

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

**Sealords Live in Vain:
Fujian and the Making of a Maritime Frontier
in Seventeenth-Century China**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

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University of California, San Diego

2011

DEDICATION

FOR MY LOVING PARENTS

Yuping Sandi Ho and Shyh-chin Mike Ho

AND MY WIFE

Elya Jun Zhang

EPIGRAPH

Defeat, my Defeat, my bold companion,
You shall hear my songs and my cries and my silences,
And none but you shall speak to me of the beating of wings,
And urging of seas,
And of mountains that burn in the night,
And you alone shall climb my steep and rocky soul.

Defeat, my Defeat, my deathless courage,
You and I shall laugh together with the storm,
And together we shall dig graves for all that die in us,
And we shall stand in the sun with a will,
And we shall be dangerous.

--Kahlil Gibran*

* "Defeat," from *The Madman* (1918)

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Being a historian means having one's patience tested all the time, and also sorely testing the patience of others. My thanks go out to those who have tolerated my eccentricities and helped me learn to live, laugh, and love this peculiar profession.

The sealord Koxinga, as various sources tell us, died of overwork, depression, rage, madness, or fever—not necessarily (but quite possibly) in that order. Were it not for the kind people who have helped me in so many ways, I might have shared his fate.

To my mentors, Professors Joseph Esherick and Paul Pickowicz, I owe a debt that I can never repay. I also want to thank all of my teachers, friends, and classmates at UC San Diego and Xiamen University. There are so many individuals to whom I would like to express my gratitude, such that if I tried to name them all, I might never get done here. Let me thank you each in person instead!

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Finally, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Elya Jun Zhang, who has stood fast by me through these topsy-turvy years. It has not been easy, I know. But every day is a chance to start again. Let us begin new life journeys together.

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- “To Protect and Preserve: Resisting the ‘Destroy the Four Olds’ Campaign, 1966-1967.” In Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History* (Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 64-95.

FIELDS OF STUDY

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STYLISTIC CONVENTIONS

Translations are mine unless indicated. It has been my goal to render everything smoothly into colloquial English. Anyone who has spent time with unpunctuated classical Chinese sources knows well that they were not written for the convenience of historians working in another language. Documents were written in the elite script of the Chinese scholarly and bureaucratic elites, for their own consumption and for their acculturated posterity. Thus, there are always classical Chinese terms and phrases that elude smooth translation and teach the translator humility. Terms that remain in Chinese I have indicated with italicized Roman form. For official titles, I have relied on the reference works of Charles O. Hucker and Brunnert & Hagelstrom.

In the Bibliography and citations, Chinese names and titles are written in simplified Chinese characters for mainland works, traditional Chinese characters for works from Hong Kong and Taiwan. When citing scholars, I use Hanyu Pinyin as the rule except in cases where the author clearly prefers or has previously published in another romanization system, such as Wade-Giles, Yale, or their own creation. Chinese and Japanese names take the order of surname first, followed by personal name. The exception is when an author has published in English, in which case his or her name follows the English order of personal name, then surname, as it would appear on a title page.

I have tried to convert weights and measures according to the generally accepted rates for Chinese units, but as these units—most notoriously the tael of silver—were often inexact and varied by time and place, my unit calculations must be an approximation. Thus, no matter how cumbersome it is, I include the original Chinese

measure word in parentheses as I see it in the sources. Specific dates of the Chinese lunar calendar are converted to the Western Gregorian calendar according to Zheng Hesheng's concordance. But sometimes the odd "in the fifth month of the fifth year," or "X taels of silver" will still pop up.

For these and other technicalities, I beg the forbearance of the reader and fellow travelers.

A Note on Weights and Measures

The measures listed below are approximate equivalences based on data from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century.

1 bu 步 = 5 Chinese feet (chi) or approximately 60.5 inches

1 chi 尺 = a Chinese foot or about 14.1 inches (linear), 12.1 inches (itinerary)

1 zhang 丈 = 10 Chinese feet or about 141 inches

1 li 里 \approx 1/3 of a mile or 1821.15 feet

1 qing 顷 = 100 mu 亩 \approx 14 acres

1 jin 斤 \approx 1.33 lbs.

1 shi 石 \approx 160 lbs. (weight), 23.4 gallons (volume)

1 tael (Chinese silver ounce) \approx £3.5 or f4 (4 Dutch florins) in the 1660s¹

¹ John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 51.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sealords Live in Vain:

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Dahpon David Ho

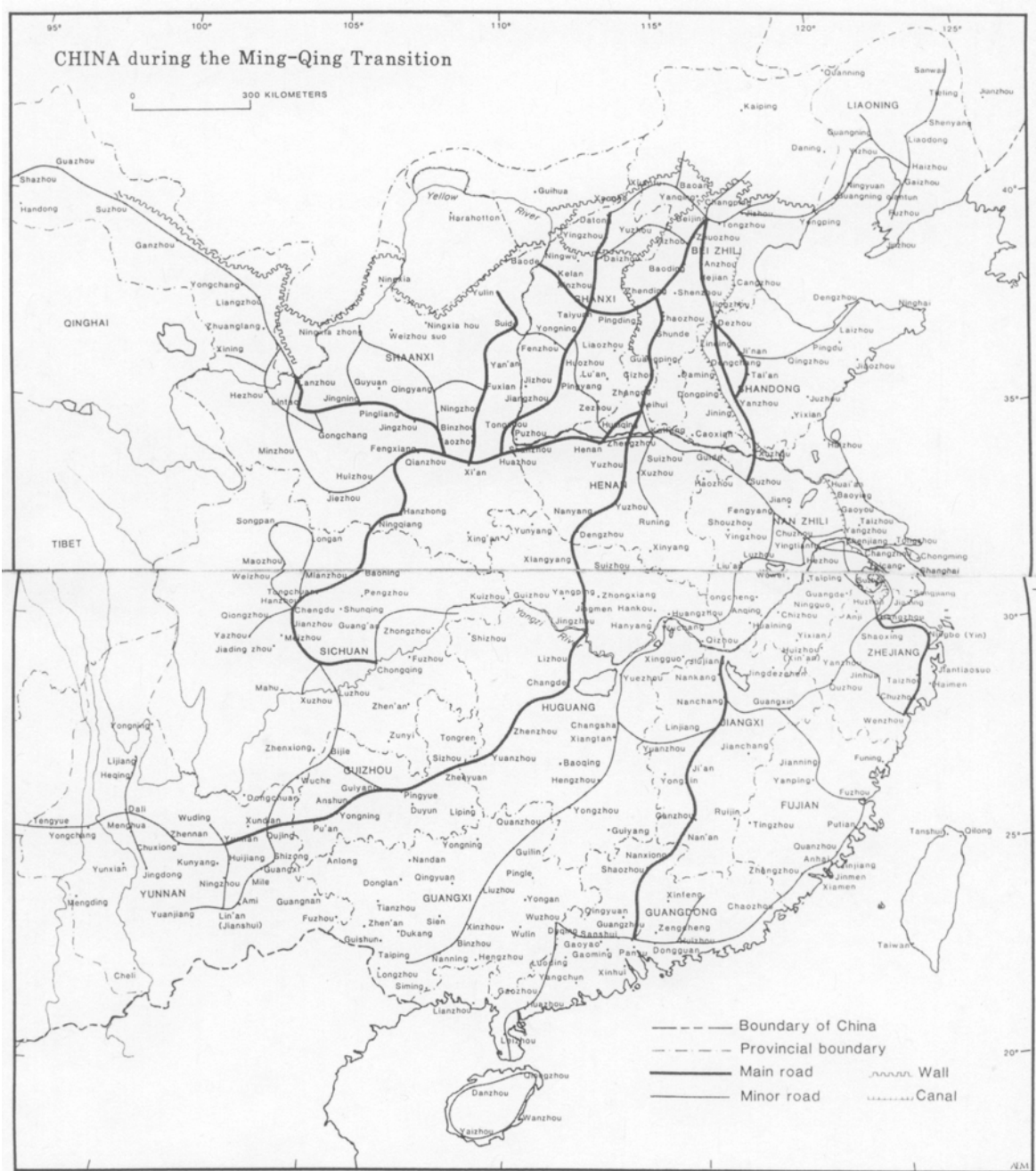
Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2011

Professor Joseph W. Esherick, Co-Chair
Professor Paul G. Pickowicz, Co-Chair

From 1661 to 1683, the province of Fujian in southeast China was the scene of the most devastating scorched earth campaign in early-modern history. A thousand-mile stretch of coast lay in wreckage, and the smoke of burning towns darkened the sky for days. Hundreds of thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands more were uprooted as the Qing state, in the midst of its conquest of China, fought a total war to defeat the seahord Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong).

The present dissertation seeks to uncover the history of the Qing Coastal Depopulation (Qianjie) and the sealords of Fujian. It also aims at an interpretation, through the Fujianese historical experience, of an East Asian maritime system that may furnish a working vocabulary for integrating the Chinese littoral with early-modern world history. It begins by placing Fujian province and her seafaring peoples in the context of a century of evolution from the Wako pirate wars of the mid-1500s to the brutal depopulation of the Chinese coast of the 1660s. It describes how the Seaban or maritime prohibitions of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) militarized the Chinese coast and inadvertently encouraged oligopoly (by a confederation of smuggler-pirates) and then monopoly (in the rise of a sealord). It ends with the brutal story of how the Qing state created a maritime frontier, destroyed the autonomous coastal powers, and reshuffled Fujian into a provincial administration.



Map 0.1 China During the Ming-Qing Transition

From Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 28-29.

Introduction

The Lives of a Frontier



Figure 0.1 – Nurhaci



Figure 0.2 – Zheng Zhilong

Two frontiersmen and an age

The Ming-Qing transition of the 17th century was the greatest upheaval in China's late imperial transformation. It was both an invasion and a civil war. It is the subject of the late Frederic Wakeman's magnificent book, *The Great Enterprise* (1985). As Wakeman showed, the Great Enterprise (that is, the Manchu conquest of China and the establishment of the Qing imperium) was not a sudden coup, but rather a long and violent effort to solve the structural crises of the late imperial polity—exigencies made all the more dire by the conditions of the 17th-century general crisis that was sweeping the world. I view the Ming-Qing transition in the broadest possible terms as a period of one hundred years, beginning in the northeastern marches with Nurhaci's drive to unify the Jurchens in 1583 and ending in the southeastern seas with the conquest of Taiwan from the last sealord scion, Zheng Keshuang, in 1683. It is a story that begins and ends in the frontiers.

For it was on the fringes of Ming China's hill country, greenwood, and the sea that two frontiersmen—both princes of their disorder—were born.² In small places, people dream big. Nurhaci (1559-1626) and Zheng Zhilong (1604-1661) never met each other, but their dreams overlapped, and their sons and grandsons were destined to be mortal enemies. Both were pioneers in expanding the boundaries of imperial China to an extent never before imagined. Nurhaci has been seen in myth and history as the grandfather of the Great Enterprise. Now, I say that the Great Enterprise, that saga of frontier dreams, was also Zheng's story.

Nurhaci and Zheng Zhilong are seldom mentioned in the same sentence. One wonders if these two men, from worlds apart, could have carried on a conversation. One was a six-foot-tall northern "barbarian" who spoke Jurchen, Mongol, and Mandarin; the other was a lean and lissome southerner who spoke the Hokkien dialect and a smattering of Japanese, Portuguese, and Dutch. Nurhaci was a minor tribal chief from Manchuria who unified the warring Jurchen clans and founded the Later Jin state that would later sweep through the Great Wall to create the Qing empire, China's last imperial dynasty; Zheng was a Fujianese smuggler and pirate, a man of the sea who huckstered, bribed, and battled his way to become maritime overlord at the end of the Ming dynasty and one of the realm's richest men, only to be outshined by his son (Zheng Chenggong, a.k.a. Koxinga), who would one day become a prince and a god.

And yet, Nurhaci and Zheng Zhilong were like wayward brothers in an age of

² Figures 0.1 and 0.2: The khan and the sealord; Zheng Zhilong cropped from a Japanese woodblock print (Donald Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga: Chikamatsu's Puppet Play, its Background and Importance*. London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951), inset. My mention of princes and disorders pays homage, of course, to John E. Mack's *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998 [1976]), and to Irving Howe, from whom Mack got the phrase.

silver and blood. Both were upward climbers who survived on their wits and ability to cross borders and cut deals with multiple cultural or ethnic groups, and who overcame a host of setbacks to become leaders of highly mobile populations. Both became transfrontier lords in regions where capital accumulation and agricultural surplus were difficult, and where an admixture of trading and raiding was thus the standard way of life. Both commanded sophisticated and hybrid military forces on the order of 60,000 men in their heyday. Their authority was grounded in the enforcement of monopolistic economic rights and mastery of commodity and population flows. Above all—and this is a credit to their enterprise—they both created organizations of power and profit to outgrow the cycles of frontier violence that the Chinese state had long exploited (in a process that Leonard Blussé once likened to “the recycling of paper-trash to usable material”³) to keep frontier civilizations divided and inchoate. The khan and the sealord reinvented their worlds because they refused to be recycled.

Lifestreams

This project is a biography of a frontier. Just as a person is born, grows, and dies, so a frontier is made and unmade and transforms as the societies within it evolve in world-historical time.⁴ Usually, a biography has to address three cardinal questions: Who is the subject? What is the course of life? What are the lessons of this life for our age? I approach these questions by introducing maritime Fujian as a historical unit,

³ More on this in Chapter 1. Leonard Blussé, “The VOC as Sorcerer's Apprentice: Stereotypes and Social Engineering on the China Coast.” In W. L. Idema, ed., *Leyden Studies in Sinology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 98.

⁴ One of the best examples of such biography is Kate Brown's *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

tracing how it was made into a frontier by policy, by people on both sides of the line, and by the changing world scene, and finally, reflecting on the costs of state control and parallels with our own time. I have chosen Fujian for two contradictory reasons: its *centrality* in the making and breaking of Chinese maritime policy, and its relative *marginality* within a system of political economy that favored regions like Jiangnan and Guangdong.⁵ My aim is twofold: to provide a frontier history of maritime Fujian during the 17th century and to suggest some of the vocabulary for re-imagining Chinese history as a subset of global maritime history.

History provides only fragmentary, messy sources for the life of a place called Fujian. But is it not the same with any biography? Whatever the story told of Fujian, it always seems to have something to do with the sea. Ming chronicles relate that Fujian was home to expert shipbuilders and mariners, the ones who built and sailed the largest wooden ships in history: the great Treasure Fleets that sailed to India and Africa in one of the glory days of the Ming (1405-1433). In a later but not tamer age, Ming officials frowned on Fujian as a den of smugglers and pirates that defied the empire's laws forbidding private maritime trade (the Seaban). We hear that Fujian was ravaged in the mid-1500s, both by pirate attacks and by the government troops sent to the rescue. We know well, too, that Fujian was the last base of resistance to the invading Manchus in the mid-1600s, and that its most famous native son was "Taiwan's first Chinese ruler and everyone's misunderstood hero," Koxinga.⁶ All true, and much more. (Even today, Fujian's seaborne prominence continues in the dubious form of snakeheads—traffickers

⁵ The same contradiction spurred Kate Brown's study of the Ukrainian-Polish-Jewish-German borderland (Ibid.).

⁶ John E. Wills, Jr., *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 230.

of illegal emigrants—and smuggler barons like the recently banished Lai Changxing.⁷)

Fujian's story coheres around the lives of her greatest and meanest sons and daughters. No family better represented the aspirations and possibilities of 16th- and 17th-century Fujian than the Zheng clan, beginning with Zheng Zhilong, the first seafarer, who created the family monopoly; his famous son Koxinga (1624-1662), who conquered the Dutch colony of Taiwan; and grandson Zheng Jing (1641-1681), who demanded tributary rights for his Taiwanese maritime kingdom on the same footing as Korea or Japan. The making of the Fujian frontier is inseparable from the story of the rise and demise of these seafarers.

But this is hardly the Zhengs' story alone. All around the rise and fall of this remarkable family lay the larger world of maritime China, East and Southeast Asia, the playground and battleground of Fujianese adventurers—all clever men, some cruel, some murderous, and all cursed as robbers and rogues in Chinese government records that have left us few accounts written in the seamen's own hands. The mid-1500s were the heyday of Fujianese seamen like ex-convict Baldy Li (Li Guangtou), whose name alone is a vivid testimony to the man; the reluctant pirate Hong Dizehen, who was a smuggler and quite a local hero for paying the ransoms to send pirate hostages home, until the day Ming troops seized his family and aroused his hatred of the government; and slave-turned-outlaw Wu Ping, an agile master of disguise like an evil version of Zorro, who dominated the seas and then vanished after a defeat, but was widely believed to have sailed out to sea and become an immortal. In the mid-1600s, there were such seamen as the slick Captain

⁷ On Lai, see Oliver August's fascinating book *Inside the Red Mansion: On the Trail of China's Most Wanted Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

China (Li Dan), who escaped slavery aboard a Spanish galley and became headman of the Chinese community in Japan; motley renegades charmingly called Quitsick, Toe-Tsai-lak, and Janglau by the Dutch (Li Kuiqi, Zhong Bin, and Liu Xiang); and even seawomen like Theyma (Zheng Ma, *née* Huang), who was Zheng Zhilong's mother, a master broker, and not a lady to be trifled with.

All the while, Portuguese fidalgos, Spanish galleon captains, fighting Jesuit priests, and Dutch VOC rogues, officers, and gentlemen were trying hard—but not always wisely—to break into this world dominated by Chinese and Japanese networks of trade and piracy. The riotous internationalism of this period becomes more comprehensible when we recall that for many of these travelers from afar, their first encounter with China was in Fujian, on Fujianese ships, or through the Hokkien diaspora. Historical spheres were being punctured, world systems formed, and Fujian was embroiled in it all.

Finally, there was the irrepressible seafarer himself, known variously as Nicholas Iquan, Jasper (or Gaspard), Tei Shiryû, Ytcuam, or even Chinchillón. Zheng Zhilong's many names matched a storied career. Spanish missionary Victorio Riccio wrote of Zheng as “Nicolas the apostate, a marvel of human fate, who rose up by most despicable chance to challenge kings and emperors.”⁸ And indeed his profile shows all the colors of his age. As a teenager, Zheng ran away from his home of Anhai, Fujian, hustled around the docks in Macau, and probably first visited Japan around age 18 (c. 1622), at which time he fell in with pirates, who captured him but deemed him too pretty and charming to

⁸ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II: 1642-1682* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2001), 586-587.

kill. By age 27, he was popular with the Dutch in Taiwan, who, strangely enough, called him “Daddy.”⁹ He clawed his way up from pirate to seahorse, routing Ming fleets in 1627, a Dutch fleet in 1633, and smashing his last rival Liu Xiang in 1635. The Ming state was forced to buy him out with honors and admiralty. By age 36 (c. 1640), only a few years before fall of the Ming dynasty, he was supreme commander of Fujianese military forces and the most important man in Fujian.¹⁰ Zheng’s half-Japanese son, Koxinga (of whom we will see more later), was destined to overshadow his father in accolades and transnational fame. But Zheng Zhilong, who had mastered the frontier, was the one who had made everything possible. Perhaps most telling was an episode when the young Koxinga asked his father where his bodyguard of freed African slaves, his faithful “Black Guard” of musketeers, had come from. Zheng told his son simply that he had brought them “from a distant country, beyond the sea.”¹¹

These, in dizzy and superficial summary, are just a fraction of the Fujianese frontiersmen, that is to say, a few whose fame or infamy put down their names for posterity. Thousands went nameless because they left no trace. Even Zheng Zhilong, who was in the thick of things, left few records behind, for the simple reason that it was not in his interest to do so. But historical mystery or obscurity does not explain why I should write about this place, these people, this time period. I do so because it tells a special story about the creativity and contingencies of the long 17th century. What these

⁹ Leonard Blussé, “The VOC as Sorcerer's Apprentice,” 99.

¹⁰ Throughout this manuscript, I take the generally accepted year of 1604 as Zheng’s birth year. Taiwanese scholar Tang Jintai, however, has recently advanced the possibility that Zheng was born in 1595, and that this would have made him quite a bit older. See Tang Jintai 湯錦台, *Kaiqi Taiwan di yi ren Zheng Zhilong 開啟台灣第一人鄭芝龍* [Zheng Zhilong: The Pioneer of Taiwan] (Taipei: Guoshi, 2002), 38-39.

¹¹ Gabriele Foccardi, *The Last Warrior: The Life of Cheng Ch'eng-kung, The Lord of the "Terrace Bay" (A Study on the T'ai-wan Wai-chih by Chiang Jih-sheng (1704))* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), 24.

seamen had in common was a desire for independence and for secure profits in a political system that gave them neither security nor dignity. Their lives were disjointed, quixotic, even contradictory, but they deserve to be told as a whole stream of lives rather than singly. As with nomads, slaves, and the poor, history records not so well their motives as the things they made with their own hands. Power and profit for a few, death and ignominy for many—but policies were broken, borders changed, and the shores of China shook as seafarers fought and died.

The evolution of the sealord was a century in the making, a long process to refine the means for maritime control, power, and profit. The Seaban laws of the Ming state, as we shall see, had laid the basis for revolt by effectively criminalizing the coastal population of Fujian. In the 100-year period from the mid-Ming to the Ming-Qing transition, the seafaring communities developed informal institutions at sea and on land to carry out illicit trade. Along with this illegal trade came the rapid institutionalization of maritime violence: the development of quasi-governmental organizations that could challenge state authority, and the centrifugal union of frontiersmen with the international sources of guns and silver that empowered them. Hence the rising tempo of butchery on the Chinese coast—from the Seaban to the pirate wars of the 1500s to the merciless depopulation of the coast from 1661 to 1683—on a scale scarcely imaginable without reference to the roughly contemporaneous Barbary pirates, and perhaps as central to the 17th-century reconfiguration of littoral East Asia as its Mediterranean counterpart was in the days of Suleiman and Phillip II.

The 17th century was a critical juncture in Chinese and world history. The general crisis of East Asia, related to the European and world crisis at the same time, led states

around the globe to scramble for solutions to falling agricultural productivity, to colder climates, to wars and revolts, to inflation and fiscal insolvency and silver specie shortage. All this in an age of imperial expansion and frontier rivalry. Resourceful solutions to frontier problems, both terrestrial and maritime, were everywhere being applied to the reconstruction and creation of centralized or absolutist states. This was a story common to England, France, and Russia as it was to China, Japan, and the Mughal and Ottoman empires. A history of 17th-century China, therefore, must address the problem of dual formation: how the frontier shaped the Chinese core, and vice versa.

Parallel frontiers

Imperial China had two great frontiers, broadly conceived—we might think of them as two oceans, north and south. The northern frontier was the terrestrial or land frontier, and it spanned the veritable ocean of desert and steppe of Central Asia to the northeast continental zone of China that borders Manchuria and Korea. The other frontier was the southern maritime frontier, the seaboard of southern China below the Yangzi that stretches from Zhejiang down to Fujian and down to Guangdong. Of course, this is a grossly simplified picture, but perhaps its crudeness has the virtue of magnifying chief commonalities. The two frontiers differed in economy, ecology, culture, and ethnicity, but they were undoubtedly linked by policy and practice with core Chinese regions and with each other. The most direct examples of this were the Great Wall, built in the late 1500s with silver imported through the southeast coast (much of it smuggled by Fujianese seamen evading the Ming maritime bans), and the state techniques of nomad containment in the north that were applied to divide and control coastal dwellers and

pirates in the south.

Some may hesitate to call Fujian a frontier, because it was a proper province of China, long assimilated into the empire, and because its people were predominantly Han. True, in ethnicity and culture, Fujian was hardly foreign—in fact, intellectual hubs like Putian city produced many elite *jinshi* and scholar-officials in the Ming period—nor was Fujian geographically an island, being contiguous to rich, cultured provinces like Zhejiang and Guangdong. On the other hand, cut by a mass of mountains and wooded hills that covered 90% of the land area, leaving only a narrow and crowded coastal plain, the province was bipolar. Coastal Fujianese, especially the Hokkien of the south, moved easily between multiple worlds, and they often seemed to have more in common with seafaring peoples in other countries than with the peoples of Fujian’s mountainous interior. While producing Confucian scholars, they maintained violent traditions of clan warfare (*xiedou*); while in theory celebrating the agrarian ideal, the landed gentry poured their resources into great trading ships, legal or not (mostly not); roving seafarers defied state efforts to limit their mobility, and most coastal residents subsisted or profited from trades like fishing, salt-making, trading, and raiding. Shipwrights, sailors, usurers, and hoodlums were in ample supply, especially in times of the strictest prohibitions on maritime commerce. (There was no such thing as an unemployed pirate.) Fujian frustrated the authorities who tried to simplify and to rule it.

Thus, if a “frontier” is limited to ethnic or cultural enclaves, national military borders, or areas of sparse settlement, then the term does not work well for a place like Fujian. (For just what kind of boundary was the ocean, anyway?) But it is more fruitful, I suggest, to envision the land-to-sea continuum as the littoral peoples used it in their

daily lives: as a habitat, a middle ground, and a supra-national economic and social space—it was not a barrier.

The real and tangible barriers were ones of policy, such as the Seaban: barriers of a politico-social, not geographic, origin.¹² If we expand the notion of a frontier in three senses: a) a mobile population with multiregional commercial and social ties; b) state attempts to apply a containment policy or forcibly relocate a geographic or occupationally defined population; and c) tariffs and trade barriers as markers of the boundary, then Fujian comes across as a frontier of interest and one that offers comparative insights on China's place in the early-modern globe. Forced relocation and mobility barriers by the Chinese state are most often encountered as expedients applied to lands distant from the core, as with the Ming building of the Great Wall, the Qing state's fixing of Mongol pasturelands, the Turfani deportation, and state-sponsored colonization of Xinjiang in the 18th century.¹³ The case of Fujian reveals that such policy-mandated barriers and coercive population movements could be applied even to a core macroregion with a Han majority population, both by the Ming (Han) and Qing (Manchu) rulers.

Boundary lines on the land-to-sea continuum were rarely stark, however. The rhetorical gulf between land and sea and the factual inaccuracy that mars many Ming and Qing writings on the subject was largely the creation of landlocked or at least land-based writers (i.e., those with the power to write) who privileged the agrarian state or their own fear or ignorance of the seas. This was not because of some inherent Chinese

¹² As the late Owen Lattimore, the doyen of frontier studies, advised in his classic *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962 [1940]), we must discriminate between the natural environment and the *social emphasis* applied to the environment in the course of history (p. 25).

¹³ Peter C. Perdue, "Empire and Nation in Comparative Perspective: Frontier Administration in Eighteenth-Century China." In *Shared Histories of Modernity: China, India and the Ottoman Empire*, edited by Huri Islamoglu and Peter Perdue (London: Routledge, 2009), 21-45.

backwardness or insularity, as later Europeans, flush with the victory of the Opium War in 1842, were to arrogantly assume. Any agrarian polity had limits to its lifespan and its ability to extract resources from the margins while balancing surplus in the core, as well as very practical concerns over potentially destabilizing forces, internal or external. In any case, Fujianese seamen generally ignored the verbiage and focused on survival in the world as it was, not the world as kings and counselors might have liked it to be.

If Fujian was a province securely within the stock Chinese *ecumene* or “all under heaven,” it was also the outer rim of a far vaster world in which its maritime linkages were *inward* linkages, and where a constellation of powers operated in spaces where state control was weak. Hardly could a neat line be drawn between Fujian as China and Fujian as “the world outside.” But this convergence of China and the world in a frontier province is exactly what makes Fujian at that time, circa 1540-1680, so interesting. For the frontier was a construct, not a given. I said earlier that this long 17th century was one of evolving maritime institutions, an epoch of experimentation on the high seas by people on the margins. But people alone do not make a frontier. The state played a powerful role by forcibly moving people around and creating the conditions to which the frontiersmen responded. Both the Ming and Qing states tried to contain or cut off the littoral regions in the mid-1500s and mid-1600s, respectively, each time by force of arms. Thus, it was also a century of frontier making, of drawing boundaries and of the repeated criminalizing and decriminalizing of much of the coastal population. Lines in the sand, foreign and civil wars on Fujianese soil, and people who killed and were killed for profit and independence—together, these made the maritime frontier.

I spoke of creativity and contingency before. This period was also one of

powerful conjuncture between states and frontiers, especially in those spaces that were effectively stateless, or perhaps inter-state (that is, situated between states). First of all, the two frontiers in China were linked by two dominant trends of the 16th-17th century, namely the growth of interregional and international trade (the beginnings of a world system) and the mobilization of frontier society into composite mercantile-military groups. In the north, there were the Mongols and Jurchens under figures like Altan Khan and Nurhaci. In the south, the confederations of pirates like Wang Zhi (d. 1559), trade conglomerates like that of Li Dan (d. 1625), and the military machine of seafarer Zheng Zhilong were cases in point. The flows of silver, transfrontier goods, and mobile populations were intertwined processes that mobilized nomads and seamen alike around dominant powers. Thus, the rallying of China's maritime frontier was a concurrent process to the rise of the Manchu state in the north.

It was also coincident with the political reordering of East Asia. The unification of Sengoku Japan—a process that began with Nobunaga and peaked with Hideyoshi (1536-1598)—the Ming-Qing transition, and the Tokugawa creation of a Japan-centered order were parallel processes that reacted to mobilization, interregionalism, and frontier expansion and containment. All were tied to the international flows of silver, guns, and goods carried by autonomous mercantile-military groups that dominated non-state spaces *between* and frontier spaces *within* states.¹⁴

I am not ascribing some overarching political consciousness or revolutionary ideology to these frontiersmen. I simply suggest that the seamen were not anarchic

¹⁴ For the Japanese case, see especially Peter D. Shapinsky, "Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Exchange in Medieval Japan" (Ph.D. thesis: University of Michigan, 2005).

rabble and that they were deeply involved in the international system of their day in a way that we cannot reduce to mere “trade” or “piracy.” The southern transfrontier region matched its northern counterpart (Manchuria and Central Asia) in complexity and importance, and both regions responded to the same sorts of transnational and internal impulses from the 1500s to the 1600s. In both north and south, frontier peoples began to organize in novel ways.

In other words, I wish to put Zheng Zhilong, one of the boldest men of action of his age, on the same footing as Nurhaci to understand the period. The Manchus have been well studied, but the maritime frontier warrants deeper inquiry. By bringing in this counterpoint, we may enrich our understanding of the century-long Great Enterprise. In this preliminary study, I suggest that the Great Enterprise, which has been largely conceived as a Manchu/northeastern undertaking, should be reconsidered in its later phase as the struggle between *two* frontiers that were simultaneously moving to center stage during this critical period of Chinese history. The Zheng family’s career very nearly mirrored the Great Enterprise of the Aisin Gioro clan of Nurhaci, and for good reason: they were both trans-frontiersmen and mercantile-military groups. Their very similitude may have accounted for their intense rivalry and final struggle to the death.

Two cases and a question

The body count in this dissertation is very high. This is at once a sobering fact, a warning, and an inducement to questioning. Maritime East Asia had the best and worst of civilization: its luxuries and its monsters, its cosmopolitanism and its savagery. These extremes were especially pronounced at a time like the Ming-Qing transition. However,

for all the wealth of the Chinese written tradition, we struggle to understand even the life of an average Chinese seaman, for, unlike his American counterparts, he left no diaries and few letters. He was deemed worthy of record chiefly through injury and illegality: murder, war, rapine, and everything that made life nasty and short. Such bloody business is the nucleus of my narrative—not to depress or to fascinate, but rather to illuminate the role of violence in frontier making. The rich cultures of marginal peoples tend to disappear without a trace if not for the scar of revolt. The unhappy truth is that such outbursts of bloodshed produced the very sources that permit the modern historian to recover this period.

Specifically, two eruptions of violence command our attention: the pirate wars (1540-1574) and the forced depopulation of the Chinese coast (1661-1683). Consider the following two cases of extreme violence at different times, but in the same place: a city called Putian in central coastal Fujian. I mentioned Putian once before as an intellectual and cultural center, famous for its academies and scholar-officials. Not so after these events.

In 1562, 4000 pirates captured Putian. They robbed and butchered the inhabitants. The pirates stayed in the city for over sixty days, until the stench of rotting bodies forced them to leave. One local scholar donated money to bury more than 10,000 corpses.¹⁵

In 1662, Qing government troops torched Putian to burn people out of their homes. This was not a battle, as Putian had already been conquered by Qing forces; rather, it was a deliberate policy of coastal depopulation, aimed leaving nothing behind for the seaford

¹⁵ Pin-tsun Chang, "Chinese Maritime Trade: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Fu-chien (Fukien)" (Ph.D. thesis: Princeton University, 1983), 242, 247.

Koxinga. Those who did not move within ten days were killed on the spot. People were crushed to death as their houses burned down.¹⁶

These two cases were separated by exactly 100 years. The city of Putian, caught in the middle, was a double victim. The first disaster was part of the Wako pirate attacks that were set off by the Ming enforcement of the Seaban policy (*Haijin*) in the 1540s— invasions that mobilized a motley crew of Japanese, Portuguese, Korean, Southeast Asian, and mostly Chinese seafarers masquerading under the blanket term of “Japanese pirates.” The second was the notorious scorched earth policy (*Qianjie*) with which the Qing empire tried to crush all maritime resistance to its Great Enterprise. From 1661 to 1683, Fujian was the center of perhaps the world’s most devastating and sustained scorched earth campaign. A thousand-mile stretch of coast lay in wreckage, and the smoke of burning towns darkened the sky for days. Hundreds of thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands more were uprooted and forced to flee to Southeast Asia, to inland provinces, or eastward to islands like Taiwan. The pirate wars and the scorched coast are the two key cases in the creation and destruction of the maritime frontier.

My question thus becomes one of causes and correlations: how did we get from pirates killing people to the state killing people in this period of 100 years? That is to say, what does this shift from non-state violence to state violence have to do with the creation of a frontier in a place called Fujian?

By Fujian, I refer not only to the coastal province by that name but to a larger stretch of the littoral that corresponds roughly to G. William Skinner’s Southeast Coast

¹⁶ Zheng Zhenman, *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*. Translated by Michael Szonyi with the assistance of Kenneth Dean and David Wakefield (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 212-215.

macroregion.¹⁷ For now, I will call this economic and cultural sphere Greater Fujian and note that it does not stop at the ocean's edge, as the macroregion does. The coast of Fujian and parts of its neighboring provinces, with its outlying ports and islands, together with expanses of water extending far out to sea, constituted the core of a maritime region with a coherence all its own. It was here that the Ming and Qing states attempted with varying degrees of success to apply strategies of containment and thus forged a maritime frontier.

My approach is basically chronological and bookended by the two policies that set the coast on fire. It starts with the Ming Seaban and ends with the Qing coastal depopulation, with the evolution of the Fujianese sealord in between. Briefly, I will say this of the Seaban: the intent of the policy was to monopolize foreign contacts and trade under state control by prohibiting private activity and increasing surveillance of the coast, but the result was that coastal people like the Fujianese were pushed into outlawry and outside of the state's control—into a frontier defined by profession more than by geography. Sailors, merchants, gentry, and their Portuguese and Japanese counterparts abroad colluded to trade Chinese goods for silver, forming autonomous mobile groups that grew larger and better armed as they came to dominate international relations. As I will explain in the chapters that follow, the Ming maritime ban shaped this evolution and inadvertently encouraged oligopoly (by a confederation of smuggler-pirates) and then monopoly (in the rise of a new species of maritime authority: the sealord).

The Qing coastal depopulation (*Qianjie*) of 1661-1683, which devastated the lives

¹⁷ G. William Skinner, "Presidential Address: The Structure of Chinese History." *Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (1985): 277.

of millions in southeast China and caused one of the largest forced migrations of the early modern era, was by contrast a policy that attempted control not of the sea, but of an artificial land boundary. Greater Fujian, in no small part because of the Ming creation of a maritime frontier, was one of the last strongholds of autonomous power and therefore one of the thorniest bases of resistance to Qing rule. The seafarer Zheng Zhilong had defected to the Qing in 1646, but his son Koxinga refused to follow suit. The continuation of the maritime resistance split the Zheng family in half and frustrated the Qing authorities, who failed in their negotiations with Koxinga, failed to defeat him militarily, and finally depopulated the coast in 1661. I will describe how these acts redrew the frontier and show that the policy was qualitatively different from the old Seaban and in some respects easier to enforce. By drawing its proverbial line in the sand (a boundary of forts and rubble within ten miles of the coast), the Qing state forcibly classified coastal residents and shattered the ranks of pirates, smugglers, and elites who had dominated the littoral since Ming times. These measures ended with the conquest of Taiwan, the demilitarization of the littoral, and the creation of a new Qing-centered maritime order.

How and why this came to be is the central problem of this study. The long view, of a Fujianese maritime frontier that paralleled its Manchurian coeval over a long 17th century, seems to me the most sensible one. Unless we understand the East Asian maritime world in Ming times, everything that came after will seem as ludicrous as the coastal depopulation itself.

Finally, although these events occurred on the periphery of a great land empire, they were not at all peripheral. The frontier story of Fujian addressed two classic

problems of the Chinese empire¹⁸, namely: 1) As a rich and vast empire, China was a magnet for trade and plunder. The empire was chronically insecure, its frontiers weakly delimited, its defenders spread thin; and 2) Despite the need for defense, just how much defense could the empire afford? How much frontier control could be built without becoming prohibitively expensive, and to what extent could frontier leaders be co-opted without crippling Chinese control of the frontier or ceding it to foreign competitors? So might Ming General Li Chengliang, the Regional Commander of Liaodong, have asked himself as he manipulated Manchurian “barbarians” like Nurhaci, and so might Prefect Cao Lütai of Tong’an have hesitated before “summoning and appeasing” (*zhaofu*) pirates like Zheng Zhilong by offering him official rank in 1628, thus paving the way for Zheng to become monopolist and overlord of Fujian.

To say that this period was contingent is not simply to say that “for want of a nail the kingdom was lost,” but that there were real alternative paths in the making and breaking of frontiers and the constitution of the multiethnic, unified Qing empire. The Qing formation was hardly inevitable. How might things have been different if, for example, Zheng Zhilong had kept his maritime organization intact and thus preserved some form of frontier autonomy in Fujian? What if sealords and seamen had secured their independence and thus continued the large movements of people, goods, and ideas that made for China a vital role in the Age of Sail? Might the Qing have been overcome by its regional satraps (Feudatories), whose rebellion nearly ruined the dynasty in 1674? Or might a different political compromise have reshaped the state configuration of China?

¹⁸ I get this from Warren I. Cohen’s analysis of Tang-era instability in *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 88.

In either case, it was the Qing resolution of the *frontier* problem that is central to our understanding of the Great Enterprise, and of the Qing period as a whole. Therefore, it is to the frontiers that we must return.

What follows is my approach to how Manchus and seamen converged in Greater Fujian. I start by placing Fujian at the center of a maritime revolt and the transformation of a non-state littoral into a frontier. Our stage is the southeast coast of China over the course of a long seventeenth century (c. 1540-1683), as the Ming empire entered its decline and began to come to death grips with enemies and strangers without and within. Let us engage in maritime history.

Chapter I

Rogue

Fujian and the Seaban



Map 1.1 - Fujian

In Fujian, mountain and sea crisscross, and the folkways of her people make them bold and fierce by nature. I fear that some desperado may appear amongst them and stir up trouble.

-- Huang Shijian¹⁹

Fujian was the Portugal of imperial China, her Holland, her headache. In Chinese imperial terms, Fujian was the gateway to the barbarians of the Eastern and Western Oceans—and in the eyes of the court, half barbarian herself. But to her sons and daughters who left shore to exchange life for livelihood—those mariners who braved wind and water, sand and foam—Fujian was much else besides. Ming author Zhou Qiyuan wrote of his people: “The mariners view floating on the huge waves as just like standing on a high hill; they gaze on foreign lands as if they were just stepping outside

¹⁹ Memorial of General Huang Shijian 黃仕簡 (*QL* 35.1 [1770 Jan.-Feb.]), 651/24, in *Gongzhong zhupi* 宮中朱批 [*zouzhe* 奏折], *Nongmin yundong* 农民运动, 67.

their doorsteps.”²⁰ It was a world of earth and water and unfixed boundaries. They did not simply sail across the sea. They lived on it until the land came home.

In the mid-1500s, Fujian became known as a rogue province and a nefarious breeding ground of pirates: those “coastal treacherous subjects who had intercourse with barbarians,” in the words of Ming official Tu Zhonglü. Censor Tu was so distraught about the pirate crisis that it affected his arithmetic—he identified the composition of the pirate swarm as consisting of 10% barbarians, 20% Ryukyu islanders, 50% people from Zhejiang province, and 90% (sic) the people of Fujian!²¹

This dour assessment of the Fujianese as the single biggest source of the pirate problem was consistent with one of the prevailing stereotypes about the Fujianese people during late imperial times. “These imbeciles compete for petty profits,” records one High Qing gazetteer, “. . . and profit-hungry young men from all quarters stake everything at sea regardless of capital punishment, flocking to wealth like wild birds. They compete in luxury and deceit, drinking up vices and breaking the law, all beyond the pale of decency. Everyone in Fujian crowds into the merchant’s trade, and the local custom is to grub for money and to cheat with pleasure.”²² Historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto writes that, “Before its elevation by commerce, the country which became Fukien had long borne an

²⁰ Zhou Qiyuan preface, in Zhang Xie 张燮 (1574-1640), *Dong Xiyang kao* 东西洋考 [The eastern and western oceans]. Reprint of the 1618 ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981 [1618]), 17.

²¹ Kwan-wai So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the 16th Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1975), 26.

²² (Qianlong) *Fuzhou fuzhi* (乾隆)福州府志, j. 24, *fengsu* 风俗, cited in Chen Zhiping 陈支平, “Minjiang shangxia you jingji qingxiexing lianxi” 闽江上下游经济的倾斜性联系, *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi yanjiu* (1995, no. 2): 26.

evil reputation as a fatally inhospitable land: a narrow malarial shore, backed by mountains full of savages.”²³

In reality, it was never so easy to assign identities to the men and women who populated or worked the Chinese coast and beyond. In the maritime world, who was who? The Ming state, like its Qing successor, created its own fair share of enemies, and as much effort was expended in trying to identify them as it was in destroying them. Here one day and gone the next, Chinese and non-Chinese, and honest crooks all, the maritime peoples were inscrutable and exasperating to the imperial authorities. The key obstacle to the Ming state’s control of the littoral was the inability to distinguish pirates and smugglers from merchants, fishers, and commonfolk—these were fluid identities in a world of apolitical survival strategies. As Robert Antony says in his study of late imperial Chinese pirates and seafarers, “violence and crime, like typhoons, taxes, and official squeeze, were undeniable parts of the seaman’s daily life.”²⁴ Predation and brigandage on the seas and along the coast were a matter of course—as were, of course, government squeezing and palm-greasing.

And yet, in the mid-1500s, the Ming empire seemed to face a clear enemy from the sea: the so-called Wako (Ch. *Wokou*), or “Japanese” pirates, whose devastation of the China coast seared itself into Chinese historical and cultural memory in ways comparable to the Vikings or the Barbary pirates of the European experience.²⁵ Tens of thousands

²³ Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Civilizations: Culture, Ambition, and the Transformation of Nature* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 342.

²⁴ Robert J. Antony, *Like Froth Floating on the Sea: The World of Pirates and Seafarers in Late Imperial South China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2003), 12.

²⁵ Today, some television dramas in China still depict the Wako as brutal Japanese invaders (played by actors sporting samurai swords and World War II style Rising Sun headbands), despite the fact that

were killed in the Wako pirate crisis from about 1540-1574, as many in internecine pirate wars as in invasion and government suppression. A century afterward, the nascent Qing state found its mortal enemy in the Fujianese seafarer Zheng Chenggong, known to the world as Koxinga. To destroy him, the Qing state devised a comprehensive scorched coast policy that had no counterpart in early modern history. Such were the names of the Enemy against whom the Ming and Qing states spilled so much blood to construct their own Maginot Lines—the Haijin (Seaban) of the Ming and the Qianjie (coastal depopulation) of the Qing.

How do we trace, how do we account for these pirate wars? These enemies did not arise from thin air, but were products of social and economic forces and of the countless individual decisions that make the fabric of history. The question is where and when to start. And so the search for Enemy origins pulls us back in time and outward in space, in search of a system.

Towards a maritime system? Preliminary thoughts

Let me say, first of all, that for me studying piracy is a means rather than an end in itself. My primary interest is in the historical evolution and dissolution of maritime institutions in China and East Asia. Large-scale rebellions and pirate movements, such as those that characterized the 1500s and 1600s, provoked strong state responses from both the Ming and Qing states and may thus help us to observe the Chinese maritime world in flux and describe some of its features.

historians agree that the Wako were mostly Chinese pirates. Such “historical” shows, sponsored by Chinese Central Television, serve obvious political and nationalistic purposes.

Robert Antony has already done an admirable job of introducing Chinese pirate history “from the bottom up,” though for a later period than the 16th-17th centuries with which I am occupied here. Scholars like Dian Murray, John Wills, Ng Chin-keong, Wang Gungwu, Leonard Blussé, and Chang Pin-tsun have done much in English to advance our knowledge of piracy and trade in maritime China (by both Asian and European merchants and marauders).²⁶ French and German works, like those of Paola Calanca and Bodo Wiethoff, respectively, sparkle, as well as studies in Dutch by the amazing polyglot, Leonard Blussé.²⁷ And if I were to list the representative Chinese and Japanese scholarship, it would make for a footnote that would cease being the foot and instead be the head and body of the page. Instead of a long literature review, let us address such works as the occasion calls for it.

But was there a system? John Wills helped open the door thirty years ago by beginning from “the perception that this naval-commercial world had some foci outside China.”²⁸ A decade ago Roderich Ptak suggested a preliminary chronological framework

²⁶ Some representative works: Robert J. Antony, *Like Froth Floating on the Sea*, op. cit.; Dian H. Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast, 1790-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); Chin-Keong Ng, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press and National University of Singapore, 1983); Gungwu Wang and Chin-keong Ng, eds., *Maritime China in Transition, 1750-1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004); Leonard Blussé, "No Boats to China: The Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern of the China Sea Trade, 1635-1690," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (1996): 51-76; Pin-tsun Chang, "Chinese Maritime Trade: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Fu-chien (Fukien)" (Ph.D. thesis: Princeton University, 1983).

²⁷ Paola Calanca, "Piraterie et contrebande au Fujian: l'administration face aux problèmes d'illégalité maritime, 17e-début 19e siècle" (Ph.D. thesis: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1999); Bodo Wiethoff, *Die chinesische Seeverbotspolitik und der private Überseehandel von 1368 bis 1567* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 1963); Leonard Blussé, *Tribuut aan China: vier eeuwen Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1989).

²⁸ John E. Wills, Jr., "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: Themes in Peripheral History." In *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, edited by Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills Jr. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 206; and more recently in John E. Wills, Jr., "Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World."

in an article subtitled “Visions of a ‘System.’”²⁹ Most recently, speaking of Ming private trade, my friend and colleague Tonio Andrade wondered “if it can be called a system, for it appears to have been ad hoc and local.”³⁰ Yet we still lack the rudiments of a workable system that can integrate our knowledge of maritime East Asia and address the questions of these perceptive scholars.³¹

Our field is distrustful of models or systems, and rightly so. They seem forced (and often are). Every system with its host of arguments has a refutation, and much historiographic clockwork whirls on little more than the elevating power of thin air. Reality is more messy than models and systems would suggest. But models can be useful tools for refining our questions and sifting out historical trends. G. William Skinner once suggested a macroregional model that has become one of the mainstays of the field. Dividing China into economic macroregions is a useful way of looking for patterns of interaction that are not confined within provincial and county lines, though this is by no means the only way to study China.

In *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, edited by Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 167-203.

²⁹ Roderich Ptak, “Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia, 1368-1567: Visions of a ‘System.’” In *China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trade (c. 1000-1600)*. Variorum Collected Studies Series CS777 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), I: 157-191 (article originally published in 1998).

³⁰ Tonio Andrade, “The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621-1662.” *Journal of World History* 15, no. 4 (2005): 415-444.

³¹ The most noteworthy survey in recent years is that of Gang Deng. His work is representative of a trend among economic historians to apply Douglass North’s “new institutional economics” and political science paradigms to Chinese history. It certainly is ambitious to cover 4,000 years of maritime China in one book, and his command of the Chinese literature is impressive, which makes this book a potentially useful reference. Unfortunately, his “path dependency” and “opportunity cost” models do not bear up well, nor does his follow-up diagnosis of a sort of Gerschenkronian “Chinese disease.” See Gang Deng, *Chinese Maritime Activities and Socioeconomic Development, c. 2100 B.C.-1900 A.D.* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 162; and his revision of that book, *Maritime Sector, Institutions, and Sea Power of Premodern China* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 222-225.

There are other reasons to harbor doubts. Nowhere in the East or Southeast Asian sources do there appear the blueprints of comprehensive “maritime systems,” just as “macroregions” are absent from the Chinese sources. These are our tentative constructs, not theirs. We also lack specific definitions for some of the words we most commonly use to describe China’s maritime past: networks, maritime trade, prohibition, monopoly. Maritime trade and piracy thus come off as a list of numbers remote from the big questions of Chinese history. We need a synthesis and vocabulary to tell us why we should care.

The term “system” is most readily used when we speak of state policies. Prime examples in Chinese history include the *baojia* or *lijia* systems of social control, the tribute system (which we will discuss later), or the *banbing* system of military rotation as described in a recent work by Josephine Khu.³² Why is it that the best-known systems are always products of the state? My guess is that it is because such systems have a written policy—and thus, it appears, intention. Political energy and organization, then, explain why those systems are most ungrudgingly recognized.

If we accept this fact, could we not also reason that the maritime world itself was changing and adapting in numerous ways to these policies and state intentions, and that these multi-sided patterns of evolution, coupled with responses to economic and elemental forces, constituted an informal system of its own? I begin from the assumption that there was a kind of order in the seemingly chaotic movement of people, possessions, and pirates, and that it was neither inscrutable nor a clockwork orange; that a theoretical

³² Josephine Meihui Tiampo Khu, "The Making of a Frontier: The Qing Military in Taiwan, 1684-1783" (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 2001).

system of functional units can help us interpret this mass in time and space; that the patterns of change in the East Asian seas, despite being non-state, inter-state, or largely invisible to us except when filtered through the sieve of official records, are comprehensible and divisible by region and by phases of response to state policies—and that these, in concatenation, deserve to be called a system.

One way to test this hypothesis is to offer some ideas on how such a framework might describe a historical process within East Asia's maritime sphere. My project starts from the Chinese side of this polyvalent maritime order, because as Roderich Ptak once said, maritime history must begin somewhere, and reading between the lines of fragmentary Chinese sources is better than reading nothing at all.³³ More specifically, this dissertation describes the formation and role of a part within this system—a region we might call Greater Fujian—at a particular window in time: a long 17th century (1540-1683), a time of violent change and thus a time that permits a peek beneath the foliage of our historical jungle. I offer here the first and very tentative part of a long-term research plan aimed at bringing the early-modern Chinese trading system into world history. I hope that the histories of East, South, and Southeast Asia will someday be integrated by such studies, so that a greater oceanic system can be envisaged.

Doubt is our profession, but I believe that every act of refutation or criticism ought to be accompanied by constructive ideas. Franz Schurmann once said, thinking of his dear friend Joseph Levenson, “Our problems differed, yet the country and history of

³³ Ptak, *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang*, V-402.

China are so rich that there were analogies enough for all.”³⁴ Let us challenge ourselves in the making of better systems.

The Seaban (Haijin)

In this dissertation, I will refer to a series of Ming prohibitions on maritime trade collectively by the term of Seaban (in Chinese: Haijin). This policy has sometimes been referred to as a “closed-door” policy, but I literally translate the Chinese term Haijin by its component terms *hai* (sea) and *jin* (ban) both to preserve the economy of the term and to point out that it was not a general isolationist policy, but specifically the prohibition of one kind of economic activity: private maritime trade.

The policy dates back to the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-1398), whose social vision for the realm was of agrarian, self-sufficient communities firmly under his autocracy. The most stable type of society (and therefore the one least likely to threaten his dynastic line), he believed, was one in which communities produced what they consumed and consumed what they produced. Mobility and greed, which could generate as well as feed on commercial activity, were the greatest threats to Zhu’s bucolic vision. Contrary to popular belief, Zhu Yuanzhang did not cut China off from the world; however, he did seek to restrict mobility and limit and control foreign trade and intercourse. The Seaban forbade Ming subjects from building ships to travel abroad and trade (though fishing was legal), and foreign trade was restricted to official tribute missions under the government’s watchful eye. Enforcement of the

³⁴ Joseph R. Levenson, and Franz Schurmann, *China: An Interpretive History, From the Beginnings to the Fall of the Han* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), vi.

Seaban was the task of the coastal garrisons that Zhu Yuanzhang ordered constructed as part of an elaborate military system known as *wei-suo*. *Wei-suo* acted as the Ming eyes and arms in the form of Battalions (*suo*) of 1120 men, four *wei* combining to form a Guard (*wei*), which were stationed at strategic locations across the empire.³⁵

Such was the theory of how things were supposed to work in the Everlasting Empire of the Great Ming, as envisaged by its founding monarch. In practice, as we will see, the best laid plans of mice and men created a warped reality indeed.

Skinner

When it comes to spatial systems in the study of China, G. William Skinner stands as a giant. Our field is poorer now for the loss of Professor Skinner's humanism and intellectual energy (for he passed away on October 25, 2008), but it is surely a richer and a better one, because Skinner lived. As a historical anthropologist, Skinner conceived of his model to explain urban development as a critical element in regional development in 19th century China. He divided late imperial China into nine physiographic macroregions based not on political boundaries or climate zones, but on the drainage basins of major rivers and geo-morphological features that could constrain the speed and routes of travel (see **Figure 1.1**). The macroregions are distinct from one another in terms of their environments, economic resources, rates of development, and to some extent, culture. Each has a core and a periphery in which markets, transport

³⁵ Cao Yonghe 曹永和, "Shilun Ming Taizu de haiyang jiaotong zhengce 試論明太祖的海洋交通政策" [Preliminary study of Zhu Yuanzhang's policies on maritime trade], in *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji* 中國海洋發展史論文集, vol. 1, edited by Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中央研究院近代史研究所, 41-70. Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1994.

systems, waterways, and habitation patterns made trade flows largely internal rather than external to the macroregion. These ideas were introduced in Skinner's landmark essays in *The City in Late Imperial China* (1977). To this he combined a hierarchical honeycomb marketing model that still boggles the minds of many students.³⁶

³⁶ G. William Skinner, "Cities and the Hierarchy of Local Systems," pp. 275-351 in *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977); and Skinner, *Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China*. Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2001 (originally published 1964-65 in the *Journal of Asian Studies*).

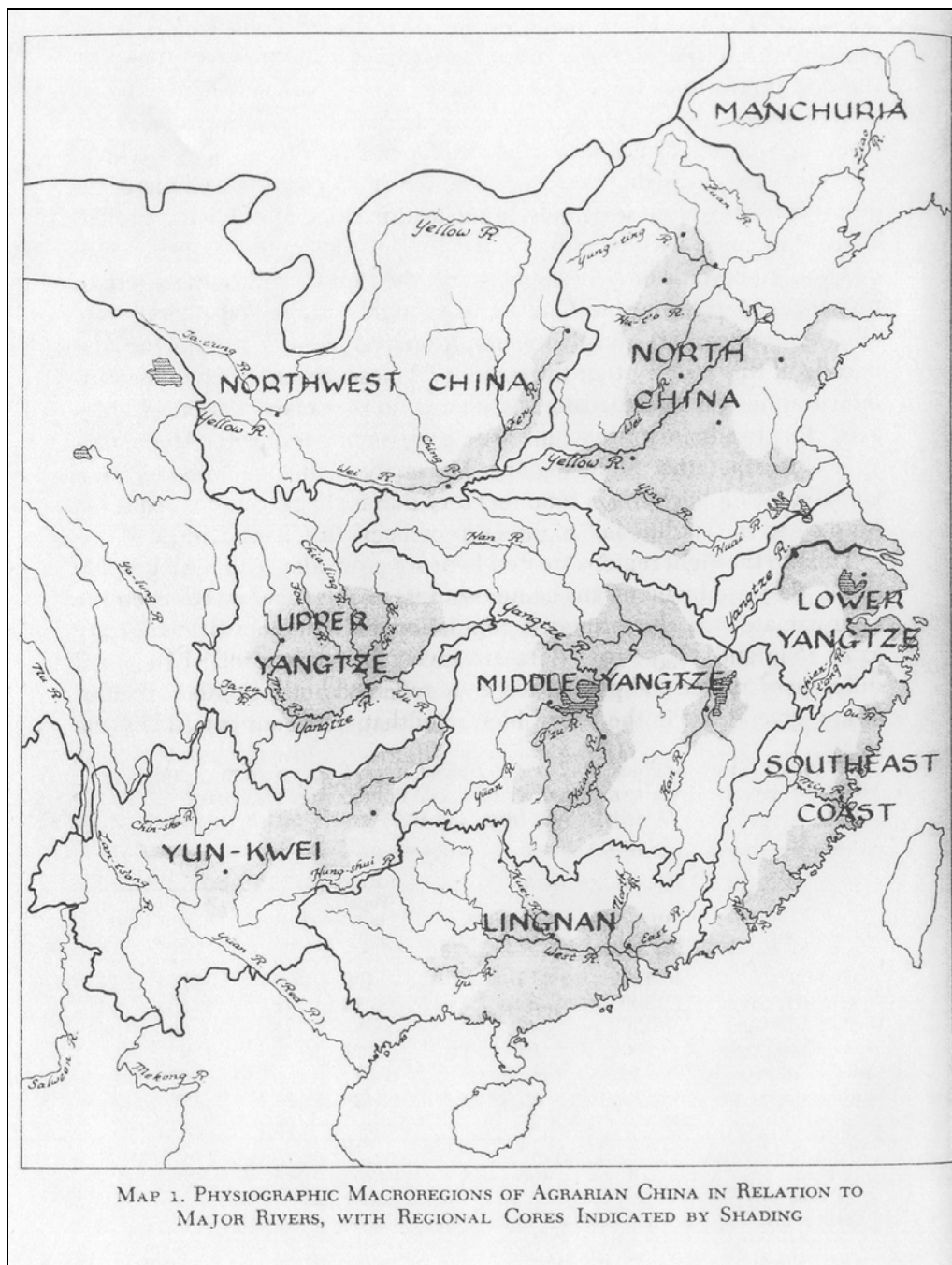


Figure 1.1 - Skinner's Nine Macroregions³⁷

Naturally, these ideas have occasioned much discussion and debate.³⁸ Skinner is not without his critics, but suffice it to say, he is here to stay. His great achievement was

³⁷ G. William Skinner, ed. *The City in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977, 214.

to bring a rigorous spatiality to a field accustomed to disembodied statistical analyses and thick description. He showed by way of example that economic and social data are best understood in their full geographical context, and he devoted his career to identifying new levels of geographical aggregation appropriate to this analysis. He was years ahead of the current GIS (Geographic Information System) revolution in the social sciences.

The macroregional system is accepted by many scholars as a valuable replacement for the old-fangled method of comparing Chinese provinces, and the proof is in the fruitful phase of research that it has inspired since its publication in 1977. As Carolyn Cartier notes: “In a field with few theoretical models, Skinner made an important contribution and provided a framework for questions about aspects of spatial patterns in the historical Chinese landscape.”³⁹

It has been objected that despite its usefulness, “the spatial structure embedded in the macroregion perspective discourages investigations into processes of economic activity and interrelations between different regional formations and interrelated spatial processes, such as activities that cross regional boundaries in long-distance and maritime trade.”⁴⁰ Robert Gardella once criticized Skinner for excluding Taiwan and for “stopping at the ocean’s edge,” while an alternative model, the urban network research of Gilbert Rozman, suggests some answers and raises even more questions.⁴¹ But one cannot be so hard on Skinner, for he originally designed his model not as a catch-all but to explain a

³⁸ The best discussion of the macroregion model, its debates, and its influence is Carolyn Cartier, “Origins and Evolution of a Geographical Idea: The Macroregion in China.” *Modern China* 28, no. 1 (2002): 79-142.

³⁹ Carolyn Cartier, “Origins and Evolution of a Geographical Idea,” 108.

⁴⁰ Carolyn Cartier, “Origins and Evolution of a Geographical Idea,” 117-118.

⁴¹ Robert Gardella, “The Maritime History of Late Imperial China: Observations on Current Concerns and Recent Research.” *Late Imperial China (formerly Ch’ing shih wen-t’i)* 6, no. 2 (Dec.) (1985): 48-66; Gilbert Rozman, *Urban Networks in Ch’ing China and Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

single process: the growth of Chinese urban systems. Pre-19th century maritime issues and international trade links were not the intended purview of his model. The onus is on those who would stretch his ideas in time and space to search for answers.

The moral of the macroregion debate is that no system is perfect, and so we should use what we can and fix all that we can. Skinner explained that broad “physiographic macroregions are the proper units for analyzing urbanization. To consider units that cover only part of a macroregion is to wrench out of context a more or less arbitrary portion of a systemic whole.”⁴² But that is precisely what has been done with the East Asian littoral, which has long been treated as a disjointed congeries of coastal dots within a state-centered continental history, or cordoned into national or provincial units divorced from the sea connections that gave it life.

If the sea is to become a meaningful object of historical analysis, it requires some criteria to capture the durable and historically specific linkages of its aquatic and semi-aquatic communities. Dian Murray, a pioneer in the study of Chinese pirates, applied Skinnerian concepts and offered this cogent observation in 1987: “It is no longer possible to think of maritime China as an undifferentiated watery realm stretching from the Yangtze River to Hainan Island. Just as there were tenuously connected economic, administrative, and cultural regions defining people’s worlds on land, so, too, there were separate or at most slightly overlapping ‘water worlds’ at sea.”⁴³ However, Murray did not elaborate beyond what she called the “Cantonese water world” (essentially the South

⁴² Skinner, *The City in Late Imperial China*, 217.

⁴³ Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast*, 2.

China Sea from Canton to Hainan and the Gulf of Tonkin). What other worlds might there be left to explore if we pick up where Skinner and Murray left off?

Sea spaces

“There is a deep landlubber bias in historical and social research,” writes Charles King. “History and social life, we seem to think, happen on the ground. What happens on the water...is just the scene-setter for the real action when the actors get where they are going. But oceans, seas, and rivers have a history of their own, not merely as highways or boundaries but as central players in distinct stories of human interaction and exchange.”⁴⁴ I agree with King’s call for a shift in scholarly gaze from real estate to bodies of water and how they shape the societies that populate their shores.

The first step to conceptualizing a maritime system is to stop thinking of the maritime world as a periphery. Instead, we can envisage the littoral as the outer reaches of a coherent maritime space that integrates the histories of multiple societies. Such a unit historically consisted of non-state spaces that were facets of a common ecological and socioeconomic world extending beyond national boundaries. While increasingly integrated in the early-modern period, a littoral-to-sea region was effectively stateless, or at most inter-state (that is, situated between states). In such regions, the continental state’s power and authority were attenuated and forced to negotiate with multiple forces. In China’s case, these included the coastal gentry (landed and often militarized elites), smugglers, and sea peoples (those who made their living by the sea); each group worked a dynamic relationship between the sea and the state. What I want to stress is a non-

⁴⁴ Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

continental and non-marginal perspective that takes the land-to-sea continuum on its own terms. The sea itself was a supra-national economic and social space—it was not a barrier.

There have been some moves in recent years to try to conceive of history around integrated sea and ocean basins as a solution to the “crisis” of area studies.⁴⁵ Integration, as Jerry Bentley reminds us, remains a loose and under-theorized concept. I find useful Bentley’s working definition of integration as “a historical process that unfolds when cross-cultural interactions bring about a division of labor between and among interacting societies or when they facilitate commercial, biological, or cultural exchanges between and among interacting societies on a regular and systematic basis.”⁴⁶ That is a mouthful, I admit, but we can use it as the organizing principle of a system linking sea regions spanning from the Sea of Japan to Malacca. Such a region of maritime interaction, an “East Asian Corridor,” arguably exists today, according to François Gipouloux (see Figure 1.2), based on long-standing economic and geopolitical factors and, more recently, international trade and investment flows. I suggest that the historical origins of the corridor lie in the period of early-modern integration that we are studying here.

⁴⁵ Martin W. Lewis and Karen Wigen, "A Maritime Response to the Crisis in Area Studies." *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2, Oceans Connect (Apr., 1999): 161-168; Jerry H. Bentley, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis." *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2, Oceans Connect (Apr., 1999): 215-224.

⁴⁶ Bentley, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," 218.

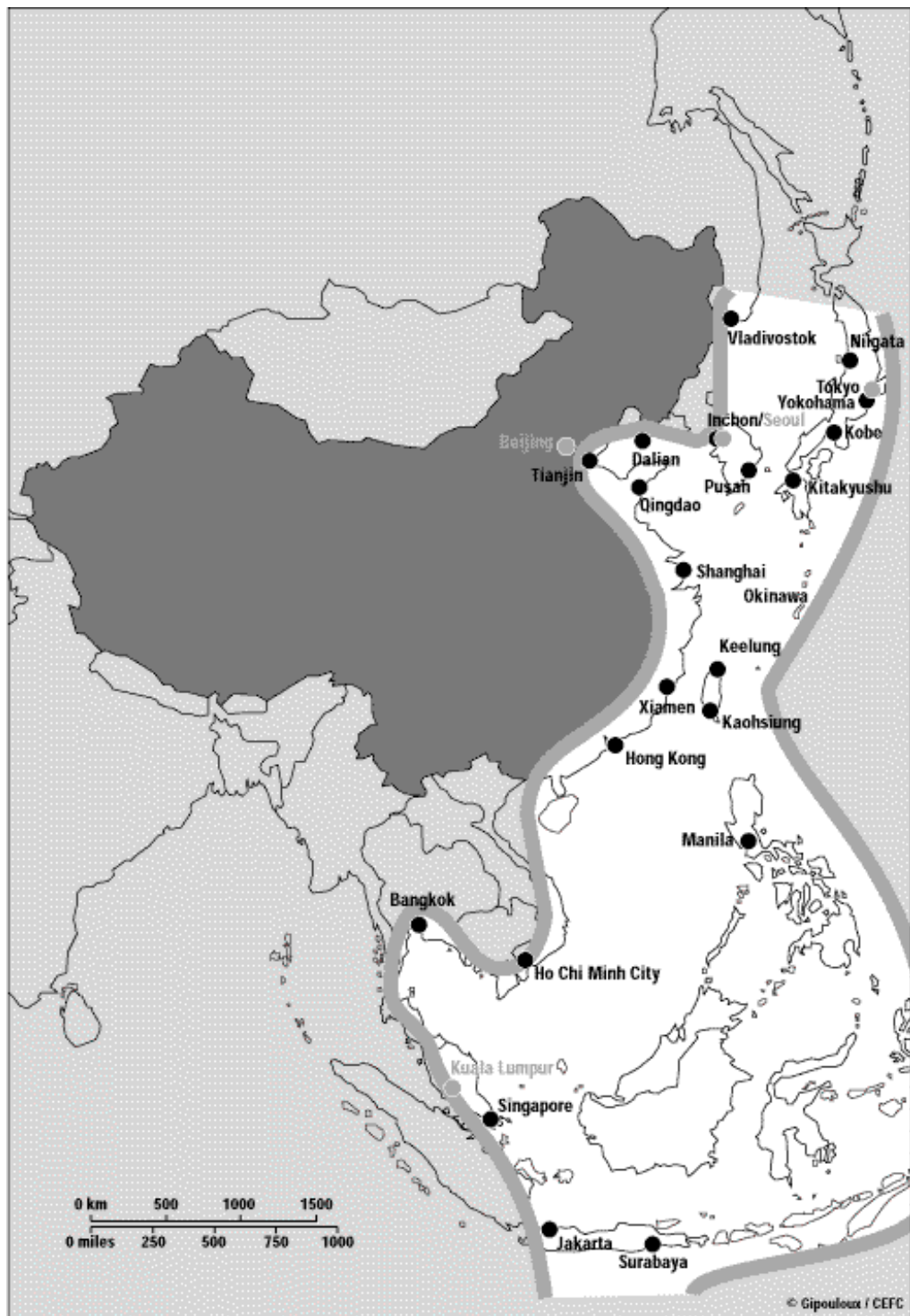


Figure 1.2 - The Modern “East Asian Corridor”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ François Gipouloux, “Integration or Disintegration? The Spatial Effects of Foreign Direct Investment in China.” *China Perspectives* 17 (May-June 1998), French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC), 6.

We may also attempt some definitions to begin some form of discussion. This is a dull thing, but it is best to be clear about where we start.

What is maritime trade? The most general answer is the exchange of goods and services across the sea, just as the most general definition of maritime history is the history of human interaction with and by means of the sea. However, by itself this tells us little: goods did not magically move from one port to another. On land, the Skinnerian marketing mechanism serves us well: it seems natural for a farmer or artisan to sell his products across the river or at the periodic town market, and for that market to be linked to a system of waterways and a hierarchical commercial network scaled to the urban core. But when we speak of trade across maritime regions, we are talking about great distances that stretched the best technologies of their day. Without compelling reasons, there would be no maritime trade braving the winds, waters, pirates, and the ministrations of money-grubbing governments.

Regional inequalities, high profit margins, and even political conditions could make maritime trade not only possible but also desirable. Networks facilitated the processes of exchange on water and on land. This was as true *within* maritime regions as it was between them—coastal trade and cabotage by small craft were as vital to the maritime economy as trans-oceanic shipping. My first task is to define regions, then define maritime regions, and then (in the next section) define networks.

Region, in a geographical sense, is straightforward enough. Here we might turn to Skinner, who states that a region is a partition of activity-space based on one of two possible criteria: 1) the homogeneity of things, thus producing a set of formal or “uniform” regions; or 2) the interrelatedness of things, thus producing a set of

“functional” regions. Unlike uniform regions, functional regions are internally differentiated, not homogeneous, which means that they are systems in which activities of different types are functionally interrelated.⁴⁸ Simply put, functional regions are zones of activity, not zones of static characteristics.

This distinction sounds more abstruse than it has to be, so let me give an example. A uniform region would be something like “Desert” or “Tropical Rainforest” or “Tundra” on a comparative atlas of vegetation. Such a zone is based on uniformity in natural ecology and climate. A functional region would be something like “Magna Graecia” (what the Greeks called Megale Hellas or Greater Greece, in the years before Roman domination) or “The Swahili Coast” or “Mesoamerica” or “The Levant”—or, to give a more famous maritime example, Fernand Braudel’s “le Monde Méditerranéen,” which is intensely heterogeneous and whose coherence as a historical region owes its existence to the flows of trade, cultures, peoples, and wars that Braudel so lovingly describes in his masterpiece, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*.⁴⁹

Maritime regions (or sea spaces, as I also call them), are thus functional regions, for they are internally differentiated, not homogeneous. However, we soon run into a problem: the littoral was linked to the sea and to lands across the sea, and the sea spaces overlapped, in ways that the continental macroregion model does not allow us to explore. Skinner’s system made sense on land because the economic geography of imperial China, like that of all premodern economies, was delimited by transport costs. The low unit cost of water transport relative to oxcart or human portage meant that mountains were

⁴⁸ G. William Skinner, “Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century China,” in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 216.

⁴⁹ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Translated by Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1972 [1966].

effective barriers to large-scale transport, and thus China's river systems largely defined the shape of regional marketing systems and the locations of their cores (where riverine transport facilitated the concentration of population, trade, and resources) and their peripheries (where highlands or deserts tended to impede capital accumulation). In recent years, the massive and excellent body of Chinese economic research compiled by Wu Chengming and the late Xu Dixin largely confirms this picture of dynamic but regionalized growth in late imperial China.⁵⁰

The core-periphery argument still applies somewhat to areas of the coast, but the littoral is special in that it contains extensive non-state sea spaces and island chains. If we cannot use mountain ranges and drainage basins as our boundaries, as Skinner does, then how can maritime regions be differentiated? Sea space seems to require an extra dimension.

I propose that maritime regions be organized around at least the following three considerations:

1. The relationship between productive areas (e.g. trade flows, specialization), including areas of the sea, which may themselves be productive areas [the **Centrality** component];
2. The nature of networks between people on the littoral-to-sea continuum (e.g. transport efficiency, organizations, and port systems) [the **Intermediacy** component];

⁵⁰ Xu Dixin 许涤新 and Wu Chengming 吴承明, eds. *Zhongguo zibenzhuyi fazhan shi* 中国资本主义发展史 (History of the development of Chinese capitalism). 3 vols. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985, 1990, 1993.

3. The political systems that enable or hinder interaction [the Accessibility component].

I will discuss the concepts of centrality, intermediacy, and accessibility in the next section, for they are factors in the arrangement of primary and secondary ports within a maritime trading system. Let me first illustrate what I mean by maritime regions before we get too far astray.

My working definition, in light of the above, is as follows. A functional maritime region (sea space) consists of one or more productive areas of the littoral, including islands and seawater zones, and is defined in shape and scope by the networks of primary and secondary ports that allowed intra-region and inter-region trade. Historically, such spheres of maritime activity, if they existed, had to be organic regions that overlapped and reflected the needs and movements of the people who lived in them. State policies did not delimit these regions by fiat, but could—by making certain areas more or less accessible—affect port configurations and trade networks, and thereby play a role in the evolution of the regions.

As Skinner so often insisted, it is improper to treat China (or any country in East Asia) as a single national market system in any historical period prior to the modern transport revolution. The same applies, I think, to the maritime world, and so we can revise our definition of maritime trade in this way. Maritime trade, rather than being country-to-country, was an exchange (of people, goods, services, ideas) between multiple productive areas within sea spaces or betwixt them, often involving and spurring specialization. This included the carrying trade of land goods not produced by the

maritime regions. When viewed from the land, maritime trade—which had to traverse linguistic, monetary, geographical, and technological obstacles and constraints—seems *external* to the macroregion (hence Skinner’s decision to exclude Taiwan from the Southeast Coast). When viewed from the system of sea spaces, maritime trade is *internal*.

For now, I want to highlight six hypothetical maritime regions, which I have drawn as R-1 to R-6 (R- abbreviating Region) in **Figure 1.3**:

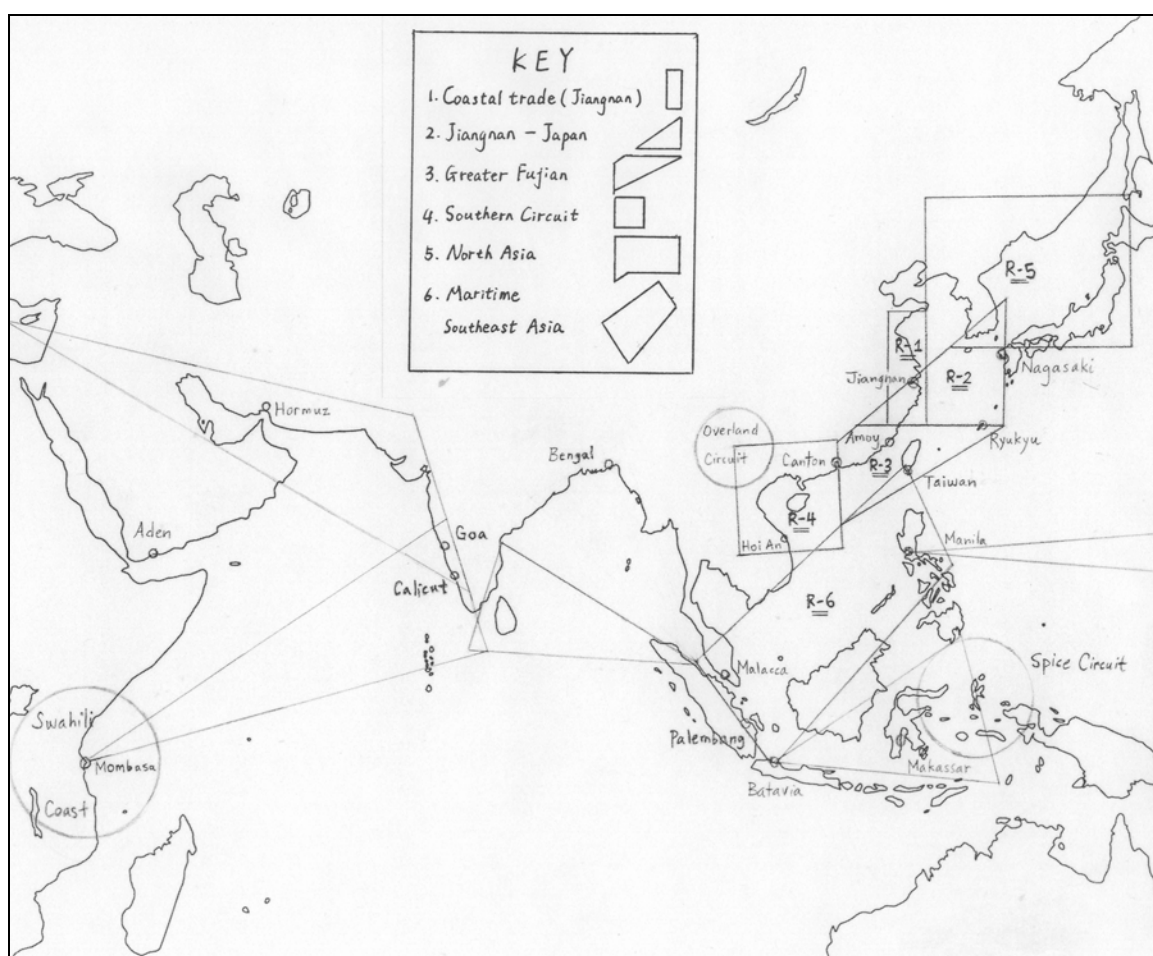


Figure 1.3 - Sea Spaces

My focus is East Asia, so I am only concerned with the six labeled regions on the righthand side of the map, as illustrated in the key. In his masterwork, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, K.N. Chaudhuri painted a magnificent system for the Indian Ocean world (broadly defined as nearly all of Asia and eastern Africa), but in doing so he had to treat the whole of East Asia as a single unit.⁵¹ Here I attempt a more modest scale with the East Asianist in mind. First, Region 1 circumscribes the Chinese coastal trade centered around Jiangnan, also known as the Lower Yangzi Delta. Jiangnan was the wealthiest region in late imperial China with abundant agricultural and human resources and the richest cities (e.g. Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing), and thus it carried a disproportionately large weight in economic and cultural life.⁵² As such, Jiangnan was key to maritime trade up and down the Chinese coast.

Region 2 connects Jiangnan, Korea, Japan (via Nagasaki), and Ryukyu (present-day Okinawa). This region was the triangle for a lucrative illicit trade in silk and silver in the 1540s and thus the crucible of the first great maritime Enemy: the Wako of the mid-1500s (before the pirate wars moved down to Region 3). Region 3 is what might be called Greater Fujian, the geographical stage of much of the action we will encounter in this dissertation. The sea space encompasses the Taiwan Straits plus much of Skinner's Southeast Coast macroregion and connects to Ryukyu. It was in the 1500s an expanding

⁵¹ K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1985]). Chaudhuri defined his Indian Ocean world as a "super-set" based on the functional logic of four "sub-sets" (i.e. civilizations): The Islamic world, Sanskrit India, Southeast Asia, and China. The boundary lines were more cultural than spatial: each civilizational sub-set was defined by cultural traits such as the shared practices of food, clothing, shelter, and customs.

⁵² Michael Marmé, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of All the Provinces Converge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

littoral sphere and a pirate haven, and, more germane to our discussion, in the 1600s it was the crucible of the new Enemy: the sealord.

Region 4 is essentially the “Cantonese” (South China) water world uncovered by Dian Murray.⁵³ I only add here that the maritime region was also loosely linked with the overland circuit of northern Southeast Asia as described recently by scholars like Laichen Sun.⁵⁴ Region 5 and Region 6 represent maritime Northern Asia and maritime Southeast Asia and can, of course, be further subdivided to fit the needs of Japanese, Korean, Ainu, Manchu, and Southeast Asian specialists. Because Region 6 is a complex and mixed space of Southeast Asian, European, and East Asian interaction, I refrain from breaking it up at this time. As for the unlabeled spaces on the diagram, they are merely sketched as ideas based on my reading of Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian maritime research.⁵⁵ I put them there only as a sample to show that the East Asian regions were connected to trans-oceanic regions that may themselves be analyzed as sea spaces.

These six main hypothetical regions are simply ideas suggested to me by my research on the 16th and 17th centuries and are not meant to represent an alternative reality that remained fixed over time. Like Skinner’s macroregions, they can at most be conceptual tools: possible frameworks by which we might organize interconnected worlds of maritime life and explore historical change within those realms. If they work, we can refine them.

⁵³ Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast*, 8.

⁵⁴ Laichen Sun, “Ming-Southeast Asian Overland Interactions, 1368-1644” (Ph.D. thesis: University of Michigan, 2000).

⁵⁵ Such as the works of K.N. Chaudhuri, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, the late Ashin Das Gupta, M.N. Pearson, Jonathan Israel, Antony Reid, and Frank Broeze.

Finally, sea spaces represent zones of historical interaction rather than zones of ownership. To say that Ming China was at any given time the nerve center of this system is not to say that these oceanic regions were Ming territory, but that in terms of political economy Ming China exercised a primary and recognizable leverage over the shape of the system. As Timothy Brook reminds us, in the 16th century, “rather than saying that ‘the Chinese economy was ebbing with the tide of the Atlantic,’ we should think of the tide of the Atlantic as being pulled by the Chinese moon.”⁵⁶ On the Pacific side, in East Asian waters, China was the nexus of activity, but it did not own the seas. The South China Sea was hardly a “Chinese lake,” as some have claimed.⁵⁷ I will not enter that killing field of territorial disputes whereby some map or historical datum is drawn up to prove that, for example, the Spratly Islands or the Paracels—or even Taiwan or the Ryukyu chain—were “Chinese territory.” Modern geopolitics is a field in which historians should not lightly tread.

If, at any historical moment, we want to know who owned or thought they owned an island, network, region, or system, we can only ask (through the prism of history) the sea peoples themselves, who quietly created the interconnected arrangements of production and exchange that made life possible—and struggle/death likely—in and on the sea.

Elements of a port system

⁵⁶ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 12.

⁵⁷ Gang Deng, *Maritime Sector, Institutions, and Sea Power of Premodern China*, 1.

We now reach our last set of definitions: networks. This is a word commonly used with reference to maritime trade, but it requires some elaboration. If we want to know the mechanism by which one port came to dominate trade at one time and not another, or how the shadow system of illicit trade related to the official system of Chinese tribute trade, it is useful to attempt a definition of ports and port networks.

Maritime regions are coherent only insofar as they are centered on networks of primary and secondary ports that allow intra-region and inter-region trade. Sea zones overlapped, and coastal areas in the early-modern period were not the nation-specific “territorial waters” that they are today. The boundary lines on my crude pencil drawing (**Fig. 1.3**) are meant to show that ports were more than receivers or exporters: they were foci that could define a maritime region.⁵⁸ Each port could also serve multiple regions in differing capacities: for example, a port city like Canton could be the primary focal port of one region and serve as a port of secondary importance for a different regional trade system. Thus in the diagram, Canton and Hoi An serve as the integrating axis of Region 4 (Southern Circuit), while Canton also sits on the dividing line between Region 4 and Region 3 (Greater Fujian), the latter being largely integrated around the primary ports of Amoy, Taiwan, and Ryukyu.

Why do I say “primary” and “secondary”? In Skinner’s macroregional model, cities are the “command posts” that serve to articulate and integrate the functional macroregions.⁵⁹ For a sea space, ports play the role of command nodes. However, as

⁵⁸ In Skinner’s model, geographical factors make relatively fixed boundaries between macroregions: that is, mountain and river factors raised the transport costs between regions and thus ensured that the bulk of a macroregion’s trade was “internal.” For sea spaces, however, the activity and relative intermediacy of ports seems to be much more decisive than geographical distance.

⁵⁹ Skinner, *The City in Late Imperial China*, 216.

B.S. Hoyle notes, “no port is an isolated phenomenon, for each belongs to a port complex.... Within each regional or subregional complex ports will never be totally equal, whatever criteria of measurement are adopted, and can therefore be ordered into a hierarchy.”⁶⁰ I find this sensible, and I assume that at a particular historical time, some ports are primary and others secondary in a maritime network, because productive areas are unequal, because of contingent factors (silting, infrastructural damage, war), and because of political interference. As these factors change over time, the port’s role in a hierarchy changes. Such seaport hierarchies can only be relative, but it is undeniable that major ports depended on local networks of complementary ports. This is why international maritime research has focused in recent years on the development of seaport systems.⁶¹ A large commercial port relied on secondary ports for shipbuilding, financial and transport services, recruitment of seamen, agriculture and crafts, without which its prosperity would have been impossible to sustain.⁶²

Shall we be more technical? A network is a framework of routes that connect a certain number of locations, or nodes. (Or, to put it in the reverse, a route is a link between two nodes that are part of a larger network. The route can refer to a tangible

⁶⁰ B.S. Hoyle, "Maritime Perspectives on Ports and Port Systems: The Case of East Africa." In *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries*, edited by Frank Broeze (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 193.

⁶¹ Some of the best work in this regard has been that of Portuguese research teams like the HISPORTOS Project, specifically on the network of seaports serving Porto, the gateway of northern Portugal. See Amélia Polónia, "Northwest Portuguese Seaport System in the Early Modern Age: Results of a Research Project." Presented at the XIV International Economic History Congress, Session 58, Helsinki, 2006; and Amândio Jorge Morais Barros, "Porto: a construção de um espaço marítimo nos alvares dos tempos modernos." Ph.D. thesis: Universidade do Porto, 2004.

⁶² Amélia Polónia, "Northwest Portuguese Seaport System in the Early Modern Age: Results of a Research Project," 3.

pathway like a road or canal, or, in our case, a sea corridor.)⁶³ Since a system of trade is a network of nodes along which various types of flows take place, let us imagine that all of our ports are nodes in this network. Where a large number of routes converge on a particular port in the system, such that the volume and frequency of traffic exceed others, then we can say that the port has primacy among those nodes, and is therefore a *primary port*.⁶⁴ The others, which are linked to the primary but do not possess the same size and diversity of function within the network, are secondary ports.

One can imagine a bunch of scenarios for the shape of connections within the network. Here are a few examples (Fig. 1.4).

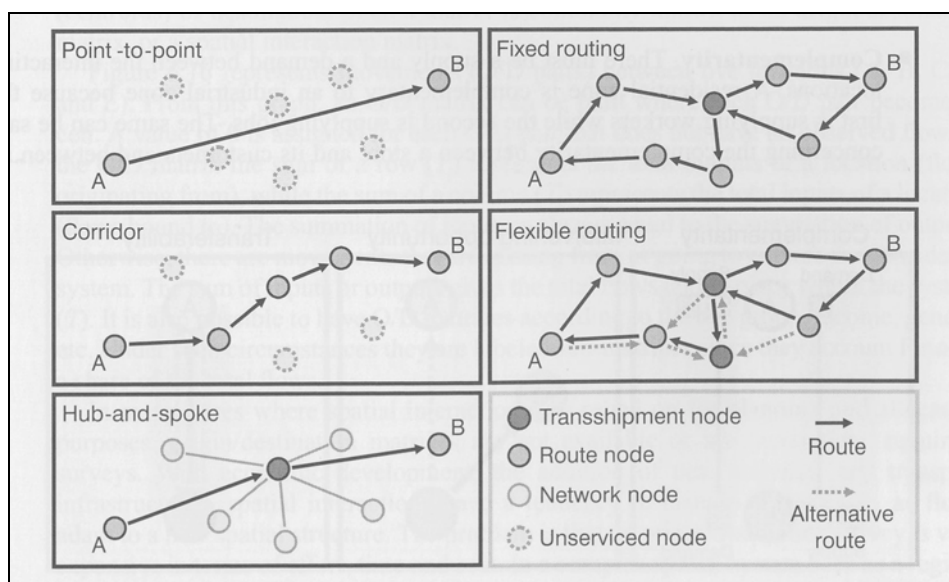


Figure 1.4 – Various Network Routing Types⁶⁵

⁶³ Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 47-48.

⁶⁴ Following Donald B. Freeman, *The Straits of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet?* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, 41.

⁶⁵ Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 163.

These various routing configurations all served some purpose—each one can be analogized to some real-world economic activity in a region or port. None is decidedly more “normal” or “correct.” However, with regard to the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, I find the hub-and-spoke configuration a useful idea, not just for East Asia, but for global trade.⁶⁶ A maritime system is an organic system aimed at solving the many-to-many distribution problem (meaning that there are multiple origins and destinations). In a many-to-many network, goods and traffic tend to collect at hubs and are then transshipped elsewhere, and this was true historically in maritime East Asia as it was in Europe. For this reason, I believe that these hubs (primary ports) and their network of spokes (secondary ports) are the proper organizing axes of the sea spaces I described in the previous section. (On a smaller scale, within any given sea space, local routes of distribution and cabotage tied coastal towns and islands in a more flexible point-to-point way.)

One final hurdle remains before our hypothetical sea spaces and port system can be linked to form a system. The Ming coastal control system was designed to enforce the ban on private trade. Arguably the maritime ban was easily evaded by traders, and at times enforcement could be lax. But the ban had one important effect on the source base. What we know about private maritime trade comes only from official reports and other fragments—account books and openly published trade transactions are sorely lacking despite the vast quantities of trade in Asian waters. We can get glimmers from Chinese gazetteers and Japanese and Southeast Asian records, and some statistical records have

⁶⁶ I am thinking of the historical monopolies and entrepot trading so prevalent in the early-modern world, all of which concentrated traffic at certain hubs. While cabotage (transfer in small boats) was the norm for local coastal trade and could be explained as point-to-point, long-distance trade across regions seems more readily explained by hubs.

been effectively mined, but the picture remains incomplete.⁶⁷ The flow of information was thus compromised. This is somewhat like the drug wars of today, which force the narcotics trade underground where it cannot be effectively monitored.

A limited spatial analysis may help us conceptualize those networks qualitatively. Here, I am inspired by some concepts from port and transport theory. Transport theory informs us that the volume of traffic moving in, out, and through a port is at least partly a reflection of the quality of the port's location. I think it fair to say that in the early-modern world the correlation was, if anything, stronger. (Before steam power revolutionized transport, location was an even more important determinant of traffic than it is today.)

Location, in the sense suggested by this theory, combined two dimensions: *centrality* (a port's own productive and traffic-generating power that comes from its size and resources, as well as proximity to a major market center); and *intermediacy* (extra traffic conveyed to a port by the choice of shipping carriers who choose the hub for convenience or benefits to the overall routing of goods).⁶⁸ Centrality is the quality of a major city or port right next to a major productive region, while intermediacy is really the quality of a transportation hub itself. A megacity like modern-day Shanghai possesses both, as it is both a productive heartland and a choice port of call for those wanting to do business with inland China. That is to say, today Shanghai possesses both a strategic

⁶⁷ Such as *Ka'i hentai*, or Yoneo Ishii, ed., *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998). Even Zhang Xie, author of the most important Ming book on the subject of the private trade, *Dong Xiyang kao* (1617), bemoaned the lack of records on the trade. And Zhang was writing his book *after* the legalization of trade at Yuegang—how much more so do we historians grieve at for the loss of sources!

⁶⁸ Douglas K. Fleming and Yehuda Hayuth, "Spatial Characteristics of Transportation Hubs: Centrality and Intermediacy." *Journal of Transport Geography* 2, no. 1 (1994): 3-18.

location that commands the rich Yangzi Delta (its centrality) and the kinds of infrastructure and government perks that attract foreign capital (added intermediacy).

To give 16th century examples, the Jiangnan region of the lower Yangzi Delta was central because of its wealth and productive resources—the things produced there (silk, porcelain, cloth) were the most highly desired items of their day. By contrast, the port of Yuegang in Fujian was not a dominant productive area compared with Jiangnan, but it was a prosperous port nonetheless because it was intermediate—ships called there from all over East and Southeast Asia, because it was far from the authorities and thus a convenient place for smugglers to avoid the Seaban of the Ming. Jiangnan, the core of Region 1, had centrality; Yuegang, the core of Region 3, had intermediacy.

Why was Jiangnan not both central and intermediate, as modern Shanghai is? Why would carriers favor Yuegang, far from the Jiangnan productive core, as the place to do business? Partly because Fujianese mariners were known for their skill in building and handling ships, and partly because of the Seaban. Under “free market” conditions, if we can imagine such a thing in the Ming system, Jiangnan likely would have been high in both categories. Government prohibition raised the risks of trading directly with Jiangnan, and many private traders decided that it was less costly overall to transship goods to and from Yuegang, even though it was a thousand miles from the Jiangnan production centers.

That is where *accessibility* comes in. Accessibility roughly denotes the capacity of a port to be reached by—or to reach—different locations.⁶⁹ Normally, we might think

⁶⁹ Following Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems*, 28.

of accessibility as a function of geography; but in East Asia, it was highly political. A location's relative accessibility in Ming China changed with the barriers that the state threw against trade. For example, Jiangnan was rendered less accessible to foreign traders because the Ming Seaban raised barriers to all but a limited number of official tribute ports. Canton, which was the official Ming tribute port, benefited from the legislated accessibility it offered to Southeast Asian trading nations; other ports on the China coast had to eke out a covert trade under the nose of the Seaban. Ryukyu⁷⁰, a poor and rocky island country east of China, also gained artificially high accessibility from the Ming Seaban and owed its middleman role entirely to political conditions prevailing in China and Japan. If the Chinese coast had been open to trade, ship captains might well have skipped the Ryukyus entirely. As traveler Yu Yonghe, writing in the 1690s, remarked: "Merchant junks never go to trade with the Ryukyus because of its poverty and stinginess. Their king will pay tribute to other countries in order to increase trade. ... There is a common saying, in which goods of poor quality are said to be 'made in the Ryukyus.' This bad craftsmanship did not just start today, for those of old said as much."⁷¹ But merchants and trade goods flowed into Ryukyu despite these poor conditions—for Ryukyu enjoyed special access to a port in Fujian (first Quanzhou and later Fuzhou) by Ming law. Traders that were barred from the Ming tributary system, like Portuguese or Japanese merchants, could bring their goods to Ryukyu instead, and thus trade indirectly with China via Ryukyu middlemen; and likewise, Chinese traders

⁷⁰ At that time an independent island country, centered on present-day Okinawa.

⁷¹ Macabe Keliher, (ed. and trans.), *Small Sea Travel Diaries: Yu Yonghe's Records of Taiwan* (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 2004), 188-190.

could access Japan indirectly by way of Ryukyu.⁷² Accessibility, politically defined, thus had a tangible impact on intermediacy in this historical context.

We have now covered the three considerations that I outlined earlier in the Sea Spaces section: the *centrality* component (the relationship between productive areas), the *intermediacy* component (the nature of networks between people on the littoral-to-sea continuum, and the *accessibility* component (the geographic and political systems that enable or hinder interaction). Taken together, these help us identify a network of primary and secondary ports that, taken together, comprise the sorts of maritime regions that I drew in **Figure 1.3**. In general, a primary port should have either: 1) high centrality and high accessibility; or 2) high intermediacy and high accessibility. If, as a result of war, government policy, or other factors, a port is rendered inaccessible relative to others, it cannot function as a primary port.

We have sketched out at least a few basic definitions to form a skeleton of the system, and now return to the elephant in the room. Could the Ming state, which was the largest, most prosperous, most populous power in East Asia, shut off the valve of East Asian maritime flows by prohibiting trade or dictating a single primary port for the entire continent? The simple answer is no, because politically-defined accessibility was but one of the three legs on which the system stood. However, a policy like the Ming Seaban could push the maritime system onto a different path.

And the Ban played on

⁷² This resembles the special intermediate position of Hong Kong up to the 1970s, when Taiwanese and Western businesses routed their goods and capital through Hong Kong for lack of direct access to mainland (then-Maoist) China.

Let us review the workings of the Chinese tribute system, which was basically an official system of foreign trade (and an attempted government monopoly).

During the Yuan dynasty (immediately preceding the Ming dynasty), China had been part of a vast Eurasian trade network, in which connections by land and sea were integrated for the first time in world history. From that time, it was possible to conceive of a global connection—the first world system.⁷³ The maritime networks of trade that spanned the Indian Ocean were dominated by Muslim traders. The greatest port of the 13th century was Quanzhou (i.e. the famed “Zayton” of Marco Polo), and a man named Pu Shougeng was leader of the Arab traders in that city, the terminus a vast network spanning the Indian Ocean and East Asian seas. At the end of the Yuan, the Sipahi mutinies and civil wars destroyed the Arab network in China.⁷⁴

When Zhu Yuanzhang founded the Ming dynasty in 1368 out of a generation of civil war, he attempted to construct a Ming-centered world order in which foreign states would ritually submit to his rule. During his battles for hegemony (c. 1352-1368), Zhu had fought bitterly with other warlords armed with powerful navies and foreign connections—a situation not calculated to correct his bucolic distrust of mobile peoples. The stick-and-carrot approach that he adopted to restrict trade and travel was the tribute system: foreigners would be restricted to visiting China only to offer tribute on a prescribed schedule, and their trade goods were regulated in the process. The more each foreign envoy submitted to the Ming emperor, the more benevolence the emperor would

⁷³ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁷⁴ Liao Dake 廖大珂, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi* 福建海外交通史 [History of Fujian's overseas relations]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2002.

bestow upon him in the form of gifts and trade goods. Meanwhile, private contact between Chinese subjects and foreigners was prohibited, as was overseas travel.

The Seaban was meant to enforce these tribute regulations and ensure a government monopoly and surveillance over foreign trade. Instead of calling the Seaban isolationist, I might suggest that it was a case of prophylaxis. (As in Go or chess, a prophylactic move is a pre-emptive act of guarding, one that stops the opponent from taking action in a certain area for fear of reprisal. The ultimate aim is to prevent the opponent from improving his or her position.) Rightly or wrongly, the first Ming emperor imagined that restricting foreign intercourse and banning private maritime trade would stabilize the empire and increase the power of his new dynasty at home and abroad.

The Ming system was modeled on historical tribute arrangements from earlier Chinese empires like the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties, but with the Seaban Zhu Yuanzhang attempted to instill a new level of exclusivity to what historian Valerie Hansen has called “the open empire” of China.⁷⁵ In the words of Charles MacSherry, “The Ming tributary system is significant because it was at once traditional and revolutionary. It was revolutionary because it brought in a new concept: that all China’s dealings with foreigners were part of the tributary system, and that in consequence all foreigners must be kept out of China except for the few who had to be admitted in order to keep the system functioning. It was traditional because it included

⁷⁵ Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000).

enough elements from older practice to seem a familiar expression of China's superior position in the Far Eastern world."⁷⁶

The most visible expression of the tribute system was the "treasure fleet" of Admiral Zheng He. Fact and fiction swirl around the Zheng He voyages (1405-1433).⁷⁷ Most recent of the legends is Gavin Menzies' sensational and regrettably poorly substantiated claim that Zheng He's captains not only discovered but colonized America while circumnavigating the world and inventing calculations of longitude.⁷⁸ Instead of reviving the old hackneyed debate on whether it was some "lost chance" for China's maritime hegemony that met a tragic end because of some inherently Chinese feudal, backward thinking—or making the equally tired claim that Zheng He was more important than Columbus or Vasco Da Gama—I will just point out that more significant in the long term than the voyages themselves was the tribute system of which they were the spearhead. After the treasure ships rotted in their docks, the tribute system continued.

The Zheng He voyages, though a spectacular display of the largest wooden ships ever built, were materially a government attempt to monopolize all trade under the official tribute system and reestablish the direct link with the Indian Ocean, which had collapsed due to the destruction of the Arab network at the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1367. They were canceled, among other causes, for the simple reason that they cost too

⁷⁶ Charles MacSherry, "Impairment of the Ming Tributary System as Exhibited in Trade Involving Fukien" (Ph.D. thesis: University of California, Berkeley, 1956), 318.

⁷⁷ Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Philip Snow, *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988; J. J. L. Duyvendak, *China's Discovery of Africa: lectures given at the University of London on January 22 and 23, 1947*. London: A. Probsthain, 1949; Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2007.

⁷⁸ Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002).

much. As a state military and diplomatic show, the voyages were stellar, but the sheer precocity of the voyages distracts from the fact that private maritime trade was still prohibited. The Seaban was reiterated by the Yongle emperor (r. 1403-1424) even as he sent his “treasure ships” out to India and Africa. The voyages were also a large-scale government employment of the restive sailors who had become lost their livelihoods because of the Seaban. Not only did the voyages finally buckle under the cost, they also were too short-lived to ameliorate the social tensions that were building in coastal provinces like Fujian because of the Seaban. The devastating Wako wars of the 1540s-1560s proved the lie of the prohibition. Lavishing attention on the government spectacle of Zheng He may make us miss the important changes in the maritime system, which continued to evolve.

The tribute system reminds us as well that Ming China was not an exceptional case in early modern history. For early modern trade was *not* free—the Estado da India, the VOC (Dutch East India Company), etc., were all attempts at monopoly. The decay of the official voyages was, if anything, a boon to private trade. Zheng He’s ships were a long-range striking force, the aircraft carriers of their day. But they were not necessarily the most efficient cargo ships. Private carriers built much smaller ships that were suited to the economies of scale at the time and were only too glad to recruit the cheap pool of sailors who became unemployed because of the scuttling of the treasure fleet. The decline of the Ming striking force, and with it the teeth of the Seaban coastal surveillance system, allowed private trade to survive.

Furthermore, we should not mistake isolation for weakness. Another misconception is that after the cancellation of the Zheng He voyages, the Chinese empire

became wretched in naval capacity and so the Portuguese (followed by all the others) sailed right in and blasted the Chinese out of the water. Robert Ritchie wrote: “Pugnacity, greed, a crusading spirit, and, above all, a superior marine technology guaranteed their success. . . . The landed states could keep the Europeans from penetrating the interior, but they could not control their own coastlines.”⁷⁹ Carlo Cipolla declared: “The roar of European ordinance awoke Chinese, Indians, and Japanese to the frightening reality of a strange, alien people that unexpectedly appeared along their coasts under the protection and with the menace of superior, formidable weapons and ruthlessly interfered with the natives’ life.”⁸⁰

Cipolla also has a good chuckle at Ming military weakness: “Nothing, I think, better than the following delightful episode can serve to illustrate the prevailing Chinese aura of patrician detachment and amateurish style. When in 1626 Yuan Ch’ung-huan had to defend Ning-yuan against the attacking Manchus...the general direction of artillery operations was put in the hands of his Fukienese cook who, incidentally, put up a very good show. If a Fukienese cook was good enough as captain-major of artillery against the ‘barbarians’...much more was needed to fight against the ‘barbarians’ who were coming from the sea. But the scholar-officials of the Celestial Empire did not have much more at their disposal.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

⁸⁰ Carlo M. Cipolla, *European Culture and Overseas Expansion* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970), 85.

⁸¹ Cipolla, *European Culture and Overseas Expansion*, 93.

The story about the cook is dubious, but one can forgive Cipolla for making such a claim, for Fujianese cooks may have been more capable than he knew.⁸² For that matter, Yuan Chonghuan was actually one of the Ming army's most capable generals at the time. (It was at that same battle at Ningyuan fortress in 1626 where Yuan literally dealt Nurhaci the defeat of his life—the great Manchu leader was wounded by cannon fire and died shortly afterward.⁸³) Although the specter of military decline still hangs over Ming history, recent studies have given the Ming military machine more of the respect it deserves on its own terms.⁸⁴

The Ming navy may have been a shadow of its former self, but it still had enough verve to repel the Portuguese (off the coast of Fujian) and the Dutch (at the Pescadores). In 1521 and 1522, Ming warships decisively defeated Portuguese attempts to force an entry, and only as late as 1557 were the Portuguese granted a trading post at Macau—hardly an awesome port, but a small peninsula connected to the mainland of Canton by a very narrow isthmus, by which the food supplies to the Portuguese city could be cut off at any time.⁸⁵ (Today, even with dredging, the bay is quite shallow.) Even this stingy concession was granted more from pragmatic concerns than from the “roar of European

⁸² The accomplished scholar was honest enough, however, when he admitted that “When one tries to describe in a very few pages a set of changes that took place over many centuries and transformed a whole continent, one is bound to be prey to over-simplification and deservedly becomes subject to serious criticism.” (Cipolla, *ibid.*, 17)

⁸³ Li Yaping 李亚平, *Diguo zhengjie wangshi: Qian Qing mishi* 帝国政界往事:前清秘史 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2007).

⁸⁴ An interesting thesis by Laichen Sun, for example, argues that the Ming should be considered the first gunpowder empire and was just coming off being a military superpower in Asia the 15th century. We could say that the remnants of its military revolution was to meet the torch-bearers of the European military revolution in the 16th century, and at that moment the Europeans lacked the power to inflict a decisive defeat on the Ming. Laichen Sun, “Ming-Southeast Asian Overland Interactions, 1368-1644,” (Ph.D. thesis: University of Michigan, 2000).

⁸⁵ Jiao Hong (1541-1620) 焦竑, *Guochao xian zheng lu* 国朝献征录 [Record of the conquests of the Ming dynasty]. Reprint of the 1616 edition ed. 120 vols. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1965, vol.67; C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East, 1550-1770: Fact and Fancy in the History of Macao* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1948).

ordinance.” The Ming state had just expelled Japan from the tributary system and sought to use the Portuguese as temporary allies against the waves of Chinese and Japanese pirates that were then ravaging the coast.⁸⁶

In short, we should not project the “sick man of Asia” image of China from the 19th century back onto the 16th and 17th centuries. Chinese maritime development, as part of the larger East Asian system, was not stamped out because of the Seaban or the end of the Zheng He voyages. It was instead forced onto a different path. As Ming scholar Timothy Brook reminds us, “culture is what people do, not what they think they should do.”⁸⁷ The sea peoples, as we will see, did not meekly follow the dominant “Confucian” culture of their day, but fulfilled their wants and needs in the larger system of maritime activity beyond the purview of the state, despite the risk of running afoul of the authorities.

The tribute system restricted all official trade to three main ports of entry: Canton (for Southeast Asia and others), Ningbo (for Japan; later retracted), and Quanzhou (for Ryukyu; later the port changed to Fuzhou). Illicit private trade, however, did not observe these port restrictions. The result was a coexistence of two separate routing systems for trade, which I have sketched in **Figure 1.5**.

⁸⁶ He Feng 何锋, "Mingchao haishang liliang jianshe kaocha 明朝海上力量建设考察 [Ming maritime seapower]" (Ph.D. thesis: Xiamen University, 2007), 123-124.

⁸⁷ Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 124.

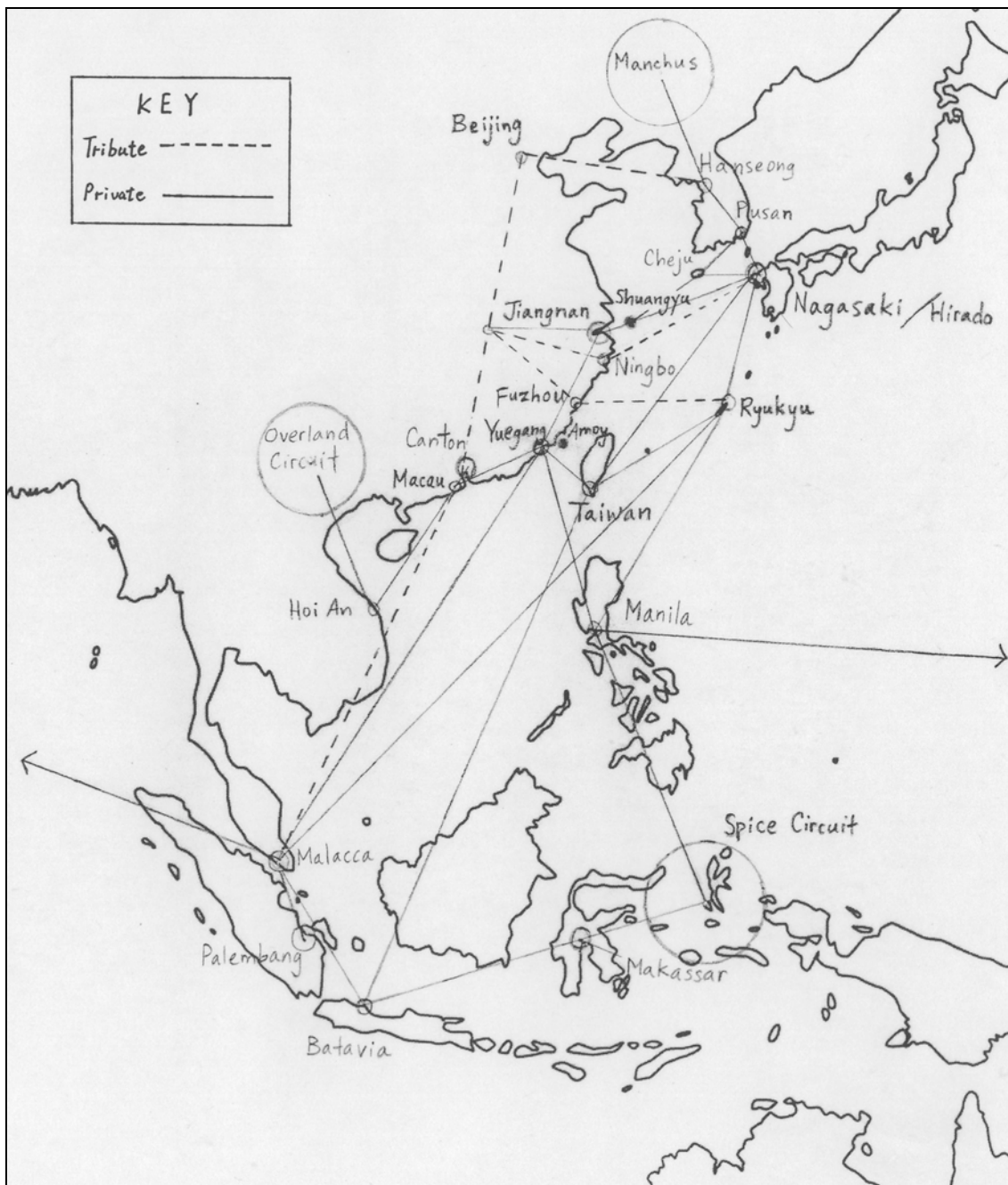


Figure 1.5 – Two Trade Systems

An initial configuration of these port systems for the Chinese case might look something like the following lists:

Tribute / official system:*Primary (authorized)*

Canton

Quanzhou/Fuzhou

Ryukyu

Malacca

Left out

Nagasaki (expelled after 1530s)

Manila

Batavia

Macau

Private trade: the flip side of the Seaban*Primary*

Shuangyu (destroyed in 1548)

Matsuura/Hirado (Nagasaki vicinity)

Macau

Batavia

Manila

Hoi An

Secondary

Taiwan (became primary after 1620s)

Ryukyu

Pusan

Cheju

In general, we can say that the tribute system and the private system kept their separate ways, for they were different in nature. The tribute system was a product of the state and determined by fiat, as was its primary port, Canton. Private trade had its own primary ports, which were not officially determined (first Shuangyu, then Yuegang). The one time that the official and the private systems “converged” (met halfway) was at Yuegang, with partial lifting of the Seaban and the opening of a trade licensing system in 1567. This was the date that most people point to as the beginning of a “golden age” of liberalized private trade.⁸⁸ But viewed in the system as a whole, the greater significance of 1567 is that it was the beginning of opportunity for the would-be monopolist, who would outgrow the official license system and link it with his private networks.

Technically, any foreign trade outside of the official tribute ports and outside of the designated tribute missions (which varied according to country) was a violation of the

⁸⁸ Ptak, Roderich. *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang*, Lin, Renchuan 林仁川. *Mingmo qingchu siren haishang maoyi* 明末清初私人海上贸易 [Private maritime trade in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties]. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1987.

Seaban. Since the Seaban was the punitive instrument of the tribute system, I now briefly turn to what those laws may have stipulated for the subjects of the Ming system and those with whom they traded.

Laws

I have translated some samples of Ming pronouncements and enumerate them here to provide some sense of the flavor and coverage of the Seaban.

Samples of Seaban pronouncements⁸⁹:

Year 1501 (Ming Hongzhi 13)

THOSE WHO:

1. Build ships with more than two masts;
2. Or ship banned goods to foreign countries;
3. Or guide pirates into coastal areas to rob and loot;

WILL BE PUNISHED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The outlaw himself will be executed [i.e., decapitated];
2. His entire family will be sentenced to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers.

THOSE WHO:

1. Rent a three-masted (or larger) ship to others;
2. And profit from the trade of banned foreign goods;

AND THOSE WHO:

1. Do not own big ships;
2. But assist in the buying and selling of banned foreign goods (sappanwood and pepper specifically) of one thousand *jin* or more;

WILL BE PUNISHED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The outlaw will be sentenced to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers;
2. The goods will be confiscated.

THOSE WHO:

1. Sail in small boats;
2. And stay close to the coasts;

⁸⁹ Shen Shixing 申时行, et al, eds., *Da Ming huidian* 大明会典, 卷132兵部十五, GJK 古籍库检索第1246/2073.

3. And fish for a living or cut timber for daily use;
SHOULD NOT BE VIOLATED BY GUARDS AND SOLDIERS.

Year 1525 (Ming Jiajing 4)

ORDERS TO THE COAST GUARDS:

[Notice posted in all coastal towns in Fujian and Zhejiang]

1. Destroy all two-masted ships built without official supervision and arrest those who sail the ships.
2. During the inspection, the guards should carefully record the quantity of all cedar boards, pine tree boards, tree trunks, rattan ropes, and indigo.
3. If the guards find a quantity of sulfur [i.e., raw material for gunpowder] of more than fifty *jin*, the sulfur must be sold to the government immediately.

THOSE WHO dare to trade more than one thousand *jin* of sappanwood or pepper:
ARE SENTENCED, whether leader or accomplice, to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers;

THOSE WHO helped coordinate the trade or who provided storage space:
ARE ALSO SENTENCED to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers.

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

1. Those who helped attend to the goods;
2. Their neighbors who did not report their crimes;
3. The gentry headman of his community;
4. And the officially designated military headman of his community:

WILL BE PUNISHED AS FOLLOWS:

1. They will all be sentenced to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers (in accordance with the codes on illegal off-border hunting of leopards and deer and the codes on the definition of accomplices);
2. In exile, the gentry headmen will toil as lifetime laborers, while military headmen may keep their ranks and receive salaries.

Year 1552 (Ming Jiajing 27)

Pronouncement to all residents in Nan Zhili, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong:

THOSE WHO:

1. Dare to sail two-masted (and larger) ships into the ocean;
2. Dare to provide water or rice to foreign ships that come anywhere near the coast;

WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED ON THE GROUNDS OF HIGH TREASON.

ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION:

1. Rich local residents have frequently communicated or conspired with the Wako;
2. Thus, to impose the restrictions effectively, from now on the Salt Censorate [i.e., the office that maintained the state salt monopoly] should also function as the Sea Censorate.

Year 1569 (Ming Longqing 3)

Pronouncement to all coastal residents:

THOSE WHO dare to trade sulfur or saltpeter with the pirates:

WILL BE PUNISHED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The criminal will suffer the death of a thousand cuts;
2. His whole family will be executed;
3. His neighbors, if they knew about the trade but did not report it, will be sentenced to lifetime servitude in military camps on the frontiers;

THOSE WHO report on such trade will be rewarded generously;

THOSE WHO deal in sulfur and saltpeter must report the quantity to the local government in advance and obtain permission before trading. If the trade volume is more than the legal limit, all trade parties should be punished without exception.

Year 1570 (Ming Longqing 4)

Pronouncement to all civil and military officials:

THOSE WHO:

1. Aid the pirates;
2. Withdraw from a fight out of cowardice;
3. Sell information to pirates;
4. Accept bribes;
5. Fabricate the surrender of pirates after accepting their bribes;
6. Or supply pirates with daily necessities (weapons, powder, liquor, and rice) off the coast;

WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED.

THOSE WHO have communicated with the pirates for years:

WILL SUFFER the death of a thousand cuts, and their property will be confiscated to supply the army.

This selection of laws come from the 1500s, a period in which piracy was on the rise, and so naturally threatened stiffer and stiffer penalties. In general, all of the Seaban edicts appear draconian and were clearly intended to terrify. For a bit of context, the death of a thousand cuts (also called death by slicing) was the worst of all punishments. The executioners were well trained in the arts of prolonging the victim's life while slowly slicing him to pieces, starting with the extremities. This terrible punishment was meted out only for those deemed the worst capital crimes, which included treason and patricide.

According to Ming law, aiding and abetting pirates—for example, selling them ingredients for gunpowder—was equivalent to rebellion and theoretically punished accordingly. The prohibitions against building or sailing ships of greater than two masts suggest military fears of large competitive vessels as well as recognition that large deep-ocean ships were being built illegally and sailing to great distances. While these laws were not always enforced with the strictest vigor, they could be used by government officials, police, or gentry to blackmail their clients. It is clear from even this limited selection of laws that the Seaban was not a single proclamation, but an accumulation over time in both repetition and in added severity.

To ask if the Seaban caused the Wako pirate attacks, or the Wako caused the intensification of the Seaban, takes us back to the chicken and the egg. The repetition and intensity of the Ming laws outlined above suggests that the state was responding directly to piratical activity; however, as Robert Antony says, “piracy was largely an inherent by-product of the Ming sea bans, which forged legitimate merchants and seamen into criminals.”⁹⁰ Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang issued the very first Seaban law in direct response to a series of pirate attacks of the 1360s; afterwards, the picture became muddled as the prohibitions spawned more pirate attacks, and such incidents caused to state to slap on more prohibitions. I have compiled a selected chronology in **Table 1.1**, below.

⁹⁰ Antony, *Like Froth Floating on the Sea*, 20.

Table 1.1: Chronological List of Seabans and Wako Incidents

YEAR	EVENT	YEAR	EVENT	YEAR	EVENT	YEAR	EVENT
1369	Wako	1397	Seaban	1523	Seaban + Wako	1556	Wako
1371	Seaban	1401	Wako	1525	Seaban	1557	Wako
1372	Wako	1404	Wako	1529	Seaban	1559	Wako
1374	Seaban	1424	Wako	1533	Seaban	1561	Wako
1381	Seaban	1433	Seaban	1546	Wako	1569	Seaban
1384	Wako	1439	Wako	1552	Seaban + Wako	1570	Seaban
1386	Seaban	1442	Wako	1553	Wako	1574	Wako
1390	Seaban	1466	Wako	1554	Wako	1576	Wako
1394	Seaban	1501	Seaban	1555	Wako		

Sources:

1. Chao Zhongchen 晁中辰, *Mingdai haijin yu haiwai maoyi* 明代海禁与海外贸易 [Seaban policy and overseas maritime trade in the Ming dynasty]. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005,
2. Chen Maoheng 陈懋恒, *Mingdai wokou kaolüe* 明代倭寇考略 [A study on the Wako pirates in the Ming dynasty]. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957.
3. Li Wenrui 李文睿, "Shilun Zhongguo gudai haiyang guanli 试论中国古代海洋管理 [Maritime Management in Ancient China]." Ph.D. thesis: Xiamen University, 2007.

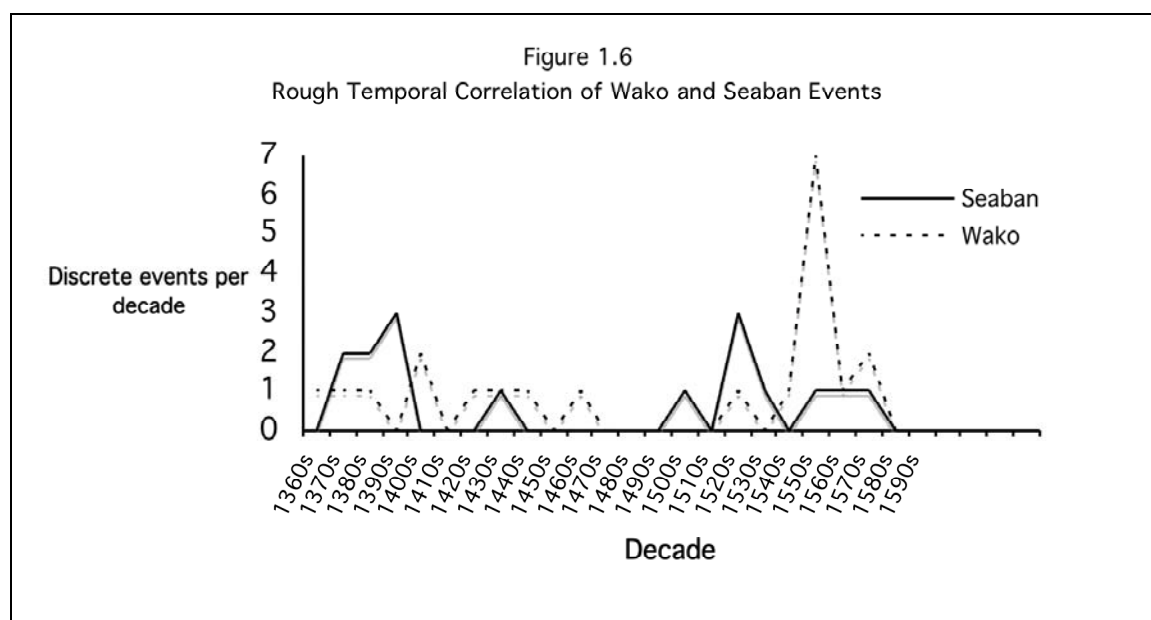


Figure 1.6: Rough Temporal Correlation of Wako and Seaban Events

On preliminary inspection, there is a rough correlation, which is more visible if we chart them side by side, as in **Figure 1.6**. This kind of temporal correlation between

prohibitions and pirate spikes does not necessarily show cause and effect, but does indicate that, more than the letter of the Seaban law itself, we must pay attention to the historical and spatial chronology of the entire system.⁹¹ If we can find a spatial connection, we will be better able to see how pirate predations followed a pattern rather than just blanket criminalization caused by the Seaban. This had to do with changes in the system as a whole—and so it is necessary to identify the link between two parts: the tribute system and smuggler-piracy. Therefore we must isolate key periods in the historical narrative.

Periodization

One of the best efforts to draw up a clear maritime periodization is that of Roderich Ptak, who has done as much as anybody to enrich our theoretical imaginings of the maritime world. I admire his application of the late Denys Lombard's ideas of an "Asian Mediterranean" (inspired by Braudel's original vision of a coherent sea world) to the problem of theorizing about the larger maritime Southeast Asian entity and have adopted a similar commitment in my own work on sea spaces. Ptak presents a "bird's-eye view" of the context of the China-Southeast Asia connection and the structure of trade routes and maritime networks.⁹²

I summarize Ptak's six major periods in **Table 1.2** below:

⁹¹ Bodo Wiethoff gives us what is probably the best such Pirate/Seaban chronological chart in the literature, but at the moment I do not have the time to translate it into English for reference here. See Wiethoff, *Die chinesische Seeverbotspolitik und der private Überseehandel von 1368 bis 1567*, 205.

⁹² Roderich Ptak, "Ming Maritime Trade to Southeast Asia, 1368-1567: Visions of a System." In *China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trade (c. 1000-1600)*. Variorum Collected Studies Series CS777 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), I: 157-191.

Table 1.2: Roderich Ptak's Maritime Periodization

Period	Years	Features
I	1368-1400	Establishment of the tribute system under the first Ming emperor. Coexistence of 3 sectors: illegal private trade, government sector, and the foreign tribute sector.
II	1400-1435	The Zheng He naval expeditions. With state maritime power at its peak, many sea peoples were absorbed into the state sector. Government trade dominates.
III	1435-1475	Practically all Indian Ocean countries turned away from China. Illegal private trade with Southeast Asia increased. Malacca prospered. The rise of the Ryukyu tribute shipments and Ryukyu as a hub for trade with Fujian.
IV	1475-1540	Decline of the tribute trade system. Fujianese start increasingly bypassing the Ryukyu network and intensifying direct connections with Southeast Asia. Further expansion of private trade. Fall of Malacca to the Portuguese (1511).
V	1540-1567	Swift rise of Chinese private trade and economic expansion throughout maritime Asia. New impulses from Japan. Explosion of Wako piracy on the China coast.
VI	1567-1640s	The Ming government lifts the maritime ban: Yuegang becomes a licensed port. This ushers in an era of free trade under relatively stable conditions. The rise of the Zheng clan in the early Qing.

Ptak supplements this with a very interesting flow model, which I have reproduced below

in **Figure 1.7**:

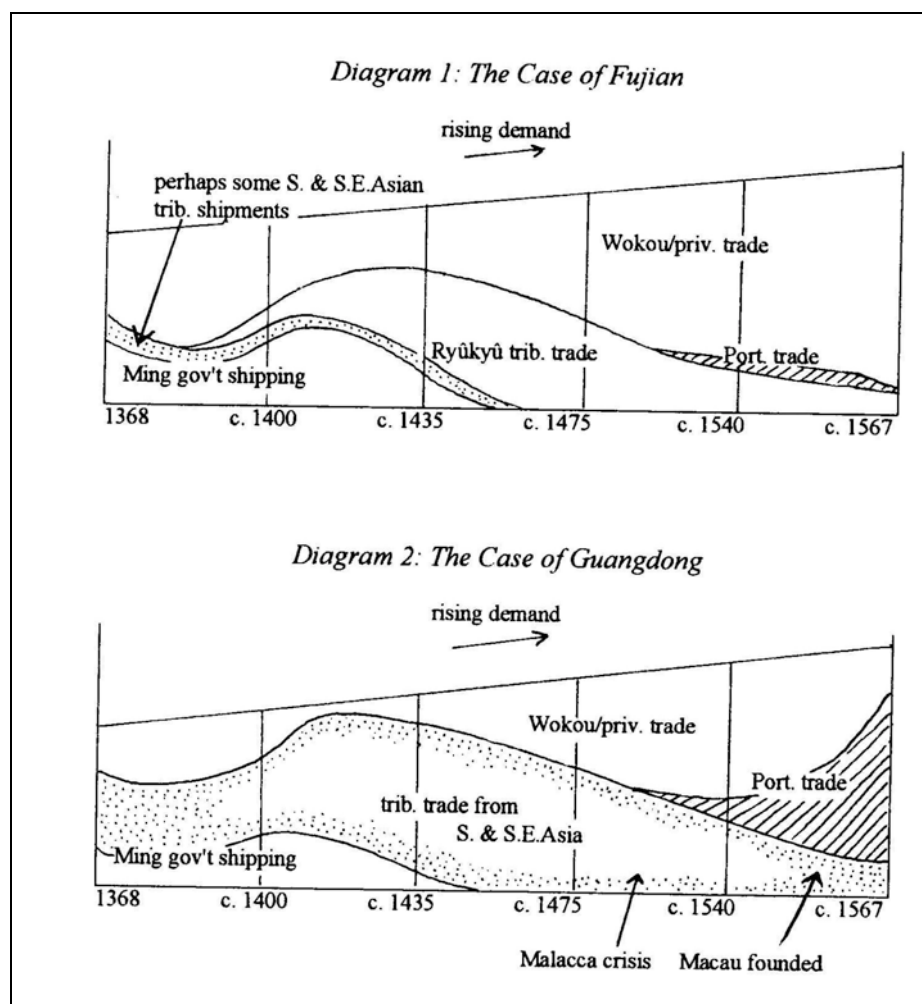


Figure 1.7 – Comparison of Maritime Fujian and Guangdong⁹³

Ptak's purpose in this diagram is to explain the diverging paths of Canton and Fujian with respect to the overall system of trade. The diagram essentially shows, in a case of rising Chinese demand for tropical goods over time, how in each period demand was met by at least two of the following sectors: 1) tribute imports from the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia; 2) tribute imports via Ryukyu; 3) Ming government shipping (such as the Zheng He voyages); 4) illegal imports from Wako smuggler-pirates; and 5)

⁹³ Ptak, *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang*, I-188.

Portuguese trade. (Note: The demand line atop each diagram represents 100%; the *area* under the demand line represents the portion of that demand that was satisfied by each of the shaded sectors.) The magnitudes indicated for the demand line are hypothetical, but if we accept the accuracy of the general trend, the conclusion is that Canton and Fujian went very different ways in maritime development. More tribute trade (the dotted zone) flowed into Canton, which developed something of a “taker mentality.” Ptak suggests that Canton largely “sat back” and enjoyed its ability to receive foreign goods from the tribute trade.⁹⁴ This “sit back” mentality largely remained in Canton throughout the imperial period, supported by the government’s continued favoritism of this place as the primary port for tribute trade.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, circumstances compelled the Fujianese to actively and innovatively expand into the illegal private sector, that of the Wako/private trade (the upper white swatch in the diagram).

As far as the general order of events goes, this is a fine periodization. Still, like any good model, it stimulates more questions than it can answer, and so there are areas where I wonder if it can be improved upon. Issues like gentry sponsorship, changing port conditions, the rise and fall of Wako piracy, and finally the rise of the seaford Zheng Zhilong cannot be fully accounted for in the last three periods of this chronology by increasing demand and the lifting of the Seaban. 1567, the year of the opening of

⁹⁴ Ptak, *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang*, I-170.

⁹⁵ James Kong Chin compared the “sit back” mentality with Fujian’s maritime activity in the following way: “Probably because Guangzhou [Canton] was always an official entrepot and generally frequented by foreign trading vessels, it was under strict control and supervision of the government and few Chinese merchants there could get permission from the local authorities to sail overseas. . . . Fujian was geographically peripheral and the central governmental restrictive controls were relatively weak. Consequently, it was totally unnecessary for merchants in Guangzhou to risk their lives and fortune trading overseas. They would customarily prefer to stay at home and wait for the coming of foreign merchants. The Hokkien merchants on the other hand had to venture overseas to seek business.” James Kong Chin, “Merchants and Other Sojourners: The Hokkiens Overseas, 1570-1760,” (Ph.D. thesis: University of Hong Kong, 1998), 372-373.

Yuegang, looms large, for Ptak assigns it the pivotal role of ending the Seaban and bringing an age of peaceful maritime growth. The Seaban was, as Ptak calls it, “a very artificial regulation,”⁹⁶ but it was more than that. The side effects of the Seaban did not end with the defeat of the Wako. I turn now to the pirate wars and see if there are possible alternative explanations for what changed and what did not.

⁹⁶ Ptak, *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang*, I-187.

Chapter II

Storm

The Pirate Wars

*If the Ming troops come, I can kill them while lying down;
But if the fisherman militias come, then I stand up to fight!
-- Fujianese pirates⁹⁷*

Baldy Li had nothing left to lose. Ming police had seized his ships and consigned him to the swelter of a Fujianese prison for violating the Seaban. Li had no intention of rotting in squalor, so he broke out of jail and joined forces with fellow ex-convict Xu Dong. The two had a lot in common, despite the fact that Li was from Fujian, while Xu hailed from Anhui. They were both from large families that had no time for fancy names. It was not uncommon in south China, especially among the poor, for parents to name children by numbers, a simple and practical method for keeping the order of birth. Xu Dong, for example, was actually Xu Number Two (Xu Er), whose key partners were his brothers Xu One, Xu Three, and Xu Four. Li, being perhaps the lucky seventh child, was thus Li Number Seven (Li Qi). But that was hardly a memorable name for a leader of seamen. Presumably Li had lost his hair by some chance, heredity, or the intercession of a barber: hence he would go down in history by his *nom de guerre* of Li Guangtou: “Baldy Li.”

⁹⁷ Zhang Zengxin 張增信, *Mingji dongnan Zhongguo de haishang huodong* 明季東南中國的海上活動 [Maritime activities in southeast China during the Ming dynasty] (Taipei: Sili Dongwu daxue Zhongguo xueshu zhuzuo jiangzu weiyuanhui, 1988), 132.

And then in 1542, fate gave Baldy Li the captain's chair. His boss Jinzi Lao,⁹⁸ who had been instrumental in bringing Portuguese traders into the Chinese smuggling networks at Shuangyu, died the premature death so common to underworld barons. Baldy Li, who had distinguished himself as a fearless captain, inherited the Don's men and led them in search of wealth and power.

1542-1543 carried great portents. Altan Khan rose to power among the Tümed and led Mongol raids into northern China. Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier reached Goa. A Fujianese vessel sailing in violation of the Seaban headed toward a fateful shipwreck at Tanegashima just south of Kyushu island, carrying the Portuguese guns that would eventually help Nobunaga and Hideyoshi unite a war-torn Japan. And Baldy Li joined hands with Xu Dong for profit and for revenge against the gentry partners who had cheated them in past business.

How and why had this reckoning come to be?

The Energy of Slaves

Sea traders are usually considered the "middlemen" between China and outsiders, and scholars like John Wills have emphasized their mediating role.⁹⁹ However, in studying an integrated history of maritime space I have come to the view that the sea peoples are only seen as middlemen or peripheral from the perspective of continental states or polities structured as such. In their own maritime element, if they were given an autonomous history, they would not be middlemen but primary actors, seen simply as

⁹⁸ "Lao" 老, literally meaning "old," was not a name but a term of respect for an underworld boss, something like the "Don" in Don Corleone (Mario Puzo's celebrated *Godfather*).

⁹⁹ Wills, "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: Themes in Peripheral History," 200-238.

working for themselves and using landed peoples to mediate their interaction with continental state and society. That is, one can just as validly view the land-based gentry as the mediators or middlemen between the “water worlds” and the continental state. In the period leading up to the pirate wars, the gentry could often be seen playing both sides.

The issue was sponsorship. To finance a large undertaking such as an overseas trading venture, families would often pool together funds to build or buy a ship and crew it. In South China, and particularly Fujian, clan organizations acted as the primary conglomerations of social and economic capital that would finance these voyages.¹⁰⁰

This had to do not only with the strength of southern Chinese clan organizations and limited capital but also the pressing need for extra-legal safety nets. “In the absence of a sufficiently strong legal framework for the creation of long-term share-holding companies,” writes Eduard Vermeer, “the family as a more or less permanent institution provided an alternative in which risks could be shared, business expanded, profits reinvested, [and] experience accumulated over many years.”¹⁰¹ Most injurious to the development of legal protections for maritime trade was the fact of the Seaban itself: since private trade was illegal, there could be no recourse to Chinese courts in the event of a dispute. To meet the threat of coercion between unequal trading partners, security in numbers and in family ties had to suffice.

The Seaban also promoted a particular form of corruption and market cannibalism

¹⁰⁰ Zheng Zhenman, *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, trans. Michael Szonyi (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

¹⁰¹ Eduard B. Vermeer, “Up the Mountains and Out to the Sea: The Expansion of the Fukienese in the Late Ming Period,” in Murray A. Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 66.

that favored the dominance of big families or syndicates.¹⁰² Transaction costs increased with requisite bribes, and the bigger players with money and connections (i.e., those who could evade or bribe soldiers and government officials to look the other way) could drive their smaller competitors out by pressure or by brute force. Prominent merchant families and gentry elites also sponsored smuggling operations in cahoots with local officials. They were equivalent to the English gentry “land pirates” who abetted piracy at about the same time in Britain.¹⁰³ Realizing that the Seaban contributed to the power of these merchant-gentry and helped provoke the pirate crisis, Ming pirate fighter Tang Shu observed, in the 1550s: “Pirates and merchants are the same people. When trade is open, the pirates become merchants; but when trade is illegal, merchants become pirates. To start by prohibiting merchants is to end by struggling to contain pirates.”¹⁰⁴ Even more bluntly, Grand Coordinator Zhu Wan stated that it was “easy to get rid of China’s coastal pirates, but particularly difficult to get rid of China’s pirates attired in caps and gowns (i.e., the gentry).”¹⁰⁵

A common practice was for gentry families to adopt a poor but trustworthy-looking young man to lead trading voyages instead of sending their own sons to sea. Such a man was known as an “adopted son” and in some cases received due honor within the family, but it was common as well for the adoptee to function more or less like a

¹⁰² Consider the history of Prohibition (the attempt to prohibit alcohol) in the United States from 1919-1933, which contributed to a dramatic rise in organized crime.

¹⁰³ C.M. Senior, *A Nation of Pirates: English Piracy in its Heyday* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1976), 124-125. According to Senior, the English at the beginning of the 17th century had a reputation for piracy that extended beyond just seamen. In foreign eyes, the whole population was sympathetic to piracy and actively supported pirate activity. These land-bound accomplices were called “land pirates.”

¹⁰⁴ Zheng Ruozeng 鄭若曾 (1503-1570), annotated by Li Zhizhong 李致忠, *Chouhai Tubian* 籌海圖編 [Illustrated Guide to Maritime Pacification]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007 [reprint of 1570s ed.], j. 11 (上), 673.

¹⁰⁵ Kwan-wai So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the 16th Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1975), 53.

bondservant, being inferior to the real sons and heirs of the clan; only by proving his worth could such a glorified slave earn the right to be a ‘real’ member of the family. This practice offered some degree of social mobility for poor young men and allowed the gentry to keep their own heirs close to the land, wealth, and cultivated intellectual lifestyle to which they were accustomed. It was these “adopted sons” who would serve as brokers and do the everyday wheeling and dealing with wholesalers, pilots, sailors, rowers, haulers, and the general run of seamen.¹⁰⁶

Suffused through this fabric of unequal trading relationships was the insatiable Chinese demand for one precious substance: silver. The commercialization of Chinese society beginning in the 1400s made silver a vital medium of exchange in the Ming empire and by extension the East Asian trading system. Failed early Ming experiments with paper money (known as Great Ming Precious Scrip) created a demand for a more stable unit of value, and the Ming economy evolved into a bimetallic system with copper coins for everyday purchases and silver for larger transactions.¹⁰⁷ By 1436, the Ming government began a grudging concession to the hegemony of silver by converting some of its levies into silver payments; this experiment culminated a century later in the drastic fiscal reforms of Zhang Juzheng in 1581, which required all taxes to be paid in silver.¹⁰⁸

Yet, as was the usual humor of history, the Ming state’s policy toward the monetization of silver was dilatory and even counterproductive. While recognizing the

¹⁰⁶ Cui Laiting 崔来廷. "Shiliu shiji dongnan Zhongguo haishang zousi maoyi tanxi 十六世纪东南中国海上走私贸易探析 [Smuggling trades along the southeast coasts of China in the 16th century]." *Nanyang wenti yanjiu* 南洋问题研究 124, no. 4 (2005): 92-98.

¹⁰⁷ Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 120.

¹⁰⁸ Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

importance and utility of this precious metal, the state was unwilling to permit silver mining for fear that the bullion would pool into private hands.¹⁰⁹ In any case, China's domestic silver veins (mostly located in the far southwest, far from the commercialized central and coastal provinces) were too small to have satisfied the growing demand.¹¹⁰ One monetary solution might have been to permit imports of foreign silver, but the official tribute system reduced this inflow to a trickle, and the longstanding Seaban policy outlawed such trade.

As historian Gang Zhao notes, between the 1550s to the 1680s there were three major suppliers of silver to East Asia: Japan, the Spanish Philippines, and the Dutch East India Company (VOC); but all three were prohibited from direct trade with China by the Seaban and thus had to rely on Chinese smugglers.¹¹¹ From the 1530s to the 1570s Japan was the major supplier of silver to Ming China. Japanese silver flowed into China through the illicit trade channels, mainly in exchange for Chinese silk, porcelain, and copper coinage. The scale of the silver trade was very large: between 1560 and about 1600, silver exports from Japan to China averaged between 33,750 and 48,750 kilograms per year.¹¹² Despite the risks, such illegal dealings were far more profitable for Chinese merchants than the official tribute trades.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, 121.

¹¹⁰ Even at its peak, Chinese domestic silver output amounted to no more than 3000-4000 kilograms annually, less than a tenth of what was illegally imported from Japan and Spanish America (via Manila) each year. See Lin Man-houng, "The Shift from East Asia to the World," in *Maritime China in Transition*, edited by Wang Gungwu and Ng Chin-keong (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 78-80; also Richard Von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), chapters 4 and 5 on the mid-Ming importations of silver.

¹¹¹ Gang Zhao, "Shaping the Asian trade network: The conception and implementation of the Chinese open trade policy, 1684-1840." Ph.D. thesis: The Johns Hopkins University, 2006, 57.

¹¹² *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, The Ming pt. 1, 398.

¹¹³ Pin-tsun Chang, *Chinese Maritime Trade: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Fu-chien* (Ph.D. thesis: Princeton University, 1983), 198-203.

During the period up to 1530, which we might call the period of sponsorship, the maritime silver trade was largely concentrated in offshore islands in Region 2 and was in the hands of Jiangnan gentry and Huishang (Anhui merchants from Huizhou). Jiangnan possessed economic centrality, but for that reason Jiangnan was also a key tax region—its share of tax revenues to the state was disproportionately large compared with its size. The increased government presence in Jiangnan made it more difficult for overseas traders to gain direct access to the central productive region, so Shuangyu developed as a smuggling port in the Zhoushan islands off the coast of Zhejiang—close enough to Jiangnan to have centrality, but far enough out to avoid the government, so long as the government was not determined to assemble a striking force. This network fell into the hands of Huizhou merchants, who used their funds from salt trading to run a lucrative smuggling business in between Jiangnan and Japan (Region 2).

As the profits of foreign trade increased, they became big enough to cause internal conflicts between seamen and their gentry allies. The illegality of the trade also created many opportunities for abuse and general coercion; when pressed for payment, the gentry sponsors used the Seaban as a tool to bully their creditors into silence. To make their threats more credible, they occasionally urged the authorities to enforce the Seaban and threatened to report the smugglers to the government for violating the law.¹¹⁴ This sponsorship would eventually break down as the exploited seamen broke away. They were able to do this because of three contributing factors: 1) Increasing profits that enabled greater financial independence; 2) New bases and foreign contacts that helped

¹¹⁴ Kwan-wai So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the 16th Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1975), 5.

reconfigure primary and secondary ports; and 3) New allies: especially the Japanese and Portuguese.¹¹⁵

The silver trade from Japan, which peaked in the 1540s, led to growing financial independence for the smugglers. One smuggling group, the Xu brothers, made profits as high as 2,000 to 3,000 taels of silver per ship per voyage, 50% of which was split with their land sponsors. The Xu brothers controlled over 100 ships, meaning that they could gross some 200,000 to 300,000 taels in total and keep half: 100,000-150,000 taels going to their sponsors.¹¹⁶ Both Zhang Lian and Xu Hai, who were successful smugglers before becoming notorious pirate leaders, had purchased large amounts of land in the Yangzi Delta region, a sign that rising profits gave them greater flexibility and financial independence.¹¹⁷

The 1540s serve as a dividing point because it was around this time that the smugglers began to go rogue on their gentry sponsors. There are many theories about the origins of the Wako pirate wars, and some scholars have pointed to the escalation in Ming enforcement of the Seaban following tributary violence in Ningbo in 1523.¹¹⁸ But I also believe that the origins of the conflict lie in the Seaban's conversion of Fujian and

¹¹⁵ On profits, see Li Longsheng 李隆生, *Wanming haiwai maoyi shuliang yanjiu:jiulun jiangnan sichou chanye yu baiyin liuru de yingxiang* 晚明海外贸易数量研究: 兼论江南丝绸产业与白银流入的影响 [A quantitative study on the late Ming maritime trade and the impact of silver imports]. Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji gufen youxian gongsi, 2005, 169-177. On bases, see Lin Renchuan 林仁川, *Mingmo qingchu siren haishang maoyi* 明末清初私人海上贸易 [Private trade in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties]. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1987, 131-160. On alliances with Japanese and Portuguese traders, see Zheng Shungong 郑舜功, *Riben yijian* 日本一鉴 [Accounts on Japan]. 5 vols, Photoprint of the original 16th-century edition, 1939, vol.1.

¹¹⁶ Zheng Ruozeng 郑若曾(1503-1570), *Chouhai tubian* 筹海图编. Reprint of the 1570s edition, in 13 vols. (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), vol. 7, 462.

¹¹⁷ Wang Shiqi 王士骥, *Huangming yuwo lu* 皇明驭倭录 [Our empire's control of the Wako]. Reprint of the Wanli (1573-1620) edition. 9 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai wuji chubanshe, 1995, 4090.

¹¹⁸ A representative sample can be found in Wan Ming 万明, *Ming yu Qing qianqi haiwai zhengce bijiao yanjiu* 明与清前期海外政策比较研究 [Comparison of the Ming and Qing maritime policies]. Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000.

the Chinese littoral into a frontier-like zone of dubious legality, a region both militarized and lacking in institutional means to resolve local conflicts or the increasing complexity of exchange and bribery without resort to violence.

After all, the Seaban laws were intended to be prophylactic, but ultimately they served to heighten the very conflicts that they were designed to avert. As scholar Paola Calanca writes: “Short of providing a real maritime policy or the means to canalize problems as soon as the first incidents occurred, [the maritime ban] would lead to coastal deregulation—smuggling, piracy, plundering on land, etc. Here lie the seeds for future disagreement....”¹¹⁹ When it finally erupted, it would be quite a disagreement indeed.

The war began (as most wars do) with a small dispute. In 1547, members of the Xie clan, a prominent gentry family in Zhejiang province, cheated their smuggling partners for the last time. As the Ming court record later summarized the situation: “The Xie clan estimated their debts [to their merchant partners] to be too much to repay, so they tried to threaten them by saying: ‘We will inform on you to the government.’ The treacherous merchants became bitter and fearful, so they banded together with foreigners and attacked the Xie clan by night, killing several men and women and burning the estate.”¹²⁰

This event, though by no means the only conflict between sponsors and smugglers in those years (for there had been sporadic fights since the 1530s), shocked the Jiangnan gentry into calling in the cavalry. They soon got more than they bargained for. In November 1547, the Ming government sent in Zhu Wan, a hard-liner who insisted on

¹¹⁹ Paola Calanca, “From a Forbidden Ocean to an Ocean under Close Watch: The Ming and Early Qing Governments and the Maritime Problem,” *Ming Qing yanjiu* 7 (1998): 20.

¹²⁰ *Ming Shilu: Shizong (Jiajing) shilu*, 350:1-2; Zhang Zengxin, *Mingji dongnan Zhongguo de haishang huodong*, 120-122.

crushing the illegal trade completely—including the gentry who connived at it. With so many vested interests threatened by this government intervention, the coast exploded into a melee. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* says in Act 4, Scene 6: “Plate sin with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks; Arm it in rags, a pigmy’s straw does pierce it.” That is to say, the rich receive a different kind of law than the poor. This was certainly the case in Ming China as it was in Elizabethan England, but the smugglers of Fujian were not men of infinite jest. The gentry betrayal, the government crackdown, and the promise of foreign trade would spark a decades-long war between the Ming government, the gentry, and the smugglers themselves, who would now turn into pirates.

The Laughter of Pirates

Zhu Wan (1494-1550) arrived at his new post as Viceroy and Grand Coordinator of the armies of Zhejiang and Fujian in 1547, only to find the situation much worse than he had predicted. In the early Ming period, individual merchants and even a few government officials had traded illegally with foreigners, but beyond sporadic incidents of violence there had been no significant or systematic armed trading groups.¹²¹ What Zhu faced in 1547, however, looked like the makings of an international pirate confederacy with roots abroad and deep inland.

Offshore from the city of Ningbo in Zhejiang province lay the twin islands known as Shuangyu, where a Fujianese ex-convict named Deng Liao had begun a smuggling

¹²¹ Lin Renchuan, *Mingmo qingchu siren haishang maoyi*, 64-66.

ring in 1526.¹²² Deng was joined by men like Jinzi Lao and Xu Dong, who attracted other Chinese, Portuguese, and Japanese traders to the island, and within a few years Shuangyu had grown into the premier haven for smugglers off the Chinese coast. There the Chinese traded such goods as silks, brocades, copper, porcelains, painted fans, pearls, and handicrafts for the silver, spices, Japanese swords, guns, and foreign commodities from as far afield as Patani, Malabar, Holland, and Japan. It was a rich and corrupt world while it lasted. Jinzi Lao's death in 1542 passed the leadership of his gang to Baldy Li, who allied himself with Xu Dong to form the largest trading consortium then present in the East China Sea. During this first stage of the pirate wars, which we might call the Confederacy Phase, merchant groups increased in size and began forming conglomerates through alliances and/or conquest of other groups.

The Ming state was slow to respond to the rising tide of local maritime violence in the 16th century, but this was likely true of most states in the seventeenth century (and we might even question our much vaunted prowess in the twenty-first century, given the surge in piracy off the Horn of Africa in the past five years). Prior to the scientific and industrial revolutions, dispersed or localized knowledge did not flow easily upward to state centers that were preoccupied with other problems.¹²³ The maritime coast was full of acts of violence to which the government was wont to turn a blind eye: even under the highly regulated tribute system there had been violations of the peace, most notably in

¹²² Cui Laiting 崔来廷, "Shiliu shiji dongnan Zhongguo haishang zousi maoyi tanxi 十六世纪东南中国海上走私贸易探析 [Smuggling trades along the southeast coasts of China in the 16th century]." *Nanyang wenti yanjiu* 南洋问题研究 124, no. 4 (2005): 93.

¹²³ For example, the Mongol menace, whose terrors were perhaps more imagined than real, continued to weigh more heavily on Ming state policy than coastal predations, even when the empire was becoming increasingly tied to transnational silver flows for its fiscal solvency.

1523 (*JJ* 2), when two competing Japanese tribute embassies had clashed in Ningbo.¹²⁴ While troublesome, such incidents had been associated with foreign trade rather than rebellion and had not seriously threatened domestic security. But pirate predations of another sort alarmed the local and provincial governments when, from the 1540s onward, armed bands of Chinese smugglers and their international allies (Portuguese, Japanese, and even Southeast Asians) began to attack en masse and to even capture administrative centers.

Some of the slowness of government response can be attributed to the distances that separated the coastal trading centers from the central government in Beijing. What was most obvious to both official critics and the pirates themselves, however, was the decline of the Ming coastal garrison system, which hindered coordinated action on the ground.¹²⁵ As the epigraph to this chapter indicates, pirates had nothing but contempt for the Ming naval forces.

Ray Huang has described late Ming field armies as generally led by brave men, but hamstrung by poor leadership and logistics, especially when directed by supercilious scholar-officials. “It was customary for civil officials to be commissioned as supreme commanders, but professional soldiers were not expected to rise beyond the rank of field marshal. . . . Most important, such an army could not be maneuvered. It needed an elite

¹²⁴ The 1523 incident, in which the Ōuchi envoy Shūsetsu Gendō tried to kill Hosokawa envoy Sō Sokyo and looted Ningbo, is recorded in Zheng Ruozeng 鄭若曾 (annotated by Li Zhizhong 李致忠), *Chouhai tubian* 籌海圖編 [Illustrated guide to maritime pacification], (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007 [reprint of 1570s ed.]), j. 2 *shang* 上, 172; also described in English in Hok-Lam Chan, “The ‘Chinese Barbarian Officials’ in the Foreign Tributary Missions to China during the Ming Dynasty,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88, no. 3 (Jul.-Sep. 1968): 412.

¹²⁵ On the decline of the Ming military, see Zhang Jinkui 张金奎, *Mingdai weisuo junhu yanjiu* 明代卫所军户研究 [Research on the Ming garrison and military registration system] (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007).

corps of highly seasoned fighters to open up avenues of attack so that the bulk of the soldiers could then swarm in behind them, sustain the momentum of the attack, and exploit the results.”¹²⁶ An army of these qualities was a crude instrument to use against a highly mobile enemy even in the best of circumstances. The need for combined arms—in amphibious warfare, for example—complicated matters further. But worst of all for hardliners like Zhu Wan, who demanded an immediate attack on the pirates, was the sullen and demoralized state of the men of the coastal garrisons.

In his reports to his superiors, Zhu described an army utterly lacking in morale or public purpose. When local commanders complained that they could not follow his orders because they had insufficient war vessels, Zhu got some captured ships repaired and refitted. However, Zhu recorded: “When we sent them to the maritime stations, the stations refused to accept them. When we sent them to the police units, again the police units refused to accept them. [...] For to add a large vessel, there should be forty or fifty more people to look after it. The body of the ship and all the wooden parts must be resealed and cleaned often. Since they are public property, who would want to give them such care and protection?” Apparently, the local guards were unwilling to undertake such labor-intensive ship maintenance, and Zhu also cited cases of embezzlement and outright theft of government warships. But the height of audacity was finally reached in the case of Sun Ao, “who rammed the boat into the rocks in order to have it destroyed in no time.”¹²⁷

Despite these obstacles, Zhu Wan managed to whip the recalcitrant coastal troops

¹²⁶ Ray Huang, “The Lung-ch’ing and Wan-li Reigns,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 579-580.

¹²⁷ So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the 16th Century*, 62.

into an attack on Shuangyu in 1548 that destroyed the smugglers' haven, killed several hundred smugglers, and razed the port facilities to the ground.¹²⁸ Zhu Wan ordered the harbor of the twin islands blockaded with stones and scuttled ships to prevent a resurgence of smuggling activity in Shuangyu. Xu Dong was captured shortly after the raid and presumably executed (though an alternative story maintains that he fled from Shuangyu and was later killed by aborigines in Taiwan in 1555¹²⁹). Instead of surrendering, Baldy Li escaped and led the survivors to his home province of Fujian, where they regrouped in the ports of Yuegang and Wuyu (near Amoy) and sharpened their swords to defend themselves in next year's battle.

One is reminded of a saying of Voltaire: "When I am attacked I fight like a devil; I yield to no one; but at bottom I am a good devil, and I end by laughing."

Death of a Smuggler

In 1549, the year after the fall of Shuangyu, Zhu Wan nearly shut down the coastal trade with his draconian measures: "Ships and warehouses were burnt, people were forced to inform on each other, and armies were sent to attack harbor towns and arrest merchants known to be trading with the foreigners."¹³⁰ However, in the process he made powerful enemies amongst the coastal gentry in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. The *Ming Shi* biography of Zhu Wan indicates that he was ultimately defeated not by the smuggler-pirates but by the local "gentlemen" who had once been their sponsors:

"Having lost their profits, the influential families, in order to cause doubt in the minds of

¹²⁸ Nie Dening, "Chinese Merchants and Their Maritime Activities under the Ban on Maritime Trade in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1567)," *Ming Qing yanjiu*, vol. 6 (1997): 81.

¹²⁹ Lin Renchuan, *Mingmo Qingchu siren haishang maoyi*, 99.

¹³⁰ Vermeer, "Up the Mountains and Out to the Sea," 70.

the people, circulated the idea that those who had been captured were all good people, not pirates.”¹³¹ Zhu dismissed this as rubbish and continued his attacks on the roots and branches of the illegal trade, saying that it was easy to rid China of the coastal pirates but difficult to eliminate the “pirates in caps and gowns” who sponsored them.

On March 18, 1549, Baldy Li led a diverse group of pirates—including several Japanese, Portuguese, and Southeast Asian rogues—in an attempt to plunder the city of Zhao’an in southern Fujian. This bold foray was to be his last. Zhu Wan and the Ming army counterattacked and chased the pirates to the area of Zoumaxi, where Baldy Li and 96 of his men were captured and summarily executed. What was really a military triumph for Zhu Wan turned out to be his political undoing. Goaded by the prominent local gentry (who wanted to protect their own illegal trades), local officials in Fujian began clamoring for Zhu’s demotion or dismissal; Censor Chen Jiude impeached Zhu on charges of killing people without imperial authorization, with the result that Zhu was suspended. Framed, humiliated, and dismissed from office while awaiting investigation, Zhu stated bitterly in 1550, “Even if His Majesty does not want to kill me, the people of Zhejiang and Fujian will.” So saying, he wrote his own epitaph and drank poison.¹³²

After the deaths of Baldy Li and Zhu Wan, pirate raids erupted all over the Chinese coast as the Ming government vacillated between hard-line enforcement and a more moderate stance on the Seaban, and new power arrangements were worked out at sea. A rich merchant named Wang Zhi became the leader of the pirate confederation after the deaths of Xu Dong and Baldy Li. In only a few years, the scale of operations

¹³¹ So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China*, 53.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 54.

amongst the merchants-turned-pirates had grown many times, and the pirates who plundered the Chinese coast numbered in the tens of thousands. It is instructive to compare Wang Zhi's organization with that of his predecessor, Xu Dong in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Operations of Wang Zhi and Xu Dong

	Xu Dong 许栋/许二	Wang Zhi 王直/汪五峰
Active Years	1530-1548 (captured in 1548)	1548-1557 (executed in 1559)
Hometown	Huizhou 徽州 [Anhui province]	She County in Huizhou 直隶徽州歙县
Base	Shuangyu 双屿(1530-1548)	Shuangyu 双屿港(before 1551)、 Matsuura日本萨摩洲之湍浦津(1551-1552)、Zhelin浙江柘林(1554)、Goto日本五岛(1555-1556)、Cengang浙江舟山岑港(1557)
Main Arena	Zhejiang 浙江, Jiangnan	Zhejiang 浙江, Jiangnan
Allies	**Li Guangtou 李光头/李七 (merged with许二 in 1543, captured by government in 1549) **Bankrupt businessmen in Zhejiang and Jiangsu; **Rich local residents in Zhejiang, e.g., Gu Liangyu 顾良玉, Liuqi Shisi 刘奇十四, Lin Xiyuan 林 希元, Xu Fu 许福, the Xie clan 谢氏家族 **Portuguese and Japanese traders	**Anhui merchants: Ye Zongman 叶宗满 / Xu Weixue 徐惟学/ Xie Lao 谢老/ Fang Tingzhu 方廷助 **Zhejiang merchants: Mao Haifeng 毛 海峰/ Xu Bixi 徐碧溪/ Xu Yuanliang 徐元亮 **former followers of Chen Sipan 陈思 盼 **Japanese traders, pirates **Pirate confederation during the Wako wars
Followers	Less than 10,000 followers	More than 20,000 followers
Ships	More than 100 ships	**More than 100 big ships; **Floating fortresses: several ships lashed into one unit: 120-feet long, up to 2000-person capacity, with ramparts wide enough for horses to run on
Armaments	N/A	Katanas, arquebuses, gunpowder rockets

Table 2.1: Operations of Wang Zhi and Xu Dong, Continued

	Xu Dong 许栋/许二	Wang Zhi 王直/汪五峰
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In their early years, Xu Er 许二 and Xu San 许三 went to Malacca and married into local families • Brokered between Chinese and Portuguese; • Eventually quit because of capital loss and disconnected from the Portuguese traders • Kidnapped coastal rich people to accumulate capital • Started to trade in Japan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In his early years, acted as broker among several countries. • After 1540, he went to Guangdong, built big ships and shipped illegal goods like saltpeter and silk brocade to Japan and Siam. Worked for Xu Dong for a time. • Profited enormously in 5-6 years • Started to recruit outlaws like Xu Hai 徐海, Chen Dong 陈东, and Ye Ming 叶明 • Wiped out Chen Sipan 陈思盼 and absorbed his gang in 1551 • Cooperated with the government but was angered by the meager reward for his help (only 100 <i>shi</i> of rice) • Dumped the awarded rice in the sea and revenged himself by looting the coasts
Trade Goods	Silk, cotton, satin, magnetic ores ↔ gold, silver (Japan)	Silk, cotton, satin, china, ironware, tea, medicine, makeup ↔ sappanwood, pepper, ivory, rhinoceros horn, hawksbill, and silver coins.
Profits	2000-3000 taels per ship per voyage; split 50% with the land allies	N/A
Fate	Eliminated by the government in 1548	Agreed to cooperate with the government in 1557 but was tricked and executed in 1559; his confederation split into several Wako pirate groups.

Sources:

1. Chang Pin-tsun 张彬村, "Shiliu shiji Zhoushan qundao de zousi maoyi 十六世纪舟山群岛的走私贸易 [Illegal trades around the Zhoushan islands in the sixteenth century China]." In *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji* 中国海洋发展史论文集, vol.1, edited by Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji bianji weiyuanhui 中国海洋发展史编辑委员会, 70-95. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan sanminzhuyi yanjiusuo, 1984.

Table 2.1: Operations of Wang Zhi and Xu Dong, Continued

2. Tang Lixing 唐力行, "Lun Mingdai Huizhou haishang yu zhongguo zibenzhuyi mengya 论明代徽州海商与中国资本主义萌芽 [Zhongguo jingjishi yanjiu 中国经济史研究, no. 3 (1990): 90-101.
3. Wang Shiqi 王士骥 (1538-), *Huangming yuwo lu* 皇明驭倭录 [The Ming dynasty's control of the Wako]. Reprint of the Wanli (1573-1620) edition. 9 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai wuji chubanshe, 1995.

In the early 1550s, Wang Zhi as the federation leader of over 20,000 pirates made several attempts to communicate with officials and their two-faced gentry allies by offering to restrain pirate activity off the coast of Zhejiang, in exchange for a possible relaxation of the Seaban laws. His efforts to convince the government to open up trade were undermined, however, by persistent attacks on Zhejiang by rival Fujianese corsairs, with the result that the Seaban debate swung again into the hands of hardliners. In 1552, Fujianese raider Deng Wenjun led 2000 pirates to sack Taizhou; they burned and pillaged the city for seven days before moving on to plunder in the districts of Shanyin and Yuyao (where the conflict with the Xie clan had begun back in 1547).¹³³

The coastal gentry had tried to play both sides in the wars with Xu Dong and the confederation of Wang Zhi. They would call for military help from the government but also stymie officials like Zhu Wan who threatened to destroy the golden goose that they so enjoyed exploiting. Meanwhile, court officials in Beijing, flooded with confusing reports of coastal towns being overrun by pirates everywhere, became ever more shrill in their demands to exterminate the pirates and especially their chief, Wang Zhi.

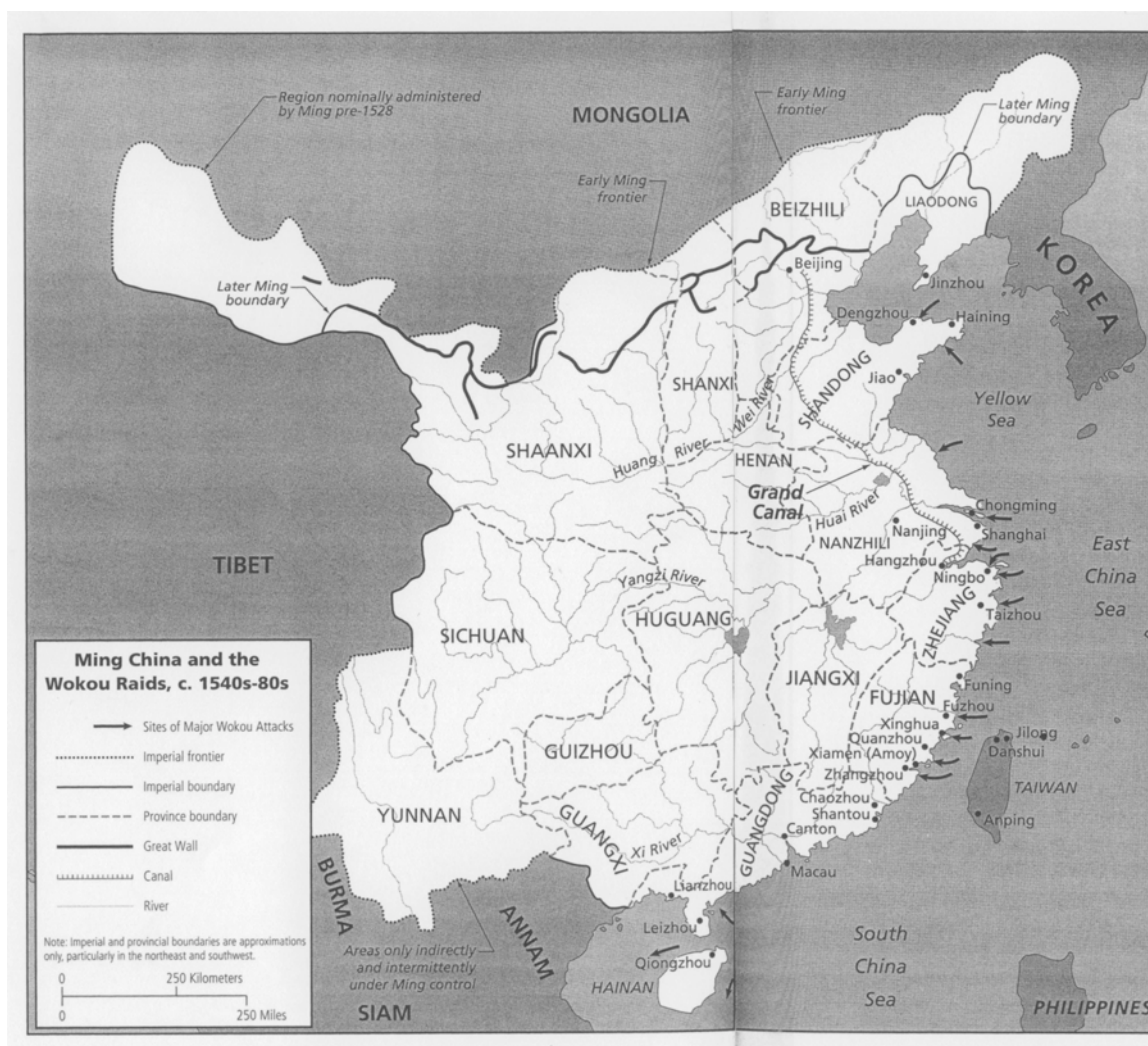
Instead of exposing the fiction, the government played into the gentry hands by attacking the pirates and refraining from prosecuting those very people whom Zhu Wan had called “pirates in caps and gowns.” Had the Ming state negotiated with Wang Zhi as

¹³³ Zheng Ruozeng, *Chouhai tubian*, j. 5, 324.

head of the pirate confederation, the war might have been considerably foreshortened. Instead, Ming field marshal Hu Zongxian lured Wang Zhi into a trap with promises of free trade and had him arrested in 1557 and finally killed in 1559. The former confederation of pirates fragmented into a confusing period of scattered piracy.

If this episode proved anything, it was that the Seaban had inadvertently promoted oligopoly—the pirate confederation of Wang Zhi was like a cartel. In hunting down Wang Zhi, the Ming state performed a decapitation attack on the confederacy, hoping that this would induce the pirates to disperse. The end result was a large-scale balloon effect¹³⁴ that pushed the intermediacy of illicit trade networks away from Zhejiang as the pirates scattered and reformed in new bases. The pirate wars moved into one of its most chaotic and bloody phases as attacks ranged up and down the coast of China (see **Map 2.1**, below).

¹³⁴ That is, squeezing one side of a balloon will make the air move to another side.



Map 2.1 – Ming China and the Wako Pirate Raids¹³⁵

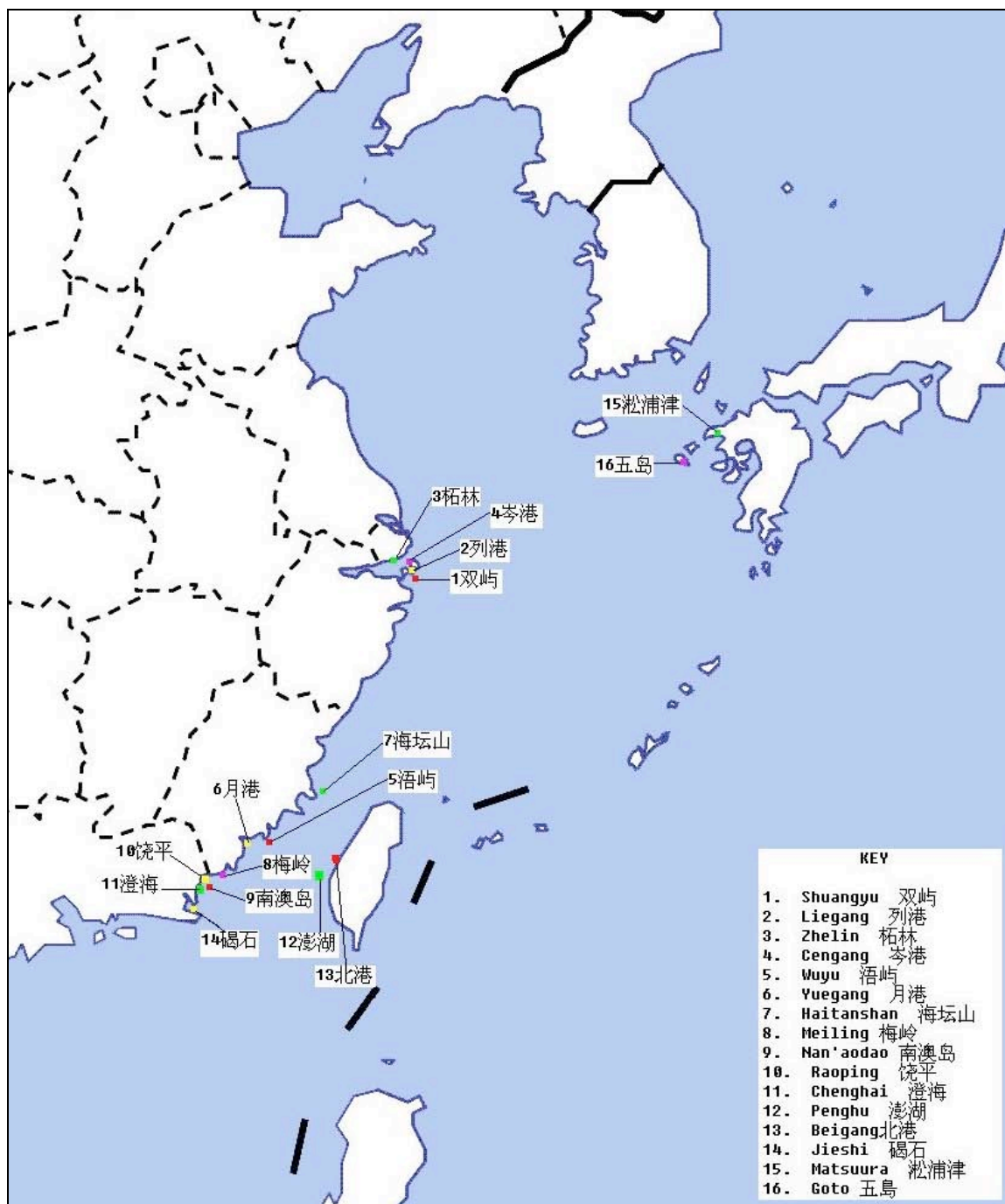
Pirate Wars

The pirate wars were bloody and messy affairs. Just glancing at a list of the principal actors shows a tale of dog-eat-dog fighting, betrayal, and short-lived coalitions (please refer to the list I have compiled in **Appendix 1**). It seems at first impossible to make any sense of the pirate comings and goings, attacks and retreats, and short-lived

¹³⁵ Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle J. Goldstein, and Carnes Lord, eds., *China goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 256-257.

alliances, but a geographical projection suggests some general patterns that can aid future research.

The Wako attacks have been explained in many ways: for example, as Japanese pirate invasions, or the struggle of smugglers against the Seaban. But one other central feature in the evolution of the pirate violence, which were the breakdown of sponsorship and the shift of the primary port down to the Taiwan Straits area (from Region 2 to Region 3). The shift in clusters of smuggler-pirate bases suggests a pattern of changing intermediacy. Plotting their bases on a map over time reveals a geographical shift during the period of the pirate wars. See **Map 2.2 and Table 2.2**:



Map 2.2 – Scatter Distribution of Seaman Bases

Table 2.2: Guide to Scatter Distribution of Seamen Bases¹³⁶

	Years	Bases	Sea Space	Location	Modern Names	Seamen	Color on Map¹³⁷
1	1530-1548	Shuangyu 双屿	R-1, R-2	浙江舟山 Zhoushan	浙江舟山市佛渡岛	Xu Brothers 许氏兄弟(1530-1548)	COLOR
2	1548-1552	Liegang 列港	R-1, R-2	浙江舟山 Zhoushan	浙江舟山市定海区	Wang Zhi 王直 (1548-1551)、Xu Hai 徐海(1552)	COLOR
3	1552-1555	Zhelin 柘林	R-1, R-2	上海 Shanghai	上海市奉贤区柘林镇	Xu Hai 徐海 (1552)、Wang Zhi 王直(1554)、Lin Bichuan 林碧川 (1553-1555)、	COLOR
4	1557	Cengang 岑港	R-1, R-2	浙江舟山 Zhoushan	浙江舟山市岑港镇	Wang Zhi 王直 (1557)	COLOR
5	1555-1558	Wuyu 浯屿	R-3	福建厦门 Amoy	福建厦门市浯屿岛	Hong Dizhen 洪迪珍(1555-1558)	COLOR
6	1558-1560	Yuegang 月港	R-3	福建漳州 Zhangzhou	福建漳州市龙海市九龙江入海口	Hong Dizhen 洪迪珍(1558)、Xu Xichi 许西池 (1558-1560)	COLOR
7	1559	Haitanshan 海坛山	R-3	福建莆田 Putian	福建莆田市平潭县海坛岛	Hong Dizhen 洪迪珍(1559)	COLOR
8	1559-1569	Meiling 梅岭	R-3	福建漳州 Zhangzhou	福建漳州市诏安县梅岭镇	Wu Ping 吴平 (1559-1564)、Xu Xichi 许西池、 Zeng Yiben 曾一本(1567-1569)	COLOR
9	1564-1571, 1605-1661	Nan'aodao 南澳岛	R-3	广东汕头 Shantou	广东汕头南澳县	Wu Ping 吴平 (1564)、Lin Daoqian 林道乾 (1566)、Yang Zhi 杨志(1571)、 Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙(1605-1661)	COLOR

¹³⁶ Condensed from Appendix 1: List of Years, Followers, Hometowns and Bases of Seamen, 1526-1661.

¹³⁷ Visible in the PDF (digital) version of this dissertation.

Table 2.2: Guide to Scatter Distribution of Seamen Bases, Continued

	Years	Bases	Sea Space	Location	Modern Names	Seamen	Color on Map¹³⁸
10	1568-1575, 1620-1629	Raoping 饶平	R-3	广东潮州 Chaozhou	广东潮州 市饶平县	Lin Daoqian 林道乾(1568-1574)、 Lin Feng 林凤(1573-1575)、 Zhu Cailao 诸綵老(1620-1629)	COLOR
11	1570-1574	Chenghai 澄海	R-3	广东澄海 Chenghai	广东澄海 县	Zhu Liangbao 诸良宝(1570-1574)	COLOR
12	1574	Penghu 澎湖	R-3	台湾 Taiwan	台湾澎湖 港	Lin Feng 林凤(1574)	COLOR
13	1605-1625	Beigang 北港	R-3	台湾 Taiwan	台湾云林 县北港镇	Yan Siqu 颜思齐(1605-1625)	COLOR
14	1615-1635	Jieshi 碣石	R-3	广东汕尾 Shanwei	广东汕尾 市碣石湾	Liu Xiang 刘香(1615-1635)	COLOR
15	1550s-1620s	Matsuura 湍浦津	R-5	日本薩摩 Satsuma	日本長崎 市平戶縣 Hirado	Wang Zhi 王直(1551-1552), Li Dan 李旦(1605-1625)、 Yan Siqu 颜思奇(1605-1625)	COLOR
16	1555-1556	Goto 五島	R-5	日本薩摩 Satsuma	日本長崎 市五島列 島(中通島 若松島福 江島久賀 島奈留島)	Wang Zhi 王直(1555-1556), Xie Lao 谢老(1556)	COLOR

Viewed in terms of phases of sponsorship and non-sponsorship, the key movements of this period are 1) the breakaway of the Region 2 network from the formerly dominant Jiangnan gentry and Anhui merchants; 2) the scattering of the confederation down to Region 3; and 3) the convergence of private and official trade on Yuegang.

¹³⁸ Visible in the PDF (digital) version of this dissertation.

My research suggests five major transformations in the century from the rise of Wako piracy to the fall of the Ming (1644):

A: Period of sponsorship

Before the 1530s, sponsorship had remained relatively stable. Japan had not yet begun its silver boom, and profit margins were lower overall.

1540s: The first Wako incident: The Zhejiang gentry sponsors cheated the smugglers, and a fight broke out on the coast in the 1540s. The gentry called in the government for help, but they soon found, to their bitter surprise, that the government under Zhu Wan was determined to destroy all of the illegal trade.

Key figures: Xu Dong, Jinzi Lao, Baldy Li (Li Guangtou), the Portuguese.¹³⁹

Region: 2

What changed: Centrality was the same (Jiangnan [silk]), but Japan started exporting a lot more silver (thus changing as a productive area and gaining centrality). Shuangyu was the chief port because it was close enough to Jiangnan (centrality) while maintaining intermediacy between Jiangnan and Japan; and was still beyond the reach of the state (accessibility). New foreign players: Portuguese and Japanese.

B: Transition away from sponsorship (Confederacy)

1540s-1560s: To survive, the armed gangs transformed into a pirate federation (the so-called “Japanese” pirates, who were really 90% Chinese). They terrorized the

¹³⁹ Wang Shiqi 王士骥, *Huangming yuwo lu* 皇明驭倭录 [The great Ming dynasty's control of the Wako]. Reprint of the Wanli (1573-1620) edition. 9 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai wuji chubanshe, 1995, vol.3, 97-101.

coast from the 1540s-1560s.

Key figures: Lin Guoxian, Wang Zhi, Li Dayong, Zhang Lian.¹⁴⁰

Preparation phase: Xu Dong, Baldy Li

Peak phase: Wang Zhi

Aftermath: Xu Hai

Region: 2

What changed: Centrality was the same (Jiangnan + Japan) but Shuangyu was destroyed by Zhu Wan. After various gentry and officials maneuvered to ruin Zhu Wan's career and pushed his dismissal and suicide in 1550, the pirate attacks continued, first on the Jiangnan gentry, then on coastal townships, and finally on major cities. The gentry, no longer eager to deal with the smuggler-pirates who were attacking their homes, grudgingly began to assist the state in prosecuting the war. The Wako confederation scattered. They moved down to Fujian and turned Yuegang into the new primary port (accessible, intermediate).

C: Free from sponsorship (Scattered pirates)

The Ming broke up the Wako pirate federation in 1557, resulting in scattered and uncontrollable pirate groups attacking all over the coast. These were suppressed after 15 more years of warfare, and the Ming state finally recognized the need to lift the maritime ban in 1567. But by this time the oligopolists at sea no longer needed sponsorship from coastal gentry.

Key figures: Wu Ping & Co.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Zheng Ruozeng, *Chouhai tubian* (Reprint of the 1570s edition. 13 vols.), vol.9, 605-610.

Preparation phase: Lin Guoxian

Peak phase: Wu Ping

Aftermath: Zeng Yiben, Zhu Liangbao, and etc.

Region: 2, 3

What changed: Yuegang, which had been the new smuggling port of choice, was now designated the official legal port. The 2 divergent systems, official legal trade and the private trade, began to converge at this point.

D: Independence

1570s-1600s: The top dogs fought for mastery of the sea. The gentry no longer played both sides but supported the state in crushing these independent pirates.

Key figures: Lin Feng, Lin Daoqian.¹⁴²

Region: 3, 6

What changed: The defeat of the last great pirate (Lin Feng) and the convergence on Yuegang made Fujian and the Taiwan Straits the new axis on which the maritime system turned. Further development of the Yuegang-based network ensured that intermediacy had now firmly passed to Region 3 and did not return to Jiangnan (Regions 1, 2). New foreign players: the Spanish and Dutch.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Zhang Zengxin 张增信, *Mingji dongnan Zhongguo de haishang huodong* 明季东南中国的海上活动 [Maritime activities in southeast China during the Ming dynasty]. Taipei: Sili Dongwu daxue Zhongguo xueshu zhuzuo jiangzu weiyuanhui, 1988, 55-62.

¹⁴² Xu Xiaowang 徐晓望, "Mingdai Zhangzhou shangren ji qi yu chaoting guanxi de tiaozheng 明代漳州商人及其与朝廷关系的调整 [The adjustment of relations between the Zhangzhou merchants and the Ming court]." In *Minnanshi yanjiu* 闽南史研究, edited by Xu Xiaowang, 194-215. Fuzhou: Haifeng chubanshe, 2004.

¹⁴³ Weng Jiayin 翁佳音, "Shiqi shiji de fulao haishang 十七世纪的福佬海商 [Fujianese sea merchants in the seventeenth century]." In *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji* 中国海洋发展史论文集, vol.7, edited

E: Sealord

1620s-1640s: The Fujian coast and Region 3 came under the control of a maritime monopolist who arose between the Ming empire and the Dutch VOC on Taiwan.

Preparation phase: Li Dan, Yan Siqi

Peak phase: Zheng Zhilong

Aftermath: Koxinga

Region: 2, 3, 6

What changed: Dutch Taiwan rose in competition with the Yuegang-based traders.

The pirates and trading consortiums clustered around Yuegang fought ever-bigger wars with each other and with the Dutch until the sealord Zheng Zhilong comes to dominate Region 3.

The violence of the pirate wars was not random, though it may have seemed that way to the harried Ming generals who struggled to keep up the fight. It signaled a transition away from sponsorship and precipitated the crisis that led to the “liberalization” of 1567. This change, at the heart of the struggle of the mid-1500s, lay deeper than the matter of open or closed doors in state policy. It was the breakout of a people in a world that accorded little or no dignity to the chaff of the sea. The gentry struggled to maintain their dominance by seeing to the destruction of the Wako organizations and forcing in 1550 the suicide of Zhu Wan, the government’s strongest advocate for suppression.

But the times were passing beyond the dominance of the gentry sponsors, and the smuggler-pirates, who had broken free from the chains of their sponsors, had shifted the hub of trade down to the coast of Fujian. Private trade was so nested in the littoral that even the government's belated opening of Yuegang was merely a recognition of a fait accompli: Yuegang was already operating as the primary (smuggling) port prior to its legalization in 1567. The state's limited knowledge of the relationship between the gentry (the "pirates in caps and gowns") and the smuggler-pirates had thus served it poorly. For the state to truly penetrate and police the littoral, it had to strike at the maritime trade system itself: either by legalizing and thus bringing it into the open, or by destroying the social basis for the extralegal shadow economy. "Army commanders who were sent in to fight the Japanese or Chinese 'pirates' looked in vain for their enemies, as the latter were usually sheltered and supported by the local people," as Eduard Vermeer writes. "Local guerillas and opposition could not be conquered short of destroying much of the Fukien coastal area with its population."¹⁴⁴ We will see in the chapters that follow the terrible true story of how the Qing empire did just that.

As early as 1547, Zhu Wan had glimpsed something of this insight (but not all) in his draconian attempts to break the system of patronage, bribery, and official-gentry corruption that dominated the littoral, and he paid for it with his life. Woe to him who teaches men faster than they can learn.

Lord of the Sea

Counting from Zhu Wan's appointment as Governor, it took the Ming twenty

¹⁴⁴ Vermeer, "Up the Mountains and Out to the Sea," 71.

years to bring the Wako crisis mostly under control (1547-1567). Some key factors in the suppression of the Wako crisis included the establishment of tighter local administration, military upgrading, and a legalization of trade at Yuegang in 1567, which helped to appease the independent traders in Fujian province.¹⁴⁵

The pirate wars began to peter out with the legalization of trade at the port of Yuegang, but it was not exactly full liberalization. What the new law said was that only Yuegang could be a legal entrepot, and people needed permits to trade—the government still tried to direct trade to a single point.¹⁴⁶ For a time this policy seemed to work. Coastal merchants and gentry, sick of the depredations of both the Wako pirates and the (sometimes equally rapacious) government troops, helped build up the “Eastern and Western Sea” networks that Fujianese native Zhang Xie described in his book, *Dong Xiyang kao* (1619).¹⁴⁷ The decisive defeat of the pirate Lin Feng in 1574, which involved a collaborative effort between local communities and the state, ended the last remnants of the pirate confederation.

But the end of one war is the beginning of something else. After the pirate wars, new forces were building in Fujian. Just as the Seaban had given an opportunity to oligopolists, the shift of the primary port from near Jiangnan down to Fujian was a window of opportunity for a potential Fujianese monopolist. The decade from the 1620s-1630s saw the rise of Zheng Zhilong, who dominated the Fujian coast and the Taiwan

¹⁴⁵ So, *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the 16th Century*, 145-156.

¹⁴⁶ Chen Wei 陈微, "Yuegang kaifang yu shijie maoyi wangluo de xingcheng 月港开放与世界贸易网络的形成 [The opening of Yuegang and the formation of the global trade network]." M.A. thesis, Xiamen University, 2006, 7-9. Also see Lin Tingshui 林汀水, "Haicheng zhi Yuegang gang kao 海澄之月港港考 [Introduction to the Yuegang port in Haicheng county, Fujian province]." *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu*, no. 1 (1995): 97-98.

¹⁴⁷ Zhang Xie 张燮 (1574-1640), *Dong Xiyang Kao* 东西洋考 [The Eastern and Western Oceans]. Reprint of the 1618 ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981 [1618]).

Straits as a sealord (combining military, political, and economic power).

What is a sealord? Frederic Wakeman mentioned the term “sea lord” in connection with Zhang Mingzhen; John Wills has also alluded to the term in a recent essay.¹⁴⁸ The term means little if it simply denotes someone with armed forces at sea—that would be little different from a pirate. We naturally think of sealord as a mixed term, as in sealord = seaman + warlord. But the label of “warlord” is not as clear-cut as it might seem, having everything to do with legitimacy and how victors write history.¹⁴⁹ As for self-image, even middling pirates thought themselves kings in their element. Consider the pirate Philip Lyne: one time his men came upon some British Admiralty papers, “which the pyrates wip’d their backsides with, saying that they were the Lords of the Sea.”¹⁵⁰

Most Chinese sources, written from the government point of view, tended to make only a mild distinction between “sea bandits” (*haikou*) and “pirates” (*haidao*), the former suggesting rebellion or at least more explicitly anti-government activities than mere robbery, but the terms were largely interchangeable. If, in the militarization of the sea from the 1500s onward, we see a progression from merchant to smuggler to pirate to sealord, where do we draw the line between a sealord and just a big pirate?

In terms of general characteristics, the average East Asian pirate was like a guerilla: hit and run. Most of those operating in the Wako wars had been part merchant,

¹⁴⁸ John E. Wills, Jr., “Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World.” In *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, edited by Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 172.

¹⁴⁹ Historians in the twentieth century, especially, have found in the term “warlord” a battleground largely linked to political ideology. I have discussed the warlord debate of modern Chinese history in “A Warlord by Any Other Name? Writing Chiang Kai-shek in the Historiography of Republican China,” online at the UCSD Chinese History website: <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/chinesehistory/pgp/dahponcksessay.htm>

¹⁵⁰ Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London: Methuen, 2003), 170.

part pirate; and unlike most European deep-sea marauders, they were more often engaged in sacking towns and coastal villages than in hitting big cargo ships. The sealord, on the other hand, is a term with political connotations. It denotes a certain institutionalization of political power that allows him to be the dominant force on the coast. By combining political, economic, and military power, his organized trading system approaches a sort of quasi-state. This may include tax collection powers (like Koxinga, as we will see in the next chapter).

Consider some counterexamples. Wang Zhi was the leader of a confederation of pirates, but he had no formalized political authority on the littoral. The pirate Zhang Lian dubbed himself king but did not have the power to make it so. Another pirate, Hong Dizhen, had no political ambitions, no desire to build a system; he just wanted to pillage.¹⁵¹ What set Zheng Zhilong apart?

As I see it, there are at least four basic facets of a sealord:

1. Personal military organization.
2. Personal commercial organization across a maritime region, or between regions.
3. Political control of a maritime region. This means combined control of land and sea (coastal bases and shipping lanes, not just a port). Political control can include “official service” or the construction of a personal political system.
4. He can be an accessory to the state, but his primary source of resources and power are from spheres independent of the state. In other words, he is autonomous, his power base autarkic.

¹⁵¹ Xie Jie (c. 1600s) 谢杰. "Qiantai wo zuan 虔台倭纂 [Collected notes on the Wako activities]." In *Xuanlan tang congshu xuji* 玄览堂丛书续集 (Nanjing: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1947), vol.17.

Zheng possessed all four traits. If we were to assign a score of 1 to each of the above criteria, only those scoring 4 would be sealords. A pirate like Zeng Yiben, who lacked both political control and an extensive commercial organization, would score 2; a larger pirate-merchant consortium leader like Xu Hai, who also lacked political control, would score 3. This measure is crude, but perhaps it can serve until a better one can be drawn.

What also distinguishes the sealord from the Wako pirate bands was the attempt to construct a new network—he was a competitor with European trading companies that were each trying to do the same. The 17th century was a time of maritime creativity worldwide, including in the East Asian sea spaces. This period of evolution thus marks a maritime expansion in East Asia: qualitatively different from European expansion, but in the 16th and 17th century context, an expansion nonetheless. Like his European rivals, the sealord encountered what might be called a hub problem. Each European empire tried to construct a double-hub system to link the Southeast Asian zone with East Asian zone.

All aimed for monopoly power, though success was evanescent:

- Spanish: Manila + (attempted Taiwan, destroyed by Dutch)
- Dutch VOC: Batavia + Taiwan (lost Taiwan to Koxinga in 1661)
- Portuguese: Malacca (lost to Dutch in 1641) + Macau
- Zheng Zhilong: Amoy + Hirado
- Koxinga and successors: Amoy + Taiwan (lost to the Qing in 1663 and 1683 respectively)¹⁵²

¹⁵² The later Qing port system can also be compared. After the Qianjie, the Qing opened Amoy, Canton, Shanghai, and Ningbo to trade in 1685. This was a multi-hub system. But even after the foreign trade was officially restricted to the single hub of Canton in 1757, Xiamen still kept its prerogative in the Nanyang (South China Sea) trade. It was mostly the Europeans who were excluded by the new arrangement. Yang Guozhen 杨国楨, *Min zai hai zhong: zhuixun Fujian haiyang fazhan shi* 闽在海中: 追寻福建海洋发展史

Confucian Scholar Huan-chang Chen once wrote that “Confucius hated monopoly; but monopoly was condemned before the time of Confucius.”¹⁵³ Well then, Confucius would not have approved of Zheng Zhilong. A seafarer, by nature of his control of a maritime region, was a military-cum-commercial monopolist. At his height Zheng probably commanded more than 60,000 men.¹⁵⁴ Zheng charged “protection fees” on all ships that came through the straits. (Such a protection racket worked as one might expect: those who did not pay were not to be protected from Zheng’s pillaging.) This netted Zheng more than 800,000 taels of silver a year.¹⁵⁵

How had this one man, this “marvel of human fate” (as Jesuit missionary Victorio Riccio called him¹⁵⁶), achieved such a meteoric rise to dominance over the province of Fujian? His complete life story would form a book in itself¹⁵⁷, but a few features can be pointed out. Zheng Zhilong was born in 1604 as the son of Zheng Shaozu, a minor local official who never seems to have risen far in the government; his mother was one Lady Huang (whom the Dutch called Theyma), the daughter of one of the local maritime trading families. “The character or will is inherited from the father; the intellect from the

[“Fujian is in the sea”: Chasing the history of Fujian’s maritime development] (Nanchang: Jiangxi gaoxiao chubanshe, 1998), 5.

¹⁵³ Huan-chang Chen, *The Economic Principles of Confucius and His School [Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. 45]* (New York: Columbia University and Longmans, Green & Co., 1911), 534.

¹⁵⁴ Zheng Xifu 郑喜夫, "Zheng Zhilong wenlu ji daifang yiwen 郑芝龙文录及待访佚文 [Collected anecdotes on Zheng Zhilong]." *Taiwan wenxian* 台湾文献 43, no. 4 (1992): 307-333.

¹⁵⁵ Han Zhenhua 韩振华, "Zheng Chenggong shidai de haiwai maoyi he haiwai maoyishang de xingzhi, 1650-1662 郑成功时代的海外贸易, 1650-1662 [A qualitative analysis of the maritime trade in the Koxinga era, 1650-1662]." In *Zheng Chenggong yanjiu lunwenji* 郑成功研究论文集, edited by Xiamen daxue lishixi, 136-193. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1965.

¹⁵⁶ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II: 1642-1682* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2001), 586-587.

¹⁵⁷ Tang Jintai 湯錦台 has written just such a biography: *Kaiqi Taiwan di yi ren Zheng Zhilong* 開啟台灣第一人鄭芝龍 [Zheng Zhilong: The Pioneer of Taiwan] (Taipei: Guoshi, 2002).

mother,” says Schopenhauer.¹⁵⁸ But Zheng seems to have completely taken after his mother rather than his stern and studious father. He appears to have been a charming, lazy, and reckless lad who would rather throw rocks at fruit trees than study the Confucian classics—one such rock he threw hit the local governor Cai Shanji squarely on the head. Cai seized Zheng and was about to punish him, but Zheng was so charming that the magistrate forgot his anger and praised him instead, saying that this boy was destined for great things in life.¹⁵⁹

This charm did not save young Zheng from his father’s wrath some years later when, as a passionate teenager, he was caught in bed with his own stepmother.¹⁶⁰ Wisely, Zheng Zhilong took to his heels and went to live with his maternal uncle in Macau, and it was in that Portuguese trading city that he learned the arts of wheeling and dealing that would later serve him so well. He picked up some street Portuguese (which was then the language of choice in the Asian trading world), a smattering of knowledge about how the world worked, and even a little Catholicism—he was baptized Nicholas Gaspard or Nicholas Iquan, the first in a string of many names he would pick up over his lifetime. Most of all, he hustled on the docks and learned the lingo and logistics of maritime trade.

It is not known exactly when Zheng Zhilong first went to Japan, but it seems to have been in the early the 1620s, for he was taken under the wing of the rich and influential Li Dan (d. 1625), leader of the Chinese merchants in Hirado (near

¹⁵⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, book 3: 300.

¹⁵⁹ Jiang Risheng 江日昇, *Taiwan waiji* 台湾外志 (外记), ed. Liu Wentai 刘文泰, et. al (Jinan: Jilu shushe, 2004), juan 1, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Liu Xianting 劉獻廷, *Guangyang zaji* 廣陽雜記, *Taiwan wenxian congkan*, vol. 29, 35.

Nagasaki).¹⁶¹ It was also in Hirado where Zheng Zhilong met and wedded his first love: Lady Tagawa Matsu, the daughter of a samurai family from amongst local *daimyo* Matsuura Takanobu's retainers. Zheng returned to Fujian to do business, and in his absence Lady Tagawa would bear his first and most famous son: the boy destined to be known as Koxinga (1624-1662).

Zheng Zhilong's career in the 1620s took him far afield to work for the Dutch VOC (East India Company) as a translator, then a privateer, and then an independent pirate. In 1627, the Dutch governor of Formosa wrote of him: "Over a year previously a man named Iquan, formerly interpreter to the Company, left without notice and became chief of a pirate band. He amassed much shipping and men, and terrorised the whole China coast, laying waste provinces, towns and villages, and rendered navigation along that part of the coast impracticable."¹⁶²

Zheng was so successful as a pirate that the local authorities in Fujian thought it safer to adopt a policy of appeasement. In 1628, Tong'an county magistrate Cao Lütai convinced his superiors in Fujian to give Zheng a commission to destroy all the other pirates in the area.¹⁶³ They had no idea what kind of fire they were playing with. Zheng lost no time in using his status as a Ming official to vanquish his rivals in Amoy and the

¹⁶¹ Li Dan was an enigmatic figure who also appears by the aliases "Captain China" and "Andrea Dittis" in English and Dutch sources. See C. R. Boxer, "The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan (Cheng Chi-Lung)." *T'ien-hsia Monthly* 11, no. 5 (1941): 402-408.

¹⁶² Boxer, "The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan," 412.

¹⁶³ Liao Hanchen 廖汉臣, "Zheng Zhilong kao 郑芝龙考 [A study on Zheng Zhilong]." *Taiwan wenxian* 台湾文献 10, no. 4 (1959): 63-70. Also see Mao Yibo 毛一波. "Zheng Zhilong shiliao zhong de Li Dan he Yan Siqi 郑芝龙史料中的李旦和颜思齐 [Li Dan and Yan Siqi in the collected documents of Zheng Zhilong]." *Taiwan wenxian* 台湾文献 14, no. 1 (1963): 72-80.

Taiwan Straits one by one, and in 1633 he defeated a Dutch fleet near Quemoy.¹⁶⁴ The last of his rivals, Liu Xiang (whom the Dutch called Janglau or Jan Glaew), fell in 1635.¹⁶⁵ Rather than fight a protracted war with the juggernaut that Zheng Zhilong had become, the Ming state decided to buy him out with honors and admiralty. By age 36 (c. 1640), Zheng was supreme commander of Fujianese military forces and the most important man in Fujian. Ships flying the Zheng flag carried silver, tea, silk, porcelain, and spices across his trading networks from Japan to Southeast Asia. Outsiders paid Zheng's transit fees or suffered the consequences.

By the 1630s, Zheng Zhilong was undoubtedly one of the richest men in China and the envy of his former employers, the Dutch VOC. Some accounts claimed that Zheng raked in tens of millions of taels per year; and the seafarer himself, proud of his achievements, claimed to own a thousand ships.¹⁶⁶ At his hometown of Anhai, Zheng constructed for himself a personal castle surrounded by moats and waterways that allowed his ships to sail directly from the sea into a special dock beneath his domicile. It was to this magnificent headquarters that he called his wife and firstborn son, whom he had not seen for so many years, and to whom he wanted to bequeath this brave new water world. Lady Tagawa was unable to travel but sent the eight-year-old boy on a lonely

¹⁶⁴ Zheng Xifu 郑喜夫, "Zheng Zhilong mie haikou Liu Xiang shimo 郑芝龙灭海寇刘香始末 [Account of Zheng Zhilong's destruction of sea rebel Liu Xiang]." *Taiwan wenxian* 台湾文献 18, no. 3 (1967): 19-39. Also see Su Tongbing 苏同炳, "Zheng Zhilong yu Li Kuiqi 郑芝龙与李魁奇 [Zheng Zhilong and Li Kuiqi]." *Taiwan wenxian* 台湾文献 25, no. 3 (1974): 1-11.

¹⁶⁵ Wang Rigen 王日根, *Ming Qing haijiang zhengce yu Zhongguo shehui fazhan* 明清海疆政策与中国社会发展 [Ming and Qing maritime policy and social development]. Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2006, 132-135.

¹⁶⁶ Chao Zhongchen 晁中辰, *Ming dai haijin yu haiwai maoyi* 明代海禁与海外贸易 [*The Ming Maritime Prohibitions and Overseas Trade*] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 2005), 260; Young-tsu Wong, "Security and Warfare on the China Coast," 129.

journey across the seas to Anhai—and it was there, atop the battlements fluttering his family banner, that the new seaholder embraced his son for the first time.¹⁶⁷

After two hundred years of maritime prohibitions and experiments with controlling pirates, the Ming state ceded effective control over the coast-to-seaspace continuum to a monopolist. As the Ming had played the game of manipulating northern tribes and eventually lost control of the Liaodong frontier to the Manchus, so it had played with pirates and concurrently lost the Fujian frontier to the new leader of seamen. A former enemy had become a master. Zheng Zhilong was the bastard child of the Seaban and the brother of the VOC.

Strange Seaban

I have described the Ming policy as anti-maritime, but this has nothing to do with some inherent Chinese “insularity” or cultural isolationism or particularism (as the old school had it). It was a strategic choice that backfired in the two centuries of its implementation. Despite state proclamations, Ming society was not at all anti-commercial: Timothy Brook’s *The Confusions of Pleasure* (1998) has done us a great service in detailing the commercialization of the Ming and its consequences for the elites and gentry at the close of the dynasty. The fact remains that the Seaban did not stamp out maritime development but simply pushed it onto a different path.

The Ming built a whole system dedicated to ensuring that the government could determine the primary port by fiat. The Zheng He voyages were a part of that system and

¹⁶⁷ Jiang Risheng, *Taiwan waiji*, juan 3, p. 36.

dedicated to the monopolization of foreign intercourse through the tribute system.¹⁶⁸ But the cost was staggering; in the end, the expensive naval force was left to rot. The result was that the government surrendered the ability to designate the primary port (except in the tribute system, which was only half of the maritime system), and, in addition, ensured that the primary port would *not* be their designated one. Since private trade was declared illegal, the “official” ports could not run the private trade, so the system of private trade had to turn one of the secondary ports into a primary. The Seaban created a situation where the primary port could not be determined by policy. That is, the tribute trade tried to restrict the ports, but made the government unable to determine the private port of call except in a negative fashion. They could not monitor it because the offices to monitor the trade required a legalization of that trade.

Meanwhile, the decline of coastal defense and surveillance system meant that even though the primary port of Shuangyu was known to the government, little could be done to halt the trade unless there was a reason to justify building a costly striking force. The law was in a twilight zone between being draconian and toothless...until the Jiangnan gentry called in the government. Then the government had to go all-out to exterminate the pirates. This completed the break between the smugglers-turned-pirates and their former sponsors, the gentry.

Thus, while reaping the benefits and perils of commercial growth in the mid-Ming, the government dropped its ability to direct its maritime course in any positive way. The great irony was that the Seaban, whose original purpose was control, actually obstructed

¹⁶⁸ On the significance of the Zheng He voyages in the Ming tributary system, see Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007).

state penetration of the littoral. The sea spaces were left to freebooters and internationals, and finally to a seahord.

The 200-year-old Seaban did not live up to any of its stated goals: made for surveillance, it surrendered control; seeking peace, it got war. By outlawing mobility, it created outlaws. The legacy of the Seaban was a mish-mash of unintended consequences. The Manchus, who began their conquest of China in 1644, reaped the troubled harvest when they arrived on the coast of southern China.

In explaining how the Southern Ming loyalist movement was able (in spite of its fatal flaws) to resist the Manchu conquest for at least eighteen years after the fall of Beijing, Lynn Struve has pointed to the important element of a genuine pride and faith in basic Ming institutions. Those strong Ming institutions “were seen as having undergirded for almost three centuries a major, successful, *indigenous* ruling order. It was not, and still is not, clear that those institutions, even in their latter-day, distorted forms, were primarily to blame for the gross disorder that overwhelmed the East Asian subcontinent in the seventeenth century.”¹⁶⁹ Many of the basic institutions of the Ming were indeed absorbed and reinvigorated by the new Qing regime, which constructed itself as the legitimate heir to the best of Ming traditions (though under new leadership).

But considered from the perspective of frontier peoples like the Manchus, who were mobilizing in response to the conditions and frontier policies of the Ming, and from the Fujianese seamen who were chafing against maritime restrictions, such faith was often weak or replaced by a desire to exploit and subvert (and overturn if possible) the established structures of power. The ambiguous role of the Fujian frontier will be seen in

¹⁶⁹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 195.

the forces that tore the littoral apart as the Great Enterprise moved to Fujian. The Zheng family was to play a fateful role in Fujian's transformation into another kind of frontier.

To destroy the new Enemy, seafarer Zheng Zhilong's son Koxinga, the Qing did what the Ming had not dared to attempt in its war against the Wako pirates: break the connection between the coast and the sea spaces. In the next chapter, we confront a state that was willing to wage war on the littoral itself. We confront the Qianjie: the Coastal Depopulation of 1661-1683.

Chapter III

War

The Empire's Scorched Shore

Why do you kill me? What! Do you not live on the other side of the water? If you lived on this side, my friend, I should be an assassin, and it would be unjust to slay you in this manner. But since you live on the other side, I am a hero, and it is just.

– Pascal¹⁷⁰

1662. Dadeng Island—little more than a rocky islet, almost within swimming distance from the mainland and north of the dumbbell-shaped greater island of Quemoy (or Jinmen). Life was hard and monotonous even in times of peace. A fisherman mixed sweat with seawater as he reeled in his nets. From the sea he made his livelihood, and perhaps one day the sea would claim his life—that or something worse, for Qing troops had not yet pacified Fujian even after fifteen years of battling sealords, loyalists, and thugs. But on this particular day, he would see something miraculous: a mermaid's smile.

The fisherman saw a mermaid—what was called a *renmianyu*, a fish with a human face—standing on the water. Their eyes met, and the mermaid grinned. Then it plunged back into the water and disappeared. In the next year, the great Coastal Depopulation (Qianjie) ravaged the coast. The mermaid sighting and its augured consequence were noted in a curious entry in the *Jinmen Gazetteer* as an omen from Heaven.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts* (Harvard Classics vol. 48, ed. Charles W. Eliot, New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1938), no. 293, p. 103.

¹⁷¹ “康熙元年,大嶼海中有人面魚立水面,見人笑而沒,越明年遷界。” From Zhonghua congshu weiyuanhui 中華叢書委員會, eds., *Jinmen zhi* 金門志 [Gazetteer of Jinmen] (n.p.: Zhonghua congshu weiyuanhui, 1956 [Minguo 45]), 卷十五, 舊事志 (二), 祥異 (signs from Heaven), p. 367.

We could simply dismiss this story from the county gazetteer as so much folk superstition. But fishing communities took omens seriously, and this mermaid sighting was duly recorded as a portent of momentous changes to come. It was true that Fujian suffered soon afterwards from a manmade rain of fire and destruction that left the coast a wasteland. It is possible that something strange *was* actually sighted at sea (even if not a mermaid) and that its appearance was later linked to the almost unthinkable catastrophe that followed on its tail.

Fish exist, and humans exist, but do such things as mermaids (a hybrid of the two) exist? Maybe only in the fancies of the fisherfolk. But similarly, as we saw in Chapter 3, policies like the Seaban (Haijin) operated in a mix of fact and myth: of weakness and isolationism, “barbarian” greed, government intransigency, “Japanese” piracy, invasion and revolt. The Coastal Depopulation (Qianjie) of 1661-1683 was much the same. The student of this history hears variously that the Manchus were afraid of water,¹⁷² that they dared not to fight the seafaring Koxinga and so took to injuring innocent coastal dwellers,¹⁷³ that mercenaries and warlords manipulated the Ming and Qing factions to their own profit, and that the Manchus built a maritime ‘Great Wall’ (a wall against the sea) and so “encouraged the conquered Chinese to share in their fear and ignorance of the sea.”¹⁷⁴ The Seaban and the Depopulation are often lumped together as a single inglorious specimen of history: a Chinese maritime “closed-door,” of which “the policy was the product of autocracy and obscurantism, and had a profound, pernicious and

¹⁷² Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 158.

¹⁷³ Lin Renchuan, *Mingmo Qingchu siren haishang maoyi*, 429.

¹⁷⁴ Jonathan Clements, *Coxinga and the Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, Inc., 2005), 182.

lasting influence on Chinese politics.”¹⁷⁵ The Depopulation in particular is often vilified as an emblem of imperial isolationism and anti-commercialism (as if the Qing had taken on the very worst of the Seaban inherited from the Ming).¹⁷⁶

All or none of these things could be true. What is wanting is a close study of the policy and its context as it was applied to Fujian and other coastal regions. In addition, rather than viewing the Seaban and the Depopulation as one and the same (i.e., a monolithic policy of isolationism and repression against coastal peoples), we would do better to see how they were distinct policies adapted to dynamic settings that changed along with the frontier itself, and how “state” and “society” reshaped themselves around the frontier. In the process we may find that, like the historical Great Wall of China that Arthur Waldron has uncovered—and like the Maginot Line to which Waldron compares the Wall—the real history of the Depopulation was less a story of a culturally determined defensive policy than a complex political process in which the military solution (the building of fortifications) was only the last stage. It is far too simplistic to point to a single plan, a single Wall. Instead, I heed Waldron’s advice to investigate Chinese foreign or frontier policy as a negotiation, a “product of the clash of several competing ideas of Chineseness.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Wu Chengming and Xu Dixin, eds. [English trans. by Li Zhengde, Liang Miaoru, and Li Siping, and annotated by C.A. Curwen], *Chinese Capitalism, 1522-1840* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 397.

¹⁷⁶ As Gang Zhao reminds us, “it has long been assumed among students of the Qing that the late imperial trade system represented a step backward from the liberal policies of the Song and Yuan, and that conservative Ming and Qing rulers resisted any change during the Age of Discovery and afterwards.” Zhao’s thesis is that, quite to the contrary, “the Qing established the most open trade policy in Chinese history.” See Gang Zhao, “Shaping the Asian trade network: The conception and implementation of the Chinese open trade policy, 1684-1840” (Ph.D. thesis: The Johns Hopkins University, 2006), 267-268.

¹⁷⁷ Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 70-71, 191.

Were the Manchus afraid of water? Who can prove such a thing, unless the Manchu-language archives and diaries are scoured for insights into their psychology and purported hydrophobia, and even if such references were found, would they explain the Coastal Depopulation?¹⁷⁸ In any case, the Qing state was more than the Manchus. The Qing conquest elites were first of all frontiersmen who were expert in the military and political use of boundaries. The burden of explanation, then, falls not mentality but on action: how the Qing state, its collaborators, and local villagers (like the unfortunate Pyrenees frontiersmen of Pascal's epigraph) came to kill those on the other side of the water.

Although the Coastal Depopulation is elusive like the mermaid, let us not dismiss its inscrutable smile offhand, but instead see if we cannot separate fish from human and examine myth and fact in detail.

What was the Qianjie?

I first review the state of our knowledge on the policy of Qianjie or coastal depopulation. (Qianjie, which I translate uniformly as the Coastal Depopulation or just Depopulation, consists of *Qian* 遷, meaning “move,” and *jie* 界, meaning “boundary.”)

After the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644, the nascent Qing conquest state faced many challengers in its quest for dominance, including roving rebels, Southern

¹⁷⁸ One rare diary, at least, shows a Manchu soldier acquitting himself well enough on boats and riverine warfare during the suppression of the Three Feudatories in south China around 1680. Of course, this was still a far cry from the squalls and billows of Greater Fujian. See Nicola Di Cosmo, ed. and trans., *The Diary of a Manchu Soldier in Seventeenth-Century China* (“*My Service in the Army*” by Dzengšeo) (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

Ming princes and their rump courts, and motley armies of loyalists and bandits.¹⁷⁹

Regional warlords often took sides in the struggle based on their perceived self-interests.

This political contest included Zheng Zhilong, whom we have seen in the previous chapter as the wily *tertius gaudens*, the laughing third man who had manipulated both the Dutch and the Ming to achieve the supreme overlordship of Fujian.¹⁸⁰ Zheng's participation in the immediate post-1644 melee was not unlike that of frontier generals like Wu Sangui, Geng Jimao, and Shang Kexi (collectively known as the Three Feudatories), whose military expertise gave them the highest currency possible in the war-torn land.

But Zheng differed from the famous Three by being not merely a borderland general, but the direct mobilizer of an autonomous frontier with its own financial resources and transnational trading apparatus. Leonard Blussé writes: "Out of the field of tension created by the first great maritime trading company [the Dutch VOC] and the political institutions of the weakened Ming, the hitherto much-exploited maritime China became a recognisable, respectable force to be reckoned with, despite the fact that the sources tried to cover it up. [... Thus] it is also the history of a short Golden Age during which the Fukienese coastal population were able to liberate themselves under the leadership of the Cheng family, from the tight reigns of the land-oriented central government and to exercise overseas trade freely and, if necessary, to impose its own

¹⁷⁹ The best study on the two decades of Southern Ming resistance remains Lynn Struve's classic *The Southern Ming, 1644-1662* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

¹⁸⁰ *Tertius Gaudens* is Leonard Blussé's term, from "The VOC as Sorcerer's Apprentice: Stereotypes and Social Engineering on the China Coast," *Leyden Studies in Sinology*, ed. W. L. Idema (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 96.

conditions on others.”¹⁸¹ In this sense, Zheng more closely resembled the early Manchu leaders than a roving general (a distinction that is seldom observed in the literature).

The phenomenon of Zheng Zhilong, and the political role that was thrust upon his frontier, was also part of a broader trend of militarization—as Lynn Struve has indicated—that saw the massive armies of the fringes (the only viable supralocal powers) become strategically more important as the center collapsed under the weight of its insoluble civil-military divide. Struve writes, “Indeed, the history of this period also can be seen as the gradual remilitarization of the Ming [...]. As militarization uncontrollably spread and deepened through the country, the military organizations that proved most hardy, and which represented the Ming in the end, were those born and nurtured illegitimately, outside the sphere of formal Ming government.”¹⁸² The Manchu Qing, as one of several frontier competitors, endeavored to co-opt those rival frontier organizations and so establish a new center.

At the end of the previous chapter, I related how the maritime frontier, which had been created over two centuries by the Seaban, the Pirate Wars, and the evolution of the sealord in the post-Wako trading system, had fallen into Zheng Zhilong’s able hands. Zheng was the consummate sea captain and mastermind who took the frontier to a whole new level of commercial-cum-military organization and built himself a castle at Anhai, a magnificent base to start a sealord dynasty. He was overlord of Fujian as the Ming imperial house lost control of the provinces and then the rest of the empire. In 1644, he

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸² Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 194-195.

was only forty, a man who, like Dorgon (1612-1650; fourteenth son of Nurhaci), kicked his star to its zenith at the very moment that the star of the Ming fell.

Zheng did end up passing the sealord mantle to his firstborn, Koxinga, but not in the way that he expected. As Beijing fell (1644), and then Nanjing (1645), Zheng watched and waited, then sprang into action when the next Southern Ming claimant turned up in his backyard. Zheng supported the rump court of the newly crowned Longwu emperor out of his Fujianese satrapy, the upshot being as Zheng anticipated: noble titles for himself and his followers, and recognition of his de facto dominion. Zheng dominated the Fuzhou court to the point that his Spanish contemporaries saw “Nicolas Ytcuam more an emperor than Lungun [Longwu].”¹⁸³ Such was only his due, as Zheng’s silver fleets and fighting men were virtually the only things standing between the Longwu emperor and thousands of Manchus trained to kill him. The historical irony was perhaps not lost on the Ming loyalists, many of whom despised Zheng as a vulgar opportunist.¹⁸⁴ Maritime Fujian, which had been criminalized, marginalized, and left out in the cold for much of the Ming period, was now the dynasty’s precious haven. And here was the pirate-prince Zheng—a step up the evolutionary chain from the Wako pirates whom the Ming had expended countless treasure to defeat a hundred years prior—now serving as kingmaker, and using the silver that he had amassed by the same methods of piracy and smuggling that the Ming had labored to suppress with its Seaban. The worm had turned!

¹⁸³ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 587.

¹⁸⁴ In Lynn Struve’s memorable phrase, the civil officials were none too happy at the powers and offices showered on this “poacher-turned-gamekeeper.” Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 88.

However, it quickly became clear that this *mariage de convenance* satisfied neither the king's men nor the seaman. To the Longwu emperor and his literati advisors, as John Wills put it, "a province was a puny thing,"¹⁸⁵ and the Ming revanchists insisted on charging inland before undertaking to consolidate forces or cooperate with their military brethren. And, as Lynn Struve has shown in her deft analysis of the Southern Ming, civil bureaucrats were both overweeningly exclusive and contemptuous of military men, whom they treated with fear and loathing, little better than the "dregs of a society that accorded no human dignity to the common soldier."¹⁸⁶ Even when war was at their throats, official gentlemen tended to deem war "too complex a matter to be left to the fighting man."¹⁸⁷ There were, of course, ministers with practical eyes and heads for strategy, but on the whole the entrenched civil-military (Chinese: *wen-wu*) divide proved suicidal for the Ming loyalist cause, especially as the Qing conquest elite was honing the art of recruiting and rewarding the very disgruntled frontiersmen and soldiers who could have given the Ming a lifeline. By treating its own strongmen with suspicion, the Southern Ming only turned out turncoats.

In one famous incident at the Longwu court, Grand Secretary Huang Daozhou and other civil officials berated Zheng Zhilong for daring to stand on *their* side of the court. What insolence! "Civil men stand on the East, military men on the West," they

¹⁸⁵ John E. Wills, Jr., "Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World." In *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, edited by Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 180.

¹⁸⁶ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 4. Struve elaborates: "Military men were not just subordinated by civil officials; they were degraded. . . . In Ming China there were no Dwight Eisenhowers or Alexander Haigs, or lieutenant colonels who later became governors or mayors, proud to tell constituents of their record in military service." (p. 6)

¹⁸⁷ John K. Fairbank, "Introduction: Varieties of the Chinese Military Experience," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, ed. Frank A. Kierman and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 11.

rebuked him, “this is the law of the Great Ancestor [i.e. Ming Taizu, who founded the dynasty and ruled from 1368-1398].” Zheng countered that the Great Ancestor himself had given General Xu Da (1332-1385) the place of honor at the East. Yes, said Huang, but General Xu was a great founding hero of the dynasty—who did Zheng think he was? I am Commander of Fujian—the sealord replied with dignity—with deeds no less than General Xu. He Kai (another high minister) broke in and mocked Zheng to the tune of: if you can recover Beijing for us, then you can stand with us. The meeting broke up in rancor.¹⁸⁸

Zheng, for his part, had not become master of the seas by being an idiot. From his perspective, so far as we can tell from the few writings attributed to him, there was little to be gained by making Fujian into a war zone on Ming or Qing terms. He had worked too hard to build Fujian from an outlaw frontier to the center of a great trading empire—his own. Was he now to throw away his naval and marine forces as cannon fodder for supercilious Ming pretenders who took his support grudgingly and treated him with scorn? Small wonder, then, that around 1645 Zheng (or at least his ghostwriter) argued in his military treatise *Jingguo xionglue* (*Great Enterprises to Manage the Country*) a well-reasoned case for provincial fiscal and military autonomy.¹⁸⁹ His plan was essentially a tactical (almost federal) alliance of autonomous provinces, each raising its own troops and issuing its own commands, each nursing its military strength for a future counteroffensive (for which Sealord Zheng, presumably, might serve as *strategos autokrator* and financier), and above all an end to the kamikaze style with which ragtag

¹⁸⁸ Jiang Risheng 江日昇, *Taiwan waiji* 台湾外志 (外记), ed. Liu Wentai 刘文泰, et. al (Jinan: Jilu shushe, 2004), juan 5, p. 56. A different account of the altercation (over who should be seated first at court) is referenced in Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 92, 225.

¹⁸⁹ Wills, “Contingent Connections,” 181-182.

idealists daily rushed to premature death against the Qing.¹⁹⁰ Manchu forces were experts at splitting and annihilating uncoordinated Chinese armies of far greater numbers, as they had proved in the battles of Sarhu (1619), Shanhaiguan (1644), and the Jiangnan campaigns (1645). Fighting scatterbrained was suicide; but with powerful, prudent strongholds, the Qing onslaught might be contained and eventually beaten.

It was like the grand strategy of Pericles reincarnated in Fujianese style. Zheng, too, seemed to foresee that battle between a land power and a sea power was futile without a master plan. During the generation-long Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431-404 BCE), Pericles had initiated a defensive strategy: Athens (the superior naval power) did not have to beat Sparta on the field, but only had to prevent the enemy from winning and undermine its fighting capacity.¹⁹¹ The key was to avoid pitched battle with an enemy that excelled in positional warfare but could not starve out a maritime power with open sea lanes. Fujian had three great mountain passes facing the Manchus to the north and northwest (the Shan, Xianxia, and Fenshui passes), and Fujianese garrisons could provide holding action, while Zheng ships could keep supplies flowing from the sea. Moreover, potential allies like the Japanese, Portuguese, and Dutch might be induced to help the Ming by promises of trade.¹⁹² (Naturally, Zheng himself

¹⁹⁰ In fact, Grand Secretary Huang Daozhou, the righteous “morning rooster” of the Longwu court who had mocked Zheng earlier, was to meet just such an end on a pathetic military campaign the following year. Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 89-92; and recounted in more detail in “‘This Foundering Old Horse’: A Righteous Minister’s Last Crusade,” Ch. 8 in Struve (ed. and trans.), *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tiger’s Jaws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 122-140.

¹⁹¹ Ober, Josiah, *The Athenian Revolution: Essays on Ancient Greek Democracy and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 66.

¹⁹² Zheng in fact dispatched an embassy to the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1646 to ask for military aid against the Manchus, but to no avail. C.R. Boxer, “The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan (Cheng Chi-lung),” *T’ien-hsia Monthly* 11, no. 5 (1941): 436-437. On another failed embassy to Nagasaki, see “‘Better to Die at Sea’: Requesting Aid from Japan,” Ch. 7 in Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, 114-121; and Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 117-120.

stood to profit most from such an arrangement, but his advice stood.) As if to overwhelm the reader with the sheer logic of his position, Zheng poured into the *Jingguo xionglue* his practical military knowledge of geography, climate, riverine and maritime defense, colonization techniques, foreign intelligence, tactics, drills, ships, and guns.¹⁹³ It was the distilled wisdom of a man who had seen too much to believe too much, who had learned his lessons at sea rather than in the study. But nothing is so pungent as the truth. Zheng's book fell undigested.

Then, in September 1646, the Longwu emperor—who had chafed at Zheng's insistence on thinking of Fujian first and the Ming second, or, alternatively, on putting mere practicality ahead of righteousness—charged out on campaign and got himself and his empress captured and killed. Zheng played no small role in this fiasco, having already ordered his troops to withdraw from the passes, thus giving the Manchus a clear road to Yanping and Tingzhou, the mountainous prefectures of Fujian. This gives every indication that even before the final blow came, Zheng had already abandoned hope in Emperor Longwu and his coterie of Quijotes. Zheng blew up his own arsenal at Fuzhou and guardedly recouped down south while corresponding with the Qing commanders. Now the Qing, represented by Manchu Prince Bolo, made Zheng a grand offer indeed: the viceroyalty of Guangdong and Fujian, which would effectively give him the seaboard and its revenues. On November 21, 1646, Zheng accepted and traveled to Fuzhou to formally offer his fealty to the Manchus.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ See Zheng Dayu 鄭大郁 and Cai Ding 蔡鼎, comps. (in the name of Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍), *Jingguo xionglue* 經國雄略 (prefaced 1645, n.p.) in 48 juan, imprint held in the Library of Congress rare books collection; also Lynn A. Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619-1683: A Historiography and Source Guide* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1998), 271.

¹⁹⁴ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 97.

Some hostile commentators, who can be very brave by proxy, have been quick to label Zheng a traitor to his country and his race.¹⁹⁵ His own son, Koxinga, by the traditional account, begged his father not to join the Manchus, saying that “a tiger cannot leave the mountain; a fish cannot leave the water,” to which Zheng retorted that Koxinga was a mere boy who knew nothing of power and politics.¹⁹⁶ Koxinga (then a strapping idealist of twenty) had come of age in wealth, education, and honor by dint of his father’s power as seahero—he had not yet known the stings of defeat and raw comeback, of heartbreak, of beggary. Koxinga, who was born in Japan and first came to Fujian as a child of seven or eight, only knew his father as an eminent and successful admiral of the great Ming dynasty; he had not seen the ugliness of the world that his father had come from and fought so hard to master. When Zheng had embraced the boy Koxinga for the first time and explained that he had built all this—Anhai castle and its thousand ships—for his family to have a home at last, he had not felt compelled to explain to the seven-year-old just what it had taken to build it all.

Some have argued that Koxinga was simply made of sterner stuff than his slippery father.¹⁹⁷ But it is as hard to judge a man objectively as it is to get into his skin. It is possible that Zheng sought a separate peace in order to protect Fujian from the depredations of war. In the words of Taiwanese scholar Tang Jintai, author of the best biography on Zheng to date, there were strong reasons for Zheng to consider saving his

¹⁹⁵ Indeed, “traditional historiography is so biased against Cheng Chih-lung that it is difficult to assess the man objectively.” Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 89.

¹⁹⁶ Jiang Risheng (ed. Liu Wentai, et. al), *Taiwan waiji*, juan 5, p. 71-72.

¹⁹⁷ Young-tsu Wong writes: “[Zheng Zhilong] was not a ‘reformist,’ and had no vision or novel plans to alleviate reality’s ills. He was rather a shrewd, cunning opportunist... Contrary to his father, [Koxinga] believed in loyalty, even to a doomed system ... he was a ‘revolutionary traditionalist.’” “Security and Warfare on the China Coast: The Taiwan Question in the Seventeenth Century.” *Monumenta Serica* 35 (1981-1983): 111-196.

de facto kingdom from becoming “burial goods for a defunct Ming dynasty that was no longer worth his protection.”¹⁹⁸ There were also strong and even tearful objections from some of his subordinates and kin. Ultimately, Zheng took the fateful plunge and so tore his own family apart.

The paucity of extant sources precludes too much psycho-scrutiny of the intentions or sincerity either of Zheng or of the Qing leaders. What we do know is that key members of Zheng’s family abandoned him at this critical juncture. Koxinga pledged loyalty to the Ming; Zheng Cai, a nephew to whom Zhilong had entrusted a strategic command, also held off; and Zheng Zhilong’s trusted brother Hongkui (alias Zhifeng), who had fought by his side for years, now deserted him by putting out to sea with a good part of the fleet. The sticking point may have been loyalty to the Ming, distrust of the Manchus—or both—or some other motive. One cannot rule out ambition, as subsequent events showed a power struggle to succeed Zheng Zhilong—and it was characteristic of the age that many local potentates used the banner of Ming loyalism to grab power for themselves. Zheng angrily wrote letters to his clansmen demanding that they join him in Fuzhou, but they remained aloof. The sealord forged on alone.

Zheng had been a risk taker all his life, and perhaps he trusted too well his own charisma in being able to pull off this final gamble without the unified strength of his organization. Possibly, too (in a rare stroke of ingenuousness), he was inclined to trust the Manchus, who had approached him with “sincerity,” as he indicated in a heated debate with his brother Hongkui.¹⁹⁹ Whatever the case, the subsequent events were

¹⁹⁸ Tang Jintai 湯錦台, *Kaiqi Taiwan di yi ren Zheng Zhilong* 開啟台灣第一人鄭芝龍 [Zheng Zhilong: The Pioneer of Taiwan] (Taipei: Guoshi, 2002), 215.

¹⁹⁹ Jiang Risheng (ed. Liu Wentai, et. al), *Taiwan waiji*, juan 5, p. 72.

disastrous for Zheng Zhilong. At first, Prince Bolo received the sealord with great pomp. Lacking a transcript, we may never know exactly what transpired at that conference in Fuzhou. Was Bolo planning treachery all along? On the one hand, this was unlikely. By most accounts, the Qing had a track record of treating turncoats well: Wu Sangui, Geng Jimao, Hong Chengchou, and many other prominent collaborators had earned places of honor and responsibility in the conquest regime.²⁰⁰ A decapitation attack on Zheng alone would have afforded them little benefit. Moreover, with half of China still unconquered, the Qing state needed ships and seamen to help subdue the watery south. The Great Enterprise required enterprising men; getting Zheng on board would have been a major coup.²⁰¹

However, we may surmise that without Zheng Hongkui, Koxinga, and a sizeable chunk of his fleet, Zheng's position was devalued if not severely compromised. Even if Bolo had planned to keep the terms of honorable surrender (and there is no clear evidence that he or his superiors intended to break precedent), his suspicions would have been aroused by the fact that Zheng came without his entire clan, warfleet, and all his coffers. Most of the sealord's mercantile-military machine was still beyond Qing control, if not openly pledged to the Southern Ming or its warlord puppeteers. Probably Bolo suspected Zheng of treacherously playing both sides. After days of hard feasting and hard drinking, Bolo peremptorily cut short the festivities and ordered Zheng to be taken to Beijing to

²⁰⁰ See biographies in Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 358-360; 415-417; 635-636; 877-880.

²⁰¹ Centuries earlier, the Mongols who conquered China and founded the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) had won the key defection of the Fujian-based Muslim trader Pu Shougeng (d. 1296), whose navy secured for the Mongols the destruction of southern Song resistance. See Wang Lianmao 王连茂, "Pu Shougeng tusha nanwai zongsi kao 蒲寿庚屠杀南外宗司考", *Quanzhou wenshi* 泉州文史, vol. 12, no. 4 (1980): 75-82. The historical precedent could not have been lost on the Manchus, who had been weaned on stories of Genghis and Khubilai and imbibed their histories and their romances—and hoped to better the instruction.

kowtow to his new emperor—effectively placing him under house arrest. Manchu troopers moved to encircle their quarry. Too late, Zheng called out to his beloved African musketeers, his Black Guards; many were cut down as they tried to rescue their lord, singing the name of St. James (Santiago) as they fell.²⁰² The sealord was shepherded to Beijing under armed guard along with his meager retinue, which included a couple of his sons (half-brothers of Koxinga). Zheng Zhilong would never see his homeland or the sea again.

All of this, of course, only confirmed for Koxinga and the rest of the Zheng clan that the Manchus had planned treachery all along. (It did not occur to them—or they did not admit to themselves—that their absence had most probably helped seal this self-fulfilling prophecy and the doom of their patriarch.) Koxinga was hostile to the Qing and seized control of the clan after a struggle for authority with his uncles and cousins. This was no mean feat for a man who was only 22 (as Nurhaci had been 23) at the time of his father's fall, but Koxinga was a zealot who literally whipped his men into shape, and by about 1650-1651, at the age of 27, he succeeded in edging out his elders. Then Koxinga made it *his own* organization: a regime in which he wielded absolute power and Spartan discipline, never permitting a crippling civil-military divide to take shape and never ceding his machine to mere literary men, though he had once (unlike his father, who was a lazy student) aspired to be a scholar himself, and had studied with the brilliant Qian

²⁰² According to Bishop Palafox, some 100 Black Guards were killed in the fight, and some of the survivors took service under the Manchus, where they distinguished themselves at the siege of Canton in 1647. Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *The History of the Conquest of China by the Tartars: Together with an account of several remarkable things, concerning the religion, manners, and customs of both nations, but especially the latter. First writ in Spanish, by Señor Palafox, Bishop of Osmá, and Viceroy of Mexico. The second edition. And now rendered into English* (London: printed by W. Godbid, and sold by M. Pitt, at the Angel, neat [sic] the little north door of St. Paul's Church, 1676), 300-307.

Qianyi. The new seahord was arrogant and ruthless, an obsessive martinet and able tactician, shrewd but sometimes pigheaded, a charismatic and autocratic man of destiny who was every bit his father's son. By combining all of these traits, and by cultivating a self-righteous image as a "faultlessly conscientious" servant of the throne while also being "a king in his own sizable domain," Koxinga made himself a legend in his own time and "presented the Qing with their greatest single challenge in conquest and pacification."²⁰³

Koxinga, the new seahord, ruled the South China seas and monopolized the China-Japan-Southeast Asia trade triangle to finance his personal naval and land forces, which grew from a few hundred to more than 100,000 soldiers at his peak. The Qing tried to negotiate with Koxinga in the years 1645-1654, but when the talks broke down, they hardened their position. (More on this later.)

Ultimately, the Qing state enacted a series of draconian sea bans aimed at cutting off coastal trade, culminating in 1661 in a scorched earth policy known as the "Coastal Depopulation Law" (*Qianjie ling*). Coastal dwellers in a thousand-mile stretch from Shandong to Guangdong were ordered to relocate 10-15 miles inland, and Qing troops laid waste to what remained, building watchtowers to patrol the no-man's land and punish those who tried to return to the coast. Some observers wrote of smoke from burning towns darkening the sky for days. Hundreds of thousands migrated to Southeast Asia, to inland provinces, or eastward to islands like Taiwan.²⁰⁴ These measures did not

²⁰³ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 156-157.

²⁰⁴ And it was precisely in the 17th century that Taiwan "became Chinese," first economically, then culturally and then politically. See Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), also available online at Gutenberg-e: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/andrade/index.html>

destroy the Zheng regime—which conquered Taiwan from the Dutch in 1662 and held the island bastion for two decades—but instead brought great misery and loss of life to coastal regions. To contemporaries and later historians, they also seemed indicative of an obstinate insularity in the face of crisis. According to Robert Antony, “the Qing government officially severed contacts with the rest of the maritime world for the next twenty years.”²⁰⁵

The pioneer who first brought this topic to the attention of Sinologists was the great Xie Guozhen (1901-1982), who tirelessly collected sources on the Ming-Qing transition amidst the difficulties of the warlord period in China and battled library deterioration before and after the Japanese invasion. Almost single-handedly, Xie (one of Liang Qichao’s brightest pupils) made the study of the Southern Ming possible.²⁰⁶ It was Xie’s preliminary essay on the coastal depopulation in 1930 that pointed the way for early Japanese and Taiwanese studies like those of Tanaka Katsumi, Ura Ren’ichi, and Su Meifang.²⁰⁷

John Wills contributed much to the dialogue with his archival studies of 17th-century Sino-Dutch relations from the VOC Koloniaal Archief and pointed out in 1974

²⁰⁵ Robert J. Antony, *Like Froth Floating on the Sea*, 36.

²⁰⁶ Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Zengding wan Ming shiji kao* 增訂晚明史籍考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981). Expanded and revised ed. of Xie’s *Wan Ming shiji kao* (Beijing: Guoli Beijing tushuguan, 1932). Rpt. in 3 vols., Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1968; and see Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict*, 94-95.

²⁰⁷ Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, “Qingchu dongnan yanhai qianjie kao” 清初東南沿海遷界考 [A study on the early Qing coastal evacuation of southeast China], Appendix 2 in *Ming Qing zhi ji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934); Tanaka Katsumi 田中克己, “Shinsho no Shina enkai: senkai wo chûshin to shite mitaru” 清初の支那沿海: 遷界を中心として見たる [On the early Qing evacuation of the Chinese coast], *Rekishigaku kenkyû* 歴史学研究, vol. 6, nos. 1 and 3 (Jan. and Mar. 1936 [repr. 1981, Tokyo], pp. 73-81, 83-94; Ura Ren’ichi 浦廉一 (trans. Lai Yung-hsiang 賴永祥), *Qingchu qianjieling kao* 清初遷界令考 [On the Qing coastal depopulation law], *Taiwan wenxian* 臺灣文獻, vol. 6, no. 4 (Dec. 1955), pp. 109-122; Su Meifang 蘇梅芳, “Qingchu qianjie shijian zhi yanjiu” 清初遷界事件之研究, *Lishi xuebao* 歷史學報 (pub. National Cheng-kung University, Tainan, Taiwan), vol. 5 (Jul. 1978).

that the coastal depopulation “is a complex story on which much remains to be done.”²⁰⁸ International scholarship has further given us a well-rounded view of Portuguese and Dutch experiences in maritime Asia during this early-modern phase of global convergence, which Wills has fruitfully called “the interactive emergence of European domination.”²⁰⁹ However, while the question of the Coastal Depopulation has been kept alive in Chinese and Japanese scholarship, treatments in English have tended to point readers only to the groundbreaking but limited work of Xie Guozhen, especially to an incomplete English translation of Xie’s article dated from 1932.²¹⁰ A more current and accessible account is needed for the present day.

Additionally, the field is open to new questions and avenues for research.

Scholars like Lawrence Kessler (1976) and Robert Oxnam (1975) have briefly surveyed the Coastal Depopulation in their studies of state-building and high politics in the early Qing, but, as Kessler noted, basic issues like the scale of the removal policy and even the matter of how many, which, and what types of villages were burned remain unclear.²¹¹ Oxnam added that “it remains a question whether or not the coastal evacuation policy was actually an effective weapon against the Cheng [Zheng] family.”²¹²

Meanwhile, recent advances in Chinese and Japanese scholarship and source collection, especially since the 1980s and 1990s, have reopened the question of the

²⁰⁸ John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 39 fn. 36.

²⁰⁹ John E. Wills, Jr. "Maritime Asia, 1500–1800: The Interactive Emergence of European Domination." *American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (February 1993): 83–105.

²¹⁰ That is: Hsieh Kuo Ching [sic] (trans. Chen Tung Hsieh), “Removal of Coastal Population in Early Tsing Period,” *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, vol. 15, no. 4 (Beiping: Jan. 1932): 559-596.

²¹¹ Lawrence D. Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule, 1661-1684* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 45.

²¹² Robert B. Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 131.

Seaban and the Coastal Depopulation in the Ming-Qing transformation. The footnotes will become elephantine if I attempt to list them all, so I will simply cite them accordingly in the account that follows. In English, an impressive conference volume on Fujianese local history in the 17th and 18th centuries was published in 1990.²¹³ Ng Chin-keong, Gang Zhao, and Josephine Khu have given us richer pictures of both life on the ground and the policy debates that led to maritime and military reforms in Fujian and Taiwan in and after 1684, though they all concern the period *after* the lifting of the Depopulation and the reopening of trade.²¹⁴ Also, Guotong Li and Eugenio Menegon have contributed fascinating insights into issues of gender and religion with regards to the coastal society of Fujian.²¹⁵

Underlying the historical transformations recorded in the above studies, as I see it, is the process that I have called the making of the maritime frontier in Fujian. The invading Qing state, committed to its reconstruction of the imperial order, had to pick up from the failures of the old Ming frontier policy and the Seaban's bastard child, the sealord. Unlike the Seaban, which we explored in the previous two chapters, the Qing Coastal Depopulation was a policy that attempted control not of the sea, but of an artificial land boundary built on forced migration. My task here is to describe how the Depopulation redrew the frontier in a way distinct from the earlier phase of frontier-

²¹³ Eduard B. Vermeer, ed. *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990).

²¹⁴ Chin-Keong Ng, *Trade and Society: the Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press and National University of Singapore, 1983); Gang Zhao, "Shaping the Asian Trade Network: The Conception and Implementation of the Chinese Open Trade Policy, 1684-1840" (Ph.D. thesis: The Johns Hopkins University, 2006); Josephine Meihui Tiampo Khu, "The Making of a Frontier: The Qing Military in Taiwan, 1684-1783" (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 2001).

²¹⁵ Guotong Li, "Reopening the Fujian Coast, 1600-1800: Gender Relations, Family Strategies, and Ethnic Identities in a Maritime World" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of California, Davis, 2007); Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 2009).

making in Fujian. I build on the aforementioned foundations and hope that we can at last begin giving this topic the fuller treatment that it deserves in English.

The Hunters

The initial Qing success at smashing one after another the Ming loyalist armies thrown against its banner forces was a feat of arms. The Qing was doubly armed in this Great Enterprise, as the Southern Ming was industrious enough in securing its own demise, both through factional intolerance and acts of pure tomfoolery. As with the civil war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists in the 20th century, the one “lost” China as much as the other “won” it. Not that the conquest was child’s play—if it had been, the fighting could have ended as early as 1647 or 1648. But millions more would perish before the savage struggle for mastery climaxed with the conquest of Taiwan in 1683, nearly four decades after the fall of Beijing.

The uneasy coalition that was the early Qing state had other problems besides beating its foes into submission. What happened on the battlefield was inextricably tied to the search for a new joint military-civil solution to the constellation of powers that was one of the structural crises of the late imperial polity. If the Qing were to last more than a day, so to speak, a new ruling elite had to be created to govern the empire once it was won on horseback.²¹⁶ The Three Feudatories (those mercenary frontier generals from the northeast, so essential to the conquest) arrogated enormous sovereign powers to themselves in exchange for services rendered, a fact that the early Qing leaders tolerated

²¹⁶ On the role of the Banner System and the creation of a dyarchy that would characterize Qing rule, see Mark Elliot’s *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

out of necessity but would eventually have to suppress with fire and sword.²¹⁷ What is more, pockets of resistance plagued the Qing, and it was in frontier regions rather than in the Chinese heartland that opposition was most tenacious. Did the Manchus think themselves the only virile frontiersmen-at-arms? Koxinga (the “twenty-seven-year-old dynamo,” as Lynn Struve called him²¹⁸) taught the conquerors the painful lesson that Fujian, which they thought they had vanquished, could be as great a headache to the new state as to the old, and for much the same reason. China did not end at the ocean’s edge.

Not that the Southern Ming movement effectively utilized this resistance or learned the lesson from the debacle of Emperor Longwu. The most damaging split up to the year 1652 was again between a shaky court characterized by the chronic military-civil divide (the regime of Regent Lu) and a recalibrating Zheng regime (eventually dominated by Koxinga), and afterwards there was an ever-widening gulf between a strong sealord group on the coast and a retreating rump court under Emperor Yongli.²¹⁹ While Koxinga and other warlords made astute obeisances to the Yongli court, it was clear that the anti-Qing resistance movement never resolved itself into one unified movement but remained a patchwork of uncoordinated regional powers that were, one by one, extinguished by Qing forces. It was just as Zheng Zhilong had warned, but no one was around to hear it except his Qing captors, who liked to keep things that way. As the Yongli emperor (the last Ming claimant) retreated inland in defeat after defeat, the hope of a Southern Ming restoration faded, then went out.

²¹⁷ The Revolt of the Three Feudatories (c. 1673-1681) as it pertains to Fujian will be discussed later.

²¹⁸ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 117.

²¹⁹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 110.

Still, the coastal resistance proved surprisingly strong. Trained by Zheng Zhilong, whipped by Koxinga, and rallied in defense of Fujian, the marine fighters were nearly indomitable in their own element. Like the Mongols of old, they could strike quickly, raid anywhere, and withdraw before the garrisons could mobilize an effective counterattack. The rocky coast and limited farmland of Fujian made life even harder for Qing commanders hoping to supply and garrison the region; their armies had overrun large swaths of territory faster than their administrators could keep up.

Such challenges did not necessarily faze the bannermen whom the Manchus sent to deal with the situation; in general, they were practical administrators who had ideas (tested in prior experience) about when to heal and when to kill. These officers, mostly Han bannermen²²⁰ with names like Zhang Cunren, Chen Jin, Zhang Xuesheng, and Liu Qingtai, attempted the tried-and-true carrot and stick approach. Such methods had worked elsewhere in China but proved somewhat less effective in maritime Fujian, which, as we have seen, had grown since its days of being “left virtually stateless by the negative, indifferent, or merely self-defensive policies of the Ming government.”²²¹ Fujian had already become a frontier once before, and that wildness remained, as most of the population relied one way or another on the sea; plus, it had spawned a seafarer: Zheng Zhilong, an uncannier frontiersman than Nurhaci himself had been before his apotheosis as the Great Khan. The new Qing officials had only a glimmer of the fact that in dealing with Zheng and his progeny, they were facing not bandits but men tied to the fabric of a larger world, men “who grew so successful as ‘protection’ racketeers among people who

²²⁰ A Han bannerman was generally a transfrontiersman who had joined the Manchus in Manchuria or a Han Chinese military or civil official who later defected to the Qing and enrolled in the Banner system, the bulwark of the Qing military system.

²²¹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 157.

had no other source of protection that they came to constitute a maritime government of sorts.”²²² And when they did take to hunting down Koxinga, the Qing generals underestimated their foe and were humiliated in battle by this tough seafarer. Let us see how.

When Nurhaci was violently orphaned in 1582 (the event that would later be seen as the fountainhead of the Great Enterprise), the legend goes that he began his career as an anti-Ming avenger with only thirteen suits of armor and a handful of fighting men.²²³ Koxinga started his anti-Qing crusade with little more: just a few ships and less than a hundred stalwarts joined him on Amoy island. Most of his father’s patrimony was split amongst his uncles and cousins. Although Koxinga was Zheng’s eldest son, and well-groomed by his father for higher things, there was no system of established primogeniture in the seafarer’s domain, and so the practice of internecine strife that Joseph Fletcher called “bloody tanistry” held virtually as true for Fujianese captains as it did for the Turco-Mongolian khans.²²⁴ Indeed, as Pamela Crossley has elaborated, in Central Asia the succession went to “precisely those men who had through intense struggle against their rival candidates demonstrated heaven-favored gifts of intelligence, agility, strength, and eloquence—the complex of qualities the Mongols had celebrated as *sečen*, and the Manchus as *sure*—qualities also tested in the medieval judicial combats of Europe.”²²⁵ If it is equivalency we want, then Koxinga surely had *sure*.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Elliot, *The Manchu Way*, 54.

²²⁴ Joseph F. Fletcher, Jr., “Turco-Mongolian Monarchic Tradition in the Ottoman Empire.” In *Eucharisterion: Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak*, edited by Ihor Sevcenko and Frank E. Sysyn. *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3-4 (1979-80), part 1: 240.

²²⁵ Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 54.

It helped that the young crusader was “Lord of the Imperial Surname” (*Guo-xing-ye*), a title once bestowed upon him by the now-dead Emperor Longwu²²⁶, and the source of his unforgettable name: *Kok-seng-ia* in the Hokkien dialect, which the Dutch, upon hearing it, wrote as Cocksinja in 1653 and Koxinga in 1670, and which subsequent generations of English, French, and Spanish sought ever to improve with bastardizations like Coxinga, Coccenyà, Cogseng, Con-seng, Kuesim, Cogsin, Coseng, Kue-sing, Quoosing, Coxiny, Quesim, Quesin, Cocxima, and even the Latin Quaesingus.²²⁷ His father, the original transnational man of mystery, would have been proud. Whether or not Koxinga purely dedicated his life to avenge the dead Ming monarch (as he so claimed), history bears out that he used the princely title to great effect as he outmaneuvered his rivals for the sealordship and squeezed taxes out of the Fujianese to secure his advantage. The seizure of power was bloodless when possible, but Koxinga did not hesitate to kill or expel his own kinsmen when it served his purposes, as in the case of his rivals and uncles Zheng Lian (executed, 1650), Zheng Zhiguan (executed, 1651), and Zheng Hongkui (forced into exile, 1651).²²⁸ In his own time, Koxinga cultivated the essential myth of himself as the great avenger, a man of implacable hatred

²²⁶ The Longwu emperor actually wanted Koxinga as a son-in-law but had no daughter to give him in marriage; so the conferral of the title was like an honorary ‘adoption’ into the imperial family.

²²⁷ Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 45; José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 584. His given name, of course, was Zheng Sen, or Zheng Damu, and he is now best known in Chinese as Zheng Chenggong. I have consistently used “Koxinga,” partly to carry the flavor of his international stature, but mostly to avoid the problem of constantly having to distinguish Zheng the father from Zheng the son, to say nothing of his relatives. While the Zhengs are many, there is but one Koxinga.

²²⁸ Yang Ying 楊英, *Congzheng shilu 從征實錄* [Records in the service of Koxinga, by Yang Ying, chief financial officer], *TW 32* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1968 [repr. Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1995]), 10-11, 16-19; *Zhongguo lishi dang’anguan bianjibu 中国第一历史档案馆编辑部 and Xiamen daxue Taiwan yanjiusuo 厦门大学台湾研究所*, eds., *Zheng Chenggong Manwen dang’an shiliao xuanyi 郑成功满文档案史料选译* [Selected Manchu documents on Koxinga] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1987), 5.

toward the barbarians who had murdered his emperor and betrayed his father. So much mythmaking was prevalent, in fact, and the legends so saucy, that “the absolutely reliable information about his life looks very meager in comparison.”²²⁹ And small wonder: as Donald Keene once said, “the lives of few men in history are richer in dramatic possibilities”²³⁰ than that of this remarkable son of a remarkable father.

Therefore, I acknowledge the myths for what they are and do not attempt a comprehensive life of the man, the legend, the hero.²³¹ This biography, as I stated at the outset, is about the frontier; my sources tell me about the methods used in Qing frontier-making and thus about the Great Enterprise itself, and how Manchus and seamen converged in an unlikely spot called Fujian. The mystique of Koxinga as avenger and Ming loyalist are not fruitless in this regard, as they reflected the politicization of Greater Fujian. “Myth is not necessarily falsehood, or fantasy,” writes Crossley, “It is a way of folding interpretations inside one another to create a coherent and if possible persuasive narrative of the origins of cultural authority or political power.”²³² The legend of the righteous avenger who awakened Manchuria to punish nefarious Ming officials had, after all, worked well for Nurhaci and spawned the early Qing conquest ideology. “It was in the manner of Chinggis Khan that, to avenge his father’s death, Nurhaci chose to pursue a

²²⁹ Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth, and the Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 9.

²³⁰ Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 44.

²³¹ One day, I hope, such a work may be attempted by a polymath up to the task. Keene said it best: “Coxinga survives to-day not in the treasures he once piled up, nor in the noses and ears he may once have caused to be cut off, nor even in the documents he addressed to his friends or enemies, but in the legends, the myths, and the works of artistry that have grown over his grave. [...] The cultural historian who attempts to give a complete picture of Coxinga’s life will thus have to take into account all that grew up around the man. This will still not be enough if he wishes to make of the subject a living creature [...] But there the historian will run the risk of turning dramatist, in the manner of his seventeenth-century predecessors. Then probably we shall have a Coxinga as distinctly for our age as Chikamatsu’s was for his.” (*The Battles of Coxinga*, 74-75)

²³² Crossley, *The Manchus*, 47-48.

path of military expansion, which eventually led him to unify the Jurchen tribes, abandon his ancestors' policy of coexistence with the Ming, and establish his own competing imperial enterprise."²³³

Koxinga could scarcely have denied the usefulness of the avenger myth to his own rise to leadership and the mobilization of Fujian, and in this, as well as the monopolistic mode of rule that he inherited from his father, lies his historical likeness to the Manchu khan. "When all else differs, what is in common stands out most clearly."²³⁴ Should we be surprised that competing imperial enterprises should clash, and that the boundaries they cut between one another were as important for each side as they were deadly for the people straddling the lines?

The Qing conquerors inadvertently helped Koxinga secure his power base by allowing the various Zheng battle leaders some breathing room in the years immediately following the capture of Zheng Zhilong. The Qing was too preoccupied with destroying the Southern Ming regimes of Regent Lu and the Yongli regime in south China to give much thought to a coastal zone where the people ate strange shellfish and lived on windswept crags in the sea. This gave Koxinga enough time to build up a power base on Amoy and offshore islands from which he retook his father's patrimony from his elders and clansmen. By the time the Qing refocused its attention on the Fujian theater, Koxinga had become his own kind of juggernaut.

Unit by unit, ship by ship, Koxinga pushed aside his rival clansmen and rebuilt his father's empire into a complex organization that warred for stockpiles and stockpiled for

²³³ Elliot, *The Manchu Way*, 54.

²³⁴ I.A. Richards, trans., *The Iliad of Homer* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950), Introduction, 8.

long-term war. Zheng Zhilong, the original seahero, had made use of African musketeers, explosives, and new kinds of Chinese warships that he had designed and refitted based on Portuguese and Dutch technology. To his father's musketeers, fireships, and men-o'-war, Koxinga eventually added cannons, pikemen, sand-fighting marines (who went barefoot and thus excelled in the morasses of coastal Fujian, which bogged down the Qing cavalry and infantry), bowmen more deadly than his gunners, and a class of special arms that were called "iron men"—fearsome fighters clad from head to knees in bulletproof iron plate and wielding those polearms that the Dutch called "soap knives": battle swords lashed to staves as long as a man. These last iron giants were marvels to friends and foes alike. Anyone who has spent time in Fujian needs hardly be reminded of the buggy, sweltering long summers and drenching rains, which, added to heavy plate armor, would have asphyxiated any ordinary footman; and here we have the origin of a pretty legend (enthusiastically promoted by Japanese writers) that these diehards must have been Japanese samurai, stronger and braver than even the Manchus, and rallying behind the half-Japanese hero, Koxinga.²³⁵

As if this were not enough, there were all sorts of fanatics, mercenaries, rogues, sailors, and slaves in Koxinga's army, which was motley like Hannibal's and as diverse as money could buy. Frederick Coyett, the Dutch governor of Taiwan whose misfortune it was to lose the colony to Koxinga in 1662, recalled that the seahero also had one class of shock troops whom Coyett likened to "mad dogs"—foot soldiers charging forward like

²³⁵ Ishihara Michihiro 石原道博, *Tei Seikō 鄭成功 [Koxinga]* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1942); Terao Yoshio 寺尾善雄, *Minmatsu no fūunji Tei Seikō 明末の風雲児鄭成功 [Koxinga: Last hero of the Ming]* (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoten, 1986), 109-110. It is documented that a number of Japanese ronin (roaming samurai) served as mercenaries in Asia, even as far south as Malacca, where they helped the Portuguese repel Dutch invaders.

lancers, who, “with bent heads and their bodies hidden behind shields, try to break through the opposing ranks with such fury and dauntless courage, as if each one still had a spare body left at home.”²³⁶ Koxinga was no Quijote like the bedizened old courtiers who had once jeered at his father; he carefully provisioned his fighting seamen and seawomen with a supply and spy network and a mercantile extraction system consisting of ten major trading combines (five land, five sea) and numerous subsidiaries in the major ports of China.²³⁷ Thus, like his father before him, Koxinga combined economics and leadership to master the frontier and its potential strengths.

The Qing forces were far from feeble or disorganized. They inherited the old Ming garrison system (*wei-suo*) along with all its strengths and weaknesses, and they applied themselves to the fight with vigor enough. In addition to their Banner troops, which consisted of Manchus, Mongols, and their Han transfrontier allies from the Northeast, the Qing conquest forces enlisted local Han Chinese as part of the garrison system of the Green Standard Army (patterned largely after the Ming military). The official roster of the Green Standard garrisons in Fujian was set in 1650 as follows:

²³⁶ Frederic Coyett, *Verwaarloosde Formosa* [Neglected Formosa], translated in William M. Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch: Described from Contemporary Sources* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1903 [Reprinted by Elibron Classics, 2006]), 420-421.

²³⁷ Yang Yanjie 杨彦杰, Zheng Chenggong bing'e yu junliang wenti “郑成功兵额与军粮问题”, *Xueshu yuekan* 学术月刊 (Aug. 1982). The land branches of 金, 木, 水, 火, 土 (named for the Five Elements) were planted in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, while the sea branches of 仁, 义, 礼, 智, 信 (named for Five Virtues) predominated in Fujian. Wei Qingyuan 韦庆远, “Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti 有关清初禁海和迁界的若干问题 [Problems of the maritime ban and the early Qing coastal evacuation],” in *Ming Qing luncong* 明清论丛 [Essays on the Ming and Qing dynasties], ed. Zhu Chengru 朱诚如 and Wang Tianyou 王天有 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2002), 196.

Table 3.1: The Green Standard Army in Fujian²³⁸

Region	Commander	Adjutants	No. of Soldiers
Fuzhou (capital)	Fujian Governor (巡抚)	8 officers	2000 (2 battalions)
Fuzhou (capital)	Fujian Commander-in-Chief (水陆提督)	8 officers	3000 (3 batt.)
Fuzhou prefecture	Fuzhou Naval Commander (水师)	8 officers	2000
Fuzhou pref.	Fuzhou Colonel (副将)	8 officers	3000 (3 batt.)
Fuzhou pref.	Min'an Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Fuzhou pref.	Changle Major (游击)	8 officers	1000
Funing pref.	Funing Colonel (副将)	7 officers	1800 (2 batt.)
Shaowu pref.	Shaowu Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Jianning pref.	Jianning Colonel (副将)	8 officers	3000 (3 batt.)
Yanping pref.	Yanping Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Tingzhou pref.	Tingzhou Brigade General (总兵)	8 officers	2000 (2 batt.)
Tingzhou pref.	Tingzhou Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Xinghua pref. (Putian)	Xinghua Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Quanzhou pref.	Quanzhou Brigade General (总兵)	8 officers	2000 (2 batt.)
Quanzhou pref.	Quanzhou Lt. Colonel (参将)	8 officers	1000
Quanzhou pref.	Tong'an Colonel (副将)	8 officers	2000
Zhangzhou pref.	Tongshan Brigade General (总兵)	8 officers	2000 (2 batt.)
Zhangzhou pref.	Zhangzhou Colonel (副将)	8 officers	3000 (3 batt.)
[Roving]	Extermination Brigade General (援剿总兵)	8 officers	2000 (2 batt.)
[Roving]	Central Brigade General (中路总兵)	8 officers	2000 (2 batt.)
Total			41,800 troops

Facing and picking apart these coordinated forces required Koxinga to master the arts of strategic attack and psychological warfare, of recruiting former foes and “frightening enemies into submission with calculated threats and impressive sample demonstrations of

²³⁸ *Qing shi gao* 清史稿, *Zhi* 志 j. 106, *Bing* 兵 j. 2.

force, rather than immediately, bluntly, and wastefully applying the fullest force available.²³⁹ He served notice to the Qing that almost any stationary garrison could be outrun and outwitted by mobile forces—it was the same lesson that the Wako pirates had taught the enforcers of the old Ming Seaban, and the same whipping that Nurhaci's Manchu raiders had dealt the Ming years before.

The new sealord's forces, multiplying from less than a hundred to tens of thousands, rapidly proved their mettle in battle against all rivals. In 1651 and carrying on into 1652, Koxinga and his men entered Haicheng port and blockaded the prefectural cities of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, effectively cutting off the richest and most powerful regions of southern Fujian.²⁴⁰ Though Koxinga narrowly failed to starve these cities into surrender and had to withdraw to his floating bastions, his assault shook Qing power in southern Fujian. The head of Chen Jin, the viceroy of Min-Zhe (i.e. Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, a political unit about the size of Great Britain), became his consolation prize! In 1654, Koxinga returned in greater force and conquered most of the territories of Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, and Xinghua prefectures (excepting their walled capitals), reaching almost to the perimeter of Fuzhou, the provincial capital.²⁴¹ Tong Guoqi, the governor of Fujian, appealed for Manchu reinforcements, and the court sent cannons and cavalry under Prince-in-Waiting Jidu with banners flying, as befit a royal of his station.²⁴²

²³⁹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 157.

²⁴⁰ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 23-26.

²⁴¹ *Ming Qing shiliao* 明清史料, 己編, vol. 3 [刑部殘題本] (repr. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 231-234; Wu Zhenglong 吳正龍, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan* 鄭成功與清政府間的談判 [*Koxinga's negotiations with the Qing state*] (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2000), 110.

²⁴² Jidu, a *shizi* (son of a Prince of the Blood of the first degree, designated thus until the full title of Prince was attained) was the second son of Jirgalang (1599-1655), a nephew of Nurhaci and one of the original regents of the Shunzhi emperor. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 397-398.

The following year, the sealord expanded his bases both north and south, conquering Zhoushan in Zhejiang and Jieyang in Chaozhou in Guangdong.²⁴³

In April 1656, Koxinga successfully repelled Jidu's attack on Amoy and Quemoy, helped by storms that pinned down the fledgling Qing fleet until his men reduced it to splinters. He mocked the Manchu prince by having the ears and noses of the captured Qing soldiers cut off and sent back to Jidu with his compliments. As Jidu returned to Beijing to lick his wounds, Koxinga's men proceeded in March 1657 to conquer Wenzhou (the major prefecture of southern Zhejiang province), using it as a springboard to capture the three counties of Haimenwei, Taiping, and Tiantai in Taizhou prefecture (central coastal Zhejiang).²⁴⁴ By this time, Koxinga had sent a flotilla of some 5,000 ships and 60,000 men northward to probe the northern coastal defenses of Zhejiang and the Yangzi Delta, while he personally campaigned in the northern coast of Fujian, wiping out a crack Qing force and collecting the heads of three veteran generals. However, cracks in his designs began to show, first in the north: the Qing recaptured the city of Zhoushan in 1656, burned it down, and depopulated the Zhoushan islands (a foreshadowing of what was to come); and then to the south: Qing forces in Fuzhou counterattacked in the autumn of 1657 and recovered the strategically vital mouth of the Min River.²⁴⁵ Koxinga withdrew to Amoy in September 1657 to launch a new training program.

²⁴³ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 121.

²⁴⁴ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 114-116.

²⁴⁵ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 182.

Table 3.2: Main Maritime Bases of the Koxinga²⁴⁶

Type	Base	District/County	Prefecture	Province
island	Xiamen (Amoy) 厦门	Tong'an	Quanzhou	Fujian
island	Jinmen (Quemoy) 金门	Tong'an	Quanzhou	Fujian
coastal	Haicheng 海澄	Haicheng	Zhangzhou	Fujian
coastal	Zhangpu 漳浦	Zhangpu	Quanzhou	Fujian
coastal	Tong'an 同安	Tong'an	Quanzhou	Fujian
coastal	Zhao'an 邵安	Zhao'an	Zhangzhou	Fujian
interior	Pinghe 平和	Pinghe	Zhangzhou	Fujian
interior	Changtai 长泰	Changtai	Zhangzhou	Fujian
island	Nan'ao 南澳	Chenghai 澄海	Chaozhou	Guangdong
coastal	Chaoyang 潮阳	Chenghai	Chaozhou	Guangdong
coastal	Jieyang 揭阳	Jieyang	Chaozhou	Guangdong
coastal	Tiantai 天台	Tiantai	Taizhou	Zhejiang
coastal	Taiping 太平	Wenling 温岭	Taizhou	Zhejiang
coastal	Haimenwei 海门卫	Haimenwei	Taizhou	Zhejiang
coastal	Panshiwei 盘石卫	Panshiwei	Wenzhou	Zhejiang

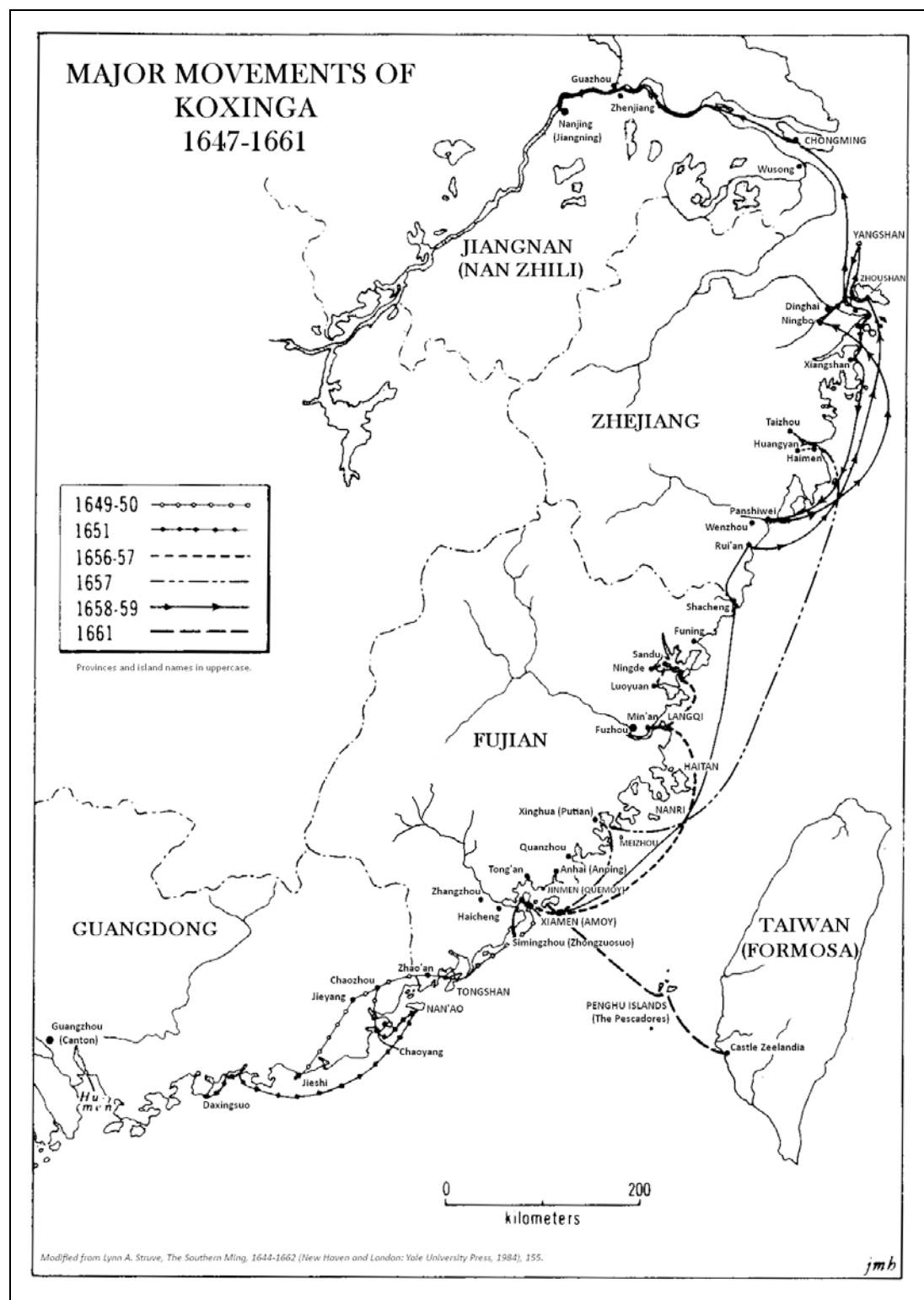
In April 1658, Koxinga's navy burst out of southern Fujian and conquered Chenghai in Guangdong province to the south, while another arm of his forces reached north to take several counties in Zhejiang: Xiangshan, Taizhou city, Haimenwei, Panshiwei, Weicheng, and Leqing.²⁴⁷ These maneuvers formed the third phase of a daring attempt to strike a body blow against the Qing in the economic heartland of the empire—a campaign that Lynn Struve observes never resolved itself into one single northern expedition, but was rather broken into halting and sometimes abortive efforts that can be divided in four main stages. Struve has given an admirable analysis of Koxinga's massive assault on Jiangnan, his audacious and arrogant show of force, and the reasons for his failure at the walls of Nanjing, which I will not attempt to repeat here

²⁴⁶ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 23, 152, 155; Lu Meisong 卢美松 (Fujian sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 福建省地方志编纂委员会), ed., *Fujian sheng lishi ditu ji* 福建省历史地图集 [Historical maps of Fujian] (Fuzhou: Fujian sheng ditu chubanshe, 2004), 74.

²⁴⁷ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 154.

in full.²⁴⁸ I provide a brief itinerary of the battles, bases, and reverses as background for the Qing attempts to deal with Koxinga, first diplomatically and then militarily. (See **Map 3.1** for an overview of the campaigns.)

²⁴⁸ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 182-189.



Map 3.1 – Major Movements of Koxinga, 1647-1661²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 155.

1659 was the year of the clash of kings. In May, Koxinga and his armada continued north along the coast of Zhejiang: fighting, training, and regrouping in Panshiwei, Liegang in the Zhoushan islands, the Yangshan islands, and Chongming island; in Jiangsu, his forces landed and cut through Wusonggang and Jiangyin. It was perhaps the single largest amphibious landing of the Ming-Qing war and one of the largest coordinated land-to-sea maneuvers of the 17th century. Overconfident, even arrogant now, Koxinga (who was normally cautious and secretive of his military plans) virtually challenged the Qing to a duel: “Have you any men left as whetted for battle as Chen Jin’s troops once were? But where is Chen Jin now? Where are his elite fighters?” he had written mockingly to Fujian Governor Tong Guoqi back in 1655, rubbing in the fact of his previous victories (Koxinga likely still kept Chen’s head as a trophy). “Let the Qing pick from its ragtag Eight Banners and transport more feeble soldiers from southern Zhejiang. [...] My troops will seize the Yangzi and Huai deltas and cut [the lifeline between] the South and North, and soon we will watch as your capital region dies!”²⁵⁰

Tong Guoqi was not frightened. The streetwise bannerman hit back: “Crawling around on the seashore, you can neither see nor hear very far. [...] You mistake your poor, isolated chain of islands for a Great Wall, and you imagine that your ships and oars can preserve you like magic charms! How wrong you are grows obvious the more conceited and extravagant you become.”²⁵¹ Rhetorically, they were at an impasse. Nevertheless, the message was clear: Koxinga had thrown down the gauntlet, and he gave the Qing ample notice of his comings and goings in 1658 and 1659. He appears to have adopted at

²⁵⁰ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 73-75.

²⁵¹ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 76-77.

every stage a slow pace of movement, nonchalantly giving the Qing defenders time to prepare. This puzzling behavior from someone who was otherwise an able tactician could be explained as simple hauteur from a man at the apex of his power, but I agree more with Struve's assessment that Koxinga probably "wanted a maximally large battle so that he could win a maximally large victory,"²⁵² and so strike terror and awe into the hearts of millions. After ten years of preparation and accumulating war materiel, the sealord was ready to move from surprise raids and attrition to an epochal showdown. His father Zheng Zhilong had done it before him, biding his time to win maximal triumphs (as against Liu Xiang in 1635, or the Dutch at Liaoluo Bay in 1633), though admittedly on a smaller scale and with perhaps more charm and acumen. Koxinga apparently saw this as his hour of destiny, his chance to deliver a coup de grâce, a feat for the ages. *Exegi monumentum aere perennius!* Such hubris spurred him to attempt to answer the Great Enterprise with one of his own.²⁵³

In Beijing, capital of the Great Qing Empire, people trembled as word of Koxinga's assault on the southern capital fanned through the rumor mill, his troop numbers inflating with the babble of scuttlebutt. *Two* hundred thousand? *Three*? A French account written from missionary records in 1671, just over a decade after the clash, claimed (no doubt with great exaggeration): "La consternation estoit si grande dans Pekim, que les Tartares traitoient déjà d'abandonner la Chine & de s'en retourner en

²⁵² Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 185.

²⁵³ "Occupying only a strip of coastal land, Ch'eng-kung [Koxinga] brought forth a political alternative bidding for the control of China," says Young-tsu Wong, in "Security and Warfare on the China Coast: The Taiwan Question in the Seventeenth Century," 138.

Tartarie.”²⁵⁴ Even an envoy from the Joseon dynasty of Korea to the Qing court breathed the air of fear.²⁵⁵ If Koxinga could deliver on his threat to sack Nanjing and cut the Grand Canal (the lifeline of grain and taxes), then Beijing might really starve.

The Shunzhi emperor (1638-1661), grandson of Nurhaci, was then a fiery romantic of 21 who relied on Buddhism to calm his violent temper. The emperor had generally treated Zheng Zhilong with courtesy, as befit a “surrendered” noble—and this against the wishes of his more conservative ministers, who wanted the caged dragon beheaded at once. As a “guest” of the Shunzhi court, Zheng spent his enforced retirement at first under a comfortable and then a more restricted house arrest, and finally languishing in chains and in poverty after negotiations with Koxinga broke down in 1654. Ten years after his betrayal in Fuzhou, Zheng seemed to have outlived his usefulness, but still the emperor pitied him.²⁵⁶ Now, hearing what Zheng’s son was up to, Emperor Shunzhi went berserk, howling that he would personally fight his way to the walls of Nanjing and crush Koxinga. Those who opposed this act of royal rage—including his mother Empress Dowager Borjigid-*shi* (herself a descendant of Genghis Khan)—watched

²⁵⁴ Adrien Greslon, *Histoire de la Chine sous la Domination des Tartares* (Paris, 1671), p. 8, quoted in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 50. I scarcely imagine, however, that the Manchus were ready to flee in terror back to Manchuria, despite the similar claims of Fr. Riccio in 1673: “The great fear and foreboding that Cuesing sowed in the seas [...] resounded through the royal court of Beijing, proclaiming notoriety greater than what reality can invent, causing such awe in the entire court that the emperor Xunchi [Shunzhi] would have fled, had the daring and spirit of his major allies not stopped him.” Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 595.

²⁵⁵ Terao Yoshio, *Minmatsu no fūunji Tei Seikō*, 139.

²⁵⁶ In 1657, when both the Board of War and the Council of Princes and Deliberative Officials (*yizheng wang beile dachen*) formally petitioned for Zheng Zhilong’s execution, the emperor overruled them, saying simply that it was “against Our wishes.” *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* 清世祖實錄選輯, TW 158 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1963) [repr. Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1997], 130.

as the emperor snatched a sword and hacked up one of his wooden thrones.²⁵⁷ The Jesuit priest Adam Schall, himself something of a fighter,²⁵⁸ interceded to help calm him down.

The Qing defense forces, for their part, had prepared a riverine fortress worthy of such an amphibious onslaught as the empire had never before seen. The wide delta of the Yangzi, the longest river in Asia and the world's third longest, was barricaded with massive chains, scuttled hulks of ships, and special cannon barges—floating fortresses bristling with cannon and shot and tied with iron links to rocks and mid-channel islands—to stop the armada. Any army would have quailed at the sight. Collectively, the mighty fortifications were known as the *gunjianglong*, literally the “rolling river dragon,”²⁵⁹ and indeed its appearance gave the armada pause at the river's mouth. But it was not enough. Koxinga's forces spent three days praying to Heaven, Earth, and the gods and emperors on high before hurling a savage assault that broke through the watery Maginot Line and allowed them to seize the strategic points of Guazhou and Zhenjiang in early August. The guns on the river were silenced. The all-important Grand Canal was ripe for the taking, and with careful planning and the building of a strong local base of support, Jiangnan could be turned into a beachhead for illimitable designs. So urged his aides, but Koxinga ignored them and did not capitalize on the opportunity to win over Jiangnan.²⁶⁰ Koxinga now seemed to be stubbornly fixated on a single pearl: Nanjing, the old and symbolic Ming capital.

²⁵⁷ Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, under *Fu-lin* entry, 257.

²⁵⁸ Father Schall had distinguished himself in battle—if you can imagine a Jesuit priest brandishing a sword and blasting his enemies to the hereafter with round shot—in the defense of Macau against a Dutch invasion in 1622. See C.R. Boxer, “The 24th of June 1622: A Portuguese Feat of Arms,” in *Estudos para a História de Macau, Séculos XVI a XVIII* (Lisboa: Fundação Oriente, 1991), 43-102.

²⁵⁹ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 146-147.

²⁶⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 187-188.

On August 24, 1659, the invasion force arrived at the high walls of Nanjing. Twelve years had passed since the fall of the Southern Ming capital, and Koxinga had now reached the pinnacle of his military strength and his capability for striking a serious (if not mortal) blow to China's economic heartland. But over the next two weeks, presuming that the Qing garrison in Nanjing would surrender to his overwhelming numerical superiority, he did not launch any serious attacks. His closest strategists urged him to assault the city immediately and overwhelm its meager garrison, but Koxinga took his sweet time, even going so far as to allow his troops to celebrate his birthday and drink themselves into oblivion. With over 85,000 infantry and a total invasion force numbering probably between 150,000-200,000, perhaps Koxinga felt that time was on his side. This waiting game, which he undertook against the advice of his best generals, proved disastrous, as it gave the Qing defenders time to regroup and gain reinforcements.²⁶¹ To his dismay, on September 9, Qing soldiers charged out of Nanjing, bolstered by banner troops in Jiangsu and crack units from the southwest theater who had arrived in time to turn the tide of battle. Koxinga's infantry, grown lax from the siege, were routed by the Qing counterattack; his navy, though unscathed, was busy transporting the surviving foot soldiers to safety; and Gan Hui, his best general, friend, and counselor, was killed while bravely covering the retreat. Koxinga wept.²⁶²

By September 14, 1659, the embattled seahero had begun a general retreat from the Yangzi river delta, returning to his headquarters at Amoy in the following month. He gave up the dearly-won citadels of Guazhou and Zhenjiang, but still held control of

²⁶¹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 187.

²⁶² "Oh, if only I had listened to Gan Hui!" he cried. Terao Yoshio, *Minmatsu no fūunji Tei Seikō*, 131-132.

Zhoushan, Taizhou, and Wenzhou in Zhejiang province.²⁶³ However, his immediate concern was to prepare for an imminent Qing counterattack. His naval units were seaworthy, but morale had been seriously damaged by the debacle at the walls of Nanjing, and Koxinga's mystique had begun to fade. Clearly, he was no longer invincible. In April 1660, the reinvigorated Qing command under Prince Dasu assembled joint naval troops from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Guangdong in the port of Quanzhou, including sailors, marines, and five hundred local warships led by Huang Wu and Shi Lang (prominent defectors from Koxinga's side) in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou. On June 17, the Qing started a general attack on Amoy island, hoping to crush the seaford in one swoop.

Koxinga and his navy were not beaten yet. Amoy (Xiamen) was his castle in the sea, the last of his inheritance. "The island is a gunshot away, separating the sea from the dry land of this empire," wrote Riccio, the peregrinating friar who led the small island church. "There, Nature creates a port that can take in all the world's naval fleets, something admirable and enticing, which I believe is second to nothing in the world."²⁶⁴ The Qing fleet, swelled with defectors and outnumbering Koxinga's forces two-to-one, made a pincer attack from the north and west. Over a thousand ships clashed in the narrow strait separating Amoy from the coast. "Thus broke out the fiercest and most dreadful battle ever fought in the Orient seas," continues our priestly witness, who stood transfixed on the beach, his eyes fixed on the battle, his voice lifted upwards in prayers to God. "[...] This terrible struggle made the sea turn blood red, with the dead and the

²⁶³ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 156.

²⁶⁴ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 589. I agree: I have gone swimming and boating in the seas surrounding Amoy, and I think it is one of the finest natural deep-water harbors in China.

dying. [...] Masts snapped in two, destroying ships; there was a heavy rain of arrows; lances and cannons fell; mountains of fire exploded. Combatants howled, the dying cried out; there was the chaotic blare of bugles, the rumble of war drums, the clanging of bassinets; add to this the volley of gunfire. It was a picture of a real life hell, filled with repulsive fumes, desperate screams and grotesque and frightful confusion of men.”²⁶⁵

When the smoke lifted, the priest stopped reciting his Holy Rosaries against the “Tartars.” The island had been saved.

For weeks after this carnage, “the beaches of Hiamuen (Amoy) were covered with rotting bodies and naval spoils that the flux and surge of the sea would daily cast on the shores.”²⁶⁶ The Qing fleet was shattered, and like Jidu before him, Prince Dasu limped home in shame, leaving the sea to swallow the wreckage of his defeat. Some accounts of the battle even report that, humiliated beyond suffering, Dasu committed suicide by the ritual method of “swallowing gold” (*tunjin*).²⁶⁷ Koxinga again ordered that the hands, ears, and noses of captured Qing soldiers be cut off and delivered to the Qing along with a woman’s handkerchief, challenging them to do better next time.²⁶⁸ But this was whistling in the dark: in truth, Koxinga knew that the time for posturing and negotiations had passed, and that the Qing, having destroyed its other pressing enemies, could now throw every available resource into hunting him down. His coastal bases could not

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 597. The original rolls more gracefully, “...representaba al vivo un espantoso infierno....”

²⁶⁶ Juan Ferrando, *Historia de los PP Dominicos*, vol. III (Madrid, 1871), 65-66, quoted in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 52.

²⁶⁷ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 172-177; Ruan Minxi 阮旻锡, *Haishang jianwenlu dingben* 海上见闻录定本, ed. Xiamen Zheng Chenggong jinianguan (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1982), 41-43. 17th-century writer Xia Lin concurs, adding that Dasu killed himself in Fuzhou. Xia Lin 夏琳, *Minhai jiyao* 閩海紀要 [Chronicle on the Fujian seas] (*Taiwan wenxian congkan 11, reprint*) (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1995 [1968]), 26.

²⁶⁸ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 162; Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 189.

withstand repeated assaults, nor could his islands if the Qing wished to press the matter. And Friar Riccio had not been mistaken—Amoy *was* only a gunshot away, and the winds were changing. Whether it took one year or ten, the enemy would come.

The Negotiators

The military solution had not been the only option tried by the new government in Beijing. During the ten years of off-and-on battle against the sealords, the Qing leadership had made vigorous attempts to negotiate a settlement with Koxinga or his kinsmen. Further, they seemed to realize that the act of capturing Zheng Zhilong in 1646, far from helping their conquest of southeast China, had actually hurt the Qing reputation and alienated the powerful surviving clansmen who still controlled the seas. It would be a mistake to kill Zheng; but setting him free was out of the question.

And so, the Qing adopted a middle-of-the-way approach and placed Zheng under a comfortable house arrest in Beijing, free to wine and dine as befit a marquis and write to his family (though his communications were, of course, monitored by the authorities).²⁶⁹ So long as Zheng-family seamen were still at large, Qing leaders hoped that the old sealord could act as a go-between and convince his relatives to accept the new regime, thus saving lives and years of battle in the marshes, bogs, and islands. A non-combative solution was also desirable because the lion's share of the conquest army was tied down fighting the Yongli loyalist regime in the west and southwest. Qing forces

²⁶⁹ Some of these communications are recorded in Xiamen daxue Taiwan yanjiusuo 厦门大学台湾研究所 and Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan 中国第一历史档案馆, ed., *Zheng Chenggong dang'an shiliao xuanji* 郑成功档案史料选辑 [*Collected archival materials on Koxinga*] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1985), 171-174, and *passim*.

held back from violating the Zheng ancestral tombs in southern Fujian and generally refrained from hostile actions against the coastal strongholds to give their negotiators time to work their wiles. Thus, for some time after the fall of the Longwu regime and the personal disaster of Zheng Zhilong, the various Zheng factions and their seamen were able to maintain a strong presence in coastal Fujian.²⁷⁰

At the urging of his temporarily benign captors, Zheng Zhilong wrote letters from Beijing urging his son to pay the Qing envoys proper respect and to consider surrendering on reasonable terms. From 1652 to 1659 (*Yongli 6-13*), a total of 46 letters and proposals were exchanged: 17 from Koxinga and 29 from the Qing side (eleven of them edicts from the Shunzhi emperor himself). The Qing side's bargaining chip was Zheng Zhilong; Koxinga's bargaining chip was the continued existence of the Yongli regime of the Southern Ming. The fortunes of the Qing forces battling the Yongli emperor in the west bore greatly on the level of Qing patience and desire to reach a separate truce with Koxinga. Also, keeping Zheng Zhikong alive proved directly useful on at least one occasion. In 1651, during a daring raid on Amoy, Qing commander Ma Degong was trapped by the seafarer's brother Hongkui, but was spared for fear that killing Ma would invite reprisals against the elder Zheng, held hostage in Beijing.²⁷¹

When the Qing negotiators approached Koxinga, they presumed that they were parleying with a man just like his father: from their perspective a dirty scoundrel, but even without the pejoratives, a man of sheer practicality (as psychologist William James might have put it, a tough, not a tender mind). And perhaps that is what he was, at base;

²⁷⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 109-110.

²⁷¹ Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office [Reprinted by SMC Publishing, 2002, Taipei, Taiwan], 1943), under Cheng Hung-k'uei entry, 112.

but on top of that, Koxinga exhibited the tempestuousness of one wounded in love, and he built (or had built for him) a romantic superstructure of legends and loyalty, passionate intensity and manifest destiny. He donned the mantle of the aggrieved frontiersman and righteous avenger and thus took on many of the qualities of the Qing conquerors whom he assailed. As is often the case in history, the bitterest quarrels are between similars who cannot excuse their surface differences; and Koxinga's stubbornness and cholera were legendary. To the seahorse's mythmaking, we might add a sketch from Riccio: "He was by nature (half-Japanese) strong, courageous, vindictive, and cruel. No weapon was there that he did not expertly wield. He handled the cannon, the lance, the halberd, and sword, with equal dexterity as the *afanje*,²⁷² the arrow, the harquebus, and the musket. He shoots a gun with as much precision as the most skilled artilleryman. His spirit was such that he was always at the front line of the battles fought against his enemies. His body has received its fill of bullets and wounds that his captains and friends would come to his aid so as not to lose their lord in a blow, he on whom they and the armies of the Empire depended. He was of proportionate stature, fairer than the pure Chinese, with a severe and grave countenance and a voice as powerful as a lion."²⁷³ Such was the man who would be prince.

The Shunzhi emperor appointed Liu Qingtai to succeed the hapless Chen Jin (whose head adorned Koxinga's list of battle trophies) as the new viceroy of Fujian and Guangdong. On November 9, 1652, the emperor directed Viceroy Liu to begin reconciliations with Koxinga: "Some years ago, as We know, our Grand Army entered

²⁷² No doubt he means the *alfanje*, a curved broadsword like a scimitar or Spanish cutlass, with a curved blade that broadens to the point and ranges from 70 cm to over a meter long.

²⁷³ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 589.

Fujian, and Zheng Zhilong led the way in pledging his fealty to Us. How could Zheng's own son [Koxinga] and younger brother [Zheng Hongkui] revolt and abandon their patriarch and brother? It must be because local officials misunderstood Our wishes and bungled the matter.²⁷⁴ [...] And so, Koxinga and the others have rebelled out of fear and mistrust. What is more, Zheng Zhilong has been obedient for some time now; how could We bear to slaughter his son and brother, who are also Our subjects? If Koxinga and the others will now return to the fold, then they can be directly employed at sea. Why should they have to come up to the capital?"²⁷⁵ The edict continued that Koxinga would be given a free hand in maritime affairs: ridding the coast of pirates, directing all ocean vessels, collecting tariffs and revenues, and so on; and other rewards would follow if he would help destroy the Ming pretenders and minor maritime warlords. The sea would be, so to speak, his oyster, if only he would submit.

The Qing side thus made the following conciliatory moves: they dismissed Fujian governor Zhang Xuesheng, provincial judge Ma Degong, and two other officials in Fujian who had been responsible for the dastardly raid on Amoy in 1651;²⁷⁶ they also released several prisoners of war. Further, they awarded Koxinga the title of Duke of Haicheng (*Haicheng gong*). He had only to properly shave his hair (i.e., meet the requirement of all subjects to shave the forehead and braid the hair back to a Manchu-style queue as a mark of submission to the Qing dynasty) and come collect his reward.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ An interesting reading of Prince Bolo's manhandling of Zheng Zhilong in 1646.

²⁷⁵ *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* (TW 158), 75.

²⁷⁶ The raid had been both calamity and opportunity for Koxinga. While it had wreaked great harm to Amoy and his store of treasure, it also catapulted Koxinga to single-handed mastery of his organization. In the aftermath of the raid, Koxinga executed his uncle Zheng Zhiguan and coerced his uncle Zheng Hongkui into retirement. There would be no more power sharing.

²⁷⁷ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 68.

The sealord was not impressed. At first, he demanded everything that the Qing had once promised his father—the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong—and more: the right to station troops and levy from Zhejiang. The Qing offer of a maritime monopoly was only “granting” him what he already had (why would he kneel for this?), and besides, he had already conquered Haicheng on his own. Surely they thought to cheat him. The most basic of Koxinga’s terms was control of the whole of Fujian: he would not subordinate himself to any provincial governor or viceroy. He also claimed the right to station troops and levy grain in seven prefectures outside of Fujian: Chaozhou and Huizhou in Guangdong; Wenzhou, Taizhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, and Chuxing in Zhejiang. Some of these were already in his hands, while others indicated the scope of his ambitious economic sphere. Finally, most daring of all, he wanted state recognition of his principedom by the sea. Fujian would follow the classic example of tributary states like the kingdoms of Annam (Vietnam) or Korea—he and his men would keep their hair and their autonomy.²⁷⁸ Duke of Haicheng was too low a title; he needed a title as high as the princely Three Feudatories (*fanwang*).

Basically, he was asking for *three provinces*, or the entire southeastern seaboard, and a special status for his people within the Qing tributary order. The Shunzhi emperor declined to be so generous. The Qing counteroffer stated that the emperor was pleased to grant Koxinga the following rewards *after* he shaved his head: the territories of four prefectures: Quanzhou and Zhangzhou in southern Fujian, and Huizhou and Chaozhou in eastern Guangdong (but significantly, not Fuzhou, the political capital of Fujian). He

²⁷⁸ “不剃发, 行政自主, 奉清年号, 遣子为质, 节庆进贡, 相互通婚, 派兵协助明朝。” Gu Cheng 顾诚, *Nan Ming shi* 南明史, 752-755; Zheng Chenggong zhi luan “郑成功之乱” in *Luqiao jiwén* 鹿樵纪闻, 60.

would have complete control of his own personnel as long as he reported the list to the court; however, he would be prohibited from interfering with local judicial operations and required to submit regular taxes just like the other provinces in the empire (meaning: his jurisdiction would still answer to the provincial governor). His title of Duke of Haicheng would be supplemented with the rank of General who Pacifies the Sea (*Jinghai jiangjun*).²⁷⁹

Koxinga again spurned such an arrangement, saying that he dealt in *provinces*, not prefectures, and again suggesting the example of a separate polity like Korea. In early spring 1654, Koxinga was summoned to Fuzhou to officially receive the Qing titles, but he did not go, sending only envoys (recalling, no doubt, of what had happened to his father eight years earlier). Even his envoys refused to kneel down to receive the imperial edicts in what they considered their home territory;²⁸⁰ one can imagine how the Qing representatives took this sort of *lèse majesté*.

The negotiations were almost doomed to failure by the haughty and pugnacious stances of both parties. Koxinga would feast the negotiators but refuse their proclamations; the Qing officials declined to see Koxinga without first seeing his new haircut. Tong Guoqi (by then transferred to Jiangxi, but still watchful of the proceedings) voiced his suspicion to the emperor that even their hostage Zheng Zhilong was only pretending to exhort his son to surrender and was really helping him milk the situation.²⁸¹ Metropolitan Censor Wang Yongji urged the court to stop talking and start sharpening

²⁷⁹ Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 67. In the official hierarchy, a *jiangjun* (Tartar General, first rank) was higher than a *tidu* (Provincial Commander in Chief, second rank).

²⁸⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 163.

²⁸¹ 佟国器为报明缉获郑芝龙书札告示事揭帖 (SZ 13.8), in *Zheng Chenggong dang'an shiliao xuanji* [Collected archival materials on Koxinga], 171-174.

their swords: “How dare he presume ownership of Fujian and Guangdong? [...] He is arrogant and ambitious, fierce and audacious—plainly only coercion will work. [...] Koxinga will surely bring disaster to the southeast.”²⁸² The Qing emissaries threatened reprisals on Zheng Zhilong if Koxinga would not cooperate. Koxinga replied that he would not accept any threats, and that if harm should befall his father, he would simply put on white mourning garments and take revenge (*gaosu baoguo*). He later wrote to his father: “The Qing treat defectors with all manner of suspicion and never carry through [with their promises]. Who does not know this? First they show you courtesy, then they view you as prey—it boils down to one word: threats. I am not a man who can be threatened!”²⁸³

The talks finally broke down in November 1654, and the envoys returned to Beijing to report the failure and complain about Koxinga’s perfidy. Both parties seem to have felt the other untrustworthy and insolent (the word “sincerity” shows up countless times in the documents). The sealord’s arrogation of sovereign powers was intolerable to a Manchu court intent on reconstructing the Chinese imperial order.²⁸⁴ Earlier that year, the court had issued Koxinga an edict of frustration about his greed and insincerity: “Always, the heroic and wise followed sincere lords, utterly devoting themselves and never wavering, and in this way attaining great fame and achievements. Never was there a heart of suspicion or a wait-and-see attitude—this is simply clear sight of destiny and the times. [...] As We have treated you with all sincerity, you should shave your hair and

²⁸² 王永吉为密陈郑成功将为东南大患事揭帖 (SZ 11.4), in *Zheng Chenggong dang'an shiliao xuanji* [Collected archival materials on Koxinga], 89.

²⁸³ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 107.

²⁸⁴ A dangerous precedent, however, had already been set with the Three Feudatories, and the issue would come back to haunt the Qing in the great revolt of 1673-1681.

stop scheming. But now, despite receiving rewards, you still do not shave your hair, but rather desire to snatch all of Fujian. [...] Your words are contradictory, your demands insatiable. [...] Think carefully of the consequences, or you will regret it!”²⁸⁵

For his part, Koxinga complained that the Qing emissaries had not treated him with proper respect, nor had they been sincere in offering him the territories he needed to support his people. They were unwilling to pay the price for genuine peace. Koxinga wrote to his father: “I requested more land in which to settle my hundreds of thousands of troops and rebuild [this war-torn region] on a solid foundation. How could they say that I was ‘speaking obstructively and making vain and insatiable demands?’ [...] If the Qing court wants talented men [like me] to strengthen the frontier, then they should not be stingy with land. If I am to restore peace and livelihood and appease my generals and fighting men, I must have land. But now the Qing is obstinately finding fault [with my refusal] on the matter of shaving the hair. Who has ever seen a man hasten to submit before he has received his land, or hastily shave his hair before proclaiming his submission? Who has ever felt obliged [to give up his welfare] when the other side has not made sincere offers? Who has ever heard of putting trust in a man’s hair, not in his heart? [...] A man of honor is candid, never equivocating. If the Qing were able to trust my word, then I would be a subject of the Qing; but because they do not trust me, I stay a subject of the Ming.”²⁸⁶ Koxinga also had some sharp words for his father: “On the

²⁸⁵ 敕諭鄭成功稿 (SZ 11.6.28), in *Zheng Chenggong dang'an shiliao xuanji* [Collected archival materials on Koxinga], 102; also in *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* (TW 158), 100-101.

²⁸⁶ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 65-66.

surface, the Qing have been treating you respectfully, [...] but clearly they want to use you to constrain me. Do I look like a man who can be constrained?”²⁸⁷

Clearly, two could play the game of righteous indignation. Koxinga’s ambitions were perplexing and troubling to the Qing. Did the sealord ever attempt these negotiations in earnest? It is hard to say. Worldly as he was, he understood that it two months to go back and forth by land from Fujian to Beijing; and since he controlled the sea-lanes, he hardly felt obliged to help speed up the messages or allow the Qing envoys to go by ship. Quite to the contrary, he could pillage the coast and succor his army maximally during such delays, especially because of the Qing promises to withdraw troops during the negotiations. And this he did by “employing a variety of tactics, from simply trouncing petty satraps and bullying their ilk into client status to presenting gifts and greetings to gentry leaders who had taken refuge in the hills.”²⁸⁸ But what if the Qing really had offered him—if not the impossible three provinces—at least a bigger part of the territorial and tributary autonomy he desired? One can hardly be sure that he would have categorically rejected such an offer. John Wills doubts that he ever seriously considered the negotiations as anything other than a chance to consolidate his position on the coast, and maybe this was so,²⁸⁹ and irrespective of his loyalty, it is clear that Koxinga emerged much stronger after the negotiations, whereas the Qing spent time and energy only to lose ground.²⁹⁰ As long as Koxinga could collect provisions, he profited regardless of the outcome.

²⁸⁷ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 67.

²⁸⁸ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 162.

²⁸⁹ Wills, “Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World,” 187.

²⁹⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 161.

Most writers, both at the time and especially those later involved in creating his hagiography as a Chinese nationalist hero, hastened to declare Koxinga a paragon of loyalty (just as they cursed Zheng Zhilong as a Judas) who merely used the negotiations to support the Ming cause.²⁹¹ Certainly, at the time, the Ming loyalists looked up to him, and he was not averse to their hero worship; but Koxinga also basked in the glow of profit and power. As with his father, we would do him too little justice if we insist on seeing these things as mutually exclusive. Probably, Koxinga would have admitted no contradiction—he himself was the star unifying these disparate purposes. As he frankly admitted to his father, he was *not* a man who could be constrained; and to his half-brother Zheng Du, he wrote: “Tigers and panthers live in the deep mountains, and all creatures fear them. But once they fall into a caged trap, they know that they are powerless and wag their tails for mercy. A phoenix soars high in the air and freely travels the universe [...] How could I give up being a phoenix to being a [caged] tiger or panther?”²⁹²

Back in 1646, Koxinga had refused to join the coastal regime of Regent Lu (bucking the trend of most former Longwu officials), preferring to pledge himself to the distant and hardly competent Yongli emperor out west. We cannot know if this was based on loyalty (the late Longwu emperor treated Regent Lu as a rival) or a tactical decision to give himself more space for his personal designs (paying court to Regent Lu would hamper his movements). Again, there is no reason why it could not have been both. I agree with Struve that Koxinga tended to act on directives from the Yongli court only when it suited his own plans, and that “in the Southeast the symbolic presence but

²⁹¹ See Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism*, 20-25, for a good discussion of this.

²⁹² Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 62.

actual absence of a Ming court gave [Koxinga] the flexibility and independence that he needed to successfully conflate his own interests with those of the Ming, and to perform at his best for the loyalist cause.”²⁹³ The interior of the seafarer’s mind is largely closed to us, but his image as a crusader for a dying cause did not dissolve the love of independence that had nurtured his father and all his Fujianese seamen.²⁹⁴ And, as Ralph Croizier says, “because such an image was politically useful one cannot be entirely sure about the man’s motives. If Koxinga never sacrificed the Ming cause, he also never had occasion to sacrifice any of his own power or interests for it.” After all, “more than one new Chinese emperor started out laboring in the cause of a fallen dynasty and ended up founding his own.”²⁹⁵

The material outcome was somewhat clearer. The Qing, which was focused on fighting warlord Li Dingguo and his protectorate, the Yongli court in the southwest, preferred to negotiate in Fujian while cutting the connections between Koxinga and the retreating Yongli regime. Meanwhile, Koxinga’s troops went inland and extracted a large quantity of silver and grain. In Zhangzhou and Quanzhou alone he procured 1.8 million silver taels; and we can speculate that he squeezed much more from Chaozhou, Huizhou, Fuzhou, and Xinghua prefectures. Koxinga’s troops swelled from some 70,000 to upwards of 180,000.²⁹⁶ This may account for his increasing arrogance in dealing with the Qing negotiators. Pride and prejudice narrowed the opportunities for meaningful

²⁹³ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 156.

²⁹⁴ E.B. Vermeer writes, “Overseas trade and migration, internal and external warfare, colonial expansion, economic decline, love of independence, a strong religious belief, receptiveness to foreign influences and regional diversity were and still are the hall marks of Fukien.” Eduard B., Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), 6.

²⁹⁵ Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism*, 23.

²⁹⁶ Yang Yanjie, “Zheng Chenggong bing’e yu junliang wenti,” 8.

communication and compromise between the Qing frontiersmen and the sealord—so alien to each other and yet so alike.

Lonely are the brave

The talks ultimately broke down in 1654. Zheng Zhilong (who had failed to bring his son to allegiance—nay, was even accused of leaking information to help his son grow in power) was clapped in irons and banished to Ningguta in the far north. And since Ningguta was close enough to water that the Qing worried the sly fox might slip free, or that Fujianese sailors might try a daring rescue (presumably through Korea?), Zheng was ordered triple-manacled and watched by Manchu bannermen.²⁹⁷

He never seems to have made it all the way to Ningguta, for European visitors to China recorded him as passing his last years in the capital, poor and pitifully chained. The sealord, whom Belgian Jesuit François de Rougemont recalled as rich and generous enough back in 1648 to erect a chapel in Beijing for the Jesuit fathers and supply them with a house, money, and servants,²⁹⁸ was now more destitute and lonely than he had been as a teenager in Macau or at any other time in his life. Stripped of all honors, friends, and hope, Zheng was reduced to begging for charity from the Jesuit fathers to whom he had once been an unstinting friend. “The wretched man, in such great solitude, began to feel want [... and] the Fathers could not bear not to help him, especially as he had asked it of them. [...] Therefore, they sent very friendly messages to him, and about ten gold pieces, which was surely a great gift, considering the poverty of the senders.

²⁹⁷ *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* (TW 158), 132-133. Court record of September 12, 1657 (SZ 14.8.5).

²⁹⁸ François de Rougemont, *Relaçãõ do Estado politico e espirital do imperio da China, pellos annos de 1659 ate o de 1666* (Lisbon, 1672), 23, 43, cited in Boxer, “The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan,” 438.

Nicolaus²⁹⁹ was amazed and moved to tears. ‘Who would expect,’ he said, ‘such faith from foreigners? But if it is granted to me to be restored to my former fortunes, I shall not be ungrateful.’³⁰⁰ But it was not to be: the man who had once launched a thousand ships would never have a chance to repay the small kindnesses of foreigners from afar.

Having failed as negotiators, the Qing returned to their capacity as killers. In 1655 Prince-in-Waiting Jidu was ordered to crush the sealord who presumed he could bargain with emperors. Koxinga and the Qing “clearly held very different views of what it meant to enter into negotiations.” As for what Koxinga really wanted, “it seems to have been some sort of semiautonomous or suzerain realm [...] composed most ideally of the three maritime provinces of Fujian, Zhejiang, and Guangdong. [...] Whether he envisioned such a realm as permanently at peace with the Qing, or as a place to wait and plot for a Ming restoration, is impossible to say. In any case, the Qing court regarded such an idea as totally outrageous.”³⁰¹

Both sides were outraged. The final negotiation attempt came in 1659 (*Yongli 13*), following Koxinga’s debacle at Nanjing, this time initiated by the sealord. On September 27, Koxinga sent his officer Cai Zheng to Beijing to negotiate with the court. By that time, the Yongli regime was being routed in the west, and Koxinga’s defeat at Nanjing had turned the tide of the war. The Qing court, no longer willing to compromise, insisted that Koxinga shave his head immediately as sign of surrender. Koxinga could not agree to this (though he seemed to give some indication that he could accept some of the other

²⁹⁹ Zheng’s Christian name, Nicholas Gaspard Iquan.

³⁰⁰ François de Rougemont, *Historia Tartaro-Sinica nova* (Lovanii, 1673), cited in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 65.

³⁰¹ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 165-166.

terms).³⁰² There was nothing left to say. In June of the following year, Prince Dasu's army and navy launched their extermination campaign on Amoy, which, though a failure, presaged more to come.

In 1660, the Qing concluded the failed talks by executing Ma Jinbao, Provincial Commander in Chief of Jiangsu, by *lingchi*: “the death of a thousand cuts.” Ma Jinbao had served as the mediator in the negotiations between the Qing and Koxinga and bore the blame for the failures and lost time.³⁰³ *Lingchi* was the most painful of executions in the Legal Code (we will see examples of other brutal, nonstandard executions in the next section), a slow slicing and cauterizing that began at the extremities and prolonged the anguish of the unfortunate victim.³⁰⁴

The year's end was significant for another reason: the Shunzhi emperor passed away; and the eight-year-old Kangxi emperor ascended to the throne, controlled by four Manchu regents (Ebilun, Soni, Suksaha, and Oboi) who considered the previous monarch too softhearted and were thus considerably more hostile toward their hostage and the recalcitrant southern Chinese.³⁰⁵ The court finally ruled that Zheng Zhilong should die.

As for the manner of Zheng Zhilong's death, there is a morbid war of the authorities. Jesuit accounts claim he was first sentenced to the lingering death of *lingchi* but that the sentence was then moderated to beheading.³⁰⁶ A Spanish work of 1676 says he was killed by a saber blow; the report of the First Dutch Embassy was that he was

³⁰² Wu Zhenglong, *Zheng Chenggong yu Qing zhengfu jian de tanpan*, 160-61.

³⁰³ Wang Zhonghan 王钟翰, ed., *Qingshi liezhuan* 清史列传, 卷八十, 逆臣传, “马逢知,” p. 6701.

³⁰⁴ Doubters may wish to see Timothy Brook, Jérôme Bourgon, and Gregory Blue's *Death by a Thousand Cuts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) before dismissing the gruesome effect of this form of execution.

³⁰⁵ The classic study of this transition period, known as the Oboi Regency, is Robert Oxnam's *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

³⁰⁶ Boxer, “The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan,” 438.

secretly poisoned to death.³⁰⁷ Later Spanish and Catholic works, such as that of Father Riccio, tended to insist on an explosive hypothesis: that is, Zheng was “blown to the skies by gunpowder with all his men, to fall miserably into hell. A death well deserved for his atrocious faults and sins, and specially for having apostatized from the Holy Faith that he professed in Baptism.”³⁰⁸ I have not found confirmation that he actually suffered the death of a thousand cuts; nor the Iberian-style infernal Inferno; and neither the Chinese nor Manchu sources that I have seen, nor the most reliable Zheng biographies, have answered conclusively the manner of his demise. Perhaps future scholarship will resolve this. The noteworthy fact from such hubbub is that “the person of Iquan, like that of his more famous son, was of such interest that people chose to invent incidents rather than state the insufficient facts known to them.”³⁰⁹

In any case, we do know the date of his execution: the third day of the tenth month of the eighteenth year of the Shunzhi reign; that is, November 24, 1661. Zheng was taken out of his cell with eleven family members, including two sons, and executed in Beijing.³¹⁰ A plausible scenario is that he was sentenced to the cruel death of *lingchi* but had (as frequently happened at the last minute) his sentenced commuted and was simply strangled or beheaded, quickly and without ado.³¹¹ But “the poor man did not

³⁰⁷ As Keene says, “Accounts of the last days of Iquan [Zheng Zhilong] vary so considerably as to afford only a dim picture of what actually took place.” Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 65.

³⁰⁸ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 588.

³⁰⁹ Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 65.

³¹⁰ Ruan Minxi, *Haishang jianwenlu dingben*, 47; Tang Jintai, *Kaiqi Taiwan di yi ren Zheng Zhilong*, 229.

³¹¹ It was not until over two months later, on February 1, 1662, that Zheng Zhilong’s death was publicly announced in Fuzhou as an execution by the thousand cuts of *lingchi*. See Haiwai Sanren 海外散人 [pseudonym], *Rongcheng jiwen* 榕城纪闻 [A record from Fuzhou] (*Qingshi ziliao* vol. 1, pp. 1-26, ed. *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo Qingshi yanjiushi*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 24. However, this was perhaps a terror tactic aimed at the Fujianese populace rather than an indication of his actual mode of execution.

thus escape from torture,” wrote Rougemont, “for he had as companions of his punishment his two small sons, of whom one he had begotten in prison itself. Who would deny that for the death of such innocents to befall a father is more bitter than any death or than any torture? And this was the end of Nicolaus.”³¹²

Few mourned him; many reviled him; most had neither sympathy nor time for grief. But Ruan Minxi, a literatus from Amoy who served by Koxinga’s side, recorded the young sealord’s reaction. Near the end of 1661, locked in combat with the Dutch over Taiwan, and on the eve of the victory for which he would be immortalized in Chinese and world history, Koxinga heard the news of his father’s death. “He shouted that it must be a false rumor, but in the middle of the night he sobbed with grief, and thereafter he passed his days in sorrow.”³¹³ The seven-year-old boy who had hugged his father for the first time atop the battlements of Anhai castle, who had trained in scholarship, and swordsmanship, and seamanship under his father’s stern but twinkling eyes, and who was now a 37-year-old patriot denouncing all traitors to his country and his dynasty, had never really forgotten the most important man in his life.

Such was the end of the man known as Nicholas Iquan, Tei Shiryû, and Chinchillón; the man who was called pirate, thief, opportunist, and traitor to the Ming; the man called savior by the Fujianese colonists whom he ferried to Taiwan to rescue from famine in the late 1620s³¹⁴; the man whom the Dutch had nicknamed “Daddy,”

³¹² François de Rougemont, *Historia Tartaro-Sinica nova* (Lovanii, 1673), cited in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 65.

³¹³ Ruan Minxi, *Haishang jianwenlu dingben*, 47. Koxinga himself would die not long after hearing of his father’s passing.

³¹⁴ Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, *Cixing shimo* 賜姓始末 (Taiwan wenxian congkan 25, reprint), (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1995 [1958]), 6; a fuller analysis of

whom Koxinga had called papa; the Commander of Fujian, Lord of Anhai, and Master of the Seas; a sailor who knew how to fight, fly, and fight another day; a pioneer who had taken the best from Macau and Japan and China and made it his very own; a captain who spoke Portuguese to his African bodyguards, Hokkien to his followers, and Japanese to his first love; and at the last, a father who had labored in vain to build a kingdom for his children, who was abandoned by his family, and who adorned a scaffold in the cold north, far from his home—the frontiersman whom we have come to know as Zheng Zhilong, the seafarer, the seaman of his age.

The Killers

Meanwhile, the killing had never stopped: talks or no talks, Ming or Qing, Manchu or Han, complicit or innocent. Like the fishermen who saw the mermaid's smile, the common people of coastal Fujian had only very brief respites in the hundred years from the Pirate Wars to the Ming-Qing transition. Politics were far from their minds, but peace was hardly possible with so many predators: pirates ("Japanese" or not), warlords, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Manchus, Ming loyalists, the seafarer and his rivals. Under Zheng Zhilong, there had been an order of sorts, of standardized protection fees, unified command, and above all the lucrative trades that kept people alive. His was not necessarily a magnanimous hand, but it was practical. The tributary system and its artificial hierarchies were not even a necessary evil. Border-crossing, which had once involved running a gauntlet through a hundred petty pirates, became more predictable

Zheng's role in the early Fujianese colonization of Taiwan is in Fang Hao 方豪, "Chongzhen chu Zheng Zhilong yimin ru Tai shi" 崇禎初鄭芝龍移民入臺事, in *Taiwan wenxian* 臺灣文獻 12.1 (1961), 37-38.

under the one master pirate. “We” and “they,” “Chinese” and “barbarian,” had little meaning in a place where what Philip Kuhn has recently called the “Maritime Interest” was the mode of life. “The Hokkien experience was thus a maritime version of the commercial mobility that can be seen throughout China during the early modern age.”³¹⁵

Zheng Zhilong had thrived on precisely such mobility at home and abroad, and his interests had been simultaneously local and transnational and not subject to any one country’s politics. As Leonard Blussé observed, “Like their congeners in Brittany during the heyday of the Continental System, Fukienese fishermen and sailors evaded the strict rules regarding trade [...]. Chinese and foreign sailors often found that their common quest for profits was a force uniting them which was stronger than the cultural values that separated them.”³¹⁶ This suited the sealord just fine. As long as the requisite “water taxes” were paid, business could be as brisk as any enterprising soul wanted it to be, and both policies and prohibitions could be flouted with a decent respect for the hypocrisies of mankind. A people, too, must live before it can propound morality.

The Ming-Qing transition, however, politicized everything and left few unscathed. Trading with “the enemy” (however defined) was treason, and even bare survival was viewed with suspicion as evidence of collaboration with hostile forces. Borders were so uncertain and shifting that an innocuous act one day could become a capital crime the next. Death was the common denominator; all sides justified their politics with murder. Koxinga was a romantic, a lover of ideals and sanctimonious posture, in comparison to

³¹⁵ This “Maritime Interest” sprang from the limited soil and resourcefulness of the coastal Fujianese and involved interlocking strategies of cash cropping, manufacturing, wage labor, commerce, and emigration. Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 32-34.

³¹⁶ Blussé, “The VOC as Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” 89.

which his father seemed like the soul of skullduggery. But Zheng Zhilong (at least after his pirate days) had shunned politics in favor of orderly profit and projected himself as the benefactor of Fujian, whereas Koxinga was quite capable of killing, robbing, and sacrificing the coastal Fujianese to serve his high purpose of restoring the Ming. One is reminded of Auden's great lines: "He knew human folly like the back of his hand, / And was greatly interested in armies and fleets; / When he laughed, respectable senators burst with laughter, / And when he cried the little children died in the streets."³¹⁷

And die they did. As we shall see, the killings were often worst where there were no clear boundaries and no clear loyalties; and, as the barbarities of invasion and civil war deeply conditioned the Coastal Depopulation that was to follow, we will consider them here. At exactly the same time, and not coincidentally—for a sort of 17th-century malaise seems to have shaken every major polity, hence the term *general crisis* that is sometimes applied—Hobbes was penning the most famous lines of his *Leviathan* (1651) toward the tail of the English Civil War. In a war that was anything but civil, "where every man is Enemy to every man [...] there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; [...] no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."³¹⁸ The somber philosopher might as well have been in Fujian.

³¹⁷ W.H. Auden, "Epitaph on a Tyrant," in *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Random House, 2007), 88.

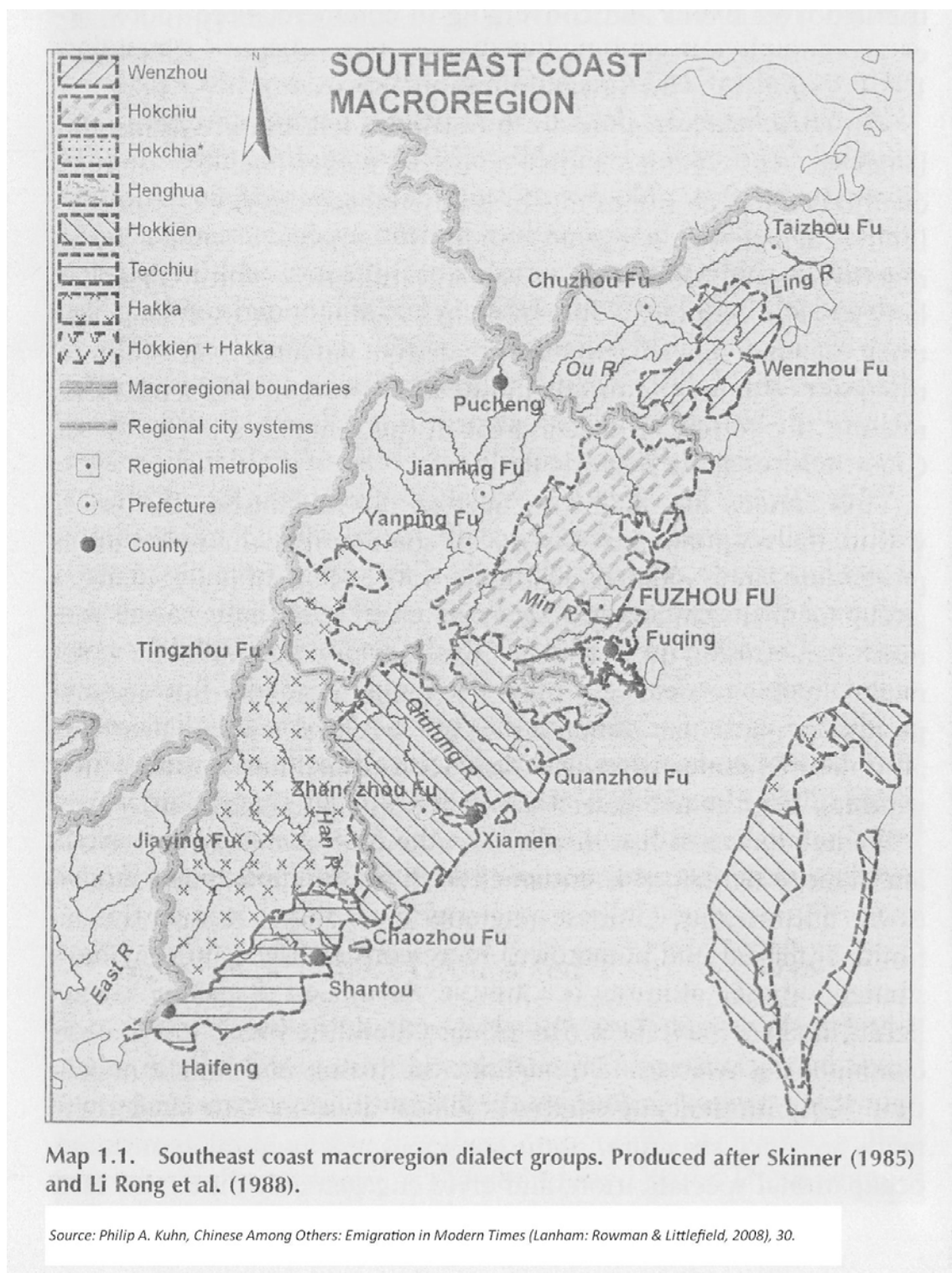
³¹⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904 [1651]), Ch. XIII: "Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery," 84.

In November 1646, Qing troops arrived at the provincial capital, and the various Zheng captains who refused to follow their patriarch to Fuzhou retreated to their lands in the south of the province. The initial transfer of power was deceptively easy in the political centers; and so the Qing generals said their *veni, vidi, vici* and exited Fujian in pursuit of greater conquests. But Prince Bolo's ignoble capture of Zheng Zhilong left something worse than a power vacuum. Most accounts of the war in Fujian leading up to the Coastal Depopulation of 1661 have presented it as a war between the Qing and the Southern Ming, or more specifically, the Qing versus Koxinga. Up to this point, the story I have told has been no exception, for, as the Chinese saying goes: when two tigers fight, the forest is shattered. But such a simplified narrative neither explains the scale of the Qing imperial reconstruction as a whole nor specially how it adapted in Fujian. Beyond the two mortal combatants lay societies in upheaval—societies in which the pell-mell of war and rebellion were igniting the most murderous instincts. Now that we have glimpsed the tigers, let us see some of the other clawed creatures of the forest.

The structural crisis that brought down the Ming stemmed from a combination of a constrained land tax system, fiscal mismanagement, a self destructive civil-military divide, and an increasingly dysfunctional political system that tipped between hostile groups of imperial clansmen, eunuchs, factions, and local elites in the heartland and on the fringes. Add to that the growing misery of tenants, conscripts, and slaves; and the antagonisms of villagers versus city dwellers, poor versus rich, landed versus landless—all galvanized by the Manchu invasion, the rise of the sealord, and the crop failures that

hit so many places in the 17th century.³¹⁹ Add particularly the chimerical nature of Fujian, a land riven with old regional rivalries and severe dialectal differences (see Map 3.2), which often erupted in turf wars. (The epigram, “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy,” usually attributed to linguist Max Weinreich, takes on new meaning in Fujian.) Add further the divide between the agricultural hinterland of Fujian and the commerce-dependent coast; and the concentration of political power in the north against the accumulation of commercial wealth in the ports of the south. Add at last the innumerable warlords, pirates, bandits, and Ming and Qing commanders competing for food, weapons, sailors, and timber—and you have a recipe and reality that could best be described as a war of all on all.

³¹⁹ Every Fujianese county gazetteer from that time (which has sometimes been called the global “little ice age”) records its own story of unseasonable cold, rain, drought, landslides, and famines, a composite assessment of which would require a whole separate study. Useful reference maps based on these gazetteers are compiled in Lu Meisong 卢美松 (*Fujian sheng difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui* 福建省地方志编纂委员会), ed., *Fujian sheng lishi ditu ji* 福建省历史地图集 [Historical maps of Fujian] (Fuzhou: Fujian sheng ditu chubanshe, 2004), esp. maps 218-225 and notes 282-286. In a letter to Tong Guoqi in 1655, Koxinga had this to say: “For several years, the people of Hebei [the Central Plain around the Yellow River] have drenched in floods, while those in Jiangnan [south of the Yangzi River] have become ghosts through drought. The rivers surge and the earth shakes: portents of disaster abound.” Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 74.



Map 3.2: Southeast Coast Macroregion³²⁰

³²⁰ Map from Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times*. Lanham: Rowman &

1647 was a bad year, according to Putian resident Chen Hong, who left us a rare eyewitness account of how his home turned into a killing field. Throughout the spring and summer, the ships of various Zheng claimants (the major ones being Zheng Cai, Zheng Hongkui, and the stripling Koxinga) went recruiting and scavenging all along the coast. Locals were driven by patriotism or poverty to rebel against the newly established Qing government. Many of these were poor tenant farmers who had longstanding grievances—like Fang Huaizhong of Nanyang village, who led farmers from several villages to the gates of Putian to complain that landlords were charging more than three times the normal grain “weighing fees”³²¹—though one need not say that this represented a proto-ideological class war. Marxist scholar Fu Yiling has demonstrated, however, that rural resistance movements were strong in inland Fujian, where tenant farmers, miners, ironworkers, haulers, and indentured laborers took arms against both Ming and Qing officials in the mid-1600s.³²² Impoverished coastal people may have been equally desperate and driven into rebellion more by their fears than by their convictions. In October 1647, for example, a local strongman named Pan Zhongqiong “adopted the slogan of Ming restoration to recruit several hundred men to his flag, camping them at Songling, where members of the Fang clan was praying at their ancestral graves. Pan’s gang were mostly tenants of the Fang landlords, so they ambushed the Fangs and

Littlefield, 2008), 30.

³²¹ Chen Hong 陈鸿 (Chen Bangxian 陈邦贤), *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng* 清初莆变小乘 [A record of the turmoil in Putian], *Qingshi ziliao* vol. 1, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo Qingshi yanjiushi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 66.

³²² See Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, *Ming Qing nongcun shehui jingji* 明清农村社会经济 [The social economy of rural China in the Ming and Qing periods] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1961), 105-153.

captured and beheaded several of them.”³²³ Thus began a pattern that would continue for the next two decades: adopting Ming or Qing pretensions to advance personal ends.

Meanwhile, rebels and rabble both landward and seaward kept harassing and recruiting villagers, and soon a throng of Fujianese insurgents besieged the coastal city of Putian (that city, we may remember, of academies, lychee fruits, and scholars, and which always seemed a magnet for pirate attacks). The Qing garrison of about 3,000 battled the rebels unsuccessfully and then holed up with the populace inside the city walls. Rogues for hire (*youshou*) were plentiful, but these too proved useless against the rebels. While city residents collapsed from exhaustion and starvation, golden ears of grain ripened just outside the walls; but the gates were barred, and no one dared to go out and harvest them. Prices for rice, barley, and wheat skyrocketed from 3 copper coins to one mace (1 *qian*, or 100 coins)³²⁴ per measure, and soon even those with money to buy food could not buy it for any price. The starving Putianese scabbled for substitute foods. Soon, all of the lotus roots in Little West Lake were gone; then people ate the roots of banana trees; finally, the only thing left was the water yam (*shuiyutou*), a semi-toxic tuber that itched the throat terribly.³²⁵

Cannibalism broke out and found its victims in close formation. In December, after a raid outside the city, the Qing authorities rounded up four farmers from the village of Siting and beheaded them in the city. “As soon as the heads rolled to the ground, the flesh of the four victims was carved up by famished bystanders,” wrote Chen Hong. “If any bones remained on which there was still a bit of flesh, those who had arrived late

³²³ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 66.

³²⁴ 1 tael (*liang*) = 10 mace (*qian*) = 100 candareens (*fen*) = 1000 coins (*wen*). A tael was the unit of currency amounting to some 37.8 grams of fine silver.

³²⁵ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 68.

would scrape off the scraps. From that point onward, when a person was executed, he/she would be reduced to bones in the blink of an eye. Women, too, partook in the cutting of cadavers.”³²⁶ Horrible as this was, more was to come. “A few residents, not wishing to take death lying down, leaped off the city wall and went outside to forage for food. Caught by Qing soldiers, they were treated as rebels and executed; caught by the rebels, they were presumed to be spies and immediately killed.”³²⁷

Hysteria gripped the community as the siege continued through the winter. A kind of witch-hunt ignited, and literally any resident inside or outside the city could be implicated for alleged connections with the rebels or with the Zheng sealords. “The most absolute power,” as Gibbon declared, “is a weak defense against the effects of despair.”³²⁸ Qing troops ripped down the houses nearest the city and stockpiled the wood for their bonfires. The rebels attacked at night and retreated during the day. Outside the city, it resembled a no-man’s land: poor villagers who happened to appear in the open country were seized by Qing patrols, stripped naked, and had their hands and feet cut off.³²⁹

From that point on, anyone captured outside the gates was charged as a spy; having a family member outside of the city was clear sign of collusion; and most so named were presumed guilty until proven dead. They were subjected to a kind of crucifixion known as *chazhu*, which translates horribly to “candle-sticking.” This was one of several unorthodox forms of execution invented by Commander Zhang

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1 (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), 274.

³²⁹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 68-69.

Yingyuan's troops to terrorize Fujian. "A wooden pole as long as 2 *zhang* (5-6 meters) was planted firmly into the earth, then sharpened at the tip," Chen Hong relates. "The captives were stripped naked; then each was lifted high by two men and, with legs forced wide apart, placed anus-first on the sharp tip. The two men pushed down simultaneously as if they were planting a candlestick. Sometimes the stake stabbed out right through the ribs, other times all the way through the body to the victim's shoulder. The living could not live, nor the dying die—it was truly wretched."³³⁰ At another public execution, Chen watched as a man strapped to a pillar by his hair had his hands hacked off, then his feet, and then his head, followed by the smashing of his chest, the crushing of his liver, and the tearing of his intestines along with the rest of his body.³³¹

Hyperbole? Another witness who lived the nightmare, Yu Yang of Putian, wrote his own grim accounts of floods followed by droughts and epidemics, and starving people selling their wives and children (perhaps exchanging children to eat them), robbing graves, murdering each other, and torrential waves breaking the sea dikes and drowning the coastal polder fields.³³² The clash of swords, the creeping of disease, the cries of children: they still sound out across time despite the stolid barriers of classical Chinese turns of phrase. The hellish return to barbarism was only beginning, but to the people of Putian, it was already like the end of the world.³³³

³³⁰ Ibid., 69.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Yu Yang 余颺, *Pubian jishi* 莆变纪事 [A chronicle of the troubles in Putian], *Qingshi ziliao* vol. 1, pp. 125-136, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo Qingshi yanjiushi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980).

³³³ See Eduard B. Vermeer's "The Decline of Hsing-hua Prefecture in the Early Ch'ing," pp. 101-161 in Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), for another detailed view of the catastrophes that befell Putian.

Yu Yang's own hands were not clean: he was a *jinshi* scholar and local gentryman who refused to join Ming claimant Regent Lu in 1647 and raised his own army to fight all who invaded his hometown (primarily the Qing, but also any other comers).³³⁴ Chen Hong mentions Yu Yang as but one of a multitude of local powers and lists many names—some affiliated with Koxinga (like Yang Geng and the brothers Zeng Liu and Zeng Qi), others independent, like the aforementioned Pan Zhongqiong. “Outside the city, the village gentry and *juren* degree holders raised their own rebel armies. [...] Regardless of rank, they all claimed to be commanders.” These forces, acting independently or in concert, attacked the city numerous times for two months. “One dark night, they came to the city gate [...] and tried unsuccessfully to burn it down. Yang Geng relentlessly battered the city with field guns. The cannonballs were like hammers, each weighing four or five *jin* [some six or seven pounds]. Rooftops and rafters crumbled beneath the rumble of the guns.”³³⁵

Within Putian, the Qing officers grew paranoiac and unnerved. When Putian resident Su Liuge's brother rebelled outside of the city, Su himself was charged with treason. Su's local headman (*baozhang*) Zheng Chongling, along with the deputy headman and his two next-door neighbors, were arrested and nailed to a door board in front the city drum tower. Headman Zheng was chubby and could not tolerate the pain, so he bribed the guards to kick his groin to accelerate his death. The deputy died after a full day of bleeding. The two neighbors begged for mercy and were at last released to recuperate under medical attention. Su Liuge was not at home when the soldiers came,

³³⁴ Xu Zi 徐鼐, *Xiaotian jizhuan* 小腆纪传, juan 57.

³³⁵ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 69.

so his son was impaled by the horrid method of *chazhu*; Su's wife fled to the home of their acquaintances, the Huang brothers. The Huangs were then arrested and paraded around the city with their mouths clamped shut by bamboo cages.³³⁶ Censor Song Zhenhan's son had the misfortune of being the son-in-law of rebel gentryman Yu Yang and was called in for interrogation for this offense. He hung himself. Qing civil official Chen Xuanzao had a son who happened to write a letter to relatives outside the city; the son was nailed to a door board while his father watched, helpless to stop the execution. "At this time, strong young men who showed the slightest ability to wield a weapon were put to death," writes Chen Hong. "Many were slaughtered for no reason at all. Commander Zhang [Yingyuan] regarded the people as chaff; Governor Zhou [Shike] saw them all as the enemy."³³⁷

In December, the city population was forcibly registered in a style that we have since come to associate with the twentieth century or the fiction of Zamyatin's *Mbi* but which must claim its origins in another time and place. "Men and women, old and young, were commanded to register with the government. The following day, each person was given a cloth label measuring three-by-six *cun* [six inches wide and eight inches long], on which a number was written in Manchu. Wearing it on one's back was the law; those not wearing it were labeled as rebel spies."³³⁸

Soon a Qing counterassault put the assorted rebels to flight. On December 17, starving city dwellers were ordered to don their Manchu numbers and follow the army out on a raid. They did as they were told, and then they went above the call of duty by

³³⁶ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 70.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

looting their rural counterparts. “No one came home empty-handed,” says our witness. A band of city folk sallied forth on their own the very next day in search of more spoils. Villagers from all quarters, defending their last shred of property, launched ambushes from their huts and homes and stabbed and kicked to death some 400-500 of these city marauders. No longer was it a war of Ming and Qing, but a war of city and countryside. The army proceeded to kill them all. “In Xin’gou, a village of 100, all but 7 were butchered. [...] The town of Huangshi saw more butchery: of the old and young who could not get away, eight or nine out of every ten were killed.” But the damage had been done. “That night, the sound of weeping could be heard throughout the city.”³³⁹

A newly married couple that lived close to the route of the rebels’ retreat was arrested. The Qing officer in charge killed the husband on the spot and tried to rape the wife. The brave woman fought for her chastity, and for this crime she was skewered alive on a pole as a human candlestick. She survived the immediate impalement but was in inhuman pain. The vice-commander, Chen Xinyu, felt pity and did her a favor by cutting her head off.³⁴⁰

All students of Chinese history know that there is something formulaic in classical sources when describing famine, natural disasters, and war. But the lurid details, the painful exactitude and finality of these descriptions—meticulously left to us by eyewitness Chen Hong (*Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*), and corroborated by Yu Yang (*Pubian jishi*)—leave no doubt in my mind that for the people of Putian, the nightmare was all too real.

³³⁹ Ibid., 70-71.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 71.

Lest we should imagine this total war as unique to Putian, let us now consider the case of the provincial capital, Fuzhou. Here, Qing control was the strongest, yet the authorities were no less insecure, the lines no less blurred. A primary account by a witness known only as “Haiwai Sanren” (literally, Idle Man of the Seas³⁴¹) covers the years 1640-1662 and records the horrifying events in that city. Fuzhou was located at the mouth of the Min River and slightly inland, buffered by many port villages; it had fallen quickly under Qing domination after Zheng Zhilong’s surrender. Though it was safer from assault than many other cities and towns, the citizens of Fuzhou were slaughtered much like their Putianese counterparts. In April 1647, when a number of ships arrived in the port of Hongjiang (whether fishermen or traders we cannot say), Viceroy Zhang Cunren thought to execute everyone onboard for not being “civilians” (*baixing*), by which term he presumably meant only farmers or city folk. Sailors were all criminals in the eyes of the viceroy. Since the seacoast was still unsettled, Zhang Cunren ordered the army to wipe out Haikou and other port towns and carry off the women.³⁴²

Interminable rains from April to June drowned the crops. By August, the long-suffering countryside was up in arms. Such rebels had little or nothing to do with the Ming, Qing, or Koxinga—they fought only for themselves. Qing troops burned villages to the ground and strictly enforced the population registers with random house-to-house searches: anyone absent from home was a rebel, and anyone not listed on the rolls was a spy. Within the city, treason extended to one’s hair: extra hairs on the head deviating

³⁴¹ Though clearly he was not an idler at all, any more than the prolific British writer Jerome K. Jerome (author of the classic *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*) was to be.

³⁴² Haiwai Sanren 海外散人 [pseudonym], *Rongcheng jiwén 榕城纪闻 [A record from Fuzhou]* (*Qingshi ziliao vol. 1, pp. 1-26, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo Qingshi yanjiushi*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 6.

from the standard Qing queue were signs of secret rebel membership, and heads were lopped off accordingly. As hunger continued within besieged Fuzhou, the deadly march from eating shoots to eating roots to eating people began. The price of rice shot up to six mace per *dou* (approx. two gallons), but few could afford it. “On some streets of forty to fifty households, not a single person could be seen. The gates of each house were pristine and well adorned, but on entering the house, you would see only piles of bones. Corpses were sprawled on the ground and scraped of all flesh, even those of children, who were kidnapped and cooked; and some even ate their own children, and husbands and wives ate their own spouses.”³⁴³

In November, a fire broke out in Kaiyuan Temple, and this too was seen as a sign of revolt. The Qing beheaded monks for this offense and displayed their heads on poles. “Governor Zhou Shike declared that villagers who were caught trying to enter the city were rebels, and he had them nailed spread-eagled to the main gate. Men would stab these crucified people from behind with long staves and twist the staves around in a grinding action: this was called ‘grinding out the heart’ (*chuanxinmo*); others were burned with a torch held to their genitals. This happened every day. Even with all these methods, some did not die straightaway, but starving men and women with bared knives carved them into pieces all the same. Blood soaked the ground as people carried them away by the handful.”³⁴⁴

As with Putian, the political witchhunts began in Fuzhou, and former Ming prefects, magistrates, and civil officials in retirement were dragged before Qing tribunals

³⁴³ Ibid., 6-7.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

and beaten, chained, or heavily fined. Outside the city, many raised their own standards of revolt. “Farmers and fishermen all claimed to be military commanders,” recalls our anonymous witness, “accepting seals and titles from Regent Lu, and even country women passed themselves off as monks to receive investiture and gather soldiers.” Starving folk fled from Fuzhou and made for their hometowns in search of food; those caught without their papers were executed as spies, and those carrying weapons for self-defense were stripped and killed.³⁴⁵

All the while, the troops of Koxinga and other Zheng claimants kept looting the coastal residents. Young-tsu Wong claims that Koxinga was quite unlike the Qing in the popular support he enjoyed and the restraint he exercised: “Though he caused heavy civilian toll on a few occasions, Ch’eng-kung [Koxinga] generally gave strict orders against wanton killing and looting when his men captured a place. Unlike most other pirates, both Ch’eng-kung and his father severely punished those who raped women, burned houses and slaughtered farm cows.”³⁴⁶ The reality was not so simple. It is true that Koxinga on occasion punished an officer for violating discipline or for excessive brutality³⁴⁷, but so did the Qing state;³⁴⁸ and in any case Koxinga’s personal discipline could not prevent abuses at the ground level any more than Chiang Kai-shek’s spartan ethic could prevent corruption in the Nationalist Party in the 20th century. (In an uncanny

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Young-tsu Wong, “Security and Warfare on the China Coast: The Taiwan Question in the Seventeenth Century,” 136.

³⁴⁷ As in the case of financial officer Wang Dazhen 王大振, executed for cruelty beyond the call of duty. See Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 75.

³⁴⁸ E.B. Vermeer points out the case of the notorious Zhou Shike (who presided over many of the brutal executions we have seen), who was dismissed and jailed on the indictment by three senior officials in the Boards of Rites and War for his cruelties to the people of Fuzhou. Eduard B. Vermeer, “The Decline of Hsing-hua Prefecture in the Early Ch’ing,” in Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), 116.

parallel, after losing the mainland to the Communists in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek retraced Koxinga's path by relocating to Taiwan, where he self-consciously glorified and sought inspiration from his historical predecessor: conducting land reforms, building schools, training to retake the mainland, looking abroad for support and supply, and in general doing many of the things that the sealord had done nearly 300 years before. The more things change, the more they remain the same.)

Of course, we should not think of the sealords only as pirates or criminal organizations, for they ruled over a vast enterprise that included numerous legitimate maritime occupations like fishing, transportation, shipbuilding, and salt brewing in addition to the lucrative cargo trade in silks, copper coins, and porcelains. But from the point of view of the victims, it was equally predation whether a pirate or a political warrior seized their food and killed their families.

Koxinga's sailors kept up their looting through the fall and winter of 1653. During the negotiation phase, the Qing court withdrew many coastal troops and allowed the sealord access to four prefectures in Fujian as a sign of good faith. Ships flying the flag of Koxinga soon arrived in each county and demanded taxes and supplies, threatening to invade if the county people refused to cooperate. Yu Yang recalled that the enormous sum of 300,000 silver taels was demanded of Putian as tribute. Zheng Qingzhu, one of Koxinga's officers, was sent to Huangshi with an appointment from the (Ming) Board of War. He set up his own *yamen* (government office) and storehouse and hired a complete set of secretaries and *yamen* runners. These runners visited each village and town, freely whipping and arresting people. They also seized the opportunity to fatten their own purses and demand extra fees for their trouble. Many families were

ruined. Most ridiculous of all was the fact that the two warring parties were in bed together. As Zheng Qingzhu levied taxes in Huangshi for his sealord, he sat with the local Qing magistrate in a pavilion; Zheng made his requests, and the Qing magistrate wrote out the orders for him.³⁴⁹ How unlike the rancorous high-level negotiations were these slick local co-operations!

In August and September 1653, Koxinga's officers returned the favor. At this time, "the rich became impoverished, and the poor sold their wives and children. The villagers endured all kinds of abuse. The hill dwellers of Guangye and Changtai suffered further depredations. Fathers, mothers, children, and wives were killed or scattered, and household goods were drained dry." Because of this, "villagers fished their food from the seas and refused to pay taxes. The official tax collectors dared not leave the city to collect the taxes."³⁵⁰ The Qing magistrate, surnamed Guo, now turned to rebel officer Guo Erlong for help. Guo Erlong was Koxinga's chief squeeze officer in Huangshi, and he was good at his job. It was not his first trip to Putian.

Back in August 1651, Guo Erlong had swooped down in the night and abducted hundreds of men and women. "The rich families of Huangshi all fled to Qingjiang and Yangcheng, thinking that since it was closer to the city and off the main roads, the city guards could rescue them in case of emergency. Erlong sniffed this out [...] and rounded them up. He seized over a thousand boys and girls as hostages, separating them into rich and poor for [ransom] silver: a thousand, a hundred, or tens [of taels per head]. For the larger households, Erlong left the old and the young and ordered the head of each

³⁴⁹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 126-127.

³⁵⁰ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 75.

household to scrounge up the ransom money. Many had no money for ransom and were beaten to death and left to rot on the roadside.”³⁵¹ This was exactly the kind of man who could help Magistrate Guo with his tax problem. The Qing magistrate tugged at his heartstrings because they happened to share the same surname, and Guo Erlong decided to be a good “brother” to his Qing compatriot. He ordered the villagers to pay, and they paid. “In this way, the tax quota was met. The magistrate visited Guo Erlong personally to thank him.”³⁵² No wonder that local leaders drilled their own militias and raised arms against both Ming and Qing—a plague on both their houses!

If you go to the coast of Fujian, you can still see traces of towers and fortresses made of stone and mud brick. These were built not by armies but by villagers. Some are still operable. Pirates and invaders over the centuries have learned to respect them, for they represented collective local defense and the militarization of society. Proliferation of these homemade castles (called *tulou*, literally “earthen towers”) tended to coincide with periods of anarchy and war such as the one I have pictured to this point. Villagers had to defend themselves without help from the government (and sometimes had to fight the predatory government itself).

Yu Yang recalled that the towers had three floors: the lowest was for livestock, the middle for the women, and the top for men who kept on watch for enemies.³⁵³ Chen Hong elaborates: “they built *tusai* [mud forts], also known as *tulou*. [The outer walls] were about 7-8 *chi* [8-9 feet] high, over ten *zhang* [118 feet] wide, and 3-4 *chi* [4-5 feet] thick. At the center they built a tower of three stories, shaped like the rampart on a city

³⁵¹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 126.

³⁵² Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 75.

³⁵³ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 126.

wall. Its four sides were like a great urn and were plated over with tiles. [...] Big villages built big ones, small villages small ones. The forts were stocked with guns of all sizes and various weapons. The top level had portholes on all sides, like city battlements, from which to look out and shoot cannons and arrows. When defenders were strong and steadfast, they would injure and repel the bandits; when defenders were few and weak, they would be overrun and robbed of everything.”³⁵⁴

Nor was the melee confined to the villages, but rather extended everywhere across the land-to-sea continuum. The “boat people” of China—called (often disparagingly) Tanka or *danhu*³⁵⁵ by landbound Chinese—who were a million strong and occupied the coves and fisheries of Guangdong and Fujian, also took arms against a sea of troubles. Niu Xiu, a writer of the early Kangxi (1662-1722) period, recorded the revolt of Tanka strongman Zhou Yu, who commanded hundreds of ships, each one tall and rigged with three broad sails and eight rows of oars—ships that could “fly across the waves.” He had cooperated briefly with the Qing as a brigade commander in Panyu (Guangdong province), where he policed the waters, but when Feudatory Shang Kexi tried to confiscate his ships and restrict his mobility in 1663, he burned down the Qing military installations and captured the Qing magistrate, Wang Yin, before finally being suppressed with massive force.³⁵⁶

It was neither the first nor the last time that the Tanka fiercely defended their way of life. Some Tanka sided with Koxinga, a few with the Qing, but most fought only for

³⁵⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 79.

³⁵⁵ Although I dislike the pejorative connotations of Tanka (anyone who reads the Chinese 蟹戶 / 蛋戶 or 蟹家 / 蛋家 can see this), it is the term by which they are best known and studied in the anthropological literature, and so I will use it when necessary as a noun and adjective instead of referring always to “boat people.”

³⁵⁶ Niu Xiu 钮琇 (z. 玉樵, d. 1704), *Gu sheng* 觚剩, j. 7, “Liang haizei” 两海贼.

their floating home-“towns.” The observations of Eugene Anderson, author of probably the best modern anthropological account of the boat people as they have survived all the way up to a few decades ago, are worth quoting at length. “Two old cannons lay in tidewater by our boat,” he wrote, “When I asked about them, I was told: ‘In the old days we used cannons to defend ourselves from pirates and the government.’ The equation of those two categories was noteworthy. [...] The boat people’s senses of self, their psychological integrity, depended on maintaining their sense of independence on the water.”³⁵⁷

Anderson went on to say that in their lusty, improvisational “salt water songs,” and in their culture and individualism, the boat people were distinct from most Chinese. “They spoke a Chinese language, ate Chinese food, dressed in Chinese style, and certainly thought of themselves as Chinese. [...] Yet, their culture was different—to many, astonishingly different—from other stereotypes of China. They lacked lineages or large-scale family organizations of any kind [...] their women were strong and independent. Their men did not till the soil. They had no fixed address. The stereotype of Chineseness includes obedience to law and order, but the boat people were a rough lot, in both speech and action. [...] At Castle Peak Bay, we lived with thousands of Chinese who were actually *more* individualistic and independent than Americans we knew. Most of the older boat people resisted the very idea of government, let alone communitarianism and conformity. They had lived under Nationalist, Japanese, Communist, and British regimes [...]. I once asked a group of men: ‘Which of those governments did you find

³⁵⁷ Eugene N. Anderson, *A Floating World Lost: A Hong Kong Fishing Community* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2007), 18-19.

best?’ An elder in the group said: ‘The Nationalists—because they couldn’t control us.’ The rest agreed. This was only one of hundreds of remarks, by dozens of people, putting opposition to authority in the most thoroughgoing terms.”³⁵⁸

In their verve and character, the Tanka were somewhat more akin to their seafaring counterparts in other countries than to their “Chinese” compatriots. As Anderson notes, significantly, the boat people were “one group within a tightly-locked ecological and economic system [...] yet, they had the independence of the free drifting life. They were fully aware of the contradiction between the two aspects of their reality, and they felt the resulting tension; this fueled their constant talk of ‘independence.’”³⁵⁹ He concludes: “The world has benefited greatly from fore-and-aft rigging, watertight compartments in the holds, and the compass—all inventions of Chinese sailors. We can now learn from the boat view of society [...]. It was a beautiful, valid, exciting, rich, full way of life. Without that richness, they might not have survived.”³⁶⁰ Such was the rich world in which the sealord, his foes, and maritime peoples of various persuasions operated.

As we saw earlier, Koxinga manipulated the negotiations with the Qing to gain the maximum advantage in time and materiel. The natural corollary of this was maximal suffering from the coastal residents and “boat people” who were caught up in these requisitions. They were in a morally ambiguous position. They were double-taxed and triple-taxed. They lived in cities, prefectures, and counties governed ostensibly by the

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 26-27.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 177. He might also have mentioned the sternpost rudder, paddlewheels, and a host of other precocious inventions. For a comprehensive account of Chinese nautical development, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 4, *Physics and Physical Technology* (Part 3: Engineering and Nautics), pp. 379-699.

Qing; yet Koxinga was in many cases the real powerhouse. Should they show the slightest sign of collaboration with the Qing, Koxinga's men could kill them. Should they back Koxinga, they would suffer Qing torture when the negotiations broke down. Roving paramilitaries did not want them cooperating with any side. It was a Catch-22 before Joseph Heller, and far more cruel. Moreover, Koxinga did not have to govern the people on whom he preyed; he was supposedly fighting for loftier causes that did not permit him the luxury of scruples. One gets the sense that his father would not have done this to his own people.

Just as the Ming had not been able to identify pirates and civilians in the Wako wars, so both Koxinga and the Qing saw "traitors" everywhere. Also, we cannot overlook the fact that it was materially beneficial to Koxinga to label everyone traitor; he could then extort everything from the people. He had many mouths to feed, men to train, skippers to satiate. To draw again the analogy between the seaholder and the khan, the Hokkienese frontiersman with his Manchu counterpart, I quote Pamela Crossley: "In Mongolian and Manchurian traditions upon which Nurgaci drew, a khan was a keeper of slaves. [...] The khan had to continue to find and distribute wealth in order to keep his federation stable, and his place within it safe. He had no choice but to conquer, and to plan new conquests to feed the mouths he had acquired in his last."³⁶¹ Just as it had been useful to Nurhaci to invent grievances against the Ming as a way to gain allies and specify targets for the next raid, so it was useful to Koxinga in his struggle for personal supremacy in Greater Fujian to pillage the people and call it patriotism. He could let his

³⁶¹ Crossley, *The Manchus*, 54.

men loose and then yank the reins of discipline to teach them their place. It was calculated political piracy. Not every captain was fit to be a khan.³⁶²

Things only got worse after the Qing negotiators failed to bring Koxinga into the fold. “We” and “they,” killing and maiming, became more senseless than before. None of the butchers deserve apologies. In January 1655, Koxinga’s assault forces pressed the siege of Xianyou to its ghastly conclusion. Since the Qing garrison would not surrender, the city would have to go. Military historian Kenneth Swope noted in a recent article that city walls in late imperial China were usually very thick, sometimes up to 15 meters (50 feet) in thickness, and ranging in height from 5-15 meters (16-50 feet). Such walls “were typically surmounted with cannon and were nearly impregnable to bombardment by cannon until the modern era. Likewise, their thickness made sapping or mining an equally daunting task.”³⁶³ But Koxinga’s fighters did not shilly-shally: they tunneled under the city walls and loaded huge boxes with gunpowder. These bombs were called *gundilong*: earth-shaking dragons.³⁶⁴ On February 21, the dragons roared, the earth convulsed, and the walls caved in. “The guards and civilians atop the battlements were blown to bits, and Koxinga’s troops poured into the breach. [...] Furious at the people of Xianyou for resisting, they slaughtered everyone they could find. They sacked the city and left after massacring most of its people.”³⁶⁵

³⁶² Ralph Croizier writes, “He was part of a time in which treachery, duplicity, and cruelty were commonplace. It may not fit in with the glorified image of the hero, but it should not surprise the historian that Koxinga could tell politically expedient lies or massacre prisoners.” *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism*, 25.

³⁶³ Kenneth M. Swope, “Clearing the Fields and Strengthening the Walls: Defending Small Cities in Late Ming China,” in *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400-1800*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 131.

³⁶⁴ The name is an interesting parallel to the watery defense line that Koxinga would later face on the Yangzi River in 1659: the *gunjianglong* (rolling river dragon) of the Qing.

³⁶⁵ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 76.

The rapine and social anarchy continued all along the coast for over a decade. The most violent period began in August 1656 after Koxinga successfully defended Amoy from the attack of Prince Jidu. The following year, on August 22, 1657, Koxinga's navy returned to Putian for a full-scale looting. This is what they did in Hanjiang, Huangshi, Tangxia, Mafeng, and other townships in three days: 1) raped and abducted the women; 2) kidnapped the children; 3) forced the men to carry their loot and killed anyone who dared to protest; 4) burned down the estates; and 5) confiscated all the books. Over a thousand men and women, including local scholars and gentry (who may have been seen as potential militia leaders), lay murdered in the dust as their houses were torn down to make giant rafts. Clothes, food, utensils, cows, sheep, chickens, pigs, and captives were loaded onto these rafts and floated down to the giant warships. All the while, the Qing troops did nothing. When the townspeople cried to them for help, the Qing commander replied: "My job is to defend the city. Others are none of my business!"³⁶⁶ From such neglect and privation, we can see, armed bands sprung up everywhere, and it was probably these who comprised the majority of the "rebels" who show up in the biased sources of all sides. Most were simply people who were neither Ming nor Qing.³⁶⁷ All of this would be forcibly changed during the Coastal Depopulation that followed, in which people were coerced into literally standing on one side or another of the line.

Finally, we must note here that the seaford, while fighting on his home turf, preceded the Qing Coastal Depopulation with scorched earth tactics of his own. Yang

³⁶⁶ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 127; Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 78-79.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p. 116, on the situation in Chaozhou, Guangdong.

Ying, Koxinga's chief financial officer, records in a peculiar entry that in October 1655 Koxinga ordered all county cities of southern Fujian demolished (starting with their walls) and burned to the ground, including the prefectural capital of Zhangzhou!³⁶⁸ Scholar Zhu Tangxian found this incredible, and on further research he confirmed that it was an exaggeration; nevertheless, at least the cities of Hui'an, Tong'an, Zhangzhou, and Anping (a.k.a. Anhai, Zheng Zhilong's old castle town), suffered from this order. They had their walls blown up and the better part of the cities razed, and their goods and people forcibly removed to Amoy and Quemoy.³⁶⁹ Of smaller towns, we can only speculate—but as we have hitherto seen, the outlook was grim. This episode, and the foregoing, suggests that the techniques of forced relocation, consolidated extraction, and controls on mobility were as necessary to the sealord as to the Qing. Koxinga was not above the spirit of the age in this regard. This was the very same man who *just months before* had written the following words to Qing officer Han Shangliang of Quanzhou: “I have feelings for my native land, so how could I bear to bring [upon it] more spears and arrows? Now, certainly, we must turn war into peace.” And this: “The land of Zhang-Quan [southern Fujian] is all my land; its people are all my people. My recent moves are simply maneuvers to put the Qing court in some difficulty. In all the towns that have surrendered to me, my troops do not shed blood.”³⁷⁰ I must wonder if, when writing such fine-sounding words, Koxinga frowned or smirked.

Qianjie

³⁶⁸ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 91.

³⁶⁹ Zhu Tangxian, annotation in Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 91.

³⁷⁰ Yang Ying, *Congzheng shilu* (TW 32), 78.

I have described enough mass killings by now and I am loath to do more. My point is simply this. This was no mere fight between two armies—it was a totalizing war with multiple sides and no clear boundaries. Because lines of control were so unsure, city and country folk, farmers and fishermen, scholar-gentry and local bullies, were all treated as enemies; and they all suffered from the depredations of combatants who had few means of distinguishing friend from foe—and material motives not to be too discriminating—and who were in any case neither willing nor able to defend the local people. We must understand this context to even begin approaching the problem of Qianjie, the Coastal Depopulation.

It is difficult for us now to comprehend the enormity of the Qianjie. One European commentator found it unthinkable, for “a government which could compel its maritime subjects to leave their houses and towns and go into the country at great loss, might have easily armed and equipped a fleet to have defended those towns and homes.”³⁷¹ Indeed, why not build a navy, or effectively employ maritime defectors, or both, as the Qing had done successfully in smashing Regent Lu’s forces in the Zhoushan islands in 1650?³⁷² True, Jidu and Dasu had both failed to take Amoy, but when had that ever stopped the conquerors? They still had in their camp thousands of sailors and captains who had fled the seaford’s ire. However, when we consider the Coastal Depopulation as the outgrowth of eight years of failed negotiations and fifteen years of slaughter and rapine against (and by) ever-present and ever-imagined enemies, and finally as a policy debate over frontier management (like the Ming building of the Great

³⁷¹ Quoted in C. Wilfrid Allan, *The Makers of Cathay* (Shanghai: The Presbyterian Mission Press, 1909), 181.

³⁷² Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 114-115.

Wall), then it is somewhat more comprehensible, if no less unpalatable. Whether or not the Manchus were “afraid of water” was almost irrelevant. The killers in Fujian were Han (or Han bannermen), and the most influential of these had local knowledge: such men as Tong Guoqi (whom John Wills has described as “someone with a singular combination of ability, integrity, connection with and protection from the heart of the imperial court, and understanding of Southeast China”³⁷³), and Huang Wu (a Fujianese defector who fled from Koxinga in 1656, and a strong advocate of both executing Zheng Zhilong and depopulating the coast of his home province as well as others³⁷⁴). And as we have seen, Koxinga played his part in stripping and scorching the coast: could he credibly claim ignorance of friend and foe? Could the city folk and the local militias?

No, the problem was not ignorance; the problem was how to turn an ambiguous war zone into a clearer frontier and then into a regular administration. The late Frederic Wakeman (channeling C.P. Cavafy’s poem “Expecting the Barbarians”) described the Qing conquest as “a certain kind of solution” to the crises of the late imperial Chinese state.³⁷⁵ But before the barbarians and their solution could be expected, certain requisites had to be met. Lynn Struve summed up best this conundrum: “No ameliorative social policies could have been instituted by either the Ming or the Ch’ing until one side or the other took and held communities by force, not only from the other, but also from all the

³⁷³ Wills, “Contingent Connections,” 188.

³⁷⁴ Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing Period*, 355. Huang Wu’s court memorial from May 6, 1657 (SZ 14.3.23) reads: “The root of the troubles is Zheng Zhilong. [...] I request that we eliminate him and so cut off the roots of the rebellion!” The Board of War concurred, and the matter was forwarded to the high council of princes and ministers, who also reported to the throne eight days later (May 14) that Zheng should be killed. However, the Shunzhi emperor spared Zheng’s life, instead ordering him exiled to Ningguta. *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* (TW 158), 128-130.

³⁷⁵ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 1073. Cavafy’s great poem ends: “Some people arrived from the frontiers / and they said that there are no longer any barbarians. / And now what shall become of us without any barbarians? / Those people were a kind of solution.” “Expecting the Barbarians,” in *The Complete Poems of Cavafy*, trans. Rae Dalven (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1976), 18-19.

forces of armed conflict that abounded.”³⁷⁶ Fifteen years of bloodshed in the bogs and bays of Fujian had failed to accomplish this. By 1661, even the far southwestern regions of the old Ming empire were largely subdued, and the last Southern Ming claimant (Yongli) was on his last legs and retreating to Burma—yet the coast remained unhinged.

Greater Fujian, in no small part because of the Ming creation of a maritime frontier, was one of the last strongholds of autonomous power. Before, it had been impossible to distinguish between a raiding ship and a merchantman, or between trader, a fisherman, and a pirate; and it was equally unfeasible to restrict only certain maritime occupations but not others. The Ming Seaban, as we saw in the previous chapter, had floundered for this very reason. It was not like the Qing did not already understand this fact from their own sources (Tong Guoqi’s reports were accurate as could be), but to hear them confirmed by a core group of local experts who knew the coast intimately and could help enforce a new kind of boundary (like Huang Wu, Shi Lang, and Li Shuaitai, of whom more later) pushed the debate into a new phase. It was no longer so much a question of whether a line should be drawn, but of what *kind* of line should be drawn. As early as October 14, 1660, before Koxinga carried his campaign offshore to Taiwan, Fujian Viceroy Li Shuaitai had already begun the experiment by requesting the removal of the coastal towns of Paitou (in Tong’an county) and Fangtian (in Haicheng county).³⁷⁷ The court approved and at the end of the year sent Sunahai, Manchu director of the Board of War, to Fujian to see with his own eyes. He came, he saw, and he recommended.

It was time to build another frontier.

³⁷⁶ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 13-14.

³⁷⁷ *Qing Shizu shilu xuanji* (TW 158), 185. (SZ 17.9.11)

Chapter IV

Fire

The Coastal Depopulation

The Tartar, afflicted or desperate over Cuesing's continuous incursions, particularly in the maritime areas, decided to withdraw the inhabitants from the shore that measures two or three leagues wide and more than 800 leagues long. At this, innumerable villages, hamlets and places were consumed by fire.

-- Fr. Victorio Riccio, 1673³⁷⁸

The Builders

Sunahai did not say in just so many words that a frontier was to be built. What he said was simply to construct a wall and deport people, as Huang Wu and others had suggested.³⁷⁹ The Coastal Depopulation, which lasted from 1661-1683, began as a series of localized island deportations and grew in scale. As with the Seaban, there are some details written in the official records, but no master plan for how it was to be carried out in each locale. It comes as an even greater surprise that there is no extant original edict ordering the Depopulation: we have only a note after the fact in the *Qing Veritable*

³⁷⁸ Extracts from *Hechos de la Orden de Predicadores en el Imperio de China* (1673) by Fr. Victorio Riccio, O.P., in José Eugenio Borao Mateo [et al.], ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan (Documents) Volume II*, 589-590.

³⁷⁹ If one asks who was responsible for the plan of the Qianjie, such a search for accountability can only end in anticlimax. Some authors have tried to single out Huang Wu or some other figure (Fang Xinghuan, Li Shuaitai, Sunahai, etc.) as the mastermind who conceived the plan and convinced the court to start this human disaster; but the accounts are not clear if one single person was responsible, or a committee, or a chain of linked commands. Rao Zongyi's study opens with an interesting discussion on the matter. See Rao Zongyi 饶宗颐, "Qingchu Chaozhou qianjie kao" 清初潮州迁界考 [The coastal depopulation in Chaozhou], in *Rao Zongyi Chao Shan difangshi lunji* 饶宗颐潮汕地方史论集 [Rao Zongyi's studies on Chaozhou and Shantou local history], ed. Huang Ting 黄挺 (Shantou: Shantou daxue chubanshe, 1996), 306-307. But even poring through the voluminous primary documents in *Qing Shilu*, *Shangyu dang*, or *Ming Qing shiliao* does not give us the precise order that started the mess. I will rather focus on what the Qianjie did rather than "whodunit."

Records (the diary of court business), remarking on the impoverished state of the deportees. No originating directive for a policy affecting millions!³⁸⁰ This is frustrating to the historian, who searches for some central rulebook by which to understand this policy in formulation and action. But after reading through the sources on what the Qing state and army did in Fujian, I believe that we can extrapolate the basics of the frontier making calculus.

If such a “playbook” had existed, and if it had been written by a caustic Chinese precursor of Jonathan Swift, its title would have run something like: *A Modest Proposal for Building a Clear Land Boundary and Breaking Existing Social Divisions by Making the Coastal People Poor and Beholden to Ourselves, and Simplifying in Order to Rule.*³⁸¹ Such a title would of course be highly suspect, but it would at least contain a kind of blunt honesty about how the Qianjie was carried out. As I see it, three basic rules seemed to operate:

1. Depopulate and impoverish the border region
2. Make people outside the boundary inferior
3. Simplify the distribution of big local players and leave them room to grow (so long as they show enough signs of subservience to the state)

³⁸⁰ Lawrence Kessler refers to this strange lacuna in the court record in *K'ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule, 1661-1684* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 185, *fn.* 112; as has Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback*, p. 128, *fn.* 17. Commentators from Xie Guozhen (1931) onwards have remarked on the possibility that the original edicts were censored by later editors to avoid tarnishing the image of the early Qing.

³⁸¹ Swift's original ferocious satire, *A Modest Proposal* (1729), of course, was in its full title *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*—written in the voice of a faux English economist, it offered Swift's attack on the brutal English occupation of Ireland in the form of logical justifications for child cannibalism.

Each of these points will be seen in action. Naturally, there were other ad hoc measures adopted by the Qing, but these three rules were the basic line in turning the borderless land-to-sea continuum into a new *frontier*: a place where a mobile population with multiregional commercial and social ties (e.g. the littoral Fujianese) was subjected to a state containment policy of constrained mobility and forced relocation to simplify the bounds of Qing rule.

The Coastal Depopulation, as I will describe it from this point on, was an attempt to create a simplified frontier in place of the warlord and seaford-ridden littoral that was the last bastard child of the Ming Seaban. The means for achieving this was the construction of an artificial land boundary: a physical replacement to both the geographical configuration of the coast and the old-style proclamations that had previously aimed to restrict certain occupational groups like sea traders or fishermen. This story can be profitably compared with the Great Wall of China, which Arthur Waldron has laid bare in his superb study. “Where states lack natural frontiers,” writes Waldron, “they have often attempted to create artificial ones. After the loss of Varus’s legions, the Romans settled for the original Rhine frontier, but they began to strengthen it by constructing the so-called *limes*, a system of roads, forts, and barriers. The French, of course, similarly left the Rhineland, and constructed the Maginot Line to create a barrier where nature had neglected to place one—what at least one author has called ‘The Great Wall of France.’ And the Chinese of the Ming rejected proposals to mount an expedition into the Ordos, and instead fortified the frontier thus left strategically vulnerable.”³⁸²

³⁸² Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*, 70-71.

The similarities between the coastal wall and the Great Wall will be apparent, but there is also a crucial difference. By contrast to the Ordos and the northern steppe/desert, the frontier-building in the maritime southeast occurred in a highly commercialized, cultured, and densely populated and ethnically Han region. (The southeast coast was a supplier of revenue, not a silver drain like the traditional western and northwestern regions.) For that reason, it deserves more study as a special case of frontier-making within “China proper.” This frontier-building did not happen only in Fujian, but the response to the conditions in Fujian would be a wide-ranging attempt to create an indisputable boundary to encompass all of the coastal provinces.

From south to north, these five coastal provinces were: Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangnan (Nan Zhili), and Shandong. Fujian and Guangdong were the two provinces most severely affected (the account that follows draws from the sources of both provinces); the reason for the former is obvious, but the latter was included partly because Koxinga had long used it as a resource base (the eastern parts of the province were more closely tied in maritime occupations to Greater Fujian than they were to Canton itself), partly because the Tanka or “boat people” bowed to no one but the gods of the sea, and, as we will see, partly because two of the Three Feudatories (and not the Manchus) dominated Fujian and Guangdong. One more thing accelerated the bloodbath: guns and circumstances in littoral south China. Qu Dajun (1630-1696), who survived the Ming-Qing transition, wrote in his *Guangdong xinyu* that Cantonese boys often started firing fowling guns from the age ten—and graduated from such “bird guns” to the

harquebus and its larger cousins.³⁸³ The ability of the southern Chinese to handle black powder and pump lead into living targets did not suit well the Qing state-building plan, nor did it help the severity of factional fighting. These factors should never inure us to the slaughter of the Coastal Depopulation—and it was a slaughter—but neither should we forget that just as many might have died in the ambiguous circumstances of the day, when commanders on all sides were robbing, raping, and grinding out hearts and planting human candles.

We have, as I said, no master edict to describe the terrible plan. However, thanks to Bao Wei, a former doctoral student at China's Zhongshan University, we now have access to the text of an original placard from Guangdong province from the first year of the Qianjie. The text was found in a local museum. Such public notices of the new law must have been widespread at the time, but of the hundreds that used to litter the coastal provinces this one alone has survived and conveys to us some of the order's immediacy despite the ravages of time:

Proclamation of Removal in the First Year of Emperor Kangxi

*In the name of the Feudatory Prince of Guangdong [Shang Kexi], Imperial Inspectors Ke[Erkun – i.e. Korkon] and Vice Military Director Jie[Shan – i.e. Giyesan], and Admiral Wang, General Shen, and Viceroy Li—
On Receipt of the Imperial Decree:*

Based on the seashore inspections of the Feudatory, officials, imperial commissioners, and commanders, the area starting from Chenghai to [...a long list of place names follows...] is now designated as the boundary line. All villages outside the boundary, all places on the seacoast, must obey and move inland. Let this serve notice of Our imperial will. All villagers and residents outside the boundary, hearing this, must spread this order and move immediately inside the border; no hesitation or resistance will be tolerated. Once you have

³⁸³ Qu Dajun 屈大均, *Guangdong xinyu* 廣東新語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), j. 16 (*Qi yu* 器語), no. 469 (*Niaoqiang* 鳥鎗), 441-442.

removed behind the borderline, you shall not cross it to farm the land. You shall not cross it to build houses in which to live. Violators will be executed for treason. Our imperial order is severe. If you commoners linger, delay, or wait and see, you will be exterminated as rebels. Those who have removed to the interior will wait for the viceroy and governor to investigate and provide land and housing. Obey this.

The following villages are ordered to evacuate: [...another long list...]

Posted the first year, first month, nineteenth day of the Kangxi reign [March 8, 1662]

Authorized first in the eighteenth year of Shunzhi, in the ninth month [November 1661]³⁸⁴

And so, beginning in fall 1661, the Qing began to build a wall of wood, mud, and stone that might work where former laws had failed. They drove pylons into the ground and built over them wooden palisades and watchtowers. The court order was to move the residents 30 *li* inward from the sea and burn all the buildings outside the 30 *li* limit.³⁸⁵ Earth and stone yielded to their designs for a trench the length of a province; the land to sea continuum was broken; and the fishermen of Dadeng Island saw their mermaid standing on the water, smiling.

A poem from a survivor in Fujian recalled the scene:

*Cold day, at sunset: husband and wife hold each other as they walk.
Where will they find solace? Hiding their faces, they weep on the roadside.
Barbarian riders drive them away; the ultimatum is unyielding.
Determined they are, to reduce the coastal earth to bare grass.
The rich suddenly became poor—and the poor, who will help them?
No deep seas are left to fish, no broad fields left to farm.*

³⁸⁴ *Zhanglin xiangtu shiliao* 樟林乡土史料, p. 21 (document held in Chenghai county museum), cited in Bao Wei 鲍炜, “Qianjie yu Ming Qing zhi ji Guangdong difang shehui” 迁界与明清之际广东地方社会 (Ph.D. thesis: Zhongshan University [Guangzhou], 2003), 63-64. The Shunzhi emperor had already died in 1661, but the reign year officially remained the “18th year of Shunzhi” until the following spring, for reasons of decorum.

³⁸⁵ (*Qianlong*) *Fuzhou fuzhi* (乾隆)福州府志, j. 13, *haifang* 海防, cited in Zhu Delan 朱德蘭, “Qingchu qianjieling shi Ming Zheng shangchuan zhi yanjiu” 清初遷界令時明鄭商船之研究, *Shilian zazhi* 史聯雜誌, v. 7 (Dec. 1985), 19.

*The inland regions are full of distressed folk; girls and women in the family quarrel without end.
 The mob turns easily to violence, crowded as they are with the starving.
 I hear that they are building a great trench and guarding it with soldiers and wardrums.
 They guard the ocean like guarding a frontier; and the old and young toil and suffer.
 This suffering overflows all feelings—who can stop this flood?*³⁸⁶

The poem refers to “barbarian” cavalry, but it is clear from other sources that not simply Manchus but also their Han bannermen and local Green Standard Army (conscripted from the Han Chinese population) soldiers were involved, and indeed some of the most egregious killings came from the Han Chinese troops themselves, for reasons of such rivalry and rapacity as we have seen. As for “guarding the ocean like guarding a frontier” (*fang hai ru fang bian*), that is precisely what they were doing in the years 1661-1665 as the coastal wall spread along the littoral areas under Qing control. But how did they do it? Even a modern coast guard would face enormous challenges in enforcing such a wide-ranging prohibition on trade and settlement, to say nothing of the early Qing army and navy. The fact is that there was not one single evacuation, but many. The timing for drawing and enforcing the boundaries varied from place to place but generally seemed to take the following method: 1) first, lines were drawn; 2) then, a clean sweep was performed to force the population behind the lines; 3) trenches and light walls were built; and 4) the walled line was fortified with troops. Blood was spilled at every stage—and not always by the Qing. Let us examine this process more closely.

To draw the lines, Qing soldiers first fixed poles in the ground and then used ropes to connect the poles. At times the rope line cut through a house or even a single

³⁸⁶ Lu Ruoteng 卢若腾, “Luqian yanhai jumin shi” 虜迁沿海居民诗, in *Jinmen zhi* 金门志, j. 12, “Bingshi/lidai bingshi” (兵事/历代兵事).

room, so that many half-houses and half-rooms were deserted.³⁸⁷ The exact placement of the line is a question for which the sources do not provide a uniform answer; and indeed uniformity could hardly be expected along so a long and indented a coastline. The figure of 30 *li* (approx. 10 miles) from the sea, as it is often given in the primary sources, seems to have been formulaic rather than based on careful surveys. In practice, the border varied from 10 *li* to some 20-30 or even 50 *li* (1 *li* \approx $\frac{1}{3}$ mile or $\frac{1}{2}$ km³⁸⁸) from the coast, depending on topography; usually what it did was to scorch the coastal plains and leave only border walls fronted by streams (natural moats) or backed by hilly lookouts—the major exception to this was the walled county and prefectural cities, which were themselves defensible and thus not included in the Depopulation. Islands and peninsulas without naval stations were clearly beyond the pale and thus ordered cleared of inhabitants.

Once the lines were drawn, sweeping of the ground began. For residents, this meant a terrifying ultimatum, usually as little as three days; for the Qing, the means for the clean sweep was humankind's oldest weapon: fire. The ultimatum was so short that many people were still locked in indecision or half disbelief when the troops returned to make good their threat. In Changle and Fuqing in northeastern Fujian, the residents were given a final (and redundant since already too late) warning, and then “mounted troops charged into the area, shooting flaming arrows into the houses; the people fled in panic

³⁸⁷ Niu Xiu 钮琇, *Gu sheng* 觚剩, j. 7, “Tu min” (徙民).

³⁸⁸ 576 meters is a commonly accepted estimate.

like birds and beasts. The fires burned for months. The troops also burnt to ashes thousands of boats and war craft, saying: ‘Nothing left for the enemy.’”³⁸⁹

In some cases, as in Changle county, the authorities could not make up their minds as to the location of the boundary, and consequently the people were forced to pick and move multiple times. Eight stockaded camps were set up to accommodate the Changle refugees in the first year of implementation; the next year, however, the boundary was redrawn further inland, the eight camps were dismantled, and the refugees were pushed into another encampment.³⁹⁰

Our witnesses from Putian, as always, recorded a grim picture from their ever-suffering homeland. Yu Yang recalled: “Manchu minister Sudahai [sic] came to survey the terrain and recommended laying waste to the country: moving all of the coastal folk inland, torching their homes, razing their shrines and altars, destroying their farms, abandoning hundreds of *li* of fertile plains—everything was to be reduced to border entrenchments.”³⁹¹ The people were duly evicted. “Rich folk had enough grain and provisions to survive a year, but the days of the poor were numbered; refugees wandered aimlessly, dispersed and dying [...]. Liantang and some other towns still had their stockades, and people regrouped there, cutting a deal with the commandant: if he would permit them to farm and fish, they would pay him each season in cash or produce, just as if they were renting it. If payments fell short, the commander sent a notice ahead of his troops; and midway, when the cash arrived, his men would pull back. Sometime later, an

³⁸⁹ Gao Zhao 高兆, “Changle Fuqing fujie tuji” 長樂福清復界圖記, in *Minsong huibian* 閩頌彙編 [Collected papers of Fujian Viceroy Yao Qisheng (d. 1683)], *ji* 記 juan.

³⁹⁰ (*Qianlong*) *Changle xianzhi* (乾隆)長樂縣志, j. 10, *xiangyi* 祥異 (SZ 18.10).

³⁹¹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 128.

inspector arrived from Beijing and ordered all of the people removed. The villagers resisted from within their stockades, so troops overran them and bound the men and women back to the city. The people wailed: ‘Officials took our money to let us farm—but now they kill us!’ In this rampantly dishonest time, the superior officers pretended not to hear anything.”³⁹²

By Chen Hong’s account: “In the tenth month [November-December 1661 (SZ 18.10)], the order came down, and those living near the coast were forced to remove to 20 *li* from the city. An earthen wall was to be built to block off everything beyond 20 *li*; not a plank of wood was to put out to sea, and it was forbidden to step foot beyond the boundary. Those who did so would suffer immediate death for violating the edict. Soldiers could show up for patrol at any moment.”³⁹³

Chen’s account also suggests that in these early stages of the Depopulation, there were few fixed garrisons; rather, roving bodies of troops took turns quartering in people’s homes or deserted villages. “Since the eighth month of the previous year [Sept. 1660], horsemen of the Eight Banners raised horses at Putian and camped outside the southern gate. In the eleventh month they decamped. Not long after, another troop came in with horses, but instead of camping at the southern gate they abruptly shifted to the northern gate and split camp around the several villages of Nanjiao, Xiadai, Xikou, Xitou, Shanglin, Qijian, Changshan, Yanshou, and Dantou. The villagers were terrified and left their homes, taking only clothing and money, leaving food and possessions behind for the soldiers. Men who could not flee quickly enough were drafted into labor; women were

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 80.

forced to warm the beds [of the troops].”³⁹⁴ Yu Yang wrote that terror reigned in the Putianese countryside: “The people were thrown into turmoil; following the official order to leave the boundary, their homes were razed—some folks were crushed to death [as their houses burned down]. It was truly a wasteland.”³⁹⁵

The clean sweep was then extended to sticks and stones that had given no offense but might (as the authorities saw it) provide comfort to those living near the new boundary line. A tree-cutting order stripped coastal Putian of its sylvan treasures, the fruits of years of accumulation: thousands of trees, including fruit orchards and big timbers of pine and cypress as wide around as a person’s arms, were axed. Then patrols came back to mow down the rest of the crops and flora, so that “not an inch of grass remained on the ground.”³⁹⁶

Scholar Eduard Vermeer, who has made a careful study of the local gazetteers of Putian and Xianyou, substantiates these bleak assessments. Xinghua prefecture, of which Putian was the major city, had already been decimated in the multi-sided wartime killings, tortures, and lootings *before* the Coastal Depopulation, some of which I described in the previous section. By Vermeer’s assessment, “the 1661 count of P’u-t’ien gave a total of 60,886 people, as against 148,756 in 1612. Not much faith should be had in these figures, however. The count of Hsien-yu [Xianyou] gave a total of 5,419 households, as against 8,522 in 1612.”³⁹⁷ This comes out to the disappearance (though not necessarily death) of nearly 90,000 residents in Xinghua prefecture. While such counts (reflecting government rolls of taxable adult males or their equivalents) cannot be taken as a precise census, the

³⁹⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 80.

³⁹⁵ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 128.

³⁹⁶ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 128.

³⁹⁷ Eduard B. Vermeer, “The Decline of Hsing-hua Prefecture in the Early Ch’ing,” 120.

trend is clear. As for the causes of the huge drop by 1661, it is impossible to assign relative weights to those deaths/disappearances by caused by wartime fatalities, famine, or mass exodus. But as Vermeer says, “It seems a safe estimate to say that Hsing-hua’s population had been halved in 1661.”³⁹⁸

The remaining half—like the rest of their coastal brethren—were now forced by the Depopulation onto one side or another of the thin and at first arbitrary line between Qing and the non-Qing. According to Vermeer, “Out of P’u-t’ien’s 31 districts, 9 had to be abandoned completely; of three others, one-third was cut off. The abandoned areas were very populous, comprising almost 200 out of P’u-t’ien’s 444 hamlets. [...] Thus, in 1661 by one single stroke P’u-t’ien was deprived not only of its income from trade and fishery, but also from over one-half of its farmland. The farmland area was reduced from 60,400 hectares to 28,100 hectares [i.e. from 604 to 281 sq. km].”³⁹⁹

Fujian had five coastal prefectures: Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, Xinghua, Fuzhou, and Funing (from south to north). Scenes of misery are scattered across the pages of all of their prefectural or county gazetteers. Other local sources include the clan genealogies (*zupu*), which abound in Fujian and are important records of local communal membership and memory. A couple will serve as examples. The county of Haicheng (Zhangzhou prefecture) was hard hit because of its proximity to Amoy and its past service as both smuggling port and naval base for Koxinga. The Xu clan of Guihai village in Haicheng recorded: “The court wished the boundary cleared to cut off communications, so everything east of Zhengqiao [a landmark bridge] was abandoned. The fields were

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

overgrown with weeds; our family and clan members called out to each other across the swampland. The ancestral shrines were razed to the ground by the troopers.”⁴⁰⁰ The Lin clan of Yushan in Jinjiang (Quanzhou prefecture), like many lineages, was reduced to a state of “scattering like a flock of birds and scurrying away like animals. The rich families that were stripped down to nothing were beyond counting. [...] As the Depopulation struck the coast, our family scattered far and wide to the four directions, and none were able to protect each other.”⁴⁰¹

Fuzhou suffered like all the rest. Though the walled provincial capital itself was insulated from the Depopulation order, the larger prefecture of Fuzhou was wracked by the same law that forced people out of their homes and rewarded the compliant only with the privilege of watching their own homes burn. “Men carried their wives and children onto the open roads as the fires were lit, leaving nothing behind them. The greater half of the refugees died on the roadside. Of the one or two [out of ten] that made it to the interior, not a scrap of food was to be had, and already starved corpses lay before their eyes. Of Fuqing’s 28 districts (*li*), only eight remained; of Changle’s original 24 townships (*du*), only four remained. The fires burned for two months. The disaster was unspeakable; but”—notes the somber writer—“the prefectures of Xinghua [Putian], Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou were still worse off.”⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ *Haicheng Guihai Xushi shipu* 海澄《圭海许氏世谱》(雍正七年许良彬续记), “Gangbin zumiao qianhou xingxiu zongji” 港滨祖庙前后兴修总记, cited in Wang Lianmao 王连茂 and Zhuang Weiji 庄为玘, eds., *Min-Tai guanxi zupu ziliao xuanji* 闽台关系族谱资料选辑 [Selected clan genealogies on Fujian-Taiwan relations] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1984), 429.

⁴⁰¹ *Jinjiang Shibi Yushan Linshi zongpu* 晋江石壁《玉山林氏宗谱》, j. 4, cited in Wang Lianmao and Zhuang Weiji, eds., *Min-Tai guanxi zupu ziliao xuanji*, 427.

⁴⁰² Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwen*, 22-23.

To the refugees crowding the roads and inland spaces, the drawing and sweeping of the lines was remembered as an ordeal of confusion and wandering; but for the authorities, the terror tactics were calculated to prepare the lines for the next crucial phase, in which the line literally solidified in the form of trenches and walls. Big ditches known as *jiegou*—boundary trenches—were scooped beneath the rope lines. A typical trench measured some 2 *zhang* ($\approx 7.1\text{m} / 23.3\text{ ft.}$) in width.⁴⁰³ Such trenches may have served a defensive function, especially in places nearer to Amoy and the seahord's favorite raiding targets in southern Fujian, but as they seem not always to have been deep—one source from Guangdong reported that the border was a shallow ditch not fully 1 *zhang* (3.58m / 11.7 ft.) wide and lined by bamboo poles strung with ropes⁴⁰⁴—they probably served the primary purpose of warning Qing subjects to keep their feet *in*. Keeping subjects of the empire “safely” on the Qing side (the stated purpose of the evacuation⁴⁰⁵) really meant denying the seahord access to recruits, their labor, or materials.

As the border walls (*jieqiang*) went up along the line of the trenches, it became clear that the Qing were engaged in a double-defensive action: walling off the seahord and impoverishing the coastal population. In general, the Fujianese border walls were at least 1 *zhang* high and 4 *chi* thick (some 11.7 ft. high x 4.7 ft. thick), and extended for some 2000 *li* (over 660 miles) along the seashore.⁴⁰⁶ The labor and materials came from the long-suffering and homeless coastal residents themselves, who had by this point

⁴⁰³ Wei Qingyuan, “Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti,” 199.

⁴⁰⁴ Wang Yun 王沄, *Yueyou jilue* 粤游纪略, cited in Rao Zongyi, *Qingchu Chaozhou qianjie kao*, 310.

⁴⁰⁵ *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* 清聖祖實錄選輯 (Taiwan wenxian congkan 165, reprint) (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1997 [1963]), 4. (SZ 18.8.13)

⁴⁰⁶ Wei Qingyuan, “Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti,” 199.

effectively “donated” everything to the state and were now drafted into corvée labor gangs and squeezed even more for their trouble.

The timing of these defensive constructions differed in each county and should not be considered a master plan for one single wall. Sometimes the building of these walls came years after the initial evacuation order and multiple burnings and clearings of the boundary. In an entry from February 1668, for example, Chen Hong describes how the wall was erected in Putian after years of illegal crossings, soldiers’ abuses, and criminal gangs (to be treated further in the next section). The people of Nanyang and Beiyang villages were dragooned into constructing a border wall stretching from Jiangkou in the north of Putian to Fengting in the south. The wall was to be 7 feet tall and about 5 feet thick (6 x 4 *chi*), and every household was responsible for building about 25 feet of it (2 *zhang* and one *chi*).⁴⁰⁷ The worst part was building a high watchtower and a sea dike at the river’s mouth (Jiangkou, at the delta of the Jiulu River, literally means “river mouth”). The wood for building the tower could only have come from the broken and deserted coastal homes of the evacuees, and Chen Hong records that the sea dike presented special difficulties because the seawater kept crashing into the construction efforts. A month later, the Qing government tried to standardize the currency by forbidding the use of old Ming money and even the early-Qing copper coins (which were devalued in copper content), and issuing new standard Kangxi money to supplement the Song dynasty coins that the Putianese still used. At the end of the same year, the coastal prohibition was relaxed so that people could get some seaweed and fish, but inexplicably, the door slammed shut again a few days later. While the dispossessed outside toiled to

⁴⁰⁷ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 86.

build a wall to cut themselves off from the sea and their livelihoods, within the city people commemorated the year's end. "Prefect Mu Tianyan, Vice Prefect Xu Tianpei, Subprefectural Magistrate Wang Rui, Magistrate Wang Kejiao, and Garrison Commandant Jin Congyi, along with all the city people, donated money to build a drum tower."⁴⁰⁸ Such were the disparate elements of the Great Enterprise in Fujian.

Let us zoom in on Putian and see topographically what the wall did.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.



Map 4.1: Taiwan Strait Area

Our object is circled above in this map of Fujian: right in the center, in the thick of things. Yu Yang wrote of his fair Putian: “My city sits constrained by mountains,

spreads out to the oceans, and stretches alongside the sea.”⁴⁰⁹ And indeed it was so. Like many cities in coastal Fujian, Putian sat with its back ringed by mountains, and from its high walls one could see far out to sea, far beyond the green coastal strip to where a long, twisting peninsula reached out like a skeletal hand grasping for the islands that dotted the horizon. Shall we zoom closer?



Map 4.2: Putian Topo

⁴⁰⁹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 135.

The parallelogram in **Map 4.2**, above, marks the once-walled Putian city, the capital seat of Xinghua prefecture during Ming and Qing times. From this topo map, the mountains hemming in Putian should be even more apparent than in the previous relief map—and east of the squiggly lines, lies the flat, fertile coastal plain that melted into the winding peninsula, full of reclaimed coastal rice fields, mudflats (harvesting grounds for shellfish), and protective bays, and all overlooked by the Tianma mountains in the center of the peninsula. The two circles on the map are Jiangkou (northeast), where the Jiulu River flowed to the sea; and Fengting (southwest), which boasted the sweetest lychee fruits in the empire. These are, we may recall, the northern and southern tips of the border wall that Chen Hong described as the bane of coastal inhabitants.

Try drawing, if you will, a line between those two circles—in your mind or on the page. Imagine now that your line has become, through some fearful architecture, a border wall 7 feet tall and 5 feet thick. Whether the line you have drawn is straight as the crow flies, or a curved one, or a three point connect-the-dots with Putian as the center node, it is unmistakable that the coastal plain and the vast extended peninsula, with its bays, salt fields, and fisheries, were cut off. Coastal inhabitants were forcibly evacuated behind an artificial but solid wall and into mountain regions where subsistence was difficult at best. A Qing edict of February 6, 1662 summed up the new strategy: “Now that the coastal populace has been moved inland, investigation should be easy. Officials cannot be as careless as they were before.”⁴¹⁰ In his book *Seeing Like a State*, James Scott has spoken of “state projects of legibility and simplification.” Scott originally “set

⁴¹⁰ *Ming Qing shiliao* 明清史料, *ding bian* (4), v. 3: 257 [SZ 18.12.18].

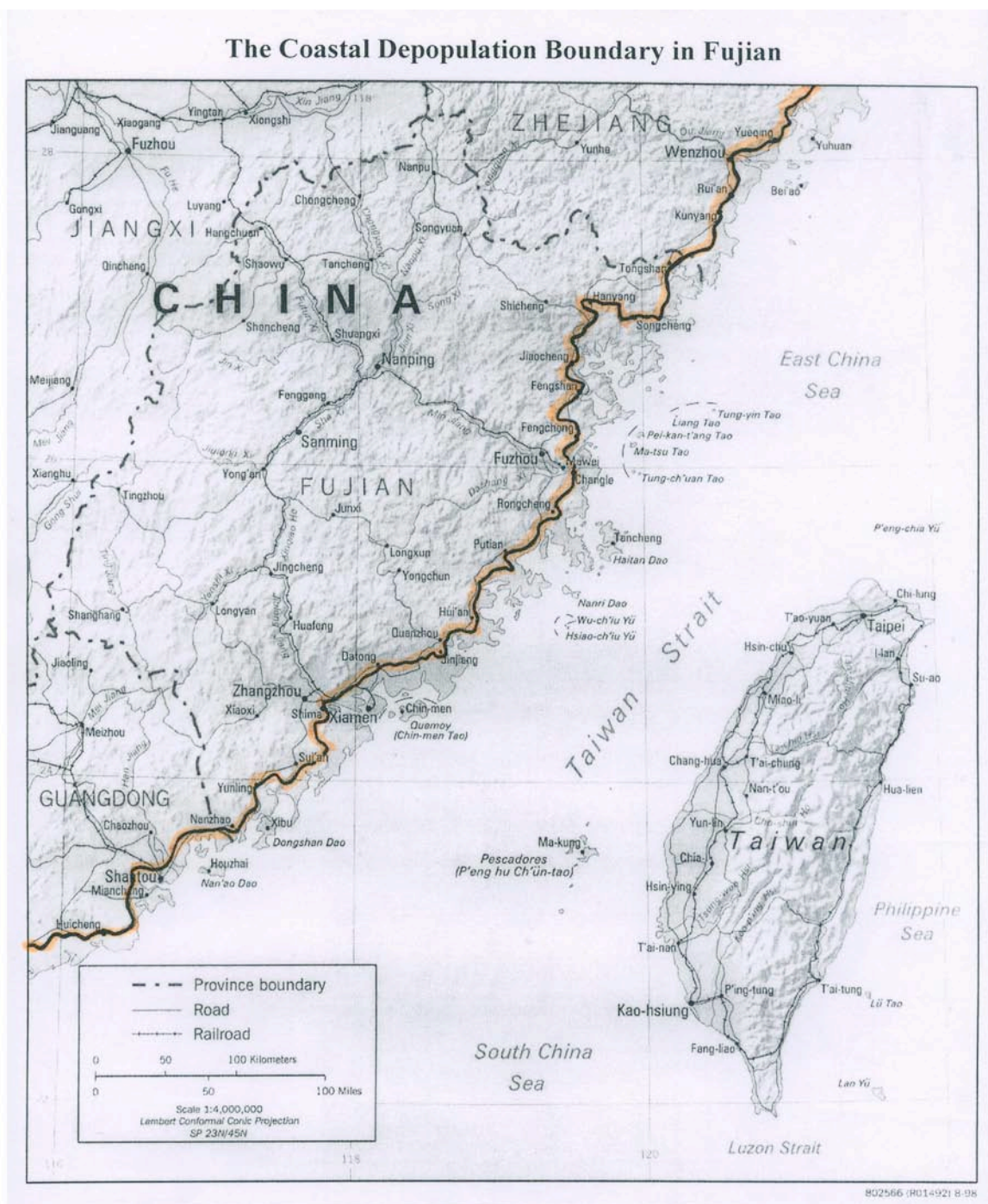
out to understand why the state has always seemed to be the enemy of ‘people who move around’ [...]. Efforts to permanently settle these mobile peoples (sedentarization) seemed to be a perennial state project—perennial, in part, because it so seldom succeeded.” Such efforts, he writes, were part of “a state’s attempt to make a society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion.”⁴¹¹ The Qing state, in the 17th century, seems to have caught something of this spirit, much to the detriment of the seafaring peoples of Fujian.

I could urge the same source-to-map conversion for each coastal prefecture and county in Fujian, and indeed for all of coastal China, but for the sake of space and time I will forbear. Someday, armed with GIS databases and cartographic capabilities, I may attempt a more complete tabulation and analysis. For now, from the foregoing, I suggest that the Coastal Depopulation was not simply a Qing military policy aimed at Koxinga. The policy was qualitatively different from the old Seaban and in some respects easier to enforce. It was aimed at all of society with its unclear boundaries and its warring factions, and it crafted a distinct and simplified political line from the artificial land boundary. The new policy made things very stark: those who stayed behind the line were, for better or for worse, Qing subjects; and those who crossed the line were deemed rebels and subject to capital punishment. No longer was there a need (as in the days of the old Ming Seaban) to distinguish fishermen from pirates, or to check the credentials of the traveling

⁴¹¹ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-2.

parties, ask their destination, or search their possessions. There was to be no middle ground. The lands and islands outside the wall belonged only to the rebels or the dead.

Having traced the line myself and compiled lists of evacuated towns and villages **(see Appendix II)**, I can attempt to illustrate the bloody boundary. The names of the settlements, which number well over a thousand, would be meaningless to those not familiar with the minutiae of coastal Fujian, and so I have plotted the boundary line on a modern map as close to the actual coordinates of the villages as possible **(See Map 4.3)**.



Map 4.3: The Coastal Depopulation Boundary in Fujian

The boundary, if not an unbroken wall, was a long, twisting line that followed local topography. When I went to Fujian and traced this route, it struck me just how chillingly similar the Qing architects were to modern engineers. The boundary largely follows the path of the modern coastal highway in southeast China, and for good reason, because it traces the course of least resistance—where the flat land ends and begins to rise into scrubby hills. Traveling north on the elevated highway today, you would see fertile coastal plains and river deltas on your right and mountains on your left. Now picture the lands on your right-hand side scorched brown or left to waste, the dikes neglected, the polder fields flooded with saltwater.

Or read here the description of one inspector in Guangdong who saw the frontier in one of its moments of relaxation (late 1670s): “I started from Huizhou and traveled outside the boundary to Chaozhou, and east to Fenshuiguan [the border between Guangdong and Fujian] before returning. [...] And what I saw was desolation outside the boundary: counties, military bases, and old sites of city habitation—all were in ruins, the walls broken, foundations empty, human bones and skeletons faintly visible in the weeds. The Cantonese country fairs were reduced to rubble, the salt fields now muck. [...] I saw] the folks imprisoned for crossing the boundary: they were just poor widows and ragamuffins who wanted to gather some clams, but they were ambushed by the officers [patrolling the shore]. [...] The warden holding them said, ‘This is all because of the boundary being closed.’ His Excellency replied, ‘But it is open now,’ and ordered them freed immediately. But he sighed, knowing that over the past eight years, the people who

were thus wrongfully imprisoned were beyond counting.”⁴¹² If one wished to enervate and impoverish the coastal peoples, and swell the ranks behind the garrison walls, there would be few more brutally calculated places to place the line.

Killing at the lines occurred in every phase of the Coastal Depopulation, but especially in the last major phase of building: the fortification of the boundary. Along the walls or trenches, forts and military camps were set up every 6-10 miles (20-30 *li*). There were also watchtowers, signal towers, and barbettes (*paotai*): raised platforms from which the soldiers could watch the coast down the barrel of the gun. Once again, the coastal residents footed the bill. Yu Yang recorded: “Although the boundary was set, [the Qing] worried that border-crossers would be uncontrollable, so four forts and ten blockhouses were ordered to be built along the wall and stationed with troops. The people outside the city were each forced to pay a household quota and conscripted into corvée labor; and from among them a fort foreman and several assistants were appointed to hasten the building process. The petty county officials and runners lorded over them, and the underlings of the commander, who acted as overseers, found every way to extort from these people.”⁴¹³

Step by step, the Qing dispossessed the coastal people of their means of economic independence and controlled their mobility through chokepoints in the wall. Eyewitness Yu Yang painted a dismal picture: “One fort cost some 3000-4000 taels, the blockhouses half as much. I cannot count the number of people flogged or beaten to death or driven to ruin. The fortifications were made of stones stripped from tombs and homes beyond the

⁴¹² Wang Yun 王沅, *Yueyou jilue* 粤游纪略, cited in Rao Zongyi, “Qingchu Chaozhou qianjie kao,” 309-310.

⁴¹³ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 128-129.

boundary, [...] and the wood and tiles for the barracks and rooms were stripped from the people's houses. The forts were founded to check entry and exit, and those who wanted to cross had to pass through the forts. The movement of those inside the boundary was controlled by the troops, and so was the flow of goods from outside the boundary. Those without an official pass from the forts were killed on the spot."⁴¹⁴

Was this a declaration of war against the coast? Not quite: for the Qing state, as all states do, claimed to be acting in the best interests of its coastal "subjects." As I mentioned earlier, there is no extant originating edict ordering the Depopulation.⁴¹⁵ However, there is a follow-up edict dated October 5, 1661 that mentions the order in hindsight and shows the flavor of rhetorical justification:

Edict to the Board of Revenue:

Previously, the coastal regions of Jiangnan, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong bordered on the rebel lairs and suffered recurrent invasion from the sea rebels. The people consequently could not live in peace. Therefore, We ordered everyone removed to the interior as a means to protect the people's livelihood. Now, if they are not quickly provided with fields and houses, how will the commonfolk survive? The respective viceroys and governors should investigate and furnish supplies—they must personally see to it that the people are resettled in homes and provided for, and not handle this task sloppily by entrusting it to subordinates!

*You of the Board, obey and implement this edict with dispatch.*⁴¹⁶

These words were nobly spoken, but they were not followed. No comprehensive system of supply was built to care for the evacuees and refugees, and in most cases neither land nor houses—not even food—were apportioned to those who drifted, rootless, in the interior. If anything, as we will see in the next section, those who already had little

⁴¹⁴ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 128-129.

⁴¹⁵ The closest one can get is a reference to 1661 (SZ 18) in the official compilation 欽定大清會典事例, j. 776, 《刑部、兵律關津》, cited in Zhu Delan, "Qingchu qianjieling shi Ming Zheng shangchuan zhi yanjiu," 19.

⁴¹⁶ *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* (TW 165), 4. (SZ 18.8.13)

were asked to give still more as their last full measure of devotion to their benefactor, the state. Negligence or corruption dissipated whatever provincial aid there was to be had; and though there were some desultory relief efforts, both by state officers and local gentry, there was never enough to go around. Resources had to be prioritized for the military, and soldiers could get away with all manner of malfeasance. For example, it was absolutely forbidden to fish, and therefore Qing officers fished to their hearts' content. In 1665, a certain Brigade General Du, on imperial orders to inspect that the coast was clear, promptly set up shop and netted all the profits of the fish market. Du literally had a captive market; local fishers were whipped into line: "Today [many were] clapped in the cangue⁴¹⁷ and beaten, and the next day even more. Only the people could be prohibited [from the sea], but not the soldiers."⁴¹⁸ All of this was absolutely necessary to "protect" the people from the depredations of the "pirates." The sealord competes for our coast?—Wonderful is the poverty of our coast!

In April 1663, Viceroy Li Shuaitai, the grandseigneur of the Depopulation in Fujian, ordered the following public works: a) dig trenches; b) build walls; c) build a gun barbette and smoke signal tower every 5 *li*; d) station a company every 20 or 30 *li*; and e) kill all who overstepped the boundary.⁴¹⁹ In January 1664, Viceroy Zhao Tingchen inspected the boundary himself and approved of what he saw.⁴²⁰

Fortified, fed, and housed by the coastal poor, and with their jobs clarified by the walls and trenches that made the old task of identifying "criminals" a simple matter of

⁴¹⁷ A cangue was a heavy wooden collar worn by prisoners in China, like the stocks of Europe and America.

⁴¹⁸ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

⁴¹⁹ Lin Jianhua 林剑华, "Ming Qing shiqi Fujian shengnei zaici yimin ji dongyin tanxi" 明清时期福建省内再次移民及动因探析, *Dongnan xueshu* 东南学术 (2006, v. 1), 157.

⁴²⁰ Zhu Delan, "Qingchu qianjieling shi Ming Zheng shangchuan zhi yanjiu," 19. (*KX 2.12*)

location, Qing troops patrolled the line constantly and killed without compunction. There was a lieutenant named Zhang An (who seems to have been neither Manchu nor bannerman, but a Putianese local) who supervised the area outside the boundary near Huangshi. He went out on patrol each day with only a long knife in his hand. “He killed everyone he met, pretending not to know any of his old acquaintances; and if they cried and begged for mercy, he might spare just one or two. If friends or relatives tried to appeal to his feelings, he would kill them all.”⁴²¹ Chen Hong estimated that over a decade of enforcing the border Zhang An murdered more than a thousand people.⁴²² One night, a Jiangxi man whom Zhang had enslaved took a sledgehammer and beat the vicious lieutenant’s brains out. The slave fled from the scene, having avenged his father and brother (both of whom had fallen beneath Zhang’s cruel knife), and wrote on a wall: *I killed him!* The locals hated the lieutenant so much that around November 1683, the story spread that he had been reincarnated as a freakish pig. “In a household in Huangshi, a pig was born with the words ‘Zhang An’ on its back. [...] The pig grew without being fed at all, and for four months no butcher dared to kill it. Finally, one man who had been wronged by Zhang An bought the pig and slaughtered it.”⁴²³

Similar cruelties abounded in other parts of the boundary—not that they were applied uniformly, for prosecution varied with the will of local administrators, but the

⁴²¹ Chen Hong 陈鸿 (Chen Bangxian 陈邦贤), *Xichao Pujing xiaoji* 熙朝莆靖小纪 [A record of the pacification of Putian in the Kangxi period] (*Qingshi ziliao* vol. 1, pp. 108-124, ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo Qingshi yanjiushi). [N.B.: This reprint cuts off at p. 124, and the last few pages of the primary source can be found in *Pubian jishi waiwuzhong* 莆变记事外五种 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 32-47]. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, p. 109. This account covers the years 1684-1697, unlike the *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, which covers the events of 1644-1683. The lifting of the Qianjie in KX 23 (1684) is the demarcation point.

⁴²² The text says literally “by the thousands,” but I think it is more reasonable here to interpret this as meaning more than one thousand.

⁴²³ Chen Hong, *Xichao Pujing xiaoji*, 109.

most traumatic events more deeply impressed themselves into the local records. One such shock was the Mulong Incident. In Xiangshan county of Guangdong in late 1664 and spring 1665, the local people were too attached to their home villages to stray far: instead, they took to the nearby mountain groves and concealed themselves, intending to wait out the evacuation order.⁴²⁴ Brigade General Ban Jisheng, a subordinate of the Feudatory Prince Shang Kexi, devised a trick to wipe out the hidden population. He proclaimed that anyone who came out and reported to the battalion would be permitted to return home. Many believed this (or lacked the resources to hide for long) and lined up outside the camp to register. General Ban ordered them to enter from the front gate one at a time, as their names were called, and “depart” from the back. Each one who stepped into the camp was killed on the spot, and not a single person walked out the back gate. Evidence of this remained until the lifting of the Depopulation years later, when refugees returned and saw the ruins of the camp: “Bleached bones littered the ground. The people gathered them up and buried them in a great mound, erecting a tombstone: Mulong mass grave. The name Mulong recalled the events of 1664.”⁴²⁵

Finally, the best-laid plans of mice and men demanded respect from all members of the animal kingdom. Signs on the wooden fence by the coastal road in Funing contained just five words: “Dare to cross: and die.” (*gan chu jie zhe: zhan*) Even horses and cows were forbidden to cross the line.⁴²⁶ In some regions of the pitted coast, where mountain paths sloped down and made wall-building impractical, Qing patrols designated roads as demarcation lines: for one thing, they could move quickly on them; for another,

⁴²⁴ No doubt it was also to escape taxes and labor levies, though the local histories do not mention this.

⁴²⁵ *Xiangshan xianzhi* (道光)香山县志, j. 8, *shilue* 事略; (光绪)香山县志, j. 22, *jishi* 纪事, p. 783.

⁴²⁶ Li Bo 李拔, *Funing fuzhi* 福宁府志, cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 403.

they could be robber barons without the trouble of building castles. Hong Ruogao wrote at the time: “In Fujian a road was designated as the boundary: below the road, facing the sea, was the ‘outside’ [*jiewai*]; above the road, toward the hills, was the ‘inside’ [*jienei*]. At the time of the initial depopulation, the houses below the road were burned, but the ones above were not. [...] Who could have been ignorant of the boundary, since the people living at the upper roadside had the ‘outside’ right before the water dripping from their rooftops [i.e., before their very eyes]? But the commonfolk had to raise livestock—and what did chickens and pigs know about frontier prohibitions? Whenever pigs and chickens crossed the road, and their owners chased them down, the patrols would see from afar and charge animals and owners with violating the law. Additionally, the road itself was not without subdivisions. Travelers unfamiliar with the route might mistakenly step in the wrong part of the road, in which case a group of soldiers would pounce on them and drag them before the judge for ‘crossing.’ Even if the travelers were released, their luggage and valuables had already been stolen [by the soldiers].”⁴²⁷ The extension of the coastal law to farm animals, hapless owners, and passersby may seem absurd, but from the last part it is clear that soldiers derived great pleasure from the artificialities of the frontier.

The outcome of all this building and killing was a line in the sand that was not necessarily a continuous wall (though long stretches consisted of defensive works), but established a new political boundary that was policed as a frontier: where people and goods were tracked, restricted, and forced to migrate. But besides saying that the Coastal Depopulation was destructive, what were its other effects? And what was the sealord

⁴²⁷ Hong Ruogao 洪若皋, *Nansha wenji* 南沙文集, j. 3, “*Zunyu chenyanshu*” 遵谕陈言疏.

doing all this time, while the Qing was building a frontier ostensibly for the purpose of cutting him off and protecting its subjects from his designs? The Qing seemed to be waging war more on the people than on the elusive heir of Zheng Zhilong. A central problem thus becomes how this maritime policy played a role in Qing state-building in Fujian. If we go all the way back to the beginning of the Ming-Qing crisis, we will see that Nurhaci and Zheng Zhilong (and their progeny) were not necessarily the *causes* of the great transformation, but they were rather *co-results* with it of forces that boiled beneath the political and economic veneer of late imperial China.

To begin unraveling these messy problems, then, we must look closer at the shape of the “state” and “society” during the Depopulation. But before that, back to the sealord for a spell.

The Scion

We cannot follow Koxinga on his adventures after 1661, the shape of his organizations and overseas ambitions, and his conquest of Taiwan, which could and should form a whole book in itself.⁴²⁸ And what a book it would have to be, to account for so many diametrically opposed images. Once upon a time, as Leonard Blussé informs us, “every Dutch schoolchild learned that in 1662 the cruel pirate Coxinga robbed his [or her] ancestors of their beautiful colony, Formosa.”⁴²⁹ And on the contrary, “every Chinese schoolchild—whether in the People’s Republic or in Taiwan—learns from his schoolbooks that the great people’s hero, [...Koxinga], chased the piratical Dutch traders

⁴²⁸ I await in particular the new dissertation of my colleague Xing Hang, a doctoral candidate at UC Berkeley, who is deeply researching Koxinga’s maritime networks and organizations.

⁴²⁹ Blussé, “The VOC as Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” 90.

from Taiwan.”⁴³⁰ Others have written or are writing more detailed histories of Taiwan and of Koxinga.⁴³¹ I note here only that Koxinga’s move to Taiwan and his sudden death in 1662 made it much easier for the Qing to carry out its maritime laws, while simultaneously creating a succession struggle within the Zheng clan that almost crippled the sea powers and resulted in a wave of defections to the Qing side.

We approach now some puzzles. For one thing, by 1661 and 1662, the crucial first and second years of the Coastal Depopulation, the Qing was not fighting from a position of weakness, but quite the opposite: all of its major rivals had collapsed or left the field. Emperor Yongli, the last flame of the Ming, was captured and strangled in late May 1662. The Southern Ming was finished. A month later, on June 23, 1662, Koxinga himself perished in Taiwan—probably from a combination of rage, malaria, and the delirium induced thereby—just after conquering the island from the Dutch and threatening to crush the Spanish in the Philippines (a threat he might well have carried out, had he lived another year), while also learning of his own son’s incest, the downfall of the Yongli emperor, and confirmation of his father’s execution.⁴³² He was 38. The manner of Koxinga’s untimely death has occasioned even more controversy and irreconcilably colorful accounts than that of his father, just seven months earlier to the day. But whether he died of madness, or overwork (a warning to us all), or a severe cold, or biting off his own tongue, or grief, or haunted by the ghosts of slain enemies, or

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Examples include Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); and Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth, and the Hero*. Reams of excellent research in Chinese, Japanese, and Dutch (to say nothing of Portuguese and other languages) have been printed on this man, but a comprehensive account has yet to harmonize these findings into a synthetic whole.

⁴³² Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 178, 193.

gnawing off his fingers⁴³³—or standing alone atop his newly won Castle Zeelandia and looking westward with a spyglass, waiting in vain through wind and rain for ships that never came, and straining his eyes beyond the Bay of Tayouan toward the green hills of his home, Fujian⁴³⁴, which he would never see again—we do know that the death of this man, the “Attila of the East,”⁴³⁵ was a turning point. The expansion of the sealord domain halted, and the Taiwan-based regime of Zheng Jing (Koxinga’s eldest son) dropped most of its political pretensions on the mainland and shrank in on itself.

But if the flame had dwindled, why the continuation and intensification of the Qianjie? Could not the Qing have dispensed with this policy—if it had indeed been simply the grand hydrophobic answer to Koxinga—now that the sealord was dead? Koxinga’s firstborn son Zheng Jing, who was described by chroniclers as a somewhat irresolute and lascivious man, cut a much less commanding figure than his father, and succeeded to his patrimony only through infighting and the loss of chunks of his organization to desertion and defection. The Qing eyes and ears, Feudatory Geng Jimao and Viceroy Li Shuaitai, were well aware of the situation and immediately sent envoys to Zheng Jing to induce his surrender. Jing chewed over the problem for a time and concluded that it was still better to hold the new base on Taiwan, lest his father have fought for it in vain. Even if he possessed only a handful of islands and could little hope to regain the scorched coast that the Qing had prepared for him, his new and fertile base

⁴³³ Such examples of the permutations of Koxinga’s death are given in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 68-75.

⁴³⁴ And perhaps remembering his other home, Japan, where his mother Lady Tagawa had borne and raised him to age seven, where his half-brother Shichizaemon still wrote to him affectionately, and which his mother had departed at last to cross the seas and visit him in Fujian, only to perish in the Manchu sack of Anhai castle, the year after Zheng Zhilong’s betrayal.

⁴³⁵ Juan Ferrando, *Historia de los PP Dominicanos*, vol. III (Madrid, 1871), 98, quoted in Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga*, 70.

on Taiwan was, as he wrote in reply to Geng and Li, “a remote place, beyond the seas, that has little to do with the main territory of the Central Kingdom [China].”⁴³⁶ It would be better, he suggested, if the Qing would allow him an autonomous existence like the tributary kingdom of Korea. This was, we may recall, what Koxinga had demanded years before, and once again the Qing would not hear of it.

The truth was that Jing could not even defend his three key island bastions: Amoy, Quemoy, and Tongshan. The Qing had prepared another fleet, swelled with high-ranking Zheng defectors and materiel. On August 29, 1662, just over twenty days after the official report of Koxinga’s death reached Beijing, the Qing appointed Shi Lang, an expert seaman who had served both Zheng Zhilong and Koxinga for years, as Naval Marshal and soon gave him a standard command of 10,000 sailors and marines.⁴³⁷ Later that year, high Zheng commander Yang Xuegao crossed over with more than 3,000 officers and troops and some 30,000 military family members and civilians.⁴³⁸ Turncoats streamed in as the seaford’s own form of bloody tanistry wound down on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. In July 1663, Jing backstabbed his own uncle Zheng Tai in a power play over Amoy (Tai had backed the wrong horse in the succession struggle⁴³⁹), and commanders like Tai’s brother Zheng Mingjun and other seacaptains sailed to Quanzhou in fear and disgust and offered their allegiance to Infantry Marshal Ma Degong, bringing with them over 400 military and civil officers, and more importantly, 7,300 soldiers and

⁴³⁶ Xia Lin, *Minhai jiyao* (TW 11), 31.

⁴³⁷ *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* (TW 165), 9, 11. (*Da Qing shengzu renhuangdi shilu*, juan 6, *KX 1.7.27*; juan 7, *KX 1.12.26*)

⁴³⁸ *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* (TW 165), 10. (*KX 1.11.25*)

⁴³⁹ As well as offering to sign a separate peace with the Qing in return for amnesty for all his followers: see Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan, ed., *Zheng Chenggong dang’an shiliao xuanji*, “Li Shuaitai tiwei Zheng Tai deng paiyuan yixiang shiben” 李率泰题为郑泰等派员议降事本 (*KX 1.9.9*), 447-449.

their families and 180 warships.⁴⁴⁰ In this and the defections that followed, the Zheng naval defenses in the Amoy region were probably cut by half (if the numbers later given from the successful Amoy invasion are any indication).⁴⁴¹ The Qing state gladly employed the defectors and handed out ranks and noble titles like candy.⁴⁴²

On October 16, 1663, Zheng captain Yang Fu ritually submitted at the Qing war camp in Quanzhou. Scholar John Wills recounts the record of Dutch captain Balthasar Bort, who happened to be present, which gives us some taste of the ritual of surrender: Yang Fu and fifty officers knelt before Feudatory Prince Geng Jimao with their hair shaved in the Manchu queue and wearing Qing caps. Yang Fu kowtowed three times, the others nine times. Then Prince Geng embraced Yang, and all were given their new Qing robes. A lavish banquet followed, in which the newly enrobed Hokkienese seamen watched Portuguese children (by which the Dutch account probably meant Asian or African slaves from Macau) from Prince Geng's palace dance in a stage play. Seated in the audience was Zheng Xi, the fifth son of Zheng Zhilong and half-brother of Koxinga, who had tried to claim the sealordship but lost out to Zheng Jing, and then escaped to join the Qing.⁴⁴³ It was an unlikely meeting, but hardly inconsistent with the times. Yang Fu, the honored turncoat, would soon show up in Chen Hong's record as a much-hated

⁴⁴⁰ *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* (TW 165), 14. (KX 2.8.15)

⁴⁴¹ Shortly before the joint Manchu-Dutch invasion of Amoy in November 1663, a Dutch captive revealed that there were 4000-5000 armed men and about 100 armed and 260 unarmed ships on Amoy and Quemoy. Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 106.

⁴⁴² *Da Qing shengzu renhuangdi shilu*, juan 8-10, has many examples: virtually every Zheng commander who defected seemed to be showered with titles and honors.

⁴⁴³ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 102.

despoiler of Putian.⁴⁴⁴ That was how the Qing resettled surrendered commanders: by assigning them to police and pillage the coast of their home province.

Besides the Zheng defectors, the Qing also had a new (though irksome) ally. The Dutch, recently ejected from Taiwan, still smarted from the hurt and were eager for revenge—and beyond that, for profit. They were only too happy to help the Qing enforce the Coastal Depopulation by plundering ships at sea and robbing coastal towns where people had secretly sneaked out again (often with the connivance of local Qing officials, who profited from the sale of fishing and trading licenses). In summer 1662, a fleet of eight war yachts and four fluyts under Balthasar Bort (with 756 sailors and 528 soldiers) arrived on the China coast with orders to attack all Zheng properties and erase the previous year's humiliation.⁴⁴⁵ Bort's flagship captain, the one-eyed Isbrandt Bouwmeester, had been a veteran of the Taiwan defeat and had watched a Dutch surgeon dissect a live Chinese prisoner at Castle Zeelandia. Such men thirsted for blood, and they soon got it, along with some welcome booty.⁴⁴⁶

On September 1, 1662, the Bort fleet bivouacked on the islands near the mouth of the River Min (near Fuzhou), which had been completely depopulated by the Qing, and the Dutch sailors helped themselves to what was left. Vice Admiral Jan van Kampen observed “many graves, sorely violated by our people, out of idle fancy that they would find gold, silver, or jewels therein: the coffins broken; the corpses thrown out of them; which lay in full dress, with caps on their heads, wearing robes, trousers, and shoes; in

⁴⁴⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 85.

⁴⁴⁵ Wills has translated a little poem by Matthijs Cramer, bookkeeper of the Bort voyage: “... Up, up thou Hero, thou’rt the man, / The scourge of our lost Tayowan. / And yea that treacherous cabal, / You’ll trample down now, one and all.” (Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 55). Tayowan = Taiwan.

⁴⁴⁶ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 61-62.

their full shape, but dry as stock fish.”⁴⁴⁷ Later, van Kampen was dispatched to chase down Zheng shipping. He had a truly wretched time of it, struggling in the northern monsoon and being taken on a wild goose chase by Chinese fishing boats (even a flotilla of some 70-80) that zipped around the Dutch warships and always got away. “The Dutch ships simply could not sail as fast as the junks.”⁴⁴⁸

Everywhere the Dutch found evidence of the Coastal Depopulation: islands and villages with fine stone houses, empty now; poor fishing villages that were winked at by the Qing authorities (who probably held out their hands for a tip); and also towns of a more ambiguous sort, which Qing troops had pillaged and evacuated, but whose people had fled to the hills and then returned, either with the permission of Qing officers or the help of Zheng troops. Balthasar Bort happily took care of the last mentioned in his own way: in Shacheng in the northeast district of Funing, a delegation of town elders and monks asked the Dutch to spare their temples, boats, and homes in return for supplies of fresh meat and other edibles. The Dutch gave them four days to pay up. On December 24, van Kampen and 160 men were sent ashore to burn the town for tardiness. Van Kampen held his fire when the people begged for another day to deliver the supplies. However, on Christmas Day, Bort overruled his vice admiral and ordered the town burned at once. “But when Van Kampen came ashore again, the houses were already—oh misery!—in flames, caused by the willfulness and disobedience of three of the skippers. From the houses and pagodas—a pitiful sight—came many sick women and

⁴⁴⁷ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 68.

⁴⁴⁸ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 75. This is Wills’ observation, not a quotation from Jan van Kampen.

men crawling on their knees, to flee the flames.”⁴⁴⁹ In a previous section, “The Killers,” we saw the twisted cases of a Qing official helping the sealord milk the people for supplies, and a Zheng commander (Guo Erlong) helping the Qing magistrate collect taxes; now we see the Dutch, in pursuit of “free trade,” helping the Qing carry out the Coastal Depopulation, all to the woe of the townspeople.

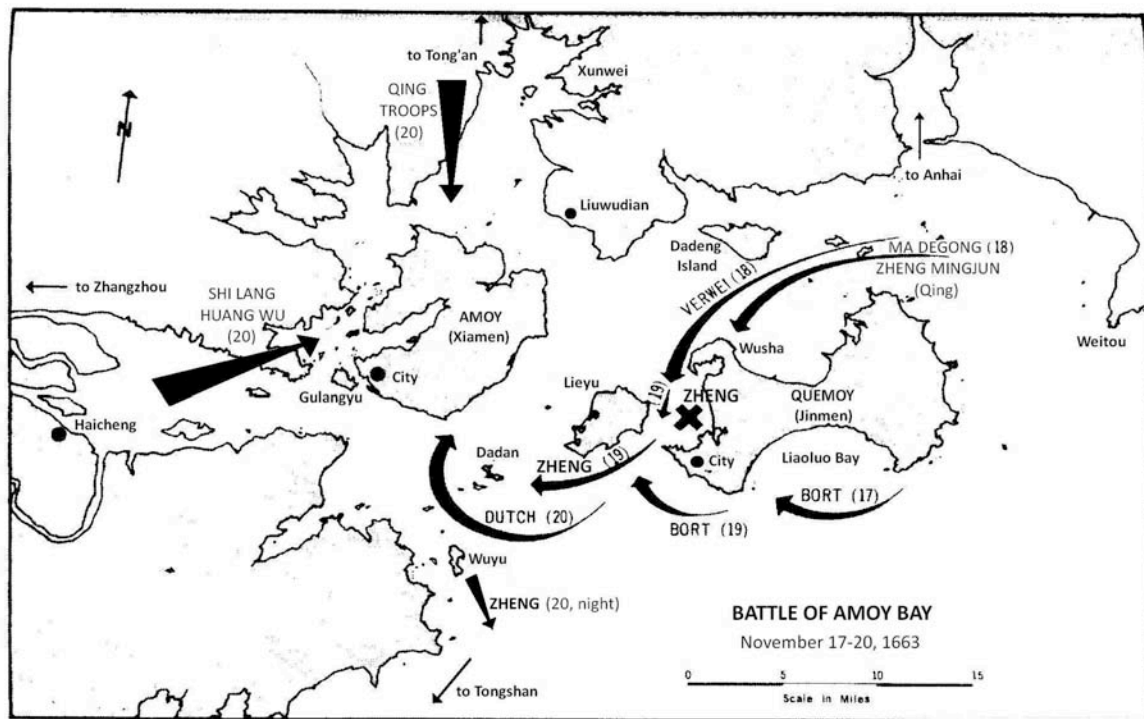
But these were only sideshows: the main objective of the Dutch was still to press the offensive against Zheng Jing, hoping to recover Taiwan, “restore the Company’s reputation,” and most importantly to gain trade privileges with the Qing empire in return for their services. In July 1663 the old Bort fleet was replaced by a new one (with Bort still commanding), the strongest fleet ever sent by the VOC to Chinese waters: 17 ships, 440 cannons, 1,382 sailors, 1,234 soldiers, and trade goods valued at 161,370 florins.⁴⁵⁰ The alliance of convenience between the “Tartars” and the “red-haired barbarians,” as they called each other, was plagued by mistrust and miscommunication, as John Wills has so well described.⁴⁵¹ But the partnership lasted long enough (the enemy of my enemy is my friend) to eradicate the sealord’s presence from the shores of the empire. After so much dickering, preparation, and delay, the final battle was an anticlimax. On November 20, 1663, while the Dutch (who had impatiently started the shooting a couple days earlier) squeezed the Zheng ships into the channels between the dumbbell-shaped Quemoy, Pac-Man shaped Amoy, and the smaller islands of Lieyu, Dadan, and Wuyu, the Qing marines under Huang Wu and Shi Lang landed on Amoy and routed the Zheng forces.

⁴⁴⁹ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 78, translating Olfert Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig Bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye op de Kuste en in het Keizerrijk van Taising of Sina* (Amsterdam, 1670), 115.

⁴⁵⁰ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 93-94.

⁴⁵¹ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, especially Chapter 2.

(See **Map 4.4, below**) Those who could flee to their ships retreated south to Tongshan (Zheng Jing's last major island in southern Fujian), but many stayed and surrendered to the Qing.



Modified from John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1602-1681* (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2005 [1974, Harvard University Press]), 147.

Map 4.4: Battle of Amoy Bay⁴⁵²

Secret Manchu reports of the time informed the throne that the long list of surrendered Zheng clanspeople included Theyma (Lady Zheng, *née* Huang), the aged matriarch who had outlived both her greatest son and grandson, and who could not abide her great-grandson as sealord. Theyma led her flock over to the Qing with their boats, their knowledge, and 775 members (from the elite and to the most humble) and affiliates and subordinates of the Zheng clan. The Qing court, though it had killed her eldest son

⁴⁵² Adapted from map in Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 147.

Zhilong without remorse two years earlier, decided now to show her mercy and peacefully reunite her with Zheng Zhibao, her one remaining son in Beijing.⁴⁵³

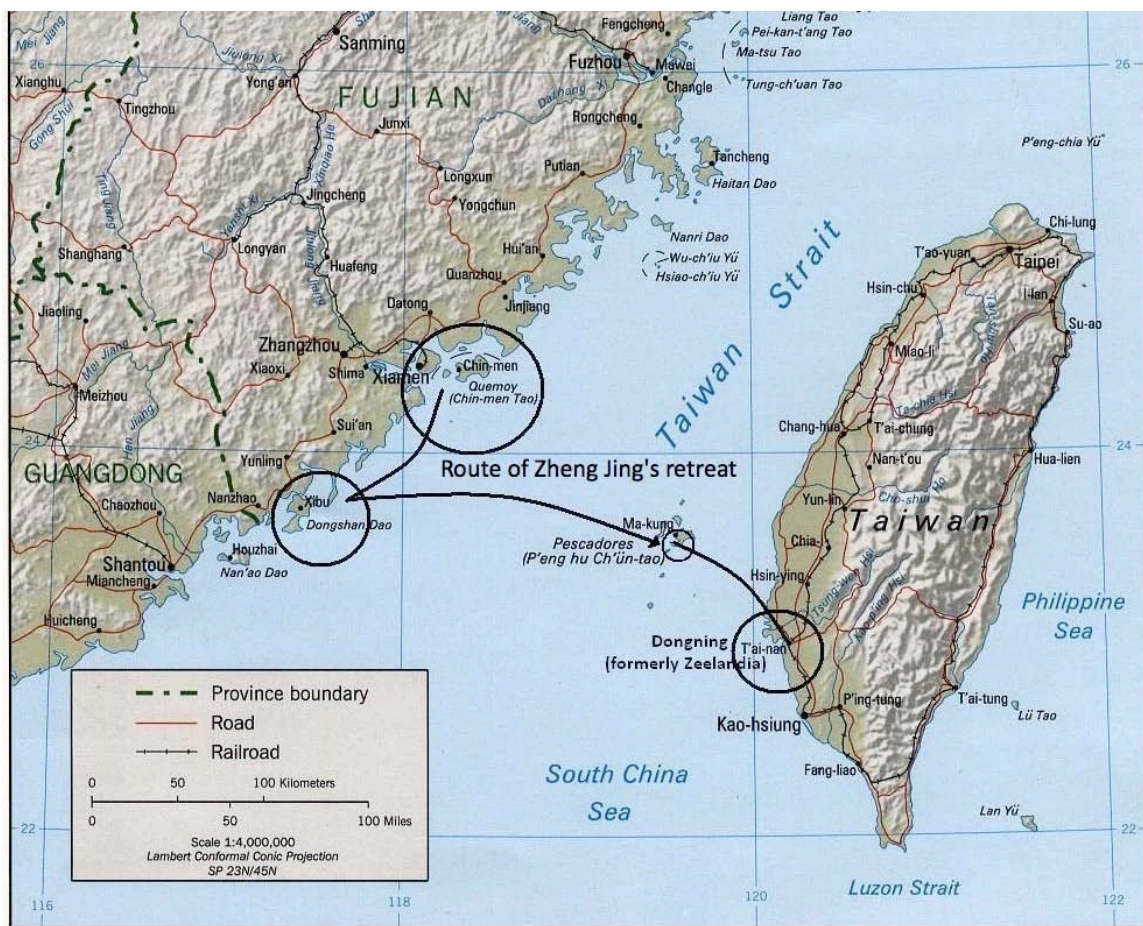
She had surrendered just in time. Those who remained on the islands now fell within the purview of the Depopulation policy. Bort and the Dutch, who had been looking forward to plundering Wuyu and Quemoy by themselves, were angry that the Qing had broken their promise and already started the looting when the Dutch landed—yet another item in the long list of complaints of “Tartar perfidy.” The buildings and fortifications on the islands were burned and the people removed or killed. Bort recorded (though not without a hint of sour grapes): “The Tartars treated shamefully the inhabitants whom they pulled out of their hiding places, not sparing women and children. Not only did they take them away as prisoners, with ropes around their necks, but also they hacked and carved many poor defenseless people, and tortured them to death, and left them lying on the road in our sight.”⁴⁵⁴

With the fall of Amoy of Quemoy, the Qing was unquestionably sovereign over the coast and the offshore islands. Jing fled down to Tongshan (whose commanders, including the long-serving Zhou Quanbin, surrendered to the Qing without firing a shot) and then abandoned the coast altogether, making for the Pescadores and ultimately for Taiwan, where the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait might buy him some more time. (**See Map 4.5, below**) The coastal islands were simply too close to defend; and as Jing went

⁴⁵³ Xiamen daxue Taiwan yanjiusuo 厦门大学台湾研究所 and Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan 中国第一历史档案馆, eds., *Kangxi tongyi Taiwan dang'an shiliao xuanji* 康熙统一台湾档案史料选辑 [Collected archival materials on the integration of Taiwan under Kangxi] (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1983), 22. (Dec. 19, 1663, *KX 2.11.20*)

⁴⁵⁴ “Fleet to Batavia, March 21, 1664,” *Koloniaal Archief*, 1137:285-300, cited and translated by Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 112. The good men of the VOC had to be contented with ‘only’ 200 Chinese prisoners as servants/slaves.

east, captains, independent warlords, and islanders shaved their hair and kowtowed to the Qing, or at least went through the motions. The Dutch were pleased to bombard those who hesitated and relieve them of their silver—even going so far as looting the great Buddhist sanctuary island of Putuoshan off the coast of Zhejiang, much to the displeasure of the Qing (who finally revoked the Dutch biennial trade privilege in 1666).⁴⁵⁵ *That* island was not to be touched.



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Map 4.5: Zheng Jing's Retreat

⁴⁵⁵ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 169-170.

Zheng Jing was now almost completely isolated on the newly acquired headquarters of Dongning, Taiwan (the new name for Castle Zeelandia), where it would take years to restore his demoralized forces to anything near their former strength; and the Qing was not only building a wall but also a navy. The defectors (Huang Wu and Shi Lang, to be sure, but add also Yang Fu, Zheng Mingjun, and tens if not hundreds of former Zheng officers) would have known all this, and so would Li Shuaitai and Geng Jimao, who were old hands at fighting the sealords. Manchu intelligence reports frankly observed as much, as did the watchful Dutch: the sealord was almost beaten. And yet, the Coastal Depopulation, which began in late 1661, would continue for *twenty years after* the death of Koxinga—and after the fall of Amoy and Quemoy in 1663—all the way until 1683. How could this be?

Chapter V

Rapine

Satraps and Society

Since Fujian has suffered from the rebellion, the people have been in extreme poverty. Now the pirates have again harassed Quanzhou and robbed at will. Thus, the farmers cannot stay in their own fields; the residents cannot live under their own roofs, nor clothe themselves, nor eat a full meal. The people, to escape their misery, took their families and fled to remote areas.

Now my soldiers are here on southern campaign. We see the ashes of the houses, the deserted fields, and the bodies on the roadside, and our hearts ache. ... We have rescued Quanzhou and reopened the road to Zhangzhou—within days we will rid this land of the rebels. Our only fear is that the people here have lost their faith and deserted their homeland and their occupations to wander as refugees. Thus we post this notice to inform people near and far: the winter approaches, so return home to harvest the crops. ... If our soldiers loot or give trouble, you may report them and they will be punished by military law.

*-- Public Notice at Luoyang Bridge, Quanzhou
October 15, 1678 (KX17.08.30)⁴⁵⁶*

The Machine

Part of the answer to the puzzle of the Coastal Depopulation's long life surely lies in what was happening 'outside': the crack, pop, and fizzle of two planned naval invasions of Taiwan in 1664 and 1665 (due partly to bad weather but also to Shi Lang's questionable maneuvers to wheel and deal and keep his admiralty); the mutual suspicions and ultimate breakdown of the Qing-Dutch alliance⁴⁵⁷; and Zheng Jing's remarkably

⁴⁵⁶ Yang Jie 楊捷, *Ping Min Ji* 平閩紀 [The Pacification of Fujian] (Taiwan wenxian congkan 98, reprint) (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1961 [1684]), j. 12, 331-332.

⁴⁵⁷ See Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, Ch. 2-3.

successful program to stimulate agriculture and trade, reorganize the military, and ultimately consolidate his regime on Taiwan.⁴⁵⁸ However, I suspect that the larger part of the answer lies on the coast of Fujian, specifically in the conduct of the Depopulation itself. Besides the obvious aspect of destroying maritime sectors from salt and fisheries to coastal agriculture and trade, it had also created new social conditions, starting with a new arbitrary political boundary around which not-so-arbitrary groups repositioned themselves. In other words, the “jie” boundary of the Qianjie was a focal point for various subsets of “state” and “society.” This requires some evaluation of the shape of the two categories of state and society during the creation of the maritime frontier, the killings, and the drawing and redrawing of the boundary.

In his study of the Pyrenees borderlands (the Cerdanya) between what eventually became the nations of France and Spain, Peter Sahlins has described the parameters of the problem with admirable clarity:

“State” and “local society” are abbreviations for different configurations of social and political groups which, acting out of private or collective interests, constructed the boundaries of territory and identity in the Cerdanya. The “state” includes, at different historical moments or simultaneously, ministers and kings, [...] provincial authorities, [...] local judicial officers, tax collectors, customs guards, and soldiers [...]. “Local society” refers to the classes of landless peasants and small property owners, many of whom survived by contraband trade, annual migration from the valley, or domestic industries such as knitting stockings; to wealthy landowners [...] and to the corporate village communities [...]. Each of these social configurations had different interests and subsequently a different relation to the problem of the boundary, and each shaped its identities accordingly. If there is a single history to the boundary and the borderland, it must take into account this multitude of voices, many of which can barely be heard.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ See Chien-Chao Hung, “Taiwan under the Cheng Family 1662-1683: Sinicization after Dutch Rule” (Ph.D. thesis: Georgetown University, 1981). Again, a foreshadowing of Chiang Kai-shek after 1949.

⁴⁵⁹ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 22-23.

What applied to the Cerdanya applied to Fujian as well. The problem of reconstructing the history and significance of the Coastal Depopulation—as with any borderland—revolves around the many arms of the Qing state that attempted to divide and isolate parts of society, and of the reciprocated acts of members of Fujianese local society. The coastal boundary was shaped between them and in turn shaped their interactions.

First, a word on the state. I have been using “Qing” so far as a placeholder, each time knowing both its oversimplification and its essential usefulness for describing a purposeful actor in a chaotic war. Now that we have seen how the wall was purposefully built by “the Qing state,” let us consider the component parts of that entity in Fujian. First comes the structure of military command, for the Depopulation was not administered as a civil statute, but as a policy that from the start was built and policed for and by the military. I have sketched a schematic:

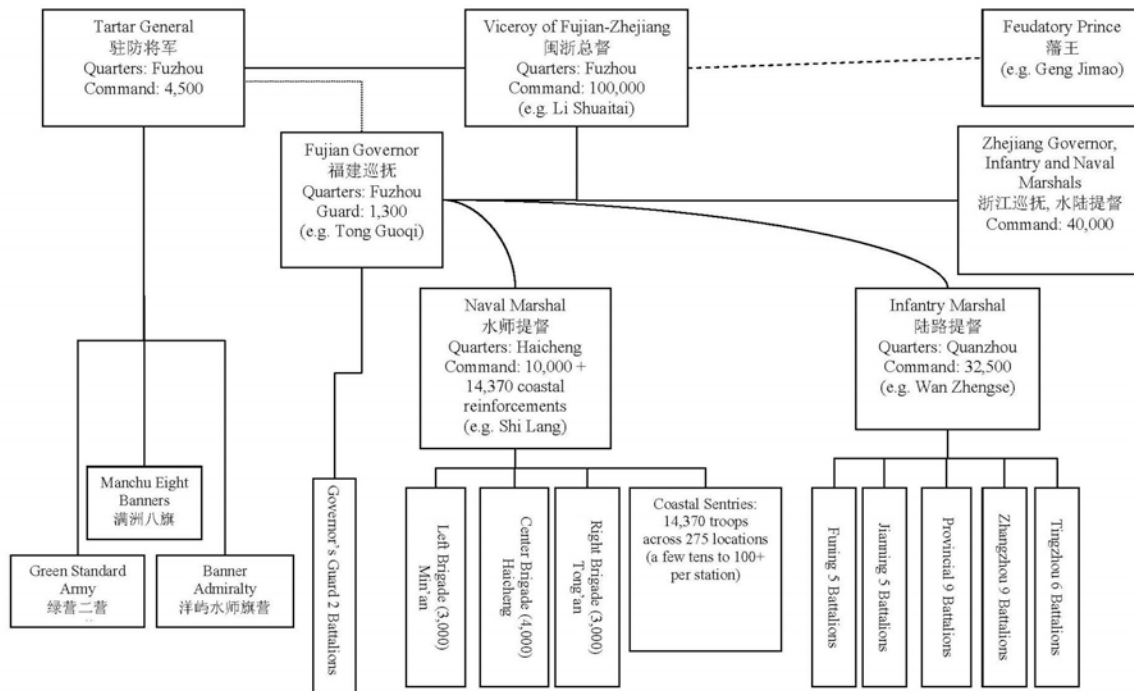


Figure 5.1: Command Structure⁴⁶⁰

Figure 5.1 shows how the chain of power descended from the top three powerholders down through the governor and then the marshals and brigade commanders.⁴⁶¹ The official command structure seemed to make the Viceroy, Tartar General, and Feudatory Prince equal partners in administering Fujian; however, in practice the Feudatory had enormous powers and independent military and taxation that made him the major regional authority. He could not be readily dismissed or reassigned,

⁴⁶⁰ Adapted from Zhu Min haijun junshi bianzuanshi 驻闽海军军事编纂室, *Fujian haifangshi* 福建海防史 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 1990), 170-172; and Zhu Weigan 朱维幹, *Fujian shigao* 福建史稿 (Fu'an: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1986), vol. 2, 403.

⁴⁶¹ The imperial Chinese military did not have a strict distinction between Army and Navy of the sort often encountered in Western militaries, so even the Infantry Marshal commanded some ships and maritime troops, and the Naval Marshal commanded coastal land troops. However, they did have separate headquarters and resources and thus clashed over jurisdiction, as with the case of Wan Zhengse's rivalry with Shi Lang throughout the 1660s (Wan wanted the post of Naval Admiral, which in a maritime province like Fujian was the more powerful and prestigious, but he lost out to Shi.) Word of their mutual jealousy reached the ear of Emperor Kangxi. *Qing shilu: Shengzu shilu*, j. 116 [KX 23.7.22]; *Qing Shengzu shilu xuanji* (TW 165), 133-134.

and while there were limits of decorum and deference to the Qing, once again in practice there was virtually no limit on the size of his private army, which was funded both by his own requisitions and subsidies he could demand from the central government for military “emergencies.”⁴⁶² Rare was the case where the Viceroy or the Tartar General would not go along with the Feudatory’s wishes—and most often they split his largesse, so that when he profited, they profited too. Corruption was a fact of life. The chain of command shown in **Figure 5.1** was also a chain of reporting: even if the local commanders or the naval or infantry marshals, who knew the reality on the ground, wished to speak truth to the throne (rarely was this the case), they would have had to go through the governor, the viceroy, and the Feudatory, who were probably bedfellows. Only three Feudatory regimes existed in the empire: Wu Sangui in Yunnan-Guizhou (southwest), Shang Kexi in Guangdong (south), and Geng Jimao in Fujian (southeast)—all had been contested regions during the initial conquest where fierce resistance had called for special measures, and where these satraps had substituted (and later, theoretically only supplemented) regular administration.

The central government essentially left the problem of coastal control up to the viceroys and the Feudatories, who proceeded to build up private armies of between 10,000-35,000 troops.⁴⁶³ That number does not include all of the ad hoc squadrons of irregulars, thugs, and surrendered rebels who were on the Feudatories’ payrolls or beholden to them. My sense from reading the *Qing Shilu* and other primary corpora is

⁴⁶² Together, the Three Feudatories presented the central government with a bill of over 11 million taels, nearly half of the empire’s tax revenue. Kai-fu Tsao, “The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China, 1673-1681: Its Setting and Significance” (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 1965), 67.

⁴⁶³ Liu Fengyun 刘凤云, *Qingdai sanfan yanjiu* 清代三藩研究 [Research on the Three Feudatories] (Beijing: Zhonghua renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994), 137.

that while the imperial court gave the original approval to depopulate the coast, it did not micromanage the process and instead deferred to the Feudatories, who proceeded to keep the court mostly ignorant of their local actions while reporting that the policy was a brilliant success. I suggest the following with regards to the relationship of the Qing state with the Qianjie: the top level or central government wished for a clear boundary line to distinguish friend from foe and thus end the uncertainty of Qing governance over the littoral and the sealord's ability to easily exploit that uncertainty for supplies and recruits; the center achieved this goal at the price of great loss of revenue and a dangerous relinquishment of state prerogatives to local actors, who gained from the losses of both the central state and the sealord. In other words, the "center" could not have been so determined to keep the Depopulation policy if it had not been for the enthusiastic participation of the local powers.

For one thing, it was not in the interests of the Feudatories or even the provincial viceroys and governors to drop the Qianjie. Almost all had their hands in illegal trading, and these 'official smugglers,' if I may call them such, profited from the monopoly that the policy gave them.⁴⁶⁴ Trade was technically illegal, but who would police the policemen? (Even as late as 1683, when Taiwan had already been conquered and the emperor wished to rescind the coastal ban, some governors still wanted the policy upheld—Emperor Kangxi deduced that it was because they balked at losing their exclusive trade profits.⁴⁶⁵) The Feudatories in particular could keep writing to the court that the military threat required their presence and their full attention (and thus the central

⁴⁶⁴ Wei Qingyuan, "Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti," 199-200.

⁴⁶⁵ *Qing shilu: Shengzu (Kangxi) shilu*, j. 116: [KX 23.7.11 (Aug. 21, 1684)].

government's full monetary support). Meanwhile, Geng Jimao, the Feudatory of Fujian, built himself a magnificent palace.

In spring 1665, ever-mournful Putian was hit by a drought, followed by a deluge a few months later; the city walls collapsed and the dikes broke, flooding the city. In Fuzhou, a fire destroyed the Feudatory's palace and the residential districts within a 20-*li* circumference. Geng Jimao immediately ordered the construction of a new and more sumptuous palace, conscripting the people of Fuzhou and artisans from all along the coast at a cost of hundreds of thousands of taels of silver.⁴⁶⁶ As for where he got the money for this (in the midst of the Coastal Depopulation, no less), we need look no further than the relationship between Geng and the local society in the years immediately surrounding the Depopulation order.

In the previous section, I mentioned three general rules of the Qianjie, the first of which was to depopulate and impoverish the border region. I meant the latter literally: the impoverishment was *not* simply an unintended or tangential consequence of the war situation. A deliberate program of impoverishing the people was carried out in the new frontier, not by the center state, but by the regional state. Some of the severest periods of this mechanism, as will become clear, occurred not during the period of highest sealord threat, but *after* 1663, when Zheng Jing had already been driven from the coast.

Geng Jimao had been operating in Guangdong prior to the Depopulation. He first moved to Fuzhou back in August 1661 (*SZ 18.7.3*). The regional viceroy and governors had spent months preparing for the Feudatory Prince's arrival: building him new quarters, buying fodder for his horses, and renovating the barracks for his troops. Geng quickly set

⁴⁶⁶ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 82.

about recruiting a local brute squad some 1,300 strong—these were local Fujianese people from Min and Hou counties who worked as his paid thugs. Much work was to be done, starting with rounding up wood, charcoal, chickens, geese, ducks and other victuals. From paving roads to digging up local tombs and using the stones as foundations for his new factories, and taxing every marketable item from rice and oil to firewood, fruits, silks, cloth, paper, timber, and bamboo, Geng made himself step by step the master of the local economy.⁴⁶⁷ Geng's personal taxes ran through the roof, such that local farmers composed folksongs to record his infamy: "Ten *mu*'s worth of grain is stripped for every one *mu* of farms"; and merchants sang: "A foot of cloth—oh!—it's stripped in half; and a *hu* [approx. 51.5 liters] of grain—oh!—they take half a cauldron [*fu*, a grain measure of some 66 liters] away."⁴⁶⁸ Apparently, the Feudatory Prince's taxes ran to 50% or more. The shanties of the old Fujianese boatmen, however, were silenced: "Everywhere, the ferryboats were monopolized by the Prince's agents, and the fishermen were out of work, helpless."⁴⁶⁹

Geng was ready to move further when the Depopulation order came down a few months later. As coastal villages burned down within sight of Fuzhou, people inside the city fell more and more under his grip; whole swaths of the city, from Kaiyuan Temple to Jinglou gate to Sanmufang, were roped off as the Feudatory's property. Residents and shopkeepers were evicted and then re-enrolled into Geng's new rental scheme. The roped-off property was now divided amongst the Prince's brokers, pawnshops, silk shops, and cloth shops at ten units a person, and the Qing Banner brokers likewise received such

⁴⁶⁷ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwèn*, 19-21.

⁴⁶⁸ (Qianlong) *Fujian tongzhi* (乾隆)福建通志, j. 70, *yiwenzhi* 艺文志, "Zhejiang zongdu Zhao Tingchen xu" 浙江总督赵廷臣序.

⁴⁶⁹ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwèn*, 21.

an apportionment. Tens of thousands of brokers and affiliates thus parceled out more than half of the city under Geng's plan. These real estate units were in turn rented back to the locals as homes and shops at rates of 3 silver taels per month (an enormous sum), which the locals had no choice but to accept.⁴⁷⁰ It only got worse from there. In order to rent their homes back, the dispossessed cityfolk had to raise the silver somehow. "The Prince who Pacifies the South, Geng Jimao, now opened his loan-sharking business," recorded Haiwai Sanren. "Every month, 5-6 percent interest was charged on every tael of silver. Those who borrowed money had the names of their entire family—father, mother, wife, and children—recorded in the books. If they were able to repay the loan on time, they were immediately forced to take out another loan. No one could refuse. If they could not repay the loan in time, the entire family was arrested and forced to work off the debt in hard labor, with food costs deducted each day. If one's wife was attractive, she was forced to work as a prostitute."⁴⁷¹ Apparently, Geng's loop had an (inescapable) entrance but no exit. Our Fuzhou informant concludes with the somber observation that Prince Geng brought with him a cortège of thousands of Cantonese civilians already enslaved in this way.⁴⁷²

Thus, by the end of the eighteenth year of the Shunzhi reign, when Zheng Zhilong's death was publicly proclaimed in Fuzhou (Feb. 1, 1662 by the Gregorian calendar), the city had effectively seen the replacement of one monopolist by a new and more monstrous one. An earthquake rocked the city on Chinese New Year's day (*KX 1.1.1*), and aftershocks continued into the night; the superstitious would have seen these

⁴⁷⁰ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwén*, 23.

⁴⁷¹ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwén*, 23.

⁴⁷² Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwén*, 23.

as portents of calamities to come. Geng did not disappoint: seven days later, he announced that the fields and houses *outside* the city were now his as well—he wanted 6,000 more housing units to settle his troops. People were handed eight taels for a large unit, six for a medium one, four for a small, and three taels for each *mu* of land (about 1/6 acre), and given a few hours to get out or die.

Now that the little problem of space was solved, the entertainment began: “The lane of Confucian academies became the abode of prostitutes, and Kaiyuan Temple was left to actors and singing girls. The theatrical troupes and prostitutes were all bondservants of the Prince, so the [pleasure] quarters bore his name: ‘Pacification Prince.’ More than a thousand musical troupers, who were also bondservants of the Prince, occupied Longshan lane.”⁴⁷³ It is not hard to guess whom all the bread and circuses were for: not the people of Fuzhou (who were already trapped in Geng’s debt machine), but his loyal soldiers, who now spent their wages whoring and carousing with Geng’s own bondservants. Thus, the silver wrung from the populace and dispensed to Geng’s private army ended up being paid back to the master himself, who could then use the money to enroll more soldiers and thugs, more debtors and slaves. Geng Jimao had created his own virtuous cycle of ‘trickle-up’ economics.

The trickle became a torrent as the power of Zheng Jing waned and turncoat sealord captains swarmed ashore with their men. When Amoy and Quemoy fell into Qing hands in 1663, the islands were stripped of their wealth and depopulated; the men were killed and the women removed to the north (where Geng’s minions probably snapped them up). Thousands of houses in Putian were confiscated and cleared to billet

⁴⁷³ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwén*, 24.

the troops of former Zheng captains like Yang Fu, who joined the profit-making machine and helped spread its scope across the province. In 1666, “local thugs banded with the troops of Prince [Geng] and Yang [Fu] to kidnap children. Families that just momentarily lost sight of their children would soon find them missing. Those [parents] who searched immediately might buy their kids back for three or four taels; but if they were not quick enough, their kids had already been sold to another town.”⁴⁷⁴

This human trafficking and extortion was carried out on a wide scale, even directly within the city. In Putian, “Prince Geng’s troops billeted in people’s houses within the city. Wealthier households might get along by paying them off, but poorer families could do little and suffered every humiliation. The troops moved around throughout the year, so that every quarter of the city suffered their depredations. Yang’s men camped within the northern gate and robbed travelers in gangs. Goods-carriers had to band together for self defense and wrestle their way free. Guards from the forts came out every night to steal grain from the fields; but if they ran into civilians keeping watch [over their own fields], the guards would claim to be a night patrol and accuse the people of being thieves. They whipped the people brutally.” Never mind that scarcely a peep had been heard from Zheng Jing in years—Geng’s forces still roved around, and Yang Fu’s men raped the countryside; later, Yang was promoted to the provincial command of Zhejiang, and Geng’s men came back for more.⁴⁷⁵

The attempts of the Qing central government to check the abuses were slow and ineffectual. The Kangxi emperor, in 1673 (ten years too late!), issued a stern warning to

⁴⁷⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

⁴⁷⁵ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83, 85.

the lower officers of his realm: “In implementing the Depopulation order, officials found forcibly evacuating innocent people, or who failed to move those who should be evacuated, will be dismissed. If officials have misreported conditions to their superiors, or failed to provide decent farmland to resettle the people, they will forfeit their salary for an entire year.”⁴⁷⁶ Clearly the emperor was out of touch with base realities—what need had they of salaries who could extract and trade at will? Men like Yang Fu in Fujian were good examples: the central government tried to rein him in with an official transfer to Shanxi in February 1666, but he had no intention of complying. Two months later another edict ordered Yang to take his troops to Zhejiang and give back to the locals the houses he had confiscated, but the prefect and the magistrate had no power to push Yang on this. When all the preparations were complete another two months later, Yang delayed his departure again, complaining that it was raining too hard.⁴⁷⁷ But perhaps few individuals made more creative use of the Depopulation than adventurer-politician Yao Qisheng in Guangdong—who, as a lowly magistrate in Xiangshan, raked in a fortune illegally shipping tea, silks, and china to the Portuguese in Macau in return for pepper and aromatics; was sentenced to death for this in 1667 but secured the protection of Feudatory Shang Kexi; enrolled as a Han bannerman and raised a private army *against* the Revolt of the Feudatories, bought himself the title of Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent by donating 150,000 taels of silver to the Qing military, and finally became

⁴⁷⁶ *Qinding Da Qing huidian shili* 钦定大清会典事例, j. 120, *Libu chu fenli* 吏部处分例, “Haifang” 海防, p. 6687.

⁴⁷⁷ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 85.

Viceroy of Fujian and the master provisioner of the Qing navy that destroyed the sealords on Taiwan in 1683!⁴⁷⁸

All of this occurred in the context of a colossal loss of revenue from the point of view of the Qing state. I do not exaggerate by using the word colossal, and I have tabulated some of the losses for Fujian province in **Table 5.1**.

⁴⁷⁸ Wei Qingyuan, “Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti,” 199-200; Chen Qinfang 陈芹芳, “Yao Qisheng yu Min-Tai shehui 姚启圣与闽台社会 [Yao Qisheng and the society of Fujian and Taiwan]” (MA thesis: Fujian Normal University [Fuzhou], 2004).

Table 5.1: Loss of Qing Land Tax (Monetary + Grain) Caused by the Coastal Depopulation in Fujian, 1661-1683

Prefecture of Fujian	Farmland Lost (<i>qing</i>) (1 <i>qing</i> \approx 14 acres)		Monetary Tax Loss (<i>tael</i>) (1 <i>tael</i> \approx £3.5 or f4 [4 Dutch florins] in the 1660s)*		Grain Tax Loss (<i>shi</i>) (1 <i>shi</i> \approx 160 lb. \approx 0.072 metric tons)				
	Total Land	Civil	Military	Total Money	Civil	Military	Total Grain	Civil	Military
Fuzhou	11928.988	10137	1791.988	83,747,756	72,423,413	11,324,343	7506.86	6307.64	1199.22
Xinghua	5166.311	5062.548	103.763	24,405,944	23,825,227	580,717	4728.26	4209.82	518.44
Quanzhou	6639.615	6485.06	154.555	50,163,373	49,689,235	474,138	5207.48	4062.52	1144.96
Zhangzhou	3261.196	3048.848	212.348	36,095,840	35,613,182	482,658	4678.94	1533.71	3145.23
Funing	4228.919	3694.205	534.714	33,813,438	30,905,756	2,907,682	9488.17	5697.31	3790.86
GRAND TOTAL	31225.029 \approx 437,150 acres (1,769 sq. km)	28427.661	2797.368	228,226,351 \approx 912,905,404 florins	212,456,813	15,769,538	31609.71 \approx 2,294 metric tons	21811	9798.71

Notes:

1. Source: (Qianlong 33) *Fujian xuzhi* 福建续志(清乾隆卅三年纂修), j. 11-12, cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 418-419.
2. *: exchange rate according to John Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 51. The rate rose to an estimated f4.125 per *tael* in the 1680s.

So: 400,000 acres abandoned and almost a billion Dutch guilders lost over a twenty-year period, plus the loss of over 2,000 metric tons of staple grain, if this estimate is accurate; not to mention the loss of miscellaneous revenues including conscription taxes, liquor taxes, and fishery taxes, which scholar Zhu Weigan has documented at about 23.5 million taels (94 million florins) *for Putian county alone*.⁴⁷⁹ If we consider that there were nineteen coastal counties affected by the Depopulation in Fujian, and that Xinghua prefecture (to which Putian belonged) was the smallest in the province, then the total must have been staggering. This still leaves out a lot. Shipping losses are even harder to estimate, since most coastal and international trade prior to 1662 was not taxed by the state, and after the Depopulation began the smugglers (especially the seaford, the Feudatories, and government officials) hardly thought to submit account books. Salt fields were also important maritime industries in Fujian and were by nature located on the ocean's edge, so they too must have been wrecked, though figures from the period of the Depopulation are still sketchy. In neighboring Zhejiang, however, it is recorded that in the rich coastal swath of Wenzhou, Taizhou, and Ningbo, more than 9,000 *qing* (\approx 126,000 acres) of rice fields and 74,700 *mu* (\approx 10,458 acres) of salt fields were wasted.⁴⁸⁰

Furthermore, consider the top row of numbers in **Table 5.1**: Fuzhou was far and away the biggest loser in land taxes, with approximately 12,000 *qing* (\approx 168,000 acres) of land lost, nearly double that of all other individual prefectures, and about 84 million taels (\approx 335 million florins) of silver in unpaid taxes, again nearly double the others. If you

⁴⁷⁹ Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 420-421.

⁴⁸⁰ Zhang Xianwen 张宪文, "Luelun qingchu Zhejiang yanhai de Qianjie 略论清初浙江沿海的迁界," *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江学刊 72 (1992, v. 1): 120.

look at the MILITARY column for both farmland and monetary tax losses, the difference is even more pronounced between Fuzhou and the others. That category refers to land and taxes from the military colonies (*tuntian*), and Fuzhou had the largest number because it was the provincial capital and had the largest military presence—not only the Banner and Green Standard garrisons indicated in **Figure 5.1**, but also the Feudatory's own forces, who fell outside the regular system. Having the most military revenue to begin with, it stands to reason that Fuzhou would also lose the most. But by all accounts the number of soldiers in Fuzhou and surrounding regions was *increasing*, not just from Geng Jimao's private army but all of the former Zheng seamen who defected to the Qing and needed to be resettled. If military revenue (and indeed all coastal revenue) was crippled by the mass Depopulation, who was paying for all of these soldiers?

Going only by the numbers, one might suppose that the Depopulation was simply enforced more strictly in Fuzhou than in other prefectures, and that this would explain the gap. Geography weighed in too, for Fuzhou sat on the fertile Min River delta and had a lot of farmland and a larger tax base to lose. But the Jiulong River delta in Zhangzhou was also a rich area, had directly supported the sealords for years, and harbored large clans of the sort that had fostered the Wako pirates a hundred years earlier. The concentration of sealord power had been in southern Fujian, and if the Depopulation had been solely aimed at breaking his power or cutting off his supplies, why the concentrated damage in Fuzhou, where Qing control was already the strongest, and not in the south? There is something more to the story, and both the arrival of Feudatory Geng Jimao to start the Depopulation and his presence in Fuzhou throughout could hardly have been incidental.

Where, then, did all the wealth go? Much of it was scattered, no doubt, in the carnage, war, and banditry—but if the previous few descriptions are any indication, the Depopulation allowed new monopolists like Geng Jimao to siphon off a fortune through the systematic impoverishment and forced dependency of the population within the boundary. Both the villagers forcibly moved behind the wall, and the city dwellers who were evicted and then locked into the city, unable ever to pay off the debt they owed to the “state” (i.e., Geng), were now clients of the Feudatory and his henchmen. The surrendered Zheng seamen (Yang Fu & co.) formed an important side clientele, for they owed their resettlement (i.e., license to pillage) to the Qing authorities, namely Geng. Feudatory Shang Kexi in Guangdong had a similar profit racket that owed its existence to the artificial Qianjie boundary.⁴⁸¹ The secret trades that Shang and Geng both carried on with the Portuguese in Macau and the Dutch also owed their existence to the Qianjie.⁴⁸² Should the coast be reopened, their monopolies would be lost.

Thus, while the “Qing state” lost an ugly sum from the Depopulation, the Feudatories (who really were “the state” at the regional level) were able to recover a large part of the wealth in-house and profit disproportionately because of the concentration of wealth and monopolized mobility in their own hands. These princes were literally invested in the frontier. My suspicion is that a chunk of the revenue losses ascribed to the Qianjie were really losses in the amount delivered to the central government, and more a

⁴⁸¹ Gu Pan 顾盼, “Qingchu Haijin zhengce yu Pingnan Wang caizheng jichu zhi guanxi” 清初海禁政策禁与平南王财政基础之关系 [The effect of the maritime bans on Feudatory Shang Kexi's financial base], in *Qingshi lunji* 清史论集 v. 2, eds. Cheng Chongde 成崇德 Chen Jiexian 陈捷先, and Li Jixiang 李纪祥 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2006): 660-680.

⁴⁸² The Feudatory's dealings with the Dutch are described to some extent in John Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, Ch. 2-3, *passim*; also Wei Qingyuan, “Youguan Qingchu jinhai he qianjie de ruogan wenti,” 199-200.

redistribution to new regionalists than an absolute loss (as with a pure scorched earth campaign). The Feudatories and the viceroys and governors who connived with them in profiteering had a vested interest in maintaining the Depopulation—and it was they, I argue, who really kept the policy going for so many years.

Perversely, resistance only helped to grease the mechanism. The impoverishment and coercive clientelism that was forced on the coastal Fujianese cowed them into obedience—and it did prevent the rise of uncontrollable pirate groups like the former Wako—but it also created enough social disturbances that Geng Jimao and Viceroy Li Shuaitai could keep hunting “bandit” heads and reporting victories for the court’s edification. In the early stage, troops maintained the Qianjie boundary; later, the line maintained the troops. Repeated violations of the boundary and Qing law by tormented local people kept the lookouts sharp, the funds flowing in, and the illusion of military necessity in place even when the threat of Zheng Jing had faded to a tolerable minimum. I will describe in the next section how the newly carved frontier became the focal point of social rampage.

Here, I conclude by noting the fundamental instability of the Qing solution in the littoral. By building a maritime frontier against the sealords, the Qing central government had reopened the door to a renewed regionalism. The institutional crisis of the Ming-Qing transition had to make use of frontier regionalists as a way to weaken non-state competitors and simplify the means of violence, but it was a Faustian deal. I have quoted Lynn Struve on this earlier in this chapter, but her insight is worth citing again: “No ameliorative social policies could have been instituted by either the Ming or the Ch’ing until one side or the other took and held communities by force, not only from

the other, but also from all the forces of armed conflict that abounded.”⁴⁸³ But the Ming was dead in 1662; and Koxinga’s passing meant that the last major armed forces in south China were the independent (and offshore and weakened) Zheng Jing and the semi-independent Feudatories (who were the main beneficiaries of the Qianjie policy). “Well before the rebellion of the feudatories broke out in 1673, then,” writes Robert Oxnam, “the feudatory princes [...] had become virtual emperors in their respective domains.”⁴⁸⁴ The Qing central state would one day have to dissolve the Qing regional state (Feudatories) and recentralize the empire to complete the conquest. Meanwhile, the Feudatories knew that their time was limited and tried every expedient to invent campaigns to justify their bloated military costs. Center and region watched each other with unease. Such a situation could not long endure: revolt was almost inevitable.

The Rampage

And now, what of that other constellation of interest groups: “local society”? The relationships of local society with the boundary were complicated by their dealings with the local state. I have already mentioned hired thugs and defectors—now I will state more clearly that the Coastal Depopulation was not simply a matter of outsiders imposing maritime laws on Fujian. Even the old Ming Seaban had not been that straightforward. In accounts of the Depopulation, one usually hears of “Manchu riders” and remorseless Qing troops torching people’s homes—did we not encounter some earlier, as in the

⁴⁸³ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 13-14.

⁴⁸⁴ Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback*, 142.

Qianjie poem?—“Barbarian riders drive them away; the ultimatum is unyielding.”⁴⁸⁵ Or this account from Changle, in Fuzhou prefecture: “Mounted troops charged into the area, shooting flaming arrows into the houses. [...] The fires burned for months.”⁴⁸⁶ No wonder that in scholarly writings on the Qianjie, from Xie Guozhen (1931) onward, one hears repeatedly of callous and unseaworthy Manchus setting the coast on fire.

But a volley of flaming arrows shot into rooftiles does not, in itself, cause fires to burn continuously for months. Nor could the Bannermen have done it without local informants and collaborators. The Banners were shock troops, primed for pitched battle, but thinly spread over the banner garrisons of the empire—hardly numerous enough to have ridden down the entire thousand-mile coast belching flames. Someone had to light the fires from the ground up, or relight them if they went out or failed to catch. Local society could play other parts than victim....

“[In Fuzhou] the minister occupied the seaside, mustering 1,200 local laborers to burn houses. Prince Geng patrolled downstream and raised 1,400 workmen, paying them four taels each. He sent them along to Fuqing, but because of a transfer order, the Prince took his hired hands down to Zhangzhou.”⁴⁸⁷ Such local hired laborers set fires and did odd jobs for decent pay. “In the eleventh month, the Manchu bannermen in Quanzhou and Zhangzhou pulled back to Fuzhou. Ninety laborers, each paid ten taels of silver, were employed to carry the bows and quivers over the twenty-day journey. Boat haulers—2,500 in all, each paid three taels—were hired to pull the bannermen [on the

⁴⁸⁵ Lu Ruoteng 卢若腾, “Luqian yanhai jumin shi” 虜迁沿海居民诗, in *Jinmen zhi* 金门志, j. 12, “Bingshi/lidai bingshi” (兵事/历代兵事).

⁴⁸⁶ Gao Zhao 高兆, “Changle Fuqing fujie tuji” 長樂福清復界圖記, in *Minsong huibian* 閩頌彙編 [Collected papers of Fujian Viceroy Yao Qisheng (d. 1683)], *ji* 記 juan.

⁴⁸⁷ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwen*, 23.

river] through two counties. The minister [probably Li Shuaitai] called up another 1,000 workmen at one tael apiece to burn down a swath of coastal residences in Funing.”⁴⁸⁸

Apparently, at the end of 1661 and the beginning of 1662, thousands of *local residents* were helping the enforcers to burn houses in their home districts and being paid good silver for it! The social origins of the people willing to take this dirty work are unclear, but we may surmise that they were of all kinds: those who had already lost their homes in the previous wars, people harboring grudges against rival clans, unemployed boatmen, day laborers, defectors, hoodlums, and drifters are some groups that come to mind. But they could just as well have been desperate fishermen trying to feed their children, or city dwellers who saw that the coastal villages were doomed (recall the divide between city and country folk in the wars of the 1650s) and figured that blood money was better than no money at all. We do not know; but we have seen already in the mass killings section how messy the situation was, and how fallacious the hoary notion that Manchu barbarians single-handedly wasted the coast. Historian Zheng Zhenman has also shown how the pervasive militarization of society beginning from the Pirate Wars resulted in intense feuding between clans in Fujian, and especially the oppression of weaker clans by stronger ones.⁴⁸⁹ The surnames of the people who signed up for the Qing torch brigade are not recorded, but I would be willing to bet that there were not a few cases of people revenging themselves against rival clans. These factors only exacerbated the riot that followed, one reared upon the social anarchy of the Ming-Qing

⁴⁸⁸ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwèn*, 23.

⁴⁸⁹ Zheng Zhenman, *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, trans. Michael Szonyi with the assistance of Kenneth Dean and David Wakefield (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 212.

transition as a whole. Lynn Struve's description of the social embroilment is worth quoting at length:

In virtually every social sector one can find evidence of severe strain on traditionally accepted relations between superiors and inferiors—for instance, landlords and tenants, masters and servants, employers and workers, literati and nonliterati. The first half of the seventeenth century stands out in Chinese history for the frequency and virulence of such things as: revolts of indentured servants against household heads, from whom goods, freedom, and self-humiliation were demanded; rent-withholding against landlords, which was incited by a variety of unfair practices; strikes by mining, industrial, and transport personnel, stemming from both governmental mismanagement and regional or periodic economic disjunctions; counterattacks by religious sects and illegal, underground organizations against the suppressive authorities; the aforementioned army mutinies and mass rural uprisings, usually because of starvation wrought by both bureaucratic and natural calamities; and banditry of every kind [...]. Of course, when a dynasty is in decline, things go wrong more badly and more irreparably than in healthier times. But the late Ming is distinctive for the blatancy and pervasiveness of the spirit of revolt in its society.⁴⁹⁰

Such was the character of the times. Indeed, historians of any of the major polities affected by the seventeenth-century general crisis would recognize at once certain similarities in the manner and scale of social revolt. We have already seen some of how this played out in maritime Fujian, which was especially rocked by the forces of silver monetization and economic specialization from the mid-1500s onward. The Wako pirates and the sealord had emerged from the Seaban, and a century later, in the mid-1600s, Fujianese society ripped itself to shreds under the gentle care of the Depopulation and the ministrations of the Feudatories.

At first, coastal people thought that the Qianjie was only a temporary order, and that they would soon be able to return to their homes. However, with the burning of their houses and the interminable drafting of labor gangs to cut trees and build forts, it dawned

⁴⁹⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 13.

on them that they might never return.⁴⁹¹ Maritime Fujian has an old tradition of poems and folksongs (like Portuguese *fado*, though more ancient), composed primarily by women, that expressed the vagaries of seafaring existence and the wistfulness of marriage to sailors. One such song runs:

*Married to a peasant, you are a couple day and night.
Married to a "bookworm," you are alone six nights out of seven.
Married to a boatman, your heart is like a lantern hung in the sky.
Married to an overseas sojourning man, you are as poor as unmarried.*⁴⁹²

But during the Qianjie, the heartbreak of being married at all overflowed all bounds: "The fishermen relied on their catch for their livelihoods, yet the prohibitions prevented them from casting their nets, and so those who crossed the boundary to catch clams and crabs were killed without mercy [...]. Fishermen sold their wives and children, and ultimately had nothing to live by; I cannot count how many starved to death."⁴⁹³ In Guangdong, similarly, people were forced to sell their children for "one *dou* of millet for a son, 100 copper coins for a daughter. The rich families bought them up [as servants]. Some of the rich folks haggled and paid almost nothing, buying up whole families for mere granules of rice."⁴⁹⁴ The poverty and desperation of these people can hardly be overstated: "The adult males went to the army, and the old people hurled themselves into gullies; or whole families would drink poison, or, having nothing left, drown themselves in the river."⁴⁹⁵

The new Xinghua prefect, a Qing bannerman named Li Ying, tried to pacify the evacuees by spending 100 taels from his own pocket and knocking on all the doors of the

⁴⁹¹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 129.

⁴⁹² Guotong Li, "Reopening the Fujian Coast, 1600-1800," 204.

⁴⁹³ Yao Qisheng 姚启胜, *Minsong huibian* 闽颂汇编, *Ende shulue* 恩德述略.

⁴⁹⁴ Qu Dajun, *Guangdong xinyu*, j. 2, *diyu* 地语, no. 63, *qianhai* 迁海, p. 58.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

gentry and wealthier households for relief contributions. In this way, he collected about 2,000 *shi* (320,000 pounds) of grain, which the gentry headmen boiled into rice gruel and ladled out to the refugees in soup kitchens at two meals a day. Such neighborhood relief efforts, though admirable, could not have been sufficient, nor were they standard policy across Fujian. As hunger grew, Li Ying started handing out Song dynasty coins and paper money: a hundred copper coins and three *dou* (about seven gallons) of millet per person.⁴⁹⁶

It is not clear exactly what they were supposed to be able to buy with that money—by that time (1662), prices were already sky high. “Since the Feudatory Prince came [to Fuzhou], commodity prices have all jumped: rice at 8 silver *fen* per *dou* (≈ 2.34 gallons), meat at 7 per catty (≈ 1.33 lb.), and oil at one mace and 1 *fen* for a 1.5 catties. The ships are all gone, the merchants shriveled, and the coolies pushed to exhaustion.”⁴⁹⁷ The year 1664 opened with the price of spring millet rising to 1 silver tael per picul in Putian.⁴⁹⁸ I have the sinking feeling that 100 copper coins could not buy very much at all—especially in the middle of the Depopulation’s first winter, when the growing season was over, fields lay fallow, and the Fujianese refugees, normally so dependent on shellfish for their protein, were cut off from the sea.

Not that anybody but the soldiers could really put seafood on their plates. I have already mentioned the case of Brigade General Du’s cornering of the fish market in 1665.⁴⁹⁹ During the late Ming period, as Lynn Struve observed, military men had been treated as “the dregs of a society that accorded no human dignity to the common

⁴⁹⁶ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 81.

⁴⁹⁷ Haiwai Sanren, *Rongcheng jiwèn*, 26.

⁴⁹⁸ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 82.

⁴⁹⁹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

soldier.”⁵⁰⁰ With the Depopulation, the tables were turned, and soldiers exercised their new power to make the evacuees—the people who formerly occupied the lands outside the boundary—the inferiors. In the most severe cases even owning seafood was a crime. “No one dared to sell seafood. All goods entering the city were searched by the guards at the city gate, and seafood was confiscated. Soldiers abused the decree to fatten their own purses. If the Feudatory’s troops caught wind that someone had salted fish at home, they would swoop down in a gang and steal everything.”⁵⁰¹

Yes, the soldiers had their day; but many of them were recruited from local society (like the aforementioned Lieutenant Zhang An, who literally became a pig), and not a few of them were probably settling old scores. This is the bitter reality that has hitherto been given too little attention in English-language accounts of the Qing maritime laws. Just as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)—China’s “ten years of madness”—could not have created so many victims if society had not also been full of willing victimizers and participants, so the Depopulation empowered hooligans and malcontents in society and released them from all social restraint.

An oft-recounted incident from Mingzhou, Zhejiang also illustrates how some people chose to use the Depopulation as a source of blackmail. A nun was eating with a gentleman’s family when she saw that there was seaweed in her bowl; she ate some of it and hid the rest away. The next day, the nun sent a messenger bearing the ultimatum:

⁵⁰⁰ Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 4.

⁵⁰¹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 81.

“Give me twenty gold pieces, or I will denounce you with this [seaweed].” The man refused to pay, so she denounced him to the magistrate.⁵⁰²

Once the frontier had been created, it became a focal point for social division and strife. Villagers and city people, evacuated and non-evacuated, began to reposition themselves around the boundary. The people who had formerly lived outside the boundary, and who now lost everything, were called “evacuees” (*qianmin*), but it was hardly the sort of neutral term that we might use nowadays to describe hurricane victims. They were now pitied, despised, and stigmatized, and I consciously use the phrase “making people outside the boundary inferior” when referring to the Qing state’s acts of divide-and-rule. The Depopulation happened 350 years ago, and the boundary line has long since been erased, but the social distinction and prejudice between the “out-of-boundary people” (*jiewairen*) and “in-boundary people” (*jieneiren*) persists, a fact that has been noted by anthropologists and ethnographers.⁵⁰³

Recalling **Map 4.2**, the Putian topographic map in the previous chapter, a large and long peninsula with many bays was cut off from Putian by the border wall between Fengting and Jiangkou (circled on the map). Everyone living on the peninsula was by definition “beyond the boundary” (*jiewai*) and thus forcibly relocated. Many had been small traders, subsistence farmers, salt workers, or fishermen who were less affluent than their city counterparts, but the distinction between them and the Putianese was economic

⁵⁰² Guizhuang ji 归庄集, j. 10, *zazhu* 杂著, cited in Cheng K’o-ch’eng, “Cheng Ch’eng-kung’s Maritime Expansion and Early Ch’ing Coastal Prohibition,” in Eduard B. Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1990) 240.

⁵⁰³ Sun Sheng 孙晟, “Liangchao zhijian: Qingchu qianjie yu shehui bianqian--yi Fujian Xinghua diqu wei zhongxin de yanjiu 两朝之间：清初迁界与社会变迁—以福建兴化地区为中心的研究 [Between two dynasties: Qianjie and social development in the early Qing, with focus on the Xinghua region of Fujian]” (Ph.D. thesis: Xiamen University, 2006), 112.

rather than geographic. Today, however, those living in Putian city are called “city brothers” (*chengli xiong*) by the people outside, who maintain a guarded distance; whereas the Putian people call the villagers of Hushi and the rest of the peninsula “out-of-boundary brothers” (*jiewai xiong*). As local scholar Bing Ju explains, “In the Putianese dialect, when someone is called ‘brother’ (*xiong*), it’s never a good thing. It has two meanings: one implies fear [or respect], and the other is ridicule. ‘Mountain village brother’ and ‘out-of-boundary brother’ are plainly terms of ridicule.”⁵⁰⁴ The folk tradition in Putian remains: *A good woman doesn’t marry a man from outside the boundary.*⁵⁰⁵ The scars of the Depopulation run deep.

The Qianjie policy started building the frontier in Putian in November 1661, but the walls and watchtowers were not finished until about April 1662. By that point, all of the evacuees had exhausted their savings. Their only source of income was to cut down trees and sell them as firewood. “Like a swarm of bees,” the refugees fell upon the trees and hacked them down for sale as firewood; in five or six days in autumn 1663, the woods of Hushan, Gucheng, Tianma, and other districts were cut clear.⁵⁰⁶

When the walls went up in 1662 and 1663, it became clear that relief was going to be long in coming. “By the hundreds and by the thousands, the [evacuated] people began to gang up and harass the city. The city officials pitied them [at first] and quietly pardoned their misdeeds.”⁵⁰⁷ But soon the evacuees began to pillage the few remaining fields and to steal grain, fruit, chickens, and pigs; and the local people could do nothing

⁵⁰⁴ Bing Ju 炳居, “Chengli yu jiewai” 城里与界外, *Fujian Xinghua wenxian* 福建兴化文献, 37; cited in Sun Sheng, “Liangchao zhijian,” 112.

⁵⁰⁵ Sun Sheng, “Liangchao zhijian,” 112.

⁵⁰⁶ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 129.

⁵⁰⁷ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 129.

to stop it. If the looters were confronted, they emitted that impassioned cry that dared anyone to moralize with them: “I am an evacuee!” (*Wo qianmin ye!*) If local residents tried to resist and happened to kill one of the looters, then the dead body would become a homing beacon for a mob of shrieking vagrants, who used the body as an excuse to break into first one house, then another, and then all the neighbors, robbing and killing along the way. The entire Zhu clan of Changgeng village was ripped apart by such a mob.⁵⁰⁸

A no-holds-barred mayhem ensued from 1663 to 1668. Gutsy smugglers racked up profits in all the daily staples that had now become so precious, while the local government in Xinghua started to hunt people down for back taxes: the poor people were supposed to have their taxes remitted and only the local gentry and scholars punished for evading taxes, but in the confusion many were accidentally or maliciously charged with resisting payments and ground up by the system. Yang Fu kowtowed to Feudatory Geng and got his pillaging license, which he proceeded to exploit with a bloodlust almost incredible in a seaman operating in his home coast. Then Geng’s troops rejoined their Yang bedfellows, and in small teams they roved the city streets and open spaces outside the city, relieving women of their jewelry and single travelers of their clothes and possessions. “The officers did not care, and the prefect and the magistrate could not stop it.”⁵⁰⁹

The coastal *qianmin*—the evacuees—allied themselves with these hooligans and soldiers. “At night, they would swarm into the villages, taking advantage of the men’s

⁵⁰⁸ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 129.

⁵⁰⁹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

absence,⁵¹⁰ and kidnap girls and women. They bound the women, gagged them, and held a knife to their throats so that they would not cry out, and then trussed them off to other villages for sale.”⁵¹¹ Their attacks were at times random but could show a more devious face. The foothills and coves of Dahan and Lufeng became a hideout for the more wicked evacuees to plan raids with the help of inland informants. “One night they would hit one village, the next night they would rob or kidnap some individual, and then they would sail to [another hideout] on Nanri Island and calculate the ransoms for their hostages. At first, they only hit the [inland] locals, but later they even kidnapped other evacuees as well.”⁵¹² They were poor and desperate, it is true, but by robbing, raping, and kidnapping, and generally behaving no better than the Wako pirates or the miscreants of Yang Fu or Geng Jimao, the former coastal inhabitants sowed hatred. Putian city resident Chen Hong put the refugees, significantly, in the same category as those named oppressors: “The evacuated people, along with the troops of Prince Geng and the troops of Yang [Fu], were a triple torture for the commonfolk.”⁵¹³ City and countryside were more deeply divided than ever.

Relief efforts sponsored by local gentry and government minders in Putian occurred sporadically in 1665 and 1666, but thousands of poor wretches in rags thronged the roads, pushing and fighting for the handouts, which came once every five days or so. Old men gasped for breath and young women covered their own faces with their hands; and all were shoved about in the human crush. Such relief efforts were undermined by

⁵¹⁰ N.B.: recall that many men had been drafted into labor gangs. Or, they might have been sneaking out beyond the wall to forage for their families' survival.

⁵¹¹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

⁵¹² Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 129.

⁵¹³ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 83.

the official defectors, who minted counterfeit coppers and thus devalued the currency. Shops closed and refused to accept the money; but to avoid paralyzing the economy the government ordered that the fake coins be accepted at a discounted rate. Soldiers (who were paid in such trash) mixed up the coins and bullied people into taking them—fights broke out every day over the money. Soon, the use of copper coins had to be banned.⁵¹⁴ The poorest families sold their children, wives, daughter-in-law, and sisters to richer families. Betrothed women fled from their husbands-to-be or ran away from home, only to fall to rape or prostitution. Even family members sold one another into bondage or bogus marriages, and the courts overflowed with lawsuits incited by relatives and neighbors against each other.⁵¹⁵

In the midst of these outrages came the most barefaced general abuse of the Depopulation boundary and of the Qing policies of rewarding those Zheng seafarers who were willing to come back into the fold. *Zhaofu* or *zhao'an*, as the policy of amnesty was called, allowed the defectors to keep their ranks or often get promotions and new titles. Suddenly the coast was flooded with colonels, majors, captains, and ensigns with nothing to do except add to the misery.⁵¹⁶ But it was only to be expected that a new wave of bogus defectors would arise, men who were not Zheng sailors at all but rather the cunning evacuees or vagrants who had gone inland (or into hiding) during the original

⁵¹⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 85-86. The ban on copper coins in Putian could not have lasted long, however, since silver was scarce. Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama has shown that silver became even more scarce due to the coastal depopulation. See Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama, "The Kangxi Depression and Early Qing Local Markets," *Modern China*, v. 10, no. 2 (Apr. 1984): 227-256.

⁵¹⁵ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 131. This sounds to me like Yu Yang's Confucian moralizing, but I can believe it.

⁵¹⁶ And what else, they might have protested in their own callous defense, could they have done? They were maritime-based people, but their seaside employments were curtailed; many had probably lost their farms and hometowns in the years of war and depopulation, and they were living in houses confiscated from other members of *les miserables*.

clean sweep, sneaked back out to offshore islands like Meizhou or Nanri, and conspired with inland racketeers. Now they wanted to shave their heads—but the ridiculous thing was that after they received their cash rewards from the local Qing bureaucrats, they simply jumped the wall, got back on their little boats, and regrew their hair. Then they would revisit the coast to plunder and then turn themselves in again. The proceeds from this foul play were enough to bribe local officials to not only look the other way but actually reward them for rejoining the flock! “When you let a tiger or wolf into the wild, and then bring it back to the city,” Yu Yang wrote wryly, “how can you expect it not to bite?”⁵¹⁷

That was not all: the gravest insult was now perpetrated on the deeply family- and clan-oriented coastal communities. Tomb robbery struck at the heart of traditions of ancestor worship and local identity, and the civilians were hardly better in this regard than the notorious Yang Fu. In gangs of ten or more these civilians would gather torches and weapons and ravage the tombs at night, stripping everything of value from the coffins and leaving the corpses hanging from trees or thrown into the grass. “The area outside the boundary had it worst, but this also happened inside the boundary,” Chen Hong tells us. Not being able to protect one’s ancestral spirits was a major cultural blow, and it reinforced the superiority and disdain with which the in-bounders regarded the out-bounders. Those who could form vigilante posses did so: in one case, the filial son of Jiang Jisheng of Tangcao mobilized a large group of men to find the culprits and avenge the indignities wreaked on his father’s tomb. In the end, they caught and jailed over

⁵¹⁷ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 130.

twenty grave robbers, including the ringleaders Fan Bolue, Huang Hushi and his unnamed brother, and Zhu Zunxian. Some escaped.⁵¹⁸

In some cases the coffins and their remains were hacked up so badly that they were beyond recognition, and matters were compounded by the bad flooding in 1664 (which probably had something to do with both the alternating downpours and droughts that hit Fujian during the wretched 17th-century climate change, as well as the clear-cutting of trees by the evacuees), which strewed everything around in the morass. One filial son, a certain Mr. Chen from Chenshan village, lost the bodies of both his parents in this way, and while he eventually recovered his father's remains, he was distraught at losing his mother's. Some Buddhist monks capitalized on the needs of Chen and others and started a bone recovery business, eventually chopping up coffins and corpses themselves to mix them all together and cremate them. "The skull of X plus the thigh of Y, a man's hand with a woman's foot, all mashed together!" bewailed Yu Yang. "Horrors! Landward coffins broken by thieves, waterside coffins broken by the monks—and the monks and the thieves are the same, caring only for profit!"⁵¹⁹

1666-1670 went by with calm seas but a stormy coast. A couple of Qing overtures were made to the elusive Zheng Jing, the equable king of Taiwan, but he declined, citing the memory of his grandfather and father. No matter: Jing had not done

⁵¹⁸ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 86.

⁵¹⁹ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 132. All society was in ferment: why should we think monks were exempt? This mention of greedy monks should be read in the context of a larger struggle between Buddhist monasteries and the scholar-official gentry over arable lands in Fujian, a tension dating all the way back to the mid-Ming period and especially the Pirate Wars, which impoverished the great temples and contributed to their "decadence." The gentry had used tax manipulations to prey on temple lands; then the Qianjie contributed even more to the "pitiable state" and "total ruin of a great number of remaining temples in the coastal regions," especially in counties like Zhangpu, where more temples were out-of-bounds than inside the boundary. See T'ien Ju-K'ang, "The Decadence of Buddhist Temples in Fu-Chien in Late Ming and Early Ch'ing," in Eduard B. Vermeer, ed. *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries*, pp. 83-100.

much to threaten the Fujian coast for years, and among the local officials there was serious talk of relaxing the border and allowing people to go out and reclaim some of the land they had lost. Local troops, however, begged to differ. Huang Yi, the nephew of Huang Wu (the famous defector who had been among the first to champion the Coastal Depopulation), was posted to Hanjiang and Baimei townships with his 300 personal guards and 2,000 soldiers, who proceeded to plunder (Huang Yi was later stripped of his rank for these crimes); and then a troop of 2,000 sailors who had not been paid for three months boarded their boats and started robbing at will. Second Captain Qian Long complained to his superiors that even his own son had been robbed, and later Prefect Mu tried to personally stop the looting by posting a bunch of official warnings (of dubious value). A mob of outraged civilians finally caught four sailors red-handed and chased them back to the water, where one sailor drowned. The new local commandant, Li Shifang, did not give a damn.⁵²⁰

It must be said that there were soldiers more honorable than this. While lieutenants like Zhang An in Huangshi were murdering even their own friends and family in cold blood, there were examples of other locals, like Lin Xiandi of Lianjiang, Jinjiang County, who protected people. Lin joined the Qing army and was assigned to patrol the boundary, but when he saw distant relations or other folks illegally foraging and fishing to eke out their survival, he let them go in peace.⁵²¹ One wonders how often such bits of light came out of the gloom, but they existed.

⁵²⁰ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 86-87.

⁵²¹ *Lianjiang Donglin zongpu* 蓮江東林宗譜, "Huang Qing enrong qishi'er weng you ji zushu zanxu" 皇清恩榮七十二翁幼及祖叔贊序, cited in Lin Xiuhe, "Cong qianjie dao fujie," 54-55.

At last, in 1668, the villagers were permitted to go 15 *li* (\approx 8.6 km) outside the border and reclaim some of their farms, but on the condition that they pay for the repairs of over twenty warships (hundreds of taels for a large one, tens for a small one), as well as build three more large forts and four smaller ones—at the cost of 3-4 taels of silver per family—to police the extended frontier. The existing border walls were to remain ominously behind them, despite the relaxation of the boundary. In return, people were allowed to catch small fish near the shore and sell them, but they were still forbidden to fish for larger ones at sea.⁵²²

The gentry and big local families were by this time (if they had not been already) decidedly on the side of whatever scintilla of law and order that the more reliable arms of the Qing state could provide. In February 1666, the roving gangs preyed on a group of fifty refugees (who were probably evacuees themselves) hiding in a cave in Dahanshan. Under cover of night on the 22nd, they crossed over to Jiangkou on boats and robbed the home of Wang Qiuqing, taking his valuables, his wife, his sister, a concubine, two little sons, and several servant girls. Wang Qiuqing teamed up with city commander Zhang Jinzhong to catch the criminals. Over thirty of the culprits were fooled with promises of amnesty and then butchered wholesale—for which Wang, happy to get his family back, rewarded the commander with 200 taels from his own pocket.⁵²³ Later, a Qing unit performing military exercises outside the north gate of Putian was raided at night by a score of ruffians, who kidnapped the Qing inspector of Jiangkou and took him out to sea as a hostage. Local officials covered up this humiliating incident and coughed up 1,000

⁵²² Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 87.

⁵²³ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 85.

taels of ransom to buy him back. Then, at Jiangkou, old sea dog Li Shichun (a real defector) killed 99 people while robbing a merchant vessel and sought refuge aboard the ship of Xiao Ying and his brother Xiao Gui, two bogus defectors who claimed to be Zheng Jing's men from Taiwan. Once on board Xiao's ship, Li Shichun and two of his servants were murdered by the son of one of Li's former victims, and their corpses were thrown to the fishes. Li's mother cried foul, but the local judge, knowing full well what had happened, hushed up the matter after the appropriate exchange of bribes. A month later the murderer, Xiao Ying, was promoted to the city.⁵²⁴

It would be too much to attempt a full account of all such acts and abuses that shook up the coast of Fujian and of southeast China and set neighbors at each other's throats in the context of the Coastal Depopulation law. I have focused on Fuzhou and Putian because they are documented by eyewitness accounts rich in local details that are missing or glossed over in the official histories; but an earnest search in regional gazetteers and genealogies will reveal that the situations I have described were not anomalous.⁵²⁵ Murders, crimes, and revenge were everywhere: like Marco Polo, I have not told the half of what was happening in China. The Qianjie was a complex negotiated process between unequally powerful but deeply self-interested groups, and this was true of every county and township in the provinces where it was carried out.⁵²⁶ The identities

⁵²⁴ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 88-89.

⁵²⁵ In Xiangshan, Guangdong, the evacuees ran amok in criminal gangs as well, and descriptions of alternating droughts and floods parallel the cases in Putian and Fuzhou. Rao Zongyi, "Qingchu Chaozhou qianjie kao," 309. Other examples abound: Lin Xiuhe from National Taiwan University has written an excellent MA thesis on the case of Jinjiang county, for example. See Lin Xiuhe 林修合, "Cong qianjie dao fujie: Qingchu Jinjiang de zongzu yu guojia 從遷界到復界: 清初晉江的宗族與國家 [From Qianjie to Fujie: Family lineages and the state in early Qing Jinjiang]" (MA thesis: National Taiwan University, 2005).

⁵²⁶ I especially direct readers to the prefectural and county gazetteers of Chaozhou (Guangdong), Nan'an (Fujian), Jinjiang (Fujian), Xiangshan (Guangdong), Tong'an (Fujian), and Hui'an (Fujian).

of many of the victims and victimizers are too often muffled by the sheer weight of thousands suffering on every page, but here is a brief list of a variety of cases (mostly from the Board of Punishments documents) I have come across, so that interested investigators may someday recover their names for history:

1. Fisherman Yu Rufu 余汝甫 and 32 others who were killed for making a living.⁵²⁷
2. Petty vendors who were executed for traveling along the seashore.⁵²⁸
3. Merchant Chen Rui 陈瑞 and his partners, who were hung in 1672 for purchasing a bulk quantities of silk and herbs, which the local official assumed they intended to ship out to sea.⁵²⁹
4. Residents who crossed the boundary to pray at the tombs of their ancestors and soon joined them in the afterlife.⁵³⁰
5. Magistrate Dong Changyu 董常裕 in Haimen county in Yangzhou prefecture, who was executed on the grounds of allowing some of his subjects to go to the ocean.⁵³¹
6. And more...⁵³²

One can only wonder, for every named individual, how many may forever remain unnamed.

⁵²⁷ *Xingbu can tiben* 刑部残题本, 顺治十二年, "Yu Rupu deng sanshisan ren an" 余汝甫等三十三人案, *Ming Qing shiliao* 明清史料, *jibian* 己编, 第3册.

⁵²⁸ *Xingbu can tiben* 刑部残题本, 顺治十七年, "Wang Jifu deng ren an" 王吉甫等人案, *Ming Qing shiliao* 明清史料, *jibian* 己编, 第6册.

⁵²⁹ *Xingbu can tiben* 刑部残题本, 顺治十七年, "Wang Jifu deng ren an" 王吉甫等人案, *Ming Qing shiliao* 明清史料, *jibian* 己编, 第6册.

⁵³⁰ *Huangce* 黄册, 康熙十一年卷, "Zhejiang xun'an shi Jin Weifan tiben" 浙江巡按使金维藩题本.

⁵³¹ *Huangce* 黄册, 康熙元年卷, "Zuo duyushi Zhang Shang tiben" 左都御史张尚题本.

⁵³² *The Ming Qing shiliao, Zheng Chenggong dang'an shiliao xuanji, Kangxi tongyi Taiwan dang'an shiliao xuanji*, and other documentary collections contain even more.

The Dead

Let me take stock here, for I do not doubt that the reader has long since crossed the threshold of incredulity. Surely, these accounts of scores of towns, hundreds of women and children, and thousands of men, soldiers, and innocents must be exaggerated? How was it possible that so many towns were burnt (such that a Spaniard spoke in awe of a “fire lasting many days—the clouds of smoke reaching as far as Hia-men [Amoy], more than twenty leagues, and the sun not being visible in all that broad expanse”⁵³³ How could so many people have died? And if everyone died, who on earth remained? How can reliable numbers be extracted from eyewitness accounts and primary sources that are loaded with “countless” casualties and a basic unit of “tens of thousands”?

The towns are as good a place to start as any. Let us first recognize that littoral China contained innumerable islands and small fishing villages that escaped the attention of the imperial inspectors. We may never know all of their names. Nevertheless, larger villages and market towns were systematically recorded by imperial commissioner Du Zhen, who was deputed by the Kangxi emperor to survey the coast of Fujian and Guangdong in 1684, restore the lands, and officially end the Coastal Depopulation. The rehabilitation of the coast would be based on his report. In **Table 5.2**, below, I have compiled some of the results of Du Zhen’s inspection tour:

⁵³³ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, vol. 36 [of 55] (Cleveland: A.H. Clark, 1903-1906), 252.

Table 5.2 Estimate of Coastal Towns Destroyed/Abandoned in Fujian Province and in Two Prefectures in Guangdong, 1661-1683

PREFECTURE (<i>fu</i> 府)	COUNTY (<i>xian</i> 縣)	MAINLAND SETTLEMENTS (<i>fuhai</i> 附海)	TOWNS ON ISLANDS OR PENINSULAS (<i>ruhai</i> 入海)	FARMLAND ABANDONED in <i>qing</i> 頃 (1 <i>qing</i> ≈ 14 acres)
<i>Huizhou</i> 惠州 (in Guangdong)	Guishan 歸善 Haifeng 海豐	132* 66	22* 64	80 ≈ 1,120 acres 3240 ≈ 45,360 acres
<i>Chaozhou</i> 潮州 (in Guangdong)	Huilai 惠來 Chaoyang 潮陽 Chenghai 澄海 Raoping 饒平 Jieyang 揭陽 Haiyang 海陽	28 32 23 41 18 --	10 20 17 29 3 --	837 ≈ 11,718 acres 760 ≈ 10,640 acres 535 ≈ 7,490 acres 615 ≈ 8,610 acres 86 ≈ 1,204 acres 278 ≈ 3,892 acres
<i>Zhangzhou</i> 漳州	Zhao'an 詔安 Zhangpu 漳浦 Haicheng 海澄 Longxi 龍溪 Pinghe 平和	34 (30) 65 (74) 39 (36) 23 (50) --	43 (30) 57 (60) 22 (--) -- (--) --	409** ≈ 5,726 acres 1,163 ≈ 16,282 acres 784 ≈ 10,976 acres 382 ≈ 5,348 acres 25 ≈ 350 acres
<i>Quanzhou</i> 泉州	Tong'an 同安 Nan'an 南安 Jinjiang 晉江 Hui'an 惠安	41 (45) 9 (10) 48 (--) 35 (--)	65 (--) 3 (30) 27 (110) 26 (105)	1,941 ≈ 21,174 acres 372 ≈ 5,208 acres 1,252 ≈ 17,528 acres 1,909** ≈ 26,727 acr.
<i>Xinghua</i> 興化	Putian 莆田 Xianyou 仙游	62 (28) 13 (33)	54 (110) 1 (--)	4,430 ≈ 62,020 acres 81 ≈ 1,134 acres
<i>Fuzhou</i> 福州	Fuqing 福清 Changle 長樂 Minxian 閩縣 Lianjiang 連江 Luoyuan 羅源	55 (7) 39 (--) 24 (25) 33 (20) 23 (60)	73 (250) 25 (75) 10 (--) 49 (180) 4 (110)	4,634 ≈ 64,876 acres 913 ≈ 12,782 acres 389 ≈ 5,446 acres 234 ≈ 3,276 acres 266 ≈ 3,724 acres

Table 5.2, Continued

PREFECTURE (<i>fu</i> 府)	COUNTY (<i>xian</i> 縣)	MAINLAND SETTLEMENTS (<i>fuhai</i> 附海)	TOWNS ON ISLANDS OR PENINSULAS (<i>ruhai</i> 入海)	FARMLAND ABANDONED in <i>qing</i> 頃 (1 <i>qing</i> ≈ 14 acres)
<i>Funing</i> (<i>zhou</i>) 福寧 (州)	Xiapu/Funing 霞浦/福寧	100 (10)	134 (220)	1,797 ≈ 25,158 acres
	Ningde 寧德	40 (60)	27 (210)	160 ≈ 2,240 acres
	Fu'an 福安	26 (30)	6 (110)	484 ≈ 6,776 acres
TOTALS	19 counties in Fujian	709 (518) towns in Fujian	626 (1,600) towns in Fujian	21,625 (21600) ≈ 302,750 acres in Fujian
	8 counties in Guangdong	340 in Guangdong	165 in Guangdong	6,431 ≈ 90,034 acres in Guangdong

Notes:

1. Source: Du Zhen 杜臻, *Yue Min xunshi jilue* 粵閩巡視紀略 (c. 1684), j. 3-5.
2. Numbers in parentheses () are Zheng Zhenman's count based on *juan* 4-5 of the same source (Zheng Zhenman [trans. Michael Szonyi], *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, 214). My count has tried to 1) eliminate repetitions from Du Zhen's original record; and 2) locate the towns geographically, and so differs from Zheng's totals.
3. A small dash '--' denotes that no number is specified in the original record.
4. *: The number here is dubious because 154 seems a disproportionately high number of settlements for only 80 *qing* of land recorded. Perhaps this is a scribe's error.
5. **: Here, Zhu Weigan in *Fujian shigao* (Zhu Weigan 朱維幹, *Fujian shigao* 福建史稿 [Fu'an: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1986], v. 2, p. 396) mistakenly counts 384 *qing* for Zhao'an and 1905 for Hui'an.

From Du Zhen's imperial report, therefore, I count a total of 1,840 destroyed settlements (1335 in Fujian and 505 in Guangdong), for which I have attached a list of the place names in **Appendix II**. Because my focus is Fujian, I have counted and listed the settlements only the five coastal prefectures of Fujian and the two easternmost prefectures of Guangdong (Chaozhou and Huizhou) that were closest to the economic circle of Greater Fujian. Hundreds of other towns remain for researchers interested in a precise count for central-southern Guangdong, which also suffered terribly from the Depopulation. Scholars Li Dongzhu and Li Longqian have estimated that combining the

results of the seven maritime prefectures of Guangdong, an area as large as 46,528.73 *qing* (\approx 2636 sq. km) was lost, which comes out to approximately 32.44% of the total arable land of the coast or 18.55% of the total farmland of the province.⁵³⁴ This is an even larger figure than that of Fujian, and was no doubt due to the fact that Guangdong had much broader coastal plains that were not right up against the mountains like those of Fujian.

The totals in **Table 5.2** substantiate the claims in various Chinese primary and secondary accounts that “many towns” were indeed lost. What is more, Du Zhen’s numbers may well be an underestimate. Du only accounted for 21,625 *qing* or 302,750 acres of farmland lost in Fujian, but as **Table 5.1** showed earlier, the Fujianese gazetteers recorded the loss of an almost 50% larger number: 31,225 *qing* or about 437,150 acres in Fujian.⁵³⁵ The reason for Du Zhen’s far lower total may be that his inspection came in 1684, well after numerous *zhanjie* (relaxations of the boundary) such as the one in 1669, in which some of the original land was recovered. Thus, Du Zhen’s account, though clearly one of devastation, does not fully reflect the state of the damage wreaked by the Depopulation in its early years.

Additionally, my total of 1,840 settlements is a conservative count. Du Zhen, being an imperial commissioner, traveled to the major towns and villages and did not deign to stop in every tiny hamlet in two thousand miles of rugged coastline. Every place listed as a town/district (*du* 都) in **Appendix II** could have comprised between 10-150

⁵³⁴ Li Dongzhu 李东珠, and Li Longqian 李龙潜, “Qingchu ‘qianhai’ dui Guangdong shehui jingji de yingxiang 清初‘迁海’对广东社会经济的影响,” *Jinan xuebao* 暨南学报, vol. 21, no. 4 (Jul. 1999): 49; 52-53.

⁵³⁵ (Qianlong 33) *Fujian xuzhi* 福建续志(清乾隆卅三年纂修), j. 11-12; cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 418-419.

small hamlets (*xiang* 乡), and so the total number of ruined settlements was much more than Du Zhen let on in his original report of 1684.⁵³⁶ The same applies to those settlements called island/mountain (*shan* 山), which often contained multiple fishing hamlets. The coast of Fujian contains 1,230 islands within ten kilometers of the mainland, and 300 islands between 10-100 kilometers; Guangdong had about half as many as Fujian.⁵³⁷ Commissioner Du, mindful that the emperor and the people were waiting for his report to officially open the boundary, was wise enough to stick to the coast and leave the islands alone.

The question of just how many people died is much more problematic than computing the number of towns and settlements. Traditional Chinese sources do not give a census in the modern sense, for they were most often compiled for tax purposes and counted only the adult males as taxable units (*ding*) and as heads of a household (*hu*). Such a number gives only a very skewed view of society. Some sources gave a middle-of-the-way assessment with households plus their primary dependents (*hukou*, which I have designated as “households+”), but my sense is that many of the elderly, women, and young children were usually left out, as were itinerants, monks, and the poor.⁵³⁸ Many households (especially the richer gentry) also gained exemption from the tax rolls through meritorious service or nefarious means. Pirates and the like were not counted. Within these source limitations, we can venture some guesses.

⁵³⁶ See Lin Xiuhe, “Cong qianjie dao fujie,” 16-18, for the case of Jinjiang County alone, in which a mere 47 townships (*du*) really contained a staggering 1,636 hamlets.

⁵³⁷ Zhang Yaoguang 张耀光, *Zhongguo bianjiang dili (haijiang)* 中国边疆地理(海疆) [China’s border geography (maritime volume)] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2001), 38-39.

⁵³⁸ Ping-ti Ho’s *Studies on the population of China, 1368-1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959) gives a better account of the unique character of Chinese population registers.

Qing author Qu Dajun (1630-1696), who wrote from his experiences and deep sympathy for his native Guangdong, claimed that the coast was evacuated several times, and that each time this happened, several hundreds of thousands died, and hundreds of thousands more were put to flight in the province.⁵³⁹ This would seem to imply a million victims in Guangdong province alone, which is clearly overstated. While it is true that the population was shifted several times over the course of the Depopulation, the entire province of Guangdong had a registered male population of 1,000,751 in the year 1661,⁵⁴⁰ which might suggest a total population in the range of 4-7 million. Li Dongzhu and Li Longqian have made a careful study of the population registers and estimated that about 400,000 people in Guangdong province were moved by the Depopulation, of whom some 200,000 may have died, for they never came back.⁵⁴¹

And what did it mean to not come back? Some of the evacuees surely died and disappeared in mass killings similar to the ones that I have had the horrid duty of recounting; but a record of population loss within one county or prefecture does not have a one-to-one correlation with the number of deaths. Consider the case of one prefecture, in **Table 5.3**, below.

⁵³⁹ Qu Dajun, *Guangdong xinyu*, j. 2, *diyü* 地语, no. 63, *qianhai* 迁海, 57-58. Qu was an observant and hardly passive bystander: he traveled widely and even briefly joined the Revolt of the Three Feudatories in 1673! See Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 201-203.

⁵⁴⁰ Liang Fangzhong 梁方仲. *Zhongguo lidai hukou, tiandi, tianfu tongji* 中国历代户口、田地、田赋统计 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 258.

⁵⁴¹ Li Dongzhu and Li Longqian, "Qingchu 'qianhai' dui Guangdong shehui jingji de yingxiang," 48.

Table 5.3: Registered Households in Counties of Chaozhou Prefecture, Guangdong

COUNTY	Registered households+ (hukou): 1660 (SZ 17)	Registered households+ (hukou): 1662 (KX 1)	Registered households+ (hukou): 1672 (KX 11)	Difference, 1662 vs. 1660 Initial Depopulation	Difference, 1672 vs. 1660 10 Years After Initial Depopulation
Haiyang 海阳	73,839	30,182	42,389	- 43,657	- 31,450
Chenghai 澄海	60,282	38,055	24,104	- 22,227	- 36,178
Chaoyang 潮阳	32,134	20,509	22,349	- 11,625	- 9,785
Raoping 饶平	49,088	27,617	37,951*	- 21,471	- 11,137
Jieyang 揭阳	34,121	27,106	34,121	- 7,015**	0**
Huilai 惠来	31,211	11,841	12,742	- 19,370	- 18,469
Puning 普宁 (Interior, not evacuated)	10,486	51,390	91,390	+ 40,904	+ 80,904
Dapu 大埔 (Interior, not evacuated)	15,012	15,017	15,012	+5	0***
TOTALS	306,173	221,717	280,058	- 84,456	- 26,115

Notes:

1. Source: Rao Zongyi, "Qingchu Chaozhou qianjie kao," 310-311.
2. *: This statistic is from 1678 (KX 17); none is available from 1672.
3. **: Rao seems to be in error here, given that on page 311 he says Jieyang lost 21,471 households between 1662 and 1660, and regained 334 between 1672 and 1662. Also, it seems unlikely that the exact same number of households entered as had originally exited in 1662. This awaits further investigation.
4. ***: This too seems worthy of doubt.

Each coastal county clearly suffered differently in the proportion and number of population loss, but towards the bottom rows of the table we can see that the interior counties of Puning and Dapu recorded an increase (or little change) in the number of

registered households. The population registers did not record where the influx of people into Puning came from, and so we cannot be sure that they all came from the coast and not some inland area, but we may surmise that a large portion of the migrants were refugees from the Coastal Depopulation. In the first year of the Depopulation, 1662, the totals on the bottom row show an immediate 84,456 decrease, but in 1672, after some periods of relaxation, the household count was only 26,115 below the pre-Depopulation count—which is to say that 58,341 households migrated back to the coast, although again we cannot be sure that these were the original refugees who were displaced in the first place. Thus, 26,115 disappeared from the prefecture, and perhaps died on the roadsides or at the hands of soldiers, bandits, and their own neighbors. But of their individual fates, alas, no one can be sure.

The case of Wenzhou prefecture in Zhejiang, immediately north of the border with Fujian, shows a similar drop. **Table 5.4** records this:

Table 5.4: Wenzhou Prefecture, Zhejiang, between 1582 and 1681

COUNTY	Registered Males, 1582 (<i>Ming WL 10</i>)	Registered Males, 1681 (<i>Qing KX 20</i>)	Change
Yongjia 永嘉	97,359	92,874	- 4,485
Leqing 乐清	79,714	16,014*	- 63,700
Rui'an 瑞安	79,829	34,007	- 45,822
Pingyang 平阳	86,719	44,079	- 42,640
Taishun 泰顺	6,518	5,015	- 1,503
Totals	350,139	191,989	- 158,180

Notes:

1. Source: Zhang Xianwen, "Luelun qingchu Zhejiang yanhai de Qianjie," 120.
2. *: This gazetteer's figure is questionable, but a better one is lacking.

Such figures show the overall trend but are unsatisfactory for showing the direct impact of the Depopulation, for it is impossible to determine how much of the documented population loss was due to the disintegration of late Ming society and the Qing conquest in the 40 years between 1582-1681 gap, to say nothing of the Depopulation period itself. But such a shortfall of consistent numbers exists not just in Zhejiang but also in all of Fujian itself. The mitigating factor for the lack of dependable numbers during the gap was, likely, the fact of the loyalist wars and the Depopulation itself: coastal China was too poor and wretched to calculate with scientific punctiliousness its own poverty and wretchedness. Nevertheless, the gazetteers do reveal that people returned to the coast during the halting government relaxations of the boundary: in Zhejiang, for example, when the border was reopened in 1670, 15,153 adult males returned; in 1672, another 1,180 came; and in 1673 the border was partially opened again, so that 2,748 returned; then in the years 1674, 1677, 1679, 1680, 1682, 1683, and 1684, people came back in dribbles of as many as 921 and as few as 75, 34, and 11 people (reflecting the unease of 1673-1681, the years of the Revolt of the Three Feudatories).⁵⁴²

As for the Fujianese, they fled in every direction. Historian Zheng Zhenman cites the case of Xue Rong of Fuqing, who wrote in his clan genealogy that “those who did not die scattered over the distant and nearby localities, even to other counties and prefectures, as well as to Hubei, Henan, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang [provinces]. Some went as far as several thousand *li* from their homes.”⁵⁴³ But not all of them migrated inland. A quick look at Jianning, one of Fujian’s inland prefectures, shows that even the interior of Fujian

⁵⁴² Zhang Xianwen, “Luelun qingchu Zhejiang yanhai de Qianjie,” 120.

⁵⁴³ Zheng Zhenman (trans. Michael Szonyi), *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, 215.

suffered a loss of population that lasted until well after the abrogation of the Depopulation in 1683. See **Table 5.5**, below.

Table 5.5: Population Registers of Jianning Prefecture of Fujian⁵⁴⁴

COUNTY	Registers in the Wanli Period (1573-1620)	Registers in 1694 (KX 33)	Change
Jian'an 建安	51,496	22,763	- 28,733
Ouning 瓯宁	92,590	18,370	- 74,220
Jiayang 建阳	83,381	35,651	- 47,730
Chong'an 崇安	43,895	19,408	- 24,487
Pucheng 浦城	45,982	24,187	- 21,795
Songxi 松溪	34,766	11,961	- 22,805
Zhenghe 政和	19,411	5,115	- 14,296
Shouning 寿宁	11,922	3,611	- 8,311
Total	383,443	141,066	- 242,377 (Loss of 63.2% of original total)

Even in the interior prefectures of Fujian, therefore, a huge decrease of population occurred during the various Ming-Qing wars and the later wars against the sealords. Where, then, did all of the people go, besides to death? If the coastal peoples of Funing, Fuzhou, Xinghua, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou did not all retreat inland, they must have sought other destinations; and indeed, amidst the chaotic scattering, there were some migrations of a more calculated nature. One local source from the village of Shijing, Nan'an county (the hometown of Zheng Zhilong) speaks of moving on his father's orders to Luzon in the Spanish Philippines, where it was safer to work and reestablish the family.⁵⁴⁵ While I cannot follow the trail of every clan in Fujian, consider the case of 27

⁵⁴⁴ Source: Zhang Qi 张琦, *Jianning fuzhi* 建宁府志, cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 411.

⁵⁴⁵ *Nan'an Shijing Zengshi zupu* 南安石井曾氏族谱, cited in Wang Lianmao and Zhuang Weiji, *Mintai guanxi zupu ziliao xuanji*, 428.

members of the Wang family of Jinjiang, who scattered to many destinations during the crisis:

Table 5.6: Destinations of the Wang Clan of Wenling, Jinjiang County, Fujian⁵⁴⁶

Destination	# of Adult Males (total: 27)
Interior	9
Anping	3
Qingyang	1
Jinjiang	1
Fuzhou	4
Nan'an	2
Taiwan	4
Philippines	1
Unknown	2

This distribution can be taken as a typical example of the paths of coastal Fujianese who lost their homes during the Coastal Depopulation. Scholars like Zhuang Weiji and Wang Lianmao, who have studied emigration patterns through such genealogies, have noted three major waves of migration to Taiwan: during the reign of Zheng Zhilong (late Ming); during the Coastal Depopulation, after Koxinga seized Taiwan from the Dutch in 1661; and after the revocation of the Depopulation policy in 1684.⁵⁴⁷ Sealord Zheng Jing on Taiwan was the single greatest beneficiary of this mass migration from Fujian to Taiwan, which actually helped him to rebuild his regime and mend the losses he had suffered from the crippling waves of defections from 1661-1665.

⁵⁴⁶ *Jinjiang Wenling Hujiang zupu* 晋江温陵沪江王氏族谱, “Shixi xiaozhuan,” 世系小传, cited in Lin Xiuhe, “Cong qianjie dao fujie,” 63.

⁵⁴⁷ Wang Lianmao 王连茂 and Zhuang Weiji 庄为玑, “Cong zupu ziliao kan Min-Tai guanxi” 从族谱资料看闽台关系, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中国史研究, v. 21 (1984), 47-59.

Thus, a strange outcome of the Depopulation was that in the initial phases, it had cut off Zheng Jing's ability to get supplies from the coast (its stated purpose), but contrarily, in the later stages it actually helped him by swelling his ranks with the dispossessed, who now had nothing to lose by joining the seahord. Jing's remaining officers also had no hometowns left to go back to, so they stayed in Taiwan. Qing viceroy Yao Qisheng later advised the emperor that Jing's troops consisted mostly of former Fujianese residents who had lost everything in the evacuation, and the best way to get them to surrender was to reopen the coast so that they would have a reason to come back.⁵⁴⁸ After dwindling to a mere several thousand following the setbacks of 1663, Jing's forces therefore saw a major resurgence as the seahord offered land in Taiwan to the refugees, as well as trade opportunities with Japan and Southeast Asia. English traders estimated in 1670 that 70,000 Chinese settlers populated Taiwan, and when the Qing finally conquered the island in 1683, there were found to be 100,000.⁵⁴⁹

Even more perversely, Zheng Jing and his 70,000 single men on Taiwan turned out to be on the buying end of the human trafficking in Fujian. That sordid business, of which we have by now seen plenty, apparently kidnapped women and young girls to be sold not just to the predatory rich families of coastal Fujian, but also shipped across the Taiwan Strait to be brides of the seahord's colonists, who had no other way to procure

⁵⁴⁸ Yao Qisheng 姚启圣, *Youweixuan zoushu* 忧畏轩奏疏, "Tiwei xiangyi pinghai shanhou tiaokuan shiben" 题为详议平海善后条款事本 (KX 19.8); "Tiwei qingzhi guihuan bianjie shiben" 题为请旨归还边界事本 (KX 19.11).

⁵⁴⁹ Sucheta Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China: Peasants, Technology, and the World Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 209.

mates.⁵⁵⁰ (Although I have no evidence, I would not be surprised if the soldiers of Geng Jimao and Yang Fu were leading smugglers of Fujianese women to Taiwan. It would not have been inconsistent with their behavior up to that point.) In this way, the social anarchy of the coast actually benefited the seaford, whose island was by contrast a bastion of peace and trade. The English certainly thought so. Agents of the British East India Company, arriving late on the scene in the 1660s, concluded that there was absolutely no “certainty of trade in any part of China under ye Tartar; who is an enemy to trade and hath depopulated all ye vast quantities of islands on ye Coaste of all maritime parts of Chyna 8 Leagues from ye Sea,”⁵⁵¹ and so in 1670 they signed a trade contract with Jing, the “King of Tywan,” taking special care to tell him: “wee would have your Majesty know, that wee are Englishmen and a distinct Nation from Hollanders—some people of which Nation about ten years since were driven out of your Land by his Majesty your Renowned Father.”⁵⁵²

It would be reckless to state that millions died from the Coastal Depopulation. Millions were no doubt impacted directly or indirectly by the disaster, and their lives were never the same, but it is difficult to separate the innumerable deaths in the Ming-Qing wars (1644-1662) from those caused by the Depopulation itself (1661-1683). Never should we minimize the human suffering, but number inflation is hardly the answer. Let us say rather more conservatively that in the maritime provinces perhaps 150,000-200,000 died directly from the policy and from the rampage that shadowed it,

⁵⁵⁰ James W. Davidson, *The Island of Formosa, Past and Present: History, People, Resources, and Commercial Prospects; tea, camphor, sugar, gold, coal, sulphur, economical plants, and other productions* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988 [1903]), 58.

⁵⁵¹ James B. Eames, *The English in China* (London: Pitman & Sons, 1909), 37.

⁵⁵² Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch*, 501.

and that of the other refugees we cannot rightly tell, though we may imagine that not a few of those brave men and women found ways to survive: by vanishing from the tax records, by going inland to carve the mountains into terraces and eke out a living, by taking to sea: some to Taiwan, others to build those hardy pioneer communities of Hokkien and Teochew peoples that today are millions strong in Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and all over Southeast Asia. The calamity of the Qing scorched coast policy marked the great dispersion of the maritime peoples of China in the Age of Sail.

Finally, the tigers had their turn. Nothing could have formed a more tragic denouement for the people of coastal Fujian than to have survived the depredations of the sealords, the Qing army, Geng Jimao, the defectors, and their own neighbors, only to be devoured at last by carnivorous beasts. The Chinese mountain tiger, which had long inhabited the wooded hills of south China, had been driven into the highlands by human encroachment on its habitat, but the Coastal Depulation opened the door for their return. What a picture! While Dutch captains, their ships “reeking of gunpowder and past cargoes of spices” and flying “the tricolor flag of the first new republic in postmedieval Europe, emblazoned with the ‘V.O.C.’ monogram of one of the world’s greatest private business combines,” were meeting with Geng Jimao, a warlord whose “splendid tents stood at the end of lines of communication and authority stretching back to Peking; [...] the outer fringe of a self-contained world that had no place either for completely independent states, let alone republics, or for the V.O.C.’s kind of private concentration of wealth and power,”⁵⁵³—plotting together the destruction of China’s great sealord

⁵⁵³ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 113. Wills was describing the meeting of Bort and Geng Jimao right after the destruction of Amoy in 1663.

family—tigers were returning to their ancient homelands, which were now restored to the wild and wooded state that was their natural habitat.⁵⁵⁴

Tiger sightings and attacks occurred all over the coast of Fujian:

1. In 1664, a pack of tigers ate people in Luoyuan county.⁵⁵⁵
2. On March 2, 1665, a tiger entered the city of Zhangzhou and mauled people.⁵⁵⁶
3. In 1666 in Tong'an county, many people from Xiaoying and Xintang villages were mauled by the roadside.⁵⁵⁷

In Putian, Second Captain Qian Long reported seeing five or six tigers on the prowl; those who snuck out beyond the wall were mauled or eaten by tigers. A party of ten or more people was killed except for one survivor, while in 1663 a tiger entered the home of a certain Mr. Zhu of Shouxiang and killed him along with his wife. Other people died at night or while lost in the woods, becoming a feast for tigers and crows.⁵⁵⁸ On February 22, 1670, the local government in Fujian announced one of the numerous *zhanjie* or relaxations of the boundary, by which residents could reclaim their homes up to 15 *li* outside the wall. Trying to evict the roving wildcats, they met with trouble. One tiger, being chased by a crowd of humans, entered a house in Baisha, killed a family of four, and mauled fourteen others before being slain.⁵⁵⁹ In 1672, ten years into the Coastal

⁵⁵⁴ See Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silk, and Silt: Environment and Economy in Late Imperial South China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 323-327, for more on Chinese tigers.

⁵⁵⁵ (Daoguang) *Fujian tongzhi* (道光)福建通志, j. 272, “Qingchao zaiyi” 清朝灾异; cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 407.

⁵⁵⁶ Chen Ruxian 陈汝咸, *Zhangzhou xianzhi* 漳州县志, j. 4, “Fengtu” 风土, “zaixiang” 灾祥; cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 407.

⁵⁵⁷ (Minguo) *Tong'an xianzhi* (民国)同安县志, j. 3, “zaixiang” 灾祥; cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 407.

⁵⁵⁸ Yu Yang, *Pubian jishi*, 134.

⁵⁵⁹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 88.

Depopulation, the town of Changtai in Zhangzhou prefecture suffered repeated tiger attacks that left a thousand dead⁵⁶⁰—the number from the local gazetteer could well have been exaggerated, but who knows? The Depopulation had eleven more years to go.

The Qing attempt at social engineering began with a mermaid's smile; it reached its ghastly halfway point with the return of *Panthera tigris*.

The Calm

The natural response to this anthology of woe is: to what end? The Coastal Depopulation was supposed to have cut off the seaford and hastened the Qing pacification of the coast. Its original proponents, Huang Wu being a primary example, had claimed that if the maritime inhabitants were removed, “the enemy will perish without our attacking him. [...] In half a year, without repairs, the sea bandits' ships will rot; and their legions will disintegrate on their own for lack of provisions.”⁵⁶¹ But that clearly did not happen: it was impossible to starve out someone who controlled the sea-lanes and had farms on the new colony of Taiwan. 1662 went by, then 1663, then 1664, and so on, but the end of the seaford was not in sight; he had even stopped attacking the coast and simply carried on a brisk smuggling trade with Qing officials in Fujian and Guangdong, along with the lucrative trades with Japan and Southeast Asia that had so enriched his grandfather. Yet the policy remained in force, despite the abuses and despite internal criticisms within the Qing government, until 1669 (when it was only partially relaxed), and reinstated frequently so that it was never finally repealed until 1684.

⁵⁶⁰ (Daoguang) *Fujian tongzhi* (道光)福建通志, j. 272, “Qingchao zaiyi” 清朝灾异; cited in Zhu Weigan, *Fujian shigao*, 407.

⁵⁶¹ Jiang Risheng (ed. Liu Wentai, et. al), *Taiwan waiji*, juan 11, p. 170.

What had the Depopulation really done? It had changed the nature of coastal society and scattered its inhabitants all over the map. Too much had happened in Fujian since the fall of the Ming for the coast to simply return to the “good old days” without a reordering of society. Beneath the larger geopolitics of the struggle between the Qing and the Zheng sealords, there had been a quieter but not less ominous social struggle between families and clans (extended lineages) over land, water, and fishing rights. After the Depopulation came into effect, a situation arose in which the bigger and stronger clans had more resources to survive or even profit from the impoverishment of their neighbors. As historian Zheng Zhenman has made clear, “no residentially concentrated lineage in the areas affected by the evacuation could avoid total collapse and dispersal.”⁵⁶² But those with extended families inland had advantages under the circumstances—smaller families were often crushed or sold into bondage to the larger and richer clans (who benefited from the human trafficking to get more slaves/servants).

Many of the smaller lineages were forced to the interior where they had no land and few sympathetic contacts who could help them get a fresh start. The total picture is too complex to analyze here in full, of those small lineages that survived the migration inland, a few examples included:

- 1) The Tong 童 lineage from Nanjing county (Zhangzhou);
- 2) The Cai 蔡 lineage from the Minnan region; (Zhangzhou and Quanzhou)
- 3) The Ye 叶 lineage from Xianyou (Putian);
- 4) The Gao 高 lineage from Shanghang 上杭 (Fuqing);

⁵⁶² Zheng Zhenman (trans. Michael Szonyi), *Family Lineage Organization and Social Change in Ming and Qing Fujian*, 215.

5) The Shi 石 lineage from Zhenhai 镇海;

-- All of whom migrated inland to Longyan 龙岩 county (Zhangzhou prefecture).⁵⁶³

And: 6) The He 何 lineage from Longtian 龙田 town (Funing zhou), which migrated to Taijiang 台江 town (Fuzhou prefecture).⁵⁶⁴

Big lineages dominated the regions within the boundary, and when the boundary was relaxed (*zhanjie*), the number of people who moved into the deserted coast was significantly less than the number of people who had fled those areas in the first place. In some cases, the former coastal residents were replaced by an influx of outsiders.⁵⁶⁵ Many lineages, especially smaller ones, had settled down in the interior areas and never returned.⁵⁶⁶

But the most graphic case was that of the town of Fuquan in Jinjiang county of southern Fujian, which fell outside the boundary and was completely devastated. Originally there had been many local clans: their surnames were Zhang 张, Huang 黄, You 尤, Su 苏, Lin 林, Chen 陈, and Jiang 蒋. When the Depopulation finally ended in 1684, and the refugees had straggled back to rebuild, their new community had only two clans: Jiang 蒋 and Quan 全. “Jiang” was the same as the former clan, a large and powerful one, but “Quan” was a new creation: the Zhang, Huang, You, Su, Lin, and Chen surnames represented small families that had few resources to rebuild and no chances of

⁵⁶³ Lin Jianhua 林建华, “Ming Qing shiqi Fujian shengnei zaici yimin ji dongin tanxi” 明清时期福建省内再次移民及动因探析, *Dongnan xueshu* 东南学术, no.1 (2006): 154-155.

⁵⁶⁴ Lin Jianhua, “Ming Qing shiqi Fujian shengnei zaici yimin ji dongin tanxi,” 157.

⁵⁶⁵ Li Deyuan 李德元, *Ming Qing shiqi hanei yimin yu haidao kaifa* 明清时期海内移民与海岛开发 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2006), 55-56.

⁵⁶⁶ Lin Jianhua, “Ming Qing shiqi Fujian shengnei zaici yimin ji dongin tanxi,” 158.

standing up to the superior Jiang clan. They therefore contracted with one another to form a collective clan and named it after their hometown: “Quan” 全 from Fuquan 福全.⁵⁶⁷ Without such survival strategies, smaller clans would have been bullied, dispossessed, and driven from their homes, for they had lost much and had now to overcome the poverty of being *jiewairen*: “people outside the boundary.” This is why scholar Lin Xiuhe believes that the Qianjie policy “created social conditions that inherently favored the big clans [...] and made the strong stronger, and the weak weaker.”⁵⁶⁸ Whether this result was intended or not, it fell in with the Qing program of simplifying the distribution of local powers on the maritime frontier of the empire.

But now I am getting ahead of the story. First, a calm seemed to settle over the empire as the long-awaited peace was restored: the economy gradually began to recover from the worst ravages of war, the currency was standardized, and some of the severest policies of the Oboi Regency were moderated. In 1669, the Kangxi emperor came into his own by ousting Regent Oboi and asserting his personal rule of the empire. Geng Jimao finally died in May 1671 and was succeeded as Feudatory of Fujian by his son Geng Jingzhong.⁵⁶⁹ Sealord Zheng Jing was still at large in Taiwan, but his forces did not pose too much of a threat to the well-fortified coast, and he found it more profitable to quietly pursue trade rather than war.

By the end of 1668, even the Dutch had departed the China coast in disgust at the lack of trade prospects, even abandoning their fort at Keelung (the northern tip of Taiwan), which they had hoped would serve as a base for trade and for attacking Zheng

⁵⁶⁷ Lin Xiuhe, “Cong qianjie dao fujie,” 114.

⁵⁶⁸ Lin Xiuhe, “Cong qianjie dao fujie,” 114.

⁵⁶⁹ Chen Hong, *Qingchu Pubian xiaocheng*, 89.

Jing. What bothered them most were the bureaucratic obstacles and miscommunications that they had with the Qing authorities. “Only a few Dutchmen learned enough Chinese to carry on a conversation, and still fewer could make an educated guess at the meaning of an official document. More often than not the Dutch depended on Chinese interpreters, many of whom had lived in Batavia, whose command of bureaucratic Chinese was rather dubious, and who, speaking only southern Fukien languages, must have had considerable difficulty communicating with officials from North China or Manchuria. Moreover, most of these Chinese apparently spoke not Dutch but Portuguese or Malay, the lingua franca of Batavia, in which the Dutch might be less than perfectly fluent.”⁵⁷⁰ This lesson in linguistic incapability is a worthy one for any would-be imperialist; but besides that, the maritime Fujianese once again proved to be the mediators between the governments of mainland China and the outside world. While war increasingly lost its luster, the various members of the Fujianese diaspora carried on their trades as usual, and the European interlopers were once again shut out.

In 1669 and 1670 (*KX* 8-9), therefore, the coastal boundaries were partially opened to allow people out to some 10-15 *li* beyond the wall. They were not yet free to resume their seafaring trades, but some, at least, could reclaim the fallow fields for food crops. Limited fishing was also allowed. Hopes ran high that the coastal frontier could finally be settled, that the nightmares of the past few decades could resolve themselves into a peaceful coexistence and a resumption of maritime trade.

The events of 1674 would push that settlement back for another decade. Just when the boundary seemed to be clear, and there was talk of relaxing further the coastal

⁵⁷⁰ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 198; 201.

prohibitions and reintegrating the littoral into the provincial polity, the coast of south China erupted in one last wave of violence that would bring the seafarer back from his quiescence in Taiwan and force the Qing central government to finally destroy the coastal frontier that it had created. For eight more years, the coast would be awash in blood. The Revolt of the Three Feudatories had broken out.

Conclusion

Crossing

The End of a Frontier

*Sir, don't you see, when our naval vessels sail west,
The pirate ships sail east;
When our naval vessels wait upon the tide,
The pirate junks catch the wind.
When our sailors are intimidated or beat a retreat,
The pirate hordes attack.
Don't resent the incompetence of our warships;
Resent only that we do not see brigadier-general Huang.
-- A Fujianese "ransom" song⁵⁷¹*

The social structure of any country is powerfully shaped by its security systems. At the same time, those security mechanisms are determined by the structure of society, with all its messiness and violence. Which one came first is hard to say, but as we have seen, the frontier structure that was hammered out in the Coastal Depopulation was problematic, not least because of the enforcers themselves: the Feudatories and their predatory goons. With police like these, who needed pirates?

I observed in the previous chapters that the Coastal Depopulation was more than a military expedient; it was a policy aimed at reshaping coastal society by creating a simplified political line backed by an artificial land boundary. I also noted that the provincial enforcers, such as Feudatory Shang Kexi in Guangdong and Feudatory Geng

⁵⁷¹ Zhang Yingchang 张应昌, ed., *Qing shiduo* 清诗铎 [A collection of Qing poems] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 300, translated by Chung-shen Chang, "Ts'ai Ch'ien, The Pirate King who Dominates the Seas: A Study of Coastal Piracy in China, 1795-1810" (Ph.D. thesis: University of Arizona, 1983), 251-252. Huang [Biao] was a Qing naval commander in Fujian in the 19th century.

Jimao (succeeded by his son Geng Jingzhong) in Fujian, had a vested interest in maintaining the Depopulation, and that they and their military profit machines gave the new coastal frontier a staying power that it might have otherwise lacked.

In questions of policy between civil and military officials, the military enforcers carried the day. Civil officials such as Censor Li Zhifang had protested the Depopulation, saying that the purpose of keeping an army was to guard a territory, not abandon it: “No one ever hears of an imperial government removing the people in order to avoid pirates!”⁵⁷² In 1673, Fujian viceroy Fan Chengmo reported to Emperor Kangxi: “More than 20,000 *qing* of land have been left to waste, causing a loss of 200,000 taels; each day brings more shortage of revenue. . . . The people are troubled, and rice prices rise daily. Unless they are cared for, the hungry, the cold, and the oppressed will take to robbery, and we cannot ensure that they will remain law-abiding subjects.”⁵⁷³ As we have seen, that is precisely what happened: the refugees became predators themselves. Meanwhile, the sealord (ostensibly the reason for everything) remained safely at large. Fan went on: “The purpose of a navy is to protect the maritime frontier. Nobody leaves the doors wide open and guards only the inside of his house!”⁵⁷⁴ Despite these and other objections, the Depopulation and its abuses continued unabated at the hands of Feudatory henchmen who did not fight the sealord but were content to “guard” the coast by ripping off the Fujianese coastal population.

⁵⁷² Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, “Qingchu dongnan yanhai qianjie bukao” 清初東南沿海遷界補考 [An amended study on the early Qing coastal evacuation of southeast China], Appendix 3 in *Ming Qing zhi ji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 271.

⁵⁷³ *Qianlong chongzuan Fujian tongzhi* 乾隆重纂福建通志, j. 87, cited in Xie Guozhen, “Qingchu dongnan yanhai qianjie bukao,” 273.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

From the foregoing, the Qing state comes off looking awful. Surely the highest imperial councils should have seen through the willful, blatant, and persistent efforts of the local satraps and scoundrels to perpetuate the whole game of exploitation? Surely, as officials like Fan Chengmo suggested, there was no need to keep killing people at the frontier line ten years after Zheng Jing had already been driven from the coast?

Only a step-by-step plan of rehabilitation could have ended the frontier period of Fujian history, phased out the special administrative satrapy of Fujian, and ushered in a period of regular provincial governance. The move toward regular provincial governance was the attempt to establish, by force or by law, a standard provincial bureaucracy to replace the ad hoc arrangements that had placed the frontier under regional overlords. This encompassed several things, including the general application of standard taxes to clearly delimited districts and the replacement of frontier posts with county *yamen*. It meant that the viceroy and governor would wield the same powers and functions that their counterparts in other provinces exhibited in the same period. It meant the subordination of the military to civil control.

But it seemed that the Coastal Depopulation could not be revoked without obstruction either from hardliners in the court or from the Feudatories themselves. Particularly bad was the local obstruction or obfuscation that twisted central directives. To give one example, the Kangxi emperor had decreed in 1669 and 1670 that the coast be partially opened to allow people out to some 10-15 *li* beyond the wall. Fan Chengmo's memorial of 1673 exposed the hollowness of decrees in the face of practice. "When your Majesty relaxed the boundary prohibition, the people gained a new lease on life. But here in Fujian the boundary is still set at Taizhai [a frontier fort]. Even though the

boundary is supposed to be opened and the land reclaimed, in reality not even one-tenth of this has been done.”⁵⁷⁵ In Fujian, Prince Geng was still in charge.

The frontier could only be dismantled in the process of eliminating those regional overlords who had contributed to the Qing conquest but at last proved to be the final obstacles. The political crisis known as the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories would bring Qing armies into Fujian once more; and the sealord would return to the coast for one last drive that would place Fujian into a civil war within a civil war. And by the end of it all, Fujian would be converted from a frontier back into a province, and Taiwan would become part of China. As historian Kai-fu Tsao writes, “The suppression of the rebellion [of the Three Feudatories] may be called the second Manchu conquest of China. It was only after this second conquest that the Manchu empire was firmly established.”⁵⁷⁶

The last part of our story begins not in Fujian, but in the far west and southwest. Let us summarize the succession of duplicity, political posturing, and outright rebellion.⁵⁷⁷

The Retirement of the Three Feudatories

Kai-fu Tsao has estimated that in the 1660s some 11,300,000 silver taels per annum, nearly half of the the tax revenue of the entire empire, went to supporting the Three Feudatories and their private armies; and that Wu Sangui maintained on paper an army of 64,000 men, Shang Kexi some 10,500 men in Guangdong, and Geng Jingzhong

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Kai-fu Tsao, “The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China, 1673-1681: Its Setting and Significance” (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 1965), 182.

⁵⁷⁷ The summary that follows is based on Kai-fu Tsao, op. cit., and the excellent work by Liu Fengyun 刘风云, *Qingdai sanfan yanjiu* 清代三藩研究 [Research on the Three Feudatories] (Beijing: Zhonghua renmin daxue chubanshe, 1994).

at least 20,000 troops in Fujian.⁵⁷⁸ A motley crew of clients and irregulars further swelled their ranks. The contributions of the Feudatories to the initial conquest of China had been immense, but as the Southern Ming resistance shriveled and the Qing rulers consolidated their empire, these three satraps and their bloated budgets seemed less and less necessary.

In April 1661, Wu Sangui (the first and most powerful Feudatory) led an army into Burma accompanied by Manchu general Aisingga. Their quarry was the Ming Prince of Gui, the last viable Southern Ming claimant, who was on his last legs after a string of defeats. Wu advanced within 20-30 miles of Ava (then the Burmese capital), forced the Burmese into giving him the Prince of Gui, and ordered the unfortunate Ming prince strangled to death in May 1662. In Tsao's assessment, "these acts were great mistakes, for once the threat, both physical and psychological, of that Ming prince from Burma was eliminated there was no need for Peking to maintain Wu's principedom in Yunnan."⁵⁷⁹ The Feudatory domains laid their sole claim to legitimacy on frontier insecurity, and military successes only sawed off the branch on which they sat.

Nevertheless, Wu, Shang, and Geng kept their principedoms through the 1660s through a combination of fabricated self-importance and genuine fears in the capital that any attempt to demote the Feudatories too quickly would drive them into revolt. While Geng Jimao and his son Geng Jingzhong wine and dined in Fuzhou at the expense of the coastal refugees, their colleagues to the south and west got very good at winning unnecessary wars. In 1664 and 1665 Shang Kexi attacked and defeated the Tanka (boat

⁵⁷⁸ Kai-fu Tsao, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China," 66-67.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

people) in Guangdong, who had been driven into revolt and piracy by the coastal interdict—another case where the Depopulation order generated rather than prevented social disorder.⁵⁸⁰ Wu Sangui attacked aboriginal tribes in northeastern Yunnan and western Guizhou provinces from July 1664 to March 1665, defeated them, and proudly established new government districts over the aboriginal highlands. However, these campaigns were of dubious value and merely served as false declarations of Wu's utility to the Qing state. As the viceroy of Guizhou reported to the throne, the aborigines were only fighting amongst themselves and had never threatened the Chinese-controlled areas.⁵⁸¹

Ultimately, time itself would provide the circumstances to break up the lavish languor of these Feudatories who were sitting on the ill-gotten gains. Shang Kexi, the Feudatory of Guangdong, got old and grey. On April 28, 1673, the Kangxi emperor received a memorial from Shang asking for permission to retire on account of his age. Shang's request to retire appears to have been genuine, and was granted; however, his second petition, in which he asked that his 38-year-old son Shang Zhixin be allowed to inherit the title of Prince who Pacifies the South and rule Guangdong, was rejected. The Qing court pointed out that Guangdong province was secure and no longer needed a special principedom. Shang Kexi accepted the decision quietly and prepared for the long move back to Manchuria.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ The Tanka were hardly a political threat, but may have been economic competitors, as Shang profited from his monopoly over maritime trade. See Gu Pan 顾盼, "Qingchu Haijin zhengce yu Pingnan Wang caizheng jichu zhi guanxi" 清初海禁政策禁与平南王财政基础之关系 [The effect of the maritime bans on Feudatory Shang Kexi's financial base], in *Qingshi lunji* 清史论集 v. 2, eds. Cheng Chongde 成崇德 Chen Jiexian 陈捷先, and Li Jixiang 李纪祥 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2006): 660-680.

⁵⁸¹ Tsao, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China," 63.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 70-71.

This abolition of Shang Kexi's principedom set a dangerous precedent for his two brothers-in-extortion, who seemed considerably less eager to give up their own kingdoms. Now that one fiefdom had been eliminated, what was to stop the court from eradicating the others? In quick succession Wu Sangui and Geng Jingzhong offered their own resignations as 'feelers' to test the court's intentions—expecting, no doubt, that the court would comprehend the hypocrisy and let them stay on. A heated debate ensued in Beijing: the court was divided between the majority opinion of Songgotu and senior officials—namely, that accepting Wu's fake resignation would provoke him to rebel—and a minority opinion held by Mingju and some of the younger bannermen, who wanted the Feudatories disbanded immediately.⁵⁸³ Ultimately, the emperor accepted the resignations and ordered both Wu and Geng to retire. Their principedoms would be abrogated, and they would be transferred to a comfortable and well-deserved retirement in Liaodong. To enforce his decision, Emperor Kangxi sent two special commissioners to Yunnan to help Wu Sangui with the packing.

Wu rebelled.

High Tide and Fall

On December 28, 1673, Wu Sangui declared that he was founding a new imperial dynasty: the Zhou. Thus began the empire-wide civil war that would go down in history as the Rebellion (or Revolt) of the Three Feudatories. The early years of the revolt went badly for the Qing. Wu's well-trained armies marched eastward on January 7, 1674, and by April of that year had successfully captured the lion's share of Hunan, Sichuan,

⁵⁸³ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 1100-1101.

Guizhou, and Guangxi provinces. Geng Jingzhong in Fujian watched as Wu's rebel forces cut a swath through the rice basket of central China before finally raising his own flag of revolt on April 21. The coast was in uproar: even Chaozhou Brigade General Liu Jinzhong, who could have threatened Geng from the south, joined Geng's rebellion instead.

Throughout the summer of 1674, Geng routed the Qing forces that were hastily thrown in his way. Relieved of the need to protect his southern flank by the defection of Liu Jinzhong, Geng personally led his army northwestward to attack Jiangxi province, while his general Zeng Yangxing overran the coastal cities of Zhejiang. By the end of July, Geng had reached the eastern shore of Lake Boyang, China's largest freshwater lake, and was ready to encroach on Anhui province.

Meanwhile, Zheng Jing had been watching and waiting from Taiwan. Though a man of less intensity than his famous father, he was a sealord nonetheless, and he mobilized his fleets for a comeback. He had once made a royal boast to Wu Sangui that he could provide 100,000 fighting men and several thousand ships for an anti-Qing campaign⁵⁸⁴; Geng Jingzhong took the possibility of a Zheng alliance seriously and made overtures as soon as he began his rebellion. The opportunity to grab territory seemed too good to pass up, and so Zheng brought navy to the Fujian coast to parley with Geng in 1674. The two former enemies negotiated an alliance that summer, but the pact broke down almost as soon as it began. Failing to receive certain districts on the Fujian coast that Geng had promised him, Zheng Jing ordered his navy to raid Amoy and seize coastal

⁵⁸⁴ Xia Lin 夏林, *Haiji jiyao* 海紀輯要 [Sea chronicles], *Taiwan wenxian congkan* 22 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 38.

towns at Geng's rear. The Fujian coast was again ravaged by two frontier lords who both laid claim to the province; and the coastal residents, who had just been allowed partially outside the boundary, were either evacuated again or joined Zheng Jing.

Despite his failure to ally with the seahord, Geng Jingzhong's rebellion in Fujian helped bring the revolt to its high water mark in the fall of 1674. From his base in Fujian, Geng had successfully threatened the Jiangnan heartland and prevented the Qing government from sending more troops to fight Wu Sangui. His troops in Jiangxi captured the eastern half of the province, while his branch army under Zeng Yangxing seized town after town in Zhejiang. By October, the provincial capital of Hangzhou was the only stronghold in Zhejiang that remained under Qing control.⁵⁸⁵

The year 1674, in the words of the late Frederic Wakeman, "saw the dynasty at its lowest point since the capture of Beijing three decades earlier."⁵⁸⁶ With rebels overrunning south China, the military situation seemed so dire by year's end that Emperor Kangxi actually considered coming to terms with seahord Zheng Jing in order to deal with Geng Jingzhong.⁵⁸⁷ On December 30, the revolt of Wang Fuchen in Shaanxi threw even north China into panic—on hearing the news, Kangxi became so desperate that he almost decided to go to the front personally to fight the campaign. The emperor later told his children that this was the only time in his life when he could not keep the despair from showing in his face.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁵ Tsao, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China," 108-110.

⁵⁸⁶ Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 1108.

⁵⁸⁷ Tsao, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China," 109.

⁵⁸⁸ Jonathan D. Spence, "The K'ang-Hsi Reign," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 9 Part One: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 142.

And yet, the Qing held firm and continued to marshal the forces and resources that would ultimately turn the tide in the war, though it would take eight years to resolve the crisis. A general mobilization of Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese troops brought 200,000 bannermen and 400,000 Green Standard soldiers to bear against the rebels. Prince Giyešu, a grandson of Nurhaci, was ordered to personally lead the Qing counterassaults against Fujian. As the fortunes of war turned gradually against Wu Sangui in west and southwest China in 1676, Geng's forces Zhejiang and Fujian found themselves being strangled by relentless Qing pressure. Desertion and shortages of war supplies weakened Geng's armies, and as Geng sat in Fuzhou pondering his fate, his generals on the Fujian-Jiangxi border began to disobey orders.

Geng would likely have fared better if he had managed to repair his relationship with Zheng Jing and gain a seaborne supply line. However, Zheng Jing refused this and continued pillaging and wreaking general havoc along the Guangdong-Fujian-Zhejiang seaboard. When he captured the major city of Zhangzhou in November 1675, Zheng avenged himself against the family of Huang Wu, the Fujianese sailor who had defected to the Qing in 1656. Huang had been one of the key local proponents of the Coastal Depopulation and had recommended that the Qing court put Zheng Zhilong to death. Zheng Jing, who had not forgotten these betrayals of his father and grandfather, ordered Huang Wu's grave desecrated and his body torn to pieces; the surviving members of Huang's family were slaughtered to repay the blood of Zheng Zhilong.⁵⁸⁹

In late 1676, Giyešu's forces broke through Geng Jingzhong's northern outpost at Quzhou and advanced into Fujian. Caught between the Qing armies and Zheng Jing's

⁵⁸⁹ Young-tsu Wong, "Security and Warfare on the China Coast," 159-160.

navy, Geng surrendered to Giyešu on the 9th of November and pledged to help the Qing defeat the sealdord. For the next three years, coastal Fujian was caught in a seesaw war: Zheng Jing captured, lost, captured, lost, and regained coastal towns in the bloody stalemate. By the time General Yang Jie arrived in Fujian with a new Qing expeditionary force in 1678, the coast had been repopulated and depopulated multiple times, depending on who held a particular stretch of coast at any given moment. The coast was again awash in fake defectors, war profiteers, and suffering bystanders.

In his memorials to the throne, Yang Jie argued that stationary approaches could only result in stalemate. Qing forces could drive the sealdord off the coast but could not destroy him at sea; meanwhile, the coastal boundary could not be effective because it spread troops too thinly. Over hundreds of miles of twisting coastline, the sealdord's men could attack anywhere at any given time, and there was no way to stop it from happening.⁵⁹⁰ Yao Qisheng, a military adventurer who assisted the war against Geng and Zheng, stated similarly: “Our troops watch sea rebels cross the boundary, but at top speed we cannot chase them on horseback for more than 40-50 *li*. The sea rebels roam anywhere they please on their boats, and they can appear anytime.”⁵⁹¹

Yao Qisheng's merits in the war against the Feudatories and Zheng Jing got him promoted to viceroy of Fujian in 1678. From this elevated position, Yao reorganized the war effort in the province—one of his first acts was to curb the abuses of the Coastal Depopulation through a policy of amnesty. As Zheng admiral Liu Guoxuan attacked the strategic southern cities of Haicheng, Tong'an, and Nan'an, Yao realized that material

⁵⁹⁰ Yang Jie 楊捷, *Ping Min Ji* 平閩紀 [The Pacification of Fujian] (Taiwan wenxian congkan 98, reprint) (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1961 [1684]), j. 3, p. 59.

⁵⁹¹ Chen Qinfang, *Yao Qisheng yu Min-Tai shehui*, 37.

incentives would be needed to undermine the seahord's ability to recruit from the local population. Yao posted two public announcements to encourage those who were living outside the boundary to migrate inland.

The first was a general amnesty for those who had crossed outside the coastal boundary; they were now welcome to return inland without fear of reprisal. The second proclamation gave such newcomers a grace period of three days to harvest any crops that they had planted outside of the boundary.⁵⁹² Such proclamations served clear wartime propagandistic purposes, but nevertheless, with these and other acts Yao was beginning in practice to soften the permanence and military significance of the border line. As the war turned sour for Zheng Jing, the flexibility of the coastal wall became a policy that carried real material benefits for both the subjects and the state. For example, by 1680 more than 100,000 people (soldiers and their families) had defected from the Zheng army, but the Qing army could employ only a small number of them. To force this influx of people behind the wall would be a heavy financial burden on the state, but to leave them rootless and landless would run the risk of them going back to Zheng Jing. In May 1680, Yao wrote a memorial to the Kangxi emperor to propose a resettlement plan that would distribute the out-of-boundary (*jiewai*) lands among these former Zheng people along the following scale:

Brigade General 总兵: 50 mu of land, 11 taels of silver;
 Colonel 副将: 35 mu of land, 8 taels of silver;
 Lt. Colonel 参将: 30 mu of land, 7 taels of silver;
 Captain 守备: 25 mu of land, 6 taels of silver;
 Lieutenants/Sub-Lieutenants 千把总: 20 mu of land, 5 taels of silver;

⁵⁹² Chen Qinfang, *Yao Qisheng yu Min-Tai shehui*, 10-11.

Common soldiers 兵丁: 12 mu of land, 3 taels of silver.⁵⁹³

Yao Qisheng's plan was designed to kill two or three birds with one stone, as the wasted fields outside of the wall cost the state nothing but were worth a great deal to those whose labor could recover the productivity of the land, thus saving the state from commuting the defection rewards into pure cash payments. Resettlement outside of the wall would also prevent conflicts over the very limited interior land and serve as a magnet for further defections. It would also expedite the reclamation of taxable land that might fill state coffers in the near future. Finally, if this pilot measure proved successful on a local scale, it could be extended to other areas by the sea. Without removing a stone from the boundary, Yao Qisheng had already begun the process of rehabilitation that would conclude Fujian's frontier odyssey.

Aftermath

Only in 1684 was the Coastal Depopulation finally repealed, and that occurred only after the Qing state had quashed the Rebellion of its own monstrous satraps and taken the unprecedented step of the sea conquest of Taiwan. The rebellion took a total of eight years to suppress (1673-1681) and strained the Qing treasury to the limit, but already by 1678 the outcome had decisively turned against the rebels. As his allies deserted him one by one, Wu Sangui fought desperately and alone to hold off the united might of the Qing military. When Wu died of illness in Hengzhou, Hunan in 1678, his grandson Wu Shifan carried on the shrinking imperial pretensions and retreated west, just as the Southern Ming princes had done years before. At last Wu Shifan found himself

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 13.

cornered in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, and committed suicide on December 7, 1681. The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories was over.

Six years of seesaw warfare in Fujian likewise ended in smoke for sealord Zheng Jing, who watched history repeat itself as his key coastal positions were lost or abandoned to the Qing forces: Haicheng, Tong'an, Tongshan, Amoy. In 1680, just as in 1663, Zheng Jing sailed across the 100-mile Taiwan Strait in shame. The winds carried him back to Taiwan, where he fell in despondency into wine, women, and song—and finally croaked in 1681. The following year, ex-Feudatory Geng Jingzhong (who had been promised a pardon for surrendering in good faith) was executed by the death of a thousand cuts and his head displayed in Beijing.

In July 1683, Admiral Shi Lang led a Qing armada of some 300 ships and 20,000 men across the Taiwan Straits and smashed the Zheng forces in a climactic seven-day sea battle in the Pescadores and secured an unconditional surrender. On October 8, Zheng Jing's teenaged son Zheng Keshuang and all members of the Taiwan court formally shaved their heads in the Manchu queue, putting an end to 38 years of seaborne resistance to Qing rule.⁵⁹⁴

Conservative officials in the Qing court generally favored abandoning the island of Taiwan and forcibly removing all of the people back to the Chinese mainland, but Shi Lang and others opposed such a move.⁵⁹⁵ The recent history of the Coastal Depopulation, which they had all lived and suffered through, must have provided harsh lessons that Shi and others were not eager to repeat. In the end, Shi Lang and the Fujianese faction won

⁵⁹⁴ Young-tsu Wong, "Security and Warfare on the China Coast," 176-184.

⁵⁹⁵ Shi Lang 施琅, *Jinghai jishi 靖海紀事* [Pacification of the seas]. *Taiwan wenxian congkan* 13, reprint (Taipei: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui [orig. Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi], 1995 [1958]), 43-46, 59-63.

the debate, and it was agreed that Taiwan would be formally annexed as a new territory of the Qing empire. It was in this way that Taiwan entered the sphere of Chinese history.⁵⁹⁶ With the Taiwan question answered, in the winter of 1683 the Qing court dispatched Han imperial commissioner Du Zhen and Manchu minister Siju (Xizhu) to Fujian and Guangdong to inspect the boundary and draw plans for rehabilitating the coast and reopening maritime trade.⁵⁹⁷

Fujian and the southeast coast of China would gradually recover its industries, agricultural yields, and maritime activity in the years and decades that followed, which are beyond the scope of this study. Even Putian, that city so tragically involved in some of the worst maritime atrocities the early-modern world has ever seen, would heal, though the process was slow and laborious. But no amount of healing—not even the miraculous pluck with which Fujianese seafarers picked themselves up by their bootstraps and built a new golden age of trade from 1683-1735 (what Ng Chin-keong has called “The Amoy Network”⁵⁹⁸)—could make us dismiss or forget the harrowing carnage we have seen in the period we have just surveyed. I turn now to some closing thoughts and questions for further exploration.

Pieces of a story

⁵⁹⁶ For a full account of this complex transformation, see Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), also available online at Gutenberg-e: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/andrade/index.html>

⁵⁹⁷ Du Zhen’s detailed survey and rehabilitation plan, which is too complicated for a quoted abstract here, was compiled in his *Yue Min xunshi jilue* 粵閩巡視紀略 (c. 1684), juan 1-3 of which deal with the background and his tour of Guangdong, and juan 4-5 of which follow his journey up the coast of Fujian.

⁵⁹⁸ Chin-Keong Ng, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press and National University of Singapore, 1983).

In this dissertation, I have tried to understand how the maritime society of Fujian transformed into an outlaw frontier, how it generated the possibility of a new kind of seaborne Chinese polity, and how it was finally reshuffled into a provincial formation by a brutal war and the systematic construction and destruction of a coastal frontier. In books as in life, only when one tries to close a chapter does the sinking realization come of how far one has yet to go. To my mind, the hardest questions to answer are ones of simple construction: How powerful was the Chinese state? Was it possible for the state to “reshuffle” a place like Fujian? *Can* a province be reshuffled?

Some questions and their answers are tautological or self-evident. These are not. “Of course,” comes the easy reply, “states do not create society.” Neither culture nor community can be unilaterally legislated into being, even by a world-conquering despot. But that does not stop states from trying, nor does it excuse us from grappling with the drastic consequences of state attempts at social engineering. The late imperial Chinese state, first in Ming terms and then in Qing terms, failed to destroy or to remake the Asian maritime order in its own image, but it contributed greatly to the conditions of war and violence that erupted in the century between the Pirate Wars of the mid-1500s and the Coastal Depopulation a hundred years later.

The state, if we can simplistically presume to know its “mind,” desired an obedient provincial administration that conformed to the governing standards of the empire as a whole. What stood in the way of that intent, in this place called Fujian, was a fiercely independent seafaring people who relied on maritime trade, who had prospered in areas outside of state control, and who had evolved their own institutions of maritime order and violence. If we combine the various plans of action that were attempted by the

Ming-Qing governments into a composite “plot,” some causal and correlative sequences might fit broadly together. In the first phase, the Seaban of the Ming backfired by criminalizing large segments of the seafaring population and binding them to unequal relationships with gentry sponsors. When the smugglers broke free in the second phase (mid-1500s), the Ming government cracked down militarily and helped explode the coast into the Pirate Wars. Militarization of the seas continued in the aftermath of those wars and reared its head again with the rise of seaholder Zheng Zhilong in the third phase (1630s-1640s); Ming attempts to buy him off expanded the seaholder’s power and domain over the coast of Fujian. When the Ming dynasty fell, the entrenched power of the seaholder helped turn the Qing invasion of Fujian into a quagmire that the Qing government tried to simplify with the brutal Coastal Depopulation (fourth phase). The price of this policy was the cession of Fujian to a regional satrap who was literally invested in the depopulation of Fujian. In the fifth phase, the power of Feudatory Geng Jingzhong was destroyed along with the seaholder, and with them the justification for the artificial boundary. Finally, Fujian was restored to a provincial administration, and the coastal frontier was dismantled. Such a five- or six-phase fable might form the basis for a very raw play called *Seaholders Live in Vain*.

And how might those major actors in the play represent themselves to audiences from a different time and place? Perhaps they might impart knowledge about their ways of disciplining *space* as well as disciplining people, their views on politically and socially constructed boundaries. Studying their actions might help answer James Scott’s question about “state projects of legibility and simplification,” and why they were so often

attempted but so seldom successful.⁵⁹⁹ For it is worth asking, after all, how and why different states at different times come to “see like a state,” and to prefer stark lines. It seems to me that one mark of modernity or early modernity is that states come to see a group of people or whole populations as objects of social engineering—this is certainly true for the Nazi and Soviet mass-murder regimes that Timothy Snyder describes so harrowingly in his book, *Bloodlands*,⁶⁰⁰ but perhaps pre-20th-century states that were differently constituted were also capable of historical variations on a theme. One way to patiently decompose the myth of Chinese isolationism and exceptionalism is to integrate China more fully into the global discussions on early-modern economic and state formation.

The study of maritime violence demands that we look at common problems in widely divergent contexts, and I am curious to know if there are comparable cases where states have used massive violence to subordinate coastal communities or cut off autonomous groups at sea. Piracy has, in all states and all societies, prompted some kinds of institutional responses, some public, some private: these can range from naval expeditions to anti-piracy laws to sailing detours or insurance contracts. So too, violence was an accepted and unavoidable fellow-traveler in maritime life; but by any standard, the Coastal Depopulation seems extreme. Apparently, in Ming-Qing China the violence in question was organized and politicized enough to prompt a severe and crushing state response against maritime activity as a whole. Was China aberrant in the scale of its

⁵⁹⁹ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-2.

⁶⁰⁰ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

response to organized seaborne violence? Was China alone in using the tactics of scorched earth and land frontier building to draw a boundary against an outlaw sea?

Moreover, that particular species of savagery in the long seventeenth century and culminating in the Coastal Depopulation seems to have engulfed more than just the Chinese state and its enemies and become a serious social disorder. This raises a question of whether the purveyors of violence in coastal societies, by dint of their ties to an international order that was being hammered out in silver and in blood, were comparably more brutal and competitive than their landbound counterparts. More than a few late-imperial Chinese statesman certainly thought so, and their appeals for a bucolic, anti-commercial Confucian order were prime justifications for prohibitive laws like Ming Seaban and the Qing Coastal Depopulation in the first place. But how much of the destabilization of China in this period was linked to what has been called the “17th-century general crisis” in world history, and does the case of maritime Fujian help add anything to the ongoing debate?

There is no question that in China’s long seventeenth century from 1540-1683, what happened at sea transformed the course of Chinese history back on land—the choices made and the paths not taken—and that coastal residents like the Fujianese paid most dearly of all for the deeds of their most ambitious mariners. But the story of the Zheng sealords and the Coastal Depopulation impacted too the geopolitical configuration of East Asia in the Age of Sail—both with regards to Koxinga’s seizure of Dutch Taiwan and the closure of mainland ports. China’s closure in 1661 and subsequent reopening in 1684 happened to coincide with other major acts of maritime legislation in what turned out to be a protectionist and mercantilist period—examples include the Sakoku (or

“closed door”) policies of Tokugawa Japan, the British Navigation Acts of 1660, and the Dutch East India Company’s decision in 1690 to end direct trade with China.⁶⁰¹ These potential connections or differences are worth further consideration.

Finally, we might ask with an eye on the present, does the sordid history of the Coastal Depopulation of Fujian—a province about 11,000 square miles larger than Portugal—offer any lessons for us as we ponder the attempts of the international community to fight the surge of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia? Is it enough to catch pirates or to attempt to control the landward communities that foster and harbor them, or does history show the explosive dangers of meddling with powers unfamiliar and seas unknown? Does the Ming Seaban hold lessons for America’s “War on Drugs”—a war that, in over 40 years since the founding of the Drug Enforcement Agency, has not only failed to stop narcotic suppliers but has actually contributed to the rise of violent smuggling cartels in countries such as Colombia and Mexico?⁶⁰² Has the militarization of that war against “shifting, contingent, temporal alliances of traffickers” (with thousands of members in an “underground empire” of organized crime and government corruption)⁶⁰³ achieved any tangible result beyond the deaths of 34,000 people in drug-related violence in Mexico in the past four years of government crackdown?⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰¹ Leonard Blusse, “No Boats to China: the Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern of the China Sea Trade, 1635-1690,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30.1 (1996), pp. 51-76.

⁶⁰² David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Howard Campbell, *Drug War Zone: Frontline Dispatches from the Streets of El Paso and Juarez* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

⁶⁰³ Campbell, *Drug War Zone*, 7, 19.

⁶⁰⁴ Ken Ellingwood, “Criticism of Calderon Mounts over Mexico Drug Violence,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 6, 2011). One author even claims that the war with the cartels puts Mexico in grave danger of becoming a “failed state”—see George W. Grayson, *Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010), chapter 10.

These questions, past and present, may elude satisfactory answers for some time yet, but I hope that this thesis, incidental and imperfect as it is, has helped add a piece of China's maritime history to our quest for an integrated understanding of the world's oceanic heritage. More and better research, more and better answers will expand our horizons. *Plus Ultra*.

Epilogue

Fujian, the Other China

When I first began this project and told people that I wanted to study Chinese maritime history, specifically Fujian province, I often received the quizzical reply, "Why Fujian? Why not Guangdong?" Although I did not always have an answer, I took not umbrage, but reflection, as the heart of this question, for it is a good question. (Is there not a dark little corner in any historian's heart that echoes the words: why am I doing this? And: is this significant?) The assumption behind this well-meaning query was, of course, that Guangdong province had always been the dominant force in Chinese maritime activity, and that it therefore had more sources and more substance and would act as a better representative of Chinese maritime history as a whole.

But Guangdong cannot act as a stand-in for the men and women who lived, died, and cried in these pages. It cannot. The dominance of Guangdong and the Canton System in pre-Opium War history and in our classroom teaching, however, does usefully point to one reason for our tendency to relegate Fujianese smuggler-seamen to historical

oblivion: namely, state favoritism. In the Ming period, due to the Seaban, private trade was forbidden, and Canton (Guangzhou) was designated the official port for the tribute trade; Canton could thus “sit back” and collect the profits of a trade that was denied to others. Generations of seamen from Fujian and Zhejiang broke the law and carved their names in silver and blood before private trade was opened again in 1567. That trade would fall into the hands of one of the wildest characters of that corrupt and contentious world: a seafarer, the product of years of suppression, militarization of trading organizations, and the new realities of the international scene.

Zheng Zhilong and his progeny sought to found a kingdom, and succeeded in founding none, but Chinese maritime history and policy is permeated with their memory. Fifteen years of warfare, followed by twenty years of coastal depopulation, ended with a reopened but carefully monitored trading system and an expanded empire that included Taiwan for the first time in Chinese history. These new conditions, and Fujianese entrepreneurial activity, gave rise to the “Amoy Network” that dominated Chinese coastal transshipping and the Nanyang trade with Southeast Asia for at least fifty years.⁶⁰⁵ In 1757, due to problems with Catholic missionaries, disruptive influences from European (especially British) traders, and an upsurge in piracy, that trading system was restricted once again to Canton. Local Cantonese merchants, who wanted to monopolize the trade for themselves, supported the restriction.⁶⁰⁶

This brings us to some ways that the past connects with the present and open up further questions. First, the state trade restriction to Canton in 1757 gave Canton

⁶⁰⁵ Chin-Keong Ng, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press and National University of Singapore, 1983).

⁶⁰⁶ Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 73.

centrality by fiat as *the* port of foreign trade in China, but it did not stop Fujianese merchants from taking their share. Several of the top companies of the Cohong (the guild of 13 companies that dominated Chinese foreign trade) were led by Fujianese merchants whose families had migrated from Quanzhou, Fujian to Canton in the early Kangxi years (1660s-1680s, perhaps to escape the Coastal Depopulation). The richest of them, Wu Bingjian (1769-1843), called Howqua by Western traders, was one of the world's wealthiest men in the early 19th century. Despite state policy that prevented them from trading directly from Fujianese ports, many enterprising Fujianese merchants, realizing that the British would *kill* for a cup of tea, built transport and cabotage services to ensure a steady supply of Fukien tea to their addicted foreign trading partners. (A number of these Fukien tea chests would end up being thrown into Boston harbor by anti-monopoly rebels dressed like American Indians in 1773. Two years later, on an April day at dawn, in a corner of one of the American maritime colonies, some “embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world.”⁶⁰⁷)

Fujian's exclusion from the Canton System is paralleled in today's China by economic policies that continue to put Canton and Shanghai at the center. After the Communist takeover in 1949, Fujian reverted to a frontier state as the de facto front line of battle with Nationalist-controlled Taiwan. The central government of the People's Republic of China placed little investment in Fujianese infrastructure (since Fujian would become rubble anyway under Nationalist guns or those of the U.S. Seventh Fleet) and sought to build industries far inland as a “Third Front.” Fujian was excluded from the First Five-Year Plan, and in the second Plan, Fujian was allowed to build one steelwork

⁶⁰⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Concord Hymn” (1836).

complex that consisted of a few former Shanghai steel factories imported (along with imported Shanghai workers) into Sanming City, a remote region of Fujian over a hundred miles from the coast. Even when the Deng Xiaoping Reforms (*gaige kaifang*) entered full swing in the 1990s, the showcase capitals of commerce were Shenzhen (in Guangdong) and Shanghai, where the government pumped billions of dollars and attracted billions more in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Fujian was left to fend for itself. This contributed to the pervasive feeling among Fujianese of all walks of life with whom I have spoken: that Fujian's achievements since the 1980s have been entirely their own, and that they owe little or nothing to the central government.

Local pride in Xiamen (Koxinga's Amoy) is particularly strong, and is especially at odds with the official Beijing-Shanghai-Shenzhen version of China's "economic miracle." When I arrived there in 2007 to begin research, I found a city where business went on briskly as usual, but where all around could be heard mutterings about the recent case of one Lai Changxing, the most famous native son. "When Boss Lai was here, our economy was even better," one taxi driver said to me as he pointed to the seaport, which he proudly stated was *not* built by outside money. "Gas was cheaper, food was cheaper, and people had good work." One government employee told me, "As a government cadre, I have to say that Lai Changxing is a criminal and a bad element. But as a southern Fujianese (Minnanren) and Xiamen resident, I would say that he is a hero to many people here." Or, as one former police lieutenant in Xiamen whispered to

journalist Hannah Beech, “Honestly, I think he did more for this city than the government ever did.”⁶⁰⁸

Who was Lai Changxing? They were astounded that I had no idea. I said abashedly that I was a historian studying seamen. “Pay attention, pay attention,” I was told, and so I paid attention. Lai was the man whose name was tangentially mentioned in Chinese newspapers but was never clearly identified. He was the “dust emperor,” the ruler without a throne. He was someone whom my favorite noodle shop owner (an old man originally from Qinghai province, thousands of miles from Xiamen) described succinctly as “a chief” (*touling*). He was the one whom journalist Oliver August called “China’s most wanted man.” To quote the Fujian Public Security Bureau’s internal proclamation number 581: “He must be found. All policemen are mobilized to block up land and sea. . . . He is doomed to destruction. The sword of law is pointing at Lai.”⁶⁰⁹ He had been the richest man in the province, he had owned billions of dollars of international shipping, he had bought the police force new phones and motorcycles, he had paid off the customs officials, he had....

The fact was, Lai was a smuggler baron, a rags-to-riches miracle story. Cars, oil, tanks, steel, televisions—anything that could be carried on his fleet of tankers and tugboats was his business. Lai had availed himself of a system in which trade, corruption, and illegality were based on arbitrary control—a fact of life in contemporary China as it was a fact of life in the Ming dynasty during the Seaban. Lai was illiterate, barely able to write his own name, and yet he had learned to navigate a system of immense complexity:

⁶⁰⁸ Hannah Beech, “Smuggler’s Blues,” *Time* (Oct. 14, 2002). Available at *Time* online: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2056114,00.html>

⁶⁰⁹ Oliver August, *Inside the Red Mansion: On the Trail of China’s Most Wanted Man* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 180.

a system that included Chinese national and provincial restrictions, international tariffs and quotas, and much local graft to grease the mechanism. At the peak of his power, Lai built a replica of the Forbidden City north of Xiamen (and so, if you watch Chinese historical dramas, you are likely seeing Lai's reconstruction in Fujian and not the real imperial palace); and he had planned to build the tallest building in Xiamen, an 88-story tower, just as Zheng Zhilong had built himself a castle at Anhai. But it was not to be. When Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji brought the central government apparatus against Lai Changxing, swooped down on Xiamen, and arrested over a thousand of his associates in 1999, the game was up. For months, despite frozen assets, revoked passports, and a nationwide manhunt on land and sea, Lai vanished without a trace. Then he turned up in Vancouver, Canada, where he was eventually given asylum, for he would have faced certain death back in China.⁶¹⁰ He lives there quietly today. He is pondering a career in real estate.

Sadly but truly, Fujian enjoys as wicked a reputation today as she did in Ming times. Fujian's most agile representatives at home and abroad are her smugglers and "snakeheads": traffickers of illegal emigrants.⁶¹¹ Their activity is undeniable, under the cover, and unsanctioned; but that is precisely the point. The laws were never made to suit the realities of Fujian or her people. Said one local Amoy employee of the *People's Daily*, the state newspaper: "Only the government thinks smuggling is stealing. The rest

⁶¹⁰ "If Lai Changxing were executed three times over, it would not be too much," Premier Zhu Rongji stated in October 2000. Hannah Beech, "Smuggler's Blues," *Time* (Oct. 14, 2002).

⁶¹¹ See, for example, Mary Angela Lagdameo, "Human Smuggling From Fujian To New York" (MA thesis: University of Southern California, 2008); and David Holley, "China's Smuggling Heartland: Fujian Province is Home to Many Emigrants Who Try to Sneak into America by Sea," *LA Times* (June 21, 1993), available online: http://articles.latimes.com/print/1993-06-21/news/mn-5464_1_fujian-province.

of us just think it's the way business is done in Fujian province."⁶¹² Maybe it is just a historian's fancy, but I like to think that as Premier Zhu Rongji watched Lai slip through his fingers in the year 2000, he cast his mind back for a second to Zhu Wan, the fearless pirate hunter of 1549, with whom he shared a surname.

At a bail hearing during Lai Changxing's Canadian immigration proceedings in 2005, the judge sternly admonished Lai, "What we don't want to see is any more testing of the water." Lai smiled and said, "I never will."⁶¹³ Whatever the truth of those words, we can at least glimpse the dark humor of history behind that enigmatic smile.

Scratches on our minds

Was Lai Changxing, then, a modern-day seafarer? Was he a natural descendant of Zheng Zhilong or his famous son Koxinga? Not quite; but this did not stop people from comparing him with a man who had been born over 300 years earlier, across the sea.

Oliver August writes: "They speculated that Lai—and hence all of them—were descendants of Koxinga. 'Changxing's face looks almost like that of Koxinga,' said an uncle during the lunch I had in Shaocuo. 'No beard though.' [I replied.] 'No. But that doesn't matter. They have the same quality.' He used the word *suzhi* for quality. It translated variously as culture or character or manners. It described a man's essence."⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Hannah Beech, "Smuggler's Blues," *Time* (Oct. 14, 2002). Compare the words of Adam Smith, who defines a smuggler as "a person who, though no doubt highly blamable for violating the laws of his country, is frequently incapable of violating those of natural justice, and would have been, in every respect, an excellent citizen had not the laws of his country made that a crime which nature never meant to be so." (*The Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Chapter 2).

⁶¹³ August, *Inside the Red Mansion*, 264.

⁶¹⁴ August, *Inside the Red Mansion*, 128-129.

Lai himself did not object to the comparison. Shortly before he fled into hiding from the Chinese police, he told his family to be strong and “believe in Coxinga’s just cause.”⁶¹⁵

Despite Lai’s yearnings to identify himself as a direct descendant of the great sealords of yore, however, he was not that. He was more directly the heir of the nearly 30 years of closure that we know as the Mao Years (1949-1976), just as Baldy Li or Zheng Zhilong were bastard children of the Ming Seaban rather than scions of Admiral Zheng He. The direct link between the Ming-Qing days of freewheeling maritime dealing and the days of Lai’s smuggling was broken by ruptures like the Coastal Depopulation, which laid the basis for new systems and historical changes. Centuries of maritime activity and accretion lay between the Zheng sealords and Lai; those centuries remain to be explored.

The purported link between the Coastal Depopulation and the Opium War is a historiographical one rather than an organic connection. Historians of China pointed to the extreme Ming and Qing maritime laws as the cause of (or at least a sign of) a particular Chinese orientation against the sea, and extrapolate from it a host of concepts about Chinese institutional insularity and the “anti-seafaring tradition of the Chinese heartland.”⁶¹⁶ The great scholar Xie Guozhen wrote his seminal study of the Coastal Depopulation principally to expose how the Manchu Qing invaders had crushed China’s native maritime potential—and, writing in the 1930s (a time of China’s abject humiliation at the feet of Japanese imperialism), no doubt he held Ming-Qing history as a

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁶¹⁶ See John K. Fairbank, “Maritime and Continental in China’s History,” in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 12, no. 1: Republican China, 1912-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 10-18. Fairbank believed in particular that the Manchus, carrying “the peripheral culture of Inner Asian tribal nomadism and semi-nomadism,” reinforced this anti-maritime tradition that they had inherited from the Ming.

mirror against China's weakness in his time.⁶¹⁷ Jane Leonard locates the roots of Qing anti-maritime suspicion in the forty years of fierce resistance to their conquest of the coast. "These circumstances," she writes, "tended to obscure the function of the coastal frontier as a barrier between China and the foreign maritime world and to overshadow the question of barbarian control and foreign relations. The evolution of Ch'ing coastal policy in this way increased the court's lack of contact with the maritime world, making this region a virtual unknown to the Chinese by the early nineteenth century."⁶¹⁸ The Opium War in this context appears as the hammer that broke down the heavily barricaded Chinese door.

We must beware, however, of too smoothly applying the teleology of the Opium War to early-modern China as a whole. As Madeleine Zelin warns us, "As students of modern China, we must not take the nineteenth century as our model of the possibilities for change in the 'late-imperial state.' The nineteenth century, with its increasing regionalism, domestic rebellion, and weakened state control over society and the bureaucracy, represents the culmination of an administrative cycle that began in the late Ming."⁶¹⁹ These words remind us that we must go back and study the creativities and contingencies of the 16th and 17th centuries with ever greater care and specificity. Even the much maligned Seaban and the Coastal Depopulation were historically constructed and contingent policies: they were not the ironclad prophecies of China's later subjugation in the 19th century.

⁶¹⁷ Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, "Qingchu dongnan yanhai qianjie kao" 清初東南沿海遷界考 [A study on the early Qing coastal evacuation of southeast China], Appendix 2 in *Ming Qing zhi ji dangshe yundong kao* 明清之際黨社運動考 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934).

⁶¹⁸ Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, 65.

⁶¹⁹ Madeleine Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth Century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 308.

In spite of the bans, massacres, and dislocations, Chinese merchants and sailors continued to trade, mix, sail, and change the material culture of East and Southeast Asia as they had done for centuries. They carried out such activities under new and different institutional contexts, but they still carried them out. But after the 17th century such trades were carried within states and between states, in a world more firmly populated by centralized states; and one amongst all those centralized states dominated the East Asian massif: the mighty and proud empire of Qing China. Gone were the possibilities of seaford domains, maritime empires, and competing Chinese polities.

A separate peace had been achieved on the Ming and Qing frontiers because brutally effective Maginot Lines had been built and cast away centuries before British ships came bearing opium and the “White Man’s Burden.” To the north, the Ming Great Wall became irrelevant as the Manchus successfully enclosed and disciplined the Mongol, Tungusic, and Turkic tribes as loyal Qing subjects. To the south, the coastal wall was dismantled as the seafords threw away their crowns and shaved their hair. As time passed them by, such walls became increasingly static and ahistorical, and more timelessly “Chinese.”⁶²⁰ Things could have happened differently, very differently, but the triumph of the continental state over the seafords made the march of Chinese isolationism seem as inevitable as the march of Western progress.

The fluid and freewheeling water world in which sailors like Baldy Li and Zheng Zhilong had cast their lots and built their dreams conveniently dissipated into myths and

⁶²⁰ On the historical and ahistorical problems of the Great Wall, see Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

local annals. Taiwan became the frontier, not coastal Fujian⁶²¹; and in time, as the Qing Empire graduated from splendor to senility to becoming the “Sick Man of Asia,” the island too would become a province. In 1895, a mere decade after it had gained provincial status, Taiwan would be lost to the rising Empire of Japan.

In the 19th century, historical humiliations from the Opium War to the Treaty of Shimonoseki seemed to prove to both foreign drug-and-Bible peddlers and indignant Chinese nationalists that the late imperial Chinese state was safely and stupidly landbound. The recent rediscovery of the Zheng He voyages has, it is true, created quite a stir, and Chinese communities from Fujian to Singapore (in 2005, Singapore threw a huge gala around the 600th anniversary of Zheng He’s maiden voyage) revel in the fanfare about China’s early-modern precocious technical achievements. But all in all the voyages of 1405-1433 and the brief flirtations of the sealords seemed but spots in the isolationist sun of the Ming and the Qing. The Seaban and the Coastal Depopulation (just like the Great Wall of China) lost their historical specificity and have easily glommed and merged, amoeba-like, into a categorical imperative called Chinese mentality. We are still a long way from an integrated history of maritime East Asia that can disentangle policy and reality, despite the blood traces left by sailors and sealords in sources scattered from Amoy to Nagasaki, Taipei to Shanghai. Until relatively recently, the search for detailed

⁶²¹ See the fine thesis of Josephine Meihui Tiampo Khu on the Qing *banbing* system and Taiwan garrisons: “The Making of a Frontier: The Qing Military in Taiwan, 1684-1783” (Ph.D. thesis: Columbia University, 2001).

local histories of the practices and malpractices of Chinese maritime policies paled against the explanatory staying power of insular Chinese mentality.⁶²²

The ambiguities melted away. The organized and politicized maritime prowess of the Fujianese, which had inspired such respect and hatred from Dutch captains and Jesuit priests in the days of Nicholas Iquan, became quaint historical artifacts. Sealords could only survive and thrive in an inter-state environment that was rapidly changing in the early modern period. Born in the frontiers of the 17th century, they would die in those frontiers, and never re-center their world or its mainstream narrative. The Manchus, whether they were afraid of water or not, would not tolerate rival claimants to the right of frontier rulership. The same economic and historical forces that had generated Nurhaci and Zheng Zhilong (the khan and the sealord) locked them and their descendants in a struggle that would elevate the one and consign the other to moldering reminiscence.

It became easy for commentators to speak of an “open” China and a “closed” China—as if there were only two kinds—instead of messy and multiple Chinas or quasi-states that had forcibly absorbed or not absorbed their maritime peoples, or further to conceive of an imperial state formation that had historically made and then unmade a maritime frontier and spilled so much blood to integrate a single province. It became easy for historians (as for the British officers who bombarded the Bogue with impunity in 1841) to project a simple and seemingly unshakeable determinism to the maritime history of China: that it was always peripheral to the landlocked civilization of the Chinese, and that China’s ships and seamen had always been inferior, her docks empty, her civilization

⁶²² Laura Hostetler wrote her excellent book *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago University Press, 2005) to take issue with “the still too prevalent myths of Chinese isolationism and Chinese exceptionalism” (xvii). The myths remain prevalent.

having slammed the door on early modernity. The Great Enterprise was finished. The sealords had lived in vain.

Appendix I

Table A-1: List of Years, Followers, Hometowns and Bases of Seamen, 1526-1661

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
1526	Deng Liao 邓燎	Deng Liao 邓燎	Fujian 福建 province	Shuangyu 双屿 in Zhoushan 舟山 [Zhejiang province] (1526)
1530-1548	Xu Brothers 许氏兄弟	Xu Er 许二 (A.K.A. Xu Dong 许栋, leader, killed by the Ming in 1548 or by the Japanese in 1555)	Huizhou 徽州, [Anhui 安徽 province]	Shuangyu 双屿 (1530-)
		Xu Yi 许一 (A.K.A. Xu Song 许松, captured by government in 1545)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Xu San 许三 (A.K.A. Xu Nan 许楠, killed by government in 1545)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Xu Xin 许梓	Huizhou 徽州	
		Baldy Li (Li Guangtou) 李光头 (merged with Xu Dong in 1543, captured by government in 1549)	Fujian 福建 province	
		Lin Jian 林剪 (joined in 1547)	Pahang, Malaysia	
		Lin Bichuan 林碧川	Huizhou 徽州	
		Wang Zhi 王直 (treasurer of Xu's fleet, joined in 1547)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Zhu Lianggui 祝良贵 (captured in 1548)	??	
		Xu Liu 许六 (captured by government in 1548)	??	
		Yao Dazong 姚大总 (captured by government in 1548)	??	
		Xu Dong 许栋 [NB: same name, but different from the Xu Dong above] (killed by Xu Chaoguang 许朝光 in 1558)	Raoping 饶平, [Guangdong province]	

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Gu Liangyu 顾良玉 (gentry partner)	??	
		Liu Qishisi 刘奇十四 (gentry partner)	??	
		Lin Xiyuan 林希元 (former official and gentry partner)	Longxi 龙溪 in Taizhou 台州 [Zhejiang province]	
		Xu Fu 许福 (gentry partner)	Tong'an 同安 in Amoy 厦门 [Fujian province]	
		Xie Clan 谢氏家族 (gentry partner)	Yuyao 余姚 in Ningbo 宁波 [Zhejiang province]	
1538-1542	Jinzi Lao 金子老 (A.K.A. Jinzhi Lao 金纸老)	Jinzi Lao 金子老	??	Shuangyu 双屿 (1539-)
		Baldy Li (Guangtou) 李光头 (joined in 1540)	Fujian	
		Portuguese (partnered with 金子老 since 1539)		Shuangyu 双屿 (1539-)
1539-	Li Guangtou 李光头	李光头 (succeeded Jinzi Lao 金子老 as the leader in 1542, and joined Xu Dong 许栋 in 1543)	??	Shuangyu 双屿 (1539-)
154?-1565	Lin Guoxian 林国显	Lin Guoxian 林国显 (killed by government in 1565)	Raoping 饶平 in Chaozhou 潮州 [Guangdong province]	Guangyang 广洋 [Guangdong province]; Japan; Nan'ao 南澳 island in Shantou 汕头 [Guangdong province]; Meiling 梅岭 in Zhao'an in Zhangzhou 漳州 [Fujian province]

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Former followers of Li Dayong 李大用	Raoping 饶平	
		Shen Men 沈门 (partnered within Guoxian 林国显)	??	Guangyang 广洋
		Xu Weixue 徐惟学 (A.K.A. Xu Bixi 徐碧溪, Lin Guoxian 林国显's adopted son)	Shexian 歙县 in Huizhou 徽州 [Anhui province]	Huangyan Ao 黄岩澳 [Zhejiang province]
		Li Feng 林凤 (Lin Guoxian 林国显's nephew)	Raoping 饶平, [Guangdong province]	
		Lin Fengyang 林逢阳 (Lin Guoxian 林国显's clan grandchild 族孙)	??	
		Wu Ping 吴平 (Lin Guoxian 林国显's nephew-in-law)	Sidu 四都 in Zhao'an 诏安 [Fujian province]	
1540-1557	Wang Zhi 王直	Wang Zhi 王直 (leader, surrendered to government in 1557, executed in 1559)	Shexian 歙县	Shuangyu 双屿 (1540-1548); Liegang 列港 in Zhoushan 舟山 [Zhejiang province] (1548-1551), Matsuura [Japan] (1551-1552), Zhelin 柘林 in Shanghai 上海 [Zhejiang province] (1554); Gotō 五岛 [Japan] (1555-1556); Cen'gang 岑港 in Zhoushan 舟山 [Zhejiang province] (1557)
		Ye Zongman 叶宗满 (friend of Wang Zhi 王直 in his early years, exiled by government in 1557)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Xu Weixuan 徐惟学 (friend of Wang Zhi in his early years, uncle of 徐海)	Huizhou 徽州	Huangyan Ao 黄岩澳
		Xie Lao 谢老 (A.K.A. Xie He 谢和, friend of	Zhangzhou 漳州	Wuyu 浯屿 in Xiamen 厦门 [Fujian

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Wang Zhi in his early years)	[Fujian province]	province]
		Fang Tingzhu 方廷助(friend of Wang Zhi in his early years)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Former followers of Lu Qi 卢七(killed and merged by Wang Zhi in 1550)	??	
		Former followers of Chen Sipan 陈思盼(A.K.A. Chen Si 陈四, Chen was killed and merged in 1551 by Wang Zhi)	??	
		Mao Haifeng 毛海峰(Wang Zhi's adopted son, joined in 1551, captured by government in 1559)	Jinxian 歙县 in Ningbo 宁波[Zhejiang province]	
		Xu Yuanliang 徐元亮(joined in 1551)	Jinxian 歙县	
		Xu Hai 徐海(broke off with Wang in 1552)	Shexian 歙县	
		Chen Dong 陈东		
		Ye Ma 叶麻 (A.K.A. Ye Ming 叶明)	Tongxiang 桐乡 in Jiaxing 嘉兴[Zhejiang province]	
		Wang Ruxian 王汝贤 (Wang's nephew, exiled by government in 1551)	Huizhou 徽州	
		Wang Ao 王澳(Wang's adopted son, rebelled against government after Wang Zhi's death)	Cen'gang 岑港	
		Hong Dizhen 洪迪珍	Zhangzhou 漳州	
		Japanese (倭门多郎, 倭门次郎, 倭门四助, and 倭门四郎)	??	
		Feng Shu 冯淑(merchant)	??	
		Lin Xiang 林珣 (A.K.A. Lin Lanshi 林烂四, maritime merchant, had business with Wang Zhi)	??	

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		in 1443-1446)		
		Cai Demei柴德美(gentry, partnered with Wang Zhi in 1551)	Cixi慈溪 in Ningbo 宁波 [Zhejiang province]	
		Zhang Zhu张珠(gentry partner, uncle of Ningbo official Zhang Dexi张德熹)	??	
		Lin Xiyuan林希元(gentry partner)	Longxi龙溪	
		Xu Fu许福(gentry partner)	Tong'an同安	
		The Xie Clan 谢氏家族(gentry partner窝主)	Yu Yao余姚	
1544	Li Dayong李大用	Li Dayong李大用(leader, whose whole fleet destroyed by storm in 1544)	Raoping 饶平	Guangyang 广洋
		Lin Guoxian林国显(one of the two survivors of the 1544 tragedy)	Raoping 饶平	
		Shen Men沈门(one the two survivors in the 1544 tragedy)	??	
		Tian Langguang田浪广	??	
1547-1562	Zhang Lian张琏	Zhang Lian张琏(leader, surrendered to the government and was executed in 1562)	Raoping 饶平	
		Lin Chaoxi林朝曦 (captured by government)	Chengxiang程乡 in Chaozhou潮州 [Guangdong province]	
		Xiao Xuefeng萧雪峰(A.K.A. Xiao Wan萧晚, captured by government)	Dapu大埔 in 嘉义 Jiayi[Taiwan]	
		Ye Huai叶槐(captured by government)	??	
		Luo Pao罗袍	??	

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Zhang Gongyou张公佑	Dapu大埔	
		Lai Ci赖赐	??	
		Bai Tu白兔	??	
		Li Dongjin李东津	??	
		Guo Yujing郭玉镜(betrayed Zhang in 1562)	??	
1549-1559	Hong Dizhen洪迪珍	Hong Dizhen洪迪珍	Zhangzhou漳州	Wuyu梧屿[(1555-1558), Yuegang月港 in Zhangzhou漳州 [Fujian province](1558), Haitanshan海坛山 in Pingtan平潭 in Putian莆田[Fujian province]
		Former followers of Wang Zhi王直	Huizhou徽州	
		Xie Lao谢老(partnered in 1558)	Zhangzhou漳州	
1550	Lu Qi卢七	Lu Qi卢七(killed and merged by Wang Zhi王直 in 1550)		Majiang马迹港 in 溧泗 in Zhoushan舟山[Zhejiang province]
1551	Chen Sipan陈思盼(A.K.A.Chen Si陈四)	Chen Sipan陈思盼(was killed and his followers were absorbed in 1551 by Wang Zhi王直)	Henggang横港 in Jiaxing嘉兴[Zhejiang province]	
1551-1554	He Yaba何亚八	He Yaba何亚八(killed in 1554)	Dongguang东莞 [Guangdong province]	
		Zheng Zongxing郑宗兴(joined before 1551, killed in 1554/55)	??	Zhelin柘林; Guanghai广海 in Taishan台山 in Jiangmen 江门 [Guangdong province](1554)

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Chen Shijie陈时杰(killed in 1554/55)	??	
		Shen Lao沈老	??	
		Wang Ming王明	??	
		Wang Zhi王直	Huizhou徽州	
		Xu Quan徐铨(killed in 1554/55)	??	
		Fang Wu方武(killed in 1554/55)	??	
		Xu Weixue徐惟学(friend of 何亚八 in his early years, uncle of 徐海)	Shexian 歙县	Huangyan'ao黄岩澳
1552-1555	Lin Bichuan林碧川	Lin Bichuan林碧川(co-leader)	Huizhou徽州	杨哥 [Japan](1552-1555); Dongshan 东山 in Fuzhou福州[Fujian province](1552); Zhelin 柘林 1553-1555)
		Deng Wenjun邓文俊(co-leader)	??	
		Shen Nanshan沈南山(co-leader)	Zhangzhou漳州 [Fujian province]	
1552-1556	Xu Hai徐海(Xu Weixue徐惟学's nephew)	Xu Hai徐海(leader)	Shexian 歙县	Liegang列港[Zhejiang province](1552); Zhelin柘林 (1554-556); Taozhai陶宅 in Qingcun青村 in Fengxian 奉贤[Shanghai上 海](1555); Zhapu乍浦 in Pinghu 平湖 in Jiaxing嘉兴[Zhejiang province](1556)
		Xu Hong徐洪(Xu Hai徐海's brother, joined)	Shexian 歙县	
		Ye Ma叶麻(joined in 1554, was surrendered to		

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		the government by 徐海Xu Hai in 1556)		
		Chen Dong陈东(former secretary to the brother of the Daimyo of Matsuura, joined Xu Hai徐海 in 1554, was surrendered to the government by Xu Hai in 1556)	??	
		Hong Donggang洪东冈	??	
		Huang Kan黄侃	??	
		Wang Yaliu王亚六	??	
1553-1554	Xiao Xian萧显	Xiao Xian萧显	South part of Zhili 直隶 province	Chongming Island崇明岛[Shanghai]
1555-1561	Xie Lao谢老	Xie Lao谢老	Zhangzhou漳州 [Fujian province]	Goto 五島 [Japan](before 1557)
		Xu Xichi许西池(partnered with Xie Lao谢老 in 1557)	??	
		Hong Dizhen洪迪珍 (partnered with Xie Lao谢老 in 1558)	Zhangzhou漳州	
1557-1564	Zhang Wei张维	Zhang Wei张维(leader, executed by the Ming government in 1664)	Jiudu九都 in Longxi 龙溪 in Taizhou台州 [Zhejiang province]	
		The twenty four “generals”二十四将	??	
1558-1559	Yan Shanlao严山老	Yan Shanlao严山老(captured by the government in 1559)	??	Yuegang月港

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
1558-1563	Xu Xichi许西池 A.K.A. Xu Chaoguang许朝 光 or Xu Lao许 老	Xu Xichi许西池 (leader, killed in 1563 by his subordinate Mo Yingfu莫应夫)	??	Nan'ao Island南澳岛; Piwang village 辟望村 in Haiyang海阳 in Chaouzhou潮州 [Guangdong province] (1558); Yuegang月港 (1558-1560)
		Former followers of Xu Dong许栋(killed in 1558 by Xu Xichi许西池)	Huanggang黄冈 in Raoping饶平	
		Xie Lao谢老 (partnered with Xu Xichi许西池 in 1557)	Zhangzhou漳州	Wuyu浯屿
1559-1566	Wu Ping吴平	吴平(leader, defeated and went MIA)	Sidu四都 in 诏安 Zhao'an in Zhangzhou漳州	Nan'ao island南澳岛; Wu Yu 浯屿; Meiling梅岭[1564]
		Xu Xichi 许西池(conceded to Wu Ping吴平)	??	
		Lin Daoqian林道乾(conceded to Wu Ping吴平)	Huilai惠来 in Shantou汕头[Guangdong province]	
		Zeng Yiben曾一本(conceded to Wu Ping吴平)	诏安 Zhao'an	
1564-1574	Lin Daoqian林道 乾	Lin Daoqian林道乾(leader, defeated in 1581)	Huilai惠来	Nan'ao island南澳岛[1566]; Beigang北港 in Yunlin雲林 [Taiwan台湾]; Ddaguzai gang打鼓仔港 in Gaoxiong高雄 [Taiwan](1567); Wanggang魷港 in Jiayi嘉义[Taiwan台湾]; Xidong village溪东寨 in Chenghai澄海in

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
				Chaozhou潮州[Guangdong] (1568); Xiawei village 下尾村 in Chaoyang 潮阳 in Chaozhou潮州[Guangdong] (1569-)
		Lin Mao林茂(Lin Daoqian林道乾's nephew) Yang Si杨四(local leader of Combidian, partnered with Lin Daoqian林道乾 in 1574)	?? Chenghai澄海	
		Zhu Liangbao诸良宝(close ally to Lin Daoqian 林道乾)	Chenghai澄海	Nanyang village 南洋寨城 in Suwan 苏湾 in Chenghai澄海 in Chaozhou 潮州[Guangdong]
1567- 1569	Zeng Yiben曾一本 本	Zeng Yiben曾一本(leader, defeated and killed in 1569) former followers of Wu Ping吴平	Zhao'an诏安 ??	
1568(b efore)- 1576	Lin Feng林凤 A.K.A. Limahong	Lin Feng林凤(leader)	Raoping饶平	Shenquan神泉 in Huilai惠来 in Shantou 汕头[Guangdong province] (1568); Chaozhou潮州(1573- 1574,1575); Philippine (1574-1575 Nanyang village 南洋寨城
		Zhu Liangbao诸良宝(partnered with Lin Feng 林 凤 after Lin Daoqian's 林道乾 defeat)	Chenghai澄海	
1569	Xu Rui 许瑞	former followers of Zeng Yiben 曾一本	??	
157?- 1574	Zhu Liangbao诸 良宝	Zhu Liangbao诸良宝(committed suicide during the wars with the government)	Chenghai澄海	Nanyang village 南洋寨城

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
	A.K.A. 朱良宝			
		Lin Daoqian 林道乾 (close ally to Zhu Liangbao 诸良宝)	Huilai 惠来	
		Lin Feng 林凤	Raoping 饶平	
		Wei Chaoyi 魏朝义 (partnered with Zhu Liangbao 诸良宝)	??	Dajiajin village 大家井村 in Chaozhou 潮州 [Guangdong province]
		Mo Yingfu 莫应敷 (partnered with Zhu Liangbao 诸良宝)	??	东湖寨 in Chaozhou 潮州 [Guangdong province]
1605-1625	Li Dan 李旦 A.K.A. “?” Captain China	Li Dan 李旦 (leader)	Quanzhou 泉州 [Fujian province]	Hirado 平戸 in Nagasaki 长崎 [Japan]
		Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙	Anping 安平 in Quanzhou 泉州	
1605-1625	Yan Siqui 颜思齐	Yan Siqui 颜思齐 (leader, died of illness in 1625)	Haicheng 海澄 in Zhangzhou 漳州	Hirado 平戸; Beigang 北港
		Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙	Anping 安平 in Quanzhou 泉州	
		Yang Tiansheng 杨天生 (killed by Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 in 1629)	??	
		Chen Zhongji 陈衷纪 (killed by Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 in 1629)	??	
		Chen De 陈德	??	

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
1620-1629	Zhu Cailao 诸綵老	Zhu Cailao 诸綵老 (defeated by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙 in 1629)	??	Chaozhou 潮州
16??-1629	Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 A.K.A. Quitsick	Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 (partnered with Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙 in 1628 and broke off the same year; was defeated and killed by Zheng Zhilong in 1629) Chen Shengning 陈盛宁	Huian 惠安 in Quanzhou 泉州 [Fujian province]	
		Zhou San 周三	??	
		Zhong Liu 钟六 (joined in 1628, betrayed in 1629)	??	
16??-1635	Liu Xiang 刘香 A.K.A. Janglau, Jan Glaew	Liu Xiang 刘香 (defeated in 1635 by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙)	Haicheng 海澄	Jieshi 碣石 in Lufeng 陆丰 in Shanwei 汕尾 [Guangdong province]; 南澳 Nan'ao
1625-1661	Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙 A.K.A. Nicolas Iquan	Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙	Anping 安平	
		Yang Liu 杨六 (betrayed in 1626, defeated and killed in 1629 by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙)	??	
		Yang Qi 杨七 (betrayed in 1626, defeated and killed in 1629 by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙)	??	
		Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 (captured and killed by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙 in 1629)	??	
		Zhu Cailao 诸綵老 (defeated by Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙 in 1629)	Chaozhou 潮州	

TIME	GROUP	MEMBERS	HOMETOWNS	BASES
		Zhong Bin钟六/钟斌(partnered with Zheng Zhilong郑芝龙to defeat Li Kuiqi李魁奇, but broke off in 1630, was defeated by Zheng in 1631, and then drowned himself in the ocean)	??	
		Followers of Liu Xiang刘香 (defeated in 1635 by Zheng Zhilong郑芝龙)	Haicheng海澄	Jieshi礁石 in Lufeng 陆丰 in Shanwei汕尾[Guangdong province]; 南澳Nan'ao
		Yang Tiansheng杨天生 (killed by Li Kuiqi李魁奇 in 1629)	??	
		Chen Zhongji陈衷纪 (killed by Li Kuiqi李魁奇 in 1629)	??	
		Zheng Zhihu郑芝虎 (killed in battle with Liu Xiang刘香 in 1633)	Anping安平	
		Zheng Zhigu郑芝鹄 (killed in battle with Liu Xiang刘香 in 1633)	Anping安平	
		Xiong Wencan熊文灿	??	
		Cao Lütai曹履泰 (magistrate of Tong'an County, Fujian, who arranged the award of an official Ming office to Zheng Zhilong)		

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Table A-2: List of Ming-Ryukyū Tributary Visits during the Ming Dynasty

Ming official ships → Ryukyū

1404 永乐二年	1415 永乐十三年
1425 洪熙元年	1442 正德四年
1447 正德十二年	1451 景泰二年
1457 天顺元年	1462 天顺六年
1471 成化七年	1478 成化十四年
1532 嘉靖十一年	1560 嘉靖三十九年
1576 万历四年	1605 万历三十三年
1629 崇祯二年	

Ryukyū tribute ships → Ming: 486 times in total
 1372-1470, four times a year, 408 times in total
 1471-1507, twice a year, 16 times in total
 1508-1523, once a year, 17 times in total
 1524-1599, once every ten years, 1 time in total
 1600-1629, once.

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Appendix II

List of Settlements Destroyed/Abandoned in the Coastal Depopulation in Fujian and Surrounding Prefectures, 1661-1683

Compiled from the account of Du Zhen 杜臻, *Yuemin xunshi jilue* 粵閩巡視紀略
[Report of my inspection tour (of the coastal boundary) in Guangdong and Fujian], in
five *juan* (Kangxi era imprint, c. 1684).

FUJIAN

I.) Zhangzhou Prefecture

漳州府			漳州府		
詔安縣	附海	入海	漳浦縣	附海	入海
p.9 j-4	西張 西岐嶺 竹港 梅嶺 分水關 十八葛 琉璃嶺 白馬坑 赤南山 洋林村 洋尾橋 龜山 華寮 懸鐘嘴 洋林寨 東洋尾河 菜園浦 公子店 梅洲寨 八尺門 江頭汛 象頭	懸鐘所 鼠嶼 大洲 走馬溪 雲蓋寺 上彭 中彭 下彭 懸鐘山 東山(川陵山) 望陽臺 蛤洲 獵洲 敏洲 紅洲 卧岡洲 陳洲 蛇洲 大柑山 小柑山 虎仔嶼 南村嶼	p.12 j-4	埔頭 後葛 洋尾橋 杜潯 舊鎮 大水窟 樹洞 長坑 雲霄鎮 廖家橋 荷步 廖家樓 嶼頭 南山 苦竹嶺 荔枝園 下嶼 黃家寨 保安 赤水 臺山 趙家城	月嶼 舊洋 銅山所 井尾澳 鐵釘 雞心 虎窟空 銅坑 銅鉢 蘇尖 巒殼澳 宮仔前 士負嶼 走馬溪 古雷 油澳 沙洲 杳澳 東墻 菜嶼 井仔澳 將軍澳

	<p>洋尾山 真武山</p> <p>梅洲 馬洋 大陂 梅洲村 漸山 官窠</p> <p>甘嶺山 大梅山</p> <p>鳳山亭 大興寨</p>	<p>崎嶼 犬眠嶼 果老山 (from j-3 p.22)</p> <p>羊■山 白牛山 鷄籠山 前江 後汐</p> <p>西閣 長沙尾</p> <p>白沙 烏頭 走馬舖 內澳 外澳 竹栖 九閩 金石巡司 洪淡巡司 宮前澳</p> <p>懸鐘澳</p>		<p>將軍嶺 大帽山</p> <p>南雞冠山 高山 山尾 埭仔頭 高塘洋 荷步</p> <p>北窠 下寨</p> <p>埔仔 石峽仔 青墩 杏仔 赤湖 內大坑 東坂 連江 崎沙 梁山</p> <p>雲霄山</p> <p>將軍山 水晶坪 火田村 修竹里 盤陀嶺 油甘嶺</p> <p>大梁山</p> <p>高洋口 秦溪村</p> <p>趙家堡 浯江橋</p>	<p>魚腸 鹿溪</p> <p>竹嶼 石城嶼 大嵩 小嵩 大澈 小澈 青山巡檢 司 燈火墩 井尾巡檢 司 東椗 南椗 岐尾 白坑 積美 鴻江澳 古樓山 東門澳 西澳 古雷巡檢 司 後葛巡檢 司 六鰲所 虎頭山 眉田寨 扈頭礁 苦竹寨</p> <p>鎮海衛</p> <p>登雲山 龜嶺山 鴻岐山 五星山</p>
count	34	43			
豁田地	384 頃有 奇				
平和縣					
豁田地 (no towns listed)	25 頃				

				張坑 橫口 山頭廟 南景 丹竈山 鐵竈坑 佛曇橋 井尾 虎岡山 揭榜山 銅山	太武山 浮沉 5都
			count 豁田地	65 1163 頃有 奇	57
漳州府			漳州府		
海澄縣		附海	入海	龍溪縣	
				附海	入海
p.23 j-4	橫口 洪礁 獨石山 關廂村 蔡家庄 陳輝村 甘輝村 太江 石馬鎮 團山 圳尾 娘媽宮 中權關口 上恒泥港 福澗 鎮海 野馬 井尾 許林頭	三都 後境 橄欖嶺 青埔 嵩嶼 長嶼 古浪 荆嶼 圭嶼 青礁 許茂 烏礁 紫泥 白石 石馬澳 浯嶼 島尾 卓崎 破竈洋	p29/30 j-4	江東橋 東尾 九頭 馬髻山 蓮花村 海滄 烏臼 姚嶼 石尾 龍江舖 柳營 三義河 玉洲 石美城 烏嶼 高浦港 柳營巡檢 司 江東馬驛 白石山	

	鎮遠樓城 三平 馬口 浮宮 蘆沉港 南岐 舖頭山 厚境 橋梁尾 席帽山 鴻福山 常春山 鴻江山 月港 漸尾 倒港 濠門巡司 海門巡司 充龍 惠民	1都 2都 梁嶼		華封嶺 九龍山 木棉菴 三義寨 23 382 頃有 奇	0
count 豁田地	39 784 頃有 奇	22	count 豁田地		

II.) Quanzhou Prefecture

泉州府			泉州府		
同安縣		附海	入海	南安縣	
				附海	入海
p.31 j-4	烏頭 孤山 鳳尾山 灌口寨 苧溪橋 方坑嶺 浦頭寨 石潯 踏石山	大嶠 洲嶼 白礁 鼠嶼 寶珠嶼 沙嶼 五通 白嶼 烏沙	p.41 j-4	小盈 東嶺 大盈 雞籠山 歌髻山 盤龍埔 紅漸山 困山 大盈舖	石井 營前澳 43都

	<p>三忠</p> <p>官巖山 店頭舖 小盈 埕頭 潯尾 馬鑾 唐厝港 鼎尾 灌口寨 芋溪 蹈石山 通津山 文圃山觜 周山窰 前厰 烏頭山 下店 板橋 美人山 西岸窰頭 東岸石潯 對窰頭後 社 馬家港 龜山 劉五店 高浦千戶 所 深青驛 同安港 夕陽山 芋溪山 陳婆陂</p>	<p>烈嶼</p> <p>澳頭 角嶼 小嶝 鼓浪嶼 鹿耳礁 金門 大擔嶼 猴嶼 黃牛嶼 沙埭 小擔 檳榔嶼 玉門澳 浯洲山 白礁巡檢司 鐘山 廈門 中左所城 廈門港 料羅 廈門墩臺 東渡墩臺 高崎墩臺 流礁墩臺 五通墩臺 東澳墩臺 徑上墩臺 井上墩臺 龍烟墩臺 城仔角 青崎 湖下 吳山 樓山 牧山</p>	<p>count</p> <p>豁田地</p>	<p>9</p> <p>372 頃有 奇</p>	<p>3</p>
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		湖山 陳坑 峯上 田浦 官澳 烏崙 大帽 金沙 太武巖 小雙山 大雙山 後浦 變山 17都 18都 19都 21都 22都 23都 24都			
count	41	65			
豁田地	1941 頃 有奇				
泉州府			泉州府		
晉江縣		附海	入海	惠安縣	
				附海	入海
p.42 j-4	龍源山 鷓鴣寨 後渚澳 洛陽橋 觀樹塔山 安海寨 小龍源山 馬坪山 日湖山 衙口山 竿頭寨	福全所 永寧衛 祥芝澳 東石澳 岱嶼 石湖 安海堡 北椗 圍頭灣 植壁港 陳坑港	p.1 j-5	石任寨 下金山 下曾山 文筆山 柳庄 溪石寨 丘戶村 九峯寨 白沙尾 烏石山 埔塘	黃崎 崇安所 峯尾澳 白沙 獺窟嶼 橫頭澳 崇武所 小岞 沙格澳 □川 樂嶼

count	竿柄臺 東安 蚩江寨 南岸水頭 潯尾 徑邊 深滬 烏潯 水頭 溪邊 浯埭 靈源山 華表山 羅裳山 橫山 陳埭 井尾埭 溜石鎮 煙浦埭 陳埭鄉 靈源 臭塗 大孤山 小孤山 法石山 安平鎮 吳山 畫山 蕭妃村 溪邊寨 東山 沈公堤 石壁山 彌陀山 青山 虎岫巖 桃花山	圳上澳 大留澳 佛堂澳 烏嶼 獅尾寨 獅頭寨 東石 □洲場 白沙湖 安海港 金釵山 益輔山 後渚臺 20都 16都 14都	count 豁田地	獅捲山 巖鼓山 古樓山 雞母山 東吳埔 許山 承天山 陳坑山 後張山 龍田山 白井山 前塗山 九峯 南莊 石船山 鳳山 大聖山 前頭山 留山 五公山 充口 馬山埭 陳平山 九峯山 35 1909 頃有 奇	輞川鎮 大岓 龍喉山 青山 覆釜 尖山 峯崎山 小兜 峯崎港 內峯 竿嶼 大岓澳 32都 27都 25都 26
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豁田地	1252 頃 有奇				
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III.) Xinghua Prefecture

興化府			興化府		
僊遊縣	附海	入海	莆田縣	附海	入海
p.7 j-5	楓亭驛 梅嶺 壺公山 東沙 厝頭 陡門 塔頭 白隔嶺 太平港 龍潭 楓亭寨 錦屏山 楓亭市	小嶼	p.9 j-5	壺公山首 天馬山 清浦村 勝塔 江口橋 南酒林 下尾 東雲 勾上 上皇港 東珠浪 東港山 白沙 鳩頭山 陳店山 後架 陳墓 忽石 馬山 鄒會徐 惠洋 五龍 東華 海濱 寧海橋 白墓 張井	莆禧所 吉廖 平海衛 江平海衛 青嶼 赤嶼 遮浪 大孤嶼 小孤嶼 吉了寨巡 檢司 中門 東湖山 西亭山 金沙舖 文甲山 山柄山 嵌頭巡檢 司 鷓鴣島 進嶼 青山巡檢 司 南日山 蔡山 壺山 演嶼 蚶山 東滬 西寨
count	13	1			
豁田地	81 頃有 奇				

				鹽場 岸勝 周堤尾 嵌頭 羨爛 百羨寨 南埕 東蔡寨 後郭 馬峯 忠門汛 遊洋 黃石山 白雲山 鼓角 東沙村 嵩山 惠洋 黃卷山 下黃竿 迎仙港 迎仙巡司 涵頭舖 黃石市 持久山 寧海鎮 白水塘 待賢里 連江里 延壽里 文賦里 常泰里 靈川里 新興里 莆田里	小南日 燕內 大礪山 小礪山 十八門 青山 崎頭 泥濕 三蓬嶼 冲心巡檢 司 三江 澳港 湄洲山 蠔仔埕 金沙澳 文甲門 大坵山 小坵山 吉了水寨 華胥山 賢良港 石獅山 九跳山 鳳石山 大泉 武盛里 新安里
			count	62	54
			畝田地	4430 頃有 奇	

IV. Fuzhou Prefecture

福州府			福州府		
福清縣	附海	入海	長樂縣	附海	入海
p.23 j-5	仙嶺 蒜嶺驛 綿亭嶺 漁溪舖 玻璃嶺 松樹嶺 蒼霞嶺 錦屏 松潭山 牛宅村 里美 定軍山 海口橋 上逕鎮 碇竈村 東大石 峯頭 旗山 棉亭山 九龍山後 西嶺 葫蘆山 □店 麒麟山 山下 風水山 下埔 蘇陰 漁溪 洋尾 南門 余坑山 峯頭寨	萬安所 牛頭寨 澤朗寨 松下 鎮東衛 詰屈 白鶴寨 壁頭巡司 牛頭巡司 野馬山 雙嶼 白嶼 烏窠巖 逕港 烏嶼門 後嶼 迎仙港 東營山 澤朗巡檢司 大丘寨 東金山 蓮盤 沙塢 草嶼 塘嶼 南匿嶼 差淡塘嶼 東甲山 貓尾 大練 小練 海壇山 浚門	p.33 j-5	高嶺山 小石山 石屏山 石龍山 七星巖 小門 舊縣 壺井山 渡橋山 雙桂山 金墩山 燕山 宿山 壠山 仙岐 梅花寨 浪頭鼻 廣石 溪湄山 社溪 大社 小社 郎官山 牛壟山 壟下城 江田 漳阪 壺井村 大董村 小董村 福山 蛤山 聖娘山	梅花所 東山 海路 東山港尾 壺井大嶼 人赤嶼 蛤嶼 廣石澳 安澳 鎮澳 梅花山 磁澳山 焦山巡檢司 石梁巡檢司 東洛 西洛 橫蒜 洛門 牛角山 東沙 白犬 東庠 南菱 東沙澳 犬目

	<p>江陰 壁頭 逕上里 牛田場 三山 薛店 蘇溪 逕上鎮</p> <p>蒼霞山 牛田鎮 玻璃寨 光賢里 唐下 新豐里 聞讀山 福廬山 時和里 鹽課司地 方民里 仁壽里 海口鎮 網山</p>	<p>獼步 廣州埕 流水隔 東墻 小墻 十二藍焦 百兵焦 大桑</p> <p>小桑 牛山 鐘門嶼 苦嶼門 化北里 平南里 烽火山 黃崎 紫闌 牧上 砦頭 坑頭 大鰲網 小鰲網 三十六脚湖 大場 小場 錢藏 軍山 碧沙洋鎮 百花砦鎮 鐘門鎮 觀音澳 蘇澳 龍王宮 晃尾澳 進屏澳 葫蘆澳 鬩殼澳 龜</p>	<p>count</p> <p>豁田地</p>	<p>林婆湖 魁山 碁山 五都 羅田 巖湖</p> <p>39 913 頃有 奇</p>	<p>25</p>
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count	55	南江 湧月	73			
豁田地	4634 頃 有奇					
福州府			福州府			
閩縣	附海	入海	連江縣	附海	入海	
p.38 j-5	閩安鎮 象洋山 馬門嶺 東岐 高樓 象洋 武定山 武定門 登高山 長柄山 東崎山 下塘寨 石龍寨 瑯琦 浮江 碁盤寨 雲峯嶺 伏莽 柔遠驛 閩安巡檢 司 閩安稅課 局 急水門 登高寨 象洋寨	五虎門 浮嶼 猴嶼 洋嶼 殷嶼 獺嶼 竹嶼 鹽嶼 芝嶼 官母嶼	p.40 j-5	浦口 麻嶺 透嶺 碁盤山 馬鼻 大澳 館頭 長沙嶺 定安嶺 大澳嶺 東岱 東岱臺 松塢 腰嶺 麻嶺 白鶴 麻坂 網邊 驢頭 拱頭 嶺口 浮曦山 東山 拱頭寨 覆釜山 馬門嶺	北菱 奇達澳 定海所 小埕寨 黃崎 小澳 荻蘆港 荻蘆山 泥塢 塘下 定岐 蓬岐 後沙 下邊 東岸 官塢 安海 苔菴 雁塔山 上竿塘 下竿塘 下木澳 大亭山 小亭山 桑嶼 閩嶺	
count	24		10			
豁田地	389 頃有 奇					

				洲嶺 百勝寨 中麻 蛤沙 東坪 玉樓山 浦口寨	鶴嶼 定海所南門 澳 長澳 鐵沙澳 後澳 北菱巡檢司 黃崎澳 上竿塘七澳 (鏡澳, 竹扈 澳, 長箕澳, 湖尾澳, ...) 下竿塘七澳 (馬鞍澳, 白沙, 鏡港, ...) 竿塘杙 上目澳
			count 豁田地	33 234 頃有 奇	49
福州府					
羅源縣					
	附海	入海			
p.45 j-5	岐陽舖 護國舖 烏坑山 界首嶺 白鶴嶺 大獲山 蹟頭 松山 小獲山 邊奇山 泥田 烏坑 三源 三層嶺 王沙	濂澳門 粧裏 簾山 濂澳			

count	疊石 半天罐 鑑江 五里渡 松崎 鑑江 東衝 公館 23 266 頃有 奇	4			
豁田地					

V.) Funing District

福寧州			福寧州		
寧德縣	附海	入海	福安縣	附海	入海
p.47 j-5	銅鏡 河溪 灘洋頭 閩坑 小留嶺 金埕河 黃坑 洋尾山 蚶崎山 黃土巖 南山 馬鞍山 張灣 斗門橋 後壟 東墻 林長嶼 黃土岸 港尾 藍田 金埕西臺	象溪 梅溪山 飛鸞嶺 城澳山(有三 澳) 金甌山 酒澳嶼 猿毛嶼 小金崎 大金崎 瑞峯山 黃灣峯 嵩山 青山 官嶼 烏嶼 西洋山 橫山 東湧 橄欖嶼 錢巖 大島	p.52 j-5	廉嶺 縣前 洋尾河 茶洋嶺 大梅 柳溪 盃溪村 三江口 大梨嶺 灣塢 梅洋山 下裴山 前郎山 官嶺 南浦 下邳 洋尾寨 六印江 甘棠港 圯灣 鹽田	衡洋 白石司 白石司馬頭 竈嶼 長興 大金須

<p>count</p> <p>豁田地</p>	<p>金埕東臺 章灣 斗門 溪灘 五馬峯 碧山 浦門</p> <p>白瓠山 銅鏡舖 雲淡門 周墩堡 白鶴山 東洋巡檢司 麻嶺巡檢司 三都 四都 五都 六都 一都</p> <p>40</p> <p>160 頃有奇</p>	<p>官井 景初澳 東山 大王宮澳 西山澳 東湧後澳</p> <p>27</p>	<p>count</p> <p>豁田地</p>	<p>衡洋山 馬頭 古鎮門 廉村 三十一都</p> <p>26</p> <p>484 頃有奇</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>福寧州</p>					
<p>福寧州 附海 入海</p>					
<p>p.56 j-5</p>	<p>福寧州城 赤岸橋 楊家溪 店頭 松山 李園山 青礁 尤家大山 楊梅嶺</p>	<p>沙埕 水澳 三沙 垵灣 鹽田 激城 秦嶼 南鎮 黃崎</p>			

	<p>小馬嶺 木連山 南屏嶺 漁洋嶺 沙塘 冲嶺 大沙 州前嶺 白塔山 魚井山 □嶺(深澳嶺) 呂徑山 青浩 青浩寨 小灣嶺 小澳山 周灣山 岐溪 西洋 橫坑 數嶺 敖嶺 范溪 圯崖山 六都嶺 六都半嶺 官嶺 三佛嶺 黃宰山 七溪團 村保嶺 村保臺 斂城 倉頭山 羣頭山 斗門山 三墩 缸窑嶺</p>	<p>店下 白鷺 前岐 流江 小馬 南屏 長興 武曲 大金所 閭夾 羅浮 箬頭幫 漁洋埠山脈 五澳 黎智墩 錢大王舖 三佛塔 牙城 梅花墩 南金墩 小箕筍 大箕筍 彩澳 大欄 小欄 流江 象洋 竹嶼 硯石 東蚶 西蚶 蓮花嶼 白瓠山 小青礁 李園 高羅 斗米 南金山</p>			
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	團山 斂城後山 嶺下 周倉嶺 後崎山 白琳 店頭河 王孫 鄭崎 巖前 塘底 塘底東山 後灣 桐山 東山嘴 東山 西山 南洋山 駱駝山 戰坪洋 分水關 大金 州前嶺 閭峽堡 羅浮 小柘洋 下場溪 龍灣 延亭 赤岸 小浩 八寶 牛店 楊梅 盃溪 烽火寨 松山港 激溪 藍溪	小金山 文崎 武崎 筆架山 鴨池 萊臺 下滸 延亭 芙蓉山 馬砌山 盔山 西洋山 浮膺山 火焰山 南表 短表 舊烽火 大箭山 小箭山 良山 日嶼 七星山(七嶼) 礮山 南礮 北礮 東礮 西礮 太姥山 屏風山 臺山 鎮下門 官澳 小馬寨 七都 西洋寨 海連里 積石 浮膺山(四澳) 烽火山			
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	屯頭 董江 桐山溪 桐山堡 鼓鐘山 霞浦山 牛跡山 洪山 蓮花山 蘆門巡檢司 廉江里 十七都 分水嶺 十九都	長表 崙山(三十六 澳) 媽宮 材堡 大箕箒巡檢司 青灣巡檢司 八都 青澳			
count	100	134			
豁田地	1797 頃 有奇				

GUANGDONG

I.) Chaozhou Prefecture

潮州府			潮州府			
惠來縣		附海	入海	潮陽縣		
		附海	入海	附海	入海	
p.9 j-3	洪橋 小黃岡 田心寨 神仙寨 湖邊鄉 後衡寨 前林村 西莊村 菓山鄉 下後陳村 驛後鄉		神泉港 神泉司 湖口港 石牌澳 靖海港東岍 赤沙澳 湖仔墩 神泉港東臺 羊尾 金剛髻山	p.10 j-3	古埕村 桑田山 虎頭山 祿景山 石井寨 洪岡山 鳳山 上下寨 西蘆寨 祿景舖 赤水寨	達壕埠 海門所 錢澳 河背砲臺 猷灣砲臺 岡頭 徑門 徑門口 東山口 後溪 蛋家宮

count 豁田地	後湖寮 石塘驛 東湖鄉 蓋洋寨 靖海所 昌山 溪東山 菱梭山 沿錫山 東山 後池山 大架山 後表山 茆洋 澳角山 小黃岡寨 大坭都 28 837 頃有 奇	10	count 豁田地	竹林寨 海田寨 華陽寨 桑田寨 赤岡寨 青林寨 下尾寨 圓山 尾渡 頭鄉 白沙溪 頭杉寨 下穢 茂洲 西墩 割頭沙 浦松子 山湖仔 割洲 澳頭 竹林 32 760 頃有 奇	糞箕灣 華陽臺 石井 門關臺 南砲臺 河溪口 桑田堡 河渡門 磊石門 20
潮州府			潮州府		
揭陽縣		附海	澄海縣	附海	入海
p.10 j-3	洪岡 深埔山 鄒堂山 雙港 土尾鄉 大蓮鄉 石港鄉 青嶼鄉 大寮鄉 塔岡鄉	北砲臺 青嶼 錢澳山	p.18 j-3	鄒堂山 蓮塘山 驛邊村 鷗汀背 南洋 山頭 南洋寨 樟林村 洪溝村 仙村	溪東港 蓬州所 西港 東港 新港 南港 東湖砲臺 三灣 平湖 外沙

count 豁田地	鐵場鄉 後田鄉 仙埔鄉 楓鄉 鄒堂鄉 舖前河 揭嶺 崑山 18 86 頃有 奇	3	count 豁田地	鹽竈村 小坑 乾岡村 白頭村 新寮村 大場 天港 玉井 石城頭 夏止 鮐浦 蓮塘村 樟林 23 535 頃有 奇	東隴臺 鹽竈臺 水寨城 小萊蕪山 大萊蕪山 鳴洋 蘇灣都 17
潮州府		潮州府			
饒平縣		附海	海陽縣	附海	入海
p.20 j-3	水磨村 長富村 市頭村 黃岡 江台埭 柘林寨 賴家 下岱埔 下岱 上灣 下灣 上里鄉 大埕鄉 長美 神前 嶺後 玖溪橋 員頭臺	大城所 井洲 五塘港 南澳 鷄母澳 柘林 青山 鐵牛港 虎嶼 獅嶼 柘林澳 市頭鄉 鴻門 石狗門 海山島 南澳山 深澳 青澳	p.12 j-3 元年無遷, 三年續遷 豁田地	村名不錄 278頃零	

count 豁田地	峙頭臺 獅頭 林厝 草尾 下尾 竹林 橫山 上里尾 紅螺山 鹽樓山 大尖山 高埕柵 大埕柵 鳳髻山 大港柵 大城千戶 所 紅旗山 鯉魚山 黃岡鎮城 南 程洋岡 神山 宣化都 41 615 頃有 奇	隆澳 蠟嶼 井洲 大金門 小金門 金山 侍郎嶼 南澳遊 南澳鎮 鷄母嶼 太子樓 29			
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II.) Huizhou Prefecture

惠州府			惠州府		
歸善縣	附海	入海	海豐縣	附海	入海
p.1 j-3	西鄉凹 山下村 小桂村 石灰山 巒殼 逕仔山	大鵬所 大梅沙 少梅沙 鴉梅山 關湖 西山	p.5 j-3	雙園村 琵琶寨 窩舖村 圓墩圍 南門 江村	靖海所 大德港西臺 大德港東臺 南海下灣 南海上灣 烏港西臺

	長山仔村 金坑 松園港 淡水圍 九里村 長潭村 龍古井村 南前村 烏栖塘村 煖水湖村 松山下村 楊山村 楊公逕 陳田村 澗背村 白雲墟 欄盤寨 烟岡寨 稔山墟 飯羅岡 大浦屯 鐵湧墟 溪背村 官田村 黃浦墟 雙園村 蒲田 燕門 舊村 西村 甘泉 蕉坑 雙羅溪 林坑 槁木洞 後壠 蕉子坑 官埔 貴到	水口 黃坑 老大鵬 塾頭港 白雲 稔山 平海所 盤圓口 小漠 飯籬岡 碧甲山 船澳 五通嶺 鹽田基 黃浦墟 淡水墟		田寮 下村 羊蹄嶺 南門山 渡頭 陂青 草頭 東鄉 西洋舖 丁張 龍鄉 黃嶼鄉 大德鄉 埕前鄉 長福橋 寮口鄉 後湖鄉 佛山鄉 南埕鄉 烏坎村 南竈 上林鄉 海峽北輦 大蘇 寮鹿 欄上 尚沙 尾洲仔 華埔溪 上寮 文昌鄉 大寨 後窟 烏頭 圍赤 企仔 下寮鄉 東樟鄉 前詹鄉	湖東澳東臺 海甲山 甲子港 蘇公澳 圭湖塾 烏塾港東臺 小城汛 觀音堂 崎石港 田尾寨 滴水塾 三洲塾 湖東港西臺 碣石衛 旗山 捷勝所 施公寮 甲子門所 石帆都 金錫都 大金籠山 梅隴 蚊寮 新圍 王公 下馬頭 扁湧湖 東坑門 烏岸 汕頭 浪湧 蛋家宮 坭坦 浩洋 沙墩 三洲 湖東港 大帽山 湖東
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	<p>河潭 赤沙寮 奕寮 思鹽臺 碧甲 長子仔 田寮 鴉雀舖 遊魚灣 東坑水 津園 龍眼岡 竹園墩 山仔頭 蕉子園 上葵坑 雲嶺 古埔輦 潮陽村 沙橋 湖下 湧頭</p> <p>崗仔 香湧 老鴉山 土灣 大墳陂 官溪 大康 小逕 太平嶺 巖前 白岡 西鄉 石井 上角 沙頭 下湧</p>		<p>count</p> <p>豁田地</p>	<p>三興寨 牛扼寨 海山港 水尾寨 東寨 水尾上村 圓墩寨 汲水門寨 出水村 黃家村 新寨 駱坑寨 新西寨 淤牛坑 大坑寨 牛郎寨 新逕寨 莆嶺 上罟寮 中罟寮 下罟寮</p> <p>66</p> <p>3240 頃有奇</p>	<p>海仔 深田湖 黃厝寮 南海 深澳 鮪門港 小漠港 謝道山 梅隴坡 青草頭西臺 青草頭東臺 長沙臺 馬鬃山 下寨 白沙湖 娘巖山 大魔山 大德□ 烏□</p> <p>64</p>
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鬱頭山 鹽竈 山頭 船凹 中興 宜富山 小漠園 欖湧 林軍寮 竹園埔 元宵圍 大嶺 蒲菜 鬱南坑 新村仔 新尾 石橋 復興凹 石頭嶺 石陂坑 小門寨 小桂凹 舊村 高埔 沙凹 嶺凹 橫岡 峯背 洞內 西湧 港尾 枯子 萌赤山 白花尾 蓮麻坑 大萌 東坑 解葵坑 大水坑				
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GLOSSARY

- Ban Jisheng 班际盛
baozhang 保长
 Cai Zheng 蔡政
 Cao Lütai 曹履泰
chazhu 插烛
 Chenghai 澄海
 Chen Hong 陈鸿 (Chen Bangxian 陈邦贤)
 Chen Jin 陈锦
 Chen Xinyu 陈心裕
 Chen Xuanzao 陈玄藻
chengli xiong 城里兄
 Chongming 崇明
chuanxinmo 穿心磨
 Dadeng (island) 大嶝
 Dahanshan 大蚶山
danhu or *danjia* (Tanka) 蛋户 / 蛋家
 Deng Wenjun 邓文俊
 Du Zhen 杜臻
 Fan Chengmo 范承谟
 Fang Huaizhong 方怀忠
 Fuquan 福全
 Fuzhou (city) 福州
gaige kaifang 改革开放
gaosu baoguo 缟素报国
 Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠
 Guazhou 瓜州
 Guo Erlong 郭尔龙
 Haicheng gong 海澄公
 Haijin (Seaban) 海禁
 Haimenwei 海门卫
 Haiwai Sanren 海外散人
 Hanjiang 涵江
 Han Shangliang 韩尚亮
 Hong Dizhen 洪迪珍
 Huangshi 黄石
 Huang Wu 黄梧
 Huang Yi 黄翼
 Jidu (Prince) 济度
 Jiangyin 江阴
jiegou 界沟
jieneiren 界内人 (people inside the boundary)
jiewairen 界外人 (people outside the boundary)
jiewai xiong 界外兄
 Jieyang 揭阳
jinshi 进士
 Jinghai jiangjun 靖海将军
 Lai Changxing 赖昌星
 Leqing 乐清
 Li Dan 李旦
 Li Kuiqi 李魁奇 (Quitsick)
 Li Guangtou (Baldy Li) 李光头
 Li Shuaitai 李率泰
 Li Shichun 李时春
 Li Ying 李英
 Li Zhifang 李芝芳
 Liegang 列港
lingchi 凌迟
 Liu Xiang 刘香 (Janglau)
 Ma Degong 马德功
 Mafeng 马峰
 Panshiwei 盘石卫
 Panyu 番禺
 Pan Zhongqiong 潘仲琼
paotai 炮台
 Putian (city) 莆田
 Putuoshan 普陀山
 Qianjie (Coastal Depopulation) 迁界
qianmin 迁民
 Qingjiang 清江
renmianyu 人面鱼
 Sanfan (Three Feudatories) 三藩
 Shang Kexi 尚可喜

- shizi 世子
 Shi Lang 施琅
 shuiyutou 水蕨头
 Siju (Xizhu) 席柱
 Song Zhenhan 宋祯汉
 Su Liuge 苏六哥
 Taiping 太平
 Taizhou 台州
 Tangxia 塘下
 Tanka (*danjia*) 蛋家
 Tiantai 天台
 Tong'an (county) 同安
 tulou 土楼
 tusai 土寨
 Wang Qiuqing 王秋卿
 Wang Yongji 王永吉
 Wang Zhi 王直
 Weicheng 卫城
 wei-suo (military system) 卫所
 Wenzhou 温州
 Wu Ping 吴平
 Wu Sangui 吴三桂
 Wusonggang 吴淞港 (Jiangsu)
 Xiangshan 象山
 Xiao Ying 萧英
 xiedou 械斗
 Xingou 辛沟
 Xu Dong (Xu Er) 许栋 (许二)
 Yangcheng 洋城
 Yang Fu 杨富
 Yang Geng 杨耿
 Yang Jie 杨捷
 Yangshan 羊山
 Yang Xuegao 杨学皋
 Yao Qisheng 姚启圣
 youshou 游手
 Yu Yang 余飏
 Zeng Liu / Zeng Qi 曾六 / 曾七
 Zeng Yangxing 曾养性
 Zhang An 张安
 Zhang Jinzhong 张进忠
 Zhang Xuesheng 张学圣
 zhaofu 招抚
 Zheng Cai 郑彩
 Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga) 郑成功
 (国姓爷)
 Zheng Chongling 郑冲龄
 Zheng Hongkui (alias Zhifeng) 郑鸿逵
 (芝凤)
 Zheng Jing 郑经 (锦)
 Zhenjiang 镇江
 Zheng Keshuang 郑克爽
 Zheng Lian 郑联
 Zheng Mingjun 郑鸣骏
 Zheng Qingzhu 郑擎柱
 Zheng Tai 郑泰
 Zheng Xi 郑袭 (Zheng Miao 郑淼)
 Zheng Zhilong 郑芝龙
 Zhong Bin 钟斌 (Toe-tsai-lak)
 Zhoushan 舟山
 Zhou Shike 周世科
 Zhou Yu (Tanka leader) 周玉
 Zhu Rongji 朱镕基
 Zhu Wan 朱纨
 Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋
 Zoumaxi 走马溪