

The Influences of Yi Chieftains' Intermarriage on Southwestern Area from Ming Dynasty to the Republic of China

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Abstract

The Yi nationality mainly resides in Yunnan province, Sichuan province and Guizhou province and has a large population. After their antecedents entered into class society, in marriage status, there formed characteristics of inner nationality marriage, outer clan marriage, inner class marriage and trans-family marriage. After the establishment of chieftain system, the level of chieftains appointed by the central kingdom is beyond all other classes and would not marry those of lower classes. They would only marry chieftain families of the same classes. Therefore, their marriage covers Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces. On another hand, since the Ming Dynasty, Yi chieftain areas had experienced dramatic social reforms, which also changed the original class system. It was then hard to maintain the originally fixed marriage relationship. They had to change their traditional marriage concepts, after which more and more inner nationality marriages and cross-class marriages occurred. Therefore, their marriage characteristics were in a contradict development of tradition and change, which exerted important and long lasting influence over the southeastern area.

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