THREE IMPEACHMENTS

Guo Xiu and the Kangxi Court

R. KENT GUY

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University of Washington / *Seattle*

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Preface

Retired professors often write big books, syntheses of a career of lecturing and reading in their chosen field. This is not such a book, but it does reflect a career's worth of reflection. In the 1980s, when I was starting out in the field, many of us came to feel that the vein for studies of China's nineteenth-century encounter with the West had been mined out, so we turned to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Motivations differed, but my own notion was to measure the capacities of the Qing state and society on the eve of its great encounter with the West. Having turned to the eighteenth century, we found a wealth of primary source material but almost no secondary sources to conjure with. We set out, usually after first monographs were completed, to create a body of secondary material. The result has been a number of large studies—of the Manchus' great enterprise of conquest, of Manchu modes of organization, of the capacities of the eighteenth-century Confucian bureaucracy, of provincial institutions, of Chinese state economic policy and mechanisms for disaster relief. All of this work has begun to paint a more complete picture of the pre-nineteenth-century Qing state and the respects in which a Manchu-governed dynasty differed from Chinese-governed regimes. Contemplating all of these large studies as I retired, I came to feel the need for smaller studies of people, moments, and events that could confirm or challenge, even confound, our hypotheses. This book is meant to be such a study.

I came across Guo Xiu's impeachments several times during my rambles through Qing dynasty sources, and I was repeatedly impressed by their detail. Rarely do extant sources say so much about a moment and the stresses and tensions that gave it life. As I read the impeachments more carefully, I discovered that they were not about single instances of corruption but about broad patterns of action that prevailed at the beginning of the long eighteenth century. How, and with what assumptions, did Mingju, Jin Fu, Wang Hongxu, Gao Shiqi, and Guo Xiu himself serve the nascent Qing state? What impact did Xuanye's transition from adolescence to adulthood

have on the course of Qing history? What loyalties guided the Chinese—no longer Ming loyalists but perhaps not fully Qing partisans—and how did they get on with their Manchu counterparts? These questions, inspired by Guo's impeachments, led me away from the texts themselves into the dynamics of the early Kangxi state. The result is a book that has two thrusts. Those interested in corruption—how it was identified, described, prosecuted, judged, and punished—might want to begin with part 2 of the book. Those interested in the Kangxi reign, the work carried out along the Grand Canal, and the role of Mingju should begin with part 1.

Even a short book requires a great deal of support. I am grateful to Hoyt Tillman for inviting me to the Conference on Culture and Power in Chinese History at Arizona State University, to the University of North Carolina East Asia Center for inviting me to present at their 2022 seminar, and to the editors of *Asia Major* for allowing me to reuse parts of my article "Words on the Winds: The Kangxi Emperor and the Qing Censorate" (*Asia Major* 39, Part 1, [2021]: 11–32). My thanks also to Lorri Hagman, the editor extraordinaire who has piloted so many successful projects in our field, for guiding this project through its initial stages, and to her successor, Caitlin Tyler-Richards, for finishing it up. Ben Pease of Pease Publishing produced the maps, patiently entertaining requests to find places that no longer exist. My wife, Christine Cordell, consistently encouraged me to finish the project and endured when I "left for the Qing." Many books by professors are produced of necessity; this one was a labor of love, and it's appropriate that I dedicate it to my daughter, Alexis Rachel Guy, and to my first teacher of modern Chinese history, Jonathan Spence, who introduced me to the Kangxi emperor.

Three Impeachments

Introduction

In the early autumn of 1686, a little-known official from Shandong named Guo Xiu (1638–1715) arrived at the Qing court from Jiangsu, where he had served as district magistrate, to compete for a post as censor in the capital. After he was appointed to the post in the spring of 1687, his initial task in the capital was to inspect granaries. But as summer turned to fall, the emperor encouraged his censors to speak out about the faults of the court. Shortly after the New Year, Guo presented the emperor with two impeachments that called into question the probity and efficacy of two of the most important officials of the day, governor-general of the Grand Canal Jin Fu (1633–1692) and chief grand secretary Mingju (1635–1708).[1] These accusations shed a bright but harsh light on the Kangxi court, revealing the web of connections and collusions that undergirded the politics of the era. One year later, Guo Xiu submitted a third impeachment, of Gao Shiqi (1645–1703), Wang Hongxu (1645–1723), and Chen Yuanlong (d. 1736), three officials who served in the emperor's private Southern Study (Nanshufang) as intellectual mentors and scholarly advisers to the monarch. This book is about Guo's impeachments.

It is also about the politics of the Kangxi court in the 1680s. Guo Xiu's impeachments interrogated relations between the monarch and three elements that made up the seventeenth-century Qing elite: Jurchens, Hanjun martial bannermen, and Chinese literati, at a moment of tremendous importance to all three. Qing rule through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rested on a grand bargain between Chinese and Manchus in which each group was assigned a sphere in administration and ideology. This bargain was struck in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, when the conquerors and conquered put aside their wartime roles and came to fill niches in the peacetime government, beginning the period that has come to be known as high Qing.[2]

The Moment: The 1680s as a Time of Change

History has been kind to the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661–1723), perhaps too kind. Few historians would dispute the emperor's judgment, made late in his reign, that his three most important accomplishments were the defeat of Wu Sangui and the ejection of the three feudatory princes from their satrapies in the south, the repair of river infrastructure in the southeast, and restoration of grain shipments along the Grand Canal. These accomplishments cannot be gainsaid. There may be room, however, to ask with what combination of Manchu and Chinese advice, insight and missteps, luck and strategy, they were achieved.

Such a fine-grained reading of the Kangxi era requires that the sixty-year reign be broken down into manageable units. The reign of the Kangxi emperor has often been treated as a single era in Chinese history, with good reason. The energetic, judicious, and curious emperor dominated the age and seemed the personal author of its triumphs. Most older studies in English and Chinese are of the entire reign and are based in the continuity of imperial leadership.[3] More recent scholarship, however, has divided the reign into shorter eras: an early period of perhaps ten years when the work of conquest was completed; a middle era when a new Chinese style administration was built; a third era dominated by warfare in Central Asia; and a fourth period dominated by the intense succession struggle and an aging monarch.[4] This book is concerned with the second of these eras, a period that began with the defeat of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories and the suppression of the Zheng Chenggong (1624–1682) regime on Taiwan in 1683 and ended with the decision to go to war in Mongolia with Galdan in 1693. This was a decade of transitions, from an age of conquest and fiscal stringency to one of peace and relative prosperity.

At the beginning of the Kangxi reign, the last remnants of the conquest regime were three powerful military figures who had been granted quasi-feudal authority over China's southeast and southwest by a conquest regime desperately pressed for resources and troops. Wu Sangui (1612–1678), Geng Jingzhong (d. 1682), and Shang Zhixin (d. 1680), known as the three feudatories (*sanfan*), occupied lands the early Qing could not afford to

administer and defended the nascent Manchu order against rebels and Ming holdouts for thirty years. But with the death of the Shunzhi emperor (r. 1644–61) and the passing of commanders who had led the Manchu armies into China, the question of the feudatories' future role inevitably emerged. As if to pose this question, in 1671 Wu Sangui offered to resign. The move was not simply a retirement; it was meant as a test of the young Kangxi emperor, then seventeen years old, who had just taken the throne. To the surprise of many and the consternation of some, the young monarch accepted the resignation and precipitated an eight-year war between the Qing and its former retainers that severely challenged the new state.[5] After the Qing prevailed, the court almost immediately agreed to support a naval attack on the regime of Zheng Chenggong on Taiwan. Politics across the Taiwan Strait in the early Qing had been left uncertain. The Manchus had no experience of naval warfare, and a suspicious court ordered the ports along the China coast evacuated and coastal dwellers moved inland, with disastrous consequences for the vigorous early modern coastal trade. The successful conclusion of the attack on Zheng Chenggong was the last time Manchu military force was used against the Chinese for nearly one hundred years. The young Kangxi emperor, secure on his throne, was the first Qing ruler to be able to contemplate a peaceful future for the dynasty.

One of the clearest signs that the long eighteenth century had arrived in China was the changed economic picture. Nature had not smiled on the early Qing years. Cooler than usual weather, devastating in an agrarian empire, marked the middle seventeenth century in China as it had in many other parts of the world.[6] Lower than normal agrarian yields made tax collection difficult; indeed, the Ming's inability to collect taxes and fund its armies had made it vulnerable to the Qing conquerors. Epidemics, a by-product of famine conditions, undermined health and stability. Granting that historians must be cautious with the label "crisis," William Atwell is nonetheless inclined to use the term to refer to the twenty years between 1640 and 1660 in China.[7] Though no longer in full-fledged crisis mode in the early Kangxi years, China's welfare can hardly have been much improved during the bitter extension of Manchu military occupation that dominated the dynasty between 1660 and the early 1680s. In particular,

the prohibition of maritime trade, which the Qing imposed until its long coastline was under control, disrupted traditional patterns of trade and undermined livelihoods and prosperity in the coastal region.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century in China, however, the weather began to warm and crops approached their normal yields. Money, which had been so tight in the early Qing that the dynasty could barely make ends meet, began to flow more easily. Trade restarted along the southeast coast, and it became possible to collect most of the land taxes. As Robert Marks has demonstrated, a warming climate and the end of the trade prohibition brought prosperity to the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong, rendering the far south one of the fastest-growing regions in the empire.[8] The Qing experienced a double peace dividend; not only were war expenses reduced, but peacetime tax receipts increased. The Kangxi emperor, who prided himself on his frugality, was able to remit taxes more often. There were four tax remissions in the first twenty years of the reign and twenty-four in its last forty years.[9] Chinese dynasties imposed both a land and a poll tax; in 1711, the emperor decreed the poll tax quotas of the provinces to be permanently frozen: no Qing successor could increase the amount levied regardless of the growth of population or productivity.

As prosperity returned, a new emperor came of age. For the first thirty-five years of the Qing dynasty, no emperor was more than twenty-five years of age; except for a few years in the late Shunzhi reign, regents and relatives managed government. This was not a necessarily a bad thing, as there were competent and powerful regents, and the Manchus had a historical preference for conciliar rule. Conservatism was built into regencies, however: they existed to conserve sovereignties intact for the legitimate ruler. A legitimate ruler, particularly a young, vigorous, and intellectually curious one who had already presided over a victorious war, had more freedom to innovate and explore. A new politics of influence arose: whereas the regents were influenced mainly by men of their own faction, a single ruler could be influenced by the wider range of officials with whom he came in contact. In the 1680s Qing courtiers had to accustom themselves to a Chinese-style all-powerful Manchu monarch, who had the ability and desire to rule as well as reign. For the next decade, the emperor would be involved in all new initiatives.

Three Tasks

As the young emperor contemplated the needs of his realm in the early 1670s, three issues stood out as urgent. The first was defining the role of Manchu bannermen in a civilian Qing state. A second was rebuilding the physical infrastructure that guided the Yellow River to the sea and supported the Grand Canal. A third task was developing a set of institutions that expressed the commitment of Manchu rulers to govern through established Confucian means and norms while retaining control of power in Manchu hands. Each of these tasks involved a process of construction, metaphorical or literal, but each also involved setting limits—on the power and prerogatives of Manchu officials, the demands of river administrators, and the influence of Chinese Confucian advisers. Each depended on the relationship of the monarch with a different group of servants.

MANCHU BANNERMEN AND THE QING STATE

Jurchens were the dominant group in the Qing Manchu order. Originally a hunter-gatherer and trading folk who lived to the northeast of the Ming Chinese, they began in the later sixteenth century to organize themselves for war against their southern neighbors. Finding the name "Jurchen" to be derogatory, in 1636 they decreed that the name of their political order would henceforth be "Manchu."[10] In the twentieth century this term has become an ethnonym, but in its original usage it described a political order that eventually came to incorporate Chinese and Mongols, as well as the Jurchens who led it.[11] In 1644, Manchu armies conquered Beijing, and over the next two generations, they extended their conquests to include all the territory controlled by the Ming.

The New Qing History, an American scholarly movement that began in the 1990s, has emphasized reading Manchu-language texts and attending carefully to the cultural and institutional forms the Manchus created. Mark Elliott and his students have done the most to define Manchu culture; in Elliott's view, the "Manchu way" consisted of a series of customs and habits that the Manchus brought with them to China, most typically "archery, horse-riding, use of the Manchu language and frugality."[12] These characteristics survived, in Elliott's view, because they were imbricated

in the institution of the eight banner armies, so-called because they were named after the color and pattern of the flags under which they marched. All Manchus, known as bannermen (*qiren*), were enrolled in these armies with their families for life.[13] The Manchu banner system was a military order in which proximity to the monarch, social status, and entitlement for office rested on one's rank, which often reflected ancestors' achievements. Originally, all banner armies were of the same status, but before the conquest the Qing ruler assumed personal command of three armies: the Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, and Plain White Banners, which become known as the "upper three banners."[14] Those affiliated with these banners had the highest status among bannermen.

Integrating the Manchu military conquest elite into civilian administration proved to be a challenge for the young dynasty. Dorgon (1612–1650), regent for the first Qing emperor to rule in China, relied on the military to establish order and conducted civil administration through those Chinese whom he could persuade to collaborate.[15] Dorgon's reliance on collaborators was, however, too much for his military colleagues, who prosecuted a number of his Chinese appointees after his death and sought to keep power in their own hands. The Manchu and Chinese orders remained separate, particularly under the regents who governed after Shunzhi's death. Imposing a harsh and austere regime, the four former military leaders appointed as regents for the young Kangxi preserved and reinforced the distinctions between conquering Manchus and conquered Chinese. The early years of Qing rule provided no stable answer to the question of how Manchus and Chinese would be integrated into a civilian peacetime administration.

Time, and new incentives, effected a solution to this problem. The Manchus born after the conquest developed stronger Chinese language skills than their forebears, showed a greater interest in matters of Chinese administration, and found new routes to civilian influence. Before the conquest, the dynasty had decreed that each of the major institutions of Qing central government—the six ministries and the Censorate—would be administered jointly by a Chinese and a Manchu. For those who could become a Manchu minister, a Manchu censor, or a Manchu grand secretary, the possibility existed of building a bicultural career, drawing on strengths from both traditions, outside of the traditional barracks and parade ground.

Mingju was neither the first nor the last to enjoy such a career, but he did effectively employ both Chinese and Manchu skills to rise from bodyguard to minister and grand secretary. Literate in Chinese and Manchu, he was comfortable with both Chinese and Manchu subordinates and served the state in both civilian and military capacities. He became a confidant and close adviser of the Kangxi emperor, twenty-one years his junior. He was very smooth and became very wealthy.

Mingju and his faction had proved valuable to the emperor during the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories; how valuable was open to question. On some readings, Mingju was instrumental in the imperial decision to go to war against the Three Feudatories. This may exaggerate his role, projecting his influence onto a decision that was likely made within the imperial family. Certainly, Mingju proved a capable administrator as minister of war, managing logistics and supply for a monarch suddenly catapulted into making strategy. Developing power in wartime, Mingju and his colleagues came to dominate the peace as they fanned out through the central and territorial administration. They offered a plausible model of how Manchus might be integrated into a peacetime administration.

THE RIVER

The Yellow River was always China's sorrow, but the nature of its threat constantly changed. Ruth Mostern's prize-winning account, *The Yellow River: A Natural and Unnatural History*, has traced events along the Yellow River through the three thousand years of Chinese life in the region. Fundamentally, she argues, catastrophic events along the banks were determined by the amount of silt that entered the river as it passed through a region of northwest China known as the Ordos. The late imperial period saw increasing deforestation and desertification in the Ordos, resulting in the river bearing increasing loads of silt.[16] For much of Chinese history the river turned north after it encountered the Shandong massif, reaching the sea at a point north of the peninsula, as it does today. However, for 531 years, from 1324 to 1855, it flowed to the sea through the lowlands of northern Jiangsu to a mouth south of the Shandong Peninsula.[17] By the beginning of the Qing, it had flowed through this southern mouth for 320 years. The longer the river flowed through the southern mouth, the more

silt it deposited along its bed through the lowlands, and the more difficult it became to control. River officials in the late Ming and early Qing confronted a problem along the river that, although not unprecedented, was perhaps unique in scope. This had implications for the Grand Canal, the crucial waterway that joined the rich agrarian south to Beijing: when the Yellow River flooded, mud flowed into the canal, and the portion of the canal that utilized the Yellow River became impassable. In 1471, the Ming Dynasty designated one member of the Ministry of Works as manager of river affairs (*zonghe shilang*), creating a specialized position to manage the lower Yellow River and Grand Canal.[18]

River work became a distinct niche in the late imperial bureaucracy, supported by a defined canon of specialized knowledge. Early Chinese produced a number of essays on river management, but beginning in the Yuan Dynasty (1264–1366), there were an increasing number of accounts by successful river managers of their experience with specific rivers.[19] The most famous of this genre was *An Overview of River Work* (Hefang yilan) by Pan Jixun (1521–1595), who served four terms in charge of the Yellow River hydraulic works and set the standard against which all subsequent river directors would be measured.[20] Much of the work of river maintenance consisted of shoring up the levees (*ti*) that contained the river, as well as the network of lakes and catchment basins through which it flowed. Winds and rains that came with late summer storms broke the levees, producing flooding and destroying maturing crops. Breaks were filled with gabions—sausage-shaped baskets of stone (*zhulong*)—and fascines (*sao*) of sorghum stalks bound together with bamboo. Joseph Needham quotes an early twentieth-century observer who watched as a hole in a levee thirty-six feet at the bottom and fifty-four feet at the top was filled: "Gabions and fascines were used, handled by 20,000 men hauling on cables 100 feet long. The process of filling a hole in the levees was referred to as 'closing the dragon gate' (*he long men*)."[21]

To address the problems of the river in the Qing, the court turned to a member of a group whose loyalty and technical knowledge had served the Qing well during the conquest. Established in 1631, the Chinese Martial Banner Army (Hanjun) was an organization for Chinese who had served the Manchus before the conquest, a mechanism for rewarding collaborators

with status in the developing Manchu order. David C. Porter has argued that the institution was founded on an exchange. The Qing "guaranteed that the state would provide all banner people with a means of support, disproportionate access to government posts carrying prestige and salaries, and the right to have penalties assessed for criminal offenses committed within the banner system." In return, the expectation was that "adult men would serve the state directly, usually as soldiers in military units, but sometimes in civilian administration, and not seek outside employment."[22]

Previous work on the Hanjun has focused on ethnic issues, the questions of what it meant that Manchus employed Chinese in their multiethnic ruling order. Much can be accomplished with such inquiry, but equally interesting is the question of what in fact the Hanjun did for their masters. Chinese scholarship has suggested that in the earliest days, the service recognized by Hanjun status was quite specific: Manchu armies were at a disadvantage in battle when Ming opponents deployed Portuguese canons against them, and the Hanjun were formed shortly after some Chinese soldiers taught the Manchus how to use, and resist, canons.[23] As the Manchu order became established, Chinese martial bannermen continued to provide their masters with access to Chinese language and technologies of rule, the forms and procedures of administration. As Manchus acquired Chinese language and cultural competence, Hanjun bannermen were less needed as translators but continued to provide knowledge and expertise to their superiors. They were literate and loyal, carried little ideological or cultural baggage, and were willing to take on tasks of military occupation that would have been difficult or distasteful for Chinese scholars with examination credentials. For instance, they oversaw the Chinese reoccupation of southern China after the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in the mid-1680s and undertook special missions requiring discretion and military-style administration.[24] In the latter part of the seventeenth century, Hanjun bannermen were particularly prominent in the territorial administration. Hanjun bannermen provided half the provincial governors in China from 1646 until the later 1670s and a quarter of all governors until 1690.[25]

With bannerman Jin Fu's appointment, the Qing got access to Chinese technology for river control. Jin Fu was not himself an expert in rivers, but

his private secretary (*muyu*), Chen Huang (d. 1689), was a master of the statecraft tradition and was able to guide Jin in understanding the realities of river control. Together, Jin and Chen developed an extensive and ambitious plan for the rivers of the southeast that they imagined would form a once-and-for-all solution to the dynasty's river concerns. It was frightfully expensive, a disadvantage that was especially acute at a time when the dynasty was bearing the expense of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. Nonetheless, the court proved willing to support their requests, and by 1683, the southern infrastructure was adequately repaired, and grain boats from the south regularly reached the capital.

THE SAGES

The postwar years also saw an enduring commitment by Qing dynasts, and a personal commitment by the Kangxi emperor, to demonstrate fealty to Confucian precepts. Patronage of Chinese scholars and scholarship became a hallmark of the new dynasty. All Chinese dynasties had a relationship with intellectual endeavor; they maintained libraries, published editions of the classics for examination takers, and cast their intellectual debates in terms drawn from the classics.[26] The Qing were especially active in this area. Because they were foreigners committed to ruling China on Chinese terms, it was essential that the Manchus demonstrate their mastery of the tradition. From the first examination for scholars of wide knowledge and great abilities (*boxue hongci*) in 1673 until at least the project to compile the *Complete Library of the Four Treasures* (Siku quanshu) in the 1770s, the Qing engaged in lavish patronage of scholarly activities.

More was involved here than reprinting the Confucian classics or patronizing Confucian scholars, although these were outward signs of the new dispensation. Huang Chin-shing has argued that the Kangxi emperor actually modeled his behavior and writing on the figures of Confucian sagehood, evoking a persona unique among Chinese emperors: "The emperor combined the tradition of governance (*chih-t'ung*) and the tradition of the Way (*tao-t'ung*) in himself. This was his most important cultural-political policy. The success of this policy could be seen in the Confucian scholars' own perceptions: in their eyes, the emperor was the real embodiment of the tradition of governance and the tradition of the Way, which had been

separated since the Golden Age."[27] Harry Miller has argued in a similar vein that the "coronation of the Kangxi emperor as sage king" effectively ended the disputes over the appropriate political model for the state that had dominated the late Ming and early Qing.[28]

Maintaining such a stance required vigilance on the emperor's part and the ready advice of Confucian specialists. To guarantee that such advice was always at hand, the Kangxi emperor established in 1677 his Southern Study, a space in the palace where he could meet and consult with selected Chinese scholars about matters of Chinese tradition. Scholars recommended from the court were appointed to serve in the study; housing was provided for them in the Forbidden City so that they could remain on call for the emperor, able to respond when the need for advice arose.

Each of these solutions to the great issues of the early Kangxi reign was in some measure unorthodox. There were no precedents for Manchus without civil service degrees exercising sway over central personnel and policies, Hanjun bannermen appointed to secure technological expertise, or scholars without a political appointment provided unrestricted access to the monarch. The solutions that evolved seemed workable, but each depended on the character and capacities of the individuals appointed. Guo Xiu was the first to subject these new solutions to review.

Guo Xiu's Intervention

In the early spring of 1688, Guo Xiu intentionally involved himself in the politics of the Kangxi court, bringing to his work courage, conviction, and the assumptions of his Confucian education. On February 1, Guo submitted his first impeachment, of Jin Fu. It was a brief document, more suggestive than conclusive, perhaps meant to test the waters, that triggered a series of more specific accusations from other officials. Three days after his first impeachment, Guo submitted a much longer and more specific impeachment of Mingju. As one of Guo's charges against Mingju was that he was in league with Jin Fu to skim revenues appropriated for the river project, it was possible that the charges against Jin Fu were meant to lead to Mingju. Both impeachments were well received, and Guo was promoted, eventually to the post of Chinese censor-in-chief. Two years later, Guo

submitted an indignant impeachment against the scholars of the Southern Study, precipitating their immediate dismissal.

Throughout his impeachments, Guo's political stance was clear and consistent. No anti-Manchu resister, he accepted the fact of Manchu rule and the legitimacy of Qing attempts to control the river, employ Manchus in high office, and recruit Chinese scholars to serve as advisers to the monarch. What he questioned was the ability and honesty of Jin Fu, Mingju, and the scholars of the Southern Study who found themselves in new and unregulated positions. Given that Manchus were to rule, he seemed to insist, they and their servants had to abide by the norms of the Confucian tradition, which he saw as of universal and not just Chinese significance.

This book assesses Guo Xiu's charges and assembles the narrative of his intervention. Guo's impeachments were not simply tales of corrupt acts performed, investigated, condemned, and punished. His impeachments did not focus on individual acts; rather they condemned long-standing patterns of behavior among principal actors of Kangxi government. This was what made his impeachments useful to the historian: Guo examined not moments but habits, not individual acts but the intertwined political activities that together constituted Qing government. Some of his charges were likely more valid, and more valuable to the emperor, than others, but all were revealing of mid-seventeenth-century Qing politics.

Part 1, "Kangxi Politics," weighs Guo's charges. Because of their breadth, understanding and assessing Guo's accusations requires fairly full review of the trajectories of their targets' careers, examined in chapters 1, 2, and 3. Guo Xiu made three charges against Jin Fu. First, he asserted that Jin was ineffective, requiring more and more support and achieving little. Second, Jin was accused of supporting the corrupt machinations of his secretary, Chen Huang. Third, Guo charged that Jin was engaged in a scheme to steal land and resources from the rightful landowners of northern Jiangsu. Chapter 1 considers how Jin Fu came to be river director and the nature of his reliance on his private secretary, Chen Huang. Chapter 2 establishes the basis for Guo Xiu's claim that Jin Fu stole land from landholders in northern Jiangsu and shows why he was perceived as ineffective.

Guo Xiu's charge against Mingju was that in numerous ways and in many specific incidents the minister had usurped imperial authority to pursue

private interests. Whereas the Manchu tradition was one of collegial rule with multiple senior figures collaborating in decision-making, in Chinese tradition the emperor was sacred, and political decisions were his alone to make. Mingju was serving in a Chinese role and could not presume on the right of the monarch to make decisions about personnel, the directions of the river project, or administrative discipline. Chapter 3 shows how Mingju came to be in a position to undertake the usurpation of imperial authority that Guo condemned and why the minister's position at the court has often been neglected in historical accounts.

Part 2, "Guo Xiu's Intervention," concentrates on Guo Xiu's actions in making his charges and the response to them among his colleagues and the emperor. Chapter 4 looks at Guo Xiu's life, how he became a censor, and the experiences and attitudes he brought to the role. Chapter 5 describes the moment of accusation, the immediate causes of Guo's actions, the language he used, and the reactions of his colleagues. Chapter 6 interrogates the emperor's reactions and the complex multiethnic environment that produced them. In chapter 7, the charges Guo brought against the scholars of the Southern Study are elaborated; they were accused of mixing scholarship and politics. Chapter 8 sets the episode in a larger context by considering the post-impeachment fates of Guo and those he condemned. A final chapter offers reflections on the universal issue of corruption and its prosecution.

A remarkable array of sources makes it possible to describe corruption and its recompense in the middle Kangxi era. For the most part, mid-seventeenth-century authors and politicians, at least those closest to the court, did not transmit to posterity negative views of the new dynasty. Recipients of the dynasty's patronage have left a positive account of the Kangxi emperor and his era. There were few dissidents in the 1680s and 1690s, and those who existed were not allowed to speak to posterity. In the 1720s, Wang Jingqi (1672–1726) offered a description of the Kangxi court that overlapped with some of Guo Xiu's charges, in a work titled *Jottings of a Western Journey* (Xizheng suibi).[29] The work was not a travelogue, as its title suggested, but an account of what Wang and his father, an official at the Qing court, observed in 1680s and 1690s Beijing. When the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1722–36) was presented with the work, he ordered it suppressed

as disrespectful of his father's government. Fortunately, the work survived and is today available.[30]

The same fate might have been in store for Guo Xiu's impeachments, but for several reasons, Guo's accusations survived. In the Yongzheng reign, sixteen years after Guo Xiu died, a friend convinced Guo Xiu's son, Guo Tingyi (n.d.) to edit his father's state papers, including the three impeachments, and prepare a chronology of his father's life.[31] Published by a man who held no degree or political position, Guo Tingyi's book was able to fly under the radar of Qing censorship. The impeachments were remembered in the 1770s when the Qianlong emperor ordered that the texts of the impeachments of Mingju and Wang Hongxu be included verbatim in their official biographies. The formal reason given by the emperor for this order was to make clear that Mingju and Wang Hongxu were in fact guilty of transgressions, of which subsequent readers needed to be aware. A second reason the emperor offered was to show that the factional maneuvering of the Kangxi years was relatively benign and easily contained by the Kangxi emperor, unlike the factionalism of the late Ming, which had brought down the dynasty.

Impeachments and imperial responses formed the warp and woof of imperial politics in China, but often this is all that remains, as the details of discussion and reply were hidden. This was not, of course, a problem unique to China. In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, Jeroen Duindam describes the challenge of establishing agency in royal courts: "How can one ascertain the degree to which rulers themselves were active agents, and how can we assess the balance between them and their courtiers and servants? Answers change not only from ruler to ruler, but within the life cycle of a single individual, particularly in long reigns. The variations in circumstances and personalities cannot be adequately addressed in generalized statements in either direction."[32] This universal problem of understanding the inner workings of imperial courts was surely no less acute in the case of the Chinese court, which made no pretense of being public and whose product, a list of edicts arranged in chronological order, was both unwieldy and not in a technical sense a primary source.

For limited periods, however—and among them were the few years of the early Kangxi reign with which this study is concerned—the court

diaries provide remarkable insights. Court diaries are a very old genre in China, dating from the earliest days of government, when "the Recorder of the Left wrote down the actions and the Recorder of the Right wrote down the utterances" of the monarch.[33] The purpose of this recording was in the first instance moral: to record clearly how mistakes were made so that they would not be repeated, and how good deeds were accomplished. They were meant as primary sources for the *Veritable Records* (Shilu), the chronological reprinting of the official edicts issued during a reign, which was prepared after an emperor died. After preparation of the *Veritable Records*, the diaries were meant to be destroyed. Diaries were intended as records of court activities; even the emperors whose lives they chronicled were not meant to see them. It is likely that this stricture was relaxed in later dynasties, but the diaries, when they existed, were regarded as the most reliable primary sources. Extant portions of the early Kangxi diary were first published in 1984, hence not available to historians who wrote about the Kangxi emperor before that date.[34]

In an ideal world, court diaries would have been an ideal source, but the real world intervened. The Kangxi diary began in the autumn of the tenth year of his reign, on October 3, 1671. This was shortly after the emperor had taken power from his regents and begun to reign in his own name; diary keeping was one of a number of specifically Chinese political practices adopted by the young emperor. The first eight years of the diary, however, were concerned exclusively with the young emperor's education and ritual activities. These were likely the primary concern of those who kept the diaries; they may also have accounted for most of the young emperor's time. In the autumn of 1679, the emperor observed, "In addition to the routine matters that the diarists of action and repose record, there are matters presented in memorials and petitions that must be decided. These are all important matters of state, and our accomplishments and failures can be observed [in them]. Henceforth, let the petitions and memorials that are reviewed by the court be recorded by the diarist on duty. As for court conferences on secret matters, and cases in which I summon officials to the throne for personal oral orders, the officials on duty need not record these."[35]

From the viewpoint of tradition, this was a somewhat odd imperial in-

tervention in diary keeping, a prescription of what sort of materials should be in the diary. It likely reflected the fact that by 1679, the monarch was making decisions important for the future of the state, and the decisions turned out to be successful. Following these orders, the diary entries became steadily more detailed as the years went by.

The diaries preserve bits of conversation between the emperor and his counselors that can be revealing. After a visit by Jin Fu to court, for instance, the emperor quietly asks that a report be prepared on the feasibility of shipping grain by sea, thus avoiding the waterways Jin was charged with sustaining. Somewhat later, when Jin Fu proposes an expensive project, the emperor notes that the dynasty's treasury is fuller than during the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. Later during a court conference, the diaries preserve what can only be called an imperial tantrum directed at Chinese officials, a revealing episode in Sino-Manchu relations. None of these comments are included or even referenced in the official record of imperial edicts in the Kangxi *Veritable Records*. The diaries are not perfect sources. They are not verbatim records, nor do they preserve any of the conversations officials had with each other as they decided what to say to the emperor. But they do afford a deeper look into Kangxi policy-making than other extant materials. Although the diaries are not extant for the entire Kangxi reign, they are available for the years of Jin Fu's service as canal director and the months in which Guo Xiu made his accusations. Together with Guo's impeachments, they produce a tale worth telling.

In the twenty-first century, additional sources have become available. A new funerary inscription for Mingju has been unearthed and an old family story about Guo Xiu's origins made public. Two new movies and a Beijing opera have been produced depicting this period; these are not as valuable as other sources, as they are not historically accurate, but they point to the contemporary relevance of the events under consideration here for assessing the nature and significance of China's last dynasty.[36]

PART I

KANGXI POLITICS

ONE

Jin Fu and the River

When a nation [*guojia*] is at the height of its glory and wants
to build something large and long-lasting, it must have an official
of profound ability, an extraordinary man whose name will be
known through posterity and whose deeds will illuminate heaven. . . .
Such a man was Mr. Jin.

WANG SHIZHEN, "JIN FU MUZHIMING"

One of the greatest puzzles of the Guo Xiu impeachments was that Jin Fu was charged with being ineffectual, yet his contemporaries and later historians regarded him as the most effective river director in the Qing. Solving this puzzle requires unpacking layers of perception surrounding Jin at multiple points of his long career as governor-general of the Grand Canal. In what respects was he successful in his early years on the river? Why, if he was so successful in the early years, was he judged ineffective in 1688? The standard answer to these questions is that Jin was effective, but in his long service he aroused bureaucratic resentments leading to his impeachment.[1] A twentieth-century take on this narrative involves the further claim that Jin aroused resentment because he employed new scientific methods that encountered conservative resistance.[2] Was he scientific and innovative? What methods did he employ, and where did he find them? This chapter reviews Jin Fu's life and proposals and argues that Jin's success lay not so much in scientific innovation—though he was certainly an empiricist—but in a rigorous, militarily inflected application of the existing technology of his day to the long-standing problems of the river.

The epigraph above expresses contemporary views of Jin. Jin Fu was a man for his times. He made his career in a young dynasty, where there was much to be done; he served a young emperor ambitious enough to undertake a major project; and he brought to the task the confidence of a proud member of the post-conquest generation. The youth of the dynasty was

evident in the state of lower Yellow River infrastructure. Chaos in the late Ming and competing priorities in the early days of the Qing had resulted in disrepair of the structures supporting the lower Yellow River in northern Jiangsu and the Grand Canal. Levees were broken, canals were filled with mud, and the flow of water that scoured the mud was divided by obstructions into smaller, weaker streams. A young and idealistic emperor called for a permanent solution to the river's woes, and Jin Fu, enacting his and his family's commitment to serve the Qing, used his prestige and resources to secure access to the latest Chinese thought on hydraulic technology. Jin made a detailed plan of repairs committing the dynasty to an expensive infrastructural regime that restored the Grand Canal to working order.

Family and State

Throughout northern China, as Manchu power grew in the early seventeenth century, families had to make choices. Some sided with the Manchus, valuing the order their military occupation brought; others opposed the new rulers; and still others cautiously held their ground until the political future became clear and more informed political commitments could be made. Jin Fu's family chose the first option, jumping with both feet into the growing Manchu state and becoming its hereditary servants. As a result of this choice, they were guaranteed a place in the new regime. They were also conscious of their Chinese heritage and willing to draw on it in their service to the Qing.[3]

Service, status, and location defined the Jins' place in the seventeenth century. The Jin family counted Licheng, a magistracy located next to the Shandong provincial capital of Jinan, as their native place. But by the mid-seventeenth century they had resided in Liaoyang, Manchuria, for several generations and were enrolled in the Hanjun. Although their identity was military, their service to the Qing was civilian. Jin Fu's father, Jin Yingxuan, served in the Office of Transmission (Tongzheng Shisi), a central government agency responsible for "presenting in (imperial) audience all memorials submitted throughout the empire; to some extent, it had 'veto' power to reject memorials considered inappropriate either in form or sub-

stance."[4] Yingxuan rose to the post of right secretary (*you canyi*), in which capacity he reviewed state papers for Qing Taizong (r. 1627–44). The post was an important one, giving its holder access to the flow of documents on which the Qing government rested, and this may have been the reason why the Jins were enrolled in the Bordered Yellow Banner, one of the three superior banners controlled by the emperor.

Jin Fu was born in Manchuria in 1633 and accompanied his family and the Qing court to Beijing in 1644. Shortly thereafter, at the age of twelve, he was enrolled in what his biography described as the "officers' school" (*guanxue*).[5] Arrangements for the education of bannermen in the early days of the dynasty were somewhat chaotic, but Jin's school seems likely to have been the Eight Banner Official's School, founded in 1644 for the education of sons of officers in the Banner armies.[6] He was not obliged to take examinations to enter Qing service, but he did have to take a test to earn an administrative post. This he did in 1652 and was appointed to serve as an editor in the History Bureau (Guoshi Yuan) a division of the Grand Secretariat, where he learned the organization and principles of Qing government.[7] He was subsequently appointed to the junior post of secretary in the Grand Secretariat, and then became a member of the Ministry of War. At the beginning of the Kangxi reign, he was promoted to academician (*xueshi*) in the Grand Secretariat (Neige), where he worked compiling the *Veritable Records* of Qing Taizong and organizing edicts issued in response to the memorials his father had processed.

How did this family think of itself?[8] Although there is a wealth of biographical material about Jin Fu, rather little of it went to the point of self-image. Particularly valuable in this regard is a funerary inscription (*muzhiming*) prepared by a very accomplished writer and civil servant named Wang Shizhen (1634–1711). Like the Jins, Wang formed a bridge between Manchus and Chinese in the very early years of the dynasty. As a local official in Yangzhou beginning in 1659, he had helped to reconstruct social life in a town devastated by the Qing conquest armies.[9] He went on from there to posts in the central Qing state. Wang Shizhen and Jin Fu may have met, but if so, their meeting was not recorded. The occasion for the epitaph was a request from Jin Fu's eldest son that Wang memorialize

his father. Internal evidence suggests that Wang had access to Jin family papers as he prepared the biography, and he also was able to listen to the stories the family told of itself.

A tantalizing detail about the Jins in Wang's epitaph was the claim that when the Ming conquered Shandong in the late fourteenth century, Jin Fu's ancestors joined the Ming army, membership in which was hereditary, and were assigned to guard Liaoyang in southern Manchuria. As the Manchu order grew in the early seventeenth century, the Jins joined it, forsaking the Ming. If true, it would appear that in the seventeenth century, the Jins traded posts as hereditary military servants of the Ming for positions as hereditary military servants of the Qing.[10] Why the Jins joined the Manchus—whether their army unit was captured or, somewhat more likely in view of the position they held, they voluntarily surrendered—is unclear.

Wang also reported that Jin had four sons and two daughters with his wives, née Yang and Bai. The sons were named Zhiyü, Zhiyong, Zhilu, and Zhiqi. The first character in each of their given names was *zhi*, "to rule," followed by the name of one of four ancient north Chinese states of Yu, Yong, Lu, and Qi. With these names, Jin Fu was hoping for a sure position for his sons, safely nestled in a state order. His hopes were in fact realized, as all four sons occupied government positions at the time of his death.[11]

As Jin became more senior, Wang's epitaph relates, he established a family temple, carefully comparing accounts of ritual by Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and Sima Guang (1019–1086) to determine the appropriate ceremonies for special occasions. Research by Kaiwing Chow and others has suggested that many seventeenth-century Chinese families, particularly ones with complex histories of loyalties like the Jins, began to reflect on the question of what made them Chinese.[12] The most common answer was that the essence of Chineseness lay not in political loyalties but in fealty to a set of rituals, customs inherited from ancestors. But which were the correct rituals? Sorting through extant accounts of ancient Chinese rituals was a major concern of scholars in the late seventeenth century and also of families trying to understand their place in the Sino-Manchu sociopolitical order.

Resilient frontiersmen, Jin and his family had survived the fall of the Ming, the chaos of war in the northeast, and the founding of a new ethnic and political regime and landed on their feet in mid-seventeenth-century

Beijing. The choice to side with the Qing proved fortuitous; it provided them shelter in the storm and offered an opportunity to realize an ambition to serve as leaders on a regional and even national scale. Understandably, the Jins' loyalties were complex: to a political order that sustained them and a civilization that nurtured them. Empowered by the Qing conquest, Jin Fu determined to render effectively the service to which his family had committed itself.

Governor and Director

As he rose in the government, Jin Fu faced the problem of how to translate his family's commitment to service into support for the new dynasty. In choosing, Jin was guided not by years of study of Confucian classics but by perceived areas of need, and how and how quickly they could be met. In 1671 Jin was appointed as governor of Anhui province. On its surface, this appointment was somewhat surprising: a thirty-eight-year-old who had never served, or likely lived, outside the capital was appointed to a high territorial post, where he became responsible for a hierarchy of officials and all matters of taxation, policing, and personnel. Several characteristics of the moment provide historical context. The earliest biographies of Jin identify his appointment to Anhui as a "special" (*te*) one, meaning that it was made not through the routine procedures of the Ministry of Personnel but directly by the imperial court.[13] War had just begun between the Qing and the Three Feudatories, and to control China's territories, the dynasty preferred Chinese-speaking soldiers, bannermen on whom they could rely to carry out orders. When Jin Fu became governor of Anhui in 1671, thirteen out of eighteen of his colleague governors were Hanjun bannermen.[14]

The young Jin Fu arrived in Anhui with cachet but no experience. He remedied this by employing as his personal assistant Chen Huang. Hired private secretaries were ubiquitous in late imperial China, but the close relationship between Chen and Jin Fu, and the salience of Chen's ideas in Jin Fu's proposals, made their relationship unique. Most biographers have treated Chen's life as an adjunct to Jin's. In the late 1930s, the historical geographer Hou Renzhi (1911–2010), an admirer, produced an independent biography.[15] Chen had no official degree, but he did have extensive knowl-

edge of administrative practice. Hou suggests plausibly, though without evidence, that Chen's taste in reading ran to the statecraft manuals that circulated in seventeenth-century China rather than the classical texts that had to be mastered for the examinations. Jin reported that during his years in Anhui, he and Chen were constantly together, even at mealtimes, as Chen administered what must have been a crash course in territorial administration.[16]

Jin Fu and Chen Huang soon found themselves administering a province that served as a crucial transit point for an empire at war. The highlights of Jin's Anhui administration noted in biographies are either efforts at reconstruction of the province following the Manchu conquest or contributions to the Qing resistance to the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories.[17] All Jin's biographies remark on one administrative innovation Jin proposed in response to a concern the Ministry of War expressed about the cost of maintaining wartime postal services in Anhui. The problem, Jin argued, was not with Anhui but with military officials from the southern provinces who were sending too many messages by express post to the capital; as the post riders came through Anhui they demanded lodging and fresh mounts on their journey to the capital. Faced with emergency messages, all Anhui officials could do was try to meet the messengers' demands. The solution, Jin's memorial argued, was to limit the number of messages by ordering those in the south to communicate on only the most urgent business. Jin proposed to enforce this proposal by limiting the number of express tallies (*huopai*), authorizing transmission of a message at high speed, that each official was given. The proposal was implemented, and the Qing saved 129,000 *liang*.[18] Jin Fu was praised for the initiative and given the honorary rank of minister of war as a reward.[19]

Jin Fu's term in Anhui was counted a success, and when the court needed a vigorous and clear-headed administrator to attack the twin problems of the Grand Canal and the Yellow River, they turned to Jin. The emperor sought a fresh approach to the issues of the lower Yellow River and Grand Canal, one that would be conclusive, a solution that would achieve results with a single effort, leaving no task undone (*yirong wumian*). The last major work on the Yellow River levees had taken place in the fifteenth century. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century river commissioners, faced

with warfare in north and central China and limited resources, had contented themselves with trying to repair breaks in the levees, particularly along the Grand Canal. The first Qing river commissioner was a bannerman named Yang Fangxing (d. 1664). According to his biography, he had a “taste for alcohol” and was ordered by Qing Taizong to stay away from it. Appointed in 1644, he presided over floods in 1645, 1647, 1650, and 1653 before being granted retirement in 1657.[20] Flooding continued under the Qing’s second river commissioner, Zhu Zhixi, in 1658, 1659, 1660, and 1661.[21] Jin Fu’s predecessor, another bannerman named Wang Guangyu, had not even been able to fill the broken places from one season to the next. Summer was the rainy season, when breaks in the levees were most likely to occur; repair work was done in the dry winter season. Wang was dismissed when the minister of works returned from a trip to the south in early March and reported that Wang hadn’t even begun work to repair the previous year’s breaks.[22]

Two weeks after Wang’s dismissal, on March 27, 1677, Jin Fu was appointed as governor-general of the Grand Canal (*hedao zongdu*).[23] This was a very senior post, one of two functionally defined senior positions in Qing territorial administration. Both positions reported directly to the emperor, though in both cases bureaucratic organs in the capital were responsible for keeping the laws, precedents, and archives associated with the functions. In the case of the director-general of the Grand Canal, the relevant body was the Ministry of Works, which reviewed materials for all public works projects: city walls and altars, palaces, roads, customs stations, harbors, canals, and river works.[24]

Receiving his orders for transfer and promotion, Jin hastened to set his affairs as Anhui governor in order, proceeding immediately to Qingkou, near the point where the Grand Canal and the Yellow River met (marked on map 1 as the point of the Clear Passage). He took responsibility from Wang Guangyü on May 5 and began to tour the river works in the company of two imperial emissaries from the capital.[25] Two months later, he submitted his first report on the situation, in which he described the river administration as “corrupt and decayed in the extreme” (*bi huai yi ji*). Stressing the need to comprehend the entire situation of the Jiangsu watercourses before taking action, Jin Fu reported that he was interviewing everyone who might have

anything to contribute, whether gentry, soldiers, artisans, or workers. Time must be taken for such a review, he asserted, because if one only followed precedent there was danger that "a repair in the east will create a break in the west, a repair in the north will create a break in the south, and time will be spent, and grain and money wasted without positive result."[26]

From his initial trip to the riverbank, Jin Fu signaled that he would handle the river differently than his predecessors. When the post of governor-general of the Grand Canal was created, the central government decreed that the seat would be in Jinan, the capital of Shandong. Jin Fu established his base of operations in Suqian District in Jiangsu, near the point where the Grand Canal, the Yellow River, and the Huai River met, and proceeded to define his role as maintaining not simply the Grand Canal but the entire lower Yellow River water system.[27] An emphasis on comprehensive planning for the lower course of the Yellow River and the portions of the canal in Jiangsu proved to be one of the hallmarks of Jin Fu's administration.

The crash course on statecraft that Chen Huang had begun in the Anhui capital continued on the riverbank; in fact, a catechism for the training has been preserved. Titled *An Explanation of River Defense* (Hefang shuyan), it was a work of one *juan* that contains twelve essays on various topics associated with hydraulic engineering.[28] In each, Jin Fu is represented as asking questions that Master Chen (Chenzi) answers. References to statecraft texts, the authority behind Jin Fu's proposals, are incorporated in Chen's responses. The core of Chen Huang's philosophy of river work, as he informs Jin Fu in an essay titled "Levees" (Tifang) is drawn from the great Ming river expert Pan Jixun, whose central idea was that using human agency to manage the river was not as good as using the force of nature to do so.[29] His goal was to "guide the river water, using the river [current] to scour the mud" (*shu shui yi shui shuai sha*). Here the idea was to narrow the river and so increase its speed by building high, strong, secure levees along its banks. The faster the river flowed, the more silt it could carry.[30] Building such levees became the primary aim for the Jin-Chen river maintenance projects. In an essay titled "Estimating Expenses" (Zhanji), Jin Fu asks Chen whether, in view of the expense of suppressing the Rebellion of Three Feudatories, a less costly course of repairs might

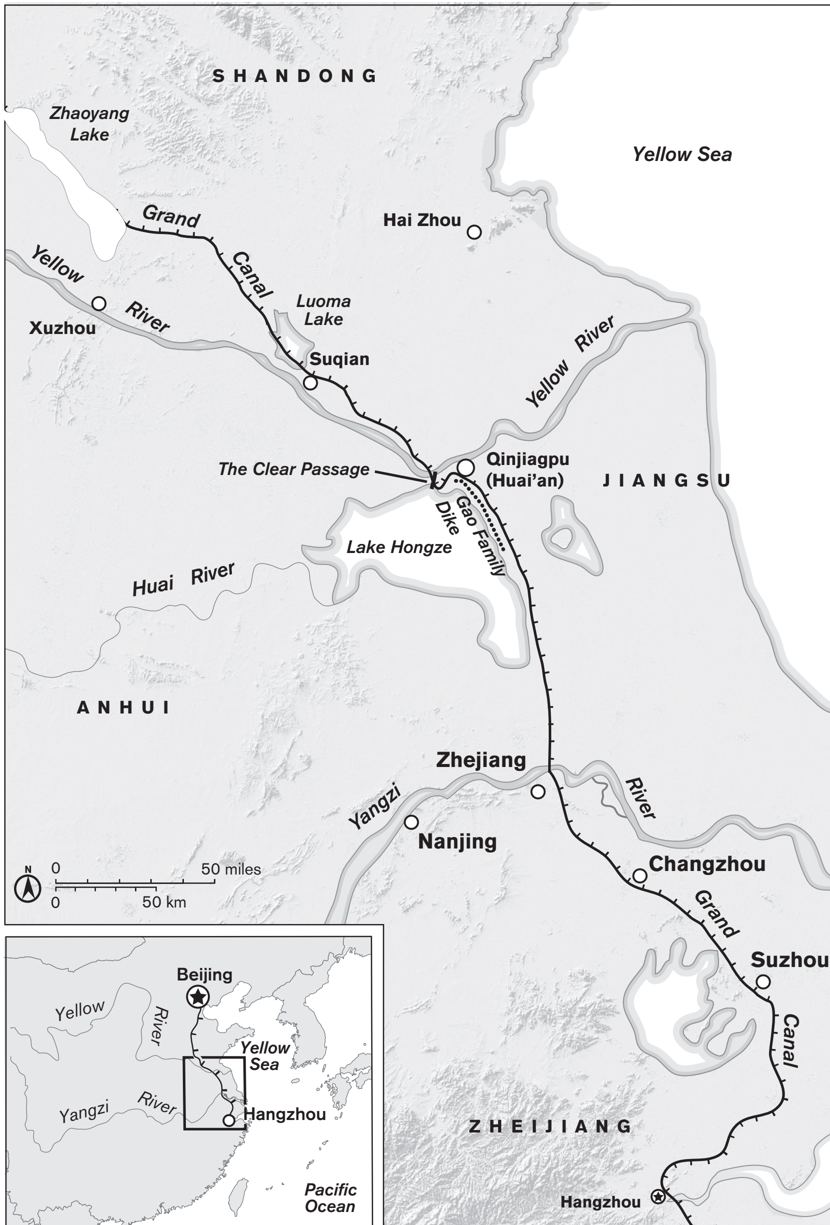
be proposed. Chen responds, no, then likens the repair of river works to a military campaign. Just as a general "who would have his troops march one thousand *li* must first lay in three months of grain supplies," so the river maintenance project must be properly supplied before it is begun. Chen writes, "It may be wasteful to spend money that should not be spent, but not spending money that ought to be spent could mean that expenses in the future might be several times as great."[31]

Jin Fu and Chen Huang offered a powerful combination of cachet and competence. This was rare, particularly in China, where those with influence gravitated to the capital, and those with specialized local competences faced a long ladder to climb to the top. Cachet came from Jin's status as a bannerman at once loyal to the Manchus and immersed in Chinese traditions of culture and administration. Competence was fostered by Chen Huang's careful reading of statecraft texts. Throughout their administration of river affairs, Jin and Chen would claim authority based on specialized knowledge of the geology and hydrology of the lower Yellow River basin acquired on their initial and subsequent inspection tours. This was a very different sort of legitimacy than the knowledge of classical precedent claimed by traditional examination graduates.[32] Jin and Chen sought to be as close to specialist technicians as possible in an administration of generalists.[33]

Proposals

On the basis of their acquired expertise, Jin and Chen made specific plans. These were set forth in eight detailed memorials that he submitted in late August 1677. Five of these memorials proposed specific reconstruction projects; the sixth dealt with appointment of officials to manage the work; the seventh with arrangements for routine inspection of the levees once they were completed; and the eighth with the costs of the work proposed. They were written in clear, simple prose, largely without literary ornamentation, and included elaborate estimates of cost, schedule, and labor requirements.

The first of Jin's proposals was to reconstruct the channel of the Yellow River by building canals and new steep levees along its banks, from the point where it joined the Grand Canal at Qingjiangpu to the sea. This ex-



1. The Grand Canal and Lower Yellow River infrastructure

pansion of the Yellow River was the largest and most expensive project Jin recommended. He proposed to build two canals 2.8 meters wide at the base, 7 meters wide on the surface, and 4.3 meters deep. They were to be located 3 meters from each side of the river. Initially, river water would flow through three channels—the original riverbed and the two newly dug channels. Eventually the channels would merge, in effect widening the river. With the dirt dug out from the new channels, levees would be built along the river edges to supplement the existing levees, which were broken and crumbling in many places. Chinese calculated the work involved in building levees in terms of the number of *tufang*—cubes of earth approximately four yards on each side, or sixty-four square yards—that had to be moved. Altogether, Jin estimated that over six million *tufang* would have to be moved to widen the river. Since it took one laborer just under four days to move a *tufang* of earth, the project would require at least twenty-four million man-days of labor. As Jin proposed to finish the project in two hundred days, he would require a labor force of more than 120,000 men.[34]

Where could such a labor force be gathered? Following a precedent established by the previous river director in 1669, Jin proposed that prefectures in Jiangsu, Henan, and Shandong that stood to benefit by the project each be required to provide between five thousand and fifteen thousand able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and forty *sui* (years). Each prefecture would also provide several officials to oversee its men. If the laborers could not do the work or the supervisors were incompetent, there would be punishment for the home prefect calculated according to an elaborate schedule of reprimands and salary fines laid out in the memorial. The required labor was not to be unpaid corvee—the labor that all Chinese taxpayers owed the state. Laborers on Jin's project were to be paid the legal rate of 0.04 ounces of silver per day. Jin estimated that the work along the Yellow River would be the most expensive of his repairs, costing 989,800 *liang*, nearly half of the total amount he requested.[35]

Jin's second project was to repair and deepen the channels, known as the Clear Passage (Qingkou), which connected the upper end of Lake Hongze with the Yellow River. Water that flowed through this channel was crucial to the process of transferring freight barges from the canal to the Yellow River. Jin reported that when he arrived at his post, the entrance to the

Yellow River from Lake Hongze had completely silted over, preventing any flow from the lake to the river. He proposed to dredge two canals on either side of the main channel, through which water from the lake could flow to the river. As in his project to widen the Yellow River, the hope was that eventually the boundaries between the main channel and the two canals would erode, so that the entrance would be widened. Jin estimated that the project would involve moving 114,000 *tufang* of earth.[36]

The third project Jin proposed was to repair breaks and secure the levees along the east side of Lake Hongze to prevent lake water from flowing into the Grand Canal.[37] The work here reinforced the Gao Family Dike (Gaojiayan), an older structure that had been repaired and renovated by Pan Jixun in 1578.

Fourth, Jin proposed to fill thirty-four breaks in the levees along a twelve-mile stretch of the lower Grand Canal. Fifth, Jin was to dredge the lower Grand Canal for a distance of 230 *li,* about eighty-two miles, so that the 1677 tribute grain could be shipped. He estimated that this would result in removing 3,477,000 *tufang* from the canal, which he proposed to add to the levees on either side of the canal.[38]

Each of Jin's first five memorials outlined a project. His sixth, seventh, and eighth memorials dealt with expenses and the deployment of civil and military personnel necessary to accommodate his ends. Jin's sixth memorial dealt with the issue of costs. If a solution to the problems of the river was to be permanent, he argued, it had to have an independent and self-perpetuating source of revenue. Jin acknowledged that his proposals were expensive; the total cost of his proposed work was 2,115,000 *liang*, and his maintenance plans required a fleet of boats that could cost another two and a half million to build. The cost of 2.1 million *liang* was almost 10 percent of the taxes remitted to the seventeenth-century Qing central government in a year; with the cost of the boats, Jin's projects approached 20 percent of the total receipts of the central government's yearly land tax receipts.[39]

Jin Fu proposed three sources of revenue. The first two reflected an awareness he shared with others who worked on the rivers, that although traditionally the state paid for riparian maintenance, some subjects benefited more than others. Individuals who owned land that chronically flooded would benefit most from the flood prevention effort and should

be expected to pay for the work. Jin reasoned that landowners wishing to avoid flooding should be willing to pay a river maintenance fee, which would vary according to the value of their lands. He also suggested that merchants who shipped private goods along the Grand Canal pay tolls for the privilege of doing so. Jin assured the emperor that he had spoken with landholders and merchants who were willing to pay. A fourth stream of revenue was to come from the sale of low-level official degrees, for which there was an eager market in Jiangnan.[40] These streams of revenue would take time to establish, as in many cases the merchants and landowners Jin envisioned as paying were dealing in 1676 with flooded lands and a blocked canal. Jin therefore recommended that the provinces of Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi be required to pay 10 percent of their tax in advance for the years 1678, 1679, 1680, and 1681. Jin calculated that this would provide him with a kitty of 2,000,000 *liang* with which he could begin work.[41]

This concern with funds, which can be seen in several of Jin's proposals and underlay them all to some degree, seemed to fly in the face of Chen Huang's advice that Jin should request all the money he needed for the long campaign rather than limit his ambitions. Jin Fu's service at court meant that he was far more aware than Chen of the fiscal stringency the Qing government had experienced in its first years and anticipated the resistance his requests would face. But there was likely a second consideration. The Qing routinely allocated a portion of tax revenue from Henan, Jiangsu, and Shandong for river maintenance, but in 1683 this amounted to 183,000 *liang*, which would hardly suffice for projects of the size Jin was contemplating. Had Jin's requests been approved, he would have had an adequate stream of revenue to work with, which would allow him to judge the priority of projects independent of the court. So long as Jin had to request funds for each project separately, he would remain hostage to court politics.

In his seventh memorial, Jin outlined changes he recommended in the number and responsibilities of officials appointed to monitor the condition of the infrastructure and supervise those who labored on it. One of the consistent problems of Grand Canal administration was overstaffing. Confronted with hundreds of miles of riverbanks and canals needing inspection and thousands of laborers to supervise, canal directors' tendency was to recommend the appointment of more and more subordinates. Of-

ten poorly paid junior officials, these appointees readily became corrupt, siphoning central government revenues meant to support repair work and demanding supplements to their income from those who used the canal system and those who lived alongside it. In the early nineteenth century, the canal administration had the reputation of being the most bloated and corrupt elements of the Qing imperial state.[42] At least in the early years of his administration, Jin seemed determined to limit the number of officials assigned to canal administration and distribute the supervisory responsibilities among regularly assigned local officials. Jin recommended that all four assistant canal director positions be abolished and their duties redistributed among regularly appointed local officials, particularly circuit intendants.[43]

In his eighth memorial, Jin Fu complained that neither officials posted to guard the riverbanks nor the common people who lived along them could be trusted to supervise their maintenance. Jin therefore proposed that the number of Green Standard Army troops stationed along the riverbanks (*he bing*) be increased to do patrol duty along rivers. They were to be provided with boats, so that on the first, eleventh, and twenty-first day of each lunar month they could travel along the rivers and inspect the levies. Different numbers of troops were required at different points on the river system; altogether he requested 5,870 men.[44]

As he had been directed, Jin Fu produced a plan for a once-and-for-all solution of the dynasty's river woes. During an extended tour of the riverbanks, he had identified all the areas of weakness where repair was needed. He had carefully and creatively assessed these needs and developed detailed plans for remedying them. In river troops he found the personnel to watch and maintain the infrastructure he created. The sources of revenue he pointed to would be adequate for the tasks he proposed, and he made provision to meet his labor requirements. The accounting he proposed was careful and meticulous, and whenever he quoted a price estimate prepared by a subordinate, he noted that he had reviewed the estimate completely and found that it did not include any frivolous or unnecessary items. He was ready to begin work in the autumn of 1677 and required only the final approval of the court.

Negotiation

This approval was some time in coming. Jin's proposal was gigantic: not only did he propose to move millions of square yards of earth, but he aimed to do so with an army of laborers and to pay for the project by readjusting the revenue obligations of five central provinces of the Chinese empire. Granted that he enjoyed the court's confidence and was following an order to solve the problems of the river system once and for all, what he proposed would have significantly changed the existing administrative order. Did he have the clout to effect such a change, and was the court, preoccupied with war in the south, prepared to give assent to the scheme?

The first clue came when the emperor, on receipt of the bannerman's memorials, did not approve them straight off but referred them to the Chinese officials at the Ministry of Works, the bureaucratic record keepers, for review. There may have been a time early in the dynasty when Manchus trusted their Chinese martial bannermen over Han Chinese officials, but that time had passed by the mid-1670s. Beijing bureaucrats' initial response to Jin's memorials was that not all of his proposals could be accomplished at once. Jin was asked to prioritize his projects, so that they could be funded in sequence. Jin's first reaction was to resist, arguing that everything he had proposed was critical:

> Below Qingjiangpu, if we neither build levees nor dredge, the Huai and Yellow Rivers will have no route to the sea. Above Qingkou if we do not dredge, the Huai will not flow easily. If the breaks in the levees along Gao Family Dike are not repaired, then the current of the Huai River will be divided and will not scour the mud; water will not be forced into the Yellow River, and the Clear Passage will be a point of danger. Moreover, if we don't rebuild the levies on the south bank of the Yellow River, then the Gao Family Dike will be threatened. If the levees on the north bank of the Yellow River are not repaired, then the rivers in Shandong will back up. In the matters of building levees, forcing the water downriver, and repairing breaks there can only be the question of what to do first; there can be no question of which is more urgent. If at present we don't make a plan to accomplish the work once and for all, then building

levies year after year, forcing water upstream year after year, boring and dredging, will not merely be a waste of the people's resources but will be endless, and the river system will steadily deteriorate.[45]

In view of Jin's unwillingness to prioritize, reviewers in the capital may have felt they had no choice but to reject all of his proposals and force a rethinking of the entire project. Four of the five proposals Jin made were returned to him with a notation: "On first review [it was recommended] that the proposal should be carried out as proposed, but on subsequent review, it was decided that the proposal should be temporarily halted. There is no need to memorialize further." No indication was given of the nature of the first and subsequent reviews or what role engineering feasibility or financial considerations played in decisions.

Fortunately, this was not the end of the matter. The rejections were accompanied with a note: "Since the emperor is genuinely concerned about restoring the canal and preserving popular livelihoods, the governor-general appointed by the emperor is ordered to reexamine [the situation] and resubmit proposals.[46] In late fall 1676, Jin submitted eight new memorials "respectfully amplifying" (*zun chen*) his earlier positions. The only proposal for which there was evidence of the court's objections was the first. Jin's first plan must have been a staggering proposal for the managers of a state at war. But for those at court, it was the most promising of Jin's four proposals. Elders at court asked Jin to consider two changes. First, the notion of drafting and assembling 120,000 men from five provinces boggled courtly minds: surely there would be abuses in the recruitment and complaints about the draft, not to mention the presence of a likely resentful army of workers not far from provinces that had been recently in rebellion. Second, the cost seemed to the emperor's advisers simply too great; it had to be reduced. Jin responded to each of these points. To reduce the number of workers on the project, he proposed that the length of time allowed for construction be doubled, from two hundred days to four hundred days. He also proposed that carts be purchased in Henan and Shandong to facilitate moving the mud. Finally, he proposed that the river troops whose deployment he had requested be set to work along the riverbanks. This would achieve a double purpose of speeding the work and familiarizing the troops with the struc-

tures they would be responsible for inspecting. With these modifications, Jin proposed to save nearly 600,000 *liang*.[47]

Final imperial authorization to begin work on Jin's projects was issued on February 4, 1678, eleven months after his appointment.[48] The first proposal was approved with the extended time horizon Jin proposed; in addition, the river director was provided with 36,000 mules to assist in moving the earth. The second project was also slightly modified. Instead of two channels linking Lake Hongze with the Yellow River, Jin created only one; he had already completed this single channel by the time the final authorization was received, and he reported that there was no need to begin work on a second channel. The other proposals were approved as made; indeed, it appeared that work had begun on some of these projects, as they were necessary if boats were to carry southeast tribute to the capital in 1678.

Jin's proposals for making the infrastructure pay for itself were received with more skepticism. The court ordered that the expenses for the project be paid for out of the regular revenues of the dynasty (*zheng xiang qian liang*). An allocation of 2,500,000 *liang* from the central treasury was provided to Jin to pay for the repairs.[49] This was a generous grant, equal to 75 percent of the revenue Jiangsu province was required to submit to the court every year. It was more than Jin had initially requested and sufficiently generous to earn the skepticism of many. But it did not provide Jin with the self-generating stream of funds that he saw as necessary for proper maintenance of the river structures. Jin was not given private access to the revenue provinces rendered to the state.

Jin and Chen had done their homework. When challenged by bureaucratic gatekeepers in the capital, they stood their ground on principles but were willing to modify numbers and requirements. Their proposal was sufficiently convincing that a court stretched for funds was willing to commit substantial resources to the effort. Through the early years of his directorship, Jin's official life seemed charmed. His appointments were made with imperial powers, and when his proposals met with bureaucratic opposition, the emperor intervened, offering Jin and Chen the chance to rewrite. When he needed money, it was provided, not in the form he wanted but in sufficient amount to meet his request. In view of the many decisions that went his way, it would be logical to conclude that Jin was a

personal protégé of the monarch. Yet in the only recorded early meeting between the two men, the emperor seemed to distrust the director and find him arrogant and closed to outside opinion.[50] The Kangxi emperor likely supported Jin not because of any personal relationship but because of the importance of the work Jin was doing.

Assessments: The Nature and Limits of Jin Fu's Success

From the year Jin Fu's proposals were approved until the end of his time as director, the Grand Canal flowed unimpeded to Beijing. The question of how Jin did it has fascinated scholars from the eighteenth century to the present, and the answers given have often reflected the times when they were written. One of the first assessments was by the remarkably productive and knowledgeable historian Li Zutao (1776–1854). Li wrote in the early nineteenth century, when Jin Fu's system was breaking down, the river bureaucracy was swollen beyond reason, and the whole administration suffered from late eighteenth-century appointees who saw the canal administration as a cash cow to be systematically milked.[51] Li praised Jin and his secretary, Chen Huang, as planners and managers who were able to conceive and execute projects of extraordinary scope and importance and willing to work when many others refused: "At a moment when collapse was imminent, most officials sighed, put their hands in their sleeves, and offered no ideas. Jin concentrated his heart, thought, effort, and ability on a comprehensive plan. Calculating and planning, organizing projects in sequence, he focused his effort on accomplishing ends and saving money." Li also warned his readers not to be deceived by the occasional frustration expressed in their writings. Rather than focus on Jin's frustrations, which may have been bitter, he encouraged his readers to pay attention to how they overcame disappointment to accomplish much.[52]

Twentieth-century scholarship has been inclined to see Jin Fu and Chen Huang as representing modern science, or at least a proto-scientific attitude. Whether Chen and Jin were scientists depended in part on what one means by science. Writing in 1938, Hou Renzhi quoted Chen Huang's advice to Jin Fu on taking up office as Grand Canal director: "I have observed that in human affairs, some try to push through with clever strategies, others try

arrogantly to impose themselves [on a situation], others use elegant words, and still others cover their eyes and ears, seeking an empty reputation in the future. However, the nature of water is established and unchanging. . . . Following its nature and seeking to use it is the only method."[53] Hou offered here a catalog of the ineffectual behaviors of traditional Chinese officials confronted with intractable problems. He meant to contrast these behaviors with a focus on the realities of river control that an official would have to have if he were to be successful. It was this realistic empiricism that Hou Renzhi deemed to be the "foundation of a scientific attitude" (*kexue de jiben taidu*).[54] Jin and Chen rejected traditional approaches; early on they proclaimed they would not be bound by adherence to precedent or respect for past practice: "There are some matters in which it is best to follow precedent and some in which current circumstances must be weighed; there are some matters in which things to be done first must be separated from things to be done later; and some matters in which everything must be done at once."[55] Jin and Chen's language was clear and their focus realistic, and in this sense they could be seen as proto-scientific. However, conceptually they did not advance beyond Pan Jixun. Nonetheless, Hou Renzhi offered them up hopefully as examples of early Chinese empiricism, speaking to an age of scientism, where Chinese faith in science was reinforced by contact with the western world.

Song Deyi offered another argument that Jin and Chen were innovators in February 1985. As the People's Republic moved into a reform era, Song offered Jin as an example of one who "sought truth from fact," the ideological desideratum of his day. Song saw the foundation of Jin and Chen's work as an effort to rethink traditional assumptions, reexamine the entire lower Yellow River and Grand Canal basin, and meticulously catalog work to be done. On this foundation, Song saw Jin and Chen as making technological innovations. He argued that Jin's willingness to build wider canals, more and more effective water gates, levees with earth drawn from within the stream being restrained, and sloped banks along Hongze Lake represented substantial technical improvements over Pan Jixun's practice and significant contributions to Chinese hydrology. The novelty of each of these innovations is unclear; what is clear is that Jin's success seemed to validate the focus on realism characteristic of the 1980s.[56]

One of the most useful assessments is the most recent. Jin Fu's work represented the Qing dynasty commitment to the regime of river maintenance that Ruth Mostern describes in *The Yellow River* as a "high revenue, high investment model of early modernity that spanned Eurasia, transforming its ecologies and societies."[57] Mostern offers a useful framework for assessing what Jin did, and did not, accomplish. The fundamental problem in Yellow River management, she demonstrates, was erosion of the loess soil of northwest China. The eroded soil entered the river and became the silt that raised the riverbed increased the danger of flooding, and complicated maintenance of the canal. Jin Fu did not address this basic problem. Instead, he endeavored to control the silt-ridden river by creating a gigantic infrastructure. Such an approach, Mostern reasons, prevented catastrophe, particularly along the canal, but at significant cost. It was a cost that she finds to be "staggering" during Pan Jixun's administration, and there is no reason to suspect that the Qing assessment was any different.

Significantly, this "high revenue, high investment" model did not prevent flooding; rather it sought to prevent damage to infrastructure. Continuing floods made Jin Fu vulnerable throughout his term. In 1680 flooding required new repairs, and Jin was formally cashiered from office but left in place to serve, a punishment known as "bearing his guilt" (*daizui*).[58] After floods in 1682 and a negative report on his work by the Manchu minister of finance Isanga (1638–1703), the emperor again reprimanded Jin but resisted a recommendation that he be dismissed.[59] Isanga added an accusation that surfaced often in regard to Jin: that he had received and spent a vast amount of money without producing a corresponding decrease in flooding:

> At a moment of military emergency, the governor-general proposed a major repair that would settle matters once and for all. The emperor specially authorized a payment of 2,500,000 *liang,* ordering him to carry out the work. All of the repairs he has made were actions that he proposed. Now the deadline for completion of the work has passed, and the money has all been used up. . . . This year's tribute boats have already sailed north, but there is cause to worry about the Grand Canal. The repairs Jin Fu has made in the levees are not secure in many places, and there are instances where the work is not up to standard.[60]

By the mid-1680s, Jin Fu was both successful and vulnerable. He had been successful in restoring the Grand Canal, and the grain and revenue that sailed along the canal was important to Qing victory in the Rebellion of Three Feudatories. But he was also vulnerable to charges of profligacy and inefficacy whenever late summer rains brought floods to northern Jiangsu province.

In view of the length of his personal service as director and the longevity of his system of managing the river, many in the three hundred years since Jin Fu's death have imagined him as making a singular contribution to the work of river maintenance. Conceptually, however, Jin Fu was conservative; his work did not embody conceptual innovation.[61] His uniqueness lay in his ability to mix commitment to the dynasty, a careful reading of the statecraft literature, observation of nature, and detailed planning with robust, militarily inflected management. He should be remembered as an insightful administrator rather than a striking innovator. The emperor resisted calls for his dismissal because Jin got the job—or at least the most important part of it—done, and as the monarch remarked on several occasions, there was no evidence that any other official could do it better. His fall from grace, the subject of the next chapter, was not because of his new techniques, but because the emperor's expectations for him changed.

TWO

Imperial Intervention

The year 1684 was a turning point in the life of the dynasty as in river affairs. In the autumn, Kangxi made his first trip to the southeast, met with Jin Fu and Chen Huang, and toured the network of levees that had been built. Until 1683, Jin and Chen had been left largely to their own devices; apart from requests for authorization and funds, Jin's name appeared relatively infrequently in the collected imperial edicts. With the end of the wars in south China and Taiwan, the emperor took a much more direct interest in Jiangnan and its rivers. From Jin's point of view, this new attention was both good and bad news. The good news was that the emperor came to understand his river control work more fully and knowledgably. The bad news was that the monarch seemed to value the river commissioner's feats of hydraulic engineering less than the welfare of the people who lived along the riverbanks. Vulnerable as he was to bureaucratic rivalries, these did not bring Jin down, nor can his fall from grace be laid at the feet of conservative statesmen. Rather it was Jin's reaction, or more likely overreaction, to the emperor's new emphases that led to Guo Xiu's impeachment. Confident of his understanding of the hydrology of the southeast, Jin defended his proposals with an intransigence that put him at odds not only with the emperor but with local elites.

The Heart of Heaven

The emperor's tour to the south in the autumn of 1684 was the first time he or any Qing monarch had set foot south of the Yellow River. The trip had multiple purposes. Michael G. Chang has traced a conflict in the Kangxi court between seeing the journey "as an exercise in benevolent civil government, or as a martially inflected rite of conquest" celebrating the Qing victory in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in 1683. In fact, as Chang

argues, the emperor pursued both ends, conspicuously engaging in administrative tasks even as he also staged *battue* hunts with military officials and Manchu notables. Chang also makes the important point that while on tour, imperial benevolence was conspicuously, even ritually, enacted. It was ideologically crucial that, however much the conquest had come about through military actions, the emperor appear on tour as a generous and benevolent sovereign, displaying concern and dispensing relief to any of his subjects who were suffering.[1]

By his effort, the emperor announced a significant change in the Chinese social base of the dynasty. In its early years, the Qing allied with northern Chinese and fought against the southeastern Chinese, whose resistance to Manchu rule was fierce, if ineffectual. In the 1680s, the southeastern Chinese came into their own as social and intellectual leaders of elite life under the Qing. There were several reasons for this. The Chinese education of the Kangxi emperor and other Manchus of his generation alerted them to the long-standing leadership of the southeast in Chinese affairs. The economic importance of the southeast was demonstrated when grain from the region fed the armies during the war years. Never again would the Qing central government ignore the southeastern elite.

River affairs were an important concern of southern landholders. Another purpose of the tour was to acquaint the emperor with the work Jin Fu had done in its geographical context.[2] The emperor spent time at Suqian, Jin Fu's base, and spoke with Jin both on his way south to Hangzhou and again on his return trip north. After the southern tour the emperor would have in his mind a mental image of the world Jin lived in and the problems he faced. On November 25, after visiting seven communities along the north bank of the river, the emperor said:

> I have long been interested in river affairs. In the palace, I frequently have looked into the details of various books about river defense. On river maps you have submitted through the years, I have researched the points where levees have broken. Although I knew the difficulty of riparian maintenance, I have never, until now, personally inspected the river. I could not imagine the surging waters of the river, the distances and heights of the levees. Now as I carefully examine the terrain and under-

stand the circumstances, and see personally [here the monarch named seven riverbank communities], each like lips embracing the current, I perceive the dangers.[3]

In the long speech that followed, the emperor related what he had learned during what seemed to have been an extended traveling tutorial. Many of his comments echoed Jin Fu's positions, and it appeared that the bannerman had made good use of the emperor's time on his trip to the south. Another benefit of the emperor's first trip to the south for Jin was that he was able to introduce the emperor to Chen Huang and to secure the emperor's approval for a special official appointment for his secretary. On his return trip up the Grand Canal, the emperor met Jin Fu again and parted from him with an encouraging comment: "Your river work these past few years has met with success. I know that you have exerted your full effort. If you continue to exert yourself fully, the work may be finished soon. It will be possible for the populace to return to their traditional labors, and you will have fulfilled my charge." The emperor also presented Jin with an imperial poem written to celebrate his accomplishments and one of the boats the monarch had used on his travels.[4]

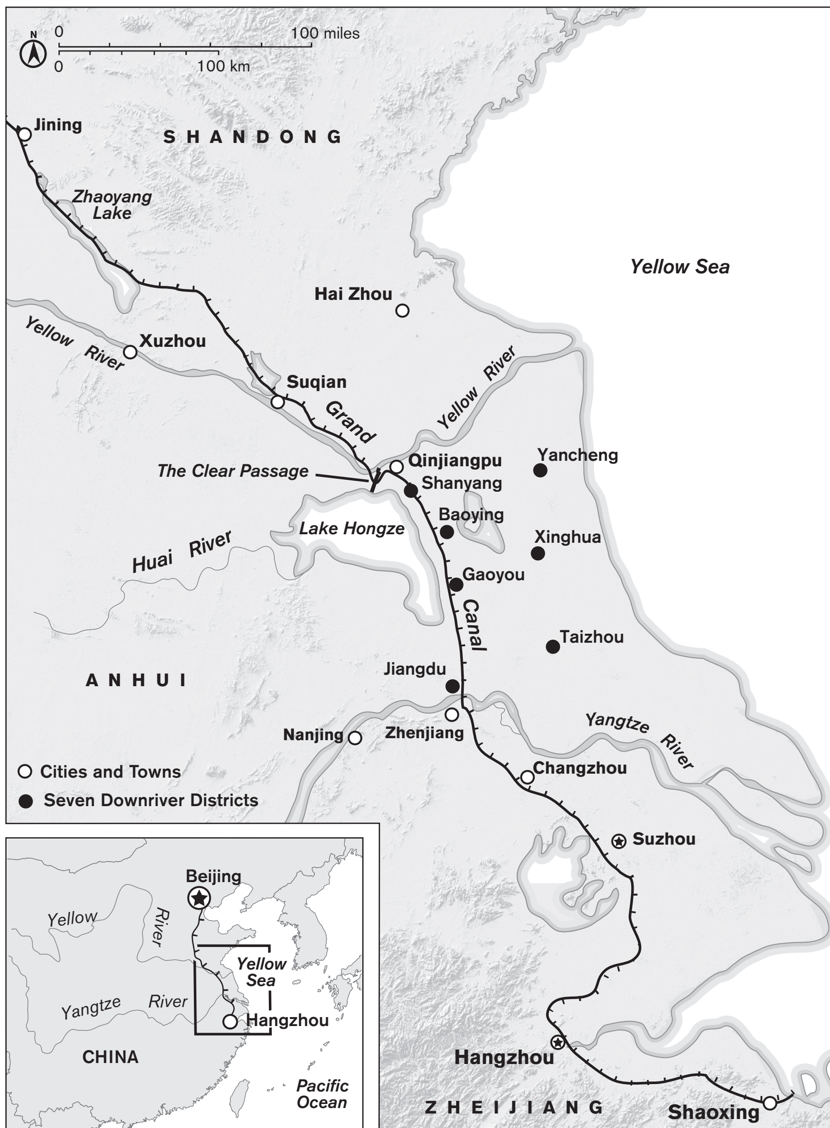
As willing as he was to praise Jin Fu's feats of hydraulic engineering, the monarch also made clear that he had another concern. The emperor was particularly moved by the poverty and misery of peasants whose lands had been flooded. He remarked to the Jiangnan governor-general who accompanied him: "I have traveled in Zhili, Shandong, and Jiangnan, but the people of Gaoyou [District] are the most pitiful I have ever seen. Now, although the waters have dried up and they have chosen higher places for their dwellings, their fields have been ruined by the floods. They cannot make a living, and my heart cannot bear [their misery]." The emperor asked the governor-general what could be done to alleviate their situation and why it hadn't been done. The governor-general responded, "This is the imperial heart of heaven, father and mother to the people, speaking. In fact, the people of Gaoyou are fairly fortunate."[5] The governor-general had a point. Although their lands were flood prone, those who lived in the delta resided on some of the richest agricultural lands in China. If the emperor had traveled farther around his empire, he certainly would

have encountered peasants whose lives were more miserable. Concern for popular livelihood was, however, baked into the emperorship in Chinese political thought, and manifesting it was one of the central purposes of the tour. Moreover, the reality of flooded lands and destroyed livelihoods could not be denied and remained an imperial preoccupation.

When the Kangxi emperor asked residents of Gaoyou District how their fields could be made more secure against flooding, they responded that the essential work was not building higher levees in the west of the province, as Jin Fu had proposed, but dredging the coastal mouths of the rivers that flowed east to the sea. Elders argued that in earlier times, east-flowing streams had carried away floodwaters, but the mouths of these streams had silted up, trapping the water in delta fields. If the mouths of these rivers were dredged, future flooding could be relieved.[6] The emperor was taken with this idea and sent the Manchu presidents of the ministries of personnel and works to the coast to inspect the river mouths to see if they were indeed closed. When they reported back that this was the case, the emperor ordered that the dredging be undertaken.[7]

The purpose of this dredging was to relieve flood danger in a region that was referred to as the "seven downriver districts." Extending from the east side of the Grand Canal to the sea and from the south bank of the Yellow River to Taizhou, the region included Yancheng and Shanyang Districts in Huaian Prefecture, as well as Gaoyou, Baoying, Jiangdu, Taizhou, and Xinghua Districts in Yangzhou Prefecture. Because the districts were spread between two prefectures, there was no single official who spoke for all the downriver districts, and the emperor's recognition of their situation was regarded as particularly appropriate.

Chinese scholarship is in agreement that 1684 saw a major change of direction in river policy and that the change came from the emperor, but the causes of the imperial change of mind have been variously explained. Was the emperor naive and ill informed in his judgment of the situation of the southeastern landowners?[8] Was he bent on asserting central power over local affairs?[9] In the absence of more evidence of the imperial thought, it is impossible to say. Seen in the larger context, however, the emperor's actions readily conformed to the new emphasis on the southeast apparent throughout post-rebellion Kangxi politics. The emperor came to the riv-



2. The Seven downriver counties

erbank and made a decisive and rather theatrical statement that no one could dispute. Policy direction was set.

Yu Chenglong

Recognizing that Jin Fu would be occupied with maintenance of the upriver levees, the emperor called for the appointment of another official to supervise the downriver dredging. After deliberation, the emperor approved the appointment of Yu Chenglong (1638–1700) to oversee downriver activities.[10] A Hanjun bannerman and almost an exact contemporary of Jin Fu, Yu Chenglong had situated himself differently in the corps of imperial servitors. Hanjun bannermen occupied a curious space in early Qing, halfway between Manchus and Chinese. As campaigns of conquest came to an end, roles and responsibilities were sorted out, and Chinese civilians emerged who were willing to take on the task of serving the new dynasty, there was less need in the Qing order for hybrid officials. Bannermen responded to the declining rationale for their existence in different ways. A generation after the 1680s, Pamela Crossley has shown, a prominent Hanjun banner family "chose" to become Manchus, adopting the naming practices and clothing of their overlords.[11] Yu Chenglong made a different choice. From a Zhili family that had joined the Qing armies, Yu was appointed as district magistrate in Zhili; he prided himself on honesty in administration and modeled himself on the then Zhili governor-general, whose honesty and transparency had earned him the nickname Clear-skies Yu (Yu Qingtian). Having the same surname as the governor-general, Yu took the same given name as his patron.[12] When Yu Qingtian was transferred to the governor-generalship of Jiangnan, he especially requested that Yu Chenglong be transferred with him, and the younger man became prefect of the capital district of Jiangnan. While on his southern tour in 1684, the emperor met Yu Qingtian and Yu Chenglong and, remarking on the reputation for honest administration Chenglong had acquired, promoted him to provincial judge of Anhui province. The responsibility for dredging the lower river was added to his responsibilities as provincial judge.

The emperor not only promoted Yu Chenglong but praised him lavishly. On his return to Beijing, Kangxi summoned Yu Chenglong's adoptive

father and presented him with a fur robe to recognize his achievement in raising such a son. The emperor wrote that the Qing had treated Chinese and Manchu bannermen equally, but he worried about the behavior of Chinese bannermen. Contrasting Yu Chenglong with bannermen who moved through the provinces surrounded by entourages of retainers, sought only luxury, and competed for wealth, the emperor wrote:

> Yu Chenglong is honest and loves the people. My heart delights in him, so it was that I rewarded him by promoting him to be Anhui provincial judge. I have also especially ordered that his father, a member of the banner army, be given a robe. . . . All who are in the eight banners ought to henceforth scour their hearts and eliminate evil habits, so that their children can serve in appointments outside the capital. It is appropriate that each of you in the banners should write letters to your children, urging them to be honest and emulate Yu Chenglong.[13]

How Jin Fu regarded all this praise for Yu Chenglong cannot be known, but he took a very dim view of Yu's assignment to dredge the lower rivers. In his memorial acknowledging receipt of the order to cooperate with Yu, Jin reacted. The argument he offered was not ad hominem. Jin praised the emperor for his interest in river affairs but urged him to remember that river work must be carried out by those who "grasp the whole situation" (*yi woyao lingshen quanjü*). Jin and Chen's approach to river control rested on the notion of using the river's current to scour the riverbed; given such a strategy, large pools of stagnant water in the lower river areas would work against such a policy. Such pools would form, Jin believed, because northern Jiangsu formed a natural basin, so that the land in the delta was in fact lower than sea level. Encouraging the flow of seawater into this lower delta area would only lead to more flooding of the lower delta and not achieve the emperor's purpose. It would be like trying "to pour ten gallons of water into five-gallon container; inevitably water would flow over the edges of the container, and move in all directions."[14]

Was Jin also jealous of the attention and authority the emperor bestowed on Yu Chenglong? This is entirely possible. Yu represented a different approach to the Hanjun bannerman's role in government, in which ad-

ministration was a civilian enterprise, as opposed to the semi-military enterprise of Jin Fu. There may well have been agitation in the Jiangnan delta for Jin's removal at the time Yu was appointed, and some may have seen the other bannerman's appointment as a step toward this end.[15] Even Guo Xiu saw the purpose of Yu Chenglong's appointment as restraining Jin Fu. This was highly unlikely in view of the ranks involved—Yu was a provincial judge (rank 4b) recently promoted from prefect, while Jin Fu held the rank of governor-general (2a)—but it may have been the hope of many in the southeast.

Contemporaries and historians agree that Yu's appointment was the root cause of the clash that dominated river affairs for the next five years. The decision was the emperor's alone; most at court expected that Jin would manage both the upstream and downstream projects. In "Kangqian shiqi," Wang Yinghua argues that the emperor had lost confidence in Jin Fu and that he trusted Yu Chenglong's reputation for honesty more than Jin Fu's technical expertise.[16] This was unlikely in view of the confidence in Jin the emperor had expressed in 1688. Another possibility was that the emperor deliberately meant to set the two officials in competition to see which would be most successful, a possibility made likely by the monarch's repeated musing about how the abilities of a potential river director could be tested before he was appointed. The emperor's own rationale was that Jin Fu was very busy, the two projects were far apart, and the lower river dredging would be too much of a burden for the director. However the decision was made, it set upstream and downstream efforts in opposition to one another and provoked a fairly spectacular response from Jin Fu.

1685: Counterproposal

To a degree that the monarch may not have realized, the downriver project posed a direct challenge to Jin Fu and Chen Huang, who prided themselves on their specialized knowledge of the geology and hydrography of northern Jiangsu and firmly believed that dredging the lower rivers would not work. As much as they feared the emperor's new project, they could not dismiss the emperor's concern for northern Jiangsu landowners. Their challenge was, therefore, to develop a scheme to achieve the imperial goals in north-

ern Jiangsu, a counterproposal that could be substituted for dredging the river. They did this in 1684–85, and their plan was gigantic.

In the autumn of 1685, Jin Fu conveyed to the emperor four large proposals for new construction that, in his view, would obviate the need for Yü's dredging of the river mouths. The first of these projects involved three revisions to infrastructure along the Grand Canal and Lake Hongze. It became one of Jin Fu's cardinal principles that the potential for flooding should be controlled at its upriver origins rather than downriver. Flooding in the seven downriver counties began with water overtopping and then breaking down the levees along the east side of the Grand Canal. To control this danger, he proposed to strengthen the Gao Family Dike, which restrained Lake Hongze.[17] Second, he recommended that shallow spots in the Grand Canal be dredged to allow water to flow smoothly north to the Yellow River. The third of Jin's upriver projects was an effort to shore up the levee on the east side of the Grand Canal to alleviate flood danger. Jin projected that these three projects would cost 532,800 *liang*.[18]

Jin's fourth proposal was his largest and represented his final response to the imperial initiative Yu Chenglong supervised. To alleviate the danger of flooding in the downriver districts, he proposed building a system of canals and locks that would guide excess water from the Grand Canal across northern Jiangsu to the sea. If such infrastructure were built, Jin was prepared to guarantee that "when the work is completed, there will be no further worries" (*gong wan zhi hou, bixu yong wu tuo huan*).[19] This solution would, however, be very expensive. Calculating the cost of building the three new canals and the necessary locks, Jin estimated that the effort would cost 2,780,000 *liang*.[20] To build the new canals, Jin put aside his preference for local officials as overseers in the face of the enormous amount of work his proposed project entailed. He proposed to appoint fifty-four supervisors and two hundred assistants, and commandeer the services of nineteen sub-magisterial personnel in the downriver counties. The proposal reflected Jin Fu's taste for large infrastructural solutions and his confidence—almost hubris—that he understood the hydrology of north Jiangsu better than anyone else of his generation.

What made the proposal controversial was the way Jin recommended funding it. Declaring that he could not, in good conscience, request such a

large amount of money from the central government, he outlined means by which it could be repaid. Some of the costs could be borne by the districts through which the new canals would pass; salt merchants, who would be provided with cheaper water transportation from the coastal salt marshes where they produced their product to the inland markets where they sold it, could pay more. But the largest portion of the reimbursement would come from renting out lands that became cultivable as they were dried out. Jin estimated that as much as 450,000–600,000 acres could be made available. He envisioned that the tenants for these "newly created lands" would be landless peasants brought from areas of misery and dearth. Landless peasants often failed when they were resettled, Jin argued, because they were given only marginal lands and a mule. To guarantee success, Jin proposed that new tenants of northern Jiangsu should be given food and clothing, and rent should not be collected for the first three years while they settled in. Once rent collection began, a stream of revenue would be created that would pay for the proposed project, underwrite further repairs to the river infrastructure, and even produce extra income that could be returned to the central treasury.[21]

Jin referred to the lands he would provide to peasants as "military agricultural colonies" (*tuntian*). Military agricultural colonies were first created during the Tang Dynasty (618–908), when they were used to support the standing army; peasant tenants farmed lands owned by the state, and the rents they paid went to support soldiers. In the Qing, about 23,000 acres of land were set aside as colonies to support the 60,000–70,000 men who pulled barges loaded with tribute grain along the Grand Canal.[22] The Qing also set aside lands throughout northern China to support the Manchu bannermen who served in garrisons in the capital and other cities. In principle, such colonies could be created, and Jin Fu's notion that land in Jiangnan could be set aside for poor peasants from other regions had precedents.

The problem was with Jin's estimate of the land available for such colonies, which he produced by comparing an estimate of the total area of southern districts with the amount of land that was taxed. Had tax registers been an accurate measure of the land owned, this might have been an appropriate procedure, but tax registers in the delta were notoriously inaccurate. There had not been a recent cadastral survey, and tax obligations

represented more a negotiation between landowners and officials than an accurate statement of land tenure. Commenting on Jin Fu's proposal, the *Baoying County Gazetteer* noted that in some of the downriver counties, four *qing* was counted as one *qing* for tax purposes, and in others, ten *qing* was counted as one.[23] In his memorial, Jin Fu specifically cited the case of Taizhou District, which he estimated contained 40,000 *qing* of land, of which only 9,300 was taxed. The *Baoying Gazetteer* noted that in Taizhou, four *qing* counted as one for tax purposes, so that in fact the 9,300 *qing* that were taxed constituted all of the land in the county. Despite Jin's observation, landowners would claim that there was no empty land in Taizhou, and any effort to create agricultural colonies there would involve seizing land that Taizhou residents regarded as their own. From the standpoint of the *Baoying Gazetteer*, Jin's scheme was a land grab, an expropriation.[24]

This proposal, which would be contested at court and in Jiangnan for the next three years, involved a measure of time warp. There was a moment in the very early Qing when Manchu forces were allied with landless peasants from north China against the landholders of the southeastern delta. At that moment, which was also the time when the Qing administration was most dependent on Chinese martial bannermen, it would have made sense to resettle landless peasants from north China in the delta. However, by the 1680s, the prospect of dispossessing delta landholders and planting substantial numbers of alien landless peasants on their lands was no longer attractive. Thirty years earlier, Jin Fu's proposal might well have been welcome in Beijing; in 1680, it was anachronistic.

Jin Fu's recommendations may have been anachronistic in another respect. As the requests made their way up the chain of review, it developed that the cost of the work was not quite the obstacle that Jin imagined it would be. The Ministry of Works recommended approval, and the full court discussed the proposal on November 18. The emperor addressed the three requests separately. He seemed most intrigued by the third one and asked the Chinese minister of works whether it would in fact prevent flooding in the downriver counties. When the minister allowed that it would, the emperor remarked, "The purpose of river defense is to protect the people's livelihood. Moreover, the state treasury is somewhat fuller at present than in

the past [*guoji jiao qian xiao yu*]. If this really would save people's livelihood and allow more grain to be raised, then perhaps 2,780,000 *liang* would not be too much [to spend]." It remains a remarkable testimony to the growth of the post-rebellion economy that the emperor could contemplate making an expenditure of this size from the central treasury. The proposal that military colonies be established to support the river commissioner's treasury particularly troubled the emperor, who commented on this aspect of Jin's proposal: "If we dry out the land but demand rent in return, it will be a burden to the people. My thought is that drying out the land and then returning it to the people to cultivate would be the best."[25]

Dueling Officials

On the same day that Jin Fu's project was discussed at court, summonses were issued for Jin and Yu Chenglong to come to the capital for an imperial audience. No rationale was provided for this either in the edict record or in the diary, but as the two officials directed projects that had the same end but approached it by opposing means, it seems likely the officials were meant to reach some sort of agreement. Jin Fu started for the capital on December 3.[26] When Yu and Jin met, both clung stoutly to their points of view. Courtiers reported that no compromise was possible (*yi bu hua yi*). The decision was left to the emperor, who sought further input: "Now we have two people, each convinced of his own view, and both views are logical [*you li*]. It seems that both could be accomplished. But we don't know which would benefit and not harm the people. You should ask officials at court from the seven downriver districts which of the two projects they support. They can gather together their fellow landsmen."[27]

Within a few days one of the diarists of action and repose, Qiao Lai (1642–1694) from Baoying District, emerged to give testimony.[28] Qiao concurred with the opinions the emperor had heard on his trip to the south and testified, "The work Yu proposes will be easy to accomplish and will benefit the people. The work Jin proposes will be hard to accomplish and will harm the people." In particular, building levees along the east-flowing rivers would damage fields, homes, and ancestral graves. After Qiao testi-

fied, the emperor asked whether he was representing only his own views or those of the district elites. Qiao answered that the landowners of the district were in agreement.[29]

A note in the *Baoying Gazetteer* detailed how this agreement had been reached. The *Gazetteer* claimed that before Qiao's appearance at court, Chen Huang had offered Qiao a bribe of 100,000 *liang* to testify in favor of Jin's proposal, which Qiao rejected. Also, before Qiao's testimony, officials from the Huaiyang downriver districts had drafted a thousand-word memorial that one of their number, a censor, was to present opposing Jin Fu's plan.[30] To prepare the memorial they had gathered at Qiao's Beijing residence one evening to vent their opposition. The labor and money needed to build the canals, they argued, would bankrupt the districts: "The rich would become poor and the poor would flee." To secure land for his canal, Jin would seize farmlands and gravesites, which would cease to be the people's land and become property of the state. The canal Jin proposed to build would not be high enough or wide enough to prevent flooding when autumn storms came. The hundreds of new officials set to supervise the work would distort selection procedures. All in all, the officials decided, Jin's proposal was one that their generation should "fight to the death" (*wo bei dang yi si zheng zhi*).[31]

Such were the views of the elite, the emperor reasoned, but what about the ordinary people? The emperor's query raised an interesting issue: How did a conquest regime solicit public opinion when memories of armed resistance were still fresh and there were financial interests at stake? The figure to whom the emperor turned to handle the inquiries and reconcile this increasingly complex case was Samha (d. 1704), a Manchu of the Plain Yellow Banner. Samha's position as Manchu minister of works made him a logical choice, although there was also a Chinese minister of works who might have been better suited to interview local people. However, Samha, who earned the *jinshi* degree in 1655, was so well versed in Chinese that he had made a career of high-level errands on behalf of the court. His most famous errand came shortly after the emperor had accepted Wu Sangui's resignation, the act that would trigger the rebellion. Samha was sent to Guizhou to quietly investigate the situation and discovered that the Guizhou governor and others had turned coat, allying themselves with

Wu. Samha raced back to the capital and informed the emperor that the war had begun.[32]

When Samha and his team reached Jiangnan, they found that the situation was hardly black and white. After consulting with local officials, Jiangsu governor Tang Bin (1627–1687) and the director-general of grain transport, Samha had a meeting with ten residents selected by the local officials to assess attitudes toward the projects of building levies upriver and dredging the lower rivers. There were a variety of opinions; in fact, there were so many objections to both projects that Samha returned to Beijing to recommend that neither be undertaken.[33] When the report was discussed at a court conference with Yu Chenglong present, courtiers raised the issue of cost. If neither project was obviously superior, should both be undertaken? How much would Yu's dredging project cost? Yu answered that it would cost about 100,000 *liang*. In the matter of cost estimates, Yu was nowhere near as prepared as Jin Fu, whose memorials carefully spelled out the nature of the work to be done and the costs of materials and labor.[34] Since the courtiers had several times recommended Jin Fu's projects, they came to regard Yu's coastal dredging project as an expensive and unnecessary add-on.[35] Reluctantly, the emperor went along with this advice, with the caveat that further choices might be made when flood season came. It seemed that Yu Chenglong had lost the battle, but he had not lost the emperor's confidence. A week later he was promoted to governor of Zhili.[36]

So matters remained through the winter of 1686, which, because it was the dry season, was when most of the repair work was accomplished. In June, however, a chance meeting at court cast the situation in the south in a different light. In April 1686, the emperor decided that since Tang Bin, then governor of Jiangsu, was such a towering talent, he deserved to serve in a more important position, and so appointed him minister of rites.[37] Tang Bin moved to the capital and had an audience with the emperor on taking up his new position. The conversation turned to conditions in Jiangsu, specifically to flood prevention. Some of what Tang told the emperor reinforced what Samha had reported: there was opposition to both the upriver and downriver projects. Jin Fu's dredging project was opposed because it would destroy ancestral graves along the river; moreover, it would be very expensive and difficult to accomplish since moving muddy earth was not

easy. The coastal project was resisted because drought conditions in Jiangsu were not ideal for large infrastructure projects. If, however, the emperor truly wanted to embark on a river project in the delta, Tang ventured to observe that the coastal dredging project made more sense than the upriver project. "If we can open up the river one foot, that will bring one foot's benefit; if we can open up the river by one inch that will bring one inch's benefit. After the excess water is drained away and the lakes and rivers of central Jiangsu are returned to normal, then dredging and levee building can be undertaken, and projects will have been carried out in proper sequence." Tang Bin also suggested that the expense of dredging the lower rivers could be borne by the districts along the riverbanks and the labor carried out by local people, particularly if taxes were remitted for several years in these selected districts. Why hadn't this view been expressed in Samha's report, the emperor asked. Tang Bin responded that because the report had to be first drafted in Manchu, then translated into Chinese, he had not wanted to complicate the process; moreover, Samha's main mission had been to contact local residents.[38]

The emperor summoned Samha the next day. Had he heard Tang Bin's view when he was in Jiangnan? Why hadn't he reported on it? Samha conceded that while he was in the south, Tang Bin had mentioned that dredging the high places in the lower rivers might have some benefit for the people. But, Samha said, Tang had presented the idea only in conversation; he had not publicly presented the view with evidence (*bing fei gongtong shang que*). Samha's distinction between views presented with evidence and those offered in conversation seemed overly legalistic for what had been a fact-finding mission. The emperor pressed further. Did Samha believe that dredging the rivers would be beneficial? Samha responded that he feared the upriver levees could not be built, and if this were the case, the lower river dredging would be beneficial.[39] Had Samha in fact suppressed Tang's view? In retrospect and without evidence, conclusions can hardly be definite.

On July 25, a little more than a month after interviewing Tang, the emperor asked his court to review the lower-river dredging project yet again. In response, they raised several issues: For dredging at the coasts to succeed, it would be necessary to close upriver floodgates to reduce the flow of water downriver. Could this be done? Or would closing the upriver floodgates so

significantly increase the risk of flooding that the effort would be counter-productive? Moreover, could the lower river counties support the dredging operations out of their own funds, or would money have to be allocated from the central treasury? On the first issue, the court concluded that the former governor's views "must be correct" (*bique*), that closing the water gates and dredging would be possible and productive. It was decided, however, that in view of the drought, the central government should allocate revenues for the coastal project.[40] They concluded that Samha had been too willing to listen to the testimony of Gao Chengmei, the Yangzhou prefect, who was likely a protégé of Jin Fu.[41] It was also claimed that the review committee had visited the coast at a moment when the seas were particularly high, and therefore reached their conclusion in error. Despite these mitigating circumstances, Samha was cashiered from his post as minister of works on August 4.

Having set two officials in competition, the emperor found himself unable to effect a compromise, or even to secure the necessary information to choose between them. The longer the competition persisted, the more officials took sides, and the more likely it became that partisanship and even corruption would surround the decision. As much as the emperor professed to despise partisanship, he created it through his own policies in the late 1680s. He would also be surprised by Jin Fu's dogged persistence.

River Redux

Confronted with evidence that there was support in Jiangnan for dredging the lower rivers, the emperor resolved to continue the interrupted project. Yu Chenglong being otherwise employed, the emperor sought another official to supervise the project. He settled on Sun Zaifeng (d. 1689). Unlike Jin and Yu, Sun was not a bannerman, but he was nonetheless well known to the emperor. From Zhejiang, Sun had received his *jinshi* degree in 1670, ranking second in the competition; he was appointed Hanlin compiler and served as an imperial diarist. He had also delivered several Classics Mat lectures.[42] Sun had accompanied the Kangxi emperor on his first southern tour and may well have been present when the seven county landholders proposed dredging at the mouths of the rivers.[43]

With Sun's appointment came a call for Jin Fu's removal from office. Arguing that during his nine years in office, Jin Fu had been unable to accomplish his goal, the Chinese minister of works recommended his dismissal. As was his habit in important matters, the emperor referred the matter to his courtiers for deliberation, observing that "if at given moment when there appeared to be no accomplishment, one applied administrative punishments and appointed a new person, there could easily be mistakes." Moving too fast in such an important matter could lead to disastrous consequences. The emperor reflected that it would be better to wait for a year or two before taking action. Following the emperor's suggestion, the courtiers recommended that Jin Fu be, once again, formally dismissed from office but allowed to remain at his post. Accepting the recommendation, the emperor declared that the issue of Jin Fu's service appeared to have become a matter of factional dispute. Courtiers did not realize, the emperor said, that whether Jin stayed or left, the real issue was how secure the river works were. Courtiers once again pointed to the need in the near future to close the floodgates and argued that unless a knowledgeable person were in charge, the danger could be high.[44]

The issue of closing the floodgates dominated the next few months of discussion. In late August 1686, Sun Zaifeng set off to the seacoast, inspected four east-flowing rivers, and established priorities among them based on the amount of water they channeled. He reported his findings to the court on November 29, requesting approval of his plans.[45] Sun also asked that several flood prevention embankments be changed to floodgates, so that the flow of water along the lower rivers could be regulated more precisely. The emperor found these proposals sensible and approved them, then ordered Sun to consult with Jin Fu to coordinate the work. The meeting between Jin and Sun took place in early December, and Sun asked Jin to close the upriver floodgates so that downriver dredging could occur.[46] Jin Fu refused, or as he subsequently claimed, he agreed to close some of the gates but not all of them. On December 10, the court received Sun Zaifeng's memorial requesting that the emperor order Jin Fu to close the gates so work on the lower river could proceed. If Sun was requesting such an order, the emperor observed, their meeting could not have gone well. Courtiers suggested that

both Jin and Sun be summoned to the capital for a face-to-face meeting with the emperor, but the emperor decided that he really only needed to speak to Jin Fu. The river director was summoned to the capital to explain his refusal to facilitate lower-river dredging.

It was not until March 1687, near the end of the winter work season on the rivers, that Jin Fu appeared at court. Jin underwent two days of interrogation on February 28 and March 1, 1687. He was first interviewed by senior court officials, during which he indicated that he willing to close the floodgates along the canal south of Gaoyou District but steadfastly refused to close all the water gates north of Gaoyou, particularly the six gates he had himself constructed in the Gao Family Dike. His reasoning was that the Gao Family Dike surrounded Lake Hongze, and if that lake became too full and the gates were closed, the excess water would pour down the course of the Yellow River, bringing flooding and interfering with the transport of tribute grain. The interview was then interrupted by the arrival of a Khalka ambassador whom the emperor had to meet.[47]

The court officials reported Jin's testimony to the emperor, who then met Jin in an audience. The emperor asked if Jin wanted to add anything to his account, and Jin complained that at a moment when his own treasury as governor-general of the Grand Canal was empty, money was being spent on what he termed "useless dredging of river mouths." He then repeated his argument that if the lower rivers were dredged at the coast as proposed, seawater would flow into the upper Jiangsu basin, an objection that the emperor rejected out of hand.[48] At this point, Tang Bin pointed out that levees far along the Yellow River had been reinforced several times and water gates installed, and therefore they should be able to withstand increased flow, were that necessary. Jin Fu responded, "River affairs are very difficult to understand. You must have held office for two or three years before you understand them. After your experience, can you really say you understand such matters? When I was first appointed, I made many mistakes, and only then could I say I understood the situation."[49] Jin Fu's claim here—that his special expertise and knowledge of the lower Yellow and Huai Rivers area provided him with the authority to reject the observations of senior officials like Tang Bin and even of the emperor—was a dangerous one at the Qing

court. Although the Kangxi emperor was curious and open-minded about scientific truths, the notion that specialized knowledge gave one priority in a court of generalists was problematic.

The next day, the emperor effected a compromise. He suggested that if Jin would close the water gate between the Yellow River and Lake Hongze, then the danger of the lake overfilling would be alleviated, and the gates along the Gao Family Dike could be safely closed. Faced with a direct imperial order, Jin Fu could not refuse, though he asserted that the closure could only occur during the three dry winter months and made clear that the responsibility was the emperor's. As it was already close to the end of the first lunar month of 1687, this meant there would only be two months for dredging the lower rivers.

The ensuing summer of 1687 would be Jin's last one as director, as impeachment resulted in his dismissal in January 1688. The problem that ended his tenure was not his stubborn opposition to opening the floodgates, although his position came within a hair's breadth of ignoring a direct order of the Son of Heaven. Nor was Jin's downfall the product of his claim that his superior knowledge of the river system should enable him to prevail over several of the most celebrated and accomplished scholar-officials of the day, although certainly this claim put Jin at odds with the dominant attitudes of a Confucian court. What brought down Jin Fu was the attempt he made, beginning in the summer of 1687, to seize lands along the riverbanks with the intent of creating agricultural colonies. This created an uproar in the seven downriver counties.

Effective work on the river infrastructure required a delicate balance among local, central, and bureaucratic interests. On the rare occasions when these interests were in accord, much could be accomplished; when they were not, chaos could ensue.[50] At one level, the argument in 1687 was over seized lands, flooded property, and ruined gravesites. At another level, the conflict was a deep, long-standing one between the state interest in maintaining the Grand Canal infrastructure and the southeastern grain it carried and landowners' interest in preventing flooding along the rivers and streams of

Jiangsu. Money spent on the canal was money not spent on flood protection, and steps necessary to sustain the canal could increase flood danger. Jin Fu, servant of the Manchu state, had long effectively maintained the canal, but he did not see his role as serving the interests of landowners. This stance was appropriate through the early years of his directorate. Once the landholders had the emperor on their side, Jin became vulnerable. His overreaction—a vast drainage scheme, military agricultural colonies, and a bribe offered to Jiangsu people in the capital—got him in trouble. Hearing of the tumult, a new censor resolved to bring the matter to the attention of the emperor. The conflict moved once again from the riverbanks of Jiangsu to the Forbidden City. Here, according to Guo Xiu, it attracted the attention of the powerful grand secretary Mingju.

THREE

Mingju

The rebels were pacified and the emperor glorified, the four directions at peace and the court in order, the ruler enlightened, the official worthy, the people at rest and the times prosperous.
VERSES INSCRIBED ON MINGJU'S TOMBSTONE

Favorites rose in China, as elsewhere, from a combination of ancestry, political advocacy, and service to the monarch.[1] From the seventeenth-century point of view, Mingju had it all: a high position in the Manchu order, crucial posts in the state bureaucracy, association with the major initiatives of the early Kangxi reign, a close relationship with the emperor, and an entrepreneurial bent of mind that led his biographer in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* to call him "a skillful business executive."[2] How had Mingju come to have it all? How did he secure the opportunity for corruption that, according to Guo Xiu, he so assiduously exploited? What combination of entitlement, accomplishment, or luck placed him so favorably in the last quarter of the seventeenth century?[3] Inheritance certainly played a part, as it located him in the Plain Yellow Banner, the dominant banner in the early Kangxi court. However, the circumstances of Mingju's family's enrollment in the Plain Yellow Banner meant that he would not be its most favored member. Much of Mingju's position rested on his accomplishments as Manchu minister and grand secretary; his work in these capacities placed him at the cutting edge of many of the reforms the young Kangxi emperor set out to achieve in the first decades of his reign.

Yehenala Bodyguard

Mingju's position at the imperial court was rooted in clan and kinship relations established before the conquest. Nurhaci (1559–1626), founder of the Manchu order, spent much of his political career bringing together

the Jurchen tribes who inhabited the northeast corner of their eponymous Manchuria. The last to be incorporated in Nurhaci's system was a group that lived along the Yehe River, the Yehenala.[4] They resisted Nurhaci for many years, meanwhile trying to secure peace by sending the daughter of their chief to be Nurhaci's wife.[5] They may have received some support from the Ming Dynasty in return for their resistance, support that was one of the Seven Grievances that Nurhaci proclaimed as he went to war against the Qing.[6] Mingju's grandfather, Gintaisi (d. 1619), the last leader of the Yehenala, died either by execution at Nurhaci's hand or by suicide.[7] Mingju's father, Niyaha (d. 1647), was the first Yehenala to willingly serve the Qing. He was accorded membership in the Plain Yellow Banner, controlled directly by the emperor, and appointed to high office both to recognize his valor in the Qing army and because the Yehenala woman sent to Nurhaci in an effort to secure peace became the mother of Nurhaci's successor.[8]

Mingju was born in 1635, a distant cousin of emperor he would serve. Mingju's mother died when he was six *sui*, and his father barely survived the conquest, dying when Mingju was 12 *sui*. As a member of one of the upper three banners, he was entitled to begin his service as an imperial bodyguard, and when at age seventeen the Shunzhi emperor remarked on his talent, he was appointed. At an earlier point in Manchu history, the notion of a Yehenala bodyguard for the Qing emperor would have been almost an oxymoron, but conquest and the founding of a new order made such an appointment possible in the 1650s.

In the post-conquest years, Mingju advanced steadily. He served first in the division of the imperial bodyguard responsible for imperial carriages, and then was promoted to department director in the imperial household.[9] In 1663 he was promoted again to commandant of the bodyguard at the Southern Park (*neiwufu zongguan*), the first ranked position he held.[10]

From his post as commandant of the bodyguard, Mingju moved into posts in civil administration. In 1665, he was appointed a sub-chancellor of the grand secretariat (rank 2b), a post that was primarily concerned with managing the secretariat archives.[11] The same year he was appointed assistant editor of the formal record of edicts issued by the Kangxi emperor's father.[12] In 1667, he was designated to accompany the Manchu minister of works, Marsai (d. 1733), to Jiangnan to inspect the Huai and lower Yellow

river works. This was a temporary commission that bore no specific rank, but travel on an imperial commission with expenses paid, often generously, by the officials whose jurisdictions were passed was a perk at the court.[13]

Mingju's career demonstrated one of the ways the regime was incorporating Manchus into the Qing civilian order. He began service at rank 4A, midway along the eight-rank system used to classify officials.[14] By comparison, a Chinese who passed the examinations and was appointed to start his career as a district magistrate held rank 7a and might pass a whole career ascending to the fourth rank. Like their Chinese counterparts, Manchus in the Qing climbed a bureaucratic ladder of rank and prestige, but they didn't start at the bottom. Posts around the emperor to which Manchus were likely to be appointed were assigned relatively high rank, and by this means the Qing reconciled their native order with the famously meritocratic order of the Chinese.

Minister of War

The Kangxi emperor's purge of his regents in 1669 was a turning point of the reign. Born after the conquest and educated by tutors in Chinese language and Chinese attitudes toward government and morality, the emperor set out after the purge to restore Chinese institutions that the regents had deemphasized. This second beginning of the Kangxi reign proved to be a favorable time for men who could operate in both the Manchu and Chinese cultural worlds. Mingju's biographies provide no evidence of his schooling. Throughout his life, however, he was reputed to be both bilingual and bicultural; he interacted with Chinese scholars on nearly equal terms and proved to be master of both Chinese and Manchu documents.[15] In one of the emperor's early appointments after taking personal control, Mingju was made Manchu president of the Censorate.

During the regency, the Censorate had lost influence, but it was one of the first institutions to which the emperor appointed his own men.[16] In the spring of 1670 Mingju was selected as a Classics Mat lecturer (*jingyan jiang guan*) for the emperor.[17] The Classics Mat lectures were occasions on which officials offered an explication of a classical text for the emperor's benefit. The title referred to the idea that emperor and scholar would sit on mats

facing each other like the rulers and advisers of classical antiquity. The lecturers were normally Chinese officials of fairly high rank or demonstrated scholarly achievement. Mingju was among twelve individuals designated in the first month of 1670 to be lecturers, one of two Manchus in the group. On October 2, 1673, Mingju and Wang Xi (1628–1703) jointly delivered their lecture on a line from the *Book of Documents*: "Let not the emperor set to the rulers of States an example of indolence or dissoluteness. Let him be wary and fearful, remembering that in one or two days, there may occur ten thousand springs of things."[18]

Mingju may have attracted the emperor's attention with his exposition of the Chinese classics, but the need that he was called upon to fill was military. Unfortunately, the opening to Chinese civil discourse precipitated by the Kangxi emperor's personal assumption of power in 1670 did not last long. This was the case in part because the initial Qing conquest had been incomplete. In 1644–45, Manchu armies only conquered lands north of the Yangzi, leaving the conquest and government of the south to three Chinese warlords, Wu Sangui (1612–1678), Shang Kexi (d. 1676), and Geng Jingzhong (d. 1682). The arrangement was stable for the lives of the three warlords, but as they grew older, the question emerged of how the south was to be permanently governed. Just as the crisis in the south was unfolding, Mingju was appointed Manchu minister of war.

A story inserted into Mingju's official biography provides context for this appointment, but the anecdote requires a bit of unpacking. According to *Qingshi*, the emperor had occasion to observe Mingju drilling troops from the Liangying Tai. Pleased with what he saw, the monarch ordered that Mingju's procedures be made law.[19] No such endorsement appeared in the diaries or the *Veritable Records*. The Liangying Tai was a pavilion overlooking a military parade ground located in the Imperial Southern Hunting Park; events there were formal affairs of state attended by the imperial family and the court. Kangxi's pleased observation of troops drilled by Mingju was not a random event but likely occurred at an official imperial review. In the official biography, this event was identified as occurring one month after Mingju's appointment as minister of war. Given the number of significant events Mingju confronted almost immediately after his appointment, it seems unlikely that he would have had the time

to spend perfecting troop drills and performing them as minister of war. If, however, the episode occurred earlier, when Mingju was commandant of the imperial bodyguard at the Southern Park, it might suggest why the young emperor turned to Mingju when he needed someone for military affairs in troubled times. Mingju was the first minister of war personally appointed by the young emperor and soon began to receive marks of imperial favor. In 1671, he was among a small group of princes and senior officials who were allowed to accompany the emperor as he plowed the ritual furrow at the Altar of Heaven on the first day of spring.[20] He was also given a hereditary captaincy in the banner armies, which he was able to pass on to his son, Singde (1655–1685).

Mingju's appointment as minister of war put him at the cutting edge of imperial concerns. Just five days before his appointment, Shang Kexi, the feudatory prince who held Qing territory in Guangdong, petitioned the court to allow his son to exercise his powers during his illness, in one of the first indications that the princes might attempt to pass on their status to their sons. The Ministry of War was involved in any actions affecting the feudatories, as they constituted the dynasty's defenses along its sea and southern frontiers. A young, personally chosen minister could be expected to play a central part in these decisions. Shang Kexi was permitted to transfer his powers temporarily. Some months later, Wu Sangui requested permission to withdraw his troops from the southwest and retire to Manchuria. While Shang Kexi's request was prompted by ill health, Wu Sangui's was meant as a test for the new monarch. Acceptance of the request would be tantamount to dismissal for Wu, who had no intention of voluntarily abandoning his position.

Many argued that Wu was indispensable in the south: "Yunnan has hereditary local officials of the Miao and Man, and it would be unwise to loosen control over them in the slightest. If the prince [Wu Sangui] were allowed to withdraw, it would be necessary to send Manchu troops to control [the province]. The arrival of Manchu troops, and the departure of [Wang's] troops would surely create local disturbances."[21] These counselors saw little reason to reject the compromises made at the time of the Qing conquest, and fear of the unknown Miao and Man tribes was a useful idiom to express their opposition.

The new emperor chose to move in a different direction. Rejecting his counselors' advice, the emperor ordered that Wu Sangui's petition be accepted and his troops be allowed to withdraw from the southwest. Although no account of this decision has been preserved, two sources claim that Mingju argued for accepting the feudatory prince's resignation. One of these is a funerary biography for Mingju composed by Wang Hongxu (1645–1723), who was a Hanlin academician during the debate.[22] Noting that many said the feudatory princes could not be removed, Wang claimed that Mingju "argued forcefully" (*kang yan*) that Shang Kexi's resignation should be accepted.[23] It was noteworthy that Wang praised Mingju for supporting the decision to accept Shang Kexi's resignation rather than Wu Sangui's, which was the more politically important decision. Associating Mingju with the Wu Sangui decision might have been problematic since accepting Wu's resignation led to war, and during the ensuing conflict conservatives proposed that those who had supported the war be executed for wasting Manchu men and treasure. In saying that Mingju supported the earlier request, Wang may have been asserting that Mingju was involved in wartime decision-making without acknowledging the subsequent call for his execution.

The degree and nature of the young Kangxi emperor's agency in the decision and, implicitly, the significance of Mingju's advice to accept the resignations, have been variously assessed. The emperor's most prominent English-language biographer, Jonathan Spence, attributes the decision primarily to the emperor.[24] H. Lyman Miller, who studies factionalism during the early Qing, acknowledges Mingju's influence, but also asserts that the emperor's grandmother must have played a role in the decision, as does Silas Wu in *Passage to Power*.[25] The emperor visited the grand empress dowager almost daily, including the days before and the day after he made the fateful decision to accept Wu Sangui's offer to withdraw from the southwest.[26] Liu Fengyun, the most important recent historian of the Rebellion in China, offers a third suggestion. Noting that just a few days after Wu Sangui's resignation was accepted, the emperor sent a mission to Wu to make arrangements for his troops' withdrawal, she suggests that the court might not have been aware that Wu would rebel.[27]

At the end of the war, a second source indicating that Mingju played a

significant role in the decision to accept Wu Sangui's resignation appeared. In December 1680, as word arrived from the south that Qing armies had retaken Yunnanfu, Wu Sangui's capital, a group of imperial princes and senior counselors proposed that the Kangxi emperor take on an honorary title as the victor in the war. Responding to their request, the emperor took an opportunity to reflect on the decision to accept Wu Sangui's resignation:

> I discussed the matter with the court. Tuhai [d. 1681] strongly opposed allowing Shang to withdraw. Considering that the feudatories' control of military power could only lead to troubles that could not be anticipated, I decided to order the withdrawal, not thinking that Wu Sangui would turn his back on the grace [he had received] and rebel, bringing tumult to all under heaven, which was only pacified by the grace of heaven and the benevolent influence of Our Ancestors. I recall that at that time, Moro [n.d.], Misgan [1633–1676], Mingju, Subai [n.d.], and Sekde [n.d.] all supported withdrawal. But no one said that in withdrawal Wu Sangui would certainly rebel. Many people still discuss this issue today and ask whether there was anyone who predicted that Wu Sangui would revolt.[28]

In this account, Mingju was not the only official who supported the withdrawal but one of five. These were men of a younger generation who supported the equally young emperor.[29] Moreover, Mingju could only be credited with supporting the idea of accepting Wu's resignation, not the notion of war, which, according to the emperor, nobody expected. The emperor's remark here reinforces Liu Fengyun's observation that the court might not have expected war in 1673.

Regardless of the nature of Mingju's contribution at the beginning of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, he played a major role in the prosecution of the war, at least for its first four years. In Qing practice, decisions about strategy and tactics in war were made by the emperor and conveyed directly to the general in the field. The Ministry of War dealt with issues of logistics, organization of armies, and wartime information. Thus, in the first month of the rebellion, the Ministry of War was ordered to prepare materials reassuring those in the south that the Qing did not intend to hurt them; to calm people in Beijing who had fled to the Western Hills at the first sign of war; to arrange a detachment of troops at Yunyang, a strategic

pass between Hubei and Sichuan that could be threatened by Wu Sangui's armies; and to arrange for provisions for provincial governors' brigades, who were mustered to serve the dynasty.[30] In addition, it would appear, Mingju advised the young monarch on larger decisions as well. Wang Hongxu wrote that during the war, the emperor "had to decide many matters by himself and valued those who advised him, of whom [Mingju] was one of only three or four."[31] The administrative load Mingju carried in these years must have been substantial, and for at least one colleague, a similar load proved overwhelming. Mingju's colleague Misgan, who was Manchu minister of finance and likely another of the inner circle, also supported going to war. Specifically pledging that the treasury could support the war, he then reportedly drove himself to death through overwork trying to fund the Kangxi military.[32]

After four years as minister of war, Mingju was appointed Manchu minister of personnel in 1675. The war was still going on, but Mingju's departure from the Ministry of War was not necessarily a demotion; more likely it represented a promotion. Although they were formally of equal status, there was a hierarchy among the six ministries that constituted the Qing central administration, reflected in the order in which they were traditionally listed: Personnel, Finance, Ritual, Punishments, War, and Works. The Ministry of Personnel stood at the top of the hierarchy because its responsibility lay in distributing talent: keeping the records of service, accomplishment, and discipline that guided the court in making appointments, as well as carrying out the routine procedures of declaring positions vacant and recommending that they be filled. Mingju's service at the Ministry of Personnel was relatively short, time enough for him to become familiar with the routine processes of appointment, transfer, and dismissal, and the universe of officials who could be appointed, which prepared him well for the role he was to play in his next appointment. In addition to being promoted to Personnel, Mingju was made grand preceptor of the heir apparent—a title of honor bestowed only by the monarch—when the *Veritable Records* of the Shunzhi emperor were completed.[33]

Despite the mechanism for awarding Manchus civilian ranks, those Manchus who reached the highest ranks in early Qing often had some connection with the military. Mingju had not served in the field, but he had commanded

the imperial bodyguard. He had played some role in the decision to go to war against Wu Sangui, though the precise role is difficult to pin down. His most useful service to the monarch was likely his role as an administrator managing the logistics and deployment of the armies, and it was as a manager and administrator that the emperor would use him after the war.

Grand Secretary

In the late summer of 1677, Mingju was appointed grand secretary of the Wu Ying Throne Hall. He held this post—the high point of his career—for eleven years, during which he had daily contact with the emperor. The grand secretariat was a highly placed advisory and secretarial agency at the Chinese court. After the first Ming emperor abolished the post of prime minister, his successors began employing a loosely organized group of secretaries to manage paperwork and oversee the education of the heir apparent. The Qing initially abolished this institution but reconstituted it in the early Kangxi reign, when it served to "handle the emperor's paperwork, recommend decisions in response to memorials received from the officialdom, and draft and issue imperial pronouncements."[34] There were from two to eight grand secretaries at any given moment, and they were identified according to the imperial throne hall where they theoretically served. The most important duty of grand secretaries was meeting daily with the emperor to record his orders, but the secretaries also offered advice to the monarch when he requested it on matters of law or precedent. Since dialogue with grand secretaries on civilian matters was recorded in the *Diary of Action and Repose* after 1679, it is possible to trace secretaries' contribution to imperial decision-making. Initially, much of Mingju's advice concerned military matters. He advised the emperor on routine matters of military administration, such as rewards and punishments for soldiers who had fought for and against the Qing in the Rebellion.[35] Mingju was credited with saving the lives of a group of scholars, including Chen Menglei (b. 1651), who had gotten caught on the feudatories' side of the war.[36] He also played a role in planning for the conquest of Taiwan in 1683, making a trip to Fujian in the summer of 1680, and thereafter offered advice on command structure for the Taiwan campaign.[37]

As warfare in the south wound down, Mingju came to specialize in advising the emperor on personnel decisions. Typical of such interactions was a decision made in early June 1680 regarding the lieutenant governorship of Jiangxi. The process began with a memorial from the Ministry of Personnel declaring that the post was vacant and nominating Wang Rizao (1623–1700) as the first candidate, and Ma Siliang (n.d.) as the second candidate. The emperor asked the assembled secretaries, "Where is Wang Rizao from and what sort of person is he?" Wang's native place was important because of the rule of avoidance, which prevented officials from serving near their places of origin. Mingju responded, "I have heard that Wang Rizao is a person worthy of appointment." Another secretary spoke up: "Wang Rizao is from Jiangnan, and he has a good reputation." The emperor thereupon appointed Wang as lieutenant governor.[38]

In this instance, Mingju was one of two secretaries who spoke up, but the longer he spent as grand secretary, the more likely he was to speak on the secretaries' behalf on personnel matters. In February 1681, an extraordinary series of appointments occurred in which Mingju moved beyond routine endorsements to place officials of his own choice in office. At this point there were three vacancies in senior posts in the territorial service: the governors-general of Guangdong and Liangjiang had died, and the governor of Jiangsu had been accused of corruption and cashiered from office.[39] As was required in the case of governor-general appointments, the Ministry of Personnel memorialized first asking whether the emperor wanted it to recommend Han, Manchu, and Hanjun candidates. The emperor turned to his secretaries and asked, "What is your recommendation?" (*Er deng suo yi ruo he?*). Mingju, responding on behalf of all his fellow secretaries, said, "The Chinese and Manchu secretaries have deliberated. Guangdong is an important post, and there may still be soldiers from the army of Shang Zhixin."[40] Shang Zhixin was the oldest son of the feudatory Shang Kexi. Apprehension about the presence of soldiers in the south loyal to the feudatory princes continued for some years after the defeat of the rebellion. "If the appointee does not have experience and talent, he should not be appointed. The Fujian governor Wu Xingzuo [1632–1698] was active in the reconquest of Fujian and is moreover experienced in [governing] the seacoast. He ought to be appointed as governor-general of Liangguang."

The emperor then asked, "What has Wu Xingzuo's conduct in office been like?" Mingju answered, "Although I cannot say that I have heard he is as honest as Yu Qingtian, I also have not heard of greed or corruption."[41] The emperor was then said to hesitate for a long time. The diarist does not, probably cannot, tell whether the emperor hesitated over the idea of appointing Wu or regarding concerns about how the name had arisen, how a secretary had interfered in his decision-making. Finally, the emperor decided to appoint Wu.

If the emperor hesitated about following Mingju's advice on the appointment of Wu Xingzuo, he virtually invited Mingju's intervention in the Jiangnan appointments. "What are your views?" asked the emperor. Once again, Mingju answered on behalf of the assembled secretaries: "The Jiangning governor's affairs are numerous and tedious, and there is an additional person sent to the Suzhou area to oversee the Imperial Manufactories. The demands on this person are many. We propose that as Yu Qingtian is honest and responsive to all the demands made upon him, appointing him as Liangjiang governor-general would be appropriate."[42] This suggestion pleased the emperor, who had praised Yu several days earlier. He responded, "It is my intent to appoint Yu Qingtian as Liangjiang governor-general." He continued, "The governor-general is the senior official. If he is upright, who would dare to act dishonestly? Who can be appointed [as governor]?" Mingju responded, "Yu Guozhu [n.d., *jinshi* 1652] is a man of great talent."[43] The emperor concluded, "Let Yu Qingtian be appointed as Liangjiang governor-general, and let Yu Guozhu be appointed as Jiangsu governor."

CONFLICT WITH SONGGOTU

The longer Mingju served on the grand secretariat, the broader his political portfolio became. There seemed to be few issues he did not address, but the highest prize in the bureaucratic order, a perch as principal adviser to the young emperor, remained closed to him as it was occupied by another highborn Manchu, Songgotu (d. 1703). The competition between these two figures was intense, although in many respects they were similar. Both were members of the Plain Yellow Banner, and both rose through the imperial bodyguard to positions at court. Both had Manchu and Chinese followers, although Mingju's group was more self-consciously multiethnic and

seemed to involve different sorts of Chinese than Songgotu's. Both had power bases in the grand secretariat, which provided them daily access to the emperor. H. Lyman Miller has argued that Songgotu created the role of Manchu executive that both Mingju and Songgotu occupied. Songgotu was instrumental in the overthrow of Oboi and may have been responsible for the restoration of the grand secretariat.[44]

As striking were their differences. Members of the same banner, they came from very different families. Mingju's Yehenala were resisters or very late-comers to Nurhaci's enterprise; Songgotu's family had a much longer history of service. Songgotu's grandfather, who knew Mongol and Chinese as well as Manchu, served as a literary adviser to Nurhaci. Songgotu was the third son of the regent Soni (d. 1667), who assisted the Shunzhi emperor in purging the faction of Dorgon after the latter's death. Songgotu opposed the war against the three feudatories; Mingju supported it. In an assessment of Mingju, the historian and archivist Yan Chongnian notes that Songgotu, after assisting with the overthrow of Oboi, played a conservative role at the Kangxi court, embodying and defending traditional Manchu ways. On the other hand, Mingju came to be associated with many of the new policies of the young Kangxi emperor.[45]

In addition to differences in family of origin, status, and political concerns, there was also a personality difference, with Songgotu aristocratic and arrogant, and Mingju suave and outgoing. The editors of *Qingshi* crafted a memorable contrast between the two figures: "Songgotu was born of high nobility. His nature was haughty and arrogant. If someone disagreed with him, Songgotu publicly criticized him. . . . Mingju strove to get along with everyone. Although he was widely respected, this respect could never be enough. He would summon newly created *jinshi*. If someone disagreed with him, Mingju plotted secretly to remove him."[46] Both were fearsome figures, the passage implied, but in different ways. If one opposed Songgotu, one could find oneself publicly castigated; if one opposed Mingju, one could find oneself suddenly dismissed.

A remarkable series of events in the autumn of 1679 resolved the ongoing tensions between Mingju and Songgotu. On September 2, a powerful earthquake shook Beijing, and the emperor summoned those at court to advise him on how the dynasty had gotten so apparently out of harmony

with the forces of nature. One account said that Wei Xiangshu (1617–1687), a Chinese censor on whom the emperor frequently relied, complained to the emperor that the continuing and bitter factional competition between Mingju and Songgotu had brought disharmony to the sociopolitical order.[47] The next day, the emperor summoned Manchu and Chinese senior officials, and according to Wei Xiangshu's *Nianpu*, read an edict that Mingju and Wei had composed.[48] The edict took a remarkable but understandable form. It mentioned no names, as the public condemnation of a long-serving imperial adviser might imply criticism of the advice he gave, the policy that resulted, or even the ruler who implemented it. Instead, the edict expressed imperial dissatisfaction with those who carried out policies. The edict was recognized as directed at Songgotu. Shortly after this edict was issued, both Songgotu and Mingju disappeared from the diary's record of imperial discussions. Mingju returned after about one month; Songgotu remained a grand secretary for a year, then resigned because of health.[49] This event marked the decline of Songgotu's influence in civil affairs but not the end of his role in Qing government. As the uncle of the Kangxi emperor's consort and great uncle of the heir apparent, Songgotu continued to have a voice in the inner councils of Manchu affairs.[50]

RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINESE INTELLECTUALS

In any political order, but especially one in which the ruler was envisioned as a sage responsible for setting the intellectual temper of the age, deciding which intellectuals the monarch met was a very important function. This was particularly true for the seventeenth-century Qing Dynasty. The Manchus who participated in the conquest had made little effort to appeal to Chinese intellectuals. The Kangxi reign was the first time during the Qing period when the court actively cultivated the southeast and proclaimed its fealty to Chinese principles.[51] Mingju's service to the emperor included recruiting and guiding Chinese scholars into the imperial presence.[52]

Mingju's association with Chinese intellectuals predated his appointment to the grand secretariat. His oldest son, Singde, earned the *jinshi* degree in 1673 and provided Mingju an entrée into the world of Chinese scholars. It was through his son that Mingju developed a celebrated relationship with Xu Qianxue (1631–1694), one of three very talented brothers from Jiangsu

who passed their *jinshi* examinations in the early Kangxi period.[53] Qianxue passed his *jinshi* in 1670 and came to know Mingju's family when he was *juren* examiner for the capital district in 1672 and passed Singde. According to Chinese practice, Singde became Xu's "student" when he passed the examination, and a lifelong bond was formed, facilitated by the fact that both lived in Beijing. Xu's steady rise during the 1680s through the grand secretariat, the Ministry of Rites, and the Hanlin Academy paralleled Mingju's rise through the political hierarchy, and they were involved in preparation of the *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing* (Da Qing yitong zhi) and the *History of the Ming* (Ming shi). When Singde died at age thirty in 1685, Mingju selected Xu to write an epitaph. Xu wrote the epitaph and also oversaw the printing of Singde's collected works, titled *Tongzhitang ji*.[54] Mingju's younger son, Guixu (1674–1717), born twenty years later than his older brother, did not earn degrees but nonetheless served as chancellor of the Hanlin Academy for fourteen years, from 1703 to 1717. Both brothers had reputations as sinophone poets.

Mingju's introduction of Chinese scholars to the Kangxi emperor derived from his practice, as grand secretary, of recommending individuals for appointment. He recommended Chinese to serve as Classics Mat lecturers and proposed the names of learned men to serve as the emperor's tutors when he requested them.[55] Certainly the emperor himself had agency in the ongoing cultural and intellectual transformation. The monarch had a good Chinese education, was curious and intellectually alert, and from the earliest days of his reign seems to have been committed to establishing Chinese scholars at his court. It was the monarch who requested that Chinese tutors be appointed to serve him. But when he needed to know who among the scholarly elite should serve him in the late 1670s and 1680s, he turned to Mingju.

Many whom Mingju recommended came from the southeast, where the best libraries and scholarly academies were located. Mingju guided the careers of prominent scholar-politicians as they made their way through the court hierarchy.[56] Wang Hongxu asserted Mingju's role in setting the Neo-Confucian tone of the court by observing that it was Mingju who transmitted to the emperor a memorial from the lieutenant governor of Fujian recommending that the seven most famous Neo-Confucian scholars

be admitted to the dynastic temple. Presenting memorials to the emperor was the role of grand secretaries; normally this would not have deserved mention in an epitaph. This reference to Mingju conveying the memorial was probably as close as a biographer could come to suggesting that a Manchu minister bore responsibility for the ideological commitments of the court.[57]

Mingju also served as editor-in-chief of six court publications: *Imperial Instructions of the Three Reigns* (Sanchao shengxun), *An Explanation of Political Institutions* (Zhengzhi dianxun), *A Campaign History of the Defeat of the Three Rebels* (Pingding san ni fanglue), *The Collected Statutes of the Qing* (Da Qing huidian), *A Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Qing* (Da Qing yitong zhi), and *The History of the Ming* (Ming shi). Collectively, the publications put a Chinese face on the Qing, perhaps for the first time. Although Mingju may not have made specific decisions of substance or wording, as editor of these publications, he oversaw the editing process. Serving as editor, he had one foot in the Manchu world and one foot in the Chinese world, and he was one of the first Manchus to be able to manage such a feat.

MINGJU AS EXECUTIVE

At the height of his power, Mingju was a formidable administrator. Wang Hongxu related that when one paid a call on Mingju to discuss a matter, one didn't wait for flowery language to be crafted: "The words spat out of his mouth establishing his commitment, which until the end of his life he never forgot. Matters concerning affairs a thousand miles away were handled like matters close at hand."[58] An unofficial history contrasted Mingju's administrative style with those of his predecessors. Bambursan (d. 1669), grand secretary during the Oboi regency, the account alleged, was an alcoholic, and administration under the regents was slowed by conflicts between the regents and the emperor over personnel. But Mingju "managed affairs like a flowing stream [*xuanhe*]. Master of both Manchu and Chinese languages and letters, he took control, drawing many matters to himself." He had his fingers in many different pots, and many came to seek his favor: "At New Year's, officials from the capital ministries, the Censorate, and their subordinates, and officials from the provinces, governors and governors-general, prefects and local commanders all brought him presents [*kui*]. For several

weeks, [there were so many visitors] they could not be admitted, and they formed lines around the block in order to be admitted in turn, so that they could say their present had been given." Presentation of Chinese New Year's gifts was not corruption, though depending on the size of the gift and how it was elicited, they could be but a half step away from it. Nonetheless, the point here was the wide influence that Mingju exercised at the height of his powers over central and territorial administration.[59]

To modern sensibilities the idea that Mingju could have at once championed the cause of army veterans, territorial administrators, and Chinese Neo-Confucian scholars who received imperial patronage may seem contradictory. Yet in the context of the times such combination was not inconceivable, for the Kangxi court of the 1680s was a place where each of the ethnic elements had a role to play, and the dynasty survived only if all worked together.

PART II

GUO XIU'S INTERVENTION

FOUR

Guo Xiu and the Qing Censorate

Through the extraordinary favor of the emperor, I was raised to the post of censor in violation of the rules of seniority. Your official is conscious of the extraordinary favor he has received, a favor that can never be repaid. All that I can do to fulfill my duty is to report all that I see without fear of others' resentment.
GUO XIU, "IMPEACHMENT OF A RIVER OFFICIAL"

Careers like Jin Fu's and Mingju's, where officers were entitled to serve, were rare in Chinese history. Much more common was a career pattern in which a young man earned his right to serve by passing civil service examinations, then worked his way up a ladder of offices as far as he could. Rising from an initial appointment as district magistrate to a post in the capital or senior territorial service could take a lifetime and required a mixture of ability, careful cultivation of superiors, and luck. Since the time he appeared at the Kangxi court, colleagues and historians have not known what to make of Guo Xiu, who seemed to appear from nowhere. How did Guo Xiu, an unheralded man from an out-of-the-way district who had been only moderately successful on the examinations come to be in a position to attack some of the most significant figures in the late seventeenth-century state? What characteristics accounted for his success, and how were they manifested in his passage to power?

Family and State

Jin Fu and his family experienced the seventeenth century as one of Qing success; Guo Xiu and his family experienced it as one of Ming decline. Dynastic decline brought chaos throughout China, although the nature of disorder varied with the geographical and social circumstances of different regions. Frederic Wakeman has emphasized the near anarchy in

Guo's native Shandong in the mid-seventeenth century. Civil order broke down during the late Ming, and political and social life in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were dominated by increasingly violent conflicts between bandit gangs and gentry-organized militias.[1] The Guos survived the chaos of the Ming-Qing transition but not without significant dislocation and a number of perilously close encounters with local violence and anti-Manchu resistance. Indeed, if some recent revelations may be trusted, the encounters were even closer than Guo Xiu himself was willing to admit publicly.

Two stories can be constructed of Guo Xiu's early years, a public one and a private one that circulated within the family. The differences between them illustrate the concerns of seventeenth-century Chinese gentry families who lived through the conquest. Guo's public story was related in a preface to *Guo Family Genealogy* (Guoshi zupu), where Guo Xiu said his family was originally from Qingzhou, which was in Qing times a large county in central Shandong that extended from the Bohai Sea into the center of the province. According to Guo, they moved in 1404 from Qingzhou to Jimo Xian on the southern coast of the Shandong Peninsula.[2] Both the date and the place were significant. In tracing their family origins to the early Ming, the Guos were like many Shandong landowning families who traced their origin to the early Ming. In *The Culture and Family Histories of Great Official Families of Shandong in the Ming and Qing*, Shandong University historian Zhu Yafei attributes these common early Ming origins to a forced migration of established families into Shandong that took place under the first emperor of the Ming.[3] Most of the families Zhu studied, however, made their homes along the prosperous Grand Canal corridor in the west of the province. The Guos' Jimo home was far from the center of the province. Today, Jimo is linked to the outside world through Qingdao, an international port to its southwest, but in the seventeenth century the region was more isolated. The Guos' home village, which bore their name—Guo Family Lane (Guojiagang)—was located along the Black (Mo) River west of the district capital.

Although far from the central areas of the province, the Guos' Jimo was not spared disorder during the conquest. The *Jimo Gazetteer* captured the chaos in early-Qing Jimo with the story of a local literatus, Huang Zong-

chang (1588–1646). A *jinshi* of 1622, Huang served terms as magistrate of a district in Zhili, censor at the Ming court, and governor of Huguang. While in Zhili, he resisted the demands of the dominant eunuch, Wei Zhongxian (1568–1627), and as censor after Wei's death he impeached over one hundred followers of the eunuch. He was himself impeached during his time in Huguang, in part in payback for his impeachments, and retired from government. Returning to Jimo, Huang organized resistance to the invading Manchu armies, selling his own household furnishings to raise money for provisions. As a result of his efforts, Jimo city was spared occupation as the eastern portion of the province was conquered. Two years later, Huang again organized the city's resistance, this time to a bandit army. One of the leaders of this army was Guo Erbiao (n.d.), a distant relative of the Guo family who was employed as a servant in Huang's household. Guo Erbiao was defeated, but Huang's son was killed in the fighting.[4]

Possibly because the rebel leader was a relative of theirs, the Guos did not follow Huang Zongchang's heroic example. They fled from Jimo to Wendeng District at the tip of the Shandong Peninsula, the end of the world as they knew it, and spent the years of the conquest, 1642–46, living with relatives. Guo Xiu was born in 1638, the second son of Guo Jingchang, who held no civil service degree but was reputed to be a talented writer. When Guo Xiu was nine *sui*, he was adopted by his uncle Guo Eryin, who saw to his upbringing and education. Xiu's father died two years later. Guo Xiu's uncle was probably of the same Guo generation as the bandit Guo Erbiao, because both had the character er in their given names, likely a generational marker. But according to Guo Xiu, they were not closely related.[5]

Recently, this story of a rural family at the mercy of forces beyond their control has been called into question. In January 2021, a program aired on Shandong television in which Guo Xianping (n.d.), eleven generations removed from Guo Xiu and still living in Jimo, was interviewed about his family history. He claimed that there were branches of the Guo family throughout Jimo. According to family legend, however, Guo Xiu was descended from Guos who belonged to one of the great families of Wei, a commercial city to the northeast of Jimo. Sitting along trade routes along the Bohai Sea, Wei was prosperous in late Ming and early Qing times, when the Grand Canal was obstructed, and it served as a transshipping

point for cargo shipped by sea from South to North China. According to Xianping, Guo Xiu's most famous ancestor in Wei was his grandfather, Guo Shangyu (1569–1647), who earned the *jinshi* degree in 1601, then served as magistrate, director-general of grain transport, and minister of war in the Ming government. In 1639, Shangyu worked with Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672), the magistrate of Wei, to defeat a Manchu raiding party that attacked the city. Five years later, when the Manchus took Beijing, Guo Shangyu became concerned that he or his family would become the target of Manchu retribution, so he moved the family, including Guo Xiu, to live in Jimo at Guo Family Lane.[6]

This story would account for a number of anomalies in Guo Xiu's account of his life. Guo Xiu was the first member of the family mentioned in the genealogy for which he wrote a preface, as if he wished to conceal his forebears. Further, Guo Xiu was adopted by his Jimo uncle two years before his father died, suggesting that the purpose of the adoption was not to ensure that he would be well raised but to securely graft Guo on the rural branch of the family tree, concealing his relationship with Guo Shangyu. Moreover, Guo's birth father, Guo Jingchang, did not share the generational er in the given name with Guo Eryin, Guo Xiu's putative uncle, making it unlikely that Jingchang and Eryin were brothers.[7] Family legends can be twisted, either purposefully or accidentally, and even Guo Xianping remarked that this family history was "not fully proven." Regardless of which story is true, Guo Xiu was likely to have been deeply affected by the Qing conquest, like many of his generation. Indeed, the rumor that Guo's family was involved in anti-Manchu activity followed him through his career, complicating his interactions with colleagues.

Examination and First Appointment

The examination process was the defining feature of elite life in late imperial China; whether and how one passed determined the course of a career. In the late seventeenth century, there was the additional issue of whether to take the examinations at all. As the examination branded those Chinese who served the new Manchu dynasty as collaborators, some, particularly in the lower Yangzi Valley, chose not to participate. Guo Xiu made a dif-

3. Journeys of the Guos during the conquest

ferent choice. He never wrote about his decision, which under the family circumstances must have been one of courage and conviction.

Guo was either early or late in his decision to take the examinations, depending on your point of view. He took his first test in 1668. Thirty years before, his family had fled the Manchus, suggesting they had perhaps been deeply implicated in the resistance. Caution might have dictated that it was too early for a Guo to risk Manchu scrutiny. On the other hand, most of the sons of Shandong elite families returned to the examination hall fairly quickly after the conquest. Why the sons of the north returned before the sons of the south has received relatively little attention from

historians. Probably the convincing explanation is that the Chinese leaders of Manchu armies in Shandong quickly allied with gentry militias to preserve order.[8] This was in contrast to the south, where occupation forces remained at loggerheads with local society until later in the seventeenth century. Valuing the order Manchu arms had brought to their province, Shandong men were able to countenance service in an alien court relatively early.

In any event Guo's resolution was to serve not necessarily the Manchu rulers but the Confucian state they sought to implement for their Chinese subjects. He likely had a fairly strong commitment to the traditional values of Confucianism. The Confucian intellectual world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had many streams of belief, some of them quite radical. There were differing views of the origins of ethical obligations, as well as debates over the meaning and authenticity of classic texts and the proper political stance of the man of learning.[9] But there is no evidence that Guo Xiu, who was educated at home far from centers of intellectual ferment, participated in any of the new forms of philosophical and epistemological inquiry. Shandong, the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius, has always had a conservative social and intellectual reputation as a world of family teachings and family values. Guo's rural Jimo was far from any of the centers of intellectual radicalism of his day. His education pointed him to the principles of the Confucian tradition, and it was the role of the man of learning to enforce them.[10]

Once Guo Xiu decided to take the examinations, he proceeded fairly smoothly through the system. In 1668, he passed the Jimo district examinations, third on the list. The following year, he was seventh on the Shandong provincial examinations. Guo Xiu journeyed to Beijing in 1671, perhaps his first time out of Shandong, to take the *jinshi* examination. He passed, number 124 in the third class. This was a good result, particularly given the intensely competitive nature of the Chinese examinations, but not an outstanding one. Guo would never be known as a brilliant test taker. It may have been his good fortune that Wei Yijie (1616–1686) was the chief examiner the year he took the *jinshi.* Wei brought an emphasis on practical morality to his role as examiner, a preference he may have inherited from his own teacher, Sun Qifeng (1585–1675), who never took the Qing

examinations but advised many who did. Sun's view was that upholding Chinese tradition was more important than any sort of doctrinal advocacy.[11] Wei believed that the explication of classical texts on the first day of the examinations was less important than the discursive essays that dominated the second day. In these essays, written in response to policy questions, the candidate was presented with a practical problem confronting the state and asked to provide a solution using Confucian principles.[12] Wei argued that such questions not only afforded the examiner a better view of the candidate's abilities but were closer in form to the model of the ancients. As Lynn Struve points out in an essay on Wei, the Qing court eventually rejected his position.[13] However, the practical thrust of Wei's writing must have influenced him as he served as chief examiner. Guo would have been judged not on his mastery of the latest exegetical fashion, which could well have been a challenge for a young man from the provinces making his first trip to the capital, but on his ability to apply moral principles to actual circumstances.[14]

It must have been an exciting moment to pass the examinations. The young Kangxi emperor had just dismissed his regents, and the moment seemed to promise an opportunity for men to take up places in the new dynasty, to build a genuinely Confucian order under Manchu leadership. Wei Yijie observed that there were so many talented candidates in 1671 that choosing candidates was difficult and could be accomplished only by comparing the scripts on the 1671 examination with those of previous years. According to Wei's *Nianpu*, Guo Xiu was one of six successful candidates in whom Wei took especial pride.[15] Entering the official service at a relatively low rank during a time of turmoil probably meant Guo did not attract particular scrutiny, which may have been good for a man with a slightly clouded background.

Guo wrote little about his ancestors and his early life, because of either modesty or, more likely, a desire to protect family secrets from Manchu scrutiny. As a result, the significance of his early experiences must be established through comparison with family members, other educated young men from Shandong, and men of his examination cohort. These comparisons suggest that Guo, while aware of Manchu power, was willing to serve the Qing state and move it toward classical standards of morality and

visions of the good. Guo also likely had a practical, rather than scholarly, bent of mind, which would serve him well in his early posting for the Qing.

Passing the examinations ensured Guo Xiu of a position in the Qing ruling order, but the specific posts he occupied were partly a matter of luck and partly a reflection of the abilities and passions he brought to his work. Guo's low rank on the palace examination meant that he would have to wait for office.[16] He made a trip to Beijing in 1676 to attend the appointments lottery, but his grandfather's death necessitated a return to Jimo for a division of family property. If Guo's family was, as his twentieth-century descendant suggested, a blended one, this property division could have been complicated. At the next lottery in 1679, Guo was selected as a magistrate of Wujiang District in Jiangsu.

Wujiang was one of the ten districts that made up Suzhou Prefecture, among the wealthiest regions of the lower Yangzi Delta in China's southeast. Wujiang was the southernmost district in the prefecture, linked by river with the provincial capital. Friends warned him that the journey to the south might be dangerous in view of the rebellion of Wu Sangui and continuing resistance of the southeast to Qing rule. Guo gamely responded that appointments are not made for the convenience of officials, but rather officials are appointed because of the needs of districts, and set off on his way.[17] When he took up his post in 1680, Guo Xiu found himself an agent on the cutting edge of political change in Jiangsu. Life was fairly rocky during the early Qing in the districts of the lower Yangzi Delta. The flight of the Ming court from Beijing to Nanjing during the Manchu conquest meant that a decisive military engagement between the Ming and Qing would be fought on delta soil, and many communities, including Suzhou, joined the Ming remnants in resisting Qing occupation. Widespread resistance had necessitated a military occupation during the early Qing, which prolonged local resentment. In his initial years as district magistrate, Guo Xiu found himself potentially squeezed between a demanding provincial military order and the resistant and recalcitrant local population.

With his fresh civil service degree, Guo represented a type of official unusual in the early Qing delta. Guo Xiu was only the third of eighteen early Qing magistrates of Wujiang to hold a *jinshi* degree; many of his predecessors had held lesser qualifications, and three of them were Hanjun

bannerman, Chinese-speaking soldiers. In addition, Guo was the first Qing magistrate to serve in the district for more than two years. Violence had ended several terms in Wujiang, and few of Guo's predecessors had the time to come to know the district and its concerns.[18] Guo's first challenge in Wujiang was a flash flood. A dry winter and spring had left the district suffering near-drought conditions, but sudden rains in August flooded the fields and destroyed crops. Taking a small boat along the canals of Wujiang, Guo inspected the damaged crops and requested a temporary tax remission. In the next year, Guo assisted the centrally appointed examiner for Jiangnan in administering the provincial examinations.[19]

In 1683, Guo addressed what local history and subsequent scholarship have identified as the central problem of Wujiang District: tax arrears.[20] As Guo wrote, taxes had been high in the district since it had sided with a local rebel against the first Ming emperor (r. 1368–98). As a result, the southeast had the highest taxes in the empire, Suzhou Prefecture had the highest taxes in the southeast, and Wujiang had the highest taxes in Suzhou Prefecture."[21] The prosperous southeast could bear a greater tax burden, but in the early Qing, natural disasters, military occupation, and tax resistance meant that not all taxes could be collected. In March 1661, Suzhou people protested excessive tax collections at a memorial service for the Shunzhi emperor, in an episode known as the Crying in the Temple Case.[22] By the time Guo reached Wujiang, there had been several remissions of tax arrears, but debts still remained.[23] The problem of collecting tax arrears was exacerbated by the practice of district clerks who, failing to inform taxpayers of the exact amount of arrears they owed, collected more money than was owed and pocketed the excess. Guo alleviated this problem by preparing a register stating exactly the amount of tax, including arrears, that each household owed and sending this record with tax collectors when they called on taxpayers to make collections. Although this expedient did not completely solve the problem of arrears, it earned Guo the respect of the local tax-paying population.[24]

In 1683, Guo Xiu responded to an imperial edict ordering magistrates to sponsor the publication of local histories. These works were compilations of local historical fact but also statements of local pride. Short-term wartime magistrates of Wujiang had not made the effort to compile a history. The

last local history of Wujiang had been written at the very end of the Jiajing period of the Ming dynasty, circa 1567. To update it, Guo and local scholars collected sources intensively for a three-month period and produced a work of forty-six *juan*, or two hundred thousand characters. Unfortunately, this work is not extant today, although portions of Guo's preface were recorded in his *Nianpu* and in the preface to the more readily available 1733 edition. Gazetteers, as local histories, generally gathered information in broadly similar categories, but different regions might have more information to include under some headings than others. The great points of pride for the 1733 gazetteer of Wujiang—and this was likely little changed from Guo's account—were the number of degree holders from the county and the volume of their writings. Preserving such material was important to the identity and pride of the county, and Guo's role in organizing and supervising the process was important to the reemergence of the county as a seat of learning in the southeast.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that Guo was at loggerheads with provincial officialdom, at least in the early years of his magistracy. Because of the resistance to Qing rule in the southeast, many of the early Jiangnan officials were military men. As the gazetteer and Guo's *Nianpu* related, Guo was on especially bad terms with the provincial military intendant, Yang Jie. Yang was no ordinary military hack. He had been active in Qing service during the conquest, serving in northwest Guangdong and Jiangxi. Appointed Jiangsu military intendant in 1676, he commanded the forces that successfully resisted Zheng Chenggong's invasion of the provincial capital, for which he was given the prestigious, if honorary, title of junior protector of the heir apparent (*taizi xiaobao*).[25] For Guo, Yang's military achievements did not excuse corruption. On one occasion, the intendant ordered a patrol boat constructed in Wujiang District and sent an agent to demand a kickback. When the agent tied up one of his clerks, Guo was summoned and struck the agent on the jaw, knocking him into the canal. Yang was furious, but there was little he could do to Guo under the circumstances. Later, Guo refused to provide the intendant extra money for military rations. He did not pay a bribe demanded by the Suzhou prefect and refused to attend a memorial service the governor held for the mother of one of his district's most difficult residents.[26]

Such relations with the military administration might have ended Guo's tenure in Jiangnan were it not for a change in the central government's attitude toward the province. Beginning in the 1680s, the imperial court, likely the Kangxi emperor personally, recognized that the standoff between military administrators in the Yangzi Delta and the educated population that had prevailed under the Oboi Regency (1661–69) was unproductive. A new provincial capital was established in Suzhou for Jiangsu, and the court began the practice of assigning to the post officials who were accomplished scholars as well as proven administrators. Guo's appointment may have been one of the early results of this policy. One of the first appointees of the new type at the provincial level was Governor Tang Bin, appointed in 1684.[27]

Tang's career was unusual. Passing the *jinshi* examinations in 1649, he first held appointment as a circuit intendant. He chose to interrupt his career for a year of study with Sun Qifeng, the teacher of Guo Xiu's examiner, Wei Yijie, which put Tang and Guo in the same lineage of northern scholars who served the Kangxi emperor. After his study with Sun, Tang took and passed the special 1679 *boxue hongci* examination, which immediately raised his prestige and prominence. Like many of those who had passed the special examination, Tang was appointed to edit the *Ming History*, but the emperor decided that his talents would be better employed as a provincial governor.[28] His nearly unique combination of service at the local level and at the highest levels at court shaped both his career and Guo Xiu's. Tang resided in Suzhou, so that interaction with Guo was easy, and the two shared a northern identity. The *History of Wujiang District* (Wujiang xian zhi) reported that when Governor Tang heard Guo Xiu had not gotten along with the previous military administrators of Jiangsu, he was "pleased."[29]

Several stories survive that describe how Guo Xiu attracted Tang Bin's attention. The nineteenth-century Manchu courtier and historian Zhaolian (1747–1823) included a brief account of Tang's relationship with Guo in his *Miscellaneous Notes from the Xiaoting Pavillion* (Xiaoting zalu). According to the account, Tang Bin arrived at his post in Jiangnan determined to foster honesty among his subordinates. When he encountered dishonesty or corruption, he would first counsel the official involved, and if that failed, he would undertake disciplinary action. Hearing of corruption in Guo Xiu's Wujiang, he called the magistrate to his office and spoke with him.

Guo responded, "The source of corruption in my district was that I had to provide bribes to your predecessor. You are conducting yourself honestly, and if after one month's grace, your reputation is the same, I can restore order" to the district's finances.[30] When Guo did as he promised, Tang remarked, "It is as if the old Guo has died, and a new Guo has been born." The anecdote probably preserved elements of truth, three of which were significant. First, despite the probity emphasized in Guo's biographies, there was a whiff of corruption about his administration of Wujiang that troubled his subsequent career. Second, the anecdote reinforced the change in Jiangsu administration represented by Tang Bin; he was certainly different than his predecessors, and the effect was perceptible. A third point of interest was the tone Guo took in responding to his superior. Guo Xiu's remark to Tang Bin was impertinent, a tart if somewhat impolitic statement of the truth that governors could also be corrupt.

There was another version of this anecdote. In his nineteenth-century history, Chen Kangqi (1840–1890) recalled hearing in his youth the story of Guo Xiu. In Chen's version, Guo Xiu appeared without summons in Tang Bin's office and declared that he would no longer accept corrupt revenues. Guo then returned to his own office and ordered his servants to bring water and scrub brushes and wash it clean. It would appear, on this telling, that Guo Xiu had a sort of conversion experience. Chen Kangqi argued that only one who had undergone such a searing experience would be qualified for the senior office at the capital.[31] There is no way of knowing which of these accounts was true, if either was. True or not, the anecdotes provided answers to the question that must have arisen in the eighteenth century as Guo Xiu's impeachments were made public by the Qianlong emperor: How did an obscure magistrate come to be in a position to challenge some of the most powerful figures at the Kangxi court? The fact that there were two stories suggests that many in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries struggled to explain Guo's unexpected appearance in high office in Beijing.

Tang Bin was in fact responsible for Guo Xiu's elevation to a capital post. As governor, Tang was required to undertake the Great Reckoning (Da Ji), a triennial evaluation of all the ranked personnel in Jiangsu. The evaluation could be fairly mechanical, and officials were invited to identify a small number of their subordinates as outstanding (*zhuo yi*).[32] In a memorial

submitted with his evaluation, Tang identified as outstanding one prefect, one department magistrate, and four district magistrates, including Guo Xiu. He described Guo as a man who was "blunt and argumentative" (*feng'e jiaoran*), terms that well describe the dialogue Zhaolian attributed to Guo. Tang also praised Guo for "collecting abundant tax [revenue] without having to dun" (*yuke bucui*), a comment that likely reflected the system of receipts described in the *History of Wujiang District*.[33]

The impression of Guo that survives from sources on his tenure in Wujiang is of a competent local official dedicated to civilian rule, who was capable of direct speech and bold action. He was unwilling to pull his punches, either along the canals of Wujiang or in the official yamen in Suzhou. Luck in the lottery had placed Guo in Wujiang, but his own character had distinguished him among the Jiangsu magistrates. Recognizing his abilities, Tang Bin recommended him, becoming a mentor in the process. Guo's career at the Kangxi court was launched.

Censor

Although there was a path for a magistrate to enter the Censorate, it was a difficult one; Guo Xiu made it only with luck and the benefit of Tang Bin's capacious coattails. Guo Xiu's move to the Censorate involved an increase to the fourth rank and a shift to a qualitatively different type of post. The increase in rank was significant. The fourth rank, the rank of censors, was midway between the seventh rank held by newly created *jinshi* appointed as magistrates, and the effective top of the system, rank 2, for ministers, grand secretaries, and governors-general.[34] Under the rules in place in 1686, magistrates with *jinshi* degrees who had served for a full two years and were recommended by the governor under whom they had served were entitled to sit for a special examination, known as the appointment examination (*kaoxuan ke*), to determine whether they could be promoted. Recommended magistrates competed in the examination against several categories of capital officials, who would likely have been better known to the grand secretaries who read the examinations. Those who passed were eligible for postings as censors or circuit intendants.[35]

Tang Bin's recommendation followed a tortured path. Initially, the Board

of Personnel refused to award an outstanding designation to Guo Xiu. By statute, outstanding designations could not be given to officials who had any tax arrears in their jurisdiction, and despite Tang's praise of Guo Xiu's ability in tax collection, Wujiang had arrears. In fact, Tang had anticipated this objection and prefaced his recommendation with the observation that since Jiangsu had higher taxes than many other provinces, many of its most capable officials presided over districts with arrears.[36] The emperor intervened, ordering that any official recommended by Tang Bin should be brought to court.

In December 1686, Guo Xiu was one of thirty-six candidates examined for promotion. The *Diary of Action and Repose* preserved a discussion of the 1686 candidates.[37] On December 12, 1686, the emperor asked the grand secretaries, "You have read what was written [in the examinations], and I have glanced through them [*lue jia guanlan*]. You ranked Liu Kai as number 1. What sort of person is he?" Wang Xi responded, "Liu Kai is in the Central Drafting Office, and his work is often seen in proclamations and patents of office. He is an intelligent person." The emperor then asked whether Liu had ever been sent out of the capital on commission, and Wang responded that Liu had been sent as a junior member of a team to carry out provincial examinations in Fujian. The emperor turned to an official from Fujian and asked what sort of reputation Liu had as an examiner. The official responded that he had not heard anything negative.

The emperor, it seems, had done more than glance at the examinations, and he had some significant reservations about the top candidate: "This script of his does not seem to be very well written. His cursive writing is rough and irregular." Had there been a fix in for Liu Kai, who served in a division of the Grand Secretariat? If so, the grand secretaries were willing to abandon their choice when confronted with imperial doubts. Mingju and Wang Xi responded to the emperor's question: "Your majesty is correct. [Liu] has long ago given up scholarship. Not only does he write characters poorly, but he does not seem to answer the questions precisely. He uses empty words to gloss the question in his answer, as if to say that he cannot answer it. His answer has very little content and leaves the reader feeling dissatisfied." The emperor then observed, "In his answer there is discussion of the merits of implementing an irrigation system in the northwest. Nat-

ural environments shape irrigation systems. If it really would have value, why didn't the ancient peoples long ago implement such a system?"[38]

The emperor then asked, "Are there any other good candidates among the group?" Wang Xi responded, "There is Pei Gun [n.d.], the magistrate of Piao District in Jiangnan. Pei Gun was very accomplished in his posting. There is also Guo Xiu, magistrate of Wujiang, who was recommended by Tang Bin and brought to the capital by special order on his recommendation." Responding perhaps to the emperor's dissatisfaction with their first choice, the grand secretaries seemed anxious to assure the emperor that there were capable people in the mix. This worked in Guo Xiu's favor, as he seemed not to have ranked among the top candidates.[39] Five days later, the emperor returned to the results of the mid-career examinations. "How many candidates were ranked in the first class, and how many in the second class?" Mingju responded that there were eight in the first class, sixteen in the second class, and twelve in the third class." "How many vacancies are there?" asked the emperor. Since the examinations were given at regular intervals and served to identify candidates who could be appointed until the next examination, there was no simple answer. Mingju responded, "Last year there were quite a few, thirty people, appointed. At present there are five vacancies as censor and five as circuit intendant. The emperor should decide how many appointments to make." The emperor decided that ten would be designated as censors and ten as circuit intendants, according to the ranking in the examinations. Wang Xi proposed that two men be dropped from the rankings; one of these was Zhao Shenqiao (1644–1720), whom Wang Xi described as one who "writes characters badly, and whose prose is only ordinary." Wang also recommended that Guo Xiu and Wang Zhuo (n.d.) be substituted for the two names that had been dropped. Apparently neither had made it into the top twenty names, but the grand secretary felt that because they had been recommended, they should be approved. The emperor concurred and ordered that the twenty individuals selected be appointed in sequence, according to their examination ranking. Guo Xiu, it would appear, had just made it into the ranks of middle-level officials. Although he was not the initial favorite of the grand secretaries, Tang Bin's recommendation had proven decisive when the emperor doubted his secretaries' judgment.

The Kangxi Censorate

Guo Xiu was appointed as censor the following spring. Little has been written about the Qing Censorate, in part because with the exception of a handful of episodes, it did not actively participate in politics.[40] This was in contrast, and likely in reaction, to the history of the Censorate during the late Ming, when censors' accusations were loud and acrimonious.[41] Early Qing rulers, who perceived that the Ming had fallen in part because the court had been overwhelmed with censorial conflicts, were anxious that this history not be repeated. The Qing developed a regular procedure for handling impeachments that placed all power in the hands of the emperor, allowing him to channel and limit the impact of censorial accusations on political life.

For one of Confucian convictions, service in the Censorate represented one of the highest responsibilities that could be earned. The Censorate was a very old institution; in fact, the title *yüshi*, rendered in English as "censor," may be one of the oldest political terms in China, appearing first in oracle bone texts. Associated with the term and the role was a complex of assumptions and understandings familiar to any Chinese scholar. The term "censor," as a translation for *yüshi*, is based on an analogy between the Chinese office and a Roman office; both polities imagined politics as rooted in a notion of virtue and provided space for an official who pointed out the differences between ideals and realities. The Chinese office was likely more heavily bureaucratized and, as it existed for a longer period of time, was associated with a more complex range of assumptions and procedures than the Roman office, but broad parallels were visible. Chinese censors traditionally had two tasks: impeachment and remonstrance. These were conceived as opposing functions: in impeachment, the censor pointed to things that should not be; in remonstrance, he pointed out what should exist but did not. For much of early imperial Chinese history, different officials engaged in these two functions, though by late imperial history the two roles were merged.

Charles Hucker has pointed to four characteristics of the Chinese censorial heritage. First, censors were officials of high prestige and autonomy; they represented an ideal cherished by the Confucian political order. It was

important that avenues of criticism be perpetually kept open, and from "a very early time, the censorial agencies seem to have gained a reputation of being fearless defenders of the unwritten constitution upon which the state system and the Chinese way of life were based."[42] Second, censors had considerable independence of action. Their writings were meant to proceed directly to the emperor rather than being passed through bureaucratic channels, and they were traditionally allowed to address such subjects and employ such evidence as they felt necessary. Third, censors were relatively young and of low rank. As men advanced in their careers, it was feared they would come to love their positions more than principles, and thus advocate compromise and be unable to perform the tasks expected of them. Fourth, there were no specialists in censorship. Censors were always expected to perform noncensorial tasks and to be able to move between the censorate and other institutions.[43] To Hucker's four principles, a fifth may be, indeed must be, added if the Guo Xiu case is to be understood: censors were vulnerable. There were never any whistleblower laws to protect censors from the sort of accusations they leveled at others. The models for the censor were the sages of antiquity, intellectuals who spoke truth to power regardless of the consequences and who stood to lose or gain based on the value of their advice. While it was considered bad form for an emperor to dismiss a censor, it was done when circumstances and charges seemed to merit it.

The Censorate took various institutional forms during Chinese history. In the Ming and the Qing it was headed by two censors-in-chief of the left and right, assisted by four assistant censors-in-chief, two each of the left and right. During the Qing period, one of the two censors-in-chief and two of the assistant censors-in-chief were Manchus. Under this leadership, the Qing Censorate had two branches, one for supervising officials at the capital and one consisting of what Hucker calls investigating censors. The censors responsible for the capital were divided into six groups, each responsible for overseeing the activities of one of the six ministries. Investigating censors bore titles that contained a geographical element but had the authority to investigate any matter regardless of where it occurred. In the Qing, there were forty-four investigating censors.

A foundational rule of impeachment, preserved in the *Great Qing Code* (Da Qing lüli) was that "in all cases where high and low officials in the

capital or outside commit an offense," the impeaching official will "send a memorial under seal, with a statement of the facts, requesting an imperial order, known as a rescript [*zhi*]. The impeaching official may not himself, without authorization, proceed to investigate the case."[44] On receipt of a memorial of impeachment, the emperor first had to characterize the accusation. For the least less serious matters, the ruler could call on his officials to "examine and advise" (*cha yi*); where the ruler envisioned that punishments would be assessed, he could call on officials to "recommend administrative punishment" (*yi chu*); and on the most serious matters, he could ask officials to "advise on severe administrative punishment" (*yanjia yichu*).[45]

After the emperor had received and characterized an impeachment, he could order an investigation and appoint an investigating committee, sometimes of one or two but more often of three persons, at least in serious cases. If the alleged infraction took place outside the capital, these individuals traveled to the site of the offense and carried out such investigation as they saw fit. The investigators' role was limited to fact-finding; when their report was submitted, the monarch reviewed it. If the ruler judged that guilt had been established, he could refer the case to the Ministry of Punishments for criminal sanctions or to the Ministry of Personnel for administrative sanctions. Administrative sanctions could include fines, demotions, or removal from office, and were assessed according to a manual, the *Regulations on Administrative Punishments* (Chufen zeli). The deliberations of the ministries were only advisory; it was the ruler who decided the sanction. In fact, the recommended sanctions were often reduced as a mark of imperial grace.

Obviously, the procedures of the Censorate did not produce a rule of law, but they were not meant to. The goal was instead a rule of virtue, and the assumption was that a ruler could best achieve such a rule when properly advised by an officialdom that represented a repository of virtue. Historical assessments of the Censorate in China have gone to extremes, with some seeing the censor as nothing more than a disciplinary official responding to the orders of an absolute monarch. Others have seen the Censorate as embodying a sort of democratic principle, with the censor speaking for the masses. Neither of these perspectives is valid. A more balanced perspec-

tive would see the censor as part political commissar, part ombudsman, and part moralist. As Charles Hucker concludes, "Neither representatives of the imperial will, nor representatives of the majority will, they were spokesmen for the general will—that is to say, guardians of the Confucian governmental heritage handed down from the past. In this manner alone can their prestige and their influence be accounted for."[46]

What characteristics brought Guo Xiu to the center of Qing power in 1686? Educated at home in a rural setting, he may have had some of the character of an autodidact unused to debate, but he knew what he knew and was prepared to act on it forcefully. Although his family had suffered during the Manchu conquest, he was willing to serve the Qing so long as they abided by Confucian principles. He was a smart man, though perhaps not brilliant, with a mind attracted to the practical problem of applying Confucian principles to real world situations. As in most successful careers, Guo's was marked by luck. He was fortunate that his examiner and his bureaucratic mentor appreciated his talents and that the drift of conversation at court resulted in his selection as censor. Guo was able to capitalize on these strokes of fortune, however, making a significant career for himself. He could be outspoken: he spoke his mind on the canals of Wujiang, in the yamen of the provincial governor of Jiangsu, and at the Kangxi court. These characteristics suited him well for appointment in the Kangxi censorate, where his courage and habit of direct speaking could find an outlet in impeachment and remonstrance. Above all, he was committed to the rule of virtue, which was the ultimate goal of the censorate.

FIVE

Impeachments

In 1688, Jin Fu and Mingju were two of the most powerful men in China. Guo Xiu was a recently promoted and still relatively obscure newcomer to the court, a censor assigned to audit the capital grain supplies. What prompted Guo to impeach Jin and Mingju, and what did he propose to accomplish by doing so? This chapter argues that Guo Xiu responded both to the call of duty and to the call of his monarch. Duty called powerfully to the recently created censor. Mingju and Jin Fu were very likely guilty, but knowledge of their guilt was hardly new; in Guo's circles suspicion of these two officials was widespread. But no one had the courage to take them on. New to the court and not yet inured to its corruption, Guo was willing to speak when others remained silent. Guo took his Confucianism seriously, and in the tradition there were many examples, beginning with Confucius himself, of men who spoke truth to power. But Guo was not proceeding from conviction alone; he was also reading signals from the emperor. His impeachment of Jin Fu responded to a call from the emperor for more information than his court was providing about the state of Qing affairs. The impeachment of Mingju responded to a specific signal that a memorial impeaching senior courtiers would be well received.

Signals

A year after Guo Xiu entered the Censorate, the Kangxi emperor engaged in a revealing dialogue with members of his court about the role and need for censors.[1] This dialogue was not public, but it resulted in an order publicly changing censorial procedures and was probably widely known. The immediate cause was a memorial that reached the emperor through a rather random sequence of events. There was a drought in the early summer of 1687, and fearing that the acts of his government might be out of

harmony with the workings of heaven, the emperor called on officials to inform him of problems they saw in the state. Most of the responses were anodyne assurances that the state was in accord with heavenly principle. One memorial from a junior official in the Court of Astronomy named Dong Hanchen (n.d.) caught the emperor's attention.[2]

Most interesting to the emperor was Dong's claim that the court needed to be more open to suggestions and criticisms from below. For at least several days, the monarch discussed this matter with his courtiers. The emperor worried that "even though the institutions of government have been roughly established, the avenues for airing views seem to be blocked." Mingju and his colleagues consistently assured the emperor that he need not worry about others' comments because he listened to their opinions; in effect, he needed no advice but theirs. There was even an attempt to suppress Dong's memorial, which was blocked by Guo Xiu's former mentor, Tang Bin.[3] The matter was finally allowed to rest when the court left Beijing to escape the heat, going first to the southern lodge and then to Manchuria for the annual autumn hunt.

On his first day back in Beijing, the emperor returned to the topic in an imperial edict:

> There have been many cases in which censors indicting corrupt officials have been afraid to speak because they have not personally observed the receipt of bribes. At present there is a law against indictments based only on hearsay (*fengwen*). But has there ever been a case where the recipient of a bribe has been willing to [say he was bribed and] be impeached? In the past, there has been a regulation allowing indictments based on unattributed sources. But the [Oboi] regents suspended this procedure. Let us restore the procedure. The corrupt fear such a rule. If there are cases of censors' bearing grudges and on investigation the grudge is proven, then there is a mechanism for reversing the charge. Let this edict be promulgated to the court, the censors and imperial advisers.[4]

The crucial expression here was the notion of *fengwen,* or things "heard on the winds." This expression had been a part of imperial Chinese political vocabulary for most of imperial times, together with the related but somewhat more ominous expression *fengyan*, meaning "rumors" or "gossip." During

the Six Dynasties period (420–589), censors were encouraged to report "folk songs and street talk that reflected popular opinion of the government." In later imperial and modern contexts as a legal term, *fengwen* is best translated as "hearsay evidence."[5] Censors were not required to prove their charges; in fact they were explicitly prohibited from investigating them. But they could be required to provide the names of their sources. With sources named, charges could be more easily investigated and unreliable sources readily eliminated. There was also a perception that when censors were not required to name sources, they could more easily make charges based on their own private grievances rather than harm to the body politic.

The significance of Kangxi's 1687 edict that more loosely sourced allegations would be entertained was not lost on the imperial favorite. As grand secretary, Mingju was obligated to promulgate the imperial edict, but he made clear that he did not approve:

> We have promulgated to the court and to the censors an edict restoring the right of censors to impeach based on unattributed sources, but we respectfully memorialize our opinions. . . . In ancient times, there was never a rule that censors could impeach based on unattributed sources. It only existed during the late Ming, when there were the several eunuch courts and offices. Worthless characters banded together into factions, attacking each other and exacting revenge. Taking advantage of the right to make accusations based on unattributed sources, they made wild accusations, which led to disasters along the border. Now with the practice of making accusations based on unattributed sources restored, we fear that worthless characters will once again use the pretext of unattributed accusation to stir up trouble and falsehood. Who can tell whether bearing grudges and seeking favors from each other will become general practice? This practice cannot be permitted. The current law [i.e., the prohibition of unattributed sources] should be maintained.

Mingju's observation that *fengwen* had never been permitted was in error, but his charge that allowing censors more license could bring about chaos, as had happened in the late Ming, was a potent one in the early Qing context. In almost no respect was the late Ming a positive example in the Qing seventeenth century. Kangxi was, however, prepared to ignore

Mingju. He responded, "Noted," and the audience ended. No change was ordered. Frustrated by the perception that he was being manipulated, the Kangxi emperor signaled to his officialdom that he was willing to receive accusations and would not be troubled by their sources.

Impeaching Jin Fu

With such a signal, it was plausible for a recently appointed censor to imagine that he could productively bring a matter of importance to the emperor's attention.[6] Still, Guo had to be cautious. The monarch had publicly indicated his desire to receive impeachments, but it was impossible to predict how he might respond to specific charges. Guo Xiu was a new censor, as yet unfamiliar to the emperor. Moreover, the emperor was proud of his knowledge of the southern river works, and specific proposals for changes in the plan of repair and maintenance had to be couched carefully. All of these necessary cautions were reflected in an impeachment of Jin Fu that was the shortest and least specific of his three impeachments, 450 characters, as opposed to 800 characters each for the other two impeachments. Unlike the other two impeachments, it did not have a bill of particulars; while it brought broad charges against Jin Fu, it did not offer specific documentable instances of malfeasance. The purpose seemed less to charge Jin Fu with corruption than to remind the emperor that many opposed Jin's project.

Read today, the impeachment of Jin Fu offers an introduction to the social and political assumptions that surrounded the role of censor. Guo Xiu wrote, "Through the extraordinary favor of the emperor, I was raised to the post of censor in violation of the rules of seniority. Your official is conscious of the extraordinary favor he has received, a favor that can never be repaid. All I can do to fulfill my duty is to report all that I see without fear of others' resentment. All within the seas is at peace, and communities are settled through the emperor's labor from dawn to dusk and his abundant care."[7]

Elements of this were true. Guo had labored in a low position for seven years and then been raised four ranks by the emperor's promotion. But humility is not all that was conveyed here. For a Confucian official, the approach to the emperor was qualitatively different from the approach

to a bureaucratic superior, as the emperorship represented the possibility of moral and political perfection (regardless of the foibles of any specific emperor). The perfection of the emperorship was established in the impeachment with standard expressions describing the demands of an emperor's life. This language was not necessary for this emperor, who was rarely susceptible to flattery and found flowery language pretentious and undesirable. It was, however, necessary for Guo to establish his commitment to a Confucian vision as a foundation for his accusations. It was the possibility of perfection that motivated the official to do his best.

Guo Xiu's criticism of Jin Fu was plainly stated. Guo wrote that in his prosperous era only one group could be thought vulnerable, and these were the landowners of the counties of the Yellow River Delta. Their vulnerability stemmed from the efforts of Jin Fu:

> The emperor has appointed Jin Fu as governor-general of river affairs, and Jin has delegated his authority to Chen Huang. If there is flooding, when the waves abate, there is yet another excuse made to the ruler. Today they propose building a dike; tomorrow they propose digging a channel. Millions are spent, but the river is as worrisome as always. Today they propose appointing a river intendant; tomorrow they propose appointing a river sub-magistrate. They take positions and ranks created by the court and award them as acts of private charity. There is no end to their underlings.[8]

As Jin Fu himself would have pointed out, he is not being accused of anything illegal here. It was fully appropriate for the director-general of river conservancy to request funds to carry out his job, although the amount of Jin's requests was an extraordinary consequence of how he set about doing his job. Moreover, Qing regulations allowed him to recommend his own subordinates. It was the pattern that Guo was pointing to, in which money was allocated, nominees were confirmed, but nothing was accomplished, and the river was as worrisome as always.

The impeachment thus far appeared to address Jin Fu's tenure in general, but its specific language pointed to Jin Fu's activities in 1686. In the early years of his tenure, Jin was concerned to reduce the number of officials involved in controlling the river. The request for massive numbers of

subordinates, which Qiao Lai decried, was a product of 1686 and the new demand Jin Fu felt to compete with Yu Chenglong and Sun Zaifeng's coastal dredging project. The image Guo Xiu projected, of apparently pointless effort at great cost, likely referred to the canal dredging effort in particular, rather than the river director's effort in general.

Guo Xiu then turned to a discussion of agricultural colonies in Jiangsu. Here he was specifically speaking of the canal dredging effort, as it was in the context of that effort that colonies were proposed. By the time Guo wrote, the process of forming agricultural colonies had actually begun:

> They also conspire to seize lands from the people, absurdly referring to this as "creating military colonies," inappropriately seizing grain for sale outside the borders of their jurisdiction. The emperor has ordered that the lower stretches of the [east-flowing rivers] must be dredged, but Jin Fu has developed a hundred schemes to impede the work. Now orders must be given so that merit prevails; the abuses must be permanently ended. As for the matter of military agricultural colonies, the emperor long ago foresaw that these would harm the people. When they were interviewed, officials also concluded that they would harm the people.[9]

Instead of undertaking the work the emperor wanted, Jin and Chen deliberately schemed to interfere with the emperor's orders and engaged in a petty land grab.

The next element in Guo's impeachment was probably predictable. Private secretaries were ubiquitous in Qing administration, necessary adjuncts to an underfunded and understaffed administration. But they were always suspect as men who had not passed the examinations or undergone the necessary training and moral education to handle administration. In rising to positions of authority, it was feared, they would only scheme to enrich themselves and the officials they served. So it was with Chen Huang: "Chen Huang's strategies serve to support the plots of Jin Fu alone; they are completely without benefit to the state's economy or the people." Guo charged Chen Huang with developing the scheme.

Concluding, Guo referred to both Chen and Huang as "corrupt officials of the state and robbers of the people" (*guo zhi chong, min zhi zei ye*). The character Guo used for "corrupt officials" means both corrupt officials and

a type of worm (*chongzi*) that consumes books. In English this is humorous, but Guo's purpose was deadly serious. In applying the term to Jin Fu, Guo meant to bring him down. Guo's impeachment concluded with the requisite request for imperial action: "I submit this for your imperial judgment, requesting that you issue an order to investigate thoroughly, assign punishments, and appoint honest and effective Manchu and Chinese high officials to set river affairs in order and memorialize about their results. The millions of souls who live north and south of the Yellow River will enjoy the benefits for eternity."[10]

REACTION

Guo's memorial was submitted in a moment of turmoil. The emperor's beloved grandmother, the grand empress dowager, died on the last days of the Chinese year corresponding to 1687.[11] There was usually a period in the first lunar month when the emperor conducted no business; this period was extended in 1688 to nearly the end of February because of the mourning activities. Guo presented his memorial at the Qianqing gate on February 24, 1687, the first day on which the emperor conducted business in the new year that had begun on February 1. Visibly tired and still wearing plain blue mourning clothes, the monarch received Guo's document and ordered those at court to discuss river matters. The Chinese minister of finance addressed the throne: "We have discussed [Jin's] proposals. Military agricultural colonies would be a burden to the people and should be stopped. As for building a new dike, we should do as Jin Fu proposes."[12]

Then the emperor ordered Guo Xiu and the minister to kneel before the throne and addressed them:

> When I was on my southern tour, I personally inspected the canal, 180 li south of the Gao Family Dike, and 180 li north of it. I saw it all and became familiar with the banks of the canal. Now there is a proposal to build a dike to force the water through the Clear Passage and out to sea. If this really were advantageous, why didn't they build it long ago? The people of the seven counties have experienced extraordinary hardship. I have seen this with my own eyes and felt it in my heart. If we build another dike, the people will be doubly burdened! Military agricultural

colonies will bring hardship to the people and profits to courtiers. Everyone knows that Chen Huang is a commoner. As for his idea of military agricultural colonies, there are none among the people of Jiangnan who do not resent it. Don't you all know this?"[13]

The monarch turned to the censors and said, "You are censors; you ought to speak directly, hiding nothing. Have you no consciences? You ought to have spoken on this matter in public." Finally, he turned to Guo Xiu and asked, "Are there details in your memorial?" Guo answered that his memorial was general. Then the monarch asked, "Does your memorial mention officials at court who interfere in river matters?" Guo answered that there was no such discussion.[14]

The last question was particularly telling. The emperor seemed suspicious that among his inner circle there were officials trying to direct river policy in ways that served their own interests—that there were names to be named. Even more telling in this regard was the emperor's comment, buried in the longer statement, that military agricultural colonies would benefit courtiers (*ting chen*). It was likely that the proposal would have benefited Jin Fu and his subordinates, but the suspicion that the circle of beneficiaries reached into the court was striking. Was the emperor looking for another impeachment?

Impeaching Mingju

One can imagine the courtiers holding their collective breath until Guo answered that he hadn't mentioned the names of any courtiers. Many no doubt hoped the moment would pass, but Guo Xiu was unwilling to let the matter rest. Several days later he produced a full-on attack on Grand Secretary Mingju. Guo's speedy response suggested that he had an impeachment of Mingju ready. His impeachment of the river director may have been an attempt to test the waters, as it were, when his real aim was to get at Mingju, whom he saw as engaged with Jin Fu in a single corrupt enterprise. Unlike Guo Xiu's first impeachment, where a pervasive and troubling pattern of events was conveyed with understatement, the second impeachment had to name names, provide details, and prove its case.[15] Impeaching an imperial

favorite, Guo's career was on the line, and failure at this point would surely have cost him a great deal, probably his career and perhaps his life. Where his first memorial was marked by rhetorical caution, the second showed argumentative caution. After an introduction stating his purpose, Guo broached the issue of how the emperor could dismiss Mingju after having favored him for so long. Guo then lodged eight charges against the grand secretary. These can be reduced to four categories of offense: (1) malfeasance of office as grand secretary; (2) forming a faction to demand bribes for appointments to territorial posts; (3) skimming the revenues allotted for river repairs; and (4) attempting to control the Censorate.

MALFEASANCE

Guo Xiu began his memorial in straightforward fashion, announcing that his purpose was to charge a great official who had become corrupt. But there was a delicate problem: in impeaching an imperial favorite, one had to avoid impugning the judgment of the ruler who had put him in place. One solution was to offer the ruler a model for changing his views. Fortunately, the classical canon offered a useful precedent of sages changing their view of subordinates. When the mythical sage-king Shun took over the throne from Yao, the *Book of Documents* recorded that he found several of Yao's officials to be corrupt and dismissed them. Recounting this example, Guo observed that because Shun was willing to dismiss Yao's officials, his era became prosperous. The case was not precisely parallel to the situation of the Kangxi emperor and Mingju, but it was close enough to serve Guo's purpose. If the great Shun was willing to recognize the faults of Yao's appointees, the Kangxi emperor should be willing to change his own view of Mingju.[16]

With this issue dispatched, Guo began his first charge, an obvious malfeasance that could be documented. It involved Mingju's use of his position as grand secretary to change an imperial order and thereby manipulate the corruption case of Governor Zhang Qian (*jinshi* 1646). Guo Xiu wrote:

> All documents drafted by the Grand Council are prepared under Mingju's direction, regardless of whether they are important or unimportant. Yu Guozhu follows Mingju's instruction. [Even] if there are errors, his colleagues do not dare make corrections.

> There have even been cases when the emperor in his wisdom called for investigation and reprimand and there has been no review or action at all. Chen Zizhi's (n.d.) impeachment of Zhang Qian requested the punishment of those who had recommended [Zhang for office], and the emperor ordered the nine ministers to punish them all appropriately and consistently. But the draft order did not mention this at all.[17]

Zhang Qian was a territorial official who specialized in border provinces with significant military garrisons. Extant personnel sources show that he was promoted steadily through mid-level posts, from Shaanxi grain intendant to provincial judge of Yunnan in December 1683, then from Yunnan provincial judge to lieutenant governor of Fujian in the spring of 1685, then from lieutenant governor of Fujian to governor of Huguang in January 1686.[18] According to Guo Xiu's censorial colleague Chen Zizhi, Zhang Qian was busy in his first few months in Huguang. He extorted money from salt merchants, the provincial mint, and along the Yangzi River wharves, and had even begun to shake down Hankow merchants. In Chen's view, Zhang Qian was so obviously corrupt that those who "recommended him for office at the time [of his appointment] must have taken bribes." Chen requested that Zhang be investigated and that those who had recommended Zhang for office be remanded for administrative discipline.[19]

Coming just a few weeks after the emperor's invitation to censors to memorialize based on words "heard on the wind," Chen's impeachment drew attention. The emperor discussed the case at some length in imperial audience and even drew the case to the attention of scholarly advisers in the Southern Study.[20] Finding it extraordinary that no one had dared to report Zhang Qian's corruption, the emperor singled out Chen Zizhi for praise and ordered that he be promoted at the first opportunity.[21]

On investigation, it was found that Zhang Qian had extorted money from his subordinates in Huguang to make up the deficits in the provincial treasury in Fujian, the post from which he had been promoted to Huguang. During the years when this case took place, the responsibilities of the lieutenant governor in the territorial order were being redefined. In the Ming, two commissioners for the dissemination of government policies (*xuanbu zheng shi*) were the senior civilian officials in each province. Fiscal review

was their responsibility, but their main task was supervising local officials. In the Qing, the two administration commissioners were reduced to one, who came to be regarded as the principal subordinate of the governor, in effect lieutenant governor.[22] The lieutenant governor became the main fiscal official at the provincial level. As Liu Fengyun has recently argued, the increasing salience of this regulation in postwar Kangxi China led to some extraordinary machinations among departing lieutenant governors stuck with unexplainable deficits.[23] Like all territorial officials, lieutenant governors were required to officially turn over (*jiaodai*) their treasuries to successors when they left their post. Any deficits had to be accounted for, or they became the responsibility of the incoming official. Zhang Qian, caught with a deficit in his treasury when his promotion from lieutenant governor to governor was announced, filled it by whatever means possible.

Guo's charge against Mingju in connection with this case was serious. Zhang Qian may well have been Mingju's protégé, as many provincial governors were. However, Guo Xiu had accused Mingju of an offense more serious than protecting a protégé. The charge was that Mingju had deliberately changed an imperial order as he prepared the written version, in order to prevent punishment of those who had recommended Zhang Qian. Under the provisions of Qing administrative law, such punishment was a real possibility. It was a long-standing principle of Chinese personnel administration that recommenders bore responsibility for a recommendee's conduct for the entire course of a recommendee's official career. Changing the emperor's orders so that Zhang's recommenders were shielded did nothing to protect Zhang Qian, whose career was toast, but it did serve to protect those at court who had spoken up for him.

FORMING A FACTION

One of the most vivid passages among Guo's descriptions of Mingju was his portrait of the favorite's actions as the imperial audience with senior counselors adjourned:

> In cases when Mingju receives imperial orders [*fengzhi*], if they are praised, he tells people, "This is because of my advocacy." If the orders are not called good, he says, "The Emperor was displeased.[24] I had to

> gently persuade him." Moreover, he freely exaggerates in order to appear gracious and assert his own importance. By this means he ties many people to him in order to extract bribes [from those wanting favors]. Every day when the court finishes considering memorials, as Manchu and Han officials of the various offices stand to the left of the main gate waiting sincerely and reverently, he reveals secrets, and there are none of the emperor's thoughts that are not divulged. In any matter affecting even slightly the business of a board, an order must be requested.[25]

Seen through the horrified, or perhaps fascinated, eyes of a court newcomer like Guo, Mingju circulated among those waiting as an imperial audience ended, bestowing a confidence here and a promise there. It was bad enough that Mingju was revealing matters that should have been kept secret until official imperial orders were issued. Even worse, he was doing it to enhance what we might today call his own brand—that is, he was emphasizing his own role in decision-making to increase the value of his services to those who requested them. Guo's scene captured Mingju in action as a faction leader, and factionalism was the subject of a substantial part of Guo's memorial.

"Mingju has formed a faction," wrote Guo. The Manchu organizer was Foron (d. 1701); the organizer among the Chinese was Yu Guozhu. Both these men had been associated with Mingju before his ascent to the Grand Secretariat. Foron had a multifaceted career: while he profited from his association with Mingju, he proved to be a capable official in his own right and served with some distinction at court. Unlike Mingju, who came from the upper three banners and began service as an imperial bodyguard, Foron belonged to the Plain White Banner and began as a Manchu clerk in the Ministry of War. It was here that he likely met Mingju, who was then minister. In 1676, Foron was assigned to supervise military provisions in wartime Huguang, where he memorialized his concern that as the need to supply the army could drain the local economy, provisions would need to be supplied by merchants from neighboring provinces. In 1680, Foron was appointed to oversee military provisions in Sichuan. After the war, he returned to the capital and rose rapidly in the central administration, serving first as a member of the Ministry of Punishments. In 1684, he served on a high-level

committee to review the provincial mints and make recommendations to ensure their solvency. The next year saw him appointed as a member of the Ministry of War, and then promoted to Manchu president of the Censorate. Following his term in the censorate, Foron attained ministerial rank, first as Manchu minister of works and then of punishments. Like Mingju, he was both a capable and corrupt administrator.[26]

Yu Guozhu was probably a decade older than Foron, having received his *jinshi* in 1653. From Huguang, he was likely something of an outsider, as most Chinese officials in these years were from the northern Chinese provinces of Henan and Shandong. His first appointment was as department magistrate, after which he returned to the capital, occupying a series of censorial and administrative positions. Between 1676 and 1680, he served as censor responsible for reviewing the Ministries of Finance (1676–78) and Ritual (1678–80). As censor for the Ministry of Finance, he reviewed tax quotas and memorialized about inequalities in an effort to secure funding for the armies in the last stage of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. In particular he proposed that provisions for the army during the rebellion be drawn from coastal provinces rather than hard-pressed interior provinces like Shaanxi, Henan, or Shandong. Transferred to be censor for the Ministry of Rites, he memorialized recommending the discipline of territorial officials.[27] In 1682, he was appointed governor of Jiangsu, becoming Guo Xiu's superior and perhaps the Jiangsu governor Guo came to dislike so heartily. On his return from Jiangsu, Yu was appointed grand secretary, where he served alongside Mingju.[28] Guo claimed three other Manchu were part of Mingju's faction: Gesite (n.d.), a censor and, according to Guo, a relative of Mingju's; Fulata (n.d.), the Manchu minister of works; and Xiqin (n.d.).[29]

Factions were hardly new at the Qing court in the 1680s, but Mingju's was held together in a new way. H. Lyman Miller has shown convincingly that competition among factions dominated the politics of the first twenty-five years of Qing rule. The factions Miller described, however, were exclusively Manchu, with each composed of soldiers of the same Manchu banner; there was the White Banner faction, the Bordered Yellow faction, and so on.[30] Mingju's followers were multiethnic and included Manchus from various banners. Instead of ethnicity and banner identity, what Mingju's followers had in common was their service in military administration during the

Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. Both Foron and Yu Guozhu worked to secure the provisioning of the Qing armies during the war, a crucial part of Mingju's portfolio as minister of war. Successful in war, they came to dominate the peacetime administration of the 1680s.

According to Guo, Mingju and his followers used their power in the 1680s to control policy and extort payments from candidates for appointment. Guo wrote that in meetings and collective recommendations, Manchus led the way, while Chinese like Yu Guozhu concurred. Guo's descriptions jibe with other accounts of discussions in the imperial presence in which Chinese officials were criticized for their silence and Manchu officials seemed to take the initiative. A second function of Mingju's faction was to extort money from officials seeking office: "When vacancies such as governor-general, governor, lieutenant governor, and provincial judge open, Yu Guozhu never fails to turn to the sale [of offices] and is not satisfied until his desires are fulfilled. For this reason, governors and governors-general must be stingy in all affairs, and the people are afflicted. The imperial vision sees the people of the empire as his children, but the people suffer from insufficiency; this is all because officials ruinously extort money for their private interests."[31]

Guo's argument against sale of office was not on legal or, in the first instance, moral grounds, but rather practical. Officials who have had to pay for their office had to make up their investment by extorting money from those they governed. No matter how benevolent a monarch intended to be, rapacious officials who had to pay back the bribes they had made to acquire office could undermine his policies. Yu Guozhu, with his long service as censor for the Ministry of Finance and his knowledge of provincial tax quotas, handled the actual negotiation of prices.[32]

Money may well have also been exchanged when new educational intendants were appointed. Educational intendants were centrally appointed officials who toured the province to which they were assigned, "inspecting schools, certifying students for subsidies in state schools, and selecting candidates for the provincial examinations." The allegation was that Yu and Mingju skimmed revenues by collecting a fee before appointment: "When the terms of educational intendants came to an end in 1684, all the new candidates for positions went [first] to discuss prices. When the members

of the court gathered to select [the new intendants], the discussion should have been public and based on reputation, but in fact the decisions had been made in advance. Because of this the educational intendants have all had to seek many sorts of bribes, and education and culture have been greatly harmed."[33]

MINGJU AND JIN FU

One appointment made during Mingju's term as minister of personnel was of particular interest: the appointment of Jin Fu as director-general of river conservancy. In his impeachment of Mingju, Guo Xiu wrote, "Jin Fu, Mingju, and Yu Guozhu work closely together and divide the revenues [lit., "divide the fat," (*fenfei*)] allocated for Yellow River repair among themselves. The officials proposed for appointment in the River Conservancy have all been identified by them and constitute a powerful, secret, protected group. When it was first proposed to open up the course of the lower Yellow River, Jin Fu was the one who had to be appointed, and he was happy to take on the task; the nine ministers approved the appointment without objection."[34]

The implications of this charge were huge. By the emperor's own account, the Yellow River project was the most expensive effort of his reign. If Jin Fu and Mingju were in league, the profits they could have enjoyed were enormous, forming the basis of fortunes that could support generations. Guo's claims, however, were nuanced and need to be parsed carefully. He was certainly claiming that Jin Fu and Mingju were in league and that they shared bribes that candidates for office paid to receive the director-general's recommendation for appointment; he also claimed that Mingju and Jin Fu skimmed the revenues appropriated by the central government for river repairs. Had this relationship begun when it was first proposed that the Yellow River be opened up? Here Guo Xiu becomes more cautious, using passive verb forms to suggest malfeasance without actually asserting agency: Jin Fu was the one who "had to be appointed" (*bi weiren*), and Jin Fu was "delighted to take on the task." What evidence was there that Jin Fu was Mingju's protégé?

Jin Fu and Mingju likely met as young men, as both were sons of highly placed families in the Sino-Manchu aristocratic order. Mingju may also have become aware of Jin Fu as minister of war, when the ministry com-

mended Jin for his proposal on communications. At the time of Jin Fu's appointment, however, Mingju was minister of personnel, and according to Jin's biographer, Wang Shizhen, Jin's appointment was a "special" one, made by the emperor himself, rather than a routine one effected through the mechanisms of the Ministry of Personnel. It is possible that Mingju influenced Jin's appointment, but there is no hard evidence. As the appointment was made before the *Diary of Action and Repose* adopted the practice of recording the emperor's political as well as his educational activities, there is no source on advice given about this appointment.

Once the diary began reporting political matters, it became possible to trace the advice Mingju offered on matters affecting Jin Fu. In the first crisis of Jin's term, floods in the late summer of 1680, Mingju was supportive but not emphatic. In 1682, when Jin Fu came to the capital and requested that the probation which had been imposed on him as administrative punishment after the 1680 floods be lifted, Mingju advised the emperor to wait: "The work on the river has only recently been completed. There is no guarantee that after a while there will not be concerns. The [previous order] left the official at his post. Let's wait a few months, and if there are no further calamities, he may be forgiven."[35] By 1685, Mingju seems to have been won over to Jin Fu's side. Late in the autumn, Jin Fu and Yu Chenglong traveled to the capital to plead their respective cases. Jin Fu argued that upriver repairs could solve the problem of flooding in north central Jiangsu, and Yu Chenglong argued that the mouths of the east-flowing rivers had to be dredged. The emperor asked Mingju for his opinion, and he answered, "Although Yu Chenglong is known for his honesty, he has never particularly specialized in river matters. Jin Fu has long held his appointment in river affairs and has achieved many successes. It seems that we should follow his proposals."[36]

Mingju not only supported Jin Fu's proposals in his conflict with Yu Chenglong, but he attempted to facilitate them by offering a means for funding them. Jin Fu's proposals were, in fact, quite expensive. Mingju studied them and noted to the emperor that the necessary funds could be provided over a three-year period: 300,000 the first year, 500,000 the second year, and 400,000 the third year.[37] As grand secretary, Mingju was fully entitled to comment on proposals involving the amounts of money

Jin Fu requested in 1685. However, the coincidence of Mingju's increased interest in how the river project was to be funded at just the point when it was becoming significantly more expensive is striking. Collusion, of course, requires two parties, and it seems likely that in 1685 Jin Fu, faced with the competition of Yu Chenglong's project on the coast, was looking for an ally at court. This was a role that Mingju was prepared to play, likely for a fee. Foron's appointment as minister of works in 1686 provided another indication of Mingju's interest in river politics.

Yu Chenglong's frustration and Mingju's support for Jin Fu's more expensive proposals were at the core of Guo Xiu's complaint:

> Later, the emperor wished to appoint another person, and Yu Chenglong, who was then favored by the throne, was sent to fulfill imperial orders. But Chenglong's rank was only that of provincial judge, all he could do was agree, and the prerogative of proposing work belonged to Jin Fu. At this point [Jin Fu] did not interfere with [Yu's] work. When Jin Fu sought to expand his project, Yu Chenglong did not agree with him; [Jin] actively interfered [with the lower river project]. Only because he relied on a powerful official [i.e., Mingju] could Jin Fu dare to act this way.[38]

The larger Jin Fu's project became, the more he needed allies, and the closer the relationship with Mingju became.

THE CENSORATE

A group like Mingju's had to protect itself, and the main institution to fear in the Chinese order was the Censorate. Mingju defended himself against the Censorate by attempting to control its membership, responding swiftly with countercharges when he was attacked and acting to preempt criticism before it arose. His forceful and repeated rejection of the idea that censorial powers needed to be broadened, in the dialogue over Dong Hanchen's memorial, clearly demonstrated Mingju's suspicion of empowered censors. Guo Xiu wrote of Mingju's fear of the Censorate: "What he worries about most are the censorial officials, fearing that they will reveal his evil schemes. When Foron was appointed to the leadership of the Censorate, the censor Li Shiqian repeatedly memorialized requesting a rescript, and censor Wu Jili

impeached [Foron] for creating pretexts to bring about officials' downfall. All who heard the indictment were frightened."[39]

The charges Guo made here cannot be verified today, although there is much evidence suggesting that he was correct. Li Shiqian received his *jinshi* in 1661 and served as a censor during the 1680s. A collection of his censorial memorials, titled *Memorials of Li Shiqian of Our Dynasty* (Guochao Li Shiqian zoushu), was published in 1826.[40] Wu Jili, from Hangzhou, received his *jinshi* degree in 1678. According to his biography, Foron was appointed to the Censorate in 1684, and his appointment as a Manchu without a Chinese civil degree could well have caused concern. His first memorial alleging that censors made accusations because they were paid to do so—in fact an attack on the Censorate itself—would have increased these concerns. The implication that Mingju was behind Foron's appointment is certainly plausible, for as Meng Zhaoxin has shown, he was behind many of the censorial appointments of the 1680s, including that of Wang Hongxu.[41]

With many of his own appointees lodged in senior posts in the Censorate, it became possible for Mingju to control appointments and assignments for junior positions: "When there are promotions made to the Censorate, or when censors are sent on investigations, Mingju and Yu Guozhu extort bribes for assigning the tasks. When reviews are conducted to select new censors, they are assigned and coordinated. When censors submit memorials, they must first request review [by Mingju]. In this way, censorial officials are all under his control."[42]

Through careful attention to censorial posts, Mingju not only could make money, but he could control the flow of information reaching the emperor. Moreover, in requesting review of censors' memorials before they reached the emperor, Mingju was interfering in what was one of the most fundamental rights of censors: to communicate directly with the monarch.

In Guo Xiu's portrayal, Mingju's tentacles, like those of a malign administrative octopus, extended throughout the Qing bureaucracy. Mingju's influence was not imposed at a single stroke; rather his powers were likely developed by stages during his decade of service at the emperor's side. Increasingly vocal on the matter of appointments as he grew more senior as

a grand secretary, his personnel recommendations became more valuable. Aware that the court was willing to invest substantial amounts in river repairs, Mingju became more directly involved in financial decisions. As he and his followers became more implicated in corruption, it became more important that his group control the Censorate. Over time, Mingju and his colleagues took advantage of the opportunities afforded by an increasingly prosperous age. While they were unquestionably agents, they were also beneficiaries of a system that was growing to meet the demands of the empire. A huge number of positions had to be filled by an emperor with little practical experience. Financial regulation was loose—enough for Zhang Qian to imagine that Huguang officials could pay back deficits in the Fujian treasury. Officials brought to their service at court a wealth of friendships, associations, and obligations. Mingju could be blamed for taking advantage of these opportunities, but he had not created them. Confronted with Guo Xiu's impeachment, the emperor faced a choice between blaming the individual or blaming the system.

The Sources

Guo Xiu's impeachment of Mingju was described by his contemporaries as a thunderclap, and it would eventually lead to dismissals, retirements, and forced leaves throughout the mid-seventeenth-century Qing order. It remains here to consider the question of where Guo had gotten his information and why it was useful to the emperor. The most famous speculator was Li Guangdi (1642–1718), an official and courtier from Fujian. Li alleged in his memoirs that the emperor had in fact drafted the charges against Mingju, giving them to Gao Shiqi in the Southern Study to pass along to Guo. Xiao Yishan (1902–1978) found this implausible, as Gao Shiqi was one of the individuals Guo later charged with corruption.[43]

There may be somewhat more to Li's speculation than meets the eye. The emperor did have a role in eliciting the impeachment when he signaled that impeachments based on hearsay would be accepted, and he questioned Guo on whether he meant to impeach anyone at court. But this does not mean the monarch himself drafted the charges. Had the Kangxi emperor been certain of Mingju's corruption, he could have proceeded in the most

efficient way, dismissing the grand secretary. There must still have been doubt in the monarch's mind—doubt that required confirmation from a source among civil officials. Or the prospect of dislodging an official with so many followers was sufficiently daunting that a paper trail was needed.

Whatever the reason for his uncertainty, it would appear that the emperor had partial but incomplete knowledge of the political world around him. The Kangxi emperor appeared better informed than many of his Ming predecessors. Ray Huang's classic account of the Wanli emperor (r. 1573–1620) portrayed a monarch surrounded by eunuchs and sycophants who was isolated from the central issues of his day and may have given up trying to find out what they were.[44] Like the Wanli emperor, the Kangxi emperor was raised at court, but the Qing had vastly reduced the presence of eunuchs. Instead, the emperor was surrounded by a multiethnic court with many strata of servitors who watched each other closely, and perhaps jealously, anxious to oppose any threat to status or prerogatives in their remarks to the monarch. The reports of these groups were likely not complete. The monarch regularly complained that factional allegiances prevented officials from telling him the truth. Confirmations were necessary, and the long-term history of the Qing monarchy presented many examples of monarchs reaching beyond those around them for information through secret communications.

Responding to the ruler, Guo must have gotten his information somewhere. As a junior censor, he would not have observed Mingju and Yu Guozhu soliciting bribes or been at court to hear the deliberations that led to policy decisions. In his second as well as his first memorial, he was using the censor's new prerogative of impeaching with unsourced allegations. One possible source of his information was suggested by an anecdote in Gao Shiqi's biography in *The History of the Qing*. According to the story, after Yu Chenglong reported Mingju's malfeasance to the emperor, the monarch asked Gao if the tales were true. Gao said they were, and the emperor then asked why no one had submitted a memorial. Gao responded, "Who doesn't fear death?"[45] There was no mention of Guo Xiu in this story, but there is reason to suspect that Yu was involved. Yu was frustrated that he couldn't carry out orders to dredge the mouth of the Yellow River, and he had made a career of impeaching corrupt Manchus. Moreover, Guo

mentioned Yu's name positively in his impeachment, expressing sympathy for the predicament he had faced in Jiangnan. This certainly does not prove that Yu wrote the impeachment, but he very well may have been one of Guo's sources.

One person who credited Guo for writing the impeachment, and did so quite ostentatiously, was the Kangxi emperor, who rewarded him with promotions. In early March 1688, he was promoted from investigating censor to assistant censor-in-chief.[46] In mid-April, the additional honorary title of minister of the court of state ceremonial was granted to him.[47] In November 1687, he was promoted to academician in the grand secretariat (rank 2b), with additional duties as member of the Ministry of Rites.[48] The following April, he was transferred to serve as chancellor of the imperial Hanlin Academy and moved to the Ministry of Personnel, which carried greater prestige.[49] In late June 1688, he was promoted to the post of censor-in-chief (*zuo duyushi*) and given responsibility for overseeing the Classics Mat lecture that occurred in early July. Later that summer, Guo's deceased father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother were granted posthumous titles, marks of imperial favor granted to high-ranking and especially favored officials.[50] Wherever Guo had gotten his information, he had done a service for the monarch and was well rewarded for it.

These rewards were gratefully received, but Guo did not submit his impeachments to earn rewards. Identifying malfeasance was the duty of the Confucian, particularly of the Confucian censor, and reporting it was its own reward. There was a patent sincerity about Guo Xiu's pronouncements. He may have veiled his purpose to some degree in his impeachment of Jin Fu; the charges he made against the river director were valid, but Guo's real target was likely Mingju and the corrupt alliance between Mingju and Jin. In his writing about Mingju, however, he was clear and direct and didn't hide behind literary allusions or oblique references.[51] Guo acted alone—"Don't you have consciences?" the emperor chided the other censors—and bore alone the burden of his attack on the major political figures of his day. In his impeachments Guo was as honest and forthright as he had been along the canals of Wujiang. His convictions and his courage would allow him to do no less.

SIX

Decisions

Censors launched impeachments, but they did not control their impact. The emperor alone determined what should be done with impeachments: the monarch judged their importance, ordered them investigated or suppressed, and punished or exonerated offenders as he judged necessary. Guo Xiu's first two impeachments were handled very differently. The accusation of Mingju was managed quietly. No investigation was undertaken of the man who had stood at the emperor's side for nearly a decade, nor was discussion allowed. The answer to Guo's charges was a long, carefully reasoned edict in which the emperor used the fact of Guo Xiu's impeachment to offer a lesson to officialdom about their duty to the monarch, a lesson in which the specific charges against the grand secretary were only hinted at. On the other hand, the charges against Jin Fu were discussed at messy length over two days at court. Consideration of the impeachment was merged with discussion of a report on river work in Jiangnan that was commissioned in late 1687. Personal grievances, ethnic resentments, and institutional jealousies, as well as the patterns of power and factional allegiance that had grown up around Jin Fu's work, were revealed. The different responses to Guo's impeachments were hardly surprising, given the offenders' positions and histories. What was interesting in the emperor's responses was the repertoire of responses available, as well as the ways they could be tailored to speak to the complex multiethnic court that served the postwar Qing monarchy.

Condemning Mingju

The condemnation of Mingju was premised on the commitment of the dynasty to Chinese principles of bureaucratic order. The emperor wrote, "The empire has established offices and divided them according to ranks and roles in order to take care of the many tasks of government. Officials

must abandon their own desires and act with complete honesty, the great officials observant of the law and the lesser officials pure [*dafa xiaolian*], with each official attending to his role and devoting himself wholeheartedly to his duty. . . . I have managed affairs in the empire now for years in this way."[1] The emperor described an ideal, almost Weberian bureaucratic order and drew on a classic utopian text to do so, asserting that the principles of administration and Qing fealty to them should have been clear to all. The Qing commitment was to a notion drawn from a second-century utopian text, the *Record of Rites* (Li ji): "When great officials are observant of the laws, and lower officials are pure, . . . the state will be in good condition."[2] Even though the target of the edict was a Manchu bannerman, the principles governing discipline were to be Chinese.

The problem, from the emperor's point of view, was that Chinese officials did not meet their obligations:

> There are among court officials, from grand secretaries to the ordinary ranks, those who do not respect their roles. They want to leave their offices early, and they focus only on their own immediate convenience. They form in groups of three to five, associating with each other. Examination graduates of the same year and protégés of senior officials associate and collaborate with each other. They plot secret affairs, they cover up for those of the same faction, scheme to receive bribes, and engage in fraud to advance private interests, all sorts of activities of which I have long known.[3]

Corruption and careerism prevented officials from playing their proper role in the affairs of the state. In so doing, they prevented the emperor from receiving the range of opinion he should have before making a decision:

> When there is a meeting, each ought to express his views, and then all should discuss together. But there are always a few who want to speak first, and the others go along in apparent agreement. What's worse, there are those who participate in conferences and seem like they are in a fog. When court conferences are like this, what can the state rely on? There are even some who remain silent when opinions are solicited, but when an affair goes awry, they cleverly transfer the blame. I'm especially dis-

gusted with this type of complaisant buck-passers [*tuiwei gourong*] and have often instructed them sternly.[4]

The emperor used the occasion of Mingju's dismissal to lecture Chinese officials on their obligations. A common refrain in the emperor's comments on his court—the accusation that Chinese courtiers preserved a self-interested silence at crucial moments—echoed Guo Xiu's charge in his impeachment of Mingju that "whenever there is a discussion at court, or [call for a] collective recommendation, Foron and Gesite dominate the discussion." Such language also occurred in other edicts, with an ethnic inflection: Manchus were willing to speak up, while Chinese held back. In the context of Mingju's impeachment, the emperor seemed to argue that officials, mostly Chinese, had failed in their duty to restrain the corrupt—or, worse, personally benefited from the corruption—and so bore as much responsibility as the accused official himself. There may have been truth in this charge, but it also served as a way of extending to the entire court the blame for the corruption Guo Xiu observed. Mingju was ultimately dismissed for his misdeeds, but the thrust of the edict condemning him was that all at court needed to reform themselves. In this respect, the edict condemning Mingju seemed to take as precedent the edict condemning his predecessor, Songgotu, theoretically drafted in part by Mingju, which did not mention Songgotu's name at all but pointed out respects in which the officialdom and military disserved the monarch.[5]

In one respect, however, the edict did reflect the specific character of Mingju's influence: it defended the right of the emperor to consult with court officials before making appointments. The emperor wrote that "the matter of selection of officials is of utmost importance. It is difficult to know all officials and judge whether any one of them is virtuous or not. Therefore, when an important post comes open, I personally order that a recommendation be made, in the expectation that an appropriate official will be found and there will be real benefit. I expect that those who are recommended will conscientiously undertake their responsibilities, aware that if they are found wanting in their performance, those who recommended them will be punished."[6] There was no apology here for relying on recommendations in making important appointments. In a very centralized

administration, where the throne granted large portfolios to little-known officials, recommendations were essential. If one individual spoke up to make recommendations more often than others, the fault did not lie with the emperor, who could only listen, but with the courtiers who failed to speak up and so failed in their duty to the monarch.

So, what was the responsibility of the emperor? It was, Kangxi averred, to intervene when the situation seemed to be out of hand. "It's not that I am unaware of these abuses. Previously, when Bambursan and Asha [d. 1669] were engaged in their calumny, upsetting the dynastic order, the law was carried out to their shame and regret."[7] Bambursan and Asha were protégés of Oboi, regent for the young Kangxi emperor in the 1660s. Bambursan was the chief grand secretary, like Mingju, and Asha was the Manchu minister of personnel. Both were dismissed and executed in the summer of 1669. Alluding to his dismissal of the regents, the emperor asserted that he was capable of intervening when the situation grew dire. But, the emperor said, he had little desire to humiliate his fellow Manchus as he had Bambursan and Asha if there was no need. For this reason, "in the current situation, where greater and lesser officials have turned their backs on the public good, although I have seen through the situation, I have not pointed it out, in hopes that the officials involved would recognize their guilt and reform themselves, and the situation could be made whole."[8] In this case the emperor argued that his reluctance to draw attention to corrupt elements of the Manchu order was justified in terms of the Neo-Confucian faith in the human ability to examine oneself and perceive the proper course of action.

Unfortunately, the corrupt officials had not moved to correct themselves. "How could I have imagined that the habits [of corruption] were so deeply entrenched that they could be practiced wholly without regret?" The edict then described cases of corruption that had occurred recently. As the purpose of these descriptions was to demonstrate that corruption had reached a stage that required imperial intervention, they did not detail the activities. The first involved the governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou, Cai Yurong (d. 1699), who had practiced favoritism in personnel actions, attempted to form a faction and employed "a hundred schemes" to advance his own interests.[9] The second case was the disappearance of his order that the names of those who had recommended Zhang Qian for territorial office

be revealed. The third case was that of Jin Fu. In Jin's case, the emperor said that he had recognized the abuse involved in the formation of agricultural colonies and sent Foron to investigate. But on his return, Foron would only argue for his own point of view, defending private interests. When reprimanded, he seemed to feel neither fear nor regret.[10]

The accumulated corruption had become serious: "Cases of this nature can only become more serious the longer they are unaddressed. Popular criticism is raging, public sentiment is inflamed, and the situation has become so serious that the censors have begun to offer memorials of impeachment. The law must be made clear, so that order can be restored in the official ranks."[11] The emperor continued, "Because I cannot bear to charge high officials with crimes, and moreover during the war there were those who served with distinction and should be forgiven the process of investigation," the solution would be a simple order. Mingju was relieved of his posts in the Grand Secretariat and ordered to serve in rotation in the imperial bodyguard. Senior Manchus could lose their posts in the civil administration, but they remained members of the banner armies and could hold military posts. Also dismissed were Ledehong (n. d.), a member of the imperial Gioro clan who had been appointed to the Grand Secretariat on the same day as Mingju, and Li Zhifang (*jinshi* 1647, d. 1694), a hero of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, who was ordered to retire and return to his native place.[12] Yu Guozhu, Mingju's protégé who had been appointed to the Grand Secretariat in the winter of 1687, was cashiered. The emperor's order went beyond what Guo Xiu had requested: altogether four out of five serving grand secretaries were dismissed.[13] No reason was given for dismissing the other grand secretaries, but likely it reflected the emperor's perception that Mingju dominated the entire secretariat. Below the level of grand secretary, the emperor was more generous than Guo Xiu. The censor Gesite, Fulata, and Xiqin were not dismissed, as Guo Xiu had requested, but a fourth Manchu, Karkun (n.d.), was.[14] Foron and Xiong Yixian (n.d.)were to be relieved of their responsibilities and were to serve without salary in the river administration to expiate their guilt. All officials should examine themselves, correct their bad habits, and devote themselves to the public interest in order that the emperor's benevolence be justified, and there would be a restoration of good government.[15]

One of the difficulties an investigation of Mingju could have posed is illustrated by an edict issued several days after the document quoted above. Once again, the emperor ordered his courtiers to assemble, and he read a prepared text.

> These days when a man is appointed, those outside say, "He was recommended by so-and-so, and therefore he was appointed." Or if there is a matter of policy discussed they say, "So-and-so supported one official's position and denigrated another official." The competition among the ranks of officials for honor begins with this. How can [I know] the strengths and weaknesses of various officials if I don't ask? Even though great officials may make recommendations, the appointments all come from me. I usually know one or two of those who are being appointed. I consider those who are being recommended by the great officials. How is this an issue? Among those who are recommended by senior counselors, about half are appointed, and half do not receive office. It is a matter of luck.[16]

Mingju had made no secret of his ability to influence appointments, and during his long stay at the emperor's side he had likely shaped the Qing administration. His fall could easily have undermined many if not most of the officials whose appointment he had advocated, who now served at the capital and in the provinces. It was necessary for the emperor to assert that he had ultimate responsibility for the personnel and policies of his reign. In the interest of stability, it was wisest that the details of Mingju's influence were not investigated. It was best perhaps to allow sleeping dismissed grand secretaries lie.

The Kangxi emperor's response to Guo Xiu's impeachment of Mingju was mature and politically skillful. It was sufficiently polished that he likely had given the situation significant thought. He had decided who was to be punished and how, and how many of Guo's charges were to be made public and in what ways. The imperial edict drew upon the precedent that had been established with the dismissal of Songgotu, to produce a document that acknowledged the charges but firmly closed the door on elaborate investigations and the wide-ranging purges to which they might have led. It may ultimately be impossible to establish with certainty the emperor's

attitude toward Mingju, and there was good reason for this. The emperor could not repudiate the counselor without turning his back on ten years' worth of successful administration or the success of Qing rule in the years of prosperity that followed the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories.

The Case of Jin Fu

Guo Xiu stirred up a hornet's nest with his impeachment of Jin Fu, and many were stung. When Guo submitted his impeachment in February 1688, his goal was to inform the emperor of local resentment of Jin Fu and Chen Huang and urge their removal. By the time the court had finished its discussion of his memorial, two governors-general, two ministry officials, and two censors had been relieved of their positions, and Chen Huang had lost his life. Two factors produced this bureaucratic carnage. First, discussion of the impeachment became intertwined with discussion of a report from the last committee to investigate Jin Fu's work, led by Foron in the late autumn of 1687. Second, the consideration of Guo Xiu's impeachment and Foron's report proved an occasion for the release of pent-up frustration about river matters that expressed itself in a spate of charges and countercharges.

The court worked through these charges over several days of discussion. Records of this discussion appeared both in the *Veritable Records*, a chronological presentation of imperial actions prepared after the emperor's death, and the *Diary of Action and Repose*, a theoretically verbatim account of what actually transpired at court. The accounts in these two sources are different, however, and the differences highlight the elements of imperial action and discourse that were judged worthy of preserving and those that editors felt might as well be forgotten.

THE FORON REPORT

A new report on Jin Fu's activity commissioned in the late autumn of 1687 coincided with and may have precipitated Guo Xiu's impeachment. Like previous reports, the 1687 document supported Jin Fu's position. But unlike earlier cases, some members of the 1687 committee expressed dissatisfaction with the committee's conclusions. The fall of Mingju and the attack on Jin Fu, which occurred after the report was made public and before it

was discussed, may have loosened tongues. The result was a discussion that revealed much about the committee process and the river.

The composition of the committee was announced on November 29, 1687.[17] The senior member was Foron, then Manchu minister of finance. The other members were Xiong Yixian (*jinshi* 1664, d. 1707), a Chinese member of the Ministry of Personnel, and two junior supervising secretaries, Dacina (n.d.) and Zhao Jishi (d. 1706).[18] The group was balanced as to ethnicity; at each level, there was one Manchu and one Chinese. However, in terms of rank and influence the committee was unbalanced: Foron was clearly the dominant member of those appointed in the capital. Once the group reached Jiangnan, they were joined by Liangjiang governor-general Dong Na (*jinshi* 1667) as well as the director-general of grain transport, Mu Tianyan (*jinshi* 1657, d. 1695). As he sent the group off, the emperor urged that, although Jin claimed that the agricultural colonies could produce hundreds of thousands in grain and cash, his purpose in supporting river construction was to benefit people, not earn revenue.[19]

A preliminary written version of the report appeared on January 21, 1688. Like previous committees sent to Jiangnan to investigate river work, the 1687–88 committee sided with Jin Fu. They argued that to control flooding in the downriver districts, the most important work was to regulate the flow upriver, and this could best be accomplished by building the secondary levee that Jin Fu had proposed along the Gao Family Dike. Embankments along the Grand Canal and the smaller east-flowing rivers needed to be reinforced, but the dredging at the mouths of smaller east-flowing rivers should be suspended. A partial text of the report that was copied into the *Veritable Records* made no reference to agricultural colonies, but subsequent discussion demonstrated that the report endorsed the idea, provided that the land used for colonies was "excess" land, created by reclamation and not owned by anyone. The report also confirmed that Jin Fu's cost estimates were plausible.[20]

This document produced an extraordinary flurry of responses. Governor-General Mu Tianyan argued that building a second wall around the Gao Family Dike was not necessary, and suggested that Foron had changed the content of the report after it was drafted. Sun Zaifeng claimed that when he met with the group along the coast, they agreed that coastal dredging

should continue, but the final report recommended that the coastal dredging should be terminated. Censor Lu Zuxiu (b. 1652, *jinshi* 1679) observed that, for a territorial official, Jin Fu had a remarkably large following in the capital and was concerned only with his personal profit. Minister of war Zhang Yushu (1642–1711) and censor Xu Qianxue submitted memorials strongly opposing the formation of agricultural colonies.[21] Jin Fu also memorialized, reviewing his own achievements and accusing Mu Tianyan, Sun Zaifeng, Guo Xiu, and Yu Chenglong of forming a faction against him.[22] Guo Xiu's memorial, the first of the series, started a cascade of criticism.

How was such a controversial report produced? Investigative committees were quite common in Qing administration, and their conclusions often appeared in the official record, cited as bases of imperial action. But rarely were accounts preserved of how the groups reached their conclusions. For Foron's committee there was such an account, in the testimony of Dong Na, one of its members. The account is biased, to be sure, but there were no unbiased observers of the river controversy of 1688, and Dong's particular biases did not overly interfere with his tale. Dong Na was an unusual governor-general. He took his *jinshi* in 1667, then served in the Hanlin Academy and the Censorate. When he was appointed governor-general of Jiangnan, he had no governing experience outside the capital.[23] The governor-general's position was originally a military one, and many of Dong's predecessors were military men. Dong, however, was stoutly civilian, his appointment having likely been the result of a central decision to return to civilian rule in the southeast.

Dong Na met the emperor five days before the other participants arrived to discuss the report.[24] He took the opportunity of his early arrival and the emperor's undivided attention to make clear that the committee report bearing his name did not reflect his views. Specifically, Dong claimed that Foron had dominated the discussion and bullied the participants into accepting his point of view. Moreover, Dong claimed that Foron's report had ignored the reservations he and others had expressed about the secondary levee along Gao Family Dike and misrepresented the committee's views on the downstream dredging projects. Dong also claimed that Foron had changed the final text of the report after the committee had agreed to it and before it was submitted to the emperor.

After some preliminaries in which Dong apologized for a previous overly prolix memorial, the monarch asked, "What do you think of Jin Fu's project to build a secondary levee to hold the Gao Family Dike?" Dong replied, "My colleagues and I originally felt that it would be not necessary to build the secondary levee." According to Dong, the group had almost decided to recommend against the levee when Zhao Jishi expressed doubt about this recommendation and demanded that they consult Jin Fu. Zhao's doubts were not about the levee project itself, but about the wisdom of submitting a report without consulting Jin Fu. Although of relatively low rank, Zhao was not a young man, and he had spent much of his early career supervising military conquest in Shanxi; he may well have had a more cautious nature or been intimidated by Jin Fu's rank and place in the Manchu hierarchy.[25] Once consulted, Jin was predictably adamant that the committee report support his proposed new levee, and the committee consensus changed. For the emperor, Dong reaffirmed his view that in fact "the secondary levee would offer no benefit and be a burden on the population."[26]

Dong's allegation that he had been bullied and not allowed to speak was striking. In fact, as governor-general, Dong Na held the same rank as Foron; ministers and governors-general held 1B, the second of the eighteen ranks into which the Chinese civil service was divided.[27] If rank had been the determining element in their relations, there was no reason why Dong should have deferred to Foron. But Foron was a Manchu and a very well-connected one. Although educated Chinese were taking up positions of authority in the Qing in the 1680s, decisions of scope, about war and peace or large expenditures, still remained in Manchu hands. There may also have been a cultural element: Manchus were accustomed to speaking directly and were used to power. Although Dong was adept at the language of administration, he may not have been equally skilled in the language of power.

Dong's most telling accusation was that Foron altered the text of the group's report after it had been agreed upon and before it was submitted. Dong Na was in a precarious position here, as he had in fact written the Chinese text of the report, translating the Manchu text Foron had drafted. Foron may have had a more limited Chinese education than his mentor, Mingju. He clearly functioned effectively in a Chinese-speaking environ-

ment, but he deferred on the presentation of a full report in classical Chinese. It seemed that Foron drafted the report in Manchu and then gave it to Dong Na to translate into Chinese.[28] But Dong Na claimed that Foron altered the text after it had been translated, making changes when he had a final, fair copy of the text made at a stationary shop. Dong said that the draft he had written referred to "creating agricultural colonies with the people's land" (*yi min tian zuo tun tian*), and the final version of the report spoke of creating colonies with "the people's excess land" (*min zhi yu tian wei tuntian*).[29]

Two further memorials submitted to the court provided support for elements of Dong's account. Full texts of these memorials are not extant, but quoted passages provide a fair indication of the main points. The first is from Sun Zaifeng, the official in charge of dredging the river mouths, who claimed that Foron had controlled (*zhu*) the production of the report, because he was engaged in a shady plot (*yin mou*) with Jin Fu. He also claimed that Jin Fu's secretary, Chen Huang, was illegally seizing property.[30] The second memorial corroborating Dong's account came from a figure of considerably higher rank and longer experience, the director-general of grain transport, Mu Tianyan. A *jinshi* of 1657 from Gansu, Mu had risen during a career of thirty years of service, earning praise and commendations as he did so. Much of his time was spent in Jiangsu, where he served as lieutenant governor from 1670 to 1675, and governor from 1675 to 1684.

He was known in these years for his work untangling land ownership and tax obligations, and his benevolence was much respected.[31] As director-general of grain transport, it was Mu's responsibility to oversee shipments of grain from southeast China to Beijing. He thus had a professional interest in the river works Jin Fu maintained, as the grain shipments passed along them. Interviewed by Foron, he expressed his view that the secondary levee at Gao Family Dike was unnecessary. Mu felt that the existing structure along the shore of the lake could be restored at significantly less expense. As Mu described his interaction with Foron's committee, he had almost convinced Foron to recommend against the secondary levee when Zhao Jishi insisted that Jin Fu be consulted. This matched Dong Na's account, except that Mu claimed credit for the committee's consensus. Mu also described the sequence of events that led Foron to edit the final report. When Jin Fu

publicly announced his plan for creating military colonies, it elicited stiff protest from local landholders. Foron, according to Mu, recognized that he could not recommend to the emperor that Jin's scheme be implemented, so he changed the language of the final report so that colonies would be created out of newly created land rather than land that was already owned.[32] Read by itself, the transcript of Dong Na's audience with the emperor suggested an inexperienced and insecure territorial official more anxious to describe Foron's bullying than to make a contribution to river policy. There was truth in this, but Mu's and Sun's memorials demonstrate that there was also truth in Dong Na's charges. The group had almost recommended against the levee at the Gao Family Dike, then Foron edited the report. There would be much to talk about at the court conference.

COURT CONFERENCE

The court conference took place over two days. The first day unfolded as a series of confrontations—between Dong Na and Foron, between Jin Fu and his accusers, and between Jin Fu and Yu Chenglong—followed by a more general discussion of river policy. The accusations continued on the second day, climaxed by the emperor's unusual angry outburst at his Chinese advisers, before the discussion settled down to a more serious assessment of Jin Fu's legacy and future. Two of the issues raised in these discussions are worthy of more careful consideration: the emperor's comments on the limitations of Chinese officials and the final decision on Jin Fu's fate.

One of the most dramatic and colorful moments in the court conference occurred when the emperor lashed out at Chinese scholars, angrily denouncing them for failing to contribute to river policies. None of the exchanges at this moment appear in *Veritable Records*. Fairly early on the first day, Xiong Yixian joined the discussion with a tale of woe and a claim that he too could not support and had not contributed to the report. Like Dong Na, Xiong was a distinguished holder of the *jinshi* degree who had served in the Hanlin Academy, rising through the ranks of postings open to Chinese at the capital; at the time of the report, he was a member of the Ministry of Personnel.[33] Xiong's explanation for his disavowal was that during the investigations he had been seriously ill. At the time of his appointment, he was experiencing diarrhea, and by the time the group reached the south,

he was having chills as well. For this reason, Xiong said that he had been unable to concentrate and had not participated in any of the group's deliberations. The emperor said, "If you were ill, you could have submitted a memorial" requesting relief. Xiong responded that he had "committed an infraction worthy of death."[34] This seemed a rather extreme response, although it anticipated the total collapse of Xiong's position. Later in the interview, the emperor asked Xiong if he agreed with the recommendation that a secondary levee be built at the Gao Family Dike. Xiong said, "At the time of the discussion, I agreed that the wall should be built." The emperor pounced: "Earlier you said you did not participate in the discussion. Now you say that at the time of the discussion you agreed. According to the evidence, you are trying to pass the buck to avoid guilt. You have turned your back on the responsibilities of a great official. In such a case, how can one not punish the one to instruct the many?"[35] Xiong kowtowed, silently accepting the emperor's reprimand.

On the next day, the emperor's frustration with Chinese officials, who seemed unwilling to commit to a course of action, boiled over: "In 1678, I issued an edict ordering that all officials work together [*tongyin xiegong*]; from ancient times it has been thus." The edict the emperor referred to had been issued in the late summer of 1678.[36] It did, as the emperor remembered, urge all officials to work together for the common good. However, the edict was read with another level of meaning; it served as a repudiation of Songgotu's leadership at court and recognized Mingju's ascendancy. Officials were told to work together but also not to form factions. Evoking this context, the emperor was saying not only that his counselors were failing to do their job, but they were doing so because of their factional allegiances.

The emperor continued in vivid language:

> Now as each of the ministries manages affairs, senior and junior Chinese officials try to pass the buck to Manchu officials. Affairs are appropriately managed only when an individual takes responsibility on himself. Then, when a matter goes awry, the blame can be placed on a single person. Chinese in office don't see a matter to its conclusion but pass responsibility to a Manchu official, in the hope of returning home early to amuse themselves at dinner parties [*zaogui yenhui xiyou*]. They are

> not devoting their entire energies to their duties of appropriately and reasonably managing affairs.[37]

The point here was not to urge austerity: the Kangxi emperor was not opposed to feasting, as Michael G. Chang has shown, and just at this moment, the court was turning more and more to Chinese social forms.[38] Nor was the objection that officials were leaving the office early to beat the commute. Qing officials worked on a ten-day-on, ten-day-off schedule; the emperor likely envisioned not hours of work missed but days. The point was rather to contrast Manchu officials who actually got things done with Chinese officials who socialized, verbalized, and fled responsibility. On the emperor's telling, Chinese officials, either through fear or irresponsibility, deferred decisions to Manchus. Manchus could rule China, but the Chinese, hopelessly addicted to social forms and factionalism, could not.

The emperor continued:

> Henceforth, let us all work together with a common purpose, striving to achieve effective administration, not just pass the buck. In the ordinary memorials of censors and circuit attendants, there may be one or two proposals that can be implemented, but hidden in them are always private interests, plots to malfeasance. Everything that is proposed has its hidden purpose. Most of the memorials I read take self-interest as the public interest and distort laws flagrantly. Territorial officials preen their authority, extorting money and favors in many ways. There are none among the governors and governors-general who are not feared, and there are none of the people's miseries that cannot be attributed to this.
>
> You who were sent to inspect the rivers are senior officials who should take the state's purpose as your own. What is it that you fear, that you are unable to speak clearly? It is obvious that you are unable to devote yourselves fully to the public interest. You take illness as an excuse, hoping to escape responsibility. The cases of Chen Mingxia and Liu Zhengzong come to mind. As we assess guilt in this case, those whom we should punish are precisely yourselves![39]

This extraordinary reprimand was suppressed completely in the *Veritable Records*. Although it was directed at Xiong Yixian, it was clearly addressed

to all the Chinese in attendance. The emperor averred that he could trust no Chinese official to put aside self-interest and act with a public spirit. When Chinese officials spoke, he couldn't trust them; when they didn't speak, they hid private motives. Chen Mingxia (1604–1654) and Liu Zhengzong (n.d.) were Chinese grand secretaries who had manipulated personnel processes in the Shunzhi period to benefit their friends and family members; both had private motives that they did not reveal to their Manchu superiors.[40] The emperor's point was to impress upon his hearers the seriousness of the charges. Chen Mingxia was executed by strangulation during the late Shunzhi reign, and Liu Zhengzong lost his post and half of his property during the Oboi regency in Kangxi's youth.

It is hard, but not impossible, to reconcile the image of the Kangxi emperor as patron of Chinese learning and scholars with this outburst, in which he pointed to Chinese habits as faults, and this may be why it was suppressed in the *Veritable Records*. When the emperor patronized learning he was paying fealty to the intellectual tradition on which Chinese governance was based. In his comments above he was expressing frustration with social habits and practices and asserting that it was Manchus who got things done, an ideological theme of Qing rule.

Getting things done was very much at stake when the question of Jin Fu's fate took its final form at the end of the second day. If the emperor was not prepared to go along with Jin Fu's proposal to create colonies—and he had made clear that he was not—did this mean Jin had to be relieved, and if so, could another official as knowledgeable as Jin be found? How was the harm Jin Fu had done by seizing land to form colonies to be balanced against the accomplishments of his long tenure? Which of the several projects along the canal and river were to be completed and which terminated? How was the extraordinary furor created by the project to be quieted? At the conclusion of the conference, the monarch asked his advisers to deliberate and report back on actions that needed to be taken.

The case against Jin Fu boiled down to a claim that he had not attended to the wishes of the elite of the lower Yangzi. Fields had been flooded, and for that reason the people were bitter. Literally, the people wanted to "eat his [Jin's] flesh" (*shi yin zhi rou*). In response, Jin expressed for the first time what would become a theme of his resistance to the charges against

him, the argument that there was an elite conspiracy against him: "I have exerted myself on the emperor's behalf for a long while, and during this time I have discovered many pieces of land that have been illicitly occupied by rich and powerful families. Because of this the rich families hate me. But what has this to do with the ordinary people?" Serving the emperor's interest meant serving the people, even if this involved attacking landlords.

During the court conference, Jin Fu offered a further self-defense:

> When I began, the hydraulic works were broken down and there were breaks in the levees everywhere. Since I became director-general, I have filled in the broken places and built levees along both sides of the river, through the emperor's grace. In recent years the rivers have been restored to their traditional courses, and there is no longer the worry about breaks. For this reason, the people's land has been dried out. It was my intention to return the revenue produced by the land to its rightful owners and make colonies out of the excess land, in order to refill the river director's treasury. This is because of my subordinate's mistake; I can do nothing about it."[41]

This would be Jin Fu's last comment during the court conference, and it was effectively a coda to his twelve years' work on the riverbank. For the first time, he acknowledged that there was resentment against him, though he blamed it on his subordinates' mistakes. He also urged the emperor to consider this resentment in the larger context of all he had accomplished during his years in Jiangnan.[42] Concluding the conference, the emperor ordered his counselors to deliberate on appropriate actions.

Stung perhaps by the complexity of the case and the emotions it had aroused, the imperial courtiers approached their final decision cautiously. After four days, on April 12, the courtiers stated their conclusion "that drilling at the mouths of east-flowing rivers should be completed, but the project at the Gao Family Dike should be halted. Decisions about the water gates along the canal should be deferred until the river dredging is finished, when a determination can be made about which gates are necessary and which can be eliminated." The advisers then asked the emperor whether they should wait to consult with Mu Tianyan and Sun Zaifeng before deliberating on the appropriate punishments for those involved in

the case. The emperor responded that they need not wait. In fact, far from consulting Sun and Mu about punishments, the emperor observed, Sun and Mu should themselves be punished: "Dong Na, Sun Zaifeng, and Mu Tianyan are important officials. They should have memorialized about any problems they saw. Instead, they waited until someone else had submitted a memorial and only then expressed their views. Today they say this; tomorrow they say that. They are completely inconsistent. Can they really be called important officials?"

There was a fine line between keeping open the flow of opinions and allowing the impeachment process to degenerate into factional warfare, between listening to the "words on the winds" and inviting backbiting. Six months after the emperor had invited censors to submit loosely sourced impeachments when they saw something wrong, at a moment when memorials of accusation were pouring in from the south about the Foron report, the emperor wrote, "Recently there have been very many memorials of impeachment from censors. If there have indeed been cases of great greed or great evil, you should memorialize promptly. But if in memorializing the purpose is to intimidate or to profit yourself, to such an extent that an official cannot rest secure, then the intimidator should be reported promptly. Let this edict be circulated in the censorate and the Ministry of Personnel."[43] Just as the edict on loosely sourced memorials signaled a change not of law but of policy, this edict sent a signal that censors needed to watch carefully so that they were not accused of greed or intimidation.

Eleven days later, the courtiers recommended that Foron, Xiong Yixian, Dacina, Sun Zaifeng, Dong Na, and Mu Tianyan be cashiered from office. The emperor approved these recommendations, except in the case of Foron. Foron, said the monarch, "was very effective in his time as minister of works. Each time he was charged with a commission he was up to the task." Two Manchus among the courtiers then testified that indeed Foron had been an effective administrator and valued supervisor. Kangxi continued, "Foron has been a loyal official. How can we, because of this matter, mistakenly condemn him?"[44] Had the emperor forgotten the reports of Foron bullying and changing the text of the report, or even Guo Xiu's accusation that in collusion with Mingju, Foron had collected corrupt revenues? If so, memories seemed to have faded when the emperor imagined a sturdy,

subordinate Manchu who actually got things done. However, Foron was advised to watch himself. The monarch reflected bitterly, "All officials have their private interests and accuse each other; it has always been thus. Not only have Han officials long walked this evil path, but now Manchus seem to be treading it as well!"

And what of Jin Fu? On the last day of the conference, the emperor had wondered how a replacement for Jin could be found, and how many years it would take to determine whether the successor was as competent as Jin. Guo Xiu suggested that the court might consult people who lived in Jiangnan, but the emperor replied that local landholders had their own interests and were not likely to agree on a single course of action. When the courtiers had presented their preliminary conclusions, the emperor again asked whether a Chinese successor could be found. Again, Guo Xiu spoke up, observing that Jin must have archives of his work that could be consulted, and that Jin was in fact "not without talent." This was a rather surprising intervention from Guo Xiu, which highlighted his perception that the harm in Jin Fu's directorship resulted from his reliance on an uncredentialed and likely immoral subordinate.[45]

The court officials were not so tolerant of Jin Fu. They recommended that he be cashiered from office, whipped one hundred strokes, and made to wear the cangue for two months. They further stipulated that Jin should not be allowed the official's privilege of paying a cash fine instead of undergoing corporal punishment. Chen Huang was to be beaten forty strokes with the flat bamboo and exiled to a distance of three thousand *li*. The emperor modified the two sentences, eliminating the corporal punishment for Jin and substituting imprisonment for beating and exile in Chen's case. But the monarch was still dissatisfied. "There are those who say the river administration has become seriously decayed during Jin Fu's administration. If this is true, then why don't the levees collapse? How can the tribute boats continue to run without obstruction? I don't believe it!" Moreover, the emperor asked again where another capable official could be found, and how one could know in advance that such an official had been found. Only after six or seven years in office would it be possible to judge that one had found an adequate successor. The emperor remained torn, although he finally agreed to remove Jin Fu from office.[46] The emperor's doubts here

did not make their way into *Veritable Records*, where the young monarch remained calm and decisive.

Voices of the Emperor

In concluding the cases of Mingju and Jin Fu, there were two imperial voices. One was calm and rational, overseeing punishments impartially and citing historical precedent. This was the voice of the edict condemning Mingju. Another voice, heard at the court conference, was angry, passionate, anxious, and even at times petulant. Part of this difference involves sources. The editors of the *Veritable Records* smoothed out the emperor's comments. Dong Na's audience with the monarch has been cut; editors completely expunged the comments about Chinese officials and their dinner parties and removed any indication of imperial indecision. Nothing was left in the record to embarrass the monarch. For *Veritable Records* editors, policy was like sausage: you could contemplate it without reflecting too deeply about how it was made.

But the reality of policy-making in the Kangxi years was much more complex and colorful. There was give-and-take, indecision, and anger. Indeed, such a range of emotions was to be expected. In 1688 the emperor was dismissing a counselor who had been at his side through some of the most difficult moments of his life and had managed a project that would be, by his account, the most expensive and important of his reign. He presided over a multiethnic and multilingual court where Manchus and Chinese remained conscious of their differences in political tone, style, and goals. Restoring the multiple voices of the emperor and the voices of many in the court does not reduce the importance of what he achieved but brings realism to an account that otherwise appears stiff and cool.

SEVEN

Corrupt Scholars

Guo Xiu's third impeachment was directed at three officials: Gao Shiqi, Chen Yuanlong, and Wang Hongxu, who served in the emperor's Southern Study. This was a space in the palace set off for the emperor to practice the arts of Chinese civilization, calligraphy, reading and writing poetry, and reading classical texts, under the guidance of accomplished scholars. Historians of the Qing have long admired the Southern Study as an embodiment of the Kangxi emperor's commitment to honor the intellectual traditions of the Chinese elite, and the vision of the most powerful man in China receiving tutelage from Chinese men of learning has been an attractive one.[1] But the reality of the study was more complicated. The line between cultural achievement and political power was fuzzy in seventeenth-century Chinese society. Chinese intellectuals were not scholars alone, and they could readily move from their cultural remit into policy-making. The Kangxi emperor seemed distantly aware of this danger, but his efforts to contain it were ineffectual, and he himself turned to the study scholars for political advice and information. Guo Xiu objected not to Southern Study personnel being involved in politics per se, but to the fact that they profited from doing so. Guo accused Gao, Wang, and Chen of selling their influence on the emperor to outsiders—that is, collecting fees for recommending people and policies to the emperor as they guided him in his cultural activities. This chapter first addresses the limits of cultural capital on call, then turns to the men who took advantage of these limits, and finally, considers Guo's accusations. In context, the actions of Gao, Wang, and Chen in interfering in political matters were understandable, but the fact that they profited was unforgivable.

The Limitations of Cultural Capital on Call

The Southern Study must have been a place of mystery to those in the capital who were aware of it. It was a space in the Forbidden City where the emperor spent time—likely afternoons, as mornings were spent in audience with political advisers and administrators. A creation of the 1670s, it had little institutional precedent. Though imperial Chinese history made provision for tutors for heirs apparent, there was no model for a specialized apparatus to teach adult emperors. Like many of the most interesting institutional innovations of the Qing, it was a pragmatic response to circumstances.

The first reference to what would become the Southern Study occurred in the autumn of 1677. Shortly after returning from his summer trip to Mongolia, the emperor addresseis courtiers:

> I occasionally want to practice calligraphy, but among those who surround me there are none who are learned and skilled calligraphers. When I discuss texts there are none who can answer my questions. Let us select two members of the Hanlin Academy who are learned and skilled in calligraphy and who can regularly be at my side and explain the meaning of texts. However, as they are likely to have other duties and to live outside of the Forbidden City, when I summon them, it will be difficult for them to respond. Let us provide them with a house inside the Forbidden City. After a few years, we can evaluate and see whether this arrangement is a good one. Now let us select one or two men who are good calligraphers, like Gao Shiqi, and invite them to the inner city. Let the Manchu and Chinese counselors collectively deliberate and memorialize on this matter.[2]

It would appear that the emperor had in mind a rather small, informal arrangement, explicitly temporary, that would provide him with the talent he needed when he was called upon to refer to texts or pick up the calligrapher's brush. Gao Shiqi was meant from the beginning to be one of the emperor's literary advisers. In view of Gao's poverty, what the emperor proposed may have been meant to create a rationale for providing him a house near the emperor. But assisting Gao cannot have been the only aim.

The need to have literary assistance readily available was a product of new demands on the emperor's time. As a young man, much of the emperor's time had been spent in education and ritual activities. With the Rebellion of Three Feudatories, an increasing part of the imperial day had to be devoted to military dispatches, and he had less time to ponder educational matters. When he needed help, he needed it quickly, hence the need for cultural capital on call.

Following the emperor's direction, Grand Secretary Mingju ordered officials in the Hanlin Academy to select several scholars in good health to assist the emperor, and five names were put forward.[3] A month later, Mingju recommended Zhang Ying (1638–1708) an expositor in the Hanlin Academy, to serve the emperor, holding the fourth rank, upper grade.[4] Mingju continued, "For calligraphy, one person should be enough. Let Gao Shiqi serve and be given the sixth-rank, upper-grade post of an academician in the Grand Secretariat. Let the Imperial Household Department arrange houses for them to live in."[5] The ranks assigned here suggested some of the anomalous nature of the institution. Rank inhered in the office in imperial China rather than in the person: all who performed the same function held the same rank, and an individual who did not hold office did not have a rank. However, Zhang Ying and Gao Shiqi performed the same task but held different ranks. Also anomalous was the place of the Southern Study in the Qing state. As institutional history was a specialty of Chinese scholars, most organs of government were surrounded with regulations. But there were few such rules for the Southern Study. Confirming the recommendations made to him, the emperor urged Gao and Zhang Ying to be careful in their efforts and to "refrain from interfering in any outside activity." Since both were "educated men," the emperor continued, these instructions should be clear, but they should be observed strictly.[6]

It was a short step, at least in the Chinese imagination, from assisting the emperor in literary studies to producing standard texts of the classics to guide study throughout the empire. As more activity took place in the Southern Study, it became necessary to add new scholars to the institution, and the office formally acquired an archive, the *Southern Study Record* (Nanshufang jiju). Like the *Diaries of Action and Repose*, the *Record* was a dated account of activities in the Southern Study that recorded dialogues

of the emperor and scholars. Zhu Quanfu (n.d.), an archivist with the National Palace Museum (Beijing), has provided a useful account of the institution and its activities based on this source.[7] He finds that at least thirty-six scholars were assigned to the study during the Kangxi reign, and they produced twenty-three sponsored publications. Many of the thirty-six individuals were assigned to serve only part-time or for a single project; unlike Gao and Zhang, they were not provided housing.

Zhu Quanfu takes some pains to establish that those in the Southern Study did not draft political documents in the study, although they may have had responsibility for drafting them in concurrent appointments they held elsewhere in the government. Politics, however, could not be completely banned from the study, nor could the emperor's moments of scholarly leisure be completely walled off from his political preoccupations. On March 3, 1681, the *Record* notes that the emperor summoned Zhang Ying and recited from memory the explanation of the Great Strength (Da Zhuang) hexagram, #34 from the *Book of Changes* (Yijing). This text was read as a meditation on power and how it should be used. Great strength was interpreted as the strength of the great, and the dominant message was that the great needed to use their power with constancy and rectitude. But there were also dangers associated with great strength; the text speaks of a ram who "butts his head against the hedge and finds that it can neither retreat or advance."[8]

At the moment when he recited the *Book of Changes* text, the emperor was confronted with a choice involving the application of strength. In late February, shortly after the New Year, the general in charge of Kangxi's armies in the far south had reported that he was ready to begin marching into Yunnan in pursuit of the last remnant of Wu Sangui's forces. There were reasons to be cautious, however. The campaign had been a long one, and the court received a report in early March that troops in Sichuan needed rest before they could be redeployed. At about the same time, the court received an urgent message that the troops in the south needed provisions, and the emperor ordered the governor-general of Huguang to dispatch grain to the south.[9] Orders were given to advance into Yunnan, but the emperor was worried. He questioned Zhang Ying in the Southern Study: Would the Qing army get stuck in Yunnan, with rebel forces to its

rear and front, like a ram that had butted its horns into a hedge and could neither advance nor retreat?

Zhang Ying responded, "The force of the bandit armies is spent; the lands they held are lost. It is difficult for them to maneuver. Relying on the authority of Heaven, victory will be as easy as "crushing weeds and smashing rotten wood. The news that [the enemies] have been cleared away will come on the appointed day." Zhang assured the emperor that as long as he relied on the right heavenly principles in applying strength, and applied it with constancy and rectitude, he need not worry about the outcome. In fact, Qing armies did succeed in Yunnan, though the march to the capital city of Yunnanfu took almost a year of cautious advance. Interpreting this passage, Zhu Quanfu claims that Zhang Ying was doing nothing more than providing an exegesis to the monarch, but it is hard to imagine that Kangxi was not, at some level, asking whether the advance into Yunnan was wise, and Zhang was answering that it was.[10]

If the emperor was asking for advice, might he also have been testing the waters, trying to assess literati opinion to make sure the leaders of Chinese society were still with him as he prosecuted a long and costly war in the southwest? Remarkably, in view of his care to assert that those in the Southern Study did not carry out political tasks, Zhu Quanfu entertains the possibility that the emperor used them as spies. He offers as an example the well-known case of Wang Hongxu being asked to report by secret memorial on conditions in the south.[11] Zhu also cites the instance, mentioned above, in which the emperor asked Gao Shiqi if Yu Chenglong's description of Mingju's corruption was accurate. The emperor almost certainly sought political intelligence.

Begun as a temporary expedient to provide the emperor with the expertise he needed to deal with matters of Chinese culture, the Southern Study evolved as it became a permanent institution.[12] Although it never had formal political functions, scholars served as informal advisers to the monarch on issues that concerned the monarch and had cultural implications. Service in the study must have seemed like a high-wire act; scholars were in the most extraordinary position, but a slight misjudgment brought disaster. Some were able to keep their balance better than others.

Advisers of the Southern Study

Although the Southern Study was a place of some mystery where the dangerous boundary between advising and influencing the emperor was easily crossed, Guo Xiu did not impeach all who worked there; he only impeached three. Of these, Gao Shiqi was the most egregiously guilty, the instigator of corrupt activities and the principal beneficiary. Wang Hongxu played an organizational role, collecting money, overseeing real property, and interacting with civil officials. Chen Yuanlong had a sort of guilt by association. Particularly rich biographical accounts are extant for all three figures.

GAO SHIQI

Gao Shiqi was a remarkably colorful figure at the seventeenth-century Kangxi court. He was rare among the emperor's courtiers in having made his way into the imperial inner circle without either examination credentials or hereditary entitlement. A rags-to-riches figure, he had remarkable calligraphy skills, and a quick-witted facility with Chinese culture endeared him to the monarch. Gossip about his rise and accomplishments abounded, and there were many questions about his ascent and service.[13]

A first question about Gao was how he came to the attention of the emperor. Two stories survive. Zhaolian (1780–1833), a Manchu historian writing in the early nineteenth century, claims that Gao Shiqi was introduced to the emperor by Mingju.[14] This is a plausible hypothesis, as Mingju had wide connections among Chinese literati, but the *Veritable Records* describe the emperor identifying Gao to Mingju as a man he sought in the Southern Study. A different story is found in *Jottings from a Western Journey* by Wang Jingqi.[15] Wang argues that it was Songgotu, Mingju's predecessor as the Kangxi emperor's Manchu favorite, who recommended Gao to the emperor.

Wang Jingqi, who grew up in Beijing at the time Gao Shiqi served in the Southern Study, has much more to say about Gao. Wang's father was a contemporary of Gao's, and he had a special awareness of Gao since both were natives of Zhejiang.[16] In 1724, Wang Jingqi made a journey to Shaanxi. His *Notes* purported to recount the journey, but the text was

actually a satirical discussion of late-Kangxi political life. One chapter of Wang's book concerned Gao Shiqi, whom Wang found to be a corrupt and immoral opportunist.

According to Wang Jingqi, Gao Shiqi was discovered by a Chinese martial bannerman named Zu Zishen (n.d.), who met him when Gao was trying to earn a living by producing pieces of calligraphy on demand in the courtyard of a temple in Beijing. Observing the quality of Gao's calligraphy, Zu remarked that Gao was destined for great things, but Gao asked how he could achieve great things when he was poor, cold, and hungry. Skill at calligraphy is always mentioned in descriptions of Gao's ascent. Early poverty is another central element of nearly all accounts of Gao, but in this case, poverty may have been relative: Gao was no farmer. Nothing is known of his family or early circumstances, but he had the leisure to develop his talents and accumulate a large fund of knowledge of Chinese culture. Early deprivation was, however, part of his self-image, made poignant by the fact that he interacted with wealthy individuals with earned degrees. Sometime after meeting Gao, Zu heard that one of Songgotu's bondservants was looking for an assistant who could do sums and write documents. Zu recommended Gao, and Gao thus became part of Songgotu's household. Once installed, Gao cleverly maneuvered to bring himself to the attention of the master of the house, who admired his calligraphy and recommended him to the emperor.[17] Wang's account thus far is plausible but not provable. The Kangxi emperor knew of Gao when the Southern Study was founded in 1677, two years before Songgotu fell from power, so that his recommendation to the emperor could easily have come from Songgotu.

This is not all there is to Wang's tale. When Gao came to the imperial court, he pledged undying gratitude to Zu Zishen. Some years later, Zu was appointed to serve as a military supervisor in Jingnan District of northwest Hubei. At this point, Wang Jingqi's tale of Gao Shiqi's rise can be checked against historical data. Zu Zishen was in fact a circuit intendant in northwest Hubei when Zhang Qian was appointed governor of the province in January 1686. The two men met and disagreed, and the new governor impeached the circuit intendant for extortion. According to both Wang's account and *Veritable Records*, Saileng'e (n.d.), a member of the Ministry of Punishments, was dispatched from Beijing to investigate the charge

against Zu Zishen. Zu Zishen impeached Zhang for corruption and asked for help from Gao Shiqi in the capital.[18]

Faced with this challenge to his protector, Gao allied with Xu Qianxue, a colleague in the Southern Study who held a concurrent appointment as head of the Censorate. Together they offered a bribe to Saileng'e to exonerate Zu Zishen and recommend Zhang Qian's dismissal. Zhang Qian, however, offered a bigger bribe, and Saileng'e was prepared on his return to Beijing to recommend that Zu Zishen be found guilty. At this point, Gao told the emperor that Zhang had bribed Saileng'e, without of course mentioning that he and Xu Qianxue had also tried to bribe the Manchu. Acting on their information, the emperor rejected Saileng'e's report and abruptly ordered him exiled.[19]

Wang Jingqi's was quite a story, of a poor but clever man's ascent and his desperate attempt to protect his benefactor. Many details, of the nature and amount of the bribes (or, for that matter, how a man who had earlier protested that he lacked money to feed his family had gotten the money to offer a bribe) cannot be confirmed. Gao Shiqi was certainly involved in the Zhang Qian case, however, and he was impeached in 1687 and found guilty of bribery. In a memorial responding to the impeachment, Gao drew the mantle of imperial scholarship over himself. He made the remarkable argument that since the emperor had placed him in a position where others became resentful, the monarch had an obligation to rescue him when he was accused. Acknowledging that it was Zhang Qian who had accused him, Gao claimed that Zhang had acted through jealousy of Gao's position, accusing him without reason. Judged guilty, Gao asked for and was granted the favor of retirement rather than punishment.[20]

Wang Jingqi had one further tale to tell of his Zhejiang compatriot: how Gao survived the fall of his patron Songgotu. According to Wang, Gao changed his allegiance when he was invited on a trip with the emperor. Traveling with Mingju, he recognized the power of the new counselor and pledged his allegiance. Songgotu was furious, but there was little he could do. When Gao came to visit Songgotu on his return, Songgotu required him to kneel during the entire visit, never permitting the calligrapher to assume a posture of friendship or equality. The case seemed to Wang Jingqi nothing more than proof of the corruption of the court, in which friends

and allies could turn on each other at the slightest provocation, and no one could be trusted as a model. Seeing Gao "ally with Ming[ju] to overthrow Song[gotu], then ally with Xu [Qianxue] to overthrow Ming[ju], then ally with Wang [Hongxu] and Ming[ju] to overthrow Xu [Qianxue]," Wang Jingqi asked, "where could the ordinary man observing the court learn of righteousness, honesty, and shame?"[21]

However Gao rose, he became a favored companion of the emperor. Gao made this clear in his published diaries of journeys he made with the monarch. The first was a trip of a little over a month that the imperial family made in 1681 to a hot spring northeast of Beijing.[22] In 1682, Gao accompanied the imperial party on a three-month journey to Manchuria, where the emperor officially informed his ancestors of his victory in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories.[23] Gao participated in a third imperial trip, a monthlong excursion to see the sights in Shanxi in the spring of 1683.[24] Gao also left an account of a fourth trip to Mongolia, but his participation was very brief; after about two weeks, he fell ill and was sent home to the imperial physician for treatment.[25] In 1684, Gao accompanied the emperor on the trip to Jiangnan where the emperor met Jin Fu for the first time, though Gao left no diary for this trip. On these trips, Gao appeared to be part tour guide, part poetry tutor, and part secretary. He dined in the emperor's tent, joined in discussions after dinner, composed poems, and provided literary and historical information about sites passed.

In addition to his travel accounts, many collections of his own poetry were among the over fifty titles he produced during his lifetime. Gao was particularly fond of making lists, perhaps a reflection of his interest, as a calligrapher, in the forms of characters. He produced lists of personal and place names in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. He left no autobiography, however, and the mysteries of Gao Shiqi's life—how he became so skilled at calligraphy and so knowledgeable about Chinese culture during an early life of poverty, and what particular qualities the emperor found attractive in this clever man from Zhejiang—may never be resolved. But he found himself in a secure spot inside the emperor's inner circle in the late 1680s, and he seemed willing for all to know about it. There were probably as many who resented as admired him, but he was a force to be reckoned with in the Manchu court.

CHEN YUANLONG

Few officials could have been more different from each other than Gao Shiqi and Chen Yuanlong. Sources are silent on Gao Shiqi's family, except to imply that there was not enough money for him to prepare for the examinations. By contrast, Chen Yuanlong came from one of the most famous families of eighteenth-century China, a remarkable clan that produced seven generations of *jinshi* degree holders. They were known as the Haining Chens, after their native county near Ningbo in Zhejiang. According to family tradition, the first Chen to receive an official degree did so in 1443, drawing on wealth that had been acquired in the salt monopoly.[26] From the "sixteenth to the nineteenth century, inclusive, the family produced thirty-one *jinshi,* one hundred and three *juren,* seventy-four senior licentiates, and about one thousand *xiucai* and students of the Imperial Academy. Three became grand secretaries, thirteen were officials above the third rank."[27] The Chens' examination success crossed the dynastic boundary. Already distinguished in the late Ming, the Chens rose even higher in the Qing, when they served as ministers and grand secretaries. This was not an easy feat. In fact, the first of the Haining Chens who served the Qing, Chen Zhilin (1605–1666), was exiled to the northeast for factionalism.[28] This exile was no doubt a blow, but the Chens were in it for the long haul, and within twenty years another Chen had risen to the rank of minister.

The Haining Chens were "aristogenic," in Timothy Brook's term—that is, although they earned their social status in each generation, they behaved as if their status, like their wealth, were inherited. They became masters of the social and cultural forms that defined the elite in the late imperial world. These included, according to Brook, "a confident competence in the arts of reading and writing, an ability to manipulate the symbols of the Confucian order, an appreciation of complex artistic media through which elite values found expression, an understanding of courtesy and deference and their effective use in social encounters, and a knowledge of acceptable models and precedents in decision making."[29] What more could an emperor possibly ask of an imperial tutor?

Chen Yuanlong's own achievements were significant: he passed second on his *jinshi* examinations in 1685 and was appointed compiler in the Han-

lin Academy. In the same year he was assigned to serve in the Southern Study. The emperor noted his skill in writing the formal, regular style of Chinese characters (*kaishu*) and asked him to demonstrate his ability with large characters. Pleased with what he saw, the emperor rewarded Chen with a piece of his own calligraphy.[30] In the Southern Study, Chen formed a particularly close relationship with Gao Shiqi. They were both from Zhejiang, and they seem to have shared an in-joke. There was a legend in the Chen family that their ancestors were originally surnamed Gao. In theory, therefore, the Chens could have been distantly related to any Gao family in Zhejiang, Gao Shiqi's included. Because of this possibility, Chen referred to Gao Shiqi as his cousin, probably in jest, when they served together in the Southern Study.

Friendly colleagues they may have been, but Chen and Gao were drawn to very different kinds of intellectual work. Gao was a poet, diarist, and calligrapher, but Chen was an encyclopedist and polymath, a slow and steady accumulator of fact and text. Chen's work was titled *The Mirror of Extending Learning* (Gezhi jingyuan). It was a hundred-*juan* work divided into thirty categories—the body, clothing, types of cloth, foods, beverages, writing implements, grasses, grains, flowers, and so on. Each category contained relevant texts establishing the origin of names, common understandings, and the like. Related to what Benjamin Elman has termed "natural studies," a movement toward practical studies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the work was a compilation of the textual sources of empirical knowledge.[31] Chen also compiled, at the emperor's order, an anthology of *fu* poems, long narrative poems from China's early imperial period.

The Chen family was certainly one that the Kangxi emperor would have wanted to cultivate, a widely known clan whose wealth and cultural capital could be of immense value to the throne. It was not surprising, therefore, that Yuanlong was invited into the Southern Study early in his career. The emperor knew who Chen was, as subsequent developments indicated, but he never warmed to Chen in the way he did to Gao Shiqi.

WANG HONGXU

Like Chen Yuanlong, Wang came from a distinguished family in the southeast; like Gao Shiqi, he was a prolific poet, whose collected poetic works

fill thirty-two *juan* in a modern edition. But unlike either Gao or Chen, Wang was also a politician drawn to the cut and thrust of the governmental arena. In Wang's life, the Kangxi emperor's charge that scholarly advisers should not be involved in current affairs found its sharpest challenge, but the emperor also found one of his most useful servants.[32]

Although the Wangs of the early Qing did not have as many generations of degree holders in their past as the Chens, they were a well-established scholarly and political family in the early Kangxi years. Wang Hongxu's great-grandfather held high office at the Ming court, and his father, Wang Guangxin (1610–1691), earned his *jinshi* degree in 1648 and embarked on a career of service to the Qing. Hongxu was one of three sons, all of whom received the *jinshi* degree. The family counted Huating Xian, near Shanghai in southeastern Jiangsu, as its native place. Wang Hongxu may have been raised there, at least for part of his boyhood. Early in his life, his father's elderly uncle, who had no sons, adopted Hongxu. When his granduncle died in 1654, Wang joined his natal family in Beijing, where his father was serving, and passed his first examination in the capital in 1672. He received his *jinshi* the following year, ranking fourth in the examination. The emperor raised him from fourth to second place after the palace examination.[33]

One of three *jinshi*-holding sons of a serving censor who had been recognized by the emperor in the palace examination, Wang attracted attention at court. In fact, he petitioned to change his name from Wang Duxin, which so closely resembled his father's name that it created confusion, to Wang Hongxu.[34] Wang moved steadily upward through literary and ceremonial positions in the 1670s. As he advanced through the courtly ranks, Kangxi began to rely on him for editorial tasks. In 1682, he was appointed to be editor of the *Ming History*, and in the same year, he was chosen as editor for the campaign history of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories and the *Collected Statutes of the Qing*. In 1683 he was appointed to a junior post in the Grand Secretariat and likely became Mingju's protégé. In 1685 he became minister of finance on Mingju's recommendation.[35]

In the first lunar month of 1685, Wang was appointed to serve in the Southern Study. Unlike Gao and Chen, Wang held outer court appointments concurrently with his appointment in the Southern Study. He continued to hold his position as minister of finance during his first months

in the Southern Study. Two years after his appointment to the study, he was appointed senior censor, on Mingju's recommendation. He took an active role in that institution, producing, among other writings, a long memorial urging that the Manchu garrison forces be prevented from interfering in the lives and livelihoods of Chinese who lived nearby.[36] This was quite a remarkable document, which came close to attacking the Manchu occupation of China or at the very least suggesting that it needed to be modified in peacetime.

In the midst of such a busy political career, it's hard to imagine that Wang contributed much to the scholarly work of the study in the 1680s, although he was eventually credited with editing the Kangxi edition of the *Classic of Poetry* (Shijing). His appointment may have reflected the emperor's growing reliance on him or been a mark of privilege acknowledging his important position at court.

Guo Xiu's Impeachment

Each of Guo's impeachments had a different tone. The impeachment of Jin Fu was a terse statement of a view widely held. The impeachment of Mingju took a legalistic tone, likely necessary in view of the prominence of the target. The accusation of scholars of the Southern Study was the only one that seemed to reveal affect: accusing degree holders like himself, Guo strained to contain his anger and disgust. Guo's frustration with the scholars of the Southern Study was evident in his turns of phrase—his amazement that educated men could possibly engage in the sort of behavior he described—and his recommendation that at least one of his targets be executed.[37]

Guo introduced his claims with a contrast between a tireless emperor who worked only for the public good and corrupt literati that worked only for their own ends:

> The emperor rises before dawn and labors until he is weary and worn, exerting his finest effort in government. He himself decides on the employment of people for his administration, never involving assistants or so-called deputies to [use his power]. When a faction has been es-

> tablished for private ends, using [the emperor's] name for its own gain as the Junior Household Administrator of the Heir Apparent Gao Shiqi and Censor of the Left Wang Hongxu have done. . . . Their guilt deserves execution. Words can barely express all the evil that they do, but I shall try to describe it in brief compass.[38]

None of Guo Xiu's other impeachments recommend execution; they rather point to the actions condemned and allow the emperor to decide on punishments. Recommending execution increased the rhetorical force of the document. Guo Xiu was likely aware that Gao Shiqi was a favorite of the emperor's, as Gao seemed to have made no secret of his relationship to the monarch. Did Guo Xiu recommend execution to emphasize the damage Gao was doing to the reputation of the monarch? Did he actually expect that the Kangxi emperor would order his favorite executed? There can be no final answer to these questions, but the recommendation of execution provides the structure of the memorial; it is divided into four sections, each focused on a different reason why Gao Shiqi deserved execution.

The first of the four sections argues that Gao deserved execution because he accepted a prestigious appointment and rewarded the monarch with immoral behavior. Gao was vulnerable as he did not have a degree, and thus lacked the moral training that passing an examination would have demonstrated. But Guo had to be careful. Guo did say that Gao's background was not the usual one: "Gao Shiqi was born in very humble circumstances and wandered to the capital knocking on office doors to seek a living. Because his calligraphy was very accomplished, the emperor, ignoring rules of seniority, promoted him to the Hanlin Academy." No censure was implied in the claim that the emperor had set aside rules of seniority in appointing Gao; Guo Xiu described his own promotion to censor in these terms. But, Guo argues, Gao Shiqi was promoted for quite specific purposes: "[Gao] serves in the Southern Study, carrying out imperial orders. The role should be limited to reading texts and not involve access to political affairs." Gao's lack of qualifications should have limited his actions. In fact, he stood out among those in the Southern Study precisely for his flouting of the rules. "Among the officials at court and in the provinces, there are none who do not know his name. More than one person has served in the Southern Study,

but the names of others who serve there are not known; why is it that Gao Shiqi's name alone is so widely known for evil and corruption? This is the first reason why Gao's guilt is worthy of execution."[39]

If Gao was the principal culprit, he was not the only one, as Guo made clear in the second reason he offered that the guilt of Gao and Wang Hongxu merited execution: they had formed a faction. "Over time, [Gao] has acquired many henchmen; they have formed a faction. He has united with Wang Hongxu; they are sworn confederates. [Gao] and the censor He Kai act like brothers. [Gao] and the Hanlin [official] Chen Yuanlong are uncle and nephew, and [Gao's] daughter is married to Wang Hongxu's older brother Wang Xuling" (1642–1725).[40] Guo asserts that familial or quasi-familial bonds underlay corrupt practice in the Southern Study. The charge that Gao and Chen Yuanlong were uncle and nephew likely referred to Chen's habit of referring to Gao as his cousin, which was probably more of an in-joke than a statement of putative relationship. Guo Xiu himself had not spent time in the Southern Study and was likely making his claim based on reported practices, which he may not fully have understood. This was the only evidence presented against Chen in the memorial, and except for the concluding sentences of the document, Chen was not among those Gao described as worthy of execution.

According to Guo, the group had established a systematic practice of extortion: "For those who are not a part of the faction, there is also a standing practice [of payment], which is called peace money [*ping'an qian*]. For those who are willing to give him bribes, Gao provides long service, brilliantly turning circumstances in their favor, and people refer to [Gao's services] as 'the path' [*menlu zhen*]. Gao is so intent on his greed that he has no doubt about his actions and declares that 'mine is the true path.'"[41] The expression *menlu* literally means a "path through the door," but it is used to describe those who have a way, a knack for getting perhaps illicit things done. Gao, Wang, and Chen were so successful that they could brag about the success and craftiness of their efforts.

Guo writes of Gao and Wang: "All governors-general, governors, lieutenant governors, provincial judges, circuit intendants, prefects, and magistrates and senior and junior officials at court, all sit down one by one with Wang Hongxu and others, who beguile them in all ways. Those who have

ambitions to high office bribe them with thousands and tens of thousands." Careful reading of Wang Hongxu's biography suggests that Wang and Gao may not have had time to form an association of the sort Gao described. Wang was appointed to the Southern Study during the first lunar month of 1685. In spring of that year, Wang Hongxu served as chief examiner for the *jinshi* examination. During the third lunar month of the following year, Wang received word that his birth mother had died, and he requested and was granted leave to return to Jiangnan for mourning.[42] In the following year, Wang's adoptive mother died, again requiring him to return home. In 1688, he signaled his readiness to return to office by greeting the emperor's carriage as it passed through Jiangnan on the emperor's second southern tour. Guo's impeachment was submitted in the fall of 1688.

In view of Wang's many commitments it was unlikely—though surely not impossible—that Guo and Wang had built the sort of systematic corrupt machine that Guo alleged. However, it seems very likely that Wang was involved in corruption. A protégé of Mingju, whose epitaph he wrote, Wang was likely involved in many of the favorite's activities. The type of corrupt activity that Guo alleged Gao and Wang committed was quite similar to the sale of office that Mingju engaged in with his henchman Yu Guozhu. Gao's sale of office may have been a continuation of Mingju's enterprise after the favorite fell from power. The Qianlong emperor, for one, was convinced that Wang was corrupt and ordered that Guo's accusation be included in Wang's biography.[43]

The third reason Gao Shiqi deserved execution was his ostentatious display of recently acquired wealth. Accusations of corruption usually did not detail the uses the accused made of their ill-gotten gains. Gao Shiqi's rise from poverty to wealth was so striking, and so widely commented on, that Guo Xiu included some detail in his impeachment: "The villain[44] Yu Ziyi [n.d.] has acted without restraint in the capital for many years. Fearing only that his deeds would become known, he hid himself in Tianjin, Zhili, and Luokou, Shandong. He gave Shiqi a sixty-room house with a tiled roof near Hufang Qiao worth eight thousand in gold, requesting that [Shiqi] take care of his problems."[45] Hufang Qiao was located to the southwest of the Liulichang antique market in the Chinese part of the city.

In the eighteenth century, corrupt officials often sought to acquire art

objects and jade as marks of their wealth.[46] Either because it was a different time or because of his personal poverty, Gao Shiqi seems to have focused instead on acquiring income-earning property or businesses. According to Guo Xiu, in addition to the house at Hufang Qiao, Gao had acquired a string of houses on *Dou* Street outside of Shuncheng Gate, for which He Kai collected the rent.[47] Gao and Wang Hongxu had also jointly acquired a series of businesses in southeast China worth nearly a million *liang*. Gao had acquired productive agricultural lands in Pinghu County in Zhejiang and an estate planted in fruit trees near Hangzhou. When a poor scholar who sold calligraphy in the streets acquires such wealth, Guo argued, one had to ask where it had come from. It was either taken from the state treasury or stolen from the people. Either way, the censor asserted, Gao must be counted a "worm in the state" and a "thief of the people."

The fourth reason why Gao deserved execution involved his continuing pursuit of illicit ends after he had been reprimanded for corruption. At the time Guo memorialized, Gao Shiqi had in fact been retired from office as a result of his involvement in the Zhang Qian / Zu Zishen case. Without questioning the emperor's judgment, Guo was at some pains to point out that Gao was guilty of more than the corruption for which he had already been charged: "With his sage understanding, the emperor is aware of Gao's guilt, but because the task of reviewing manuscripts in the Southern Study is not finished, he has ordered that [Gao] be relieved of office while he continued his tasks [in the Southern Study], an instance of great imperial grace. In the most extreme case, Gao and Wang do not think of reforming themselves but continue their evils ceaselessly.[48]

Not only had Gao and Wang continued to engage in corruption after Gao was impeached but, according to Guo, both were particularly active during the Kangxi emperor's second southern tour. This took place during the spring of 1689, just before Guo submitted his impeachment. Although the emperor had given strict orders at the beginning of tours to limit expenditures and the burdens they might impose on the local population, inevitably a great deal of money changed hands. Guo Xiu argued that some of this money went to Gao and Wang. Even though Gao had been technically relieved of office, and Wang was completing his mourning obligations while

on home leave, they had engaged in corruption during the tour: "When the emperor was on his southern tour, he strictly prohibited [members of his entourage from] soliciting bribes and determined to punish violators through military law. However, Wang Hongxu and Gao Shiqi, not fearing death, sought business with district and local officials in Huai'an and Yangzhou, resulting in the illicit payment of ten thousand *liang* to [Gao] Shiqi. If it was like this in Huai'an and Yangzhou, who knows how much money was extorted elsewhere!"[49] Their brazen conduct on the second southern tour constituted the fourth reason why Gao deserved execution.

In a final peroration, Guo forcefully expressed his personal anger that men of his own class would engage in corrupt behavior:

> Even more shocking, Wang Hongxu and Chen Yuanlong are products of the examination system! They are assumed to be preeminently men of virtue among the literati. But they have no respect for the criticism of the pure, and they have become infamous without any sense of shame. Moreover, as toadying officials, there is nothing they will not do: what others have not dared to do, they willingly undertake without guilt. Scheming after wealth even as they do harm to our moral tradition, do they not constitute a blemish on [the reputation of] those who serve at court? Gao Shiqi, Chen Yuanlong, and Wang Hongxu have the nature of wolves, the hearts of snakes, and the form of treacherous turtles. Those who fear the powerful do not dare speak of them; those who receive their favors are pressed and do not desire to speak of them. If I dared not speak, I would have repaid imperial grace with great guilt. So, not fearing others' resentment, I look to the emperor to dismiss and banish them, to make clear the laws of the state; the people's hearts will rejoice, and all under heaven will be benefited.[50]

It is impossible to know how the emperor felt about this passionate denunciation of three of his closest collaborators. Shortly after receiving the memorial, he duly ordered Gao, Wang, Chen, He Kai, and Wang Hongxu's brother Wang Xuling dismissed from office, offering no further comments on the affair. There were no reforms to the Southern Study, which existed as a central government institution until the end of the dynasty.

Scholars, Grandees, and Moralists

Historians have praised the formation of the Southern Study as a particularly striking example of the Kangxi emperor's commitment to Chinese principles in his administration of the Qing state. The praise in fact began with one of the early appointees to the study, Xu Qianxue, who wrote that the emperor "summons to the palace many eminent gentlemen from various regions, and diligently do they come, afraid to be late. Gao Shiqi was the first to be favored for his culture and learning. . . . Daily is he consulted in the heart of the Forbidden City." Quoting this, Harry Miller terms the Southern Study "a masterpiece of co-optation."[51]

Guo's memorial and the new information that has become available with Zhu Quanfu's publication quoting the *Southern Study Record* demonstrate that although classics were explained and allusions explicated in the Southern Study, a lot more went on as well. As the emperor interacted with representatives of the great families of the empire, strategies were evaluated and appointments considered. The study proved to be a space, and possibly the only space, where the emperor could associate easily with representatives of the Chinese elite, including the uncredentialed Gao Shiqi, whose company the monarch seemed genuinely to enjoy. It also proved to be a site where staff could pursue their own ends—personal, political, and pecuniary.

This pursuit of private ends proved especially aggravating to Guo Xiu and led him to impeach degree holders like himself. Guo's first two impeachments were directed at officials who from the historical standpoint were irregular officials, Manchu and Chinese martial bannermen. Although Guo's examples of corruption were likely true, they represented examples of irregular officials functioning in unusual ways. Southern Study appointees were serving in traditional roles as advisers to the monarch, albeit in a new institution. The censor's mission compelled Guo to point out corruption wherever he saw it, including among those who possessed the same qualification he held.

Viewed in another way, Guo's impeachment pointed out the range of commitments found among those who held the same credentials, read the same texts, and took the same exams. Gao, Wang, and Chen were a callig-

rapher, a poet, and an encyclopedist. Preserving text and practice under a foreign emperor was their purpose, evidently one that allowed them to feel comfortable recommending people and policies to the monarch and accepting the gifts that came as a result. For Wang and Chen, whose relatives and ancestors served throughout the Ming and early Qing, corruption may have been business as usual.[52] Gao was new to the world, but poverty impelled and opportunity tempted him to make the best of his situation. Guo, on the other hand, was a moralist, firm in his convictions and confidently aware of his role. For him, the integrity of the state was the ultimate goal.

EIGHT

Second Acts

In the long run, Guo Xiu's impeachments posed a significant dilemma for the emperor. The charges were serious and could not be ignored, but those he attacked were too important to the emperor personally, or to the state politically, to be abandoned. Eventually these two realities needed to be reconciled, and the histories of the convicted officials after their prosecution, related below, demonstrate how this occurred. None of the officials charged was permanently dismissed, except Jin Fu's secretary, Chen Huang. Some were restored to office and others sent to new posts after a greater or lesser length of time, depending on abilities and circumstances. Guo Xiu's personal fate was also at stake. He made enemies with his charges, and they counterattacked following his third impeachment. In his case, a decision had to be made about his long-term viability as a Qing official.

The Accused

A characteristic of the jurisprudence of official punishment in the Qing is relevant to this process. Historians of corruption and its prosecution in China have often grown frustrated that those who were cashiered from office didn't remain cashiered. They often found their way back into office, sometimes enjoying long post-prosecution careers. This was neither a failure of justice nor evidence of hypocrisy among Qing prosecutors; it was built into the laws of the dynasty.[1] In the Qing, as in many complex administrative orders, the decision that a malfeasant official required discipline was qualitatively different from the decision that a given servant was no longer useful to the dynasty. Being cashiered from office (*gezhi*) had a place in both systems. Cashiering could end a career, if that was the emperor's wish, or it could represent a disciplinary action, a punishment that could be redeemed in a variety of ways.[2] In such a flexible system, it

was possible to engineer different outcomes based on individual abilities, personnel vacancies, or needs of state. The problem for the dismissed official was discerning how valuable he was perceived to be and how long it might be before restoration was possible. The particular fates of the officials dismissed as a result of Guo Xiu's impeachments—Jin Fu, Mingju, Gao Shiqi, Chen Yuanlong, and Wang Hongxu—were telling of their personal strengths and the social elements they represented.

JIN FU AND CHEN HUANG

The only irreparable damage from Guo's impeachments involved Chen Huang, who was condemned to be beaten and imprisoned, and died in prison. Unlike the holders of civil service degrees, Chen had no protection against corporal punishment. Chen was not the only non–degree holder among the victims. Jin Fu and Gao Shiqi both lacked degrees but were punished far more leniently than Chen. Both Jin and Gao were known personally to the emperor and fit into very specific niches in the dynastic order. Chen Huang's case easily fit into the stereotype of a commoner who usurped authority. Such an official was dispensable, and his punishment demonstrated to the Jiangnan elite that the court did not endorse his plans.

Although charges of inefficacy and corruption were made against Jin Fu, he had substantial accomplishments. During his term the Grand Canal had been restored, grain flowed to the capital, and flood damage was repaired in timely fashion. As early as his first southern tour, the emperor encouraged Jin to devote himself to the task of recording the experience and knowledge he had gained on the riverbank. In retirement, Jin produced a work eventually titled *On Managing the River* (Zhihe fanglue), which was presented to the throne in 1689, the year after his impeachment. The work is divided into four sections. The first provides accounts of the river, the grain transport system, major floods, and the riverbeds. The second lists the officials whose duty it was to maintain infrastructure and provides accounts of the levees and necessary maintenance. A third section is composed of Jin Fu's memorials, together with the central government responses to them, and the fourth provides a schedule of necessary tasks for preserving the system. Chen Huang's catechism is appended at the end of the book.[3]

When the emperor began to plan a second southern tour in the autumn

of 1689, he ordered that both Jin Fu and Yu Chenglong accompany him. On this tour Kangxi saw the Central Canal (Zhong He), one of Jin Fu's last additions to the river infrastructure. This was a three-hundred-*li* canal that began close to the point where the Grand Canal joined the Yellow River and extended as far as Suqian District. Dividing the waters of the river, the canal facilitated the transport of grain boats along the portion of the route north that utilized the river. Once the emperor actually saw the canal, he recognized its importance, noting that merchants especially valued the new link, which saved time and expense in shipments. When the imperial party returned to Beijing, the emperor restored Jin Fu's rank. Three times over the next three years, the monarch ordered Jin to inspect the southern river works.

In 1692, Jin Fu was reappointed as director-general of the River Conservancy, a full restoration of his previous rank and authority. Jin responded with a thousand-word memorial describing the contributions his secretary and friend Chen Huang had made to their common enterprise: "Now that I have received the imperial grace and been reappointed as river director, how could the one who provided me with utter devotion [not be here]?[4] . . . Since Chen Huang has tragically died, were I to remain silent and hold my resentment, living while he died, I would be turning my back on my friend."[5] There followed an extensive list of the occasions on which Chen Huang made suggestions that Jin had followed in his work. Jin Fu was clearly determined to use the platform provided by his reappointment to publicize the achievements of his friend and former secretary.

After being reappointed, Jin was confronted with an unusual task. Responding to reports of a famine in Shanxi, the emperor ordered that a portion of the tribute grain, usually shipped from the southeast to the capital, be diverted and shipped instead to Shanxi. He ordered Jin Fu to oversee the shipment. This meant after the grain had been transported up the Grand Canal, it was to continue up the Yellow River, through the Sanmen Gorges, then to Puzhou in Shanxi, where it would be distributed as relief grain. The travel was difficult and uncomfortable, and the emperor provided Jin with an imperial barge to ride in. In this instance, it was not so much a test of Jin's specific river expertise as his competence to manage a complex logistic feat.

The transfer of grain was successfully completed, but time was catching up with Jin Fu, who was sixty years old. Already at the time of his reappointment Jin had protested that his health was failing. Retirement for civil officials involved a fairly delicate and perhaps routinized dance, in which the official pleaded that his health did not permit him to serve the state, but the monarch rejected his pleas, urging that his service was still necessary.[6] After his return from Shanxi, Jin Fu twice memorialized the emperor requesting retirement. Both times the emperor ordered Jin Fu's son, Jin Zhiyu, to visit his father. In his last months in office, Jin wrote a valedictory edict, setting forth work that remained to be done on the southern rivers. According to Wang Shizhen, in what may have been a narrative flourish, Jin Fu died just as an order was received from the emperor permitting his retirement. His remains were returned to Beijing and taken to his home in a grand funeral procession. "The emperor sighed fondly on reading his posthumous memorial, and ordered his remains returned to the capital and brought through the official city before being returned to his home. Before this time, [such a ritual] had not occurred. The emperor ordered that all the great officials and guardsmen [gather to] offer wine and tea. He ordered the Ministry of Rites to recommend a posthumous name and granted [Jin] the name Wenxiang. . . . His funeral rites were without parallel.[7]

In death, Jin's achievements in Jiangnan were allowed to outshine his mistakes in judgment in 1687 and 1688, as they probably should have. He had established the foundation for successful river control for more than a century, repairing an infrastructure that was decayed and dysfunctional.

MINGJU

Mingju suffered less than might have been expected for one guilty of the profound corruption with which he was charged. Just how seriously he was punished is a matter of some dispute. The public sources suggest a period of significantly reduced influence, followed by partial reinstatement. On dismissal, according to the *Veritable Records*, he was reassigned to the Imperial Household Department.[8] For the remainder of his life, he served as senior assistant chamberlain in the imperial household. He occasionally presided over sacrifices and religious rituals but held no postings in the Qing civil service. War brought Mingju back into the imperial presence.

In 1690, he was ordered to accompany as military adviser to the emperor's elder brother Fuquan (1653–1703) on a campaign against the Mongol leader Galdan. Fuquan defeated Galdan, but he did not pursue the Mongol into the steppe, and the engagement was judged indecisive at best. For his failure to advise Fuquan adequately, Mingju was again disciplined.[9] In 1696, when the emperor personally led armies into the steppe, Mingju was ordered to oversee food provisions for the west-route army, presiding over the thousand carts that carried grain north. In 1697, when the emperor led a second campaign, Mingju accompanied him again, with special responsibility for the transport of grain supplies.[10] The death of Galdan during the 1697 campaign was taken as a great victory for the Qing. To celebrate, all ranks that had been reduced as administrative discipline, including Mingju's, were restored. Mingju lived for twelve years after the conquest, dying in the spring of 1708.

Wang Hongxu's long-buried epitaph is compatible with this account but suggests a very different reality. According to Wang, a "certain censor," meaning Guo Xiu, impeached Jin Fu, and the charges implicated Mingju. This may have been an attempt on Wang's part to minimize the charges against Mingju, but Wang may not have known the specific charges, which weren't revealed until the eighteenth century. In Wang's account, Mingju remained in a position of influence, as "one of the Deliberative Council of the Great Princes [*Yizheng Dachen*]." Before the Manchu conquest, this had been a high-level advisory body for Manchu rulers. It may have continued to exist after the conquest, as there were scattered references to it through the dynasty, but it was never formally incorporated into Chinese accounts of Qing political structure. Details of Mingju's service in the group may never be known—it is unlikely that Wang Hongxu knew them either. Wang's assertion was essentially that Mingju continued to have influence in the Manchu order behind the scenes. According to Wang, Mingju's trip to Mongolia in Fuquan's entourage was a mission to secure strategic information for the emperor, as was his travel with the emperor in 1696. Wang concluded his account with a very impressive list of gifts the emperor presented to Mingju after the Mongolian campaigns, including the right to ride a horse in the Forbidden City.[11]

No attempt was ever made to recover the corrupt revenues Mingju was

said to have garnered during his service as grand secretary. According to a later account, after he was dismissed Mingju devoted himself to restoring the family name and managing the family wealth. He bought land and began to treat his household slaves in exemplary fashion. His slaves were said to remark, "If one couldn't live in Mingju's household, where could one live?" Mingju hired an overseer who made sure the household slaves were never involved in illegal activity and was authorized to beat them if they were. The illicit activity of slaves was a concern of many great families in the Qing; there always remained the possibility that an owner could be charged with being involved in his slaves' misdeeds.[12] Mingju's money supported the family's involvement in one of the most troublesome issues of the later Kangxi reign: the question of which of his sons would succeed him. During the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, partly as a concession to Chinese practice, the emperor designated his oldest surviving son as heir apparent. Primogeniture was not, however, the Manchu practice, and as this son reached adulthood in 1708, the emperor became dissatisfied and deposed him. After the deposition, Kangxi called upon those at court to deliberate and recommend which of his other sons should be heir. The Chinese scholarly community strongly supported the emperor's eighth son, Yinsi (1681–1726), who was particularly favorable to Chinese scholarly interests.[13] Mingju supported Yinsi when he was alive but died before the crisis came to a head. According to an edict issued in 1724, Mingju's son Guixu not only supported Yinsi but used his father's fortune to bankroll an unsuccessful campaign for him. Although Mingju's money was unavailing and Guixu 's intervention a failure, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–1736), Kangxi's fourth son and successor, condemned Guixu for his attempted intervention. Guixu had been dead for seven years by this time, but the Yongzheng emperor decreed that Guixu's tombstone be reinscribed: "This is the tomb of Guixu, the disloyal, the unfilial, the underhanded, and the treacherous."[14]

Mingju's descendants no longer had influence at the Qing court, but at least they had their money. They remained one of the wealthiest Manchu families throughout much of the eighteenth century, at least until the time of Heshen (1750–1799), the notoriously corrupt minister of the Qianlong emperor. According to the Manchu historian Zhaolian, in the

last quarter of the eighteenth century, "Heshen's family and Mingju's descendants feuded, the descendants of Mingju faced legal charges, and their property was expropriated." The text did not say that Heshen seized Mingju's family's property, but that is certainly one plausible reading of his account. Zhaolian, who seemed torn between his admiration for the great figures of Manchu history and disgust at Mingju's family's corruption, concluded with the reflection that "it is always sad to see a great family lose its property, but the more corrupt a family is, the longer it will be able to preserve its wealth."[15]

Unlike Jin Fu, Mingju was not indispensable. But the great Manchu families enrolled in the Plain Yellow Banner were. The founding order of the Qing rested on the banner system, and as Mark Elliott has argued, the banner order remained central to the Qing throughout the dynasty. High Manchus could be executed—indeed, that happened to several, including the alcoholic Bambursan, when the Kangxi emperor took power in 1671—but those killed were perceived as having challenged the power of the throne. Mingju was not guilty of such a crime. He had made use of his position to accumulate wealth, but he had also guided the Qing order through its most troubled period during and immediately after the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. Under these circumstances, Mingju was allowed to enjoy the privilege that all Manchus had, of returning to their banner status and living out their days.

GAO SHIQI

Guo Xiu's impeachment of Gao Shiqi was particularly sharp, but the emperor was clearly very devoted to Gao. Although Gao was cashiered twice, once for corruption in the Zhang Qian case and once in response to Guo Xiu's charges, the Kangxi emperor was unwilling to let him go. In 1694, six years after his impeachment, Gao was invited back to the palace and the Southern Study. Two years later, he accompanied the emperor on his expedition against Galdan. Of what use would a formerly disgraced poetry tutor be on a military expedition? Not much, apparently; the short account that Gao left of the trip, *Accompanying the Voyage* (*Hucong jicheng*) mostly related history and historical geography. On their return to the capital, Gao received word that his mother was ill and requested permission to return to

Zhejiang to care for her. The emperor offered him regular positions in the civil service to lure him back to the capital, but Gao Shiqi stayed at home.[16]

While in retirement Gao produced, in addition to many collections of poetry, two projects characteristic of his cast of mind: a list of 222 plants he found in the garden of his estate and two catalogs of paintings in his collection. Lists of the phenomena of nature were not unusual in China; the catalog of the imperial library records nearly fifty lists of plants, trees, birds, animals, insects, and fish. One suspects Gao derived much satisfaction out of writing hundreds of related characters in his list, as well as from advertising the diversity and fruitfulness of the new estate he had built for himself in Zhejiang.[17] Both art catalogs have attracted attention from art historians because of their detail and historical accuracy. The second catalog is also interesting for its organization. Its categories include: lists of paintings to be presented to a superior (part 1); lists of paintings to be presented to a superior (part 2); lists of paintings to be given away; and handscrolls with Gao's colophon to be kept and appreciated. Clearly Gao intended his painting collection to represent an entrée into various social settings. In the early twentieth century, Luo Zhenyu (1868–1940) criticized Gao for including in his list for presentation to a superior, by which Gao may have meant the emperor, paintings that were fakes and of lesser quality. Art historian Amy Shumei Huang argues that under early Qing standards of art criticism and authenticity, some of these works might have been considered of high value. Nonetheless it was clear that Guo was, in what Huang calls his "artful networking," offering to trade his cultural capital for social status.[18]

In 1702, Gao greeted the imperial carriage during the emperor's southern tour and was invited to the capital one last time. Gao left an account of this, perhaps sentimental, visit, recording the emperor's grateful remark that Gao had opened his eyes to the Chinese classical tradition: "Even though he never won any battles, I have honored him because his contribution to my education has been so great." Gao died on his estate in the south in 1704. The emperor took the unusual step of awarding Guo a posthumous name, Wenge. Emperors often dispensed praiseful posthumous names but usually only to very successful military or civil officials.[19]

Kangxi's naming of Gao Shiqi, as well as his implicit comparison of

Gao to a general, suggests his reverence for the poet-calligrapher. The twentieth-century editors of *Qingshi* group Gao's biography with that of Wang Hongxu and Xu Qianxue. Noting that all were dismissed and then recalled to the court, the editors argue that Wang and Xu were recalled for their literary ability; Gao's recall, they claim, was a matter of sheer luck.[20] But luck was not all there was to it. The relationship between Gao and the emperor was personal. Gao's wit and other gifts were certainly part of his appeal; he may also have served as a representative of the Chinese arts of civilization who had no political axe to grind, a Chinese scholar in whose company the monarch could relax.

CHEN YUANLONG

Chen Yuanlong was dismissed along with Gao Shiqi and Wang Hongxu, but in fact, the case against him was somewhat thin: Guo Xiu offered no particulars of Chen's corrupt behavior, and the burden of his accusation was that Chen and Gao Shiqi called each other "uncle" and "nephew," which may have been something of an in-joke between them. Moreover, Chen's family was one of the most celebrated in seventeenth-century China; it would ill behoove a monarch who sought the allegiance of the literate elite to dismiss Chen lightly. It was true that two of Chen's ancestors had been exiled and killed by the Qing, but these occurred in different times, when the monarchy was not so strongly committed to the Chinese cultural world. Of the three scholars impeached in Guo Xiu's third memorial, Chen was the first to return to office.

Chen's was also the only family that had the cultural clout to push back against the charges against Yuanlong. According to Chen Yuanlong's nineteenth-century descendant Chen Qiyuan (1811–1881), the Chens were originally surnamed Gao. At some point during the Song Dynasty, a Gao ancestor, while crossing a bridge in a southern city, observed a young man falling into a canal and dove in to save him. This so impressed a bean curd seller named Chen, who had a stand nearby, that he adopted young Gao into his family and married him to his only daughter. The descendants of this match became the Chens of Haining. Theoretically Chen Yuanlong could have been related, very distantly, to a Gao from Zhejiang.[21] In recognition of this possibility, but more likely as a gesture of friendship and sociability,

Chen Yuanlong referred to Gao Shiqi as "cousin," and Gao reciprocated. The emperor accepted this explanation, and Chen's service in the capital was not interrupted.

He was in fact promoted to the post of reader (*shidu xueshi*) in the Hanlin Academy, a post he held for fifteen years. During his service, he frequently was called into the imperial presence to demonstrate his calligraphy. At one point the emperor offered to execute in his own hand calligraphy naming a studio in the home of Hanlin members. Chen Yuanlong requested that the name of his eighty-year-old father's studio, the Hall of Daily Pleasure (*Ai Ri Tang*), be written by the emperor. In 1702, Chen was again promoted to be supervisor of the household of the heir apparent (*janshi*), a post he had to resign to honor a mourning obligation for his parents.[22]

When he returned to the capital in 1710, the emperor had in mind a different sort of posting for Chen. After several months as a member of the Ministry of Personnel, Chen was appointed governor of Guangxi. Such a territorial appointment seems unusual for one whose service had been exclusively in literary positions at the capital but may reflect the court's faith in the omnicompetence of trained Confucians. The emperor offered a curiously ambiguous send-off: "Guangxi is a province where you must bring together scholars and soldiers, and rule the people and the armies harmoniously. It requires unusual competence and experience. You have served many years in the Hanlin. Now I am going to especially try you out in a frontier post to see if you are able to devote yourself and work hard in the job." Had the emperor become cynical about the administrative abilities of talented Confucians?[23]

There was a further mystery associated with this appointment. Tales of infants switched at birth are always fascinating, particularly when one of the infants becomes emperor. Because of the continuing interest in matters of Chinese culture manifested by Qing emperors, legends have long existed that one or another of the Qing emperors was in fact Chinese, switched at birth with a Manchu. This was particularly true of the Qianlong emperor, who lavishly patronized Chinese arts and letters. Speculation has centered on the Chen family. The Chens were visited twice by the Qianlong emperor on his southern tour; two pieces of imperial calligraphy graced their home; and the emperor seemed consistently concerned with the seawalls in Zhe-

jiang that protected their property. Most intriguing, the Qianlong emperor was born just five days after the sudden and unexpected appointment of Chen Yuanlong, an appointment to which his wife strenuously objected. Had the Chens left a baby behind? Was the Qianlong emperor in fact a descendant of one of the most famous gentry families of the Qing? Twentieth-century historian Meng Shen offers an emphatic no in a brief essay titled "The Chen Family of Haining" (Haining Chen jia). Meng argues that the prince who would become the Yongzheng emperor already had a male heir, the Chens' examination success long predated the Qianlong reign, and the seawalls were a necessary concern of the state. Yuanlong's wife objected to the appointment because she was worried about the education of her children. Most telling, Meng asks why a proud and successful Manchu emperor would want to turn over his state to the Chinese. Chen Yuanlong didn't last long in Guangxi; the Yongzheng emperor recalled him to Beijing shortly after his ascension to the throne.[24] The fact that a legend like this could circulate demonstrates the enormous prestige of the Chen family and suggests why the Kangxi emperor could not allow Chen Yuanlong to slouch off into oblivion when Guo Xiu accused him.

WANG HONGXU

For some in every age, the temptation to meddle in politics is almost irresistible. Wang Hongxu seemed to be one of these people, and his career followed a pattern: his undeniable literary talents brought him to court, where he seemed to prosper; then, like a Chinese Icarus, he flew too close to the court and was ordered with singed wings to return home. When he returned home after Guo Xiu impeached him, Wang was in for a rude shock. The magistrate of his home county, on trial in another matter, revealed that he had bribed Wang Hongxu. Although the emperor had not chosen to comment on Guo's impeachment of Wang, he fulminated at some length on this new evidence, condemning Chinese officials who formed factions. Wang was sent home in disgrace.[25]

In 1694, Wang's talents once again earned him a place at court, and once again he rose to a high post. Wang's initial appointment was as minister of works. In that capacity he supervised, for a time, the lower Yellow River

and the reconstruction of the Gao Family Dike. There was some concern about how money was spent during Wang's time as minister, but Wang survived the charges. He also served as a Classics Mat lecturer and imperial diarist, and was transferred from the Ministry of Works to the Ministry of Finance. What brought him down a second time were his efforts in behalf of Yinsi, the emperor's eighth son. The emperor would not tolerate the interference, and Wang went home again.[26]

In 1714, grand secretaries Wang Xi and Zhang Yushu memorialized the emperor, noting that not much progress had been made on the Ming History project started in the late 1670s. To reenergize the effort, they recommended that Wang Hongxu be recalled and set to work. This time, however, Wang brought with him a partial draft of the biography section of the *Ming History*. While at home, Wang had invited Wan Sitong (1638–1702), the most accomplished and knowledgeable historian of the Ming, to live at the Wang family estate in the capital, and together they finished the *Ming History* biographies. In 1714, Wang petitioned the throne for permission to return to present the completed *Ming History* biographies. The emperor agreed and ordered that the other members of the Ming History Commission review the draft. In 1724, the year after the Kangxi emperor's death, the *Ming History* was approved and officially promulgated. It would seem that Wang Hongxu had made his mark on Ming and Qing history. Twentieth-century historians have, however, not appreciated Wang's efforts, pointing out that he made inappropriate and unnecessary changes to Wan Sitong's text. They also criticize Wang Hongxu for privately publishing the *Ming History* as his own work.[27]

Wang's last official service was a literary commission to prepare an official edition of the Classic of Poetry for the emperor, and in pursuit of this commission he sought out rare commentaries and incorporated them into his text. It seemed that he had finally found a secure niche at court befitting his talents and education. And yet, early in the twentieth century, a series of thirty-three secret reports from Wang to the emperor conveying political intelligence were found in the Qing archives. It seems that in his last years Wang had added spying to the many roles he played for the emperor. For all his literary talent, he simply could not stay away from politics.[28]

Guo Xiu

Guo Xiu's fate was probably predictable. In the intensely competitive world of an early modern court, any change in status earned attention; as the emperor became more aware of an individual, so did the court, for better or worse. Guo Xiu's impeachments were powerful, often compared to the earthquakes that struck the capital city during the Kangxi reign. Guo's first two impeachments earned him the favor, and perhaps the gratitude, of the monarch, which was expressed in a rapid increase in rank and responsibility. His third impeachment was not directly commended, though the monarch did take quick action to remedy the problem to which Guo had pointed. At this point, according to Guo's *Nianpu*, those at court began to cast "sidelong glances" (*xianmu*) at the newly powerful censor, and Guo was impeached for using his new power inappropriately. This was followed by two further charges that were outright efforts at revenge. The charges posed a dilemma for the emperor: how far was he willing to defend Guo Xiu against his colleagues? In the answer lay Guo's fate and the direction of his subsequent career.

The first charge against Guo was a curious one. It had some merit, but it was certainly meant to serve other purposes and combined elements of jealousy and opportunism. The charge came from the governor of Guo's native Shandong province, Qian Jue (*jinshi* 1677, d. 1703).[29] During the autumn of 1688, the investigating censor for Shandong impeached Qian for corruption; the emperor sent the impeachment to Qian for comment. Qian responded, predictably, that the charge was without merit, and went on to claim that the charge came about because he had declined to follow Guo Xiu's recommendation, conveyed in a private letter, in some personnel matters in the province. Specifically, Qian alleged that Guo had recommended that the magistrate of Jimo District and two local educational officials were men of ability who should be promoted. Because he did not act on this recommendation, Qian alleged, the censor-in-chief had pressed his subordinate to impeach the governor. On receipt of Qian's response, the emperor assigned Guo's colleague, the Manchu censor-in-chief Maci, to investigate. Maci had long been an associate of the emperor's and had

been promoted to Manchu censor-in-chief as a reward for his successful investigation of the Zhang Qian case.[30]

Maci had to investigate two elements of Qian's charge. Did Guo Xiu write a private letter to Qian? Was Qian impeached because he failed to follow Guo's recommendation? The first question was answered easily: Guo readily admitted that he had signed the letter. If the account in Guo's *Nianpu* may be taken as his defense, the letter was signed by four officials, three of whom were natives of Shandong.[31] The letter conveyed what must have been a consensus in the capital about which local officials were most promising. On the other hand, Guo was the most senior of the four officials, and because he was censor-in-chief, the letter could easily be read as an attempt to throw his weight around. A suggestion from the censor-in-chief was not to be taken lightly in imperial China. Guo denied emphatically that he had pressed the investigating censor to impeach Qian. As he put the matter to the emperor, "I am censor-in-chief. Why would I not have impeached the governor myself?"[32] Anyone familiar with Guo's career would know that he was not one to evade responsibility or hide behind others. The investigating censor confirmed that Guo had not pressed him to impeach Qian.[33]

When these findings were sent to the emperor, he referred them to the Ministry of Personnel for review. The ministry decided that the authors of the private letter had indeed been out of line and recommended that the junior signatories be cashiered from office. They recommended that Guo, the senior member of the group, be punished more severely. He was ordered beaten but was to be allowed the civil official's prerogative of redeeming his punishment with a cash payment.[34] Asserting that Guo "was blunt and direct, and dares to speak [the truth], so let us be lenient," the emperor reduced Guo's punishment to demotion by five ranks, and Guo was ordered to remain in the capital while awaiting a new assignment. Guo's accuser, Qian Jue, did not escape scot-free. The emperor judged that when Qian received the inappropriate private letter, he should have memorialized immediately and not waited until he had himself been impeached before calling the matter to the court's attention. Qian was relieved of his responsibilities in Shandong, pending investigation of the charge of corruption.

When the charges were proven in 1691, Qian was cashiered from office, ending his career.

The seeds for Guo's second impeachment were planted with the conclusion of the first. Qian Jue's relief meant that a new governor had to be appointed in Shandong. Because of its proximity to the capital, high tax quota, and the fact that it sat astride the main route from the capital to the wealthy southeast, Shandong had always seen governors with close ties to the capital.[35] Qian Jue had been mayor of the capital city and assistant censor-in-chief before his appointment in Shandong. It was to be expected that the emperor would turn to someone he trusted to take up the post. During the spring of 1688, when the emperor dismissed most of those involved in the river project, he had excepted Foron: "Foron must be considered a careful and able official. Let him return to work in the banner armies with his original rank." Five days after relieving Qian Jue, the emperor appointed Foron to replace him.[36] This was bad news for Guo Xiu, for it meant that one of the men he had impeached, a henchman of Mingju, was now in charge of his native province.

In the spring of 1690, Foron charged that Guo Xiu had concealed the fact that he was the son of the rebel Guo Erbiao, who had attacked Jimo and carried out anti-Manchu activities in 1643–44. There was some truth here. Guo Xiu and Guo Erbiao belonged to the same lineage. But as Guo Xiu would state in interrogation with tears in his eyes, his grandfather had so suffered during Erbiao's rebellion that he had moved the family to the tip of the Shandong Peninsula for four years. Erbiao's relationship to Guo Xiu cannot today be established. The first character of Erbiao's given name was the same as the first character in his grandfather Eryin's name, suggesting that they were of the same generation. In his testimony, Guo Xiu would only acknowledge that they were "distant relations" (*yuan zu*). Foron's mistake in identifying Guo Erbiao as Guo Xiu's father was not an innocent one, from Guo Xiu's point of view; the charges were "cooked up" (*luo zhi*; lit., "the strings were laid out") by a governor bent on revenge.[37] There was irony in the fact that Guo probably did have an anti-Manchu ancestor in Guo Shangyu. If Foron had known of this connection, his attack might have been more successful.

The emperor was inclined to accept Guo Xiu's explanation. But this

second accusation served to highlight the animosity Guo had created with his impeachments. Qing emperors controlled many aspects of the impeachment process, but they could hardly prevent accusations and still preserve the powers of the Censorate, one of the oldest and most hallowed institutions of the Chinese order. The only way to prevent further charges against the former censor was to remove him from court, and this the emperor did in a fairly gentle way by suggesting to Guo in an imperial audience that he retire to his native Jimo.[38]

Even removing Guo from the court did not stop the attacks. As Guo was preparing to return home in the summer of 1691, the governor of Jiangsu made a new charge that Guo had left a deficit in the treasury of Wujiang District when he moved to Beijing. The energy behind this accusation came from Gao Chengjue (1651–1709) the lieutenant governor of the province. Guo Xiu knew that Gao Chengjue bore him ill will, but he was not sure why; he speculated that this man was one of Mingju's henchmen or that he came from the same lineage as Gao Shiqi.[39] Both of these were possible, but it was more likely that Gao Chengjue, a Hanjun bannerman, was acting on behalf of fellow bannerman Jin Fu, who had recommended his appointment.[40] Guo Xiu was ordered to travel to Jiangsu to answer the charges. The order to go to Jiangsu was conveyed through Foron, the governor of Guo's native province. However, when Foron received the order, Guo had not yet returned to Shandong. Foron found this suspicious and accused Guo Xiu of lingering in the capital to found a faction and stir up trouble. Guo declared that he had no such intent; he had sent his servants back to Shandong to arrange for his move and had been delayed only by a spell of rains and intense summer heat.

At the beginning of the seventh lunar month Guo Xiu set out from the capital, noting to the emperor that his departure was well within the five-month deadline allowed for officials to finish up their affairs and depart from their posts. As Guo passed through Shandong, soldiers from Foron's garrison joined Guo's party to ensure his arrival in Jiangsu. Despite the haste and concern about Guo's arrival in Jiangnan, he was held in house arrest for a month before the lieutenant governor arrived to interrogate him about the deficit. Early in the interrogation Guo established the cause of the deficit. During his term, assistant magistrate Zhao Jiong (n.d.), after having issued

certificates proving receipt of all grain due, in fact removed some of the contents of the granary, falsely claiming that it was required for payment of river repairs. Gao Chengjue came to the interrogation determined to prove that Guo Xiu was at fault and spent four days interrogating Wujiang District underlings searching for proof. A crowd gathered to observe the proceedings, and when Gao Chengjue found no proof, he became abusive. When the deficit was first reported, Zhao Jiong fled and was at the time of the interrogation nowhere to be found. Gao Chengjue had not pursued him when he fled; now the lieutenant governor claimed that Guo Xiu and Zhao were in league, and Zhao had fled to preserve their ill-gotten gains. Guo Xiu responded with three points. First, all the evidence and testimony pointed to the assistant magistrate as the source of the deficit. Second, when he had first heard of the deficit, while he was still in Beijing, Guo had sent a servant to Wu to buy grain to make the district treasury whole. Third, under the new procedure implemented by the Qing, once an official had turned over (*jiaodai*) his post, deficits remaining in the treasury became the responsibility of his successor. As the treasury was no longer in deficit, and there was no evidence of his corruption, Guo was at length exonerated and allowed to return to Jimo. Gao Chengjue attempted one final indignity, arguing that since Guo had arrived in Jiangsu escorted by Shandong troops, he should return to Shandong escorted by Jiangsu troops. The Jiangsu governor, Gao's superior, vetoed this on the ground that Guo was innocent, and Guo returned to Jimo unaccompanied.[41]

Once in Jimo, Guo submitted a memorial to the emperor describing how he had been subjected by capital factions to trumped-up charges:

> I am a humble Confucian, from a family honest for generations. After eight years as magistrate, the emperor especially ordered that I be appointed to the Censorate and then promoted me several times, which I received with tears of gratitude. Observing that the emperor labored unceasingly to govern, sought to differentiate the virtuous from the evil and establish order at court and in the provinces, I determined to reward imperial virtue with my service. Not thinking of myself, I submitted three memorials in succession for imperial review, despising the behavior I uncovered. I was sure of my sources, but various people gnashed their

> teeth in anger. In the past year, there has been nit-picking on all sides. Not finding any offenses, they have proceeded to cook up charges. They didn't realize that I am not a greedy man and have not taken corrupt money, and there were no bribes that they could point to. They did not realize that I keep my household in order, and there were no incidents of my family or servants harming the neighborhoods where I lived.[42]

The memorial proceeded to describe Guo's treatment and his response to each of the charges made against him.[43] Guo's claims that his impeachments had earned him enemies and that his honesty made it impossible to lodge charges against him reflected perhaps a measure of self-pity but were not implausible. More significant, the statement did not reflect any sense of mistreatment by the emperor. Guo Xiu had spoken his truth and paid his price; neither Xiu himself nor the son who edited his *Nianpu* expressed bitterness, nor did any of the various men who wrote prefaces for the *Nianpu* or his collected state papers.

Guo's return home must have had a melancholy feel, but five years after his return tragedy struck. Guo's wife of many years died in 1694. The long-married partners were childless, but his wife's final illness and death prompted Guo to adopt his brother's five-year-old son as his own, naming him Guo Tingyi. Leaving nothing to chance, Guo took two wives—simultaneously—and both of his wives produced sons, so Guo found himself at sixty *sui* the father of a young family. In 1700 Guo decided to test the waters to see whether and how the emperor remembered him, and whether he might be considered for a new post. This he did by traveling to eastern Shandong to greet the imperial party as it passed through the province on its way south for a southern tour. The emperor did recall Guo Xiu and praised his service as magistrate but made no mention of his time in the Censorate or the impeachments. Guo was invited to Beijing to wait for official appointment.

Guo's appointment, when it came, was a surprise; he was appointed governor-general of Huguang. In point of rank, the position was appropriate for Guo Xiu, but it seemed ill suited to him in many other regards. Huguang was a troubled jurisdiction in the early eighteenth century. Barely a generation earlier, Huguang had been a battleground in the Rebellion of

the Three Feudatories. A frontier region, it incorporated both productive agricultural land and border areas inhabited by Miao people, ethnically different from the Chinese. Bisected by the Yangzi River, the province was also the site of an important pass between the middle and upper Yangzi regions, which both the Ming and the Qing found prudent to protect with military force. Many of the governors-general of Huguang and the governors of its two subordinate provinces, Huguang and Pianyuan (renamed Hunan and Hubei during the Yongzheng reign), were Chinese martial bannerman. Guo Xiu had had no administrative experience since his time in Wujiang, and his relationships with military representatives there were not good.[44]

In Wujiang the most important problem had been inequities in taxation, and when Guo Xiu found himself in Huguang, taxation was the first issue he addressed, proposing a number of tax remissions and reorganizations shortly after his arrival.[45] In January 1700, Guo was allowed the privilege of traveling from Wuchang, the Huguang provincial capital, to Beijing for an imperial audience. When the emperor asked him to speak about Foron, Guo took the opportunity to clear the family name by reviewing his genealogy and wondering where Foron had gotten his incorrect information. The audience then moved on to a discussion of Huguang. Guo requested that the court undertake a full cadastral survey in Huguang. Noting that the process would take some time, Guo also a warned the emperor that a new survey might result in a reduction of tax revenues. When the emperor asked how much, Guo responded that it could be as great as 30 percent. The emperor allowed that this would be all right, provided that the people were not unduly burdened. Following the audience, Kangxi commended Guo's administration. In one exchange the emperor told a governor that Guo Xiu and Zhang Pengge (1649–1725) were the two best territorial administrators in the empire.[46]

When Guo returned to Wuchang, things began to go awry. The lieutenant governor of Huguang was impeached; it appeared that he had claimed illness to linger in his private apartments when in fact he was quite well. Guo Xiu's subordinate, Governor Nian Xialing (1643–1727), tried to protect him, and Guo and Nian, who served in the same city, were both reprimanded.[47] After Guo recommended a number of what he thought were postwar reconstruction projects in the realm of the pacified Miao, the

Miao carried out a raid, continuing their war. An official Guo had sent to a district with substantial tax arrears was arrested and tied up by the local populace. Guo, who was in his early sixties, reported that his health was failing and requested to be allowed to resign. As more complaints came in to the court, Kangxi sent a group of three officials to check up on Guo. Ironically, one of these officials was Zhao Shenqiao, a former governor of Huguang, who had lost out to Guo Xiu in the 1686 censorial examinations. In 1703, Guo Xiu reported that the cadastral survey was complete and once again complained that his health no longer permitted him to administer affairs in Huguang. The emperor responded with an edict noting that in imperial audience Guo had remarked that governing Huguang was easy. The monarch also complained about how long the cadastral survey had taken and listed all of the various charges against Guo. Guo Xiu replied that he was old, sick, and no longer able to manage affairs; he acknowledged his guilt and requested punishment. In the spring of 1703, Guo was formally cashiered and returned to Shandong once again, this time for good. He lived twelve more years, dying in 1715.[48]

Needs of State

Confronted with the dilemma of what to do with those Guo Xiu had impeached, the Kangxi emperor effected a compromise: Confucian imperatives dictated the dismissal of those impeached in 1688–89, while social and political realities led to their reappointment in the 1690s. This compromise was not necessarily conscious; more likely it was enforced by circumstances. Pragmatism and economic necessity dictated Jin Fu's appointment and continuing service on the river; Manchu social realities underlay Mingju's retention as counselor; educational and ideological needs compelled the appointment of Chinese scholars to the Southern Study. The realities behind these arrangements could not be denied, nor could the officials who had occupied these posts be abandoned.

The case of Guo Xiu himself was more complex. His actions made enemies with a long reach. Agitation at court was fierce. Moreover, there was some substance to the charges against him. It was likely improper for a senior capital official to try to influence local appointments, there were

arrears in his Wujiang District, and there was anti-Manchuism in his family. The emperor could have, and from a modern point of view should have, intervened to protect Guo Xiu, whose impeachment had been so important in ridding the court of Mingju. But given the attention Guo Xiu had brought on himself and the cutthroat competition of the court, it is likely that attacks would have continued after an imperial intervention. The emperor may have done Guo a favor in suggesting that he quietly resign. The modern reader would want Kangxi to have protected his appointee longer at the end of his final term in office, or at least granted him the retirement for ill health that he repeatedly sought. But as attacks piled up and Guo stumbled, the monarch felt he could no longer risk failing in the region where Wu Sangui had been the strongest. The needs of state prevailed over the needs of any single official.

Conclusion

Corruption and its prosecution are enduring subjects of political investigation, both as old as human institutions themselves. The term *corruption* is, however, an abstraction, a category into which a wide variety of individual actions can be placed. Such an abstraction may be useful to the social scientist in explaining why a regime doesn't function optimally or enjoy full legitimacy, or even as a residual category where phenomena unsusceptible of other explanation may fit. It may be useful to the ethicist trying to determine the wellsprings of good and evil in the human character. But the historian has to look at a more granular level: What elements of an institution are being corrupted, by whom and to what ends? Individual corrupt actions, to the extent that they can be revealed—and very often they can't be, as they are undertaken in secret—tell us a great deal about their historical moment. Who was important enough to bribe, and how had their importance been established? What were the networks that made corruption possible? On what social and economic foundations did bribery rest? Where did the money come from, and what class was most involved? What did people value enough to pay bribes, and why did they value it? What was the attitude of those in legitimate authority toward corruption and its prosecution? This book has examined in as much detail as possible Guo Xiu's memorials on central government corruption in the middle years of the Kangxi reign, in an attempt to characterize the period and its principal actors. In conclusion it may be useful to sum up what the lens of corruption shows about the period.

In a historical era when the most commonly used primary source, the *Veritable Records*, focused exclusively on the emperor, testimony like Guo Xiu's usefully highlights which of the many imperial servants of the day politically alert contemporaries perceived as most important. In Guo's memorials Mingju appears, somewhat surprisingly in view of the limited extant sources about him, as one of the dominant figures of the age. He was the official who had to be bribed if one wished to advance in the early

and mid-1680s. He was associated with, if not the author of, some of the most important departures of the middle Kangxi reign. Through his recommendation, Chinese scholars gained access to the emperor. During the Kangxi emperor's late adolescence, he was the go-to figure at the Kangxi court. As war ended and the emperor aged, there was less need for Mingju and, from the emperor's point of view, more danger in retaining him.

Jin Fu was also a crucial figure. He was bribed no doubt; infrastructure projects, which involved expenditure of funds in a wide variety of venues and times, were particularly susceptible to corruption. But more important in his case, he sought to bribe Mingju and others in the capital so as to secure resources and permissions to implement his vision of a workable river control system. The emperor, for the most part, ignored the possibility that Jin Fu accepted bribes and focused on the larger issue of Jin Fu's plans. Gao Shiqi, Wang Hongxu, and Chen Yuanlong were also important enough to bribe. They have been known in the scholarship primarily as guarantors of the dynasty's Chinese Confucian credentials. But they appear in Guo Xiu's writings as underminers of the court's reputation, as they accepted money to influence appointments and policy directions.

Malfeasance was not the product of just a few officials. Each of the figures Guo identified as corrupt commanded networks of followers. Collectively they demonstrated that it took, if not a village, at least a multiethnic coalition to achieve the consolidation of dynastic rule that was achieved in the middle Kangxi years. The skills of bannermen like Jin Fu, working with Chen Huang, were required to translate Chinese language and technology into forms the Manchus could use to secure their rule. Serving as an intermediary had its advantages, however, and according to the Kangxi emperor's testimony when he first promoted Yu Chenglong, bannermen in the postwar era had become wealthy and corrupt. Mingju's administrative ability, bilingual facility, and wide contacts were necessary to secure his teenage monarch's rule. But his success was made possible by a network of followers, which included warriors from the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories as well as a generation of grand secretaries. Gao, Wang, and Chen provided necessary Chinese polish to the Manchu ruler's actions and informal input into the Manchu emperor's decisions. But they also had their henchman, who collected money and managed the properties

that money bought. Each of these networks was performing important functions for the state, highlighted by the amounts of money that flowed through them, licitly or illicitly. The Qing achievements of the 1680s were not the emperor's alone, despite the efforts of the Qing history-making process and the modern scholars who have used it to glorify the monarch. They were, rather, the achievements of a regime of diverse social elements engaged in a generally effective but occasionally misguided collaboration.

Guo Xiu's accusations show that the 1680s were an important moment in the ever-changing relation of Manchu bannermen, Hanjun bannermen, and Chinese scholar-officials in the Qing dynasty. The three groups had come to share a common purpose—the survival and enhancement of Qing rule—and in pursuit of this end, these groups had begun to routinely interact. But they had different interests, and Guo Xiu felt obliged to describe their corruption in separate documents. And each pursued advantage in its own way. Manchus, at least in Kangxi's telling, had a sense of themselves as the people who got things done and viewed Chinese as officials who temporized, passed blame, and yearned to return home to their dinner parties. But Manchu control of the imperial center made possible Mingju's profits. Hanjun bannermen shared their Manchu colleagues' sense of themselves as doers and, if Jin Fu can be taken as an example, had little patience with the Chinese elites who stood in the way. Chinese scholars, like Dong Na, feared the power of Manchus and Hanjun bannermen, but their monopoly on the language of politics proved valuable, giving them access to power.

Corruption in the 1680s reflected, in part at least, the Qing's changing Chinese social and economic base in the mid-Kangxi era. The relation between economic change and corruption is difficult to establish. Corruption was hardly new in seventeenth-century China, and it is notoriously difficult to periodize corruption in the late imperial Chinese world.[1] When significant corruption cases emerge, it is always difficult to know whether the underlying problem was more serious or the perceiver more acute. Certainly, Guo Xiu's status as something of an outsider at the Kangxi court of the late 1680s made him a sharp observer. But it does seem likely that bribery and extortion increased in amount and frequency as prosperity returned. The economy of the first years of Qing rule was tightly constrained. The peace that prevailed in China after 1683 and the restoration

of normal agricultural and trade conditions brought a return of prosperity. The central state was able to invest more money in its projects, at least in the river project, and Mingju's interest grew as state investments increased. On the local level, the return of prosperity likely made office holding more worthwhile. The expected profits of office were great enough that it was worthwhile to pay a bribe to achieve it. Collecting these payments became a valuable enterprise. Mingju and his network of financial henchmen were able to capture a significant amount of economic surplus—enough, when properly managed, to render his descendants one of the wealthiest Manchu families in the eighteenth century.

The changing social basis of Qing rule underlay Jin Fu's frustrations after 1684 and conditioned his response. In its early years, Manchu rule in China rested on Chinese of the north. North Chinese peasants formed a large component of early Qing armies, and north Chinese scholars made up the majority of those who passed the first examinations. There is little collective data on the origins of Hanjun bannermen, but it is likely that they were northerners as well. After the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, however, the emperor and court turned their attention to the landholders and scholars of the south—as it was then known, the lower Yangzi Valley. The emperor's discovery of the interests of landholders in the seven downriver counties changed the nature of Jin Fu's river enterprise. Mingju—who may have used his power initially to protect the northerners who had fought in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories—switched emphases and used his connections to reach out to south Chinese scholars to invite them to court. Southerners began to pass examinations at a rate appropriate to their numbers and educational advantage, and southerners came to populate the emperor's Southern Study. The sources of this turn to the south were numerous and complex. Among them were the lure of southern education and culture to the first Manchu emperor to receive a Chinese education, the power of southern money and its contribution to the Qing tax base, and the value of southern agriculture, proven during the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, when Mingju's colleagues and protégés strained to feed the Qing armies.

What did Chinese of the late seventeenth century value enough to pay bribes to attain? The answer offered by Guo's memorials was a position in

the governing regime. Mingju and his henchman collected payments for appointments, as did the men in the Southern Study. In this respect, the Qing was no different from many contemporary regimes. Offices were for sale throughout the early modern world, a situation fostered by the monetization of economies and the growth of administrative apparatuses. These sales have been correctly condemned in moral terms: they were socially unfair, undermined meritocracy, and weakened the states that undertook them. Though these moral questions cannot be entirely laid aside, other analytical questions may be posed. Details of the way offices were sold, who profited from them, and where the money went are telling. Such details speak to universal questions of how wealth is translated into power and how private resources can be tapped, and for whose purposes.

Two broad types of office sale can be identified. In the first, the state itself collects the money and appoints the official, in what might be termed classic venality, identified most clearly with prerevolutionary France.[2] Such a pattern marks a state in need of resources, trying to secure private wealth outside the tax system. A second pattern involves intermediaries: the aspirant pays a well-positioned courtier to recommend him and, assuming all goes well, receives his post. Linda Levy Peck has vividly described this process in Stuart England.[3] As she has argued, this pattern became particularly entrenched as the opportunities for patronage grew and the value of office to its holder increased.

The Qing empire saw both kinds of sale. In its early days, when revenue was scarce and expenses heavy, degrees were sold directly by the state. During its first years, the Qing contemplated such sales when tax income could not cover the expenses of military conquest. In 1673, at the beginning of the Three Feudatories war, Lawrence Zhang has recently demonstrated, the dynasty implemented an elaborate scheme for selling offices, promotions, and transfers to more desirable posts.[4] Most of the time, emperors and their Confucian counselors tried to avoid official sales of office if revenues were sufficient to meet the state's policy ends. In the 1680s, another sort of office sale emerged. Mingju and his colleagues received personal payments in return for recommendations for appointment. As with their counterparts in England, they practiced their selling at a moment when offices were becoming more valuable. As such, they were part of a universal trend, a mark

of its time. But they were also products of a particular postwar moment. Men who had been wartime colleagues became peacetime associates, using the knowledge they had gained during the war and the trust the emperor vested in Mingju to ensure their future and their fortunes. Operating at the intersection between Chinese and Manchu administrations, they produced venality with Chinese characteristics.

There is no evidence that the Kangxi emperor himself was corrupt, if that concept can even be meaningfully applied to a figure who theoretically controlled all under heaven. But the emperor may have been less interested in prosecuting corruption per se than in ensuring that officials' corrupt activities did not interfere with the great enterprises of the dynasty.[5] The emperor did not choose to investigate Jin Fu's corruption, nor did he seem interested in the details of actions of Mingju, Gao Shiqi, Wang Hongxu, or Chen Yuanlong. His approach, outlined in his edict on Mingju, was to hold back in the hope that officials would correct themselves, intervening only when he felt the activity had begun to interfere with his own authority or the legitimacy of the dynasty. As one historian has phrased it, recognizing that corruption and greed were constant threats to the governing process, the emperor felt it necessary to intervene from time to time to preserve the state. When he acted, his punishments were swift and decisive.[6]

Kangxi's actions were determined by the needs of state. Mingju was interfering with his authority to govern, and the emperor's resolve that the minister be removed was unmistakable. By contrast, his indecision about whether Jin Fu should be dismissed was based on his worry that a successor would not be as capable. The treatment of Guo Xiu also reflected a pragmatic approach to the censor and his concerns. So long as Guo served the emperor's interests, he was praised and promoted. Once Guo's actions, however sincerely undertaken, came to complicate management of the state, support diminished. Guo Xiu may have reached this point when he impeached the Southern Study scholars. Dismissals—ultimately temporary—came quickly, but there was no comment from the monarch. When Guo Xiu's multiple accusations seemed to require complex and nuanced action on the emperor's part, the simplest course was to simply ask the censor to resign. The suggestion that Guo Xiu retire was not an order

or a punishment so much as a recognition that the needs of state would be better served by Guo's departure than by his continued presence in Beijing.

So, finally, can Guo Xiu's impeachments be termed successful? The answer depends on what we mean by success. His impeachments did not end the careers of any of his targets except Chen Huang. But Guo Xiu was not a factional infighter who sought to bring down one set of officials to make way for others. Nor, it seemed, did he seek power for himself. His vision was broader. At a moment when the direction of the dynasty was being established, when the great bargain between Manchu and Chinese was being struck, his aim was to ensure that Confucian standards would guide the new regime. He had an impact on those who served, and perhaps the emperor, in delayed careers, upset arrangements, and important realizations. His actions were significant enough that the Qianlong emperor preserved two of his attacks for posterity. Perhaps this was enough for this likely grandson of Ming resisters who ventured forth from Jimo to guide the Manchu order in the right direction.

Glossary of Chinese Characters

Ai Ri Tang 愛日堂
Anhui 安徽
Asha (M) 阿思哈 (Ch)

baixing 百姓
Bambursan (M) 班布而善 (Ch)
Baoying 寶應
Benzhuan 本傳
bi huai yi ji 敝 壞 已極
bi weiren 必委任
bing fei gongtong shang que
  并非共同商確
bique 必確
boxue hongci 博學宏詞

Cai Yürong 蔡毓榮
can 参
cha yi 察議
Chen Guiying 陈桂英
Chen Huang 陳黃
Chen Kangqi 陳康祺
Chen Menglei 陳夢雷
Chen Mingxia 陳名夏
Chen Qiyuan 陳其元
Chen Yuanlong 陳元龍
Chen Zhilin 陈之遴
Chen Zizhi 陳紫芝
Chenzi 陳子
chongzi 蟲子
Chufen zeli 處分澤例

Da Ji 大計
Da Qing huidian 大清會典
Da Qing lüli 大清律例
Da Qing yitong zhi 大清一通 志
Da Zhuang 大壯
Dacina (M) 達奇納 (Ch)
dafa xiaolian 大法小 廉
daizui 戴罪
Dong Hanchen 董漢 臣
Dong Na 董訥
Dorgon (M) 多而衮 (Ch)
Dou 斜

er deng suo yi ruo he 爾等所議若何

fenfei 分肥
feng'e jiaoran 風鄂矯然
fengwen 風問
fengyan 風言
fengzhi 奉旨
Foron (M) 佛倫 (Ch)
fu 赋
Fulata (M) 傅腊塔 (Ch 17th century)
  富拉塔 (Ch 18th century)
Fuquan 福全

Gao Chengjue 高承爵
Gao Chengmei 高承爵
Gao Shiqi 高士奇
Gaojiayan 高家堰
Gaoyou 高郵
Geng Jingzhong 耿靜忠
Gesite (M) 葛思泰 (Ch 17th century)
  格撕特 (Ch 18th century)
gezhi 革職
Gezhi jingyuan 格致镜原
Gintaisi (M) 金台石 (Ch)

gong wan zhi hou, bixu yong wu tuo
huan 工完之候,必須永無他患)
guanxue 管學
Guixu 揆敘
Guizhou 贵州
Guo Erbiao 郭爾標
Guo Eryin 郭爾印
Guo Jingchang 郭經昌
Guo Shangyu 郭尚友
Guo Tingyi 郭廷翼
Guo Xianping 郭顯平
Guo Xiu 郭琇
guo zhi chong, min zhi zei ye
國之蟲, 民之賊 也
Guochao Li Shiqian zoushu
國朝李時谦奏書
Guochao qixian leizheng
國朝奇賢類 正
guoji jiao qian xiao yu 國計較前稍裕
guojia 國家
Guojiagang 郭家港
guoshi guan 國史館
Guoshi Yuan 國史院
Guoshi zupu 郭氏族譜

"Haining Chen jia" 海寧陳家
Hanjun 汉军
he bing 河兵
he long men 合龍門
hedao zongdu 河道總都
Hefang shuyan 呵方述 言
Hefang yilan 河方一藍
Heshen 和神
Hongze 洪澤
Hou Renzhi 候任之
Huai 淮
Huaian 壞安
Huaiyang 淮阳
Huang Zongchang 黃宗昌

Huating 華停
Hucong jicheng 扈從記程
Hufang qiao 虎坊 橋
huopai 火 牌

Isanga (M) 伊桑阿 (Ch)

jian chen 奸臣
Jiangdu 江都
Jiangnan 江南
Jiangning 江宁
Jiangsu 江苏
jiaodai 交代
Jimo Xian 即墨縣
Jin Fu 靳輔
Jin Yingxuan 靳应选
Jin Zhiyu 靳治豫
jingyan jiang guan 经筵讲管
juan 卷

kaishu 楷书
kang yan 抗言
Kangxi 康熙
kaoxuan ke 考选科
Karkun (M) 科爾坤 (Ch)
kexue de jiben taidu
科學的基本态度
kui 餽
Kuixu 揆叙

Ledehong 勒德洪
Li Guangdi 李光地
Li ji 禮記
Li Shiqian 李時謙
Li Zhifang 李之芳
Li Zutao 李祖陶
liang 两
Liangying Tai 晾鷹臺
Liaoyang 辽阳

Licheng 歷城
Liu Fengyun 劉風雲
Liu Kai 劉楷
Liu Zhengzong 劉正宗
Liulichang 琉璃厂
Lu Zuxiu 陸祖修
lue jia guanlan 略加觀覽
Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉
luo zhi 羅織

Ma Siliang 馬斯良
Marsai (M) 瑪爾塞 (Ch)
menlu zhen 門路真
min zhi yu tian wei tuntian
民之餘田為屯田
Ming shi 明史
Mingju 明珠
Misgan (M) 米思翰 (Ch)
Mo 墨
Moro (M) 莫落 (Ch)
Mu Tianyan 慕天顏
muyu 墓友
muzhiming 墓誌銘

Nanshufang 南書房
Nanshufang jiju 南書房 記注
Neige 內閣
neiwufu zongguan 內務府總管
Nian Xialing 年遐齡
Niyaha (M) 尼雅哈 (Ch)
Nurhaci (M) 努爾 哈赤 (Ch)

Pan Jixun 潘季馴
Pei Gun 裴袞
Piao 漂
ping'an qian 平安錢
Pingding san ni fanglue 平定三逆
方略
Puzhou 蒲州

Qian Jue 錢玨,
Qianqing 乾清
Qiao Lai 喬萊
Qinding Baqi Tongzhi 欽定八旗統志
qing 顷
Qing Taizong 请太宗
Qingjiangpu 清江浦
Qingkou 清口
Qingshi 清史
Qingshi liezhuan 清史列傳
qiren 祺人

Saileng'e (M) 色楞额 (Ch)
Samha (M) 薩穆哈 (Ch)
Sanchao shengxun 三朝聖 訓
sanfan 三藩
Sanmen 三門
sao 埽
Sekde (M) 塞克德 (Ch)
Shandong 山东
Shang Kexi 尚可喜
Shang Zhixin 商之信
Shanyang 山陽
shi yin zhi rou 食伊之肉
shidu xueshi 侍讀學士
Shijing 诗经
Shilu 實錄
shu shui yi shui shuai sha
束水以水刷沙
Shun 舜
Shuncheng 順城
Shunzhi 顺治
Siku quanshu 四库全书
Sima Guang 司馬廣
Singde (M) 性德 (Ch)
Songgotu (M) 索額圖 (Ch)
Soni (M) 索尼 (Ch)
Subai (M) 蘇拜 (Ch)
sui 岁

Sun Qifeng 孫奇逢
Sun Zaifeng 孫在豐
Suqian 宿遷
Suzhou 苏州

Taichangsi qing 太常寺 卿
Taizhou 泰州
taizi xiaobao 太子小保
Tang Bin 汤斌
te 特
ti 堤
"Tifang" 隄防
ting chen 廷臣
tongyin xiegong 統寅協恭
Tongzheng Shisi 通政使司
Tongzhitang ji 通志堂集
tufang 土方
Tuhai (M) 圖海 (Ch)
tuiwei gourong 推諉苟容
tuntian 屯田

Wan Sitong 萬斯同
Wanli 万历
Wang Duxin 王 渡心
Wang Guangxin 王廣心)
Wang Guangyü 王光裕
Wang Hongxu 王鴻緒
Wang Jingqi 王景祺
Wang Rizao 王日藻
Wang Shizhen 王士禛,
Wang Xi 王熙
Wang Xuling 王頊齡
Wang Yuewen 王跃問
Wei 濰
Wei Xiangshu 魏象枢
Wei Yijie 魏裔介
Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢
Wen Tiren 問體仁
Wendeng 文登
Wenge 文格
Wenxiang 文襄
wo bei dang yi si zheng zhi 我背當以死爭之
Wu Jili 吳霽力
Wu Sangui 吳三桂
Wu Xingzuo 吳興祚
Wujiang 吳江
Wujiang xian zhi 吳江縣志

xianmu 顯目
Xiao Yishan 蕭一山
Xiaoting zalu 嘯亭雜陸
Xinghua 興化
Xiong Yixian 熊一灦
Xiqin 席球 (Ch 17th century) 錫球 (Ch 18th century)
Xizheng suibi 西征隋筆
Xu Qianxue 徐乾學
xuanbu zheng shi 宣布政事
xuanhe 懸河
xueshi 學士

Yan Chongnian 閻重年
Yan Song 嚴誦
Yancheng 鹽城
Yang Fangxing 楊方興
Yang Jie 楊捷
Yangzhou 陽州
yanjia yichu 嚴加議處
Yao 尧
Yehe 葉赫
yi bu hua yi 義不畫一
yi chu 議處
yi min tian zuo tun tian 以民田作屯田
yi woyao lingshen quanjü 宜握要領審全局
Yijing 易經
yin mou 陰謀

Yinsi 胤禩
yirong wumian 一荣无免
Yizheng Dachen 議政大臣
Yongzheng 雍正
you canyi 右參議
you li 有里
Yu Chenglong 余誠龍
Yu Guozhu 于國柱
Yu Qingtian 余青天
Yu Ziyi 俞子易
yuan zu 遠祖
yuke bucui 優科不崔
Yunnanfu 云南府
Yunyang 雲
yüshi 御史

zaogui yenhui xiyou 早歸宴會嬉遊
Zhang Pengge 長鵬 翮
Zhang Qian 張汧
Zhang Ying 張英
Zhang Yushu 張玉書
"Zhanji" 估計
zhanshi 詹事
Zhao Huilin 趙惠林
Zhao Jiong 趙炯
Zhao Jishi 趙吉士
Zhao Shenqiao 趙申喬
Zhaolian 昭槤
Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功
zheng xiang qian liang 正項錢糧
Zhengzhi dianxun 政治典訓
zhi 治
Zhihe fanglue 治河方略
Zhili 直隶
Zhilu 治魯
Zhiqi 治齊
Zhiyong 治雍
Zhiyü 治豫
Zhong He 中河
Zhou Lianggong 周亮工
zhu 主
Zhu Quanfu 朱全甫
Zhu Xi 朱喜
Zhu Yafei 朱亞非
Zhu Zhixi 朱之錫
zhulong 竹龍
zhuo yi 卓異
zonghe shilang 总河侍郎
Zu Zishen 祖澤深
zun chen 尊陳
zuo duyushi 左都御史

Notes

ABBREVIATIONS

GCQXLZ	*Guochao qixian leizheng*
Diary	*Kangxi qijuzhu*
ECCP	Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*
KXSL	Shengzu ren (Kangxi) Huangdi shilu
Zoushu	Jin Fu, *Jin Wenxiang gong (Fu) Zoushu*

INTRODUCTION

1. I follow Thomas Metzger (*The Internal Organization of Ch'ing Bureaucracy*, 115) in translating *can* as "impeach." The romanization of Mingju's Chinese name would be Mingzhu. Throughout, I refer to Manchus by names romanized from the Manchu wherever possible. The Chinese characters for their names are in the glossary.

2. The term "high Qing" was first used by Frederic Wakeman in "High Qing: 1683–1839."

3. Spence, *Emperor of China* and "The Kang-hsi Reign"; Meng Zhaoxin, *Kangxi dadi quanjuan* and *Kangxi pingjuan*.

4. One of the first efforts to subdivide the reign was Spence, "The Seven Ages of K'ang-hsi." Three studies have treated the early era as the last of the conquest age. See Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in the Early Qing Dynasty*; H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict"; Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback. For the middle era, see Kessler, Kang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule*. For the third era, see Perdue, *China Marches West*. For the fourth period, see Wu, *Passage to Power*.

5. Liu Fengyun, *Qingdai sanfan yanjiu*.

6. Parker, *Global Crisis,* 115–51. Parker takes the Kangxi emperor's first southern tour in 1684 as the end of the climate-induced general crisis of the seventeenth century in China (112–25).

7. Atwell, "Some Observations on the 'Seventeenth Century Crisis' in China and Japan."

8. Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silt and Salt*.

9. Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, 1:811–12.

10. Pamela Kyle Crossley provides the most reliable account of changing Manchu self-images in *The Translucent Mirror*.

11. On this point, see Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?" While recognizing the important distinction between an ethnic group and a political order, I follow twentieth-century convention and use the term "Manchu" to refer to both.

12. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 8.

13. "Bannerman," referring to a soldier enrolled in one of the armies identified by the color and pattern of their banners, is not an English word but is used here as an exact translation of the Chinese *qiren*.

14. Crossley, *Translucent Mirror*, 165.

15. On Dorgon's use of collaborators, see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 414–42, 848–93; Dennerline, "The Shun-chih Reign." Dennerline makes the important point that Dorgon needed to be careful not to create situations in which military commanders and princes could challenge his authority.

16. Mostern, *The Yellow River*, 193–94.

17. Joseph Needham notes that the shift of the river to a southern mouth was a gradual process, beginning in 1288 and continuing through 1324. See his useful chart "Changes of Course of the Yellow River," in "Hydraulics," 242–43.

18. *Mingshi*, first chapter on river control, juan 83.

19. *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 69.1502. The works on river management that were copied into the *Siku quanshu* are listed in *juan* 69. Those that were merely listed in the catalog are found in *juan* 75.

20. Ray Huang refers to Pan as commissioner, with concurrent rank as vice censor in chief. *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1107–111. See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 69.1495.

21. Needham, "Hydraulics," 340–41.

22. Porter, "Ethnic and Status Identity in Qing China," 85.

23. Liu Jinde, "Sanshi nian lai bachi hanjun yenjiu dongxu," 39.

24. The high point of Chinese banner influence in Qing government, as measured by the number of provincial governorships they occupied, was not the days when they served as translators but the days when they were dispatched as loyal functionaries.

25. Statistics of Narakino Shimesu, cited in Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 2, 1022–25.

26. For a brief summary of the history of Chinese dynasties' patronage of scholars and scholarship, see Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, chapter 1.

27. Huang Chin-shing, *The Price of Having a Sage-Emperor*, 8–9.

28. Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in the Early Qing Dynasty*, 123–29.

29. The "journey to the west" of the title may have been a reference to the government in Shanxi and Shaanxi, which had been turned over to Manchus earlier in the Kangxi reign and was, in Wang's view, particularly ineffective and corrupt.

30. Wang Jingqi , *Dushu tang xizheng suibi*, 1724.

31. The books were *Guo huaye (xiu) xiansheng shugao* and *Guo huaye xiansheng nianpu*.

32. Duindam, introduction to *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, 18.

33. Wolfgang Franke, "The Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644," 61.

34. *Kangxi qizhuju* (hereafter *Diary*).

35. *Diary*, 435.

36. The opera was titled *Guo Xiu xi tang*, which premiered in 2019, and the teledramas were *Kangxi wangchao*, a forty-six episode television series aired in 2001, and *Tianxia changhe*, a forty-episode drama aired in 2021–22. It would be possible to assess the accuracy and ideological themes of these products based on the history told below, but this remains outside the scope of the present work.

ONE / JIN FU AND THE RIVER

Epigraph: Wang Shizhen, "Jin Fu gong muzhiming." For a complete translation of the text of Wang's "Muzhiming," see Guy, "A Chinese Bannerman Expert in Waterworks."

1. See Wang Yinghua, "Kangqian shiqi zhili xiahe diqu de liangci zhenglun."

2. See Song, "Jin Fu zhihe jianlue"; Hou Renzhi, "Chen Huang zhi he," 65–68.

3. There are six biographies of Jin Fu in *juan* 155 of *Guochao qixian leizheng*. (hereafter GCQXLZ). They include the "Muzhiming" by Wang Shizhen; the State Historical Commission biography, *Guoshiguan benzhuan*, likely prepared in the eighteenth century; and biographies by Wan Chengcang (*jinshi* 1712, d. 1747) and Lu Shao (1725–1785). A nineteenth-century account of Jin's work in the rivers by Li Zutao (1776–1858) and a brief account from a work titled *Guoshi xianliang xiao zhuan* are also included. Twentieth-century biographies include accounts in *ECCP* and *Qingshi*.

4. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 553. See also Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, 484.

5. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 155.1a–b.

6. Crosley, "Manchu Education," 356.

7. All of Jin's biographies, except the *Benzhuan* prepared by the State Historiographical Commission in the early eighteenth century, say that Jin was appointed *pianxiu* in the Hanlin Academy. This would have been quite a stretch for him to be given an instructor position in an academy composed of the highest-ranking recipients of the *jinshi* degree. The *Benzhuan* placed him in the *Guoshi yuan*, which seems more likely. *Benzhuan* editors, though not contemporaries, would have had Jin's official curriculum vitae.

8. For Chinese scholarship on Chinese martial bannerman identities—whether they saw themselves as Manchu or Chinese—see Liu Jinde, "Sanshi nian lai bachi hanjun yenjiu zongxu," 40–41.

9. See Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou*, 35–79.

10. Wang Shizhen, “Jin Fu gong muzhiming,” 1871.

11. Wang Shizhen, “Jin Fu gong muzhiming,” 1870.

12. See Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*.

13. Wang Shizhen, “Jin Fu gong muzhiming,” 1867; Lu Shao, in *GCQXLZ* 155.26a–b.

14. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* II, 1540.

15. Hou Renzhi, “Chen Huang zhi he.”

16. *Hefang shuyan* 579.776, quoted in Hou, “Chen Huang zhi he,” 65–66.

17. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ*, 155.1a–b; Wang Shizhen, “Jin Fu gong muzhiming,” 1866–67; Wan Chengcang, in *GCQXLZ*, 155.25b–26a. credits Jin with attracting 100,000 households back to Anhui. See also ECCP.

18. On *huo-pai,* see Sun, *Ch'ing Administrative Terms*, 246. A *liang* was a standard unit of Chinese currency, equivalent in theory to one ounce of silver.

19. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 155.1b–2a. The memorial on postal savings is printed in Jin Fu, *Jin wenxiang gong (fu) zoushu*, 999–1020. Hereafter *Zoushu*.

20. *Qingshi*, 280.2978–79.

21. *Qingshi*, 280.2979.

22. *Shengzu ren (Kangxi) Huangdi shilu* 4.841 (hereafter *KXSL*).

23. *KXSL* 64.850.

24. On the ministry of works, see Zhang Deze, *Qingdai guojia jiguan kaolue*, 122–45, esp. 140–41.

25. *Zoushu*, 15–17.

26. *Zoushu*, 20–22.

27. See Jia Guojing, “*Qing qianqi di hedu yu huang chuan zhengzhi*,” 187.

28. The work was edited by a contemporary, Zhang Aisheng. It was included in the *Siku quanshu*, appended to Jin Fu's collected memorials (vol. 549, pp. 746–79 in the Guji reprint). A more legible version, cited below, is in *juan* 9 of *Zhihe fanglue*.

29. *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1107–10. Pan's *Hefang yilan* was also written in the form of questions and answers, which may have influenced the way Chen's work was presented. On Pan, see Vermeer, “P'an Chi-hsun's Solutions to Yellow River Problems of the Sixteenth Century.”

30. *Hefang shuyan, in Zhihe fanglue* 9.801; see also Hou, “Chen Huang zhi he,” 72–74.

31. *Hefang shuyan*, in *Zhihe fanglue* 9.781–82; see also *Qing shi* 280.2984.

32. Recent research has shown bannermen claiming technical expertise in other spheres of administration, suggesting that trained bannermen may have become a new stratum of officials in the early and mid-Qing. See Kai Jun Chen, *Porcelain for the Emperor*, particularly chapter 1, ”Bannermen Technocrats in the Early Qing.”

33. Over time, the Qing recognized the value of specialized training in river posi-

tions. During the Qianlong era, river directors served relatively long terms, and experience became a criterion for selection. See Wang Yinghua, "Kangqian shiqi," 84.

34. *Zoushu*, 29–38.

35. *Zoushu*, 38–44.

36. *Zoushu*, 45–48.

37. *Zoushu*, 49–57.

38. *Zoushu*, 65–70.

39. For the retained and remitted land taxes, see Zelin, *The Magistrate's Tael*, 28.

40. The Qing did offer offices for sale in 1673, but the proceeds likely went to support the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, not river work. For the regulations for office sale in 1673, see Lawrence Zhang, *Power for a Price*, 271–73.

41. *Zouzhu*, 71–82.

42. Hu Ch'ang-tu, "The Yellow River Administration in the Ch'ing Dynasty." Hu estimates that in the seventeenth century, there were approximately twenty-nine officials subordinated to the director-general of the Grand Canal (508).

43. *Zoushu*, 153–70.

44. *Zoushu*, 99–101, 104–8.

45. This passage does not appear in Jin's collected memorials. It is quoted in Wang Shizhen, "Jin Fu gong Muzhiming," 1867; "Guoshi xianliang xiao zhuan," in *GCQXLZ* 155.17b–19a; Wan Chengcang, in *GCQXLZ* 155.26b–27a.

46. *Zoushu*, 131, 135, 139, 147.

47. *Zoushu*, 123–30. The court's objections here have been inferred from quoted passages in Jin's responses.

48. *KXSL* 71.908; *ECCP*, 161. See also *Da qing huidian zeli*, 910.492–93.

49. *KXSL* 77.987.

50. Diary, 920; Wang Yinghua, "Kangqian shiqi," 78. This characterization came in 1682 after Jin had haughtily dismissed a river expert from Henan who had been sent to consult with him.

51. See Hu Ch'angtu, "The Yellow River Administration"; and Zhaolian, *Xiaoting zalu*, *juan* 7, particularly p. 214.

52. Li Zutao, "*Zhihe shizhuang*," *GCQXLZ* 155.29a. Li, much of whose work was bibliographic, commented on the disorganized quality of *Zoushu*. Although the editors of *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (57.1223) remarked that Jin's son had done the editorial work, Li saw the selection as haphazard.

53. *Hefang shuyan*, quoted in Hou Renzhi, "Chen Huang zhihe," 69–70.

54. Hou Renzhi, "Chen Huang zhihe," 70.

55. These are the concluding lines of Jin's first memorial, *Zoushu*, 28b.

56. Song, "Jin fu zhihe jianlue," 92–94. In Pan Jixun's day, his methods of river control were as advanced as any in the world. By Jin's day, a new science of hydrology,

based in Newtonian physics, had developed in Italy and the Netherlands. See Davids, "River Control and the Evolution of Knowledge"; Biswas, *History of Hydrology*.

57. Mostern, *The Yellow River*, 183.

58. For 1680, see *Zoushu* 3.335–8; *Diary*, 594; and *KXSL* 91.1137, 91.1155.

59. *Diary*, 920; see also *KXSL* 105.66. Isanga, from the Plain Yellow Banner, was a very significant figure at the Kangxi court. He earned a *jinshi* degree in 1652. During the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, Isanga supervised the construction of boats used to attack Wu Sangui's forces at Lake Dongting. He also served on the committee that inspected the rivers in 1675 and recommended that a new director—ultimately Jin Fu—be appointed. He served as Manchu minister of finance from 1677 to 1683. He was the head of various ministries until 1688, when he became grand secretary. The emperor particularly valued his comments on criminal sentences involving the death penalty. See *Qingshi* 251.3815.

60. *KXSL* 105.66.

61. This point is made clearly in the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* assessment of *Zoushu*, 1223.

TWO / IMPERIAL INTERVENTION

1. Chang, "Civil-Military Tensions during the Kangxi Emperor's First Southern Tour."

2. See Shang, "Kangxi nanxun yu zhili huanghe."

3. *Diary*, 1242; *KXSL* 117.222.

4. *Diary*, 1251; see also *KXSL* 117.1220. Jin acknowledged receipt of the imperial poem in a memorial in *Zoushu,* 621–30.

5. *Diary*, 1242. The emperor's expression of sympathy was not entirely spontaneous. He had been warned about the dissatisfaction of downriver residents by the censor Li Shiqian before the trip began. See "Xiahe zhi zheng daohuosu jianchayushi Li Shiqian danke Jin Fu."

6. *KXSL* 117.223, 229.

7. *KXSL* 118.238.

8. He, "Kangxi qianqi Jin Fu zhihe zhengyi de zhengzhi shi fenxi," 63.

9. Jia Guojing, "Qing qianqi di hedu yu huang chuan zhengzhi," 189.

10. On Yu Chenglong, see Liu Fengyun, "Cong hanjun qiren Yu Chenglong kan fengjian guanliao de duo zhong zhengzhi renge."

11. See Crossley, "The Tong in Two Worlds."

12. To avoid confusion, I use Yu Qingtian to refer to the elder Yu, and Yu Chenglong when I refer to the younger man. On Yu Qingtian, the elder, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 65–66.

13. Xu Qianxue, “Jishi,” in *GCJXLZ* 160.32.

14. *Zoushu* 6.725–50.

15. Li Zutao, *GCJXLZ* 155.46a.

16. Wang Yinghua, “Kangqian shiqi,” 78.

17. *Zoushu*, 704–5.

18. *Zoushu*, 706–13. The secondary levy was projected to cost 193,880; the dredging project was to cost 31,000; and the work on the levees along the canal was estimated to cost 308,500.

19. This extraordinarily confident claim is found in *Zoushu*, 704.

20. *Zoushu*, 733–37.

21. *Zoushu*, 743–45.

22. Li Wenzhi, “Qingdai tuntian yu caoyun.”

23. *Qing* was a Chinese measure of land equal to 15.13 acres.

24. *Baoying xianzhi*, 1346.

25. *Diary*, 1380. The Kangxi comment on the state of finances was addressed to his courtiers. It was not a part of the public record.

26. *Zoushu*, 723.

27. *KXSL* 123.304.

28. On Qiao Lai, see *Qingshi* 483.5237; *GCQXLZ* 120.8a–19a.

29. *KXSL* 113.305; *Diary*, 1399.

30. The memorial was titled “Four Things That Cannot Be Permitted in Guiding the Waters to the Sea” (*Baoying xianzhi*, 1338–43). Eleven officials from four districts signed the draft memorial. Qiao Lai, who had passed both the *jinshi* and the *boxue hongci* examinations and served as a diarist, likely the most prestigious official from Huaiyang in the capital, was chosen as spokesman.

31. *Baoying xianzhi,* 1343–48. The description was written down in 1698, ten years after the meeting described.

32. *Qingshi* 269.3929.

33. *Diary*, 1427.

34. *KXSL* 124.316. Wang Yinghua (“Kangqian shiqi,” 78) takes this as evidence that Yu didn’t know much about river work.

35. See chapter 5 below for Mingju’s likely role in this decision.

36. *KXSL* 124.318.

37. *Qingshi 266.3909*. Tang received a concurrent appointment as tutor to the heir apparent. On Tang Bin’s mentorship of Guo Xiu, see chapter 3 below.

38. *KXSL* 126.338–39; *Diary*, 1481.

39. *KXSL* 126.340. Noting that Tang Bin did not offer any guarantees and seemed to betray a spirit of “try it and see,” He Weiguo (“Kangxi qianqi,” 68) sees the emperor’s intervention here as a use of autocratic authority not supported by evidence.

40. *KXSL* 127.348–49.

41. Like Jin's family, the Gaos joined the Qing cause before the conquest and earned a hereditary distinction for their service, although the extant funerary inscription does not identify them as bannermen. Jin Fu recommended Gao for appointment in Jiangsu. *Diary*, 1303. See also *GCQXLZ* 167.4a. For Gao's prosecution of Guo Xiu, see chapter 9 below.

42. *KXSL* 127.351. On Sun, see *Qingshi* 280.398.

43. Chang, "Civil-Military Tensions," 40.

44. *KXSL* 126.347; *Diary*, 1509–10.

45. *KXSL* 127.364.

46. *KXSL* 128.374–75.

47. *KXSL* 129.380–81; *Diary*, 1583–84.

48. *KXSL* 129.379–80.

49. *Diary*, 1584.

50. These issues are thoughtfully explored in Wang Yinghua, "Kangqian shiqi," 84.

THREE / MINGJU

Epigraph: Chen Guiying, "Beijing tushuguan zang chaoben," 32.

1. For some reflections on the sources of seventeenth-century favorites' power, see Bérenger, "Pour une enquête européenne."

2. Fang Chaoying, "Mingju," in *ECCP*, 577.

3. Mingju has received scant attention in histories of the Kangxi reign, in part because of the limited biographical materials available. Most published biographies (except one, discussed below) derive from his official biography, which is cited below as it appears in *Qingshi liezhuan*. This was edited in 1772 by order of the Qianlong emperor, who was anxious to show that Mingju had a limited influence and was guilty of only garden-variety corruption, unlike the evil ministers of the late Ming (see *Gaozongchun (Qianlong) Huangdi Shilu* 919.327–28). Following imperial instructions, state historians produced a very brief account of Mingju's life—basically a list of the titles he held—followed by the full text of Guo Xiu's impeachment and the Kangxi emperor's response. In the following account, events in Mingju's life have been confirmed, wherever possible, from other sources. The single exception to this rule is a funerary inscription by Wang Hongxu that had a remarkable provenance. Wang decided not to publish it, and it was buried with Mingju. It was rediscovered during the Cultural Revolution and first published in 1996 as the last two pages of Chen Guiying's article "Beijing tushuguan zang chaoben."

4. The *nala* part of their name implied descent from the same ancestor as the other Jurchen clans. In his biographical note on Yangginu, head of the Yehenala in *ECCP*

(897–98), George Kennedy argues that they were likely not descended from a Manchu but more likely from a Mongol who adopted the Nara clan name.

5. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 155.

6. Crossley, A *Translucent Mirror*, 169.

7. As early as the Ming Wanli reign, Ming sources recorded enmity between Nurhaci and the Yehenala. See Yan Chongnian, "Mingzhu lun," 3. On Gintaisi, see *ECCP*, 269–70.

8. Possibly to curry favor with Mingju, Xu Qianxue wrote an essay on the Yehenala titled "Yehe beili jiacheng." See Meng Zhaoxin, "Bachu Mingzhu yu zhengqu jiangnan shidafu," 28.

9. On the Imperial Equipage Department, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-his Emperor*, 27–30. Mingju's service in the department preceded Cao Yin's by a decade.

10. The title *neiwufu zongguan* referred to a number of positions. The most likely seems to have been the commandant of the imperial guards at the Southern Hunting Park (*nan yuan*). See Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, 25–26.

11. Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, 44; Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 347.

12. *Qingshi lie zhuan* 8.13a; *KXSL* 24.328.

13. *KXSL* 27.381–82.

14. Ranks were numbered 1 to 8, and there was an upper and lower division within each rank. Rank 1A was the highest, rank 8B the lowest.

15. See *Qingdai yeshi daguan*, 3.21.

16. *KXSL* 32.420; *Qingshi lie zhuan*, 8.13a. Both Jonathan Spence ("The Kang-hsi Reign," 135) and H. L. Miller ("Factional Conflict," 103) take Mingju's appointment to the Censorate as a sign of the emperor's commitment to put his own men in the bureaucratic order.

17. *KXSL* 35.473.

18. *Diary*, 114; Yan Chongnian, "Mingzhu lun," 8; *Shang Shu*, 72.

19. *Qingshi* 270.3931.

20. *KXSL* 38.509.

21. *KXSL* 43.569. The diary, which did not yet record political deliberations, notes that in addition to accepting Wu's resignation, the emperor discussed several lines from Confucius and received tribute from the Khalka Mongols on this date. See *Diary*, 109–10.

22. Chen Guiying, "Beijing tushuguan zang chaoben 'Mingju muzhiming' kaoshu," 31. Hereafter, I cite the funerary inscription as Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," and cite Chen's useful analysis as Chen Guiying, "Kaoshu," to distinguish the primary and secondary sources.

23. Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," 31.

24. Spence, "The Kang-hsi Reign," 138.

25. Silas H. L. Wu, *Passage to Power*, 27; H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict," 108–9. See also Meng Zhaoxin, *Xiaozhuang huang hou*, 394.

26. For an interesting reflection on the Kangxi emperor, his grandmother, and the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, see Qiao Zhizhong and Kong Yonghong, "Kangxi yu Xiaozhuang taihuang taihou zhengzhi guanxi de jiegou," 53–59.

27. Liu Fengyun, *Qingdai Sanfan Yenjiu*, 164.

28. *KXSL* 99.1246. See also Spence, "The Kang-hsi Reign," 138.

29. See H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict," 109. The life dates of all those who supported the decision on Wu Sangui cannot be established. Both Mingju and Misgan were in their late thirties. Tuhai, the only named opponent of the decision, was much older.

30. *KXSL* 45.594–95, 592–93, 597.

31. Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," 31.

32. *Qingshi* 269.3925. Misgan's grandson Fuheng (d. 1770) was a dominant figure in the court of the Kangxi emperor's grandson, the Qianlong emperor.

33. Chen Guiyin, "Muzhiming," 31.

34. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 466–67.

35. *Diary*, 343, 346, 435.

36. On Chen Menglei, see *ECCP*, 93–94.

37. Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," 31; *Diary*, 905; Zhao Huilin, "Nala Mingju liugei houren yichan," 7.

38. Diary, 539. Wang Rizao received the appointment and after two years was promoted to governor of Henan (*Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 3:1786–87). He is better known today as a poet and calligrapher.

39. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 3:1365, 1548.

40. See *ECCP*, 634.

41. On Wu Xingzuo, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 266–69; and *ECCP*, 377. In a later posting in Guangdong, Wu proved to be quite corrupt. See John Wills, "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: Themes in Peripheral History," 232.

42. Yu Qingtian was the older Yu Chenglong; see chapter 2.

43. According to Guo Xiu's accusation, Yu Guozhu was a member of Mingju's faction, responsible for setting prices when offices were sold. See chapter 5.

44. H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict," 105. On Songgotu's appointment to the secretariat, see *KXSL* 33.27a; *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 36.

45. Yan Chongnian, "Mingju lun," 6; See also H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict," 104–6.

46. *Qingshi* 370.3932.

47. *Qingdai yeshi daguan* 3.20; *Qingshi*, 3930.

48. *KXSL* 83.1059; Wei Xuemi, *Wei Minguo gong nianpu*, 46b–47a.

49. *Diary*, 420–35.

50. See *ECCP*, 663–65; *Qingshi*, 3930–31.

51. See Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 17–23; Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in the Early Qing Dynasty*, 107–32.

52. Meng Zhaoxin, "Bachu Mingju yu zhengchu jiangnan shidafu," 28–31. In this important article, Meng emphasizes the close connections between Mingju and the scholars recruited to serve in the Kangxi court in the late 1670s and 1680s.

53. *ECCP*, 310–12. See also Lynn Ann Struve, "The Hsu Brothers and Semiofficial Patronage of Scholars in the K'ang-hsi Period."

54. Xu Qianxue, "Nala jun muzhiming"; Meng Zhaoxin, "Bachu Mingju," 28.

55. On the selection of tutors, see chapter 8.

56. Meng Zhaoxin, "Bachu Mingju," 28–31.

57. See Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," 32; Chen Guiying, "Kaoshu," 28.

58. Chen Guiying, "Muzhiming," 31.

59. *Qingdai yeshi daguan* 3.21. For other anecdotes about Mingju from the *yeshi* tradition, see 3.20–25.

FOUR / GUO XIU AND THE QING CENSORATE

Epigraph: Guo Xiu, "Impeachment of a River Official," in *Guo Huaye (Xiu) xianzheng shugao*, 80.

1. Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 430–34.

2. Zhang Wenyan, "Guo Xiu shi zenma jin ru jimo Guo shi jiapu de." The author identifies herself as a reporter for Al Jazeera network in China.

3. Zhu Yafei, *Ming-Qing Shandong shijia jiazu yu jiazu wenhua*, 2.

4. *Jimo xian zhi*, 640–41. See also "Shandong huang shi zhi chuang." The Huang family was prominent in Jimo from the late Ming through the nineteenth century. Like the Guos, they combined resistance to the conquest with service to the Qing.

5. *Guo Huaye (Xiu) xiansheng nianpu*, 2–3. Hereafter *Nianpu*.

6. Wakeman (*The Great Enterprise*, 1000) refers to the defense of Wei County. Guo Shangyu declined an offer to serve the Qing, but his collaborator Zhou Lianggong accepted office with the new dynasty.

7. Zhang Wenyan, "Guo Xiu shi zenma jin ru jimo Guo shi jiapu de."

8. Agnew, *The Kongs of Qufu*, 65–67; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 432–33. Zhu Yafei *Ming-Qing Shandong shijia jiazu yu jiazu wenhua*, 9, proposes that Shandong elite weren't "burdened by foolish loyalties."

9. See the survey of early Qing Confucian ideas in Peterson, "Arguments over Learning."

10. Zhu Yafei, *Ming-Qing Shandong shijia jiazu yu jiazu wenhua*, 5.

11. On Sun, see *ECCP*, 671–72; Peterson, "Arguments over Learning," 472–74.

12. On policy questions, see Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 431–50.

13. Wei Yijie, "Keju yi," translated in Struve, "Ruling from a Sedan Chair," 12.

14. For a discussion of how the emphasis on the latest exegetical fashion could distort the examination, see, among many others, Qiu Jun, "Quan xuan zhi fa".

15. Wei Litung, *Wei zhenan xiansheng nianpu*, 34b–35a. Wei's *nianpu* was compiled by his son. Given Guo Xiu's low rank, it is possible that this comment was entered in the *nianpu* after Guo had made a name for himself with impeachments. As Wei Yijie did not live to see Guo's impeachments, the entry would have been posthumous.

16. *Nianpu*, 508–9.

17. *Nianpu*, 509.

18. See *Wujiang xian zhi*, *juan* 3.

19. *Nianpu*, 509–11.

20. All gazetteers used similar categories to discuss local history, though the amount of space devoted to each category is a mark of its importance in local affairs. The 1733 edition of *Wujiang xian zhi* devoted five large *juan*, nearly two hundred printed pages, to the evolution of tax obligations. See *Wujiang xian zhi*, 311–504.

21. Preface to *Wujiang xian zhi*, quoted in *Nianpu*, 512.

22. Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 236–37.

23. *Wujiang xian zhi* (1733), 499.

24. *Wujiang xian zhi* (1733), 675; *Nianpu*, 510.

25. *Qingshi* 262.3883. Zhaolian (*Xiaoting zalu*, 177) regarded Yang as one of the two most successful Green Standard army generals in the early Qing.

26. *Wujiang xian zhi*, 689–90; *Nianpu*, 510–19.

27. *Qingshi* 266.3907–10. See also Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 240–44.

28. On Tang's appointment, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 241–42. On the new Qing post-rebellion attitude toward the southeast, see chapter 3.

29. *Wujang xian zhi*, 690.

30. *Xiaoting zalu* 4.95–96.

31. Chen Kangqi, "Jiwen," in *GCQXLZ* 160.36a–b. This episode was the basis for a Peking opera titled *Guo Xiu Washes the Hall* (Guo Xiu xi tang), performed in Beijing in 2018. See "Xin pian jingju 'Guo Xiu xi tang' xian shou quantong wemhua xiandai liliang."

32. On outstanding recommendations in the Qing, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 92–95.

33. Tang Bin, *Qian'an xiansheng shugao*, 961.

34. The fourth rank was the highest rank one could purchase (see Lawrence Zhang, *Power for a Price*, 39, 267–70) and may have represented a threshold between junior and senior civil service rank.

35. Regulations for participation in the little-known examination are found in *Da qing huidian shili* 1029.328–29.

36. Tang Bin, *Qian'an xiansheng shugao*, 961.

37. The Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors personally interviewed candidates at this stage of advancement. Kangxi seemed content here to rely on his counselors' impressions.

38. One genre of statecraft memorials by governors of Shaanxi argued that if irrigation works were built in the northwest, the area could be made more prosperous. See Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 214–15.

39. Guo's ranking in this and the *jinshi* examinations suggested that in a national competitive pool, he was not the strongest candidate.

40. See Hucker, The Censorial System of Ming China, 28n64. A search under *yüshi* in the China Academic database turns up no articles on the Qing. Aside from the accusations of Guo Xiu, the most active censors in during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were Wei Xiangshu (1617–1687), Guo Xiu's examiner Wei Yijie (1616–1686), Xie Jishi (689–1756) during the Yongzheng reign, and the censorial opponents of Heshen (1750–1799) in the Qianlong reign. On Qing censors, see Struve, "Ruling from a Sedan Chair"; Nivison, "Ho-shen and His Accusers."

41. There have been several accounts of these events, including Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China*, 152–234; Dardess, *Blood and History in China*.

42. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China*, 21.

43. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China*, 20–23.

44. Jones, *The Great Qing Code*, 40.

45. *Da Qing huidian shili*, 11.5a–b; Metzger, *The Internal Organization of Ch'ing Bureaucracy*, 115.

46. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China*, 296.

FIVE / IMPEACHMENTS

1. See *Diary*, 1627–30. There is a full translation of this Guy, "Heard on the Wind," 12–23.

2. Dong's memorial is not extant. It is described in Yang Chun, "Tang Bin Zhuan" (*GCQXLC* 48.31b), as having ten points.

3. Tang Bin had never gotten along with Mingju. As a result of his attempt to suppress Dong's memorial, he was hounded from office and died. *Qingshi* 266.3908–9.

4. *KXSL* 231.41

5. See Chen Song, "'Short Scrolls' and 'Slanderous Reports,'" 156.

6. Min Lu ("Guo Xiu danke Jin Fu an zhong an") points out the importance of the hearsay edict to Guo Xiu's subsequent impeachments.

7. "Tecan hechen," in Guo Xiu, *Guo Huaye (Xiu) xiansheng shugao*, 79.

8. "Tecan hechen," 80.

9. "Tecan hechen," 80–81.

10. "Tecan hechen," 81.

11. *KXSL* 132.424.

12. *KXSL* 133.438; *Diary*, 1718.

13. *KXSL* 133.438; *Diary*, 1718.

14. *Diary*, 1718. The comment to the censors and the question to Guo were not included in *KXSL*.

15. The earliest text of Guo's impeachment of Mingju, "Tecan dachen" (in *Guo Huaye (Xiu) xiansheng shugao*, 83–91), was likely printed in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In the latter part of the century, the text was copied into Mingju's official biography, *Qingshi liezhuan*. Shortly thereafter, Zhaolian copied it into *Xiaoting zalu* 3.63–65. In the twentieth century Xiao Yishan reprinted the earliest version in *Qingdai tongshi*, 1:795–96. There were two differences between the early and the late texts (see notes 24 and 29 below).

16. "Tecan dachen," 83; *Shang shu*, 39–40.

17. "Tecan dachen," 85. Chen Zizhi, from Zhejiang, received his *jinshi* in 1678. After passing through the Hanlin Academy, he was appointed censor for the Shaanxi circuit. *Qingshi* 283.4003–4.

18. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 2:2002, 2004; *KXSL*, 128.372.

19. *Qingshi*, 283.4003.

20. *Diary*, 1690–91.

21. *KXSL* 128.423.

22. Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 55–56.

23. Liu Fengyun, "Kangxi chao di dufu yu difang qianliang kuikong."

24. There is a textual variant here. Copies produced in the late eighteenth century read, "The emperor didn't understand" (*shang yi buzei*). The seventeenth century version has *buxi*, "was not pleased."

25. "Tecan dachen," 85–86.

26. *Qingshi lie zhuan* 8.16b–19a; *Qingshi* 270.3933. Both are attached to Mingju's biography.

27. *Qingshi lie zhuan* 8.19–20.

28. *Qingshi lie zhuan* 8.18b–20; *Qingshi* 270.3932–33.

29. The names of these Manchu officials were rendered into Chinese differently in the early and later printings of Guo's memorial. This likely had to do with changing Qing protocols for representing Manchu names in Chinese. In the glossary I have provided the characters used in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Chinese renderings of these Manchu names.

30. H. Lyman Miller, "Factional Conflict."

31. "Tecan dachen," 87.

32. "Tecan dachen," 87.

33. "Tecan dachen," 87–88. On educational intendants, see Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 498; Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, 146–47; Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 52.

34. "Tecan dachen," 88.

35. *Diary*, 1037.

36. *Diary*, 1396. Mingju's statement was not reproduced in *Veritable Records.*

37. *Diary*, 1370–72.

38. "Tecan dachen," 88–89.

39. "Tecan dachen," 90.

40. Li Shiqian was a censor in the early Kangxi period. See "Xiahe zhi zheng daohu-osu jianchayushi Li Shiqian danke Jin Fu." The collection of his censorial memorials, *Guochao Li Shiqian zoushu*, is held and has been digitized by Columbia University. It does not contain any documents about Foron or his time in the censorate but does contain a memorial written before the emperor's first southern tour warning him of the suffering in the seven downriver counties.

41. Meng, "Bachu Mingju yu zhengchu jiangnan shidafu," 28–29. See also *Diary*, 1125, 1220, 1606, 1605.

42. "Tecan dachen," 89–90.

43. Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi* I, 796.

44. Ray Huang, *1587: A Year of No Significance*.

45. *Qingshi*, 3941.

46. *Nianpu*, 523.

47. *Nianpu*, 524.

48. *Nianpu*, 525.

49. *Nianpu*, 527.

50. *Nianpu*, 528.

51. Dong Hanchen, the astronomer whose memorial triggered the emperor's edict on loosely sourced impeachments, did use many classical references to cushion his accusations. See Guy, "Heard on the Winds."

SIX / DECISIONS

1. *KXSL* 133.441.

2. "Li Yun," line 31, in *Li Chi*.

3. *KXSL* 133.441.

4. *KXSL* 133.441. On passing the buck, see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 844.

5. *KXSL* 82.1052–53. There is no evidence that Kangxi had help in crafting the edict condemning Mingju. The parallels between the two edicts are broad but not exact.

6. *KXSL* 133.441.

7. *KXSL* 133.441; *Qingshi* 250.3808; *ECCP*, 600.

8. *KXSL* 133.441–42.

9. For a somewhat more detailed treatment of Cai, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 331–34; Bao Hengxin, "Kangxi shizhi sixiang tanyi," 88.

10. For the commission of Foron, see *KXSL* 131.413, 423–24. The emperor's interaction with the Foron committee is described below.

11. *KXSL* 133.442.

12. *Qingshi* 252.3820–22. Li Zhifang was not formally cashiered but allowed to retire.

13. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 25.

14. Karkun was Manchu minister of works, reputed to be in league with Mingju and Jin Fu.

15. *KXSL* 133.442. The purge of Mingju and his followers obviously affected the central government. There may also have been a purge of territorial officials tied to Mingju. Elsewhere, I have suggested that when four or more governors were dismissed within a single year, the year should be counted as unusual (see my *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 124). Four governors were cashiered between the twelfth month of 1687 and the first month of 1688 (*Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 1552–53.)

16. *KXSL* 133.445.

17. *KXSL* 131.413.

18. Supervising secretaries (*jishizhong*) were technically censors who served the emperor directly, reviewing documents to see if they were in proper form. See Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, 133.

19. *KXSL* 131.413.

20. *KXSL* 132.423–24.

21. See *KXSL*, *juan* 132; *Qingshi liezhuan* 52.17b.

22. *GCQXLZ* 155.10. Jin Fu's accusations of factionalism had a basis. Lu Zuxiu was a student of Mu Tianyan, and Sun Zaifeng was related by marriage to Mu Tianyan. Sun Zaifeng and Guo Xiu were *jinshi* classmates.

23. *Qingshi* 280.3984.

24. There is no mention of the conversation between Dong and the emperor in *Veritable Records*. The account comes completely from the diary.

25. *Qingshi* 478.5093–94.

26. *Diary*, 1736.

27. Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, 99 and 395.

28. Zhaolian, *Xiaoting* zalu, 43. See Porter, "Bannermen as Translators." Dong Na would have studied Manchu in the Hanlin Academy.

29. *Diary*, 1737.

30. *KXSL* 134.449.

31. *Qingshi* 279.3974–75.

32. *(Mu Tianyan) benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 150.19b–20a; *KXSL* 133.440. Likely in response to this memorial, Jin Fu himself memorialized, accusing Mu and others of forming a faction to attack him. *KXSL* 133.447.

33. *Qingshi* 280.3984. As early as February, the emperor had complained of Xiong's unwillingness to speak about the report. *KXSL* 133.438.

34. *Diary*, 1738.

35. *Diary*, 1738. Xiong was eventually reappointed and ended his career as Chinese minister of works. His son, Xiong Xuepeng, enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a territorial official during the Qianlong reign.

36. *KXSL* 83.1059. The phrase *tongyin xiegong* appears in both edicts. For discussion of Songgotu's fall and Mingju's rise, see chapter 5.

37. *Diary*, 1743. The passage is not included in *KXSL*.

38. Chang, "Of Feasts and Feudatories."

39. *Diary*, 1743–44.

40. On Chen's fall, see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise, 979–89*; on Liu, see 999–1000.

41. *KXSL* 133.451–52; *Diary*, 1744.

42. *KXSL* 133.452.

43. *KXSL* 133.445. Bao Hengxin ("Kangxi shizhi sixiang tanyi," 90–91) suggests that Kangxi maintained openness to "words on the winds" throughout his reign, but this edict clearly was meant to limit impeachments.

44. *Diary*, 1754.

45. *Diary*, 1746.

46. *Diary*, 1754.

SEVEN / CORRUPT SCHOLARS

1. See Wu Xiulang, "Nanshufang zhi jianzhi ji qi qianqi zhi fazhan"; Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in the Early Qing Dynasty*, 121–22. In "The Kang-hsi Reign" (165–68), Jonathan Spence emphasizes the political role of the Southern Study.

2. *Diary*, 331; *KXSL* 69.891.

3. *Diary*, 332.

4. *ECCP*, 64. Zhang Ying and his son, Zhang Tingyu (1672–1755), were advisers to three Qing emperors.

5. *Diary*, 337.

6. *Diary*, 337; *KXSL* 70.896. The *KXSL* account omits the phrase "since both men were educated."

7. Zhu Quanfu, "Lun Kangxi shiqi de nanshufang," 27–37.

8. Zhu Quanfu, "Lun Kangxi shiqi de nanshufang," 31; On the Da Zhuang hexagram, see Lynn, *The Classic of Changes*, 345–49.

9. *KXSL* 94.1185–87.

10. Zhu Quanfu, "Lun Kangxi shiqi de nanshufang," 31.

11. Zhu Quanfu, "Lun Kangxi shiqi de nanshufang," 37; Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor*, 222.

12. It existed until the end of the dynasty.

13. For stories from the *yeshi* tradition, see *Qingdai yeshi daguan*, 83–85.

14. Zhaolian, *Xiaoting zalu*, 254.

15. A surviving copy of *Xizheng suibi* is reprinted in *Xu xiu siku quanshu* 1177:257–96.

16. Wang Jingqi's father, Wang Bin, passed the *boxue hongci* examinations in 1679 and held posts in the capital until 1706. Wang Jingqi earned the *juren* degree in 1724 but never earned a *jinshi*. See *ECCP*, 812–13.

17. Wang Jingqi, *Dushu tang xizheng suibi*, 274.

18. Wang Jingqi, *Dushu tang xizheng suibi*, 275. On the Zhang Qian case, see chapter 5.

19. See *KXSL* 132.423, for the emperor's rejection of Saileng'e's report and his exile.

20. *Qingshi* 272.3941.

21. *Dushu tang xizheng suibi*, 276.

22. *Record of a Journey to Songting* (*Songtingxingji*) was copied into the *Siku quanshu* and reviewed in *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 58.1294–95. According to the Siku editors, Gao made a major geographical error in naming his account, as the trip did not take him close to Songting Mountain.

23. *Record of a Journey with the Emperor to the East* (*Hucong dongxun rilu*).

24. The account of this trip was titled *Daily Journal of a Journey with the Emperor to the West* (*Hucong xixun rilu*) and was included in the *Siku quanshu*. See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 58.1294.

25. *Notes from North of the Border* (*Saibei waichao*).

26. Meng Sen produced a short essay entirely devoted to the Chen family, titled "Haining Chen jia," On the first Chen degree holder, see p. 512.

27. *ECCP*, 96.

28. On Chen Zhilin, see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 961–66, 1001–5; *ECCP*, 97.

29. Brook, "Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony," 33, 41.

30. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ*, 12.27 a–b.

31. Elman, "The Social Roles of Literati in Mid Ch'ing China," 417. See also *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 136.2824.

32. The most useful biography is Zhang Boxing, "[Wang Hongxu] Muzhiming," which is reprinted in *GCQXLZ* and in *Zhengyitang xuji* 7.1a–9a. Zhang Boxing described himself as a lifelong friend and student of Wang Hongxu. See also *ECCP*, 826; *Qingshi* 272.3939–3940; *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 58.16a–24a.

33. "[Wang Hongxu] muzhiming," *Zheng yi tang xu ji*, 7b–8a.

34. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 58.16a.

35. "[Wang Hongxu] muzhiming," 7.4a–b; *Qingshi* 271.3939.

36. "[Wang Hongxu] muzhiming," 7.5a–b, quotes the text of this memorial. See also *Qingshi* 271.3940.

37. The text of Guo's impeachment, "Tecan jinchen," is found in Guo Xiu, *Guo Huaye (Xiu) xiansheng shugao*, 99–107. A punctuated version exists in Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, 1, 799–801. The two versions are substantially the same, although the Xiao version omits several of the introductory sentences. References hereafter refer to the *Shugao* text.

38. "Tecan jinchen," 99–100.

39. "Tecan jinchen," 100–101.

40. *Qingshi*, 268.3924. There are no biographies of He Kai.

41. "Tecan jinchen," 102.

42. Zhang Boxing, "Muzhiming," 7.2b–3a.

43. *Gaozhichun (Qianlong) huangdi shilu* 979.73–74.

44. *Guang kun*, lit., a bare stick or village ruffian.

45. "Tecan jinchen," 102. There is no biography of Yu, though the Taiwanese author Wang Yuewen (b. 1962) has made him a character in his 2009 novel of the Kangxi court, *Da qing xiang guo*. See "Da Qing xiang guo, Songgotu, Yu Ziyi."

46. See Yan, "Elite Objects and Private Collections in Eighteenth-Century China."

47. Shuncheng, written with a different character,承 instead of 城, was an early name for what is today called Xuanwu Men, located in the south central part of Beijing.

48. "Tecan jinchen," 104.

49. "Tecan Jinchen," 105.

50. "Tecan Jinchen," 105–6. *Qingyi*, "criticism of the pure," was a long-standing term for court gossip, particularly younger officials pointing out the faults of their seniors.

51. Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in the Early Qing Dynasty*, 121.

52. It is striking that by the later eighteenth century, some Chinese intellectuals were far more likely to see themselves exclusively as scholars. Those who worked on the imperial *Siku quanshu* project in the 1770s were quite content with a purely scholarly role (see Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, chapter 2). Benjamin Elman has explored this transition in *From Philosophy to Philology*, chapter 3.

EIGHT / SECOND ACTS

1. See Metzger, *The Internal Organization of Ch'ing Bureaucracy*, 314–17.

2. It was possible to cashier an official with the further stipulation that the man could never again be reappointed, but even then, as Metzger (*The Internal Organiza-*

tion of Ch'ing Bureaucracy, 316) notes, reinstatement might be possible. In addition to the mechanisms listed in Metzger, more senior cashiered officials could "greet the emperor's carriage" when it passed through a location near the official's home and plead for reinstatement.

3. *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 69.1501. How much of this work was completed during Jin's lifetime is unclear. The editors of the *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* describe a four-*juan* edition titled *An Elaboration of Memorials on Managing the River* (Zhi he zou xushu). A nine-*juan* version, titled *Strategies for Managing the River* (Zhi he fanglue) was issued during the Yongzheng reign, in 1727. Subsequently this edition was edited by Governor Cui Yingkai and reprinted ca. 1780, and this is the edition reprinted by Guangwen. In his epitaph, Wang Shizhen referred to a twelve-*juan* edition, but he did not provide any publication data.

4. Literally, the virtue of dogs and horses (*qianma zhi rong*). This was an established expression for utter devotion; it had no derogative implication.

5. Quoted in Hou, "Chen Huang zhi he," 80.

6. Retirement from the Qing civil service was relatively rare, and the mechanisms and assumptions involved require further study. See also Guo Xiu's pleas to retire below.

7. Wang Shizhen, "Jin Fu gong muzhiming," 1870.

8. *KXSL* 133.441–43.

9. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 155.15b; *KXSL* 149.652; Perdue, *China Marches West*, 155–59.

10. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 155.15b; *KXSL*, 173.874, 180.924; Perdue, *China Marches West*, 183–90. Moving grain here was quite a logistical feat, and it barely arrived in time. Credit for this feat was given to Yu Chenglong.

11. Wang Shizhen, "Jin Fu gong muzhiming," 1870.

12. Zhaolian, *Xiaoting zalu*, 448.

13. The story of the succession crisis is most vividly told in Silas H. L. Wu, *Passage to Power*, chapters 11–15.

14. *Qingshi* 288.4029; *ECCP*, 430–31.

15. Zhaolian, *Xiaoting zalu*, 448.

16. *Qingshi* 173.3942.

17. See *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 116.2448. The lists of plants and so on are found in *juan* 115–16.

18. Amy Shumei Huang, "Artful Networking," esp. 66–80.

19. *Qingshi* 173.3942.

20. *Qingshi* 172.3937.

21. Chen Qiyuan, *Yongxianjai biji*, quoted in Meng Sen, "Haining Chen jia," 511; see also *GCQXLZ* 12.41a–b.

22. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 12.37b.

23. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 12.38a; Spence, "The Kang-hsi Reign" 176.

24. Meng Sen, *Haining Chen jia*, 528.

25. *Qingshi* 272.3940.

26. *Qingshi* 272.3940.

27. *Qingshi* 273.3939; *ECCP*, 826.

28. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor*, 221.

29. Qian Jue had served as magistrate, vice censor-in-chief, and mayor of Beijing before being appointed in Shandong.

30. *KXSL* 141.566.

31. *Nianpu*, 529.

32. *Nianpu*, 530.

33. *Nianpu*, 530.

34. *Nianpu* claims that in the original sentence, Guo was not allowed to redeem his punishment. *KXSL* 141.566 specifically says that the punishment could be redeemed. As serious as the charge of a private letter was, it seems unlikely to have trumped the traditional prohibition of bodily punishment of a degree-holding official. The *Nianpu* was compiled in 1735, forty-six years after the sentence.

35. Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 190–91.

36. *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*, 1554.

37. *Nianpu*, 531–32, 540–42.

38. *Nianpu*, 532. Formally, Guo's return home was not a result of discipline. Guo was waiting for a new post after his dismissal from the Censorate, and he simply returned home rather than wait for a new assignment.

39. *Nianpu*, 532, 542.

40. *Diary*, 1303.

41. *Nianpu*, 532–35, 542–46.

42. *Nianpu*, 537–38.

43. The *Nianpu* describes these episodes twice, first relating the facts, then reprinting Guo's memorial.

44. For a brief history of the Huguang governor-generalship, see Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 287–92.

45. *Qingshi*, 3937; *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 160.35b.

46. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ* 160.36a.

47. *Benzhuan*, in *GCQXLZ*, 160.37b. Officials who served in the same city, regardless of their positions, were held to be responsible for each other. Nian was a Chinese martial bannerman and the father of Nian Gengyao, who conquered Tibet in the last years of the Kangxi reign and was briefly a dominant presence in the Yongzheng court before being cashiered and exiled.

48. *GCQXLZ*, 37b–38a. Most Qing officials who resigned on account of illness died

shortly after their resignations. Did Guo Xiu's twelve years after being dismissed suggest that illness was a pretext for retirement, that he recognized he was over his head in Huguang?

CONCLUSION

1. On the difficulty of periodizing corruption in the Qing, see Will, "Officials and Money in Late Imperial China."

2. See Doyle, *Venality.*

3. See Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England*.

4. Lawrence Zhang, *Power for a Price*.

5. This approach could be contrasted with the propensity to legislate of his successor, Yongzheng, and the slow elaboration of punishments and fines that occurred during the Qianlong reign.

6. Bao Hengxin, "Kangxi shizhi sixang tanyi," 86, 88. For a list of major corruption prosecutions during the Kangxi reign, see 87–89.

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R. KENT GUY is professor of history emeritus at the University of Washington. He is author of *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* and *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era.*

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