han, it is important to note. Manchu Qing representations of "barbarian" regions of the empire could also serve as a means of reasserting and reinscribing the civilizational superiority of the center or ruling regime. See Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel*

Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

64. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, [1978] 1979), 7.
65. Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives,"* chaps. 1, 5, and 6.
66. See Elliott, this volume.
67. See Elliott, this volume.
68. See Elliott, this volume.
69. C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
70. See Vasantkumar, this volume.
71. See Vasantkumar, this volume.

CHAPTER 1

1. Anonymous, "Youxiu de Baiyue minzu- Guangdong dili!" (Independence for the outstanding Cantonese nationality!), February 2006, www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060229.htm (accessed between November 2007 and May 2009). Although the term *Baiyue* can refer to the Hundred Yue tribes, whose presence extended beyond present-day Guangdong, the author of the article cited above asserts that it refers to "the people of present-day Guangdong and Hong Kong." Accordingly, I have translated *Baiyue* as "Cantonese." For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the Baiyue, the Nanyue, and the present-day Cantonese, see Diana Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue—The Contemporary Agenda of History: Scholarship and Identity," *Modern China* 22, no. 1 (January 1996): 11–13.

2. The essay "Han Nationality," featured on the PRC Ministry of Culture website ChinaCulture.org (www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/2003-09/24/content_23849.htm), provides a concise and telling synopsis of official portrayals of the Han.

3. David Goodman and Chongyi Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," in *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade, and Regionalism*, ed. David Goodman and Gerald Segal (New York: Routledge, 1994), 178.

4. Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Reflections on Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14.

5. Stevan Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 23.

6. Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," 7.

7. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 179. Herold J. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion in South China* (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1967), 130.

8. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 7.

9. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 13.

10. Helen Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference in South China," *Daedalus* 122 (Spring 1993): 19. For an informative examination of the history of environmentally determinist thought in China and its relationship with racial ideologies, please see Zhihong Chen's chapter in this volume.

11. Hsiao-Chieh Cheng, Hui-Chen Pai Cheng, and Kenneth Lawrence Thern, *Shan Hai Ching: Legendary Geography and Wonders of Ancient China* (Taipei: National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1985), 148.

12. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 49.

13. Wolfram Eberhard, "Chinese Regional Stereotypes," *Asian Survey* 5, no. 12 (December 1965): 600.

14. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 19; Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 8.

15. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 132.

16. Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 36.

17. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 138–41; Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 9.

18. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 32.

19. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 12.

20. Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion*, 130.

21. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 179.

22. Ni Jianzhong, ed., *Renwen zhongguo: zhongguo de nanbei qingmao yu renwen jingshen* (Humanist China: Humanism and the Character of South and North China) (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Publishing, 1996), 511.

23. Peter Tsan-yin Cheung, "The Case of Guangdong in Central-Provincial Relations," in *Changing Central-Local Relations in China: Reform and State Capacity*, ed. Jia Hao and Lin Zhimin (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1994), 211.

24. See John de Francis, *Nationalism and Language Reform in China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

25. Ezra Vogel, *Canton under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949–1968* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 54.

26. Edward Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity: A Southern Alternative to Mao-Era Anti-Imperialist Nationalism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (February 1994): 78.

27. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 98.

28. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 113.

29. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 180.

30. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 121.

31. Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 214, 212.

32. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 180.

33. David Goodman, "The Politics of Regionalism: Economic Development, Conflict, and Negotiation," in Goodman and Segal, *China Deconstructs*, 29.

34. The observations in the following three sections are based upon five years of residence (2002–7) in Han-majority regions of both northern and southern China (Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou). Internet posts, popular books, magazine articles, and other commentaries are cited in these sections as concise and telling expressions of opinions and trends noted during this period.

35. Goodman and Feng, "Guangdong: Greater Hong Kong and the New Regionalist Future," 188.

36. Lynn White and Cheng Li, "China Coast Identities," in *China's Quest for National Identity*, ed. Dittmer Lowell and Samuel S. Kim (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 164.

37. A useful example is Jin Hui and Yang Li, *Ke pa de Wenzhou ren* (The Frightening Wenzhouese) (Beijing: Author's Publishing House, 2002); and the notably awkward labeling of the people of Wenzhou as the "Jews of China."

38. One commentator, in a widely distributed Internet post, attributed the perceived unpleasant and uncultured characteristics of the Cantonese people to their relatively short history (only two millennia compared to the purported five millennia of the Central Plains) as well as to their leading role in opening to the world (which he claimed has resulted in the entry of "foreign sediment"). See Piaoling Gongzi, "Choulou de Guangdongren" (The ugly Cantonese), 2005, <http://tieba.baidu.com/f?kz=132862453> (accessed April 2009).

39. Ni Jianzhong, *Renwen zhongguo*, 490, 534, 546.

40. A popular saying claims that the Cantonese eat "anything that flies except airplanes and everything with four legs except tables."

41. Daniel Ferguson, "The Shandong Highwayman: Mechanisms of Inclusion and Resistance and the Predication of Cantonese Identity through Cantonese Opera," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 25 (1993): 69.

42. White and Li, "China Coast Identities," 173.

43. For more insight into conceptualization of "mixed blood" and the Han, please see Emma Teng's chapter in this volume.

44. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 49, 89.

45. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 69–70.

46. Cheng et al., *Shan Hai Ching*, 148.

47. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 201–202.

48. Hainan Island was designated as a province independent from Guangdong in 1988, yet remains associated in popular imaginings with the Cantonese cultural milieu.

49. James Cheung, "Guangdong under Reform: Social and Political Trends and Challenges," in *Rethinking China's Provinces*, ed. John Fitzgerald (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.

50. Duanxiaduanxia, "Shenzhen luan ma?" (Is Shenzhen chaotic?), February 2006, <http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/3485489.html?fr=ql3> (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009); Aeraneal_hsu, "Guangzhou zhende luan me?" (Is Guangzhou really chaotic?), January 2006, <http://iask.sina.com.cn/b/3511282.html> (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009).

51. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 13.

52. This comment was posted in response to a purported exposé of a Cantonese meal of human fetuses, which turned out to be a piece of performance art. For more details, see Anonymous, "Zhenjing a! Sang jin tianliang! Tamen zai chiren!" (Shocking! They have completely lost their conscience! They're eating people!), March 2007, <http://post.baidu.com/f?kz=183175763> (accessed between November 2007 and April 2009).

53. Zhu Xueyuan, "Gancui rang Guangdong dili suan le" (Just let Guangdong be independent), April 2003, www.boxun.com/hero/zhuxueyuan/9_1.shtml (accessed between December 2007 and April 2009).

54. Li Dali, "Shanghai guangzhou jianwenlu" (Records from a journey through Shanghai and Guangzhou), *Kaifang zazhi* (Open Magazine) (August 2007), 64.

55. Li, "Shanghai guangzhou jianwenlu," 65.

56. Friedman, "Reconstructing China's National Identity," 86.

57. Such attributions of difference to workers from outside of Guangdong are not solely based in class but also in regional identity. Much like Shanghai and other rapidly developing coastal cities, the urban areas of the Pearl River Delta are populated not only by lower-class migrant workers engaged in physical labor but also by professionals and office workers from other provinces. Yet even among professionals in an upper-class office, perceptions of difference remain between "locals" (*bendiren*) and "outsiders" (*waidiren*); e.g., Ni Jianzhong, *Renwen zhongguo*, 495.

58. This is a phenomenon that I first noticed in Shanghai, where anything unsavory was inevitably deemed to be the workings of *waidiren*.

59. Ye Shuming, "Xiang yaomohua shuo bu: qishi ni bu dong Guangdongren" (Say "no" to demonization: You don't really understand the Cantonese), http://book.sina.com.cn/nzt/soc/1110948111_guangdongren/ (accessed November 2008 and May 2009).

60. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 4.

61. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 6.

62. Ferguson, "The Shandong Highwayman," 69–70; Allen Chun, "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," *boundary 2* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 112.

63. Lary, "The Tomb of the King of Nanyue," 6.

64. William Long, "Weishenme Guangdongren bu kan Yangshi" (Why Cantonese don't watch CCTV), December 2005, www.williamlong.info/archives/346.html (accessed November 2008 and May 2009).

65. Long, "Weishenme Guangdongren bu kan Yangshi."

66. Vagueness about the borders of their Republic, as to whether it would

include only Hong Kong or also Guangdong, is another interesting example of differentiation, this time within the pan-Cantonese community.

67. Anonymous, "Wo yao zai Guangdong qian qi yi chang shao feichai de yundong" (I want to burn away the waste in Guangdong), January 2006, www.hkfront.org/intcanton20060102.htm (accessed between November 2007 and May 2009).

68. Anonymous, "Youxiu de Baiyue minzu- Guangdong duli!" (Independence for the outstanding Cantonese nationality!).

69. Ivan Zhai, "Guangzhou Blames People with Ulterior Motives for Pro-Cantonese Campaign," *South China Morning Post*, July 29, 2010.

70. Siu, "Cultural Identity and the Politics of Difference," 23.

71. A term borrowed from Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 2001.

72. Josie Liu, "In a Search for Cultural Identity, Clothes Definitely Maketh the Han," *South China Morning Post*, September 10, 2005.

73. Betty Lin, "Han Clothing May Be Revived," August 2007, www.phstory.com/print.php?id=518 (accessed between November 2008 and May 2009).

74. Jin Ling, "Hanzu zhao bu dao ziji de minzu fuzhuang le?" (Will the Han find their own national clothing?), December 2005, www.ycwb.com/gb/content/2005-12/01/content_1030067.htm (accessed between November 2008 and May 2009).

75. Liu, "In a Search For Cultural Identity"; and personal correspondence, 2010.

76. Betty Lin, "Han Clothing May Be Revived."

77. Zhu Yueyi, "Guangzhou hanfu buluo meinw wangyou chuan kuan-pao daxiu guangjie" (A beauty from Guangzhou's Han clothing tribe hits the streets with her broad skirt and big sleeves), August 2006, <http://culture.people.com.cn/GB/22219/4697452.html> (accessed May 2009).

78. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 186.

79. See note 1 in this chapter for a discussion of the Baiyue, the Yue, and the Cantonese.

CHAPTER 2

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1. Lisa See, "The Funeral Banquet," in *Half-and-Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*, ed. Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn (New York: Pantheon, 1998), 125–38.

2. "Descendant of the Dragon" (Long de chuanren) is the title of a popular song by Hou Dejian and a reference to the notion that the Chinese people are the mythical descendants of the Dragon. In the song Hou refers to the "Black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin" of the Descendants of the Dragon.

3. See Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

4. See www.huaren.org/home.

5. See www.huaren.org/Text/11246910846136097/Chinese-Communities.

6. See Lisa See, *On Gold Mountain: The One-Hundred-Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family* (New York: Vintage, 1995), xx.

7. See, "The Funeral Banquet," 135.

8. My use of the phrase "1/8 Chinese" here is a deliberate reference to the contentious question of blood quantum, which I address below.

9. For a recent critique of Han-centrism, see Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

10. For a discussion of the historical tension between Chinese culturalism and ethnic, or descent-based conceptions of Chineseness, see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Patricia Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), 11–36; and Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

11. See Melissa Brown, "On Becoming Chinese," in Brown, *Negotiating Ethnicities in China Taiwan*, 37–74.

12. Hence I do not address the recent controversy surrounding "Chocolate Angel" singer, Lou Jing, the daughter of a Chinese mother and African Ameri-

can father who was born and raised in Shanghai. On this topic, see Emma Jinhua Teng, "From 'Chocolate City' to 'Shanghai Angel': Chinese-Black Inter-racialism in a Globalizing China" (unpublished paper).

13. On the differences between various concepts of Chineseness, see David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, ed. Weiming Tu (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 148–67; and Allen Chun, "Fuck Chineseness: On the Ambiguities of Ethnicity as Culture as Identity," *boundary 2* 23, no. 2 (1996): 111–38. On the concept of the Chinese *minzu*, see Joshua Fogel, "Race and Class in Chinese Historiography," *Modern China* 3 (July 1977): 346–75.

14. Since my focus here is on questions of Chineseness, my discussion is limited to Eurasians of Chinese descent. It is also worth noting that the term "Eurasian" (Ou-Ya) later came to denote the geographic region spanning the European and Asian continents.

15. Following my sources, I use the terms "European" and "Asian" as racial designations to denote people with ancestry in the native peoples of Europe and Asia. Hence Euro-Americans fall under the category "European," while Asian Americans fall under the category "Asian." I do not employ the term "Caucasian" since nineteenth-century anthropologists also considered South Asians to be "Caucasian." Chinese sources typically referred to Europeans/Euro-Americans as "Westerners" (*xiren*) or "Foreigners" (*yangren*). Therefore, I use "European" and "Western" interchangeably.

16. Xing Long, "Qingmo minchu hunyin shenghuozhong de xinzhao," *Jindaishi yanjiu* 3, no. 63 (1991): 168–83.

17. Kate Bagnall, "Golden Shadows on a White Land: An Exploration of the Lives of White Women Who Partner Chinese Men and Their Children in Southern Australia, 1855–1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sydney, 2006).

18. In the 1930s an estimated 60,000 children of Sino-Russian descent lived in the Manchurian Railway Zone. See Robert E. Park, "Race Relations and Certain Frontiers," in *Race and Culture Contacts*, ed. E. B. Reuter (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1934), 57–85.

19. See Herbert Day Lamson, "The American Community in Shanghai" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1935). For more on this historical background, see E. J. Teng, "Negotiating Eurasian Identities between China and America, 1842–1943" (unpublished manuscript).

20. See Dong Lin, ed., *Zhongguo guojifa* (Chongqing: Guomin tushu chubanshe, 1943), 62.

21. See Dong Lin, *Zhongguo guojifa*, 72.

22. See Robin White, "Hong Kong, Nationality, and the British Empire: Historical Doubts and Confusions on the Status of the Inhabitants," *Hong Kong Law Journal* 19 (1989): 25.

23. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this ambiguity is a central theme in many Eurasian memoirs. See E. J. Teng, "Reinventing Home: Images of

Mobility and Returns in Eurasian Memoirs" (Zaizao "Jiaxiang": Ouyayiren jiyilu zhong de yidong yixiang), Center for Chinese Studies Research Series (Hanxue yanjiu) 12 (Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 2009).

24. See Henry Lethbridge, "Caste, Class, and Race in Hong Kong before the Japanese Occupation," in *Hong Kong: Stability and Change: A Collection of Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Catherine Joyce Symons, *Looking at the Stars: Memoirs of Catherine Joyce Symons* ([Hong Kong]: Pegasus Books, 1996), vi. Symons was born in Shanghai but lived most of her life in Hong Kong before retiring to Britain.

25. Lamson, "The American Community in Shanghai," 590–91.

26. Symons, *Looking at the Stars*; Li Mo, *Bainian jiating bianqian* (Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 2000), 37–42.

27. See Carl Smith, "Protected Women in 19th-Century Hong Kong," in *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape*, ed. Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1994), 221–37.

28. See Peter Hall, *In the Web* (Wirral: P. Hall, 1992).

29. We must also take into consideration the status of the European parental groups within racial hierarchies of the time. The Portuguese, for example, enjoyed less prestige than the British and Americans during this era, while White Russians were held in particular disesteem due to their refugee status and poverty. Owing to their distinct ethnic identity, which includes the Roman Catholic faith and in some cases the use of Portuguese surnames, it has recently been suggested that the Portuguese-descended Macanese (Aomen tusheng) be added as a fifty-sixth official minority group of the Chinese population. I am grateful to Professor Jin Guoping for this information.

30. See C.G. Alabaster, "Some Observations on Race Mixture in Hong-Kong," *Eugenics Review* 11 (1920): 247–48. Alabaster was Hong Kong attorney general from 1930 to 1941.

31. Alabaster, "Some Observations," 247.

32. In reality, many Eurasian families were known to use two names, one Western and one Chinese. Some used a Chinese name in China and Hong Kong and a Western one while traveling or studying abroad. Sometimes siblings in a single family used different names. In a speech to the Eurasian community in Hong Kong in 1929, C.G. Anderson proclaimed that there was no division between "Chans" and "Smiths" within the community. See Eric P. Ho, *The Welfare League: The Sixty Years, 1930–1990* (Hong Kong: Welfare League, 1990), 9. Nonetheless, despite the complex and ambiguous reality, I would argue that names do serve a specific ideological function in the service of *claiming* Han Chineseness.

33. One should also note the existence of Eurasian institutions in Hong Kong, such as the Eurasian cemetery that was established in 1890 and schools such as the Diocesan Native Female Training School (later Diocesan Girls' School), which was founded in 1860 with Eurasian students in mind. In Shanghai, the Hanbury School for Eurasians and other separate institutions, such as

a Eurasian Sunday school, were established for Eurasians. See Lamson, "The American Community in Shanghai."

34. See Cedric Dover, *Half-Caste* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1937), 166.

35. Lamson, "The American Community in Shanghai."

36. Wu Tingfang, *America, through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat* (New York: Stokes, 1914), 185.

37. Dover, *Half-Caste*, 166.

38. See Hall, *In the Web*.

39. John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 100–102.

40. Lamson, "The American Community in Shanghai."

41. See Han Suyin, *The Crippled Tree: China, Autobiography, History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965); and *A Mortal Flower: China, Autobiography, History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965).

42. See Alabaster, "Some Observations," 248.

43. See the chapters by Elliott, Giersch, and Leibold, this volume. See also Peter Bol, "Geography and Culture: The Middle-Period Discourse on the Zhong guo—the Central Country" (paper presented at the International Conference on the Cultural Interpretations of Mobility, Center for Chinese Studies, National Central Library, Taipei, Taiwan, March 2008). See Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

44. Quoted in Kai-wing Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining the Hanzu Identity in Modern China," in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 55. My translation.

45. See Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 118.

46. See Karl, *Staging the World*.

47. Quoted in Frank Dikötter, Introduction to *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 4.

48. See Peter Zarrow, "Introduction: Citizenship in China and the West," in *Imagining the People: Chinese Intellectuals and the Concept of Citizenship, 1890–1920*, ed. Peter G. Zarrow and Joshua A. Fogel (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 3–38.

49. See Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*; and Emma J. Teng, "Eurasian Hybridity in Chinese Utopian Visions: From 'One World' to a 'Society Based on Beauty' and Beyond," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 131–63.

50. See Jean Gittins, *Eastern Windows—Western Skies* (Hong Kong: South China Morning Post, 1969); and Florence Yeo, *My Memories* (Speldhurst, Kent: Words & Images, 1994). For a comparison of the sisters, see Vicky Lee, *Being*

Eurasian: Memories across Racial Divides (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004).

51. See Lee, *Being Eurasian*; Peter Hall, *In the Web*; and Frances Tse Liu, Terese Tse Bartholomew, and Frances McDonald, *Ho Kom-Tong: A Man for All Seasons* (Hong Kong: Compradore House, 2003).

52. Gittins, *Eastern Windows*, 10–11.

53. Yeo, *My Memories*, 12.

54. Ho Tung was also known to have used the name “HT Bosman” when traveling abroad.

55. See Ebrey, “Surnames and Han Chinese Identity”; Irene Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist University, 1997); Hall, *In the Web*; and Lamson, “The American Community in Shanghai.”

56. By way of contrast we might note Ho Tung’s younger brother, Ho K’ai-Gai (He Qigui), who took the name “Walter Bosman” when he went to study in England. Bosman would later “pass” for white.

57. See Ebrey, “Surnames and Han Chinese Identity.”

58. Irene Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1976), 94.

59. Ho Tung’s interests were not confined to Hong Kong but also extended to China, where he traveled regularly for business dealings, holidays, and family visits and where he owned two homes. He was deeply concerned with the political future of China after the 1911 Revolution and engaged in various political causes (see Lee, *Being Eurasian*, 29). One of his sons, Ho Shilai (He Shili), became an important GMD general.

60. See Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 44, 209.

61. See Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 1.

62. See Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*, xv.

63. See Brown, “On Becoming Chinese.”

64. See Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*, xvi.

65. Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 1.

66. Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 51.

67. Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 22.

68. Yeo, quoted in Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 175.

69. Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 384.

70. See Andrea Louie, *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Elizabeth Sinn, “Xin Xi Gu Xiang: A Study of Regional Associations as a Bonding Mechanism in the Chinese Diaspora: The Hong Kong Experience” (paper presented at the Luo Di Shen Gen conference, University of California, Berkeley, 1992).

71. Cheng, *Intercultural Reminiscences*, 384.

72. Following conventional practice, I refer to “Han Suyin” by her pen name throughout this work.

73. Han Suyin, *A Mortal Flower*, 144.

74. Han Suyin, *Phoenix Harvest: China: Autobiography, History* ([U.K.]: Triad Panther, 1985), 314.
75. Han Suyin, *Birdless Summer: China, Autobiography, History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1968), 22.
76. Han Suyin, *Birdless Summer*, 70.
77. Han Suyin, *Birdless Summer*, 49.
78. Han Suyin, *A Mortal Flower*, 400.
79. Han Suyin, *A Mortal Flower*, 401.
80. Han Suyin, *Birdless Summer*, 22.
81. Han Suyin, *Phoenix Harvest*, 315.
82. Han Suyin, *Phoenix Harvest*, 315.
83. Han Suyin, *My House Has Two Doors: China, Autobiography, History* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), 11.
84. The survey of contemporary Chinese articles on Han Suyin was performed by Betty Zhang in January–March 2008 and updated by me in July 2008.
85. Some sample titles are “China Is the Foundation of Her Emotional Sustenance,” “Her Heart Beats in Harmony with China,” “Han Suyin’s Obsession with China,” “Han Suyin’s Chinese Bones,” and “My Only Love Is CHINA—An Interview with English-Nationality Woman Writer Ms. Han Suyin.”
86. I would like to make clear that this section deals only with the critics’ representations of Han’s Chineseness and not with my own opinions. In addition, due to limitations of space, my remarks here are general and do not account for differences among the critics as individuals with varying viewpoints.
87. Wang Xingyuan, “Han Suyin de Zhongguo qingjie,” *Zhongzhou tongzhan* 12 (1997): 39.
88. Qiu Jian, “Tade gen yongyuan zai Zhongguo—fang yingji nüzuojia Han Suyin nüshi,” *Juece yu xinxi* 2 (2000): 25–26.
89. Ye Junjian, “Zhongguo shi ta ganqing jituo de suozai—ji zhuming Yingji zuojia Han Suyin,” *Yanhuang chunqiu* 7 (1994): 56–59.
90. Ye Junjian, “Zhongguo shi ta ganqing jituo de suozai.”
91. Lin Xi, “Wo suo zhidao de Han Suyin,” *Dangdai wentan* 2 (1982): 26–27.
92. Wang Xingyuan, “Han Suyin de Zhongguo qingjie.”
93. Wang Huiqin, “Huajia yanzhong de Han Suyin,” *Yishu jie* 3 (1994): 20–21.
94. Ye Junjian, “Zhongguo shi ta ganqing jituo de suozai.”
95. Qiu Jian, “Tade gen yongyuan zai Zhongguo.”
96. As Andrea Louie and Elizabeth Sinn have demonstrated, slogans such as “Love the hometown, love the country; build the hometown, build the country,” and “plant roots in Hong Kong, tie the heart to the home region,” have been revived and modified. See Louie, *Chineseness across Borders*, 53.
97. See Wei-ming Tu, ed., *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), Ling-chi Wang, “The Structure of Dual Domination: Toward a Paradigm for the Study of the

Chinese Diaspora in the US," *Amerasia* 21, nos. 1–2 (1995): 149–69; and Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*.

98. Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity"; and Brown, "On Becoming Chinese."

99. See, e.g., Ian Haney-López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Werner Sollors, "The Bluish Tinge in the Halfmoon; or, Fingernails as a Racial Sign," in *Neither Black nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 142–61; Werner Sollors, ed., *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Maria P.P. Root, ed., *Racially Mixed People in America* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992); and Maria P.P. Root, *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996)

100. See Miss Chinatown USA Pageant, "Miss Chinatown Applicant Information Qualifications," www.sanfranciscochinatown.com/events/misschinatown.html (accessed January 4, 2008). Thank you to Sau-ling Wong for pointing me to this source. Also, China Synergy Programme for Outstanding Youth, www.chinasynergy.org.hk/programme.php?lang=en (accessed February 6, 2008); and Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, "Admission Guidelines for 2007 Expatriate Youth Summer Formosa Study Tour to Taiwan," www.ocac.gov.tw (accessed February 6, 2008).

101. Note, for example, that the mainstream press has referred to Barack Obama as "African American," "black," and "biracial" but never as "white."

102. See Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," 34. See also Cheng, *Clara Ho Tung*; and Hall, *In the Web*.

103. Han Suyin, *A Mortal Flower*, 408.

104. On the question of blood quantum, see, e.g., Terry P. Wilson, "Blood Quantum: Native American Mixed Bloods," in Root, *Racially Mixed People in America*, 108–25.

105. Bartlett G. Yung, "'Drumming' Revolutionary China," *The World's Work* (April 1914): 692.

106. See Miss Chinatown USA Pageant, "Miss Chinatown Applicant Information Qualifications."

107. See Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity."

108. On this subject, see Brown, "On Becoming Chinese."

109. See Sollors, "The Bluish Tinge in the Half Moon."

110. On phenotype, see Brown, "On Becoming Chinese."

111. Louie, *Chineseness across Borders*, 51.

112. See Steven Kaplan, "If There Are No Races, How Can Jews Be a 'Race'?" *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 2, no. 1 (2003): 79–96.

113. Kaplan, "If There Are No Races," 80.

114. Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*.

CHAPTER 3

The phrase “climate’s moral economy” in the title comes from David N. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 221. I want to thank Bryna Goodman, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, Thomas Mullaney, Eric Vanden Bussche, and the two anonymous reviewers of this chapter for their helpful comments. Any mistakes that remain are my own.

1. Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 7–8.

2. *Guanzi* is a text from the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.E.).

3. James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 24–29; Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, 25–29.

4. David A. Bello, “To Go Where No Han Could Go for Long,” *Modern China* 31, no. 3 (July 2005): 283–317.

5. Marta Hanson, “Robust Northerners and Delicate Southerners,” *Positions* 6, no. 3 (Winter 1998): 515–50.

6. Guo Shuanglin, *Xichao jidang xiade wanqing dilixue* (Late Qing Geography under Western Influence) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 41.

7. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (An Introduction to History), trans. from Arabic by Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, [1969] 1989), 58, 63–64; Geoffrey J. Martin and Preston E. James, *All Possible Worlds*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993), 53.

8. Henry T. Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, 2 vols. (London: Parker & Son, 1857; Parker, Son & Bourne, 1861); Martin and James, *All Possible Worlds*, 102–4.

9. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, 196–99.

10. Friedrich Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*, 2 vols. [Vol. 1 first published 1882; vol. 2 first published 1891] (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn, 1909–12); Martin and James, *All Possible Worlds*, 169.

11. Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911).

12. R. J. Johnston and J. D. Sidaway, *Geography and Geographers*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, [1979] 2004), 46–47.

13. Ellsworth Huntington, *Civilization and Climate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915).

14. Ellsworth Huntington, *The Character of Races* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1924), 232–33.

15. Therefore, Huntington concluded, black Africans “represent our primitive ancestors.” “It is not to be expected that such people should ever rise very high in the scale of civilization.” The American Indians—because they had migrated to the New World via the wastes of northern Siberia and across the Bering Strait—forever carried with them the stamp of that “repressive” phase in their evolutionary past. While “the native races within the tropics are dull

in thought and slow in action," the American Indians had "a lower degree of originality and initiative, but a certain passivity," compared to Europeans. Ellsworth Huntington, "Environment and Racial Character," in *Organic Adaptation to Environment*, ed. Malcolm R. Thorpe (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1924), 281–99; Huntington, *Civilization and Climate*, 35; David N. Livingstone, "The Moral Discourse of Climate: Historical Considerations on Race, Place, and Virtue," *Journal of Historical Geography* 17, no. 4 (1991): 413–434.

16. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, 224–25.

17. Robert DeCourcy Ward, *Climate: Considered Especially in Relation to Man* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 272–73.

18. Ward, *Climate*, 227–28.

19. Stephen Frenkel, "Geography, Empire, and Environmental Determinism," *Geographical Review* 82, no. 2 (April 1992): 143–53.

20. Frenkel, "Geography, Empire, and Environmental Determinism." James M. Blaut criticized two best-selling world history books, Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997) and David Landes's *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998). Using these two books as recent examples, Blaut analyzes how environmental determinism has served to validate a Eurocentric world history. See James M. Blaut, "Environmentalism and Eurocentrism," *Geographical Review* 89, no. 3 (July 1999): 391–408.

21. Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 3.

22. The Chinese translator of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws*, Yan Fu (1853–1921), disagreed with Montesquieu's environmental determinist opinion and criticized it in his own commentaries on this work. *Yan Fu Ji* (Collections of Yan Fu) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), vol. 4.

23. Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*.

24. For a more detailed discussion on Chinese intellectuals' (both reformers and Republican revolutionaries) discussion on race as well as its relationship with Darwinism, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1964); James R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1983); Young-tsu Wong, *Search for Modern Nationalism: Zhang Binglin and Revolutionary China, 1869–1936* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989); Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*.

25. Kang Youwei, *Datongshu* (Book of Great Harmony) (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1998), 155–62.

26. Xue Fucheng, *Chushi Ying, Fa, Yi, Bi siguo riji* (Diary in Four Countries: Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1966–67). Cited from Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 90–91.

27. Liang Qichao, "Dili yu wenming de guanxi" (The relationship between geography and civilization), *Xinmin Congbao* (New Citizens' Miscellanies) (1903); and "Zhongguo dili dashi lun" (General situation of Chinese geog-

raphy), *Xinmin Congbao* (New Citizens' Miscellanies) (April–June 1902), reprinted in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi Heji: Wenji* (Collected Works from the Ice-Drinker's Studio: Literature), vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941), 106–16 and 77–101. “Yazhou dili dashi lun” (General situation of Asian geography) and “Ouzhou dili dashi lun” (General situation of European geography), in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi Heji: Wenji*, vol. 4 (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1941), 69–77, 101–6. Liang was heavily influenced by the Japanese historian Kazutami Ukita (1859–1945). Ukita's *Shigaku tsuron* (General Introduction to History) was extremely popular in China during the early twentieth century. Ukita's interpretation about geography and civilization was mainly based on Hegel and Henry Buckle, although he criticized their Eurocentric perspectives. For a Chinese translation of Ukita's *Shigaku tsuron*, see Li Haosheng, trans., *Shixue Tonglun* (Hangzhou: Hezhong yishuju, 1903).

28. Zhang Xiangwen, *Xinzhuan diwenxue* (New Writings on Physiography) (Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1908), 194–95.

29. Ding Yiming, “Dili lishixue shangzhi guanचा” (A historical observation of geography), *Dixue zazhi*, nos. 9–10 (1912).

30. Huntington's most popular works in China included *The Pulse of Asia* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907), *Civilization and Climate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), and *The Character of Races: As Influenced by Physical Environment, Natural Selection, and Historical Development* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924).

31. George Babcock Cressey, *China's Geographic Foundations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1934). There were several Chinese translations of this book.

32. Tang Xiaofeng, *From Dynastic Geography to Historical Geography* (Beijing: Commercial Press International, 2000).

33. John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 103–46; Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 240–44; Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 155–158.

34. Yin Weilian, “Yingfa junshi xiade xianluo” (Siam under British and French influence), *New Asia* 1, no. 5 (February 1931): 71–84.

35. Yin Weilian, “Yingfa junshi xiade xianluo.”

36. Zhu Kezhen, “Dili duiyu rensheng zhi yingxiang” (The impact of geography on human life), *Shidi xuebao* 2, no. 1 (November 1922): 1–12.

37. Zhu Kezhen, “Dili duiyu rensheng zhi yingxiang.”

38. For discussions on the discourse on skin color and “yellowness,” see Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 55–57.

39. Zhuang Qiyun, “Guoshixue jiangyi” (Lecture on the national situation), *Fangzhi yuekan* 6, no. 1 (January 1933): 1–6.

40. *Chi* is a Chinese traditional unit of length, equal to about one-third of a meter.

41. Zhang, “Guoshixue jiangyi.”

42. *Ibid.*

43. Shen Meizhen, “Laozai minzu” (The Dayak people), in “Yazhou sanjian,” *New Asia* 4, no. 2 (June 1932): 123–25.

44. Han Mansheng, "Fanren de jinji" (Taboos of the savages), in "Yazhou sanjian," *New Asia* 4 no. 2 (June 1932): 133–35.

45. Wu Xiaoyan, "Mengguren zhi tezhi" (Special character of the Mongols), *New Asia* 9, no. 4 (April 1935): 47–52.

46. Wu Pufan, "Ziran huanjiang yu zangzu wenhua" (Physical environment and Tibetan culture), *New Asia* 12, no. 3 (September 1936): 1–8.

47. Zhuang Xinzai, "Zhongguo renkou yapo juejing zhongde shenglu" (Solution for the Chinese population problem), *New Asia* 8, no. 4 (October 1934): 31–36.

48. Ward, *Climate*, 204, 229.

49. During the early twentieth century, the idea that the form of the head was the most permanent and distinctive of racial traits gained much popularity among geographers and anthropologists. It was believed that the most primitive heads were long, narrow, and low, with small brain capacity. As man had evolved, his head had tended first to lengthen from back to front, then to become higher, and finally broader. So a round head was regarded as biologically the most advanced because it could hold the largest brain. Scholars classified human head forms into three types, based on the cephalic index: Dolicho (below 75), Medium (between 75 and 80), and Brachy (above 80). The higher the cephalic index, the more superior the race. According to Taylor, the Negrito and the Negro had the lowest cephalic index; the Mongolian had the highest, even higher than the white. Therefore, Taylor actually came to the conclusion that many places in Australia were unsuitable for white settlement. Taylor was vehemently attacked for this suggestion as it ran against the conventional White Australia Policy. Griffith Taylor, *Environment, Race and Migration*, 2nd enl. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1945); Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 75–77; Zhang Yintang, "Zhongzu tezheng de goucheng yu qihou de guanxi" (The formation of racial characteristics and its relationship to climates), *Dixue zazhi*, no. 2 (1931), 235–48; Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, 227.

50. Ma Hetian, "Kaifa xibei shi jiejie zhongguo shehui minsheng wenti de genben fangfa" (Developing the northwest is the fundamental solution for Chinese livelihood), *New Asia* 1, no. 1 (1930), 37–40.

51. [Zhang Weiyu, ed.,] "Ribei renkou zhi zengjia yu yimin" (Japanese population growth and immigration), in "Yiyuejian zhi niaokan" (A bird's-eye view of the past month), *New Asia* 1, no. 4 (January 1931): 9–10; Chen Liefu, "Yingmeiri zai taipingyang de zhengba yu woguo guofang" (The competition among Britain, the United States, and Japan on the Pacific Ocean and China's national defense), *New Asia* 1, no. 3 (1930): 79–86.

52. Wei Qinglan, "Ribei qinlue dongsansheng de jingguo jiqi xianshi" (Japanese aggression in the three northeastern provinces: Past and present), *New Asia* 1, no. 1 (1930): 67–73.

53. Pei Yixi, "Ribei dui Man Meng yizhi hanmin zhi yanjiu" (Research on Japanese efforts to relocate Koreans to Manchuria and Mongolia), *New Asia* 3, no. 1 (October 1931): 141–50. While Pei suggests that the Japanese

authorities “forced” the Koreans to move to Manchuria, recent research by Korean scholars such as Hyun Ok Park suggests that while Korean migration to Manchuria was seen by the Japanese as part of empire building in East Asia, generally Koreans willingly migrated as a means of escaping poverty and unemployment in their own country. Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), chap. 1.

54. Zhang Muiyi, “Xin Man Meng zhengce yu dongsheng jingji de weiji” (Japan’s new Manchuria and Mongolia policy and the economic crisis in the northeastern provinces), *New Asia* 3, no. 1 (October 1931): 83–106.

55. The policy of “migrating people to the frontiers to substantiate the frontiers” (*yimin shibian*) has been used by various Chinese dynasties, such as the Han, Tang, Ming, and Qing. See Ma Ruhang and Ma Dazheng, eds., *Qingdai de bianjiang zhengce* (Frontier Policy of the Qing Dynasty) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1994); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 324–29.

56. *New Asia* 1, no. 1 (1930); *New Asia* 4, no. 1 (May 1932).

57. [Zhang Weiyu, ed.] “Neizheng bu ni yimin kenzhi jihua” (The Internal Affairs Department plans for migration and wasteland reclamation in the frontiers), in “Yiyuejian zhi niaokan,” [Zhang Weiyu, ed.] “Shibu jihua yimin kenzhi: jiangshe dongbei xibei liang yikenju” (The Industrial Department plans for migration and wasteland reclamation: The Northeastern and Northwestern Migration and Wasteland Reclamation Bureaus will be established), in “Yiyuejian” (During the Past Month), *New Asia* 3, no. 1 (Oct. 1931), 169; [Yin Weilian, ed.] “Fabu niding yifan kenbian banfa” (The Judicial Department plans to relocate criminals to the frontiers for land reclamation), in “Yiyuejian bianjiang dongfang dashiji” (Major frontier and Oriental affairs during the last month), *New Asia* 6, no. 3 (September 1933): 161–62.

58. Justin Tighe, *Constructing Suiyuan* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). The Hetao area is at the top of the Great Bend of the Yellow River in the Inner Mongolian region and Ningxia.

59. Zhang Xinglang, “Siyang Zhang Dunggu jushi nianpu” (Chronological biography of the retired scholar Zhang Dunggu in Siyang), *Dixue zazhi*, Special Issue in Commemoration of Mr. Zhang Weixi, no. 2 (1933): 1–50.

60. Du Chaobin, “Xibei guofang jihua de yanjiu” (Research on national defense in the Northwest), *New Asia* 4, no. 1 (May 1932): 17–34.

61. See, e.g., Fang Baohan, “Bianjiang tunken lun” (Discussion on frontier land reclamation), *New Asia* 11, no. 2 (February 1936): 13–38.

62. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, “Preface,” vii.

63. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 158.

64. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 164.

65. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 199.

66. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 194. It is worthwhile to note that the migration legend is generally accepted among the Hakkas as well as Hakka scholars even today, though the specific dates of migration might differ

slightly. Nicole Constable, ed., *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

67. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 169.

68. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 197. It seems Huntington made a mistake here by saying that the Hoklos were one branch of the Hakka. According to Mary S. Erbaugh, "The Hoklo . . . are not Hakka at all but Min people from southern Fujian living in Guangdong. Hoklo is the Cantonese pronunciation of the characters for 'Fu[jian]' and 'fellow,' pronounced *Fu lao* in Mandarin." See Mary S. Erbaugh, "The Hakka Paradox in the People's Republic of China: Exile, Eminence, and Public Silence," in Constable, *Guest People*, 196–231 n. 2.

69. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 162. Emphases mine in this paragraph.

70. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 166.

71. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 163.

72. Huntington, *The Character of Races*, "Preface," vii. Huntington himself clearly specifies the sources of his information.

73. The "Yongjia Chaos" refers to the Hun (Xiongnu) occupation of the Jin dynasty capital Luoyang and the capture of the Yongjia emperor in 311 C.E.

74. The "Jingkang Chaos" refers to the Jin (established by the Nüzhen) occupation of the Song capital Kaifeng and the capture of the Huizong and Qinzong emperors in 1127.

75. Zhang Qiyun, *Zhongguo minzuzhi* (History of the Chinese Nation) (Taiwan: Shangwu yinshuguan, [1929] 1969), 23–32.

76. Zhang continues to explain that during the Yuan dynasty, although the Mongol rulers called the northern Chinese "Hanren" and the Southern Chinese "Nanren," only the "Nanren" were real Han. The so-called Hanren in north China were not purely Han because they had mingled with the nomadic peoples.

77. Tan Qixiang, "Jin Yongjia sangluan houzhi minzu qianxi" (Migration after the Yongjia Chaos during the Jin), in Tan Qixiang, *Changshui Cuibian* (Essential Collections of *Chuangshui Ji*) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 272–98. In the early 1990s, in response to questioning of the population numbers in this article by a younger generation scholar, Ge Jianxiong, Tan realized that the way he calculated the number of migrants and its percentage was flawed, and thus the numbers he proposed were somewhat exaggerated. Nonetheless, Tan's major thesis about the several migration waves from the north to the south in Chinese history is still widely accepted. Ge Jianxiong, *Youyou Changshui: Tan Qixiang Qianzhuan* (The Floating Stream: Former Part of Biography of Tan Qixiang) (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1997), 43–44.

78. Both *Qinding Gujin tushu jicheng* and *Donghualu* were compiled during the eighteenth century. The former gathers sources from the Zhou to the seventeenth century. The latter covers 1644 to the Yongzheng period. Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, rev. and enl. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 605–7, 942–43.

79. Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia*.
80. Zhu Kezhen, "Zhongguo lishishang zhi hanzai" (Droughts in Chinese history: A verification of Dr. Huntington's hypothesis), *Shidi xuebao* 3, no. 6 (April 1925).
81. Ding Wenjiang, "Lishi renwu yu dili de guanxi" (The relationship between eminent people in history and geography), *Shidi xuebao* 2, no. 4 (May 1923).
82. Ding Wenjiang, "Lishi renwu yu dili de guanxi."
83. Liang Boqiang, "Yixueshang zhongguo minzu—Hanzu—zhiyanjiu" (Medical research on the Chinese race: The Han), *Dongfang zazhi* 23, no. 13 (1926); Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 135.
84. Zhang Junjun, *Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao* (The Reform of the Chinese Race) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1935); and *Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao: xubian* (Sequel to *The Reform of the Chinese Race*) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936).
85. Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 134–35.
86. During the early twentieth century, with the rediscovery of Mendel's laws of heredity, which explained the mechanism by which individual traits were passed from parent to child, and the 1915 publication of Arthur de Gobineau's work on the importance of heredity, biological determinism arose as a new theory, which gave rise to the global interest in eugenics. Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915); Huntington, *The Character of Races*, 1.
87. Ding Wenjiang, "Zhesixue yu pudie" (Eugenics and genealogy), *Gaizao* (Reconstruction) 3, nos. 4, 5, and 6 (1919). On Ding's eugenics, see Charlotte Furth, *Ting Wen-chiang: Science and China's New Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).
88. Chen Changheng and Zhou Jianren, *Jinhualun yu shanzhongxue* (Evolutionism and Eugenics) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, [1923] 1925); Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 171.
89. Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, 240–44; Frank Dikötter, *Imperfect Conceptions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Eugenics in Sino-Japanese Contexts, 1896–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
90. Rogaski suggests that these areas were chosen by Pan because they were more economically developed. I think that Pan was influenced by the geographic conversation about migration and "progressive" qualities, and chose these areas because they were understood to have a high percentage of Han migrants. Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, 241.
91. Pan Guangdan, "'Dongsheng hanzu zhimin pinzhi zhi yanjiu' zheng-qiu'an" (Survey questions for "Research on Han Migrants' Qualities in the Northeast"), *Renwen shiguan* (Humanitarian View on History) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 245–59 (reprinted in *Minguo congshu*, vol. 20 [Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989]).
92. Pan was very familiar with Huntington's work. He translated Hunting-

ton's *The Character of Races* into Chinese in 1929, under a slightly different title, *Ziran taotai yu Zhonghua minzuxing* (Natural Selection and Chinese National Characteristics) (Shanghai: Xinyue Shudian).

93. Pan Guangdan, *Minzu texing yu minzu weisheng* (Racial Characteristics and Racial Hygiene) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937).

94. Pan Guangdan, *Minzu texing*, n. 15.

95. Pan Guangdan, "Author's Preface," in *Minzu texing*.

96. Pan Guangdan, "'Dongsheng hanzu.'"

97. Pan Guangdan, "Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao: yiben guanyu minzu de xinshu de pinglun" (Reconstruction of the Chinese race: Review of a new book on race), in *Minzu texing yu minzu weisheng* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), appendix 1, 355–73 (reprinted in *Minguo congshu*, ser. 1, vol. 20 [Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1989]).

98. Pan Guangdan, "Zhongguo minzu."

CHAPTER 4

My thanks go to Mark Selden, Hildegard Diemberger, and the editors for their insightful comments.

1. Frederic Wakeman Jr., "Hanjian (Traitor)! Collaboration and Retribution in Wartime Shanghai," in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-Hsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 299–300.

2. In the twentieth century the Manchu category *hanjian* has been appropriated by Han to label and exorcise any Han who has allegedly collaborated with putative enemies of China. While this rich discursive tradition is largely outside the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that the category "Bad Han" shares certain common properties with *hanjian*. There is, however, a crucial difference: "Bad Han" is a CCP category used in relation to Han discrimination against "domestic" ethnic minorities, whereas *hanjian* is a term used to designate anyone within China (including non-Han ethnic groups) believed to have collaborated with China's "external" enemies.

3. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 150.

4. Giersch, this volume.

5. "Non-Han" in this chapter refers to those groups who have been classified as minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*) in China but not national groups outside of China, such as Koreans or Japanese.

6. Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans., ed., and introd. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1950).

7. Michael Rustin, "Structural and Unconscious Implications of the Dyad and Triad: An Essay in Theoretical Integration; Durkheim, Simmel, Freud," *Sociological Review* 19, no. 2 (1971): 179–201.

8. Simmel, *The Sociology*, 158. For Simmel, the third member can play

several roles: (1) “the non-partisan and the mediator,” upholding the rules in a dispute involving two parties; (2) the *tertius gaudens* (the laughing third), in which role the third can provide the balance in a conflict of two by forming a coalition with the party offering him the most benefits; (3) *divide et impera* (divide and rule), by which the third intervenes in the conflict or even provokes it directly with an aim to benefit from it. In the latter two configurations, the third plays a much more active role, aligning with one against the other, depending on circumstances, thereby creating a far more dynamic but less predictable group relationship; see Simmel, *The Sociology*, 145–69.

9. A group or society of two beings is, according to Zygmunt Bauman, the “primal scene” of morality: “For better or worse, morality—with its awesome potential for love and hatred, for self-sacrifice and domination, care and cruelty, with ambivalence as its prime mover—may rule the intimate ‘society of two’, of I and the Other, uncontested. There, it is self-sufficient. It does not need reason nor knowledge, argument nor conviction. It would not understand them anyway, it is ‘before’ all that. . . . It does not need standards either; it is its own standard, it sets standards as it goes, it is an act of continuous creation. It does not know of guilt or innocence; its [*sic*] is the purity of naivety.” Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 110.

10. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

11. Mao Zedong, “Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society (March 1926),” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 1 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 13.

12. Cf. Slavoj Žižek, “Mao Zedong: The Marxist Lord of Misrule,” www.lacan.com/zizmaozedong.htm (accessed April 25, 2009).

13. The exchanges in 1912 between Yuan Shikai, president of the Republic of China, and the Jebtsundamba Khutughtu, Holy Khan of Mongolia, demonstrated Yuan’s conciliatory attitudes to the Mongols, extolling the intimate historical relationship between the Mongols and Han. Liu Xujuan, ed., *Menggu Shiliao Huibian* (Mongolian Historical Materials) (Taipei: Jinglan wenhua chubanshe, 1977), 167–72.

14. http://c250.columbia.edu/dkv/eseminars/0732/web/pdf/0732_s4_o_pdf_1.pdf (accessed April 25, 2009).

15. Magnus Fiskesjö, “Rescuing the Empire: Chinese Nation-Building in the Twentieth Century,” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2006): 21.

16. Leibold, this volume; and *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenous Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

17. There were arguably dissident voices within the GMD, as noted by Liu Xiaoyuan. I suggest, however, that these differences were not ideological but about administration and policy implementation. Liu Xiaoyuan, *Reins of Liberation: An Entangled History of Mongolian Independence, Chinese Territoriality, and Great Power Hegemony, 1911–1950* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 207.

18. In Tony Saich, ed., *The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 42.

19. Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongzhanbu, ed., *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian, 1921.7–1949.9* (Beijing: Zhonggong Zhongyang Dangxiao Chubanshe, 1991), 24. My emphasis.

20. Hui Daiyin, “Jundui zhong zhengzhi gongzuo de fangfa,” in Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongzhanbu, *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian, 1921.7–1949.9*, 78.

21. See de Certeau’s discussion of strategy and tactic in terms of vision. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 35–37.

22. Hunan sheng diyici nongmin daibiao dahui, “Hunan sheng diyici nongmin daibiao dahui jiefang Miao Yao jueyi an: 1926 nian 12 yue,” in Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongzhanbu, *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian, 1921.7–1949.9*, 52.

23. See Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

24. Cheng Shaoyu, “Wei Zhonggong gengjia buershiweike hua er douzheng,” in Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongzhanbu, *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian, 1921.7–1949.9*, 148. Wang’s problem with CCP Great Hanism was not that it was oppressing minorities but that it neglected minorities who were equally oppressed and exploited by international imperialism and by Chinese warlords and capitalists.

25. Liu Xiaoyuan, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921–1945* (Washington, DC, and Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2004).

26. Zhonggong Zhongyang Tongzhanbu, *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian*, 316.

27. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 26.

28. Fiskesjö, “Rescuing the Empire,” 30.

29. Ruey Yih-fu, “Xinan shaoshu minzu chong shou pianpang mingming kaolüe” (On the origin of the tribal names with insect-beast-signified radicals of southwestern minority groups, with English summary), in *Zhongguo minzu ji qi wenhua lungao* (China: The Nation and Some Aspects of Its Culture. A Collection of Selected Essays with Anthropological Approaches) (Taipei: Yinwen yinshuguan, [1941] 1972), 73–117. Fiskesjö argues that the CCP adopted the results of this project without acknowledgment in its *minzu* identification project starting in the 1950s. This view is also shared by Leibold, this volume. It is important to note, however, that the CCP rectification of names preceded the GMD, even though it did not make a systematic classification.

30. The Declaration stated expressly: “We hold that it is only through a common struggle by ourselves and the nation of Inner Mongolia that we can rapidly defeat our common enemy—the Japanese imperialists and their running dog, Chiang Kai-shek. At the same time, we are persuaded that only by

fighting together with us can the Inner Mongolian nation preserve the glory of the epoch of Genghis Khan, avoid the extinction of their nation, embark on the path of national revival, and obtain independence and freedom like that enjoyed by the nations of Turkey, Poland, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus." Stuart Schram, trans., *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912–1949: Toward the Second United Front, January 1935–July 1937* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 71.

31. Liu Xiao, "Liu Xiao guanyu Mengmin gongzuo de jidian yijian (1937)," in *Nei Menggu gemin lishi wenjian huiji*, ed. Xie Shijing and Qian Zhan-yuan (Beijing and Hohhot: Zhongyang Dang'an'guan/Nei Menggu Zizhiqu Dang'an'guan, [1937] 1988), 364.

32. Liu Xiao, "Liu Xiao," 365.

33. Liu Xiao, "Liu Xiao," 360.

34. The fundamental question then is whether they had the same goal and how different ethnic interests might affect "good ethnicity" after the enemies were eliminated.

35. For an analysis of "minority nationality revolution" in China, see Uradyn E. Bulag, "The Yearning for 'Friendship': Revisiting 'the Political' in Minority Revolutionary History in China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 1 (2006): 3–32.

36. The script was written by the veteran Mongolian playwright Yun Zhao-guang. See Yun Zhaoguang, "E'erduosi fengbao," in *Nei Menggu dianying juban xuan* (An Anthology of Inner Mongolian Film Scripts), ed. Nei Menggu dangdai wenxue congshu bianweihui (Huhehaote: Nei Menggu renmin chubanshe, 1987), 50–158.

37. Yun Zhaoguang, "E'erduosi fengbao," 76.

38. Yun Zhaoguang, "E'erduosi fengbao," 77.

39. Yun Zhaoguang, "E'erduosi fengbao," 80–81.

40. See Uradyn E. Bulag, *The Mongol at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

41. Bonnie Honig, "Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 97–113.

CHAPTER 5

1. Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu: Han minzu de renleixue fenxi* (Snowball: An Anthropological Analysis of the Han Nationality) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999), 1–12.

2. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan-yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1989), 13.

3. Xu Jieshun, ed., *Renleixue jiaocheng* (Course in Anthropology) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2005), 3.

4. Zhang Qi, "Tamen shi gu luomaren de houyi ma?" (Are they the descen-

dants of ancient Romans?), *Yang Cheng Wan Bao* (Guangzhou), February 10, 2002, A1.

5. Chen Jianping, “Fandu Kaifeng qian nian ‘youtaishi’” (Reexamining a thousand years of Kaifeng’s “Jewish History”), *Yang Cheng Wan Bao* (Guangzhou), February 11, 2000, A1, A6.

6. Chen Chuyue and Li Kaiyuan, “Xilan Wang Zi houyi yinshen Quanzhou” (The hidden descendants of Xilan Wang Zi in Quanzhou), *Yang Cheng Wan Bao* (Guangzhou), February 21, 2000, A1.

7. Hu Yuying and Hu Jie, “Heshan Yuan shi yuan chu Xianbei” (The Yuan family of Heshan originated from the Sarbi), *Yang Cheng Wan Bao* (Guangzhou), February 22, 2000, A1.

8. *Xiandai Hanyu cidian, di wu ban* (Modern Chinese Dictionary, 5th ed.) (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005), 697. For a detailed discussion of Han ethnic groups, see Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu*.

9. *Sui shu—nan man zhuan* (History of the Sui—Nanman Commentary).

10. *Tongdian juan 187 Nanman* (Comprehensive Institutions, vol. 187: Nanman).

11. *Sui shu—dili zhi shang* (History of the Sui, Geography, vol. 1).

12. *Sui shu—dili zhi shang*.

13. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu*, 13.

14. For a detailed discussion of the plurality of the origins, formation, and development of the Han nationality, see Xu Jieshun, *Han minzu fazhan shi* (History of the Han Nationality’s Development) (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1993).

15. Liu Zhizhong and Li Yi, *Guocheng zhuanhua lun* (Process Transformation Theory) (Beijing: Zhongguo zhanwang chubanshe, 1988), 32–33.

16. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi* (History of the Chinese Population) (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1995), 46, 76.

17. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 92.

18. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 213.

19. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 297.

20. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 459.

21. Wang Yumin, *Zhongguo renkou shi*, 515.

22. Wang Keqian and Wu Zongying, *Jiazhiguan yu Zhonghua minzu ningjuli* (Value Systems and the Cohesion of the Chinese Nation) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2001), 2.

23. See Tao Sha, “Hanzi di zishu yu shiyong” (Count and usage of Chinese characters), *Beijing wan bao* (Beijing), September 16, 1982.

24. Taken from Li Yuese (Joseph Needham), *Zhongguo kexue jishu shi di yi juan di yi fen ce* (History of Science and Technology in China, vol. 1, subvol. 1) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1975), 88–89.

25. Xu Jieshun, *Han minzu fazhan shi*, 345.

26. *Han Fei Zi: Wu Du* (Five Vermin).

27. *Shiji—Yin* (Records of the Historian—Yin).

28. *Guo Yu—Lu Yu shang* (Discourses of the States—Discourses of Lu, vol. 1).
29. *Shiji—Zhou* (Records of the Historian—Zhou).
30. *Shiji—Huozhi liezhuan* (Records of the Historian—Biographies of Profiteers).
31. *Zuozhuan Xiang gong shisi nian* (Zuozhuan Duke Xiang Year 14).
32. *Zuozhuan Xiang gong shisi nian*.
33. *Zuozhuan Xiang gong shisi nian*.
34. *Makesi Engesi xuanji di er juan* (Selected Writings of Marx and Engels, vol. 2) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1992), 70.
35. *Wei shu—gaozu ji* (History of the Wei—Records on the Founder).
36. *Gongyang zhuan Yin gong yuan nian* (Gongyang Commentary, Duke Yin Year 1).
37. *Mengzi—Liang Hui wang shang* (Mencius: King Hui of Liang, vol. 1).
38. *Shiji—Li Si liezhuan* (Records of the Historian—Biography of Li Si).
39. *Han shu—Dong Zhongshu zhuan* (History of the Han—Biography of Dong Zhongshu).
40. *Zizhi tongjian juan 198 Taizong ji* (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government, vol. 198: Records of Taizong).
41. *Ming Taizu shi lu juan 53, Hongwu san nian liu yue ding chou* (True Records of the Founding Emperor of the Ming, vol. 53: 6th Month of the 3rd Year of Hongwu).
42. *Ming Taizu shi lu juan 127, Yongle ershiyi nian* (True Records of the Founding Emperor of the Ming, vol. 127: 21st Year of Yongle).
43. *Jin shi juan 4 Xizong ben ji* (History of the Jin, vol. 4: Records of Xizong).
44. *Yuan shi juan 6 Shizu ben ji san* (History of the Yuan, vol. 6: 3rd Volume of Records of Shizu).
45. Yongzheng Emperor, *Dayi Juemilu* (Record of Awakening to Supreme Justice).
46. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu*, 6.

CHAPTER 6

1. See Thomas S. Mullaney, “55 + 1 = 1, or The Strange Calculus of Chinese Nationhood,” *China Information* 18 (2004): 197–205, for an introduction to the historical origins of the 1950s PRC Ethnic Classification (*minzu shibie*) Project.
2. Wang Guowei (1877–1927) is often commemorated for methodologically pioneering the interdisciplinary use of excavated materials and received literary texts. See Li Xueqin, *Zouchu yigu shidai* (Walking Out of the “Doubting of Antiquity” Era) (Changchun: Changchun chubanshe, 2007), 2.
3. See *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2009), on disciplines. For reasons of space and emphasis, I have not been able to address other contributory disciplines such as linguistics.
4. “Early China” in Western sinology generally spans the earliest times

down to and including the Han dynasty. The periodization and nomenclature of Chinese history remains under debate. For the sake of convenience, this chapter uses the term *antiquity* to refer to this period up to the Han dynasty and the term *antiquarian* for students of this period.

5. Mark Elliot, in this volume, defines ethnicity as “the social organization and political assertion of difference perceived to inhere in culturally bounded, descent-based categories.” On the Han dynasty use of the term *Qinren* (People of Qin) and its relation to the history of the English term *China*, via Sanskrit, see also Fei Xiaotong, “Hanren’ kao,” in *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan-yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1989), 137–52; Victor Mair, “The North(west) ern Peoples and the Recurrent Origins of the ‘Chinese’ State,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 46–86; and Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

6. Yang Bojun, ed., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), vol. 2, 818.

7. On early interpretations of *zu* and *xing*, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 B.C.): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006), 24, 66, 69, 165.

8. *Zuozhuan*, Xi 31.5. Yang Bojun uses this example to define *zulei* as ancestral lineage in his *Zuozhuan* lexicon, implicitly reaffirming the historical particularity of the Cheng 4.4 case. See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan cidian* (Dictionary of the *Zuo* Commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 622. For analyses of this passage in other contexts, see also Haun Saussy, *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 91–3, 220–21; and Liu, *The Clash of Empires*, 72–75.

9. *Hanshu*, 94.3834. See also Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans: Pre-Imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy,” in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 59–102.

10. See John Lust, *Tsou Jung: The Revolutionary Army. A Chinese Nationalist Tract of 1903* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968). Translation mine.

11. Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 3.

12. On the successive cosmological models placing the Central States at the center from pre-imperial antiquity in the received and excavated tradition, see Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On the formation of the Confucian canon, see Michael Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

13. The most frequently cited examples are probably *Mencius* 3A4: “[Mencius:] I have heard of [the] Xia converting the Yi, but I have never heard of their

conversion to the Yi"; and Analects 3.5: "The Master said: 'The Yi and Di with rulers are not the equal of the various Xia states without them.'"

14. See, for example, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*, Zhao 17.3: "[Confucius] told the people: 'I heard that when the Son of Heaven loses the [knowledge of the order of] official rankings, the study of official rankings lies with the Four Yi. This seems to be true.'"

15. Mozi's fifth century B.C.E. "Jie zang" (For moderation in funerals) attacks excessively lavish Central States funerals as well as overly casual practices of outsiders, although the former is clearly the main object of critique.

16. *Yan tie lun* (Discourses on Salt and Iron), "Lun Zou," chap. 53. This text was composed sometime between 74 and 49 B.C.E. and is ascribed to Huan Kuan. See Wang Liqi, ed., *Yan tie lun jiao zhu*, rev. ed. (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1983), 564.

17. *Shiji*, 74.2345. For a discussion of the fragmentary presence of Zou Yan in the early archive, see Donald Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 822–25.

18. *Shiji*, 74.2344; *Yan tie lun*, "Lun Zou."

19. See the map of figure 1, prefacing Gu Jiegang, ed., *Gushi bian* (Hai kou: Hainan chubanshe, 2003), vol. 2. See also Gu Jiegang, "Qin Han tongyi de you lai he Zhanguo ren dui yu shijie de xiang xiang," 1–6, in the same volume.

20. Gu's critical history of classicists bears some resemblance to that of Friedrich Nietzsche (e.g., "Wir Philologen"), as well as to the critiques of the Sanskritist D.D. Kosambi (1907–66). One might further compare Martin Bernal's multivolume *Black Athena* to Gu Jiegang's project in their dual interest in past and present: in how the ancients themselves represented their own past and in the myth-making process by which moderns reconceived antiquity for their own ends, particularly in reading race back into history. However, where Bernal returns to the Greco-Roman classics to recover the positive history of Greek cultural inheritance from a broader Levantine world, erased by nineteenth-century racist classicism, Gu rereads the Confucian Classics in order to excise the "false" history interpolated by *jingxue* elites through painstaking chronological analysis of textual contradictions. See Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

21. Gu Jiegang, "Gu xu," in *Gushi bian* (Discriminations on Ancient History), ed. Gu Jiegang (Hai kou: Hainan chubanshe, 2003), vol. 4, 1–14; and Gu Jiegang, *Qin Han fangshi yu Rusheng* (Masters of Techniques and Classicists during the Qin–Han Period) (Shanghai: Shanghai shiji chubanshe, 2005). On the complexities of the New Text vs. Old Text, Han Learning vs. Song Learning through the *jingxue* tradition, see also Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-Chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and

Lawrence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

22. See Li Ling, "Chutu faxian yu gudai shu niandai de zai renshi," in *Li Ling zi xuan ji* (Works of Li Ling Selected by Himself) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1998), 22–57. See also Li, *Zouchu yigu shidai* (Walking Out of the Era of Doubting of Antiquity); and Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting Early Chinese Texts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

23. The term *sinocentrism* gained historical currency through John K. Fairbank's influential account, which staged the hierarchical Chinese world order in opposition to an (unexamined) egalitarian European world order. According to his analysis, cultural and diplomatic superiority shaped millennia of Chinese foreign policy and explained its ultimate downfall during the Opium Wars and the Sino-Japanese wars. China could politically control the "Sinic Zone" where Chinese culture (e.g., Chinese writing, agriculture, and Confucianism) held sway but perennially showed its vulnerability to the alphabetic, pastoral-nomadic, tribal "Inner Asian Zone" and to the "Outer Zone" that would eventually include Europe. See John K. Fairbank, "A Preliminary Framework," in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1–19. The sinocentric model can be traced genealogically to the nineteenth-century debates over the translation of the Chinese term *yi* as "foreigner" or as "barbarian." As Lydia Liu demonstrates, the interpretation of *yi* became critical within the battles for sovereignty during the Opium Wars and their aftermath. In the treaty document of 1858 following their military victories, the British officially banned the use of *yi* as a reference to the British government. By contrast, and despite both the British translation and the Han nationalist rhetoric, the Manchu rulers of the Qing empire embraced the *yi* of pre-imperial classical tradition. In selecting out ancient genealogies of foreign-born Zhou rulers, they found in the Confucian *yi* an affirmative local discourse legitimating their own rule. As Liu points out, the British translation of *yi* as the inferior barbarian belonged to a psychologizing account about the Chinese. See Liu, *The Clash of Empires*, 31–69.

24. See, e.g., Lien-sheng Yang, "Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order," in Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order*, 20–33; Chun-shu Chang, *The Rise of Chinese Empire*, vol. 1, *Nation, State, and Imperialism in Early China, ca. 1600 B.C.–A.D. 8* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 156–57, for the Han dynasty; Morris Rossabi, ed., *China amongst Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), for the Song and Yuan dynasties; Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), for the Qing dynasty. Some have also argued that the term *sinicization* (or *sinification*), like sinocentrism, essentially ethnologizes its archive. See Elliot on this debate. Pamela Crossley argues that "'sinicization' has no purpose other than as a vessel for a set of

ideological impositions describing assimilation and acculturation as having causes and meanings with relation to China that are somehow special." See Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 13. Cf. Pamela Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11, no. 1 (1990): 1–35.

25. Xudong Zhang argues that neoliberal sinocentrists in the 1990s PRC, and their Western critics, view "culture" as a way of reviving nationalist politics in a global capitalist world, without apprehending the cultural forms of bourgeois culture itself. See Xudong Zhang, *Whither China? Intellectual Politics in Contemporary China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002). In Rey Chow's account, the study of Chinese literature and culture in the U.S. academy is itself shaped by a U.S. administrative "ethnicity-management apparatus." This is characterized by a sinocentric model of Chineseness, privileging as most authentic a primitivized Chinese antiquity. See Rey Chow, "Introduction: On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem," in *Modern Chinese Literary and Cultural Studies in the Age of Theory: Reimagining a Field*, ed. Rey Chow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 1–25. On the participation of any description of China in the writing of "China" and its meanings, see Eric Hayot, Haun Saussy, and Steven G. Yao, "Sinographies: An Introduction," in *Sinographies: Writing China*, ed. Eric Hayot, Haun Saussy, and Steven G. Yao (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), vii–xxi.

26. On Lin Shu's championing of the *Shiji's* ethnographic descriptions as a sign of Chinese "civilized" thinking in the preface to his 1903 translation of Michael Haberlandt's influential *Völkerkunder* (translated as *Min zhong xue*), see Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 69–70. Tsu illuminates the dependence of modern Chinese racial, national, and cultural identity on mobilizing "negative" feelings of failure (e.g., self-reproach, humiliation). For a typical account of the importance of the Han dynasty in the ethnogenealogy of the Chinese, see Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan-yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1989), 29.

27. See Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 179–201, for a useful account of the founding of the academic discipline of ethnology in the 1920s and its relation to the administrative and cultural technologies of domination.

28. Gu Jiegang recalls this call to *zheng li guo gu* by his teachers Zhang Taiyan and Hu Shih as a response to the introduction of Western sciences.

29. See Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 292, 294; James Leibold, "Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China: From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man," *Modern China* 32, no. 2 (April 2006), 212–13 n. 1. On the use of *minzu* to translate *minzoku*

(Japanese) versus *narod* or *narodnost* (Russian), see Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity," 19–20.

30. Thus, for example, a "race of Han" appears in English as early as 1836 but refers to the Han dynasty state. See John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants* (London: C. Knight, 1836). On nineteenth-century European racialist thought, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Race," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd ed., ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 274–87.

31. Zhang produced commentaries on the *Zuozhuan*. See Shimada Kenji, *Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution: Zhang Binglin and Confucianism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

32. Zhang Taiyan, "Yu zhong da xinwen bao" (Response from prison to a newspaper report), in *Zhang Taiyan Zhenglun xuanji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 233–35.

33. Leibold, "Competing Narratives"; and Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining the Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race,'" in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 34–52.

34. Blood was the most important of the five markers of race for Sun, alongside livelihood, language, religion, and customs. See Leibold, this volume; Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race*, 123–25; Dru Gladney, *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 14–15; and Magnus Fiskesjö, "Rescuing the Empire: Chinese Nation-Building in the Twentieth Century," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2006): 15–44. For Sun's direction of the ethnonationalist Han movement against the Manchu Qing "colonizers" of China, over and above the threat of Euro-American imperialism descried through *guojia zhuyi* (nation-statist) arguments, see Rebecca Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 117–18.

35. For Fu Sinian, history was the product of race (*zhongzu*) and geography, and he reexamined archaeological and textual records to argue that the pre-imperial Huaxia emerged from groups from both the eastern and western regions of China. See Fu Sinian, *Fu Sinian quanji* (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1980), 1230. Scholars working with models of racialized diffusion from the West had already proposed the origins of Chinese civilization or state in the eastward migrations of non-Chinese racial groups. For a good summary of contrasting positions, see Wang Ming-ke, *Huaxia bianyuan: lishi jiyi yu zuqun rentong* (On Chinese Borderlands: Historical Memory and Ethnic Identity) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2006). Victor Mair, more recently, has traced the origins of the Chinese state through a history of Sinitic (Chinese) and non-Sinitic (e.g., "Eurasian heritage") peoples. Drawing on the *Shiji* and other records of ethnonyms and surnames of heads of ancestral houses, as well as on descriptions of physical traits, he argues the primary

contribution of non-Sinitic peoples of China's north, northwest, and west to the successive premodern states of "China" from the Shang dynasty onward. See Mair, "The North(west)ern Peoples." Thus, for example, the *Shiji's* record of the "prominent nose" of the founder of the Han dynasty, Han Gaozu, suggests that "he had the blood of the steppe peoples running in his veins." Mair uses the term *Sinitic*, not *Han*, for his ethnic history.

36. Gu Jiegang, "Bian Zhongguo lishi de zhongxin wenti," and "Fanxing yu Hanxing," in *Gu Jiegang xueshu wenhua suibi* (Gu Jiegang's Informal Academic and Cultural Writings), ed. Gu Hong (Beijing: Zhongguo tiedao chubanshe, 1988), 3–5. Gu Jiegang's 1930s geography journal *Yu Gong* (Tribute of Yu) was at the forefront of collective antiquarian attacks on the Republican-era orthodoxy of a monoracial history of China. For Gu, the monoracial genealogy belonged to the sinocentric historiographic model, which his "doubting antiquity" movement sought to overturn.

37. Gu uses the term *Hanzu* interchangeably with *the Chinese* (*Huaxia minzu* and *Zhongguo minzu*) precisely to reveal the racially composite nature of both.

38. Gu Jiegang, *Gushi bian* (Hai kou: Hainan chubanshe, 2003), vol. 1, 49.

39. See, e.g., Qi Sihe, "Minzu yu Zhongzu," *Yu Gong banyuekan* 7, no. 1–3 (April 1937): 25–34; and Lü Simian, *Zhongguo minzu shi* (History of the Chinese *minzu*) (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1934), 9–16. For a discussion of this group and their significance, see James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 122–42.

40. For this reason, Gu promised his new *minzu* history would equal the famous Chinese novel *Sanguo yanyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) in entertainment value. Gu's textual theory drew explicitly on literary comparisons with Peking Opera and folklore.

41. Thomas S. Mullaney, "Ethnic Classification Writ Large: The 1954 Yunnan Province Classification Project and Its Foundations in Republican-Era Taxonomic Thought," *China Information* 18 (2004): 207–41.

42. Guo Moruo, *Zhongguo gudai shehui yanjiu* (Research on Ancient Chinese Society) (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe, [1929] 2008), 5. On Guo's historiographic project, see Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and History: Origins of Marxist Historiography in China, 1919–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 137–79.

43. On the context of the debate, see Q. Edward Wang, "Between Marxism and Nationalism: Chinese historiography and the Soviet influence, 1949–63," *Journal of Contemporary China* 9 (2000): 95–111.

44. G. V. Elfimov, "Lun zhongguo minzu de xingcheng," Hui Wenjing, "Lun Han minzu de xingcheng," and Cai Meibiao, "Han minzu xingcheng de wenti," in *Han minzu xingcheng wenti taolunji* (Collected Discussions on the Formation of the Han *minzu*), ed. Fan Wenlan (Beijing: Xinhua shudian, 1957), 228–54, 14–38, 39–43.

45. Fan Wenlan, "Zi Qin-Han qi Zhongguo chengwei tongyi guojia de

yuanyin," in Fan Wenlan, *Han minzu xingcheng wenti taolunji*, 1–16. Fan argues that Marx, like Soviet sinologists, had insufficient knowledge of Chinese history and was using a different definition of Asia. On Fan Wenlan's subsequent history of the *Zhonghua minzu*, which incorporated the ancient Hanzu and other ancient nationalities and which became canonical until Mao Zedong's death in 1976, see Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 172–74.

46. On allochronism as "the denial of coevalness" in anthropology, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 32.

47. Wang Ming-ke, *Huaxia bianyuan*, 3–6. Compare Cui Mingde, *Liang Han minzu guanxi sixiang shi* (History of Theories of Ethnic Relations in the Han Dynasty) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2007), which traces the development of notions of what Cui calls a unified *Zhonghua minzu*. He looks at discursive stages and strategies in the "centripetal" movement toward ever greater *minzu* cohesiveness, for example, in the genealogical tracing of common ancestors or the use of cosmology.

48. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* does not register this use of the term *Han*, and the (U.S.-targeted) *Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus Online* includes this definition of Han: "the Chinese peoples especially as distinguished from non-Chinese (as Mongolian) elements in the population."

49. See Pines, "Beasts or Humans"; and Yuri Pines, "The Question of Interpretation: Qin History in Light of New Epigraphic Sources," *Early China* 29 (2004): 1–44; Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Nicola Di Cosmo, "Ethnography of the Nomads and 'Barbarian' History in Han China," in *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*, ed. Lin Foxhall et al. (Stuttgart: Frank Steiner Verlag, 2010), 299–324. For the discursive construction of "Han" and "non-Han" identities in the Tang dynasty and for the argument that ethnicity (expansively defined) did matter during this period, see Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008). Abramson traces patterns of what he calls ethnic hancization (distinct from cultural sinicization) through the pre-imperial period.

50. See, e.g., Gideon Shelach and Yuri Pines, "Secondary State Formation of Local Identity: Change and Continuity in the State of Qin (770–221 B.C.)," in *Archaeology of Asia*, ed. Miriam T. Stark (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 202–30; von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius*; Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 B.C.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

51. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 26–27.

52. On the modern Chinese institution of archaeology, see K. C. Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 4th ed. rev. and enl. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 12–21; Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual*, rev. and enl. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 341–47;

and Michael Puett, "China in Early Eurasian History: Recent Scholarship on the Issue," in *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia*, ed. Victor Mair (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Man, 1998), 699–715. One should note that the study of inscriptions on bronze and stone (*jinshixue*) had flourished since the eleventh century. Both Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 414; and Xu Pingfang, "Epilogue: Part 1," in *The Formation of Chinese Civilization: An Archaeological Perspective*, ed. Sarah Allan et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 8, 284, stage their accounts of Chinese civilization against the Eurocentrism of this earlier model of diffusion. On Marxist social developmental theory, see Enzheng Tong, "Thirty Years of Chinese Archaeology (1949–1979)," in *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and Claire Fawcett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 177–97. On the paradigm shift of the third phase led by Su Bingqi's *quyu puxi* theory, see Su Bingqi, "A New Age of Chinese Archaeology," in *Exploring China's Past: New Discoveries and Studies in Archaeology and Art*, ed. and trans. Roderick Whitfield and Wang Tao (London: Saffron Books, 1999), 17–25. The first of Chinese archaeology's three major tasks, in Su Bingqi's words, remains "writing national history."

53. See Li Chi [Li Ji], *Anyang: A Chronicle of the Discovery, Excavation, and Reconstruction of the Ancient Capital of the Shang Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 255–64. Li Ji argues from analysis of human remains at Anyang that "many different ethnic stocks" met at the north China plain, among which the Mongoloid group was dominant. Compare Kim Hayes, "On the Presence of Non-Chinese at Anyang," *Sino-Platonic Papers* 132 (April 2004). For further discussions, see Leibold, "Competing Narratives"; and John Olsen, "China's Earliest Inhabitants," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 2 (2000): 1–7.

54. Compare the debates surrounding the PRC government-sponsored Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project (carried out in 1996–2000), which pushed Chinese civilization further back in time than the Shang dynasty accepted by most Western sinologists. On the interdisciplinary methods of the project, see Li Xueqin, "The Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project: Methodology and Results," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4 (2002): 321–33. On chronology, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Calendar and Chronology," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 19–29.

55. On the impact of the administrative organization of archaeology according to modern provinces on the naming and study of ancient minority groups, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, "The Regionalist Paradigm in Chinese Archaeology," in *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and Claire Fawcett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 198–217.

56. Sarah Allan, "Introduction," in Allan et al., *Formation of Chinese Civilization*, 3. She goes on: "Besides artifacts per se, the material traces of human

activities reflecting a complex of traits, such as a common style of burial, a common settlement pattern, and a common mode of agricultural production, may be taken as markers in defining an archaeological culture.”

57. Jay Xu, “Sichuan before the Warring States Period,” in *Ancient Sichuan: Treasures from a Lost Civilization*, ed. Robert Bagley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 21–27; and Michael Nylan, “The Legacies of the Chengdu Plain,” in Bagley, *Ancient Sichuan*, 309–25. On the early-twentieth-century debate over whether the Han dynasty cliffside tombs in Sichuan were the product of Hanzu or Manzi “barbarians”—or of Egyptians, in Victor Segalen’s imagination, and a lost tribe of Israelites, in Thomas Torrance’s—see Jeff Kyong-McClain, “Barbarian Caves or Han Tombs? Republican-Era Archaeology and the Reassertion of Han Presence in Ancient Sichuan,” *Twentieth Century China* 35 (April 2010): 4–24.

58. Enzheng Tong, “Slate Cist Graves and Megalithic Chamber Tombs in Southwest China: Archaeological, Historical, and Ethnographical Approaches to the Identification of Early Ethnic Groups,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1 (1982): 266–74.

59. On the rise of the subfield of ethnoarchaeology in the aftermath of the 1950s Yunnan Classification Project, see Liang Zhaotao and Zhang Shouqi, “On ‘Ethnoarchaeology,’” in *Anthropology in China: Defining the Discipline*, ed. Gregory Eliyu Guldin (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991), 91–107; Li Yangsong, “Zhongguo minzu kaoguxue ji you guan wenti” (Some issues concerning ethnoarchaeology), in *Yingjie ershiyi shiji de Zhongguo kaoguxue guoji xueshu taolunhui lunji* (Proceedings of the International Conference on Chinese Archaeology Enters the Twenty-First Century), ed. Beijing daxue kaogu xuexi (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe 1998), 343–49. For a representative example of the use of *Shiji* ethnography and excavated visual materials in linking a modern minority genealogically to the ancient occupants of that region, see Wang Ningsheng, “Putuoshan Shizhaishan qingtongqi tuxiang suojian gudai minzu kao,” in *Minzu kaoguxue lunji* (Collected Essays on Ethnoarchaeology) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 1989), 372–89. The Han are not useful for ethnogenealogy precisely because they have lost the “primitive state” allegedly displayed by certain living groups. On the relation of ethnographic and archaeological theories, see Ian Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural History: Words and Things in Iron Age Greece* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000); Siân Jones, “Ethnicity: Theoretical Approaches, Methodological Implications,” in *Handbook of Archaeological Theories*, ed. R. Alexander Neftley et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008); and Ian Hodder, *Archaeology beyond Dialogue* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003).

60. For representative examples, see Mair, *The Bronze Age*; Wang Binghua, *Xiyu kaogu lishi lunji* (Collected Archaeological and Historical Studies of the Western Regions) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2008); Lin Meicun, *Sichou zhi lu kaogu shiwu jiang* (Fifteen Talks on Silk Road Archaeology) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006).

61. On molecular archaeology, see Paola Francalacci, “DNA Analysis on

Ancient Dessicated Corpses from Xinjiang (China): Further Results," in Mair, *The Bronze Age*, 537–47. For a critique of the methods and claims of population genetics, and of the Human Genome Diversity Project in particular, see Jonathan Marks, "'We're Going to Tell These People Who They Really Are': Science and Relatedness," in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*, ed. S. Franklin and S. McKinnon (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 355–83. See Denis Sinor, "The Myth of Languages and the Language of Myth," in Mair, *The Bronze Age*, 729, on the problem of correlating genetic and linguistic relationships.

62. For these statements, see Elena E. Kuzmina, *The Prehistory of the Silk Road* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 91–92, whose account goes on, "As for the Mongoloids, their penetration from the east into Eastern Xinjiang by small groups is noted only from the third century B.C. and is linked with the migration westward of the Huns and Turks, a conclusion corroborated by the evidence of the Han written sources." See also Han Kangxin, *Sichou zhilu gudai jumin zhongzu renleixue yanjiu* (Racial Anthropological Research on the Ancient Inhabitants of the Silk Road) (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1994), 21–27; J.P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair, *The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples from the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 241. See also Mair, "The North(west)ern Peoples." Wang Binghua, *Xiyu kaogu lishi lunji*, calls for more work on the racial anthropology of these corpses that integrates the theoretical methodology of modern *minzu* studies. For an argument that the Han dynasty administrative documents excavated in Juyan, at the northwestern frontier with the Xiongnu (modern-day Gansu province and Inner Mongolia), recorded skin color, see Chun-shu Chang, *The Rise of Chinese Empire*, vol. 2, *Frontier, Immigration, and Empire in Han China, 130 B.C.–A.D. 157* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007). Chang does not, however, conflate skin color or race with Han dynasty identities.

63. Mallory and Mair, *The Tarim Mummies*, 24; my emphasis. They are summarizing the work of Chinese physical anthropologists but using their own translations. They continue: "So far the earliest physical evidence has been identified as conforming to a rather robust 'Proto-European' type" (141, 237). It should be emphasized that physical anthropology and molecular archaeology are only two of the diverse technologies upon which Mair's many collaborative and interdisciplinary publications draw. See Mair's introduction to *Contact and Exchange in the Ancient World*, ed. Victor H. Mair (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), on the need to return to the study of ancient contact using "hard data." For a very different theoretical model that examines the active pursuit and reinvention of the foreign in the context of Han dynasty China, see Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

64. For a detailed analysis of Han dynasty "Hu (foreigner) and Han" battle paintings, often in funerary contexts, see Xing Yitian, "Handai huaxiang Hu-Han zhanzheng tu de goucheng, leixing yu yiyi," *Guoli Taiwan daxue mei-*

shushi yanjiu jikan 19 (2005): 1–72. On phobic caricatures of foreigners and the competing associations of foreigners and exotic animals with immortality, see Yen Zheng, “Barbarian Images in Han Period Art,” *Orientalisms* (June 1998): 50–59.

65. See Rey Chow, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 30–33. Literary studies of other modern ethnicities have usefully drawn attention to the choices of particular genres or disciplines over others. In the case of English ethnicity, Robert Young traces a competition between Celt-promoting poets (evoking King Arthur) and Saxon-promoting prose historians, novelists, and philologists (evoking King Alfred) through the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The prose writers prevailed, and it was their historical account, not that of biological race theorists, to which the English owe the myth of Saxon origins. See Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008).

66. For careful comparisons of Han dynasty and nineteenth-century ethnography, see, e.g., David Schaberg, “Travel, Geography, and the Imperial Imagination in Fifth-Century Athens and Han China,” *Comparative Literature* 51, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 152–91; Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001).

67. See, e.g., Wei Yuan, *Shengwu ji* (Record of Imperial Military Achievements) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, [1842] 1936), 4.10a. On the historical geopolitics of Xinjiang, see Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); and James Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

68. See Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 1–12, on the genealogy of this “contrapuntal perspective” through recent postcolonial thought; and Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 52–53.

69. Tamara T. Chin, “Defamiliarizing the Foreigner: Sima Qian’s Ethnography and Han-Xiongnu Marriage Diplomacy,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70, no. 2 (2010): 311–54.

70. The *Hanshu* “Account of the Xiongnu” contains the same passage, although the openly xenophobic rhetoric of its authorial postface radically alters the framing of the account. See *Hanshu*, 94.3830.

71. In regard to both foreign and domestic customs, the connotation of *su* is often, but not always, negative. So, for example, the *Shiji* describes (not without skepticism) Emperor Wudi drawing inspiration for his new rituals from the belief in ghosts found in Yue customs (*Shiji*, 12.478); to the Han politician Gongsun Hong’s failure to change decadent customs through his example of sleeping on coarse beds (*Shiji*, 13.124); and to the terrorization of worthy advisers according to Qin dynasty customs (*Shiji*, 6.278). In this and other cases of *Qin su*, such misguided customs are determined by the political

state of Qin, and they temporally contrast with prior and subsequent norms. The recurrent phrase *Qin su* in Han dynasty texts is not used in opposition to non-Qin or non-Central States customs.

72. Through the dialogue Zhonghang Yue goes on to contrast other Xiongnu and Han customs (e.g., food, drink, clothing, seasonal occupations, political and kinship relations), finally dismissing the Han envoy as a cap-wearing “dweller in houses of earth.”

73. Sima Qian was himself punished by castration for appearing to support a traitor in the Xiongnu wars.

74. See Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 178–89, on the significance of such pursuits of unsanctioned cross-cultural alliances across the colonial encounter. On the role of these conflictive sympathies in German ethnographies of Africa and China, see George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

75. Jean Comaroff, “Ethnography,” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005), vol. 2, 725–28. See also John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), 1–67.

CHAPTER 7

1. Jacques Lemoine, “What Is the Actual Number of the (H)mong in the World?” *Hmong Studies Journal* 6 (2005): 1.

2. In fact, since this paper was first presented, Lemoine has gone further, saying that “nationality identity is understood by each ethnic group as a nickname hiding its true ethnic identity, and used as a joker within each group and a wildcard outside.” Jacques Lemoine “To Tell the Truth,” *Hmong Studies Journal* 9 (2008): 3.

3. Patricia Ebrey, “Surnames and Han Chinese Identity,” in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1996), 26, says she could give “hundreds of examples” of claims to descent from Huang Di from the Tang and Song. While the historical category “Han” may have been highly variable (Pat Giersch, Mark Elliott, this volume), it seems that by no means are such myths of common Chinese descent solely nineteenth century in origin.

4. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

5. Charles Keyes, “Presidential Address: ‘The Peoples of Asia’—Science and Politics in the Classification of Ethnic Groups in Thailand, China, and Vietnam,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 4 (2002): 1163–1203.

6. Erik Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 19. This is only to touch the tip of a historical iceberg. See, e.g., Caroline Humphrey

(with Urgunge Onon), *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the Daur Mongols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); but see also Raphael Israeli, Review of *Familiar Strangers*, by Jonathan Lipman, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 2 (2003): 237–39; Uradyn E. Bulag, “Inner Mongolia: The Dialectics of Colonization and Ethnicity Building,” in *Governing China’s Multiethnic Frontiers*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 84–116; Magnus Fiskesjö, “Rescuing the Empire: Chinese Nation-Building in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century,” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2006): 15–44; Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Pamela Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); James Leibold, “Competing Narratives of Racial Unity in Republican China: From the Yellow Emperor to Peking Man,” *Modern China* 32, no. 2 (April 2006): 181–220; James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

7. Evelyn Rawski, “Presidential Address: Re-envisioning the Qing: the Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996): 842.

8. Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts*, 19.

9. Nicholas Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion: the White Hmong of Northern Thailand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

10. Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion*, 173.

11. George William Clark, *Kweichow and Yun-Nan Province* (Shanghai: Mercury Press, 1886); Harold Wiens, *Han Chinese Expansion in Southern China*, rev. ed. (Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press, 1967); Donald S. Sutton, “Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century,” in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 190–228.

12. John Anderson, *A.R. Margary, the Journey of, from Shanghai to Bhamo, and Back to Manwyne* (London: Macmillan, 1878).

13. See also Bulag, this volume, on the similar divisions introduced into the “Han” social category by the encounter with otherness.

14. Also a story about how two brothers originally worshiped at the same paternal grave but at different times of the year so that their descendants, the Hmong and Han, lost contact with each other. There is much evidence, including Chinese loanwords and stories about the origins of geomancy, pointing to long-standing contacts between the two cultures.

15. Pronounced *shwa* (the *-v* indicates a mid-rising tone). David Crockett Graham, *Songs and Stories of the Ch’uan Miao*, Smithsonian Misc. Coll., vol. 123, no. 1 (City of Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1954), suggested this might mean to “play or be idle.”

16. According to H.R. Davies, *Yün-nan: The Link between India and the*

Yangtze (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 370, the Burmese Shan used the term *White Chinaman* (*Che-hpök*), to refer to the Hmong. The first term is Tai (*jek*), the second may be from Burmese *phyu*, "white."

17. So *ua npau suav*, lit., "to boil a Chinese," means "to have a nightmare," in a similar way as the Cantonese term for "spirit" forms a compound, *gweilo*, to mean "foreigner."

18. Keyes, "Presidential Address: 'The Peoples of Asia,'" 1174.

19. Barbara Ward, "Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fishermen of South China," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock, 1965), 113–38; see also Helen Siu and Zhiwei Liu, "Lineage, Market, Pirate, and Dan: Ethnicity in the Pearl River Delta of South China," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 285–310.

20. Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850–1980* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

21. Gregory Guldin, "Seven-Veiled Ethnicity: A Hong Kong Chinese Folk Model," *Journal of Chinese Studies* 1, no. 2 (1984): 139–56.

22. Guldin, "Seven-Veiled Ethnicity," 151.

23. Guldin, "Seven-Veiled Ethnicity," 147.

24. See also his debate with Sparks, who worked with the Chaozhao in Hong Kong and Guangdong, in *Current Anthropology* 19, no. 1 (1978).

25. Guldin, "Seven-Veiled Ethnicity," 143.

26. See also Anders Hansson, *Chinese Outcasts: Discrimination and Emancipation in Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), on stigmatized social categories like actors, musicians (see also Chien Chiao, "Status and Role of the Musicians in Traditional China," in *Imagining China: Regional Division and National Unity*, ed. Huang Shu-min and Cheng-Kuang Hsu [Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1999], 81–90), and "shed people" in late imperial China.

27. Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

28. Ann Maxwell Hill, *Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

29. See also Elliott, this volume.

30. It is doubtful that Chang (Wen-Chin Chang, "The Interstitial Subjectivities of the Yunnanese Chinese in Thailand," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 9, no. 1 [2008]: 97–122) is correct in claiming Hill (*Merchants and Migrants*) was wrong on this. The current use of "Han" by Yunnanese in Thailand to refer to themselves (when talking to a Taiwanese) probably reflects the recent influence of Chinese media and education in the region.

31. I made this same point in more detail in Nicholas Tapp, "Minority Nationality in China: Policy and Practice," in *Indigenous Peoples of Asia*, ed. Robert H. Barnes, Andrew Gray, and Benedict Kingsbury (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 1995), 195–220.

32. Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

33. Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 4.

34. Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa*, 5.

35. Andreas Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 4 (2008): 970–1022.

36. The communal was relatively isolated, the minority defined by others; ethnicity marked a stage of conscious mobilization and self-definition in the face of others; the national was defined by a territorial claim. J. A. Ross, "Language and the Mobilization of Ethnic Identity," in *Language and Ethnic Relations*, ed. H. Giles and B. Saint-Jacques (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979), 1–14; Nicholas Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion: The White Hmong of Northern Thailand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 176.

37. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Monthly Review Press [New Left Books], 1971), 127–88.

38. Keyes, "Presidential Address: 'The Peoples of Asia.'"

39. Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993): 211–39.

40. Keyes, "Presidential Address: 'The Peoples of Asia,'" 1171.

41. Claudio Delang, ed., *Living at the Edge of Thai Society: The Karen in the Highlands of Northern Thailand* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

42. Charles Keyes, "Afterword: The Politics of 'Karen-ness' in Thailand," in Delang, *Living at the Edge of Thai Society*, 210.

43. Peter Hinton, "Do the Karen Really Exist?" in *Highlanders of Thailand*, ed. John McKinnon and Wanat Bhrukrasri (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), 155–68.

44. Ronald Renard, "Studying Peoples Often Called Karen," in Deland, *Living at the Edge of Thai Society*, 1–15.

45. Dru Gladney, "The Ethnogenesis of the Uighur," *Central Asian Survey* 9, no. 1 (1990): 1–28; Ildikó Beller-Hann et al., *Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

46. Laura Newby, "'Us' and 'Them' in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Xinjiang," in Beller-Hann, *Situating the Uyghurs between China and Central Asia*, 15–30.

47. Letter from Stevan Harrell, cited in Jonathan Unger, "Not Quite Han: The Ethnic Minorities of China's Southwest," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 29, no. 3 (1997): 67–78.

48. Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech—A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

49. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 14.

50. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 17.

51. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 20.

52. Yet a word of warning is in order here. David Reason, "Classification, Time, and the Organization of Production," in *Classifications in Their Social*

Context, ed. Roy Ellen and David Reason (London: Academic Press, 1979), 221–47, notes that acts of distinction and demarcation are not really classification but “categorization”; nor is an ad hoc arrangement like an inventory, whose organizing principle is outside of itself. To establish a system of classification, which he sees as the dominant mode of signification in our society, relying on a distinction of sign from its sense, mark from its interpretation, requires a very high degree of communication. Roy Ellen, “Introductory Essay,” in Ellen and Reason, *Classifications in their Social Context*, 1–32, too distinguishes different kinds of classificatory construct such as taxonomies, indices, keys, paradigms, and typologies.

53. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 29.

54. Lemoine, “What Is the Actual Number of the (H)mong in the World?”

55. William Hanks, *Language and Communicative Practices* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 142; original emphasis.

56. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 8. However, for a reasoned critique of Brubaker’s theory (which itself misses Abner Cohen), see Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, “The Roots of Intense Ethnic Conflict May Not in Fact Be Ethnic,” *European Journal of Sociology* 45, no. 2 (2004): 209–32.

57. Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 3.

58. Ralph Litzinger, *Other Chinas: The Yao and the Politics of National Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Louisa Schein, “Urbanity, Cosmopolitanism, Consumption,” in *China Urban*, ed. Nancy Chen, C. Clark, S. Gottschang, and L. Jeffery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 225–41; Nimrod Baranovitch, “Between Alterity and Identity: New Voices of Minority People in China,” *Modern China* 27, no. 3 (2001): 359–401; Kevin Caffrey, “Who ‘Who’ Is, and Other Local Poetics of National Policy: Yunnan *minzu shibie* and Hui in the Process,” *China Information* 18, no. 2 (2004): 243–74.

59. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 4.

60. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 4.

61. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 19. She adds that “there is no desire without the law that forms and sustains the very desire it prohibits” (103). For me this explains very well the Chinese distinctions within Hmong social organization referred to in the first section above.

62. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 51.

63. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 11.

64. Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 83. Litzinger, *Other Chinas*, comes close to this, arguing cogently that Foucault’s later writings on power as productive enable us to look at the “incomplete, nuanced or ambiguous practices that accompany the process of subject formation” (25) and locates his detailed ethnography as an attempt to avoid posing “a dominant state apparatus against a docile ethnic other” (27).

65. Thomas Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities: Autonomy or Assimilation?* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1989).

66. Examples are the “Miao” of Hainan Island, who, as Heberer notes, are “actually” Yao; and the Miao who became Tujia, as described by Melissa Brown, “Ethnic Classification and Culture: The Case of the Tujia in Hubei, China,” *Asian Ethnicity* 2, no.1 (2001): 55–72; and also by Jacques Lemoine, “Les ethnies non Han de la Chine,” in *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade; Ethnologie Régionale 2: Asie-Amériques-Mascareignes*, ed. Jean Poirier (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1978), 731–992.

67. Gregory Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China: From Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 122. He is referring to a letter written to him by Huang Shuping in 1988.

68. However, Katherine Kaup, *Ethnic Politics in China: Creating the Zhuang* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), one of the few authors—like June Dreyer, *China’s Forty Millions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976)—to properly consider the ethnic classification in the right context, namely, the creation of autonomous regional zones, notes that people’s desires in Wenshan to be recognized as Sha or Tu or Nong were dismissed as “misunderstandings.” She notes further (as does Jonathan Unger, “Not Quite Han,” based on a more recent visit) that many of the Buyi in Guizhou are actually blood relatives of Zhuang across the border in Guangxi (similar to the Pumi/Tibetan/Mongol situation). So local views were overridden as often as not.

69. Magnus Fiskesjö, “The Autonomy of Naming: Kinship, Power and Ethnonymy in the Wa Lands of the Southeast Asia-China Frontier,” in *Asian Names: History, Culture, and Identity*, ed. Charles MacDonald and Zheng Yangwen (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2009), 150–74.

70. Fiskesjö refers here to Barbara Bodenhorn and Gabriele vom Bruck, “Entangled in Histories: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming,” in *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*, ed. Gabriele vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1–30.

71. Fiskesjö, “The Autonomy of Naming.”

72. Fiskesjö shows how Wa patrilines had been entirely lost in areas with extensive Chinese immigration, to the dismay of those in the central Wa lands who retained them together with Chinese patronymics.

73. Stéphane Gros, “The Politics of Names: the Identification of the Dulong (Drung) of Northwest Yunnan,” *China Information* 18, no. 2 (2004): 275–302.

74. Keyes, “Presidential Address: ‘The Peoples of Asia.’”

75. Wang Ming-Ke, “Searching for Qiang Culture in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” *Inner Asia* 4 (2002): 131–48.

76. In an early movement toward constructionism in the American immigration context, Jonathan Sarna, “From Immigrants to Ethnic: Towards a New Theory of ‘Ethnicization,’” *Ethnicity* 5 (1997): 370–78, saw ethnicity as arising from the combination of an ascription with the experience of adversity.

77. Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954);

Michael Moerman, "Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who Are the Lue?" *American Anthropologist* 67, no. 1 (1965): 1215–30; F.K. Lehman, "Who Are the Karen, and If So, Why? Karen Ethnohistory and a Formal Theory of Ethnicity," in *Ethnic Adaptation and Identity: The Karen on the Thai Frontier with Burma*, ed. Charles Keyes (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1979), 215–253.

78. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 33.

79. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 46.

80. Kun Chang, "A Comparative Study of the Yao Tone System," *Language* 42, no. 2 (1966): 303–10; Richard Cushman, "Rebel Haunts and Lotus Huts: Problems in the Ethnohistory of the Yao," Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1970; Jacques Lemoine, *Yao Ceremonial Paintings* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1982); Jacques Lemoine and Chien Chiao, eds., *The Yao of South China: Recent International Studies* (Paris: Pangu, Editions de l'A.F.E.Y. [with the assistance of the French National Centre of Scientific Research], 1991); Jeffery Macdonald, *Transnational Aspects of Iu-Mien Refugee Identity* (New York: Garland, 1997); Hjørleifur Jonsson, *Mien Relations: Mountain People and State Control in Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

81. David Faure, "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta," *Modern China* 15, no. 1 (1989): 4–36.

82. See Chan Wing-hoi, "Ordination Names in Hakka Genealogies: A Religious Practice and Its Decline," in *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China*, ed. David Faure and Helen F. Siu (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 65–82, on the association between ordination names in genealogies with ancestral lineage and ethnic affiliation among the Yao, Hakka, and Cantonese. Besides Jacques Lemoine, *Yao Ceremonial Paintings*, on Yao Daoism, see also Michel Strickmann, "The Tao among the Yao: Taoism and the Sinification of South China," in *Rekishu no okeru minshū to bunka* (People and Culture in History), ed. Sakai Todai Sensei koki shukuga kinen ronshu (Association for the Commemoration of Professor Sakai Tadao) (Tokyo: Kokasho Kankōkai, 1982); and Eli Alberts, *A History of Daoism and the Yao people of South China* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2007).

83. The other truly Yao dialects are Byao Min and Dzao Min and Kim Mun. See Kun Chang, "A Comparative Study of the Yao Tone System"; and the essays in Lemoine and Chien Chiao, ed., *The Yao of South China*.

84. "Mieu" is the southern Chinese pronunciation of "Miao"; see Nguyen van Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity: The Mieu in North Vietnam* (Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2007).

85. Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*.

86. Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity*, 133; Lemoine, "Les ethnies non han de la Chine."

87. Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity*, 31.

88. Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity*, 39.

89. Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity*, 42.

90. The question itself of course expresses the very relationship I wish to

question and inquire into here, since it appeals on the one hand to the notion of some abstract classification that would assign people to their “proper places” within such a system and on the other assumes the importance of peoples’ deep sense of their own social identities, the question of “consciousness.”

91. Norma Diamond, “The Miao and Poison: Interactions on China’s South-west Frontier,” *Ethnology* 27, no. 1 (1988): 1–21.

92. The literature on this is too vast to be summarized, but it may be said to have started with Diamond, “The Miao and Poison”; and Ben Hillman and Lee-Ann Henfry, “Macho Minority: Masculinity and Ethnicity on the Edge of Tibet,” *Modern China* 32, no. 2 (2006): 251–72, is a recent example. Research conducted in minority languages has a very different flavor. But my question is a real, not a rhetorical one; there may be no justification for opposing a local sense of identity to that which is publicly presented.

93. Siu-woo Cheung, “Representation and Negotiation of Ge Identity in Southeast Guizhou,” in Brown, *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, 274. Other examples can be found in Fei Xiaotong, “Ethnic Identification in China,” in *Towards a People’s Anthropology* (Beijing: New World Press, 1981); Heberer, *China and Its National Minorities*.

94. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); see Calhoun, “Nationalism and Ethnicity.”

95. Calhoun, “Nationalism and Ethnicity.”

96. Fiskesjö, “Rescuing the Empire.” He does so in agreement with Henrietta Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Public Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911–1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), and in the context of discussing the avoidance by historians of the “Chinese rejection of Chineseness” in costume and other ways.

97. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*; and Lemoine, “What Is the Actual Number of the (H)mong in the World?”

98. Tapp, “Minority Nationality in China.” Lemoine’s argument was anticipated by Vladimír Liščák, “Some Approaches to the Classification of Small Ethnic Groups in China,” *Thai-Yunnan Project Newsletter* 20 (1993): 12–17, who noted both *minzu* and *shaoshu minzu* were political terms that could not be used for purposes of ethnic identification.

99. Ma Rong, “A New Perspective in Guiding Ethnic Relations in the Twenty-First Century: ‘De-politicization’ of Ethnicity in China,” *Asian Ethnicity* 8, no. 3 (2007): 199–217.

100. Ma Rong, “A New Perspective,” 200.

101. Ma Rong, “A New Perspective,” 202.

102. Tapp, “Minority Nationality in China.”

103. Fiskesjö, “Rescuing the Empire”; Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921–1945* (Washington, DC, and Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2004). Stevan Harrell, “The Role of the Periphery in Chinese Nationalism,” in *Imagining China: Regional Division and National Unity*, ed. Huang Shu-Min (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1999), 133–60, discusses criteria

for inclusion, of both peoples and territories, and lists as nationalist claims on the periphery, cultural, linguistic, geographic, racial, historical, and political reasons.

104. Ma Rong, "A New Perspective," 213. In fairness it should be said that there are some attempts to deal with the political implications of ethnicity in the article and some references to Duara's more complex account of the relations between culturalism and nationalism in the Chinese past. See Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Barry Sautman, "Myths of Descent, Racial Nationalism and Ethnic Minorities in the People's Republic of China," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 75–95.

105. Ma Rong, "A New Perspective," 207–8; cf. Colin Mackerras, *China's Ethnic Minorities and Globalization* (Abingdon: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

106. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 1994). Ma's argument about the dangers of separatism and the effects of globalization seems to betray a fear of minority extra-border connections.

107. Keyes, "Presidential Address: 'The Peoples of Asia.'"

108. Ma Rong, "A New Perspective," 213.

109. For example, Leibold, "Competing Narratives of Racial Unity," finds that Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, overemphasizes the transition from a racial nationalism associated with evolutionary ideas toward a cultural nationalism associated with modernity and a rejection of tradition. It is interesting to speculate on the nature of the relationship of these two forms of nationalism with the enlightenment/romantic dichotomy I develop below. Might one say that the five-stage theory associated with beliefs in historical evolutionary progress lends itself more easily to forms of racialized nationalism, while the *minzu shibie* project, which exemplified a romantic relativising trend, is more compatible with cultural forms of nationalism? Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), of course also discusses the "racialization of lineage discourse" in the late nineteenth century.

110. Frank Proschan, "Peoples of the Gourd: Imagined Ethnicities in Highland Southeast Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 4 (2001): 999–1032.

111. See Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries." Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1990] 1992), followed Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, in seeing nationalism as a political principle but distinguished "political nationalism" from the "ethno-linguistic" nationalism or "proto-nationalism" of groups striving for autonomy like, we may say, the Hmong, Kurds, or Basques. See also Thomas Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, [1993] 2002); and Calhoun, "Nationalism

and Ethnicity," who summarized the literature up to the early 1990s in terms of "primordial" as opposed to "modern" approaches; also Brackette Williams, "A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation across Ethnic terrain," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (1989): 401–44. Some theorists distinguish between civic nationalism and ethnonationalism, in what I find a quite useful distinction (pace Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 132–46).

112. Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity."

113. Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

114. See Elliott, this volume.

115. Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity."

116. Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," 20.

117. Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," 25.

118. Tapp, "Minority Nationality in China."

119. See also James Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 1–30, who problematizes the assumed movement from culturalism to nationalism calling for attention to class and statecraft and the importance of Han chauvinism in the past.

120. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

121. Ma Rong, "A New Perspective," 216.

122. Ma's favorable views of American pluralism miss the now extensive literature on collective minority rights, such as John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Nor does it consider the appeal this very model of pluralism held for Republican China, according to Fiskesjö, "Rescuing the Empire." The alternatives at that time were separatism, a revival of the imperial model, or Western assimilation, and the latter received considerable support. Harrell's "civilizing project," in his "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3–36, was only the second of these models, although it was the one that eventually triumphed. Fiskesjö notes the current formula of "multinational state" with Han as the "default ethnicity" (see Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001) is very much a post-1949 model.

123. Brown, "Ethnic Classification and Culture."

124. Mary Rack, *Ethnic Distinctions, Local Meanings: Negotiating Cultural Identities in China* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 43.

125. Brown, "Ethnic Classification and Culture."

126. *Minjia* meant "commoners" or "civilians" and was often applied to distinguish local people from in-migrating militia. Charles P. Fitzgerald, *The*

Tower of Five Glories: A Study of the Min Chia of Ta Li, Yunnan (London: Cresset Press, 1941); Francis L.K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); David Wu, "Culture Change and Ethnic Identity among Minorities in China," in *Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups in China*, ed. Chien Chiao and Nicholas Tapp (Hong Kong: New Asia College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1989), 11–22; Zhihong Bai, "The Discourse of Tourism Development in the Construction of a Bai Cultural and Historic City," *Thai-Yunnan Project Bulletin* 2 (2001): 1–3; Zhihong Bai, "Difference-Making: Bai Identity Construction in Dali" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 2007). See also Beth Notar, *Displacing Desire: Travel and Popular Culture in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), on the people of Dali.

127. Bai, "Difference-Making."

128. Those Tujia who were sinicized Miao not wishing to be known as Miao (Brown, "Ethnic Classification and Culture"; Lemoine, "Les ethnies non han de la Chine") reflect one of the classic identification problems discussed by Fei Xiaotong, "Ethnic Identification in China." See also Koenraad Wellens, "Consecrating the Premi House: Ritual, Community and the State in the Borderlands of East Tibet" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oslo, 2006); and Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*, on the classification of the Pumi as Tibetan. Other Tujia, though, have certainly had Han ancestries.

129. Brown, "Ethnic Classification and Culture"; Harrell, "Introduction."

130. Ellen, "Introductory Essay," suggests seven variables that may provide us with analytic links between formal structures and social context.

131. Lemoine, "What Is the Actual Number?"

132. Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

133. Schein, *Minority Rules*, 20; following Harrell, *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*.

134. Stuart Hall, "Fantasy, Identity, Politics," in *Cultural Remix: Theories and Politics of the Popular*, ed. Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), 63–70.

135. Thomas S. Mullaney, "Ethnic Classification Writ Large: The 1954 Yunnan Province Classification Project and Its Foundations in Republican-Era Taxonomic Thought," *China Information* 18 (2004): 207–41; "Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification and Scientific Statecraft in Modern China, 1926–1954" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2006).

136. See Davies, *Yün-nan*.

137. Peter Murphy, "Romantic Modernism and the Greek Polis," *Thesis Eleven* 34, no. 1 (1993): 42–66.

138. Murphy, "Romantic Modernism and the Greek Polis."

139. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1970), however, charts a movement from resemblance toward representation at the end of the sixteenth century. Interpretation gives way to Order gives way to History, a period in which language

has become detached even from representation and is triumphant, in which man becomes historicized as the empirical-transcendental subject and object of knowledge.

140. However, Fiskesjö, "Rescuing the Empire," shows how the project of ethnic classification certainly preceded the Communist state in Ruey Yih-Fu's own project to "rectify names." In this volume, moreover, Bulag says that the CCP ethnic rectification project in fact preceded the GMD one. See also Leibold, this volume.

141. See Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China*.

142. Murphy, "Romantic Modernism and the Greek Polis."

143. Jonathan Friedman, "Global System, Globalization and the Parameters of Modernity," in *Global Modernities*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), 69–90.

144. Sydney White, "Fame and Sacrifice: The Gendered Construction of Nazi Identity," *Modern China* 23, no. 3 (1997): 298–327.

145. Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, makes an even broader case for seeing space (as geography) and time (as history) as "the two primordial axes ordering human variation in the nation-state"; space divides otherwise equivalent cultures, while time leads to evolutionary beliefs in progress from savagery. See Leibold, this volume, on the universal and particular.

146. The very high quality of some of this earlier work can be seen for example in Yih-Fu Ruey and Tung-kuei Kuan, *Chuannan Yaque Miao de hun sang lisu* (Marriage and Mortuary Customs of the Magpie Miao, Southern Szechuan, China), Monograph Series A, no. 23 (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1962). For a good account of the earlier ethnography, see Jacques Lemoine, "Ethnologists in China," *Diogenes* 34, no. 133 (1986): 83–102.

147. "I take it as axiomatic that all classifications are discursive practices situated in a given social matrix and general configuration of knowledge and ideas (*epistemes*, ideologies . . .)," Ellen, "Introductory Essay," 17.

148. Thang, *Ambiguity of Identity*.

149. Charles Keyes, "Towards a New Formulation of the Concept of Ethnic Group," *Ethnicity* 3 (1976): 202–13; Charles Keyes, "The Dialectics of Ethnic Change," in *Ethnic Change*, ed. Charles Keyes (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 4–30.

150. Slavoj Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, Please!" in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, ed. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2000), 237.

151. As Reason, "Classification, Time, and the Organization of Production," notes, temporal order is distinguished by recurrence, and there is a distinction to be made between abstract and textual time. Here the "again" is not the repetition of an essentially identical event; rather an event owes its identity to its essential affinity to previous events. We are confronted by a problem of analogy, because of a classification system based on resemblances; in order to recognize this as a representation, either it is recognizable independently of

the mode of representation or the represented itself must determine the mode of representation, leading to a subject/object dichotomy. Boundaries are *not* a part of what is being classified.

CHAPTER 8

The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Albert Dien, Victor Mair, Yuri Pines, David Robinson, Xiaofei Tian, and Shaoyun Yang for their valuable suggestions on different versions of this chapter.

1. Adachi Fumito, *Kanminzoku to ha dare ka: kodai Chūgoku to Nihon rettō o meguru minzoku, shakaigakuteki shiten* (Tokyo: Yubun shoin, 2006), 168.

2. Still, whatever information is produced through such work will not really help us understand the category *Han* as such, especially not when nearly all the DNA research that is done focuses on China's "ethnic groups," generally understood as referring to the non-Han. See Yonggang Yao et al., "Genetic Relationship of Chinese Ethnic Populations Revealed by mtDNA Sequence Diversity," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 118, no.1 (2002): 63–76; and "Mitochondrial DNA Sequence Polymorphism of Five Ethnic Populations from Northern China," *Human Genetics* 113, no.5 (2003): 391–405. In this and other work, geneticists have established the fact of a broad division between what they term northern and southern haplotypes. To be sure, some of this research does involve Han populations (e.g., Yao, "Phylogeographic Differentiation of Mitochondrial DNA in Han Chinese," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 70, no. 3 [2002]: 635–51), but this is not framed as work on "ethnic groups."

3. I offer a more detailed explanation in my essay, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 27–57. The problem of ethnicity in China is treated also in the introduction to Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 16–20. See also the discussions in Wang Mingke, *Huaxia bianyuan* (Taipei: Yunchen Publishers, 1997), 71–78; and Marc S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1–17.

4. Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," 34.

5. "In the ancient world ethnicity was widespread, although nationality in the political sense was rare." John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 105.

6. References to much of this work will be found in the notes to Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners"; and Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*. See also the edited volume of Hutchinson and Smith mentioned in the preceding note.

7. Cf. the work of Jonathan Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cam-

bridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and *Hellenicity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Irad Malkin, ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Washington, DC: Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies, 2001); and Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999). For treatments of ethnicity in premodern China, see the work of Wang, Abramson, and Elliott, cited earlier; important new scholarship in this same vein includes that by Erica J. Brindley, Miranda Brown, Leo Shin, and others. Studies of ethnicity in twentieth-century China using what Abramson calls the "post-sinological approach" are too numerous to list; two important books that helped chart the course are Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); and Melissa Brown, ed., *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1996).

8. Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 5.

9. Evident from the essays on "Ethnicity in the Modern World" collected in Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 133–86.

10. Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 14. The authors' meaning here is somewhat opaque: One would have thought that most anything historians might have to say about ethnicity in the period before the nineteenth century—or, indeed, about anything in any period at all—would be regarded as a "matter of interpretation."

11. The word *ethnicity* first appeared in the *OED* in 1953 (Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 4).

12. The classic work of this early phase of ethnic studies is Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan's 1963 book on contemporary American society, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963), in which "race" was clearly a primary concern. But it is worth noting that ethnicity has come to be framed much more broadly than just about "racism," since it permits the inclusion of groups whose identity may lack that phenotypical aspect of difference. This makes "race" a much less useful analytical category for thinking about socially constructed alterity, historically or otherwise, except in certain carefully defined contexts.

13. An exception to this generalization—unexpected, since it does not seem to represent the approach taken in the majority of essays in the volume—is to be found at one point in the introduction to *Empire at the Margins*, where the authors state, "To be ethnic is to be marginal, not part of the canon, not part of the established culture central to legitimacy of the state, not mainstream, not authoritative" (5). This would seem to make it impossible to admit that anything like Han "ethnicity" has ever existed, or could exist. This argument repeats points made earlier in Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11, no.1 (June 1990): 1–35.

14. See Uradyn E. Bulag, "Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China," *American Anthropologist* 105, no. 4 (December 2003): 9.

15. See the work of Wang Mingke, cited earlier; also Bin Jiang and He

Cuiping, eds., *Guojia, shichang yu mailuohua de zuqun* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2000); Zhang Haiyang, *Zhongguo de duoyuan wenhua yu Zhongguo ren de rentong* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006); and Jian Zhixiang, *Zuqun guishu de ziwo rentong yu shehui dingyi* (Beijing: Minzu cbs, 2006). A search of the electronic China Academic Journals Full-text Database (www.cnki.net) shows that *zuqun* comes to be used commonly in titles only beginning in 2005.

16. The importance of the Other in the process of ethnic formation is recognized, too, by many Chinese scholars. See, e.g., Zhong Han, "Minzushi yanjiuzhong de 'tazhe' shijiao," *Lishi yanjiu*, no.1 (2008): 43–66.

17. The mutual referentiality of these terms is nicely captured in what may be the earliest use of the expression *hushuo* in a Southern Song text, *Qidong yeyu*, by Zhou Mi, where Han Zhou, speaking of Zhou Jun, says, "Here comes that fellow again, talking gibberish (*zhe han you lai hushuo*)." Cited in Morohashi, *Dai Kan-Wa jiten* (Tokyo: Taishukan shofen, 1943). The use of *Han* (or *Hanzi*) as a colloquial term for an adult male—yet another chapter of the story of *Han*—seems to have become common at this time. See Chen Gaohua, "Lun Yuandai de chengwei xisu," *Zhejiang xuekan* 5 (2000): 123–30.

18. For an explanation of the source of the name *Han* for the river and Liu Bang's reasons for choosing to name his dynasty for the river, see Hu Axiang, "Liu Bang Hanguo hao kaoyuan," *Shixue yuekan* 6 (2001): 57–62.

19. This is firmly demonstrated in Chen Shu, "Han'er Hanzi shuo," *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 1 (1986): 290; see also Wang, *Huaxia*, 318; Zhang, *Zhongguo de duoyuan wenhua*, 31; and elsewhere. Based on occurrences in *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*, Wang notes that the most common term of self-identification at this period was simply *Zhongguo ren* (290 n. 1). He argues that it was during this time that the limits of "China" and "Chineseness" initially hardened along the lines that later Chinese states would generally assume, but on the basis of terms such as *Zhongguo* and *Huaxia*. Applying the term *Hanren*, not to mention *Hanzu*, to describe "the Chinese" at this time should be seen as highly anachronistic—though one sees it often, even in serious historical scholarship.

20. On the repeated emergence of *Han* as a dynastic name, see Hu Axiang, "Zhongguo lishishang de Hanguo hao," *Jiangsu xingzhengyuan xuebao* 23, no. 5 (2005), 130–36.

21. Kawamoto Yoshiaki, *Gi-Shin Nanbokuchō jidai no minzoku mondai* (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1998), 30–32; Yang Shaoyun, "Becoming *Zhongguo*, Becoming *Han*: Tracing and Reconceptualizing Ethnicity in Ancient North China, 770 B.C.–A.D. 581" (Master's thesis, National University of Singapore, 2007), 52–55.

22. Peter A. Boodberg, "The Language of the T'o-Pa Wei," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1, no. 2 (July 1936): 185.

23. Kawamoto, *Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 52–53; Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, eds., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200–600* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 7; Mark Edward Lewis, *China between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 81, 167

24. Both Naitō Kōnan and Miyazaki Ichisada saw the Northern dynasties as a key moment in the evolution of Chinese society, in which (in Miyazaki's language), the "civilizationism" (*bunmeishugi*) of the Hua was challenged by the "rusticity" (*sobokushugi*) of the Hu, resulting in the erosion of the privileges of elite families and, eventually, the emergence of meritocratic ideals in the Sui and Tang. The tension between Hu and Hua thus figures as a major theme of Japanese scholarship on the period. See Kawamoto, *Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 13; and Michio Tanigawa, "Sōsetsu" (General introduction), in *Gi-Shin Nanbokuchō, Zui-Tō jidaishi no kihon mondai*, ed. M. Tanigawa et al. (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), 19–20. For a brief review of scholarship on the period generally, see the introduction to Albert E. Dien, *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 1–30. The most recent complete treatment in English is Lewis, *China between Empires*.

25. Dorothy C. Wong, "Ethnicity and Identity: Northern Nomads as Buddhist Art Patrons during the Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties," in *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo and Don Wyatt (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 82–85. Kawamoto relates the story of a Northern Wei minister of Chinese descent who was executed for having mocked Buddhist beliefs (*Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 42).

26. Wong, "Ethnicity and Identity," 82, citing in particular the work of Albert Dien. "Hybrid vigor" is Audrey Spiro's phrase; see her essay, "Hybrid Vigor: Memory, Mimesis, and the Matching of Meanings in Fifth-Century Buddhist Art," in Pearce, Spiro, and Ebrey, *Culture and Power*, 125–48. Kawamoto speaks in similar terms of the "energy" of the Northern Wei and other Hu regimes (*Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 344). "Borealization," on the other hand, is a term I would like to suggest in place of "Xianbei-ization" or "Sārbi-ization" to describe the acculturation of the Chinese generally to northern norms. The word is based on the Latin *borealis*, from Boreas, the Greek god of the north wind. Whether this or the term proposed by Victor Mair, *Tabgatchization*, is preferable is a matter left to the reader; his emphasis on the importance of seeing cultural change as moving in both directions is in any event the same. See his review of James O. Caswell's *Written and Unwritten: A New History of the Buddhist Caves at Yungang*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 1992): 358–59.

27. See the description in Lewis of representations of "a Chinese history and cosmos in which everyone was Xianbei, or a Xianbei world that embodied Chinese history and values" (*China between Empires*, 168).

28. See Xiaofei Tian, "The Cultural Construction of North and South," in *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang*, 502–557 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), chap. 7.

29. Liu, *Huzu wangchao*, 167–71. On similar bestowals in a slightly later period, see Albert E. Dien, "The Bestowal of Surnames under the Western Wei-Northern Chou: A Case of Counter-Acculturation," *T'oung Pao* 63, nos. 2–3 (1977): 137–77.

30. In a recent master's thesis, Shaoyun Yang has shown that it was at this time that the *Zuozhuan* phrase now so familiar to us—*fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi*—was creatively reinterpreted by the Western Jin literatus Jiang Tong (d. 310) as part of an argument as to why the “Rong barbarians” (i.e., the Qiang and Di) who had been allowed to settle in the Guanzhong area should be relocated. In the *Xi Rong lun*, Jiang combined the *Zuozhuan* phrases (originally a reference to lineages) and *bu yu Hua tong* (not the same as the *Hua*—in its original context a comment on material distinctions only in food and clothing), joining them with his own phrase, *Rong-Di zhitai* (the state of mind of the Rong and Di), to form a “quotation” from a classical source that would support his own exclusionist position. See Yang, “Becoming *Zhongguo*,” 62–64. The essay is found in the biography of Jiang Tong, *Jinshu* j. 56.

31. This characterization of the *Zuo Commentary* should not be taken to mean that ethnic exclusivism is all-pervasive there; on the contrary, many passages suggest the possibility of transformation of “barbarians” into cultured *Hua*. See the discussions in Yuri Pines, “Beasts or Humans? Pre-Imperial Origins of the ‘Sino-Barbarian’ Dichotomy,” in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 69–73.

32. Scott Pearce, “Form and Matter: Archaizing Reform in Sixth-Century China,” in Pearce, Spiro, and Ebrey, *Culture and Power*, 164–69.

33. Yang, “Becoming *Zhongguo*,” 85.

34. This, the first of a number of “Later Zhao” states, was founded by Liu Yuan, who, though a sinicized Xiongnu, claimed to represent a restoration of the Han house; his regime is sometimes called “Han Zhao.” Lewis, *China between Empires*, 51, 145.

35. Victor Mair, “The North(west)ern Peoples and the Recurrent Origins of the Chinese State,” in *The Teleology of the Modern Nation-State: Japan and China*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 77. Relevant here is the observation by Mark Edward Lewis that it was under the Northern Wei, when for the first time “nomadic chiefs ruled over both Chinese and nomads within an empire,” that an expanded idea of “universal empire” took hold, in which political legitimacy hinged mainly on a conqueror’s willingness to abide by certain expectations, including building a capital, sacrificing to Heaven, and providing offices and salaries (Lewis, *China between Empires*, 150–51). While I would agree that this imperial universalism aimed to transcend any “overriding loyalty to a Han Chinese people and their culture”—a sensibility that is admittedly explicitly tied to the nation-state—it seems to me that one must not overestimate (whether in the Northern Wei or in later periods, including the present) the degree to which universalism trumped (or trumps) ethnic particularism.

36. Kawamoto, *Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 95.

37. Chen, “Han’er,” 291; Jia Jingyan, “Luelun Han minzu de xingcheng,” in *Zhongguo gudai minzu zhi*, ed. Hua Xiaolin (Beijing: Wenshizhe, 1993), 16, citing Li Ciming (1830–1895), probably *Beishi buzhuang*. Both Chen and Jia

provide numerous attestations of various uses of *Han*. Li Yimang makes the same point in “Shishi Hanzu,” in Hua, *Zhongguo gudai minzu zhi*, 24.

38. *Beiqi shu* j. 21: 294.

39. *Beishi*, j. 6: 215.

40. *Weishu* j. 114: 3034.

41. Yang, “Becoming *Zhongguo*,” 93–94, citing the *Weishu* and *Nanqi shu*.

42. Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian*, ann. Hu Sanxing (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), j. 167. Elsewhere, in the commentary to *juan* 22, Hu offered a more complete genealogy of the term: “In Han times, the Xiongnu called the people of the Central Plains ‘men of Qin.’ In the Tang and in the present dynasty, they [referring to the nomadic heirs of the Xiongnu] call [people] of the Central Plains *Han*, as in *Han’er*, *Hanren*, and so on. This has become the custom.” Cited in Zhao Yongchun, “Shilun Jinren de ‘Zhongguo guan,’” *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 19, no.4 (2009): 4.

43. Kawamoto, *Gi-Shin minzoku mondai*, 361.

44. Xiaofei Tian, personal communication, December 23, 2008.

45. My thanks to Yuri Pines for this suggestion. For comparison, a fascinating exploration of the afterlife of imperial labels in the Ottoman empire is found in Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7–26.

46. Jia, “Han minzu,” 16; Lewis, *China between Empires*, 167; Yang discusses this issue at length in “Becoming *Zhongguo*,” 97–106. See also Liu Fugen, “Sanguo Wei-Jin Nanbei chao mali yuyan shuolue,” *Zhejiang jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* 6, no. 6 (2003): 35, who emphasizes that *Han’er* was used by “minority peoples” to insult the Chinese.

47. Yang points to a passage in the *Beishi* where the Särbi word *Ran’gan* is mentioned, perhaps with this meaning. Yang, “Becoming *Zhongguo*,” 93.

48. Based on searches of phrases in the electronic Scripta Sinica *Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliao ku* database version of the *Suishu*, maintained by Academia Sinica. All searches of dynastic histories cited in the notes are from this database.

49. Of the ten occurrences of *Hanren* in the Tang histories, about half reflect the new usage as an ethnonym. This proportion is greater in the Five Dynasties histories. Again, these conclusions are reached on the basis of the frequency with which *Han* and its various compounds appear in the dynastic histories. I am aware that there are limitations to the use of these texts as indices and that the same search terms are found in other contemporary texts as well. My goal, at least at this point, is not to be exhaustive but to determine relative frequency and general range of meaning in elite discourse; for this purpose, the dynastic histories will serve adequately.

50. Cited in Chen “Han’er,” 9. The original text is found in *juan* 1 of Ma’s best-known work, *Lanzhenzi*.

51. Peter Bol, personal communication, April 16, 2008. See also Bol, “Geography and Culture: The Middle-Period Discourse on the *Zhong guo*, the Central Country,” in *Kongjian yu wenhua changyu*, ed. Wang Ailing (Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 2009).

52. One of the first to remark on the changed meaning of *Hanren* was Zhao Yi, who wrote about this in *Nianershi zhaji*, *juan* 28, “Jin Yuan juyou Hanren Nanren zhi ming.” He fails to mention the use of the term in the Liao, however, saying only that the Jin applied it to those living in Liao territory when they took over.

53. *Huaren* appears not once in the *Liaoshi* or *Jinshi*, and only twice in the *Songshi*, both in sections on foreign countries.

54. Liu Pujiang, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” in *Liao-Jin shilun* (Shenyang: Liaoning University Press, 1999), 110.

55. Liu, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” 111; Liu, *Huzu wangchao*, 208.

56. Liu, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” 121.

57. Jia, “Han minzu,” 18; Liu, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” 111; Meng Siming, *Yuandai shehui jieji zhidu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1955), 35.

58. In an edict of 1161, the Song emperor is quoted as saying that he would welcome any who come to him from the Jin side, “Jurchen, Bohai, Khitan, and Han’er alike,” and that they will be treated no differently from the “people of the Central Lands.” Liu, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” 111. Quotation from the Song *Huiyao*.

59. I base this conclusion on the frequency of its appearance in the *Jinshi* relative to other terms.

60. Cited in Liu, “Shuo ‘Hanren,’” 112. This was in distinction to *guiming ren*, defined by Zhu Xi as “people who were originally not from the Central Plain. They are like the Yao people who lived in caves and have come to the Central Plain, emerging from the darkness into the light.”

61. Yanai Wataru, “Gendai shakai no san kaikyū,” in *Mōkōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōkō shoin, 1930), 345 ff. Chen Yinke’s “Yuandai Hanren yiming kao” confirms these same conclusions. Both men built on prior scholarship by Zhao Yi and Qian Daxin.

62. It is worth observing that this aspect of Ming ideology is easily exaggerated, since in between talk of the stench of mutton and Mongol perfidy, Zhu also took the time to make it clear that he was open to the idea of Mongols (and others) as his loyal subjects. The ambiguous place of Mongols in the Ming empire is the subject of much work by David Robinson; for example, see his “Politics, Force, and Ethnicity in Ming China: Mongols and the Abortive Coup of 1461,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59, no.1 (June 1999): 79–123.

63. Extracts from the *Da Ming Huidian*, for instance, show that *Hanren* was used commonly to refer to Chinese subjects of the Ming wherever they might live when it was necessary to differentiate them from those whom we might now reasonably call the “non-Han.” See the following, dated 1546: 又令、凡川廣雲貴陝西等處。但有漢人交結夷人、互相買賣借貸誑騙。引惹邊釁。及潛住苗寨、教誘為亂、貽害地方者。俱問發邊衛、永遠充軍。 See also the emperor’s 1374 appeal to the Dali kingdom in which he notes, “Seven years have passed since the day . . . my many brave men brought peace and restored to the Han people our old lands, unifying China,” *Ming shilu*, j. 92.

64. That through the period of Jurchen rule a distinction was drawn be-

tween *Zhongguo* as a cultural idea and *Zhongguo* as the name for the state that controlled the Central Plains, regardless of which ethnic group was in political power, is persuasively argued in Zhao, "Shilun Jinren de 'Zhongguo guan.'"

65. A notable difference between the Hanjun in the Qing and the forces of the same name under the Yuan is that while the former was composed of men taken solely from households of ethnic Chinese (called in Manchu *Nikan*) that had come under Qing rule before the 1644 conquest, the latter were from the entire range of households classified as Hanren in the Yuan.

CHAPTER 9

I wish to thank the participants of the Critical Han Studies Symposium and Workshop, hosted by Stanford University (April 2008), for their questions on my initial paper. In particular, I thank Jiang Yonglin, Don Sutton, Emma Teng, and the editors, who provided extremely valuable input. I also presented the paper at "Insiders and Outsiders in Chinese History," a Yale conference in honor of my adviser and teacher, Jonathan Spence. I not only acknowledge my tremendous debt to Jonathan but also thank conference participants, especially Roger Des Forges, for their helpful critiques. Finally, I thank the two anonymous reviewers for providing careful and thoughtful insights that have improved this chapter.

1. For Harrell's statements on ethnic identity, ethnic groups, and ethnic consciousness, see "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 27–28; Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 21.

2. For Elliott's statements on ethnicity, see Mark C. Elliott, this volume; "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 32–35; *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 16–19.

3. David Snow, Sharon Oselin, and Catherine Corrigan-Brown, "Identity," in *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, ed. George Ritzer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference, 2005), vol. 1, 390–93.

4. For a recent introduction to the field, see Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, "Critical Race Theory," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Maryanne Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), vol. 2, 501–7.

5. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 1 (June 2002): 154–73.

6. Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining the Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in *The Construction*

of *Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 39; Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13–17.

7. Patricia Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1996), 20. For an overview of the culturalism thesis, see James Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 1–30.

8. Ebrey, "Surnames and Han Chinese Identity," 26.

9. Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossings in Liao China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

10. Elliott, this volume.

11. Gang Zhao, "A Marginal Identity and Its Modern Transformation: Inquiring into Han Identity" (paper presented at the Critical Han Studies Symposium & Workshop, Stanford University, April 24–26, 2008), 14.

12. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 70, 168–69.

13. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 210.

14. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 210–33.

15. Helen F. Siu and Liu Zhiwei, "Lineage, Market, Pirate, and Dan: Ethnicity in the Pearl River Delta of South China," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 292–93.

16. Daniel McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland: Yan Ruyi and the Recruitment of the Gelao during the 1795–97 Miao Revolt," *Late Imperial China* 23, no. 2 (December 2002): 53–86.

17. McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland," 64.

18. Donald S. Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire: The 'Miao Uprising' of 1795–1797 Reexamined," *Asia Major* 16, pt. 2, 3rd ser. (2003): 125–26, 132–43.

19. Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt," 126.

20. See, e.g., E'ertai in *Gongzhongdang Yongzhengchao zouzhe* (Secret Palace Memorials of the Yung-cheng Period: Ch'ing Documents at the National Palace Museum), ed. National Palace Museum (Taipei: National Palace Museum Press, 1977–80), vol. 9, 286–89, 580–85, 795–97 (hereafter cited as GZDYZ); Gao Qizhuo, in GZDYZ, vol. 20, 98–109.

21. *Qing shilu you guan Yunnan shiliao huibian* (Collection of Historical Material Relating to Yunnan in the Qing Veritable Records), comp. Yunnan Provincial History Institute (Kunming: Yunnan renmin, 1984–86), vol. 2, 123 (hereafter QSL); McMahon, "Identity and Conflict," 59.

22. C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 61–63.

23. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 213, 217.

24. See, e.g., E'ertai, in GZDYZ, vol. 9, 286–89; GZDYZ, vol. 9, 580–84.

25. GZDYZ, vol. 10, 607–10. Since it was widely recognized that some *yi* could stand miasmatic places, while those from the interior were susceptible to its diseases and poisons, this and other evidence therefore suggests that officials may have conceived of *yi* bodies as different from those of Han, although an alternative explanation, also voiced by Qing officials, noted that people might become accustomed to miasmatic environments. Yang Yingju, on Mangzi bodies; for the “acclimatization” approach, see Fuheng et al., in *Zhupi zouzhe* (Palace Memorials) (Beijing: Number One Historical Archives) (hereafter ZPZZ), 142–41, QL 35/1/19.

26. Yue, in QSL, vol. 2, 121; Hao Yulin, in GZDYZ, vol. 9, 863–66.

27. Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 89–90.

28. ZPZZ 116–11, QL 31/6/30.

29. David Atwill, “Rebellion South of the Clouds: Ethnic Insurgency, Muslim Yunnanese, and the Panthay Rebellion” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai‘i, 1999), 78–82; Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 133.

30. Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, chap. 6.

31. Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, chap. 7.

32. Addendum to a memorial, ZPZZ 1754–55. First translated in Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 187, but note the substitution here of “Han people” for “Chinese” to more accurately reflect the original document.

33. Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 112–16.

34. For an example, see the land dispute case in Yongbei from 1821 (Daoguang 1) in which Qingbao and the court came to understand the conflict as one between Hanmin, who mortgaged the land from a *tusi* at the expense of the *yi* who lived there. QSL, vol. 2, 213, 216–17. This differs from the way Zhang Yunsui or Fuheng understood and evaluated land conflicts in the eighteenth century. See Zhang, in ZPZZ 1685–84, QL/9/21; and Fuheng et al., in ZPZZ 142–1, QL 35/1/19.

35. Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 43–46.

36. Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 51, 69–82; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Peter Perdue places this process in larger empire-wide and Eurasian perspectives, in *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005), 409–12, 442–61.

37. Jonathan N. Lipman, “‘A Fierce and Brutal People’: On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law,” in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 88.

38. Yongzheng emperor, quoted in QSL, vol. 2, 126–27.

39. Donald S. Sutton, “Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier,” *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2003): 41–80.

40. I find the discussions in “A Fierce and Brutal People,” 88–96; and in *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington, Press, 1997), 118–23, extraordinarily insightful.

41. Delgado and Stefancic, “Critical Race Theory,” 501–7.

42. My favorite explanation of these approaches to difference is in Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), chap. 4.
43. GZDYZ, vol. 9, 863–66.
44. QSL, vol. 1, 241.
45. Donald S. Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 191–193.
46. Shizong shilu, juan 43, 18–20, cited in *Qingshilu Guangxi ziliao jilu* (Compilation of Guangxi Materials from the Qing Veritable Records), vol. 1 (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1988), 237.
47. For E'ertai's vision, see Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 61–63. For concepts of "barbarian" space, see Zhang Yunsui, in ZPZZ 1733–2, QL 11/5/9; Fuheng in ZPZZ 142–1, QL 35/1/19, and QSL, vol. 3, 63–65. Yue Zhongqi refers to Wumeng, then in Sichuan but later transformed into Zhaotong in Yunnan as Miaojiang. QSL 2, 125.
48. Sutton covers these debates in "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier," 219. I have also looked at one such debate, Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 89–91.
49. Zhang Yunsui, in ZPZZ 1685–4, QL 8/9/21; Fuheng et al., in ZPZZ 142–1, QL 35/1/19; Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 142–45.
50. *Gongzhongdang* (Palace Memorials) (National Palace Museum, Taipei), JQ 13/8/29, #011866.
51. He Zikai, "Tengyue bianwu deshi lun" (On the successes and failures of Tengyue frontier management), in *Yongchang fu wen zheng*, ed. Li Genyuan (Kunming: Tengchong Li shi, 1941), vol. 14 (*wen juan*), 4a–5a; Zhao Jinsheng, writing in the 1830s, argued for Han settlement. See Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, 143–49; Zhao, "Nanhuang tushuo" (Illustrated manual of the southern wastelands), in *Yongchang fu wen zheng*, vol. 14 (*wen juan*), 1b–2a.
52. Older studies tend to assume that Han identity predated the conflicts. See, e.g., Wang Shuhuai, *Xian Tong Yunnan Huimin shibian* (The Hui Incident of the Xianfeng and Tongzhi Reigns) (Taipei Shi: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1968), 67–68. Atwill has brilliantly challenged this assumption but has not followed up on it in detail.
53. David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 64–67; ZPZZ 810–1, DG 4/7/16, Mingshan.
54. The Hunanese mine boss, Xiang Zhongxin, claimed that he initially felt no need to aid the Lin'an men against the Muslim Chinese; however, it was out of fear that his men might be next that they mobilized. Confession of Xiang Zhongxin, in *Yunnan Huimin qiyi shiliao* (Historical Materials from the Yunnan Hui Uprising), ed. Jing Dexin (Kunming: Yunnan minzu chubanshe, 1986), 16–18. Several other confessions reveal a similar interpretation, suggesting that the Hunanese men were not particularly committed to collective action based on Han identity.
55. Various confessions, cited in *Yunnan Huimin qiyi shiliao*, 12–14, 18–19,

27. For a local's use of terminology that identified western Yunnan violence as Han-Hui, see Baoshan resident Sheng Yuhua's "Yongchang Han Hui hudouan jielue," in *Yunnan Huimin qiyi shiliao*, 62–74.

56. Zhuang Jifa, *Qingdai mimi huidang shi yanjiu* (Studies in the History of Secret Societies in the Qing Dynasty) (Taibei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1994), 124–27, 140, 197; Dian H. Murray, with Qin Baoqi, *The Origins of the Tiandihui: The Chinese Triads in Legend and History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). For memorials reporting the spread of Tiandi hui practices into Yunnan, see *Tiandi hui* (The Heaven and Earth Society), comp. Zhongguo renmin daxue Qingshi yanjiu suo, *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan* (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue, 1980–1988), vol. 7, 426–36.

57. Wang, *Xian Tong Yunnan Huimin shibian*, 68–71.

58. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 68–73.

59. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 68.

60. "Qingdan" (a list of criminals) filed with the Daoguang 20 Lufu zouzhe (Grand Council Copies of Palace Memorials), minzu lei 1968–7 (Beijing, Number One Historical Archives); Ma Wenzhao memorial, copy from Lufu zouzhe, minzu lei 1968–2, DG 20/4/11. Wang Shuhuai argues that the Mian-ning men formed a secret society, but Ma Wenzhao—the only evidence for this—is not clear enough to conclude this. Wang, *Xian Tong Yunnan Huimin shibian*, 70–71.

61. Ma Wenzhao memorial, Lufu zouzhe, minzu lei 1968–2, DG20/4/11.

62. ZPZZ 886–2, DG 29/10/28.

63. Murray, *Origins of the Tiandihui*, 28–29, 76–77.

64. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*, 81–90.

65. See, e.g., David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," *Daedalus* 120, no. 2 (Spring 1991): esp. 171; Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), 299–306; Harrell, "Introduction," 27.

66. Leo K. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

67. Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt," 141.

68. QSL, vol. 2, 147.

69. David Faure, "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming and Their Impact on Yao Ethnicity," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 171–89.

CHAPTER 10

1. Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (The Pattern of Plurality and Unity in the Chinese Nation) (Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989): 1–13.

2. Chen Liankai, *Zhonghua minzu yanjiu chutan* (Preliminary Research on the Zhonghua minzu) (Beijing: Zhishi chubanshe, 1994), 111–29, 275–88, 288–311.

3. Rui-Jing Gan et al., "Pinghua Population as an Exception of Han Chinese's Coherent Genetic Structure," *Journal of Human Genetics* 53, no. 4 (2008): 303, 304; Bo Wen et al., "Genetic Evidence Supports Demic Diffusion of Han Culture," *Nature* 431 (2004): 302–5. This "coherent genetic structure," Chinese geneticists also argue, still exhibits a distinct pattern of variation among northern and southern Han people, which is more evident in the maternal side through its mtDNA than the paternal Y-chromosome marker. Among Han cybernationalists, this research is misinterpreted as scientific evidence of Han racial purity; see James Leibold, "More than a Category," *China Quarterly* 203 (2010): 539–59.

4. Hai-guo Zhang et al., "Dermatoglyphics from All Chinese Ethnic groups Reveal Geographic Patterning," *PLoS ONE* 5.1 (January 2010): 1–12; Xinhua, "Woguo wancheng fuwen diaocha: Zhonghua minzu zigu jushi yi jieren" (Investigation of our country's complete fingerprints: The Zhonghua minzu has been a single family since ancient times), *Xinhua Net*, February 8, 2010, http://news.xinhuanet.com/tech/2010-02/08/content_1295221.htm.

5. Xu Jieshun, *Xueqiu: Han minzu de renleixue fenxi* (Snowball: An Anthropological Analysis of the Han Nationality) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999), 1.

6. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).

7. Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 81–87.

8. Dru C. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1 (1994): 92–123; Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 100–131.

9. Pamela Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton, Introduction to *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 5.

10. See, in particular, Melissa Brown, "Ethnic Identity, Cultural Variation, and Processes of Change: Rethinking the Insights of Standardization and Orthopraxy," *Modern China* 33, no. 1 (2007): 116–17 and passim; Susan Blum, *Portraits of "Primitives": Ordering Human Kinds in the Chinese Nation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 12 and passim; Naran Bilik, "Names Have Memories: History, Semantic Identity and Conflict in Mongolian and Chinese Language Use," *Inner Asia* 9, no. 1 (2007): 23–39; Stevan Harrell, Introduction to *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1996), 1–15.

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34. Liang Qichao, “Zhongguo lishi shang minzu zhi yanjiu” (Research on the role of minzu in Chinese history), in *Yinbingshi heji* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941), vol. 42, 1.

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90. Liang Qichao, "Zhongguo lishi shang minzu zhi yanjiu," 4.
91. Liang Qichao, "Zhongguo lishi shang minzu zhi yanjiu," 5–13. These eight lineages were the Miaoman, Shu, Badi, Xuhuai, Wuyue, Min, Baiyue, Baipu.
92. Liang Qichao, "Zhongguo lishi shang minzu zhi yanjiu," 3.
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CHAPTER 11

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2. Maurice Freedman, "Why China?" [Presidential Address, Royal Anthropological Institute], in *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays by Maurice Freedman* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, [1969] 1979), 419. See G. William Skinner, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957); G. William Skinner, *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1958); Maurice Freedman, *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* (London: Athlone, 1958); Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966); Maurice Freedman, *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays by Maurice Freedman* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1979); and Myron Cohen, *Kinship, Contract, Community, and the State: Anthropological Perspectives on China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

3. The People's Republic is formally a *tongyi duominzu guojia*, commonly rendered in English as a "unified multiethnic country." There are problems with this translation, however. First, *minzu* and *ethnic* are imperfect equivalents at best. *Minzu*, variously translated as "race," "nationality" (in the Stalinist sense), or "ethnicity," entered Chinese from Japanese in the late nineteenth century. It in turn is thought to have entered Japanese as a translation of the German *das volk*. Rather than view *minzu* as simply the Chinese instantiation of a universal social category called "ethnicity," I side with Stevan Harrell, "Ethnicity, Local Interests and the State: Yi Communities in Southwest China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 3 (1990): 515–48, who considers its translation problematic and leaves it in the Chinese. Tapp, this volume, argues strongly for the incommensurality of the two terms. Yet I disagree with his assertion based on Lemoine's work that *minzu* "is a category that has nothing to do with (what is often understood as) ethnicity." Neither the position that *minzu* is after all just ethnicity in another guise nor its opposite allows us to gain analytic purchase on the significance of the trend in recent years toward translating *minzu* as ethnicity.

The latter is also a problematic concept, especially given the sharp divide in Chinese minority studies between those scholars influenced by Mark Elliott's work on the Manchu who assert the pan-temporal utility of ethnicity as an organizing concept and those scholars who follow Pamela Crossley's approach to ethnicity, which links it to the nation-state as a political form with a specific history and territorial span. I count myself in the latter camp in no small part because I think that assuming a priori that we are talking about ethnicity in some recognizable form in, say, the eighteenth-century Qing empire, may tend to obscure the ways in which the forms of groupness then in common circulation, while in some facets similar to ethnicity in the contemporary world, diverged in important ways from ethnicity as we know it. Thus I find the approach advocated by Chin, this volume, particularly productive. "I do not," she writes, "—as others have productively done—provide a universal definition of ethnicity in order to assess its currency in, or availability for, Chinese antiquity. Nor do I present an evolutionary account of a peculiarly Chinese notion of ethnicity. Rather, I examine competing ideas that have animated the antiquarian's *minzu*, *zuqun*, or *ethnos*—ideas that may have taken the name ethnicity or ethnic group but that at other times, or simultaneously, may have been interpreted or translated as race, culture, or nation."

4. Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies, 1991). Other works in this tradition include Melissa Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Uradyn E. Bulag, *Mongols at China's Edge: History and the Politics of National Unity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002) (the debt the title of this chapter owes to this volume should be obvious); Dru C. Gladney, "Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 1

(1994): 92–123; Dru C. Gladney, *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Stevan Harrell, “Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State”; Stevan Harrell, “Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them,” in *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, ed. Stevan Harrell (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 3–36; Stevan Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic in South China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); Ralph Litzinger, “Making Histories: Contending Conceptions of the Yao Past,” in Harrell, *Cultural Encounters on China’s Ethnic Frontiers*, 117–139; Ralph Litzinger, “Memory Work: Reconstituting the Ethnic in Post-Mao China.” *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (1998): 224–55; Ralph Litzinger, *Other Chinas: The Yao and the Politics of National Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Mary Rack, *Ethnic Distinctions, Local Meanings: Negotiating Cultural Identities in China* (London: Pluto Press, 2005); Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China’s Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Louisa Schein, “Urbanity, Cosmopolitanism, Consumption,” in *China Urban*, ed. Nancy Chen, C. Clark, S. Gottschang, and L. Jeffery (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 225–41; and Nicholas Tapp, *The Hmong of China: Context, Agency, and the Imaginary* (Boston: Brill, 2001).

5. Erik Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 18.

6. Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts*, 18.

7. Harding’s formulation highlights the implicit majority/minority resonances of “China Proper” and its others. “‘China Proper’ referred to those areas that were directly controlled by the central administrative bureaucracy. For most of the Qing dynasty, it consisted of the nineteen provinces primarily populated by Han Chinese. In contrast, “Outer China” or the “[Chinese] dependencies referred to other areas, primarily peopled by ethnic minorities, that were under the suzerainty of the Chinese state and whose subordination was ensured by force if necessary. During the Qing, these included Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan and Tibet”; see Harry Harding, “The Concept of ‘Greater China’: Themes, Variations, and Reservations,” *China Quarterly* 136 (Dec. 1993), 662.

8. Mette Hansen, *Frontier People: Han Settlers in Minority Areas of China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005), 12.

9. Melissa Brown’s brilliant, if theoretically eccentric, comparative work on the aborigines of Taiwan and the Tujia of Hubei highlights the constructedness and ongoing negotiation of boundaries between minority and majority communities. According to Brown, the Tujia communities of which she writes were classed as minorities in the context of the ethnic identification project of the 1950s (*minzu shibie*) despite self-identifying as Han, in large part because their cultural practices seemed foreign to the metropolitan Han doing the identifying. Brown, in turn, notes, devastatingly, “Ironically, the very cultural basis that PRC officials apparently used to classify Tujia as non-Han in the 1950s suggests that, at the turn of the twenty-first century, Taiwanese should

be classified as more Han than most Han in the PRC"; see Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese?* 169.

10. On the vicissitudes of "race" in "the Chinese context," see, among others, Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 34–53; Kai-wing Chow, "Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining the Hanzu Identity in Modern China," in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Po-shek Fu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 47–83; Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); "Racial Identities in China: Context and Meaning," *China Quarterly* 138 (1994): 404–12; Frank Dikötter, "Racial Discourse in China: Continuities and Permutations," in *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, ed. Frank Dikötter (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 12–33; Harrell, "Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State"; Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*; and Barry Sautman, "Anti-Black Racism in Post-Mao China," *China Quarterly* 138 (1994): 413–37; Barry Sautman, "Myths of Descent, Racial Nationalism, and Ethnic Minorities in the People's Republic of China," in Dikötter, *The Construction of Racial Identities*, 75–95; Barry Sautman, "Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 1 (2001): 95–124. For useful interventions on race more broadly and with special reference to cultural anthropology, see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993); David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002); Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology; Marxism without Guarantees," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and K. Chen (New York: Routledge, [1986] 1996), 25–70; Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *"Race," Culture, and Difference*, ed. D. James and A. Rattansi (London: Sage, 1989), 252–59; "What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" in Morley and Chen, *Stuart Hall*, 465–75; Allan Pred, *Even in Sweden: Racisms, Racialized Spaces, and the Popular Geographical Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Kamala Visweswaran, "Race and the Culture of Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 1 (1998): 70–83.

11. John Hartigan Jr., *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4.

12. Cf. Harrell, "Ethnicity, Local Interests, and the State"; Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*; and further discussion, below.

13. *Race* in Detroit, *minzu* in Xiahe.

14. See Charlene Makley, *The Violence of Liberation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), for a wrenching account of Xiahe under high Maoism and its aftermath.

15. For Hartigan, the ultimate relationality of markedness is a crucial point:

"The key point—often neglected by theorists of whiteness—is that all of this is relational; you cannot just refer to a category as generically marked or unmarked. White racialness can be marked in one domain and unmarked in another" (Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 291 n. 47).

16. Hartigan draws on Virginia Dominguez's definition of racialization: "the process whereby 'differences between human beings are simplified and transformed into Difference. . . .' This process, associated with objectifications of people of color, reduces individuality to the point where only racialness matters. . . . Whites too are subjected to racialization" (Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 13).

17. Giersch, this volume, writes compellingly of the historical emergence of Han as an "ethnic" category in a context, Qing colonial Yunnan, in which Han as a group were not (yet) locally hegemonic. See, for example, his discussion of David Atwill's treatment of the violence between various native-place-based groups and Hui at the Baiyang mines in 1821.

18. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 16–17.

19. This phrase is Anna Tsing's. "An out-of-the-way place is, by definition, a place where the instability of political meanings is easy to see. The authority of national policies is displaced through distance and the necessity of reenactment at the margins." Anna L. Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 27.

20. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 282.

21. Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*, 295.

22. Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*, 295.

23. Hartigan is careful not to reduce race to class: "When I stress the role of class . . . I am not asserting that race can simply be reduced to class as some theorists argue. Rather, I emphasize how racial categories and conflicts are consistently textured by class distinctions." Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 15.

24. I use "ethnoracial" here to signal the degree to which even as any natural basis for race has been dismissed, culture and ethnicity have become naturalized or biologized. Scholars such as Visweswaran, "Race and the Culture of Anthropology," have argued that culture/ethnicity plays a role in the discourse of contemporary anthropology roughly identical to that played by race in the social science of the long nineteenth century (approximately 1850–1950). In other words, ethnicity and culture have simultaneously been naturalized, dehistoricized, and assimilated to physical appearance and geographic location to provide a convenient, commonsense index of radical difference and/or rationale for exclusion. Also see Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*; Pred, *Even in Sweden*; and Verena Stolcke, "Talking Culture," *Current Anthropology* 36, no. 1 (1995): 1–24, on cultural racism in contemporary Europe.

25. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 3.

26. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 3.

27. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 4.

28. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 17.

29. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 108.
30. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 108.
31. Here Hartigan draws on Kathleen Stewart's seductive but problematic work on Appalachia, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 188.
32. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 109.
33. Hartigan, *Racial Situations*, 108.
34. Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*, 11–12.
35. Harrell, *Ways of Being Ethnic*, 296. In this vein, Beth Notar cites the cultural geographer Doreen Massey's work as generative, noting that "she proposes we consider places as 'articulated moments in networks of social relations,' where each place is a unique point of . . . intersection" (quoted in Beth Notar, *Displacing Desire* [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006], 8).
36. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).
37. Many people I talked to whose jobs involved dealing with tourists had horror stories about dealing with Israelis. The only other nationalities who came in for such uniform criticism were Pakistanis and the French.
38. Robert Ekvall, *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 33.
39. This is not entirely true. There are at least some Tibetans who profess no religion, and there are also followers of Bön in the region who are looked upon with the same mixture of fear and distrust by average Tibetans as that with which Urban Han view Tibetan nomads.
40. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 33.
41. Says Wenhe of his childhood on the Ganjia grasslands, "I grew up poor. You know if we had fields we could farm, if we had sheep like the Tibetans, we could herd (*fangmu*), but we didn't have either, so we had to take what work we could get. I had to learn Tibetan as a kid because in Tibetan places like Ganjia and Sangke [both traditionally pastoralist areas], what else are you going to do?"
42. For a discussion of the term's rise to prominence, see Andrew Kipnis, "Suzhi: A Keyword Approach," *China Quarterly* 186 (2006): 295–313, who notes, "The slippage between singular and plural forms of *suzhi* facilitates the types of hierarchical discourse that require moving from one of the many specific qualities of an individual, such as the way she is dressed, her accent, her table manners or her score on a particular test to an overall judgment of her capital Q Quality" (304). Other explorations of *suzhi* in contemporary China include Ann Anagnost, "The Corporeal Politics of Quality (*Suzhi*)," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 189–208; and Yan Hairong, "Neoliberal Governmentality and Neohumanism: Organizing *Suzhi*/Value Flow through Labor Recruitment Networks," *Cultural Anthropology* 18, no. 4 (2003): 493–523; Yan Hairong, *New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development and Women Workers in China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). Lamentably, none of these texts deal in any substantive way with intersections between *minzu* politics and *suzhi* politics.

43. See Wurlig Borchigud, "Transgressing Ethnic and National Boundaries: Contemporary 'Inner Mongolian' Identities in China," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, ed. Melissa Brown (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California Press, 1996), 160–81, for a discussion of a somewhat parallel phenomenon in Inner Mongolia. See also Franck Billé, "Cooking the Mongol, Feeding the Han: Ethnic Intersections in Inner Mongolia," *Inner Asia* 11 (2009): 20–23.

44. See Webb Keane, "Public Speaking: On Indonesian as the Language of the Nation," *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 503–30, on the possible publics of national languages.

45. Michael Silverstein, "The Whens and Wheres—as Well as Hows—of Ethnolinguistic Recognition," *Public Culture* 15, no. 3 (2003): 531–57.

46. See Arienne Dwyer, "The Texture of Tongues: Language and Power in China," in *Nationalism and Ethnoregional Identities in China*, ed. William Safran (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), 68–85, for more on popular and official language ideologies in contemporary China.

47. Webb Keane, "Knowing One's Place: National Language and the Idea of the Local in Eastern Indonesia," *Cultural Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (1997): 37–63.

48. Meyer Fortes, "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process," in *Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa*, ed. Bronislaw Malinowski (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, Memorandum 15, 1938), 60–92; see below.

49. Indeed after the violent confrontations between Tibetan protesters and paramilitary police in March 2008, all bets are off as to the future contours of pan-ethnic regional identity.

50. Charles R. Hale, *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894–1917* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

51. Max Gluckman, *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*, Rhodes-Livingstone Institute Papers 28 (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, [1940] 1968); Fortes, "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process."

52. See Jerry S. Eades, "The New Chinese Anthropology: A View from Outside," in *Perspectives on Chinese Society: Anthropological Views from Japan*, ed. Jerry Eades, Michiko Suenari, and Christian Daniels, CSAC Monograph 10 (Kent: University of Kent, 1995), 274–91. I thank Jenny Chio for bringing this text to my attention.

53. Max Gluckman's discussion of social situations has interesting resonances with Hartigan: "As a starting point for my analysis I describe a series of events as I recorded them on a single day. Social situations are a large part of the raw material of the anthropologist. They are the events he observes and from them and their inter-relationships he abstracts the social structure, relationships, institutions, etc., of that society. By them, and by new situations, he must check the validity of his generalisations" (*Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*, 2). Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central*

Africa (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), chap. 4, puts Gluckman's work in greater context.

54. Maurice Freedman, "An Epicycle of Cathay: The Southward Expansion of the Sinologists," in *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays by Maurice Freedman* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, [1974] 1979), 47.

55. Fortes, "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process," 62.

56. Interestingly, there is a direct line from the work of Fortes and Gluckman to the concept of ethnicity that Mark Elliott has employed in his important recent works on the Manchu. Fredrik Barth, whose work has been such an inspiration for Elliott (see especially Elliott, "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," for a detailed elaboration of the concept; also Giersch, this volume), was himself primarily inspired to focus on the salience of boundaries by the work of Gluckman and Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954) (Fredrik Barth, personal communication, Nov. 5, 2005). We must remember that Barth's work (most crucially his edited volume *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* [Boston: Little, Brown], 1969) is not without its flaws. Hale reminds us that most of Barth's interpreters "stopped short of bringing the reproduction of ethnic identity into analytical balance with the constitutive impact of structural inequalities. Instead, once relations between the group and 'the outside' have been recognized as unequal and the external constraints of subordination have been taken into account, the premise of bounded cultural production has given license for a return to community level particularism, albeit in a transformed and more sophisticated guise" (Hale, *Resistance and Contradiction*, 203). This passage uncannily captures some of the problems with recent China minorities studies.

57. See Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996).

58. I am unsure of the exact details of the connections between Ekvall and the early theorists of culture contact, but he does seem to have participated in the University of Chicago's Divisional Seminar in Race and Culture Contacts at some point in the mid- to late 1930s. Others who participated in this seminar included Malinowski, Robert Redfield, Robert Park, Radcliffe-Brown, and Isaac Schapera (though it is unclear whether they were all there at the same time). The work of both Malinowski and Schapera appears in *Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa*. On Ekvall's participation, see the foreword to *Cultural Relations*. On others' participation, see Clifford Wilcox, *Robert Redfield and the Development of American Anthropology* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 74 n. 36. On Schapera, see www.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/index.php?html=/mss/newaids/BC1168.HTM&tmsscollid=43, accessed June 21, 2010.

59. Mueggler does something similar in the introduction of *Age of Wild Ghosts*, but ends up, I think, underplaying the significance of minority status in people's daily lives. While I find Mueggler's frustration with ethnicity as

the defining lens of *minzu* studies salutary, I am less than convinced by the assertion that this inspires: "In this sense, Zhizuo might be seen as just one more locale in the vast and diverse landscape of rural China, neither typical nor unique, neither marginal nor central" (Mueggler, *Age of Wild Ghosts*, 18).

60. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 13.

61. Interestingly, he suggests that in the 1920s and 1930s the result of this infiltration was the Tibetanization of Han in-migrants rather than the Hanification of local Tibetans, which characterizes the contemporary situation.

62. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 83.

63. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 33.

64. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 33.

65. Ekvall, *Cultural Relations*, 13.

Character List

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Baiyue | 百粤 |
| Baihua zhongguo lishi | 白话中国历史 |
| Baixing | 百姓 |
| Ban ge Zhongguoren | 半个中国人 |
| Beijingren | 北京人 |
| Beiren | 北人 |
| Beiyu | 北语 |
| Bendiren | 本地人 |
| Bentuhua | 本土化 |
| Bijiao Hanhua | 比较汉化 |
| Bijiao xianshi | 比较现时 |
| Bianjiang kaogu | 边疆考古 |
| Bu yu Hua tong | 不与华同 |
| Bunmeishugi | 文明主义 |
| Chen Boda | 陈伯达 |
| Chen Jianshan | 陈兼善 |
| Chen Liankai | 陈连开 |
| Chengshi | 诚实 |
| Chiang Kai-shek | 蒋介石 |
| Chide tai luan le | 吃得太乱了 |
| Chiyong | 蚩尤 |
| Chuzhong benguoshi | 初中本国史 |
| Chunjie | 春节 |
| Da Han | 大汉 |
| Da Hanzu minzu zhuyi | 大汉族民族主义 |

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Da Hanzu zhuyi | 大汉族主义 |
| Da minzuzhuyi | 大民族主义 |
| Datongshu | 大同书 |
| Dayitong | 大一统 |
| Dao bianjiang qu | 到边疆去 |
| Dimai | 地脉 |
| Diyun | 地运 |
| Dinglun | 定论 |
| Dongfang nüzi | 东方女子 |
| Dongfang zazhi | 东方杂志 |
| Duo minzu de guojia | 多民族的国家 |
| Duoyuanshuo | 多元说 |
| Duoyuan yiti | 多元一体 |
| Duoyuan yiti geju | 多元一体格局 |
| Fada | 发达 |
| Fan | 蕃 |
| Fan | 番 |
| Fanxiang | 返乡 |
| Fanyi | 番夷 |
| Fanzu | 蕃族 |
| Fan Hua | 反华 |
| Fangmu | 放牧 |
| Fangyan | 方言 |
| Fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi | 非我族类,其心必异 |
| Fei Xiaotong | 费孝通 |
| Fengsu | 风俗 |
| Fengyan | 风偃 |
| Fu Sinian | 傅斯年 |
| Ganzhi | 干支 |
| Gongxiang | 共相 |
| Gudai minzu | 古代民族 |
| Gu Jiegang | 顾颉刚 |
| Gugan | 骨干 |
| Guxiang | 故乡 |
| Guang | 广 |
| Guangdong sheng | 广东省 |
| Guigen | 归根 |
| Guizheng ren | 归正人 |
| Guizu | 贵族 |

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Guocui | 国粹 |
| Guojia | 国家 |
| Guomin | 国民 |
| Guoren | 国人 |
| Guoshi dagang | 国史大纲 |
| Guozu | 国族 |
| Gushibian | 古史辨 |
| | |
| Han'er | 汉儿 |
| Han Fan bu qi | 汉番步骑 |
| Hanfu yundong | 汉服运动 |
| Hanhua | 汉化 |
| Hanjian | 汉奸 |
| Hanjun | 汉军 |
| Hanmin | 汉民 |
| Han minzu | 汉民族 |
| Hanren | 汉人 |
| Hanren jie | 汉人街 |
| Hanren pengyou | 汉人朋友 |
| Han renzhong | 汉人种 |
| Hanshui | 汉水 |
| Hansu | 汉俗 |
| Han Suyin | 韩素音 |
| Han tu guanbing | 汉土官兵 |
| Han wang | 汉网 |
| Hanwen | 汉文 |
| Hanxue | 汉学 |
| Hanyu | 汉语 |
| Hanzhong | 汉种 |
| Hanzu | 汉族 |
| Hao Hanren | 好汉人 |
| He Ailing | 和艾龄 |
| He Bingsong | 何炳松 |
| He Dong/Ho Tung | 和东 |
| He er butong | 和而不同 |
| Heji cuoza zhi zu | 合极错杂之族 |
| Hemu | 合墓 |
| Hexie Shehui | 和谐社会 |
| Hen nanting | 很难听 |
| Ho-si-man/Heshiwen | 何仕文 |
| Hu | 胡 |

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Hufu | 胡服 |
| Hua | 华 |
| Huaqiao | 华侨 |
| Huaren | 华人 |
| Huaxia | 华夏 |
| Hua-Yi yi jia | 华夷一家 |
| Hua-Yi zhi bian | 华夷之辨 |
| Huayi | 华裔 |
| Huayi Yingguoren | 华裔英国人 |
| Huayi Yingji | 华裔英籍 |
| Huazu | 华族 |
| Huai Hanren | 坏汉人 |
| Huangbai hezhong | 黄白合种 |
| Huangdi zisun | 黄帝子孙 |
| Huang Zunxian | 黄遵宪 |
| Huiguan | 会馆 |
| Huiguo | 回国 |
| Huijia | 回家 |
| Hunxue'er | 混血儿 |
| | |
| Jimi | 羁縻 |
| Jiazu | 家族 |
| Jian Bozan | 翦伯赞 |
| Jiandan | 简单 |
| Jiang Zhiyou | 将智由 |
| Jiefang ribao | 解放日报 |
| Jiemeng | 结盟 |
| Jin | 金 |
| Jinbu | 进步 |
| Jindai minzu | 近代民族 |
| Jingxue | 经学 |
| Jiuguo | 救国 |
| Juhe | 聚合 |
| Junzi | 君子 |
| | |
| Kang Youwei | 康有为 |
| Kaoguxue | 考古学 |
| Kejiaren | 客家人 |
| Kemin | 客民 |
| Keren | 客人 |
| Kezhang | 客长 |

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Kezhong | 客众 |
| Lai Xiru | 赖希如 |
| Laoban | 老板 |
| Laojia | 老家 |
| Li Dongfang | 黎东方 |
| Lihai | 厉害 |
| Li Ji | 李济 |
| Lishi renwu | 历史人物 |
| Liyi lianjie | 礼仪廉洁 |
| Liangmin | 良民 |
| Liang Qichao | 梁启超 |
| Liang Siyong | 梁思永 |
| Liao | 辽 |
| Lin Huixiang | 林惠祥 |
| Liuguan | 流官 |
| Liumin | 流民 |
| Liu Shiwei | 刘师培 |
| Liu Yizheng | 刘诒征 |
| Long de chuanren | 龙的传人 |
| Longshan | 龙山 |
| Lu | 虏 |
| Lu Maode | 陆懋德 |
| Lü Simian | 吕思勉 |
| Lü Zhenyu | 吕振羽 |
| Luohou | 落后 |
| Manyi | 蛮夷 |
| Mei shenme teshu de | 没什么特殊的 |
| Menggu gongzuo | 蒙古工作 |
| Mengjian | 蒙奸 |
| Miao Fenglin | 缪凤林 |
| Miaojiang | 苗疆 |
| Miaoman | 苗蛮 |
| Min | 民 |
| Minjia | 民家 |
| Minren | 民人 |
| Minsu | 民俗 |
| Minzu | 民族 |
| Minzu qingxu | 民族情绪 |
| Minzu shibie | 民族识别 |

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|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Minzu tuanjie | 民族团结 |
| Minzuxue | 民族学 |
| Minzu yishi | 民族意识 |
| Minzu zhengce | 民族政策 |
| Minzu zhuyi | 民族主义 |
| Muti | 母体 |
| Nanfang dushi Bao | 南方都市报 |
| Nanren | 南人 |
| Nanyue | 南粤 |
| Nanzu | 南族 |
| Naozi hen jiandan | 脑子很简单 |
| Neidi | 内地 |
| Ningju hexin | 凝聚核心 |
| Ouya | 欧亚 |
| Ouya hunxue | 欧亚混血 |
| Ouya hunxue de Zhongguo nüzi | 欧亚混血的中国女子 |
| Putonghua | 普通话 |
| Qi | 气 |
| Qimeng | 启蒙 |
| Qipianle ni | 欺骗了你 |
| Qian Mu | 钱穆 |
| Qianshen | 前身 |
| Qian shi tamen de pengyou | 钱是他们的朋友 |
| Qianshi Hanren | 前世汉人 |
| Qingming Jie | 清明节 |
| Qingqing baibai huangdi zhi zisun | 清清白白黄帝之子孙 |
| Qingzhen | 清真 |
| Qun | 群 |
| Qun zhuyi | 群主义 |
| Ran'gan (Sārbi term) | 染干 |
| Renleixue | 人类学 |
| Renmin | 人民 |
| Renzhong | 人种 |
| Renzhongxue | 人种学 |
| Rong Di zhitai | 戎狄志态 |
| Ronghe | 融合 |

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|--|-----------------|
| Ru zhongguo bantu | 入中国版图 |
| Rui Yifu | 芮逸夫 |
| San duo | 三多 |
| Semu | 色目 |
| Shaguotun | 沙锅屯 |
| Shan hai jing | 山海经 |
| Shaoshu minzu | 少数民族 |
| Shaoshu minzuhua | 少数民族化 |
| Shiji | 史记 |
| Shijie Huaren wenxue | 世界华人文学 |
| Shitou buneng dang zhentou, Hanren buneng zuo pengyou | 石头不能当枕头,汉人不能做朋友 |
| Shizu | 氏族 |
| Sichuanren | 四川人 |
| Sifa xingzheng bu | 司法行政部 |
| Sima Qian | 司马迁 |
| Sixiang | 思想 |
| Siyiguan | 四夷馆 |
| Sobokushugi | 素朴主義 |
| Songzu | 宋族 |
| Suzhi | 素质 |
| Suibian bu ting hua | 随便不听话 |
| Sun Yat-sen | 孙中山 |
| Tamen naozi hao | 他们脑子好 |
| Tangren | 唐人 |
| Tangren jie | 唐人街 |
| Tianxia | 天下 |
| Tiaodunren | 条顿人 |
| Ting women de anduo Zangyu juede hen shufu | 听我们的安多藏语觉得很舒服 |
| Torii Ryûzô | 鸟居龙藏 |
| Tongyi duominzu guojia | 统一多民族国家 |
| Tubing | 土兵 |
| Tulian | 土练 |
| Turen | 土人 |
| Tusi | 土司 |
| Tuoba (Tabgach) | 拓拔 |
| Wai | 外 |

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|--|--------------|
| Waidiren | 外地人 |
| Waiguoren | 外国人 |
| Wailai | 外来 |
| Wailaishuo | 外来说 |
| Waizu | 外族 |
| Wangben | 忘本 |
| Wang Chuanxie | 王传燮 |
| Wei | 魏 |
| Weishenme suoyoude Zhongguoren buxing? | 为什么所有的中国人不行? |
| Wenhua | 文化 |
| Wenhua shamo | 文化沙漠 |
| Wenyanwen | 文言文 |
| Weng Wenhao | 翁文灏 |
| Women da Hanzu | 我们大汉族 |
| Women meiyou wenhua, meiyou jianshi | 我们没有文化, 没有见识 |
| Women Zangzu zui bu xihuan de shi Huizu | 我们藏族最不喜欢的是回族 |
| Wuhu luanhua | 五胡乱华 |
| Wuji | 无稽 |
| Wuzu gonghe | 五族共和 |
| Xiguan | 习惯 |
| Xilaishuo | 西来说 |
| Xinan shaoshu minzu | 西南少数民族 |
| Xia | 夏 |
| Xiahe | 夏河 |
| Xia Zengyou | 夏曾佑 |
| Xianbei (Sārbi) | 鲜卑 |
| Xiansheng | 先生 |
| Xiangtu | 乡土 |
| Xiao buluo | 小部落 |
| Xiaoren | 小人 |
| Xin dalu | 新大陆 |
| Xinxian xueye | 新鲜血液 |
| Xin xuetong de hunru | 新血统的混入 |
| Xing | 性 |
| Xing ji xionghan | 性极凶悍 |
| Xiong Shili | 熊十力 |
| Xu Bingchang | 徐炳昶 |

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|-------------------------------|----------|
| Xugouxing puxi | 虚构性谱系 |
| Xu Jieshun | 徐杰舜 |
| Xueheng | 学衡 |
| Xueqiu | 雪球 |
| Yan | 燕 |
| Yandi | 炎帝 |
| Yan Fu | 严复 |
| Yange dili | 严格地力 |
| Yanhuang | 炎黄 |
| Yanren | 燕人 |
| Yang Du | 扬度 |
| Yangshao | 仰韶 |
| Yi | 夷 |
| Yidi | 夷地 |
| Yifang | 夷方 |
| Yifang shuitu yang yifang ren | 一方水土养一方人 |
| Yifen wei'er | 一分为二 |
| Yimin | 夷民 |
| Yiren | 夷人 |
| Yishi tongren | 一视同仁 |
| Yisilan minzu | 伊斯兰民族 |
| Yixia dongxi shuo | 夷夏东西说 |
| Yiyuanlun | 一元论 |
| Yiyuanshuo | 一元说 |
| Yu Jianhua | 俞剑华 |
| Yuan | 元 |
| Yuanren | 猿人 |
| Yuan Shikai | 袁世凯 |
| Yuanshi Ouzhou renzhong | 原始欧洲人种 |
| Yue | 粤 |
| Zhanzai Hanren de fangmian | 站在汉人的方面 |
| Zhang | 瘴 |
| Zhang Binglin | 章炳麟 |
| Zhang Qiyun | 张其昀 |
| Zhang Xuguang | 张旭光 |
| Zhendān | 震旦 |
| Zhina | 支那 |
| Zhizu | 支族 |
| Zhong | 中 |

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|--------------------------|--------|
| Zhong | 种 |
| Zhongguo | 中国 |
| Zhongguo benbu | 中国本部 |
| Zhongguo de Youtairen | 中国的犹太人 |
| Zhongguo minzu shi | 中国民族史 |
| Zhongguo minzu | 中国民族 |
| Zhongguo mingyun | 中国命运 |
| Zhongguoren | 中国人 |
| Zhongguoren de xue | 中国人的血 |
| Zhongguoren de xuetong | 中国人的血统 |
| Zhongguo renmin | 中国人民 |
| Zhongguo renzhong kao | 中国人种考 |
| Zhongguo renzhong xitong | 中国人种系统 |
| Zhongguo xin | 中国心 |
| Zhonghua | 中华 |
| Zhonghua da di | 中华大地 |
| Zhonghua guozu | 中华国族 |
| Zhonghua minzu | 中华民族 |
| Zhonglei | 种类 |
| Zhongtu | 中土 |
| Zhongyang dianshitai | 中央电视台 |
| Zhongyuan | 中原 |
| Zhongzu | 中族 |
| Zhongzu de ouxiang | 种族的偶像 |
| Zhou Guanghu | 周光湖 |
| Zhou Yutong | 周予同 |
| Zhuti | 主体 |
| Zhuxia | 诸夏 |
| Zixiang | 自相 |
| Zizhi bang | 自治邦 |
| Zongjiao butong | 宗教不同 |
| Zongzu | 宗族 |
| Zou Rong | 邹容 |
| Zu | 族 |
| Zuguo | 祖国 |
| Zulei | 族类 |
| Zuqun | 族群 |
| Zuqun lilun | 族群理论 |
| Zuxian | 祖先 |
| Zui gulao de minzu | 最古老的民族 |
| Zuozhuan | 左传 |

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