



Constructing the Chinese: Paleoanthropology and Anthropology in the Chinese Frontier, 1920-1950

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To My Parents

Advisor: Professor Henrietta Harrison

Hsiao-pei Yen

Constructing the Chinese: Paleoanthropology and Anthropology in the Chinese Frontier,
1920-1950

ABSTRACT

Today's Chinese ethno-nationalism exploits nativist ancestral claims back to antiquity to legitimize its geo-political occupation of the entire territory of modern China, which includes areas where many non-Han people live. It also insists on the inseparability of the non-Han nationalities as an integrated part of *Zhonghua minzu*. This dissertation traces the origin of this nationalism to the two major waves of scientific investigation in the fields of paleoanthropology and anthropology in the Chinese frontier during the first half of the twentieth century. Prevailing theories and discoveries in the two scientific disciplines inspired the ways in which the Chinese intellectuals constructed their national identity.

The first wave concerns the international quest for human ancestors in North China and the northwestern frontier in the 1920s and 1930s. Foreign scientists, such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Amadeus Grabau, Roy Chapman Andrews, and Davidson Black, came to China to search for the first human fossils. With the discovery of Peking Man, they made Beijing one of the most prestigious places for the study of human paleontology and popularized the evolutionary Asiatic theory that designated Chinese Central Asia and Mongolia as the cradle of humans. Inspired by the theory and the study of the Peking Man fossils, Chinese intellectuals turned Peking Man into the first Chinese and a common ancestor of all humans.

In the second wave, from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, Chinese anthropologists like Rui Yifu, Cen Jiawu, Fei Xiaotong, and Li Anzhai made enormous efforts to inscribe the non-Han people of the southwestern frontier into the genealogy of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). Their interpretations of the relationship between the Han and the non-Han and between the frontier and the center were influenced by various Western anthropological theories. However, their intensive studies of the southwestern non-Han societies advocated the ethnic integration and nationalization of China's southwestern frontier.

By linking the two waves of scientific endeavor, this dissertation asserts that the Chinese intellectual construction of modern Chinese ethnogenesis and nationalism was not a parochial and reactionary nationalist “invention” but a series of indigenizing attempts to appropriate and interpret scientific theories and discoveries.

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INTRODUCTION

A couple recent events highlight the temporal and spacial dimensions of modern Chinese ethno-nationalism. On August 8, 2008, with unprecedented global media attention fixed on the opening ceremony of the 29th Olympic Games in Beijing, an article appeared on China's official newspaper *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily) celebrating the inauguration of the great event. Entitled "A Historical Fusion of a Great Nation and a Great Games," the article started, with much elation, by describing the last section of the Olympic torch relay that took place during the day:

Early this morning, the Olympic torch, which has been passed on through the hands of more than 20,000 torch bearers in more than 100 cities of the five continents, was relayed from the Peking Man site at Zhoukoudian once inhabited by ancestors of the Chinese once inhabited, and will reach the cauldron located in the Bird's Nest Stadium later tonight. The opening of the 29th Olympic Games marks the arrival of a long awaited great moment. This glorious historical moment congeals with the unswerving pursuit of a people; it records the steadfastly progressive steps of a nation; and it is filled with true desires of the Chinese sons and daughters (*huaxia ernü*) for friendship and peace with peoples of the world.¹

The choice of Zhoukoudian as the starting site of the torch relay on the day of the opening is significant not only because Peking Man was one of the first hominids to use fire, but he was also seen as the common ancestor of the Chinese. Thus the route from Zhoukoudian to the Bird's Nest symbolized the long journey of the "Chinese" from their prehistoric origins to a recognized place as a great nation in the global community. Also significant was the choice of the athlete, Li Ning, as the final torchbearer who lit the cauldron in the stadium. Li was a legendary former gymnast who won several Olympic

¹ Yan Xiaoming, Wang Jianxin, and Lai Renqiong, "Yige weida de minzu yu yixiang weida yundong de lishixing ronghe," *Renmin ribao* (Beijing), 8 August 2008.

medals in the 1980s. He was also of the Zhuang nationality. From Zhoukoudian to Li Ning, the deliberately designed Olympic torch relay was intended to illuminate China's long "history" that stretched back to antiquity as well as the heterogeneous, yet "united," population of more than 1.3 billion "Chinese sons and daughters."² This "unitary multi-ethnic" (*tongyi de duominzu*) national body following the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party was later symbolically represented by 56 children wearing different ethnic costumes carrying the People's Republic of China flag and singing the national anthem.³

Even years before the Beijing Olympics, the government of the Fangshan district where the Zhoukoudian is located enthusiastically hosted a series of cultural festivals in July 2005 with the slogan "Olympics in Beijing, Ancestral Roots in Fangshan" (*aoyun Beijing, zugen Fangshan*) to boost local tourist industry. With cultural festivals and activities as preludes,⁴ the government then announced the establishment of a special

² Before the torch arrived in Beijing for the opening ceremony, it had traveled throughout China over three months. The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) coined the torch relay process the "Journey of Harmony" (*hexie zhi li*). See <http://torchrelay.beijing2008.cn/cn/journey/>. In minority autonomous regions, the torchbearers were non-Han minorities. As James Leibold points out, these minority torchbearers were chosen to represent visibility and active participation of minorities in China's national events. See James Leibold, "The Beijing Olympics and China's Conflicted National Form," *The China Journal* 63 (January 2010): 7.

³ The media guide for the opening ceremony claimed that these children were from 56 ethnic groups. However it was revealed later that they were actually all Han Chinese. See Belinda Goldsmith, "Ethnic Children Faked at Games Opening," *Reuters*, 15 August 2008 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/08/15/us-olympics-fake-idUSSP2154320080815>.

⁴ Meng Qingzhen and Zhou Li, "Fangshan qu lijie luyou wenhua jie dashiji" [Events of Previous Tourism and Cultural Festivals in the Fangshan District], *Beijingren zazhi*, 1 (2006), at <http://www.zkd.cn:8089/web/guest/home>.

search committee to carry out the task of finding the missing skulls of Peking Man.⁵ Between 1929 and 1937, five complete Peking Man skullcaps and more than one hundred separate pieces of teeth and bone relics were discovered at the Zhoukoudian site. However, these fossils disappeared on their way to the United States in 1941 in the middle of the Second World War. Since the end of the war, scientists have searched for the missing fossils in China, Japan, and the United States but failed to discover their whereabouts. The Fangshan government initiated the first official inquiry into the whereabouts of these fossils. The committee recruited famous scientists and academicians, such as paleoanthropologist Wu Xinzhi of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (IVPP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), professor of anthropology and prehistoric archaeology Zhou Guoxin, and Jia Yuzhang, son of paleoanthropologist Jia Lanpo, who discovered three of the five Peking Man skulls.⁶ Regardless of whether scientists could decipher more information from these original fossils to add to our contemporary knowledge of human origins in general or to *Homo erectus* specifically, these fossils bear different meanings for the Chinese.⁷ The

⁵ Wang Wentao, “Beijing chengli xunzhao “Beijingren” tougaigu huashi xingdong jigou” [The Acting Committee for the Search of ‘Peking Man’ Is founded in Beijing], *Xinhuanet*, 3 July 2005, http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2005-07/03/content_3167623.htm.

⁶ “Search for Missing Peking Man Skulls Continues,” *Xinhuanet* (English), 6 July 2005, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-07/06/content_3184050.htm.

⁷ One partial skull was discovered in 1966 and is the only original Peking Man fossil available today. The extensive excavations since 1929 have caused great damage to the Zhoukoudian site. In 2009, the Paleoanthropological Research Center of the IVPP has begun a new excavation-conservation project. See Lu Yiran, “Bashinian hou chongxin faxian Beijingren” [Rediscovery of the Peking Man after 80 Years], *Zhongguo wenhua bao*, 18 January 2010. Even without the originals, the duplicates of the Peking Man fossils made before their disappearance have provided substantial information for morphological studies of *Homo erectus*. Therefore, it is questionable if the discovery of

Chinese paleoanthropologist Gao Xing, a researcher of the IVPP and the chair of the Paleoanthropological Research Center of Zhoukoudian, has commented on the necessity of the new search: “Mankind can give up many things, but there is one thing that we can never abandon – that is our ancestors.”⁸ It is thus not an overstatement to say that the Chinese might have suffered from an “ancestral complex” with Peking Man.

The search for the missing “ancestral” relics and the 2008 Beijing Olympics showcased a modern Chinese ethno-racial nationalism that exploited nativist ancestral claims going to antiquity to legitimize the geo-political occupation of the entire territory of modern China, which includes areas where many non-Han people live. It also insisted on the inseparability of the non-Han nationalities as an integrated part of *Zhonghua minzu*. This dissertation traces the origin of this nationalism to the two major waves of scientific investigation in the fields of paleoanthropology and anthropology in the Chinese frontier during the first half of the twentieth century. These two movements resulted in a quest across time and space to identify the “first Chinese” and demarcate the boundaries of “China” by naturalizing the frontier non-Han societies. Chinese scientists and intellectuals, the main protagonists of this story, undertook great efforts to probe into the origin of humanity and the Chinese, to introduce and indigenize scientific disciplines, and to promote ethno-racial unity during times of national crisis. These attempts were inspired by pursuit of scientific knowledge, as well as ardent nationalism. They were inevitably connected to China's national concerns, most importantly, the Second Sino-

any of the missing Peking Man originally fossils would dramatically change our current understanding of human evolution.

⁸ Ibid.

Japanese. Yet, I would argue, the construction of the Chinese as a result of these attempts could not be simply labeled as a parochial, localized, and reactionary nationalist “invention.” The Chinese scientists and intellectuals were informed and influenced by the activities, theories, and discoveries of their foreign colleagues, some of whom worked as their research partners. Some came to China for the abundant field opportunities the land promised, and others provided mentorship during the formative years of Chinese scientists' intellectual development while studying abroad. Thus the Chinese intellectual construction of modern Chinese identity should be seen as a project integrating and appropriating the prevailing scientific theories offered by their foreign peers, as well as the results of research conducted by themselves at the time; and this project could not be separated from the concurrent global intellectual discourses concerning human evolution and societal relations between the self and the other.

This dissertation by no means intends to present a disciplinary history of Chinese paleoanthropology or that of anthropology. My concern is more with the process of knowledge formation and the ways in which ideas are socially and culturally constructed and historically contingent. Therefore my approach is more informed by the methodology

used in sociological analysis of knowledge.⁹ I attempt to present the socio-historical matrix in which the contour of modern Chinese ethno-nationalism was formed on the foundation of paleoanthropological and anthropological knowledge. Other than analyzing the contents of theories and ideas, the scope of my study also expands to personal networks as well as institutions in which interactions of scientists or intellectuals took place and field experiences where interactions of scientists and their subjects and the locales took place. The latter includes paleoanthropological field expeditions conducted by foreign scientists in Chinese territories in which scientific internationalism often clashed with nationalism and anthropological field research conducted by Chinese scientists in the frontier in which ethnopolitics interfered with the knowledge of the indigene. Only through an investigation of the complex of individuals, networks,

⁹ German sociologist Karl Mannheim is often considered as the founder of “sociology of knowledge” which proposes that what we know about reality is determined by our social context and therefore we need comprehensive sociological investigation to understand the mechanism of knowledge formation. See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1936) and *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1952). For a classic introduction of the theory and its application to everyday reality, see Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967). Ian Hacking's *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) offers a succinct philosophical appraisal of the theory. Examples of scholarship evolving historicized sociological studies on science and social sciences are Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (Vintage, 1975); Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Labratory Life: the Construction of Scientific Facts* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 1979); Donald MacKenzie. *Statistics in Britain: The Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Universtiy Press, 1981); Danna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Timothy Lenoir, *Instituting Science: The Cultural Production of Scientific Disciplines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), to list just a few.

institutions, and national and global contexts could we better understand how certain ideas were produced, disseminated, interpreted, and appropriated.

Peking Man and Paleoanthropological Nationalism

Who is Peking Man and what is his significance in human evolution? Peking Man (*Beijing yuanren*) belongs to the family of *Homo erectus* (first named *Sinanthropus pekinensis*, now *Homo erectus pekinensis*), a hominid descended from *Homo habilis*, the first of genus *Homo* originating in Africa. He lived in north China approximately 0.68 to 0.78 million years ago.¹⁰ It is now generally accepted that about 1.8 million years ago *Homo erectus* migrated out of Africa into the unoccupied regions of Asia, and later Europe. This is the Out of Africa I hypothesis. The origin of modern humans is, however, a much debated issue in paleoanthropology. The Recent Out of Africa (or sometimes the Out of Africa II) hypothesis claims that *Homo sapiens* first evolved in Africa around 200,000 years ago and migrated into Eurasia around 100,000 years ago. Supporters of the hypothesis also believe that the modern humans from Africa had replaced the more archaic hominids, without interbreeding, inhabiting Europe and Asia.¹¹ Genetic research conducted in 1987 by molecular biologists analyzed the mitochondrial

¹⁰ For a long time since the discovery of the Peking Man, his dating had been estimated at about 500,000 years. Recent study using radioisotopic dating method shows that he might be substantially much older. See Guanjun Shen, Xing Gao, Bin Gao, and Darryl E. Granger, "Age of Zhoukoudian *Homo erectus* with ²⁶Al/¹⁰Be Burial Dating," *Nature* 458 (March 12, 2009): 198-200.

¹¹ Christopher Stinger and Robin McKie, *African Exodus: the Origins of Modern Humanity* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1996), 82-84.

DNA data extracted from the placentas of 147 women from five racial groups and found that there existed very few mtDNA mutational differences between these groups and the greatest variations existed among contemporary Africans. The findings suggested that modern mankind must have originated in Africa.¹² This research has immediately boosted the popularity of the Recent Out of Africa hypothesis. The Recent Out of Africa hypothesis does not believe that regional *Homo erectus* had any contribution to the formation of modern humans. According to this theory, therefore, Peking Man, like the Neanderthal, is all but an extinct evolutionary sideline rather than our direct ancestor.

Many Chinese scientists and the general public today, however, hold the interpretation that modern Chinese are descendants of Peking Man.¹³ In other words, the Chinese accept the Out of Africa I hypothesis that Peking Man and other *Homo erectus* were from a shared African hominid origin, but instead of being replaced by more modern humans from Africa, Peking Man evolved continuously, with interactions and hybridizations with neighboring populations, into *Homo sapiens* and then the modern Chinese. This is the hypothesis of Multiregional Continuity, which is the main opponent of the Recent Out of Africa hypothesis.¹⁴ Chinese scientists like Wu Xinzhi are the major

¹² R.L. Cann, M. Stoneking, and A.C. Wilson, "Mitochondrial DNA and Human Evolution," *Nature* 325 (1987): 31-36.

¹³ An internet survey done by Sinanet (*Xinlang wang*) in 2006 shows that 53% of the participating 5400 Chinese voters support the multiregional continuity theory, and only about 30% support the Out of Africa theory. See "Renlei qiyuandi yanjiu zhengyi" (The Controversy over the Origin of Humans) at <http://news.survey.sina.com.cn/voterresult.php?pid=6765>.

¹⁴ For a rather thorough historical and theoretical understanding of the Multiregional Continuity theory, see Milford Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari, *Race and Human Evolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

advocators for Multiregional Continuity theory and their best evidence comes from the existing hominid fossils found in China, which show common morphological traits between *Homo erectus*, *Homo sapiens*, and contemporary Chinese.¹⁵

When did the theory arise that Peking Man was the ancestor of the Chinese people? Scholars have often connected this question to the rise of China's paleoanthropological nationalism. Attacking the use of paleoanthropology in present-day China as a nationalist tool to construct mytho-historical longevity and continuity of the Chinese, Barry Sautman has argued that since the mid-1980s the Chinese have started to regard Peking Man as the ancestor of the Chinese race (*Zhonghua minzu*), rather than as the origin for humanity as a whole.¹⁶ Sigrid Schmalzer disagrees with his dating and claims that Peking Man has been linked with China's past since the early 1950s, when Peking Man was promoted by the Maoist state to prove that labor created humanity.¹⁷ While Sautman blames Chinese scientists for ignoring genetic evidence in favor of the Multiregional Continuity theory and therefore creating the cult of Peking Man (or

¹⁵ Wu Xinzhi developed this theory with the American paleoanthropologist Milford Wolpoff and the Australian paleoanthropologist Alan Thorne in the 1980s. See Milford Wolpoff, Wu Xinzhi, and Alan Thorn, "Modern *Homo sapiens* Origins: A General Theory of Hominid Evolution Involving the Fossil Evidence from East Asia" in *The Origins of Modern Humans: A World Survey of the Fossil Evidence*, eds. Fred Smith and Frank Spencer (New York: Alan R. Liss Inc., 1984), 411-483. It is important to note that even in China the Multiregional Continuity (*duo diqu lianxuxing* in Chinese) theory is under scrutiny today. The most serious attack comes from the American-trained geneticist Jin Li, who is the provost of Fudan University and has been advocating the Recent Out of Africa theory in recent years.

¹⁶ Barry Sautman, "Peking Man and the Politics of Paleoanthropological Nationalism in China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60:1 (2001): 95-124.

¹⁷ Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Chinese *Homo erectus* in general), Schmalzer focuses on how the earlier effort of the state to disseminate socialist interpretations of human evolution among the masses led to the popularization of Peking Man. However, I would argue there was an increasing interest in Peking Man and his connection to China's past as early as the late 1930s and early 1940s as a result of the prevailing evolutionary theory of Asiacentrism.

From the late 19th century until the end of the Second World War, it was Asia, instead of Africa, that dominated the imagination of Euro-American scientists in their search for human ancestors. Although Darwin pointed to Africa as the possible original birthplace of humans in his epic *The Descent of Man*,¹⁸ as Robin Dennell has cogently argued, there were three factors that led to the popularity of the Asian paradigm: biogeographical inferences, available fossil evidence, and racial prejudices.¹⁹ Asia, as the great landmass connecting Europe and America, was hypothesized as the center for the dispersal of biota by evolutionary naturalists who were puzzled by similar flora and fauna specimens found on disjunctive continents.²⁰ Concerning human evolution, in the late

¹⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 vols., (London: John Murray, 1871).

¹⁹ Robin W. Dennell, "From Sangiran to Olduvai, 1937-1960: The Quest for 'Centres' of Hominid Origins in Asia and Africa," in *Studying Human Origins: Disciplinary History and Epistemology*, eds. Raymond Corbey and Wil Roebroeks (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 45-66. The paleoanthropological paradigm shifted to Africa after the Second World War because the prevailing racial ideology had changed to be an embrace of unity and Africa was no longer seen as the Dark Continent. China was closed up and the previous European colonies in Africa became the new center for fieldwork. The discovery of the *Zinjanthropus boisei* (an australopithecine), identified as the oldest hominid, by the Leakeys in Tanzania in 1960 further boosted the new interest in Africa.

²⁰ For an excellent account of the role Asia played in the formation of Asa Gray's disjunction theory of evolutionism concerning the similarity between the flora of Northeast Asia and that of Northeastern America, see Kuang-chi Hung, "The Place that

19th century the German scientist Ernst Haeckel theorized that humans were derived from southern Asian apes.²¹ Inspired by Haeckel, the young Dutch scientist Eugène Dubois went to the Dutch controlled East Java to search for the hypothetical missing link and in 1891 discovered in Trinil a skullcap and a femur which he named *Pithecanthropus erectus*, or Java Man.²² Java Man was the first hominid fossil found in Asia and was considered an intermediate species between ape and man. Scientists kept looking to Asia for the answer of human origins and the major advocates came from North America, whose efforts for finding the evidence in China and Mongolia familiarized the Chinese general public with evolutionary theories in general and the Asiatic hypothesis in particular.

Scientists affiliated with the American Museum of Natural History such as W.D. Matthew, William Gregory, Roy Chapman Andrews, and Henry Fairfield Osborn believed that the most probable center of the dispersal of mammals and primates, including early humans, lay in the high plateau region in Central Asia, encompassing Xinjiang, Tibet, and Mongolia, where drastic climatic and environmental changes during

‘Offers the Greatest Interest’: Northeast Asia and the Making of the Making of Asia
Gray’s Disjunction Thesis,” *Harvard Papers in Botany* 15:2 (2010): 231-276.

²¹ Ernst Haeckele, *The History of Creation* (New York: D. Appleton, 1876). The original German was *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1873).

²² For the discovery and evolutionary significance of the Java Man, see Bert Theunissen, *Eugène Dubois and the Ape-Man from Java* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publications, 1989). Pat Shipman’s *The Man Who Found the Missing Link: the Extraordinary Life of Eugene Dubois* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2001) offers a more biographical account of Dubois.

the late Tertiary period contributed to the evolution of more advanced species.²³ To test the hypothesis, Andrews and Osborn organized a series of expeditions into the Gobi of Mongolia throughout the 1920s. Davidson Black, a Canadian anatomist, was influenced by Matthew and went to Beijing in 1919 determined to find the missing link.²⁴ Amadeus Grabau, a geologist professor at the Peking University at the time, was yet another supporter of the Central Asiatic hypothesis. The idea was soon popularized in China through their extensive exploration in search of and research on the first human ancestor in Mongolia and north China. The discovery of the first Peking Man skull in 1929 was made by the Cenozoic Research Laboratory, a transnational research institute led by Davidson Black. The Peking Man skull represented the most ancient hominid fossil discovered to that time and its larger brain size (as compared to the Java Man) and upright feature were viewed as evidence that it was no doubt the direct ancestor of humans. Scientists in China and the world were thrilled by the finding and the international media generated a mood of sensationalism about the discovery. The New York Times called it an “epoch-making” and cited the famous British anthropologist G. Elliot Smith saying that it “was the most important discovery of the remains of ancient

²³ W.D. Matthew, “Climate and Evolution,” *Annals of New York Academy of Science* 14 (1915): 171-318. W.K. Gregory, “The Origin of Man from the Anthropoid Stem – When and Where?” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 66 (1927): 439-463. Henry Fairfield Osborn, “The Geological and Faunal Relations of Europe and America During the Tertiary Period and the Theory of the Successive Invasions of an African Fauna,” *Science* (New Series) 11:276 (1900): 561-574; “Why Central Asia?” *Natural History* 16:3 (1926): 263-269, and *Man Rises to Parnassus: Critical Epochs in the Prehistory of Man* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1927).

²⁴ Davidson Black, *Asia and the Dispersal of Primates*. Reprint from the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* 4:2 (1925).

men ever made.”²⁵ The discovery of Peking Man and the continuing effort in excavating at the Zhoukoudian site by Chinese scientists under the supervision of their foreign peers not only made Beijing one of the most famous research centers for the studying of human paleontology but also helped promote the plausibility of evolutionary Asiacentrism. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, the studies of the Peking Man fossils done by Black and Weidenreich indicated a continuous morphological relationship between Peking Man and the modern Chinese. The implication was obvious: Peking Man was not only an ancient hominid, but he was more likely the direct ancestor of the Chinese. Chinese intellectuals who supported monogenism and evolutionary Asiacentricism therefore argued that a Peking Man was the first Chinese and a common ancestor of all humans and developed a Sino-centric narrative to justify the territorial integrity of China during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

War and Chinese Ethnicity

The war also catalyzed the anthropological construction of the multiple yet united organic entity of *Zhonghua minzu*. The constitution of today’s People’s Republic of China states “the People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national state (*tongyi de duominzu guojia*) built up jointly by the people of all its nationalities.”²⁶ While all the

²⁵ “‘Missing Link’ Seen in Find Near Peking; Scientists Stirred,” *New York Times*, 16 December 1929. The *New York Times* also mistakenly reported that “ten skeletons” were found.

²⁶ Fei Xiaotong's contribution to this formula is found in the talk he delivered at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1988 where he introduced and elaborated on the

peoples within the territory of China form the collective unity called *Zhonghua minzu*, they can be further classified as fifty-six *minzu*. All the non-Han *minzu* are also identified as minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*).²⁷ The discursive formation of the *minzu* discourse has a history associated with the political development of modern China since the late 19th century. The Second Sino-Japanese War once again pushed issues of *minzu* to the forefront. The results of the Peking Man research were used to argue in favor of the longevity and the indigeneity of *Zhonghua minzu*; but how did Chinese intellectuals deal with other pressing questions concerning the boundaries of China, the constituencies of the Chinese nation, and the relations between the Han and the non-Han? James Leibold has argued that the war pressured many Chinese intellectuals to adopt a state ideology in favor of ethnic unity.²⁸ Indeed, even Gu Jiegang, often considered by Chinese historians as the liberal promoter of ethnic diversity, had opted for a more patriotic position calling for ethnic solidarity between the Han and the non-Han.

In 1939, Gu Jiegang debated the meanings of *minzu* with Fei Xiaotong in *Bianjiang zhoukan* (The Frontier Weekly), published in Kunming. The debate lasted for

concept of *duoyuan yiti*. The speech is included in Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989).

²⁷ It might not be an overstatement that no political term has generated more confusion than *minzu*. Contemporary scholars in China have attempted to find better terminology to avoid such confusion. Some suggest saving the term *minzu* for “nationality” and replacing *Zhonghua minzu* (literally Chinese nationality) with *Zhonghua guozuo* (literally Chinese national group). Others are in favor of keeping *Zhonghua minzu* but using *zuqun* (group) for “nationality.” The leading scholar of the first view is political scientist Ning Sao, and sociologist Ma Rong promotes the second view. See Wen Mingchao, “Zhengzhi douzheng zhong de minzu huayu [The Discourse of *Minzu* in Political Struggle],” *Kaifang shidai* (June 2010): 54.

²⁸ James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and the Indigenes Became Chinese* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 135-142.

more than four months and many intellectuals joined the discussions. While Gu argued that *Zhonghua minzu* was one single unity and was not divisible, Fei Xiaotong insisted that *Zhonghua minzu* was composed of many *minzu* and therefore was multiple. As I show in Chapter 3 below, the participants of the debate attempted to incorporate historical evidence, fossil reports and ethnological studies to support their arguments about the meanings of *minzu* and what constituted *Zhonghua minzu*. It marked the most serious and in-depth debate on *minzu* during the Republican period and one, I think, that came to serve as a harbinger of today's unitary multi-ethnic model of the Chinese nation.

Fei Xiaotong's participation in the debate of 1939 highlighted the importance of the *minzu* issue to anthropologists whose research was primarily concerned with China's ethnic minorities. Thomas Mullaney's study of the 1954 ethnic classification project has demonstrated the defining role of ethnologists in the construction of the categories ethnicity would entail in Communist China.²⁹ However, a full picture of the wartime anthropological investigation and its influence on the formation of an inclusive national identity has yet been offered. During the period of the war, Chinese anthropologists and ethnologists conducted extensive research on the non-Han minority peoples of China's southwestern frontier in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan, an area made up of China's most diverse minority population. Many of them, such as Fei Xiaotong and Li Anzhai, had just returned to China from studies abroad and were often enthusiastic about putting Western theories and methodologies into practice with the Chinese reality. This period was perhaps a golden era for the development of Chinese anthropology, and the frontier

²⁹ Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

became “a paradise” for field research.³⁰ Moreover, many anthropologists, like Li Anzhai and Wu Wenzao, also made great efforts to promote the modernization of the frontier for national reconstruction.³¹ How did anthropologists ponder the question of *minzu*? Did they see *Zhonghua minzu* as a single unity or a composite of multiple *minzu*? Opinions were divided. While some, such as Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu, supported the unitary model that Gu Jiegang had proposed, others, for example, Li Anzhai, believed in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural China, the model Fei Xiaotong had depicted. Yet, no matter which model they thought better explained the Chinese reality, they were all engaged in the same process during the war: advocating ethnic integration and the nationalization of China’s southwestern frontier by inscribing the minority groups into the Chinese genealogy. Therefore, wartime anthropology facilitated the consolidation of a national consciousness that the southwestern frontier and its non-Han peoples were an essential part of China.

This dissertation tells a story of origins: the origin of humans, the origin of the Chinese, and the origin of modern Chinese racial and ethnic nationalism. It also tells a story of an entangled history about science, nationalism, and imperialism between China and the world. In the process of forming national identity, Chinese scientists and intellectuals not only extended the history of *Zhonghua minzu* to deep antiquity but also

³⁰ Li Anzhai, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo* [*Frontier Social Work*] (Zhonghua shuju, 1944).

³¹ Li Anzhai advocated the frontier social work as a modernizing project to promote development of the frontier minority societies; Wu Wenzao proposed the establishment of a new discipline, *bianzhengxue* (the study of frontier affairs), to tackle issues of frontier development with methods of applied anthropology. See Chapter 4.

expanded the boundary of it to the frontier non-Han regions. The tool used to construct such narrative, however, was not a nativist outcry resorting to traditional values and beliefs, but rather an adaptation of the dominant scientific fashions, such as evolutionary Asiancentrism and Euro-American anthropological theories and methodologies. My story of the making of this process is told in two parts. The first part deals with the development of paleoanthropology in north and northwest China in the 1920s and 1930s and its influence on how Chinese intellectuals reconstructed their ancient past. Chapter 1 introduces the “Peking Circle”³² of international scientists whose research and discoveries contributed much to the establishment and development of Chinese paleoanthropology. There was a close collaborative relationship between Chinese and foreign scientists within the Peking Circle. They worked with each other, formed an intimate circle and enjoyed the relatively relaxing political environment in Peking. However, national teams overlapped with the international network as individual scientists also belonged to other independent national organizations outside the Circle. For example, the American Walter Granger was a member of the Central Asiatic Expeditions team of the American Museum of Natural History; the French Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was a part of the *Mission paléontologique Française*; and the Swede Johan Gunnar Andersson received funding from the Swedish China Committee. Their work in China also served different nationalistic ends to enhance the reputation of scientific achievement of their individual nations. Competition and tension existed

³² The city Beijing was known as Peking before 1928 when its name was temporarily changed to Pei'ping (Beiping). The PRC adopted the *pinyin* system and officially changed the spelling to Beijing, as it is now widely used. To best render the historical milieu of the 1920s, I choose to use Peking in the “Peking Circle” when I refer to the scientific community in Beijing at the time while Beijing for the name of the city.

among these teams, whose activities were often met with hostile eyes of Chinese nationalists. The Cenozoic Research Laboratory in 1929 was a true international organization that was affiliated with the Chinese National Geological Survey, under the Chinese director's supervision, and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. It enjoyed a crew of famous international scientists, some of whom were members of the Peking Circle. These foreign scientists helped train a group of Chinese scientists to assist their excavations at the Zhoukoudian site. The Chinese scientists continued to work in the field and contributed greatly to the development of Chinese paleontology and paleoanthropology. Through the effort of the Cenozoic Research Lab, Beijing was promoted as one of the most advanced research centers for paleoanthropological study, and the indigenization of the discipline was made possible.

Chapter 2 discusses the theory of evolutionary Asiacentrism and the Peking Man findings at the Zhoukoudian site. It shows that the theory was first popularized by scientists of the Peking Circle, and the Peking man discoveries further provided strong evidence for the idea that Central Asia, or to be more specific, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Mongolia, was the original cradle of humans. Chinese scholars in the late 1930s and 1940s appropriated the findings to construct the monogenesis theory of the Chinese, which designated that all the diverse ethnic groups within the territory of China shared a common ancestor back to antiquity.

The second part of the dissertation describes the attempt made by Chinese anthropologists to promote ethnic integration by inscribing the non-Han minority nationalities of the southwestern frontier into the Chinese genealogy. The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War and Japan's propagandist utilization of the Wilsonian idea of

national self-determination in Asia urged Chinese intellectuals to ponder questions such as “What is China?” and “Who are the constituencies of the Chinese?” Chapter 3 focuses on the debate in 1939 centering on the meanings of *minzu* and the relationship between the Han and the non-Han, which had great impact on the formation of the “unitary multi-national state” model used by the PRC today. Some Chinese ethnologists, especially the ones affiliated with the Southern School of historical ethnology such as Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu, were firm supporters of Gu Jiegang’s unitary theory. They defined the Chinese nation as an organic and unitary unit formed by diverse and different branches of “clans,” instead of ethnic units, and attempted to prove the possibility of national integration and assimilation through their ethnological works on the minority people in China's southwestern frontier.

Chapter 4 focuses on two groups of anthropologists, mostly affiliated with the Northern School of cultural functionalism and community studies, who found China’s southwestern frontier to be the ideal laboratory for contesting Western anthropological and sociological theories. The Kuige researchers, such as Fei Xiaotong and Tian Rukang, set their base in Yunnan and scrutinized the rural economy, lineage structure, and religious practices of local society. Their research, aiming at establishing an indigenized form of “Chinese anthropology/sociology,” later became a foundation for the development of sinological anthropology (*hanxue renleixue*) in the West in the 1960s and 1970s. The second group consists of scholars affiliated with the sociology department of the West China Union University. The research of these anthropologists, such as Li Anzhai and Jiang Zhiang, was mainly shaped by their commitment to frontier construction and social work based on the model of the British and American colonial

administration in the colonies as well as the newly developed cultural program in Mexico. I discuss specifically Li's ideas of the frontier social work, his rather romantic conceptualization of the frontier, the department of sociology he developed and how the research of the Tibetan society carried out by Li and his colleagues had long-term effects on ethnopolitics in the People's Republic of China. In the conclusion, I summarize my arguments and emphasize the lasting influence of the pre-1949 intellectual legacy in China today.

PART ONE

THE FIRST CHINESE

CHAPTER ONE
IN SEARCH OF THE COMMON ANCESTOR: PALEOANTHROPOLOGY
IN NORTH AND NORTHWESTERN CHINA, 1920-1939

On April 25, 1927, a group of scientists gathered at the famous French restaurant, Hotel du Nord, in Beijing to enjoy a cordial “Cenozoic Dinner” (*diner cénozoïque*). To honor the Swedish geologist-archeologist Johan Gunnar Andersson before his departure to Sweden, a special menu was created to include the most whimsical names of courses, which served to entertain the attending geologists and paleontologists. For example, the appetizer was *meletta sardinites*, a kind of sardine that existed in the Oligocene; the soup was *testudo insolitus*, a Pliocene tortoise; and for the dessert, the choices were stratigraphic cake (*gateau stratigraphique*) and assorted Paleolithic fruit (*fruits paléolithiques assortis*). Of course, the menu also included a meat dish called *Chilotherium anderssoni* (a giant rhinoceros of the late Miocene in northern China, discovered by Andersson and named after him). To acknowledge Andersson’s contribution to the two hominid teeth discovered in Zhoukoudian, a profile of a primitive woman’s head was printed on the menu to indicate that this Cenozoic dinner was prepared “under the spiritual guidance of Peking Lady” (*sous la direction spirituelle de la Dame pékinoise*). After the meal, all attending scientists signed their names on the menu and mailed it to their common friend, Henry Fairfield Osborn, the president of the American Museum of Natural History to “remind him of Peking.”¹

¹ This menu is discovered by Allan Mazur, the biographer of Amadeus Grabau, in the American Museum of Natural History archives. See Allan Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History: The Lives and Works Amadeus Grabau and Mary Autin* (Syracuse: Garrett, 2004), 294. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate this menu in the Special Collections of the American Museum of Natural History.

The people who had forever left their signatures on the menu were a motley crew of international scientists including Weng Wenhao, Ding Wenjiang, Johan Gunnar Andersson, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Walter Granger, George Barbour, Amadeus Grabau, and Davidson Black, names well known to students of geology, paleoanthropology, and Chinese history.² A few days later, the French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin described the “Cenozoic” dinner in a letter to his friend, “I believe that never in all of my life – family life included – have I spent hours so rich and cordial as that evening. As so many other times in Peking, the occasion was pervaded by a dimly sensed triumph at the overcoming of racial, national, and religious barriers.”³ The friends formed a very close and intimate circle in Beijing’s lively, transnational scientific environment in the 1920s and 1930s. Davidson Black used to call this circle “the gang.”⁴ The “Peking Circle” constitutes two kinds of scientists: while the majority of them either taught or worked in Beijing’s academic or research institutions, it also included the American vertebrate paleontologist Walter Granger of the American Central Asiatic Expeditions, who often stayed in Beijing temporarily during the preparation periods for their northwestern expeditions. The formation of the Peking Circle was not an accident: the coming together of these scientists in Beijing during the 1920s was largely a result of a shared common interest: the search for human ancestors.

² The other attending scientists were Li Siguang, Jin Shuchu, and Sven Hedin, who were good friends of the Circle.

³ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters to Two Friends, 1926 – 1952* (New York: The New American Library, 1967), 71-72.

⁴ A letter from Davidson Black to George Barbour (June 12, 1933). Claude Cuenot, *Teilhard de Chardin: A Biographical Study* (London: Burns and Oates, 1958), 158.

This chapter sets the stage of the paleoanthropological milieu in China when the dominant evolutionary theory pointed the way to Asia as the cradle of humans. It tells the story of the Peking Circle, the activities and discoveries of the members in the development of Chinese paleoanthropology, and the ways in which Beijing became one of the most important places for the research of human origins in the 1920s and 1930s. The bond between members of the Circle was strengthened through shared theoretical origins, joint field research and expeditions, and social activities. However, such scientific internationalism was not immune from nationalistic interests and competition. Most members of the transnational Peking Circle also belonged to other institutions, such as the French Paleontological Mission and the American Museum of Natural History, and functioned along the modern imperialist scientific tradition to discover and to collect for the establishment of the knowledge of the unknown. While these institutions enjoyed relatively unrestricted access to the Chinese frontier and Mongolia in the early Republican period, in the late 1920s rising Chinese and Mongolian nationalisms began to interpret these activities as violations to their national sovereignty. The Chinese and Mongolian governments set regulations on foreign explorations and claimed authority over the fossils and specimens collected from their territories. The story of the discoveries and activities of the members of the Peking Circle highlights the entanglement between scientific internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism in China in the early 20th century. The tensions also manifest how issues concerning human origins in general and Chinese origins in particular could bear highly political implications.

Not all members of the Peking Circle were involved in their national scientific enterprises of fossil exploration in China. Some, for example, Davidson Black and Amadeus Grabau, were more engaged in establishing their own scientific careers through investigating the Chinese materials. Their research played a crucial role in the establishment and development of Chinese paleoanthropology. They also helped train the first generation of professional Chinese field paleoanthropologists through their teachings in Beijing's academic institutions and through collaborative field research. Beijing enjoyed a reputation as the haven for international intellectual expatriates and the nexus of northwestern frontier explorations. The discovery of Peking Man (originally named *Sinanthropus pekinensis*: Chinese Man of Peking) further garnered unprecedented international media attention for the ancient city of early humans. The Cenozoic Research Laboratory (*xinshengdai yanjiushi*), staffed by the core members of the Peking Circle to carry out the Peking Man excavation project, not only promoted Beijing's status as the most prominent center for human paleontology but also set the foundation for the indigenization of paleoanthropology in China.

Rendezvous in Beijing: The Transnational Scientific Community

The Chinese Institutions

All of the members of the Peking Circle, regardless of their nationalities, were affiliated with or had connections to the National Geological Survey of China (*Dizhi diaochasuo*) and the non-governmental, voluntary Geological Society of China (*Dizhi*

xuehui). The two Chinese scientific institutions fostered a transnational environment for collaboration between Chinese and foreign scientists. The National Geological Survey of China was one of the most progressive scientific institutions in Republican China. The central figure, who was both the founder and the director for many years, was Ding Wenjiang. Born into a wealthy family in Jiangsu, Ding was one of the first Chinese intellectuals who received a solid science education in the West. He studied under the prominent British geologist J.W. Gregory at University of Glasgow and graduated with a double degree in zoology and geology. Like many contemporary Chinese overseas students, he returned to China in 1911, eager to serve his country. He was recruited to lead the geology section (*dizhi ke*) of the Bureau of Mines (*kuangzheng si*) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (*nongshang bu*) of the new Republic in 1913. However, Ding found that none of the staff in his office was expert in geology. Realizing the importance of training professional geologists, Ding and Zhang Hongzhao, a Tokyo university graduate and the only other geological expert in the Ministry, launched the Geological Institute, funded by the Bureau of Mines. Together with Weng Wenhao, a newly returned graduate of Louvain, the three young geologists formed the core teaching body. Within three years, they had trained numerous diligent young men who were capable of carrying out field research and investigation. Many of these students filled the staff of the newly launched National Geological Survey, directed by Ding Wenjiang under the Bureau in 1916.

The official mission of the Geological Survey was to systematically establish data of China's geological features, to create maps, and to investigate mines,⁵ but it also managed to promote general geological studies and international collaboration. During its early years, the Survey, with limited funding, was often commissioned by the Ministry and private coal mining companies to examine mineral deposits and to record conditions of earthquakes. The Swedish geologist Johan Gunnar Andersson was hired as a mining advisor by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in 1914 for the purpose of locating valuable minerals. He became friendly with Ding Wenjiang in 1915 and was later one of the leading researchers in the Survey. As will be discussed in detail later in the chapter, Andersson also managed to bring in financial support from Swedish sources. Due to the continuing priority given to industrial modernization by the Chinese state, the external funds, and the able leadership of Ding Wenjiang, the Survey soon expanded. The examination of mineral deposits continued to be the main project of the personnel, but other general local and provincial geological surveys were also making progress.⁶ The Survey became one of the hosting institutions for foreign professionals, thanks to the openness of Ding Wenjiang to transnational collaborations.

By the 1920s the Geological Survey had become the leading organ of geological and paleontological research in China. It published two major scholarly journals, the *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China (Dizhi huibao)* and the *Paleontologia Sinica*

⁵ Zhang Jiuchen, *Dizhixue yu minguo shehui, 1916-1950* [Geology and the Republican Society, 1916-1950] (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), 38.

⁶ For a general early history of the Survey and its activities, see J. G. Andersson, "The National Geological Survey of China" *Geografiska Annaler* Vol. 3 (1921): 305-310 and Zhang Hongzhao. "The Geological Survey of China," *Science*, 56: 1444 (1 September 1922): 233-237.

(*Zhongguo gushengwu zhi*), and occasional monographs of field research.⁷ The Survey managed to build a museum to display its collections of minerals, rocks, and fossils. There was also a library filled with academic publications acquired from Europe and America.⁸ The Survey formed a strong intellectual community with the geological department of the National Peking University and the Peking Union Medical College. The founding of the transnational Geological Society of China in Beijing in 1922, with 26 charter members, further created a bridge between the geologists of the Survey, the faculty of geology in higher educational institutions in Beijing, and other independent researchers.⁹ The *Bulletin of Geological Society of China* was the official organ of this organization that reported its annual meetings, financial status, and its members' research projects. It was published mainly in English, with occasional French and German articles. The Society expanded rapidly; by 1926 it had more than a hundred affiliated fellows from all over the world.¹⁰ The bilingual (Chinese and English) *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China*, the *Paleontologia Sinica*, and the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* became the primary vehicles to introduce the burgeoning field of Chinese geology and paleontology to a wider international audience.¹¹

⁷ National Geological Survey of China. *Zhongguo dizhi diaochasuo gaikuang: bensuo chengli shiwunian jinian kan* [The National Geological Survey of China, 1916-1931: A Summary of Its Work during the First Fifteen Years of Its Establishment] (Beijing, 1931), 23-24.

⁸ Ibid, 25-29.

⁹ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 1:1 (1922), 1.

¹⁰ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 5:1 (1926), 89-97.

¹¹ Each issue of the *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China* contains two separate sections: articles in English and articles in Chinese. English articles were

The core members of the Peking Circle were founding members of the Geological Society. Weng Wenhao served as the vice president; J. Gunnar Andersson, Ding Wenjiang, and A. W. Grabau were the councilors; and Ding was also the editor of the *Bulletin*. Davidson Black and Walter Granger each delivered a congratulatory speech in the Society's first general meeting. George Barbour participated in several field research trips conducted by Andersson and Grabau. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was pursuing his PhD degree in Paris at the time and would arrive in Beijing in 1923. After his arrival, the Peking Circle would soon come into shape through institutional affiliation, social gatherings, field research, and expeditions to the Chinese frontier.

Life in Beijing

For foreign scientists who came to China in the early 20th century, Beijing was an intellectual oasis in the vast barren area of a backward, stagnant, and “uncultivated” China. Andersson had described Beijing as a different China: “During my years in Peking I had the great good fortune to live in a circle of the leaders in science and literature trained in modern scholarship, and I thus learned to know another China, seething with new spiritual power, eager to adopt all that is valuable in occidental

summarized in Chinese and included in the Chinese section, and vice versa. The language of *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* is mainly English, which means the Chinese geologists had to translate their research report to English, or to even write in English, for publication. Grace Shen has suggested that the English *Bulletin of the Geological Society* had more successfully raised awareness of the research done by Chinese geologists, because the details of the Chinese articles in the Survey's Bulletin would be completely ignored by international audience. See Grace Yen Shen, “Modern Geology and Nationalism in Republican China, 1911-1949” (Ph.d. diss.: Harvard University, 2007), 152.

civilization but proudly aware of the noble worth and vitality of her own cultural inheritance.”¹² The “real” China, as Andersson saw it, extended from the country districts to all the interior cities that had been relatively untouched by foreign influence. He described the life of people in these areas as “the living Middle Ages.”¹³ The “other China,” on the contrary, contained a Chinese intellectual community formed by people like Ding Wenjiang and Weng Wenhao: those who were able to find balance between East and West. Beijing, where most such Chinese intellectuals resided during the 1910s and 1920s, became a magnet for foreign intellectuals who might otherwise find China’s backward rural conditions and less “cultivated” peasant population difficult to endure. This was a further reason for the lure of Beijing in the eyes of the northwestern frontier explorers and field researchers. Beijing was literally seen as the closest civilized city surrounded by the wilderness of the frontier. After a few months of digging up fossils and collecting rocks in the Ordos region in 1923, the French Teilhard de Chardin who had just started his expatriate life in China, longed for the exciting intellectual atmosphere of Paris.¹⁴ To him, the Chinese frontier represented the “raw regions of the universe” and “intellectual life is the last thing you will find in the people of these parts.”¹⁵ On his journey back to Tianjin in November of that year, where he was sent to

¹² J. G. Andersson, *The Dragon and the Foreign Devils* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1928) vii.

¹³ *Ibid*, 86.

¹⁴ More details of Teilhard de Chardin’s conflict with the Catholic church will be discussed later in the chapter.

¹⁵ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin *Letters from a Traveller* (New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1962) 74.

help the Jesuit school, he stopped by in Beijing, as all other explorers did. This short stay turned out to be a blessing. Not only was the old capital very picturesque in autumn colors, it was the “one city in China where you find most intelligence and intellectual life.”¹⁶ Beijing provided both material supplies for extended frontier journeys and intellectual nourishment for the mind of the solitary foreign explorers.

Knowing little or no Chinese was not a problem for foreign scientists who taught at Chinese universities. All their classes were delivered in English and most of their Chinese intellectual friends trained in the West were fluent in English or other European languages. For example, Teilhard de Chardin felt most close to the Belgium-trained Weng Wenhao who spoke excellent French.¹⁷ Perhaps for this reason, most foreign scientists of the Peking Circle did not know any Chinese. Although they lived in China, some for a long time, they had very little contact with ordinary Chinese who spoke no foreign tongue. For example, during Andersson’s research at various sites of the Yangshao Culture in Henan, Gansu, and the Kokonor area, he often dispatched his “private Chinese collectors” to investigate grave sites and to negotiate with local villagers.¹⁸ Foreign missionaries also played an important role in providing the scientists

¹⁶ Ibid, 106.

¹⁷ George Barbour. *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 46.

¹⁸ G. J. Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth: Studies in Prehistoric China* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1934), 256-8; Andersson even trained his cook and servants to be his research assistants. In fact, his team of Chinese assistants played important role in his great discoveries by identifying sites, acquiring artifacts in villages, cleaning up excavated objects, and protecting him from local bandits. Andersson often acknowledges their contribution in his writings.

with information and access to local societies.¹⁹ Perhaps it was considered unnecessary for geologists, paleontologists, or naturalists in general, who dealt mainly with rocks, fossils, plants, and animals, to learn Chinese for practical purposes. Nonetheless, the famous American herpetologist, Clifford H. Pope, who was a member of the American Central Asiatic Expeditions, argued that knowledge of the Chinese language would prove quite valuable for foreign collectors and scientific investigators to acquire local information during their field research.²⁰ The lack of Chinese language skills shows that the members of the Peking Circle were quite confined within the highly intellectualized “gated” community in Beijing. The only lure of the “real” China was the abundant research opportunities it guaranteed.

Any foreign scientist who arrived in Beijing for the first time would easily find company from not only the “enlightened” Chinese intellectuals, but also other scientists from all over the world hired by Chinese academic institutions and explorers preparing for their next expeditions. There were about two thousand foreigners of almost every nationality resident in Beijing at the time.²¹ The mixed transnational community was friendly toward newcomers. And life could not be easier and more comfortable in Beijing for these foreign professionals. First of all, they were often paid much higher

¹⁹ Andersson had mentioned the ample assistance he received from the Swedish missionaries in central Henan that led to his great discoveries. See his *Dragon and the Foreign Devils*, 213-239, and *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 77-79.

²⁰ Clifford H. Pope, “Collecting in Northern and Central China” in *The New Conquest of Central Asia* (New York; American Museum of Natural History, 1932), 479-80.

²¹ Roy Chapman Andrews, *Ends of the Earth* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1929), 234.

salaries than those they would receive in their hometowns. With the Boxer indemnity funds and generous Rockefeller support, Chinese institutions could offer guaranteed high pay to recruit outstanding scholars to offer their services in China. For example, Amadeus Grabau was offered \$1,600 a month for teaching paleontology at Peking University and being affiliated with the Geological Survey as a researcher.²² Grabau, who had been fired by Columbia University for his pro-German attitude during the First World War and his personal conflicts with colleagues in his department, regarded coming to China as the most favorable choice to start anew his life and career. With such a generous salary, Grabau was able to live in a small but nice house and to afford three Chinese servants to take care of his daily life.²³ Walter Granger and the members of his Central Asiatic Expeditions team lived in a rented mansion with one hundred and sixty-one rooms, which once was the residence of a Manchu prince. The wage for servants was moderate, and most of them knew a little English for daily communication. Many Chinese cooks were very good at preparing Western style food. Roy Chapman Andersson, the leader of the American team, once said “living is made so very easy in China that one becomes hopelessly spoiled.”²⁴ Regardless of frequent political disturbances, Beijing’s foreign population was well-protected, especially those who resided inside the Legation Quarter. Andersson considered that “security of life and property is greater in Peking than in Stockholm, a remarkable condition which can only

²² Mazur, *A Romance of Natural History*, 224.

²³ *Ibid*, 252.

²⁴ Andrews, *Ends of the Earth*, 232.

be explained by the fact that the police control is better organized in the former place than in the latter.”²⁵

The small space encircled by the triangle shaped by three institutions: Peking University at the northeastern corner of the old Imperial City, Peking Union Medical College in the East City, and the Geological Survey in the West City formed the locus of intellectual life for the Peking Circle’s foreign scientists. In late 1923, the newcomer Teilhard de Chardin spent a day with many American and Chinese anthropologists, paleontologists, and geologists and was amazed that “it’s a great deal in itself...to have the opportunity of finding them all collected at the same place and time.”²⁶ The more formal academic gatherings took place in those general and annual meetings of the Geological Society. These were often occasions where the most important and influential Chinese and foreign figures attended to deliver their research reports or to announce new projects. The meetings were polyglot. While the leading language was English, scholars were free to use whatever languages they felt most comfortable to use.²⁷ It was a time to make connections. Teilhard de Chardin, for example, was informally introduced into the community in the sixth general meeting in June 1923 when he made a presentation of the findings he and his colleague, Father Emile Licent, made during their Ordos expedition.²⁸ We learn what a typical group gathering was like from a letter Teilhard de Chardin wrote

²⁵ Andersson, *The Dragon and the Foreign Devils*, 55.

²⁶ Teilhard, *Letters from a Traveller*, 106.

²⁷ For example, Weng Wenhao often spoke French in public meetings like these. See *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 2:3-4 (1923), 99.

²⁸ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 2:3-4 (1923), 1.

to his cousin in France describing the second annual meeting of the Geological Society in January 1924:

The Geological Conference was very lively; I made a number of new contacts, learnt a great deal, and greatly enjoyed the frank intimacy that was born between Chinese, Americans, Swiss and French. A continual succession of dinner-parties consolidated these new friendships. If you'd been here yesterday, you'd have laughed to see ten rickshaws, each carrying a gentleman in a fur cap, plunging into the narrow lanes under the eyes of the dumbfounded Chinese, and all looking for the scene of the banquet. These little lanes are perhaps the most picturesque of the memories I'll retain of my time in Peking.²⁹

Social life in Beijing for foreigners of the scientific circle encompassed other circles.

Cocktail and dinner parties were a normal part of daily life. Members of the legations were frequent guests at these occasions and they often had good relations with the expatriate scientists. Grabau's sister, Adele Grabau Ziemer, who came to China in 1934 to take care of her brother, complained about Grabau's busy social life of endless invitations and parties:

Nov.20 here we had the famous Dr. V.K. Ting [Ding Wenjiang] – Chinese reformer (a Chinaman) – here for lunch. Nov. 21 we went to lunch in a rickshaw to a writer's house – a fine place in the Legation Quarter. [In the afternoon] the editor of the Peking newspaper came for tea. The same evening from 6 to 8 was a cocktail party and reception at the house of the American Minister to China... [Nov.24] Another Chinese professor is here. Tomorrow we are invited out at a Chinese doctor's house – rich Chinese people. We go for noon hour, and in the evening somewhere else. All next week we are booked.³⁰

The scientific community could also be very hierarchical. Upon their arrival in Beijing in 1921, George Barbour's wife wrote her parents explaining the community:

“The newcomers must call on the oldcomers...within the first week, month, or year

²⁹ Teilhard, *Letters from a Traveller*, 107-108.

³⁰ Adele Grabau Ziemer to Family, cited in Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History*, 368.

according to your position and theirs.”³¹ However, discomfort and fatigue from long trip and anxiety toward new environment could be eased by the warm welcome offered by Ding Wenjiang, who ranked perhaps the highest in the community. Not only did Ding eagerly promote Sino-Western scientific collaboration, he also tried his best to accommodate foreign scientists and provide much needed guidance. Perhaps it was for pragmatic concern as he once said, “Although foreigners have better achievements than us, they do not speak Chinese and do not know China’s needs. Without capable Chinese to guide them, they cannot work to the best of their ability.”³² However, Ding’s openness and intelligence won him intimate friendship and praises from the foreigners of the Circle. Andersson dedicated his first book of travel experiences in China, *The Dragon and the Foreign Devils*, to Ding Wenjiang to celebrate their friendship. For Andersson, Ding “may not be counted as a typical Chinese: for that he is too driving in his work, too demanding towards his collaborators, much too frank in his criticism, and has too keen a sense of merciless justice. But as one of the most advanced members of today’s Chinese intelligentsia, he is [a] shining representative of his people.”³³ Teilhard de Chardin called Ding the “most remarkable neo-Chinese”³⁴ and described him as “deeply Chinese,

³¹ Dorothy Barbour Letter (February 13, 1921), cited in Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History*, 299.

³² Ding Wenjiang, “Woguo kexue yanjiu shiye” *Shenbao* (12/18/1935), cited in Zhang Jiuchen, *Dizhixue yu minguo shegui*, 163.

³³ Magnus Fiskesjö and Chen Xingcan, *China before China: Johan Gunnar Andersson, Ding Wenjiang, and the Discovery of China's Prehistory* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 2004), 16.

³⁴ Teilhard, *Letters from a Traveller*, 71.

without being at all xenophobic... [H]e represents, in his ideas, the axis along which China must reorganize and advance...³⁵

Another senior figure in the Circle who played the role of helping and guiding the junior members and newcomers was Amadeus Grabau. Because of his worsening arthritis problem, Grabau was not able to conduct field research after the first year of his stay in China and focused mainly on teaching paleontology and geology at Peking University and doing research for the Geological Survey. After classes, he spent most time at home writing, reading, and examining rocks and fossils brought to him by his colleagues. His small house close to the Geological Survey became the mecca for the Peking Circle. The members of the Circle often gathered in his house for dinner and chats. Sometimes classes or college meetings took place there as well. Teilhard de Chardin was said to have lunch at the Grabau's every Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.³⁶ Sven Hedin's recollection of the time at the Grabau's reveals the interesting atmosphere of an intellectual dinner in the Circle:

When one was a guest at Grabau's table it was less a matter of enjoying all the finest dishes the Chinese kitchen could produce, the delicious fruits or the sparkling wine, than of listening to the host's witty epigrams or his brilliant eloquence. But one had to be constantly *en garde*, for when one least suspected it the host might tinkle on his glass and declare: "Now Mr. X is going to make a wonderful speech for us." And then one was obliged to deliver a speech. Those who knew Grabau's habits at the dinner-table were therefore always ready with some anecdotes or stories that might with advantage be used in a speech. Thus what he most esteemed at table was wit – without, however, forgetting the pleasure afforded by a good kitchen. One always went to Grabau's dinners with tense expectation, and always with the conviction that one would have a good time. But what above all drew us to Grabau's

³⁵ Ibid, 64.

³⁶ Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History*, 375.

table was the knowledge that we should there meet extremely interesting and celebrated men... Grabau's home became a focus, a salon, for the academic circles in Peking, and his hospitality knew no bounds.³⁷

This somewhat "tense" intellectual conversation was too overwhelming for Grabau's sister, who sometimes longed for an "everyday natural human being."³⁸

Grabau was not only regarded as a cordial man by his friends, he was also well-respected by his Chinese students at Peking University. Once the Geological Survey offered two students of Grabau's a field trip to Yunnan. It was considered a great opportunity for graduate students, but the two begged to stay in Beijing instead, for they were worried about Grabau's health and preferred to stay and work with him as long as possible.³⁹ In 1926, the Geological Society initiated the first A.W. Grabau Gold Medal Awards to honor Grabau's contribution. The industrialist and geologist Wang Chongyou (C.Y. Wang), who was Grabau's student at Columbia, donated a permanent fund and all the necessary expenses to found a gold medal in Grabau's name to acknowledge outstanding contributions in geological science.⁴⁰ Grabau was unsurprisingly the first recipient of the award.⁴¹ On Grabau's 60th birthday in 1930, which coincided with the 10th year of his service in China, the Geological Society held a reception. A whole issue

³⁷ Sven Hedin, "Amadeus Grabau, In Memorium," *Bulletin of Geological Society of China*, 27 (November 1947): 28.

³⁸ Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History*, 376.

³⁹ Andersson, *The Dragon and the Foreign Devils*, 258.

⁴⁰ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 5:1 (1926), 23-24.

⁴¹ Li Siguang, Davidson Black, Wong Wenhao, and Yang Zhongjian were subsequent recipients of this medal. See issues of *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* from 1926 to 1938.

of the *Bulletin of Geological Society* was dedicated to Grabau's Anniversary. Zhang Hongzhao wrote a Chinese poem and Sven Hedin drew a picture of Grabau for this special occasion. The main Chinese staff of the Society's council wrote a letter to express their gratitude for Grabau's achievements. In the letter, they pointed out that regardless of economic distress and political disorder, Grabau continued his research and teaching. Even when the university was temporarily closed due to political disturbances, Grabau managed to have classes in his house. "We want particularly to tell you that ever since your arrival in China we have felt that you are one of us. We have long since forgotten that you are a foreigner, because we realize that your heart is here, and that your devotion to science is strong enough to transcend race and nationality."⁴²

Most of the foreign scientists in the Circle came to China for the abundance of research opportunities, especially in the field of human paleontology. As mentioned in the introduction and will be explored more in detail in the next chapter, since the discovery of the Java Man - an "ape man" that was the supposed missing link between human and ape - by Eugène Dubois in 1891, many scientists believed that human ancestors might be found in Asia. The French Jesuits stationed in Tianjin did extensive research in Inner Mongolia. The American Central Asiatic Expeditions allotted Mongolia as the site for their hunt for human ancestors. Andersson and Black were involved in the Zhoukoudian project in north China and collaborated with the Geological Survey to indigenize the human paleontological research in China and promoted Beijing as one of the most important research centers in the world. It is the episodes of their investigations and discoveries in these areas we now turn to.

⁴² *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* 10 (December, 1931), 1.

Inner Mongolia: The Jesuit Garden of Eden

The existing scholarship on the Jesuit activities in China often focuses on the late Ming and the high Qing period before the Jesuits were expelled and prohibited from proselytizing Christianity in China.⁴³ Few have looked at the Jesuit China mission in the 19th and 20th century after the Jesuits had re-established their infrastructure in China.⁴⁴ The return of the French Jesuits to North China after the Second Opium War established the Catholic vicariate in Xianxian, a rural village in Hebei. Their activities extended to Tianjin (four hours by car from Xianxian) where the formal French concession was built in 1860. The French Jesuit engagement of natural science in North China during the first quarter of the 20th century is exemplified by the work of Father Emile Licent. Licent obtained his doctoral degree in science, specializing in zoology. It was in 1912 that Licent formalized the idea of building a natural science museum in Tianjin. North China, particularly in the region of the Yellow River Basin, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet remained an unknown area in the fields of natural sciences. Inspired by another French Jesuit, Pierre Heude, who had established a natural science museum in Xiujiahui (Zikawei) in

⁴³ Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B.C. Oh. *East Meets West: the Jesuits in China, 1582-1773* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988); Roman Malek, ed. *Western Learning and Christianity in China: the Contribution and Impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S. J. (1592-1666)* (Sankt Augustin: China Zentrium; Institut Monumenta Serica, 1998); Liam Matthew Brockey. *Journey to the East: the Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Florence Hsia. *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and Their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China* (University of Chicago Press, 2009); R. Po-chia Hsia. *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552-1610*. Oxford University Press, 2010); this list is by no means exhaustive.

⁴⁴ For example, Richard Madsen. "Hierarchical Modernization: Tianjin's Gong Shang College as Model for Catholic Community in North China," in 161-190 in Wen-hsin Yeh, ed. *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 161-191.

Shanghai in the late 19th century and collected mainly from the middle and Eastern China in the Yangzi area, Licent wanted to create a similar one in North China. He envisioned his natural science museum as a research institution that fulfilled multiple functions: installing and studying the collections, publishing research reports, sending materials to other scientific institutions, and providing service for public education.⁴⁵ His idea was soon endorsed by the superiors of the Mission in Xianxian, the Jesuit Provincial of Northern France, as well as the general superior of the Jesuits. Emile Licent traveled from France through Siberia and arrived in Tianjin in 1914.

Licent's primary duty in Tianjin was as naturalist, explorer, and collector. In the first few years, he familiarized himself with the Chinese language and visited the mountains in areas northwest of Beijing along the railroad of Kalgan and Datong, the loess region of the Yellow River, Henan, Shanxi and Shaanxi. Licent received extensive support and help from the Catholic priests along his itineraries. They would provide him with food, accommodation, as well as transportation and coolies. He collected almost everything he could find on his journeys: from rocks, insects, plants, animals, and fossils to local ethnic costumes and crafts. This was due to his constant anxiety to "collect specimens everywhere and everyday for all the branches of natural history."⁴⁶ By 1925, Licent had traveled 50,000 kilometers and brought back thousands of specimens.

⁴⁵ Emile Licent. *Vingt deux années d'exploration dans le Nord de la Chine, en Mandchourie, en Mongolie et au Bas-Tibet (1914-1935): Le Musée Hoang ho Pai ho de Tientsin* (Mission de Sienhsien, 1936), 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 9.

Since 1914, Licent had been storing his collections in a small building, a property of the Jesuits, in Tianjin. However, as the quantity of specimens grew more and more each year, Licent received support from the Xianxian Mission and the authorities of the French and Italian Concessions to build a museum he had originally planned on Race Course Road. The three-floor museum, named Musée Hoang Ho Pai Ho (The Yellow River and White River Museum, or *Beijiang bowuyuan*, as it was known to the Chinese), was finally completed in 1922.

In 1920, Licent carried out a considerable number of excavations near Qingyang in northeastern Gansu and inspected several places for the formation of the great loess base. He discovered 4 pieces of cut-quartz: 3 slim splinters in which two were clearly touched up, and 1 big pointed bifacial cut-pebble. These pieces of quartz belonged to the late Pleistocene period (c.1.8 million years ago) and seemed to be tools made by the human hand. This discovery proved the hypothesis that there was no human existence in China during the Old Stone Age (the Paleolithic period, c. 2.5 million -100,000 years ago) to be false.⁴⁷ In the same year, Licent received samples of rhinoceros teeth and other animal bone fossils found near the Ordos desert by a Belgian Jesuit. Later he received information from two other Jesuit fathers, who had been prompted by the Mongolian Wansjock, that there was a site with bones at the Sjara Osso Gol (southeastern Ordos,

⁴⁷ Sinologist Berthold Laufer had claimed that the factor counted for the scarcity of China's stone implements discovered was that "the Chinese have never passed through an epoch which for other culture-regions has been designated as a stone age." See Berthold Laufer. *Jade: A Study of Chinese Archaeology and Religion* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1912), 29.

Salawusu in Chinese) at the southern edge of the Ordos.⁴⁸ Licent was preoccupied with finding paleontological fossils in the Ordos from that time onward.

In 1922, Licent returned to southern Ordos largely to exploit the fauna of the Quaternary along the Sjara Osso Gol. He discovered skeletons of the *Rhinoceros tichorhinus* (wooly rhinoceros) and the *Hemione* (Asiatic wild ass), one human tooth fossil, and a few human femurs and humerus. Licent was excited about his paleontological discoveries but also felt that he was unable to handle the research of these findings by himself. In fact, since 1916 Licent, lacking professional expertise in identifying and taxonomizing fossils, had been sending poorly labeled specimens to Marcellin Boule, a professor of geology, paleontology, and physical anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, for further evaluation and examination. When Licent found the promising conditions of the Ordos in 1922, he asked Boule if he could send someone to China to aid his research. Boule found his protégé, the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a perfect candidate for the mission.

Teilhard de Chardin was born in 1881 in Auvergne, France, to a family of distinguished lineage. He was influenced by his mother's piety and decided to become a Jesuit so he could keep his interest in natural science while devoting himself to the religious cause. He studied paleontology with Marcellin Boule, began to teach geology in the Catholic Institute in Paris in 1921, and obtained his doctorate of science from the Sorbonne in 1922. When he was younger, Teilhard de Chardin was influenced by Henri

⁴⁸ J. Gunnar Andersson. *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 148.

Bergson's book, *Creative Evolution*.⁴⁹ Throughout the years of studying science, Teilhard de Chardin grew more interested in Darwin's theory and he attempted to consolidate science with elements of religion. He developed a concept of "the All" (*le Tout*): the totality of the entire universe, in which constant evolution occurs and the ultimate goal is the convergence of all things to form the body of Christ, which is what he called the "Omega Point."⁵⁰ Teilhard de Chardin's resolution of science and religion led to his rejection of a literal interpretation of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, and original sin. His writings and lectures on evolution and his growing popularity in the arena of science were frowned on by the Catholic authorities in Vatican. They wanted him to leave Europe. When in 1922 Licent requested a collaborator for his research in China, the Jesuit superiors suggested Teilhard de Chardin, who first was not interested in the idea of leaving his beloved Paris to travel to China. However, he was encouraged by Boule and, being a Jesuit, he had to obey the rule of his superiors. Teilhard de Chardin arrived in China in 1923, but only intended to stay for a year until the anger of the Jesuit authorities was quelled.

To continue the expedition to the Ordos, Licent acquired financial support from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, the Academy of Sciences, and the Ministry of Public Instruction (or the Ministry of Education).⁵¹ The expedition was coined the "French Paleontological Mission" (*Mission paléontologique Française*).

⁴⁹ Amir D. Aczel, *The Jesuit and the Skull: Teilhard de Chardin, Evolution, and the Search for Peking Man* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2007), 75.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 76.

⁵¹ Emile Licent. *Le Paléolithique de la Chine* (1929), 3. The amount was 35,000 francs in total, about 2,500 Mexican silver dollars.

Licent would be the director and the Musée Hoang Ho Pai Ho would provide any necessary personnel and equipment. The national identification in the title of the expedition is significant. This occurred during a time when the Chinese northern and northwestern frontier was the locus of foreign scientific explorations. Competing with Roy Chapman Andrews of the American Museum of Natural History's Central Asiatic Expeditions in Mongolia and the Swedish-funded Andersson, Licent and Teilhard began their first expedition in the Ordos, with the support of French institutions. In a letter to Boule in Paris, Teilhard de Chardin contended that his work in China represented Paris, and he would make every effort to promote the scientific institutions in Paris to the high reputation enjoyed by those in New York and Uppsala.⁵² In 1923 the French Jesuits discovered an entire area of Paleolithic dispersal, rich in Stone Age artifacts, at Shuidonggou. This was a stone-tool industry that was similar to the Middle Paleolithic industry found in Europe.⁵³ They also found the remains of 33 species of mammals and 11 species of birds, as well as scarpers and points made by the human hand at Sjava Osso Gol. Although they were not able to find human skulls during their expedition, at Licent's laboratory in Tianjin Teilhard de Chardin was able to discover a humanlike upper incisor from the pile of animal teeth they brought back. He dated it to the Pleistocene era. The tooth was further examined by the Canadian scientist Davidson

⁵² Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Teilhard de Chardin en Chine: Correspondance inédite (1923-1940)* (Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle, 2004), 166.

⁵³ Aczel, *Jesuit and the Skull*, 96.

Black in Beijing, who named the unknown hominid the “Ordos Man” (or *Hetaoren*, as it was known to the Chinese).⁵⁴

Compared to the American Central Asiatic Expeditions, whose activities will be discussed later, the French Paleontological Mission was relatively small in scale and tight on budget. The French team comprised ten mules, three donkeys, five muleteers, two servants, a military escort, and the two scientists.⁵⁵ One advantage the French Jesuit explorers enjoyed was the extensive and efficient information network formed by the Catholic priests in the area. Licent had frequently received fossil samples and information about possible sites through other missionaries, and these often led to important discoveries. In a letter to his mentor Boule, Teilhard de Chardin mentioned that they had obtained some “tips” from the Belgian missionaries that were even unknown to the Geological Survey of China.⁵⁶ Keeping their itinerary secret was Licent’s advice to Teilhard, and the two Jesuit-explorers often tried to avoid direct conflict with the interest of other teams. They tended to publish immediately about their invaluable findings, even before they had studied and examined them closely. The purpose seemed to be to announce the French team as the first discoverer of particular sites.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Ibid, 98.

⁵⁵ Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 26-7.

⁵⁶ Teilhard de Chardin, *Teilhard de Chardin en Chine*, 65.

⁵⁷ Tai Li-chuan, “A French Adviser in the Time of Choukoutien Archaeological Excavation: Study Based on the Recently Published Teilhard de Chardin's Correspondence,” *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*, 79:1 (2008): 11.

Licent's museum collections were fast growing, and he extended the space to include a side building for public display in 1925. In 1928 the museum was open to the public for the first time. The grand opening ceremony was a big event: not only did all the foreign legations in Tianjin send their representatives, but the participants also included Chinese officials of Zhili and foreign and Chinese newspaper reporters.⁵⁸ The public display contained two floors. The first floor was for geology and paleontology and showed animal fossils (horses, ox, deers, giraffe) and rocks that had been found in Qingyang, Gansu, the south of Kalgan, and Sjara Oso Gol. After entering the museum's main gate, the visitor would first see a large complete skeleton of *Rhinoceros tichorhinus* (only two other similar specimens were to be found in the world at the time: one was kept in the museum's private collection and one was sent to the Paris Museum; both were discovered by Licent). The second floor was for ethnology, botany, and zoology. Wood, fruits, grains, fish, insects, animals, as well as a variety of ethnic costumes, food, cigarettes, pipes, and crafts were crammed into one exhibition room.⁵⁹

Despite its bustling grand opening, the Musée Hoang He Pai Ho was not a popular place for ordinary Tianjinese. It only opened three days a week for 4 hours a day. The ticket was sold at \$1 Mexican dollar. Brian Power, a Briton living in Tianjin at the time, described the museum as a "quiet place," and even on Sundays during its

⁵⁸ Wang Jiachuan and Wang Shan, "Tianjin Beijiang bowuguan bukao (Addendum on the Hoangho-Paiho Museum in Tianjin)," *China Historical Materials of Science and Technology*, 25:1 (2004): 38.

⁵⁹ Emile Licent, *A Guild to the Hoangho-Paiho Museum of Natural History* (date and publisher unknown).

opening time there were no more than a dozen visitors.⁶⁰ Nakayama Shōzen, a scholar of religion and the leader of Tenrikyō, attempted to visit the museum during his trip to Tianjin. He initially had difficulty finding the museum because many local Tianjinese did not seem to know the existence of it. Nakayama was impressed by the collections but what interested him more was the motivation of the Jesuits in building a museum like this. Being a religious leader himself, he did not understand if the Jesuits sent their missionaries to China for the purpose of preaching or researching, and whether their goal was to convert the Chinese or to train scientific scholars.⁶¹

Musée Hoang He Pai Ho was a product of nationalism and personal ambition. According to Amir Aczel, “Licent believed that the museum was a French outpost in a foreign land – its collections were not to be shared with the Chinese or with other Westerners... It was ‘his’ museum.”⁶² Indeed, on the Museum Guide, written by Licent himself, it stated very clearly that all the collections were “personal.”⁶³ The collections to be publically displayed were only a very small portion of his “personal collections,” which were kept in the private section of the museum. Licent considered his work in the museum to lend prestige to French science.⁶⁴ He also attempted to maintain a good

⁶⁰ Brian Power, *Ford of Heaven: A Childhood in Tianjin, China* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2005), 165.

⁶¹ Fang Jianchang, “Tianjin Beijiāng bowuguan kaoshi (On the Hoangho-Paiho Museum in Tianjin),” *China Historical Materials of Science and Technology*, 24:1 (2003):12.

⁶² Aczel, *The Jesuit and the Skull*, 139.

⁶³ Licent, *A Guide to the Musuem*, 1.

⁶⁴ Licent, *Le Paléolithique de la Chine*, 6.

relationship with the Paris Museum of Natural History in the Metropole. The contract he made with Boule for the French Paleontological Mission stated that any unique pieces discovered during the expedition would be sent to and kept by the Paris Museum and only duplicates or casts would stay in the Musée Hoang Ho Pai Ho.⁶⁵ Licent had also donated two series of plant specimens to the Royal Kew Gardens in London, Paleolithic and Neolithic rocks to the Institute of Human Paleontology in Paris,⁶⁶ and thousands of specimens to Chinese and foreign universities.⁶⁷ Licent, the “Father Curator,” had built the museum into one of the most important natural history museums in North China. According to the Chinese paleontologist Jia Lanpo, Licent believed that the deserts of Inner Mongolia, prehistorically fertile, were the site of the lost Garden of Eden.⁶⁸ The fossils that were dug out from that region by Licent had definitely enriched his own Garden of Eden in Tianjin.

Teilhard de Chardin returned to Paris in 1925 with huge number of findings from the previous expeditions. He intended to stay in Paris for good, but a document he wrote back in 1922 about original sin had just been discovered by the Vatican. The Jesuit superiors were again furious. They demanded that Teilhard de Chardin sign six propositions and exiled him back to China, this time with an unlimited term. He returned to China in 1926 and began to spend more time in Beijing, participating in the more lively international intellectual community and forming good relationships with the

⁶⁵ Ibid, 6.

⁶⁶ Licent, *Vingt deux années d'exploration*, 36.

⁶⁷ Wang and Wang, “Tianjin Beijiāng bowuguan bukāo,” 38.

⁶⁸ Aczel, *The Jesuit and the Skull*, 89.

expatriate scientists as well as Chinese intellectuals of the Peking Circle. Teilhard de Chardin had not been very happy working with Licent, as the latter had become “obsessively jealous of the prestige of his Museum.”⁶⁹ Moreover, Teilhard de Chardin began to enjoy life in Beijing and regarded it as his new intellectual haven, second to his beloved Paris. When he decided to accept a position in the newly established Cenozoic Research Laboratory of the Geological Survey in 1929, Licent was quite angry at him for neglecting the duties of the museum and accused him of “going over to the Chinese,” even calling him a “coolie.”⁷⁰

Licent continued his expeditions with the aid of other Jesuit fathers and kept aggregating his collections. He left Tianjin for France in 1939 during the second Sino-Japanese War. He brought most of the invaluable fossil specimens back to the Paris Museum, but the Musée Hoang Ho Pai Ho was still left with 35,000 plant specimens, 2000 animal specimens, thousands of mineral specimens, and 7000 ethnological samples.⁷¹ The new curator of the museum, Father Pierre Leroy, moved most of the important collections to Beijing in 1940 when the Japanese occupied the British and French concessions. The Musée was taken over by the Bureau of Culture of the Tianjin municipal government in 1952, and in 1957 it was renamed Tianjin Museum of Natural History.

⁶⁹ Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 31.

⁷⁰ Mary Lukas and Ellen Lukas, *Teilhard* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 114.

⁷¹ Fang, “*Tianjin Beijiang bowuguan kaoshi*,” 13.

Mongolia: The American Hunt for the Trophy

Throughout the 1920s, while the French Jesuits persevered with their investigation of Inner Mongolia on donkey backs, the American scientists traversed the Gobi in Mongolia with fleets of automobiles in search of human origins. The idea of the American Central Asiatic Expeditions was conceived by Roy Chapman Andrews as early as in 1912. After investigating marine mammals in the Pacific for years, Andrews began to be interested in land exploration in Asia, inspired by Henry Fairfield Osborn's Asiatic homeland theory. Similar mammalian and reptilian fossils found simultaneously in Europe and in the Rocky Mountain region of North America, separated by ten thousand miles, led Osborn to declare that the "dispersal center" must be half-way in-between. He suggested that during the end of the age of reptiles and the beginning of the age of mammals, the ancestors of higher mammals evolved in northern Asia and later migrated eastward and westward to other continents.⁷² "Asia is the mother of the continents" thus became Osborn's famous "prophecy."⁷³ Andrews took Osborn's courses while he studied at Columbia and later worked under Osborn at the American Museum of Natural History. He was a firm believer in Osborn's Asiatic "prophecy" and was determined to prove it. In 1915, Andrews proposed to Osborn a series of expeditions to northern Asia

⁷² Henry Fairfield Osborn, "The Geological and Faunal Relations of Europe and America During the Tertiary Period and the Theory of the Successive Invasions of an African Fauna," *Science*, New Series, 11:276 (1900): 567. Asa Gray had pondered upon similar phenomenon concerning the dispersal of plants, see Kuang-chi Hung, "The Place that 'Offers the Greatest Interest': Northeast Asia and the Making of the Making of Asa Gray's Disjunction Thesis," *Harvard Papers in Botany*, 15:2 (2010), 231-276.

⁷³ Henry Fairfield Osborn, "Forward: Asia the Mother of Continents," in Roy Chapman Andrews, *On the Trail of Ancient Man* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc, 1926), vii-x.

extending over ten years. The First Asiatic Zoological Expedition took place in Yunnan and the Tibetan frontier in 1916 and the Second in Mongolia in 1919. The team contained only a handful of members, including Andrews and his wife, and the main purpose was to collect zoological specimens through hunting. These two hunting expeditions resulted in the “largest and most complete collection of mammals that had ever been taken from a single region of Asia.”⁷⁴ Andrews was convinced that the Chinese frontier was the ideal testing ground for Osborn’s theory, and the idea of more ambitious expeditions, both in scale and scope, began to brew in his mind.

In 1920, Andrews presented to Osborn his plan of the “exploration of the future.” It was a formidable “total” exploration of Mongolia meant to map its whole past history through geological and paleontological studies of land structure, fossils, and climate, through zoological collecting of living animals, and through ethnological research of the frontier indigenes. The “exploration of the future” needed a staff of experts from each branch of science to carry out different tasks. The grandiose scope of the exploration also needed a new pace so as to “do in one season as much as others have done in ten years.”⁷⁵ The solution was to travel with motorcars, an innovative undertaking in the history of exploration. Osborn was fascinated by Andrews’ grand plan and immediately approved it. The museum would do its best to support the expedition, but Andrews would have to raise most of the funding, estimated at a quarter million dollars for the first five years.

⁷⁴ Roy Chapman Andrews, *Ends of the Earth* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1929), 178.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 205.

To raise such a huge amount of money in New York City within a short period of time, Andrews' strategy was to make his proposed exploration a "society expedition with a big S" by first persuading influential financiers to support it and then make donating to the cause of the expedition the most fashionable "must" for other members of the New York high society to follow.⁷⁶ The first step Andrews took was to unfold a map in front of J.P Morgan, the powerful banker, showing him the white space of the unknown Gobi and then demonstrating his grand proposal for exploring the place to prove Osborn's theory. After fifteen minutes, Morgan, whose eyes were glowing with enthusiasm, pledged fifty thousand dollars for Andrews' expedition.⁷⁷ Andrews' strategy worked: within a few months, after numerous dinner parties and public presentations, he raised enough money to proceed with the exploration. Among the generous supporters were wealthy New Yorkers such as the financiers and philanthropists John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Cleveland H. Dodge, and George F. Baker, just to name a few.⁷⁸ Andrews would be the leader and the zoologist of the expedition team. Walter Granger, the curator of vertebrate paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, was the second in command and the chief paleontologist.⁷⁹ The rest of the team included geologists, herpetologists, archaeologists, anthropologists, a surgeon, technicians, and a photographer taking motion

⁷⁶ Roy Chapman Andrews, *Under a Lucky Star* (New York: The Viking Press, 1943), 165.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 167.

⁷⁸ Andrews, *Ends of the Earth*, 208.

⁷⁹ For Walter Granger's biography, see Vincent Morgan and Spencer Lucas, *Walter Granger, 1872-1941, Paleontologist*, Bulletin 19, New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science (2002).

pictures.⁸⁰ A fleet of three cars and two trucks was to be used to transport the staff across the Gobi, supported by a caravan of around one hundred camels carrying supplies. Instead of the most well known contemporary Italian and French cars, Andrews picked the Dodge Brothers cars and the Fulton trucks because “this was an all-American expedition.”⁸¹ To make the team’s national identity even more conspicuous, an American flag was always flying on the top of the tent during the expeditions.⁸²

The expeditions attracted great media attention and aroused enormous public interest. However, what interested people was not Andrews’ original objective of testing Osborn’s theory of Central Asia as the origin of mammalian evolution, but the expedition’s “potential” in discovering the “Missing Link.” A headline in *The New York Times* that pitched finding the human fossil as the primary mission of the expedition – “Scientists to Seek Ape-Man’s Bones: Natural History Expedition Will Begin Five-year Quest For Missing Link in February” – was simply one among many examples.⁸³ The Darwinian interpretation that humans had evolved from apes was a highly controversial issue in America at the time: just within a few years the Scopes Trial would hit the

⁸⁰ Roy Chapman Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia* (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1932), xi.

⁸¹ Andrews, *On the Trail of Ancient Man*, 10.

⁸² This flag is preserved by the American Museum of Natural History as a symbol for all the expeditions conducted by the Museum for “the quest of knowledge, insight, and understanding.” See http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/expeditions/treasure_fossil/Treasures/Gobi_Flag/gobi.html.

⁸³ “Scientists to Seek Ape-Man’s Bones,” *New York Times* (October 20, 1920).

headlines.⁸⁴ Not wanting to exasperate the conservative science community, Andrews had attempted to clarify and direct public attention to the larger scope of the expedition. But the press was not interested in anything else except the “primitive man,” and as Andrews noted, the team had to “bow to the inevitable and talk Missing Link for all we were worth since it was a definite part of our program.”⁸⁵ Perhaps it was strategically a compromise to public demand initially, but the team increasingly came to regard the search for the Missing Link as the most important mission when successive expeditions in Mongolia carried out throughout the 1920s. The shift in emphasis was mostly related to Osborn’s proposition about the origin of the human ancestors. In the early 1920s, he had become one of the most zealous proselytizers of the idea that Central Asia was the cradle of humanity. With the discovery of the Java Man in Asia and the Piltdown Man in Europe, Osborn’s belief in the mammalian dispersal hypothesis led to his next expectation: the discovery of the primitive man in North America.⁸⁶ In 1922, he misidentified a peccary tooth found in Nebraska as the first Java-Man like fossil in North America and triumphantly announced the discovery of the Nebraska Man (*Hesperopithecus*), the “first anthropoid found in America.”⁸⁷ The infamous Nebraska

⁸⁴ The Scopes Trial, or more popularly known as the Monkey Trial, was a famous legal case in which John Scopes, a high school science teacher, was accused by the State of Tennessee in 1925 for violating the state law by teaching evolution in class. This case demonstrates the controversy between creationism and evolutionary theory that has long existed in America.

⁸⁵ Andrews, *Ends of the Earth*, 212.

⁸⁶ Details of Osborn’s theory and the discoveries of human fossils will be discussed in Chapter 2.

⁸⁷ Henry Fairfield Osborn, “*Hesperopithecus*, the First Anthropoid Primate Found in America,” *Science*, 55:1427 (May 5, 1922), 463-5.

Man was dismissed in 1925, but Osborn never gave up. The discovery of a human tooth and deposits of Paleolithic artifacts made by the French Jesuits in Ordos in 1923 had strengthened Osborn's conviction in his Central Asia "prophecy." Now he gambled on his Central Asiatic Expeditions team to bring back the grand trophy from the arid Gobi.⁸⁸

The team of the Central Asiatic Expeditions spent a whole year for preparation in Beijing before its first departure for Mongolia in April 1922. Upon arriving in Beijing, Andrews and Granger immediately visited the Geological Survey and received a cordial reception from J.G. Andersson, Amadeus Grabau, Ding Wenjiang, and Weng Wenhao.⁸⁹ To facilitate cooperation and to avoid competition, Ding, the director of the Survey at the time, negotiated with Andrews about carving up field research areas. The regions the Survey was already interested in investigating had to be preserved. These included Zhili, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan, Gansu, Manchuria, and some areas in Mongolia, Guizhou, and Sichuan. The American team was welcome to take other places.⁹⁰ In return, Osborn agreed to send a duplicate set of the American Museum's collections to

⁸⁸ Henry Fairfield Osborn, "Why Central Asia?" *Natural History*, 16:3 (1926), 266.

⁸⁹ Andrews, *On the Trail of Ancient Man*, 26.

⁹⁰ A letter from Ding Wenjiang to Roy Chapman Andrews, 18 April 1921, Box 5, Folder 18, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History. As a friendly gesture, the Survey later handed over to Americans their preserved districts in Guizhou and Sichuan. Walter Granger thus conducted research in eastern Sichuan during the years 1921-2, 1923, and 1926, and discovered rich fossils of the Pleistocene times. See Walter Granger, "Paleontological Exploration in Eastern Sichuan," in Roy Chapman Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 501-528.

the Survey.⁹¹ The team was determined to have Mongolia as the chief exploration site and attempted to maintain a friendly relationship with the Survey and other scientists researching in China. The territorial division between research teams was strictly followed. For example, during the first year's preliminary exploration in Mongolia, the American team examined the vicinity of Kalgan, a reserved area for the Survey, and discovered a fossil bed of the Cretaceous or Tertiary period. Andrews informed Andersson of their findings and was willing to present him the fragmentary fossil bones the team had obtained.⁹²

The American team spent five months in Mongolia in 1922 to survey the geology of the Gobi and collected about two thousand fossil specimens and several thousand mammals.⁹³ The most significant discovery was the colossal fossil skull of *Baluchitherium*, the giant extinct rhinoceros, at Iren Dabasu in southeastern Mongolia. The beast from the Oligocene period was the largest known land mammal. It was an encouraging sign for the team because the members believed, as did Osborn, that the human ancestors evolved from the anthropoid-ape stock during the Oligocene and progressed in the open land, just as in the place where they found the *Baluchitherium*. Andrews boldly declared that "This discovery [of man's remote ancestors] will most

⁹¹ A letter from Ding Wenjiang to Henry Fairfield Osborn, 25 March 1921, Box 5, Folder 18, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

⁹² A letter from Roy Chapman Andrews to J.G. Andersson (date unknown, probably in late 1922 after the team returned to Beijing from the first year's exploration), Box 1, Folder 4, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

⁹³ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 176-9.

probably be made in Asia; it would be rash to predict that it will be made in that part of Asia where our parties are now working, but in our opinion it is more probably that we are relatively near the centre of human origin.”⁹⁴

The team returned to Mongolia in 1923 with much enthusiasm to focus on the paleontological investigation of the region. In Flaming Cliffs, the team found enough skulls and jaws of Protoceratops (later named *Protoceratops andrewsi*) to make a complete developmental series.⁹⁵ But the most exciting finding was a nest of dinosaur eggs. Twenty-five eggs were taken out from the sandstone, and most of them were in perfect condition. Andrews claimed, “Never before in the history of science has it been possible to study paleoembryology!”⁹⁶ The team also discovered a new species of dinosaur near the nest of eggs, which was later named by Osborn as *Oviraptor* (the egg thief).⁹⁷ The second season of the Central Asiatic Expeditions was definitely a fruitful one: in Flaming Cliff alone the team collected sixty cases of fossils, including seventy skulls, fourteen skeletons and twenty-five dinosaur eggs.⁹⁸ Osborn visited the team in

⁹⁴ Andrews, *On the Trail of Ancient Man*, 207.

⁹⁵ Andrews, 231.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 231. Yet, these eggs were not the first dinosaur eggs ever discovered. Fossil eggshells and complete eggs were first found in 1859 and in 1869 in France. However, they were considered to be eggs of crocodile and giant bird until Paul Gervais, a French paleontologist, published a report in 1877 on these eggs and suspected them to be dinosaur eggs. See Donald Gault, *Dinosaurs: The Encyclopedia, Supplement 3* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 613-652.

⁹⁷ Later discoveries revealed that *Oviraptor* was a nesting dinosaur and the eggs discovered by the American team in 1923 were actually *Oviraptor* eggs. See Mark Norell, James Clark, Luis Chiappe, and Demberelyin Dashzeveg, “A Nesting Dinosaur” *Nature*, 378 (1995): 774-6.

⁹⁸ Andrews, *On the Trail of Ancient Man*, 240.

Mongolia right before the completion of the expedition and made a stop in Beijing in 1923. This was Osborn's first time in China; he received a cordial welcome from the scientific community and became the special guest of honor at the seventh general meeting of the Geological Society in 1923. He gave grateful thanks for the help the American CAE team received from the Survey and the Society.⁹⁹ Osborn also met with the Premier W.W. Yen (Yan Huiqing) and other cabinet officials of the Beiyang government, such as Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun), to discuss the establishment of a natural history museum in Beijing modeled on the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History.¹⁰⁰ The relationship between the American Museum, represented by Osborn and his expedition team, and the Beijing scientific community and politicians was in its most friendly term.

The discovery of the dinosaur eggs aroused unprecedented worldwide public interest, which eventually became a mixed blessing for the CAE team. To raise more funds for their next expedition, the team decided to hold an auction to sell one egg to the highest bidder. Offers came from all over the world, and eventually the egg was sold to Colonel Austin Colgate for five thousand dollars.¹⁰¹ With the high publicity brought forth by the dinosaur eggs, Andrews was able to obtain enough money for the next

⁹⁹ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 2:3-4 (1923), 100-103.

¹⁰⁰ A letter from Osborn to Sao-ke Alfred Sze (Shi Zhaoji), the head of the Chinese legation to America, 11 August 1924, Box 4, Folder 4, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History. As the successive political events unfolded in Beijing, the plan for a natural history museum was later aborted.

¹⁰¹ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 230.

expedition, planned for 1925. However, the negotiation with the Mongolian government for passports was not so smooth this time. After the founding of the Mongolian People's Republic, the government had formed a Scientific Committee to deal with scientific expeditions and to prepare for the establishment of a natural museum in Urga (now Ulan Bator). The chair of the committee, who was also the Minister of Education, opposed the American expeditions. According to Andrews, the Mongols suspected that the American team made huge profits by selling the dinosaur eggs and thus did not want to allow foreigners to come in and rob the priceless possessions of the Mongolian people.¹⁰² Through the help of Andrews' powerful Mongolian friends, the Scientific Committee reached an agreement with Andrews in May 1925. Complete paleontological fossil skeletons and one example of each rare fossil had to be returned to the Scientific Committee; the American Museum of Natural History would send some collections of the American flora and fauna to the Committee; Andrews would have to present to the Committee with copies of maps of their itinerary, all the scientific accounts, and photographs taken during his expeditions.¹⁰³ Although Andrews signed the agreement to proceed with the expeditions, he never attempted to follow it as he was strongly opposed to returning to the Mongols any of the fossils found by his team. As will be discussed later, the American Museum had only sent back to the Mongolian Scientific Committee

¹⁰² A letter from Andrews to Osborn, 1 October 1924, Box 4, Folder 4, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

¹⁰³ "Agreement between the Mongolian Scientific Committee and Roy Chapman Andrews," 29 May 1925, Folder 1214.1 (March-May, 1925), Central Archives, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

“things that are all inexpensive and will not be of much trouble to prepare,” which included a few casts of dinosaur eggs, some minor collections, and photographs.¹⁰⁴

The 1925 expedition was probably the largest land expedition ever carried in the history of exploration. There were forty staff members in total, with five Dodge cars, two trucks, and one hundred and twenty-five camels. The team traveled five thousand miles across the Gobi and accomplished much more than in the previous seasons. In addition to more mammalian and reptilian fossils and dinosaur eggs, the expedition discovered two Paleolithic and one Neolithic cultural deposit. A rather accurate topographic survey from Kalgan to the heart of the Gobi was conducted, and maps were produced.¹⁰⁵

Although no human fossil was found this time either, Andrews and Osborn’s expectation of finding the relics of the Missing Link was once more stimulated by the announcement of the discovery of two hominid teeth in Beijing in 1926. “We believe,” Andrews stated, “that what we have proved true in the case of mammals and reptiles is likely to prove true in the case of man also. We think that man originated in this region [Mongolia] because it was the type of country which would best encourage his development.”¹⁰⁶

The Mongolian objection to the CAE expedition was only the beginning of a series of obstacles the team was to be confronted with; more would be initiated by the

¹⁰⁴ A letter from Andrews to Osborn, 1 October 1924, Box 4, Folder 4, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

¹⁰⁵ “Summary of the results accomplished by the Third Asiatic Expedition during the season of 1925,” Box 6, Folder 44, Roy Chapman Andrews Administrative Papers, 1920-1940, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

¹⁰⁶ “Pre-Dawn Man,” *The Trans-Pacific* (June 16, 1928).

nationalist Chinese. By the time the Chinese Nationalist government was inaugurated in Nanjing in 1927, a strong anti-foreign nationalism had reached its climax nationwide. While Beijing was still in the control of Zhang Zuolin and his Fengtian army, a group of Chinese scholars from universities in Beijing formed an organization, the Chinese Association of Learned Societies (*Zhongguo xueshu tuanti xiehui*), in the spring of 1927 to prevent Sven Hedin's expedition to Xinjiang. The primary objective of the Association was to put a bridle on foreign expeditions in China that "infringe our sovereignty, plunder our research materials, and cause great loss to the future of Chinese academic development."¹⁰⁷ It was a "duel between West and East," as Hedin called it, and for his personal honor and reputation he was determined to fight against the "Chinese intolerance."¹⁰⁸ Ding Wenjiang and Weng Wenhao were both nationalists but they also supported international cooperation and their role in the anti-Hedin event was controversial. According to Hedin, Weng, who was the director of the Geological Survey at the time, had also become a target for the angry professors of the Association, not only for Weng's personal relationship with the "Swedes" (Andersson and Hedin) but also because these professors were envious that the Survey was the most modern and Westernized scientific institution in Beijing.¹⁰⁹ Hedin's assumption was perhaps not groundless: even Ding Wenjiang pointed out that the opposition of anti-foreign

¹⁰⁷ "Beijing xueshu tuanti fandui wairen caiqu guwu zhi xuanyan zuori yeyi fabiao" (The Manifesto of the Association of Learned Societies Against Foreigners Collecting Ancient Relics was Announced Yesterday), *Chen bao* (March 10, 1927), cited in Wang Chen, ed., *Gaoshang zhe de muzhiming* (The Epitaph of the Nobles) (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2005), 521-522.

¹⁰⁸ Sven Hedin, *History of the Expedition in Asia, 1927-1935, Volume 1*, (Stockholm: Elanders bortryckeri aktiebolag, 1943), 16, 17.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 18.

nationalism was directed more against himself, Weng, Andersson, and the Survey than against Hedin and his expedition.¹¹⁰ Ding and Weng remained low-key and only occasionally offered Hedin their personal opinions on Chinese politics. After negotiations over five months, Hedin finally came to terms with the Association and signed an agreement. The Swedish team had to accept a Chinese co-director and include ten Chinese professors and graduate students in his team. Other than paying all necessary expenses for the Chinese members, Hedin had to pay “monthly fees” to the Association during the time of the expedition. Further all findings should be turned over to the Association and only some duplicates would be given to Hedin.¹¹¹ The Sino-Swedish Scientific Expedition to Northwestern China (*Zhong-Rui xibei kexue kaochatuan*) was the first joint expedition between foreign and Chinese scientists, and the agreement would become the protocol for future negotiations.

For the Association, the result was a great victory for the Chinese. As one of the members claimed, the Sino-Swedish agreement was “a reversed unequal treaty,” which marked an epoch in the history of China’s confrontation with foreign countries.¹¹² However, for Andrews and his team members, who were waiting in Beijing for their next venture into Mongolia, it was a great threat. To avoid alerting the Association, Andrews obtained permission directly from Zhang Zuolin and launched the expedition in the summer of 1928 in secrecy by persuading the foreign correspondents of major

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 20.

¹¹¹ Wang Chen, ed., *Gaoshang zhe de muzhiming*, 525-528.

¹¹² Ibid, 10.

newspapers to hold the news of the expedition until after their departure.¹¹³ However, even though the expedition proceeded as Andrews planned, at their return in August, eighty-seven boxes of their collections were held in Kalgan by the newly established Beijing Branch of the National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities (*Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuan hui*). Unlike the un-official Association, the National Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities was founded by the Nationalist government to implement regulations and laws on foreign expeditions, international collaboration, and the preservation of ancient relics.¹¹⁴ Andrews claimed that the Chinese “had no legal or moral right to detain our collections.”¹¹⁵ The Chinese reaction against foreign expeditions might have been regarded by Andrews as irrational native resistance against scientific universalism. However, Fan Fa-ti points out that the Chinese establishment of legal regulations protecting antiquities was better seen as part of a larger global historical development of modern nation-states, creating national identity and reinforcing border controls.¹¹⁶ After six weeks of negotiation, an agreement was signed.

¹¹³ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 345.

¹¹⁴ Luo Guihuan, “Shilun 20 shiji qianqi ‘Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuan hui’ de chengli ji yiyi” (Regarding the Founding and Significance of the National Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities in the Early 20th Century), *Zhongguo keji shi zazhi* (*The Chinese Journal for the History of Science and Technology*), 27:2 (2006): 138-9. The committee members included nineteen intellectuals, including Zhang Ji, Cai Yuanpei, Fu Sinian, Li Ji, Gu Jiegang, and Li Siguang. All the main constituents, like Liu Bannong, Ma Heng, and Yuan Fuli, from the Chinese Association of Learned Societies were recruited to the National Committee. Weng Wenhao was also recruited as a member and served as a buffering negotiator between the antagonistic Chinese members and foreigners.

¹¹⁵ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 418.

¹¹⁶ Fan Fa-ti, “Circulating Material Objects: the International Controversy over Antiquities and Fossils in Twentieth-Century China,” unpublished manuscript.

The Committee allowed the paleontological fossils to be shipped to the American Museum for study, but they had to be returned to China later, while all the archaeological findings and half of the zoological and botanical specimens would stay in China. In reality, Andrews was able to ship all the collections, except one box of archaeological relics, to America, and did not return any as indicated by the agreement.¹¹⁷

The ambivalent position of Ding Wenjiang and Weng Wenhao during the anti-Hedin event shows that friendship and collaboration that transcended national boundaries could only exist within the Peking Circle. It was true that Ding and Weng were well respected by their foreign peers, but they were regarded as exceptional, or the “other Chinese,” in Anderssons’ term. The foreign scientists of the Circle generally did not have a high opinion of other Chinese. During his brief return to Beijing in the summer of 1929, Sven Hedin complained to Andrews and Granger about having included Chinese in his team. To keep good relationship with the Chinese, Hedin often praised his Chinese members in public. In his own account of the expedition, which was published later in the 1940s, Hedin contended that it was satisfying to “give a number of young Chinese a chance of modern scientific training under European leadership.”¹¹⁸ However, he

¹¹⁷ Luo Guihuan, “Shilun 20 shiji qianqi ‘Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuan hui’ de chengli ji yiyi,” 139.

¹¹⁸ Sven Hedin, *History of the Expedition in Asia, 1927-1935, Vol.1*, 60. Hedin’s attitude in public leaves an impression to Chinese scholars of the Sino-Swedish Expedition that Sven Hedin was a great example of a true collaborator. For example, Luo Guihuan calls him an “honest scholar with much insight” who “could sincerely collaborated with the Chinese, unlike other Western expedition team leaders.” See Luo Guihuan, “20 shiji qianqi liangci shibai de zhong wai hezuo kexue kaocha jiyi yuanyin,” (The Two Failed Joint Scientific Expeditions in China and Foreign Countries in the early 20th Century), *Zhongguo keji shi zazhi (The Chinese Journal for the History of Science and Technology)*. 26:3 (2005): 198.

privately revealed to his American friends that he actually regarded the Chinese participation as a complete “farce” forced upon him,¹¹⁹ and that he was quite disappointed at his Chinese co-director, who, although an educated gentleman, did not even know where Gobi was.¹²⁰ Granger concluded that Hedin’s previous accomplishments were achieved with the aid of “competent white men – Swedish, German, and others” and therefore the present joint expedition with a “haphazard assortment of Chinese students and graduate failures” could hardly have been much assistance in his scientific work.¹²¹ When Granger, on behalf of the Central Asiatic Expeditions, proposed to the Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities the team’s next expedition in 1929, the Committee expected the Americans to follow a similar agreement to the one made with Sven Hedin. The expedition would have to include half Chinese staff, paid by the American team.¹²² Andrews was very much opposed to the idea of collaboration with the Chinese in the expeditions. The American team refused to compromise with the Committee, also because they wanted to keep all their collections. Aside from testing Osborn’s theory, the unspoken ultimate goal of the Central Asiatic Expeditions was to collect unknown specimens to enhance the possessions of the

¹¹⁹ A letter from Andrews to Granger, 18 November 1929, Box 1, Folder 11, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

¹²⁰ A letter from Granger to Osborn, 25 June 1929, Box 4, Folder 7, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History. This co-director was Xu Bingchang, a professor of Philosophy at Beida and a member of the National Committee.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 420-1.

American Museum of Natural History. In a public statement condemning the Chinese government and the Committee for interrupting the Central Asiatic Expeditions, Andrews angrily commented that the Chinese attitude would stop all foreign scientific work in the country, and “Museums can not send expensive expeditions if they are not allowed control of their collections.”¹²³

Through diplomatic negotiations and the bribing of the members of the Committee, the American team was allowed to resume the work in Mongolia in 1930.¹²⁴ In order not to hand over substantial specimens to the Chinese, Andrews decided to limit this expedition to only paleontological, geological, and topographical research. The team would also include three “Chinese” scientists: Yang Zhongjian (C.C. Young), who received a doctorate in vertebrate paleontology in Germany and returned to China in 1928, Teilhard de Chardin, representing the Geological Survey, and the geologist Zhang Xi from Zhongshan University.¹²⁵ Instead of making them members of the team,

¹²³ Cited in Henry Fairfield Osborn, “Interruption of Central Asiatic Exploration by the American Museum of Natural History,” *Science*, 70:1813 (Sep. 27, 1929): 293.

¹²⁴ In a letter to Granger, 15 January 1930, Andrews revealed that he had “employed” a member of the Committee whose name was T.T. Sun to report the Committee’s inner workings and to negotiate for the Expedition under the table. See Box 1, Folder 1, MSS. C446 Central Asiatic Expeditions, 1921-1930, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History; and also Charles Gallenkamp, *Dragon Hunter: Roy Chapman Andrews and the Central Asiatic Expeditions* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 263-4.

¹²⁵ The agreement on including the three scientists was probably made based on the good relationship between Teilhard de Chardin and Andrews and Granger. Davidson Black was also included in an earlier expedition. However, it is interesting to note that unlike Black, who was invited by Andrews and Granger, Teilhard de Chardin was regarded as an official representative of the Geological Survey, thus a “Chinese” participant.

Andrews referred them as the “Chinese representatives.”¹²⁶ Within four months, the team found seventy-five species of paleontological fossils, including a few new types, and managed to ship all the findings back to the American Museum.¹²⁷ According to Andrews, it formed the “largest and one of the most important collections ever taken out of Central Asia.”¹²⁸ Instead of cooperation, Andrews and his American team members intentionally isolated the three “Chinese representatives” in order to prevent them from participating in their fossil collecting activities. According to Yang Zhongjian, the three of them were allowed to use the tools brought by the team and thus they were involved in their own scattered geological research and fossil digging. All vertebrate fossils they discovered had to be handed over to the Americans.¹²⁹ However, the participation in the American expedition provided the Chinese members ample opportunities to learn professional field techniques. As Yang commented, “To put it bluntly, the so-called ‘Sino-American collaboration’ (*Zhong-Mei hezuo*) is but about how they take advantage of us, and how we take advantage of them.”¹³⁰ Thus ended the last Central Asiatic Expeditions of the American Museum. In 1932, Andrews attempted to ally with the newly inaugurated government of Manchukuo in order to resume the exploration of

¹²⁶ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 422.

¹²⁷ Luo Guiguan, “20 shiji qianqi liangci shibai de zhong wai hezuo kexue kaocha jiqi yuanyin,” 196.

¹²⁸ Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 453.

¹²⁹ Yang Zhongjian, *Yang Zhongjian huiyi lu* (Beijing: Dizhi chubanshe, 1983), 70.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Mongolia through Manchuria. His plan was aborted due to the political instability of the area.¹³¹

No human fossil was ever discovered during the Central Asiatic Expeditions from 1921 to 1930. As Andrews lamented, “we have not been successful in one objective of our search – the ‘dawn man,’” and he blamed the Chinese opposition to foreign investigation that cut short their expeditions and prevented them from obtaining their goal.¹³² However, the team did manage to bring back to the Museum a large quantity of valuable paleontological fossils.¹³³ Both Osborn and Andrews were convinced more than ever that “Central Asia was a paleontological Garden of Eden.”¹³⁴ Mongolia represented to them an unknown and utterly blank space in the fields of natural science to be filled up through their investigation. It was viewed as a great opportunity to advance the scientific accomplishment of the Americans and to gain prestige for their Museum, similar in significance to what Inner Mongolia did for Licent and his Musée in Tianjin. As historian Ronald Reinger has cogently commented, the Central Asiatic Expeditions were a product of the American Empire in the early twentieth century as the ambitious Osborn

¹³¹ See Andrews’ correspondence with Chuichi Ohashi, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Manchuria, Box 7, Folder 3, Roy Chapman Andrews Administrative Papers, 1920-1940, Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

¹³² Andrews, *New Conquest of Central Asia*, 453.

¹³³ According to the estimation made by the United States Geological Survey, the accomplishments made in the first three years by the CAE equaled to what had been accomplished in fifty years of discovery (1850-1900) in the Rocky Mountain region. See Henry Fairfield Osborn, “Discoveries in the Gobi Desert by the American Museums Expeditions,” *Nature*, 118: 2968 (Sept. 18, 1926): 419.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 453.

eagerly expanded the Museum's collections through explorations not only to Asia, but also to North and South America, Europe, and Africa.¹³⁵ Reinger also points out that such imperial hegemonic mentality was best reflected in the attitude of the expedition members toward the Chinese and the Mongolians: these Americans took it for granted that they should take possession of the scientific findings from Central Asia because they held far greater knowledge than the people of the land.¹³⁶ Andrews had publicly claimed that the American Central Asiatic Exploration was working toward the aim of advancing world science, because "the Chinese themselves cannot do the work, for they have neither adequately trained men nor the money to conduct investigations."¹³⁷ Not only did the American team members express condescending attitudes toward the Chinese and Chinese scientists, the Museum also failed to treat the Chinese or Mongolian museums on equal terms. To obtain permission from the Mongolian government, the American Museum promised to send duplicates of their collections to the Urga Museum. Instead, Andrews and Osborn decided to have the American Museum gather some "mounted discards" of birds and mammals from their school collections. "They [the Mongols] are

¹³⁵ Ronald Reinger, *An Agenda for Antiquity: Henry Fairfield Osborn and Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, 1890-1935* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 103-4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹³⁷ Cited in Henry Fairfield Osborn, "Interruption of Central Asiatic Exploration by the American Museum of Natural History," 293.

very keen to have anything of the sort,” Andrews explained, “it really makes little difference how badly mounted they are.”¹³⁸

China, with few funds and a few professionally trained scientists, was indeed in need of international assistance. A mutual collaboration with foreigners who, while utilizing the resources to pursue scientific knowledge in the land of opportunity, were also committed to the development and advancement of science in China would be put into practice by the Cenozoic Research Laboratory. The Cenozoic Lab embodied a vision aimed at indigenizing scientific institution and research in China by training more Chinese to become capable scientists who could carry on the mission by themselves in the future. We now turn to the episode when the awaited “missing link” was finally discovered in China and the efforts were made by the scientists of the Peking Circle to promote the development of Chinese paleoanthropology in Beijing.

North and Northwestern China: International Collaboration and the Discovery of Peking Man

The discovery of Peking Man has a long history, beginning with the Swedish geologist Johan Gunnar Andersson’s fossil collecting venture in China. While traveling along the Yellow River and surveying for mines he became interested in the paleontological fossils he discovered in loess beds. He received funds from his friend, the Swedish industrialist Axel Lagrelius, to secure a large collection of vertebrate fossils.

¹³⁸ A letter from George Sherwood to Doctor Frank M. Chapman and Mr H.E. Anthony, 15 July 1926, Folder 1214.1 (July-August, 1926), Special Collections, American Museum of Natural History.

Lagrelius established the Swedish China Research Committee (the Kinafond) to support Andersson's fossil collecting work in China.¹³⁹ In 1918, Andersson was told by J. McGregor Gibb, a chemistry professor in Beijing, about fragments of bone-bearing clay he found in a place called "Chicken Bone Hill" near Zhoukoudian, 50 km southwest of Beijing.¹⁴⁰ However, Andersson only discovered many small bones belonging to rodents and birds but nothing else, and his interest in the Zhoukoudian deposit vanished. In 1921, with Otto Zdansky, the Austrian paleontologist invited by Andersson from the University of Uppsala to aid his work on other fossil deposits, and Walter Granger, who happened to be in Beijing preparing for the first Central Asiatic Expedition, Andersson again went back to Zhoukoudian. This time, they found many vertebrate fossils and flakes of quartz in the cave. The latter led Andersson to make the assumption that a "hominid" might have used these sharp quartz flakes to cut up the captured animals. He told Zdansky, "I have a feeling that there lie here the remains of one of our ancestors and it is only a question of your finding him."¹⁴¹ Zdansky continued the excavation at the site and found more fossil mammals, including an upper molar that unmistakably belonged to a hominid jaw. Instead of announcing his big discovery or, at least, informing Andersson about it, Zdansky kept it to himself and packed it with the other fossil teeth he excavated. As he recalled later, "I recognized it at once, but I said nothing. You see, hominid material is

¹³⁹ Niall Mateer and Spencer Lucas, "Swedish Vertebrate Paleontology in China: A History of the Lagrelius Collection," *Bulletin of the Geological Institution of the University of Uppsala*, 11 (1985): 5.

¹⁴⁰ J. Gunnar Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth: Studies in Prehistoric China* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1973), 95-6.

¹⁴¹ Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 101.

always in the limelight and I was afraid that if it came out there would be such a stir, and I would be forced to hand over material I had a promise to publish.”¹⁴² Beginning in 1919, Andersson, who was not an expert in paleontology, had shipped fossils he found in China to the Swedish paleontologist Carl Wiman at the University of Uppsala so that he might examine and identify these fossils.¹⁴³ Zdansky returned to Uppsala in 1923 and worked on preparing these fossils.

Andersson’s research in China, unrelated to the survey of mines, was undoubtedly connected to Swedish national interest, as it was mostly funded by the Swedish China Research Committee.¹⁴⁴ It was out of a nationalist desire to glorify Swedish national strength and scientific advancement. This is revealed in a letter written by the Swedish

¹⁴² John Reader, *Missing Links: In Search of Human Origins* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 207.

¹⁴³ Niall Mateer and Spencer Lucas, “Swedish Vertebrate Paleontology in China: A History of the Lagrelius Collection,” 5. In 1924, the Swedish China Research Committee had come to an agreement with the Geological Survey to return human remains as well as a large quantity of botanical and mammal fossils that Andersson shipped to Uppsala for study. Based on the records kept in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, founded by Andersson in Stockholm in 1926 to store archaeological findings from China, there were seven shipments of boxes from Sweden to Beijing from 1927 to 1936. See Magnus Fiskesjö, “The China Collection: the Cross-continental Ethics of Johan Gunnar Andersson and the Creation of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities,” in Håkan Karlsson ed., *Swedish Archaeologists on Ethics* (Lindome: Bricoleur Press, 2004), 193. However, these returned collections are nowhere to be found now in China. Therefore, the Paleontological Museum of the University of Uppsala and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities hold one of the largest collections of Chinese fossils and archaeological relics outside of China. For correspondence between Andersson, Weng, and the Swedish China Research Committee, see Weng Xiyu, ed., *Weng Wenhao gurenleixue yu lishi wenhua wenji* (Weng Wenhao: Works on Paleontology, History and Culture) (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2008), 126-67.

¹⁴⁴ The Swedish Crown Prince also became a co-sponsor of the Committee. See *ibid*, 5.

archaeologist, Oscar Montelius, in requesting research fund for Andersson, “Few words are needed to convince us here in Sweden, what great importance it would have for our small people, if Swedish scientists were to be recognized for spreading light over the oldest history of the ancient cultural country of China...”¹⁴⁵ While working officially for the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and serving as a senior member in the Geological Survey, Andersson felt quite confident in securing Sino-Swedish cooperation in China until the French Jesuits and the American expedition team began to show an interest in the abundant paleontological opportunities in China’s northwestern frontier and Mongolia. In 1920, Andersson visited Licent in Tianjin and had a chance to look at his fossil collections. It worried Andersson immediately because eighty percent of Licent’s specimens were the same taxa as the specimens he had collected and sent to Uppsala, which signaled a potential competition between the Swedes and the French over the same material.¹⁴⁶ To secure Swedish cooperation in China, Andersson urged his scientist friends in Sweden to write to Ding Wenjiang to stress the “strong commitment that Sweden had to paleontological research in China.”¹⁴⁷ Then the American Central Asiatic Expeditions posed even greater danger because their more ambitious venture was well supported with huge capital and better equipment. The news of the discovery of dinosaur eggs was a big blow for Andersson because he had planned to visit the same region in 1920 but later had to yield to the American team to avoid competition. In a

¹⁴⁵ Fiskesjö and Chen, *China before China*, 32.

¹⁴⁶ Niall Mateer and Spencer Lucas, “Swedish Vertebrate Paleontology in China: A History of the Lagrelius Collection,” 10.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

letter to Wiman, Andersson expressed his frustration at the missed opportunity and stated, “Certainly, the Americans, with their unlimited resources and fleets of automobiles, could cross the endless Mongolian plains and discover the country’s wonderful secrets.”¹⁴⁸

Andersson was offered a professorship at the University of Stockholm and the position as the director of the newly established Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, so he decided to return to Sweden for good in 1926.¹⁴⁹ However, after learning of the Swedish Crown Prince’s plan of touring the world, Andersson invited the Prince to make Beijing a stop on his itinerary in October 1926. It was his last attempt to win praise for Swedish accomplishments in China. He managed to bring the Geological Society, the Peking Union Medical College, and the Peking Society of Natural History to hold a joint welcome reception for the Prince. The highlight of the event would be a presentation by Andersson about the mammal material he had discovered in China in the last decade. He asked Wiman for notes on the fossils stored in Uppsala, and it was at the point that Zdansky finally revealed the existence of two hominid teeth: a molar from his excavation in 1921; and a premolar he had just uncovered from the piles of fossils brought back from China. Andersson did not record how he felt about Zdansky’s keeping the molar without informing him for five years, but he did write down his excitement upon knowing the discovery: “So the hominid expected by me was found!”¹⁵⁰ The news was going to be revealed to the public in the reception on October 22nd. After the opening speech by

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 13.

¹⁴⁹ A letter from Andersson to Ding Wenjiang and Weng Wenhao (March 15, 1926), cited in Weng Xinyu, ed. *Weng Wenhao gurenleixue yu lishi wenhua wenji*, 150-3.

¹⁵⁰ Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 103.

Weng Wenhao, the president of the Geological Society, the Prince gave a short talk, followed by Liang Qichao's paper on archaeology in China, and Teilhard de Chardin's presentation of the Ordos Man. Then came the last program of Andersson's presentation in which he announced the finding of two teeth probably belonging to the earliest ancestor of humans.¹⁵¹ It created quite a stir for the scientific society in Beijing and the world, as Zdansky had predicted. The headline in the Manchester Guardian read, "The Oldest Human Type whose remains have been found in the strata of the earth."¹⁵² However, not all were convinced that the two teeth would prove the existence of early human ancestors in Zhoukoudian. For example, Teilhard de Chardin asked Andersson whether the teeth could belong to some carnivore, instead of a hominid.¹⁵³ At a dinner party later that year, Amadeus Grabau asked Andersson the same question in front of Beijing's most distinguished scientists. Andersson, feeling that "the ground was rocking beneath my feet and that both the Peking Man and I myself would be ridiculed if I could not return the complement promptly," replied with wit, "The latest news from the Chou K'ou Tien [Zhoukoudian] field is that our old friend is neither a man nor a carnivore, but rather something half-way between the two. It is a lady."¹⁵⁴ Since then the "Peking Lady" had become a nickname used by the scientists in the Peking Circle, and she consequently was made the spiritual host of Andersson's farewell dinner in April 1927.

¹⁵¹ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 5:3-4 (1927), 197-200.

¹⁵² Anon. "News report on Peking Man," *Manchester Guardian* (November 17, 1926), cited in Reader. *The Missing Links*, 211.

¹⁵³ Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 105.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 105-6.

The scientist who was most excited about the two molars and enthusiastically supported Andersson's interpretation of them was Davidson Black. He had been a firm believer in the Central Asiatic hypothesis ever since he first read W.D. Matthew's book, which designated north Asia as the center of mammalian dispersal, with evidence of the relation between environmental changes and evolutionary development.¹⁵⁵ As Black's biographer Dora Hood has pointed out, reading Matthew's 1915 book was a turning point in Black's life. Afterwards, Black's thoughts were primarily occupied with exploring China and other Asian regions to prove Matthew's theory and to find man's origin.¹⁵⁶ The offer by Peking Union Medical College in 1919 of a position as the professor of anatomy provided exactly such an opportunity. As early as 1922, Black had suggested to Roger Greene, the director of the China Medical Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, the branch directly in charge of the PUMC, that the college was in the best position to "become the foremost Eastern pioneer in the realm of investigations calculated to throw light on man's origin."¹⁵⁷ As an anatomist, Black had helped Andersson examine the human remains from his excavations in north and northwestern China since 1921.¹⁵⁸ The discovery of prehistoric human skeletons in Gansu from 1923 to 1924 was an encouraging sign for both Black and Andersson that more ancient human relics must be buried farther west in Xinjiang – a region that lay within the original center of primate

¹⁵⁵ W.D. Matthew, *Climate and Evolution*, N.Y. Academy of Sciences, 1915. More of Matthew's theory is discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁶ Dora Hood, *Davidson Black: A Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 35.

¹⁵⁷ Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 43-44.

¹⁵⁸ For more information on these findings, see Chapter 2.

dispersal. They planned a joint expedition to Xinjiang exclusively for the discovery of the “missing link.” To persuade the Rockefeller Foundation to support his proposal, Black expressed his great expectation of promising findings in China to Edwin Emree, the director of the Division of Studies at the Rockefeller Foundation:

For the love of Peet don't allow yourself to contemplate a visit to the eastern hemisphere without calling first on Peking which really honest to goodness and no joking is the scientific centre for the greater part of Asia. I know how important Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia are – but their importance lies rather in their isolation, and the consequent specialization of their material while Central Asia holds the key to man's origin and to his subsequent migration remote and recent.¹⁵⁹

It also indicates Black's expectation that Beijing should become the definite center for the research of paleoanthropology and the headquarters for his venture into Central Asia. The joint Xinjiang expedition was eventually aborted due to insufficient funding from the Swedish China Committee. However the discovery of the teeth from the Zhoukoudian site ignited a rather prosperous future. Black immediately wrote a short piece introducing the great finding to the readers of *Science*. In the article, he was confident that “the actual presence of early man in eastern Asia is therefore no longer a matter of conjecture.” With the Piltdown Man in the west and the Java Man in the southeast, “The Chou Kou Tien discovery therefore furnishes one more link in the already strong chain of evidence supporting the hypothesis of the central Asiatic origin of the Hominidae.”¹⁶⁰ Knowing Andersson's imminent departure from China, Black quickly persuaded the Rockefeller Foundation to grant support to a joint research plan on the Zhoukoudian

¹⁵⁹ A letter from Black to Edwin Embree, 8 July 1925, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 316, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁶⁰ Davidson Black, “Tertiary Man in Asia – the Chou Kou Tien Discovery,” *Science*, 64:1668 (Dec. 1, 1926): 587.

project for two years by the Peking Union Medical College and the Geological Survey. A formal statement was made in February 1927 to secure the cooperation, and Andersson handed over to Black all his data and the responsibility for the further investigation of the Zhoukoudian site.¹⁶¹ Thus the phase of the Swedish influence in the research of paleoanthropology in China was officially over, and a new era of international cooperation began.

The statement showed mutual benefits for both institutions and, in many ways, leanings toward the advantage of scientific establishment in China. Unlike the precedent with Andersson and his Swedish institutions, the statement indicated that “all collections of specimens shall entirely belong to the Geological Survey, but the anthropoid material will be deposited for study in the Department of Anatomy of the Peking Union Medical College with the understanding that nothing will be exported out of China.”¹⁶² China lacked both funds and adequately trained men to carry out independent work in the field of human paleontology, Black argued, and most foreign scientific institutions were not willing to do more than “sending out expeditions for the acquisition of material and data.” Black specified clearly that his position, together with the PUMC, and the Rockefeller Foundation, was unique because “we have permanently located our laboratories and our research interests in China and we are in a position to undertake

¹⁶¹ “Memorandum on Future Human Paleontological Research by Davidson Black”, 11 January 1929, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 317, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁶² “Cooperation between the National Geological Survey of China and the Peking Union Medical College for Research on the Tertiary and Quaternary Deposits in North China,” Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 316, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

research for the sake of the work itself.” And above all, their research material would be prepared, studied, described, and left exclusively in China.¹⁶³

Black was more ambitious than Andersson. Now with the Rockefeller funds and the full support from the Geological Survey, he was determined to discover “man” in the Zhoukoudian deposits. The excavation in Zhoukoudian was resumed in April 1927. Lockhart Hall at the PUMC was used as the laboratory for storing, preparing, and studying the excavated material. Although Andersson was no longer in China, he had insisted that a Swede should supervise the work. Black agreed and Wiman’s student Berger Bohlin thus became a part of the project for two years.¹⁶⁴ Upon arriving at Zhoukoudian, Bohlin was assigned a difficult task by Black, who was perhaps too anxious to find any promising result, to remove one whole large deposit within six weeks.¹⁶⁵ Bohlin did extensive excavation with Li Jie, a geologist from the Geological Survey, ten technicians, and a large team of laborers, and he eventually discovered another molar in 1927.¹⁶⁶ Black identified it as a child hominid molar, similar to the one Zdansky discovered in Uppsala, from the Pleistocene period. He thus rushed to create a new

¹⁶³ “Memorandum on Future Human Paleontological Research by Davidson Black” 11, January 11 1929, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 317, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁶⁴ Niall Mateer and Spencer Lucas, “Swedish Vertebrate Paleontology in China: A History of the Lagrelius Collection,” 17.

¹⁶⁵ Reader. *Missing Links*, 214.

¹⁶⁶ There were normally fifty to sixty, sometimes even a hundred, Chinese laborers working in the deposits. See Pei Wenzhong, *Zhoukoudian dongxueceng caijue ji* (Zhoukoudian Excavations), Bulletin of the Geological Survey, Series B, Vol. 7 (1934): 16.

genus for the Zhoukoudian hominid: *Sinanthropus pekinensis*.¹⁶⁷ In 1928, Li Jie was replaced by Yang Zhongjian, who was aided by Pei Wenzhong, Grabau's student and a graduate of geology from Peking University. That year's work resulted in a lower jaw with three teeth, along with 400 boxes of animal fossils.¹⁶⁸ According to Pei, the intensive excavation had nearly transformed the Chicken Bone Hill, one of the deposits, into a Chicken Bone Pit.¹⁶⁹

In January 1929, at the end period of the Rockefeller funds, Black proposed to the Foundation a more ambitious plan for future work on human paleontology in China. Besides systematically excavating the Zhoukoudian deposits and the neighboring sites, the investigation of other localities, including northwestern Shanxi, regions along the Beijing-Hankou railway northward of the Yellow River, and Xinjiang, should be carried out; Black should visit the Trinil site where the Java Man was discovered to comparatively study the *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus*; and a permanent Cenozoic Research Laboratory should be established as a special department of the Geological Survey with Black and Ding Wenjiang being the honorary directors.¹⁷⁰ The Rockefeller

¹⁶⁷ The term *Sinanthropus* was suggested by Grabau. See Davidson Black. *On A Lower Molar Tooth from the Chou Kou Tien Deposit*. *Paleontologia Sinica*, Series D, Vol. 7 (1927): 21.

¹⁶⁸ Reader, *Missing Links*, 218.

¹⁶⁹ Pei, *Zhoukoudian dongxueceng caijue ji*, 37.

¹⁷⁰ "Memorandum on Future Human Paleontological Research by Davidson Black," 11 January 1929, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 317, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

Foundation approved the proposal and provided \$80,000 for the research.¹⁷¹ The professional staff of the new Cenozoic Laboratory included a mixture of foreign and Chinese scientists: Teilhard de Chardin served as the advisor and research associate; Yang Zhongjian was the assistant director; Pei Wenzhong was in charge of the Zhoukoudian fieldwork; Bian Meinian, later joined by Jia Lanpo, would be the field assistants.¹⁷² George Barbour became the visiting physiographer and frequently offered his expertise on geological problems.¹⁷³

By November 1929, the excavation of the year had only resulted in a few more isolated teeth, and the team was going to close down the work for the winter. Pei Wenzhong was struggling to reach the bottom of a cave and did not want to give up. His perseverance paid off: in the late afternoon of December 2nd he discovered a complete skullcap embedded in the cave travertine. The next morning the exhilarated Pai telegraphed Black and sent letters through a special messenger to Weng and Yang in Beijing. He then carefully wrapped the skull in layers of Chinese cotton paper and coarse cloth soaked with flour paste. The weather was so cold, it took three days for the wrappings to dry. Then Pei rushed back to Beijing on the 6th and delivered the first complete skull of the *Sinanthropus* to Black at the Cenozoic Laboratory.¹⁷⁴ Black was

¹⁷¹ Dora Hood, *Davidson Black*, 100.

¹⁷² A letter from Black to Roger Greene (the director of the PUMC), Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 318, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁷³ George Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 48.

¹⁷⁴ For descriptions of the discovery, see Pei Wenzhong, "Account of Discovery of Adult *Sinanthropus* Skull," *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* (1929): 203-5, and Pei Wenzhong. *Zhoukoudian dongxueceng caijue ji*, 39-41.

overwhelmed with joy by the discovery. As Barbour recalled, “it seemed as if Black’s whole life had been in preparation for that moment.”¹⁷⁵ The Geological Survey held a special meeting on December 28th to announce the discovery.¹⁷⁶ The next day the foreign press *Peking Leader* immediately reported the discovery, and the event and the news aroused great public interest throughout the world.¹⁷⁷ Scientists around the world soon visited Beijing to see the skull. The famous British anatomist G. Elliot Smith, who reconstructed the Piltdown Man skull, came to Beijing in September 1930. In the speech “Ancestry of Man” that he delivered to the Geological Society, Smith congratulated the Geological Survey for the exceptional work which he regarded as the “most important and thrilling discovery of our early ancestry.”¹⁷⁸ As Smith contended, the discovery had also made Beijing “the center of interest at the present moment for all students of human evolution.”¹⁷⁹

Among the numerous news reports and articles, the role of the PUMC in the discovery did not get much publicity. However, it was not a problem for the PUMC and the Rockefeller Foundation. As Roger Greene said to M.K. Eagleston, the secretary of

¹⁷⁵ Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 52.

¹⁷⁶ “Proceedings on the Special Meeting on December 28th, 1929.” *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* (1929): 171-2.

¹⁷⁷ The article on the *Peking Leader* was written by Barbour, for his recollection of the event, see Dora Hood, *Davidson Black*, 105-6.

¹⁷⁸ G. Elliot Smith, “Ancestry of Man,” *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* (1930): 191.

¹⁷⁹ “Peiping Center of Interest for All Students of Human Evolution,” *Peking Leader* (Sept. 28, 1930).

the China Medical Board, “This is as it should be, and tends to create the kind of good feeling necessary for the continuation of the work under the best condition. We can rest satisfied with the knowledge that the scientists of the world who are interested in this particular subject will give the college all the credit that is its due, and nothing can distract from the credit due to Dr. Black personally.”¹⁸⁰ Greene, who had been enthusiastically working to transform the PUMC into a “Chinese” institution for the modernization of China, had become an avid supporter of the Cenozoic project.¹⁸¹ When Black proposed the extension of funds for the Laboratory in 1932, Greene wrote to the President of the Foundation, Max Mason, that “I wish to add my hearty endorsement to this application. I believe that money has rarely been spent in a more effective and productive manner for research of this type.”¹⁸² As a person who had been working toward the goal of implementing American medical education in China to foster the development of medical science of the Chinese, Greene was particularly frustrated by the situation created by the Central Asiatic Expeditions in 1929. In a letter to Mason about Osborn and Andrew’s statement condemning the Chinese government and the National Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities in Science, Greene articulated how much

¹⁸⁰ “A letter from Roger Greene to M. K. Eagleston,” 30 December 1929, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 317, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁸¹ For Roger Greene’s China career, see Warren I. Cohen, *The Chinese Connection: Roger S. Greene, Thomas W. Lamont, George E. Sokolsky and American-East Asian Relations* (Columbia University Press, 1978), and Mary Brown Bullock, *An American Transplant: the Rockefeller Foundation and the Peking Union Medical College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 48-77.

¹⁸² “A letter from Roger Greene to Max Mason,” 4 January 1932, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 318, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

damage the attitude of the American Museum could potentially do to the healthy cooperation already established between foreign and Chinese scientists:

I am, however, much distressed at the publication of this article, and it has caused concern to some other scientific workers, such as Dr. Grabau, the American attended to the Chinese Geological Survey and Dr. Black of our department of anatomy... I believe that the attitude of the representative of the American Museum here has done not a little to aggravate the situation... Of course, the essential feature of our work in this field has been cooperation with the Chinese, and perhaps for that reason Mr. Andrews would say that our work was not foreign in the sense which he meant. There has been too much of a tendency in the past for Dr. Osborn to assume that the work of the American Museum was the only scientific work being done in China. Some of his friends should exercise restraint over his utterances. Personally, I should be sorry to see any more of Rockefeller's money used to support the Museum's foreign expeditions until a different attitude is adopted.¹⁸³

Greene was eager to differentiate himself and other foreign scientists like Grabau and Black from Andrews and his American team. The former's work was not tied to any particular national interest, and they stayed in China for the opportunities it offered to fulfill their personal visions. As Max Mason later commented, they "were definitely a part of China," and "their strength come from the cordiality of understanding and willingness to cooperate shown by the Chinese."¹⁸⁴ Yang Zhongjian later similarly remarked that the foreigners of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory worked their best to help their Chinese colleagues, with the expectation that one day the Chinese scientific research could be handled and developed only by the Chinese themselves.¹⁸⁵ And to

¹⁸³ A letter from Roger Greene to Max Mason," 27 December 1929, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 317, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Max Mason's Diary of 16 January 1931, Max Mason, R.G. 12.1 Diaries, Reel #1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁸⁵ Yang Zhongjian, "Xinshengdai yanjiushi ershi nian (Twenty Years of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory)," *Kexue*, 30:10 (1948): 328.

thank Black for his able leadership and the “sympathetic attitude” that made possible the excellent discovery in the Zhoukoudian project, the Geological Society awarded him with the Grabau Medal of 1929; and Black attributed the success of the project largely to the collaboration between foreign and Chinese scientists.¹⁸⁶

The Cenozoic Laboratory continued to make efforts at the Zhoukoudian sites, which resulted in more fragments of skulls and jaws with teeth that belonged to the same genus of *Sinanthropus*. Moreover, in 1933 a large deposit of Paleolithic human remains and archaeological relics was uncovered in the Upper Cave, one of the sites excavated in Zhoukoudian.¹⁸⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, Barbour, and Yang also made field reconnaissance of Cenozoic deposits in Shanxi, Shaanxi, the Ordos, and Manchuria.¹⁸⁸ Black was burning his candle at both ends by dealing with the PUMC affairs during the day and studying the fossils from the Zhououdian deposits at night. He often worked in his laboratory until dawn. On the afternoon of March 16, 1934, Black talked to Yang in his laboratory about the future of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory. One half-hour after Yang left, he died at his desk of heart failure.¹⁸⁹ It was a sudden blow to the Beijing scientific community. In May his friends of the Peking Circle held a memorial meeting for him in the Geological Survey. Weng Wenhao, who had just had a serious car

¹⁸⁶ “Proceedings of the Special Meeting of the Geological Society,” *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*. (1931): 102.

¹⁸⁷ Pei Wenzhong, “A Preliminary Report on the Late-Paleolithic Cave of Choukoutien,” *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, (1934): 327-358.

¹⁸⁸ Davidson Black, *Fossil Man in China*, Geological Memoirs, Series A, Number 11 (1933), 9.

¹⁸⁹ Yang Zhongjian, *Yang Zhongjian huiyi lu*, 79.

accident in Hangzhou, wrote a letter from the hospital to express his sorrow. He talked about Black's kind spirit of cooperation in working with the Geological Survey and his Chinese colleagues.¹⁹⁰ Ding Wenjiang touched upon the delicate topic of the relationship between Chinese and foreign scientists. It is worth citing at length, for Ding summarized well the true partnership shared among the friends of the Peking Circle, transcending national boundaries:

It is frankly admitted that sometimes we find cooperation between Chinese and foreigners in scientific work rather difficult. The reasons I think are not difficult to seek. First many foreigners are suffering from a superiority complex. Subconsciously they think somewhat like this: here is a Chinese, he knows something about science, but he is a Chinese nevertheless – he is different from a European, therefore we cannot treat him in the same way. At best his manners become patronizing. On the other hand, their Chinese colleagues are suffering from an inferior complex. They become self-conscious and supersensitive, always imaging that the foreigner is laughing at them or despising them. Ninety percent of the troubles between Chinese and foreign colleagues working together comes from these two factors. In my dealings with Davidson Black, and I think Black's colleagues will bear me out, I never found him suffering from such a complex, and his Chinese colleagues became also free from theirs. In politics Black was a conservative, but in his dealings with his Chinese colleagues, he forgot altogether about their nationalities or race, because he realized that science was above such artificial and accidental things. This I think is an example for all of us to follow.¹⁹¹

Black's death was not only a great loss for his friends, but it also signified the decline of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory. Franz Weidenreich, a Jewish German anatomist, took over Black's position in 1935. Weidenreich was an outstanding scholar who contributed much to the study of Peking Man and the relation to Java Man, and he also established the theory of the multi-regional origin of modern humans based on his

¹⁹⁰ "Proceedings of the Special Meeting (May 11, 1934)," *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China* (1934): 320.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 322.

examination of Peking Man and modern Asians, which was to have long-lasting influence on the development of Chinese paleoanthropology. However, as Yang pointed out, Weidenreich was not a sociable person like Black and was not interested in anything but research. Thus Yang had to deal with all the organizational affairs.¹⁹² In 1937, the Rockefeller Foundation also stopped supporting any activities of the Cenozoic Laboratory outside of Zhoukoudian.¹⁹³ The Second Sino-Japanese war made the future of the Laboratory rather bleak. Weidenreich received a position in the American Museum of Natural History and left China in 1941 and all the Peking Man skulls mysteriously went missing while being shipped to America in the same year.

The End of the Peking Circle

The decline of the Peking Circle was foreshadowed by two deaths: Black's in 1934, and Ding Wenjiang's in 1936.¹⁹⁴ With the Japanese occupation of Beijing in 1937, most Chinese scientists left for the southwest. There were only a few staff in the now "Peking branch" of the Geological Survey, while the main office had moved to Nanjing, and then Chongqing.¹⁹⁵ The Society had already moved to Nanjing one year earlier. The majority of the foreign scientists left China for good. Only Grabau, whose crippled body was no

¹⁹² Yang Zhongjian, *Yang Zhongjian huiyi lu*, 82.

¹⁹³ A letter from Henry Houghton (Director of the China Medical Board) to Warren Weaver (Director of Division of Natural Sciences), 13 November 1936, Record Group 1.1, Series 601, Box 39, Folder 321, Rockefeller Foundation Archives.

¹⁹⁴ Ding Wenjiang died of gas poisoning during his field research in Hunan.

¹⁹⁵ Yang Zhongjian, "Xinshengdai yanjiushi ershi nian (Twenty Years of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory)," *Kexue*, 30:10 (1948), 325-8.

longer able to take long trip, and Teilhard de Chardin, whose French citizenship protected him, chose to stay in the occupied Beijing. They did not see each other often because both were confined in different foreign legations under strict Japanese regulations.¹⁹⁶ It was sad to see all the friends depart. When Yang Zhongjian decided to go to the southwest, he went to say goodbye to Grabau. Grabau told him that he would refuse to work under the Japanese and asked him to give his regards to all the friends in the southwest. When they shook hands for the last time, Grabau could no longer control himself and shed tears.¹⁹⁷ During his waning days, Grabau applied for Chinese citizenship but he died not long after in 1946.¹⁹⁸

I have tried to delineate how the Peking Circle was formed and strengthened through shared life experience in Beijing and scientific collaborations. The foreign members of the Circle made the most important paleoanthropological discoveries and helped educate a new generation of Chinese professional scientists, such as Yang Zhongjian and Pei Wenzhong, who would later carry on much crucial field work and make many new discoveries in Communist China. Although the internationalism of the Peking Circle was inevitably entangled with conflicting nationalist interests, since the members also belonged to different nationalist networks, the Cenozoic Research Laboratory proved to be a rather successful model for mutual cooperation in the research on paleoanthropology. What is perhaps also important in appraising the Peking Circle is

¹⁹⁶ Barbour, *In the Field with Teilhard de Chardin*, 114.

¹⁹⁷ Yang Zhongjian, *Yang Zhongjian huiyilu* (Beijing: Dizhi chubanshe, 1983), 93.

¹⁹⁸ Allan Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History*, 449.

the influence such experience in China had on the foreign scientists. I think the transformation of Teilhard de Chardin serves as a good example. One night during his first expedition to the Ordos in 1923, the homesick Teilhard de Chardin could not sleep. He gazed at the quiet desert area of Inner Mongolia and the starry sky and began to ponder the purpose of his expedition. “From the whole of sleeping Asia I thought there rose a voice which whispered, ‘Now, my brothers of the West, it is your turn.’” He believed that the answer of Asia lay in the hands of the Western men.¹⁹⁹ It was his mission to find it. However, after years of working in China, Teilhard de Chardin had a renewed attitude. In 1933, he accompanied Grabau and Ding to attend the Geological Conference held in Washington. In a letter to his friend, Teilhard de Chardin described the three of them as “the three wise men of the East,” who were bringing the splendid scientific discovery in China to the West.²⁰⁰ By then, Teilhard de Chardin had assumed an “oriental” identity and saw himself as a part of China.²⁰¹

Conclusion

This chapter provides a sociological study of how paleoanthropology took shape in China in the 1920s and 1930s by emphasizing the role of the Peking Circle, the

¹⁹⁹ Teilhard, *Letters from a Traveller*, 102.

²⁰⁰ Thomas M. King and Mary Wood Gilbert, eds., *The Letters of Teilhard de Chardin and Lucile Swan* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993), 3.

²⁰¹ His most famous work, *The Phenomenon of Man*, was produced in the late 1930s. It is a religious and philosophical interpretation of the evolution of man and is much influenced by his paleoanthropological work done in the Cenozoic Research Laboratory. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (London: Collins, 1955).

operation of the Chinese and transnational scientific institutions, the field experiences, and the interaction of ideologies between scientific internationalism, universalism, nationalism, and imperialism. It describes the complexity of knowledge formation in a world of unequal power relations functioning at various national and personal levels. The complexity lies in the fact that these power relations were not absolute and were often manipulated. For example, regardless of the scientific hegemony of Western institutions, their scientific activities in China were limited by the Chinese nationalist assertion of sovereignty over the objects taken from Chinese territories. Yang Zhongjian's remarks mentioned before show that Chinese scientists took advantage of the situation and created opportunities for collaboration to learn the most advanced field skills and techniques from leading foreign scientists. Or as Fan Fa-ti describes it, these Chinese scientists were appropriating foreign scientific imperialism for their own nationistic ends.²⁰² Therefore, instead of presenting this episode of paleoanthropological history as exemplifying a reductionist dichotomy between Western imperialism and Chinese nationalism, I attempt to show the multifaceted interactions and the historical contingency shaping these discourses.

For personal, nationalistic, and scholarly reasons, foreign scientists came to China and made Beijing one of the most famous centers for the study of paleoanthropology in the 1920s and 1930s. Their discoveries and activities were well known to the Chinese general readers through newspapers, popular press, and scientific journals. Their voices became the authority in the field of paleoanthropology. China, as an ideal place for scientific research opportunities, as a haven for the politically and religiously persecuted,

²⁰² Fan Fa-ti, "Circulating Material Objects."

and as a place to meet other scientists with similar vision and ambition, transformed the lives of these foreign scientists, and at the same time created for them niches in the temple of fame in the history of paleoanthropology. In the next chapter, we will study how their scientific appraisal of China or Chinese Central Asia as the origin of human evolution deeply influenced the formation of Sino-centric Chinese ethnogenesis.

CHAPTER TWO
EVOLUTIONARY ASIACENTRISM, PEKING MAN, AND THE
ORIGINS OF SINOCENTRIC ETHNO-NATIONALISM

Asia, especially China, has a long history of cultural development and also is the cradle of human race. Today, the yellow and the white races make the majority of the world population, how can we Chinese not take the responsibility for the future of humanity? How can we not carry on the duty for mankind so we won't fail our ancestors and our parents?

Li Jiefei, "Human Ancestors and Their Original Place" (1936)¹

Pondering the question of human origins, Li Jiefei, Professor of History and Geography at Zhejiang University, came up with an answer that sounds almost self-indulgent. Why did a highly educated man like Li boast like this about China's importance in human history in 1936? It was not just nationalism gone amok. Li offered scientific evidence to bolster his argument. The discovery of the Peking Man skull in the late 1920s had made China the centre stage of human paleontological research. Peking Man was the earliest hominid fossil found at the time, and many scientists believed him to be the missing link between ape and man that they had been searching for all over the globe. Peking Man was not only an international scientific celebrity but also an object of national pride for the Chinese.

Anthony Smith suggests that racial genealogy and descent are deemed vital for territorial claims and national solidarity in the construction of national identity.² To arouse anti-Manchu sentiment, late Qing scholars supported a Sino-Babylonian

¹ Li Jiefei, "Renlei zuxian yu qi zhudi" (Human Ancestors and their Original Home), *Xuefeng*, 6:6 (1936): 7.

² Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 58.

interpretation of Chinese origin, which marked West Asia as the cradle for human civilization and maintained that the Chinese were descendents of a branch of ancient Babylonians who had migrated to the East. The introduction of the evolutionary Asiatic theory by scientists of the Peking Circle in the 1920s and 1930s inspired Chinese intellectuals to construe a nativist interpretation of their own past. Peking Man thus became the perfect candidate to serve as the progenitor of all Chinese in the process of ethnic myth-making by Chinese intellectuals. The attempt of Chinese intellectuals was not only to call for ethnic solidarity among the Han and the non-Han, but also to prove the indigeneity of the Chinese in deep time, to repudiate various theories tracing the Chinese descent to foreign migrations, and finally, to claim political legitimacy over spatial China.

From Eurocentrism to Asiaticism

Western Origin of Chinese Civilization

Where did the Chinese come from? Ever since the 17th century, European scholars had proposed various hypotheses that traced the origins of Chinese civilization and the Chinese race to various Western sources. Henri Cordier, the French historian and the co-founder of *T'oung Pao*, argued that the European scholars, eager to find a common origin for all humanity, would “invent imaginary relations” or “absurd theories” to link ancient China with Asia Minor and even Europe. All the effort of mapping China’s past with an Occidental origin led to what he calls “one of the most curious examples of

madness that can generate ignorance or mediocre science.”³ Through the juxtaposition of similarities between the Chinese writing system and Egyptian hieroglyphs, scholars such as the German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher and the Joseph de Guignes claimed that ancient China was a colony of Egypt and the Chinese were descendants of Egyptians.⁴ Some others, based on philological comparison, proposed that China and Europe shared linguistic and cultural origin.⁵ Indeed, though these theories may seem rather ridiculous from today’s perspective, we should not easily discredit them as “examples of madness,” for they were serious scholarly attempts to place China in an integrated system of world civilization.⁶

³ Henri Cordier, *Histoire Générale de la Chine* (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), 10-11. In the first chapter, Cordier also examines these theories and debates, and provides his own criticism. David E. Mungello has linked the interpretations made by the Jesuits about China to the popularization of “sinology” among European scholars in the 17th and 18th centuries. Mungello argues that these Jesuits were eager to fit Chinese civilization into the scheme of biblical monogenism. See Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985).

⁴ Kircher’s idea of China’s Egyptian origin is presented in his *Oedipi Aegyptiaci* (1654) and *China Illustrata* (1667); Joseph de Guignes, *Mémoire dans Lequel on Prouve que les Chinois Sont Une Colonie Égyptienne* (1769)

⁵ This view was shared by two British missionary-sinologists in the 19th century. John Chalmers, *The Origin of Chinese: An Attempt to Trace the Connection of the Chinese with the Western Nations in their Religion, Superstitions, Arts, Languages, and Traditions* (Hong Kong: De Souza and Co., 1866) and Joseph Edkins, *China's Place in Philology: an Attempt to show that the Languages of Europe and Asia have a Common Origin* (London: Trübner & Co., 8 and 60, Paternoster Row, 1871).

⁶ Edward Said has claimed that these theories were driven by a Eurocentric worldview toward the Orient in an era of European imperialist expansion. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979). However, the relation between Orientalism and European imperialism has been reappraised recently. Suzanne Marchand’s study on German Orientalism shows that Orientalism was not always shaped by imperialism; in the German case, it was more directly inspired by religion. See Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Among the various theories of Western origin, the one that most resonated in China was the theory of Sino-Babylonism proposed by Albert Terrien de Lacouperie in 1894. A professor of Indo-Chinese philology at University College, London, Terrien de Lacouperie published a book entitled *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilization from 2300 B.C. to 200 A. D.*⁷ By comparing the hexagrams in the Chinese classic *Yijing* with the cuneiform script, he claimed Chinese civilization originated in Babylon. He linked the term *baixing* (common people, or literally the hundred surnames), which appeared in the Chinese classics, to the Bak tribes in Mesopotamia and argued that the Chinese were descendents of the Bak. Terrien de Lacouperie looked for “traces” left by the Bak in Chinese ancient mythology and culture. In his interpretation, Huangdi was Nakhunte, the first leader of the Bak, who migrated to China with his people; Shennong was Sargon, who invented signs of fire to record facts; and Cangjie was Dungi, who taught the Bak to write.⁸ Terrien de Lacouperie’s theory of China’s Western origins could not escape the larger framework of scholarly Eurocentrism prevailing at the time. Fa-ti Fan has grouped Terrien de Lacouperie together with nineteenth-century Orientalists and comparative philologists, such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Auguste Schleicher, and Friedrich Max Müller, and finds parallels between Terrien de Lacouperie’s story of the Bak migration to and colonization of China and the philologists’ Aryan myth narrative.⁹ Yet, Terrien de Lacouperie did not intend to praise

⁷ Albert Terrien de Lacouperie, *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilization from 2300 B.C. to 200 A. D.* (London: Asher & Co., 1894).

⁸ *Ibid*, 4-5.

⁹ Fa-ti Fan, “How Did the Chinese Become Native?: Science and the Search for National Origins in the May Fourth Era,” in *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In*

the superiority of the “Chinese,” despite their shared ancestral lines with the Europeans. Instead, with a twist of environmental determinism, he was more concerned with how the initial superiority of the Bak had vanished in the long-term process of becoming “Chinese.” He described the Chinese as “intelligent, but lacking originality and creative power, deeply imbued with reverence for the ancients, and specially for those who had introduced civilisation in their land, blindly conservative and respecting precedents and routine, somnolent still in their worship of olden times.” And therefore China’s achievements were only relics of the “progress of Western civilization” left by their ancestors.¹⁰

Terrien de Lacouperie’s Sino-Babylonism, linking Chinese to Westerners with a common origin, had found its audience in Japan and China at the turn of the twentieth century. Terrien de Lacouperie’s idea was first introduced to Chinese overseas students in Japan through the popular Japanese text, *Shina bunmei shi* (History of Chinese Civilization), coauthored by Shirakawa Jirō and Kokubu Tanenori.¹¹ This book not only summarized Terrien de Lacouperie’s main argument but also highlighted the connections between Chinese mythical figures and real historical figures of West Asia and therefore

Search of Chinese Modernity, eds. Kai-Wing Chow, Tze-ki Hon, Hung-yok Ip, and Don C. Price (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 187.

¹⁰ Terrien de Lacouperie (1894), x. Terrien de Lacouperie’s theory was not without criticism among European sinologists. For example, James Legge, who believed that the Chinese came from Central Asia, debated with Terrien de Lacouperie over his evidence for a few years. See Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge’s Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 384-392.

¹¹ Shirakawa Jirō and Kokubu Tanenori, *Shina bunmei shi* (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1900). The book was later translated into Chinese as *Zhina wenming shi* (Shanghai: Jinhua shuju, 1903).

validated Chinese mythology.¹² But it was Jiang Zhiyou's series of articles, "Zhongguo renzhong kao" (Inquiry into the Chinese Race), that made Terrien de Lacouperie and his theory well known to late Qing Chinese intellectuals.¹³ Jiang's articles presented partial translations of *Western Origins of the Early Chinese Civilization* and systematically introduced the idea of Sino-Babylonism, focusing on the migration of the ancestors of the Han race from Mesopotamia and cultural similarities between ancient China and Babylon. He also included excerpts from ancient Chinese texts such as *Shanhai jing* (The Classic of Mountains and Seas) to show the validity of the theory.

Among the Chinese intellectuals who strongly embraced Sino-Babylonism were scholars of the National Essence circle. Why did they find a Eurocentric view of Chinese origin so appealing? First of all, as Song-chiao Shen has pointed out, it might have assuaged the inferiority complex these late Qing scholars were experiencing and trying to overcome by giving them hope that China's repeated defeats by the West might only be temporary and China might catch up with the West in the future, for they shared the same ancestor.¹⁴ On the other hand, scholars like Liu Shipai, Huang Jie, and Zhang Binglin

¹² Hon Tze-ki, "From a Hierarchy in Time to a Hierarchy in Space: the Meanings of Sino-Babylonism in Early 20th century China," *Modern China*, 36:2 (2010), 148.

¹³ Jiang Zhiyou was a poet who went to Japan in 1902 and became an editor for Liang Qichao's journal, *Xinmin congbao*, where he published his series of articles from 1903 to 1905. These articles were eventually published as a book, *Zhongguo renzhong kao* (Shanghai: Huangtong shuju, 1929).

¹⁴ Song-chiao Shen, "Wo yi wo xue jian Xuanyuan – Huangdi shenhua yu wan Qing de guozu jiangou," (The Myth of *Huangdi* and the Construction of Chinese Nationhood in Late Qing) *Taiwan shehui jikan*, 28 (Dec., 1997): 37-38. It should also be noted that neither the Japanese text nor Jiang's articles translated Terrien de Lacouperie's condescending view of the Chinese as mentioned above. Neither did they introduce criticism of Sino-Babylonism by other European sinologists. Therefore, we could

were particularly fascinated by Terrien de Lacouperie's interpretation of Huangdi as the leader of the "civilisers" who imported advanced technologies, arts, and government systems to China and intermingled with various primitive native tribes.¹⁵ They appropriated such rhetoric and turned the myth of Huangdi into a powerful weapon for their racial war against the Manchus.¹⁶ It should be noted that in his articles, Jiang Zhiyou was careful in his choice of racial or ethnic terminology and used the term *Zhongguo zhong* as his translation for Terrien de Lacouperie's term for "Chinese." Jiang explained that *Zhongguo zhong* was a more inclusive term than *Han zu* because it better represented all the people of China, including those with ancestral lines from Shennong or Yandi.¹⁷ The National Essence scholars, however, rather signified Terrien de Lacouperie's story as an epic of the "Han" migration and settlement. They placed great emphasis on the identity of Huangdi as the common ancestor of the Han, his defeat of other non-Han indigenes who had lived in China prior to his arrival, and his final conquest of the land. The narrative proved the Han's superiority over other ethnic groups in China. Liu Shipai even portrayed the initial conquest of China by the ancestors of the

assume that Terrien de Lacouperie's theory was accepted by the late Qing scholars as one of the most advanced and valid studies by contemporary European scholarship.

¹⁵ Terrien de Lacouperie provided a chronicle of how native Chinese tribes encountered the Bak Sing "civilisers" and were transformed by Western imports. See Terrien de Lacouperie (1894), 373-397.

¹⁶ See Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 119-123; Kai-wing Chow, "Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Bingling and the Invention of the Han 'Race' in Modern China," in Frank Dikötter, ed., *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 34-52; and Sung-chiao Shen, "Wo yi wo xue jian Xuanyuan – Huangdi shenhua yu wan Qing de guozu jiangou," 1-77.

¹⁷ Jiang Zhiyou, *Zhongguo renzhongkao* (1929), 186-187.

Han as being like the Spanish colonization of the Americas.¹⁸ Therefore, it would be convenient for the National Essence scholars to connect China's contemporary misfortunes to the illegitimate rule of the inferior Manchus. They advocated for Han dominance as the "natural way" to be followed and further argued that only by doing so could China enjoy again its ancient glory.¹⁹ These scholars appropriated a Eurocentric interpretation of China's early history that extolled the influence of Western civilization to support a Han-centric ethnic nationalism that asserted a domestic racial supremacism similar to the one practiced by the imperialistic powers to which they were very much opposed.

Despite the fact that Jiang Zhiyou's book popularized Sino-Babylonism in China, Jiang himself did not embrace the theory as much as many of his colleagues did. He argued, "The theory of the Western origin (*xilai shuo*) of the Chinese is pretty much acknowledged by scholars in the world. But we, as Chinese, should still carry out expeditions to Babylonia, Chaldea, Elam, Susiana, the Tigris-Euphrates area, the Mesopotamian plain, and places in Central Asia to discover ancient artifacts and archaeological relics. Only when we advance our scholarship [in archaeology] will we be able to examine by ourselves the true validity of the theory."²⁰ Prehistoric archaeology was rather a novel field in China at the turn of the twentieth century; extremely few Chinese archaeologists were professionally trained and able to perform such a task.

¹⁸ Liu Shipei, *Liu Shenshu xiansheng Yishu* (The Posthumous Work of Liu Shipei), Volume 1 (Taipei: Huashi chubanshe, 1975), 721-722. Also cited in Song-chiao Shen, 38.

¹⁹ Song-chiao Shen, 40.

²⁰ Jiang Zhiyou, *Zhongguo renzhongkao* (1929), 33-34.

Although after the 1911 Revolution, the newly constructed rhetoric of the harmonious co-existence of ethnic groups that was advocated by the new Republic rendered anti-Manchu nationalism less relevant, Sino-Babylonism continued to be viewed favorably to other origin theories by Chinese intellectuals until the 1920s, when the May Fourth scholars began to re-examine the theory with acute anti-imperialist and nationalist eyes and when the fields of paleontology, geology, as well as archaeology, were more academically developed, allowing new research to be carried out in the Chinese soil.²¹ Interestingly, it was Johann Gunnar Andersson, the Swedish geologist and amateur archaeologist, who provoked a controversy over the Western origin theories with his archaeological discovery of the Yangshao culture in Henan.

The archaeological deposit excavated by Andersson in 1921 in the Yangshao village of Henan was rich in pottery debris, stone implements, and human skeletal remains. Stone implements had been discovered in China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by foreign scholars and explorers. However, these objects were attributed to the non-Han living in the frontier or the indigenes of China before the arrival of the Han. Chinese geologist Zhang Hongzhao and American anthropologist Berthold Laufer even concluded that the Chinese prehistoric time began with the rather late Bronze Age.²² Therefore, the most important question Andersson was eager to find out was whether the

²¹ For May Fourth scholars' criticism on Sino-Babylonism, see Hon Tze-ki, "From a Hierarchy in Time to a Hierarchy in Space: the Meanings of Sino-Babylonism in Early 20th century China," 157-161.

²² Chen Xingcan, *Zhongguo shiqian kaoguxue shi yanjiu* (Study on History of Prehistoric Archaeology in China) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007), 92-93.

Yangshao culture was created by the early Chinese or the “barbarians.”²³ The findings from the site showed settled agricultural activities and the domesticity of pigs. There was also a tripod with wide hollow legs, found among the pottery, in the shape of an idiosyncratic Zhou style. Andersson was convinced that “this ancient culture is decidedly Chinese.”²⁴ The discovery of the Yangshao culture thus proved the existence of Chinese stone working and pushed the Chinese prehistoric timetable farther to the Stone Age.

It was more difficult for Andersson to decide the age of the site. With few books available and simply no existing Chinese archaeological collection of objects from a similar time period for comparison, Andersson could only rely on his knowledge of the famous European stone-age collections. He found striking similarities between the fine polished polychrome wares of Yangshao and those discovered from the late Neolithic and Aeneolithic cultures of Europe and West Asia, especially the collections from Anau and Tripolje. It was possible that the likenesses were only produced by parallel developments. But Andersson was more convinced by a monogenic, diffusionist explanation, like the one depicted by Terrien de Lacouperie. Andersson refuted Terrien de Lacouperie’s thesis of the “Bak” as unscientific; yet, he enthusiastically endorsed the framework of cultural migration from West to East.²⁵ He estimated a rather late date for the Yangshao culture: a transitional Aeneolithic period from the Stone to the Bronze

²³ J.G. Andersson, “An Early Chinese Culture,” *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China*, 5:1 (1923), 32.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, 40-41.

Ages (c. 3000 BCE).²⁶ This date was derived from adding a considerable migration time to the date of the earliest polychrome pottery found in Babylonia from around 3500 BCE.²⁷

Many Western scholars favorably supported Andersson's hypothesis. R.L. Hobson, an expert on Chinese ceramics of the British Museum, confirmed Andersson's view that the Yangshao pottery came from the same family of the late Neolithic pottery found in West Asia.²⁸ German sinologist Otto Franke also believed that the technology of making polychrome pottery was only one among many that spread from the West to ancient China, and that Andersson's discovery should once and for all shut the door on any nativist interpretation of Chinese civilization.²⁹ The Swedish archaeologist T.J. Arne also pointed out the similarities between the Yangshao pottery and the Susa pottery.³⁰ With the discovery of Yangshao culture and its assumed connection to the civilization in West Asia, Andersson tended to agree with Ferdinand von Richthofen, the German geographer, that the ancestors of the Chinese first settled in Xinjiang and were influenced

²⁶ J.G. Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth* (London: Kegan Paul, 1934), 336.

²⁷ Today, archaeologists normally date the Yangshao culture to be 5000 to 3000 BCE. The inaccuracy of Andersson's estimation mainly comes from his theoretical assumption of a cultural migration from West to East so that the date of the Yangshao pottery could not be earlier than the pottery found in West Asia.

²⁸ Andersson, "An Early Chinese Culture," 38.

²⁹ Chen Xingcan, *Zhongguo shiqian kaoguxue shi yanjiu*, 106.

³⁰ T.J. Arne, "Painted Stone Age Pottery from the Province of Honan, China," *Palaeontologia Sinica*, Series D, 1:2 (1925): 1-34.

by Western civilization before they eventually migrated to the Yellow River Valley.³¹ Andersson spent two years in Gansu attempting to find evidence of the path of such cultural migration. His excavation in Gansu, which resulted in large amount of similar painted pottery, ironically put his own hypothesis into contestation. If his hypothesis held water, the Gansu pottery should have been from an earlier age than the Henan pottery, giving Gansu's geographical proximity to Xinjiang. In theory, if the quantity and quality of the Gansu pottery was both superior to the Henan pottery, it was likely that the technique of making the polychrome pottery first arrived in Gansu from Xinjiang and later spread to Henan. But in fact, the Henan pottery had a certain textural and artistic sophistication that was lacking in the Gansu pottery. Andersson could only attribute such differences to the swift spread of the culture along the Yellow River Valley, which allowed the mingling with certain elements of indigenous culture.³²

Andersson's hypothesis of the Western origin of Chinese civilization was met with less appreciation than criticism and even antagonism by Chinese intellectuals. Historian and linguist Jin Zhaozi blamed Andersson for having distorted his archaeological findings to support Terrien de Lacouperie's theory and to advocate for the domination of world civilization by the West.³³ Unlike the late Qing anti-Manchu

³¹ J. G. Andersson, "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Research in Kansu," *Memoir of the Geological Survey of China*, Series A, Number 5 (1925): 41. Ferdinand von Richthofen, *China: Ergebnisse eigener reisen und darauf gegründeter studien* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1877), 404-428.

³² J. G. Andersson, "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Research in Kansu," *Memoir of the Geological Survey of China*, Series A, Number 5 (1925): 49.

³³ Jin Zhaozi, "Zhongguo renzhong ji wenhua zhi youlai" (The Origin of the Chinese Race and Culture), *Dongfang zazhi* (The Eastern Miscellany), 26:24 (Dec. 1929): 73.

nationalists, many post-May Fourth intellectuals who were more critical of complete Westernization had no fanciful thoughts about a Western origin. On the other hand, they often criticized such theories as evidence of pompous Eurocentrism. Jin argued, “The hypothesis of cultural migration from the West to the East formulated by Andersson and Arne showcases the delirious mentality of Europeans regarding themselves as the center of world civilization. I think, their evidence only proves that the direction of cultural migration was in fact from the East to the West, not the reverse.”³⁴ Historian Liu Xingtang called Andersson and Arne “ignorant scholars who advocated a theory of Western origin of the Chinese only based on the pattern and type of pottery.”³⁵ And he mocked their hypothesis as an “imperialist invasion of the ancient culture of the colony and semi-colony.”³⁶ Anthropologist Lin Huixiang labeled Andersson’s hypothesis the “new Western origin theory,” and provided a more neutral view on the origin of the Chinese. Compared to the “old” theories of Western origin, be it of Egyptian Origin or Indian Origin, Andersson’s “new” theory was backed with a scientific methodology and approach and was therefore more advanced and not completely useless. Yet, Lin contended, the discovery of Peking Man lent the theory of nativism strength and rendered it more acceptable.³⁷ Indeed, theories of Western origins were attacked not only because they looked “imperialistic” but also because groundbreaking scientific discoveries made

³⁴ Ibid, 81.

³⁵ Liu Xingtang, “Zhongguo renzhong de qiyuan” (The Origin of the Chinese), *Wenhua pipan*, no.2 (1935): 11.

³⁶ Ibid, 20.

³⁷ Lin Huixiang, *Zhongguo minzushi*, Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1936), 64.

in China, which led to knowledge of the unfolding of various aspects of prehistoric China as well as to an understanding of the link to a common human origin, had contributed to the rise of a nativist interpretation of the Chinese origin story. The main body of the discoveries and research, as described in Chapter 1, was made by foreign scientists who were firm believers of an evolutionary Asiacentrism that designated Asia as the original home of our common human ancestor.

Asia: Mother of Continents

Today, Africa is generally considered as the center for hominid origins, but most scientists did not consider African origins a hundred years ago when Asiacentrism was the dominant paradigm. In the late 19th century, German scientist Ernst Haeckel believed that humans were derived from southern Asian apes, and the hypothetical continent Lemuria in southern Asia was considered the original home of the first “primeval man” (*Homo primigenius*), a hypothetical species. And since the land had sunken below the surface of the Indian Ocean, no fossils of what he termed *Pithecanthropus*, or the ape-man, had ever been discovered.³⁸ Inspired by Haeckel, the young and adventurous Dutch scientist Eugène Dubois joined the Dutch East Indies to Java to search for the hypothetical missing link. He discovered a skullcap and a femur which he named

³⁸ Ernst Haeckele, *The History of Creation* (New York: D. Appleton, 1876), 325-328. The original German was *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (Berlin, G. Reimer, 1873).

Pithecanthropus erectus after Haeckel.³⁹ The fossil presented both ape and human features and was considered more primitive than the existing Neanderthal fossils found in Europe. Dubois presented his finding to the scientific society in Europe as an upright ape-man who lived in Java during the late Pliocene or early Pleistocene period. The reception of the Java Man was controversial, as many discredited the fossil thinking it to be that of a deformed ape, and Dubois completely withdrew himself from the debate in 1900.⁴⁰ The primitive features of the Java Man would later become an important evidence supporting the Central Asia hypothesis, the most popular Asiatic paradigm of human origins developed by scientists from North America.

In the early 20th century, paleoanthropologists were attempting to understand mechanisms and causes that led to the particular path of human evolution. This set the biogeographical foundation for the Central Asia hypothesis. Many believed that a changing environment played the determining role in the transition from apes to humans. They deemed the uplifting of the Himalayas and the opening up of the Central Asian plains during the Oligocene and Miocene times to be the key events that forced the human ancestor to become bipedal in order to adapt to a new terrestrial lifestyle. (It should be noted that the concept “Central Asia” in this evolutionary mechanism mainly denotes the high plateau area that stretches from Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjinag, and Inner Mongolia to Mongolia. It is not to be confused with today’s political definition of

³⁹ For the discovery and evolutionary significance of the Java Man, see Bert Theunissen, *Eugène Dubois and the Ape-Man from Java* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publications, 1989). Pat Shipman’s *The Man Who Found the Missing Link: the Extraordinary Life of Eugene Dubois* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2001) offers a more biographical account of Dubois.

⁴⁰ Bert Theunissen, *Eugène Dubois and the Ape-Man from Java*, 79-127.

Central Asia.) The person who popularized the environmental hypothesis pointing to the direction of Central Asia was the Canadian-born paleontologist William Diller Matthew. Matthew argued, in his influential work “Climate and Evolution” of 1915, that climate change was the primary factor for the migration of mammals radiating outward from the so-called “Holarctic” center where dramatic climatic compulsion took place. Moreover, the earlier and more primitive species were forced to migrate to warmer environments, farther away from the center where only the more advanced species, which evolved to adapt to worse climatic conditions, survived.⁴¹ Matthew saw Central Asia, with the drying-out and drastically changing climate beginning in the Oligocene period, as the center of mammal dispersal. And Java Man fit nicely in the scheme: a more primitive type forced to migrate to the southern warmer forested areas. Being the assistant of Henry Fairfield Osborn at the American Museum of Natural History, Matthew’s interest in Asia and in the evolutionary mechanism was undoubtedly developed under the influence of his mentor, who had come up with an Asia hypothesis as early as in 1900.

By examining similar fossils that had been found in Europe and North America, Osborn suggested that during the end of the age of reptiles and the beginning of the age of mammals, the ancestors of higher mammals evolved in Asia and later migrated eastward and westward to other continents.⁴² Although Matthew’s theory was mainly concerned with the evolution of mammals, Osborn applied it to human evolution and

⁴¹ William Diller Matthew, “Climate and Evolution,” *Annals of New York Academy of Science*, Vol. 14 (1915): 171-318.

⁴² Henry Fairfield Osborn, “The Geological and Faunal Relations of Europe and America During the Tertiary Period and the Theory of the Successive Invasions of an African Fauna,” *Science*, New Series, 11:276 (1900): 561-574.

believed Central Asia held the key to understanding our past. In his famous article, “Why Central Asia?” of 1926, Osborn presented a full picture of his idea of human evolution.⁴³ Developed on Matthew’s framework, Osborn argued that in lowlands in tropical and semi-tropical regions, where natural resources were abundant, the process of evolution was hindered and even retrogressive; only dry and open regions could stimulate the development of intelligence. The dry uplands of Mongolia and Tibet in Central Asia offered the perfect invigorating environment for the evolution of our ancestors. Osborn was not a traditional Darwinian evolutionist; instead, he believed in orthogenesis, or parallel evolution, that man was not evolved from apes, but that both evolved along similar but parallel paths.⁴⁴ Moreover, the view that our ancestors, what Osborn called Dawn Man, were distinguished from the apes because their mental superiority made them more adaptive to a changing environment seems to be quite Lamarckian.⁴⁵

Under the slogan of “the hunt for fossil man in Asia,” Roy Chapman Andrews, inspired and supported by Osborn, made a successful public appeal in America and gained support for the Central Asiatic Expeditions team to travel across the Gobi Desert in Mongolia in the early 1920s. The discovery of a human tooth and deposits of

⁴³ Henry Fairfield Osborn, “Why Central Asia?” *Natural History*, 16:3 (1926): 263-269.

⁴⁴ For an evaluation of different evolutionary theories, mostly non-Darwinian, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and how they were shaped by historical contingency and style of interpretation, see Peter J. Bowler, *Theories of Human Evolution: A Century of Debate, 1844-1944* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

⁴⁵ Osborn used the term “Dawn Man” to replace the “Ape Man” as a differentiation between the more progressive human ancestor and other primates. See Osborn (1926), 269. According to Bowler, Osborn’s full rejection of an ape ancestry of humans began in the 1920s when he became the most avid advocator for Central Asia theory. See Bowler, 125.

Paleolithic artifacts made by Teilhard de Chardin and Licent in Ordos in 1923 was a direct confirmation for Osborn and his team that they would hit their jackpot in Mongolia. The team's "hunt" in Mongolia throughout the decade resulted in enormous discoveries of dinosaur bones, eggs, and archaeological relics of Paleolithic culture. Although the grand trophy – the human fossil – was never found, Osborn was convinced that further investigations in the dry uplands of Mongolia and Tibet would prove that Asia was indeed the origin of man.⁴⁶

Osborn's theory of human evolution also formed the basis for his understanding of the origin of race.⁴⁷ It was in his manifesto *Man Rises to Parnassus* of 1927 that he provided an epic portrayal of the prehistory of man from the migration of the Dawn Man to the settlement and development of his descendents in different continents. The descendents of Dawn Man further evolved into three distinctive species even before the Pleistocene: *Homo sapiens europaeus* (the Caucasian), *Homo sapiens asiaticus* (the Mongolian), and *Homo sapiens afer* (the Negroid). These three stocks were profoundly different in mental and physical formation, which was in accordance with the environment into which they eventually migrated. From Central Asia, the most advanced Caucasian stock moved west and developed a great civilization. The Mongolian stock moved east and settled in China and Asia, while the Negroid migrated to the tropical

⁴⁶ Osborn (1926), 266-268.

⁴⁷ Other examples of how human evolutionary theories were applied to explain racial differences can be found in the ideas of the British paleoanthropologists Sir Arthur Keith and Elliot Smith. See Robin Dennell, "From Sangiran to Olduvai, 1937-1960: The Quest for 'Centres' of Hominid Origins in Asia and Africa," in *Studying Human Origins: Disciplinary History and Epistemology*, eds., Raymond Corbey and Wil Roebroeks (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 52-55.

regions where the weather was warm and food was abundant. Osborn described the hierarchy of the three stocks:

The Mongolian is somewhat less profoundly different from the Caucasian than is the Negro. The intelligence and morale of the Mongolian may fully reach the high Caucasian level, as shown in great periods of Chinese history, but except in the plateau region of Asia his physical development seldom equals that of either the Negroid or the Caucasian, which give rise to the tallest races in the world.⁴⁸

It should not be surprising to find Osborn's story full of the racial ideology that was prevailing at the time. His belief in a Central Asian origin also came from his repudiation of the possibility that human ancestors came from Africa, as Darwin had suggested in *The Descent of Man* in 1871. His attitude was best reflected in his dismissal of the Taung Child, discovered by Raymond Dart in South Africa in 1924, as hominid.⁴⁹ As historian Brian Regal points out, "For Osborn to say that archaic humans had *moved into* Africa was not a 'paradoxical' idea, but to say human ancestors *came out of* Africa was."⁵⁰ (author's own emphasis)

Osborn and his theory were not unknown to the Chinese. As mentioned earlier, he visited Beijing in 1923 on returning from Mongolia with his team and became

⁴⁸ Henry Fairfield Osborn, *Man Rises to Parnassus: Critical Epochs in the Prehistory of Man* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1927), 202.

⁴⁹ Dart claimed that the upright posture of the Taung Child, a species of the *Australopithecus*, represented an important stage of human evolution. However, only a few paleoanthropologists took him seriously because the widely accepted Central Asia theory made Africa an irrelevant place for human origin. The prevailing belief in the brain development as the key factor for our ancestor to evolve into man also rendered Taung Child's upright form insignificant. Not until the late 1930s and 1940s, with discoveries of new evidence and changing interpretations, was *Australopithecus* accepted as the earliest known hominids. See Bolwer, 39-40.

⁵⁰ Brian Regal, *Henry Fairfield Osborn: Race and the Search for the Origins of Man* (Hants, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002), 167.

acquainted with the Peking Circle and other Chinese intellectuals. He was invited to be a special guest of honor at the seventh general meeting of the Geological Society in 1923.⁵¹ He also had the opportunity to present his theory in a talk entitled, “Why Mongolia May Be the Home of Primitive Man,” before the *Wenyou hui* (Friends of Literature), an organization formed by Chinese and foreign scholars in Beijing.⁵² The Central Asia hypothesis was also embraced by other famous foreign scientists working in Beijing at the time. Both Amadeus Grabau and Davidson Black were firm believers in the theory, and some of their publications on the issues were translated into Chinese and introduced to the general readers. Black’s direct link to the Cenozoic Research Laboratory and the discovery of Peking Man further popularized the theory and had a great impact on how Chinese intellectuals conceptualized their past.

Davidson Black was deeply influenced by Matthew. Perhaps more than anyone else, Black’s commitment to his work in China was bolstered by his strong convictions about the theory. Andersson’s discoveries of early mammal fossils and Grabau’s study of Chinese stratigraphic structure further strengthened his belief.⁵³ He published a paper entitled “Asia and the Dispersal of Primates” in 1925 to apply Matthew’s theory to the evolution of primates. Like Matthew, Black indicated a pattern of migration from the Asian center toward the peripheries. The formation of the Himalayas led to drought in the Central Asia plain and forced the primates to adapt or to move out of the region. The

⁵¹ *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 2:3-4 (1923): 100-103.

⁵² Osborn, “Why Central Asia?” 267-268.

⁵³ Davidson Black, *Asia and the Dispersal of Primates*. Reprint from the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, v. 4, no.2. 1925.

more primitive forms, such as *Pithecanthropus* and the Neanderthal, were pushed farther away from the center. Black believed in the priority of encephalization and was convinced that the ancestors of proto-humans had a distinctive mental capacity that already made them different from other apes at the time of environmental challenge.⁵⁴

He categorized the ancient primates into two groups:

Group 1. A conservative group, characterized by a relatively early maturity of growth, the members of which were unable or unwilling to modify their mode of living to suit the necessities of an altering environment. They therefore became faced with the alternative of migration with the environment or of extinction...

Group 2. A progressive group, the members of which were characterized in general by a tendency toward a relatively prolonged period of childhood. As one of the most important features of this type of growth curve, the processes of maturation particularly of the encephalic part of the skull were retarded thus permitting among members of this group both a relative and an absolute increase in the volume of the cerebrum. By reason of the resulting increase in mental capacity, the individuals of this group were both able and willing to alter their mode of life to suit progressive environmental conditions.⁵⁵

To convince his readers that evolutionary changes were induced by biological difference that was programmed to follow a progressive path, he argued: "Today as in the past the more archaic and less successful members of the group (i.e. Group 2, the proto-human) tend to occupy those regions which are most remote from the Asiatic centre of human dispersal, such a distribution having been forced upon them by the more gifted races."⁵⁶

Black predicted that further investigations in the Tarim region in Xinjiang would offer unique opportunities to find fossils of the progressive proto-human group. His plan for a

⁵⁴ Whether the larger brain size led to the upright bipedal posture or vice versa was a much debated issue among paleoanthropologists at the time. See Bowler, 149-185.

⁵⁵ Davidson Black, "Asia and the Dispersal of Primates," *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 4:2 (1925), 175.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 175-176.

joint-expedition to Xinjiang with Andersson was aborted. Nonetheless, the discovery in Zhoukoudian of the Peking Man skull in 1929 was no less significant for Black, who was convinced that the brain size of *Sinanthropus*, much larger than those of living great apes and that of *Australopithecus* (the Taung Child), provided for the priority of encephalization.

The discovery of Peking Man in North China in the 1920s was timely and provided much needed boost for supporters of the Central Asia hypothesis. Black, who named the species *Sinanthropus*, claimed that the discovery of such a Quaternary fossil in Eastern Asia had provided the most convincing evidence so far to confirm Osborn's theory that Central Asia was the origin of man. A line linking the geographical location of the *Eoanthropus*, or Piltdown Man,⁵⁷ in the west with that of *Sinanthropus* in the east would lend evidence to the view that the ancient Central Asian plain was the perfect center of dispersal. Black believed that the new evidence would invalidate any claims of European origins.⁵⁸ Amadeus Grabau, although not a member of the Zhoukoudian project, helped promote the scientific significance of Peking Man as well as the validity of the Central Asia theory.

⁵⁷ The Piltdown Man remains were discovered in Piltdown, England in 1912. It had an apelike jaw but with a skull and teeth similar to those of humans. Many famous paleoanthropologists, such as Grafton Elliot Smith and Teilhard de Chardin, examined it and claimed that it represented the missing link, a true hybrid between human and ape. Although there was skepticism over a hybrid ape-man, it took 40 years for later scientists to determine that Piltdown Man was a forgery: the pieces were in fact a lower jawbone of an orangutan and a modern human skull deliberately combined together.

⁵⁸ Davidson Black, "On a Lower Molar Hominid Tooth from the Chou Kou Tien Deposit," *Palaeontologia Sinica*, Series D, 7:1 (1927): 22.

In the 1930s, Grabau wrote several articles advocating the Central Asia theory, viewing Peking Man as the mechanism of human evolution.⁵⁹ Some were translated into Chinese and published in both general and popular science journals.⁶⁰ French scientist Henri Breuil, who visited the Zhoukoudian site in 1931, described Peking Man as Grabau's "godson" to stress his involvement in popularizing Peking Man and human evolution.⁶¹ Being a geologist, Grabau was familiar with the topographical formation of the Himalayan Mountains at the beginning of the Miocene period. He believed that only such drastic geological change could stimulate evolutionary development. He rejected the African origin theory:

I hold that there is no reason why man should arise in Africa, for we know of no physical event which would set this special evolution going, no *Imperative Impetus*, such as was given in Southern Asia; and without such an impetus, so vast a divergence in the evolutionary trend could not have taken place. Moreover, the conditions of existence in Central and South Africa in Quaternary and probably in later Tertiary time as well, were conducive to the perpetuation of primitive types if they existed, or the deterioration, mentally if not physically, of higher types which had wandered into this region. For so far as we are able to judge, the climate of Central Africa in those days was mild if not tropical and sufficient food was probably obtainable by the simplest means, so that no premium was placed upon the cultivation of those mental faculties, which under

⁵⁹ These articles include "Did Man Originate in Asia?" *Asia* (1935): 24-27; *Tibet and the Origin of Man* (Stockholm, Centraltryckeriet, 1935); "The Beginnings of the Human Race," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 65 (1934): 1-20; and "Asia and the Evolution of Man," *The China Journal* (March, 1930): 152-163.

⁶⁰ "Asia and the Evolution of Man" was translated as "Yaxiya he renlei de jinhua," *Zireanjie* (Nature), 5:7 (1930): 599-611; and "Did Man Originate in Asia?" was translated as "Renlei shifou qiyuan yu yazhou," *Shishi leibian*, 3:11 (1935): 86-90.

⁶¹ Allan Mazur, *A Romance in Natural History* (Syracuse, NY: Garret, 2004), 384.

severer conditions would have to be invoked to make it possible to cope with a hostile environment.⁶²

The elevation of the Himalayas, or the *imperative impetus* as Grabau called it, led to the emergence of proto-humans, which he named *Protanthropus*.

Grabau constructed a narrative that attempted to smoothly intermingle the existing fossil discoveries into a story of human evolution.⁶³ The story began in the later Miocene period when the aridity, followed by the formation of the Himalayas, forced the anthropoid in Tibet to go through the process of natural selection. The surviving ones emerged as *Protanthropus* and learned how to use stone tools. They then migrated northward to the Tarim Basin in the early Pliocene. It was here that they learned how to use fire and created proto-paleolithic culture. During the late Pliocene, *Protanthropus* migrated both eastward and westward. *Sinanthropus*, or Peking Man, was the descendent of *Protoanthropus*, who reached East China. A branch of this group moved further south to Java and became *Pithecanthropus*. The branch moving westward split into two groups: one reached West Europe and became *Eoanthropus*; the other arrived in Africa and evolved into the very early *Homo*.⁶⁴ Like Osborn, Grabau maintained that the tropical conditions led to developmental retardation and therefore *Pithecanthropus* represented a more primitive phase than *Sinanthropus*, and the early *Homo* found in Africa was also quite primitive. So far Grabau's storyline was not significantly different

⁶² A. W. Grabau, "The Beginnings of the Human Race," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1934): 7.

⁶³ The following description comes from his booklet, *Tibet and the Origin of Man* (Stockholm, Centraltryckeriet, 1935) (a reprint from *Geografiska Annaler* 1935).

⁶⁴ This refers to the jawbone discovered by Louis Leakey in Kenya in 1932.

from Osborn's, only with fewer racial implications. What distinguishes the two narratives is Grabau's attempt to explain why so few Paleolithic fossil remains were discovered in China but were abundant in Europe if the original home of our ancestor was closer to the former than to the latter place. He attributed it to the loess deposition sweeping North China during the Pleistocene time, which rendered the place too cold and too dusty for humans to exist. This prevented the return of primitive *Homo*, or the Neanderthal, of Europe and West Asia to their original home. By the beginning of the Holocene time, the mysterious "Neolithic Man," Grabau argued, coming from an unknown place, migrated to Europe as well as Eastern Asia. "Probably he gives birth to some of the peoples of modern Asia, and to the primitive North Americans as well."⁶⁵ Grabau correctly made the distinction between the first human ancestor and modern humans because the origin of *Homo sapiens* was still dubious and a much-debated issue at the time. Moreover, Grabau's assumption of the mysterious Neolithic Man as the common ancestor of modern humans provided an alternative explanation for the similarities found between Neolithic European and Western Asian pottery and those discovered by Andersson in Yangshao. Instead of making North China the recipient of European civilization, Grabau saw both places as frontiers for the newly developed species of unknown provenance.

Peter Bowler has argued that European scientists' preference for Central Asia as the original home of human ancestors reflected fundamental racist prejudices against

⁶⁵ Grabau, *Tibet and the Origin of Man*, 324.

anything African.⁶⁶ For people like Henry Fairfield Osborn, who supported white supremacy, the very idea that our first ancestor might have originated in Africa was unpalatable. Asia seemed to be a more acceptable choice. Discoveries made in Africa were deemed irrelevant, and Asia, “mother of continents,” as Osborn called it, was receiving all the attention in the 1920s.⁶⁷ Many Chinese scientists also supported the Central Asia theory. Chinese paleontologists Pei Wenzhong and Yang Zhongjian accepted the theory and emphasized the prominent relevance of their finding for the question of human origins.⁶⁸ Zhu Xi, the famous biologist and father of Chinese embryology, believed Asia to be the original home of humans and the cradle of human civilization.⁶⁹ All of these intellectuals endorsed the theory not so much for its racist underpinnings, but because they thought it represented the most plausible evolutionary mechanism known at the time and it was strongly supported by the leading scientists in the field.

Many Chinese intellectuals also welcomed the Central Asia theory because it rendered the Eurocentric view of human origin and world civilization a mere fallacy. With the discovery of Peking Man and all the international sensationalist reports

⁶⁶ Peter Bowler, “Comment ‘Piltdown: An Appraisal of the Case against Sir Arthur Keith,’” *Current Anthropology*, 33:3 (June, 1992): 261.

⁶⁷ Henry Fairfield Osborn, “Proving Asia the Mother of Continents,” *Asia Magazine*, 12:9 (1922): 721-724.

⁶⁸ Pei Wenzhong, “Zhongguo yuanren huashi zhi fajian” (The Discovery of the Chinese Ape-Man), *Kexue*, 14:8 (1930): 1128; Yang Zhongjian, “Zhongguo yuanren yu renlei jinhua wenti” (Chinese Ape-Man and Human Evolution), *Kexue*, 15:9 (1931): 1392.

⁶⁹ Zhu Xi, *Women de zuxian* (Our Ancestors) (Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1940), 173.

following the event, China was in the spotlight and was seen as the most promising place for groundbreaking field research in human paleontology. As a Chinese journalist commented in 1929: “European and American paleontologists have shifted their interest from the Mesopotamian plain to Central Asia, and now they are rushing to North Asia in flocks.”⁷⁰ Suddenly the Chinese had a reason to be proud because Peking Man was found in China. One of the leading Chinese science journals *Kexue* reported an anecdote that highlighted such sensation. The article stated that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, one of the participating scientists in the Zhoukoudian project, returned briefly to Paris in 1930 and gave several speeches to the science community on the discovery of Peking Man. On one occasion, there were a few Chinese overseas students in the audience. After the talk, the French audience noticed them and came over to shake hands with them. The French congratulated them and praised the achievement of the Chinese scientists. These Chinese students were overjoyed as if “it’s the happiest thing [that had] ever happened to them in their time in Europe.” The journalist commented that “scientific discoveries honor the nation and glorify the race” (*guo yi zhi er rong, zhong yin zhi er hua*).⁷¹ The Peking Man sensation helped promote a strong nativist Sino-centric view of the ancient past among Chinese intellectuals and scientists. It also encouraged a sense of responsibility for taking part in world affairs and international communities. Historian Li Jiefei’s statement, quoted in the beginning of the chapter, best exemplified such attitudes. The

⁷⁰ Zhe Sheng, “Zhongguo xinde yi ‘renlei yuanshi yazhou’ de shizheng” (A New Evidence for “Asia as the Origin of Humans” Is Found in China), *Dongfang zazhi*, 26:11 (1929): 81.

⁷¹ “Zhongguo yuanren huashi zhi fajian yinqi Faguo kexuejia zhi zhuyi” (The Discovery of *Sinanthropus pekinensis* has Caught the Attention of the French Scientists), *Kexue*, 15:4 (1931): 179-180.

need to construct a story about the “Chinese” with native ancestors and a history of 500,000 years seemed to be increasingly pressing during a time of tremendous national crises that threatened the very survival of the national body.

Peking Man and the Antiquity of the Chinese: From Asiacentrism to Sinocentrism

In the 1920s more Chinese intellectuals rejected the Western origin hypotheses of the Chinese ethno-genesis and tended to support a nativist alternative. The polychrome pottery discovered in Yangshao was taken by Andersson as an indication of influence from Western civilization. The human remains found in the same deposits, ironically, were taken by Chinese intellectuals as the most direct counterargument against his theory. Davidson Black collaborated with Andersson in the Yangshao and Gansu projects and gave extensive reports on the skeletal remains discovered along with the artifacts. Since 1921 Andersson had been relying on Black’s expertise in anatomy to help him analyze the human bones collected during his field research. Their findings were published in both English and Chinese in the scholarly journal of the Geological Survey of China. Black’s reports included his examinations of the skeletal remains Andersson discovered in Shaguo tun, Manchuria, Yangshao, and Gansu.⁷² In his preliminary report on the Gansu skulls, Black described that these specimens largely

⁷² Davidson Black, “A Note on the Physical Characters of the Prehistoric Kansu Race,” *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of China*, Series A, 5 (1925): 52-56; “The Human Skeletal Remains from the Sha Kuo Tun Cave Deposit in Comparison with those from Yang Shao Tsun and with Recent North China Skeletal Material,” *Palaeontologia Sinica and Geological Survey of China*, Series D, 1:3 (1925): 1-148; and “A Study of Kansu and Honan Aeneolithic Skulls and Specimens from Later Kansu Prehistoric Sites in Comparison with North China and Other Recent Crania,” *Palaeontologia Sinica and Geological Survey of China*, Series D, 6:1 (1928): 1-83.

belonged to a proto-Chinese type, very similar in physical type to the modern Chinese inhabitants of these regions. Only 3 skulls, which he named Type X, might be a mixture of Western and proto-Chinese strains.⁷³ However, in his extensive final report Black corrected his previous assumption and claimed that all the human bones from these three places were proto-Chinese types and were similar to the modern Chinese, which he named “North Chinese” (*Homo Asiaticus proprius*).⁷⁴ The Latin term and the general name Black ascribed for the modern Chinese is revealing. The Northern Chinese become not only representative of all the Chinese, but also of the designated *Homo Asiaticus proprius* (Typical Asian Man). A transition from a general Asiatic paradigm to a Sinocentric one was already evident in the ways in which Black classified his specimens.

Black’s conclusion was well received by Chinese intellectuals, who believed that it immediately put Andersson’s hypothesis into contestation. If the human bones found in these deposits were all proto-Chinese, it was likely that the artifacts they produced were native. Jin Zhaozi argued that “Andersson’s theory of cultural migration from the West to the East is a pure fallacy similar to the false claims made by Richthofen and Terrien de Lacouperie about how the Chinese race and culture all came from the West. In an era when only scientific objectivity reigns, we have longed for Black’s study to stop such dogmatic opinions.”⁷⁵ For Jin, Black’s direct anatomical analysis of the bones

⁷³ Black, “A Note on the Physical Characters of the Prehistoric Kansu Race,” 54-55.

⁷⁴ For Black’s final report, see “The Human Skeletal Remains from the Sha Kuo Tun Cave Deposit in Comparison with those from Yang Shao Tsun and with Recent North China Skeletal Material,” 98. He coined the term North Chinese and *Homo Asiaticus proprius* in “A Note on the Physical Characters of the Prehistoric Kansu Race,” 54.

⁷⁵ Jin Zhaozi, “Zhongguo renzhong ji wenhua zhi youlai,” 81.

seemed to be more scientific and therefore more convincing than Andersson's method of typological comparison. Li Jiefei combined Black's reports with Grabau's narrative of human evolution to claim that not only were the Neolithic inhabitants of Yangshao and Gansu natives of China, but even the human ancestors also originated in Xinjiang, within the Chinese territory.⁷⁶ Even Andersson himself corrected his previous assumption after reviewing Black's reports that the producers of the Yangshao culture were the "original ancestors of the modern Chinese."⁷⁷ With more deposits of Neolithic cultures excavated in China, in the 1940s Andersson changed much of his view concerning the cultural migration path and concluded, "There is nothing to indicate that any other race participated in the making of the Honan and Kansu pottery of the Yang Shao period... Everything goes to show that the Chinese were master potters from their very first appearance in the Yang Shao culture." He even suggested that there was the possibility that "China was the giver and the West the recipient."⁷⁸

With the discovery of Peking Man, the time of prehistoric "China" seemed to be pushed back even further. The critical question was to clarify the relationship between Peking Man and the modern "Chinese." Chinese intellectuals relied largely on the assumptions made by the foreign experts working on the Zhoukoudian project. Davidson Black insisted that *Sinanthropus* was the direct ancestor of modern humans. Although he found resemblances between *Sinanthropus* and *Pithecanthropus*, the craniographic and

⁷⁶ Li Jiefei, "Renlei zuxian yu qi zhudi," 4-5.

⁷⁷ Andersson, *Children of the Yellow Earth*, 331.

⁷⁸ J.G. Andersson, "Researches into the Prehistory of the Chinese," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 15 (1943): 287.

craniometric measurements made it evident that *Sinanthropus* was the more progressive type, capable of making crude stone tools found with his skeletons, while *Pithecanthropus* was more primitive and conservative.⁷⁹ The joint report by Black, Teilhard de Chardin, Yang Zhongjian, and Pei Wenzhong further suggested that *Sinanthropus* was morphologically different from any other hominid fossils that had been discovered up to that time.⁸⁰ Franz Weidenreich, Black's successor, concluded that *Sinanthropus* had a close connection to the recent Mongol racial groups in China because they shared certain particular features rarely found in other races, including the torus mandibularis of the lower jaw, the shovel-shaped upper incisors, the Inca bone, and the sagittal crest of the skull.⁸¹ Lacking further evidence, none of the scientists of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory had drawn a definitive conclusion that Peking Man was the direct ancestor of the modern northern Chinese. Yet, they had generally agreed on the close link between them, regarded Peking Man as *sui generis*, and tending to emphasize his differences more than his shared features with other fossil men. It is not difficult to understand why they "exaggerated" the importance and uniqueness of Peking

⁷⁹ Davidson Black, "The Croonian Lecture – On the Discovery, Morphology, and Environment of *Sinanthropus pekinensis*," *Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society, London*, 123 (1934): 113-115. Black's conclusion seems to be precipitate and matches too perfectly his own theory on the primate dispersal. In the 1940s, further studies done by Franz Weidenreich showed that *Sinanthropus* and *Pithecanthropus* represented the same species with only geographical differences. See Franz Weidenreich, "The Skull of *Sinanthropus pekinensis*: A Comparative Study of a Primitive Hominid Skull," *Palaeontologica Sinia*, Series D, 10 (1943). Now these two types are considered as *Homo erectus*, the direct ancestor of *Homo sapiens*.

⁸⁰ Davidson Black, Teilhard de Chardin, C.C. Young, and W.C. Pei, *Fossil Man in China* (Beijing: Geological Survey of China, 1933).

⁸¹ Franz Weidenreich, "*Sinanthropus pekinensis* and His Significance for the Problem of Human Evolution," *Bulletin of the Geological Society of China*, 19:1 (1939): 12.

Man. These scientists had acquired international fame because of Peking man, whose significance and contribution to the knowledge of human evolution would have a direct impact on their careers and future research opportunities. It is perhaps especially evident in the case of Davidson Black, who very early on was determined to find human ancestors in China, and who hastily created a new genus *Sinanthropus pekinensis* when only one molar was discovered in 1927.

The excavation of the Zhoukoudian site in early 1930s resulted in the new discovery of Upper Paleolithic human remains with a large number of animal bones and archaeological objects. This was known as the Upper Cave Man (*Shandongdong ren*). Weidenreich's study of the three complete skulls showed that although one male skull closely resembled the Upper Paleolithic Man found in Europe, it shared certain features with skulls of Neolithic Gansu inhabitants and skulls from ancient tombs in Manchuria. His analysis of the Upper Cave Man was ambivalent. On the one hand, he claimed that "these recent North Chinese may be considered as more advanced types, but traceable to ancestors like those represent by the Upper Cave Man... In any case, the Old Man of the Upper Cave appears to represent not only a very primitive form of modern man, but at the same time also a type of primitive Mongolian."⁸² On the other hand, he did not think the Upper Cave Man would shed any light on the origin of the Chinese. But he did not

⁸² Franz Weidenreich, "On the Earliest Representatives of Modern Mankind Recovered on the Soil of East Asia," *Peking Natural History Bulletin*, 13:3 (1938-39): 170. It should be noted here that Weidenreich's study of the other two skulls came to very surprising result: these belonged to two young females with Melanesoid and Eskimoid identities. This led to Weidenreich's conclusion that racial differentiations must have existed earlier than we assumed and that racial purity must be a later construction.

exclude the possibility that the Cave Man family was a migrating foreign tribe and was attacked and killed by the indigenous Chinese race.⁸³

The enticing assumption of a “close link” between Peking Man and the modern Chinese was enough to encourage the Chinese intellectuals to make more daring statements about their past. The Second Sino-Japanese War provided a direct incentive for them to advocate for Sinocentric ethno-nationalism, supported by a claim of the distant ancestral origin of Peking Man and by the construction of a continuous genealogy of the “Chinese” as the true indigene of China. Even scholars who were cautious not to overstate Peking Man’s direct ancestral links still held him to provide evidence of the native origin of the Chinese. In a book entitled *Our Nation* (*Women de guozu*), sociologist Mao Qijun and his co-author Liu Honghuan argued that although it was not certain if the Chinese were descendants of Peking Man, the theory of the native origin of the Chinese was very likely to be accurate. They accepted the Asia theory and believed that future research might prove China to be the “hometown” of all humans. They speculated that a proto-Mongol race must have appeared in North China, east of Xinjiang, around 25,000 years ago and then migrated to different parts of China and developed into distinct ethnic groups, which led to the formation of the Chinese nation.⁸⁴ Archaeologist Yin Da endorsed the nativist interpretation of Chinese origin and attempted to prove with archaeological and paleoanthropological findings. In his article, “*Zhonghua minzu and its Cultural Origins*” (*Zhonghua minzu ji qi wenhua zhi qiyuan*),

⁸³ Ibid, 217.

⁸⁴ Mao Qijun and Liu Honghuan, *Women de guozu* (*Our Nation*) (Duli chubanshe, 1941), 16-17.

Yin began by calling attention to false claims made by Euro-American and Japanese scholars about the origins of the Chinese race and civilization. Their intention was to erase the long glorious history of the Chinese. Yin argued it would be particularly dangerous if the Chinese also believed them and lost their national confidence (*minzu zixinxin*).⁸⁵ Yin meticulously examined the findings of the Paleolithic period, like Peking Man and Ordos Man as well as the findings of the Neolithic period, such as the Yangshao, Longshan, and Anyang remains. To provide first-hand analysis on these discoveries, he cited Black, Weidenreich, and Andersson. He admitted that Chinese society was not isolated from the rest of the world and could not avoid interaction with other cultures, yet, the human fossils and archaeological artifacts from Paleolithic and Neolithic periods strongly demonstrated their link to the modern northern Chinese. Consequently “[t]he Chinese race and its culture was indeed originated and developed in the vast land called ‘China.’”⁸⁶

Rather than blindly following sensational reports of Peking Man, most of the Chinese intellectuals writing about the origin of the Chinese in relation to Peking Man were quite well informed about the prevailing evolutionary theories and contemporary discoveries such as the Java man and the Piltdown Man. If they were too enthusiastic in celebrating the significance of Peking Man, they might well have just been influenced by the foreign scientists working on the Peking Man project, who had never ceased to promote the importance and uniqueness of the fossils they found. The author, Youliang

⁸⁵ Yin Da, “Zhonghua minzu ji qi wenhua zhi qiyuan” (*Zhonghua minzu* and its Cultural Origins), *Zhongguo wenhua*, 1:5 (1940): 16.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

(a pen name), of the article entitled, “From Prehistoric Humans to the Chinese” (*Cong shiqian renlei shuodao Zhonghua minzu*), provided a detailed account of all the existing fossil men and how *Sinanthropus* should be evaluated.⁸⁷ His description included the well known fossils, like the Java Man, the Piltdown Man, the Rhodesian Man, the Neanderthal, and the Cro-Magnon, as well as the less known types, such as the Chancelade fossil and the Grimaldi fossil.⁸⁸ He believed that humans originated in Asia, and China could be the most possible location. Although the date of *Pithecanthropus* seemed to be earlier than that of *Sinanthropus*, Youliang argued that only *Sinanthropus* could be identified as the first human because he knew how to use fire and make stone tools. He saw *Pithecanthropus* as the more primitive relative of *Sinanthropus* having migrated to Southeast Asia from China – a view that was also held by Davidson Black. He thus concluded that today’s Chinese were the descendants of *Sinanthropus*, and the prehistory of humans offered a window through which it was possible to see the greatness of the Chinese, whose ancestors had spread around the world since the Paleolithic period. “We pioneered in human evolution and made human civilization bloom. Our ancestors lit up the fire so we could be illuminated. How can the Chinese today not be awakened and inspired!”⁸⁹

The antiquity of the Chinese was emphasized by Chinese intellectuals who pinpointed Peking Man as the progenitor of the Chinese. Li Guangming, one of the

⁸⁷ Youliang, “Cong shiqian renlei shuodao Zhonghua minzu,” *Xinli jianshe*, 1:5 (1943): 10-17.

⁸⁸ These are late Paleolithic fossils of *Homo sapiens* discovered in Europe.

⁸⁹ Youliang, “Cong shiqian renlei shuodao Zhonghua minzu,” 17.

earliest researchers of ethnology at the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica, wrote an article in 1944 to demonstrate the antiquity of the Chinese race.⁹⁰ Li began by rejecting “non-scientific” theories of Western origin and then described “scientific” discoveries of recent human paleontology in China. He cited the Central Asia theory of Osborn and Grabau and argued that the discovery of Peking Man had proved that China might be the original home of human ancestors. He also stated that the international scientific community considered Peking Man to be the oldest human fossil and concluded that the Chinese ancestors were native.⁹¹ To show the antiquity of the Chinese, Li, incorporating paeloanthropological and archaeological findings as well as Chinese ancient historical texts, and portrayed a continuous development of the Chinese from the prehistoric Peking Man of more than 500,000 BCE to the Zhou dynasty. In the story, Peking Man, the first Chinese and perhaps the first human, began to make stone tools to facilitate daily life and China entered the Paleolithic era. The Ordos remains discovered by Emile Licent and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the Mongolian artifacts found by the Central Asiatic Expeditions team provided evidence of a continuing Paleolithic culture until about 50,000 years ago. Yangshao and Qijiangping (Gansu) relics showed Neolithic characteristics. Li emphasized Black’s reports on the skeletal remains that were found in these deposits indicated that these Neolithic inhabitants in north and northwest China were proto-Chinese. “It is evident,” Li stated, “that our race

⁹⁰ Li Guangming, “Zhonghua minzu de youjiuxing,” *Sichuan qingnian*, 1:2 (1944): 14-18. Li conducted one of the earliest ethnographies done in the Republic period in the late 1920s. But his research career ended early when he left the IHP shortly after and became an educator.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 15.

had been native long ago in prehistoric time, and it goes without saying that the later culture was also created by our native ancestors.”⁹² Therefore, Li argued, despite linguistic and cultural differences, the frontier peoples of Mongolia and Tibet also regarded themselves as the descendants of the shared common ancestor with the Han.⁹³ For Li, Peking Man was evidence of the antiquity and the indigeneity of the Chinese race. If all the ethnic groups in contemporary China share a common origin, they should continue to behave like a “family.” Li’s argument eventually became a call for ethnic solidarity among all Chinese during the war.

Sociologist Chen Zhengmo boldly declared that *Zhonghua minzu* had a history dating back 500,000 years. In an article he wrote in 1943, Chen described that a conventional way of calculating the age of the Chinese race was to begin with the year of Huangdi. Therefore, many, including Chiang Kai-shek in his famous *China’s Destiny*, claimed that the Chinese race was 5000 years old. However, Chen argued, “Recent scientific discovery has shown that the Chinese race originated and has continued to develop on the same land for 500,000 years, the longest history of any nation state in the world.”⁹⁴ Like Li Guangming, Chen repudiated theories that designated foreign origins for the Chinese as unscientific and untrustworthy. Chen was quite familiar with the Central Asia theory. He cited Osborn and Matthew and described various expeditions carried out by the Central Asiatic Expeditions in Mongolia. Chen was inclined to believe

⁹² Ibid, 16.

⁹³ Ibid, 17.

⁹⁴ Chen Zhengmo, “Zhonghua minzu yiyou wushiwan nian zhi lishi” (*Zhonghua minzu Has a History of 500,000 Years*), *Xin Zhonghua*, new series, 1:10 (1943): 24.

that the Mongolian plateau, instead of Tibet, was the original home of humans because it was closer to the site of Peking Man. Now what was the relationship between Peking Man and the modern Chinese? Ye Weidan's popular book *Peking Man* of 1933 denied any connection between *Sinanthropus* and modern humans, including the proto-Mongoloid race.⁹⁵ Chen disagreed and cited the reports by Weidenreich on Peking Man's shovel-shaped upper incisors and mandibular tori as morphological evidence that the proto-Mongoloid race was indeed related to Peking Man. He also cited Black's reports on the Yanshao and Gansu skeletal remains as a proto-Chinese type. Then Chen stated,

According to scientific evidence, we come to the conclusion that the Chinese are indigenous (*Zhonghua minzu wei tuzhu*). All the suppositions calling for foreign origins are thus proven false. The near ancestor of the Chinese is the Yangshao man and the distant ancestor Peking Man... We, the descendants of our ancestors, must protect our land from foreign races. It is the way to follow the footsteps of our ancestors.⁹⁶

Chen Zhengmo appealed to the antiquity of the Chinese as the claim of the legitimacy of the Chinese occupation of the "ancestral" land. Moreover, for Chen, Peking Man was not only the ancestor of the Han, but the ancestor of all ethnic groups in China. A monogenic interpretation of Chinese ethnic formation was not a new concept but it was receiving more attention. This is evident, for example, in Xiong Shili's famous history lectures, which he delivered to students in Sichuan to inspire their nationalist spirit in 1938, and in which he bestowed on Peking Man the status of the common ancestor of all people in

⁹⁵ Ye Weidan, *Beijing ren* (Peking Man) (Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1933).

⁹⁶ Chen, "Zhonghua minzu yiyou wushiwan nian zhi lishi," 27.

China.⁹⁷ It would not be easy, however, to trace the genealogy of Peking Man and to explain how all the ethnic peoples evolved. Chen had to rely on speculation and available frameworks borrowed from evolutionary theories.

Chen's explanation for ethnic differences and distribution was influenced by Darwinism and the scheme of dispersal proposed by Matthew and Black. It began with the narrative of Peking Man's offspring migrating in different directions from the Mongolian plateau. The ones who stayed in the center of dispersal had to compete with each other, and therefore the struggle to survival led to rapid and higher development of culture. The ones who migrated to the periphery became the first settlers of these virgin lands. With abundant resources and space, the competition among frontier settlers was minimum and therefore their progress became sluggish. Once the population density forced the more superior people from the center to migrate outward, they pushed the inferior people at the frontier even farther to the periphery. The result was a pattern of long-term cultural development in concentric circles, the farther away from the center the more backward.⁹⁸ Therefore, Chen argued, the Han, the descendants of the branch in the center, should not discriminate against the people in the frontier or the periphery for their cultural backwardness; on the contrary, the Han should show respect for them because their ancestors had endured great hardships in cultivating the frontier. Chen concluded that understanding the fact that the Han had shared the land with the other *zongzu*

⁹⁷ Xiong Shili, *Xiong Shili quanji*, Vol. 2 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 622-646.

⁹⁸ This is similar to the traditional *tianxia* system of world order but Chen was undoubtedly more influenced by contemporary evolutionist interpretations.

(lineages) for 500,000 years would certainly strengthen the public morale for the final victory against the Japanese.⁹⁹

Historians of Republican China often see Chinese scholars' "worship" of Peking Man as a blatant statement of nationalism's abuse of scientific findings. James Leibold uses the case of Xiong Shili to demonstrate how archaeological evidence was used to construct national and racial identities.¹⁰⁰ Frank Dikötter has criticized archaeologist Li Yan, who made a similar assumption of the antiquity of the Chinese race, and infused science into old Chinese myths to "revitalize sinocentric beliefs."¹⁰¹ Both Leibold and Dikötter assume that Western scientific theories and findings are universally objective and it was the fault of nationalist Chinese scholars who manipulated them. However, this chapter has shown a rather different picture. Indeed, the monogenic view, tracing a shared ancestor among different ethnic peoples, served a nationalistic function, especially during the time of war when ethnic tensions were aroused by Japanese imperialism calling for secession of non-Han peoples from China. Yet, the ethnic monogenism of Chinese scholars, instead of being a mere manipulation of objective scientific "truth," was better seen as a historical construct and a product of contemporary evolutionary discourse of Asiaticism, a theory that was constructed, in many ways, by the prevailing cultural, racial, and scientific biases. A closer examination of the Chinese monogenic ethnic theory reveals that, instead of promoting Han-centrism, like the view produced by the

⁹⁹ Chen, "Zhonghua minzu yiyou wushiwan nian zhi lishi," 28-30.

¹⁰⁰ James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenous Became Chinese* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 129-131.

¹⁰¹ Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford University Press, 1992), 134.

National Essence scholars at the turn of the century, these authors were more eager to claim the indigeneity for all ethnic groups within China. It was more of a defensive counterargument, incorporating the most updated scientific understanding of human evolution, against theories that designated the origin of the Chinese to foreign identities and against Japanese imperialism that attempted to arouse ethnic separatism among the non-Han frontier peoples.

Conclusion

Sino-Babylonism was popular among Chinese intellectuals in the first two decades of the 20th century. J.G. Andersson was probably one of the last foreign scholars to endorse the theory with his archaeological findings. However, in the 1920s, Chinese intellectuals had already begun to question such an approach and Andersson's argument was met with mixed appraisals. After the discovery of Peking Man, Chinese intellectuals tended to have firm confidence that Central Asia, or to be more precise, Northwestern China, was the cradle of humans. They were inspired by foreign scientists, such as Henry Fairfield Osborn, Davidson Black, and Amadeus Grabau, who were advocates of the Asiatic approach of human paleontology.

Many Chinese intellectuals, including historians, social scientists, and archaeologists, had attempted to establish the hypothesis that Peking Man was the ancestor of all the Chinese by plausibly presenting "scientific" discoveries as the evidence. Many believed, that since their evidence came from "scientific" discoveries, their arguments were therefore "scientific" and not fabrications based on myths and

legends. Many had also come to their conclusions through borrowing the prevailing theories described by leading scientists in the fields. It is important to note that the real mechanism of evolutionism was still a much-debated issue even among Western scientists. For example, not until the late 1970s and 1980s did new techniques of molecular biology provide genetic evidence to support Africa as the more plausible cradle of humans and African apes our close cousins.¹⁰²

Tze-ki Hon has attempted to explain the rise and fall of Sino-Babylonism in Republican China in terms of how Chinese intellectuals perceived the world system of nation-states.¹⁰³ He argues that they embraced it at the turn of the 20th century because they saw the world order in temporal hierarchy, with Europe and America on top, and they were eager to be part of it. In the 1930s, they began to view the system of nation-states as a hierarchy in space and realized that China's territorial sovereignty was threatened. As a result, they rejected Sino-Babylonism for its imperialist undertones. I agree with Hon that the world system of nation-states could be conceptualized in both temporal and spatial hierarchical forms. However, they often co-exist and reinforce each other. In the case of Sino-Babylonism, it was discredited by Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s because the Chinese worldview of temporal hierarchy was reversed: now the Chinese, a.k.a. Peking Man, were the progenitor of humans and China the cradle of world civilization. Huangdi was rendered irrelevant in the new plot of Chinese racial history

¹⁰² Before the introduction of DNA technology, fossils were the only available means for paleoanthropologists to decipher our past. Interpretations of fossil evidence could be ideologically subjective and therefore lead to multifaceted outcomes, the best example is found in the Piltdown Man hoax.

¹⁰³ Tze-ki Hon, "From a Hierarchy in Time to a Hierarchy in Space: The Meanings of Sino-Babylonism in Early Twentieth-Century China."

with an expansion of 500,000 years. And the temporal hierarchy was used to justify the legitimacy and sovereignty for the spatial claim over all the territories within China.

Sigrid Schmalzer argues that Peking Man was not popularly considered to be the ancestor of the Chinese during the Republican period for two reasons, one scientific and one cultural. The first was related to the lack of further evidence to fill the huge gap between *Sinanthropus* and *Homo sapiens*, and the second was the refusal to believe that monkeys could be ancestors of the Chinese.¹⁰⁴ The cultural factor aside, this chapter has demonstrated that the idea of Peking Man as the Chinese ancestor was not unpopular, at least among intellectuals. I will also argue that the ones who held more cautious attitudes about making a direct link between Peking Man and modern Chinese did not completely discredit Peking Man's ancestral status. Although the investigations of the Peking Man fossils led by Black and Weidenreich showed evidence of links between Peking Man and the modern Chinese, Weidenreich's later multi-original interpretation of the Upper Cave findings of Zhoukoudian tended to complicate the scenario. Peking Man might be the ancestor of the modern Chinese, but he was not the only one. For example, anthropologist Ling Chunsheng suggested that *Zhonghua minzu* began with Upper Cave Man of polytypic origins, which included the Peking Man lineage.¹⁰⁵ In other words, Peking Man was not exclusively Chinese; the modern Chinese ethnic identity was a hybrid construct. The polytypic approach of Chinese ethno-history had its own merit when

¹⁰⁴ Sigrid Schmalzer. *The People's Peking Man*, 49-50.

¹⁰⁵ Ling Chunsheng, "Zhongguo bianjiang minzu" [Frontier Ethnic Groups in China] in *Bianjiang wenhua lunji* [Collected Essays on Frontier Culture], Ling Chunsheng et al. (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua shiye chuban weiyuanhui, 1953), 1-3, reprinted in Ling Chunsheng. *Zhongguo bianjiang minzu yu huan Taipingyang wenhua: Ling Chunsheng xiansheng lunwenji* [Studies of Chinese Minorities and Circum-Pacific Culture: Collected Work of Ling Chunsheng] (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 1979), 5-7.

being applied to promote wartime nationalism. Instead of utilizing Peking Man as irrefutable scientific evidence for the antiquity of the Chinese, it stressed the importance of “ethnic integration.” That is, people in China might not have one shared common ancestor, but long-term historical interactions had made them culturally and biologically integrated. They became an undividable family and China was the home to foster their brotherly bonding. As will be discussed in the following chapter, monogenism and integration theory begin with different origin narratives but come to the same end: China is an organic and unitary entity that is indivisible.

PART TWO

WHO ARE THE CHINESE

CHAPTER THREE
THE DISCOURSE OF *MINZU*: ETHNOLOGY AND ETHNO-NATIONALISM
IN THE SOUTHWESTERN FRONTIER

The international search for the common human ancestor resulted in nationalistic Chinese intellectuals indigenizing Peking Man as the first Chinese. Once the temporal inquiry of identifying the origin was fulfilled, the question still left unresolved was: who would be written into the genealogy of Peking Man's descendents? It was a spatial task, a process that involved the demarcation of boundaries between who was Chinese and who was not. Ever since the 1911 Revolution, the Chinese state was determined to keep the old Qing imperial territory intact while at the same time transforming China into a new nation-state. The insistence on territorial integrity was like a magic spell, or what Joseph Esherick has called the "Atatürk counterfactual," that few Han Chinese had thought otherwise.¹ Part II concerns the second scientific inquiry into the Chinese frontier: anthropological research on the non-Han in the southwestern frontier societies during the 1940s. It is a story of how Chinese intellectuals, especially anthropologists, conceptualized the new China as an organic multi-ethnic nation-state and construed the

¹ Joseph Esherick compares the transformation of the Qing Empire to the modern Chinese nation-state with that of the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish nation and asks why the leaders of China, unlike their counterparts led by Atatürk in Turkey, did not focus their nation-building effort on the Han inhabited China proper and left the non-Han peoples of the periphery to decide their own fate. Although talks supporting the China Proper position did occur, they were too insignificant compared to the prevailing view for the Greater China. Esherick concludes that foreign imperialistic aggression on China's frontiers was the major reason for the Chinese state and intellectuals to support the Greater China position. See Joseph Esherick, "How the Qing Became China," in *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, eds. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 228-259. Scholars have also argued that the statist view of a unified China was not completely shared by some provincial elites at the fall of the Qing, for example, see Presenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 177-204.

frontier as an inseparable national space rather than the imperial borderland. The Second Sino-Japanese War acted as the driving force for the emergence of a new kind of ethnic nationalism that would have great impact on the formation of the modern Chinese national identity as enunciated by the formula of the “unitary multi-national state” (*tongyi de duo minzu guojia*) in the current constitution of People’s Republic of China.

This chapter brings to the fore the intellectual discussion of *minzu* during the Second Sino-Japanese War and how the two strands of views on the structure of the *Zhonghua minzu* – the unitary and the multiple models – emerged and reinforced each other. It also elucidates the ways in which Chinese ethnologists supported ethnic integration through studies of the southwestern frontier societies. What will be discussed in detail is the debate on *minzu* initiated by Gu Jiegang in 1939 and how wartime ethno-nationalism came into play in shaping the discourse of *minzu*.² The discursive formation of the *minzu* discourse has a history associated with the political history of modern China since the late 19th century. The meaning of *minzu* and the content of the *Zhonghua minzu* were seriously debated by Chinese intellectuals during the Second Sino-Japanese War. This period was decisive for fostering the concept of a unitary and inclusive superstructure of *Zhonghua minzu*. Wartime nationalism also reinforced the belief that

² The debate on *minzu* in 1939 has caught much attention of scholars in China in recent years but yet to be fully discussed by scholars outside of China. See, for example, Zhou Wenjiu and Zhang Jinpeng, “Guanyu ‘Zhonghua minzu shi yige’ xueshu bianlun de kaocha,” *Minzu yanjiu*, 3 (2007): 20-30; Zhou Wenjiu. “Cong ‘yige’ dao ‘duoyuan yiti’: guanyu Zhongguo minzu lilun fazhan de shixue shi kaocha,” *Beijin daxue xuebao*, 44:4 (2007): 102-109; and Huang Tianhua. “‘Minzu yishi yu guojia guannian: Kangzhan qian hou guanyu ‘Zhonghua minzu shi yige’ de taolun,” in *1940 niandai de Zhongguo*, Vol.2 (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 1044-1061. The first two articles tend to be descriptive and lack contextual analysis. Huang has attempted to provide more comprehensive historical understanding to the debate. All three agree that the debate had played important role in the formation of PRC’s unitary multi-ethnic formula.

Zhonghua minzu, which encompassed all the peoples within the imperial territory of the Qing, was an organic and unbreakable unit. The debate on *minzu* in 1939 demonstrates that the unitary- and multi-*minzu* views were not two opposing and irreconcilable models. Although most participants of the debate were not anthropologists, the issue had a reverberating effect among ethnologists whose work dealt directly with ethnicity. Cen Jiawu and Rui Yifu borrowed concepts of Morganian evolutionism and cultural diffusionism to interpret the cultures of the frontier non-Han societies in order to demonstrate the historical and cultural bond between the Han and the non-Han who constituted a united and inseparable *Zhonghua minzu*. This chapter, therefore, stresses the pivotal role anthropology played in the construction of national genealogy and the forging of a new inclusive national identity.

The Discourse of Minzu before the Second Sino-Japanese War

A brief review on the history of the discourse of *minzu* will help us understand what was at the core of the debate in 1939. The term *minzu* became part of the Chinese lexicon at the turn of the 20th century. Scholars are still debating who was the first to invent or introduce the term to the Chinese audience.³ Suffice it to say that *minzu* was

³ Liang Qichao has been considered for many to be the first Chinese intellectual to introduce the term from Japanese (*minzoku*) in 1898. More recent studies show that the term might have appeared even earlier. For example, Wang Tao used the term from the English in the 1870s. For a brief description of lexical trace of the term, see Peng Yinming, “Guanyu wo guo minzu guainian lishi de chubu kaocha” [A Preliminary Investigation Concerning the Idea of Minzu in Our Country], *Minzu yanjiu*, no.2 (1985), 8. Fang Weigui has suggested that the term *minzu* even appeared in 1837 in a translation of a biblical text to describe the Israelis, see “Lun jindai sixiangshi shangde ‘minzu,’ ‘nation,’ he ‘Zhongguo’” in *Ershi shiji shuangyuekan*, no.70 (April, 2002), 34. It should

popularized by Chinese intellectuals at a time when they were eager to reconceptualize “China” with ideas of Western nationalism and the political model of nation-state. By combining pre-existing words *min* (people) with *zu* (lineage), *minzu* came into being as a term loaded with modern connotations including nation, ethnicity, nationality, people, and race. The late Qing revolutionaries and radical overseas students coined the term *minzu zhuyi*, a direct translation from the Japanese *minzokushugi*, to propagandize anti-Manchu nationalism. *Zhonghua minzu* appeared in the writings of Sun Yat-sen, and Zhang Binglin defined “China” as a political and geographical entity for the Chinese/Han. Zhang Binglin was the most fervent advocate for a distinct Han racial identity contrasting with that of the Manchus.⁴ Although supporting anti-Manchu nationalism, Sun Yat-sen felt that Zhang Binglin’s extremist racist vision of *Zhonghua minzu*, which excluded all non-Han peoples, was impractical. Instead, he emphasized a geographically and culturally unified “China” whose constituencies included five different ethnic peoples. However, Sun’s multi-ethnic inclusive scheme was built on the belief that *Zhonghua minzu*, or the Chinese nation, would eventually embrace a single Han identity through assimilation.⁵

be noted that the Japanese term *minzoku* also bears many meanings, including “nation,” “people,” “ethnicity,” or “*Volk*,” and is difficult to translate. For a discussion on the origin and the discourse of *minzoku* in the formation of Japanese nationalism, see Kevin M. Doak, “Ethnic Nationalism and Romanticism in Early Twentieth-Century Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 22:1 (Winter, 1996): 77-103.

⁴ See Kai-wing Chow, “Imagining Boundaries of Blood: Zhang Binglin and the Invention of the Chinese Race in Modern China” in Barry Sautman ed., *Racial Identities in East Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 1995), 150-169.

⁵ See James Leibold, “Positioning ‘*minzu*’ within Sun Yet-sen’s discourse of *Minzuzhuyi*,” *Journal of Asian History*, v.38, no.2 (2004): 163-213. Leibold emphasizes

After the fall of the Qing, the inclusionist view became the norm. This was reflected in the design of the first national flag, with its five colored stripes representing the five major ethnic groups living harmoniously together: the Han, the Manchu, the Mongol, the Hui, and the Tibetan.⁶ Yet the transformation from the old empire to a new nation-state was never a natural and peaceful process, particularly when the new nation-state attempted to keep the old imperial territory and population intact. The meaning of *minzu*, the constituency of the *Zhonghua minzu*, as well as the boundary of “China,” were constantly contested during the Republican period. A nation-wide intellectual and political debate on *minzu* took place in the early 1920s when Outer Mongolia, aided by the recently established Soviet Union, declared independence.⁷ The debate began in the spring of 1924 when the negotiation between the Beiyang government and the Soviet delegates entered the final stage and a protocol was signed that recognized the Soviet protectorate of Outer Mongolia. Participants in the debate included intellectuals, journalists, politicians, and the party members of the Guomindang and the CCP. The debate first centered on whether Outer Mongolia should leave the suzerainty of China

the natural evolutionary concept in Sun’s *minzu zhuyi* that Sun believed the assimilation of other peoples into the Han was following the law of natural selection because the Han was more culturally advanced and demographically larger than any of the minority peoples.

⁶ The five-colored flag was in fact based on the Qing flag of the high-ranking navy officials. Sun Yet-sen strongly opposed the use of the design, but his own preference of the blue-white flag designed by Lu Haodong was not chosen by the temporary cabinet in 1912. For a discussion on the transformation of the flag in the early Republic, see John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 180-185.

⁷ For a comprehensive account of the debate, see Ao Guangxu, “20 niandai guonei Menggu wenti zhi zheng [Controversies over the Mongolia Issue in China in the 1920s],” *Jindai shi yanjiu*, no.4 (2007): 55-73.

and became a dependency of the Soviet Union. The common language adopted by all the participants, regardless of whether they were pro-Soviet, anti-Soviet, revolutionaries, liberals, or statistes (*guojia zhuyi pai*), was that of the Wilsonian self-determination of nations (*minzu zijue*).⁸ But the positions taken diverged in the interpretations of *minzu*. The debate finally became one over the political meanings and implications of *minzu*: whether an equal line could be drawn between *minzu* and “nation,” and if not, whether a *minzu* enjoy self-determination. One side advocated for the right to self-determination of Outer Mongolia and saw the Mongols as a separate *minzu* (ethnic group) from the Han. Their rivals, on the other hand, regarded the Mongols as an inseparable unit of the *Zhonghua minzu* and therefore viewed the application of “national self-determination” to Outer Mongolia as inappropriate and misleading.⁹ This intellectual struggle for

⁸ To understand the global impact of the Wilsonian self-determination doctrine, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁹ It is obvious that the CCP members supported independence of Outer Mongolia. The attitudes of the GMD members, however, were more ambiguous. The GMD was forming an alliance with the CCP under the supervision of the Comintern from Moscow. Sun Yet-sen had to negotiate with Mikhail Borodin over the content of his *minzu zhuyi* and made compromise between a nationalism centered on the Han domination and the political right of self-determination for all the domestic *minzu*. Sun’s compromise was stated in the *Jianguo dagang* (1924) that the Chinese central government would “nurture (*fuzhi*) the domestic small and weak (*ruoxiao*) *minzu* so they will be able to achieve self-determination and self-rule.” See Sun Yet-sen, “Guomin zhengfu jianguo dagang” in *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, V.9 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 127. For the influence of the Comintern on Sun Yet-sen’s *minzu zhuyi*, see Leibold, 189-198. Sun’s rhetoric shows that self-determination and self-rule for domestic non-Han *minzu* was possible but conditional; at the moment they were just too small in number and too weak and therefore needed to be fostered by the Han majority. As Ao Guangxu suggests, factionalism inside the GMD also resulted in the party’s ambivalent attitudes towards the Mongolia issue. The “statists” (or the right-wing) faction opposed to the separation of Mongolia from China which was supposed to be consisted by five major ethnic groups while the “liberal” (or the left-wing) faction supported self-determination of Mongolia. See Ao, 69.

Mongolia's place in a new China lasted for three months, but no definite conclusion was drawn on the meaning and application of *minzu*.

The *minzu* problem became increasingly crucial after the nationalist revolution and the inauguration of the Nanjing Government in 1927 and the ensuing Japanese imperialist expansion onto Chinese soil in the 1930s. Some resolution of the dilemma of keeping the Qing imperial borderlands *and* remolding China into a modern nation-state seemed to be far more urgent for confronting foreign threats. The GMD drafted a more straightforward policy concerning *minzu*. The Party's Third National Congress in 1929 maintained that "*minzu zhuyi* from the Three People's Principles of our Party designates the close solidarity between the Han, the Manchu, the Mongol, the Hui, and the Tibetan peoples to form one strong and forceful national body (*guozu*)."¹⁰ Self-determination was no longer part of the official language. But it was soon used by Japan to justify its aggression toward China. After the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the establishment of the puppet regime of Manchukuo in 1932, the Japanese instigated an autonomy movement (*Huabei zizhi yundong*) to call for the secession of Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Chahar, and Suiyuan from the Nanjing Government.¹¹ China's future looked bleak, as did the GMD's inclusive vision of *minzu*. Chinese intellectuals, tormented by their

¹⁰ See Ma Yuhua, *Guomin zhengfu dui xinan shaoshu minzu diaocha zhi yanjiu (1929-1948)* [The Nationalist Government's Research on the Southwestern Minority Peoples] (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2006), 113.

¹¹ For the autonomy movement, see Parks Coble, *Facing Japan: Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism* (Harvard University Asia Center, 1991) and Marjorie Dryburgh, *North China and Japanese Expansion, 1933-1937: Regional Power and the National Interest* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000). The former focuses on Chiang Kai-shek's appeasement attitudes toward the Japanese aggression in North China and the latter provides the perspective from Song Zheyuan, the leader of the autonomy movement.

nation's unfortunate fate, sought confirmation of their national and cultural identity. Historians and anthropologists made efforts to construct the ethno-history of China to debunk the prevailing Japanese scholarship on the relationship between the Han and the non-Han frontier minorities.¹² Fu Sinian, then the head of the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica, hastily compiled *An Outline History of Northeastern China (Dongbei shigang)* in 1932 to prove that Manchuria (Fu insisted on using the term *Dongbei* instead) had historically been an integral part of China.¹³ From 1934 to 1936, three major works on the ethno-history of China were produced. In these works, all entitled "*Zhongguo minzushi*" [The Ethno-history of China], the authors, historian Wang Tongling, historian Lü Simian, and anthropologist Lin Huixiang, attempted to delineate a narrative of how different non-Han ethnic groups in China had interacted with and been

¹² Stefan Tanaka has argued that prewar Japanese scholars, such as Shiratori Kurakichi, helped produce a historical discourse through the formation of *toyoshi* (Oriental history) to legitimate Japan's domination over China in Asia. See Stephan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Other contemporary Japanese scholars in the 1920s and 1930s also had attempted to invalidate China's claim over the frontier territories that previously were part of the Qing dynasty. Yano Jin'ichi, a professor of *Tōyōshi*, had made the distinction between China and the Qing and questioned if China could legitimately inherit the former Qing territory. Yano further claimed that since the Manchu, the Mongol, the Hui, and the Tibetan were different *minzu* from the Han, the Han did not have right over the other's land. See Yano Jin'ichi, "Man-Mō-Zō wa Shina no ryōdo ni arazu ron [Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet Were Not the Original Territory of China]," *Gaikō jihō*, 35:412 (1931), 56-71. Such rhetoric was extensively utilized by the Japanese officials and military leaders to justify their activities in China's northwestern frontier. See Wen Mingchao, "Zhengzhi douzheng zhong de minzu huayu [The Discourse of *Minzu* in Political Struggle]," *Kaifang shidai* (06/2010), 53-66.

¹³ Fu Sinian, *Dongbei shigang* (Peking, 1932). Fu's work was harshly criticized for errors and his downplaying of materials that did not support his arguments. Wang Fan-sen suggests that it was Fu Sinian's "nationalistic feelings got the better of his academic principles." See Wang Fan-sen, *Fu Ssu-nien: A life in Chinese History and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 151.

integrated into the Han to form today's China.¹⁴ While Wang and Lü employed ancient Chinese texts extensively to support their arguments, Lin referenced more contemporary ethnological studies on linguistics and customs. Fuzzy usage of the terms *minzu*, *zhongzu*, *zu*, or *ren* was common in all three works, but the term *Zhonghua minzu* was univocally used by all to mean both the Han and the Chinese nation. Lin explained that “among all the *minzu* in China only one branch forms the ‘backbone’ and the others come to join it. And after each mingling, the names of the others will be effaced and only the name of the backbone branch remains.”¹⁵ Wang's book could also be regarded as an ethno-history of the Han since its main theme focused on how the Han *zu* had evolved throughout history.¹⁶ Several common themes can be called from the three major works on the ethno-history of China produced after the Manchuria Incident. First, they all adopted a polygenesis approach to the origin of the Chinese, and the Han was only one among many different and separate peoples who did not share common ancestors. Second, the Han had become the main line and continuously absorbed other peoples into its own genealogy. Third, Chinese history, therefore, could be periodized into phases of ethnic assimilation between the Han and the non-Han. Last, and most importantly, all three

¹⁴ Wang Tongling, *Zhongguo minzushi* (Wenhua xueshe, 1934). Wang's book was first published in 1928 and was revised and reprinted in 1934. Lü Simian, *Zhongguo minzushi* (Shijie shuju, 1934). Lin Huixiang, *Zhongguo minzushi* (Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936). For a brief comparison of the three works, see Ma Rong, “*Cong Wang Tongling Zhongguo minzushi tanqi: woguo 30niandai sanben Zhongguo minzushi de bijiao yanjiu*,” *Beijing daxue xuebao*, Vol.39, no.3 (May, 2002): 125-135.

¹⁵ Lin, 39.

¹⁶ There are eight chapters in Wang's book, which periodize Chinese history into eight stages. These stages, including one embryonic phase, four phases of metamorphosis, and three recuperating phases in between each metamorphosis, chronologically present how the Han *zu* had evolved through constant mingling with other peoples.

works pointed out that despite the polygenetic origins of the diverse *minzu* in China, the “natural” tendency, based on the authors’ historical analysis, was for all to be mingled into one single *minzu*. It is not surprising that at a time when a future of fragmentation seemed to be imminent, Chinese intellectuals were anxious to call for ethnic solidarity. The theme that unity was a historical and natural consequence, and therefore should not be contravened, would be further reinforced by the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

The Debate in 1939 and the De-ethnicization of Minzu

The eight-year War of Resistance caused tremendous dislocation and disintegration of Chinese society and exacted a costly human toll; yet the imminent danger of the fall of the nation sparked a new type of an integrated ethnic nationalism that transcended the single Han ethnicity. With the Marco Polo Incident in July 1937 and the sweeping invasion of the north, central, and south coastal areas by the Japanese army, the Nanjing government retreated to Chongqing in 1938. Once Chongqing was announced as the wartime provisional capital, major universities and institutions also moved to southwest China.¹⁷ The southwestern frontier became the home front of the nation at war, and its development had a direct impact on the future of the nation. The migrating

¹⁷ The Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica first moved to Kunming in 1938, and then settled in Lizhuang, Sichuan in 1940. Qinghua University, Beijing University, and Nankai formed the National Southwest Associated University in Kunming. Zhongyang University moved to Chongqing. The campus of Chengdu’s West China Union University (Huaxi xiehe daxue) was shared by four other missionary schools: Yanjing, Jinling, Jinling Women’s College, and Qilu.

Han Chinese entered into a new symbiotic relationship with the frontier minority peoples in the southwest. The *minzu* question became an even more pressing and sensitive issue.

The Chinese intellectuals migrating to the southwest initiated a series of discussions on the impact of wartime relocation on the relationship between the center and the periphery, and on what national identity should be formulated to confront the foreign threat and to strengthen national solidarity. In January 1st, 1939, Gu Jiegang, who had moved to Kunming, published an article entitled “The Use of the Term ‘China Proper’ Should be Abandoned” (“*Zhongguo benbu*” *yiming jiying feiqi*) in the newly launched weekly journal *Bianjiang zhoukan* (The Frontier Weekly) of which he was the editor. Gu argued that Japanese imperialism invented the term *Zhongguo benbu*, which divided China into “China proper” and the “frontier,” in order to justify their invasion of the frontier (while leaving China Proper for the Han Chinese). Gu contended, “Only when we protect our frontier can we safeguard the heart of our nation,” and he suggested abandoning the use of *Zhongguo benbu* to promote unity between the “proper” and the “frontier.”¹⁸ Gu Jiegang’s accusation that the Japanese invented the term *Zhongguo benbu* may be unfounded. It might be a direct translation from the English term “China Proper.” According to Harry Harding, “China Proper” was first used by Westerners in the early 19th century to describe the eighteen provinces of the Qing administrative

¹⁸ Gu Jiegang, “‘*Zhongguo benbu*’ *yiming jiying feiqi*,” *Bianjiang zhoukan* (Jan 1, 1939). Gu Jiegang had presented a similar argument in the opening statement of the first issue of the *Tribute of Yu (Yu gong)* in 1934 to question the Japanese conspiracy of using the term *benbu* and to call for serious scholarly devotion to the study of *minzu* and geography. See Gu Jiegang and Tan Qixiang, “Opening Statement,” *Yu gong*, Vol.1, no.1 (March, 1934): 1. For a discussion of the journal in regard to nationalism and the study of historical geography by the editor Gu Jiegang and the contributors, see Laurence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China’s New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (University of California Press, 1971), 272-279.

system.¹⁹ The Japanese might well have translated that term and imported it to China. In any case the term was used by Chinese intellectuals even before 1930s, when Japan's aggression became more prominent.²⁰ In this article, Gu re-demarcated the territories previously known as North China, Central China, South China, and West China (*Huabei*, *Huazhong*, *Huanan*, and *Huaxi*) by pushing the boundaries of these traditionally Han-dominated areas into the frontier lands.²¹ Gu envisioned a territorially integrated China that eliminated all boundaries between the core and the frontier. It would not be difficult to achieve, Gu noted elsewhere, because all the different races (*zhongzu*) living within this territory had already been bonded by a shared history and common culture that made them a unitary *minzu*, that is, the *Zhonghua minzu*.²²

However, Gu's vision of the harmonious unification of all peoples of China was not shared by some scholars. Following Gu's article advocating the abandonment of the term *Zhongguo benbu*, the leftist Chu Tunan, then a professor at the Yunnan University, published a piece entitled "About the *Minzu* Question in Yunnan" (*Guanyu Yunnan de minzu wenti*) in the *Frontier Weekly*. By applying Marxist historiography, Chu presented

¹⁹ Harry Harding, "The Concept of 'Greater China:' Themes, Variations and Reservations," *The China Quarterly*, 136 (Dec. 1993): 660-686.

²⁰ Chen Zhihong, "Stretching the Skin of the Nation: Chinese Intellectuals, the State, and the Frontiers in the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 2008), 10.

²¹ Gu redefined *Huabei* as from the south of Siberia down to the Yin Mountains (*Yinshan*); *Huazhong* contained the area from the south of the Yin Mountain to the Qin Mountains (*Qinling*); *Huanan* went from the south of the Qin Mountains to the South Sea; and *Huaxi* covered the area from the Altai Mountains to the Himalaya.

²² Gu Jiegang, "Zhonghua minzu de tuanjie [The Solidarity of Zhonghua min zu]," *Shenbao* (Jan. 10, 1937).

the history of the Han colonizing Yunnan (*Han ren zhimin Yunnan*) as a history of ethnic struggle (*minzu douzheng*).²³ A week later, journalist Gan Cheng used similar language in his report on the inauguration of the Society of Ethnology in Yunnan (*Yunnan minzu xuehui*), adding a sideline that “The Han colonization of Yunnan was a history of struggle written in fresh blood. Even today, rebellions are not uncommon among the barbarians of the frontier (*biandi yimin*)”²⁴ Fu Sinian was outraged by this interpretation of Yunnan as “colonized” by the Han settlers. He immediately wrote a letter to Gu Jiegang expressing his concerns. Fu warned Gu Jiegang that he should use the terms *bianjiang* and *minzu* with caution, especially when applying them to Yunnan because they might well trigger local sentiment. Fu argued, “‘*Bianren*’ (literally frontier people) was a derogatory term and ‘*biandi*’ (literally frontier region) was a synonym for ‘backward place.’ The local intellectuals in Yunnan have never thought of themselves and their hometown in such terms.”²⁵ As for the term *minzu*, Fu reminded Gu that “now we have come to the southwest and should realize how important the political implication of *minzu* is here. Even the local Yunnanese themselves agree that there is only one Chinese nation (*Zhongguo minzu*) and do not want to probe into the question: why do we, who are

²³ Chu Tunan, “Guanyu Yunnan de minzu wenti,” *Bianjiang Zhoukan* (Jan, 16, 1939).

²⁴ Gan Cheng, “Yunnan minzu xuehui chengli,” *Bianjiang Zhoukan* (Jan, 23, 1939). This and Chu’s article are also quoted in *Huang Tianhua. “Minzu yishe yu guojia guannian: Kangzhan qian hou guanyu ‘Zhonghua minzu shi yige’ de taolun,”* in *1940 niandai de Zhongguo*, Vol.2 (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 1047.

²⁵ Fu Sinian, *Fu Sinian Quanji*, Vol.7 (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 205.

only sojourners here, concoct all sorts of names of *minzu* [to encourage disunity]?”²⁶ Moreover, Fu was particularly concerned about how discussions of *minzu* would reinforce the Japanese propaganda that Guangxi and Yunnan were the homeland of the Shan people (today’s Dai) and should be returned to the Shan of Thailand.²⁷ Gu Jiegang, who was then suffering emotionally from the death of his father and had been physically ill for a while, could not remain silent after reading his old friend’s letter and promptly wrote an article entitled “The Zhonghua *minzu* is One” (*Zhonghua minzu shi yige*) and published it in the *Frontier Weekly*.²⁸

Gu Jiegang’s article could be regarded as a propagandist piece of nationalism, and its title echoed that of a piece written by his old friend Fu Sinian a few years earlier in 1935. As a response to Japan’s imperialism and the autonomy movement in North China, Fu had written an essay, “The Zhonghua *minzu* is A Whole” (*Zhonghua minzu shi zhenghe de*), to advocate for the unity and solidarity of the nation.²⁹ Fu argued that different and separate *minzu* existed in China more than two thousand years ago; however, after the unification in 221 BCE the “natural tendency” had been for China to be unified under proper leaderships. Disunity and fragmentation was only temporary because it

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Gu Jiegang wrote in his diary “Mengzhen (Fu Sinian) scolded me for allowing articles claiming that *Zhonghua minzu* consists several *minzu* to be published in the *Frontier Weekly*. He thought such viewpoint would bring disaster of disunity. I, therefore, wrote this article as an announcement for our fellow countrymen. Since this issue has also been bothering me for a long time, it was not difficult for me to write it up.” See Gu Jiegang, *Gu Jiegang Riji*, vol. 4 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2007), 197.

²⁹ *Duli pinglun*, no.181 (Dec. 15, 1935). Reprinted in Fu Sinian, *Fu Sinian quanji*, Vol.4 (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 125-127.

was caused by men's force against the natural laws of fact (*wuli de shishi*). Like Fu's piece, Gu's article stressed the importance of national unity, yet the ideas Gu expressed were much in tandem with his own concept of *bianjiang, minzu*, and what was "China." Gu argued that *Zhonghua minzu* represented an organic superstructure that transcended any racial and cultural categorizations. He stressed the consequence of long-term historical miscegenation and cultural interaction between individual groups and argued that therefore the boundaries now were no longer distinct. Instead of praising Han culture as the great assimilating force, Gu believed that it was only human nature to adopt the best ways of living and to abandon what was not comfortable. "In lifestyle, the Han people have borrowed more from the non-Han than they have inherited from their own ancestors... Therefore, the culture of the Han today is also shared by the non-Han. So it cannot be called the 'Han culture,' but rather the 'culture of the *Zhonghua minzu*.'"³⁰ For Gu, "nation" (*guojia*) was the unequivocal meaning of *minzu*, and he equated *Zhonghua minzu* and *Zhongguo*, the political sovereignty known as "China." Therefore, *Zhonghua minzu* could only be one single unit; and there could not exist any *minzu* other than *Zhonghua minzu*. The idea of "five major *minzu*" (*wuda minzu*), Gu argued, "was invented by the Chinese to trap themselves."³¹ He blamed the anti-Qing revolutionaries and the early Republican government for confusing "*minzu*" with "*zhongzu*" and embedding the idea of the "republicanism of five *minzu*" (*wuzu gonghe*) deeply into

³⁰ Gu Jiegang, "Zhonghua minzu shi yige" [*Zhonghua minzu is one*] *Bianjiang zhoukan, Yishibao*, no.9 (2/13/1939). Reprinted in Gu Jiegang. *Gu Jiegang juan, Zhongguo xiandian xueshu jingdian* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 776-7.

³¹ *Ibid*, 774.

people's minds, which resulted in all the frontier crises China was facing today. Japan utilized the idea of national self-determination to snatch Manchuria and was applying the same rhetoric to southwest China, Gu argued. Even worse, now the Chinese themselves were snared by imperialism and talked about all the different *minzu* within China. Gu lamented, "Alas, *minzu*, *minzu*, how many vices are made possible under your name!"³² Ultimately, Gu contended that there was no such thing as "five major *minzu*," not to mention any small *minzu*; there was also no need to divide the Chinese in terms of race since no one could claim to be pure blooded. There was no difference between center and margin, between Han and non-Han; everyone was a member of the integrated *Zhonghua minzu*.

Gu's article caught the public's attention and was soon reprinted by many major newspapers. It also provoked a series of intellectual discussion on the issue of *minzu*. Historians Zhang Weihua and Bai Shouyi supported Gu's argument and Bai even suggested using "*Zhonghua minzu shi yige*" as the central theme for the construction of a new history of China.³³ On the other hand, anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, who had just returned to China from Britain after receiving his doctoral degree, expressed his disagreement. In an article entitled "A Discussion on the Issue of *Minzu*" (*Guanyu minzu wenti de taolun*), Fei questioned Gu's interpretation of *minzu* and the political implication of it. Fei argued that Gu had confused the meanings of *nation* and *state* and thus misinterpreted the concept of *minzu*. Nation referred to a group of people with a shared

³² Ibid, 779.

³³ Zhang Weihua, "Dule Gu Jiegang xiansheng de 'Zhonghua minzu shi yige' zhihou," *Bianjiang zhoukan* (Feb. 27, 1939); Bai Shouyi, "Lai han," *Bianjiang zhoukan* (Apr. 3, 1939).

culture, language, and blood, while state represented a political organization in which a group of people was governed by a common government. Although Gu translated *minzu* as nation, Fei pointed out, his definition of nation was actually “state.” Fei argued that *minzu* was not equivalent to *guojia*, as Gu would like to call it, and that the mingling (*hunhe*) of different cultures, languages, and even physical types (*tizhi*) did not necessarily lead to political unity.³⁴ Moreover, Fei introduced the concept of “group subjectivity” into his discussion. It was easy for people to categorize others in terms of culture, language, and physical type, but such standards might not tally with how “the others” had defined themselves. Moreover, Fei believed that existing cultural, linguistic, and physical differences often became the basis for group antagonism. Calling *Zhonghua minzu* one unit did not eliminate real differences and conflicts between groups. Fei argued that what was more important was to “let every member of the state enjoy equality and let everyone be benefitted by the unified political entity. Thus this state will be loved and supported by every member of it.”³⁵ Fei believed that only if the political and economic equality between all groups of people in China was achieved would the country be immune to the enemy’s instigation of ethnic separatism.³⁶

³⁴ Fei Xiaotong, “Guanyu minzu wenti de taolun,” *Bianjiang zhoukan* (May, 1, 1939).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Fei’s interpretations of nation, state, race, and *minzu* were in accordance with those outlined by his advisor Wu Wenzao at Yenjing Univeristy who wrote an essay in the mid-1920s demonstrating the differences between *guojia* and *minzu* and delineating a blue print of the ideal nation-state China should strive to become. See Wu Wenzao. This essay will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Fei Xiaotong's interpretations of nation, state, race, and *minzu* were in accordance with those outlined by his advisor, Wu Wenzao, at Yanjing University. Wu, a Ph.D. of sociology from Columbia University, was a pioneer in the indigenization of anthropology and sociology in China in the 1930s and 40s.³⁷ During the mid-1920s, while still studying in the United States, Wu wrote an essay demonstrating the differences between *guojia* and *minzu* and delineated a blue print for the ideal nation-state China should strive to become.³⁸ Anthropologist Wang Mingming contends that Wu's essay was one of the very first in China to have systematically analyzed the issue from the perspectives of anthropology and Western theories of nationalism.³⁹ Wu defined *minzu* as an anthropological term and a cultural and psychological unit that should be differentiated from *guojia*, a pure political unit. Therefore, China should not have to follow the prevailing Wilsonian formula of "one nation, one state." Instead, American federalism, with a stronger central state after the Civil War, served for Wu as the best example of a unified multi-national state.⁴⁰ He suggested that the cultural diversity and the strength emerging from collaboration in a multi-ethnic nation-state far surpassed those in a single-

³⁷ Wu and his disciples, such as Fei Xiaotong and Lin Yaohua, are regarded as the key figures of the "northern school" of Chinese anthropology.

³⁸ Wu Wenzao, "Minzu yu guojia," *Liu Mei xuesheng jibao*, 11:3 (1926), reprinted in Wu Wenzao, *Renleixue shehuixue yanjiu wenji* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1990), 19-36.

³⁹ See Wang Mingming, "Minzu yu guojia: cong Wu Wenzao de zaoqi lunshu chufa," *Journal of Yunnan Institute of the Nationalities*, 16:16 (Nov. 1999): 22.

⁴⁰ Wu was mostly fond of the definition of the modern nation made by the American political scientist Francis Lieber who was a German immigrant. Lieber emphasized the nation as an organic unity that was formed by people with shared culture and language. See Francis Lieber, *Fragments of Political Science on Nationalism and Internationalism* (New York: Scribner, 1868).

ethnic nation-state, and therefore the former was the most stable and desirable model of the modern nation-state. The unity of the nation was maintained as long as all the peoples enjoyed the same equality within the territory. Obviously, Fei Xiaotong shared with his advisor a similar approach to China's *minzu* problem.⁴¹

In response to Fei's criticism, Gu Jiegang wrote another article to clarify his previous arguments. In "More On 'Zhonghua minzu is One,'" Gu first reiterated his standpoint, "I have no training in socio-anthropology and am not able to construct my idea with related academic theories. But I find myself in the most strenuous time in Chinese history. I have personally encountered the frontier peoples (*bianmin*) and experienced their sufferings and pains. I am patriotic and sympathetic, therefore I must speak what I have in mind."⁴² Gu redefined the meaning of *minzu* as "a group of people who have the sentiment of solidarity (*tuanjie qingxu*) and share happiness and misfortune."⁴³ For Gu, the mingling of culture, language, or physical types was not the

⁴¹ Fei Xiaotong contended in his later years during the 1990s that the foundation for his multiplicity within unity (*duoyuan yiti*) framework was built on the theory of ethnos depicted by S.M. Shirokogoroff. Shirokogoroff defines the concept of the ethnos as a process of the formation of ethnic unit containing a group of people with shared origin, language, customs, and technical culture. The growth and decay of the ethnos is determined by the natural environment as well as the ethnic environment, i.e. the interaction and conflict with surrounding ethnic units. According to Fei, the ethnos best describes the historical dynamics between different ethnic units and thus had inspired him to construct a model to explain the symbiotic relationship between the Han and the non-Han as separate ethnic units. See Fei Xiaotong, "Jianshu wode minzu yanjiu jingli he sikao," *Beijing daxue xuebao*, 2 (1997), 4-12. For the theory of the ethnos, see S.M. Shirokogoroff. *Ethnic Unit and Milieu: A Summary of the Ethnos* (Shanghai: Edward Evans and Sons, 1924).

⁴² Gu Jiegang, "Zai xu 'Zhonghua minzu shi yige,'" *Bianjiang zhoukan* (May 8 and 29, 1939).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

precondition of forming a *minzu*; rather, the sentiment of solidarity was the crucial force needed to bond the members of a *minzu*. If people recognized *Zhonghua minzu* as the only *minzu*, which comprised all different groups within the territory, Gu argued, then domestic conflicts would be easy to resolve and the “*minzu* problem” would not come into play to exacerbate the political tensions. In his journey to Northwest China, Gu had seen a mass burial mound of victims killed in ethnic conflicts between the local Han and Hui. “I was heartbroken at the sight of it. It was the term *minzu* that has caused it.”⁴⁴ The Han, Gu argued, were the most developed (*xianjin zhe*) of the *Zhonghua minzu* and the Manchu, Mongols, and others were the less developed (*houjin zhe*); the latter could only call themselves as “separate *zhongzu*,” instead of *minzu* because they had not achieved nationhood. Gu reiterated his view that *Zhonghua minzu* was not a political entity dominated by the Han but rather one without any ethnic boundaries. The assimilation of the frontier societies, Gu concluded, was not to sinicize the frontier by wiping out the indigenous local culture, but to modernize the frontier by increasing the knowledge and living skills of the local peoples and making them citizens of modern China.

Was *Zhonghua minzu* one or many? Obviously both Gu Jiegang and Fei Xiaotong agreed that there existed various groups (whether categorized as *zhongzu* or *minzu*) within the territory of China. While Gu stressed the interaction, shared history, and commonality between these groups, Fei emphasized group identity and pointed out the differences and conflicts between these groups. Moreover, Gu Jiegang had to teleologically downplay the importance of individual *minzu* so as to bolster the greater

⁴⁴ Ibid.

vision of an overarching and encompassing *Zhonghua minzu*. This might sound odd to historians of China who regard Gu as “the biggest champion of cultural diversity in Republican China.”⁴⁵ Was he becoming more nationalistic by compromising his multi-ethnic and multi-cultural vision of China during the war? I think the answer is no. Gu’s wartime organic and unified model of *Zhonghua minzu* as a superstructure transcending any racial, ethnic, and cultural prejudices does not essentially contradict his previous multi-ethnic and multi-cultural perspective, which responded primarily to Han-chauvinism and the Guomindang assimilationist policy. Moreover, the idea of a unitary *Zhonghua minzu* was logically derived from his ideas of the frontier and Chinese nation before the war. Shimada Miwa contends that Gu Jiegang and his colleagues of the *Yugong* journal had been constructing a “new *minzu* ideology,” since the journal’s inauguration in 1934. From that time, he stressed the shared cultural and historical commonality between different peoples of China, rejected Sun Yat-sen’s five-ethnicity model, and argued to eradicate the boundaries between “China Proper” and the “frontier.”⁴⁶ Gu’s wartime *minzu* idea was only a manifestation of, rather than a deviation from, the “new *minzu* ideology.” Kevin Doak cogently suggests that wartime Japanese imperialism stressed the importance of ethnic identity and encouraged people in Asia to split away from the political states they belonged to.⁴⁷ It was exactly to rebut

⁴⁵ The quote is from James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and the Indigenous Became Chinese* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 135.

⁴⁶ Shimada Miwa, “Koketugo no kyouiki gainen” in *Chukaminkoku no seido hennyou to higasiajia chiiki chujo*, Nishimura Shigeo and Tanaka Hitoshi, eds., (Tokyo: Kyuko shoin, 2008), 157-174.

⁴⁷ Kevin M. Doak, “Building National Identity through Ethnicity: Ethnology in Wartime Japan and After,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 27, No.1 (Winter 2001): 1-

such an ideological framework that Chinese intellectuals like Gu Jiegang were involved in the process of “de-ethnicizing” *minzu*. Ethnicity would be eliminated from the connotations of *minzu*, and it would no longer be used as a category to differentiate people, because China would only have one unique and transcendental ethnicity, that is, the *Zhonghua minzu*.

Despite Gu Jiegang’s frequent emphasis on the mutual integration between different groups of China and his effort to reject Han ethnic chauvinism, his model of a unitary *minzu* was singled out and widely supported by nationalistic Han intellectuals who modified it to fit a more Han-centered agenda. Some applied the latest discoveries at the Zhoukoudian to claim that the ancestor of the Han (namely, Peking Man) was one of the original indigenes of China, and thus the unity of *Zhonghua minzu* could be traced to pre-historical times. Ma Yi, a native of Heilongjiang who had published extensively on the political situations of Manchuria in the 1930s and 40s and became a member of the GMD’s Economic Committee of Manchuria after the war, wrote an article arguing that the discoveries and related research of Peking Man had falsified the theory of the Western origins of the Han. The Han, whose ancestral line could be traced to as early as Peking Man, was, like the Miao and other indigenes of the southwest, a native tribe of China. Ma wanted to refute the Japanese claim that the Miao were the native of China and was driven out by the migrating Han to the southwest.⁴⁸ Those who believed in

39. Doak argues that ethnicity, instead of race, played the pivotal role in supporting wartime Japanese imperialism. Such ethnic self-determination policy was applied to Manchuria, as well as South East Asia, however, with limited success.

⁴⁸ Ma Yi, “Jiaqiang ‘Zhonghua minzu shi yige’ de xinnian,” *Bianjiang zhoukan* (May, 7, 1939).

monogenism argued that the Han and the southwestern minorities shared the same ancestor and the latter were not separate *minzu* but a part of the Han. For example, Zhang Tingxiu, a historian and the president of Guizhou University, could not agree more with Gu Jiegang that the term *minzu* had been misused and should be abandoned. Zhang argued that evidence from linguistic, history, myth, and physical anthropological data showed that the Miao and other non-Han peoples of Southwest China were closely related to the Han and shared the same origin. Therefore, they were the core constituents of the Han *minzu*, i.e, the *Zhonghua minzu*.⁴⁹ Such statements led some minority intellectuals to question their implicit Han chauvinism and to ask whether the non-Han peoples should support the war effort. Lu-ge-fu-er, a Miao intellectual, claimed, “Although the Miao and the Yi do not have historical records, we have never agreed that we share the same origin with the Han... The war propaganda seems to create the image that the war is not for the whole nation, but only for the Han; and the national construction is to construct a nation for the Han... This kind of ethnic chauvinism needs to be abolished in order to unite all the *minzu* against Japan.”⁵⁰

The debate, which had lasted for more than four months, seemed to come to an end by the summer of 1939. Ironically, the debate, which began with Gu Jiegang’s nationalist call for ethnic solidarity, was seen by the wartime Chongqing government as instigating ethnic conflict. Rumor had it that the government was to forbid all

⁴⁹ Zhang Tingxiu, “Zailun ‘Han Yi tong yuan,’” *Xinan bianjiang*, no.6 (May, 1939).

⁵⁰ Lu-ge-fu-er, “Lai han liang tong,” *Bianjiang zhoukan* (May, 15, 1939). Lugefuer’s Han name was Wang Hongtong. He edited and compiled the Miao literature anthologies in the 1950s.

discussions on *minzu*.⁵¹ Indeed, the debate signifies a pivotal point in the discourse of *minzu* during the Republican period. The locus of the debate – whether *Zhonghua minzu* was a homogenous entity, both culturally and politically, or whether it contained multiple distinct *minzu* – was left unresolved because fundamentally these terms were laden with contingent political implications. Gu Jiegang’s vision might have even been adopted by the GMD, who developed a monogenesis and unitary approach to deal with the wartime “nationality problem” in the 1940s. In his speech, “The Collective Responsibility of the *Zhonghua Minzu*,” as well as in his book, *China’s Destiny*, Chiang Kai-shek was determined to end the confusion of *minzu* once and for all by replacing the term with *zongzu* (clan) so as to play down ethnic (Fei Xiaotong’s categorization) or racial (Gu Jiegang’s) differences between the peoples in China: now they were all genealogically related as family members.⁵² In Chiang’s formula, *Zhonghua minzu*, formed by the five clans, was an organic collective and familial unity. However, unlike what Gu Jiegang would have envisaged, that is, a *Zhonghua minzu* that transcended all ethnic boundaries by erasing all ethnic chauvinisms, Chiang presented the brotherly bonding within a highly Han-centered framework in ways which “the shared historical destiny of all the clans was created by the traditional moral values of China [i.e. the Han], which were capable of holding together the sentiments of each clan and to transform the indigenous

⁵¹ See Gu Jiegang, *Gu Jiegang rijì*, Vol.4 (Taipei: Liejing chubanshe, 2007), 212.

⁵² Chiang Kai-shek’s speech, “*Zhonghua minzu zhengge gongtong de zeren*,” was delivered to the minorities in Xining on August, 27, 1942. See Guomindang Archives, 132/102.2. Chiang Kai-shek, *Zhongguo zhi mingyun* (Chongqing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943). It is often said that the book was actually written by Chiang’s ghostwriter, Tao Xisheng.

quality of each clan.”⁵³ Such a twist would be reflected in the GMD ethnic policy in the frontier, which paid special attention to ethnic assimilation and sinicization by promoting Mandarin, relocating of the Han in the frontier, and miscegenating between the Han settlers and the non-Han indigenes. It should be noted, however, as James Leibold suggests, that Chiang Kai-shek’s model of a unified and homogenous *Zhonghua minzu* remained an ideal because in reality the weak GMD state “was forced to adopt a more pragmatic and inherently conservative approach to the frontier question.”⁵⁴ Yet the state was more determined to penetrate into the southwestern frontier during the war than ever before. To probe into local conditions for policy making, the state often collaborated with academic institutions to conduct socio-anthropological field research and survey of the frontier societies.⁵⁵ Some anthropologists were even recruited into the government body to engage directly with frontier affairs.⁵⁶

Fei Xiaotong seemed to be the only anthropologist directly participating in the debate of *minzu* in 1939. It would be rather difficult for anthropologists to ignore the

⁵³ Ibid, 6.

⁵⁴ James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 52. For GMD’s frontier policy toward the Mongols and the Tibetans, see chapter 2, 51-79.

⁵⁵ For the GMD research and surveys of the southwestern frontier societies, see Ma Yuhua, *Guomin zhengfu dui Xinan shaoshu minzu diaocha zhi yanjiu, 1929-1948* (Yunnan: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2006) and Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (University of California Press, 2011),

⁵⁶ For example, Ling Chunsheng was appointed the director of the Mongolian-Tibetan Education Department during the war and the director of the Institute of Borders Culture and Education after the war; Jiang Yingliang was the head of the Committee of Frontier Policy Planning in Yunnan during the war and later served temporarily as the county magistrate in Cheli, Yunnan in 1945; and Rui Yifu was one of the first elected legislators in 1947 and dealt with ethnic policy.

multiplicity of China's ethnic composition and to de-ethnicize *minzu* for the sake of national unity. Yet, even anthropologists had to take the national crisis and the political consequences of their scholarship into consideration. Many years later Fei Xiaotong explained why he did not follow up on Gu Jiegang's second article: "I wholeheartedly embraced his political standpoint but I still did not agree with him that acknowledging the Manchu and the Mongols as *minzu* would encourage imperialism to split our country... However, I did not write back because such debate was too political and was not appropriate at a time when our country was facing a difficult situation."⁵⁷ And Fei had realized that unitarity and multiplicity were not antagonistic but rather dialectical concepts. Fei's own famous formula of the Chinese nation as an "organic unity of diversity," (*duoyuan yiti*) which he developed in the late 1980s, was itself a synthesis of the two models invoked in the debate in 1939.⁵⁸ As Fei himself commented on the occasion of Gu Jiegang's centenary in 1993, "historical development [of all these years] has given an answer to what we debated at that time; that is, *Zhonghua minzu* is one unity and yet multiple. Unity and diversity are dialectical. *Minzu* is not a static unit; it could aggregate or break up. It is determined not by acknowledging abstract titles but by equality and the richness of the diversity within the unity."⁵⁹

In discussing the pre-1949 *minzu* discourse, Thomas Mullaney divides the discourse in two camps: the mono-*minzu* worldview of Chiang Kai-shek and the GMD,

⁵⁷ Fei Xiaotong, *Fei Xiaotong wenji*, Vol. 13 (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 1999), 30.

⁵⁸ Fei Xiaotong, *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989).

⁵⁹ Fei Xiaotong, *Fei Xiaotong wenji*, Vol. 13, 30.

and the multi-minzu model of Chinese ethnologists and the CCP.⁶⁰ I think such a classification overlooks the complexity and nuances involved in an intellectual assessment of *minzu* during the war, and it is also quite misleading to draw such a clear contrast between the two prevailing views.⁶¹ Some ethnologists, such as Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu, who conducted field research in the southwestern frontier non-Han societies not only supported nationalist calls for ethnic solidarity but also attempted to prove the validity of ethnic integration and the unity of *Zhonghua minzu* through their works on historical ethnology and folk studies (*minsu yanjiu*). Ethnic minorities of China's southwest frontier, the "most colorful ethnic palette,"⁶² had a longer history of interaction with the Han settlers than ethnic groups elsewhere. Their culture and history reflect the blurring boundary between the Han and the non-Han. The works of Rui Yifu and Cen

⁶⁰ Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (University of California Press, 2011), 74-80.

⁶¹ The CCP's ethnic policy was constructed within the Marxist-Leninist framework that promoted national self-determination for minorities. Although still acknowledging the "multiplicity" of *minzu* (nationality), the CCP did embrace a more "unification" policy during the war. See Liu Xiaoyuan, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1925-1945* (Stanford University Press, 2004). Even the Soviet nationality policy itself was not free from contradictions and it developed along a more Russian-centered approach in the 1930s. See Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Cornell University Press, 2001). For a more nuanced discussion comparing the ethnic views of the CCP and the GMD, see James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenous Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁶² This characterization is coined by Wang Ming-ke, see his "Taiwan jin wushinian lai de Zhongguo Xinan minzushi yanjiu" [The Research of Ethno-history of Southwest China in Taiwan in the last Fifty Years] in Hsu Cheng-kuang and Huang Ying-kuei, eds., *Renleixue zai Taiwan: Huigu yu Zhanwang* [Anthropological Studies in Taiwan: Retrospect and Prospect] (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 1999), 284.

Jiawu painstakingly recorded observed details of cultural and folk practices from field research in the frontier societies, and yet they relied heavily on ancient Chinese texts to provide windows to the past of these peoples.⁶³ It is not surprising that for many ethnologists who were using such an approach, their ethnological oeuvre of the southwestern frontier belonged to a more ambitious project of constructing a grand ethno-history of the *Zhonghua minzu*.⁶⁴ Their writings on the issue of *minzu* during the war utilized their ethnological findings to bolster the image of the harmonious unity and a promising future of ethnic integration.

Ethnology, Southwestern Frontier Minorities, and Wartime Nationalism

The earliest Chinese ethnological research on the southwestern frontier minorities began in the late 1920s with intentionally nationalistic aims. The leading academic institutions that initiated such research were the Institute of Philology and History (IPH)

⁶³ Stevan Harrell has held that the Republican scholars often relied on Chinese historical records to trace the history of minority peoples. See Stevan Harrell, "The History of the History of the Yi," in Stevan Harrell ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (University of Washington Press, 1995), 75-79.

⁶⁴ Anthropologists in Taiwan and China tend to categorize the works of Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu as the "southern school" (*nanpai*), or "historical school" (*lishi xuepai*), as was opposed to the "northern school" which emphasized the application of functionalism and other cultural anthropological theories to the study of minorities. Scholars of the southern school were mostly affiliated with the Academia Sinica and the Zhongshan University and scholars of the northern school were graduates of the Yenjing University. See Tang Mei-chun, "Renleixue zai Zhongguo," *Renlei yu wenhua*, 7:9 (1976), Huang Ying-kuei, "Lishixue he renleixue de huihe," in Tu Cheng-sheng, ed. *Xueshushi yu fangfaxue de xingsi* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2000), 285-316, and Huang Shuping and Gong Peihua, *Wenhua renleixue lilun fangfang yanjiu* (Guangdong: Guangdong gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004).

at Zhongshan University and the Institute of History and Philology (IHP) at Academia Sinica.⁶⁵ The IPH was launched in 1927 by Gu Jiegang and Fu Sinian at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, and one year later when Fu Sinian was invited by Cai Yuanpei to work for the Academia Sinica, he founded the IHP. To avoid confusion, the one at Zhongshan University became the Institute of Humanities in 1935 and the ethnological research was carried out under the section of folk studies led by Yang Chengzhi. In 1934, the anthropology department, focusing on ethnology and physical anthropology, was created under the IHP at the Academia Sinica.⁶⁶ Why were scholars of Chinese history and philology interested in ethnological studies of the southwestern minorities? Fu Sinian, the founder of the IHP, explained that since the languages of the non-Han people in Tibet, Burma, Siam, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Sichuan belonged to the Tibeto-Burman sub-branch or the Chinese-Siamese sub-branch of the Indo-Chinese language family, learning these languages would facilitate the study of the Chinese (Han) language, especially the ancient version. The aim of the IHP was to surpass the sinological achievement of European scholars and to establish orthodox scientific oriental

⁶⁵ S.M. Shirokogoroff, Rong Zhaozu, and Yang Chengzhi of Zhongshan University conducted research in Yunnan in 1928 and Li Guangming of the IHP at the Academia Sinica went to Sichuan to study the Qiang.

⁶⁶ The Institute of Philology and History was launched in 1927 by Gu Jiegang and Fu Sinian at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, and one year later when Fu Sinian was invited by Cai Yuanpei to work for the Academia Sinica, he founded the Institute of History and Philology. To avoid confusion, the one at Zhongshan University became the Institute of Humanities in 1935 and the ethnological research was carried out under the section of folk studies led by Yang Chengzhi. In 1934, the anthropology department, focusing on ethnology and physical anthropology, was created under the IHP at the Academia Sinica.

studies (*kexue de dongfangxue zhi zhengtong*) in China.⁶⁷ “It will be such a shame for the Chinese if the knowledge of the Indo-Chinese language is constructed by the Europeans!”⁶⁸ Fu’s statement shows how the close relationship between the southwestern ethnic groups and the Han provided the first and strongest incentive for the Han scholars to study the southwest: through the understanding of “them,” we shall know more about “us.” Moreover, Fu stressed the importance of studying southwestern minorities: “there is no other question more important than the *minzu* question of the southwest for the study of Chinese history.”⁶⁹ The ethnological study of the southwestern minorities was therefore well supported by a strong nationalistic mission that the Chinese established for themselves a system of scientific Sinology.

Fu Sinian, who had inspired Gu Jiegang’s article on the unity of *Zhonghua minzu*, did not directly participate in the *minzu* debate in 1939, but he found Fei Xiaotong’s view repulsive and troublesome. In a personal letter to Zhu Jiahua and Hang Liwu, the director and the secretary general of the Board of Trustees of the British Boxer Indemnity at the time, Fu expressed his deep concern for the political consequences of Fei’s statement.⁷⁰ It is worth citing part of this letter in length:

⁶⁷ Fu Sinian, *Fu Sinian QuANJI* [Collected Works of Fu Sinian], Volume 6 (Hunan: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 6-7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁷⁰ Fu thought that Wu Wenzao instigated his protégée Fei Xiaotong to write the response letter disputing Gu in the debate. Since Wu was sponsored by the Board of Trustees of the British Boxer Indemnity to launch a department of sociology at the Yunnan University, Fu wrote to Zhu and Hang asking them to reconsider funding Wu in Yunnan.

If we want to know how important such an issue is, we should first understand the “*minzu* question” in this area [Yunnan]. Today very few Han people in this area had Han ancestors. It is through assimilation that the Han has become the majority here. The force of assimilation comes from the greater ability of the Han. Thus, the Han does not represent a single race, but a *minzu*. How can any of us make certain that we don’t have any Hu or Yue blood in us? Such an assimilation process has long been going on in this area. For example, Long Yun, the Governor of Yunnan, is a Lolo (now Yi); the official Zhou Zhongyue is a Minjia (now Bai); and the famous elite Li Genyuan is a Boyi (now Dai). However, they all identify themselves as “Chinese” (*Zhongguo ren*) instead of their individual tribal origins (*buluo*). This is a blessing on our country... While assimilation is going on in this area, these refugee “scholars” come over here from the interior. They not only attack assimilation with their theory [of how *Zhonghua minzu* is not one but multiple] but also instigate a sentiment of national disunity (*guozu fenhua*) and encourage tribal consciousness (*buluo yishi*). Those assimilated people scruple to talk about their origins. The comments of those “scholars” would either make them angry or arouse their consciousness to secede from the Han. Either way is not what we would expect to see!⁷¹

The “refugee scholars” in Fu’s letter refers particularly to Fei Xiaotong and other anthropologists and sociologists affiliated with the Society of Ethnology in Yunnan (*Yunnan minzu xuehui*), founded by Wu Wenzao. Wu advocated a “pure” scholarly association to pursue a scholarship that “does not serve politics” (*xuewen buwei zhengzhi fuwu*).⁷² Fu also uttered his loathing for Wu’s slogan and his clique:

Sure, scholarship should not be manipulated by politics. But if a vapid scholarship has a negative impact on politics, then it should be banned. The Society of Ethnology founded by Mr. Wu specializes in creating such tricky scholarship... I don’t think Wu and his disciples intend to make trouble. But they follow the “imperialist science” developed in the colonies and forget how ignorant they themselves are of politics and how much they have been influenced by the evil practices of the West. Moreover, they want to be famous in this area. This will only bring negative consequences.⁷³

⁷¹ The Fu Sinian Archive I-1197, the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica.

⁷² Yue Nan, *Cong Cai Yuanpei dao Hu Shi: Zhongyanyuan naxie ren he shi* (Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 106.

⁷³ Fu Sinian Archive I-1197. It should be pointed out that James Leibold has misinterpreted the content of Fu Sinian’s letter by mistaking Gu Jiegang to be the target

Fu's statement clearly shows his view toward the *minzu* and the "colonial" anthropology that Wu Wenzao and his affiliates were engaged in.⁷⁴ Indeed, Wu Wenzao had long been promoting the functionalist and cultural anthropology that had been developed by British and American scholars whose object was the "primitive" tribal people in their colonies. For Fu Sinian, such anthropology was inevitably entangled with political and ideological interpretations and thus was not appropriate for China at a time of national crisis. What China needed was "objective" and "scientific" anthropology, an anthropology that emphasized "recording" and "measuring," and avoided theories and interpretations. The seemingly objective approach of historical ethnology, which combined historical textual study with ethnographical scrutiny, developed by ethnologists affiliated with the IHP and Zhongshan University, or the so-called "southern school," was hardly immune from politics. During the war, Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu, two leading ethnologists specializing in the historical ethnology of the southern minorities, actively supported the unitary vision of ethno-nationalism through their works. Moreover, regardless of the methodological orientation towards Chinese historical textual analysis,

of Fu's attack, see *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 140-141. Based on the supportive position Gu took to Fu's call for ethnic unity, it is surprising if Fu would in any case condemn Gu in his letter. And obviously, throughout Fu's letter, the name "Mr. Wu" (*Wu jun*) could hardly be referring to Gu Jiegang.

⁷⁴ It is said that there was personal conflict between Fu Sinian and Wu Wenzao, which might have triggered Fu's furious response to Fei Xiaotong's article and the founding of the Society of Ethnology. But such conflict faithfully portrayed what Yunnan had become during the war. The migration of the government and the scholars also brought forth competition and conflict between the "outsiders" and the "locals." As Chu Tunan later remembered, Yunnan was in such chaos: there was political conflict between Chiang Kai-shek and the local governor Yun Long; in academic community, factions were formed to distinguish the migrating scholars from the local ones, as well as the ones with foreign degrees from the ones without. See Yue Nan, 105.

Cen's and Rui's interpretations of the frontier cultures were nonetheless influenced by cultural evolutionism and diffusionism, respectively. These two Western anthropological theories were developed in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries to understand the progressive mechanism of human societies from the primitive to the advanced. They offered Cen and Rui frameworks to explain similarities of cultural practices found among the Han and the non-Han and helped them propose a model for unitary ethnic nationalism.

Cen Jiawu, Cultural Evolutionism, and Ethnic Integration

Cen Jiawu studied sociology at Zhongshan University and archaeology and physical anthropology in Japan. He returned to China at the brink of the war in 1937 and began to teach at Zhongshan University. When he was a student, Cen was inspired by the American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society* and was influenced by Morgan's unilineal evolutionism. The theory of unilineal evolution in anthropology was developed by Lewis H. Morgan and the British Edward B. Tylor in the late 19th century.⁷⁵ Building on Darwin's evolutionary theory, they believed that the development of culture followed the same trajectory of the evolution of species, that is, from the most primitive to the most civilized. All societies would eventually pass through the same stages independently at different speeds. Therefore, the "primitive" people of indigenous societies represented earlier stages of cultural evolution. According to Gregory Guildin,

⁷⁵ Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (London: MacMillan & Company, 1877) and Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Customs* (London: John Murray, 1871).

evolutionism was the first and the most popular foreign paradigm introduced to the Chinese academia of social sciences, and its influence was only to be surpassed by functionalism in the 1930s and 1940s.⁷⁶ Perhaps the appeal of cultural evolutionism to Chinese scholars was embedded in its underlining assumption of a Darwinian evolutionary mechanism, which made the theory appear to be a rather “scientific” explanation of cultural origins.⁷⁷ The appeal could also have come from the similarity between cultural evolutionism and traditional Confucian moralism, for both theories assume a “natural” order of cultural development and primitivize the “other” as “barbarians.”⁷⁸ Adopting an evolutionist perspective, Cen Jiawu regarded the traditional social customs and cultural activities still practiced in the “uncivilized” societies of the “southwestern barbarians” (*xinan yi*) as living evidence of ancient Chinese society. He was determined to do research in the frontier in order to compile his own version of China’s ancient society.⁷⁹ Fascinated by the totemic and folk artifacts found in the minority societies in southwest China, Cen wrote a few books on the topic during the

⁷⁶ Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropological in China: from Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 25-26.

⁷⁷ In fact, cultural evolutionism is not very Darwinian because its parallelism assumes independent development of human societies and stresses internal factors as driving forces for progress. This aspect is influenced by the idea of “psychic unity of mankind” proposed by the German scholar Adolf Bastian in the 19th century.

⁷⁸ The similarity between cultural evolutionism and Confucian moralism is suggested by Charles F. McKhann. See Charles F. McKhann, “The Naxi and the Nationalities Question,” in Steven Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 42.

⁷⁹ Cen Jiawu, “Renleixue yanjiu de ziwo pipan,” *Guangmin ribao* (Jan. 1951), cited in Xu Jieshun and Peng Yingming, “Cen Jiawu xiansheng de zhixue jingli ji renleixue minzuxue yanjiu shuping,” *Zhongnan minzu xueyuan xuebao*, Vol. 21, No.6 (2001): 19.

1930s while he was only in his 20s. In the field of Chinese anthropology, Cen was often compared with Fei Xiaotong, both touted as examples of young scholars with outstanding performance.⁸⁰

During the wartime, Cen Jiawu ethnological work on the southwestern frontier societies was an attempt to search for clues for his reconstruction of ancient Chinese society. He studied the art of these minorities and concluded “we can still find the primitive culture of our past in today’s southwestern societies.” He thought art served as an example that “If we want to study the technique of Tang batik that was already lost in the Han society, we will have to visit the Shosoin in Japan⁸¹ to get a real look at the relics... But batik is very popular in the Hua Miao society. Therefore if we go to the Miao area we will be able to study the Tang craft from living materials.”⁸² Similarly, “if we want to study music and dance of ancient Chinese society, we only need to do research in the southwestern frontier.”⁸³ Cen also observed various social practices of southwestern frontier minorities and cross-examined them with Chinese ancient texts. He asserted that the cross-cousin marriage practiced by the Hei Miao, the marriage of the widow and her brother-in-law found in the Lolo society, and the Miao’s marriage by capture could all be found in texts like *Erya* and *Zuozhuan*; therefore these minority

⁸⁰ The phrase “*nan Cen bei Fei*” is used to describe that Cen Jiawu and Fei Xiaotong were the most promising young figures in the southern and the northern schools.

⁸¹ Shosoin is the warehouse built in the Nara period and holds thousands of artifacts, including Tang objects, from the 8th century.

⁸² Cen Jiawu, “Xinan bianjiang zhongzu yishu yanjiu zhi yiyi,” *Zeshan banyuekan*, 2:3 (1941): 2-3.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 4.

cultural practices were in fact relics of Chinese ancient society.⁸⁴ Southwestern frontier societies represented a treasure house for Cen Jiawu where replicas of lost ancient Chinese culture would be discovered and reconstructed. By constantly making connections between contemporary frontier societies and ancient Chinese society, Cen Jiawu reinforced the image of the frontier societies as static and ahistorical. He also sustained the Han assimilation narrative and promoted the idea of unitary nationalism.

Although Cen Jiawu was influenced by cultural evolutionism, his view was moderated by Sinocentric nationalism. He applied parallelism to explain similarities between cultural practices of the Han and the non-Han, but he would never come to the conclusion that the Han and the non-Han did not share the same origin and what was at work was mainly the “psychic unity of mankind.” Instead, Cen Jiawu wholeheartedly embraced Gu Jiegang’s unitary model of *Zhonghua minzu* and attempted to prove that shared cultural practices among different groups of people were the consequence of a shared origin. In an article entitled “The Theory and Practice of Frontier Work” (*Bianjiang gongzuo de lilun yu shiji*), Cen explained, “All the groups within the territory of China belong to one *minzu*. This *Zhonghua minzu* is a mixture of all the groups and their cultures...Today, the cultures found in the frontier societies are more primitive compared to the culture of the hinterland. But aren’t such primitive cultures exactly what our own culture looked like in ancient times?”⁸⁵ Cen argued that the New Year celebrating activities of the Miao and the wedding customs of the *tusi* in Yunnan and

⁸⁴ Cen Jiawu, “Cong jizhong yisu guan cha Zhongguo gudai shehui,” *Dongfang zazhi*, 42:12 (1946): 16-21.

⁸⁵ Cen Jiawu, “Bianjiang gongzuo de lilun yu shijian,” *Zhongguo qingnian*, Vol.2, No.5 (1940), 33.

Guizhou were very similar to those practices recorded in the *Book of Songs* and the *Rites of Zhou*. Therefore, these were proof that the Han and the non-Han shared a common origin. But the mountainous geographical environment in the frontier isolated these non-Han societies and slowed down the speed of their progress. After recognizing the frontier peoples as an inseparable part of the *Zhonghua minzu*, Cen suggested that people participating in the frontier construction mission should spread the correct theory of *minzu* to the frontier and make their best effort to form solidarity with the frontier peoples.⁸⁶

After the publication of *China's Destiny*, many scholars, including Cen Jiawu, adopted Chiang's use of *zongzu* as a substitute for *minzu*. In an article entitled "On *Minzu* and *Zongzu*" Cen reappraised Gu Jiegang's and Zhang Tingxiu's views in terms of *zongzu* and backed up the unitary model with ethnological evidence.⁸⁷ Cen began with the statement that not until the outbreak of the war did the Chinese realize that the idea that China was a multi-ethnic state was a false statement. The war brought Chinese scholars closer to the frontier and into more contact with the frontier peoples. The more research they carried out about these peoples, the more they realized that these people had shared culture, history, and even physical characteristics with the Han. Cen then compared Gu Jiegang's polygenesis and the unitary model of *Zhonghua minzu* with Zhang Tingxiu's monogenesis hypothesis. Cen contended that although Gu and Zhang believed in different ethnogenesis theories, their conclusions of the unitary body were the

⁸⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁸⁷ Cen Jiawu, "Lun minzu yu zongzu," *Bianzheng gonglun*, Vol.3, No.4 (1944): 1-10.

same. Providing textual evidence from Chinese historical records and recent archaeological discoveries in the southwestern frontier areas, Cen suggested that many different groups in southwest China did not share the same ancestor with the Han but had been interacting with the Han since pre-historical times and therefore had been culturally integrated into the superstructure of *Zhonghua minzu*.⁸⁸ On the other hand, Cen reminded the reader that there were also people who were originally Han who, but for economic or political reasons, resettled in the frontier areas and thus had become integrated into the non-Han societies. Ethnological studies done in the southwestern frontier showed that many minority peoples were in reality descendents of the Han. The popular origin myths in the Miao communities, such as the flood story, were used by Cen as examples to support the theory of the same origin of the Han and the Miao.⁸⁹ Whether sharing the same ancestor or not, Cen asserted that *Zhonghua minzu* as one single homogenous entity was an undeniable truth. Yet, the question the ethnologist needed to resolve was: on what basis could one taxonomize these non-Han groups if *minzu* was not a proper category?⁹⁰ Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny* had put the terminology war to an end by

⁸⁸ Ibid, 2-4.

⁸⁹ The myth of the flood states that after a massive flood the only survivors were a man and his sister. He married her and she gave birth to a tumor. He cut the tumor in pieces and these pieces became the Miao, the Zhongjia, the Yao and the Hakka. There are many different versions of the story.

⁹⁰ In 1939 Cen wrote an article on the costumes of the southwestern minorities. To avoid confusion and unnecessary criticism, Cen used *zhongzu* instead of *minzu* to describe these peoples. Yang Chenzhi, the famous ethnologist in folk studies, encouraged him to replace *zhongzu* with "the southwestern indigenes" (*Xinan tuzu* or *tuzhu*) because all groups in China belonged to the same racial category. In the end, Cen accepted Gu Jiegang's suggestion to use *buzu* (tribe). See Cen, "Lun minzu yu zongzu," 7.

introducing the concept of *zongzu*. Cen could find no other term that so accurately portrayed the relationship between the different groups of people in China. However, in the long run, Cen suggested, the term *zongzu* would become obsolete because the integrating force of *Zhonghua minzu* would eventually erase all the differences among the *zhongzu*.⁹¹

Rui Yifu, the Discourse of Minzu, and Ethnic Integration

The other important ethnologist who actively promoted ethnic nationalism through research of the southwestern frontier minorities was Rui Yifu. Unlike Cen Jiawu, Rui had no overseas experience nor a foreign degree. He received ethnological training through joint field research with Ling Chunsheng, the leading ethnologist at the IHP.⁹² In 1933, Rui Yifu and Ling Chunsheng traveled to western Hunan to study the Miao, which was the first anthropological research of the Miao done by Chinese.⁹³ In 1935 and 1936, Rui and Ling accompanied the Chinese commissioners of the Sino-British Joint Border Commission to the southern border between Yunnan and Burma in order to settle the un-

⁹¹ Ibid, 9.

⁹² Rui Yifu was recommended by Ling Chunsheng, a fellow Jiangsunese, to work as an assistant at the Academia Sinica. Ling Chunsheng studied with Marcel Mauss and received a doctoral degree of ethnology from University of Paris. Rui studied linguistics with Zhao Yuanren, a Harvard graduate and the leading linguist at the time, and learnt ethnological methodologies with Ling Chunsheng in their many joint research.

⁹³ Many missionaries had recorded customs and cultural practices of the Miao since the late 19th century. Japanese scholar Torii Ryuzo was the first to systematically study the different Miao groups in Southwest China. See Torii Ryuzo, *Byo-zoku chosa hokoku* (Tokyo: Imperial University, 1907).

demarcated border problem.⁹⁴ They investigated many indigenous ethnic groups of the area, including Baiyi (now Dai), Lohei (now Lahu), and Kawa (now Wa). During the war, Rui Yifu conducted two field studies on the Miao: one in Guizhou between 1939 and 1940 and the other in southern Sichuan between 1942 and 1943.⁹⁵ Rui was mostly interested in the Miao culture and history and their relationship with the Han. He also attempted to formulate a more comprehensive ethnic classification system. But his ultimate aim was to establish a grand narrative of *Zhonghua minzu* by offering a scientific taxonomy of its constituencies and by integrating all the micro-histories of these peoples.⁹⁶

The debate on *minzu* in 1939 encouraged anthropologists to ponder the issue of *minzu* and the reality of ethnic integration as seen in the southwestern frontier societies. Rui Yifu discussed his view of *minzu* in an article entitled “*Zhonghua guozu jie*” (On the Definition of *Zhonghua guozu*) in 1942. Rui could not deny the diversity among the Chinese, yet he did not go as far as Fei Xiaotong to suggest the connection between

⁹⁴ For the southern Yunnan-Burma border conflict and the Joint Border Commission, see Zhou Guangzhuo, *Dian-mian nanduan wei dingjie diaocha baogao shu* [The Investigative Report of the Yunnan-Burma Undemarcated Southern Border] (1935), reprinted in *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu, no.149* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1967).

⁹⁵ According to Wang Ming-ke, the IHP intended to complete an integrated study of the Miao society by researching the four areas of the major Miao population: Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan (*Xiangmiao, Qianmiao, Dianmiao, and Chuanmiao*). See Wang Ming-ke, “Chuannan Miao zu diaocha rizhi 1942-43 daodu bing xu” [The Reading Guide and the Preface of the Research Journal of the Research on the Miao of Southern Sichuan, 1942-43] in *Chuannan Miao zu diaocha rizhi, 1942-43* (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2010), xv.

⁹⁶ For an evaluation of Rui Yifu’s ethnological oeuvre, see Hsieh Shih-chung, “An Ethnographic World Formulated: On Yi-fu Ruy’s Academic Construction of Minority Histories and Cultures of South China,” *Inner Asia*, Vol.4, No.1 (2001): 149-165.

ethnic subjectivity and national disunity. Rui began by clarifying two terms: *Zhonghua guojia* and *Zhonghua minzu*. He emphasized the non-biological and the “imagined” characteristics of *minzu*, “Our *minzu* is formed through the process of integrating (*ronghe*) the thoughts, feelings, and determinations of different *zhongzu* (races). Such a process has lasted for thousands of years.”⁹⁷ Rui argued that the disagreement between Gu Jiegang and Fei Xiaotong was not an ideological one, but rather a linguistic one. Therefore it was crucial to articulate the exact meaning of the terms *Zhonghua minzu* and *minzu*. First, Rui suggested that although *Zhonghua minzu* was a man-made symbol, it nonetheless represented a certain fact that could not be ignored. The term *Zhonghua minzu* was an abbreviation of *Zhonghua guojia de guozu* (the nation of the *Zhonghua* state) and the adjective *Zhonghua guojia de* had both political and legal significations.⁹⁸ Then Rui explained the term *minzu*, or ethnos, as the sub-species, formed by cultural and linguistic affiliations, deriving from *Homo sapiens*. Therefore, *Zhonghua minzu* was a politically determined branch in the human family of *minzu*. “For all the citizens of the *Zhonghua guojia*, *Zhonghua minzu* is a united species,” Rui argued. Rui agreed with Gu Jiegang on the issue of national unity; however, Rui’s anthropological definition of *Zhonghua minzu* did not stop here. He continued to taxonomize the composition of *Zhonghua minzu*: he defined agricultural *minzu*, nomadic *minzu*, Sino-Tibetan linguistic *minzu*, Altaic linguistic *minzu*, Islamic *minzu* and Buddhist *minzu* as the sub-species of

⁹⁷ Rui Yifu, “*Zhonghua guozu jie*” [On the Definition of *Zhonghua guozu*], *Renwen kexue xuebao*, Vol. 1, No.2 (1942). Reprinted and revised in Rui Yifu. *Zhongguo minzu ji qi wenhua lungao* [China: the Nation and Some Aspects of Its Culture: A Collection of Selected Essays with Anthropological Approaches] (National Taiwan University, 1972), 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

Zhonghua minzu. These sub-species could be further divided into the Mongol *minzu*, the Tibetan *minzu*, the Uygur *minzu*, the Miao *minzu*, the Tong *minzu* (today's Zhuang), and the Lolo *minzu*, etc. "Obviously, from the political perspective, *Zhonghua minzu* is an indivisible unity; yet, from a scholarly view, it can be divided into many units."⁹⁹ Instead of de-ethnicizing *minzu*, Rui had extracted the meaning of *minzu* (ethnos, or ethnicity) from *Zhonghua minzu* and made the latter merely a political symbol.

To avoid confusion between *guozu*, *minzu*, and *guojia*, Rui further suggested using *Zhonghua guozu* as a synthetic term that had cultural, social, political, and legal connotations.¹⁰⁰ Rui explained the four aspects of *Zhonghua guozu*: territorial, racial, linguistic, and cultural. He concluded that all four aspects proved *Zhonghua guozu* to be diverse (*duoyuan de*), yet all the diversities had been mingled and assimilated (*hunhe tonghua*) into one unity. Rui stressed the historical tendency towards integration: "The unification of Qin and Han signified the initial formation of our *guozu*; the turmoil caused by the five northern minorities during the Jin dynasty resulted in the assimilation of the Xiongnu and the Xianbei into us; the invasion of the Liao and the Jin during the Song dynasty resulted in the assimilation of the Donghu and the Jurchen into us; the Mongol and the Manchu had tried to conquest the middle kingdom through force but eventually were sinocized; all of them have become the important elements of today's *Zhonghua guozu*. Rivers and Oceans do not refuse to take in rills. This is why *Zhonghua guozu* has

⁹⁹ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 4.

become huge.”¹⁰¹ Unlike Gu Jiegang, Rui’s model of *Zhonghua guozu* consciously delineates a Han-centered assimilating narrative.

In an article published in the collection for the ten-year anniversary of the Chinese Ethnological Society in 1944,¹⁰² Rui Yifu discussed the classification and the geographical distribution of the *Zhonghua guozu*.¹⁰³ Rui came up with the concept of the “trinity” to explain the co-existence and overlapping of the *Zhonghua minzu*, *Zhonghua guozu*, and *Zhonghua guojia*. And he reiterated that *Zhonghua guozu* was united by natural force and it could be said to consist only of one blood, one life style, one language, one religion, and one culture, since more than 95% of the constituencies were Han.¹⁰⁴ However, in spite of his statement that *Zhonghua minzu* was one single unity, Rui’s article was in fact about the classification of Chinese ethnicity. Rui argued, “the slogan that ‘*Zhonghua minzu* is one’ is undeniable, but for academic purposes, we might as well study the nation as multiple branches.”¹⁰⁵ Moreover, “No scientific study can be rid of the process of ‘dividing’ (*fen*), such as analyzing (*fenxi*) or classifying (*fenlei*).”¹⁰⁶ And

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 8.

¹⁰² The Chinese Ethnological Society was launched in 1934 in Nanjing by He Liankui, Huang Wenshan and Sun Benwen. It held two annual meetings in 1935 and 1936 and invited Alfred Radcliff-Brown to be the keynote speaker. The IHP affiliated anthropologists Wu Dingliang, Ling Chunsheng, and Rui Yifu were all members of the Society.

¹⁰³ Rui Yifu, “*Zhonghua guozu de zhipai jiqi fenbu*” [The Branches and Their Distribution of the *Zhonghua guozu*], in *Zhongguo minzu xuehui shizhounian jinian lunwen ji* (Chengdu: Zhongguo minzu xuehui, 1944), 3-13.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Rui, “*Zhonghua guozu de zhipai jiqi fenbu*,” 4.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 12.

he was even commissioned by the Central Government to make the “chart of the status quo of the *guozu*” for demographic statistics. Although, as Fu Sinian and Gu Jiegang had worried, the issue of *minzu* and ethnic classification might instigate non-Han ethnic sentiment and encourage antagonism, it was an indispensable part of nation building and frontier governance. A detailed and precise demographic study of ethnic distribution would facilitate wartime political and economic construction of the frontier areas. Moreover, from the nation building perspective, as Wang Mingke has argued, establishing the classification system represented a process of including the non-Han marginal groups into the sovereignty of the nation.¹⁰⁷

Rui Yifu’s ethnological study of the Miao became the basis for his claim of ethnic integration and frontier modernization. His analysis of the Miao cultural practices was influenced by the prevailing theory of cultural diffusionism. Like cultural evolutionism, diffusionism was also a response to the late 19th century anthropological inquiry into cultural development in human societies. Diffusionism criticized cultural evolutionism as ethnocentric and lacking a historical understanding of cultural development while stressing the importance of migration and interaction between societies and claiming that all cultures originated from one or a few shared “cultural centers.”¹⁰⁸ The influence of

¹⁰⁷ Wang Mingke, “Taiwan diqu jin wushinian lai de xinan minzu shi yanjiu,” 302.

¹⁰⁸ Three main schools of diffusionism developed at the turn of the 20th century. Franz Boas was a staunch critic of cultural evolutionism and anthropologists related to the Boasian school of historical particularism, which emphasized historical formation of cultural traits, are often considered as the American proponents of diffusionism. The British school was led by Eliott Smith and W. J. Perry and the German school was led by Fritz Graebner and Father Pater Wilhelm Schmidt. While the former held the extremist view that all cultures evolved from one single cultural center, which is Egypt, the latter

diffusionism could be traced to Rui Yifu's earlier work on the origin of the Miao. Like Cen Jiawu, Rui was fascinated by the similarities between the Miao and the Han mythical narratives. Origin myths provided Rui a rich material to understand cultural diffusion between the Han and the non-Han. In an article entitled “*Miaozu de hongshui gushi he Fuxi Nüwa de chuanshuo*” (The Flood Stories of the Miao and the Legends of *Fuxi* and *Nüwa*), Rui analyzed four local Miao flood stories he had collected during his fieldwork in Western Hunan and found that a common theme of these stories about a brother marrying his sister was very similar to the Chinese legend about *Fuxi* and *Nüwa*. This similarity was used by Cen Jiawu to demonstrate that the Miao and the Han had a common origin. Rui was more cautious not to jump to a conclusion at this step; instead he researched for the origin of the *Fuxi* and *Nüwa* legend in Chinese historical texts and compared linguistic similarities with the Miao names. Rui came to the hypothesis that “The names of *Fuxi* and *Nüwa* can hardly be found in ancient texts [before the late warring state period], I doubt if they had a Han origin. *Fuxi* and Bu-i, *Nüwa* and Ku-eh are phonetically close. Bu-i and Ku-eh were the ancestors of the Miao, and the flood story was the origin myth of the Miao. We have mistaken (*wuyong*) them for our own origin myth.”¹⁰⁹ Rui suspected that the legend of *Fuxi* and *Nüwa* was very possible a Han appropriation of the Miao origin myth. Yet whether *Fuxi* and *Nüwa* were Han or Miao was not important for Rui; neither was it his concern to pursue a Miao cultural

believed that more than one cultural center existed and developed into concentric cultural circles.

¹⁰⁹ Rui Yifu, “*Miaozu de hongshui gushi he Fuxi Nüwa de chuanshuo*” [The Flood Stories of the Miao and the Legends of *Fuxi* and *Nüwa*] in *Renleixue jikan* [Anthropological Journal], 1:1 (1938), 188.

history. He was more interested in demarcating a “cultural area” in Southeast Asia covering southwest China, Malaysia, Indonesia, central India, and Taiwan, where similar flood stories were found. Rui then concluded that the center of this cultural area was the southwestern region of China and the flood myth had originated in China and diffused across the cultural area.¹¹⁰ Ultimately, Rui viewed the differences between the Han and the Miao as insignificant and since the Miao had been sinicized and included as a member of the Chinese nation, it was more important for him to use the Miao episode to enrich “Chinese” history and to designate southwest China as the “cultural center” of Southeast Asia.

During the war, Rui, together with his assistant Hu Qingjun, conducted ethnological research on the Miao in southern Sichuan for six months, from December 1942 to May 1943. Xuyong County in southern Sichuan, along the borders with Guizhou and Yunnan and the nearby Gusong County in Yunnan, were chosen to be the field location not only because many Miao resided in this area but also because it was close to Lizhuang, where the IHP was relocated during the war. The result of Rui Yifu’s Xuyong Miao research was not published until much later after he went to Taiwan.¹¹¹ Rui had kept a research journal during his fieldwork; and it was re-discovered, edited, and

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 191.

¹¹¹ See Rui Yifu, “Chuannan Yaque Miao de qingshu chengwei zhi tanyuan” in *Guoli Taiwan daxue kaogu renleixue kan*, Volume 3 (1954), 1-13; Rui Yifu and Guan Donggui, *Chuannan Yaque Miao de hunsang lisu: ziliao zhi bu* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1962); and Rui Yifu, “Chuannan Yaque Miao ji qi jiazhi” in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan*, Volume 34 (1963), 367-388.

published by the IHP in 2010.¹¹² In his journal, Rui meticulously recorded his daily life, including geographical location, altitude, temperature, and notes on the people he met or interviewed. This journal is a valuable source, maybe even more valuable than the research reports themselves, because it provides a rare opportunity to delve into the mind of the ethnologist and the daily activities of his fieldwork, but more importantly, into how Rui's ethnological observations and diffusionist interpretations were entangled with nationalistic concerns.

When Rui Yifu and Hu Qingjun first arrived in Xuyong County in December 1942, they met with the county magistrate and the military commander who was training the troops stationed in Xuyong for dispatch to India, and through whom the ethnologists were introduced to the local gentry and local party officials.¹¹³ Because Rui Yifu and Hu Qingjun represented the Academia Sinica, the highest national research institute, they were often treated as high officials by local political, educational, and military leaders, and their visit to the rural villages seemed to be a rather important event for the locals. They were invited to give presentations at the provincial high school, the highest educational center at Xuyong. Rui talked about the meaning of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu zhi yiyi*) and Hu's speech was on racial equality (*Zhongzu pingdeng zhi*

¹¹² Rui Yifu, *Chuannan Miaozu diaocha rizhi, 1942-1943* (Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2010). Hu Qingjun's comprehensive research report was lost during the Cultural Revolution but he did publish a few short essays in between 1944 and 1948 based on this research. The one on the field journey will provide a chance to cross check with Rui's journal. See Hu Qingjun, "Chuannan Miao xiang ji xing" in *Zhongyang zhoukan* (1944), Volume 6, number 36-37, reprinted and edited in Hu Qingjun, *Han cun yu Miao xiang* (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2006), 191-203.

¹¹³ Rui Yifu, *Chuanmiao diaocha rizhi*, 4-5.

yiyi).¹¹⁴ Rui's field work in the rural Miao communities was far from arduous: the local police station hired a sedan chair for him, and his trips to the remote villages were well assisted by people from the county and village offices.

During his stay in Xuyong, Rui Yifu documented many local Miao cultural practices in his journal but noticed that many of them were not so different from common Han practices, and he interpreted them as cultural borrowings from the Han. Rui was often hosted by local Miao residents who were mostly tenant farmers who could speak Mandarin. These men dressed like the Han, while only women kept traditional Miao costumes. Rui observed them performing wedding and funeral ceremonies and shamanist practices. He also managed to learn basic Miao language. Once Rui Yifu and Hu Qingjun were invited to observe a wedding ceremony of the Zhang family in the Houshan village where there were forty Miao households. At the time when the bride arrived, the family slaughtered a chicken and spread the blood in all the rooms. The Zhang clan leader served a piece of pork and some liquor to the ancestors. Rui wrote in his journal: "This is what the Han call *hui chema*, so they [the Miao] are imitating the Han. Originally, the Miao did not practice this ceremony. What they had was called '*da tudi*,' which was a ceremony to invite ancestors to participate."¹¹⁵ Rui also had many opportunities to observe Miao shamanism. The Miao believed that illness was caused by ghosts and would invite a *duangong*, or a shaman, to drive the ghosts out. Rui noticed

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 11. *Hui mache* is a part of the old wedding ceremony practiced in southern Sichuan. It refers to the ritual performed when the bridal sedan chair arrived at the door of the groom. It is not clear whether Rui Yifu had misused the specific term or he used it as a generalized term for wedding ceremony.

that the shaman rituals performed were full of Mandarin incantations. One day Rui came across an old Daoist master on the street who collected Daoist instruction booklets for funerals and fast. After reading these Daoist materials Rui remarked in his journal that he had found fault with David Graham's previous research on the Miao. David Graham, the famous missionary who had researched the Miao and the Qiang in Sichuan, wrote about *guoguan* and *shang daoshan* performed by young men as traditional Miao practices.¹¹⁶ Rui found these practices in the Daoist instructions and thus commented, "These are nothing but the products of the sinicization of the Miao (*Hanhua zhi chanwu*)."¹¹⁷

The degree of sinicization was even more profound among the local Miao elite. Rui Yifu mentioned how he was quite impressed by a Miao elite whose name was Han Jiexiu, the only Miao representative in the township council of a village Rui visited. Han had graduated from the local elementary school and had taken courses in a Chengdu high school. He had worked as a secretary in a government office. After he came back to Xuyong in 1940, he organized a frontier cultural association (*bianmin wenhua xiehui*), and helped found eight local frontier schools (*bianmin xuexiao*).¹¹⁸ Rui noticed that not only was Han highly sinicized, his wife had also cut her hair short and dressed in Han

¹¹⁶ David C. Graham had published quite a few articles on the Miao in southern Sichuan, for example, "The Ch'uan Miao of Southern Szechuen" in *Journal of the West China Border Research Society*, 1 (1922/23): 56, and "The Chuan Miao of West China" in *Journal of Religion*, 6 (1926): 302-307.

¹¹⁷ Rui Yifu, *Chuanmiao diaocha rizhi*, 87.

¹¹⁸ These schools were established by local educated Miao to improve literacy and promote education. Hu mentioned that these frontier schools were supported by the churches and did not receive subsidy from the government. See Hu, 197.

costumes.¹¹⁹ Rui discussed the Miao issues with Han for two days and discovered Han to be quite insightful. Their discussion covered topics like the political and social status of the Miao, examples of how the Han psychologically discriminated against the Miao by regarding them as having crooked spines, and how the Miao, the Yi, and the Han had intermingled.¹²⁰ Like many other local Miao elites, Han Jiexiu was a pious Christian. In the late 19th century, foreign missionaries established their station here to proselytize the local Miao population. At the time of Rui Yifu's arrival, 13% of the Miao in Xuyong were Catholics and 10% were Protestants.¹²¹ Rui Yifu had visited some missionaries to learn about the local Miao conditions because, in many ways, the missionaries seemed to understand the details of the Miao livelihood more than the local Han bureaucrats. Christianization and sinicization seemed to offer two ways of modernization, and for many local Miao these two trajectories were rather compatible. Hu Qingjun had pointed out that the Christianized Miao were more likely to abandon their old customs, and the women had fully adopted the Han costumes.¹²² However, in the eyes of the nationalist ethnologists, Christianity posed a barrier for a complete assimilation of the Miao into the Han community. Rui Yifu commented on Han Jiexiu in his journal: "I am quite surprised to see a Christian not confined by Christian doctrines."¹²³ Hu Qingjun also asserted that since all the frontier schools were fully supported by the church and did not receive any

¹¹⁹ Rui, 89.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 89.

¹²¹ Hu Qingjun, 235.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Rui, 89.

subsidy from the local government, the church influence would have more deeply penetrated into the local Miao community.¹²⁴

Rui Yifu's observation shows that in the communities where the Miao co-resided with the Han, the Miao men tended to be more assimilated into the Han culture and social practices than did the women in their households since the men had more opportunity to work with the Han. However, as Rui pointed out on many occasions, the Miao women were undergoing the assimilation process as well. They gradually abandoned their old Miao costumes and adopted the Han style.¹²⁵ The Miao language was also slowly disappearing. In several places, either in Xuyong or Xinwen County, east of Xuyong, Rui Yifu had attempted to conduct his interviews in Miao, but the interviewees refused to respond. They would only respond in Mandarin and claimed not to understand the Miao tongue. Rui's conclusion was that "the Miao here are ashamed of speaking Miao."¹²⁶ Hu Qingjun also mentioned how some Miao desired to be sinicized by claiming that their ancestors were Han who were later "indigenized" after marrying local Miao women.¹²⁷ Hu viewed this as a sign of an "inferiority complex."¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Hu, 197.

¹²⁵ Rui had attempted to purchase some Miao traditional dresses from a local Miao woman. The woman knew that these clothes were difficult to find so she asked for a high price. Rui could not afford it and he negotiated to only take photographs and make drawings of the clothes instead. See Rui, 82.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 101, 115.

¹²⁷ Hu, 196.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 202.

Rui Yifu might have expected to find a rich reservoir of original Miao cultural practices in southern Sichuan, like those he and Ling Chunsheng attempted to record ten years earlier in western Hunan.¹²⁹ However, what he learned was that many Miao of the younger generation desired to be more like the Han and were abandoning their language and customs. On the other hand, Han culture had long diffused into the Miao daily life, which led Rui to believe that the contemporary Miao were already more “sinicized” than they could have imagined because many of their seemingly “traditional” rituals turned out to be borrowings from the Han practices.¹³⁰ The blurring boundaries between the Han and the non-Han and the determination of the Miao to become Han confirmed to Rui what he wrote a year earlier about the concept of integration (*ronghe*). Or perhaps his ethnological survey of the Miao was more guided by his belief in integration, therefore he was not able to see otherwise. In any case, in his essay on the definition of the *Zhonghua guozu* in 1942, Rui was more assertive about the force of ethnic integration. He prescribed a model of diversity within the Chinese nation through the integration (*ronghe*)

¹²⁹ Rui Yifu and Ling Chunsheng encouraged the local Miao people to perform the “drum dance” that was identified as lewd religious practice and was banned by the local government. Some local Miao elite complained to the Committee of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs that Rui and Ling collected and photographed backward Miao practices in order to entertain the Han. See Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo minzu xue shi*, Volume 1 (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), 180. Rui and Ling lamented, “The educated Miao often feel ashamed of their drum dance. They think it exposes their barbarian characteristics. Therefore, the drum dance that represents ethnicity will probably be extinguished after a few decades.” See Ling Chunsheng and Rui Yifu, *Xiangxi miaozu diaocha baogao* (Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), 202.

¹³⁰ However, I think it is debatable whether what Rui had identified as the Han practices were actually invented by the Han. Just as he was not sure about the origin of the *Fuxi* and *Nüwa* legend, he did not investigate the real origin of these shared practices.

of the idea (*sixiang*), feeling (*ganqing*), and determination (*yizhi*) of all the groups.¹³¹ His own Xuyong experience spoke of the integration process as a rather peaceful and harmonious one in which the non-Han population had chosen to follow the “Han way.” He believed that miscegenation and cultural adoption would naturally replace of the Miao identity with a Han one.¹³²

In Rui Yifu’s revision of his previous classification of the *Zhonghua guozu*, he again emphasized the concept of *guozu ronghe* (national or ethnic integration). Rui argued that a nation was formed by material foundation and spiritual structure. While material foundation included race, territory, and population,¹³³ spiritual structure referred to national culture, including life, language, written language, religion, and customs. “Our ancestors have already done 94-95% of national integration for us. It is without saying that the rest 5-6% non-Han sub-lines need to be further integrated. It is our responsibility to integrate them.” Rui’s Xuyong experience reinforced his belief that national integration was a feasible project. The first step, Rui argued, “was to popularize our traditional culture and unified language among the citizens of all the divisions, the sub-lines, and all the groups. So everyone ‘responds with the same voice’ (*tongsheng zhi*

¹³¹ Rui, “Zhonghua guozu de fenzhi jiqi fenbu,” 16.

¹³² Rui later defined the “Han” as a people who had straight hair, yellow skin, medium-sized head, medium-sized nose, and medium-sized body; who spoke the single-syllable, multi-tone, and isolating Hanyu; whose religious belief was not fixed; whose economic mode was transforming from agricultural to industrial; and whose customs were becoming modernized. See Rui Yifu, “Zhongguo minzu” in *Wu Zhihui xiansheng jiu zhi rongqing zhuhe lunwen ji* (Taipei, 1953), revised and reprinted in Rui Yifu, *Zhongguo minzu jiqi wenhua lungao*, Volume 1 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshu guan, 1972), 38.

¹³³ Rui applied the theory of British political scientist Ernest Barker. See Ernest Barker. *National Character and the Factors in its Formation* (London, 1927), 2.

ying), everyone ‘strives for with the same breath’ (*tongqi zhi qiu*), and everyone ‘enjoys the convenience brought forth by the same language’.”¹³⁴

Conclusion

The meaning of *minzu* and the composition of *Zhonghua minzu* have been contested and closely tied to the formation of Chinese nationalism. The War of Resistance that lasted for eight years saw the emergence of a new kind of ethno-nationalism. While the anti-Qing revolutionaries advocated for an exclusivist Han ethno-nationalism against the Manchus, the intellectuals like Gu Jiegang forged a new type of unitary “ethnicity” of *Zhonghua minzu* that superseded all other ethnicities. As they saw it, *minzu* alone would no longer carry the meaning of ethnicity; and it would only exist within the body of *Zhonghua minzu*. The process of the de-ethnicization of *minzu* was a response to wartime Japanese imperialism that utilized ethnic self-determination as the façade of aggressive militarism in Asia.

The debate over *minzu* in 1939 created a forum in which intellectuals, from historians to ethnologists, were able to re-examine the meaning of *minzu* and the relationship between the Han and the non-Han at a time when national unity was of utmost concern. Rui Yifu and Cen Jiawu applied their ethnological findings in the southwestern frontier societies to confirm the “fact” that all peoples within the territory of China had always been a part of *Zhonghua minzu*. Field experience also assured the ethnologists that the national integration and ethnic assimilation of the non-Han was a

¹³⁴ Ibid, 31.

“natural” outcome for the future of these societies. Moreover, inspired by the prevailing Western anthropological theories, Rui and Cen found rich materials in China’s southwestern frontier to link the present ethnic minorities to China’s past and to reinforce the Han cultural dominance over the non-Han. Recent scholars have criticized such an approach as Han-centered.¹³⁵ Yet, I think it is also important to appraise these ethnological writings in their historical context and to understand how politics and nationalism intertwined with the production and appropriation of knowledge.

The debate in 1939 and the ensuing discussions of *minzu* demonstrate that the unitary and the multiple models were rather two strands of views that would eventually come together to form what the Chinese state today insists to be the “natural” structure of the Chinese nation-state. Wartime ethnic nationalism naturalized China’s southwestern frontier as an inseparable part of the Chinese nation-state and included the indigenous non-Han as the main branches of the Chinese family tree. Fei Xiaotong, much influenced by his mentor Wu Wenzao, argued against Gu Jiegang’s unitary view in 1939, yet his own multi-ethnic perspective was by no means to encourage ethnic separatism within a unified China. For Fei Xiaotong, Wu Wenzao, and some other anthropologists who are the protagonists of the next chapter, China was portrayed as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation-state that could be modeled on the example of the United States. Their investigation of the southwestern frontier societies during the war would further

¹³⁵ For example, Ho Tsui-ping, “*Cong Zhongguo shaoshu minzu di jige ge’an tan ‘ji’ yu ‘yiji’ de guanxi*” [Relations of the "Self" and "Other" Discussed through Several Studies on China's National Minority], in Hsu Cheng-kuang and Huang Ying-kuei, eds., *Renleixue zai Taiwan: Hugu yu Zhanwang* [Anthropological Studies in Taiwan: Retrospect and Prospect] (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 1999), 357-404.

symbolically transform the frontier into a national space; and their effort on the frontier construction would build the foundation for the CCP's annexation of Tibet in 1950.

CHAPTER FOUR
INDIGENIZING ANTHROPOLOGY, SINICIZING THE FRONTIER:
CHINESE ANTHROPOLOGISTS IN THE SOUTHWEST

The debate over *minzu* in 1939 demonstrates two perspectives Chinese intellectuals delineated for modern China: the unitary ethnic nation-state and the multi-ethnic nation-state. To repudiate the propaganda of Japanese imperialism, Gu Jiegang and his supporters de-ethnicized the term *minzu* and claimed that China had only one single shared ethnicity. On the other hand, Fei Xiaotong, Wu Wenzao and some other anthropologists were freed from the ideological confinement of the “one nation one state” myth and portrayed China as a political sovereignty formed by multi-ethnic peoples. Unlike Cen Jiawu and Rui Yifu, whose primary concerns in researching the southwestern frontier societies were to record or to preserve the relics of ancient Chinese culture and to promote ethnic integration, for Fei Xiaotong and his colleagues, anthropological research was to facilitate a better understanding of the present condition of “Chinese” society. For Fei Xiaotong and his colleagues, the theoretical marriage of anthropology and sociology was crucial to the study of Chinese society: the science of studying the “other” could not be separated from the science of studying “us.”

This chapter introduces the activities of Fei Xiaotong and Li Anzhai and their independent intellectual communities in Yunnan and Sichuan. Both Fei and Li were graduates of sociology from Yanjing University and studied anthropology abroad in the West. What connected the two was not only the influence of Western anthropological traditions on their own oeuvre, but also their commitment to the indigenization of anthropology in China. During their undergraduate years at Yanjing, Fei and Li were affiliated with Wu Wenzao, who taught sociology and advocated the application of

cultural functionalism and community studies in research meant to improve the understanding of Chinese society. After studying with the leading cultural anthropologists in Britain and America, Fei and Li returned to China and devoted themselves to field research of the Chinese frontier societies. Like many Chinese intellectuals of their time, Fei and Li believed that the scientific scrutiny of Chinese society and its problems was the prerequisite for implementing any feasible social reform and reconstruction. The pragmatic motivation for studying science and social science was that it could serve nationalistic ends. For Fei and Li, however, their intellectual nationalism was also reflected in their desire to establish an indigenous mode of anthropology, departing from the colonial anthropology they learned from their Western advisors. Such an indigenous anthropology was to be more compatible with Chinese reality. Fei Xiaotong and his affiliates in Yunnan were engaged in contesting the applicability of the methodology of community studies and functionalist anthropology to the study of the villages. Li Anzhai and his colleagues of the sociology department at the West China Union University in Sichuan developed a kind of applied anthropology that combined academic research with administrative training and social service to facilitate the modernization of the frontier. The frontier became the ideal research lab for field research on the indigenization movement. As this chapter shows, the outcome of their effort to construct the anthropological knowledge of the frontier symbolically and politically sinicized the frontier spaces and their people as a quintessential part of “China” and the “Chinese.”

Wu Wenzao and Indigenizing Anthropology

Wu Wenzao received his Ph.D. degree in sociology from Columbia University and began his teaching career at Yanjing's Department of Sociology and Social Work (often referred to as the sociology department) in 1929. It is worth noting that the first independent anthropology department did not appear in China until 1948; before then, anthropology, as an academic discipline, had been integrated into sociology in most universities and institutions, from the 1920s. The contemporary Chinese anthropologist Francis L.K. Hsu wrote in 1944: "Sociologists teach anthropology in our universities as a matter of course, just as scholars with distinctively anthropological background lecture on sociology."¹ The blurring disciplinary boundary between sociology and anthropology was a distinct feature of Chinese anthropology (and sociology as well).² Western anthropology, as a new social science discipline emerging in the late 19th century, was concerned with studying the primitive "other," as opposed to the civilized European

¹ Francis L.K. Hsu, "Sociological Research in China," *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography*, new series, 4:1-4 (March-December, 1944): 12. Quoted in Maurice Freedman, "Sociology in and of China," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 13, No.2 (June, 1962): 106.

² The term "anthropology," translated in Chinese as *renleixue* (a study of human beings), had rather confusing connotations in the West at the time. What was known in Germany and France as Anthropologie was in fact physical anthropology or anthropometry in Britain and America. The equivalence of anthropology (sometimes more specifically defined as cultural or social anthropology), used in the English-speaking world, was Ethnologie in Germany and France. It should be clarified here that the term anthropology used in this chapter fits in the British-American fashion since all of our Chinese protagonists received their graduate trainings either in Britain or America. They were also known by their contemporaries as cultural or social anthropologists.

societies, and had a history inseparable from colonialism.³ It did not align itself with sociology until after the Second World War, when most of the previous colonies declared independence and the anthropologists had to find replacements for the exotic and primitive “other” that had been the focus of previous research. Post-colonial anthropology redirected itself along a more sociological trajectory and took up the study of one’s internal society.⁴ The early marriage between sociology and anthropology in China was not accidental but rather a pragmatic choice and a gesture toward anti-colonialism and anti-Eurocentrism consciously made by Chinese scholars.

Wu Wenzao was a firm believer in empirical research, and he was determined to bring new scientific methodology to the Chinese academia. Like many other Chinese intellectuals of his time, Wu Wenzao devoted himself to the study of Chinese society and cultural practices in the hope of providing potential solutions for social reform. While at Columbia, Wu studied with the famous American sociologists F.H. Giddings and William Ogburn and audited Franz Boas’s courses. It was during this time that Wu realized the close relationship between sociology and anthropology and the importance of

³ On the relationship between anthropology and colonialism, see Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Ithaca Press, 1973).

⁴ Paul Sillitoe, “The Search for Relevance: A Brief History of Applied Anthropology” *History and Anthropology*, 17:1: 9. The turning away from the study of primitive society to the study of civilized society was even coined as “the Chinese phase of social anthropology” by the famous sinological anthropologist Maurice Freedman in 1963. See Maurice Freedman, “A Chinese Phase in Social Anthropology,” *British Journal of Sociology*, 14:1 (March 1963): 1-19. However, whether an anthropologist could study his/her own society with fresh eyes was also debated. For example, Edmund Leach, the British social anthropologist who is known for his studies of the former British colonies of Burma and Ceylon, claimed that anthropologists should only study the “other” and criticized the work of Chinese anthropologists, such as Fei Xiaotong, for lacking objectivity. See Edmund Leach, *Social Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

combining the methodologies of the two disciplines to produce what was best for China's need.⁵ In the 1920s, when sociology was still at its initial stage in Chinese academia, the dominant methodological tool used by both foreign and Chinese sociologists was the social survey.⁶ Researchers relied on prepared questionnaires oriented to probe into social abnormalities; the results were then presented and interpreted using statistics.⁷ Wu Wenzao criticized such an approach for the lack of a detached objectivity and of a more scientific method that would allow data to be obtained.⁸ For example, the questionnaires could be prepared by poorly trained researchers and thus would lead to little understanding of the real problems. And the data was often too broad to tackle specific social conditions in depth. Wu's alternative to the social survey approach was the anthropological field research, putting the researcher in intimate contact with his subject over a long period of time, combined with social anthropological theories, all of which aimed at understanding the totality of culture in a given society.

⁵ Wu Wenzao, "Wu Wenzao zizhuan," *Jinyang xuekan*, 12 (1982): 45.

⁶ Most of the early sociology departments in China were established by Americans in missionary colleges. The early interest of employing the method of social survey was to facilitate mission work in Chinese villages. Social survey soon became the dominant approach for reform-minded sociologists to pinpoint social problems. See Morton H. Fried, "Community Studies in China," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 14:1 (Nov. 1954), 17.

⁷ Morton H. Fried, 14-17.

⁸ Wu's arrival at Yanjing in 1929 stirred factionalism within the sociology department. He and his advisees and affiliates formed the theoretical oriented sociology wing challenging the more established social service wing which emphasized social survey method for the purpose of social reform. For a detailed discussion of the competition between these two wings and the paradigm shift within the department, see Yung-chen Chiang, *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China, 1919-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 3.

In the early 1930s Wu Wenzao, the newly returned young scholar, was quite in synchronization with the most advanced sociological research in the West. Community studies were first reckoned by Wu to offer the most promising model for the development of Chinese sociology/anthropology. In 1932, Wu invited Robert E. Park, the founder of the Chicago School of urban sociology, to be a visiting professor to the sociology department at Yanjing. Park was a pioneer in urban sociological research whose groundbreaking book, *The City: Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment*, published in 1925 with his colleague Ernest W. Burgess, elaborated a theory of urban ecology that divided the city into different community zones with distinctive collective behaviors. During the three months of his stay, Park not only offered classes on collective behavior and sociological research, but also introduced the method of community research to his Chinese students. He brought them to prison and brothel visits in Beijing and taught them how to conduct real-life research.⁹ Wu Wenzao himself was an advocate of community theory. He was the first to coin the term *shequ* (community) to introduce the new concept to the Chinese audience. In a speech he delivered in the sociology department at Qinghua University in 1934, Wu defined *shequ* as the pattern of life and cultural practice of a group of people living in a certain territory.¹⁰ Community research aimed at understanding the cultural life of the people

⁹ Fei Xiaotong, "Foreword," in *Earthbound China*, by Fei Xiaotong and Zhang Zhiyi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), ix. The sociology department at Yanjing published a book in 1933 to commemorate Park's visit. The book, entitled *Paikeshexue lunwen ji*, consists articles by Park, Wu Wenzao, Park's lectures, and introduction to Park's work written by Wu's students (including Lin Yaohua and Fei Xiaotong).

¹⁰ Wu Wenzao, "Xiandai shequ shidi yanjiu de yiyi he gongyong," *Shehui yanjiu*, 66 (1935), reprinted in Wu Wenzao, *Renleixue shehuixue yanjiu wenji* (Beijing: Minzu

within the community, and it was best done with objective observation and meticulous note taking. Park had personally told Wu that researchers of community studies had indeed borrowed much of the necessary technology of field research from ethnology.¹¹ This had strengthened Wu Wenzao's belief in the compatibility between community studies and anthropology. The only question left was: which school of anthropology to choose from?

Since Wu Wenzao taught a course on anthropology at Yanjing, he was familiar with Western anthropological theories. In 1932, in a chapter Wu wrote for an edited book that served as a general introduction to the social sciences, he outlined the history of cultural anthropology and analyzed different schools of thought.¹² Evolutionism and diffusionism were outdated and burdened with Eurocentrism, Wu argued. And the American historical particularism of Boas seemed to be more promising. However, what mostly caught Wu's attention was the rival functionalist school developed in Britain by anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski. For Malinowski, existing anthropological theories all ambitiously attempted to construct a grand narrative of human history and therefore tended to lose sight of how cultural elements actually functioned in "cultural facts."¹³ In other words, the functionalists were more interested in

chubanshe, 1990), 144-5.

¹¹ Wu Wenzao, "Xifang shequ yanjiu de jinjin qushi," *Shehui yanjiu*, 67 (1935), reprinted in Wu Wenzao, *Renleixue shehuixue yanjiu wenji* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1990), 155.

¹² Wu Wenzao, "Wenhua renleixue," Sung Hanbing ed., *Shehuixue dagang* (Shanghai: Liming shuju, 1932), chapter 3; reprinted in Wu Wenzao, *Renleixue shehuixue yanjiu wenji* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1990), 37-74.

¹³ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture* (Chapel Hill: University

how cultural institutions functioned to fulfill the basic physical and psychological needs of individuals in a temporally and spatially defined society. Functionalist anthropology required a detailed investigation of segments of culture (such as ritual, food, etc.) through direct observation and intensive day-to-day contact with the informants in order to determine how cultural segments connected to one another and what functions each carried in larger contexts. In the late 1910s, Malinowski himself spent almost two years carrying out his ethnographic fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands, a British colony. Like Malinowski, other influential British functionalists, such as Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, conducted field research in the colonies and maintained close ties with local colonial authorities.¹⁴ Although the development of functionalist anthropology was a product of British colonialism, Wu Wenzao realized the potential benefit such scholarship might bring to the colonized society. “It is hard to predict how this school [functionalism] will be evaluated in the future,” Wu Wenzao wrote, “but nonetheless it has an indelible contribution, that is, its pragmatic application.”¹⁵ Wu suggested that functionalism offered a more objective approach to the understanding of non-Western society: instead of degrading cultural practices found in primitive societies as living “relics” of the past, functionalism reappraised these practices in terms of their own unique social function, how they were interconnected to an organic totality, and what they meant for the

of North Carolina Press, 1944), 24-27.

¹⁴ For example, Radcliffe-Brown did his early research in the Andaman Islands and Western Australia. He served as the director of education in Tonga and later in Cape Town where he studied the kinship system of the local society.

¹⁵ Wu, “Wenhua renleixue,” 68.

indigenes.¹⁶ Such understanding might lead to an appreciation of and sympathy toward the colonized society.

If Wu Wenzao hesitated in 1932, by 1935 he had already become the most zealous advocate of functionalism in China. He praised functionalism as the most powerful tool in the field of social anthropology.¹⁷ Wu himself was interested in Boasian historical particularism when he studied in America, but he was not convinced that it would be a good methodological framework to adopt for Chinese anthropology. For Wu, historical particularism described culture as “shreds and patches” and stressed the uniqueness of cultural traits in society, which led to very little understanding of the totality of culture and the interconnection between each cultural unit. Functionalism would be a better candidate, Wu believed, and moreover, “it offers a more enhanced field research method as well as a more complete ethnographical writing.”¹⁸ In 1935, Wu, then the chairman of the sociology department at Yanjing, invited Radcliffe-Brown, who was in Japan for a short stay, to be a visiting professor at his department. During the few months of his stay at Yanjing, Radcliffe-Brown taught “comparative sociology” and

¹⁶ Anthropologist Wang Mingming further points out that because functionalism does not treat non-European societies as representations of lower stages in human evolution, it attempts to find legitimacy for non-Western cultures and beliefs. The functionalists also believe that knowledge of the “other” obtained from empirical research will be valuable for Westerners to criticize their own culture. Wang Mingming, *Shehui renleixue yu Zhongguo yanjiu* (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2005), 11.

¹⁷ Wu Wenzao, “Gongnengpai shehuirenleixue de youlai yu xianzhuang,” *Shehui yanjiu*, 111 & 112 (1935), reprinted in Wu Wenzao, *Renleixue shehuixue yanjiu wenji* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1990), 122.

¹⁸ Wu, “Wu Wenzao zizhuan,” 49.

offered a graduate seminar.¹⁹ He supervised Chinese students on fieldwork and served as Lin Yaohua's and Li Youyi's master thesis adviser.²⁰ Although Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski are both considered the founders of functionalism, there are differences between their interpretations of "function." While Malinowski was interested in studying culture, Radcliffe-Brown rejected the concept of culture as too abstract and non-scientific and therefore preferred to limit his scope to concrete social structures, like kinship. Malinowski believed that the function of cultural practices was to serve individual needs, but for Radcliffe-Brown the function of social structures was to maintain the structural continuity.²¹ As Wang Mingming suggests, Radcliffe-Brown's visit to China introduced the concept of social structure to his Chinese students and researchers, who would later

¹⁹ Radcliffe-Brown coined the term "comparative sociology" for "social anthropology" to differentiate it from "cultural anthropology," the prevailing school in America. Since both Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski were influenced by Marcel Mauss and Emile Durkheim, the British school of social anthropology was oriented toward a combination of sociological theory and ethnographical field research method in the study of non-Western societies. For introduction of social anthropology as a distinct British anthropological tradition, see Adam Kuper, *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School* (London: Routledge, 1996). For Radcliffe-Brown's teaching and activities in China, see Chiao Chien, "Radcliffe-Brown in China," *Anthropology Today*, 3:2 (Apr., 1987): 5-6.

²⁰ Gregory Eliyu Guldin, *The Saga of Anthropology in China: From Malinowski to Moscow to Mao* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 42. Lin Yaohua later received a PhD in anthropology from Harvard. He came back to China during the war and conducted extensive research on the Yi in Sichuan. His most well-known work to the English readers was the book, *The Golden Wing* (1947), an anthropological investigation of the Han family system in the village of his hometown in Fujian. Li Youyi investigated in anthropological study of the Tibetan communities in Sichuan and Lhasa during the war and became a famous Tibetan specialist.

²¹ Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1939): 938-964. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "On the Concept of Function in Social Science," *American Anthropologist*, 37:3 (1935): 394-402.

apply such a concept to their own research of Chinese society.²² The other practical suggestion Radcliffe-Brown offered was that the most suitable community unit for the purpose of research in China should be the village, and comparative micro-studies of different villages would help construct the macro-structural outline of Chinese society.²³ The seeds of functionalism and micro-community studies that Park and Radcliffe-Brown had sown on their visits to China would take root, affecting the direction in which Chinese social anthropological research would grow in the coming years.²⁴

Wu Wenzao was more an educator than a field researcher: he spent most of his time teaching, translating, and writing introductions on the theory and methodology of social anthropology. Besides inviting outstanding scholars to come to China, Wu Wenzao's scheme for cultivating a new generation of Chinese professionals in sociology and anthropology also involved sending promising students to study overseas. Wu carefully sought the optimal places for his advisees and affiliates to continue their academic training and to acquire first-hand experience with leading scholars of different schools. Fei Xiaotong, who studied with Wu Wenzao as an undergraduate at Yanjing and who completed his Master's degree with S.M. Shirokogoroff at Qinghua, was sent to study with Bronislaw Malinowski at the London School of Economics; Lin Yaohua was

²² Wang Mingming, *Shehui renleixue yu Zhongguo yanjiu*, 31.

²³ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Duiyu Zhongguo xiangcun shenghuo shehuixue diaocha de jianyi" (A Proposal for Sociological Investigation of Village Life in China), Wu Wenzao trans., *Shehuixue jie*, 9 (1936): 79-88. The sociology department at Yanjing published a special issue in the journal *Shehuixue jie* in 1936 to honor Radcliffe-Brown.

²⁴ The students of Yanjing University, influenced by the two masters, produced a handful research projects between 1933 and 1939, including Fei Xiaotong's *Peasant Life in China*. For a complete list of these projects, see Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, ix-x.

sent to Harvard to study anthropology; Huang Di went to the University of Chicago to study sociology. Li Anzhai, who was not a protégé of Wu Wenzao but maintained a good relationship with Wu while pursuing his degree in the sociology department at Yanjing, secured a Rockefeller Fellowship to study cultural anthropology with Alfred, L. Kroeber and Robert Lowie at the University of California at Berkeley, and later went to Yale University to learn from Edward Sapir.²⁵

Between 1936 and 1937, Wu Wenzao traveled to America and Europe and met with many of the leading anthropologists in the West. He interviewed Bronislaw Malinowski in Britain and informed him that he and his students were about to launch the “School of Chinese Sociology,” which aimed at understanding the impact of cultural changes on the life of the contemporary Chinese through the study of village communities, employing functionalist theoretical framework.²⁶ After completing his training in America, Li Anzhai returned to China in late 1936 and joined Wu’s work of promoting the indigenization of sociology. He taught in the sociology department at Yanjing University and served as the editor of *Shehui yanjiu* (Journal of Social Research), the publication of Yanjing’s Society of Social Research. Wu’s own students, such as Fei Xiaotong and Lin Yaohua, would return later and become enthusiastically involved in various community field research. These scholars, affiliated with Wu’s “School of Chinese Sociology” (often called the Chinese Functionalist School by their contemporaries), tended to stress the pragmatic application of functionalist anthropology

²⁵ Kroeber, Lowie and Sapir were all famous anthropologists of the Boasian cultural anthropological school.

²⁶ Wang Mingming, 26-27.

and ethnology, which aimed to solve social problems. Their research focused on the internal organization and structure of the community and provided functional interpretations of individual cultural practices to the society as a whole.²⁷

When Wu Wenzao first started to teach at Yanjing, most sociology and anthropology departments in China were still dominated by foreign professors teaching Western textbooks that were completely detached from Chinese social reality. Wu was one of the few Chinese scholars who delivered their lectures on sociological and anthropological theories in Chinese.²⁸ This was the very first step toward the road of establishing a “Chinese school of sociology,” yet it was a breakthrough. The indigenization movement in the 1930s represented not only the fruit of professionalization in the field but also a growing national consciousness of the need to establish a scientific discipline that truly spoke to China’s needs. It also reflected an anti-colonial desire to rescue China from the Western gaze and to free anthropology from its embarrassing marriage with colonialism. Malinowski described Wu Wenzao’s visit to Britain in 1936 as a “great pleasure,” because what these Chinese scholars were promoting would bring anthropology to a radically new phase. First of all, the subject of anthropology would be expanded to the study of “civilized” society. And second, such anthropological research would be carried out by a native, instead of an outsider.²⁹

²⁷ Wang Jianmin, 149.

²⁸ Fei Xiaotong, who had a solid Western education in missionary middle school, was surprised to find out that Wu’s lectures on Western theories were taught in Chinese. He considered it quite “bizarre” at the time for a returned scholar to do such a thing. See Fei Xiaotong, *Shicheng, buke, zhixue* (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2002), 43.

²⁹ See Malinowski’s preface for Fei Xiaotong’s first English publication, *Peasant Life in China* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1939), xiii-xx. Malinowski

However, except for Malinowski, whose Polish identity had made him rather an “outsider” in British academia and which perhaps had contributed to his more sympathetic attitudes toward non-Western societies, the Chinese anthropological indigenization did not arouse too much interest in the West, nor was its radical methodological direction taken up by anthropologists in other areas before the end of the Second World War.³⁰ As Wang Jianmin suggests, perhaps it is because no matter how Chinese researchers moved the anthropological gaze away from “exotic and primitive” societies to their own communities, their subject of study, whether it was the Han Chinese or minority nationalities, was still considered by Western anthropologists as “exotic and primitive.”³¹ We should also remember that the very unequal relations of power between China and the West, which the Chinese advocates for the indigenization movement wanted so eagerly to overcome, was, ironically, further perpetuated through the extensive American philanthropist sponsorship of the various research projects carried out by the Chinese researchers themselves.³²

The outbreak of the war in 1937 pushed the indigenization movement to yet another stage and created a more favorable environment for the integration of anthropology and sociology. With the movement of the central government to

also praised Fei’s work as the epitome of “Chinese sociology.”

³⁰ I thank Mark Elliott for suggesting the connection between Malinowski's own background and the less Eurocentric views presented by his scholarship.

³¹ Wang, 147

³² For example, the Rockefeller Foundation generously supported Chinese students to study in America and Chinese scholars to travel overseas for research. See Chiang Yung-chen’s study on the impact of the Rockefeller Foundation to the research direction of Chinese sociology.

Chongqing, Sichuan, the southwestern and northwestern frontier regions no longer belonged to the insignificant political and geographical periphery. The frontier became the home front of the nation at war, and its development had a direct impact on the future of the nation. For the functionalist anthropologists, the frontier and its diverse non-Han cultures provided the most desirable laboratory, in which their theoretical framework could be grounded in concrete field research. Their research was further imbued with nationalistic spirit to bring material improvement and social justice to their fellow non-Han citizens. Fei Xiaotong returned to a war-torn China in 1938 and immediately began his fieldwork in a village in Yunnan. He gathered a few young scholars and formed a research team dedicated to the social anthropological study of frontier Yunnan. Li Anzhai moved to Chengdu, Sichuan and devoted himself to frontier social work (*bianjiang shehui gongzuo*), developed alongside the study of frontier affairs (*bianzheng xue*), as a distinct sub-category of applied anthropology deemed to fulfill the most urgent need in the development of the frontier.

The Kuige Scholars in Yunnan

In 1939 when Fei Xiaotong responded to Gu Jiegang's article on the unity of *minzu* he had just returned to China from Britain the previous year and was offered a teaching position by Wu Wenzao in the sociology department of Yunnan University. Wu Wenzao, like many of his colleagues, left Japanese-occupied Beijing and migrated to Kunming, Yunnan in 1938. He established the sociology department at Yunnan University in 1939 and served as the chairman. In the same year, with the support of the

Rockefeller Foundation, Wu launched the Yanjing-Yunnan Station for Sociological Research and recruited a few young scholars, including Fei Xiaotong, to work at the station.³³ Wu also co-founded the Society of Ethnology in Yunnan (*Yunnan minzu xuehui*) with Li Ji as president. Wu Wenzao deemed migrating to southwest China a golden opportunity to carry on functionalist research in different communities, especially the frontier non-Han societies. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the activities of Wu and his affiliates in Yunnan had caused some nationalist scholars, such as Fu Sinian, to frown because of a perceived risk of triggering ethnic separatism among the frontier non-Han. Indeed, Wu, Fei and their colleagues working in the station were borrowing methodologies from “imperialist science,” but they did not equate themselves with the “imperialist anthropologists.” As Wu and Fei stated in the multi-ethnic nation-state model, all the ethnic peoples were equal to the dominant Han and were indispensable parts of a unified China. Moreover, they attempted to differentiate themselves from their Western peers by bestowing a mission, or a “function” in Fei Xiaotong’s term, on their research: the functional goal of their social research was to offer a practical tool for controlling social change.³⁴ Far from instigating ethnic separatism, the research of Fei and his affiliates aimed to provide practical solutions to make China a better place for all its constituencies. Trying to envision “China” and the

³³ After the funds ran out, the Station was supported by various grants from the Farmers’ Bank in China, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Economic Council of Yunnan Province. See Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, xiii.

³⁴ Fei Xiaotong, “Zai lun shehui bianqian,” *Shehui yanjiu (Yishi bao)*, 46 (March 24, 1937). The essay was reprinted in Fei Xiaotong. *Fei Xiaotong wenji*, Volume 1 (Beijing: Qunyan chuban she, 1999), 498-508. Part of it is translated by R. David Arkush in *Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 55-56.

“Chinese nation” in times of national crises, Wu Wenzao, Fei Xiaotong, Gu Jiegang, and Fu Sinian came to different results because the methodological frameworks they engaged with were different. However, the fundamental forces driving their agendas, namely nationalism and a desire to change politics through scholarship, were similar.

Fei Xiaotong became the director of the research station and remained the core figure after Wu Wenzao accepted a government position and moved to Chongqing in 1940. With increasing air raids in Kunming and eventually with the destruction of the research station located at the campus of Yunnan University, the research team decided to move the station to a temple located in an old town of Chenggong, southeast of Kunming. The temple, known as Kuixingge, was a tower of three floors and a place of worship for the God of Literature (Kuixing). From 1940 until the end of the war, the research team was stationed in Kuixingge, later called “Kuige.” There were about 10 researchers working in the station at various times. The majority of the team members were students from Qinghua and Xinan lianda.³⁵ Wilma Fairbank, then a cultural relations officer at the American Embassy, described Kuige after her visit in 1945 as a “romantic Spirit Tower which stands foursquare with curving glazed-tiled roofs in the midst of a cypress

³⁵ The list of the members includes Fei Xiaotong, Zhang Zhiyi, Shi Guoheng, Hu Qingjun, Gu Bao, Tian Rukang, Zhang Zongying, Wang Kang, Xu Langguang (Francis L.K. Hsu), and Qu Tongzu. Anthropologists Tao Yunkui, who was then teaching at Nankai University, was already using the spared room in the temple as a workplace before the team moved over. He continued to work there as an independent scholar and therefore was not considered as a member of Kuige. For more detailed description of the background and achievements of the Kuige members, see R. David Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China*, 102-103, and Xie Yong, *Xinan lianda yu Zhongguo xiandai zhishifenzi* (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 101-102.

grove.”³⁶ The first floor had a kitchen and a dining area. The second floor, with desks, a table, and a few shelves of books and manuscripts, was the study and the discussion room for the researchers. The top floor had a wooden desk and a small desk where Fei Xiaotong did all his work. Fei’s work space was so narrow that if three people were present at the same time they could barely turn around.³⁷

Kuige was not only a work station; the methodology applied there also represented an ideal model of academia Fei Xiaotong wanted to foster in China. Fei Xiaotong implemented the scholarship and the academic tradition he learnt from Malinowski in the department of anthropology at the London School of Economics. Each researcher conducted his own fieldwork in a selected community in accordance with his chosen topic. Seminars were held regularly to discuss the findings. The researcher then would produce a final field report or an academic essay. Fei Xiaotong was convinced that “the benefit of such research method is enormous. It not only inspires personal creativity but also collective performance.”³⁸ For the researchers who were still students, Fei was not only the director but also a non-conventional teacher who encouraged academic freedom but never hesitated to provide necessary advice and methodological training. Hu Qingjun, a 1942 sociology graduate of Qinghua who had assisted Rui Yifu’s research in southern Sichuan, worked part-time at Kuige and was

³⁶ Quoted in R. David Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China*, 100.

³⁷ Hu Qingjun, “Fei Xiaotong ji qi yanjiu gongzuo,” *Guancha*, 4:22-23 (1948): 23.

³⁸ Fei Xiaotong and Zhang Zhiyi, *Yunnan sancun* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1990), 4.

deeply impressed by the scholarly atmosphere at Kuige under Fei's leadership. Hu thought there were four elements to the "Kuige spirit" Fei helped to nourish: freedom of research inquiry, respect for individual performance, open discussion (seminars), and shared comradeship.³⁹

Despite material scarcity, the Kuige researchers devoted themselves to fieldwork and formed intimate intellectual bonds with each other. The limited budget did not allow the team to hire secretaries or assistants, and the researchers had to hand copy and mimeograph their seminar material and manuscripts.⁴⁰ They had to make their own cotton wicks for the kerosene lamps used at night.⁴¹ The researchers suffered from insufficient diet and once the whole team was infected with dysentery.⁴² Their fieldwork was not always smooth either. Fei Xiaotong described how once hostile villagers put the researchers in a "haunted" house with dying horses.⁴³ But the spirit of the research team was high. The members strongly believed in their mission to acquire knowledge of social science that was necessary for the reconstruction of China. And their camaraderie grew stronger in shared hardship.

³⁹ Hu Qingjun, "Fei Xiaotong ji qi yanjiu gongzuo," 23.

⁴⁰ Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, xii.

⁴¹ Liu Haoxing, "Fei Xiaotong shehuixue xueshu sixiang pingshu," *Zhongguo shehui kexue*, 3 (1988): 157.

⁴² Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, xiii.

⁴³ *Ibid*, xii.

By the end of the war, the Kuige team had produced more than ten monographs, most of which were then translated into English and published in the United States.⁴⁴ The soul of the team, Fei Xiaotong, undoubtedly provided brilliant guidance and inspiration. But the Kuige experience would not have been possible without the war and the frontier. Away from the protection of the ivory tower, with no access to libraries, and no connection to foreign intellectual networks, the Kuige researchers had to adopt what David Arkush has called “guerilla tactics”: to engage in firsthand observation and to solve problems by collective discussions.⁴⁵ Fei Xiaotong admitted that it was the war that has provided the long-awaited stimulus needed for sociologists and anthropologists to integrate theory into Chinese reality.⁴⁶ The research of the Kuige focused on the rural economy and cultural practices of the non-Han. Their methodology combined Malinowski's functional approach and Radcliffe-Brown's comparative method of classification and taxonomy. Rural villages and non-Han communities in the frontier Yunnan were the ideal laboratory for testing the theory and establishing systematic and scientific knowledge of “China.” Their devotion to the indigenization of anthropology

⁴⁴ According to Arkush, the original Chinese versions were only circulated in mimeograph and were not as well known to the Chinese public as their English translations were to the Western readers. See Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong*, 102. To list a few of the English versions: three studies on the rural economy by Fei Xiaotong and Zhang Zhiyi were combined in *Earthbound China*; Shi Guoheng's study on labor in Yunnan was translated as *China Enters the Machine Age* (1944); and Francis Hsu's book *Magic and Science in Western Yunnan* (1943). For a full list of the publications, see Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, x-xi.

⁴⁵ Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong*, 101.

⁴⁶ Fei Xiaotong. “Zhongguo shehuixue de chengzhang,” *Shehui yanjiu (Yishi bao)* (Sept. 18, 1947). Reprinted in Fei Xiaotong, *Fei Xiaotong wenji*, Volume 5 (Beijing: Qunyan chuban she, 1999), 413.

was accompanied by a nationalistic conviction that their academic mission was tied to the fate of their people and the nation. For the Kuige scholars, the remote frontier Yunnan provided a microscopic view of the more “primitive” and under-developed China. But the war-time frontier was not only a subject of research; it made the scholars experience the real poverty and hardships of the masses. The war-time frontier, Fei Xiaotong once said, nurtured the “moral enlightenment which comes with the realization of one’s part in the community, in the nation, and in the age.”⁴⁷ It fostered the intellectual maturity of the Kuige scholars.

The Kuige spirit represents one example of war-time scholarship that stresses hardship and strives for the pursuit of knowledge under strenuous circumstances while at the same time romanticizing the subject of study. The frontier non-Han society was portrayed as a lost paradise in which all the vices and sins of civilization could be redeemed. Tian Rukang⁴⁸ described his great affection for the Mang Town (*Mangshi*), a Baiyi (Dai)village on the border with Burma, where he spent ten months for fieldwork, “I simply cannot find any defect in Mangshi; I am crazily in love with her, just like she is my very first love.”⁴⁹ Tian’s study of the Baiyi society focused on the Bai, a collective term for six specific religious activities performed to worship Buddha, and their social

⁴⁷ Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, xii.

⁴⁸ Tian Rukang (1916-2006) was a native of Kunming. He joined the Kuige in 1940 after graduated from Xinan Lianda. He worked full-time at Kuige and was later recommended by Fei Xiaotong to study at the LSE. Tian received a PhD in anthropology in 1948.

⁴⁹ Tian Rukang, “Yi Mang shi: biandi wenhua de sumiao,” *Lüxing zazhi*, 17:3 (March 1943): 115.

functions.⁵⁰ Malinowski's influence was obvious.⁵¹ Tian classified the cultural activities of the local Baiyi into Bai and non-Bai cults, and only the former were both religious and collective. In order to preserve a seat in heaven in the afterlife, different households sponsored activities including ceremonies, singing, dancing, feasting, and theatrical performances that lasted for days. The householders also had to prepare offerings for the temple. Tian first provided an exhaustive ethnographic account of various Bai cults and then attempted to understand why such extravagant and excessive activities, considered by outsiders to be superstitious, would be an essential part of social life in a relatively poor frontier society. Tian concluded the Bai cults, like religious performances found elsewhere, had a positive and active social function that not only offered the participants temporary liberation from social norms but also helped maintain social order and kept the wealth disparity in balance. Tian believed that the Bai cults were the secret that had made the Baiyi community a paradise where the society was tranquil and peaceful, everyday life was enchanting, and the looks of the people were natural and graceful.⁵²

⁵⁰ Tian Rukang, *Mang shi bianmin de Bai* (Chongqing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1946). Reprinted in 2008 by Yunnan renmin chubanshe. The research became the basis of his dissertation, "Religious Cults and Social Structure of the Shan States of Yunnan-Burma Frontier." Part of it was published in *American Anthropologist* (15:1) in 1949 under the title, "Pai Cults and Social Age in the Tai Tribes of the Yunnan-Burma Frontier." The dissertation was finally published as a monograph, entitled *Religious Cults of the Pai-i along the Burma-Yunnan Border*, by Cornell University Press in 1986.

⁵¹ Tian had cited Malinowski's *Wenhua lun* a few times. Malinowski gave Wu Wenzao his unpublished manuscript during the latter's visit in 1936. Fei Xiaotong translated it into Chinese and Wu had it published in the title *Wenhua lun* [What is Culture] in China in 1944. Before its publication, the majority of the translation had already appeared in newspaper columns and journals in the later 1930s. See Arkush, 327. The book contains the core concepts of Malinowski's functionalism and had a great impact on the Chinese functionalists.

⁵² Tian Rukang, *Mang shi bianmin de Bai*, 100.

“The Bai cults are not nonsense, nor are they foolish and extravagant activities,” Tian was convinced, “we should feel grateful that such creative wisdom of humankind survives in this remote place full of swamps and poisonous gases. Maybe these cults could offer us a blueprint in remaking our own world in the future.”⁵³

The Yunnan frontier also appeared in the research of the Kuige as a representation of the “primitive” China. Fei Xiaotong had described Yunnan as the “cultural laboratory par excellence” because the villages outside Kunming remained relatively untouched by modernization and offered an abundance of cases allowing the sociologist to observe the exoticism and the relics of the past, which stood in stark contrast to the modernizing Kunming.⁵⁴ Fei even compared these villages to Malinowski’s Trobriand Islands:

Here the old order is still dominant. On market day we meet hundreds of womenfolk in colorful and exotic costumes, coming down from the mountains where aboriginal communities live peacefully. If we follow them back to their own villages, we can be entertained in the “bachelor house,” a place reminiscent of that described by Malinowski in his Trobriand material; and we will find tabooed quarters where the ancestors’ ashes are kept. In a single day we will have traveled from Polynesia to New York. If one is a sociologist, one cannot fail to be excited by the opportunity for a comparative study of cultural types and for analyzing the process of cultural change.⁵⁵

It was in Yunnan’s villages that Fei was able to test what he had learnt from Malinowski and where he attempted to build a systematic structural understanding of China’s rural economy. Fei Xiaotong conducted research with Zhang Zhiyi, a 1939 Qinghua sociology graduate and a full-time researcher of Kuige, on peasant life in three villages in Yunnan

⁵³ Ibid, 104.

⁵⁴ Fei Xiaotong, “Introduction,” in *Earthbound China*, 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 9.

between 1938 and 1943.⁵⁶ Community studies focuses on the microcosm of society, and Fei Xiaotong was hoping to study enough villages and to taxonomize them as “types” in order to construct the macrocosm of Chinese society. Fei classified these three villages into three types: Lucun had only traditional agricultural activities; Yicun’s economy relied on agriculture and small industry; and Yucun was less isolated and had begun to be affected by modern technology and thus to develop toward tenancy and absentee landlordism.⁵⁷ Fei then compared these three types with Kaixiangong, the earlier study he had done in his hometown in Jiangsu. He contended that “the four types, put together, show the process of economic development going on in rural China today.”⁵⁸ In other words, as David Arkush has cogently pointed out, Fei’s approach assumes “there was only one type of Chinese village with differences being simply a matter of time – that Kaixiangong had once been like Lu-cun and Lu-cun would become like Kaixiangong.”⁵⁹ Without taking into consideration regional differences, Fei’s unilineal approach was not too much different from the evolutionist view Cen Jiawu had applied in his study of the southwestern non-Han societies.

Fei Xiaotong’s earlier study on Kaixiangong was praised by Malinowski as “a landmark in anthropological field-work and theory,” for it was a pioneering study done by “a native among natives.” Was the study on frontier Yunnan by Fei and his Kuige

⁵⁶ The research results were then translated into English by Fei and published as *Earthbound China: A Study of Rural Economy in Yunnan* in America in 1945.

⁵⁷ The three villages were composed mainly of Han settlers and a small population of non-Han indigenes.

⁵⁸ Fei Xiaotong, *Earthbound China*, 206.

⁵⁹ David Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong*, 91.

colleagues less significant because they now turned to study the “exotic other” just like their Western mentors and peers did with the tribal people in their colonies? Fei Xiaotong had clearly defended his position when he attempted to enunciate the relations between the Han anthropologist and his non-Han subject:

There are only three field studies I have done in my life that could be qualified as anthropological fieldwork: the first took place in the Yao Mountain in Guangxi (1935), the second was in the Jiangcun (Kaixiangong) in Jiangsu, and the third was in Lucun in Yunnan. All three could be said to be research done by a Chinese about Chinese culture and society. Although I was studying the Yao from a Han perspective in my first research, I was neither studying my indigenous culture nor the culture of “the other.” The truth is, I am a part of my subject and my subject a part of me (*ni zhong you wo, wo zhong you ni*). I would also say that our similarities outnumber our differences. In other words, although the Han and the Yao are two separate ethnic groups, they share a lot in social and cultural life. This is the distinct feature of research on Chinese minority nationalities: the degree of similarity and difference between ethnic groups cannot be simply identified as “indigenous culture” (*ben wenhua*) versus “the culture of the other” (*yi wenhua*).⁶⁰

Fei Xiaotong had rejected Gu Jiegang’s conceptualization of China as one single *minzu* in the debate of 1939 in favor of the multi-*minzu* model. However he never denied the unity of China. The belief that the non-Han were an inseparable part of the historical and cultural China was strongly held by other Kuige members as well. Tian Rukang had no doubt considered his study of the Baiyi as an anthropological study of the “Chinese:” he claimed that “the Baiyi see themselves as Chinese (*Zhongguoren*), and we acknowledge them to be an excellent clan (*zongzu*) with long history on China’s southwestern border.”⁶¹ Francis L. K. Hsu’s study, *Under the Ancestors’ Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality*, provides an extreme example. Hsu was Fei’s classmate at the London

⁶⁰ Fei, *Lun renleixue yu wenhua zijue*, 84-85.

⁶¹ Tian Rukang, *Mangshi*, 1.

School of Economics. He returned to China in 1941 and was affiliated with Kuige. Hsu's research focuses on the family structure and ancestral worship and their influence on personality in West Town (Xizhou in Dali). The people of West Town belong to the Minjia ethnicity (today's Bai) that had been acculturated to the Han culture since the Ming but still kept the Minjia language as their mother tongue. According to Hsu, "West Towners not only are Chinese in culture but also tend to insist that they are more Chinese in some respects than the Chinese in many other parts of China."⁶² Perhaps Hsu was given such an impression by the much sinicized Minjia elite, like those who appeared in Rui Yifu's study of Xuyong. We might also assume that the non-Han people did not insist on strong ethnic identity at the time, as they do today. Yet, Hsu ignored the more idiosyncratically indigenous aspects of the Minjia cultural practices, such as matrilineal marriages and local religious rites and festivals, and only stressed the much sinicized familial and ancestral practices and claim that "the essential social structure of the community I have studied is typical of China as a whole."⁶³ It is in such ways that the Kuige scholars' social anthropological research on the frontier and non-Han communities claimed to be a new phase of anthropology written by "the native among the natives"; and the frontier thus symbolically become an inseparable part of China.

⁶² Francis L.K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited).

⁶³ Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*, vii. The lacking of appreciation for the Minjia indigenous culture was also criticized by E.R. Leach. See E.R. Leach, *Social Anthropology* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 126-7. A good contrast to Hsu's account of the Minjia in Dali is the contemporary ethnological study by C.P. Fitzgerald, in which Minjia was portrayed as a people who had been influenced by the Han but kept a distinct ethnic and cultural identity. See C.P. Fitzgerald, *The Tower of Five Glories: A Study of the Min Chia of Ta Li, Yunnan* (London: The Cresset Press, 1941).

The Kuige was dissolved after the end of the war in 1945 when most members left Yunnan to pursue their study or work elsewhere. Francis L.K. Hsu migrated to America and the rest stayed in China after 1949. Fei Xiaotong participated in the ethnic identification project in the 1950s and remained an important figure in the new Soviet-oriented discipline of ethnology. According to David Arkush, the other Kuige members more or less “dropped out of sight.”⁶⁴ However the aura of the Kuige scholarship lingers. The Kuige spirit has caught the attention of Chinese scholars today who lament the bygone era of an ideal prototype of “modern Chinese scholarship.”⁶⁵ Wang Mingming praises Kuige scholars as the new generation of “Chinese intelligentsia” who were a hybrid of Western academia and Chinese traditional intellectual values: they were influenced by Western thoughts but were determined to establish the indigenized alternative; they followed the tradition of the Ming Qing scholars to form network as the basis for scholarly pursuit and were content to ground themselves in the tranquil landscape of rural China. The Kuige scholars carried out penetrating field research in anthropology that provides foreign scholars an opportunity to probe into Chinese society

⁶⁴ Arkush, 103.

⁶⁵ The recent interest in Kuige has led to a fad of “revisiting” the Kuixingge temple as well as the places where Fei Xiaotong and his colleagues conducted their fieldworks. The temple has become a new tourist site and is now reconstructed. New anthropological studies on Lucun, the West Town, and Mangshi have also been produced so as to bring new interpretations to the old works. Anthropologist Wang Mingming and sociologist Pan Naigu (Pan Guangdan’s daughter) edited a volume entitled *Chonggui “Kuige”* (Return to “Kuige”) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2005). The book contains memoirs by the Kuige members about their Kuige experience as well as articles on Kuige by recent scholars.

from a different angle; and it was the work of the Kuige scholars that had a great impact on the work of later sinological anthropologists, such as Maurice Freedman.⁶⁶

Li Anzhai and Applied Anthropology in Sichuan

After the outbreak of the war in 1937, unprecedented effort and energy had been devoted to understanding and developing the frontier societies by both scholars and the Guomindang government, as if the frontier had become vital to China's national redemption and survival. Li Anzhai and his colleagues at the West China Union University in Chengdu turned to a more practical approach to the indigenization of anthropology, developing the frontier social work method that combined the techniques of applied anthropology - a relatively new branch of anthropology primarily developed as a means to assist the indirect rule of native populations in the British colonies or to deal with the native Amerindians in the American West - with work in cultural missions, experimented with in Mexico by the nationalists after the Revolution to modernize the rural areas. Their work on the frontier was also oriented toward constructing a new China founded on the ideology of multi-ethnic nationalism. As a result, the knowledge these scholars acquired of the frontier Tibetan society and their rich experience in frontier construction during the war later became a crucial aid for the CCP's annexation of Tibet in 1950.

The Frontier Discourse

⁶⁶ Wang Mingming, "Kuige de guoke," *Chonggui Kuige*, 96-99.

The process of indigenizing anthropology and the effort of frontier construction as part of the wartime nation-building project gave the frontier multiple meanings: it was the microcosm of greater China, and its fate was inevitably critical to China's survival; it was an ideal laboratory that provided ample materials for the experimentation in Chinese anthropology; it was also a land for spiritual purification and the redemption of the intellectuals from the interior (*neidi*). The GMD's attitude toward the frontier was quite laissez-faire, and it was only during the war that the party demonstrated a real intention to incorporate it into its nation-building effort.⁶⁷ Indeed, frontier governance and development was at the forefront of GMD wartime policy making. In its Outline for Frontier Administration, the Central Committee called for collaboration between the government and scholars on frontier development: "We will launch institutions to study frontier affairs and invite academic specialists to collect data and make proposals for the development of the frontier (*bianjiang jianshe*). Their research product will be incorporated into our policy-making consideration, and will promote interest in frontier construction."⁶⁸ To promote communication with the frontier population, in 1941 the Office of Frontier Party Affairs of the Central Organization Bureau established the Frontier Languages Compilation and Translation Committee in Chongqing. Its mission was to translate and introduce important Chinese literature and official policy announcements into the frontier languages, such as Mongolian and Tibetan. "It is to make the frontier fellow citizens understand the considerations of the central government

⁶⁷ See Hsiao-ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928-1949* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006) and James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: How the Qing Frontier and the Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 51-79.

⁶⁸ Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo minzuxue shi*, 221.

and to familiarize them with our traditional culture and the modern world; it will also translate works by frontier writers into Chinese and introduce frontier culture to the people in the interior.”⁶⁹ Zhu Jiahua, the head of the Central Organization Bureau, invited Gu Jiegang to be the provisional vice-director of the Committee.⁷⁰

In 1941 the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission established the Society for the Study of Chinese Frontier Affairs (*Zhongguo bianzheng xuehui*). Wu Zhongxin, the head of the Commission, was elected as the director and Wu Wenzao was the vice-director. Many anthropologists and sociologists joined the Society, and Li Anzhai was elected as one of the trustees. The launching of the Society promoted the institutionalization of the newly developed discipline, the study of frontier affairs (*bianzhengxue*). Wu Wenzao defined *bianzhengxue* as “the science of studying the political thought, facts, institution, and administration of the frontier people.”⁷¹ The Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission also published a journal, *Bianzheng gonglun* (Frontier Affairs), which included academic articles of the frontier research, discussions of how to practice frontier fieldwork and solve frontier social problems, and reports on the general situation of the frontier. Many universities followed up by establishing departments of *bianzhengxue* or by offering classes on studies of *bianzheng*.⁷² Even Fu

⁶⁹ Zhu Jiahua, *Bianjiang wenti yu bianjiang gongzuo* [Frontier issues and frontier work] (Zhongyang zuzhi bu bianjiang yuwen bianyi wei yuan hui, 1942), 1

⁷⁰ Zhao Xia, “Gu Jiegang xiansheng dui bianjiang wenti de shijian yu yanjiu” [Gu Jiegang’s Research and Practice of the Frontier Question] *Beijing shehui kexue*, no.4 (2002): 122.

⁷¹ Wu Wenzao, “Bianzheng xue fafan” in *Bianzheng gonglun*, no.5 & 6 (1942), 6.

⁷² These included the Zhongyang Zhengzhi xuexiao (Central Political School), Xibei daxue (Northwest University) and Zhongyang daxue (National Central University).

Sinian, who had insisted that scholarship should not serve politics, now admitted that the frontier reports gathered by the researchers of the Institute of History and Philology could offer much insight for governance.⁷³

The need to implement proper governance of the frontier pushed anthropological research of the frontier in a more pragmatic direction. The approach of applied anthropology answered such need. Wu Wenzao suggested, “Applied anthropology is mainly used in the West today to aid colonial administration, colonial education, colonial social welfare, and colonial cultural transformation. While in China, from a different perspective, applied anthropology will help our *frontier* governance, *frontier* education, *frontier* social welfare, and *frontier* cultural transformation. (italics added)”⁷⁴ Although applied anthropology aiming at aiding Chinese frontier governance was mainly adopted for pragmatic reasons, the very applicability of Western colonial applied anthropology to China’s frontier affairs shows the asymmetrical power relations between the Han center and the non-Han frontier. Yet, it is also crucial to note that Wu’s insistence on replacing the “colony” with “frontier” in describing China’s situation reveals the unwillingness of these intellectuals to see themselves as part of the Han colonial power. Perhaps it was their own intellectual commitment to the cause of the anti-colonial indigenization of anthropology and their political opposition to Japanese imperialism that deceived them about the nature of their own relationship with their frontier object. In any case, with the launching and promotion of *bianzhengxue*, the “frontier” was reinterpreted and naturalized as a quintessentially national space. This also reflects a great methodological

⁷³ Wang Jianmin, *Zhongguo minzuxue shi*, 269.

⁷⁴ Wu Wenzao, “Bianzheng xue fafan,” 2.

difference between the British functionalists, such as Malinowski, and the Chinese functionalists described here. While the former were mainly interested in understanding the functionality of culture in human societies, the latter aimed ultimately at the pragmatic application of such functionality, or more explicitly, at what anthropology could offer for national unity.

Li Anzhai was one of the few scholars who specialized in both Tibetology and the anthropology of the Tibetan community. He had done extensive fieldwork in Labrang of Xiahe County in Gansu from 1938 to 1941. It was part of a project in which Yanjing cooperated with the Center for Science Education (Kexue jiaoyu guan) in Gansu to promote Tibetan culture, as well as social anthropological fieldwork. Li's research, his first major field research after returning to China from America, focused on Tibetan Buddhism and the functions religion assumed in Tibetan society. He employed ethnographical techniques he learned from his American mentors and applied the functionalist approach to reappraise the role religion played in maintaining the Tibetan community. He obtained data on Tibetan cultural performances and daily practices through living with local Tibetans and directly participating in their religious events. Li and his wife, Yu Shiyu, adopted Tibetan names, dressed in Tibetan costumes, and mastered the Tibetan language.⁷⁵ Yu became Li's assistant and even established a girls' elementary school in Labrang to promote local education.⁷⁶ Their field research lasted

⁷⁵ Wang Xianmei, "The Intellectuals who Were Not Intimidated by The 3000-mile Traveling on Horse Back to the Frontier – in Memory of Professors Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu" in *China Tibetology*. No.4 (2004): 129. The degree of nativization that Li Anzhai and his wife were committed was striking.

⁷⁶ Yu Shiyu, "Labuleng banxue ji," *Bianjiang fuwu*, 4 (1943): 9-12. For a description of Li and Yu's educational enterprise in Labrang, see Andres Rodriguez,

for three years, the longest anthropological fieldwork that contemporary Chinese scholars had ever conducted.⁷⁷ The research data was compiled into a report of 200,000 words entitled *The Research Report of the Labrang Monastery* (or *Zangzu zongjiaoshi zhi shidi kaocha*, *Field Research on the History of Tibetan Religion*).⁷⁸ It was the first particular and detailed observation of the social and cultural practice of Tibetan Buddhism in the Labrang Monastery, one of six great monasteries of the Geluk School (*huangjiao*) and the largest Tibetan temple outside of Tibet. Tibetan Buddhism was a religion that dominated every aspect of Tibetan society, and Li treated Labrang Monastery as a community, a public space, and the center of Tibetan local life. He suggested that the temple, as the political, economic, and cultural institution of local life, should be studied and re-evaluated in order to understand its power in manipulating local politics. He also described lucidly how the Buddhist educational system functioned within the temple and how knowledge was disseminated in Tibetan society as a whole. His report was, however, also marked by a nationalistic commitment to study the frontier for national construction and frontier development during wartime. True socio-anthropological

“Building the Nation, Serving the Frontier: Mobilizing and Reconstructing China’s Borderlands during the War of Resistance (1937–1945),” *Modern Asian Studies*, 45:2 (2011): 352-359.

⁷⁷ Li also received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation for his research in Xiahe. However, Wu Wenzao, who was in charge of the Foundation’s allocation in China, cancelled Li’s funding in 1941 and gave it to his own protégé Lin Yaohua. For episodes on how personal connections determined funding and research opportunities, see Chiang, *Social Engineering*.

⁷⁸ Li Anzhai, *Zangzu zongjiaoshi zhi shidi yanjiu* [Field Research on the History of Tibetan Religion] (Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1989). Li published several articles drawn from his research in major journals dedicated to frontier studies in the 1940s. His research report, as a whole, was not published until the 1980s.

appreciation of Tibetan monasticism as a multi-functional social system, instead of only a religious belief system, Li argued, was crucial to establish knowledge of frontier studies and would enormously benefit frontier social reform.⁷⁹

Li Anzhai was hired by West China Union University (*Huaxi xiehe daxue*) in Chengdu as the head of the sociology department in 1941.⁸⁰ He founded the *Huaxi bianjiang yanjiu suo* (Institute of West China Frontier Research) in 1942 and received support from the Viking Fund.⁸¹ Famous Tibetanists Ren Naiqiang and Paul Sherap were invited to work as researchers. Yu Shiyu also became an instructor of Tibetan. They later organized the *Kang zang yanjiu she* (Research Society of Xikang and Tibet). Because of the vibrant scholarly activities of frontier studies, the remote town of Huaxiba where the West China Union University was located was called “the center of Chinese ethnology” by contemporaries.⁸²

Despite scarcity in funding, in 1944 Li Anzhai and Ren Naiqiang, along with their students, managed to conduct further field research on Tibetan Buddhism in north Kham (Xikang). In their six month research period, they visited all Buddhist temples in the area

⁷⁹ Li Anzhai, *Li Anzhai Zangxuewenlun xuan* [Selections of Li Anzahi's Works on Tibetology] (Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, 1990), 202.

⁸⁰ During the war, the campus of the WCUU was shared by four other missionary schools that had moved to Chengdu: Yanjing (Beijing), Jinling (Nanjing), Jinling Women's College (Nanjing), and Qilu (Jinan).

⁸¹ Ren Yimin ed., *Sichuan renwu zhuan*, 323. The Viking Fund was established in 1941 by Axel Leonard Wenner-Gren, the wealthy Swedish entrepreneur, to promote and support anthropological research worldwide. It was later renamed the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

⁸² Wang Mingming, *Zhongguo minzuxue shi*, 218.

and interviewed local villagers and administrators (*tusi*). At the end of the trip, they brought back rare Tibetan sutras from the famous Derge Parkhang sutra-printing house (*Dege jingyuan*).⁸³ Li published several important articles on Xikang local history and population distribution, and an analysis of Tibetan Buddhist sects.⁸⁴ Owen Lattimore once praised Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu as the leading pioneers in frontier studies and in the analysis of monasticism as the central institution of Tibetan communities.⁸⁵ Li's research on Tibetan Buddhism aroused international scholarly interest in Tibetology. It was also of great value for administrators in policy making and frontier governance, for it often provided detailed demographic data of the frontier communities and the interaction between the local Han and the non-Han residents.

Like the Kuige scholars, Li Anzhai romanticized the rural and ethnic Tibetan region as the exotic and feminized land of purity. The precipitous mountains or the burning deserts that shaped the unique frontier culture were no longer seen as obstacles keeping people away from it. On the contrary, Li contended, the geographical difficulty could be advantageous in training field researchers. Furthermore, being in an unfamiliar cultural environment would stimulate researchers to discover more problems, something that could not be achieved if they conducted their research in interior communities. For a romantic anthropologist like Li, it was only through the challenge of the precarious and

⁸³ For the study of the establishment of the Derge Parkhang, see Cynthia Col, *Picturing the Canon, the Murals, Sculpture and Architecture of the Derge Parkhang*, Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2009.

⁸⁴ Luo Runcang, "Kangzhan qijian Sichuan zangxue yanjiu gaishu" *Zhongguo zangxue*, 3 (1996): 19.

⁸⁵ Owen Lattimore, "Some Recent Inner Asian Studies," *Pacific Affairs*, 20:3 (Sep., 1947): 319.

changing nature of the frontier that one's soul could be purified and transcended. He compared the frontier to a passionate, vivacious girl, "when she is happy, you could go crazy with her and be intoxicated by the power of love...when she is angry, you would be tortured by the ordeal."⁸⁶ He described his own experience traveling in the Amdo Tibetan region where he came across drizzle, heavy rain, gales, hail, and a beautiful sunset during one single day.⁸⁷ It is most revealing how Li feminized the frontier, but bestowed her an active and conducting role in the relationship with the male anthropologist.

Like Wu Wenzao and Fei Xiaotong, Li Anzhai believed that the interior and the frontier should be unified under the banner of multi-ethnic nationalism, multi-culturalism, and modernization. Citizenship would be applied to all people, and industrial development would improve the livelihood of the frontier societies. Li asserted:

Everybody enjoys the same rights and obligations as a citizen in the era of *Sanmin zhuyi* (Three People's Principles). We will have both a unified national language and different local dialects; we will bolster a central ideology (*zhongxin sixiang*) while still believing in different religions; we are all Chinese (*Zhonghua minzu*) only different in origins; we will have unified institutions and laws while practicing different customs.⁸⁸

Li's proposal for the unification of the interior and the frontier chose the middle way between chauvinistic Han assimilationist nationalism and frontier autonomy.⁸⁹ It is more

⁸⁶ Li Anzhai, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo* [*Frontier Social Work*] (Zhonghua Shuju, 1944), 8.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁹ For a discussion among contemporary scholars on whether the frontier should

like the model of a federalist republic. Instead of the sinicization of the frontier by the interior, Li preferred a “cultural dialogue” (*wenhua goutong*) between the two.⁹⁰

Although the Tibetan traditions needed to be modernized, the solution was not to impose the Han way. Instead, Li argued, Han society had much to learn from Tibetan culture. A synthesis was necessary, and it could be drawn from objective and penetrating research into the frontier society from the angle of modern anthropology.⁹¹

Li’s belief that multi-ethnic nationalism, instead of ethnic separation, best served China’s wartime situation might have also been reinforced by his encounter with famous minority “nationalists.” During their stay in Labrang, the Lis became good friends with Huang Zhengqing, the Guomindang-appointed military commander of Xiahe County, and his brother, the fifth Jamyang Zhepa, the highest religious authority at the Labrang Monastery. The Huang brothers, of Tibetan ethnicity, maintained a close relationship with the Guomindang and were promoters of wartime nationalism.⁹² In 1943, Jamyang

be autonomous or remained in the status quo, see “Bianjiang zizhi yu wenhua zuotan hui” (Symposium on the Frontier Autonomy and Culture), *Bianzheng gonglun*, 6:2 (1947): 1-8.

⁹⁰ Li Anzhai, *Li Anzhai Zangxuewenlun xuan*, 108.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁹² Their father of the Huang brothers, Gonpo Dondrup, served as the local *baozheng* (headman of the *baojia* system) of Liang, Sichuan, in the early Republican period and adopted Huang as his surname. Huang Zhengqing’s Tibetan name was Apa Alo. In 1920, he accompanied his younger brother, who was found as the fifth Jamyang Zhepa in 1916, to Labrang. Huang Zhengqing assumed the head of the Labrang Tibetan militia in 1928 and maintained the joint rule of Labrang with his brother until the latter died in 1947. Despite his relationship with the GMD, Huang decided to change his camp and rallied his army to welcome the arrival of the PLA at the Communist takeover. After 1949, Huang received high positions in the Gansu government, such as the vice governor of Gansu and the vice chairman of the Gansu Committee of the CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference). He is regarded by the Communist histories

Zhaypa donated money to the Guomindang for the purchase of thirty planes to support the war effort.⁹³

Li Anzhai's American mentors and his experience with the Amerindians influenced his idea of multi-culturalism. The training in cultural anthropology under the guidance of Kroeber, Lowe, and Sapir, who were leading scholars in the study of Native American societies, equipped Li Anzhai not only with rich ethnographical field experience, but also a cultural relativist approach to the society of "the other." While at Berkeley, Li spent three months living with a native Zuni family in New Mexico and completed an ethnological survey focusing on the structural development of the Zuni's matrilineal system.⁹⁴ Although still a neophyte in the field, Li did not hesitate to point out flaws he found in the leading views on Zuni's religion of established anthropologists Ruth Benedict and Ruth Bunzel, who remarked that Zuni religion was formalistic, mechanic, and lacking in personal reference.⁹⁵ Li criticized such a notion as partial and prejudiced by the researchers' own Eurocentric view of religion. He argued that anthropologists tended to forget the intricacies of cultural forms and thus made reductionist assumptions about the observed society. Christian church services could be

as a model ethnic minority.

⁹³ Wang Guoxin, "Zangzu renmin dui kangri zhanzheng de gongxian" (The Contribution of the Tibetan People to the War of Resistance), *Xizang ribao* (The Tibetan Daily) (20 August 2005). The truthfulness of this anecdote is questionable, though.

⁹⁴ It is not surprising that Li chose to study Zuni: his advisor Kroeber was a Zuni expert.

⁹⁵ Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston, 1934) and Ruth L. Bunzel, "Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism; Zuni Origin Myths; Zuni Ritual Poetry; Zuni Katcinas" (Forty-seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1932): 467-1086.

repetitive and highly formalistic, Li contended, but no Western anthropologists would conclude that Christian practices lacked “the spontaneous outpouring of the heart.”⁹⁶ He further cautioned against researchers using their own cultural criteria to evaluate others. Li’s experience with the Zuni played an important role in his future commitment to a more “indigenous centered” approach to anthropology.

Li’s ample experience with the frontier made him the perfect candidate for the GMD effort for the frontier development. In the early 1940s, he worked for the Ministry of Education as a commissioner to examine the condition of education practiced in the frontier regions of Sichuan, Xikang, and Gansu. He examined the existing administration of frontier education, school education, social education, monastery education, and other related cultural practices. He also made several suggestions for frontier educational reform: improving local short-term elementary schools; raising the salary of teachers; promoting Mandarin and the phonetic system; and increasing the enrollment of ethnic minority students.⁹⁷ However, few of Li’s proposals were ever put into practice. This was not only because the wartime GMD government was unable to allocate resources to carry out the grandiose frontier policy, but ultimately, perhaps, because Chiang Kai-shek considered Tibet, as well as other frontier peripheries, more a buffer zone than an

⁹⁶ Li Anzhai, “Zuni: Some Observations and Queries,” *American Anthropologist*, 39:1 (1937): 64. Li was mocking Ruth Bunzel who made a comment on Zuni prayer to be “not a spontaneous outpouring of the heart.” See Ruth Bunzel, “Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism; Zuni Origin Myths; Zuni Ritual Poetry; Zuni Katcinas” in *Forty-seventh Annual Report* (Bureau of American Ethnology, 1932): 493. Li Anzhai was the first Chinese anthropologist who conducted field research on a society outside of China. Not only was his study published in the prestigious *American Anthropologist*, but it also became one of the standard anthropological pieces of Zuni studies.

⁹⁷ Wang, *Zhongguo minzuxue shi*, 273.

integrated part of China's territory.⁹⁸

Frontier Social Work

After years of working as a frontier social worker, Li Anzhai was asked by the Social Department of the Nationalist government to write a handbook providing guidelines for frontier social work. The book, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo* (Frontier Social Work), published in 1944, which included articles Li published in major journals dedicated to the study of the frontier, was an important summary facilitating our understanding of the theory and practice of Li's frontier social work, as well as his engagement in applied anthropology.

For Li, frontier social work should follow the methods of applied anthropology and procedures of social work. He criticized traditional frontier policies for being discriminatory against the frontier people by ignoring the need of their livelihood. Now under the rule of the Three People's Principles and the rhetoric of multi-ethnic harmony, the frontier people were equal to other citizens of the nation only in theory, while in reality they were at a disadvantage due to geographical barriers and cultural backwardness. Therefore, the frontier urgently needed the implementation of social work.

The best way to improve the frontier livelihood was, according to Li, to bring in modern industrial technology. However, Li disagreed with the "migration and cultivation" (*tunken*) project that the GMD proposed, as expressed by Zhu Jiahua in a speech about instruction on frontier issues and frontier work. Zhu claimed that the

⁹⁸ Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, 155.

pastoral economy was the cause of the frontier's backwardness and therefore should be replaced by intensive agriculture.⁹⁹ On the contrary, instead of transforming the frontier into arable land, Li asserted that a plan to industrialize the local pastoral economy would be more suitable to local development.¹⁰⁰ In Li's view the key need in the frontier reform was to modernize the frontier without making drastic changes to its unique cultural heritage. This was in line with his multi-ethnic, multi-cultural scheme for the New China.

At the core of Li Anzhai's model of frontier social work was his vision to combine scientific scholarly research with social reform and local administrative need. Therefore, his frontier social work included aspects of research, social service, and personnel training, which he called the "three-in-one method." Li was inspired by the experiment carried out in Tanganyika in 1928 by the British colonial administrator A.M. Hutt and the anthropologist Gordon Brown, who intended to find the most feasible way for the collaboration between colonial administration and anthropology.¹⁰¹ The project they later published, *Anthropology in Action*, was one of the pioneer works in applied anthropology. Perhaps Gordon Brown himself, who was a student of Malinowski and worked as the Superintendent of Education in Tanganyika while conducting ethnological research of the Hehe,¹⁰² also became a role model for Li Anzhai, who considered himself

⁹⁹ Zhu, *Bianjiang wenti yu bianjiang gongzuo*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Li, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo*, 4-5.

¹⁰¹ George M. Foster, *Applied Anthropology* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 192.

¹⁰² T. F. McIlwraith, "G. Gordon Brown, 1896-1955," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 60:3 (June 1958): 571-573.

an anthropologist-educator. Li's faith in the practicality of applied anthropology in frontier construction is revealed in his own assertion, "The three-in-one method of research, service, and training is derived from sociology and anthropology; it is applied science. Only the applied science can relieve people's sufferings and train multidisciplinary specialists."¹⁰³

Li's three-in-one model was also inspired by the famous "cultural missions" project in Mexican nation building during the post-revolutionary era. At the end of his studies in America in 1936, Li spent three months in Mexico observing rural programs there in the hope that the Mexican case "may more closely approximate conditions that he will meet in China."¹⁰⁴ He visited Tepoztlan, Yucatan, and Chan Kom and was impressed by the cultural mission programs carried out there. The cultural mission was an ambitious educational experiment aiming to bring civilization and progress to the rural areas and indigenous communities in order to integrate them into the broader Mexican nation. The mission groups were formed by six to eight people, including a group leader, an agricultural worker, a carpenter, a nurse, a social worker, a recreational director, a teacher, an artisan, and sometimes other professionals. These units traveled around from one school and community to another.¹⁰⁵ The priority of the mission was to achieve national unity through teaching the Spanish language and to introduce the villagers to

¹⁰³ Li, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo*, 54.

¹⁰⁴ Fellowship card of Li An-che, RG 10.2, Fellowship Cards, New China Program – H-SS, Rockefeller Archive Center.

¹⁰⁵ Wallace Woolsey, "Cultural Mission No. 53, San Pablo Huixtepec, Oaxaca," *The Modern Language Journal*, 48:1 (January 1964): 35-39.

modern knowledge and skills to improve their lives. Since their founding in the 1920s, the cultural missions had made great achievements in uplifting these communities.¹⁰⁶

Borrowing the framework of the Mexican cultural mission, Li proposed the formation of a “frontier cultural mission,” which included professional academic specialists, such as sociologists, anthropologists, geologists, biologists, industrial chemists, and philologists.¹⁰⁷ Qualified scholars could be recruited either from the Academia Sinica and universities, or directly from local frontier communities. These specialists would familiarize the frontier population with modern technology and science so they could manage to help themselves; at the same time, those researchers could continue their own scholarly work in the frontier, familiarize themselves with local culture and customs, and help train local youth to be the future social workers serving their own communities. Li proposed that the frontier cultural mission groups form the core institution of frontier development. The specialists should carry out an educational reform program by utilizing the available local temple or mosque resources. They should also form frontier local community centers, as well as mobile work teams, to bring civilization to the frontier in the way most relevant to the frontier lifestyle.¹⁰⁸ Compared to the original Mexican cultural missions, Li’s frontier cultural mission groups consisted of highly elite intellectual personnel. This might have been because of a practical concern to most efficiently employ the numerous intellectuals available at the frontier

¹⁰⁶ Devere Allen, “Cultural Missions Bringing Light to Mexican Masses” *Hispania*, 27:1 (February 1944): 69-70.

¹⁰⁷ Li, *Bianjiang shehui gongzuo*, 73.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 74-78.

during the war. But it perhaps reveals more of Li's personal commitment to frontier advancement. Ultimately, like the Mexican cultural missions, Li's frontier counterpart attempted to integrate the frontier "local" into the Chinese "national" through industrialism (*gongyehua*) and civic principles (*gongmin yuanze*), which most likely would benefit local development without hampering the growth of local culture.

As to the training of the social workers, Li suggested that the government should consign the task to those universities with frontier studies programs. The sociology department at West China Union University, under Li's own guidance, collaborated with the Chinese Society of Rural Construction in establishing the Shiyangchang Social Work Training Station in the rural area of Chengdu. The station intended to provide students from the cities with an environment that was similar to that of the frontier in order to familiarize them with varied material and cultural challenges confronted in the frontier. The sociology department and the Institute of West China Frontier Research took the lead in coordinating with other academic, governmental, and civic institutions to form a network that actively promoted frontier social work.¹⁰⁹ Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu also served as advisors for the Border Service Department under the Church of Christ in China to aid the organization's effort in training qualified social workers to promote education and to provide medical service in non-Han frontier communities.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ "Zai Sichuan tan bianjiang shegong" [Frontier Social Work in Sichuan], *Huaxi shegong*, 7 (30 November 1946): 25. These institutions included the Society for the Study of Chinese Frontier affairs, the Sichuan and Xikang Provincial Civil Service Training Regiments, the Border Service Department under the Church of Christ in China, etc.

¹¹⁰ Li Anzhai was the leading instructor for the training program of the student social workers for the *Liangshan kangzhan jianshe fuwu tuan* (The Wartime Service

Was Li Anzhai's frontier cultural mission and frontier social work similar to a top-down penetrating "civilizing project" initiated by the state to impose national ideology on the local? Here Chen Bo's view might provide a useful understanding of the differences. According to Chen, Li conceptualized the frontier and the interior as a dual structure. Unlike the unequal relationship between the center and the periphery, the dual structure promotes a mutual balance between the frontier and the interior.¹¹¹ Li strongly believed that the frontier urgently needed modernization and his frontier social work would assume the responsibility of supporting and helping the frontier to transform from inside out. It is important to understand that both Li's frontier-center approach to modernization and his dual structure were envisioned with the ultimate objectives of achieving national unity and ethnic integration. Wartime nationalism largely shaped Li's scholarship.

Li Anzhai and Tibet

By the end of the war, the GMD and the Han Chinese had achieved their greatest influence in Tibet since 1911. However, as Hsiao-ting Lin suggests, the GMD never came up with a clear and reasonable Tibet strategy. "[I]nconsistency and contradiction

Mission for Construction in the Liang Mountains) in 1945. See "Liangshan fuwu tuan chufa qianhou," *Bianjiang fuwu*, 2 (1945): 3.

¹¹¹ Chen Bo, *Li Anzhai yu Huaxi xuanpai renleixue* [Li Anzhai and the West China School of Anthropology] (Chengdu: Sichuan chuban jituan Bashu shushe, 2010), 148. Chen Bo is an anthropologist and the leading scholar of the Li Anzhai studies in China. His book is the first comprehensive study on Li Anzhai's life and scholarly contribution.

had ultimately prevented wartime China from bringing the territory into a closer political and administrative orbit.”¹¹² Most of Li Anzhai’s proposals for frontier social work were ignored and unfulfilled. The project of frontier development almost came to a halt after the war when the GMD was busy engaging in fighting with the CCP.¹¹³ Owen Lattimore suggests that it was because Li’s non-Marxist liberal approach to promoting better relations between the Chinese and non-Chinese frontier minorities was restrained by the authoritarian thought control of the GMD.¹¹⁴ However, in light of Hsiao-ting Lin’s study on the GMD frontier policy, I think the failure of the GMD to implement Li’s frontier proposals was because Li’s frontier vision, which was centered on multi-culturalism and mutual interactions between the interior and the frontier, was unimaginable for the GMD, which had neither a commitment to a frontier-centered policy nor resources to carry one out during or after the war.

The CCP was much more ambitious than the GMD. It was determined to take over Tibet as early as 1949, after their defeat of the GMD. He Long, the commander of the new Southwest Division of the People's Liberation Army, visited Li Anzhai, Ren Naiqiang, and the other Tibetan experts of the Institute of West China Frontier Research

¹¹² Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier*, 152. Gray Tuttle also contends that the Nationalist state was too weak to assert any substantial political sovereignty over Tibet during the Republican period. See Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹¹³ Li Anzhai complained that the government’s ardent interest in frontier construction had rapidly declined with the end of the war. He argued that national reconstruction could not be done without developing the frontier. See Li Anzhai, “Shengli yu bianjiang gongzuo,” *Bianjiang tongxun*, 4:1 (1947): 1-2.

¹¹⁴ Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), xxiv.

in December, 1949.¹¹⁵ He inquired into various aspects of Tibet, including culture, religion, and geography. Li Anzhai, Yu Shiyu, and Ren Naiqiang were among several other Tibetan specialists to be recruited into the think tank for Tibetan policy. Ren Naiqiang even offered He Long a detailed map of Tibet he had been making for the last twenty years. The scholars worked in the Center for the Tibetan Problem (*Xizang wenti yanjiu shi*), organized by He Long. They drafted policy outlines for the takeover; they compiled a Tibetan language textbook and concise introduction to Tibet for the PLA soldiers covering history, philosophy, religion, and art; they also formulated propagandist slogans.

Half of the scholars in the think tank, including Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu, entered the Tibetan border with the PLA 18th division in 1950.¹¹⁶ Within two months, these specialists conducted field research and gathered information about Tibetan society. Their reports became the foundation for the making of the Ten-point Policy for the Advance into Tibet (*Jinjun Xizang shida zhengce*) that guided negotiations with local Tibetan authorities. Li Anzhai served as the head of the education division in the People's Liberation Committee in Chamdo. He and his wife participated in the establishment of the Chamdo School, the first modern elementary school in Tibet. In 1951, they entered Lhasa with the army to aid the signing of the 17-Article Agreement

¹¹⁵ For the description of He Long's meeting with the scholars and their contribution to the takeover of Tibet, see Deng Shouming, "He Long wei jiefang Xizang qingjiao Zangxue zhuanjia," [He Long Seeks Advice from Tibetologists for the Liberation of Tibet] *Sichuan dangshi*, 2 (2002): 16-19.

¹¹⁶ For detailed description of the life of Lian Anzhai and Yu Shiyu in Tibet, see Wang Xianmei, "Wushi shuxing chuguanbian, heju zhengan lu sanqian – yi Li Anzhai Yu Shiyu fufu" [The Intellectuals who Were Not Intimidated by The 3000-mile Traveling on Horse Back to the Frontier – in Memory of Professors Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu] *China Tibetology*, 4 (2004): 125-137.

for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. During the five years of their stay in Tibet, Li Anzhai and Yu Shiyu participated in the founding of the Tibetan language training program, the Mandarin program, as well as the Lhasa First Elementary School. Li's engagement in frontier work, to a great extent, helped the CCP secure the takeover of Tibet. The non-Marxist, liberal-oriented Li, whose efforts were ignored by the GMD, had his name forever inscribed in the history of the CCP's colonization of Tibet. It was, eventually, the CCP's determination to wield Chinese sovereignty over Tibet that fulfilled Li's dream of being a true anthropologist-educator and serving the frontier community.

In 1956, Li and Yu moved back to Sichuan and worked as administrators for the newly established Southwest College for Nationalities (*Xinan minzu xueyuan*). After both sociology and anthropology were denounced as bourgeois disciplines that served capitalist needs and all related research could only continue under Soviet-influenced ethnography, the liberal and non-compromising Li had to stop all his projects. In 1962, Li began to teach English in the Sichuan Normal College (now the Sichuan University) and until his death in 1985 he was never able to resume his anthropological career or to conduct field research.

Conclusion

The wartime period in the 1940s is a fascinating episode in Chinese intellectual history in which the disciplinary development, such as social anthropology and applied anthropology, was entangled with the frontier discourse, wartime nationalism, and

ethnopolitics, as demonstrated by the Kuige scholarship and Li Anzhai's frontier social work. The popular imagination of the frontier as a national space that played a crucial role in the construction of Chinese nationalism during the 1930s, as reflected by numerous popular frontier travel writing, journals on the frontier affairs, and intellectual societies devoted to the studies of frontier geography and history, was transformed into a concrete experience of the frontier as a living place during the wartime period. Migration to the southwest brought the frontier close to home and facilitated field research on the frontier non-Han communities. The "terra incognita" was no longer an imagined periphery; and the flourishing of frontier studies, especially in the field of anthropology and ethnography, demonstrated a more pressing intellectual desire to "conquer" the new "interior." The reconceptualization of the frontier facilitated the process of the indigenization of anthropology, and the migrating Han anthropologists made the frontier their ultimate "field," where they could contest Western theories with Chinese reality. These anthropologists also romanticized the frontier and even imagined a gendered relationship with it. Their scholarships and activities were strongly motivated by a nationalistic commitment to integrate the frontier societies into the broader Chinese national community.

With the hindsight of postcolonialism, especially when taking into consideration ethnic conflicts between the Han and Tibetans in Tibet and the PRC government's suppression of the Tibetan independence movement at the present time, we can see that the indigenization of social anthropology through the study of the frontier was ironically achieved through a Han colonial position. However, as David Arkush argues, it "seems

overtly harsh to blame anthropologists for the sins of imperialism.”¹¹⁷ It would be equally reductionist to claim that the Chinese anthropologists during the 1940s were simply imperialists in assisting and reinforcing the colonial rule of the regime over the frontier and the non-Han. Notwithstanding the disciplinary methodology and practical application they adopted and in many ways perpetuated, and the unequal colonial encounters between the core and the frontier, their effort revealed a commitment to the indigenization of social anthropology, which was itself an attempt to resist and overcome the very unequal power relations between China and the West. Yet, the “indigenization” involved was not simply a neutral process of applying anthropological theories to Chinese reality. Every step made was unmistakably driven by national and political concerns. This significantly differentiates the Han anthropologists from their Western mentors. Fei Xiaotong and Li Anzhai were attracted to the idea that scientific research could be applied to improve the rule over the native. Their effort to understand the frontier and the non-Han communities, to conduct field research, and to ultimately transform society for its own benefit went beyond a simple colonial enthusiasm for civilizing the frontier. The frontier was their intellectual, personal, and national crusade. And their studies urged the consolidation of a national consciousness that the frontier was an inseparable and indispensable part of geographical China, and that frontier minorities should be an integrated part of the multi-ethnic cultural China.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Arkush, 88.

¹¹⁸ This idea was mostly articulated by Fei Xiaotong’s model of the “pluralistic unity,” which bears similarities to Li Anzhai’s multi-ethnic pluralism.

CONCLUSION

The studies in the fields of paleoanthropology and anthropology from 1920s to 1940s helped shape the discourse of modern Chinese ethnogenesis and nationalism. The Chinese intellectual search for ancestral roots and the effort to inscribe the non-Han frontier population into the Chinese genealogy were driven primarily by a nationalist desire to forge ethnic solidarity and national unity. Prevailing theories and discoveries in the two scientific disciplines inspired the ways in which the Chinese intellectuals constructed their national identity. The Asiatic approach to human origins, the discovery of Peking Man, and the studies of the Peking Man fossils had enormous influence on how Chinese intellectuals imagined their ancient past and its connections to the present. Various anthropological theories placed methodological tools at the disposal of Chinese intellectuals which they were able to use to reconceptualize the relations between the frontier and the interior, and between the Han and the non-Han. Overall, in important ways, the formation of modern Chinese ethnogenesis and nationalism could be seen as a product of a series of indigenizing attempts to appropriate and interpret scientific theories and discoveries.

In the early 20th century, the dominant paleoanthropological paradigm that Asia was the center of human origins turned China into the hot spot for hominid fossil hunting, similar to the position that Africa occupies for paleoanthropologists today. The story surrounding the discovery of Peking Man highlights the competition among international scientific institutions striving to find the first human relics in the Chinese northwestern frontier and Mongolia. This took place in an era of rising East Asian nationalisms that would eventually become important players in the “great game.” Even before Africa

became the new hypothetical center of human origins, regulations on fossil collecting set by the Chinese and Mongolian governments in the late 1920s had already made paleoanthropological expeditions into these places less desirable for foreign scientists. The Cenozoic Research Laboratory established a new model for paleoanthropological research in China. Although the first hominid molar discovered at the Zhoukoudian in 1921 by Zdansky occurred not so much because of a developed scientific method but because of luck guided by Andersson's "insightful instinct," the discoveries of Peking Man skulls in the late 1920s and 1930s were consequences of successful international collaborations between foreign and Chinese scientists of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory. The promotion of Beijing as the leading research center for paleoanthropology and the enormous international interest in Peking Man had cascading effect on the pride the Chinese felt about themselves. It should not be surprising that the Chinese intellectuals would be highly inspired by the Asiatic hypothesis and the reports of the Peking Man research to assume that Peking Man was the first Chinese, and that the first Chinese was the common ancestor of all humans.

During the Second Sino-Japanese War, with the migration of the national center to southwest China near the minority frontier areas, ethnopolitics became a most sensitive issue and received unprecedented attention. The intellectual discussions of *minzu* culminated in the debate in 1939. Although the participants were divided by the question of whether *Zhonghua minzu* was an organic single entity and indivisible, they were all supporters of an ethnic nationalism that stressed solidarity among the Han and the non-Han. The same attitudes were reflected in the research conducted by Chinese anthropologists on the southwestern frontier ethnic societies during the same period.

Whether they supported the unitary-*minzu* model or the multiple-*minzu* model, Chinese anthropologists attempted to promote ethnic integration and frontier modernization through their studies. Their research methodologies were influenced by different theories developed in the West, such as cultural evolutionism, diffusionism, functionalism, and colonial applied anthropology. However, in the process of reproducing knowledge of the frontier “others,” these theories were turned into politicized tools to serve rather nationalistic ends.

What I have attempted to describe in these chapters is the sociology of the formation of Chinese intellectual discourse of ethno-nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century. What involved was a process of continuous negotiations between scientific universalism (or internationalism) and nationalist commitments. Each negotiation was determined by China's position in, and interaction with, the world. As the chapters demonstrate, the intellectual milieu in China had transformed from a more cosmopolitan one in the 1920s to a more national one in the 1940s. The form and content of Chinese ethno-nationalism and the Chinese indigenization of disciplines taking shape in the latter period was, of course, an outgrowth of international scholarship produced in the former period. Although the current study focuses on the scientific disciplines of paleoanthropology and anthropology, it provides a general methodological framework that can be used to inquire into other areas of intellectual development in China, for example, geology, archaeology, and history.

The pre-1949 concerns and development in paleoanthropology and anthropology have a legacy that continues until the present day. It is most obvious in the direction Chinese paleoanthropology has taken since that time. The Cenozoic Research Laboratory continued to exist throughout the period of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the ensuing civil war, but all research agendas were suspended after Weidenreich's leave in 1941. Jia Lanpo resumed the Zhoukoudian project in 1949 after the establishment of the PRC, and the laboratory eventually was transformed, as the independent Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (IVPP), within the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1960.¹ Yang Zhongjian, Pei Wenzhong, and Jia Lanpo took the leading roles in the research of the IVPP. What had survived from the previous Cenozoic Research Laboratory was not only the personnel but also the theoretical foundations concerning human and Chinese origins. After the international paleoanthropological paradigm shifted from Asia to Africa, for more than two decades, Jia Lanpo still insisted, into the late 1980s, that humans originated in Asia, most likely in Yunnan and Tibet, instead of Africa.² But what really has left a long-standing influence on the core framework of

¹ For a brief history of the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, see Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man: Popular Science and Human Identity in Twentieth-century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 64n23, or the website of the Institute at <http://www.ivpp.cas.cn/jggk/lsg>.

² Jia argument was mainly based on the fossil discoveries of *Ramapithecus* in southwest China. Jia Lanpo, "Gurenleixue yanjiu de yixie wenti" [A Few Questions Concerning the Study of Paleoanthropology] in Chen Guoqiang and Lin Jiahuang, eds. *Renleixue yanjiu zhi si* [The Study of Anthropology, Volume 4] (Shanghai: Sanlian chubanshe, 1992), 2; and Jia Lanpo and Huang Weiwen, *The Story of Peking Man*, trans. Yin Zhiqi (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press and Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990), 242-243. Once considered as a possible hominid ancestor, *Ramapithecus* was dismissed in the late 1970s and has been regarded thereafter as the ancestor of orangutan. For the controversy of the *Ramapithecus*, see Milford Wolpoff, "Ramapithecus and Hominid Origins," *Current Anthropology*, 23:5 (Oct. 1982), 501-522.

Chinese paleoanthropology is the multiregional continuity theory. As Milford Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari suggest, Chinese paleoanthropologists support the theory not only because they are familiar with the relevant fossil evidence found in China, but also because of the influence of Franz Weidenreich, the paleoanthropologist who first proposed the hypothesis in 1946.³ Relying mainly on morphological analysis of fossils found in China and Java, Weidenreich suggested that contemporary racial groups (Australian, Mongolian, African, and Eurasian) developed along parallel lines from more archaic regional human forms. However, these regional developments were not isolated processes and interbreeding and genetic flows occurred at a rather early stage.⁴ Accordingly, regional *Homo erectus*, such as Peking Man, were not replaced by more advanced forms from other regions, but rather themselves evolved into *Homo sapiens*. Many Chinese paleoanthropologists of the IVPP today, such as Wu Xinzhi and Gao Xin, are firm supporters of the multiregional continuity theory.

Weidenreich's influence on Chinese paleoanthropology falls in two phases. In the late 1930s, before his multiregional hypothesis took shape, Weidenreich's meticulous examination of the Peking Man fossils encouraged the Chinese intellectuals to make the assumption that Peking Man was not only a common ancestor but also the Chinese ancestor. The multiregional continuity hypothesis, which particularly points to a

³ Milford Wolpoff and Rachel Caspari, *Race and Human Evolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 28.

⁴ Franz Weidenreich, *Apes, Giants and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), "Facts and Speculations Concerning the Origin of *Homo sapiens*," *American Anthropologist*, 49 (1947), 187-203, and "The Trend of Human Evolution," *Evolution*, 1 (1947), 221-236.

polygenetic origin of the modern human races, has appealed to Chinese scholars especially since the African paradigm has begun to dominate and Peking Man has become a peripheral figure in human evolution. Multiregional continuity compensates for the lost status of Peking Man: even if he has ceased to be the common ancestor, he might still well be the Chinese ancestor. What I am suggesting here is not that contemporary Chinese paleoanthropology is entirely directed by ethnic nationalism. As Sigrid Schmalzer suggests, the desire for prestige in international science forms the other reason for the Chinese support of multiregional theory.⁵ Judging from the fame Beijing enjoyed as the center for the research of paleoanthropology during the most splendid years of the Cenozoic Research Laboratory, it is not surprising that multiregional theory has been continuously embraced by Chinese scientists. Moreover, it should again be pointed out that Chinese scientists are not the only proponents of the multiregional origins of modern humans, and their supporting fossil evidence is not easily dismissed as invalid.⁶ On the other hand, paleoanthropological research of human origins and migrations is inevitably entangled with current politics and nationalist concerns of ancestral identity. As Robin Dennell notes, “we may mistake a mirror for a window, and

⁵ Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People's Peking Man*, 249-250.

⁶ The most outspoken scientist of the multiregional theory in the West is Milford Wolpoff. Others, such as Dennis Etler and Alan Templeton have criticized the ROA theory for lacking sufficient data. See Dennis Etler, “Homo erectus in East Asia: Human Ancestor of Evolutionary Dead-end?” *Athena Review*, 4:1 (2004), 55-72; and Alan Templeton, “Genetics and Recent Human Evolution,” *Evolution*, 61:7 (Jul., 2007), 1507-1519. Fossils found in Europe, China, and Australia form the major evidence supporting the multiregional theory.

simply extrapolate onto the past our own views and prejudices about the present.”⁷ A genetic study done recently by HUGO Pan-Asian Consortium shows that modern humans migrated from Africa to Asia through a southern coastal route, along the rim of today’s India.⁸ The result has prompted the Director General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of India to comment, “This is path breaking. This large study establishes that Indians are ancestors of Japanese, Chinese and all other East Asians.”⁹ Moreover, we simply don’t know much about our past. New fossil discoveries continue to put accepted theories into contestation and engender more possible paths human evolution might have taken.¹⁰

⁷ Robin Dennell, “From Sangiran to Olduvai, 1937-1960: The Quest for ‘Centres’ of Hominid Origins in Asia and Africa,” in Raymond Corbey and Wil Roebroeks, eds., *Studying Human Origins: Disciplinary History and Epistemology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 65. He suggests that politics and ideas of race played a role in the paradigm shift of paleoanthropology. For example, the post-war American domination of the field was in favor for an agenda of racial unity and as a logical consequence the “center” was moved to Africa.

⁸ HUGO Pan-Asian SNP Consortium, “Mapping Human Genetic Diversity in Asia,” *Science*, v. 326 (2009), 1541-1545. HUGO stands for the Human Genome Organisation, an international research group working on the mapping of the human genome project.

⁹ “Indians are Ancestors of Japanese, Chinese,” *Indiaedunews.net (National Network of Education)*(Dec. 12, 2009), at http://www.indiaedunews.net/Science/Indians_are_ancestors_of_Japanese,_Chinese_9855/. This comment is remarkable because it imposes national boundaries and ethnic identities onto prehistoric times. It also shows why any paleoanthropological results could easily be turned into political statements.

¹⁰ For example, a recent discovery of a *Homo erectus* fossil in Dmanisi dated around 1.85-1.78 million years (older than the earliest ones found in Africa) may suggest that *Homo erectus* originated in Asia, instead of Africa. See Reid Ferring, et al., “Earliest Human Occupations at Dmanisi (Georgian Caucasus) Dated to 1.85 – 1.78 Ma,” *PNAS*, 108:26 (June 28, 2011), 10432-10435.

Chinese anthropologists have continued to play an important role in China's frontier development and ethnic affairs since 1949.¹¹ Their most daunting project immediately after this was the ethnic classification project in the 1950s to erase ambiguities regarding ethnic identity and demarcation by "scientifically" creating clearly defined ethnic categories.¹² Everyone could now find a proper place in the family of the Chinese nation. The official Central Institute of Nationalities (*Zhongyang minzu xueyuan*, now Central Minzu University, *Zhongyang minzu daxue*) was established to tackle issues related to minority ethnicity and to help implement ethnic policies (or ethnic work, *minzu gongzuo*) in these regions. Anthropologists (or ethnologists as they were called during this period) became the intermediary between the state and the minority societies: their research served as the foundation for the making of the Party's ethnic policies, and in turn they propagandized these policies and guidelines to minority peoples.¹³

Since the reform and the re-establishment of anthropology in academia, the social role of the anthropologist has not significantly changed. China's recent national campaign to "Open the West" (or the Great Development of the West, *xibu da kaifa*)¹⁴

¹¹ Although anthropology, together with sociology, as an academic discipline was abolished and did not resume until the 1980s, most anthropologists conducted research in the field of ethnology, aligned with the Soviet model of nationalities.

¹² Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (University of California Press, 2011).

¹³ For how Chinese ethnological studies were used in the consolidation of the Communist Party rule in the minority regions, see Wang Jianmin, "Academic Universality and Indigenization," in *Sociology and Anthropology in Twentieth Century China in Historical Perspective*, eds. Arif Dirlik, Guannan Li, and Hsiao-pei Yen (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2012), 49-50.

¹⁴ For details of the campaign and related issues, see *The China Quarterly's* Volume 178 (2004).

has aroused a renewed scholarly interest in frontier studies in China. Fei Xiaotong, who had paid special attention to the regional economy of the minority societies in West China since the late 1980s and had prescribed a framework for developmental strategies based on the ethnic geography of the northwestern corridor (*xibei zoulang*) and the Tibet-Yi corridor (*Zang-Yi zoulang*), became the authority on issues of economic development and the preservation of ethnic identity until his death in 2005.¹⁵ The first official China Forum on Frontier Development (*Bianjiang fazhan Zhongguo luntan*) was inaugurated in October 2010.¹⁶ The forum was organized by Central Minzu University, and its participants included many famous anthropologists whose discussions centered on issues of frontier security, ethnic solidarity, and social stability.¹⁷ The integration of politics and scholarship has certainly become a prominent feature of Chinese anthropology, particularly in the way anthropology has been used as a tool for the rule and the development of the frontier. The indigenization of anthropology, as Fei Xiaotong, Wu Wenzao, and Li Anzhai had envisioned it in the 1930s and 1940s, which embodied pragmatic application of functionalism, applied anthropology for frontier development, and the frontier social work, has perhaps finally been achieved.

¹⁵ Fei Xiaotong, *Fei Xiaotong lun xibu kaifa yu quyue jingji* [Fei Xiaotong on Opening the West and Regional Economy] (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 2000). In his last years, Fei led a state sponsored project (*guojia zhongdian keti*) on how to preserve, develop and make use of the ethnic and cultural resources in West China (Xibu renwen ziyuan de baohu kaifa he liyong).

¹⁶ The first forum was one among many events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Fei Xiaotong.

¹⁷ The forum is initiated by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and is intended to run for five years. For details of the first forum, see Sun Qiang, “‘Bianjiang fazhan Zhongguo luntan 2010’ zhuyao lunshu” [Review of the “China Forum of the Frontier Development 2010,” *Yuanshengtai minzu wenhua xuekan*, no.1 (2011), 148-151.

GLOSSARY

Anyang 安陽

aoyun Beijing, zugen Fangshan 奧運北京，祖根房山

Bai 白

Bai Shouyi 白壽彝

baixing 百姓

Baiyi 擺夷

Beijiang bowuyuan 北疆博物院

Beijing yuanren 北京猿人

Beiyang 北洋

ben wenhua 本文化

Bian Meinian 卞美年

biandi 邊地

biandi yimin 邊地夷民

bianjiang 邊疆

Bianjiang gongzuo de lilun yu shiji 邊疆工作的理論與實際

bianjiang jianshe 邊疆建設

Bianjiang shehui gongzuo 邊疆社會工作

Bianjiang zhoukan 邊疆週刊

bianmin 邊民

bianmin wenhua xiehui 邊民文化協會

bianmin xuexiao 邊民學校

bianzheng 邊政

bianzheng gonglun 邊政公論

bianzhengxue 邊政學

Boyi 僂夷

buluo 部落

buluo yishi 部落意識

Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培

Cangjie 倉頡

Cen Jiawu 岑家梧

Chen Zhengmo 陳正謨

Chenggong 呈貢

Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石

Chongqing 重慶

Chu Tunan 楚圖南

Cong shiqian renlei shuodao Zhonghua minzu 從史前人類說到中華民族

Dai 傣

Dege jingyuan 德格經院

Ding Wenjiang 丁文江

Dizhi diaochasuo 地質調查所

Dizhi huibao 地質彙報

dizhi ke 地質科

Dongbei shigang 東北史綱

Donghu 東胡

da tudi 打土地

duangong 端公

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| duoyuan de 多元的 | Han 漢 |
| duoyuan yiti 多元一體 | Han Jiexiu 韓介休 |
| Fei Xiaotong 費孝通 | Han ren zhimin Yunnan 漢人殖民雲南 |
| fen 分 | Han zu 漢族 |
| Fengtian 奉天 | hanxue renleixue 漢學人類學 |
| fenlei 分類 | He Long 賀龍 |
| fenxi 分析 | Hebei 河北 |
| Fu Sinian 傅斯年 | Henan 河南 |
| Fuxi 伏羲 | Hetaoren 河套人 |
| Gan Cheng 干城 | hexie zhi lu 和諧之旅 |
| ganqing 感情 | houjin zhe 後進者 |
| Gansu 甘肅 | Houshan 後山 |
| Gao Xing 高星 | Hu Qingjun 胡慶鈞 |
| gongmin yuanze 公民原則 | Huabei 華北 |
| gongyehua 工業化 | Huabei zizhi yundong 華北自治運動 |
| Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 | Huanan 華南 |
| Gu Weijun 顧維鈞 | Huang Di 黃迪 |
| guanyu minzu wenti de taolun 關於民族問題的討論 | Huang Jie 黃節 |
| Guizhou 貴州 | Huang Zhengqing 黃正清 |
| guo yi zhi er rong, zhong yin zhi er hua 國以之而榮，種因之而華 | Huangdi 黃帝 |
| guoguan 過關 | Huaxi bianjiang yanjiu suo 華西邊疆研究所 |
| guojia zhuyi pai 國家主義派 | Huaxi 華西 |
| guozu 國族 | Huaxi ziehe daxue 華西協和大學 |
| guozu fenhua 國族分化 | huaxia ernu 華夏兒女 |
| | Huaxiba 華西壩 |

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| Huazhong 華中 | Li Ji 李濟 |
| Hui 回 | Li Jie 李捷 |
| hui chema 回車馬 | Li Jiefei 李潔非 |
| hunhe 混合 | Li Youyi 李有義 |
| Jia Lanpo 賈蘭坡 | Lin Huixiang 林惠祥 |
| Jiang Zhiang 蔣旨昂 | Lin Yan 林炎 |
| Jiang Zhiyou 蔣智由 | Lin Yaohua 林耀華 |
| Jiangcun 江村 | Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 |
| Jiangsu 江蘇 | Liu Shiwei 劉師培 |
| Jin Zhaozi 金兆梓 | Liu Xingtang 劉興唐 |
| Jinjun Xizang shida zhengce 進軍西藏 十大政策 | Lizhuang 李莊 |
| Kaixiangong 開弦弓 | Lohei 倮黑 |
| Kang Zang yanjiu she 康藏研究社 | Long Yun 龍雲 |
| Kawa 佻瓦 | Longshan 龍山 |
| kexue 科學 | Lü Simiam 呂思勉 |
| kexue de dongfangxue zhi zhengtong 科 學的東方學之正統 | Lucun 祿村 |
| Kexue jiaoyu guan 科學教育館 | Lu-ge-fu-er 魯格夫爾 |
| kuangzheng si 礦政司 | Mangshi 芒市 |
| Kuige 魁閣 | Miao 苗 |
| Kuixingge 魁星閣 | Minjia 民家 |
| Kunming 昆明 | minsu yanjiu 民俗研究 |
| Lahu 拉佧 | minzu 民族 |
| Li Anzhai 李安宅 | minzu douzheng 民族鬥爭 |
| Li Guangming 黎光明 | minzu zhuyi 民族主義 |
| | minzu zijue 民族自覺 |

minzu zixinxin 民族自信心
neidi 內地
ni zhong you wo, wo zhong you ni 你中有我，我中有你
nongshang bu 農商部
Nüwa 女媧
Pei Wenzhong 裴文中
Qiang 羌
Qinghai 青海
Qinghua 清華
Qingyang 慶陽
Ren Naiqiang 任乃強
renleixue 人類學
Renmin ribao 人民日報
ronghe 融合
Rui Yifu 芮逸夫
ruoxiao minzu 弱小民族
Salawusu 薩拉烏蘇
Sanminzhuyi 三民主義
Shaanxi 陝西
Shandingdong ren 山頂洞人
shang daoshan 上刀山
Shangdong 山東
Shanhaijing 山海經
Shanxi 山西
shaoshu minzu 少數民族
Shennong 神農
shequ 社區
Shiyangchang 石羊場
Shuidonggou 水洞溝
Sichuan 四川
Sun Yat-sen 孫中山
Tian Rukang 田汝康
Tianjin 天津
tianxia 天下
tizhi 體質
tongqi zhi qiu 同氣之求
tongsheng zhi ying 同聲之應
tongyi de duo minzu guojia 統一的多民族國家
tuanjie qingxu 團結情緒
tunken 屯墾
tusi 土司
Wa 瓦
Wang Chongyou 王寵佑
Wang Tongling 王桐齡
Weng Wenhao 翁文灝
wenhua goutong 文化溝通
Wenyou hui 文友會
Women de guozu 我們的國族
Wu Dingliang 吳定良
Wu Wenzao 吳文藻

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|------------------------------|---|
| Wu Zhongxin 吳忠信 | Ye Weidan 葉為耽 |
| wuda minzu 五大民族 | Yijing 易經 |
| wuli de shishi 物理的事實 | Yin Da 尹達 |
| wuyong 誤用 | yizhi 意志 |
| wuzu gonghe 五族共和 | Youliang 有亮 |
| Xiahe 夏河 | Yu Shiyu 于式玉 |
| Xianbei 鮮卑 | Yugong 禹貢 |
| xianjin zhe 先進者 | Yunnan 雲南 |
| Xianxian 獻縣 | Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 |
| xilai shuo 西來說 | Zhang Hongzhao 章鴻釗 |
| Xinan minzu xueyuan 西南民族學院 | Zhang Tingxiu 張廷休 |
| xinan yi 西南夷 | Zhang Weihua 張維華 |
| Xinjiang 新疆 | Zhang Zhiyi 張之毅 |
| Xinshengdai yanjiushi 新生代研究室 | Zhang Zoulin 張作霖 |
| Xiong Shili 熊十力 | Zhejiang 浙江 |
| Xiongnu 匈奴 | Zhili 直隸 |
| Xizang wenti yanjiu shi | Zhongguo benbu 中國本部 |
| xuwen buwei zhengzhi fuwu | Zhongguo benbu yiming jiying feiqi 中 國本部一名極應廢棄 |
| Xujiahui 徐家匯 | Zhongguo bianzheng xuehui 中國邊政 學會 |
| Xuyong 敘永 | Zhongguo gushengwu zhi 中國古生物 誌 |
| Yan Huiqing 顏惠慶 | Zhongguo renzhong kao 中國人種考 |
| Yang Chengzhi 楊成志 | Zhongguo zhong 中國種 |
| Yang Zhongjian 楊鍾健 | Zhonghua guojia 中華國家 |
| Yangshao 仰韶 | |
| Yanjing 燕京 | |

Zhonghua guojia de guozu 中華國家的國族 zongzu 宗族

Zhonghua guozu jie 中華國族解

Zhonghua minzu 中華民族

Zhonghua minzu ji qi wenhua zhi qiyuan 中華民族及其文化之起源

Zhonghua minzu she yige 中華民族是一個

Zhonghua minzu shi zhenghe de 中華民族是整個的

Zhonghua minzu wei tuzhu 中華民族為土著

Zhonghua minzu zhi yiyi 中華民族之意義

Zhong-Mei hezuo 中美合作

Zhongshan Daxue 中山大學

zhongxin sixiang 中心思想

Zhongyang guwu baoguan weiyuan hui 中央古物保管委員會

zhongyong zhi dao 中庸之道

zhongzu 種族

Zhongzu pingdeng zhi yiyi 種族平等之意義

Zhou Zhongyue 周鍾嶽

Zhoukoudian 周口店

Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊

Zhu Xi 朱洗

Zhuang 壯

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