

**title:** *Amazing story of Wo Renbo - written scripts of Southern China and ethnic identity*

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**Abstract:**

This paper is an attempt at presenting some problems concerning the ethnic identity among the minority nationalities in the area of southern Sichuan and northern Yunnan provinces in China. Lisu nationality living mainly in Nujiang River region was recognized as one without its own written script. In early 20s of XX century a man called Wo(Wa) Renbo (1900-1964) created an original phonetic script and standardized 900 phonetic signs representing all dialects of Lisu living in the area of Weixi county. His invention and thinking about ethnicity, community and culture give as a glimpse into the ethnolinguistic situation of Southern China before the 1949. His diary and literature written in this original script seems to be very helpful in the study of development of written scripts and comparison with phonetic scripts of Yi, Tibetan, Naxi dongba and geba scripts, but also with little known Malimasa and Ersu shanba script used by people inhabiting the same area.

Preliminary research seems to entitle as to assume that pictographic script of Naxi and its mnemonic character as well as pure phonetic syllabary of Yi had strong influence on the creator of Lisu script. What's also important Wo Renbo shown the role of ethnic identity to many of Lisu people.