A New Interpretation of the Yao Charters

*Barend J. ter Haar**

The Yao culture of southern China has acquired a special status among Western scholars of Chinese religious culture, ever since Michel Strickmann pointed out that the Yao ritual traditions were actually Daoist in nature, very similar to the Lüshan (Mount Lü) tradition popular in Fujian and on Taiwan.[1] Another aspect of Yao culture which has drawn the attention of many scholars, especially in China itself, are their charters. These are often beautifully illustrated scrolls, written in classical Chinese (with clear vernacular influences) and generally referred to as the 'Charter of Emperor Ping' (*pinghuang juandie* or variants hereof) or the 'Proclamation [Allowing the Yao] to Cross the Mountains' (*guoshan bangwen* or variants thereof). The charters present themselves as imperial writs and contain at least one or two narratives, which tell of the origins of the first Yao groups and legitimate their exemption from taxes and corvée labour. The first narrative traces the origin of the Yao to a dragon-dog Called Panhu which performed meritorious services to a Chinese emperor. The Yao descend from the twelve children that he begot with his Chinese wife. The second narrative then tells of the original residence of these descendants in an ideal place and their forced migration southward.

Chinese (both Han and Yao) scholars take the claims of these documents to be imperial charters quite literally and use them as straightforward historical sources on the early history of the Yao.[2] However, it seems much more likely that these documents were composed by the Yao themselves on the basis of orally transmitted mythology in order to create a positive identity *vis-à-vis* the Han Chinese. This is indicated by the clumsy classical language, the narrative contents of large sections (quite unlike any other imperial documents known to me, with one exception, which will be noted), and a range of internal inconsistencies.[3] Finally, given the incessant complaints of Chinese local

---

*I wish to thank Dr Martin Heydra (Princeton University, Gest Library) for his help in collecting hard to obtain mainland Chinese publications on ethnic minorities. Lowell Skar has provided important comments, of which I was able to incorporate only some in the present research report. Chan Wing-hoi and Hjorleifur Jonsson kindly sent me important unpublished papers of theirs.

officials about people fleeing into inaccessible regions inhabited by non-Han cultures in order to escape taxes and corvée, it is extremely unlikely that any local group would have received permanent exemptions.

One type of bureaucratic document does resemble the Yao charters in function and contents, namely the charters (*die*) in which official titles were bestowed on local deities. Such title grants were especially common from the late eleventh century until the end of the Song dynasty (960-1276). Since the custom culminated under the southern Song, most titles have been granted to temples in the south and local Yao groups could easily have been aware of this practice. The charters in which these titles were granted contained a formal appraisal by the Board of Rites on the efficacy of the local deity. Based upon this evaluation, the Court of Imperial Sacrifices would provide the title, and the Imperial Secretariat would then draft an imperial edict bestowing the title. The Imperial Secretariat would add a full report on the investigations that had been carried out, including a survey of the deity's epiphany and recent miracles. All of this then made up the charters that the temples subsequently received. The temple community often had the texts of these charters engraved in stone and erected as a stele, because of their obvious significance for the status and legitimacy of the local cult.[4] From a technical point of view, however, the Yao charters simply do not qualify as valid bureaucratic documents, since they lack any mention of the agencies responsible for drawing them up, of the investigative process and of the official evaluation. Thus, I suspect that the temple title grant charters formed a source of inspiration, but were not closely imitated. The case of the temple title grants also shows that even in the unlikely case that the Yao charters do go back to a Song (or even older) original, most of their contents would still have been based on Yao sources.

In this article, I therefore propose to interpret the narratives contained in the charters as statements about Yao identity and Yao rights. My interpretation in no way exhausts all dimensions of these charters. David White has analysed the Panhu story as part of larger corpus of dog myths.[5] The recent dissertation by Hjorleifur Jonsson includes an extensive treatment of the use of these charters by the Yao themselves on the basis of his fieldwork among Yao communities in northern Thailand. Jonsson's work reveals the existence of considerable local variation, which I have ignored in the present paper in order to bring across my main arguments more clearly.[6] Because of the persuasiveness of the narrowly historical interpretation of the Yao charters in most Chinese, Japanese and Western scholarship to date, I have decided to limit myself in the present article to demonstrating the appropriateness of a mythological interpretation.

THE YAO CHARTERS

Although by no means all groups that are labelled Yao today also have (or had) the same origin myths and practice(d) Daoist rituals,[7] these practices and myths were and are of the utmost importance in defining a Yao identity for many of these groups.[8] This overall Yao identity did not preclude the use of other names to refer to their own specific groups (so-called autonyms, not to be confused with names or labels used by outsiders to refer to them), nor did it preclude the existence of more localized group identities. Historically, it seems quite likely that the term Yao was originally a label and was then imposed on a range of local, often unrelated groups in southern China by Han observers from the outside. The frequent usage of the term 'Yao' in these charters to refer to a set of surname groups descending from one common ancestor clearly shows that the term and the accompanying assumption of a common historical past was early on incorporated as an overall autonym. In the course of time, the sense of a collective Yao cultural and religious identity may also have grown, in the same way that the sense of a collective Han or Chinese identity has also been the product of a long and still continuing historical process. The term 'Yao' was mainly used by many of these groups in interacting with Han Chinese (especially officials), with other autonyms used for oral and internal usage. The charters were important in dealing with these outsiders, hence the use of the term Yao as an autonym, but also for internal usage as I will argue below.

More or less the same Panhu myth can be found among the She (or rather the northern Fujian groups now labelled as such). This myth was laid down in charters quite similar in form and contents to those of the Yao.[9] For this reason, it has been suggested that the She and the Yao ultimately draw from the same cultural substratum.[10] In a recent paper, Wing-hoi Chan has argued that the She are a quasi-ethnic minority largely made up of local migrants and tax refugees of Han stock. Some She groups probably adopted their charters and Panhu mythology from local Yao groups in the course of their peregrinations, which also explains the use of the label 'Yao' to refer to themselves in some instances.[11] This explanation neatly fits the thesis put forward below, namely that we should see the charters as part of a cultural repertoire about demonstrating independency and Chineseness (not to be confused with Han-ness, since the charters explicitly differentiate between inside=highland=Yao and outside=lowland=Han), rather than seeing them as historical records in the modern Western sense of the word.

Once we set aside the claims made in the charters themselves, the precise date of origin of the genre becomes very difficult to ascertain. The oldest two external references to Yao charters (*die*) date from the late Ming and 1781,[12] which fits the earliest reliable copying dates of 1643 and 1645.[13] Virtually all extant copies were made during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The

charters can contain very concrete narratives dealing with specific migrations of individual people. These start from the thirteenth century, with a strong concentration during the Ming period (1368-1644). Since the most common date given for the donation of the charter by the Chinese emperor is 1260 (alternative dates are the Sui, Tang, and Han, in descending order of frequency), it seems likely that the genre was first created during the Yuan (1270-1368) as a piece of historical fiction and took definitive shape during the subsequent Ming. This would also match the quantitative growth of reliable individual records from the early Ming onwards. Without a further analysis of their contents and the precise affiliations of all extant versions, however, any dating of the individual charters and the genre as a whole remains highly tentative.

The first narrative tells of a dragon-dog, who was living in the palace of Emperor Ping. One day, Emperor Ping considered killing the foreign (*waiguo*) Emperor Gao and the dragon-dog offered to do this for him. The emperor then promised his daughter in marriage if he would be successful. The dragon-dog disappeared across the huge seas to the fief of this foreign king on a journey of seven days and nights, and brought back the head of the foreign king. Now, the emperor donated his daughter in marriage to the dragon-dog, who turned out to be Panhu. The emperor enfeoffed him as a king in the Ten Treasure Palace (*shibao dian*) in the Nanjing region. The couple had six boys and six girls, who married, and from whom the twelve Yao surname groups (*xing*) are said to descend.[14] This narrative is included in most charters, but located in different periods of time, most commonly the Sui or the late Song. The overall story goes back to the third century AD or before, with all essential elements being the same (foreign threat, dog-saviour, marriage to princess, retreat to a mountainous area, as well as freedom of taxes and corvée), lacking only the concrete place names and the notion of Yao descent from the dog figure.[15]

It seems quite likely that the story functioned as a charter myth for local non-Han cultures from that early date onwards. Our sources specify that local ethnic groups claimed to descend from Panhu. Miscellaneous notes from the Tang onwards describe festivals and rituals devoted to King Panhu among these non-Han cultures, with some fragmentary references to his myth.[16] For them the dog was a positive animal and having a loyal dog serving a Chinese emperor was not at all humiliating. The fact that Han Chinese may have interpreted things differently does not prove that these local ethnic groups would have shared this view (even if they increasingly do so today, due to the accelerating encroachment of the Han and Thai cultures, depending on where the Yao groups live).

The second narrative tells us how, for a long time, these surname groups happily lived in their fief, until they were forced to move away under the pressures of ever increasing taxes and corvée imposed by local Han Chinese magistrates, combined with the occurrence of natural disasters (especially

flooding). This supposedly happened during the late Yuan or early Ming. Strictly speaking, the imposition of taxes and corvée and the forced migration southward constituted a betrayal of the original promises made to the Yao ancestors. During their long and arduous journey over sea (or in some versions over land), they encountered a terrible storm. Only thanks to the assistance of King Panhu and his divine armies were they able to survive, and eventually reached the southern regions where they now live. This story is only included in full in some of the extant charters, as well as in Daoist ritual texts of the Yao.[17] On the other hand, a written Chinese version of this story would be presented during marriage rituals, while the Mien 'song language' version (i.e. the version in the Yao language itself) would be recited.[18] The story is prominently depicted in Yao paintings and was clearly important to them.[19]

A number of charters contain a third type of narrative, which is much more specific in time, place and actors. These narratives recount the settlement history of specific Yao individuals and surname groups (*xing*), local incidents involving Yao groups, the assistance provided by Yao militia to the Ming administration and so forth. These events are presented by the charters as the application of the ideals expressed in the two other narratives, although it seems more likely that the first two narratives were created (possibly out of already existing Yao mythology) in order to provide the Yao groups with a reference point in a mythical past, and thereby legitimate their present migrations.

Finally, most charters contain a non-narrative section, which list the rights of the Yao to certain types of mountainous land, reiterates their freedom from taxes and corvée, and finally specifies a long series of internal rules. In the Big Yao Mountain region, this narrative section was further developed into separate documents (often written on stone) to regulate intra-Yao behaviour.[20] Interestingly, the charters refer to the 'Yao' as one people and use the character for 'Yao' with the dog radical. Scholarly publications consistently change this into the jade radical, because the dog radical has negative connotations in Han Chinese culture. Nonetheless, since the Yao saw themselves as descending from a dog, they may originally have interpreted the character with the dog-radical in a positive way.[21]

The first two narratives create a sense of cohesion and enhanced status for the Yao as a whole with respect to the Han by means of three different mechanisms: descent from a common ancestor, the performance of meritorious acts for the benefit of the nation, and a shared place of origin. None of these mechanisms are unique to the Yao, and they can be found among non-Han and Han cultures alike. Of these three mechanisms, the notion of shared descent has been investigated in great detail by modern scholars, who see it as one of the most important structures that kept together traditional Chinese society.

The mechanism of common descent was not quite the same as in the lineage system that became so important to southern Chinese society during the late imperial period.[22] The Yao notions of descent and kinship have remained much

allowing him to enact the cosmic processes. He also created the Step of Yu, which was an essential element of Daoist ritual.[31] Panhu's role in Yao lore partly parallels the role of Yu the Great in Han Chinese Daoist ritual. He appears in connection with a great flood, he is the first ruler of the Yao nation, and the patriarch of their ritual tradition. The notion of Panhu as the source of ritual power is clearest in the story of the sea journey of the Yao, when they were threatened by storms and saved by Panhu and his divine armies. This view of Panhu may well go back to the Song period, but (no longer?) holds true for the Meishan ritual tradition as it was practised by Yao groups since the late imperial period.[32] Both King Yu and Panhu are able to control water and are the ultimate source of ritual power in their respective traditions. It therefore seems likely that the choice of Kuaiji as the location for Panhu's kingdom was inspired by the mythology around King Yu.

The choice of Nanjing as the location for the first ideal world of the Yao betrays a different logic. It is quite certain that the Yao never lived in the neighbourhood of modern Nanjing (leave alone any of the other 'Southern Capitals' in Chinese history, which were located even further northward). Modern Nanjing only became known under this name from the Ming onwards, when it first functioned as the only capital under the Hongwu and Yongle emperors, becoming the second capital after the Yongle emperor moved the real centre of political power to the new capital of Beijing ('Northern Capital'). Although Nanjing lost in concrete political importance, it retained a strong association with the much admired founding emperor of the Ming. Beijing always remained distant and lacked the rich symbolic connotations that Nanjing had. In a messianic context, Nanjing sometimes served as the ideal city where heaven on earth would be realized.[33] Within the structure of the two Yao myths, and from a Ming or later political perspective, the choice of this city as the location of Panhu's kingdom was very appropriate. It connected the Yao to a central place in Han Chinese political culture. By linking the original region of residence of the first twelve Yao clans to Yu the Great's Kuaiji Mountain and to the late imperial Han Chinese capital of Nanjing, the Yao successfully anchored themselves in the Chinese politico-religious world.

The overall landscape in which the events of the first and second narratives take place can be interpreted as a mythical landscape.[34] In the Meishan ritual tradition, as in southern Chinese religious culture in general, grotto worlds are of central importance, especially the Peachblossom Spring Grotto (*taoyuan dong*). This place recalls the famous grotto world with the same name in early Daoist mythology. In the same way, the grotto that formed the original residence of the first twelve Yao surname groups must actually be seen as a paradisical world. Its alternative names of Thousand Family Grotto, Ten Unit Grotto and others all express the same idea, by combining a perfect number (thousand, ten, seven) with a term for a unit of people. Seven Precious Objects Grotto also expresses the auspicious nature of this location.

Paradisical grotto-worlds such as the Peachblossom Spring Grotto are separated from the human world by water, whether seas, lakes, rivers or even wells. Many are the stories in Chinese (i.e. not exclusively Han) mythology of people who travelled over water and happened to stumble upon such grotto-worlds, whether with beautiful landscapes and inhabited by eternally young people, or more like underworlds with magistrates, instruments of torture and punishment, and so forth. In either case, the grotto-world is separated from the world of the living by a water barrier. More generally, the worlds of the unborn as well as the dead are separated from the world of the living by water, which needs to be crossed before living beings (human or animal) can be (re)born or die.[35]

Water barriers appear twice in the above two Yao myths. The first time, the dragon-dog journeys over water for many days and nights (in some versions the barrier is formed by a large mass of land) to reach the land of the rebellious king. It indicates Panhu's ability to travel from the world of the living into the world of the dead (or the immortals). In Yao lore, Panhu is not only the forefather of all Yao families, but also a master of ritual and in charge of the exorcist armies of the Soldiers and Horses of the Five Banners. Such soldiers are people who had died without being able to complete the process. As a result they are caught in the liminal space between the lands of the living and the dead, and can therefore be summoned to subdue other, even more dangerous demonic beings. These armies are an essential feature of the Meishan and other southern Chinese exorcist ritual traditions.

The second time that a water barrier plays a role is when the first twelve Yao clans are threatened by disasters and official repression, and have to leave their original paradisical world by boat over the ocean (in very few versions the journey is over land). They float around for months, and only after praying to Panhu for help are they guided into a safe harbour with the assistance of his Soldiers and Horses of the Five Banners (the divine armies of the Yao exorcist ritual traditions). This is particularly striking, given the fact that the Yao (or Yao culture) most likely spread southward over land from Hunan and certainly never crossed the sea. Therefore, the ocean crossing of the first Yao clans should not be seen as a real life journey, but rather as a symbolic event. The second mythical narrative explains the present plight of the Yao in much less hospitable mountain worlds as a fall from grace, driven from a paradisical grotto world to a harsh and much more difficult world.

Taken as a whole, the two mythical narratives can be read in various ways. They provide an explanation for the present-day, less than privileged life of the Yao in historical terms. They certify the claims of the Yao to the mountains as an imperially given right. Finally, they explain the importance of Panhu as the ancestor of all Yao surname groups (in the first narrative) and the source of their ritual power (in the second narrative). The detailed rules that follow them in many charters further develop these themes, specify a range of behavioural

rules, and explicitly mention the duty of local magistrates to intervene in conflicts over mountain land on behalf of the Yao. Even more than with respect to the mythical narratives, we need more extensive fieldwork to clarify the way in which the various Yao groups saw these rules in actual practice.

On the surface, the Yao adoption of a migration myth may appear to be the logical result of their mobile existence, due to their tradition of practising swidden agriculture. However, although this aspect of the myth was no doubt very attractive to the Yao, I do not think that this is its ultimate justification. We find surprisingly many such migration narratives as the myths of origin of southern Chinese groups, whether lineages, marginal groups (such as the Triads!) or local cultures (including ethnic groups).[36]

A well-known example are the Hakka, whose origins supposedly were in Henan from which they then migrated south somewhere during the Tang dynasty. This myth - as I would see it - has decisively shaped their self-perception and continues to determine scholarly interpretations of Hakka history until today.[37] In Southern Fujian, a great number of families (non-Hakka) claim to descend from people who originally came from Gushi County in modern Henan Province during the early Tang dynasty. These first immigrants supposedly came in the service of the generals who first opened up the region for the Han Chinese.[38] Both population groups inhabited the flat lands and were stable residential groups, although certainly the Hakka have a recent history of migrations to obtain lands for cultivation. Many more examples of such migration myths could be adduced, but the basic similarity with the Yao accounts should be self-evident.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I wish to propose as an alternative hypothesis that such migration myths do not reflect any historical northern origins of the local cultures in question, but rather their southern and - as seen from a Han Chinese perspective - culturally suspect origins. Until the end of the northern Song period (960-1127), the centre of Han Chinese cultural traditions had been in the north (referred to for instance as the 'middle plains'). For local groups in the far south, especially those of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds it was essential for their survival to demonstrate their 'Chineseness' and they did so by means of such migration myths. David Faure has suggested that such stories were about the claims of various groups to the right of possessing and working local land.[39] Given the stress in the Yao charters on their inalienable right to all land in the hills and mountains, Faure's interpretation clearly holds true for the Yao case as well, but is still incomplete. The narratives not only deal with land rights, but also underline the Yao loyalty to the Chinese imperial system and explain their present marginal position as a kind of involuntary banishment of a group with

meritorious antecedents.

My analysis forces us to reconsider the matter of the 'origins' of the Yao, She and Hakka, which may not be the result of actual migrations, but of increased contacts and intermingling (through marriages and the absorption of Han Chinese) with a hegemonic culture from the north. Whether any 'pure' Yao, She and Hakka groups ever existed is therefore very much open to questioning. In this preliminary interpretation even the Hakka would be an earlier and more advanced adaptation of local cultures to this hegemonic culture than the She and Yao. I am well aware that my interpretation of Yao (and by implication also She and Hakka) origin accounts runs counter to their present self-perceptions, as well as virtually all modern scholarship. Especially in the case of the Hakka, even considering my interpretation may be difficult, in view of the Hakka (and more generally Han) perception of a non-Han (i.e. 'ethnic minority') origin as dishonourable.[40] However, such views and their scholarly derivations continue to accept the Han-centric vision that underlies all of these origin accounts, but which I do not share. Historically speaking, there is no pure Chinese or Han-Chinese culture to begin with.

The first two narratives in the charters were mythological accounts which served a specific Yao agenda. They helped to create a supralocal Yao identity and legitimated their right as inalienable privilege derived from the authority of the Chinese imperial system (significantly always a dynasty with a Han background!). This entailed accepting some of the system's premises, notably the right of a conveniently distant emperor to dispense favours, but at the same time subverted the much closer authority of the local officials, by placing them outside their power to impose taxes and corvée. Therefore, by accepting the imperial system on a higher level, it became possible to maintain full autonomy on an immediate local level. This supralocal Yao identity was useful in their dealings with respect to local Han groups and magistrates, as well as with other non-Han cultures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bai Yuchan.

1988 *Haiqiong baizhenren yulu.* Daozang reprint, vol. 33

Bokenkamp, S.

1986 'The Peach Flower Font and the Grotto Passage', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106

Constable, N.

1996 'Introduction', in: N. Constable (ed.) *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad.* Seattle

Cushman, R.

1970 'Rebel Haunts and Lotus Huts: Problems in the Ethnohistory of the Yao',

PhD dissertation, Cornell University

Faure, D.

1986 *The Structure of Chinese Rural Society: Lineage and Village in the Eastern New Territories*. Hong Kong

1989 *The ~~Rural Economy of Pre-Liberation China: Trade Expansion and Peasant Livelihood in Jiangsu and Guangdong~~*. ~~Hong Kong~~ "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta" Modern China 15:1 (1989), pp. 4-36.

Freedman, M.

1965 *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*. London, (first published, 1958)

1971 *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*. London (1966)

Hahn, T.

1988 'The Standard Taoist Mountain and Related Features of Religious Geography', *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 4

Hansen, V.

1990 *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*. Princeton

Huang Yu & Li Bengao.

1988 'Ye tan Yaozu "qianjiadong"', in: *Xi'nan minzu yanjiu* Guiyang: *Guizhou minzu*.

Hu Qiwang and Fan Honggui.

1983 *Pancun yaozu* (n.p.: Minzu)

Huang Yu.

1988 'Yaozu "pinghuang juandie" chutan', in: Qiao Jian, Xie Jian, Hu Qiwang (eds) *Yaozu yanjiu lunwen ji*. (Luancheng: Minzu), translated in Jacques Lemoine and Chiao Chien (eds) loc cit, 1991

Jonsson, H.

1993 'People of the Forested Mountains: A Comparative Perspective on the Social Landscape of the Kia Shen Pong', paper prepared for the 4th Workshop of the International Association for Yao Studies, Chiang-mai, December, 1993

1996 'Shifting Social Landscape: Mien (Yao) Upland Communities and Histories in State-Client Settings', Cornell University, PhD dissertation

Kandre, P.

1976 'Yao (Iu Mien) Supernaturalism, Language, and Ethnicity', in: David J. Banks (ed.) *Changing Identities in Modern Southeast Asia*. The Hague

1967 'Autonomy and Integration of Social Systems: The Iu Mien ("Yao" or "Man") Mountain Population and Their Neighbors', in: Peter Kunstadter (ed.) *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities, and Nations*. Princeton

Lagerwey, J.

1987 *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*. New York

1991 *Le continent des esprits: la Chine dans le miroir du taoïsme*.

Bruxelles

Lemoine, J.

1982 *Yao Ceremonial Paintings.* Bangkok

1983 'Yao Religion and Society', in: John McKinnon and Wanat Bhruksari (eds) *Highlanders of Thailand.* Kuala Lumpur

Lemoine, Jaques and Chiao Chien (eds)

1991 *The Yao of South China: Recent International Studies*. Paris

Li Weixin.

1985 'Shilun yaozu "guoshan bang"', in: Hu Qiwang and Hua Zugen (eds) *Yaozu yanjiu lunwen ji* (Zhongnan minzu xueyuan minzu yanjiusuo)

Litzinger, R.

1995a 'Making Histories: Contending Conception of the Yao Past', in: Stevan Harrell (ed.) *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers.* Seattle

1995b 'The Work of Culture and Memory in Contemporary China', in: *Working Papers in Asian/Pacific Studies.* Durham

Liu Zhiwan.

1974 *Zhongguo minjian xinyang lunji* (Taibei: *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo*)

Luo Xianglin.

1933 *Kejia yanjiu daolun* (Xingning: *Xingning xishan shucang*) and summary by Myron L. Cohen, in: 'The Hakka or "Guest People": Dialect as a Sociocultural Variable in Southeast China,' in: Nicole Constable (ed.) *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad.* Seattle, 1996

Makino Tatsumi

1985 *Makino Tatsumi chôsaku shû, Chûgoku imin densetsu/Kôtô genjû minzoku kô* (Tôkyô: *Ocha no mizu shobô)*

Pu Chaojun and Guo Zhu (eds)

1992 *Zhongguo yaozu fengtu zhi.* Beijing

Rao Zongyi (Jao Tsong-yi).

1982 'The She Settlements in the Han River Basin, Kwangtung', in: *Xuantang jilin, Shilin.* Hong Kong

1988 'Taiguo "Yaoren wenshu" du houji', in: Qiao, Xie & Hu, loc cit, translated in Jacques Lemoine and Chiao Chien (eds)

Rong Guanjing.

1988 'Yaozu lishi santi', in: *Xi'nan minzu yanjiu.* Guiyang

Shiratori Yoshirô.

1975 *Yôjin monjo.* Tôkyô

Stein, R.A.

1990 (Phyllis Brooks trsl.) *The World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought.* Stanford

Strickmann, M.

1980 'History, Anthropology, and Chinese Religion', *Harvard Journal of*

Asiatic Studies 40

1982 'The Tao among the Yao: Taoism and the Sinification of South China', in: *Rekishi ni okeru minshû to bunka-Sakai Tada sensei koki jukuga kinen ronshû*. Tôkyô

Stübel, H., and Li Hua-min.

1932 *Die Hsia-min von Tse-mu-schan (Monographie des Institutes für Sozialwissenschaften)*. Nanking

Szonyi, M.A.

1995 'Village Rituals in Fuzhou in the Late Imperial and Republican Periods', University of Oxford, DPhil dissertation

Xu Renyao and Hu Qiwang.

1985 'Yaozu "guoshan bang" xi', in: Hu and Hua, loc cit. 1991, pp. 125-44

White, D.G.

1991 *Myths of the Dog-Man*. Chicago

Wing-hoi Chan

1997 'Ethnic Labels in a Mountainous Niche: The Case of the She Bandits' (paper presented at the Conference on 'Ethnicity and the China Frontier: Changing Discourse and Consciousness', Hannover

Zhang Youjuan.

1990 'Zhongguo yaoren wenshu ji qi yanjiu', in: *Guangxi minzu xueyuan xuebao, (Zhexue shehui kexueban)*

Notes

1. Strickman, 1980, 230; 1982, 23-30. This work was based on the Yao ritual texts reproduced in Shiratori Yoshirô (1975), who did not mention Daoism at all. An excellent and insightful study of Yao history and identity is Cushman, 1970. I hope to present a more detailed analysis of Daoist traditions among the Yao elsewhere, and will therefore only note at this point that Chinese scholars had already observed the Daoist nature of Yao rituals during the 1930s.
2. Such as Rong Guanjing, 1988, pp. 220-30; Xu Renyao and Hu Qiwang, 1985, pp. 131-45; Li Weixin, 1985, pp. 146-57; Rao Zongyi (Jao Tsong-yi), 1988, pp. 37-45; and Huang Yu, 1988, pp. 46-62. Jacques Lemoine also accepts this judgement, see Lemoine, 1982, pp. 11-44, and 1983, esp. pp. 196-7.
3. A substantial number of different versions has been reserved. As many as 89 are contained in the *Guangxi yaozu hehui lishi diaocha* VIII (Nanning: *Guangxi renmin*, 1985).
4. Hansen, 1990, pp. 79-104, provides an excellent analysis of the title granting process.

5. White, 1991, pp. 140-79.
6. My remarks are based on his 1993 paper. See also his 1996 PhD dissertation.
7. Pu Chaojun and Guo Zhu (eds), 1992, *passim*.
8. As pointed out by Cushman, 1970, pp. 144-7 and most clearly by Peter Kandre, 1976, pp. 171-97. Of course, the present situation is different, both in Southeast Asia and in southern China, due to the pressures of acculturation and outright cultural persecution. For the mainland situation, see Litzinger, 1995a, pp. 117-30; and 1995b.
9. See H. Stübel and Li Hua-min, 1932, pp. 35-42, 61-93 (these materials are entirely the same in type of contents as the fuller Yao charters, including the migration myth and historical records on the migration of specific ancestors). The charter also details the history of the ancestors of its present She owners, calling them Yao (Stübel and Li, 1932, pp. 76-82)! Cushman, 1970, pp. 64-71, argues that the myth was unique to the Yao (including the so-called Miao on Hainan Isle, who are really Yao) and She. White, 1991, pp. 140-79, suggests that this is not the case.
10. Stübel and Li, 1932, pp. 97-111. Rao Zongyi, 1982, pp. 1468-96.
11. Wing-hoi Chan, 1997. Of course, they may also have incorporated actual Yao groups over the centuries.
12. Zhang Youjuan, 1990: 3: p. 25.
13. *Guangxi yaozu shehui lishi diaocha* VIII, pp. 68 (1643), 71 (1645, recopied in 1833).
14. Version quoted from Pu and Guo, 1992, pp. 339-44. The story quoted in op. cit., pp. 316-17 as the earliest version of Panhu's myth is really a paraphrase of the story from the *Houhanshu*.
15. White, 1991, p. 141 and note 2. Pu and Guo, 1992, pp. 316-27, 359-62, and *passim*.
16. For a general discussion of the worship of Panhu, including the historical evidence, see Pu and Guo 1992, pp. 315-403. I therefore see no reason to assume that the Yao (or their predecessors) adopted the story from classical Chinese sources or adapted their own myths according to this Chinese version of it. See White 1991, pp. 145 and 158.
17. For some versions, see Pu and Guo, 1992, pp. 327-9 (overland), 331 and 352-3 (overseas) and their general discussion on pp. 337-55. Lemoine, 1982, pp. 15-17 (overseas) analyses the story as a historical source. Rong Guanjing, 1988, pp. 222-3, counts 24 charters containing the story out of a total of 149 charters surveyed. Among the 89 charters in the *Guangxi yaozu shehui lishi diaocha* VIII, eleven contain shorter or longer references to this story (14, 37, 61, 207, 210, 216, 227, 237, 249, 250, 254).
18. Kandre, 1976, pp. 175-6, based on fieldwork among the Yao in northern

Thailand.

19. Lemoine, 1982, pp. 147-51.
20. Pu and Guo, 1992, pp. 253-78.
21. Scholars always implicitly assumed that the Yao derived their name from a derogative Han Chinese discourse, but for all we know the name may be their own as well. The use of the dog radical makes eminent sense from their perspective and could have inspired the Han adoption of the radical for the names of other ethnic groups.
22. The classical statements are Maurice Freedman, 1965, and 1971. On the importance of the Ming, see David Faure, 1986, Michael A. Szonyi, 1995, and oral comments by David Faure during a lecture at Heidelberg University in April 1996.
23. Hu Qiwang and Fan Honggui, 1983, describe the remarkably flexible partner selection and residence practices of the Yao in mainland China. Kandre, 1976, pp. 177-80 and 1967, pp. 591-3 briefly describes the situation among the Yao in Thailand. Among the Yao, women are part of the lineage and they can be depicted on ancestral scrolls, as I have seen on examples in the possession of Mr Heinrich Foss (Karlsruhe, Germany). According to their foundation myth, six surname groups descend from women as well.
24. Kandre, 1976, *passim*.
25. See my 'Creating group identity through ritual and myth: the case of the Chinese Triads,' Chapter Nine (completed book manuscript).
26. Makino Tatsumi, 1985, pp. 3-163; and Faure, 1989, pp. 4-36.
27. *Guangxi yaozu shehui lishi diaocha*: same list 2, 28, 35, 72, 75, 92, 96, 100, 146, 160, 203, same type and different list, 215, 235.
28. *Guangxi yaozu shehui lishi diaocha*: same list 11, 57, 215; same type, different list, 32, 255.
29. Thus, Huang Yu and Li Bengao speculate in considerable detail about the possible location of the Thousand Families in Huang Yu and Li Bengao, 1988, pp. 259-67.
30. White, 1991, pp. 154-5, refers to such places as the location of Panhu's cult, but his sources only speak of Panhu's residence in these places.
31. Lagerwey, 1987, pp. 25-48; and 1991, pp. 136-42.
32. The reference by the southern Song Daoist master Bai Yuchan (1134 or 1194-1229) to the 'Pangu methods' (Pangu being the Han version of Panhu) as a prominent exorcist ritual tradition of his time indicates that Pangu had long been associated with such traditions. Sadly, this is all we know. Bai's reference to the 'Investigating and Summoning Hall of Immortal Mei (*meixian kaozhaoyuan*)' could be interpreted as a reference to Mountain Mei, when we interpret *meixian* as a writing error for the rather

similar *meishan*. However, this remains only a tantalizing hunch. Both references are contained in the same set of dialogues between Bai Yuchan and his students, see Bai Yuchan, 1988, vol. 33, 1: 112a and 113c-114a. Guo Pu already associated Panhu with Kuaiji, but it is unclear whether this was his own interpretation of conflicting evidence, or went back to actual local beliefs. See White, 1991, p. 144.

33. See sections 3.1.1. and 6.2. of my 'Creating group identity through ritual and myth: the case of the Chinese Triads', (book manuscript).
34. For this reason, and unlike Lemoine, 1982, p. 15, I translate *dong* as grotto, rather than valley. In Chapter Three of my 'Creating group identity through ritual and myth: the case of the Chinese Triads', (book manuscript), I discuss the landscape of birth and death.
35. The preceding discussion is based upon Liu Zhiwan, 1974; Bokenkamp, 1986, pp. 65-77; Hahn, 1988, pp. 145-56; Stein, 1990.
36. See Makino Tatsumi, 1985, pp. 3-163.
37. Luo Xianglin, 1933, in: Nicole Constable (ed.), 1996, pp. 40-8.
38. Makino Tatsumi, 1985, pp. 91-102.
39. Faure, 1989, pp. 4-36.
40. As suggested by Nicole Constable, 1996, pp. 7-15.