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Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644-1796

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seems to have been meant. Even if a writer is not specifically or consciously addressing those issues debated by the advocates of proletarian literature, references to the popular or the masses engage with one another at a discursive level, as the textuality of discourse extends far beyond an individual or single consciousness. Production of literary value, as Mack reminds us, constitutes an ideological change. It is important to keep in mind that neither a single view nor even multiple views can effect ideological change. In fact, it is precisely the discursive forces that lie beyond the peripheries of individual consciousness that are at the core of these ideological changes.

Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature is, in more ways than one, extremely thought-provoking. My criticisms in no way diminish the value of what he accomplishes in this informative study.

Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796 BY R. KENT GUY. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 445. \$80.00 cloth, \$45.00 paper.

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A book on Qing governors and governors-general (collectively called *dufu* 督撫) is certainly something to be treasured by all of us who have started with Hummel,¹ have read Qing documents for years, and are faithful users of that bible of Qing historians, Qian Shifu's 錢實甫 *Qing-dai zhiguan nianbiao* 清代職官年表 (extensively used by Kent Guy to build statistical tables).² With the Qing system being what it was, most communications between the field and the throne passed through the *dufu*, meaning that the vast majority of the memorials found in archives and published annals bear *dufu* signatures; consequently this gives us a sense of familiarity with these men, who seem to be the main actors in the government of the Qing territory, when in fact many, if not most of them, are just names to us—seemingly interchangeable names that repeatedly appear in documents issuing from one province

¹ Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644–1912)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943–44).

² Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980.

after another and year after year, but are borne by Chinese or Manchu individuals (and the occasional Mongol) whom we almost never know *as individuals*.³

Do the governors and governors-general whose careers are reported in this book stand out as individuals—that is, as personalities beyond the bare facts of their political and administrative paths and occasional accomplishments? Only to a limited extent. Guy insists on the importance of biography, and he provides a number of biographical sketches, some of them quite extensive. These deal with both completely unknown persons and celebrities, as well as with characters ranging all the way from corrupt and ineffectual types to superb and faultless statesmen—men in the league of a Yang Xifu 楊錫紱 or a Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀. Characteristically, the more vivid accounts concern governors who lived during the Ming-Qing transition, broadly defined, before political stability set in and careers became more predictable. (At one point, discussing factional alignments, Guy nicely contrasts the founding decades, “when loyalties were larger than life,” with the late Qianlong “era of epigones.”) For the most part, the sources used are the standard biographies, as found in such collections as *Qingshi liezhuan* 清史列傳 or *Guochao qixian leizheng* 國朝耆獻類徵 and in the biographical section of the Qing dynastic history,⁴ and the published memorials of the personalities discussed.

However rich they may be, these sources, which constitute what Guy calls the “primary source record,” are severely constrained by the conventions inherent in the genres to which they belong. Going beyond what they actually say is largely a matter of interpretation, or imagination.⁵ Given the large number of individuals discussed in *Qing*

³ Guy makes much of the personal, at times intimate, relationship between official and emperor reflected in the palace memorials. But this is true only to a limited extent. Although Kangxi in his responses to secret memorials and Yongzheng in his famously verbose rescripts could turn quite personal, thereafter palace memorials became a direct but extremely formal medium of communication, even in the case of the “thank you” memorials (*xie'en zhe* 謝恩摺) that were supposed to maintain the personal relationship between emperor and official.

⁴ Guy is using the *Qingshi* 清史 put out by the Nationalist government (Taipei: Guofang yanjiuyuan, 1961), rather than the more familiar and nearly identical *Qingshi gao* 清史稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976–77).

⁵ To give just one example, consider the claim that several generations of the family of Kaerjishan served the Qing “with grace and dignity” (p. 152). Kaerjishan himself may not have been all grace and dignity: he was indicted for his unwillingness to denounce cor-

Governors and Their Provinces, the accounts of their actual work, range of responsibilities, and personalities could be only cursory. Still, we must not forget that there is a lot more evidence around. Thus, looking into the extensive published anthologies of proclamations, correspondences, and other administrative papers (*gongdu* 公牘) by governors such as Tian Wenjing 田文鏡 or Chen Hongmou—to mention two outstanding collections⁶—can add considerable depth to our understanding of their relations with their terrain and subordinates, and of their personalities and idiosyncrasies, at least in their public dealings. In addition, there is a world of anecdotes and private testimonies, found in particular in *biji*-type jottings and unofficial histories: although not always regarded as respectable sources by historians, they tell us much about how their subjects were perceived by their contemporaries. One example among many is the testimony about the famous Yu Chenglong 于成龍, then Liang-Jiang governor-general, found in *Linian ji* 歷年記, the engrossing autobiography left by a modest citizen of Shanghai named Yao Tinglin 姚廷遴 and covering the years from 1628 to 1697. Yao was thrilled to catch a glimpse of the impassive old statesman passing through Shanghai on an inspection tour, and on this and other occasions is ecstatic about Yu's benevolent policies, his legendary integrity, and especially his ability to control his subordinates. The appointment of Yu (a Chinese and a non-bannerman) to the Liang-Jiang post in early 1682 in effect marked the end of a protracted period of dominance of the military in Jiangnan, with all the attending humiliations met by the literati and the requisitions suffered by taxpayers. Yao Tinglin insists that the turnaround was concomitant with the eventual crushing of the Sanfan rebellion, and his year-by-year narrative graphically illustrates how the inhabitants of Jiangnan experienced the change.⁷

ruption among his subordinates in the 1741 edict quoted by Guy on p. 356 and discussed below, and was threatened with punishment.

⁶ They are, respectively, *Fu Yu xuanhua lu* 撫豫宣化錄 and its many sequels, and *Peiyuan tang oucun gao* 培遠堂偶存稿. Only the former is mentioned, in passing (p. 397 n. 15), and is not actually used. A quantity of such collections were published by governors (and other officials) from the late Ming onward.

⁷ Yao Tinglin, *Linian ji*, in *Qingdai riji huichao* 清代日記彙鈔 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 115–18. Governor Tang Bin, who visited Shanghai in 1685, was the same type of official, and Yao Tinglin tells of his extraordinary popularity; see Yao Tinglin, *Linian ji*, pp. 121–23. Guy mentions both Yu Chenglong and his younger colleague,

Apart from the occasional reference to Zhaolian's 昭璉 *Xiaoting zalu* 嘯亭雜錄, such nonofficial literature is mostly absent from *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*.⁸ However, Guy's aim is not to propose a social or personal history of Qing governors. It is, above all, to explain the emergence and development of this very peculiar category of high officials in Chinese imperial history. He analyzes, in other words, why and how the Qing in the first century or so of their rule more or less invented a new type of provincial chief and in some instances cut new provincial frontiers and created new territorial identities—that is, territories where the imposition of a fully fledged administrative apparatus with a governor at the top gave rise to political-administrative traditions both distinctive and coherent, and in effect to what we might call a “sense of belonging” on the part of their inhabitants. (One example—by no means the only one—is Hunan, which emerged as a provincial entity in the early Kangxi period and developed a strong personality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a “center of statecraft” [p. 297] and, later, of political activism.) Regions were converted into provinces, says Guy, and in the process they came to be “integrated into an early modern state” (p. 325). This evolution is recounted in the five chapters that comprise Part 1 of the book and is then examined in different regional contexts in the four chapters of Part 2. The process was complicated, encompassing several generations and advancing at different speeds in each region, depending on the type of problems encountered, and Guy reconstructs it in wonderful detail.

one-time protégé and namesake, the “younger Yu Chenglong,” but he mixes up their biographies (pp. 65–66, 247); he is not the first to do so. The Yu Chenglong who started his career in a miserable county of Guangxi died in 1684 and is not the same as the one who became Zhili governor-general in 1698 (for the second time); and the latter, not the former, was a Chinese bannerman (compare their biographies in Hummel). Yu Chenglong's forceful and exacting style of governance, as well as the range of his responsibilities, is reflected in his collections of administrative documents, the *Yushan zoudu* 于山奏牘 (1683) and *Yu Qingduan gong zhengshu* 于清端公政書 (posthumous). I wonder where Guy found the bizarre (and spurious) story according to which the younger Yu adopted the name of his mentor out of gratitude and admiration.

⁸ The *Xiaoting zalu* includes anecdotes on a large number of statesmen and generals, several of whom, such as Tang Bin, Ortai, Gali, Nian Gengyao, Bi Yuan, and others, feature prominently in the book under review. Much more anecdotal material on governors and governors-general is found in early Republican compilations like *Qingchao yeshi daguan* 清朝野史大觀 and *Qingbai leichao* 清稗類鈔, which draw heavily from Qing unofficial literature.

The first chapter, “Burdens of History,” recalls the historical legacy, principally that of the Ming, which the Qing rulers inherited while they were taking hold of the empire. The terms “coordinator,” or “grand coordinator” (*xunfu* 巡撫), and “supreme commander” (*zongdu* 總督) were created in the Ming, but these were not the same thing as the governors and governors-general familiar to Qing historians. As Guy puts it, “The Ming had built a regime of control, not of integration” (p. 287). The positions of *zongdu* and *xunfu* were created on an ad hoc basis, usually in response to military emergencies (though many of them became quite stable); their constituencies might vary and were only occasionally coterminous with provincial boundaries, and their incumbents reported directly to the emperor.⁹ “Coordinators” were, of course, necessary in a system wherein the Ming founder had carefully seen to it that provincial administrative and military functions be split among several officials reporting directly to the capital. Still, not a few stabilized *xunfu* positions were devoted to gubernatorial tasks of a mainly administrative nature (as alluded to on p. 42). For example, the Yingtian *xunfu*, whose seat was in Suzhou, first on a seasonal basis from 1553 and then permanently from 1603, was the de facto governor of the lower Yangzi prefectures (which, to be sure, did not yet form a “province”), as can be seen on an almost daily basis in a chronicle of Suzhou entitled *Qi Zhen jiwen lu* 啟禎紀聞錄 that covers the years from 1620 to 1653. Incidentally, the descriptions in that work make debatable Guy’s claim that before the installation of a Qing provincial government in the 1660s, Suzhou “was known not as a city of administration but as a city of wealth” (p. 238); it was very much a city of administration, with many *yamen* and officials, and it was also Jiangnan’s major center for the collection of grain tribute. Another point worth noting is that the regional inspectors (the *xun’an yushi* 巡按御史, briefly mentioned on p. 56), who were regularly sent around by the Censorate to spend a full year in the provinces to which they had been assigned, were entitled to act as extraordinary provincial governors, as it were, endowed with full powers, and many did act this way.

In short, the Ming empire was not a “territorial chaos,” as suggested

⁹ Two works not cited by Guy but useful to understanding the Ming pattern and its changes are Wu Tingxie 吳廷燮, *Ming dufu nianbiao* 明督撫年表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982); and Le Runcheng 勒潤成, *Mingchao zongdu xunfu xiaqu yanjiu* 明朝總督巡撫轄區研究 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1996).

by Guy (p. 360), and Ming provinces were stable entities, albeit less strongly defined as self-contained administrative units with a unified hierarchy than were Qing provinces. Indeed, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces* cogently shows that the mature Qing system that emerged in the eighteenth century was something different—streamlined, standardized, with a well-defined distribution of responsibilities, and with the governor clearly identified as the only legitimate “middleman,” to use Guy’s term, between the local officials and citizenry and the central government. One of Guy’s signal contributions is to elucidate the inner logic that determined the complex system of *dufu* appointments, promotions, and transfers on the basis of ethnic, regional, and historical factors. Local patterns emerge, originating in each province’s distinctive story of integration (as analyzed in Part 2), though these patterns could be subject to change depending on historical conditions. “Special” appointments that were made directly by the emperor are contrasted by Guy with the more bureaucratic procedures that developed with time. One significant feature, effectively described in Chapter 5, is the rapid and well-organized circulation of officials from province to province. This model of systematic turnover, which seems to have been the dynasty’s deliberate choice despite its costs in terms of discontinuities in local leadership, reached maturity under the Qianlong emperor. By encouraging the consistency of discourse and practice across the empire and facilitating the dissemination of reforms and innovations, it reinforced the universalism inherent in a Chinese traditional conception of governance that was based on a set of immutable philosophical and political principles supposed to apply in every environment. Indeed, this process of centralization is very much in evidence in eighteenth-century documents. In probably no period of imperial history were there so many examples of the throne collectively consulting the governors on this or that issue of common interest, comparing the answers, and making decisions accordingly.¹⁰ And besides the information received in the *Jing bao* 京報 (Peking gazette), provincial governments were flooded with circulars (*tongxing* 通行) informing them of decisions that referred to particular places but were expected to be

¹⁰ For an example analyzed in great detail, see Helen Dunstan, “Orders Go Forth in the Morning and are Changed by Nightfall’: A Monetary Policy Cycle in Qing China, November 1744–June 1745,” *T’oung Pao* 82.1–3 (1996): 66–136.

enforced everywhere—and at the least the governors were supposed to acknowledge receipt of these and report on what had been done.¹¹

The all-encompassing role assigned to Qing governors was not without its risks. It might well be argued that in terms of control from the Center the Ming institution of regional inspectors (abolished in 1661) was at least as efficient as the system of internal evaluation entrusted to the provincial hierarchy that replaced it. The Qing governors' ever-growing autonomy in deciding on local appointments was much criticized in certain circles for the opportunities for graft it created and the resulting cases of favoritism and complicity.¹² "Protecting one's subordinates" was a common accusation against governors on the part of the Qing emperors. Thus a 1741 edict, which Guy translates in part (p. 356), curiously glossing the phrase "the ritual vessels are out of order" (*fugui buchi* 簠簋不飭) as "to make allegations," when in fact it means "officials are corrupt,"¹³ is an admonition to the "nine ministers" and the entire officialdom beyond; it is not about appointments or counselors, as Guy suggests, but about corruption and the disinclination to denounce it—"protection," in other words. Corruption comes up again and again in Guy's narrative, revealing a variety of patterns—regional, temporal, even ethnic. The edict in question is only one example among many of emperors pathetically denouncing the corruption that is kept concealed from them by governors who protect their clients and claiming that *they* have the means to find out about it by themselves—as the Qianlong emperor did in this particular instance, adding the usual flourish: "If it's like that in one province, one can imagine what it is in the others!" 一省如此, 他省可知. Such protestations stand in stark contrast with the throne's tacit acceptance of corruption implied by the well-known system of voluntary fines

¹¹ I have analyzed one massive report reflecting the process in "The 1744 Annual Audits of Magistrate Activity and Their Fate," *Late Imperial China* 18.2 (1997): 22–24.

¹² A case in point is Guotai's behavior in Shandong and the scandal that ensued (see esp. p. 193).

¹³ The next sentence is also mistranslated. It does not mean "Perhaps there are those officials who have formerly been of great assistance [to those in power], and when I make appointments, former friendships are remembered and supervision is loose"; rather, it means: "That sometimes there should be among them men who have been long dismissed, whose old stratagems resurface because I again rely on them, and who as a consequence become lax and do not regulate themselves—of this too one cannot be sure" 或其中有久經左斥, 因朕復加倚用, 而向日之故智復萌, 遂爾放縱不自檢束者, 亦未可定.

established at the end of the reign (described on pp. 321–23), when the emperor condoned the payment of enormous sums by officials who could have acquired the money only by illegal means.

As the empire achieved an unprecedented degree of political and administrative integration, the governors' tasks also became standardized to a considerable extent. A typical example here is that of the three Middle Yangzi provinces (Jiangxi, Hubei, and Hunan), with all three governors year after year sending the same sort of memorials in the prescribed form and dealing with a well-established range of topics (p. 308). The same could be said of most other regions as well. And yet, as Guy's research richly demonstrates, even though the provincial governments of the Qing were similar in form—and, we might add, subject to a constraining and ever-growing set of centralized regulations—they were “different in social and political role” (p. 324). Administrative, military, and fiscal demands varied widely, as did the relations of the governors with local society and with the central government. Their dealings with Beijing, in particular, were determined by a variety of political and strategic factors, including distance: in the southwest “distance made consultation with the capital almost impossible” (p. 334), whereas the governors of Zhili were, so to speak, within hearing distance from the capital. As a result, not only the posts, but also the personalities, backgrounds, and career patterns of Qing governors offered a wide range of variation, which Guy neatly sums up in the conclusion.

Certain posts acquired a degree of specialization and were preferably entrusted to governors or governors-general with the relevant profile and experience. This is not surprising for places like Shaanxi-Gansu, where the demands of the military were heavy, or Yunnan, which had ethnic tensions, frontier unrest, and a mining industry. But we are also made to realize that Jiangsu, at first sight a province with no technical demands out of the ordinary, “became one of the most specialized provincial postings” (p. 240): the problem there was to avoid antagonizing the gentry with excessively harsh fiscal policies, to show due respect for their cultural traditions, and to smooth out relations between civil and military authorities; and the solution was to appoint a string of “scholar-governors” who were able more or less to reconcile the Lower Yangzi elite and population with the Qing regime (pp. 241–44). As we know, the Kangxi emperor's first trip to Jiangnan, in

1684, was meant to promote this reconciliation in a dramatic way,¹⁴ and of course he and Qianlong continued the practice. Other governors in the eighteenth century did much to ingratiate themselves with the Jiangnan literati. First among these was the remarkable Yinjishan, an influential Manchu with full academic credentials, who spent some twenty-five years in gubernatorial positions in Jiangsu between 1728 and 1765, who was extremely popular there, and who claimed that this was his real home.

All these contrasts within a general trend toward integration and normalization are readily in evidence in Part 2 of *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, which takes us on a grand tour of the regions of China and endeavors to analyze the formation of what Guy calls the “modern” province as well as the specificities of the post of governor/governor-general in different environments. The emphasis is decidedly on the formative postconquest decades, down to the early Qianlong reign: indeed, one of the merits of this book, here and in Part 1 as well, is to provide a full account of the lengthy process of trial and error that took place before the territorial and administrative pattern with which historians of the “high Qing” and the nineteenth century are familiar was finally installed and the “routine provincial promotion system” (p. 299) could produce the best possible results.

These formative decades were also contentious ones, not only because of the wars, rebellions, and ethnic strife with which the first generations of governors and governors-general had to cope, but also because of the internal conflicts that occasionally erupted. The well-known dispute in the early 1710s between the Chinese Zhang Boxing and the Manchu Gali, respectively Jiangsu governor and Liang-Jiang governor-general, is recounted in some detail (pp. 248 ff.). In the eyes of public opinion—and in Kangxi’s discourse—this dispute pitted Chinese bookishness and self-righteousness against Manchu efficiency and sleaze. Guy lays the emphasis on what the dispute reveals about the difficulties of governing Jiangnan in the early Qing, rather than concentrating on the throne’s uneasy management of the Manchu-Chinese diarchy as do earlier accounts, notably the one proposed by

¹⁴ I have offered a detailed analysis of Kangxi’s first visit to Suzhou and its significance in “Vu de Shanghai,” in *Kangxi, empereur de Chine 1662–1722. La cité interdite à Versailles: Musée national du château de Versailles 27 janvier-9 mai 2004* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), pp. 29–41.

Pierre-Henri Durand in his *Lettrés et pouvoirs*.¹⁵ And he makes the interesting point that the very fact that the conflict between Gali and Zhang Boxing could be made public demonstrated a normalization of the situation in Jiangnan (p. 258).

In contrast, the conflict among provincial officials that raged in Canton about a decade later did not take place in the public eye, and it is less well known to historians. The details are most telling, not only about the conflictual relationships among the Canton officialdom at the time, but also about the way the Yongzheng emperor handled his personal envoys in the provinces. Guy does mention a dispute between governor Yang Wenqian—one of Yongzheng's favorite officials—and Akedun; but a careful examination of published archives (including the 1930 issues of *Wenxian congbian* 文獻叢編) and of the *Yongzheng zhupi yuzhi* 雍正硃批諭旨 reveals that this was only the first act in a controversy that involved several other Canton high officials, all of them bannermen and special Yongzheng appointees (including a former retainer from his pre-imperial days), and that the bone of contention was an institution placed at the heart of power in Canton, the Guangdong maritime customs. The conflict became really vicious—and at the same time embarrassing for Yongzheng—when Yang's enemies started sending secret memorials attacking him soon after he had left Canton in the third month of 1727 to attend his father's funeral in Beijing and meet the emperor. Central to the accusations was Yang's alleged mismanagement and extortion in connection with the maritime customs superintendency. Like several Guangdong governors until about 1750 (and like Li Zhiying later in the century, as mentioned later on by Guy), Yang was concurrently in charge of this famously lucrative post, and according to his colleagues he had—among other things—appointed a group of special brokers (of “super-monopolists”) to his devotion, overtaxed the foreign merchants, and dissimulated part of the customs revenue due to Beijing. He was also accused of having caused the 1726 food riots, mentioned by Guy, through the exactions of his minions against the merchants importing rice from Guangxi, and was said to be thoroughly detested by the Guangdong populace.

¹⁵ Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992, chap. 10, “Chinois et Mandchous.”

It would be too long to recount the exchange of self-righteous memorials and furious rescripts that continued in the following months; they make full sense only when a chronology is carefully reconstructed taking account of the delivery time of three to four weeks for documents circulating between Canton and the capital, and of the movements of the protagonists between different places. Yongzheng at first did not believe Yang Wenqian could have done anything wrong apart from antagonizing his colleagues with his well-known arrogance. Yet he requested more solid evidence, without mentioning a word to Yang (who at the time had already left Beijing to conduct an audit in Fujian); and in the end, when Yongzheng was overwhelmed by the facts, he forwarded the accusatory memorials to Yang together with a scathing edict asking for explanations. By then, Yang was back in Canton, and he lost no time to censure his former accusers. He more or less managed to extricate himself, claiming that his enemies were terrified lest he should discover the terrible mess their incompetence had created in Guangdong during his absence. He died in his post shortly thereafter and was duly canonized. Yet, a later investigation by Governor-General Kong Yuxun established that many of the accusations were true. Interesting details abound in the documents. To cite just one of them, the first accuser of Yang Wenqian, the then financial commissioner Guanda (not Guangda as written on p. 314), a *booi* 包衣 attached to the imperial household, is said somewhere to be unable to read Chinese, suggesting he had gotten help to compose his secret memorial. More generally, they are illustrative of the nature and dangers of Yongzheng's highly idiosyncratic mode of managing personnel in far-away places. And they show that Yang Wenqian in effect established, largely on his own initiative, the practices and policies that were to dominate the Canton system through its disappearance in 1842.¹⁶

The regional stories recounted by Guy, which are rich with episodes of the same sort, feature some very striking evolutions, and these meant changes in the roles of, and demands made on, the governors as well. Examples are too many to be mentioned here. Though both

¹⁶ For details, see my essay "Discussions about the Market-place and the Market Principle in Eighteenth-century Guangdong," in *Zhongguo haiyang fazhan shi lunwen ji* 中國海洋發展史論文集 / *Essays in Chinese Maritime History*, vol. 7, ed. Shi-yeoung Tang 湯熙勇 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of Social Sciences and Philosophy, 1999), part 1, esp. pp. 357–67.

Sichuan and Gansu remained strategically and militarily important during the entire period under consideration, they became different types of places, both politically and administratively, in the course of the eighteenth century: whereas the former enjoyed economic development and eventually became the rice basket of the empire, the latter remained stuck in poverty and a heavy importer of supplies for the military. "Posts crafted for the leaders of occupation forces could only with difficulty be transformed into positions for managers of economic development, particularly when the issue was dealing with economic decline rather than growth," notes Guy at one point, adding that, contrary to some of their Manchu colleagues, Chen Hongmou and Bi Yuan in Shaanxi "were able to fill both roles" (p. 229).

The Shaanxi case is not so clear-cut, in fact. The governor-general (alternatively titled Chuan-Shaan and Shaan-Gan until the latter prevailed, after 1748), whose principal though by no means exclusive task was military affairs, was based only intermittently in Xi'an and was moved to other places on the occasion of military campaigns. From 1764 onward he was permanently installed in Lanzhou, his Xi'an *yamen* having been downgraded to the status of "travel quarters" (*xingtai* 行臺).¹⁷ The Shaanxi governors were, of course, involved in provisioning the large Xi'an garrisons and now and then the forces deployed to other theaters as well. Thus, the ruinous Jinchuan campaigns under Qianlong cost Shaanxi inhabitants and officials dearly in terms of food, animals, and corvée requisitions, and it can be graphically seen in Chen Hongmou's papers that the administration of the province was thrown into total disarray for at least a half-year around 1748–1749 as the Qing *Grande Armée* (*dabing* 大兵), arriving from the capital, walked through the Shaanxi core and south on its way to Sichuan. Chen was actually chided by the emperor for his insufficiencies as a manager of

¹⁷ Just saying that "the governor-general even resided at Lanzhou . . . briefly during the 1750s" (p. 210) is misleading. In 1684, apparently, the (then) Chuan-Shaan *zongdu* was installed in Hanzhong (south Shaanxi), midway between the capitals of the two provinces, for an unknown period of time (we know that by 1703 he was back in Xi'an). Yang Yingju was appointed Shaan-Gan *zongdu* in 1759 in the wake of the Central Asia campaigns, but he asked that his jurisdiction be limited to Gansu; the following year the post was defined as Shaan-Gan again, and Yang stayed in Gansu; at some point his seat was transferred farther west to Suzhou 肅州, from where it was definitively moved back to Lanzhou in 1764. See *Xi'an fuzhi* 西安府志 (1779), 9.2b–3a; and *Lanzhou fuzhi* 蘭州府志 (1833), 3.6b–7a. (Yang Yingju's 楊應琚 *Qingshi gao* biography mistakenly states that he was moved to Suzhou in 1764.)

military logistics, and Yinjishan was moved in as governor-general to take things in hand. Beyond such logistical tasks (as opposed to actual military commands), however, the Shaanxi governors in the Qianlong period were above all civilian officials; in this respect I do not agree with the notion that Shaanxi's evolution "toward the model of a civilian province" took place particularly during the tenure of Bi Yuan from 1773 to 1785 (p. 209). The process had already been forcefully started by Chen Hongmou, who served four times in Shaanxi during the 1740s and 1750s (hence the name of the studio he fitted out in his Xi'an *yamen* on his fourth visit, the Four Time Hall [Silai tang 四來堂]), for a total of eleven years. As William T. Rowe has shown, Chen had a special relationship with Shaanxi, and he made strenuous efforts, abundantly documented in his administrative writings, to make it into a model province in economic, educational, and administrative terms.¹⁸ The development of the agrarian economy, in particular by fostering irrigation, noted by Guy as more suited to Chinese-style government (p. 214), was a constant preoccupation, and Bi Yuan essentially followed in the steps of his predecessors, including the ill-fated Cui Ji—the first Chinese governor in Shaanxi—in the years 1737 and 1738.¹⁹

The cases of Shaanxi and Gansu illustrate the typical scenario in which two provinces were put under the same governor-general but evolved along divergent paths. Other such couples are analyzed in the book under review, for example Guangdong and Guangxi, with the former becoming one of the richest and most commercialized provinces of China, the latter declining into the status of an overexploited backwater. The way Zhejiang and Fujian "acquired rather different personalities" and were, so to speak, pulled apart from each other, is also striking: the former maintained strong ties to both Jiangnan (to which its northern prefectures in effect belonged both culturally and economically) and the centers of civilian government in the capital,

¹⁸ *Saving the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ Contrary to what is said here, Cui Ji was dismissed (more exactly, transferred to Hubei) not because "little action had been taken," but because of too much action, which had caused resentment among the populace. See my account in "'Encouraging Agriculture' and the Excesses of Official Mobilization: Cui Ji's 1737–1738 Well-drilling Campaign in Shaanxi," in *Papers from the Third International Conference on Sinology, History Section: Economic History, Urban and Material Culture* (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2002), pp. 141–79.

whereas the latter was dominated by coastal defense issues and had a military specialization that was reflected in the tasks of its governor-general and governor as well as in the competencies and career profiles of the men who filled the posts (p. 270). Such specialization could raise problems. Guy shows that in the course of the eighteenth century Fujian was entrusted to governors with little knowledge of the peculiar society of that notoriously difficult province. As a result, "eighteenth-century governors of Fujian could not speak for those they governed as readily as the governors of Jiangnan and Zhejiang did" (pp. 283–84).

This notion of governors speaking for their constituents—in other words, espousing their interests—is worthy of note. Governors who acted as representatives of their provinces could for this reason be at odds with the ministries in the capital (pp. 166 ff.) and be regarded as putting local interest ahead of national (or imperial) interest. And it was not just governors. Pleasing "public opinion"—which in some cases entailed behavior not unlike that of modern politicians—was important for local officials in general: it made the performance of their duties easier, and as a reputation of popularity would be favorably considered by their superiors it was good for their careers; but it could also be denounced as conflicting with the interests and policies of the throne. The accusation of "marketing one's reputation" (*shi ming* 市名) is frequently encountered, one example cited in Guy's book being the attacks directed at Chen Hongmou by jealous Manchu colleagues (p. 212).²⁰ The reproach was, of course, especially serious in the case of governors and governors-general, who were expected to act as personal servants of the emperor rather than as bureaucrats sent out to take care of the people. In this respect at least, the Confucian political tradition might conflict with Manchu-style loyalty.

The organization of *Qing Governors and Their Provinces* is not without its problems. There is, inevitably, some overlapping between Part 1, which is a general and more or less chronological review of the emergence and development of the Qing institution of governors and governors-general, and Part 2, which discusses the main regions

²⁰ I am not so sure it was in Chen's character to court popularity. As far as his relations with his subordinates are concerned, at least, his correspondences with them show him as a rule to be impatient and demanding, and occasionally scathing. It is possible that Chen Hongmou antagonized his Manchu superiors by his self-righteousness; he certainly annoyed the emperor on occasion, even if Qianlong was the first to recognize his efficiency, considerable experience, and eminent service.

of the empire one after the other. Readers will always find details and statements to dispute in such a wide-ranging account, and I suppose that Guy would be the first to acknowledge that the patterns of appointment and career he has worked out admit of many exceptions, sometimes important ones. One is occasionally surprised by his geographical characterizations or groupings of provinces—for example, his listing Jiangsu as being among those “located on the edges of the empire,” together with Guizhou and Guangxi (p. 170); his calling Guangdong “the southeast” (p. 314); or his listing Fujian and Yunnan as belonging to the “central part of the empire” (p. 173). The discussion of Sichuan in a chapter devoted to “The North and the Northwest” is likewise unexpected, but at least it makes sense in military terms, as reflected by the appointment of a “Sichuan-Shaanxi governor-general” for significant periods of time in the first half of the dynasty. In economic terms, however, after its recovery from mid-seventeenth century devastation, Sichuan became fully integrated in the market systems of the Middle and Lower Yangzi. Commercial ties with Shaanxi remained active—as illustrated by the rich merchant families based in the counties around Xi’an who were regular sojourners in Sichuan—but their significance was nothing compared with the enormous quantities of grain that were shipped every year down the Yangzi from Sichuan, certainly not a part of the north and northwest in this respect.

As I noted at the beginning of this review, at first sight *Qing Governors and Their Provinces* seems to be dealing with people and institutions familiar to the Qing historian. Nothing is farther from the truth. This is a pathbreaking piece of research, full of discoveries and enormously instructive. No work that I know of provides such a comprehensive and diversified image of the Qing imperial territory and the changes it went through. This is also a complex book, touching on a wide range of subjects and not always easy to follow. The conclusion conveniently sums up the main arguments, but I confess I did not quite understand the reasoning on pages 356–57 to the effect that Qianlong became ever more dependent on his counselors as his reign unfolded, and that at the same time “the court lost the political initiative.” Perhaps part of the problem lies in the lack of definition of that elusive and ubiquitous notion “the court.” The argument seems to be that the emperor’s counselors (presumably the Grand Council) were instrumental in promoting a more routinized mode of appointment

and transfer of governors, and hence fewer “special appointments” by the emperor himself. If “the role of imperial councilors and bureaucrats grew,” as Guy says, then what is exactly this “court” that lost the political initiative? Or are we to understand that those routinely appointed governors had more autonomy in creating and running the hallowed institutions that promoted local well-being (granaries and the like)? Guy mentions such institutions in the conclusion to Chapter 5, but he is referring to the first half of the eighteenth century and thus, essentially to the period *before* this routinization encouraged by the emperor’s entourage set in.²¹

I will be forgiven to end with a few criticisms of a minor nature. To begin with, several errors might have been easily avoided. The official ranking system included nine ranks, not eight (p. 58). *Feiyuan* 廢員 (p. 151) are not “officials whose talents were being wasted” but officials who had been dismissed. It is unclear what connection Jiang Zhaokui’s appointment as Shanxi governor in 1792 (in fact, early 1793) might have had with the White Lotus rebellion, which erupted in 1796 and did not concern Shanxi (p. 207). Amoy and Xiamen are the same place (p. 266). Echang was dismissed from his Jiangxi governorship in 1752 not “in connection with the posthumous unauthorized publication of the public papers of Sun Jiagan,” but for his inability to find out about the authors of the infamous “bogus memorial” attributed to Sun Jiagan, who was very much alive at that time (p. 307). One would certainly not define the co-hong merchants of Canton as the “representatives of the Imperial Household Department” (p. 311). Wu Sangui’s successor in Yunnan was his grandson, not his son, who had been executed in Beijing as a hostage (p. 331). And finally, the *Xingke tiben* are not “the governors’ correspondence with the board,” but copies of their memorials (formally sent to the emperor) forwarded to the Board of Punishments by the Censorate’s “Punishments” office of scrutiny (*xingke*) (p. 395 n. 55).

Another reproach is that the production of the University of Washington Press is far from impeccable. Maps would have considerably enhanced the readability of the chapters in Part 2. Careful copyediting would have identified occasional transcription errors (some of them

²¹ This conclusion to chap. 5, where the court is likewise said to have failed to retain its initiative, is not too clear either. Perhaps “eighteenth” should read “nineteenth” on p. 178, line 8.

due to the old Wade-Giles creeping in): Cha Siting for Zha Siting (correct in the index); Lü Lungqi for Lu Longqi (correct in the glossary); *huipi* for *huibi* 迴避; the *hapax* “Fukian” for Fukien/Fujian; kabushika kaishu for kabushiki kaisha; and more. More serious are the incomplete glossary and the woefully inadequate index, which has almost no analytical entries and lacks a great many important notions (for example, “corruption”) and individuals (for example, Ortai, which is found only in the glossary, with the spelling Ertai, though the latter is never used in the text). This is a pity in a book that contains so much information scattered across its chapters and can, moreover, be counted among the most thoughtful and knowledgeable works on Qing history published in recent years.