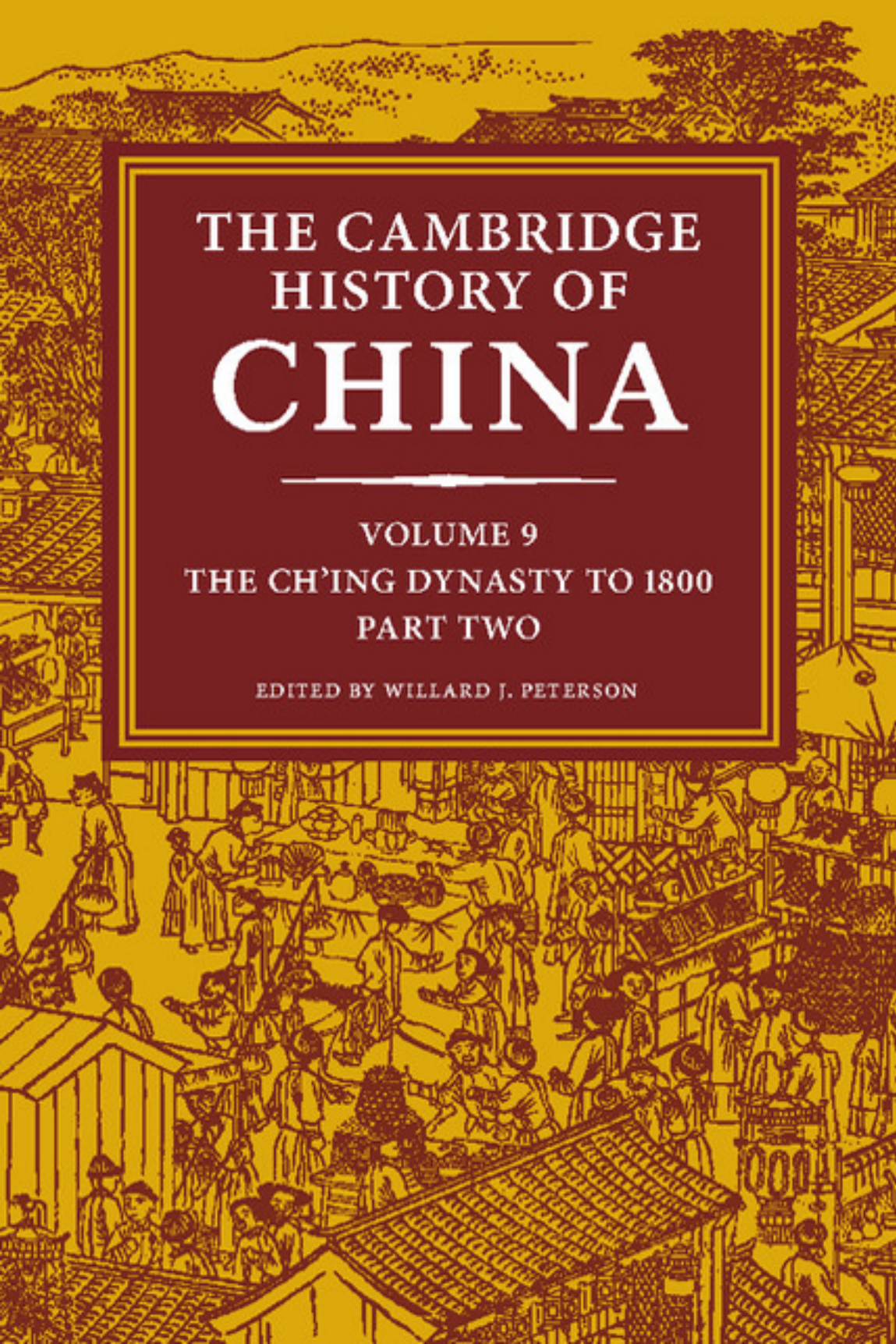
THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

VOLUME 9
THE CH'ING DYNASTY TO 1800
PART TWO

EDITED BY WILLARD J. PETERSON



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Volume 9
Part Two: The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800

edited by

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Map 1. The Ch'ing empire: physical features


Irkutsk
Lake Baikal
Nerchinsk
Argun River
Great Khingan Mountains
Lesser Khingan Mts
Blagoveshchensk
Amur River
Selenga River
Kiakhta
Orkhon River
Urga
Kerillen River
Tsitsihar
Sungari River
Ussuri River
Harbin
Ch'ang-pai Mts
MONGOLIA
Vladivostok
Liao River
GOBI DESERT
Mukden
Ku-pei k'ou
Shan-hai kuan
Yalu River
KOREA
Peking
Ordos Desert
Great Wall
Wu-t'ai Mts
Tientsin
Lu-shun
Seoul
T'ai-yuan
Tai-hang Mts
North China Plain
Grand Canal
Tsinan
Lanchow
Yellow River
Kaifeng
Chia-ling River
Sian
Tsin-ling Mts.
Huai River
Han River
Nanking
Shanghai
Soochow
Min River
Chengtu
Yangtze Gorges
Wuhan
Yangtze River
Ningpo
Chou-shan Islands
Red Basin
Tung-t'ing Lake
Nan-ch'ang
Poyang Lake
Ch'ien-t'ang River
Ch'ang-sha
Kan River
Wu-i Mountains
Yunnan Plateau
Kweiyang
Hsing River
Foochow
Kweilin
Mel-ling
Amoy
Liu-ch'iu Islands
TAIWAN
Hsi River
Canton
Red River
Nanning
Macao
Hanoi
ANNAN (VIETNAM)
Hainan Island
The Ch'ing Empire
Grand canal
Great wall
Pass
Trade route
0 250 500 750 1000 km
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles

Map 1. (*cont.*)

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PREFACE

The editor of this volume, like the editors of the previous volumes in *The Cambridge History of China* series, has accrued many debts of gratitude. The foremost debt is to the authors of the chapters gathered here. Their scholarly contributions are the heart and body of the volume. All of them have shown forbearance, and some have had to be more than patient. Two of the chapters and their authors were included in the early plan for Volume 9 proposed many years ago by the late Frederick Wakeman Jr., and two more were prepared but for thematic reasons could not be included in what was published as Part One in 2002. At the opposite extreme, one of the chapters, the last to be commissioned, was not completed until January 2014.

The chapter authors and I are indebted to the late Denis C. Twitchett, my mentor and former colleague, who envisioned and remained the main force behind the entire project that is *The Cambridge History of China*. The readers, the users, of this volume, without fully realizing it, are indebted to Michael A. Reeve, whose critical acumen contributed to clearer articulation of the ideas presented, whose care for bibliographical detail led to more accuracy in the bibliographical citations across a body of literature in more than a dozen languages from the past three centuries, and whose skills in data management facilitated the progress of this long and complicated project. I am also indebted to Jenny Chao-hui Liu for editorial help on some of the chapters, and to my colleague Susan Naquin, who selflessly contributed her knowledge of Ch'ing history and her skills as an editor to the preparation of several chapters. The editor alone is responsible for the errors, inconsistencies, and infelicities that remain.

The East Asian Studies Program at Princeton University, directed during the relevant years by Martin C. Collcutt and Benjamin A. Elman, generously supported *The Cambridge History of China* project in numerous direct and indirect ways. In addition, Benjamin Elman generously made funds available from the Mellon research grant he was awarded to help expedite the editing of

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Willard J. Peterson
2015

CH'ING DYNASTY RULERS TO 1850

Personal name	Lived	Chinese name of reign period	Reign period (calendar years)	Chinese posthumous names
Nurhaci	1559–1626	–	–	T'ai-tsu, Kao
(unknown, referred to as Hung Taiji)	1592–1643	–	1627–43	T'ai-tsung, Wen
		Ch'ung-te	1637–43	
Fu-lin	1638–61	Shun-chih	1644–61	Shih-tsu, Chang
Hsüan-yeh	1654–1722	K'ang-hsi	1662–1722	Sheng-tsu, Jen
Yin-chen	1678–1735	Yung-cheng	1723–35	Shih-tsung, Hsien
Hung-li	1711–99	Ch'ien-lung	1736–95	Kao-tsung, Ch'un
Yung-yen	1760–1820	Chia-ch'ing	1796–1820	Jen-tsung, Jui
Mien-ning, Min-ning	1782–1850	Tao-kuang	1821–50	Hsüan-tsung, Ch'eng

INTRODUCTION: THE CH'ING DYNASTY, THE CH'ING EMPIRE, AND THE GREAT CH'ING INTEGRATED DOMAIN

Willard J. Peterson

The ninth volume of *The Cambridge history of China* series has the title *The Ch'ing dynasty to 1800*. As in all other volumes of *The Cambridge history of China*, the term "dynasty" is used in four main senses. It is used most often in a temporal sense as a way of indicating a period of time, from the inaugural declaration to the end of a succession of rulers who, after the founder, mostly inherited their position as ruler. Such a line of rulers is by definition a dynasty. In many instances in *The Cambridge history of China* series, references to a family dynasty include not just rulers, but also their relatives by birth and marriage. "The dynasty" is also used in an extended sense to refer to the government apparatus that the dynastic family employs to try to maintain itself in power and attract or compel obedience. In this third sense, "the dynasty" can refer to the court, the state, and the government institutions, including the military, without specifying which is meant. "The dynasty" in this institutional sense can be imputed with agency as the subject of active verbs: "the dynasty did this or that," or "the dynasty conquered here or there." Because a dynasty – that is, the line of one family of rulers and its government – could, and did, fail, to be replaced by one or more other dynasties, each dynasty assigned itself a name.[1] The names of the dynasties in *The Cambridge history of China* series were not the name of a family, as in the histories of some other places, but a name associated with the family's place of origin, or, from the thirteenth century on, a name indicative of some chosen symbolic value by which it meant to be known.

Each dynasty had a spatial or geographical dimension; that is, the area or territories the dynasty ruled, or claimed to rule. In *The Cambridge history of China* volumes, the name of the dynasty is also used to indicate that territorial extent. This fourth sense of the term "dynasty" appears as a name on a map, where it functions as the name of a country. The subtitle of each volume through Volume 11, except Volume 6, has the name of the dynasty or dynasties

[1] In contrast, the continuing line of emperors in Japan to the present day do not have a dynastic name.

being considered. (The subtitle of Volume 6 is *Alien regimes and border states, 907–1368*, which might imply that they were not dynasties, but in the chapters the Liao, Chin and Yüan regimes are referred to as dynasties.) As a convention, then, the dynastic name is used as shorthand for a period of time, a ruling family, a government, and the territorial extent under the rule of that government.

The territorial extent of the major dynasties considered in the first eleven volumes of *The Cambridge history of China* is generally referred to as an empire, modified by the name of the dynasty that ostensibly ruled it. In other words, "empire" is used to refer to the territory under the control of a dynastic ruler, who is routinely labeled an emperor. The cluster of terms – "empire," "emperor," and "imperial government" – are conventional and pervasive in the first eleven volumes of *The Cambridge history of China*.

What is conveyed by the term "empire" in these volumes? The word in English and French is derived from a Roman word for "commanding" (*imperare*), which gave rise to words for the one who had supreme command (*imperator*), and then for the territory controlled by him and his designates; that is, an empire (*imperium*). In other historical contexts, the word "empire" has usually been reserved for command over more than a few important territorial units, and is generally taken to be greater in extent than what is ruled by a king. There is a built-in presumption of military conquest or subordination of more territories under the control of one ruler. If there is a counterpart word in earlier Chinese texts for "empire," it is usually taken to be *t'ien-hsia*, literally "all under Heaven,"[2] where Heaven (*T'ien*) was understood to be a superior ancestral deity who is "up there" in the sky (*t'ien*). The term "all under Heaven" was used a thousand years before the Roman *imperium* to convey the idea of an extensive territory of subordinated units in principle under the formal control of one man. "All under Heaven" was used from the beginning of the Chou dynasty (1045–256 BCE) as a way of indicating what was under the nominal command of the Chou king, who was ritually referred to as the earthly counterpart and even descendant of Heaven (*t'ien tzu*). In other words, the early rhetorical claim was that the king should command all the people in all the areas that acknowledge Heaven (*t'ien*) as a deity; it was not a universal claim to rule all peoples everywhere. This claim remained as rhetoric, not description, as Chou dynasty kings never achieved that degree of direct control. In 221 BCE the king of Ch'in, who inherited a kingdom (*kuo*), completed the conquest of the six major rival kingdoms in what we now call north and central China. Still a king, he asked for and acquired a new, superior title, *huang-ti*, to mark

[2] Yü Ying-shih, "Han foreign relations," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 1: *The Ch'in and Han empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), p. 378.

his bringing together all under Heaven (*ping t'ien-hsia*).[3] The new title, by convention, and in analogy to Rome a couple of centuries later, is rendered into English as "august emperor," and is usually just "emperor" in *The Cambridge history of China* volumes. (To avoid the reference to Rome, some authors prefer to translate the title as "august thearch," although that term does not have comparable implications in English.) An emperor/*huang-ti*, by his own or his ancestors' military conquests, commanded an "empire." This is where *The Cambridge history of China* series of volumes begins, with the founding of an effective empire in 221 BCE by the newly named first Ch'in emperor. (There had been dynasties of kings before, but 221 marks the beginning of dynasties of emperors.) The volumes published so far, up to Volume 10, are primarily concerned with a succession of imperial dynasties headed by emperors, with Volume 7 ending with the last claimants who would be rulers of the Ming empire in the seventeenth century.[4]

Although "empire" is used as a conventional term in Volumes 1 through 9 published in *The Cambridge history of China* series, it is not a well-defined concept. In historical literature more generally, "empire" is a problematic, contested term. History books are filled with empires: not only Roman, but Greek, Persian, Byzantine, Holy Roman, Ottoman, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, British, Japanese, and many more that themselves embraced the word "empire" or something like it as self-descriptive or have been ascribed that status by others, usually historians. Even among this small selection, the empires do not have much in common other than commanding more than a few significant territories and peoples beyond where they started or were based. There is no consensus on the taxonomy of "empire," or on the criteria under which the label is to be applied or withheld.[5] In recent times, the term "empire" generally has been used in a pejorative sense, an accusation against ambitious, multi-territorial exertions of power in conflict with the ideal of the nation-state. In these uses applied to more recent times, "empire" is generally

[3] Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih chi* [*Po-na-pen*, 1930–7 ed.] (*c.*90 BCE; Peking, 1972) 6, p. 236. Derk Bodde, "The state and empire of Ch'in," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 1: *The Ch'in and Han empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), p. 53.

[4] Frederick W. Mote and Denis C. Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 7: *The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644, part 1* (New York, 1988).

[5] The secondary literature is enormous on the comparative study of empires. A place to begin is the brief consideration of what they call "universal empire through time and across cultures" in Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, "'Elephant of India': Universal empire through time and across cultures," in *Universal empire: A comparative approach to imperial culture and representation in Eurasian history*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 8–14 and 27–8. In addition to "universal empire" (understood in the singular, perhaps as an ideal type), another term that is invoked is "tributary empire." See Peter Fibiger Bang and C.A. Bayly, *Tributary empires in global history* (New York, 2011). The discussions in both volumes selectively reference the Han, T'ang, Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing empires, all of which partially fit the various criteria used to describe "empire."

a negative term, usually with implications of being bad, of being exploitative of others, a mode of governance used in the past that need be renounced. Although some commentators have tried to point to more positive characteristics of some empires as systems of multinational control, when the area the Ch'ing leaders controlled is treated as still another iteration of "empire" the negative implications of the term do not go away.

Part One of Volume 9, which has the subtitle *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, includes assessments of the four individuals who reigned as the Ch'ing emperor /*huang-ti*/ khan from 1644 to 1795. "Empire" is routinely used to characterize the territories that came under the Ch'ing government's control. Whether we think of empire with the negative implications that the term has acquired in historiography from the twentieth century on, or as a conventional translation of the long-standing, positive Chinese term *t'ien-hsia*, all under Heaven, there are three problematic aspects to be noticed when we consider the historical developments antecedent to the Ch'ing dynasty's "empire."

The first problematic aspect is that there was no settled boundary, not even the Pacific shore, for the territorial limits of the succession of empires treated in *The Cambridge history of China* volumes. They cannot be regarded together as constituting a single empire under a succession of different dynastic names, even though by convention they are all referred to as "China" in the titles of the volumes. The boundaries of the areas controlled under the Han dynasties of the two Liu families (see Volume 1), under the T'ang dynasty of the Li family (see Volume 3), under the Sung of the Chao family (see Volume 5), and under the Ming dynasty of the Chu family (see Volume 7) had significant differences in every direction. The capitals of these five dynastic families were in different places. The origins and backgrounds of the five families were radically different. On the other hand, each of these five empires ruled populations of roughly fifty million persons or more. (By late Ming the population of the empire was in the range of two hundred million.) They each adopted the rhetorical claims entailed by using the title *huang-ti* (emperor) and *t'ien-hsia* (all under Heaven, or empire). They each contributed to the evolving technology of governance using imperial institutions. Together these five (some would say four) dynastic families, the two Liu, the Li, the Chao, and the Chu, from 200 BCE to 1650 or so provided the titular rulers for 1,200 of the 1,850 years.[6] If more restrictive criteria for assessing the degree

[6] In a 1717 edict the K'ang-hsi emperor declared that in the 1,960 years since the first year of the founding Ch'in emperor (counting from when he first became king of Ch'in), there had been 211 people who had been named emperor (*huang-ti*) and had recognized reign periods for tracking historical events. See Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York, 1974), p. 145.

of actual, effective imperial command over major parts of the empire exercised by the reigning emperors and their surrogates are applied, then the percentage of years of the collective rule of these five dynasties would be reduced from two-thirds to less than half the total years from 200 BCE to 1650. In either case, there has not been one continuous empire as a geographical or political entity.

The second problematic aspect of the use of the term "empire" in the volumes of *The Cambridge history of China* prior to the establishment of the Ch'ing dynasty is represented in the discussion of the founding of the Yüan dynasty. Khubilai (1215–94), a grandson of the great conqueror known as Chinggis (d. 1227), maneuvered to become the fifth great *khan*, or *khaghan*, in 1260, and he only proclaimed the Great Yüan dynasty to begin in 1272, with himself as *huang-ti* (emperor).[7] Khubilai and his successors as *khaghan* commanded more inner Asian territory than any previous dynasty considered in *The Cambridge history of China* volumes. Their command of the former Chin and Sung territories was as august emperors (*huang-ti*), with titles, reign names, rituals, and calendars much like the emperors of previous long-lasting dynasties. This dual, blended, or blurred practice combining khan and emperor was not unprecedented, and later it was attractive to some Ming emperors and their advisers, who had designs on recovering control of territories to the north and west. So the second problematic aspect of deploying the label "empire" to characterize or describe the Yüan dynasty's territory is that to do so is to treat Yüan as one more iteration of a succession of empires without asking whether it was something categorically different from what had gone before. We might ask whether the label "empire" has become too elastic, and therefore vague, when it is applied to dynasties from the thirteenth century on in the volumes of *The Cambridge history of China*.

When "empire" is used as the conventional translation for *t'ien-hsia* (all under Heaven), it obscures the later development of an added meaning for that Chinese word and some of its associated words. In part because of the succession of dynasties that included takeovers by outsiders, by the seventeenth century some historically minded writers sought to use *t'ien-hsia* not in a territorial sense, as in "empire," but instead to refer to something more enduring. They argued that *t'ien-hsia* did not change just because there was a change of dynastic family and the extent of the territory it ruled. In their arguments *t'ien-hsia* was a term that conveyed something like civilization, or civilized values and

[7] Morris Rossabi, "The reign of Khubilai khan," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states, 907–1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (New York, 1994), p. 423; and Frederick W. Mote, "Chinese society under Mongol rule, 1215–1368," in ibid., pp. 623–4, which are followed for the spellings of the names.

practices.[8] Left unsaid was that it was "our" civilization, the civilization of the writers making the claim. This interpretation added an ambiguity to what the term *t'ien-hsia* meant. In the mid-eighteenth century, early in his reign, the emperor is recorded as declaring, "I am master of all under Heaven" (*chen wei t'ien-hsia chu*).[9] The context does not limit his meaning of *t'ien-hsia* to the territory he ruled, as in empire, or to a large, diverse set of subjugated peoples, whom he controlled as emperor and khan, or to a non-dynastic tradition of civilization and civilized values. The reader now cannot determine whether the emperor or his audience had such distinctions in mind, but "empire" seems to be an inadequate word to cover his grandiose claim.

As a descriptive term derived from Roman history for an extensive, conquered territory that is also used as a standard term for rendering *t'ien-hsia* (all under Heaven), "empire" is so pervasive in *The Cambridge history of China* volumes, including this one, that it cannot be abandoned. But considering an alternative might enhance understanding of what "empire" means in the specific context of Volume 9. Under the Great Yüan, the Great Ming, and the Great Ch'ing regimes, as they called themselves, the governments ordered massive compilations that assembled geographical information about all the areas under their purview. All three compilations went under the rubric of gazetteer (*chih*, as the genre is usually translated when it refers to materials about territorial units such as a county, a prefecture, a province, or a region). Instead of using "all under Heaven" as the term to indicate the inclusive territory covered in the three massive compilations, the successive sets of editors in their titles used the term "integrated domain" (*i-t'ung*). In his preface to the *Ta Ch'ing i-t'ung chih* (*Gazetteer of the Great Ch'ing integrated domain*), dated the first month of 1744, the Ch'ien-lung emperor explained that his grandfather had ordered a compilation to celebrate the great integrated domain (*ta i-t'ung*), but the work was not finished when he died. His father renewed the commitment. Now, ten years later, the emperor wrote, more than 350 draft chapters had been prepared, covering eighteen provinces (*sheng*) with more than 1,600 prefectures, sub-prefectures, and counties; fifty-seven outer territories (*wai fan*) and attached states (*shu kuo*); and beyond them the thirty-one places that had sent representatives bringing tribute.[10] This was an integrated domain that

[8] "Cheng shih," in Ku Yen-wu, *Jih chih lu chi shih: Wai ch'i chung*, comp. Huang Ju-ch'eng (1834; Shanghai, 1985), 13, p. 5b. Also see the discussions on *Chung-kuo* in chapters 4 and 6.

[9] See chapter 14 below, note 33.

[10] Preface dated the first month of 1744 by the Ch'ien-lung emperor, in *Ta Ch'ing i-t'ung chih: San-pai wu-shih-liu chüan*, 1744 preface date, printed 1764. East Asian Library, Princeton University, Princeton. The date of the submission of the printed version is at the end of the book in a note by the compilers.

was layered out from the imperial center. Notice was taken of effectively independent places with which it had contacts, including the Chosŏn dynasty's Korea and Japan of the Tokugawa shoguns to the east, an unstable Annan to the south, and countries such as Holland in the far west on the Western Ocean.[11]

The term *i-t'ung* as "integrated domain" had a long history. According to an account produced a century later (with supposed quotations from participants' speech), at the moment of the transformation of the king of Ch'in in 221 BCE into the first emperor (*huang-ti*), his chief adviser, Li Ssu, argued successfully against any allocation of territory to subordinates on an irrevocable, inheritable basis. In the course of his argument, Li Ssu used the conventional inclusive term, *t'ien-hsia* (all under Heaven), which had been commonly used during the no-longer-existing Chou dynasty. He meant the term more in the sense of the people now under the ruler's command, not as the territory. As a premise of his argument he used "within the seas" (*hai nei*) in the sense of everywhere that counted, with a geopolitical connotation. He also used what was probably a newer term, *i-t'ung* ("integrated domain"): "Now everywhere within the seas has submitted to His Highness's holy integrated domain."[12] The important distinction, made explicit by Li Ssu, was that previously all under Heaven had been divided up into autonomous, inheritable political units controlled by successions of dynastic lords and tribal leaders nominally under a Chou king. He urged that the new "integrated domain" should be administered by appointed officials on a revocable, salaried basis, not by a hereditary elite. Acknowledging that the newly entitled *huang-ti* (august emperor) had brought together all under Heaven (*ping t'ien-hsia*), Li Ssu proposed a further distinction. "Everywhere within the seas there are now administrative units [that are not inheritable or militarily autonomous] and the rules come from the integrated domain [and are not determined locally]; this has never been the case since high antiquity."[13] This early articulation of an unprecedented ideal of an integrated domain under a Ch'in ruler whose dynastic successors could continue indefinitely was not realized. The first emperor died in 210, and Li Ssu was dead in 208 BCE.

Was the ideal of an integrated domain without delegation or toleration of inherited control over militarily autonomous regions ever approximated? A partial answer, limited to Volume 9, is that as the three Ch'ing rulers

[11] Information about Chosŏn Korea is in chapter 353, information about Annan in chapter 354, information about Japan in chapter 356, information about Western Ocean countries that had direct relations with the Ch'ing court in chapter 355. These countries are discussed in chapters in this volume, in this order.

[12] Ssu-ma, *Shih chi* 6, p. 239. [13] Ssu-ma, *Shih chi* 6, p. 236.

by the mid-eighteenth century doubled their territory far beyond the initial conquests of the seventeenth century,[14] what they conquered was not left as nominally or loosely controlled autonomous regions. They weakened existing claims of inherited territorial privilege by subordinated leaders, and they blocked new claims by Manchus, Mongols, and others in their domain. On the other hand, from the beginning the Ch'ing rulers did not impose a uniform administrative system. The eighteen provinces, sometimes called the inner areas (*nei ti*) and formed out of what mostly had been directly controlled Ming territory, were each administered by Ch'ing governors appointed by the emperor under a changing set of criteria (see chapter 1 below). Pairs of provinces and their governors were usually overseen by a proximate governor-general. Provincial government also was supervised routinely from the capital on a divided functional basis by the six ministries inherited from the Ming system, and through the second half of the eighteenth century on a strategic basis by the Grand Council (*Chün-chi ch'u*), a mid-Ch'ing innovation. Following Ming practice, the Ch'ing government continued to divide each province into a hierarchy of prefectures (*fu*), sub-prefectures (*chou*) and counties (*hsien*).

The island of Taiwan is an example of a territory with a significant non-Han population that had not been under Ming control but was incorporated into the Ch'ing provincial hierarchy after its conquest in 1683 (see chapter 2). Although there were special circumstances, especially related to large-scale immigration, Taiwan illustrates the complexity of integrating new territory into the prefecture–county hierarchy that had been reconfirmed as areas formerly controlled by the Ming government were taken over by Ch'ing forces in the seventeenth century.

The Manchu emperors successively subordinated more non-Ming territories in Mongolia, Tibet, and Sinkiang, but without bringing them into the province–prefecture–county hierarchy. Some were placed first under the newly developed banner system, and all came under the mainly civil administration of a board that ultimately was known as the *Li-fan yüan* (sometimes called the "board for governing outer territories"), charged with overseeing outer territories (*wai fan*) (see chapter 3). The question of a unified administrative system could always be raised, if only rhetorically. In an interview in 1715 the K'ang-hsi emperor asked an official who had lived for a year in Mongol territory if Mongols could be governed by the ways of Han people (*Han jen chih tao*), meaning a provincial system. The answer, of course, was that it was not possible.[15] Although they were administered separately, and differently, from

[14] See chapters 3–5 of *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1, and chapters 2 and 3 of this volume.

[15] Chung-kuo ti-i li-shih tang-an-kuan, comp., *K'ang-hsi ch'i chü chu*, Volume 2 (Peking, 1984), p. 2014.

the inner areas, the outer territories were functionally also incorporated into an integrated domain by the middle of the eighteenth century. In this respect, the Ch'ing system was moving close to satisfying Li Ssu's main criterion of not allowing territorial, militarized lords to remain in place or to develop.

The three eighteenth-century Ch'ing rulers did allow hereditary elites. There was a privileged dynastic family, known as the Aisin Gioro clan, which included the pool of sons from which emperors were selected, but from which direct powers and also peripheral members were stripped away.[16] Of more military and political consequence was the conquest elite.[17] (Elite is used here in a simple, vague sense of a relatively small, discernible group that wields disproportionate power over other elements of society, and has protected status and access to wealth.) Conquest elites were descendants of bannermen, especially leaders, who served successfully during the years of the conquests of eastern Mongols and the Ming empire. These descendants inherited notable ranks in the Manchu, Mongol, and Han-chün banners, and their elite status gave them advantaged possibilities of appointment to leadership roles in the Ch'ing government.[18]

A separate, larger elite, the core of which was men recruited on the basis of a civil service examination system largely taken over from the Ming dynasty, staffed the bulk of the regular official posts in the civil bureaucracy in the capital and in the provincial administrative hierarchies down to the county level.[19] Their status was not normally inheritable, although sons of important men had a comparative advantage, and the Ch'ing system began to allow the purchase of eligibility for appointment to office. This elite consisted of serving and retired officials, and it was augmented by holders of higher examination degrees who had not been appointed to office. Officials and higher-degree holders were themselves a superior subset of the larger pool of men known as literati (*shih*) since the eleventh century. Literati in Ch'ing times can be identified by their ability to compose examination-level prose essays and poetry. They constituted more loosely defined, overlapping groups variously called the examination elite, the educated elite, the learned elite,

[16] Pamela K. Crossley, "The conquest elite of the Ch'ing empire," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 314–15.

[17] Crossley, "The conquest elite of the Ch'ing empire" esp. pp. 310–13.

[18] See the discussion in Crossley, "The conquest elite of the Ch'ing empire" pp. 310–59. With some hesitation, Mark C. Elliott decided to speak of all the groups in the banners as "Manchus." Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu way: The eight banners and ethnic identity in late imperial China* (Stanford, 2001), pp. 14–15. In his sense, banner elite, conquest elite, and Manchu elite all would refer to more or less the same constructed group.

[19] See the discussion in Benjamin A. Elman, "The social roles of literati in early to mid-Ch'ing," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 360–427.

the scholar elite,[20] and sometimes the intellectual elite. The autonomy of this elite group, involved in a culture of books that stretched back at least to the eleventh century, was gradually co-opted and constrained in the eighteenth century (see chapter 14).

Another term, "local elites," refers to more diffuse groups that could include officials at home, literati, men of some wealth, and others active in local affairs (see chapter 15). Although the term "merchant elite" is not used in Volume 9, through the eighteenth century there was a noticeable increase in men who owned significant wealth derived principally from regional and overseas trade in salt, tea, and other processed commodities, separate from rents from real estate.

These several differently constituted but not wholly distinct elites – even the members of the imperial family and the conquest elite that had inherited status – all were effectively managed or intimidated by the three administrative emperors through the eighteenth century. The emperors pursued policies and practices that created the conditions under which the different elites, especially the successful leaders in each group, perceived an interest in working with the emperor in a modulated political competition for advantage over other elite groups. Under the simple criterion of an integrated domain that did not condone autonomous control of territory by individuals who had inheritable power, the emperors in the eighteenth century administrated an integrated domain. In this volume it is called the Ch'ing dynasty and the Ch'ing empire, but it represented a new order that was categorically different from the "old" empires.[21]

Given that all under Heaven (*t'ien-hsia*) has sometimes been taken to imply a claim about "universal empire," did Ch'ing emperors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries recognize or accept limits on the extent of their control? The Ch'ing government tolerated different practices in handling its relations with neighboring areas that it did not take to be constituent parts of the directly administered areas under the six ministries or the *Li-fan yüan*.

The government in Korea under the Chosŏn dynasty of kings maintained its independent administration, although it was coerced into accepting the status of tributary state to the Ch'ing government from 1637 on (see chapter 4). The Ch'ing government dominated but did not directly control the Chosŏn monarchy, and generally did not take notice of the Korean elites' continuing ideological resistance to any implications of Manchu superiority. By having

[20] Alexander Woodside, "The Ch'ien-lung reign," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), p. 282.

[21] Willard J. Peterson, "Introduction: New order for the old order," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 1–8.

autonomous, inherited control of their own economic and military resources, the Korean kings were not subordinated as part of an integrated domain under Li Ssu's criterion. Neither were, in the south, the kings of Annan, who, like the kings of Korea, had a formal tributary relation to the Ming emperors that was transferred to the Ch'ing emperors in the seventeenth century. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the kings of Annan themselves were controlled by territorial lords who were at war with even more southern rivals. The Ch'ing government tolerated a disunited area with endemic warfare on the southern edge of their domain, and quickly withdrew from an attempted military intervention at the end of the eighteenth century. Ch'ing emperors never commanded what came to be known after 1802 as Vietnam (see chapter 5). The rulers of Korea and Vietnam maintained the formality of being in a tributary relation with the Ch'ing court, and at times used it to their advantage, even as they maintained their autonomy.

To the north of their territories, Ch'ing emperors negotiated and maintained an accommodation with the eastward-expanding Russian empire.[22] Farther to the east, although some previous regimes in Japan had accepted a tributary relation to the rulers on the mainland, the Tokugawa regime from its founding at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in the aftermath of the failed Japanese invasion of the Korean peninsula, never entered into a tributary relation with the Ch'ing court, even while establishing commercial and cultural contacts with the Ch'ing empire via intermediaries (see chapter 6). In these cases – Korea under the Chosŏn kings, Annan nominally under the Le dynasty of kings, Russia under the Romanov tsars, and Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate – there were different degrees of tributary relations – from frequent to none – and also of non-tributary involvement through the eighteenth century. However, each of these countries had its own autonomous, hereditary rulers with their own significant military forces. They were not parts of an integrated domain in the sense put forward by Li Ssu, but they were accorded sections of the *Gazetteer of the Great Ch'ing integrated domain* as places that at some point in the past had paid tribute to an emperor.

The *Gazetteer* also named and loosely described certain European countries, even though these countries were not in any sense subordinated parts of a Ch'ing-controlled polity. In the early Ch'ing period representatives of European countries arrived in Macao and tried to present themselves to the authorities in Canton as their earlier counterparts had in Ming times as coming

[22] Jonathan D. Spence, "The K'ang-hsi reign," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 152–3; and Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 10: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, part 1*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 35–106.

from a tributary state. They were participating, along with others representing lesser political entities, in the formalities of being bearers of tribute in order to be allowed to trade at southern coastal cities.[23] Some of these Europeans made it to the Ch'ing court in Peking, but from the 1680s on few Europeans were involved in embassies or as tribute bearers. They were trading on the southern, coastal edge of the Ch'ing empire, along with many others from other parts of a maritime system that extended from Nagasaki to Malacca and beyond (see chapters 5 and 7). The different, evolving practical arrangements that the Ch'ing government implemented in its relations with neighboring political entities and toward both state-sponsored representatives and other visitors who were primarily interested in trade together seem to show that limits were tacitly recognized for what was administered as an integrated domain.

In quite different circumstances, dozens of members of the Society of Jesus also passed through Macao. They traveled and lived in many parts of Ch'ing territory, even in Peking. Some of the Jesuits were spread out as missionaries in the provinces. A few were employed by the Ch'ing state on special projects, including serving as tutors to the emperor. The various countries in Europe from which the Jesuits came were clearly not part of an integrated domain, nor was the Society in Rome to which they belonged. All of them adapted to the constraints that were variably imposed by Ch'ing government officials at different levels, even as they disseminated Western knowledge through their teaching and their books published in Chinese. Some of the new knowledge was selected and incorporated, at the highest levels, in part because of the K'ang-hsi emperor's personal interest, into imperially endorsed publications in fields of knowledge such as calendar systems, astronomy, and mathematics. At the same time, from the beginning of the Ch'ing period, literati who were not affiliated with the government also read and wrote, and published, on the new knowledge (see chapters 8 and 9).

The potentially destabilizing new knowledge from Western countries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was accepted at the government level and among literati interested in the new ideas, although in the early eighteenth century the ideas began to be characterized as neither new nor fundamentally Western. Their acceptance raises the question whether the ideal of an integrated domain extended to cultural and intellectual production and circulation. The question also comes because Li Ssu, who articulated the concept of an integrated domain for territories under his ruler in 221 BCE,

[23] For a summary of the complex western Pacific maritime environment in late Ming times that included the south China coast, see John E. Wills Jr., "Relations with maritime Europeans, 1514–1662," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 8: *The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644, part 2*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (New York, 1998), pp. 333–75.

is held responsible for proposing at that time to burn potentially disruptive written material as a means to make it easier to maintain the new order under his new emperor.[24] The Ch'ing government, from its inception in 1636, on occasion attempted to impose strict sanctions specifically against some printed books and manuscripts, and more generally against expressions of opinions that were intended to be, or might be construed as, critical of the contemporary conduct of government, but did it go to the extremes that are imputed to Li Ssu? A complicated answer must be considered in sectors and in stages of the Ch'ing period to the year 1800.

Textual materials produced and transmitted by medical practitioners and scholars investigating the rich heritage of medical knowledge were largely left unregulated by the Ch'ing government, as were most other types of technical knowledge. They were not political. Even knowledge related to the calendar, which always had implications for the legitimacy of its sponsoring government, was much less controlled than it had been in Ming times (see chapter 9). Another rich and deeply rooted written tradition had to do with Taoist writings. Like elite medical practitioners, Taoist clergy who participated in professional service activities at the Ch'ing court were generally left unregulated. Even farther outside the imperial purview were local clergy and lay adherents who performed ritual services and taught in the provinces throughout the realm. They went as unnoticed as the broad range of medical providers who operated on all levels of society (see chapter 10). On the other hand, in the eighteenth century, Jesuits from Europe were strictly limited in their missionary activities, and the few who remained after 1720 mostly served Ch'ing imperial interests.

In the first few decades of the Ch'ing period – that is, the 1640s to 1670s – literati who were not participating in government service in general were left to pursue their intellectual interests, although there were sanctions against expressions of views, whether in writing or in public speech, that could be construed as critical of the Ch'ing government and of the Manchus, or as sympathetic to the deposed Ming dynasty. A broad spectrum of interest continued after 1644 in refining and even reformulating the primary concerns left over from Ming times, especially interpretations of the grounds of moral understanding and the motives and means of moral cultivation and moral action. These were largely discussed in terms that were incompatible with

[24] Ssu-ma, *Shih chi* 6, pp. 254–5. Li Ssu's proposal, which the Ch'in emperor supposedly endorsed, was made in direct response to a suggestion that the old ways be restored by granting inheritable privileges to relatives of the emperor and to his most accomplished officials; that is, to back away from the concept of an integrated domain because it did not create inheritable political units with substantive military and fiscal powers.

the established teachings that the new Ch'ing government had taken over from Ming times in determining who would succeed in the civil examination system. These aspects of what is still characterized as Ming thought were not overthrown along with the Ming government, and Ch'ing authorities took little notice of this discourse (see chapter 11). They endorsed the authority of the mainstream Sung dynasty interpretations of classical learning for the purposes of the examination system that continued without interruption.

The Ch'ing institutions of territorial control stabilized, and as it transpired they contributed to almost a century without war (from 1680 to 1770) within the provinces and in the more central areas administered under the *Li-fan yüan*. During that time, three successive Ch'ing emperors took an increased interest in, and exerted greater control over, intellectual production. On the positive side, they patronized groups of scholars at the capital who produced a series of major publications, some of them massive, that were intended to establish unified, dominating interpretations of important aspects of the cultural heritage. There was a darker side, which included intellectual suppression and self-censorship (see chapter 14). As arbiters of the new political order, these emperors presumed they could have control over cultural values. They were proactive in asserting that control. The Ch'ien-lung emperor was interested in writings that merited patronage, preservation, and transmission, but also in eliminating, almost as Li Ssu had proposed, writings that might be disruptive of social order. At least in some of the imperial rhetoric, all the social practices for all in his realm came under the authority of the emperor.[25] The government in Peking and its extension into the provincial hierarchy controlled who among the local elite in the counties could be rewarded publicly, what could be written in local gazetteers and other official publications, and much more. The Ch'ien-lung emperor extended the positive and negative effects of imperial control over intellectual production and preservation, and he wanted to do so over social norms. After he retired in 1795, the imperial center's direct influence began to retract. Writers, readers, and collectors of books experienced a reduction of central government involvement in their scholarly pursuits. Local elites began to recover some autonomy in local cultural and political affairs (see chapter 15).

Was there an integrated domain by 1750 in the sense, going back to Li Ssu, of a territorial administrative system that did not have constituent parts that were inheritable and militarily autonomous? The answer seems to be yes. Was there an integrated domain that extended central control over significant, but not all, portions of the cultural and intellectual spheres, especially those that might serve as sources of dissent? In spite of the censorship and disruptions,

[25] See chapter 14 below, pp. 616–17.

the answer seems to be not yet clear, even in the 1770s when imperial pressures were at their most extreme.

The new order that the three eighteenth-century emperors were instrumental in building, whether or not it is regarded as an integrated domain, did not last long. As Volume 10 of *The Cambridge history of China* shows, this new order (described in the Introduction to Volume 10 as the old order)[26] was less effective through the nineteenth century, although few would have predicted that outcome in the year 1800, when the coverage in this volume mainly ends.

[26] John K. Fairbank, "Introduction: The old order," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 10: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, part 1*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 1–34.

CHAPTER 1

GOVERNING PROVINCES

R. Kent Guy

Under the Ch'ing dynasty, provincial governors (*hsün-fu*) played vital roles in each of the six traditional divisions of administration: personnel, finance, justice, war, ritual, and public works. Provincial governors supervised lower-level officials in the prefectures and counties, appointing some and dismissing and recommending others as need and opportunity arose. Assisted by lieutenant governors (*pu-cheng shih*), who in Ming times had effectively been provincial finance commissioners, Ch'ing governors were responsible for expenditures made from provincial treasuries, which held roughly one-quarter of the revenues collected by the dynasty. Governors oversaw and often personally attended provincial examinations, an important step in the civil service examination ladder, supervised by the Ministry of Rites. They provided logistical support for military garrisons located in their provinces, and themselves commanded garrison forces. They supervised and were responsible for financial accounting on local engineering projects, and reviewed all criminal and civil sentences meted out by local officials before such cases were sent to the capital for approval. Not only were they important functionaries; provincial governors also had the privilege of writing palace memorials, documents on which modern studies of the Ch'ing government and its capacities at the local level rest.

Strong, stable provincial government in the Ch'ing period was a relatively new phenomenon, as previous dynasties had not found it easy to delegate authority over province-sized units. Territorial leaders who were powerful enough to be effective in administration, like the regional commissioners (*mu*) of the later Han,[1] or the military commissioners (*chieh-tu shih*) of the T'ang, posed challenges to the central government, particularly when they

[1] On regional commissioners in Han, see B. J. Mansvelt Beck, "The fall of Han," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 1: *The Ch'in and Han empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), p. 334.

were located on the borders.[2] Conversely, those units that were controlled by the center, like T'ang prefectures (*fu*), were too small and numerous to extract sufficient resources to maintain order when faced with larger military threats. The Yüan dynasty (1271–1368) contributed most to the institutional development of provinces in the late imperial period. Forced by the extent of their conquests to delegate territorial control, the Mongol leaders set borders for province-like units, and adopted the practice of transferring qualified officials from one to another of the areas they had conquered. Lacking in some cases even the language of those they governed, Yüan governors remained dependent on the central government's control of military and economic resources. If the Mongol-appointed territorial administrators were to survive in their regional postings, they had to learn to deploy Yüan power effectively. The weakness of this system was that within each large territorial unit authority was delegated separately to multiple officials, one each to oversee civilian and military matters, as well as to an ombudsman-like provincial censor to assess the officials' performance. Co-ordinating the activities of these separate administrators was a constant problem, and made consistent, stable regional administration difficult.[3]

Nine years after declaring himself emperor, the founding ruler of the Ming dynasty, Chu Yüan-chang (r. 1368–98), instituted a major reform in civil administrative practice. He converted branch secretariats (*hsing chung-shu sheng*) that had been developed by the Yüan government into the seats of commissioners for the promulgation and dissemination of government policies (*ch'eng-hsüan pu-cheng shih*), in effect offices of provincial civilian administration. In 1426 the Ming government began the practice of using grand co-ordinators (*hsün-fu*) to manage both military and civilian affairs in particular regions of the empire.[4] Over the course of the Ming period, thirty-one posts for grand co-ordinators were created. During the 1420s and 1430s most of them were

[2] The literature on the failure of military commissioners in the T'ang and the An Lu-shan Rebellion is extensive. See Charles A. Peterson, "Court and province in mid- and late T'ang," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 3: *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, part 1*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 464–560.

[3] On Yüan provincial government, see Morris Rossabi, "The reign of Khubilai khan," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states, 907–1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (New York, 1994), pp. 414–89; Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian rule in China: Local administration in the Yuan dynasty* (Cambridge, MA, 1989); David M. Farquhar, "Structure and function in the Yüan imperial government," in *China under Mongol rule*, ed. John D. Langlois Jr. (Princeton, 1981), pp. 25–55; and Sung Lien et al., eds., *Yüan shih* (1370; Peking, 1960) 91, pp. 2305–7. See the map outlining the borders of these divisions in Rossabi, "The reign of Khubilai khan," pp. 440–1.

[4] See Hok-lam Chan, "The Chien-wen, Yung-lo, Hung-hsi, and Hsüan-te reigns, 1399–1435," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 7: *The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644, part 1*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis C. Twitchett (New York, 1988), p. 292; and Chang Che-lang, *Ming-tai hsün-fu yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1995).

sent to areas south and west of the new capital in Peking: Chekiang, Shantung, Shansi, Honan, Kiangsi, and Hu-kuang.[5] Between 1435 and 1475, grand co-ordinators were appointed along the empire's frontiers and around the capital area at Shun-t'ien, Shensi, Kansu, Liaotung, Pao-ting, Hsuan-fu, Ta-t'ung, Ninghsia, Yen-sui, and Szechwan.[6] In the sixteenth century, most new grand co-ordinator positions were located farther to the south, the scenes of violence between the state's representatives and local bandit groups in Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Kweichow, Yunnan, Yün-yang, Nan-kan, Fukien, and P'ien-yüan in Hu-kuang. In the seventeenth century, as threats to Ming territories appeared on the northern frontier, grand co-ordinators were established at strategic locations to protect the two capitals: at Tientsin, Ch'eng-tien, Miyün, An-ch'ing, Teng-lai, and Huai-yang.[7] By 1644, more than half the grand co-ordinators were located within one day's horse ride of Peking. In the late sixteenth century, when the grand co-ordinators had proved inadequate to the task of defending the dynasty, the position of supreme commander (*tsung-tu*) was created on top of the grand co-ordinators. This was the situation when the Ch'ing leaders took over.

Change in the provincial order after 1644 was not the product of a grand design for governing that Manchu rulers brought with them to Peking, although elements of their system reflected their military experience. Rather, the new order was developed in response to shorter-term economic and political pressures, and represented a kind of institutional bricolage, a hybrid transformation of existing institutions to suit new purposes. Ch'ing rulers, through their regularized appointments of governors (*hsün-fu*) and other strategic institutional innovations, gradually created a powerful post that could serve as a vehicle for both administrative reform and the maintenance of peace and stability. The office of provincial governor developed in four stages, corresponding roughly to the reigns of the first four Ch'ing emperors.

During the Shun-chih reign (1644–61), the Ch'ing leaders established a geographical framework for civilian administration. They rejected as too costly the multiple, redundant military postings of the late Ming. They delineated administrative boundaries that in many cases survive today. In the later

[5] In the Ming, some grand co-ordinators were identified by the names of the region they governed, often comparable to a modern province, and some were identified by the city at which they were posted. This practice persisted in the early Ch'ing, but by the mid-Ch'ing most governors were identified by the name of their province.

[6] In a number of these cases, *hsün-fu* were posted at the sites where Ming princes had been earlier enfeoffed, with some expectation that they could lead the defense there. Unofficial sources indicated that a second *hsün-fu* was also established in Szechwan at Sung-p'an. There was also a *hsün-fu* established in T'ung-chou, but the function of this official, minding the transport of grain to the capital, was quite different from that of the other officials who held the title.

[7] *Hsün-fu* were established briefly at Shanhaikuan, Ch'ang-p'ing, and Ch'eng-te.

seventeenth century, during the K'ang-hsi reign (1662–1722), the multiple territorial delegates of central authority under the Ming and Yüan systems were eliminated, creating a new, streamlined, and largely civilian provincial governorship. The Yung-cheng emperor (r. 1723–35) used his powers of special appointment to place in office men who would not have qualified under previous procedures. He also used a new secret palace memorial system to establish personal ties with those who represented him in the provinces. The reign of his son and successor, the Ch'ien-lung emperor (r. 1736–96), saw a further centralization of provincial administration, with governors serving as the functional subordinates of the Grand Council (*Chün-chi-ch'u*), a new and powerful administrative institution. Governors' appointments and tenures were subordinated to the interests and emphases of the men who served successively as chief grand councilors.

THE SHUN-CHIH REIGN: TAKING OVER FROM THE MING GOVERNMENT

Changes in the institution of governor (*hsün-fu*) began soon after the Ch'ing occupation of Peking in 1644. The new rulers set out to fashion a territorial administration for the Ming areas that they were acquiring. In the spring of that year, the questions to be addressed were fairly basic ones: where should provincial governors be positioned, and who should occupy the posts? The answers that evolved through the first reign after the fall of the Ming dynasty foreshadowed the subsequent development of Ch'ing territorial government in the conquered Ming areas.

The locations of provincial governors

Ch'ing rulers, like those of previous dynasties, balanced historical precedents against political and fiscal needs as they decided where to post territorial personnel. The Manchus' centrally controlled armies achieved domination over northern Ming areas in 1644–5, and Han-chün bannermen were installed as governors-general (*tsung-tu*) of the newly conquered territories.[8] These Han-chün bannermen had performed well during the first phase of the conquest,

[8] In discussions of Ming history, *tsung-tu* is usually translated as "supreme commander"; for Ch'ing history, *tsung-tu* is translated as "governor-general." On the establishment of governors-general, see *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (1899; Peking, 1991), ch. 23, pp. 1–3; Chao-Erh-hsün et al., *Ch'ing shih* (Yang-ming-shan, 1961), ch. 117, pp. 1385–8; and Ch'ien Shih-fu, comp., *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao* (Peking, 1980), Volume 2, pp. 1342–74 (see the especially useful chart on pp. 1510–11). On the institution of Manchu, Mongol, and Han-chün banners and bannermen, see chapters 1 and 6 in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1.

and the Prince Regent, Dorgon (1612–50), who began to rule for the new, six-year-old Shun-chih emperor, had high expectations for them as civil administrators. He placed them at the top of the developing hierarchy of regional officials, a half-step below garrison commanders in rank. Their role was not the command of troops, but overseeing the projection of Ch'ing power over the cities and the countryside. In 1645, five governors-general were appointed for Shansi, Shensi, the Huai-yang area, the southeast coast, and Hu-kuang; two more governors-general were assigned to manage grain transport and river conservancy across provincial boundaries. Subsequently governors-general were established for Chiang-nan in 1646; Liang-Kuang in 1647; the capital area (Chihli), Shantung, and Honan in 1649; and Yunnan–Kweichow in 1653.

Initially the goal seems to have been to fill Ming posts of grand co-ordinators (*hsün-fu*) with competent, trusted men. In 1644, the new rulers appointed eight men to serve as governors in places on the North China Plain where the Ming had posted grand co-ordinators. By the end of 1645, Ch'ing appointees had replaced Ming men in twelve other locations in north and northwest China and the Yangtze valley. In the late 1640s there were Ch'ing governors (*hsün-fu*) in twenty more posts: Shun-t'ien, Tientsin, Hsüan-fu, Anhwei, Shantung, Paoting, Teng-chou, Shansi, Honan, Shensi, Yen-sui, Kansu, Fukien, Chekiang, Kiangsi, Yün-yang, Nan-kan, Hu-kuang, P'ien-yüan and Ninghsia.[9] In addition, the Ch'ing leaders created two new positions. A governor was appointed at Nanking to replace the administrators of the Ming southern capital, and another was assigned to manage transport and commerce along the Yangtze River.

As Ch'ing armies moved into the south and west, six new governors were appointed, in Foochow (1647), Szechwan (1648), Kwangtung (1649), Kwangsi (1649), and later Kweichow (1658), and Yunnan (1659).[10] Ch'ing armies were still in active pursuit of Ming loyalist forces, so that reappointing existing Ming personnel to many of these southern postings was not feasible. Most often in the south, the leaders of conquering armies, such as Wu Sankuei (1612–78), worked together with local people who could be persuaded to collaborate with them. These regimes were unstable, and it took at least a generation for civilian territorial government to be secured in the southern tier of provinces.[11] By 1659 governors appointed by Ch'ing officials in Peking served in twenty-six of the thirty locations where Ming grand co-ordinators had been stationed. The only Ming posts to which the Ch'ing did not make

[9] Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, pp. 1517–18.

[10] Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, pp. 1519–25.

[11] See Lynn A. Struve, *The southern Ming, 1644–1662* (New Haven, 1984), for descriptions of the conflicts in the early days of the Ch'ing in the south.

appointments were Liaotung, Ch'eng-t'ien, Mi-yün, and Ta-t'ung, positions that had been created to secure Ming defenses against Mongols and Manchus.

Having replaced the staff of the Ming provincial offices, the Ch'ing government began to adapt the system to its own needs. The most important development of the 1650s was a reduction in the total number of positions for financial reasons. As they expanded their area of control, Ch'ing rulers found their new empire enormously expensive to administer. In its later years, the Ming government had significant fiscal problems, and the new dynasty was initially unable to increase tax revenues or even to secure accurate tax rolls. In 1649, the Ministry of Revenue memorialized the throne to propose a number of steps to deal with what must have been a serious shortfall:

> In our dynasty's establishment of government, the most important thing has been sympathy for the people. Since the conquest, we have abolished illegal taxes in order to succor the people. Now, however, armies are on the march, and border areas have not yet been settled. Yearly income does not balance yearly expenditures. This office therefore proposes that licentiates (*chien-sheng*) and lower-ranking officials be allowed to purchase office, that Taoist and Buddhist ordination certificates be sold, that criminals be allowed to pay fines rather than suffer corporal punishment, and that the governorships of Tientsin, Feng-yang, and Anhwei be abolished.[12]

In 1649, positions for *hsün-fu* were eliminated at Pao-ting near the capital, and in the lower Yangtze at Feng-yang and Anhwei. The government determined that order had been restored in the area, and Manchu and Han troops originally stationed there were transferred farther south.[13] Beginning in 1652, *hsün-fu* posts of primarily military significance were eliminated along the northern borders at Hsüan-fu, Yen-sui, and Ninghsia. In the south the posts at Nan-kan in southern Kiangsi and Yün-yang in eastern Szechwan, which had been created to monitor the movement of people through critical passes into central China, were eliminated as it became apparent that Manchu garrison commanders in the north and governors-general in the south could control the situation. In 1666, there were eighteen positions remaining for *hsün-fu*, now governors. There were eighteen provinces.

Typical of the pattern of creation and dissolution of a governor's position was the posting at Teng-chou, a port on the north side of the Shantung peninsula that is today known as P'eng-lai. Teng-chou was not a traditional center of regional administration, but before the harbor silted up in the eighteenth

[12] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 44, p. 10b, quoted in Fu Tsung-mao, *Ch'ing-tai tu-fu chih-tu* (Taipei, 1963), p. 12.

[13] The position of governor at Feng-yang was restored in 1657, when troops were returned from the south, but was abolished permanently in 1665.

Map 2. Eighteen provincial administrative areas

century it was a major port of embarkation on the Yellow Sea.[14] In 1621 the Ming government had posted a grand co-ordinator in the city because it seemed to be an ideal launching place for naval attacks against the Manchu threat in the north. The position had been allowed to lapse in 1629, in part because of the difficulty of co-ordinating with Tientsin and Liaotung.[15] It was re-created in 1630 when Yellow Sea pirates led by K'ung Yu-te laid siege to the city,[16] but was vacated with the Ch'ing conquest in the spring of 1644. Later that summer, Chang Jo-ch'i, a native of Teng-chou who was then serving as administrator of Peking, memorialized the new Ch'ing emperor urging that a governor be established in that coastal city. Chang nominated two individuals, one an official in the Ministry of Revenue and the other a censor of a circuit in Honan province, praising them both as administrators and assuring the court that either could do the job. He concluded the memorial by writing that he knew these men well, since one was his kinsman and the other his official colleague.[17] A month after Chang's memorial, Dorgon appointed a governor to Teng-chou, although neither of those that Chang had recommended.[18]

Chang's plea for a governorship at Teng-chou rested on an argument for the protection of mercantile interests in the port, and it is likely that early Ch'ing appointees there were meant to be specialists in commercial affairs. Of the three who later held the Teng-chou post, two went on to supervise river and grain transport along the Yellow River and the Grand Canal.[19] As these inland transport routes were secured, the court was confronted with a report from the Ministry of Revenue that its holdings of grain and cash were not sufficient to cover expenditures. The Shun-chih emperor asked the ministry officials to recommend cost-saving measures, and abolition of the Teng-chou and Hsüan-fu governorships was on a long list of proposed expedients. Eventually, the governorship at Teng-chou was replaced with the office of a naval intendant, who commanded a brigade of waterborne defense forces.[20]

As the number of governors' positions was being reduced to eighteen by 1666, the number of cities where administration commissioners (*ch'eng hsüan*

[14] Thomas R. Gottschang and Diana Lary, *Swallows and settlers: The great migration from north China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor, 2000), pp. 31–2.

[15] Chang Che-lang, *Ming-tai hsün-fu yen-chiu*, pp. 117–19.

[16] See Christopher S. Agnew, "Migrants and mutineers: The rebellion of Kong Youde and seventeenth-century northeast Asia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52 No. 3 (2009), pp. 505–41.

[17] The memorial by Chang Jo-ch'i is in "Shun-chih ch'u nien lung-lo yü k'ung-chih Han-tsu kuan-shen shih-liao," in *Ch'ing tai tang-an shih-liao ts'ung-pien* 13 (1990), p. 28. For Chang Jo-ch'i's biography, see *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* (1928; Taipei, 1962) 79, pp. 50–2.

[18] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 6, p. 8a.

[19] Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, pp. 1517–19.

[20] *Shan-tung t'ung-chih* (Tsinan, 1877; rpt. Shanghai, 1915), ch. 115, pp. 3283–4.

pu-cheng shih) were posted increased from fourteen in 1659 to eighteen in 1667. Everywhere a governor was posted, there was now also an administration commissioner, and this arrangement changed the character of both positions. In Ming times, administration commissioners were responsible for geographically bounded areas equivalent to provinces, but grand co-ordinators, on the other hand, had been direct imperial appointees whose mandate was more functional than geographic. Under the Ch'ing, governors became the senior officials within administration commissioners' jurisdictions, with responsibility for a specific geographical area, a process that one scholar has termed the "territorialization" of provincial administration.[21] Because the governor (*hsün-fu*) had emerged as the senior provincial official in the Ch'ing period, it is the practice to refer to the administration commissioners as their lieutenant governors.

The cycle played out in Teng-chou of Ch'ing appointees being sent to and then withdrawn from military outposts eventually produced a map of provinces different from the late Ming situation. In Table 1.1, the locations of Ming grand co-ordinators and Ch'ing provincial governors are compared. In the final arrangement, the Ch'ing government had about half, thirteen out of twenty-five, of the Ming postings of grand co-ordinators.

Ch'ing provinces were similar to the territories of provincial administrative commissioners that the first Ming emperor began in order to reorganize Yüan territory. The locations for governors were for the most part river valley cities of trade and commerce where civilian populations paid taxes and did business. These were centers that the Ch'ing had to control if they were to govern successfully. The posts that they eliminated were the ones that the Ming had created for military emergencies, including outposts along the northern border (Hsüan-fu, Ninghsia, Yen-sui, Ta-t'ung) that covered the Ming retreat from direct involvement in the affairs of the steppe, as well as internal control posts in the south (Nan-kan, Yün-yang and P'ien-yüan). The disappearance of these positions pointed to one of the fundamental characteristics of early Ch'ing rule: the Manchu leadership preferred to retain direct control of the preponderance of military force through their own organizational resources, especially the banner armies, than to add this power to the portfolio of civilian administrators. Posted in centers of civilian control and still retaining some of the functions of military occupiers, provincial governors in the Shun-chih reign were not fully tied to either the civilian or the military hierarchies.

[21] Hsü Ch'un-feng, "Ch'ing-tai tu-fu chih-tu ti ch'üeh-li," *Li-shih tang-an* No. 1 (2006), p. 64. Hsü sees the "territorialization" process as having been completed in 1748, when governors lost their concurrent titles as censors and it was decreed that the governor was senior to the lieutenant governor.

Table 1.1. *Locations of Ming grand co-ordinators (*hsün-fu*) and Ch'ing provincial governors (*hsün-fu*)*

Ming	Ming only	Ming and Ch'ing	Ch'ing only
Shantung (Chi-nan)		Shantung (1644)	
	Teng-lai*		
Shansi (T'ai-yüan)		Shansi (1644)	
Honan (Kaifeng)		Honan (1644)	
Chekiang (Hangchow)		Chekiang (1645)	
Kiangsi (Nan-ch'ang)		Kiangsi (1645)	
	Nan-kan*		
Shensi (Sian)		Shensi (1645)	
Kansu (Kan-chou)		Kansu (1645)	
	Liaotung*		
	Hsüan-fu*		
	Ninghsia*		
	Yen-sui*		
	Ta-t'ung*		
Fukien (Foochow)		Fukien (1647)	
Szechwan (Chengtu)		Szechwan (1648)	
Kwangtung (Canton)		Kwangtung (1649)	
Kwangsi (Kweilin)		Kwangsi (1652)	
Kweichow (Kuei-yang)		Kweichow (1652)	
Yunnan		Yunnan (1659)	
			Chihli (1660)
	Tientsin*		
	Shun-t'ien*		
	Pao-ting*		
			Anhwei (1661)
			Kiangsu (1661)
	An-ch'ing*		
Hu-kuang (Wu-ch'ang)			Hupei (1724)
			Hunan (1724)
	P'ien-yüan*		
	Yün-yang*		
	Mi-yün		
	Huai-yang		
	Ch'eng-t'ien		

* Existed briefly during the Ch'ing; abolished by 1675.

Sources: Chang T'ing-yü, *Ming shih*, 73, pp. 1776–9, and Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 3, pp. 1516–17.

Appointing governors

Late in 1645 the Ch'ing leaders were still mostly using former Ming personnel to continue the existing system. Although the first governors they appointed

were Han-chün bannermen sent to protect the capital by taking control at Tientsin, Pao-ting, Tsinan, Kaifeng, and T'ai-yüan, the Ch'ing leaders relied on civilian collaborators to fill other governors' posts. Of the twenty-two governors serving in early 1645, fifteen were former Ming officials. Four were promoted from the lower ranks, and eleven were former senior officials who had declared themselves loyal to the Ch'ing and been reassigned or promoted to new responsibilities. Of the eleven, three had served as grand co-ordinators, five had served in senior posts in the capital, and three others had held local office during the Ming.[22] In turning to these surrendered officials, the regent Dorgon was influenced by a memorial submitted in 1644 by Sung Ch'üan (1598–1652), a former Ming official who was appointed to govern the Shun-t'ien region around the capital. He urged Dorgon to solicit recommendations from Han Chinese literati.[23] Dorgon needed to deploy a full roster of officials and show his Han subjects that the new rulers had effective control. Aware of the weaknesses and factionalism that had prevailed among Ming bureaucrats, he was willing to overlook the past records of potential appointees when necessary, and thus was rather indiscriminate in his selections.[24]

One difficulty with Dorgon's strategy, pointed out by both contemporaries and historians, was that it meant the new dynasty had few men of proven competence prepared to take office. Many senior Ming officials had fled the capital upon the arrival of the rebel troops of Li Tzu-ch'eng in the spring of 1644, and they were not willing to return to serve the new dynasty. Many of those who were willing either were inexperienced or had undergone some sort of administrative punishment in the Ming period. One of the newly appointed governors, Huang T'u-an, had held appointment in the Ming Ministry of Personnel. He had initially declined Ch'ing offers of appointment ostensibly out of concern for his mother's health. When ordered to take office in 1645, he found the task of pacifying the remnants of Li Tzu-ch'eng's retreating forces too challenging, and he asked to resign. The Ch'ing court decided that he had been derelict in his duty, and ordered that his name be removed from the list of potential officials. Nevertheless, Huang was appointed governor of Ninghsia on the recommendation of Fan Wen-ch'eng (1597–1666), a Han-chün bannerman who had been a Ch'ing grand secretary since 1636. Once again, Huang was dismissed from office and demoted five ranks.[25] Kao

[22] Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, pp. 1516–17.

[23] *Huang Ch'ing tsou-i* (*c.*1800; Shanghai, 2002), ch. 1, pp. 2a–2b. The memorial is also frequently cited in Sung's biographies.

[24] Chou Yüan-lien and Chao Shih-yü, *Huang-fu she-cheng wang To-erh-kun ch'üan chuan* (Ch'ang-ch'un, 1986), p. 207.

[25] *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 79, pp. 10–10a.

Tou-kuang had been indicted twice as the Ming grand co-ordinator at Feng-yang for his failure to defeat the rebel Chang Hsien-chung (1605–47). Kao was appointed the Ch'ing governor at P'ien-yüan in Hu-kuang, but was dismissed after three years for taking bribes and for failing to enforce the requirement that Han subjects adopt the Manchu hairstyle, the queue.[26]

Even the most experienced and capable Ming officials found themselves in a nearly impossible position in the early Ch'ing, caught between restive and recalcitrant local populations and the new government's demand to restore order. By the early 1650s, the fifteen governors who had been former Ming officials were no longer part of regional administration. Some left through routine personnel changes, and some were removed during the factional maneuvers attendant on the death of Dorgon in December 1650. Two were promoted to central government positions in Peking, five were demoted, one was relieved of his responsibilities, three were dismissed as officials, three left office through death or illness, and one retired when his position was abolished. For the most part, surrendered Ming officials were replaced with Han-chün bannermen, and by 1659 bannermen occupied sixteen of the posts of governor.[27]

Although replacing surrendered Ming officials was partly a product of circumstance, the turn to Han-chün bannermen was in part motivated, at least in the southern regions, by the continuing need for a Ch'ing military presence. Conquest operations continued in the south for nearly a generation after the Ch'ing dynasty had been established in Peking. Even in the northern provinces, such as Shantung, Honan, Shansi, and Shensi, Han-chün bannermen proved to be useful intermediaries between local communities and Manchu overlords. The Shun-chih regime produced a frame for territorial rule, but in the insecure world of the mid-seventeenth century, it was a frame reinforced by arms and administered by military men.

THE K'ANG-HSI REIGN: EMPOWERING CIVILIAN GOVERNORS

During the K'ang-hsi reign, the regime of military occupation shifted to being a structure of civilian administration. The transition was crucial for any conquering order, but it was especially complex in the second half of the seventeenth century. The unity and even the survival of Ch'ing rule were not assured at the beginning of the K'ang-hsi reign. Garrison forces maintained control in the northwest, and the northern provinces were quiet for the most

[26] *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 79, p. 11–11a.

[27] Documents on the impeachments of these governors were first published in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* in 1928. They are reprinted in "Shun-chih ch'in-cheng hou Han kuan pei k'o an," in *Ch'ing tai tang-an shih-liao ts'ung-pien*, 13 (1990), pp. 111–260.

part. But resentments continued along the lower Yangtze. The southeast coast was held by a regime that made many concessions to local demands. The southwest had been turned over to Wu San-kuei, the Ming general who had sided with the Ch'ing in the spring of 1644. Szechwan and Hukuang were only lightly controlled by Ch'ing forces and administrators. A conquering army maintaining a sort of martial law was both expensive and unpopular. Civilian territorial government had to be established with adequate and reliable flows of revenue to the capital, or the dynasty would be short-lived. As military conquest and occupation proceeded in some quarters of the empire, civilian routines were established elsewhere. With each of the crises that the Ch'ing regime overcame, new men came into the central government, with new visions of the relationship between the center and the provinces.

On the whole, the K'ang-hsi years were marked by significant institutional changes in territorial administration. During the Oboi regency (1661–9), governors by stages became responsible for the civilian functions of government, and local officials were made responsible to them. Between 1669 and 1683, the first years in which the young K'ang-hsi emperor personally exercised power, the emphasis was on achieving administrative consistency in all provinces of the empire, especially after the suppression of the rebellions led by Wu San-kuei and his allies in the 1670s. Following the fighting, a period of peace and growing prosperity, roughly from 1685 to 1700, saw an increase in the prominence of governors and the resources they could command. The court moved by word and deed to ensure the loyalty of these governors to the emperor and the central government, and not to the interests of private groupings, families, or factions. During the last years of the reign, from the year 1700 to 1722, tensions implicit in the provincial order became more manifest as the emperor withdrew from direct involvement in managing the provinces and their governors.

The political history of the K'ang-hsi years has been presented in terms of imperial edicts, changing factional allegiances, and the emperor's personal preferences. Less attention has been given to the effects of these changes on provincial governance. Central initiatives in the provinces have been refracted through the lenses of elite preferences and resistance, local conditions and needs. By considering the major developments at the capital and their effects, where discernible, in the provinces, a richer political history is achieved. Inevitably this history is somewhat anecdotal, as it is not possible to consider the impact of a single change on every province, or consider all the important changes in a single province. But some sense of dialog is essential, for it was through the discourse of edict and effect, central articulation and local reformulation, that provincial administration developed during the K'ang-hsi period.

Regents and reaction

The institutional changes of the early K'ang-hsi years were in large part the work of four regents, senior Manchu counselors led by Oboi (d. 1669), who exercised power on behalf of the young emperor between 1661 and 1669. Themselves veterans of the military campaigns of the 1640s and 1650s, Oboi and his colleagues brought to governing the habits of military administration. During their regency, the "values of military efficiency and military men's paramount roles were declared in the provinces as well as in the capital."[28] The regents expressed their intent to control the provinces by appointing sixteen new governors in a single year, more than in any other year of the K'ang-hsi reign.[29] In that same year, the regents created eight new positions of governor-general (*tsung-tu*) to oversee the governors. There were probably two purposes to this churning and culling of territorial officials. The moves allowed the regents to put their protégés in office, thereby securing subordinates with whom they were comfortable. The best-documented case is that of Chu Ch'ang-tso, a protégé of the regent Suksaha. Chu was appointed to Chekiang, where he systematically asserted central control in a province where his predecessor had made many concessions to local elites' preferences and customs. Chu was transferred to Chihli, where he assisted Suksaha's efforts to acquire better lands for his banner, for which he was dismissed from office and executed.[30] The changes also served to bring Ch'ing military forces under more consistent and direct control. In addition, the regents abolished the units of troops under the governors' direct control, and left the governors-general as the senior provincial military officials.[31]

Having placed their men in the provinces, the regents were anxious to defend their appointees' authority, and they were suspicious of the duplications of responsibility and overlapping authority that had been inherited from the Ming. Under the late Ming territorial system, responsibilities had been divided among what were called the three commissions or offices (*san ssu*):

[28] Jonathan D. Spence, "The K'ang-hsi reign," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 126–7. See also Robert B. Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback: Manchu politics in the Oboi regency, 1661–1669* (Chicago, 1975).

[29] See Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, p. 1531. Three of the regents' appointees had served previously in the provinces; thirteen were serving in the capital at the time of their appointments. For the most part, these governors served only during the regency. Ten had left office by 1670, three more were gone by 1673, and only two of the regent-appointed governors remained in office through 1680.

[30] R. Kent Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces: The evolution of territorial administration in China, 1644–1796* (Seattle, 2010), pp. 263–4; and Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 250, p. 3806. See also Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, p. 98.

[31] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (1899; rpt. Peking, 1991). Chapters 546–55 have a historical summary, by province, of the disposition of Ch'ing forces. Governors' regiments are included under each province.

the provincial administration commission, the regional military commission, and the provincial surveillance commission. Provincial decisions and record keeping were also reviewed on regular tours by regional inspectors (*hsün-an*) appointed by the censorate. "The three provincial offices were sufficiently independent of each other that no one man or agency was able to gain control over a province, but they worked cooperatively, sending their senior officials to assemblies for discussions of major policies and problems."[32]

This arrangement did not suit the Oboi regents. The first of these territorial officials to be pared away were the regional inspectors. Because their duty was to "observe all government officials, check files, audit accounts, interrogate officials, and criticize inappropriate policies" during their tours of provinces,[33] these officials were a thorn in the side of governors. Governor Liu Wu-yüan at Nan-kan in southern Kiangsi spent much of his time in the south battling the forces of the Prince of Kuei, a Ming pretender, or Li Ch'eng-tung, the turncoat Kwangtung governor. Liu had little use for regional inspectors. In 1651, he memorialized to complain of the impact of these men on his ability to manage the area. "A regional inspector," he wrote, highlighting what he saw as the appropriate hierarchy of offices, "is only a junior member of the censorate. He should be subordinate to a governor and governor-general, who hold higher-rank concurrent appointments in the censorate."[34] Nine of the twenty-one indictments that resulted in the dismissal of territorial officials during the Shun-chih reign were launched by regional inspectors, and two of these indictments were of governors.[35] Governor T'u Kuo-pao of Soochow committed suicide rather than face the investigation of the charges against him.[36] The regents at the beginning of the K'ang-hsi reign lost little time in addressing this problem. After a brief experiment with trying to regulate regional inspectors, they summarily abolished these posts in the spring of 1661.[37]

[32] Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China* (Stanford, 1985), p. 77.

[33] Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China*, p. 253. For a discussion of these officials during the Ming, see Thomas G. Nimick, *Local administration in Ming China: The changing roles of magistrates, prefects, and provincial officials* (Minneapolis, 2008), pp. 79–90.

[34] Liu Wu-yüan's memorial is in *Huang Ch'ing tsou-i*, ch. 3, pp. 10b–15b; quotation is from p. 13.

[35] Adam Y. C. Lui, *Corruption in China during the early Ch'ing period, 1644–1660* (Hong Kong, 1979), p. 43 and Appendix 1.

[36] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 6, p. 1, and ch. 62, p. 9; Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1985), Volume 1, p. 646. T'u's suicide proved a grimly ironic end to his term, which had begun with his wife's suicide. Confronted with the prospect that Soochow would be occupied by pirates, she hanged herself from the Soochow bell tower. On the wife's suicide, see Chao-lien, *Hsiao-t'ing tsa-lu* (1880; Peking, 1980), ch. 10.

[37] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu* (Peking, 2008), ch. 2, p. 24. At the end of the Shun-chih reign, the court had issued instructions to new regional inspectors. The regents almost immediately

The next post to be challenged was that of the junior of the two administration commissioners (*pu-cheng shih*) assigned to manage local affairs in each province. The senior of these was known as the left administration commissioner, and the junior as the right administration commissioner.[38] The new Ch'ing rulers were skeptical of the need for two. An edict observed tartly, "The administration commissioner of the left is a very busy office. But what does the commissioner of the right do? If this is not a superfluous post, then he must have some function. The officials of the six ministries are unwilling to provide details."[39] The need for the second post was reduced when the central authorities abolished the requirement that a commissioner accompany all local officials to an imperial audience once every three years, a task that could take him away from his duties for several months or even a year at a time.[40] The censor Wei I-chieh had memorialized in 1658 in support of the principle of collegial administration: "How can one person's judgment compare with that of two men? How can one person's energy compare with that of two men?"[41] The regents were unconvinced by this argument, and in 1667 they ordered that there would be only one administration commissioner in each province, except in the several provinces whose geography seemed to require two administrative centers.[42]

Although these institutional changes were carried out in order to render the governor clearly the senior official in his province, they also had the effect of simplifying the hierarchy of territorial officials. Already in the Shun-chih period a hierarchy was emerging among the offices that had been theoretically equal under the Ming. In early Ch'ing, the governor (*hsün-fu*) emerged as the senior provincial official, superior to the administration commissioner (*pu-cheng shih*), who was above the surveillance commissioner (*an-ch'a shih*). This hierarchy was apparent in appointment practices. In 1655, it was ordered that

fashioned a set of rules from these instructions, reissuing them in the imperative mood, with the threat of impeachment for those who violated a rule attached to the end of each rule. Compare *Shih-tsu shih-lu*, ch. 55, pp. 9–10a, and *Sheng-tsu shih–lu*, ch. 1, pp. 12a–13. The regulations were issued on February, 18, 1661, and were in force for a little over three months before the post was abolished. Several cases of corruption among the regional inspectors were reported in the first year of the regency; see note 17 of Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, p. 99.

38 *Ta Ming hui-tien* (1588; Taipei, 1963), ch. 2, pp. 1–1a.

39 *Ch'ing ch'ao wen-hsien t'ung-kao* (Hang-chou, 1988), ch. 77, p. 5571. Concerns about superfluous posts were common in the early Ch'ing.

40 For the rules governing these visits in the Ming, see *Ta Ming hui-tien*, ch. 13, pp. 1–9. The Ch'ing suspended these triennial trips to the capital at the end of the Shun-chih period and relied instead on written evaluations. The exact form of these evaluations was a subject of debate during the regency. For a brief summary of this somewhat inconclusive debate, see Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, p. 91.

41 Wei I-chieh, "Ming fan-nieh chih chih chang shu," in Wei I-chieh, *Chien-chi t'ang wen-chi*, Volume 1 (1700; Peking, 2007), p. 3.

42 *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 13, pp. 5a–6.

surveillance commissioners could be promoted to administration commissioner, and that circuit intendants (*tao-t'ai*) could be promoted to surveillance commissioner.[43] In view of this emerging structure, Ch'ing historians writing in English have taken to referring to the administration commissioner (*pu-cheng shih*) as "lieutenant governor." When the post of regional inspector was abolished, his tasks were divided among other territorial officials. The court assigned to the administration commissioners the duty of auditing civil and military accounts, to the prefects and circuit intendants the evaluation of county magistrates, and to the surveillance commissioners the review of judicial decisions and the inspection of prisons.[44] Because of this assignment, Ch'ing historians commonly refer to the provincial surveillance commissioner as "provincial judge." Each governor thus became responsible for a hierarchy of civilian officials who administered government affairs within his jurisdiction, and he carried out this responsibility without supervision or interference from within the province.

A final innovation in the structure of provincial administration occurred in 1668, the last year of the regency, when for the first time Manchus were appointed to posts of governor in Shansi and Shensi provinces. The decisions appeared to be part of a strategic plan, for within two weeks Manchu lieutenant governors and provincial judges were also appointed for these provinces. Two years later, Manchus filled the top three posts in Kansu. The *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien* (*Collected statutes of the Ch'ing*) takes the 1668 appointments as the beginning of a policy of appointing Manchus to these three northwestern provinces. As there does not appear to be an edict announcing such a policy, the reasons for this change can only be a matter of speculation. Most likely the shifts were prompted by military considerations: there was a large Manchu garrison in Shensi, which it was the governor's role to supply, and Kansu and Shansi were the starting places for military campaigns in Central Asia. With brief exceptions, Kansu was governed by a Manchu until 1728, Shansi until 1737, and Shensi until 1792. In 1680 a Manchu was appointed governor outside the northwest, in Szechwan. Gradually the range of provinces where Manchus served as governor increased, until by the middle of the eighteenth century they had been governors in all the provinces and comprised as much as 40 percent of the governors' corps.

In most accounts of the K'ang-hsi reign, Oboi and his fellow regents have been treated as anachronistic remnants of the conquest generation or as obstacles that the young emperor had to overcome before he could rule personally. Yet the regents made substantial contributions to the Ch'ing development of a

[43] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien* (K'ang-hsi edition, 1690), ch. 8, pp. 8–29.

[44] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 3, pp. 1a–2.

hierarchical provincial administration. They eliminated what they and others perceived as unnecessary positions, simplified the ranks, and established the final form for provincial government. Although the governors appointed in the first days of the regency did not, for the most part, survive beyond their patrons' time in power, the reforms did.

The creation of Kiangsu province

The regents' streamlining of the provincial hierarchy and appointing trusted men as governors were undertaken to make the Ch'ing occupation more efficient. In the early days, Ch'ing armies had been crucial in restoring order. As an invading regime became an established government, the political and financial costs of using an army to govern territory became more apparent, and nowhere more so than in the wealthy, highly literate communities of the lower Yangtze area.[45] The K'ang-hsi reign began inauspiciously there. The root of the trouble was the reaction of the regents to the widespread tax delinquency and fraud in one of the empire's richest regions. To address this problem, they decreed that local officials would be fined or degraded according to the percentage of uncollected taxes in their jurisdictions.[46] Shortly after the death of the Shun-chih emperor in early 1661, an edict was issued that reiterated earlier regulations, and added the stipulation that any official whose own family's taxes were unpaid would not be eligible for promotion. It was not so much the terms of the edict, which moderately increased pressure on county magistrates, but the way it was read by officials in Chiang-ning (Nanking in Ming times), the capital of Chiang-nan, that caused the problem. The edict did not mention the south at all, but referred only to tax problems in Chihli, but that could be taken to refer to the southern metropolitan area around the former Ming southern capital.[47] Inspired by the severity that the Oboi regents seemed to exhibit toward the habits and failings of Han officials, especially in Chiang-nan, Governor Chu Kuo-chih,[48] a Han-chün bannerman, moved to collect these outstanding taxes. In late March of 1661 he began to see resistance in the form of a demonstration by Soochow local elites against the burden of the back taxes they were being made to pay. As the regents

[45] For a discussion of the extensive literature on the movement of officials in Kiangsu, see Fu Lin-hsiang, "Ch'ing-tai Chiang-su chien sheng wen-t'i hsin t'an," *Ch'ing shih yen-chiu* No. 2 (2009), p. 23, and p. 30, note 1.

[46] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 88, pp. 5b–6b.

[47] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 1, pp. 16b–17a. Several days before this edict was issued, a censor asked for and received a reduction in the commutation rate of tribute taxes in the Su-Sung-T'ai circuit because of the heavy burden of land taxes.

[48] Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 487, pp. 5288–9.

understood, this conflict between the government and the taxpaying elites of Chiang-nan could not be allowed to continue if the new dynasty was to endure. A new basis for interactions between the landowning elites and the central government had to be developed.[49]

A process was set in motion in 1661 that eventually led to a new arrangement under which the elites of Soochow and the lower Yangtze area would have their own direct access to the central government. This process probably began when Chu Kuo-chih left his post abruptly in the autumn of that year. The circumstances under which Chu decamped were not made clear, although he faced local hostility for his vigorous prosecution of the collection of tax arrears. Chu's biography in the *Ch'ing shih* (*History of the Ch'ing*) recounts his charges against Chiang-nan taxpayers, and then observes with delicious understatement, "for this he earned a reputation for cruelty."[50] The only formal acknowledgment of these events by the central government was an edict issued in March of 1662 in which Governor Chu Kuo-chih was condemned for using the pretext of a mourning obligation to leave his post. The Ministry of Personnel recommended that in punishment he be demoted five grades, the usual penalty for such action, but the regents commented that since Chu had abandoned such important duties, he should be cashiered as an official.[51] The edict condemning Chu seems to have appeared considerably after he had fled his post, for in December of 1661 the regents had appointed a Han-chün bannerman, Han Shih-ch'i, to replace him. Han had moved from a posting in the Imperial Household Department to the position of governor of Shun-t'ien, the area immediately around Peking, in the early summer of 1661. He was to serve as governor at Chiang-ning until 1669.[52]

A further series of changes also began in Chiang-nan in 1661. Under the Ming and early Ch'ing system, the two administrative commissioners both served in Chiang-ning, but beginning in 1661 there was a territorial division between the two.[53] One was given responsibility for the counties up

[49] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Volume 2, pp. 1067–71. As Wakeman described the matter, the solution was achieved when "a new system of tax registers was established, land was properly recorded therein, and liability was attached to the individual household without relying on the old tax headman system." Ibid., p. 1070.

[50] Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 487, p. 5289. Chu's biography is placed in a *chüan* that the *Ch'ing shih* devoted to failed and cruel officials. See also Meng Sen, "Tsou-hsiao an," in Meng Sen, *Ming Ch'ing shih lun chu chi-k'an* (Taipei, 1965), p. 434.

[51] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 6, p. 5a. After his service at Chiang-ning, Chu served as governor of Yunnan, during which capacity he was killed by the forces of Wu San-kuei. Meng Sen suggests that it was a Chiang-nan literatus, serving as adviser to Wu, who recommended the killing.

[52] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 5, p. 5. See also *Man-chou ming ch'en chuan* (Peking, Tao-kuang edition), ch. 19, pp. 533–4.

[53] Fu Lin-hsiang argued that the territorial division had its origin in a functional division. The administration commissioner of the right was made responsible for collecting arrears, and the commissioner

the river, and the other was made responsible for the counties of the lower delta, where more tax arrears cases had occurred, and he would be located in Soochow. Later provincial gazetteers date the founding of Kiangsu province from this reorganization of the administrative commissioners' duties.[54] The change seems to have occurred when a new administrative commissioner of the right for Chiang-nan arrived in the lower Yangtze area in early January of 1662, one month after the new governor, Han Shih-ch'i.[55]

Several other pieces of circumstantial evidence also suggest that the Ch'ing government was moving toward a new administrative presence in the Yangtze delta in the early 1660s. After taking up his post in Chiang-nan in late 1661, Governor Han Shih-ch'i ordered the city walls of Soochow strengthened and expanded, with structures incorporated for guardhouses and granaries. This was the first reconstruction of the city walls since the late 1360s, and the last major rebuilding in the later imperial period.[56] Two years later, in the summer of 1663, the central government further increased its presence in the lower Yangtze delta by appointing two provincial judges for Chiang-nan. Both judges had the same title, but the *Ch'ung-hsiu An-hui t'ung chih* (*Revised comprehensive gazetteer of Anhwei*) and other sources distinguish between them as the judge for Anhwei and the judge for Kiangsu.[57] Effectively, the former Ming southern metropolitan area had been split into the two Ch'ing provinces of Kiangsu and Anhwei.

Administrative consistency for the provinces

When the K'ang-hsi emperor dismissed the last of the regents in the summer of 1669, he sought to move beyond the military style of governance that they had advocated. He did not anticipate that he would soon have to confront a

of the left was responsible for new taxes. Since most of the arrears occurred in the lower delta, it made sense to move the right commissioner to Soochow. See Fu, "Ch'ing-tai Chiang-su chien sheng wen-t'i hsin t'an," p. 24.

54 *Chiang-nan t'ung-chih*, ch. 22, as cited in Chiang T'ao, "Ch'ing-tai Chiang-nan sheng fen-chih wen-t'i: Li-tsu yü Ch'ing shih-lu ti k'ao-ch'a," *Ch'ing shih yen-chiu* No. 2 (2009), p. 19; also see *Ch'ung hsiu An-hui t'ung-chih* (*c.*1880), ch. 17, pp. 3–3b. Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 117, p. 1389.

55 *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 5, p. 12b. The new commissioner, Sun Tai, was a somewhat mysterious figure. Prior to his assignment to Chiang-nan, he had held a post in the Grand Secretariat. He seems to have held no other high office in the Ch'ing and there is no extant biography of him.

56 Xu Yinong, *The Chinese city in space and time: The development of urban form in Suzhou* (Honolulu, 2000), p. 102.

57 The appointments are noted in *Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 12, p. 11b, and ch. 13, p. 2. See also *Ch'ung hsiu An-hui t'ung-chih*, ch. 7, pp. 3a–b; see also Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 3, p. 1991. The Anhwei provincial judge served in Chiang-ning until 1760, and was the only provincial judge who served in a city separate from a provincial governor. See Fu Lin-hsiang, "Ch'ing tai Chiang-su chien sheng wen-t'i hsin t'an," p. 26.

major rebellion. The emperor shuffled officials and positions throughout the government structure in the early 1670s. At the center, the Three Inner Courts (*Nei san yüan*) that had served as advisory bodies to early Manchu rulers were reorganized into the Grand Secretariat, and a new group of Han officials and Manchus were appointed to serve as grand secretaries.[58] In the provinces, the young emperor seemed to take a new attitude toward governors, no longer regarding them as an extension of his dynasty's military power but as agents of civil administration. In 1671 a censor for the Shantung circuit memorialized asking the emperor to remind governors of their military duties so that banditry could be held in check and the people's security assured. K'ang-hsi responded that governors need not be responsible for all the particulars of military activity. "Has not our dynasty," he asked, "established governors-general and provincial military intendants for this purpose?" Governors should share command with the appropriate local officials.[59] The emperor felt that the government could maintain the preponderance of force at the local level through its military hierarchy; it no longer had to rely on its governors in the disposition of troops.

The emphasis on civilian affairs in territorial administration was also reflected in a new procedure for appointing governors that gave their subordinate officials systematic access to promotion. In the Ming, most middle- and senior-level positions had been filled through personal recommendations, a process known as "collective recommendation" (*hui-ya*).[60] The procedure for appointing a grand co-ordinator (*hsün-fu*) seems to have been that he was recommended collectively by the Ministry of War if the post was one of military significance. If the grand co-ordinator's main role was to be tax collection, the Ministry of Revenue recommended him. This system had the advantage of assuring that an appointee would be well known to his superiors in the capital and to the court. Before the 1670s, Ch'ing rulers followed the Ming practice of allowing senior officials at the capital to memorialize to recommend candidates for office. During the first years of the dynasty, however, the disadvantages of the procedure became apparent, to judge from the changes perceived to be necessary. In 1653 it was decreed that any person could be recommended as governor or governor-general, regardless of rank, provided that the man's accomplishments were carefully specified. Presumably these

[58] On the reorganization of the Grand Secretariat, see Meng Chao-hsin, *K'ang-hsi p'ing-chuan* (Nanking, 1998), pp. 60–1. According to the *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien*, the practice of making ranked lists was applied to the appointment of officials in the Grand Secretariat in 1671, but there is no edict establishing this fact in the *K'ang-hsi shih-lu*. In these years, there was also a spate of proposals on reorganizing evaluation and promotion procedures in the lower territorial service. See Fang Yü-chin, "K'ang-hsi ch'u-nien yu-kuan kuan-yüan ch'uan-hsüan chih yü-shih tsou-chang," *Li-shih tang-an* No. 2 (1992), pp. 3–19.

[59] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 23, p. 7; *Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 35, p. 22.

[60] *Ta Ming hui-tien* (1588; Taipei, 1963), pp. 110–15. *Hsün-fu* are treated on p. 110.

detailed documents, or the reasoning behind them, would have had to be prepared in advance by men intimate with the inner workings of the system, for in 1654 the court ordered that recommendations for a governor's position should be submitted on the day after the position was declared vacant.[61] In 1661, a censor in the Ministry of Rites memorialized that "since I have been at court, recommendations have frequently received a rescript requesting that the recommenders memorialize again." His solution to this problem was to ask that those entitled to make recommendations provide as many as six names at a time, so that the emperor could choose among multiple candidates without having to wait for a series of recommendations.[62] In 1663, the Oboi regents decreed that if a recommended candidate proved to be inappropriate, both the candidate and the recommender would be punished.

In 1671, the K'ang-hsi emperor approved a proposal, drafted by Ai Yüan-cheng of the Ministry of Personnel, that a ranked list be established for candidates for governorships.[63] As Ai's memorial made clear, the idea of these lists and the graded entitlements to promotion that they entailed had originated in the Manchu banner hierarchy, was applied first to the military, and now was to be extended to provincial administration. This method was referred to as preparing a ranked list (*k'ai-lieh*) of those eligible for promotion.[64] On the occasion of an opening, the emperor would have a complete list of all those eligible for advancement to the particular office. Candidates could be assured that their names would reach the court and be presented systematically.

Promotions of lieutenant governors to governorships was not new in 1671, but following an edict of that year they increased significantly. Between 1651 and 1660, 18 percent of new governors had moved up from lieutenant governor. During the regency only 10 percent were promoted from positions in the provinces. The K'ang-hsi emperor's order had an immediate impact, setting a precedent that subsequent emperors followed. This innovation meant that a significant proportion of governors after 1671 had had experience as territorial administrators in subordinate positions before they became governors.[65]

[61] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien* (1734 edition) ch. 6, pp. 10a–11.

[62] *Huang Ch'ing tsou-i*, ch. 13, pp. 16b–17b. In view of the date of the memorial, it is possible that Hsü Huang, the censor, was protesting the actions of the Oboi regents in appointing governors of their own choosing from the center. Hsü subsequently served in posts in the provincial bureaucracy, but never reached the rank of governor.

[63] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien* (1734 edition), ch. 8, p. 1.

[64] The *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* devoted four chapters to *k'ai-lieh* regulations (ch. 48–52, pp. 608–56), two for Manchu and two for Han Chinese officials. Generally, the chapters move from the rules governing promotions of more senior officials to rules governing more junior promotions. The relatively brief discussion of making ranked lists for governors occurs at the beginning of ch. 51, p. 654.

[65] The late seventeenth-century change in the attitudes and capacities of those who were appointed governors during the Ch'ing dynasty has been of interest to historians. Authors of previous scholarship, including Lawrence D. Kessler, "Ethnic composition of provincial leadership during the Ch'ing

Table 1.2. *Percentages of governors promoted from lieutenant governor*

K'ang-hsi reign, by decade	Later reigns
1661–70 10%	Yung-cheng (1723–35) 34%
1671–80 39%	Ch'ien-lung (1736–95) 28%
1681–90 40%	Chia-ch'ing (1796–1820) 38%
1691–1700 40%	Tao-kuang (1821–50) 39%
1701–10 31%	Hsien-feng (1851–61) 48%
1711–20 44%	T'ung-chih (1862–74) 47%
	Kuang-hsü (to 1900) 45%

Source: Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, pp. 1530–75 *passim*; and Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, p. 368.

Perhaps just as significant, new governors had had experience in provinces other than the one to which they were promoted. A rule of the K'ang-hsi period stipulated that an official could not be elevated to the rank of governor in a province in which he had served as lieutenant governor. These men thus carried their experience from one province to another, and the Ch'ing personnel system envisioned governors as masters of a body of experience not specific to one area. The rule also tended to separate new governors from the networks they had acquired as lieutenant governors in another province.

The turn after the regency toward an emphasis on the civilian side in provincial government was abruptly reversed in 1673, when in what was surely the most important decision of his early tenure, the K'ang-hsi emperor decided to accept a confrontation with Wu San-kuei, the former Ming general who had been given a large hereditary fiefdom with autonomous powers in the southwest as his reward for services in suppressing the Ming resistance. The war that ensued, lasting from 1673 to 1681, had both short- and long-term effects on the provincial order. In the short run, the fighting disrupted such administration as the Ch'ing had been able to build in the south and

dynasty," *Journal of Asian Studies* 28 No. 3 (1969), pp. 489–511; Narakino Shimesu, *Shindai jūyō shokkan no kenkyū: Man-Kan heiyō no zenbō* (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 250–2; and Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Volume 2, pp. 1016–36, have attempted to measure social change among governors by counting the numbers of governors with the ethnic designators "Han," "Manchu," and "Han-chün bannermen." This distinction constitutes one measure of change among the corps of governors. The amount of experience an official had in the territories constitutes another measure of administrative change. There were Han-chün bannermen as governors throughout the early Ch'ing, but the earliest bannermen governors were military men straight from banner armies. The late seventeenth-century bannermen–governors had often had years, even decades, of experience in civilian administrative positions before their appointment as governors. After the 1670s, even Manchus appointed governors had previous experience in the lower ranks of territorial administration.

southwest, and it produced a remilitarization both of specific provincial offices and of governorships in general. In the longer run, the fuller integration of these regions into the Ch'ing empire, combined with the rising prosperity of the late seventeenth century, resulted in a strong, uniform, and effective provincial regime.

None of the eventual benefits of the war against Wu San-kuei and his allies were apparent when it broke out. The campaigns initially went badly for the Ch'ing government, a fact reflected in its impact on the corps of governors. In 1673, the governor of Kweichow, where Wu San-kuei was based, surrendered to him, and the governor of Yunnan was killed.[66] In 1674, the governor of P'ien-yüan (later renamed Hunan) abandoned his post, the governor of Szechwan surrendered, and the governor of Kwangsi was imprisoned and executed by an ally of Wu.[67] In 1676, the official appointed to replace the imprisoned leader of Kwangsi joined Wu's forces, and the governor of Kwangtung joined the rebellion.[68]

The K'ang-hsi emperor slowly re-established control of the provinces in rebellion. The tide began to turn even before Wu San-kuei's death in 1678, but it was not until 1681 that a full quota of Ch'ing-appointed governors served in the southern provincial capitals. Victory was accomplished only by re-emphasizing the role of the military, particularly south of the Yangtze. In 1675, the post of governor-general in Kiangsi that had been eliminated in 1665 was re-established, and in 1676 an official of governor rank was appointed to serve at Yün-yang, on the major route from the Szechwan basin into the middle Yangtze region. Each of these posts was abolished again after 1679, although over protests from some local officials.[69] Never reversed, however, was the decision taken in 1674 to restore the governors' brigades that had been abolished in 1665. New garrisons of banner soldiers were established in Fukien, Kwangtung, and Han-chung (in Hupei), and with a few exceptions the

[66] Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, p. 1542. Historical legend has it that the Yunnan governor, the same Chu Kuo-chih who had fled his post in Chiang-nan after the tax protests there, was killed on the advice of a Chiang-nan literatus loyal to Wu; see note 51 above. There is no record of the fate of the imprisoned Kweichow governor.

[67] See Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, p. 1543. On the execution of the Kwangsi governor, see Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Volume 2, pp. 1118–19. Successors were appointed to replace the governors of P'ien-yüan, Szechwan, and Kwangsi, but their role was to co-ordinate the war against Wu. After the rebellion was defeated they returned to their provincial capitals.

[68] Although Ch'ing military appointees in various parts of the empire sided with Wu San-kuei, Kwangtung governor Ch'en Hung-ming was the only governor who joined Wu. At the end of the rebellion the K'ang-hsi emperor condemned Ch'en, but pardoned him from execution. For a collective biography of the governors who were killed, imprisoned, or surrendered during the Three Feudatories rebellion, see *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 80, pp. 14–15. Also see Spence, "The K'ang-hsi reign," pp. 136–46, including the map of the provinces joining in the rebellion.

[69] See Ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai chih-kuan nien-piao*, Volume 2, pp. 1542–6.

post-rebellion governors of the southern provinces were Han-chün bannermen until the middle years of the eighteenth century.

As disruptive as the Three Feudatories rebellion instigated by Wu San-kuei was in the short run, the restoration of central control south of the Yangtze was a critical step in the dynasty's establishment of regular provincial administration. In the southwest, regimes that had hereditary privileges had prevailed into the early Ch'ing period. The Ming-period governors of Yunnan had all been from the Mu family, descendants of an adopted son of the first Ming emperor, and many of the local officials there were of the sort known as hereditary local chieftains (*t'u-ssu*). In appointing Wu San-kuei to control the southwest, early Ch'ing leaders were continuing this pattern. The longer Wu San-kuei was in power, the greater the subsidy he demanded to preserve order. By the K'ang-hsi years his share of the budget was nearly equivalent to the military expenditures for the remainder of the empire. Moreover, Wu insisted on the right to make his own appointments, and the civil and military officials he selected were referred to as those "selected in the west" (*hsi-hsüan*). Asserting Ch'ing control in this region proved crucial to the dynasty's success. A provincial order could hardly be stable when some regional commanders had greater financial and appointive authority than others. As the list of provinces where governors went over or fell to the rebels in the mid-1670s suggests, Ch'ing power in the southern tier of provinces was not secure as long as the power of someone like Wu San-kuei was intact. The process of eliminating hereditary powers in the southwest began in the 1670s, and in effect had precipitated the rebellion.

Post-rebellion provincial administration

Both the K'ang-hsi emperor and his governors emerged stronger after the rebellion. For the central government, the defeat of the three feudatories in the far south saw the end not only of wartime expenses, but also of the subsidies to Wu San-kuei. Once the fighting in the southern and central provinces ended, farmers and merchants returned to their normal activities, and the economy began to recover for the first time since the Ming collapse in the 1640s. With the 1683 defeat of the regime of Cheng Ch'eng-kung in Taiwan, trade was restored along the southeast coast and the economy revived. The economic disruptions that have been called the "K'ang-hsi depression" eased, assisted by the warming weather of the last years of the seventeenth century.[70]

[70] See Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt: Environment and economy in late imperial south China* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 147–57; and Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama, "The Kangxi depression and early Qing local markets," *Modern China* 10 No. 2 (1984), pp. 227–56.

As military expenses declined, it became possible for the central government to invest in infrastructure projects such as repair of the Grand Canal. This essential waterway connected the rice-producing areas of the central provinces with Peking, and had to be maintained if the capital was to be fed. The canal also served as a main highway for private commercial traffic. The canal drew on water from multiple rivers, and it had silted up during the late Ming and early Ch'ing when maintenance was deferred. Dredging it required more resources than a single province could provide and had to be a central-government task. During the term of Chin Fu as governor-general for river affairs from 1677 to 1688, the government embarked on a major renovation of the canal. This project provoked disputes between those emphasizing the necessity of keeping supplies flowing and others prioritizing the well-being of the communities living along the canal,[71] but when the work was completed, it assured the supply of the capital and the livelihood of the provinces in the northeast.

The lower Yangtze region was not the only place in which the government was urged to make investments after the rebellions were over. In the autumn of 1681, Ts'ai Yü-jung (1633–99) memorialized in his new capacity as governor-general of Yunnan and Kweichow to offer an elaborate plan for the restoration of order in the southwest. Some of his ideas were directed at immediate problems, while others looked further ahead, but all suggested how much had to be done before the region could be fully incorporated into the provincial system. Ts'ai warned the court not to expect much revenue from these two provinces, declaring that until lands were reclaimed and the damages of eight years of warfare repaired, taxes would need to be forgiven. He made a series of proposals for investing in roads, diverting rivers to build canals, opening mines, and resettling population.[72]

In many respects, Ts'ai Yü-jung and Chin Fu were similar. Both were Han-chün bannermen of grand vision, entrusted with projects central to the establishment of the Ch'ing state, and both came to be distrusted by the court they served. Chin's canal project was undertaken in modified form because of the political, economic, and social importance of the work involved. Ts'ai's plans reminded the emperor too much of Wu San-kuei's dominance in the southwest, and he was dismissed. Both visions, however, were testimony to the growing prosperity of the post-rebellion era and the opportunities for state building.

[71] See Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, pp. 244–8, for a discussion of river politics.

[72] These memorials are reproduced in *Yün-nan t'ung-chih* (1736; rpt. Taipei, 1983), Part 29, ch. 4, pp. 11a–56b; individual memorials are anthologized in Ho Ch'ang-ling, comp., *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* (1826; Taipei, 1972), chs. 12, 26, 86.

Governors were now powerful figures overseeing substantial revenues. The emperor took some pains to remind his territorial officials that their obligations to the central government were more important than what they owed their protégés and superiors. In an edict issued in response to an earthquake in 1679, the emperor observed with some hyperbole that the households of provincial officials and their servants were growing more prosperous every day, while ordinary people were selling their children in the marketplace for gruel. He attributed this situation to the payments extorted by senior officials from their subordinates, and asserted that although he had been willing to tolerate such behavior during the war, he could not abide it now that there was peace.[73] Despite the emperor's admonitions, the power of governors steadily grew, and their arrivals and departures in provincial capitals were major events. In 1691 a censor urged the emperor to limit the size of the retinues that governors could bring with them to office to one hundred people, not including family members; lieutenant governors were to be allowed only fifty people.[74]

The office of governor was becoming such a lucrative post that Mingju (1635–1708), one of the few K'ang-hsi counselors who had supported the emperor's decision to risk war in 1673 and who emerged after the rebellion as the most powerful figure at court, began in effect selling the posts of governor. In 1688 the censor Kuo Hsiu (1638–1715) charged that Mingju and his collaborator, Yü Kuo-chu, were collecting substantial sums from those who sought to be appointed to senior provincial office.[75] This pattern of collusion and corruption would become familiar to subsequent bureaucrats. Governors presided over streams of revenue in provincial capitals that eluded those in Peking who had appointed them. To secure access to these revenues, Mingju demanded money from new appointees. In turn governors, whose activities were not audited, could require payments from their subordinates, and so on down the line.[76] Two of Mingju's collaborators in 1687 were Chin Fu and Ts'ai Yu-jung, the men who presided over two of the largest engineering projects attempted by the Ch'ing government: the reconstruction of the Grand Canal in the lower Yangtze region and the building of a series of east–west canals linking the south-flowing rivers in the southwest. Portions of the money allocated for both these projects found their way into Ts'ai's and Chin's purses,

[73] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 82, pp. 19–19b.

[74] The censor's memorial is in *Huang Ch'ing tsou-i*, ch. 24, pp. 2–3.

[75] Kuo Hsiu's accusation is available in several places. The full text is reprinted in Chao-lien, *Hsiao-t'ing tsa-lu* 3, pp. 63–5. It was also inserted in full into Mingju's biography in *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 8, pp. 13b–14a.

[76] This potential for corruption existed throughout the dynasty. The same pattern was visible in the cases of Nien Keng-yao and Ho-shen (see below).

and they no doubt judged the sums they had paid to Mingju to have been wise investments.[77]

The K'ang-hsi emperor's reaction to Kuo Hsiu's accusations focused not so much on Mingju, who lost his positions but was not severely punished, as on the obligation that all officials owed to the dynasty. Kuo Hsiu's charges provided the emperor an opportunity to address all officials on the political imperatives for a prosperous and secure state. They must recognize that their obligations to the dynasty they served, the values it represented, and the people they governed, all were more important than their relationships with mentors or families. He declared,

> We have established offices and divided them according to ranks and roles in order to take care of the many tasks of government. Officials must abandon their own desires and act with complete honesty, with the great officials attending to the law, and small officials acting with humility, with each attending to his role and devoting himself wholeheartedly to his duty.[78]

Loyalty to the state marked the careers of the three governors whom the emperor, those around him, and subsequent historians regarded as the model territorial officials of the K'ang-hsi reign: Yü Ch'eng-lung (1617–84), governor of Chihli from 1680 to 1681 and then governor-general of Kiangsi and Chiang-nan from 1682 to 1684; P'eng P'eng (1637–1704), governor of Kwangsi from 1699 to 1701 and of Kwangtung from 1701 to 1704; and Shih Shih-lun (1658?–1722), lieutenant governor of Hunan, from 1701 to 1704 and of Anhwei in 1704. Each of these officials made a commitment to the Ch'ing early in their careers. Yü Ch'eng-lung had tearfully left his family in Shansi and headed off to what must have seemed the end of the earth, rural Kwangsi, to be a county magistrate. Then he served in difficult posts during the Three Feudatories rebellion. P'eng P'eng feigned illness for two years rather than serve in the army of Keng Ching-chung (d. 1682), an ally of Wu San-kuei, and then distinguished himself as a vigorous and honest investigator of corruption after the rebellion. Shih Shih-lun's father, Shih Lang (1621–90), had led the naval forces that conquered Taiwan in 1683. Each was also identified as a skilled and incorruptible administrator by the K'ang-hsi emperor, and the imperial praise was echoed in popular acclaim. And each became the subject of a Ch'ing-era novel that offered a highly fictionalized account of their incorruptible lives and the judgments that they rendered. Highly popular, by the nineteenth century these works were available in multiple

[77] The association of Ts'ai Yü-jung and Chin Fu with Mingju was asserted in the indictment. See also Lawrence D. Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule, 1661–1684* (Chicago, 1976), p. 129.

[78] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 133, p. 17a.

editions, despite having been written in what Lu Hsün described as "atrocious Chinese."[79]

The last two decades of the K'ang-hsi reign

The effectiveness of the K'ang-hsi provincial administration that was reached during the tenures of Yü, P'eng, Shih, and others like them was short-lived. After the year 1700 the emperor grew more concerned with factional disputes related to the selection of his successor, and the energy he devoted to the appointment and support of competent officials in the provinces waned. Perhaps as important were the increased powers that were accruing to governors around the empire. Their role had grown significantly, but not entirely in a way that was planned. Governors' authority had been consolidated during the regency, and then linked more with civil affairs in subsequent years. Their military authority increased during the Wu San-kuei rebellion, and overall their positions were enhanced by the prosperity that followed its suppression. Increasingly powerful figures, governors were perceived as infringing on the authority of those officials in posts that had been of equal rank in the Ming but were now functionally subordinate.

The succession crisis developed during the last twenty years of the K'ang-hsi reign. Confronted with evidence of his favorite son's unfitness for the role of emperor and the competing claims of his other sons, the emperor disowned his heir-apparent in 1708, reinstated him, and then deposed him again, finally, in 1711, but without settling on a successor heir. As this process unfolded, groups of officials in the capital and other interested parties formed around other princes who were potential heirs as they jockeyed for the emperor's favor. This factional maneuvering was not primarily centered in the provinces, but, surrounded by political tumult, the emperor began to measure each governor not by his moral probity, but by the calm in his jurisdiction. He did not want officials who "created problems" (*sheng shih*). In 1715 the emperor wrote, "Although Chihli governor Chao Hung-hsieh and Shansi governor Sukeji are not entirely above the temptations of wealth, they have kept their provinces quiet, and their areas uneventful. I still regard this sort of man as excellent."[80] Both of these officials served long terms, Chao Hung-hsieh in Chihli from 1705 to 1722, and Sukeji in Shansi from 1709 to 1722. Where honesty had once been the touchstone of provincial service for the emperor, in his later years a territorial official's primary virtue was in maintaining stability.

[79] Lu Hsün, *A brief history of Chinese fiction*, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (1959; Westport, CT, 1973), pp. 348–9, 411–19.

[80] Chung-kuo ti i li-shih tang-an-kuan, comp., *K'ang-hsi ch'i-chü-chu* (Peking, 1984), p. 2203.

Looking for security, the emperor did not separate loyalty to the state from loyalty to his person, so he selected as governors men he knew personally. Two prominent appointments of this sort were his *Book of change* tutor, Hsü Ch'ao (1647–1715), who was governor of Honan from 1700 to 1704, and his calligraphy tutor, Ch'en Yüan-lung, who was governor of Kwangsi from 1711 to 1718. In the case of Ch'en's appointment, it is not clear whether the posting to the far southern border of the empire was a promotion or a demotion. Ch'en's service at court had been a roller coaster ride of dismissals and reinstatements. When the emperor dispatched him to Kwangsi he said,

> Ch'en Yüan-lung has long served in the Hanlin Academy, but he has never really managed affairs. Since his appointment as a member of the Ministry of Personnel, some of those he has recommended have not been upright. Let us send Ch'en to a frontier posting and see how he does.[81]

It is telling that even though the emperor did not know how well Ch'en would do in Kwangsi, he preferred an appointee he knew personally for the position.

Some of the friction in administering the provinces of the empire derived from subordinate officials perceiving their powers being infringed and then looking to the central government for relief, while governors looked to the emperor himself for their defense. However, the K'ang-hsi emperor was not a legislator, and his grants of authority to provincial officials were inconsistent and confusing. Too often, the limits of a governor's power had not been defined; nor had the responsibilities and limits of those above and below him. This situation led to a series of mutual indictments and accusations of malfeasance.

In the summer of 1699, the lieutenant governor of Shansi, Chishiwu, indicted the governor, Wolun, for extorting money from the prefects of the province.[82] Shortly thereafter, Wolun indicted Chishiwu for not managing provincial treasuries adequately and for sponsoring extortion among his subordinates. The mutual indictments pointed to anomalies in the late K'ang-hsi order. Lieutenant governors were responsible for collecting taxes and for accounting for those revenues that remained in the province after the central tax quota had been paid, but governors made the decisions about how much provincial revenue should be used to defray military expenses and relieve subsistence crises. Moreover, because of the way offices had been developed in the early Ch'ing, lieutenant governors had the same rank as governors, although

[81] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen haung-ti shih-lu*, ch. 247, p. 5. Ch'en's biography in *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* sanitizes this comment to "You have served well in the Hanlin for many years. Now I am going to specially try you out in a frontier post to see what you are like at doing the job."

[82] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 193, pp. 14–14a, ch. 194, pp. 4a–5. See also Liu Feng-yün, "K'ang-hsi ch'ao ti tsung-fu yü ti-fang ch'ien-liang k'uei-k'ung," *Ch'ing shih yen-chiu* No. 3 (2009), p. 35.

functionally they were subordinates. The situation was complicated by the fact that with the elimination of regional inspectors during the early Oboi regency, there was no outside review, and governors' offices audited themselves. The court's initial response to the accusations was to dismiss both Chishiwu and Wolun, and put new officials in their place.[83] A similar case, centering on different provincial prerogatives, occurred in Szechwan a few years later. The governor, Yü Yang-chih, and the provincial military intendant, Yüeh Sheng-lung, came into conflict over how aggressive the strategy along the Tibet border should be.[84] Yüeh Sheng-lung favored an attempt to conquer the trading town of Dartsedo, whereas Yü, who may have been receiving money from the merchants there, opposed any attempt to take the city. Each official accused the other of malfeasance. At stake was not only the question of Tibet policy, but also that of who should control military affairs, a pressing one in a border province like Szechwan.

The most spectacular case of mutual indictments occurred in the lower Yangtze province of Kiangsu in 1712. There governor Chang Po-hsing (1652–1725) accused governor-general Gali (d. 1714) of favoritism in the provincial examinations. In return, Gali accused Chang of a range of misdeeds, including failure to pursue pirates along the coast and to police his jurisdiction adequately, inability to assure the timely delivery of tribute grain to the capital, protecting the suspected traitor Fang Pao (1668–1749), and perhaps most galling to the *chin-shih* degree-holding Chang Po-hsing, reading and engaging in scholarship when he should have been attending to the affairs of government. Several sets of investigators failed to get to the bottom of these incendiary charges, which brought examination candidates and military personnel to the streets in protest. Finally the emperor sided with Chang Po-hsing, despite the fact that Gali's mother had been the emperor's wet nurse. Gali returned to the capital, and Chang was reappointed governor of Kiangsu.[85]

These cases were widely known, in part because officials were transferred frequently and news traveled with them and their retinues. Wolun, accused in Shansi, was replaced by Gali, who was to be accused in Kiangsu. Chishiwu, who was vindicated in Shansi, replaced Yü Yang-chih in Szechwan. Inevitably, the mutual indictments raised tensions among provincial personnel. In 1691, a censor memorialized to urge the emperor to act promptly in such cases, since

[83] Ultimately Chishiwu was vindicated and promoted, and Wolun returned to a position in the banner hierarchy.

[84] *Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 194, pp. 2–2a, 6a–7. See also Dai Yingcong, *The Sichuan frontier and Tibet: Imperial strategy in the early Qing* (Seattle, 2009), pp. 57–60.

[85] See memorial in Chang Po-hsing, *Cheng-i t'ang wen-chi* (Shanghai, 1936) 2, pp. 17–27. See also Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, pp. 248–57.

if they were allowed to fester, such disputes could affect officials throughout the system and government efficacy would decline.[86] The K'ang-hsi emperor responded in each of these cases, but often tardily and tersely, seemingly disinclined to address the structural conflicts that underlay the accusations. He managed personalities rather than structures, trusted more in people than in laws, and was forgiving of the foibles of those he trusted. Both his son and grandson would describe his administrative style as "lenient" (*k'uan*) rather than "strict" (*chai*).

Each of these cases of mutual accusation owed much to the particular circumstances and personalities involved. Shansi's rather insular Manchu politics, Szechwan's needs as a border province with Tibet, and the remarkable confrontation of military and civilian eminence that was enacted in the lower Yangtze region certainly shaped the protests that occurred there. However, collectively the accusers seemed to be probing and challenging the limits of provincial offices and authority.

THE YUNG-CHENG REIGN: CONTROLLING GOVERNORS FROM THE CENTER

Yin-chen, the prince who became the Yung-cheng emperor in 1735, was particularly aware of these weaknesses in the practice of administering provinces. An outsider prince who had not been expected to become emperor, Yin-chen had a temperament that was at once skeptical and experimental, restless and brilliant. He had observed capital officials long enough to know their talents and their failings. Just fifty days after ascending the throne, the Yung-cheng emperor issued a series of edicts outlining his expectations for provincial officials and his understanding of their failures. In these early edicts and throughout his reign he condemned Han officials for pursuing their private ends under the cover of Confucian universalism, for colluding with each other to deny the central government access to all the revenues raised in the name of the state, for resisting realistic assessments of administrative and political performance, and for ignoring the tasks of maintaining order and sustaining the military.[87] The new emperor was hardly opposed to Confucian precepts, but he was opposed to the political practices of many literati. His critique raised the fascinating question of the relationship of precept to practice. Could administrative rationality be built on the foundation of the eighteenth-century bureaucrat's classical training? One way to do so would have been to build a structure of

[86] The censor's memorial is in *Huang Ch'ing tsou-i*, ch. 23, pp. 8–9.

[87] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu* (Peking, 1985), ch. 3, p. 8. See R. Kent Guy, "Ideology and organization in the Qing empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 No. 4 (2010), pp. 355–77.

regulations to constrain provincial officials' capacity to advance interests other than the state's. While the Yung-cheng emperor did this to some extent, his more immediate response was to use his powers of appointment to build a corps of provincial officials loyal to his own person and goals.

New men

In the course of his first six years on the throne the Yung-cheng emperor appointed eighty men as governors of provinces, creating the most tumultuous period in Ch'ing provincial administration before the middle of the nineteenth century. The new emperor's earliest intervention in the corps of governors was to dismiss about half the provincial governors of the K'ang-hsi era in his first few months on the throne. He said he perceived them to be corrupt, or ineffective, or both. He may also not have trusted their loyalty to him as his father's successor. Some of the replacements were the product of factional maneuvering. In the first full year of the reign, 1723, at least six governors were appointed on the recommendation of Nien Keng-yao (d. 1726), a Han-chün bannerman and *chin-shih* who, as a general in the northwest, had led Ch'ing troops to victory in Tibet in the last years of the K'ang-hsi reign.[88] Over the next two years, as the new emperor became aware of Nien's ambitions and the extent of his corruption, their relations began to sour. Beginning in the spring of 1725, the six governors were dismissed abruptly, causing a flurry of concern at court that the emperor sought to allay.[89] This cycle played itself out clearly in Chihli. There, Chao Hung-hsieh, who had been praised by the K'ang-hsi emperor for not creating trouble, died in office in 1722, leaving tax arrears of some 450,000 taels of silver. In recognition of his long service in Chihli, the K'ang-hsi emperor had allowed his son, Chao Chih-huan, to succeed him and clear up the arrears. When Nien pointed out that the son was as corrupt as the father, the Yung-cheng emperor dismissed Chao Chih-huan. At this point, according to subsequent investigations, Chao offered Nien Keng-yao a bribe of 150,000 taels to be reinstated. Nien declined to take the offer, and instead recommended his protégé Li Wei-chün for the Chihli post.[90] Li served nearly two years, and then was dismissed shortly after his patron was relieved of his command in Szechwan. Ironically, Li Wei-chün tried to save himself by indicting Nien, but the emperor saw through the ruse, charging him with being "outwardly compliant but inwardly rebellious."[91]

[88] Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan* (Peking, 1985), pp. 99–101.

[89] The emperor's conciliatory words are quoted in Feng, *Yung-cheng chuan*, p. 457.

[90] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 34, pp. 10a–11a; Feng, *Yung-cheng chuan*, p. 105.

[91] See biography of Li Wei-chün in *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 13, p. 2a.

The emperor's parade of appointments continued after the early days of his reign. Even after Nien committed suicide in early 1726, new governors were appointed and dismissed at a rate unequaled during other times in the Ch'ing period. What were the characteristics of the new appointees, referred to as the emperor's "new men"?[92] Personal loyalty to the emperor was a common characteristic, fostered by his seeking and maintaining personal relations with those he appointed. His three favorite governors, T'ien Wen-ching (1662–1732), O-erh-t'ai (Ortai, 1680–1745), and Li Wei (1687–1738), were all men rescued from the obscurity of lower-middle- to middle-level bureaucratic careers. When the emperor observed them acting effectively, he raised them rapidly to high office. They owed their eminence entirely to him, and they served with intelligence and ability for the remainder of their lives.

The Yung-cheng emperor's surviving comments on personnel dossiers and his remarks to individual officials show that he sought more than loyalty. He devoted a tremendous amount of time to evaluating the men who were to serve him. More than 11,000 imperial comments on audiences he held with those recommended for appointment and promotion are extant today.[93] In his working reviews of officials, the emperor seemed above all concerned with talent (*ts'ai*). The search for talent was nothing new in administrative history or imperial rhetoric, but what was remarkable under this emperor was the emphasis on talent to the exclusion of other characteristics. Traditionally, officials were judged by three qualities: honesty (*ch'ing*), vigilance (*shen*), and diligence (*ch'in*).[94] These desiderata were so established that they were inscribed on tablets in government offices throughout the empire. The Yung-cheng emperor decided that, at least for governors, these three virtues were insufficient: "The office of governor is difficult and has many responsibilities, and honesty, vigilance, and diligence are hardly enough to succeed. In employing officials we cannot demand perfection; nonetheless a governor must have a full measure of talent. Only then will he be able to avoid error."[95] The difference between talent and the more traditional criteria lay in part

[92] This term "new men" was originally coined by Kent C. Smith in his dissertation "Ch'ing policy and the development of southwest China: Aspects of Ortai's governor-generalship, 1726–1731," Yale University, 1970, to describe O-erh-t'ai. William Rowe used the term more generally to describe prominent officials in the early Yung-cheng reign; see William T. Rowe, *Saving the world: Chen Hongmou and elite consciousness in eighteenth-century China* (Stanford, 2001), p. 53.

[93] These comments by the Yung-cheng emperor are published in Ch'in Kuo-ching et al., eds., *Chung-kuo ti i li-shih tang-an-kuan ts'ang Ch'ing tai kuan-yüan lü-li tang-an ch'üan-pien* (Shanghai, 1997). They are discussed at some length in Wang Chih-ming, *Yung-cheng ch'ao kuan-liao chih-tu yen-chiu* (Shanghai, 2007).

[94] These characteristics were first identified in the Three Kingdoms period, and remained a staple of personnel administration throughout the imperial era.

[95] O-erh-t'ai et al., eds., *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* (1738; Taipei, 1965), Volume 3, p. 1177.

in the way they were measured. Honesty, vigilance, and diligence were good Confucian virtues, outward manifestations of inner disposition and cultivation. Talent, on the other hand, was measured by accomplishments in office. The emperor was proposing a new paradigm for evaluating officials.

This change was critical for an emperor whose commitment to reform in some respects exceeded his own capacity to achieve results. Tellingly, most of the proposals for such reforms originated with provincial bureaucrats. For instance, although the emperor from his earliest days understood that there was a problem of financing local government, the idea of collecting the silver wastage fee for the public coffers and using it to provide salaries for previously unpaid sub-officials came from T'ien Wen-ching and other northern governors.[96] Similarly, the policy of reorganizing the southwest by abolishing recognition of hereditary local headmen was forged by the emperor's favorite, O-erh-t'ai, while he was serving as governor-general of Yunnan and Kweichow, with the emperor approving in general terms. The reality was that before taking the throne, the Yung-cheng emperor had had little administrative experience. He was aware of abuses by officials and sub-officials, but he hardly had the experience to impose the means to ameliorate them. The new solutions for which his reign is famous came about through the initiatives of provincial officials whom the emperor trusted.

To be certain that governors accomplished the missions for which they were appointed, the Yung-cheng emperor expanded the secret palace memorial system that had been initiated by his father. This private communications system allowed documents to be conveyed directly and confidentially between the emperor and selected officials, a secure and regular channel of communication between them.[97] These documents did not, given the speed of communications and the distances in the Ch'ing empire, allow the emperor to participate in key decision-making in the provinces, but he could much more readily avail himself of officials' advice. Secret palace memorials also allowed the emperor to ask one official in confidence about the performance of his colleagues, and then check the responses by consulting others or more open records. This possibility constituted a new check on provincial officials' activities. Initially, all the palace memorials and the imperial rescripts on them were strictly secret. The emperor himself regarded this work as his central contribution to the management of the Ch'ing state, and toward the end of his reign he ordered that a compilation of his secret comments to officials be published

[96] See Madeleine Zelin, "The Yung-cheng reign," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 9, Part 1: *The Ch'ing empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (New York, 2002), pp. 209–10.

[97] The origins of this system are well described in Silas H. L. Wu, *Communication and imperial control in China: Evolution of the palace memorial system, 1693–1735* (Cambridge, MA, 1970).

as his legacy. The resulting *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih* (*Imperial rescripts in red from the Yung-cheng reign*) was issued in 1738. Although somewhat edited to reflect the ideological sensitivities of both the new emperor and his officials, it remains a primary source for understanding the evolution of policy in the Yung-cheng reign.[98]

Governor T'ien Wen-ching and the emperor

The appointment of T'ien Wen-ching illustrates the energy and urgency that the Yung-cheng emperor brought to his new appointments, and the ways in which he used the new palace memorial system to achieve his ends. Like many Yung-cheng favorites, T'ien was a Han-chün bannerman, not a product of the examination system. After twenty-five years of experience in the lower strata of provincial administration, he was plucked from administrative obscurity by the vigilant emperor.

T'ien's first appointment had been as assistant magistrate in Ch'ang-lo, Fukien, a coastal county downstream from Foochow city, where the Min River joins the sea. After eleven years there, T'ien was promoted, presumably by routine means, to be the magistrate of Hsiang-ning county in Shansi, a small place in the mountains east of the Yellow River, where he served for fourteen years. T'ien Wen-ching's next posting was as magistrate of the larger independent department of I-chou in Chihli, which straddled the Great Wall along the Shansi border about 220 *li* southwest of Peking. After only a year there, T'ien was given a series of appointments in the capital. From 1705 to 1708, he served as assistant department director in the Ministry of Punishments; from 1708 to 1711, he was a department director in the Ministry of Personnel; in 1711, he was transferred to the Censorate; and in 1715, he was assigned the task of reviewing salt quotas for the Ch'ang-lu salt district, which included much of north China and provided significant revenue for the Imperial Household Department. While many sources describe T'ien Wen-ching as a fairly rough-and-ready provincial administrator, honest to a fault but lacking in the polish of his Confucian subordinates, his series of mid-level capital appointments suggests that he was not inept in the capital's bureaucratic world.[99]

By the early 1720s, T'ien Wen-ching was the sort of obscure but experienced junior official whom the Yung-cheng emperor wanted to meet, but the

[98] On the publication of the memorials, see Yang Ch'i-ch'iao, *Yung-cheng ti chi ch'i mi-che chih-tu yen-chiu* (Hong Kong, 1983), pp. 188–98. The resulting collection was first printed in 1738, and has been reprinted as O-erh-t'ai, *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*.

[99] Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period* (Washington, DC, 1943–4), pp. 719–20.

actual circumstances of T'ien's encounter with the emperor, as the emperor related them, owed more to accident than to imperial design. The emperor's association with T'ien began when T'ien was directed, in his capacity as a reader in the Grand Secretariat, to represent the emperor at sacrifices carried out at Hua-shan, one of the five sacred mountains, located in Hua-yin county in central Shensi, just southwest of the elbow of the Yellow River. T'ien's route probably carried him through I-chou, then down the Fen River valley in central Shansi, perhaps past Hsiang-ning county where he had spent the majority of his time as a county official. As he passed through these areas, T'ien encountered the first famine of the Yung-cheng reign. It was due to a drought that had probably begun in the summer of 1721 and was concentrated around the great bend in the Yellow River in Shensi province. By 1722 much of the north was affected, including Shansi. During an earlier trip to the capital when he was still in favor, Nien Keng-yao had reported this famine to the emperor, but Shansi officials had not made any mention of it, and so had not triggered any of the famine-relief procedures that the Ch'ing had developed. T'ien Wen-ching, asked to observe conditions along the way, reported that famine was everywhere in full evidence. The emperor replaced the governor of Shansi and appointed T'ien lieutenant governor, the first Han official to hold that position since the Oboi regency. Using the expertise he had accumulated during his years of provincial service, T'ien oversaw famine relief, and also worked to correct the tax deficits that had accumulated during the long term of Sukeji as governor.[100]

Success in Shansi led to the transfer of T'ien Wen-ching to the post of lieutenant governor of Honan. There he confronted a new challenge, the distribution of relief and the reconstruction of the dikes along the Yellow River that had collapsed following torrential rains in the spring of 1723 that ended the northern drought. A new imperial appointee, Chi Tseng-yün, was sent to inspect the situation, and he recommended shoring up the river banks through much of Honan province.[101] The maintenance of these dike works was a perpetual obligation of the Honan governor, one of the few tasks of an individual governor that was formally recognized in the Ch'ing administrative code. In this regard, the situation in Honan was quite different from that of

[100] *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 51, pp. 8–15. This account was provided by the emperor as he defended T'ien from an indictment made in 1726. It has been questioned by Ch'en Chieh-hsien, "Lun sheng Ch'ing ming-ch'en T'ien Wen-ching chih te-ch'ung chi ch'i yüan-yin," *Ku-kung wen-hsien* 4 (1973), pp. 29–30. Ch'en is inclined to trust rumors of the Yung-cheng era that T'ien had served in the household of Prince Yin-chen before he was elevated to the throne. Feng Erh-k'ang, in *Yung-cheng chuan*, p. 475, sees no cause to doubt the Yung-cheng account.

[101] On Chi Tseng-yün, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, pp. 119–20. His memorials on river conservation are printed in Chi Tseng-yün, *Fang-ho tsou-i* (Yung-cheng reign; Shanghai, 2002).

Shantung, where the Ch'ing central state normally underwrote the cost of repairs to the Grand Canal. In Honan each governor had to cobble together a package of central allocations, local resources, and provincial funds to support river work. Often the labor and expense of maintaining the river had to be balanced against the need to provide relief for those whose homes and crops were destroyed by flooding.[102] When T'ien Wen-ching arrived in Kaifeng as lieutenant governor, he found his superior, governor Shih Wen-cho, daunted by the task before him. Peasants would not sell the provincial government the straw needed to repair the dikes at reasonable prices, and laborers could not be hired within budget to accomplish the work.[103] In a secret memorial, T'ien calmly reassured the monarch that straw could readily be acquired at harvest time on the northern plain, and that workers, if properly paid and supervised, would undertake the task of shoring up embankments. The issue was money. T'ien then proposed that landowners along the banks of the river, who would be the main beneficiaries of dike works, be assessed according to the size of their holdings in order to pay the workers and supervise the labor.[104]

The activism and confidence of T'ien Wen-ching's memorial distinguished it from Shih Wen-cho's. In contrast to the governor's worries about whether carts and men could be hired and straw found, T'ien assured the emperor in a matter-of-fact tone that the work could be accomplished, and that it would produce embankments secure for a generation. Shih Wen-cho addressed the emperor as one might a distant and rather ill-equipped accountant. The numbers were provided, but there was nothing to be done except reach the governor's conclusion that a further imposition on the local population was necessary. T'ien Wen-ching did not offer the emperor a choice. There was no request for imperial authorization in his memorial, and subsequent events suggested that he had initiated his plan before the emperor read or responded to it. But he did provide a fairly clear outline of the situation, and his proposal was comprehensive enough to assure an emperor separated from the scene of disaster by distance and layers of officialdom that the goals of the project could be reached.

As it turned out, resistance by local landowners frustrated T'ien's plan. Confronted with the lieutenant governor's requests for money, members of the local elite responded by boycotting the provincial examination.[105] By

[102] On river maintenance in Honan, see Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, pp. 188–9. For comparison, see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The making of a hinterland: State, society, and economy in inland north China, 1853–1937* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 154–5, 162.

[103] O-erh-t'ai, *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, Volume 2, p. 1151.

[104] O-erh-t'ai, *Yung-cheng chu-p'i yü-chih*, Volume 5, pp. 3016–17.

[105] On this boycott, see Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of civil examinations in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 230–1.

this means, they hoped to attract the attention of examination officials, who could convey their opposition directly to the Yung-cheng court, bypassing the governor's yamen. They found a sympathetic ear in the examiner Chang T'ing-lu, and also in his brother Chang T'ing-yü (1672–1755), a confidant of the K'ang-hsi emperor, high-ranking official of the Yung-cheng emperor, and dean of scholarly officials in the capital. Although leaders of the boycott were arrested, T'ien retreated from his plan to have landholders pay for or supervise the work on the riverbanks. The necessary work along the banks of the Yellow River was accomplished instead by a detachment of "river troops" (*ho-ping*) lent to the Honan provincial administration by the director-general of the Southern River Conservancy.[106] But the fact that T'ien Wen-ching could not implement his ideas did not undermine the emperor's confidence in him. In the autumn of 1725 T'ien was promoted to be governor of Honan, and subordinate officials of his choosing were transferred to the province to replace those who had sided with the local elite in the examination boycott.

Because of the governor's honesty and initiative, the Yung-cheng emperor championed T'ien Wen-ching on this occasion and at several points later in his long governorship, when his activism got him in trouble. T'ien's honesty was in part conditioned by his history within the Ch'ing bureaucracy. Having advanced to senior provincial offices through the emperor's intervention, he had no bureaucratic mentors to please and every reason to report information and advice that the emperor wanted. By the same token, he had little incentive to tell the emperor merely what pleased him to hear, since Kaifeng was close enough to the capital that any obvious falsifications would make their way there. Just as important, T'ien Wen-ching had arrived in Honan ready to take charge, and he had offered a clear solution to an enduring problem for the province. The solution may have represented the perspective of a lower stratum of administrators than was usually heard at court. T'ien himself was only a few years away from being a magistrate, and a source published several years after the events suggested that his proposal had originated with the magistrate of one of the riverbank counties affected by the flood. In endorsing T'ien, the emperor may have been endorsing not one official, but a whole cohort of junior officials who in the eighteenth century were making their way up the provincial government hierarchy that the Ch'ing leaders had created in the seventeenth century.

Control of local officials

The first half of the Yung-cheng reign was marked by rapid changes of personnel; its second half was marked by institution building. For governors,

[106] *Ho-nan t'ung-chih* (early Ch'ien-lung; Shanghai, 1987), ch. 15, pp. 26a–b.

the most important of the latter trend was the development of a system that allowed them to promote the most competent of their subordinates to the most difficult posts in their provinces. Central evaluation of officials was ideologically important in the imperial system, but it could not readily deal with the problem that some areas required specialized knowledge of particular social and political conditions, and others needed higher levels of skill and experience.

This problem was hardly new. Administrators in the capital throughout the Ming and early Ch'ing periods had been concerned about assigning officials with particular expertise to posts requiring it. The Yung-cheng emperor formalized these procedures, decreeing a system that would prevail until the end of the dynasty. In broad terms, this mid-Ch'ing solution was to acknowledge that provincial-level officials, closer to local postings and their particular problems, were better qualified to judge fitness for local offices than was the Ministry of Personnel in Peking. Because they had been accorded special rights of appointment at several points in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, a patchwork of personnel regimes had been created among the provinces, sometimes with marked differences.[107]

Under the Ch'ing, as with previous dynasties, a small number of local postings deemed strategically important were designated "directly attached" (*chih-li*) or independent departments or sub-prefectures.[108] Officials in charge of these areas reported directly to the governor of the province in which they were located, rather than to the prefect and circuit intendant, who normally served as intermediaries. The governors of the provinces in which such jurisdictions were located were allowed to select the magistrates of independent departments and sub-prefectures from among the most competent officials serving elsewhere in the province. This grant of appointive authority was intended to guarantee not only that the local officials in these districts would be experienced and accomplished, but also that they would have the confidence of the provincial governor.[109]

[107] For a discussion of local appointments in the Ming, see Nimick, *Local administration in Ming China*, particularly pp. 84–90.

[108] Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in Imperial China*, p. 160.

[109] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 61, pp. 1–4. In 1899, there were fifty-three independent departments and twenty independent sub-prefectures. On their establishment and development, see *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 38, pp. 1–10. The rule that governors would select the officials of these units was labeled *yüan-ting*, part of the original regulations of the dynasty. This designation would seem to confirm Skinner's hypothesis that these jurisdictions were meant from the beginning to be special, as opposed to the notion in H. S. Brunnert, V. V. Hagelstrom, et al., *Present day political organization of China* (Shanghai, 1912), that they were areas in transition to more normal patterns of administration. See G. William Skinner, "Cities and the hierarchy of local systems," in *The city in late imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, 1977), p. 321.

After the rebellions set off by Wu San-kuei were defeated, the K'ang-hsi court faced the problem of getting qualified officials to accept postings perceived as dangerous and unhealthy in the far south. In 1684, the emperor decreed that those who served in distant southern postings, officially termed "malarial and miasmic" (*yen chang*), would automatically be eligible for promotion after they had served successfully for three or five years, depending on the difficulty of the position.[110] In 1695, when the K'ang-hsi court set out to establish local administration on Taiwan, these two kinds of administrative special status were combined. Officials appointed to the island were to be selected by the governor of Fukien from among the most competent magistrates serving in the mainland jurisdictions of his province, and then deemed to be eligible for further promotion after three years of successful service.[111]

During the Yung-cheng reign, the number of counties that were set aside for such special treatment increased significantly, and came to include not only places in border provinces, but those well within the frontiers. In 1724, the emperor decreed that the governors of Kwangtung and Kwangsi should select magistrates for "malarial and miasmic" districts from among the most competent in their provinces, and made their possibilities for promotion comparable to those in Taiwan.[112] In the same year, he extended those terms of service to counties along the seacoasts of Shantung, Kiangsu, Chekiang, and Kwangtung.[113] A further order provided that the magistrates posted along the rivers of Honan, Shantung, and Kiangsu be selected by governors from among those working elsewhere in the province and be eligible for promotion after three years of successful service. For riverbank posts, such "success" was defined as having no breaks in the dikes during one's term of office and not having spent excessive funds on dike maintenance.[114] In this instance, it would seem, magistrates were being given an incentive not only to serve along the rivers, but also to avoid the graft that was often associated with dike maintenance projects. In 1727 the Yung-cheng emperor set aside five border districts in Shensi and Kansu for appointment by the governors of those provinces.[115] Later that year the magistrates of forty districts and departments of Hunan, Kweichow, and Yunnan, designated Miao frontier areas (Miao *chiang*), were offered similar terms for appointment and promotion.[116]

Early Ch'ing regulations for borderlands and internal frontiers addressed one side of the problem of differences in postings, but there remained the

[110] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 67, p. 5. [111] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 65, p. 17.
[112] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 67, pp. 5–6. [113] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 65, pp. 2–7.
[114] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 63, pp. 15–16. This edict was issued shortly after the resolution of the dispute between T'ien Wen-ching and the riverbank landowners in Honan.
[115] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 66, p. 1. [116] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 67, p. 11.

fact that some places not on frontiers required special experience and skill. The Ch'ing government had a system for identifying and distinguishing difficult postings. Each post was characterized according to the presence or absence of four attributes, each of which was indicated by a single character. A position could be troublesome (*fan*), meaning that there was a great deal of official business; a thoroughfare (*ch'ung*), meaning that it was a center of communications or commercial importance; difficult (*nan*), meaning that the magistrate had to cope with an "unruly, crime-prone population"; or wearisome (*pi*), meaning that taxes were difficult to collect. Combinations of these attributes meant altogether fifteen possible designations, and in general the more labels a post had, the more difficult it was considered to be.[117]

In 1731 governors were given control over the appointment of officials who served in posts with multiple attributes. Pursuant to an order to deliberate and respond on the matter, the Ministry of Personnel, whose powers were being curtailed, observed that postings could be easy or difficult, just as talents could be limited or abundant. Only when talents were matched to locations would there be benefit to the people. The ministry proposed that governors be allowed to recommend the most competent officials in their provinces for appointment to posts designated with three or four attributes. The emperor approved the proposal, and it became established practice.[118]

By the end of the Yung-cheng reign, Ch'ing governors had acquired control over the appointment of a substantial number of magistracies in a wide variety of venues. The terminology used to designate these positions pointed to their political significance. Posts were labeled "very important posts" (*tsui yao ch'üeh*) if they had four designated attributes, or "important posts" (*yao ch'üeh*) if they had three attributes or had already been placed under the governor's control, based on their location.[119] Appointments under the control of governors were also known in official records as posts for which selection was made outside the capital (*chien hsüan tsai wai chih ch'üeh*). According to the 1899 edition of the *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (*Precedents and regulations of the collected statutes of the Ch'ing*), there were 301 such magistracies in counties, departments, and

[117] Skinner, "Cities and the hierarchy of local systems," pp. 315–16.

[118] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 61, p. 18; *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 113, pp. 11–12. This innovation appears to have been the result of the proposal of one provincial governor. See Kuo Ch'eng-k'ang, *Shih-pa shih-chi ti Chung-kuo cheng-chih* (Taipei, 2001), pp. 285–7.

[119] G. William Skinner argued that there was a "secret strategic component" to post designations that raised certain posts to "important" even though they had only two designators. While I have not examined all the possible cases, in most of the cases that I have observed, the posts that counted as "important" even though they had only two designators were those posts that had been set aside in the late K'ang-hsi and the Yung-cheng edicts. In these situations, there was certainly an additional component to these post rankings, but its origin was not particularly secret.

sub-prefectures in the eighteen provinces.[120] Because of the common terminology used to describe them, it is impossible to tell how many posts were set aside for strategic reasons, and how many because of economic importance. During the early eighteenth century, a total of 181 counties and departments were so designated on the basis of their strategic location in the far south, along the seacoasts and riverbanks, and in Miao frontier regions. Some of these posts lost their special status in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and it seems likely that, with commercial development, more districts of economic importance were added to the list. By then perhaps half of the posts under governors' control were positions of economic or commercial importance.

In view of the great effort the Yung-cheng emperor put into selecting the officials who would serve him as governors, the fact that he so readily turned over to them the authority to select their junior officials might seem paradoxical. From the point of view of provincial administration, however, there was no inconsistency. Lower-ranked officials who were more responsive to their governor's priorities made it possible for him to carry out central-government directives more effectively. Changing the locus of selection of many local officials from the Ministry of Personnel to the governor's yamen also enhanced the power of those men whom the emperor held primarily responsible for the tasks of governing their province.

THE CH'IEN-LUNG REIGN: SUBORDINATING GOVERNORS AND EXTRACTING WEALTH

The Yung-cheng emperor left his son who became the Ch'ien-lung emperor a complicated and contested legacy. By dint of energy and dedication the Yung-cheng emperor by the end of his life had produced an efficient bureaucratic order that was almost professional in its character. He had achieved this success by exercising a degree of personal involvement that many of the Han official elite found distasteful. The main problem that his successor faced in the early days of his rule was how to signal a retreat from the most unpopular of his father's policies of provincial government without either losing the capacity to monitor and influence local affairs that the Yung-cheng provincial order

[120] *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, ch. 8, pp. 10a–13a. Postings under governors' control were also identified in a manual of official posting, entitled *Ch'üeh-chih ch'üan-lan* (Peking, 1904; rpt. Taipei, 1967). The purpose of this manual seems to have been to prepare officials for the postings they were dispatched to take up. The volume not only recorded the fact that a post had been judged "important" or "very important," but also noted the designations assigned to a post and whether it belonged to one of the categories placed under a governor's control by imperial edict.

afforded, or appearing to repudiate his father, an option that required careful maneuvering when filial piety was a cardinal virtue.

During the early Ch'ien-lung years, governors continued to exercise the wide powers they had acquired during the previous reigns, and the more active among them not only refined and further defined these powers, they also produced a body of writings about administration. Few of the provincial activists enjoyed the close relations with the emperor that their predecessors had in the previous reign. As those who had served under Yung-cheng passed from the scene, by mid-century there was a shift in the way power was exercised. The locus of initiative in provincial affairs shifted from an emperor–governor alliance to an alliance between the emperor and officials in the central government who viewed governors as their subordinates. The mid-eighteenth-century governor's role came to be defined as one of filling the forms generated by the increasingly powerful members of the Grand Council. The most frequent path to an appointment as governor became lateral transfer, and a governor's political fortunes could be measured in his successive transfers to wealthier and more politically visible postings. As governors jockeyed for more advantageous positions, bribes and presents became a common feature of the appointment process and of the conduct of government generally.

Reaction to the Yung-cheng order

The Yung-cheng emperor has been admired by twentieth-century Western and Japanese scholars for his modernization of Ch'ing administration, but he was not so well regarded in eighteenth-century China. His attempt to rule through strong provincial governors and to bypass many central-government officials and institutions, his emphasis on concrete accomplishments as opposed to more generalized notions of virtue, and what many perceived as an increasingly militarized provincial order were particularly unpopular among the Han official elites who participated in Ch'ing rule.[121]

[121] Fang Pao, "Ch'ing chiao-ch'u chi-hsi hsing-ch'i jen-ts'ai cha-tzu," in Fang Pao, *Fang Pao chi* (Shanghai, 1983), Volume 2, pp. 557–63; Ts'ao I-shih, "Ch'ing fen-pieh hsien-neng shu," in Ho Ch'ang-ling, *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* 19, pp. 24–5. For complaints that too many Manchus had been appointed provincial governor, see the entry on Hang Shih-chün in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, p. 277; and CSL-CL 184:46a–50a. For Ch'üan Tsu-wang's complaint, see his "Chiang-yin Yang Wen-ting kung hsing-shu," in Ch'üan Tsu-wang, *Chieh-ch'i-t'ing chi wai pien* (Shanghai, 2002), ch. 11. On the complexity of the debate over the Yung-cheng emperor's nourishment of virtue reforms in the early Ch'ien-lung period, see Madeleine Zelin, *The magistrate's tael: Rationalizing fiscal reform in eighteenth-century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 266–78. Many of these critical perspectives emerged when the new emperor invited comment on Ch'ing government in the early years of the reign, a process known as "opening the avenue of opinion."

To address these resentments, a few obvious changes were made in the first years of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's reign. Many of those who had previously been dismissed were restored to their positions and ranks. Seven governors were appointed in 1736; they replaced four who had been relieved of office and recalled to the capital and three who were formally indicted and dismissed. In the southwest and northwest, these new appointments were related to a change in military strategy. There were also changes in economic policy. The emperor rescinded imperial authorization of a system of land deed registration that T'ien Wen-ching had established in Honan,[122] and he retreated from the Yung-cheng policy of reducing taxes on "reclaimed land"; that is, land put back into cultivation after warfare or disaster.[123] Many of these early changes were justified by reference to a passage in the *Book of documents* that spoke of the need for successive monarchs to alternate leniency (*k'uan*) and strictness (*chai*) in their style of rule. Applied to the early Ch'ing period, it was understood that the K'ang-hsi emperor had been lenient and the Yung-cheng emperor severe, and that the Ch'ien-lung emperor's role was to modulate his father's severity.[124]

One of the dismissals of a governor proved to be more contentious than the court expected. Wang Shih-chün (1683–1756), refusing to go quietly, lectured the emperor on the dangers of abandoning the Yung-cheng legacy.[125] Wang rose and fell within the bureaucracy on the strength of his association with the bureaucratic and administrative style espoused by the Yung-cheng emperor. He earned his *chin-shih* degree in 1721, almost the last year of the K'ang-hsi reign, and his performance on the palace examinations and in the imperial interview earned him a place in the Hanlin Academy. The new Yung-cheng emperor decided to cut the size of the Hanlin Academy in half, and Wang was sent by special imperial order to assist Governor T'ien Wen-ching while awaiting appointment as a magistrate. According to the *Ch'ing shih* (*Ch'ing history*) account, T'ien was initially inhospitable to the neophyte dispatched to him for training almost straight from Peking's examination halls, but Wang proved his competence, even successfully disputing the governor on a technical matter of taxation. In that dispute Wang received support from the lieutenant governor, Yang Wen-ch'ien, whose protégé he subsequently became. When Yang was transferred to Kwangtung, he asked that Wang accompany him, and Wang was appointed circuit intendant there. In 1732, Wang replaced T'ien Wen-ching, who had died in office, both as governor of Honan and as

[122] *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu* (Peking, 1986), ch. 8, pp. 3–14.
[123] *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 4, pp. 7–28.
[124] Tai I, *Ch'ien-lung ti chi ch'i shih-tai* (Peking, 1992), pp. 114–18.
[125] On Wang Shih-chün, see Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 295, pp. 4079–80.

governor-general for the lower Yellow River and Grand Canal (*Ho-tung ho-tao tsung-tu*).[126]

Several factors rendered Wang Shih-chün a vulnerable figure after the Yung-cheng emperor died in the late summer of 1735. As governor-general, he was the successor of T'ien Wen-ching, who had already made numerous enemies among the senior officials and the local elites of Honan during his governorship. Wang made clear his admiration for T'ien, and in 1733 or 1734 nominated him for posthumous selection for the Honan temple of eminent statesmen. Unfortunately, nature had not smiled on the last years of T'ien's administration, and he was indicted for failing to report a severe flood in 1730.[127] It was easy for many in the province and in the capital to blame the hardship that Honan people suffered in the early 1730s on T'ien's and Wang's misgovernment. When in the late fall of 1735 the minister of finance indicted Wang for overreporting the amount of reclaimed land in the province, the new emperor relieved Wang of his duties. He charged that Wang had failed to exert himself adequately to nourish and restore the people after T'ien's cruel administration. Fu-de, an associate of O-erh-t'ai, replaced Wang.[128]

For the first time in his fourteen years in government Wang was recalled to Peking. He had reason, perhaps, to be bitter, but what made him most uneasy during his eight-month stay in the capital were the changes he saw being made in the Yung-cheng emperor's institutions. When he received an appointment as governor of Szechwan, he could no longer restrain himself, and set forth his views in a lengthy and in places impassioned memorial.[129] Four matters troubled Wang. Most important was the way the Yung-cheng legacy of administrative reform was regarded at the Ch'ien-lung court. Wang acknowledged that there had been excesses, supervisors had mistaken strictness for clarity, public accounting had become dominated by trifles, and punishments had

[126] *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 18, pp. 12–16; Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 295, p. 4078; Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, p. 720.

[127] The charge was revived in 1731; see *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 7, p. 30–30a. The charge was particularly potent as T'ien had made his name in the Yung-cheng years by pointing out an unreported flood.

[128] *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 17, pp. 14–15. The indictment is quoted at some length in *Ch'ing shih lieh-chuan* 18, pp. 13a–14a, and Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 295, p. 4079. It included the lurid detail that poor people in Honan were being forced to sell their daughters in order to meet the heavy tax burden caused by taking reclaimed lands off the tax rolls. The author was said to be a protégé of O-erh-t'ai. On O-erh-t'ai's power at the early Ch'ien-lung court, see below. It was rumored that there was no love lost between the Yung-cheng emperor's two favorites, T'ien Wen-ching and O-erh-t'ai.

[129] The account here is based on an original copy of Wang Shih-chün's memorial held in the First Historical Archives, Peking. However, most accounts of the case, for instance, Tai, *Ch'ien-lung ti chi ch'i shih-tai*, pp. 111–12, are based on the Ch'ien-lung emperor's response to Wang; see *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 23, pp. 16a–21a.

not matched crimes. In Wang's view, these were faults of a bureaucratic order, not the results of Yung-cheng's policies. After the emperor's death, however, the whole court appeared intent on undoing his work. Among newly minted *chin-shih* degree holders and aspiring bureaucrats, any proposal that effectively would overturn Yung-cheng's policies was regarded as good. Wang urged the young emperor to be on his guard.

Wang's second and third concerns were with the emerging patterns of relations between provincial and central administrators. The root of the problem was that ministers (*shang-shu*) often served concurrently as grand secretaries (*ta-hsüeh-shih*) and grand councilors (*chün-chi ta-ch'en*). In their latter capacity as advisers, they were in a position to pass judgment on proposals that they had made in their other capacity as ministers. Of what use was it to write a secret palace memorial about personnel or financial matters when the ministers of personnel or finance would read it because they were also grand councilors? Related to this, the third problem Wang saw was favoritism in the treatment of provincial governors' recommendations. Some proposals were approved automatically, he alleged, even if the weight of precedent was against them, while other governors found themselves frustrated even when their arguments were sound and their procedures traditional.

Wang's fourth complaint suggested that instead of concerning themselves with matters of policy, courtiers were devoting their time to building factions. The occasions for this personnel manipulation were several seemingly innocuous edicts issued early in the reign in which the emperor invited serving officials to recommend men of talent and promised to restore to office those who had been dismissed wrongfully or for minor cause. As a result of these edicts, Wang noted, the courtyards of senior officials had become like marketplaces where graft and gossip were the stock-in-trade.

Few would have spoken to the new emperor in language as intemperate as Wang Shih-chün used. The case, moreover, marked a tear in the fabric of a transition that was meant to be seamless. In a sense the problem lay in a contradiction in the Yung-cheng emperor's legacy. On the one hand, he had empowered provincial personnel to actively pursue his vision of the state, while on the other he had created a high-level advisory council in the capital that oversaw a wide range of civilian and military matters in the provinces. These two models coexisted somewhat uncomfortably through the middle decades of the eighteenth century. The differences between them were seldom sharply highlighted. Some eighteenth-century governors chose to be provincial activists in all matters, others only in some matters, while still others merely filled in the paperwork for an increasingly powerful Grand Council. Given the emperor's sensitivity to factions among his senior bureaucrats, there was little group solidarity among governors of the different types.

Provincial activists

Although many had reservations about the Yung-cheng emperor's style of rule, few doubted the efficacy of the provincial order he had built. Much of this order was left intact in the early Ch'ien-lung years. The Grand Council remained the center of the Ch'ing administration, though it grew more powerful and independent with the new staff and record-keeping apparatus it acquired. Palace memorials remained the principle mode of communication between regions and the center, and increasingly became the medium through which the Grand Council as a government-within-a-government secured the information it needed to administer the empire.[130] The "nourishing-incorruptibility" (*yang-lien*) system, a method for providing government salaries for the subordinates of the magistrate and one of Yung-cheng's main reforms, after some debate, was left intact. Provincial officials who had had their formative experiences under the Yung-cheng emperor remained in place throughout much of the empire. They dominated the first two decades of the Ch'ien-lung reign, and were responsible for many of its signal achievements. Examples of activist governors include Ch'en Hung-mou (1696–1771), Yang Hsi-fu (1701–68), and Fang Kuan-ch'eng (1698–1768).

Ch'en Hung-mou experienced his baptism of fire in the lower Yangtze shortly after receiving his *chin-shih* degree in 1724. Difficulties in administering examinations and collecting taxes were endemic to this region, where the intensive education of elites made examinations among the most competitive in the empire, and where collected tax revenues seldom matched what was due to the central government. Shortly before Ch'en's appointment to the lower Yangtze, the Yung-cheng emperor became aware that candidates there were hiring substitutes to take their annual requalification examinations. He charged Ch'en with eliminating this fraud. Ch'en found that the practice was so widespread that it would be practically impossible to arrest all those who engaged in it. He recommended an amnesty, followed by rigorous enforcement of the rules. The emperor, initially flabbergasted at the prospect of an imperial order being questioned, characteristically listened to the advice from his official in the province and approved Ch'en's suggestion. The problem of tax arrears was equally difficult. Aggressive prosecution in 1661 had led to public demonstrations. Although the court then had effected a compromise that produced peace in Kiangsu, unpaid taxes continued to plague almost

[130] Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 137–68. For one official's concern about how decisions were being made under the new system, see "Lun chiu ch'ing hui i shih i cha-tzu," in Fang Pao, *Fang Pao chi*, Volume 2, pp. 574–6.

every governor of the province. During Ch'en's time in the southeast, governor Yin-chi-shan undertook a survey of taxes due in Kiangsu that produced a fairly full accounting of the arrears and led to the dismissal of many officials who had colluded in or condoned underpayment. Ch'en Hung-mou, however, emerged from the accounting with his reputation intact, and he was able to count Yin-chi-shan as one of his mentors in the bureaucratic world.[131]

Ch'en Hung-mou's other signal provincial contribution was in Shensi, where he served four times between 1740 and 1760. His initial appointment to the province was unusual. During the Oboi regency in the 1660s, the practice was established of appointing only Manchus to Shensi, and Ch'en was among its first Han governors.[132] In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Shensi served as a rear base for the Ch'ing armies in the northwest, and many of the Manchu appointees had been responsible for military provisioning. Ch'en devoted himself to more civilian tasks, and was particularly known for his concern with irrigation and the encouragement of agriculture in Shensi, which was a theme in the writings of all the Han officials who governed Shensi. Ts'ui Chi, the first Han governor, was a *chin-shih* from Shansi. He had submitted an extensive series of memorials on hydraulic projects, but was dismissed when the emperor found that little action had been taken on any of them.[133] Ch'en Hung-mou completed some of Ts'ui's projects and established the tradition of concern with these issues. The editors of the nineteenth-century *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* (*Writings on ordering the world in our dynasty*) devoted nearly one *chüan* to proposals regarding Shensi's waterways.[134] During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a new agrarian economy based on crops from the New World that could be grown on marginal lands evolved in Shensi.[135]

In addition to these regional accomplishments, Ch'en Hung-mou made a substantial contribution to empire-wide territorial administration. By one account,

> Fairly shortly after Ch'ien-lung's succession, he came to use the multi-talented Ch'en as a provincial troubleshooter. Ch'en's transfers came quite suddenly as he was needed to deal with food supply emergencies, or revive collapsing hydraulic structures, or handle urgent minority relations problems, or manage logistics for impending military campaigns, or clear up litigation gluts, or simply rescue a province mired in maladministration.[136]

[131] Rowe, *Saving the world*, p. 51. [132] See above, p. 32.

[133] On Ts'ui Chi, see Li Huan, comp., *Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-cheng ch'u pien* (1884–90; Taipei, 1966) 73, pp. 37–9a; and *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 64, pp. 8–9.

[134] Rowe, *Saving the world*, pp. 224–6; Ho, *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* 214, pp. 2875–98.

[135] See Roy Bin Wong, *China transformed: Historical change and the limits of European experience* (Ithaca, NY, 1997), p. 19.

[136] Rowe, *Saving the world*, p. 54.

In his capacity as imperial troubleshooter, Ch'en received more appointments to be a provincial governor than any other official during the dynasty. Ch'en's second lasting contribution to the life of the empire was his writings. Partly because of the geographical range of his experience, and because he wrote so clearly about the imperatives of stability, his written works were printed and reprinted from the early nineteenth century on for later generations who lived in an era of insecurity. They form a telling introduction to the methods and mentality of one of the most successful eighteenth-century officials.[137]

Yang Hsi-fu was another revered activist official of the mid-eighteenth century.[138] Although he served initially in the Hanlin Academy during the Yung-cheng reign, perhaps the most striking fact about his official life was that it was spent almost entirely in the south. Only six of his forty-one years in government service were in the capital, and he held no position in a northern province. Yang's first appointment was as circuit intendant in the Kuang-Chao-Lo circuit in central Kwangtung. The main feature of this area, a wealthy one in the core of the Ling-nan region, was a large, privately built dike system known as the Mulberry Enclosure that irrigated the most productive farmland in the region. Three years before Yang's appointment, these dikes had been the subject of a furious conflict between those who wanted to re-enforce them with stone and others who thought this would be too expensive.[139] All was quiet during Yang Hsi-fu's term, but the experience may have been his first introduction to the politics of dike building and river control.

From Kwangtung Yang moved on to deal with a different set of problems as lieutenant governor of Kwangsi, the post to which he was promoted in 1736. There, as throughout the southwest in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the dominant issue was the relations between the Ch'ing government, Han settlers, and indigenous Miao peoples. During the Yung-cheng reign, the solution that the court and local officials had envisioned was military conquest. When Yang arrived in Kwangsi in the first year of the Ch'ien-lung reign, the new emperor stressed instead a policy of peaceful accommodation. Yang's background as a trained civil servant suited him to the new communitarian directions of imperial policy, and when he wrote about establishing mutual responsibility (*pao-chia*) units and mechanisms for interregional cooperation among provincial officials, he received praise and support from Peking.

[137] Rowe, *Saving the world*, pp. 549–52, has a useful annotated list of Ch'en's writings.

[138] Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 309, pp. 4176–7; Li Huan, *Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-cheng ch'u pien* 173, p. 16a. See also Guy, *Qing governors and their provinces*, pp. 293–9.

[139] This conflict is described in the biography of A-k'o-tun in Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 304, pp. 4133–4.

The combination of experience in the wealthy core of Kwangtung and then in the borderlands of Kwangsi might have qualified Yang Hsi-fu superbly for service in Hunan, but one detail perhaps stood in the way. Yang was from Kiangsi, the neighboring province to the east of Hunan. Specifically, he was from Ch'ing-chiang, a county situated along the major route between Nan-ch'ang and Ch'ang-sha, the two provincial capitals. Service in Hunan could have been regarded as a violation of the rules of avoidance that prevented an official from serving within two hundred *li* of his native district. However, the Ch'ing leadership had decided early on that rules of avoidance did not apply to special appointments made by the emperor. The fact that Yang was appointed to Hunan strongly suggested that his appointment was decided upon at the highest levels.

Yang Hsi-fu was best known during his Hunan years for an essay in which he reflected on the relation of increases in population to rises in grain prices, and on the importance of maintaining the hydraulic infrastructure if a growing population was to be fed. Yang acted on this insight, and devoted much of his time as governor to repairing and expanding dikes and irrigation works.[140] The court went out of its way on several occasions to make sure that Yang remained in Hunan. All Ch'ing officials were required to observe a period of ritual mourning when a parent died, about twenty-seven months for a father's death and a shorter period for a mother. When officials observed mourning, they formally vacated their offices, and on completion of the prescribed term they were expected to report to Peking. There they presented their credentials to the Ministry of Personnel, and waited for the next available vacancy at an appropriate rank.[141] Yang Hsi-fu was unique among eighteenth-century governors in having to go into mourning twice while he was governor of Hunan, once in 1748 for his father and again in 1751 for his mother. After both periods of mourning Yang was sent back to Hunan, probably as the result of imperial intervention in the routine process.

After his service in Hunan, Yang was promoted to a position in the capital, and then to be governor-general for grain transport, a post he held for twelve years, longer than any other official in the eighteenth century. His epitaph recorded that the emperor recommended that Yang's book, *Ts'ao-yün ch'üan-shu* (*Complete account of grain transport*), be provided to all subsequent grain

[140] Yang Hsi-fu, "Ch'en-ming mi kuei chih yu shu," in Ho, *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* 39, pp. 21a–24b. The text is translated in full in Helen Dunstan, *Conflicting counsels to confuse the age: A documentary study of political economy in Qing China, 1644–1840* (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 279–91. See also Peter C. Perdue, *Exhausting the earth: State and peasant in Hunan, 1500–1850* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 166–234.

[141] Regulations on mourning are found in ch. 138 and 139 of *Ta Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*.

transport officials.[142] The collection of his writings produced after Yang's death by bureaucratic subordinates, the *Ssu-chih t'ang wen-chi* (*Collected writings from the Hall of four types of knowing*), presents a picture of nearly selfless dedication to administration.[143]

Fang Kuan-ch'eng had a particularly rocky ride on his way to high provincial office. He came from one of the most famous lineages of the empire, the Fang families of T'ung-ch'eng, Anhwei. During his childhood, Fangs and Changs from that county, who intermarried, were among the ranks of senior officials. Chang T'ing-yü (1672–1755) of T'ung-ch'eng served as a grand councilor during the Yung-cheng and early Ch'ien-lung reigns. He had been a tutor to the prince who became the Ch'ien-lung emperor. Another example from T'ung-ch'eng is Fang Pao (1668–1749), who was commissioned by the Ch'ien-lung emperor to write a manual for writers of examination essays.[144] Such eminence also had its costs. Back in 1713 a censor accused Hanlin academician Tai Ming-shih (1653–1713), also from T'ung-ch'eng, of publishing a collection with seditious content entitled *Nan-shan-chi* (*Nan-shan collection*). In it Tai mentioned a book on the princes of the southern Ming by Fang Kuan-ch'eng's grandfather, who had also written a preface for Tai's collection. The K'ang-hsi emperor, confronted with evidence both of sedition and of collusion among senior literati officials, reacted violently. He proscribed the volume, sentenced Tai Ming-shih to be executed, and condemned Fang's family to exile.[145]

As a teenaged boy Fang Kuan-ch'eng was spared from exile, but he spent most of his adolescence shuttling back and forth between a family property near Nanking and Heilungkiang, far in the northeast, where his banished parents and grandparents were living in exile. Because of the cloud over his family, Fang did not take the civil examinations in which members of his lineage for so many generations had enjoyed success. Instead he offered his services as an amanuensis to Fu-p'eng (d. 1748), a general and Manchu prince. In 1732 Fu-p'eng was appointed commander-in-chief of the Ch'ing forces

[142] Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing shih*, ch. 309, p. 4176. Yang's book by this title does not appear to be extant; however, another work, entitled *Ts'ao-yün tse-li tsuan* (*Regulations on grain transport*), attributed to him, has recently been reprinted.

[143] Yang Hsi-fu, *Ssu-chih t'ang wen-chi* (1805; Peking, 2000).

[144] Hilary J. Beattie, *Land and lineage in China: A study of T'ung-ch'eng county, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 31–2. On Fang Pao, see R. Kent Guy, "Fang Pao and the *Ch'in-ting Ssu-shu-wen*," in *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600–1900*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 150–82.

[145] Lynn A. Struve, "Uses of history in traditional Chinese society: The southern Ming in Ch'ing historiography," diss., University of Michigan, 1974, p. 354. See also the entry on Tai Ming-shih in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, p. 701; and Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs: Un procès littéraire dans la Chine impériale* (Paris, 1992), pp. 67–9.