

A NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

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VOLUME LXX



A NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

*Franchising a Tai Chieftaincy under the Tusi System
of Late Imperial China*

BY

JENNIFER TOOK



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Cover illustration: Native magistrate's table, yamen courtroom, Xincheng.
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In memory of my husband, David Took.

CONTENTS

Prefaceix
Acknowledgmentsxi
Reign periodsxiv
Weights and Measuresxv
Abbreviations and translationsxvi
List of Illustrationsxvii
Chapter	
ONE: Introduction	1
TWO: Chinese Territorial Administration Prior to the Native Chieftaincy System: The ‘Bridle and Halter’ Prefectures	24
THREE: Historical Origins and Geographical Boundaries of the Anping Native Chieftaincy	46
FOUR: State-Sanctioned Power: The Anping Native Official as Agent of the Chinese Court	66
FIVE: Local Political Power: The Anping Native Official as ‘Local Emperor’	90
SIX: ‘Civilizing Districts’ and Local Headmen: The Administrative Organization of the Villages	123
SEVEN: Classes of People in the Anping Native Chieftaincy ..	149
EIGHT: The System of Land Tenure in the Anping Native Chieftaincy	185

NINE: The Impact of <i>Gaitu Guiliu</i> on the Anping Native Chieftaincy	226
TEN: Review and Closing Remarks	258
Appendices	
A. Some Details recorded by the Fieldworkers on Local Zhuang Customs at Anping	273
B. Zhuang Areas in <i>Diaocha</i>	284
C. Record in Stone of Perpetual Regulations	285
D. Native Official Posts and Ranks during the Qing	287
E. Land Distributed by the Last Anping Native Official to the Official Clan	289
F. Case Study: Xiali Manor Estate	291
Glossary	298
Western Bibliography	304
Chinese Bibliography	309
Index	314

PREFACE

My interest in exploring the native chieftaincy (*tusi*) system in southwest China grew out of my undergraduate study of the Song dynasty poet-official Fan Chengda's observations on the *man* (southern 'barbarians') in his monograph, *Guizhou yuhengzhi* (Record of a Posting to the Forests, Mountains and Waterways in Guangxi). Written in 1175, it provided a direct record of many aspects of Han Chinese colonial administration in China's southwest frontier and its interaction with the local tribal chieftaincies during that time.

Fan's thoughts as he set off on his posting, revealing a sensibility quite at odds with the usual trepidation of the central Chinese bureaucrat posted to the ecologically hazardous and culturally alien south, captured my imagination:

I was setting off from Weiyuan on a military assignment to Guangxi. My relatives and friends had seen me off – thereafter, their place was taken by the wild districts and picturesque landscapes, which became my companions. I brought with me poetry written by the Tang poets, and read what I could on the Guilin (Guangxi) area. Dufu had said it brought the people felicity, Bai Juyi said it was not miasmal, and Hanyu wrote, when he reached Xiangnan Jiangshan, that it was more stunning than where the Canluan sages had ventured. So, for a travelling official hastening to the region, could anything be better? ¹

Recalling his arrival at the heart of the administrative districts (which were essentially protectorates) to which he had been assigned, Fan wrote:

By the third month of 1173, I had reached the commandery, where the weather was indeed clear and comfortable, just as I had heard. The wondrousness of their caverns and mountain peaks, the simple and unadulterated nature of their customs, and the splendour and power of their prefec-

¹ Fan Chengda, *Guizhou yuhengzhi* (Record of a Posting to the Forests, Mountains and Waterways of Guangxi), in *Nanfang caomu zhuang (wai shi er zhong)* (A Record of Plants and Trees in the Southern Regions [and twelve others]) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), Preface, pp. 589–367. This work is also available in several other publications, such as the annotated version by Qi Zheping, *Guizhou yuheng zhi xiaobu* (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe, 1994). The most thorough annotated version to date is by Hu Qiwang and Qin Guangguang, *Guizhou yuhengzhi jiyi jiaozhu* (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1986).

tural administration, far surpassed what I had heard. I do not look down on their people, whose simplicity is tinged with compassion, who trust in each other's sincerity, and lack any malevolence towards one another. They reap harvests continuously, and their commanders treat books lightly. I resided there for two years, during which my heart was at peace.²

Fan also described how he memorialized the Emperor repeatedly, without success, to allow him to stay on in Guangxi at the end of his posting rather than accept his new orders to go to Sichuan. When Fan finally had to take his leave, the local *man* saw him on his way, proffering wine and stretching out their farewells for as long as two days after Fan had gone outside the city wall. Such reminiscences revealed a senior Han Chinese official at ease with border administration over the non-Han peoples in China's southwest who already had an established prefectoral administration, were culturally more receptive and less aggressive than the non-Han in the north and northwest and were, like the Han, skilful at wet-rice farming. A kind of communion was evident, even though such feelings may well have been engendered by Fan's literary sensibilities. Nevertheless, I decided that further investigation of Han Chinese colonial administration in Guangxi could provide a fruitful and colourful source of postgraduate research. I was fortunate to be able to investigate the evolution and later development of the Chinese protectorates into *tusi* native chieftaincies through the abundance of Chinese language materials on the *tusi* system available to me when I embarked on my PhD thesis. Perhaps because of my legal training, I was also drawn to the task of piecing together and systematically recording the political, social and economic systems which formed the basis of this *tusi* native chiefaincy. My PhD supervisor, Professor David Holm, brought to my attention the 1950s ethnological data on the Zhuang, revised and reprinted in the 1980s, from which I discovered a wealth of information on *tusi* native chieftaincies in Guangxi. A subsequent trip to Guangxi funded by The University of Melbourne enabled me to supplement this data with original classified reports, maps and other local materials, aided wholeheartedly by staff from the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute, the Guangxi Provincial Library and the Xincheng *tusi* museum.

² Fan Chengda, *Guizhou yuhenghzi*.

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This study was made possible through an Australian Postgraduate Award, a Melbourne University Travelling Scholarship and a grant from the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies. Publication of this work was assisted by a publication grant from The University of Melbourne. I also received generous assistance and support from many people.

At The University of Melbourne it was my good fortune to study under Professor David Holm, a pre-eminent scholar and pioneer in Zhuang studies. I am indebted to Professor Holm for introducing me to the study of south China and for his patience, guidance and rigorous instruction over the course of my PhD candidature. Thanks are also due to Professor Holm for his continuing support of this project well beyond completion of my PhD.

I thank Bai Yaotian from the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute for his valuable assistance and encouragement during the early stages of my research, for providing me with valuable insights in dealing with pre-modern south Chinese gazetteers and other primary sources, and for his continuing assistance with the many new questions which arose as my thesis progressed. I also express my special gratitude to Long Yining, the librarian in charge of the local historical documents section of the Guangxi Provincial Library in Nanning, and her colleagues, for their assistance in enabling me to access key materials on my topic, and for granting me some dispensation from the strict photocopying rules which were in place during my visit. While in Guangxi I also received valuable assistance from Mr. Ling Shudong, a research associate at the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies, who introduced me to other scholars at the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute and helped me to obtain further materials which are not readily accessible.

I also thank the museum staff at the Xincheng *yamen* museum for their hospitality and assistance during my visit. Allowing me to take out the Qing dynasty judicial torture instruments (which were still lying on the floor of the dark and dusty *yamen* jail nearly eighty years after the closure of the *yamen*) in order to photograph them in the sunlight was

a rare privilege. As agreed with them, I also record the fact that we drank an agreeable bottle of *tusi* wine over dinner in Xincheng.

At The University of Melbourne, I enjoyed a high level of support from the librarian and staff at the East Asian section of the Baillieu Library. I also thank Dr. Luo Yongxian for his valuable instruction in the translation of pre-modern Chinese sources, and for his continuing, generous assistance with Zhuang language queries.

Associate Professor David Dorward of La Trobe University kindly offered valuable insights on chieftaincy in Africa, as well as guidance on reading material in this area.

I am indebted to Professor Li Jinfang of the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing for discussing with me some questions that lingered long after I had revised the manuscript, and sharing some insights. Thanks also to Dr. Zhu Xiongquan of the Central University for Nationalities for bringing me up-to-date on recent trends in Chinese research on the Chinese native chieftaincy system.

Dr. Jamie Greenbaum helped in my research by locating materials for me in Beijing. He also provided useful insights and a valuable sounding-board, particularly during the last stages of this project.

During the revision process I benefited greatly from the comments of Professor Jeffrey Barlow, as well as the anonymous reader from Brill. Their suggestions and recommendations have resulted in the development and re-evaluation of many chapters, and given the manuscript its present shape. All mistakes and other shortcomings, of course, are mine.

I thank Georgina Lim for producing the line drawings. The contemporary maps were designed by Andrew Hardie of the Cartography Unit, School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies at The University of Melbourne. I also thank Rob Cowpe for his assistance in putting the manuscript into publishable form. Thanks are due also to Donna Williams for her meticulous editing and proofreading, and for her moral support following the untimely death of my husband. I am also grateful to the editorial staff at Brill for their compassion and patience following my loss.

This project could not have been completed without the support of family and friends. I am indebted to Debbie McLure for helping with my daughter's care during the last six weeks of my PhD candidature. I thank Lynne Curran, who read parts of the manuscript and made suggestions for the improvement of style. I also thank Allan Myers QC, who gave practical support which enabled the smooth completion of this

book. My thanks are due also to my daughter Penelope for her patience and sacrifices throughout this project.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my late husband, David Took, for encouraging and supporting me in my desire to study Chinese after many years as a legal practitioner, for his keen interest in this project, and his steadfast belief. It is to him that this book is dedicated.

MING DYNASTY REIGN PERIODS

<i>Reign Title</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Hongwu	1368–1398
Jianwen	1399–1402
Yongle	1403–1424
Hongxi	1425–1426
Xuande	1426–1435
Zhengtong	1436–1449
Jingtai	1450–1456
Tianshun	1457–1464
Chenghua	1465–1487
Hongzhi	1488–1505
Zhengde	1506–1521
Jiajing	1522–1566
Longqing	1567–1572
Wanli	1573–1619
Taichang	1620–1621
Tianqi	1621–1627
Chongzhen	1628–1644

QING DYNASTY REIGN PERIODS

<i>Reign Title</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Shunzhi	1644–1661
Kangxi	1662–1722
Yongzheng	1723–1735
Qianlong	1736–1795
Jiaqing	1796–1820
Daoguang	1821–1850
Xianfeng	1851–1861
Tongzhi	1862–1874
Guangxu	1875–1908
Xuantong	1909–1911

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Area

1 <i>mu</i>	approximately 1/15 of a hectare, or 1/6 of an acre
1 <i>ban</i> *	6 <i>mu</i> = approximately 60 <i>jin</i> of grain*
1 <i>fen</i>	0.1 <i>mu</i> (approximately 66.6 square metres or 717.5 square feet)

Length

1 <i>chi</i>	approximately 1/3 metre or 13.1 inches
1 <i>zhang</i>	10 <i>chi</i> (approximately 3.3 metres or 131.2 inches)
1 <i>li</i>	150 <i>zhang</i> (approximately 500 metres or 1/3 of a mile)

Weight

1 <i>dan</i>	50 kg (approximately 110 lbs)
1 <i>liang</i>	50 grams (approximately 1.76 ounces)
1 <i>jin</i>	10 <i>liang</i> = 500 grams (approximately 1.1 lbs)

Money

1 <i>liang</i>	1 ounce of silver = 1000 copper cash
1 <i>wen</i>	1 copper coin (cash)
1 <i>fen</i>	0.01 <i>liang</i>
1 <i>jiao</i>	10 <i>fen</i>

*This measure only applied in the *tusi* districts which were in present-day Daxin county. There, the most basic unit of calculation was the amount of harvested grain, which was used to reckon the area. Since the output of the various types of fields varied, this led to disparities.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Diaocha</i>	<i>Guangxi Zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha</i> (Investigations on the Society and History of the Zhuang in Guangxi), 7 vols. (vol. 1 1984, vol. 2 1985, vol. 3 1985, vol. 4 1987, vol. 5 1986, vol. 6 1985, vol. 7 1987), ed. <i>Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqiu bianjizu</i> . Guangxi: Guangxi minzu chubanshe.
Field Studies	As above
Internal Reports	<i>Guangxi sheng Daxin xian Zhuangzu diaocha ziliao</i> (Materials on the Field Studies on the Zhuang in Daxin County, Guangxi Province). 1957. Held at the Guangxi Provincial Library, Nanning.

TRANSLATIONS

All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

1. Schematic map of Anping native subprefecture containing boundary descriptions	56
2. Schematic Ming Dynasty map of Anping native subprefecture during the Wanli reign period, 1573–1620	57
3. Schematic Ming Dynasty map of Guangxi Province during the Wanli reign period, 1573–1620	61
4. Guangxi Province as at 1582	61
5. Relative location of Daxin County in Guangxi Province	63
6. Sketch map indicating the eight native chieftaincies located within the boundaries of present-day Daxin County	63
7. Map of Daxin County indicating (a) the approximate locations of the eight native chieftaincies within its boundaries and (b) the approximate administrative divisions of Anping native chieftaincy	128
8. Map of Anping native chieftaincy indicating approximate location of the official manor estates	209
9. Map of Xiali and its surrounding villages	297

FIGURES

Fig. 1. Field workers ca. 1959	9
Fig. 2. Sample stone epigraphy from the Mo <i>tusi</i> <i>yamen</i> Museum, Xincheng, Guangxi	16
Fig. 3. Sketch plan of Anping native official's <i>yamen</i>	103
Fig. 4. A Chinese <i>yamen</i> : Yubing county <i>yamen</i> , Guizhou province	104
Fig. 5. Jail and judicial torture instruments at Mo <i>tusi</i> <i>yamen</i> Museum, Xincheng, Guangxi	120
Fig. 6. System of land tenure in the Anping native chieftaincy	192
Fig. 7. Antiphonal singing at a Zhuang song fair	271

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The native chieftaincy (*tusi*) system, a form of indirect rule, was employed by the late-traditional Chinese state as a pragmatic means of exercising political control over the tribal chieftains who ran China's indigenous frontier societies. Under this system, the Chinese court officially recognized indigenous tribal chieftains who had submitted to it, thus nominally incorporating them into the Chinese system of government. By submitting to the Chinese court, the chieftains were permitted to continue their customary, autonomous rule over their peoples, their political power enhanced by the court's recognition. In return, the Chinese court achieved a measure of influence through Chinese-style administrative units in alien territory consisting mainly of minority peoples. The Chinese court also used the *tusi* system as an ideological tool for sinifying the non-Han peoples and, over time, to tighten its control over the hereditary chieftains. The Chinese court always considered the *tusi* system an interim measure, pending substitution of direct Chinese rule. This 'interim' measure was to last many centuries.

The period from the embryonic stages of the native chieftaincy system to the final conversion to direct Han Chinese rule spanned approximately one thousand years. Regularized in the Chinese bureaucracy during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the system persisted well into the twentieth century. Xincheng, the last native chieftaincy administration in Guangxi, was not converted to a county under direct Chinese administration until April 1928, and some *tusi* in other provinces, such as the Cheli native chieftaincy in Sipsong Banna in southern Yunnan, retained local power up till the 1950s. The *tusi* system itself was not officially repealed by the Chinese government until 1956.

The history of the native chieftaincy system and its significance in the relationship between the Chinese state and its periphery have been extensively researched and documented by Chinese writers since the 1930s. Until recently, these studies have mainly examined the native chieftaincy system from the perspective of the Chinese state; that is, as an aspect of Chinese colonial administration and frontier defence. This reflects the fact that the bulk of primary source materials on the native

chieftaincy, such as the standard histories, provincial and county gazetteers, statutes, veritable records and court memorials, were written by Chinese court officials, scholar-bureaucrats or the Emperor himself, *ipso facto* representing the interests of the Chinese state and various factors within it. However, there was also some interest during the Republic in the study of the border peoples from other perspectives, such as Liu Xifan's 1934 ethnographical study *Lingbiao jiman* (Record of the Barbarians in Guangxi and Guangdong). After the establishment of the PRC, not much was written on the *tusi* system in China until the 1980s, although compilations of the work on the *tusi* system by the early, pioneering group of Republican writers such as She Yize, Ling Chunsheng and Huang Kaihua were published in Taiwan in the 1960s.

A wealth of additional material has been sourced by later PRC writers. In 1988, Wu Yongzhang wrote a comprehensive study on the origins and development of the *tusi* system: *Zhongguo tusi zhidu yuanyuan yu fazhangshi* (A History of the Origins and Development of China's Native Chieftaincy System). This covered each dynastic period from the Qin onward in considerable detail, providing a depth of research far beyond that of the earlier writers on the system who focused on the Ming and Qing dynasties. Similarly, Gong Yin's volume, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* (History of China's Native Chieftaincy System), published in 1992, includes an unprecedented study of over four hundred *tusi* offices conducted during field visits to all the provinces in which the *tusi* system operated.

Apart from Wu Yongzhang and Gong Yin's studies, some of the main Chinese works on the *tusi* system in the past 70 years include Liu Xifan's 1934 ethnological study *Lingbiao jiman* mentioned above, which contains a chapter on the *tusi* system. In addition, She Yize wrote *Mingdai zhi tusi zhidu* (The Native Chieftaincy System during the Ming) and *Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu* (The Native Chieftaincy System during the Qing) in 1936 and *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* (China's Native Chieftaincy System) in 1944. Ling Chunsheng's *Zhongguo bianzheng zhi tusi zhidu* (The Native Chieftaincy System of China's Frontier Administration) was written in 1944. This productive decade also saw Huang Fen-sheng's *Bianjiang zhengjiao zhi yanjiu* (Studies on Border Administration Policies), written in 1947. Later, in 1968, Peng Zunbao et al. edited *Mingdai tusi zhidu* (The Native Chieftaincy System during the Ming Dynasty), a Taiwanese compilation of Republican works. In 1998, Li Shiyu produced *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao* (Discourses on the Qing

Native Chieftaincy System). New works in Chinese on the history of the Zhuang, which invariably include sections on the *tusi* institution, continue to be written, and increasingly make use of the revised editions produced in the 1980s of the 1950s data mentioned above, a recent example being *Zhuangzu shi* (A History of the Zhuang), edited by Zhang Shengzhen and published in 2002.

The presence of *tusi* in parts of southwest China was recorded by western commentators during the late Qing, notably by the English missionary Samuel R. Clarke in his work *Among the Tribes in South-West China*, which he wrote at the turn of the twentieth century. However, western scholarship on the *tusi* system to date has remained relatively small and has also focused on the records of the *tusi* as evidencing the state of core–periphery relations between Beijing and the indigenous frontier peoples, and as a tool of frontier management and control by the Chinese court.

The earliest western work to systematically depict and discuss the *tusi* system was Herold Wiens' book *China's March towards the Tropics*, published in 1954. This contains a discussion on the formal structure of Han-Chinese political control over the non-Han peoples in the undeveloped frontier. Wiens provides an account of the historical causes of the *tusi* system and its inception and development during imperial China up to the eventual replacement of the *tusi* domains by the autonomous regions established by the PRC.

A study which considered the *tusi* system in Guangxi was Richard Cushman's 1970 dissertation on the ethno-history of the Yao: "Rebel Haunts and Lotus Huts: Problems in the Ethnohistory of the Yao". Anthropological in focus, this study explored the possibilities for ethno-historical research in south China, using as a test case sources then available on the Yao. Cushman examined the *tusi* administration under Ming and Qing frontier policy in the context of his investigation of Yao–Chinese relations. In his 1987 article "The Zhuang Minority Peoples of the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier in the Song Period", Jeffrey Barlow discussed the role of the *tusi* system as an instrument of Chinese frontier management and its efficacy as a means of central Chinese control of the Zhuang. In his 1989 article "The Zhuang Minority in the Ming Era", Barlow discussed the *tusi* system from a similar viewpoint, as well as its eventual replacement of the traditional Zhuang hierarchy. The *tusi* system and its antecedent, the *jimizhou* (bridle and halter prefectures) system are addressed in Barlow's comprehensive and authoritative web

publication on the Zhuang, *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*.

John Herman's 1993 dissertation on the motives and methods of state expansion during the first century of Manchu rule of China, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650–1750", which focused on specific frontier areas in Eastern Tibet and Guizhou, included a study of the *tusi* system as an objective means of measuring the effects of state policy on indigenous frontier society. Herman's 1997 article "Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing Reforms to the Native Chieftaincy System" examined efforts by the early Qing to reform Ming policies and practices relating to the relationship between the *tusi* and the Chinese state, particularly the *tusi* inheritance process. Herman drew mainly on material pertaining to Guizhou province.

The *tusi* system as an aspect of frontier control continues to attract interest. Leo Shin's 1999 dissertation, "Tribalizing the Frontier: Barbarians, Settlers and the State in Ming South China", a study of how the Chinese state expanded its frontier, focuses on the practice and process of tribalization in Guangxi during the Ming. It includes an investigation of the ways in which China's contracting of frontier control to *tusi* facilitated the creation of changing political and cultural boundaries at the frontier. Chuan-Kang Shih's 2001 article, "Genesis of Marriage among the Moso and Empire-Building in Late Imperial China", includes a study of Qing reforms to the *tusi* system through tightening the native chieftain inheritance requirements in relation to the institutionalizing of marriage among the Moso. Laura Hostetler's book, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, published in 2001, which investigates the use by the Qing state of cartographic and ethnographic representation in its empire building, includes a brief section on the *tusi* system as it related to territory not yet directly administered by the central government. The *tusi* system is also examined in relation to its role in the cultural survival of the Zhuang under Chinese rule in David Holm's *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors: A Zhuang Cosmological Text from Southwest China*, published in 2003. Frederick Mote, in his 1999 book *Imperial China 900–1800*, includes some discussion of the role of the *tusi* system in the history of border policy in China's southwest, in particular during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Mote concludes that the *tusi* system is one of the most

intriguing aspects of traditional Chinese government, which should be understood in relation to the realities of its time.¹

A NEW SOURCE OF LOCAL MATERIAL ON THE TUSI

The government of the PRC has applied a considerably more systematic approach to the research and investigation of China's minority peoples than the previous Republican government, as part of its ongoing work on nationalities policy. Although China's southwest frontier has always been considered ethnically distinct, under the Republican government there were only five officially recognized ethnic groups within China: the Han, Mongols, Tibetans, Turkic Moslems, and Manchus. By 1978, under the Chinese Communist Party, the population within China's borders had been classified into 56 nationalities (including the majority Han) by 1978. The "nationalities identification" (*minzu shibie*), carried out in the 1950s and 1960s, was primarily concerned with evaluating the claims of countryside people to separate nationality (*minzu*) status based on the five Stalinist criteria (possession of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, manifesting itself in common special features of national culture), and with determining the historical stage (according to the normative stages of Marxist historical development) of each *minzu*.

This stage was followed by the "nationalities work" (*minzu gongzuo*), which was aimed at formulating regional autonomy policy. This policy, which was essentially driven by national politics, aided the PRC in attaining national unity and security. It was also designed to enable adjustment of the timing and methods adopted in pursuing socialist transformation in accordance with objective conditions, pursuant to the government's stated aim of assisting all the national minorities in progressing towards socialism.² Consequently, the government of the PRC

¹ F. W. Mote, *Imperial China 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: Harvard University Press 1999), p. 717.

² Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. 24. See also G. V. H. Moseley, *The Consolidation of the South China Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 6–10; Huang Guangxue et al., eds., *Zhongguo de minzu shibie* (China's Nationalities Identification) (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe), 1995.

has devoted greater attention than previous Chinese governments to China's southern minority peoples, hitherto regarded as having a less important place in Chinese frontier policy than the Tibetan and Mongolian minorities.

Under the direction of the Nationalities Committee of the National People's Congress and the Nationality Affairs Commission of the State Council (*Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui minzu weiyuanhui*), government ethnological teams were sent out in the 1950s to conduct large-scale, systematic field studies on the minority peoples residing in China's frontier territories to help the new government identify China's minority nationalities for purposes of its regional autonomy policy. This resulted in the compilation of internal (*neibu*) reports in the 1950s and 1960s. The investigations on society and history (*Shehui lishi diaocha*) of the minority peoples which formed the basis of these reports are said to have yielded some 30 million words.³ These reports were later revised and published as part of a series of five large collections on nationality questions (*Minzu wenti wu zhong congshu*) sponsored by the Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China during the 1980s. These were brief gazetteers of minority nationalities (*Shaoshu minzu jianzhi*), brief histories (*Shaoshu minzu jianshi*), brief treatises on minority languages (*Shaoshu minzu yuyuan jianzhi*), general surveys of minority nationality autonomous areas (*Minzu zizhiqu gaikuang*), and field studies on the society and history of the minority nationalities (*Zhongguo shaoshu minzu shehui lishi diaocha ziliaozongkan*).⁴

Guangxi was one of the ten frontier provinces in which the native chieftaincy system took hold. (The others were Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangdong, Hunan, Hubei, Gansu, Qinghai and Tibet.) In all, there were 2,569 *tusi* units in these ten provinces. Guangxi, with 341, had the fourth largest number after Sichuan (652), Yunnan (587) and

³ Weng Dujian, ed., *Zhongguo minzu guanxishi guangyao* (An Outline of the History of China's Minority Nationality Relationships) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2001), p. 2.

⁴ These comprised more than three hundred volumes. Some collections were published centrally by the Nationalities Publishing House (*Minzu chubanshe*) in Beijing, while others were published by provincial publishing houses; no complete statistics are currently available. However, one each of the brief gazetteers, histories, language introductions and grammars, and general surveys was published in respect of the Zhuang peoples in Guangxi, as well as seven volumes of field studies on their society and history (discussed below).

Guizhou (412).⁵ Guangxi has a large concentration of Tai-speaking Zhuang people whose forebears have resided there at least since the Bronze Age. Over ninety percent of Zhuang reside in Guangxi. With a total population of about 16 million, the Zhuang are the most populous of the 55 minority nationalities recognized by the PRC since the late 1970s under its nationalities identification work.⁶ As seen above, identification as a minority nationality in the PRC was determined by several subjective factors as well as national politics; ethnicity is also regarded as an elastic concept by anthropologists.⁷ Although the Zhuang are officially recognized as a national minority, and as such are sometimes considered to have a ‘manufactured’ identity, scholars are generally agreed that the forebears of the Zhuang, the Bai Yue (literally, One Hundred Yue), were recognized as an ethnic group from the Song dynasty (960–1279).

The Bai Yue are usually divided into a northern and a southern group, and the Zhuang are said to stem from the southern branch, which extended into present-day southwest Guangdong, south and west Guangxi and northern Vietnam.⁸ The Zhuang, generally considered to have assimilated well with the Han through the mutual influence of both cultures, make up 96.89 percent of the population of Daxin county, the geographical focus of the present study.⁹ An outline of the evolution of the Zhuang name is provided in the *Zhuangyu fangyan yanjiu* (Research on the Zhuang Local Dialects).

The term ‘Yue’ extends back to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period (722–222 BC). There were many branches of the Yue, with the Xi’ou and Luo Yue branches inhabiting Guangdong, Guangxi, Southern Guizhou, Eastern Yunnan and Hainan Island. Speakers of Tai languages are said to be descended from the Luo Yue branch. After the Han dynasty (206–220), the names Xi’ou and Luo Yue fell into disuse and were replaced by the name Wu Hu. Not long after this they changed

⁵ Gong Yin, p. 2.

⁶ The Zhuang are also the largest minority nationality in the world not to have their own state, after the Kurds, who also number around 16 million.

⁷ Colin Mackerras, *China’s Minority Cultures: Identities and Integration since 1912* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), pp. 3–8.

⁸ J. Barlow, “Origins of the Zhuang: The Bai Yue,” in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*, <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/as/resources/shuang/index.html> (updated 22 January, 2001 and 3 April, 2001; accessed 13 December 2001).

⁹ The other groups include the Han, Miao, Yao, Dong, Hui, Li, Jing, Shuijia, and Mulan; see *Daxin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Daxin County), pp. 410–411.

again to Li and Lao, terms which originally referred to the minority peoples in Sichuan but were later used interchangeably to refer to the Zhuang and Li of Guangxi, Guangdong and Hainan Island. After the Yuan and Ming dynasties, the Li and Lao appellations were again gradually replaced by a variety of other names including Lang, Zhuang and Nong. The Lang name was gradually abandoned and is no longer used in Zhuang areas. The name Zhuang came to be recorded in some southern Song historical records, initially to indicate a kind of local soldier (*zhuangding*). Later its usage was broadened to refer to the minority peoples in the areas of Yishan and Liujiang (present-day Liuzhou municipality), roughly coincident with those areas in which the people used to call themselves ‘Buzhuang’. In 1965, Zhou Enlai changed the character used for Zhuang (which had variant forms over time) to its present form, which represents ‘strong’.¹⁰

The relative prominence of the Zhuang, together with the considerable number of long-lasting Zhuang *tusi* jurisdictions in Guangxi, has resulted in the inclusion in the nationalities work of a wealth of material relating to the *tusi* administration and Zhuang society. This material is contained in one series of the abovementioned investigations, the seven-volume collection of investigations on society and history carried out on the Zhuang peoples in Guangxi (*Guangxi Zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha*; hereafter referred to as the Field Studies), published in revised form in the 1980s.¹¹

In their published form, the Field Studies were put together by the Nationalities Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (*Zhongguo kexueyuan minzu yanjiu suo*), the Central Nationalities Institute (*Zhongyang minzu xueyuan*) and the relevant work units (*danwei*) of the respective minority nationality areas, under the leadership of the Nationalities Affairs Commission of the State Council (*Guowuyuan minzu shiwu weiyuanhui*) and the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (*Zhongguo kexueyuan zhexue shehui kexuebu*).¹²

¹⁰ *Zhuangyu fangyan yanjiu* (Research on the Zhuang Local Dialects) (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 1999), pp. 4–6, 11.

¹¹ A list of all the Zhuang areas covered in this series is contained in appendix B.

¹² This work took place during the process of compiling the brief histories of the minority nationalities, the brief records of the minority nationalities and the general surveys of nationalities’ autonomous areas; see *Guangxi zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha* (Field Studies), vol. 4, Preface. (The term *Diaocha* is used from here on in the footnotes when referring to page references for the Field Studies, although the term Field Studies is used in the text.)



Fig.1 Field workers ca. 1959. (Hao Shiyuan, et.al., eds., *Tianye diaocha shilu – minzu diaocha huiyi.*)

The Field Studies are of unique historical value in that they include a cohesive body of material on several native chieftaincies in Guangxi, based primarily on local information gathered from within the old Zhuang *tusi* domains after the end of imperial China, and before the modernizations and social transformation of the PRC had been effected in those areas. Apart from recording existing local epigraphy and other available local evidence, they contain first-hand oral accounts from villagers who had living memory of conditions under the *tusi* administration.

The investigation teams were made up experienced fieldworkers, professors, teachers and students familiar with the study of history and ancient texts, and cadres and minority peoples who were engaged in nationalities work. They worked under a series of directives to first study the economic structure and class conditions, and then to gather material on historical development and special customs, after which they carried out systematic research on the nationalities.¹³ The team originally sent in 1956–1957 to investigate the Zhuang in Daxin county (where the Anping native chieftaincy was located) consisted of twelve

¹³ Hao Shiyuan, et al., eds., *Tianye diaocha shilu – minzu diaocha huiyi* (Reminiscences on Fieldwork Investigations) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1999), pp. 213 and 215. The authors do not specify who issued the directives, although they would have had to be central-level documents.

people, including Huang Xianfan, Fan Deng, Yu Zhaowu, Su Guanchang, Huang Huaixing, Ruan Ganbi, Huang Yongzhen, Li Ganfen, Fu Jishu, Yang Demao and Huang Guozhen.¹⁴

The process of collecting such information during the 1950s and 1960s was not easy. Apart from the harsh physical terrain, difficult living conditions and poor communications, the low educational levels and superstitious beliefs of the villagers led, for example, to their fears of being photographed. This necessitated repeated efforts and great patience on the part of the fieldworkers in order to obtain systematic information.

The collection of such specific local information resulted in the availability of a body of data not recorded in the dynastic histories, gazetteers, statutes, imperial memorials or other standard Chinese records. These data provide the wherewithal for looking at *tusi* chieftaincies from the point of view of their internal dynamics and social structure, rather than of conducting investigations based on the relations of chieftains with the Chinese state. The material also affords details on agriculture and land use derived from interviews with local people, as well as records of epigraphy, contracts, clan registers, shamanistic and Daoist scriptures, poems, songs, proverbs and traditional stories.¹⁵

The localities covered in the Field Studies are entirely in Guangxi's north and west. However, the *tusi* administration in many of these areas, such as Shangsi county, Baise county, Encheng *tusi* and Wuming county, was subsumed into regular Han administration a long time ago (1733 in the case of Encheng *tusi*), and there was scant evidence from these areas from which to investigate their past *tusi* administrations. The localities covered in the Field Studies which constitute large and relatively recent *tusi* administrations are Nandan county, within which the Nandan *tusi* was located, and Daxin county, which contained the Anping, Taiping, Encheng, Quanming, Yingming, Wancheng, Yangli and Xialei *tusi* administrations.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Internal Reports, p. 1. The name of the twelfth member is not provided. I understand from Zhuang colleagues at the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute that most of the team were themselves Zhuang. The term 'fieldworkers' used hereafter refers to these investigation teams, who collected the material for the Field Studies.

¹⁵ *Tianye diaocha shilu*, pp. 222–223.

¹⁶ Other large *tusi* administrations in Guangxi not covered in the Field Studies but of historical importance and for which significant amounts of material are available are Tianzhou, Jingxi (Guishun), Donglan, Sicheng (Lingyun) and the last *tusi* administration in Guangxi, Xincheng.

WHY THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY WAS SELECTED

Territorially, this book is confined to a portrayal of the Anping *tusi*, which was located in present-day Daxin county. Field Studies on the Anping and Nandan *tusi* contain the most information on the economic, political, legal and social systems which operated under native chieftaincies. The material on Nandan, a larger and more powerful *tusi* than Anping in Guangxi's northwest, afforded several points for comparison with Anping. Ultimately, however, I decided to attempt a fuller portrayal of one native chieftaincy, Anping, for which sufficient local information was available, at the expense of a broader-based study of two or more chieftaincies with inconsistent categories and amounts of information. The conditions in Anping *tusi* were also sufficiently similar to the seven neighbouring *tusi* to constitute more or less representative conditions for *tusi* in the Daxin county area. Indeed, the representative quality of this study extends well beyond the county level to that of China's south and southwest, throughout which the structure of the *tusi* system was generally uniform.¹⁷

As with many studies, the fact that the most comprehensive materials were on Anping was due simply to chance: a combination of pragmatic and coincidental circumstances contributed to the relative abundance of material on this *tusi*. Part of the reason why the field-workers selected Daxin county as an area to research (apart from its potential richness as the site of eight of the longest-lasting *tusi*) was geographical convenience and propinquity: the three *tusi* domains of Taiping, Anping and Encheng were joined, and the former *tusi* locations of Quanming and Mingying were only two or three *li* away from each other. Wancheng and Yangli were also in neighbouring locations.

The fieldworkers also happened to receive a lot of support and assistance from six local officials in Daxin. Their work was then divided into two phases, the first of which took place over six to seven weeks between November and December 1956 and covered Anping, Taiping and Wancheng. This first phase took longer than the second due to the workers' lack of experience and understanding of the issues at that stage.¹⁸ This initial uncertainty, together with the generous local assistance given them, probably led the fieldworkers to collect a greater

¹⁷ See Mote, *Imperial China 900–1800*, p. 706.

¹⁸ See Internal Reports, pp. 1–2.

amount of data on Anping *tusi* than on the other *tusi* covered in the Field Studies. Such factors are not unusual in respect of fieldwork; John Lessing Buck commented on the importance of personal contacts and suitable local investigations in the selection of villages for his landmark study on land utilization in China between 1929 and 1933.¹⁹

The Anping material is further enhanced by the fact that the field-workers also carried out and recorded systematic investigations on eleven of the fifteen or so manor estates (*zhuangtian*) which were run by the Anping native official.²⁰ These were initially published in the 1960s in the *Guangxi Zhuangzu diqu zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao* (Material on the Economic Investigations of the Manor Estates in the Zhuang Districts of Guangxi) (1964) and the internal publication *Daxin xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao* (Material on Economic Investigations of the Manor Estates of the Anping Native Official in Daxin County) (1964), both of which were compiled by the Investigations on the Society and History of the Guangxi Minority Nationalities Group (*Guangxi shaoshu minzu shehui lishi diaochazu*) of the Nationalities Research Institute of the China Academy of Sciences. I was able to obtain copies of both these publications during a research trip to Guangxi in October 1999.

During my visit to Guangxi, I was also able to locate a copy of the internal (*neibu*) report on Anping published in 1957, which contains the raw material on which the 1987 Field Studies was based. This was the *Guangxi sheng Daxin xian Zhuangzu diaocha ziliao* (Material on Investigations on the Zhuang in Daxin County, Guangxi Province) (1957), hereafter referred to as the Internal Reports.²¹ Apart from containing the original reports (often roughly assembled) of the fieldworkers from their initial fieldwork in Anping between October and December 1956, it also contains a sketch map prepared by the fieldworkers which indicates the approximate boundaries of Anping and the other seven *tusi* which were located within Daxin; the map is not reproduced in the Field Studies. This sketch map also appears to be the only available contemporary map of these eight *tusi*. I was advised by the Guangxi

¹⁹ John Lessing Buck, *Land Utilization in China* (Nanking: The University of Nanking, 1937), p. viii.

²⁰ Similar investigations, but on a much smaller scale, were also carried out on the four official manor estates in Lingle Xian under the Cen clan native official; see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 282–291.

²¹ The Internal Reports also contains the raw material on which the 1987 Field Studies on Taiping, Wancheng, Encheng, Quanming and Yingming, and Xialei were based.

Provincial Library that a similar internal report was not available for the Nandan *tusi*. As the raw and unedited original reports written some thirty years before the published Field Studies, the Internal Reports greatly enhanced the value of the Anping materials as a primary source for a portrayal of a sample *tusi* in southern China.

The Field Studies on Anping *tusi* are further enhanced and supported by the availability of other sources of local information which can be used to supplement, corroborate and cross-check. These include epigraphy and contracts, records of place names, and clan genealogy registers of the native officials. Since the late 1980s, there has also been a proliferation of studies on the Zhuang, mostly by Zhuang scholars, which are useful for the different insights they provide into matters sometimes taken at face value by the fieldworkers when they collected their material in the 1950s.²²

²² (i) Epigraphy and contracts: An abundance of epigraphic and other written evidence was collected by fieldworkers from minority nationality areas in Guangxi in the course of the nationalities work. These are contained in two publications: the *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji* (Collection of Stone Epigraphy from the Guangxi Minority Nationalities Districts) published in 1979 and the *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu beiwen, qiyue ziliaoji* (Collection of Materials on Stone Epigraphy and Contracts in the Guangxi Minority Nationalities Districts) published in 1987. The balance of the material in both these collections reflects the preponderance of available material for former *tusi* within the Daxin area, particularly Anping.

(ii) Records of place names: The gazetteer of place names of Daxin county (*Daxin xian dimingzhi*), available at the Guangxi Provincial Library and Guangxi Nationalities Institute, provides a wealth of local information on the historical origins of the villages within Anping, as well as the historical and linguistic background to the Zhuang place names mentioned in the Field Studies. It also contains detailed maps down to the *xiang* level, from which many of the villages mentioned in the Field Studies have been located for purposes of constructing the maps in this book. More widely ranging place name compendia such as the *Guangxi zhuangzu diming xuanji* (Selection of Zhuang Place Names in Guangxi) have been similarly useful.

(iii) Clan registers: The *Zhuangxu tuguhan zupu jicheng* (Compendium of Zhuang Native Official Family Registers) compiled by Bai Yaotian and Taniguchi B?nan in 1998 provides genealogical records as well as biographical details on the Anping native officials, which supplement the details in the Field Studies on the succession of native chieftains in Anping. Some of this information is in fact based on the Field Studies, illustrating the extent to which the Studies have entered the realm of accepted knowledge in this area.

(iv) An example of a work that provides some insights into an aspect taken at face value by the fieldworkers is the article by Gong Yonghui ““Tuhua Hanren”’ yu ‘Hanyi’ guannian” (The Concept of ‘Local Han People’ and ‘Han Descendants’) in *Zhuangzu lungao* (Draft Essays on the Zhuang) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), pp. 98–114, which has a discussion of the generally accepted fabrications by the native officials of distinguished Han ancestry.

THE FIELD STUDIES AS A MAIN PRIMARY SOURCE

The use of the Field Studies as a primary source from which to construct aspects of the Anping *tusi* administration generates certain immediate epistemological questions. The first is the mainly oral nature of the information collected, and the perceivable gap of approximately fifty years between the Field Studies investigations and the preceding formal abolition of the Anping *tusi* in 1906. We will see in chapter 9, however, that the fifty-year gap was in reality much smaller, due to the de facto persistence of the customary rule of the native official which outlasted the formal abolition of the Anping *tusi* and the substitution of direct Chinese administration. It meant that most of the villagers who supplied the oral evidence, who were on average in their sixties and seventies at the time, had direct memories of living conditions under the *tusi*.

From the viewpoint of Chinese scholarship, Chinese commentators on the *tusi* in Guangxi have overwhelmingly accepted the Field Studies as a standard source.²³ As we will see in chapter 8, the information contained in the Field Studies on land usage under the Anping *tusi* has also become the *locus classicus* for Chinese studies on the land tenure system within the native chieftaincy. The Field Studies are also treated as a standard source on the *tusi* in the modern *Daxin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Daxin County). County gazetteers have to be approved at the provincial level prior to publication, and have to meet strict standards of factual accuracy.

The Field Studies and the published collections of local epigraphy and contracts are the only body of material on the local society under the *tusi* in Guangxi. The poor state of remaining *tusi* epigraphic evidence and the passing of nearly fifty years since the interviews conducted by the fieldworkers means that any further fieldwork is unlikely to uncover major new findings on local society under the *tusi*, and probably cannot

²³ For example, parts of the Internal Reports have been incorporated in the *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian* (Collection of Materials on the Guangxi Native Chieftaincy System) compiled by the Historical Group of the Guangxi Museum in 1961, which constitutes the most comprehensive and systematic source of materials (especially local gazetteers) on the Guangxi native chieftaincy; see, for example, *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian* (1961), vol. 3, pp. 369–372. The Guangxi Museum played a direct role in the original work for the Field Studies, being added to the contingent of field participants when the Guangxi operation was expanded into a large-scale nationalities project in 1958; see *Tianye diaocha shilu*, p. 210.

replicate or even corroborate their results.²⁴ During a visit in September 1999 to the Xincheng *tusi* museum, the only extant former government offices (*yamen*) of a local chieftaincy in Guangxi, I was able to view some of the stone epigraphy pertaining to the Xincheng *tusi*. The museum officials informed me that stone tablets and steles pertaining to *tusi* administrations had also been retrieved from all over Guangxi and were in storage at the Xincheng Museum pending future display at the museum. Several stone tablets had been crudely cemented onto a wall at the back of the *yamen*; the museum officials told me that some were previously steles, but details of their original location were not available.²⁵ The epigraphy on the back wall was mostly in disrepair, with some barely legible (see figure 2). When I enquired about stone rubbings, the museum officials said that none were available at the Xincheng Museum, although they thought that some records of the epigraphic text had once been made. I was also advised by colleagues from the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute and the Xincheng Museum officials that there are no extant remains of the Nandan, Anping or Taiping *tusi* regimes in situ. These facts and circumstances underscore the historical value of the Field Studies and related publications.

Nonetheless, questions will always hang over the Field Studies material as perpetual qualifications. The status of the fieldworkers (whether as ethnologists or representatives of the government) vis-à-vis the villagers, and how they may have distorted the oral information they were given, have been discussed in studies of local memories at the village level.²⁶ Generally, however, oral sources, with all the attendant difficulties in interpretation, are accepted amongst historians as a historical source, and motives for their possible distortion are recognized. For instance, it has been noted in respect of the history of Nigeria, in which a number of societies had no written languages, that oral sources were

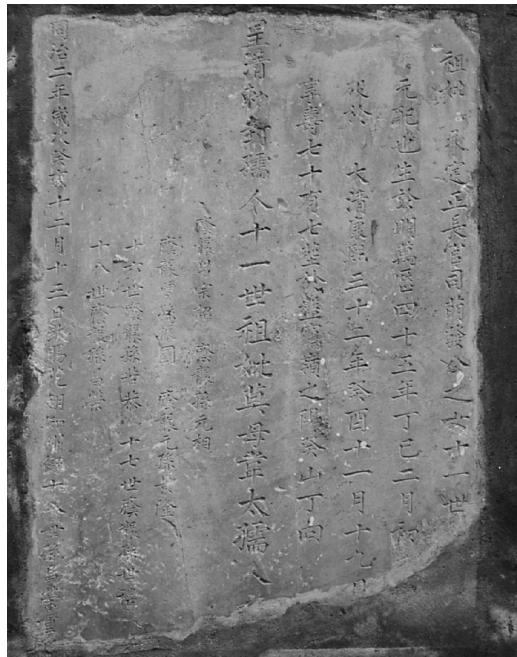
²⁴ However, systematic fieldwork might well reveal more information about the decaying by-products of the *tusi* regime during 1907–1928, and further information about the surveys themselves.

²⁵ The museum officials also advised me that much documentation was lost or misplaced on the recent death of the last Xincheng Museum head (a matter which could be followed up in the future, as I formed the impression that a sufficiently rigorous inquiry had not been undertaken).

²⁶ See for example, F. Zonabend, *The Enduring Memory: Time and History in a French Village*, trans. A. Forster (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). For studies on collective and social memories, see Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories: History, Power and Morality in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).



Fig. 2. Sample stone epigraphy from the Mo tusi yamen Museum, Xincheng, Guangxi. (Photos by author.)



no less valuable intrinsically than written ones.²⁷ The representative qualities of the interviewees, too, must be considered: were certain groups of people omitted?

The second question that arises in relation to the use of the Field Studies as a primary source for this study is that, in keeping with the

²⁷ See Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), pp. 27–28.

Marxist concept of historical materialism which has been officially promoted in China since 1949, the fieldworkers presented the material within the orthodox Chinese Marxist framework of the stages in human history.²⁸ Thus, they sought to demonstrate that the Anping *tusi* was at the historical stage of feudalism, a stage which followed slave society and preceded capitalism. This is expressed in the Field Studies through consistent themes. For instance, they characterize the *tusi* system as a ‘feudal lord system’ (*fengjian lingzhu zhidu*), with corresponding vocabulary connoting the comparative benefits of socialist transformation. The most common terms used are ‘exploitation’ (*boxue*) and ‘oppression’ (*yapo*), which the fieldworkers use to describe the conditions under which the peasants were ruled by the native official. The fieldworkers say, for example, that the native official system in Anping “imposed a rotten and dark rule, severely hindering the development of society and history; for a long period it stagnated in the historical stage of the feudal lord system”.²⁹ They also present the struggles of the subjugated serf population for personal liberation and the abolition of corvée, which contributed to the gradual collapse of the *tusi* system, as leading to the replacement of the “backward feudal lord system” by the landlord system. They characterize emancipated serfs who were able to buy plots of land as emergent well-to-do peasants embarking on a more advanced form of economic activity closer to the capitalist mode of production. Statements on the class conflict between the peasants and the native official, which convey the Marxist concept of class-based struggle as the motive force of history, pervade the narrative.³⁰

The fieldworkers were required (at least when the original fieldwork was recorded) to conform to the orthodoxy of the 1950s, when a particular theory about the feudal stage in the development of human

²⁸ The appearance of social-economic history of an unmistakably Marxist bent had in fact begun to flourish in China by the 1930s. Marxist socio-historical concepts were widely disseminated during this decade, so that the materialist conception of history came to shape the views on the past, present and future of significant numbers of Chinese intellectuals; see Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and History: Origins of Marxist Historiography in China, 1919–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp.1–3. Dirlik also notes that since 1949 an officially promoted view of history has narrowed the range of interpretations open to historians (p. 16).

²⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 75.

³⁰ See, for example, *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 55, in which the fieldworkers comment, in respect of the efforts of the peasants to petition the government authorities to restrict the powers of the native official, that “the class conflict felt by the peasants toward the native official grew sharper each day”.

society was part of official dogma.³¹ Nevertheless, this pattern of fitting the data into the Marxist materialist conception of history is easily recognised and isolated, and provides no reason to question the veracity of the factual material collected by the fieldworkers. The fact that these were largely political constraints to which Chinese scholars were subjected, but which incidentally gave rise to useful social and economic histories, has also been acknowledged by western scholars.³²

A question remains regarding an apparent imbalance in the interpretation of these data as evidence of the oppression of the peasantry by the native chieftain. This imbalance is suggested, for example, by a Qing frontier statute passed in 1737 which imposed checks and limitations on the privileges and *yamen* expenditures of the native officials, and reduced certain tax and corvée burdens of the peasants under their jurisdiction. Details of the circumstances and process which gave rise to effective protests by the local peasantry (or intervention by the Qing authorities) are not provided in the Field Studies.

Equally, we know that in certain *tusi* jurisdictions that were abolished and replaced by direct Chinese administration, the subject populace agitated for reinstatement of the *tusi* regime.³³ The existence for 900 years, in one form or another, of the rule of the Anping *tusi* seems abnormally long if the regime was based solely on tyrannical oppression without consent. It was followed by direct rule by the Qing and the Republican governments, under which the overall tax and tributary burdens of the populace were significantly increased, a fact which also suggests some imbalance in the presentation of evidence in the Field

³¹ It is beyond the scope of this book to fully explore the use of “feudal” (the usual translation of *fengjian*), a term used both to depict the social formation that prevailed in medieval Europe and Western Zhou society and describe the native chieftaincy. See Dirlin, *Revolution and History*, pp. 147–148, on this use of *fengjian* and on the fundamental difficulties in the usage of the term. For another discussion which goes back to first principles on the definition of *fengjian* and on Chinese feudalism generally, see Derk Bodde, “Feudalism in China”, in *Feudalism in History*, ed. Rushton Coulbourn (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965). See also Benjamin Schwartz, “A Marxist Controversy on China,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 13 (1954): 143–153; also Albert Feuerwerker, “China’s History in Marxian Dress,” in *History of Communist China*, ed. Albert Feuerwerker (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1968) for general reservations and criticisms on the approach such as that adopted in the Field Studies.

³² See, for example, Thomas Buoye, *Manslaughter, Markets, and Moral Economy: Violent Disputes over Property Rights in Eighteenth-Century China* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 18.

³³ For instance, after Shangxi subprefecture underwent *gaitu guiliu* in 1505, disorder broke out, compelling the Ming authorities to reinstate the old system and appoint the most able of the local headmen; see *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988) p. 371, citing *Mingshi* (Official History of the Ming) j.317.

Studies. These issues raise questions on the quality of the oral evidence collected from the villagers regarding the extent of the ‘oppression’ and ‘exploitation’ by the native official; such questions turn not on the accuracy of the evidence but rather on what underlying social and political dynamics may have been operating that were not recorded by the field-workers. This may have been due simply to ignorance of the value of such notions to their reporting. The fieldworkers themselves acknowledged their lack of experience and understanding of the questions when they initially embarked on their surveys of Anping in 1956.³⁴

These concerns are considerably counterbalanced by another aspect of historical materialism: its emphasis on socio-economic phenomena as the starting point of analysis and the corresponding use of a social scientific approach to history in explaining the dynamics of historical change, which has contributed to the wealth of socio-economic detail in the Field Studies.³⁵ The socio-economic situation in Anping is reflected in the rich detail on the system of land ownership and land tenure, which underpinned its political economy. Its social history is provided through details on the structure and customary aspects of the native official’s local political power through his place in the official ruling clan, the administrative organization of the villages and local headmen, and the social stratification of the subject populace.

In these respects the Field Studies is not unlike Mao Zedong’s *Report from Xunwu*, which also contains a detailed and lengthy chapter on traditional land relationships. Mao’s work has been described as a valuable record made at a critical point in the transition from late imperial times to the establishment of a new regime that can be mined for data on the society, economy, politics and history of one county and region in China at this important juncture, a description which could just as easily apply to the Field Studies on Anping.³⁶ In *Report from Xunwu*, Mao attempted to let analysis of local power relations and politics take precedence over doctrinaire investigations that imposed theory on facts. This is a basic methodological stance discussed in his *Diaocha gongzuo* (The Work of Investigation): Marxist analysis should be grounded in investigations of actual conditions.³⁷ “The Work of Investigation”, written at the same time as *Report from Xunwu* (May 1930),

³⁴ Internal Reports, p. 2.

³⁵ See Dirlit, *Revolution and History*, p. 13.

³⁶ Mao Zedong, *Report from Xunwu*, trans. Roger R. Thompson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 5.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 26–27.

was intended as an instruction manual for Communist cadres in the methodology of investigation work. In an investigation meeting, Mao stressed the importance of involving old people rich in experience, who understood not only current conditions but the reasons for those conditions.³⁸ Mao's *Report from Xunwu*, which was rediscovered in 1950 after being reported lost in 1941, was not published until the end of 1982 as part of a campaign associated with Deng Xiaoping that stressed the importance of "seeking truth from facts" (*shishi qiushi*). It was seen as exemplifying the young Mao's efforts to gather facts from which truth could be derived.³⁹

There is little doubt that the compilers of the Field Studies were influenced by the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) tradition of field investigation work. Mao's concept of Marxist analysis grounded in investigations of actual conditions became orthodoxy within the CCP and is very much in evidence in the abundance of grass-roots level detail in the material.⁴⁰ Although this has resulted in a heavy emphasis on empirical socio-economic detail at the expense of culture, language and underlying dynamics which are not immediately measurable in economic terms, the Field Studies has nonetheless furnished us with abundant material for a three-dimensional portrayal of the Anping native chieftaincy. The Field Studies contain significant facts on the traditional customs (including topics such as dress, food, song fairs, marriage and superstitions) of the Zhuang inhabitants of Anping *tusi*, although the coverage is not deep. (Details which were recorded by the fieldworkers on Anping customs are summarized in appendix A.) Such cursory treatment may have contributed to the criticism by some western scholars that the 1950s nationalities identification investigations and resultant publications are superficial.⁴¹ However, this absence of

³⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 36. This principle continues to be consciously applied in contemporary Chinese research; see, for example, Weng Dujian, ed., *Zhongguo minzu guanxishi gangyao*, p. iii, where the editor states that one of the principles applied in the process of researching that book was "seeking truth from facts".

⁴⁰ A parallel study which embodied the application of similar concepts was Chen Hang-Seng's comparative study of agrarian problems and social organization among the Pai Yi people of Yunnan and the Kamba of East Tibet: *Frontier Land Systems in Southernmost China: A Comparative Study of Agrarian Problems and Social Organization among the Pai Yi people of Yunnan and the Kamba people of Sikang* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1949).

⁴¹ See, for example, Charles F. McKhann, "The Naxi and the Nationalities Question," in *Cultural Encounters*, ed. S. Harrell, pp. 46–47.

cultural and language focus does not vitiate the quality or value of the data collected by the fieldworkers for the present purposes, in particular on the *tusi* in its institutional details. There exists, in any event, a rich and rapidly growing body of material on Zhuang history, language and culture by Chinese and Zhuang scholars, stemming partly from the nationalities identification work, which can be used to complement the details in the Field Studies. In fact, the Field Studies are increasingly cited as a primary source in these burgeoning secondary sources. As well, over the past decade or so there has been a growing contribution by western scholars to the study of China's ethnic minorities.⁴² However, the abiding feature of the Field Studies is that they were a one-off exercise achieved within a very small window of opportunity, which cannot now be repeated or improved upon.

SCOPE AND AIMS OF THIS BOOK

This book utilizes the Field Studies and other local materials to construct a portrait of the Anping native chieftaincy. It describes and analyses the framework of the local economic, social and political systems which operated within the Anping *tusi* administration, and examines their interaction as a system of politico-economic control by the native chieftain over his subjects and over the resources within his territory. It also investigates the way in which the native chieftain and his clan constructed and consolidated power and used it to gain the resources necessary to maintain themselves and run all governmental functions. To put this in context, the dual quality of the *tusi* system as a Chinese franchise and as a non-Chinese chieftaincy, whereby the *tusi* had to comply with two codes of behaviour, is also explored.

Previous western studies have focused on the native chieftaincy

⁴² For an article which rounds up some recent publications on China's ethnic minorities, see Susan D. Blum, "Margins and Centers: A Decade of Publishing on China's Ethnic Minorities," *Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 4 (November 2002): 1287–1310. The history of the Zhuang from their origins to the 1911 Revolution, with an extensive bibliography, is also available as a web publication by Jeffrey G. Barlow (see n. 8). A recent work which investigates buffalo sacrifice and attendant rituals among the Zhuang in Northwest Guangxi, and includes a general overview of Zhuang ethnicity as well as important background material on Zhuang cultural history, is David Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors: A Zhuang Cosmological Text from Southwest China* (De Kalb, IL: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 2003).

system from the top down, viewing it as a ‘tribal’ administrative system. In doing so, those studies reflected the state of Chinese frontier policy and the outer layer of Chinese control and influence. In contrast, through an investigation of the internal dynamics of a *tusi*, in which the native chieftain was the hereditary chief of his peoples, this book adopts a reversed perspective. As I mentioned earlier, I was drawn to such an exercise partly through my legal background, which emphasizes building up the larger case from smaller facts. Since the publication of the edited Field Studies in the 1980s and the subsequent burgeoning scholarship in this area by Zhuang and Han scholars, there also appears to be a perceived need to undertake such a ‘grass-roots’ approach to the *tusi* domains. While this could be seen as a continuum of the “seeking truth from facts” principle manifested in Mao’s *Report from Xunwu*, it is also related to the current recognition among scholars in China that the history of the *tusi* has not yet been adequately studied. The growing body of writing, which increasingly cites the Field Studies, is regarded as an attempt to fill the gaps so that the past can be more clearly understood and modern China better governed.⁴³

The need for this reversed perspective is also supported by the consensus reached at a recent conference on southern ethnic historical studies in China that the focus of current *tusi* studies should shift from the viewpoint of the central government to that of the relationship between the *tusi* rulers and their subjects.⁴⁴

For the general reader who may be more interested in this book as a history of relations between a southwestern minority group and the Chinese state, it is my hope that the micro-level nature of this study will provide ‘grist to the mill’ with which to test and contribute to the wider debates about China’s relationship with its peripheral peoples. These include the current vigorous debates on the Chinese empire and its ‘civilizing’ projects on its peripheral peoples, as well as the current

⁴³ I am indebted to Professor Li Jinfang from the Central University for Nationalities (*Zhongyang minzu daxue*), Beijing, for discussing these issues with me in November 2004. A discussion of other political purposes that may inform the central government’s wish to utilize such research, such as in relation to its minority nationalities policies, is beyond the scope of this book.

⁴⁴ Discussions with Dr. Zhu Zongquan, Central University for Nationalities (*Zhongyang minzu daxue*), Beijing, 22 November, 2004. The conference in question, during which two papers on the *tusi* were presented, was the Conference of Southern Ethnic Historical Studies in China, held at the Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, 12–14 October, 2004.

interpretations of China's basic approach to political and military security (also known as "grand strategy"). A key contribution of the Anping micro-history in relation to broader issues of Chinese history, for instance, is that it provides a concrete illustration of Chinese realpolitik, which was (and continues to be) an important element of China's strategic culture.

In order that it can also serve as a discrete, 'stand-alone' study of a representative *tusi* in southwest China, this book also includes two chapters which deal with the wider aspects of the *tusi* system. The first (chapter 2) contains a discussion of the background to the native chieftaincy system, which focuses on the origin and evolution of the successive Chinese administrative policies in respect of the minority peoples in China's peripheral regions which preceded the regularization of the *tusi* system during the Ming dynasty. The second (chapter 4) explores the interface between the Han Chinese court and the local Zhuang tribal system through the office of the native official by looking at the Anping native official in his capacity as agent of the Chinese government.

Chapter 3 and chapters 5 to 9 have been constructed primarily from the Field Studies and supporting local data, and provide an anatomy of the component parts of this representative *tusi*. The chapters present a discussion of the geographical boundaries and historical origins of Anping *tusi* (chapter 3), the customary institutions of the native official and his clan which were left substantially untouched by the Chinese state (chapter 5), the territorial divisions and local headman system of the villages within Anping *tusi* (chapter 6), the social stratification of its populace (chapter 7), the system of land tenure under the native official (chapter 8), and the impact on Anping *tusi* of *gaitu guiliu* (the replacement of the native chieftaincies by direct Han rule) in the early twentieth century (chapter 9).

Those chapters thus describe the history of Anping *tusi* from its inception in 1369 to its abolition in 1906, and its persistence, through local cultural and political forces, into the Republican era. Apart from providing a comprehensive portrait of a Chinese-enfranchised native chieftaincy, at least in its institutional details, this book aims to link up with other investigations of *tusi* in other parts of China, other frontier indigenous societies within traditional empires, and the political economies of chiefly domains in other times and other parts of the world.

CHAPTER TWO

CHINESE TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION PRIOR TO THE NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY SYSTEM: THE ‘BRIDLE AND HALTER’ PREFECTURES

The term *tusi* (literally, native superintendency), denoting native chieftains who were incorporated into China’s central government administration, had a more exotic sounding institutional antecedent, the ‘bridle and halter’ prefectures (*jimizhou*) established during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Under this system, native chieftains became attached to the Chinese empire through their submission to the court and the subsequent conferral by the court of Chinese titles with rights of hereditary succession. In this way the Chinese administration gained the loyalty of the native chieftains, but their subordinated jurisdictions were not yet incorporated into the Chinese bureaucratic system. The territories controlled by the chieftains were correspondingly constituted as *jimizhou* or *jimixian* (bridle and halter prefectures or counties) and were allowed to remain under their direct and customary rule. *Jimizhou* were in effect Chinese protectorates, formally reflecting their subordination to a Chinese area command (*dudufu*). They were essentially regional satraps, which minimized China’s military expenses. This was part of the Tang court’s expansionist policy in the southwest frontier, distinguished from its earlier suppression and pacification campaigns in the north by a more restrained, laissez-faire approach. While *jimizhou* were not formally established until the Tang dynasty, the underlying *jimi* policy originated much earlier as part of the Qin emperor’s blueprint for bringing the western and southern minority peoples within the Chinese imperium.

‘BRIDLING AND HALTERING’

The *jimi* (bridle and halter) concept is said to date back to the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), although the underlying moral philosophy existed in broad outline as early as the Zhou dynasty (c.1111–249 BC). It is generally recognized by Chinese scholars as the embryonic concept

from which the native chieftaincy system evolved and developed.¹ The establishment during the Tang dynasty of *jimizhou*, an official term referring to an administrative unit, was the administrative elaboration of the *jimi* policy.

Jimi policy involved a pragmatically loose, ‘hands-off’ administration of the non-Han peoples by the central government, provided they had demonstrated allegiance and submitted to the Chinese court. Consequently, *jimizhou* are often translated as ‘prefectures and counties under loose rein’ or ‘loose rein administration’, and *jimi* policy is correspondingly described as ‘loose rein policy’.² This translation is often used interchangeably with Schafer’s more literal rendering of bridle and halter counties or policy. As Schafer describes it, the term was taken from the euphemistic vocabulary of conquest of classical antiquity: the Han Son of Heaven was said to “bridle and halter” the subjected barbarians by the force of his social conscience and responsibility.³

Jimi is not amenable to any fixed definition, but came to include a wide range of meanings over time. An oft-quoted sentence which adopts the bridle and halter phrase appears in a biographical record (*zhuan*) of Xima Xiangru, a Han dynasty writer, which is contained in the *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian, compiled c.104–87 BC). Arguing against a proclamation to establish commanderies and appoint officials in the remote border areas, he is recorded to have said

Now we have heard that as regards the Yi and Di [the eastern and northern barbarians], the Emperor’s attitude is to bridle and halter them and not sever relations, that is all (*Gai wen tianzi zhi yu Yi Di ye, qi yi jimi wujue eryi*).

Thus, at least from the Han dynasty, *jimi* denoted the principle of maintaining links and not severing relations, aptly embodied in the ‘loose rein’ terminology.

The annotation to this Han dynasty quote states that *ji* refers to the

¹ Gong Yin, p. 1; Wu Yongzhang, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu yuanyuan yu fazhan shi*, p. 129; *Yunnan minzu zhengzhi zhidusi*, p. 128. On the Zhou, see, for example, Huang Fensheng, pp. 13–15.

² The “loose-rein” rendering appears to have been coined by Professor Yang Lien-sheng. See Yang Lien-Sheng, “Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order,” in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank, p. 31 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).

³ Edward Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 71.

bridle of a horse, while *mi* refers to the rope used for leading cattle, and that, according to the *Han guan yi* (Rites for Officials of the Han), the *siyi* (barbarians) should, like horses and cattle, be bridled and haltered (*yan zhi siyi ru niu ma zhi shou jimi*).⁴ *Siyi* (literally, barbarians of four directions) was an all-inclusive term for the barbarians on the east called *yi*, those on the south called *man*, those on the west called *rong* and those on the north called *di*.⁵

We can discern from the tone of these comments that, by the Han dynasty, the term ‘bridle and halter’ had come to indicate an administrative expedient. The conciliatory aspect of stopping short of completely severing relations also connotes an inherent policy of appeasement. *Jimi* policy was motivated by considerations of expediency, primarily the geopolitical, military and economic benefits which flowed to China from settling and promoting peaceful relations with the frontier ‘barbarians’. These benefits flowed both ways: there were significant advantages for the barbarian chiefs to form subordinate relationships with the Chinese government, such as trade, official titles, credentials and imperial gifts.⁶

While elements of appeasement and benevolence were present in *jimi* policy, the bridle and halter metaphor, together with the use of the collective term *man* (with its insect radical) to denote the southern tribal peoples, combined to suggest that the Chinese considered the southern barbarians to be not only uncivilized but also not fully human. The term *man* was first used as a general term to describe the southern

⁴ *Shiji*, Sima Xiangru liezhuan no. 57, pp. 3049–3050 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju edn., 1968, j.117). See also *Ciyuan* (Origins of Phrases), revised edn. (Beijing: Shangwa yinshuguan, 1990), vol. 3, p. 2489. The annotations were contained in the *Suoyin* (index), located immediately after the relevant passage of the *Shiji*, and said to be written by Sima Zhen in the early 8th century. On the *Suo Yin* see *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe, p. 407 (Berkeley, California: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993).

⁵ On the barbarians of the four directions, see *Liji jijie* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1989), p. 359; Huang Fengsheng, p. 15. It has been noted, however, that there does not seem to be any single Chinese character which can be properly translated as ‘barbarian’; while these names came to refer to barbarians, they were probably originally the names of ethnic groups. See Herlee G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 197–98.

⁶ For a chronological chart depicting the two-way benefits in the tributary relations between China and barbarian chiefs in Yunnan during the Tang, see Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao Kingdom and T'ang China's Southwestern Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 195–99.

barbarians in the Tribute of Yu (*Yugong*), a chapter which describes the nine regions of China and their products, contained in the *Shujing* (The Book of Documents, which dates back to the Western Zhou dynasty).⁷ In keeping with the spirit of this metaphor, Schafer states that the Chinese considered that the non-Han border peoples were “bestial aliens who had to be bound by the leash of Chinese moral superiority.”⁸ This Chinese inclination to compare barbarians with animals, including writing the names of barbarian tribes in characters with animal radicals, goes back to remote antiquity.⁹

Flowing from this Chinese perception of the barbarians’ uncivilized state, a philosophical aspect emanating from *jimi* was China’s obligation to extend her civilization to the barbarians where possible. The perceived abjectness of the barbarians triggered Confucian moral concerns of how to deal with those unfortunate enough to have been born uncivilized. This concern was manifested through the *hua* (literally, to transform) or civilizing process, a continuous process of extending the benefits of Chinese civilization to the barbarians, which was later incorporated into Chinese border administration policy. Nor was the Chinese civilizing mission confined to the barbarian border peoples. It was an ingrained duty enshrined in the canonical books of the Chinese and through ritual observances such as those prescribed in the Book of Rites (*Li Ji*). This moral duty extended to the peripheral non-Han peoples as much as to the ‘mean people’ within China proper, the *jianren*.¹⁰

China’s self-perceived role of a superior civilization with commensurate moral responsibilities towards the barbarian minorities is encapsulated in the direct voice of the Song dynasty scholar-official, Fan Chengda, who was Military and Pacification Commissioner in Guangxi from 1172 to 1174. Of the barbarians whose tribal areas had been demarcated into *jimi* units under his administration during that time, he observed:

Their peoples are rough and fierce, their customs wild and strange, and they are not capable of being fully controlled and governed by the laws

⁷ On the dating of the *Shujing* and its *Yugong* chapter, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, pp. 376–378. See also *Hanyu da cidian*, 8: 1009.

⁸ Schafer, p. 71.

⁹ Yang Lien-shang, “Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order,” p. 27.

¹⁰ For a study of ritual codification and the way in which moral expectations of Confucians were articulated in public rituals see David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T’ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

and instruction of the Middle Kingdom, so for the time being all one can do is bridle and halter them.¹¹

The reference to the laws and instruction of China, the ‘Middle Kingdom’, reflects Fan’s belief in China’s centrality in relation to the peripheral minority peoples and her natural duty as the civilizing state to govern and bring about civilization. Fan’s assessment that these “rough and fierce” peoples with “wild and strange customs” could only be bridled and haltered (*jimi*) “for the time being” is a direct reference to the bridle and halter administrative system and its supposedly interim nature; eventual acculturation of the barbarians was presumed.

The metaphor of the restrained or leashed animal later co-existed with the no less pejorative nomenclature of being in a ‘raw’ (*sheng*) or ‘cooked’ (*shu*) state, which applied from the Song dynasty onwards. Generally, the Chinese used raw and cooked to denote the degree of sinification attained by the barbarians, although tax implications were also linked to such labelling.¹² Also in his capacity as Guangxi Military and Pacification Commissioner, Fan Chengda commented on certain “*sheng man*” (uncooked barbarians) in the western district of E Prefecture, which was not a bridle and halter prefecture.¹³ Schafer makes the analogous observation that the settled rice-growing aborigines in the south, more amenable to assimilation to Chinese ways due to a more similar technology and society, would have been regarded by the Chinese as already “half-formed Chinese”.¹⁴ In the same vein, Fan Chengda noted around 1172 that beyond the bridle and halter prefectures and valleys, the barbarians were genuine barbarians who were outside civilization (*hua wai*).¹⁵ This suggests that by the Southern Song (1127–1279), *hua* civilizing notions had merged with original considerations of administrative expediency and appeasement to form part of the ideology underlying the bridle and halter prefectures. The *hua* civilizing mission was also evident in the

¹¹ Fan Chengda, *Guanghai yuhengzhi*, pp. 589–386.

¹² See, for example, Cushman, “Rebel Haunts and Lotus Huts”, p. 212; David Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, p. 167. These authors have also noted that *sheng* and *shu* were technical terms which referred to tax categories linked to the degree of pacification of the subject barbarians. The ‘raw’ barbarians were not entered into the household registers and did not pay government taxes, while the ‘cooked’ barbarians were counted as tax-paying subjects (Holm, *ibid.*).

¹³ See Fan Chengda, *Guanghai yuhengzhi*, pp. 589–387.

¹⁴ Schafer, p. 70. Cushman (pp. 212–17) provides a description of the steps involved in this assimilation programme and their application in respect of the Yao.

¹⁵ Fan Chengda, *Guanghai yuhengzhi*, pp. 589–386.

later Ming and Qing *tusi* administrations, where it solidified into deliberate policy designed to effect greater control over the hereditary *tusi*.

JIMI ZHOUXIAN AS A FRONTIER ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

Some scholars consider that *jimi* was also a shorthand cliché for the Chinese frontier policy of “use barbarians to control barbarians” (*yi yi zhi yi*).¹⁶ The following is an outline of the historical development of the *jimi* system as a form of territorial administration (and thus a measure of political control) by the Chinese court from China’s first unification during the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC) up until its crystallization into the *tusi* system during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368).

The Qin rulers dissolved the regionally-based feudal system which had prevailed during the Zhou and established a centralised bureaucratic administration through commanderies (*jun*) and counties (*xian*), the precursors to the eventual territorial-administration hierarchy of provinces (*sheng*), prefectures (*fu* and *zhou*) and counties (*xian*) during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The frontier policies in force during the Qin and Han dynasties (221BC–220) were based on the central question of how best to treat the indigenous peoples who were, in the eyes of the Chinese, “savages and barbarians, volatile, miserly and cruel... they love swords and treat death lightly.”¹⁷

In general, this translated into three main management strategies. First, separate forms of administrative organisation were set up as part of a united administration. Depending on the circumstances prevailing at the time, the Chinese court would set up commanderies, counties, vassal states and military officers such as the Leader of Court Gentlemen (*zhong lang jiang*), Commandant (*xiao wei*) or Protector-General (*duhu*) to administer the frontier tribal areas.¹⁸ The Protector-General of the Xiyu

¹⁶ See, for example, Yang Lien-sheng, “Historical Notes on the Chinese World Order,” p. 33; Cushman, p. 155; Wu Yongzhang p. 111.

¹⁷ Schafer p. 58, citing the *Shi an ji* in *Taiping yu lan* (Imperially Reviewed Encyclopaedia of the Taiping Era), 172, 5b. The frequent insurrections of the barbarians and murderous suppression campaigns which bloodied the landscape of the southwest frontiers throughout the formation and development of the *jimi* policy (such as described by Schafer) are not always emphasized in the contemporary texts.

¹⁸ Renderings of imperial titles in this book are generally based on Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995).

(the Western Regions), Ban Chao, who held the post for 31 years during the Later Han dynasty, is reported to have said that by implementing this policy, “We can attain harmonious relations with the distant barbarians; we can be unified with those with different customs.”

These bland references to the local customs of the barbarians draw a polite veil on what would have seemed, to the Chinese officials sent to the southwest frontier, strange and repellent. For example, the following details provided by Fan Chengda, writing c.1174, of the ceremonial abductions practised at the start of marriage by indigenous peoples in Yunnan and Guangxi, would probably have been culturally repugnant to a Han official. Describing the wedding ceremonies of valley (*dong*) officials under his jurisdiction, Fan notes that they were carried out “in a bold, careless fashion, with extravagance and lack of restraint”:

When the bridegroom comes to effect the marriage, the woman’s family sets up a temporary dwelling of straw over five miles away for them to live in, and this is called “Entering the Hut” (*ru liao*). Each of the two families uses music accompanied by drumbeats to welcome the bride and groom into the hut. The woman has over one hundred slave girls and concubines, and the bridegroom’s slave boys number up to several hundred. On the night of the marriage, each of the two families has abundant soldiers standing in readiness, and at the slightest words the soldiers would set to with their blades. After the wedding, the husband often draws out his blade and with violent intent kills his wife’s slave girls and the concubines. The more slave girls he can kill from the time of entering the hut, the more his wife’s faction will fear him; otherwise he will be called a coward.¹⁹

When Ban Chao departed the post, he is reported to have said to his successor, “Be loose with discipline, be lax with small transgressions; consider the big picture.”²⁰ This deliberate flexibility was also evident in the words of the general Liang Shang, who is reported to have warned the Regional Inspector (*cishi*) of Liangzhou in 139:

¹⁹ Fan Chengda, *Guanghai yuhengzhi*, in Qi Zheping, *Guanghai yuhengzhi jiaobu* (Annotated Edition of the *Guanghai yuhengzhi*, with Supplements), p. 35 (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe, 1990). The killing of slaves and sham fights referred to here were part of the marriage ritual of ‘entering the hut’ similarly described in the *Lingwai daida* compiled in 1178 by Zhou Qufei. See Zhou Qufei, *Nanfang caomu zhuang*, pp. 589–478.

²⁰ *Yunnan minzu zhengzhi zhidu shi*, pp. 34–35 (citing *Hou Hanshu – Banchao zhuan*).

The way to govern is not to have any set rules; when events arise you should act in accordance with the situation, and go along a little with their customs.²¹

This cautious yet flexible approach reflects the prudent ‘hands-off’ policy toward the local government of the outlying peoples, which was part of the moral philosophy adopted by the Chinese imperial court since the Zhou dynasty (c.1066–221 BC), encapsulated in the phrase “*huai zhu hou rou yuan ren*” (be kind to the visiting princes, be gentle to the distant peoples).²² Rules were set out in the Autumn Offices (*qiuguan*) and Summer Offices (*xiaguan*) sections of the Rites of Zhou (*Zhou li*), said to have emerged in the mid-second century BC, which prescribed official posts for the implementation of this policy. For example, a Zhou court official, called the Master of Cherishing the Regions (*huai fang shi*), was in charge of tribute and the entertainment of envoys and frontier peoples, and matters of protocol. Similarly, the Master of Instructing the Regions (*xun fang shi*) was in charge of civilizing the frontier peoples; his responsibilities included enlightenment of the frontier peoples through education, and disseminating the orders of the imperial commanders. There was also the Master of the Territories (*xing fang shi*), who was in charge of the territories of the vassal states and had to determine the borders of the lands which did not interconnect with that of China.²³ Although records are scant, it can reasonably be inferred that various barbarian tribes nominally subject to the Zhou rulers were allowed to function under their own chieftains provided they were submissive.²⁴ Thus, the blueprint of the *jimi* and later *tusi* system was probably evident as far back as the Zhou dynasty.

The second administrative strategy evident in the Qin and Han dynasties was that of elevating the position of the tribal chieftains. Although contemporary Chinese writers state that this was for the purpose of forming a closer relationship between the border peoples and China, the primary motivation was to entice the chieftains into voluntary submission to the Chinese court. Once they had submitted, the Qin court

²¹ *Yunnan minzu zhengzhi zhidu shi*, pp. 34–35 (citing *Hou Hanshu – Xiqiang zhuan*).

²² See, for example, Wiens p. 202; Huang Fensheng, *Bianjiang zhengjiao zhi yanjiu* (Studies on Border Administration Policies) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), p. 13. See also discussion of the role of barbarians in the Western Zhou period in Creel, pp. 194–241.

²³ Huang Fensheng, p. 14. The *Zhou li* (Rites of Zhou) is said to have emerged in the mid-2nd century BCE. For a discussion of the date see Loewe, 1993, pp. 24–32.

²⁴ Creel, p. 230.

awarded them with feudal titles. They were classified as *bangjun* (rulers) under the Qin laws and were granted privileged treatment, which included being excused where they had committed crimes which were deemed tolerable by the Qin court.²⁵ Official supervision of frontier affairs was handled through the single office of the Chamberlain for Dependencies (*dianke*), who was in charge of the feudal princes and was charged with responsibility to “return the barbarians to correct principles” (*guiyi*).²⁶

The third administrative strategy under Qin and Han frontier policy was to bring about the migration of Chinese settlers to the frontier areas and set up military farms (*tuntian*) for the purpose of building up economic strength in the frontiers. This strategy, recommended by the Western Han political commentator Chao Cuo (200–154 BC), was adopted during the reign of the Han emperor Wendi (179–156 BC). Chao Cuo’s policy involved transferring people to form cities and towns in areas of strategic military importance, and around the roads which led to rivers. They would be provided with housing and planting equipment, after which criminals and exiles would be ordered to settle there. Chao Cuo’s thinking was that those who settled first would grow happy and not think of returning to their home towns; consequently, the poor would admire them and be persuaded to settle there. It was in effect what Wiens called military agricultural colonization.²⁷

The *tuntian* policy was an important strategic decision of the Han rulers in relation to border administration, and a vast amount of effort was dedicated to it. It led to soldiers taking part in grain transport from China proper from the beginning of the Han dynasty, and provided a firm economic basis for administration of the border territories. It was to be, along with the native chieftaincy system, an important device used by the imperial rulers to maintain control over the frontier indigenous peoples. The reality was that the military settlers were exiles, criminals or people forcibly moved to areas where they would voluntarily defend themselves against tribal attacks or could be subjected to conscription by the Chinese military. The practice of military colonization did not become widespread, however, until the Tang dynasty (618–907).²⁸

²⁵ Yunnan minzu zhengzhi zhidu shi, p. 35.

²⁶ Huang Fensheng, p. 15.

²⁷ Yunnan minzu zhengzhi zhidu shi, p. 35; Wiens, p. 194.

²⁸ Wiens, pp. 194–95; see also pp. 194–98 for a discussion on military agricultural settlements.

Thus, the blueprint of the bridle and halter policy as a form of territorial administration had already assumed a definitive shape during the earliest days of the centralized Chinese state in the Qin and Han dynasties, centred around the notion of *huairou* (literally, cherish the gentle), which came to have the extended, political meaning of ‘to win over to pacification’, synonymous with the concept of appeasement encrypted in *jimi* policy. The first recorded usage of *huairou* as a show of conciliation in order to entice distant peoples to submit to the Chinese court (and thus be brought under its control) appears to be in the *Xinshu-Wu Xu*, written by Jia Yi during the Han dynasty.²⁹ This term appears to have evolved from the two verbs *huai* and *rou* in the previously encountered Zhou dynasty phrase “*huai zhu hou rou yuan ren*”, in which the verbs retained their fundamental meanings of ‘cherishing’ and ‘being gentle’. The etymologically disparate leap during the Han dynasty to the more political concepts of pacification and conciliation is an early testament to Chinese political and military concerns about the border minorities. While Confucian moral concerns were always present as symbolized by the duty of the Chamberlain for Dependencies to “return the barbarians to correct principles”, expediency was always the key concern in Chinese relations with the peripheral peoples. The fostering of assimilation to Chinese ways was seen more as a matter of reducing military threat and facilitating stability than of extending compassion and civilization to the barbarians, implicit in the original meanings of *huai* and *rou*. Creel notes that the unassimilated people were an almost constant threat to the Zhou, who were wisely committed to a policy of conciliation.³⁰

Huairou was achieved in the Qin dynasty primarily through rewarding those tribal chieftains who submitted to the Chinese court with titles of nobility such as prince (*wang*), marquis (*hou*) and lord (*junzhang*). The Qin court also used less subtle tactics, often giving Qin girls as brides to those indigenous leaders who had been awarded noble titles as a way of winning them over.³¹ This practice of giving Chinese brides to barbarian chiefs was already evident during the Zhou dynasty.³²

Besides granting noble titles to those chieftains who had pledged

²⁹ See, for example, *Hanyu dacidian*, 7:789. On the *Xinshu* and Jia Yi (201–169 BC see Loewe, pp. 161–70).

³⁰ Creel, p. 204.

³¹ See, for example, Gong Yin, p .2.

³² See, for example, Creel, p. 212.

allegiance, the Qin court also gave the chieftains accompanying regalia as symbols of imperial power, such as the official seal with a silk ribbon (*yinshou*) and coins and silks (*qianbo*). These gestures bore out the already well-formed appeasement policy embodied in the phrase “through a square seal and a tiny amount of silk, we can pacify the border areas” (*yi fang cun zhi yin, zhang er zhi zu, tian fu fang wai*), which is recorded in the *Hanshu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty), which covers the period 209–25 BC.³³

By the Han dynasty, a gradual process of increasing the status of the imperial awards was already apparent. Not only was the system of granting noble titles to chieftains who had acknowledged allegiance retained, but also demonstrations of especial loyalty towards the court by subordinated chieftains were further rewarded by the court through promotion to higher ranks. Besides representing imperial favour, the promotions also represented a further step in the submission by the minority headmen, and a gradual expansion of the power and prestige of the Chinese imperial court in the border areas.³⁴ Maintenance of communications with enfeoffed princes and marquises and non-Chinese leaders by the Chinese court continued under the office of the Director of the Messenger Office (*daxingling*), which superseded the *dianke* in about 144 BC. This office was superseded in 104 BC by the Chamberlain for Dependencies (*da honglu* (literally, great maintainer of orderliness)).³⁵

The Qin Han policy of enfeoffing submissive chieftains was continued by the ruling cliques during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280), when further layers of enticement and a broadening of the base of local notables eligible for imperial favours can be discerned. Apart from awarding noble and military titles, there were cases during the Wei (220–265) of the Chinese court’s appointing the most obedient of the barbarian princes (*manyi junzhang*) as local Grand Protector (*taishou*) and Commander-in-Chief (*dudu*). Some were even granted the central government title of Palace Aide to the Censor-in-Chief (*yushi zhongcheng*), to whom regional inspectors reported. During this period, each ruler was concerned with re-establishing unity and claiming a legitimate right to the Chinese empire; in awarding these titles to local

³³ Gong Yin, p. 4 (citing *Hanshu* j. 64A, *Yanzhu liezhuan* 34a).

³⁴ Gong Yin, pp. 4–5.

³⁵ Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985); Huang Fensheng, p. 15.

tribesmen, the Wei ruler was in fact attempting to utilize the non-Han peoples to destroy the rearguard of the Shu Han. Nonetheless, the resultant shift towards granting central government titles to indigenous leaders at this time represented a significant step in the evolution of the native chieftaincy system.³⁶

The Shu Han kingdom (221–263), which controlled the southwest during its reign, further extended the reach of the system by looking out for people of talent (apart from the chieftains who had submitted) and appointing them as local or central government officers. It was an attempt by the imperial court to put members of the upper strata into the local and central organs of state, to whom they gave a relatively higher level of political treatment. This was also an early instance of the method of gradually civilizing the barbarians through the establishment of patron-client relations between the Chinese state and the ruling classes of the barbarian states, another feature of the native chieftaincy system. In reality, most of these members of the upper strata were people who had pledged loyalty to the Shu Han regime. This extension of favourable treatment to the ruling echelon of the minority peoples during the Shu Han dynasty proved an effective device. Pacification of the southern people was achieved in many cases, as well as the provision of military funding by locally appointed chieftains.³⁷

It was also during the Shu Han that the minister and strategist Zhuge Liang, who is credited with carrying out the pacification of the south, set out his oft-cited rationale as to why no central government troops or garrisons should be left in tribal territory and no grain requisitions should be made upon the indigenous peoples. It was essentially a more explicit elaboration of the practical reasons behind the policy of government abstention from the internal affairs of the frontier indigenous peoples. Zhuge Liang's rationale consisted of what he considered the “three difficulties” which would flow from governing the barbarians in the southern frontier by Chinese military force.³⁸

The “three difficulties” which the minister saw were as follows:

- (1) If Chinese troops were to occupy non-Han areas there would need to be permanent garrisons, which may not have sufficient food supplies;

³⁶ See Gong Yin, pp. 6–7.

³⁷ Wu Yongzhang, pp. 31–32.

³⁸ Zhuge Liang's argument in respect of the “three difficulties” is quoted in Huang Fengsheng, p. 95, Gong Yin, p. 7, and Wu Yongzhang, pp. 30–31 (citing the *Shu shu – Zhuge Liang zhuan*).

- (2) If the Chinese garrison troops were inadequate, this would lead to new attacks by barbarians, and consequent deaths of brothers and fathers, which would result in disastrous revolts;
- (3) The frequent woundings and slayings suffered by the barbarians would make them naturally suspicious of repeated grievances; if occupied by alien troops, they would ultimately have no trust in them.

Wu Yongzhang interprets the minister's rationale as follows: by not assigning central government officials and continuing to use local headmen to govern the south, the Chinese government would not have to station troops there. Consequently, it would not add to its economic burdens or create misunderstandings amongst the border peoples. This was the only way to safeguard the rule of the Shu Han, and for affairs between the barbarians and Han to be mutually peaceful.³⁹

Based on these arguments, Zhuge Liang advocated the policy of retaining the use of local leaders to rule their peoples; no Han officials should be established, and no garrisons installed.⁴⁰ This policy was generally considered to be a most ingenious method of bridling and haltering the barbarians (*miao de jimi manyi zhi shu*). It also appears from the context of this quote that *jimi* had, by the Shu Han, come to refer to indirect rule.⁴¹

The Wu regime (222–280) of the Three Kingdoms period also adopted the tactic of investing local headmen with noble titles, while the Wei dynasty rulers (220–265) also appointed indigenous people as officials.⁴² The Wei and Jin dynasties (220–420) also continued the Chinese practice of having a Chamberlain for Dependencies (*da honglu*) in charge of frontier affairs.⁴³

During the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589) when the whole of China was fractured and ruled by two independent dynasties, the Southern dynasties continued to follow the Qin and Han tribal control methods in respect of the minority peoples in the southwest and Yangtze areas, bestowing official and noble titles upon the local chieftains. They were given the titles of Local Regional Chief (*cishi*), Commandery Governor (*junshou*) and District Magistrate (*xianling*), together

³⁹ Wu Yongzhang, p. 31.

⁴⁰ Wu Yongzhang, pp. 30–31; Gong Yin, p. 7; Huang Fensheng, p. 95.

⁴¹ Wu Yongzhang, p. 31; Gong Yin, p. 8 (citing *Jiu Tangshu* j. 91, *Zhang Jianzhi liezhuhan* 41).

⁴² Wu Yongzhang, pp. 32–33.

⁴³ Wiens, p. 204.

with empty titles such as prince (*wang*) and marquis (*hou*). The extreme divisiveness of this 170-year period of disunion led to a weakening of the Southern dynasty's control over the non-Han areas, so it resorted to this bestowal of ranks and titles in an effort to achieve an overspread of its power in those areas. The local headmen were able to take advantage of the political instability and constant scrambles for power between the northern and southern regimes to elevate their status and develop their actual strength.⁴⁴

Following almost 300 years of fragmentation under the Wei and Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, China was re-united under the short-lived Sui dynasty (581–618), during which her imperial glory and aura of legitimacy were restored. Because of its short rule, Sui policy toward the minority peoples was simply a continuation of the practice of bestowing upon submissive headmen such titles as regional chiefs, governors and district magistrates, and of granting empty noble titles. However, one significant development in the native chieftaincy system during the Sui was the appointment of local leaders as local prefecture and county officials to directly govern the areas under their jurisdiction in the Lingnan (Guangdong and Guangxi) area. It became standard practice for the Chinese court to grant extended powers to submissive local leaders, including the power to appoint subordinates and to transfer troops. This was largely driven by pragmatic reasons of military capability. In the face of fierce revolts against the Chinese court and the success of subordinate chieftains in stabilizing the area through their local troops, the court recognized that, although this opened the way for a broadening of their powers, it had little choice but to bridle and halter (*jimi*) them.⁴⁵

Thus, in terms of the evolution of the native chieftaincy system, the Sui is distinguished by the Chinese court's recognition that indirect rule in accordance with local custom by locally appointed officials who were local leaders was still more effective than direct rule by central government officials.⁴⁶ This view is perhaps a natural consequence of the breakdown of the cohesiveness of the Han political system during the

⁴⁴ Wu Yongzhang, pp. 69–70.

⁴⁵ Gong Yin, pp. 11–12; Wu Yongzhang, p. 85. For an example of a successful pacification campaign during the Sui dynasty led by the Li Lao local leaders who had submitted to the court and carried out the emperor's orders, see Wu Yongzhang, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Tan Qizhu, *Zhuangzu tusi zhidu* (The Zhuang Native Chieftaincy System) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1995), p. 6; Wu Yongzhang, pp. 85–86.

previous 300 years when China was ravaged by the scrambles for power of competing regimes.

By the Tang dynasty (618–907), under a flourishing social and economic environment and powerful Chinese state, the cumulative experiences of the previous dynasties culminated in a wide-scale establishment of bridle and halter prefectures, bringing the *jimi* policy to its highest point. At the beginning of the Tang, the Chinese court appointed chieftains of large tribal groups as commanders-in-chief (*dudu*) and regional chiefs (*cishi*). Those appointments stimulated headmen of other groups to submit to the court in order to gain rank recognition and privileges, which helped stabilize the rule of the imperial court in these areas.

A striking example of this was the return of the chieftain of the Western Cuan in Yunnan, Cuan Hongda, to Kunzhou (present-day Kunming) to pledge allegiance to the Chinese court on the accession of the first Tang emperor Gaozu to the throne in 618. Cuan was a powerful leader whose clash with cruel and brutal Chinese officials at the end of the Sui dynasty led to fierce revolts and the consequent abandonment by the Chinese court of its control over Ningzhou (in the region of present-day Dianchi in Yunnan), which was controlled by the Cuan family. The winning over of the Cuan, who wielded great influence in China's southwestern frontiers, set off the 'copycat' submissions of numerous other chieftains. This development led to the Tang court's organizing the territory controlled by the submitted chieftains into seven prefectures (*zhou*) and fifteen counties (*xian*) and constituting the respective local leaders as regional chiefs or county magistrates of their respective territorial units. They were the precursors of the *jimi* prefectures.⁴⁷

It was not until the Zhenguan period under the second Tang emperor Taizong (627–649) that the use of *jimi* prefectures as a method of controlling the indigenous peoples became official government policy. It is recorded in the New History of the Tang (*Xin Tangshu*), which covers the period 618–906:

When the Tang dynasty came to power, [the Chinese government] lacked the time to deal with the barbarians. After emperor Taizong pacified the Tujue, the northwestern barbarians (*fan*) and the southwestern barbarians (*manyi*) gradually submitted to the Chinese court, whence their tribes were constituted as prefectures and counties, the larger ones as Area Commands (*dudufu*). Their leaders were appointed as commanders-in-

⁴⁷ Gong Yin pp. 13–14. For a list of the earliest records of local headmen who were made regional chiefs (*cishi*) of prefectures see Wu Yongzhang, p. 80.

chief and regional chiefs, all hereditary positions. Although they were thereby within the jurisdiction for local tribute and taxes, most did not report to the Ministry of Revenue. Thus, up to now, the influence of the Chinese government would be conveyed through the leadership of the commanders-in-chief and protectors general (*duhu*) of the frontier prefectures, in this way making the governing pattern known.⁴⁸

This statement sums up the administrative basis of the *jimi* prefectures, and is said to be the earliest articulation of its form. Wu Yongzhang points out certain features of the *jimi* prefectures during the Tang. First, their numbers were extremely high compared with regular prefectures: 856 *jimi* prefectures throughout China (of which 402 were in the southern minority areas) as compared with 331 regular prefectures in the more densely populated interior. Second, their dimensions were relatively small, which also indicated a relatively small number of subordinated (*jimi*) counties. It also indicated a much smaller number of households under each *jimi* prefecture than in regular prefectures, details of which tended not to be reported to the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu*), as well as crude and simple seats of administration, all of which contributed to later difficulties in ascertaining the specific details of the Tang *jimi* prefectures.⁴⁹

These factors support the above report in the New Standard History of the Tang that the prefectures were constituted from the territory under the control of the headmen who had submitted to the Chinese court. The Tang court left the chieftains' customary rule over their subjects and their local organisation undisturbed, a policy which echoed the words of Zhuge Liang over four hundred years previously. The inordinately high number of Tang *jimi* prefectures would, in any case, have rendered direct government impossible.

These initial *jimi* prefectures and counties presented a hazy, ill-defined picture, often with no determinable town-based administrative seat. For instance, it is recorded in the Old Standard History of the Tang (*Jiu Tangshu*) that in the first year of the Tianbao reign period (742), Qianzhou (in Guizhou province) was turned into fifty *jimi* prefectures, all of which had temporary seats of administration in the mountains and valleys. These numerous, small-scale *jimi* prefectures differed from the

⁴⁸ Wu Yongzhang, p. 80; Gong Yin, pp. 14–15 (citing *Xin Tangshu* j.43b, Dili [Records of Geography] 7b).

⁴⁹ Wu Yongzhang, pp. 81–82 (citing *Xin Tangshu* – *dilizhi* 7b). For a summary of the location of the *jimi* prefectures see Gong Yin, p. 15.

regular prefectures in that while the former were based on the chieftain's power base, thus often consisting of no more than a single group of people, the regular prefectures were established in accordance with geographical conditions and population size.⁵⁰

Together with the Chinese court's general policy of non-interference, it is evident that the controls applied by the Tang court over the first *jimi* prefectures were loose and lax. This was not from indifference. By adopting a flexible approach towards *jimi* prefectures and regular prefectures, the Tang court left the way open for conversion from one to the other depending on the strengthening or weakening of the court's power in the southwestern border areas, in order to facilitate direct control or pacification as the situation dictated.⁵¹ Once an area had been constituted a *jimi* administrative unit upon the submission of its chieftain, it was theoretically on track to direct Han Chinese control "to hasten their conversion to civilized ways."⁵²

Besides appointing local headmen to Tang offices in their own former territory which had been incorporated as *jimi* administrative units, the Tang court also continued the practice of bestowing on them various empty noble titles, with the added feature of extremely high official ranks. These ranks were as high as grade 1, second class for specified princes, and grade 2, first class for specific dukes. These titles bore no relation to concrete duties and merely demonstrated imperial favour. What they do reveal, however, is that the Tang court was at pains to win over the southern chieftains and took especial effort to bring about their voluntary submission.⁵³

These policies were related to the many instances of native resistance towards the Tang presence in the seventh and eighth centuries, including revolts in the western administrations of Rongzhou and Yongzhou, a series of rebellions in Lingnan, and the great insurrections against Chinese rule in Annan which led to a large-scale invasion of Annan by Nanzhao troops.⁵⁴ In 794 there was an uprising by the leading indigenous

⁵⁰ Wu Yongzhang, pp. 83–84.

⁵¹ Wu Yongzhang, p. 84.

⁵² Schafer, p. 70.

⁵³ Wu Yongzhang, p. 87; Gong Yin, p. 16.

⁵⁴ Under the Tang, Lingnan (the territory south of the Nanling ranges and east of the Guizhou–Yunnan plateau) was designated a circuit (*lu*) which was subdivided into the five jurisdictions of Guang, Gui, Yong, Rong and Annan. Yong and Rong prefectures (Yongzhou and Rongzhou) were part of what was to become Guangxi (the Guangnan West Circuit) during the Song. On Nanzhao, see Charles Backus, *The Nan-chao Kingdom and T'ang China's Southwestern Frontier* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

clan, the Huang, when it attacked the Tang administration at Yongzhou, taking thirteen prefectures. Even after the surrender of the Huang leader and the Tang court's bestowal of magistracies upon him and his younger brother, the Huang turned against the Chinese, seizing further areas in the northern part of the Yong administration. In addition to such instances of native chieftains rebelling against the Chinese to whom they were ostensibly subordinated, punitive measures taken by the Tang administration against the Huang and other insurrections were often brutal, in some cases involving wholesale extermination. What these incidents illustrate is that, on the one hand, the Chinese court's bestowal of highly valued titles and ranks did not constitute a guarantee of loyalty by the subordinated chieftains. On the other hand, it also appears that, as a tribal control policy, *jimi* always contained an underlying 'carrot and stick' element: peaceful subordination was rewarded by the Chinese state with tribute relations, but when China's interests were threatened, she could resort to genocide. This dual attitude towards the border peoples came to be called *de yi sui yuan, wei yi she fu* (pacify the virtuous border peoples, subdue the powerful).⁵⁵

The Chinese area command also regarded the Tang court's establishment of prefectures and counties with Tang-endorsed status as a means of counteracting the attractions of assimilation to other powerful states such as the Nanzhao state or Champa. The spectre of malaria and other tropical diseases which regularly struck down Han Chinese soldiers in the southwest also played a part in *jimi* policy, since it enabled access by the Chinese government to local troops inured to and conversant with the harsh ecology, thus taking pressure off imperial troops. The historical records abound with statements revealing the extent to which the Han officials feared miasma in Guangxi. For instance, a memorial presented to the Emperor Shizong in 1431 by the Governor and Regional Commander of Guangxi canvassed rationalizing the number of *yamen* in the area of the Zuo and You Rivers in Guangxi because it was miasmal and full of venomous insects.⁵⁶

The officials which the Tang court established under its *jimi* prefec-

⁵⁵ She Yize, "Mingdai zhi tusi zhidu" (The Ming Native Chieftaincy System), in Shaoshu minzushi lunwen xianji (Selected Writings on the History of the Minority Nationalities), (Guangxi zhuangzu zizhiqu minzu yanjiusuo, 1980), vol. 4, p. 22. Schafer (pp. 61–71) provides a vivid chronicle of rebellions by chieftains, Tang reprisals and slaughter in Lingnan and Annam over the period 622–894.

⁵⁶ See *Ming shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu* (The Veritable Records of the Ming: Extracts on Guangxi History) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1990), p. 742.

tures and counties were all granted hereditary rights. This conferral tended to be couched in loose wording such as “their tribes will inherit the office of regional chiefs and such like from generation to generation” (*qi buluo daixi cishi deng guan*).⁵⁷ It went no further than reinstating the status quo of the hereditary titles of the indigenous chieftains which had been conferred since the Han and Shu Han dynasties, which were also part of their customary status. A more specific, legal regulatory system which tied the hereditary succession of the native official to central government criteria such as that formulated during the Ming and tightened during the Qing was not yet established during the Tang. However, the Tang court instigated the system of granting military appointments such as Barbarian Chieftain (*manqiu*) and Subsidiary General (*yajiang*) to native chieftains who had undertaken military expeditions on its behalf.⁵⁸ These were the precursors of the high-ranking military titles such as the Pacification Commissioner (*xuanfushi* and *xuanweishi*) conferred on native chieftains in southwestern China under the *tusi* system when it took formal shape during the Yuan dynasty.

The rulers of the Song dynasty (960–1279) followed and developed the Tang *jimi* policy in the areas inhabited by indigenous peoples. *Jimi* administrative units during the Song were mainly concentrated within the five circuits (*lu*) of Jinghu Lu (38 prefectures), Kuizhou Lu (50 prefectures), Chengdu Fu Lu (110 prefectures), Tongchuan Fu Lu (48 prefectures) and Guangan Xilu (90 prefectures, five counties, 11 valleys), totalling 336 *jimi* prefectures, six *jimi* counties and 14 *jimi* valleys.⁵⁹

Although this was still a relatively large number compared to the scale of regular prefectures in the more densely populated Chinese provinces, it was significantly less than the 856 *jimi* prefectures during the Tang dynasty. It indicates that some measure of consolidation was instigated by the Song court, in a departure from the crude Tang pattern of constituting a power base of one administrative unit per chieftain.

Apart from basically following the Tang system of establishing *jimi* prefectures and constituting the respective headmen as hereditary chiefs (*zhangguan*) of their respective *jimi* units, the Song court also ratified the former official titles granted by the Tang court once the local chiefs

⁵⁷ Gong Yin, p. 17 (citing *Jiu Tangshu* j. 197, “Nan man xinan man liezhuan,” 147).

⁵⁸ Gong Yin, pp. 17–18.

⁵⁹ Gong Yin, pp. 18–19. Wiens put the total number of *jimi* prefectures in the Song at approximately 200, but this only took into account three circuits; (see Wiens, pp. 211 and 383, n. 15).

in question had pledged allegiance to the Song court. In addition, it took the further step of attracting more local chieftains into submission by extending official titles to those who had not received any from the Tang court, as well as promoting existing official and noble titles.

The Song court also began to tighten rules regarding the hereditary status of the *jimi* officials, thus shifting the evidentiary nexus from what had been the status quo amongst the local chiefs towards satisfaction of Song court prerequisites for their entitlement to rights of hereditary succession. An inheritance procedure was developed which required a Han person to first make a report to the emperor of the proposed succession, which was to include a written request (*zhuang qing*) setting out details of the descendants, which had to be jointly signed by local officers (eight regional chiefs) and the chieftain of the territory in question. The court would then issue an edict permitting the requested succession. In reality, all that was required was the support of the local leaders for the nominated heirs; the Song court did not go beyond acknowledging what was already the case.⁶⁰ Though nominal, these formalities represented the beginning of the court-dictated inheritance requirements which were a key component of the *tusi* system, and which would develop into a stranglehold on the native chieftains during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Local leaders who were obstinate and unwilling to submit would be transferred from their local base. The Song rulers, preferring not to resort to more punitive measures, considered that cutting them off from their support base would be sufficient reprisal. The court preferred to use pledges and agreements to control its *jimi* officials, to “summon and console” the barbarians and ensure social order.⁶¹ The Song emperor Zhenzong (998-1022) is reported to have stated:

I frequently instruct: When the Man and Yi barbarians attack each other, only order the use of mediation to break the situation. Do not make unauthorized use of weapons; this will lead to trouble.⁶²

This reluctance to use military force and imperial injunction against unauthorised attacks was a consistent policy of the Song court, which looked upon this ‘hands-off’ policy as part of the *jimi* principle. This attitude was further articulated by emperor Zhenzong in the second year of the Xiangfu reign period (1009):

⁶⁰ Gong Yin, pp. 19-21.

⁶¹ Gong Yin, p. 21; Wu Yongzhang, p. 113.

⁶² Gong Yin, p. 21 (citing *Wujing zongyao*, j.20; *Bianfang tiao* p. 34).

I instruct: I am frequently arming my border officers, and there has been no trouble. If the outside barbarians slay each other, there are local laws. If I use the laws of China to restrain them, this will certainly lead to trouble; this is the process of the *jimi* principle.⁶³

Thus, by the Song dynasty, *jimi* had come to refer to loose government. This is also reflected in Fan Chengda's assessment of the barbarians in southwest Guangxi some 160 years after emperor Zhenzong said, around 1172, that "for the time being all one can do is bridle and halter (*jimi*) them."

By the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), the court had discontinued the bridle and halter (*jimi*) nomenclature.⁶⁴ Chinese scholars consider that the Yuan rulers played a pivotal role in developing the administration of the southern minority peoples and effectively establishing the foundations of the *tusi* system. Under the bridle and halter system of the Tang and Song dynasties, *jun* and *xian* territorial units based on the Chinese system were used in name but continued in reality to be small independent kingdoms. The Yuan government continued to establish Chinese-style territorial divisions (*lu*, *fu*, *zhou* and *xian*) upon the submission of chieftains, but tailored them to the actual geographical and population size of each particular domain, thereby strengthening its consolidation over the tribal areas.

The Yuan rulers also formally incorporated native chieftains into the central Chinese administration and established official posts with Chinese-style rankings, in particular the pacification commissioners (*xuanwei*, *xuanfu* and *zhaotao*) and the posts of chief (*zhangguan*), which were the predecessors to those in the Ming. The civil posts of prefec-tural, subprefectural and county magistrate (*tufu*, *tuzhou* and *tuxian*) were also established during the Yuan. The native chieftains who were rewarded with these posts were now known as native officials (*tuguan*), a term which signified the duality of the *tusi* system through its marriage of the aboriginal (*tu*) with officialdom (*guan*).⁶⁵

⁶³ Wu Yongzhang, p. 111 (citing Song *huiyao jigao*, Fanyi wu 43); Gong Yin, p. 21 (citing same). As with their coverage of the Tang, Wu and Gong Yin do not portray the level of rebellion and "trouble" emanating from the non-Han peoples which the Song administration had to deal with. The Song court was criticized for refraining from action in the face of flagrant provocations on the part of the frontier non-Han peoples; see, for example, Wiens, p. 212.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Cushman, p. 177.

⁶⁵ Some writers consider that *tu*, which can mean earth as well as local, is a pejorative way of referring to the hereditary chiefs or officials of the minority nationalities. See, for example, Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 25.

The Yuan court prescribed specific legal requirements for the appointment of these native officials. It also began the practice of staffing the *tusi* administration with combinations of regular Chinese bureaucrats and indigenous officials. It formulated the core regulations of the *tusi* system, notably rules on the appointment, succession, promotion and punishment of native officials. It also prescribed court tribute requirements, tax obligations including the large-scale establishment of a household registration system, and gifts of appreciation from the Chinese court. In addition, the Yuan court set up the framework for the organization of native troops (*tubing*) under the Chinese government's policy of using "barbarians to attack barbarians" (*yì man gōng man*). Thus, the administrative, economic and military aspects of the *tusi* system all took shape during the Yuan dynasty.⁶⁶

After the overthrow of the Mongols by the Ming dynasty, the Ming court continued the Yuan practice of enfeoffing native officials, initially as a means of rewarding military support. When the Ming court started to see how effective the system could be for the cost merely of granting compliant headmen imperial rank, the system became a fixed institution, and Anping was one of the first native chieftaincies to be established thereunder. The workings of this institution are explored through the investigation of the Anping *tusi* in the following chapters.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See Wu Yongzhang, pp. 129–56.

⁶⁷ Bai Yaotian has argued that the high point of the *tusi* system was actually during the Yuan dynasty and that it began its downfall in the Ming rather than, as generally considered, during the Qing. See Bai Yaotian, "Tusi zhi sheng yu Yuan kui yu Ming lun" (On the Theory that the Native Chieftaincy System Flourished during the Yuan and Fell during the Ming), *Guizhou minzu yanjiu* 4 (1999):1–11.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

HISTORICAL ORIGINS

The historical origins of the Anping native chieftaincy can be traced back to its establishment by the Tang court (618–907) as Bozhou, a bridle and halter prefecture. For a long time before that, it had been called Anshan.¹ The establishment of bridle and halter prefectures such as Bozhou in the basin of the Zuo and You Rivers was directly related to a series of uprisings by high-ranking local chieftains seeking to set up their own political regimes in the southwest after the unification of Lingnan (the area comprising Guangxi and Guangdong) during the Sui and Tang dynasties (581–907).

This local resistance is said to have comprised two stages. The first was a series of small uprisings in Guangxi and Guangdong between 597 and 769 which were quickly put down by the Chinese court. The second stage was a drawn-out series of uprisings generally referred to as the Xiyuan uprising (the term Xiyuan, from Xiyuan subprefecture, which was along the Zuo River in the area of present-day Fusui, was also the Tang administrative name for the areas within the Zuo and You rivers). These uprisings began in 756 and lasted till about 830. They were initially led by the Huang clan who, together with the Nong clan, were the most powerful chieftains in the valleys (*dong*) of the Zuo and You rivers.² The areas in which the Huang clan had the most power, Ningming, Longzhou, Chongzuo and Fusui, were called the Huang valleys. The Huang chieftains were called the *huangdong man* (Huang valley barbarians) or *xiyuan man*, and they were led in the Xiyuan uprisings by the father and son team of Huang Qianyao and Huang Shaoqing.

¹ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51:15a. The date of its conversion from Anshan to Bozhou is not provided.

² The valleys (*dong*) were originally mountain valleys or plains where wet-field rice farming was possible, but the term later acquired the political meaning of a territorial and administrative unit; see, for example, Bai Yaotian, “‘Zhuang’ kao,” in *Guangxi minzu lishi yu wenhua yanjiu* 4 (1991), esp. pp. 7–8.

By 822, Huang Shaoqing had taken advantage of internal wrangling among the Tang officials to attack Longzhou, occupy Zuojiang township (west of present-day Nanning), attack Qinzhou and occupy Qianjin township. By 824, Lingnan had been ravaged by the Huang occupation of over ten prefectures in west Guangdong and southern Guangxi. By then, the Tang court was preoccupied with other peasant revolts including the Tufan and Nanzhao uprisings, and could only deal with the Xiyuan situation through enticing the rebels into submission with offers of amnesty. The Xiyuan uprising was finally put to rest when the Huang chieftains accepted the offers to surrender. By the end of the Tang dynasty, the power of the Huang clan had weakened and the Nong clan (whose centres of power were Tiandeng and Jingxi in the Zuo River district) was in the ascendant.³

It is possible that the Anping area was the Po valley (*dong*), one of the four valleys of Lei, Shui, Pin and Po, which was later changed to Bozhou.⁴ After the Huang clan submitted to the Chinese court and its power subsequently weakened, various groups from the Nong valleys rose to prominence in the eleventh century in the area of the Zuo and You Rivers, the strongest of which was the contingent of the chieftain Nong Zhigao. Nong Zhigao's soldiers defeated a contingent led by Huang Deqing of the Huang valley, whereupon Nong became the leader of an alliance of all the valleys of the Zhuang clans in the Zuo River. Nong Zhigao was appointed magistrate of Guangyuan subprefecture by the Song court, after which he annexed the four valleys of Lei, Shui, Pin and Po, as well as Silang subprefecture in Annam. The Lei valley was later divided into Shanglei and Xialei native prefectures, located in the area of present-day Yangli district and Xialei district in Daxin county. Fan Chengda, Guangxi Military and Pacification Commissioner during 1172–1174, recorded that there had been four divisions of the Nong family in the four bridle and halter prefectures of Anping, Wule, Zhonglang and Qiyuan, all ruled by chieftains surnamed Nong.⁵ Thus, it appears that the Anping district was part of the Nong valleys of the Zhuang from very early times.

³ *Guangxi shigao*, pp. 74–77.

⁴ No date is provided for the change of name from Po valley to Bozhou.

⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 19, citing *Songshi* (Official History of the Song Dynasty) j.4; Fan Chengda, *Guizhou yuhengzhi*, pp. 589–385.

As a bridle and halter prefecture, Bozhou was under the jurisdiction of the Yongzhou Area Command (*dudufu*). During the Song Huangyou reign (1049–1054), Bozhou was attached to Taiping Stockade (*zhai*).⁶ The Song court changed Bozhou to Anping subprefecture in 1049, when it was converted to the jurisdiction of Zuojiang Circuit (*dao*).⁷

During the Song Huangyou reign period (1049–1053), as native magistrate of Guangyuan subprefecture which was under the jurisdiction of Yong prefecture, Nong Zhigao instigated an unsuccessful rebellion against the Song court. The defeat by the court of the Nong Zhigao rebellion, as it has come to be called, was a pivotal point in the history of the Zhuang peoples in the area of the Zuo and You rivers, and is the point from which the Anping native officials claimed their ancestry.⁸

We can link the rebellion to Nong Zhigao's earlier founding of the state of Dali Guo from a base at Longzhou in 1041–42. Vietnam, which bordered Guangyuan subprefecture to the south, refused to recognize his state formally, but overlooked an uprising by Nong in 1048 out of its concern to retain the Nong chieftaincy as a buffer against the Chinese. Nong Zhigao also approached the Song court at Yongzhou (present-day Nanning) for assistance, but the Chinese did not want to contest the area with Vietnam, and so refused him an audience.

Nong Zhigao then relocated his base from Longzhou to Ande subprefecture (present-day Jingxi), where he came into contact with Chinese traders from Guangzhou who had come to the region to purchase gold. Two of the traders were *jinshi* (graduates of the highest imperial examinations) named Huang Wei and Huang Shimi. Feeling that he had no choice but to declare an independent state, Nong Zhigao took their advice and dispatched troops to attack the Song court. In the third month of 1052, assisted by Huang Wei and Huang Shimi, Nong Zhigao mobilized troops at Ande subprefecture and led 5,000 eastward along

⁶ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51:15a. The *dudufu* was a designation of a regional military jurisdiction and its headquarters, headed by a Commander-in-Chief (*dudu*); see Hucker, #7314.

⁷ *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao* (1889) j.13:32b (the actual year the change took place is not specified); *Bai Yaotian*, “Songdai zai jin Guangxi sibu shezhi jimizhou, xian, dong kao” (An Examination of the Bridle and Halter Prefectures, Counties and Valleys Established in Western Guangxi during the Song) (Part Two), in *Guangxi minzu yanjiu* 1 (1998), p. 43.

⁸ A study of the reasons for the repeated uprisings of the Nong and the perceived threat posed by the Nong to the Chinese is beyond the scope of this book. For a detailed discussion on the Nong Zhigao rebellion, its background and implications see J. Barlow, “The Tang-Song Interregnum,” especially pp. 30–44.

the You River in a successful series of attacks on several garrisons. Nong's troops attacked Yongzhou, killing the magistrate, other senior officials and over a thousand troops. After eight days, the Zhuang forces had surrounded Guangzhou but met with strong resistance as the township was heavily fortified. Despite surrounding and attacking it for fifty-seven days, Nong Zhigao could not defeat Guangzhou and had to retreat north, where he defeated a succession of Song forces. He retook Yongzhou in the tenth month of 1052 and expressed his desire to be enfeoffed by the Song court as Military Commissioner of Yongzhou and Guizhou (*yonggui jiedushi*).⁹

By this time, the Song emperor Renzong had offered massive rewards for the capture of Nong, his relatives and entourage, and had ordered a large-scale deployment of troops. He also dispatched the general Di Qing as Military Commander (*xuanfushi*) to suppress Nong Zhigao. The Song troops were initially routed at the Kunlun Pass (north-east of Yongzhou). Di Qing executed those soldiers who had not taken heed of his orders, reorganized his armoury, and ordered a ten-day rest. When the Zhuang forces spied them returning, they thought that the army had not yet begun its advance. The next day, Di Qing prepared his cavalry and issued an order for the Kunlun Pass to be attacked and cut off during the night, a ploy using surprise tactics which was successful. In 1054, however, Nong's troops were severely defeated by Di Qing at Yongzhou, and fled. Di Qing's troops pursued them for fifty *li*, decapitating several thousand. Nong Zhigao set fire to the town by night and escaped. Di Qing's troops displayed the severed heads of Huang Shimi and other members of Nong Zhigao's entourage in the town and piled up the corpses in the capital, where they could apparently be seen from the northern corner of the city. Some of the bandits' corpses had gold dragons on their clothing, which led people to surmise that Nong Zhigao had died. In fact, Nong apparently fled to Dali in Yunnan, but it is not known when he died.¹⁰

The Field Studies provide one version of Nong Zhigao's fate, as gleaned from local legends circulating in the area:

At the time of the defeat of Nong Zhigao's struggle against the Song, the Song general Di Qing went in hot and relentless pursuit. He spurred on

⁹ Barlow, *The Zhuang*, pp. 30–36; *Guangxi shigao*, pp. 89–91.

¹⁰ *Songshi* (Official History of the Song) j.290, pp. 9719–9720; *Guangxi shigao*, p. 91.

the soldiers who were fatigued and hungry. They immediately vanquished Wutang and Liutang, and vigorously attacked Nanning, picking wild fruit on the way to sate their hunger. The defeated troops of Nong Zhigao fled in confusion toward their old territory in the Zuo River. Some circled round from Jiaozhi to Xishaba (in present-day Wenshan Autonomous Subprefecture in Yunnan). The Song soldiers pursued them till they captured Nong Zhigao alive. They killed him and cut out his stomach, and sated their resentment by setting alight his stomach cavity. From this point on, the power of the Song dynasty penetrated the region of the Zuo River.¹¹

Folklore apart, the consequence of the defeat of the Nong troops by the Chinese troops under the Song general Di Qing was that Han Chinese control penetrated further into the region of the Zuo and You rivers, which became fully incorporated into the Chinese empire for the first time. The likelihood, also, is that Anping and the other small *tusi* located in the area of present-day Daxin county and Tiandeng county to its north, in the region of the Zuo and You rivers, were basically bandit suppression districts set up by the Chinese court following the defeat of Nong Zhigao.

It is in relation to this period that mention is made of Li Mao, supposedly the earliest ancestor of the Li clan, to which the Anping native officials belonged. An extract from the Gazetteer of Guangxi Province (*Guangxi tongzhi*) states that Li Mao, a man from Yidu in Shandong, was rewarded for his meritorious conduct in the border regions between the Zuo and You rivers with a subprefectural magistracy, and thereby hereditary status, by the governor of Guizhou during the Zhuping reign period of the Song dynasty under the emperor Yingzong (1064–1067).¹² Another extract from the Leiping County Gazetteer (1946) states that, after accompanying Di Qing on his successful southern expedition against Nong Zhigao, Li Mao was promoted to the noble title of Marquis of Anhua, a hereditary office belonging to the Taiping native sub-prefecture.¹³

According to the Field Studies, Li Mao administered the Zuo River for over twenty years, after which he was appointed native official, acting in the capacity of deputy of the Song imperial court. He converted the two valleys of Taiping and Anping into hereditary domains

¹¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 19.

¹² Ibid., citing *Guangxi tongzhi – tusi zhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province – Records of the Native Officials) (1801).

¹³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 20, citing *Leiping xianzhi* (1946).

and re-established them as the Taiping native subprefecture (*tuzhou*). The seat of local government was originally at Jiuzhou (present-day Jiuzhou village in Zhongjun Yicun in the Taiping district of Daxin county).¹⁴ The fieldworkers quote part of the text of a “Record in Stone on the Establishment of the Ancestral Hall” set up by the Anping native official Li Binggui in the twentieth year of the Qing Daoguang reign period (1840), on which the above statement appears to be based:

Our earliest ancestor Li Mao was originally registered as a man of Yidu in Shandong. From the fifth year of the Huangyou reign of the Song Emperor Renzong (1053), he accompanied the Military Assistant Lord Di Qing in quelling the Nong Zhigao rebellion at Yongzhou. At that time Tai [ping] prefecture still consisted of uncultivated lands occupied by the barbarians, and there was no seat of subprefectural administration to speak of. Our ancestor cut his way through the grass with his own efforts and cleared the thistles and thorns, and cared for those who had fled there, and so Taiping (prefecture) was opened up.¹⁵ The Imperial Court assessed the merits of the officials, in order to set up local hereditary posts.¹⁶

It appears from the above that mention of Li Mao began sometime before the 1801 edition of the Gazetteer of Guangxi Province. The historical biographer Bai Yaotian has noted that the 1726 Gazetteer of Taiping Prefecture, in its records of the native officials (*Taiping fuzhi – tusi zhuan*), records that Li Mao of Yidu in Shandong was the earliest ancestor of the Taiping subprefecture native officials, and that this was probably taken from the Li native official register. Bai also notes that this information was later restated in the 1801 *Guangxi tongzhi* in respect of the Li clan of Anping *tusi*.¹⁷ There is no similar mention of Li Mao in the much earlier Ming dynasty Gazetteer of Guangxi Province (1531), in which the earliest Anping native official was Li Guoyou, who is recorded to have submitted to the court in the beginning of the Hongwu reign period of the Ming (1368).¹⁸ Furthermore, according to the Index to Names of People during the Song (*Songshi renming suoyin*), Li Mao’s name does not appear in the official history of the Song Dynasty (*Songshi*).¹⁹

¹⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 20.

¹⁵ Anping native subprefecture was subordinate to Taiping native subprefecture at that time. It acquired separate administrative status in 1369.

¹⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 19.

¹⁷ Bai Yaotian, *Guangxi minzu yanjiu*, p. 105.

¹⁸ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51:15a.

¹⁹ Cf. *Songshi renmin suoyin*, p. 628.

Some doubt has also been cast on the claims that Li Mao and the other headmen who accompanied Di Qing on the expedition to suppress Nong Zhigao earned noble titles as rewards for meritorious conduct.²⁰ Moreover, Li Mao appears to have been only one of several people from Shandong who were appointed by the Song court as native officials in the Zuoyou River and Yishan areas following the defeat of the Nong Zhigao uprising, based on information contained in the later (1801) edition of the Gazetteer of Guangxi Province.²¹ There seems to have been a set pattern of Shandong ancestors, which casts doubts on the veracity of the Li clan's claims to lineage from Li Mao.

Scholars are now generally agreed that such claims were fictions. Bai Yaotian carried out an examination of Song and Yuan documentation in relation to this question, and pointed out inconsistencies that negate the claims. Some of these irregularities seem glaringly obvious. For instance, he notes that the term 'Shandong' as a local administrative area began only during the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) and was not in use during the Song dynasty. Bai also points out that under the *jimi* policy of keeping native chieftains and Chinese court officials apart, the latter (which allegedly included Li Mao) were not permitted to take long-term posts in *jimi* areas. Bai concludes that Li Mao cannot be identified through the historical records, that "Li Mao from Yidu county in Shandong" was a fiction created during the Qing, and also that the Taiping and Anping native officials were in fact descended from local headmen in the Zuojiang area who, otherwise, would not have been granted *jimi* titles.²² Direct evidence in support of this view is contained in a memorial submitted to the Ming emperor Xianzong in 1465 by Feng Junyi, Secretary in the Ministry of Justice (*xingbu zhushi*), in relation to government management of banditry problems in Guangxi. In his discussion of the usefulness of native officials in military expeditions, Feng states that the government had established many prefectures and counties in Guangxi during the Ming Hongwu reign period (1368–1398) and had selected native people from each area as native officials.²³

Many Zhuang claimed ancestors from Shandong who had accompa-

²⁰ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 316.

²¹ *Guangxi tongshi* (1988), pp. 316–318.

²² See Bai Yaotian, *Guangxi minzu yanjiu*, pp. 105–107. Similar cases have been demonstrated by scholars to be forgeries; see, for example, Gong Yonghui, *Zhuangzu lungao*, pp. 98–114.

²³ *Ming Shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu*, p. 753.

nied Di Qing to Guangxi to suppress Nong Zhigao's revolt.²⁴ Increasing pressure on native officials after the Ming to demonstrate descent from Han-style lineages contributed to a proliferation of such claims to Han ancestry by the mid-Qing. It was a common device, reasons for which extended beyond the direct pressures from the Chinese court regarding evidentiary requirements for *tusi* inheritance. It was also a response to the more general and unspoken pressures emanating from the penetration of Han culture into the Zhuang territory and the discrimination practised by the Han against the Zhuang, such as in money-lending. The claims to Han Chinese ancestry were rarely challenged by the Chinese authorities, even though the artifice was at times absurdly blatant.²⁵ It was also in the interests of the Chinese state to have trustworthy native officials who would advance Chinese culture and ideology, although often in pursuit of their own ambitions. Construction of Chinese genealogy was *prima facie* evidence of such trustworthiness, which may have explained the evident collusion by the Chinese authorities.²⁶ Nor was the concept of fictive genealogy as a political tool new; Herlee Creel notes its use by a Jung chieftain during the Zhou dynasty.²⁷

The Anping native subprefecture was eventually carved out from the Taiping native subprefecture. This was perhaps foreseeable; although Anping valley (*dong*) was under the jurisdiction of the Taiping native official, it had nevertheless maintained relative independence, and was under the control of another separately enfeoffed official clan in the area. This provided the conditions and basis for the later division of administrative power.²⁸

The circumstances leading to the separate administrative status of the Anping native chieftaincy are well documented. During the Cheng-zong reign period of the Yuan (1295–1307), Li Xinglong, the magistrate of Taiping native subprefecture, performed meritorious service on

²⁴ See, for example, *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), pp. 316–318.

²⁵ See Barlow, "The Zhuang in the Early Qing Era," in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*, pp.29–34. For a discussion of the sometimes absurd lengths to which some native officials went in creating illustrious Han genealogies see *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 21.

²⁶ Cf. Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories*, pp. 32–36, in which he discusses how the Chinese state condoned fabrication of illustrious Chinese ancestry in the interests of finding trustworthy candidates to supervise Confucian ritual ceremonies.

²⁷ Creel, pp. 225–226. On this point see also Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p. 48.

²⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 20.

a military expedition to quell Huang Shengxu of Shangsi subprefecture during a peasant uprising, and was promoted to Route Commander (*zongguan*) of the Taiping Circuit. His son, Weiping, was also adept at government. However, when Weiping's son Guofu was in power, the rebel Huang Yingyan, from the same clan as Huang Shengxu, attacked the seat of Taiping Circuit and seized the seal of the Route Commander. Guofu and his younger brother Guoyou lost their protection from the Yuan court and retreated to Taiping subprefecture and the Anping area.

Li Guofu delegated to his younger brother Li Guoyou the task of garrisoning soldiers to defend the Anping valley. There, Li Guoyou's power grew such that he demanded to break away and be self supporting. The result was a division between the two brothers within the native official's family. The original Anping valley was to constitute a wholly independent unit, and be freed from its subordinate relationship with Taiping subprefecture.²⁹

Local stories were in circulation as to how the Anping and Taiping areas, originally the domains of the two brothers, came to be demarcated:

In order to divide the southern and northern shared boundaries of the two subprefectures, they negotiated several times, but still neither was willing to give ground. Finally they agreed that on a certain day when both native officials would be in their own homes at the same time, and after they had cooked and eaten their meal, they would set out at daylight. The Taiping native official was to ride a sheep heading north; the Anping native official was to ride a horse and head south; the place at which they met on the same stretch of road would be the boundary of the subprefecture. The crafty Anping native official, pleased with his scheming, had only to tear along on his horse to be certain of seizing a large amount of territory. The Taiping native official was fully aware that he had got the worst of the deal. Nevertheless, he maintained his composure, and when the appointed day arrived, he did not wait for his meal to cook, but set off during the middle of the night, dragging his sheep. At this time, the Anping native official had just risen, and cooked his meal at a leisurely pace, awaiting the start of his journey at daylight with arrogant anticipation. Because the firewood was damp, the fire was small and the rice was not yet cooked, it was already bright daylight when he frantically went outside, mounted the horse and dashed off, cracking his whip. But

²⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 20, citing *Guangxi tongzhi – tusi zhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province – Records of the Native Officials); see also Bai Yaotian, *Guangxi minzu yanjiu*, pp. 43–44.

it was already late and he had just gone some short distance from the edge of the Anping village when he saw the Taiping native official, who had slowly got there on his sheep. He had no alternative but to make their mutual meeting place the boundary. Consequently, the Anping native subprefecture was broad from east to west and narrow from north to south, and going south for three *li* from Anping Jie (market village), one would then be within the territorial boundaries of the Taiping native subprefecture.³⁰

Similar accounts were in circulation in the other *tusi* within Daxin county, such as Xialei. Intense disputes had arisen because the *tusi* boundaries were unclear when the native officials were originally enfeoffed. This led the officials to resort to mythical accounts based on traditional local customs in an attempt to ‘determine’ the boundaries.³¹ Though the above account is best regarded merely as local legend, the shape it describes is broadly reflected in the schematic map of Anping native subprefecture in the *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao* (Essentials from the Gazetteer of Guangxi Province, 1889), which is reproduced as map 1.

Although Anping subprefecture continued to be under the jurisdiction of the Taiping Circuit (*lu*) during the Yuan dynasty, it was transferred during the Ming dynasty to the jurisdiction of Taiping prefecture, which continued into the Qing.³² This progression from a bridle and halter prefecture to a *tusi* subprefecture with its own administration, directly subordinate to a prefecture (*fu*) forming part of the regular territorial administration of the Chinese empire, took place at the start of the Ming dynasty (1369) when its first native official, Li Guoyou, was appointed as magistrate (*zhizhou*) of Anping subprefecture.³³

Anping Native Chieftaincy during the Ming Dynasty

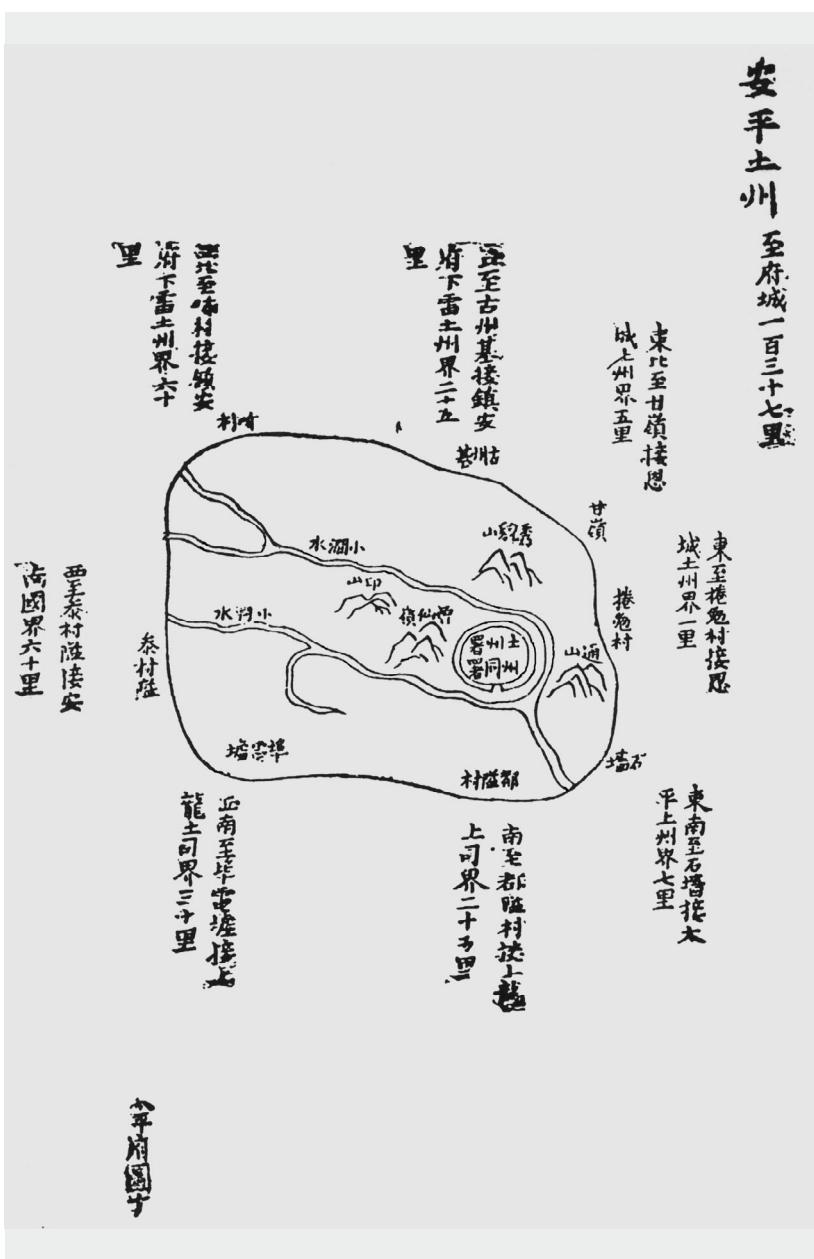
A schematic map of Anping native subprefecture during the Wanli reign period of the Ming (1573–1620) is reproduced as map 2. The map is based on Essentials for the Pacification of Guangxi (*Dianyue yaozuan*). By then, approximately two hundred years had passed since Anping

³⁰ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 21.

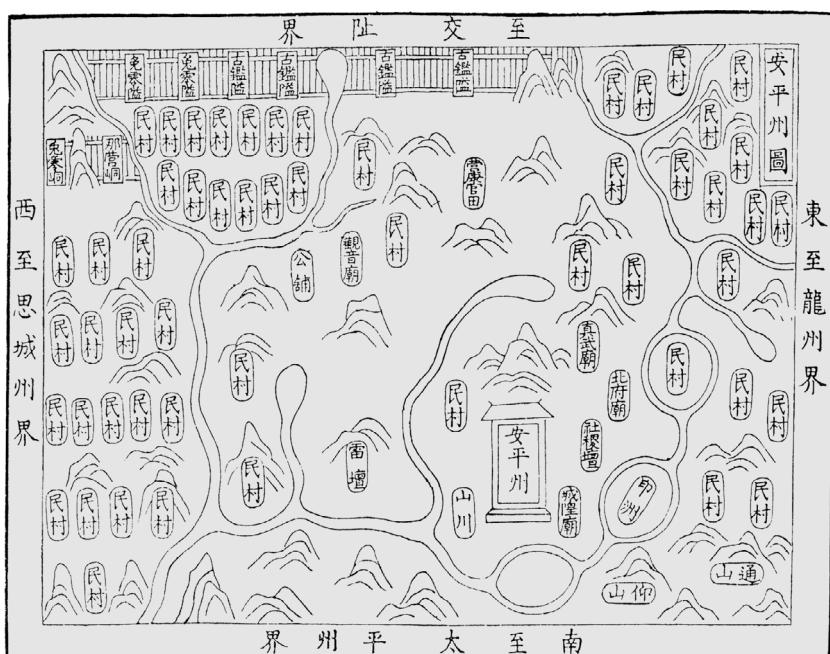
³¹ Ibid., p. 163.

³² Ibid.

³³ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51:15a.



Map 1. Schematic map of Anping native subprefecture containing boundary descriptions. (*Guangxi tongzhi jiyao*, 1889, repr. 1967, p. 321.)



Map 2. Schematic Ming Dynasty map of Anping native subprefecture during the Wanli reign period, 1573–1620. (*Dianyue yaozuan*, 1599–1620, repr. 1993, p. 380.)

became a *tusi* in 1369. Although a military map, its layout is consistent with what one would expect a *tusi* resulting from a Chinese bandit suppression campaign to look like. The mountain passes along the border with Vietnam are clearly marked, and the border itself is depicted as a fence, revealing in graphic clarity the primary purpose of this *tusi* in military terms as a buffer and first line of defence. The analogy of the fence (*fanli*) that the *tusi* effectively provided to the Chinese state is frequently mentioned in the historical records. Outwardly, at least, Anping's central district displayed some of the key features of a Chinese town, as indicated by its Chinese temples and altars: the *Zhenwu miao* (temple to the guardian spirit of the north), the *Shejitan* (temple to the god of soil and the god of grain), the *Chenghuang miao* (temple to the god of the city wall), the *Guanyin miao* (temple to the Bodhisattva Guanyin), and the *Lei tan* (altar to the god of thunder).³⁴ It appears to

³⁴ For instance, several of these, namely the *Zhenwu miao*, *Sheji tan*, *Chenghuang miao* and *Guanyin miao*, were also in Yubing county in Guizhou in the mid-18th century; see *Guizhou yubing xian xianzhi* (1757), reprinted 1995, pp. 71, 76, 77, 212.

be a physical manifestation of the *hua* sinification process or, at least, of the client-state model implicit in the *tusi* system, under which the *tusi* had to demonstrate loyalty and allegiance to the Chinese court.³⁵

GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

Territory of the Native Official's Jurisdiction

We saw in chapter 2 that during the Yuan dynasty the Chinese court began to prescribe specific legal requirements for the appointment of native officials, who would thereupon be formally incorporated into the Han central administration. A reason given by the Yuan court for bestowing the necessary credentials and authenticating objects on the native official was “so that through the official credentials, they may govern their tribes” (*bi de yi wangguan jingjie, tongshe qi buluo*).³⁶ The phrase “govern their tribes” (*tongshe qi buluo*) suggests that the customary boundaries of the indigenous peoples under the native chieftain also constituted the boundaries of his jurisdiction as court-franchised native official.

This loose notion that the native officials were to be enfeoffed by the Chinese court in respect of what was customarily their domain is consistent with the court’s policy towards the earlier bridle and halter counties, under which the existing sphere of control of each enfeoffed chieftain was endorsed by the court. She Yize notes that the native officials were “granted a fief over their land” (*fengtu qi dizhe*) and that they carved out their regimes based on their respective areas of control.³⁷ Thus, the geographical boundaries of control were also determined in accordance with established custom. Established custom simply meant whatever areas had been seized by the native official at the time of his enfeoffment; it was ‘customary’ for geographical boundaries to be fought for bitterly and violently, even in order to wrest control over one small village.³⁸

The precise location of the boundaries of Anping native subprefecture

³⁵ For a list of other Chinese temples which were in the Daxin area, see *Daxin xianzhi* (Records of Daxin County), pp. 444–445.

³⁶ Wu Yongzhang, p. 136, citing *Yuanshi leibian* j.42.

³⁷ She Yize, “Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu,” pp. 36–37.

³⁸ As advised by Bai Yaotian, private communication 12 January, 2001.

cannot be ascertained, as is the case in respect of most of the other native chieftaincies. According to Bai Yaotian, the only clear record of the boundaries of a native subprefecture remaining today is that of Siling, contained in the *Siling tuzhouzhi* (Record of Siling Native Subprefecture).³⁹ However, it appears that the territorial boundaries of Anping native chieftaincy underwent minimal changes over its duration.⁴⁰

Details of the various conditions (including geographical details) of the territory within the native official's jurisdiction were required to be submitted by the candidate for the position of native official to the relevant prefectural or provincial authorities, which in the case of Anping native subprefecture was Taiping prefecture. An indication of the scope of the details is provided in the Record of Siling Native Subprefecture. It records that Wei Xiangxian, who succeeded to the post of native official of Siling subprefecture in the sixth year of the Qing Daoguang reign period (1826), made a written report on the conditions within the subprefecture (which was also subordinate to Taiping prefecture) in the first month of that year. The purpose of the report was to enable the magistrate to prepare a clear and detailed list dealing with the geography and archives of Siling subprefecture, in compliance with the requirement of the local authorities that such details be submitted for entry into the register. Wei Xiangxian's report included details on the location of boundaries, the evolution of the subprefecture, its climate, mountains, rivers, topography, customs, the city wall, markets, streets, basic level administrative organization, villages, the *yamen*, temples, the number of local troops guarding the passes, local products, numbers of households, taxes, equipment and number of troops available for military expeditions, officials and their salaries, genealogical records of the native official, tributary goods, tribute dates, and labour.⁴¹

In the absence of further evidence, we can only surmise that the boundaries of the Anping native chieftaincy were probably endorsed by the Chinese court (through the Taiping prefectoral authorities) as the boundaries which applied at the time the earliest verifiable native official Li Guoyou acceded as magistrate of Anping native subprefecture in 1369.

³⁹ Bai Yaotian, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Internal Reports, p. 6. The fieldworkers state that the only change occurred during the Daoguang reign period of the Qing (1821–1850), when the native official Li Binggui privately mortgaged three border villages to the magistrate of Xia Lang in Vietnam; the French invaded Vietnam shortly after that and the matter was left unsettled (*ibid.*).

⁴¹ Bai Yaotian, private communication 28 June, 2001.

The boundaries in question would have been those which Li Guoyou carved out of the Taiping native subprefecture, although it is unlikely that details of what was submitted to the prefectural authorities can ever be ascertained. It is probable, however, that the details on Anping native subprefecture in the 1531 Gazetteer of Guangxi Province (*Guangxi tongzhi*) are based on the records originally submitted to the Taiping prefectural authorities in respect of Li Guoyou's investiture. This report on the territory under the native official's jurisdiction had to be submitted to the local authorities each time a native official succeeded to the post. From the Chinese court's perspective, this was to enable it to have a clear picture of the scope of the territory and the duties of the native official in respect of defending that territory on its behalf. Through the report, the relevant local authorities would also acquire an understanding of its conditions, such as through Wei Xiangxian's above report in respect of Siling subprefecture, which had to include details on the defence of mountain passes and the availability of local soldiers for military requisitions.⁴² It therefore appears that much of the local information typically contained in provincial gazetteers such as that of Guangxi was derived from this initial report submitted by the native official.⁴³

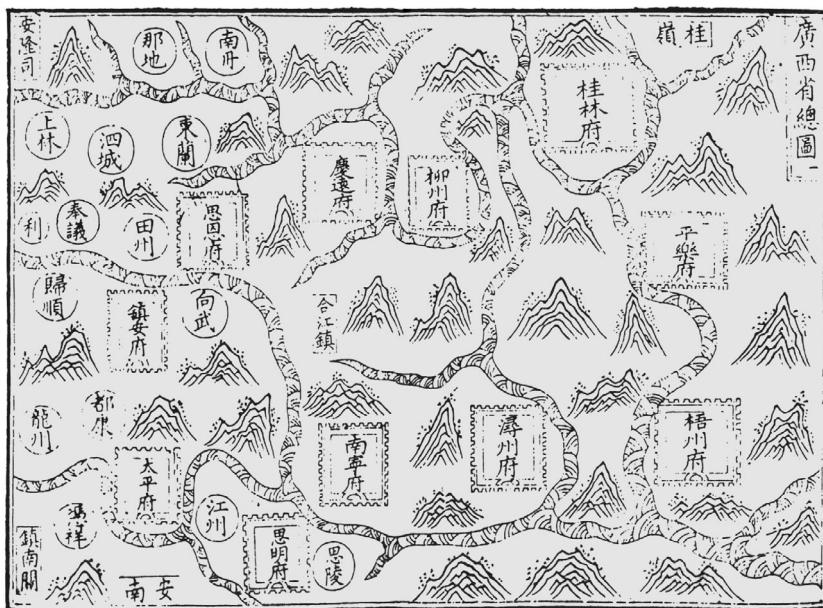
Location of Anping Native Chieftaincy

Location of Taiping Prefecture in Guangxi Province

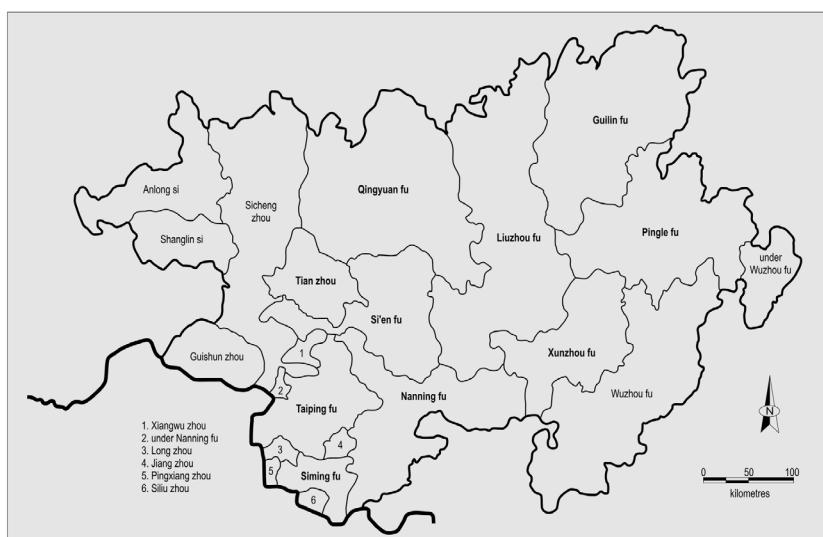
As we saw earlier in this chapter, Anping subprefecture was subordinate to Taiping prefecture from the Ming dynasty, and this relationship continued into the Qing dynasty. A map of Guangxi province indicating its prefectures and subprefectures in 1599 is reproduced as map 3, with Taiping prefecture in the bottom left section. Some of the topographical features which are characteristic of the region are apparent even in this simple schematic map. It is clear that the various administrative units were effectively outposts delineated by the river system,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ This may well have resulted in more reliable data than could have been compiled by local officials; Hsiao Kung-Chuan has pointed out that inaccuracies and other shortcomings stemming from the carelessness, partiality, dishonesty or inadequate qualifications of the compilers often marred the quality of local gazetteers; see Hsiao Kung-Chuan, Preface, pp. vii–viii.



Map 3. Schematic Ming Dynasty map of Guangxi province during the Wanli reign period, 1573–1620. (*Guangxi tongzhi*, Ming Wanli 27, 1599, block printed edn.)



Map 4. Guangxi province as at 1582 (native jurisdictions are indicated in bold). (Adapted from *Zhongguo lishi dituji*, vol. 7, 1992, pp. 74–75.)

with Taiping prefecture nestled in what appears to be a bend in the Zuo River.

A contemporary depiction of Guangxi province as at 1582, which is similar to the 1599 map and indicates the location of *tusi* units (including Anping), is reproduced as map 4.

Location of Daxin County in Guangxi Province

In contemporary terms, the Anping native chieftaincy was one of eight native chieftaincies located within the boundaries of present-day Daxin county. Map 5 indicates the relative location of Daxin county in Guangxi province.

Records on the Location and Boundaries of Anping Native Chieftaincy

As discussed in chapter 1, a sketch map of the eight native chieftaincies located within present-day Daxin county is contained in the Internal Reports (see map 6). It is, to my knowledge, the only extant map that depicts the relative location and boundaries of Anping native chieftaincy. (The other seven native chieftaincies within present-day Daxin and which are also indicated on this map were Wancheng, Mingying, Quanming, Encheng, Yangli, Taiping and Xialei.)

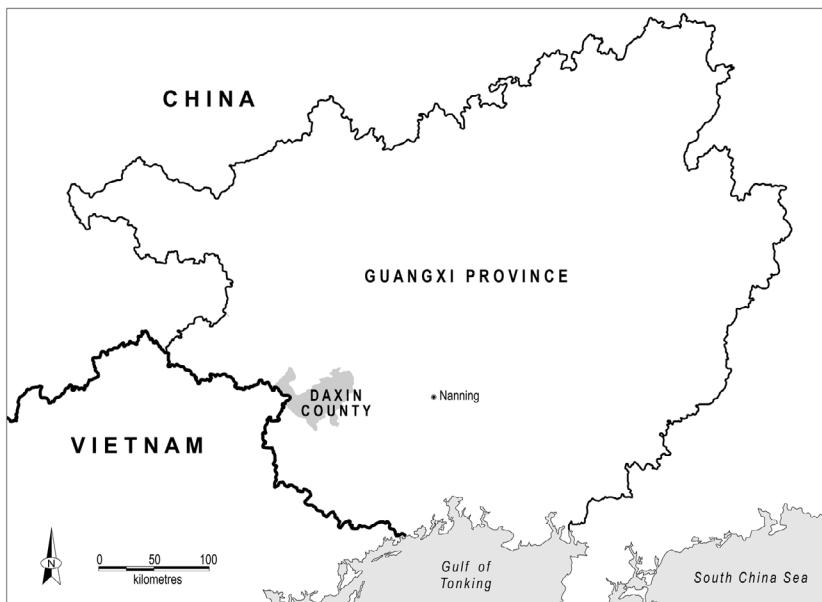
It is recorded in the *Guangxi tongzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province) of 1531 that Anping subprefecture was 100 *li* (approximately 50 kilometres) northwest of the prefectoral city of the Taiping prefecture (*fu*) (present-day Taiping township, the county town of Chongzuo).⁴⁴ It is recorded in the *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao* (Extracts from the Gazetteer of Guangxi Province) that Anping subprefecture was 61 *li* from east to west, and 50 *li* from north to south.⁴⁵

Available information on the geographical boundaries of Anping native chieftaincy is sketchy. There are two sources of information on where the boundaries were: a description in the *Guangxi tongzhi – tusi zhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province – Records of Native Officials) (1801), and one in the *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao*. The Field Studies contains the description from the *Guangxi tongzhi* (1801).⁴⁶ The Internal Reports

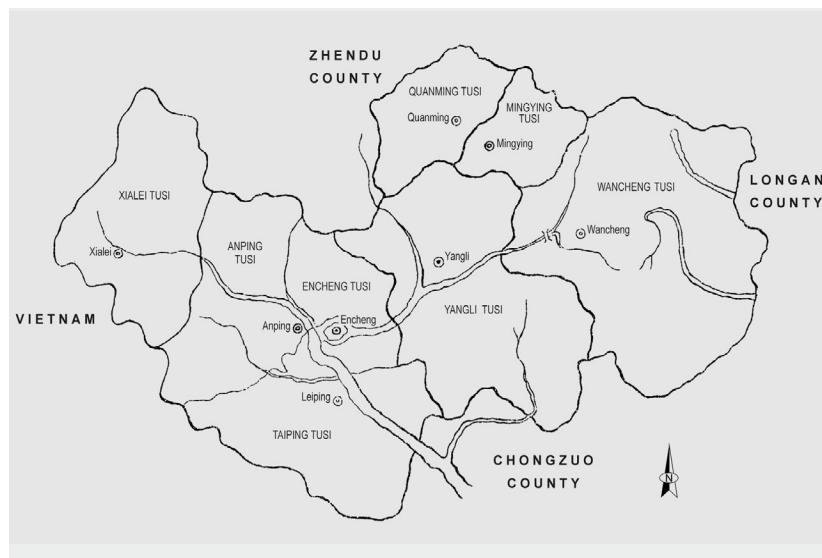
⁴⁴ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51:15a.

⁴⁵ *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao* (1889) j.13:32b.

⁴⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 19.



Map 5. Relative location of Daxin county in Guangxi province.



Map 6. Sketch map indicating the eight native chieftaincies located within the boundaries of present-day Daxin county.

contain the description from the *Guangxi tongzhi jiayao* (1889), which was also adopted in the *Daxin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Daxin County).⁴⁷ Both descriptions are different, which suggests somewhat skewed and subjective interpretations of which areas best represented the boundaries at each of the four directions; neither can be said to be correct or incorrect. This difficulty was probably compounded by the slanted shape of Anping *tusi* itself.⁴⁸ The description from the *Guangxi tongzhi jiayao* is as follows:

Its eastern boundary reached Taiping native subprefecture, its southern boundary reached Shanglong native subprefecture, its western boundary reached the Vietnam border extending up to Jinlong valley (in the northern part of Longzhou), and its northern boundary reached Xialei native subprefecture.⁴⁹

These details are reflected in the schematic map of Anping native subprefecture contained in the *Guangxi tongzhi jiayao* of 1889 (see map 1 above).

As with the 1599 map of Guangxi Province, it is apparent from map 1 that the administrative centre of Anping was effectively an outpost delineated by the waterways and was located on a flat tract of land between mountain ranges. Natural conditions prevented the development of large settlements and rendered access, transport and communications extremely difficult, with local knowledge (and therefore control) of such intractable terrain the natural domain of the local Zhuang inhabitants. This crude map also provides an unusually clear depiction of the borders of the Anping native chieftaincy around 1889, with all the border villages it mentions marked on the map. Regrettably, most of the villages it mentions are not contained in the *Daxin xian dimingzhi* (Place Names Gazetteer of Daxin County) or other available sources, and thus cannot be traced for mapping purposes, at least for the time being.

A more usable source of information on the location of the Anping native chieftaincy is the Field Studies, for which the fieldworkers provided details of the areas (usually the *xiang*-level territorial unit) in which each of Anping's nine administrative districts were located.⁵⁰ By utilizing this information with map 6, which provides valuable infor-

⁴⁷ See Internal Reports, p. 5; *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 22.

⁴⁸ See the extrapolation of Anping *tusi* in map 7, which is discussed in detail in chapter 6.

⁴⁹ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ See Internal Reports, pp. 5–6; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30.

mation on villages that were within the borders of the Anping native chieftaincy and were traceable through the Place Names Gazetteer of Daxin County, I was able to make an extrapolation of the likely location and boundaries of the Anping native chieftaincy (see map 7 in chapter 6).

CHAPTER FOUR

STATE-SANCTIONED POWER: THE ANPING NATIVE OFFICIAL AS AGENT OF THE CHINESE COURT

The Anping native official (*tuguan*) was a dual gateway into the Zhuang political system and out to the greater Chinese empire, his office serving as a node between the central Chinese administration and Zhuang political organization. In this chapter, the aspect of the *tusi* system under the spotlight is that of the native official in his capacity as agent of the Chinese court. The chapter discusses the nature and relative status of the office of the Anping native official, his duties and responsibilities to the Chinese court, and the derivation of his authority from that court.¹

Tusi were created as a means of consolidating Chinese political control of alien regimes along the border. The role and influence of the Chinese court in relation to attaining the post of native official was direct and pervasive. The court prescribed regulations to control the native officials and ensure that its minimal but essential demands were met. Native officials who breached regulations could be cashiered. The court's investiture system was also used to control the succession of native officials, so that the inheritance rules came to be more closely aligned with the interests of the Chinese rulers over time.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIVE OFFICIAL TO THE CHINESE COURT

From the viewpoint of the local Zhuang population under his control, the Anping native official was their ruler, and the Anping territory his domain. Through his appointment as native official, the chieftain obtained the legal sanction of the Chinese court of the position and power system which he enjoyed locally. From the viewpoint of the Chinese court, he was the local chieftain who had submitted to the court and who provided a first line of defence for the empire. Through incorpo-

¹ The male pronoun is used throughout in relation to the native official for convenience. The native chieftains were not exclusively male; several female native officials played prominent roles in the history of Guangxi. Anping itself never had a female native official.

ration of local chieftains into the Chinese administration, some degree of control over potential rebellions and tribal uprisings was ensured, as was the effective defence of China's border regions by a local military well versed in the local ground conditions.

The fundamental nature of the defence obligation is apparent in the appointment of Li Guoyou as the first Anping native subprefectural magistrate in 1368. Immediately upon his appointment, he was charged with the task of defending all the narrow passes leading to Jiaozhi.² It was also recorded in 1531 that each of the mountain passes in Anping (of which seven were listed) had one headman in charge of 24 local troops charged with defending the border with Vietnam.³ The Anping area bordered Vietnam, and defence concerns were particularly acute; the political power of the native official was expected to come under regular pressure from outside the country. The fieldworkers state that in protecting his own domains and safeguarding China's borders, the *tusi* made a significant contribution to China's defence through leading his local troops.⁴ The unequivocal nature of this acknowledgment, which stands out from the generally anti-*tusi* tone of the Field Studies in respect of its feudal structure, is a powerful indication of the extent to which China relied on border *tusi* like Anping as de facto buffers. Control of the passage of individuals (such as registered Chinese fleeing beyond Chinese jurisdiction) and of the export of goods (such as weaponry) was also a concern of the Chinese government from at least the Han dynasty, when it posted troops at frontier passes to act as frontier police.⁵ Such concerns are not directly mentioned in the Field Studies or gazetteers, but may also have been part of the native official's brief from the Chinese court.

By the time the Anping native subprefecture was established in 1368, the Ming court had a dual rationale for the institution of the native chieftaincy. First was the mutual benefit of the subject 'barbarian' territory's becoming a vassal state of the Chinese court, and thus relatively stable from the court's point of view, in return for which the local chieftains continued their customary rule under official central government

² *Guangxi tongzhi*, j.59, 'tusi yi', comp. Xie Qikun (1801; repr., Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1988), vol. 3 p. 1744.

³ *Guangxi tongzhi*, j.51, comp. Lin Fu (1531; block print. edn), p. 15b.

⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 22.

⁵ See Michael Loewe, *Military Operations in the Han Period* (London: The China Society, 1961), esp. pp.17ff.

posts. This attitude of the Ming court is summed up by an imperial edict issued by the Ming Emperor Taizu (1368–1398) on a visit to the court by a man from Guizhou, Tian Renzhi:

The officers defending our land are all officials of the court, and the people are all loyal subjects of the court. If you can make them submit and be pacified, it will lead to a peaceful life for all, and then you will enjoy long term prosperity.⁶

Second was the so-called “use barbarians to attack barbarians” (*yi man gong man*) philosophy. This was a policy of expedience which enabled the Chinese court to reduce the number of imperial troops in border regions. In the second year of the Hongwu reign period of the Ming dynasty (1369), when eight valleys of Qingyuan prefecture submitted to the Ming court, government officials are reported to have said that, by using the Song and Yuan system of utilizing tribal headmen to govern their own people, the barbarian situation would be easily controlled and Ming garrison troops reduced. Such statements encapsulated the mentality of the Ming court in respect of China’s southwestern border areas. The court’s ‘opening up frontier land’ mentality was characterized by a very real fear of disobedience by the barbarians and the consequent warfare; the Ming had great trouble balancing its pacification and suppression policies in the southwest, which led to many killings and *tusi* uprisings. The reality was that constant banditry and revolts formed a backdrop of overt and threatened violence throughout the duration of the *tusi* system. From the Tang through the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing, there were rebellions among the minority peoples in every southwest border province. Military suppression of the Yao revolts in the Ming dynasty required several hundred thousand troops.

In the fourth year of the Ming Zhengtong reign period (1439), when the Nandan native official Mo Zhenqin invited the native inhabitants of various counties to accept his rule, Emperor Yinzong is said to have commented that “using barbarians to attack barbarians” had long been an accepted theory. If it was effective, he asked, then why could the court not spare the use of one such official? When there were headmen who would comply with imperial orders and could at the same time exercise control over their local population, the cost of granting them an imperial rank seemed eminently worthwhile and sound. The rationale

⁶ She Yize, “Mingdai zhi *tusi zhidu*,” p. 19 (citing *Mingshi* j.316).

expressed by Emperor Yinzong was a major reason for the regularization of the native chieftaincy system during the Ming dynasty.⁷

RELATIVE STATUS OF THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

All native official positions were civil posts appointed by the Ministry of Personnel (*libu*) or military posts appointed by the Ministry of War (*bingbu*). The first recorded Anping native official, Li Guoyou, was appointed as native subprefectural magistrate (*tuzhizhou*) in 1368, at the inception of the Ming dynasty. This was a civil post appointed by the Ministry of Personnel. Successive Anping native officials retained this office without change for the 560-year duration of the Anping native chieftaincy, an unbroken chain of succession which is spelled out later in this chapter.

Administratively, the territory of the Anping native chieftaincy was classified as a native subprefecture (*tuzhou*), which mirrored the subprefecture (*zhou*) of China's civilian administration. The Chinese subprefecture was normally an intermediate unit of administrative supervision between the superior prefecture (*fu*) and its subordinate counties (*xian*). Anping native subprefecture mirrored this structure in being subordinate to Taiping prefecture; it was not, however, sub-divided further into counties.

The number of native officials appointed to differently ranked posts varied, as did the distribution of the posts; no distinct rules on this can be discerned. However, native prefectures, subprefectures and counties tended to be concentrated in Guangxi and Yunnan, and were dominant in Guangxi.⁸ Anping and the seven other native chieftaincies within the boundaries of present-day Daxin county were all native subprefectures.

The position of native subprefectural magistrate was ranked 5b during the Qing dynasty, and probably also during the Ming dynasty.⁹ The military native officials appointed under the Ministry of War (*bingbu*)

⁷ Ibid. (citing *Mingshi* j.317).

⁸ Li Shiyu, *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao* (1998), p. 114–15.

⁹ See, for example, She Yize, “*Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu*,” p. 37; Wu Yongzhang, p. 213. She Yize (p. 20) notes that there is no clear record of its rank in the *Mingshi*. Wu Yongzhang (p. 160) argues that it can be drawn by inference, since there were stated parallels with the Han counterparts, that it was also ranked 5b in the Ming; (see also Gong Yin, p. 66).

held generally higher ranks which ranged from 3a down to 7a.¹⁰ In contrast, the civil native official posts under the Ministry of Personnel had a top rank of 4b, which applied to the native prefectural magistrate, and ranged down to 9b for the *tuxunjian* (native police chief).¹¹ Thus, the 5b ranking of the Anping native subprefectural magistrate was considerably lower than that of the senior military native official posts, but second highest of the civil native official posts, after the native prefectural magistrate. (A list of the native official posts and rankings which were in force during the Qing dynasty is provided in appendix D.)

The role of the rank divisions in relation to central government posts was to determine such matters as prestige, compensation and priority in court audiences.¹² They also reflected the generally meritocratic Chinese system of appointing individuals to the bureaucracy based on performance in the imperial examinations. However, the native chieftains were awarded these Chinese-style offices with generally identical ranking to that of their Han counterparts based on heredity rather than merit. With hereditary rank, the family of the chieftain selected by the Chinese court had rights of succession to the title and office of the particular native official. Legal transmission was through the most qualified member of the lineage satisfying the requirements of succession stipulated by the central government. This departure from the rationale for granting titles and ranks within the Han administration tends to bear out the widely held view that the bestowal of prestigious and high-sounding central government titles upon the native officials was a device of the Chinese government to entice the native chieftains into voluntary submission.¹³ The Han and Manchu officials tended to look down on the *tusi*; as mentioned earlier, the *tu* prefix had pejorative connotations. This is also reflected institutionally in the ranking of the native official, which was always one rank below that of his central government counterpart.¹⁴

¹⁰ The *zhihuishi* (Commander) had the highest ranking at 3a. The abovementioned *xuanweishi* was ranked 3b, *xuanfushi* 4a and *anfushi* 4b; see She Yize, “Qingdai zhi *tusi* zhidu,” p. 37. Herman states that military *tusi* posts tended to be located along or just beyond China’s recognized political borders, and they were expected to command sizable military troops to assist in China’s defence. Civil *tusi* posts tended to be located within a defined provincial boundary and were routinely in charge of an administrative unit which mirrored China’s civilian administration; see J. Herman, “Empire in the Southwest,” p. 50.

¹¹ Hucker, #2724.

¹² Hucker, #1315.

¹³ See, for example, Wiens, p. 209.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 229; see also Mackerras, p. 25.

Technically, the native official rankings bore little relation to their nominal counterparts in the Chinese bureaucracy. The majority of native officials had no obligation to obey those in higher-ranked posts, unlike their regular bureaucrat (*liuguan*) counterparts, for which this was official policy. Nor was the ranking linked to salary. In the event that a Chinese official committed a crime, his rank and corresponding salary could be reduced by the Chinese government. As native officials received no salary from the central government, there was no equivalent penalty, and they could only be made to donate rice to atone for their crimes. Demotion from a native official's post (or outright dismissal) was, however, used as a common form of punishment by the central government.¹⁵ Equally, the native officials actively sought promotion and the prestige and power embodied in higher ranks. The main ways of gaining promotion during the Ming (before the weakening of the system by the Qing court) were through military merit (most *tuguan* were elevated through this avenue), demonstrations of loyalty and diligence, the granting of rice provisions to support border troops, and the offering of gifts of silver and other valuables to the Chinese court. Gong Yin notes that this last avenue, which effectively amounted to buying one's promotion, was an "objectionable practice" which the Chinese court recognized for what it was.¹⁶

Rank seniority also dictated the level of the rewards (*shang*) presented by the Chinese court in return for native official tribute.¹⁷ According to a memorial dated 1522 in the Veritable Records of the Ming emperor Shizong, the native officials used these reciprocal gifts from the court to intimidate their people upon their return from the capital. They would also try to fraudulently claim higher rank in an effort to get higher level gifts, a practice which the emperor noted should be prevented through investigations by the Bureaus of Civil and Military Personnel.¹⁸

The size of the contingent of local troops (*tubing*) under his control was also a measure of the power and status of the native official.¹⁹ Anping native subprefecture, which was liable for providing approximately five

¹⁵ She Yize, "Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu," p. 38; Gong Yin, pp. 66–67, 85.

¹⁶ Gong Yin, pp. 80–82.

¹⁷ She Yize, "Mingdai zhi tusi zhidu," p. 21.

¹⁸ *Ming Shizong shilu* j.16 (in *Ming shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu*), pp. 767–68.

¹⁹ Gu Youshi, "Lun Zhuangzu tubing," (On Zhuang Native Soldiers), in *Zhuangzu lungao* (Draft Essays on the Zhuang) (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), p. 253.

hundred local troops, was not one of the big and powerful native chieftaincies.²⁰ The strongest and most powerful native chieftaincies in Guangxi were the native prefectures of Sicheng (in present-day Lingyun county), Tianzhou (in present-day Tianyang county), Si'en (in the region of present-day Du'an, Mashang and Wuming), Nandan, Nadi (within present-day Nandan county), Donglan and Xiangwu. For instance, prior to its abolition in 1505, the Si'en native official was required to send 3,000 local troops annually to garrison the border.²¹

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIVE OFFICIAL TOWARDS THE CHINESE COURT

Compared to his counterparts in the regular Chinese bureaucracy, the native official had significantly fewer responsibilities. Even during the Qing dynasty, when the office of the native official had formally been in existence for several hundred years, the official responsibilities that went with the post were minimal. There were evidently no clear regulations; the native official was generally regarded as a small feudal lord with hardly any responsibilities towards the population and extremely restricted duties towards the Qing court. His only real responsibility was to ensure peace and stability within his domain. Maintaining stability amounted to preventing outsiders, bandits, escaped criminals, traitors to the Chinese government and the like to enter the native official's domains to hide. Similarly, maintaining peace among the people amounted simply to preventing the populace from creating disorder or going outside to commit robbery, or fomenting rebellion against the Qing court.²²

By far the most important duty of the native officials towards the Chinese government was to provide it with local troops (*tubing*), consistent with the court's "use barbarians to attack barbarians" policy. Native officials regularly received orders to lead their troops to suppress enemies or pacify bandits. During the Ming, native officials were often willing to comply as a way of gaining promotion, although at great cost in terms of human suffering, to the local soldiery. Garrison shifts could be for three to five years, and the wives and children left behind to

²⁰ Internal Reports, p. 25 (citing *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao*).

²¹ Gu Youshi, p. 252.

²² She Yize, *Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu*, p. 54.

cultivate their fields and otherwise fend for themselves suffered immense hardship.²³ The critical importance of this obligation to the Chinese court is evident from the practical difficulties of utilizing imperial troops in such mountainous and climatically hazardous territory, as well as the cost benefits of being able to requisition local soldiers through the native official. Imperial troops frequently perished, became weakened or fled through lack of acclimatization to the hazardous environment of the southwest.²⁴

The Chinese court was heavily reliant on *tubing* as mercenaries to suppress constant peasant rebellions throughout the Ming and for almost a hundred years into the Qing.²⁵ Wiens has also noted that exacting local taxes would have been dangerous without powerful military backing.²⁶ The Ming court even instigated promotion systems for *tubing*, using as a measure the total number of heads which they cut off in battle. In an attack on the Yao in 1520, the native troops beheaded 500 Yao and were ordered by the Chinese commander to kill the rest of the bandits within a set time. An imperial officer was in charge of recording the number of these ‘meritorious’ killings for promotion purposes. The Ming court was also very concerned to ensure the timeliness of the native troops on requisitions, as the troops were accepting assignments but not meeting the deadlines due to what they perceived as insufficient rewards. In 1519 the Guangxi Vice-Regional Commander (*fuzongbing*), Zhang You, memorialized the throne requesting permission to increase the rewards to *tubing* for these reasons, which was acceded to by the Ministry of War. The Ming court also devised duty shifts for *tubing* which rotated their defence duties with their field cultivation, to minimize farming losses.²⁷

The power of the *tubing* waned in the Qing. However, it is clear from the report submitted by the native official of Siling native subprefecture in 1826 to the prefectural authorities (see chapter 3) that provision of native soldiers for defence and military conscription remained an integral responsibility of the native official towards the Chinese government during the Qing.

Another important obligation of the native official towards the Chinese

²³ She Yize, “Mingdai zhi tusi zhidu,” pp. 21–22.

²⁴ Gu Youshi, p. 261.

²⁵ Gu Youshi, p. 263.

²⁶ Wiens, p. 215.

²⁷ *Ming shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu*, p. 648.

government was the payment of court tribute, for which the Chinese court presented reciprocal rewards, as mentioned earlier. These tributes were due once every three years and necessitated trips to the capital. A visit once every three years was the norm during the Ming. Standard *tusi* tributes were prescribed by the court, which would decline tribute which did not meet the standards. The significance of the standard of gifts from licensed native chiefs to the colonizing authorities was also considered important in other colonizing empires which utilized native administration. Lord Lugard, for example, instructed his political officers in northern Nigeria that care must be taken to exact the proper respect and courtesy from the native chiefs. The proffer of a gift which did not properly reflect the rank and wealth of the chief would be noted by the people as a grave insult.²⁸

The Chinese court also drew up special regulations in respect of the tributes from each province, under which Guangxi tribute during the Ming had to include horses, silver utensils, incense, antidotes and hemp cloth.²⁹ By the Qing dynasty, the amount and types of *tusi* tributes had become more simplified, and *tusi* from Guangxi only had to provide horses as special tribute. The court also allowed tributes generally to be converted to silver. This also alleviated the onerous requirement for *tusi* to travel to Beijing, a change by the court which enabled payments to be made ‘on the spot’ at the nearest central government offices.³⁰

When the chieftains brought tribute to the capital, they were given rewards by the court in accordance with the seniority of their rank. During the Ming, these rewards included money and coloured silk. Those *tusi* who were respectful and submissive were given more munificent rewards such as silver, white gold, gold rings, brocade, pearls and jade; the Ming court spared no expense when it came to winning over compliant *tusi*.³¹

If a native official was late in presenting tribute the reward was halved, and he was also liable to punishment. She Yize observes that these aspects were regarded merely as long-standing conventions fixed by the central

²⁸ Frederick Lugard, *Political Memoranda: Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative 1913–1918* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 310.

²⁹ For a list of tributes which the chieftains had to present to the court during the Ming see Wu Yongzhang p. 186; for during the Qing see *ibid.*, pp. 230–33.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 230–32.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

government, and were of no particular harm or benefit to either party; what was considered critical was the duty to respond to military requisitions.³² The native officials were also required to pay a nominal tax to the Chinese court. The central government rarely pursued taxes vigilantly from *tusi* such as Anping, in areas which were remote from Chinese civilian administrative centres, and smaller *tusi* not close to major transport routes rarely paid taxes.³³ However, the taxes payable by Anping subprefecture during the Qing have been recorded as follows:

Anping subprefecture: liable for the requisition of 508 *dou* and five *sheng* of autumn rice, converted to *shimi* (varietal grain). Liable also for the requisition of refined silver in lieu of dry-field grain 440.085 ounces, of which 228.7 ounces is to be retained and 211.385 ounces is to be transported. In years with an intercalary month an additional requisition of 21.775 ounces [of silver] is applicable.³⁴

To sum up, the central court demanded as a minimum that the *tusi* express submission to the court, maintain order, provide local troops and present tribute to the court. To secure compliance by the *tusi* with these minimal but critical duties and responsibilities, the Chinese court prohibited certain behaviour. Transgressions subject to government penalties included crossing borders to cause disturbance, non-arrival of requisitioned troops for military expeditions, and failure to provide court tribute by the due date.³⁵ If the *tusi* satisfied these requirements, the court did not intervene in their internal affairs and condoned their autonomous administration of the territories under their jurisdiction.³⁶

DERIVATION OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE ANPING NATIVE OFFICIALS FROM THE CHINESE COURT

Clan Register of the Li Native Officials of Anping

Although the native officials were government officials in name only, with few actual official responsibilities, the Chinese government exer-

³² She Yize, “Mingdai zhi *tusi zhidu*,” pp. 21–22.

³³ J. Herman, “Empire in the Southwest,” p. 51. See also J. Herman, “National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650–1750” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1993), pp. 61–62.

³⁴ *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliao huibian*, p. 380 (citing *Guangxi tongzhi jiayao*).

³⁵ See, for example, *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), pp. 648ff.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 650.

cised close supervision and control over the legal right to accede to the post. The hereditary nature of the native chieftains, who in turn were supported by a local hereditary system, prevented the Chinese court from installing a chieftain it considered reliable.³⁷ The inheritance rules thus became an important tool through which the court exercised control over the *tusi*. A key prerequisite for inheriting the post of native official was the family register.

The family register of the Anping native officials constituted the genealogy of those Li clan members who met the Chinese court's criteria for appointment to the hereditary native official post. The Li clan's Chinese surname reflects the penetration of Han Chinese culture since around the second century, when the Yue (the ancestors of the Zhuang) began to adopt Chinese surnames.³⁸ The requirement to maintain a *tuguan* register was instigated in the twenty-sixth year of the Ming Hongwu reign period (1393).³⁹ It was designed to minimize or prevent disputes among potential claimants to succession. This section discusses the significance of the register and explores the operation of the native official inheritance rules as manifested through the genealogy of the Anping native officials.

The Field Studies introduces the succession of Anping native officials, who belonged to the Li clan, with an excerpt from the "Record in Stone of the Establishment of the Ancestral Hall by the Li Native Official of Anping" (*Anping tuguan Li shi chuangjian zongci bei*) (hereinafter referred to as the "Record in Stone"), which was extant in Anping Jie at the time of the fieldwork.⁴⁰ The Li ancestral hall was established in the twentieth year of the Qing Daoguang reign period (1840). The stone inscription dates from the same year, and was written by the then native official, Li Binggui. The rubbing of the stone tablet in question was made in 1956 and its text is recorded in full in the 1982 collection of stone tablet inscriptions from the minority nationality areas of Guangxi (*Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji*).⁴¹ The extract of the Record in Stone is as follows:

³⁷ See, for example, Mackerras, p. 25.

³⁸ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 13.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18 (citing *Ming huidian* j.6, *Tuguan chengxu*).

⁴⁰ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 21.

⁴¹ *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji*, pp. 49–50. This is one of two such collections of local epigraphy and contracts, the other being *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu beiwen, qiyue ziliao ji* (Collection of stone tablet inscriptions and contracts from Guangxi minority nationality areas).

Anping was divided off after three (we suspect this a mistake for ten) generations.⁴² Our branch ancestor (name taboo) Li Guoyou established a separate subprefecture and administered the people. From the time of the Ming dynasty there have been numerous outstanding achievements, which are recorded in the family annals. The hereditary post was passed on from generation to generation, details of which cannot be enumerated in full.

However, these all had to do with restraining the wild tribes and bringing an end to their covetous attitudes in external relations; and internally, the settling of the ordinary people and saving them from the hardships of their perilous position. For this reason, when the present Qing court was set up, it continued to confer this post and frequently increased the bestowal of favourable decrees. If we calculate those who have received enfeoffment up to the present time, with respect to the state, the family has been in power for more than seven hundred years. With respect to the family line, there have been hereditary posts for more than twenty generations. The collateral branches of families have prospered and increased, and have continued to proliferate. The merits and virtues of our ancestors should indeed be recorded for posterity.⁴³

The essential feature of the Record in Stone is that it provides a complete or at least a continuous register of the Li native officials. This list is also set out in the Field Studies, to which the editors have added the details of the two native officials who succeeded the twenty-first native official, Li Binggui.⁴⁴ The Zhuang native official family registers which have been collected to date, with two exceptions from the Ming dynasty, were all supplemented or extended during the Qing dynasty or the

⁴² Bai Yaotian notes that the reference here to “three generations” refers first to the appointment of Li Mao after 1053, secondly to the appointment of Li Xinlong and thirdly to the appointment of Li Weibing, after which Li Guoyou divided Anping into Taiping and Anping subprefectures. Bai also notes that since this covers a period of over 270 years, this statement in the Record in Stone is clearly erroneous (*Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 552). A discussion of Li Xinlong and Li Weibing is contained in Bai Yaotian, “Anping Lishi, Annan Shashi tuguan sanlun,” pp. 110–11. This inaccuracy is also pointed out in the Internal Reports, p. 23. The Field Studies authors have dealt with this by inserting the parenthesis indicating that a reference to ten generations was probably intended. It remains unclear who these ten generations refer to; it may merely be an estimate based on the length of time from the Song to the Ming dynasties.

⁴³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 21. There are slight discrepancies with the text in *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji*, p. 50.

⁴⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 21. The Field Studies list contains two names (Li Qi and Li Mingluan) which do not appear in the Record in Stone (as recorded in the *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji*), with no accompanying details. The Internal Reports, pp. 22–23, contains further typographical inconsistencies. This is probably due to difficulties in transcribing the text when the fieldwork was being carried out.

Republic. Some of these clan registers are engraved on tombstones and some are in cliffside stone carvings, but the majority are in book form.⁴⁵ The fieldworkers described the difficulties at the time (1957) of obtaining clear details of the dates relating to each native official in the course of their fieldwork. Originally, these could be checked against the memorial tablet inscriptions on their tombs, but after 1949 these tombstones were all damaged or destroyed, so that by the time of the Field Studies it was possible only to make inferences from remnants.⁴⁶ The chapter on the Li native official register in *Zhuangzhu tuguan zupu jicheng* (Collection of Clan Registers of Zhuang Native Officials) is based on Li Binggui's Record in Stone, which suggests that this is the fullest extant version of this register.

Native Officials of Anping Subprefecture 1368–1906

The following genealogy of the Anping native officials is based on the abovementioned collection of clan registers of Zhuang native officials, the Field Studies, the Ming dynasty *Tuguan dibu* (Archival Records of Native Officials), related pre-modern gazetteers, standard histories and administrative manuals. Chinese regulations on succession which impacted on the selection of the Anping native officials are also incorporated into the narrative as they occur.⁴⁷ Where known, the dates and relationship to the previous incumbent are provided. This genealogy is spelled out as fully as possible because it provides some firsthand details on aspects of the *tusi* inheritance procedure as they affected the Anping native officials.

1. *Li Guoyou (1369?)*

Li Guoyou is named in the Ming Gazetteer of Guangxi Province (1531) as the first Anping native official. It records that he submitted to the court in the first year of the Hongwu reign period of the Ming (1368), when he was appointed hereditary magistrate of Anping subprefecture.⁴⁸ As seen above, this is also recorded in the Record in Stone, in which Li

⁴⁵ *Zhuangzhu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 24.

⁴⁶ Internal Reports, p. 23.

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive description of the Chinese criteria and formalities for inheriting the native official post during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties see Gong Yin, pp. 32–39, 63–80, 116–24.

⁴⁸ *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531), j.51:15a.

Guoyou is referred to as the branch ancestor of the Li clan who established a separate subprefecture. This is a matter of some controversy (see below).

2. *Li Saidu* (1369–?)

In the Ming dynasty Archival Records of Native Officials, which covers the period 1368–1497, it is recorded that Li Saidu paid a visit to the Regional Commander (*zong bingguan*) to pledge allegiance to the Ming court in 1368 and that he was appointed magistrate of the subprefecture in 1369. This was at the inception of the Ming dynasty, when the hereditary system of the Yuan dynasty had been adopted by the new Ming rulers without change. All that the previous native official under the Yuan dynasty was required to do to be re-confirmed was to present his seal to the new court and indicate his submission. Li Saidu's visit to the Regional Commander, who was assigned to Guangxi Province, indicates that he did not actually travel to the capital, although the court had issued regulations early in the Ming Hongwu reign period (1368–1398) requiring prospective native official successors to appear personally at the imperial palace for appointment as native official. This was strictly enforced until around 1424, after which conditions for exemption from this onerous requirement developed, as did the payment of grain or cash to avoid the trip. There was a precedent as early as 1464 for appointments bestowed “on the spot” (*jiudi guandai*) once evidentiary criteria were satisfied. In 1671, the Qing court finally abolished the regulation requiring personal attendance at Beijing.⁴⁹

The Ming dynasty Archival Records of Native Officials is composed of extracts from the files retained by the local official of systematic investigations on the rights to succession of the successive native officials. Bai Yaotian has noted in another work on the Li clan that the statement in several Ming records that Li Guoyou acceded as magistrate of Anping subprefecture in 1368 is erroneous. He states that Li Guoyou in fact became magistrate of Anping subprefecture much earlier, in 1326, when it was subordinate to Taiping circuit and not yet divided off into a separate subprefecture subordinate to Taiping prefecture. Bai considers that the mistake may have occurred because Li Guoyou died or retired

⁴⁹ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhou zhizhou*, p. 14a (page references are from a manuscript copy held at the Guangxi Provincial Library; page nos. may differ from published versions, but the section on Anping is easily found). On the regulations requiring appearance at the imperial palace see Wu Yongzhang, pp. 169–72, 223.

just as the Yuan dynasty was coming to an end.⁵⁰ Owing to Li Guoyou's advanced years, it is probable that he let Li Saidu submit to the new Ming court when it replaced the Yuan court, which resulted in Saidu being appointed first hereditary magistrate in the new dynasty. Bai argues that this is why the initial hereditary native official was referred to in the Ming dynasty Archival Records of Native Officials as *tuguan nan* (native official's son).⁵¹

3. Li Gui (1388–1406) (son by concubine)

After Li Saidu's death (for which no date is provided), Li Chang, the son of his principal wife, also died. In the fourth month of the twenty-first year of the Hongwu reign period (1388), Li Gui, the eldest son of Li Saidu's concubine, was permitted to succeed to his father's post. This accorded with the Ming dynasty regulations on native official succession, which were still based mainly on prevailing local customs in the area, reflecting a universal concern in respect of indirect rule.⁵² By Li Gui's time, twenty years into the Ming dynasty, the Ming court had issued specific rules on the range of family members who could succeed to the native official post, in an effort to prevent internecine disputes amongst powerful clan members contending for succession, which had led to frequent killings and turmoil. The rules covered seven categories, the first of which was the son: if there was none by the principal wife, then a concubine's son could succeed, as in Li Gui's case. The second category was a younger brother or sister. The third was an uncle or nephew, in either order. The fourth was more distant relatives in the absence of direct heirs. The fifth was a wife or concubine of the native official, the latter only where the wife had died. The sixth was a daughter or daughter-in-law. The seventh was the mother, if the son had died.⁵³

4. Li Xian (1411–1418) (son by principal wife)

It is recorded in the Ming dynasty Archival Records of Native Officials that Li Gui went on an expedition to Annam in 1406 (presumably

⁵⁰ Bai Yaotian, "Anping Li shi", pp. 111–12.

⁵¹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 554. See *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhou zhizhou*, p. 14a.

⁵² Cf. Lugard, who expressed the importance of following the customary law in Africa where possible, and appointing a chief who was the recognized heir, in order to avoid trouble; see Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 213.

⁵³ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhou zhizhou*, p. 14a. For a full discussion of these Ming dynasty succession rules see Wu Yongzhang, pp. 168–78.

requisitioned by the central government), where he was killed by poisoned arrows. Li Xian, the eldest son of Li Gui's principal wife, assumed charge of his father's troops. In 1411 he was permitted by imperial edict to replace his father. Li Xian himself was killed in 1418 by troops of the magistrate of Taiping subprefecture.⁵⁴ No reasons are given for the killing, but the record suggests there may have been territorial struggles between the Taiping and Anping *tusi* at the time. The use of poisoned arrows to kill Li Gui too typified the weaponry skills of the Zhuang, who were renowned for their prowess with the cross-bow.

5. Li Hua (1423–?) (younger brother)

After Li Xian's death, the Three Provincial Offices (*sansi*) examined and confirmed Li Hua, Li Xian's younger brother by the same mother, as Li Xian's successor. An imperial edict allowed his succession to the post in 1423. Li Hua's succession brings into focus the Ming court's evidentiary rules in respect of the inheritance of the native official post. The examination and verification of Li Hua by the Three Provincial Offices prior to memorializing the emperor constituted part of the succession formalities which, together with the previously mentioned rules on the range of eligible successors, evolved during the Ming in response to disputes and false claims regarding succession. The Three Provincial Offices referred to the *buzheng shisi* (Provincial Administration Commission), the *ancha shisi* (Surveillance Commission) and *duzhi huishishi* (Regional Military Commission). In 1393, in order to prevent fraudulent claims to succession, the Ming court issued evidentiary regulations for succession to the post. The Bureau of Honours (*yanfengsi*) had to appoint an official to undertake an investigation to ascertain parties who had not been involved in a scramble for succession, and to obtain a complete *zongzhi tuben* (ancestral chart) as well as documentation from the government officials attesting to completion of their duties. These then had to be submitted to the government office for memorializing the Emperor.

The *zongzhi tuben* listed the surnames of the paternal ancestors of the initial inheritors, and explained whether they were born of the wife or concubine, who the mother was, the relationship to the originally appointed native official, and so on. *Zongzhi tuben* was also called *qingong zongtu*

⁵⁴ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhous zhizhou*, p. 14b. As noted by Bai Yaotian, Li Xian is not included in the "Record in Stone"; see *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 554.

(personally provided ancestral chart); it was a critical item in the native official inheritance system.

The *zongzhi tuben*, which was essentially a family register, emerged during the Ming. A factor which helped its emergence was the strengthening of the native official administration under the Ming. Another factor must have been the Ming Hongwu regulations under which the *zongzhi tuben* became an essential precondition for succession. It is from the time of the *zongzhi tuben* that the family registers of the Zhuang native officials began to be written and compiled continuously.⁵⁵

Three important conditions had to be satisfied for inheritance of the post of native official. These were the provision of the *zongzhi tuben*, the presentation of the *sansi huizou* (Joint Memorial of the Three Provincial Offices) and the provision of the *jiezhuang* (assurance) by the clan leaders and local people. The *jiezhang* of the clan leaders and local people was an undertaking in respect of the authenticity of the *zongzhi tuben*; it constituted a guarantee that there would be no clan disputes and that the people were fully convinced in respect of the successor. The *sansi huizou* was the result of the survey investigations of the Three Provincial Offices, which had an exacting standard of examination, including checking of details, interrogation and re-investigation. Without these three items, the prospective successor was unable to obtain ratification for inheriting the post.⁵⁶ These requirements remained in force during the Qing, which added the submission of the original *haozhi* (certificate of appointment) as a key evidentiary requirement.⁵⁷

After Li Hua was given the credentials to return to the subprefecture as native official, he was crippled.⁵⁸ However, Li Hua paid tribute to the Emperor in 1427, which indicates that he was still holding the post of magistrate during the Ming Xuande reign period (1426–1435).⁵⁹

6. Li Sen (c. 1435) (eldest son)

Li Hua's eldest son, Li Sen, was substituted for the post after his father became incapacitated.⁶⁰ No date is provided in the Ming Archival Records

⁵⁵ See *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, pp. 17–18. For an investigation and analysis of the evolution of the Zhuang native official family registers see *ibid.*, pp. 19–24.

⁵⁶ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 18; Wu Yongzhang, p. 175.

⁵⁷ See Wu Yongzhang, pp. 222–23.

⁵⁸ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhoushi zhizhou*, p. 14b.

⁵⁹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 555 (citing *Ming Yingzong shilu* j.14).

⁶⁰ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhoushi zhizhou*, p. 14b.

of Native Officials. However, it is recorded in the Veritable Records of the Ming Emperor Yingzong that, in the first year of the Ming Zhengtong reign period (1436), Li Sen presented tribute to the court in his capacity as native magistrate of Anping subprefecture, which indicates that he was native official sometime during the end of the Ming Xuande reign period (1426–1435).⁶¹

7. Li Lin (?–c.1496) (eldest grandson)

When Li Sen died, his eldest grandson, Li Lin, inherited the post. No date is given. Li Lin's father, i.e., Li Sen's son, is not mentioned at all in the Ming Archival Records of Native Officials. This bypassed member was evidently Li He, who, together with Zhao Renzheng, the native magistrate of Longzhou, had made repeated incursions into the territory of Silang subprefecture in Annam.⁶² As mentioned earlier, incursions by native officials were an offence. The magistrate of Silang had petitioned the Ming emperor Yinzong, requesting an investigation. The Ming emperor Yingzong was inclined not to prosecute Li He as long as he expressed remorse; instead he ordered the Regional Commander of Guangxi to investigate and report back to him. From the fact that Li He's name is not in the Archival Records of Native Officials or the Record in Stone, it seems plausible that this investigation led to his disgrace. What is clear from the memorial to the emperor advising of these attacks by Li He and others is that Li He was magistrate of Anping subprefecture in 1439, having replaced Li Sen who had died by then. Thus, Li He and his son Li Lin held the Anping magistracy for close to sixty years, from the Ming Zhengtong reign period (1436–1449) to the Ming Hongzhi reign period (1488–1505).⁶³

Although it appears that the procedures for Li He to replace his father Li Sen as magistrate were completed, his magistracy was omitted from the Ming Archival Records of Native Officials, which was compiled in 1528 after he acceded to the post. This omission may be due to the authorities' never considering Li He to have been a proper ruler, as a result of his disgrace. The lengthy time gap and the omission of the date of Li Lin's accession (which would have been an indirect reference to Li

⁶¹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 555 (citing *Ming Yingzong shilu* j.14).

⁶² Tu' lang (Silang) was a subprefecture divided into *shang* and *xia* directly west of Anping; see Dáo Duy Anh, *Yuenan lidai jiangyu* (The Territory of Vietnam over Past Dynasties), trans. Zhong Minyan (Beijing: Shangwu, 1973), p. 194.

⁶³ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, pp. 555–56 (citing *Ming Yingzong shilu* j.54).

He's term as magistrate) also suggest the omission was deliberate. However, there is a reference in the Archival Records of Native Officials to a later memorial to the emperor requesting an investigation into the history of Li Lin's accession to the magistracy, although the results of this investigation are not provided.⁶⁴

8. Li Zhen (1497–?) (third son)

When Li Lin died, his eldest son Li Yu and second son Li Xi died one after the other, leaving no heirs. Li Zhen, the third son, was investigated by the Three Provincial Offices in the tenth year of the Ming Hongzhi reign period (1497) and satisfied the succession requirements.⁶⁵ Li Zhen held office from 1497 through the Ming Zhengde (1506–1521) and Jiajing (1522–1566) reign periods. He is the last magistrate recorded in the section on Anping native subprefecture in the Archival Records of Native Officials.⁶⁶

9. Li Yuan (no date) (relationship unknown)

Li Yuan is the last magistrate of Anping subprefecture listed in the *Cangwu zongdu junmenzhi* (Military Annals of the Cangwu Supreme Commander), which was completed in 1553.⁶⁷ (Cangwu was an ancient reference to the *Baiyue* territory and minority peoples of southern China, including Guangxi.) Nothing else is known about him.

10. Li Zun (c. 1577) (relationship unknown)

Li Zun is the last Anping magistrate listed in the Gazetteer of Taiping Prefecture (*Taiping fuzhi*), which was compiled in 1577, indicating that he held office around that time.⁶⁸ Otherwise, nothing else is known about him.

11. Li Guang (c.1600) (son)

Li Guang was magistrate of Anping subprefecture during the middle to later years of the Ming Wanli reign period (1573–1619).⁶⁹ He is credited

⁶⁴ *Tuguan dibu – Anping zhou zhizhou*, p. 14b.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 556.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. See *Taiping fu zhi* 3:88a, p. 311.

⁶⁹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 557. No source is mentioned; Bai may be relying on *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 21.

with having been promoted to the fourth rank during the Jiajing reign period of the Ming (1522–1566) for his success in a mission to Nanguan to repel the Mo barbarians who had attempted to seize the position of the Annam king, Li Zhao. This appears to be an error in recording, since Li Zun (Li Guang's father) was still in office in 1577.⁷⁰

12. Li Chengzong (c.1624) (relationship unknown)

Li Chengzong was magistrate of Anping subprefecture during the Ming Tianqi reign period (1621–1627). This information is based on a stone stele erected in 1624 by the magistrates of Yangli and Zuo subprefectures recording construction of a dam for irrigation within Taiping prefecture. The text of the stele refers incidentally to a levy due from Li Chengzong in his capacity as magistrate of Anping subprefecture.⁷¹

13. and 14. Li Mingluan (c.1630–c.1658) and Li Changheng (1659–c.1673) (relationships unknown)

Details on Li Mingluan are scant, but can be inferred from a record in the *Qing shigao* (Draft History of the Qing Dynasty), which states that hereditary succession to the Anping magistracy passed to Li Changheng in 1659 when he submitted to the jurisdiction of the court.⁷² Thus it appears that Li Mingluan held the post sometime between the Ming Chongzhen reign period (1628–1644) and the start of the Qing Shunzi reign period (1644–1661). The inscription on an iron bell cast by Li Changheng in his capacity as magistrate of Anping subprefecture in the twelfth year of the Qing Kangxi reign period (1673) corroborates these details.⁷³

15. Li Ziding (c.1700) (relationship unknown)

Li Ziding appears to have been in office during the Qing Kangxi reign period (1662–1722).⁷⁴ No other details are known.

16. Li Zheng (c.1723–c.1746) (relationship unknown)

Li Zheng was magistrate of Anping subprefecture during the Yongzheng reign period of the Qing (1723–1735) until the early part of the Qianlong

⁷⁰ *Leiping xianzhi*, p. 82 of Chengwen reprint, *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 557.

⁷¹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 557.

⁷² Ibid. (citing *Qing shigao* j.516).

⁷³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 21–22.

⁷⁴ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 558 (citing *Guangxi tongzhi*, *Jiaqing* j.59).

reign period of the Qing (1736–1795). He died from illness sometime before the third month of 1746.⁷⁵ He had no male offspring and chose a younger brother, Li Zhuoyi, as his successor.⁷⁶

17. Li Zhuoyi (no date) (younger brother)

Having been chosen by the previous native official Li Zheng to succeed him, Li Zhuoyi accepted an imperial decree granting him the status of *zongzi* (son in orthodox succession) and thereby the position of native official. No dates are provided. Such a choice was permitted under the Qing succession rules, which were stricter and more specific than those under the Ming and departed significantly from the customary indigenous rules condoned initially by the Ming rulers. In particular, the Qing court shifted the rules away from the indigenous custom of allowing female members of the native official's family to succeed, towards the Chinese patrilineal inheritance system.

The Qing rules led to significantly fewer succession disputes than during the Ming, but were ultimately designed to increase state control over the selection of native officials and to eventually destroy the native official inheritance system.⁷⁷ Briefly, the Qing rules which applied to Li Zhuoyi stipulated that on the death of the native official or on his request for a replacement owing to old age or illness, he could be succeeded first by a son or grandson of his principal wife; if there was no such heir, then secondly by the son or grandson of his concubine. (This priority accorded to the wife's as opposed to the concubine's sons was another major departure from the Ming rules, and was designed to reduce succession struggles.) If there was no such heir, then his younger brother, or a clansman of the younger brother, could inherit. Fourthly, the native official's wife and son-in-law could also be allowed to inherit the post provided he or she enjoyed the local people's trust. Li Zhuoyi appears to have qualified for the post under the third category.⁷⁸

18. Li Bo (1746–1771) (son)

It is recorded in the Veritable Records of the Qing emperor Gaozong that Li Zheng died in 1746 and was succeeded by his son Li Bo. Li Bo

⁷⁵ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 558 (no source is provided).

⁷⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 22.

⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion of the reform of the *tusi* inheritance process during the Qing and the policy debates leading up to it see Herman, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony", pp. 37–54.

⁷⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 22. On Qing succession rules see Wu Yongzhang, pp. 220–25.

held the post for 25 years, retiring due to illness in 1771.⁷⁹ These statements are inconsistent with the details in respect of the seventeenth native official Li Zhuoyi. They reflect the difficulties inherent in piecing together the genealogy in the absence of the original native official register.

19. Li Tinglan (1771–1800) (son)

Li Tinglan is recorded as the son of Li Bo, who inherited the post on Li Bo's illness and subsequent retirement in 1771. He held the post for thirty years until his death in 1800.⁸⁰ (It therefore appears that Li Zhuoyi, if he did indeed become native official around 1746, must have held the post only briefly.)

20. Li Jiyou (1800–?) (relationship unknown)

Li Jiyou accepted an imperial edict to succeed to the post in 1800. He died from illness during the Qing Daoguang reign period (1821–1850).⁸¹ No other details are known.

21. Li Binggui (1841–c.1860) (uncle)

It is not clear when Li Jiyou died, but because he had no sons, his uncles Li Tingzhi and Li Binggui were successively appointed to the post. Li Tingzhi left office for unspecified reasons, and Li Binggui is said to have acceded to the post in 1841.⁸² This appears inconsistent with the date of the Record in Stone written by Li Binggui and dated 1840. Another stone inscription composed and erected by Li Binggui in his capacity as magistrate in the Southern *hua* (district) of Anping subprefecture indicates that he was still in the post in 1858.

By the late Qing dynasty, underlying court policy also required prospective native officials to undergo Chinese education and demonstrate a high level of Chinese culture. The Guangxi Provincial Governor memorialized the emperor in 1907 advocating the selection as successor to the native official of the most educationally outstanding amongst the brothers, sons and uncles of the official, although by then the Qing court was facing destruction and lacked the resources or energy to officially implement this proposal.⁸³ It is probable that Li Binggui, who received

⁷⁹ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 558 (citing *Qing Gaozong shilu* j.260).

⁸⁰ Ibid. (citing *Qing Gaozong shilu* j.896).

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 558 (citing *Qing Renzong shilu* j.65).

⁸² Ibid., p. 559 (citing *Qing Xuanzong shilu* j.351).

⁸³ Wu Yongzhang, p. 222.

an exceptionally good Chinese education and composed many inscriptions and poems including the Record in Stone, was appointed under this policy.⁸⁴

22. *Li Chaoxu* (c.1862–?) (son)

Li Binggui's son Li Chaoxu succeeded to the post during the Qing Tongzhi reign period (1862–1874). He left no heirs on his death, so Li Depu, the son of his younger brother, was appointed to the post.⁸⁵

23. *Li Depu* (c.1890–1906) (nephew)

Li Depu inherited the post during the middle years of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908), holding it until 1906 when the post was abolished and the Anping *tusi* was converted to direct Chinese administration. In actuality he continued to rule the Anping district until 1930, when he was suppressed by the Red Army. Li Depu's succession was the result of fierce contention and covert struggles among the official clan for succession. The previous incumbent, Li Chaoxu, had only one son, Li Ying, who was the rightful successor under the Qing succession rules. However, Li Ying was poisoned by the wife of Li Chaoxu's younger brother, Chaorong, in a plot for her own son to inherit the post. Li Depu's succession was possible under the Qing regulation that a clansman of the native official's younger brother could inherit the post in the absence of a son or grandson of the principal wife or concubine.⁸⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The incompleteness and inconsistencies in the various sources of the above genealogy illustrate the difficulties of compilation which arise in the absence of the original family register. The consistent record of dates and relationships becomes less coherent beyond the coverage provided by the Ming Archival Records of Native Officials, which concluded with the eighth native official Li Zhen, who was appointed in 1497. In addition, gaps of several years between appointments occurred occasionally,

⁸⁴ Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng, p. 559.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 559–560 (citing Diaocha, vol. 4, p. 22).

⁸⁶ Diaocha, vol. 4, p. 22; Wu Yongzhang, p. 221.

such as the five-year interval between the accession of the fifth native official, Li Hua, and the death of the previous incumbent Li Xian. The extent to which this may have been due to internal scrambles amongst the official clan for succession, problems in the examination process or other factors cannot be ascertained.

Despite its patchiness, with sources ranging from inscriptions on stone steles and iron bells to written records and inferences, the Li genealogy provides some direct insights into the workings of the *tusi* system from the viewpoint of both the Chinese court and the native chieftains. We have seen an instance in which the local authorities may have omitted to record one generational stage altogether from the archival records for reasons of misconduct: Li He's incursion into Silang subprefecture amounted to crossing borders to cause disturbance, which was a crime.⁸⁷ However, it appears that the matter did not preclude Li He's son from qualifying for succession. Li Xian, in taking control of his father's troops on his death, appears to have been trying to comply with the Chinese court's requirement that the *tusi* have troops on call at all times, in order to ensure that he qualified for succession to the post.

The ancestral register also allows us to observe, at first hand, some actual instances of the application of the investiture regulations, which changed considerably between the Ming and Qing dynasties. Once confirmed by the Chinese government through the granting of the imperial warrant and seal of office, the role of the native official was re-defined in its own terms under the native official's local political system. This system is discussed in the next chapter.

⁸⁷ Zhuangzu tongshi (1997), p. 648.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOCAL POLITICAL POWER: THE ANPING NATIVE OFFICIAL AS ‘LOCAL EMPEROR’

The word *tusi* (chieftain) is an imported term. The word closest in meaning in our language is *Gea-bo*, the term of address for ‘king’ in ancient times. That is why the Maichi chieftain does not use terms like ‘territory’, but says ‘country’ instead.

Alai, *Chen Ai Luo Ding* (Dust Settles)

As far as Anping’s local Zhuang populace was concerned, the middle rank and status of Anping native officials in terms of the central Chinese bureaucracy was of little consequence, if any. It is highly unlikely that the local people would even have been cognizant of the Chinese government post or rank of their native official. To them he was the local emperor (*tu huangdi*). The point at which the native official was left to his own devices as ‘local emperor’ was his confirmation in the post by the Chinese government. His position then moved from the ambit of central government requirements into the separate and different local political system of the Anping native chieftaincy. Within this system, apart from being the senior official and military commander of his territory, he was also head of the ranks of the official clan, and the highest judicial officer. This chapter describes the nature of this local political system and the way in which the native official used his official status to augment his authority and power within that system.

Once confirmed as native official (*tuguan*) by the Chinese government, the native official’s continuing customary control over the local population under the ‘hands-off’ policy of the Chinese court was now enhanced by the perceived might of the court’s sanction of his leadership. Rituals, notably the grandeur of the accession and ‘opening of the seal’ ceremony, contributed to the scale of his power and reinforced the court’s backing of his position as most senior official in the subprefecture.

When the native official succeeded to the post, a grand accession ceremony had to be held at the *yamen*. At the appointed time, all the village heads, head constables and village elders led the villagers in carrying

food, gifts and paper money to the *yamen* to proffer their congratulations. The native official would then ascend to the hall of the *yamen* to receive the seal of office, at which point blunderbusses would be fired.¹ Next, the native official would receive the insignia of rank, after which he would offer prayers to the gods and ancestral spirits and then recite the notice from the imperial court ratifying his accession. From the side, the Master of Ceremonies would chant loudly, “On the first use of the seal, let there be good climate; on two uses of the seal, let the country be safe and the people peaceful; on three uses of the seal, may you be promoted three times in succession.” When the native official completed his prayers, he received the kowtows of the various headmen and ordinary folk in succession. After that, on the ninth day of the first month of each year thereafter, the native official performed the “opening of the seal” ceremony (*kaiyin yishi*), at which the village headmen came to pay their respects, bearing gifts. The native official would also bestow gifts of small quantities of meat and wine upon the headmen.²

This receipt of the seal would have marked (at least ceremonially and in the eyes of the villagers) the appointment of the native official by the Chinese court.³ The ritual receptions and kowtowing, on the other hand, symbolized and reinforced the full weight of his customary control over the local population.⁴ The native official was also the self-appointed representative of religious authority for his domain; similar ceremonials were carried out twice a month in which he donned heavy metallic war robes called *bayu yi* (Eight Treasure Robes) to reinforce his priestly authority.⁵

¹ The fieldworkers do not state who the seal was received from. These rituals as they relate to the seal do not accord with the procedures stipulated in the Qing statutes for succession to the post, which also involved the granting of a certificate (*haozi*) by the Bureau of Personnel (*libu*), usually through the Provincial Administration Commission (*buzhengsi*); see, for example, Wu Yongzhang, p. 223. It seems unlikely that the Provincial Administration Commissioner would have attended to grant the seal at what was essentially a local ceremony comprising natural village notables; the native official’s appointment by the Provincial Administration Commission had probably taken place earlier.

² *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 22.

³ Facsimiles of four native official seals are contained in *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, pp. 606, 648.

⁴ Commonalities with similar accession ceremonies in other chieftaincies in other parts of the world, such as the installation ceremony of the traditional African chief, are evident; see, for example, George B. N. Ayittey, *Indigenous African Institutions* (Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY: Transnational Publishers, 1991), p. 116.

⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 15–16.

The fear in which the Anping native official was held by the local villagers and the conduct expected of them are vividly illustrated by the fieldworkers' reconstruction of the native official's departures from the *yamen* and visits to the countryside:

When the native official goes out of the *yamen*, he must be accompanied by a guard of honour to symbolize authority. At this time, the house slaves who specialize in setting off blunderbusses let off three bangs. When the people in Anping Jie hear the sound, they walk away in avoidance, remove their stalls and close their doors, residents in neighbouring streets pull down clothes being dried in the sun, and the roads suddenly turn into empty, silent, dead towns without people. All that can be seen are two *yamen* runners carrying and clattering iron chains to clear the way, followed by two bailiffs, each carrying a wooden staff in both hands and calling out as they walk, as well as two bailiffs carrying placards with the large words "Clear the Way", striking a brass gong hung on a flagpole, together with two buglers blowing long horns, advancing forward blowing and beating. One after another, four runners carrying banners on which has been written the four separate characters for Dragon, Phoenix, Tiger, Leopard, lead the native official who sits upright in a large sedan chair borne on the shoulders of four men, which arrives slowly. The bodyguards clustered around the large sedan hold long spears, and following behind are the lord secretaries (*shiyē*) on horseback, as well as various slaves using both hands to hold up bamboo tobacco pipes, cake basins and tea trays, and other slaves forming an entourage, setting off firecrackers and so on, following diligently behind. It has been said that one day during the Qing Daoguang reign period (1821–1851), the native official Li Binggui decided on a sudden whim to go out of the *yamen*. It was a market day at Anping Jie; the street was a mass of ten thousand bobbing heads. It was too late to walk away to avoid the native official, so they all prostrated themselves by the roadside, not daring to utter a sound, lowering their heads to wait for the native official's sedan to pass by.

If the native official is going far into the countryside, the runners who clear the way first go ahead shouting, and people walking on the roadside rapidly make way and withdraw from his presence. The village headmen will have led the old people of each household to kneel in welcome at the village entrance, lowering their heads and shouting loudly "The official is coming, the official is coming". Once the native official has entered the village, they must also kowtow three times to the native official in his sedan or on horseback before they dare to rise. At this time, every house in the village has already taken in clothes airing in the sun and other miscellaneous items; male and female, old and young are restrained from moving about outside. Adult males go in proper order to pay their respects; none may sit on stools, but sit cross-legged on the ground listening respectfully. Should the native official wish to stay overnight in

the village, the villagers will busy themselves killing chickens and slaughtering pigs, and preparing a lavish supply of wine and food, all serving him very cautiously, for fear that any offence or poor service will incur unexpected misfortune. What expenses there are for the visit will have to be allocated among the villagers by the headmen.⁶

These customs underscore the tyrannical dimension of the native official's rule. Equally, we can observe that the procession of the native official was very similar to processions performed at the local county level by Chinese county magistrates. The county, like the *tusi* domain, was also a realm of its own, a microcosm of the decentralized Chinese empire in which the magistrate was effectively the 'local emperor'. The label *tu huangdi* (local emperor) may have come about through an analogy between the native official and the Chinese magistrate, both of whom held plenipotentiary powers and performed official sacrifices. The basis for the political power wielded by the native official was said to be his ruling organization together with his laws.⁷ These are discussed in turn.

THE RULING ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIVE OFFICIAL

The Official Clan (guanzu)

As well as being the most senior Chinese government official and acknowledged ruler within the Anping native subprefecture, the native official was also the head of the official clan (*guanzu*) and in this capacity was called *zongzhu* (clan head).⁸ As *zongzhu*, the native official held the most clan authority and had the last say in all matters within the official clan. The official clan was a major part of the native official's ruling organization. A structured organization of the official clan members akin to a body corporate was in place which consolidated the authority of the native official and gave clan members rights over certain households and in the countryside generally, as well as entitlement to certain property rights.⁹

⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 22–23; cf. Internal Reports, p. 34.

⁷ Internal Reports, p. 36. These were, of course, underpinned by land ownership, which is discussed in chapter 8.

⁸ Internal Reports, p. 34; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 23. I use the word 'clan' here in its broader meaning of a group based on agnation; cf. Maurice Freedman, ed., *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 14.

⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 23.

The Clan Elder System (zuzhang zhidu)

The *zongzhu* was also part of the system known as the *zuzhang zhidu* (clan elder system), under which the native official also had charge of such clan matters as sacrifices and the ancestral hall, succession questions and clan disputes.¹⁰ Consistent with the non-governmental status of the rest of the official clan members, clan disputes could only be dealt with by the native official, and were not handled by the subprefectural administration. According to Li Jin, who was the last clan elder of the Li clan, the clan elder system came into being very early (no dates are given) and was not discontinued until after the 1950s. Following the abolition of the native chieftaincy and conversion to direct Chinese rule in 1906, the power of the clan elder weakened such that he could only deal with matters pertaining to the ancestral hall and was in charge of summoning clan members for meetings.¹¹ However, the fieldworkers recorded the following details about the *zuzhang* system during the rule of the native official.

Clan Organization

There were three main positions in the clan organization:

1. The *zongzhu* (clan head) was also the native official. The *zongzhu* was the final adjudicator of all disputes within the official clan.
2. The *zuzhang* (clan elder) was an office usually held by the elder or younger brother of the incumbent native official; for example, Li Deming was the elder brother (by his father's concubine) of the last Anping native official Li Depu. However, after conversion to direct Chinese rule, the clan elder came to be selected during the sacrificial rites at the ancestral hall, and those selected were always from the more powerful members of the lineage. (This indicates that the clan elder system, which was part of the traditional social and political organization, outlived the formal abolishment of the native official post). The clan elder was responsible for handling those cases which the household head (discussed below) had been

¹⁰ Internal Reports, p. 34. Details on the *zuzhang* system are contained in the Internal Reports, pp. 34–36. Most of these details have been omitted from the Field Studies.

¹¹ Internal Reports, p. 34.

unable to resolve, and for ratifying or appointing successors from within the official clan.¹² The clan elder also fixed the dates for ancestral sacrifices, notified the household head about requirements for collection of rice and expenses for ancestral sacrifices, and enforced rules and regulations.

3. The household head (*huzhang*) presided over the *hu*. According to the Internal Reports, Anping subprefecture was divided into four *hu*. This is inconsistent with the Field Studies, which describe these units as four large *fang*, a Chinese lineage term which generally refers to a branch of a descent network. *Fang* seems to be semantically more appropriate than *hu*, which literally means ‘doorway’ and by extension ‘household’.¹³ (Nevertheless, the Field Studies also use the title *huzhang*.) The household heads were responsible for handling the smaller disputes among the official clan members of the particular branch, for collecting the rice and money for sacrificial rites, and for transmitting notices from the clan elders.

It is likely that *fang*, which represented a tight organization based on blood relationships, is the correct term. The senior branch was in Liao-sui village in Lushan in the Southern *hua* (i.e., present-day Minlu village); the second branch was in Nalian village in Anping *xiang* (parish) in The Five Places (present-day Anmin village); the third branch was in Kongmang village in Baoxu in the Eastern *hua* (present-day Baoxu *xiang*); and the fourth branch was in Baipan village (in present-day Kanxu) in the Western *hua*. Strictly, this does not represent a full geographic coverage of the eight *hua* (administrative districts) of Anping native subprefecture (see chapter 6). However, the locations of the four *fang* were closer to Anping Jie (market village) and also to the official manor estates (see chapter 8), all of which were within 40 *li* from Anping Jie. This is probably related to the locus of the seat of the native official, around which the better fields, typically reserved for the official clan, were also located.

At the end of the Qing dynasty, the household heads were all appointed from amongst the clan members who were close to and trusted by the

¹² Internal Reports, p. 35.

¹³ For a discussion of the term *fang*, see, for example, Myron L. Cohen, “Developmental Process in the Chinese Domestic Group,” in Freedman, *Family and Kinship*, pp. 21–23.

native official, who was dependent on the force and personal loyalty of the official clan to buttress his authority.

The *fang* were rich conglomerations of households which had power and influence in their area and managed its internal affairs. They also mediated internal disputes in the name of the native official, and exploited this delegated power to embezzle and extort from the villagers, thereby imposing the political might of the native official in the countryside. The household head was appointed by the native official during his rule, but after conversion to direct Chinese rule, selection was through a consultative process.¹⁴ As with the selection of the clan elder after conversion to direct Chinese administration, this *prima facie* change to a more democratic selection process probably continued to be dominated by more powerful clan members.

Official Clan Rules

The fieldworkers summed up the rules which operated within the official clan as follows:

1. If a member of the official clan died without issue, the clan elder (*zuzhang*) had to personally sanction the search for an heir, or could directly appoint an heir. This was a considerable power, since the clan elder could theoretically appoint a prospective native official through this avenue. As the native official selected the clan elder, this was a possible source of tension within the official clan.
2. In principle, candidates for succession or adoption had first to be selected from amongst close relatives. If there was contention, this was first mediated by the household head (*huzhang*). If mediation could not be achieved, then the clan elder would deal with it. If it still could not be resolved, the clan head (i.e. the native official) would summon a large-scale meeting of the entire clan to deal with the matter.¹⁵ We have no details on whether the clan elder or native official had the last say.
3. All the property of clan members who died with no issue and no close relatives to succeed them was to be turned over to the ancestral hall.

¹⁴ Internal Reports, pp. 34–35.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

4. Prospective heirs had to first hand over 8,000 copper coins, which was first lent out at interest, and later used for sacrificial offerings in the ancestral hall. They also had to hand over 2,400 copper coins to the clan elder for issuance of a certificate of inheritance.¹⁶
5. Those people with the same surname who applied to join the ancestral hall first had to hand over 5,000 copper coins for food provisions for the hall. The clan elder would then make a public announcement to the lineage that the applicant had joined the hall and was a member of the official clan.¹⁷
6. It was forbidden within the clan to bring in males to live with the bride's family upon marriage (*ru zhui*); violation of this rule was punished by removal from the clan, fines, and a penalty called *tuimen* (literally, withdraw from the doorway; the meaning of this term is unclear and is not defined by the fieldworkers).¹⁸ The fieldworkers also do not provide the reason for this prohibition, which did not apply to the greater Zhuang community, in which a man was permitted to reside with his bride's family subject to payment of a tax and compliance with other procedural requirements. There was also a concern to prevent the dispersal of lineage wealth through a son-in-law; regulations were also in existence which precluded people without sons from passing their property to their sons-in-law.¹⁹
7. During weddings and funerals of members of the native official's family, each household had to assist by donating 400 copper coins.
8. During the seasonal sacrifice in spring and autumn (generally in the third and ninth months of each year), one bamboo tube (*tong*) full of white rice (which approximated to one *jin*) had to be collected from each household. Each household also had to contribute 200 copper coins, which was pooled to buy a pig to roast as a sacrificial offering, and for ancestral hall expenses. During the sacrificial rites, each family was represented by one family member, and when repairs were needed, everyone had to contribute assistance.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a general discussion on ancestral halls, see M. Freedman, "Ritual Aspects of Chinese Kinship and Marriage" in *Family and Kinship*, esp. pp. 168–179.

¹⁸ Internal Reports, pp. 36–37.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

Within the ambit of these clan rules, the native official could not rely solely on the seal of the Chinese court, and was dependent instead on the maintenance of loyalty amongst the official clan, which was also a mainstay of his political power in the villages. The native official also had to take specific measures to safeguard his position, rights and interests within the clan structure, such as paying due regard to bribes given him by clan members. The post of clan elder was invariably given to a close relative of the incumbent native official; the clan elder was also the henchman who provided the native official with the most benefits. Li Deming, the brother of the last Anping native official Li Depu, seized a great amount of power within the clan when Li Depu appointed him clan elder, and at the same time became the most senior village elder (*xiang lao*) in the territory. Relying on the power of the native official, Li Deming used the pretext of mediating on behalf of people in disputes and managing the area's affairs to engage in pettifoggery and extort money. Similar peculation was practised by Li Depu's son, younger brother and other relatives, who all exploited the fact that the villagers preferred to have their disputes settled at that level rather than at the *yamen*.²¹

Privileges Accorded the Official Clan

The native official also controlled the official clan through the dispensing of favourable treatment. This took the form of minimal land tax liability, total exemption from the liability to provide conscripted labour and tributes (such tax, labour and tributes being part of the standard burdens of the tax paying subjects in the area), and relatively more rights of disposal over property, including the rights to inherit, pawn or sell property within the official clan.²² The fieldworkers do not specify whether these were privileges accorded to all households in the official clan by virtue of their position, or whether they were special dispensations granted at the discretion of the native official. It appears, however, that the privileges were the native official's to give and were not regarded as fixed rules.

Official clan members also enjoyed a higher social position than the serfs and ordinary people, and were addressed by terms of respect.

²¹ Ibid., p. 26.

²² *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 23.

They were allowed to read books and enrol for the examinations, wear long gowns, riding breeches and white aristocratic garments, and build storeyed brick houses; these were rights denied to peasants and serfs.²³

Thus, while the Chinese government condoned the native official's retention of full customary control over his subjects, in reality the official had to utilize intricate mechanisms and checks within his clan organization to preserve and maintain that control. The power of the tight *fang* units helped solidify the client–patron relationship, and ensured that the official clan constituted what the fieldworkers described as the tip of the multi-layered ruling organization of which the native official was head.²⁴

Technically, the clan structure and rules (which varied from clan to clan) were outside the demands imposed by the native chieftaincy system which had led to the grafting of fictive Han ancestry onto the native official registers. However, the adoption in the clan rules of Han concepts such as the *fang* and that quintessential Chinese institution, the ancestral hall, suggests that although the clan elder and household head were probably based on local Zhuang social organization, these rules were modified to help consolidate the authority of the native official.²⁵ While we cannot ascertain their basis, we can surmise that terms such as *zongzhu*, which were overtly Han, were introduced by the native official during the Qing, when native official inheritance procedures became increasingly linked with Chinese education and culture.²⁶ However, the fact that the clan elder system outlived the abolition of the office of the Anping native official by over forty years indicates that, despite its Chinese nomenclature, it was a local indigenous system applying to the ruling elite.

Hybridization

As with many of the other institutions in this Zhuang native chieftaincy (such as the village headman system), these official clan rules reflect a

²³ Ibid. The various terms of respect are discussed in chapter 7.

²⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 32.

²⁵ For a description of the role and functions of the Chinese ancestral hall see, for example, Y. K Leong and L. K. Tao, *Village and Town Life in China* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923), p. 22ff.

²⁶ Zong refers in the Chinese kinship system to exogamy and patrilineal descent; see Han Yi-Fêng, "The Chinese Kinship System", in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 2 (1937), p. 173.

hybrid creature crafted from Zhuang and Han Chinese elements. Some idea of the extent of deviation from the underlying Zhuang culture can be gleaned from a brief look at the Zhuang marriage custom of males living with the bride's family upon marriage, an important difference between Zhuang and Han cultures which was expressly prohibited under clan rule (vi) above. This custom of residing with the wife's side (*qifang juzhu hunzhi*) originated from the original Zhuang matriarchal society; children born to husband and wife were reckoned as coming from the wife's bloodline. Penetration of Han culture since the Qin dynasty in the third century BC led to the custom being gradually changed over the Tang and Song dynasties to residing with the husband's side. However, the relatively late introduction of Han culture to the Zhuang territory in the west of Guangxi (where Anping was located) meant that the custom was still prevalent there during the Ming dynasty, when the court first issued regulations requiring potential successors to the native official post to submit an ancestral chart (*zongzhi tuben*; see chapter 4). This ancestral chart, on which the native official inheritance came to rely entirely, had to include surnames of paternal ancestors. This meant that the *ru zhui* practice, which would have generated potential contenders for *tusi* succession from the female line, was potentially destabilizing and would have prevented the ruling clan from submitting ancestral charts acceptable to the Chinese bureaucracy. Such factors probably led to the express prohibition of *ru zhui* in the official clan, on pain of punishment. Bai Yaotian notes, however, that even with the changes in matrimonial residence to the husband's side, the reckoning of the blood line based on the woman's side remained unchanged, so ingrained was this old custom in Zhuang consciousness.

This is amply illustrated in the remote mountain village of Nianjing in Pingmeng xiang, in Napo county (about 130 kilometres northwest of Daxin county where Anping was located). Despite the fact that the Zhuang tribes there had already come to regard the male as principal and the female as subordinate when their males and females were married off, the original status accorded to the female line was still embodied in their day-to-day practices. The incense burner on the family shrine was feminine, and each time a daughter was born an incense burner was added to the shrine. When a daughter was married off, her incense burner went with her to her husband's home. The incense burner at the family home represented the family's descendants, and only if

they had female children were they qualified to enshrine and worship their ancestors.²⁷

The wide gulf between such Zhuang practices and Chinese patterns of patrilineal ancestor worship suggests the involvement of a considerable degree of contrivance in the above clan rules. It probably accounts for the seemingly out of place prohibition of *ru zhui*; it was a natural custom which had to be deliberately suppressed in the interests of the perceived benefits accruing to the Zhuang from the *tusi* system. It was probably also based on concerns to keep property within patrilineal blood lines, and to keep outside males out of the bride's family for paramilitary reasons.

The notion of ancestral sacrifices at the Li clan's ancestral hall, too, represented a deviation from original Zhuang customs. Prior to the Ming dynasty there was no concept of ancestral worship among the Zhuang. The Zhuang believed in ghosts rather than spirits; the spirits of their dead ancestors were 'family ghosts' which were deeply feared by the Zhuang, who invited shamans to deliver sacrifices. When the parents died, the sons and daughters would invite a shaman to perform magic and also invite the neighbourhood to perform a riotous, noisy show striking gongs and beating drums, to drive out disaster brought by the death. The sons and daughters did not take part in a funeral procession.²⁸

These customs were radically different to the Han spirit of cherishing and honouring the memory of one's ancestors. However, Zhuang culture was increasingly influenced by Han forms and language over time. This is evident in the form of ancestor worship practised in Anping, which appears also to be a hybrid of Zhuang and Han concepts. Local Zhuang belief in Anping was that the soul of the dead did not disperse but remained in the home for three generations, which is why the local villages set up spirit altars to worship their ancestors. Only after five generations would the soul reach the lower level of the home, and after nine generations it would finally leave the home, but remain in the village. Those households in each village which shared the same surname or ancestors would therefore set up a temple housing the *tudi miao* (village god), also called *fude ci* (temple of prosperity and virtue), for the purpose of offering sacrifices to distant ancestors. It is said that Anping Jie had 72 streets, which was in reality a reference to its 72 temples to

²⁷ *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the village god. The native official is said to have had only one village god temple. It was at the village god temple that the people prayed for protection, good harvests, good fortune and so on.²⁹

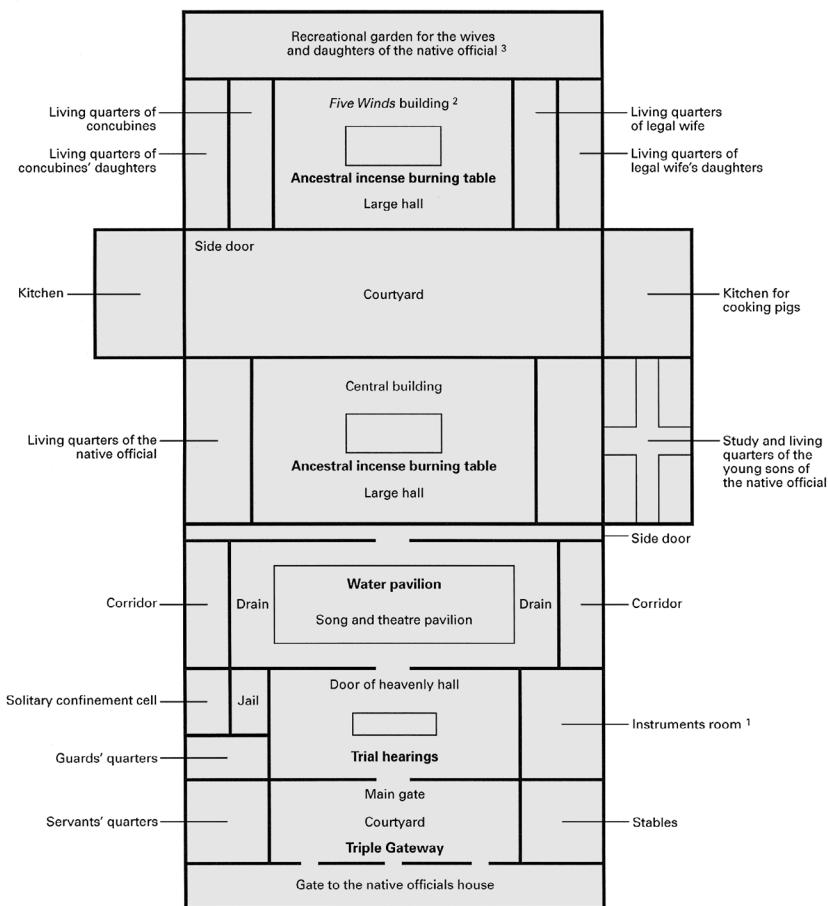
The fact that Zhuang ancestor worship started to form during the Ming dynasty also contains an air of artifice. The superimposition of the *tusi* system and the requirements of the Ming court that prospective native officials demonstrate their patrilineal ancestry resulted in the Han-style clan structure and rules, such as those seen here for the official clan at Anping *tusi*. Zhuang emulation of Chinese political forms had already begun 700 years earlier, during the Tang dynasty; the *tusi* system with its attendant benefits to Zhuang chieftains must surely have intensified the process. The clan rules, a hybrid creation which did not sit easily with traditional Zhuang or Han customs, indicated that the Zhuang were just as pragmatic as the Chinese in their usage of the native chieftaincy system. Even during the Tang, the hereditary tribal chiefs were strengthening their power through their Chinese-sponsored titles under its antecedent, the bridle and halter system. This strengthening and consolidation of power vis-à-vis the local populace is symbolically represented through the *yamen*, discussed below.

The Headquarters of the Native Official: The Yamen

The *yamen* was also the judicial quarters of the native official. It contained the court room, the ancestral hall, staff lodgings, granary, offices, gaol, and the living quarters of the native official's family. The Anping *yamen* was already ruined by the time of earlier fieldwork in 1945, save for the walls and the steps leading up to it.³⁰ The fieldworkers provided a sketch plan of the Anping *yamen* based on accounts by local villagers and their survey of the ruins. It is reproduced in figure 3. There is a marked similarity to the layout of a Chinese *yamen* (an example from the mid-18th century is provided in figure 4). As with the general layout of Anping shown in map 2, the native official's *yamen* was an ostensible monument to sinification, which was always intrinsic to the *tusi* system. Equally, it served as a powerful tool through which the native official consolidated his power, not unlike the Chinese magistrate for whom the *yamen* was also the administrative and ceremonial centre.

²⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 15.

³⁰ See *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian*, p. 367.



1 Used for storing:
– umbrellas
– flags and weapons etc carried by guard of honour
– banners and tablets authorizing the actions of senior officials

2 Heavily guarded; for use by the womenfolk of the native official's family

3 This area also used to raise horses, pigs, cows, chickens, ducks and hunting dogs, and to breed goldfish

Fig. 3. Sketch plan of Anping native official's yamen. (Adapted from Diaocha, vol. 4, p. 26 and Internal Reports, p. 68.)

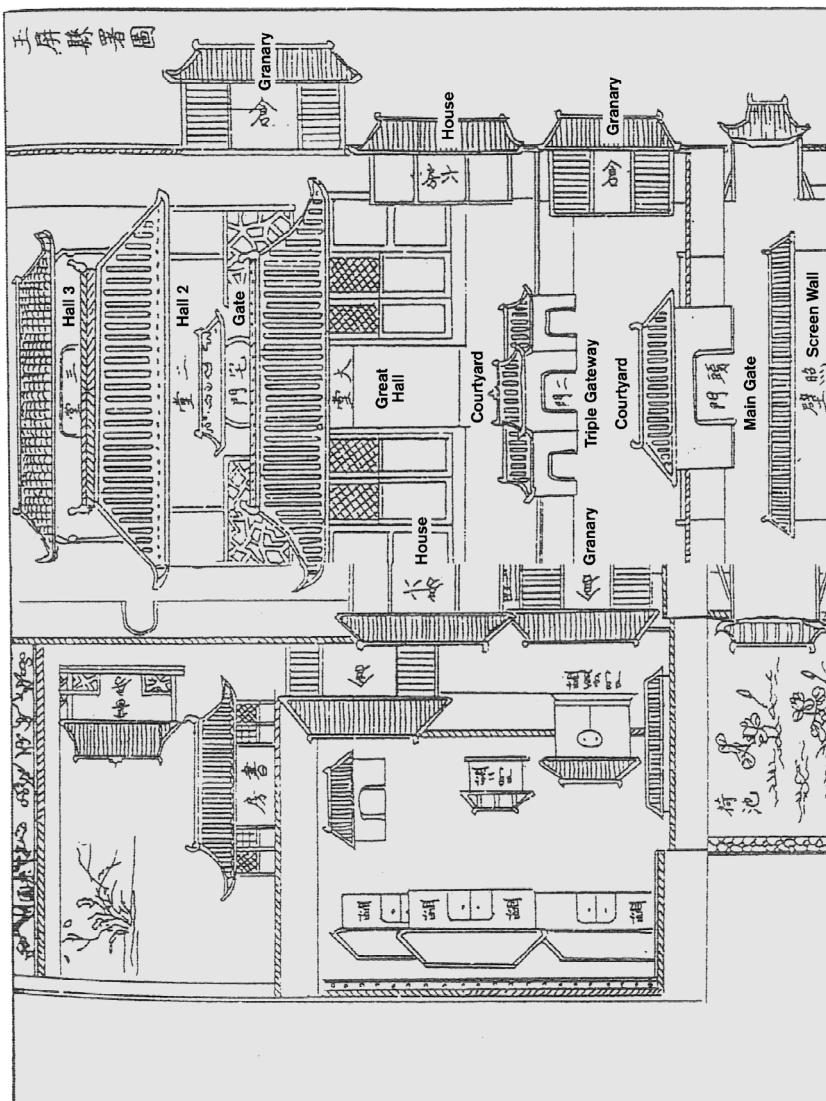


Fig. 4. A Chinese yamen: Yubing county yamen, Guizhou province. (*Guizhou yubing xianzhi*, 1757, repr. 1995.)

The Organization of the Yamen

Details of the internal organization of the Anping native official's *yamen* are sketchy; what is known is recorded here. The native official's core support group based in the *yamen* consisted of the assistants (*zuoyou guan*), then the lord secretary (*shiye*), second secretary (*erye*), soldiers, prison guards (*yuzu*) and porter (*menfang*). The fieldworkers do not define the role of the *menfang* in respect of the Anping *yamen*. It was probably similar to that of the *menfang* in the Nandan *yamen*, who pressed for payment of levies, dispatched documents, announced callers, and relied only on court registration fees, hall arrangement fees and whatever extortions he could make for his income.³¹ Again, we do not know when the Chinese-style names originated, although they were probably put in place by the assistants (*zuoyou guan*) appointed by the Chinese court at the establishment of Anping native subprefecture in 1368.

The Assistants (zuoyou guan)

When the office of the native official was established, the *zuoyou guan* (literally, left and right officials) were appointed by the local authorities to assist the native official in trying cases. As with the Chinese bureaucracy, the term was used for officials appointed as pairs to one office.³² Their posts were later abandoned. No specific date or reason is given, but the fieldworkers report that they were retrenched sometime during the end of the Qing dynasty, when the native official's power waswaning.³³

The Lord Secretary (shiye)

The *shiye* was responsible for recording and ordering documents, and was personally employed by the native official. He enjoyed relatively high status. The *shiye* tended to be a Han person who was recruited from amongst people with scholarly accomplishments who understood how to deal with the official documents and correspondence. His monthly salary was fifty strings of cash, converted into 1500 *jin* of rice. During the end of the Qing, Huang Jinting, a Han person from Anping Jie, was the *shiye* of the last native official, Li Depu. The ordinary folk respectfully addressed him as *erye* (second master).³⁴ This seems confusing in

³¹ Internal Reports, p. 24.

³² See Hucke, #7016.

³³ Internal Reports, p. 24; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 25.

³⁴ Internal Reports, p. 24.

view of the second assistant (discussed below) who was also termed *erye*. To the ordinary people, it probably expressed their perception of him as a gentleman of a rank below the native official. The *shiye* had to manage all matters in accordance with the native official's wishes, and he could not act without the native official's authorization, in reality being a high level employee.³⁵

The Second Secretary (erye)

According to the Internal Reports, the *erye* pressed for rental payments, imposed monetary levies, dispatched orders, delivered letters and performed other miscellaneous tasks.³⁶ The *erye* was also responsible for passing on commands to the senior headman (*zhidong*) of the respective districts. Although his status was relatively low, in the eyes of the local populace he was still considered as a person who possessed a certain power as de facto gatekeeper to the officials. It became a convention that people wanting to see an official had to give him a chicken before they could submit their report. The native official also gave the *erye* a monthly salary of approximately 30 strings of cash, commuted to over 800 *jin* of rice. The people who held these posts were mostly from outside the territory. This payment of a salary to recruit outsiders was a move to avoid the collusion that occurred when native people were used.³⁷

Because there was no salary stipulation for the *shiye* and *erye*, if the native official noticed that they lacked money he would sometimes give them a ticket (*zhuangpiao*) authorizing them to go to an assigned village. The understanding was that they would use the opportunity to extort what they could from the villagers.³⁸

The sketchiness of these details is probably because the villagers interviewed by the fieldworkers, by then already 50 years after the abolition of the office of the Anping *tusi*, would have been unlikely (even when

³⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 25.

³⁶ Internal Reports, p. 24. This information is inconsistent with the Field Studies (see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 25), which ascribe these tasks to the *yamen* runners. The *Daxin xianzhi* (published in 1989, after the Field Studies) has adopted the details in the Internal Reports.

³⁷ Internal Reports, pp. 24–25; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 25. The information on the *erye* from the Internal Reports is inconsistent with the Field Studies in which the same details are given in respect of the *yamen* runners (*chaiyi*); the *erye* is not mentioned; see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 25). I have retained the version from the Internal Reports as it was also adopted by the *Daxin xianzhi* (p. 285).

³⁸ Internal Reports, pp. 24–25.

the *yamen* was functioning) to have had much exposure to the internal operations of the *yamen*. Details which the fieldworkers collected on the *yamen* organization in neighbouring Taiping *tusi* are equally scant.³⁹ The fieldworkers provide a far more comprehensive description of the organizational structure of the *yamen* in the much larger Nandan *tusi*, listing fourteen types of personnel. Even so, they caution that these details are incomplete and probably contain errors, since the staff titles underwent many changes over the long period of time involved, and their material was based solely on the recollections of old people.⁴⁰ What they do reveal, though, is the particularistic nature of native chieftaincies, even within the same province; significant differences were discernible in the details on the *yamen* organization of these three *tusi*. Notwithstanding these qualifications, these details were adopted by the editorial committee of the Gazetteer of Daxin County (*Daxin xianzhi*), there being no other record of the internal workings of these native chieftaincies.

The Soldiers of the Native Official

At the end of the Qing there were three categories of soldiers under the Anping native official, the first two of which he retained as his personal soldiers. All of the native official's soldiers were also his serfs, bound through his ultimate ownership of the fields they cultivated:

1. The *minzhuang* (stalwarts) were essentially *yamen* messengers who performed military service for the native official. They wore a uniform with the words *Anping zhou minzhuang* (Stalwarts of Anping subprefecture) displayed on the front. These soldiers were recruited by the native official from amongst criminals who had committed minor offences, after they had served their prison sentences. He allowed those who wanted to return home to do so.⁴¹ The *minzhuang* were transferred from every village as soon as there was a matter to be dealt with, and had to await conclusion of the business, after which they were dispatched back to their respective villages to attend to farming.⁴² It appears that the *minzhuang* were retained solely for local matters and did not form part of the trained military forces which provided services to the central government.

³⁹ See *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 81–82

⁴⁰ See *Diaocha*, vol. 2, pp. 41–42.

⁴¹ Internal Reports, p. 25.

⁴² *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 27.

2. The *qinbing* were bodyguards. The native official had four bodyguards, who wore uniforms with the two characters *qinbing* displayed on the front and back. They accompanied the native official when he left the *yamen* or went to the countryside; in between times they returned home to cultivate their fields. Only people from the Five Places near the Anping *yamen* could serve as bodyguards. They had to store their unwieldy knives and spears in their own homes, as they stood ready to respond to a summons from the native official.⁴³ The bodyguards were also called *maa¹ hin¹* (hunting dog).⁴⁴ They were originally the house slaves of the native official who later undertook the planting of official fields, and took turns going to the *yamen* to carry out their duties there.
3. The *tubing* (native soldiers), also called *tuyong* (local braves), constituted the native official's military system and were his greatest source of power.⁴⁵ The use of *tubing* as an essential tool of the central court to progress its "use barbarians to attack barbarians" policy was standardized by the end of the Song.⁴⁶ The *tubing* under the Anping native official had been enlisted for generations from amongst the families who had been settled as soldiers on the land. As we saw earlier, they would be given military fields (*tun-tian*) following a suppression campaign. Military fields flourished in Guangxi, and those *tubing* who cultivated them were also called

⁴³ Internal Reports, p. 25.

⁴⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 27. The Field Studies provides Chinese characters for Zhuang terms such as this, and sometimes provides their literal or discursive meaning. Many of these terms appear to be from the Tai dialect of Lungming, in the southern part of Tiandeng county. I have tried to identify these terms (in this chapter as well as elsewhere in this thesis) with the assistance of Mr. Ling Shudong, a research associate at the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies. I have also consulted Thomas J Hudack, ed., *William J. Gedney's the Tai Dialect of Lungming: Glossaries, Texts and Translations* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1991). I have also received further assistance in relation to the Zhuang spellings in this book from Dr. Luo Yongxian of the Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies.

⁴⁵ The information provided on the *tubing* in the Field Studies and Internal Reports is also scant and sketchy. A particularly informative and comprehensive essay on the Zhuang *tubing*, covering their characteristics, historical evolution, uses and historical significance is contained in the essay "Lun Zhuangzu tubing" (On Zhuang Native Soldiers) by Gu Youshi in *Zhuangzu lungao*, pp. 252–273. See also *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), pp. 639–648. Jeffrey Barlow weaves in discussions on the Zhuang *tubing*, Zhuang military history, Zhuang weaponry and military strategies in his web publication on the history of the Zhuang and their culture, *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*.

⁴⁶ Gu Youshi, "Lun Zhuangzu tubing," p. 262.

gengbing (soldiers of the plough). It is recorded that there were 13,841 *gengbing* in Guangxi during the Qing Qianlong reign period (1736–1795).⁴⁷ In normal times they would attend to farming their fields, but whenever there was a military summons they had to take up their weapons and respond, following the Chinese army on an expedition or guarding strategic passes. Essentially serfs, they did not receive any salary, and had to provide military service as a priority. The forced breaks in farming which occurred during military requisitions were a source of great hardship for Zhuang *tubing* throughout their history.

The number of *tubing* in a large *tusi* was generally around twenty to thirty thousand.⁴⁸ *Tubing* were used heavily as mercenaries for the Chinese state during the Ming suppression campaigns. It is recorded that in 1491, there were not less than 400,000 to 500,000 *tubing* under the prefectures in the area of the Zuo and You rivers.⁴⁹

During the Qing, the Chinese government required Anping native sub-prefecture to have five hundred *tubing*, who were to be allocated grain provisions.⁵⁰ There were over eight hundred of these soldiers in Anping subprefecture.⁵¹ During the Ming, Anping had 140 troops for conscription and a further 70 on standby for additional transfers, as well as one headman and 24 local troops to guard each of the eight mountain passes.⁵²

Given the large numbers of *tubing* used in military expeditions, the modest troop requirements in respect of the Anping native chieftaincy reflected its smallness and the fact that it was part of a long pacified area. It also indicated that *tubing* usage in Anping was focused primarily on border defence, a matter which remained of critical importance to the Chinese government throughout the duration of the Anping native chieftaincy. Statistics are not readily available, but it is unlikely that *tubing* from Anping were ever involved in any significant military expeditions. Some support for this view is provided by the fact that the Chinese court had established an active promotion system during the mid-Ming

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 266–267.

⁴⁸ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 641.

⁴⁹ *Ming shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu*, p. 758.

⁵⁰ Internal Reports, p. 25, (citing *Guangxi tongzhi jiyeo, daxin xianzhi*, p. 342).

⁵¹ Internal Reports, p. 25. The date for this figure is not provided but was presumably during the late Qing.

⁵² *Guangxi tongzhi* (1531) j.51 p. 15b.

(around 1491) for *tubing* achievements in military expeditions, under which a *tusi* would be promoted up to the next rank each time its *tubing* were successful in an expedition. It was therefore possible under this system for a subprefectural magistrate to be promoted up to the most senior position of *duzhi jundudu* (Regional Military Commissioner).⁵³ The Anping native official remained at the rank of subprefectural magistrate (*zhizhou*) throughout the 560-year duration of the Anping *tusi*, which implies that it was seldom called upon to field soldiers for military expeditions.

Nonetheless, the availability to the Chinese court of the martially skilled, ferocious and locally acclimatized *tubing* was a critical component of the native chieftaincy contract. The value of *tubing* to the defence of China's border with Vietnam is illustrated in a 1527 memorial to the Ming emperor Shizong by Wang Shouren of Nanjing, a minister of the War Ministry who held the concurrent posts of Left Censor-in-chief and Regulator-General of Guangxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Huguang (*Nanjing bingbu shangshu qian zuo duyushi zongzhi liang-guang, jiangxi, huguang*).⁵⁴

Wang argued against the court's policy (instituted in the mid-Ming) of eliminating the *tubing*, which was related to its policy of *gaitu guiliu* (abolition of *tusi* and substitution of direct Chinese rule).⁵⁵ On the Si'en *tusi* which had been converted to direct Chinese rule in 1505, Wang pointed out that prior to the conversion, the local populace provided 3,000 *tubing* annually to carry out prefectural assignments. After conversion, however, the prefectural authorities had to send several thousand militiamen each year merely to be on guard against repeat uprisings (*fanfu*). Turning to Tianzhou, a powerful *tusi* which had been attacked by the Chinese army in 1526, Wang pointed out that it was next to Vietnam, had difficult topography, and was occupied by minority peoples (the Yao and Zhuang) and their descendants, so that it was easy for them to gather in large numbers. For these reasons, he argued, it was imperative to retain existing native officials because their military force could be drawn on to create a type of fence (*ping bi*):

⁵³ *Ming shilu – Guangxi shiliao zhailu*, p. 758.

⁵⁴ Censorial titles carried great prestige, as those so appointed could denounce anyone in government for misconduct, and could remonstrate with the Emperor about public or personal matters, as in this case. The prefix "Left" denoted officials who were actually serving in the Censorate as opposed to those who were only nominally Censors-in-Chief (see Hucker, #7335). The Regulator-General was a title given to a multi-province Military Coordinator in the Ming (see Hucker, #7092).

⁵⁵ *Gaitu guiliu* is discussed in detail in chapter 9.

If we kill their people and substitute direct Chinese rule, then we will have border trouble. For us to remove the fence ourselves is not a plan for long term peace.

The court ultimately denied Wang's request, because its control over *tusi* domains had increased, and political and economic conditions of the *gaitu guiliu* movement had already taken hold.⁵⁶ The reasons for the court's denial were also connected with its concerns to eliminate the two large and powerful *tusi* in question, which required abolishing their armed forces. Tianzhou, as well, controlled the vital You River traffic. That is, internal threats outweighed external defence problems in these cases. However, it is clear that the issue of abolishing the centuries-old *tubing* system was not straightforward, and was much debated at court. What we can surmise from these sorts of memorials is that it is likely the Chinese court tacitly applied the 'fence' (buffer) argument expressed by Wang to small compliant border *tusi* like Anping, which posed no threat to the Chinese state, with the result that Anping *tusi* remained undisturbed.

By the Qing dynasty, the power of the *tubing* had been greatly weakened overall, along with the decline of the *tusi* following a concerted *gaitu guiliu* campaign in the eighteenth century under the Yongzheng emperor, during which a large number of native chieftaincies were eliminated. Defence of *tusi* areas was progressively replaced by Green Standards (*luying bing*), Chinese troops who were distinguished from Manchu troops by their green banners.⁵⁷

Apart from the Qing court's implementation of these deliberate policies, advances in warfare technology (particularly increased firearms) also contributed to the natural weakening in military value of the Zhuang *tubing* to the Chinese state. The Zhuang soldiers had been valued by the Chinese government for their courageous and cruel military skills, including organization into specially trained crack units expert in the use of Zhuang weapons such as long spears, slanted knives, javelins and poisoned arrows.⁵⁸ There is much evidence in the historical records that their special skills, including battle formations and the ability to attack barbarians in mountain hideouts, were still being used by the Chinese government in the Guangxi border areas during the mid-Ming. However, it was inevitable that the use of firearms by the Chinese army,

⁵⁶ Gu Youshi, "Lun Zhuangzu tubing," pp. 257–258.

⁵⁷ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 642.

⁵⁸ Gu Youshi, "Lun Zhuangzu tubing," p. 259.

which was becoming increasingly widespread during the Ming, would have diminished if not nullified the value of these skills, and therefore of the Zhuang soldier, to the Chinese court. By the mid-Ming, the Chinese army was also manufacturing more effective guns than those used in the early Ming, with superior firing speed, power and focus.⁵⁹ The extent to which firearms could devalue the professional Zhuang troops was devastating. Since learning to use firearms was an easy matter, regular government troops could rapidly become the equal of the professional Zhuang soldiery, whose shield walls and intricate formation skills would amount to nothing in the face of fire power.⁶⁰

Such developments in warfare technology over time, together with the Chinese government's concerted campaign to reduce the *tubing* and replace them with regular government forces, resulted in the increasing reliance of the remaining *tubing* on the native official in their basic capacity as serfs. The construction by the Chinese of a fortification with built-in cannons along the Guangxi border with Vietnam in 1896 indicates that the role of the Zhuang *tubing* in guarding the mountain passes along the border was also gradually being replaced by the Chinese army by the end of the Qing.⁶¹ These changes increased the native official's local political power as he effectively became their sole master. These conditions are manifested in Anping *tusi* in the onerous corvée burdens which the serfs were subjected to by the Qing dynasty (see chapters 7 and 8).

By the late Qing, the Anping *tubing* still served a specific purpose in China's border defence; 40 *tubing* on average were posted to guard each of the eight mountain passes which surrounded Anping.⁶² Apart from this obligation to the Chinese government, the Anping native official also made use of the *tubing* to help quell local peasant resistance, which had become increasingly widespread around Anping in the late Qing. The *tubing* played a critical role in assisting the Qing government in relation to the Taiping Rebellion and related secret society activities. Li Binggui, who was the Anping native official around 1840 to 1860, re-organized his local soldiers into a de facto fourth category of soldiers, the *lianyong* (trained warriors), in response to the upheavals of the

⁵⁹ Wang Zhaochun, *Zhongguo huoqishi*, p. 153ff.

⁶⁰ J. Barlow, "The Minorities in the Yuan Era in Guangxi," in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*, esp. pp. 19–20.

⁶¹ See Wang Zhaochun, *Zhongguo huoqishi*, p. 480.

⁶² See, for example, *Guangxi tongzhi jiyao* (1899) j.13 pp. 33a, 33b.

Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864). They wore uniforms emblazoned with the words *Anping zhou tuan lianyong* (Trained Warriors of Anping Sub-prefecture).⁶³

In 1902, the activities of the secret society known as *sandian hui* (Three Dot Society), which stirred up much local peasant resistance to the status quo, were at its peak. Under the orders of the Qing general Lu Rongting (a Zhuang and future Guangxi warlord), the last Anping native official, Li Depu, divided Anping into five paramilitary groupings (*tuan*). These were the eastern, southern, western, northern and central *tuan*, which were based on the existing administrative districts (*hua*) of the same name, the central *tuan* equating to Anping Jie. Li Depu then organized the *lianyong* under these five *tuan*. During 1903–1904, he raised money from the villages and armed the *lianyong* with rifles and bullets from the Longzhou administration; they played an important part in putting down the Three Dot Society. *Lianyong* grain was collected from the local villagers by local headmen over a five-year period; those who did not have the resources to pay this levy were imprisoned. The burden of having to feed the soldiers combined with natural calamities (there was a great drought in 1902) to be a period remembered by the local villagers as one of untold hardship.⁶⁴ These sorts of conditions, together with the increasingly loud and cohesive opposition of the Anping serfs during the late Qing to their servitude under the native official, eventually led to the Anping *tubing* taking up arms against the native official and his system.⁶⁵

The Laws of the Native Official

Timothy Earle has argued that power, unlike authority, tends to be backed by some implied threat; compliance by common people is unwilling.⁶⁶ The laws of the native official provided the basis (and implied threat) for his local power. According to the fieldworkers, there was no statute law generally available for examination. There was no common body of regulations; consistent with the particularistic nature of native chieftaincies,

⁶³ Internal Reports, p. 25.

⁶⁴ Internal Reports, pp. 25–26.

⁶⁵ This is discussed in chapter 9.

⁶⁶ See Timothy Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power: The Political Economy in Prehistory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 3–4.

each *tusi* domain had its own form of government and methods of adjudication.⁶⁷

By and large the Anping native official's 'laws' were whatever he decided to implement on whim, to be contrasted with the customary laws of the people. The customary laws constituted a body of rules which had taken form since the earliest times of the minority peoples, and which had evolved over time into universally obeyed laws. They contained perceived standards of right and wrong, as well as primitive democratic qualities, and were usually implemented by the local headmen.⁶⁸ Traditionally, the customary laws of the minority peoples have played a supplemental role to the prescribed laws, to help safeguard public order.⁶⁹ The fieldworkers were unable to find any written records of customary laws in Anping.

Notwithstanding the dearth of written records of proclaimed laws and customary laws, the fieldworkers did find a *xiang* (administrative district akin to a parish) contract drawn up by the last native official's elder brother, Li Deming, in the fourteenth year of the Republic (1925). It is understood to amass all the original customary laws of the villages within the *xiang* (unnamed, but probably Baoxu, which covered Anping), which then become part of the native official's laws sometime before the Anping *tusi* was formally abolished in 1906. They consisted of seven items which, though minor, provide some insight into the everyday activities and concerns within Anping *tusi*: (i) the theft of grain, bamboo, fruit and vegetables, and sugar cane was liable to fines; (ii) those who witnessed the theft of grain, wheat and beans, bamboo shoots, timber, fruit and vegetables, sugar cane and so forth and reported same were paid a reward, and those who did not report were subject to the same punishment as a thief; (iv) dams in fields could not be used without permission, and could only be opened after the fifteenth day of the eighth month; those who breached this rule were fined; (v) those who knowingly bought stolen goods from a thief instead of reporting the crime were punished; (vi) ducklings could only be reared on the household's own property and could not be set free in other people's wet fields, nor could dams be randomly opened; anyone reporting these acts was rewarded, and anyone violating these rules was fined.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 650.

⁶⁸ See *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 650. For a study of the customary law of China's minority peoples, see Fan Honggui, *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu xiguanfa* (The Customary Law of China's Minority Nationalities) (Jilin: Jilin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1990).

⁶⁹ Fan Honggui, Preface.

⁷⁰ Internal Reports, pp. 38–39.

Despite the arbitrariness of his laws (save for the meagre collection of minor laws above), the native official had the highest judicial authority in the territory, into which some measure of structure and consolidation was injected, as follows.

Adjudication

Adjudication by the native official was totally subject to his will. His will was law, and those under him did not dare oppose it. Customary laws played a part in the adjudication process only insofar as the native official could take advantage of any part of those laws that was advantageous to his rule.

Unlike the local customary laws, the native official's laws contained no moral concepts of right and wrong, and were dependent solely on violence for their implementation. Consequently, the cornerstone of the native official's system of law was punishment (*xingfa*), which was typified by intimidation and particularly harsh penalties. These measures, essentially realizations of the implied threat which is said to back power, were also employed to suppress serf resistance and to maintain the native official's rule.

The fieldworkers were able to collect large amounts of anecdotal evidence in respect of the native official's methods of adjudication. After the native official accepted a case, he would send the *yamen* runners to make initial investigations. The plaintiff, in accordance with precedent, had to give straw sandals and one or two strings of cash to the runners, as well as entertain them with wine and meat. The native official would listen to one side of the story, or decide on the dispute based on the amount he received in bribes. Less serious cases were handled by the imposition of a fine; if two people had come to blows, the losing side had to forfeit 360 cash in favour of the side which had shed blood. If there was a serious injury, then apart from taking responsibility for the cost of medicine for the wounded party and carrying out the farming work which they had caused to be held up, the losing party also had to pay a penalty of 720 cash. The fines were not paid over to the winning side but were all turned over to the *yamen*. Consequently, the peasants referred to the native official's adjudication of such cases as "the cow eating grass from the side of a ditch—it can nibble at both sides".⁷¹

In significant cases such as homicide, the native official went so far

⁷¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 27.

as to use the method of extorting from those who were related to or friendly with the perpetrator of the crime, called *lianzuofa* (literally, punishment-by-connection laws).⁷² For example, some people in Nian village had called together several villagers to kill their enemy Qin Mao. Because the killer absconded, the native official Li Depu had the four headmen of that village tied up as security in neighbouring Yan-ying village, pressed the villagers for payment, and dispatched runners who forced the villagers to pay fines. There was no alternative but for each household to pay out money apportioned according to the respective portion of their cultivated land. During the collection of fines, the runners made heavy demands on the peasants for pork, chicken, wine and vegetables, they ate and drank heavily, and did not release the village headmen until they had received all the fines in full.⁷³ The objective seemed to be to extract a fine for the crime regardless of whether the perpetrator was brought to justice. Although the headmen served as agents of the native official in each administrative district and helped buttress his power in the countryside, this act of tying them up as security for payment of the fines reflects the less than secure positions of those agents outside the official clan network.

Such wanton treatment by the Anping native official in respect of a homicide case appears out of alignment with that in other *tusi*. In neighbouring Taiping *tusi*, although the native official had similar powers of adjudication over the small matters covered in the above village contract such as theft of ducks and bean shoots, there were certain defined matters which were specifically outside his jurisdiction, which had to be referred to Zuozhou (a Chinese subprefecture) for trial. Matters beyond his jurisdiction included homicide cases, adultery, swindling, larceny and local matters where the value of property involved exceeded 300 *liang* (ounces of silver).⁷⁴

The judicial powers of the Nandan native official were similarly circumscribed. By the Qing, the Nandan native official's power extended only to routine civil administration and the levying of grain and money payments; more important civil cases, weighty criminal matters and the exercise of capital punishment were in the hands of the Nandan trials

⁷² *Lianzuofa* is also a Chinese form of punishment. The fieldworkers were probably just using a term they were familiar with to describe the similar form of punishment used by the native official.

⁷³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 27.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

officer (*chengshengguan*), who was under the jurisdiction of Hechi county.⁷⁵ From these differences it appears that the Anping native official had a disproportionate amount of power. This may be linked to the retrenchment during the Qing of the Chinese assistants (*zuoyouguan*) who had been appointed to assist the native official in trials when the Anping *yamen* was established in the Ming.⁷⁶ There was no such vacuum in Nandan *tusi*, where a Chinese official known as the *hantang* was appointed by the local Chinese authorities to manage the official clan and litigation among the people.⁷⁷

Punishments could also be capricious and cruel. In Xiadian village during the end of the Guangxu reign period (1875–1908), a villager, Nong Shiyin, beat an old tiger to death. The native official decided to regard this as beating to death a *guangou* (official dog). Nong Shiyin was jailed and had to sell off all his fields to pay off the officials, who also forced him to hand over his daughter. After she was raped by the native official (Li Depu), she was then sold off to be the wife of another person.⁷⁸ This sort of arbitrary cruelty and opportunism by the native official meant that the local people were unable to form any clear understanding of the boundaries of his laws and standards of right and wrong.⁷⁹ The administration of justice is portrayed as deviant and rampantly opportunistic, unlike the settled principles of justice and duty to be observed in other Tai polities ruled by seigniorial chiefs.⁸⁰ However, all of these accounts relate to the last Anping native official, Li Depu, probably because the villagers had living memory of his deeds at the time they were interviewed. As Li Depu was notorious for his immorality, egregious behaviour and evil deeds, it cannot be assumed that such lawless native official laws had always been the case in Anping.

What is clear, however, is that, at the end of the Qing, the Anping *tusi* subjects perceived the native official as little more than a lawless tyrant. In a review of the data recorded in the Gazetteer of Daxin County (*Daxin*

⁷⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 157, 162.

⁷⁶ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 157.

⁷⁸ Internal Reports, p. 37.

⁷⁹ On Li Depu's notoriety see, for example, *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 560.

⁸⁰ On the lord of the *muöng* (principality) of Tai-speaking peoples, who is seen as protector and organizer of the community, including provider of justice, in return for which he enjoys privileges such as possession of the best rice-fields and rights to corvée labour and taxes see George Condominas, *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai: Historical Anthropological Aspects of Southeast Asian Social Spaces* (Canberra: Dept. of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, 1990), pp. 55–60).

xianzhi) on the eight native chieftaincies which were located in present-day Daxin county, Anping stands out as the only one in which the native official is stated to have held power over the life and property of the people.⁸¹ This does not appear to be an isolated case. Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Samuel Clarke noted that there was a very cruel native chieftain among the Lolo (also called No-Su) peoples in the Zhaotong district in Yunnan near the border with Guizhou Province, for whom it was common practice to gouge out the eyes of those who disobeyed him. Clarke also noted that these chieftains, who it seems were also native officials, designated themselves by a term equivalent to the Chinese *guanyuan*, which refers to a magistrate or officer.⁸² They were clearly aware of the awe and political benefit which such titles instilled in the eyes of the local people.

The Court and Prison

The court and prison, which were located in the *yamen* (see figure 5), were also used by the native official to augment his autocratic rule and tyrannical treatment of his subjects. The court was regarded by the people merely as an adjunct to the unfettered power of the native official, serving as an opportunity for obtaining property and money; fees had to be paid whether a party was the plaintiff or defendant, and all fines were turned over to the native official.⁸³

The fieldworkers provide a description of the Anping jail by the serf Huang Shixing, who was once imprisoned there:

In a house like a black cavity there were regularly several dozen people locked up, up to over a hundred people. Those whose violation was heavy were locked into a dark jail, and an unwieldy wooden cangue restrained their hands and feet. All newly-arrived prisoners had the heavy wooden cangue put on them by the prison guards regardless of whether their crime was petty or serious. Petty criminals had to pay over 20 to 30 *yuan* worth of silver coins before the heavy cangue was unfastened. For prisoners whose crimes were serious, the enabling charges were higher; they had to pay 50 to 80 silver coins as a fee for unfastening the cangue. Poor prisoners without money were driven off during each day of their imprisonment to do various forms of hard labour such as chopping

⁸¹ This data in the *Daxin xianzhi* is based on the Field Studies.

⁸² Samuel R. Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-West China 1900* (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1984), p. 120.

⁸³ Internal Reports, p. 36.

firewood, grinding cereal, repairing houses and sweeping toilets. At each pause they were only given two bowls of thin gruel, which they endured up till they died of illness and disability.⁸⁴

During a visit to the Xincheng *yamen* museum, I found the original cangue, shackles and chains similar to that described by the above-mentioned Anping serf still lying intact (in fact, simply scattered about the floor) in the *yamen* jail. The prison was indeed as dark as described, and certainly lent itself to comparison with a “demonic cave”. I was able to take these torture instruments outside to photograph them (see figure 5).

The jail was another embodiment of the tyrannical rule of the Anping native official. It stands in stark contrast to the conditions expected (and enshrined in regulations) of a Chinese prison under proper supervision of a magistrate, where basic standards of safety, hygiene and medical assistance were provided, as well as food rations, straw mats and padded cotton jackets for the hungry and cold.⁸⁵ However, the use of the cangue, manacles and shackles was also standard in Chinese prisons, and maltreatment of prisoners by the warden and guards was common practice. Under Chinese law, however, the magistrate was charged with preventing such irregularities. Regulations were also in place which theoretically provided prison inmates with some official recourse in the event of maltreatment.⁸⁶

To sum up, there was an evident dichotomy in the native official’s position in relation to the official clan and as ruler of the greater populace, which coincided roughly with authority and power. Since the native official’s position in relation to the Chinese court stemmed from his membership of the clan that had established lineage rights in accordance with the court regulations on succession, the clan effectively sanctioned his leadership, and thus his authority. We have seen how the native official maintained loyalties and authority within the clan through the balancing of a complex support system. The fact that the clan elder (*zuzhang*), who was selected by the native official, had the power to directly appoint a potential heir, illustrates the inherent vulnerability of the hereditary position of the native official; it was an unspoken

⁸⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 28.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Huang Liu-hung, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China*, trans. and ed. Djang Chu (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1984), pp. 126–127.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 307–317.

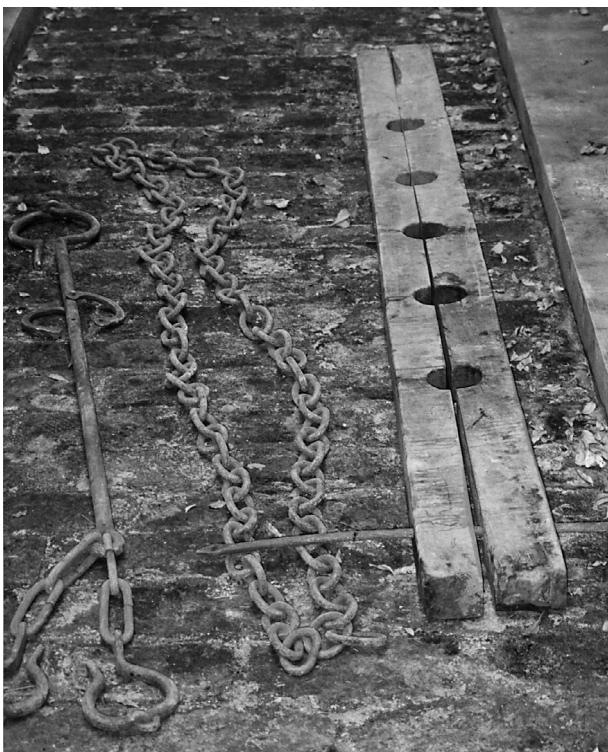


Fig. 5. Jail and judicial torture instruments at *Mo tusi yamen* Museum, Xincheng, Guangxi. (Photos by author.)

guarantee of the political power of the official clan. It was essentially the interplay of entourage politics, a key characteristic of chieftaincies.⁸⁷ The native official's efforts to control the clan through granting privileges, too, reflect the inherent precariousness of his authority, which is universal to all leadership positions.⁸⁸

The grandeur of the accession ceremony also served to reinforce the native official's authority as leader in the eyes of the local population through the ritual kowtows of the village headmen. This type of ceremonial re-legitimizing of the state's mandate in order to consolidate political power vis-à-vis the local indigenous people was neither new nor culturally specific. In Western Zhou times (1066–771 BC), the royal investiture of an heir to a fief was an important custom seen as legitimizing the vassal's tenure, regardless of how long the vassal may have already enjoyed the fief.⁸⁹ The universality of such ceremonial is evident in other colonizing empires. For example, the staves of office presented to Nigerian Emirs by the British Governor were greatly prized for symbolizing the power which the Emir derived from the government. Installation of the Emir was a ceremonial conducted on the grandest scale before the local populace, dignified by a parade of troops.⁹⁰ Similarly, the donning of ornate war robes by the Anping native official in his priestly role is mirrored by the Hawaiian high chiefs, who were considered gods and wore brilliantly coloured feather cloaks which were considered the clothes of the gods.⁹¹

In his role as ruler, military commander and highest judicial officer in the territory, the native official constructed power through intimidation, and also by drawing and building upon the physical and symbolic force of the *yamen*. In this sphere, there appear to have been few checks and balances on his conduct, if any. Similarities to other chiefdoms in other parts of the world, such as in legitimization procedures, hereditary succession, and the role of the chief as political, judicial, religious, and military head of the tribe, appear to fall away when it comes to the

⁸⁷ See, for example, Timothy Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power: the Political Economy in Prehistory*; Randall Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

⁸⁸ See Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), pp. 27–53.

⁸⁹ Herlee Creel, pp. 385–386.

⁹⁰ Frederick Lugard, Baron, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 212.

⁹¹ Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power*, p. 9.

chieftain's accountability and responsibility to his people. For instance, in indigenous African systems, there was an emphasis on the rule of law; furthermore, customary laws were subject to public debate and could not be mischievously decreed by chiefs. A chief could also be 'de-stooled' for acting autocratically.⁹² Following the opening up of channels of appeal to the local authorities, which were the natural corollary of *gaitu guiliu* and the turbulent events of the late Qing (discussed in chapter 9), the blatant malpractices of the native official were gradually stemmed. However, it is clear that once his authority was sanctioned by his genealogy and the Chinese court, the native official enjoyed a level of power locally which was entirely disproportionate to the level of his official rank within the Chinese administration.

⁹² See Ayittey, esp. pp. 72, 108, 112, 117 ff.

CHAPTER SIX

'CIVILIZING DISTRICTS' AND LOCAL HEADMEN: THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGES

The official clan constituted only the tip of a multi-layered ruling organization of which the native official was the head.¹ The territorial administration of the Anping native subprefecture was effected through a complex administrative apparatus which represented a layer of political rule below that of the official clan. Control was effected by dividing the territory into administrative districts and establishing a hierarchy of local headmen to administer them.² This chapter examines these mechanisms, through which a detailed picture of a well-established Zhuang political system emerges.

ADMINISTRATIVE CLUSTERS: THE EIGHT CIVILIZING DISTRICTS AND FIVE PLACES

The native official delineated the villages under his control into the so-called *ba hua si cheng* (eight civilizing districts and four walled towns). *Sicheng* (Four Walled Towns) was also somewhat confusingly known as *Wuchu* (Five Places). It was located in the immediate vicinity of the Anping township.³ The villages surrounding the Anping township were originally called *Wochu* (Our Area) and were divided up into five

¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 2.

² Except where otherwise indicated, the factual information contained in this chapter is derived from *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 29–32. The only other source which supplements this information (on the hierarchy of headmen at this village level) is the Internal Reports (pp. 26–32). This material, being in unedited form and not intended for public consumption, is at times sketchy. Inconsistencies are pointed out and resolved if possible. The relevant section in the 1961 collection of materials on the Guangxi native chieftaincy system compiled by the Guangxi Museum (*Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian*) appears to be based on the relevant sections in the Internal Reports and has attempted to tidy up the salient details. Unlike its other sections, the *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian* does not cite any pre-modern sources for its record of this section (viz. vol. 3, section 3, *Anping zhou de tumu* [The headmen of Anping subprefecture], pp. 369–372), which the compilers attributed solely to “recent field studies”. It therefore appears that the Field Studies are the only source for this level of local administration.

³ Internal Reports, p. 5.

sections, which is said to be why they came to be called *Wuchu* (Five Places) by the villagers. I use this designation hereafter, for simplicity and because it was the term with which the local populace was more familiar.

The fieldworkers do not elaborate on the origins of this nomenclature. However, the use of the term *hua* (literally, to transform) for these administrative divisions is evidently related to the notion of ‘transforming’ or ‘civilizing’ commoners and non-Han peoples, a process which was continuously operating amongst the peripheral states of the Chinese empire from at least the Western Zhou dynasty (1066–771 BC).⁴ Whether or not the overt use of this term here reflected an ongoing attempt by the native officials to signify these areas or to signify that the territory was no longer beyond the pale of civilization (*huawai*), it was at least expressive of one of the highest ideals of Chinese civilization, and as such can be seen as a desire to gain favour with the Chinese court.⁵

The Field Studies and Internal Reports do not specify when this administrative delineation of the Anping *tusi* domain took place. However, the Eight Civilizing Districts and Five Places appear to have been in existence in Anping prefecture (in its previous ‘bridle and halter’ form) in the fifth year of the Song Huangyou reign period (1053), after the Song General Diqing subjugated Nong Zhigao and was granted a hereditary fief.⁶ The eight districts were individually named *dong* (East), *xi* (West), *nan* (South), *bei* (North), *shang* (Upper), *zhong* (Middle), *gui* (Return) and *shi* (Food).

No reasons are given for the names “Food”, “Return” and “Upper”,

⁴ This is discussed in chapter 2. This continuous process was already in operation during the Western Zhou dynasty (see, for example, Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), pp. 115, 174).

⁵ This can be contrasted with Nandan native subprefecture, where its equivalent administrative districts were called by the military name *shao* (cf. sentry post), and the headmen had titles prefixed *shao* (*Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 43). A variety of other terms were used in the other *tusi* in Daxin county, such as *tuan* (Taiping *tusi*) and *jia* (Wancheng *tusi*); see *Daxin xianzhi*, pp. 26–27. The *hua* nomenclature in Anping, with its philosophical dimension, seems to stand alone.

⁶ Internal Reports, p. 5. As with the *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliao huibian*, the Administrative Divisions section in the Gazetteer of Daxin County contains these details on the territorial divisions of the Anping native subprefecture but with no details of when the delineation occurred (see *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 26). This is to be contrasted with the administrative division of Taiping native subprefecture, which is stated in the *Daxin xianzhi* to have occurred during the end of the Guangxu reign period of the Qing (see ibid.).

but the naming was probably based on local factors. The actual locations of the directionally named districts (see map 7) seem displaced as no reference point is apparent. The Han Chinese tended to reckon their boundaries on the basis of roads from the central administrative seat, but the locations of the districts in this case bear no relation to their orientation relative to Anping Jie. Only the Middle District (*zhong hua*) seems to be located in a way consistent with its name, as it is roughly in the centre of the subprefecture. Nevertheless, the directional names replicate the order of the cardinal directions, suggesting a microcosm of the Chinese empire.

The Eight Civilizing Districts and Five Places of Anping contained, in total, 263 large and small villages (*cun* and *tun*).⁷ At the time of gathering their data in the 1950s, the fieldworkers also stated that Anping native subprefecture contained a total of 5,741 households, 28,740 people, 1,034,000 *mu* of arable land, and over 5,600 head of buffalo. They surmised that in the native official era fifty years earlier, these figures would have been much lower.⁸ Notwithstanding this qualification, these figures were adopted by the Gazetteer of Daxin County.⁹ (There is a paucity of information on population and changes in population over time within Anping and other *tusi*, which has to be accepted as a shortcoming of these data. Generally, population statistics were not recorded in the Chinese annals in respect of aboriginal populations in the southwest.)¹⁰

Cun and *tun* denoted the natural villages within the *xiang* (parish) rather than specific administrative divisions. Prior to the establishment of the PRC in 1949 there were 20 to 30 households on average in a *cun*.¹¹ *Tun* has come to refer to the smaller natural villages, largely

⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 29. The Internal Reports makes no mention of this precise figure of 263 *cun* and *tun*, and sheds no light on how this figure was arrived at in the Field Studies. The *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliao huibian*, the *Guangxi tongzhi*, and *Daxin xianzhi* do not provide details on the number of villages which were in Anping *tusi*. I have therefore assumed that this figure of 263 was based on oral evidence from the local villagers.

⁸ Internal Reports, p. 6.

⁹ See *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 26.

¹⁰ See, for example, Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), esp. p. 260.

¹¹ See *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 29. The *xiang* was a rural administrative district, or parish; it was the territorial unit directly below the *xian* (county). For a summary of the historical background of the *xiang* as an administrative division of rural areas, see Hsiao Kung-chuan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), p. 559, n. 12.

equating to the English hamlet. The *tun* in Daxin county continue to be relatively small to this day. Currently, most *tun* in Anping contain around forty to fifty households, but can range from around ten to over two hundred. There are three reasons for this: first, the scattered valleys in the karst region could accommodate few residents, and there were only small patches of arable land due to the problem of surface water availability. Second, the small hamlets had evolved gradually from single households originally set up when peasants fleeing war escaped to the mountains to eke out an existence. Third, topographical conditions made the valleys inaccessible, with poor communications.¹²

During the Anping native chieftaincy, a distinction was usually made between *cun* and *tun* villages in respect of the origins of their inhabitants. The *tun* (literally, encampments) were established as a result of the practice of *tuntian*, the military colonies discussed in chapter 2, whereby garrison soldiers were stationed in the countryside and required to produce their own food through opening up the wasteland and planting grain. *Tun* inhabitants were thus outsiders. The practice began with the settling of Song troops in the area following the defeat of the Nong Zhigao rebellion. It appears to have been part of a long-term plan in relation to border areas: in Nandan native subprefecture, following the defeat of the Nong Zhigao peasant uprising, the Song court made a long-term plan for garrisoning and defending remote areas, which involved dispatching troops to those areas to create *tuntian*.¹³ *Cun* inhabitants, on the other hand, tended to be indigenous people who had settled in the *cun* villages through having natural ties to the area rather than through government action.

The Five Places referred to the area of Anping Jie (*Jie* means “street”, but it also indicated a *cun*-level village with a periodic market, as in this case). The built-up area and its immediate surrounds was the economic centre of Anping, and was said to contain nine streets and thirteen lanes. The nine streets referred to the places where various trading transactions in the marketplace were carried out, such as Zheng Jie (Upright Street), Xin Jie (New Street) and Zhu Hang (Pig Row). Anping Jie and the *yamen* of the Anping native official were burned down by peasant armies during the Xianfeng and Tongzhi reign periods of the Qing

¹² *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 44.

¹³ See *Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 141.

(1851–1875), and Anping Jie never recovered.¹⁴ Both were successively restored during the Guangxu reign period (1875–1909), but by then, circumstances had changed greatly.

The thirteen lanes encircled the *yamen* of the native official and were actually the places where the house slaves who specialized in certain tasks congregated. In Kedu Tun and Dahe Tun, house slaves by the river bank ferried people across the river; in Aibu Tun, they specialized in weaving cotton cloth for the native official's family; in Waliu Tun, they baked tiles and sawed timber; and in Luliu Tun they grew flowers.¹⁵

Location of the Eight Civilizing Districts and Five Places

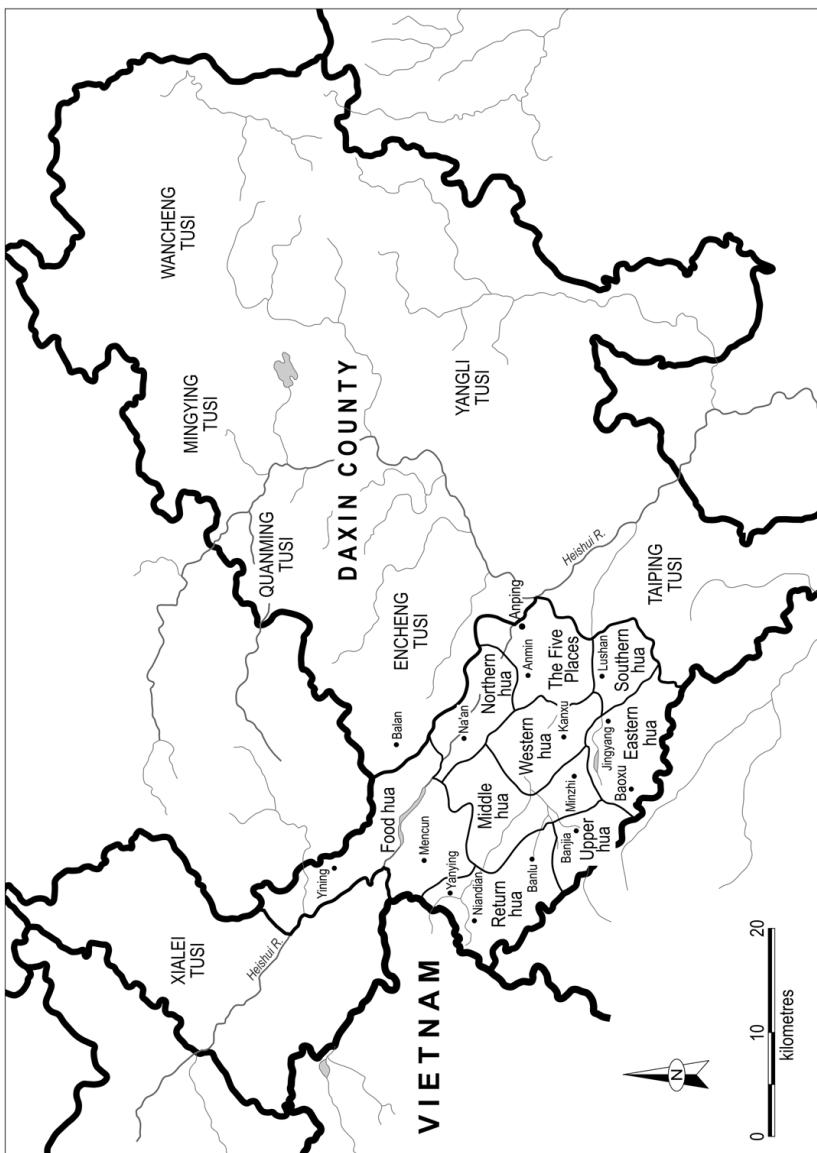
The fieldworkers recorded some details on the location of the eight civilizing districts in relation to the *xiang* (parish) in which they were located. They also provided the names of the villages within the Five Places.¹⁶ Such information has enabled me to establish the approximate boundaries of these territorial units (see map 7). The ability to make this extrapolation is testament to the contribution of the Field Studies to our knowledge of the anatomy of a Zhuang native subprefecture. We can now provide a cartographic and verbal depiction of a discrete set of 'village clusters' typically associated with chieftaincies, which formed the domain of this native official.

Information on the boundaries of the various *xiang*, as well as the local folklore regarding the place names of the relevant *xiang* and villages, is also available through the Place Name Gazetteer of Daxin County (*Daxin xian dimingzhi*). Putting the information together, we can arrive at the following descriptions of the Anping territorial units.

¹⁴ This appears to be a reference to an incident during the eighth year of the Tongzhi reign period (1869) after the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion, when a remaining Taiping army led by Tang Ahliu occupied Anping for five years. Fighting between the peasant troops and official troops resulted in a large fire in Anping Jie (see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 54; *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 3).

¹⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 29.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 30; Internal Reports, pp. 5–6.



Map 7. Map of Daxin county indicating (a) the approximate locations of the eight native chieftaincies within its boundaries and (b) the approximate administrative divisions of Anping native chieftaincy.

Eastern District

The Eastern District (*donghua*) was in the area of Baoxu Xiang at the western end of Anping.¹⁷ It had “over twenty” villages.¹⁸ It was 112 square kilometres in area.¹⁹ The area was said to have been prone to hailstorms (*baο*) and was called Baodi (hailstorm place). As people came to the area to settle and trade, the population increased and it became a marketplace known as Baoxu (hailstorm market). Legend has it that a pair of ducks in the well at the end of the market street was spotted by an outsider, who said they were treasure ducks, so the name was changed to Baoxu (treasure market). The villages in this district are said to have been founded in the Song dynasty.²⁰

What is at issue here is the idea, widespread in Zhuang areas and in China generally, of local places owing their prosperity to buried treasure. If such legends surround it, the place is referred to as *youbao*, or often *yousanbao* (cf. the Buddhist precept that treasures come in threes). The appearance here of a rare species of bird might have been an outward sign of such treasure.

Western District

The Western District (*xihua*) was in the area of Kanxu Xiang, a little over twenty *li* from the west of Anping Jie, and was situated in the hills. It also had “over twenty” villages. Its territory totalled 128 square kilometres. The hill slopes were said to have an abundant growth of a fragrant and sweet fruit called maak² kaam¹ (a type of orange), which probably accounts for the similarity in sound of the name Kanxu Xiang. It became a marketplace during the Republic. Villages here were said to have been founded in the beginning of the Song Dynasty.²¹

¹⁷ The territorial nomenclature (e.g. *xiang*) used by the fieldworkers refers to that in force when the fieldwork was undertaken in the 1950s. There were many changes in administrative units between then and the 1980s. Details of these changes are contained in *Daxin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Daxin County), pp. 30–36.

¹⁸ These place names are based on the nomenclature in force at the time of the fieldwork in 1956–57. Although most underwent several changes of administrative unit between then and c.1984, the original place names remained unchanged. The stated estimates of *cun* and *tun* for each district have to be taken at their face value. On a generous totaling of these estimates, they approach the “263 large and small *cun* and *tun*” specified by the fieldworkers.

¹⁹ *Daxin xian dimingzhi*, p. 112.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Southern District

The Southern District (*nanhua*) was in the area of Lushan Xiang, over twenty *li* from Anping Jie in the southwestern region. It also had “over twenty” villages. Lushan Xiang was changed to Lushan Cungongsuo in 1984. (Since the 1980s, *cungongsuo* has been the name for the administrative village, a territorial unit comprising as many as ten natural villages.) It was originally called Naman (na⁴ monq²) village. Na⁴ monq² was a Zhuang term referring to fields which had just been cleared, with only the beginnings of vegetation, indicating a newer village.²² Later, because a mountain at the rear of the village contained a grotto (*yan-dong*) with pleasing scenery which was also refreshingly cool, people called it Lushan Yan (Lushan grotto), after the famous Lushan mountain in Jiangxi renowned for the natural beauty of its overhanging rocks, clear springs and waterfalls. Villages here are said to have been established during the Ming Dynasty.²³

Northern District

The Northern District (*beihua*) was in the region of Na'an Xiang, in the mountain district ten *li* or so to the northwest of Anping Jie. It had “over ten” small villages. Na'an Xiang has undergone several name changes, the most recent of which was to Na'an Cungongsuo in 1984. It is said that there were already villages here during the Song dynasty. Na'an village, from which its name derived, was established during the Song Xianchun reign period (1265-1274). Na (na⁴) means fields in the local Zhuang language. Its fields were all located by the Heishui riverbank (*an*), hence its name Na'an (fields by the riverbank), which represents a blend of Zhuang and Chinese terms.²⁴

Upper District

The Upper District (*shanghua*) was in the region of Banjia Cun. It was a little over thirty *li* to the west of Anping Jie, and had “over ten” villages. It was named after the hamlet of Banjia, the seat of Banjia Cungongsuo. Banjia was established during the Yuan Dade reign period

²² As advised by Mr. Ling Shudong.

²³ *Daxin xian dimingzhi*, p. 122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

(1297–1307). A small river flowed through the middle of the hamlet and the houses were arranged in rows outwards from the river banks, thus resembling the branches of a tree. *Jia* (ŋa¹) referred in the local Zhuang language to tree branches and *ban* (?baan³) to a natural village (*tun*); hence its name means Tree Branch Village.²⁵

Middle District

The Middle District (*zhonghua*) was in the region of Minzhi Cun. It was twenty or more *li* to the southwest of Anping Jie, and had “over thirty” large and small villages.²⁶ Minzhi was also changed to Minzhi Cungongsuo in 1984. Villages had already been established there during the Yuan dynasty. Its name is said to be based on the virtues *ren yi li zhi* and *xin* (benevolence and righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and trust). This distinctly Chinese village name indicates that the area was already showing signs of sinification during the Yuan dynasty.

Return District

The Return District (*guihua*) was in the region of Banlü Cun, Yanying Xiang and Niandian Xiang. Villages were already in existence there during the Yuan dynasty. Banlü was its original name, so-called because the villages (?baan³) were all situated at the foot of a mountain, and *lì* (luak⁵) referred in the local Zhuang language to the foot of a mountain. Later on the character for *lì* was changed to the more auspicious character for emoluments, a reference to the Chinese phrase *fulì* (happiness and emoluments).²⁷ This is an instance of a Zhuang word being replaced with a similar sounding Chinese word but with an entirely different meaning.

Yanying Xiang (changed to Yanying Cungongsuo in 1984) was approximately twenty-seven kilometres northwest of Anping Jie (see map 7). It was surrounded by mountains, with steep cliffs on its southeastern side. When one called out through a mountain pass in the steep cliffs, a clear echo could be heard on all sides. *Yan* referred in the local dialect to a steep cliff, and *ying* referred to an echo, hence its name. Villages

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 113–114.

²⁶ Again, this description is based on the map of Daxin county in the *Daxin xian dimingzhi*. The Field Studies description (*Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30) appears incorrect.

²⁷ *Daxin xian dimingzhi*, p. 114.

are said to have been in existence in this locality during the Tang dynasty.²⁸

Niandian Xiang (changed to Niandian Cungongsuo in 1984) was approximately thirty kilometres from Anping Jie (see map 7). Its name was an amalgamation of the character *nian* from Niandou village, and the character *dian* from Xiadian village and Shangdian village, all of which were under its jurisdiction. *Nian* referred to water (*nam*⁶) in the local dialect, as there was water cascading down the mountains alongside the village. *Dian* (*teem*³) in Xiadian village referred to dripping water, which was present in valleys where the village was founded. Shangdian was so named because it was upstream of Xiadian.²⁹ Again, such village names reveal a combination of Chinese (*shang* and *xia* meaning upper and lower) and Zhuang terms.

Food District

The Food District (*shihua*) was in the region of Mencun Xiang (changed to Mencun Cungongsuo in 1984), which was over twenty *li* north of Anping Jie, and had “over twenty” villages. Villages were already in existence there during the Tang dynasty.³⁰

According to local legend, a native official had gone hunting in the area, when a dog he was hunting disappeared down a hole and did not emerge for a long time. The native official sent his retinue to find it. When asked, the villagers, knowing that the dog was still in the hole, withheld the truth. After that, the village came to be called Mancun (hide the truth), but later on people grew accustomed to writing its name as Mencun.³¹

Five Places District

The Five Places (*wuchu*) District was in the region of Anping Cun, Anmin Cun, Bahe Cun, Tuocun and Nongcun.³² Anping Cun is twelve

²⁸ Ibid., p. 133.

²⁹ Ibid. In 1928, following the conversion of Anping to direct Chinese rule, the Guomindang re-categorized all the villages in the Return District and the Middle District into various villages prefixed *min*: Minfu, Minlu, Minshou, Minkang, Minning, Minren, Minyi, Minli, Minzhi and Minxin Cun (*Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30).

³⁰ *Daxin xian dimingzhi*, p. 134.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Internal Reports, p. 6.

kilometres northwest of the seat of administration of Leiping. As seen earlier, villages were already established there during the Song dynasty.³³

Anmin Cun, which was five kilometres west of Anping, already had villages in existence during the Song dynasty. It was located in a remote mountainous district where native officials would take refuge each time there was upheaval; subsequently it came to be called Anmin (pacify the people) by the native officials.³⁴

Bahe Cun was northwest of the seat of administration of present-day Leiping, and is the seat of Anmin Cun. It was established in the first year of the Wude reign period of the Tang dynasty (618).³⁵ *Ba* (pja¹) referred in the local Zhuang language to a stone mountain beside the village and *he* was similar in sound to the Zhuang word *ha*³ meaning five, which was a reference to the five households who came at the same time to establish the village.³⁶

These descriptions provide a glimpse of a settled village society going back as far as the Tang dynasty (618–907), set in valleys between karst mountains where the inhabitants lived amidst overhanging rocks, waterfalls and grottoes. The place names of the old villages within these parishes serve as linguistic symbols or ‘living fossils’ of geographic substance and location and as evidence of the stability of human activities and customs. As such, they constitute a valuable source for ethno-linguistic study.³⁷ They also reveal the natural way in which Zhuang and Chinese terms are blended in the village names, indicating a society at ease with this concept since at least the Song dynasty.

Administration of the Civilizing Districts

In each district (*hua*), the native official established local headmen known as *zhidong*, *zonghua*, *fudong*, *zhangdong*, *quandong* and *quan'ai*.³⁸ They were essentially part of his band of retainers, who served as his deputies in administering the territory under his jurisdiction. In addition, every village had from one to several *langshou*. The distinctly

³³ *Daxin xian dimingzhi*, p. 99.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.; *Guangxi Zhuangzu diming xuanji*, p. 93.

³⁷ *Guangxi Zhuangyu diming xuanji*, Foreword.

³⁸ Internal Reports, pp. 26–27.

Chinese character of most of the headman titles suggests that they were created by the native official in response to the demands of the native official system, or as a politically beneficial patron-client gesture. In reality, the headmen were part of the native chieftain's retinue, regardless of the superimposition upon it of the native official system.

During the heyday of the native official, each rank of local headmen had prescribed responsibilities, each subordinate to the next higher rank. The information in the Field Studies is limited to the late Qing dynasty, when the political power of the native official had declined. The authority of each of these offices at that time could be roughly summed up as follows:

Zhidong (Chief of the Valley)

There was one *zhidong* per district, appointed and removed by the native official. The title *zhidong* (literally, to know the valley) tracks the semantics of the Chinese term for magistrate (*zhizhou*—to know the subprefecture). The title also suggests that the *hua* administrative units in Anping native chieftaincy were earlier known as *dong* (valleys), or were based on the *dong* administrative unit. Fan Chengda, writing around 1172, also referred to *zhidong*, a title conferred on local chieftains under the bridle-and-halter system when Fan was Guangxi Military Commissioner.³⁹

The *zhidong* had overall responsibility for the entire district. He was also in charge of the *zongguan*, *fudong* and *langshou* of his district. He transmitted the orders of the native official and instructed the *zonghua* to press for corvée, grain and cash payments, the most crucial duty of the village headman. When matters in the parish (*xiang*) required resolution, it was the *zhidong* who summoned the other headmen of the district to deal with them; this was described as “to divide the task” (Ch. *fenshi*; Zh. *pan¹ sai⁵*).⁴⁰ (The fieldworkers, in transcribing Zhuang terms, tried to find Chinese characters that coincided both in meaning and sound. This is an example.) The title was later changed to *tuanzong* in accordance with post Tongzhi restoration (1862–1874) changes in local governance.

A *zhidong* (Chief of the Valley) and *tuanzhang* (Detachment Com-

³⁹ See Fan Chengda, *Guihai yuhengzhi*, in *Nanfang caomu zhuang*, p. 589–386.

⁴⁰ Internal Reports, p. 31.

mander) was established in each district. The other posts could be established in various possible combinations in each district, depending on the particular conditions of each area.⁴¹

Zonghua (District Supervisor)

The post of *zonghua* was second only to the *zhidong* and was later called *zongguan* or *zongli*. *Zongguan* (literally, to take overall responsibility) was also a military official title in imperial China, rendered in the Qing as "Supervisor-in-Chief."⁴² As with several other titles within the Anping native chieftaincy, it represents a convergence in nomenclature with the regular Chinese (*liuguan*) administration.

The *zonghua* was appointed and removed by the native official, and was responsible for the management and affairs of several villages. Each district was divided into several parts, and each division had one *zonghua*, usually totalling three or four per district. The main responsibilities of the post were to press for labour, grain and money on behalf of the native official. Sometimes he had the power to appoint and remove village headmen, and to handle village disputes. The *zonghua* also acted as runner for the *zhidong*, with responsibility for delivering incoming and outgoing messages.⁴³

Fudong (Deputy Chief of the Valley)

The *fudong* was not in fact the deputy to the *zhidong*, as implied by the title, but was the assistant to the *zonghua*. Some *fudong* were individually hired and paid a salary by the *zonghua*; their primary function was to act on behalf of the *zonghua* in pressing for collection of grain payments, conscripting corvée and offering tributes to the native official and the *zhidong*. They also assisted the *zonghua* in writing official documents; a certain level of literacy was therefore required at this level. When the native official visited the countryside, the *fudong* notified the *langshou*, prepared food and obtained the requisite labour services.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian*, vol. 3, p. 370.

⁴² See Hucke, #7110.

⁴³ Internal Reports, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

Tuanzhang (Detachment Commander)

The *tuanzhang* was responsible for training and organizing the *tuanyong* (regiment braves) to defend the territory.⁴⁵ This post was probably established after the Tongzhi restoration, which is consistent with the *tuanzong* discussed in chapter 9. After the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), the Qing court militarized the structure of local government in order to exercise surveillance over the peasantry, as is reflected in the *tuan* (detachment) nomenclature.⁴⁶

Quan'ai (Plenipotentiary of the Pass)

The post of *quan'ai* was specially set up for the local headmen who guarded the entrance to narrow mountain passes within the subprefecture. There was one *quan'ai* per pass, directly accountable to the native official or the *zhidong*. Some *quan'ai* held the concurrent post of *langshou*, and administered the affairs of their village. Given the fundamental duty of the native official to provide military service to the Chinese state and to defend China's borders, it is likely that this post, which had a direct bearing upon defence and the organization of the local military, was established by the native official in response to these requirements and was not a natural headman post belonging to the traditional Zhuang political system.

Quandong (Plenipotentiary of the Valley)

One *quandong* was established per district. He was responsible for collecting the annual grain rental from the official fields.⁴⁷ This is to be distinguished from the *zonghua* above, who pressed for grain taxes from the villages for which he was responsible.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the military reorganization that took place during the Tongzhi Restoration, see Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung Chih Restoration, 1862–1874* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957), esp. pp. 196–221.

⁴⁷ Internal Reports, p. 27. This post is not included in the Field Studies (see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30).

Qiandong (Tax Collector of the Valley)

One *qiandong* was established per district, or one was established for a large village or several small villages. This headman had responsibility for pressing for and collecting grain taxes.⁴⁸

Such meticulously delineated posts illustrate the level to which the collection of grain from all over the districts was institutionalized. This is not surprising given that grain was the primary source of income of the native official and his kinsmen, and also given the sheer physical and logistical difficulties involved in collecting the grain taxes from every district.

Qiandong (Notary of the Valley)

One *qiandong* was established per district, or one was established for a large village or several small villages. He administered orders issued by, and otherwise had the same duties as, the *quandong*.⁴⁹

Zhangdong (Keeper of the Valley), fudong (Deputy Chief of the Valley) and zongli (Superintendent)

These posts equally administered one large village or several small villages that were close together. Their position was higher than that of the *langshou*, although some held the post of *langshou* concurrently. They were responsible for the administration of their particular village; their authority did not extend into other villages.⁵⁰

Langshou (Village Headman)

Every village had a *langshou*, who was responsible for collecting grain tax and pressing for labour services, as well as for the routine matters of that village.⁵¹ (This is discussed in detail later in this chapter.)

⁴⁸ This post appears in the Field Studies (see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30) but not in the Internal Reports (p. 27). Under the land tenure system discussed in chapter 8, it appears that this headman was responsible for collecting taxes from people’s fields (*mintian*), as opposed to the *quandong*, who was responsible for collecting grain rental from the official fields.

⁴⁹ Internal Reports, p. 27. As with the *quandong* above, this post is not included in the Field Studies. The pinyin transcriptions of this and the “Tax collector of the Valley” immediately above are identical. Tax collector of the Valley is denoted by the Chinese character for money, while Notary of the Valley is denoted by the Chinese character for records, which functions as a verb (to keep records) here.

⁵⁰ Internal Reports, p. 27.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Yebing (Night Soldier)

The *yebing* were the runners for the headmen in each village.⁵²

Political control by the headmen

The fieldworkers researched the organizational structure of the villages within the Return District (*Guihua*) at the end of the Qing dynasty. They selected this district because it was furthest from the native official's administrative headquarters at Anping, which meant that his influence was weaker there. In these circumstances, the political control wielded by the headmen, free from constraints relating to the native official, would probably have been used to maximum effect.⁵³ The structure in the Return District is shown below.

This breakdown indicates that each village always had at least one *langshou*. The fact that all the villages here were hamlets (*tun*) probably accounts for the low number of headmen.⁵⁴

VILLAGE	NO. OF HEADMEN	POSTS HELD
Kongtun	1	<i>langshou</i>
Meitun	1	<i>langshou</i>
Sanliang	1	<i>langshou</i>
Nianniu	1	<i>langshou</i>
Lengzong	2	<i>langshou, fudong</i>
Shangdian	2	<i>langshou, zongguan</i>
Xiadian	2	<i>langshou, zhangdong</i>
Shou	2	<i>langshou, qiandong</i> ⁵⁵
Didan	2	<i>langshou, qian'ai</i>
Ying	2	<i>langshou, zongli</i>
Yanying	2	<i>langshou, zhangdong</i>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ The compilers of the *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian* appear to have used this record of the organizational structure within *Guihua* to make a list of possible combinations of headmen in the villages, depending on the conditions and differences in each area (see *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoj huibian*, vol. 3, p. 370).

⁵⁵ There is a discrepancy here between the Field Studies (*Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 30) in which this post is described as *qiandong* and the Internal Reports (p. 28) in which it is described as *quandong*. The inconsistency suggests that these different character renderings referred to the same post rather than two separate posts.

Internal Machinations

The village headmen constituted one layer of the native official's local support system which covered management of routine matters, peace-keeping and defence in the villages, and ensured provision by the villages of taxes and labour services. The authority and benefits accruing to the posts were liable to exploitation by both headmen and native officials. Two of these posts (*zhidong* and *zonghua*) are discussed further for the insights they provide into such stratagems. Finally, the role of the *langshou*, regarded by the villagers as an important village elder, is also explored.

The Zhidong (Chief of the Valley)

The *zhidong* was the highest official in the district. Appointed directly by the native official, the extent of his authority was very wide, and locally his standing was so great that he was in some cases regarded by the villagers as a celestial being to be worshipped.⁵⁶ He was regarded as second only to the native official and customarily called *er guan* (Second Official). Consequently, the tussle to gain this office was always intense; aspirants to the post had to try and please the native official and present him gifts which displayed their respect in order to be favoured with an appointment. This was why the positions were generally taken by people from the largest rich households in the district who had a modicum of culture, were familiar with the machinations of officialdom, could speak the official dialect (southwest official Chinese) or the Yue (Cantonese) dialect, and had the ability to manage work. If the *zhidong* did not consistently exert himself in presenting tributes and displaying loyalty, the native official would find an excuse to dismiss and replace him, usually before a year or so. Otherwise, he could look forward to a long term in office.

The importance attached to the office of the *zhidong* was reinforced ceremonially within the district. When the *zhidong* took office, the native official would dispatch a runner to deliver the documents of appointment, two people would lift a banner with both hands, one person would fire an iron blunderbuss, and a gong would be struck loudly as this procession made its way through the village. The headmen of all the

⁵⁶ Internal Reports, p. 29.

villages under the particular district came to proffer congratulations, and the newly appointed *zhidong* also arranged a large banquet to receive them. It was a replica, scaled down accordingly, of the accession ceremony for the native official and the opening of the seal described in chapter 5. It illustrates how the native official and local headmen utilized patron-client relations to build their respective but also interdependent political power and support.⁵⁷

These local headmen held real power, were mutually dependent and had a strong network system. For example, there was an agreement that on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month each year during the Dragon Boat Festival, Nong Zhai, the *zhidong* of the Northern District, would invite the twenty-four *langshou* from the entire district to come first to a dinner, where he would present them with gifts to show appreciation for their support.

Remuneration

The salary of the *zhidong* was always the sum of the income received from the official fields apportioned to him by the native official, and the tribute paid by each village. The fieldworkers considered that this led to the extra-economic exploitation of the serfs. They noted, for example, that the peasants in Banjia village (in the Upper District) had to undertake three days of cultivation and two days of portage on behalf of the *zhidong*, and provide labour service to the *fudong*, on top of their tax obligations to the native official.⁵⁸ For example, the peasants who rented the six *ban* (36 *mu*) of official fields of Fujiao village apportioned to the *zhidong* of the Northern District paid over one half of their harvest to him as rent, approximating 9000 *jin* of paddy.⁵⁹ Apart from that, the *zhidong* also received 3,600 cash towards the miscellaneous expenses of his office, collected from apportionments from every village in the district. This income alone was far from sufficient to cover his expenses. Consequently, the main income of the *zhidong* was obtained during the collection of grain taxes from the district, when he could use various

⁵⁷ Cf. Eric R. Wolf, "Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies," in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. Michael Banton, pp. 16ff. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1966).

⁵⁸ See *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 36.

⁵⁹ A *ban* was a common unit of area in respect of fields in Anping, equivalent to 6 *mu* (see Internal Reports, p. 10). The *mu* varies in different parts of the country but is approximately one sixth of an acre.

pretexts to obtain some benefit and, through his adjudication of disputes between the villagers, resort to extortion.

The *zhidong* of the Eastern District received ten *mu* of official fields to cultivate, was exempt from taxes, and also received ten to thirty *jin* of paddy each year from every household in every village under his jurisdiction. It is unclear why the *zhidong* of the Eastern District, which was said to have "over twenty" villages, received ten *mu* of official fields while the *zhidong* of the Northern District, which was said to have "over ten" villages, received thirty-six *mu* of official fields, though this suggests that factors other than size of their jurisdiction were at play. It may have been a way of counterbalancing the larger paddy tribute which the *zhidong* of the Eastern District received.

The *zhidong* of the Return District also received income from official fields. Each year ten strings of cash collected from each village within the district were turned over to him.⁶⁰ In addition, he received fifty-five strings of cash from the grain taxes, half of which he had to pay to the native official. He also exploited opportunities to obtain other income in the course of adjudicating disputes.

Village Disputes

The general attitude of the peasants towards disputes was that it was preferable to invite the nearby *zhidong* to adjudicate, this being simpler and more economical than travelling to the *yamen* where, as with Chinese villagers, they would be prey to *yamen* runners who would squeeze each party alike for all manner of fees. The fieldworkers do not provide details on the adjudication process save to say that when the *zhidong* tried a case for which there were no stipulated criteria or norms, the matter was mostly dealt with in accordance with traditional customs. The *zhidong* did not adjudicate the matter alone but through a joint consultative process. He would usually summon together the *zongguan*, *fudong*, *langshou* and other headmen, who would jointly confer on how to handle the matter.⁶¹

An example of the customary law which prevailed related to the case of a son born out of wedlock. In general, the male party would be fined 3,600 cash, which he had to pay to the *zhidong*, after which there would

⁶⁰ The fieldworkers do not specify the number of official fields received by the *zhidong* of the Return District.

⁶¹ Internal Reports, p. 31.

be no further investigation. If the complaint was taken higher up to the native official, the demands would escalate.

A case where this happened was when the widow of Feng Xing of Yanying village fell pregnant, and her late husband's family lodged a complaint with the native official's office. The widow's younger brother, Feng Yan, was fined 10,000 copper *yuan*. He was forced to sell all his property to pay the fine, but that was not the end of the matter. The *zhidong* fined the family a further 1,000 copper *yuan* and ten *jin* of pork, claiming that this situation was an offence to public decency and disrespect towards the gods, and that it also sullied the name of the native official. The family also had to prepare a feast, and after offering sacrifices to the gods at the local temple had to again entertain the *zhidong* and other headmen to proffer apologies. Only then was the matter considered settled.

The fines imposed by the *zhidong* varied, and were divided up by the headmen who were involved in the matter. If it was a large case the fine was relatively high and the *zhidong*, not daring to keep all of it, had to hand over seven-tenths to the native official.

Relationship between the zhidong and the Native Official

Once in office, it was incumbent on the *zhidong* to make even more efforts to ingratiate himself to the native official than before his appointment, and to serve loyally in his position. When the native official began to use his seal in the first month of the year, the *zhidong* would normally bring the headmen from the entire district together with people from every household, who would carry roast pig, wine and vegetables as congratulatory offerings. On each celebratory occasion as well as weddings, funerals or marriages of daughters from the official household, buildings were constructed, and the *zhidong* had to exert himself to raise and apportion grain payments from the district as tribute. As well, if the native official or his runners arrived in his district, the *zhidong* had to extend lavish hospitality and make every effort to satisfy all their needs. Such forced demonstrations of loyalty and political support by the *zhidong* towards the native official underscored his liability to dismissal by the native official at any time. For this reason the native official could and probably did make more demands of the *zhidong* and other headmen than he could of his official clan members, who held some veto over his authority.

Both Liang Guisheng of Nonghe village in the Eastern District and

Huang Tuan of Najie village in the Northern District used money to buy the post of *zhidong* from the native official. The native official would fix the period of their appointment in accordance with the amount of their tribute. At its expiry, the *zhidong* post was again up for purchase by another person. This can be compared with the Nandan chieftaincy, where the equivalent office of *shaozong* could be mortgaged and sold, subject to the native official's approval. In this way families could effectively buy power and prestige.⁶² Consequently, those who had a special relationship with the native official would assume longer appointments. In a posting lasting over thirty years, Feng Jiduan of Du'ai village in the Northern District was appointed *zhidong* in the twenty-fourth year of the Guangxu reign period (1898) and remained in office until the eighteenth year of the Republic (1929) after the native official fell from power. It also illustrates the deeply-entrenched nature of the local headman system which the native official had at his disposal well after the official abolition of his office in 1906. It was a local political institution which remained intact regardless of governmental action.

The zonghua (District Supervisor)

The *zonghua* was the second highest headman after the *zhidong*. Since the *zonghua* was both appointed and removed by the native official aspirants to the position had to bribe the native official with money. For instance, in the twenty-fifth year of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1899), Nong Shengguang of Banda village in the Eastern District had to give the native official 50 strings of cash before he could assume the post.

The *zonghua* was eligible for six *ban* (36 *mu*) of official fields, which were cultivated by the villagers and for which they paid him rent (the fieldworkers do not specify the proportion of rent in this case). Through the grain taxes and labour services which he had to procure for the native official, the *zonghua* netted approximately 9,000 *jin* of paddy annually. Fines paid in relation to the adjudication of village disputes were also part of his income. From the peasants' viewpoint it was more convenient to invite the *zonghua* to handle their cases. They only needed to pay him a bribe, after which he would see to it that their problems were removed from the public eye. However, he had to remit

⁶² See *Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 43.

seven-tenths of the public fines to the native official and the *zhidong*, with only the remainder at his disposal.⁶³

Although this was *prima facie* another avenue for the adjudication of village disputes, it was a less formal channel than adjudication through the *zhidong*, which had to be dealt with by consultation with other headmen in accordance with stipulated criteria or traditional customs. This avenue of ‘adjudication’ through bribery of the *zonghua* therefore appears to have been a back-door method of attempting to have the dispute ‘forgotten’ rather than addressed through formal channels.

The langshou

As we have seen above, the *langshou* (Village Headman) was the one post which was always in existence in every village, and was a natural post. Unlike the *lang* prefix in official Chinese titles which is usually rendered as “gentleman”, in the Zhuang *tusi* domains, *langshou* is said to have been a generalized term for a natural village headman.⁶⁴ The *langshou* originated from the *cun lao* (village elder) of former times. Consistent with being a village elder, the *langshou* was elected by the villagers rather than appointed directly by the native official. The *langshou* also had charge of all the routine work in the village. Apart from the standard duties of pressing for grain payments, conscripting labour and exacting tributes, the *langshou* also managed the ancestral sacrifices within the village and was responsible for public welfare, which extended to the mediation of disputes and participation in legal cases. He was required to appear personally to preside over and manage all these matters. For instance, if the village water cart was broken, it was the *langshou* who summoned every household to promptly provide the labour and grain required for its repair. Otherwise, the village harvest would be affected and the *langshou* would be held accountable by the native official.

The entire village was liable for grain payments, conscripted labour, and tribute payments. If they did not hand over the payments on time, the *langshou* would be held responsible. The *langshou* also had to levy and collect the additional payments from each household for family weddings, funerals and so on of the native official’s family. When the

⁶³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 31.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Hucker, #3563 ff.; cf. Bai Yaotian, “‘Lang’ kao” (A Study of the Term ‘lang’), in *Guangxi minzu lishi yu wenhua yanjiu*, vol. 3, 1989, p. 21.

native official and the *zhidong*, accompanied by their officials and runners, passed through a village, the required meat, wine, miscellaneous expenses and public duties were all the responsibility of the *langshou*, who had to collect a contribution from every household. This extended to the village sacrifices during the annual spring and autumn festivals, as well as to times of natural and man-made calamities, when it was also the *langshou* who had to initiate the collection of grain and money from every household and prepare the sacrificial offerings to the local gods. Thus it appears that the *langshou* had the ultimate responsibility for the labour, grain tax and tribute that several of the other headmen were also charged with pressing for.

The *langshou* also had to implement any order of the native official, which apparently extended even to ordering girls of the village to entertain and sleep with the official.⁶⁵ The fieldworkers do not comment on whether this posed a conflict with the role of the *langshou* as a village elder, and it is possible that this detail pertained only to the last native official, Li Depu. There is evidence of villagers lodging complaints against such behaviour by the native official at the prefectural courts during the late Qing dynasty (see chapter 9).

The post of *langshou* was generally changed every three years. Once elected, the headman would apply to the native official and the *zhidong* to be registered. On his appointment, each *langshou* had to produce ten *jin* each of wine and rice, 40 *jin* of soybeans, and ten *jin* of polished glutinous rice, buy and organize offerings, and invite the head of every household to come to do obeisance and offer sacrifices to the local gods. After dealing with shared official business, the parties would drink and feast. This was called khaw³ laaŋ¹, and each household was required to contribute towards it. Each village had about one *ban* (six *mu*) of public fields called *nalang* (na⁴ laaŋ⁴), which were not liable for payment of grain taxes and could be cultivated and kept by the *langshou* himself. An example of this was the *nalang* fields of Keqiao village, which had an annual yield of 3,000 *jin* of paddy.

The *langshou* was considered by the villagers to have a key position and role in their village, evidently due to the official business which he carried out and to the fact that they elected him. His duties included the ancestral sacrifices of the village and its public welfare. When a small matter arose which involved being fined by the officials, the villagers

⁶⁵ Internal Reports, p. 32.

would invite the *langshou* to settle the matter in accordance with customary laws. When sons grew up and brothers wanted to divide up the house, they invited the *langshou* to approve the distribution. Should a dispute arise, they would invite the *langshou* to investigate and make a decision; for this they only needed to prepare wine and meat as compensation. According to the old man Qin Guangquan of Bannan village in the Eastern District, many small matters and conflicts were all harmoniously resolved before the *langshou* in this manner. The plaintiff would take along a chicken to make a complaint to higher authority only when there was no alternative. If a disturbance occurred in the village, the *langshou* had to attend with the native official, the *zhidong* and other local headmen to handle the case. At the same time, the *langshou* was in charge of the preparation by both sides of the wine and meat with which the officials were received. The *langshou* was required to be involved throughout the matter, up until settlement of the lawsuit.⁶⁶

Unlike the *zhidong*, the *langshou* did not have the authority to adjudicate (*cai jue*) disputes, but could only mediate (*tiao jie*) by making peace or bringing about agreement between the parties. Similarly, the involvement of the *langshou* in a lawsuit was as an assistant; he had no judicial authority in the proceedings. Nonetheless, it seems his presence during legal proceedings was conducive to effecting resolution, if only because of the greater familiarity (and probably comfort) the parties would have felt with him.

The *langshou* of each village in the administrative centre of the native official in the Five Places District had a lower status than the *langshou* in the districts. In the former, they were merely subordinates to the runners of the native official. However, they relied on the power and influence of the native official to increase officially apportioned levies through forcible extortion in the countryside.

In some of the larger villages, *langshou* who could not discharge all their duties selected a rank of people called *hutou* (household head) from amongst the peasant households, who assisted the *langshou* in pressing for conscripted labour and taxes, transmitting orders, delivering letters and other services. The *hutou* did not receive any remuneration, but could offset the corvée obligations of their households against the services they performed.

⁶⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 32.

Concluding remarks

It is clear that a tight chain of control was in place in every village within the Anping native chieftaincy, implemented through the administrative division of the villages and the corresponding village headmen system. It was a meticulous form of decentralization, in which each district was headed by a *zhidong*, and further divided into several units presided over by *zonghua*. Each village was, in turn, overseen by at least one *langshou*. In this way, every district was, at one level, a separate political entity.⁶⁷ Through a combination of patron-client ties and entourage politics, the native official was aided and abetted in governing the local population, keeping order and controlling the territory by a range of local officials responsible for specific tasks. Their duty to collect grain taxes and cash for the native official was paramount, as was their duty to obtain (through coercive means, as suggested by the consistent use of terms such as 'press' or 'urge') a continuous supply of corvée from the villagers under their jurisdiction. These were uniform duties for all the levels of headmen, from the *zhidong* and *zonghua* down to the junior headmen.

The *zhidong*, a territorial magnate, was the native official's deputy in the countryside. Appointed and removed by the native official, aspirants for the job jockeyed for the position through bribes and demonstrations of loyalty and ability. With no time limit on the posting, the potential to use this position to construct one's own sphere of power locally was immense, as in the case of Feng Jiduan in the Northern District. The extent of political power available to the *zhidong* is also apparent from the fact that he was in some cases elevated by the villagers to the status of a celestial being.

As clients of their patron, the headmen, once appointed, were duty-bound to express and demonstrate their loyalty and esteem, often in forms prescribed by the native official, which ensured the spread and reinforcement of his power in the countryside as well as tributes for the chiefly coffers. Although the *zhidong* and *zonghua* could be removed at any time by the native official, in practice the native official would have

⁶⁷ These territorial divisions within the political domain, and the concept of village clusters as political entities, have parallels with Kachin society in northeast Burma; see E. R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), chapters 4 and 5, esp. p. 114 ff.

been mindful of their independent power bases in their own districts and ability to mobilize the locals, factors critical to his own political power. Thus, a constant balancing of intricate mechanisms was required to maintain the native official's political power in the countryside.

This balancing is reflected through the *langshou*, whose authority stemmed from election by the villagers rather than favour purchased from the native official. As the most natural headman and the one most acquainted with the people and the everyday matters of the village such as the division of family property, he was the natural headman of each village. While he was nominally subordinate to the *zhidong* and other senior officials and had less authority in the adjudication of disputes, his importance and inherent authority as a village elder was clearly recognized by the native official and senior headmen. His presence was required for the joint consultative process when the *zhidong* adjudicated a dispute.

The very real power of the *langshou* was also evidenced by the yearly bestowal of hospitality and gifts upon them by the *zhidong* to publicly acknowledge their support. In addition, the three-year duration of the *langshou* post had to be registered with the native official and *zhidong*. This appears to have been an attempt by the native official, who lacked control over their appointment, to limit the potential extent of the power of the *langshou*.

The village headman system also provided the villagers with alternative channels of adjudication to that of the native official's *yamen*. Through this means, the native official could also achieve local order in the countryside at little cost. For the villagers it was cheaper and more direct than taking their case to the *yamen*. For the headmen, some degree of peculation was condoned by the native official in that they could impose and divide fines amongst themselves. The percentage of the fines which the headmen felt compelled to pass on to the native official was also an extra source of income for the chiefly clan. Thus, through the 'civilizing districts' and the corresponding village headman system, the native official imposed political power and control over the free peasants in the villages and ensured his supply of grain, corvée and tribute from the furthest reaches of his territory.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLASSES OF PEOPLE IN THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

Apart from the official clan and the local headmen discussed in chapters 5 and 6, the rest of the local population comprised a mixture of people who broadly comprised traders, the ordinary people of the town (*ping min*), and the villagers who lived in the countryside. The villagers were variously designated by the fieldworkers as *xiangxiaren* (people of the countryside) and *nongmin* (peasants).¹ Many of these villagers and peasants, although theoretically entitled to be free people, were in actuality subordinated as house slaves (*jianu*) and serfs (*nongnu*) and provided tribute and corvée to the native official. These classes of people are discussed in turn.

FREE PEOPLE: TRADERS

The people who settled in the Anping Jie market town included small retailers who supported themselves by their own labour. Together with the headmen who held local power in each village, they enjoyed a higher status than the serfs. An inscription on a large temple bell observed by the fieldworkers referred to the travelling traders who had already become a relatively large social stratum in Anping subprefecture by the twelfth year of the Qing Kangxi reign period (1673), under the native official Li Changheng.²

Some of these traders were sojourners, others seasonal residents. The many small retailers who came from outside the Anping territory were called by the general term “guest people” (kxn⁴ kheek²). They spoke either southwest Mandarin or Cantonese, and were distinguished from the Zhuang-speaking “native people” (kxn⁴ thoo³). Those people who lived in Anping Jie were respectfully called puu¹ cow¹ (people of

¹ Although the fieldworkers do not expressly define these terms, I have assumed from their usage that *xiangxiaren* simply refers to villagers generally, nearly all of whom farmed land, and that *nongmin* referred to the peasantry who farmed land.

² *Diaocha*, vol 4, p. 6.

the subprefecture) because their land was under the jurisdiction of the administrative headquarters of the subprefecture. Those who resided in Baoxu Jie were called pu¹ faa⁶. Traders who spoke the Han language were also called *hunan lao* because many of the small retailers were from Hunan; they were also called maak² keew¹ (a small red hot pepper) because they liked to eat hot peppers. As they did not cultivate official fields, pay grain taxes or perform corvée, they were classified as free people; consequently, the peasants accorded them terms of respect. Men were called ye³ (master), young men were called laaj⁴ cxyw³ (young man), and women on the street were called naaj⁴ (lady) and saaw¹ (young woman).

Merchants were allowed to wear long upper garments of silk and satin and small caps on their heads, build sun-dried mud brick houses, and send their sons and younger brothers to study and enrol in the examinations to win official rank. They very rarely intermarried with villagers, and they considered it especially shameful to marry their daughters to villagers.³

How the native official regarded the merchants at Anping Jie was based mostly on his economic relationships with them. The traders were reliant on the native official for protection of their profits. Consequently, patron-client relationships were woven into this layer of society; the merchants who had shops on the main streets became an important source of support for the native official. As to the bulk of ordinary traders, their status remained that of poor commoners who supported themselves by their own labour, and whose only difference from serfs was that their persons were not subject to the native official's jurisdiction. Only the extremely small number of wealthy traders had a relatively higher status and enjoyed special treatment. This higher status appears to be linked only with these mutual economic and political relationships. Traders were actually in the lowest traditional Chinese classification of occupational statuses (the *simin*, or the four occupational groups of ordinary subjects, namely scholars, agriculturalists, artisans and merchants). This is generally assumed to imply hierarchy. The system says nothing about economic gradations within each group.⁴

The native official had a very close relationship with the rich traders,

³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 23–24.

⁴ Philip Kuhn, "Chinese views of social classification," in *Class and Social Stratification in Post-Revolution China*, ed. James L. Watson, p. 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Kuhn (pp. 24–27) also notes that there is considerable evidence against the notion of any connection between wealth and higher status.

with whom he engaged in leisurely pursuits. Some habitually accompanied him in playing mahjong and smoking, and some took part in literary pursuits. The famous *Huixianya* (Meeting the Immortals Cliff), where generations of native officials and Han gentlemen spent summer holidays writing exchanges of poems to each other, was extant in Anping Jie at the time of the Field Studies. The earliest poetic compositions carved on the walls of its grottoes include the following poem written during the fortieth year of the Wanli reign period of the Ming dynasty (1612):

We meet on an ancient cliff,
 High and towering, as if in a picture.
 Magnificent pine trees welcome beauty,
 Fragrant grass and famed orchids, glorious flowers unfold.
 Orioles sing, encircling the trees, exchanging new words.
 Celestial beings play *weiqi* day and night.
 I come here to steal some leisure and enjoyment.
 Wherever I climb, I am free of cares.⁵

This poem's style of five syllables and eight lines clearly emulated the *liishi* (Regulated Verse) established during the Tang dynasty, and is powerfully indicative of the influence, absorption and appeal of Han Chinese culture to the *tusi* elites as early as 1612.⁶

The Anping native official Li Binggui also had poems in similar Tang Regulated Verse style carved on stone and wooden tablets during the Qing Xianfeng reign period (1851–1862) to extol the magnificence of the Meeting the Immortals Cliff and the *Luyan*, a cliff in the Southern District. From this, it is apparent that the official clan, local headmen, and merchants made up a small and exclusive social group with the native official as head. They formed a small ruling elite, constructed temples and private monuments, and continuously absorbed Han culture.⁷

The impression of the top echelon of this Zhuang native chieftaincy is of a very high level of sinification, which is unlikely to have been an entirely political gesture on the part of the native official. In these cases it was probably the natural outcome of finding the most mutually enjoyable and pragmatic channel for social interaction between the native official and Han traders, for which Han Chinese culture with its

⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 24.

⁶ On this form of verse see, for example, James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 26–29.

⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 24–25.

prestige and benefits was the obvious choice. As well, the Zhuang were no strangers to the art of poetry and composition; song fairs were an integral part of the traditional culture. Many songs had to be composed spontaneously and were regarded as displays of the singer's ability. The convergence with similar facets of the 'ruling' culture made for a particularly seamless and vibrant integration at this level.

FREE PEOPLE: PEOPLE OF THE TOWN

The town dwellers comprised the *jieshangren* (townspeople) and the *pingmin* (ordinary people). The *jieshangren* included the official clan, relatives of officials, and immigrant Han or *kejia* (guest people) who had come in from outside the subprefecture. There was a marked social and political distinction between the *jieshangren*, who tended to be people of relatively higher status whom the native official supported and cultivated, and the *pingmin*, the ordinary townspeople who, like the free peasants, were subjected to various restrictions.

SUBORDINATED PEOPLE

House Slaves (jianu)

The Anping native official owned most of the land within the subprefecture, the draught animals, and almost all the serfs and house slaves, who had particularly harsh corvée burdens. The fieldworkers list five origins of house slaves:

- Slave girls who had accompanied the daughter of the native official on her marriage (i.e., girls who were brought in as part of a bride's dowry);
- The husbands brought into the family when maidservants married. Girls bought as wives for existing house slaves also became house slaves;
- Serfs with no place and no means of existence, who had gone to seek refuge as house slaves;
- Those who had been demoted to house slaves as a penalty for having committed a crime;
- Offspring of servants handed down from generation to generation.⁸

⁸ Ibid., pp. 74–75.

The fieldworkers do not provide statistics on the total number of house slaves in Anping. However, they estimated that around eighty-five percent of the entire Anping population were serfs and fifteen percent were free peasant households.⁹ This indicates that the number of house slaves, who mainly supported the *yamen* and official household, was negligible compared to the number of serfs. Nevertheless, the large amount of detail on the house slaves which the fieldworkers collected suggests a strong sense of grievance amongst the families, which translated into detailed memories. Such accounts also enabled the fieldworkers to compile a detailed description of the ways in which the house slaves served the needs, domestic and ceremonial, of the official household.¹⁰ House slaves came from villages near the *yamen* such as Dahe, Zhuhang, Dulou and Baisha.

The house slaves considered themselves no different to slaves (*nuli*).¹¹ However, the traditional notion of outright slaves who could be bought and sold, as in China, does not appear to have been present in the Anping native chieftaincy. *Prima facie*, the abovementioned origins seem fairly limited sources of house slaves. The qualified term ‘house slaves’, too, implies a limited group. Prisoners of war, who were the main source of slaves in China proper and in neighbouring slave societies such as Thailand, were also absent in Anping, as were debt slaves, a major component of Thai slavery.¹² However, slavery as a means of penal servitude and the hereditary nature of house slaves (the fourth and fifth of the above categories) were common to other slave societies.¹³

In slave societies, it is assumed that the natural condition was one of marked inequality. However, house slaves could elevate themselves to the relatively freer position of serfs, and later purchase their way out of

⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 217–218.

¹⁰ For a recent study of social memory covering memories of suffering, see Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories: History, Power and Morality in a Chinese Village*. On the ceremonial importance of slaves in reinforcing the rank and status of the ruling stratum see Andrew Turton, “Thai Institutions of Slavery,” in *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, ed. James L. Watson, pp. 280–81 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980).

¹¹ Internal Reports, p. 76.

¹² For a discussion of the origins of slaves during the Zhou dynasty see, for example, *Zhongguo nuli shehuishi* (A History of China’s Slave Society), pp. 25–41. On slavery in China see, for example, Chao Kang, *Man and Land in Chinese History: An Economic Analysis* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 134ff. and 149ff. On debt slavery see, for example, David Feeny, “The Demise of Corvée and Slavery in Thailand, 1782–1913,” in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia*, ed. Martin A. Klein, pp. 88–90 (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

¹³ See, for example, David Feeny, p. 90.

servitude (as could the serfs), immediately becoming entitled to the benefits of free status.¹⁴ Nor, it appears, were the Anping house slaves bound to their positions contractually: the fieldworkers do not provide any evidence of written regulations on house slaves or serfs in statutes or contracts. This indicates an inherent social and political flexibility inconsistent with more institutionalized regulations for slaves in societies with well-developed property rights in man such as Thailand.¹⁵ Although the house slaves held the lowest social position in Anping, some were, in time, able to purchase emancipation from their servitude, whereupon they became free peasants. Slavery as it operated in Anping was therefore looser than the ‘closed mode’ of slavery that prevailed in many Asian societies, where there were formidable barriers to entering or re-entering the dominant society, including being kept at arm’s length by virtue of the stigma attached to the status of slave.¹⁶

According to the Internal Reports, house slaves were classified into two different ranks depending on factors such as the length of time of service and the extent of trust and affection between slave and native official. They were called *toumu* (headman) and *erмо* (second slave). The *toumu* had a higher status than the *erмо*, to the extent that they could exploit their position to make extortions from the serfs, and were respectfully addressed as *erye* (second master) by the villagers. Some of the people waiting to see the native official had to first present a chicken to the *toumu*, a practice not unlike that enjoyed by the native official’s *yamen* runners.¹⁷

The family of Nong Shijing in Baila village were *toumu* house slaves for a number of generations. They had over ten *mu* of land passed down to them by their ancestors, and did not need to rely on the negligible handouts from the native official to get by. Their corvée obligations were relatively light; each day, when the native official was about to have a meal, they had to wait upon a specified member of his party, after

¹⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 61.

¹⁵ Cf. David Feeny, pp. 87–99.

¹⁶ See, for example, James L. Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁷ See Shi Zhongjian and Wang Zhaowu, “Daxin xian tuguan tongzhi shiqi tudi guanxi diaocha ji” (Record of Investigations on Land Relationships during the Period of Rule by the Native Official in Daxin County), in *Lingwai zhuanzhu huikao* (Collection of Studies on the Zhuang Peoples beyond the Lingnan Ranges), p. 350. Shi Zhongjian and Wang Zhaowu, two of the original fieldworkers who took part in collecting the data in the Internal Reports, were correcting an original statement in the Internal Reports (see p. 75) that there were three such ranks of house slaves.

which they could return home for their meal. On the first and fifteenth day of each month, when the native official went to pray at the temple, they also had to assist in holding up the corners of the native official's robes (the temple here appears to be the village god temple discussed in chapter 5). They received no remuneration all year, but if the native official took a liking to them, he might give them one or two vouchers which enabled them to go to the villages to extort a few copper cash as extra income.¹⁸

Beima

Another category of house slave was the *beima* (standby horse), which was something of an anomaly in that *beima* were considered to be one rank higher than the free peasants. *Beima* were therefore regarded as headmen by the common people. Like headmen, they pressed for grain and firewood and conscripted corvée labour on the native official's behalf, taking advantage of their position to harass the villagers if they did not respond. The residents of the Western District also brought them 240 *jin* of paddy each year, which was deemed equivalent to payment from the native official. Despite these benefits, in reality they could not easily extricate themselves from their lowly house slave status.¹⁹ This was encapsulated in the local saying "Obey the official if you want oil and salt".

House slaves were reliant on working for the native official in order to receive the fields and grain necessary to maintain their lives. Unlike free peasants, however, house slaves were not liable for payment of tax, which suggests that an element of trade-off may sometimes have been involved where peasants chose to be house slaves, or to remain house slaves. Despite the rules to which they were subjected, their position was strengthened through the acquisition of property, which later enabled some to purchase their way out of slavery.²⁰ Notwithstanding the theoretically elastic boundaries of their subordinated status, their low social position was reflected in their daily lives. For example, the fifty-odd house slaves from the eighteen households in Dahe village all lived in a low bamboo shed beside the *yamen*. They had no property,

¹⁸ Internal Reports, pp. 75–76.

¹⁹ Internal Reports, p. 76; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 43.

²⁰ Internal Reports, p. 76.

their persons were subject to the native official, and they could not leave Anping. The following is a summary of an account of their daily work routine given by an old man named Huang Jinsheng who had been one of the house slaves:

- Before daylight: The house slaves would husk rice and cook gruel to eat.
- By daylight: The house slaves would congregate beside the *yamen* to await allocation of farm work by a manager. Work would begin on the first sounding of a small bell in front of the *yamen*; those who delayed were beaten and scolded. The house slaves brought along farm cattle and tools from the official's house and went to the official manor estate five *li* away in Baisha village, where they planted the 80 acres of official fields despite low yields. Overseers patrolled the fields, shouting at those who would not work vigorously.
- Noon: The second sounding, this time of a cannon by the *yamen*, at which point the house slaves could stop work to eat.
- After lunch: The house slaves had to continue to work under the scorching sun. At the third sounding of the cannon by the *yamen*, which was not until dark, they could stop work for the day.
- End of the day: The house slaves went to the side of the *yamen* where they awaited the issue by the official household of about two *jin* of grain for their families to cook gruel. Any people considered not to have worked well on the day were tied up and beaten.
- End of farming season: The house slaves were dispatched to the courtyard at the rear of the *yamen* to grow vegetables, husk rice, feed the pigs, graze cattle, and perform other miscellaneous tasks. [This courtyard area is indicated in figure 3]. All had work quotas. All left for work early and received grain in the evening; if they did not work they would suffer beatings and hunger. Just to be able to maintain the lowest standard of living, they regularly rose while it was dark to seize some time to grow miscellaneous grains and collect wild herbs at nearby open grounds, weave bamboo utensils and so forth. Apart from

their own use, they would take these to the market-place to exchange for essential salt, clothing and utensils.²¹

The fieldworkers attempted to estimate the amount of the crops these fifty-odd slaves would have harvested for the native official. Based on the harvest from eighty *mu* of dry fields and the planting of two crops of coarse grains each year, namely millet, maize or wheat, and based on an annual harvest of 500 *jin* of millet per *mu*, the fieldworkers estimated that they probably harvested 110,000 *jin* of millet for the year. To this they added forty pigs which had to be raised for the native official, calculating each pig at 100 *jin*, equalling 4,000 *jin* of pork. Tending ten head of water buffalo for the native official would have required two labourers. Each day they had to pound grain and hull rice for the native official, totalling 720 *jin*, so for the whole year they would have polished 262,700 *jin* of husked rice. They also performed other labour services without remuneration, and various temporary assignments.²² It is apparent from this description that all surplus labour and surplus production supported the household of the native official.

The fieldworkers also spoke to families who had been effectively enslaved to the native official as house slaves for generations. The house slave Nong Yuzhen of Qihe village, like Huang Jinsheng above, lived close to the *yamen*. According to her conversations with the field-workers, several generations of people in her family had to perform numerous labour services throughout the year, such as harvesting and grinding grain, tending cattle, harrowing fields, transplanting rice seedlings, guarding fish ponds, cutting firewood and whatever other tasks were demanded. Because they had been house slaves for three or four generations, people looked down on them, and called them *me⁵ hoi² ku¹*.²³ (It seems from this account that the stigma implied by this derogatory term was aimed at the fact that the family had been house slaves for generations rather than at house slaves generally.) In Nong's recollection, her family had served as house slaves for three generations, continuing up till the time of her discussions with the field-workers in the 1950s. Nong's account provides further details of the house slave's lot:

²¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 36–37.

²² Internal Reports, p. 87.

²³ Internal Reports, p. 84.

As soon as it was daylight, we would enter the *yamen*, where our work assignments for that day would be allocated. If it was to grind rice, then it would be in accordance with regulations fixed by the native official; if sixty *jin* of grain was ground, then we had to hand over thirty-six *jin* of unpolished rice or thirty-two *jin* of white rice; only the grain husks and crushed rice that were left over were returned to the persons who had ground the rice. This is why we always had to find ways of grinding the rice more coarsely and more rapidly, so that there would be more leftovers. This way, we could rely on getting enough from this source to feed our whole family. If we had to plant fields, we had to go to the *yamen* at dawn to collect equipment and lead the water buffalo, because we lacked any equipment, and had to borrow equipment from the native official even to plant our own land.

Apart from the two *jin* of grain which we received each day, every year the native official gave us three hundred cash and ten *jin* of unpolished rice during the New Year festival and ancestral rites on the fourteenth day of the seventh month, which served as our ancestral offerings. Each year we only had two rest days. However, if there was business to be done at the official household, even those two rest days would be taken from us. If we did not complete one day's work, we would not get the food rations for the next day. Even when we became ill, all we could do was resign ourselves to our fate. If someone had a death in the family or gave birth, and really could not work, they had to kneel before the native official and beg for consideration; at times, we received a touch of benevolence. At the end of each year, if the native official took a liking to us, then we could also get part of a set of old clothes and quilts. At the time, our family consisted of five people, and we only had two torn quilts. Everyone had two sets of torn clothes and no cotton-padded clothes for cold days, so we could only shiver by the fireside. Our feet were uncovered all year, sometimes wearing a pair of grass sandals. We had to endure such miserable times up until the thirteenth year of the Republic (1924), when labour services were considerably reduced. It was only after the twentieth year of the Republic (1931) that we were not called up as slaves.²⁴

Nong's reference to ancestral rites on the fourteenth day of the seventh month probably refers to the river sacrifices practised in Tai culture in South China on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, to appease the spirits of the dead (the dates vary slightly). The offerings were paper offerings which were put into the water.²⁵

The relative lateness of these dates indicates that the social relations

²⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

²⁵ See, for example, Wolfram Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), pp. 198–199.

that prevailed under the Anping native chieftain remained intact well after the office of the native official was cashiered in 1906. Even after the appointment by the local Qing authorities of the first regular Chinese bureaucrat, the *tanya guan* (Disciplinary Official) in Anping in 1908, the native official continued to exert de facto control over many people, including his house slaves. The continuation of the social and political structure of the native official's rule regardless of the abolition of the office is hardly surprising, given that the native official and official clan were a ruling class among client chieftaincies in China who had held their hereditary posts for centuries, as in the case of Anping. This phenomenon was widespread among native chieftaincies in China. For example, it was observed firsthand by Chen Hang-Seng as late as the 1940s in Tehke in Tibet.²⁶

Several other factors may have also contributed to the long drawn-out slavery of Nong's family. For instance, house slaves such as Nong's family were less able to organize themselves to agitate for the reduction or abolishment of their labour services than serfs. The serfs, probably by virtue of the more institutionalized nature of their labour services (for example, Fen village was liable for tomb sweeping) were able from relatively early times to achieve wholesale reductions or exemptions from specified services through organized opposition or demands.

By the late Qing dynasty, successful demands by the serfs (usually under the leadership of a headman) for exemptions or conversions of corvée to grain payments were relatively frequent. A Qing government proclamation in 1899 acceded to a joint report made by a group of villagers in Longbo village in Na'an parish in the Northern District under the leadership of the *langshou*, requesting conversion of water-carrying corvée fields into straight salary fields. The proclamation also reduced the corvée burden to merely one labourer for the year and permanently exempted the descendants of the villagers from water-carrying services.²⁷ This sort of agreement was typical throughout the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908).

The house slaves, on the other hand, lacked the uniformity of conditions necessary to speak with a coherent voice, or to achieve standard reforms to their conditions of servitude. Whilst there were many cases of house slaves demanding and obtaining abolition of their labour

²⁶ Chen Hang-Seng, *Frontier Land Systems of Southernmost China*, pp. 81–82.

²⁷ See *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji*, p. 69.

service obligations and lowly status during the closing decades of the Qing dynasty, these concessions were mostly obtained by those able to buy themselves out of house slave status on an ad hoc basis. For instance, at the end of the nineteenth century, a house slave in Dulou village who was about to be married was able to use forty silver dollars to buy himself out of his slave status and attain new rank as a free peasant. This move was apparently driven by the desire of the bride's family that she ride in a sedan chair to be married; house slaves and those who married them were prohibited from doing so.²⁸ The family's demand for a sedan chair was tantamount to avoiding the bride's being married off as a slave. There were many such instances of house slaves managing to abolish slavery for descendants, though not necessarily for themselves.²⁹ Ironically, this apparently immediate transition to free peasant status on payment of an agreed price was a by-product of the originally despotic nature of the Anping native official. That is, while the peasants' harsh slavery conditions were arbitrarily imposed, it resulted in a similarly arbitrary emancipation based on negotiation of a redemption price, without the political and social fetters imposed on joining the dominant society which existed in many societies in which slaves were found.³⁰

Some house slaves also took advantage of the weakened position of the native official during the struggle with the Three Dot Society (discussed in chapter 9) to buy their way out of their lowly status. For example, in 1877 the peasant Nong Qinfu from Qujie village succeeded in purchasing *jiansheng* rank with fifty strings of cash; Nong Guangpin used eighty strings of cash to buy *shaoyin* rank, and Nong Luju bought *laomin* status with thirty strings of cash. Thereafter they were no longer required to serve as house slaves. *Jiansheng* referred in China proper to men admitted to the National University without having passed any civil service examination, in recognition of their contributions of grain or money to the state. *Shaoyin* was an unofficial reference during the Qing to the various posts of an assistant prefecture or county official such as police chief, district jailor or county magistrate's assistant. *Laomin* simply referred to an ordinary person, or civilian. It is unclear what these ranks meant in practical terms here, apart from as an indicator of some free

²⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 61.

²⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 61, 63.

³⁰ See, for example, Lionel Caplan, "Power and Status in South Asian Slavery," in *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, ed. James L. Watson, pp. 169–171.

and social status, presumably graded according to the amount paid. The sale of rank as a means of tapping private wealth was at its most widespread during the Qing and supplied essential revenue to assist in suppressing the rebellions in the early nineteenth century.³¹

Redemption from house slave status was theoretically always an option; the sole criterion was the ability to raise sufficient money to purchase free status. This would also have been a factor in the relatively late dates mentioned by the house slave Nong Yuzhen. Although she mentioned having some land of their own, it appears to have been only a temporary grant by the native official of three *fen* (0.3 *mu*) of land on which to plant vegetables for the family.³² The work burdens of her family would have precluded the opportunity to accumulate the substantial amounts of money required to negotiate with the native official to buy their way out of servitude. In the face of national revolution towards the end of its rule, the Qing government had little time to attend to the border areas, enabling continued exploitation of the peasants by the native official with increased ferocity. Such factors would also have contributed to the extension of Nong Yuzhen's house slave status well beyond the substitution of direct Chinese rule in Anping in 1908.

The fieldworkers asked Nong why her family felt they had to carry out the work and why they did not consider escaping. The old woman laughed at their query:

How could we not go? Even if we were sick we had to turn up. Even if we could escape, some of our family could not run, and what sort of life would they have after escaping? Moreover, where could we flee? Besides being unfamiliar with the roads, we had no idea of from which places we could get away. Anyway, how could we escape the clutches of the native official? This ruler was very close by. Whoever was caught and returned would be beaten half to death, if not killed, unless they were a relative or friend of the native official.³³

These words provide some direct insight into life as a house slave in close proximity to the native official's *yamen*. Apart from being acutely conscious of the ruthlessness and propinquity of the native official, it appears that slaves lacked sufficient familiarity with their local area even

³¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 61. On *Jiansheng* and *shaoyin* rank see Hucker, #8567, #5126, and *Hanyu dacidian*, 1988, 2:1648. On the sale of rank see Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862–1874*, esp. pp. 173–174.

³² Internal Reports, p. 85.

³³ Internal Reports, p. 86.

to be able to plan an escape route out of the subprefecture. Flight as a form of protest was therefore not a realistic option for these house slaves. Out-migration from the subprefecture was limited, and the availability of support groups in neighbouring towns such as Longzhou would have been unlikely. (We can note in comparison that in the Nandan native chieftaincy, there were express prohibitions on leaving the territory. People who went to an outside county even if only to seek assistance for ill health were punished by the headmen and native official, and their households bankrupted.)³⁴

The harsh topography would also have played a part; Anping subprefecture was located in a narrow region amidst inaccessible karst mountains, where familiarity with the maze of narrow mountain footpaths was essential for any plots to hide or escape. Those peasants engaged in trade would have had this knowledge, but they would not have been house slaves. Nong's retort also reflects the extent to which the native official had a monopoly on the house slaves' time; they were accountable to him most daylight hours and every day of the year bar two, resulting in minimal freedom to move around the village let alone the subprefecture; their mobility was probably confined to the limited area encompassing their home, place of work and the Anping market area.

Notwithstanding these factors, the apparent absence of any attempted or actual revolt by the house slaves suggests there may have been a better standard of living as a house slave than as a free peasant, who was only marginally free and whose freedom, such as it was, was often precarious. Quite possibly the relative certainty of grain rations from the native official, though meagre, was adjudged preferable to the plight of peasants, who suffered great hardship during the frequent calamities that befell their harvests.³⁵ For instance, the fieldworkers transliterated a typical hardship song recounting a great flood that occurred in Anping in 1905 (there had been four great floods in the preceding one hundred years). The song was sung by the older people during the farming season. It reflects the geographical and physical extent of the suffering wreaked upon this rice farming community:

³⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 151.

³⁵ A list of recorded droughts and floods between 1668 and 1968 and the text of typical songs passed down among the peasants which recounted their hardships is contained in *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 4–6. Miscellaneous other work, such as cloth weaving, which the peasants had to undertake for post-disaster survival are also described.

God sent forth an ill omen,
 Causing great suffering to the ordinary folk of Guangxu times
 (1875–1908).

In 1905 there came a great flood
 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, it burst the dykes of Jinlong
 valley.
 The floods entered Shangsi village,
 They swallowed up the rice-fields.
 The newly ripened paddy was hard to harvest,
 It lodged in the mud, where it began to rot.
 Climbing to the mountaintop and gazing down,
 A vast expanse of water, waves dashing against the skies,
 Submerging the rooftops of Lunfang village,
 Capsizing the bamboo rafts of Heishui River,
 Washing continuously to Longzhou town,
 From Dimen to Huangcang ,
 Flooding up till Tuolu and Tuobo,
 All the way till lower Taiping, overflowing into Haiyuan,
 Surging towards the rivers of Nanning,
 Sinking its wooden boats over and over again.³⁶

In some instances, being a house slave was also preferable to being a serf, as demonstrated by serfs who, lacking means of subsistence, sought refuge as house slaves.

*Serfs (*nongnu*)*

The serfs had a slightly higher status than house slaves, and were to be found throughout all the villages. They were referred to by themselves and by others locally as *luk⁵naa⁴* (children of the wet-fields), which reflects the wet-field rice cultivation at which the Tai peoples were so adept. This category of people comprised most of the Anping population; around eighty-five percent of households were serf households.³⁷ The native official had always focused on their traditional labour services.³⁸ How certain villages came to perform ‘traditional’ labour

³⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 5–6

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 217–218.

³⁸ Internal Reports, p. 76.

services was often arbitrary, accidental or related to the location of the villages. The officials, who relied totally on serf corvée for all their needs, systematically used various methods to tie the serfs to a particular piece of land. Serfs had to take on the burden of onerous labour services as effective rental for the land, which only partially fed them. Increasing numbers of serfs became firmly bound, compelled to rely on the native official from generation to generation. The native official would attach the main services which he required to the land cultivated by the serfs; if their rented fields consisted of two inferior fields, fifty percent of the harvest from the first field and forty percent of the harvest of the second field would constitute rental, in accordance with the saying *guan si min liu* (four parts to the official, six parts to the people). The native official had a granary in each village, each of which could hold 15,000 *jin* of grain. The native official also required the serfs to hand over fifteen *jin* of grain as public grain each half year.³⁹

The origins of the serfs in Anping are not entirely clear. Based on their surveys, the fieldworkers considered that the serfs may have been from the following categories:

1. Landless peasants who had no means of existence, and could only rely on the native official.
2. Families of house slaves. With the passing of time, a group of *toumu* or head slaves would emerge from amongst the house slaves. They increasingly acquired more private property so that they gradually divested themselves of their house slave status and elevated themselves to the relatively freer position of serfs. The field-workers note, however, that the distinction between the economic and political position of house slaves and serfs was unclear and inconsistent.⁴⁰
3. Members of the official clan who, owing to bankruptcy, had received a portion of land from the native official to cultivate, which they had lost over time, and were consequently reduced to becoming serfs.⁴¹

Despite the nebulous nature of these stated origins, the fact is that 85 percent of the population were serfs.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 76–77. For a discussion of the absolute and symbolic value of stored grain as a tool of political power see, for example, Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Clinton, Mass.: The Colonial Press, Inc., 1940), p. 330.

⁴⁰ Internal Reports, p. 92.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The conditions of the serfs in each village were different. The village-level corvée burdens which pertained to Xiali village, a village near the native official's headquarters (see map 9), were as follows:

The Corvée Burdens of Xiali Village

Xiali village had sixteen households, all of which were serf households.⁴² It was located in Anping parish in the Five Places District near the native official's headquarters, and was part of one of the official manor estates, located five *li* from Anping Jie.⁴³ Some of its corvée obligations, listed below, were levied on the village as a whole, and some on individual households of the village:⁴⁴

1. On the first day of the first month of each year, each household in the village had to present the native official with a load of firewood.
2. On the nineteenth day of the first month of each year, when the native official "opened the seal" (*kaiyin*), each household had to present a load of firewood.
3. On the twenty-ninth day of the first month of each year, they had to present a type of grass called *yaan³ naay⁴* (literally, rice seedling breakfast) to the native official with which to make glutinous rice cakes.
4. Before the third day of the third month of each year, they had to construct a bamboo raft, in preparation for greeting and sending off the native official when he went to sweep his ancestral tombs. When the native official arrived, old people standing by the side of the road did not even dare lift their heads. Each household also had to send one person to carry sacrificial offerings and sweep the ancestral tombs for the native official. After making obeisance at the ancestral tombs, the *zongguan* (District Supervisor) of each village received an amount of polished glutinous rice sufficient for distribution to the sixteen people who accompanied him. He also received cooked pork and pig feet together with three bowls of food containing a mixture of chicken, duck, eggs and bamboo shoots and three *jin* of wine, which were distributed so that each

⁴² The fieldworkers have said elsewhere that Xiali village had 18 households (see chapter 8).

⁴³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 37.

⁴⁴ Internal Reports, pp. 77–78.

person received one cup. On this day, the serfs were not allowed to sweep their own ancestral tombs; it was a criminal offence to do so before the native official swept his. They had to work for the whole of the third day, postponing the sweeping of their own tombs until the fourth day.

5. During the song festival in the fourth month of each year, the village had to send four labourers to carry the native official's sedan chair and two people to carry his luggage.
6. On the third and fourth days of the fifth month of each year, each household had to present a load of firewood, and toast some buckwheat to present to the native official's household to use for cold pyramid-shaped dumplings. They also had to present a bundle of leaves for wrapping the dumplings, called *toog¹ tseg¹* (big leaf).
7. On the fourteenth day of the seventh month of each year, each household had to present twenty *jin* of sweet potatoes; if there was also a song fair that month, the village had to send six people.
8. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month each year they had to look for honey, two *jin* of which the whole village presented to the native official.
9. On the ninth day of the ninth month each year when the native official swept his ancestral tombs, they had to present him with a fruit, possibly jackfruit, called *maak² naam¹*. There was only one tree bearing this type of fruit in the locality, which the native official claimed as his; the serfs had to harvest the fruit for him.
10. On the winter solstice in the eleventh month each year, each household had to present a load of firewood.
11. On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month each year, each household had to present one load of firewood to the native official.

Apart from having to present the above gifts to the native official, the corvée obligations of the villagers of Xiali village were the most onerous amongst all the villages within the native chieftaincy. From the above list it seems there were only three months of the year in which they did not have specific corvée duties. In addition, each month they had to go away on assignments two or three times, totalling over thirty times per year. Each time there was an assignment the entire village had to send one person from each household. The main services which they had to provide were carrying goods on shoulder poles to Longming, Xialei and Taiping prefectures, as well as to Shanglong, Longzhou, and Wancheng. Those performing this service received one *jin* and two *liang*.

of rice per day, sixteen cash for wine, as well as a small amount of pork and vegetables, sufficient for two meals. During the end of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908), when the native official Li Depu wanted labour, he did not care whether people were young or old so long as they could carry the articles in question. Those families who did not have labourers had to pay the native official 500 cash in lieu of each required service.

In their cultural aspects, the corvée and tributes of Xiali village reveal something of a hybrid flavour: there are Zhuang song festivals, and the Chinese custom of sweeping ancestral tombs on the ninth day of the ninth month. The corvée duties to be performed just before the fifth day of the fifth month relate to the dragon boat festival, which was customary in central and south China. It is possible that the dumplings wrapped in “big leaves” were related to rice that was wrapped in the leaves of swamp plants and eaten on the fifth day of the fifth month in south China, or some other version of the dumpling (*zong*) in south China also associated with this date.⁴⁵

The Chinese custom of tomb sweeping was carried out not only at the official level, where it could be regarded as politically motivated, but also by the lowest strata of this Zhuang society. It appears to be an instance of how Chinese customs permeated to local practices at every level through the agency of the *tusi*. This process no doubt accelerated in the Qing, when governmental reforms to the native chieftaincy regulations resulted in increasing pressure on the native officials to be ‘Chinese’. Emulation of *tusi* practices by the serfs hints too at a layer in the relationship between the serfs and hereditary ruling clan not entirely marked by the despotic rule emphasized in the Field Studies.

Serfs’ Obligations on a Death in the Native Official’s Family

When the native official or a member of his family died, a tomb had to be constructed, which required many labourers. These tomb builders were recruited from Fen village and Longwang village in Anping parish. At the same time, sixty to one hundred people would be deployed each day from Baisha village, Jiaozha village and so on to carry out miscellaneous tasks. Tomb construction took approximately two months. People worked in three-day shifts, and received only grain rations.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Wolfram Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, pp. 197, 394ff.

⁴⁶ Internal Reports, p. 81.

The villagers of Fen village had become the serfs who specialized in guarding the native official's tombs. Each time the native official visited the tombs, they were required to sweep the tombs, cut the grass and erect a thatched shed for the native official and his family members to shelter from the heat and perform their sacrificial rites, and to ensure that the serfs and other villagers could not set eyes on the family members of the native official. These contingents originally consisted of about ten families, but the number was later reduced. They had to cultivate the *fentian* (grave fields), hand over half of their harvest annually as land rent, and were only exempted from grain tribute. They had to perform many other labour services as well.⁴⁷ The fieldworkers do not state the specific location of the official graves, nor is it recorded in the Gazetteer of Daxin County. However, in this case it was probably the mountain behind Baisha village (also in Anping parish; see map 9), which had been declared a burial place by the native official.⁴⁸

When a member of the official family died, each village had to send a number of people to carry the coffin. The entire subprefecture had to provide sixty people, divided into two teams of thirty who would work in shifts to carry the coffin. In the funeral procession they were not allowed to let the catafalque tilt; it had to be perfectly balanced (referred to as *tianpingyi*—level with the heavens) as they carried it up the hill to the grave. As with the rest of south China, hill tombs were the norm, which in Guangxi could mean on, and even atop, steep karst mountains with jagged peaks. Crammed together on a narrow road, the thirty coffin carriers sustained frequent injuries to their feet and hands. Because the coffin was very heavy, the native official of neighbouring Taiping subprefecture would also dispatch fifty other people to assist, who were each given only one meal.

Expenses for weddings and funerals of the official clan were borne by the entire population of the subprefecture. Rules in this regard had apparently formed early. Each village had to contribute towards the expenses, and the amount was added to their grain taxes. For each grain payment of one string of cash that was due, an additional 540 cash was payable for this item.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Internal Reports, p. 81.

Obligations of Serfs in More Distant Villages

The relative harshness of the corvée, tribute and tax burdens appeared to lessen with distance from the *yamen*. For example, Shidi village, which was in the far west of the subprefecture close to Xialei and the border with Vietnam, had to perform a special labour service which involved all the villagers in preparing black cloth for official funerals. When the native official and his principal wife died, the village had to send ten people to collect the woven black cloth from each household. They had to join the pieces into a large piece of cloth six *chi* wide and several *zhang* long. (One *chi* approximates a foot, and one *zhang* ten feet.) The serfs were required to hold up the cloth during the funeral to ensure that outsiders could not see the female members of the native chieftain's family. After the funeral the cloth was taken down, taken apart, and the pieces returned to each household to keep for re-use in the future. If torn, it had to be replaced at the household's own expense.⁵⁰ The contrast between this and the tomb corvée of Fen village is stark.

Origins of Specific Goods and Labour Services

As with the native official's 'laws', the source of the so-called regulations requiring various labour services from certain villages was based on no more than the command of the native official. This, in turn, could be based on nothing more than caprice. According to local legend, the *zongguan* (District Supervisor) of Xiali village, on observing one day that the land was covered in mushrooms, went out of his way to pick a basketful to give to the native official. In later years the native official demanded this gift annually; thenceforth it became a fixed rule. In Baisha village, the villagers found a honeycomb, but did not dare eat it themselves, so they cautiously gave it to the native official. From that point on, the native official made it a regulation that they had to present him with several honeycombs each year.⁵¹ The native official later issued a formal decree prohibiting peasants from collecting honeycombs for themselves. In an instance where this decree was breached, the violator was flogged and fined 1,000 cash.⁵² Apart from the material benefit of

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 84.

⁵² *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 40.

these goods and labour services, the native official appeared to regard them as a symbol of his status as ruler. He made strenuous efforts to preserve and maintain ‘symbolic’ corvée in the face of the rapidly escalating redemptions from serfdom during the late Qing dynasty.⁵³

*Extra-economic Coercion and Oppression of Serfs, House
Slaves and Peasants*

Apart from the corvée services imposed on the house slaves and serfs all year round, the serfs, house slaves and peasants were also subjected to cruel and humiliating personal treatment by the native official, which the fieldworkers described as extra-economic (*chaojingji*). In this sphere, the native official appeared to have customary rights over their persons, although no basis is provided by the fieldworkers, who characterize it as the arbitrary exploitation of a despotic feudal lord. It is clear, however, that there were no guaranteed protections for their persons, including that of married or unmarried women who were molested by the native official.⁵⁴ This state of affairs is in marked contrast to the highly institutionalized slavery system which existed in Thailand, under which there were well defined laws on slavery which provided slaves with some legal protection from abuse by their master.⁵⁵ However, such abuse of power was not unusual in Tai agricultural communities that practised the feudal serf system, such as in Yunnan and Tibet. The fieldworkers tend to describe abuses of the serfs, house slaves and peasants as being perpetrated by the native official. However, abuses such as extortion, blackmail and rape were also perpetrated by other members of the official clan. In particular, the rampant cruelty towards women of the last native official Li Depu’s brothers Li Deming, Li Dexin, Li Dechao and Li Debin, which went unchecked, was common knowledge throughout the subprefecture.⁵⁶

The fieldworkers provide many examples of cruel personal oppression. Foremost perhaps was the customary practice of sending all newly-wed girls from the families of serfs, house slaves and peasants to the *yamen* on their wedding night to be molested by the native official.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid., p. 60.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 46.

⁵⁵ See, for example, David Feeny, p. 89.

⁵⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Internal Reports, p. 87 and *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 44.

This seems to mirror the *droit de seigneur* of the European feudal lord (which was technically limited to a vassal's bride). The fieldworkers do not provide the basis for this practice. As a customary practice, it appears to stand alone as something of a curiosity. It is unlikely that Chinese slaveholders, despite having clear property rights in the slaves and bond-servants and exercising extra-economic control over them, would have condoned such abuse. It was too aberrant to Confucian notions (and expectations) of morality and conduct.

In fact, this practice, known as *chuyequan* (first night rights), is singled out for mention in the brief one-line definition of the Anping native official in the Gazetteer of Daxin County (*Daxin xianzhi*). In the Field Studies on the Nandan *tusi*, the fieldworkers note that only a minority of 'unworthy' native officials practised *chuyequan*, a conduct lacking in morality, and that it was said to occur in Si'en Fu and Taiping Fu.⁵⁸ It therefore appears that the Anping native official was especially 'unworthy' and that these observations may be linked only to the last native official, Li Depu.

The fieldworkers also reported that in 1875, when the wife of the native official Li Chaoxu gave birth to a girl, the wife of Nong Shenggui of Lunzhai village, who had just given birth to a son, was compelled to be the daughter's wet nurse. She was not allowed to bring her own son, who consequently died of hunger, resulting in the extinguishment of Nong Shenggui's lineage.⁵⁹ There were many other instances of extreme cruelty, including the practice of having a young boy and girl buried alive with the native official upon his death. They were buried once the grave had been filled with firewood, rice, water, incense and cooking utensils, with which they were meant to wait upon the dead.⁶⁰ The fieldworkers do not specify exactly when this practice prevailed in Anping, but make the point that it was relatively recent, possibly inferring that such practices belonged to a bygone age in China. However, human sacrifices for the dead were not unknown in Qing China. There were still cases of servants accompanying their master in death, under the old Manchu practice, in the mid-17th century.⁶¹

⁵⁸ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 284 and *Diaocha*, vol. 2, p. 161.

⁵⁹ Internal Reports, p. 87.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 44.

⁶¹ See, for example, Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 229.

FURTHER OBLIGATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

Yamen Construction: A Call on the Entire Populace

When the native official wanted to carry out construction work on the *yamen*, all the people in every district of Anping were notified, and had to provide labour and money for it. The thickest and best trunks of the *xian* tree had to be chopped down and transported from faraway Yanhua, Yanmen and Vietnam, and people also had to be dispatched to burn limestone.⁶² The two villages of Banshou and Banzhi in the Eastern District specialized in stone carving. During the construction process over two hundred serfs would carry sand every day. Regardless of what labour they had performed, each person would receive only one *jin* of unhusked rice, which was far from sufficient.⁶³

The Anping population worked intermittently in this way for three years before the building was completed. This obligation appears to have applied to all the people living in Anping regardless of their status, although serf labour was heavily called upon. The free people were probably only obliged to provide money towards the project. It is unclear whether the fieldworkers were referring here to construction of the *yamen* generally or a specific instance; the reference to three years suggests the latter. The Anping *yamen* was restored shortly before 1901; it is likely that this was the construction work referred to here.

Liegou (Hunting Dogs)

The Anping native chieftaincy also had what was called the *liegou* (hunting dog) labour service. *Liegou* posts were all held by young men who were selected for their tall and sturdy stature, good looks and intelligence. They were used specially to accompany and guard the native official. There were usually twenty *liegou* in the *yamen*, who were rotated in ten-day shifts. When on duty they received one *jin* of husked

⁶² The wood from the *xian* tree, an evergreen tree, is particularly solid and is used in building ships and machinery; it is a valued hardwood in China (see *Hanyu dacidian*, vol. 4, p. 1359). It is a native hardwood in the Daxin area and its botanical name is *Burretiodendron hsienmu* Chun et How (see *Guangxi zhiwu minglu*, 1971, 2:186–187).

⁶³ Internal Reports, p. 80.

rice and twenty-four copper cash per day, which just sufficed for their grain rations.⁶⁴ It is unclear whether *liegou* only accompanied the native official on outings or if they were also incorporated into his contingent of bodyguards.

Social and Political Restrictions

While serfs held a slightly higher status in Anping than house slaves, both serfs and house slaves were collectively regarded as having the lowest status in Anping, and had no personal freedom in political terms. As noted earlier, it is difficult to ascertain what quantitative or qualitative distinction there was between the serfs and house slaves in terms of their economic and political position. However, house slaves could elevate themselves to serfs with the acquisition of private property. Thus, the perception among the local populace was that house slaves were of lower social status than serfs. Nevertheless, the marginality of the serfs' lives (and thus of any perceived higher status) was summed up by the list of eight hardships which the fieldworkers concluded were imposed on the serfs:

- 1st hardship: Exploitation by the native official resulting in malnutrition.
- 2nd hardship: Labour services too numerous and onerous, examples being delivering firewood and carrying shoulder-poles.
- 3rd hardship: No mosquito nets provided for hot days, resulting in frequent illnesses.
- 4th hardship: Insufficient clothing in winter.
- 5th hardship: Lack of fields or scant fields, which were hard to cultivate.
- 6th hardship: Wives and other women abused by the native official; no protection of one's person.
- 7th hardship: Constant beatings, scoldings and extortions by the native official and headmen, making it hard to eke out an existence.
- 8th hardship: Difficult to purchase brides due to lack of money.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 80–81

⁶⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 46.

The fieldworkers also listed some of the political and social restrictions on the serfs and house slaves. Local legend has it that several generations before, if the serfs or house slaves were walking past the *yamen*, they were required to hold a leaf in their mouths and crawl past in a stooped position, as if to acknowledge that they belonged in the same category as animals. After they had crawled past, they also had to kow-tow towards the *yamen*; only then could they depart.⁶⁶ The fieldworkers do not specify how many generations ago this practice applied. Although it seems of questionable veracity, it reflects a local perception of abject humiliation of the serfs and slaves by the native official, which could have fuelled the peasants' later, open contempt for the native official, embodied in such sayings as *tuguan daguo wang* (the native official is greater than a king).⁶⁷

The serfs and house slaves had to abide by the following rules of address:

- They had to address the native official as *dalaoye* (grand master), and his principal wife as *yinmu* (official mother), *taimu* (great mother) or *muguan* (mother official).
- They had to address the official clan members as *tailao* (grand elder) and their wives as *taifu*, i.e., *laotaitai* (venerable madam).⁶⁸
- They had to address the young women as *me⁵* *kuun¹* (official lady).⁶⁹
- They had to address the daughters of the principal wife of an official as *xiaojie* (young lady).
- They had to address the sons of the principal wife of the official as *xiuye*, which was a local pronunciation for *shaoye* (young master).
- In addressing a concubine, if she had been a house slave or serf, they had to call her *nanye* (lady); they had to address her daughters as *dajie* (big sister) and her sons as *xiaodi* (little brother).⁷⁰

Most of these were standard terms of address which also applied in a Chinese community. *Shaoye*, for instance, was a vulgar term originally

⁶⁶ Internal Reports, p. 93.

⁶⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 64.

⁶⁸ In *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 23 the fieldworkers state that *tailao* was the term by which old clan members were to be addressed, which seems more consistent with the term.

⁶⁹ There is a discrepancy here between the Internal Reports and *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 23 which states that “*mieguan*” referred to the women in the official clan. According to colleagues from the Guangxi Nationalities Research Institute, the term covers a mother or wife of an official, or a female official.

⁷⁰ Internal Reports, p. 93. I have assumed this refers to an official's concubine.

referring to the son of a man of rank or of an official, used by servants to refer to the master's son, as was also the case here.⁷¹ This is another instance in which Chinese terminology was introduced into the vocabulary of the subject Zhuang populace by the official clan, for reasons of politics and cultural prestige. However, the mutual influence of Chinese and Tai terms is well known; for example, the Zhuang term *me⁵ kuun¹* (official lady), with its evident relationship to the Chinese *ma* (mother) and *guan* (official), sounds distinctly Chinese. It is unlikely, in this case, that the forced use of these Chinese terms of address would have played much part in the process of acculturation of the subjugated Zhuang; if anything, the terms encapsulated the feudal conditions of this *tusi* against which the serfs eventually rose up.

Consistent with their higher social and political status, the townspeople regarded it as shameful to marry off their daughters to villagers. They had a saying which encapsulated this attitude: "Only chickens are brought from the countryside to be sold, none are brought from the town to be sold." They had another saying to the effect that they would rather be struck by lightning than be married to a villager.

On market days in the town, villagers from the countryside had to endure the humiliation of deferring to the townspeople should the latter announce that they wanted to purchase an item which the villagers had already purchased for themselves. If they got a beating, they had to accept it as bad luck; if they struck back, the townspeople would immediately gather round and beat them. More importantly, it could result in the villagers not daring to return to the market fair for several months or years. There was much anecdotal evidence of such beatings during the end of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908).⁷²

Other restrictions included an absolute ban on townspeople sitting with villagers at a banquet. Villagers were permitted to sit only at the lower tables.⁷³ The native official extended favourable treatment to the townspeople: the official clan did not have to provide corvée, and their grain tribute obligation was very light; they were only required to hand over 360 cash per three *mu* of fields. During the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908) this was six to ten cash per *jin* of rice. By contrast, the villagers had to hand over twenty *jin* of white rice per six *fen* (0.6 *mu*)

⁷¹ See Han-Yi Fêng, "The Chinese Kinship System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 2 (1937), p. 238.

⁷² Internal Reports, p. 94.

⁷³ Ibid.

of land, as well as provide onerous labour services.⁷⁴ The fieldworkers do not specify the period to which these payment obligations applied, although if based on living memory it was probably during and after the Qing Guangxu reign period, when the native official continued to exercise de facto control.

The ordinary free subjects were subjected to building restrictions from an early date, although the fieldworkers do not specify how early. They were only permitted to build houses with mud walls in Anping Jie, and could not construct brick houses. ‘Misfortune’ would befall those who built brick houses, and even moneyed Han Chinese were subject to this restriction. This apparently accounted for the absence of any brick houses or buildings of two or more storeys, apart from those of the native official and official clan, prior to 1949.⁷⁵

Dress Rules

The peasants from the villages were subjected to dress codes, and were prohibited from certain activities. When they went to the market town, they were not permitted to wear white clothing, shoes or stockings, nor could they wear long gowns, hold umbrellas, ride horses, or sit in sedan chairs. When they were married they were not permitted to hold up banners, blow horns or beat gongs; only people from official families or Han Chinese could do so. On rainy days, all that could be seen outside the market town was masses of bamboo hats piled high resembling a hill; the hats could not be taken into the town.⁷⁶

The same restrictions pertaining to peasants applied to serfs. For instance, the serf Huang Huiting was seen by the native official Li Depu wearing a pair of white stockings in breach of these prohibitions in 1901. The native official had him bound and beaten, and also fined him five strings of cash before releasing him. Another instance was where the serf Huang Tian of Nongqiao village was dispatched to carry a shoulder pole to present gifts at Longzhou. On his return journey he came across a riderless horse, so he mounted it and rode home. A runner of the native official discovered this, so Huang Tian was bound

⁷⁴ Internal Reports, p. 95.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Internal Reports, p. 93.

and beaten.⁷⁷ Serfs were also prohibited from wearing silk clothes or riding in bridal sedan chairs; their women could not tie their hair with embroidered ribbon, and they could not hold pipes or wear rain hats when they went to the market.⁷⁸ The extreme detail in these recollections suggests how aggrieved the local populace was about restrictions on their dress and conduct, which amounted to a public airing of their low status.

Apart from these prohibitions, there were established customs in respect of permitted dress. Only members of the official clan and those who had studied for the examinations could wear riding breeches and white garments. Amongst the free people, distinctions were drawn up in respect of people of the town and the villagers (*xiangxiaren*) from the countryside: those in the town could wear long garments of silk and satin, and small caps with a button (*dingzi*), which indicated rank. However, villagers, and even people who had come from outside the subprefecture (*kheek² pu¹*) were not permitted these forms of dress, and could only wear clothing made from black or blue cloth. Their caps had to have a small hole, or they would be subjected to a beating and a fine.⁷⁹ Dress codes and other restrictions such as prescribed types of housing and tombs for people of different classes were common practice in formally stratified societies with distinct classes of people, and China proper was no different in this regard.⁸⁰

Education and Examinations

The native official also formulated regulations early on regarding study and literacy. Only the official clan, Han Chinese, or people whose ancestors had attained official rank were allowed to sit for the *xiucuai* (county

⁷⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 28

⁷⁸ Although it seems logical that the lower position of the serfs relative to peasants should be reflected by additional restrictions, there are inconsistencies between the Internal Reports and the Field Studies which cast some doubt on whether these additional restrictions can be taken as definitive. For instance, Huang Huiting, described as a serf in the *Diaocha*, is described as a peasant in the Internal Reports (see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 28; Internal Reports, p. 93).

⁷⁹ Internal Reports, pp. 93–94. Although the fieldworkers do not elaborate, the hole was probably required for the Manchu queue imposed by the Qing rulers.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Eberhard, *A History of China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 217–218.

level) examinations to attain scholarly honour or official rank. In addition, they had to establish that there had not been a marriage to a person with the same surname within the last three generations of their family.

The intent of this requirement may have been to ensure that examination candidates had clear paternal bloodlines, so that their surnames could be relied on as indicators of heredity and criteria for marriage relationships, as with Han surname concepts. This would also have ensured that the notables had the required pedigree, thus strengthening the cohesion of that class. It also reflected the patron-client aspect of the relationship between the native official and the Chinese government. Examination candidates could only prove compliance with these requirements through family registers; that is, they had to have documentary evidence of their ancestral connections. This stipulation would have excluded most native (Zhuang) people. Prior to signing up for the examination, they had to present the surnames of their great-grandfather and great-grandmother, their grandfather and grandmother, and their father and mother.⁸¹ The fieldworkers do not say where the examinations were held, but it was probably at the seat of Taiping prefecture.

As for the villagers, serfs and house slaves, they were forbidden to sit for the *xiucuai* examinations. The native official also restricted what they could learn at all. He only permitted them to know a few words in order that they could act as *daogong*, sign contracts, look up the calendar, and do calculations and other rudimentary tasks. The *daogong* was a local priest who occupied a key role in local religion. Each village in Anping usually had one *daogong* or *mogong*, a kind of vernacular priest. The *daogong*, *mogong* or *wupo* (female spirit medium) would typically take part in ancestral sacrifices and offerings to local deities. They were also summoned by the native official or the villagers to make utterances and perform purging rituals in times of illness or other difficulties, in the belief that they were a medium for consulting spirits. The villagers also believed that by becoming a *daogong* (or *mogong*) one could avoid misfortunes in the family such as illness or lack of progeny.⁸² The *daogong* was literate; the *mogong* was also literate, but not recognized by the Chinese state. The *wupo* were normally illiterate, but they had an oral tradition.⁸³

⁸¹ Internal Reports, p. 95.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 124–126.

⁸³ See “*Wushi yu wushu*” in *Zhongguo geminzu yuanshi zongjiao ziliaojicheng – Tujia zujuan, Yaozu juan, Zhuangzu juan, Lizu juan*, ed. Lü Daji (Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), esp. pp. 556–72. On Zhuang priests see also David Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, esp. pp. 21–24.

For those allowed to study for the examinations, the native official had established a library in the *yamen* especially for members of the official clan, and the sons and younger brothers of people of higher status who had official rank. (This is indicated in the plan of Anping *yamen* in figure 3.) In 1904, the native official established a small school, but made certain that apart from the official clan, the families of those with official rank and the Han Chinese people (who at the time, however, did not dare attend), no other people were allowed to enter the school. The native official also issued express stipulations that villagers, house slaves and the sons and younger brothers of barbers were not permitted to attend the school.⁸⁴ This prohibition on the sons and younger brothers of barbers appears to mirror the lowly status which they would have held in Chinese society, namely as one of the ‘lowly’ or ‘mean’ people (*jianmin*). However, their specific exclusion here may relate to locally-based superstition, possibly in connection with the cutting of hair. Barbers in China were also considered unclean because they handled hair.⁸⁵

The establishment of the school at such a late stage of the Anping native chieftaincy indicates how abject its conditions were. The first school in a Guangxi *tusi* was the Taiping Prefectural School established by the Ming government in 1397.⁸⁶ However, it did not begin establishing county and community schools in the Daxin area until the late Ming (c.1602). The Qing government went further, setting up academies, free schools and private schools, advanced halls of learning and teachers’ colleges, although none were in the Anping area. Nominally, the court had a policy of non-discrimination as well as fee assistance for distant frontier candidates, but the native officials took great care to prevent their local subjects from gaining access to these benefits.⁸⁷ They exploited Qing regulations which stipulated that the local minority peoples could only enter for examinations through the *tusi* in order to block Zhuang from sitting. They were also keen to prevent successful examination candidates from gaining exemption from corvée, permitted

⁸⁴ Internal Reports, p. 95.

⁸⁵ On *jianmin* see, for example, Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China*, p.77; Anders Hansson, *Chinese Outcasts: Discrimination and Emancipation in Late Imperial Ching* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), p.1. On barbers being considered unclean see Hansson, p. 51.

⁸⁶ *Guangxi tongzhi – jiaoyuzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province – Records on Education), p. 33.

⁸⁷ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 352; Gong Yin, pp. 138–139.

under a 1765 Qing statute.⁸⁸ As a result, the government schools were all monopolized by the families of officials, the rich and the powerful. Up until the thirty-fourth year of the Republic (1945), most of the Daxin population remained illiterate, with only about 200 middle school students and 15,361 primary school students in the whole county.⁸⁹

Influenced by the revolutionary fervour of the late Qing, the serfs engaged teachers to open private schools in their own villages. In 1907, a group of students agitated for a *yamen* permit to allow the collection of contributions from the villages to fund the conversion of a temple into a primary school.⁹⁰ School fees were high: many people studied at the primary level, but very few were able to reach a higher level because of fee increments. To study to the level of the Four Books and Five Classics required annual fees of four to five strings of cash, which was beyond the means (and ability) of poor people. In the final analysis, only the moneyed were able to study; nor did the native official want to encourage people of ability to emerge from amongst the serfs and house slaves.⁹¹ As late as the Republican period, when Nong Shijing, the younger son of an Anping house slave, studied at junior middle school level in Longzhou, he was severely persecuted and intimidated by the official clan.⁹²

This desire by the native officials to keep education beyond the reach of the local Zhuang populace was also evident in Nandan *tusi*, where there were only a few examination candidates from Nandan even during the Qing, when presentation of candidates for examinations was at its most widespread. According to the fieldworkers, this is partly because the Nandan native official simply sealed off the territory, not wishing the native youths to sit for the examinations. The policy, as with Anping, was to keep the local people ignorant. There were also practical realities: the Zhuang were industrious farmers, but by nature did little reading. Without schooling they would most likely fail the examinations. The villages in Nandan did not have any primary schools until 1921.⁹³

The care taken by the native official to prevent access to education

⁸⁸ *Guangxi tongzhi – jiaoyuzhi*, p. 34.

⁸⁹ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 352. On education in *tusi* domains during the Ming and Qing see Gong Yin, pp. 100–104 (Ming), 134–139 (Qing).

⁹⁰ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 354.

⁹¹ Internal Reports, pp. 94–95.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 95–96.

⁹³ *Diaocha*, vol. 2, pp. 71, 162.

by the local Zhuang populace typifies the segregation of *tusi* subjects which doubtless contributed to the late cultural, commercial and agricultural development of Anping and neighbouring *tusi* domains compared to those parts of Guangxi which were under regular Chinese administration.⁹⁴ It would also have delayed the ability of the serf population to challenge and upset the *tusi* system under which they had lived for generations. Such awareness of the potentially destabilizing effects of education is universal; in tropical Africa, for instance, Lord Lugard noted how the barest amount of newly acquired knowledge could react on the village and upset tribal authority.⁹⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The picture that emerges from this study of the social stratification in Anping is of a predominantly serf-bound society with 85 percent of the subjects tied to the land, and the native official holding rights over their persons. It is a picture very much at odds with China proper, where tenants were basically free men, never debased to the status of serf; serfdom was never part of the Chinese agrarian system.⁹⁶

This stratified society, also evident in other *tusi*, is remarkably similar to the social structure of the bridle and halter prefectures and *tusi* society under the Song and Ming dynasties. This stratification was observed in the Song dynasty by Fan Chengda, Military and Pacification Commissioner of Guangxi during 1172–1174, who noted that the society within the bridle and halter prefectures (*jimizhou*) consisted of the *jimi* officials, then the tribal headmen, then the rest of the people, who were called *tituo*, which was equivalent to *baixing* (the common people). Fan added:

The common people are all submissive to the free people, and others become enslaved through robbery, plundering and mountain hunting as well as through barter, purchase or marriages...they remain subordinated from generation to generation and are called *jianu* (domestic slaves) as well as *jiading* (domestic labourers).⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *Zhuangzu tongshi*, 1988, p. 396.

⁹⁵ Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 217.

⁹⁶ Chao, Kang, *Man and Land in Chinese History: An Economic Analysis*, pp.177ff, 222ff.

⁹⁷ Fan Chengda, *Guihai yuhengzhi* in *Nanfang caomu zhuang*, pp. 589–386.

In his Ming dynasty ethnography the *Chiya* (Elegances from the Tropics), Kuang Lu observed that the *tituo* were the lowest rank of labourers in the mountain areas. *Tituo* is defined in a philological study of the *Chiya* as referring to lowly people in servitude who were enslaved from generation to generation.⁹⁸ Thus, the stratified society of the Anping native chieftaincy and others in the late Qing dynasty appears to represent a continuum going back at least to the twelfth century.

As a rigidly stratified society, commonalities are also apparent with Tai chiefdoms outside the direct control of the Chinese state, which had similarly stratified societies headed by a chiefly clan. For example, the five social categories of Tai society during French colonization consisted of, first, the hereditary chiefs, who held economic, political and judicial power; second, the notables who constituted the foundation of the administrative apparatus of the chiefs; third, a category of village headmen who administered the villages; fourth, the peasants, who comprised the bulk of the population and were liable to provide duty and pay taxes; and fifth, a category of household slaves.⁹⁹

These commonalities and continuities reveal the corresponding continuity of the *yi yi zhi yi* (use barbarians to rule barbarians) policy of the Chinese state towards compliant border minorities. The sheer degree of political autonomy retained by the native official under this policy helped to perpetuate the survival into the twentieth century of this anachronistic institution.

It appears that the extent and conditions of the serfdom and slavery in Anping were especially harsh. This is suggested by comparison with the Nandan native chieftaincy, in which serfdom appears not to have played any significant role.¹⁰⁰ Peasants in Nandan had to provide personal services to the native official, which, during the Song and Yuan dynasties, comprised mainly converting wasteland into field *mu*, but lessened during the Ming. The main reason for the absence of serfdom in Nandan appears to be the lower proportion of land owned by the native official; the peasants owned 60 percent of the land in Nandan county. The relatively high percentage of privately owned land resulted in the establishment of private manor estates owned by manor lords

⁹⁸ Kuang Lu, “*Chiya*”, in *Chiya kaoshi*, annot. Lan Hong’en, pp. 35–36.

⁹⁹ Georges Condominas, pp. 46ff.

¹⁰⁰ *Diaocha*, vol. 2, pp. 44–47, 159.

(*zhuangzhu*), who competed for power with the native official; there was no such phenomenon in Anping.¹⁰¹

Anping was, by contrast, a smaller and poorer native chieftaincy in which most of the peasantry barely existed at subsistence level. This resulted in the Anping native official's having immense power over his subjects. The decrease in the military value to the Chinese state of the Zhuang soldiery since the mid-Ming dynasty, which led to the greater dependence of these erstwhile mercenaries on the native official, no doubt contributed to an increase in the native official's power over the peasantry. However, the extreme serfdom in Anping was related primarily to the native official's ownership of most of the land within Anping. The system of land tenure under the Anping native official is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 151, 159.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE IN THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

The education I received taught me that land was the most stable thing on earth. Next was the kingly power of the *tusi* that ruled it.

—Alai, *Chen Ai Luo Ding* (Dust Settles)

Control of land played a key role in maintaining the economic, social and political power of the native official. Land was the greatest means of production in the Anping native chieftaincy, and rice was the main crop produced. The labour-intensive nature of rice planting and the skill of the Zhuang in wet-rice agriculture meant that control of the land and manpower would bring with it control of the economy, and the ability to use the surplus to bolster the political power of the official clan.¹ This chapter examines the status and use of land in the Anping native chieftaincy, and the role of land in the consolidation and later dissipation of the power of the native official.

BASIS OF LAND OWNERSHIP IN THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

The analysis of rights in land in the Anping native chieftaincy is problematic. This is partly because of the difficulties in separating customary rights in land from the rights granted to the native official under his enfeoffment by the Chinese court. The main Chinese commentators on the land system within the Zhuang native chieftaincies have equated the jurisdiction granted to the native official with the land within the jurisdiction. In doing so, they have stated that the native official was the owner of all the land within his jurisdiction.² Existing land contracts and regulations made during the Anping native chieftaincy indicate that this was no longer the case from the mid-1700s and possibly earlier.

¹ It has been observed that land ownership serves as an index to the nature of social and political structure (see Chen Hang-Seng, p. 34).

² See, for example, *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 632.

Despite some difficulties in determining the nature of the fief, the rich factual detail collected and compiled by the fieldworkers in respect of the classes and use of land within the Anping native chieftaincy has enabled the following account of the system of land use that was in force during that period.

Ultimate Ownership of Land

The varying degrees of land rights within the Anping native chieftaincy were technically subject to the primary ownership of the land by the Chinese court. It has long been an accepted premise that ownership of all land within China's borders was vested in the emperor as sovereign. The basis cited for this premise is a poem entitled *Beishan* (Northern Mountain) from the *Shijing* (Book of Songs), written between c.1000 and c.600 BC.³ The key passage is in the second stanza:

Everywhere under Heaven
Is no land that is not the king's.
To the borders of all those lands
None but is the king's slave.⁴

Western legal commentators tend to view this premise as stemming from the fact that the will of the emperor was the sole source of law and that the above quotation from the *Shijing* merely articulates the autocratic rule of the sovereign.⁵ Consequently, this primary and reversionary status of land ownership is generally not discussed in any significant detail in texts on Chinese law, which tend to focus on the possession and alienation of land by the people under titles granted by local authorities.⁶

Applying this premise to Anping, the fieldworkers state that after General Di Qing suppressed the Nong Zhigao rebellion at the beginning of the Song dynasty, the Song court seized all the land in the Daxin area, and established the hereditary native chieftaincy.⁷ Ultimate

³ See Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, pp. 415–423.

⁴ Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 320.

⁵ See, for example, C. Jamieson, *Chinese Family and Commercial Law* (Hong Kong: Vetch and Lee Limited, 19700, pp. 9, 90.

⁶ See, for example, William C. Jones, trans., *The Great Qing Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 19940, pp. 114–121; Wang Chenguang and Zhang Xianchu, eds., *Introduction to Chinese Law* (Hong Kong and Singapore: Sweet & Maxwell Asia, 1997), pp. 541–542.

⁷ Internal Reports, p. 46.

ownership of the land within Anping thereby vested in the sovereign.⁸ Thereafter, the fieldworkers quote the phrase *shoutu kaihuang* (accept a fief, open up the wasteland), which was contained in an antithetical couplet from the Anping *yamen* describing the land ownership status of the native official. This couplet, said to have been hung up by the native official Li Binggui during celebrations in 1840 to mark the restoration of the *yamen*, extols the hereditary offices bestowed upon the barbarians after their pacification for some twenty generations after General Di Qing and his troops came to the area:

Since the time of Di Qing,
We accepted a fief and opened up the wasteland,
A meritorious plan, in place for several hundred years.

After the *Man* were pacified,
We were bestowed hereditary offices,
With official posts renewed over twenty generations.⁹

The fieldworkers state that on the basis of the phrase *shoutu kaihuang*, the native official had become the highest land owner in the Anping area eight or nine hundred years earlier. The couplet therefore purports to establish that the Li clan's ownership of the land stems from the bestowal upon them of a fief after the defeat of the Nong Zhigao rebellion during the Song dynasty. All land (including mountains, rivers and ponds), as well as the peasants who cultivated the land, became the property of the native official and his clan, who inherited it from generation to generation and allocated it at will; some of those circumstances remained in force until just before the establishment of the PRC.¹⁰

⁸ In this regard, the fieldworkers' observation that the Song court "forcibly occupied" the land in Anping (see Internal Reports, p. 46) implies that from the indigenous viewpoint, the seizure of the land by the Song court was akin to the indigenous dispossession of native land such as that through annexation by the British Crown, a matter which remains the subject of continuing debate in Australia, stemming from the decision of the High Court of Australia in *Mabo v. Queensland* (No.2) (1992). Although the right of the Chinese court to grant the native official a fief over the Anping native subprefecture is subsequently not questioned by the fieldworkers or other commentators, it is clear from the Field Studies that the local populace considered the native official's land ownership to be unlawful.

⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

The Fief

Apart from the questionable basis of this alleged Song dynasty fief, a fundamental problem in establishing the basis of the native official's proprietary rights over the land within the Anping native chieftaincy is the difficulty in finding direct evidence of the nature of the fiefdom which was granted in the beginning of the Ming dynasty. The question is whether the jurisdiction of the territory over which the fief was effective included ownership rights to the land, or merely rights to control the use of land. Another question is whether the native official held rights over land as a traditional prerogative in indigenous society, or as the local representative of the Chinese emperor. Available scholarship does not appear to separate these two concepts clearly.

There is no available evidence of the wording of the fief, if in fact any wording existed. Whatever the form of the fief, the native official dealt with a large proportion of the land within his jurisdiction in a manner consistent with having ultimate land ownership rights. Other Chinese-sponsored native chieftains have generally been recognized as owning the land within their domains, but the basis of such ownership has been demonstrated by contemporary scholars only on the basis of circumstantial evidence. For example, the native chieftain of the Dai people of the Dehong region in Yunnan held the highest right of ownership over all the land within his domain. This right was regarded as a prerogative bestowed on the native chieftain under long-standing customary laws handed down orally; no written statutes have been discovered in the Dehong Dai area.

Following the establishment of Yunnan as a province in 1274, its first governor, Shansiding Saidianchi, adopted a policy of gentle pacification and allowing people to maintain their customs. This was in effect an acknowledgment of the rights of the native chieftains over the lands traditionally under their jurisdiction, allowing them to govern their territories in accordance with the customary laws of local society.¹¹ There was much circumstantial evidence that the highest right to ownership of land was still vested in the native chieftain. For instance, he had the rights to confiscate land on non-payment of rent. His permission also

¹¹ Zhang Xiaohui et al., "Yunnan Dehong Daizu de fengjian falü" (The Feudal Laws of the Dai People of Dehong), in Xu Zhongqi et al., eds., *Shaoshu minzu xiguanfa yanjiu* (1998), pp. 81–82, 84, 87.

had to be obtained before disused land could be cleared and cultivated. Once the land was brought under cultivation, the cultivator had to begin paying official rent after three years.¹² The question of enfeoffment by the Chinese court in respect of the land does not appear to have been addressed, probably due to its tacit acknowledgement of the powers of the native chieftains over the lands traditionally under their jurisdiction.

In the case of the Kamba in eastern Tibet, in which native chieftains were also incorporated into the Chinese imperial administration as *tusi*, it was also generally recognized that the chieftains traditionally owned the land and had the authority to grant land. According to Chen Hang-Seng, who conducted field studies in the area in the 1940s, the basis of such ownership rights lay in local folklore. It was believed that when kings, or Gea-bo, came to rule over the land, all land belonged to them. The Gea-bo were identified with the native chieftains, who were later appointed as *tusi* by the Chinese government. They had at their disposal the local headmen, the people and the land. As recently as the period of Chen's study, the Chinese administration recognized the permanent land ownership of the *tusi*.¹³ Chen also states that the chieftain, as representative of the state, was the owner of state lands.¹⁴ Thus, in the case of the Kamba, the two aspects of the native official's rights of ownership over the land, that is, his traditional prerogative and his capacity as representative of the Chinese state, were brought into the open.

In the case of Anping, the fieldworkers relied solely on the dubious grant of fief described above as the basis of the native official's ownership of the land within Anping. However, recent commentators on the Anping native chieftaincy, Bai Yaotian for example, have not found additional written evidence of any other sources of the fief.

Modern Guangxi scholars have sought to base the Anping native official's land ownership rights on the following indirect evidence. The authors of the 1980 *Zhuangzu jianshi* (Short History of the Zhuang) state that all the land within the Zhuang *tusi* domains was the property of the native official. They cite the following two quotes as authority for this proposition: "All the land and water in the territory is submitted to the court" (*difang shuitu, yibing guifu*) and "Every inch of land belongs to the official's foundation" (*chicun tudi, xishu guanji*). The source of the former quote is a stone inscription on a mountain opposite the seat

¹² Ibid., pp. 81–82.

¹³ Chen Hang-Seng, pp. 92–93. Chen does not state how this recognition was effected or whether documentary evidence was provided.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 88.

of Encheng subprefecture (in present-day Daxin county). The inscription was by Zhao Shixu, a descendant of the Encheng native official Zhao Renshou.¹⁵ The source of the latter quote is given as the chapter *zhao ling* (Imperial Edicts) in *juan* 17 of the *Baishan tusi zhi* (Gazetteer of the Baishan Native Chieftaincy, Imperial Edicts, chapter 17).¹⁶

These two sentences were cited by other Zhuang scholars in later publications. In the 1988 *Zhuangzu tongshi* (General History of the Zhuang), the authors cite the first sentence as authority for their assertion that the *tusi* wholly owned any land that was productive.¹⁷ The connection between the sentence and this assertion is unclear. They also quote the second sentence and explain its meaning: when the Baishan *tusi*, Wang Qing, was awarded Liangdan Bu by the Song general Di Qing, its fields were divided into grain fields and official fields. The official fields all belonged to the native official. The grain fields were the self-reclaimed fields which nominally belonged to the peasants, but could not be bought or sold. Their ownership rights were in the ‘grasp’ of the native official. Given these realities, the authors conclude that it was pointless to speak of the fields as belonging to the peasants, and that this was the thrust of the second sentence.¹⁸ In his essay in the 1989 *Zhuangzu lungao* (Draft Essays on the Zhuang), Tan Qi quotes the same two sentences in support of the bald assertion that the native official was the highest level of land owner and possessed all the land within his jurisdiction.¹⁹

In the 1997 *Zhuangzu tongshi* (General History of the Zhuang), the authors also cite these two sentences, and attempt to clarify their relevance. They state that each time there was a change of dynasty and the native official submitted to the new court, “All the land and water in the territory was submitted to the court”. They go on to state that when the court enfeoffed the native official, the fief included the land and common people, and they quote the sentence from the *Baishan sizhi* in support of this.²⁰ That quote is used in support of the same proposition in the 2002 *Zhuangzu shi* (A History of the Zhuang).²¹

¹⁵ *Zhuangzu jianshi*, p. 41, n. 1; *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 320.

¹⁶ Ibid. The title of this book is misquoted by the authors of the *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988); it is actually *Baisan sizhi* (Gazetteer of the Baishan [Native] Office).

¹⁷ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 320.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁹ Tan Qi, “Zhuangzu lingzhu zhidu de tudi guanxi he jieji guanxi (Land and class relations under the Zhuang feudal landlord system), in *Zhuangzu lungao*, p. 213.

²⁰ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 632. The authors erroneously cite only the *Baishan tusi zhi* j.17 as the source of both these sentences.

²¹ *Zhuangzu shi* (A History of the Zhuang), ed. Zhang Shengzhen (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2002), p. 312.

The stone carving containing the first quote is not recorded in the two available collections of Zhuang epigraphy in Guangxi, so it cannot be cross-checked or its context ascertained. It certainly lacks legal force, since it was written by a family member of the Encheng native official and not by the Chinese administration. (It may, however, have had customary force.) In any event, the use of this quote as the basis for the assertion that the native official owned the land is flawed, since it takes the stone carving at face value. As to the second quote, this is indeed contained in chapter 17 of the *Baishan sizhi*.²²

The context of this second quote involved fields within the native chieftaincy which were sold or mortgaged to Han outsiders in violation of regulations. “Every inch of land belongs to the official’s foundation” referred to reclaimed land which had been neither mortgaged nor reported. The native official was to be ordered by the local authorities to recover this land for direct management by his office. Such land was being distinguished from fields which had already been sold or mortgaged; these the native official had to buy back according to the amount of the debt, a process that entailed a five-year delay before the *tusi* could regain the produce of the fields.²³

Although the assertion that all land belonged to the native official appears to have some basis in the second quote, it is not on as solid ground as the customary laws of the Kamba and Dehong native chieftaincies. Nevertheless, it is clear that Guangxi scholars consider that the Anping native official had the highest rights of ownership of all land within his domain, and they attribute this to the fiefdom from the Chinese court rather than to customary laws. This reliance on two separate quotes that are open to interpretation, coupled with reluctance to invoke customary laws, suggests that the Anping native chieftain may have had weaker customary rights of land ownership than the Dehong or Kamba chieftains. The reasons may be connected with the fracturing of the region of the Zuo and You rivers following the Song suppression of the Nong Zhigao rebellion. The fieldworkers state that the native official “forcibly

²² See *Baishan sizhi* (1830), reprint held at *Zhongyang minzu daxue tushuguan*, j.17 p. 2.35b. The opening words in the original, which are actually *chidi cuntu xishu guanji*, have been slightly misquoted in the 1980 *Zhuangzu jianshi*. This inaccuracy, however, does not alter the essential meaning of this sentence.

²³ *Baishan sizhi* j.17, pp. 2.35a–2.35b. The relevant passage is an excerpt from the Qing *Duchayuan ni jiancha zhiquan tiaoli* (Regulations on Investigating Powers Drafted by the Censorate), which were issued in 1661; see *ibid.* pp. 2.30a, 2.38b, and *Qingchao fazhishi* (A History of the Qing Legal System), p. 182.

occupied” (*bazhan*) a large amount of the land which was used as manor fields, and relied on his political power to seize fields, forests and fishponds; the language is not consistent with having ultimate land ownership rights under customary laws.²⁴ The use of the term ‘political power’, while probably intended to illustrate feudal conditions, nevertheless conveys a sense that the native official’s seizure of land encroached on customary land rights.

The Chinese court did not pay a salary to the Anping native official, which indicates that the court intended him to derive his income from the fief. Practically, therefore, the Chinese court can be assumed to have condoned the native official’s claims to land ownership in order to justify his demands for taxes and services from the peasantry. This was reflected in the organization of the better quality fields into *yangshan tian*, which the fieldworkers define as “salary fields”.²⁵ This absence of salary underscores the essentially pragmatic and economically expedient nature of the *tusi* system.

According to the Zhuang scholar Wei Wenxuan, the view that the native official owned the land within his domain came about simply through the court’s condoning his use of the land as he pleased. The court neither intervened nor cared about how the official used the land. This reflected the fundamentally opportunistic basis of the relationship between the *tusi* and the court: it was a cost-effective means of administration and control by the Chinese state.²⁶ The results of this bargain were brutal; the *tusi* effectively became feudal landlords with absolute power, as we will see below.

DIVISION OF LAND IN THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

Notwithstanding some uncertainty regarding the legal status of the native official’s land ownership, a system of land tenure was in place during the Anping native chieftaincy which derived *prima facie* from the fief. Because the land varied in location, quality and characteristics, it was roughly divided into the two categories of people’s fields (*mintian*) and

²⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 214.

²⁵ See, for example, *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliaoz huibian*, pp. 362–365; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 36.

²⁶ Wei Wenxuan, “Guangxi zhuangzu diqu tusi zhidu gaishu” (A Brief Account of the Native Official System in the Zhuang Areas of Guangxi), *Sanyuesan* 2 (1984).

official fields (*guantian*). People's fields were used to ensure a supply of corvée labour and for payment of tribute and taxes. Official fields were not liable for grain taxes, and were wholly the private property of the native official and the official clan.²⁷

As is indicated in figure 6, there were three broad categories of official fields in Anping: those which were organized and managed as official manor estates (*zhuangtian*), those given to official clan members, and corvée fields (*yitian*) used to provide farming rights to serfs in return for special labour services to the native official. Although the people's fields and official fields were nominally separate categories, certain land initially classed as people's fields was later claimed by the native official as official fields.

This system of land tenure was more entrenched the closer the land was to the centre of the native official's control. Land within the outlying areas of Anping was not as tightly regulated by the system, nor was much of it subject to ownership by the native official. In these outlying areas where the native official's influence was not strong, the villagers continued to hold fast to many old customs, resulting in little change up to the establishment of the PRC.²⁸ The land in these outlying areas is discussed first.

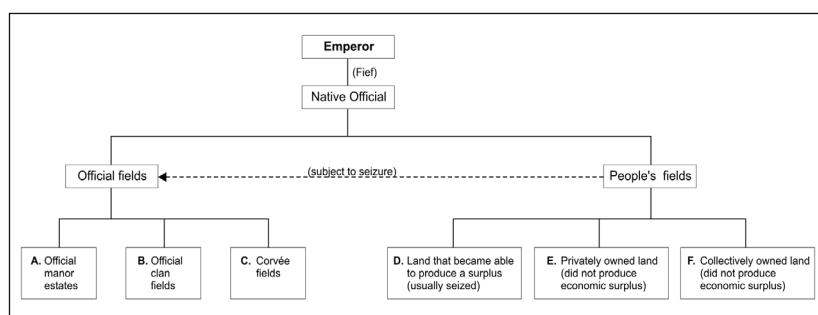


Fig. 6. System of land tenure in the Anping native chieftaincy.

²⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 33. Information in the Field Studies and Internal Reports on the exact rights and obligations in respect of the different types of land in Anping *tusi* is hazy, and detailed tables on land amounts, tax rates and households as provided in Chen Hang-Seng's comparative study cannot be drawn up from it. Some clarification can probably be derived from material on other *tusi* domains in the general area.

²⁸ Internal Reports, p. 61.

*People's Fields**Collectively-owned Land*

In peripheral and secluded mountain villages, production capability was low due to the scarcity of labour and the rule of the native official was weak. Many fields were collectively owned (*gongyou*) by the villages, subject to the property rights of the native official. Such communal ownership, along with cooperative labour, was typical in other Tai communities, for example Thailand.²⁹

An example was the twenty-household village of Xiadian village in Baoxu. It was unable to produce much grain due to regular flooding of the fields, so the peasants had difficulty maintaining even adequate clothing and food. Each time there was a calamity many peasants had to flee to the neighbouring native official domains of Guohua and Guode to seek a living. As a result, land lay waste. The Anping native official had no choice but to abandon exploitation of those lands, and required payment of relatively trifling amounts of tax.

The native official stipulated that, at each summer harvesting season, every village had to pay over five strings of cash in lieu of grain tax. After the autumn harvest, another five strings was to be paid, the amount to be apportioned among the households by the village elders. Each *mu* was charged forty-four cash in the summer season, and another forty at the autumn harvest. Consequently there was a formal preservation of the property rights of the native official over the land, while the peasants had relatively generous rights of use and production. Their personal attachment to the native official was also relatively slight.

This type of collective ownership system was current in the early years of the Anping native chieftaincy, and was still in existence at the time of the Field Studies. Because there was wasteland everywhere available for reclamation, the mortgage and rental of land did not develop; each person relied solely on their labour capacity, and could not possess or operate relatively more land. Consequently, disparities in wealth in these outer regions were not great. For instance, there were twenty-seven households in Shangdian village, of which four had nine *mu* of fields, twenty-one had five to seven *mu*, one household had one *mu* and

²⁹ See, for example, Chatthip Nartsupha *The Thai Village Economy in the Past*, trans. C. Baker and P. Phongpaichit (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books 1999).

the remaining household had no fields but relied on clearing land for their livelihood. Also, in Bannan village, which had twenty-four households, five households had thirty *mu* of fields, two had fifteen *mu*, fifteen had six to eight *mu* and two households had no fields.³⁰ Disparities between the amounts of land owned by these households were presumably related to their labour capacity. Labour-sharing customs applied, whereby those who had finished harvesting would assist families that were still harvesting and be repaid with food and wine.³¹

The land ownership situation reflected in these examples did not change significantly until the Republic; landlords with more concentrated landholdings did not appear until shortly before the Field Studies.³² This suggests that in areas where native officials took no significant steps to exercise their rights under the fief, the prevailing system of collective ownership by the villagers continued undisturbed.

Villages adjoining the border with Vietnam all developed in much the same way as Xiadian village; they owned the land in common and were less subject to exploitation by the native official. For instance, in a year of good rainfall, the amount of land tax payable in the first half of the year was five and a half strings of cash, with five strings to be paid in the second half of the year. This implied that a lower tax rate probably applied if it was a dry year, although the fieldworkers do not elaborate. The *langshou* (village headman) would apportion the liability of each household; for every five *fen* or so of land (five *jin* of grain) twenty-two cash was due, with twenty cash at mid-year.³³ On a per *mu* basis, this was roughly equivalent to the relatively light tax imposed by the native official on Xiadian Tun.

The fieldworkers also refer to these collectively owned fields as *mintian* (people's fields).³⁴ As we will see below, people's fields that the native official considered desirable became subject to seizure or the imposition of higher taxes without warning. In this sense the term 'people's

³⁰ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 33.

³¹ See *ibid.*, p. 4.

³² Internal Reports, p. 62.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 33–34. *Mintian* was merely a generic term which differentiated land owned by the people from land owned by the native official and his clan. Thus the fieldworkers also used the term *mintian* to refer to fields which were previously owned by the official clan and which later came to be privately owned by peasants following the breakdown of the official clan's ability to support its lifestyle through landholdings; see Internal Reports, p. 46.

fields' seems a misnomer, since the fields were always liable to seizure by the native official and thereby conversion into official fields (*guantian*).

Desirable or Economically Viable Land

The native officials' tendency to leave outlying land in Anping undisturbed and the inhabitants free to continue longstanding customary practices merely reflected pragmatic policy. Low production capacity, low population, weaker control and proximity to the Vietnam border were factors which would have rendered a claim by the native official under the authority of his fief economically unviable and politically injudicious. The land by and large remained true people's fields by default. Where land was perceived as desirable by the native official, or where wasteland began to yield a consistent surplus after being cleared by the peasants, the situation was considerably different. There were many instances of random and brutal seizure of lands that the native official considered desirable. This exercise of the primary right of ownership by the native official occurred throughout the entire period of native official rule in Anping, on pain of eviction or other punishment.³⁵

The Fengshui Case

An early case of seizure by the native official was legendary among the peasants in Baipin village in Kanxu. Around the fiftieth year of the Qing Kangxi reign period (1711), seven cows had calves on the same day. On hearing this glad news, the people said that the area had the "pulse of the dragon" and good *fengshui*, and would flourish and develop in the future. When the current native official, Li Zhangheng, heard this, he dispatched a geomancer to conduct a survey. The geomancer was convinced that it was a precious *longgong* (dragon lord) location. Consequently, the native official, wishing to claim ownership of the land, compelled the entire village to move. He had the land marked off as a grave site and the dependants of old and new officials buried there. He called it Nong Fen (Gravesite Valley) and prohibited the ordinary people from entering it to cut firewood or open up wasteland. The native official also believed the geomancer's divinations that the *longmu* (dragon mother) lived in a mountain called Fen Shan. The mountain belonged to the Hu clan, who lived beside Yanming village at

³⁵ Internal Reports, p. 56.

the bottom of the foothills opposite Nong Fen. It was believed that the dragon lord would move to Fen Shan in order to be united with the dragon mother, which would mean the loss of the *fengshui* to the Hu. If the Hu clan prospered as a result, this would be unfavourable to the native official.

To prevent this, the native official commanded the house slaves and serfs of the Five Places District to bring their tools to the area and gave them a limit of one day and a night in which to excavate the Hu clan's mountain by one *zhang* (3.3 metres) and add to it five *mu* of ponds, in order to destroy the *fengshui* of the Hu family and drive out the dragon mother. Under intense pressure from the native official, the labourers managed to dig the fishponds, using their jacket fronts to load up the soil. These became the official's ponds, which caused immense suffering to the local peasants who thereby lost their land.³⁶

Clearing of Wasteland

As is indicated in box D in figure 6, land that could produce a consistent surplus was commonly seized by the native official for conversion to official fields. The process of clearing wasteland usually marked the first step in the process of establishing corvée fields. The native official had rules in place which required that his permission be sought before cultivation of the wasteland in the central area of Anping could begin. Those peasants wishing to clear wasteland had to go to the *yamen* and present a pair of roosters by way of application. After that, they had to hand over one or two strings of cash before they could finally start to cultivate the land. After one to two years of planting, when the quality of the soil had improved and the land was yielding harvests, the native official would assert his property rights by establishing rental payments. For good quality land classed as *bendi* (basket fields), the rent was twenty strings of cash for each *ban* (six *mu*); medium quality land was liable for over ten strings; and even land of indifferent quality was liable for ten strings.³⁷ Those who failed to pay were not permitted to cultivate the land. Apart from this, the peasants also had to hand over two

³⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 34; Internal Reports, pp. 56–57.

³⁷ Internal Reports, p. 48. *Bendi* was one of the four types of land which were cultivated in Anping according to their suitability: the other three were *shuitian* (wet fields), *hantian* (dry fields) and *yuandi* (plant-growing land). *Bendi* was used for growing sesame, white beans and cotton (Internal Reports, pp. 10–11). The fieldworkers do not give the reason for the name.

hundred cash in lieu of grain annually, and provide specified corvée services. This liability for corvée presumably began when peasants obtained permission from the native official to cultivate the land.

If peasants wished to open up wet fields or dry fields, different fees applied. For each *ban* of fields they had to hand over ten to twelve strings of evidentiary fees (*pingju fei*). When taxes became payable, they had to pay twenty to thirty strings. Each year they also had to pay three hundred and sixty copper coins. These circumstances were in force before the beginning of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1909), when the native official Li Chaoxu was in power.³⁸

Thus, the native official applied gradually increasing layers of control and exploitation from the time the peasants attempted to clear wasteland and land in only passable condition that was scattered and difficult to administer, all of which started off nominally as people's fields until it had been transformed into fields with increased production capacity. Thereafter, it was likely to be incorporated into one of the classes of official fields for more formal management and to ensure officials' grain incomes. People's fields were also subject to the imposition of higher taxes at any time.³⁹

Grain Fields

The people's fields were also called grain fields (Ch. *liangtian*; Zh. *na⁴ laaj⁵*), because of the obligation of the peasants cultivating them to pay grain taxes. These fields could also be bought and sold. People's fields tended to comprise private fields that were cultivated by free peasants; this land was handed down to them by ancestors who were free peasants. In addition, some serfs also had small amounts of private land which they had cleared themselves.⁴⁰ However, such privately-owned land tended to be infertile hillside land.⁴¹ This was not surprising given that the native official, as highest land owner within his jurisdiction, could take possession of people's fields at any time for conversion to official fields, usually as official manor fields or as his private fields.⁴² The field-workers estimate that the native official took possession of not less than

³⁸ Internal Reports, pp. 48–49.

³⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 33.

⁴⁰ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 637.

⁴¹ *Zhuangzu lungao*, p. 218.

⁴² *Zhuangzu tongshi*, p. 637.

ninety percent of the total land in Anping, which indicates that approximately ten percent of land remained privately owned people's fields.⁴³

Official Fields

The official fields (*guantian*) tended to comprise the more concentrated and larger areas of good fields within the territory; these the native official appropriated to himself in the early period of his rule. The grain output of these fields was produced by the local serfs and house slaves of the native official and was entirely turned over to him. The fields served as *yangshan tian* (provisions fields) or *xinfeng tian* (salary fields), and were not liable for payment of taxes to the local authorities. This was consistent with the fact that the Chinese court did not provide a salary to the native official. The fieldworkers noted that traces of this phenomenon remained up to the time of the Republic.⁴⁴

Origins of Official Fields

Accurate details of the means by which official fields were originally appropriated by the native official were impossible to obtain due to the long period involved and the many changes that had taken place. Many different local legends about the origins of the official fields were in circulation, and varied from village to village. Nine versions are listed below.⁴⁵

1. According to the peasants of Xiali village and Bansuo village, that area was originally mountainous and densely forested, with many birds and wild animals. Only local Zhuang people with the surname Nong were scattered throughout the district. After Nong Zhigao was defeated and left the area, the Song general Di Qing dispatched officers to the area who occupied the good fields of the local people. Both the fields and the grain produced from them were turned over to the native official.
2. According to the peasants of the villages of Nali, Tudi and Wazao, after the native official arrived, he erected a banner in the good fields to signify his appropriation of that land.

⁴³ Internal Reports, p. 47.

⁴⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 36.

⁴⁵ These are contained in *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 37–38.

3. According to the peasants of Keqiao village, their forefathers converted the wasteland there to fine fields, which they cultivated from generation to generation. Later, the villages were often plundered by bandits who had entered the territory. The villagers were forced to flee deep into the mountains, and so had no way of collecting their harvest. This continued for several years, and life became so difficult that the peasants had no alternative but to ask the native official to station soldiers in the village for defence. However, the villagers had to provide for the troops. A section of land totalling 260 *mu* was demarcated for cultivation. The harvested grain was entirely turned over to the troops, and in the course of time the fields were converted into official fields. The peasants of Keqiao village, Baixing village and Nalie village were encumbered with having to cultivate the official fields from generation to generation, and became households of the official manor.
4. In Gengsong Zhuang, an official manor estate, the forebears of the local villagers reclaimed the mountain forests and converted them into productive fields, but these were forcibly seized by a gang of outsiders. The Zhuang people who lost their land refused to accept this, and lodged a complaint with the native official. In his judgment, the native official declared that the complainants had stirred up trouble unceasingly, so he had decided to “return the fields to the hall” (*guitang*) and make them official fields. The villagers understood the term *guitang* (return to the hall, i.e., the hall of the chiefly lineage) to mean “belonging to the local authorities”.⁴⁶
5. Due to crop failures, the villagers in Tudi village and Wazao village were unable to pay grain tax. The native official made a fraudulent report that he had already repaid the tax debts on the villagers’ behalf, and that their fields were therefore forfeited to him. After this, the villagers were obliged to pay rent to the native official.
6. According to the peasants of Xiali village, in the areas near the centre of Anping, all the peasants who cleared and cultivated wasteland had to pay rental to the native official starting from the third year after reclamation. If they failed to do so, the native official would use the sanctions “one year means indebtedness, three years means resistance” and “the debtor must be locked up, the resistor must be killed” to have the fields confiscated by the *yamen*.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 213.

7. A common saying among the peasants was that households without offspring had all their fields “returned to the hall”. The old man Nong Minde of Bafu village told the fieldworkers:

From 1902 until 1907 during the great drought, countless people starved to death. In the fifty-household Bafu village, ten households with the Huang surname died off, and only twelve households remained in the entire village. The fields of those households without descendants were all returned to the hall.

8. According to the peasants in Qila village, because of a shortage of grain caused by natural disasters, they had to borrow grain from the native official to tide themselves over. Later they were unable to repay the principal and the interest, and had to relinquish their fields to the native official.
9. The peasants had their land expropriated if they committed an offence. According to the peasants of Jiangdong village, if the native official went to the village, any peasants that did not kneel before him were stripped of their fields and the official took possession instead. At the native official tomb behind Qila village, peasants were not permitted to cut firewood or to gather anything. The fishponds near Qila village were the property of the native official and the peasants were not allowed to fish there. All those who disobeyed the prohibitions were branded as criminals and punished, and their fields were “returned to the hall”.

These accounts reveal that the peasants believed that the native official used *guitang* (return to the hall) as a stratagem by which to expropriate their fields for flimsy reasons such as minor breaches of regulations or causing the slightest offence, and on false pretexts. The peasants also had a highly sceptical view of the “return to the hall” sanction. According to a sixty-nine-year-old peasant from Jingyang parish who was interviewed by the fieldworkers, the peasants regarded this sanction as a ruse designed to give the masses the superficial impression that the land had become the property of the *yamen*; in actuality, it had become official fields. This was done at first to avoid adverse public opinion; after a period of time the land would gradually be converted to the native official’s private property.⁴⁷ It also appears from these accounts that the local people felt that they had been dispossessed of their land

⁴⁷ *Daxin xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao*, p. 6.

by the native official, suggesting that he had no such ownership rights under customary law. The native official's erection of a banner in a stretch of good fields to claim his ownership (in the second account above) gives some credence to this view. It supports the general opinion of Guangxi scholars that the native official's ownership rights in land derived from his fief rather than from customary law.

These accounts also reflect the views of the indigenous peasants who were unlikely to have been cognizant of the legal basis of the native official's claim as ultimate landowner under the fief granted by the Chinese state, at least from 1369. The native official would have viewed such land as able to produce an economic surplus, and hence as an easily managed source of income ideally suited for appropriation and conversion into official fields. It appears that what was really happening in these cases was that the native official had decided to exercise his right of ownership over land which was in the peasants' possession. In some cases, such as the sixth account above in which cleared and cultivated wasteland was held by the peasants subject to payment of rent from the third year after reclamation, it appears that the land was legally confiscated. In most other instances, the native official arbitrarily seized the land through his authority under the fief. The sense of dispossession of customary ownership rights permeates these legends.

Types of Official Fields

Categories of official fields varied among native chieftaincies. There were three basic categories in Anping native subprefecture. First, as indicated by the purported origins of the official fields, most comprised official manor estates (*guanzhuang*). Second, there were official fields which were put aside for certain relatives of the native official. The third category was the corvée fields (*yitian*).

Corvée fields were so called because their primary and most salient function was to ensure a steady supply of corvée labour. The serfs who farmed these fields were given hereditary farming rights, subject to the duty to provide labour and tribute to the native official. The fieldworkers also appear to have regarded them as people's fields, as indicated by their statement that "the people's fields (*mintian*) were used to service corvée labour, for tributes and taxes, which is why they were also named corvée fields (*yitian*)".⁴⁸ Such statements reflect the sometimes amor-

⁴⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 33.

phous state of the evidence collected by the fieldworkers in respect of the system of land tenure under the Anping native chieftaincy.⁴⁹ There was probably logic to such formlessness, given the intense concern of the native official to secure any surplus wealth. Nevertheless, it is clear that the corvée fields were wholly controlled by the native official in that they were devoted to the provision of specific corvée and tribute. As such, they have been classified by Chinese scholars as official fields.⁵⁰ These classes of official fields are discussed in order of their proximity to the native official's headquarters.

Corvée Fields

The more scattered fields not amenable to direct management by the native official were allocated to the local peasants to cultivate. The poorer production conditions and yields of these fields meant that it was harder for the native official to exploit them for large amounts of grain. Consequently, the native official imposed various corvée burdens on the peasants cultivating these fields, which became their predominant feature and is how they came to be called corvée fields.⁵¹ No rent was payable on these fields, in lieu of corvée. Through this system, the native official and his clan had access to large amounts of unpaid labour and tribute as well as grain tax. This reflected the political economy of the native chieftain and official clan, whereby they used their control of

⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the Field Studies remain the sole primary source for the system of land division during the Anping native chieftaincy. Its loose and at times unclear state has led to different interpretations in respect of types of landholdings. For example, in Tan Qi's article "Zhuangzu lingzhu zhidu de tudi guanxi he jieji guanxi" (Land and class relations under the Zhuang feudal landlord system) in the *Zhuangzu lungao*, the author categorizes the land in the Zhuang territories under the native official into, first, land owned by the native official (comprising (i) official fields directly owned and operated by the native official; (ii) corvée fields; (iii) manor fields); second, land owned by the official clan; third, land owned by local headmen; fourth, land owned by peasant landlords; and fifth, land owned by peasants and serfs (see *Zhuangzu lungao*, pp. 213–219). This categorization, while based on the field studies, draws upon a wider range of native chieftaincies and does not quite fit with the material on Anping; nor does the author adopt the fieldworkers' 'people's fields' nomenclature. However, the author corroborates the classification of the corvée fields as official fields. The fieldworkers seemed much surer of their ground in their report on corvée fields in the neighbouring Taiping native chieftaincy, where they stated unequivocally that the corvée fields (along with the provisions fields (*shantian*) of the native official and official clan) belonged to the category of official fields (see Internal Reports, p. 144).

⁵⁰ See *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 634, in which the authors state that the corvée fields were a type of official fields which had been divided off for cultivation by serfs who provided corvée services.

⁵¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 34, 42.

land to control the resources necessary for their support and to run all governmental functions. This control, in turn, created the material basis for their political power.⁵² The corvée fields were considered the biggest feature of the land system in operation during the native chieftaincy.⁵³ These labour fields also came to be called na⁴ faan¹ (aboriginal fields) due to the backbreaking labour (*fanyi* or aboriginal labour) performed by the serfs.

The fixed corvée undertaken by the peasants from generation to generation evolved into relatively stable farming rights which ran alongside the ultimate ownership of the native official. Subject to this ownership, the corvée fields could be passed down from father to son, ownership could be transferred, and land mortgaged, bought and sold. Since these fields produced low yields and their real benefit to the native official consisted of the corvée services of their cultivators, it was expedient for the native official to grant the workers hereditary rights in return for hereditary corvée services. Thus, the corvée fields came to possess two characteristics: ownership by the native official, and rights of cultivation by the serfs.⁵⁴ Much of the unpaid labour attached to the corvée fields was seasonal, which left the serfs with fixed amounts of time in which to undertake work on their own behalf. Some serfs were also able to obtain the native official's permission to open up wasteland to supplement their livelihood.⁵⁵

The corvée fields were spread throughout Anping. They were variously designated by a field name, and ensured a supply of essential services to the chiefly clan. The fieldworkers recorded twelve categories of corvée fields.⁵⁶

Tiaoshui tian (Carrying Water Fields)

The serfs who were in charge of planting the six *mu* of fields in Najia village in Longpo in the Northern District carried water as rent in kind. Each day they would send two people to the *yamen* to carry 100 *dan* of water. The shift was changed once every three days, and there were no rests all year round. On the ninth day of the first month of each year, when the native official performed the opening of the seal ceremony,

⁵² Cf. T. Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power: The Political Economy in Prehistory*, pp. 3–14.

⁵³ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 634.

⁵⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 34.

⁵⁵ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 637.

⁵⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 35.

the headmen from every district had to proffer congratulations, for which water usage was very high. Each of the two villages of Longpo and Najia was obliged to provide one person from each household to bring pork, glutinous rice cakes and other congratulatory gifts and to carry water for one day. The official's household supplied meals to those providing the labour, but did not pay them any compensation.

Ma cao tian (Horse Fodder Fields)

The peasants of Tousha village and Masha village in the Northern District were in charge of cultivating these fields, which were for producing fodder for the *yamen* horses.

Tai jiao tian (Carrying Sedan Chair Fields)

These were cultivated by the peasants of Gengsong village in the Eastern District. Because that village was a long distance from the *yamen*, its obligation was later changed to payment of half the harvested grain.

Gan niao tian (Catching Birds Fields)

These were cultivated by the peasants of Kanxu in the Western District. The peasants had to guard the grain from the official granary when it was being dried in the sun.

Chai tian (Firewood Fields)

Situated in Yanrui village in the Northern District, these were especially for the payment of rent in the form of dry firewood.

Shi jiang tian (Stonemason Fields)

These were situated in Banyang in the Northern District, and in Nonghe and Balang villages in the Western District. In the event of a funeral in an official's family, the serfs provided the labour and materials to construct the tomb or the official family's accommodation.

Zhu qi tian (Bamboo Implement Fields)

These were situated in Longyue and Longsheng villages. The serfs who cultivated these fields were liable for making bamboo furniture for the *yamen*.

Fen tian (Grave Fields)

The village of Fentun, which was close to the native official's tomb and had special charge of protecting it, had ten households charged with

planting several dozen *mu* of fields. During the spring and autumn tomb-sweeping periods, the serfs had to thoroughly clean the route to the graves, put up mat awnings under which the native official and his dependants rested, coordinate the tomb sweeping, and perform miscellaneous other services. Although this was later changed to the provision of half of their produce as land rent, some of the original corvée services were retained, save that payment of grain taxes was exempted.

Xiyi tian (Clothes Washing Fields)

These fields were situated in Nayi village in the Eastern District. Planting was managed by the peasants from twenty households in six neighbouring villages. When the native official married off a daughter, the peasants had to pool money to buy a slave girl to form part of the dowry.

Jiejiang tian (Fields for the Release of Craftsmen)

These fields were situated in Balang and Longhua villages in the Western District. The serfs from ten or so households from those villages were in charge of farming them. Ten people made up a team which went to the *yamen* to cut firewood and kindling. The teams were rotated once every ten days, with no rest all year, and they were given only daily meals from the native official's household. Although some of the peasants in those villages did not have to cultivate official fields, they still had to provide labour for cutting and sawing wood in accordance with customary practice. Because the fields were some distance from the villages, the peasants became unwilling to do the planting and had the obligation transferred to the seven households of Nayi village. The fieldworkers do not elaborate on when or how this change was effected. However, it indicates that some degree of flexibility regarding the corvée burdens of the villages was possible, provided that the native official continued to receive the corvée.

Zhuzongtian (Fields for Cooking Dumplings)

In Baixin village in Keqiao, three households each cultivated one *mu* of fields. Each year on New Year's Eve they provided three people to collect leaves and to go to the *yamen* to wrap glutinous rice dumplings. For this, they were exempted from grain taxes.

Kanmaotian (Fields for Watching Cats)

Three households from Keqiao each planted one *mu* of fields which was exempt from grain taxes. Each year during the period between

New Year's Eve and the second day of the first month, the peasants had to go to the *yamen* to guard the items of tribute on the altar to the deities, and if there were mistakes or losses, they would be tied up and beaten.

Corvée fields—Summary

It is unclear from the Field Studies whether this list of twelve types of corvée fields was exhaustive. However, as it probably represents the extent of the recollections provided to the fieldworkers by the local peasants whose families bore these labour and tribute burdens on a hereditary basis, the list is likely to be highly accurate. It has been said that there were not less than a hundred different types of corvée fields in the Zhuang native chieftaincies.⁵⁷

Although some corvée fields were exempted from the grain tax, the tax was still nominally payable, an exception being the grave fields at Fentun. As is noted in chapter 7, serfs other than those who cultivated corvée fields also had to provide corvée and tribute.⁵⁸ In addition, each household in each village had to hand over ten *jin* of unhusked rice as tribute each year, to feed the local troops.⁵⁹

We cannot say when these corvée fields date back to, although the serfs are said to have endured harsh corvée burdens during the Qing Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong reign periods (1662–1796).⁶⁰ Since the Chinese state was not concerned with the manner in which the native official governed his subjects, the Chinese names given to these fields are unlikely to have been a political gesture on the part of the native official, and probably reflect Han cultural influences in the area.

Fields for Relatives of the Native Official

Also under the umbrella of official fields was a portion of land customarily set aside for relatives of the native official, with the portion varying from chieftaincy to chieftaincy. The fieldworkers name only two in the Anping native chieftaincy: *na⁴ kuun¹*, which referred to land given by the native official to his elder sister when she married, and *na⁴ kuun¹*

⁵⁷ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 634, citing the Records of Lingle County of the Republic (*Mingguo Lingle xianzhi*), Part Four.

⁵⁸ These labour services are discussed in *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 35–36. A variety of such labour services is discussed in chapter 7.

⁵⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 36.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

pja¹, which referred to land given by the native official to his younger brother. Eighteen *mu* of land was given to the native official's elder sister in Lunce village in Anping parish. In addition, Bahe village contained 120 *mu* of both of these types of official fields. Nong village had twenty-four *mu*, and Lun village had the same amount.⁶¹ Totalling 186 *mu*, these reported amounts of official relatives' fields were relatively small and it is unclear whether they were comprehensive for Anping.

Setting aside portions of land for relatives of the native official was a common practice among the native chieftaincies in Daxin county. For instance, the native official of Taiping native chieftaincy apportioned some fields to spinster members of his family who could not be married off, to support them in old age. These fields were called *yanggutian* (fields for supporting aunts). The native official also apportioned fields for young girls in his family who had not yet married, which were called *zhifentian* (rouge and powder fields) and *zhenxiantian* (needle and thread fields).⁶² Although the fieldworkers do not specify who cultivated these fields, the fields for supporting aunts in the Anping native chieftaincy were classed as a type of corvée field cultivated by serfs. Similarly, the needle and thread fields were listed as corvée fields where the serfs cultivating the fields were responsible for making clothes, quilts, mosquito nets and wedding trousseaus for the native official's family throughout the year.⁶³ We can surmise that these official relatives' fields probably operated as corvée fields through which official family members received specific services.

Official Manor Estates

The official manor estates (*guanzhuang*) were the most clearly definable category of official fields. They consisted of concentrated stretches of good fields within the territories, that is, wet fields which were in short supply and capable of producing consistent economic surpluses, which were the native official's main object of control. They were set up by the native official for special operation and management. They were the most important source of grain income for the native official, and constituted his private property.⁶⁴ The manor estates were generally cultivated

⁶¹ Internal Reports, p. 47.

⁶² Internal Reports, p. 145.

⁶³ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), pp. 636–637.

⁶⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 37–38.

by serfs from over 440 households from forty-one villages, and the harvests were turned over to the native official and official clan.⁶⁵

The precise number of official manor estates under the Anping native chieftaincy is unclear, and the accounts vary. According to the Internal Reports (1958), the villagers who spoke to the fieldworkers recalled twelve official manor estates. The revised and edited Field Studies (1987) state that the native official had twelve manor estates, although local legend suggests there may have been fourteen.⁶⁶ In a further summing-up of the economic surveys on the official manor estates, fifteen manor estates are described, although the detailed survey reports on each manor estate cover only eleven of them.⁶⁷

The approximate location of the fifteen official manor estates listed in the revised 1987 edition of the Field Studies is indicated in map 8.⁶⁸ The topography of Anping native subprefecture consisted of chains of connecting mountains, which gradually became less steep from northwest to southeast. There were towering cliffs, but the mountain ranges were not large; the mountains, not all of which were conjoined, rose up from flat land. The manor estates were located in these areas of flat land in between the mountains. Generally, where there were stretches of land consisting of a few hundred *mu*, they were almost all official manor estates. The serfs who cultivated these manor estates from generation to generation dwelled in the many villages scattered at the bottom of the mountain ranges.⁶⁹ They were generally divided up in accordance with natural conditions, one or several villages making up a manor estate.⁷⁰

The fieldworkers were able to obtain some details of the location of each of eleven of the official manor estates which were owned by the last Anping native official, Li Depu, and his younger brother during the end of the Qing dynasty, together with estimates of their acreage (totalling

⁶⁵ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 633.

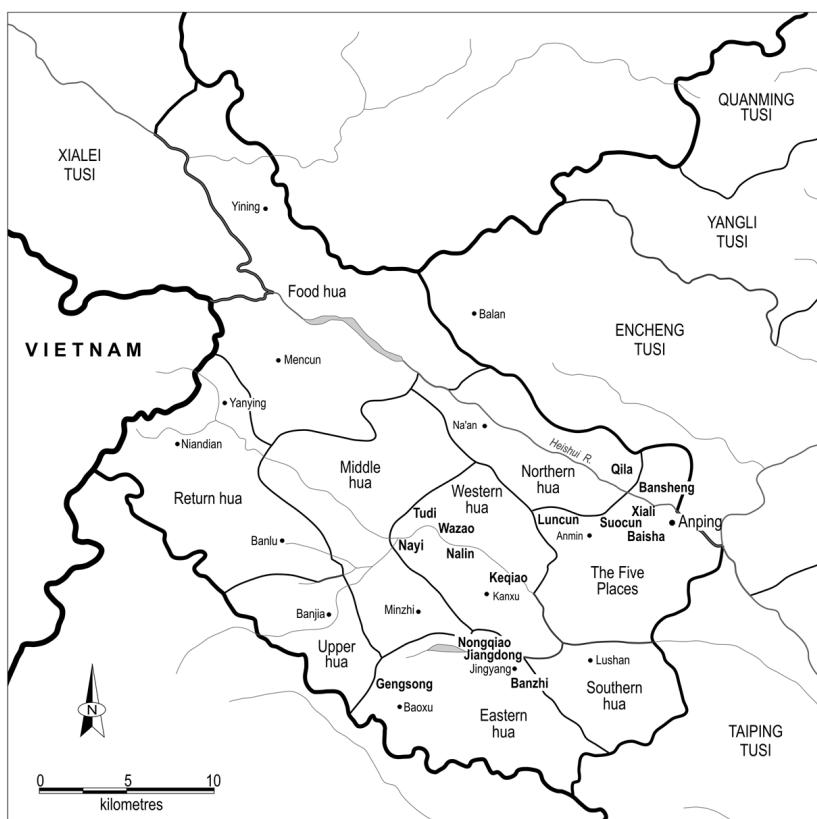
⁶⁶ Internal Reports, p. 46; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 37.

⁶⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 212, 235–281. Both numbers are cited in other publications; e.g., the authors of the General History of the Zhuang refer to the eleven manor estates on which the fieldworkers provided detailed reports, while Tan Qi quoted the number as fifteen (see *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1997), p. 633; Tan Qi, “*Zhuangzu lingzhu zhidu de tudi guanxi he jieji guangxi*”, in *Zhuangzu lungao*, p. 215).

⁶⁸ The three extra manor estates as compared to the original twelve listed in the Internal Reports are due to the listing of Tudi and Wazao manor estates (listed as one estate in the Internal Reports) as two separate estates, and the addition of three other estates (viz. Baisha, Bansheng and Luncun).

⁶⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 212.

⁷⁰ Tan Qi, “*Zhuangzu lingzhu zhidu de tudi guanxi he jieji guangxi*”, in *Zhuangzu lungao*, p. 214.



Map 8. Map of Anping native chieftaincy indicating approximate location of the official manor estates.

approximately 4,500 *mu*) and condition. They were also able to gather some data on the amount of land distributed by the native official to the official clan and close relatives, although the latter was difficult to ascertain. A summary of these details is provided in appendix E.

The native official relied on the manor estates as his 'salary fields', that is, as his basic source of income. They were all the more critical because, unlike wealthier *tusi* such as Nandan which was rich in tin, Anping had no significant natural resources. The fieldworkers compiled detailed economic surveys on eleven of the manor estates.⁷¹ As mentioned earlier, these details were not published in the original 1958

⁷¹ See *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 235–281.

Internal Reports. However, they were published in two further internal reports dated 1964: the *Guangxi zhuangzu diqu zhuangtian jingji diaocha baogao ziliaoji* (Selected Materials on the Economic Survey Reports of the Manor Estates in the Zhuang Territories) and the *Daxin xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao* (Economic Survey Materials on the Official Manor Estates of the Anping Native Official in Daxin County). The editors of these 1964 internal reports have stated in the prefaces that the 1958 field studies were compiled in haste and were thus incomplete, and that the 1964 publications sought to preserve and organize those original materials. The extreme level of detail in these surveys reflects the degree of concern to examine and record the workings of feudal land ownership systems, which Mao Zedong saw as stunting the growth of rural productive forces. The objectives of the Communist leaders in the 1950s were to free up these rural productive forces for agrarian reform, and consequently industrialization.⁷²

Xiali manor estate is discussed in appendix F. It was one of the manor estates (along with Suocun, Bansheng, Qila and Baisha) which were close to the seat of administration of the native official. Owing to this proximity, the serfs working in them rarely had any private land, and there were few free peasants. For instance, about fifty years prior to these surveys (c.1900), Baisha manor estate had thirteen households, all of whom were serfs, who did not have one piece of private land between them. This is in contrast to those manor estates further away from the centre of Anping such as Gengsong and Wazao, in which the serfs generally had some private fields, there were more free peasants who did not have to cultivate official fields, and the population was higher.⁷³

The tightly-knit web of control under the manor estate system (see appendix F) and the intense concern to access the high economic surpluses generated by the best fields underscored the fact that its fields were the native official's salary fields in lieu of income from the Chinese government. They were thus designed to guarantee the native official's income. Since the grain rent was based on a percentage split of what was harvested, the native official feared insufficient rental through inefficient planting and thus poor grain yields. Where he became aware

⁷² See, for example, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Vol. III* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p. 247.

⁷³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 215.

of such reductions in output, he would take steps to minimize his potential losses. For instance, a condition of planting the official fields in Zhidi manor estate was that the tenant-farmers who did not farm diligently and had indifferent yields would have their fields seized from them and given to other tenant-farmers.⁷⁴

Such slothfulness in planting was in fact an act of rebellion by the tenant-farmers of Xiali manor estate against the native official in retaliation for still having to perform regular, gratuitous corvée service after paying grain rent. Their practice of cutting ripened grain from the official fields which they had cultivated prior to collecting the harvest was also regarded as an act of rebellion.⁷⁵ Such acts of rebellion against the native official were common in several of the manor estates.⁷⁶

These actions also raise the question of why the tenant-farmers chose to be inefficient despite having the best fields to cultivate for a usual fifty-fifty split, and under threat of eviction on non-payment of grain rent. By comparison, the serfs who worked the corvée fields which were of much poorer quality, and for which they paid grain tax, had similar corvée obligations, but enjoyed hereditary farming rights subject to performing those obligations. The lack of any such property rights in the manor fields, and the wish of the tenant-farmers to farm their own private plots, were probably key contributing factors. House slaves who managed to render their own land viable also became greatly opposed to having to perform forced work on the official fields.⁷⁷

These conflicts between the native official and tenant-farmers in the manor estates reflected a tensely balanced system which could not last. Faced with tenant-farmers harbouring ill-will stemming from feelings of dispossession of their land by the native official and deeply resentful of their added corvée burdens, the native official had to impose constant surveillance of them through his field managers and other officials. Inevitably, the fraudulent practices and persecution of the peasants by the field managers (see appendix F), who exploited their position and connections with the native official, led to the peasants' extreme aversion to them. For instance, the peasants had to expend large amounts of

⁷⁴ *Daxin Xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao*, p. 37.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁷⁶ A list of rebellious acts of the tenant-farmers is provided by the fieldworkers in respect of Xiali manor estate, Jiangdong manor estate and Gengsong manor estate in *ibid.*, pp. 13, 30 and 33.

⁷⁷ See *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 47.

labour to carry the paddy from the official warehouses to the *yamen* each year. Those who lacked the strength for this task had to make gifts of rice or cash to the field manager to avoid the labour; the field manager would then add that portion of grain transport labour onto another peasant's workload. Some peasants would pay five or six hundred cash for this avoidance of labour; consequently, whenever the field manager dispatched labourers, he would include a few extra labourers to enable him to extort such money.⁷⁸

The power of the field managers increased despite such practices, leading to intense struggles between the rich households of the village to get the position. However, the method of appointment of field managers was later converted to that of election by the villagers or rotating posts.⁷⁹ The fieldworkers do not date this development, which seems to represent a radical shift towards a democratically based framework far removed from the original power structure of the native official. However, it reflects the increasing unwillingness of the peasants to endure maltreatment, expressed through such actions as reporting the native official's crimes to the local authorities, which became widespread during the late nineteenth century. The continuing resistance of serfs and slaves forced to cultivate official fields and endure heavy corvée burdens finally led to the realization by the official clan that they were getting half the result for twice the effort. It led to the eventual abandonment of the system of direct management and the introduction of cultivation led by house slaves.⁸⁰ Hired labour, however, did not take place until after the abolition of the native official system in 1906.

The continual increase in the number of official clan members also meant that the finite and relatively small amount of land in Anping could not support their luxurious lifestyles; there were "more monks than food". Consequently, many official clan members fell into reduced circumstances and began to sell off their land.⁸¹ There is indirect evidence of the sale of official fields in Jiangdong manor estate by the native official to the peasants in the 1850s.⁸² Such sales represented a major step in the dismantlement of the foundations of the manor estate system. They also heralded a shift from the controlled cultivation of official land

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 39–40.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸¹ Internal Reports, p. 46.

⁸² *Daxin Xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao*, p. 12.

under the native official's system of land tenure in Anping to its outright sale to the peasants and the later commercialization of land.

LAND CONTRACTS DURING THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

Notwithstanding the land tenure system, some land contracts between peasants were in existence in respect of the land within the Anping native chieftaincy. There were also some land contracts between the peasants and members of the official clan, as well as permits from the native official in relation to many of these land transactions. These land contracts were in existence during the Qing Qianlong reign period (1736–1795) and there is indirect evidence that land contracts also existed in the late Ming and early Qing.⁸³ The following discussion of the land contracts focuses on their impact on the system of land tenure under the Anping native chieftaincy. A thorough and highly useful dissection and analysis of those land contracts which were recorded by the fieldworkers has been carried out by Luo Shujie, which I have relied upon for much of this section.⁸⁴

The land contracts and related documents pertaining to the Anping native chieftaincy numbered approximately 180.⁸⁵ Excluding those contracts dated after the official abolition of the Anping native chieftaincy (*gaitu guiliu*) in 1906, the contracts numbered about 160, and covered the period from 1748 to 1906. Although they do not purport to be an exhaustive collection, general patterns can be discerned. There were five main types of contracts and related documents:

1. Applications to the *yamen* requesting issuance of permits. These permits represented the native official's ratification of land dealings such as the purchase of fields, the confirmation of a successor's right to ownership of fields, the alteration of a field's characteristics, or the redemption of mortgaged fields.

⁸³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 50.

⁸⁴ Luo Shujie, *Guangxi Daxin Xian tusi shiqi tiandi qiyue wenshu yanjiu* (A Study of the Land Contract Documentation during the Native Chieftaincy Era in Daxin County, Guangxi), MA thesis, 1998, Zhongyang minzu daxue (Central Nationalities University, Guangxi).

⁸⁵ These are contained in *Guangxi shaoshu minzu digi beiwen, qiyue ziliaoji* (Collection of Materials on Epigraphy and Contracts in the Guangxi Minority Nationality Territories), 1987.

2. Field permits. These constituted recognition by the native official of the property ownership rights of the field owners. Most of these permits related to the purchase of fields. Because the plots of land owned by the serfs tended to be dry or infertile land further away from the centre of the native official's administration, most of the serfs had no choice but to cultivate official fields for the native official just to be able to support a simple existence. Consequently, once they owned their own land, especially after using up long accumulated savings to purchase it, they urgently needed to have their ownership rights ratified through issuance of the field permit.⁸⁶
3. Notice of sale of fields. These were applications by field owners requesting recognition by the native official of the legality of the sale of fields. In general, these applications were made through notification to the *yamen* after the fields in question had already been sold.
4. Contracts for the sale and purchase of land: these contracts represented the agreement concluded between the buyer and seller and were kept by the buyer as evidence of the buyer's ownership of the subject land. They were all agreements between the peasants with no tax receipt or seal of the local government authority (including the native official). There were eight types of reasons for the sale of land by the peasants. The commonest was that of destitution due to crop failure, resulting in the peasants being compelled to sell. Second was the urgent need for money to repay debts.
5. Contracts for the mortgage of land: these contracts constituted the concluded agreement between the mortgagor and mortgagee, and were retained by the mortgagee as evidence of his rights of use over the subject land. They were generally made among the peasants themselves. The main reasons for the mortgage contracts were once again related to poverty: lack of money to repay debts, sustain a livelihood or survive crop failures.⁸⁷

The various classes of land covered by the land contracts are described below.

⁸⁶ Luo Shujie, 1998, p. 14. For the other reasons see *ibid.*, pp. 14–18.

⁸⁷ Luo Shujie, 1998, pp. 9–13, 21–22, 34.

People's Fields and Corvée Fields

It is clear from the existence of these land contracts and related land permits issued by the *yamen* that private property rights in land existed during the Anping native chieftaincy. Technically, this is consistent with the system of land tenure under the Anping native chieftaincy in which the native official tended not to use his authority under the fief to claim or alter the rights of ownership enjoyed by the peasants in those people's fields (*mintian*) which did not produce an economic surplus. The exact amount of land owned by the serfs and free peasants cannot be ascertained. However, some elderly villagers interviewed by the fieldworkers have estimated that in the three manor estates of Tudi, Wazao and Nalin, about three quarters of the land was comprised of manor fields, while people's fields comprised about one quarter. The existence of these people's fields which were not the property of the native official, together with the impact of Han people and culture in the region which accelerated during the Qing, resulted in the proliferation of these Han-style contracts in the native chieftaincies within Daxin county.⁸⁸ We have also seen how the serfs who cultivated the corvée fields acquired hereditary farming rights which could be mortgaged, bought and sold. Most of the land dealt with by the peasants under these contracts consisted of such people's fields, which they owned outright, and corvée fields over which they possessed cultivation rights.

As noted above, the main reason for the sale of people's fields and corvée fields was simply the impoverished circumstances of the serfs who, at the slightest mishap, were faced with no choice but to sell their small plots of self-opened wasteland or risk a mortgage over their corvée fields. Although true commercialization had not yet come into play and what sales and purchases there were stemmed from destitution and urgent necessity, these transactions nevertheless laid the foundations for the development of a market in land.

⁸⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 214; Luo Shujie, 1998, p. 8. All contracts were written in Chinese. For a discussion of the spread of Qing land contracts in Guangxi minority areas, see Yang Guozhen, *Ming Qing tudi qiyue wenshu yanjiu* (Research on Ming and Qing Land Contracts), pp. 380–394. Samuel Clarke (pp. 37–39) noted at around 1900 that all land deeds and other official legal documents of the Miao in Guizhou had to be written in Chinese. He observed that not one in a hundred Miao was able to read the contract document.

Fields Belonging to the Native Official and the Official Clan

Although not as numerous, a number of the land contracts evidenced the sale of land by members of the official clan to peasants. These were among the earliest of the existing land contracts. The official clan members had inherited the land in question for their daily needs over past generations. The land was continuously divided up for various reasons, so that some of these clan members were reduced to self-cultivating peasants. Others were compelled, through a decline in their financial situation, to sell their fields and houses. Official clan members who wished to sell their fields had to adhere to the clan rule “first within the clan, then outside the clan”. Once a peasant had purchased the land subject to the vendor having complied with this rule, he acquired full ownership of the land.⁸⁹

According to Luo Shujie, by the Qing dynasty, the original basis of production of the native chieftaincy system had become increasingly difficult to sustain. As revealed through the fragility of the official manor estate system, the serfs were indifferent to the amount of the harvest obtained by the native official and were consistently tardy in their work obligations in respect of the official fields, devoting their energies to cultivating their own fields. The harsh measures which the native official implemented to combat this proved ineffective. Furthermore, with the spread into the region of the commodity economy, the needs of the official clan and headmen grew larger. Consequently, the native official began to sell off those fields which he managed directly, especially those which were located further away from his administrative centre. These factors contributed to the sale of land by the official clan.⁹⁰

Unlike the land contracts in respect of people’s fields which did not belong to the native official and corvée fields over which the native official did not derive the harvest (save for grain tax), these contracts represented a potential weakening in the structure of the land ownership system under the native chieftaincy and thus the balance of power held by the native official and official clan. Better quality official fields which originally belonged to official clan members were being acquired by the peasants, thus *prima facie* altering the ownership balance of the official fields, which were originally wholly devoted to serving the

⁸⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 50.

⁹⁰ Luo Shujie, 1998, pp. 25–26.

requirements of the official clan on pain of tenant eviction. There is evidence of such sales as far back as 1577, when a sale by the native official of *yangshantian* (provisions fields) to a local villager, Ling Dacheng (which he subsequently sold to the prefect Wu Shouling) was recorded in respect of Zuo Subprefecture (present-day Congzuo county).⁹¹

Such sales of land by the native official and official clan members to the peasants during the Ming dynasty were stemmed during the Qing. The Qing authorities imposed strict prohibitions on the sale and purchase of land owned by the native official. These prohibitions were driven by the concerns of the authorities that the sale and purchase of land by the native official could directly affect the basis of rule through the native official, who was not paid a salary by the court.⁹² A promulgation issued by the Guangxi Provincial Administration (*Guangxi buzhengshi*) in the forty-second year of the Qing Qianlong reign period (1777) prohibited the mortgage and sale by local headmen or villagers of land which belonged to the native official.⁹³ The following year, it issued a further regulation in respect of the five native prefectures under Qingyuan prefecture, where the native official had mortgaged his fields. It stipulated that the official manor estate fields in those areas had to be used solely for the provision of grain rent for the needs of the native official, and prohibited any private mortgage of such fields by the native officials and their successors. Because some of these mortgaged fields could not be redeemed, the Qing authorities tightened the punishments for violation of these rules, including corporal punishment equivalent to that prescribed for the crime of theft, and demotion of the native official's rank.⁹⁴

These sanctions appear to have been effective. Of the existing land contracts, there are none evidencing the sale of land by the native official as from the Qing Jiaqing reign period (1796–1820); the manor estate fields and provisions fields (*shantian*) of the native official remained basically intact prior to the abolition of the Daxin native chieftaincies.⁹⁵ That this was the case is also corroborated by the strong recollections

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 25, citing Ming Wanli 5 (1577), *Taiping fuzhi* (Records of Taiping Prefecture) j.2).

⁹² Ibid., p. 25.

⁹³ Ibid. (citing *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, Shangwu yinxhuguan shitongben, j.202, p. 6667).

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 26 (citing *Qinding Da Qing huidian shili*, Guangxu shangshu yinshuguan shiyinben, j.589, p. 5).

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

of the villagers in respect of the organization of the official manor estates under the last Anping native official Li Depu, discussed earlier in this chapter.

These actions by the Guangxi Provincial Administration provide direct evidence from the Qing Qianlong reign period of the continuing economic expedience which was a fundamental element of the *tusi* system since its inception. There was a very real concern on the part of the government to prevent the official fields, which supported the *tusi*, from falling outside his control through sale or mortgage to outsiders. Apart from the potential sabotage of an administrative expedient which had provided order in this border region at low cost to the Chinese court for centuries, the court also stood to lose grain taxes and tribute.

The fact that native officials were selling and mortgaging official fields indicates that the economic benefits flowing from the *tusi* system had become inadequate. This aspect is not directly addressed by the field-workers. Some insights on the difficulties facing *tusi* at the time are provided in the *Qing shigao* (Draft History of the Qing) in its section on Xie Qikun, who was appointed Governor (*xunfu*) of Guangxi province in 1799.⁹⁶ During that time, there were forty-six *tusi* in Guangxi, whose means of livelihood were worsening daily. Consequently they often borrowed money from Han outsiders at usurious rates and had to use their land as security. Xie Qikun issued a prohibition on heavy interest exploitation by these Han creditors and ordered that the fields be transferred back to the *tusi*. For those who lacked the means to redeem it, Xie reduced the interest payment rates and ordered that they be returned to the original owner after five years.⁹⁷ (The quote from the *Baishan sizhi* (1830) mentioned earlier in this chapter, which Guangxi scholars use to establish the basis of the native official's ownership of the land within his domain, also related to the Qianlong reign period and appears to be connected with the same issues.)

Official Recognition of Private Property Rights in Land

Despite the many permits which the native official had issued in relation to individual land contracts, a push emerged in the late Qing for the issuance of a united set of regulations in respect of all land transactions.

⁹⁶ *Qing shigao* (Draft History of the Qing) j.359, pp. 11356–11358. Xie was also editor of the *Guangxi tongzhi* (Gazetteer of Guangxi Province), 1801.

⁹⁷ See *Qing shigao* (Draft History of the Qing), j.359, p. 11358.

The impetus for these regulations grew out of the proliferation of people's fields which could be bought out with corvée exemptions. Because the conditions of such exemptions varied, it led to the peasants seizing opportunities for fraudulent practices and consequently to a rise in contested lawsuits. Under pressure from the villagers of the Five Places District in Anping, the native official issued a set of united regulations in 1807 in respect of the purchase and sale of land and standardized prescriptions as to payments and procedures to be complied with by the parties to the contract.⁹⁸ The regulations also served as an official recognition of the people's private rights in land within the Five Places District, although it appears to have been regarded as having a far wider application.

This official recognition, together with the increasingly detailed contractual descriptions and demarcations of the land being bought and sold, combined to solidify the constitutional framework and form clearly identifiable private land boundaries which paved the way for the commercialisation of rights in land. This framework for the exchange of fixed rights in land represents a significant shift away from the more amorphous framework of land ownership under the native chieftaincy depicted in figure 6.

Annexation of Native Chieftaincy Conditions to Land Contracts

As we have seen, corvée was an integral component of the system of land tenure under the Anping native chieftaincy. Because the native chieftaincies within Daxin county were all relatively small in area, with populations not exceeding several thousand people, most of the young able-bodied men had to provide corvée to the native official. The huge scale and impact of corvée and the harsh nature of the labour led to a deep fear and loathing of corvée by the local people. Those who grew rich were determined to redeem their corvée at all costs.⁹⁹

This was not easily achieved. The shackling of the peasants to the native official through corvée continued in some of the land contracts, which included corvée and tax obligations.¹⁰⁰ Of the land contracts

⁹⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 51–52.

⁹⁹ Luo Shujie, 1998, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Luo Shujie has compiled a chart of 23 field permits containing tax and corvée conditions and a chart of 22 purchase, sale and mortgage contracts containing tax and corvée conditions; see Luo Shujie 1998, pp. 36–38, charts 6 and 7.

collected by the fieldworkers, those containing such obligations were made between the seventeenth year of the Qing Qianlong reign period (1748) and the third year of the Qing Xuantong reign period (1911). This annotation of corvée and tax obligations which ran with the land in purchase, sale and mortgage contracts was a distinguishing feature of the land contracts made during the native chieftaincies within Daxin county; it is a feature which did not emerge in Han Chinese territory.¹⁰¹ The very long time—about 150 years—in which the land continued to be encumbered with corvée obligations despite the ability to purchase and sell land through contracts embodies the extent to which the corvée institution was entrenched in agrarian *tusi* domains such as Anping. Even bonded servitude in China, which was close to serfdom in that human service could be sold with land, had more or less disappeared by the eighteenth century.¹⁰²

The annexation of tax and corvée conditions to land contracts was achieved by the native official through his authority to affix his seal on behalf of the *yamen*, which was required for the contracts to be legally effective. This authority afforded him considerable control over the sale and purchase of land. At the point of affixing the seal, despite attempts by the contracting parties to abolish the various corvée services and taxes which originally attached to the land, the native official would disallow such exemption. As well as exploiting his authority to affix the seal, the native official also exploited his authority to issue permits validating the land contracts through imposing steadily increasing permit fees.¹⁰³ Thus, although the corvée obligations were commonly not annotated on the purchase, sale and mortgage contracts, they were listed in the related permits (which were required for legal effectiveness) issued by the *yamen* to the field owner.

Corvée and tax obligations were generally fixed according to the type of fields involved:

- Fields classified as *shangchengtian* (upper town fields) and *liangtian* (grain fields) were exempt from corvée obligations, but were liable for native chieftaincy taxes, described as grain cash for salt, wages, marriage and funeral rites (*qianliang yan xiang hunli sangli*). They were also subject to military service in the event of war.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰² On bonded servitude in China see Thomas Buoye, esp. pp.62ff.

¹⁰³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 53 and Luo Shujie, 1998, p. 21.

Upper town fields were basically private fields which had been distributed by the native official to official clan members, while grain fields were basically corvée and tax-exempt fields which the native official had allocated for self use.

- Fields classified as *mintian* (people's fields), *yitian* (corvée fields) and *xiachengtian* (lower town fields) were not liable to the grain cash for salt, wages, marriages and funeral rites, but were subject to provision of corvée. These fields were basically corvée fields cultivated by the serfs.
- Fields classified as *shantian* (provisions fields), which were private fields of superior quality which used to be owned and operated directly by the native official, were technically exempt from corvée and taxes. In terms of field quality, the upper town fields and provisions fields were superior to the others in degree of soil fertility, irrigation and communication conditions. However, the native official frequently converted these fields to upper town fields or even lower town fields, simultaneously subjecting the purchaser to harsh taxes and corvée. Consequently, despite the opportunity to acquire these high quality fields, the people were unwilling to buy them.¹⁰⁴

By annexing tax and corvée conditions to fields which were bought and sold, the native official technically preserved the ultimate ownership rights over the land and serfs which he hitherto enjoyed. Despite this attempt by the native official to retain the benefit of corvée services within the changing balance of ownership under the land contracts, the increasing curbs on his power by the Qing government and the burgeoning wave of serf resistance within Anping during the Qing Daoguang reign period (1821–1851) proved too powerful for preservation of the status quo.

The land contracts themselves contained the seeds of disintegration of these personal obligations. The very fact that the serfs could sell their rights in the fields and transfer their corvée and tax burdens to the purchasers meant that the vendor serfs could thereby liberate themselves from serfdom, even though the corvée attached to their land remained due to the native official and was being shifted onto the purchaser. However, it was not without a price: the tax and corvée obligations borne by the particular fields was a factor taken into account in the valuation of

¹⁰⁴ See Luo Shujie, 1998, pp. 21, 25, 41–42.

the land for purposes of the contract. (Other factors were the quality, location and characteristics of the field as well as demand and supply, natural disasters, and local economic and political factors such as policy changes, banditry or warfare.)¹⁰⁵

By the late Qing, the personal obligation of the serfs in Anping and the other native chieftaincies within Daxin county to perform corvée was greatly diminished, and legal channels were available for divestment.

DISMANTLING OF THE SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE

This chapter has focused on the division and use of land under the Anping native chieftaincy. The system of land tenure described above was the practical elaboration of the fief granted by the Chinese government to the Anping native official. It appears to have been in operation for at least 440 years, from the time Li Guoyou was appointed as first native magistrate of Anping subprefecture in 1369 until around 1810 when the number of land contracts in Anping began to flourish.¹⁰⁶ From that point onwards, the various encroachments made upon the system of land tenure by land contracts, demands for reform by the peasants and the increasing curbs on the power of the native official by the Qing government led, inevitably, to the final dismantlement of its foundations. Arbitrary seizure of land by the native official was no longer viable, resulting in a drop in his income.¹⁰⁷ The balance of power held by the native official and his clan was increasingly weakened by the sale of official fields and growing divestment of corvée obligations. These constraints, however, were in the official arena where acquisition of land had become more transparent and publicly accountable. It did not preclude the native official from other arbitrarily exploitative behaviour,

¹⁰⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ This estimated figure applies to the period when the native official's land tenure system was probably fully operational, with at least 90 percent of the land owned by the native official. Despite the increased avenues for redemption of corvée, many peasants lacked the means to achieve this and the official manor estates remained their only means of livelihood. There is evidence of continuing manor estate operations (e.g., in Jiangdong manor estate) under the last native official, Li Depu, and even up to the rule of his son Li Shaohe, who assumed power through the office of *zhishi* (magistrate) in 1923. (See *Daxin xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji ziliao* pp. 12–13; *Diachua*, vol. 4, pp. 70–71.)

¹⁰⁷ Internal Reports, p. 59.

such as imposing the tactic of renewed taxes to make further exactions from those peasants who owned people's fields.¹⁰⁸

In the official arena, the native official could not interfere with valid land transactions. According to the house slave Nong Shijun of Baila village, his family had fifteen *mu* of private fields which they mortgaged on one occasion to a person from neighbouring Encheng. After they redeemed the mortgage, Li Shixiu, an official clan member, used his position to try to intimidate Nong's family, claiming the land was his and demanding a few strings of cash for its redemption. When Nong's family lodged a complaint with the local authorities, the native official Li Depu had no legal basis upon which to support Li Shixiu's demands, and could only return the fields to Nong's family.¹⁰⁹ The increasing lodgement of complaints by the peasants against the native official with the governmental authorities was a strong reflection of the extent to which the peasants' agitations had solidified into a coherent and effective voice, aided by the Qing authorities who were also seizing opportunities to weaken and supplant the rule of the native official.

Nevertheless, the native official took what indirect opportunities presented themselves for continuing gains via the people's land, such as through field permit fees, and by employing various ruses to seize back land owned by the peasants. The permit fee payable on the sale and purchase of fields during the Daoguang reign period (1821–1850) was approximately 464 copper cash per *mu*. By the Guangxu reign period (1875–1908) this fee had risen to approximately 2,166 copper cash per *mu*, an over fourfold increase. There were also many instances where native officials seized fields owned by the peasants by bankrupting them, using the rule "if it's three years it's a debt, if it's five years it's defiance" (*san nian wei qian, wu nian wei kang*) in respect of grain collections.¹¹⁰

Other symptoms highlighted the increasing inability of the land tenure system to function as a tool of control. The lower production rate of the official manor estate fields resulting from the drop in the number of serfs and slaves, as well as inefficiencies in production caused by the small number of remaining serfs and slaves whose will to work for the native official grew weaker each day, meant that there was little economic

¹⁰⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 67.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 53.

¹¹⁰ Internal Reports, p. 57; Luo Shujie, 1998, pp. 20–21.

benefit in retaining ownership of the official fields and pursuing the manor estate enterprises.¹¹¹ Apart from progressively divesting themselves of their corvée burdens, the serfs and slaves were also acquiring land, and were irresistibly drawn into the revolutionary activity pervading the whole of China which culminated in the 1911 revolution which overthrew the Qing government. By all indications, it was going to become harder for the native official to preserve his land, and wholesale reforms were imminent. The Disciplinary Official (*tanya guan*) installed by the Qing authorities in 1908 was also providing relief to people whose land had been wrongfully claimed by the native official. These cumulative factors convinced the native official that he could no longer exploit his position to derive benefits, and had no option left but to sell his land and try instead to seize some of the people's wealth.

This situation was crystallized in a large scale sell-off of official land belonging to the native official beginning from about the thirtieth year of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1904). The bulk of these sales took place from the point the Disciplinary Official (*tanya guan*) was appointed in Anping in 1908.¹¹² At the same time, the official clan also panicked and sold off their fields. The people were full of misgivings about buying official fields, fearing traps and pitfalls, and initially did not dare buy. The native official would target and seek out those serfs with a higher level of savings, and intimidate them into buying. Once they acquiesced, he would sell them a large amount of land. To allay their misgivings, the native official would also invite people with whom the peasants were familiar to go around advocating the purchase of the land and exhorting the advantages with verbal slogans, tactics which proved effective. For example, the words, "Quickly, buy now, the price is not high; after you have planted it for a few years, even if you retire you will cover your costs" were apparently used by Zhao Shenglu to the peasant Huang Chunsong in Anmin parish, who then bought the fields.¹¹³ However, this final sell-off of official land spanned a period of over forty years, from around 1904 up to the Republic.¹¹⁴

The official dismantlement of the land tenure system can be said to have begun when the local authorities dissolved the hereditary status of

¹¹¹ Internal Reports, p. 59.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 59–60.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 60.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

the native official and subsumed all the corvée fields into Han administration following a heated incident against the native official in Kanxu in 1905.¹¹⁵ It thereby abolished the corvée and tribute attached to the fields, replacing it with the government taxes payable in respect of people's fields. The fact that the official manor estate fields and other official fields of the native official were not similarly subsumed by the Qing government at this point appears to indicate the government's recognition that the fields remained *de jure* salary fields of the native official so long as his office had not yet been abolished. That is, the underlying fief was still operational to the extent the native official as agent of the Chinese government was entitled to support from the land.

By 1913, the first county magistrate (*xianzhishi*) under the Republican government, Zhang Fengshu, reconstituted the official fields as people's fields, converting their grain tribute liability to government taxes and divesting them of the obligations towards the native official. This marked the final dismantlement of the system of land tenure under the Anping native official.¹¹⁶ Despite the land contracts and related transactions which nurtured the seeds of commercialization and the final dismantlement of the system of land tenure in 1913, the effect of its harsh controls, particularly corvée, had left its mark. Up until the land reform movement in the 1950s, the fieldworkers were still unable to find any landowners in Anping whose families had owned more than a hundred *mu* of land for a few generations.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ These issues are discussed in chapter 9.

¹¹⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 65.

¹¹⁷ Internal Reports, p. 58.

CHAPTER NINE

THE IMPACT OF GAITU GUILIU ON THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

BACKGROUND TO GAITU GUILIU

The native chieftaincy system was a pragmatic means of extending Chinese control over its peripheral territories populated by non-Han peoples. It was also a means of implementing the *hua* civilizing mission of the Chinese. The eventual outcome of such a system and the gradual intensifications which began with the bridle and halter prefectures (*jimizhou*) discussed in chapter 2 was the policy known as *gaitu guiliu* (reform the native chieftaincies and replace them by direct Han rule).

Literally, the term *gui* contains the notion of ‘returning’ or ‘reverting to’. Since the native chieftaincies were never ruled by regular Chinese officials in the first place, the use of *gui* in the term *gaitu guiliu* seems an overt indication of how the Chinese government regarded the *tusi* as a transitional measure, the court’s ultimate goal always having been the political integration of the non-Han border peoples. In its broader sense, *gui* also denotes the moral sense of movement towards a norm, as in *guizheng* (to come back to the right way). *Liu* (literally, circulating) is a reference to the *liuguan* Chinese government officials who were assigned to border regions during the Ming and Qing. Because they had fixed assignments, were not hereditary officials, and were not natives of the area, the post had ‘circulating’ characteristics. These rotational posts were designed to guard against the hereditary and entrenched local power which the *tusi* enjoyed.

Theoretically, under this policy the Chinese court would replace the native official with regular Chinese bureaucrats when it adjudged the native chieftaincy to have reached a point at which the minority peoples had become sufficiently acculturated to be subsumed into the regular Chinese bureaucracy. It was the final stage in the incorporation of the *tusi* domains into the Chinese empire.

Practically, this policy was also a means by which the Chinese court

could weaken the political power of the native officials, extinguish their hereditary rights and deal with outstanding problems. Thus, the key targets of the policy tended to be the more powerful native chieftaincies, of which Tianzhou was a prime example in Guangxi. Tianzhou (see map 4) was the centre of the heartland of the unassimilated Zhuang of the southwest and was ruled by the most powerful branch of the Cen clan, itself one of the leading Zhuang clans in Guangxi. It was also the base from which Zhuang resistance to the Chinese had repeatedly arisen. During the Ming dynasty, as a result of manoeuvring by the powerful Zhuang lord Cen Meng, whose power base was at Tianzhou, the court was prevented from carrying out its plans to abolish the Tianzhou native chieftaincy. It was not abolished until 1875, when it was converted to Enlong county.¹

The Ming court would seize the opportunity to implement *gaitu guiliu* as soon as conditions and opportunities presented themselves. The main conditions under which the Ming abrogated the native chieftaincies were if the native officials revolted against the Chinese court or committed crimes, the native official died with no heirs and there was no potential successor, or if a successor was found not to have the correct genealogical connection to the previous native official.² By the end of the Ming dynasty, the power of the native chieftains had been considerably weakened, due largely to the court's simultaneous policy of fragmenting the territory under the native chieftains and conferring many noble titles upon them, thus dividing their power. This 'divide and conquer' policy, known as *zhong jian zhu man* (establish numerous noble titles for the barbarians), was applied by the Ming court to powerful and frequently rebelling native chieftaincies such as Tianzhou and Si'en, also in Guangxi, which were divided up into several smaller *tusi* domains. This was not difficult to do, given that the powerful chieftains found it hard to administer large territorial areas because of formidable topography and cultural differences.³ It was a brutally applied policy

¹ See J. Barlow, "Ming Transformation of the *Tusi* System", pp. 4–13, in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*. On the abolition of the Tianzhou native chieftaincy see *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 289. For an account of the source of the clan registers of the Cen of Tianzhou see *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, pp. 203–320.

² Gong Yin, p. 105.

³ Ibid., p.109, Wiens, p. 222.

which favoured collaborators while cruelly suppressing those who opposed it.

In actuality, however, the *gaitu guiliu* policy was generally unsuccessful during the Ming. The impasse in respect of Tianzhou typified the conditions in which the Ming court attempted to impose the *gaitu guiliu* policy. The chieftains and their headmen were too powerful locally and too deeply rooted in the local society; consequently, conditions were not amenable to the substitution of direct Chinese rule. This deeply entrenched power and resilience of the *tusi* was a major cause of the problems which the Ming court had encountered in implementing *gaitu guiliu*.⁴ This is demonstrable from the perspective of the local people who bore the brunt of the tyrannical rule of the native officials. Although they may also have desired the substitution of direct Han rule with the concomitant inclusion in the registered Chinese population and fixed tax rates, it was a case of better the devil they knew. The economic advantages of direct Han rule were by no means clear, and if *tusi* exactions were tolerable, there would have been no reason for the local populace to agitate for change. They were accustomed to a life of oppression and autocratic rule, went along with whatever the headmen commanded, and did not dare rebel against the native official. Consequently, even after reform of the native chieftaincy by the Chinese court, the deposed native official would use his power to compel the local people to betray the central government and assist in bringing about his reinstatement. Such restorations of native officials were common during the Ming dynasty.⁵ A case where the Ming court had to reinstate a native official together with his hereditary rights due to fierce resistance was that of Shangsi subprefecture in Guangxi, which was replaced by direct Han rule in 1505. The native official orchestrated a series of later disturbances by the local people, which resulted in his reinstatement as hereditary native official in 1522.⁶

The effective power of the *tusi* even led the Ming court to actually establish new *tusi* in eastern Guangxi, due to rebellions there against the Han rulers. Ming officials, seeing that there was little rebellion against the *tusi* rulers in western Guangxi, advocated the establishment of these *tusi*.⁷ There is no historical document that systematically records

⁴ See *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 370–371.

⁵ She Yize, “Mingdai zhi *tusi* zhidu” (1936), p. 24.

⁶ Gong Yin, p. 106.

⁷ See Su Jianling, *Ming Qing shiqi Zhuangzu lishi yanjiu* (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe, 1993), p. 120–176, 177–178.

the number and location of *tusi* set up in eastern Guangxi during the Ming, but Su Jianling concludes from his investigations that there were 292.⁸ This ambivalence of the Ming rulers towards *gaitu guiliu* can also be discerned from their aversion (see chapter 5) to using imperial troops in punitive expeditions, where they preferred to take advantage of the skilful and seasoned native troops (*tubing*) of the *tusi*. There were many such debates on whether to implement *gaitu guiliu* after the mid-Ming.⁹

By the Qing dynasty, the Chinese court had begun imposing *gaitu guiliu* policy on the native chieftaincies under an increased range of conditions. The most common reasons given by the court were: (i) particularly domineering and evil native officials; (ii) lack of benevolence, and prevailing brutality, killings and lawlessness; (iii) the removal from office of a native official and the absence of a successor; (iv) killings resulting from scrambles for succession; (v) self-requests by native officials for replacement by direct Han administration; (vi) a long-term wish to seize the opportunity for conversion to direct Han administration; and (vii) to protect the territory and govern the barbarians.¹⁰ Gong Yin also lists several reasons given by the Qing court for its implementation of *gaitu guiliu*, which include disputes between native officials and petitions presented by the local people for substitution of direct Han administration.¹¹

Couched in much broader terms than those given during the Ming dynasty, these reasons would generally permit *gaitu guiliu* at the court's will, indicating the much larger scale on which it was carried out by the Qing rulers. A moral element was also injected into the Qing justifications.

The first two of the above reasons, for example, express concerns regarding evil, brutality and lack of benevolence in certain native chieftains. Several commentaries were written by scholar-officials during the Qing highlighting the tyranny of the native officials, and their abusive practices such as making wanton extortions from the populace.¹² For instance, Liu Bin made the following observations on the Yongchang native chieftaincy in Yunnan, which were recorded in the dynastic memorials on statecraft (*Huangchao jingshi wenbian*):

⁸ Ibid., pp. 177–178.

⁹ She Yize, "Mingdai zhi *tusi zhidu*" (1936), p. 24; Li Shiyu, *Qingdai *tusi zhidu* lunkao* (The Native Chieftaincy System under the Qing: A Treatise and Investigation of the Evidence) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), p. 35.

¹⁰ She Yize, "Qingdai zhi *tusi zhidu*," p. 59.

¹¹ Gong Yin, pp. 149–150.

¹² Wu Yongzhang, pp. 252–253.

Their [the *tusi*] officials are hereditary; their people are subjected to their rule for generations. The lives of the sons and daughters on the landed estates are based merely upon their every wish or desire; their state of suffering or joy, their conditions of safety or danger, are subject only to their control. They treat human life as if it was not worth a straw, as if it was just a bit of sport. No one dares to heave a sigh or express their grief! Their hereditary officials and the people ruled by them for generations must come not from the fathers but from the sons and grandsons, so they are continually multiplying. Thus when these people die, so be it; no one dares to challenge them.¹³

Such moralistic condemnations suggest that there may have been a concerted attempt by the Qing gentry-officials to popularize anti-*tusi* sentiment in a push to increase the abolition of native chieftaincies in favour of regular Han Chinese administration. However, the Qing government did not necessarily follow the “clichés on benevolence” contained in the policies articulated by Qing notables in debates on *gaitu guiliu*. Many gentry-officials were, in fact, opposed to the policy, believing it to be unimportant.¹⁴ The Qing emperors, despite praising the policy, did not apply it across the board. A tone of circumspection is reflected in the words of the Yongzheng emperor in the thirteenth year of his reign (1735):

If, because other places have already converted to direct Han administration, every *tusi* is compelled to follow the example of the applicants, I disallow this entirely. If through some crafty instigation on the part of the Han a complaint is lodged against them and the *tusi* is found guilty of a crime whereupon his administration is converted to direct Han rule, I will tolerate this even less. These governors should, in accordance with my uniform concern for inner and outer regions, enable the *tusi* to defend the territory and uphold the laws so that together they will benefit from the nation’s benevolence. It will then not be necessary to convert the native chieftaincies to regular Han administration in order to move in the direction of civilization.¹⁵

The Yongzheng emperor appears to be alluding to the notion that the *hua* civilizing process could occur within the political structure of the native chieftaincy. Notwithstanding the emperor’s express reluctance to

¹³ *Yongchang tusi ji* (Record of the Yongchang Native Chieftaincy) recorded in *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (Dynastic Memorials on Statecraft) *bingzheng* (Military Affairs section), j.86, as quoted in Wu Yongzhang, p. 252. The complete text of this record is also contained in *Guangxi tusi zhidu ziliao huibian*, pp. 514–519.

¹⁴ She Yize, “Qingdai zhi *tusi* zhidu” (1936), p. 58.

¹⁵ Ibid., citing *Donghua lu* (Records from the Eastern Gate), Yongzheng 13. See also Wu Yongzhang, p. 259.

reform native chieftaincies if they were upholding territorial defence and order, he had in fact carried out a large-scale empire-wide reform of the native chieftaincies nine years earlier, in the fourth year of his reign (1726). Under Governor Ortai, the governor-general of Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi, a basic reform of native chieftaincies in Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi was carried out between 1726 and 1731, using the joint measures of suppression and amnesty.¹⁶ Following *tusi* rebellions in Sichuan, the native chieftaincies in western Sichuan were also gradually abolished by 1736.¹⁷ No similar large-scale organized *tusi* reforms followed. The *tusi* in Guangxi reformed under the Yongzheng reform campaign are listed below.¹⁸

<i>Year</i>	<i>Native Chieftaincy (prefecture)</i>	<i>Reason given for abrogation</i>
1725	Yongsun fusi (Qingyuan fu)	Killings
1725	Longzhou (Taiping fu)	Greed, cruelty
1727	Sicheng tuzhizhou	Wanton killings
1729	Donglan tuzhizhou (Qingyuan fu)	Succession disputes among clans
1729	Xialong tuxunjian (Taiping fu)	Corruption and incompetence
1730	Guisun tuzhizhou (Zhen'an fu)	Arrogance and disobedience
1730	Xialei tuzhizhou	Organized bandit rebellion
1732	Fengyi tuzhizhou (Si'en fu)	Lineage died out
1732	Siming tuzhifu	Weakness and inability
1733	Sicheng tuzhizhou (Taiping fu)	Plotted to murder uncle

There appears to be a combination of individual reasons for the Guangxi reforms; no clear policy can be discerned. However, most of these districts were held by the three largest Zhuang clans, which suggests that the reform of the native chieftaincies was in reality motivated by the real and potential threats posed to the Chinese state by the more powerful clans.¹⁹ In addition, the Qing court tended not to impose *gaitu guiliu* unless actions of *tusi* posed a direct threat to the government. This was

¹⁶ For biographical details of Governor Ortai see, for example, Arthur Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943–1944), (Taipei: Literature House, Ltd., 1964), pp. 601–603.

¹⁷ Gong Yin, pp. 147–148.

¹⁸ Source: Li Shiyu, *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao*, pp. 218–222.

¹⁹ J. Barlow, “Ming Transformation of the Tusi System: Gai-Tu Gui-Liu,” p. 8, in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*.

the case with three of the Guangxi districts, Sicheng, Donglan and Longzhou, where the *tusi* were brutalizing their people and endangering the area.²⁰ Yongzheng's reform movement covered more than half of the native chieftaincies close to the Chinese interior. However, many native chieftaincies in the peripheral regions were not only preserved, but several new territories were also opened up and conferred upon native chieftains by the Chinese government.²¹

Thus, although the Qing implemented *gaitu guiliu* on a larger scale than the Ming, the policy and process cannot be clearly defined. Overall, *gaitu guiliu* was not regarded as a major challenge to the dynasty, but rather as a partial, ad hoc measure to cater to specific situations, summed up by the phrase "if the head aches treat the head, if the foot hurts treat the foot". Words of Han Liangfu, the governor of Guangxi during the fifth year of the Yongzheng reign period (1727), are quoted to this effect.²²

GAITU GUILIU AND THE ANPING NATIVE CHIEFTAINCY

Although the *gaitu guiliu* process varied from place to place, it is clear that the Anping native chieftaincy was low down in the hierarchy of targets for the abrogation of *tusi* offices. Since the successful suppression by the Chinese court of the Nong Zhigao revolt during the Song dynasty, the Anping area never re-emerged as a source of revolt, internally or against the Chinese court. It is also likely, as mentioned in chapter 3, that Anping and its neighbouring *tusi* in the region of the Zuo and You rivers were basically bandit suppression districts set up by the Chinese court in the aftermath of the defeat of the Nong Zhigao rebellion. We saw in chapter 3 that the origins of the Anping native chieftaincy can be traced back to the conversion into hereditary domains of the two subjugated valleys (*dong*) of Taiping and Anping following the Nong Zhigao rebellion, which was quelled by Song troops led by General Di Qing in 1053. The Song troops who accompanied General Di Qing were stationed at garrisons all over the territory, where they defended the political power of the native official.²³ We also saw how,

²⁰ Li Shiyu, *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao*, p. 39.

²¹ She Yize, "Qingdai zhi *tusi* zhidu," p. 58.

²² Li Shiyu, *Qingdai tusi zhidu lunkao*, p. 39.

²³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 20.

during the Yuan dynasty, Li Guoyou, the younger brother of the native official of Taiping native subprefecture, broke away and carved out the Anping native chieftaincy. Anping native chieftaincy was therefore largely a post-Nong Zhigao creature of the Chinese court, distinguished by being a garrison regime imposed on the area. It is likely that the *tun* villages dating back to the Song dynasty (see chapter 6) originated from this point. It was as near as makes no difference a creation of the Chinese state.

Anping may well have been seen to satisfy the Yongzheng emperor's expressed ideal of a *tusi* which defended the territory and upheld the laws; it was, at any rate, a smaller and weaker *tusi* which was respectful and submissive and did not enter into troublesome alliances. These factors probably contributed to its being overlooked in the empire-wide campaign to reform native chieftaincies under the Yongzheng emperor.

After the Yongzheng campaign, eighty-seven out of the previous one hundred and twenty-eight *tusi* administrations in Guangxi were replaced by circuit officials. The remaining forty-one *tusi* consisted of very small domains, many of which, like Anping, were under the jurisdiction of Taiping prefecture.²⁴ As we saw in chapter 3, the Anping native chieftaincy was one of eight *tusi* located within the boundaries of present-day Daxin county, which was the longest lasting Zhuang *tusi* area. As with Anping, all eight were originally established by the Song court following the Nong Zhigao rebellion. Apart from Yangli *tusi* and Encheng *tusi* which were subjected relatively early to *gaitu guiliu*, the remaining six were not transformed to direct Han rule until between 1904 and 1912, as shown in the table on the following page.²⁵

By 1929, the *gaitu guiliu* reforms in Guangxi had come to an end. Xincheng, the last *tusi* administration in Guangxi, was converted to a county under Han administration in April 1928.²⁶

Officially, the Qing government reformed the Anping native chieftaincy in 1906, when it abolished the hereditary post of the Anping native official and appointed the first Chinese bureaucrat, the *tanya guan* (Disciplinary Official).²⁷ However, Anping native subprefecture was not

²⁴ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), pp. 371–373.

²⁵ Slight variations occur in respect of the precise date on which *gaitu guiliu* was considered to have taken place. Unless otherwise noted, the source is *Daxin xianzhi*, pp. 286–289.

²⁶ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 372; Qin Guiqing, *Guangxi Xincheng tusi shihua* (Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe, 1990), p. 154.

²⁷ Internal Reports, p. 41; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 65. According to the latter, the first Disciplinary Official was not dispatched to Anping until 1908.

<i>Native chieftaincy</i>	<i>Superior Prefecture</i>	<i>Gaitu guiliu date</i>
Wancheng <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1906/1907 ²⁸
Mingying <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1907
Quanming <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1912
Yangli <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1432/1574/1575 ²⁹
Encheng <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1733
Taiping <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1911/1912 ³⁰
Anping <i>tusi</i>	Taiping Fu	1906
Xialei <i>tusi</i>	Guishun zhilizhou	1904/1905 ³¹

formally incorporated into Han administration until 1928. Huang Kaihua puts the *gaitu guiliu* date of Anping *tusi* at 1928, probably on the basis that the Anping native chieftaincy retained its outer form until that date.³²

Left unconverted by the Qing government following the Yongzheng campaign, Anping *tusi* fell into the category of sweeping-up work (*saowei gongzuo*), which was still being carried out by the Chinese government by the beginning of the Republic.³³ Liu Xifan, writing in 1934, says that the reason these remaining *tusi* had not been converted was that they were small and weak *tusi*, not worth pursuing.³⁴ Nevertheless, the loca-

²⁸ Gong Yin (p. 1148) puts the *gaitu guiliu* date as 1906, while it is listed as 1907 in the *Daxin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Daxin County), p. 287. Huang Kaihua puts it at 1929, the year it was converted into Wancheng county (Huang Kaihua, “Mingdai tusi zhidu sheshi yu xinan kaifa,” p. 136).

²⁹ Huang Kaihua states that the last native official was put to death in 1428. Huang notes that the *Mingshi* puts the *gaitu guiliu* date at the second year of the Wanli reign period (1574); see Huang Kaihua, *ibid.*, p. 4. The official *gaitu guiliu* date listed in the *Daxin xianzhi* (p. 289) is 1432. Luo Shujie notes that the *Taiping fuzhi* (Gazetteer of Taiping Prefecture) records the *gaitu guiliu* date as 1575, and that textual research remains to be carried out on these discrepancies; see Luo Shujie, “Lun Zhuangzu tusi tiandi qiyue wenshu de leixing” (A Discussion of the Types of Land Deeds of the Zhuang Native Chieftaincy System), pp. 61, 66.

³⁰ The *gaitu guiliu* date is listed as 1911 in the *Daxin xianzhi* (p. 286). Gong Yin (p. 1146) puts it as 1912, the year the first Disciplinary Official (*tanya guan*) was appointed.

³¹ The last native official was dismissed in 1905 (*Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 167). The *Daxin xianzhi* lists the *gaitu guiliu* date as 1904, the year in which the first Disciplinary Official was appointed (*Daxin xianzhi*, p. 289).

³² Huang Kaihua, “Mingdai tusi zhidu sheshi yu Xinan kaihua,” p. 136.

³³ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), p. 372.

³⁴ Liu Xifan, *Lingbiao jiman* (A Record of the Barbarians in the Lingnan Ranges), 1934, p. 217.

tion of Anping and its neighbouring *tusi* on the border with Vietnam cannot be discounted as a factor contributing to the Chinese court deliberately leaving them unreformed. Wiens goes so far as to infer that Governor Ortai wished to retain *tusi* in the border regions as buffers, from the fact that after putting down certain frontier *tusi* revolts, he restored the former *tusi* to their positions.³⁵

An indication of the state of affairs within Anping at a relatively late stage, the mid-nineteenth century, is the record in stone installed by the Anping native official Li Binggui on the occasion of the construction of the Li clan ancestral hall in 1840. The record extols the virtues of their claimed ancestor Li Mao from Shandong, who accompanied General Di Qing in his campaign to put down the Nong Zhigao rebellion. (As discussed in chapter 3, this claimed ancestry is generally regarded as fictive, and the first Anping native official Li Guoyou was probably an indigenous headman.) Its establishment also marked celebrations to mark the restoration of the *yamen*. The erection of an ancestral hall and record in stone at this time was probably connected with the increasing perception by Zhuang *tusi* elites by the mid-Qing that it was to their advantage to claim Han Chinese ancestry. It also embodied the resolve of the Li clan to consolidate and reinforce the institution and lineage of the Anping *tusi* at a time of growing dissent and revolutionary fervour amongst local people. The construction of the Li ancestral hall in 1840 also reflected the extent of the local political power retained by the Anping official clan, which contributed to the long drawn-out *gaitu guiliu* process in Anping.

The persistence of a power advantage enjoyed by the Anping native official came into direct conflict with the growing serf resistance which had been fiercely nurtured by the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), which was a radical political and religious peasant revolt which devastated a third of China.³⁶ Fundamentally agrarian, it advocated a form of primitive collectivism that called for commonly held land, equal distribution of land and equality between men and women. It spread over seventeen provinces of China and severely eroded the power of the Qing dynasty.

³⁵ Wiens, p. 236.

³⁶ See, for example, *Guangxi shigao*, pp. 156–166; Teng, Ssu-yü, *New Light on the History of the Taiping Rebellion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), esp. p. 35ff. A synthesis of the Taiping Rebellion can also be found in Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung Chih Restoration, 1862–1874*, p. 98ff.

The rebellion originated in Guangxi where its leader, Hong Xiuquan, and his friend Feng Yunshan formed a religious group from among the impoverished peasants of Guangxi and began preaching in Cigu village in Guixian (in southeastern Guangxi) in 1844. With its radical borrowing of elements of Christianity, it reflected the extent to which western and other outside influences were felt in the province. Serf resistance was also fuelled by the activities of related secret societies which swept through the Anping area during much of the nineteenth century. This led to a newly raised consciousness in the local population, articulated through an increasing recourse to litigation, demands for constitutional government, and increasingly concerted demands for the abolition of corvée. These internal pressures and changing local dynamics formed the main impetus for the Qing government to abrogate the Anping *tusi*. Thus the *gaitu guiliu* process in Anping came to encompass not only the Chinese government's policies of political integration and the elimination of hereditary *tusi* rights but also other heated local issues, which included a strong anti-slavery dimension. These notions are reflected in the commentaries on the Zhuang. Tan Qi, for instance, notes that besides abolishing the native official's hereditary rule, privileges and separatist regime, *gaitu guiliu* also enabled the serfs to rid themselves of their enslavement and become free peasants owning their own land.³⁷

Following the abolition of many *tusi* in the southwest during the Yongzheng campaign, conditions for the people in the remaining border *tusi* (exemplified by the corvée burdens) remained harsh. The provincial authorities were compelled by popular agitation to adopt measures to alleviate the more intolerable aspects of the rule of the native official in these remaining border *tusi*. However, in going some way to meeting the serfs' demands, the main objective of the Qing authorities was always to suppress the privileges still enjoyed by the native official.³⁸ It is a consistent theme throughout the Field Studies that, after the Yongzheng reforms, the Qing authorities acted in response to pressures from within Anping to curtail the powers of the native official rather than of their own volition. The enervation of the Qing regime by the Qing emperors, together with the decreasing effectiveness of power flowing from the

³⁷ See Tan Qi, "Zhuangzu diqu gaitu guiliu de lishi yiyi," in *Zhuangzu lungao*, p. 250.

³⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 49.

centralized government administration towards the periphery of the empire, are also likely to have contributed to such passive responses.³⁹

An early instance of an attempt by the Qing authorities to limit the powers of the Anping native official was a set of regulations proclaimed in writing in the tenth year of the Yongzheng reign period (1732). These became ‘perpetual regulations’ carved in stone in Anping native subprefecture in the second year of the Qianlong reign period (1737). They marked the beginning of changes and reforms to the corvée and tribute systems under the Anping *tusi*.⁴⁰ (The text of these perpetual regulations is provided in appendix C.) The fieldworkers regarded the diminution and removal of certain corvée and tribute burdens in these regulations not as beneficence from the Qing court but as evidence of the serfs’ determination to oppose and free themselves from the harsh obligations endured during the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong reign periods of the Qing (1662–1796).⁴¹

By the Qing Daoguang reign period (1821–1851), serf resistance in Anping was being actively stimulated through the Heaven and Earth Society (*Tiandihui*), which had spread throughout Guangxi. It was essentially a political organization directed against the Manchu Qing dynasty, which it considered usurpers; its slogan was “restore the Ming, eliminate the Qing”.⁴² Many secret societies in Guangxi were sects of the Heaven and Earth Society, and formed the core of many uprisings.⁴³

An uprising at Na’an in the Northern District also occurred during this period, incited by the opposition of a group of serfs who displayed banners with the slogan “Kill only the native official, don’t disturb the ordinary folk” (*zhi sha tuguan, bu rao baixing*). Serfs from Na’an had provided military service for generations and were regularly dispatched to defend the border passes. Consequently, the people in the village of Na’an all had military equipment; they were to turn into a peasant army

³⁹ For a discussion of these issues and the resulting partial administrative vacuum in the countryside see Hsiao Kung-Chuan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 503–505.

⁴⁰ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 28–29, 49. See also *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji* (1982), pp. 19–20.

⁴¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 49.

⁴² See Jean Chesneaux, *Secret Societies in China*, trans. G. Nettle (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1971), esp. p.13ff.

⁴³ See D. Lary, *Region and Nation: The Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics 1925–1937* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 24. On the *Tiandihui* see *Guangxi shigao*, pp. 153–156.

opposing the native official. The native official Li Binggui lost his immediate line of defence and was forced to flee into remote mountains. At the same time, over twenty local troops from Na'an sent to guard Niandou Pass joined the revolt, using slogans such as *ba luobo* (pull out the turnip) to urge the villagers to eliminate the native official. A large number of serfs joined the revolt one after the other.⁴⁴ The Na'an uprising reflects the extent of the peasant resistance during the time of Li Binggui's construction of the Li ancestral hall in 1840. This may have provided additional impetus for its construction at that time.

By the Qing Tongzhi reign period (1862–1875), the Taiping Rebellion and the Heaven and Earth Society had been defeated. The Qing general Feng Zicai, who had been instrumental in suppressing the Taipings and was appointed as provincial commander-in-chief of Guangxi in 1862, was sent to the Anping area to carry out a large-scale suppression campaign on the remnants of the peasant uprisings.⁴⁵ He ordered the coordination of military forces from each area. Taking along his headmen, the Anping native official Li Binggui led local troops from the Western and Northern districts to intercept from the side flank, defeating the peasant army. He arranged for the clothing from the dead to be piled up in a small house as a way of reporting his successes to the Qing authorities; consequently the Qing court conferred on Li Binggui the honorary title of *hua ling si pin dingdai, shixi Anping tuzhou zhengtang jia san ji* (peacock's feather rank button, rank four; Anping hereditary native magistrate promoted by three grades).⁴⁶ This typified the continuing support of the Qing authorities for the Anping native official based on their interdependence at a time when both needed to consolidate their weakening power in the face of the growing revolutionary fervour that was taking hold in Anping and elsewhere.

Despite the defeat of the peasant revolutions, General Feng Zicai's suppression campaign hardened the resolve of the Anping peasants against exploitation by the native official. The serfs began to elect their own headmen to make demands of the higher authorities concerning the lawlessness of the native official. In response to such demands, the local Qing authorities issued several proclamations. One such proclamation

⁴⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 54.

⁴⁵ On Feng Zicai see, for example, A. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 244–247.

⁴⁶ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 54. The rank button (*dingdai*) was an insignia of rank worn atop an official's headgear; see, for example, Hucke, #6742.

issued by the Provincial Governor of Guangxi (*Guangxi xunfu*) in the fifth year of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1879) reflected the disorder of many years in the west of the province and the hardship of the people's lives; it noted that a root cause was the arbitrary and excessive apportionment of levies by the native official with no regard for the hardships which they caused.⁴⁷ The proclamation prohibited further extortions from the local people and the use of false pretexts to impose levies, on pain of harsh penalties.⁴⁸

Practically, these types of pronouncements were hard to implement since they were in direct conflict with the personal interests of the native official, who exploited the inaccessibility of the border regions to preserve his administration and passively resisted the influence of the government authorities. The authorities responded to such passive resistance by having the edicts carved in stone. The local people paid due regard to these government-issued notifications, and resorted repeatedly to lawsuits against the native official, demanding that he be stripped of his rule.⁴⁹ The peasants were effectively pressurizing the provincial authorities to implement *gaitu guiliu*.

Another prohibition issued by the Guangxi Provincial Administration Commissioner (*buzhengshi*) in the twelfth year of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1886), and also carved in stone, exposed a specific *tusi* malpractice in considerable detail. It described how in the *tusi* under Taiping prefecture, whenever there was a homicide case, the villagers in neighbouring areas were forced to contribute the funeral expenses and whenever there was a theft, the villagers were ordered to make good the stolen property. The relatives of the victims were loyal subjects, but the *tusi* frequently failed to investigate the killers and thieves.

⁴⁷ The fieldworkers frequently do not provide details on the higher authorities. Although the Qing bureaucracy became increasingly enervated towards the end of the dynasty, the territorial administration remained in place. The Governor of Guangxi, who had charge of its administration, was subordinate to the Governors-General (*zongdu*) of Guangdong and Guangxi (known as Liangguang), the paramount administrative authority in the province. The relationship between the Governor and Governors-General was usually one of close collaboration. Below the Governor were the Provincial Administration Commissioner (*buzhengshi*) and the Provincial Surveillance Commissioner (*anchashi*). The next lower echelon was that of the various Circuit Intendants (*daotai*), followed by the unit of local administration; see Hucker, pp. 88–91.

⁴⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 54–55. The complete text is contained in *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji* (1982), pp. 58–59.

⁴⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 55.

The villagers were allowed to petition the authorities with their complaints, resulting in their incessant involvement in litigation. “Unworthy” native officials took advantage of these cases to bend the law, making harsh exactions. The Provincial Governor had repeatedly forbidden these practices, but they had not abated. As a result, bands of thugs and ruffians roamed the countryside. The local magistrates were required to properly investigate theft and murder cases, arrest the real culprits, and deal with them properly, rather than use them as a pretext for harsh exactions. If it was found that the native official intended to make use of the plunder, he was to be charged without the possibility of a pardon.⁵⁰

These cases illustrate the extent to which the villagers were compelled to go to law; the response of the provincial authorities illustrates their concern about increasing lawlessness in *tusi* domains. The moral language apparent in the wording of the prohibition, including the specific reference to the morally unworthy behaviour of the native official implicit in the phrase “unworthy native official” (*bu xiao tuguan*), contains distinctly Confucian overtones. *Bu xiao* is defined as being degenerate as a son, falling short of a conventional standard, and not being upright, honest or decent like the father.⁵¹ The moral framework of such anti-*tusi* expressions gave the commoners an appropriate and persuasive language in which to couch their appeals to higher-level magistrates. Prohibitions such as this were repeatedly promulgated, but no significant effect on the power of the Anping native official.⁵² The problem in this case, however, may not have been the power of the native official, but his incapacity to control bands of ruffians or to investigate criminal cases; that is, it may have been a law and order problem.

In 1875, Anping came under the influence of the Three Dot Society (*sandianhui*), whose headmen had come over from Qinzhou (a subprefecture under Han Chinese administration) to the east of Taiping, then from southwestern Guangdong, and set up meetings in the marketplaces of Anping and Baoxu. This society, whose slogan was “All the earth is red, kill the emperor, kill the government troops”, probably appealed to the Anping locals as much for its egalitarian basis, under which those who attended meetings were not differentiated according to wealth or

⁵⁰ Ibid. The text of this prohibition is also in *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu beiwen qiyue ziliaoji* (1987), pp. 4–5.

⁵¹ See, for example, *Mathews Chinese English Dictionary*, p. 743; *Hanyu dacidian* (1990), vol. 1, p. 412.

⁵² *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 55.

rank. By the end of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908), the adult males of nearly every village in Anping had joined the society; under-aged males from widowed families also sought its protection.

From the viewpoint of the Anping locals, the native official was identified with the Qing government. Members of the Three Dot Society surrounded the *yamen* in 1901, but by then the society's internal structure had weakened and intra-faction strife sabotaged this effort. The native official, Li Depu, fled to the Northern District where he gathered local troops and, collaborating with government forces, forced the retreat of the peasants that still resisted. Li Depu closely followed the Qing general Lu Rongting in encircling and suppressing the peasant army at every point.⁵³ In the following year (1902) there were open hostilities with society members who had retreated to Encheng. Due to a great disparity in troop strength, many peasants were killed and their troops dispersed in a bloody massacre.⁵⁴

The Anping native official, who had lost power for a time, once again received high praise from the Qing authorities. He was appointed as Regiment Commander (*tongdai*) and allowed to station troops to guard the border territories. Li Depu and his clan continued to levy labour and expenses from each district and village.⁵⁵ Thus, Li Depu used his collaboration with and favour from the Qing authorities not only to defeat the peasant army but also to maintain his local power.

In re-establishing his power, Li Depu utilized his local troops (*tuyong*), which he renamed *lianyong* (warriors in training). He created uniforms with the words “Warriors in training of Anping native subprefecture”, and appointed new regiment commanders (*tuanzong*). This reorganization and new nomenclature was in reference to the new systems of local self-defence inaugurated by the Qing state after the Taiping Rebellion. The *lianyong* had been successful during the Taiping Rebellion in suppressing the Heaven and Earth Society; by the Qing Guangxu reign period

⁵³ Lu Rongting was to become the first regional military ruler of Guangxi after the establishment of the Republic. Formerly a Zhuang bandit leader, he was brought into the regular forces by the Governor-General of Liangguang (Guangdong and Guangxi), Cen Chunxuan, in 1904 to suppress the uprisings in Guangxi that year and soon became a senior officer. In 1911, he became provincial Commander-in-Chief of Guangxi; see D. Lary, pp. 10, 24–32. For biographical details on Lu Rongting see *Mingguo guangxi renwuzhuan* (Guangxi Personages during the Republic), 1983, pp. 48–60.

⁵⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 57.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

period (1875–1908), they were showing their effectiveness again in suppressing the Three Dot Society.

Taiping prefecture also provided strong support. In 1903, the *lian-yong* were given three hundred rifles and several thousand bullets by the Circuit Intendant (*daotai*) of Longzhou. The close collaboration between the Anping native official and the provincial authorities through this joint utilization of the Anping *lian-yong* can only have continued to reinforce the local political power of the native official and his clan.

The rapid decline in Qing power and prestige during the nineteenth century, largely precipitated by its defeats in the first Opium War (1839–1842), the Anglo-French War (1856–1858), the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Boxer Rebellion (1900), would also have strengthened the case for retaining the border *tusi*. The *tusi* proved useful during the Qing as buffers between China and foreign powers such as Burma, Vietnam, and later the British and French. A shift in the primary underlying value of *tusi* from units of indirect rule over the non-Han border peoples to thinly disguised buffers probably occurred some time after the Yongzheng reforms.

In all these circumstances, it is unlikely that *gaitu guiliu*, with its accompanying economic and military cost, assumed any priority with the provincial government in the late Qing dynasty. Nonetheless, the local authorities remained conscious of the need to seize opportunities to increase the cuts to and controls of the special and monopolistic powers of the native official, and weaken his rule. The growing number of petitions by the peasants demanding intervention in respect of the native official's malpractices was a way of achieving this. An example was an injunction issued as a 'perpetual reform' by the Provincial Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi (*liangguang dufu*) in 1880, in response to serf lawsuits for abolition of corvée obligations. The perpetual reform reduced serfs' obligations towards the native official, noted the extra-legal taxes collected by the *tusi*, and set out a list of levies and payments; native officials were prohibited from extracting levies outside its parameters.⁵⁶ This injunction applied to all *tusi* in Taiping Guishun *bingbeidao* (Taiping Guishun Military Preparedness Circuit), which probably included all the *tusi* along the Vietnam border.

By then the struggle of the peasants to rid themselves of corvée and tribute burdens had become a major problem. Although the Anping native

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

official Li Depu was compelled to accept the increasing official limitations on corvée, he used various methods to obstruct these goals. He even transferred corvée and tribute obligations onto the free peasants, intensifying their resistance.⁵⁷

INCIDENTS LEADING TO GAITU GUILIU IN ANPING

A series of increasingly pointed incidents led to the Qing authorities taking the first concrete steps towards *gaitu guiliu* in Anping in 1906. A significant turning point seems to have been an incident in the spring of 1903 when Li Depu went to attend a song fair at Jingyang village. He compelled the local villages to send over thirty young girls to entertain him, then forced a thirteen-year-old girl to stay overnight with him. At risk of his life, her father stood outside the house of the local *langshou* (village elder) with a firelock. Li Depu was sufficiently concerned to free the girl. The father lodged a complaint at Longzhou. He won the lawsuit and Li Depu was fined. This provided encouragement to the father of another girl molested by the native official. The native official had someone give the father seventy silver dollars to drop the charge, but the father paid over the money to the Longzhou authorities to lodge the complaint.⁵⁸

A crucial incident involved the peasants in the Western District. The native official had sent his clan brother (*zudi*) Li Dezhi, known as *dazongli* (big manager), together with some of his headmen, to the area in 1905. On the pretext of signing up thirty soldiers and collecting grain for their regiment, they made manifestly unfair exactions from the villagers. Matters grew heated when the peasants, who had been forced to pool all their money to avoid corvée obligations, still could not obtain exemptions. Over six hundred villagers rushed to Kanxu Jie and the matter escalated into public exposure. On learning the questionable basis of the extortions, the crowd had Li Dezhi beaten. A henchman of the native official who fled was angrily pursued, panicked and drowned in a river. The crowds took Li Dezhi and the other headmen to the authorities for trial, but were given false assurances by Li Depu that he would deal with the matter. After a few days, Li Depu withdrew the case, sparking

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

great anger in the Western District. The villagers elected four of their own headmen by public nomination to go to Longzhou to lodge a complaint.

At the same time, a fire erupted in Kanxu Jie (also in the Western District) in which about eighty thatched houses were burned and a trader from Hunan died. The native official seized on this to falsely accuse the people of the Western District of killing people and setting the fire. He beseeched the Chinese authorities at Longzhou to send troops to suppress the peasants. This escalated into insoluble conflict between the native official and the local populace. The Longzhou authorities did not dare neglect the situation. Under the urging of He Chunyi, one of the headmen who had been elected to lodge the accusation, they dispatched an employee to conduct an on-the-spot investigation to determine the true situation, in order to avert a massacre. However, the native official still would not let the matter drop. He tried to assemble local troops from each district to suppress the resistance in the Western District. The people of the Western District were eager for a fight, and began to attack. He Chunyi and other villagers had systematically listed the wrong-doings of the native official in a complaint to the higher authorities at Longzhou. The lawsuit was entitled *zha cai hai min, min zei dang zhu* (swindling wealth and injuring the people; leaders who rob the people should be punished).⁵⁹ The plaints were usually written by paid scribes.⁶⁰ It was an express demand for the abolition of the native official system in Anping.

Matters had to reach such a critical point before the provincial authorities, fearful that the situation would escalate into disaster, turned their attention to formally abandoning the native official system. Conditions were ripe and action was quick. The local authorities sent personnel from Zuozhou, another county (*xian*) level administration within Taiping prefecture, to investigate the case. In an effort to appease the people, they had Li Depu sent for trial at Zuozhou and fined heavily. In accordance with the plaint prepared by He Chunyi and the other Kanxu headmen, the local authorities annulled the hereditary status of the Anping native official, and appropriated all the corvée fields which were not part of the manor fields or official fields belonging to the native official.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 65.

⁶⁰ On private scribes, professional plaint writers and litigation advisers during the Qing see Philip Huang, *Civil Justice in China: Representation and Practice during the Qing* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 163ff.

They abolished the corvée and the tribute obligations of the corvée fields and converted the liability to taxes payable to the government authorities on a par with the people's fields (*mintian*). The fieldworkers do not specify the date of this important change, but it appears to have taken place sometime in 1905 or 1906, prior to the appointment of the Disciplinary Official in 1906. The serfs in Anping were said to be wild with joy at this historic victory; the peasants in the Western District commemorated the changes by conspicuously carving the words *guanqing minle* (the officials are honest and the people happy) in large bold lettering on the river bank of Keqiao village in Kanxu.⁶¹

Thus, the Qing authorities did not take any actual steps towards *gaitu guiliu* until the increasingly dangerous tensions reached the threshold of major conflict and destabilization in Kanxu. That the first official step towards the actual implementation of *gaitu guiliu* was taken in response to a lawsuit filed by villagers, rather than as a consequence of any clear policy on the part of the provincial authorities, reflects the extent of the bureaucratic and political ills of the provincial authorities, who were not inclined to disturb the *tusi* establishment until faced with high level threats of civil disturbance.⁶² Thereafter, the first thing the authorities did after annulling the hereditary office of the Anping native official was to seize the corvée fields from which he derived free labour and tributary payments.

In 1906, the thirty-second year of the Guangxu reign period, the Qing government appointed Li Jishou from Zhejiang province to the office of Disciplinary Official (*tanya guan*) of Anping.⁶³ He brought new governing powers and a new system designed to eradicate the hardships of the local populace under the rule of the native official. He abolished the administrative structure of the native official's *yamen* and removed most of the *yamen* runners and prison guards, leaving behind only one private assistant (*shiyē*) and eight *yamen* runners to work in the great hall of the native official. He issued a formal decree abolishing all the labour service due to the former *yamen*; all necessary work was hired on a monetary basis. The tributary payments which each village had previously owed the native official were all cancelled and converted to a

⁶¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 65.

⁶² For a study which discusses the administrative deterioration of the Qing bureaucracy in respect of the Chinese countryside see Hsiao Kung-Chuan, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century*.

⁶³ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 65; Internal Reports, p. 41.

grain tax based on field acreage. At the same time, he established the first *mengxue* (primary school); students wishing to enter school were no longer subject to constraints of rank.⁶⁴

The retained private assistant, Huang Angui, was from Anping Jie. Unfamiliar with the new situation, he continued to send people to the countryside to collect levies in accordance with the old native official rules. When he was assigning labour at Lun village he was boycotted by the villagers, so he arrested the headman as a surety. This led to the peasants lodging a complaint at the *yamen*, demanding that the Disciplinary Official issue clear guidelines. Accordingly, Li Jishou pronounced that the *yamen* could no longer use free labour, that the grain tax was approximately sixty *jin* per *mu* of fields, and that an additional levy of 120 to 150 cash to supply food to the *lianyyong* soldiers in each district was also payable. The headman was released; the decree and improved measures introduced by the Disciplinary Official increased his and the Qing government's authority in the area. Li Jishou was appointed to another post not long afterwards. Some fifty years later, the villagers still expressed fond memories of the work he carried out in Anping.

This relatively smooth transition and the new reforms introduced by the first Disciplinary Official proved short-lived. Two replacement Disciplinary Officials followed. It was difficult to distinguish the authentic from the false authorities; apparently for political reasons, too many offices were set up, which became a source of local jokes on the state of the rotting Qing government. Wu Jimen, the Disciplinary Official who came afterwards, lasted only another two months, achieved nothing noteworthy and was forced to leave the post.⁶⁵

THE POLITICAL POWER OF LI DEPU FOLLOWING GAITU GUILIU

Li Depu retained considerable political power after the abolition of his office, and actively plotted to regain his position. He made it difficult for the new decrees and reforms to be implemented and for the Disciplinary

⁶⁴ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 65. The establishment of the primary school by the first Disciplinary Official in 1906 appears to conflict with the information in the *Daxin xianzhi* (p. 354) that several students from Anping collected funds to set up a primary school in 1907. It is likely that the native official, Li Depu, prevented the former school from operating after the Disciplinary Official, Li Jishou, was transferred out of Anping.

⁶⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 66.

Official to do his job. In the sixth month of 1908, actually using the office of the Disciplinary Official, Li Depu once again sat on the throne of the *yamen*. Apart from the addition of the signboard of the Disciplinary Official, the small reforms which had already begun were treated as futile gestures and forcefully brought to an end. Li Depu obtained the powerful support of General Lu Rongting, who provided him with over 100 rifles. Newly cloaked with the credentials of the Disciplinary Official, Li Depu used this to strengthen his political power and authority, and continued exploiting the villagers as before. The Qing government, struggling to preserve itself in the face of the national revolution, had no time to attend to the border areas. From 1908 to 1911 the 'rule' of the native official provoked widespread discontent; continued arbitrary levies and extortions prevented the people from earning a livelihood. Peasant songs handed down from the time tell of the repeated natural calamities and war turmoil and the resultant despair in the peasants' lives, including this typical song:

There is no rice to buy at the market,
Only a few stalls selling cassava and sweet potato.
Hastening to non-existent rice sellers at Taiping market,
We hope for Yangli to open its official granaries.
Waiting to buy grain, our stomachs ache with hunger,
Wanting to buy grain, the prices are higher than the skies.
One and a half *jin* of rice for a hundred cash,
If we don't bring it home it will be hard to bear.
We buy it to bring home and boil for gruel
Poor homes, rich homes, it's all the same
Who is able to eat a meal of cooked rice?⁶⁶

In the eleventh month of 1911, the local authorities sent an official, Wang Tingling, to investigate an appeal by families of murder victims whose cases had not been properly addressed by the native official. Wang temporarily suspended the native official and sent him for trial, and acted simultaneously as Disciplinary Official. One month later, Li Dinghan took over as Disciplinary Official. By then, the impact of the 1911 revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen which overthrew the Qing dynasty had reached the border regions. The two regimes of the Disciplinary Official and the

⁶⁶ Ibid.

native official now co-existed in Anping subprefecture. The Disciplinary Official who held position but not power was ordered not to leave the *yamen*; the Anping native official who held power but not position was still in control of the whole of Anping native subprefecture.⁶⁷ This dual system of control, where the county governments were delegated de jure authority but the *tusi* held de facto power, was common in the border *tusi* after *gaitu guiliu*.⁶⁸

GAITU GUILIU IN ANPING DURING THE REPUBLIC

After the Republican revolution, the first central government official sent to Anping was the county magistrate (*xianzhishi*) Zhang Fengshu in 1913. He abolished the positions of the local headmen under the native official system and replaced them with officials under the Chinese administrative structure of the *xiang*, *cun* and *jia*, and set to work putting in order the people's fields and the grain taxes of the subprefecture. Thus, the piecemeal way in which *gaitu guiliu* was implemented in Anping was actually completed by the Guomindang. After initial steps, each ten households made up one *jia*, ten *jia* made up one *cun*, and ten *cun* made up one *xiang*. The *xiang* head ordered the *cun* and *jia* heads to make door placards which clearly displayed the number of each household. Next came the implementation of Joint Responsibility Laws (*lianzuofa*), under which the entire *jia* was jointly responsible for the matters of any one household. At the same time, the county magistrate incorporated all the official fields of the native official into people's fields, with grain taxes payable to the local government authorities. These changes led the native official and other landlords to take urgent steps to distribute the official fields under their control to relatives' estates to avoid confiscation. These taxes were considerably higher than the previous taxes under the native official. For instance, where the Anping native subprefecture taxes were previously 362 *yuan* (presumably annually), after their imposition by the county magistrate the new taxes escalated to 4,075 *yuan*, an elevenfold increase.⁶⁹

Like the previous Disciplinary Officials sent by the Qing authorities, the county magistrates held no real power and had no way of dealing with

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 67.

⁶⁸ See Wiens, pp. 248–250.

⁶⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 67.

the large-scale sale of land and corvée obligations which the native official had embarked on in response to the clampdowns on his land system, or his continual extortions. They did not even have a source of payment for their own *yamen* salaries. The arrival of the first county magistrate brought new burdens for the peasants other than those which they were already subjected to under the continuing illegal power of the native official. As a result of difficulties created by the native official, Zhang Fengshu was compelled to leave Anping in 1915.

In the fifth month of 1915, Li Depu, having been the previous Disciplinary Official under the Qing government, falsely declared himself the second county magistrate under the Republic. Emboldened by what he perceived as an indifferent aftermath to the 1911 revolution, he simply proclaimed himself "hereditary magistrate of Anping subprefecture". He used this title explicitly in public notifications, contracts and epigraphy. That this could happen unchecked highlighted the extent of the civil disorders of the warlord era following the Republican revolution, which resulted in there being no national policy in respect of the *tusi* at this time. Li Depu fundamentally denied the *gaitu guiliu* imposed at the end of the Qing dynasty, and continued to impose himself on the people as native official. He embarked on a comprehensive restoration of his rule of Anping as native official over the next six years, during which he continued his arbitrary extortions.⁷⁰ The uprising of the national defence forces at the time over the opposition to Yuan Shikai and the subsequent north-south conflicts and fighting among the warlords resulted in the government having no resources to devote to border affairs. Villagers were by now resorting regularly to plaints, but the pattern remained the same; concepts of civil rights continued to mature amongst the populace, but the native official's retention of political power, buoyed by the turbulent political situation, remained steadfast.⁷¹

In 1921, a regiment of the Guangdong Army led by Shen Hongying occupied Guangxi, and Li Depu lost his position. Nonetheless, he seems to have retained actual power. He mustered the headmen from each district and with the help of his younger brother, Li Dexin, he organized a regiment of over two hundred men, assigning his trusted aide Chen Rongting as commander. He also transferred sixty or seventy armed troops from Baoxu and combined them into a battalion, assigning his son Li

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 69.

Shaohe as battalion commander. This regiment cooperated with the Guangxi army to attack the Guangdong army. The following year (1922), after the Guangdong warlords had been driven out, Li Depu led these forces against the remnants of the Guangdong Army from Anping and seized back power. Huang Xiaozhong, who had risen from originally being a house slave, was made battalion commander, and Li Shaohe succeeded to the post of Anping County Magistrate (*Anping xian zhishi*) in 1923. This ‘succession’ was in effect a continuation of the hereditary native official system, and of the mockery of the Republican county magistrate appointment assumed by the last native official Li Depu. The elderly Li Depu became the *taishanghuang* (father of the Emperor) in Anping, while the people, through habit, still referred to Li Shaohe as ‘native official’.⁷²

Li Shaohe

Li Shaohe, like his father, proved highly adept at rallying forces with which to establish a power base. He took advantage of clan relationships, using clan members to support and strengthen his rule. For instance, in 1925, using the rights held by Li Deming (the elder brother of his father Li Depu) under the various posts of *tuanju* (Regimental Agent) *judong* (Superintendent) and *zuzhang* (clan elder), Li Shaohe drew up village regulations which the villagers were compelled to obey. He obtained support for reinstatement of the powers of the native official through winning over the headmen of each village, using the social and political power of the official clan. He ensured that the headmen derived direct personal benefits from grain tax, corvée, and the mediation of disputes (in effect the status quo ante), thereby obtaining their backing.⁷³ Thus, nearly twenty years after the Anping native chieftaincy was formally dissolved, the long-standing practice of the chiefly class constructing and maintaining political power through a patron-client relationship with the village headmen appears to have continued undisturbed, as did the intrinsic local power of the official clan.

In 1924, the magistrate of Zuo County issued an injunction which abolished several exactions which Li Shaohe was making on the local

⁷² Ibid., pp. 69–70.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 70.

populace, such as marriage and funeral fees, and fees imposed on households without fathers or sons. This injunction was in response to complaints by a group of Kanxu villagers about the harshness of his exactions and forced labour services. Despite this, Li Shaohe continued to use the status of the county magistrate to maintain his rule, as had his father. In this way, he extended the rule of the native official up until the fifteenth year of the Republic (1926), when the provincial authorities finally removed him from office.⁷⁴ This was apparently due to his notoriety; it is more likely that the authorities were sufficiently concerned with the very real power which was still at Li Shaohe's disposal through his local network and authority.

The fieldworkers were able to collect many accounts of Li Shaohe's deeds as he clung on to political power. They cite the case of the peasant Tan Dexing in Baisha village, whose father died and was buried beside the native official's ancestral graves. On discovering this, Li Shaohe jailed Tan Dexing for twenty days and then compelled him to have his father buried elsewhere before releasing him. In a similar case, when some young people went to chop wood by the native official's ancestral graves at the mountain behind Baisha, Li Shaohe sent his troops to seal up the opening to the road below the mountain and seize them for punishment. Alarmed, they hid atop the mountain, not daring to come out for seven days. In addition, Li Shaohe regularly used gratis labour for the delivery of goods and carrying of loads outside the subprefecture. When his brother fell ill and died in Nanning, Li Shaohe summoned over one hundred people to go on foot to bring back his brother's corpse, coffin and ancestral offerings. The return journey took over half a month. Li Shaohe was also particularly cruel towards peasants who were in rental arrears; when the peasant Nong Gongquan in Gensong village was unable to pay the year's grain rent, he had to send his six-year-old daughter to the *yamen* to work as security. Despite her young age, she had to perform numerous household duties and was beaten at the slightest displeasure. When she grew up, Li Shaohe wanted to take her as his concubine. His wife did not accede to this, so the girl was regularly abused. No longer able to endure such maltreatment, she drowned herself in a river.⁷⁵

Such incidents reflected, again, the overall indifference of the government towards the welfare of the subjects of the old *tusi* regimes, so long

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 71; Internal Reports, p. 43.

⁷⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 71.

as they posed no threat to national order and security. In effect, things had not changed much since Governor Han's comment in 1727 that "if the foot aches treat the foot, if the head aches treat the head".

In the tenth month of 1926, a new magistrate (*zhishi*), Qin Shangbin, was appointed by the provincial authorities. Seeing the extent of the power held by the Anping native official and taking heed of the lessons of his predecessors, Qin Shangbin determined to move the county administration away from Anping. He moved it to Baoxu Jie, where communications were convenient and commerce more developed. Not long after, the Guomindang again seized political power over the whole country, after which Jiang Jingqi, who succeeded to Qin's post, set about forging the territories under the former Taiping, Anping and Xialei native officials into a new administrative unit which he named Leiping county in 1928. Thereafter, he divided Anping native subprefecture into the five *xiang* of Anping, Na'an, Kanxu, Baoxu and Lushan, with Baoxu as the county seat.⁷⁶

Thus, during the twenty-one years from 1906, when the process of *gaitu guiliu* formally began in Anping, until 1926, when Li Shaohe was dismissed as County Magistrate, the very real political power of the Anping native official continued to maintain its existence. During this time eight Disciplinary Officials and magistrates were sent out by the Qing and Republican governments respectively, of which five were Han officials appointed from outside who held office for only six or seven years in total. They performed practically no function; all were controlled by the Anping native official.⁷⁷ The three appointments totalling thirteen years of Li Depu and his son Li Shaohe, in practice, stretched out the 'reformed' *tusi* system for twenty-one years, aided by the chaotic political situation and the deep-rooted *tusi* support systems epitomized by the local headmen and local soldiers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Several points can be made in respect of what was effectively a twenty-one-year *gaitu guiliu* process in Anping initiated by the provincial

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 72; *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 5. The villages which comprised Anping native sub-prefecture were last re-organized in 1984–1985, and are now variously under Baoxu Xiang, Leiping Zhen and Shuolong Xiang; see *Daxin xianzhi*, pp. 35–36.

⁷⁷ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 72.

authorities just six years before the Qing government abdicated. By the late Qing dynasty if not much earlier, Anping *tusi* would have satisfied the theoretical requirements under the traditional Han Chinese *hua* concepts for the implementation of *gaitu guiliu*. However, by the end of the Qing Qianlong reign period (1736–1795), the court was preoccupied by a series of major crises which claimed its urgent attention. In practice, also, the costs of implementation of *gaitu guiliu* in terms of resources alone would have been unjustifiable when weighed against the absence of any threat by the Anping *tusi* to the already waning power of the Qing court. As well, the government and the Anping *tusi* shared a common enemy in the secret societies which rose to prominence in the late Qing, and were correspondingly regarded by those societies as the common enemy of the people. The one was identified with the other in the eyes of the peasants.

A pattern of collaboration between the Qing government and Anping *tusi* had also developed. This began earlier than their collaboration over the Three Dot Society during 1901–1903. In 1869, for example, after the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion, Tang Aliu led remaining troops into Anping and occupied the subprefecture for five years. Thereafter, the Anping native official Li Binggui, leading two hundred of his soldiers, defeated Tang Aliu's troops.⁷⁸

In the wider context of border defence, the fieldworkers have acknowledged the considerable contribution of *tusi* in the border areas around Anping in opposing invasion from outside, thus protecting China's territory.⁷⁹ The fieldworkers (and the editors of the Gazetteer of Daxin County) do not mention any border battles in which the Anping *tusi* was specifically involved, which suggests that its value to China's border defence was potential though no less vital. Jeffrey Barlow notes that the lack of stability along the frontier region bordering Vietnam had always been beneficial to the Zhuang *tusi*. Such conditions made the support of the Zhuang headmen in the frontier areas vital to the Qing rulers. After a series of destabilizing events in the late eighteenth century related to Qing attempts in 1788 to directly control Vietnam through a puppet government, the Qing government was inclined to leave in place the hereditary *tusi* along the border.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Daxin xianzhi*, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 75.

⁸⁰ See J. Barlow, "The Zhuang in the Early Qing Era," pp. 12–13/52, in *The Zhuang: A Longitudinal Study of Their History and Their Culture*.

Similar concerns would have prevailed during the conflict between China and France over Vietnam in the late nineteenth century, which resulted in the Sino-French War (1883–1885), during which China lost her claim to sovereignty over Vietnam.⁸¹ However, she retained control over her southern boundaries and the rich natural resources within those boundaries (such as the coal mines in Guangdong and gold deposits in Yunnan) which had been coveted by the French. The Chinese had feared that ceding Vietnam, which they had long considered a defensive screen, would weaken China's southern defensive frontier.⁸² A memorial from the *Zongli yamen* (the Chinese foreign office) to the Chinese throne in 1882 revealed its concerns regarding the adequacy of China's strength and Vietnam's weakness in the face of the French threat, and the military and strategic importance of the passes between Vietnam and the southern Chinese provinces. France had already attained control over the three southern Vietnamese provinces (known as Cochinchina). The northern provinces bordered on Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi, in respect of which the memorial stated:

If we wait until the French have entirely occupied the north before we inaugurate a plan closing the passes for self-defence, then China's defences will be drawn back and there will be no end to ensuing troubles.⁸³

In an imperial decree to Li Hongzhang (the governor-general at Tianjin who was the leading advocate of appeasement during the related Sino-French negotiations) in May 1883, when reports of renewed French troop reinforcements in Vietnam had reached the Qing court, the throne expressed further concerns about the exposure of the Chinese border provinces to French incursion:

That state (Vietnam) is one of our dependencies, and we cannot but protect it. Also, the territories of Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi border on it, and if the screens of defence are drawn back, how can we bear to speak of the future troubles.⁸⁴

⁸¹ On the background to the Sino-French War and a useful dissection and insight into the process of Qing policy making during the Sino-French confrontation, including the relative influence of the throne, high ranking and lower ranking officials see Lloyd E. Eastman, *Throne and Mandarins: China's Search for a Policy during the Sino-French Controversy 1880–1885* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), esp. pp. 154–162.

⁸² Immanuel Hsu, "Late Ch'ing Foreign Relations, 1866–1905," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, pt. 2, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, p. 99 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Eastman, p. 53.

⁸³ Eastman, p. 54.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

This edict signified the final determination of the Qing court to forcefully counteract the French encroachments.⁸⁵ The Qing general Feng Zicai was reinstated to lead the Qing troops in the battle of Zhennan Guan, a town on the Guangxi-Vietnam border approximately one hundred kilometres south of Anping.⁸⁶ The French had attempted to advance into southern China in February 1885 by taking Zhennan Guan. In March 1885, the Chinese defeated the French forces at Zhennan Guan and went on to recapture the important northern Vietnamese city of Liangshan (to which the French had retreated), located just south of Zhennan Guan. Some hold the view that, following their success in Zhennan Guan, the Chinese were close to victory when peace negotiations forced the cessation of hostilities on April 4, 1885.⁸⁷

These factors strongly suggest that the longstanding buffer role of Anping and the other remaining border *tusi* was as critical as ever during this period, even though Anping *tusi* was not directly called upon for troops. The French capture of Zhennan Guan was perceived as a great threat to border safety in China's southwest and caused a great panic in Guangxi. Nanning was evacuated, Liuzhou was in a state of alarm, and martial law was proclaimed in Guilin.⁸⁸ The critical importance of the Guangxi frontier pass to China's security was expressed thus by General Feng Zicai during an address to a joint meeting of generals after his reinstatement by the Qing court to lead the Zhennan Guan battle:

The French devils have invaded Zhennan Guan, destroying our gateway. We must all regard national affairs as important. National affairs are home affairs. If the French bandits are not wiped out, a loss of a nation will mean a loss of a home. We must all unite with one heart to protect the nation.⁸⁹

These circumstances would have placed the defensive 'fence' of border *tusi* in high relief. (It seems, however, that an adequate history of the Sino-French war in military terms and its effect on the local populations along the China-Vietnam border is yet to be written.) The exposure through the Sino-French War of the weaknesses of the military policies of the Qing court and of its twenty-year-old Self-Strengthening Movement resulted in the war being a significant milestone in the intellectual

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Guangxi shigao*, p. 175.

⁸⁷ See Liu Kwang-Ching, "The Military Challenge: The North-West and the Coast," p. 251, *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, pt. 2.

⁸⁸ *Guangxi shigao*, p. 175.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 177.

and political development of modern China. In the following decade (1885–1894), a group of intellectuals worked towards a reform programme geared not only towards economic modernization but fundamental political changes, including the setting up of parliaments. They asserted that the common people were of greater importance than the emperor. Eastman argues that these demands for political reform after the Sino-French War triggered the anti-Manchu revolution.⁹⁰ As we have seen, it was in this political climate that the Anping native chieftaincy was finally reformed by the Qing through pressure from the local peasantry, albeit only in half-measures.

The commentators on *gaitu guiliu* have focused on the abrogation of the *tusi* system (*tusi zhidu*). However, the personal tenacity and political power of the last legal Anping native official, Li Depu, was a distinct force quite separate from the system his post embodied. The distinctions between the legal authority and legal shell of the Disciplinary Official and the abrogated native official post became irrelevant at the grass roots level, in which the natural authority and deeply entrenched headman system of the native official continued to endure and to undermine the *gaitu guiliu* process.

Gaitu guiliu brought positive and objective benefits such as increasingly frequent dealings and trade between Zhuang and Han, the development and fusion of culture and education, and the opening up of educational opportunities to the local Zhuang.⁹¹ However, these benefits may not have been readily felt by the local peasants, who were in the short term subjected to more or less the same levels of economic and political burdens after *gaitu guiliu*.⁹² Thus it has been said that in the final analysis, *gaitu guiliu* simply led to the replacement of one form of exploitation by another. For instance, Sicheng Fu (present-day Lingyun county and Leye county), which underwent *gaitu guiliu* in 1666, had to endure thirty-eight “objectionable practices” similar to those under the *tusi* jurisdiction up until the Jiaqing reign period (1796–1820), a period of over one hundred years.⁹³

As late as 1924, when Li Shaohe (still described by the locals as ‘native official’ of Anping) had a child, the local villagers were still forced to contribute five *jiao* per household; numerous other harsh assignments

⁹⁰ Eastman, p. 204–205.

⁹¹ *Zhuangzu tongshi* (1988), pp. 373–374.

⁹² Ibid., p. 376.

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 374–376.

also remained in force.⁹⁴ After the Guomindang government converted the Anping village administrative system in 1913, it imposed heavier grain taxes and miscellaneous assignments, as well as numerous other taxes. These items, to name a few, included stamp tax, defence service, lawsuit fees, trading licence tax, contract tax, smoking and wine licence tax, and sugar extraction tax.⁹⁵ In 1945, the grain taxes imposed on the 5,335 people in the sixteen *xiang* within Leiping county averaged sixty-nine *jin* per head, on top of which the Guomindang charged supplementary state requisitions for grain purchases as well as subsidy fees for the heads of the *xiang*, *cun* and *jia*, making the total amount of annual tax two hundred *jin* of grain per peasant.⁹⁶

During the same period, the ‘Anping native official’ Li Shaohe and his clan continued to trouble the people up until the establishment of the PRC through Li’s considerable connections with the warlord Wei Yunsong of the Old Guangxi faction.⁹⁷ The serfs and house slaves of Anping were not fully liberated until the large-scale land reform movement which began in 1950.⁹⁸

The fieldworkers state that the long period of rule by the Anping native official could not be abolished with “a mere official document” and that the native official’s “system”, that is, his political power, social organization, land holdings and entourage, was largely left intact following *gaitu guiliu*.⁹⁹ Anping’s sensitive border location during a time of increasing foreign encroachments, the weakened status of the late Qing government, the civil disorders of the warlord era during which the Republican government could not depend on its soldiers, the personal political power of Li Depu and his son Li Shaohe, and the persistence of local culture despite Han Chinese institutions all combined to support this view.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 376.

⁹⁵ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 73.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 73–74.

⁹⁷ Internal Reports, p. 45; *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 74. On regionalism and the Guangxi Clique see D. Lary, *The Kwangsi Clique in Chinese Politics 1925–1937*.

⁹⁸ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 74.

⁹⁹ Internal Reports, p. 41.

CHAPTER TEN

REVIEW AND CLOSING REMARKS

...direct your eyes downward, do not hold your head high and gaze at the sky.

—Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. III

The administration of China's border areas through indigenous native chieftains is fairly well known in the general literature and is being increasingly explored by western scholars in relation to such questions as China's frontier policy and its impact on minority cultures. However, details of the way in which a Chinese-enfranchised native chieftaincy (*tusi*) actually operated and evolved have yet to be recorded.

The purpose of this book, therefore, was to describe the institutional and day-to-day workings of one such *tusi*—the Anping native chieftaincy in southwest Guangxi on the border with Vietnam—which functioned as a *tusi* chieftaincy for nearly 600 years. Because of its longevity, a secondary purpose was to examine its administrative and political evolution, in broad outline, from the fourteenth to the twentieth century.

The day-to-day workings of the Anping native chieftaincy and its administrative and political evolution were addressed in several contexts: the historical background to the Chinese native chieftaincy system, the native chieftaincy's historical origins and geographical boundaries, the relationship of the native 'official' (that is, the Chinese-enfranchised indigenous native chieftain) with the Chinese court, the local political system of the native official, the territorial divisions and local headman system, the stratification of the local populace, the land tenure system, and finally, the circumstances which led to the final dissolution of this native chieftaincy in 1906.

The historical development of the predecessor to the *tusi*, the 'bridle-and-halter' (*jimi*) system, as a form of territorial administration (and thus a measure of political control) was reviewed. That development extended from China's first unification during the Qin dynasty in the third century BC to its crystallization into the native chieftaincy system in the thirteenth century. Underlying the development of those systems was the evolving Chinese frontier policy. The exploration of the 'bridle-and-

halter' system, which encapsulated frontier policy, provides a point of entry into the wider debates on the nature of Chinese colonization, and contributes to historical perspectives on Chinese foreign relations. It has been argued, for instance, that the Chinese invented the practices of realpolitik and Machtpolitik, and were indeed practising and criticizing these practices as early as the Zhou dynasty.¹ The story of the Anping native chieftaincy, beginning from its origins as part of the 'bridle-and-halter' system that was motivated by the Chinese court's desire for pacification of its border areas, will add much to these debates on cultural realism and strategic culture.²

The circumstances leading to the establishment of the Anping native chieftaincy, and its significance in relation to the Nong Zhigao rebellion in the eleventh century, were described. From its earliest days as a Chinese-enfranchised native chieftaincy, it seemed to be a creature of the Chinese state, a remnant of a Chinese bandit-suppression campaign under which the native official was duty-bound to offer expressions and demonstrations of loyalty to the Chinese state. The agricultural garrisons set up in the aftermath of the rebellion, which provided both frontier defence and troops which could feed themselves, illustrate the way in which the Chinese empire reconciled its economic and political policies in order to contain the costs of empire.³ The ancestry of the Anping native chieftains and the related geographical boundaries of the Anping native chieftaincy, which comprised the native official's jurisdiction, provide insights into some of the ways in which the Zhuang responded to and negotiated around pressures emanating from Han influences, notably through the manufacturing of fictive Han ancestry. As well, we saw how information on border outposts in Chinese gazetteers was compiled by the Chinese prefectoral authorities, through information required to be submitted by the enfranchised native chieftain upon his accession.

The significance to the Chinese court and relative status of the particular office of the Anping native official, and his responsibilities towards

¹ See, for example, Warren I. Cohen, *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 2, 478.

² A key work in this area is Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). See also Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present and Future* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000).

³ For a discussion of considerations relating to the cost of Han imperialism, see Warren I. Cohen, p. 28ff.

the court under the terms of his licence, were described; we saw how the conditions of his tenure in office revolved around ensuring minimal disturbance to the Chinese government. The description also included a detailed genealogy of the Li native officials, who managed to comply with the changing demands of the native official succession rules over the Ming and Qing dynasties, ensuring an unbroken line of Anping native officials for 560 years. Their genealogy provides first-hand instances of the court's application of its *tusi* investiture regulations, as well as direct insights into the practical operation of the *tusi* regulations from the viewpoint of both the Chinese court and the native chieftains.

The entourage was paramount to the construction of the native official's local political power. His authority was dependent on the loyalty and support of the official clan, who assisted him in governing the territory. To strengthen his local power, the native official flagrantly exploited his official title from the Chinese court, reinforcing it yearly through elaborate ceremonials such that he was perceived as 'local emperor' by the local population. He made similar use of the physical and symbolic force of the *yamen*, a carbon copy of the seat of the Chinese county magistrate, and of his military and justice systems to consolidate his political power and legitimize his autocratic regime. The use of legitimization procedures to bolster the chieftain's perceived authority was not culture-specific; there are distinct similarities in the installation ceremonies of traditional African chiefs, and there is much scholarship on how legitimacy is conceived and achieved by ruling authorities.⁴ These common denominators, however, belie significant differences in the functions of the chief in different chiefly domains, in respect of which the study of this south Chinese native chieftaincy can provide new points of contrast.

The village headmen in each administrative district comprised another layer of the native official's entourage beyond his official clan network. The headmen jockeyed for the native official's favour; he, in turn, relied on them for keeping order in the countryside and extracting taxes, tribute and labour in his name. Those headmen held very real power, granted as loyal clients to their patron, and had a strong and deeply entrenched network system which lasted well beyond the formal abolition of the native chieftaincy. Even today, the interplay of chieftaincy

⁴ See, for example, Chan Hok-lam, *Legitimation in Imperial China: Discussions Under the Jurchen-Chin Dynasty (1115–1234)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), and George B. Ayittey, *Indigenous African Institutions*.

politics, elite formation and communal identities remains an essential element of the dynamics of chieftaincy structures, which are constantly being renegotiated in relation to power struggles in colonial and post-colonial states.⁵

The administrative divisions, called ‘civilizing districts’, into which the native official organized the territory under his jurisdiction, were also described, as were the villages which made up those districts, some of which originated as far back as the Tang dynasty (618–907). Information from the county place name gazetteer, when combined with the Field Studies data, made possible a cartographic and verbal depiction of the village clusters which made up this representative *tusi*. We saw in chapter 6 that the old village names are considered to be a valuable source for ethnolinguistic study. The local village administration also constitutes primary evidence of the interaction and blending of both Han and Zhuang political and cultural influences going back at least to the Tang dynasty. Such phenomena will be relevant to research on the changes which occurred on southwest China’s early modern frontier resulting from the interaction of its indigenous peoples, imperial officials and immigrants, and their respective cultural and political institutions.⁶

The people within the Anping native chieftaincy lived in a highly stratified society of free and unfree people, with serfs and house slaves comprising over 85 percent of the population. Such a stratified society was a fundamental characteristic of the political economy of chiefdoms. The native official’s concomitant control over human labour ensured total control over the political economy and the resulting class differentiation, since surplus production was used to support the chiefly clan.

The native official based his ownership of the land in Anping on his fief from the Chinese court, and used it to create a carefully structured land tenure system that provided the infrastructure for control. Although the evidence on the precise source of the native official’s ownership of the land remains unclear, parallels were drawn with other chieftaincies within China. Students of chiefdoms will also be able to compare the nature of the native chieftain’s land ownership (as well as his other functions) with that of chieftains in other countries. It can be contrasted, for

⁵ See, for example, Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s–1990s* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

⁶ See, for example, C. Pat Giersch, “‘A Motley Throng’: Social Change on Southwest China’s Early Modern Frontier, 1700–1880,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60, no. 1 (February 2001), pp. 67–94.

instance, with the custodial nature of land ownership by chiefs in West Africa, who could not own land in a private capacity, and whose wealth was held by the ‘stool’ or office of chieftaincy in trust for the tribe as a whole.⁷

The social, economic and political systems in Anping were also held together by the native official’s ownership of the land within his jurisdiction. It was a critical factor in legitimizing his ability to control and direct the human labour, and to exact the further corvée and tributary payments which supported the ruling organization. Increasing private land transactions paved the way for the commercialization of property rights in the Qing, and consequent political development. This, together with the dwindling material resources of the official clan over time, resulted in the weakening of the balance of land ownership that it held. Consequently, the land tenure system lost its ability to function as a tool of economic and political control.

The preponderance of material in the Field Studies on the land system in Anping relates in part to the CCP’s emphasis on historical materialism and its tradition of field investigation work discussed in chapter 1. It also reflects the fact that the Field Studies were carried out during the nation-wide socialist transformation of agriculture, when Mao Zedong had endorsed Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s thesis of “land to the tiller” as the byword for the emancipation of peasants from feudal agrarian relations. These emphases also led to the rich detail collected by the fieldworkers on the classes of people in Anping, which bear out Mao’s exhortations (echoed in his *Report from Xunwu*) that (a) good leadership can only come through concrete knowledge of the actual conditions of each class in Chinese society, and (b) actual conditions can only be discovered through investigation of the conditions of each social class—which requires directing one’s eyes downward.⁸ The relatively longer chapters in this book on land, social structure and the local indigenous systems reflect the large body of material which was collected on these subjects owing in part to the above rationale, as well as the need to record such historically valuable data. These data could not be replicated once those with living memories of the *tusi* era had passed on.

The vast amounts of material collected by the fieldworkers on the land tenure system also reflected Chinese traditional thinking on land,

⁷ See, for example, Ayittey, *Indigenous African Institutions*, pp. 117–122.

⁸ See Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. III (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), p. 11.

which had always underpinned the social and political systems of this agricultural nation, and was the basis for regional power prior to land reform. The Field Studies were carried out at a time when the CCP was taking steps to liquidate or at least minimize the interests of land-owners, and would at the same time have been interested in analysis of the methods of autocratic rule exercised by the *tusi* regimes. There was a historically based need to understand the land system and the way in which power was constructed and maintained through land.⁹

Notwithstanding the ultimate breakdown of the land tenure system, the native chieftaincy continued to be propped up by social and cultural forces. The long process which eventually led to the conversion of the Anping native chieftaincy to direct Han Chinese administration (*gaitu guiliu*) revealed the cohesion and persistence of the underlying local culture regardless of the superimposition of the *tusi* institution. Abolition of the *tusi* office did not correspondingly dismantle the real as opposed to formal power of the official clan, who had been the hereditary rulers of the area for centuries. That power was constructed not only through control of material resources but also through the entourage and patron-client relationships which permeated all strata of the native chieftaincy, and amounted to an immutable social and cultural force. These powers, including the power to mobilize headmen and troops and to use clan members to maintain and strengthen his rule, remained at the native official's disposal well into the Republic.

This book's primary purpose was to describe one representative *tusi* chieftaincy in China's southwest. What emerged was a portrait of a Zhuang community living within the Chinese empire and in harsh conditions of serfdom for at least 85 percent of the population. What also emerged were some insights into the underlying socio-political and cultural factors which contributed to the remarkable longevity of the *tusi* institution in this area, notwithstanding the empire-wide *gaitu guiliu* reforms in the eighteenth century.

A PRAGMATIC AND EXPEDIENT BARGAIN

Ultimately, the Anping chieftain donned the robes of native official as part of a fundamentally pragmatic bargain. This provided the Chinese state with economic, tributary, defence and geopolitical benefits and an

⁹ Discussions with Professor Li Jinfang, Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, November 2004.

ideological tool in areas geographically and psychologically remote from its central interests, and the Zhuang chieftain with the sanction by the Chinese empire of his minority regime. These mutual benefits contributed to the system's tenacity in the absence of political reasons for their termination. Both parties stretched the bargain to its limits, resulting in the survival of *tusi* chieftaincies such as Anping into the twentieth century.

The theoretical notion that the non-Han border peoples would be politically integrated into the Chinese empire once they were sufficiently “cooked” (*shu*) and no longer beyond the pale of civilization (*huawai*) gave way in Anping to the practical notion of expedient administration. This sort of thinking was evident even in the vocabulary of border administration during the Han dynasty (206–220). For example, the term *huairou* (literally, cherish the weak) had evolved by then to refer to the more expedient and political concepts of conciliation and appeasement in order to control ‘barbarians’ who might otherwise pose a military threat to the Chinese state. Under such expedient border policy, Anping, a basically poor and trouble-free *tusi* following a Song dynasty bandit suppression campaign, required little of the court’s attention. The *tusi* bargain appears to have been little more than a sly compromise on the margins of the empire, exploited fully by both sides.

The deal was also stretched to the limit through the Chinese government’s continuing adherence to the “rule barbarians by barbarians” (*yi yi zhi yi*) philosophy well into the close of the imperial era. This was implemented through a ‘hands-off’ policy under which, once he was confirmed in his position by the Chinese court, the native official was allowed to continue his customary indigenous rule over his subjects undisturbed. This tacit agreement was noted by Samuel Clarke among the native officials in Guizhou and Yunnan, whom he termed “lairds”. Clarke more or less captured the Chinese government’s ‘hands-off’ policy and its consequences for the *tusi* subjects as late as 1900 when he wrote:

The Chinese...did not interfere between the lairds and their tenants, and left things very much as they were. As long as the lairds pay taxes, recognize the sovereignty of China, and make no serious trouble, they are left alone. When the laird is a strong, just man, the present system works well; but when he is a cruel tyrant, as many of them are, holding practically the power of life and death over his retainers and tenants, cruel things are very often done in those regions.¹⁰

¹⁰ Samuel Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-West China 1900*, p. 122.

Unlike other colonizing empires which utilized indirect rule, such as the British in tropical Africa, the Chinese rulers did not actively take on the role of trustee for the welfare of the colonized subjects while they were under *tusi* rule; self government was not, and could never be, the objective of a Confucian state. Theoretically, the welfare of *tusi* subjects would be achieved through sinification and direct Chinese rule, although in practice *gaitu guiliu* happened in Anping only when the Qing rulers no longer had any other alternative. This practical manifestation of the *tusi* bargain corroborates the view that the Chinese interest in the *tusi* system was motivated by control rather than governing per se, resulting in abuses seldom being questioned, and political effectiveness seldom being discussed. It reveals, at close range, the complicity of the Chinese in the degeneration of these institutions.¹¹

Maintenance of the bargain also required active steps, exemplified by the Guangxi governor Xie Qikun being at pains around 1800 to ensure that native officials retained their land ownership and that their land did not become mortgaged to outsiders. Although this was also motivated by the court's concerns about the usurious conditions to which *tusi* and other Zhuang were subjected by Han merchants, the overriding concern was to preserve the fief, and thus the crucial elements of the pragmatic bargain.

CULTURAL AFFINITY

Generally, a climate amenable to the natural melding of the local Zhuang and Han cultures also nurtured the longevity of the *tusi* chieftaincy at Anping. The mere fact of the interposition of the Chinese *tusi* system on this Zhuang native chieftaincy in southwest China resulted in a certain degree of acculturation of its Zhuang inhabitants. Han influence in the region since the Qin dynasty had led over time to adoption by the Zhuang of many elements from the Chinese, notably the script and Han surnames, which greatly added to the adhesiveness of Zhuang to Han culture.¹² The agrarian-based societies of the Zhuang and southern Han and their common skill in wet-rice agriculture also served as important agents of cultural affinity.

¹¹ See Mote, pp. 716–717.

¹² *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 14.

Nor did acculturation proceed only in the direction of the culture of the conquering people. Zhuang ways were also adopted by the many Han settlers in the border regions, through intermarriage and the like; the cultural profile of the frontier was always fluid.¹³ The provenance of many Zhuang words, too, is a blend of Tai and Chinese, which is often hard to differentiate.

During the Qing dynasty, the imposition of reforms to the *tusi* system which linked the *tusi* inheritance requirements to increasingly Chinese criteria such as Chinese-style lineage registers and Chinese education led to greater pressures on the local Zhuang to be 'Chinese'. This was driven by the ruling elite, through its need for political legitimacy, as well as by the commoners themselves through such factors as emulation of the ruling class and cultural prestige, and as a way of minimizing discrimination by the Han. Many aspects of the local Zhuang culture in Anping were essentially hybrid, a fact which is vividly embodied by the companionable enjoyment which the Zhuang native officials derived from writing Tang-style poetry with Han traders. The villagers also practised Chinese customs such as tomb sweeping, and celebrating the dragon boat festival, which has claims to both Tai and Han origins. Even the corvée field names, which appear to date back at least to the seventeenth century, were distinctly Chinese, even though they denoted the concept of serfdom, which had been fundamentally non-Chinese since early imperial times.

There was also a tendency among the Zhuang chieftains to a shifting and malleable psychology stemming from the demands imposed by native chieftaincy administration. Among some of the Zhuang, too, nationality awareness was not strong. Some Zhuang even considered themselves to be Han people whose forebears were from Shandong and had come across with General Di Qing's military expedition during the Song dynasty.¹⁴ These conditions helped shape a psychological and cultural climate which was generally receptive to a mixture of Zhuang and Han cultural influences.

¹³ Recent works which would fit with these issues include two works, one an edited volume, by Stevan Harrell: *Cultural Encounters in China's Ethnic Frontiers* (op. cit.) and *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001). See also John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier 1600–1800* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Zhang Junru, et. al., *Zhuangyu fangyan yanjiu*, p. 5; *Zhuangzu tuguan zupu jicheng*, p. 21.

THE CONTINUING “FENCE” (*FANLI*)

China’s continuing defence concerns also contributed to the longevity of the *tusi* chieftaincy at Anping. It would be an exaggeration of the term ‘buffer state’ to use it to describe this *tusi* as it was part of the Chinese state. However, border *tusi* did act as a protective fence for China. Politically non-threatening, Anping and its neighbouring *tusi* were bypassed by the Yongzheng reform campaign in the eighteenth century and left undisturbed. Ostensibly, this was because they were small and unimportant *tusi*, part of the sweeping up work that took place much later. Practically, this inaction was also driven by elements of realpolitik, notably their value to the Chinese state as a buffer along the border with Vietnam. This was consistently denoted in the historical records by terms such as *pingbi* (fence) and *fanli* (barrier), which was acknowledged as much in connection with the tensions at Zhennan Guan during the Sino-French War. These instances of non-coercive strategies used by the Chinese state to maintain stability along the Chinese-Vietnamese border, and the use of *tusi* in the Daxin area as stable buffers provide useful cases in point for students of China’s strategic culture.¹⁵

THE IRON PAIL

Ultimately, it was impractical for *gaitu guiliu* to ever resume any priority with the Qing authorities in the Anping area following the Yongzheng campaign in the eighteenth century, since it was essentially sinified and compliant, and had neither significant resources nor a developed economy. These circumstances assisted the Zhuang native official at Anping

¹⁵ For example, these findings can be viewed in the context of Johnston’s discussion of the range of grand strategic options extant in China: See Alastair Iain Johnston, p. 116ff. In their recent book *Interpreting China’s Grand Strategy: Past, Present and Future*, which was prepared for the US Air Force, Swaine and Tellis (p. 24ff.) argue that the defence of the Chinese heartland required the Chinese state to directly or indirectly control, influence or neutralize its very large periphery. The authors discuss tributary relations with periphery powers and the recognition of local leaders under conditions favourable to China’s security. Nonetheless, specific mention of the *tusi* system at many points would have enhanced their discussions on the importance of a peripheral zone, including within its border regions, where Chinese regimes always sought a buffer and sometimes real control. Swaine and Tellis drew entirely on western-language sources.

and neighbouring *tusi* in engineering a state of ‘arrested development’ for an extraordinary length of time, leading to the particularly harsh conditions to which the peasantry was subjected, as with other long-lasting agrarian *tusi* regimes such as in Yunnan. We saw, for instance, how the Anping native official blocked off access to education other than to his kinsmen and certain Han.

The native officials used the *tusi* system in these ways to segregate the local Zhuang population from the rest of Guangxi. This led to the significant backwardness and underdevelopment of *tusi* areas compared to developed areas of Guangxi under regular Chinese administration, said in some cases to be by as much as a thousand years.¹⁶ The large proportion of serfdom at Anping stood in stark contrast to conditions in China proper, where tenants were basically free. These feudal conditions were probably aggravated as the property of the native official dissipated over time, culminating in the manifest distortion and abuse of power by the last Anping native official and greater level of serfdom in Anping than observable in Nandan *tusi*, which was richer in natural resources. The heavy corvée burdens of the Anping serfs and resultant demands on their time meant that they had difficulty just subsisting and little opportunity to produce any surplus from which to develop a commodity economy. Consequently, a money economy, which may have provided greater ability to commute corvée and military burdens (which was observable in Nandan), could not form. Zhuang scholars have likened the measure of the native official’s control over his territory to an iron pail: “When the wind blows it does not pass through, when water splashes it does not seep in.”¹⁷

These hermetic conditions are a graphic illustration of the human consequences of the expedient, realpolitik elements of the *tusi* bargain. The unchecked tyrannical regime of the Anping native officials, whose mandate did not include ensuring the well-being of their subjects, attests to the fundamental bankruptcy of realpolitik. These issues remain timeless and universal, a contemporary embodiment being the current investigations of the mechanics of tyranny in the context of the search for peace in the Middle East.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Zhuangzu tongshi*, 1988, p. 396. (This figure seems exaggerated.)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ A recent work which dissects tyrannical regimes and argues that the US cannot continue to enter into realpolitik arrangements with them is Anatoly Shcharansky’s *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror* (Public Affairs, 2004).

A STAKE IN THE EXISTING ORDER?

Despite the collusion of the native ruler and colonizing power in contributing to the longevity of the *tusi* chieftaincy at Anping by stretching the bargain to its limits, the question remains of why its populace did not agitate much earlier for the substitution of direct Chinese rule, as was known to have happened in other *tusi* districts. The fact that there was no such agitation until near the close of the Qing dynasty suggests a degree of tacit consent from the peasantry for the continued existence of this *tusi*.

‘Consent’ may have taken indirect forms. The Field Studies do not address the question of tax and corvée burdens in *tusi* regimes compared to the tax burdens (including the *ding* or corvée tax) under direct Chinese rule. Nevertheless, this comparison was probably instrumental during recent centuries in giving rise to unrest in *tusi* areas, or, at times, the flight of direct-ruled subjects into *tusi* domains. Although there is insufficient information for definitive answers, these actions indicate that the peasants had sufficient knowledge of relative tax burdens; overall, the *tusi* probably offered a comparatively tolerable tax regime. The grain tax levied on the peasantry in *tusi* domains was not calculated per *mu* as in China but was determined by the native official according to the amount harvested.¹⁹ Putting aside the question of the tax rate, this may have led to a fairer system overall, as it inherently took into account good and bad harvest years. Also, as we have seen, the benefits of *gaitu guiliu* were not immediately apparent to the local peasantry; the overall tax and tributary burdens of the Anping populace increased as much as elevenfold following the appointment of the first central government county magistrate under the Republican government.

Although the native official continued to be the ultimate owner of most of the land in Anping, we also observed the struggles and determination of the serfs and villagers to meet their grain tax obligations on pain of losing their rights to their fields. The serfs had relatively stable hereditary farming rights in the fields they cultivated. Ownership is a relative concept; such fixity of tenure probably amounted to sufficient ‘ownership’ in the eyes of the peasantry to constitute a stake in the existing order.

The concept of the Zhuang populace at Anping having a stake in society becomes more concrete at the cultural level. The local customs,

¹⁹ *Zhuangzu tongshi*, 1988, p. 397.

including the unique hybrid culture resulting from the longstanding Han influences and the overlay of the Chinese *tusi* institution on this Zhuang community, contributed to a sense of cultural identity which also served as a cohesive force keeping this community from agitating for change for many centuries. This is also reflected in their highly advanced political and administrative institutions and social organization. David Holm has pointed out that the longevity of the *tusi* institution helped preserve the cultural survival of the Zhuang under Chinese rule and that the Zhuang came to wear two hats, becoming adept at ‘cultural code switching’ or being Chinese or non-Chinese as the situation required.²⁰ Equally, the natural affinity between the Zhuang and the Han probably played a part in the Chinese authorities leaving the institution in place here for so long.

The lens through which this *tusi* society was observed has been distinctly Chinese. Beyond the immediate frame, however, it was at many points very definitely non-Chinese. Although it was beyond the scope of this book to explore cultural aspects of the Zhuang in any depth, something of its original matriarchal society, radically different marriage customs and ancestral concepts was captured. Another area in which the minority status of the Anping populace was boldly highlighted was that of its vibrant song fairs. As we saw earlier, the Zhuang love to sing and are particularly adept at improvising to fixed rules, a skill that reveals their intelligence and ability through the words and melodies. In Anping, these song fairs took place in each village each farming holiday or festival day. Up to three villages might hold a song festival on the same day. On the nineteenth day of the second month after sacrifices for the birthday of the goddess Guanyin, young men and women would come from each village to take part in antiphonal singing at the marketplace. This practice typified the melding of different religious and cultural elements which formed part of the tapestry of daily life at Anping. Whether the songs were of hardship or love, or a means of spreading political messages, the singing embodied a cohesive and identifying force. A typical love song recorded by the field workers at Anping combines the reality of poverty with the joy of being together:

²⁰ D. Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, esp. pp. 171, 218.



Fig. 7. Antiphonal singing at a Zhuang song fair. (Photo by Qin Rizheng)

If the two of us live together
There's no need to worry about food or drink
In three days, we'll eat one grain of rice together
In seven days we'll cook one pot of gruel
Each eating half, the stomach will be full
Half a meal, but the heart is content
We'll eat one piece of meat in three years
Together we'll drink one bottle of wine in five years
As long as I can marry you, my girl
Not eating or drinking, my heart will be happy.²¹

Valuable sources of oral literature (*koutou wenxue*), many such mountain songs were collected by the fieldworkers in Anping. They are a powerful testament to the fact that there were ways in which the Anping peasantry could live a life, despite the 'iron pail'.

The findings in this book can be utilized by the reader through a range of perspectives, some of which have been touched on previously. At the most basic level, the book offers a more or less complete 'anatomy' of the day-to-day workings and institutions of a Zhuang *tusi* chieftaincy in

²¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 11.

southwest China, which was part of the machinery of China's border administration. On another level, the centrality of land ownership to the native chieftain's power, as evidenced by the immense territorial administration in this *tusi*, provides new and detailed material on the political economy of a chieftaincy within China which will be a useful comparative source for students of chiefdoms. The way in which the native official constructed and reinforced his power through his fief from the Chinese court will also resonate with power theories of politics, in that all institutions within this political regime can be evaluated as a means to attaining maximum control of all people within the territory.

The concrete details also constitute valuable evidence bearing on contemporary debates on Han colonization and centre–periphery relations. In the debates on China's basic approach to political and military security, the book illustrates how China's policy toward sinicized peripheral peoples, particularly the culturally more receptive and less aggressive people of the southwest, was largely non-coercive.

For all its shortcomings, the Field Studies have given us a unique perspective from the lowest strata of society on what their life was like within a Chinese-enfranchised native chieftaincy. While the evidence is necessarily subject to the qualifications raised in chapter 1, the viewpoints of the wealthy and powerful, always afforded a voice, are subject to the same caveats. A wealth of detail on the circumstances and obligations of the poor and destitute within a representative Chinese *tusi* can now be sourced, as well as a comprehensive blueprint of the economic, political, legal and social systems under which they existed. With the growing interest in the *tusi* system under which more than 2,500 *tusi* districts were scattered over ten provinces of China, I hope that this study will assist scholars to pursue research on other *tusi* domains, with the goal of furthering our understanding of its place in history.

APPENDIX A

SOME DETAILS RECORDED BY THE FIELD WORKERS ON LOCAL ZHUANG CUSTOMS AT ANPING¹

RESIDENCES

Most of the houses in the villages were constructed from bamboo. Bamboo pieces were woven into bamboo fences, and mud and grass were pasted together to form walls, the tops of which were covered with grass, all in the old *gan lan* (dry fence) style. The houses had an upper and lower storey. The lower level was used to raise livestock and keep various other animals, and the people lived on the upper level. The front door opened from the middle of the house or on both sides, and wooden or stone steps were constructed to get to the upper storey. An altar to the deities stood on the screen wall facing the door, on which were placed memorial tablets to ancestors and the deities. This was said to be a sacred spot, so it was taboo to kill ducks or suspend salted meat on the wall of the central room, or on both sides of the passageway. It was also forbidden to eat or lay a makeshift bed here, or to indulge in uproarious laughter or singing; such behaviour was considered offensive to the deities, and the people feared it would bring calamity. They also used branches to erect a flat roof at the front and side of the house, which was used to dry grain and clothing, and as a place to enjoy the cool. To adapt to the warm weather, many of the houses were built on the hillside, encircling a trickling stream; it was clean, fresh and pleasant, and formed a vibrant countryside landscape, full of poetic beauty.

DRESS

Most of the men wore Chinese jackets with buttons down the front, but some maintained the large-sleeved collarless jacket of before. Women wore jackets which reached to the waist and were connected to long trousers. Young people liked white clothing, while old women changed to wearing black or blue clothes, but the villagers in Banjia village still

¹ Source: *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 9–15.

maintained long black pleated skirts with decorative borders. In 1932, in a move to compel the assimilation of the Zhuang, the Guomindang sent village elders, parish police and so on to keep watch in the market place, and to cut up long skirts and compel a change of dress. These actions provoked much indignation, so the villagers rose up in resistance. In some areas, long skirts have been preserved up to the present day.

Men's queues have been shaved off from the time of the Republic. Women's hairstyles varied according to their age: teenagers kept a single plait and a fringe, middle-aged women wore their hair in two plaits, and elderly women still combed their hair into a bun behind their heads. They loved silver ornaments; there were hairpins, hoop earrings, neckbands, bracelets, anklets, rings and so forth. They would dress in such splendid attire during festival days, some wearing four neckbands and over ten rings, the entire silver ornamentation on their bodies weighing over one and a half *jin*. They also liked embroidered cloth shoes; the old women wore embroidered shoes with the tips sticking up, while girls and young women wore round-tipped embroidered shoes. All rather exquisite, it was the standard attire during the end of the Qing dynasty, still maintained till now in remote mountain villages such as Banjia. After the Republic, women gradually started to wear Han dress.

FOOD AND DRINK

Husked rice was the main food, which was eaten with corn, sweet potato and local herbs and vegetables; these varied in accordance with one's wealth or poverty. Corn was ground up into pieces and served with steamed rice, or ground into powder, put into water and boiled into a paste. During the harvesting season the villagers would eat more dry rice, or three or four meals of gruel daily, in order to augment physical strength. On ordinary days, the whole family would sit round the table and eat together, but the younger generations or young daughters-in-law had to sit near the pot and ladle out rice for the older generations and the whole family, and serve more rice as necessary; this was a fine custom under which the old were accorded respect and the young were nurtured.

On ordinary days the vegetable accompaniments were relatively simple, and all mixed together in a pot. The villagers were fond of eating fresh blood; they regarded the blood of pigs, cows, ducks, chickens, dogs,

goats and snakes as tonics. For instance, after they washed a snake clean and severed its end, they would immediately suck the blood, which they considered to be a treatment for rheumatism and similar illnesses. Or, after stirring pig's blood, they would add it to fried pork as seasoning. Other ways of eating fresh blood were more or less the same. The villagers also daubed meat and fish which had been sliced into strips or pieces with salt and cooked rice, then put it into a jar which they sealed up. Fish was preserved in this way for twenty days, while the preservation time for meat was relatively longer. The villagers would serve the preserved meat and fish to guests during the harvesting season, during festivals, or song fairs. Whether raw or steamed, it had a distinct local flavour, tart and tasty. Apart from this, dog meat was enjoyed everywhere, and snake, duck and cat meat were combined to make a thick stew, which was quite delicious.

FESTIVALS

The festivals which revolved around the farming activities were generally similar to those of the Han. However, the villagers also preserved some special features, replete with superstition and local colour.

The first day of the first month was the New Year. On New Year's Eve, the young men from every family would take turns staying up all night. When midnight came and the chickens cried out, they would all try to be the first to go out to set off firecrackers for good luck; this custom was called *shou ji zui* (guarding the chicken's mouth). The women whose job it was to carry water on shoulder poles had to carry home all the water for the family's needs that day before sunlight. After that the whole family would remain silently at home, in order to prevent alarming the spirits. It was also forbidden to go outside to call on or meet up with other people. This prohibition was not lifted until after breakfast had been eaten on the second day. The villagers in remote Niandou parish received back the spirits of their ancestors on New Year's Eve. On the evening of the first day they offered sacrifices to the ancestral spirits, and at the same time wound up their new year activities. In areas such as Baoxu parish, it was popular to celebrate "Little Year" (*xiao nian*) at the end of the first month.

On the second day of the second month, each household in places such as Anping market village would pool money to pay for the prepa-

rations for sacrificial offerings, offer sacrifices to the temple housing the village god and plead for blessings, protection and prosperity.

On the third day of the third month, each family would offer sacrifices at their ancestral graves. However, some villages fixed different dates for this ceremony. For example, in Banjia village this took place on the thirteenth day of the third month, in Bandong village it was on the fourteenth day of the third month, in Shangsi village it was on the seventeenth day of the third month, in Na village it was on the twenty-sixth day of the third month; the times were not standard, and were based, rather, on the convenience of the particular lineages and their kinsfolk.

At the appointed time, each family would bring wine and meat, often several dozen *jin*; they would also carry over five-coloured steamed glutinous rice, which they would pile up into a tower or circular shape. They would then climb up to the graves (which were always on hills) to sweep them. Large families of a few dozen people would gather together for a picnic after they had swept the tombs; there, they would listen to the elder members narrate the history of their forebears and their clan, which was called *lian zong* (connecting with the ancestors), in this way strengthening their relationships with each other, and their sense of family unity. After the tomb sweeping had been completed and they had descended the mountain, those friends and relatives that had come from afar were invited by each family to take part in entertainments. At this time, young men and women would participate in antiphonic singing; the village outskirts would be filled with the sounds of joy and laughter.

In the fourth month, each village would fix the dates for the song fair. Niandian parish still held the sowing seeds ceremony, during which they wished for an abundant harvest.

On the fifth day of the fifth month, some villages celebrated the Dragon Boat Festival.

In the sixth month, after planting the seedlings, the villagers would prepare the three sacrificial animals (*san sheng*) as sacrifices, and go to the fields to pray to the field gods, plead for blessings, protection and the avoidance of disasters. However, some villages did not do things this way. Villages such as Banjia and Bantong incorporated the field sacrifices into the seventh day of the seventh month, during which they also participated in festivities.

The fourteenth day of the seventh month was an important festival when sacrifices would be offered to ancestors for the whole year.

The fifteenth day of the eighth month was the mid-autumn festival, but there were not many activities for this.

The ninth day of the ninth month was important for offering sacrifices at the market town.

In the tenth month, after collecting the autumn harvest, the villagers would pray to the deities to express their thanks.

In the twelfth month, the villagers would begin preparations for the New Year.

MARRIAGE

Although young men led an independent social life, it was conventional practice for parents to take charge of their marriage. Because the degree of Han influences in the market towns and villages differed, there were quite large variations in marriage customs from place to place.

In the market towns, marriage between people of the same surname was prohibited; such marriages were called *pa hui* (creeping dust). In the villages, rules on same-surname marriages were relatively looser; restrictions applied only in respect of marriages between close relatives of the same clan. People of different nationalities could marry, but prevailing class attitudes meant that Han traders did not desire their daughters to be married off to villagers.

When village boys reached the age of eight to twelve years, their parents would attend to their marriage arrangements. First they would find a matchmaker who would acquire girls' birth data to use as the basis for assessing compatibility with the boy, and then make a decision. Generally, they would consider ability for hard work, good health and suitability of appearance; the female side also looked out for whether the male had any bad habits. After taking part in repeated conversations with the matchmaker, and after the matchmaker had been to the girl's home three times for discussions, the girl's family would bring out half a bowl of fried soya beans, and both sides would eat them as they discussed betrothal gifts, and even concluded the marriage contract. One could not freely repudiate this agreement, just as the soya beans which they had eaten could not be spat out. Both sides had to adhere to the arrangements, which is why there was a saying, "one coin secures goods, one bean secures family members" (*yi qian ding huo, yi dou ding qinren*). Later on, the male's family would bring thirty *jin* of pork and glutinous rice and two *dan* of wine to the girls' home to get to know her relatives,

and from this point on they mutually called each other “old relative” (*lao qin*).

Because the children were so young, they generally did not marry until some two to five years after the engagement. Every first day of the first month and fourteenth day of the seventh month in the years before the wedding, the male side had to prepare gifts for the future in-laws. Each time they would present them with over ten *jin* of pork, two fattened chickens or ducks, and two *dan* of dumplings and cakes. The girl’s family would politely act as if to decline the proffered gifts, and generally only take a third or half of them; the rest was taken back to the male’s side. When they attained the age of fifteen when they were legally marriageable, the male side would choose an auspicious date, and two days before the marriage rites they would ask the matchmaker to hand over the pre-selected betrothal gifts to the girl’s home. This generally consisted of thirty to fifty *jin* of wine, one to two hundred *jin* of pork, three to five capons, glutinous rice and such. The girl’s family would distribute these gifts among their close relatives, and invite them to come over to drink wine and escort the bride to the wedding party.

On the day of the wedding, the bridegroom would, based on his financial resources, bring three to five *dan* or seven *dan* of glutinous rice, and one to two hundred *jin*, or up to three hundred *jin*, of pork to the bride’s home to escort her to the wedding. After undergoing the ceremony and rites, the new bride, with her female companions, would walk to the bridegroom’s house, bringing with them the fried pork and other gifts presented by the bride’s family. When they reached the door of the bridegroom’s house, the new bride had to wait until the predetermined auspicious time before she could go through the door and into the house. At this time, the bridegroom’s family members all had to avoid going outside the house, in order to prevent getting entangled with the “wild spirits” (*yegui*) which had been brought over by the new bride from outside. New brides who came to Niandun village first had to enter the cattle pens on the lower storey before they could turn around and climb the stairs into the house. The shaman presided over the wedding ceremony, where they would face the spirit altar to announce the new bride, and plead for blessings and protection. Later they would commence the wedding feast; some families had one, or twenty, tables; others had up to a hundred. The atmosphere was at once grand, exuberant and happy.

On the wedding night, the new bride would stay the night with the females who had accompanied her, and the next morning she would

return to the home of her parents. Only on the third day would the new bride finally return to her husband's home to stay three or five days; from this time on, she returned to her parents' home where she would pass a life of "departing from the husband's home" (*bu luo fu jia*). Each year at harvesting season or on New Year's Eve, the daughter-in-law had to go to her husband's home to help for three to five days while usually working at her parents' home. She could also take part in all social activities. Only after about three years did she go to her husband's home to reside permanently. If she were to go prematurely to live in her husband's home, this was considered inauspicious, and would attract censure under local conventions; such behaviour was derisively called "starving husband" (*e fu*).

This practice, in which the bride gradually goes from living with her mother to living with her husband, can be seen as reflecting the vestiges of the Zhuang matriarchal society and beginnings of a patriarchal society.

Because the market towns were influenced by class restrictions and other Han influences, the wedding ceremonies of well-to-do families were roughly similar to those in the hinterland; as an honour, the bride rode in a sedan chair to be married, and in the bridal chamber the husband and wife ate duck legs, which they exchanged, to symbolize the prosperity of sons and grandsons. After the wedding, they lived permanently in the husband's house.

Apart from this, the Zhuang custom of marrying into and living with the bride's family (*ru zhui*) was also popular. According to statistics on Na'an parish, twenty percent of the people there engaged in this practice. They were generally families which did not have sons, and after deciding through consultation with clan members, permission would be granted for the woman to have her husband move into her home after marriage. Most men who participated in this practice were poor, or from families which had too many sons. The husband who went to live with the bride's family had to change his surname to that of his wife's family; this was customarily called *kang lou ti* (carrying the stairs), and was looked down upon.

When men took another woman as a concubine, it was mostly because their marriage had produced no sons, or there had been a falling out between husband and wife. For some, it was because they were dissatisfied with their parents arranging their marriage, and waited till they reached adulthood to fall in love and take a new wife. In some wealthy households the taking of a concubine was to augment the family's

labour capacity – reasons varied. Concubines also occupied a different position in the family. Senior or low rank within the household was determined by whether one was wife or concubine, and children born to wife or concubine were similarly differentiated. In the market towns, concubines of people with power and position, because they were born poor, had lowly status in the household, and could not eat at the same table as the family. They were like slaves, were subjected to abuse and maltreatment, and were worked like domestic animals.

Widows were regarded as a jinx to their husbands, and most were married off to poor and wifeless men. When they were married off, the bridegroom's side had to present a small amount of betrothal gifts to the dead husband's family, from which time the widow would be freed from her original husband's family. If these betrothal gifts were not delivered, then although the widow had remarried, she was still considered a member of her dead husband's family. Under-aged children could accompany their widowed mothers who remarried, but after these children reached adulthood they had to return to succeed to their father's family enterprise, or to be married from their father's home. The widows in the market towns were very much fettered by the feudal ethical codes, usually confined to their deceased husband's home where they could not remarry. Illegitimate children and the mothers of such children were socially discriminated against, and not recognized by their families.

CHILDBIRTH

On the third day after women in Banjia village gave birth, the woman's family would present her with one *dan* of glutinous rice and several dozen duck eggs. At this time, the village children will already have gathered outside the expectant mother's house and cried out "daughter" (*yue shao*) or "son" (*mao*), "Come and plough the fields! Come and plant the fields! Climb the hills to chop wood..." These words expressed their wish for the newborn to grow up quickly into an able and hard-working person in the years to come. The family of the new mother would give a duck egg and rice ball to each of the children. In some villages this custom was different. They would use the pork, raw duck and glutinous rice presented by the woman's family as sacrificial offerings to the family's ancestral spirit altar, and plead for blessings and protection, and the safety of mother and child. Friends and relatives would

also bring rice, ducks, pork and so on, and come to offer congratulations. If it was the birth of a first boy or first girl, then the celebrations were even more ceremonious. One full month after the birth, the woman's family would present "three sacrificial animals" (*san sheng*), a strip of fish sandwiched in between duck and pig meat, as a sacrificial offering, as well as red glutinous rice pounded into paste, clothes, quilts, and a cradle for the infant, and so forth. They would invite the shaman to come and conduct rites for one day and one night, and name the infant on behalf of the spirits. On its clothing they would also write the Daoist magic figures and incantations *changsheng bao ming*, *bagua husheng* (survival into long life, protection by the 8 trigrams), which the child could not remove until its seventh or eighth year. When the child was named, its parents would change it at the same time. For example, if a newborn infant was given the name Zhaohui, thereafter, he would not be called by this original name. Before his parents, his name would be changed to "Fuhui"; before his paternal grandparents his name would be "Muhui", at the same time it was changed to "Gonghui" and "Pohui". Those people who lacked sons or grandsons would be called by their original name until death. The Zhuang regard females as of equal status to males. Because poor households worry about having too many sons, which would result in them lacking the ability to find them wives, they hope for many daughters, which would enable them to receive betrothal gifts in the future.

ELDERLY BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

When Zhuang villagers attained the age of thirty-six, some of them would offer birthday congratulations to their elders. Such birthday congratulations tended to be plain and simple; at the appointed time, the family would kill a cock to offer as sacrifice to the ancestors and to show respect to the deities, and they would plead for blessings and protection. Some ceremonies were relatively grander, and required a shaman to be invited to the house to preside over a day and a night of rites. Married daughters and daughters of brothers had to specially present a birthday gift called *pei gen* (plant roots), which consisted of a small bamboo tube of white rice, birthday clothes, a birthday hat and a pair of birthday shoes, to express their gratitude and congratulations to their parents.

FUNERALS

After someone had died, a shaman would be invited to release the souls of the dead. The shaman would take steps to ascertain when the deceased could meet the deities, and select an auspicious day for the burial. That is why there was a custom called ‘Halt the coffin and wait for the burial’ (*ting guan dai zang*). Some impoverished households had to delay burial because they were unable at the time to come up with the burial fees.

Burial customs differed from place to place. In the Anping market town, when a person died, three rounds of fireworks had to be set off immediately to announce the death, after which the task of notification would fall to the mother’s brother or close relatives. The family of the mother’s brother would present one *zhang* or one *chi* of white cloth to pay their respects to the deceased. The bereaved son would hold joss sticks in his hand, and under the supervision of the *daogong* (Daoist priest) who would chant and mutter all the way, he would go to the river bank or water’s side to “buy water” (*mai shui*). This consisted of throwing a few *wen* (copper coins) into the water, and filling an earthenware jar with water which he would carry home and use to wash the face and body of the deceased. If male, the hair would be shaved, and if female it would be combed, washed and wrapped up. They would be dressed in new jackets, trousers, shoes and stockings, and a copper coin would be inserted into their mouths, which was called *na liang*. Next the coffin would be prepared and the corpse put in it, and then it would be placed in the front of the main room of the house to await burial. Generally the coffin stayed there for three, five or up to seven days, during which the *daogong* would be invited to chant the scriptures. The relatives of the deceased would arrive in succession, each bringing a dozen types of vegetable dishes with which to offer condolences. When the time for burial arrived, they would bring paper horses, paper houses, paper money and other funeral objects, and write the Buddhist sutras on a strip of white cloth over one *zhang* long, which would serve as funeral streamers. The corpse would then be carried to the graveyard, where it was burned and buried. On the third day after the burial, the relatives again went to tend to the grave.

In villages such as Banjia, the people preserved Zhuang burial customs. After someone had died, they would soak the leaves of teak and mandarin trees in water, which they would then use to wipe the face and body of the deceased. The deceased would be dressed in new or

clean clothes, and a silver or copper coin would be placed in the deceased's mouth. As well, a few chicken feathers would be placed in the deceased's hands, and the white cloth brought by the mother's brother would be used to wrap the corpse before placing it in the coffin. At this time, the village had to abstain from hulling rice or grinding grain, close relatives of the deceased could not eat anything, and were further prohibited from eating meat or fish; violation of this rule was considered disrespectful to the dead person. After the corpse was put into the coffin, daughters or granddaughters would keep vigil beside the coffin. Close relatives would each use three *chi* of white cloth as mourning apparel, and also bring three or five *jin* of glutinous rice with which to hold a memorial ceremony for the deceased. Family members of the brother's daughters would present one hundred *jin* of rice and one *dan* of glutinous rice together with paper clothes, paper shoes and other funeral objects. They would also invite the villagers to come and perform lion dances and join in the funeral procession. Only after the burial were the above prohibitions lifted. However, during the three months of mourning for the deceased parent that had to be observed after the burial, the bereaved sons and daughters were not allowed to go to the market, drink wine, sing or shave their hair, and so on. On the first day of each year and the fourteenth day of every seventh year after that, they could only eat in the kitchen, as a token of their grief.

Those who died young or met with cruel deaths could not be entered in the family registers, and were not permitted to be carried out from the front door of their home. They could only be moved to the ground floor, and hastily carried out and buried.

In the past, cremation was popular; the deceased's remains were put into the coffin and placed atop a stack of firewood. An axe was used to chop open the coffin, and after the cremation, the remaining bones were put into an earthen jar in order from feet to head, which was called *shi gu chong zang* (picking up bones to bury once more).

APPENDIX B

ZHUANG AREAS IN DIAOCHA

List of Zhuang areas covered in the seven-volume *Guangxi Zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha*:

- Vol. 1: Baoding xiang in Tian'e xian
Weile xiang in Longlin gezu zizhiqus
Longji xiang in Longsheng gezu zizhixian
Layi xiang in Nandan xian
Yueli xiang in Nandan xian
Longshui xiang in Huanjiang xian
- Vol. 2: Nandan xian
Weixin xiang in Nalao qu in Xilin xian
Liangpa xiang in Baise xian
Chengguan xiang in Huanjiang xian
- Vol. 3: Shangsi xian
Siyang xiang in Shangxi xian
Nadang xiang in Shangxi xian
Shuangqiao xiang in Wuming xian
Napo renmin gongshe (People's Commune) Napo shengchan dadu
(Production Brigade) in Napo xian
- Vol. 4: Anping *tusi*
Taiping *tusi*
Wancheng *tusi*
Encheng *tusi*
Quanming and Mingying *tusi*
Xialei *tusi*
Lingle xian
- Vol. 5: Luodong xiang in Yishan xian
Tanle xiang in Tiandong xian
Nalie xiang in Donglan xian
Dongli tun in Zhonghe qu, Donglan xian
- Vol. 6: Dengguang xiang in Wuming xian
Qingjiang xiang in Wuming xian
Gaoxian xiang in Shanglin xian
Youyi renmin gongshe (People's Commune) in Mashan xian
Gaoxing renmin gongshe (People's Commune) in Dou'an Yaozu Zizhixian
- Vol. 7: Quanlong dong in Longjin xian
The Long peoples of Pingguo xian
The Pian peoples of Fangcheng xian

APPENDIX C

RECORD IN STONE OF PERPETUAL REGULATIONS¹

ANPING NATIVE SUBPREFECTURE, TAIPING PREFECTURE,
GUANGXI PROVINCE.

In order to provide explicit instructions for investigating its military affairs, on the second day of the seventh month of this year, Magistrate Li of this prefecture has received these orders. The regulations have been announced through the courier station of the Salt Control Circuit. To permit the frontier statutes to be published, these orders are received.

The Provincial Governor, E Yang, has permitted this local office to work jointly to hand down details pertaining to Anping native subprefecture of the regulation amounts of annual silver, rice and grain, as well as the length of corvée labour, those items which should be abolished, and those items which should be retained. These are to be listed in order, and the instructions carved in stone for perpetual compliance.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| One item: | An annual income from the eight <i>hua</i> of an amount of 1,148 taels and five <i>fen</i> of seventh-grade silver in total, for public use. |
| One item: | An annual income from the fields of seven <i>hua</i> of 1,252 taels and four <i>fen</i> of seventh-grade silver in total. |
| One item: | An annual income from the eight <i>hua</i> of grain amounting to 248 taels and four <i>fen</i> of seventh-grade silver in total. |
| One item: | An annual collection totalling fifty-three piculs and six pecks of rice and sixty-six piculs and seven pecks of grain, in accordance with the calculations of the tenth year of the Yongzheng reign period (1732). |
| One item: | An annual collection of sixty-three taels of seventh-grade silver for firewood, horses and judgments. |
| One item: | The provision of conscripted labour is to be abolished. |
| One item: | The provision of three cases of rice during intercalary months is permanently abolished. |

When the imperial envoy goes to the southern frontier pass, servants must be employed for its opening and closing. In accordance with past

¹ *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 28–29; *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu shike beiwenji* 1979, p. 19; *Guangxi shaoshu minzu diqu beiwen, qiyue ziliaoji* 1987, p. 2. These three sources all have minor inconsistencies with each other. I have translated all items covered. The order follows that in the *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 28–29.

practice, six tithings are to provide the labour. Apart from servants, six tithings must hand over 240 strings of cash annually. The Upper *hua*, Middle *hua* and Food *hua* must also pay twenty-seven taels of seventh grade silver and five strings of cash to allow the local officials to hire workers on their own.

Two items for weddings and funerals:

For all weddings and funerals of the officials themselves, on each occasion a collection of 1,000 taels of seventh-grade silver is permitted. When the eldest son and eldest daughter are married, on each occasion a collection of 1,000 taels of seventh-grade silver is permitted. Such deductions are prohibited for the next son or daughter.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| One item: | An annual order for tribute from the Upper <i>hua</i> , Middle <i>hua</i> and Food <i>hua</i> of eight piculs of grain, in return for which they are exempted from looking after and providing fodder for horses. |
| One item: | Payment of silver for saltpetre is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The setting up of 500 rank-and-file soldiers; these are to work in shifts to guard nine mountain passes and defend the area. In guarding the border, the old rules will continue to apply. |
| One item: | The silver payable for hereditary rights is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The provision of discounted firewood from the eight <i>hua</i> is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The item of a station for (changing) horses is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The payment of silver for grass and tiles is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The item of payment of silver for fish and flowers is permanently abolished. |
| One item: | The item of an annual payment of 20,000 <i>jin</i> of surplus salt all year round from the ports near the prefecture and of collecting small bribes of twenty-eight <i>wen</i> per <i>jin</i> of salt is to be appraised at the current rate and returned to the prefecture. |

Promulgated on the _____ day of the seventh month of the second year of the Qianlong reign period (1737).

APPENDIX D

NATIVE OFFICIAL POSTS AND RANKS DURING THE QING

1. Military posts under the Ministry of War (*Bingbu*)

Tubian (low-ranking military officer):

<i>Tuyouji</i> (Native Brigade Commander)	3b
<i>Tudusi</i> (Native Brigade Vice Commander)	4a
<i>Tuqianzong</i> (Native Company Commander)	6a
<i>Tubazong</i> (Native Squad Leader)	7a
<i>Tushoubei</i> (Native Assistant Brigade Commander)	5a

Tusi (native official):

<i>Zhihuishi</i> (Commander)	3a
<i>Zhihui tongzhi</i> (Vice Commander)	3b
<i>Xuanfushi</i> (Pacification Commissioner)	3b
<i>Zhihui qianshi</i> (Assistant Commander)	4a
<i>Xuanfushi</i> (Pacification Commissioner)	4b
<i>Fuxuanfushi</i> (Vice Pacification Commissioner)	5b
<i>Anfushi</i> (Pacification Commissioner)	5b
<i>Qianhuzhang</i> (Battalion Head)	5a
<i>Fuqianhu</i> (Vice Battalion Commander)	5b
<i>Baihu</i> (Company Commander)	6a
<i>Changkuansi</i> (Chief)	6b
<i>Fuchangkuansi</i> (Vice Chief)	7a

2. Civil posts under the Ministry of Personnel (*Libu*)

<i>Tuzhifu</i> (Native Prefect)	4b
<i>Tutongzhi</i> (Native Subprefectural Magistrate)	5a
<i>Tutongpan</i> (Native Subprefectural Magistrate)	6a
<i>Tujingli</i> (Native Registrar)	6a
<i>Tuzhishi</i> (Native Administrative Clerk)	6a
<i>Tuzhizhou</i> (Native Subprefectural Magistrate)	5b

<i>Tuzhoutong</i> (Native Department Vice Magistrate)	6b
<i>Tuzhoupan</i> (Native Assistant Department Magistrate)	7b
<i>Tutuiguan</i> (Native Judge)	
<i>Tulimu</i> (Native Chief of Police)	
<i>Tuzhixian</i> (Native District Magistrate)	
<i>Tuxiancheng</i> (Native County Magistrate's Assistant)	8a
<i>Tuzhubu</i> (Native Assistant Magistrate)	
<i>Tudianshi</i> (Native Clerk)	
<i>Tuxunqian</i> (Native Police Chief)	9b

Sources: She Yize, 'Qingdai zhi tusi zhidu' (The Qing Native Chieftaincy System); Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*. Where ranks are not provided, the posts were variable or unranked.

APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED AMOUNTS OF LAND DISTRIBUTED BY THE LAST ANPING NATIVE OFFICIAL TO THE OFFICIAL CLAN

<i>Manor Estate</i>	<i>Distance from Anping Jie</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
Baisha Zhuang	c. 5 li	234 mu	One hundred and eighty mu of cultivated land, which included 130 mu of rice fields and 50 mu of dry land.	Eighteen mu and 24 mu to younger brothers Li Deqing and Li Debing, 12 mu to younger sister
Shangsuozhuang and Xiasuozhuang (also referred to as Suocun Zhuang in map 8)	c. 8 li	420 mu	The land was open and flat and was irrigated. The soil was rich and fertile.	
Xiali Zhuang	c. 5 li	c.300 mu	Two hundred and thirty mu of paddy fields and dry fields, 100 mu of dry land; also had 2 fishponds totalling 60 mu.	
Luncun Zhuang	c. 10 li	240 mu	Seventy percent of total farmland	
Bansheng Zhuang	c. 6 li	466 mu		Two hundred and seventy mu of paddy fields and dry fields to younger brother Li Deqing and 102 mu of paddy fields and dry fields to Li Dexin.
Qila Zhuang	8 li	202 mu		Seventy mu were within Banlie, Bankou and Banhou villages. By the Guangxu reign period (1875–1909), the native official Li Chaoxu had distributed the land to his younger brother.

continued over

<i>Manor Estate</i>	<i>Distance from Anping Jie</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Distribution</i>
Zhidi Zhuang (also referred to as Tudi Zhuang and Wazao Zhuang in map 8)	c. 20 <i>li</i>	Over 1000 <i>mu</i>	Seventy-five percent of total farmland	Over 1,000 <i>mu</i> of official fields distributed within Tudi, Wazao, Nongzhong, Nongren, Nalin and An villages. Divided into three manor estates.
Jingyang Zhuang (also referred to as Jiangdong Zhuang in map 8) ¹	c. 30 <i>li</i>	Over 1,100 <i>mu</i>	All good fields close to the villages and near the water; 20% of total farmland	Distributed within the thirteen villages of Jiangdong, Banzhi and Longqiao. Divided into three manor estates.
Gengsong Zhuang	c. 40 <i>li</i>	210 <i>mu</i>		
Keqiao Zhuang	c. 20 <i>li</i>	360 <i>mu</i>	Eighty percent of total farmland. Had two mountain forests.	

(Source: *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 37)

The manor estates referred to as Banzhi Zhuang, Nalin Zhuang and Nayi Zhuang, the locations of which are indicated on map 8, have not been included in the above list of eleven manor estates, possibly because the fieldworkers could not ascertain the acreage, or deemed them too small for inclusion in a general summary.²

¹ The references to the alternate names for these manor estates in map 8 (which is based on *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 37 and Internal Reports, pp. 46–47), which refer to basically the same areas, are probably due to the fieldworkers' different methods of transcription. These correspondences are based on the overlap between the lists of natural villages attributed to the variously named manor estates in *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 37 and 212. The village names have remained unchanged from the time of the Field Studies (notwithstanding changes to the names of some of the related administrative units) till now, as evidenced by the *Daxin xian dimingzhi* (Gazetteer of Place Names in Daxin County) (1992). Not all the villages mentioned by the fieldworkers could be located in the aforementioned record of place names, which is the most comprehensive source of village names which I was able to obtain from the Guangxi Provincial Library. However, enough were traceable for the extrapolation of the locations of the fifteen manor estates indicated on map 8.

² These manor estates are referred to in *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 212. Nayi Zhuang, for instance, consisted of only forty-two *mu*; see *Diaocha*, vol. 4, p. 258.

APPENDIX F

XIALI MANOR ESTATE¹

LOCATION AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Xiali manor estate was located five *li* north of the native official's headquarters. Its eastern boundary was eighteen *li* from the administrative centre of the Encheng native chieftaincy, its western boundary was ten *li* from Anmin, and its northern boundary was fifteen *li* from the centre of Na'an parish. It consisted of smooth and level terrain with continuous fields, and a small river running through the northeastern side which enabled water to be pumped into the fields by a waterwheel. A small stream from Anmin on its western side flowed all year round, enabling easy irrigation.

Fifty percent of the official fields were wet fields, in which two crops could be planted each year. There was only one village (the village of Xiali) in the Xiali manor estate. When Li Depu was native official from the middle years of the Qing Guangxu reign period (1875–1908) until 1906, the village had twenty households, of which eighteen cultivated official fields; there were no privately owned fields. Two households did not plant official fields, apparently because they had ancestral fields.

At the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republic there were approximately fifty *ban* (three hundred *mu*) of official fields in Xiali manor estate, consisting of approximately 120 *mu* of wet fields, 110 *mu* of hilltop fields which depended on rainfall (*wangtian*) and 100 *mu* of dry fields (*shedi*). The main crops planted were paddy, maize, sweet potato and buckwheat.

CULTIVATION OF THE OFFICIAL FIELDS BY TENANT-FARMERS

The tenant-farmers (*tianding*) on Xiali manor estate who cultivated the manor estate fields were issued by the officials with buffalo to raise (any calves had to be turned over to the native official), farming tools (although

¹ Sources: *Diaocha*, vol. 4, pp. 219-20, 270, 272; *Daxin Xian Anping tuguan zhuangtian jingji diaocha ziliao*, pp. 31-33, 43.

not always), and seed. Each year, the tenant-farmers planted and weeded the fields and gathered the harvest for the native official. The native official gave each of the tenant-farmers a daily ration of one *jin* of unpolished rice, two or three *liang* of soybean, and one *jin* of wine (if available), or one *jin* of wine money (equivalent to eight copper coins) if no wine was available. This was issued to the tenant-farmers by the field manager. Those who did not go to work for the official would not be issued the food and wine for that day. The tenant-farmers also divided up the harvest with the native official as discussed below.

Grain Rent

As mentioned earlier, official fields did not attract grain tax. However, the tenant-farmers of Xiali manor estate had to pay grain rent and provide a variety of corvée services to the native official. After the native official Li Depu took office in the mid-Guangxu reign period (1875–1908), the rent payable by the tenant-farmers was based on the rule “six parts to the official, four parts to the people” (*guanliu minsi*). This rental of sixty percent of their harvest was considerably higher than the usual grain rent of fifty percent which applied in the other manor estates. For example, the grain rent in Gengsong Zhuang was fifty percent of the harvest. This was to account for the fact that the Xiali tenant-farmers would go first to the fields to cut some grain for themselves prior to harvesting.

The tenant-farmers also had to carry the grain belonging to the official to the official granary in the village. After harvesting, the field manager would order each tenant-farmer to dry and thresh the grain. When fully dried out, all the grain was carried to the *yamen*. The official gave each person one *jin* of unpolished rice for each day spent transporting grain, and occasionally some oil and salt.

Other Income of the Tenant-Farmers

As we saw earlier, each year the tenant-farmers of Xiali manor estate were permitted to first collect some paddy for themselves at the point of ripening but prior to harvesting, ostensibly to cover them for meals during the busy harvesting season. This may be the Tai custom of *chi*

xin (eating the new). They were first allowed to cut one or two tenths from all four sides of each official field which they had personally planted. Later, some of them wanted to be able to cut one quarter or one third of the total area of one field. Consequently, even before the harvest had been collected and rental divided up for the officials, the tenant-farmers had already collected three or four hundred *jin* of unhusked rice. It appears that this arrangement was not condoned by the native official, but he lacked the means to control it. This may have been because the practice held sway as a customary observance.

Corvée Service and Gifts

A detailed account of the corvée and gift obligations of the tenant-farmers in Xiali is provided in chapter 7, and is therefore not repeated here. However, that account, based on the Internal Reports, did not include the further obligation of the tenant-farmers in respect of the fishponds in Xiali. There was one fishpond in front of Xiali village which was twenty-two *mu* in area, and another fishpond behind the houses which was over forty *mu* in area. According to the local peasants, these fishponds were seized by the native official a long time ago. Each year during the autumn festivals or if the native official desired to eat fresh fish, he would summon the tenant-farmers to cast nets and catch him some fish. The officials would dispatch a *yamen* guard to inspect the fish, all of which was given to the native official. Occasionally, the officials would give a few small fish to the tenant-farmers who helped catch the fish. This form of corvée service was relatively more common in Xiali village and Qila village, which, as indicated in map 8, is only a few kilometres north of Xiali village, across the Heishui River.

FIELD MANAGERS

The native official had a tight administrative organization devoted to the operation and management of the manor estate economy. A field manager (Ch. *guantian*, Zh. *na⁴ kuun¹*) was assigned by the native official to every manor estate; there was one field manager for Xiali manor estate. (The number of field managers varied between manor estates; Zhidi manor estate, which was roughly three times the size of Xiali manor

estate, had three field managers.) The field manager was the right-hand man of the native official as well as the agent through which he issued orders. The field managers in every manor estate were all trusted aides of the native official, and underwent a selection process. They tended to be selected from among the native official's kinsmen, those with whom the native official was well acquainted, those who were comparatively rich, those who had good verbal skills, and those who could read. All field managers had to be from the manor estate for which they were appointed. They could be removed or changed at the whim of the native official. Equally, they could hold the post for long periods if they enjoyed good relations with and incurred the trust of the native official. This was apparently the case with Zhao Shengliu, the field manager of Bansuo manor estate, who was the assumed brother of the last Anping native official, Li Depu, and served as field manager for around thirty years. On the other hand, Nong Xingren, the field manager of Tudi manor estate, was removed by the native official after only one year. He had incurred the native official's dissatisfaction because he did not recruit sufficient labour, collected inadequate amounts of grain, and did not regularly report incidents of lawbreaking (which were opportunities for the native official to charge fines) within the manor estate. These dynamics mirror those of the headman system discussed in chapter 6.

Remuneration of Field Managers

The field managers received considerable remuneration. Each year they could cultivate one to two *ban* (six to twelve *mu*) of manor estate fields free of rent or grain tribute. In addition, each year after they had transported the grain rental to Anping, they could sweep up what grain had fallen onto the granary floor for their own use. Apart from this, the native official also issued the field managers with two hundred copper cash as a supplementary living allowance for each day during which they weighed, checked and accepted the grain rent which the serfs handed over at the *yamen*.

Responsibilities of the Field Manager

The Anping native official only appointed one field manager and one *bulao* (Zh. pu¹ laau⁶, “elder”) to Xiali manor estate as it only had

eighteen households, and its fields were concentrated in one spot. The specific responsibilities and remuneration of the Xiali field manager were more or less the same as in other manor estates. The Xiali field manager was required to:

1. Supervise and urge the tenant-farmers to exert themselves in planting their fields during the sowing season.
2. Report to the native official when the grain had ripened; the native official would then assign people to inspect and collect it. The field manager was also responsible for arranging their food and lodging.
3. Guard the official granary.
4. Summon the tenant-farmers to hand over their grain rent.
5. Transmit the native official's orders to send tenant-farmers to provide corvée labour.
6. Mediate small disputes among the peasants, and refer those matters which he had been unable to resolve to the native official to settle.
7. Take charge of the account book for Xiali manor estate in which he recorded the amount of official fields cultivated by the tenant-farmers and the quantity of grain rental due from them.
8. Make secret reports to the native official of any tenant-farmers who displayed antagonism towards the native official.
9. Manage the irrigation of the entire manor estate. Each year he had to lead the serfs of the manor estates in repairing the dam and dredging the ditches. He was also responsible for getting the serfs to collect wood and cane to construct a water wheel for those manor estate fields which required a water wheel for irrigation by pumping.
10. Patrol the fields regularly and, if he discovered fields which lacked water, he had to ensure that the serfs in charge of cultivating those fields drew water to irrigate them.
11. Report to the native official if the serfs lacked buffalo to plough the fields or if there was an increase in the local population, and provide the notifications necessary for issue of buffalo or selection of additional fields for the serfs.

THE *BULAO* OF XIALI MANOR ESTATE

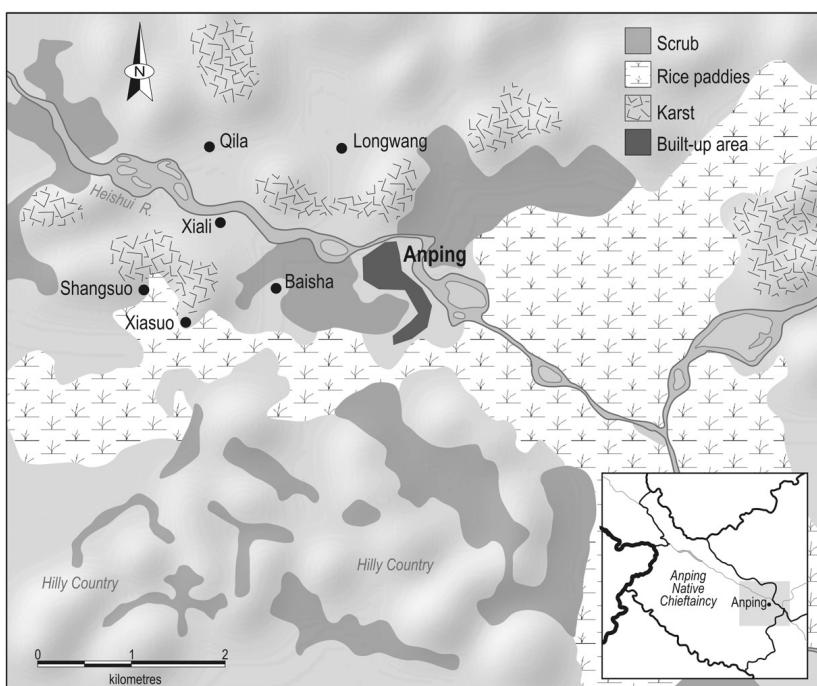
The *bulao* (elder) of Xiali manor estate was a free peasant of Xiali village who did not plant official fields. The *bulao* appears to have been an 'optional extra' who would be appointed by the native official if the

latter considered him to be loyal and able to coerce the tenant-farmers. His main responsibilities were to assist the native official in collecting grain tribute from those free peasants who were not liable for grain rent. Apart from Xiali village, the pu¹ laau⁶ *bulao* also had to collect these grain tributes from the nearby villages of Shangli and Qila in Na'an. This was generally carried out between the tenth and twelfth months of each year. Each time he arrived at the respective villages, he would arrange for the *bulang* (Zh. pu¹ laaq⁴) and field manager of that village to notify the relevant peasant households; he was only required to sit in attendance and collect the grain. (The field workers do not state who the *bulang* was; presumably he had a similar position to the *bulao*.) The peasants would present him with chicken and ducks at the places where he attended to these duties. The *bulao* did not receive official fields to cultivate, but was exempted from any corvée. Despite this apparently minimal remuneration, in reality the *bulao* made a considerable amount of money via the grain collection process, through extortion, embezzlement, pocketing funds levied as fines in respect of dispute mediations, under-reporting grain amounts handed over by the peasants, and so on.

OTHER SURVEILLANCE

Apart from the field manager and *bulao* which the native official established in Xiali manor estate, the native official also dispatched his bodyguards (*qinbing*) or official clan members to patrol and supervise the tenant-farmers during the harvesting period, and to press the tenant-farmers for rental payments and corvée.

To sum up, Xiali manor estate contained primarily high yielding wet rice fields (230 *mu* out of a total 300 *mu*); it also had the benefit of natural irrigation sources owing to its location beside the Heishui River (see map 9). Tight controls and surveillance of the fields and harvest, including ensuring provision of water and buffalo if required, was implemented through the field manager and his assistants. The fact that the native official did not utilize the local headmen for the above tasks, but regarded it as requiring the use of specially appointed field managers, reveals the intense degree of concern to access the high economic surpluses generated by the best fields.



Map 9. Xiali and its surrounding villages.

(Adapted from U.S. Army Map Service – China Mapping Service (Republic of China), China (Kwangsi) 1:50,000 Series L7001, Edition 1-CMS Lei-P'ing, Sheet 6818 III)

CHINESE CHARACTER GLOSSARY

Ancha shisi	按察使司
Anping	安平
Anping jie	安平街
Anping zhou tuan lianyong	安平州團練勇
Anshan	安山
bahua sicheng	八化四城
Bai yue	百越
ban	半
Beihua	北化
beima	備馬
bingbu	兵部
Bozhou	波州
buxiao tuguan	不肖土官
buzheng shisi	部政使司
chicun tudi, xishu guanji	尺寸土地, 悉屬官基
chuyequan	初夜權
cishi	刺史
cun	村
daogong	道公
Daxin xian	大新縣
difang shuitu, yibing guifu	地方水土, 一并歸附
Di Qing	狄青
dong	峒

Donghua	東化
dudufu	都督府
duzhi huishi	都指揮使
erye	二爺
Fan Chengda	范成大
Fanli	藩籬
fang	房
Feng Zicai	馮子材
Fu	府
fudong	副峒
gaitu guiliu	改土歸流
gengbing	耕兵
guantian	官田
guantian	管田
guanzhuang	官莊
guanzu	官族
Guangxi	廣西
Guangxi Zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha	廣西壯族社會歷史調查
Guihua	歸化
guitang	歸堂
haozhi	號紙
hua	化
huawai	化外
huairou	懷柔
hutou	戶頭
huzhang	戶長

jia	甲
jianu	家奴
jieshangren	街上人
jiezhuang	結狀
jimizhou	羈縻州
kaiyin yishi	開印儀式
langshou	朗首
Li Binggui	李秉圭
libu	吏部
Li Shaohe	李少鶴
Li Guoyou	李郭祐
Li Mao	李茂
Li Depu	李德普
liangtian	糧田
lianyong	練勇
lianzuofa	連坐法
liuguan	流官
Lu Rongting	陸榮廷
Luoyue	駱越
man	蠻
mengxue	蒙學
mintian	民田
minzhuang	民壯
mogong	麼公
mu	畝
Nandan	南丹

Nong Zhigao	儂智高
Nongmin	農民
nongnu	農奴
pingmin	平民
qinbing	親兵
qingong zongtu	親供宗圖
quan'ai	權隘
quandong	權峒
ru zhui	入贊
Sandianhui	三點會
Sansi huizou	三司會奏
Shanghua	上化
shedi	畲地
sheng	生
Shihua	食化
shiye	師爺
shoutu kaihuang	受土開荒
shu	熟
Si'en	思恩
siyi	四夷
Taiping	太平
tanya guan	彈壓官
Tiandihui	天地會
tianding	佃丁
Tianzhou	田州
tuanzong	團總

tubing	土兵
tuguan	土官
Tuguan dibu	土官底簿
tun	屯
tuntian	屯田
tusi	土司
tuyong	土勇
tuzhou	土州
wangtian	望田
Wuchu	五處
wupo	巫婆
xian	縣
xiang	鄉
xiangxiaren	鄉下人
Xianzhishi	縣知事
Xie Qikun	謝啟昆
Xihua	西化
xinfeng tian	薪俸田
xuanfu	宣撫
xuanfushi	宣撫使
xuanwei	宣慰
xuanweishi	宣慰使
xunfu	巡撫
yamen	衙門
Yanfengsi	驗封司
yangshantian	養膳田

yebing	夜兵
yi man gong man	以蠻攻蠻
yi yi zhi yi	以夷治夷
yitian	役田
You jiang	右江
zhangdong	掌峒
zhong jian zhu man	眾建諸蠻
Zhonghua	中化
zhou	州
Zhuang	壯
zhuangtian	莊田
Zhuge Liang	諸葛亮
zong binguan	總兵官
zongguan	總管
zonghua	總化
zongli	總理
zongzhi tuben	宗支圖本
zongzhu	宗主
Zuo jiang	左江
zuoyou guan	左右官
zuzhang zhidu	族長制度

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INDEX

- African chiefdoms, 122, 262
ancestral hall, 94, 97, 101, 235
Anping native chieftaincy: why selected, 11-13; historical origins, 46-55; Ming map of, 57; geographical boundaries of, 58-65; relative status of, 69; local political system, 90-121; village organization, 123-27; location of administrative districts, 127-133; local headman system, 133-138; village disputes, 141-42; contribution to border defence, 253, 255; *See also* serfs, traders, house slaves, education and examinations, land tenure system
Anping native official (*tuguan*): significance to Chinese court, 66-69; status of post, 69-71; responsibilities, 72-75; tribute obligations, 74; penalties, 71; promotion pathways during Ming, 71; clan register, 75-89; Ming requirements for inheritance of the post, 82; Qing requirements, 86; educational requirements in late Qing, 87; accession ceremony, 90-91; official clan of, 93; clan elder system, 94; clan organization, 94-96; clan rules, 96-98; privileges of official clan, 98-99; soldiers under, 107-9; laws, 113-18; salary through fields, 191
- Bai Yaotian, 51, 52, 59
Bai Yue, 7, 84, *see also* Yue
Barlow, Jeffrey, 3, 253
Bingbu (Ministry of War), 69
Buck, John Lessing, 12
buffers, 48, 57, 67, 235, 242, 255, 267
building restrictions, 99, 176
- Cheli native chieftaincy, 1
China's strategic culture, 23, 259
Chinese Communist Party (CCP), 20, 263
Chinese county magistrate, 93
- Chiya* (Elegances from the Tropics), 182
Clarke, Samuel R., 3, 118, 215n88, 264
Creel, Herlee, 33, 53
cun (natural village), 125-26. *See also* tun
cungongsuo (administrative village), 130, 131, 132
Cushman, Richard, 3
- daogong* (local priest), 178, 282
Di Qing, Song general, 49, 50, 52, 53, 124, 185, 189, 232, 266
dong (valley), 30, 47, 53, 134, 232
Dragon Boat Festival, 140, 266
- Earle, Timothy, 113
Eastman, Lloyd, 256
education and examinations, in Anping, 177-181, 268; schools in Guangxi, 179-180
entourage politics, 121
epigraphy, 15
- Fan Chengda, ix, x, 27, 28, 30, 44, 47, 134, 181
fence (*fanli, pingbi*), 57, 110, 267; defensive 'fence' of border *tusi*, 255
Feng Zicai, Qing general, 238, 255
fief, 58, 121, 124, 261, 265. *See also* land tenure
- gaitu guiliu*, 23, 111, 122, 256, 257, 263, 265, 267, 269; background, 226-232; meaning, 226; policy during the Ming, 227-29; policy during the Qing, 229-232; end of, in Guangxi, 233; and Anping Native Chieftaincy, 232-243; in Daxin county, 233-34; anti-slavery aspect, 236; incidents compelling *gaitu guiliu* in Anping, 243-46; during the Republic, 248-252; government indifference, 251-52; duration in Anping, 252

- Gong Yin, 2, 71
 Guangxi, 2, 4, contemporary map, 63;
 Ming dynasty maps, 61
Guangxi sheng Daxin xian Zhuangzu diaocha ziliao (Internal Reports), 12
Guangxi Zhuangzu shehui lishi diaocha (Field Studies), 8; how compiled, 8; historical value, 9–10; use as primary source, 14–21
- Han dynasty, 25, 33, 34, 42, 264
 Han Liangfu, 232, 252
Hanshu (History of the Former Han Dynasty), 34
 Hawaiian high chiefs, 121
 Herman, John 4
 historical materialism, 17, 18, 19, 262
 Holm, David, 4, 270
 Hostetler, Laura, 4
 house slaves (*jianu*) in Anping, 153–163, 170, 174; origins, 152; c.f. free peasants, 162
hua (civilizing mission), 27, 28, to transform, 124; 230
 Huang Fensheng, 2
 Huang Kaihua, 2, 234
 hybrid, from Zhuang and Han, 100–102, 266, 270, contribution of hybrid culture, 270
- jianren* ('mean people'), 27, 179
jimizhou (bridle and halter prefectures) 3, 24, 38, 39, 40; *jimi* (bridle and halter) policy, 24–28, 33, 37, 43, 44, 258; highest point, 38; 'carrot and stick' element, 41; appeasement as part of *jimi* policy, 26; *huairou* as part of *jimi* policy, 31, 33, 264; referring to loose government, 44; *jimi zhouxian* as frontier administration system from Qin to Yuan dynasty, 29–45
Jiu Tangshu (Old History of the Tang), 39
- Libu* (Ministry of Personnel), 69
 land reform movement, 257, 263
 land tenure system in Anping, 184; basis of land ownership, 184–186; Anping fief, 186; difficulties in establishing nature of fief, 187–191; division of land, 191–92; people's fields (*mintian*), 192; collectively owned land, 193–95; desirable land, 195–97; grain fields, 197–98; official fields (*guantian*), 198; origins, 198–201; types of, 201–06; fields for official relatives, 206–07; official manor estates, 207–212; manor estate case study, 291–97, land contracts during Anping native chieftaincy, 213–222; dismantlement of land tenure system, 222–25; historical need to understand, 263
- Li Ji* (Book of Rites), 27
 Li Mao, and fictive ancestry, 50–52, 235; as response to Han pressures, 53
 Li Shiyu, 2
 Ling Chunsheng, 2
Liuguan (regular bureaucrat), 71
 Liu Xifan 2, 234
 Lord Lugard. *See* Nigeria
 Lu Rongting, Qing general, 113, 241, 247
 Luo Shujie, 213, 216
- Machtpolitik, 259
 malaria, and harsh ecology 41; hazardous environment, 73
man, 26. *See also* Siyi
 Mao Zedong, 210, 258; *Report from Xunwu*, 19, 20, 22, 262; *shishi quishi* (seeking truth from facts), 20
 Ming *tusi* succession rules, 80–82
 Mote, Frederick, 4
- Nandan, 10, 107, 117, 126, 162, 180, 182, 209, 268; Nandan Native official, 68; judicial powers, 116–17; Nandan *yamen*, 105
 Nanzhao, 40
 nationalities identification (*minzu shibie*), 5
 nationalities work (*minzu gongzuo*) 5
 native chieftaincy (*tusi*) system, 42, 66, 68; form of indirect rule, 1; duration, 1; Chinese works on, 2–3; western works on, 3–4; areas under, 6; implicit client-state relation, 58; reason for regularization during Ming, 69; Zhuang pragmatism towards, 102; segregation of subjects under, 181, 268; dual system after *gaitu guiliu*, 248; tenacity of, 256, 257

- natural village headman (*langshou*), 144-46, 148
- Nigeria, 15; northern Nigeria, 74; Lord Lugard, 74, 181; Nigerian Emirs, 121; oral historical sources, 15
- Nong Zhigao, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 124, 186, 190, 232, 233, 259, founding of Dali Guo, 48; rebellion against Song court, 48-50; impact of defeat of Nong troops, 50
- Old Guangxi faction, 257
- Ortai, Governor, 231, 235
- oral sources as historical source, 15
- Peng Zunbao 2
- provincial gazetteers, local information, 59-60
- Qin dynasty, 24, 29, 31, 33, 100, 258
- Qing shigao* (Draft History of the Qing), 218
- Qing tusi* succession rules, 86, 87
- realpolitik, 23, 259, 267, 268
- Republic, 143, 224, 225, 248, 249, 250, 251; taxes under, 257
- salary fields (*yangshan tian*), 191
- Sandian hui* (Three Dot Society), 113, 240, 241, 242, 253
- Schafer, Edward, 25, 28
- scribes, for writing plaints, 244
- serfs (*nongnu*) in Anping, 163-170; traditional labour services, 163-64; serf origins, 164; labour service obligations of Xiali Village, 165-67; obligations on death in native official's family, 167-68; origins of goods and labour services, 169-170; serf hardships, 173; social and political restrictions, 174-76; dress rules, 176-77; restrictions on education, 178-181; contrast with Chinese tenants, 268; impact of *gaitu guiliu* on, 236
- shaman, 101
- She Yize, 2, 58, 74
- sheng* (raw) and *shu* (cooked), denoting sinification and tax implications, 28
- Shih, Chuan-Kang, 4
- Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian), 25, 26
- Shijing* (Book of Songs), 185
- Shin, Leo, 4
- Shu Han kingdom, 35-36, 42
- Shujing* (Book of Documents), 27
- Sino-French War, 254-67
- Siyi* (barbarians of four directions), 26
- Song dynasty, 42, 43, 44, 48, 49, 52, 68, 100, 108, 126, 129, 133, 185, 186, 264
- song fairs (*Zhuang*), 152, 270, 271
- Southern and Northern dynasties, 36, 37
- Sui dynasty, 37, 46
- Tai chiefdoms outside Chinese state, 117, 182
- Taiping native official, 53
- Taiping prefecture, 55, 60, 62, 239, 242; Taiping Prefectural School, 179;
- Taiping subprefecture, 53, 54, 81, 116
- Taiping Rebellion, 112, 113, 136, 235-36, 238, 241, 253
- Tan Qi, 236
- Tang dynasty, 24, 25, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 100, 132, 133, 261
- Tang regulated verse, 151
- Thailand, 153, 193
- Three Kingdoms period, 34
- Tiandihui* (Heaven and Earth Society), 237, 238, 241
- Tongzhi restoration, 134
- Traders and merchants in Anping, 149-151
- Tu*, as pejorative term, 44, 44n65, 70
- Tubing* (native soldiers), 45, 71, 73, 108-113, 229; number in Anping, 71-72; value to border defence, 110; weakening of value, 111-12, 183
- Tuguan dibu* (Archival Records of Native Officials), 78-80, 82-84
- tun* (natural village), 125-26. *See also cun*
- tuntian* (military farms), and military colonization, 32, 126
- Vietnam, 48, 57, 67, 110, 194, 235, 242, 253, 254, 255, 258
- village names as ethnolinguistic source, 133
- Wei and Jin dynasties, 34, 35, 36, 37
- Wiens, Herold, 3, 32, 235

- Wu regime of Three Kingdoms period, 36
Wu Yongzhang, 2, 36, 39
- xiang* (parish), 125; *xiang* contract, 114; *xiang, cun* and *jia* Chinese administrative structure, 248, 257
- Xie Qikun, 218, 265
- Xin Tangshu* (New History of the Tang), 38, 39
- Xincheng, 1, 119, 233
- yamen*, 59, 90, 91, 92, 115, 141, 148, 174, 179, 200, 214, 220, 235, 241, 245, 246, 260; Anping *yamen*, 102-03; organization, 105-7; *yamen* construction, 172; court and prison, 118-120; c.f. Chinese prisons, 119; symbolic force of, 121
- yi man gong man* (use barbarians to attack barbarians), 45, 68, 72, 108
- yi yi zhi yi* (use barbarians to control barbarians), 29, 182, 264
- Yuan dynasty, 29, 42, 44, 45, 53, 55, 68, 80, 130, 131
- Yue, origins of, 7
- Yunnan, 1, 30, 38, 69, 118, 187, 229, 264, 268, Dali in, 49
- Zhang Shengzhen 3,
Zhou dynasty, 24, 31, 33, 53, 121, 124, 259
- Zhuang, in Guangxi, 7-8; Nong valleys of the Zhuang, 47; claims of Han ancestry, 52-53; weaponry skills, 81; Zhuang native officials, 82; value of Zhuang soldiers, 111; Zhuang terms, transcription of, 134; high level of sinification, 151; Zhuang customs, 97, 100, 273-283; residences, 273; dress, 273-74; food and drink, 274-75; festivals, 275-77; marriage, 277-280; childbirth, 280-81; elderly birthday, 281-2; funerals, 282-83; cultural affinity with Han, 265; Zhuang nationality awareness, 266; segregated by *tusi* system, 268; cultural survival of, 270; original matriarchal society, 100, 270; Han influences on Zhuang culture, 101-2; *See also* song fairs
- Zhuge Liang, policy of retaining local leaders to rule their peoples, 35-36; 39