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Dances of the Doomed: Ritual and Resistance among China's Western Hunan Miao in the 1940s

ABSTRACT:
In January of 1942 Western Hunan (Xiangxi 湘西) was rocked by a Miao 苗 uprising against Nationalist rule; it ended in August after leaders had been tricked into surrendering. The goal of this paper is to examine both the beliefs and practices of the Miao warrior culture that underlay the uprising, and their significance for modern Chinese history. The bulk of scholarship on the uprising tends to label its religious factors as "superstition," while also neglecting the significance of women's roles in the mobilization process. In contrast, this study describes how beliefs in savior figures and how mass possession rituals led by Miao female mediums were critical in quickly motivating the Miao fighters, with Miao montagnards choosing to die on their feet rather than survive on their knees. Such phenomena were hardly limited to Western Hunan, and thus we can find in other parts of China, and in the world, numerous uprisings featuring charismatic religious figures who staged possession rituals designed to bestow such things as invulnerability in battle.

KEYWORDS:
Miao, Western Hunan, resistance, possession rituals, female mediums

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Beginning in January 1942, the Western Hunan (Xiangxi 湘西) region was rocked by a Miao 苗 uprising against Nationalist rule – an uprising usually referred to as "Jumping Immortals" (*tiaoxian* 跳仙; Miao: *nbud wangx* 葡王), or alternatively, "Performing the Generals and Marshals" (*bu jiangshuai* 布將帥; Miao: *nbud jiangb sheb*).[1] It originated in the Miao villages of Yongsui 永綏 county (today's Huayuan 花垣), spreading from there to Fenghuang 鳳凰 and Qiancheng 乾城 (today's Jishou 吉首), as well as to Songtao 松桃 and Tongren 銅仁 in Guizhou

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[1] The term "Miao 苗" is used in this paper as a convenience for general readers, yet it is highly problematic. While traditional labels for ethnic groups considered to be "Miao" have tended to focus on color (Hong Miao 紅苗, Hua Miao 花苗, Hei Miao 黑苗, etc.), ethnographic methodology favors the use of autonyms, including Kho Xiong (or Qho Xiong, Qoxiong,

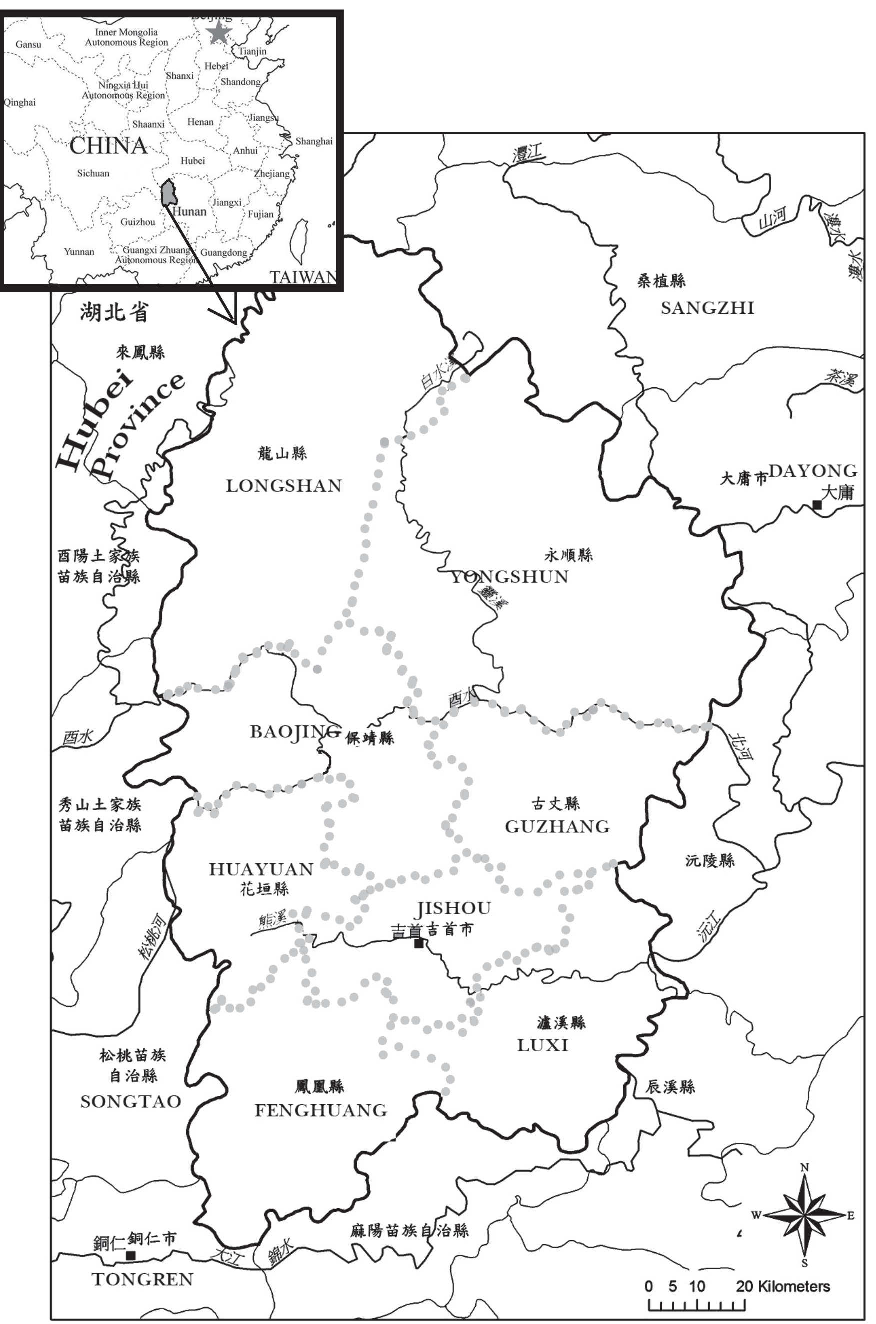
貴州, most of these areas being part of the Laershan 臘爾山 plateau. (For these and other locations, see the map of Western Hunan.) While the actual number of Miao fighters only numbered in the hundreds, the uprising proved difficult to suppress, and the violence did not end until August 1942, and only after some leaders had been tricked into surrendering. The goal of this paper is to examine the beliefs and practices at the heart of the Jumping Immortals uprising, as well as their significance in the context of modern Chinese history.

Despite the obvious importance of indigenous ritual traditions in numerous Miao uprisings of the modern era, much scholarship tends to either ignore such factors or else labels them as "superstition 迷信"; and at the same time the issues of gender and women's roles in these movements have been similarly overlooked. This paper attempts to fill these gaps in our knowledge, using data that can help us better understand aspects of indigenous culture that traditional sources like gazetteers tend to ignore. One of the most salient cultural aspects of the Jumping Immortals uprising was the prominence of local ritual traditions.[2] The deities that participants worshiped were deeply embedded in Western Hunan's religious life, including three martial gods (referred to as the Heavenly Kings [Tianwang 天王; the full title being "White Emperor Heavenly Kings or Baidi tianwang 白帝天王"]),[3] as well as other popular deities such as the Thunder God (Leigong 雷公), the Earth God (Tudi gong 土地神), Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo (Nuogong Nuomu 儺公儺母), and so on. Among the most notable were goddesses known as the Seven Immortal Maidens (Qi xiannü 七仙女, or Qi guniang 七姑娘), patron deities of the female mediums (*xianniang* 仙娘; Miao: *xiand*

Kuoxiong) for Western Hunan and Northeast Guizhou, Hmu or Khanao for Southeast Guizhou, and Hmong (or Mong, A Hmao) for Sichuan, Western Guizhou, Yunnan, and the Indo-Chinese peninsula. These groups speak mutually unintelligible languages, as well as between 30–40 dialects. There is considerable controversy over the extent to which the Hmong share common cultural features with other groups like the Kho Xiong, despite some attempts to conflate all these peoples into one massive entity. For more on these issues, see Nicholas Tapp, *The Hmong of China: Context, Agency, and the Imaginary* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion: The White Hmong of Northern Thailand* (Singapore: Oxford U.P., 1989); Jacques Lemoine, "To Tell the Truth," *Hmong Studies Journal* 9 (2008), pp. 1–29. See also Lemoine's review of Louisa Schein's *Minority Rules*, in *The China Quarterly* 165 (March 2001), pp. 207–8.

[2] An overview may be found in Paul R. Katz, "Religious Life in Western Hunan during the Modern Era: Some Preliminary Observations," *CEA* 25 (2017; forthcoming).

[3] Donald S. Sutton, "Myth Making on an Ethnic Frontier: The Cult of the Heavenly Kings of West Hunan, 1715–1996," *Modern China* 26.4 (2000), pp. 448–500; Xie Xiaohui, "From Woman's Fertility to Masculine Authority: The Story of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings in Western Hunan," in David Faure and Ho Ts'ui-p'ing [何翠萍], eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors: Imperial Expansion and Indigenous Society in Southwest China* (Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 2013), pp. 111–37.



Map. Eight Counties of Western Hunan, and Selected Outlying Counties

Adapted from map created by 中央研究院人文社會科學研究中心地理資訊科學研究專題中心 *(Center for GIS, RCHSS, Academia Sinica)*

Rivers — County boundaries — FENGHUANG County names

niangx/goud niandx) who helped lead the uprising. Indeed, the importance of specialists like these is one of the most striking aspects of the uprising, particularly their preparing followers for battle by means of ecstatic rituals featuring induced trances that culminated in possession by the deities mentioned above.[4] Many of these elements pervaded indigenous Miao culture, yet had been shaped by outside influences as well. Such cultural amalgams can be found in the alternative indigenous term for the uprising (mentioned above), "performing/jumping generals and marshals 布將帥." While the last two characters are Chinese, the first one derives from the Miao word for making a physical motion like jumping (*nbud* 葡) and it appears in compounds used to describe the possession rituals of Miao female mediums (Miao: *nbud goud niangx* 葡姑娘, or *bu xiongniang* 布熊娘). Combined, the three characters mean to stage a possession ritual for ensuring victory in battle.[5]

Our ability to understand the uprising has been hindered by significant methodological challenges, one of which involves primary sources. As Ranajit Guha noted in his classic *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, religious beliefs and practices constitute an essential element of insurgent consciousness and subjectivity, yet one that is often downplayed in traditional historical narratives or else treated as mere folklorist detail.[6] In the case of the Jumping Immortals uprising, since it was hardly a "great event" in the larger scheme of modern Chinese history, there is a paucity of information in archival or newspaper accounts,[7] although some sources from the 1930s describe factors contributing to these events. The bulk of data available today consists mainly of writings by local historians, as well as interviews with participants and eyewitnesses who were still alive in

[4] For more on Western Hunan spirit mediums, see Kang Shih-yu 康詩瑀, "Xiangxi xianniang diaocha fangtanlu" 湘西仙娘調查訪談錄, *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 189 (2015), pp. 217–312. See also Huang Jin 黃金, "Dongbu fangyanqu Shanjiang Miaozu xianniang tiaoxian yishi diaocha" 東部方言區山江苗族仙娘跳仙儀式調查, *Shaoshu minzu zongjiao yanjiu* 少數民族宗教研究 1 (2013), pp. 224–30; Ma Yongbin 麻勇斌, *Chanshi mitu: Xiang, Qian jiaojiedi Miaozu shenxing funü yanjiu* 闡釋迷途, 湘、黔交界地苗族神性婦女研究 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 2004); Guo Wei 過偉, *Zhongguo nüshen* 中國女神 (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000). There are also some male mediums (10% is the figure usually given in interviews); one example may be found in the account of Liao Changlu 廖昌祿/Liao Changliu 廖昌六 presented later in the present article.

[5] Shi Qigui 石啓貴, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族實地調查報告 (1940; Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 65–67; Ma, *Chanshi mitu*, pp. 38–128.

[6] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford U.P., 1983). I am grateful to Shen Sung-chiao 沈松僑 for bringing this important work to my attention.

[7] Major online newspaper databases like *Shenbao* 申報 contain no accounts of this uprising, their reporters and editorial staffs being concerned with more "significant" stories like the Pacific War.

the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, most of the secondary scholarship on the Jumping Immortals has been produced in China, where it is subject to political agendas that stress the importance of class struggle or the CCP's supposed role in sparking such uprisings.[8] The nature of this data naturally raises questions about "accuracy" and "objectivity" due to the fact that it is prone to distortion and exaggeration, if not outright fabrication. However, the same might be said about the archival sources historians are used to relying on, which tend to center on confessions of captured individuals (often made under duress) that can obscure as much as they reveal.[9] In the case of the Jumping Immortals uprising, no confessions have survived, but while participant and eyewitness accounts can hardly be considered ideal sources, they were at least provided willingly. Moreover, such accounts contain far more detailed descriptions of religious life than are usually found in archival texts.[10]

Fortunately, a wide range of works provide relatively detailed accounts of social and cultural life in Western Hunan during the Republican era, including surveys conducted by governments officials and ethnographers as well as the writings of local elites. For example, Ding Yiqing 丁乙青, who travelled throughout Western Hunan during the winter of 1918, describes its bustling markets and thriving temple cults, but also notes the difficulties posed by rough terrain and banditry.[11] More comprehensive data are found in *Hunan gexian diaocha biji* 湖南各縣調查筆記, compiled in 1931 by the provincial official Zeng Jiwu 曾繼梧 (1878–1944; a native of Xinhua 新化 in Hunan), which contains reports about agricultural production and local customs. The reports consistently refer to Western Hunan's rugged topography, harsh life, and inadequate schools.[12] However, the quality of the data varies dra-

8 See for example Qu Zuhai 瞿祖海, "Shilun Kangzhan shiqi Xiangxi minbian de zhuyao tedian" 試論抗戰時期湘西民變的主要特點, *Jishou daxue xuebao (Shehui kexueban)* 吉首大學學報 (社會科學版) 13 (1985), pp. 14–21.

9 See the expert analysis of such sources in Donald Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire: The 'Miao Uprising' of 1795–1797 Reexamined," *AM* 3d ser. 16.2 (2003), pp. 105–52.

10 The concept of "religion 宗教" is admittedly a Western neologism. For the purposes of analysis, "religious" is used in this paper as an adjective broadly covering the beliefs and practices described in historical documents and observed during fieldwork.

11 Ding Yiqing 丁乙青, *Xiangxi youji* 湘西遊記, in *Luyouji huikan* 旅遊記彙刊 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1932).

12 Zeng Jiwu 曾繼梧, *Hunan gexian diaocha biji* 湖南各縣調查筆記 (Changsha: Heji yinshua gongsi, 1931). Other Republican-era surveys include Hunan Provincial Government, *Hunan quansheng shehui diaocha, Fengsu* 湖南全省社會調查, 風俗 (unpub. ms., 1934), pp. 32–39; Yu Defan 余德範, *Diyici chuxun Qian-Feng-Gu-Sui gexian riji* 第一次出巡乾鳳古綏各縣日記 (unpub. ms., 1935); Hua Lu 華麓, "Xiangxi minsu" 湘西民俗, in Ma Yiwu 馬益吾, ed., *Wo suo zhidao de Xiangxi* 我所知道的湘西 (Changsha: Hunan guomin yinwuguan, 1935).

matically depending on the locales that submitted it, and there are also stereotypical statements that refer to the region's "backwardness 落伍." Additional records of local life may be found in *Xiangxi xiangtu diaocha huibian* 湘西鄉土調查彙編, also compiled during the 1930s and 1940s.

Missionary reports shed additional light on the region's modern history, including one composed by Chen Xinchuan 陳心傳 (1893–1971) of the Church of Christ in China (Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui 中華基督教會), which draws on earlier sources while including his own observations.[13] For the CCP, we have the writings of Zhou Libo 周立波 (1908–1979), a native of Yiyang 益陽 (Hunan) who spent the winter of 1938 in Western Hunan promoting party doctrine and helping to edit *Kangzhan ribao* 抗戰日報, recording his experiences in a number of essays that have been republished in his collected works.[14] Data from CCP surveys conducted during the early 1950s can be problematic, yet also of some value if critically assessed.[15]

In contrast to the above sources, which were prepared by outside scholars and officials, we also have detailed accounts by leading members of the Western Hunan elite, the best known being the renowned writer Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902–1988), who was born and raised in Fenghuang.[16] Another example is the official Shi Honggui 石宏規 (1898–1982), a native of Yongsui who was a member of the Legislative Yuan and fled to Taiwan with other KMT elites in 1949. Shi composed a detailed account of Western Hunan customs and social life, including a lengthy proposal for reforming economic and cultural conditions (titled "Xiangxi Miaozu wenhua jingji jianshe fang'an" 湘西苗族文化經濟建設方案).[17]

13 Chen Xinchuan 陳心傳, *Wuxi Miaozu gujin shenghuoji* 五溪苗族古今生活集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2012). For Christian missions in Southwest China, see Yang Tianhong 楊天宏, *Zhonghua jidu jiaohui bianjiang fuwu yanjiu* 中華基督教會邊疆服務研究 (Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2010); Long Xianqiong 龍先瓊, *Jindai Xiangxi kaifashi yanjiu: Yi quyushi wei shijiao* 近代湘西開發史研究, 以區域史爲視角 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2014), pp. 98–101, 149–53.

14 See for example Zhou Libo 周立波, "Xiangxi xing" 湘西行, in *Zhou Libo daibiaozuo* 周立波代表作 (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1989), pp. 265–78; idem, "Xiangxi Miaomin de guoqu he fengsu: Yige beiwanglu" 湘西苗民的過去和風俗, 一個備忘錄, in *Zhou Libo daibiaozuo*, pp. 283–95. These two essays first appeared in the July 20 and August 5, 1939 issues of *Zhongxue sheng* 中學生, published in Guilin 桂林.

15 See for example Liu Runshi 劉潤世, *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shenghuo yu xisu* 湘西兄弟民族的生活與習俗 (unpub. ms., 1951); Cao Xianjie 曹先捷, *Xiangxi Miaozu renmin de xinshidai* 湘西苗族人民的新世代 (Hankou: Zhongguo renmin wenyi chubanshe, 1954).

16 Jeffrey C. Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision of Republican China," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1977); Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford U.P., 1987).

17 Shi Honggui 石宏規, *Xiangxi Miaozu kaocha jiyao* 湘西苗族考察紀要 (Changsha: Feixiong yinshua gongsi, 1933), esp. pp. 43–51. See also Cui Rong 崔榕, "Guojia zaichang yu Xiangxi Miaozu wenhua de bianqian: Minguo zhengfu de wenhua tonghua celue zai Xiangxi Miaozu

Perhaps our most valuable sources are reports by trained ethnographers. One example is *Xiangxi Miaoqu zhi shezhi ji xianzhuang* 湘西苗區之設治及其現狀 by the KMT cadre and ethnographer Sheng Xiangzi 盛襄子. It presents an overview of geographic and socioeconomic conditions, while paying close attention to issues of migration and interaction between different groups. Sheng also composed detailed reports about local customs, including judicial rituals performed in Heavenly Kings temples.[18] In addition, we have the ethnographic data collected by Academia Sinica scholars Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 (1901–1978) and Ruey Yih-fu 芮逸夫 (1898–1991), as well as their research assistant and local intellectual Shi Qigui 石啓貴 (1896–1959). The three did fieldwork in Western Hunan from 1933 to 1936 as part of a major Institute of History and Philology research project on Southwest China undertaken between 1929 and 1943, which resulted in the collection of over 8,000 photographs, 1,100 artifacts, and 800 documents.[19] Ling and Rui wrote up their findings in 1940, although their book (titled *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族調查報告) was not published until 1947. Shi also wrote up his findings in 1940. This stands as one of the earliest examples of Chinese indigenous anthropology, and was published under the title *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族實地調查報告. More recently, Shi's son (Shi Jianzhong 石建中) and daughter-in-law (the late Ma Shulan 麻樹蘭), both emeritus professors at Beijing's Minzu University (Minzu daxue 民族大學) have done follow-up research and worked with other scholars and local experts to publish Shi Qigui's field data in the extensively annotated collection *Minguo shiqi Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha shilu* 民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄.[20]

diqu de shijian" 國家在場與湘西苗族文化的變遷, 民國政府的文化同化策略在湘西苗族地區的實踐, *Qinghai minzu yanjiu* 青海民族研究 22.1 (2011), pp. 69–74.

[18] Sheng Xiangzi 盛襄子, *Xiangxi Miaoqu zhi shezhi ji qi xianzhuang* 湘西苗區之設治及其現狀 (Chongqing: Duli chubanshe, 1943); see also the reprinted version in Zhang Yongguo 張永國, ed., *Minquo nianjian Miaozu lunwenji* 民國年間苗族論文集 (Guiyang: Guizhou minzu yanjiusuo, 1983), pp. 47–71.

[19] There is even a 50-minute film of Western Hunan's cultural traditions, which may be the first example of ethnographic cinematography in China.

[20] Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 and Ruey Yih-fu 芮逸夫, *Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha baogao* 湘西苗族調查報告 (1947; Taipei: SMC Corporation, 1978); Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*; Shi et al., eds. and comps., *Minguo shiqi Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha shilu* 民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu chuabanshe, 2009). See also Shi Jianzhong 石建中, "Xiangxi Miaozu diaocha yu Shi Qigui de Zhongguo meng" 湘西苗族調查與石啓貴的中國夢, in Kang Bao 康豹 (Paul R. Katz), Long Haiqing 龍海清, and Luo Kanglong 羅康隆, eds., *Xiangxi zongjiao wenhua diaocha yu yanjiu* 湘西宗教文化調查與研究 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu chubanshe, 2017; forthcoming), pp. 1–24. For more on the significance of that era's ethnographic writing, see Cheung Siu-woo [張兆和], "Miao Identities, Indigenism and the Politics of Appropriation in Southwest China during the Republican Period," *Asian Ethnicity* 4.1 (2003), pp. 85–114; Zhang Qiusong 張秋東, "'Wenhua lieqi' yu 'zhengzhi zijue':

Despite the virtues of these sources, however, there is much about Western Hunan Miao religious life that they do not reveal. In the case of the Jumping Immortals uprising, many of the associated beliefs and practices would have been expressed in Miao language, both as part of indigenous ritual traditions and among the specialists that performed them. The Miao do not possess a written language, and the few Miao liturgical texts that have been compiled combine romanization and phonetically similar Chinese characters alongside Chinese translations. Moreover, Miao religious culture occupies a mainly peripheral position in the research that purports to describe it. For example, scholars often use pejorative labels when referring to ritual specialists (one common instance is "*wushi* 巫師"), or else favor exonyms like "Miao laoshi 苗老師" instead of indigenous terms like "*badaixiong* 巴代雄." As a general rule, it would seem appropriate to respect indigenous terminology whenever feasible, even if it may not be possible to use it exclusively. Only through ethnographic investigations that include rituals, as well as by conducting interviews, can we begin to grasp the significance of the indigenous cultural traditions that helped spark the Jumping Immortals.[21]

The structure of the present paper is as follows: I begin with a description of Western Hunan's historical development, focusing on the factors that helped spark the Jumping Immortals uprising. This is followed by a narrative account of these events, plus a more detailed analysis of the uprising's most important beliefs and practices. The next section features comparisons to previous uprisings in this region. The Conclusion considers the events from the broader perspectives of

Ling Chunsheng deng yu Shi Qigui de Xiangxi Miaozu yanjiu bijiao fenxi" 文化獵奇與政治自覺, 凌純聲等與石啓貴的湘西苗族研究比較分析, *Leshan shifan xueyuan xuebao* 樂山師範學院學報 25.3 (2010), pp. 108–12.

21 For more on these issues, see He Xi [賀喜], "The Past Tells It Differently: The Myth of Native Subjugation in the Creation of Lineage Society in South China," in Faure and Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 138–70; Kao Ya-ning [高雅寧], "Chief, God, or National Hero? Representing Nong Zhigao in Chinese Ethnic Minority Society," in Faure and Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 42–65. Pioneering work on how language can shape regional cultural systems may be found in David Holm's *Mapping the Old Character Zhuang Script* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), esp. pp. 742–69, as well as his "The Tao among the Zhuang [壯]: Imported and Indigenous Aspects of Zhuang Ritual," *Minsu quyi* 117 (1999), pp. 371–88, and "The Exemplar of Filial Piety and the End of the Ape-men: Dong Yong [董永] in Guangxi and Guizhou Ritual Performance," *TP* 90 (2004), pp. 32–64. Some ideas expressed above have been inspired by Mandy Sadan's review of *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (review no. 903); see <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/903> (accessed September 2, 2016). While I do not understand Miao languages, I hope to be able to work with partners and informants to enhance my understanding of their ritual practices in the future.

Chinese and world religious history; it also examines possible links to the formation of a Miao ethnic identity.

ECOLOGY, CULTURE AND LATE IMPERIAL HISTORY

When viewed from a macrohistorical perspective, the Jumping Immortals uprising seems to fit the pattern of resistance against modern state policies aimed at exploiting indigenous resources. One way to consider this problem involves the concept of governmentality, that is, the state's efforts to observe, measure, and control local communities. Research by numerous scholars clearly indicates the importance of such facets of governmentality as institutions like schools, courts, and prisons, as well as regulations, and surveys including resulting statistics.[22] My research also draws on the concept of "territorialization," that is, the ongoing efforts by governments to establish control over natural resources and the people who use them within boundaries defined by the state and embodied in maps.[23] The above measures proved vital to the state enterprise of gaining full epistemological access to and administrative mastery over its territory and subjects. However, they also ran the risk of alienating indigenous populations as ambitious modern states usurped socioeconomic structures once run by local elites.[24] Such patterns appear to have also been at work in Western Hunan during the modern era, as can be seen in the sources cited above, as well as the work of scholars like Edward A. McCord and Jeffrey C. Kinkley.[25]

The impact of governmentality on Western Hunan can only be fully understood by appreciating the fact that its historical development has been shaped by two key factors: Mountainous terrain, which until recently inhibited the growth of agriculture and transportation networks;

[22] See the classic studies by Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity. Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2002); Nicholas B. Dirks, 2001. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 2001). Data on Republican-era surveys may be found in Tong Lam [林東], *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900–1949* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2011).

[23] Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, "Territorialization and State Power in Thailand," *Theory and Society* 24 (1995), pp. 385–426.

[24] See the work of James C. Scott, especially *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1998) and *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 2009). For Taiwan, see Paul R. Katz, *When Valleys Turned Blood Red: The Ta-pa-ni Incident in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2005); Katz, "Governmentality and its Consequences in Colonial Taiwan: A Case Study of the Ta-pa-ni Incident of 1915," *JAS* 64.2 (2005), pp. 387–424.

[25] Edward A. McCord, "Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China: The 1937 West Hunan Miao Abolish-Military-Land-Resist-Japan Uprising," *Modern Asian Studies* 45.6 (2011), pp. 1499–1533; Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision"; idem, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen.*

and a sizeable and often unruly non-Han population, including the Miao and Tujia 土家 peoples. The modern history of this region reveals it to have been a vibrant cultural frontier featuring widespread differences between Miao groups that had undergone extensive processes of assimilation (usually labeled "*shu Miao* 熟苗," similar to the "*shu fan* 熟蕃" labels used by Qing and Japanese colonial powers in Taiwan) and pockets of unassimilated Miao montagnards ("*sheng Miao* 生苗," similar to "*sheng fan* 生蕃"), including in areas where the Jumping Immortals uprising originated. The latter groups of Miao deeply resented not only state policies but also Han cultural intrusions, with their sentiments finding expression in songs and other practices linked to the uprising described in this paper. This means that before we move on to describe the uprising itself, as well as the policies often viewed as being among its immediate causes, we must first try to understand Western Hunan's ecological, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions.

In today's parlance, the Chinese term "Xiangxi 湘西" refers to the Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture 湘西土家族苗族自治州, which encompasses areas along the Yuan River 沅水 and Li River 澧水, as well as Jishou city (Jishoushi 吉首市) plus the counties of Baojing 保靖, Fenghuang 鳳凰, Guzhang 古丈, Huayuan 花垣, Longshan 龍山, Luxi 瀘溪, and Yongshun 永順. Covering an area of 15,486 square kilometers, other areas of Hunan lie to its south and east, Enshi 恩施 (Hubei 湖北) to the north, and Chongqing 重慶 (Sichuan 四川) plus Tongren (Guizhou) to the west. "Xiangxi" did not become used as an administrative term until the Republican era, when the Nationalist state established the Western Hunan Pacification District (Xiangxi suijingchu 湘西綏靖處), which covered a total of nineteen counties. The Miao Autonomous District (Xiangxi Miaozu zizhiqu 湘西苗族自治區) was founded in September 1952, but originally only included Baojing, Fenghuang, Guzhang, Luxi, Qiancheng, and Yongsui, with Dayong 大庸, Sangzhi 桑植, Longshan, and Yongshun being added three months later for a total of ten counties. The name "Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture" was not adopted until September 1957, but two counties that had originally belonged to it (Dayong and Sangzhi) were reapportioned to Zhangjiajie 張家界 in January 1989, leaving the one city and seven counties that remain part of the Autonomous Prefecture today.[26]

[26] Liu Luping 劉路平, *Xiangxi mingci shiyi* 湘西名辭釋義 (Taipei: Lien-ching, 2014), pp. 1–5; Xiong Xiaohui 熊曉輝 and Xiang Dong 向東, *Xiangxi lishi yu wenhua* 湘西歷史與文化 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu chubanshe, 2008), pp. 5–19.

Over 80% of Western Hunan is covered with swift streams and high mountains (the tallest towering 1,128 meters above sea level), making many areas extremely hard to farm and hazardous to traverse. While some of the river-linked valleys had at an earlier point already developed into centers of wet-rice cultivation and nodes of regional trade, Western Hunan's mountainous areas consisted of scattered hamlets where locals grew subsistence crops, engaged in mining, and lumbering.[27] The altitude had a major impact on quality of life, especially since many key crops usually thrive in areas that are lower than 500 meters. Wet rice could be cultivated in fertile valley basins by people who lived there, but at altitudes above 1,000 meters one cannot even find dry rice, only corn, buckwheat, and others. It should come as little surprise then that the county where the Jumping Immortals erupted, namely Yongsui (modern Huayuan), contains some of Western Hunan's highest percentages of land between 500 and 800 meters in altitude (62.8%) and over 800 meters (19.0%). For the other center of the uprising, Fenghuang, just over half of the county's land is over 500 meters above sea level (38.0% for 500–800 meters, 14.6% for 800+ meters).[28]

During the Qing dynasty, Western Hunan constituted a key section of the "Miao Frontier" (*Miaojiang* 苗疆), which also included parts of Sichuan and Guizhou. Qing officials were hard-pressed to effectively govern this region, which had been resisting imperial rule going all the way back to Han-dynasty times. The authorities attempted to tighten their grip with a hodge-podge of policies similar to those implemented in other frontier regions like Guizhou, Yunnan, and Taiwan. Such policies included: abandoning the system of native chieftains (*tusi* 土司) and replacing it with regular officials (*gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流), promoting cultural assimilation (such as temples to state-approved deities), striving to suppress indigenous rituals, limiting contact between Miao and Han peoples, and maintaining a sizeable military presence.[29] However, the problem of armed resistance by non-Han peoples persisted

[27] 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* 23.2 (December 2002), pp. 53–86.

[28] Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou difangzhi biancuan weiyuanhui 湘西土家族苗族自治州地方志編纂委員會, ed. and comp., *Xiangxi zhouzhi* 湘西州志 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1999); Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou difangzhi biancuan weiyuanhui 湘西土家族苗族自治州地方志編纂委員會, ed. and comp., *Nongyezhi* 農業志, in *Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhouzhi congshu* 湘西土家族苗族自治州志叢書 (Anhui: Huangshan shushe, 1993).

[29] For overviews of Western Hunan's historical development during the Qing, see Donald S. Sutton, "Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier: Customary and Statutory Law in the 18th Century Miao Pale," *Modern Asian Studies* 37.1 (2003), pp. 41–80; Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century," in Pamela Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity,and Frontier in Early Modern*

well into the Republican era. An article by Ling Chunsheng notes that uprisings occurred on an almost annual basis, with non-Han peoples expressing defiance through sayings such as "Officials have thousands of troops, but we have thousands of mountains. When they come, we leave; when they leave, we return 官有萬兵, 我有萬山, 其來我去, 其去我還." The most effective way to stamp out resistance often involved besieging villages and starving their inhabitants to death, or waiting for them to commit suicide.[30]

Major changes shook Western Hunan when the settlement of Han people and the loss of Miao ancestral lands sparked the mammoth Qianlong-Jiaqing Miao Rebellion, or Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi 乾嘉苗民起義 (hereafter referred to as the "Miao Rebellion"), which erupted in 1795 and required two years plus nearly 200,000 troops to suppress.[31] In the aftermath of this catastrophe, the newly-enthroned Jiaqing 嘉慶 emperor took the restoration of order on the Miao frontier as one of the major challenges of his reign. As William Rowe and other scholars have pointed out, recent years have witnessed a wave of scholarship in both Chinese and English on the Jiaqing reign that reevaluates the contributions of the emperor as having helped put the Qing empire back on track sufficiently to last an additional century. One aspect of the Jiaqing emperor's attitude towards local society, which differed significantly from that of his predecessor the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor, was his view that uprisings often resulted from official misdoing. Jiaqing often quoted the saying "under official oppression, the people will

China (Berkeley: U. California P., 2006), pp. 190–228. See also Daniel McMahon, *Rethinking the Decline of China's Qing Dynasty: Imperial Activism and Borderland Management at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015). In addition, there is the pioneering work of Xie Xiaohui 謝曉輝, including her doctoral thesis and related publications such as "Miaojiang de kaifa yu difang shenqi de chongsu" 苗疆的開發與地方神祇的重塑, *Lishi renleixue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 6.1–2 (2008), pp. 111–46. See also Wang Xiuyu [王秀玉], *China's Last Imperial Frontier: Late Qing Expansion in Sichuan's Tibetan Borderland* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011).

30 Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲, "Yaomin zaofan" 猺民造反, *Shidai gonglun (Nanjing)* 時代公論（南京）56 (1933), pp. 24–25. Similar tactics marked Japanese suppression of the Wushe/Musha 霧社 uprising in 1930; see Teng Hsiang-yang 鄧相揚, *Wushe shijian* 霧社事件 (Taipei: Yu-shan she, 1998).

31 Key studies include Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire"; McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland"; Wu Rongzhen 吳榮臻, *Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi shigao* 乾嘉苗民起義史稿 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1985); Wu Rongzhen 吳榮臻, ed., *Miaozu tongshi* 苗族通史 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2007), pp. 27–87; Wu Xinfu 伍新福, "Shilun Xiangxi Miaozu 'gaitu guiliiui': Jian xi Qian-Jia qiyi de yuanyin" 試論湘西苗區改土歸流, 兼析乾嘉起義的原因, in Xiangxi zizhizhou Fenghuangxian minwei 湘西自治州鳳凰縣民委 et al., eds., *Miaozushi wenji: Jinian Qian-Jia qiyi 190 zhounian* 苗族史文集, 紀念乾嘉起義190週年 (Changsha: Hunan daxue chubanshe, 1986), pp. 56–69. See also *Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi ziliao wenxian* 乾嘉苗民起義資料文獻, vol. 1, pp. 18–25 (n.a., unpub. ms. belonging to Cheng Mingjun).

[have no choice but to] rebel 官逼民反," and tried in part to address this problem by allowing for some devolution of imperial authority to local officials and trusted elites.[32]

In Western Hunan, a number of new policies were pursued by officials like Fu Nai 傅鼐 (1758–1811; a Fenghuang subprefect whom Jiaqing later put in charge of the whole Miao frontier) and Yan Ruyi 嚴如熤 (1759–1826). The most important of these policies involved ending the hundred households (*baihu* 百戶) system that dated to the Yongzheng 雍正 and Qianlong reigns and replacing it with military agricultural colonies (*tuntian* 屯田) that were administered by both Han and Miao military elites who had aided the Qing in the suppression of the Miao Rebellion. Over 20,000 acres of land were appropriated to support 8,000 irregular soldiers and 5,000 Miao troops, which resulted in a major redistribution of resources from Miao families that had taken part in the rebellion to those that had helped to suppress it. In short, these policies not only enhanced the state's authority but also contributed to the growth of new Miao elites, especially military officers.

In addition, the nineteenth century witnessed the growing impact of Han Chinese merchants, who came to Western Hunan in order to trade in products such as lumber, fruit, charcoal, and especially *tong* oil 桐油. Miao elites who proved able to trade with their Chinese counterparts developed into wealthy merchants in their own right, with both groups monopolizing many of the region's resources. Other Miao elites became landlords (sometimes as part of the military colonies system), while still others ended up serving as local officials (most often in the military). As a result of these trends, by the end of the Qing dynasty a new Miao ruling class had emerged in Western Hunan, which coexisted with Han Chinese elites who did business in the region or chose to settle there. At the same time, growing numbers of Miao (and especially montagnard groups) were chafing under state and elite rule.[33] Furthermore, life often proved trying for Miao tenant farmers in the agricultural colonies: they suffered under high rents, taxes, and fees, with precious few allowances made for natural disasters and other calamities.[34]

32 William T. Rowe, "Introduction: The Significance of the Qianlong-Jiaqing Transition in Qing History," *Late Imperial China* 32.2 (December 2011), pp. 74–88. See also the articles by Cecily McCaffrey and Matthew Mosca in that issue.

33 Shi Jianhua 石建華 and Wu Xianyou 伍賢佑, *Xiangxi Miaozu bainian shilu* 湘西苗族百年實錄 (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2009) 2, pp. 614–16; Long, *Jindai Xiangxi kaifashi yanjiu*, pp. 72–98. I thank Lin Man-houng 林滿紅 for her helpful comments on this issue.

34 McCord, "Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China," pp. 1502–6, 1511, 1515, 1520, 1530.

THE EXPANSION OF THE MODERN STATE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The conditions described above persisted into the Republican era (1912–1949), when they were aggravated by new state-building policies and the impact of the War of Resistance against Japan.[35] One early Republican source, *Hunan fengsu minqing baogaoshu* 湖南風俗民情報告書, indicates that Western Hunan's Miao population at the end of the Qing dynasty was 187,859, slightly more than half (54.3%) of the 345,966 people classified as Miao who resided in all of Hunan province.[36] The highest concentrations were in Yongsui, the site where the Jumping Immortals uprising occurred, with demographic data for 1935 listing 101,514 Miao or 87.4% of the county's entire population of 116,129, most of whom resided in montagnard communities. Fenghuang's population for the same year was 102,134, including 58,734 Miao (57.5%). For Qiancheng (the main target of rebel attacks), a 1938 survey lists 83,623 people, of whom 40,871 were Miao (48.8%).[37] These demographic ratios remained relatively unchanged despite an influx of Han Chinese migrants during the late 1930s and 1940s. In 1954, the population of Huayuan was 135,965, including 96,259 Miao (70.7%), while the figures for Fenghuang and Jishou were 168,858 (including 85,243 Miao or 50.5%) and 95,767 (including 41,169 Miao or 42.9%), respectively.[38] During the Republican era, population density was relatively low, numbering 200–600 persons per square kilometer in Western Hunan's core areas, but as low as 50–100 in the highlands.[39]

During the Republican period the local economy was mainly agricultural (both swidden and lowlands), and in fact most of Western Hunan's natives worked at farming. Sources dating from the 1930s to the 1950s reveal that the region's main cash crops were hemp, cotton, fruits, vegetables, sugar cane, tea, tobacco, and opium, while staple crops like rice, corn, millet, sweet potatoes, and beans constituted the core of its subsistence agriculture.[40] Even as late as 1958, only 10% of Western Hunan's total land area was under cultivation, and less than

35 An overview of the trends discussed below may be found in Liu Yangyang 劉泱泱, *Jindai Hunan shehui bianqian* 近代湖南社會變遷 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1988).

36 *Hunan fengsu minqing baogaoshu* 湖南風俗民情報告書 (1912).

37 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 2–3.

38 Zhongnan xingzheng weiyuanhui minzu shiwu weiyuanhui 中南行政委員會民族事務委員會, ed. and comp., *Xiangxi Miaozu zizhiqu shangye ziliao huibian* 湘西苗族自治區商業資料彙編 (Wuhan: Zhongnan xingzheng weiyuanhui minzu shiwu weiyuanhui, 1954).

39 Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 1–3.

40 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 71–81; *Nongyezhi*, p. 4; *Xiangxi Miaozu zizhiqu shangye ziliao huibian*, pp. 3–36.

half of that was in rice. Due to the topographic and ecological conditions discussed above, poorer communities of montagnards planted corn and potatoes on mountain slopes.[41] There was also some industry, especially mining, lumber, and most importantly *tong* oil, with the transport of such products depending for the most part on river networks extending eastwards to the main transshipment center at Changde 常德 (Shen Congwen's writings contain vivid accounts of boatmen and life on the waterfront).[42] However, the region's infrastructure depended almost exclusively on river transport. The first telegraph system did not arrive until the 1920s, while drivable roads were not constructed until 1935 and no railroads traversed the region until the 1970s.[43]

While Western Hunan's natural resources provided money-making opportunities for some of the region's elites, many of its montagnards appear to have been an impoverished people living on the edge. Poor terrain and unstable weather conditions made it difficult to achieve stable harvest patterns. The main vegetable for many families was pickled cabbage 酸菜, with the worst-off families not even able to afford that. During times of famine, people tried to survive on beans called *ge* 葛 (*Pueraria thunbergiana*) or on a local soil known as "Guanyin's earth/rock" (Guanyin tu/shi 觀音石/土), which could fill bellies but often led to death from constipation.[44] In times when disasters struck, the weak were said to have sold their children while the strong turned to banditry.[45] Life could be especially rough for Miao women, especially since few Han families from the valleys dared to marry their daughters to montagnard men. One local poem contains the following passage: "Adding a bride is like adding a slave 家添一婦似添奴; last night she gave birth, today she goes out to herd livestock 昨晚臨盆今出牧."[46]

41 Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 1–3, 268–69.

42 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 7–13; Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 225–37, 253–55, 269–70.

43 Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, p. 29.

44 Zhou Libo, "Xiangxi xing"; idem, "Xiangxi Miaomin de guoqu he fengsu." The suffering of famine victims is vividly described in Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley, *Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-century China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2008). A special note of thanks to Wu Bingchun 伍秉純 for his help in identifying local famine foods.

45 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 68–71; Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 238–40, 255–56; Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. p. 9. See also the periodical *Xiangzai baodao* 湘災報導, published 1945–1946, as well as *Xiangzai yuekan* 湘災月刊 (published in 1922). Both periodicals may be found in *Minguo zhenxi duankan duankan* 民國珍稀短刊斷刊, vol. 27 (Hunan) (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suofu zhongxin, 2006), pp. 13177–544, esp. pp. 13355–96.

46 Zhou Libo, "Wuli de Xiangxi" 霧裡的湘西, in *Zhou Libo daibiaozuo*, pp. 298–302. This article was first published in the April 1940 issue of *Zhongguo qingnian* 中國青年. See also Chen Xinchuan, *Wuxi Miaozu gujin shenghuoji*, pp. 73–74, 216–18, 327–30.

All over the world, local pockets of impoverished, marginalized yet historically rooted peoples who endure despite a surrounding, dominant state tend to develop hard-edged survival skills. These often turn out to be in the form of organized martial groups and long periods of simmering insurgency. Western Hunan was no different. It was a region known for violent blood feuds, whose inhabitants honed their hunting and fighting skills from an early age. This was the case for none other than Shen Congwen, whose uncle was a martial arts instructor. Shen trained with him in the use of the spear, club, bow and arrow, and javelin, as well as boxing and herbal medicine (for healing wounds). No modern armies functioned in Western Hunan until the mid-1930s, with military power residing in the hands of warlords who exercised judicial, taxation, and police powers over the people they governed. The most famous of these were Chen Quzhen 陳渠珍 (1882–1952) and Long Yunfei 龍雲飛 (1886–1950). Chen was known as the "King of Western Hunan" or Xiangxi wang 湘西王, and Long was referred to as the "Miao King" (Miaowang 苗王) since at least 1928 (the latter title's millenarian overtones surely were clear to his followers).[47] The region was also ravaged by numerous bandits (people who were down on their luck yet who possessed charisma and fighting skills), including groups of former mule tenders, miners, and one famous girl of seventeen. In this martial environment, to join a government military force was often viewed as a respectable career. While such military forces suffered from relatively poor living conditions and low pay, their overall quality of life did not seem appreciably worse than that of their civilian peers. As for military officers, many could make a living from forcing local merchants to make "contributions" or taking their "cut" from the local opium trade.[48]

This sort of martial culture blended neatly with ritual practices. Some local government adjutants 副官 are said to have judged legal cases, staged blood oaths, and overseen beheadings at temples dedicated either to the City God (Chenghuang 城隍) or to the Heavenly Kings.[49] Shen Congwen's writings feature colorful descriptions of these

[47] Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, p. 62.

[48] Edward A. McCord, "Local Bullies and Armed Force Entrepreneurs: Militia Leadership in Republican Hunan," *Twentieth-Century China* 34.2 (2008), pp. 5–29; Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 39–40, 52–59, 70–101, 283; Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. pp. 16–18, 38, 48. See also "Hunan sheng Fenghuang xian xiangtu diaocha baogao" 湖南省鳳凰縣鄉土調查報告 (pub. 1939), in Ministry of Education, ed. and comp., *Xiangxi xiangtu diaocha huibian* 湘西鄉土調查彙編, pp. 65–66; see vol. 6 of *Minguo shiqi shehui diaocha ziliao huibian* 民國時期社會調查資料彙編 (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2013).

[49] Blood oaths and other judicial rituals are examined in Paul R. Katz, *Divine Justice: Religion and the Development of Chinese Legal Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

events, including an observation that soldiers were willing to serve as executioners for the remuneration involved.[50]

The Nationalist government proved hard-pressed to tame Western Hunan, especially during the late 1930s after it transferred its capital to Chongqing 重慶 during the War of Resistance against Japan.[51] A number of sources written before and after the Jumping Immortals uprising indicate that Western Hunan's Miao communities encountered an increasingly intrusive state presence during this period. One author, writing in 1939, observed that 300 years previously Qiancheng had been a tree-laden valley, and only became a county in the middle of the nineteenth century. This was accompanied by the arrival of Han Chinese settlers, especially from the Deng 鄧, Huang 黃, Wen 文, Xiao 蕭, and Zhang 張 surname groups. This Han migration increased dramatically after modern roads were built and large numbers of refugees fleeing Japanese forces began to flow in.[52] Despite idealistic plans for Western Hunan's development that were advanced by scholars and officials like Sheng Xiangzi and Shi Honggui, the reality on the ground consisted of KMT and CCP armies traversing (and ravaging) the region, especially the thousands of KMT troops sent to crack down on Communist guerillas and support the campaigns of provincial governor He Jian 何鍵 (1887–1956) against forces loyal to Chen Quzhen. The fall of Chen's "kingdom" led to the demobilization of his troops, many of whom turned to banditry. Many years of warfare ensued, bringing severe suffering to Western Hunan's inhabitants.[53]

Apart from refugees, large numbers of officials and carpetbaggers also began to arrive in the region during the 1930s, largely taking over the local economy and blocking chances for upward mobility among Miao elites. Nearly all county magistrates and the majority of township heads were Han Chinese from outside the region, while *bao*

[50] See for example Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 257–58, 283. See also Shen Congwen 沈從文, "Xinhai geming de yi ke" 辛亥革命的一課, in idem, *Zizhuanji* 自傳集 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1992), pp. 30–40.

[51] Valuable overviews of this war and its impact on social life may be found in Diana Lary, *The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation, 1937–1945* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 2010); Hans van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925–1945* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Lü Fangshang 呂芳上, ed., *Zhanzheng de lishi yu jiyi* (1); *He yu zhan* 戰爭的歷史與記憶 (1), 和與戰 (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2015); Lü Fangshang, ed., *Zhanzheng de lishi yu jiyi* (3); *Zhanzheng zhong de ren yu shehui* 戰爭的歷史與記憶 (3), 戰爭中的人與社會 (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2015).

[52] Yang Ding 楊定, "Miaoren fengsu pianduan" 苗人風俗片斷 (pub. 1940), in Ministry of Education, ed., *Xiangxi xiangtu diaocha huibian* , pp. 101–2. See also Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. pp. 242–43.

[53] Shi Jianhua and Wu Xianyou, *Xiangxi Miaozu bainian shilu*, volume 2, p. 521; Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. pp. 233–43; Zhou Libo, "Wuli de Xiangxi."

保 heads and other lower-level posts were held by Miao elites.[54] One prominent example is Fenghuang county magistrate Song Mang 宋氓, a native of Changsha 長沙, who served from 1936 to 1938. Song ordered Fenghuang residents to surrender all guns that they maintained for self-defense purposes; he then had these weapons destroyed, causing intense consternation among those who had spent hard-earned savings on these weapons at a time when their use had been allowed.[55] There were problems in trading as well. Outside businessmen took control over *tong* oil and other local products, with the result that Miao cultivators and merchants lost a key means of livelihood. The outbreak of war with Japan also caused exports of *tong* oil to stagnate, thereby negatively impacting incomes.[56] To make matters worse, money-lending and usury ran rampant despite KMT attempts to set up local credit cooperatives 合作社. The money-lending was causing Miao montagnards to assume crushing debts. Many were forced to sell off their lands, which prompted discontent,[57] even among elites like Shen Congwen, who writes of his disillusion at these trends as well as a profound sense of nostalgia for better times.[58]

Life in Western Hunan deteriorated further due to a number of KMT policies that proved highly controversial. As a result of the War of Resistance against Japan, the Nationalist government strove to enforce its will with a growing presence of regular army troops. In addition, the imposition of cadastral surveys and new land taxes enraged Miao elites, while rigorous enforcement of the *baojia* 保甲 system (and its use of collective punishment in cases of wrongdoing) caused considerable consternation.[59] Another source of tension was the practice of conscripting young men for military service 抓丁, which could usually be avoided only by paying hefty fines (or bribes) to local officials and their underlings. Many fled their homes to avoid the press gangs, which caused great hardship due to the fact that their labor was needed for local agriculture.[60] Thousands of Western Hunan conscripts ended up

54 Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. p. 13; Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision of Republican China", pp. 240–45, 252–54, 258–62.

55 Zhou Libo, "Wuli de Xiangxi."

56 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 71–73.

57 Shi Zhibing 石志兵, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi" 湘黔邊苗民的"跳仙會"起義, *Zhongnan minzu xueyuan xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 中南民族學院學報 (哲學社會科學版) 6 (1993), pp. 124–26; Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 101–5.

58 Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, pp. 229–34.

59 McCord, "Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China," pp. 1499, 1500, 1502, 1506, 1518–20, 1522–23, 1525, 1528; Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, pp. 233–43.

60 Shi, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi." There are also a number of local

as KMT cannon fodder. In just one example, only 100 of 7,000 Fenghuang soldiers survived the defense of Shanghai during seven days of fighting on November 8–14, 1937.[61]

On the economic front, Miao montagnards suffered due to poor harvests and rising prices, all of which was further aggravated by the state's imposing dozens of levies (*paikuan* 派款; as many as fifty-six according to one source), including for such items as owning a fire pit (*huokeng juan* 火炕捐) or bullets (*zidan juan* 子彈捐), or even living near a telephone/power pole (*diangan juan* 電桿捐). Many farmers fled to avoid this burden, leaving their fields lying fallow.[62]

By far the greatest resentment among the Miao was aimed at the imposition of a salt monopoly, which resulted in limited quantities of substandard salt being sold at exorbitant prices. Salt had long been a scarce and highly valued commodity in the region, especially among its montagnards (as had greatly been the case for Taiwan's aborigines under Qing and Japanese colonial rule).[63] Being an essential commodity, salt in China had been subject to imperial monopoly control since ancient times, culminating in the state's selling salt rights to merchants who monopolized its sale in retail markets, with the state collecting tax on the revenue. This system persisted into the Republican era, and despite the growth of private competition it did not gain a major share of the market. (This was the case in Western Hunan, where privatization had yet to take root.) The weakness of the Republican state plus constant warfare inhibited the development of a modern salt industry and supporting infrastructure, and, to make matters worse, Japanese troops seized the salt water pools (salterns) of North China shortly after the War of Resistance broke out, which led to major shortages. As a result, specially licensed monopoly merchants retained full control

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stories about these matters, including "Qita fanboxue yapo gushi: Kanding haohan" 其他反剝削壓迫故事, 抗丁好漢, in Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenhuaguan 湘西土家族苗族自治州文化館, ed., *Xiangxi minjian wenxue ziliao* 湘西民間文學資料 (Jishou: Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenhuaguan, 1988) 3, pp. 191–92; "Qita fanboxue yapo gushi: Kanding qiang" 其他反剝削壓迫故事, 抗丁牆, ibid., pp. 192–93. A detailed study of how such practices disrupted Sichuan local society during this period may be found in Kevin Landdeck, "Chicken-footed Gods or Village Protectors: Conscription, Community, and Conflict in Rural Sichuan, 1937–1945," *Frontiers of History in China* 9.1 (2014), pp. 56–82.

[61] Su Shengxiong 蘇聖雄, "Jiang Zhongzheng dui Song-Hu huizhan zhi zhanlue zai tan" 蔣中正對淞滬會戰之戰略再探, *Guoshiguan guankan* 國史館館刊 46 (2015), pp. 61–101. See also Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen.* pp. 243–45.

[62] Shi, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi."

[63] See for example John R. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1993), pp. 35–38; Paul D. Barclay, "Cultural Brokerage and Interethnic Marriage in Colonial Taiwan: Japanese Subalterns and Their Aborigine Wives, 1895–1930," *JAS* 64.2 (2005), pp. 323–60.

over Western Hunan salt prices, and despite the creation of "salt co-operatives 食鹽合作社" the products they sold were expensive and of abysmal quality.[64] Both historical writings and the accounts of elderly informants describe people subsisting on small packets of salt wrapped in cloth, from which they would lovingly take a few licks during each meal.[65]

A few years after the Jumping Immortals uprising CCP officials and ethnographers transcribed montagnard song lyrics as part of surveys that they undertook. Two examples show clearly the level of local frustration.

"There Is No Peace under the KMT" 國民黨不太平 (from Yongsui county)

有兒是老蔣的	My son belongs to old Chiang (that is, Chiang Kai-shek),
有錢是鄉長的	My money belongs to the township head,
有穀子是地主的	My grain is for the landlord,
有豬牛是隊長的	Pigs and oxen go to the brigade chief,
有乖婆娘是保長的	My good wife belongs to the *bao* head.

"Evil Demons Bully the Miao" 惡鬼欺苗家 (from Yongsui county)

兒啼女喊叫饑餓	My sons and daughters wail with hunger,
要衣要食撈不得	I cannot get them the food and clothes they need,
有兒才知父母苦	Only a son knows his parents' hardships
只好扛鋤去挖蕨	All he can do is pick up a hoe and go dig for bracken ferns. ... [66]

Despite the obvious editorial agenda that underlay the collection and publication of particular songs that lambasted the KMT and lauded the CCP, such lyrics no doubt show actual strains of local resentment against Nationalist policies at various moments and locales.[67]

[64] Dong Zhenping 董振平, "Lun 1927–1937 nian guotongqu shiyan zhuanshangzhi yu ziyou maoyizhi zhi zheng" 論1927–1937年國統區食鹽專商制與自由貿易制之爭, *Yanyeshi yanjiu* 鹽業史研究 4 (2003), pp. 14–19; S.A.M. Adshead, *The Modernization of the Chinese Salt Administration, 1900–1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1970).

[65] Cao Xianjie 曹先捷, "Yanbao de tian he ku" 鹽包的甜和苦, in Cao, *Xiangxi Miaozu renmin de xinshidai*, pp. 42–45; Wang Zhong 王仲, "Yuan Shikai tongzhi shiqi de yanwu he 'yanwu gaige'" 袁世凱統治時期的鹽務和鹽務改革, *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究 4 (1987), pp. 95–121.

[66] Yi Jun 藝軍 and Chu Qi 楚奇, eds., *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shange* 湘西兄弟民族的山歌 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin chubanshe, 1951), pp. 9, 11–12.

[67] Songs have continued to play important roles among non-Han peoples. For example, as reported by research partners and informants, Hmong on both sides of the border are said to have sung across the front lines in order to avoid shooting at each other during the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War.

There is also evidence suggesting that the Miao of Western Hunan suffered from ethnic discrimination, maltreatment, and human trafficking. Moreover, Miao girls were swept up by pimps and abusers. We know of one case, told by a Han Chinese who lived in the region during the late 1930s, in which a young girl about fifteen or sixteen years old disappeared while selling firewood at the waterfront. Her father launched a search to no avail; but a few months later she turned up pregnant. Despite his rage, her father did not inform the authorities for fear that his own life might be in danger from the very same perpetrators or their friends.[68]

Yet some Miao had resisted in the past and continued to do so. As early as 1915–1916, Miao from the counties of Baojing, Guzhang, Qiancheng, and Yongsui rose in armed rebellion. Their rising began with a blood oath (*chixie* 吃血; *shaxue weimeng* 歃血爲盟) involving thousands of participants. The most notable example of a Miao uprising was given the name "Abolishing Military Lands 革屯," occurring in 1936–1939. As detailed research by Edward McCord and numerous Chinese scholars has shown, the main cause was resentment over government heavy-handedness in the form of excessive rents and harsh collection methods, yet it also featured He Jian and local elites (especially warlords like Chen and Long) competing to gain control over Western Hunan's resources, with KMT factionalism and anti-Japanese sentiments playing a role as well. Ethnic elements also appear to have been a factor: one outbreak of violence in 1937 was marked by the slaughter of Han officials and elites from Changsha. As for religion and ritual, blood oaths continued to prove important, as can be seen in the example of Miao residents of Longtan 龍潭 township (Yongsui county) who asked a local spirit medium to help them perform a blood oath before trying to assassinate a military officer in 1936. However, none of these revolts resembled the Jumping Immortals uprising in terms of beliefs in a savior figure and group possession rituals. In the aftermath of the Abolish Military Lands uprising, the Nationalist government agreed to reduce taxes to 50% of their original assessments and end the levying of miscellaneous fees, but the land surveys necessary for enacting these new measures were not completed until the 1940s. By then, it was too late, as economic hardship, social tensions, and controversial policies had caused the cauldron of tension in Western Hunan to reach the boiling point.

68 Yang, "Miaoren fengsu pianduan"; Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*. pp. 242–43.

THE UPRISING

The origins of the Jumping Immortals uprising may be traced to the agricultural community of Salt Well Village (Yanjing zhai 鹽井寨), then a part of Weicheng 衛城 township in Yongsui county (today it belongs to Lianghe 兩河 township, Huayuan).[69] Located over 900 meters above sea level, its Miao montagnard inhabitants scratched out a living from crops like corn and sweet potatoes, as well as from forest products. Even though it produced *tong* oil, the village until recently was largely isolated,[70] and its inhabitants were among the poorest natives of what was already an impoverished county.[71] As was the case throughout Western Hunan, many villagers chafed under KMT rule, including its press gangs, taxes, and salt monopoly, but it took a series of seemingly sacred events to inspire the inabitants of Salt Well Village, as well as other Miao communities in the area, to take up arms in resistance.

It began in April 1941, when an impoverished Miao villager named Ma Balong 麻巴隆 and his blind wife gave birth to a son. Right away, it seemed clear to some that the boy (who was given the name Ma Laobao 麻老保) was no ordinary infant. This was due to unusual physical features, including three tufts of hair on his head and especially his ability to stand erect during his first bath. The paramount role of family came into play at this point. Miao social and religious life gives one an identity centered on the family (Miao: *ad bloud neax*), and family, per

69 For overviews of the events described in this section of the paper, see Shi Bangyan 石邦彥, "Minguo shiqi Xiangxi Miaoqu de 'Tiaoxian' baodong" 民國時期湘西苗區的"跳仙"暴動, in idem, *Ming Qing shiqi Xiangxi Miaozushi lunji* 明清時期湘西苗族史論集 (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 1994), pp. 118–24; Zhang Yinghe 張應和, *Miaozu tanqi* 苗鄉探奇 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1994), pp. 207–11; Liu Shanshu 劉善述, "'Tiaoxian' douzheng chafang biji" "跳仙"鬥爭查訪筆記, in Xia Han 夏寒, ed., *Xiangxi Miaomin getun shikao* 湘西苗民革屯史考 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1999), pp. 229–39; Wu Rongzhen 吳榮臻, "Miaomin 'Bu jiangshuai' yundong jilue" 苗民"布將帥"運動紀略, in Wu Xianyou 伍賢佑, ed., *Luanshi juyi* 亂世聚義 (Jishou: Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui, 2005), pp. 50–54; Shi Sen 石森, "'Tiaoxian' shengdi" 跳仙聖地, in Hunan sheng Huayuan xian wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui, ed., *Shenqi de Huayuan*: *Fengjing pian* 神奇的花垣, 風景篇 (Hunan: Huayuan xian Zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 2005), pp. 49–52; Long Bingwen 龍炳文, ed. and comp., "Tiaoxianhui: Wangshan fengyun" 跳仙會, 王山風雲, in Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenhuaguan, ed., *Xiangxi minjian wenxue ziliao*, pp. 185–90; Shi and Wu, *Xiangxi Miaozu bainian shilu* 2, pp. 439–61; Shi, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi."

70 James Scott has argued that isolation can serve as a means of maintaining independence from state control; see *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1998).

71 I am deeply grateful to Zhang Yinghe and Cheng Mingjun for helping to collect ethnographic data on Salt Well Village during fieldwork in January and May-June 2014. I also thank Shi Jianzhong for sharing the data collected by Ma Shugang during interviews at this and other nearby villages in 1984.

se, works outward from there, into larger networks of power formed by people of the same surname living in the same village (*ad mangx zuos*).[72] Ma Laobao's birth quickly attracted the attention of two village elites, Ma Laokui 麻老魁 and his nephew Ma Laoban 麻老伴, who went to Ma Balong's house to view the infant. They were immediately struck by the baby's looks, and also recalled that during a recent flood a yellow streak had appeared in the middle of the Yuan 沅 River, which they took as a sign that the deity Gong Gong 共工 had returned to free the Miao from the yoke of their Han oppressors. Based on these portents, and perhaps as part of an effort to create a sense of ethnic identity, the Mas concluded that Ma Laobao was in fact none other than a new "Miao King" (Miaowang 苗王), a savior who would lead the Miao to overthrow the Nationalist regime and its hated Han carpetbaggers.[73]

News of the auspicious signs soon spread like wildfire throughout the southwestern area of Yongsui county, as well as nearby areas in the neighboring counties of Fenghuang, Qiancheng, and Songtao. As other Miao villagers started to flock to Salt Well Village to gaze on the royal infant during the summer and autumn, Ma Laokui and Ma Laoban erected a massive altar seven feet high for the worship of the infant Miao King. They also prepared banners dedicated to the Heavenly Kings adorned with sayings like "Heaven bestows its commands; the gods and numinous beings are of one heart 天賜號令, 神靈同心," as well as a wooden sword said to be able to lengthen when drawn from its scabbard. Ma Laoban, who is remembered as a strapping young man of twenty-four at the time of the uprising, appears to have been a key figure in the mobilization process. He claimed to have mastered a "wordless celestial text 無字天書" that gave him the power to summon spirit armies, and, having studied martial arts skills, performed routines in public that featured his prodigious leaping ability. In addition, Ma Laoban stated that the infant Miao King had given him the title of "Master of Records" (Zhangbu xiansheng 掌簿先生), and his uncle had been enfeoffed as "Grand Commander" (Dajiangshuai 大將帥). Other titles were bestowed on elites from nearby counties charged with leading their own forces into battle. At the same time, morality played an

[72] Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 146–60..

[73] As David Holm pointed out when discussing an early version of this paper, it is more than a bit ironic that some of these ideals of a Miao savior may be modeled on Han Chinese imperial ones. See for example the hagiography of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝) found in the *Bamboo Annals* (*Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年), which dates back to the 3rd century BC. See Fang Shiming 方詩銘 and Wang Xiuling 王修齡, *Guben Zhushu jinian jizheng* 古本竹書紀年輯證 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2005), p. 189.

important role in the movement: people who joined were instructed to help those in need and refrain from any acts of pillage.

The cult of the infant Miao King was promoted by charismatic spirit-mediums (especially female ones), who transmitted the cult's beliefs and practices into their own villages and beyond via altar networks known as *tantou* 壇頭. In the case of Salt Well Village, this role was played by two female mediums named Ma Hongniang 麻紅娘 and Ma Hongxiang 麻紅香. They were Ma Balong's younger sisters, a fact that further demonstrates the importance of family ties in Miao social and religious life. The Ma sisters were renowned for an ability to offer sacrifices to both Miao and Han deities (see below), and proved adept at teaching techniques for going into trance that could also provide protection during battle, the most important of which involved induced possession after drinking potions referred to as "immortals water 仙水." Some draughts may have been imbued with herbal medicines, yet all were said to have the power to prevent harm from both blade and bullet 刀槍不入. The fiercest fighters trained by the Mas formed two companies of riflemen, some with modern weapons but others bearing traditional fowling pieces.[74]

The outbreak of this local fervor in Salt Well Village and surrounding communities grew so intense that, by the beginning of 1942, it had caught the attention of the local authorities; Weicheng township head Wu Xianqing 吳顯清 (a Miao elite) attempted to ensnare both Ma Balong and his son by inviting them into town to be worshipped there. When this failed to work, he led a group of fifty armed police and militia towards the village on January 21, 1942, only to be routed in an ambush organized by Ma Laoban and Ma Laokui. This prompted a massive reprisal by Yongsui county magistrate Huang Yingchuan 黃穎川 (most likely a Han Chinese), who personally led an attack on the village with a combined force of police and regular army forces. Government forces apparently felt intimidated by the prospect of facing Miao battle rituals, thus they brought along firecrackers that could be set off as a sign of surrender should the fighting turn against them, or in celebration if they proved victorious. A dubious account claims that some soldiers died from *gu* 蠱 poisoning while pursuing rebel forces, which further indicates the trepidation the state and its representatives felt towards traditional Miao culture.[75] The soldiers' fears initially appeared justified

[74] As taken up in later sections, this and other aspects of the mobilization process for the Jumping Immortals uprising were also integral to the Qing-dynasty Miao Rebellion.

[75] Li Kangxue 李康學 and Luo Zhaoyong 羅兆勇, *Da Xiangxi yanyi* 大湘西演義 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2003), p. 271. Regarding fear of *gu* 蠱 poisoning, see Norma Diamond,

on the first day of battle, but eventually the tide turned in their favor when they realized that Miao rites were ineffective in stopping their bullets, which killed or wounded a number of the uprising's leaders. The battle culminated in the rebels being soundly defeated, with many survivors fleeing to Songtao. Some joined forces with Fenghuang fighters to attack the local salt bureau on March 6, only to suffer another defeat. Salt Well Village was pillaged, but subsequently the county officials offered concessions to the locals to prevent further violence.

The fates of the uprising's leaders varied considerably. Ma Laokui died during the fighting, but Ma Laoban survived and returned to Salt Well Village in 1945; he was allowed to settle there after paying a fine. He passed away peacefully in his home. The infant Miao King was spirited into hiding after the movement's initial defeat, and ended up being adopted by relatives in Guizhou who concealed his identity. According to one account, he returned to Salt Well Village after 1949, rising to the position of production captain 生產隊長 during Mao's land reform policies. Other accounts paint a grimmer picture, however, claiming that he became impoverished and unable to marry. In 1995, while fishing in a local stream, he was accused by villagers of poaching their stock; he was then strung up on a tree and thrashed so hard that his pants came undone. In a fit of rage, he then set fire to his persecutors' homes, the resulting blaze engulfing nearly half the village. For this he spent three years in jail, and lived out the remainder of his days in a dank cave. His grave is said to lie along a local road, but clearly it is not well marked or maintained.

The second center of the Jumping Immortals uprising was at Fenghuang.[76] The leader in this case, Wu Chunmei 吳春妹, was also a female medium. Her leading disciples were Shi Laoshuang 石老雙 (a butcher from Hanglai 夯來 village in Miliang 米良 township who was

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"The Miao and Poison: Interactions on China's Southwest Frontier," *Ethnology* 27.1 (1988), pp. 1–25; Yen Fang-tzu 顏芳姿, "Bianpo de wushu zhikong: Mohei linju de shehui zhanyan" 變婆的巫術指控, 抹黑鄰居的社會展演, *Minsu quyi* 185 (2014), pp. 167–217. A macrohistorical treatment of the social and cultural significance of accusatory practices may be found in Barend J. ter Haar, *Telling Stories: Witchcraft and Scapegoating in Chinese History*, Sinica Leidensia 71 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006).

[76] These events are described in Jia Jun 家俊 and Xiang Nong 向農, ed. and comp., "Tiaoxian hui: Tiaoxian de youlai" 跳仙會, 跳仙的由來, Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenhuaguan, ed., *Xiangxi minjian wenxue ziliao*, pp. 187–90; Tian Ruyang 田儒揚, "'Bu jiangshuai' gongda Ganziping xianggongsuo" "布將帥"攻打竿子坪鄉公所, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 67–68; Shi, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi." See also the following autobiographical accounts by Wu Guofan 吳國範: "Wo zuzhiguo 'Bu jiangshuai'" 我組織過"布將帥," in Wu, ed. *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 59–62; "'Bu jiangshuai' douzheng" "布將帥"鬥爭, *Xiangxi wenshi ziliao* 湘西文史資料 10 (1987), pp. 139–44.

widely known as very tall and strong) and Wu Guofan 吳國範 (b. 1921; a native of Jiusiping 舊司坪 village in Shanlin 善鄰 township). Shi and Wu attracted hundreds of followers by instructing them in trance and battle techniques. Wu was particularly charismatic; he inspired people to worship him as a savior and refer to him with the title "King Wu" (Wuwang 吳王). Wu led his forces into battle dressed in the attire of ritual specialists known as "*badaizha* 巴代扎" (Miao: *bax deib zhal*; also called "Ke laoshi 客老師" by local scholars and officials), who performed rites largely derived from Daoist traditions using both local dialect 土話 and standard Han Chinese.[77] He also commissioned banners to worship the Heavenly Kings and arranged for proclamations 告示 to be posted in villages that he passed through, after informing villagers that a Miao savior from Yongsui (Ma Balong) had promised to end forced mililtary impressment of young men and to provide ample supplies of salt. Wu's proclamations did not contain any references to impending apocalyptic events, however, which would seem to distinguish them from what Barend ter Haar refers to as the "demonological messianic paradigm."[78]

Wu Chunmei's disciple Shi Laoshuang died during the Songtao attack, but beginning in March 1942 her other disciple Wu Guofan led a series of raids on local police stations and township offices. Wu's forces first attacked from the rebel base in Jisi 幾司 (near his home), striking the nearby villages of Jila 吉臘 and Hanglai 夯來. From there, they advanced on Ganziping 竿子坪 in April (like the other sites listed above, also in Shanlin township), where some of the defending police and militia are said to have been so terrified by the rebels' appearance that they turned tail and fled. Those that stayed soon surrendered, and officials and local elites who had maltreated the local Miao were put to death. The Jumping Immortals rebels then helped themselves to their weapons, and "persuaded" the area's richer inhabitants to part with some of their wealth. From Ganziping, Wu and his troops headed west towards the larger town of Deshengying 得勝營 (today's Jixin 吉信), led by Shi San'ge 石三哥, a tall, strong, and apparently highly charismatic individual. There they faced off against well-armed police and soldiers whose weapons included machine guns, but the rebels' bravery under fire (or the effects of the trances they performed, discussed below) en-

[77] See the following chapters of Kang, Long, and Luo, eds., *Xiangxi zongjiao wenhua diaocha yu yanjiu*; Long Haiqing 龍海清, "Xiangxi Miaozu 'chuanjie' de diaocha baogao yu chanshi 湘西苗族"穿街"的調查報告與闡釋, pp. 25–55; Shi Shougui 石壽貴, "Kai tianmen song wangshi keyi 開天門送亡師科儀, pp. 318–42.

[78] Barend ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads: Creating an Identity* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998), pp. 224–62.

abled them to overwhelm the defenders. Township quickly fled with whatever wealth they could carry, while the police and soldiers were either imprisoned or killed.

The authorities' debacle at Deshengying, which meant that Wu's troops now effectively occupied the townships of Shanlin and Weiwen 蔚文, sparked panic among the KMT leadership, prompting Fenghuang county magistrate Li Zongqi 李宗祺 (who served from May 1940 to November 1945) to deploy ever larger numbers of soldiers and police, who then staged a massive counterattack on the rebel-held Deshengying. Despite facing machine-gun fire and hand grenades, the rebel forces stood their ground, inflicting serious casualties on the KMT troops. However, the tide began to turn against them when Shi San'ge suffered a battle wound, prompting Wu Guofan to order a retreat. (In order to cover their withdrawl, the rebels placed banners atop the local Heavenly Kings temple, which caused the KMT forces to delay their advance for fear that the rebels planned to use the temple as a base for fighting on.)

Following their defeat at Deshengying, Wu Guofan and his forces regrouped at Jisi in May. There they were joined by Miao rebels from the village of Longya banchong 龍牙半沖 (just across the Fenghuang county border in Qiancheng, near Liaoyachong 廖牙沖). The Qiancheng fighters were led by Wu Tianqiu 吳天求, his relative Wu Tianlu 吳天祿 (exact relationship unclear), and a male spirit medium who had healed an illness of Wu Tianqiu (on which, see below). Wu's forces are said to have steeled themselves for battle by going into trance after drinking immortals water and making offerings to images of deities worshiped during a ritual called "Repaying a Nuo Vow."[79] Together, these forces advanced north on Qiancheng, with both men and women wearing their finest Miao clothing. Apart from a few fighters who bore rifles that they owned or had captured in battle, most appear to have armed themselves with wooden knives (some accounts claim these were intended for use in expelling demons); others bore umbrellas or handkerchiefs, things said to have the power to stop bullets. Many fighters carried red bags containing rations and ritual items that included rice (which when scat-

[79] A detailed description and analysis of these rites may be found in Paul R. Katz, "Repaying a Nuo Vow (還儺願) in Western Hunan (湘西): A Rite of Trans-Hybridity?" *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* (*Taiwan renleixue kan* 臺灣人類學刊) 11.2 (2013), pp. 1–88. See also Zhang Yinghe 張應和, "Miaozu Huan Nuoyuan yuanliukao" 苗族還儺願源流考, *Jishou daxue xuebao (Shehui kexueban)* 12.4 (1991), pp. 97–104. This essay has also been reprinted in Zhou Mingfu 周明阜, Zhang Yinghe 張應和 and Xie Xinning 謝心寧, eds., *Yuan-Xiang Nuoci huilan* 沅湘儺辭匯覽 (Hong Kong: Xianggang guoji zhanwang chubanshe, 1992), pp. 400–13, as well as Zhang, *Miaoxiang tanqi*, pp. 119–30.

tered could summon spirit-soldiers), horse feed (for the spirit-horses that would bear fighters to battle), and cinnabar powder (*zhushafen* 硃砂粉; used to cause storms).[80]

After arriving at Qiancheng, the Miao forces went into trances and launched a frenzied attack that at first seemed on the verge of success: the rebels overran the first two artillery emplacements outside the city walls. Inside, local officials and KMT party members were in a state of disarray, frantically ordering their troops to stand fast while also preparing to cross the river on the other side of the city and dynamite the bridges to cover their retreat should the defenses crumble. The battle raged for two days (May 27–28). The armed police manning the town's walls were so shaken by reports of the rebel fighters' ritual powers and the sight of their wild charges that at first all their shots went badly astray (some reports suggest that the rebels' trances allowed them to keep jumping forward despite having suffered wounds). In the heat of the fighting, when all hope seemed to have failed, Qiancheng county magistrate Shao Hongbiao 邵鴻鏣 decided that it was time for his forces to stage some battle rituals of their own, ordering a black dog butchered and its blood smeared on the his soldiers' bullets,[81] which seems to have made their shooting become more accurate and devastating. A black dog's blood was also said to have been daubed on the forehead of a young boy captive in order to wake him from his trance and make him talk, but without success.[82] Wu Tianqiu suffered a leg wound and was captured and thrown into prison along with other Qiancheng leaders, whose families had to pay substantial ransoms in the form of cash or oxen in order to win their release. However, Wu Guofan and a substantial portion of his forces successfully escaped and made their way back to Fenghuang.

[80] I thank Cheng Mingjun for helping to clarify the significance of these items.

[81] For more on battle rituals performed by both state and rebel forces, see Paul R. Katz, "Banner Worship and Human Sacrifice in Chinese Military History," in Perry Link, ed., *The Scholar's Mind: Essays in Honor of F. W. Mote* (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 2009), pp. 207–27. Concerning Chinese battle rites involving menstrual blood and the exposing female genitalia, see Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1997), pp. 119–45. See also Chiang Chu-shan 蔣竹山, "Nüti yu zhanzheng: Ming-Qing yanpao zhi shu 'Yinmenzhen' zai tan" 女體與戰爭, 明清厭砲之術 "陰門陣"再探, *Xinshixue* 新史學 10.3 (1999), pp. 159–86. In Taiwan, the term "black dog blood" (*oh kau tsui* 黑狗血) is sometimes used as a euphemism for menstrual blood; see Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution," in Emily M. Ahern and Hill Gates, eds., *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1981), pp. 381–96, esp. 392–93.

[82] Some legends claim that one Miao ancestor was a dog, an apparent result of which was the taboo against eating dog meat; e.g., Long Haiqing 龍海清, "Panhu shenhua de shizuozhe" 盤瓠神話的始作者, in Zhongguo shaoshu minzu wenxue xuehui 中國少數民族文學學會, ed., *Shenhua xintan* 神話新探 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1986), pp. 325–28. The use of dog's blood on bullets was said to be ineffective if the fighters using them had consumed canine flesh.

A vivid account of these events was recorded by the famous Tujia writer Sun Jianzhong 孫健忠 (b. 1938) in his novella *City Corner* (*Chengjiao* 城角; 1988). In it are stories based on memories of his childhood.[83] While *Chengjiao* is a work of fiction, Sun does show awareness of the causes of uprising, including the impact of controversial state policies like press gangs and the salt monopoly. It also gives a detailed account of the pre-battle possession rituals presided over by female spirit-mediums, including the use of immortals water. Sun recalls having ascended the city walls with his uncle to watch the attack, and despite his apparent sympathies with the rebels' cause he nonetheless scornfully labels them as "jumping bandits 跳跳匪." His account confirms the initial success of the rebel advance, as well as the defenders' terror causing them to shoot wildly. Sun does add one element, namely that when defeat seemed imminent the defenders worshipped images and banners of the Heavenly Kings before resorting to the use of dog's blood on their ammunition. (This will also be discussed below.) He also claims that immortals water contained a drug that enabled the rebels to keep on their feet after suffering serious wounds.[84]

Despite the defeat at Qiancheng, Wu Guofan, Wu Chunmei and the fighters they commanded remained a formidable force, and since they had chosen to hide in the mountains so as to avoid further head-on engagements it proved difficult for the state to completely stamp out the uprising. Realizing that other tactics were needed, Li Zongqi offered concessions to persuade the leaders to surrender, including lowering of taxes, increasing salt rations, and limiting military conscription. However, when the leaders came down from the mountains for further negotiations, Li had them arrested. Wu Chunmei was thrown in jail and tortured, eventually dying from the ordeal. Another female medium named Wu Meihong 吳妹紅 was then chosen as the uprising's leader, but was arrested almost immediately. Enraged at Li's treachery, a group of between sixty and eighty fighters (including women and children) launched an attack on Fenghuang, only to be routed by local militia and regular army forces. Two men and three women perished, the youngest a twelve-year-old. In reprisal, Li led a series of harsh cam-

[83] Sun grew up in troubled times of chaotic violence, vividly portrayed in his novel and other writings. An account of his life and works may be found in Wu Zhengfeng 吳正鋒 and Mao Binghan 毛炳漢, *Sun Jianzhong pingzhuan* 孫健忠評傳 (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 2008).

[84] I have found two versions of this story to date: Sun Jianzhong 孫健忠, "Chengjiao" 城角, *Shiyue* 十月 (June 1989), pp. 182–89, and idem, "Cheng zhi jiao" 城之角, in idem, *Mohuan Xiangxi* 魔幻湘西 (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 2013), pp. 426–44. I have used the first of these for this paper. See also Wu and Mao, *Sun Jianzhong pingzhuan*, pp. 170–82.

paigns against local villages, forcing alleged participants in the uprising to pay restitution and beheading those who failed to comply. Li eventually was promoted to an administrative post in Changde, and some accounts, albeit clearly written under a CCP agenda to portray KMT officials as corrupt oppressors of non-Han peoples, claim that he left Fenghuang a rich man due to his ill-gotten gains.[85] Of the rebel leadership, Wu Guofan was drafted into a local military unit. He later deserted and fled home, but became blind in one eye during his ordeals.[86] Shi Laoshuang was survived by a daughter who grew up and married, but died in an auto accident in 2001. Her own daughter currently is married with children.

RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF THE JUMPING IMMORTALS UPRISING

Looking back on the traumatic events of 1942, one can't help but conclude that, despite their bravery and determination, the men and women who took part in the Jumping Immortals uprising must have known that they were putting themselves in mortal danger against a better-armed foe. How then, were their leaders able to mobilize them for rebellion in the face of such long odds? Apart from the political and socioeconomic factors described above, perhaps the main impetuses involved four areas of belief and practice.[87]

1. Belief in a Savior Figure and the Impact of Local Deities

The Jumping Immortals were firmly grounded in local religious traditions, especially (but hardly exclusively) Miao ones. As noted above, much of the inspiration for the uprising derived from the belief that a savior had been born in Salt Well Village. Miao villagers throughout the region had flocked to worship the baby boy, who was venerated as a new "Miao King." In addition, Wu Guofan's charisma prompted

[85] Tian Heng 田亨, "Li Zongqi chuli 'yaofei' shijian" 李宗祺處理"妖匪"事件, *Xiangxi wenshi ziliao* 10 (1987), pp. 154–55; Han Zhenpeng 韓振鵬, "Li xianzhang zhenya Miaomin sheng-guan facai" 李縣長鎮壓苗民升官發財, *Xiangxi wenshi ziliao* 10 (1987), pp. 156–58; Li and Luo, *Da Xiangxi yanyi*, pp. 269–73. See also Long Boye 龍伯業, *Jindai Wuling Miaozu douzhengshi* 近代武陵苗族鬥爭史 (Guiyang: Guizhou minzu chubanshe, 1994), pp. 239–73.

[86] Long Mingji 隆名驥, *Minguo Xiangxi Miaoxiang jishi* 民國湘西苗鄉紀實 (Beijing: Beijing Yanshan chubanshe, 2010), pp. 126–32; Wu, "Wo zuzhiguo 'Bu jiangshuai'"; idem, "'Bu jiangshuai' douzheng."

[87] Much of the information on beliefs and practices presented below derives from the following works: Shi Langzhai 石琅齋, "Mawang chushi he 'Bu jiangshuai' dansheng" 痲王出世和"布將帥"誕生, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 55–58; Zhou Mingfu 周明阜, *Da Xiangxi bainian fengyun* 大湘西百年風雲 (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2010), pp. 12–269. See also the anonymous online essay entitled "Xiang-E-Yu-Qian bianqu shenbing jiemi" 湘鄂渝黔邊區神兵揭秘, which is full of colorful detail but has little annotation: <(http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_65079b600100gjz0.html)>.

Miao villagers throughout Fenghuang to worship him as King Wu, a title which, like those of the Miao King and "King Ma" (Mawang 麻王), had long been revered throughout Southwest China. Similar savior figures had been worshiped during other Miao uprisings (see below).

While participants were said to have paid homage to the Miao King, the deities most commonly worshiped during the uprising were the Seven Immortal Maidens (mainly during possession rituals), the Heavenly Kings (primary protective spirits in battle), the Thunder God, the Earth God, and Lord Nuo with Mother Nuo. All of these deities were highly popular among the Miao, even if not necessarily of Miao origin.[88] For example, despite the fact that salt was a precious and essential commodity, participants were forbidden to use it for up to seven days before going into trance due to Miao taboos centering on stories about the Thunder God's fear of salt.

Not surprisingly, given its immense popularity in Western Hunan, the cult of the Heavenly Kings was venerated by both the rebels and their opponents. Sun Jianzhong's novella *Chengjiao* describes rumors spread by traveling merchants to the effect that, prior to launching their assault on Qiancheng, the rebels had made blood oaths to the Heavenly Kings at their main temple, the Sanwang Miao 三王廟 located in Yaxi 雅溪. This, plus the fact that the rebels had chosen to advance under banners to these deities, prompted Qiancheng's government defenders to make lavish offerings of their own, but when the resulting divination rituals proved inconclusive and incense sticks stopped burning on their own accord, the citizenry began to worry that the Heavenly Kings had chosen to side with the rebels. This account also claims that Li Zongqi had followed the advice of some of his subordinates and ordered banners from another Heavenly King's temple to be hung on the Qiancheng city walls in order to counter rebel battle magic.[89]

2. *Clothing and Its Significance*

Traditional Miao clothing had important symbolic and other significances in the uprising.[90] Leaders like Wu Guofan went into battle

[88] For more on Western Hunan cults to these and other deities, see Zhang Ziwei 張子偉, ed., *Xiangxi Nuo wenhua zhi mi* 湘西儺文化之迷 (Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 1991); Li Huaisun 李懷蓀, "Meishan shen Zhang Wulan tanlue" 梅山神張五郎探略, *Minzu luntan* 民族論壇 4 (1997), pp. 50–54; Li Huaisun, "Wuxi diyu wu wenhua de bianqian he Nuoshen Dongshan shenggong, Nanshan shengmu" 五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母, *Minsu quyi* 106 (1997), pp. 97–166; Lü Yangzheng 呂養正, *Xiangxi Miaozu guishen chongbai tanyou* 湘西苗族鬼神崇拜探幽 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2001).

[89] Long, *Minguo Xiangxi Miaoxiang jishi.*

[90] For more on the symbolic importance of clothing in Miao culture, and especially women's

dressed as local ritual specialists: their costumes included a red robe, a crown with two large chicken feathers, five-colored flags of command, and an ox horn. The flags and horn were used to direct troop movements. Military commanders also wore robes and hats and carried flags, but did not bear ox horns. Sun Jianzhong observed that leaders' outfits reminded him of the costumes worn by traditional opera performers, which attests to their rich visual attributes.[91] Male and female fighters (including some children and youths) dressed in their finest Miao clothes and headscarves (some wore bamboo hats 斗笠 instead), while bearing umbrellas or handkerchiefs into battle. Many women who joined the uprising wore lavish silver ornaments 銀飾盛裝, which victorious KMT forces stripped from their corpses as booty.[92]

Such clothing could also be worn during major rituals;[93] in those contexts they were imbued with profound symbolic import, the handkerchiefs and umbrellas representing dragons, and the belts snakes. In addition, headscarves worn during mortuary rituals symbolized the bridge or rainbow that bore the deceased to the celestial realms (reminding one of the rainbow bridge of Taiwan aboriginal beliefs portrayed in the film "Sediq Bale").[94] One effort at reconstructing the rebels' garb (even if dubious in its accuracy) is a series of drawings of Jumping Immortals dances made in the 1950s by a Daoist priest from Fenghuang who was also skilled in musical and dramatic performances (see figure 1).[95] Our fieldwork in Western Hunan clearly indicates the key role played by clothing for local specialists referred to as "*badaixiong* 巴代

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clothing, see Ho Zhaohua, "Clothes to Dye For: Cloth and Person among Shidong [施洞] Miao in Guizhou Province," Ph.D. diss. (National Tsing-hua University, 2011), esp. pp. 196–330; Ho Zhaohua 何兆華, "Dang 'zuohua' cheng 'zuoren': Shidong Miaozu feiquzhi wenhua yichan zhi chuancheng yu bianqian" 當"做花"成"做人", 施洞苗族非物質文化遺產之傳承與變遷, *Minsu quyi* 185 (2014), pp. 51–114; Chen Meiwen 陳玫妏, *Cong mingming tan Guangxi Tianlin Pangu Yaoren de goucheng yu shengming de laiyuan* 從命名談廣西田林盤古瑤人的構成與生命的來源 (Taipei: Tangshan chubanshe, 2003), pp. 115–18. See also Li Qianbin 李黔濱, "Gaishu" 概述, in Guizhou wenhua ting 貴州省文化廳 and Guizhousheng bowuguan 貴州省博物館, eds., *Miaozu yinshi* 苗族銀飾 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2011), pp. 9–43; Tian Chiping 田特平, Tian Maojun 田茂軍, Chen Qigui 陳啓貴, and Shi Qunyong 石群勇, *Xiangxi Miaozu yinshi duanzhi jiyi* 湘西苗族銀飾鍛製技藝 (Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2015).

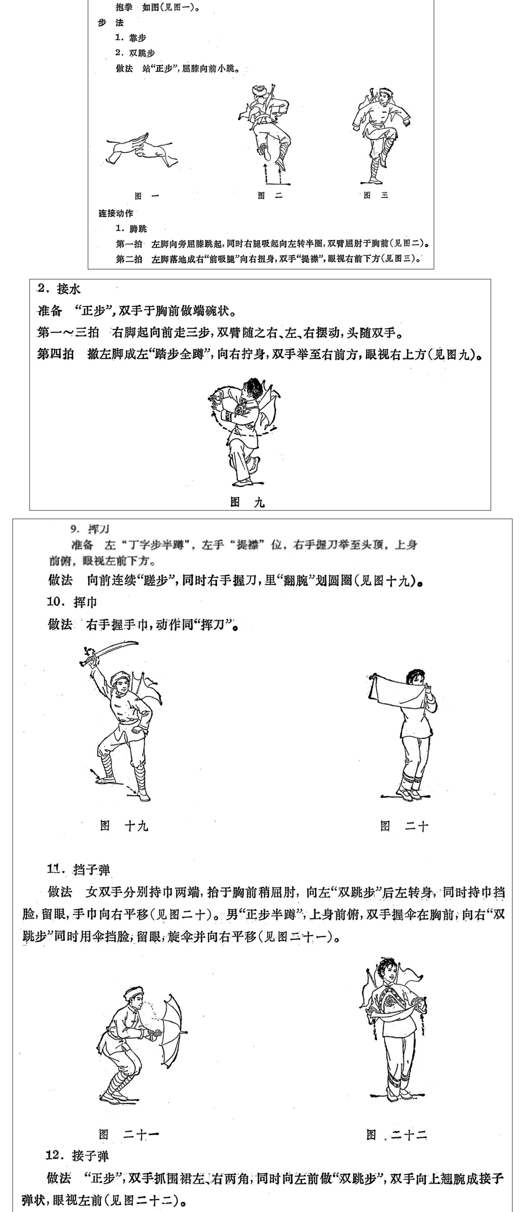
[91] Sun Jianzhong, "Chengjiao."

[92] Jishou xian nongdiaoban 吉首縣農調辦, ed. and comp., "1942 nian chunxia Qiancheng xian Miaozu renmin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qishi" 1942 年春夏乾城縣苗族人民的"跳仙會"起事 (unpublished report, October 24, 1980); Long, *Minguo Xiangxi Miaoxiang jishi*; Yi and Chu, eds., *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shange*, p. 57.

[93] See for example Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 106–11.

[94] Qiandong Nanzhou Minzu yanjiusuo 黔東南州民族研究所, ed., *Zhongguo Miaozu minsu* 中國苗族民俗 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1990), pp. 94–95, 540–41.

[95] Hunan sheng wenhua ting 湖南省文化廳, ed., *Hunan minzu minjian wudao jicheng* 湖南民族民間舞蹈集成 (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 2009) 4, pp. 1831–51.



手　式

抱拳　如图(见图一)。

步　法

1. 靠步

2. 双跳步

做法　站“正步”,屈膝向前小跳。

图　一　　图　二　　图　三

连接动作

1. 腾跳

第一拍　左脚向旁屈膝跳起,同时右腿吸起向左转半圈,双臂屈肘于胸前(见图二)。

第二拍　左脚落地成右“前吸腿”向右扭身,双手“提襟”,眼视右前下方(见图三)。

2. 接水

准备　“正步”,双手于胸前做端碗状。

第一～三拍　右脚起向前走三步,双臂随之右、左、右摆动,头随双手。

第四拍　撤左脚成左“踏步全蹲”,向右拧身,双手举至右前方,眼视右上方(见图九)。

图　九

9. 挥刀

准备　左“丁字步半蹲”，左手“提襟”位，右手握刀举至头顶，上身前俯，眼视左前下方。

做法　向前连续“蹉步”,同时右手握刀,里“翻腕”划圆圈(见图十九)。

10. 挥巾

做法　右手握手巾,动作同“挥刀”。

图　十九　　图　二十

11. 挡子弹

做法　女双手分别持巾两端,抬于胸前稍屈肘,向左“双跳步”后左转身,同时持巾挡脸,留眼,手巾向右平移(见图二十)。男“正步半蹲”,上身前俯,双手握伞在胸前,向右“双跳步”同时用伞挡脸,留眼,旋伞并向右平移(见图二十一)。

图　二十一　　图　二十二

12. 接子弹

做法　“正步”,双手抓围裙左、右两角,同时向左前做“双跳步”,双手向上翘腕成接子弹状,眼视左前(见图二十二)。

Figure 1. Drawings of Jumping Immortals Dances, Showing Garb

Excerpted from Hunan minzu minjian wudao jicheng, *vol. 4, pp. 1838, 1841, 1843. (Cited n. 95.)*

雄" (Miao: *bax deib xongb*; usually labeled "Miao laoshi 苗老師" by local scholars and officials), who stage rituals in Miao based on oral traditions that exhibit little Daoist influence. Interviews with these specialists reveal that they can only perform rites in full Miao costume, all the way down to their shoes and socks; if they don even one item of non-Miao clothing, the ancestors who are their masters will fail to respond to their supplications. This is also the case for many female mediums.

3. Spirit Mediums and the Importance of Gender

While the belief in an infant savior combined with the presence of popular deities and rituals helped attract participants, the true core of the uprising seems to have centered on spirit mediums, especially female ones. In particular, the sisters Ma Hongniang and Ma Hongxiang were renowned specialists in the Yongsui area, and used trance states to tell worshippers of the Miao King and his powers. They also recruited other female mediums to their cause (most notably Wu Chunmei from Fenghuang), and it is surely not a coincidence that branch altars headed by these mediums were key nodes in the movement's spread. Many chose to travel to Salt Well Village not only to prepare for battle, but also for the Ma sisters' healing rituals. Both practices featured immortals water, which was normally used to cure illness but during armed conflicts was said to provide invulnerability in battle.[96]

As was the case in Yongsui, the growth of the Jumping Immortals movement in Fenghuang resulted in large part from the presence of a charismatic female medium, in this case Wu Chunmei, who was just twenty-two at the time of the uprising.[97] Like her counterparts in Yongsui, Wu's practices centered on the cult of the Seven Immortal Maidens (referred to in Fenghuang as the Seven Elder Sister Masters or Qi shijie 七師姐). One of her most prominent disciples (Shi Lao-

[96] Stimulating discussions of gender and religion include Megan Bryson, *Goddess on the Frontier: Religion, Ethnicity, and Gender in Southwest China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2016); Chen Meiwen, "Gendered Ritual and Performative Literacy: Yao Women, Goddesses of Fertility and the Chinese Imperial State," Ph.D. diss. (Leiden University, 2016); Ho Ts'ui-p'ing, "Gendering Ritual Community across the Chinese Southwest Borderland," in Faure and Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 215–25; Jinhua Jia, Xiaofei Kang, and Ping Yao, eds. *Gendering Chinese Religion: Subject, Identity, and Body* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2014); Kang Xiaofei, "Women and the Religious Question in Modern China," in Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey, eds., *Modern Chinese Religion II, 1850–1915* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 1, pp. 491–559; Jinhua Emma Teng, "Religion as a Source of Oppression and Creativity for Chinese Women," *Journal of Women and Gender Studies* 1 (1990), pp. 165–94.

[97] Long Dean 龍德安, "'Bu jiangshuai' da Fenghuangcheng" "布將帥"打鳳凰城, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 69–70; Tian, "'Bu jiangshuai' gongda Ganziping xianggongsuo"; Wu, "Miaomin 'Bu jiangshuai' yundong jilue"; Shi, "Minguo shiqi Xiangxi Miaoqu de 'Tiaoxian' baodong."

shuang) had visited Salt Well Village with her to train under the Ma sisters, while another (Wu Guofan) learned his practices from Shi. All three of these leaders instructed participants in entering into trance by means of immortal water, which some accounts claimed contained an unnamed herbal medicine. Some accounts of the uprising state that participants referred to the Ma sisters and Wu Chunmei as "immortal masters 仙師," believing that possession rites involving the immortals water and worship of the Seven Immortal Maidens could bestow invulnerability. The role of the mediums' altars as sites for mobilizing followers is also mentioned.[98]

The uprising in Qiancheng was also linked to a spirit-medium, albeit in this instance a male one.[99] Its leader, Wu Tianqiu, became afflicted with a mysterious illness in early 1942, and his condition deteriorated despite medicinal treatments. His wife sought out a local medium named Liao Changlu 廖昌祿 (some sources give Liao Changliu 廖昌六) and asked him to perform an exorcism (literally "release from demonic forces 解煞"). Wu was carried to the Liao family home, where Liao had prepared a bowl full of immortals water. Drawing charms in the air over the bowl, Liao recited the following spell: "May the demons of heaven and earth depart; may Tianqiu's *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄 souls follow me 天煞地煞都走開, 天求的魂魄跟我來."[100] He then spat a mouthful of water onto Wu, which caused him to leap up as in a trance and sprint out of Liao's house all the way to his own home, whereupon he began to jump incessantly up and down. Higher and higher he leapt, and then he shouted out that he was going to give up farming to become an immortal 仙人 and that he possessed his own numinous mixture of immortals water. In the frenzy of his trance, he called on family and friends to join him, following which he grabbed a large bowl of water and began to spit its contents onto everyone watching him, who went into trance as well (a phenomenon that seems similar to the induced collective trances described below).

98 Wu, ed., *Miaozu tongshi*, pp. 351–55.

99 Liu Zheng 劉正, "Qiancheng 'Bu jiangshuai' de huodong" 乾城"布將帥"的活動, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 63–64; Tian Heng 田亨, "'Bu jiangshuai' da Qianzhoucheng" "布將帥"打乾州城, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 65–66; Wu Kan 吳砍, "Ji 'Erma dawang' gong Qianzhou 記"二麻大王"攻乾州, in Wu, ed., *Luanshi juyi*, pp. 73–74. See also the folktale collected in the Jishou metropolitan area titled "Wu Tianqiu qishi tiaoxian" 吳天求起事跳仙, in Zhongguo minjian wenxue jicheng quanguo bianji weiyuanhui 中國民間文學集成全國編輯委員會 and Zhongguo minjian wenxue jicheng Hunan juan bianji weiyuanhui 中國民間文學集成湖南卷編輯委員會, ed. and comp., *Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng: Hunan juan* 中國民間故事集成, 湖南卷 (Beijing: Zhongguo ISBN zhongxin, 2002), pp. 277–79.

100 This suggests that Liao's rituals may have been one form of the *jiao shuiwan* 叫水碗 rites, which are regularly performed for healing purposes (see below).

Not only were female spirit-mediums among the leaders responsible for training troops, the actual fighting forces included substantial numbers of Miao women as well, some of whom fought in the rebel vanguard. The prominence of female mediums and warriors figures in numerous songs about the uprising (see appendix A, #1–2).[101] This is hardly to deny the presence of male leaders as well, and the purported savior was supposed to be a Miao king, not a Miao queen. Nonetheless, women's roles were quite important. Women have long enjoyed relatively high status in Western Hunan religious culture, as can be seen in the following story often heard in the field. One day, Taishang laojun 太上老君 (Laozi 老子) disguised himself as a mangy beggar and asked three of his apprentices to carry him across a river. The disciple who refused out of disgust ended up becoming a Daoist master (*daoshi* 道士), and had to perform all of his rites standing up and using Chinese scriptures; he would go blind if he mispronounced a single character. The disciple who hesitated in fulfilling this task became a *badaizha* ritual specialist and had to perform rites in Chinese standing up, but without the need to use scriptures. The one who readily fulfilled this task became a female medium, and was allowed to perform rites in Miao while sitting.[102]

Spirit-mediums have a venerable history among the non-Han peoples of Southwest China; written records date back to at least the time of the renowned writer Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340–278 BC) as recorded in his *Songs of Chu* (*Chuci* 楚辭), especially the *Nine Songs* (*Jiuge* 九歌).[103] Moving closer to our time period, detailed accounts are found in such Qing-dynasty texts as *Songs of Female Mediums* (*Xianniangqu* 仙娘曲), composed by Sun Yongqing 孫永清 (1734–1790) most likely during his term as provincial governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Guangxi. Sun's work features lively images of these specialists and their rites, with the mediums dressing in their finest clothes and jewelry (just like the women in the Jumping Immortals movement), imbibing copious amounts of wine, dancing (which apparently did not include jumping). He also

101 Yi and Chu, *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shange*, pp. 54–57.

102 Wu Hexian [吳合顯], "Crossing the River. Xiangxi Miao Spirit Mediumship," M.A. thesis (University of Kansas, 2010), pp. 1–3, 54–59; Wu Xiyun 吳曦雲, *Hong Miao fengsu* 紅苗風俗 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Tianma chubanshe, 2006), pp. 197–202. Some versions of the Taishang laojun story that I have heard in Western Hunan replace the female medium with a *badaixiong*, both being local ritual specialists who perform almost exclusively in Miao.

103 See David Hawkes, trans. and ed., *The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 18–19, 96–97. See also *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*, edited by Arthur Waley (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955); Lin He 林河, *Jiuge yu Yuan-Xiang minsu* 九歌與沅湘民俗 (Shanghai: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi Sanlian shudian, Shanghai fendian, 1990).

noted that all their songs were in Miao, and that it proved impossible to outlaw their practices (see appendix B, #1).[104] For Western Hunan, the treatise on customs (*fengsu* 風俗) that we find in the Daoguang 道光 edition of *Chenxi xianzhi* 辰谿縣志 notes the importance of female mediums and their rituals for the women's community; it describes their performances of rites on behalf of the deceased in which they sing and dance while holding a knife (*sidao* 司刀 or *shidao* 師刀) (see appendix B, #2).[105] Republican-era works, including the writings of Shi Qigui,[106] as well as Shen Congwen, also contain portrayals of female mediums, albeit often from a critical perspective.[107]

In recent years, the study of non-Han female mediums has been attracting increasing attention, as can be seen in works recently published by Huang Jin 黃金, Ma Yongbin 麻勇斌, and Kang Shih-yu 康詩瑀.[108] The latter's fieldwork reveals that the life stories of Western Hunan mediums are similar to those in Taiwan and other parts of the world in that they only chose this profession after experiencing a major crisis, usually a physical or mental illness that could only be cured by their agreeing to mediumship. In addition, Western Hunan's mediums learn their trade in two different ways: training by living masters 陽傳 and training by deceased masters 陰傳, the latter form of transmission being as prevalent (or even more common) than the former. Miao spirit mediumship is also a family affair, and a medium's patriarchs can include a wide range of ancestors, including those who had served as *badaixiong*, *badaizha*, and mediums. And, despite centuries of campaigns to extirpate them, mediums continue to thrive in both rural and urban areas, where they still command a considerable measure of respect.[109]

104 Sun Yongqing 孫永清, "Xianniang qu" 仙娘曲, in *Baoyan tang shiji* 寶嚴堂詩集, Xicheng 錫成 edn. (1917), *j.* 4, p. 8.

105 Xu Huiyun 徐會雲 and Liu Jiachuan 劉家傳, ed. and comp., *Daoguang Chenxi xianzhi* 道光辰谿縣志, in Jiangsu guji chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, ed., *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng: Hunan fuxianzhi ji* 中國地方志集成, 湖南府縣志輯 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2002), *j.* 16, p. 350. For similar data from Fujian and Taiwan, see Brigitte Baptandier, *The Lady of Linshui. A Chinese Female Cult*, Kristin Ingrid Fryklund, trans. (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2008).

106 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 519–20, 588–89.

107 Kinkley, "Shen Ts'ung-wen's Vision," pp. 289–95; Kinkley, *Odyssey of Shen Congwen*, pp. 126, 327; Shen Congwen, "Shenwu zhi ai" 神巫之愛, in *Shen Congwen wenji* 沈從文文集 (Guangzhou: Hucheng chubanshe, 1983), vol. 8, pp. 241–300; Shen Congwen, "Fenghuang" 鳳凰, in ibid., 9, pp. 397–415. The latter story may also be found in Shen Congwen, *Fenghuang wangshi* 鳳凰往事 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2014), pp. 74–94.

108 Huang, "Dongbu fangyanqu Shanjiang Miaozu xianniang tiaoxian yishi diaocha"; Kang, "Xiangxi xianniang diaocha fangtanlu"; Ma, *Chanshi mitu*. See also Kao Ya-ning 高雅寧, *Guangxi Jingxi xian Zhuangren nongcun shehui zhong "Mopo" de yangcheng guocheng yu yishi biayan* 廣西靖西縣壯人農村社會中 me$^{21\ 4}$ mo:t^{31} (魔婆)的養成過程與儀式表演 (Taipei: Tangshan chubanshe, 2002).

109 These phenomena are discussed in Katz, "Religious Life in Western Hunan."

Similar phenomena have been observed for Miao/Hmong communities in other parts of China and throughout the world.[110]

The importance of female mediums to the Jumping Immortals uprising can be seen in the fact that the movement's most prominent deities included the Seven Immortal Maidens, the primary patron spirits for Western Hunan mediums. In addition, the uprising's ritual practices centered on the use of immortals water, which echoes the significance of such water in many other medium rituals. Rites featuring the use of bowls of water 叫水碗 remain a key component of healing rituals performed by mediums throughout Western Hunan today, while one key item of clothing borne into battle (handkerchiefs) could be used to hide a medium's face before going into trance or cover bowls of white rice using in fear-quelling rites. In addition, some accounts of female mediums being possessed note that they would jump high off the ground, so it hardly seems surprising that these items and practices would occupy a central place in uprisings led by such specialists.[111]

The fact that women figured so prominently in the Jumping Immortals uprising (both as participants and especially as its leaders) may well be due to their place in Western Hunan social life. This is not to deny the existence of gender-based divisions of labor and responsibility among local Miao, and the fact that most marriages tended to be virilocal. Be that as it may, however, women's roles in the local economy (tea picking, for example)[112] as well as their place in family structures and marriage networks often provided a relatively high stature, one aspect of which might be the fact that Miao areas were said to have lower rates of female infanticide.[113] Accounts dating back to the Qing dynasty describe Miao women's using firearms and helping their menfolk load in the heat of battle, while Zhou Libo describes one widow leading armed men into combat during a feud to avenge the death of her husband.[114] Miao women are also described as key figures in resolving a certain type

110 See Jean Mottin, *Allons faire le tour du ciel et de la terre: Le chamanisme des Hmong vue dans les texts* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1982); Jacques Lemoine, *Entre la maladie et la mort: Le chamane Hmong sur les chemins de l'Audelà* (Bangkok: Pandora, 1987); Lemoine, "Shamanism in the Context of Hmong Resettlement," in Glenn Hendricks et al., eds., *The Hmong in Transition* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1986), pp. 337–48; Xoua Thao, "Hmong Perception of Illness and Traditional Ways of Healing," in Hendricks, *The Hmong in Transition*, pp. 365–78. See also Tapp, *The Hmong of China*, pp. 147–58.

111 Wu, "Xiangxi Miao Spirit Mediumship"; Huang, "Dongbu fangyanqu Shanjiang Miaozu xianniang tiaoxian yishi diaocha"; Kang, "Xiangxi xianniang diaocha fangtanlu."

112 I am grateful to Lai Hui-min 賴惠敏 for pointing this out.

113 Wu, *Hong Miao fengsu*, pp. 87–91.

114 Zhou, "Wuli de Xiangxi."

of feud known as “beating the wrongful family 打冤家.”[115] One of the leaders of the Miao Rebellion was a woman named Shi Niemei 石乜妹 (from Songtao, Guizhou), who was eventually captured and beheaded by Qing forces. Ho Zhaohua 何兆華 also discusses the case of the Guizhou woman warrior Wud Maox Xid 務冒細, said to be endowed with extremely long breasts that she would throw over her shoulders when riding her flying horse into battle.[116] Similar phenomena continued into the Republican era, and were also common in Taiwan and other frontier areas.[117] Today one can still hear stories of women warriors routing Qing invaders during the Miao Rebellion, often with reference to handkerchiefs and headscarves as lethal weapons.[118]

4. *Ecstatic Rites of Possession*

Another core facet of the Jumping Immortals uprising was the practice of inducing possession by drinking immortals water, which was believed to protect one from bodily harm. Sources from Fenghuang provide details about these trances. Each participant was given a bowl of spring water 泉水 and instructed to hold the water in the mouth while worshipping deities like the Seven Immortal Maidens with three sticks of incense. The next stage was the drinking of the water at the command of the female medium in charge, who would make her will known by waving a handkerchief. This would prompt the participant to go into a trance marked by incessant jumping. Some participants would dance and sing traditional Miao songs that invoked animals like eagles, which reminds one of American Indian traditions (see below). Others would jump, twist around, and chant spells for protection in battle such

115 Studies of dispute resolution in Western Hunan Miao (including judicial rituals) may be found in the following chapters from *Xiangxi zongjiao wenhua diaocha yu yanjiu* (see n. 20, above): Xie Xiaohui 謝曉輝, “Cong ‘Shanru Miaodi wangna Miaoren an’ kan shiba shiji Xiangxi Miaojiang yu shenpan” 從“擅入苗地妄拿苗人案”看18世紀湘西苗疆之苗例與神判, pp. 77–90; Luo Kanglong 羅康隆, Ma Yongheng 麻勇恒 and Wu Hexian 吳合顯, “La’er shanqu Miaozu ‘huqing’ diaocha” 臘爾山區苗族“呼清”調查, pp. 91–132; Ma Meiyin 麻美垠, “Jiwei diqu ‘tali’ fashi de zongjiaoxue yiyi” 吉衛地區“他力”法事的宗教學意義, pp. 133–56.

116 Ho, “Clothes to Dye For,” pp. 180–81. See also Ho Zhaohua, “Shidong Miaozu jianzhi tuxiangshan de xiqu yu nüxing xingxiang” 施洞苗族剪紙圖像上的戲曲與女性形象, *Minsu quyi* 177 (2012), pp. 275–83.

117 For accounts of women on the Taiwan frontier, see Lo Shih-chieh 羅士傑, “Luelun Qing Tongzhi nianjian Taiwan Dai Chaochun an yu Tiandihui zhi guanxi” 略論清同治年間台灣戴潮春案與天地會之關係, *Minsu quyi* 138 (2002), pp. 279–303. See also Jacques Lemoine, “Fonction et rébellion: La place de la femme à l’intérieur et à la périphérie du monde chinois,” *Social Anthropology* 5.3 (1997), pp. 255–75.

118 Xiang Nong 向農, ed. and comp., “Shi Niemei de gushi: Qiaobai niurouyan” 石乜妹的故事, 巧擺牛肉宴, in Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou wenhuaguan, ed., *Xiangxi minjian wenxue ziliao*, pp. 75–76; Li Jing 李經, ed. and comp., “Magu kangzu” 麻姑抗租, in ibid., pp. 201–3; Xiang, ed. and comp., “Shi Niemei de gushi: Huagu chuanling” 石乜妹的故事, 花鼓傳令, in ibid., pp. 76–78.

as "Seal knives and block guns; bullets will not enter, knives will not pierce 封刀封槍, 槍打不進, 刀砍不入." The sources also note that many participants were women, each of whom wore traditional Miao costume. The women would sit on the ground with eyes closed, rocking back and forth as they went into trance (much like Miao female mediums). The spell most prominently chanted was, "Immortal maidens descend from Heaven, manifesting their awesome numinosity; knives will not pierce, bullets will not enter 天降仙女, 大顯威靈, 刀砍不入, 槍打不進." Eyewitness accounts stress that participants literally jumped en route to battle, often chanting the word *deng* 登. Some were even said to have cut their bodies with weapons, which bears a similarity to the mortification practices of many spirit-mediums (*dang-ki* 童乩) in Taiwan.[119]

Some accounts claim that immortals water might have been infused with medicinal herbs, which acted as stimulants or could induce trance (as noted above, the writer Sun Jianzhong claimed that some Jumping Immortals used drugs to enhance their vigor in battle). The local historian Wu Xiyun 吳曦云 once interviewed a woman surnamed Long 龍 who had taken part in these events at age seventeen and sustained a leg wound (she still had a scar, over forty years later at the time of the interview). She recalled having drunk immortals water treated with an herbal substance, which caused her to feel unusually energetic and to jump with great vigor for at least 4 hours at a time. When its effects had worn off, the resulting exhaustion would require two or three days of sleep to fully recover from.[120] However, while the practices of Miao medicine have gained some renown,[121] one should not discount the possibility that the ecstasy reported concerning some of the possession experiences may not have always been drug-induced. The practice of working oneself into an uncontrollable rage in battle is common in many cultures,[122] and the theme of raging into battle has been preserved in

119 See for example Liu Ziqi 劉自齊, "Liliang he zhihui de songge: Shilun Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi shiqi Miaozu minjian geyao he chaunshuogushi" 力量和智慧的頌歌, 試論乾嘉苗民起義時期苗族民間歌謠和傳說故事, in Xiangxi zizhizhou Fenghuangxian minwei, ed., *Miaozushi wenji*, pp. 275–83; Long, *Minguo Xiangxi Miaoxiang jishi*; Shi Jianhua and Wu Xianyou, *Xiangxi Miaozu bainian shilu* 1, pp. 442–49; Li and Luo, *Da Xiangxi yanyi*, pp. 216–27. For Taiwanese mediums, see David K. Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors. Folk Religion in a Taiwanese Village* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1972); Lin Wei-Ping [林瑋嬪], *Materializing Magic Power: Chinese Popular Religion in Villages and Cities* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard U.P., 2015).

120 The feeling of profound exhaustion after trance is common among spirit-mediums; see Huang, "Dongbu fangyanqu Shanjiang Miaozu xianniang tiaoxian yishi diaocha"; Cheng Mingjun, e-mail communication, July 4, 2014.

121 Ou Zhian 歐志安, *Xiangxi Miaoyao huibian* 湘西苗藥匯編 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1990). See also Wu, *Hong Miao fengsu*, pp. 161–62.

122 One example is the berserkers. See for example Anatoly Liberman, "Berserks in His-

songs linked to the Jumping Immortals (see appendix A, #3),[123] as well as similar events during the Qing dynasty (see below). Moreover, Ma Yongbin's study of mediumship in Guizhou notes that rage-like trances there had links to local martial arts practices.[124] Not all participants in the Jumping Immortals uprising were able to go into trance, however, so they faked such experiences or chose not to fight.[125]

One particularly telling point is that possession rituals performed during the Jumping Immortals uprising were similar to various local ritual calendars. In general, two forms of possession involving female mediums existed: 1. rites for individual mediums (*nbud goud niangx* 葡姑娘); and 2. rites where mediums cause other women to become possessed by the Seven Maidens (*nbud qix nt meib* 葡七姊妹, or *qid qix goud niangx* 切七姑娘). Regarding the first type, one source states that each year on the fifteenth day of the third lunar month female mediums would lead villagers in a ritual the name of which was the same term used for the uprising, namely, "Jumping Immortals." Each household would prepare vegetarian rice cakes (*zhaiba* 齋粑) and tofu, which the medium would offer to local deities to heal illness and guarantee a bountiful harvest. Once the sacrifices had concluded, participants would start to go into trance, until the entire group was dancing and spinning around as one.[126] Cheng Mingjun 程明君 reports similar village rites held at local Earth God altars (*tudi tang* 土地堂). A bowl of water was placed on the altar, and after the female medium had obtained the permission of the Earth God she would share its contents with all worshipers who wished to achieve trance. Those who succeeded could become possessed either by the gods or their deceased ancestors.[127]

The second type of rite was held in many parts of Western Hunan. According to field data collected by Shi Qigui during the 1930s, it was

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tory and Legend," *Russian History* 32.1 (2005), pp. 401–11; Howard D. Fabing, "On Going Berserk: A Neurochemical Inquiry," *Scientific Monthly* 83.5 (1956), pp. 232–37.

123 Yi and Chu, *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shange*, p. 51.

124 Ma, *Chanshi mitu*, pp. 38–128. This seems somewhat similar to some Eight Generals (Bajiajiang 八家將) troupes of Taiwanese festivals. See Avron Boretz, *Gods, Ghosts, and Gangsters: Ritual Violence, Martial Arts, and Masculinity on the Margins of Chinese Society* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2011); Donald S. Sutton, *Steps of Perfection: Exorcistic Performers and Chinese Religion in Twentieth-Century Taiwan* (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2003).

125 Several villagers we interviewed in Hanglai Village on July 14, 2013, mentioned this point, which is also referred to in an e-mail communication from Cheng Mingjun on July 4, 2014.

126 See the folktale "Miaojia Tiaoxian de youlai" 苗家跳仙的由來, in Fenghuang Xian minjian wenxue jicheng bangongshi 鳳凰縣民間文學集成辦公室, ed. and comp., Zhongguo minjian gushi jicheng: *Hunan juan. Fenghuang Xian ziliaoben* 中國民間故事集成, 湖南卷, 鳳凰縣資料本 (n.p., n.d.: 1987), p. 425.

127 Cheng Mingjun, e-mail communication, September 16, 2014.

staged around the family hearth on the date of the Lantern Festival (Yuanxiaojie 元宵節). An elder woman (most likely a spirit-medium) would be summoned, and then would perform rites that induced her peers (especially younger women and girls) to go into trance, during which they would dance and sing humorous (or lewd) love songs.[128] Detailed information on such rites comes from Guzhang, where they also featured an older woman/medium inducing trance-like states in younger ones, especially those beginning to experience puberty. Each woman/girl to be possessed covered her face with a handkerchief (just like the Miao female mediums described above or Hmong mediums today) while holding seven sticks of incense. Spells to invite the Seven Maidens were then recited, their presence being indicated when the young women and girls would start to rock back and forth and drool. Once possessed, they would sing songs (including erotic duets with men) and invite onlookers to dance with them.[129] All this suggests that the rites used to prepare participants for battle had a solid foundation in local cultural traditions, and would not have been seen as strange or unusual by participants. It also points to the pressing need for in-depth studies of the wide range of possession rituals that continue to mark Miao religious life.[130]

The ecstatic rites of possession that lay at the core of the Jumping Immortals uprising can also help answer one question posed at the beginning of this section of the paper: Why did so many Miao villagers choose to rebel when their cause stood such a poor chance of success? As we saw above, while possession rituals ended up being utterly ineffective in providing protection from battle wounds, they did inspire courage in the Miao participants and fear in the minds of the police and soldiers charged with suppressing them. In other words, the rites helped villagers overcome the logical realization of nearly inevitable failure that had been drilled into their forebears in the most terrifying fashion. As William Hinton once noted in his classic study *Fanshen*:

> The ruthless way in which the slightest defiance on the part of tenants and labourers was suppressed over the years created in the

128 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 519–20.

129 See the folksongs and accompanying commentary in "Qing Qi guniang xisu" 請七姑娘習俗, in Guzhang Xian minjian wenxue jicheng bangongshi 古丈縣民間文學集成辦公室, ed. and comp., *Zhongguo minjian geyao jicheng: Hunan juan; Guzhang Xian ziliaoben* 中國歌謠集成, 湖南卷, 古丈縣資料本 (1988); "Song Qigu niangniang" 送七姑娘娘, in Zhongguo minjian wenxue jicheng quanguo bianji weiyuanhui and Zhongguo minjian wenxue jicheng Hunan juan bianji weiyuanhui, ed. and comp., *Zhongguo minjian geyao jicheng: Hunan juan* 中國民間歌謠集成; 湖南卷 (Beijing: Zhongguo ISBN zhongxin, 1996), pp. 379–80. See also Dai Yeda 戴業大, *Taohua Tan* 桃花潭 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2011), pp. 138–55; Ma, *Chanshi mitu*.

130 Wu Bingchun, e-mail communication, June 15, 2014.

> peasants a deep, almost instinctive, reluctance to mount an attack against the power of the gentry… Those who raised their heads to lead them had either been bought off or had had their heads severed. Their followers had been cut to pieces, burned, flayed, or buried alive… Such events and mementoes were a part of the cultural heritage of every peasant in China… It is no wonder, then, that only the most extreme provocation could overcome the peasants' great reluctance to act, and set them in motion.[131]

Accordingly, as Donald Sutton observed in his study of the Miao Rebellion, possession rituals proved a potent mobilization device that "…readied [the rebels] to undertake the quixotic goal of challenging Qing military power [and] suspended any careful consideration of a fatally doomed venture."[132] Shi Qigui made a similar observation, noting that while most Jumping Immortals bore only the most rudimentary weapons into battle, "So long as they drank that [immortals] water, they proved particularly vigorous, and had no fear of death 惟已吃了該水時, 特別壯神, 不怕死."[133] There are still many questions about the religious aspects of the uprising that will require further research, however, including why female mediums played a more prominent role than other specialists, why blood oaths proved less important than had been the case for earlier uprisings, the ways in which rituals may have been linked to local power structures, mobilization networks, and other features. One way to start addressing these issues involves comparative and long-term historical perspectives, which are explored next.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY: OTHER RELIGIOUS UPRISINGS IN WESTERN HUNAN

During the late-imperial and modern eras, numerous rebel groups in Western Hunan worshiped deities and performed rituals prior to battle, including not only drinking spiritually charged water but also blood oaths and sacrifices to banners 祭旗.[134] While the Jumping Immortals uprising was taking place in the southern areas of this region,

131 William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 63. See also Elizabeth Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1980).

132 Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire," pp. 118–19, 121.

133 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 66–67.

134 For macrohistorical studies of these groups, see David Ownby, *Brotherhoods and Secret Societies in Early and Mid-Qing China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1996); ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads*. Banner worship is described in Katz, "Banner Worship and Human Sacrifice," pp. 207–27.

armed groups referred to as "divine soldiers 神兵" spread throughout the northern counties of Baojing, Guzhang, Yongshun, Longshan, and others. The members of these groups resembled those who took part in the Jumping Immortals uprising in also having potated "divine water 神水" for protection in battle, but the northerners tended to worship exclusively Han Chinese deities like Guangong 關公 and He Xiangu 何仙姑, while also reciting traditional Buddhist scriptures like *Jin'gang jing* 金鋼經 and chanting *Dabei zhou* 大悲咒. Some groups had links to so-called "redemptive societies 救世團體" like the Fellowship of Goodness (Tongshanshe 同善社),[135] whose members studied the Eight Virtues (Bade 八德),[136] and were indoctrinated in proper moral behavior.[137] In general, such groups appear little different from those found in other parts of China that claimed to provide protection against bandits, like the Red Spears (Hongqianghui 紅槍會), or invulnerability against battle wounds, like the Boxers (Yihetuan 義和團).[138]

An earlier Western Hunan uprising that in many ways seems similar to the Jumping Immortals was the Miao Rebellion of 1795–1797.[139]

135 Pioneering works on redemptive societies include Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 103–22, 139–40, 154–62; Thomas David DuBois, *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2005), pp. 107–20; Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 2011), pp. 90–108; David Ownby, "Redemptive Societies in the Twentieth Century," in Goossaert, Kiely and Lagerwey, eds., *Modern Chinese Religion II* 2, pp. 685–750; Shao Yong 紹雍, *Zhongguo huidaomen* 中國會道門 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1997); Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, *Kingendai Chūgoku ni okeru shūkyō kessha no kenkyū* 近、現代中國における宗教結社の研究 (Tokyo: Tokyo kabushiki kaishi kokusho kankōkai, 2002); Sun Jiang 孫江, *Kindai Chūgoku no kakumei to himitsu kessha: Chūgoku kakumei no shakaishi kenkyū (1895–1955)* 近代中國の革命と秘密結社, 中國革命の社會史的研究 (一八九五 – 一九五五) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2007).

136 The importance of the Eight Virtues is discussed in Fan Chun-wu 范純武, "Bade: Jindai Zhongguo jiushi tuanti de daode leimu yu shijian" 八德, 近代中國救世團體的道德類目與實踐, in Kang Bao 康豹 (Paul R. Katz) and Gao Wansang 高萬桑 (Vincent Goossaert), eds., *Gaibian Zhongguo zongjiao de wushinian, 1898–1948* 改變中國宗教的五十年, 1898–1948 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of Modern History, 2015), pp. 225–59.

137 The following works contain data on the beliefs and practices espoused by these groups: Huang Guiqing 黃貴清, "Baojing xian Xike shenbing huodong jishi" 保靖縣溪科神兵活動紀實, *Xiangxi wenshi ziliao* 5 (1985), pp. 60–64; Zhang Shengwen 張聖文, "Tongshanshe yange yu Guzhang Tongshanshe" 同善社沿革與古丈同善社, *Xiangxi wenshi ziliao* 5 (1985), pp. 35–37; Shi Zhongguang 石中光, "Kangzhan shiqi Qiandong Xiangxi minbian pingshu" 抗戰時期黔東湘西民變述評, *Huaihua shizhuan xuebao* 懷化師專學報 15.2 (1996), pp. 136–39; Qu, "Shilun Kangzhan shiqi Xiangxi minbian de zhuyao tedian"; Xiong Xiaohui and Xiang Dong, *Xiangxi lishi yu wenhua*, pp. 269–82.

138 Tai Hsüan-chih [戴玄之], *The Red Spears, 1916–1949*, Ronald Suleski, trans., Elizabeth Perry, intro. (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1985). Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1987); Cohen, *History in Three Keys.*

139 Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire"; McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland"; Hu Qiwang 胡起望, "Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi canjiaren gongdan jianshu"

It covered roughly the same area as the Jumping Immortals uprising (Yongsui, Fenghuang, Qiancheng, Songtao, and so forth), but was much larger in terms of size, with rebel forces numbering in the thousands. Moreover, while attacks on Qing positions lasted only three months, steadfast defensive tactics (including fortifications) allowed rebels to hold out for years, albeit with devastating consequences (entire hamlets were wiped out). Both uprisings were in part sparked by resentment against state policies as well as Han Chinese migration and control over the local economy, which often resulted in Miao impoverishment. In terms of mobilization, the earlier Miao Rebellion and the modern Jumping Immortals uprising both started out as family affairs, with affinal and agnatic ties being of primary importance. Their leadership also embraced similar political messages, identifying Han abuses and exploitation, and making calls to "kill the guest [Han] people 殺客" (here, the term "guest" referring not to Hakka but to Han Chinese people in general). In addition, both uprisings featured savior figures variously identified as the "Miao King," "King Ma," or "King Wu," with such beliefs remaining prevalent throughout the region, especially Fenghuang.[140]

There were also significant differences. The Miao Rebellion appears to have featured a more complex ethnic composition, with some Han Chinese collaborators (labeled as "treacherous Han 漢奸") assisting the Miao rebels, and officials like Yan Ruyi using the Gelao 仡佬 (Klau) against the Miao in a "divide and rule" strategy. In addition, there are few instances of entire villages rising up against the state, which was the case in the Jumping Immortals uprising.[141] The suppression of the Miao Rebellion was marked by the use of horrific punishments (including castration) as a means of terrorizing those who resisted into obeying imperial rule, while retribution against Jumping Immortals rebels seems mild in comparison. In addition, the leaders of the Miao Rebellion were elites from the region's leading families 百戶長 who wanted

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乾嘉苗民起義參加人供單簡述, in Xiangxi zizhizhou Fenghuangxian minwei, ed., *Miaozushi wenji*, pp. 182–200; Shi Shaoming 石紹明, "Luelun Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi de jige kouhao" 略論乾嘉苗民起義的幾個口號, in ibid., pp. 114–24.

[140] *Fenghuang tingzhi* 鳳凰廳志 (1824), ed. and comp., Huang Yingpei 黃應培, Sun Junquan 孫均銓, and Huang Yuanfu 黃元復, in *Zhongguo fangzhi jicheng: Hunan fuxianzhi ji* 中國地方志集成, 湖南府縣志輯 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 72, pp. 706–7, 828, 836, 1096.

[141] See especially McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland," Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire", and Barend ter Haar, "The Gathering of Brothers and Elders (*ko-lao hui* 哥老會): A New Hypothesis," in Leonard Blussé and Harriet Zurndorfer, eds., *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern China: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp. 259–83.

more sway in local affairs, as opposed to the relatively low social status of the Jumping Immortals leadership. Most of these Miao elites and their families were wiped out during the suppression campaign, which contributed to Western Hunan's gradual disappearance as a free-wheeling periphery. In contrast, many Jumping Immortals leaders and their descendants survived. It is also worth noting that while the local economy was a factor in both revolts, the Jumping Immortals uprising seems to have been sparked less by resentment over the appropriation of ancestral lands and more by the impoverishment due to the rise of a new class of Han merchants who often fleeced local villagers through loan sharking and other schemes.[142]

Another apparent difference involves the role of gender. As noted above, women have long occupied key positions in Miao village life, as well as some of the marriage networks that supported elite power structures.[143] Regretably, archival accounts of the Miao Rebellion provide little information as to the role of gender, and with the exception of Shi Niemei most leaders appear to have been men. While the term "shaman" (*wu* 巫) appears in some accounts, indicating that mediums played a role, there is no indication that they were women, and in most scholarship the entire issue of gender in the earlier uprising tends to be overlooked.

In terms of ritual practices, we see similarities and differences once again. For example, while previous scholarship on the Miao Rebellion demonstrates the important use of blood oaths, the rebels also worshipped leading local deities like the Heavenly Kings. Moreover, some Qing rebels did engage in induced spirit-possession before battle, including sword dancing, which was derisively referred to in Qing archival sources as "mad Miao 癲苗." These beliefs and practices, some of which proved to be early indications of those found in the Taiping Civil War and Boxer Rebellion,[144] were recorded in local songs (see appendix C). However, the significance of jumping or leaping in the Miao Rebellion is not clear, and the word *tiao* 跳 does not appear prominently in Qing archival sources.[145]

142 Shi, *Xiangxi Miaozu shidi diaocha baogao*, pp. 96–100. See also Wu, "Shilun Xiangxi Miaozu 'gaitu guiliiui'"; Shi, "Xiang-Qian bian Miaomin de 'Tiaoxianhui' qiyi."

143 Xie Xiaohui 謝曉輝, "Lianyin jiemeng yu puxi chuancheng – Mingdai Xiangxi Miaojiang tusi de bianqian" 聯姻結盟與譜系傳承, 明代湘西苗疆土司的變遷, *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* 中國社會歷史評論, 13 (2012), pp. 306–37.

144 Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire."

145 Liu, "Liliang he zhihui de songge"; Miao Qing 苗青, "Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi geyaoxuan" 乾嘉苗民起義歌謠選, in Xiangxi zizhizhou Fenghuangxian minwei, ed., *Miaozushi wenji*, pp. 284–96.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The descriptions and events presented above reveal that, apart from the role of governmentality in the form of policies that alienated local populations (and especially their elites), indigenous beliefs and practices were equally important in sparking acts of armed resistance in modern Western Hunan, including the Jumping Immortals uprising. Unfortunately, however, most accounts of this region's armed resistance movements during the Republican era focus on the Abolish Military Lands (*getun*) uprisings, and many have settled into the narrative of proving they were patriotic movements; only a few works even mention the swearing of blood oaths.[146] In contrast, this study has pointed to a broader context of resistance that took many different forms, especially beliefs and practices that gave men and women the courage to resist the vastly superior resources of the state, as well as facets of religious life such as female mediumship that most written sources overlook. In those villages that rose in resistance, the local people had been oppressed, and their livelihoods were threatened. Beliefs in savior figures and the staging of mass possession rituals helped provide a trigger for a rapid transition from hopeless passivity to motivated resistance, with many montagnards choosing to die on their feet rather than survive on their knees.[147]

The above phenomena were hardly limited to Western Hunan. For example, one of Nicholas Tapp's (1952–2015) final contributions to our field, a paper on Hmong messianism, shows us that many of the themes discussed in the present article (for example, women leaders, spiritually potent water, handkerchiefs, and above all jumping or leaping) occur as well in the uprisings that have lately been studied.[148] The important work on late-imperial religious rebellions in southwestern China by Cheung Siu-woo 張兆和 points to the importance of the belief in saviors

[146] McCord, "Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China," p. 1520; Guizhousheng minzu yanjiusuo 貴州省民族研究所, ed., *Xiangxi Miaozu getun shilu* 湘西苗族革屯史錄 (unpub. ms., 1985) p. 33.

[147] For an exploration of why people undertake dangerous actions seemingly injurious to their self-interests, see Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, with a foreword by Sir Herbert Read, Anthony Bower, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1956). For the importance of charismatic possession in resistance movements, see Robert P. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China: Taiping Rebels, Taiwanese Ghosts and Tiananmen* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 1994). Similar phenomena continue to persist to the present day, as may be seen in the following *New York Times* article on spirit-possession incidents among female Cambodian factory workers <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/18/opinion/workers-of-the-world-faint.html> (accessed January 19, 2014).

[148] Nicholas Tapp, "Of Grasshoppers, Caterpillars, and Beans: A Historical Perspective on Hmong Messianism," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and National Studies in Southeast Asia* 3.2 (2015), pp. 289–318.

(including historical figures like Wu Sangui 吳三桂, 1612–1678) who would deliver followers from subjugation and create an ideal society of peace and plenty, as well as spirit-mediums who led rebels in mass possession rituals.[149] Research on late-imperial uprisings in this region by Robert Jenks, Charles Giersch, and John Herman confirms that such events were consistently marked by the presence of messianic beliefs and leadership by ritual specialists (regrettably, their gender is usually not given).[150] Additional records exist for Republican-era resistance movements in Guizhou, Guangxi, and Yunnan, where millennial beliefs and leadership by female mediums continued unabated. For example, Huang Shu-li's 黃淑莉 doctoral thesis on Guizhou's religious history features new data on female mediums' reliance on ritually charged water to induce possession in their followers, all of which is similar to the practices that characterized the Jumping Immortals.[151]

The materials in this paper also have the potential to serve as a basis for future comparative studies, including cross-cultural ones. If we cast our gaze further afield to other parts of the world, we find that numerous uprisings featured spirit-mediums and other charismatic religious figures who boasted of their ability to stage invulnerability rituals. One example is James Scott's study of Zomia,[152] which points to the importance of "prophets of renewal," including Hmong "Miao kings,"[153] while revolts in the Philippines and Melanesia were often sparked by beliefs in the return of a messianic king and manifestations

149 Cheung Siu-woo, "Millenarianism, Christian Movements, and Ethnic Change among Miao in Southwest China," in Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 1995), pp. 217–47. See also Wu, ed., *Miaozu tongshi*, pp. 33–36.

150 Charles Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 2006); John Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200–1700* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 2007); Robert D. Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou: The "Miao" Rebellion, 1854–1873* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 1994). See also Claudine Lombard-Salmon, *Un exemple d'acculturation chinoise: la province du Gui Zhou au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1972); David Faure, "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming and Their Impact on Yao Ethnicity," in Pamela K. Crossley et al., eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2006), pp. 171–89.

151 Huang Shu-li, "From Millenarians to Christians: The History of Christian Bureaucracy in Ahmao (Miao/Hmong) Society, 1850s-2012," Ph.D. diss. (University of Michigan, 2014). See also Wu, ed., *Miaozu tongshi*, pp. 344–45, 402–6.

152 Zomia encompasses virtually all lands at altitudes exceeding 300 meters traversing five Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma) and four provinces of China (Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and parts of Sichuan but not Hunan).

153 Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, pp. 283–323, esp. 285–87. See also Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, pp. 251, 265–75; Geoffrey C. Gunn, "Shamans and Rebels: The Batchai (Meo) Rebellion of Northern Lao and North-west Vietnam (1918–21)," *Journal of the Siam Society* 74 (1986), pp. 107–21; G. C. K. Gwassa and John Iliffe, eds., *Records of the Maji-Maji Rising* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968); Allen F. Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1976).

of ecstatic possession among participants that were usually labeled as "madness."[154] Similar phenomena marked Native American uprisings, some of which were headed by ritual specialists who preached the advent of a savior and possession by divine or ancestral figures, and also instructed followers in dancing, trance, and visions as a means of protection in battle as well as preparing for the apocalypse and subsequent return to a "regenerated earth" and "life of aboriginal happiness."[155] In recent years, the infamous Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, has claimed to be a medium whose rites are supposed to provide protection against bullets.[156] We might be tempted to consider mediumship as a "weapon of the weak," and doing so ought not downplay the martial and violent aspects of spirit possession, including exorcistic rituals that resemble pitched battles, with mediums commanding legions of cavalry and spirit soldiers.[157]

A second issue meriting further exploration is how events like the Jumping Immortals uprising survive in local memory. As Mary Rack shows in her study of local cults in the Jishou area, memories of bandit heroes like Long Yunfei are a source of tension between the CCP state and the communities it governs. Rituals performed by spirit-mediums provide an arena where memories of resistance to state hegemony can be revived;[158] it is surely no coincidence that the Shanjiang Miao

[154] Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila U.P., 1979). See also Charles F. Keyes, "National Heroine or Local Spirit? The Struggle over Memory in the Case of Thao Suranuri of Nakhon Ratchasima," in Shigeharu Tanabe and Charles F. Keyes, eds., *Cultural Crisis and Social Memory: Modernity and Identity in Thailand and Laos* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), pp. 113–36; Keyes, "Millenarianism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society," *JAS* 36.2 (1977), pp. 283–302.

[155] James Mooney, *The Ghost-dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1965; originally published in 1896 as part 2 of the *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1892–1893*).

[156] See for example the following article: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/31/world/africa/lra-5-reasons> (accessed September 11, 2013).

[157] For more on these issues, see Nicholas Tapp, "Shamanism and Violence: Power, Repression and Suffering in Indigenous Religious Conflicts," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 15:1 (2014), pp. 85–90. See also Carlos Fausto, *Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2012); Mark Juergensmeyer, Margo Kitts, and Michael Jerryson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook on Religion and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 2012); Diana Riboli and Davide Torri, eds., *Shamanism and Violence: Power, Repression and Suffering in Indigenous Religious Conflicts* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 2013); Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1987); Neil Whitehead and Robin Wright, eds., *In Darkness and Secrecy: The Anthropology of Assault Sorcery and Witchcraft in Amazonia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke U.P., 2004). The overlap between Chinese religious and martial traditions is treated in Paul R. Katz, "Trial by Power: Some Preliminary Observations on the Judicial Roles of Taoist Martial Deities," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 36 (2008), pp. 54–83; Mark R.E. Meulenbeld, *Demonic Warfare: Daoism, Territorial Networks, and the History of a Ming Novel* (Honolulu: U. Hawai'i P., 2015).

[158] Mary Rack, "Bandits and Heroes: Time and Place in Central China," in Wendy James and David Mills, eds., *The Qualities of Time: Anthropological Approaches* (Oxford and New

Museum (Shanjiang Miaozu bowuguan 山江苗族博物館) in Fenghuang county has been built on the site of Long's former residence, the "Hall of the Miao King" (Miaowangfu 苗王府). Work by Donald Sutton and Daniel McMahon points to similar phenomena having occurred in the aftermath of the Miao Rebellion. In that case, a sense of local pride found expression in songs, and key figures like Fu Nai were remembered as either valiant heroes or brutal oppressors, depending on where one does fieldwork and who one talks to.[159] This suggests that the Jumping Immortals uprising merits being studied in terms of Paul Cohen's "three keys": event, experience, and myth. While this paper has focused on the former two, there is clearly room for work on the third, especially in light of the fact that in China today only certain types of "myths" can be told.[160] For example, county governments whose jurisdictions cover the areas where the Jumping Immortals uprising took place have usually promoted local Miao dances that demonstrate merely an "intangible cultural heritage 非物質文化遺產"; they have hesitated to promote Jumping Immortals-style dances linked to controversial events. Our elderly village informants emphasized that the uprising had been a taboo subject until recent years due to its having been labeled as a form of "superstition."

Remembrances of the Jumping Immortals continue to thrive today. During a visit to Hanglai village in July 2013, many of the elderly villagers we interviewed, including eyewitnesses and children of participants (see figure 2), could recall the difficult days of the 1940s, especially salt rationing and its impact on daily life. They recounted with relish the charisma displayed by Shi Laoshuang, whose huge feasts attracted followers from far and wide. People there would burn mounds of paper money while worshipping Miao deities, and this provided needed warmth during the cold winter nights. Some reenacted the dancing that ensued after drinking immortals water, waving handkerchiefs in the air while chanting spells intended to initiate the jumping (*tiaoqilai! tiaoqilai!*

York: Berg, 2005), pp. 203–18. See also Chao Shu-kang 趙樹岡, *Xinghuo yu xianghuo: Dazhong wenhua yu difang lishi shiyexia de Zhonggong guojia xinggou* 星火與香火, 大眾文化與地方歷史視野下的中共國家形構 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 2006).

159 Sutton, "Ethnic Revolt in the Qing Empire"; McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland." Similar phenomena may be found for figures like Fenghuang county magistrate Li Zongqi or the southern Taiwanese rebel leader Jiang Ding 江定 (1866–1916) during the Ta-pa-ni Incident; see Katz, *When Valleys Turned Blood Red*, pp. 69–71.

160 Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, pp. 3–13. Erik Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2001). See also Gail Hershatter, *The Gender of Memory: Rural Women and China's Collective Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

Figure 2. Two Elderly Village Informants

Photo taken during a visit to Hanglai Village in July 2013. We interviewed elderly villagers about their recollections of the Jumping Immortals incident. The people in the photo are (left to right): Cheng Mingjun 程明君 *(photojournalist and expert on local Miao culture), Kang Shih-yu* 康詩瑀 *(my research assistant from Taiwan), two villagers, and myself.*

跳起來! 跳起來!) or provide protection from bullets (*dabujin! dabujin!* 打不進! 打不進!). The elders that we interviewed emphasized the importance of wearing traditional Miao clothing, and they recalled anti-Han slogans such as "slaughter our way into the homes of the guest people [Han Chinese] 殺進客人的大門." Such slogans rarely appear in studies of the uprising, perhaps due to concerns over unwanted memories of a violent past.

Finally, there is the issue of ethnic identity. In contrast to other acts of armed resistance in Western Hunan during this time period, including the divine soldiers (*shenbing*) and the Abolish Military Lands rebellions, participants in the Jumping Immortals uprising observed practices that expressed a sense of Miao identity, especially in the realms of ritual, gender, and clothing. At the same time, this identity proved to be a hybrid one, involving deities worshipped by Miao, Tujia, and Han Chinese alike (most notably the Heavenly Kings) and featuring both female mediums (who performed their rites in Miao) and leaders dressed like *badaizha* (who did so in local dialect). This in turn raises the question of whether the beliefs and practices described in this paper might have

helped the Jumping Immortals leadership attract a multi-ethnic base of support, or rather inhibited ethnic "border crossing."[161]

The work of Fredrik Barth proves invaluable in considering these problems, especially his articulation of "interactionist" theories about ethnic identity. According to Barth, ethnic groups are forms of ascription and identification created by interested actors, with aspects of ethnic identity such as culture (including religious culture) imbedded in groups that are constantly articulating, negotiating, and reinforcing such forms of self-identification. In short, ethnic identity is something that people strategize about; it is not static.[162] In the case of the Jumping Immortals, the significance of claims to Miao identity lies not in the veracity of those claims, but in their being called upon at a particular historical juncture, which in this instance involved the Mas, the Wus, and other leaders who attempted to mobilize and motivate their followers. As we saw above, Western Hunan and the entire Southwest China region have long been complex and multi-faceted environments with shifting vectors of interaction between the Miao, Han, and other peoples.[163] Thus, in considering the ethnicity of the Jumping Immortals, what may be most interesting is not whether it should be viewed as Miao or Han, but instead how its leaders attempted to assert distinct forms of ethnicity, as well as how subsequent generations of scholars have striven to assess this uprising's significance in the context of identity politics.[164]

161 Donald Sutton and Dan McMahon also debate this point in their research on the Miao Rebellion.

162 Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in idem, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), pp. 9–38; Barth, *Balinese Worlds* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1993). See also Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1985).

163 C. Patterson Giersch, "From Subjects to Han: The Rise of Han as Identity in Nineteenth-Century Southwest China," in Thomas S. Mullaney, ed., *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation and Identity of China's Majority* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2012), pp. 191–209; Thomas S. Mullaney, "Ethnic Classification Writ Large: The 1954 Yunnan Province Ethnic Classification Project and Its Foundations in Republican-Era Taxonomic Thought," *China Information* 18.2 (2004), pp. 207–41; Nicholas Tapp, "The Han Joker in the Pack: Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature," in Mullaney, ed. *Critical Han Studies*, pp. 147–70. Wu Xu [吴旭], *Farming, Cooking and Eating Practices in the Central China Highlands: How Hezha Foods Function to Establish Ethnic Identity* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011).

164 I am deeply grateful to David Holm and the late Nicholas Tapp for their guidance on these points.

Appendix A. Three Songs about the Jumping Immortals Uprising

The following songs are found in Yi and Chu, *Xiangxi xiongdi minzu de shange* (full citn. at n. 66), pp. 9–12, 51–57.

1. "Don't Sit so High above Us" (or "Get off Your High Horse") 你別高高坐在上 (Song recorded in Deshengying 得勝營, Fenghuang county.)

   走上坎來看仙娘,
   仙娘打鳳凰走成行.
   廖球的鹽井出了王,
   嚇的縣長發了狂,
   鄉長被趕慌了張,
   舊司坪的人打開了倉.

2. "Good for the Jumping Immortals" (or "The Jumping Immortals are Good") 跳仙好 (Song recorded in Liaojiachong 廖家冲, Fenghuang county.)

   將帥出門穿的好,
   都是一十七八的青姑娘,
   手裡拿著一個手帕子…
   女將出門不用槍,
   拿著手帕子在手上,
   紅旗綠旗走一路.

3. "We'll Drink Two or Three Bowls of Officials' Blood" 官血喝你兩三盆 (Song recorded in Liaojiachong, Fenghuang county.)

   官府抓壯丁逼的發昏,
   愁苦壞了爹娘親,
   大家都來喝仙水,
   喝了仙水就跳起來瘋又癲.
   蹴腳拍手就鳳凰去,
   要殺掉縣長李宗期.

Appendix B. Two Qing-dynasty Accounts of Miao Spirit-Mediums

1. Song of the Female Medium 仙娘曲

   See Sun Yongqing (1734–1790), "Xianniang qu" 仙娘曲 (full citn. at n. 104), *j.* 4, p. 8.

   黔俗尙鬼, 病輒延端工 (名巫)禳壓之其術, 卜夜設壇, 磔雞酬酒, 廣合笙竽, 而錯以鐃鐲飾美男子, 輕鬟纖屐, 躡壇跳舞, 盡態極妍, 謂之仙娘. 洎乃侑以椒醑, 或極飲. 大醉, 則曰仙娘喜, 而病者霍然矣. 雖厲禁弗能止. 其歌詞喁喁唧唧, 多苗猓語, 弗能悉也. 也作仙娘曲, 揚葩會鼓, 夜未闌, 仙娘窈窕, 舞七鞶鞶, 躉雙跣地, 衣薄媚行, 烟何翩珊, 笙竽罷吹, 瑟不鼓, 庭燭無光, 仙細語, 脩然一曲, 神弦鳴翠, 虯倏駕曉楸雨.

2. Local Customs 風俗

   See Xu Huiyun and Liu Jiachuan, ed. and comp., *Daoguang Chenxi xianzhi* 道光辰谿縣志 (full citn. at n. 105), *j.* 16, p. 350.

婦女多信女巫, 美其名曰仙娘, 每遇疾病或偶有懷疑之事, 輒向占問曰問仙, 女巫正坐堂中, 以巾蒙首, 主人焚香默祝意中之事. 女巫初作入陰司狀, 屏息不言, 磨牙有聲, 少頃還陽, 手搖足動, 以歌唱爲答問, 節以司刀, 依稀影射之詞, 最易惑聽. 又其術有曰關魂, 能令亡者魂附其身, 聲目神情宛肖其人生時, 聞者鮮不爲之感泣. 此外, 有關查五星踩墳山, 占失物諸名目, 其伎倆亦如此之, 稍有知識之家, 無不嚴爲禁阻, 邇來其風亦漸革矣.

Appendix C. Three Songs about the Miao Rebellion

The following are found in Liu Ziqi, "Liliang he zhihui de songge" (full citn. at n. 119), pp. 275–83; Miao Qing, "Qian-Jia Miaomin qiyi geyaoxuan" (full citn. at n. 145), pp. 284–96.

"Think about It, Look around You" 想一想, 看一看
人說吉瓜[165] 董島[166] 迄個地方,
出了草寇、出了癲子王;
說什麽草寇想坐金鑾殿,
說什麽癲子王要把漢人全殺光.[167]

"Song for Training the Troops" 練兵歌
我苗山, 高萬丈, 揮木刀, 殺清兵, 烏鴉難飛過山崗;
跨木凳, 戰馬躍;
清軍大炮轟不平, 手舞盾牌沖上前, 鐵打江山坐得長;
空中懸布架橋梁.
起義大軍忙練武, 打死奸臣朱道台,[168] 火把燒紅練兵場.
活埋福寧狗豺狼! 義旗飄, 牛角響.[169]

"Our Women Generals Come from Cucumber Village" 女將出在黃瓜寨
女將出在黃瓜寨, 三個女將會騰雲;
山頂擺開石灰戰, 打得清兵瞎眼睛.
女將出在黃瓜寨, 三個女將不簡單;
山頂擺開石灰陣, 打得清兵命歸天.[170]

165 The term *jigua* 吉瓜 refers to Upper Cucumber Village (Shang Huanggua zhai 上黃瓜寨).

166 The term *dongdao* 董島 refers to Lower Cucumber Village (Xia Huanggua zhai 下黃瓜寨).

167 Sung by Ma Kaiwang 麻開旺 and Shi Chengzhang 石成章; collected by Peng Jikuan 彭繼寬 and Miao Qing 苗青; translated by Miao Qing 苗青.

168 Zhu Daotai 朱道台 (Circuit Intendent Zhu) is a reference to Zhu Longa 朱隆阿 (fl. 1749–1795).

169 Fragments of this song are sung in the Sanpenping 三盆坪 and Pinglong 坪壟 areas of Jishou; this version has been compiled from four different singers: Shi Guozhen 石國珍, Wu Kunyu 吳昆玉, Long Jiahe 龍家和, and Shi Bashan 施巴山; collected by Miao Qing.

170 Sung by Long Guangyu 龍光玉 and Long Guangcheng 龍光成; collected by Miao Qing.