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The Rise of the Southwestern Frontier under the Qing
1640-1800

by

Yingcong Dai

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by R. Kent Guy
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

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Doctoral Dissertation

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Abstract

The Rise of the Southwestern Frontier under the Qing
1640-1800

by Yingcong Dai

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee: Professor R. Kent Guy
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This dissertation is a study of the domestic impact of the Qing dynasty's frontier strategies during the first half of the dynasty (1640-1800). It examines how the vigorous Qing frontier undertakings during this period played a significant role in shaping and maintaining the Qing policies towards the Southwest of China, namely, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, and explores how these policies functioned in the making of the particular socio-economic structure in this region. This study examines the change of the position of the Southwest in the strategic considerations of the Qing authorities. In the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the lack of both economic and strategic importance in the Southwest led the central government to neglect this region. This neglect caused the slow recovery from war devastation in the Southwest. The strategic importance of the Southwest grew with the unfolding of the intricate relationships between the Qing empire and the Tibetan authorities. When the Qing realized at the end of the seventeenth century that Tibetan affairs were central to both settling the Zunghar threat in the Northwest and pacifying the Mongol hordes in Mongolia and Kokonor, they began to build a strong military base area in the Southwest. This study demonstrates that militarization was of great significance to social and economic developments in the region. In order to retain adequate resources in the region to support military buildup and frontier campaigns, the central government deemphasized revenue collection from the

Southwest. The low taxation provided the most important stimulus to the development of the region. Private merchants and regional elites capitalized on this, making the Southwest a major rice exporter from the 1720s to the 1790s. The Qing state encouraged and protected the circulation of rice to the lower Yangtze valley. This attitude of the Qing state towards marketing systems exemplifies its flexibility in directing the economic life of the country.

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INTRODUCTION

For the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), the turn of the nineteenth century stands as a major threshold. Different focuses characterize the periods on either side of this dividing line. During the first half of the Qing dynasty, namely, 1644-1800, one central theme for the Qing empire was their frontier undertakings. Inherited from the preceding Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a series of frontier problems in the northern, northwestern, southwestern and southern frontiers confronted the Qing dynasty. This theme of the early Qing has always attracted great attention from scholars of Qing history.¹ Nevertheless, most of these studies have not tried linking the Qing frontier enterprise with developments in the political, social and economic circumstances of the first half of the Qing dynasty. Frontier issues are treated as if they are isolated from other events, unfolding in isolation from important issues in the domestic arena, such as Qing economic statecraft and the formation of a socio-economic structure.

¹The early scholarship on Chinese frontier history is by Owen Lattimore: Inner Asian Frontiers of China. The most recent work on the history of Chinese frontiers is by Thomas J. Barfield: The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China.

History is a process with multiple dimensions. It is a challenging task to explore interplay between different dimensions and catch the forces which orchestrated the interplay. Since the Qing frontier enterprise was such a significant affair for the Qing state, the Qing central government had to craft policies to facilitate their expansionist efforts. These policies would affect developments in the areas which shouldered more frontier responsibilities. This study attempts to correlate all these dynamics and present a broad picture encompassing Qing diplomatic, political and provincial socio-economic developments. More particularly, this study examines impact of the Qing frontier undertakings on local development in the Southwest, a region which underwent a change of position in Qing strategic considerations during the first half of the Qing dynasty. This study hypothesizes that the shift in the Qing's strategic considerations of the Southwest played an important role in the socio-economic development of the region. The key element which propelled the Qing authorities to change their attitude towards the Southwest was the realization of the critical role Tibet played in both settling the Zunghar threat in the Northwest, and in pacifying the Mongol hordes in Mongolia and Kokonor(Qinghai). While Tibet was the key to the various Mongol problems, the Southwest was the key to Tibet. Thus

the Qing authorities began to build a strong military base area in the Southwest.

The process of militarization was of great significance to the social and economic developments in the Southwest. First and foremost, the central government de-emphasized revenue collection from the region. A frontier economic zone thus took shape along with the military build-up in the region. This mechanism provided much vigor to the development of the region: continuous migration waves into the region were stimulated, the economy, especially the commercial-oriented economy, prospered. With much agricultural production surplus in private hands, this region played the role of a major rice exporter since the late Kangxi period until the 1790s. Surplus rice exported from Sichuan weighed significantly in the country's economic life. The central government took advantage of this situation to equipoise the national economic system.

The concept of the "Southwest" in this study includes the three provinces in the southwestern frontier of China, i.e. Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou. To be sure, it is a bit precarious to group these three provinces into one political entity. As is well-known, the three provinces have represented, throughout history, very different degrees of development in almost all aspects. Nevertheless, it is useful to take them as one as this was how they were grouped together by the Qing state. From the perspective of the Qing

throne, these three provinces were always viewed as having similar features. First, from when the region was conquered by the Qing in the 1660s to the end of the seventeenth century, the region was viewed as the least important by the center - it was remote, bleak and even "uncivilized." Then in the eighteenth century, the region functioned as a frontier stronghold. More emphasis, however, is given to the province of Sichuan in this study, because it was the most important among the three in shouldering the frontier responsibilities during the eighteenth century. Also it was the province which had been affected by the Qing frontier undertakings most fundamentally.

While not attempting to conduct a local history of the three provinces during this one century and a half period, this study treats the region as one entity in strategic terms and highlights the correlations between the dynamics of frontier activities and local developments. It will provide a background for a more detailed study on the region's local history.

Prior to the Qing dynasty, the three provinces had undergone very different experiences. Before the Qing period, Yunnan and Guizhou were hardly governed by the Chinese central government. Most parts of the two provinces were ruled by local chieftains of various non-Han peoples.² During the early Ming dynasty, the Hongwu 洪武 emperor (r.

² The major ethnic peoples in the Southwest are the Miao, Yi (Lolo), Yao, Bai and Tibetan.

1368-1398), the founder of the Ming dynasty, granted Yunnan province to one of his god-sons in order to reinforce the presence of the central authorities in Yunnan.³ After that the Yongle 永樂 emperor (1403-1424) first introduced the reform of "integrating native chieftains into the regular official system (*gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流)"⁴ in Yunnan as well as Guizhou province. However, the Ming efforts were not successful. By the end of the Ming dynasty, the direct control of the central government was still nominal in most parts of the two provinces. Between the two, Guizhou was more loosely controlled. The ecological conditions in the two provinces were not agreeable either. High altitude, rugged topography, poor soils, as well as the year-round miasmas, especially in Guizhou, which was believed to be lethal to human beings, kept Han Chinese settlers away from these two provinces for centuries. By the end of the Ming dynasty, the two provinces were sparsely populated.

Sichuan was an entirely different case. The Chengdu plain (or the Red Basin) in the core of the province, is one of the most productive regions in China. Due to the high degree of humidity in the basin, and the longlasting effects of a water project conducted in the third century B.C. (the Dujiang Dam 都江堰), most parts of the Chengdu plain can be

³This god-son of the Hongwu emperor was Mu Ying 沐英. The Mu family's rule in Yunnan did not end until the Ming dynasty was toppled in 1644. The last prince Mu Tianbo 沐天波 was killed in Burma, as he was a follower of the Yongli emperor. See Chapter I.

⁴About the reform of "integrating local chieftains into the regular official system," see footnote 99 of Chapter IV.

cultivated almost year-round. Since the area was first annexed by the Qin state in 316 B.C., Sichuan had been fully integrated into the Chinese cultural tradition. The area had proved to be strategically important to the central authorities of China proper. Up to the Ming Dynasty, Sichuan had been regarded as an extra reservoir of resources as well as a place of retreat for the central authorities of China, when it was defeated in the heartland. Since the tenth century, parallel to another most productive region in China, the Jiangnan region, Sichuan had become another pillar for the central authorities in terms of its economic affluence and strategic importance.

On the other hand, the geographic features and rich resources in Sichuan also provided favorable conditions for autonomy in Sichuan. This tendency has long been noticed and emphasized by scholars.⁵ Therefore, during periods of disunion, the Southwest was prone to be held by an independent power that could compete with other powers in the Yellow River valley and the lower Yangtze River valley. This scenario had occurred more than once in history. The two most prominent instances were the Shu Kingdom (222-263) of the first disunion period from 220 A.D. to 590, and the states of the Former Shu (907-925) and the Later Shu (925-965) during the interregnum period between the Tang (618-

⁵Chi, Ch'ao-ting, Key Economic Areas in Chinese History: As Revealed in the Development of Public Works for Water-Control, 1963. p. 31-33. See also Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, "Essay on Chinese Geography," *Yin-ping-shih Collected Essays*, Shanghai, 1926, chuan 37, p. 51.

907) and the Song Dynasties (960-1279) from 907 through 960. However, in a unified China, the area would have a significant meaning for the central government.

During the Ming dynasty, Sichuan province did not distinguish itself in its revenue contribution to the state, let alone match that of the Jiangnan region. In other words, Sichuan experienced a degradation in terms its position in the consideration of the central government, assuming a stature, in terms of revenue contribution, closer to its backward neighboring provinces, Yunnan and Guizhou.⁶ One reason for the poor performance of Sichuan was probably the low density of population. At the end of the Yuan dynasty (1264-1368) and the beginning of the Ming, Sichuan had been a battleground between a regional dynasty and the Ming troops. The population loss was very severe. Throughout the Ming dynasty, the province had been gradually repopulated by migrants from other provinces. Nevertheless, the vitality of the economy in the region had not been regained.

At the end of the Ming dynasty, Sichuan was inflicted with what would become a longlasting devastation, first by the Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 Rebellion, then by various pro-Ming warlords and bandits, and finally by the Qing conquest war. When Qing control was eventually set up, the province

⁶According to the official statistics of the Ming dynasty, revenue in kind from Sichuan was only 6.73 per cent in wheat, 3.26 per cent in rice of the total revenue collected from the whole country, not much higher than the other two southwest provinces, Yunnan (0.77 per cent, 0.49 per cent) and Guizhou (below 0.005 per cent, 0.23 per cent).

was in utter ruin and the depopulation was extremely serious. Therefore, when the period under observation by this study starts, the region had no economic attraction for the central government. Neither did it have any strategic meaning.

During the period of Qing conquest and consolidation, i.e. 1644-1673, the Qing's neglect of the Southwest allowed the region to suffer longer from warfare and destruction. Although a major expedition was sent by the throne to the Southwest early in its conquest of China, it did not pacify the region until after Zhang Xianzhong's regime was crushed. In sharp contrast with the Jiangnan area which was the most important revenue contributor of the Qing dynasty, the Southwest received little attention from the central government in restoring the devastated economy and recovering the greatly declined population. Not until the outbreak of the Wu Sangui Rebellion in 1673 and the emergence of a series of frontier crises in the next period, did the central authorities have to rethink their attitude towards the Southwest.

Soon after Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1662-1722) took the reins of government himself in 1672, a great rebellion led by a feudatory in the Southwest shook the incipient Qing regime. The Qing's campaign against Wu Sangui's rebellion from 1673 through 1681 marked the ultimate success of the Qing's conquest of China and the consolidation of the new dynasty.

After the Qing dynasty painstakingly pacified this rebellion, the Qing put political stability, instead of prosperity, as the priority of its policy towards the Southwest. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Qing throne came to realize that the key to resolving a cluster of frontier problems in vast north, northwest and west border areas lay in controlling the Tibetan Lamaist establishment. Therefore, the Qing central government began to pay more attention to the Southwest because of its geographic proximity to Tibet.

During the remainder of the Kangxi period (1696-1722), the increasing importance of Tibetan affairs in Qing diplomacy enhanced the strategic importance of the southwest. Marked by the appointment of a favorite official of Kangxi, Yue Shenglong 岳昇龍, to the Southwest as the chief military official, the Qing's endeavors to build a strategic base in the Southwest began. Yue served in the Southwest for fifteen years, initiating a long-term domination of his family in the Southwest. Correspondingly, the prestige of military personnel was highly elevated in the Southwest. In order to aid the military buildup in the region, the throne continued to sacrifice its revenue income from the region though the economic recovery had been achieved by this time. The lax attitude of the state towards taxation became a great incentive for continuous waves of immigrants to the region and for further economic

development. A frontier economic zone was taking shape. In the last few years of the Kangxi period, the first Qing Tibetan expedition took place to expel the Zunghar invaders from Tibet. It served as a turning point in the relations between the Qing and Tibet and dramatically enhanced the strategic magnitude of the Southwest.

The period of the Yongzheng 雍正 emperor, 1723-1735, was a critical period in the development in the Southwest. The Southwest was one of the key frontier strongholds of the period due to Yongzheng's ambitious frontier operations. It was during this period that the Southwest and the Northwest were officially separated as two strategic zones. The militarization of the region continued and was greatly reinforced owing to Yongzheng's bold policy of "integrating native chieftains into the regular official system" in ethnic minority areas in the Southwest. Meanwhile, the throne began to take advantage of the abundant surplus rice in the Southwest to relieve rice shortages in other regions of the nation. In so doing, the Qing state actually created two systems for administering the economic life of the country: one was the taxation system which drew surplus agricultural products to the state by mandatory levy; the other encouraged market mechanisms to increase the circulation of surplus rice from the Southwest to areas suffering from rice shortages, mainly the Jiangnan area,

which, ironically, was the number one contributor of revenue in the nation.

The succeeding emperor to Yongzheng, the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor (r. 1735-1795) desiring to alter his father's frontier activism, withdrew from the immense frontier undertakings, and focused on various domestic problems. However, he failed to adhere to his intention and had to soon reorient his strategy due to the intensification of frontier emergencies from 1745 to 1776. During this period, the Qing engaged in a series of sizable and expensive frontier campaigns. A turning point in Qing frontier undertakings occurred in the 1750s when Qing armies conquered the Zunghar empire. The most dangerous rival to the Qing empire to control the Tibetan Lamaist establishment was thus eliminated. It also meant a transition would begin for the Southwest. The decades of military campaigns had a strong impact on the socio-economic life of the Southwest. The military buildup had reached a very high point in this period. Not only did the military possess superiority in the local political scene, it also greatly influenced economic developments in the region. The military buildup both stimulated the market for local products and invigorated the long-distance trade networks. The economies of the three provinces in the Southwest became further integrated during this period. Meanwhile, the central government had developed a set of more skillful strategies for manipulating the

surplus rice in the southwest market. The dependency of the state on the rice market of the Southwest had become a reality by this period.

After the second Jinchuan campaign ended in 1776, the strategic focus of the Qing dynasty began to shift from the frontier to the domestic arena. Yet during the remaining period of the Qianlong reign, namely, 1777-1796, two expeditions were launched to fight with the Gurkhas for the security of Tibet. After those two campaigns, came the final settlement of Tibetan affairs. "The Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government" promulgated by the Qing government in 1793 put a concluding mark to the century-long endeavors of the Qing dynasty to place Tibet under its control. After this, the strategic importance of the Southwest began to fade. But the aftermath of the century-long frontier undertakings did not disappear instantly. The effort of the military buildup on society persisted. The corruption of the military and the frontier bureaucracy was another legacy of the frontier expansion for the Qing to deal with. Another major by-product of the Qing low-taxation policy towards the Southwest, the rice market in Sichuan, began to decline due to population pressures. Furthermore, the conclusion of the frontier campaigns left numerous people, who had been hired by the state to transport provisions in the frontier campaigns, jobless. The inadequate disposition of these labors by the Qing state

laid a social base for the great White Lotus rebellion in 1796.

The one-century long Qing frontier undertakings left a significant legacy in the Southwest. The end of the Qianlong period, coincidental with the end of the eighteenth century, was a crucial moment in Qing history. Nevertheless, the succeeding emperors in the nineteenth century did not adjust earlier policies towards the Southwest after it ceased to be a strategic stronghold for the Qing empire. The low taxation rate was retained in the Southwest. Not until the Qing empire was hit by the Taiping Rebellion in the middle of the nineteenth century, did the Qing dynasty turn to the Southwest to squeeze more revenue. The dramatic increase of taxation rates in the Southwest was crucial to the success of the Qing campaign against the Taipings, though with negative consequences: local uprisings were triggered in both Sichuan and Yunnan in the short term and the grievances of the local elites became accumulated which eventually led to their rebellion against the Qing state on the eve of the 1911 Revolution.

Chapter I.

Setting Up A Strategic Map (1644-1673)

1. Haoge's Sichuan Expedition and An Era of Warlords

The Qing dynasty's conquest of China was a protracted process. It had been no easy task for the Manchus to begin exercising their sovereignty over the enormous territory of China. In the spring of 1644, Qing forces entered China proper through the Shanhaiguan 山海關 Pass on the border between Ming's China and Manchuria. In June, 1644, Qing forces took Beijing and put the young Shunzhi 順治 emperor (r. 1644-1661) on the throne, and then started their long-term goal of conquering China. This process did not end until 1662, when Qing troops finally conquered the Southwest and executed the last ruler of the Ming dynasty in Yunnan.

The situation in 1644 was very difficult for China's new conquerors. Before the Qing took Beijing, the Ming capital was seized by an anti-Ming rebel, Li Zicheng 李自成 (1605?-1645),¹ for a couple of months founding a new dynasty called the Da Shun 大順. The last Ming emperor hanged himself upon the fall of the capital to the rebels.²

¹For a detailed study on Li Zicheng and his legendary rebellion against the Ming dynasty, see James B. Parsons, The Peasant Rebellions of the Late Ming Dynasty.

²The best and the most detailed account about the demise of the last emperor of the Ming dynasty, Chongzhen 崇禎, is in Frederic Wakeman Jr.'s Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China, pp. 257-266.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country was overrun by a dozen different groups of rebels. On June 4, 1644, one day before Qing cavalry rushed into the gates of Beijing, Li Zicheng's disorganized armies went on the rampage in Beijing then pulled out. They retreated southwards and changed their cause from rebelling against the Ming to resisting the Qing. Aided by these rebels, the resistance movement against the Qing led by former Ming officials and many of the gentry class was a great obstacle to the Qing's claim of being the new sovereigns of China.

With limited troops and facing so many anti-Qing forces throughout the country, it was certainly not practical to try to quell resistance and revolts everywhere simultaneously. In order to conquer China and consolidate their governance subsequently, the Qing authorities had to maneuver their limited military forces efficiently. In observing how the Qing acted in the years following the conquest, it seems that the Qing authorities divided the whole country into four groups on their strategic map: first, special regions which were politically important to the dynasty, such as Zhili province in which the capital, Beijing, was located; second, regions financially vital to the dynasty such as the Jiangnan 江南 region (including Jiangnan province, Zhejiang province, Jiangxi province and part of Anhui province); third, the secondary regions which were financially important but less crucial than the second

category, such as the remaining provinces which had the responsibility to submit the "tribute grain;"³ and the fourth, remote regions which were the least important to the Qing dynasty, and thus only became targets of the Qing conquest later, such as the Southwest, i.e. Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou. The situation of limited troops and numerous anti-Qing forces forced the Qing dynasty to adopt different policies and strategies towards these various regions which had different role to play in the Qing politics.

After Shunzhi was enthroned in Beijing and ruled under the guidance of his regent Dorgon 多爾袞(1612-1650), the Qing authorities chose to concentrate on the strategically important Shaanxi province in the Northwest, and the financially important Jiangnan region in the Southeast. Shaanxi was traditionally regarded as a stronghold on the northwestern frontier which faced the Mongol tribes and Muslims in the north and northwest. Shaanxi was also the area from which the great Li Zicheng Rebellion originated. Jiangnan was a political center of the Ming dynasty. But more importantly, it was the most productive region in the country. A great portion of the Ming's revenues were

³The tribute grain was part of the land tax, which was initiated in the Ming dynasty. Only a few provinces had the obligation to submit the tribute grain to the state. There were five provinces in the Ming which paid the tribute grain and eight provinces in the Qing (Jiangsu, Anhui, Shandong, Henan, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hubei and Hunan). The Jiangnan area shouldered the greatest share of the tribute grain during both the Ming and Qing period. During the Qianlong period (1766), 3,230,220 dan out of the total amount tribute grain, 4,787,763 dan were from the Jiangnan area (Liang Fangzhong, *Zhongguo Lidai Hukou, Tiandi, Tianfu Tongji*, p. 396).

collected from the Jiangnan region.⁴ Meanwhile, it was the center of Confucian culture, a region producing plenty of scholar-officials for generations. It was in this region that the anti-Qing movement was best organized and the most committed. Therefore, in the first stage of the Qing conquest, Shaanxi and the Jiangnan region were the main targets.

In late 1644, a Qing expedition took Shaanxi. In the spring of 1645, a Han bannerman, Meng Qiaofang 孟喬芳, was appointed Governor-General of Shaanxi and the Three Borders (Shaanxi San Bian 陝西三邊).⁵ He endeavored to pacify the region and tried to push southward to Sichuan from Shaanxi, but he never achieved any substantial progress towards his second goal. At the southern front, the Qing concentrated their crack forces in subjugating the Jiangnan area. On May 20, 1645, Qing forces led by the Imperial Prince Dodo 多鐸 captured Yangzhou 揚州 after having defeated the most tenacious resistance of the Ming armies. Then on June 8, Qing forces were greeted in Nanjing by the renegade Ming officials. Subsequently, the Qing troops crushed strong resistance by the Ming armies and the gentry-led popular resistance movement in Jiangnan and occupied the whole region.

⁴During the Ming dynasty, the tax burden of the Jiangnan area was already fairly heavy. It is widely believed that the Qing took over the Ming system in tax collection.

⁵*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 15, pp. 27b-28a.

While the Southwest was put in the least important position in terms of its strategic and economic significance to the Qing dynasty, in 1645, there was a reason for the new rulers of China to divide their limited forces for an expedition to the Southwest. The reason is that another dangerous rebel, who had pretensions to compete with the Qing dynasty for the rule of China, was using the Southwest as his base. He even founded a dynasty called the Great West (*Da Xi* 大西) in Chengdu 成都, the capital of the province of Sichuan. This rebel was Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 (1606?-1647).⁶

Like Li Zicheng, Zhang Xianzhong also had a long history of rebellion. During his prolonged and capricious rebel career, Zhang had at one time cooperated with a major rebel leader, Gao Yingxiang 高迎祥, under whom Li Zicheng had been a general. As a military professional and a man of ambition, Zhang was not at ease under the control of a person whose background was no more noble than his. Their cooperation split quickly. In early 1644, Zhang intruded into Sichuan. He took Chengdu in September of that year. Soon after, he enthroned himself and called his regime the Great West.⁷ Although it has traditionally been played down that the operations of Zhang's rebels were crucial in toppling the Ming Dynasty, the existence of the Great West

⁶For Zhang's early life, see Parsons, pp. 17-19.

⁷Parsons, pp. 156-160. Parsons thinks that the authority of the Great West was limited to the core area of Sichuan centered on Chengdu. Even within Sichuan province, opposition forces to the Great West existed. Parsons, p. 172.

regime in Sichuan did in fact assist the triumphant advance of Li Zicheng's forces in north China.

Threatened by his potential to compete with the Qing dynasty, Qing authorities had to take Zhang Xianzhong and his small dynasty in Sichuan seriously. On January 6, 1646, the Qing court sent its first expedition to Sichuan under the command of Heluohui 何洛會, a Manchu general, who was designated as "the General Pacifying the West (*Ding Xi Da Jiangjun* 定西大將軍).⁸ This was the first move by the Qing to subjugate the Southwest. Nevertheless, the Qing authorities might have felt that the commander-in-chief of this expedition was not prestigious enough to show the Qing's determination to conquer Sichuan.⁹ Actually the expedition never reached Sichuan, having stopped in Shaanxi to fight bandits. Two months later, on March 8, 1646, the court sent another expedition led by one of the most outstanding military commanders of the Qing, the Prince Su (*Su Wang* 肅王) Haoge 豪格 (1609-1648), the elder brother of the Shunzhi emperor.¹⁰ Haoge was entitled "the General Pacifying the Remote (*Jing Yuan Da Jiangjun* 靖遠大將軍)" for the expedition.¹¹

⁸*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 21, pp. 18a-b.

⁹Heluohui used to be a subordinate of Haoge. But he was instrumental in framing Haoge, which led to a temporary deprivation of Haoge's princeness, shortly before the Qing forces entered China proper. Heluohui was executed when the Shunzhi emperor rehabilitated Haoge after Dorgon died in 1650. See Heluohui's biography in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 246.

¹⁰For Haoge's biographies, see *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 219; *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 185-186; and Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 280-281.

¹¹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 23, pp. 9a-10b.

In his early years, Haoge had distinguished himself by conducting many successful campaigns against the Mongols, the Ming forces and expeditions to Korea before and after the Qing entered China proper. As the eldest son of Abahai (Huangtaiji 皇太極) (1592-1643) and a distinguished general, Haoge was the most likely person for the throne after Abahai died in 1643. But his ambitious uncle, Dorgon who was actually three years younger than Haoge, chose his five-year old brother Fulin 福臨 as the new Shunzhi emperor, and made himself the regent. Obviously, the relations between Dorgon and Haoge were not smooth. However, at this point, the appointment of Haoge to head the expedition against Zhang Xianzhong in Sichuan can only be explained by the Qing's desire to use their best force to wipe out this serious menace to the dynasty. It would not be a conspiracy of Dorgon to banish his political rival from capital. In fact, in 1644, Dorgon conferred on Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612-1678)¹², a crucial figure in introducing Qing forces into China proper and a trusted Chinese renegade by the Qing, the title "Prince who Pacifies the West (*Ping Xi Wang* 平西王)." He was ordered to station his forces on the border between Shaanxi and Sichuan.

In the edict conferring on Haoge the title of "the General of Pacifying the Remote," the Qing authorities

¹²Wu Sangui later staged a great rebellion against the Qing dynasty in the Kangxi period. See Section 1 of Chapter II. For his biographies, see *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 474; *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 314-315; and Hummel, pp. 877-880.

instructed him to emphasize on controlling the province of Sichuan, and building up a base for the Qing military forces, instead of pursuing the remaining rebels to other provinces once they were smashed. The court also sent Haoge three hundred and four seals for local officials in Sichuan.¹³ Haoge's expedition, however, ended too soon to achieve the goal of controlling the province, though he did kill Zhang and obliterate the Great West regime.

Zhang was a conceited rebel. As a consequence, he lacked accurate insight into the current situation. He was confident that his power was strong enough to establish himself in China's political arena. When he entered Sichuan, his pretension was to build a base area, then to conquer the whole country.¹⁴ In the beginning of 1646, Zhang announced a new reign title meaning Grand Prosperity, and said that he had received an omen from Heaven that he would become the sovereign of the entire world. And he granted new titles to his four sons, and enfeoffed them in the provinces that he wanted to conquer.¹⁵ He did not prepare for confrontation with Qing forces.

Expecting to pacify the whole country as peacefully as possible, the Qing first persuaded Zhang to surrender to the Qing by sending an edict on January 6, 1646, when the first

¹³Shizu Shilu, vol. 23, pp. 9a-b.

¹⁴ When Zhang was asked his intention in taking Sichuan, he answered: "I take Sichuan for a base for the time being, then I will launch an expedition to pacify the whole country." Yanyun Nang 欽定四庫全書 vol. 2, cited in Yuan Tingdong, Zhang Xianzhong Lunzhuan, p. 91.

¹⁵A. Launay, Histoire des missions de Chine: Se-tchoan. p. 8.

expedition under Hehuiluo was ordered.¹⁶ This should have been taken by Zhang as a signal of appeasement. Not surprisingly, he did not respond to it. One morning in the autumn of 1646 when he heard that Qing forces led by Haoge and Wu Sangui were approaching Sichuan from the north, he was suddenly awakened to the realization that the Qing regime would not allow any form of power-sharing. In October, 1646, Zhang decided to abandon Sichuan and to head towards Shaanxi province.¹⁷ Strategically, this decision was not a wise one, for he was bound to confront Haoge and his crack force on his way to Shaanxi. However, before Zhang headed north with some thousand troops, he made an arrangement which would have a longlasting impact on the Southwest after he himself was dead. He divided his remaining armies into four divisions led by four of his key generals and ordered them to operate independently.¹⁸ He thus sowed the seeds of warlordism in the Southwest.

On February 1, 1647, during his march towards Shaanxi, Zhang encountered Haoge's expedition in Xichong 西充 county of north Sichuan. In the fighting, Zhang was hit by an arrowhead. He died immediately and his forces were defeated by Haoge's troops.¹⁹ With the death of the rebel chief, the subordinates of Zhang were permanently divided.

¹⁶*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 21, pp. 18b-19a.

¹⁷Parsons, pp. 167-178.

¹⁸They were Li Dingguo 李定國, Sun Kewang 孫可望, Liu Wenxiu 劉文秀, and Ai Nengqi 艾能奇.

¹⁹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 29, pp. 8b-9a.

Haoge reported to the Qing court in the autumn of 1647 that he had cleared away the rebels in Sichuan and that the province had been pacified²⁰. The Qing throne held a ceremony celebrating the pacification. Months after that, Haoge was ordered to return to Beijing, leaving Wu Sangui and the Governor of Sichuan Li Guoying 李國英 to take charge of all affairs in the region. When Haoge arrived in Beijing in the spring of 1648, he was received by the throne with a splendid imperial banquet.²¹ Nevertheless, one month after his return, in March, 1648, Haoge was charged with some insignificant misconducts and was given the death penalty.²² Although the punishment was reduced to life imprisonment, Haoge died in jail in 1648 at the age of thirty-nine. He was not rehabilitated until after Dorgon died in 1650.

The case against Haoge was obviously a continuity of power struggle between him and the regent Dorgon. But one crime he was charged with was not without some ground: he cheated the throne with reporting on his pacification of Sichuan in 1647. Haoge's claim that Sichuan was pacified was too premature. Sichuan was not fully controlled by the Qing authorities for another dozen years after Haoge's assertion. Another truth concealed in Haoge's early triumph was that the withdrawal of his troops from the Chengdu plain was forced by the fact that it was simply impossible to get

²⁰*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 33, pp.19b-20a.

²¹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 36, p. 8a.

²²*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 37, pp. 14b-15b.

enough provisions from the area to feed his soldiers and horses. The provisions left by Zhang Xianzhong in Chengdu had been robbed by one former Ming official Yang Zhan 楊展.²³ Also it is believed that the province was suffering from a famine in that year.²⁴ One branch of the Qing army which had been sent to east Sichuan to fight with Yang Zhan had been out of supplies for eight months. Soldiers killed all their horses and mules for food. And they killed every enemy they caught and ate their flesh.²⁵ To add one more difficulty to this, the transportation of such a huge number of troops, especially cavalry in the mountainous region of Sichuan was very inefficient and difficult. In early 1648, the emperor ordered that a member of imperial family, Neikun 內坤, be dismissed from his office and be whipped one hundred times because he had complained overtly about the hardship of climbing mountains on foot in the Sichuan campaign.²⁶ It is unclear whether the decision for Dorgon to summon Haoge back from the Southwest was related to their power struggle. But it seems that Haoge requested this triumph himself for he emphasized in his reports that his task of pacifying Sichuan had been fulfilled.

²³Xie Guozhen, *Nan Ming Shilue*, pp. 178-179.

²⁴Fu Diyi, *Wuma Xiansheng Jinian*, p. 117; Xie Guozhen, *Nan Ming Shilue*, p. 179; Robert E. Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," pp. 48-51.

²⁵Regional Commander Ma Huabao's 馬化豹 report, in *Ming Qing Shiliao Bing Bian*, vol. 7.

²⁶*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 36, p. 11b.

If Haoge did request to return to Beijing, he had reasons to do so. What Haoge witnessed and experienced in Sichuan was utterly disappointing. The extent of depopulation and destruction caused by the rebellions in the late Ming period were far more serious than the Qing rulers expected. Having been briefly ruled by Zhang Xianzhong's Great West regime, the province had suffered from warfare and alleged massacres perpetrated by Zhang. The validity of the legend about Zhang's massacres has been questioned by many historians.²⁷ As is the case with many myths, this one is certainly an exaggeration while containing some historical truth. However, the cruelty of Zhang is not in question.²⁸ The dubious aspect of the myth is whether Zhang

²⁷The leading work of this kind is Hu Zhaoxi's Zhang Xianzhong Tu Shu Kaobian, Jian Lun Huquang Tian Sichuan.

²⁸There are many first-hand accounts of Zhang's personality that confirm this assertion. Portuguese Jesuit Gabriel de Magalhães, who was in Sichuan when Zhang took Chengdu, wrote: Zhang "began his rule with such liberality, justice, and magnificence--by which he captivated all hearts--that many mandarins, famous both in civic as in military affairs, whom fear was keeping concealed, left their hideouts and flew to his side. And surely he was so equipped by nature with such virtues that had not clemency been wanting and unbelievable wrath and more than beastly savagery and unhuman cruelty taken its place in his soul, he had seemed made king by nature." (Cited in Parsons, Peasant Rebellions, p. 171). Recorded in Histoire des Missions de Chine: Se-tchoan is the following: "Malgré ces témoignages de sympathie, le caractère du tyran était si cruel, ses colères si fréquentes, que les prêtres étrangers craignaient toujours de se voir frappés par lui. Cette crainte n'était pas chimérique. Un eunuque, gardien de la bibliothèque, les ayant accusés d'avoir emporté des livres chez eux, le tyran leur adressa de telles menaces qu'ils se crurent à leur dernière heure. Cependant ils ne se déconcertèrent pas et prouvèrent qu'ils étaient victimes d'une calomnie. Aussitôt, T'Zhang, tournant sa colère contre l'eunuque et ses amis, les fit décapiter". (p.7) The same book also records: "Un autre jour, un volume de la bibliothèque des missionnaires lui étant tombé entre les mains, il en demanda l'explication; c'était un livre de théologie. Les ouvriers évangéliques lui en traduisirent plusieurs passages qu'il jugea admirables. 'Mais, dit-il, cette loi n'est pas

had the capacity and the time to kill so many so that the whole province was deserted. According to reliable accounts of two Jesuits who were trapped in the city of Chengdu throughout Zhang's short regime, the tragedy started when Zhang heard the news that Haoge was approaching his capital. When he realized that his dream to be a monarch of China was being shattered by the sweeping advance of Qing forces, the deep frustration of the rebel chief turned to a desperate decision to destroy the region where he had established his small kingdom. It was from this moment that the bloody massacre started.²⁹ As popular sayings tell, Zhang killed

faite pour les habitants du Se-tchoan, qui préfèrent les sabres et les lances à la doctrine divine. C'est pourquoi je suis envoyé par le Seigneur du ciel et de la terre pour châtier les bonzes et les autres méchantes gens, qui voulaient non seulement vous chasser de la province, mais encore vous tuer.' Et pour se conformer de plus en plus à ce qu'il disait être sa destinée, Zhang fit périr les 2000 bonzes que renfermait Tchen-tou" (ibid. pp. 7-8). On another occasion, Zhang ordered the killing of all Christian refugees seeking protection in the residence of the two missionaries except two domestics. As a result, only two young men survived; they were passed off as the adopted sons of the two missionaries. All others were killed, including three children, aged 14, 10 and 8 (ibid. p. 8).

²⁹There were two Jesuits Louis Buglio (1606-1682) and Gabriel De Magalhaens (1609-1678) in Sichuan when Zhang entered the province. Buglio was born in Sicily. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1622, and came to China in 1637. His Chinese name is Li Leisi (利類思). De Magalhaens was a Portuguese. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1626. He went to Goa to teach philosophy in 1634 and arrived in China in 1640. His Chinese name is An Wensi (安文思). He was on good terms with Jean Adam Schall von Bell when he was in Beijing later. Buglio went to Sichuan in 1640. De Magalhaens went there one year later to assist Buglio in missionary affairs. Both Buglio and De Magalhaens were introduced to Zhang Xianzhong by a friend who had been a Ming official and then the chief of the Ministry of Rites of Zhang's regime. They were brought to Zhang and had opportunities to observe the new monarch and to witness the massacre of 1646. According to them, Zhang was very cruel and he lost his temper very often. Although he treated the missionaries well, granting them house, clothing, presents and so on, letting them make spheres for him before the approach of the Qing army, the two missionaries had already experienced fear constantly by living near this

indiscriminately. Many innocent people in the province fell as his victims. Some people claimed that all the people in the province had been killed by this monster.³⁰

If the Jesuits' accounts are reliable: Zhang commenced massive killing only when he was under the threat of the approaching Qing forces, which would leave him with only a couple of months during which the massacre occurred. Zhang withdrew from Chengdu in October, 1646. He died in January, 1647 on his way to Shaanxi province. It was simply impossible to kill all three million people in the province as many records allege.³¹ As a matter of fact, the jurisdiction of Zhang's kingdom did not encompass the whole of Sichuan province. The area under his direct control was limited to the Chengdu plain, the core area of the

tyranny. The one important character of the rebel chief was caprice. Sometimes Zhang showed intimacy towards the missionaries, but sometimes treated them as foreigners, traitors and spies, coming to explore the country under the cloak of religion. Their accounts revealed that it was after Zhang received the report that the Qing army had entered the province that he assembled his subordinates and proposed to kill all people in Chengdu. He also ordered the death of his 280 concubines and all women taken by his officials and soldiers. Zhang took the two Jesuits with him as he headed towards Shensi province. After Zhang was dead in January, 1647, they were taken by the Qing forces, and then sent to Peking. De Magalhaens died in 1678 and Buglio died in 1682 (A. Launay, Histoire des missions de Chine: Se-tchoan, pp. 3-13). There is also a lengthy account of Zhang Xianzhong's massacres in Guluodong (F. Gourdin)'s Sheng Jiao Ru Chuan Ji (pp. 14-52). It was based mainly upon the writings by those two missionaries.

³⁰The accurate number of the victims of Zhang's massacre is impossible to know. The estimations are very diverse. Entenmann holds that the depopulation was greatest in the provincial capital and the adjacent areas (p. 43).

³¹Some accounts even provided obviously incredible figures of the victims of massacre. For instance, in Shu Bi, the accumulated figure is 60 billion, more than the total population of the Ming dynasty. Later this figure was taken by the official Ming Shi.

province.³² Pro-Ming forces still occupied some strategic places in the province. For instance, the second largest city, Chongqing 重慶, was recaptured by a Ming official Zeng Ying 曾英 in the spring of 1645. And the city of Zunyi 遵義 remained in the hands of Ming officials throughout Zhang's regime.³³ Therefore, the area affected by Zhang's cruel decision was not beyond the Chengdu plain, and, perhaps, the areas along his march to the north. As many point out, many records of witnesses and contemporaries which were published during the later periods of the Qing dynasty, were colored with political statements, deliberately exaggerating some facts, while concealing others.

Nevertheless, when Haoge marched into Sichuan from the north down to Chengdu, he took the route Zhang's armies had just moved through, the areas affected by Zhang's final slaughters and destruction. When Haoge took the capital of Sichuan, Chengdu, the city had been destroyed. He could not even stay there for too long due to the difficulties of collecting sufficient provisions and other supplies. So he retreated north and had his troops stationed in Baoning 保寧, a city close to the border between Sichuan and Shaanxi. Subsequently, Baoning became the temporary capital of Sichuan. Before Haoge returned to Beijing, one of his subordinates, Li Guoying, was appointed Governor of Sichuan. Li was therefore stationed in Baoning to administer the

³²Parsons, p. 172.

³³Entenmann, pp. 37-38.

limited Qing territory in north Sichuan and to fight with the various remaining anti-Qing forces in the south. Not until 1659 did Li Guoying move his bureau to Chengdu. After Haoge left the western front, a military officer in Shaanxi, Jiang Xiang 姜瓖, rebelled against the Qing.³⁴ Suddenly the situation in Shaanxi and Shanxi intensified. The emergency immediately drew the paramount attention of the central government. Wu Sangui and Li Guohan had to go to Shaanxi to quash this rebellion. The Southwest was actually abandoned to local warlords and bandits.

Zhang Xianzhong died too early to carry out thorough destruction and depopulation. Zhang's massacre was only a prelude to the long-lasting devastation in the province. The Qing central government's strategy in conquering China was certainly a contributing factor to the devastation of the Southwest. After Haoge crushed the Great West regime and killed Zhang Xianzhong, Qing forces did not take the chance to occupy the province, and push on to Yunnan and Guizhou. On the contrary, Haoge and Wu Sangui withdrew from the province. Thereafter the Qing forces headed by Wu Sangui, the Governor of Sichuan, Li Guoying, et al had only controlled some territory in north Sichuan, which could be seen as an auxiliary measure to the consolidation of Shaanxi province. While Li Guoying took Baoning as his temporary capital, Wu Sangui made Hanzhong 漢中 of Shaanxi province, a

³⁴About Jiang Xiang's rebellion, see Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, pp. 805-819.

strategic point on the border of Sichuan and Shaanxi, their base for many years. Before 1653, there was no firm determination on the Qing side to fully control the region. The absence of Qing authorities in the Southwest left a power vacuum where was filled by local warlords and bandits.

The withdrawal of the Qing forces invited the rise of local warlords. As a matter of fact, the elimination of Zhang Xianzhong's kingdom by Haoge cleared away a fierce rival for many a former Ming officials in the region. They took advantage of both the withdrawal of the Qing forces and the demise of Zhang Xianzhong to claim their own control over the territory. Thus the region was divided among rival warlords and bandits.³⁵ Warfare, chaos and terror loomed large in the region. Although most of them upheld the anti-Qing banner, and some of them kept ambiguous connections with the Southern Ming regime centered in Guilin 桂林,³⁶ it has to be pointed out that these warlords were less motivated by loyalty to the Ming dynasty than by pure self-interest. Although the time span of the anti-Qing movement

³⁵The origins of the bandits were diversified. But some of them were originally affiliated with Zhang Xianzhong and Li Zicheng. The chief leaders of these branches of Li Zicheng were Li Guo 李過, Kao Yigong 高一功, Liu Tichun 劉體純, Yuan Zongdi 袁宗第, Hao Yaoqi 郝搖旗 and Li Laiheng 李來亨.

³⁶This Southern Ming regime was established on December 24, 1646 in Zhaoqing 肇慶, Guangdong province. The grandson of the Wanli 萬曆 emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Youlang 朱由榔, was enthroned as the Yongli 永歷 emperor. Later the capital was moved to Guilin, Guangxi province. After Sun Kewang surrendered to the Guilin regime, he moved the Yongli emperor to his domain in the Southwest. About the Southern Ming regime in Guilin, see Lynn Struve, The Southern Ming, 1644-1662, Chapter 6, "Third Defeat and Standoff: The Far Southwest and Southeast," pp. 139-166; and Chapter 7, "Last Stands, Last Defeat," pp. 167-195.

in the Southwest was rather long, only secondary to the Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 family's resistance to the Qing based on Taiwan,³⁷ there was no comparison between theirs and the short-lived yet devoted resistance movement in the Jiangnan region.³⁸ Many leading warlords in the Southwest were opportunists and short-sighted, as Claudine Lombard-Salmon points out:

Since the Ming dynasty lost its power in 1644, in the whole south of China emerged a throng of adventurers, who were often the former Ming military, and established themselves as lesser local lords upholding the cause of "the Southern Ming." They were often motivated by their personal interests other than conviction [to the cause of the Southern Ming]. This is why there were so many battles and rivalries inside the same group of the supporters to the Ming order and why they eventually failed.³⁹

The durability of the anti-Qing movement in the Southwest could be better explained by the reluctance of the central government to make a determined effort, or more precisely by the Qing's strategy of differentiation in conquering the different parts of China. Lynn Struve also notices that the lack of interest and ability is the key

³⁷Zheng was son of a pirate in the late Ming period. He was granted the last name of the Ming royal house when his father surrendered to the Ming government. After the fall of the Ming dynasty, he committed himself to the Southern Ming court and defied the Qing regime for eighteen years before his death in 1662. In 1659, he conducted an offensive from the sea via the Yangtze River to Nanking. And in 1661 he led his army to drive the Dutch out of Taiwan and made Taiwan his base. His son and grandson continued to fight with the Qing forces until 1683. During the Shunzhi and the early Kangxi periods, the Zheng force constituted a great threat to the Qing regime, more particularly, a great threat to the most productive region -- the Jiangnan region.

³⁸About the Jiangnan resistance movement, see Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, pp. 644-680.

³⁹Claudine Lombard-Salmon, Un exemple d'acculturation chinoise: la province du Gui Zhou au XVIII^e siècle, p. 55.

reason to explain the late-in-coming conquest of the Southwest. She characterizes the situation in the Southwest during 1652-1655 as the following:

... Through all of this, the rebels-cum-loyalists had not been able to hold any appreciable amount of Ch'ing territory. Nevertheless, the Ch'ing, who at this time seem to have had no good sources of intelligence on what was happening in the Southwest, were stunned by this burst of enemy activity, and their losses were very painful... They came to realize more acutely how tenuous their control was in these regions. So for some time after this, the Ch'ing stuck mainly to consolidating their position and truly pacifying the lands they held in Szu-ch'uan, Hu-kuang, and Liang-Kuang, adopting a wait-and-see attitude towards the even wilder far Southwest.⁴⁰

Actually, the Qing's hold of Sichuan was only limited to the north part until the late 1650s. The wait-and-see attitude of the Qing dynasty unwittingly fostered the rampant spread of slaughter and terror generated by a variety of local military lords. It is plausible to say that the Qing did adopt a policy of "wait-and-see" towards the Southwest, including Yunnan, Guizhou provinces, and the south part of Sichuan while they focused on conquering and consolidating other more important areas.

If the appointment of Haoge to head the Sichuan campaign exemplified the attention of the Qing dynasty towards the region due to the threat by Zhang Xianzhong, the early departure of Haoge from Sichuan marked the disillusion of the central government about the worthiness of taking the Southwest during the early stages of their conquest of

⁴⁰Lynn A. Struve, Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws, pp. 149-150.

China. Haoge must have brought the information on the devastation in the province to the central government which would reconfirm the strategy of the new regime to pay more attention to the Southeast instead of the Southwest at this crucial early stage. Therefore, in the following four years, no major Manchu general was sent to the Southwest. Since Haoge's departure, the Qing had primarily relied on Wu Sangui to take the lead in the conquest of the enormous Southwest including Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou as well as Guangxi province. Years after Haoge's expedition, there was not much progress made in expanding Qing territory and what Wu Sangui and others did was no more than dig-in by the border between Shaanxi and Sichuan, leaving the vast Southwest to bandits and the warlords of Yongli's Southern Ming regime. A renewed effort to conquer the Southwest did not start until 1653, when the situation in the Southwest took a turn due to the surrender of a major rebel chief, Sun Kewang 孫可望 (d. 1660), who had been a chief general of Zhang Xianzhong's, to the Southern Ming regime in Guilin headed by the Yongli emperor Zhu Youlang.

2. The Qing's Pacification and Restoration

The existence of the Southern Ming court in Guilin, capital of Guangxi province, made the situation in the Southwest more complicated. From 1647 to 1652, some former Ming officials and heads of local militia divided the territories in eastern, southern and western Sichuan. They

possessed some thousands of soldiers respectively and asked for titles and posts from the Southern Ming court in Guilin. Yet there were numerous battles among this horde of warlords to gain more territory and resources.⁴¹ Up to 1652, most of Sichuan was divided among these warlords. The Qing forces under Wu Sangui occasionally made some offensives into the southern parts of Sichuan, taking advantage of the fighting among the Southern Ming warlords. Qing armies once occupied Chengdu, Chongqing and Xuzhou 叙州. Nevertheless, in 1652, the Qing operations in the Southwest suffered a major setback because of an action taken by a former subordinate of Zhang Xianzhong, Sun Kewang.

Since Zhang Xianzhong's death, his four generals, Sun Kewang 孫可望, Li Dingguo 李定國, Liu Wenxiu 劉文秀 and Ai Nengqi 艾能奇, and some other powerful chiefs had continued their resistance to the Qing dynasty. They kept a loose cooperative relationship among themselves, roving in the Southwest and sometimes even Guangdong and Hunan. And they also fought each other from time to time. Among the four, Sun Kewang was the strongest. Often he played the role of coordinator for the remaining forces of Zhang Xianzhong. In 1652, Sun surrendered to the Southern Ming court in Guilin and thus put the exiled court under his control owing to his

⁴¹The major warlords were Li Zhanchun 李占春, Tan Wen 譚文, Tan Hong 譚弘, Tan Yi 譚誼, Yang Zhan 楊展, Yu Dahai 于大海, Yuan Tao 袁韜, Wu Dading 武大定.

military power.⁴² His submission greatly enhanced the strength of the tottering Southern Ming regime, and the territory controlled by the Southern Ming was suddenly enlarged. Guangxi, south Hunan, and most parts of Sichuan once again fell into the hands of the Southern Ming regime.

This incident was a turning point in the Qing conquest of the Southwest. The deterioration of affairs in the Southwest affirmed the Qing determination to launch some forceful campaigns to recover the Southwest. With most of the country now under Qing control, the government could concentrate its attention and resources on the Southwest. In 1652, the Shunzhi emperor appointed already retired Hong Chengchou 洪承畴 (1593-1665)⁴³ as Governor-General of Huguang, LiangGuang, Yunnan and Guizhou. Shunzhi again designated Prince Nikan 尼堪 as "the General Who Pacifies the Remote (Dingyuan Da Jiangjun 定遠大將軍)," and ordered him to push into the Southwest to suppress Sun. Meanwhile,

⁴²Before 1652, Sun and other former subordinates of Zhang Xianzhong had already had contacts and some kind of relations with the Southern Ming court in Guilin. But these relations were a bargaining ground for Sun and his like. The action of 1652 was different: he had decided to tie his interest with the destiny of the Southern Ming regime.

⁴²Sun had previously requested for the title from the Yungli emperor of the Southern Ming of Guangxi. But his request was rejected. Since 1653, the Yungli emperor was under a *de facto* control of Sun at Anlong, Kuichow province. See Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, p. 990, footnote 5; p. 1030; Struve, The Southern Ming, 1644-1662, pp. 73-75, 86-88, and 116-119.

⁴³Hong Chengchou was the highest Ming official who surrendered to the Qing before the Qing forces entered China proper. He was captured by Qing troops in 1642 as the Governor-General of Northeastern Zhili and Liaodong. He surrendered subsequently and was made a bannerman. After the Qing dynasty was established in Beijing, he was appointed Grand Secretary.

Wu Sangui, Li Guohan et al were still the major forces in the Southwest campaign. Wu Sangui was also granted enormous power in the campaign. Nevertheless, the Southwest campaign went on for another six to seven years. One of the reasons was the difficulty in providing supplies in the rugged southwestern mountainous areas.

In 1657, the conflicts between Sun Kewang and Li Dingguo became intense. The two mavericks had a battle, and Sun was defeated by Li. At this point, Sun, a capricious person, chose to surrender to the Qing, thus changing the whole situation in the Southwest. From this moment on, the Qing forces began to gain the upper hand in the campaign. Their advances were greatly accelerated. In 1658, the Qing recovered two important cities in Sichuan: Chongqing and Zunyi,⁴⁴ and entered Guizhou from three directions. In the early 1659, Wu Sangui et al pushed into Kunming 昆明, the capital of Yunnan and defeated Li Dingguo there. The Yongli emperor of the Southern Ming regime fled into Burma.

In 1659, the emperor ordered that the three Chinese princes, Wu Sangui, Shang Kexi 尚可喜⁴⁵ and Geng Jimao 耿繼茂⁴⁶ be stationed respectively in the three provinces: Yunnan, Guangdong and Sichuan.⁴⁷ In the following year, Geng Jimao was transferred from Sichuan to Guangxi.⁴⁸ Thence the

⁴⁴Zunyi was in the province of Sichuan from the Ming dynasty to the early Qing. Later it was changed into Guizhou province.

⁴⁵Shang was the Prince Who Pacifies the South (*Ping Nan Wang* 平南王).

⁴⁶Geng was the Prince Who Tranquilizes the South (*Jing Nan Wang* 靖南王).

⁴⁷*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 124, pp. 14b-15a.

⁴⁸*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 137, pp. 7b-8a.

domination of the three feudatories in the south and Southwest was formed. Shortly after Xuanye 玄燁 (r. 1662-1722) was enthroned as the Kangxi emperor, in the spring of 1662, Wu Sangui led Qing forces into Burma and caught Zhu Youlang. The last emperor of the Ming was soon executed in Kunming.⁴⁹

While the Qing forces continued their campaigns in Yunnan and Guizhou, a reinforced offensive was launched to recover Sichuan from the hands of the warlords and bandits. The protracted warfare in Sichuan did not completely end until 1664 when the last bandit chief Li Laiheng 李來亨 and all his family hanged themselves out of desperation.⁵⁰ Thus came the conclusion of all warfare in mainland China brought about by the Ming-Qing transition. This was twenty years after the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1644.

More than two decades of warfare had a long-lasting impact on the region. First, there was a serious population loss. Second, the economy was destroyed. The region was left in an utter ruin. In some areas of Sichuan province, jungle animals such as tigers, boars, and deer, roamed in the places which had been populous and prosperous. There are some records saying that tigers ate the remaining few human beings and new immigrants, becoming a local scourge. Even

⁴⁹Shengzu Shilu, vol.6, pp. 11a-b. For the last days of the Yongli emperor, see Lynn A. Struve Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tiger's Jaws, Chapter 15, "'There Was Only Me': A Boy Eunuch Sees the Bitter End," pp. 239-260.

⁵⁰Shizu Shilu, vol. 78, p. 30a; Lawrence D. Kessler, K'ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule: 1661-1684, pp. 139-140.

the Chengdu plain, the core area of the province, was frequented by these animals.⁵¹ The scenario described in the following passage was not rare throughout the region:

From 1645 to 1658 or 1659, among the nine prefectures and one hundred twenty counties, there were only the places of Zunyi, Li Zhou, Wulong etc. where no slaughter occurred, and in the area of Shangnan there were some survivors. Elsewhere in successive towns and cities everyone was slaughtered, and not one person was left. Moreover, the land was deserted, and food was not to be found. In the areas which had not yet had disasters visited upon them, or which had distant or remote mountain redoubts, there may have occasionally been three or five weak and exhausted refugees who had fled there. At first they gathered wild celery and dug up bracken, and then they ate wild grass and cut off tree bark. When the grass and trees were gone, if one person encountered another, the one would eat the other.⁵²

In the other two southwestern provinces, Yunnan and Guizhou, the devastation was also serious. A contemporary travelled to Guiyang 貴陽, the capital of Guizhou, in the 1650s to search for his parents, when the city was under Sun Kewang's control. What he saw is as follow:

The bund guards in some places had been chased away by tigers, and the mountain slopes from top to bottom were strewn with human bones. There was not a sign of merchants and [other] travelers. All I saw were horsemen flying back and forth [between] clashes. Also, I saw people whose ears and noses had been cut off and some whose two arms both were gone. But they still [were made to] bear heavy loads for long distances. It was terribly cruel. Even though the scenery was unusually interesting. I could not bear to watch it go by.⁵³

⁵¹Fei Mi, *Huang Shu*; Entenmann, p. 49.

⁵²Ouyang Zhi, *Shu Luan*, p. 31a-b.

⁵³Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws*, pp. 152-153.

The local gazetteers of the Southwest are full of accounts about the devastation and depopulation during the turbulent era of the Ming-Qing transition. The scenery was depicted as "bleak and deserted, like the original stage of the human world."⁵⁴ The population loss was extremely serious. It was not uncommon for there to be only several dozens of households left in an entire county.⁵⁵ While there is a consensus that the devastation was widespread and the degree was serious, some historians further argue that the population loss and the destruction of the economy were most serious in the core areas of the provinces, in Sichuan, namely the Chengdu plain which was the most productive and developed area of the region.⁵⁶ Most extant local gazetteers of the province were compiled during or after the eighteenth century. They only give a general picture of devastation in the early Qing dynasty. There are very few clues to trace the exact origins of the devastation. When the causes of the depopulation and desolation were occasionally specified in the gazetteers, it is understandable that the compilers simply blamed the rebels of Zhang Xianzhong. A modicum of discretion is needed in dealing with the narratives in the local gazetteers, witnesses' memoirs and secondary accounts.

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⁵⁴Wenjiang Xian Zhi, vol. 3.

⁵⁵In a census of 1659, only 23 households were registered in Wenjiang county, with 31 men and 23 women. Wenjiang Xian Zhi, vol. 3.

⁵⁶Entenmann, pp. 52-54.

⁵⁷There are about a dozen accounts available, but most of them were compiled in later periods. For instance, Shu Bi, an influential work of

One action that cannot be underestimated is the killing done by the Qing troops during the campaign to suppress the rebels and the forces of resistance movements.⁵⁸ Among the endless accounts about the atrocities of Zhang Xianzhong and his followers, there are yet some clues of the other side of the story. When Qing armies led by Haoge first entered the city of Chengdu in 1647, there was a fight between two branches of the Qing army. They looted the city, caught people to kill and eat. Shortly after this disaster, there was an epidemic that caused more death.⁵⁹ Another record reads, in the same year, a Qing general and former rebel, Liang Yixun 梁一訓 "drove a couple thousand of the remaining people (in Chengdu) north towards Mianzhou, and killed all of them there, thus there were no more people left in Chengdu."⁶⁰

People were also killed by warlords during their battles among each other. In the gazetteers of Chengdu prefecture, there is an account telling of the chaotic

this kind was written during the eighteenth century, at least a half century after the events occurred. For a study on those accounts, see Ren Naiqiang, *Guanyu Zhang Xianzhong Shiliao de Jianbie*."

⁵⁸Entenmann holds that the massacre by Zhang was only one of the causes of population loss in Sichuan. The other reasons were slaughters done by the Ming and Qing armies, the other rebels, banditry, and the deterioration of agriculture which caused famine and thence disease. Entenmann, pp. 20-72. He points out: "Undoubtedly he [Zhang] and his followers were directly responsible for great loss of life, yet more destructive, probably, was the indirect effect of their activities and those of their enemies: collapse of the agriculture economy and the resulting famine and disease" p. 26.

⁵⁹Fei Mi, *Huang Shu*.

⁶⁰Gu Shanzhen, *Ke Dian Shu*, p. 100.

situation after the departure of Haoge's force from Chengdu in 1647:

Motley mobs from all directions crowded into Chengdu...There is no way to tell how many battles that occurred among them. The few survivors in Chengdu were killed in such a chaotic situation. Thence land was deserted, famines were frequent and families separated and people ate people.⁶¹

Besides, according to the materials available, there was a considerable scale of emigration that took place during the Ming-Qing transition from the Southwest to other parts of China. Although it is impossible to estimate how many people were killed in the period, it would be groundless to assert that killing was the only reason for the population loss during these two decades. There is evidence showing that people started moving out when Zhang Xianzhong's troops took Sichuan. For instance, the two Catholic missionaries mentioned earlier were caught by Zhang's soldiers when they were about to embark a ship fleeing to Jiangnan.⁶²

The major movements of emigration, however, occurred after the fall of the Great West regime and the death of Zhang. It is plausible to say that more people fled out of the Southwest during the period of warlords and the Qing conquest period than during the period of Zhang's regime. The destination of the emigration was the neighboring provinces and the peripheral areas in the Southwest which

⁶¹*Chengdu Fu Zhi*, Kangxi, vol. 35.

⁶²A. Launay, *Histoire des missions de Chine: Se-tchoan*. p. 6.

were usually the spheres of dominion of non-Han peoples. For instance, many gentry members of Sichuan fled into Shizhu 石砫 prefecture to seek refuge. They even organized some literary societies while in refuge.⁶³ And some residents who were not willing to subjugate themselves to Qing rule also departed their home towns to join the resistance forces.⁶⁴

By the time the Qing forces brought the Southwest under their full control, population loss was heavy. Particularly in Sichuan where the seesaw battles went on for about two decades, only very few original residents remained, and military personnel outnumbered the civilians. The troops in Yunnan and Guizhou were also numerous. The officials in charge had to arrange for the withdrawal of some of them right after the taking of the two provinces from the Southern Ming regime, though some smaller campaigns to suppress the non-Han peoples were still going on.⁶⁵ According to Qing records, in 1661, there were only 16,000 civilians in Sichuan, but the army stationed in the province had reached 100,000.⁶⁶

Moreover, the rank-and-file of the Qing troops were extremely enlarged with the incorporation of the surrendered Southern Ming forces and former bandits. Among those surrendered people, a large portion were dependents of the rebels. One official pointed out that the dependents were

⁶³Sichuan Tongzhi, vol. 154, pp. 52a-b.

⁶⁴Guluodong, Sheng Jiao Ru Chuan Ji, p. 62.

⁶⁵Shizu Shilu, vol. 137. pp. 11b-12a; p. 18b.

⁶⁶Qing Chao Wenxian Tong Kao, vol. 19.

several times the size of military personnel.⁶⁷ Having gone through prolonged warfare, the Southwest became fully militarized. In other words, the normal economic and social structures had been entirely destroyed. All human activities during the period were somehow connected with military operations.

How to accommodate these surrendered rebels and their families was one of the difficult tasks for the Qing authorities to deal with in the early years of peace. In the Southwest, with such a large portion of the total population being either former rebels or their dependents, and so few civilians, the normalization of social life and the restoration of the economy, certainly secondary to the task of demilitarization, were understandably retarded. Meanwhile, the authorities tried not to provoke serious conflict with non-Han peoples in the three provinces while quickly quashing scattered uprisings and resistance of non-Han tribes. Possibly out of this concern, Wu Sangui's motive of replacing local chieftains with Qing officials was not echoed by the central government in 1666.⁶⁸

The establishment of the Qing administrative system in the Southwest was also troubled by the desolate circumstances. Due to the scarcity of population, some administrative units were either cancelled or merged.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 22, pp. 3b-4a.

⁶⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 19, pp. 18b-19a.

⁶⁹In May, 1662, the Governor of Sichuan, Dong Fengcai 佟鳳彩, petitioned to merge Yuechi county into Nanchong, and Jiangyou county into Pingwu

civil and military service examinations were either cancelled or postponed.⁷⁰ The officials did not have regular places to be stationed.⁷¹ Many posts were filled with people without degrees or even any education⁷². The office of the governor of Sichuan had been located in Baoning for many years. In 1662, it was temporarily moved to Chongqing because the major battlegrounds had shifted to east Sichuan.⁷³ Not until 1659 did the seat of the Governor of Sichuan move back to Chengdu.

To fill the vacancies of the administrative post in the Southwest, and to accommodate surrendered warlords, many posts, especially military posts, were given to ex-rebel chiefs. In 1664, an official in the Ministry of War, Liao Dan 廖丹 sensed the potential disadvantage of this arrangement and suggested that the surrendered rebel chiefs be dispatched to posts in all provinces, not only appointed locally. Liao also suggested postponing the one-time high level military examinations for there had already been excessive aspirants not being able to get proper positions due to the appointments of the surrendered rebels. The emperor adopted the first suggestion, but modified the

due to a sparse population in Sichuan. The throne endorsed it. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 6, p. 17.

⁷⁰In 1663, the military service examination was cancelled in Yunnan. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 9, pp. 17b-18a.

⁷¹"During the 1660s, Sichuan was first pacified, and officials began to be appointed. All officials did not have fixed places to live, neither did they have bureaus, going back and forth like commissioners."

Guluodong, *Sheng Jiao Ru Chau Ji*, p. 62.

⁷²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 7, pp. 21b-22a.

⁷³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 20b-21a.

second one: cutting the quota for passers of the military examinations of the year in half.⁷⁴ This regulation was not changed until 1673.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, most ex-rebels remained in the Southwest to take posts. There were two reasons. First, the Southwest badly needed bureaucratic personnel, and regular officials were not willing to stay in this barren region, only taking the posts in the Southwest as a springboard for better appointments.⁷⁶ Second, it was presumably easier for their former chiefs to control the surrendered soldiers as in the late Shunzhi reign and the early Kangxi reign, in the Southwest, the mainstay of the society consisted of the former military personnel from the warlord period. This may be one explanation for the low success rate of examinations of the region during the period. Also this special social setting in the Southwest turned out to be suitable for Wu Sangui's Rebellion late in 1673.⁷⁷

It is illuminative to have a survey of the situation in the whole country at this time in order to understand the strategy of the central government towards the Southwest. It is important to point out that depopulation and destruction of the economy were a prevalent phenomenon throughout the

⁷⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 11, p. 8b.

⁷⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 43, p. 10a.

⁷⁶*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 134, pp. 2a-b.

⁷⁷For instance, renegade Tan Hong, who was appointed as Regional Commander after his surrender, was among the first group of high officials in the Southwest to declare their backing of Wu Sangui's rebellion in 1673.

whole country during the Shunzhi period and the first decade of the Kangxi reign. In 1626, eighteen years before the fall of the Ming dyansty, the total population of the country was 51 million strong. In 1651, the total population was only 10.6 million.⁷⁸

Another conspicuous phenomenon was that the wave of diaspora from the Southwest did not stop with the restoration of peace in most regions of the country. As early as in 1647, the central government ordered local officials to treat well the returned inhabitants who had fled from their native places due to warfare.⁷⁹ However, throughout the period of conquest and consolidation from 1644 to 1673, it seems that there were many factors that forced or lured people to leave their homes. In the region where there was warfare going on, such as the Southwest, people fled to avoid war, especially to avoid the burden of military corvée and obligations to provide provisions. The famine following warfare was also an important reason which drove people to move out of their home areas to seek a livelihood somewhere else. In other regions unaffected by war, people still tended to move around to find better opportunities, for the reclamation of deserted land in war-torn areas was beneficial for farmers. According to the Qing

⁷⁸Chen Zhenhan, *"Ming Mo Qing Chu Zhongguo de Nongye Laodong Shengchanlu, Dizu he tudi Jizhong."*

⁷⁹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 33, p. 10a.

rule, new residents did not pay capitation, and reclaimed land was not taxed until ten years after reclamation.⁸⁰

Throughout the Shunzhi reign, petitions submitted by provincial officials to request tax exemptions on large areas of land were fairly common. Reclamation of deserted land was one of the urgent tasks the new dynasty undertook. However, the destruction and the disorder caused by the Ming-Qing warfare were widespread, and therefore the recovery process was rather slow despite the special attention of the central government to the issue. In 1651, there was 13,490 *qing* of deserted land in three counties of Shanxi province. The government issued a decree calling for cultivators.⁸¹ In the same year, there was 9,184 *qing* of deserted land in the province of Jiangnan (Qianshan 潜山, Taihu 太湖, Tongcheng 桐城 and Susong 宿松), the most productive agricultural area of the country.⁸² In 1654, about one fifth of the revenue levied from the provinces of Zhili, Shandong, Shanxi, Henan, Zhejiang, Jiangnan, Shaanxi, Huguang, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong was exempted because of the desolation of agricultural land and depopulation in those provinces.⁸³ In 1667, there was still four million *qing* of deserted land in the whole country.

⁸⁰According to an edict of December 12, 1673 (*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 6).

⁸¹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 53, p. 5b; p. 20a.

⁸²*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 61, p. 12a.

⁸³The total amount of regular taxation from the eleven provinces was 31,645,668 taels of silver. The amount of exemption was 6,394,000 taels. *Shizu Shilu*, Vol. 84, p. 26b.

The real start of the recovery of the economy was one step behind the military consolidation of the new dynasty. In 1652, nine years after the founding of the dynasty, the Ministry of Rites memorialized the emperor that all exposed human bodies everywhere in the country that had been left from the warfare of the preceding years be buried.⁸⁴ Not until 1666-1667, the sixth year of the Kangxi reign, did reclamation work to begin to pick up in southeast and north China.

In the Southwest, however, reclamation and repopulation were one step or even two steps behind the above regions, as the conclusion of the warfare came later and the degree of destruction was more serious. Moreover, the greater concern of the central government for the Southwest, for the time being, was demilitarization, instead of restoration of the economy and repopulation. There was no incentive for the central government to organize an immigration movement to refill the population vacancy in the Southwest during this period. None of the three provinces in the Southwest bore any obligation to supply the central government with canal grain. In addition, there was a tendency that their low profile in revenue contribution during the Ming dynasty would continue in the Qing dynasty. But the central authorities would be greatly relieved if the region could, at least, rely less upon the state fisc to maintain the

⁸⁴Shizu Shilu, vol. 62, pp. 7b-8a.

sizable military build-up in the Southwest. Presumably, some more attention and assistance from the central government might speed up the process of recovery. Nevertheless, the central government was in a plight itself during the period from the end of the conquest campaign in the Southwest and the outbreak of the Wu Sangui Rebellion in 1673. Thus the recovery in the Southwest was left to the local officials who were not able to do much with their limited available resources.

Among the three provinces of the Southwest, Sichuan was in the worst shape. In this period, the population in Guizhou and Yunnan surpassed that of Sichuan. This situation lasted into the middle of the Kangxi reign, i.e., the 1680s. One explanation for this could be that some Sichuanese moved to Yunnan and Guizhou to avoid the chaos of the warlord period in Sichuan. Another possible reason was that Yunnan and Guizhou were under the direct rule of Wu Sangui since 1662. His shrouded pretension to break faith with the Qing dynasty was behind his efforts to rebuild Yunnan and Guizhou as his base area. Also, the Qing government generously poured money into the provinces from the beginning of the Yunnan campaign. Besides other considerations, it was a way to ensure Wu of the good will of the central government towards him.

With more money drawn from the central fiscs, Wu could manage to attract more people to the province. And he was

also able to appropriate military provisions to subsidize reclamation. Wu had once, in 1665, spent 30,000 taels of silver to purchase oxen and seeds to distribute to the people in Shuixi 水西, Guizhou province and distributed 15,000 *dan* of rice from provisions to aid poor people.⁸⁵ Wu also distributed loans to merchants as capital.⁸⁶

As an important way to build up his personal power in the Southwest, Wu shrewdly took advantage of the issue of non-Han peoples in the region to squeeze financial grants from the central government. He pressed the central authorities for fiscal support and permission to possess oversized troops with the excuse of unrest among the non-Han communities on the one hand, and he forced the non-Han native chieftains to subjugate themselves to his reign with the backing of the throne on the other hand. Against such a background, Wu launched a campaign against the Miao people in Shuixi area in 1662 and ousted the local chieftains there. He subsequently established his direct rule in the area.⁸⁷

In 1666, a military examination was held for the first time in both Guizhou and Yunnan. Twenty and twenty-seven

⁸⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 15, p. 14b. Shuixi was an area where local chieftains of non-Han peoples ruled. Wu Sangui conquered the area and established four prefectures, Pingyuan 平遠, Dading 大定, Qianxi 黔西 and Weining 威寧 and appointed regular officials to these prefectures. In reality, there was not enough people for these officials to rule. Some officials pointed out later the motivation for Wu to attack local chieftain was to steal the wealth of the chieftains. See *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 108, pp. 16a-b, pp. 17a-b.

⁸⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 97, pp. 5a-b.

⁸⁷Ma Yao, *Yunnan Jian Shi*, p. 162.

examinees in the two provinces respectively earned the degree.⁸⁸ But the same examination in Sichuan was cancelled because less than one hundred candidates had enrolled for the examination.⁸⁹ In 1663, only four years after the Qing forces took Yunnan, provincial officials had been able to report to the central government that 1,200 *qing* of land had been reclaimed in Yunnan.⁹⁰ The next year, the Guizhou Governor reported to have reclaimed 12,900 *qing* of land in his province.⁹¹ But there was no such report from Sichuan throughout this period prior to the Wu Sangui Rebellion in 1673. On the eve of Wu Sangui's rebellion in 1673, the economic recovery in Yunnan and Guizhou was ahead of that in Sichuan.

The backwardness in Sichuan has more to do with the administrative arrangement of the Qing dynasty than with other reasons. It seems that the province was left ignored and poorly financed after the conclusion of the conquering war. Before the province was fully conquered by the Qing dynasty, the province was under the supervision of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. The provisions needed in the Sichuan campaign were supplied by and transported from Shaanxi province. In 1661, there was a change in provincial bureaucratic administration system. Every province was assigned a Governor-General. Thereupon, a

⁸⁸*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 18, p. 18a; vol. 19, p. 19, p. 1a.

⁸⁹*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 19, p. 10b.

⁹⁰*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 12, p. 9b.

⁹¹*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 16, p. 2a.

Governor-General of Sichuan, for the first time, was appointed to the province.⁹² Presumably, Shaanxi was relieved from supporting Sichuan in provisions, etc., thereafter.

The first Governor-General was Li Guoying. He had first come to the region with Prince Haoge in 1646 and was in the posts of Governor of Sichuan and Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi for years. He was the Governor-General of Sichuan for five years and retired from the post in 1666. Possibly his experiences and connections with Shaanxi helped him in his new post. The most noticeable thing he did during his tenure was to try to reduce the size of the military in Sichuan.

The second Governor-General was Miao Cheng 苗澄. He was transferred from Governor-General of Zhili, having no experience with the affairs in the Southwest. He stayed in the post only one year before he requested to be dismissed in 1667 because he felt that he was not competent for the post. Perhaps he was disappointed by the desolate situation, knowing that this position in such a province would in no way benefit his bureaucratic career. His only achievement in Sichuan was to transfer seven thousand soldiers to reclaim land in the capital city Chengdu. He estimated that they could produce 42,000 *dan* of rice, thereby saving 5,600 taels of silver from the state fiscs each year.⁹³

⁹²Shengzu Shilu, vol. 4, p. 15a.

⁹³Shengzu Shilu, vol. 24, p. 30b.

The third Governor-General was Liu Zhaoqi 劉兆麒. Before he was appointed to the post of Governor-General of Sichuan in 1668, he had distinguished himself as the Governor of Huguang in reclaiming deserted land in the province. In 1666, Liu was titled as Vice Minister of the Ministry of Works owing to his outstanding merit in reclamation in Huguang.⁹⁴ But his tenure in Sichuan was even shorter than his predecessor's had been. He left within a year. However, after he was transferred from Sichuan to Zhejiang, he memorialized to the throne to apply some more flexible policy to attract people to resettle the province. His major strategy was to award local officials according to the amount of emigrants called back. In an earlier period, the Qing government had used this method to restore the social life and economy in the country in general. But this policy had been abolished with the normalization of most parts of the country.⁹⁵ Apparently, until this time, there were no particular policies made by the center aiming at repopulating the province. Liu's petition was the first to urge the center to respond to the problems of the region with some special methods.

In 1670, the central government ordered the restoration of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang. Therefore, the province was jointly supervised with the provinces of Hunan and Hubei under one Governor-General.

⁹⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 20, p. 7a.

⁹⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 27, p. 19a.

This step reflected the frustration of the authorities in making progress in repopulating the region and recovering the economy there. More importantly, many Sichuanese had fled to Huguang during the war years. To call these people back to their native land, this measure was certainly more efficient than the previous administrative arrangement which did not give the Governor-General of Sichuan any power beyond the boundary of Sichuan. For it would be difficult for a Governor of Sichuan to even have his official announcement posted in provinces other than his own. In the early summer of 1670, Cai Yurong 蔡毓榮 (1633-1699),⁹⁶ a Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Personnel was appointed as Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang, stationed in Jingzhou 荊州 of Hubei province, close to the border between Hubei and Sichuan.⁹⁷

Liu Zhaoqi's suggestion to reward local officials for calling back emigrants had been adopted by the central government. The Qing dynasty resumed the policy of rewarding officials who could bring people to the province. The first person rewarded was the Governor of Sichuan Zhang Dedi 張德地. About the same time when Cai was appointed, Zhang was given the title Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Works

⁹⁶Cai Yurong's father was a Ming official and he surrendered to the Qing before the Qing took China proper. Then the Cai's were recruited into the Chinese Plain White Banner. For Cai Yurong's biographies, see *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 18-19; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 256; and Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 734-736.

⁹⁷In most cases, the Governor-General of Huguang was stationed in Wuchang 武昌, the middle of Hubei province.

because of his achievements in calling people back to Sichuan.⁹⁸ It seems that the repopulation and restoration in Sichuan really started around 1670.

Then in 1671, Cai Yurong pushed the repopulation efforts one step further than Liu's proposition. He memorialized to the court in the summer of that year:

There are arable lands in Sichuan province; but there are not [enough] cultivators. It is an urgent thing to call for cultivators. But now the benchmark for rewarding is having called in seven hundred people to the province. It is very expensive; only a few officials can afford to do it.⁹⁹

Cai proposed to broaden the way to call people, to reduce the size of reclamation lots counted for rewarding and to prolong the tax-free period for cultivators. More importantly, he suggested some concrete methods to "broaden the way to call people." First, any aspirant waiting for local posts and any degree holder of any level could be appointed as county magistrate as long as they brought with them three hundred households to reclaim deserted land. Second, any incumbent in the province could be promoted regardless of his term of tenure if he fulfilled the above prerequisite; third, the surrendered rebel chiefs instead of waiting for the chance for military exploits in order to be appointed, could be appointed to posts immediately if they could get people to move to Sichuan.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 33, p. 14b.

⁹⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 36, pp. 7b-8b.

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*

In the next year, Cai petitioned to allow the offspring of the former soldiers who had been allotted land to till in both Sichuan and Huguang to take part in the examinations.¹⁰¹ This was another effective step in stabilizing the population of the areas. These steps turned out to be fruitful. It is valid to assert that more organized migration to the province started in 1671. In the same year, a Qing policy stated: "Anyone who brings his wife and goes to Sichuan to reclaim deserted land is allowed to be registered there as a regular subject (*ruji* 入籍)".¹⁰²

A successful migration movement counts on sufficient incentives for migrants, and incentives for overseers as well. During the period from the conquest of Sichuan in 1658 to 1670, owing to ignorance about the province and little investment by the central government, there lacked the impetus to either migrants or organizers. The repopulation and the restoration in the province thus lagged behind. Liu Zhaoqi and Cai Yurong's actions changed this situation by actually producing some good stimuli for officials to be involved in the repopulation of the area. Yet there were not many benefits for migrants to move to the area according to the Liu-Cai policies. Therefore, the result was a migration movement which was somehow coerced and orchestrated by local officials who had interests in doing so.

¹⁰¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 40, pp. 4b-5a.

¹⁰²*Sichuan Tongzhi*, Jiaqing. Vol. 64.

About same time that Cai put forward his policies concerning rewarding resettlement in Sichuan, he also requested that the Governor-General and the Commander-general have the power to appoint military officers stationed in strategic points in Sichuan province.¹⁰³ This was complementary to his scheme, ensuring the feasibility of office-granting. Entenmann also found out that "much of the effort to attract settlers to Sichuan evidently came from local and provincial officials."¹⁰⁴ It was more practical for carrying out the Liu-Cai scheme when both Huguang and Sichuan were under one Governor-General's control. There should be little doubt that this was a great way for aspirants in Huguang provinces to get positions. Later on there is a saying to summarize the migration movement in the early Qing to Sichuan that says: "Sichuan was refilled with the people from Huguang." Cai Yurong's role should not be overlooked as an initiator of the population movement.

These proposals were echoed at the local level by officials who used force to bring about a repopulation of their areas. It is rather difficult to estimate how many people were escorted to Sichuan by force. But there are some records showing that forced immigration was occurring. One such record reads:

During the Shunzhi and Kangxi periods, [the government] started to summon people from Hubei, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Fukien province to Sichuan to

¹⁰³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 36, p. 10a.

¹⁰⁴Entenmann, p. 79.

cultivate land. **There were people who were forced to come.** They were allowed to settle down and open land anywhere at their will. As long as they paid tax on several *mu* of land, they would possess several dozen *mu* of land.¹⁰⁵

Other evidence of the forced immigration is a legend that is widespread in the province about the origin of a local idiom "jieshou 解手." The words literally mean to untie one's hands, but the phrase is used to mean to urinate. According to the legend, the ancestors of many Sichuanese were forced to migrate to the province by the government. On their way to the province, their hands were tied up, under the control of soldiers. They were only untied when they had to urinate.¹⁰⁶ In fact, the idiom had already existed in much earlier periods. There is no evidence either that the origin of the adage can be interpreted in this way. But as a reality, many Sichuanese still believe that the forced migration of their ancestor brought out the idiom.

No matter how emigrants returned to Sichuan and new immigrants came to Sichuan, the repopulation was slowly picking up from the early 1670s. It was in 1671 that an ancestor of Deng Xiaoping moved back to Sichuan from Guangdong province. An earlier ancestor of Deng was a high official during the Ming dynasty. After his tenure in Guangdong ended, he settled down in Guangdong. In 1671, Li Xiangen 李仙根, a native of Suining 遂寧 county, Sichuan

¹⁰⁵Zhou Xun, *Shu Hai Congtan*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁶Hu Zhaoxi, p. 90; Mori Kiko, "Shin dai Sisen no imin keizai."

province and *jinshi* degree holder of 1661, and then an examination superintendent in Guangdong, met Deng's ancestor and persuaded the Deng family to move back to their original home town.¹⁰⁷ It seems that Cai Yurong's efforts were echoed among high level officials at this time. Unfortunately, in the early 1670s, the Southwest was already at the brink of another calamity, Wu Sangui's Rebellion.

The recovery from the decades of warfare in the Southwest did not evenly unfold. With huge financial input from the central government and the deliberate management of ambitious Wu Sangui, the two provinces which, previously, were far more backward in all aspects than Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou, were relatively faster in recovery from the war devastation. But with little financial support from the central government, the outset of revitalization in Sichuan was long overdue. The turn in the 1670s in repopulating Sichuan was still not evidence of a change in the central government's strategies, but only the result of reinforced efforts by provincial officials with assistance from the rewarding policy. Strategically, the central government did not change its basic layout of the administrative hierarchy at the end of this conquering and recovering period.

3. A New Orientation in the Qing's Economic Statecraft

¹⁰⁷Maomao 毛毛, *Wo de Fuqing Deng Xiaoping 我的父親鄧小平*, p. 26 (Hong Kong: San Lian Shudian 三聯書店. 1993).

During most of the conquest era of 1644-1673, China was at war. To manage to conduct a conquering war this massive and protracted, one vital issue was how to guarantee the supply of provisions to the fronts. It was a difficult task. It was particularly so because the new rulers of China were fully aware that the previous dynasty fell largely due to its mistakes in raising funds for supporting military campaigns.

One important political principle that underlay the central policies and strategies during this period was to distinguish the Qing dynasty from a cruel, greedy and corrupt Ming dynasty. The Shunzhi administration was determined to eliminate the malaise of the Ming dynasty which the new ruling elites believed to be one of the major causes of the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644.¹⁰⁸ As is well known, one infamous mismanagement of the Ming dynasty was the overcharging of taxes in the name of military campaigns. But at the same time, the armies of the Ming dynasty were

¹⁰⁸But Wakeman has a slightly different interpretation on the issue: "The peasant rebellions of the late Ming were generated by a combination of repeated famines during the 1630s and '40s, and widespread government disintegration. Only a fraction of Ming documents attributed the cause of the rebellion to high taxes. Most official sources singled out military arrears, supply deficiencies, and forced conscription as primary motives for rebellion." Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, pp. 225-226. While correctly pointing out the deterioration of the military supply as one of the causes of the rebellion, Wakeman somehow understates the negative impact of the surcharges imposed in the late Ming period, e.g. the notorious "Three Surcharges of Military Rations" which the Qing government held as the major cause of the fall of the Ming dynasty. Wakeman only points out that the military expense was still not covered even with those surcharges (ibid. pp. 36-37).

poorly fed.¹⁰⁹ This became one direct cause of the great rebellions of the late Ming. The two major leaders of the rebellion, Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong were both soldiers.

Since the founding of the Qing dynasty, the new central government had reiterated the idea that the new dynasty would forever forsake exploiting the people for any purpose. More particularly, the Qing dynasty made it clear that they would never transfer the burden of military campaigns to the common people. All military expenditures would be allocated from the state fiscs. From the very early days, the Qing dynasty issued edicts abolishing extra taxes that had been levied on the people since the Tianqi 天啓 (1621-1627) and the Chongzhen 崇禎 reign (1628-1644) of the Ming dynasty. On August 18, 1644, the regent Dorgon abolished the "Three Surcharges of Military Rations (*sanxiang jiapai* 三餉加派)." ¹¹⁰ In October, 1644, the throne issued a milestone edict to the Ministry of Revenue to lay down some fundamental rules for Qing revenue policies. In the edict, the emperor discussed the cause of the fall of the Ming dynasty:

¹⁰⁹As Lynn Struve points out: "Partially as a result of fiscal mismanagement, but also out of simple disregard and disdain on the part of the civil bureaucracy, the living standards of military households and the service conditions of soldiers on duty were allowed to deteriorate almost shockingly, adding material hardship to the social stigma of hereditary military status. Desertion, absconding, and empty rosters became common. Garrison strengths sank far below their designated levels, and those soldiers who remained often were employed in nonmilitary tasks, as transport or construction workers and even as officers' domestic servants." *The Southern Ming, 1644-1662*, p. 3.

¹¹⁰*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 9a-11a.

In the beginning of the Ming dynasty, there were some regulations with regard to taxing people, which allowed people to relax and to reproduce. In the Wanli 萬曆 [1573-1620] period, the country was rich and all families and people were adequately fed. During the Tianqi and Chongzhen periods, taxes were added due to the wars, and surcharges were rampant. Greedy officials and clerks took advantage to do malicious things. People could not bear this suffering. Then the fate of the dynasty was doomed. This lesson well deserves to be our warning.¹¹¹

In this same edict, the Shunzhi emperor ordered that the tax rate of the Qing dynasty be the same as that of the Wanli reign of the Ming dynasty, and that all taxes added during the Tianqi and Chongzhen period be abolished.¹¹² This articulation of avoidance of falling into the old track of the preceding dynasty was emphasized throughout the dynasty, especially, in the early periods of the dynasty.

Based upon this consideration, the newly-founded Qing dynasty began to pave the way for the creation of a different system to supply its armies and military campaigns. That was to make the state treasury the sole source of all military expenditures, instead to levying extra taxes on the people for each military campaign. The later-Qing scholar Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) first pointed this important development in his reputable work Shengwu Ji 聖武記 (The Records of the Imperial Campaigns).¹¹³ He argued:

¹¹¹Shizu Shilu, vol. 112, p. 7a.

¹¹²Shizu Shilu, vol. 112, p. 7b.

¹¹³Wei Yuan was an outstanding thinker of the nineteenth century. He had close relations with Lin Zexu 林則徐, a leading figure in the Opium War between China and Britain in the 1830s-40s. Wei's best known work is Hai Guo Tu Zhi 海國圖志 (The illustrated gazetteer of the maritime countries), which was the first work to introduce conditions in the western countries in East Asia. It stands as a milestone in the relations between the East and the West. Sheng Wu Ji was published in

There are two differences between the arrangement of military affairs of our dynasty and the previous dynasties. One is that our dynasty has less soldiers. The other is that our dynasty pays more to soldiers... During all preceding dynasties, military campaigns were supported by adding taxes on people. Therefore there were more soldiers but less money for soldiers in the past. But our dynasty uses only fisc money, without adding any tax on the people. Therefore, there were less soldiers but more money.¹¹⁴

Although Wei Yuan pointedly summarized this basic reformation in the Qing's military system, he did not reveal the whole mechanism of the system and the process of development. And he himself was bewildered by the fact that the Qing dynasty could restrain from increasing taxes while its armies were adequately fed and supplied.

To achieve this goal was one of the major themes in Qing statecraft. The evolution of the policy had consequently affected the developments in various provinces which had different roles to play in the strategic map of the Qing dynasty. The conquering period was an inceptive stage for the development. Although the policy had not yet taken final shape, the layout of the responsibility of the different regions had been ushered in: the Southeast, more specifically, the Jiangnan region, basically played the role of contributing region in the development, while the Southwest was a consuming region which absorbed a

1842, after China was defeated by Britain in the Opium War. His purpose in writing this book was to trace the origins of the strength of the Qing dynasty and to provide some lessons for the Qing in their dealings with the new foreign threats. For more about Wei Yuan, see Jane Kate Leonard, Wei Yuan and the Rediscovery of the Maritime World.

¹¹⁴Wei Yuan, Sheng Wu Ji, vol. 11.

considerable portion of state income. This pattern would continue in the later periods though the contexts would be radically different.

As the new Manchu rulers promised, during the conquering period, the central government restored the tax rate of the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty, and abolished the infamous "Three Surcharges." Furthermore, it was routine for the central government to grant tax exemptions to the provinces and areas which were heavily damaged by warfare during the Ming-Qing transition.

The relief of many regions from extra taxation was not without sacrifice for certain areas. In order to keep the state fiscs constantly sufficient for any possible emergency, the central government had to tighten its exactions on the major revenue supply region, namely, the Jiangnan area. If the central authorities were lenient or even lax in treating other provinces, it never took its hands off of this region. The consensus that half the revenue of the country comes from this single region (*tianxia caifu, ban chu dongnan* 天下財賦，半出東南) had been shared by the throne and the officials. As early as in June 1645, just two weeks after Yangzhou fell into the hands of Qing forces, and one week before Nanjing was taken, a Vice-Minister in Beijing urged the throne to order an immediate transportation of the Canal grain in the Jiangnan area to the north to check the rising of rice prices in the capital

and other areas in north China.¹¹⁵ In the Shunzhi period and the first decade of the Kangxi period, while the edicts to exempt the poorer areas from regular taxes and arrears were common and frequent, the court reiterated that it would not allow the Jiangnan area to escape from paying off arrears. As a rule, the Canal Grain was usually not exempted even in the case of natural calamities. In addition, in 1658, an official petitioned to the throne that credit for clearing arrears be a major criterion to evaluate officials in Jiangnan.¹¹⁶ In fact, during the first period of the dynasty, about fifty per cent of levied grain, and twenty per cent of cash revenue received by the state fiscs came from the Jiangnan region alone. Both local officials and the taxpayers from the areas had bitter complaints about the high-handed exaction of the central government.

In 1661, occurred a well-known incident in which tens of thousands of gentry in Jiangsu province refused to pay taxes to protest the unfair tax burden on people of the region. The regent of the new Kangxi emperor, Oboi 鳌拜, gave an order to render a severe punishment.¹¹⁷ As a result, hundreds of gentry were beheaded.¹¹⁸ The Qing authorities'

¹¹⁵*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 16, pp. 9b-10a.

¹¹⁶*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 118, pp. 8a-10a.

¹¹⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 3, p. 3a.

¹¹⁸A treatment of the incident can be seen in Lawrence D. Kessler Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, pp. 33-34, pp. 102-108; Jerry Dennerline, "Fiscal Reform and Local Control: The Gentry-Bureaucratic Alliance Survives the Conquest." Dennerline holds that the incident was not a simple anti-Qing protest, rather it was an outbreak of long-time tension between the bureaucracy and the local gentry on the

adoption of such a high-handed solution was in sharp contrast to their condoning measures towards other regions. Some historians may interpret the imperative measures taken in the Jiangnan area as aiming at destroying the monopoly of local literati in communal affairs. But as a matter of fact, it was taken in order to guarantee income to the state fiscs. In other words, it was more economically concerned than politically concerned. As a political threat, the Jiangnan loyalist movement had been thoroughly demoralized in 1647 by a bloody crackdown of the Qing armies¹¹⁹.

While keeping a tight-fisted attitude towards tax collection in the Southeast, the Qing dynasty did try to realize their intent to supply its troops with money from the state treasury. During the two years of 1657 and 1658, the central government allocated a total of 110,000 taels of silver from the state fiscs to award soldiers and their families besides their regular payment (annual income of the state fiscs in the early Shunzhi reign was 14,800,000 taels). Nevertheless, during the Shunzhi period, wars were widespread in southern and southwestern China and every campaign was considerably costly. To support the military forces at several fronts simultaneously was a heavy burden for the central government when the war-ravaged north China had not yet recovered. Although most of the annual income of

distribution of tax obligations in Jiangnan. Eventually the two sides reached a compromise and their alliance in local domination was renewed.
¹¹⁹Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, p. 751.

the central government was going to military expenditures, it was still hard to meet all needs, especially when the size of the Green Standard Army was rapidly expanded with the incorporation of surrendered soldiers.¹²⁰ The clamor over the shortage of funds for military expenses was getting louder and louder in the late Shunzhi and the early Kangxi period. It was a difficult period for the newly founded government to manage to live with its principles.

There was one occasion in which the Qing government almost fell into the old track of the Ming dynasty of levying a surcharge on top of the land tax. In the late Shunzhi reign, Zheng Chenggong's force constituted a big threat to the Qing dynasty. In 1659, Zheng made a successful offensive from the sea to the southeast coastal areas. At one point, Zheng's fleet reached the city of Zhenjiang 鎮江, and the whole Jiangnan area was shocked. In this year and the following years, much of the revenue levied from the Jiangnan area had to be retained in Jiangnan to supply expensive projects such as ship-building in order to ward off the raids from Zheng. In 1659, no taxation, either in grain or in cash, was transferred to Beijing. All income had been consumed locally. Only at this point did the central government become shaky in clinging to the principle

¹²⁰In early 1663, Geng Jimo reported on that 290 officers, 4,334 soldiers along with 467 family members were recruited from surrendered rebels in one year from autumn, 1661 to autumn, 1662 (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 7, pp. 23a-b). In 1667, the state fiscs spent 800,000 taels to settle surrendered soldiers.

of not levying extra taxes upon people for military needs. In the autumn of 1661, the emperor decided to resume the "Militia Surcharge (*lianxiang* 練餉)" of the late Ming dynasty, levying one extra *fen* of silver to each *mu* of land. Nevertheless, it soon encountered opposition from high officials. Embarrassed by the apparent violation of the principle of the new dynasty, the emperor declared the abolition of this convenient measure three days after it was criticized.¹²¹

In order to make ends meet, the Qing government had to resort to methods other than imposing extra taxes. What these measures entailed for the time being might not be as ideal as the policy-makers designed, but the direction of the endeavors was clear: creating a new, efficient and economical system to keep and feed the military forces.

First, the central government had to concentrate on some fronts, instead of all fronts. In the early Shunzhi period, the major areas which drew the central government's attention and support were the Jiangnan area and the "Three borders" areas of Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces. Since 1651-1652, the central government put more emphasis on the campaign in Yunnan province, decreeing that only the Yunnan campaign should be supplied by appropriating the regular revenue collected from the other provinces. Apparently, the existence of the last Southern Ming dynasty first in Kunming

¹²¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 4, p. 9b; vol. 5, pp. 18b-19a; vol. 5, pp. 19b-20a.

then in Burma constituted a keen threat to the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty. It was this concern that stood behind the extraordinary commitment of the Qing dynasty to the Yunnan campaign. Meanwhile, the central government ordered that military provisions in other provinces be managed locally.¹²² In fact, it was impossible for all provinces to collect provisions locally. For instance, provisions needed in Fujian garrisons to defend against Zheng Chenggong's pirates, which turned out to be the second most expensive project, were still supplied by the Jiangnan region.

The contradiction between the limited resources available for military expenditure and the new regime's determination to reform the Ming dynasty's revenue system caused serious difficulties for the central authorities in the 1660s. In 1660, the total annual income of the state from regular taxes was 8.75 million taels of silver, but the Yunnan campaign cost more than 9 million a year. As the Ministry of Revenue complained: "To exhaust the entire revenue income of the country cannot be enough to support one province's expenditure."¹²³ Obviously, the central government simply had no capacity to take care of all the divisions of armies stationed and pushing forward all over the country. They were left to support the swelling armies by primarily employing their own wits.

¹²²*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 137, pp. 9a-9b.

¹²³*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 136, p. 22.a.

The heavy burden of feeding the armies was worsened with the incorporation into the Qing army of the surrendered or captured soldiers of various anti-Qing forces. In many cases, the pacification of certain areas only meant that the local residents had more mouths to feed. It is plausible to assert that much depopulation was caused by the exactions made by armies in the wake of war. Many residents survived the wars but were bankrupted and thence fled under the exactions of the Qing armies.

In 1647, a witness in Sichuan wrote, after Prince Haoge's forces entered Sichuan, the soldiers "searched for grain in our place [the Chengdu prefecture] day and night. They had people hung and burned. The people could be released if they submitted some grain; otherwise they were burned to death. The local residents all fled to the wild mountains."¹²⁴ Obviously, many residents fled from their homes during this period due to the extortion of the Qing armies. With more and more people fleeing from their homes, more and more arable land was deserted. Thus the provision problem was exacerbated the following year. This vicious circle continued to be the reality throughout most parts of the period.

In the other provinces of the Southwest, a similar scenario also occurred.¹²⁵ Even in Yunnan province where the central government invested heavily, the local residents

¹²⁴Fu Diyi. *Wuma Xiansheng Jinian*, p.119

¹²⁵*Ming Qing Shiliao, Jia Bian*, vol. 6, p. 538; pp. 595-596.

suffered greatly from supporting military operations. First, heavy corvee duties to transport provisions shipped from other provinces were all carried out by native residents. Second, the state fiscs mainly supplied cash to the provinces. The officials in charge had to purchase grain and other necessities locally. There were occasions when there was no grain available for purchase because of the frequent exactions. The rice price thus rose to more than twenty taels a *dan*. People began to flee.¹²⁶

In order to resolve the problem of military provisions, the Qing government had to utilize a traditionally effective method, the military colony, in some areas in which the provision problem was especially serious. Since the early years of the Shunzhi period, the officials had begun to talk about implementing military colonies in the areas where war destruction caused a dearth of provisions. In 1652, several officials memorialized to the throne to adopt military colonies to make up for the shortage of military provisions. Liu Yumo 劉餘謨, an official in the Ministry of Rites indicated in his memorial of 1652 that there were vast deserted lands in Hunan, Sichuan, Guangdong and Guangxi province.¹²⁷

After that, military colonies were a much debated topic among high officials. According to the Qing records, the implementation of military colonies had been quite fruitful

¹²⁶*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 134, pp. 18b-20a; vol. 135, pp. 6b-7a.

¹²⁷*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 67, pp. 6a-b.

in Huguang and Shaanxi provinces. But the achievements in the Southwest were modest.¹²⁸ In Sichuan, perhaps the most substantial result of military colonization was achieved by the Governor of Sichuan, Li Guangying, in north Sichuan when most of the province was the battleground of various warlords in the early 1650s. The Qing forces had reclaimed over 100,000 *mu* of land there.¹²⁹ But after the taking of the whole province by the Qing forces, not much progress was made in this regard. Thirteen years later, in 1665, the issue of opening military colonies in the Southwest was again brought to the attention of the emperor.¹³⁰ It can be concluded that military colonies failed to be a major agent in revitalizing the economy in the Southwest.

When all major campaigns had been finished and all anti-Qing forces, except Zheng Chenggong's, had been eliminated, the authorities began to concentrate on cutting down the size of the military. In the late Shunzhi and the early Kangxi period, the size of the Green Standard Army had increased to 600,000. That was three times the size at beginning of the dynasty. As early as in 1659, Lin Qilong 林起龍, the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Revenue, first proposed to reform the Green Standard Army along the principle of "less soldiers but more payment."¹³¹ His intention was to eliminate empty rosters and to strengthen

¹²⁸*Da Qing Huidian*.

¹²⁹Li Jingping, "Qing Qianqi Juntun Gaishu."

¹³⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 24, p. 3b.

¹³¹*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 127, pp. 23b-29a.

the army with an increased payment for rank-and-filers but a reduced budget for the state. Nevertheless, this reform could not start before the restoration of peace in all of the country. And it was interrupted with the advent of the Wu Sangui Rebellion in 1673. Throughout the first half of the Qing dynasty, this issue resurfaced again and again when the Qing state had to cope with the expanded military, one consequence of its massive frontier campaigns.

The conquering era left important legacies in Qing economic statecraft. Pressed by the circumstances of the era, the Qing readily took from the Ming dynasty the strategy of relying upon the Jiangnan area as the single most important source of state revenues. This strategy persisted for two centuries until it was challenged in the mid-nineteenth century because of the Taiping Rebellion. Under the auspices of this strategy, the Qing state could adopt some relaxed policies in taxation towards other regions of the country, especially when those other regions were not able to score high in revenue contribution, or, as would be the case in the eighteenth century, when the other regions were shouldering more frontier responsibilities.

The Qing was also to adhere to the principle they set up in the beginning of the dynasty that all military expenditures would be paid from the state fiscs. That meant to the provinces that military buildup and campaigns would not become a burden for the localities financially. Rather,

it meant that the resources collected by the state via taxation would be channeled to the areas where the military establishment was dominant. Although these legacies of the conquering era would undergo some modifications in the periods to come, they presaged the patterns of Qing economic statecraft in the following periods.

4. The First Contacts with the Tibetans

In the beginning of the Qing dynasty, conquest, consolidation and restoration occupied almost all of the attention of the new dynasty. Nevertheless, the Qing rulers were not completely dismissive of their frontier security. As a people rising on the Chinese frontier themselves, the Manchus were particularly sensitive and skillful in dealing with frontier issues. This had been well-demonstrated in their managements of the subjugation of some Mongol tribes before and after the Manchus entered China proper.¹³² At this stage, the Qing had a modicum of knowledge about the relationship between the Mongols and Tibetans, knowing that common religious belief was the single most important tie connecting the two peoples. To reinforce their control over the Mongol tribes, the Qing began to pay attention to Tibetan affairs even before they started their conquest of China in 1644.

¹³²See David M. Farquhar, "The Origins of the Manchus' Mongolian Policy."

To understand the Qing interests in Tibetan affairs, it is necessary to understand the origins of Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism and its historic relationship with the Mongols.¹³³ Buddhism spread to Tibet in the seventh century and flourished in the following century. However, Buddhism in Tibet suffered a major setback due to the religious persecution by a Tibetan king in the ninth century. Not until the tenth century, did Buddhism recover from this devastation. But since then, Buddhism in Tibet began to assume Lamaist form with the absorption of some elements from a Tibetan aboriginal religion, Bon, a primitive deist religion. From the eleventh to the fifteenth century, Lamaism split into many sects. There were frequent conflicts among the various sects with each of them allying itself with different local nobles.

Along with the establishment of the Yuan dynasty, the Sakya Sect gained supremacy because of the favor and the support provided by the Yuan rulers. The Sakya leader Phagspa 八思巴 was even entitled as "the Priest of State" by Kubilai Khan 忽必烈汗. He was stationed in the capital of the Yuan dynasty, Dadu 大都 to take charge of the religious affairs of the whole country. Nevertheless, when the Yuan fell, the superior position of the Sakya Sect was gone.

¹³³The following narrative is mainly based upon Huang Fengsheng, Zang Zu Shilue, Wang Furen and Suo Wenqing, Zang Zu Shiyao, Luciano Petech, Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yuan -- Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History; Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet; and Yang Ho-chin, Annals of Kokonor.

Tibet was again divided by many contending sects. Throughout most of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the situation was about the same.

In the beginning of the Ming dynasty, the last sect of Tibetan Lamaism took the shape with the advocacy of the great Lamaist reformer Tsongkhapa 宗喀巴 (1357-1419). The new sect was called *Gelukpa*, or the Yellow Church, or Yellow Sect, as monks of the sect distinguished themselves from other sects by wearing yellow robes and yellow hats. After Tsongkhapa died, his disciples continued his cause. The Yellow Sect rapidly grew. In 1546, a child, Sonam Gyatso 索南嘉措 (1543-1588) was chosen as the reincarnation of a deceased great monk, Gendun Gyatso 根敦嘉措 (1475-1542) and became the leader of the Yellow Sect.

The dramatic escalation of the Yellow Sect in the Tibetan political and religious life was dependent upon the military assistance of the Mongols. In 1578, Altan Khan 俺達汗 of the Tumed Mongols¹³⁴ converted to Yellow Sect Lamaism after an intimate conversation with Sonam Gyatso. Since this time, a common religious belief began to bond these two peoples, Tibetans and Mongols, together. Altan Khan honored the leader of the Yellow Sect by granting him the title "Dalai Lama."¹³⁵ Later, one of the leading disciples of Tsongkhapa Gedun Truppa 根敦朱巴 (1391-1472) was

¹³⁴Altan Khan (1507-1582) was the grandson of Dayan Khan, the leader of the Eastern Mongols.

¹³⁵"dalai" is Mongol for "ocean;" lama is Tibetan which means "superior master."

conferred posthumously the first Dalai Lama, and his disciple Gedun Gyatso was conferred posthumously the second Dalai Lama. Therefore, Sonam Gyatso became the third Dalai Lama. The system of the Dalai Lama thus became an outstanding feature of the Yellow Sect. Since Altan Khan's conversion to the Yellow Sect, the Yellow Sect's influence soon spread to Kokonor (today's Qinghai and part of Gansu provinces) and Mongolia. Nevertheless, among a number of the Lamaist sects in Tibet, the Yellow sect was the last to arise. It was weak in its competition with other sects. So it had to appeal to some military forces outside Tibet to aid its bid for power in Tibet.

After the third Dalai died, a grandson of Altan Khan, Yonten Gyatso 雲丹嘉措 (1589-1616), was chosen as the reincarnation of the third Dalai and he thus became the fourth Dalai Lama. The clergy of the Yellow Sect did not register their objection to such an unauthentic arrangement as they had to rely upon the Mongol military forces to fight with their rivals and enemies inside and outside Tibet.

In 1622, the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1782) was inaugurated. At the time, the Yellow Sect was facing serious challenges and great hostilities from other sects of Lamaism. Under pressure, the Yellow Sect turned to the Khoshot Mongols, who were under the leadership of the ambitious Gushri Khan 顧實汗 for military assistance.¹³⁶ At

¹³⁶About Gushri Khan's involvement in Tibetan affairs, see Luo Lida, "Ming Mo Qing Chu de Meng Zang Guanxi he Gushi Han Ru Zang Shijian."

the invitation of the fifth Dalai, Gushri Khan entered Dbus in Tibet in 1639 and accepted the title conferred by the fifth Dalai Lama: "*Bstan-'dzin chos-rgyal* (The religious king who maintains the Teachings)." In 1642, Gushri Khan defeated the other sects and the Khalkha Mongols who had not yet converted to the Yellow Sect. With the military intervention of the Mongols, the Yellow Sect gained domination in Tibet and tremendous influence on the territories of Mongol tribes. Meanwhile, Gushri Khan established his own political rule of Tibet. The control of the Khoshot Mongols over Tibet lasted for seventy-five years (1642-1717).

Gushri Khan had subjugated himself to the Manchus before the fall of the Ming dyansty. With the persuasion of Gushri Khan, the fifth Dalai Lama also sent representatives to Manchuria to show his good will to the Manchus. Although the Manchus were aware of the significance of the Dalai Lama in reconciliating the Mongols, they were not really interested in Lamaism itself. Only out of the consideration of pacifying the Mongols did the Manchus invite the Tibetan monks to do preaching in Mongolia and Manchuria.

After the Qing dynasty was founded, the Qing rulers made efforts to establish contacts with the Tibetans. The throne sent lamas from Beijing to Lhasa to deliver the emperor's greetings to the Dalai Lama, and to offer "*manja*"

ceremony¹³⁷ in prominent monasteries in Tibet. The Qing throne also extended an invitation to the fifth Dalai Lama for a visit to Beijing more than once. In 1652, the Dalai Lama eventually made his journey to Beijing. He was warmly received. A lamasery was built in Beijing to accommodate him. The Qing authorities were anxious to keep the Dalai Lama in the capital. But the Dalai Lama insisted on returning to Tibet using the excuse of not being acclimatized to Beijing. Before the departure of the Dalai Lama, the Qing throne bestowed on the Dalai Lama a gold cachet and a gold seal with the inscription of a long title "*Xitian Dashan Zizai Fo suo Ling Tianxia Shijiao Putong Wachila Danla Dalai Laman* 西天大善自在佛所領天下釋教普通瓦赤喇但喇達賴喇嘛," which means "the Dalai Lama who has the knowledge of Vajra Dhara, is the great benevolent Buddha of the western territory, and is the leader of Buddhism." This long title confirmed the supreme position of the Dalai Lama in the Lamaist world. Meanwhile, the Qing court recognized Gushri Khan's administrative power over Tibet. Therefore, the situation of the Mongols' rule of Tibet was also admitted by the Qing dynasty.

Since Gushri Khan only lived in Tibet part of the year, a *sde-srid* (governor, or *diba* 第巴 in Chinese) was appointed to deal with daily affairs in Tibet. Usually, it was the

¹³⁷*Ao chao* 熬茶 in Chinese. It is usually translated as "the collective tea party to monks." It was an important religious ceremony in the Lamaist tradition.

Dalai Lama who had the right to appoint the new governor. As a great leader not only in religious affairs, but also in politics, the fifth Dalai Lama had gradually developed an uneasiness towards the Mongol Khan's control. To counteract the influence of the Mongol Khan, in 1678, the Dalai Lama appointed Sanggye Gyatso 桑結嘉措 (1653-1705)¹³⁸ as *sde-srid*, who was competent and acute in political manoeuvres. Gushri Khan died in 1654. His oldest son Dalai Khan 達賴汗 inherited his position. The Qing recognized Dayan Khan's kingship by granting him a seal in 1658. After Dayan Khan died, his son Lajang Khan 拉藏汗 inherited his position. Both Dayan and Lajang Khan lacked the competence and might Gushri Khan possessed. This provided opportunities for Sanggye Gyatso to grab power into his own hands after he became the governor.

The initial Qing dealings in Tibetan affairs in the seventeenth century laid down a foundation for the future establishment of the Chinese suzerainty in Tibet ultimately during the eighteenth century. Although the Qing rulers were highly aware of the significance of maintaining a good relationship with the Tibetan religious establishment, it is unlikely that the Qing rulers were true admirers of Lamaism

¹³⁸Sanggye Gyatso (1653-1705) was a prominent political leader of Tibet in the seventeenth century. For his close relations with the fifth Dalai Lama and his role in Tibetan politics and the relationship with the Qing and Zunghars, see Section 5 of Chapter III. There are not many studies on him in spite of his important role in seventeenth century Tibetan history. One of them is by Wang Yao, "Diba. Sangjie Jiacao Za Kao."

themselves.¹³⁹ Abahai criticized poignantly the Mongols for their indulgence in Lamaism, holding Lamaism as the cause for the decline of their kingdoms.¹⁴⁰ This attitude was also shared by Kangxi. He once commented in 1673:

When I was ten years old [in 1664], a lama came to the court to receive an audience. When he mentioned the Buddhism in the west land, I repudiated it as being wrong, making him speechless. I have ever disliked this kind of thing.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, at this point, the Qing policy towards Tibetan affairs was far less defined and elaborate as it was in the later periods. As some historians point out, the Qing interest in Tibet was minimal during the regent period of the Kangxi era (1661-1669).¹⁴² To be sure, the entitlement of the Dalai Lama as the religious leader in the Lamaist order fully demonstrated the support of the Qing for the Dalai Lama and the Yellow Sect. Nevertheless, the Qing interests in Tibetan affairs were not beyond this extent. There was no intention on the Qing side of extending any form of administration into Tibet, nor was there any attempt to tighten economic and cultural relationships with Tibet. This attitude of the Qing court left room for others to expand into Tibet. It was around the middle of the seventeenth century that the Malla dynasty (13th c. - 1769)

¹³⁹Yuan Senpo, *Kang, Yong, Qian Jingying yu Kaifa Bei Jiang*, pp. 314-316.

¹⁴⁰Abahai said: "The princes of Mongol tribes abandoned Mongol language, imitating Lamaism in everything. This led to the decline of their nation." (*Taizong Shilu*, vol. 18, p. 13b).

¹⁴¹*Kangxi Qiju Zhu*, vol. 1.

¹⁴²Kessler, pp. 152-153.

of Nepal concluded a commercial treaty with Tibet. This treaty not only allowed the Nepalese to share the control of the Tibetan border towns, Kuti and Kerung 濟隆, but also rendered the Nepalese the right to mint coins for Tibet. Therefore, the currency used in Tibet was all minted in Nepal with the names of the Nepalese kings cast on them since the middle of the seventeenth century. Tibetans paid for these coins with silver each year.¹⁴³

5. Conclusion

The Ming-Qing transition was a prolonged process that was in fact more complex than is commonly recognized. During this era of conquest, 1644-1673, the paramount concern of the state was to expunge all anti-Qing forces and to pacify the whole country. Recovery of the economy was secondary to the above concerns. Owing to the limited resources controlled by the central authorities, the Qing dynasty had to differentiate all regions of the country into different groups in a hierarchical way. The priority of conquest was first given to the regions which were deemed more vital to the consolidation of the dynasty. The Southwest was the last region that was conquered by the Qing forces. Although the state invested heavily in the Yunnan campaign since the later 1650s, the Southwest as a whole was regarded by the

¹⁴³Rishikesh Shaha, Modern Nepal: A Political History 1769-1955, vol. 1, p. 29. Tibet is rich in silver deposits, but lacked the means to mint coins.

central government as a remote border region creating low revenue contributions. On the eve of Wu Sangui's Rebellion in 1673, the interest of the central authorities towards the Southwest was no more than territorial. Compared with the other regions making more contributions in revenue income, the Qing government did not really concern itself with reconstructing the destroyed economy and the depopulated society in the Southwest. The piecemeal efforts were mainly initiated by local officials. The full-fledged recovery and repopulation and further development still awaited a change of the state's strategy and policy in later periods.

The war circumstances of the period had well circumvented the new dynasty in its commitment to revamp the politico-economic institutions of the preceding dynasty. However, a new orientation was laid down during this period. Although this period can only be regarded as a transitional stage, and many measures taken during this period were temporary and expedient in nature, this period did presage some essential rationales of Qing politico-economic statecraft to which the succeeding emperors continued to adhere. More particularly, the geographical layout of financial institutions survived the conquest period, becoming a pattern throughout the Qing dynasty, in which the Southeast was mainly a contributing region, and the Southwest was a consuming region.

The frontier ambitions of the Qing dynasty were also obstructed by the ongoing wars. Facing a desolated local society and devastated economy, it was impossible for the Qing rulers to engage in any large scale border operations. During the Shunzhi period, the scarcity of military provisions had inhibited the central authorities from taking initiatives in frontier enterprises though some Mongol tribes had demonstrated signals of disobedience and rebellion. The raids on the borders of China proper were not occasional, but frequent. The Qing government was justifiably alarmed by the aggressiveness of the Mongol tribes, especially the Eleuth 厄魯特 Mongols.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, given the military and financial situation of the time, the Qing dynasty was not capable of making any offensives on their north frontiers. In order to appease the insubordinate Mongol tribes, the Qing authorities resorted to the centripetal force of the Dalai Lama. In 1652, the Qing throne invited the fifth Dalai Lama to visit Beijing and granted him the title as the leader of the Lamaist world. However, the Qing did not quite ascertain the real role the Tibetan religious establishment played in

¹⁴⁴Eleuth Mongols were called Oirats during the Ming dynasty, and had been a keen threat to the Ming northern frontiers. At the end of the Ming, four major tribes formed within Eleuth group: the Choros, Dorbet, Khoshot, and Torghut. Among the four, the Choros was the strongest. They became dominant in the 1620s and organized a Zunghar confederation in the 1630s. "Zunghar" means the left wing as the Choros was located on the left among the four tribes. Later the Choros, sometimes even all the Eleuth Mongols, were called the Zunghars. For the rise of the Zunghar empire, see Section 4 of Chapter II.

the Qing overall frontier affairs until the end of the seventeenth century. The initial contacts with the Tibetans were not leading to any desire for the Qing to obtain further control of Tibet.

Chapter II.

A Strategic Transformation: From the Northwest to the Southwest, 1673-1696

1. The Wu Sangui Rebellion (1673-1681)¹

In the fourth year after the Kangxi emperor took the reins of government in 1669, another serious challenge befell the emperor and the Qing dynasty. The period started with a disaster. The onset of the Wu Sangui Rebellion in 1673 once again pulled the country into another large-scale civil war. The recovery from the devastation caused by the protracted Ming-Qing transition was interrupted.

The rampant expansion of the power of the three feudatories was an inevitable consequence of the drawn-out Qing conquest of China. It was against the will and interest

¹In both Chinese and English literature about the rebellion, it is often referred to as *San Fan zhi Luan* (三藩之亂) or "the Three Feudatories Rebellion." This expression is not accurate and even misleading for it gives an impression that the three feudatories played equal roles in the rebellion. In fact, this rebellion was primarily initiated and carried out by Wu Sangui and his liegemen. The other two feudatories were rather reluctant to join the rebels. Actually Shang Kexi, who died in 1676, never joined the rebellion. He and his another son were vigorously engaged in the campaign against the rebellion. Geng rebelled in 1674, and soon surrendered to the Qing dynasty in 1676. Shang Zhixin, the son of Shang Kexi, took the side of the rebels in 1675, but surrendered to the Qing dynasty in 1677. One of the reasons for Shang's return to the Qing was that he was not trusted by Wu. It is plausible to say that Geng and Shang Zhixing were at no time Wu's accomplices. Although the outcome of the rebellion was the obliteration of the three feudatories by the Qing dynasty without making any distinction--this was why the Qing government denounced the three feudatories in the same terms later, it is necessary to bear in mind that Wu was the sole person responsible for initiating and orchestrating the rebellion. Therefore, it is more appropriate to call the rebellion "the Wu Sangui Rebellion."

of the Qing throne that any kind of feudatory should be created during the process of the conquest war. The formation of the three feudatories in the South and the Southwest was imposed upon the Qing dynasty by a particular set of circumstances. As F. Wakeman Jr. put it :

The Manchus could not by themselves have conquered south China at the time. They had no choice but to rely upon their Chinese adherents to carry out that commission. Yet they apparently did not foresee the dangerous consequences of this course of action. First, and most obviously, the ruling house placed virtually unchecked power in the hands of Wu Sangui and the other two feudatories who helped conquer south China, Geng Jingzhong and Shang Kexi. In effect, the dynasty created the kind of aristocratic threat it had feared from the Manchus' own quarter, but embodied this time in the form of Chinese military nobles. Wu Sangui's principedom, his private army of liegemen, was the very sort of feudal force that Dorgon and then Shunzhi had kept their own Manchu *beile* from acquiring.²

What the three feudatories, especially Wu,³ did in the Southwest after the peace was eventually restored enhanced the distrust of the central government towards them.

Although the Qing court had stressed in the beginning when the three Chinese princes were assigned to be stationed in the South and the Southwest that the civil affairs in the provinces had to be directed by the Governors-General and Governors in their respective provinces, in fact, Wu, Shang and Geng had subdued the regular officials under their

²Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, p. 1036.

³Wu was the most powerful of the three feudatories. On the eve of the rebellion, Shang Kexi was in Guangdong province, Geng Jingzhong in Fujian, and Wu Sangui in Yunnan province, with his influence extending to Guizhou and Sichuan provinces. Shang and Geng each possessed about six to seven thousand of Green Standard soldiers. Wu had alone twelve thousand Green Standard soldiers.

control. Moreover, Wu had usurped the right to appoint officials that should have been under the control of the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Personnel. It was not unusual that when an official appointed by the court arrived at the post, he found the post had already been assigned by Wu to another person. In addition, Wu even recommended his followers to positions in other provinces. Wu also requested extraordinary financial support from the central government on the excuse of reinforcing the frontier and pacifying the non-Han peoples in the Southwest.⁴ But the expenditure of the money was not subject to the control of the Ministry of Revenue. Up until the eruption of the rebellion, the three feudatories consumed approximately half of the annual revenues of the state.⁵ Of the three, Wu got the biggest share.⁶

With huge amounts of money on hand to spend, Wu could enhance his armament and buy off liegemen. Wu also established connections with the Dalai Lama, and began to trade tea for horses with the Tibetans. Wu ceded Zhongdian

⁴Lawrence D. Kessler also notices this: "Wu managed to justify his continuing presence and unchallenged authority in Yunnan many years after the Ming pretender had been eliminated and the area stabilized by submitting exaggerated reports of trouble with non-Han ethnic minorities." Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, p. 77.

⁵Over ten million taels per year. Wakeman, The Great Enterprise, p. 1099.

⁶According to Kessler, Wu's army consumed millions of taels each year by the end of the Shunzhi period, which was about two-fifths of the nation's cash revenues. On the eve of the rebellion, the expenditure of the three feudatories was five million taels each year: Yunnan, 1,700,000; Guizhou, 500,000; Fujian, 1,600,000; Guangdong, 1,200,000. Kessler, Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, p. 78.

中甸, Yunnan province to the Mongols residing there to trade for their support.⁷ In his domain in the Southwest, Wu acted like a *de facto* monarch. He was able to mint money, to regulate tax rates and to set up customs. Shang Zhixin and Geng Jingzhong also accumulated wealth through illegal ways in their domains. All in all, to the central authorities in Beijing, what was going on in the feudatories had been reminiscent of the powerful fiefs in the Early Han dynasty and the dangerous military commandaries in the border areas in the Tang dynasty.⁸

The central government was, naturally, distressed by the increasing power of the three feudatories, especially that of Wu Sangui. The Shunzhi emperor passed away in 1661. The new ruler of the Qing dynasty, Kangxi, inherited from the Shunzhi a conquered China and a series of problems unsolved. The regent Oboi was still under the pressure of circumstances: the Prince Gui of the Southern Ming regime was still at large in Burma. The Qing dynasty had only to resort to Wu to obliterate this last political antagonist to the dynasty. Wu's influence and position had been reinforced with the increase of his merit. It became more and more

⁷Wu imported a great number of horses from Tibet. Ma Yao, *Yunnan Jian Shi*, p. 163.

⁸On these two occasions in Chinese history, feudatories, which were initially installed and supported by the central authorities, became dangerous threats to the central government, and eventually mounted rebellions against the central government.

difficult to initiate an action to knock out the feudatories.⁹

When the Kangxi emperor got rid of the domineering regent Oboi and began to take the reins of government in 1669, he wrote down the three most important things for his ruling of the country, and hung it on a pillar of the palace to give himself a reminder everyday. The three things were the three feudatories, water projects and the Canal grain.¹⁰ The Kangxi emperor recollected after the rebellion was suppressed: "The three feudatories all took charge of military power. Therefore, I was afraid that their power became exuberant with the passing of time, thus leading to unpredictable consequences. So I made up my mind to withdraw them [from their feudatories]."¹¹ In the same edict, the emperor also indicated that he had made this decision in his early youth.¹² For the emperor, the Southwest under the domination of the three Chinese princes constituted the greatest political menace to the dynasty.

Before 1673, the government had poured a monstrous amount of money into Yunnan province every year to meet the demands of Wu Sangui's huge military build-up. But to relate this investment with the emperor's concerns stated above, it is apparent that the money was a means to trade for

⁹On politics of the three feudatories before Wu Sangui rebellion, see Kessler, Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, pp.75-81; Ma Yao Yunnan Jian Shi, pp. 161-164.

¹⁰Shengzu Shilu, vol. 154, p. 10a.

¹¹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 99, p. 8a.

¹²Shengzu Shilu, vol. 99, p. 9a.

political loyalty. The central government was thus thrown into a very passive position. For a period of time, some court officials tried to change the situation by calling for a disarmament in the Southwest. But they failed to find an appropriate way to materialize it. With the influence of the three feudatories, especially, that of Wu, rampant, any attempt aimed at trimming the power of the three feudatories would easily provoke an undesirable conflict. The clash between the three feudatories on the one hand and the central authorities on the other hand was only a matter of time.

The critical moment came in the spring of 1673 when Shang Kexi, feeling disappointed for the misconducts of his Son, Shang Zhixin's 尚之信, requested the Kangxi emperor that he retire to Manchuria where he had been living before the Qing forces conquered China proper.¹³ The emperor seized the opportunity to resolve the problem of the three feudatories. The court ordered that the whole feudatory, en lieu of Shang Kexi himself, move back to Manchuria. Following suit to Shang, in August of the same year, Wu Sangui requested that his feudatory in Yunnan be abolished and he retire to Manchuria too.¹⁴ The common wisdom about this request of Wu is that this was only a probe seeking the

¹³Shang Kexi's son Shang Zhixing was very cruel and domineering. Shang Kexi was always checked by him. Shang hoped that he could retire to Manchuria and that his son could inherit the title of prince and the feudatory.

¹⁴Six days later, Geng Jingzhong also made the same request.

reaction of the central government. What Wu expected was a reaffirmation of his power and domain in the Southwest from the throne. Contrary to the expectations of Wu, the emperor, who had been concerned with the problem and determined to use this chance to reduce the power of the three feudatories, turned this trick against Wu himself. Kangxi approved his request and ordered a transferring of the feudatory from the Southwest to Manchuria despite the objections from cautious officials in the court. For Wu, it meant that his years' travail would go in vain. He decided to rebel.

Wu Sangui rebelled on December 28, 1673, killing the Governor of Yunnan, Zhu Guozhi 朱國治, claiming the foundation of a Zhou 周 dynasty and to fight for restoring the throne of the Ming dynasty. The major provincial officials in Yunnan and Guizhou took Wu's side but the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, Gan Wenkun 甘文焜 committed suicide. The rebels soon had the two provinces under their control.¹⁵

The country was therefore thrown into war again. The whole campaign to put down the rebellion lasted eight years which can be divided into three stages. The first stage was from the onset of the rebellion to the summer of 1676, in which the focus of the war was to fight for an advantage in

¹⁵For the details of Wu's Rebellion and the Qing campaign against it, see also Wei Yuan *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 2; Xiao Yishan *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 1, pp. 449-483; Ma Yao *Yunnan Jian Shi*, pp. 164-166; Wakeman, pp. 1099-1105.

the Shaanxi-Sichuan border area. The second stage was from the summer of 1676, when the Qing forces had stabilized the situation on the Shaanxi front, to the autumn of 1678, when Wu Sangui died shortly after he enthroned himself as the emperor of the Zhou dynasty. During the second stage, the rebel side attempted to make a stand by the Yangtze River and the Qing forces tried to cripple the rebels' capacity to make any offensive. The main battleground was in Hunan province. The third stage started from Wu's death in the summer of 1678 to the end of the whole campaign in 1682 when the rebels retreated to their last base area, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces and the Qing forces launched massive offensive to recover the two provinces and the whole Southwest.

The first stage was the most serious for the Qing dynasty at first. The rebel forces took the offensive, and their territory expanded rapidly as more provincial officials and military commanders in Guangxi, Sichuan and Hunan responded to the rebellion. Among them were Guangxi General Sun Yanling 孫延齡, the Provincial Military Commander of Guangxi Ma Xiong 馬雄, the Governor of Sichuan Luo Sen 羅森 the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Zheng Jiaolin 鄭蛟麟, and the Regional Commander Tan Hong 譚弘. In April, 1674, Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠 rebelled in Fujian province. Geng soon attacked Jiangxi and Zhejiang provinces from Fujian, threatening the Jiangnan region. From the

headquarters of the rebellion in Yunnan-Guizhou, Wu sent out two armies. One, led by Wang Pingfan 王屏藩, entered Sichuan. Another, under the command of Ma Bao 馬寶, advanced into Hunan province. By the spring of 1674, the rebel forces controlled enormous territories in six provinces in the South, the Southwest and the Yangtze valley. In the following year, Shang Zhixin, the son of Shang Kexi, also joined the rebellion.

Although the Qing dynasty faced a debacle south of the Yangtze River, what concerned the central government most was the safety of Shaanxi province for it was the most possible passage for the rebels to attack the capital.¹⁶ In the spring of 1674, the former Governor-General of Shaanxi Moluo 莫洛 was appointed Grand Minister Commander (*jinglue* 經略) to Shaanxi.¹⁷ Shortly before, the throne had sent heavy troops led by Xi'an General Waerka 瓦爾喀 to enter Sichuan from Shaanxi in an attempt to attack Yunnan from Sichuan.¹⁸ But the betrayal of the provincial officials of Sichuan baffled the plan of the central government.

In the autumn of 1674, the Qing offensive in north Sichuan proved to be fruitful. The Qing armies pushed to

¹⁶In Great Enterprise, Wakeman holds that Guangxi province was "particularly critical" and gives a lengthy account of what happened there while giving virtually no mention of the Shaanxi and Sichuan campaign. In my view, the situation in Guangxi was the least critical to the whole campaign. The province had not recovered from the Qing forces until early 1680. The occupation of the province by the rebels did not threaten the throne in the way the revolt of Wang Fuchen did.

¹⁷Shengzu Shilu, vol. 46, pp. 12a-13a.

¹⁸Shengzu Shilu, vol. 44. p. 14b.

near Baoning, a strategically important city in north Sichuan. At this point, Wu's chief general in Sichuan, Wang Pingfan, cut the supply line of the Qing army several times, forcing the Qing troops to retreat from north Sichuan to Hanzhong in Shaanxi. This setback not only prevented the Qing forces from taking Sichuan for four more years, but also triggered an incident that hurt the Qing dynasty gravely. In the early 1675, plagued with a serious provisions shortage, the Provincial Military Commander of Shaanxi Wang Fuchen 王輔臣, Wu Sangui's god-son, rebelled in Ningqiang 寧羌, killing the newly appointed Grand Minister Commander Moluo. The whole Shaanxi front suddenly became fragile. Lacking provisions, the Qing army was forced to abandon Hanzhong in the summer of the year and fled to Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi.

Upon hearing of Wang Fuchen's mutiny, the Kangxi emperor decided to go to the front to supervise the whole campaign himself. Only under the strong persuasion of his court officials, did the emperor give up this desperate idea. Instead the emperor sent heavy armies to Shaanxi and issued an edict to lure Wang away from the rebel camp.¹⁹

Wang Fuchen surrendered to the Qing dynasty in the summer of 1676 under the heavy pressure of the crack Qing forces led by Tuhai 圖海 and with the personal plea to capitulate from the emperor himself. Thus was foiled Wu's

¹⁹"The Qing people hold Wang Fuchen as their deepest concern." Wu Han ed. *Chaoxian Li Chao Shilu zhong de Zhongguo Shiliao*, p. 4020.

attempt to attack Beijing through the passage of Shaanxi-Shanxi provinces. Meanwhile, Geng Jingzhong surrendered to the Qing dynasty too in the south. The Qing forces could then easily clear the rebels from Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Fujian. By the end of the first stage, namely, the summer of 1676, the Qing dynasty had recovered about half of the territories overrun by the rebels. More importantly, the Qing had successfully forced the rebels into a defensive posture on the front at the Shaanxi-Sichuan border.²⁰

During the second stage of the campaign (summer, 1676 - - Autumn, 1678), the focal point of war moved to Hunan province. The two sides had battled heavily to gain the city of Hengzhou 衡州 by the Yangtze River and Dongting Lake 洞庭湖, which was the headquarters of Wu Sangui during this period. During this stage, the rebels had lost any momentum to launch a north expedition aimed at toppling the Qing dynasty. Rather, the rebels had reduced their ambition to holding steadfastly south of the Yangtze valley. There was a rumor that Wu Sangui hoped to share the reign of the country with the Qing dynasty. In the summer of 1677, Shang Zhixin capitulated to the Qing dynasty as he felt that he was not

²⁰The Qing forces might have pushed into north Sichuan at this point. But Kangxi was concerned about the difficulties in transporting provisions in the mountainous area. Thus the emperor preferred to maintain only a stalemate in Shaanxi-Sichuan border until the right moment for a counteroffensive. Another reason not to take the offensive at this point was that the emperor was angry about the Qing army's fiasco at the Baoning front, then at Hanzhong. He ordered that the army come back to Beijing for an investigation of the responsibility for the debacle. See *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 63, pp. 18a-19a; 19b-20a; vol. 65, pp. 19b-20a.

trusted by Wu. Guangdong province was pacified. At this point, only the three Southwestern provinces, Guangxi, and part of Hunan were still in the hands of the rebels.

In March, 1678, sensing his days were numbered, Wu Sangui enthroned himself in Hengzhou, becoming the emperor of the Zhou dynasty.²¹ His enthronement was a signal that he had abandoned the cause of the Ming Restoration, even as a cloak. This action defined him as a rebel pure and simple. It presaged the demise of the rebellion in political terms. In October, Wu died in Hengzhou. His grandson Wu Shifan 吳世璠 inherited the seat of emperor and decided to retreat to Yunnan after some internal disputes. By this time, the Qing's victory was all too clear. Wu's forces had lost all chance to regain the advantage. However, it still took more than three years for the Qing dynasty to claim its final triumph.

In the beginning of the last stage of the campaign, dating from the autumn of 1678 to the early 1682, the Qing forces were ready to make a final attack on the base area of the rebels in Yunnan and Guizhou. In the early winter of 1679, Kangxi sent special commissioners bringing his order to the Qing forces that were stationed at the Shaanxi front, and had maintained a defensive posture for years. He ordered

²¹Wu Sangui claimed to establish this Zhou dynasty right after he rebelled. But he did not take it one step further and enthrone himself because he was then still upholding the cause of "restoring the Ming dynasty". He only entitled himself as "the Generalissimo of the expedition army of the world (*Tianxia Du Zhaotao Bingma Da Yuanshuai* 天下都招討兵馬大元帥)."

an offensive from Shaanxi into Sichuan.²² Thus the stalemate at the Shaanxi-Sichuan border was broken. The Qing armies soon regained Hanzhong, Baoning and Chengdu. Wu's general Wang Pingfan hanged himself in Baoning. Soon thereafter most of the province came under the Qing control. Meanwhile, at the other two fronts, Guangxi and Hunan, the Qing armies crushed the rebel forces, retaking the two provinces.

In the spring of 1680, the Qing forces were prepared to launch a massive attack from all directions on Yunnan and Guizhou. The emperor appointed the former Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang Cai Yurong as the General of Pacifying the Remoteness (*Suiyuan Jiangjun* 綏遠將軍), in charge of all the Green Standard Armies in the campaign.²³ In May, 1680, the Qing armies entered Guizhou. However, the progress was disrupted by the revolt of Tan Hong in eastern Sichuan.²⁴ Taking advantage of the strife between two chief Qing generals in Sichuan, Tan rebelled against the Qing again in autumn, 1680. He made eastern Sichuan his base area and dispatched contingents to invite the rebel forces in Yunnan and Guizhou to break out and to move north, intending

²²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 85, pp. 8b-10a.

²³Cai Yurong later composed a memoir of the last stage of the campaign: *Pingnan Jilue*. It gives detailed and vivid accounts of the battles from Hunan to Yunnan. The memoir was first published in 1982 in *Qing Shi Ziliao*, No. 3.

²⁴Tan Hong was a former Ming officer. He was one of the chief warlords fighting for a piece of their domain in the interregnum of the Ming-Qing transition in Sichuan. He was renegade to the Qing regime in the early 1660s and he was appointed a Regional Military Commander in Sichuan. When Wu rose to rebel in 1673, Tan joined Wu along with several other high officials in Sichuan. But he surrendered to the Qing later during the rebellion.

to cut off the supply line of the Qing forces. Kangxi was not bewildered by this incident. He ordered the defense in the critical Hanzhong-Baoning area reinforced on the one hand, and ordered the Qing armies to keep on the offensive in Guizhou on the other hand. His strategy was to demoralize Tan Hong by attacking directly at the base area of the rebels.²⁵ By the end of the year, Guizhou was occupied by the Qing forces.²⁶ Then in the beginning of 1681, Tan Hong's revolt was quelled²⁷.

The final campaign to recover Yunnan province took quite a long time to complete, apparently due to the difficulties of transporting provisions in the mountainous areas of Yunnan. In November of 1681, the Qing forces pushed to the city of Kunming. Wu Shifan, the grandson of Wu Sangui, committed suicide; and the other rebel leaders surrendered to the Qing armies. Thus concluded the prolonged campaign against this great rebellion.

The suppression campaign of the Wu Sangui rebellion represented not only the last step in the Qing conquest of China, but also a critical stage of the consolidation of the new regime. To be sure, the rebellion had posed a severe challenge to the legitimacy of the Manchu dynasty. Nevertheless, the rebels did not gain as much support from all walks of life as one might expect. The explanation for

²⁵*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 92, pp. 22a-b.

²⁶*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 93, p. 7a.

²⁷*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 94, p. 6a.

this low-key reaction to a rebellion upholding Han nationalism would not lie in people's unquestionable loyalty to the Qing dynasty, rather in people's disdain for a person who had long before lost the credibility to uphold any lofty cause. Wu had placed himself in a vulnerable position when he became a collaborator of the Manchu dynasty. His betrayal of the Ming dynasty and his execution of the last Southern Ming emperor nailed him down to a position from which it was very difficult for him to justify his cause to oppose the Qing dynasty. So he could not attract people to fight for him wholeheartedly, let alone the Ming loyalist scholars.²⁸ It is a constant occurrence that his generals were capricious between the rebellion and the Qing dynasty, even Geng Jingzhong and Shang Zhixin acted this way. Although at times he gathered numerous followers and gained enormous territories, he was never able to remedy his Achilles' heel. The ambiguity of the rebellion inhibited him from taking more aggressive military strategies. After he enthroned himself in 1678, this weakness became lethal to him. At that moment, even envoys from Korea, where the king and his

²⁸Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 rebuffed the invitation of Wu to join the rebellion (*Guo Chao Qixian Leizheng Bubian*, p. 13237). Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 "was cautiously hopeful at the outset of Wu's rebellion, but he later scornfully called it 'the wiggling of worms.'" "Only two relatively well-known Ming scholars joined the rebellion -- Qu Dajun 屈大均, a Guangdong poet, and Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹, a geographer from Jiangxi." (Kessler, *Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684*, pp. 85-86).

officials had kept close observation of the events, noticed that Wu had completely lost his political future.²⁹

The Qing dynasty did suffer from territory losses and military debacles at the beginning of the war. But the superior strength on the side of the Qing forces eventually won the day. Besides Wu's shortcomings, one of the Qing's systems, which was to render handsome rewards to soldiers with merits, played an important role in achieving the ultimate triumph of the Qing dynasty against the rebels.

2. The Aftermath of the Wu Sanguì Rebellion

The eight-year campaign had a profound impact on the country. As the base area of the rebellion, there is no doubt that the Southwest bore tangible scars of the rebellion after the campaign had been brought to a close. Nevertheless, the impact of the rebellion was certainly, and most significantly, beyond the Southwest.

First, the immense military operations against the rebels drained the state treasury, causing temporary financial difficulties for the Qing government. During the campaign, in order to ensure supplies for the military needs, the government adopted some convenient measures to solve the problems. One of these measures was the adoption

²⁹In 1676, the Korean envoy reported to the Korean king: "If [Wu] Sanguì had great ambition of driving out the Qing out of central China, he would have already advanced [into the North]. But he has just held a corner without making any advance. It is obvious that he does not have great ambition." Wu, Han ed. *Chaoxian Li Chao Shilu zhong de Zhongguo Shiliao*, pp. 4031-4032.

of the system of *juanna* 捐納, which was to sell offices to the public in a hidden way.³⁰ War also destroyed the economy in the provinces where the campaigns had been carried out. After the provinces which were overrun by the rebels, such as Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi and Guangdong, were retaken, the Qing authorities found that huge amounts of land had been deserted and residents had fled.³¹ The impact of war was even reflected in the environs of the capital. A Korean envoy to China reported to the Korean King: "When I went to the Yan 燕 area in the year of renzi(1672), vehicles and

³⁰This was the first time that the Qing dynasty adopted this system to raise funds for military campaigns. The procedure is that the government encouraged the people to "donate" either money or grain to the state, then the government rewarded the donation by granting official titles, usually honorific to the donor. This system was later reapplied by the Qing state when it needed to gather resources from society for certain projects or campaigns. Another time when the Qing used this method was in the second Jinchuan campaign of 1771-76. See Section 3 of Chapter V.

³¹"We [Tuhai et al] went to Shaanxi province by imperial order and saw vagrants everywhere. Not only the people in the places overrun by the rebels cannot cultivate the land, the people not disturbed by the rebels also suffer extremely from transporting the provisions of the armies..." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 61, pp. 18b-19a; "The province of Guangdong is extremely devastated." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 71, pp. 12a-b; An edict to the Ministry of Revenue in 1678 read: "In Zhejiang province, there were nineteen counties, such as Jiangshan 江山, Xi'an 西安, and Transport Commands in Wenzhou 温州, and Quzhou 衢州, which were first seized by the rebels, due to their closeness to Fujian province. People [in these places] suffer from difficulties now. So all their taxes of the sixteenth year of the Kangxi reign are exempted. The Governor-General and the Governor there should manage to call back people who fled to avoid the rebels in their home areas, and to restore cultivation." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 74. p. 3a. A viceroy in Jiangxi petitioned the throne in 1679: "People fled and land is deserted in Jiangxi province since the rebellion started. Although [we] made efforts to call for reclamation in both the seventeenth and eighteenth year of the Kangxi reign, there is still more than half land [in the province] deserted. Thence [we] plea to exempt the taxes." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 85, pp. 23a-b.

horses were lined in road, this time(1675) there were many households deserted."³²

Moreover, the rebellion presented a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty. It surprised many that the Qing dynasty survived the challenge rather steadily. There is little doubt that the political weakness on the side of Wu Sangui aided the Qing and contributed to their ultimate victory. If Wu Sangui's political weakness explains the passive response from the Han people to the rebellion,³³ the rebellion, however, provided the nomadic tribes in the north and the northwest regions with a stimulus to harass the Chinese border areas and to expand their sphere of power. Even the Korean court was excited with the success of Wu Sangui. They watched the whole event with anxiety and expectation though they were not capable of acting in any way.³⁴

To pacify the Mongol tribes and subjugate them to the control of the newly-established Qing regime was a critical task of the Qing dynasty. It proved to be a difficult and protracted task. There were several moments during the early Qing when the Mongols constituted a threat or a potential

³²Wu Han ed. *Chaoxian Li Chao Shilu zhong de Zhongguo Shiliao*, p. 4020.

³³There were very few insurrections which occurred to respond to Wu Sangui's Rebellion. One abortive insurrection was in Beijing in early 1674, allegedly organized by a person named Yang Qilong 楊起隆, who claimed that he was the third Crown Prince of the Ming dynasty. The insurrection plot was, however, never realized, for the authorities arrested most of the followers before the planned day of insurrection. Yang fled. See Kessler, *Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule*, p. 83.

³⁴Wu Han ed. *Chaoxian Li Chao Shilu zhong de Zhongguo Shiliao*, p. 3997.

threat to the dynasty. One of them was during Wu Sangui's rebellion. As the Korean officials noted, the relationship between the Qing and the Mongols, particularly the Chahar 察哈爾 Mongols, was fragile during this period. In 1675, when the military situation was the most critical on the Qing side, the Chahar Mongols, which was the most hostile to the Qing among all the Mongol tribes,³⁵ rebelled. Fortunately for the Qing, the rebellion was soon subdued by the heavy presence of the Qing army reinforced by cavalry from other Mongol tribes. It was also during this period that the Zunghar empire took an offensive stance in the Northwest. They took advantage of the rebellion in south China to expand their influence by attacking the Khalkhas 喀爾喀 Mongols, thence threatening southern Mongolia. The Northwest and the North were therefore under the threat of a rising Zunghar empire. Nevertheless, the Qing government was not able to settle any border problem while dealing with the rebellion in the south. But the threat of the Zunghars and other border problems became so intolerable for the Qing throne that they were put on the top of the agenda in the post-rebellion era.

³⁵The Chahar Mongols were the descendants of the most senior Chinggisid line in Mongolia. The well-known Mongol leader Lighdan Khan was of the tribe. Before the Manchus conquered China, most Mongol tribes were already bending to the Manchus for protection and supplies. At that time, the Chahar Mongols were the only tribe which rejected submission to the Manchus. Aided by the other Mongol tribes, the Manchus defeated the Chahar Mongols in 1634. Lighdan Khan died of smallpox in the following year. Therefore the Manchus removed the last barrier to controlling southern Mongolia.

Another threat, which was revealed with the unfolding of the rebellion, that alarmed the Qing throne was the role that Tibet played in the event.³⁶ Through years of buildup in the Southwest, Wu Sangui established certain relations with the Tibetans who were, at that time, under the governance of the Mongol Khan. In the rebellion, the fifth Dalai Lama took an ambiguous position between the Qing throne and the rebellion. In the early stages of the rebellion, the Dalai Lama held back his forces in defiance of the order from the Qing throne to attack the rebels. Then he proposed to the Kangxi emperor that the Qing dynasty share the rule of the country with Wu Sangui and offer a truce if Wu's influence became strong and widespread. Not surprisingly, the emperor rejected this proposal categorically.³⁷ Throughout the rebellion, Wu kept making efforts to ally with the Tibetan leaders in order to strengthen his power. The Qing throne began to be aware of the dubious connections between Wu and the Tibetans, but it did not want to upset overtly the normal relation with Tibet at this point.

It is apparent that Kangxi was not true admirer of the Tibetan Lamaism. It is only out of strategic concerns and needs that the Qing authorities maintained a benign attitude towards Tibetan Lamaism and the Dalai Lama.³⁸ The way in

³⁶Kessler also discusses this issue in Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, pp. 86-87

³⁷Shengzu Shilu, vol. 54, pp. 16a-17b.

³⁸See Section 4 of Chapter I.

which the Kangxi emperor handled the dubious connections between the rebels and the Tibetans was consistent with the general principles of Qing diplomacy. While keeping regular relations with the Tibetans on surface, the Qing authorities did conduct espionage on the Tibetans. In 1680, when the Qing armies were about to push into Yunnan and Guizhou, the emperor ordered the generals at the front to search for any correspondence between the Dalai Lama and Wu Sangui, and to send anything to the capital once found.³⁹ Meanwhile, the emperor sent a commissioner to conduct reconnaissance along the border between Sichuan province and Tibet.⁴⁰ Next year, the emperor further ordered former rebels who had internal information on the connections between the Wu family and the Dalai Lama to the capital for interrogation.⁴¹

Viewed from the perspective of the history of Qing-Tibetan relations, the rebellion was critical in terms of the potential harm that the Tibetans and the Mongol Khan who was ruling Tibet could cause to the Qing empire through allying with satraps of the Qing border provinces. Since the conclusion of the rebellion, the central authorities became particularly alert to this kind of uncontrollable relationship that might develop between the Qing viceroys of the border provinces and the Tibetan authorities. Until the end of the seventeenth century, the Qing central government

³⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 90, p. 5a.

⁴⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 90, pp. 9b-10a.

⁴¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 96, pp. 16a-b.

paid special attention to its provincial officials appointed to the region in order to prevent any sort of recurrence of Wu's story. Nevertheless, what is clear at this point is that the central government still did not feel it imperative to do something beyond the Qing's jurisdiction to settle this matter except reinforcing reconnaissance of the Tibetans and the Mongols along the borders between Sichuan and Tibet. The emphasis of the precaution of the Qing throne was put on the provincial officials appointed to the region instead.

Another factor that explains why the Qing authorities did not adopt any solid steps to enhance their control over Tibet per se after the rebellion was the increasing tension between the Qing dynasty and the Zunghar empire in the Northwest. Becoming aware that the leader of the Zunghar empire Galdan had a close personal relationship with the Tibetan ruling group, the Qing throne chose to maintain the *status quo* in its relationship with Tibet while they actively prepared to resolve the Zunghar problem.

While the Qing worked to maintain the *status quo* in Qing-Tibetan relations, in the immediate post-rebellion era, the focus of the Qing in the Southwest was the reestablishment of control in the region. When the rebellion was eventually put down in 1681, the Southwest was unquestionably in the worst shape in terms of destruction and depopulation. Previous efforts to restore the social life and local economy which had been accelerated from the

early 1670s were wasted. The repopulation which was under way in the 1670s was interrupted by the advent of the rebellion. During the rebellion, another wave of emigration from the Southwest to avoid the warfare took place.⁴² When the Qing armies regained the three southwest provinces in the early 1680s, they found a similar situation to what when the Qing forces first conquered the region in the early 1660s.

In Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou, most houses were burnt down and many people had fled. In Sichuan, the depopulation was serious. In 1681, Sichuan Governor Hang'ai 杭愛 reported that the people in the province had all fled, only soldiers could be seen in the province.⁴³ The local gazetteers are also full of records about the destruction caused by the rebellion.⁴⁴ In his study of immigration to Sichuan during the Qing period, Entenmann estimates that approximately two-thirds or three-fourth of the population in the province was lost, after about forty years of

⁴²"Since Sichuan had been occupied by the rebels for a long time, and the rebels treated the people very ruthlessly and levied high revenue, the common people had fled away one by one." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 88, p. 13b. "... there are few people in Guizhou, many fled out due to the warfare." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 84, p. 10b.

⁴³"Sichuan had been occupied by the rebels for a long time. People fled out. Only soldiers remain in the province. There are cases that soldiers took people's land forcefully, and refuse to pay taxes. Now the rebels have been cleared out. If some measures are not adopted immediately to rectify the situation, this trend will continue." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 96, pp. 20b-21a.

⁴⁴After the rebellion, in Cangxi 蒼溪 county of northern Sichuan, "people did not have any livelihood, all fled into the wild and bleak mountains and valleys... There were innumerable people who lost their property and livelihood." *Cangxi Xian Zhi*. Vol. 13.

continuous warfare, including the Zhang Xianzhong Rebellion, the Ming-Qing transition and the Wu Sangui Rebellion, only one million original residents remained in Sichuan in 1680.⁴⁵

In the immediate post-rebellion era, the central government's attitude towards the Southwest in terms of reconstruction was very much reminiscent of the period after the country was just pacified by the Kangxi emperor in the early 1660s. The region was, as in the previous period, much less economically important than some other regions to the Qing dynasty. The most visible change in administering the region was that the throne paid much more attention in checking the power of the provincial viceroys appointed to the Southwest. The shock of Wu's rebellion was still painfully fresh years after peace had been restored. For the central government, political stability overweighed the reconstruction of society and the recovery of the economy in the Southwest. Although the Southwest was still regarded as "remote," "bleak," and even "uncivilized" by the central government, it was not viewed as politically negligible. Thus, it became a primary goal for the central authorities to avoid nourishing another feudatory or any form of powerful satrap that would threaten the regime politically in the Southwest.

⁴⁵Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," p. 59.

As the paramount commander of the campaign against the Wu Sangui rebellion, Kangxi was deeply affected by the unwonted experience of coping with military debacles and emergencies on a daily basis during the eight-year campaign. To prevent such a political disaster from recurring became an obsession, influencing his politics for the rest of his reign. In 1683, two years after the conclusion of the rebellion, the emperor told his courtiers:

It is not a nice thing to allow military commanders to possess military power for too long. Military officials usually become arrogant and uncheckable if they are in one post for a long period of time. So it always leads to unrest. They can know to awe the throne only if they often come to an audience at the court. People like Wu Sangui, Geng Jingzhong and Shang Zhixin became cavalier and ambitious because they were not ordered to come to see the emperor. Therefore they rebelled. This is indeed an important matter. Moreover, the rank-and-file at the border areas only know their superiors, but not the law of the state. I once issued an edict to the Guangxi General Ma Chengyin 馬承蔭. When Ma knelt down to accept the edict, his subordinates were all surprised, saying: "how can our general also kneel down to somebody." It is thus obvious that one cannot be allowed to possess military power for too long.⁴⁶

The Qing rulers were taught to be very careful towards the high officials, especially high officials appointed to the border regions during the rebellion. To be sure, the precaution of the central authorities did not lead to an exclusion of Han Chinese officials to those posts in the Southwest. Rather, both Manchu and Han Chinese officials were subject to the surveillance of the central

⁴⁶Shengzhu Shilu, vol. 109, pp. 2a-b.

authorities.⁴⁷ This became the backdrop for three cases in which three viceroys from the three Southwest provinces were condemned to severe punishment within ten years following the rebellion. The three cases reflect the far-reaching echoes of the Wu Sangui Rebellion. And they provide some clues to Qing strategies towards the Southwest in the post-rebellion period.

The first case was that of Cai Yurong. Cai was from an established Chinese banner family whose father had been the Director-General of Grain Transport.⁴⁸ As an able viceroy, Cai had adopted efficient measures to promote repopulation and reclamation in Huguang and Sichuan provinces prior to the breakout of the rebellion when he was the Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang.⁴⁹ In 1674, Cai was granted the title of Minister of the Ministry of War as an award for his efforts in repopulating his pale.⁵⁰

⁴⁷The poor performance of the Manchu bannermen in the campaign against the rebellion gave the Kangxi emperor a chance to knock down the pretension that the Manchu elites always assumed prior to the rebellion. Thomas J. Barfield remarks on the victory of the emperor as the following: "The failure of the Manchu military leadership and the effective use of Green Standard troops also marked the consolidation of the Qing government. Neither banner leaders nor old Chinese allies could consider themselves exempt from Kangxi's authority. The Manchu bannermen in particular could no longer claim to be the military backbone of the empire after failing in their duty to the dynasty. From now on, these Manchus could only maintain their position by supporting the dynasty in hope of receiving imperial favor. Kangxi was also free to employ Chinese in military or civil positions as he pleased." Thomas J. Barfield, The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, p. 274.

⁴⁸Qing Shi Liezhuan, p. 18.

⁴⁹See Section 2 of Chapter I.

⁵⁰Shengzu Shilu, vol. 46, p. 3b.

Cai was in the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang when Wu Sangui's rebellion broke out. He was one of the persons who first reported to the throne the beginnings of the rebellion. Throughout the rebellion, Cai had been one of the chief officials at the front directing the campaign against the rebels. He was trusted by the emperor, despite the circumstances of the time that so many Han officials surrendered to the rebel forces and that almost all Han officials were subject to suspicion and surveillance.⁵¹ In the last stage of the campaign, Cai was appointed as the General of Pacifying Remoteness to direct all Green Standard Armies to attack Yunnan province. This appointment made Cai the most powerful Chinese commander at the Southwest front.⁵²

After the conclusion of the campaign, Cai returned to his post in Huguang as the Governor-general of Huguang.⁵³

⁵¹In the early stage of the campaign, Cai was accused of mistakenly moving troops so that most important cities in Hunan province were lost to the rebels. The throne pardoned this dereliction and ordered him to stay at the post to remedy the situation. Then Guangxi General Ma Xiong rebelled and sent a letter to the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi Jin Guangzu 金光祖. In the letter, Ma claimed that Cai Yurong was going to surrender to Wu. Upon hearing this, Cai memorialized to the emperor to clarify the case and to request to be dismissed from the post and to retire to his original banner camp. The emperor made him at ease by telling him to continue to serve his tenure in the front and not to be disturbed by the letter. *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, p. 18.

⁵²In autumn, 1680, on the eve of the campaign to recover Guizhou and Yunnan province, the chief commander of the Manchu troops, the General of Tranquilizing the Remoteness (*Dingyuan da Jiangjun* 定遠大將軍) Zhangtai 章泰 memorialized the throne to unify the leadership of the campaign. The emperor ordered Cai to communicate on military matters with Zhangtai. *Shengzu Shilu*, vo. 91, pp. 26a-b. Cai was therefore *de facto* the co-commander in chief of the Yunnan-Guizhou campaign.

⁵³After the rebellion started, the Qing government made the Governor-general of Sichuan and Huguang two posts: Governor-general of Sichuan

Before long, Cai was appointed as Governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou in the early 1682.⁵⁴

Cai's survival of the rebellion and the purge of the rebellion-related officials afterwards and his successful advancement through the bureaucratic echelons did not necessarily immunize him from political downfalls. The last appointment of Cai's actually put him in a similar position as which Wu Sangui had been situated. In order to prevent another strong satrap from arising, the emperor decided not to install a Manchu General in Yunnan.⁵⁵ Yet for the regular provincial officials appointed to the areas, there was great incertitude waiting for them because of the shadow of the Wan Sangui Rebellion. Cai thus faced a very unforeseeable future. What made things worse was Cai's hawkish stance in dealing with the non-Han peoples, especially the Miao, in the two provinces.

Because of Wu Sangui's precedent in taking advantage of suppressing the non-Han peoples in the Southwest to expand his own strength and power, the emperor was particularly on the alert against any request to resort to military action against the non-Han peoples in the region. He saw it as a way for the provincial officials to augment their own power. Once the Qing forces were involved in such a military operation, the central government would be forced to follow

and Governor-general of Huguang. Cai was the Governor-general of Huguang.

⁵⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 100, p. 11b.

⁵⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 79, pp. 21a-b.

the steps initiated by the border viceroys. It was under just such a pretext that Wu persuaded the central government to grant him enormous fiscal support. Out of such consideration, throughout the rest of the Kangxi reign, the Qing government did not intend to launch any large-scale operations to tighten its control on the communities of non-Han peoples living in the vast areas of the Southwest.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, Cai was not aware of this mentality of the emperor's.

Shortly after he took office in Yunnan, Cai began to take high-handed measures concerning the affairs of the native peoples while he set his hands to land reclamation as well as other steps for reinvigorating economy in the two provinces. He first proposed repealing the ranks and titles given to the native chieftains when they submitted to the Qing forces, but, at the same time allowing them to maintain their system of inheritance of the chieftainship.⁵⁷ Then Cai proposed forbidding native chieftains and peoples from possessing any arms, and forbidding Han Chinese from trading

⁵⁶During the campaign to recover Yunnan and Guizhou, Kangxi did not show any mercy towards the non-Han chieftains who rebelled against the central government. He once ordered one of the chief commanders of the campaign, Zhao Liang-tung 趙良棟, to extirpate them if they did not respond to the appeasement of the Qing authorities. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 97, pp. 3a-b. But after peace was restored, the regular officials took over the local administration, the central government became rather restrained from encouraging provincial officials to wield the stick on the native non-Han peoples in the Southwest.

⁵⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 105, pp. 8b-9a. According to *Qing Shi Liezhuan* (p. 19) and *Qing Shi Gao* (vol. 256), Cai submitted ten proposals with regard to the recovery of Yunnan and Guizhou from the destruction in late 1682. According to Cai's memoir *Ping Nan Jilue*, the throne endorsed his proposals.

in materials for making gunpowder such as lead, nitre and sulphur to the Lolos (Yi people).⁵⁸ Later Cai again requested to let the offspring of native chieftains take part in the civil service examinations and enter the bureaucracy.⁵⁹ This last step was apparently to lead to a weakening of the system of the native chieftain, as the holding of a degree from the examinations was a substitute for the qualification granted by birth status to be a local chieftain.

The Kangxi emperor favored appeasement as the single most important principle underlying the policies towards the non-Han peoples in the Southwest. The fear of the rise of any centrifugal force among the border viceroys was great, as-much-so that the Kangxi emperor turned down any motion to evoke the *status quo* in the region. To Cai's proposals, the emperor made it clear that the system of the native chieftain was the most desirable way to harness the non-Han peoples of the Southwest.⁶⁰ Kangxi disapproved of Cai's proposal to set a limit on arms' possession by the non-Han peoples.

In the spring of 1683, when the Provincial Military Commander of Guizhou suggested that it was not wise to

⁵⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 106, pp. 18a-b.

⁵⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 113, pp. 4b-5a.

⁶⁰Kangxi said: "I think native chieftains in Pingyue 平越, Qianxi 黔西, Weining 威寧 and Daning 大寧 four prefectures originally belonging to the Miao barbarians, different from the common people. It is the best method to still use native chieftains to rule these places." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 106, pp. 18b-19a.

entitle native chieftains to military posts, the emperor ordered the Ministry of War to send a commissioner to Yunnan and Guizhou to investigate the matter of the native chieftain and to provide a solution to the issue.⁶¹

Apparently, the emperor hoped to stabilize the situation of the non-Han peoples in the Southwest.⁶²

In early 1686, Cai reported to the throne that the Miao people had made disturbances in Guizhou province, and thus requested to launch a military campaign to suppress the Miaos. Kangxi was particularly stirred by this motive from Cai. He suspected that what Cai was doing in the Southwest was following the old track of Wu feudatory. He also suspected what Cai wanted to do was to extract the wealth of the local chieftains and to attack them if they failed to comply.⁶³ Cai's career was therefore jeopardized. Shortly after Cai's petition was rejected by the emperor, Kangxi issued another edict to the Ministry of Personnel and the Ministry of War, reiterating his appeasement policy towards the Miaos in the Southwest, and Hunan and Guangxi province. The emperor denounced the provincial Governors and Governors-General in these regions for their hawkish stance on Miao affairs. Obviously, this edict was mainly targeting

⁶¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 108, p. 11a.

⁶²According to the report jointly made by the special commissioner to Guizhou Kulena 庫勒納 and Cai Yurong, the central government approved not to restore the local chieftain system in Shuixi, the Miao area in Guizhou for it had been years since Wu instituted regular officials in the area in 1665. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 113, p. 17a.

⁶³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 124, pp. 4b-5a.

Yunnan and Guizhou Governor-General Cai Yurong. His smooth promotion through the bureaucracy and his merits in putting down the Wu Sangui Rebellion just turned around against him due to the special lesson that the emperor learned so dearly through the rebellion.

Three months later, in the spring of 1686, Cai was removed from the post of Governor-General after four years of serving in that position and was transferred to an insignificant post in the capital, Vice Director-General of the Capital Granaries (*Zongdu Cangchang Shilang* 總督倉場侍郎). The person who succeeded Cai was Fan Chengxun 范承勳, the son of Fan Wencheng 范文程,⁶⁴ and the younger brother of Fan Chengmo 范承謨, who became a role model for Chinese officials due to his loyalty to the Qing and his martyrdom in the Wu Sangui Rebellion.⁶⁵ Without question, his taking the post would put the throne at ease. But Cai had yet a greater ordeal awaiting him ahead. Early next year, Cai was arrested under the excuse that he had appropriated the wealth of Wu Sangui and had taken Wu's grand-daughter as his concubine. The charge was so serious that Cai was sentenced to the capital penalty. He was pardoned of death only by the order of the emperor. Instead, he was granted to be jailed in

⁶⁴Fan Wencheng (1597-1666) was from a family of Ming high officials. He surrendered to the Qing dynasty in 1618 before the Qing conquered China. He became very trusted by the Qing rulers, and was instrumental in the Qing conquest of China. His biographies are in the *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 232 and the *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁵ In *Great Enterprise* (pp. 1105-1115), Wakeman gives a detailed account of Fan Chengmo's story during the Wu Sangui Rebellion. His biography is also in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 251.

shackles for three months, whipped one hundred times and exiled to Manchuria. His property was confiscated and his family was dismissed.

Coincidentally, when Cai was trying to persuade the throne to take a harder line against the local chieftain, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Xifo 禧佛 also petitioned to the throne requesting to forbid selling arms to the non-Han peoples in Sichuan.⁶⁶ Although the Ministry of War approved his petition, he was soon transferred to the post of Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Law in the capital in autumn, 1686, only three months after Cai was removed from his post of the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou.

The first big trial Xifo dealt with in his new office was Cai's case. Although Cai had been sentenced to death by the Ministry of Law, Xifo was accused of trying to shield Cai in the trial immediately after Cai's case was closed. He was given one hundred lashes and jailed two months with shackles. Then he was also exiled to Manchuria by the order of the Kangxi emperor. Several other officials in the Ministry of Law were also punished for the same charge.⁶⁷

The emperor's sensibility to the high-handed attitude of the provincial mandarins towards the non-Han peoples in the Southwest did not ease with time. Seven years later, in 1692, the third provincial governor from the Southwest was condemned because of the same mistake made in business

⁶⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 126. pp. 1b-2a.

⁶⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 129. pp. 12a-13a.

relative to non-Han peoples' affairs. This one was Guizhou Governor Wei Jiqi 衛既齊. Wei was a pretentious bureaucrat. He once compared himself with two historic figures Junchen 君陳 and Zhaobo 召伯 of the Zhou dynasty⁶⁸ in a memorial he submitted to the emperor. His self-assurance impressed Kangxi so much that he could still remember this memorial when Wei was accused about two years later.

Wei Jiqi was appointed the Governor of Guizhou in the autumn of 1691. Then in 1692, misled by phony information from his subordinates, he launched a campaign to suppress the Miao people in Liping 黎平 prefecture, Guizhou. Then he reported to the throne that the Qing troops killed over one thousand Miao people in the area, which was again fabricated by his subordinates. Although Wei quickly corrected his false report, Kangxi had already been irritated. It was utterly against the rule that any such military aggression be carried on in the Southwest without the emperor's approval first. The emperor denounced Wei harshly and ordered him punished. After a trial, he was given the death penalty. At last, the emperor himself changed the sentence into exile to Manchuria.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Junchen was son of Zhou Marquis (周公旦). He became the king of the Zhou dynasty after the Zhou Marquis died. Zhaobo's name was Ji Shi 姬奭. He was a subject of King Wu of the Zhou dynasty. He became very powerful after the death of King Wu. Both figures symbolized subjects with the potential to rule.

⁶⁹ *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 155, pp. 19a-a; pp. 22a-b. Vol. 158, pp. 19a-20a; 20a-b. Also *Qing Shih Gao*, vol. 276.

The three cases mentioned above were not random and unrelated cases. They well reflect the profound concern of the central government over its border satraps in the Southwest. After Wu's rebellion was terminated, the major goal for the central government in ruling the Southwest was to keep this region firmly under the Qing's political control in order to prevent any further unrest from occurring, particularly unrest fermented within the bureaucratic circle. The punishments that the these viceroys received were meant to send a message. The message delivered by the three cases was a warning to the other officials in the region. In fact, none of the three remained in exile for a long time. In his later years, Cai Yurong penned a memoir of his campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion after he was appointed the General of Pacifying the Remoteness. At the end of the memoir, Cai signed implicitly that it was difficult to stay in office once one had some military merits. He might have understood well the true cause of his downfall.⁷⁰

After Cai Yurong was transferred to the capital, the court appointed Fan Chengxun the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou in the late spring of 1686. Fan remain in that position for eight years. As one of the most trusted official of the emperor, Fan well embodied the line of the central authorities towards the region in his administration

⁷⁰Cai Yurong, *Ping Nan Jilue*.

of the two provinces. There was no more recourse to military power to deal with the non-Han peoples in either province during Fan's tenure. At the end of 1693, Fan went to the capital to receive an audience with the emperor. Kangxi was so moved by seeing Fan, the son of the late great official, Fan Wencheng and the brother of the martyr, Fan Chengmo, that Kangxi bestowed an outfit of furs of his own to Fan as a token of his gratitude to the honorable family, also as a reward for the excellent performance of Fan himself in the special post in the Southwest.⁷¹ Obviously, the emperor was satisfied with the choice he had made several years ago to appoint Fan Chengxun to this unusual position.

3. Prosperity versus Desolation

After the conclusion of the rebellion, the recovery of economy nationwide was speedy. Generally speaking, the country had stepped out of the economic difficulties caused by the rebellion by 1685, the fourth year after the end of the campaign. As the Kangxi emperor said, "the state fiscs are now full."⁷² The throne was then able to invest in some major water projects and to grant partial tax exemptions to the provinces which had been tightly squeezed by the authorities, such as Jiangsu province. Meanwhile, the temporary measures to increase state income adopted during the campaign were abated. In 1689, the central government

⁷¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 161, pp. 3b-4a.

⁷²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 123, pp. 3a-b.

exempted the Jiangnan region of all arrears from the past years which had been a heavy burden for the people as well as the officials in the region.⁷³ In 1691, the throne even felt sure of exempting the Canal Grain in rotation among the seven provinces which had such an obligation.⁷⁴

Having been freed from the massive campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion, the Qing throne now had the capacity to deal with its border affairs. In 1683, the Qing forces defeated their rival for decades in the southeastern coastal areas, the Zheng family. Zheng Keshuang 鄭克爽, the chief of the pirate force capitulated. Thereafter, the Qing dynasty could be released from costly coastal defence maneuvers and concentrate on the northern borders which held the most thorny and threatening problems: the expansion of the Russians in the Amur valley and the aggression of the Zunghars in north Mongolia.

In the years of 1685-1686, the Kangxi emperor led two expeditions himself to the northeast border to fight with the Russians whose expansion in Siberia and the Amur valley alarmed the Qing dynasty. The military supremacy of the Qing armies over the Russians laid a firm foundation for negotiations. In 1689, the treaty of Nerchinsk was concluded, which regulated the boundary between the two countries along the Argun River and the Amur River. The tension in the northeastern periphery was thus under

⁷³Shengzu Shilu, vol. 139, pp. 13a-14a.

⁷⁴Shengzu Shilu, vol. 153, pp. 23b-24a.

control.⁷⁵ During and after the northeastern crisis, the Qing authorities paid greater attention to explore Manchuria than before. With governmental investment and careful planning, Manchuria was getting more populated, and more widely cultivated.⁷⁶

The next major target of Kangxi's diplomacy was Zungharia in the northwest frontier. From the end of the conflicts with the Russians in the northeastern fringe to 1696, the preoccupation of the Qing throne was Zunghar affairs. During this period, the Qing rulers regarded the Zunghars as the most dangerous enemy to the stability of the Qing empire. This estimation of the whole frontier situation led to the three major expeditions of Qing troops to the Northwest.⁷⁷ Only when the role played by the Tibetan leaders in the Zunghar crisis was revealed in 1695, did the Qing begin to realize the indispensibility of changing its fundamental strategy of diplomacy.

Therefore, during this period, as in the 1660s and the early 1670s, there was no urgent need for the central authorities to devote much energy and resources to revitalize the Southwest. An active policy to revitalize a war-torn region required heavy investment from outside,

⁷⁵About the Sino-Russian relations of the time and the two campaigns against the Russians see Kessler, Kangxi and the Consolidation of Qing Rule: 1661-1684, pp. 97-103; Also Mark Mancall, Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations until 1728; Yuan Senpo, Kang Yong Qian Jingying yu Kaifa Bei Jiang, pp. 36-58.

⁷⁶Yuan Senpo, Kang Yong Qian Jingying yu Kaifa Bei Jiang, pp. 386-405.

⁷⁷See next section.

either state or private sectors. However, the central government was not very enthusiastic about promoting prosperity in the Southwest. Since political stability was the primary goal, repopulation and economic development were lagging behind the other regions which received more attention from the throne.⁷⁸ Still aware that the huge amount of state money which had poured into the Southwest had only aided the growth of an ambitious renegade, the central government was especially cautious to avoid repeating the scenario. Therefore, any requests for financial investment would remind the throne of Wu Sangui. This had been a taboo for the provincial viceroys of the Southwest after the case of Cai Yurong.

After the campaign against the rebellion was concluded, the Southwest was sparsely populated and economy was bankrupt. When the Qing armies launched their final attack upon the region, they found it extremely difficult to gather enough provisions for the armies locally. In order to gain victory in the campaign, the emperor himself had to encourage the troops that entered the region to use whatever ways possible to get food. That was actually a green light to loot and pillage. When the region was recovered by the

⁷⁸After the rebellion, the throne sent special commissioners from the capital to oversee the repopulation and the restoration of the economy in the provinces. For instance, Du Zhen 杜臻, Vice-President of the Ministry of Personnel, and Xizhu 席柱, subchancellor of the Neige, were sent to Fujian and Guangdong; Jin Shijian 金世鑑, vice-president of the Ministry of Works, and Yasiha 雅思哈, Vice-President of the Censorate were sent to Zhejiang and Jiangnan (Kessler, p. 95). But there was no commissioner sent to the Southwest for this matter.

Qing forces, once again it was not uncommon that military personnel outnumbered civilians in some areas.⁷⁹

In 1681, Sichuan Governor Hang'ai reported to the throne that people in Sichuan all fled due to the protracted dominance of the province by the rebels, that there were only soldiers being seen in the province at that time. In the same memorial, the Governor revealed that the soldiers occupied the arable land of the original residents, but refused to pay taxes. He warned that the situation would discourage people who had fled from returning to their home areas. He suggested forcing the military to return the land they tilled to the original residents once they came back, but to allow the officials and the soldiers who tilled the land that nobody claimed to continue their cultivation under the condition that it be registered as taxable land.⁸⁰

The central government was aware of the desolate situation in the Southwest. In the wake of the campaign against the rebellion, the Qing central authorities had granted extensive taxation exemptions and rebates to the Southwest. Until 1693, the emperor still lamented the hardship of people's life and the slow recovery of the economy from war devastation in the Southwest. He granted the three provinces of the Southwest and Guangxi province a total exemption of capitation of the following year, 1694. The emperor sighed: "Guangxi, Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan

⁷⁹See footnote 43 of this Chapter.

⁸⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 96, pp. 20b-21b.

four provinces are all frontier areas, soil being meager, livelihood being difficult. It is different from the inland areas where boat and carriages are convergent, and a vast variety of means for living are available."⁸¹

From the point of view of the Qing central authorities, the desolation in the Southwest was a matter of fact. It would take tremendous efforts to heal the scars of war in the region. However, the focus of the state strategy of the moment was not to bring life to these remote provinces, rather, the essential policy of the central government was *laissez-faire* in nature. The eruption of the great rebellion forged by Wu Sangui suddenly focused the central government's attention on the remote Southwest. The eight years spent dealing with this enormous campaign to put down the rebellion had changed the basic view of the central authorities. They would no longer hold that the Southwest was insignificant in terms of the political stability. Nevertheless, the Southwest still occupied a less important position in the strategic considerations of the central authorities in this period. Regarded as "remote", "bleak" and "uncivilized", the Southwest was, as a whole, behind the other areas which were strategically more important for the central government such as Jiangnan, Zhili, and Manchuria. .

For the central government, the more urgent and important matter was how to maintain a functioning state

⁸¹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 160, pp. 1b-2b.

apparatus in the region. This entailed building up the upper layers of the social structure, the elite community first. For officials and bureaucrats, serving office in the Southwest was not in their best interests for obvious reasons. In 1685, the Regional Commander of north Sichuan stationed in Baoning, Zhao Hongcan 趙弘燦, a native from Ningxia requested to be transferred to another place under the excuse of his inability to acclimate to the climate of northern Sichuan. He was then transferred to Zhili province.⁸² This was not a common case among military officials. Zhao Hongcan obtained his purpose only because he was son of Zhao Liangdong 趙良棟, another major Han Chinese commander who had established great merit in the campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion. Ten years later, in 1695, when the father was ordered to retire to his hometown, he requested to go to Jiangnan to live and have his illness cured there. Kangxi granted him permission.⁸³

It seems a common practice for bureaucrats to take advantage of their public service to change their residences for their own interests, though most of them did not need to ask for permission from the imperial power. Nevertheless, the pattern was a movement away from a relatively desolate area to a relative prosperous area. The outcome was that elites moved to the more wealthy and more developed regions and avoided going to undeveloped and meager regions. There

⁸²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 121, pp. 3a-b.

⁸³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 167, pp. 22a-b.

is little doubt that Jiangnan was the region to which people always desired to go; likewise the Southwest was certainly among the top regions to which people were reluctant to go. During this period the practice had become so widespread that the authorities had to do something to check this it. What the Qing government did was two things. One was to increase the attractiveness of serving in the remote provinces and another was to force bureaucrats from remote regions to return to their hometown once their tenures were terminated.

In 1681, when a prefecture magistrate from Guangdong province petitioned that officials who could recruit cultivators to their jurisdiction be rewarded, Kangxi ordered that no province but the three provinces in the Southwest, Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou be allowed to enjoy such a special treatment.⁸⁴ This policy had a dual effect. On the one hand, it gave some vigor to the repopulation of the Southwest. On the other hand, it provided some incentive for the officials to serve in the region.

In 1683, Kangxi asked the Ministry of Personnel to produce a solution to the problem that bureaucrats appointed to Sichuan and Guangxi always delayed their arrival at their post, so that many posts stood vacant for a long time in the two provinces. One month later, the Ministry of Personnel worked out a solution that regulated that the stipend of

⁸⁴Shengzu Shilu, vol. 96, pp. 27b-28a.

officials who were appointed to the two province be changed from "the stipend of inland standard (*fufeng* 腹俸)" to "the stipend of border standard (*bianfeng* 邊俸)." It meant an increase of payment to those officials. In the early Qing dynasty, both of these two provinces were listed as ones for which the stipend was of the border standard. Sichuan was changed to inland standard in 1663, Guangxi was changed in 1669.⁸⁵ To increase the stipend of officials and bureaucrats appointed to Sichuan and Guangxi to match the stipend paid to officials in Yunnan and Guizhou, which were always listed as "the border standard" was one method to guarantee the normal functioning of governmental institutions in these remote regions.

The whole Southwest remained unattractive to both elites and commoners for the rest of this period. The throne was clear about the situation, but was unable to do much about it. In an effort to change this, in the autumn of 1685, the throne appointed the outstanding official Yao Diyu 姚締虞 as Governor of Sichuan. Yao had once served as a Judge (*tuiguan* 推官) in Chengdu prefecture when the area was first conquered by the Qing forces in 1658. At that time, the small number of survivors of the long-time devastation gathered to go about looting and accused each other, making big trouble for the new authorities. Yao earned his

⁸⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 113, p. 9a.

reputation by ably handling these lawsuits. After decades, he was still remembered by the people in the area.⁸⁶

Yao was then at the post of Censor (*Zuo Jiandu Yushi* 左僉都御史) in the capital when he was appointed Governor of Sichuan. Before he left for the post, the emperor granted an audience to him. Kangxi expressed his concern over the province:

At the end of the Ming dynasty, the province of Sichuan suffered from the Zhang Xianzhong rebellion, population reduced, and land was deserted. Then there were frequent devastations caused by a variety of rebels. People there thus were further exhausted. You should rectify yourself and lead your subordinates to pacify and foster the residents, making sure that the people of the remoteness all enjoy their life and occupations. Satisfy my very high expectations in choosing you [to this post].⁸⁷

The next year, the emperor voiced again his awareness and concern of the desolation in Sichuan when a dispute on the issue of logging phoebe nanmu, a tree whose wood is of good quality for construction, in Sichuan arose. Sichuan was well known for its production of nanmu trees. The nanmu log was the best choice for a building's pillars and beams. Several years ago, the court had sent commissioners to some provinces of the South and the Southwest to purchase logs of nanmu trees for the purpose of renovating of the imperial palace in the capital. In 1686, an official from Sichuan memorialized to stop or to reduce purchasing and transporting nanmu logs from Sichuan as it was difficult and

⁸⁶*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 274.

⁸⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 122, p. 7b.

expensive to transport logs out of the Emei Mountain area. Kangxi responded to this request by saying: "Sichuan has repeatedly suffered from wars. People are extremely poor. I have deep compassion for them. How can they be again bothered?" He ordered to stop logging nanmu in Sichuan.⁸⁸ Again in the following year, the emperor issued an edict to the Ministry of Works ordering them to inform the Governor of Sichuan to halt the logging and transporting of nanmu trees.⁸⁹ It seems that the throne was responding to the situation in Sichuan as well as the whole Southwest in a rather passive way. Throughout this period, what the central government did in terms of recovery of the population loss and economic life was barely beyond merely granting exemptions.

In the summer of 1686, the Governor of Sichuan Yao Diyu presented an important memorial to the throne proposing a solution to the dismal situation after being in the post for less than one year. The memorial reads:

having repeatedly suffered from warfare, Sichuan is in an extremely devastated state. Most official households and local gentry families (*huanghu xiangshen* 宦户乡绅) have emigrated to other provinces. Although it has been ordered that their offspring resume their holdings and occupations [in Sichuan], after having participated in the examinations and entered into officialdom [from Sichuan], they still turn away from their original places and live in the other provinces. Having seen this, the commoners [who emigrated from Sichuan] are also reluctant to come back. Therefore, if one gentry family comes back in response to the government's call,

⁸⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 124, pp. 21b-22a.

⁸⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 130. pp. 2b-3a.

it would be equal to several households of commoners' coming back. If only gentry and official families come back, the common people will return voluntarily. We have now located the emigrated gentry families, please let the concerned ministry order them to resume their former occupations in Sichuan.⁹⁰

Yao's memorial for the first time pointed out that the expatriation of the elites was a key to the repopulation and cultivation of the barren land of Sichuan. It is not difficult to imagine that elites might be more mobile than commoners might be. And they would lead the trend by setting role models for commoners as Yao suggested. Therefore, an expatriation of elites would inevitably trigger a massive expatriation at bottom level. Although Yao did not make it clear, he alluded that this expatriation of elites was still continuing via the drain of newcomers to the bureaucracy through the examinations. What he implied was that officials and bureaucrats from Sichuan tended to stay in the places where they had served, and not returning to their hometown at the completion of their tenure.

As mentioned earlier, the authorities had been bothered by this geographic mobility among the officialdom. At some points, the authorities had to force the retired officials to return to their hometown. The emperor approved Yao's suggestion. He commented: "He memorialized a right thing. Sichuan has vast territory but is sparsely populated. If officials coming from the province all settled down in other

⁹⁰Qing Shih Gao, vol. 274.

provinces, the population of Sichuan must be less and less, and the area more and more deserted."⁹¹

For some reason the emperor was very impressed by this memorial. Three years later, 1688, Yao Diyu died in his office. In the summer of that year, Gaertu 噶爾圖 was appointed Yao's successor. In the audience with the emperor before his departure, Kangxi recalled the memorial: "Yao Diyu had memorialized that many gentry families from Sichuan had moved to other provinces. They should be ordered to return their hometowns. For that will lead to prosperity for the localities, which will also be beneficial to the poor people. You should gradually pick up this matter." In the same meeting, the emperor also pointed out that there was a great deal of deserted land in Sichuan, and that cultivators should be recruited to till it.⁹²

Again in 1691, when an official from the Ministry of Law proposed that the retired officials living in provinces other than their home province be allowed to make a choice of living place at their will, free of forced return, the emperor approved this motion with exceptions only to officials from Fengtian province and Sichuan province.⁹³ That means that officials from those two provinces were still subject to forced return.

⁹¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 126. p. 24b.

⁹²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 136. pp. 7b-8a.

⁹³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 150, pp. 15b-16a.

To attract, or to force elites to reside in an undeveloped area was not without difficulty. It is hardly possible to esteem how successful this scheme worked during this period. What is apparent, however, is that there was a lack of incentive for the elites to return their domiciliary areas. In order to reconstruct the social hierarchy in the Southwest, another way was to cultivate a new elite class among the new residents immigrating to the region. In 1690, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Ge Sitai 葛思泰 petitioned the central government to allow the offspring of immigrants to Sichuan to be able to take part in the civil service examinations.⁹⁴ As Yao Diyu revealed in his 1686 memorial, emigrated gentry families sent their offspring to Sichuan to participate in the examinations, taking advantage of their domicile. Not surprisingly, this group of people would easily make their bid given the fairly low density of population and a quota regulated before the rebellion. Nevertheless, after they obtained a degree and bureaucratic assignments, they would never return to Sichuan. Ge Sitai's proposal was actually aimed at counteracting this flaw in the practice of the examination system in this region and to gradually build a Sichuan-based elite stratum since their family interests lay in their land reclamation and enterprises established in Sichuan province.

⁹⁴Shengzu Shilu, vol. 149. p. 15a.

During this period, from the conclusion of Wu Sangui's Rebellion to 1696, the recovery of population loss and economy in the Southwest was gradually picking up. In 1685, the registered population of Sichuan was only 18,000.⁹⁵ It is a phony number obviously. But it was the number for the authorities to levy head tax. So no matter how many people were living in the province, the tax income that the state could claim was minimum. In 1688, the total annual tax income levied from Sichuan was only 40,000 taels of silver.⁹⁶ By 1692, the annual head tax increased to 120,000s tael per year, the number of registered population 197,965 exceeding the pre-rebellion era.⁹⁷ It is plausible that the population increase included the registration of the demilitarized soldiers who had been tilling the land without claiming any tax obligation before the authorities tightened its control on household registration. Meanwhile, there were similar developments in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces.

On the whole, compared with the other regions, the recovery and the further development in the Southwest lagged behind considerably. Although the central authorities had good knowledge of the grim situation in the Southwest, and tried to lure or force elites to stay in the region and frequently granted tax exemptions and rebates, they could

⁹⁵*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 274, p. 10051.

⁹⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 136, pp. 7b-8a.

⁹⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 156, pp. 4a-b.

not push harder given the circumstances of the post-rebellion era. The burst of resurgence awaited yet a new impetus.

4. The Zunghar Expeditions and the Exposure of the Tibetan Conspiracy

In the 1690s, after the resolution of the Sino-Russian conflict, the Zunghar crisis became the center of attention for the Qing authorities. The menace of the Zunghars had long been a serious problem for the Qing throne. Actually, the settlement of the dispute with the Russians was one step towards the resolution of the Zunghar problem. The Qing throne had feared that the two powers could ally with each other to rival the Qing empire. The Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 had firmly removed this concern of the Qing throne. As Thomas Barfield points out: "In exchange for a promise of neutrality, the Manchus granted the Russians rights to trade and settled the border dispute over the Amur frontier."⁹⁸ The Qing was then able to concentrate on the Zunghar problem in the 1690s.

The Zunghar empire was established by the descendants of the Oirats Mongols. As a non-Chinggisid Mongol branch, the Oirats had been a great threat to the Ming dynasty in the early to the middle of the Ming period. After the northern Yuan dynasty, which was founded by the direct descendants of Chinggis Khan, collapsed, the non-Chinggisid

⁹⁸Thomas Barfield, The Perilous Frontier, p. 283.

Mongols entered the arena to pursue power in the vast Mongolian steppe from their original region, the area of the Altai Mountains. The Oirats defeated the Eastern Mongols in 1412. After this victory, the Ming government changed its policy of supporting the Oirats against the Eastern Mongols and began to support the Eastern Mongols. This was typically the Ming's diplomacy in dealing with the Mongol tribes: to keep the Mongols constantly divided. Despite the Ming's support of the Eastern Mongols, the Oirats defeated the Eastern Mongols again in 1431, then killed their chieftain Arughtai in 1434. Thereafter, the Oirats became the single menace to the Ming dynasty on its northern border.

In 1439, Esen 也先, a formidable warrior, became the leader of the Oirats. During his reign, the Oirats reached their peak of power. In 1449, the Oirats attacked the field headquarters of the Ming emperor in Tumu 土木, Hebei province. The Ming Zhengtong 正統 emperor fell captive. This was the well-known Tumu incident.⁹⁹ However, the enthroning of a new emperor by the Ming court rendered the splendid victory of Esen meaningless. They returned the Zhengtong emperor to the Ming the following year with nothing gained. Esen's charisma was thus tarnished.

Esen died in 1455. After his death, Oirat influence over China's northern frontier had dwindled largely.¹⁰⁰ But

⁹⁹For the Tumu Incident and the Ming campaigns against the Oirats, see Frederick Mote, "The T'u-mu Incident of 1449."

¹⁰⁰About the ups-and-downs of the Oirats during the Ming dynasty, see Barfield, The Perilous Frontier, pp. 231-242.

their domination in Eastern Turkestan was still to last about one century. In 1552, the Oirats lost several battles to the Eastern Mongols. Only at this point did they withdraw into the Tarbaghatai region from which they originally came. It was in this region that one of the Oirat tribes, the Choros, reorganized a new Zunghar confederation. This declining people thus gradually regained strength in their birthplace. During the reign of Ba'atur (r. 1634-1653), the territory of the Zunghar empire expanded. They also renewed their relations with the Russians.

By the 1630s, the Zunghar empire found circumstances were most favorable for their expansion. The Moscovites were concentrating on their expansion in Siberia, leaving Inner Asia open to the Zunghars. Meanwhile, the Ming dynasty of China was declining due to multiple interior and exterior problems. By the 1630s, most of the Mongol tribes in southern Mongolia had severed relations with the Ming dynasty and had been incorporated into the Manchu political sphere. The only hostile tribe, the one under Linghdan Khan's leadership was fatally defeated by the Manchus in 1634.¹⁰¹ In 1640, on the eve of the collapse of the Ming dynasty, Ba'atur summoned a pan-Mongol confederation in Zungharia. All Mongol tribes except the southern Mongols under the control of the Manchus attended the confederation. At the confederation, an all Mongol unity was formed and

¹⁰¹Linghdan Khan died of smallpox in 1635.

Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism (*Gelukpa* or the Yellow Sect) was adopted as the official religion of the Mongols. Since then, the Zunghars actively involved themselves in the politics of the Tibetan religious establishment. They firmly backed Gushri Khan from the Khoshot Mongol tribe in his invasion of Tibet in 1642 at the invitation of the fifth Dalai Lama to crush the rivals of the Yellow Sect in Tibet.

Ba'atur died in 1653. With him gone, the Zunghar empire entered a time of disturbance characterized by a keen power struggle among the offspring of Ba'atur. In 1671, Ba'atur's second son, Galdan Boshughtu 噶爾丹, returned to Zunghar from Tibet where he had been a Yellow Sect lama under the supervision of the fifth Dalai Lama. Galdan killed one of his brothers and drove another two to Qinghai, and enthroned himself as the leader of the Zunghar empire.¹⁰² During Galdan's stay in Lhasa, he established very close relations with the fifth Dalai Lama and other dignitaries. These special connections with the Tibetan leaders aided Galdan greatly later in his pursuit of power in the Mongol steppe. In the 1670s, taking advantage of the Wu Sangui Rebellion in southern China, Galdan subjugated his former ally the Khoshot Mongols to his control and annexed the Muslim oases in Eastern Turkestan into his sphere of influence, thus restoring the power of the old Oirat confederation. Zunghar

¹⁰²For Galdan's rise and fall, see Barfield, pp. 280-286; Yuan Senpo, pp. 73-105.

power controlled the traditional transportation route between China and the Mediterranean via the Turkestan.

The rise of a powerful Zunghar empire in the northwest constituted a major threat to the Manchu reign in China, especially when ambitious Galdan mounted offensives against the Khalkha Mongols in northern Mongolia. Although the Qing dynasty had coopted the southern Mongol tribes before they took power in China, the northern Mongols were yet out of the reach of the Qing authorities. The long-term internal strife among the Khalkha tribes put them in a very weak position facing a powerful and aggressive Zunghar empire. During the Wu Sangui rebellion, the Zunghars took advantage of the Qing's concentration on the suppression campaign to attack the Khalkha Mongols, driving the Khalkhas into southern Mongolia seeking refuge under the Qing's authorities. In 1688, Galdan again invaded northern Mongolia with 30,000 troops when another dispute among the Khalkhas broke out. The Tushiyetu Khan fled to China. The Zunghars then reached the Kerulen River. Thousands of Khalkhas fled into southern Mongolia. To the Qing throne, this was an action directly offending the Qing's territory. The Kangxi emperor could no longer tolerate the existence of the Zunghar empire on his northwest frontier. He determined to eliminate this aggressive neighbor. The conquest of northern Mongolia would lead to a destruction of the political stability of southern Mongolia which the Qing rulers had

fought decades to achieve.¹⁰³ Such comprehension of the Zunghar crisis thus led to three major expeditions to the Zungaria in the 1690s. The Kangxi emperor commanded all three expeditions himself.

The first expedition was carried out in 1690. It was aimed at checking the brunt of the Zunghar offensive against the Khalkhas. The Qing forces eventually defeated the Zunghars in this campaign when the battleground moved to Ulaan Butung 烏蘭布通, southern Mongolia, about two hundred miles north of Beijing.¹⁰⁴ The Zunghars withdrew from Mongolia. Kangxi expected that the Zunghars would be more obedient after this showdown. He thus did not pursue the Zunghars to wipe out the threat.

In the summer of 1695, Galdan invaded northern Mongolia again. Then he intended to make an offensive against southern Mongolia from the Keluren River. This aggression alarmed the Qing authorities. This time the Kangxi emperor determined to obliterate this nuisance. In the spring of 1696, the emperor led massive Qing troops into the Gobi area. Aided with intelligence provided by Galdan's nephew, Tsewang Rabtan 策妄阿喇布坦, who was a rival to Galdan in the

¹⁰³Thomas Barfield argues: "For the Manchus, Mongolia acted as a bulwark against invasion, providing China's northern frontier with protection. Zunghar domination of this area threatened the Ch'ing [Qing] interests because from there the Zunghars could invade northern China and wean the southern Mongolian tribes away from Ch'ing control." *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 282.

¹⁰⁴About the battle fought at Ulaan Butung, see Yuan Senpo, *Kang Yong Qian Jingying yu Kaifa Bei Jiang*, pp. 82-93.

power struggle among the Zunghars at that time,¹⁰⁵ the Qing troops dealt Galdan a fatal hit. Most of the Zunghar armies were annihilated. Even Galdan's wife was killed in battle. Some Zunghars surrendered to the Qing dynasty. Galdan fled with a small number of followers. In the autumn of the same year, another expedition was launched by the emperor to search for Galdan and the remnants of the smashed Zunghar empire. The Qing's expeditions, however, due to the exhaustion of the supplies, returned before encountered any Zunghars. Later the Qing throne learned that Galdan had committed suicide in the last spring.¹⁰⁶

During the spring expedition of 1696, the Qing throne learned from the Zunghar captives of a surprising secret that had been covered up by the premier of Tibet, Sanggye Gyatso. The secret was that the fifth Dalai Lama had been deceased for fifteen years and that all correspondences between the Qing throne and the fifth Dalai over these fifteen years had been handled by Sanggye Gyatso, the governor of Tibet (*sed-srid*). The Qing also found that the Tibetan religious hierarchy was in one way or another encouraging Galdan's aggression in northern Mongolia. This incident dramatically changed Kangxi's perspective on the

¹⁰⁵Galdan took Tsewang Rabtan's *fiancée* as his own concubine in 1679 and poisoned Tsewang Rabtan's younger brother to death in 1688. Yuan Senpo, *Kang Yong Qian Jingying yu Kaifa Bei Jiang*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁶However, the death of Galdan was not the end of the Zunghar threat. After the death of Galdan, Tsewang Rabtan rose to power. He made more trouble during the last years of the Kangxi reign. See Section 5 of Chapter III.

Qing's diplomacy. He began to realize that in order to fully subjugate the Zunghars, as well as the other Mongol tribes, the more efficient way probably was not to often launch expensive expeditions, but simply to tighten control over the religious establishment in Lhasa, which had been overlooked to some degree by the Qing authorities in the past years of Kangxi's reign.

5. A Turning Point: Yue Shenglong Appointed to the Southwest

Kangxi was shocked when the secret that the fifth Dalai Lama had been deceased for fifteen years was revealed in his Zunghar expedition in 1696. This was a turning point in the relations between the Qing authorities and the Tibetan leadership. From this moment on, the position of Tibetan affairs in the whole strategic map of Qing foreign relations was shifted. It was since this moment that the Qing authorities realized that all frontier problems related to the nomadic peoples in the north and the northwest could be easily handled by simply putting the head of the Tibetan lamaist hierarchy under control. With this change of attitude of the central government towards Tibetan affairs, the Southwest, which bordered on Tibet, became strategically more important. This was the grand background for the speeding-up of the repopulation and the economic recovery in the Southwest in the last two and half decades of the Kangxi reign (1696-1722).

During his stay in Lhasa, Galdan had developed close connections with the fifth Dalai Lama and Sanggye Gyatso. Like Gushri Khan's family, Galdan also intended to take advantage of the Tibetan religious establishment to serve his own ambition. In 1671, he returned to Zungharia and then seized power of the Zungharia by eliminating all his brothers. Believing that the establishment of the Yellow Sect was behind him, Galdan was encouraged in his aggression into the Khalkha territory.

The fifth Dalai Lama died in 1682. However, Sanggye Gyatso knew very well that it was Lajang Khan who manipulated the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and that his position would be in jeopardy if he could not be favored by the new Dalai Lama. Therefore he concealed the death of the fifth Dalai Lama from both Lajang Khan and the Qing authorities for fifteen years. He made up all correspondences with the Qing throne and kept secret connections with Galdan, hoping to counteract the Mongol ruler, Lajang Khan, with the power of the Zunghar empire. On the other side, Galdan was also emboldened by his close relations with Sanggye Gyatso.

The disclosure of the conspiracy forged by Sanggye Gyatso around the death of the fifth Dalai was a heavy blow to the Qing throne. The Kangxi emperor took it as a serious offense to the authority of the Qing empire. More particularly, when the Qing throne learned that the Tibetans

were behind Galdan in his aggression towards northern Mongolia, the impact of the scandal was even deeper. All of sudden, the Qing rulers found that they had to reorient their diplomatic strategy.

In the early autumn of 1696, the Kangxi emperor appointed one of his favorite generals, then the Regional Commander of Tianjin 天津, Yue Shenglong 岳昇龍 (d. 1713)¹⁰⁷ as Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan.¹⁰⁸ Yue Shenglong was from a military family in Gansu province. His father was promoted to Regional Commander of Datong commandary 大同鎮, Shanxi province, because of his merits in the campaign against Wu Sangui's Rebellion. Yue Shenglong inherited the family profession to become a rank-and-filer when he was young. He was promoted rather rapidly due to his distinctive performances in cracking down local banditry. Soon he was appointed the Regional Commander of Dengzhou 登州, then the Regional Commander of Zhili and Tianjin. As a chief military commander in the environment of the capital, Yue began to be noticed by the Qing throne. Yue had accompanied the emperor on his three Zunghar expeditions, in charge of the transportation of provisions. In 1696, in the second campaign against the Zunghars, Kangxi singled Yue out to accompany him in directing the campaign. Yue was promoted to acting Grand Minister (在議政大臣上行走).¹⁰⁹ Immediately

¹⁰⁷For his biography, see *Sichuan Tongzhi*, Jiaqing, vol. 153.

¹⁰⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 174, p. 21b.

¹⁰⁹*Sichuan Tongzhi*, Jiaqing, vol. 153, p.2a.

following the disclosure of the death of the fifth Dalai Lama, Yue was appointed to the post of Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. Before leaving for his new post in Sichuan, Kangxi ordered him to head to the capital first for a meeting with. Meanwhile, Kangxi ordered the Governor of Sichuan Yu Yangzhi 于養志 to survey the boundaries between the province of Sichuan and Tibet, which had never been done since the founding of the Qing dynasty.¹¹⁰

The appointment of Yue Shenglong to Sichuan was an obvious sign that the Qing central authorities began to change their attitude towards Tibet and the Tibetans. With the appointment of Yue to Sichuan, the *status quo* in the Southwest was upset. Some new opportunities were brought into the region thanks to the change of Qing diplomacy.

6. Conclusion

The Wu Sangui Rebellion of 1673-1681 once again threw the country into war and chaos, interrupting the recovery process nationwide. The rebellion started in the Southwest in late 1673, and was eventually exterminated in 1681. Most parts of the Southwest suffered from the war for an extended period. Although the rebellion inflicted a heavy blow to the new dynasty, the ultimate triumph of the Qing dynasty over Wu Sangui destroyed the last vital threat to the Qing

¹¹⁰Shengzu Shilu, vol. 176, pp. 7a-b.

dynasty.¹¹¹ Therefore, the termination of the rebellion marked the completion of the Qing conquest of China.

After the rebellion was put down in 1681, the central government focused upon the reconstruction of the damaged economy in the war-torn areas and gathered strength and resources to knock down Zheng Jing's resistance based on Taiwan. It was a period in which the country as a whole was getting out of the shadow of civil war and stepping towards prosperity. And it was a period in which the dynasty first developed the capacity to deal with frontier crises with power and resources. However, the focus of the frontier issues of the period was in the north. After the suppression campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion, the Qing forces launched five great campaigns, two in the northeast border region against the Russians, and three in the northwest against the Zunghar empire. These campaigns checked the Russian's expansion in the Amur valley and smashed the Zunghar empire headed by Galdan-it would take some time for the Zunghars to restore their strength before they could challenge the Qing dynasty again.

After the Wu Sangui Rebellion, the Southwest as a whole was still regarded as remote by the central authorities,

¹¹¹The ongoing resistance movement led by Zheng Jing 鄭經 in Taiwan was not so critical to the survival of the dynasty. The Kangxi emperor commented after the pirates surrendered to the Qing authorities in 1683: "The sea pirates were only minor illness such as scab. Taiwan was a small isle, gaining it not meaning much more, losing it not much less." (Shengzu Shilu, vol. 112, pp. 20a-21a.) The emperor, however, changed this view of Taiwan later when he had a modicum of knowledge about the island.

although they became much more careful not to nourish another powerful satrap. The Southwest remained a distressing place for officials and bureaucrats to serve their appointments, but the region still enjoyed special lenient treatment in taxation and other levies. Repopulation and reclamation were resumed but lacked momentum. The situation was similar to the previous period. There were few incentives for attracting immigrants to the region. It was not that the Qing authorities ignored the Southwest. They put political stability instead economic prosperity as the chief goal in administering the region.

Nevertheless, things were about to change when the Qing authorities began to realize the important position of Tibet in the Qing frontier undertakings. During the second expedition against the Zunghars led by the Kangxi emperor himself in 1696, the emperor found that there was a rather subtle but dangerous relationship existing between the aggressive Zunghars and the Tibetan governor Sanggye Gyatso. The emperor was struck by the shocking finding that the fifth Dalai Lama, whom the Qing throne had been treating as the supreme figure of Lamaist Buddhism for decades, had been dead for fifteen years. Having been involved in a power struggle with the Lajang Khan, who was then the ruler of Tibet, Sanggye Gyatso concealed the Dalai Lama's death from the Qing government and manipulated the actions of the Lamaist Zunghars. The Qing throne then began to realize the

importance of Tibetan affairs to their overall strategy of subduing the nomadic peoples. In 1696, Yue Shenglong, a promising military commander trusted by the emperor, was appointed as Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. This arrangement was a turning point in the attitude of the central government towards the Southwest. It marked a strategic transformation of the focus of Qing diplomacy from the Northwest to the Southwest, from fighting directly with warriors in the steppe to controlling the spriritual leader in Lhasa who controlled the warriors in the vast steppe. With more attention being paid to the Tibetan affairs by the Qing throne, more vigor was applied towards the developing the Southwest in the following period.

Chapter III.

The Onset of the Qing Expansion in the Southwest (1696-1722)

1. Expand to the West: Recovery of Dajianlu (1701)

The three Zunghar campaigns led by the Kangxi emperor were the high peak of the frontier adventures of the Kangxi period. The decisive operations in the northwestern Gobi area eliminated a dangerous challenger to the Qing dynasty by gaining the subordination of the Mongol tribes. The splendid triumph of the three Zunghar campaigns was the great pride of the emperor and the empire. Kangxi recalled them many times in his later years with contentment and passion. Nevertheless, one aftermath of the campaigns which had been carefully concealed by the emperor and his officials is even more significant than the military *éclat*. The grand campaigns in the vast and bleak Gobi area were not an entirely pleasant experience for the emperor, especially the third campaign, which attempted to capture Galdan and the last remaining forces of the Zunghar empire. He realized that it would be very costly and inefficient to chase the nomadic Zunghar tribes in their own habitat. What had plagued the emperor most was the logistics of the supply of provisions to the front in the immense Gobi area.¹ The

¹More than three decades later, when the Yongzheng emperor was about to conclude his fruitless campaign against the Zunghar empire in the Northwest, he justified his decision by claiming that Kangxi once gave him a secret edict which warned him to avoid penetrating into the Gobi

difficulties in guaranteeing supplies constituted the greatest unknown element to the destiny of campaign. The emperor realized during the campaigns that the Qing dynasty had to change its current strategy for controlling the Mongol tribes. Although the nephew of Galdan, Tsewang Rabtan (?-1727), remained a potential menace to the Qing empire, the Qing throne did not desire to mount another Gobi expedition. In the spring of 1697, Kangxi expounded a new strategy for controlling the Mongol tribes:

...There had been much discussion about the reconquest of the Loop Area of the Yellow River valley [from the Mongols] during the Ming time. The Ming officials Xia Yan and Zeng Xian were even executed for their (unwelcome) opinion concerning the matter. In my opinion, this place itself is not important. If the Mongols are harnessed properly, how could they make trouble even though they have the place; if they are not properly controlled, they could make trouble anywhere. The Mongols are vagrant people. There is no way to prevent every possible trouble made by them. It was no benefit to concentrate only on retaking the Loop Area...²

The message was clear: Kangxi no longer believed that direct military intervention into Mongol areas was the best way to control the Mongol tribes. He realized, after learning of the conspiracy of the Tibetan governor (*sde-srid*) Sanggye Gyatso to conceal the death of the fifth Dalai Lama, that the most important and effective factor in keeping peace and stability in the Mongol regions was to guarantee the authority of the Dalai Lama, who had

area, the home base of the Zunghar people. Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 1, p. 842.

²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 183, p. 23b.

tremendous religious power over the Mongol people. Later the same year, Kangxi further commented on the same issue by saying: "The key to Mongol affairs lies in the right approach, not on how close our armies are to the Mongol people."³ At this moment, to the emperor, the "right approach" was to use the Dalai Lama as a vehicle to harness the forceful Mongol tribes. He had convinced himself that the origin of the Zunghar rebellion was intrigue by the Tibetan governor Sanggye Gyatso after the fifth Dalai Lama died. In this context, it is no surprise that Kangxi concluded that the presence of the fifth Dalai Lama had been crucial to the stability and peace in the frontiers of the Qing empire prior to the Zunghar Rebellion.⁴ The post-Zunghar campaigns era (1696-1722) of the Kangxi period was guided by such strategic considerations. During this era, the focus of frontier affairs was put on Tibetan issues.⁵

Nevertheless, the change of the focus of frontier affairs did not mean any immediate substantial action. In fact, to maintain the status quo was still the Qing priority. Sanggye Gyatso was allowed to continue his governance over Tibet in spite of all the condemnations issued by Kangxi.⁶ The Qing government did approve the sixth

³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 185, p. 11b.

⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 227, p. 10a.

⁵L. Petech points out that Kangxi's interest in Tibet was merely "religious-political." Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet*, pp. 9-10.

⁶The condemnations were unusually harsh. See *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 174, pp. 14a-15b.

Dalai Lama, who had been installed by Sanggye Gyatso without informing the Qing throne. The reason that the Qing throne did not adopt a more active stance in Tibet was not expounded by either the emperor or his officials. But, obviously, with the existence of the remaining Zunghar tribes in the northwest, especially Galdan's nephew, Tsewang Rabtan's tribe, it was not wise to provoke Sanggye Gyatso, who had such close ties with the Zunghars. More importantly, Sanggye possessed a solid power base. As an actual biological heir of the fifth Dalai Lama,⁷ Sanggye had grown up under the close attention and supervision of the fifth Dalai Lama. He was summoned to the Potala Palace to receive religious and literary education when he was eight year-old. Three years before the fifth Dalai Lama passed away, Sanggye was handpicked by the Dalai to be appointed *sde-srid*. The fifth Dalai Lama also wrote a proclamation expounding the virtue of Sanggye. Therefore, the rule of Sanggye Gyatso was actually an extension of the fifth Dalai Lama's.

Facing such a political situation, the Qing throne had to be very cautious and patient. The Qing throne was expecting that the opponent of Sanggye Gyatso, the offspring of the Gushi Khan family, would be gathering strength to

⁷The fifth Dalai Lama practiced in secret the rituals of the Red Sect. It is believed in Tibet that Sanggye Gyatso was his biological son. In 1652, before his trip to Beijing, the fifth Dalai Lama stayed one night in an aristocrat Grong-smad-pa's home in the north of Lhasa. It was the hostess who accompanied the Dalai Lama to bed. The following year, Sanggye Gyatso was born in this family. See Wang Yao, "*Diba. Sangjie Jiacao Za Kao*;" Also Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, p. 9.

take back power from Sanggye Gyatso one day. The conflict between the Tibetans and the Mongol Gushri Khan's offspring intensified in the late period of the fifth Dalai Lama's reign. After Sanggye took power, not only did he continue the fifth Dalai's scheme of weakening the power of the Mongol lord, but also tried to take action to get rid of the Mongol superintendent from Tibet. It was said that Sanggye poisoned the Dalai Khan, the father of Lajang Khan. He also attempted to poison Lajang Khan himself. Besides, Lajang Khan's wife had been a lover of Sanggye before married to Lajang Khan, but she was declined by Sanggye.

At this point, the best strategy for the Qing side would be to wait and see. The only tangible move to show the change in the Qing attitude was the appointment of Yue Shenglong to the post of Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan in 1696. This was the first time the Qing government appointed a general who was personally close to the emperor to the post. Since the importance of the Tibetan Lamaist establishment to frontier stability was projected in the Zunghar campaigns, the strategic position of the Southwest had been elevated. The exclusion of the Southwest from the high-profile revenue contributing areas could no longer justify the ignorance of the central government towards the region. Until this moment, the Qing had never paid much attention to its western boundary between China and Tibet. In the beginning of the Kangxi reign, when the Qing forces

pacified the Southwest in the early 1660s, the Qing had mandated the region to Wu Sangui's feudatory. Under Wu's *de facto* autonomous principedom, the central authorities hardly concerned themselves with matters such as clarifying and consolidating the western borders. So, Wu took advantage of the obscurity of the Qing attitude to cede the area of Zhongdian in north Yunnan to the Tibetans. After his rebellion, the frontier emergencies in the North and Northwest attracted the attention of the central government. Therefore, not until the disclosure of the fifth Dalai Lama's death, did the Qing government take the frontier affairs in the Southwest seriously.

Two months after Kangxi appointed Yue Shenglong Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan in the autumn of 1696, the emperor ordered the current Governor of Sichuan Yu Yangzhi 于養志 to survey the boundary between Sichuan and Tibet. It was only then that Yu Yangzhi reported to the throne that Dajianlu 打箭爐,⁸ a stronghold on the route connecting Sichuan and Tibet, was ruled by the "inner native chieftains (内土司 *nei tusi*)" during the Ming dynasty, and that it was still occupied and ruled by the Tibetans at this time. Therefore, the emperor ordered to include this

⁸Dajianlu literally means "furnace for arrow-forging." According to the Han people's legend, Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, an outstanding statesman and military strategist of the late second century and the early third century, had set up a workshop to forge weapons there in the midst of his westward campaigns, thus the place being called "Dajianlu". Another interpretation is that the name is a transliteration from Tibetan "Dar-tse-mdo." "dar" means sutra banner, "rtse" mountain peak, and "mdo" confluence of two rivers.

territory into "The Imperial Gazetteers of the Unified Country)" (一統志 *yitong zhi*). But at the same time, he also ordered to let the Tibetans continue to reside in Dajianlu doing tea business with the Chinese, and to let the local chieftains continue their rule.⁹

Dajianlu is located in the southwestern part of today's Sichuan province. The residents in the area were mainly Tibetans and Tibetan-speaking peoples.¹⁰ Traditionally the area encompassing Dajianlu was part of the Kham area, one of the four parts of Tibet.¹¹ During the Ming, the Dajianlu area had been ruled by the local chieftains. After the Ming reform of integrating native chieftains into the regular official system (*gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流), which was carried out in the early fifteenth century, the place was nominally integrated into the Ming administrative system. During the Ming, the area had been very sparsely populated. Few residents lived in the town. Tibetan merchants who went to China proper to do business stopped at the town as a transfer station. But it still had not become a thriving market town when the Qing dynasty replaced the Ming dynasty,

⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol.176, pp.7a-b.

¹⁰There are more than a dozen ethnic peoples living in this area today. It is one of the most culturally diverse region in China. Sandwiched between Chinese and Tibetan cultures, these ethnic groups have developed their own unique cultures while absorbing many elements from the two great cultures. In the region, Tibetan and Chinese are the languages spoken by most people, even though each ethnic group has its own distinctive language or dialect. In the early twentieth century, Han Chinese were the majority in the city of Dajianlu (it was called Kangding 康定 at the time). Mei Xinru, *Xi Kang*, p. 14.

¹¹The territory of Tibet consists of four parts: Kham 康, Bbus 衛, Tsang 藏 and Mnga'-ris 阿里.

even though it had long served as a site for trade between the Chinese and the Tibetans.

Trade relations between the Chinese and the Tibetans can be traced back to the Song dynasties (960-1279). The staples for trade between the two sides were tea and horses. As is well known, tea was the most needed commodity from the Han Chinese for the Tibetans. What the Tibetans traded for tea was mainly horse. During the Song dynasty, horses became a chief military necessity due to the constant frontier warfare. To fight with the northern nomads, horses were indispensable in strengthening the Song's military capacity. Thus the trade in Tibetan horses for tea became something beyond a simple economic matter. Since the Song dynasty, the tea-horse trade had been under strict state control or even monopoly. State policy had played a large role in directing the size of the tea production in Sichuan, the major region producing tea for export to Tibet. In the Song dynasties, the huge demand for horses stimulated tea production in Sichuan. The output of tea from Sichuan surpassed the total output from all other tea-producing regions of the country. During the Ming dynasty, because the Ming government utilized the tea-horse trade as an instrument to control the Tibetans, there were more restrictions on the tea-horse trade between the two peoples. The Ming government raised the tea price and lowered the horse price to limit the quantity of transactions. Thus the tea market shrank in

Tibet. As a consequence, tea production in Sichuan declined to two-third of the level in these Song dynasties.¹²

The Qing dynasty inherited the system of state supervision of tea-horse trade. By the Kangxi period, the state monopolized border trade of tea-horses still existed, but it had declined even further due to the reduced demand for Tibetan horses from the Qing side and the increasing demand for commodities other than tea from the Tibetans. The trading activities had begun to escape state control since the founding of the Qing dynasty. This trend worked to develop Dajianlu into a trading center for other commodities between Tibetan and Chinese merchants. In the early Qing dynasty, the fifth Dalai Lama petitioned the Qing throne to open trade in Beishengzhou 北勝州, Yunnan province after the province was conquered by Qing forces. The Qing throne granted permission to the fifth Dalai Lama. The trade was officially opened in 1665. At that time, the area was under Wu Sangui's control. There is little doubt that all benefits went to Wu's feudatory instead of the Qing fiscs.

Since the end of Wu's rebellion, the Qing had not paid much attention to the matter of border trade in the Southwest. With the subordination of most of the Mongol tribes, the Qing found that there was no urgent need to trade tea for Tibetan horses. In the three campaigns against the Zunghars, the Qing throne mainly bought Mongol horses

¹²Chen Yishi, *"Qing Dai Chuan Chaye de Fazhan jiqi yu Zang Qu de Jingji Wenhua Jiaoliu."*

from Ningxia or northern Sichuan to meet its military needs. In addition, by the middle of the Kangxi period, the government no longer forbade people in China proper to raise horses. Thus horse supply was no longer a problem. The five Tea-Horse Bureaus in Qinghai, the state agency in charge of the tea-horse business, which was set up in the early years of the Kangxi period, gradually went out of business. Therefore, in 1705, the throne abolished these five bureaus for good and turned over the tea-horse trade to the Governor of Gansu.¹³ In fact, this was the end of state control of the border trade between the Chinese and the Tibetans.

By the time Yue Shenglong was appointed to Sichuan, it seemed that the Qing throne was ignorant of the details of trade activities between the Tibetans and the Chinese in the area. Nevertheless, Yu Yangzhi, the Governor of Sichuan, was on top of the business. Not only did he know it well, but he also had fully taken advantage of the trade to fill his own pocket. Yu Yangzhi was transferred to Sichuan in 1693 from the post of Governor of Pianyuan 偏沅 (i.e. the province of Hunan).¹⁴ When Yu arrived at his post in Sichuan, the Dajianlu area had achieved a certain degree of prosperity. The thriving market was very much a result of the closure of border trade in north Yunnan. As discussed earlier, the Qing approved opening border trade between the Tibetans and the

¹³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 221, p. 2b. Later in the Yongzheng period, the Tea-Horse Bureau was restored for a short time. But it was abolished again before long.

¹⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 158, p. 18b.

Chinese in Beishengzhou, northern Yunnan in the early Qing. During his rule, Wu Sangui further ceded the Zhongdian area of northern Yunnan to the Tibetans. It seems that the chief consideration for giving up this piece of territory was to create a site for the Tibetans to accommodate the congregating Tibetan merchants. However, the territory was recovered by the Qing forces when the Qing armies took Yunnan back from the rebels. Moreover, the Qing government ordered border trade in northern Yunnan closed in the wake of the rebellion.¹⁵ The Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou at that time was Cai Yurong. Cai intended to expel the Tibetan officials who had been stationed in Zhongdian.¹⁶ Since then, the Dajianlu area became the only spot for border trade between the two peoples.¹⁷

When Yu Yangzhi arrived at his post in 1693, the Dajianlu area had been populated with Tibetan merchants. But Qing administration had not yet extended to the area. Since the Qing state did not have any ready policy concerning the

¹⁵*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 104, pp. 23a-b.

¹⁶*Shengqzu Shilu*, vol. 104, pp. 23a-b.

¹⁷Since a very early time in history, the commercial exchanges between the Tibetans and the Han Chinese and other ethnic groups living in today's Sichuan and Yunnan provinces were conducted via two difficult and dangerous routes. One was the Yunnan-Tibet route, which started from Kunming, via Zhongdian 中甸, Deqing 德清, to enter Tibet. Another was the Sichuan-Tibet route, which was from Yazhou 雅州, via Dajianlu, Batang 巴塘, to enter Tibet. Via Tibet, the Chinese kept commercial ties with countries in South Asia, such as India and Nepal. Generally speaking, the Sichuan-Tibetan route was more important than the Yunnan-Tibet route. The Wu Sangui feudatory in Yunnan, however, elevated the importance of the Yunnan-Tibet route due to his direct control of Yunnan province. After the trade in northern Yunnan was shut down in the wake of the rebellion, the Sichuan-Tibetan route was reinvigorated.

border trade in the Southwest and did not have much information about the trade in the region, the provincial viceroys had ample room to maneuver. According to a memorial written by Yue Shenglong in 1699, Yu Yangzhi had been bought off by the Tibetans and thus let the Tibetans continue to control the area. What Yu gained through the deal was a tax levied on all tea packs sold to the Tibetan merchants. The tea trade was rather heavy considering the slow economy in Sichuan. According to Yue Shenglong's charge, more than 800,000 packs (about 144,000 *dan*) of tea were sold to Tibetan merchants each year, thus several tens of thousands taels of silver went to Yu's pocket each year. Yue's charge was almost certainly an exaggeration. But Yue Shenglong claimed: "There are receipts kept in Xingjing 榮經 county and there are tea merchants available to prove this."¹⁸ Besides tea, the border trade also included many other commodities such as rice, cloth, and tobacco.

For the Tibetan secular and monastic elites, the border trade in Dajianlu was a great source of luxury commodities and wealth. Having been freed from the restrictions of the Ming dynasty, the Tibetans seized the chance to consolidate what they gained. Tibetan officials, as well as Tibetan armies were sent to be stationed in Dajianlu. By 1696, the Tibetan influence had been the strongest in the area. With the plenty of the tea tax going into his pocket, Yu Yangzhi

¹⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 194, pp. 9b-10a.

was in no way motivated to check Tibetan penetration into the territory of the local chieftains in the area. In 1696, when the Qing throne ordered Yu Yangzhi together with the Tibetan officials to survey the boundary between Sichuan and Tibet, the Tibetan control of the Dajianlu area was a *fait accompli*. Yu Yangzhi's execution of the order was merely perfunctory. He reported to the throne:

This official, together with the Tibetan lama officials, made a survey of the boundary around the area of Dajianlu. Since the Ming on, this territory was originally under the control of the 'inner native chieftains.' So it should be included into the territory [of the Qing dynasty]. Nevertheless, the Tibetans take the tea business as a livelihood and have lived in the area for years. Moreover, the Dalai Lama had memorialized the emperor to get permission to trade on the border areas. So they should be allowed to continue the business.¹⁹

Yu affirmed that this piece of territory belonged to the Qing dynasty on paper. Yet, the intent of Yu's memorial was to persuade the Qing government to maintain the *status quo* in the Dajianlu area. After this boundary survey, the Tibetan control of the area of Dajianlu persisted. According to what Yue Shenglong revealed in his impeachment of Yu, the Tibetans appropriated thousands of *li* of the territory of the native chieftains, controlled tens of thousands of households of the non-Han peoples in the area. In addition, the Tibetans also forged weapons and stored foodstuff and forage in Muya 木鴉, a town west of Dajianlu. Not until the interference of the new Provincial Military Commander Yue

¹⁹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 176, pp. 7a-b.

Shenglong into this matter, did the situation in the area begin to change. Yue was handpicked by the Kangxi emperor. He was obviously endowed some special authority in dealing with border affairs and possessed more direct access to communicate with the emperor.²⁰ More particularly, his appointment was aimed at strengthening the Qing's control of the Tibetans. So Yue would inevitably involved himself in the issue of controlling Dajianlu. He and the Governor of Sichuan Yu Yangzhi were bound to confront each other soon.

The discord that would trigger the friction between the two officials was over the Tibetan occupation of the Dajianlu area. Yue had no reason to follow Yu's steps and continue the appeasement policy towards the Tibetans. On the contrary, he had good motivations to take the territory from the Tibetans with decisive actions. Moreover, Yue would not allow Yu to keep swallowing the profits gained from the border trade.

After Yue Shenglong took his office, he began to prepare for a showdown with the Tibetans. In 1698, he moved the Qing border garrison from Liangwan 梁萬 to Hualin 化林, which was adjacent to the Dajianlu area.²¹ This was a step

²⁰Obviously, Yue was given the privilege to use "secret memorials" to reach the emperor directly. "Secret memorials" were a method invented by Kangxi for the purpose of direct communication between the emperor and his viceroys in provinces or frontiers. About the origins and evolution of the system, see Silas Hsiu-liang Wu, Communication and Imperial Control in China: Evolution of the Palace Memorial System, 1693-1735, and Yang Qiqiao, Yongzheng Di jiqi Mizhe Zhidu Yanjiu.

²¹Yue Shenglong petitioned the central government to move the Assistant Regional Commander of Liangwan garrison to Hualin garrison, and to assign 375 soldiers along with two Company Commanders and Squad leaders

conspicuously aimed at confronting the Tibetan forces stationed in the Dajianlu area. The tension began to build along the Qing garrison line. In late summer, 1699, the Tibetan official in the area, Changcejilie 昌側集烈, provoked a conflict by sending several thousands of soldiers to take some strongholds on the transportation route from Yazhou to Dajianlu. Yue Shenglong responded to the move promptly and decisively. On the one hand, he banned trading activities, prohibiting Chinese merchants from going to Dajianlu. On the other hand, he reinforced the Hualin garrison by sending, secretly, five hundred Qing troops. Meanwhile, Yue informed Governor Yu Yangzhi of his moves.²²

Yue Shenglong's hawkish measures in dealing with the Dajianlu issue distressed Yu Yangzhi. Over the years, Yu had established a tacit agreement between the Tibetans and himself on border matters. Yu's appeasement policy had been well received by the Tibetans. As a payback, he enjoyed handsome profits levied on the border trade. The tranquility based upon mutual understanding in the area was, however, upset by Yue Shenglong's blatantly aggressive response. Therefore, the 1699 crisis was not only a conflict between the Qing forces and the Tibetans, but also a showdown between the two Qing border viceroys. Upon hearing the news of the crisis, Yu immediately sent a subordinate of his to

from Liangwan garrison to Hualin garrison. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 188, pp. 15a-b.

²²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 194, pp. 3b-4a.

shuttle between the Tibetans and the Qing side to mediate the conflict. In addition, Yu also stopped the Qing armies from moving to the front on Yue's order, according to the impeachment of Yue Shenglong. Yu's strategy was to keep a peaceful environment in which the two sides could negotiate to achieve the best result. But Yue's attitude was more power-based.

The strife between the two Qing viceroys was so intense that both decided to forward the case to the throne. Thus occurred the infamous case of the mutual impeachments between the two border officials. Yu accused Yue of acting presumptuously in handling the border crisis by sending troops to agitate the Tibetans, and of disturbing the normal social order among the merchants and the local residents in the area.²³ Yue accused Yu of surrendering the emperor's territory to the Tibetans without authorization, and of exploiting the merchants in the border trade.²⁴ The mutual accusations went even beyond the border crisis *per se* and revealed a situation in the southwestern frontier which was barely tolerable for the central authorities. It seemed that not only the Governor of Sichuan Yu Yangzhi, but also Yue Shenglong, the chief military commander in the province, were involved in all kinds of affairs aimed at attaining personal fortune. Things had gone so far that the emperor had to give his favored general Yue Shenglong some

²³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 193, pp. 16a-b.

²⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 194, pp. 3b-4a.

punishment in order to show his impartiality. He ordered the suspension of both officials from their posts and sent two court officials, Luocho 羅察, a Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Works, and Butai 布泰, a Grand Secretariat, to Sichuan to investigate the case. Before they left for the Southwest, the emperor granted them an audience. The Kangxi emperor warned them not to be partial and not to implicate too many other matters and people. And more particularly, the emperor indicated not to put the Yu and Yue in jail with shackles and fetters even if what they were accused of was true.²⁵ The emperor wanted to maintain some latitude to reverse the case later.

The investigation and prosecution of the case was a prolonged process. Not until early 1701 did the case end. It seems that the two court officials sent to handle the case did not correctly catch the implications of the emperor. Without much difficulty, the commissioners confirmed that both were impeached with some ground. In the spring of 1700, they proposed a balanced solution: both were dismissed from their posts.²⁶ But Kangxi was not pleased with the impartial solution though he endorsed the dismissals of the two. Later that year, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Xierda 席爾達 was ordered to review the case. The result of Xierda's review was, as expected, that Yu Yangzhi received a far more severe punishment while the penalty for Yue

²⁵*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 194, p. 7b.

²⁶*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 198, pp. 9b-10a; pp. 10a-11a.

remained the same. Yu was given the death penalty this time and escorted to the capital to await execution. The emperor also ordered punishments for the two court officials who handled the case initially, Luocho and Butai, for they did not judge the case appropriately. The two were accordingly demoted by three ranks.²⁷ Apparently, Kangxi was indisposed to impose a penalty on his favored general Yue Shenglong, albeit he had to do it for the time being. But for Yu Yangzhi, the emperor had no mercy at all.

The partiality of the emperor was further demonstrated one year later. In the fall of 1701, the emperor issued an edict to the Ministry of War: "Sichuan is an important area. The current Provincial Military Commander [of Sichuan] Tang Xishun 唐希順 is not able to serve the in post due to his illness. Let the former Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Yue Shenglong take the post."²⁸ Thus Yue Shenglong returned to the post only with a brief interruption of about a year and a half. After his reappointment, Yue served for over ten years without any transfer or change. In late 1703, Yue, along with other provincial officials and generals, were summoned to the court to receive an audience with the emperor. They were all given gifts from the emperor.²⁹ Meanwhile, Yu Yangzhi was still awaiting his fate in jail. In the early fall of 1704, he was exiled to Manchuria under

²⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 202, pp. 16b-17a.

²⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 206, p. 8a.

²⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 214, pp. 2a-b; p. 12b.

the excuse that he had not paid off the embezzled money.³⁰ Although he was pardoned from death, Yu's political career was over.

The case of mutual impeachments between Yu Yangzhi and Yue Shenglong did not delay Qing operation against the Tibetans in the Dajianlu area. As soon as the two Sichuan officials were suspended from their duty, the Qing throne appointed both a new Governor of Sichuan and a new Provincial Military Commander. Meanwhile, the Governor-general of Sichuan and Shaanxi Xierda, who usually resided in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, stepped in to take charge of the military operation on the western border of Sichuan. The stiff stance of Yue Shenglong towards the Tibetans was maintained by the new provincial viceroys. On August 14, 1700, Xierda petitioned the throne to order the Tibetan governor Sanggye Gyatso to apprehend the Tibetan official Changcejilie since he had killed one local chieftain in the area. He also requested that the Qing Hualin garrison be moved to Dajianlu. The throne approved his motions.³¹ On the very same day, the Kangxi emperor issued an edict to Sanggye. It read:

There has long been a clear boundary [between Sichuan and Tibet]. With your connivance, your official Changcejilie occupied with power the place of inner local chieftain Shelajaba 蛇蠟渣吧 in Dajianlu, Sichuan province, appropriated over the period of time Wuni 烏泥, Ruoni 若泥 and Fanzhou 凡州 three places in the

³⁰ *Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 216, p. 19b.

³¹ *Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 199, pp. 14a-b.

eastern side of the Lu 瀘 River, and coveted Jiaqing 嘉慶 and Cadao 擦道. In addition, he killed the inner chieftain Shelazhaba because the latter had revealed something [to the Qing authorities]. None of these undaunted and perverse conducts can be tolerated. The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Xierda has reported on them [to me]. According to his report, it is you who directed in secret your subordinates to trespass upon and to harry the border areas. How can our border territories be yielded even one inch. The things you conducted were all absurd and unlawful. Upon receiving the edict, you should return the Dajianlu area and all inner local chieftains' territories within [China's] boundary which you gradually encroached and submit the Tibetan official who beat the inner local chieftain Shelazhaba to death [to the Qing authorities]. Otherwise you will be held as the initiator of all crimes. Then it would be too late for you to regret.³²

This edict of the Kangxi emperor was but an ultimatum to Sanggye. The tense standoff in the area was escalated. Nevertheless, the Tibetans did not comply with the emperor's volition and they did not want to give up their occupation without a major confrontation. In the winter, 1700, when the Qing Hualin garrison was transferred to Dajianlu at the emperor's order, the Tibetan soldiers killed the Qing soldiers who were paving a road for the Qing troops, and pulled down bridges to stop the advance of the Qing armies. At this point, the Qing officials still wished to press Sanggye in restraining the offensive actions of the Tibetan soldiers.³³

However, the Tibetans pushed things further by taking another place in the area, Pengba 烹壩, intending to intercept the Qing Hualin garrison from their rear. The

³²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 199, pp. 23b-24b.

³³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 201, pp. 26a-b.

Tibetans thus propelled the Qing forces towards a showdown. At this point, the Qing local officials were all enthusiastic about mounting a campaign against the Tibetans. The Assistant Regional Commander of the Hualin garrison Li Lin 李麟 submitted the tactics of retaking Dajianlu. The new Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Tang Xishun had moved his headquarters to the Hualin garrison to maneuver the armies. The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Xierda asked the central government through a secret memorial if a major campaign was going to be launched. Encouraged by the vigor of the provincial officials, the throne made a decision to go to war. Two thousand Manchu troops stationed in Jingzhou 荆州, Hubei province, were dispatched to Sichuan. Meanwhile, a Vice-Minister of the Court of Colonial Affairs, Manpi 满丕 was sent to the front to take charge of the operations.³⁴

On January 28, 1701, the Qing forces attacked Dajianlu from three directions. The Tibetan resistance collapsed soon in the face of the heavy presence of the Qing forces. According to the report of Manpi and Tang Xishun, five thousand Tibetan soldiers were killed in the battle. The Tibetan officials Changcejilie and Longsong were also killed.³⁵ No matter how accurate the number was, the Tibetans suffered a major defeat. Almost all male Tibetans in the area were killed. Most Tibetans who survived the Qing

³⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 202, pp. 10a-11a.

³⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 203, p. 8a.

attack were women.³⁶ Then on February 20, the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Tang Xishun arrived at Dajianlu. This operation of the Qing forces in the Dajianlu area marked the commencement of the Qing governance of the area. After Tang's arrival at Dajianlu, he claimed the subjugation of about twelve thousand households of Tibetans and other non-Han people in the area to the Qing authorities.³⁷

One year later, in early 1702, the Qing court sent Lama Mubaseerji 木巴色爾濟, Director (*langzhong*) Shutu 舒圖 and Vice-Director (*yuanwai*) Tietu 鐵圖 to Dajianlu to oversee trade affairs.³⁸ This was the first time since the founding of the Qing dynasty that the central government looked into the affairs of border trade in the area. The center of concern was not trade *per se*,³⁹ but the consolidation of the border areas. Meanwhile, the court commissioner Manpi was still stationed in the area to supervise the establishment of the Qing administration. The Qing forces dispatched to the area were not withdrawn until the autumn of 1702.⁴⁰

In 1706, a chain bridge was hung in Anle 安樂 over the Lu River (i.e. Dadu 大渡 River), a tributary of the Yangtze River, which runs from north to south on the east of

³⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 210, pp. 8a-b.

³⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 203, p. 16b.

³⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 207, pp. 5b-7a.

³⁹The lax attitude of the Kangxi emperor towards the border trade in the area will be discussed in the next section. It was consonant with the other policies of the Qing throne towards the region.

⁴⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 210, p. 7b.

Dajianlu, at the request of the Governor of Sichuan Nengtai 能泰. Before there was not a single bridge over the river. People had to creep over an iron chain to go across the river, as the current was too torrential and rapid to navigate. With the bridge, it was relatively easy for Qing armies to move back and forth between Dajianlu and the garrisons in the heartland of Sichuan. The Kangxi emperor named the bridge "Luding 瀘定," which means to pacify the Lu river, and wrote an essay to mark the completion of the bridge.⁴¹

The campaign of 1701 was of great significance for the Qing dynasty. It stood for one step forwards in its attempt to place the Tibetan Lamaist establishment under the Qing control, because the border trade which was crucial to the Tibetans was now under the direct supervision of the Qing administration in the Dajianlu area. Although the Qing dynasty adopted a far more lax policy than the Ming dynasty did, and was much less inclined to use trade sanctions as a diplomatic instrument in checking the Tibetans, the potential for the Qing dynasty to do so existed anyway. Moreover, the display of military power delivered an explicit message to Sangge Gyatso that the relations between the two sides were after all power-based. Thus, the Qing was in a more advantageous position in maintaining the subtle relations with the Tibetans. To be sure, the Dajianlu crisis

⁴¹Sichuan Tongzhi, vol. 13, pp. 1a-2b; Shengzu Shilu, vol. 225, pp. 19a-b.

of 1701 was not the final resolution to the conflict between the two sides over the control of the area. It was only the beginning of the Qing expansion in the Kham area. The Qing control of Dajianlu gained the Qing dynasty a footing in the area. Further conflicts and further Qing expansion were yet to unfold in later periods.⁴²

The Dajianlu crisis was also a significant event for the provincial government, for the incident considerably enhanced the strategic importance of the region. And the territory expansion in Sichuan meant the increase of military expenditures. Before the Dajianlu incident, military expenditures for Sichuan province were 600,000-700,000 taels of silver per year.⁴³ But after the incident, an additional 100,000 taels were added each year to Sichuan.⁴⁴ Since the Wu Sangui Rebellion, the Qing central government had been very cautious not to nourish another strong satrap in the Southwest by providing generous financial support. For decades, to raise monetary distribution from the state exchequers to the Southwest had been a forbidden topic in the central politics. Nevertheless, the persistent vigilance had been outweighed by the escalating importance of the Southwest in the complex relations with the Tibetans. The increase of the military budget by a large degree was one of the indications of the

⁴²See section 5 of this chapter.

⁴³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 187, pp. 13b-14a.

⁴⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 207, p. 25b.

transformation of the area into a strategically significant region.

Since this incident, Kangxi's interests in frontier geography had been stimulated. In 1704, Kangxi sent Imperial Guardsman Laxi 拉錫 to explore the source of the Yellow River. He told Laxi that nobody had ever been at the very source of the Yellow River though it was known as Guerbansuoluomo 古爾班索羅謨. He ordered the court official to be sure to go to the starting point of the Yellow River. Laxi accomplished his mission by claiming the source of the Yellow River as being the Stars Sea (Xingsu Hai 星宿海) of the Kunlun 崑崙 Mountains.⁴⁵ The next target of the emperor was the source of the Yangtze River. Traditionally, people believed that the origin of the Yangtze Rive was in the Min Mountains 岷山. But Kangxi wanted to explore it further. One day in 1709, the emperor talked about geography with his court officials. While mentioning the origin of the Yangtze River, he pointed out the real origin was not in the Min Mountains, but in the Kunlun Mountains. He indicated that this knowledge was not recorded in writing, but was known by the indigenous people.⁴⁶ However, the curiosity of the emperor would not be satisfied until a much later time.

In 1708, Kangxi began to undertake a project mapping the empire. Some Jesuit missionaries working for the Qing court were assigned to carry out this project. They also

⁴⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 217, pp. 10b-12b.

⁴⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 240, pp. 15a-16a.

went to the Southwest to survey the geography and to draw maps. Although Tibet was not included in this project, the throne ordered his envoy to Lhasa, Heshou 赫壽, to draw a map of Tibet.⁴⁷

2. Under Kangxi's "Loose Rein" Policy

Historically, "loose rein (*jimi* 羈縻)" was a type of state policy applied to peripheral, mainly ethnic, areas and characterized by laxity in central political, economic and social controls and allowing a considerable degree of autonomy to the native peoples.⁴⁸ The term "loose rein," as applied, in the late Kangxi period, however, involves some differences in substance. The use of this term does not imply a parallel to areas treated by "loose rein" policy in history. Historically, the areas under the "loose rein" policy were usually the areas not subject to the regular administrative system. But, the Southwest during the Qing dynasty was under the direct administration of the central authorities. Therefore, to use the term is to articulate the Qing strategy in treating different regions with different emphasis in terms of its respective role in national politics.

⁴⁷Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, p. 15.

⁴⁸During the Tang dynasty, the term "*jimi* (loose rein)" was used to refer to prefectures set up in the northern and northwestern peripheral areas, in which central control was only nominal. Later "loose rein" was also used in referring to low-key policy applied to peripheral areas.

To understand the significance of the "loose rein" policy towards the Southwest, it is necessary to look at the Qing strategies in financial management nationwide during the late Kangxi period. There are some changes in the management of state finance in this period. Due to the rapid recovery and further development of the economy in the country at large in the wake of the Wu Sangui Rebellion, revenue income increased dramatically. The late Kangxi period witnessed a climax of economic prosperity for the whole Qing dynasty. The amplitude of the state excheques enabled the Qing to embark on some expensive projects which had not been attempted during the period of economic recovery.

When the state had plenty of resources on hand to spend, the pattern of financial management assumed some new characteristics. In the previous eras, the government had given the utmost attention and energy to safeguarding the revenue income from the key revenue-contributing regions, e.g. the Jiangnan region. And the central government had to carefully calculate the limited resources and the needs from all over the country. The revenue that had flowed out from the Jiangnan region was not supposed to go back to be spent in that locale. The urgent military demands had exhausted most of the state revenues. As discussed in the first chapter, the whole country could be divided into two categories from the beginning of the Qing dynasty:

contributing areas and consuming areas.⁴⁹ But during the late Kangxi period, in which peace was restored and the economy boomed, the whole country could be divided into three categories.

The first category was the key economic areas, such as the Jiangnan area. Jiangnan, compared to other regions, continued to contribute the most revenue to the state fiscs. But, it began to receive enormous investments from the state for water projects in order to ensure the longlasting productiveness of the region. It was the first time in Qing history that the central government was able to invest in the most productive region of the country. Approximately three million taels of silver were spent on water projects in the Huai River and Jiangnan each year. But, due to the abundance of the state excheques, the Qing government did not hesitate to initiate these expensive projects. Kangxi once said that it was not a big deal to spend one or two million taels on water projects in Jiangnan.⁵⁰ It was also during this period that the central government granted generous tax deductions and exemptions universally to all areas, including the productive Jiangnan region. In addition, Kangxi made six royal trips to Jiangnan to ensure that the political and economic control over the region remained solid. The state excheques had to pay a big share of the total expenditures of these extravagant trips.

⁴⁹See Section 3 of Chapter I.

⁵⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 224, pp. 6b-7a.

The second category was the regions which received substantial financial assistance from the state but made little contribution to the state's revenue income. Manchuria fell into this category. In general, the Qing state rarely granted subsidies to aid the economy in a certain region unless there was a significance other than economic development per se. Due to its special political significance, Manchuria was treated as this type of region. It kept receiving huge amount of money from the central fiscs, but repaid little. Another region belonging to this category was Mongolia. The political implications were obvious. It was part of the Qing Mongolian policy which was aimed at the subjugation of the Mongol tribes to the Qing dynasty.

The third category was the regions where the Qing adopted an attitude that can be summarized as "no spending, no exacting." Or in other words, the "loose rein" policy. The Southwest belonged to this category. This attitude meant that the state did not subsidize economic development in the region as the government did in the regions of the second category. But the other side of the coin is that the state did not expect to gain significant revenue income from the region either. The rate of taxation was minimal or even symbolic. To be sure, the "loose rein" policy was not equivalent to neglect or low-profile interest. It was a strategy applied to a region which possessed some special

meaning to the central government. While lack of state investments would slow down economic recovery and development for the time being, low taxation would eventually stimulate the economy and strengthen the power of the region in the long run.

In the wake of the Wu Sangui Rebellion, as elaborated in the previous chapter, the Qing throne became extremely alert to viceroys in the border provinces who had a tendency to expand their power. The harsh treatment given by the Qing throne to the provincial viceroys, Cai Yurong, Xifo, and Wei Jiqi, in the post-rebellion period perfectly exemplifies this propensity of the Qing throne. To avoid falling into the same pitfall as those aspiring viceroys, the successors to the provincial posts in the Southwest tended to be rather circumspect and passive. This attitude was best demonstrated in a memorial submitted by the Governor of Guizhou, Wang Yan 王燕, who was appointed in 1698. After he arrived at his post, he found that about forty per cent of land in the province was still deserted. He proposed, in his memorial, to encourage reclamation in Guizhou with some kind of favor granted by the government. He was, however, afraid of asking for any investment from the central government. He said that he understood that it was difficult for the state to grant any financial support to do so. What he dared to request was only a longer period of tax exemption for newly reclaimed

land.⁵¹ As explained above, the Qing state was not in financial difficulty. What was at stake was differentiation of the state policy towards various types of regions.

In the immediate post-rebellion period, the reconstruction of economy was a task almost nationwide. The deliberate restraint of the central government from investing in the Southwest did not distance the Southwest from the other regions which were also suffering from the ravages of the civil war. However, two or three decades after the rebellion, when other regions were showing signs of prosperity, the economic backwardness of the Southwest became conspicuous. The desolation of the Southwest was in sharp contrast to the boom times in other regions, especially the Southeast, or the Jiangnan area. Sometimes even Kangxi himself felt embarrassed by the degree of desolation in the Southwest. It was understandable that he wanted to find a scapegoat for it. In the early summer of 1701, a Censor, Wei Shouqi 魏壽期, mentioned in a memorial that the area around Hanzhong 漢中, Shaanxi province (it was located on the border with Sichuan) used to be a prosperous place, but the local people fled during the Wu Sangui rebellion. The emperor was outraged upon reading this in his memorial. He repudiated it as "absurdity." And he articulated the following point: "The people in this area were razed out by the vagrant outlaw Zhang Xianzhong at the

⁵¹Cited in Claudine Lombard-Salmon, "Un exemple d'acculturation chinoise: la province du Gui Zhou au XVIII^e siècle," pp. 352-353.

end of the Ming dynasty. Warfare had been going on in that place from the seventeenth year of the Shunzhi reign [1660] to the thirteenth year of the Kangxi reign [1674]. Then it was pacified. There has not yet been many years since then, how could the people get back and the place become populated?"⁵² What Kangxi tried to make clear was that it was Zhang Xianzhong who was to blame for the desolation in the vast Southwest.

It is hardly possible to know if this inclination of the emperor had thereafter become the official line on the issue. Nevertheless, twelve years later, in 1713, Kangxi mentioned again that Zhang Xianzhong had massacred innumerable people in Sichuan. This time he asked the Minister of the Ministry of Revenue, Zhang Penghe 張鵬翮, one of the favored high officials of Kangxi, and a Sichuanese, if there was any literature by Sichuanese recording the massacres of Zhang Xianzhong in Sichuan. Zhang replied that there was no one taking the account of the massacres because all the people were killed. The emperor then said: "After Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong overran Dengzhou 鄧州, Henan province, Zhang Xianzhong went to Sichuan. The details of these events have not been known. Your father is eighty-seven years old this year. He would be seventeen or eighteen when Zhang Xianzhong came to Sichuan. He must know something

⁵²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 204, pp. 14a-15a.

of the truth. You can ask him about this and submit a memorial [to me]."⁵³

We do not know whether Zhang Penghe's father told his son about Zhang Xianzhong's massacres and what he, in turn, told the emperor. About twenty-six years later, in 1739, the Ming History was completed. In the biography of Zhang Xianzhong, the accounts about his massacres in Sichuan are incredible. The total number of those killed was given as 60 million, much more than the total population of the whole country in the late Ming dynasty. No matter how ridiculous the accounts are, since then, this fabricated myth about Zhang's massacres became an orthodox story in the history of the Ming-Qing transition. Following the lead of the official Ming History, more literature was produced about the atrocious slaughter and the severe devastation by the rebels in the Southwest.⁵⁴

Although it cannot be proven that Kangxi initiated a myth that made Zhang Xianzhong the scapegoat for the slow economic recovery of the Southwest, there is some truth to the speculation. It is a fact, very hard for the Qing throne to dismiss, that the central government did not make the economic recovery of the Southwest a priority in until Tibetan affairs became the center of the Qing frontier strategy following the Zunghar campaigns. However, when the

⁵³Shengzu Shilu, vol. 254, pp. 26a-27a.

⁵⁴For a study on the literature on Zhang Xianzhong and his massacre in Sichuan, see Ren Naiqiang, "Guanyu Zhang Xianzhong Shiliao de Jianbie."

Qing throne eventually turned to the Southwest early in the eighteenth century, the situation in the Southwest was not very encouraging. Not only did about half of the arable land still lay deserted, but population recovery also lagged far behind the other regions which had also suffered from the rampages of the rebels of the Wu Sangui Rebellion. With the focus of Qing frontier diplomacy on Tibet, the Qing throne had to approach the Southwest with a different attitude. It seemed that the *laissez-faire* policy was no longer suitable for the changed strategy of the Qing state. But, in order to explain its previous neglect, the central authorities were inclined to blame Zhang Xianzhong's cruelty for the cause of the barren scenery in the Southwest.

Regardless of how the throne perceived the causes of the retardation of the economic recovery in the Southwest, the backwardness at the beginning of the eighteenth century was a reality. The ascendancy of the strategic importance of the Southwest did not convince the throne to adopt any active measures, such as providing financial subsidies, towards the Southwest. Compared with the investments the central government put in water projects in Jiangnan, in reclamation in Manchuria or in relief projects in Mongolia, the Southwest was placed at the bottom of the government investment agenda. Nevertheless, besides financial investment, another efficient way to get the economic engine moving was to exempt or reduce taxes. This is the other

side, perhaps the more important side, of the Qing "loose rein" policy towards the region.

Of all the taxed regions in the country, the Southwest, as well as Guangxi province, had the least revenue obligations. (see Table 1: Land Taxes in 1685). The rate of taxation for those four provinces were so low that the provinces did not even bother to report poor harvests due to bad weather in order to get further reductions. The emperor once mentioned in 1717 that he had never heard of any bad weather reports from these four provinces.⁵⁵ Not until 1692, about forty years after other provinces had begun to receive regular tax exemptions, did Sichuan province receive its first tax exemption from the central government. After that the Southwest began to receive more tax reductions and exemptions. In 1702, Kangxi even exempted all taxes for the year 1703 in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan and Guangxi provinces.⁵⁶ these reductions and exemptions represent the throne's efforts at reinvigorating the economy of the region. These policies had a dual effect: first, they lightened the burden on the people already there; and second, the lighter taxes constituted a single most important incentive to draw settlers to the region.⁵⁷

⁵⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 272, p. 5a.

⁵⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 210, p. 9b.

⁵⁷For a specialized study of migration to Sichuan during the Kangxi period, see Entenmann "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," Chapter III. "Conquest, Consolidation, and Reconstruction."

Land Taxes in 1685 (The Twenty-fourth year of the Kangxi Reign)

Province	Land Tax (in kind)	Land Tax (in cash)
Jiangsu	365,570 <i>dan</i>	3,680,192 taels
Anhui	166,427 <i>dan</i>	1,441,325 taels
Zhejiang	1,345,772 <i>dan</i>	2,618,416 taels
Hubei	138,197 <i>dan</i>	923,288 taels
Hunan	65,366 <i>dan</i>	517,092 taels
Guangdong	30,643 <i>dan</i>	2,027,793 taels
Shandong	506,965 <i>dan</i>	2,818,019 taels
Jiangxi	925,423 <i>dan</i>	1,743,245 taels
Shaanxi	170,922 <i>dan</i>	1,315,012 taels
Henan	---	2,606,004 taels
Guangxi	221,718 <i>dan</i>	293,604 taels
Sichuan	1,215 <i>dan</i>	32,211 taels
Yunnan	203,360 <i>dan</i>	99,182 taels
Guizhou	59,482 <i>dan</i>	53,512 taels

(Source: Liang Fangzhong, p. 392)

In addition, because of the slowness of land reclamation in the Southwest, the time span for tax exemptions for newly reclaimed land was longer than anywhere else. During this period, the tax-free period for newly reclaimed land was usually three to five years in other regions, but seven years in the Southwest. This was another

incentive for farmers who desired to flee from tax duties in other regions.

As canal grain contributing provinces, Hunan and Hubei were under much heavier exactions by the Qing state than the Southwest. Also it was well-known that the sub-levies in Hunan were numerous and unbearable. In 1703, Kangxi issued an edict to the newly appointed Pianyuan 偏沅 (Hunan) Governor Zhao Shenqiao 趙申喬 to express his concerns over the exactions in the province:

Hunan is an outlying province. I heard that there has been an age-long practice among the officials in the province to assess all kinds of surcharges without authorization. Every year the unofficial surcharges are several times higher than the regular taxes. Moreover, the imposition of "huohao 火耗"⁵⁸ by the revenue bureaus of the province was also higher than that in other provinces. The people are poor and have no way to manage [to pay all these surcharges]. Therefore they often fled from their home places.⁵⁹

To avoid the heavy taxes as well as the surcharges arbitrarily imposed by the local officials, people of Huguang, namely Hunan and Hubei provinces, often chose to go to the Southwest, Sichuan in particular, to search for better livelihood. It is safe to say that this period witnessed the first big wave of migration into the Southwest in Qing history. Most of the immigrants were from the Huguang region, namely Hubei and Hunan. Therefore, there

⁵⁸"Huohao" was a surcharge levied by local officials in the name of making up spoilage and transport expenses for tax in kind. Zelin translates it as "meltage fees." For further definition of the meltage fees, see Madeleine Zelin, The Magistrate's Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth-Century Ch'ing China, pp. 88-89.

⁵⁹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 211, p. 5a.

emerged a popular saying: "Sichuan was refilled by the people from Huguang (*Huguang tian Sichuan* 湖廣填四川)." Although the problem of population pressure started showing its gravity in the turn of the eighteenth century, the impetus for the farmers of the two provinces to migrate into the Southwest was not overpopulation, but overtaxation. While huge numbers of farmers moved out of Hunan for the unclaimed land in the Southwest, they left large amount of land in Hunan deserted. Hunan was also one of the provinces which suffered severely from the devastation of the Wu Sangui rebellion. After the civil war, the amount of deserted land was immense. In 1700, the province was referred as with "sparse population and vast land (*min xi di guang* 民稀地廣)."⁶⁰ By 1714, after thirty years of reclamation, there were still 46,100 *qing* of the deserted land in Hunan province, according to an official report.⁶¹ This fact shocked the Qing throne and the central government began to pay attention to the problem of heavy surcharges in the region of Huguang.

Taking advantage of the state policies was a weapon of the commoners. Since the early eighteenth century, Huguang people moved to the Southwest in large number. But they were pursued different strategies for avoiding being taxed by the state in their new settlements. One of the strategies was to be "commuting farmers." These people took advantage of the

⁶⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 197, pp. 18b-19a.

⁶¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 260, pp. 7b-8a.

tax-free period for the newly reclaimed land to go to the Southwest to cultivate the deserted land. But once the tax-free period was over, they returned to their home places in Huguang. It is impossible to assess how many people followed such a strategy. Nevertheless, the social consequences of this type of population movement were tangible. One of consequences was the increase of real estate disputes in Hunan province. Before those commuting farmers left for the Southwest, they usually sold their land and houses. But when they returned, they often had disputes with the new owners of the properties.⁶² Another possible consequence was the confusion in population and land registration in both of the regions due to the high mobility of the population.

Besides the commuting migration strategy, another type of population movement was "bouncing migration." In the Southwest, many immigrants did not settle down in the first place they migrated to. Often they moved from place to place in order to choose a better living environment and to maximize their gains. It is quite plausible that they left the first land they reclaimed when the tax-free privilege expired. During this period, there was still much room for immigrants to move around due to the sparseness of the population. Initially, the main stream of immigrants moved around the core area of Sichuan, e.g. the Chengdu plain or the Red Basin area. Gradually, the new settlers radiated to

⁶²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 250, p. 17b.

the peripheral areas of the province. Then in the late Kangxi reign, people began to move from Sichuan to Yunnan and Guizhou.⁶³

With land reclamation underway, the economy in the Southwest was gradually resurrected. Nevertheless, the increase in population and the acceleration of reclamation were not reflected in governmental registrations. The increase of taxable land in the Southwest was slow, the registered population was also low, as shown in the official records. Many historians are much vexed by the erroneous and deceptive records of the population and the arable land of this period in the Southwest, claiming that they are misleading statistics.⁶⁴ Although it is commonly believed that the local officials purposely concealed the true situation from the central authorities, in fact, it was Kangxi who was responsible for the confusion in the statistics from the region concerning population and land. This can be regarded as another aspect of the "loose rein" policy of the central government.

As mentioned above, the state fiscs of the period were full. The central government did not count on an increase of

⁶³In early 1717, Kangxi once mentioned that the Guizhou Governor had reported him through secret memorial that quite alot of people migrated into Guizhou from Sichuan (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 271, p. 16b).

⁶⁴Ho, Ping-ti, "Nan Song Zhi Jin Tudi Shuzi de Kaoshi he Pingjia;" D. H. Perkins, *Agricultural Development in China, 1368-1968*, p. 7, p. 200; Ramon H. Myers, "The Usefulness of Local Gazeteers for the Study of Modern Chinese Economic History: Szechuan Province during the Ch'ing and Republican Periods;" G. William Skinner, "Sichuan's Population in the Nineteenth century: Lessons from Disaggregated data;" Wang Di, "Qing Dai Sichuan Renkou, Gengdi ji Liangshi Wenti."

revenues from the Southwest. What concerned the throne most was the "stability" in the region. Many times the emperor warned to the governors appointed to the Southwest not to upset the tranquility in the localities. As for revenue contribution, the attitude of the Kangxi emperor was atypical among the Chinese monarchs. He once said: "The purpose of collecting taxes is for the state to make the ends meet; if there have been enough revenues for the state, why bother to get more?"⁶⁵ Kangxi opposed the idea of conducting a land survey in order to increase revenues in the Southwest. In 1709, he told the new Governor of Sichuan Nian Gengyao 年羹堯 (d. 1726):⁶⁶

Many people from Huguang have gone to Sichuan to till land and to live for these last years. The place is getting productive and rich. As new Governor, if you try to examine the reclaimed land, and to increase taxes upon your arrival, you would loose popularity. The survey of land in Hunan resulted in troubles and disturbance. Years ago, the Governor of Sichuan Gaertu 噶爾圖 proposed to carry out a survey. But he failed to achieve his goal. It is all right to examine the taxation matter later. But you must keep the people undisturbed. This is the most important thing in Sichuan.⁶⁷

⁶⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 210, p. 9b.

⁶⁶Nian Gengyao was from a family of the Chinese Bordered Yellow Banner. He was a close associate of the Prince Yong 雍, the future Yongzheng emperor. Nian was appointed Governor of Sichuan in 1709. He was one of the chief commanders of the first Qing Tibetan expedition in 1718-20. In 1721, he was promoted to Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi and became an upstart in the southwestern and the northwestern frontiers. He was instrumental in assisting Yongzheng in his power struggle for the throne. Nian was dominant in the Northwest and Southwest until he was removed from power by the Yongzheng emperor in 1725. See Section 1 of Chapter IV. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 319-322; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 295; Hummel, pp. 587-590.

⁶⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 239, pp. 13b-14a.

In 1713, the emperor again declared that he did not attempt to collect tax from the newly reclaimed land in Sichuan even though he knew that the loss resulting from this leniency would amount to 300,000 taels of silver per year. His rationale was consistent: the state fiscs had already been filled.⁶⁸

Under such a policy, there is little doubt that no real effort was made to ascertain accurate figures of population and taxable land in the region. Although the provincial officials periodically reported to the throne on figures of population and reclaimed land which had just been registered to the local government,⁶⁹ in general, the population and the arable land in the Southwest were underreported to an extremely great extent. To be sure, the situation was known to the Qing throne. In other words, the Qing throne was not fooled by the local officials. On the contrary, the emperor was well-informed of the developments in the Southwest.

What underscored the seemingly excessive leniency is that the Qing throne wanted to retain a certain amount of resources in the regions in order to prepare for any frontier emergency. This idea was first expounded by the emperor in late 1709.⁷⁰ For the frontier regions such as the

⁶⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 256, p. 14b.

⁶⁹In 1703, 1,724 *qing* of land; in 1711, 15,380 *qing* of land were registered in Sichuan. In 1717, the Sichuan Governor Nian Gengyao reported that 9,111 households, 1,752 *qing* and 58 *mu* land and 1,130 people were registered in the Chengdu plain area (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 272, pp. 14b-15a).

⁷⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 240, pp. 3b-5b.

Southwest which bordered Tibet, the most unpredictable factor in the Qing frontier enterprise, it might be even more urgent to store some resources locally.⁷¹ It would be inefficient and slow to transport the provisions and other supplies from the capital to the Southwest in case of a frontier incident. Moreover, Kangxi hoped that stability could be maintained in the frontier region. He knew well that land surveys were never a welcome thing for both officials and people, especially, when a considerable amount of unreported land and population were probably under the control of the military in the region.

Kangxi's "loose rein" policy towards the Southwest was also embodied in his benign stance towards border trade between Han Chinese and Tibetans in the western Sichuan area. Since the Dajianlu crisis of 1701, the Qing central authorities began to write the border trade into its frontier agenda for the Southwest. In early 1703, the emperor sent Lama Mubaseerji, and court officials Shutu and Tietu to Dajianlu to oversee the trade affairs. The emperor issued an edict to these three commissioners stating the principles they had to obey in dealing with the border business. In the edict, the emperor ordered that they inform the Tibetan leader Sanggye Gyatso of their mission immediately after their arrival and ask Sanggye to send high

⁷¹The first decade of the eighteenth century witnessed a Tibetan political scene which was still haunted by power struggles and frequent turnovers of rulers. For a detailed account of the Tibetan political unrest of the period, see Section 5 of this Chapter.

lamas to Dajianlu to oversee trade activities as well. As for the customs, the edict ruled:

The Tibetans are most greedy. Yet they can be pleased with any small benefit. The transaction tax will not be levied upon them, only upon the merchants of our country. You cannot take levying the transaction tax as a serious matter. If you are determined to make profits, merchants will not come. Then what is different from banning the trade at all? The sum of income from this matter is not significant, do not care too much. You must foster good reputations [for the dynasty]. They [the Tibetans] would praise us even though they only get a modicum of benefit. You must get familiar with the local situation and memorialize me whenever there is a thing on which you should be reporting.⁷²

This edict of the emperor set the basic tone for Qing management of the border trade at Dajianlu. Again the Qing throne took a "loose rein" attitude towards another chance to increase revenue from the Southwest.

The "loose rein" was also evident in the Qing throne's attitude towards taxing the mining industries in Yunnan. In 1707, the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Beihenuo 貝和諾 reported to the central government on the amount of tax charged for the year of 1705-1706 on the metal mines such as gold, silver, bronze and tin in Yunnan province. The total amount was only 80,152 taels of silver and 84 taels of gold. The Ministry of Revenue held that the amount was too low to be acceptable. It ruled that the Governor-General conduct an investigation and raise the tax rate. But Kangxi disagreed with this disposition. He thought that eighty

⁷²Shengzu Shilu, vol. 207, pp. 5b-7a.

thousand taels was good enough, and there was no need to charge more tax on the mining industries in Yunnan.⁷³

Under the Qing "loose rein" policy, the Southwest was gradually becoming populated and developed during the late Kangxi period. By the end of the Kangxi reign, the population in Sichuan had reached to 1.6 million, and 0.58 million in Yunnan, 0.085 million in Guizhou.⁷⁴ By the end of the Kangxi reign, the core areas, such as the Chengdu plain, had been considerably repopulated. One indication of this repopulation is that, in 1721, some counties which had been abolished in the early Qing due to sparse population were restored and more official posts were added in this region.⁷⁵ Compared with regions of dense population, such as Jiangnan, the population density was still fairly low. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that by that time the region as a whole had already rid itself of the shadow of decades of warfare and destruction. The Qing "loose rein" policy played an important role in this significant development.

3. Ascendancy of the Military in the Southwest

The Kangxi emperor had developed a philosophy with regard to harnessing his officials during his more than

⁷³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 231, pp. 8a-b.

⁷⁴According to Liang Fangzhong, the number of people who were required to pay capitation in Sichuan in 1724 was 409,310, in Yunnan 145,240, and in Guizhou 21,388. If the people who did not pay capitation were four times this figure, the total population would be approximately 1.6 million, 0.58 million and 0.085 million respectively. Liang Fangzhong, *Zhongguo Lidai Hukou, Tiandi, Tianfu Tongji*, p. 393.

⁷⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 293, pp. 4b-5a; vol. 293, pp. 4b-5a.

sixty-year rule of the immense Qing empire. In general, he was more harsh towards civil officials, and more lenient towards military officials. This became more apparent during the last two decades his reign. One reason was, as he himself explained, that the long-time peace made experienced generals fewer and fewer. So to those military officials who had participated in the various campaigns of the early or the middle Kangxi periods, the emperor always had special feelings. Above all, the emperor had been more flexible in the appointment of military officials to the border areas because he had attempted to achieve the best efficiency in assisting the Qing frontier politics with powerful military establishments. This flexibility of the emperor can be seen in many cases. One day in the autumn of 1703, after the emperor inspected the performance of the military examinees and decided the order of place for the candidates, he issued an edict. It read:

... It is forbidden for civil officials to be appointed to their home places; but for military officials, it is beneficial to be familiar with the geographic situation of the place where they are appointed. For a country, the border officials are the most crucial. It is a very important matter to appoint military officials [to border areas]. It does not matter that troops are not used for one hundred years; but it matters without preparations for war for even one day. It has been a long time of peace. The experienced generals have been getting scarce.⁷⁶

A similar assumption had been expressed by the emperor over and over again during the last twenty years of his

⁷⁶Shengzu Shilu, vol. 213, p. 18b.

reign. He had a clear vision of how to maintain the local military establishment's efficiency and power. There were two basic principles. First, selection and appointment of military officials would not follow the regular appointment procedure. Second, military personnel should be guaranteed adequate economic resources. In the Southwest where the military's position had become increasingly important, the flexibility of the central government in its treatment of the military was very clearly displayed.

In selecting military officials to posts in the strategic border areas, Kangxi was inclined to be more practical and less restrictive. He encouraged experienced soldiers and officers to participate in the military examinations. To make this participation feasible, the emperor allowed those in the rank-and-file to take the examinations in the places where they served, and did not require them to return to their domiciles. During the Qing dynasty, there were two ways to appoint military officials. One was called "lottery appointment (*chebu* 掣補)," which was appointed by the Ministry of War. Another was called "appointment by recommendation (*tibu* 題補)," which was appointed through nomination by provincial officials. In 1708, the Ministry of War petitioned the emperor to allow all border and coastal areas to use the second method to appoint military officials. Thus, a vacant post could be filled rapidly by a lower official from the same province.

For Shaanxi, Yunnan and Guizhou, the rank of a new appointment could be one or two levels higher than one's old rank.⁷⁷ This measure gave more opportunities to the military personnel in the border and coastal areas. In 1718, the emperor once again reiterated that in practicing the *tibu* system, Assistant Regional Commanders, a high military post, could be appointed from the lower officers in nearby areas.⁷⁸ Throughout the Kangxi period, appointments of military officials were never subject to the restrictions of the law of avoidance or other bureaucratic regulations.⁷⁹

In the Southwest, the tenure of the chief military officials, usually Provincial Military Commanders, was often much longer than that of the civil officials. While turnovers of civil officials were commonplace, it seems that military officials, once the emperor felt the appointed officials were the right persons for the posts, would stay in their posts until they retired or illness made them unable to perform their duties.⁸⁰ The most illuminating case

⁷⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 232, pp. 19b.

⁷⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 282, pp. 9a-b.

⁷⁹In the last year of the Kangxi reign, i.e., 1722, the emperor became concerned with the abuse of the system of *tibu*. He pointed out that there had been too many officials of intermediate level who were appointed with the recommendation of provincial Governors-General and Governors, and that it was impossible for him to get to know all of them personally (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 297, pp. 5a-b.). The resolution to the problem suggested by the court officials was to abate the *tibu* for the civil officials save several remote prefectures in Guangxi and Yunnan province and Taiwan prefecture. But for appointments of military officials below from Regional Vice-Commander, the system of *tibu* was still preserved (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 297, pp. 12a-b).

⁸⁰On some occasion, aging and illness could not be excuses for retirement either. In 1719, the Provincial Military Commander of Guyuan 固原, Pan Yulong 潘育龍 asked to retire due to old age and poor health.

was that of Yue Shenglong. The emperor's partiality was explicitly demonstrated in his disposition of the case of the mutual impeachment between the Governor of Sichuan Yu Yangzhi and the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Yue Shenglong during the Dajianlu incident. After Yue resumed his office, he was never transferred until he died, in his post, in 1713. To reward these chief military officials who had served in the southwestern border regions for a considerably long period, the emperor sometimes granted special titles to them while keeping them in their posts. For instance, the throne granted the Provincial Military Commander of Guizhou Li Fangshu 李芳述 the honorable title "The General of Pacifying the Remoteness (*Zhenyuan Jiangjun* 鎮遠將軍)" and the rank of the Junior Guardian (*taizishaobao* 太子少保) in 1706.⁸¹ Li had won many exploits in the field and had been at this post for many years. He remained at the post until his death in 1709.⁸²

In treating the major military commanders in the Southwest, Kangxi sometimes showed a great degree of flexibility. This was very explicit in the case of Yue Shenglong's change of his domicile. In 1713, shortly before

But Kangxi persuaded him to stay in the post (*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 283, pp. 3b-4a). Not long after this, Pan died at his post (*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 286, p. 4b).

⁸¹*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 225, pp. 1b-2a.

⁸²The same method was also used towards the military officials in other border provinces. In 1709, the throne granted the Provincial Military Commander of Shaanxi, Pan Yulong, the honorable title of the General of Tranquilization and Pacification (*Zhensui Jiangjun* 鎮綏將軍), but ordered him to remain in the position at the same time.

Yue died of illness, he wrote a petition to the emperor to request to allow his family to stay in Sichuan under the excuse that his mother was over ninety years old so that she was not capable of moving back to their hometown in Gansu province. This demand was squarely against Qing rules that military officials were forbidden to settle down where they had served, or even to purchase real estate in their duty places. Nevertheless, Kangxi allowed Yue Shenglong and his family to stay in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan.⁸³ Yue Shenglong's elder brother Yue Chaolong 岳超龍, a military professional as well, also settled in Chengdu.⁸⁴ After Yue Shenglong died, his eldest son Yue Zhongqi 岳鐘琪 (1686-1754)⁸⁵ took over his position. Yue Zhongqi was only ten years old when their family moved to Chengdu. Later he entered the bureaucratic career by purchasing the position of a Subprefectural Magistrate.⁸⁶ In 1711, Yue was appointed Brigade Commander of Songpan 松潘, thus becoming a military official.⁸⁷ He was promoted to Regional Vice Commander of Yongning 永寧. In 1721, due to his outstanding performance in the Qing first Tibet campaign and his successful suppression of a Tibetan rebellion in Qinghai, he was

⁸³*Shenqzu Shilu*, vol. 254, pp. 28a-b.

⁸⁴*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 11, pp. 2a-b.

⁸⁵There are a number of biographies of Yue Zhongqi. They are in *Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 153; *Chongxiu Chengdu Xianzhi*, vol. 4; *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 322-323; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 296; Hummel, pp. 957-959.

⁸⁶Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, p. 957.

⁸⁷*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 153, p. 5a.

appointed Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, taking the post his father had occupied for many years.⁸⁸

The case of the Yue family was not an isolated one. Actually, a couple of years before Yue Shenglong submitted his request, the former Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, Tang Xishun, who was appointed to the post during the absence of Yue due to his strife with Yu Yangzhi, requested of the throne before he died in 1709 to allow his family to live in Chengdu and thus to change his domicile to Chengdu. It seems that Tang did not return to his home province, Shaanxi, after his retirement in 1701 and that he and his family had been living in Sichuan. But not until he was on his deathbed, did he make a formal request to the throne. His request was approved.⁸⁹ The approvals of Tang Xishun's and Yue Shenglong's requests were but a signal of the open-minded attitude of the emperor towards this type of matter. During this period, there were many other military officials who settled down in the Southwest, most of them settled in the Chengdu plain, the most productive area in the Southwest, instead of returning to their home places after retiring from their services. Except for two or three other military officials who made petitions to the throne to get permission, it can be speculated that many officers of

⁸⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 292, p. 17a.

⁸⁹*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 11, pp. 4b-5a.

lower ranks obtained new domiciles without petitioning the throne.⁹⁰

Another noteworthy case involving the settlement of a military official in Chengdu is that of Yang Tianzong 楊天縱. Yang was also a Shaanxi native. He had been a Company Commander in Sichuan when the Dajianlu crisis occurred in 1701. In the campaign to take Dajianlu, he distinguished himself with exploits and was promoted to Brigade Vice-Commander. It is possible that he settled his family in Chengdu during this period. Later he was transferred to Shandong province. During the Yongzheng period, he was transferred to Yunnan province and eventually was promoted to Provincial Military Commander of Yunnan.⁹¹

It is notable that most of these soldiers were from the Northwest, either Shaanxi or Gansu province. Gansu had been well-known as a source for good soldiers, but was meager in wealth, and harsh in climate. Most Qing rank-and-filers in Sichuan were from this region. The phenomenon that military personnel of northwestern background chose to settle down in Sichuan can be interpreted in two ways. First, it was an indication of the considerable economic recovery in the Southwest during this period. Given the absence of such a

⁹⁰The other military people who settled in Chengdu during the Kangxi period were Ben Jinzhong 本進忠, a native of Gansu province, Song Zongzhang 宋宗璋, a native of Gansu province, Liu Tinjie 劉廷傑, a native of Gansu, Wang Yunji 王允吉, a native of Anyue 安岳, Sichuan province, Wang Guoxiang 汪國祥, a native of Zhejiang province, Chen Shan 陳山, a native of Zhili province. *Chongxiu Chengdu Xian Zhi*, vol. 7.

⁹¹*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 11, pp. 4a-b.

tendency in previous periods, the new trend indicates that the environment in the region had become more liveable. When General Zhao Liangdong, a Ningxia native, retired in the 1680s, he chose Jiangnan as his ideal residence, instead of the Southwest, with which he had many personal ties. But during the late Kangxi period, a modicum of economic recovery plus salubrious climate and captivating natural scenery made the core area of the Southwest an attractive home for the northwestern veterans.

Second, it suggests that some developments favorable to military personnel were going on in the region. To be sure, to the civil elites, the Southwest was still not attractive. The civil officials who were appointed to the three provinces of the Southwest often purposely delayed in arriving at their new posts so that they would be dismissed and then awaited better appointments.⁹² Although the central government attempted to remedy this abuse of the appointment system, the situation persisted. The newly-appointed civil officials delayed so drastically in going to the posts that many posts in the region were vacant.⁹³ In the early Kangxi period, the throne had ruled that all officials who had come from Sichuan ought to return to the province after their tenures were over in order to hold back the trend that more and more elites emigrated from the region through bureaucratic service. This rule was still valid during this

⁹²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 193, p. 22b.

⁹³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 223, p. 4a.

period. In 1711, the acting Governor of Guizhou Bai Huang 白潢 memorialized the throne to also apply this rule to Guizhou province where the economy was recovering but gentry-officials were still emigrating.⁹⁴ The stark contrast of the direction of movement between the military and the civil elites in the Southwest exemplifies the ascendancy of the military's position in the region.

Besides the Qing central authorities' *laissez-faire* attitude towards enforcing the law of avoidance, another temptation to lure the military to stay was the advantages for military personnel to make a fortune in the region. The Kangxi emperor knew well that the financial problem was the most vital one weakening the armies. The fall of the Ming dynasty was a constant reminder of that dear lesson. Moreover, the disastrous mutiny of the Qing rank-and-file under Wang Fuchen on the Shaanxi-Sichuan border during Wu Sangui's rebellion also had longlasting impact on Kangxi. Therefore, the emperor was inclined to be very flexible

⁹⁴Bai Huang said in his memorial: "The local officials and local gentry are the models of common people. If officials return to their hometowns to live after their official careers end, young students in localities would have role models to imitate. In addition, they bring their salaries with them and spend them locally, which would somehow benefit the common people in localities. This is one way to help local communities get more civilized. Nevertheless, the officials from Guizhou province detested the destitution of their own hometowns once they were appointed to other places. They usually settle in other provinces and never return to their homes. If people all mimic their examples and emigrate out of the province, then only the beefheaded poors would remain in Guizhou. This is not the will of our emperor to cultivate the local communities. This subject likes to cite the precedents of Fengtian and Sichuan and to ban the officials and gentry members of Guizhou province from living in other provinces." *Gong zhong Dang Kangxi Chao Zouzhe*, vol. 6, pp. 548-549.

towards the illicit conduct of the military officials. While he was generally more harsh in punishing officials who appropriated soldiers' salaries and made fraudulent claims on the size of the armies, he was more perfunctory towards the fortune-making activities of his military officials. Morality was not a criterion the emperor used to select and evaluate a military official. Under the influence of such an approach by the emperor, cases in which military officials took advantage of their power to make personal fortunes were not uncommon during this period. Accordingly, cases in which civil officials impeached military officials for such transgressions were frequent. The emperor had elaborated his ideas on the situation in 1710:

Since Zhao Shengqiao 趙中喬 [the Governor of Hunan] impeached Yu Yimo 俞益謨 [the Provincial Military Commander of Hunan], Governors-General and Governors tend to keep a firm hand on the military. The military are not scholars. They only fight on order in the battlefield. Most of the local civil officials have income from "huohao." But the military does not have such an extra income. Nevertheless, if one wishes soldiers to do their best in their duty, one must reward the soldiers from time to time. Then they can be encouraged and willingly to fight once there is an enemy. If there is no reward at all, how can anybody be happy to be used? There is an ancient saying that brave fighters are only made with heavy rewards. Now the civil officials in a peaceful time only know to check strictly the military with the ready regulations, but never consider the interests of the military. During the time when the three feudatories made rebellion, Zhang Yong 張勇, Wang Jinbao 王進寶, Zhao Liangdong 趙良棟 and Sun Sike 孫思克 had done the bravura to annihilate the rebels. It was also because I had trusted these generals and granted them lots of favors, allowed them abundant expenditures, and bestowed them grants from time to time that the soldiers obeyed their direction and fought to their last breath, so the

campaign could be won. Although the military cannot be spoiled so that they will be too arrogant, they cannot be mistreated either so that their militancy is weakened. The military of our dynasty has never been spoiled. If they are impaired or insulted, the strength of the armies would be eroded. It is indeed an important matter.⁹⁵

The Governor of Hunan Zhao Shengqiao's impeachment of Yu Yimo was a renowned case at the time. Zhao Shengqiao accused the Provincial Military Commander of Hunan province, Yu Yimo, of appropriating military expenditures and allowing his subordinates to be involved in all kinds of commercial activities, including running pawn shops. Zhao had a reputation for being an upright official. But the emperor was not happy about his application his own lofty morality to criticize his colleagues. The emperor overtly advocated that it was not necessary for Governors and Governors-General to be too demanding of their subordinate officials. According to the emperor, to judge if an official was upright or "clean," one could only look at major aspects of one's characters and behaviors, but not trifles.⁹⁶

⁹⁵*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 243, pp. 4a-5a.

⁹⁶Kangxi said in an edict of April 18, 1711: "Governors-General and Governors should take care of important issues in dealing with their daily affairs. Do not be too strict and rigid. One who is lenient would win supporters; one who is sincere would be trusted by people. It is a basic principle to be lenient in ruling the country. If one is too picky, nobody in the world is without errors. When Zhao Shengqiao was the Governor of Zhejiang, the people there had a lot of complaints about him. When he was transferred to Hunan, all officials, higher and lower, were accused by him. How can it be possible that there is no single good official in a whole province? In short, viceroys should not impeach officials so recklessly. During the Ming, officials could not conduct on behalf of the interests of the state, and they impeached each other out of personal grievances, fabricating cases. This practice must be prohibited. One can only look at important things in judging if an official is upright or not." *Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 245, pp. 16b-17a.

Since conflict between civil officials and military officials in the border provinces occurred fairly frequently in the last two decades of the Kangxi reign, the throne became more and more concerned. On occasion, the emperor exhorted the viceroys appointed to the Southwest not to be overcritical of their fellow military officials. The emperor's leniency towards the military had been well demonstrated in the case of Yu Yangzhi and Yue Shenglong in the early 1700s.

In the winter of 1709, when Kangxi granted an audience to the new Governor of Sichuan Nian Gengyao, a confidant of the future Yongzheng emperor, one of the exhortations the emperor gave to the young viceroy was to keep up good relations with the military officials. After warning Nian that the military officials usually tended to exaggerate their merit in suppressing local bandits, the emperor went ahead to reiterate his concerns for the military officials: "The military officials should not be allowed to make trouble. However, they should also be given some latitude (to make money) so that they can raise their families. As the Governor, you should be friendly and cooperative with the military officials, do not be overcritical (of them)."⁹⁷

⁹⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 239, p. 14a-b. On another occasion in 1709, the emperor said: "... the local civil and military officials are always in conflict while working together. It should not be harshly penalized for military officials such as Regional Commanders to take soldiers' allowances into their own pockets. Civil officials are able to support themselves even though they are completely free from corruption. But what extra income do military officials have? In case of any incident in localities, civil officials can stay in their bureaus to take command of

As supercilious as Nian was, he was not taking the military so seriously. Not long after his appointment, there had been some clues of his discord with the senior military officer, the Provincial Military Commander Yue Shenglong.⁹⁸ Then after Yue retired from the post in 1711 because of his old age, and perhaps because of his uneasiness with Nian as well, Nian Gengyao reported to the throne that Yue had borrowed ten thousand taels of silver from the provincial excheques which had not been returned. Nian also suggested that Nian himself and other provincial officials were willing to pay back this sum of money. This should be considered as a scheme for Nian to expose the misconduct of Yue Shenglong to the emperor. But the Kangxi emperor did not blame Yue. Instead, he said: "This sum of money was presumptuously lent (to Yue) by the former Governor Nengtai and the former Provincial Administration Commissioner Bian Yongshi. Obviously this was wrong. But Yue Shenglong has made many contributions. It is not unreasonable for you folks to manage to pay back (for him)."⁹⁹ Yue's

the affair, but military officials have to go to the front to confront danger." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 239, pp.7a-b.

⁹⁸In 1710, there was an armed conflict between the Qing garrison and the Tibetans in Ningfan Wei 寧番衛, Sichuan province. Yue Shenglong asked to lead an excursion to crack down the Tibetans who killed a Qing officer. Kangxi approved the action and also order Nian Gengyao to go the front as well. But not until Nian arrived at the place, did Yue accomplished the operation, caught a Tibetan chieftain who was responsible for the incident. So Nian returned to Chengdu from half way. After the emperor received the report on the incident, Yue was rewarded but Nian was penalized in the name of "avoidance of danger (*weibi buqian* 畏避不前)." Nian was dismissed but was allowed to remain in office. *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 142, p. 23a; vol. 244, pp. 15a-b; vol. 246, p. 6a.

⁹⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 250, p. 12b.

misappropriation was therefore pardoned by the emperor himself.

Along with the enhancement of the strategic importance of the Southwest, the power and social position of the military officials had also been elevated. Many of them had adroitly used this advantage to make fortunes for themselves and their families. The opportunities were many.

At first, it was not uncommon for military officials to be involved in commerce. Yu Yangzhi had accused Yue Shenglong of letting his subordinates monopolize the salt business while driving out small salt merchants.¹⁰⁰ The salt industry in Sichuan had a century-long history. It was one of the prominent commodities produced in the region since a very early time. Like other industries, the salt industry was also destroyed during the Ming-Qing transition and the Wu Sangui Rebellion. It was slowly picking up during the late Kangxi period. In 1686, gabelle began to be levied in Sichuan. Parallel to the loose rein policies adopted in other matters, the Qing policy towards the salt industry in Sichuan was also characterized as lax and non-revenue-oriented. As the loose rein policy worked in other areas, it spurred the salt industry to develop too.¹⁰¹ Thus rose an opportunity for the military officials.

¹⁰⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 193, pp. 15b-16a; vol. 198, pp. 10a-11a.

¹⁰¹Zhang Xuejun and Ran Guangrong, *Ming Qing Sichuan Jinq Yan Shi Gao*, pp. 79-83.

The tea-horse trade in the border areas between Sichuan and Tibet was another opportunity. Since the Dajianlu Incident, the central government had begun to look into the border trade in western Sichuan. Nevertheless, unlike the Ming government that had tight control on the income of taxes levied on both imported and exported commodities, the Qing throne did not take this income seriously. As pointed out in the last section, only Chinese goods exported to Tibet were taxed, but not vice-versa. In addition, the tax levied on the Chinese merchants was extremely low. This lax control of the Qing state on the border trade was no doubt a stimulant to the merchants of both sides. During the last two decades of the Kangxi reign, the border trade thrived. Nevertheless, this region was still on the margin of Qing administration. Goods moving along the major transportation routes were prone to harassment by the local people. Therefore, the Qing garrisons along the major routes became indispensable to the merchants. With Yu Yangzhi as a predecessor in embezzling the border trade tariff, it is plausible that any military official who was on the rise in the Southwest would have no hesitation to follow the suit of Yu Yangzhi.

The system of Qing military expenditures was run differently from the Ming dynasty. The army was made to purchase their necessities and some equipment, including horses, with their salaries by themselves. The amount of the

salary was considerable since it was meant to cover the costs of food and equipment. Thus it created another remarkable phenomenon whereby any military unit meant a market for merchants. When there was a military campaign, only part of the supplies were prepared by the logistics units. The rank-and-filers had to buy and carry the rest of the supplies by themselves. This meant that each military campaign was trailed by a horde of merchants, moving along with the military camps. This system provided a chance for the military officials and merchants to take advantage of each other.

In the western and the southwestern border areas, the military officials were sometimes bribed by merchants to buy bony horses from them and then to resell the horses to the soldiers. Yue Shenglong was accused of having done this. Moreover, it was not uncommon for military officials to withhold part of the salaries of their subordinates in the name of purchasing certain equipment for them. In this way, the military officials could easily gather a certain sum of capital to start a business. We cannot estimate the scope of the involvement of military officials in this type commerce. Some clues show that the activities would involve running pawn shops, practicing usury and, as mentioned earlier, monopolizing the salt trade.

Another important way for the military officials in the Southwest to get rich was to invest in land. Since the

scarcity of the population in the region persisted throughout the late Kangxi period, land prices were fairly low, or even free since most arable land was deserted and ownerless. After the Wu Sangui Rebellion, an official revealed that the military had occupied arable land in Sichuan, and that the returned refugees found their land seized by the military.¹⁰² It is plausible that this situation still existed during this period. In a correspondence of October 25, 1703, Italian missionary M. Appiani also mentioned the military land in Sichuan.¹⁰³ To be sure, all the military land was not taxed. By the end of the Kangxi reign, land reclamation in the Southwest was well underway. However, the amount of registered land was still very small. One reason could be that a considerable amount of land was under the control of the military. Perhaps being aware of this situation, Kangxi warned the provincial viceroys more than once not to make an investigation of the actual land tenure. As the emperor pointed out, the military officials lacked sources of extra income while the civil officials enjoyed "huohao" readily. One can speculate that military officials would be more enthusiastic than civil officials in searching for fortune on their own.

¹⁰²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 96, pp. 20b-21a.

¹⁰³The archives of the Missions-Etrangeres de Paris, Sichuan, vol. 407, pp. 341-357. M. Appiani belonged to an evangelical organization based in Paris: Chapel of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, i.e. the Lazaristes. Appiani arrived in Sichuan in the summer of 1702.

Because of the increasing concerns of the central authorities over Tibetan affairs, the central government would continue its special policies towards the Southwest in the coming years. In one sense, this period was only the beginning of the ascendancy of the military forces in the Southwest. As the Tibetan crises developed later to the extent that military intervention was required, the Southwest then became a military rear-base and the dominance of the military personnel in society more conspicuous.

4. Initial Rice Circulation in the Yangtze River Regions

The ascendancy of the Southwest in the strategic considerations of the Qing empire reaffirmed the validity of the policy that the Qing government had maintained towards the region since the early Qing. The central government, during the late Kangxi period, found new significance in adhering to the existing "loose rein" policy. The authorities began to realize that it was utterly necessary to retain a certain amount of wealth in the region in case there was a frontier emergency. The core of the "loose rein" policy was a de-emphasis on extracting revenue from the Southwest. If in the previous periods the adoption of such policy was a result of the unstable situation in the early Qing dynasty and of the era of the Wu Sangui Rebellion, during this later period it was part of the state's financial strategy. It connotes the changing attitude of the

central government in perceiving the significance of the region. The "loose rein" policy provided some stimuli for the revitalization of the economy and repopulation in the region. By the early eighteenth century, the effects of such a policy on population and economic recovery were fairly visible. Not blind to these developments in the Southwest, the throne did not intend to adjust in any way its strategies in revenue-levying nationwide, making the revenue obligations more evenly distributed. Therefore, the central government in fact created two sets of criterion in its administration of economic matters.

It was during this period that the population pressure first became tangible. One conspicuous indication was that rice prices in the regions of dense population began to rise. In 1699, Kangxi had first noticed this problem.¹⁰⁴ Since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the Qing throne had put tremendous emphases on controlling the Jiangnan region, the most productive region of the country, to guarantee abundance of the state fisc. The Jiangnan region alone undertook more than half of the state revenues and canal grain. More specifically, Suzhou 蘇州, Songjiang 松江, Changzhou 常州 and Zhenjiang 鎮江, four prefectures of Jiangsu province, took on one-third of the total canal grain obligations, which amounted to 1.4 million *dan* per year. Ironically, by this period, due to population increases and

¹⁰⁴Shengzu Shilu, vol. 193, pp. 19a-b.

the heavy tax burden, the region could no longer feed the local people with the local agricultural output. According to the law, tribute grain was not exemptable, even in bad years.¹⁰⁵ As a result, the people of the region had to rely on rice imported from other regions, mainly from the upper Yangtze valley, to meet their daily needs.¹⁰⁶ Another southern province, Guangdong, also suffered from rice shortages in this period. The rice consumed in Guangdong was mainly imported from Guangxi province. But Guangxi also imported rice from Hunan province. During this period, there was an adage that said: "When the provinces of Hunan and Hubei have good harvests, all the people in the country are fed (*Huguang shu, tianxia zu* 湖廣熟，天下足)". It shows that the Qing revenue system had stimulated creation of a subsystem of rice circulation. While the southeastern and the southern provinces played the role of major rice contributors to the state, they were at the same time importers of rice from the upper Yangtze valley in order to feed the local people. The people in the region which was known as "the granary" had to consume rice produced

¹⁰⁵*Da Qing Huidian*. But exceptions are not absent from the records of the late Kangxi period. From time to time, provincial officials would ask the throne's permission to postpone completion of the tribute grain collecting or to substitute grain with cash. Sometimes the emperor also ordered to set aside a portion of the tribute grain before it was transported to the capital to sell at the regular price to relieve rice shortages. But it had to be made up in the following year.

¹⁰⁶In a memorial of the Governor of Jiangsu Yu Zhun 于準 of 1708, he mentioned: "But the population in this place is so dense that rice produced locally is not sufficient to feed all the people. [The people here] are dependent on the supply of 'guest rice (*ke mi* 客米)' from other provinces." *Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 233, pp.9a-b.

somewhere else. Not surprisingly, this subsystem of rice circulation was initiated and manipulated by private merchants in this first stage.¹⁰⁷

With the exacerbation of rice shortage in Jiangnan during the course of the period, the central government had to adopt some measures to ensure a steady rice supply to Jiangsu, Zhejiang and other provinces suffering from rice shortages. But their rational was not to lessen the revenue burden of these provinces in order to leave more grain in the localities to feed the increased population, but to ensure the accessibility of the subsystem of rice circulation in these regions. In 1708, at the request of the Governor of Jiangsu, Yu Zhun 于準, the throne ordered the ban on rice exportation in the middle Yangtze valley provinces of Jiangxi, Hunan and Hubei lifted. That is to say, the government officially endorsed the rice trade which had been carried out by merchants for years without state intervention or protection. In so doing, the Qing utilized marketing mechanisms as an instrument to remedy the drawbacks of the Qing revenue-levying strategies. Meanwhile, the provincial governments of the regions in which rice shortages were present also used the official coffer to purchase rice from the upper Yangtze valley, then sold it

¹⁰⁷Through a specialized study on rice prices of the early eighteenth century, Han-sheng Chuan and Richard Kraus reach a conclusion that the lower Yangtze valley had been largely dependent upon grain transported from upper Yangtze valley since the early eighteenth century (Mid-Ch'ing Rice Markets and Trade). This can also be demonstrated through historical method.

locally at the regular price. This was not a rare scenario during this period. In a sense, the state became one important client in the rice market. In one occasion, the throne ordered that 300,000 *dan* of the canal grain levied from Jiangxi province be sold in Jiangnan to relieve a rice shortage. To make up this portion of the Canal Grain obligation of Jiangxi province, the throne told the province to buy this amount of grain from Hubei in the following year.¹⁰⁸ Another measure the government took to ensure a rice supply to Jiangnan and the other southern provinces was to ban rice exports to foreign countries via ocean transportation. It had been a firm belief that the rice shortage in Jiangnan and the southeastern coastal areas was caused by rice smuggling to foreign countries.¹⁰⁹

The coming into being of the subsystem of rice circulation was welcome news for the central government. It functioned well during this period to relieve regional rice shortages, either caused by natural calamities or overexaction by the state vis-à-vis the increase of population in the most productive region, Jiangnan. Perhaps the smooth functioning of the mechanism contributed to the Qing dynasty's maintenance of its unevenly prorated revenue-

¹⁰⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 233, p. 22b.

¹⁰⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 232, pp. 4a-b. Later in the Yongzheng period, the Qing authorities realized that the ocean trade was not the cause of the rice shortage in China, because the south and the southeast Asian countries were also rice producing regions. It was not profitable to transport rice from China to sell there (*Shizu Shilu*, vol. 54, p. 20). But during the late Kangxi period, the government did regard the foreign trade as one major cause of the rice shortages.

levying system. There was no outcry for reforming the existing revenue-collecting system in this period. Nevertheless, what was obscure to the central government was that a substantial portion of rice on the markets of the middle Yangtze valley was actually transported from the Southwest, more particularly, the province of Sichuan. It is worth noting that during this period the central government was entirely ignorant of such a development, not realizing that the Southwest played a considerable part in the subsystem of rice circulation. Not until the second year of the Yongzheng reign, i.e. 1724, was the central government first informed of this situation.¹¹⁰ And not until the fifth year of the Yongzheng reign, i.e. 1727, did the Qing authorities realize that it was necessary to levy some duty on the rice cargo that was shipped from Sichuan to Hubei via the Yangtze River.¹¹¹ Therefore, it can be assumed that prior to 1727, the rice market in the Southwest was basically beyond the reach of the state. For the central authorities at that time, the only well-known center for rice transactions was Hankou 漢口, Hubei province, the largest hub of the commercial activities in central China. This development in the Southwest, which had been concealed from the central government, was undoubtedly an outcome of the "loose rein" policy. And it contributed to the

¹¹⁰ Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi, Wang Jinghao's 王景灝 memorial on October 6, 1724 (the twenty-fourth day of the eighth month of the second year of the Yongzheng reign).

¹¹¹ Shizu Shilu, vol. 62, pp. 5a-b.

development of a subsystem of rice circulation which had grown by taking advantage of the drawbacks of the state tax-levying system.

The Qing "loose rein" policy towards the Southwest rendered the amounts of most agricultural yields in the region beyond the knowledge of the government, let alone putting these outputs under state taxation. By this period, rice production in the Chengdu plain had exceeded the level before the Ming-Qing transition.¹¹² Due to the camouflage of large amounts of reclaimed land, and the low tax rate, the rice price in the Southwest was much lower than the average price in other parts of China. By the late Kangxi period, rice was only 0.33 taels of silver per *dan* in Sichuan. This was equal to the price about twenty years earlier in Tongcheng 桐城 county, Anhui province. And the rice price in Yunnan and Guizhou was no higher either.¹¹³ But in Beijing in 1709, one *dan* of millet was one tael and two *qian*, and wheat was one tael and eight *qian* per *dan*. Compare with these prices, the Southwest was definitely an ideal place for merchants to speculate.

Although there is no documented evidence to reconstruct the dynamics of rice exports from Sichuan during this period, the copious records about the flourishing of the rice trade during the Yongzheng period suggest that this

¹¹²In 1724, the registered land in Sichuan was 21.5 million *mu*, which surpassed the amount of the Ming dynasty, 13 million *mu*. Liang Fanzhong, p. 380.

¹¹³Shenqzu Shilu, vol. 272, pp. 6b-7a.

development should have been underway long before the Yongzheng period. In the second year of the Yongzheng reign (1724), the Governor of Sichuan Wang Jinghao 王景灝 told the emperor in a memorial: "The rice consumed in Jiangsu and Zhejiang areas has long been dependent upon imports from Huguang, but [the rice of] Huguang has long been dependent upon Sichuan."¹¹⁴ He described the large volume of rice traffic in the Kuiguan Pass 夔關 at the west end of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, as the following: "After the autumn harvest, about a dozen to twenty rice cargo vessels pass the Kuiguan Pass each day, going down to Hubei."¹¹⁵ This was about the first time that the central government was informed by its officials about this development. Presumably, the harsh attitude that the Yongzheng emperor assumed in tightening the management of the state finances had some impact on the Southwest where the rectification of the financial situation was most needed. The provincial officials were somehow under pressure to report to the throne the true economic situation in the region.

As mentioned above, during the late Kangxi period, the military had a great amount of arable land under their control in the Southwest. It would be no surprise if the military put its surplus land yields onto the market, though there is not much written evidence to prove this hypothesis.

¹¹⁴See footnote 110.

¹¹⁵ibid.

But what is certain is that the ascendancy of the Southwest in Qing frontier diplomacy ensured that the region would continue to be a low-taxed zone because of the consideration of retaining some amount of resources in the region as a backup for military provisions. Before a customs system was set up in the early Yongzheng period in the Kuiguan Pass, the rice trade from the Southwest to the middle and the lower Yangtze valley was completely free from taxation. The central government had unknowingly relinquished another revenue source while the magnates in the Southwest readily enjoyed the opportunity to make their own fortunes.

With the flourishing of the rice trade, other local products of the Southwest also found markets through the same outlet. Therefore, the regional economy became more specialized and more market-oriented. Industries such as salt, tong-oil, wax, tea, silk, and so on all developed along with the rice trade.¹¹⁶ Since the commercial economy was the mainstay in the region, the characteristics of the social structure also reflected this development.

5. The First Tibetan Expedition (1718-1720)

In 1705, the power balance in the Tibetan political arena was upset by a sudden but long overdue incident: Lajang Khan, the grandson of Gushi Khan, killed *sde-srid* Sanggye Gyatso, the Tibetan political leader, and in the following year dethroned the sixth Dalai Lama who had been

¹¹⁶See Mori kiko, "*Shin dai Sisen no imin keizai.*"

established by Sanggye. This incident ended Sanggye Gyatso's twenty-five-year rule of Tibet, and triggered political unrest.

When the death of the fifth Dalai Lama was disclosed in 1696, the Qing throne chose to restrain its rage over Sanggye Gyatso, who had concealed the death of the Dalai Lama for fifteen years, and to acquiesce to his authority in Tibet. The rationale underscoring this strategy was to safeguard the political stability of the Tibetan Lamaist establishment in the immediate post-Zunghar campaigns period, for it would not be wise to overtly sever relations with the Tibetan leadership, which had the Dalai Lama under its control, after a major military showdown with the Zunghars who were followers of Yellow Sect Lamaism. On the contrary, this was a moment more than ever to show the respect of the Qing throne to the Lamaist hierarchy in Lhasa in order to counterbalance the impact of the Qing Zunghar expeditions upon other nomadic peoples who were also believers of Lamaism. Nevertheless, knowing that the offspring of the Mongol lord Gushri Khan would not allow Sanggye Gyatso to perpetuate his rule and would eventually make an attempt to topple his regime, the Qing was prepared to be confronted with a political disturbance in Tibet. But the point is that the Qing throne by no means attempted to get its own hands dirty by getting rid of the disobedient Sanggye Gyatso.

The excuse for Lajang Khan to rise in revolt was fairly justified: the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangsyang Gyatso 倉央嘉錯, established by Sanggye Gyatso, did not himself comply with the precepts of the Yellow Sect. In other words, Tsangsyang was hardly a devoted lamaist. Rather, he was a talented and romantic poet. Abandoning himself in composing poems and pursuing amour, the young sixth Dalai Lama gave Sanggye's opponent an excuse *par excellence* to provoke the *status quo*. After the sixth Dalai Lama was enthroned by Sanggye, Lajang Khan had frequently reported on his inappropriate deeds to the Qing central government. These reports served as a prelude to his blatant actions against Sanggye Gyatso later.¹¹⁷

In 1703, in a religious gathering on the Tibetan New Year's day, Lajang Khan caught and killed several confidants of Sanggye Gyatso. Sanggye immediately summoned his armed forces to drive Lajang Khan out of Lhasa. The latter retreated to northern Tibet and then mounted an expedition on Lhasa. With the mediation of some high lamas, Sanggye agreed to retire, but at the same time made his son the new *sde-srid*. Peace was achieved following Sanggye Gyatso's stepping down, but it did not last long. In early 1705, hostilities were reopened between Sanggye and Lajang Khan. Although a truce was reached again with the mediation of the high lamas, both sides were determined to have a showdown

¹¹⁷Yang Ho-chin, Annals of Kokonor, p. 44.

this time. Lajang Khan launched a sizeable expedition from Qinghai in two directions. And Sanggye gathered a force from 130,000 militia households to deter Lajang Khan's offensive. Sanggye Gyatso's force was soon shattered by the overwhelming Mongol cavalry. On July 17, 1705, Sanggye was caught by Lajang Khan's soldiers. He was executed the same day, as believed among the Tibetans, by Lajang Khan's wife, an ex-lover of Sanggye.¹¹⁸

The Qing throne received the news of the demise of Sanggye Gyatso with mixed feelings. On the one hand, it was welcome news, for the Qing throne had long detested Sanggye Gyatso for his strong tendency to try to swing away from the control of the Qing throne. The Kangxi emperor could never forgive his role in Galdan's aggression of Khalkha Mongol territory and his playing with fire in the Dajianlu incident of 1701. Lajang Khan's eradication of Sanggye relieved the Qing throne from a constant apprehension of pending peril in Lhasa. On the other hand, the death of Sanggye would mean the ascendancy of the Mongol prince who had been deprived of much power during the era of Sanggye Gyatso. For some reason, however, the Qing throne felt more comfortable with Lajang Khan than with the Tibetans. But the coming back to power by the Mongol lord would no surprisingly provoke resistance and opposition from the Tibetan elites.

Therefore, a period of political unrest would follow in the

¹¹⁸Wang Yao, "Diba Sangjie Jiacao Zao Kao;" Yang Ho-chin, Annals of Kokonor, p. 44; Petech, pp. 9-10.

wake of the death of Sanggye Gyatso. The Qing throne was very much aware of the complication of the situation.

Nevertheless, the Qing throne was left with few choices in their reaction to the changes occurring in Tibet. They could merely approve the *fait accompli* that Lajang Khan had taken over the governance of Tibet after he defeated Sanggye. Furthermore, the Qing throne contradicted its earlier approval of the sixth Dalai Lama by declaring the sixth Dalai Lama the "phony" one. Kangxi ordered Lajang Khan to send the denounced Dalai Lama as well as Sanggye's wife to Beijing, because the emperor was afraid that ambitious Tsewang Rrabtan of the Zunghar tribe might be interested in obtaining this dethroned Dalai Lama to enhance his own power. The emperor also sent a high ranking general, Xizhu 席柱, from the capital to Tibet to escort them to Beijing. Just as Kangxi had expected, Tsewang Rabtan also dispatched envoys to Tibet to get the dethroned sixth Dalai Lama upon hearing the news of the turnover of the Dalai Lama. But they were one step late. When his envoys arrived, the Qing emissaries had taken him and Sanggye's wife *en route* to Beijing.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 227, pp. 9a-b. As a talented poet, the sixth Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso was popular among the Tibetan people. When he was escorted to Beijing, the Tibetans seized him from the Qing escort *en route* and hid him in a castle. Exchanges of fire between the Tibetans on the one hand, and the Qing and Lajang Khan's forces on the other hand lasted for a couple of days, leaving scores of dead. Eventually, Tsangyang walked out towards his capturers, attempting to stop the fighting. This young poet died on his way to Beijing at Kun-dga'-no'ur, a small lake of southern Qinghai in 1706 (See Wang Yao, "Diba Sangjies Jiacao Zao kao," and Yang Ho-chin, *Annals of Kokonor*, p. 45). But his

In 1707, Lajang Khan named another sixth Dalai Lama who was generally believed to be the son of Lajang Khan. This overt offense against the Lamaist tradition outraged the Tibetan upper clergy. They opposed the decision of Lajang Khan. Nevertheless, the Qing government approved the new sixth Dalai Lama in 1710.¹²⁰ The tension between the Tibetan elites and the Mongol lord on the issue of the new Dalai Lama had never been alleviated. Also in 1710, the high lamas from the four renowned Yellow Sect lamaseries declared that they had found the true incarnation of the fifth Dalai Lama. This "soul boy" was lodged by Tibetan clergy in a monastery in Litang 裏塘, west of Dajianlu.¹²¹

The reassertion of authority by Lajang Khan in Tibet was not good news for Tsewang Rabtan in the northwestern Gobi area. Like his uncle Galdan, Tsewang Rabtan had kept a close relationship with Sanggye Gyatso. It had been an aspiration of the Zunghas for two generations to replace the offspring of Gushri Khan to control the Tibetan Lamaist establishment. To do this, the Zunghars first adopted a strategy to support powerful Tibetan political figure such as Sanggye Gyatso. Over a period of time, the Zunghars and

lyrics, poems and prose are widespread in Tibet and beyond to this day. About the death of Tshangs-dbyangs, there was a rumor that he was actually murdered by the Qing officials. The Italian missionaries who were in Lhasa then took record of this rumor. Petech thinks "there is no sufficient reason for doubting that this is true." Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, p. 13.

¹²⁰Shengzu Shilu, vol. 241, pp. 14b-15a.

¹²¹About this "soul boy," see Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, pp. 16-19.

Sanggye had developed some unusually close relations. In competing with his political rival in Tibet, Sanggye utilized the Zunghar military power as his backing. The Zunghars also upheld Lhasa as their source of legitimation in their expansion cause.¹²² The demise of Sanggye was a deadly blow to Tsewang Rabtan's scheme. After Lajang Khan killed Sangge Gyatso and took power in Tibet, Tsewang had to change his strategy. He began to seek to subjugate the offspring of Gushri Khan through marital ties. Tsewang first married the elder sister of Lajang Khan himself. Then he made Lajang Khan's son, dGa'-ldan-rab-brlan, his son-in-law, and kept him in Yli.¹²³

Kangxi might have sensed the potential danger pending upon Lajang Khan. In 1714, the emperor voiced his concern to his courtiers:

I think that one of Lajang Khan's sons went to Tsetwang Rabtan's place to get married, another son is stationed in Qinghai, if Tswang Rabtan keeps the son married to his daughter at his place for a couple of years with the excuse of his fondness of the son-in-law of his, and I keep his son stationed in Qinghai also out of the reason of fondness, Lajang Khan would lack aiding hands around him, and he would be weak and dangerous. Moreover, Lajang Khan is nearly sixty years old. He should plan for himself. His people are fewer [in Tibet], and the Tibetans are numerous, but also fierce in nature, how can peace be lasting? Lajang Khan killed fierce *sde-srid* [Sanggye]. Then I rewarded him by entitling him "Protecting Religion and Obedience Khan (*fu jiao gongshun Han* 扶教恭順汗). Not only I know his submission is *bona fide* towards China, but also

¹²²As Petech points out: "It was of the highest importance for the Dsungars to secure influence over Tibet, not so much on strategical grounds, for that road led nowhere, as because of religious-political reasons." Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, p. 25.

¹²³Cewangrenjie, Poluonai Zhuan, pp. 135-137.

people everywhere know it. But Oirat people are suspicious as well as dauntless. If there is any emergency, despite my sympathy to him and his confidence in me, immediate assistance from us cannot be expected since their territory is so far away, tens of thousands of *li* lies in between. The situation would only give place to regrets afterwards, for not even I am able to help. These thoughts of mine are very much presage of the future. He [Lajang Khan] is a smart person though, presumably knowing that it will not do without careful speculation and preparation. I watch out for Lajang Khan from time to time.¹²⁴

In order to prepare for any unexpected event which might upset the *status quo* in the Tibetan political arena, the Qing throne had to act in advance. In 1713, in order to counterbalance the authority of the second sixth Dalai Lama, whom had not been accepted by the Tibetan clerical and secular elites, and to ease the discontent of the Tibetan elites, the Qing throne entitled the Panchen Lama Hutuktu of Qinghai "Eerdeni", which means "treasure" in Manchu, and granted him a cachet like the one the Qing throne gave to the fifth Dalai Lama.¹²⁵ This was the origin of the ascendancy of the Panchen Lama. In the following decades, the Qing government repeated this manoeuvre with the Panchen Lama in order to check the power and influence of the Dalai Lama. In the spring of 1715, the Qing throne ordered the "soul boy", who was found and claimed by the Tibetan high lamas in 1710, to move from his residency in Litang to Kumbum (Ta'er Si 塔兒寺) in Xining, Qinghai.¹²⁶ By doing so, the

¹²⁴Shengzu Shilu, vol. 259, pp. 4b-5a.

¹²⁵Shengzu Shilu, vol. 253, p. 7b.

¹²⁶Shengzu Shilu, vol. 263, pp. 4b-5b. But the religious leaders in Qinghai refused to send the "soul boy" to Xining using the excuse that he had not yet got measles. (Shengzu Shilu, vol. 265, pp. 13a-b). In early 1716, a conflict over the control of the soul boy among the

Qing authorities would have a ready candidate for a new Dalai Lama under its control if the legitimacy of the current sixth Dalai Lama was threatened along with any possible downfall of Lajang Khan.

Kangxi's circumspection soon proved to be utterly necessary. Less than ten days after the emperor gave the order regarding the resettlement of the "soul boy" in Qinghai, the Qing dynasty was confronted with a new frontier emergency: Tsewang Rabtán launched a campaign to attack the Muslim city state of Hami 哈密 in Chinese Eastern Turkestan.¹²⁷ The northwestern frontier of China was suddenly thrown into a state of uncertainty. The motive of Tsewang's attack of Hami, according to one historian, was one step towards his long-embraced ambition, to seize Tibet from Lajang Khan's control. In order to confuse the Qing government and check the Qing armies, he made the attack on Hami first.¹²⁸

Upon hearing the news of the Zunghars' attack on Hami, the Qing throne immediately sent sizable number of Qing troops from the garrisons in Gansu and Shaanxi provinces to

Tibetan and Mongol leaders in Qinghai was triggered. The Qing government responded by sending troops to Qinghai to curb the rebellious Mongol leader Chahandanjin 察漢丹津 (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 266, pp.17a-18a). Under the Qing request backed by military presence, the Qinghai leaders moved the soul boy to Kumbum on April 7, 1716. (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 268, pp. 4b-5b).

¹²⁷Hami was located on the major route of caravans between China and Central Asia. The pretext for Tsewang Rabtán to attack Hami was that people of Hami had taxed irregularly on trade in their area and they held back the Zunghars who wanted to do business in Hami, *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 263, pp. 24a-b; *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 263, pp. 23b-25a.

¹²⁸Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai Tong Shi*, vol. 1, p. 833.

Hami. The military buildup in the adjacent regions were put on alert. The Zunghar offensive was not a strong one. Even before the arrival of the Qing reinforcements, a minor Qing army which was stationed close to Hami had crushed the Zunghar offensive.¹²⁹ But the emperor did not attempt to stop short of achieving a major victory. He continued working on mounting a big campaign to eliminate the Zunghar threat. With the sudden influx of a huge number of military forces in Hami and its environs, the problem of provisions again became serious. The emperor could still recall the frustrating experiences of running out of provisions in the immense Gobi during his expeditions against Galdan in the 1690s. So the Qing throne had paid close attention to the logistics of provisions. However, problems arose immediately, the prairie along the route could not offer enough forage for a large number of camels and horses that transported the provisions to the front lines in Chinese Eastern Turkestan. Therefore, the Qing throne began to ponder the strategy of setting up permanent military colonies to be connected with the heartland by a string of military stations. During the summer of 1715, the Qing government started probing the feasibilities of such a scheme.¹³⁰ Pending the outcome of the deliberations, the Qing court postponed launching an assault against the Zunghars and instead concentrated on reclamation in the

¹²⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 263, pp. 12a-b.

¹³⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 264, pp. 19b-20a.

frontier areas. This marks the beginning of Qing military exploration in Chinese Eastern Turkestan. By then, the Qing dynasty had to change a tacit policy (not to carry out expeditions into the immense Gobi areas to confront the nomadic peoples in their own habitat) which had been abided by since the end of the three Zunghar campaigns in the 1690s. Meanwhile, the Qing dynasty had also to change its passivity towards military colonies which did not turn out to be very successful when the Qing government tried to make use of this traditional institution to bring the country out of the ruins of war in the beginning of the dynasty.

This measure of the Qing dynasty dealt a deadening blow to the Zunghars. While the heavy Qing armies were digging in around the base areas of the Zunghars, Tsewang Rabtan was cornered. To escape, he could either raid Qinghai or raid Tibet. The Qing throne had foreseen these probabilities, but was inclined to believe that Qinghai was the more possible target.¹³¹ In summer, 1716, some Qing forces were stationed in the passes to Qinghai. Later in the winter of the same year, Kangxi again ordered to reinforce the defense of Xining and along the Gasi Kou 噶斯口 Pass. In early 1717, the throne added three thousand troops to the Gasi Kou Pass once again.¹³²

Nevertheless, Tsewang Rabtan did not act as the Qing throne had predicted. At the end of 1716, encouraged by the

¹³¹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 265, pp. 15a-b.

¹³²Shengzu Shilu, vol. 271, pp. 3b-4a.

positive signal from the Tibetan elites who resented Lajang Khan, Tsewang sent his brother Tsering Dondup to lead six thousands troops to advance towards Tibet.¹³³ The invading army chose a difficult route to Tibet and it took them more than one year to reach their destination.¹³⁴ In the summer of 1717, the Qing court had been informed by captured Zunghar soldiers that Tsering Donbup had led an army to head to Tibet under the excuse of assisting Lajang Khan in fighting against Bolukeba 卜魯克巴. Kangxi began to fear that Lajang would join Tsewang to rebel against the Qing dynasty. He directed Heshou, Minister of the Court of Colonial Affairs, to write to Lajang Khan to warn him not to collaborate with the Zunghars.¹³⁵ In the fall of 1717, while the Qing forces triumphed in assaulting Urumchi, Lajang Khan reported to the Qing throne that he was in immediate danger of being attacked by the Zunghars.¹³⁶ The Qing throne was shocked by the Zunghar invasion of Tibet. Not long after the Qing throne received Lajang Khan's plea for assistance, Tsering Dondup smashed the Tibetan resistance after a standoff of approximately two months, then seized Lhasa, and killed Lajang Khan on December 3, 1717.¹³⁷ Thus began the

¹³³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 273, pp. 15b-17a.

¹³⁴The route for Tsering Dondup to enter Tibet was starting from the southwest of Yli, bypassing the grand Gobi, going across the west part of the Kunlun Mountains, then reaching the Tenggeli Lake, which connects Rear Tibet. See Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 1, pp. 833-834.

¹³⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 273, pp. 7b-9a.

¹³⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 273, pp. 23a-b.

¹³⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 278, p. 20a. About the Zunghar raid of Tibet, see also Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 25-41.

three years Zunghar occupation of Tibet. Tsewang Rabtan also killed the elder son of Lajang Khan after Tsering Dondup took Lhasa.

The lack of preparation for the Zunghar attack of Tibet significantly delayed the Qing response to the crisis. After the Qing throne learned that the Zunghars had invaded Tibet, it immediately ordered two thousand Manchu soldiers who were stationed in Jingzhou 荊州, Hubei province to move to Chengdu.¹³⁸ In 1717 and 1718, the Qing engaged in extensive maneuvers of military forces on the western frontlines and tried to launch two operations to expel the Zunghars from Tibet. But both campaigns failed due to inadequate preparations and insufficient military forces. In the latter campaign, the Qing troops were annihilated by the cold weather, lack of food and the Tibetan soldiers. The chief commander Elunte 額倫特 was killed along with most of his soldiers.¹³⁹

In the beginning of 1719, the Qing court appointed Kangxi's fourteenth son Yunti 允禩 the Generalissimo of Pacifying the Remote (*Fuyuan Dai Jiangjun* 撫遠大將軍) to go to the front to supervise the campaign.¹⁴⁰ The Tibetan crisis became the most urgent issue of the time for the Qing throne. But not until three years after the Zunghars took Tibet, in 1720, was the Qing dynasty able to organize a

¹³⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 273, pp. 23a-b.

¹³⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 281, pp.13b-14a; Cewangrenjie, *Poluonai Zhuan*, p. 182.

¹⁴⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 282, pp. 10b-11a.

powerful expedition to expel the Zunghars from Tibet. In the early spring of 1720, the Qing forces pushed into Tibet from two directions: one army led by the Manchu Commander-in-chief Yanxin 延信, the grandson of Haoge, from Qinghai with over twelve thousand soldiers, one led by the General of Pacifying the West (*Ding Xi Jiangjun* 定西將軍) Gaerbi 噶爾弼 from Sichuan, via the traditional "tea-horse" passage -- Dajianlu, Litang 裏塘, Batang 巴塘, Lali 拉里, Mozhugongka 墨竹工卡 -- to Lhasa. Meanwhile, another expedition was launched at the base area of the Zunghars in Chinese Eastern Turkistan. The decision to invade Tibet was not an easy one. The Kangxi emperor, having been ailing since 1717, had to confront the opposition from his courtiers who were not willing to endorse such a risky and difficult campaign. But eventually the Kangxi emperor's will prevailed.

Before this showdown, the Kangxi emperor entitled the "soul boy," who had been lodged in a lamasery in Xining, the new sixth Dalai Lama, and gave him the cachet which symbolized the legitimacy of the Dalai Lama in the autumn of 1719. The emperor declared at the same time that the Qing armies would invade Tibet next spring under the pretext of enthroning the new Dalai Lama in Tibet.¹⁴¹ In so doing, Kangxi used the "soul boy" as both an instrument to delegitimize the Zunghars' occupation of Tibet and to justify the coming Qing invasion of Tibet. This was a

¹⁴¹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 285, pp. 16a-18a.

decisive measure, for Tsering Dondup also attempted to seize the "soul boy" in Qinghai.

Apparently, the Zunghars concentrated only in halting the Qing offensive from Qinghai, but did not prepare well for the attack from Sichuan. On September 24, the Qing forces from Sichuan first took Lhasa.¹⁴² The Qing forces from Qinghai encountered heavier resistance yet still prevailed. Having frustrated all Zunghar attempts to defy the Qing advance, the Qing armies from Qinghai escorted the new sixth Dalai Lama into Lhasa on October 10.¹⁴³ Tsering Dondup, who had occupied Tibet for three years, had fled back to Ili before the Qing forces appeared in Lhasa.¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the Qing campaign in Urumqi was also successful.¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the threat of the Zunghars towards the Qing empire did not completely disappear with their relinquishing of Tibet. During the remaining years of the Kangxi reign which ended in late 1722, the emperor had intensively speculated upon an ultimate solution to the Zunghar threat. But the ever-present problem of the provisions inhibited the Qing from further action other than establishing garrisons and military colonies in the areas of Hami and Urumqi.

¹⁴²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 289, pp. 13b-15a.

¹⁴³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 289, pp. 16b-17a.

¹⁴⁴*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 289, pp. 20a-b.

¹⁴⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 289, pp. 2a-3a. For the first Qing Tibetan campaign, see also Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 55-61.

In October, 1720, the Qing troops escorted the new sixth Dalai Lama¹⁴⁶ to Lhasa and enthroned him under the presence of the Qing military forces. This measure won the Qing dynasty tremendous support from the Tibetans and the Lamaist Mongols in Tibet and Qinghai, justifying the Qing invasion of Tibet. In the following year, the Qing throne abolished the office of *sde-srid* (governor), and set up four Kaloon (Minister of Council), consisting of two clergymen and two laymen, to take over the administration of Tibetan affairs. Meanwhile, the Qing dynasty stationed three thousand troops in Tibet to oversee its administration. Of the three thousand soldiers, one thousand two hundred were from Sichuan.¹⁴⁷ A little later, an additional five hundred Manchu troops and five hundred the Green Standard Army troops were sent to Tibet. The Qing chief commander Yanxin was also ordered to return to Tibet to take charge of the Qing armies in Tibet.¹⁴⁸ But Yanxin petitioned the throne to be excused from this duty due to his illness. Then the court ordered the Sichuan Governor-General Gaerbi to fill the vacuum and go to Tibet.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶This Dalai Lama was later regarded as the seventh Dalai Lama.

¹⁴⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 291, pp. 11b-12a.

¹⁴⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 291, pp. 30a-31a; vol. 292, pp. 3b-4a.

¹⁴⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 292, p. 14b. It seems that to take charge of the Qing armies stationed in Tibet was not a welcome appointment for the Qing generals. Gaerbi also fell sick en route to Tibet in the border area of western Sichuan. Then the Qing throne had to order the Duke Cewangnuoerbu 策旺諾爾布 to act for the General of Pacifying the West (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. pp. 8a-b). A little later, the central government had to reward the staff members of Gaerbi who went to Tibet with promotions (*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 298, pp. 9a-b).

The first Qing Tibetan expedition of 1717-20 was a turning point in the relations between the Qing dynasty and Tibet. The campaign not only expelled the Zunghar invaders, but also ended seventy-five years of Mongol domination of Tibet. After the incident, a new era began in which the most outstanding characteristic was the more active intervention of the Qing dynasty into Tibetan affairs. As Petech holds, a so-called Chinese Protectorate began to be built-up in Tibet after this campaign.¹⁵⁰ In the wake of the Tibetan campaign, Kangxi intended to have Qing military forces stationed in Tibet permanently. To keep with this diplomatic démarche, it became indispensable that the Southwest should be made into a more efficient military base area supporting this new strategy. This was the most significant impact of the first Tibetan campaign on the Southwest. Actually, a number of developments had already been underway since the onset of the Tibetan emergency in 1717.

First, a Manchu garrison in Chengdu was established in 1718. Prior to the Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717, there had not been any Manchu garrison, the best fighting forces of the Qing dynasty, in the Southwest. The nearest Manchu garrisons were the ones in Xian, Shaanxi province and Jingzhou, Hubei province. Upon hearing of the Tibetan emergency in the autumn of 1717, the Qing central government immediately ordered two thousand Manchu soldiers from the

¹⁵⁰Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, pp. 62-77.

Manchu garrison in Jingzhou, Hubei province, to move to Chengdu. One year later, an additional one thousand Jingzhou Manchu soldiers were sent to Sichuan.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, the Qing government was very disappointed by the performance of the Green Standard armies in the Southwest. In the autumn of 1717, when the Southwest was in the middle of preparations for war, a mutiny occurred when some one thousand Green Standard soldiers were sent from Chengdu to Songpan 松潘, a frontline at that time. The soldiers rioted claiming that they were underpaid.¹⁵² The emperor sighed that they could not do without Manchu soldiers. He rejoiced that he had ordered the two thousand Manchu soldiers from Jingzhou to move to Chengdu in advance.¹⁵³ The absence of Manchu troops in the Southwest made it impossible for the Qing government to respond to the Tibetan emergency promptly. This lesson convinced the Qing authorities that it would be utterly necessary to establish a Manchu garrison in Chengdu, the nearest metropolis to the Tibetan frontier.

The following year, 1718, Nian Gengyao petitioned to set up a Manchu compound to the west of Chengdu, retaining one thousand Manchu soldiers of the two thousand Jingzhou Manchu soldiers in Sichuan. He justified this move by displaying his concerns over the deficient fighting strength

¹⁵¹*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 281, pp. 19b-20a.

¹⁵²*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 274, p. 6b-7a; pp. 15b-16a; pp. 19a-b; vol. 276, p. 19b.

¹⁵³*Shengzhu Shilu*, vol. 274, p. 16a.

of the Green Standard soldiers.¹⁵⁴ In September of the same year, the throne approved his request, increasing the number of soldiers to 1,600, and placing a Vice Manchu Military Commander to take charge of the garrison.¹⁵⁵ In early 1719, Nian began to prepare materials and to draft manpower to build the garrison which was designed to consist of 5,632 rooms.¹⁵⁶

Second, some adjustments to the bureaucratic system were made in order to give the local officials more power and leeway in coordinating military matters. In autumn, 1718, the Qing throne restored the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan,¹⁵⁷ and designated the current Governor of Sichuan Nian Gengyao the Governor-General of Sichuan.

¹⁵⁴Nian said: "Sichuan province is located on the periphery and far away from the center. There are barbarian peoples ruled by native chieftains inside the province. Outside, it borders Qinghai and Tibet. Although a Provincial Military Commander was appointed [to the province], it is difficult to train the soldiers as they have a different attitude [to their obligations]. The reason for it is that more soldiers are from other provinces rather than from the local province." *Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 280, pp. 12b-13b.

¹⁵⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 280, pp. 12b-13b.

¹⁵⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 282, p. 15b.

¹⁵⁷The first provincial post established for the province of Sichuan in the Qing dynasty was Governor of Sichuan in 1644. For a long period of time, the Governor of Sichuan had to reside in Baoning, a city in northern Sichuan, because most of the province was not yet controlled by Qing forces. In 1654, the province began to be under the supervision of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi (it was called *Chuan-Shan Sanbian Zongdu* 川陝三邊總督). The Governor-General of Sichuan was first installed in 1661 when Sichuan was conquered by Qing forces. Then in 1670, the Governor-General of Sichuan and the Governor-General of Huguang were combined as Governor-General of Sichuan and Huguang. During the Wu Sangui Rebellion, a separate Governor-General of Sichuan was installed in 1674. After the rebellion, it was again merged with the Governor-General of Shaanxi as the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Sichuan in 1680. It was the third time a Governor-General of Sichuan was installed in 1718. But it did not last long either. See Section 3 of Chapter IV and Section 3 of Chapter V.

According to the Qing rule, the Governor was not responsible for military matters; only the Governor-General was. But at that moment, Nian was already shouldering too many military responsibilities. The post of the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Sichuan was split between Shaanxi and Sichuan.¹⁵⁸ Not long after this, in the summer of 1721, the throne again ordered Nian Gengyao to hold concurrently the post of the Governor-General of Shaanxi because the Governor-General of Shaanxi Ehai was transferred to the northwestern front to take charge of the supply of provisions. The post of the Governor of Sichuan was again restored and Seertu was appointed the acting Governor of Sichuan as Nian went to Xian to take office.¹⁵⁹ These administrative changes reflected the elevation of the strategic position of the Southwest. It was a prelude to the ultimate separation of the Governorship-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi in the following periods, the Yongzheng period and the Qianlong period.

Third, the Qing throne began to invest more resources in building of a frontier defense system along the border line between China proper and Tibet. In late 1717, the court sent two high-ranking officials to Dajianlu and Yunnan respectively to reinforce the defense of those places.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 281, pp. 19b-20a; pp. 21b-22a.

¹⁵⁹*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 292, p. 20b.

¹⁶⁰*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 274, pp. 20a-b.

The scope of Qing administration began to expand to the west of Dajianlu.

There are two major towns in the area west of Dajianlu: Litang and Batang. Previously, the area west of Dajianlu had been under the control of Lajang Khan. The main residents of the area were Tibetans and Mongols from another branch of the offspring of Gushri Khan under the leadership of Lobdzan Dandzin, most of them were believers of Lamaism. Due to the extremely difficult natural conditions, the area had not yet been of much interest to the Han Chinese. Litang is more than 4,000 meters above sea level. Batang is located east of the Yangtze River (this section is known as Jinsha River 金沙) which now serves as the border between Tibet and Sichuan province. Located between the two grand cultures, and on one of the major routes linking China proper and Tibet, the area assumed a mixture of both cultures with the Tibetan culture dominant. The "soul boy" who was found and proclaimed as the reincarnation of the Fifth Dalai Lama by the Tibetan high clergy was born and grew up in Litang.

Since the Dajianlu incident of 1701, the Qing had put Dajianlu under its control, but had not yet pushed further beyond Dajianlu. In early 1718, the Qing sent five hundred Manchu soldiers from Jingzhou to Dajianlu to reinforce the defense there.¹⁶¹In the summer of 1718, the Qing forces in Dajianlu heard that the Zunghars were persuading the Tibetan

¹⁶¹Shengzu Shilu, vol. 277, pp. 4a-b.

officials in Batang to submit themselves to Tsering Dondup who had just taken Lhasa. Fala 法喇, the Qing general at the front, thus asked the central government for permission to move forward to Litang. The Qing throne approved this motion.¹⁶² But it seems that for some reason this goal was not achieved within 1718. The following spring, Fala once again requested to lead the Qing forces to take over Litang and Batang.¹⁶³ At this point, the Qing had realized that it was of great strategic significance to take control of these places. It would open another passage for an incursion into Tibet. Having received the approval from the throne, Fala sent the Regional Vice Commander Yue Zhongqi, the eldest son of Yue Shenglong, to move west to take the two places. In Litang, the Tibetan officials refused to submit themselves to the Qing authorities. By the order of Fala, seven of them were executed. Yue Zhongqi also killed several thousands of native soldiers on the battleground.¹⁶⁴ Then Yue advanced towards Batang. The other Tibetan chieftain was intimidated and quickly submitted the town to the Qing forces.¹⁶⁵ By the autumn of 1719, the area was under Qing forces, two thousand seven hundred Qing troops were stationed in the area.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶²*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 279, pp. 7a-8b.

¹⁶³*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 283, pp. 17a-18a.

¹⁶⁴Yue Jiong, *Yue Xiangqin Gong Xinglue*.

¹⁶⁵*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 284, pp. 19a-20a. *Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 81, p. 5a.

¹⁶⁶*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 285, pp. 14b-15a. A number of works on the relationships between the Qing dynasty and Tibet hold that this area was officially divided from Tibet and integrated into Sichuan province in 1728 after the second Qing Tibetan expedition. *Qing Shi Gao* takes this stance. Although the Qing dynasty did not set up a civil administrative

Adjacent places, such as Zhaliao 乍了, Chamuduo 叉木多 and Chawa 察哇 were also taken under Qing control.

Control of the passage from Sichuan to Tibet via the traditional tea-horse route provided the Qing dynasty with a new channel to reach into the center of Tibet. Traditionally, official communication between the Tibetans and the Chinese central authorities went chiefly through Qinghai. But as demonstrated in the first Tibetan campaign, the Qing incursion troops taking the route via Dajianlu reached Lhasa ahead of the Qing armies from Qinghai. The throne was impressed with the swiftness of the Sichuan-Lhasa route. When the Qing armies were to return from Tibet, the throne ordered all the armies, take the route via Dajianlu to come back to Chengdu and then to return to their respective home garrisons.¹⁶⁷ In the wake of the campaign, the Qing dynasty set up sixty-six stations along the route from Dajianlu to Lali, Tibet. In each station, about thirty Qing and native soldiers of the local chieftains were stationed.¹⁶⁸ In so doing, the Kham area was occupied by Qing forces, and Sichuan became directly connected to Tibet, and therefore, became more strategically important in the Qing diplomacy of Tibetan affairs.¹⁶⁹

system in the area until 1728, the sixth year of the Yongzheng period, this area had already been under Qing military occupation since 1719.

¹⁶⁷*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 291, pp. 1b-2b.

¹⁶⁸*Shengzu Shilu*, vol. 299, pp. 5b-6a.

¹⁶⁹Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, p. 66.

Meanwhile, the Qing military buildup in Yunnan province, another corridor from China proper to Tibet was also underway. In 1718, a Manchu Commander-in-chief, Heli 和禮, was sent to Yunnan to inspect the military arrangements in Yunnan. Soon after this, several thousand Manchu soldiers were dispatched from Jiangning 江寧 to Yunnan and were stationed in the Zhongdian area. In the early winter of 1719, another Manchu Commander-in-chief Wuge 武格 was sent to Yunnan to oversee military affairs. This was the beginning of the sizable Manchu military presence in Yunnan. It was also during this period that relay horse stations were first built in western Yunnan to facilitate military action.

Fourth, and most importantly, the Qing throne began to relate its lax taxation policy towards the Southwest with the military buildup there. The tacit understanding was that the low contribution of revenue from the Southwest was not only further justified, but was a necessary measure. Along with the ascendance of the Southwest in Qing frontier strategies, more military forces were stationed in the region. One problem was how to feed the armies. After the Qing armies expanded into the area west of Dajianlu, the problem became more serious. Nian Gengyao had requested to store grain in the border areas to prepare for emergencies. He also demanded to retain some land tax in kind to be used as military provisions. The frequent reports to the Qing

throne about the difficulties of provisions in the Southwest frontier were only to confirm to the central government the validity of the lenient tax requirements in the Southwest.

6. Conclusion

The period covered in this chapter is marked by two major frontier expeditions. It started with the three Zunghar campaigns of 1694-1695. And it ended with the first Tibetan expedition of 1720. In the beginning of the period, the Qing throne attempted to adopt a different diplomacy towards its dangerous frontier foes. That is if gave up long distance military campaigns into the habitat of the nomadic peoples such as the Zunghars, and began to pay more attention to harnessing the Tibetan Lamaist establishment in Lhasa.

To be sure, during this period, the Qing rulers had not yet developed a set of mature ideas in terms of utilizing the religious establishment of Lhasa in its protracted intercourse with the frontier peoples who were followers of the Yellow Sect Lamaism. Nevertheless, the Kangxi emperor had already realized the peculiar role which Lhasa played in the making of the frontier environment. This strategic change in diplomatic strategy led the Qing throne to start to build up a stronger Southwest, a region which was currently of little economic significance to the central government. However, during most of this period, before the

1717 Tibetan crisis, the guideline underpinning the Qing management of the Southwest was only to build a largely defensive and deterrent frontier garrison line. The Qing throne seemed to be satisfied to only deliver some messages of power to the Tibetan ruler, first Sanggye Gyatso, then Lajang Khan, with the heavy presence of Qing forces along the border with Tibet. There was no prediction at all that the development of the Tibetan affairs would eventually involve the military intervention of the Qing forces into the territory of Tibet. It was because of this perception that the Qing throne was shocked by the Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717, and that the Qing dynasty was slow to gather enough military forces to mount an expedition into Tibet -- three years had elapsed before the Qing forces were able to enter Tibet to expel the Zunghars and to enthrone the Seventh Dalai Lama.

Therefore, by the end of the Kangxi reign, the Qing throne began to realize that it was not enough to merely strengthen the border defense in the Southwest, but also that the whole region should be built into a military base which would possess both defensive and offensive capacities. Unfortunately, there had been too little time for Kangxi to accomplish this goal. He passed away less than two years after the triumph of the first Tibetan expedition. This task was left to the next sovereign, the Yongzheng emperor (1723-1735).

The developments in the Southwest during this period corresponded with the basic strategies of Qing diplomacy towards Tibet. Stability instead of prosperity continued to be the major concern of the Qing throne over the region. Nevertheless, unlike in the previous period during which the connotation of "stability" meant more prevention of another ambitious satrap from rising to contend with the Qing dynasty as Wu Sangui did, the meaning of "stability" during the late Kangxi period was more directed towards the relations between the Qing and Tibet. Taking advantage of the state's "loose rein" policy, there were some unexpected developments in the Southwest. The rise of the power of the military and the formation of a rice production base are the most important ones among all other things. In the coming Yongzheng era, these developments continued.

Chapter IV.

Construction of A Military Stronghold during the Yongzheng Period (1722-1735)

1. The Fall of Nian Gengyao and the Rise of Yue Zhongqi

The Kangxi's successor, Yongzheng, has been a center of controversy. Not being the legitimate heir apparent, he allegedly seized the throne through intrigues. Although it is not a concern of this study to explore Yongzheng's legitimacy, the succession crisis of 1722 was of significance in shift of the Qing political and diplomatic foci after Yongzheng was enthroned. The Kangxi frontier strategies were interrupted temporarily by this political upheaval at the top tier of the Qing political pyramid.

When the Kangxi emperor died at the end of 1722, the strongest rival of Yongzheng for throne was Yunti, the fourteenth son of Kangxi and the crown prince designated by Kangxi. However, he was at the northwestern frontier taking charge of the preparations for a campaign against Tsewang Rabtan. Being away from the political center rendered Yunti virtually impotent in the power struggle for throne. The fourth son of Kangxi, the Prince Yong, Yinzhen 胤禛, prevailed in the power struggle and became new emperor, his reign name being Yongzheng.

Once becoming emperor himself, Yongzheng felt that it was not secure to let his rival Yunti continue to head heavy

Qing troops at the northwestern frontier. Therefore he called back Yunti and suspended the planned campaign against the Zunghars.¹ In early 1723, Yongzheng began seeking peace with the Zunghars and reduced the Qing armies on the western frontier.² In the spring of 1723, he also withdrew all Qing armies from Tibet under the pretext of the enormous expenditures required to support the armies in Tibet.³ Meanwhile, Yongzheng set himself to rectifying his father's lax policies towards the military and the financial administration. Yongzheng believed that his retreating strategy in the former would be beneficial in strengthening central controls over the military and state finances. As conventional wisdom suggests, frontier undertakings always augment the power of the military and cause undesirable depletion of state exchequer.

Nevertheless, the military standdown at the northwestern front soon proved to be a vital mistake. The foes of the Qing dynasty seized the chance to make offensives into the northwestern frontier areas. The political stability of the Northwest and the legitimacy of the new emperor were challenged. Yongzheng quickly realized his miscalculations and promptly adjusted his frontier

¹Shizong Shilu, vol. 1, pp. 9a-10a; Barfield, The Perilous Frontier, p. 291.

²Shizong Shilu, vol. 3, pp. 31b-32a, pp. 49a-50b; vol. 4, pp.1b-2a.

³Shizong Shilu, vol. 3, pp. 2b-3b. According to Petech, the Tibetan political leaders overtly expressed their concerns about the Zunghar threat with the withdrawal of the Qing troops. But their appeal did not result in any change in this matter. Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, pp. 79-80.

strategy after the breakout of the first frontier emergency of the Yongzheng period: the rebellion of a Khoshot Mongol lord, Lobdzan Dandzin 羅卜藏丹津, in Qinghai in 1723. Yongzheng had no choice but to follow his father's steps closely and to resume a power-based diplomacy towards frontier affairs.

The Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion was actually an overdue consequence of the Qing's first Tibetan expedition of 1720.⁴ Although the rebellion started in the summer of 1732, the origins of the rebellion were rooted in the Qing removal of the Khoshot Mongol's control of Tibet following the Qing's first Tibetan expedition.

The Qinghai area had been under Tibetan control since the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907). But since 1509, Mongol tribes (the Oirats) had begun to penetrate into Qinghai. By the end of the Ming dynasty, e.g., the middle of seventeenth century, the leader of the Khoshot Mongols (one tribe of Oirats) Gushri Khan established his domination over Qinghai. Gushri Khan was designated as the ruler of Tibet by the Qing dynasty in 1653.⁵ After he died in 1656, his offspring was divided into two big branches: one, headed by Dayan Khan 達延汗, remained in Tibet, inheriting Gushri Khan's title and position; another, under Zhashenbatuer 扎什巴圖爾, the tenth son of Gushri Khan, dwelt in Qinghai and the west of the

⁴For a detailed study of the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion, see Sato Hisashi "Robuzandanjin no hanlan ni tsuide ロブザンゲンジンの反亂について (On the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion)" in *Chûsei Chibetto Shi Kenkyû*, pp. 383-423.

⁵See Section 4 of Chapter I.

Loop area of the Yellow River valley. When the Zunghar tribe reached its apogee during the middle of the Kangxi period, Qinghai was also harried by the Zunghars. In 1698, after Galdan was defeated by the Qing expeditions, Zhashenbatuer submitted himself to the Qing dynasty. He was entitled "prince." Qinghai thus became a part of the Qing empire.

Zhashenbatuer's son Lobdzan Dandzin inherited his father's rank. Having seen that Lajang Khan was unpopular among the Tibetans because of the issue of the second sixth Dalai Lama, Lobdzan Dandzin served as a patron of the "soul boy" whom the Tibetan high clergy found in Litang. Lobdzan Dandzin invited the "soul boy" to reside in the famous Lamaist monastery Kumbum (Taer Si 塔兒寺) in Qinghai. During the first Qing Tibetan expedition, he petitioned the Qing government to enthrone this "soul boy." His intention was quite conspicuous. He envisaged to replace Lajang Khan's family to be the ruler of Tibet.⁶ Nevertheless, the Qing dynasty did not act upon his will. Frustrated by the Qing démarche in Tibetan affairs, that was to choose a Tibetan leader to rule Tibet in lieu of a Mongol lord, Lobdzan

⁶About two months before Lobdzan Dandzin rebelled, Nian Gengyao said in a secret memorial to the emperor: "Lobdzan Dandzin is overconfident about himself. He has been longing to become the king of Tibet for a long time. (*Lobdzan Dandzin bu zi chuaidu, xiyi Zang wang yi fei yi ri.* 羅布藏丹晉不自揣度，希冀藏王已非一日。)" But he downplayed the possibility that he would rebel, for Nian did not think that he was capable of mobilizing other Mongol chieftains in Qinghai to rebel with him. According to Nian, Lobdzan Dandzin was suspicious in his personality, holding no harmonious relationship with his followers. *Gongzhong Dang Yongzheng Chao Zouzhe*, vol. 1, p. 188.

Dandzin was spurred to revolt.⁷ He called himself "Dalaihun Taiji 達賴混台吉 (Kontaisha)," repudiating the titles and ranks granted by the Qing dynasty. Shortly after this rebellion started in the summer of 1723, the prestigious great lama in Kumbum Chahannuomenhan 察罕諾門汗 decided to side with Lobdzan Dandzin. Therefore, many Mongol and Tibetan tribes and lamas in Qinghai followed his suit to join the rebellion. Lobdzan Dandzin also contacted Tsewang Rabtan to form an anti-Qing coalition. The whole western frontier was suddenly in a great crisis.

Yongzheng had to confront this emergency while coping with the aftermath of the succession crisis in the capital. Initially, he tried to solve the crisis without resorting to military power. He sent a Vice-Minister Changshou 常壽 to persuade Lobdzan Dandzin to stop the rebellion. But Lobdzan Dandzin did not surrender. He had Changshou imprisoned. Then

⁷When the Qing armies escorted the seventh Dalai Lama to Lhasa, many leading Tibetan and Mongol political and religious figures from Qinghai accompanied the magnificent procession. Among them was Lobdzan Dandzin who was envisaging to be entitled the prince of Tibet by the Qing authorities as his ancestors were. But in the ceremony of the enthronement of the seventh Dalai Lama, only the Qing officials and generals were seated in prominent positions, the notables from Qinghai were left out in the cold. The Qing officials also declined Lobdzan Dandzin's request to forgive Stag-rtse-pa, the Tibetan governor under the Zunghar occupation. More importantly, the Qing dynasty appointed Kangjinai (k'an-C'en-nas) the new political leader of Tibet, ignoring Lobdzan Dandzin's years of patronage of the new Dalai Lama. All of these suggested that the Qing did not intend to continue the Khoshots' dominance of Tibet from Gushri Khan. Lobdzan Dandzin was utterly dismayed with the result. As the author of Annals of Kokonor stated: "Due to many such causes our faces were washed with the sweat of shame and our hearts were pierced as by a thorn; so, harboring resentment, we took an oath before [the image of] the Buddha in Tibet agreeing to rise in revolt against China." Yang Ho-chin, Annals of Kokonor, pp. 48-49.

the new emperor had no choice but to use force. On October 30, 1723, Yongzheng entitled the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Nian Gengyao "The Generalissimo of Pacifying the Remoteness (*Fuyuan Da Jiangjun* 撫遠大將軍)." The throne also ordered the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Yue Zhongqi and others to act as Nian's staff members.⁸ To prevent Lobdzan Dandzin from attacking the inland and Tibet, and associating with Tsewang Rabtan, Nian stationed Qing armies at all possible routes and passes. In the spring of 1724, Qing forces launched an offensive. Yue Zhongqi first stormed enemy's camps near Xining, leaving thousands dead. Then Yue proposed launching a surprise attack upon the headquarters of Lobdzan Dandzin at Tsaidam 柴達木 before the grass began sprouting. Yongzheng was greatly encouraged by the blatant proposal and endorsed the motion. Yue was granted the title of the General of Propagating the Supremacy (*Fenwei Jiangjun* 奮威將軍). Yue led five thousand troops, the *crème de la crème* to pierce into the base area of the Khoshots in the Chadamu River valley and annihilated the main force of Lobdzan Dandzin within two weeks. Lobdzan Dandzin himself fled to Zungharia.

After the Khoshots Mongols revolted in Qinghai, various Tibetan tribes⁹ living in Gansu also rebelled against the

⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 12, pp. 2a-3a; pp. 3a-5a.

⁹During this period, there were many sub-ethnic peoples of the Tibetan group which lived in today's Qinghai and Gansu provinces. Roughly, there were forty of them in the north of the Tanggula Mountain 唐古拉 and thirty-nine of them in the south of the mountain. Huang Fengsheng, *Zanqzu Shi Lue*, pp. 229-230.

Qing. Having triumphed from his legendary expedition to the Chadamu valley, Yue was immediately engaged in mercilessly putting down these minor rebellions in Gansu. By the summer of 1724, Qinghai and Gansu, the region traditionally known as Kokonor to Westerners, was officially integrated into the Qing territory.¹⁰

The triumph of the Qinghai campaign pacifying the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion was surprising good news for Yongzheng, who had been extremely upset by the rebellion.¹¹ Both Nian and Yue were lavishly rewarded. In November, 1723, the emperor entitled Nian Gengyao duke of the second rank, and Yue Zhongqi a hereditary title of "Baitalabule hafan 拜他喇布勒哈番 (hereditary rank of seventh grade)" for their contributions in suppressing the Golok (*Guoluoke* 郭羅克) Tibetans in Qinghai.¹² Soon after this, Nian was made a duke of the first rank and given the title of "Jingqini hafan 精奇尼哈番." Yue was made a duke of the third rank.¹³ Then in

¹⁰At the suggestion of Nian Gengyao, the Qing government reorganized the tribes in Qinghai into *zuoling* 佐領 (niru, the Company Commander) system and established a tributary system in Qinghai. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 20, pp. 26b-29a. To separate the Tibetans from the Mongols, the Qing authorities ordered that the Tibetans only live south of the Yellow River. In addition, the Qing restored the system of local chieftain among the Tibetan tribes, thus depriving them of their submission to the Khoshot Mongols. In 1725, the Qing authorities established the Xining Bureau (Xining Banshi Dachen 西寧辦事大臣) as the representative of the central government to rule the Qinghai area.

¹¹See Yongzheng's comment on Nian Gengyao's memorial of the 29th of the third month, 1724, *Wenxian Congbian*, vol. 5, "Nian Gengyao's memorials."

¹²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 12, p. 9a. The Golok was one tribe within the Tibetan group. The Golok people lived in northern Sichuan and southern Qinghai. They were well-known for their militant character and their habit of looting.

¹³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 17, pp. 11a-b.

the summer of 1724, Yue was designated to act as Provincial Military Commander of Shaanxi and Ganzhou concurrently.¹⁴ And he was ordered to stay in Xining, Qinghai. At the end of 1724, Nian was again granted another hereditary title: the first rank of "Asihani hafan 阿思哈尼哈番 (Baron)."¹⁵ Even Nian's father Nian Xialing 年遐齡 was granted a duke, and the title of Grand Mentor.¹⁶

The Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion forced Yongzheng to return to the Kangxi policies in frontier affairs. In other words, Yongzheng found himself on an irreversible course to pursue an aggressive stance towards frontier problems. Once he realized that it was a mistake for him to have withdrawn from the Kangxi frontier activism, he began to worry about the damage caused by this mistake to his weak legitimacy. In order to cover up his ephemeral mistake, Yongzheng even ventured to falsify his rescript in the court records¹⁷ and

¹⁴Shizong Shilu, vol. 21, p. 8a.

¹⁵Shizong Shilu, vol. 26, pp. 22a-b.

¹⁶Shizong Shilu, vol. 17, p. 11b.

¹⁷After Yongzheng was enthroned in 1722, the Governor of Sichuan Cai Ting 蔡廷 petitioned to the new emperor to withdraw Qing soldiers from Tibet. Yongzheng's rescript on the memorial was: "[Your opinion is] as same as mine and the court officials'. It is being carried out. [You are] right 與朕意、廷臣議同，正在此辦理。是。" (Archives of the Palace Museum, Taipei, Yongzheng, No. 8096, from Yang Qiqiao, Yongzheng Di Jiqi Mizhe Zhidu Yanjiu, p. 273). However, in the officially published collection of the Yongzheng edicts Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi, the rescript on Cai's memorial had been changed into the following: "The Zunghar devils are sly and stubborn. It is their nature that they will not be at ease. My father knew their tricks well. He had made efforts for more than ten years [in Zunghar affairs]. He had no alternative but to order generals to lead expeditions to mount attacks on the Zunghars. It is not because my father desired fame, staging wars without solid ground. Even though I am not as able [as him], you officials should encourage me to do my best to continue the cause in order to accomplish my father's will."

took in his earlier conversation with Kangxi which contained his hawkish attitude towards the Zunghars in the official chronicle of the Kangxi period: Shengzu Shilu, or the "Veritable Records of the Kangxi Emperor," which was compiled under the auspices of the new emperor.¹⁸

In the wake of the Qinghai campaigns, Nian Gengyao and Yue Zhongqi's reputations and influence suddenly rose. But that meant different things to both Yue and Nian. For Yue, the promotion meant that he was promoted from a local military official to a competent field commander attracting attention from the throne. But for Nian, it meant the consolidation of his special close relations with Yongzheng that had existed since before Yongzheng became emperor. Nian had been a chief partisan of the Yongzheng clique when Yongzheng was an ambitious Imperial Prince. Nian's younger sister was a favored concubine of Yongzheng. Assumably, Nian was instrumental in Yongzheng's striving for the throne. Then he was one of the major counselors of the new emperor. During almost one decade of Nian's appointment in the West,

Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi, vol. 21, p. 51. This obviously is a faked one to cover up Yongzheng's retreat from Kangxi's frontier activism.

¹⁸According to the Shengzu shilu, in 1715, when the Zunghars raided Hami, thus triggering the great Qing military campaign in the vast northwest, Yongzheng, then the Imperial Prince (*Heshi* 和碩 Prince), held a rather hawkish attitude towards the Zunghars. He told his father, Kangxi, that it was a pity that the Qing forces did not eradicate Tsewang Rabtán too while they fought against Galdan in the 1690s. And he expressed his support for an expedition to eliminate the Zunghar threat. Shengzu Shilu, vol. 263, pp. 18b-19a. It is uncommon to include a conversation between the emperor and his sons in the Shilu. The inclusion of this conversation between Kangxi and Yongzheng was out of consideration of propaganda. Possibly it was aimed at refashioning his image as a mighty expansionist, to match his father, Kangxi's prestige.

they kept frequent and secret contacts through relay horses. Most of their correspondences were written in Manchu.

After the former crown prince Yunti was called back to the capital, military affairs of the northwestern frontline were taken over by Yanxin 延信, grandson of Haoge, and Nian Gengyao.¹⁹ But Yanxin was called back to the capital shortly after the withdrawal of Qing armies from Tibet in the spring of 1723.²⁰ Thus Nian became the single most powerful figure in the western and the southwestern regions. The year of 1724 marked Nian's climax of political power. He was promoted and entitled three times within two months. In his comments to a memorial Nian submitted, Yongzheng even called him the "savior" of the emperor.²¹

Nevertheless, the extraordinary favor and power were not auspicious for Nian, given the suspicious nature of Yongzheng. Furthermore, Nian was a supercilious person himself. His excessive abuse of his power and the emperor's favor seeded his demise when he was at the top of his political life.²² Beginning from 1725, Yongzheng started undermining Nian's flamboyant influence by knocking his trivial mistakes. And in spring, 1725, Yongzheng ordered Nian deprived of the titles of Generalissimo of Pacifying

¹⁹Shizong Shilu, vol. 1, pp. 9a-10a.

²⁰Yanxin was charged, in 1727, of being associated with the deposed crown prince Yunti and Nian Gengyao, and appropriating 100,000 taels in the first Qing Tibetan expedition. He was ordered to be jailed for ever. Qing Shi Gao, vol. 219.

²¹Wenxian Congbian, vol. 5, "Nian Gengyao's memorials."

²²For Nian Gengyao's abuse of his power and other misconducts, see Xiao Shi, Yongxian Lu, vol. 3.

the Remoteness and Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, and transferred him to Hangzhou, Zhejiang province as the General of Hangzhou.²³ This transfer of Nian was a signal that he was no longer favored by the emperor. He soon became the target of criticism and impeachment of other officials. Several months later, Nian was dismissed, and soon arrested. In early 1726, he was sentenced to commit suicide under the accusation of ninety-two crimes, most of which were relative to corruption, such as appropriating military funds, dealing in illegal salt, tea and horse trading, and also for his errors in etiquette.²⁴ His family was also implicated and punished accordingly. Many officials and bureaucrats who had been recommended or used by Nian were also purged.²⁵

The case of Nian Gengyao was an important political incident in the early Yongzheng period. To be sure, the purge of Nian was more than a case of conflict between a monarch and a powerful satrap. Although Nian was only a provincial viceroy without any position in the central government, his close relations with the emperor and his frequent and critical participation in Yongzheng's decision-making indicate that his role was far more than a mere regional satrap. The deepest concerns of Yongzheng were not only the rise of a powerful satrap in the northwestern and

²³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 31, pp. 10b-11a.

²⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 39, pp. 6b-12a.

²⁵For a detailed account of Nian Gengyao's case see Feng Erkang *Yongzheng Zhuan*, pp. 96-120. In early 1727, Yongzheng granted amnesties to the sons of Nian. It marked the end of the case of Nian.

the southwestern regions, but also that Nian's swelling influence in national politics would further hurt Yongzheng's already weak legitimacy.²⁶ Yongzheng had a strong tendency to articulate his changed position as emperor, no longer allowing his partisans of the past behave towards him in the same manner as when he was an Imperial Prince. Yongzheng's oversensitivity to any potential threat to his emperorship and Nian's ignorance of the subtle change in their relations led to Nian's downfall. Because of this nature of the case of Nian Gengyao, the fall of Nian did not presage any shift in Qing frontier strategies, and Qing policies towards the northwestern and and southwestern frontiers. To guarantee the continuity in Qing frontier politics, Yongzheng soon filled the vacancy left by Nian with an upstart among the Qing frontier officials. This upstart was Yue Zhongqi.

Having grown up in Sichuan, Yue Zhongqi was renowned for his expertise of the geographic and human conditions in the southwestern frontier. His rapid promotion since the first Qing Tibetan campaign prepared him for the position held by Nian Gengyao. Yue was on the rise while Nian declined. Yue was first appointed concurrently Governor of

²⁶"I am not a teenage emperor, [there is] no need of waiting for Nian Gengyao's instructions. Did I do this because of Nian Gengyao's forceful memorial?" "I think I am not less able than other people in all kinds of things. When I was prince, I was able to do the things other princes and officials were not able to do; and I had insights that other princes and officials did not have. Now I am emperor. I will do my best to change the conventions. How can I be at ease to be thought unable?" Yongzheng Chao Qiju Zhu, December 30, 1724.

Gansu after the former governor, a partisan of Nian was dismissed. Then Yue was appointed acting Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi by the same edict in which Yongzheng ordered the transfer of Nian to Zhejiang in 1725.²⁷ Three months later, he became the formal Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi.²⁸ Then in the summer of 1725, Yue, along with the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Gao Qizhuo 高其倬 as well as others, was entitled Junior Mentor for his outstanding services.²⁹ One month after Yue became the formal Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, he requested a royal audience and was granted one.³⁰ At the audience with the emperor, Yue was conferred the title of Vice Minister of the Ministry of War.³¹ In 1726, Yongzheng let Yue move his residency to Chengdu since Yue was engaged in subjugating the Lolo people in Puxiong 普雄, the border area between Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou.³²

Yue's appointment as the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi was exceptional in a number of aspects. First, it was against the law of avoidance, for Yue's domicile was already Chengdu. It was the first case, perhaps the only case, in the Qing history that a person was appointed Governor-General in his own home province. Furthermore, it was again an unusual thing for the throne to order a viceroy

²⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 31, pp. 10b-11a.

²⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 34, p. 14a.

²⁹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 33, pp. 7a-b.

³⁰*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 36, p. 2a.

³¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 36, p. 5a.

³²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 49, pp. 27b-28a.

to be stationed in his very domiciliary city. Second, the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi was of great strategic importance. It had been a post exclusively reserved for bannermen, either Manchu or Han, since 1668.³³ But Yue was a Han Chinese, not a Han bannerman. Yue's appointment was exceptional, it indicates that Yue was highly regarded by Yongzheng. Meanwhile, it shows that Yongzheng was afraid of weakening the military power at the western and the southwestern frontiers because of the purge of Nian and his clique. In order to maintain a stable situation in the border areas, the throne had to find a person of equivalent capability and influence to Nian. At that time, the best candidate was Yue Zhongqi. Yue was not only the most prominent military commander in these regions, but also had demonstrated his independence from the influence of Nian Gengyao. Moreover, Yue played a critical role in pulling Nian down. There are some clues suggesting that Yue had been informed of Nian's pending downfall by Yongzheng before the emperor initiated his condemnation upon Nian.³⁴ After Nian fell, Yue was entrusted by Yongzheng with the power of screening and purging the officials promoted by Nian in the Northwest and the Southwest.

Although it was not a conventional case, Yongzheng's promotion of Yue Zhongqi, was justified by the tensions mounting at the northwestern and western frontlines. The

³³Fuge, *Ting Yu Congtan*, p. 65-66.

³⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 34, p. 8b.

first Qing Tibetan expedition had expelled the Zunghar invaders out of Tibet. But the Zunghar threat to Tibet was not eliminated. The Zunghars, headed by Tsewang Rabtan, still constituted a real menace to the Qing frontier areas such as Khalkha Mongolia, Qinghai, Gansu, and Tibet. When Lobdzan Dandzin was defeated by Yue Zhongqi in 1724, he fled to seek refuge in Zunghar domain. The Qing court demanded the Zunghars submit Lobdzan Dandzin to the Qing authorities, but the Zunghars refused to comply. The Qing was greatly offended by the defiance. Nevertheless, since the Qing armies had called off the preparations for a campaign against the Zunghars in the very beginning of the Yongzheng period, the Qing had to wait for next chance to mount an offensive on the Zunghars.

In 1727, Tsewang Rabtan died. His son Galdan Tsering 噶爾丹策零 inherited the kingship of Zungharia. Like his father, Galdan Tsering was also a fierce warrior. He inherited his father's ambition to control Tibet and to contend with the Qing empire. He continued to defy the Qing's request to turn in refugee Lobdzan Dandzin.

Meanwhile, more internal turmoil in Tibet erupted as an outcome of the long-term strife between the aristocracy of Dbus (Qian Zang or Nearer Tibet) and that of Tsang (Hou Zang or Further Tibet). On August 5, 1727, three Kaloons (Councilors) from Dbus, Aerbuba 阿爾布巴 (or Na-p'od-pa), Longbunai 隆布鼐 (or Lum-pa-nas) and Zhaernai 扎爾鼐, who had

closer relationship with the Zunghars and marital connections with Lobdzan Dandzin, joined hands to kill another Kaloon, the leading one among the four Kaloons, Kangjinai 康濟鼐 (or K'an-C'en-nas) from Tsang. The father of the seventh Dalai Lama was also involved in the conspiracy to kill Kangjinai. The short peace since the first Qing Tibetan expedition was upset.³⁵

Upon hearing of the incident, the Qing throne was shocked and speculated that the hands of the Zunghars were behind this incident.³⁶ All Qing armies in Shaanxi, Sichuan and Yunnan were ordered to be on alert.³⁷ Yongzheng also ordered Yue Zhongqi to go to Xi'an immediately to prepare an expedition and then go to the capital right after his arrangements in Xi'an, as the emperor needed "to give him some instructions in person."³⁸ Although the Qing throne

³⁵In the beginning of 1727, Eqi 鄂齊, Qing envoy sent to Tibet, had observed that there were conflicts among the four Kaloons. According to Eqi, being haughty, Kangjinai was resented by the other three Kaloons. These three Kaloons, associated with the father of the seventh Dalai Lama, became a clique. Eqi thought that something might happen and he suggested dismissing Longbunai and Zhaernai from the posts of Kaloon to reduce the influence of ambitious Aerbuba. But Yongzheng did not accept Eqi's proposal. Rather, he ordered the four Kaloons and the Dalai Lama to be harmonious to each other and sent two officials, Sengge 僧格 and Mala 馬喇, to Lhasa to reinforce the Qing influence. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 52, pp. 29b-30b; Cewangrenjie *Puluonai Zhuan*, pp. 255-269; Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 101-125.

³⁶There is no evidence to prove that the three rebel Kaloons were associated with the Zunghars. The three also accused Kangjinai, whom was killed by the three, of having connections with the Zunghars. These accusations from two sides would be regarded merely political vilifications. See Tang Chi'an, "Poushi Shiba Shiji de Weizang Zhanzheng;" also Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 135-136.

³⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 60, pp. 24b-25a; vol. 61, pp. 6a-b.

³⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 60, p. 25a.

soon realized that the Zunghars had not played any part in this incident, the next calculation of the emperor was to take this chance to reinforce the Qing influence in Lhasa that had been weakened with the withdrawal of the Qing armies from Tibet at the beginning of the Yongzheng period. Yongzheng decided to launch another expedition to Tibet. His intention was to move the Dalai Lama to Xining, Qinghai in order to dash the Zunghar motivation to invade Tibet. He deemed that "Tibet will be in peace forever if the Dalai Lama is moved to Xining."³⁹ He had secretly ordered his brother and his most intimate confidant Yunxiang 允祥 to "move the Dalai Lama to Xining."⁴⁰ However, Yongzheng again considered that the Qing expedition would force the rebel Kaloons to flee to Zungharia and to bring the Dalai Lama with them, which would be disastrous to the Qing's Tibetan diplomacy. So Yongzheng withheld the expedition to wait and see.⁴¹

But the situation in Tibet was not entirely dismal for the Qing. Another Kagoon of Tsang, Poluonai 頗羅鼐 (or P'o-lha-nas),⁴² launched an expedition from Shigatse 日喀則 against the three rebelled Kaloons. After one year of seesaw

³⁹*Zhanggu Congbian*, no. 4, Ortai's memorials: on Tibetan affairs No. 1.

⁴⁰Qing archives, the Chinese History Archives, Number 1, the Qing vermilion commentaries on memorials, Minorities, No. 1293. From Li Fengzhen, "Shilun Yiqiwulingnian Xizang Zhuermuotenamuzhale Shijian."

⁴¹*Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi*, vol. 13.

⁴²Poluonai was the most important political leader in 18th-century Tibet. For his early years, see Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 21-24; for his biography, Cewangrenjie, *Poluonai Zhuan*.

battles between the two sides, Poluonai defeated his opponents and arrested the three Kaloons in July, 1728. Yongzheng was pleased by this move of Poluonai, and immediately instructed Yue Zhongqi to send an envoy to Lhasa to inform the Qing officials Mala 馬喇 and Sengge 僧格, who had been stationed there throughout the Tibetan civil war, that the Qing dynasty was on the side of Poluonai.⁴³ Having made sure that the Dalai Lama would not go to the Zunghars, Yongzheng ordered another expedition to Tibet. In late summer, 1728, Qing armies from Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan under the supervision of the plenipotentiary of the Tibetan Affairs Zhalang'a 查郎阿,⁴⁴ entered Lhasa, and executed the three Kaloons from Dbus, their relatives and followers.⁴⁵

From this time on, the Qing began to station the Grand Minister Residents of Tibet (*Zhu Zang Dachen* 駐藏大臣), or "Amban" in Manchu, regularly in Lhasa. Meanwhile, the Qing military stationed two thousand troops in Lhasa.⁴⁶ To reform the Tibetan political structure, the Qing abolished the

⁴³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 62, pp. 21b-22a.

⁴⁴The number of the Qing expedition was 15,000, among which 8,000 from Shaanxi, 4,000 from Sichuan and 3,000 from Yunnan. Only 6,420 soldiers arrived in Lhasa. The rest was left in the strategic points along the routes to Lhasa. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 75, pp. 18a-b.

⁴⁵About the civil war in Tibet and the Qing second invasion of Tibet, see Cewangrenjie, *Poluonai Zhuan*, pp. 270-345, Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 108-131.

⁴⁶Zhalang'a proposed leaving 10,000 armies in Lhasa to Poluonai. Poluonai requested reducing this number. Then Zhalang'a proposed 5,000. But Poluonai still thought that it was too many to bear for the Tibetans. Upon Poluonai's demand, the number was eventually reduced to 2,000. The armies were accommodated in residents' homes in Lhasa. Cewangrenjie, *Poluonai Zhuanq*, pp. 349-351.

Kaloon system and named Poluonai Prince (*beile* 貝勒) to take charge of the administration of routine affairs in Tibet.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Qing authorities ordered part of Tsang to be put under the separate control of the Panchen Lama, another leading figure in the Yellow Sect Lamaist order.

When the major Qing forces withdrew from Tibet after peace and order were restored at the end of 1728, the Qing armies escorted the seventh Dalai Lama to Litang in western Sichuan to reside. The original intention of the Qing authorities was to send the Dalai Lama to Beijing. It had been a long-harbored desire of the Qing emperors to meet with the new Dalai Lama. Since the Shunzhi emperor met the fifth Dalai Lama in Beijing in 1652, the Qing throne had never had the opportunity. Aware of the significance of the Dalai Lama's visit, Kangxi had wished to have the Dalai Lama visit Beijing. But he died shortly after his troops enthroned the seventh Dalai Lama in Lhasa. Yongzheng had the same intent. Nevertheless, the Dalai Lama declined the invitation with the excuse that he was not immune to smallpox, a fatal disease for the Tibetans at that time.⁴⁸

The Qing eventually decided to place the Dalai Lama in western Sichuan. While there was no explanation on the Qing side to change its original intention to move the Dalai to

⁴⁷Initially, the Qing intended to let Poluonai only rule Further Tibet, and to let two people recommended by Poluonai rule Nearer Tibet. But the Qing throne eventually decided to let Poluonai take the reins of government of all Tibet except Kham, before the Dalai Lama moved to Litang. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 76, pp.4a-b; vol. 76, pp. 13a-14a.

⁴⁸Cewangrenjie, *Poluonai Zhuan*, pp. 346-349.

Xining, one possibility is that the Qing throne was still concerned with the Khoshot Mongols in Qinghai who had rebelled in 1723. Western Sichuan must have seemed a safe place to settle the Dalai Lama. To protect the Dalai Lama, the throne sent the Regional Commander of Chongqing, Ren Guorong 任國榮, to lead two thousand soldiers to Litang. The military was also ordered to be responsible for the accomodation of the Dalai Lama and his equipage.⁴⁹ The chief commander of the Manchu garrison in Chengdu, the Manchu Vice Commander-in-chief Naige 鼐格 was also sent to Litang to take care of the Dalai Lama.⁵⁰ Under the excuse of protecting the residency of the Dalai Lama, the size of the military forces in Sichuan was augmented.

Around the time of the second Tibetan expedition, it was well recognized throughout the country that the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, Yue Zhongqi, was immensely influential. This surge of Yue's fame, on the one hand, would arouse vigilance from the throne and jealousy from his fellow officials. On the other hand, it evoked expectations from some anti-Qing force.

First, Yue's rise to power naturally aroused jealousy among the civil officials in the region. Typically, the civil officials would accuse military officials of purposely fomenting frontier conflict or warfare in order to enhance their own credentials. As early as 1726, the Governor of

⁴⁹Shizong Shilu, vol. 76, pp. 7b-8a.

⁵⁰Shizong Shilu, vol. 76, p. 9b.

Sichuan, Famin 法敏, had made such a report about Yue Zhongqi through the secret memorial system. But Yongzheng did not side with Famin. A couple of years later, when Famin was charged for other misconducts, the emperor exposed his secret reports on Yue and condemned him of trying to frame Yue and of hindering the imperial frontier operations.⁵¹ The former Governor of Sichuan, the son of Cai Yurong, Cai Ting 蔡珽, also spread rumors against Yue being dismissed in 1724. It was Cai who memorialized the emperor to withdraw the armies from Tibet and it was on his memorial that Yongzheng endorsed the retreat of the armies from Tibet. Given Yongzheng's eagerness to correct his initial mistake to slacken the military pressure in the northwestern and the western frontiers, Cai was doomed to fall. Cai was soon implicated in the case of Nian Gengyao. Therefore, his accusation against Yue was easily dismissed by the emperor as another piece of slander by a partisan of Nian.⁵²

Yet trouble was not limited among the officialdom. In the summer of 1727, Yue Zhongqi reported to the throne that a man was caught in Sichuan for yelling in the streets of Chengdu that Yue was going to lead troops in Sichuan and Shaanxi to rebel against the Qing. Yongzheng praised Yue's honesty, and revealed that the throne had been receiving

⁵¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 61, p. 28b.

⁵²Cai Ting criticized Yue Zhongqi: "[A certain] frontier official has an appetite for frontier incidents in order to get promoted with his military successes. So he tends to incite such incidents." *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 59, pp. 27a-28a.

plenty of memorials vilifying Yue for years. According to the emperor, some even claimed that Yue was the offspring of Yue Fei, a popular anti-Jin hero of the Southern Song dynasty (1127-11279), and that he would have his revenge against the Qing dynasty for what the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) did to the Song dynasty.⁵³ But Yongzheng assured Yue that he was not affected by those accusations. He ruled that harsh punishment should be rendered on the agitator and his plotter behind the scene.⁵⁴ Yue survived this political crisis intact. Furthermore, his eldest son, Yue Jun 岳潛, was appointed Governor of Shandong around this time. Being only twenty-five years old, he was one of the youngest governors of the time. In autumn, 1727, Yongzheng summoned Yue to the capital for a private meeting when the Tibetan civil war occurred. It was a common practice that when a Governor-General or Governor was summoned to the capital, an acting Governor-General or Governor was appointed for the interim. Not following the common practice, Yongzheng

⁵³The Jin dynasty was founded in 1115 by the Jurchen people, the ancestors of Manchus, in Manchuria. The Jin dynasty pushed south to the Song territory from 1125. Two years later the Jin captured the last emperors of the Northern Song dynasty and conquered north China. The Song moved south and founded the Southern Song dynasty in Hangzhou. The resistance war of the Southern Song dynasty lasted for four decades. Yue Fei was a popular hero in the Song resistance against the Jin.

⁵⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 59, pp. 3a-4a. Later in 1727, officials in Sichuan made certain of the man, whose name was Lu Zonghan 盧宗漢, who was an immigrant from Hubei province, and that he was involved in a land dispute. In order to get his case through, he spread rumors and yelled along streets, without anybody behind him. He was sentenced to capital penalty in suspension. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 62, pp. 14b-15a.

allowed Yue to keep his post of the governorship-general of Shaanxi and Sichuan while Yue was absent.

In 1728, a government student from Yongxing 永興 country, Hunan province, Zeng Jing 曾靜, sent a disciple of his, Zhang Xi 張熙 to Sichuan to persuade Yue Zhongqi to rebel against the Qing dynasty. Zhang said to Yue that since he was the descendant of Yue Fei, he should not serve the Qing which was the offspring of the Jin dynasty against which Yue Fei had fought so hard. Yue Zhongqi was shocked at hearing this appeal for rebellion. He asked the Governor of Sichuan, Xilin 西琳, and the Provincial Surveillance Commissioner of Sichuan, Shuose 碩色, to join him in interrogating Zhang, hoping to obtain more information about the conspiracy. Zhang Xi refused to tell at first. Then Yue invited Zhang to a private room and consoled him with friendly words, pretending to be sympathetic with his cause. In order to know the whole plot, Yue even swore before the gods to show his willingness to join Zhang's cause. Only then did Zhang tell Yue the story about his teacher Zeng Jing.⁵⁵

Zeng was an admirer of the famous anti-Qing scholar Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629-1683).⁵⁶ He was deeply influenced by

⁵⁵ *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 81, pp. 24a-b.

⁵⁶ Being a native of Shimen 石門 county, Zhejiang province, Lü was a well-known Neo-Confucian scholar and anti-Qing nationalist. He attempted to restore the Ming dynasty in the beginning of the Qing dynasty. He participated, however, in the Qing civil service examinations in 1653, and obtained a degree of Government Student. But he soon regretted it and refused to participate in examinations any more. He lectured to students and wrote while practicing medicine to support himself. He became well-

Lü's anti-Qing sentiments, and began to associate himself with the disciples of Lü. As a powerless scholar, Zeng lacked the means to realize his political aspiration. But the fame and influence of Yue Zhongqi attracted his attention. He then tried to convince Yue of the justification his cause. What troubled Yue Zhongqi was not whether he would join Zhang, for it was out of the question to associate himself with such a hopeless cause, but how to clear himself from being viewed as an accomplice of the conspiracy. Yue immediately reported to Yongzheng on the incident, thus starting a serious case of persecution during the Yongzheng period.

Yongzheng ordered a merciless crackdown on the conspiracy clique. Zeng and Shen Zaikuan 沈在寬, a disciple of Lü's disciple Yan Hongkui 嚴鴻逵, were apprehended. The throne ordered to open Lü, Yan and Lü's son's tombs to apply symbolic punishments upon their bodies, and to execute Shen, another son of Lu and a son of Yan, to punish all male members above sixteen years-old in Yan's family, and to enslave all other family members. After his apprehension, Zeng began to regret his belief and deeds. He began to condemn himself vigorously. To educate the people of the

known for his scholarship in his lifetime. In 1678, he was recommended by the Governor of Zhejiang to take part in the special examination of Erudite Literatus *boxue hongci ke* 博學鴻詞科. But he declined it. Two years later, he was again recommended as "recluse". To clarify his determination not to serve the Qing, Lü then had his hair shaved and claimed to have become a Buddhist monk. Lü died in 1683, leaving copious writings in which his anti-Qing nationalism was explicitly expressed.

country not to venture themselves in similar attempt, Yongzheng did not have Zeng killed. Instead, Yongzheng ordered him released, as well as Zhang Xi, to compile a pamphlet which was entitled as Dayi Juemi Lu 大義覺迷錄 (the narration of the great righteousness and an enlightenment). It was a collection of Zeng and Zhang's confessions and all edicts concerning this case. Yongzheng ordered all students throughout the country to read this pamphlet.⁵⁷

The case of Zeng Jing was one of the most serious cases of political persecution during the Qing period. Unlike other cases which typically only involved literary expressions, this case was complicated by an attempt to instigate an insurrection by courting a Qing provincial satrap. The choice of Yue Zhongqi by Zeng Jing was not without reason. The precedent of the three feudatories and the increasing influence and power of the Southwestern military magnate all contributed to Zeng's choice.

Nevertheless, Yongzheng did not change his attitude towards Yue Zhongqi after this incident. On the contrary, he expressed his praise of Yue on his unquestionable loyalty to the Qing dynasty. He signed that Yue even made a false oath before the gods in order to find out the whole plot. The

⁵⁷Despite Yongzheng's edict inhibiting his successors from killing Zeng Jing and Zhang Xi, they were executed in 1735 by an order of Qianlong three months after he was enthroned. Qianlong also banned Dayi Juemi Lu from circulation. For a detailed account of the incident, see Feng Erkang, Yongzheng Zhuan, pp. 222-236. The Qing documents pertinent to this incident have been published in Wenxian Congbian, vol. 3, by the Palace Museum in Taipei.

emperor said that he himself could never betray his oath before the divines. Therefore, he was deeply moved.⁵⁸ Yongzheng had a reputation for his suspicious character. His treatment of Yue after the Zeng Jing incident was not quite consistent with his typical behavior. One explanation is that in 1728 the emperor was in the middle of settling the Tibetan emergency and meanwhile was envisioning a new military operation against the Zunghars. He was in bad need of experienced generals such as Yue Zhongqi.

2. The Zunghar Campaign and the Fall of Yue Zhongqi

The Tibetan emergency sounded a warning alarm to the Qing throne. It suggested that the existence of the Zunghar power in the Northwest would be a very hotbed for unrest in Tibet. After the Tibetan civil war and the Qing's second Tibetan expedition, Galdan Tsering again took the initiative, asking to go to Tibet to perform the ceremony of *mangja*, and claiming that he would send two sons of Lajang Khan back to Tibet.

Yongzheng was remarkably encouraged by the results of the second Tibetan expedition which pacified the rebellion in Tibet and put pro-Qing Poluonai in power. Also in 1728, the Qing signed the Treaties of Kiakhta with the Russians. Settling the protracted disputes between the two empires

⁵⁸Shizong Shilu, vol. 87, pp. 4b-5b.

over the border, trade and other matters, the Treaties of Kiakhta ensured the neutrality of the Russians in conflicts between the Qing and the Zunghars. This diplomatic move was one step in Yongzheng's preparations for another war with the Zunghars.⁵⁹ He became less cautious in launching another expedition to eliminate the Zunghar threat. In the spring of 1729, he put forward his idea. He argued it was to safeguard the stability in Khalkha Mongolia, Tibet and Qinghai that the Qing had to launch this campaign.⁶⁰ It turned out that most of his courtiers opposed his motion. Only the Grand Scholar Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 (1672-1746) was on the side of the emperor. Among the frontier satraps, Yue Zhongqi was one of few who were supportive of the emperor. After the expedition set off, Yue submitted a memorial to the throne listing ten advantages which would guarantee the victory of the expedition.⁶¹ Yongzheng was very pleased with Yue's loyalty as well as his optimism. However, Yue might be overconfident by assuring the throne of victory.

The will of the emperor eventually prevailed. An expedition was inaugurated in spring, 1729.⁶² The expedition consisted of two divisions: the northern route and the

⁵⁹Mark Mancall, Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations until 1728. pp. 211-215.

⁶⁰Shizong Shilu, vol. 78, pp. 14b-22a.

⁶¹The ten conditions are: "The first is the virtue of our emperor; the second is the timing; the third is geographic advantage; the fourth is personnel; the fifth is provisions; the sixth is quality of rank-and-file; the seventh is battle formation; the eighth is weaponry; the ninth is tactics; the tenth is to keep armies in good form." Shizong Shilu, vol. 82, pp. 5a-6a.

⁶²On Yongzheng's Zunghar campaign, see Barfield, pp. 291-292.

western route. Furdan 傅爾丹 was designated "the Generalissimo of Pacifying the Frontier(*jing bian da jiangjun* 靖邊大將軍)" and was in charge of the northern route. Meanwhile, Yue Zhongqi was entitled "the Generalissimo of Tranquilizing the Remoteness(*ning yuan da jiangjun* 寧遠大將軍)" and was in charge of the western route. At the same time, the throne directed the Qing armies stationed in Tibet and the Tibetan armies to set up a garrison in Tenggelingaoer 騰格里腦兒 which was one of the entrances for the Zunghars to enter Tibet. In the following year, the throne again ordered the Qing commissioner in Tibet, Sengge, to lead 1,500 soldiers to reinforce the garrison.

In the early summer of 1730, the expedition set out. Yongzheng especially ordered Yue Zhongqi's son, Yue Jun, the Governor of Shandong, to take a leave to Xi'an to bid farewell to his father. When Galdan Tsering heard of the news of the Qing expedition setting out, he sent an emissary to the Qing capital to deliver his willingness to send back Lobdzan Dandzin and asked the Qing to stop the expedition. Yongzheng agreed to suspend the expedition for a year. Meanwhile, he ordered Yue Zhongqi and Furdan back to the capital for an audience.⁶³

Having no intention to keep his words, Galdan Tsering seized the chance of the absence of the Qing commanders-in-

⁶³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 94, pp. 11a-12b. Yue returned to the northwestern front in early 1731. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 101, p. 3a.

chief at the frontline to make an assault on a military ranch on the western route in Kuoshetu 闊舍圖 in the summer of 1730. This surprise attack was very successful. All the horses and camels raised in the ranch were seized by the Zunghars. Although Qing troops managed to take back some of livestock, the western route was thus demoralized. Yongzheng was startled. The ambitious emperor suddenly realized that there were some weak points in his strategy. Next summer, the Zunghars made another offensive on the Qing armies of the northern route under the command of Furdan in Khobdo. Having been lured into the Zunghar trap, Furdan suffered an out-and-out fiasco. Almost all his armies were annihilated, many a high official was either killed or captured. Furdan barely survived himself. The throne was again shocked with this serious defeat. To prevent Furdan from pursuing suicide, Yongzheng took off a belt of his own and sent it to the front to let Furdan tie it on, making him aware of his imperial responsibilities.⁶⁴ What the throne wanted to do at that moment was not to punish Furdan, but to prevent the remaining troops from disbanding. This setback was indeed disastrous.

After the incident of Kuoshetu ranch, Yongzheng became increasingly bitter and suspicious towards Yue Zhongqi. Yue must have sensed the changed attitude of the emperor. He was somehow prepared to leave the post at any moment. In the

⁶⁴Shizong Shilu, vol. 108, p. 28b-31b.

spring of 1731, he submitted sixteen points regarding setting up a garrison and military colony in the area of Tulufan. Obviously, Yue was rather conservative in strategies and tactics at this moment. Yongzheng dismissed them as saying "none of them is with value (*jing wu yi ke caiqu zhi chu* 竟無一可採取之處)" and voiced his distrust of Yue as the chief commander of the campaign.⁶⁵ From this time on, it became more and more often that the emperor picked on Yue whenever he presented his suggestions on the campaign. Once Yongzheng even said that Yue had "disappointed my trust and reliance since the beginning of the campaign".⁶⁶ In the spring of 1731, the throne appointed a Manchu general Yilibu 伊禮布 deputy general to the western route to oversee Yue's action. He was told to accompany Yue with Manchu soldiers whenever Yue went for military operations.⁶⁷ In later 1731, the emperor granted gifts to the soldiers and the commanders at the northwestern front. But conspicuously Yue was not given any of them.⁶⁸ Although Yongzheng lowered the heat of his criticism on Yue after the fiasco of Furdan, Yue's future was doomed.

The situation at the front became increasingly difficult because the northern route had lost its combat capacity after the Khobdo fiasco in the summer of 1731. Having lost the trust and favor of the throne, Yue Zhongqi

⁶⁵*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 103, pp. 16b-18a.

⁶⁶*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 107, pp. 10a-b.

⁶⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 104, pp. 17a-b.

⁶⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 112, pp. 19b-20a.

was not in a position to make any active initiatives. His last suggestion to the throne was to build a garrison in a place called Mulei 穆壘 to station armies and to set up military colonies. Yue maintained that it was the only way to stop the expansion of the Zunghars towards the east. Apparently, Yue Zhongqi had retreated from an offensive strategy to his bottom line: to hold the Qing defense line steadfast. He firmly insisted on digging-in in that place, even putting all his family members as guaranties.⁶⁹ Yongzheng approved this suggestion with reluctance. But around the same time, the emperor ordered to Yue punished as he failed to shield the Qing garrison from the harassment of the Zunghars. This initiated a series of indictments against Yue from other officials.

In the early spring of 1732, the Zunghars attacked Hami with massive forces. At this moment, Yue stationed his 30,000 armies in Balikun 巴里坤. Since the snow on the ground had not yet melted, Yue did not attempt to have a real fight. He only sent out a dispatch to balk the Zunghar assault on Hami. The throne was again angry at him for not seizing the opportunity to give a heavy blow to the enemy. Not long after this incident, Yongzheng appointed the Governor of Guizhou, Zhang Guangsi 張廣泗 (d. 1749),⁷⁰ a long

⁶⁹ Yue said in a memorial: "If there is anything wrong with the Mulei garrison in the future, please punish this subject severely, and also punish my wife and sons severely." *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 114, pp. 13b-14a.

⁷⁰ Zhang Guangsi was a bannerman of the Chinese Plain Red Banner. He was appointed to prefect of Liping 黎平 prefecture, Guizhou province in 1726 and started his two-decade career as a frontier strongman. Because of

time subordinate of Ortai,⁷¹ deputy general of the western route. This was the beginning of the penetration of the influence of Ortai into northwestern affairs. Then in the following months, Yue was impeached by the court officials for his conservative direction of the Hami battle, which resulted in the easy escape of the enemy. As Yue had played a critical role in pulling down Nian Gengyao back in 1725, this time, it was Ortai, one of a few most trusted officials by Yongzheng during his entire reign, who played a critical role in falling Yue. Having been summoned to the capital from the Southwest in the autumn of 1731, Ortai indicted Yue, in the late spring of 1732, following the battle of Balikun, of not correctly presaging and not decisively responding to the moves of the enemy. Ortai suggested that Yue be deprived of the title of nobility, the hereditary ranks, and the post of Governor-General of Shaanxi, but be allowed to act as the Generalissimo. The emperor adopted all the suggestions of Ortai, but kept Yue's post of the Governor-General.⁷²

A couple of months later, Yongzheng sent Ortai to the Northwest to oversee all military matters. It was a signal that Yue Zhongqi's days were numbered. The next day,

Ortai's patronage and Zhang's high-handed stance in maintaining order in the frontier areas of Guizhou, he was promoted to Governor of Guizhou in 1728. He was instrumental in putting down the Miao Rebellion at the end of the Yongzheng era. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 324-325; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 297; Hummel, pp. 43-45.

⁷¹For information about Ortai, see the next section of this chapter.

⁷²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 117, pp. 9a-b.

Yongzheng deprived Yue of the title of the generalship of the campaign and ordered him to come back to the capital. The new Governor-General of Shaanxi Chalanga 查郎阿 was designated "the Generalissimo of Tranquilizing the Remoteness." Then the new deputy general Zhang Guangsi also stood forward to condemn Yue by criticising his motion to build a garrison in Mulei. Zhang argued that the place was situated between two mountains and thus was so exposed to assaults of the Zunghars that it was very risky to station a huge number of military forces in the place. Zhang also criticised Yue's other arrangements and strategies.⁷³ As a partisan of Ortai, Zhang was promoted rapidly within a few years from a lower official to a provincial viceroy. He functioned as an agent of Ortai in pulling down Yue. After Zhang's criticism of Yue's Mulei garrison project, Yongzheng ordered to call off building the garrison in Mulei and to withdraw the armies from the place. The last foothold for Yue to turn the case around was thus lost.

In late autumn, 1732, Yongzheng issued an edict requesting reports of Yue Zhongqi's malfeasance and called on former subordinates of Yue to indict him or comment on the decision of the throne. Soon Yue was dismissed from all posts he still held and jailed in the Ministry of War.⁷⁴ Meanwhile his properties in Chengdu were confiscated. The crimes of Yue were enumerated as the following by Yongzheng:

⁷³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 122, pp. 4b-5b; pp. 5b-8a.

⁷⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 124, pp. 26a-27a.

[Yue] is rough and careless in character. [He] is perfunctory in his duties, treating imperial military affairs as routine. [He] is not fair in delivering awards and punishments. [He] issued conflicting orders. [He] does not care for his soldiers. [He] does not accept good suggestions. [He] is arrogant and self-opinionated so that [he] has repeatedly missed opportunities in both defensive and offensive situations. [Under his command], the military administration of armies is in a neglected state, the morality of soldiers is minimal. Hundreds of thousands of horses and camels which have been raised through years were either stolen by the enemy or died through inadequate care. When livestock were needed, only a few were left. What [he] has reported to me before was either phony or deceptive, and it is merely his strategy to cover up his mistakes.⁷⁵

Yue was jailed in Beijing for more than four years after the emperor's edict. The Ministry of Law sentenced that he was to be executed immediately in 1733. But Yongzheng changed the sentence to imprisonment awaiting execution.⁷⁶ Yue was not released until 1737, the second year of the Qianlong reign.

Strategically, the Yongzheng campaign against the Zunghars was a failure. Since the northern route under Furdan's command had lost its combat capacity after the Khobdo fiasco, and Yue Zhongqi, the commander-in-chief of the western route, was struggling to regain the trust of the throne, without attempting to launch any aggressive operation, the Zunghars were able to cross the Altai Mountains to invade the Khalkha Mongols twice in 1731 and 1732. Although the Qing armies managed to drive the Zunghars out of Khalkha and resealed Uliasutai, it had become

⁷⁵*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 124, pp. 26a-27a.

⁷⁶Hummel, p. 958.

increasingly clear that the campaign would not bring a resolution to the Zunghar problem, especially when the Khalkha Mongols pressed the Qing throne to end the campaign which had exhausted the resources and the patience of the Khalkha Mongols.⁷⁷ Moreover, to substitute Yue with Ortai did not bring any crucial turn to the campaign. Since the summer of 1734, the Qing began talking peace. Then in the early autumn of 1734, two imperial representatives were sent to the Zunghar territory to seek a truce. Although a formal peace pact was not reached until 1739, the fourth year of the Qianlong period, the two sides had actually ceased exchanging hostilities in the later spring of 1735; and thence began to negotiate the boundary between the two empires.

As some historians point out, the Yongzheng emperor's self-opinionated personality and his overreaching manner in monitoring the campaign attributed much to the failure of his Zunghar campaign.⁷⁸ In Chinese history, there was a tradition that field commanders-in-chief was entrusted with the impassable authority in military dispositions. Due to the difficulties in long-distance communication, it was wise for emperors not to take too much charge of the military matters in the front. Nevertheless, the rulers of the Qing dynasty altered this tradition since the very beginning of the dynasty. The first two emperors of the Qing dynasty,

⁷⁷Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 292.

⁷⁸Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng Zhuan*, p. 353-357.

Shunzhi and Kangxi, were outstanding military commanders themselves. Shunzhi was in charge of the campaigns in the conquest era. The Kangxi emperor went to the front to lead two campaigns against the Russians, and three campaigns against the Zunghars. These precedents set a model for Yongzheng. Neither a warrior nor a military strategist himself, Yongzheng admitted that he could not be expected to match his father and grand-father. He would not mimic his father and went to the front himself. Instead, he invented a temporary but efficient bureau for military affairs to give him quick access to the developments at the front.

Unwittingly, this invention of Yongzheng survived the Zunghar campaign and became one of the most significant political institution of the Qing dynasty. This bureau is known as the "Junji Chu 軍機處 (the Grand Council)"⁷⁹ As historians have pointed out, the coming into being of the Grand Council was the outcome of Yongzheng's strong propensity to control his field commanders. The ups-and-downs of Yue Zhongqi during the Yongzheng era exemplified this case.

3. Demarcation of the Northwest and the Southwest

Previous Qing historians have failed to notice another significant legacy of the Yongzheng Zunghar campaigns. But

⁷⁹For a specialized and original study of the Grand Council, see Beatrice S. Bartlett, Monarchs and Ministers: the Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820.

it is meaningful for this study. Parallel to Yongzheng's dealings with the Zunghar campaign and the rise and fall of his generals at the northwestern frontline was another significant development: the demarcation of two strategically important regions, the Northwest and the Southwest, in administrative terms. The Northwest refers to mainly Shaanxi and Gansu provinces of which Xi'an was the capital. The demarcation was manifested in the separation of the Governorship-General of Shaanxi and the Governorship-General of Sichuan in the spring of 1731. On April 5, 1731, Yongzheng issued an edict to the Grand Scholars which reads:

I also think that the territory of Sichuan and Shaanxi extends thousands of *li*, really an enormous region. Now there are the affairs of managing military provisions in the west. It was difficult for one Governor-General to handle [both provinces]. There had been a Governor-General of Sichuan installed before. Now [I order to] add again a Governor-General of Sichuan. Let the current Provincial Military Commander [of Sichuan] Huang Tinggui 黄廷桂 take the position...⁸⁰

On May 22, 1731, a seal for the Governor-General of Sichuan was made.⁸¹ The former Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Yue Zhongqi became only the Governor-General of Shaanxi.

Since the early Qing, the Northwest had been one of the most important strategic strongholds for the dynasty, as it had been so during the Ming dynasty. The Northwest served both as a barrier to the capital and as a base area

⁸⁰*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 103, pp. 31a-32b.

⁸¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 105, p. 16b.

supporting all frontier operations to the north, the northwest and the west. As shown in the first chapter, Shaanxi province was among the first provinces to be conquered and to be consolidated during the prolonged Qing conquest of China. When the Wu Sangui Rebellion started, the Qing throne was again most concerned with the safety of Shaanxi, and tried to hold it under the Qing control at all costs. During Kangxi's three Zunghar campaigns, both the Northwest and the Southwest were mobilized to support the campaigns. But the Northwest shouldered many more duties due to geographical and economic advantages.

Historically, the Qing dynasty had treated the Southwest as an attachment to the Northwest in its strategic consideration.⁸² While the Qing throne was clearly conscious of the importance of the Northwest, the strategic importance of the Southwest remained rather obscure during the seventeenth century. The Southwest was, to a degree, neglected by the central authorities. This had been the case until the Kangxi emperor realized the close connections between the biggest threats towards the Qing at the end of the seventeenth century: the Zunghars on the one hand, and the Tibetan religious establishment on the other hand.

Nevertheless, the Southwest was still not able to undertake frontier responsibilities without the military

⁸²The first time in history Shaanxi and Sichuan were combined into one province was during the Yuan dynasty (1264-1368). After that, there were a number of times in which the two provinces were separated and combined again. See Tan Qixiang, "Yuan Shaanxi Sichuan Xingsheng Yanqie Kao."

assistance and leadership at the Northwest, even though the central government had begun to endeavor to build a well-equipped base area in the Southwest for frontier emergencies.⁸³ Resources in the Southwest were still not sufficient for feeding Qing armies which were stationed there. For a long period of time, Sichuan relied upon Shaanxi to furnish military provisions. Primarily due to this factor, the Qing throne had combined the Governorship-General of Shaanxi and that of Sichuan together into the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi after the campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion and had maintained this arrangement since then until the Yongzheng period. Before a Manchu garrison was set up in Chengdu in 1718, the Manchu garrison in Xi'an was also responsible for military duties in north Sichuan and Tibet.

Another explanation, perhaps a more important one, for the Qing dynasty's reluctance to separate the Governorship-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi earlier was rooted in their comprehension of the complex relations among the Tibetans, Mongols, Zunghars and the Qing. With the unfolding of the complexity of the quadruple relationship, the Qing authorities were increasingly convinced that all the relations revolved around a certain axis. As the Yongzheng emperor put it:

⁸³The author characterizes the Qing policy towards the Southwest during the late Kangxi period as a "loose-rein" policy. See Section 2 of Chapter III.

The Tibetan and the Zunghar affairs, which cannot be made a parallel to the affairs concerning the remote countries such as Vietnam and Russia, are closely attended by all the Mongol tribes, including the forty-eight Mongol banners, the Mongols in the Qinghai area, and the Khalkha Mongols. As long as the Zunghar problem is not resolved, the arrangements of the Tibetan problem would not be settled; if the disposition of Tibet cannot be appropriately made, the Mongol tribes would have suspicions and doubts. The two problems, that of Zunghar and of Tibet, are indeed potential threats to the country. The destiny of our imperial house and our people is tied with them.⁸⁴

As indicated in the previous chapters, the reason that the Tibetan issue was at the center of the problems was the common religious tie which bound the Tibetans, the Zunghars and the Mongols so closely together. Having realized the close connections in these multiple relationships, the Qing throne might see some validity in integrating the Northwest and the Southwest under one superior viceroy. During the period between the appointment of Yue Shenglong to Sichuan in 1696 and the Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717, the Qing throne's expectation of the Southwest was to reinforce the military might and to use the military installation there as backing in the Qing diplomatic intercourses with the Tibetans. The scope of the military buildup was not yet strong enough to dispatch sizable contingents to cope with possible emergencies beyond the province border.

The Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717 earmarked another turning point in the Qing's strategy towards Tibetan affairs. The Qing realized it was utterly necessary to be prepared at any moment to render direct military

⁸⁴Zhanqqu Congbian, vol. 4, the memorials of Ortai.

intervention in Tibet proper. It was not sufficient only to array military forces along the southwestern frontier while the rival of the Qing dynasty, the Zunghars, were always attempting military offensives into Tibet. The lesson learned by the Qing was that military installations in the region should not only be defensive, but offensive too. The most exemplary move prompted by this change in Qing's attitude towards the strategic position of the Southwest was the establishment of the Manchu garrison in Chengdu during the first Tibetan expedition. And, as a prelude to the separation of the Northwest and the Southwest during the Yongzheng period, there was a short-lived separation of the Governor-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi in 1718 when Nian Gengyao was appointed concurrently the Governor-General and Governor of Sichuan because the military affairs in Sichuan had multiplied with the advent of the Tibetan campaign. But this separation ended with the conclusion of the Tibetan campaign and Nian was appointed Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi in 1721.⁸⁵

Although the Manchu garrison in Chengdu foreshadowed the enhancement of the Southwest in Qing Tibetan diplomacy, there was not much time for Kangxi to do anything further in this direction. He passed away in 1722 only two years after the conclusion of the first Tibetan expedition. During the Yongzheng period, frontier emergencies occupied considerable

⁸⁵See footnote 157 of Chapter III for the evolution of the provincial administrative structure in Sichuan prior to the Yongzheng period.

attention of the ambitious emperor. Although he first attempted to retreat from where his father had gone, he in the end turned out to have gone further than his father in frontier adventures, driven by ambition and necessity--he launched the grand Zunghar campaign which lasted seven years. The frontier related tasks for the Northwest and the Southwest became so overloaded that it became necessary to separate the duties between the Northwest and the Southwest. In addition, what was interwoven with the emperor's frontier undertakings was the chronic problem of conflicts between the monarch and his satraps. The demarcation of the Northwest and the Southwest were basically circumscribed by the above two considerations.

Yongzheng's conflicts with his frontier personnel significantly influenced his decision to administratively separate the Northwest and Southwest regions. The conflicts between Yongzheng and one of the major commander-in-chiefs of the Zunghar campaign Yue Zhongqi served as one backdrop of the demarcation of the Northwest and the Southwest politically. As shown in the previous sections, Yue Zhongqi was a very important political figure of the Yongzheng period. Many political maneuvers unfolded around this politically powerful figure. His rise and fall well reflected a dilemma that was one of the characteristics of the Yongzheng politics: the emperor's frontier ambitions

belied his endeavors to maintain centralized control over all provincial authorities.

Throughout the Qing, the administrative structure of the Southwest and Northwest had changed many times. During the very early period of the Qing dynasty, the Qing had set up a Governor-General of Sichuan for a short period of time. Due to the desolate situation of the province, the Qing throne soon changed this arrangement. According to the military and the political needs, the Governorship-General of Sichuan was joined with that of Hubei, Gansu and Shaanxi province respectively until the Wu Sangui Rebellion in the 1670s to the 1680s. Since the pacification of the rebellion, the fluctuation of the post had stopped. The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi became a constant arrangement until 1731. In the late Kangxi period and the early Yongzheng period, because of the frequent military operations in the Northwest, e.g., the Tibetan expedition of 1717-1720, the preparation of another Zunghar campaign during the last years of the Kangxi reign, the suppression of the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebelliion, the position of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi was greatly enhanced. The official who was in this position during the early Yongzheng period was Nian Gengyao. As suggested in the previous section, Nian's unusual relationship with the Yongzheng emperor led to his peerless influence in the early years of the Yongzheng period. After the fall of Nian, the

throne appointed Yue Zhongqi to the position of Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. Perhaps the emperor was taught by the case of Nian, he soon separated the position in 1726 and let Yue be only the Governor-General of Sichuan. But the tense situation at the frontier did not allow him to persist in this change. He had to change back and let Yue Zhongqi retake the post of Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi in the same year. Moreover, Yongzheng ordered Yue to act as the Governor of Xi'an a couple of months later.

The continuous strained situation in the northwestern frontier and the unrest in Tibet rendered the position of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi enormously important. Yue Zhongqi's influence was accordingly enhanced. Additionally, the other members of the Yue family were also appointed to the important positions about the same time. In 1728, Yue's uncle, the younger brother of Yue Shenglong, Yue Chaolong, was appointed acting Commander-in-chief of Huguang.⁸⁶ And about a year earlier, Yue Zhongqi's eldest son, Yue Jun, was appointed the Governor of Shandong. Therefore, by the middle of the Yongzheng period, Yue's family had an immense area of China under its direct command: Sichuan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Hubei, Hunan, and Shandong. It was not surprising that the anti-Qing scholar Zeng Jing chose Yue Zhongqi as the agent of his anti-Qing

⁸⁶Yue Chaolong was a Brigade Commander in Sichuan during the late Kangxi period. In 1722, he was transferred to Qinghai because his nephew Yue Zhongqi was promoted to Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. See Wei Xiumei, *"Qingdai Renguan zhi Qinzu Huibi Zhidu."*

course. Being renowned for his suspicious nature, the Yongzheng emperor was not quite at ease with the expansion of the Yue family's influence. Moreover, a rumor circulated in society that Yue was the descendant of Yue Fei, a Chinese hero who fought relentlessly against the Jin dynasty, the progenitor of the Qing dynasty, was very irritating for the Qing ruler. The only reason that convinced the Yongzheng emperor to maintain the status quo was probably that he was in dire need of Yue's support to fulfil his ambition to resolve the thorny Zunghar problem. Nevertheless, after the fiasco in Kuoshetu, Yongzheng began to realize that his overconfidence about the Zunghar expedition and Yue Zhongqi's military talents might be a mistake. It was from that time on that he began to villainize Yue. The change of the attitude of the Yongzheng paved the way for the separation of Governorship-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi. From the perspective of the throne, this measure would partly serve the purpose of impairing the influence of Yue Zhongqi. The 1731 decree of the separation was actually a presage of the eventual downfall of Yue. Having considered that Yue's domicile was in Sichuan, the emperor deprived Yue of governance over his own home province first.

Another consideration behind Yongzheng's decision to separate Sichuan and Shaanxi was more practical. As the emperor stated in the edict, he thought that it would be very difficult for one Governor-General to oversee all the

affairs of the two provinces, which had become more and more overloaded and complex since the second Tibetan expedition in 1727 and the start of the Zunghar campaign in 1729. About half-a-year after the edict was issued, Yongzheng again reiterated his reason for separating Shaanxi and Sichuan on another occasion by emphasizing the military affairs in western Sichuan. He said: "Considering that the territory of Sichuan is so enormous, and the military and civilians are mixed-up with the Tibetans and the Miaos, and, in particular, the military affairs going on in the western border area [of Sichuan], one Governor-General of Shaanxi [would find it] difficult to control. Therefore, Governor-General of Sichuan was installed for these reasons."⁸⁷ The so-called "military affairs in the western border area" referred to the Qing dealings with the Tibetans. After the peace was restored in Tibet in 1728, the Qing throne decided to put the seventh Dalai Lama under the direct protection of the Qing forces. Therefore, the Dalai Lama was sent to Litang, western Sichuan to reside. With the coming of the Dalai Lama to Sichuan, the province's responsibilities in the Qing frontier affairs were greatly augmented. The province not only had to increase its military forces to safeguard the Dalai Lama's residency, but also had to provide all the expenses the Dalai Lama needed for daily

⁸⁷Shizong Shilu, vol. 110, pp. 23a-b.

expenditures and performance of religious and diplomatic rituals.

To provide a stately residency for the Dalai Lama, the Qing state allocated hundreds of thousands of taels of silver from the state excheques to build a magnificent monastery in Gada 噶達 (Kata or mGar-t'ar, as transliterated from Tibetan), west of Dajianlu. Yongzheng gave the name of the monastery "Huiyuan 惠遠" which means to benefit the remoteness. According to an inscription on the monastery, written by Yongzheng himself, the Qing throne intended to keep the Dalai Lama in the new monastery permanently.⁸⁸ The scale of the monastery was extremely grand. It was an emulation of a famous lamaist monastery in Tibet with more than one thousand rooms in the main storied palace building and single-storey houses of four hundred rooms.⁸⁹ Possibly those single-storey houses were the barracks of the two thousand Qing soldiers who were on duty to safeguard the Dalai Lama.

The relationship between the Qing and Tibet in the post-1727 rebellion period was undergoing another transition. The Qing throne restored the Kangxi policy of putting direct control on the Tibetans by stationing sizeable troops in Tibet. The Qing had a more direct

⁸⁸Yongzheng stated the reason to have the Dalai Lama live in Gada: "There is the Panchen Eerdeni in Tibet. But the barbarian peoples in the border areas, are far from Tibet, all have desires to be converted to the great teaching of Buddhism." Sichuan Tongzhi, vol. 13, pp. 8a-10a.

⁸⁹ibid.

intervention into Tibetan affairs by stationing armies and the special commissioners in Tibet. Over a period of time, the pro-Qing stance of the new Tibetan leader Poluonai won the trust of the Qing throne. His power and prestige began to be established among Tibetan society. By 1729, the political situation in Tibet was stable enough for the return of the Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, the advent of the Qing campaign against the Zunghars once again intensified the atmosphere in Lhasa. It was well justified then for the Qing dynasty to keep the Dalai Lama in Sichuan for a longer time.

Traditionally, the Tibetan affairs were overseen by the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. The residence of the Dalai Lama in Sichuan, however, considerably compounded this responsibility of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. It was during the course of the Zunghar campaign that the Qing throne realized that there were considerably heavy tasks to take over the defense of Tibet and the protection of the Dalai Lama, and that it might be too much for Shaanxi province to continue to share these tasks while undertaking most duties of the Zunghar campaign in the Northwest. The time had come that a demarcation should be made between the frontier responsibilities of the Northwest and those of Tibetan affairs.

In March, 1731, the throne ruled that since Shaanxi military forces had so much to do with the Zunghar campaign,

they no longer had the responsibility to send soldiers to Tibet, and that Sichuan alone would undertake the responsibility to send two thousand armies to Tibet to carry out garrison duty and to exchange them periodically.⁹⁰ About a half month later, the Yongzheng emperor issued the edict to separate the Governorship-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi. These two decisions of the Qing central government were not coincidences. They together marked a strategic transformation in Qing frontier politics. Although the Qing throne still adhered to the conviction that the Tibetan affairs were closely related with the Zunghar problem and the stabilities of the Mongol tribes, the multiplication of the Tibetan responsibilities and the protraction of the Zunghar campaign forced the Qing to designate another region to take on the Tibetan affairs exclusively.⁹¹ Meanwhile, the province of Sichuan was also discharged from the duty of supplying personnel to the Zunghar campaign. Although occasionally the military forces stationed in northern Sichuan were still on call to reinforce the defense in Qinghai, on the whole, the military force in the Southwest became exclusively focusd on Tibetan affairs.

⁹⁰Shizong Shilu, vol. 103, pp. 8a-b.

⁹¹But the emperor did not exclusively appoint officials from the Southwest to positions in Tibet. In 1732, a general from Hunan province was appointed commander of the military stationed in Tibet. Shizong Shilu, vo. 117, p. 5b. In the 1730s, Zhou Qifeng 周起鳳, a veteran general in the Northwest, was appointed Regional Commander of Shaanxi and Xining to lead soldiers from Sichuan to Tibet. It gradually became a practice during the Qianlong period that most officials appointed to Tibet were from the Southwest. See Section 1 and 3 Chapter V and Section 2 of Chapter VI.

In the autumn of 1731, after both the Qing western and the northern routes of the expedition suffered deadly blows from the Zunghars, Galdan Tsering claimed that the Zunghars were to send the son of Lajang Khan, Suerza (Surya) 蘇爾雜, who was captured by the Zunghars during the Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717, back to Tibet and to enthrone him as the king of Tibet. He also said that five thousand Zunghar soldiers would escort Suerza to Tibet. Both the Tibetan authorities and the Qing throne were alarmed at this move of the Zunghars. In 1717 when the Zunghars invaded Tibet, they also first proclaimed that they would send another son of Lajang Khan, who was married to the daughter of Tsewang Rabtan back to Tibet. Upon being informed the Tsering's claim, the Qing throne firmly rebutted the Zunghar claim, and immediately ordered the Qing armies stationed in Tibet to be on alert and had one thousand Qing soldiers stationed in Shamuduo 叉木多, Tibet go to Lhasa speedily.⁹² In late 1731, Poluonai requested that the Qing authorities give him a seal. The Ministry of Rites issued a seal to him which reads: "Duoluo Beile 多羅貝勒 who administers the affairs of the Kaloons in Nearer Tibet and Further Tibet".⁹³ It signified that Poluonai was recognized *de facto* Tibet paramount leader by the Qing dynasty. Thus the Qing showed the Zunghars their strong backing of Poluonai. In order not to cause any confusion, the Qing continued keeping the Dalai

⁹²Shizong Shilu, vol. 109, pp. 15b-17a.

⁹³Shizong Shilu, vol. 112, pp. 26b-27a.

Lama in Sichuan. But upon knowing of the Zunghar attempt on Tibet in the autumn of 1731, the Qing government moved the Dalai Lama from his residency in Litang to the newly completed Huiyuan monastery in Gada, west of Dajianlu.⁹⁴ And the emperor changed the place name into Taining 泰寧, which means "peace and tranquillity". Three brigades (about 1,500 soldiers) were specially recruited to safeguard the Lamaist patriarch at Taining. The seventh Dalai Lama did not return to Lhasa until 1735 when a détente was reached between the Qing dynasty and the Zunghars after seven years of strenuous campaign.

It was during this period that the province of Sichuan accomplished a transition from a region which had long been regarded as a backwater, of China proper to a frontier stronghold. The transition was first conceived when the Kangxi emperor heard of the plot of Sanggye to conceal the death of the fifth Dalai Lama for fifteen years. And it started when the Kangxi appointed his hand-picked general Yue Shenglong to Sichuan as the chief military commander of the province. During the first Qing Tibetan expedition, the establishment of the Manchu garrison in Chengdu marked the acceleration of the process. Then during the Yongzheng period, the intensification of the frontier emergencies in Tibet and the Qing decision to separate the Northwest and

⁹⁴But the seventh Dalai Lama complained that the monastery was poorly constructed, facilities being simple and supplies being scant.

the Southwest in their frontier responsibilities eventually completed the transition.⁹⁵

The military buildup in Sichuan had been underway since the Zunghar invasion of Tibet in 1717. During this period, the renewed emergency in Tibet just intensified this process. After Nian Gengyao and Yue Zhongqi tranquilized the revolts in Qinghai, Nian submitted an important memorial to the throne expounding thirteen measures to consolidate the Qing conquest of Qinghai and the borderland along Tibet. Nian proposed to further reinforce the Qing garrisons in the Dajianlu area and west of Dajianlu. Although Nian was purged one year after the triumph of the Qinghai campaign, the many efforts he made concerning frontier construction survived his demise. The era of Yue Zhongqi witnessed a further militarization in Sichuan due to the second Tibetan expedition and the residency of the Dalai Lama in Sichuan.

Along with Sichuan's rise as a frontier stronghold and the administrative separation of Sichuan and Shaanxi, another corresponding development was the strategic integration of the three provinces in the Southwest,

⁹⁵After the Qianlong emperor was enthroned in 1735, he once again restored the office of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, abolishing the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan. The Governor-General of Sichuan of that time, Huang Tinggui, was demoted to Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. For Qianlong's rationale of restoration of the old system, see Section 1 of Chapter V. However, this temporary restoration did not nullify the separation of the two strategic regions. In 1749, during the first Jinchuan campaign and on the eve of another political upheaval in Tibet, Qianlong had to change back to the Yongzheng disposition, restoring the Governor-General of Sichuan, thus finalizing the transformation in administrative terms.

Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou. In particular, Sichuan and Yunnan were more closely linked by their direct military responsibilities to Tibet. During the second Qing expedition to Tibet, as in the first time, some thousands of Qing troops were sent from Yunnan to Tibet. After the Qing forces put Poluonai in power and order was restored, the Yunnan armies were ordered stationed in Shamuduo.⁹⁶ This branch of the Qing army was on call to reinforce the Qing garrison in Lhasa whenever there was a need. One such occasion was when Galdan Tsering proclaimed he would send the son of Lajang Khan back to Tibet in the autumn of 1731. Strategically, these two provinces were functioning together. Moreover, Yunnan and Guizhou were customarily placed under one Governor-General due to the geographical convenience and some similar characteristics commonly shared by both the provinces. Therefore, Guizhou was also aligned in the strategic district of the Southwest. During the later Kangxi period, the integration of the three provinces in the Southwest was already underway. The process was accelerated during the Yongzheng period. It was in the early Yongzheng

⁹⁶Shamuduo is called Changdu 昌都 today. The town started sprawling actually since the Qing garrison was stationed in Shamuduo. This town's connections with Yunnan and Sichuan are visible. The following account was written by a group of young scholars of diverse ethnic backgrounds from Yunnan in the early 1990s: "Street scene in Changdu interests us most. It is possibly true that all groceries and restaurants are owned by the Sichuanese. There are bridges called "Yunnan Bridge" and "Sichuan Bridge" in Changdu -- they are the evidence of the connections between Changdu and the two provinces. There are craftsmen of Bai ethnicity from Dali 大理, Heqing 鹤庆 [Yunnan], forging Tibetan knives in Changdu. The other business people are almost all from Sichuan." Mu Jihong et al, *Dian, Zang, Chuan "Da Sanjiao" Wenhua Tan Mi*, p. 179.

time, soon after the emperor realized his mistake to have retreated to a defensive stance in the northwestern and the western frontiers, i.e., calling off the Zunghar campaign and withdrawing the Qing armies from Tibet, he began to endeavor in reinforcing the Qing governance in the Southwest.

In the first year of the Yongzheng reign (1723), the new emperor appointed an official with a rather inferior rank from the Imperial Household Department to Yunnan as deputy examination commissioner. This official was Ortai 鄂爾泰 (1680-1745), a Manchu in his forties, who had developed a very unusual and extremely intimate relationship with the emperor, becoming one of the foremost architects of Yongzheng politics.⁹⁷ His tenure as examination commissioner was very short. But this appointment of 1723 was the beginning of Ortai's long time bonds to the Southwest where he later served as Governor-General for six years during Yongzheng's reign. After this first appointment, Ortai was soon promoted to the Provincial Administration Commissioner of Jiangsu in the same year. Then in 1725, he was appointed Governor of Guangxi. While Ortai was en route to Guangxi,

⁹⁷Ortai was from the Manchu Bordered Blue Banner. After he obtained a degree of Provincial Graduate, i.e., *juren*, and got a position in Imperial Household Department, he had not gained further advancement in his official career. About the close relationship between Yongzheng and Ortai, see Kent Clarke Smith, "Ch'ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China: Aspects of Ortai's Governor-Generalship, 1726-1731;" Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng Zhuan*, pp.476-481. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 288, *Qing Shi Lie Zhuang*, pp. 208-209, Hummel, pp. 601-603.

the Yongzheng changed the appointment to Governor of Yunnan. Strangely enough, the throne did not have him perform the duties of the Governor of Yunnan, but those of the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou. Meanwhile, the current Governor of Yunnan Yang Mingshi 楊名時 was appointed to Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, but took charge of only the duties of the Governor of Yunnan.⁹⁸ These unusual arrangements only served as a passage for Ortai to take the post of Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou formally. Since Ortai was only a very low-ranking official in the beginning of the Yongzheng period, the emperor was a bit cautious not to invite criticism by promoting his intimate too rapidly.

Ortai was formally appointed the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou in the following year, 1726. It is highly illuminating that the emperor appointed one of his most trusted officials to the Southwest: it signified that the imperial attention towards the Southwest had been greatly enhanced. Soon after Ortai's taking full charge of the position of Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, he initiated a sweeping campaign in the Southwest to incorporate the areas under the rule of the local chieftains of the aboriginal peoples into the regular Qing administrative system. That is the so-called movement of "gai tu gui liu 改土歸流 (integrating local chieftains into

⁹⁸Shizong Shilu, vol. 37, pp. 14a-b.

the regular official system⁹⁹). In the following years, the campaign to integrate the minorities' domains into the centralized administrative system was carried out in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Guangxi and Hunan provinces. It is beyond the scope of this study to give an overreaching account and assessment of the movement per se.¹⁰⁰ What should be emphasized is that the grand background of the Qing diplomatic circumstances in the Yongzheng era should be taken into consideration when a study of the movement is made. In a dissertation on the governorship-general of Ortai in the Southwest, Kent C. Smith correctly lists the Qing military involvement in Central Asia and Tibet as the number one reason for the throne to endorse the revision of the administrative map in the border area between Sichuan and Yunnan province. He points out the Yongzheng's campaign in the Northwest and Tibet had enhanced the strategic

⁹⁹There are two meanings to *gai tu gui liu*. One is to abolish local chieftains and to appoint regular officials to areas of the local chieftains. Another meaning is to confer Qing titles or ranks to the existing local chieftains, putting them on the lowest rungs of the Qing bureaucratic ladders, responsible for collecting symbolic taxes and keeping order among the local communities. The latter method was more commonly adopted during the Yongzheng period. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate *gai tu gui liu* into "integrating local chieftains into the regular official system."

¹⁰⁰For the study of the movement of "integrating local chieftains into the regular official system," see Smith "Ch'ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China: Aspects of Ortai's Governor-Generalship, 1726-1731;" John Herman, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650-1750;" Claudine Lombard-Salmon, Un exemple d'acculturation chinoise: la province du Gui Zhou au XVIII^e siècle, pp. 211-228; Wei Yuan, Sheng Wu Ji, vol. 7; Wu Xinfu and Long Boya, Miao Zu Shi, pp. 323-340; and Ma Yao, Yunnan Jian Shi, pp. 166-170.

importance of the Southwest.¹⁰¹ He is absolutely right. By the same token, the rationale underlining Yongzheng's endorsement of the reform was not an ideological belief to convert the ununified peoples in the border areas of the empire. The overwhelming concern of the Yongzheng emperor was more strategic, instead of ideological. Another factor which enhanced the importance of Yunnan province was the serious problem of copper scarcity faced by the nation due to the decline of copper imports from Japan. The rich deposit of copper in Yunnan thus lured the Qing authorities to pay more attention to the remote region.¹⁰²

As far as this study is concerned, the appointment of Ortai to the Southwest had two political implications. First, it was a significant move for Yongzheng to strengthen the Southwest frontier in order to make the region more compatible with its new orientation. So in a broader sense the appointment of Ortai to the Southwest can be seen as part of the Qing strategy of coping with the Zunghar and Tibetan affairs. The importance of the Southwest had gained increasing imperial attention during the Kangxi period,

¹⁰¹Smith, p. 117-118. To elaborate his point, Smith says: "In others where the Ch'ing was only beginning to secure communication routes and military bases, the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng emperors conferred the status of Native Authority upon local tribal leaders in order to provide a buffer against Dzungar and Tibetan incursions. Thus the Tibetan and Central Asian campaigns gave impetus to much reorganization of the territory lying along the Yunnan-Szechwan border, especially to revision of the relationships between tribal chieftains and Imperial officialdom there." pp. 118-119.

¹⁰²Smith; Helen Dunstan, "Safely Supping with the Devil: The Qing State and Its Merchant Suppliers of Copper."

especially when Yunnan was serving as another base area for military actions in Tibet by at the end of the Kangxi period. When the Yongzheng became the new ruler of the dynasty, the pressure of frontier emergencies forced him abandon his father's "loose rein" policy towards the Southwest, adopting some more active measures to reinforce the Qing governance in the region. Yongzheng had a different philosophy regarding stability. Unlike the Kangxi emperor, he did not confine himself within the limits of stability. Rather, he was not afraid of taking action when it became necessary.¹⁰³

Ortai was the best person who understood the Yongzheng's political aspirations and managed to realize them in whatever way he held necessary. After Ortai arrived in Yunnan, he soon realized that the problem of the local chieftains was a great hindrance to the achievement of stability and consolidation in the Southwest, it handicapped the administration. Therefore, Ortai convinced Yongzheng to embark on this risk-taking reform to curb the problem. The undertaking of Ortai in reforming the local chieftain system constituted a significant part of his political attainments in the Southwest. Along with the line to consolidate the

¹⁰³Yongzheng said: "It is close to procrastination to have no action, but it is close to provocation to be active. Nevertheless, they are still different in between, though they seem to be similar to each other. One should not be too active in a time of no emergency; but should not procrastinate on the occasion of emergency. The key is to examine the situation and to act to comply with certain opportunity. This is the only way that works effectively." *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 23, p. 26.

southwestern frontier, Ortai was engaged in many other projects such as reforming the administrative structure, reinforcing the military buildup, storing grain, initiating water projects and promoting education in the two provinces. Throughout Ortai's seven-year governance, the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou had gained much strength in terms of military forces and penetration of Qing administrative control. According to Qing records, dozens of official posts were added during these six years and thousands more soldiers were installed in the two provinces.¹⁰⁴

Ortai was favored and trusted by the emperor to an extraordinary extent during the entire Yongzheng period. As a shrewd statesman, he knew well his missions. Besides consolidating the Southwest, Ortai kept close touch with the emperor, providing suggestions and functioning as a propagandist for the emperor. He often reported auspicious omens which appeared in the Southwest to the throne. The reaction of the emperor to the omen reports from Ortai was always more enthusiastic and positive than to similar reports from other officials. To show his appreciation of the loyalty and the tacit understanding of his intimate, Yongzheng would always attribute the auspicious omens to Ortai's merits and virtues. Ortai was awarded and promoted in rank a number of times.¹⁰⁵ In 1728, the emperor also

¹⁰⁴Feng Erkang, p. 340.

¹⁰⁵In 1732, Ortai was entitled the "Grand Academician of Hall for the Preservation of Harmony," and concurrently Minister of the Ministry of War (*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 114, p. 12a).

designated Guangxi province under Ortai's jurisdiction. He appointed Ortai the Governor-General of Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi. Apparently, the emperor intended that the political strongman wield his wand into the province of Guangxi that was also plagued with the problems of untamed ethnic peoples and the impotence of the local authorities.¹⁰⁶ To act upon the emperor's expectation, Ortai did endeavor to strengthen the military lineup in Guangxi and took forceful measures to yoke the minorities there.

Another political implication of the appointment of Ortai to the Southwest was presumably a counterbalance to the rising political influence of another upstart in the Southwest as well as the Northwest, Yue Zhongqi. As discussed earlier, Yongzheng's commitment of the military commandship to Yue was more out of the demands of the frontier affairs rather than trust. It was three months after Yue became the acting Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi that Ortai's appointment was changed from the Governor of Guangxi to the Governor of Yunnan. Soon after Yue Zhongqi was appointed concurrently the Governor of Xian while being Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, the throne ordered Ortai to take the post of Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou officially. During the campaigns of subjugating the indigenous peoples to the Qing authorities, Ortai and Yue Zhongqi had cooperated in a few battles

¹⁰⁶Shizong Shilu, vol. 74, pp. 10b-11a.

against the ethnic peoples who resisted such changes in the border areas between Sichuan and Guizhou. Although their cooperation had been efficient in terms of the military operation, there had been clues suggesting some discord between the two.¹⁰⁷ It was even probable that Ortai had kept informing on his neighbor satrap to the emperor.

While Yue Zhongqi was losing the favor of the emperor and becoming the victim of imperial politics, Ortai was on the steady rise. In the early autumn of 1731, Ortai was ordered for the first time to leave his post and to go to the capital for a new assignment. This was the very time Yue was doomed to a fall from power, waiting for the final words from the throne. Having arrived in the capital, Ortai was entitled the inheritable first rank of Earl in early 1732 for his merit of expanding the imperial system to the Miao region of Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi provinces. Soon after this, Ortai was ordered to act as the Commander-in-chief of the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. In March, 1732, Ortai rendered Yue a fatal blow. He charged Yue, in harsh terms, of his malfeasances as the commander-in-chief of the expedition, and demanded that Yue was given a conge as the commander-in-chief. As already shown in the previous section, Yue was soon taken into imprisonment and sent to the capital. The final chapter of the Zunghar campaign was conducted under the supervision of Ortai who was sent to the

¹⁰⁷Smith, pp. 120-143.

northwestern front to oversee the campaign in the summer of 1732, along with another rising star from the Southwest: Zhang Guangsi.

It was an interesting development that by the end of the Yongzheng period, Ortai tended to take over the sphere of influence of the former super military strongman Yue Zhongqi. Ortai's subordinates in Yunnan and Guizhou were evidently given more rapid and unconventional promotions. Zhang Guangsi's rapid promotion to the governorship and his transfer from the Southwest to the Northwest to be the deputy commander-in-chief of the Zunghar expedition is one example. He was soon promoted to Commander-in-chief of the Han Plain Red Banner after transferring to the Northwest. Another case is Ha Yuansheng 哈元生, the Provincial Military Commander of Guizhou province. With Ortai's recommendation, Ha gained the imperial attention. In the late summer of 1732, the emperor ordered Ha to go to the capital for an imperial audience, and let him bring four to five officers from the province with him to the capital for some special awards or promotions.

While more officials from Yunnan and Guizhou became prominent on the bureaucratic echelon, the throne also tried to diminish the remaining influence of Yue Zhongqi in Sichuan. In autumn 1731, Yongzheng issued an edict to the Grand Secretariat which said that there was a dearth of talented generals in Sichuan and that the neighboring

provincenced should select some able military officials to send to the new Governor-General Huang Tinggui for him to appoint.¹⁰⁸ In early 1732, before Yue was put in prison, the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Ji Chengbin 紀成斌 was dismissed under the pretext of his dereliction of duty in the fiasco of Kuoshetu. Ji was actually recommended to this position by Yue when the former Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Huang Tinggui became the Governor-General of Sichuan in 1731. Then another western frontier veteran Yan Qingru 顏清如¹⁰⁹ was appointed to the position. But Yan had been serving duty at the front of the Zunghar campaign. So military power was still in the hands of Huang. As Kangxi picked Yue Shenglong from the vicinity of the capital to the position of the Commander-in-chief of Sichuan, Huang was also transferred from a similar position: the Regional Commander of Xuanhua 宣化, Zhili province.

¹⁰⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 108, p. 36b.

¹⁰⁹Yan was a native of Chengdu. He participated in the first military conflict between the Qing and the Tibetans in Dajianlu in 1701. He joined the first Tibetan expedition in 1720. During the Yongzheng period, he participated in the campaign pacifying the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion under Yue Zhongqi. He was in Lhasa when the coup of 1727 occurred. It was said that Yan stopped Puluonai from killing the rebels indiscriminately and persuaded him to wait for the Qing armies to dispose of the rebels. After the pacification of the coup, Yan was promoted to Regional Vice-Commander. Not long after that he was promoted to Regional Commander of Yansui Zhen 延綏鎮. He then joined the Zunghar expedition. He did not return from the frontline until 1737 despite his appointment as the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. After he returned, he was transferred to Provincial Military Commander of Huguang. But he requested to retire. So he lived in Chengdu thence for more than twenty years until he died in his eighties *Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 153. Yan's life exemplifies the tense military situations in the Southwest and the Northwest during the early eighteenth century. He was another person with Sichuanese domicile to be appointed Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan.

Before Huang, there had been five turnovers in the position within a three-year period. After Huang was appointed in 1727, he held the post for a relatively long period of time. Even after he was designated the new Governor-General of Sichuan, he still took care of the duties of the office until the Qianlong period. Although there is no evidence to support a presumption that Huang's appointment to Sichuan was another counterbalance to the power of Yue Zhongqi, it is apparent that the throne felt that he was the right person for this crucial position. In the beginning of 1733, the throne appointed Ortai's nephew, Echang 鄂昌, as Governor of Sichuan. But Echang proved a disappointment to the throne. He was dismissed only one year later.¹¹⁰

Throughout the Yongzheng period, the Southwest stood as one of the most important strategic regions. The Qing dynamics of the personnel buildup in the region well reflected the critical position of the region in national politics. Corresponding to the demarcation of the Southwest and the Northwest, the three southwestern provinces became increasingly integrated in strategic terms. The common responsibility to support the Qing's undertaking in Tibet tied Sichuan and Yunnan closely together. And the traditional ties between Yunnan and Guizhou therefore included the latter into this coalition. Judging from the

¹¹⁰According to the edict, Echang had many malfeasance while being the Governor of Sichuan, and he was supercilious and indulged himself in drinking so that he was fatuous and muddleheaded (*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 156, pp. 5b-6b).

personnel buildup in the region during this period, it is fair to assert that the Qing throne had devoted the uppermost manpower to the region. This was a new trend of the Yongzheng period. After Ortai left the Southwest, the two succeeding Governors-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, Gao Qizhuo and Yinjishan 尹繼善, were both transferred from another important post: the Governor-General of Jiangnan. They were both regarded as first-rate provincial officials. Gao had actually served in the position before Ortai's taking over.

The demarcation of the Southwest and the Northwest was one of the significant legacies of the Yongzheng era. It was a product of the Yongzheng frontier activism. It shows that the position of the Southwest in the Qing frontier enterprise was clearly defined. Along with this strategic transformation, Yongzheng also strengthened the Qing's governance in Yunnan and Guizhou. Through all these endeavors, the three provinces of the Southwest began to integrate together in strategic terms.

4. Formation of A Frontier Economic Zone

The domination of the military in the Southwest was a *fait accompli* by the Yongzheng period. If this trend was overlooked in some way by the central authorities in most of the Kangxi period, it became well recognized during the Yongzheng period. After the Wu Sangui Rebellion in the 1670s

and the 1680s, the Kangxi emperor had been very careful in yoking the power of the provincial viceroys in the Southwest. But the emergence of the frontier crises since the middle of the Kangxi period negated the Kangxi's efforts. With the ascendance of Tibetan affairs in Qing diplomacy, an upsurge of military buildup in the Southwest became an inevitable reality. More particularly, after the first Tibetan expedition of 1718-20 and the second Tibetan expedition of 1727-28, it became very obvious that the Southwest should serve as a military base area to prepare for any potential emergency in Tibet. This development rendered significant impact upon the other developments in the Southwest, helping shape many characteristics of the economic and social life in this region.

Nevertheless, when Yongzheng was first enthroned in 1722, he did not intend to allow the trend to continue growing without any restraint. What the new emperor wanted to do was the opposite: he attempted to rectify a number of policies of his father's so that the central power would not attenuate with the increased of the distance to the capital. Among the policies he attempted to rectify, the two most important were the reform of the financial administration and the limit of the military expenditures to a controlable amount. These two policies were actually connected. As is well known, the Kangxi emperor was renowned for his inclination to grant remissions of revenue duties. To be

sure, the economic booms since the middle of the Kangxi reign enabled the Kangxi to endure various expensive projects, such as the water projects in the Southeast and many a military expedition in the frontiers while frequently exempting or reducing taxes in various regions. The generosity of the emperor, however, had been abused, especially during the last years of the Kangxi reign. When Yongzheng took the reins of the government, he found that the government deficit was fairly high. The amount of arrears had reached 2.5 million taels of silver.¹¹¹ Blaming his father's excessive leniency, Yongzheng was determined to embark on straightening out the financial chaos.¹¹² In Jiangnan and Zhejiang where the arrears accumulated in the last decade of the Kangxi period were prodigious, the throne adopted rather harsh measures to pursue the payment of the arrears. The local officials even put thousands of people, among whom many were gentry, who were not able to pay off the arrears, into jail. The campaign to recover the arrears in other provinces, such as Shandong and Hubei, was also carried out with great momentum in the first half of the Yongzheng period.¹¹³

The Southwest was entirely a different case. Tax arrears were not a problem due to the extremely light tax obligations in the Southwest. Instead, the fiscal focus of

¹¹¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 100, p. 16b.

¹¹²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 2, pp. 24b-26a; vol. 26, pp. 13a-14b.

¹¹³Feng Erkang, pp. 180-183.

the new emperor in the Southwest was to regulate military expenditures. In so doing, the Yongzheng emperor tried not to follow his father's footsteps which showed partiality between civil and military officials. He wanted to be more harsh and less lenient towards the military.¹¹⁴ Another aim which was insinuated by the efforts to limit military expenditures in the Southwest was to trim down the power of the military officials in the region.

In the first year of the Yongzheng reign, the new emperor issued an edict to the Ministry of Personnel, the Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry of War. The edict enjoined that the military expenditures of all provinces be fixed.¹¹⁵ Thus there would be less chance for the provincial military commanders to propose unreasonable increases in order to benefit their own pockets. The emperor also admonished the Manchu military professionals not to indulge themselves in an extravagant lifestyle and made it clear that the state would not increase the budget to feed the Manchu soldiers.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Yongzheng ordered the officials to go to the Ministry of Revenue to investigate the state loan to soldiers.¹¹⁷ As for the Southwest where the military had enjoyed some exceptional privileges since

¹¹⁴One example is that Yongzheng urged the provincial officials in the Northwest to submit the accounts of military expenditures to the central government. This was not the case during the Kangxi period (*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 9a-b).

¹¹⁵*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 19b-20a.

¹¹⁶*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 20b-21a.

¹¹⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 6, pp. 26a-b.

the later Kangxi reign, Yongzheng also liked to show his toughness.

In the early fall of 1723, the new emperor issued an edict to the Ministry of War with regard to forbidding high ranking military officials, e.g., Provincial Military Commander, Regional Commander, and Regional Vice-Commander, from procuring estates and settling down in the place where they had served their terms. But the edict ruled that military officials below the rank of Assistant Regional Commander would not be restrained by the regulation because Yongzheng thought that they "are all lower officials. Even though they possess some estates in their duty area, they should be insignificant in amount. If they are all enjoined to return home (after their tenure is over) regardless of their respective situations, they could run into hardships."¹¹⁸ Then the Ministry of War legislated that military officials below the rank of Assistant Regional Commander be allowed to own property in their service places, and that they or their families be allowed to settle down in their service places and to change their domiciles when their service was terminated due to retirement, dismissal or death, and that they pay taxes as native people once they registered to be residents with the local officials.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 10, pp. 6b-7a.

¹¹⁹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 10, pp. 6b-7a.

This measure was of great significance. It revealed that by the late Kangxi reign it had been a commonplace for military officials to pursue fortune and settle down in their service places. According to the observation of this study, the phenomenon should be par excellence in the Southwest. Therefore, this measure, taken in the beginning of the Yongzheng period, was one of his new policies aimed at rectifying his father's excessive leniency towards the military, especially high officers in the Southwest. Nevertheless, with lower military officials being allowed rights of owning property and changing domicile, it can be imagined that the high officers would figure ways to invalidate the law in any case, and an anticipated surge in pursuing property and changing domiciles would follow the enactment of the law. This compromise reflected the difficulties facing Yongzheng in implementing his new politics.

Another related development is that Yongzheng was more aggressive than Kangxi in controlling the appointment of local civilian officials. During this period, the turnover rates of both civil and military officials were much higher than in previous periods. As in previous periods, for civil officials, appointments to the Southwest were still not welcome ones. In the early years of the Yongzheng reign, the ambitious emperor envisioned rectifying his father's tolerant attitude towards the appointments in the border

provinces which allowed provincial officials to manage to fill vacancies with officials serving in the local province and not counting upon the appointees sent by the central government. Yongzheng knew that it was a convenient way for Governors-General, Governors and Provincial Military Commanders of the border provinces to promote and appoint their own people and that the system had been abused to an extensive degree during the course of the Kangxi period. In 1724, the new emperor abruptly rebuffed a request from the Governor of Guizhou that local officials in the poor and the remote areas of the province be recommended by the provincial viceroy or the commander-in-chief for promotion within three years. Then Yongzheng alluded to his courtiers to work out a solution to substitute for this practice. The result was rather ironic: after each national civil service examination, the examinees who failed to pass the examination would procure an opportunity to serve a sort of internship in the Southwest. If they performed well in the period of internship, they could get formal offices in that province with the recommendation of the provincial officials. These people, however, were free to retake the national civil service examination if they wanted.¹²⁰ Effective or not, this measure served the throne in his attempt to take back the right of appointment in the frontier provinces.

¹²⁰Shizong Shilu, vol. 22, pp. 7a-b.

Yongzheng's efforts to check the military were soon offset by the new emergencies in the West and the Southwest. The Yongzheng emperor swiftly changed his retreat after Lobdzan Dandzin rebelled in Qinghai in his first year of rule, resuming a power-based diplomacy towards the frontier contenders. However, he was still reluctant to alter his resolution to confine the power of the military. As was always the case, military operations inevitably led to the ascendancy of the chief military commanders at the front. The more uncertain the frontier was, the more important the military officials of the border area became. Nevertheless, with the unfolding of the Qinghai campaign, the second Tibetan campaign, the Zunghar campaign and the numerous military operations in the Southwest to implement the reform of "integrating the local chieftain into the regular official system", the emperor had to give away his determination step by step.

By the end of the fifth year of the Yongzheng reign, most of Yongzheng's attempts at rectifying his father's lenient attitude towards the military had been shattered by the frequent frontier expeditions. Not only was he forced to continue his father's practice of bestowing heavy rewards of cash to military personnel, but he also compromised many principles which he had tried to establish since the beginning of his reign. In 1727, he admitted that his policy forbidding soldiers from being promoted within one garrison

was not practicable and proclaimed that the old policy should continue.¹²¹ Also he compromised his position on the changing special appointment system in the border provinces for civil officials. In 1726, the emperor had to retreat from his reform and ruled that whether or not promotions in the border provinces should be the same as in the heartland should be determined by the concrete conditions in each place, thus withdrawing from his earlier wholesale abolition of the special promotion system applied in the border provinces.¹²² In the autumn of 1727, Ortai petitioned the throne to ascertain which counties should be in the "border salary (*bianfeng* 邊俸)" category, which should be placed in the category of three-year promotion, and which should have five-year promotion. Ortai suggested that the posts in the remote counties, newly established ones and the ones adjacent to the ethnic minorities should all be listed for three years promotion and that for these posts, appointees could be selected among the local officials in the same province. Ortai also requested that military officials in remote posts enjoy the same privilege.¹²³ Thus the old system that gave some flexibility to official appointments in the Southwest was resumed. Not surprisingly, this system would incur corruption and abuse over the course of the time.

¹²¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 63, pp. 16a-17a.

¹²²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 48, pp. 23b-24a.

¹²³*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 61, pp. 30b-32a.

As elaborated in the previous section, with the increase in the frequency of Tibetan emergencies, the Qing authorities had to engage themselves in a military buildup in the Southwest. As usual, this process did not only involve the increase of military personnel, but also meant an increase of fiscal investment from the Qing central government. There are a number of indications which suggested this tendency. First, there must be an increase of payments to soldiers corresponding the enlarged size of the army. In addition, the military commanders also asked for payment for the native soldiers of ethnic minorities who belonged to the local chieftains but were under the control of the Qing frontier military commanders during certain military actions. For instance, Nian Gengyao had requested the provisions subsidies ("Salt and vegetables money, *yan cai yin* 鹽菜銀") for the native soldiers in the area west of Dajianlu.¹²⁴ To use ethnic native soldiers in the Qing frontier campaigns was an important means to transform the non-Han Chinese areas in the Southwest. It had been adopted since the era of Wu Sangui. But it was further elaborated since the Yongzheng period. As was always the case, the native soldiers were underpaid compared with the Green Standard soldiers. Nevertheless, it became one excuse for the frontier viceroys to request more funding from the central government.

¹²⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 6, p. 13b.

Second, there should be a considerable increase in the expense of transporting provisions to the frontier garrisons which were hard to reach due to the mountainous road conditions. In the case of the area of Dajianlu, where the native staple foodstuff was highland barley which was not consumed by the Chinese soldiers, all provisions had to be transported from the Han areas of the province. The cost for this undertaking was huge. The market price for rice was almost two to three times higher than that in the Han areas of the province.¹²⁵ Fighting for their respective interests, the military and civil officials once had disagreement on the issue of provisions. The military officials requested to get the provisions in kind, for the price in the area was higher. But the Governor of Sichuan insisted that it was too difficult and costly for hired labors to transport provisions to the border area. So he demanded that the central government to pay the soldiers cash and let them purchase rice locally. Given the importance of the garrison in the area, Yongzheng would not place financial considerations as a priority. He ordered either to increase the payment to the armies to enable them to purchase rice locally from merchants or to increase the wages to the hired labors to guarantee the supply of rice to the garrisons in the area.¹²⁶ In either case, the state exchequer paid more.

¹²⁵During this period, the rice price in the core area of Sichuan was about 2-3 *qian* per *dou*, but in the area of Dajianlu it was 8-9 *qian* to 1 *tael* per *dou*. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 95, pp. 1b-2b.

¹²⁶*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 95, pp. 1b-2b.

Furthermore, the provisions of the Qing armies stationed in Tibet were also partially transported from Sichuan and Yunnan, though the bigger share of burden fell on the shoulders of the Tibetans. Transportation within the Tibetan boundary was conducted by the Tibetans. Presumably the Qing paid for those labors. In 1728, the Qing throne first reduced the number of the Qing armies in Tibet from three thousand to two thousand because of the provisions problem.¹²⁷ Again in 1733, due to the prodigious expense of maintaining the Qing garrison in Tibet, the throne decided to reduce the number of troops one more time. Two thousand Sichuan soldiers stationed in Lhasa and other places were reduced to five hundred. The one thousand Yunnan soldiers stationed in Shamuduo were reduced to five hundred.¹²⁸

Third, there would be a tremendous cost in the building of barracks and other military facilities in the Southwest. For instance, in 1730, the Governor of Sichuan Xiande 憲德 petitioned to build barracks, beacon towers and relay horse stations in the area of Dajianlu. He proposed to build fifty-five stations for communication purposes.¹²⁹ This was no doubt a big project. The state would pay for everything from materials to laborers, and, of course, corruption. Consider that the central government had allocated several hundred thousand taels of silver for building the Huiyuan

¹²⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 72, pp. 18a-b.

¹²⁸*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 129, pp. 1a-2a.

¹²⁹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 93, p. 13a.

monastery in Taining, the cost for the military facilities would not be insignificant given the ecological and human environment in the area.

Fourth, the central government was, in general, very lenient in the matter of soldiers' tendering of their loans from the government before they were called to the front, especially when the soldiers carried out operations or conducted duties in Tibet. Exemption and reductions were not unusual. As is well known, the Tibetan duty was not a welcome one for either Qing officials or soldiers. Three Qing commanders sent to Tibet malingered in the wake of the first Tibetan expedition. One of them, Gaerbi, was given the death penalty for his faking of illness. To maintain the morale of the soldiers sent to Tibet, the Qing authorities had to provide more incentives. In most cases, the government would lend, in lieu of selling, horses to soldiers who were going to carry out duty in Tibet. And the government was rather lenient too in requesting compensation in case of the death of the horses.

Besides the military expenses, the Tibetan affairs were becoming increasingly costly too. Financially, the Qing central government treated the Sichuan provincial government as an agent and cashier of the central government in the Tibetan affairs. In 1727, the Yongzheng emperor ordered the allocation of ten thousand taels of silver from the Sichuan fisc to pay for the transfer of the Mongols who had lived in

Tibet to Qinghai.¹³⁰ Then in early 1728, as the second Tibetan expedition was underway and efficient communication between the center and the Southwest became imperative, the emperor ruled that the post stations in Sichuan and Yunnan all be supported with the regular land tax capitation (*zhengxiang* 正項) of the provinces.¹³¹ That meant that a portion of the Qing revenue income would be consumed locally without reaching the state treasury. During the seventh Dalai Lama's stay in western Sichuan from 1728 to 1735, all his expenditures were supplied by the Sichuan government. The throne always gave the order to the Sichuan provincial government to provide supplies to the Dalai Lama and his equipage "abundantly". But apparently all moneys were in fact allocated from the central exchequer.

Yongzheng's initiative to reform the system of administering the ethnic minorities in the Southwest opened another broad avenue for the provincial officials to earn credit and to request investment from the central government. The cost of carrying out the reform and maintaining the results greatly surpassed the revenue income the Qing obtained after the ethnic minority areas were integrated into the Qing administrative system. In most cases, the revenue paid by the ethnic peoples was only nominal or symbolic. But the Qing expenditure in this commitment was unmeasurable. The enormous pouring of money

¹³⁰*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 61, pp. 5b-6a.

¹³¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 64, pp. 18b-19a.

into the Southwest was a contrast to the situation in the middle of the Kangxi period after the Wu Sangui Rebellion when the central authorities constrained themselves from nurturing the possible growth of another powerful satrap in the remote Southwest. By this time, the Southwest once again became a region which consumed a prodigious amount of the state's revenue. The situation was reminiscent of the era of Wu Sangui's feudatory in the 1660s and the 1670s. The two cases were different however. The former was a passive measure designed to maintain the loyalty of the feudatory, but the latter was to meet the exigencies of the Qing frontier strategy. Although Yongzheng was fully aware of the disadvantages in this development, he was not able to ameliorate the situation without compromising his grand frontier strategy.

One would presume that the build-up of the military establishment in the Southwest would result in an increase in the economic burden for the local people. Conventional wisdom holds that military operations and installations would be harmful to the local economy and disturb the normal rhythm of social life. It might be the case if an area became an actual battleground or the military was badly fed (as happened during the protracted Ming-Qing transition and the Wu Sangui Rebellion in the region, see Chapter I and II), or if the discipline of the troops was problematic as what happened in the Miao area of Guzhou 古州, Guizhou

province, in the last year of the Yongzheng period.¹³² Nevertheless, during most of the Yongzheng period in the Southwest, when economic affluence was achieved, the burden of taxation remained extremely low, and additional expenditures were drawn from the state treasury, the military build-up did not adversely effect the economy.

As this study observes, the throne was no longer ignorant of the economic development of the region during the Yongzheng period. But the priority of strategic consideration on the side of the central authorities constantly overcame the pulse to adjust the taxation rate to keep pace with the population growth and the economic developments in the region. The sharp contrast between the tax contribution of the Southwest and the neighboring provinces constituted the single most important incentive to draw people to migrate into this region (see Table 2: Land Taxes in the Southwest, the emigrant provinces and the Southeast in 1724). It was during this period, the migration movement to the Southwest, which started after the Qing fully controlled the region in the early 1660s, was gaining

¹³²The misconduct of the Qing garrison in Guzhou triggered one of the biggest Miao rebellions in Qing history. It started in the spring of 1735, and soon spread to the neighboring areas. Hundreds of thousands of people were involved in the rebellion. The Qing throne sent armies from Yunnan, Huguang and Liangguang to Guizhou to suppress the rebellion. Ortai requested to strip him of the title of Earl for he thought he was partially responsible for the rebellion. The rebellion was not completely put down until the second year of the Qianlong reign, namely, 1737 when Zhang Guangsi was designated the commander-in-chief of the campaign. See Wei Yuan, *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 7; Wu Xinfu and Long Boya *Miao Zu Shi*, pp. 341-349; Lombard-Salmon, pp. 171-176, pp. 231-236.

momentum.¹³³ Every year, tens of thousands of immigrants poured into the Southwest from Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong, Shaanxi and Jiangxi provinces. At some points, over one thousand people from Huguang would enter Sichuan in a single day.¹³⁴

Table 2: Land Taxes in the Southeast, the Emigrating Provinces and the Southwest in 1724 (The Second Year of the Yongzheng Reign)

Province	Land Tax in Kind	Land Tax in Cash
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Southeast:

Jiangsu	276,838 dan	3,719,942 taels
Anhui	179,972 dan	1,387,596 taels
Zhejiang	1,369,258 dan	2,695,432 taels

The Emigrating Provinces:

Hubei	157,080 dan	988,656 taels
Hunan	149,601 dan	1,092,634 taels
Guangdong	247,804 dan	865,927 taels
Jiangxi	127,452 dan	1,179,476 taels
Shaanxi	901,086 dan	1,355,245 taels

The Southwest:

Sichuan	57,119 dan	225,535 taels
Yunnan	142,980 dan	91,257 taels
Guizhou	110,610 dan	57,788 taels

(Source: Liang Fangzhong, p. 393)

¹³³For a specialized study of the migration into Sichuan and the Qing policies towards it during the Yongzheng period, see Robert E. Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," Chapter IV, "Settlement and administration in the Yongzheng reign."

¹³⁴*Guizhou Fu Zhi*, Daoguang, vol. 34.

As Table 2 shows, the attraction of the Southwest was primarily the low tax rate. Affected by this chief factor, the living costs and the value of real estate were also low. It was not only an opportunity for the uprooted peasants to search for a livelihood, but also a temptation for people with some capital to launch ventures. Therefore, the immigrants coming into the Southwest consisted of both the marginals and the well-to-dos. Yongzheng himself once noted:

...thence I pay attention from time to time to explore the causes [of the migration to Sichuan]. Now according to the memorials from various provinces one after another, [I realize] perhaps the reason is that there is a huge amount of deserted land in Sichuan province, and rice is abundant, and the price is low. Moreover, the ignorant people, who have always had the intention to pursue profit, are convinced by some rumor that three *qian* can buy one *dan* of rice in Sichuan. There are even brokers who advocate hard that it is extremely easy to gain a livelihood in Sichuan, and that as soon as one settles down there, one can get wealthy. The ignorant people are thus agitated. **Not only are the poor trapped into their snare, but people of means also sell their properties [to go to Sichuan] in order to achieve affluence.** How can one not think that the reason for the price of food in Sichuan to be low is that the territory is huge and population is sparse. The people who consume are fewer, therefore the price is lower. If people in other provinces all gush into this one province, there would be more mouths to feed, how can one still expect the low expenditures as before?¹³⁵

This passage of Yongzheng's revealed some truth while covering some others. He was correct to interpret that the major motivation to migration was the expectation of a better life in Sichuan and that both the poor and the well-to-do were involved in the population movement. But the

¹³⁵Shizong Shilu, vol. 66, pp. 23a-b.

emperor did not mention how much the tax obligation in the province contrasted with that in the surrounding provinces. As is usually the case, what the immigrants were told about the ease of making a fortune in Sichuan was possibly exaggerated. Nevertheless, there was some validity in their expectations given what is shown in Chart II, and, as will be elaborated later in this section, the ample supply of rice from Sichuan to Huguang, and the lower Yangtze Valley each year.

The coincidence of the military buildup and the migration peak in the period of the Yongzheng reign is not only due to the factor of a low tax rate. Also, as pointed out above, when the state guaranteed the military expenditures from the state treasury, and there were no hostilities in the territory of the province, the local economy would only benefit from the military buildup. First of all, the military was a reliable and sizable client for agricultural products, primarily rice. Since most soldiers were paid in cash for their stipend, they would chiefly rely on the local market to get their daily foodstuff. Second, the military also relied on the local market to purchase other daily necessities and materials for constructing military facilities. Third, the transportation of military provisions to all garrisons needed a considerable amount of manpower, to which the state paid an adequate wage. If the first two cases were true everywhere, the third one was

particular to the Southwest and the Northwest where the military operations were going on and the newly established garrisons were far from the core areas. Fourth, the Qing expansion along the buffer areas between Tibet and Sichuan and Yunnan was accompanied with a swarm of Chinese merchants who pioneered the new territory under Qing military protection. It made the Southwest an attractive place for merchants. Among the migrants, there was a considerable number of people who seized the good opportunities to establish their business. These factors should be taken into consideration when an in-depth examination of the migration movement into the Southwest is made.

In 1727, the large scale migration had reached a point that the government had to intervene to prevent any undesirable consequences from emerging. In the fall of that year, Yue Zhongqi memorialized the throne to inform that there were hundreds of thousands of households which had migrated from Huguang, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Guangxi province to Sichuan. This was the very first time that the central government was informed by a provincial official that the migration movement in the Southwest had become a considerable population movement. But his goal was to squeeze the central government for some subsidies. At Yue's suggestion, The throne allocated ten thousand *liang* of silver to Sichuan to subsidize poor immigrants. Nevertheless, the emperor demanded the local magistrates to

be more strict in registering the new settlers, discerning between the lawful and the outlaw. Meanwhile, the emperor required that the magistrates of the emigrating places pay for the cost of the subsidy given to Sichuan.¹³⁶

The emperor's intention was to check the migration wave by putting more pressure on the local magistrates of the emigrating areas. As the emperor himself knew, this measure would not work well at stopping the migration waves. Nevertheless, the throne did not perceive this movement as very harmful. Yue Zhongqi also held an encouraging attitude to the movement. Though the emperor's whim to put the migration under closer supervision was echoed by the civilian officials in Sichuan, the measures taken were only aimed at maintaining social order in the region. The Governor of Sichuan, Xiande, managed to implement more organizational efforts to control the new settlers in Sichuan. What he did was mainly to sort the immigrants into two categories: the lawful and the outlaw, and to retain the lawfuls and to expel the outlaws, and then to sort the lawful people again into two groups: the poor and the well-to-do, only extremely poor people were able to procure the subsidies from the government. Since a land survey was concurrently being carried out in Sichuan, Xiande planned to allocate ownerless land to the new settlers after the land survey was finished.¹³⁷ Two months later, Xiande reported

¹³⁶*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 61, pp. 29a-30b.

¹³⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 65, pp. 9a-10b.

that he gave every household (a couple in this case, as he indicated) 30 *mu* of rice paddy, and 50 *mu* of dry land, for every additional male adult there was an additional 15 *mu* of rice paddy or 25 *mu* of dry land, and 12 taels of silver for the cost of equipment and seeds. The tax free periods for those new farmers were three years for rice paddy and five years for dry land.¹³⁸ As Xiande indicated in this report, a similar policy to subsidize new settlers for the cost of equipment and seeds was also applied in Yunnan province. As one can imagine, these measures to subsidize new settlers, no matter under what conditions, only created a more heated incentive to the ever high migration waves.

The migration movement to the Southwest was not a state-sponsored population movement. Instead, it was a natural response to the unbalanced taxation distribution system maintained by the Qing government in the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods. The incentives for people to move to the Southwest, mainly the low living cost and highly profitable livelihood in the region, were generated first and foremost by the light tax obligation. To be sure, the government did adopt some measures to control the movement as shown above. But the government's responses were passive and did not stop the trend. A similar case is in Fengtian province (Manchuria). It was because of the very low tax obligation

¹³⁸Shizong Shilu, vol. 67, pp. 25b-26a. There are more accounts on the government's responses to the migration into the Southwest in Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi and Gongzhongdang Yongzheng Chao Zouzhe.

in the area that a huge number of Han Chinese migrated to the area despite of the state ban of the Han Chinese from moving to Manchuria. Given that an enforced ban on such movement would cost the state more, the authorities took an attitude of *laissez-faire* except adopting some measures to minimize the negative outcome. The population in the Southwest was thus speedily enlarged during this period. According to the very incomplete and problematic state records, the total male adult population in Sichuan increased from 409,310 in 1724 (the second year of the Yongzheng reign) to 2,506,780 in 1749 (the fourteenth year of the Qianlong reign). In Yunnan, it increased from 145,240 in 1724 to 1,946,173 in 1749. In Guizhou, it increased from 21,388 in 1724 to 3,075,111 in 1749.¹³⁹ Given the fact that the reform on capitation system in 173x removed the reason for hiding the number of male adults, the dramatic increase in the twenty-five year span should be noted with much caution.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the migration movement did change the human environment in the Southwest. Manpower was no longer scarce. Land was reclaimed, first the land in the core and plain area, then small plots on hills and the peripheral areas. With so large a percentage of the population in the Southwest immigrants, about half in

¹³⁹Liang Fangzhong, *Zhongguo Lidai Huhou, Tiandi, Tianfu Tongji*, p. 258.

¹⁴⁰The total male adult population in the whole country jumped from 25,284,818 in 1724 to 177,495,039 in 1749, according to the same sources (ibid. p. 258).

Sichuan province, the social life assumed some unique characteristics.¹⁴¹

With the Southwest repopulated, the economy flourished,¹⁴² the sharp contrast between the real production output and the low revenue contribution became increasingly drastic. Moreover, the absence of governmental registration in land ownership also fostered numerous disputes and conflicts among the cultivators. Lawsuits over land and water facilities multiplied in these years. The local magistrates had to hire more and more clerks and runners to aid them in dealing with such affairs, thus paving the way for the overgrowth of the sub-bureaucrat class in the region. At the end of 1727, Yue Zhongqi asked the throne to send court officials to Sichuan to conduct a land survey because the malpractice of hiding land was serious. Yongzheng sanctioned the motion with a certain degree of reluctance and selected officials in various governmental departments and expectant officials in the capital to go to

¹⁴¹For the characteristics of migrant society in Sichuan, see Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," Chapter V, "Migrant society."

¹⁴²In Sichuan province, arable land (450,000 *qing*) had surpassed that in the Ming dynasty (130,000 *qing*) by three times by the end of the Yongzheng era. In Yunnan province, large scale copper mining started in 1726, first in the 東川/Dongchuan area. About one decade later, Yunnan copper became the single source for coinage casting nationwide. But copper mining and supplying were strictly controlled by the Qing state. For a detailed study of the Qing control of Yunnan copper mining and supplying, see Yan Zhongping, *Qing Dai Yunnan Tong Zheng Kao*; also Helen Dunstan "Safely Supping with the Devil: The Qing State and Its Merchant Uppliers of Copper."

Sichuan to carry out this project.¹⁴³ It was the first time in Qing history a land survey was carried out in the Southwest.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the military in the region probably had a considerable amount of land under their control. This does not include the military colonies. Besides the military colonies which were obviously known to the central government,¹⁴⁴ the military officials might have some land under their own name without being registered in any government record. It was a lucrative undertaking for military elites to invest in land, taking advantage of their privileged status. That was a prime impetus for so many military officials to settle down in the region. Moreover, the families of the garrison armies were also allocated land to till and to make their property. According to the Qing rule, the land associated with the military was to enjoy certain privileges in tax contributions. Another type of military land was that which was owned by a military unit but was rented out to farmers to cultivate. The rent collected from this type of land would go to the military unit and was spent at the officers' will.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³Shizong Shilu, vol. 63, pp. 21b-22a. For more about this land survey, see Entenmann, pp. 131-142.

¹⁴⁴The amount of the military colonies in Sichuan was not big. In 1724, there was 57,333 *mu* of them. The amount declined during the Qianlong reign. By 1766, there was no military colony in Sichuan. Qingchao Wenxian Tongkao, vol. 10.

¹⁴⁵For instance, in 1727, the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, Huang Tingui converted a military drill ground in Huayang 華陽 county into agricultural land and rented it out to tenants. The rent collected from the land, which was slightly less than 200 taels of silver, served

This study suggests that the widespread ownership of land by the military was one of the chief concerns of the central government in restraining itself from conducting a land survey. In 1727, the Yongzheng emperor was still cautious in endorsing such a motion. He emphasized that the purpose was not to increase the revenue contribution to the central government, but only to acquire the exact amount of arable land in the region. He was not willing to take responsibility for the initiative. He was annoyed when he knew that the provincial officials told the residents that the survey was by the order of the throne. Not surprisingly, the civilian residents would also be unhappy with this initiative. As Kangxi knew it well, no land survey would be received without stirring up some disorder. Some conflicts were reported, but no serious incidents occurred.¹⁴⁶ However, on the whole, the survey was fruitful. Registered land in the province was more than doubled after the survey

as the public expense for the garrison stationed there. This practice continued into the Qianlong period. By the fifteenth year of the Qianlong period (1750), the area of this land was more than seven hundred *mu*. In that year, the Governor-General of Sichuan Celeng 策楞 and the Provincial Military Commander Yue Zhongqi proposed raising rent to 451 taels and this sum continued to serve as the public expense of the garrison. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 361, pp. 23a-b.

¹⁴⁶The only incident of unrest pertinent to the land survey is an abortive rebellion organized by Yang Chengxun 楊成勳. Yang claimed that he possessed a jade seal which had been passed by the imperial houses of the past dynasties. To mobilize followers, he spread a verse which said: "The disaster was originated in the year of *wushen* (1728) when the land survey was carried out at the emperor's order (*yuanhuo qi yu wushen nian, feng zhi qingzhang min tian*. 禍冤起于戊申年，奉旨清丈民田)." Yang's followers complained that the officials in Zhongzhou prefecture took advantage of the people under the excuse of the land survey. *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 89, pp. 32a-34b; vol. 93, pp. 4a-b.

in spite of the fact that much more land was still beyond the state's knowledge.

It was true that the land survey of 1728 did not result in an immediate tax increase in the province. The phenomenon can be perceived from two aspects. First, as expounded above, the frontier emergencies of the time, i.e., the second Tibetan expedition and the Zunghar campaign elevated the Southwest's position as a strategic stronghold. The Qing central government would commit itself to investing in, instead of extracting from this region at this moment. It was not in the best interest of the Qing to risk the stability of the region to increase the revenue contribution. In 1729, the throne even exempted all taxes for 1730 from Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi five provinces because of the Tibetan expedition and campaigns in the ethnic minority areas.¹⁴⁷ Second, there was another advantage unwittingly created by the unbalanced taxation distribution system: the abundant rice surplus of the Southwest became a lever for the Qing dynasty to alleviate the serious rice shortages in the Southeast, the major revenue contributor of the Qing dynasty. In other words, the phenomenon of rice exports of large quantities mentioned in the last chapter continued, or even escalated during this period.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 82, pp. 8b-10a.

¹⁴⁸Takeo Abe, "Beikoku jyukyuu no kenkyuu."

The new development in this matter was that the central government was no longer blind to this phenomenon, but consciously utilized the situation to serve its own purpose. By the Yongzheng period, the rice shortage in the lower Yangtze valley and other areas became even more serious than during the late Kangxi period due to the steady population growth. Rice prices kept hiking in most regions of the country. The Jiangnan region suffered most from the rice shortage. As Qing documents indicated repeatedly, even in the years of good harvests, rice was short in the region, let alone the bad years. While compromising little on the high revenue income and the Canal Grain levied from Jiangnan, the Qing government endeavored to guarantee that the rice market in Jiangnan was constantly supplied. Rice exports from Sichuan were thus an expedient for the central government to alleviate the problem without costing the state treasury too much.¹⁴⁹

Yongzheng noted the existence of rice exports from Sichuan when he was enthroned. But he still held that it was Huguang that weighed significantly in supplying the rice market in Jiangnan. In 1726, Li Wei 李衛 (1686-1717), one of the Yongzheng's favorite officials, the Governor of Zhejiang at that time, first reported the throne that the biggest rice market was in Hankou, but that the majority of rice

¹⁴⁹In some cases, the provincial government allocated money from provincial fiscs to purchase rice imported from Sichuan and stored it in local granaries in order to sell it at an average price when a rice shortage occurred.

transacted in the harbor city was from Sichuan.¹⁵⁰ Only then did the Qing government begin to realize the scope of the rice trade from Sichuan. Until 1727, there was no tax levied on rice shipments from Sichuan to Hubei. And besides rice cargo, other goods were also transported in and out via the same route, even illegal commodities such as salt. The local officials along the Yangtze River seized this opportunity to blackmail the merchants. In the autumn of 1727, Yue Zhongqi petitioned to the throne to set up a customs house to levy duty on the cargo traffic in the Yangtze River. Yue argued that the measure would benefit the local authorities in checking the rice trade and would protect merchants from being blackmailed by the local officials. The throne endorsed the request.¹⁵¹ A customs house was thereafter set up in the Kuiguan Pass which was the entrance to Sichuan from Hubei via the Yangtze River.

The rice exports became increasingly indispensable in aiding the Qing authorities to relieve rice shortages in the lower Yangtze valley. The mechanism of the market economy became a complementary part of the Qing economic system. The following edict was issued in early 1732, which reflected the degree to which the Qing dynasty was counting on the operation of the market in the rice issue:

The province of Sichuan is one of the rice producing regions. (The government) has long allowed merchants to transport rice via the Yangtze River to Hubei to sell

¹⁵⁰*Yongzheng Zhupi Yuzhi*, Li Wei's memorial on June 30, 1726.

¹⁵¹*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 62, pp. 5a-b.

in order to meet the demands of the neighboring provinces. In the ninth year of the Yongzheng reign (1731), the Governor of Sichuan Xiande petitioned to place a temporary embargo on the rice trade due to the slight hike of rice prices in Sichuan and the military provisions being purchased in the province. This was only an expediency. Xian should have requested to lift the ban in the tenth year of the Yongzheng reign (1732) when the harvest in Sichuan was good so that the rice prices were dropped. But the ban is still in effect today. Thus rice cannot be circulated, Hubei province cannot benefit from the rice from Sichuan. This is really not the way in which the high officials are doing their job fairly. Moreover, the prefectures and the counties in Jiangsu and Zhejiang which are short of rice are looking upon Hubei for relief. But this governor does not allow the rice of Sichuan to go to Hubei, then what can the neighboring provinces expect?¹⁵²

The emperor ordered Xiande to lift the embargo immediately. This case clearly demonstrates that the Qing central government actually treated the rice trade as an indispensable part of its economic system. Although the operation of the rice trade was by and large under the control of private merchants, the state watched closely and acted at some crucial moments as an agent to manipulate the rice circulation. The efficient functioning of this circulation system probably constituted another important reason for the Qing throne to keep a low tax rate in the Southwest. The Southwest therefore became a special economic zone in which commercialization took the lead in the economic life since the surplus of agriculture was more subject to market circulation than to state exaction.

The irregularity of the mechanism had aroused doubt among contemporary dissidents such as Zeng Jing. As he

¹⁵²*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 127, pp. 1b-2a.

perceived the matter, it was one evidence of the avidity of Yongzheng "to let people purchase rice in Sichuan and then sell it in Suzhou of Jiangnan."¹⁵³ Although there is no ground to accuse the emperor himself as speculator who actually benefited from rice trade, it indicates that the Qing state's use of the surplus rice of Sichuan to remedy rice shortages in the lower Yangtze valley had been no secret to the public.

Since the rice trade was conducted primarily by private merchants, wealth was accumulated in private hands chiefly. The copious output of rice did not increase the public storage of rice in the province. In 1731, the provincial government complained to the central government that the public granaries were short of rice by 600,000 *dan*. Yongzheng himself was surprised at the report. The solution was that the provincial government was allowed to use the duty silver levied at the Kui Pass customs as well as the tea and salt tax to purchase rice to fill the public granaries.¹⁵⁴ Stimulated by the rice trade, other trades also flourished in Sichuan. With some surplus of agricultural production to trade, the commoner's involvement in commercial activities was larger in scale than other parts of China. The military was also involved in such undertakings. To facilitate this faculty of the local society, the marketing towns began to mushroom in the

¹⁵³Zeng Jing, *Dayi Juemi Lu*.

¹⁵⁴*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 108, pp. 40a-41b; vol. 127, pp. 1b-2a.

province, becoming one of the most important features of the region.¹⁵⁵

The unique economic environment also had an impact on the pattern of social mobility in the region. As a sharp contrast to the dearth of higher degree-holders in the region,¹⁵⁶ people of wealth were not scarce. Therefore, the tendency in this region was that people tried to obtain social prestige with their wealth, not scholarship. On more than one occasion, the wealthy voluntarily offered donations of grain or money to the Qing armies conducting military actions in the Tibetan border in expectation of titles or honors from the government. The local officials were also well aware of the affluence of the people in the area, and tried to squeeze some from them. They would call on the public for donations once there was an opportunity. In the case mentioned earlier of the public granaries being short of rice, the Governor-General of Sichuan, Huang Tinggui, proposed selling offices to raise funds for rice, though the central government rejected the proposal.

5. Conclusion

¹⁵⁵G. William Skinner produced his well-known theory of "marketing towns" based upon his examination of the commercial structure of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Sichuan.

¹⁵⁶Similar to the previous period, there was no *jinshi* degree holders from Sichuan during the entire Yongzheng period (there were three *jinshi* from Sichuan during sixty years of the Kangxi period). The performance of the other two southwestern provinces was even less successful (Zhu Peilian, *Qing Dai Dingjia Lu*).

During the Yongzheng period the Qing central government finally defined the strategic importance of the Southwest. It demarcated the Northwest and the Southwest into two separate frontier strongholds, respectively dealing with two major diplomatic affairs: that of the Zunghar empire, and that of Tibet. Although Yongzheng at first attempted to retreat from Kangxi's frontier activism, he quickly adjusted his position and showed everlasting enthusiasm in implementing his own frontier activism. During this period, the military operations in the Northwest and the Southwest were intense and in large scale, constituting one of the major themes of the Yongzheng era. With three of era's most powerful political figures, Nian Gengyao, Yue Zhongqi and Ortai, making the Southwest, as well as the Northwest, their stage of political activities, the Southwest gained unprecedented importance in the national politics.

The legacy of Yongzheng's frontier undertakings was double-edged. On the one side, his power-based diplomacy was successful in general, leaving his successor little berth to change to a low-keyed approach to the same problems. On the other side, his resort to force in frontier affairs contradicted his constant pulse to restrain the military commanders from becoming too powerful, leaving military forces greatly expanded in the Southwest. This planted seeds of some problems for the next sovereign.

Parallel with the military buildup, the economy in the Southwest entered a boom phase. Large numbers of immigrants poured into the region and the agricultural productivity dramatically increased. Nevertheless, the Qing kept a low-key attitude towards the tax contribution of the Southwest, which stimulated further thriving of the rice market in Sichuan. Like Kangxi, Yongzheng also took advantage of this situation to relieve rice shortages in the lower Yangtze valley by encouraging merchants to export the surplus rice from Sichuan. A special mechanism of managing the economic order of the country was in the making.

Chapter V.

Heyday of Frontier Expansion (1735-1776)

1. A Peace Interlude (1735-1745)

On August 22, 1735, the Yongzheng emperor died of a sudden illness at the age of fifty-eight. His fourth son Hongli 弘歷 was enthroned as had been arranged before Yongzheng passed away. The new emperor was known as the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735-1795). The Qianlong emperor inherited from his father a much enlarged empire and two ongoing campaigns: the northwestern campaign against the Zunghars, and the southwestern campaign suppressing a large scale Miao rebellion in southeastern Guizhou province.¹ Contradictory to the original intention of the Yongzheng emperor to be a domestic emperor, the thirteen-year Yongzheng era was busy with the frontier operations and the country was in a constant state of mobilization. It was on the eve of his demise that Yongzheng began to feel the strain caused by the protracted campaign against the Zunghars in the Northwest. Negotiations were initiated with the Zunghars in the fall of 1734. But the Miao rebellion was reaching its full swing in the Southwest in 1735 when the emperor died. Qianlong was faced a choice, whether to

¹About the Miao Rebellion in the Yongzheng-Qianlong period, see footnote 132 of Chapter IV.

continue his father's course and assume an active stance in frontier undertakings or not.

As the Yongzheng emperor came to the power with his own ambitions, the Qianlong emperor also envisaged recasting the course of Qing politics, making his own impact on the Qing empire.² It is a pattern which had been repeated: the new emperor tried to rectify their fathers' policies and to reorient a theme for their own era. This kind of rebellion against the heritage from the previous ruler was not uncommon in history. Nevertheless, the irony was that once the new ruler was in a position where his predecessors had once been, he would compromise to reality.

After his enthronement, the Qianlong emperor chose not to act along the path initiated by his father. He actively steered a turn in the frontier enterprise.³ While urging the commanders in charge of the campaign against the Miao Rebellion in Guizhou to speed up the operation, he set his efforts towards concluding the Zunghar campaign and shifting attention to domestic issues. He also held a far less active attitude than Yongzheng towards the campaign in the Southwest to reform the local chieftain system.⁴ The

²There have been some studies on Qianlong's modification of the Yongzheng emperor's policies. See Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng Zhuan*, pp. 555-561; and R. Kent Guy, "Personnel Policy in the Early Qianlong Reign: The Ascension of the Qianlong Emperor as a Moment of Crisis."

³In 1749, the Qianlong emperor recalled in an edict that it was himself who first suggested to conclude the Zunghar campaign to the Yongzheng emperor when Yongzheng felt drained by the protracted campaign by the late Yongzheng period. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 333, p. 7a.

⁴In 1752, Qianlong said: "As for the matter of integrating the native chieftains into the regular official system, not only should it not be

impulses behind this strategic shift were multiple. First, the protracted Yongzheng frontier undertakings had been very costly. Knowing that the abundance of the state fiscs was the very foundation of any promising politics, Qianlong ardently wanted to retrench state expenditures. Second, as all monarchs might be concerned, the new emperor hated to see that frontier satraps and generals became too powerful with the expansion of the empire. Third, Qianlong was more concerned with a serious domestic problem the country was facing: the increasing inflation of rice prices. He apparently weighed this domestic exigency over frontier affairs during the first decade of his reign.

The new emperor was doing well at the beginning of his reign: the Miao Rebellion was soon put down in 1736 after Zhang Guangsi, a valiant and yet brutal warrior, was appointed the commander-in-chief of the campaign. The sweeping reform to incorporate the aboriginal peoples' territories into the Qing administrative pale was slowed down. The negotiations with the Zunghars were satisfactorily concluded in 1737, the Zunghars again conforming with the terms of being a tributary to the Qing empire. Along the corridor of the Yellow River, hundreds of thousands of Qing troops were returning home from the seven year-long

attempted in the mind, also it should be careful not even to (mention it) in official documents. The reason for this is that the natives are not willing to be integrated (into the regular official system). In case they sense some wind of it, they must be alarmed and fight against it collectively. The consequence of it will be hard to handle." Gaozong Shilu, vol. 422, p. 6a.

exhausting campaign in the grand Gobi area. In a word, the atmosphere in the beginning of the new reign suggested a restoration of peace. Also on December 12, 1735, Qianlong decreed the abolishment of the Council of State, the very legacy of the Yongzheng frontier enterprise.⁵

Although there was a strong tendency for Qianlong to tone down frontier affairs, he was, however, prudent in making a decision concerning the sensitive matter of the military stationed in Tibet. The Qing military station in Tibet was resumed after the Tibetan civil war of 1727-28.⁶ The station became further justified once the Yongzheng Zunghar campaign was launched shortly after the Tibetan civil war was brought to an end with the intervention of Qing forces. But once the truce with the Zunghars materialized, the Qing military station in Lhasa again became questionable. On August 18, 1734, Yongzheng sent his brother, The Prince Guo 果 Yunli 允禮 to Taining in western Sichuan to escort the seventh Dalai Lama back to Tibet. Poluonai held a grandiose ceremony to celebrate the return of the Dalai Lama from his seven-year exile in Sichuan. With the return of the Dalai Lama, which symbolized the stabilization of the Tibetan situation, the Qing throne certainly faced a reconsideration of its policy towards Lhasa.

⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 5.

⁶See Section 1 of Chapter IV.

In April, 1736, the Princes and Grand Ministers of the Deliberative Council proposed a wholesale withdrawal of the Qing plenipotentiaries sent to several strategic places during the Zunghar campaign, such as Xining, Hami, Guihua and Lhasa. In the case of Lhasa, they tentatively suggested:

There has never been an official [officially] stationed in Tibet. Years ago Kangjinai and Poluonai detested each other and engaged in a feud.⁷ Therefore, [the Qing] sent officials leading armies to be stationed there temporarily. Now the Dalai Lama has returned to Tibet, the [Qing] soldiers have also withdrawn.⁸ There is no necessity to station officials there any more. Now Vice Minister Hangyilu 杭奕祿 is heading to Tibet with some business. He is ordered to take care of the Tibetan affairs for the time being. After his memorial arrives, then we can decide if Mala⁹ should be withdrawn.¹⁰

After having arrived in Lhasa, Hangyilu in late 1736 suggested the withdrawal of all the Qing armies from Tibet. But the Qianlong emperor was not compromising on this issue. He insisted on continuing to station Qing troops in Lhasa:

Through reading Hangyilu's memorial, (I feel that) Beile Poluonai et al indeed deem that the stationing of Qing troops in Tibet is beneficial to him. Before my father worried that the Tibetan population is dense, so that the stationing of Qing armies for a long period of

⁷It is certainly a mistake for the Qing officials to say that Kangjinai and Poluonai were engaged in a conflict. During the Tibetan civil war of 1727-1728, Kangjinai was killed by Aerbuba, Longbunai and Zhaernai. Then Kangjinai's follower Poluonai mounted an expedition to Lhasa to suppress the rebellion and arrested the three rebelled Kaloons. See Section 1 of Chapter IV.

⁸"The Qing soldiers" here should mean the Qing armies of the second Tibetan expedition which entered Tibet in 1728. In 1733, at Poluonai's request, the Qing dynasty withdrew one thousand and five hundred soldiers from Lhasa, leaving only five hundred soldiers and their commander Zhou Qifeng. The Tibetans built new barracks in the north of Lhasa to accommodate the remaining five hundred Qing soldiers. *Poluonai zhuan*, pp. 418-420; *Shizong Shilu*, vol. 129, pp. 1a-2a.

¹⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 17, pp. 17a-b.

time would be a burden to them. So he was inclined to withdraw them. But if it is beneficial, several hundreds of soldiers would not consume too many provisions. Thence I order to stop withdrawing the garrison soldiers and the soldiers in the outposts in Tibet, and to let them continue the station in rotation. We can wait one or two years to decide a final withdrawal.¹¹

According to Duokaxiazhong Cewangrenjie, a close follower of Poluonai and the author of the biography of Poluonai, the Tibetans had already been burdened with the Qing military stationed in Lhasa. Even the pro-Qing Tibetan leader Poluonai hoped that the Qing armies withdrew from Tibet.¹² Qianlong's pretext for stationing Qing armies in Tibet, based on the desire of the Tibetans, was obviously made-up. The truth is that the Qianlong emperor had a clear sense of how crucial the stability of Tibet was for peace in the vast Northwest, Qinghai and Mongolia. It would be too risky to completely free the reins on the Tibetan affairs for which the previous Qing emperors, Kangxi and Yongzheng, had paid so dear a price. Therefore, even under the appeasement atmosphere of the early years of the Qianlong period, the emperor did not dare to retreat from the essential part of the Tibetan policy set by his predecessors. Instead, Qianlong reduced the size of the military stationed in Tibet and reduced the number of Ambans installed in Lhasa to one person.¹³ In 1739, the Qing throne

¹¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 52, pp. 3a-b.

¹²Poluonai Zhuan, pp. 395-397; pp.418-420.

¹³By the late Yongzheng period, there were four or five Qing officials sent to Tibet at the same time. The regular number for Ambans is two. Wu Fengpei and Zeng Guoqing, Qing Chao Zhu Zang Dacheng Zhidu de Jianli yu Yan'ge, p.21.

granted the Tibetan leader Poluonai the title of Prince (*junwang* 郡王). It is a confirmation of the Qing support of him in ruling Tibet and contending with the Zunghars.¹⁴ Subsequently, Poluonai strengthened the Tibetan military forces and placed heavy garrisons on the routes to the Zunghar empire.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the Qianlong emperor did not hesitate to redefine other aspects of the Yongzheng legacy. One significant measure he took was to abolish the post of the Governorship-General of Sichuan and to restore the Governorship-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi in the early of 1736. His reason was rather evincible of his new politics:

According to the conventional system, there had been only one Governor-General for Sichuan and Shaanxi two provinces. Then because the military operations were carried out in the western frontier, and there were the affairs of the military provisions to be dealt with, a Governor-General of Sichuan was thus installed separately. Now the expedition was withdrawn; the military affairs are to be completed. Let follow the conventional system to reset the Governorship-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi and to abolish the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan.¹⁶

The size of Sichuan province doubled in the Yongzheng period when the area of Kham was officially integrated into the province. The total territory of the three provinces (Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu¹⁷) was therefore the biggest among all Governors-General's jurisdictions in the country.

¹⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol.106, p. 28.

¹⁵Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. p. 852.

¹⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 8, pp. 7a-b. The date of the edict is January 14 in the *Shilu*, but January 13 in the *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 11.

¹⁷Gansu province was always in the same pale as Shaanxi province.

But residing in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, the Governor-General was rather distant from Sichuan. It is arguable that Qianlong was playing down the importance of the Southwest at this point. As this study observed in the previous chapter, the separation of the Governorship-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi was of important strategic significance because of the escalation of Tibetan affairs in Qing diplomatic enterprises. It embodied the very character of Yongzheng's frontier activism. Therefore, the restoration of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi signified the new orientation of Qianlong.

Parallel to the restoration of the Governorship-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, the throne separated the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou in the summer of 1736. Zhang Guangsi was appointed the Governor-General of Guizhou and also took charge of the duties of the Governor of Guizhou under the reason that he was directing the campaign against the Miao Rebellion in Guzhou, Guizhou province. Accordingly, Yinjishan, the current Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou was striped of half of his jurisdiction, becoming the Governor-General of Yunnan only.¹⁸ Zhang Guangsi became increasingly influential due to his skillful handling of the suppression of the Miao Rebellion in Guzhou. Qianlong knew that a person like Zhang could be both benefit and a danger to the empire. On the one hand, they were very useful in

¹⁸Gaozong Shilu, vol. 20, p. 20a.

dealing with the thorny problems of the indigenous people. On the other hand, they were always prone to swelling their personal power too rapidly. Therefore, it was not without reason that Qianlong did not give him the jurisdiction of two provinces. Later, when Zhang was transferred to Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi to direct the first Jinchuan campaign in 1747, the post of the Governorship-General of Yunnan and Guizhou was restored immediately.

Another matter in which Qianlong set his hands was to reduce the military forces in the border areas. The frontier activism of Yongzheng left a sizable military apparatus in the frontier regions, particularly in the Northwest and the Southwest. It was relatively more simple to settle the matter in the northwestern frontier. The main forces in the Zunghar campaign fronts were field armies. They were simply withdrawn to their original garrisons at the order of the court.¹⁹ But it was a completely different story in the Southwest. It was more difficult to have the oversized military lineup slimmed because of the different nature of the military buildup in the Southwest. Qianlong would realize this shortly.

As shown above, Qianlong did envisage a renewal of frontier politics in the beginning years of his reign. But

¹⁹In the post-Zunghar campaign period, more Qing troops were stationed in the area of Hami than before the campaign. The Qing military colonization of the area was in full swing from this moment on. From the emperor's point of view, Hami was the most important frontier because of the survival of the Zungharia. Nevertheless, the size of the military dwindled significantly compared with the size during the campaign.

the Yongzheng legacy could not be easily removed without tenacious efforts being made. During the first decade of the Qianlong period, the resistance to his deemphasis of frontier undertakings was tangible and strong. The following paragraphs will examine this resistance from two aspects: the difficult situation for the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi; and the see-saw battle to size down armies in the Southwest.

As Qianlong predicted when he combined the two Governors-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi again, the tension between the new Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi and the provincial officials in Sichuan was soon on the rise. The person who was affected most by this institutional change was the current Governor-General of Sichuan Huang Tinggui. In the same edict which created the combined Governor-General post, the emperor demoted him to Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, the post he held before he was promoted to the Governor-General of Sichuan in 1731. It is rare to demote a governor-general without any obvious misconduct. This demotion can only be explained in the context of Qianlong's appeasement tendency in these years. But it created a difficult situation for the new provincial authorities in Sichuan and Shaanxi. Not only did Huang not have good connection with the new Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Zhalang'a 查郎阿, but also he would not subjugate himself to the Governor of Sichuan Yang Bi 楊斌,

who was formerly under Huang's supervision. The unpleasant situation was soon relayed to the throne. Less than one year after this structural change, in the autumn of 1736, Zhalang'a reported to the throne the difficult situation among the provincial officials in the region. Qianlong noted that he had been well aware of the situation and said that he would not expect speedy improvement under the supervision of Zhalang'a. But he did press him to integrate in substance the province of Sichuan into his jurisdiction.²⁰

Qianlong had to deal with the aftermath of this provocative administrative change for the following several years. To smooth the transition for Sichuan province, which had practiced much independent jurisdiction during the late Yongzheng period, the emperor had carried out a series of personnel changes. First of all, at the end of 1736, the throne summoned Huang Tinggui to the capital; his title of Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan was deprived and given to the current Regional Commander of Yichang 宜昌, Wang Jinchang 王進昌. Huang was kept in the capital and was later appointed Commissioner of Imperial Procession Guard, an honorific post without power in the court.²¹ It was the low point in Huang's long official career.

²⁰Gaozong Shilu, vol. 25, pp. 26a-b.

²¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 30, p. 9a; vol. 32, p. 4a. Later Huang was ordered to act for the Regional Commander of Tianjin 天津, and was appointed formally to the post in the spring of 1738, in the meantime, he was deprived of the title of Commissioner of Imperial Guard (Gaozong Shilu, vol. 62, pp. 7b-8a). Although the post of the Regional Commander of Tianjin was an important one, from which many a frontier viceroy was appointed -- Yue Shenglong was in the post when he was appointed the

After having removed Huang from Sichuan, the next target of the throne was the Governor of Sichuan Yang Bi, who was appointed Governor in the last year of the Yongzheng period. In the spring of 1737, Yang was dismissed and the current Governor of Shaanxi, Shuose 碩色, was transferred to the post.²² The transfer of Shouse to Sichuan was a judicious choice. Since the Governor of Shaanxi was subordinate to the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, it might be easier for him to get along with Zhalang'a, as the emperor might assume.

In spite of the efforts by the throne to eradicate Sichuanese regionalism, which had been fostered in the Yongzheng military campaign era, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Zhalang'a still had difficulties implementating his jurisdiction in Sichuan.²³ When Shuose first went to the new post, the emperor told him: "You just arrived in Sichuan province. Although your responsibilities as the Governor are the same [as they were in Shaanxi], the situation in locality is different. Do not hurry to change anything. It is fine to start to rectify things only after

Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, it was actually another demotion for Huang Tinggui. But he impressed the emperor with his outstanding performance in this post. In 1741, he was appointed Governor of Gansu. And he was eventually appointed Governor-General of Sichuan in 1753 after the post was restored in 1749. This experience of Huang was one reflection of Qianlong's changing attitude towards the Yongzheng legacy of frontier acitivism. See Section 3 of this Chapter.

²²*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 39, pp. 6b-7a.

²³According to the records of his memorials to the throne in *Gaozong Shilu*, Zhalang'a rarely involved himself in the affairs of Sichuan province.

you get familiar with the situation there."²⁴ Qianlong did expect the appointment of Shuose to be helpful in ameliorating the relationship between the provincial government and the regional superintendent Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. But Shuose was too ambitious to cooperate with Zhalang'a. He seemed not to be very instrumental in smoothing out the wrinkles. Zhalang'a's influence in Sichuan was never anything more than peripheral.

In the following years, the throne had to frequently transfer the provincial officials in the two provinces to achieve the best resolution to the subtle discords among the officials in the region. In the summer of 1738, Zhalang'a was replaced with Emida 郭彌達. One year later, Shuose was replaced with Fang Xian 方顯, who was the Provincial Administration Commissioner of Sichuan at that time. Meanwhile, the throne also replaced the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Wang Jinchang with Zheng Wenhuan 鄭文煥, the current Regional Commander of Zhaoyong Zhen 昭通鎮, Yunnan. There is no record about the relationship between Emida and Fang Xian. But what happened was that Emida was soon replaced with senior frontier viceroy Yinjishan 尹繼善 (1696-1771) in the spring of 1740, who had been the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou during the Yongzheng period. After Yinjishan came to his new post, Fang had

²⁴Gaozong Shilu, vol. 43, p. 26a.

specially memorialized to the throne that he personally respected the new Governor-General and was very happy about his coming.²⁵ Shortly before, the new Provincial Military Commander Zheng Wenhuan also memorialized that he respected Fang, and that they were on good terms.²⁶ The conciliation among the officialdom in this region had been one focus of imperial attention.

One month later after Fang stated his harmonious relations with Yinjishan, he was ordered to transfer to the post of Governor of Guangxi. And Shuose was transferred back to Governor of Sichuan, as the emperor thought he was not faring well in Shandong province and he might be more suitable for Sichuan due to his familiarity with the situation there.²⁷ For some reason, Yinjishan himself did not hold his position as the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi for very long either. In 1743, the current Governor-General of Yunnan Qingfu 慶復²⁸ was appointed the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. As Qianlong mentioned in 1779, more than three decades later, it was an open secret that Yinjishan was not on good terms with Huang Tinggui, the

²⁵Gaozong Shilu, vol. 119, pp. 30b-31a.

²⁶Gaozong Shilu, vol. 113, p. 22a.

²⁷Gaozong Shilu, vol. 122, p. 6a.

²⁸Being a well-established Manchu official, Qingfu had been appointed to act as the commander-in-chief of the north route army in the Zunghar campaign when Qianlong was first enthroned in 1735. Although the campaign was soon called off, he had been exposed to frontier affairs. Plus, he had several years' experience of being the Governor-General of Yunnan prior to his appointment as the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. See his biography in Qing Shi Gao, vol. 297.

long time military viceroy of Sichuan province.²⁹ One may assume that Yinjishan would also have had difficulties in dealing with the long-term subordinates of Huang in Sichuan. Meanwhile, Shuose was once again transferred from Governor of Sichuan to that of Henan. He was replaced by a Vice Minister from the Ministry of War Jishan 紀山.

Jishan was the son of Elunte 額倫特, a chief commander of the first Tibetan expedition who was killed in 1718 in Tibet. Before he was appointed Governor of Sichuan, Jishan had been the chief commander of Qing armies stationed in Tibet for about three years (his title was the Vice Commander-in-chief stationed in Tibet, *Zhu Zang Fu Dutong* 駐藏副都統). His appointment to Sichuan was significant in terms of his background in the Tibetan affairs.³⁰ As pointed out by R. Kent Guy, it was a trend in the middle of the Qing dynasty that special expertise became one of the prerequisites to be appointed to a position.³¹ Since the arrival of Jishan and Qingfu in the Southwest, it became a pattern that Qianlong tended to appoint the people who had some sort of connections with the frontier affairs in this region, either through their own previous experience in this

²⁹The emperor said: "Huang Tinggui has always been on bad terms with Yinjishan." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1077, p. 27b.

³⁰Jishan was appointed Grand Minister of Tibet (Amban) in 1749. He was arrested for trial after the Tibetan 1750 rebellion, because he did not adopt any forceful and timely measure to prevent the younger son of Poluonai from staging a rebellion. He was sentenced death penalty. On April 23, 1751, he was ordered by the throne to commit suicide. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 385, pp. 12b-13a.

³¹R. Kent Guy, "Imperial Powers and the Appointment of Provincial Governors in Ch'ing China, 1700-1900."

region or their relatives who had served in the region. Upon the appointment of Jishan, Qianlong composed a poem for Jishan, mentioning his father's death as a martyr for the empire and expressing his high expectations of Jishan.³²

With the coming of Qingfu and Jishan, the vexation of the strained relationships among the provincial viceroys began to dwindle away after a decade of imperial maneuvers. The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Qingfu could finally extend his influence into Sichuan. Nevertheless, the resurgence of frontier emergencies³³ in western Sichuan and Tibet in the mid-eighteenth century was soon to upset the painstakingly achieved harmony. The onset of the new military campaigns tied Qingfu down in Sichuan. He could in no way oversee affairs in Shaanxi and Gansu provinces while he was engaged in directing military campaigns in western Sichuan. It had become apparent by that time that it was a failure for Qianlong to abate the strategic transformation of the Yongzheng era: the separation of the two frontier provinces, Shaanxi (together with Gansu) and Sichuan in administrative terms.

If Qianlong had experienced many headaches confronting the problems evoked by his decision to de-emphasize the Sichuan frontier, he did not feel any less painful retrenching the military buildup in the Southwest during the

³²*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 15, p. 1a.

³³The Zhandui Incident of 1745-1746, the Jinchuan Rebellion of 1746-1749, and the Tibetan Rebellion of 1750, see next section.

first decade of his rule. The military establishment in the Southwest had swollen throughout the Yongzheng period. As discussed in the previous chapters, the military was one important source for local economic recovery. It proved to be a reliable and big consumer of local products, among which grain was the biggest staple, the military was also an avenue for absorbing superfluous hands in the region which was attracting large numbers of migrants.³⁴ While it was easy to recruit soldiers in this region, it was not so easy to slim the military lineup when the center made a shift in frontier policy.³⁵

Actually, some disarmament had begun in the last year of the Yongzheng reign. When the seventh Dalai Lama was directed by Yongzheng to return to Lhasa, the Qing government had encountered the problem of how to disband three brigades that had been recruited particularly for safeguarding the Dalai Lama in Taining. But the provincial government knew it was virtually impossible to make this many people jobless overnight. The Governor-General of Sichuan at that time, Huang Tinggui proposed an adroit way to disband these three brigades, amounting to several

³⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 165, pp. 14a-b.

³⁵The conclusion of the military campaign against the Zunghars in the beginning of the Qianlong reign also brought in many jobless in the northwestern front. In 1737, the Suzhou 肅州 Circuit Intendant Huang Wenwei 黃文偉 reported to the throne on this phenomenon in the Hami area and requested rations to assist them to return home (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol.37, pp. 22b-23a).

thousand soldiers. It was to transfer most of the officers and the soldiers to adjacent garrisons.³⁶

The pattern of the Taining demobilization might have been repeated in other cases. The strategem of the provincial officials to respond to the call of disarmament by the central government was to reduce some soldiers in one place but asked to increase the military in other places. In 1742, the Governor-General of Yunnan Zhang Yunsui 張允隨³⁷ had overtly voiced his unwillingness to curtail the military forces in Yunnan, articulating the unique geographic and human settings in Yunnan³⁸ and proposed reluctantly to have 1160 soldiers reduced. Nevertheless, he postulated that the way he prepared to carry out this reduction was to stop filling any new vacancies, but not to take anybody out of

³⁶Huang proposed to the throne to merge seven hundred soldiers along with the Regional Vice-Commander of Taining to the nearby Hualin garrison, thus augmenting the the Hulin garrison into two brigades (There had been only three hundred soldiers in the Hualin brigade), and to create several positions for the officers of the three brigades in Taining; and to merge another one hundred soldiers from Taining to another nearby garrison, Fuhe 阜和 brigade. Thus more than half of the military personnel that were subject to demobilization were retained in service officially, let alone the ones who managed to stay through unofficial ways (*Shizong Shilu*, vol. 155, pp. 3a-b).

³⁷Zhang Yunsui was a Han Bannerman. He had been in different posts in Yunnan since the late Kangxi period. He became the Governor of Yunnan in the middle of the Yongzheng period. He was instrumental in copper mining in Yunnan and later in the project of the Jinsha River. He died in 1751 as the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou. His biography is in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol.307.

³⁸Zhang said: "Yunnan is isolated in remoteness, with hundreds of barbarian peoples inside, and three sides being frontiers. The situation of Yunnan is strategically important. In case of emergency, it is difficult to count on support from the neighboring provinces. It is totally dependent on the garrisons in the province to secure the authority [of the state] and to extinguish danger at its start. So there are difficulties to retrench the military forces." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 173, p. 11a.

the rank-and-file immediately.³⁹ Then it was a question of when these 1160 vacancies would occur. This approach of passive resistance to disarmament became rather popular in the Southwest in the following years. For example, the Governor-General of Guizhou Zhang Guangsi proposed exactly the same method as Zhang Yunsui to reduce the military force in Guizhou in 1745.⁴⁰

The tremendous pressure caused by disarmament fell first and foremost on the local government, in lieu of the central authorities. Although the new emperor had made it clear that he was determined to gradually liquidate all extra military forces recruited under the Yongzheng frontier activism, the local officials of the Southwest proved to be lukewarm in realizing this intention of the emperor. The disarmament was protracted and painstaking. It did not bring about much result after one decade's efforts. In 1744, a Vice Minister of the Ministry of Revenue, Liang Shizheng 梁詩正⁴¹ et al memorialized the throne to request that the provincial officials in Sichuan examine the soldiers who had been recruited since the first year of the Yongzheng reign and reduce their numbers. Liang's motivation was to trim

³⁹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 173, pp. 11a-12b.

⁴⁰Gaozong Shilu, vol. 236, pp. 7b-8b.

⁴¹Liang Shizheng (?-1763) acquired the degree of *jinshi* in 1730 and became the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Revenue in 1748, then was promoted to Minister in 1745. He distinguished himself by advocating economizing state expenditures, especially military expenditure. He proposed that the Manchu banners be engaged in the military colonization at the frontier areas, and that extra numbers of the military forces be cut down. Qing Shi Gao, vol. 303.

down military expenditures which seemed still a thorny problem for the central government.

As an outspoken proponent for retrenchment of expenditures, Liang spared no energy in pushing his agenda to reduce state expenditures in military and construction projects. Nevertheless, this proposal was doomed to be unwelcome among the provincial officials in the Southwest. Qingfu, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi appointed one year earlier, repudiated this motion by stating firmly that the ten thousand soldiers recruited in 1730 (the eighth year of the Yongzheng reign) had been demobilized in the last two years of the Yongzheng period. He argued further that many garrisons in Sichuan were strategically important, so that it was not appropriate to perform disarmament.⁴²

In spite of the continuous pressure from the central government for disarmament, military domination in the Southwest remained a reality during the first decade of the Qianlong era. The Yongzheng frontier expansion in the territories of the ethnic peoples in the Southwest left a remarkable legacy to the Qianlong period. In many newly expanded territories, the garrison or military outpost were the only hallmarks of the Qing authorities. Sometimes the military garrisons also undertook the duties of civil administration such as collecting tax from the aboriginal

⁴²Gaozong Shilu, vol. 225, pp.18a-20a.

peoples, since there were no civil officials appointed to same localities. In these areas, the military became the core of the newly established frontier community. Along with the armies, came their families and relatives. Also, many people of special skill such as blacksmiths, carpenters, bow-makers, tailors, doctors, veterinarians, leather makers, and cooks were drawn to the new frontiers where they were hired by the military. As the emperor once commented, half of population in these areas was military-related. It had been commonplace in history that the military played a pioneering role in migration to the frontiers.⁴³ While the expansion was still underway, it was simply not appropriate to carry out retrenchment in these areas.

If the disarmament policy of the first decade of the Qianlong period gave many headaches to the viceroys in the Southwest, the resurgence of the frontier emergencies in the second decade of the Qianlong period was a relief, of sorts, for them. Once the frontier crises arose again in the middle of the 1740s, the military buildup in the Southwest, which might never really decline, gained momentum once again.

The first decade of the Qianlong period passed in peace. But the continuous presence of the Zungharia in the Northwest still haunted the Qing empire. More particularly, the Zunghars still held an aggressive stance towards Tibet. Galdan Tsering asked repeatedly for the Qing throne's

⁴³James Lee, "Migration and Expansion in Chinese History."

permission to go to Tibet for the mangja ceremony. They ultimately made the trip to Lhasa in 1743. But the Tibetan leader Poluonai did not give them a warm reception. And the Tibetans refused the Zunghar request to have lamas sent to Zungharia. These developments did not escape the attention of the Qing throne. The emperor had kept a vigilant eye on what was going on and had to prepare for possible crisis in advance.⁴⁴

2. The Resurgence of Frontier Emergencies (1745-1776)

The peace of the early Qianlong era was shattered by new frontier emergencies around the mid-eighteenth century. During the twenty-one years between 1745-1776, the Qing dynasty was pulled into into a string of frontier campaigns of which the impact onto the local development in the Southwest was significant. Starting with the Zhandui Incident (1745-46) and the first Jinchuan campaign (1747-1749), the frontier operations intensified in 1750 with the advent of the Tibetan Rebellion and the third Tibetan expedition, and culminated with the Qianlong Zunghar campaigns which eliminated the Zunghar empire in 1757. The Qing throne was greatly encouraged by the successful Zunghar campaign and began to assume a more active stance in its diplomatic dealings and in its frontier strategy. This demarche resulted in more frontier wars in the post-Zunghar campaign period: the Muslim campaign of 1758-59, the Burmese

⁴⁴Gaozong Shilu, vol. 234, pp. 1b-2a.

campaign of 1765-69, and the second Jinchuan campaign of 1771-76.

The Zhandui Incident

The place where the first new emergency was triggered was in western Sichuan, or, the Kham area.⁴⁵ The extremely harsh natural environment prevented the area from being unified under a single authority. Since very early on, the area had been ruled by various local chieftains who were only symbolically subjugated to the Chinese central government prior to the Qing dynasty. Even after the Qing annexation of the area into Sichuan and Yunnan provinces began in the late Kangxi period,⁴⁶ Qing political control over the area was nominal except in some major strategic places such as Dajianlu, Litang and Batang. There was no Chinese migration into the area up to the middle of the eighteenth century. Even Qing civil officials were unwilling to go there to take the posts assigned to them. The only presence of the Qing authorities was the Qing military outposts along the difficult and bleak road between Chengdu and Lhasa via Dajianlu.

Ethnically, the people living in the area were a subdivision of the Tibetan group, who called themselves

⁴⁵For the general information on this area, see Section 1 of Chapter III.

⁴⁶About the Qing conquest of the area, see John Herman, "National Integration and Regional Hegemony: The Political and Cultural Dynamics of Qing State Expansion, 1650-1750."

Jiarongwa 嘉戎哇; and the language they spoke was *Jiarong* 嘉戎.⁴⁷ They identified themselves mainly by the domains of local chieftains (*tusi* 土司 or *tumu* 土目). Religiously, they were believers of Tibetan Lamaism. But what is worth noting is that they were not followers of the dominant Yellow Sect (*Gelukpa*) headed by the Dalai Lama; but, rather of the Red Sect of Lamaism (*Kargyupa*), which had been an antagonist of the Yellow Sect for generations.⁴⁸ Therefore, they did not recognize the hierarchy of the Yellow Sect. When the Mongol leader Gushri Khan claimed his governance over Tibet in 1642, he assigned one of his sons to the area of Kokonor (Qinghai). Since then, this branch of Gushri Khan's offspring extended its influence into the area of Kham.⁴⁹ The Qing suppression of the Lobszang Dandzin Rebellion in 1723 eliminated the Khoshot Mongols' control of Qinghai. The domination of the Khoshot Mongols in the area of Kham was also weakened. Thus the local chieftains in the area were rendered more autonomy. But meanwhile, the conflicts among the different local chieftains were further intensified.

⁴⁷"Jiarongwa" is a transliteration from Tibetan, which means the people who live in the valleys close to the Han Chinese. Jiarong language is commonly regarded as one branch of Tibetan. But there are scholars who argue that "Jiarong" belongs to the Qiang 羌 language system. So long as the question with regard to the relationship between the Tibetan people and the Qiang people is not solved, this controversy will remain.

⁴⁸According to an investigation made by Mei Xinru in the 1920s-1930s, the majority of the lamaseries in Zhandui (it was called Zhanhua 瞻化 at that time) still belonged to the Red Sect. See Mei Xinru, *Xi Kang*, pp. 160-161.

⁴⁹The Khoshot Mongols of Qinghai had actually extended their political influence to today's north Yunnan province. Before the Wu Sangui Rebellion, Wu Sangui ceded Zhongdian of today's Yunnan to the Mongols to trade for their neutrality or support. See Section 1 of Chapter II.

The prelude to the new wave of frontier emergencies was the Zhandui 瞻對 Incident of 1745-1746.⁵⁰ The area of Zhandui was located on both sides of the Yalong 鴉龍 River, right on the route from Sichuan to Tibet. The people of Zhandui were well-known for their martiality and their Robinhood-like behavior: to pillage passing official equipages and merchant caravans. Aided by the perilous geographic conditions in the Yalong River valley, the people of Zhandui had successfully frustrated Qing attacks in 1730. At the end of 1744 and early 1745, Qing troops withdrawing from Tibet were repeatedly looted by the Zhandui people.⁵¹ In the spring of 1745, the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Qingfu proposed to the throne to use military forces to render them a lesson. Unwilling to drag in any meaningless frontier conflict, the Qianlong emperor endorsed the action only with

⁵⁰The following account of the Zhandui Incident is mainly based on the records in *Gaozong Shilu*: vol. 239, pp. 3a-4b, 23b-26a, 32b-33b; vol. 240, pp. 9a-10a; vol. 242, pp. 18a-b, pp. 27a-28a, pp. 29b-30a; vol. 243, pp. 20b-22a; vol. 245, pp. 28a-29a; vol. 247, pp. 19b-20b, pp. 21b-22a; vol. 249, pp. 28b-31a, pp. 33a-b; vol. 251, pp. 22b-23b; vol. 252, pp. 24b-27a; vol. 253, pp. 22a-23b, pp. 23b-24a, pp. 25a-b; vol. 254, pp. 25b-26b; vol. 255, pp. 32a-33a, pp. 33a-34b, pp. 34b-35a; vol. 257, pp. 1b-2a, pp. 18b-20b, 20b-21b, pp. 21b-22a; vol. 259, pp. 16a-18a, pp. 38b-39b, pp. 39b-40b, pp. 40b-41a; vol. 260, pp. 14a-15a, pp. 15a-16a, pp. 15a-16a, pp. 16b-18b; vol. 261, pp. 7b-9b, pp. 10b-11b, pp. 35a-36a; vol. 262, pp. 5b-7a; vol. 263, pp. 9a-b, 3a-b; vol. 265, pp. 35b-36b; vol. 266, pp. 17a-18a, pp. 18b-19b; vol. 268, pp. 2b-3b, pp. 3b-4b, p. 4b, pp. 4b-8b; vol. 269, pp. 17b-20b; vol. 271, p. 5a, pp. 12b-13b, pp. 17a-18a; vol. 279, pp. 9b-10b; vol. 280, pp. 22b-25b. An original treatment of the incident can be found in Herman's, pp. 237-254.

⁵¹Some argue that the antagonism of the Zhandui people towards the Qing was triggered by the residency of the seventh Dalai Lama in this area. Being believers of the Red Sect, the Zhandui people were hostile to the religious leader of the Yellow Sect, the Dalai Lama. If this was a long-term cause for the Zhandui Incident, the direct cause of the unrest is still to be explored, since the Dalai Lama left the area in 1734, ten years before the Zhandui Rebellion set out.

reluctance. What underlined the Qianlong's determination to resort to the military action was that he was concerned the safety of the avenue connecting Sichuan and Lhasa. As he put it: "... the armies are now stationed in Tibet. How can it be allowed to be harassed by those ugly kind. It really reaches the point that we have to resort to military action."⁵² Therefore, the Qing troops began to storm the stockaded villages in Zhandui in the spring of 1745.

The Qing campaign to subjugate the Zhandui chieftains proved to be a difficult and costly one. At first, the throne believed in a speedy triumph and an once for all solution, "yi lao yong yi 一勞永逸 (to reach a solution once for all)," as the emperor frequently said, to the harassment to the Sichuanese-Tibetan artery. The soldiers in the front were chiefly the native soldiers recruited from the other local chieftains' domains in the area. Some thousands of Tibetan soldiers were also recruited at the consent of the Tibetan leader Poluonai. Nevertheless, the throne soon found out that it was a mistake to start this campaign. Not only did more and more money pour into the area at the request of the Sichuan officials and field commanders, but also the scale of war kept escalating. The native soldiers were replaced with regular Qing armies; the neighboring provinces, Yunnan and Guizhou, were also mobilized to provide military forces and supplies. In the autumn of 1745, Qingfu headed to

⁵²Gaozong Shilu, vol. 239, p. 4a.

Chengdu from Xian to oversee the campaign. He was thence tied up in Sichuan by never-ending frontier emergencies until his dismissal in 1747.

The most difficult part of the fight for the Qing armies was the ramparts and blockhouses that the Zhandui people built on cliffs, passes and the tops of mountains. The sizable Qing armies were almost deprived of all the superiority they were supposed to possess by those blockhouses and very difficult transportation conditions. Moreover, the problem in supplying of the provisions became increasingly serious. Although the Qing had mobilized all available resources, it seemed that little could be done with the situation. Expenditures exceeded one million taels of silver. The confrontation had turned out to be fruitless by the spring of 1746, seven months after the campaign started. Already at the end of his patience, the emperor urged Qingfu to conclude the operation as soon as possible. Under this pressure, Qingfu began to plan to use the personal rivals of Zhandui leader Bangun 班滾 to upset the resistance from inside. Meanwhile, having realized that it was impossible to gain the upperhand in this campaign, Qingfu and other frontier commanders planned a scheme to conclude the operation to comply with the emperor's will.

On July 19, 1746, Qing soldiers piled straw in some dozens of abandoned blockhouses and burned them. Following the fire, the Qing officials reported the emperor that

Bangun, the very person who was responsible for this tenuous resistance to the Qing campaign, was burned to ashes in the fire. The campaign was thus concluded. It turned out later that Bangun did not die in the fire, but simply fled to an other village to hide. In any case, Qianlong was satisfied to know about the end of the wasteful campaign. He readily accepted the fabricated triumph of the Qing troops.⁵³

The First Jinchuan Campaign

The Zhandui Incident was only the prelude to another greater campaign for the Qing dynasty: the first Jinchuan campaign.⁵⁴ Less than one year after the Zhandui Incident, the throne was flooded with reports from officials in Sichuan about the disobedient conduct of the Jinchuan 金川 chieftain Shaluoben 莎羅奔. The clamour for war became increasingly high in following months.

Jinchuan and Small Jinchuan 小金川 are two tributaries of the Dadu River 大渡河. The name of "Jinchuan" means "gold river", because of gold ore in the river valleys. The topography in the two river valleys is extremely precipitous, layers of steep mountains sandwiched two

⁵³During the first Jinchuan campaign, the conspiracy was exposed to the throne by new Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi Zhang Guangsi. Qingfu and other officials responsible for the fabrication were severely punished. Qingfu was ordered to commit suicide in October, 1747. The Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Li Zhicui 李質粹 was executed the following year.

⁵⁴The following account of the first Jinchuan campaign is based on the copious documents in *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 284 to vol. 351; Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, pp. 109-113; Wei Yuan, *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 7.

rushing rivers on which cable bridges and leather canoes connected the two sides of rivers. In the valleys, it was mostly hazy with frequent rain and snow. It was dim in the mountains even during the daytime. The area had never been within the regular pale of the central Chinese authorities, though some administrative bureaus had been established from time to time.⁵⁵ At this time, there were two tribes of Jiarong-speaking people living in the area. One was Cujin 促浸 centered in Jinchuan, another was Zanla 攢拉 centered in Small Jinchuan. The harsh ecological conditions in the area did not provide sufficient livelihood for the people who lived there for generations. The output⁵⁶ from small pieces of arable land on mountains and cliffs could only feed the people for half year. For the rest of year, the Jinchuan men had to bring their families and to go to hire themselves out in Maozhou 茂州, Wen County 汶縣 and Bao County 保縣, where the residents were Qiang people, Tibetan and Han Chinese and the Qing had regular administrative control. The local people called this hiring out as "xiaba 下壩 (go down to the plain)."⁵⁷ As in the Zhandui area, the two Jinchuan areas was also secured with many blockhouses. In 1666 (the fifth year of the Kangxi period), the chieftain of the Small Jinchuan submitted to the Qing and was granted an official

⁵⁵During the Sui dynasty (581-618), a county was set up in Jinchuan. During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the area was under the Zagu 雜谷 *anfusi*. See Gu Yanwu, *Tianxia Junquo Libing Shu*, vol. 20, p. 24b.

⁵⁶The major crops in the area are highland barley and buckwheat.

⁵⁷Wang Chang, *Shujiao Jiwen*.

title by the Qing authorities.⁵⁸ During the Qing's first Tibetan Expedition of 1717-20, the chieftain of Jinchuan Shaluoben and his army joined the Qing expedition to pierce into Lhasa under the command of Yue Zhongqi, a Brigade Commander at that time. In the early Yongzheng period, Shaluoben was entitled Pacification Commissioner (*anfushi* 安撫使) by the Qing throne.

No sooner than the fire in Zhandui was completely extinguished, did new trouble in Jinchuan emerge.⁵⁹ In 1747, Shaluoben began to attack other tribes in the neighboring area. The Governor of Sichuan Jishan sent troops to restrain Shaluoben. But it turned out that the Qing armies themselves were soon involved in the hostilities. In the first half of 1747, Qingfu along with the provincial officials of Sichuan petitioned the throne to mount a campaign against Jinchuan. Having some doubts about the triumph of the Zhandui campaign, Qianlong was in no way interested in another similar mess in western Sichuan. Nevertheless, the clamour for war was loud and once again the same arguments such as "to resolve the problem once for all" poured into the ears of the emperor. Pressed by the border viceroys, the emperor endorsed the campaign in the summer of 1747. Impressed with his quick triumph in suppressing the Miao Rebellion in the

⁵⁸Wei Yuan recorded in *Sheng Wu Ji* that the chieftain of the Small Jinchuan was entitled "*tusi* 土司 (native chieftain)" by the Qing authorities in 1666 (the fifth year of the Kangxi reign).

⁵⁹For the Qing records on the first Jinchuan campaign, see *Gaozong Shilu*, from vol. 284 to vol. 353.

early Qianlong period, the emperor ordered Zhang Guangsi, the current Governor-General of Guizhou, to go to Sichuan to direct the campaign. In order to give him more direct access to the resources in Sichuan, Zhang was appointed the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi on April 20, 1747. Deprived of the post of the Governor-General, Qingfu was ordered to stay in Sichuan for the time being.⁶⁰

Qianlong obviously had inflated expectations of Zhang. Moreover, the throne did not have a clear sense of how different the ecological circumstances in Jinchuan were from that in the Miao area of Guizhou, Guizhou province.⁶¹ The emperor ordered Zhang to apply what he used towards the Miao people to harness the Jinchuan people. Facing a similar situation that the Qing forces had faced in the Zhandui Incident: precipitous topographic condition and stone blockhouses which were hard to overcome, Zhang's pretention in the beginning of the campaign was largely lost before long. So was the patience of the throne. In the spring of 1748, Qianlong made two decisions in terms of personnel arrangement in the campaign. First, the emperor appointed Yue Zhongqi, who was living in his home in Chengdu with no official title, a Regional Commander and ordered him to join

⁶⁰Qingfu remained in Sichuan to assist Zhang in directing the campaign until the autumn of that year. Once Qingfu returned to Peking, he was charged with cheating the throne in the Zhandui Incident by reporting the phony death of Bengun to the throne. Qingfu was dismissed, and then in 1749, was ordered to commit suicide. See his biography in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 297.

⁶¹In the beginning of the Jinchuan campaign, Qianlong even referred to the Jinchuan people as "Miao fan 苗番 (Miao barbarian)."

Zhang in directing the campaign.⁶² Pretty soon Qianlong promoted Yue to Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. Since his release from imprisonment in 1737, Yue had lived in Chengdu, his hometown, for ten quiet years.⁶³ As Qianlong acknowledged, his background in dealing with the aboriginal peoples in western Sichuan was peerless among all Qing officials.⁶⁴ Second, the emperor appointed a Grand Academician, Naqing 納親,⁶⁵ the Grand Minister Commander (*jinglue* 經略) to the front. These measures signaled the ebbing away of the emperor's confidence in Zhang and meanwhile the escalation of the campaign: it became the very focus of the country's attention in the late 1740s.

The scale of mobilization for the Jinchuan campaign was beyond the expectations of the Qing authorities. Not only were the other two Southwestern provinces, Yunnan and Guizhou, ordered to send troops to the front, many other provinces were also mobilized to send troops to Sichuan. In addition, the prodigious expenditure of this campaign

⁶²The Minister of the Ministry of War, Bandi 班第, a veteran official of Tibetan affairs, who was at the Jinchuan front in taking charge of the provisions, secretly memorialized the throne to recommend Yue Zhongqi in early 1748.

⁶³For Yue's dismissal and imprisonment, see Section 2 of Chapter IV.

⁶⁴Qianlong excused Yue's alleged dereliction in the Zunghar campaign of the Yongzheng period by saying that, as an expert in the affairs of western Sichuan, he would not be expected to be good in northwestern affairs. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 313, pp. 13b-14a.

⁶⁵Naqing was from the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. His grandfather Ebilong 遏必隆 was one of the regents of the Kangxi emperor. Later Ebilong was complicated in the case of Oboi and was jailed for trial. Kangxi pardoned him from death penalty. Naqing had been trusted by the Yongzheng emperor. He became a Grand Minister of State in 1737 and had been the Minister of the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Personnel. See Naqing's biography in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 301.

startled the Qing authorities. Qianlong became more and more impatient with Zhang Guangsi, as well as Naqing.⁶⁶ In the winter of 1748, the throne called back Zhang and Naqing to report on the campaign in person. Meanwhile, Qianlong appointed the Grand Academician Fuheng 傅恆 (1719?-1769)⁶⁷ as Grand Minister Commander (*jinglue*) to the Jinchuan front. Fuheng was a trusted court official of Qianlong. His brother Fuqing 傅清 was then the Grand Minister of Tibet (Amban). Occasionally the throne sent messages to Fuqing through Fuheng's correspondence with his brother. Thus he had already involved himself in frontier affairs before this appointment.

After Fuheng's appointment, the Qianlong emperor ordered Zhang Guangsi and Naqing jailed for trial. Neither

⁶⁶One of the critical event that accelerated the change of the emperor's attitude towards Zhang and Naqing was the emperor's audience of Ma Liangzhu, a veteran general at the Jinchuan front, who was accused of missing military opportunist by Zhang Guangsi. Ma had been a old hand of the western frontier. Being a native of Gansu, he served in the rank-and-file in Sichuan during the Kangxi period. Later he followed the suit of Yue Shenglong to change his domicile to Chengdu. Ma joined the first Tibetan Expedition and the Second Tibetan Expedition under Yue Zhongqi. Knowing that Ma was an expert in dealing with the Jinchuan people in the area, Qianlong ordered to escort Ma to the capital when Zhang accused him of dereliction of his duties. It was through the conversation with Ma that the emperor obtained the first-hand information about the campaign. He then ordered to pardon Ma's lapse and sent him back to the front. Not long after that, he ordered Zhang and Naqing to go back to the capital.

⁶⁷Fuheng was from the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. He was the younger brother of the Qianlong empress, who died in 1748. He joined the Council of State in 1745, and since then remained to be a major officer for twenty-four years. After Naqing was executed, Fuheng became the most important court official of the Qianlong emperor. His biography is in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 301; *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 209-210; Hummel, pp. 252-253; also see Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp. 84-85.

survived the imperial trial.⁶⁸ At this point, Qianlong already began to contemplate withdrawing from this fruitless campaign. Perhaps one reason for the emperor to put Naqing on trial was that Naqing did not emphasize the difficult aspects of the campaign in his reports to the throne and therefore did not propose to end the campaign. Therefore Qianlong viewed Fuheng's mission as managing the conclusion of the campaign with an acceptable result. Qianlong showed his utmost trust and favor to Fuheng, hoping that Fuheng would realize his unspoken desire to end the campaign and prepare some suitable excuses for the throne to stop the campaign. Nevertheless, Fuheng was not willing to return from Jinchuan with empty hands. After his arrival, he reported the throne on the difficult topography and the disadvantages experienced by the Qing forces in Jinchuan, which had not been reported on by Zhang and Naqing. On the other hand, he expressed his determination to overcome these disadvantages and to bring the Jinchuan chieftain Shaluoben to subjugation.

Qianlong was rather disappointed with the militant attitude of Fuheng. To prevent Fuheng from dragging-out the campaign, Qianlong had to make his intention clear. Over the following two weeks, the emperor issued lengthy edicts

⁶⁸Zhang Guangsi was executed in early 1749. Naqing was escorted back to the Jinchuan front to be executed in front of the Qing armies. But the Jinchuan campaign ended while he was en route to Sichuan. So Qianlong ordered him to commit suicide with a sword of his grandfather Ebilong on the spot. He did so near Banlan 班蘭 Mountain in early 1750 (*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 301).

almost everyday to Fuheng urging him to end the war. In these edicts, what was repeated was that the state had spent too much money on the campaign, that the people in Sichuan had suffered too much supporting the campaign, and that the emperor never had the intention of bringing this piece of bleak land into the pale of the Qing empire.

Although the orders to stop the campaign from the throne flooded to him, Fuheng was still firm in carrying out his own plan. There were two advantages for him. First, the people of Jinchuan had been equally exhausted by the war of more than two years. They had begun to discuss a truce with the Qing forces. Second, more importantly, Yue Zhongqi did not provide wholehearted service until Zhang Guangsi, the very person who helped pull Yue down during the Yongzheng Zunghar campaign,⁶⁹ was removed from the position of commander-in-chief of the campaign. Yue was apparently more active and constructive in cooperating with Fuheng. Yue and Fuheng decided to change the tactics that Zhang had used: which was to attack each blockhouse at the cost of heavy casualties and then to hold the blockhouse as a stronghold for next step. What Yue and Fu planned on doing was to send a dispatch to Shaluoben's headquarters via byway while averting the enemy's attention by making a feint attack on

⁶⁹During the Qing Zunghar campaign of the Yongzheng period, Yue Zhongqi was commander-in-chief. He was, however, dismissed from all positions and jailed for trial due to some ill feelings Yongzheng had for him in 1732. In condemning Yue Zhongqi, Zhang Guangsi, the deputy Commander-in-chief of the campaign, played a critical role. See Section 2 of Chapter IV.

the frontline. In early 1749, Yue led a dozen soldiers to Shaluoben's blockhouse to persuade him to surrender. Having once been a subordinate of Yue, Shaluoben realized that it was an opportunity for him to get out of this plight. He treated Yue as if he was Yue's subordinate. Next day, he followed Yue to the Qing headquarters and surrendered.⁷⁰

This unexpected result was received by the throne with surprise and joy. Upon the return of Fuheng to the capital, the emperor held a magnificent triumphant ceremony and granted Fuheng the first rank of duke (*weiyong gong* 威勇公 which means the duke of power and valour). Yue Zhongqi was granted the third rank of duke (*weixin gong* 威信公 which means the duke of power and trustworthiness). Once again, Yue rose to power and fame through frontier warfare.

The Zhandui campaign and the first Jinchuan campaign bore some similarities. First, unlike the previous frontier campaigns during the Kangxi and the Yongzheng periods, these two campaigns were not significant to the Qing frontier strategy, though they were very costly. Second, as John Herman points out, the local Qing officials were instrumental in fermenting the hostilities.⁷¹ The throne was pushed into an abrupt decision by the clamour of war from

⁷⁰Shaluoben was stunned by Yue's courage to enter his headquarters and moved by Yue's trust of him. For the dramatic details of this episode, see *Yue Xiangqin Gong Xinglue*. Shaluoben promised to submit the murderers whom the Qing authorities required, to submit arms and to provide symbolic tribute to the Qing. The Qing throne also exempted punishment on him, as promised by Yue Zhongqi to him.

⁷¹Herman, pp. 255-283.

below. In other words, the throne was misinformed and misguided by the provincial officials. Before Fuheng's arrival at the Jinchuan front, no single official had presented to the central government a clear picture of how difficult the topographic conditions were in the area. What had reached the top tier of the decision-making mechanism was that it would be an easy and quick victory to "resolve the problem once and for all." Reluctant to reverse his non-militant frontier policy, Qianlong initially was unwilling to agree to a war. Nevertheless, with the escalation of the campaign, the emperor shifted his attitude. He tended to be even more determined than the field commanders and the provincial officials in Sichuan. He turned down the possibility to accept a surrender from Shaluoben and stuck to an "once and for all" solution. More particularly, after the Zhandui conspiracy was exposed, Qianlong was further convinced that it was the Qing's impotent disposition of the Zhandui Incident that invited the Jinchuan Rebellion. But, he changed his attitude again when he sent Fuheng to the Jinchuan front. At that point, he was determined to end the campaign as soon as possible.

What made Qianlong shift his position was the tremendous expenditures of the campaign. Almost 20 million taels of silver had been spent on the two year campaign.⁷² While this heavy flow of state revenue to the Southwest did

⁷²Gaozongq Shilu, vol. 331, p. 31b.

not serve any meaningful goal of the empire, the throne was also concerned about yielding too much power to the local officials and the military commanders. The executions of Zhang Guangsi and Naqing were not only a punishment for their dereliction, but also a reminder of the power possessed by the central authorities over the field commanders.

Another reason for Qianlong's decision to end the first Jinchuan campaign as soon as possible was the deterioration of the situation in Tibet from 1747 and the increasing alarm of the Zunghar threat towards Tibet.⁷³ Eager to be free from the Jinchuan campaign and to concentrate on Tibetan affairs which were much more crucial to the security of the Qing empire, the Qing throne had demonstrated increasing impatience towards the first Jinchuan campaign. But Qianlong's concern was well founded. Only one year after the first Jinchuan campaign, another rebellion occurred in Tibet in 1750.

The Tibetan Rebellion of 1750 and Qianlong's Tibetan Campaign

Although the two campaigns of the 1740s did not in any direct way affect the Qing's greater diplomacy, which was centered on Tibetan affairs, by 1749 Qianlong might have had to admit by 1749 that his peace-oriented frontier strategy had met its end. The fragile peace in the Northwest between

⁷³Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, p. 185.

the Qing and the Zungharia had been interrupted by numerous alarms. During the 1740s, while the Qing took pains to wrestle with the revolts of the indigenous peoples in western Sichuan, the peace policy was further threatened by another critical incident: the passing away of the Tibetan leader Poluonai in February, 1747. Before Poluonai's death, some important developments had been unfolding in Tibet while the Zhandui and the first Jinchuan campaigns were going on. Aware of the significance of these developments, Qianlong had never let the turbulent incidents in western Sichuan obscure his observation of the Tibetan affairs.

Since the seventh Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa from Taining, Sichuan in 1735, the relationship between him and Tibetan political leader Poluonai had been anything but smooth. As an able political leader, Poluonai had successfully concentrated much power in his own hands before the return of the Dalai Lama. Since 1745, reports about the discord between the two began to reach Beijing. The Qing Ambans stationed in Lhasa had to play the role of reconcilers from time to time. In 1746, the Dalai Lama even secretly sent one of his officials to Beijing to complain about Poluonai's unfair treatment of him.⁷⁴ In January, 1747, the emperor issued an edict to Poluonai which read: "I regard you two (Poluonai and the Dalai Lama) as one without any partiality. If there is even slight discord between you

⁷⁴Petech, pp. 175-176.

two, so that the local community becomes unstable, then you will disappoint my expectations and trust very much."⁷⁵

Soon after this incident, Poluonai died in February, 1747.⁷⁶ Poluonai's second son aGyur-med rnam-rgyal (朱爾默特那木扎勒 Zhuermote Namuzhale) inherited the title of Prince, becoming the new leader of Tibet by the endorsement of the Qing court. What did not fade away with Poluonai's demise was the animosity between the Dalai Lama and the Poluo family. The young Prince was even more hostile to the Dalai Lama. His haughty and imperious personality made the hostility even more overt. At Poluonai's funeral, he refused the Dalai Lama's condolences and offer to chant sutras at the mourning ceremony. Only through the accomodation of Fuqing, the Qing Amban, did the young Prince allow the Dalai Lama pray for the deceased.⁷⁷

During the three years aGyur-med rnam-rgyal ruled Tibet, the relationship between him and the Dalai Lama never improved. While paying great attention to the Jinchuan campaign, Qianlong had kept a close watch on the developments in Lhasa.

As portrayed by both Tibetan writers and Qing officials, aGyur-med was a dangerous personality. He planned to kill the Dalai Lama and seize power for himself. To obtain this aim he had to first defy Qing influence in Tibet

⁷⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 280, p. 3b-5a.

⁷⁶Petech gives a very good evaluation of Poluonai as the Tibetan leader of the period. See Petech, pp. 177-180.

⁷⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 296, p. 10a.

for the Qing also supported the Dalai Lama.⁷⁸ He made military arrangements aiming to prevent Qing intervention in Tibetan affairs and to isolate the Dalai Lama from his own followers. The young Prince's brother Ye-ses-ts'e-brtan (朱爾默特策布登 Zhuermote Cebudeng) was the chief official in Mnga'-ris 阿里 which was the region bordering Zungharia. In December, 1749, aGyur-med sent armies to kill his brother and one son of his brother. More seriously, he reportedly sent his deputy to the Zunghars to seek support.⁷⁹

On November 15, 1750, Fuqing and another Amban Labudun 拉布敦 summoned the young Prince into their bureau and killed him. The two Ambans subsequently asked Pandita, a Tibetan noble with a title of duke granted by the Qing throne, to act as head of the Tibetan government. While there were few who would rise to protest the murder of the young Prince by the Chinese officials, one follower of aGyur-med mobilized a mob of 1000 men to stage an utterly fanatic attack on the Chinese residence. Fuqing and Labudun fought with the mob but both of them were killed in the melee. Along with them over one hundred Chinese, both soldiers and civilians, died, either by suicide or by the mob. After having conducted the pillage and slaughter, the mob dispersed, and their head

⁷⁸Up to this point, the Qing government had carried out a policy of keeping the political and religious authorities in Tibet separate. The Dalai Lama was supported by the Qing as the highest religious leader in the Lamaist world. But the Dalai Lama was not given any political power. Although aGyur-med was given full political power in ruling Tibet by the Qing authorities, he still deemed the Dalai Lama a threat to him, especially when he tried to get rid of the Qing control in Tibet.

⁷⁹Ding Shicun, *Zhu Zang Dacheng Kao*, p. 41.

fled. The Dalai Lama and Pandita stepped in to restore order.⁸⁰

When the news reached Beijing, Qianlong was outraged. He ordered that the Governor-General of Sichuan Celeng 策楞 and the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Yue Zhongqi lead an expedition of eight hundred soldiers into Tibet to quell the rebellion. When the Qing expedition arrived in Lhasa, order had already been restored. Pandita arrested some people who took part in the riot against the Qing Ambans and the residences and handed them over to the Qing expedition. This Qing expedition thus did not have any battles in Tibet.

Qianlong saw the 1750 Rebellion as a juncture in stabilizing the Tibetan political layout. He let Celeng and the new Ambans institute a reform of the Tibetan political system. Accordingly, the Qing officials abolished the post of Prince, and established a government consisting of four Kaloons of equal position. It was during this reform that it was made clear that all kaloons had to obey the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama and the Qing Ambans. In the following year, Celeng and others proposed thirteen propositions to reinforce the political reform.⁸¹ The Amban system was further consolidated according to the thirteen propositions. Meanwhile, the Qing military station in Tibet was restored to the scale of the Yongzheng period. Since then 1,500

⁸⁰Petech, pp. 198-202.

⁸¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 385, pp. 13a-19b.

soldiers were regularly stationed in Tibet. The 1750 incident was another turning point in the relationship between the Qing throne and Tibet. It hallmarked the end of the governance of Tibet by a secular and hereditary powerful family: the Poluo family since 1728. The Qing government gave back the power to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, thus starting the era of the combination of church and state in Tibet.⁸²

The Zunghar Campaigns and the Elimination of Zungharia

The Zunghar threat of interfering in Tibetan affairs, however, still remained after the 1750 Rebellion in Tibet was quenched. As Qianlong commented later, the Zunghars would be the most serious challenger to the stability of the Lamaist world in the vast Chinese frontier lines in the north, the northwest and the west. Although Qianlong had not dared to launch a sizable campaign to eliminate this long-time enemy, neither would he let slip a perfect chance to put this dangerous foe away.⁸³

After Galdan Tsering died in 1745, the Zungharia was plagued with a succession crisis. Galdan Tsering was first succeeded by his son, Tsewang Dorji Namgyal 策妄多爾濟那木扎勒. Quickly shown to be incompetent, he was deposed in 1750.

⁸²Petech clearly points this out in the chapter "The End of the 'Kingdom' " of China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century, pp. 198-216.

⁸³About Qianlong's Zunghar campaigns, see Barfield, pp. 292-294; Xiao Yishan, Qing Dai Tongshi, vol. 2, pp. 87-97; Wei Yuan, Shengwu Ji, vol. 4.

Another son of Galdan Tesring, Lama Darja 達爾扎 became the new leader of the Zungharia. But Dawachi 達瓦齊, the grandson of Tsering Dondup, the general who had invaded Tibet in 1717, challenged the legitimacy of Lama Darja and went to war with Lama Darja. In 1751, Lama Darja was killed and Dawachi took the throne. By 1755, hundreds of thousands Zunghars began to flee the disorders brought by the civil war in the Zungharia and sought refuge under the Qing authorities. Among the defectors was a Khoyid 輝特 chieftan Amursana 阿睦爾撒納 who had played a major role in assisting Dawachi seize the power. Not acknowledging the legitimacy of either Lama Darja or Dawachi, Qianlong did see these crises inside the Zungharia as a great opportunity for the Qing dynasty to settle the century long problem once and for all.⁸⁴

In 1755, a new Zunghar campaign was launched. At this stage, the emperor's intention was to send the Zunghar tribes seeking refuge under the Qing back to the Ili area and to disintegrate the Zungharia by entitling four Zunghar Khans in that area.⁸⁵ Aided by the defected Zunghar chieftains, the campaign progressed with surprising speed. Within five months, the Qing expedition took over Ili and captured Dawachi. Nevertheless, after the Qing main forces left Ili, Amursana claimed himself the new ruler of the Zunghar empire and challenged the Qing authorities. Qianlong wasted no time in ordering another expedition in 1756,

⁸⁴Gaozong Shilu, vol. 464, pp. 9a-10a.

⁸⁵Gaozong Shilu, vol. 548, p. 3b.

driving Amursana to the Kazakhs. But when the Qing forces withdrew from this area, the Zunghar tribes struck back. And so did Amursana.

At this point, the Qianlong emperor had to make a choice whether it was necessary or not to annihilate the Zunghar tribes. He began to talk about "annihilation (*yong jue gengchu* 永絕根除)" of the Zunghar state in late 1756. In 1757, the last campaign against the remaining Zunghars was staged. Coincidentally, an epidemic of smallpox engulfed Inner Asia, the base area of the Zunghars. While many Zunghars, including Amursana himself,⁸⁶ died of smallpox, numerous Zunghars were killed indiscriminately by the Qing armies under the guideline of eliminating this warlike people postulated by the Qianlong emperor. As a result, Zungharia was obliterated and a small number of surviving Zunghar people were relocated to Manchuria. In order to repopulate the vast Gobi area which used to be the territory of a powerful empire, the Qing encouraged Muslims and Han Chinese to migrate into the area. Once thriving nomadic empire thus met its tragic termination.⁸⁷

Compared with the previous Qing campaigns against the Zunghars, the Qianlong victory was an easy one. The internal strife among the Zunghars and the outbreak of smallpox

⁸⁶Amursana fled to Russia in 1757 and died of smallpox there subsequently.

⁸⁷Only a very small number of the Zunghar people remained in the Ili area. They lived through the Qing dynasty under strict supervision. In the early twentieth century, a small republic was established by the offspring of the Zunghar empire. But it did not last long.

rendered the Qing a better position in the campaign. Qianlong was shrewd enough to seize the chance to wipe out this long-time enemy of the Qing empire. The campaigns of the 1750s were truly significant. They represent a turning point in the Qing frontier undertakings. After the Zunghar empire was eliminated, the north and the northwest frontiers of China were secured. More particularly, the annihilation of the Zungharia safeguarded, to a great extent, the domination of the Qing dynasty over Tibet. With the Zunghars gone, the Qing dynasty would be much more at ease with its western frontier, no longer afraid of Zunghar intervention into Tibetan affairs.

Another important ramification of the triumph of the Zunghar campaign was that Qianlong let go of his intention, which he had harbored when he came to the throne, of preferring peaceful diplomacy to his father's aggressive strategy. This change was well-embodied in an edict he issued to fence away the criticism of his Zunghar campaign. In this edict, he overtly defended his aggressive and merciless position towards the Zunghars. And he emphasized that it was vital for the security of the Qing dynasty to annihilate this nation without mercy. In addition, Qianlong displayed freely his confidence in the military might of the Qing empire. He alluded his willingness to go to more frontier wars if he wanted.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Gaozong Shilu, vol. 543, pp. 12a-16b.

The instant consequence of Qianlong's shift of his attitude was his decision to launch a campaign against the Muslims in the far Northwest immediately after the end of the Zunghar campaign. The Muslim campaign of 1758-59 crushed the independence attempt of the Muslims in Chinese Eastern Turkestan, putting this area under the direct rule of the Qing dynasty.⁸⁹ Unlike any of the previous frontier campaigns in the Northwest, this one was not aimed at resolving any threat to the Qing empire. Qianlong was more motivated by aggression than the security of the empire. Between the lines in the edicts he issued in those years, Qianlong could hardly hide his enjoyment in watching his territory expand, even to the point where it had never been conquered by any of the previous Chinese emperors. As Qianlong reiterated, the wealth of the state allowed him to be engaged in such a campaign without impairing the welfare of people. Following the Muslim campaign, a power-based diplomacy became dominant in the Qing frontier strategy.

The Burmese Campaign of 1765-69⁹⁰

During 1765-1769, the Qing engaged itself in another protracted yet difficult frontier war. For the first time the antagonist of the Qing dynasty was not in the North or

⁸⁹About the Qing Muslim campaign, see Xiao Yishan *Qingdai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp. 97-104.

⁹⁰For the Burma campaign, see Xiao Yishan *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp.118-128; Wang Chang *Zheng Mian Jilue*; *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 752 to vol. 849.

the West, but in the South. The war was with Burma, a southern neighbor of the Qing empire bordering with Yunnan province. Burma had not had any relationship with the Qing dynasty since Wu Sangui went into Burma to catch the last Southern Ming emperor Zhu Youlang in 1662.⁹¹ From 1750, through the intermediation of a Chinese silver mine owner in the border area, Wu Shangxian 吳尚賢,⁹² the king of Burma began to pay tribute to the Qing throne. Since some earlier time, several local chieftains in the area of Puer 普洱 prefecture of Yunnan province had been obliged to pay tribute to the king of Burma. They ceased to do so, however, after the founding of a new Burmese kingdom by Alompra (雍藉牙 yongjiya) in 1754.⁹³ In 1765, the king of Burma started to use force to press the chieftains in Puer to pay tribute. The harassment by the Burmese of these local chieftains eventually invoked a war between the Qing dynasty and Burma.

Qianlong had envisaged getting rid of this frontier trouble in one easy stroke as Burma was a state of no importance and no power to the Qing throne. Nevertheless, Qianlong was soon frustrated. Not only did the war not end quickly, it also turned out to be very difficult. The Manchu

⁹¹See Section 2 of Chapter I.

⁹²During this period, hundreds of thousands of Chinese went to the border areas between China and Burma to open silver mines. Over the years, this group of people formed a local community independent of both Qing and Burmese authorities. Wu's motive in persuading the Burmese king to pay tribute to the Qing throne was to raise his own influence.

⁹³About the origins of the conflict between the Qing dynasty and Burma, see Wang Chang, *Zheng Mian Jilue*.

cavalry had to deal with, for the first time, the tropical jungles and swamps, and above all, the lethal endemic malaria caused by miasmas, as believed by all at the time. In 1768, the Qing commander-in-chief Mingrui 明瑞 and over ten thousand soldiers perished all together in Burmese territory after they were lost in the jungle. Then the Qing throne had to send the champion of the first Jinchuan campaign Fuheng to Yunnan to command the operation. In the summer of 1769, equipped with horses, elephants, oxen, and poisoned arrowheads, Fuheng led the expedition far into the territory of Burma. By the end of 1769, the Burmese first requested a truce and agreed to be a tributary country to the Qing. Although the Qianlong emperor was not completely satisfied with the result, he could not do anything other than claim triumph for the Qing, for the widespread of malaria in the border area had cost too many lives of soldiers as well as officers.⁹⁴ Fuheng himself caught the disease too. Furthermore, transportation of the supplies to the armies which had far penetrated into the Burmese territory was insurmountably difficult. Shortly after he returned to Beijing, Fuheng died of the disease he caught in Burma in the summer of 1770. E'ning 鄂寧, the son of Ortai, who participated in the campaign, also died of the same disease the same month.

⁹⁴More than three thousand Qing soldiers and officers died in the campaign, *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 849, pp. 35a-b.

The Burmese campaign signifies that the rationales for the Qing throne to launch a frontier war had changed. Unlike the previous frontier campaigns, the Burmese campaign was much less pertinent to the security of the Qing empire. Rather, the throne was in a state of making decisions at his will. Both the successes in the Northwest campaigns and the abundance of the state fiscs gave him the confidence to do so. The four-year-long campaign, as was always the case, turned a large area into a war zone. Troops were maneuvered from Guizhou, Sichuan, Hunan, Hubei, Henan, and even Zhili and Manchuria to the front. At some points, some fifty to sixty thousand Manchu and the Green Standard armies were congregated on the Yunnan-Burma border. All the above provinces were also responsible for supplying the front with military equipment and animals such as horses, oxen and mules. The state fiscs had allocated 13 million tael of silver in total to the campaign.⁹⁵

The Burmese campaign was not a successful one. The friction between the two countries was not resolved with the truce. More importantly, Qianlong was still in the mood to pursue a bigger showdown with the Burmese. Therefore, after the main Qing forces were withdrawn from Yunnan, which had been transferred from the Southwest and other provinces, the throne ordered to continue the military lineup in Yunnan. One Vice Manchu General (*fu jiangjun* 副將軍) was ordered to

⁹⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 836, pp. 24a-b. But the actual expense was 9.8 million taels of silver, *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 848, pp. 5b-6a.

be stationed in Yunnan in which there had not been any presence of a Manchu military official before. Also the military posting system from Beijing to the border area of Yunnan province, which was created during the campaign, remained working after the campaign was called off. The active preparedness for war was, however, brought to a halt by the onset of the second Jinchuan campaign in 1771.

The Second Jinchuan Campaign of 1771-76⁹⁶

After the first Jinchuan campaign (1747-1749) ended, the Jinchuan area did not cease to make trouble for the Qing authorities. Feuds among the local chieftains over various issues were occasionally reported. Unwilling to get involved in another costly and fruitless campaign in this area, the Qing throne preferred to see these feuds weaken or even eliminate the most recalcitrant local chieftain, that of Jinchuan. So the Qing government took an apparently partial attitude in these feuds, encouraging the other chieftains to attack Jinchuan. This policy was described as "to attack the barbarians with the barbarians (*yi man gong man* 以蠻攻蠻)." The Qing provincial viceroys such as the Governors-General of Sichuan, Kaitai 開泰, Aertai 阿爾泰, and the Provincial Military Commander Yue Zhonghuang 岳鍾璜 were all supportive

⁹⁶About the Second Jinchuan Campaign, see Xiao Yishan *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp. 112-117; Wei Yuan *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 7; *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 880-vol. 1009.

of this strategy.⁹⁷ As indicated above, partially out of the consideration of potential new emergencies from this area, the Qing central authorities could not shrug off the importance of the military establishment in Sichuan province. Accordingly, the special treatment that the area had received since early on continued into the 1770s.

In the wake of the Burmese campaign, another war erupted in the Jinchuan area. In 1770, the chieftain of Small Jinchuan, Senggesang 僧格桑, initiated a series of attacks on a neighboring chieftain's territory. Ultimately, the Qing armies that had been summoned to protect Small Jinchuan's neighbors got involved in the conflict with Small Jinchuan. Encouraged by his successful campaigns in the recent years and by the calculation that the topographic conditions in Small Jinchuan were not as difficult as in Jinchuan, Qianlong decided to resort to force to put down the unrest and to subjugate Senggesang. This military engagement postponed another Qing campaign against Burma which the emperor had actively prepared since the calling off of the Burma campaign in 1769 due to the spread of malaria and difficulties in transportation. Nevertheless,

⁹⁷For example, in 1758, Qianlong stated this schema as the following: "If local chieftains in the Jinchuan area can join hands to eliminate the disobedient chieftains in the area and divide their territories, this barbarian area would be in peace forever, and we would no longer worry about ceaseless unrests in the area. But, this strategy should not be discussed openly. The civil and military officials should be instructed in secret that they can imply this intention of us to the chieftains, so that they know how to act." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 562, pp. 1b-2a. Also *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 565, pp. 21a-22b; vol. 675, pp. 2b-4b; vol. 716, pp. 17b-18b; vol. 763, pp. 1b-4b.

Qianlong's determination in bringing the Jinchuan people to their knees made this campaign last for more than five years and became the most costly campaign to date in Qing history.

If Qianlong was pushed into a war by the provincial viceroys in the case of the first Jinchuan campaign in 1747, he was the mastermind of the campaign this time, pushing the provincial officials to relentlessly beat down rebellious Senggesang. The change of attitude of the emperor was so drastic that he made it clear on more than one occasion that he would not accept the surrender of Sengedang as he did last time to the chieftain of Jinchuan, Shaluoben. He claimed that he would abolish the system of local chieftains and establish Qing military colonies in the region as had been done in the Miao areas in Guizhou after the suppression of the Miao Rebellion of the 1730s.

Outraged with the Governor-General of Sichuan Aertai's 阿爾泰 slowness in moving against Small Jinchuan, the emperor issued many edicts condemning Aertai for his reluctance to launch a major operation.⁹⁸ In the autumn of 1771 the throne appointed Guilin 桂林 and Wenfu 溫福 as the commanders-in-chief of the campaign. In early 1772, the Qing found that the chieftain of Jinchuan had taken a role in supporting Small Jinchuan by sending people to fight against the Qing

⁹⁸Gaozong Shilu, vol. 890, 891. Aertai was doomed by his inactive attitude. He was dismissed from the post of Governor-General of Sichuan, then regiven the post, and then dismissed again within a year in 1772. By the end of the year, he was charged with embezzlement and was ordered to commit suicide by the emperor in early 1773.

armies. This offense of Jinchuan gave the Qing throne an excuse to extend the war to Jinchuan. When the Qing armies crushed his headquarters in January, 1773, Senggesang fled to Jinchuan. The chieftain of Jinchuan at the time, Suonuomu 索諾木, was determined to defy the Qing dynasty. Suonuomu was the brother of Shaluoben, who had frustrated the Qing troops so badly in the first Jinchuan campaign in the 1740s. The warfare was thus escalated to involve both Small Jinchuan and Jinchuan. The Qing throne began to transfer Manchu armies from the capital and Manchuria to the Jinchuan front.

The campaign in the first half of 1773 was a disaster for the Qing forces. The Jinchuan people retook Small Jinchuan in the battle of Muguomu 木果木 in the summer of 1773 and thousands of Qing soldiers died in the battle. One of the Qing's chief commanders, Wenfu, was also killed in the field. In the summer of 1773, Qianlong appointed Agui 阿桂 the General of Pacifying the West (*Ding Xi Jiangjun* 定西將軍). During the first Jinchuan campaign, Agui had been indicted by Yue Zhongqi for his pusillanimity on the battleground. But this time he showed his excellence in commanding the campaign.

Under Agui's direction, the Qing forces began to gain the upper-hand after one year's difficult battle in the forbidding terrain. In the fall of 1773, the Qing forces reconquered Small Jinchuan. On September 10, 1775, the Qing armies broke Lewuwei 勒烏圍 blockhouse, the headquarters of

Jinchuan. Suonuomu and his brother Shaluoben fled to Galayi 噶喇依 (also transliterated as Gaerya 噶爾牙 or Guaerya 刮耳崖), the last stronghold of the Jinchuan people. The chieftain of Small Jinchuan Senggesang had died of illness one year ago. Entering 1776, the Qing forces had become dominant. In March 22, 1776, the Qing armies knocked down Gaerya. The next day, Suonuomu and Shaluoben surrendered to the Qing,⁹⁹ thus concluding the five years long second Jinchuan campaign. This campaign was the most expensive in Qing history to date. About 700,000 Qing troops were mobilized to the area from all over the country. More than 61 million taels of silver were spent in the campaign, which was three times of that spent on the Zunghar campaign of the 1750s.

While the final stage of the campaign was approaching, Qianlong changed his past policy of not establishing a normal administrative structure in this area. He talked decisively about abolishing the local chieftain system and establishing military colonies and regular administration in the area. More significantly, the throne ordered the Manchu regiment in the Manchu garrison of Chengdu to move to Dajianlu. And he appointed a Manchu General to the province of Sichuan to oversee all Manchu regiments in the province and the affairs concerning the indigenous peoples in western Sichuan. That was the first time a Manchu General, the highest Manchu official in the province was appointed to the

⁹⁹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1002, pp. 27b-29a.

Southwest. The other measures the Qing dynasty adopted to integrate this region into the Qing empire included setting up Meiluo prefecture 美諾廳 (Meinuo ting) in Small Jinchuan¹⁰⁰ and Aergu prefecture 阿爾古廳 (Aergu ting) in Jinchuan, relocating over one thousand lesser chieftains to other parts of China,¹⁰¹ requiring the remaining local chieftains in western Sichuan to go to the capital to see the emperor in rotation, setting up military colonies in the Jinchuan area, outlawing the local religion (the Red Sect of Lamaism), and sending some Yellow Sect lamas from Beijing to promote Yellow Sect Lamaism in the area.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰It was changed to "Maogong 懋功" by Qianlong himself later, which means "great triumph," to mark this expensive victory.

¹⁰¹The major chieftains were all executed in an extremely brutal way in Beijing after the ceremony of submitting the captives to the throne.

¹⁰²Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1017, p. 18b. During the campaign, the Qing troops had destroyed some Lamaseries in the area. After the campaign, Qianlong ordered the disassembly of the remaining ones and had the parts sent to Beijing to be rebuilt as another reminder of his military *éclat*. The attitude of the Qing throne towards Red Sect Lamaism in the area is a topic worth further examination. Initially, Qianlong was reluctant to send lamas from Beijing to the Jinchuan area for he was informed that the local religion belonged to the Red Sect, instead of the Yellow Sect which was the school to which the lamas in Beijing belonged. Also Qianlong categorily rejected the Dalai Lama's request to send lamas from Tibet to the Jinchuan area. The emperor was afraid of the expansion of the Dalai Lama's influence in the area. After the campaign, however, Qianlong decided to force Yellow Sect lamaism on the Jinchuan people by sending lamas to the area from Beijing and letting the Governor-General of Sichuan Wenshou build lamaseries. One reason for the Qing throne to ban the Red Sect is that the Jinchuan lamas used imprecation, which was one of the features of the Red Sect, against the Qing armies during the campaign. It seems that the Qing sponsorship of the Yellow Sect did take effect in the area. According to an investigation made by Mei Xinru in the 1920s-1930s, there were more monasteries of the Yellow Sect (6) than that of the Red Sect (4), and there were 360 lamas of the Yellow sect while there were only 40 lamas of the Red Sect. See Mei Xinru, Xi Kang, p. 158.

All these measures were more radical than previous Qing policies towards the ethnic peoples in the Southwest, with the exception of the Miao people in southeast Guizhou after the Miao Rebellion of the Yongzheng-Qianlong period. Also, these measures drastically contrasted with what Qianlong did in the area after the first Jinchuan campaign. At that time, the rationale was to keep the *status quo*, in lieu of upsetting the traditional structure, for the Qing throne had learnt that it was rather costly to do so. But this rationale had been abandoned by the Qing government in 1776. Being backed by strong financial power, the Qing state was capable of supporting such a radical policy change in its frontier undertakings. It was also a key reason behind Qianlong's eagerness for war on other occasions after the Zunghar empire was eliminated.

3. Under the Shadow of the Frontier Campaigns

The mid-eighteenth century frontier crises had a great impact on local developments in the Southwest. After three decades of military campaigns in the Southwest, a number of longlasting changes had occurred in the region which are of significance in terms of the purpose of this study. First, the strategic position of the Southwest had been reconfirmed. Second, the military buildup in the Southwest had reached its highest point since the onset of Qing rule in the region. Third, the socio-economic environment in the

Southwest had been shaped to a great degree under the influence of the military operations during the three decades. All these developments were extensions of the developments which began in the late Kangxi period. But during this period some important characteristics became even more conspicuous. One significant consequence, the formation of the Qing policy of commanding rice circulation from the Southwest to the Lower Yangtze valley, will be dealt with in detail in the next section.

The Restoration of the Governorship-General of Sichuan and the Appointment of a Manchu General to Sichuan

Administratively, the most important legacy of the three decades of frontier operations was the restoration of one of the important strategic transformations of the Yongzheng period: the separation of the Governor-General of Shaanxi and the Governor-General of Sichuan. It was during this period that the century-long vicissitudes of the provincial administrative structure in these areas ended. After this period, the strategic separation of the two areas, the Northwest and the Southwest, became a constant, except for a temporary merging during the White Lotus Rebellion of the Jiaqing period.¹⁰³

¹⁰³During the latter part of the campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion, the Jiaqing emperor found that the provincial officials in Shaanxi and Sichuan could not cooperate well in the engagement of the campaign. So he ordered the two positions combined for the purpose of commanding military actions. But this change did not become permanent. It was changed back right after the campaign ended.

The dynamic of the transformation is worth a look. It shows how the emperor had to bend his will to the changing situation in the provinces. Although he was reluctant in the beginning to invalidate his decision abolishing the Governorship-General of Sichuan about a decade ago, the unremitting military operations starting from the middle 1740s soon forced him to face reality of the situation and to resume his father's schema of separating the two strategic regions administratively.

The restoration process was propelled by the first Jinchuan campaign. On April 20, 1747, Qianlong transferred the Governor-General of Guizhou, Zhang Guangsi, to the post of the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi when the hostilities in Jinchuan gained momentum. At this point, Qianlong did not have a clear vision of how different the situation in the Jinchuan area was from that in the Miao area in Guizhou. For a quite while, he simply called the Jinchuan people "Miao barbarians." Therefore, he expected that Zhang's experience with the Miao people in Guizhou would aid Zhang in dealing with the Jinchuan people.

Once Zhang was gone from Guizhou, Qianlong ordered a merging of the posts of Governor-General of Yunnan and that of Guizhou into one on June 7, 1747. He commented as such: "The old system of Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou was of deep meaning--it connected the two provinces together, and thus serving to consolidate the defense of

these remote areas."¹⁰⁴ The separation of the Governorship-General in these two provinces only occurred once at this time in the entire Qing history. It was obviously a product of the circumstances of the post-Miao Rebellion of the 1730s. By this time, the Qing court had been assured that this deposition was no longer necessary, for the Miao area had not shown any sign of rebellion since the brutal suppression in the early Qianlong period. But to ensure the peace of Guizhou, one month after the restoration of the Governorship-General of Yunnan and Guizhou, Qianlong ordered the Governor of Guizhou to take charge of the military duties of the province since the Governor-General was stationed in Kunming, which was far away from Guizhou.¹⁰⁵

Not long after his arrival at his new post, Zhang Guangsi felt that he was not able to handle the affairs of Shaanxi and Gansu while he was stationed in Sichuan to direct the campaign against the Jinchuan people. He petitioned the throne in November, 1747 to appoint a Governor-General of Shaanxi and to allow him to only take care of Sichuan province. But Qianlong was not happy with this suggestion. He responded: "What you see may be correct. But there are no big affairs in Shaanxi and Gansu right now. It is just right for you to stay in Sichuan to carefully

¹⁰⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 289, pp. 45a-b.

¹⁰⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 292, pp. 19a-b.

manage the settlement of the Jinchuan affairs. Why should we bother to have the system changed?"¹⁰⁶

There is evidence that this was not the real reason for the throne to forestall any change in this administrative layout. In the autumn of 1747, the throne was informed that the Zunghars who had been sent to Tibet for the *mangja* ceremony halted their journey *en route* to Tibet suspiciously. The emperor was afraid of an offensive by the Zunghars on Qinghai. On the one hand, Qianlong directed Qingfu, the dismissed Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, who was heading to the capital from Sichuan, to stay in Shaanxi for a while to make some necessary arrangements for any possible emergency. On the other hand, the emperor emphasized that every action be kept secret to the Zunghars. Therefore, Qianlong would not do anything about Zhang's suggestion at this point, though he was indeed concerned with the case that there was no superior official in the Northwest.¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, the intensification of the Jinchuan campaign in Sichuan would convince anybody of a modicum of vision to adopt Zhang's suggestion. In the beginning of 1748, the throne began to take steps to separate the two regions. First, Qianlong ordered the current Governor of Gansu Huang Tinggui, a senior provincial viceroy of the western frontiers to take charge of the affairs of Shaanxi

¹⁰⁶*Gaozongq Shilu*, vol. 299, pp. 26a-b.

¹⁰⁷*Gaozongq Shilu*, vol. 298, pp. 14a-15a.

and Gansu.¹⁰⁸ Since the throne began to doubt Zhang Guangsi's capacity in handling the Jinchuan campaign in the spring of 1748, Qianlong again let Huang also take charge of routine affairs in Sichuan.

The politics of provincial personnel in the Southwest took a turn in the fall of 1748. Because of the inability of Zhang Guangsi and his friction with the newly-appointed Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan Yue Zhongqi, the throne decided to replace Zhang with a Manchu official. Ironically, the person Qianlong picked to replace Zhang was Celeng 策楞,¹⁰⁹ the elder brother of Naqing, the Grand Minister Commander (*jinglue dachen* 經略大臣) in the Jinchuan front, who was ordered along with Zhang to return the capital and was later condemned to death by the emperor. To demonstrate his loyalty to the Qing throne, Celeng fiercely denounced his younger brother upon his arriving in Sichuan and voluntarily promised to pay back the debt Naqing owned to the state since Naqing was soon ordered to commit suicide.

Before Celeng arrived in Sichuan, the new Grand Minister Commander Fuheng was ordered to take charge of the affairs of Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. As a

¹⁰⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 305, p. 6a.

¹⁰⁹Celeng was from the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. He led the Tibetan expedition of 1750 and was instrumental in reforming the Tibetan political system in the wake of the 1750 rebellion (see Section 2 of this chapter). He later was one of the chief commanders in the Qianlong Zunghar campaigns of the 1750s and he was killed by the Zunghar in the campaign. His biography is in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 314.

trusted court official of the emperor, Fuheng probably persuaded the throne to finally take the step to separate the Governorship-General of Sichuan and that of Shaanxi, for he reported to the throne many first-hand observations from his journey to the Jinchuan frontline.¹¹⁰ So Qianlong changed his decision before Celeng arrived in the capital and appointed Celeng the Governor-General of Sichuan only. At the same time, Yinjishan was appointed Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu. The edict issued on January 18, 1749 regarding this administrative adjustment emphasized that the size of the region was the single most important concern behind this change.¹¹¹ Therefore, Yongzheng's policy was resumed and Qianlong's attempt to tone down the strategic magnitude of the Southwest was relinquished. The position of Governor of Sichuan was abolished soon after.¹¹² Sichuan

¹¹⁰Qianlong had exchanged his opinion regarding the candidates for these posts affected by this administrative change with Fuheng before he made the decisions *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 329, pp. 59a-60b.

¹¹¹This edict read: "The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi presides over Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu, which is a vast area. In times of no emergency, it is yet too immense for him to take good control. Now the campaign in Jinchuan is not finished. There are all kinds of local affairs and the affairs of military supplies [which need to be administered]. If the Governor-General is stationed in Xi'an, it would be difficult for him to take care of [all these affairs] from such a distance. Even after the campaign is called off, it is necessary to have somebody to take charge of the area." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 329, pp. 58a-b.

¹¹²Bandi, an imperial commissioner to the Jinchuan front, was ordered to take charge of the affairs of the Sichuan Governor, which were usually civilian affairs, during the campaign period. And he was ordered to submit the seal of the Sichuan Governor when the campaign ended and he returned to the capital *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 331, p. 6b. Therefore, the post of the Sichuan Governor no longer existed after Bandi returned to Beijing late in 1749.

became the second province in the country to be ruled by only a Governor-General. The other province was Zhili.

Not surprisingly, the vicissitudes of provincial administrative structure involved personal fluctuations in the official careers for some viceroys. When Yongzheng first separated the two regions in 1731, Huang Tinggui was promoted to Governor-General of Sichuan from Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. About twenty-two years later, Huang was again appointed to this position in early 1753 when Celeng took a leave in mourning for his parent. Not coincidentally, Yue Zhongqi, the person who was Huang's supervisor while Huang was the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan, now was Huang's subordinate, serving in the same position Huang used to hold: the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan. Huang did not stay in Sichuan for too long: he was transferred to Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu in 1755 when the Zunghar campaign started. But during his two-year tenure in Sichuan, he did leave some traces that subtly reflected his sentiment over his unusual experience in and out of the position. In a stele inscription for the reparation of a water dam in Sichuan, Huang mentioned his return to the post with relatively personal feelings.¹¹³

¹¹³"In the year of *guiyou* [1753], I was ordered to govern Sichuan again. The people of Sichuan are the people of whom I used to take good care. Their welfare is my deepest concern." *Sichuan Tongzhi*, Jiaqing, vol. 23.

If Qianlong did think that the Southwest was a less important region when he was first enthroned, he had almost entirely changed his impression after the first Jinchuan campaign. Previously, Qianlong stressed that Hami of the far Northwest was the most important frontier stronghold. But by the middle of the Qianlong period, the emperor had changed his tone. He told officials who were appointed to Sichuan that the appointment was not a "remote" one but an "important" one (*Ci fei diao yuan, gai diao yao ye.* 此非調遠，蓋調要也。).¹¹⁴

During the Zunghar and the Muslim campaigns in the late 1750s and the early 1760s, Sichuan supplied the Northwest with various materials including grain, horses etc. This situation probably inspired some northwestern officials to consider bringing Sichuan into the Northwest again administratively. On September 20, 1759, the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu, Yang Yingju 楊應琚, proposed restoring the Governorship-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi and establishing a new post of Governor-General of Gansu, for he deemed that Gansu was too enormous to be governed solely by one Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu. The emperor's response to this motion was rather ambiguous. He ordered title of the current Governor-General of Sichuan changed to Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi; but he let the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi be stationed

¹¹⁴Gaozong Shilu, vol. 803, p. 2b.

in Sichuan and only to administer civil affairs in the two provinces. Meanwhile the emperor appointed Yang as the Governor-General of Gansu and gave him the power to direct the military forces in both Shaanxi and Gansu provinces.¹¹⁵ By so doing, the throne split the administrative power of Shaanxi into the hands of two provincial viceroys -- one in Sichuan and one in Gansu. Probably having been aware of the drawbacks of such an arrangement, Qianlong suspended the measure two months later, citing the ongoing military campaign against the Muslims in the Northwest. On January 21, 1761, Qianlong ruled that there was no need to establish a separate Governor-General for Gansu since the newly-conquered Chinese East Turkistan had been governed under several high officials -- the new territory was not assigned to the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu to rule. Therefore, the Governor-General of Sichuan would remain the same.¹¹⁶

The affirmation of the separation of the Northwest and the Southwest by separating the Governorship-General of Shaanxi and Gansu on the one hand and that of Sichuan on the other hand during the first half of Qianlong's reign was very much a milestone in the strategic history of the Qing dynasty. It marked the conclusion of the persistent policy fluctuations concerning the post of the Governorship-General of Sichuan. Since 1761 the administrative structure in the

¹¹⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 593, pp. 28b-30a.

¹¹⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 627, 3a-b.

Northwest and the Southwest was not changed until the end of the dynasty.¹¹⁷

Another significant development was the appointment of a Manchu General (*jiangjun* 將軍) to the province of Sichuan. "General" was the highest Manchu military position stationed outside of the capital. Before 1776, there were only six of them in the whole country.¹¹⁸ When the Manchu garrison was established in Chengdu in 1718 during the first Tibetan expedition, the Kangxi emperor appointed a Vice Commander-in-chief (*fu dutong* 副都統) to head the Manchu garrison.¹¹⁹ This appointment signified the Kangxi emperor's perception of the importance the region: it was important, but not to the degree of the other areas in which a Manchu General was assigned. This disposition remained unchanged until the end of the second Jinchuan campaign.

As early as in the autumn of 1775, when the second Jinchuan campaign reached its final phase, Qianlong instructed that part of the Manchu troops in the Chengdu garrison be transferred to Dajianlu and that a Manchu General be appointed to head the garrison in Dajianlu.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Except for a temporary merging of the two Governors-General during the White Lotus Rebellion of 1796-1805 due to the need to have a uniform command of the suppression campaign. See footnote 10x.

¹¹⁸They were stationed in Shengjing 盛京 of Manchuria, Ili 伊犁 of Chinese Eastern Turkistan, Xi'an, Jiangning 江寧 (today's Nanjing), Hangzhou 杭州, and Guangzhou 廣州.

¹¹⁹See Section 6 of Chapter III.

¹²⁰"As for the Manchu troops in Chengdu, they must move to Dajianlu. That place oversees the barbarian areas, and is able to check Tibet from the distance. It is indeed a strategically critical point. It is necessary to have a General stationed in that place to enhance the authority [of the Qing dynasty]." *Gaozongq Shilu*, vol. 989, pp. 24b-25a.

After the campaign, the Guangzhou General Mingliang 明亮 was appointed the first Chengdu General in 1776. He was stationed in Dajianlu for a while with one thousand Manchu soldiers.¹²¹ The appointment was a critical step in reinforcing Qing control over the area of Kham. As a rule, Manchu Generals did not have the responsibility to take charge of the Green Standard Armies. But in this case, Mingliang was given the authority to take charge of all Qing outposts in western Sichuan. Also he was endowed the authority to oversee all ethnic affairs, both military and civilian, of the province. Whenever there was such an affair, both the Governor-General of Sichuan and the Manchu General should be consulted.

The stationing of Qing armies and Manchu General in the area, administratively known as Yazhou 雅州 prefecture, brought to a conclusion to the decades of exploration and expansion of the Qing dynasty into the area of Kham, a buffer region standing between China and Tibet. In addition, the appointment of a Manchu General to Sichuan also marked the apex of the Qing military buildup in the area. From that point on, the province had two supreme military commanders, a Manchu General and the Governor-General, one Manchu, another also Manchu, in most cases.

¹²¹It was regulated that the Vice Commander-in-chief of the Chengdu Manchu garrison replace the Chengdu General stationed in Dajianlu after a couple of years. The General would then return to the Chengdu garrison.

Strong Military Presence in the Southwest

The intensive military campaigns of the mid-eighteenth century resulted in the further expansion of the military force in the Southwest. The three decades of frontier operations outweighed Qianlong's efforts at disarmament in the first decade of his reign. The strong military presence in the Southwest became an irreversable reality by the end of the second Jinchuan campaign.

Part of the renewed strength of the military of this time was due to the rehabilitation of one of the region's premier military families, the Yue family of Chengdu. The first Jinchuan campaign enable Yue Zhongqi to return to power. As a senior military satrap in the region and an expert on the affairs of the native chieftains in western Sichuan, Yue proved himself an indispensable person to the empire. After he was released from imperial jail in Beijing in 1737, he returned to Chengdu and lived in his private mansion for eleven years leisurely, reclusive, yet comfortable life.¹²² But obviously he was given special treatment by the local officials. It was known to the public that his properties had been confiscated when he was put in jail in 1733 to compensate for the damage caused by his mistakes in the Zunghar campaign. The total amount of compensation was supposed to be 754,600 taels of silver. By

¹²²He named his garden "An Su 安素," which means to be happy with plainness; and his manor as "Ai Xian 愛閑," which means to be fond of leisure. He often spent time reading and gardening, as if he was never a renowned general and powerful viceroy. See Yue Xiangqin Gong Xinglue.

1743, only 27,400 taels from selling his confiscated properties had been paid to the state. The provincial government in Sichuan reported then that all of his properties had been sold. In 1749, Qianlong commented: "As for his properties, Yue Zhongqi was the Provincial Military Commander, his son Yue Jun has been the Governor, what he possesses would certainly far exceed this amount (27,400 taels). How can it be reported to be all sold? If so, Yue Zhongqi would not be able to live, let alone live a good life in his elderly years awaiting today's imperial favor. What can be told is that the local officials were perfunctary in the examination, and that my judgements on this matter have been correct."¹²³ But Qianlong remitted this old debt after the triumph of the first Jinchuan campaign.

Yue's legendary deeds in the final chapter of the first Jinchuan campaign won him back his lost reputation and power. In the autumn of 1749, he was granted a court audience and was warmly received by the emperor. He was granted the privilege of horse-riding in the imperial palace, an honorific treatment from the throne. Also Yue's two sons were entitled as Junior Guardsmen. Being exuberant in literary works, Qianlong had two poems composed for Yue, appraising his extraordinary merits. Back in Sichuan, Yue was quick to rebuild his authority. He recommended his old

¹²³Gaozong Shilu, vol. 350, pp. 24b-25b.

subordinates to various positions under him. Some of these people were under criminal charges at this time. But Yue brought them back to officialdom. More interestingly, in the rest of 1749, Yue rebuilt a shrine in dedication to Yue Fei, the Chinese hero of the Song dynasty who fought the Jin people, the ancestors of the Manchus, and the forefather of the Yue family as believed by the family.¹²⁴ The shrine had been destroyed during Zhang Xianzhong's occupation in the late Ming and had not been repaired since.¹²⁵ Back in 1738, when Yue was implicated in the Zeng Jing Incident, the fictitious connection between Yue Fei and Yue Zhongqi had worked against Yue.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Yue had the confidence in 1749 to overtly pay homage to Yue Fei by rebuilding his shrine in Chengdu. It was a strong indication that Yue was at the pinnacle of his power and prestige and it was a unique way for Yue to rehabilitate himself.

Yue Zhongqi's expertise on the aboriginal peoples in western and northwestern Sichuan was invaluable to the Qianlong emperor. Nevertheless, the throne was concerned about the old story that the frontier military viceroys trapped the central government in an unwanted war which only served to augment the merit of the frontier viceroys. So, the throne often advised Yue not to resort to force to settle border unrest by the indigenous peoples.¹²⁷ Moreover,

¹²⁴*Yue Xianqin Gong Xinlue*.

¹²⁵*Chongxiu Chengdu Xian Zhi*, vol. 2, pp. 5b-6a.

¹²⁶See Section 2 of Chapter IV.

¹²⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 431, pp. 8b-10a; vol. 432, pp. 1b-3a.

the emperor did not promote Yue further in spite of his possession of the title of duke.

In the spring of 1754, Yue Zhongqi died at the age of sixty-eight, shortly after his son, Yue Jun died in 1753.¹²⁸ Yue was posthumously entitled as Xiangqin 襄勤, which means "assistance with diligence." On the same day on which the emperor issued an edict to lament the death of Yue Zhongqi, Qianlong appointed Yue Zhongqi's cousin Yue Zhonghuang 岳鍾璜, the son of Yue Chaolong, the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan.¹²⁹ Zhonghuan held this position for twelve years (1754-1767). In 1759, he was acting Governor-General of Sichuan for a short period.

The demise of Yue Zhonghuang in 1767 ended more than half a-century of dominance of the Yue family in Sichuan. Although all the sons of Yue Zhongqi and Yue Zhonghuang entered Qing officialdom, none of them ever gained influence parallel to their fathers' and grandfathers'.¹³⁰ As a pioneer in exploring the Southwest, as well as the Northwest, the Yue family gained high prestige and position from the Qing state. However, after Yue Zhongqi and his cousin Zhonghuang both died, the Qing throne was inclined to

¹²⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 458, pp. 12a-b.

¹²⁹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 458, p. 13b. Yue Zhonghuang had also been a high ranking military official under Yongzheng. At the time he was appointed to Sichuan, he was the Provincial Military Commander of Guangxi.

¹³⁰Yue Zhongqi had seven sons, and sixteen grandsons. All of them held either civil or military titles, but all lesser than Provincial Military Commander, which had been held by Yue Shenlong, Yue Chaolong, Yue Zhongqi and Yue Zhonghuang for many years. See *Yue Xiangqin Gong Xinglue*.

have more Manchus appointed to the positions once held by the members of the Yue family. The glory of Yue Zhongqi remained to be remembered throughout the rest of the Qing dynasty, but the power held by him was not passed to his descendants.

Although the positions of high military commander were reserved for Manchu or Han Chinese Bannermen who were hand-picked for the most part by the emperor himself, the lesser military positions in the Southwest were mostly filled by natives or officers promoted from lower positions in the same province. This was the appointment of "tibu 題補."¹³¹ As a convention initiated during the Kangxi period, military appointments tended to be more flexible and less subject to the constraint of the law of avoidance. Qianlong continued to follow this practice, partially out of pressure from provincial viceroys who recommended their subordinates to the local positions, partially for retaining officers with expertise in particular localities. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon was more common in the Southwest. For instance, at least six of Yue Zhongqi's sons and grandsons held lesser military posts in Sichuan province in the Qianlong period.¹³² In 1745, out of 114 posts of lesser military positions in Yunnan, only four of them were filled by people appointed by the central government, all the rest were

¹³¹About "tibu," see Section 3 of Chapter III.

¹³²Yue Xiangqin Gong Xinlue.

through "*tibu* (appointment by recommendation)."¹³³ During the two Jinchuan campaigns, most military positions in the province were filled by the people who had military merit. But they had not been designated by the central government.¹³⁴

Not only did the provincial and local officials attempt to control the appointment of middle-level military positions, they also strove to maintain the swollen size of the military establishment in the region. The frequent military campaigns throughout the three decades of the mid-eighteenth century in the Southwest left the region with a giant military establishment. As had always been the case, the provincial viceroys preferred to keep the *status quo* while the central government wanted to slim it down. In the years following the first Jinchuan campaign, the provincial viceroys in Sichuan endeavored to maintain the military's size in order to obtain more funds from the central government. They emphasized the inconvenience of demobilizing soldiers who had military merits. As before, they proposed sizing down the troops by leaving vacancies unfilled when any appeared, but not actively reducing the size of the armies.¹³⁵ In 1751, two years after the conclusion of the first Jinchuan campaign, Yue Zhongqi proposed restoring the system of annual military field

¹³³Gaozong Shilu, vol. 241, pp. 15b-16b.

¹³⁴Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an, vol. 1, p. 56b.

¹³⁵Gaozong Shilu, vol. 337, pp. 30a-b; vol. 338, pp. 17b-18a.

exercises.¹³⁶ This was an adroit way of maintaining the military support from the central authorities. In addition, the incessant conflicts between the native peoples in western Sichuan again provided a sound excuse for the province to maintain the military lineup. In 1752, the Governor-General of Sichuan Celeng and Yue Zhongqi launched a small campaign to pacify the local chieftain in Zagu 雜谷 area, in southwestern Sichuan, who was reported to have fiercely attacked his neighboring chieftains. After the campaign, the Qing installed more military forces in this area. Although this campaign against the Zagu chieftain turned out to be a quick success, the Qianlong emperor warned Celeng and Yue seriously not to escalate the degree of hostilities and not to drag the central government into another pitfall. The throne was fully aware that a campaign of this kind would help the provincial government keep military expenditures high and maintain the scale of the military lineup in the area.¹³⁷

Despite the throne's desire to slim the military establishment in the Southwest, this region drew an increasingly large amount of money from the state excheques. As in the Yongzheng period, once the Qing state adopted a policy of activism in frontier affairs, it became unrealistic to cut down military expenditures. As a matter

¹³⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 400, pp. 14a-15a.

¹³⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 422, pp. 4b-7a; vol. 423, pp. 2b-3b; vol. 423, pp. 4b-6b; vol. 424, pp. 4a-5a; vol. 424, pp. 25b-28a; vol. 426, 7b-10a.

of fact, military expenses kept rising after the Zhandui crisis. Even during the intervals of peace, Sichuan needed some 200,000 to 300,000 taels of silver annually from the state to support the military forces. This amount exceeded the total revenue collected from the province. This meant the money had to be allocated from other provinces' revenues.¹³⁸ This kind of fund transferred from other provinces was called "Assistance Tael (*xieji yin* 協濟銀)." The same scenario also occurred in Yunnan, another southwestern province.

As in the Yongzheng period, there were many justifications for the Southwest to claim oversized military expenditures. First, the Southwest undertook the duty of supporting the military stationed in Tibet and the outposts along the Lhasa-Chengdu route. All of the stipends to the soldiers stationed in Tibet were provided from the provincial fiscs of Sichuan. Because all these outposts belonged to the category of "outside the pass (口外 *kouwai*)," the soldiers assigned to the outposts were paid additional subsidies, *yan cai yin* 鹽菜銀 (salt and vegetables money). Second, most outposts were areas where rice was not a local product. Transportation of provisions to those outposts raised the expenses tremendously. After the first Jinchuan campaign, the emperor was wary of any possible incidents in the area. He ordered the storage of provisions

¹³⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 339, pp. 13a-b.

before hand along the route from Chengdu to Tibet. He once allocated one million taels for this.¹³⁹ Although the corruption of the Qing frontier officials and generals had been picking up momentum along with the intensification of the frontier campaigns, the flow of state money into the Southwest was eventually bountiful to society at large.

Prosperity Stimulated by the Frontier Undertakings

Moving our lens from the military sector to society in general in the Southwest, what can be observed is a very colorful and dynamic picture. The first four decades of the Qianlong reign on the one hand witnessed a continuity of the previous developments in repopulation, economic growth and cultural reconstruction; on the other hand, the Qing frontier campaigns functioned as catalysts to accelerate these developments, these dynamics fostered a number of unique features in the socio-economic structure of the Southwest.

Migration to the Southwest was not a new development of the Qianlong period. However, repopulation was spurred on in this period by the opportunities brought about by the frontier campaigns. As noted in the previous chapters, the Qing government did little to organize and subsidize this migration. Rather, the opportunities in the Southwest constituted the single most important incentive to draw the

¹³⁹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 335, pp. 21a-b.

unremitting population waves to the Southwest. The taxation rate remained stable throughout the Qianlong period (see Table 3: Land Taxes in 1766). This fact would continue to play a great part in bringing more immigrants to the Southwest. During this period, the first four decades of the Qianlong period, the core area of the Southwest, namely, the Red Basin area or the Chengdu Plain, had become fully populated. This forced the immigrants to spread from the core area to the peripheries. Only when the provincial officials in the Southwest, especially in Sichuan, were alarmed by the increasing number of incidents of crime, did they report the problem to the throne and proposed curbing the migration tide. Nevertheless, the Qianlong emperor, who had sensed the population pressure nationwide, had no intention of halting the migration movements which he hoped would alleviate population pressures in other regions of the country. On more than one occasion, he made it clear that the government would not forbid migration, for it was spurred by the natural desire for survival.

Table 3: Land Taxes in 1766 (The Thirty-first Year of the Qianlong Reign)

Province	Land Tax in Kind	Land Tax in Cash
Jiangsu	2,085,451 <i>dan</i>	3,255,236 taels
Anhui	694,316 <i>dan</i>	1,707,123 taels
Zhejiang	1,386,700 <i>dan</i>	2,821,483 taels
Guangdong	348,174 <i>dan</i>	1,260,933 taels

Hunan	277,949 <i>dan</i>	1,178,357 taels
Hubei	286,537 <i>dan</i>	1,121,043 taels
Jiangxi	899,836 <i>dan</i>	1,939,126 taels
Shaanxi	31,948 <i>dan</i>	1,555,518 taels
Sichuan	13,440 <i>dan</i>	660,801 taels
Yunnan	167,938 <i>dan</i>	105,784 taels
Guizhou	135,250 <i>dan</i>	121,282 taels

(Source: Liang Fangzhong, p. 396)

It seems that there are not accurate statistics on the immigrants to the Southwest from this period.¹⁴⁰ But in 1749, the thirteenth year of the Qianlong reign, the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Zhang Yunsui reported that there were more than 243,000 people from Guangdong and Hunan migrating into Sichuan via Guizhou province during six years of 1743-49.¹⁴¹ This is about the only quantitative report on the immigration during the period. Another report from the Provincial Administration Commissioner of Sichuan Li Rulan 李如蘭 in 1747 said that the immigrants in Sichuan increased "hundred times" in recent years.¹⁴²

Contrary to the situation in the early Qing period when few bureaucrats were willing to take the posts in the Southwest, during this period, many would find the region an ideal place to serve their official tenure. Furthermore,

¹⁴⁰Entenmann, pp. 223-225.

¹⁴¹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 311, pp. 44a-b.

¹⁴²*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 283, pp. 23a-b.

they also sought to stay in the region after their tenure ended. One example which is illuminating is the return of a Han Chinese bannerman Wang Ji 王機 . Wang's grandfather Wang Xinming 王新命 was a native of Tongchuan 潼川 prefecture, Sichuan province. Wang Xinming joined the Qing army when Haoke made his expedition into Sichuan in 1646, after dozens of Wang's family members died in the Zhang Xianzhong Rebellion. He was only fifteen years old, and was adopted by the Cao family which was in the Han Bordered Blue Banner. Wang thus became a Han Chinese Bannerman and was eventually promoted to the position of Governor-General of Jiangxi. But during this period, his grandson Wang Ji requested to the throne that he be allowed to withdraw from the banner and to return to his original home, Tongchuan, to live. The throne granted him his request.¹⁴³ Not only civil officials, but also military officials sought to settle down in Sichuan. A veteran frontier general, Ma Liangzhu 馬良柱,¹⁴⁴ also requested that he be allowed to change his domicile officially to Chengdu in where he already homed. Qianlong also gave his permission to Ma's request. The examples set

¹⁴³*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 514, pp. 6a-7a.

¹⁴⁴Ma Liangzhu was a Muslim from Gansu province. He was a celebrated military general in the northwestern frontier in the Kangxi period and was transferred to the Southwest in the Yongzheng period. He joined the campaigns against the Lobdzan Dandzin Rebellion, the Zhandui rebellion and the first Jinchuan campaign. After the first Jinchuan campaign, he was appointed the Regional Commander of Songpan 松潘, Sichuan province. He was remembered as a legendary figure in the Qing frontier undertakings owing to his extraordinary merits. See his biographies in *Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 153 and *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 311.

by these bureaucrat immigrants would further galvanize the popular immigration.

An immigrant society with many unique characteristics was thus taking shape in the Southwest. On the one hand, an immigrant society had a high degree of self-governance. On the other hand, it also witnessed a high rate of crime and disorder. These two sides coexisted in the society of the Southwest. The high degree of self-governance was best exemplified in the numerous immigrant organizations. These organizations were usually called *huiguan* 會館 ("society halls"). These immigrant organizations were based on the geographic origins of its members. They did not emphasize different social status within the same geographic groups. Therefore, these organizations provided occasions to dilute or to blend class distinctions among people of the same geographic origin. But in most cases, the patrons of these immigrant organizations were merchants.¹⁴⁵ In the countryside, where immigrants with different geographical origins were mingled together, people were more inclined to use mutual contracts to resolve conflicts over various matters. For instance, in Ba 巴 county of east Sichuan, several farmers reached a mutual agreement with regard to the right of irrigating their rice plots, which were interlocked with each other by erecting a stele with their

¹⁴⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 271, pp. 39b-40a. For the nature of *huiguan* in Sichuan, see Lü Zuoxie "Ming Qing Shiqi de huiguan bingfei Gong Shang Ye Hanghui."

agreement chiseled on it.¹⁴⁶ But similar situations sometimes involved more official interference due to the lack of lineage leadership in many areas.

The government was more concerned with the drawbacks of an immigrant society. The social problems can be broken down into primarily two categories: judicial and criminal. These two types of problems were both most visible in Sichuan. Because the majority of the population was new to the localities, conflicts over the ownership of real estate were numerous. This situation made Sichuan well-known for lawsuits. Additionally, surplus population in the region became a great source of crime. One conspicuous phenomenon during this period is the striking increase in reports to the central government of women martyrs from Sichuan. It was an indication of the increase of rape cases, which often resulted in murder. Meanwhile, many unemployed single males took refuge in Buddhist temples. Having no commitment to Buddhism, and without shaved heads, their congregation in temples became one of the sources of disorder.¹⁴⁷ It was also during this period that a bandit organization known as "guolu" 噶魯 began to arouse the attention of the Qing authorities. The local officials soon ascertained that this bandit organization originated from immigrants.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶Ba Xian Archives, the twentieth date of the third month of the forty-eighth year of the Qianlong reign, in Qing Dai Qian, Jia, Dao Ba Xian Dang'an Xuanbian, p.1.

¹⁴⁷Gaozong Shilu, vol. 790, pp. 10b-11a.

¹⁴⁸The Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi, Qingfu, reported on the problem to the throne on November 13, 1745. He said: "Most of the

The economy in the three provinces of the Southwest continued to thrive, becoming more and more integrated during this era. The Jinsha 金沙 River project and Chishui 赤水 River project in the early Qianlong period greatly promoted economic and cultural exchange among the three provinces. Before the Qianlong period, the major road connecting Yunnan with the outside and the capital was through Guizhou. Even though Yunnan bordered Sichuan, there were no good transportation avenues linking the two provinces. During this period, due to the mining of copper in Yunnan and the necessity of transporting it to the capital and other provinces, a water route between Yunnan and Sichuan became an much discussed issue. The Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Zhang Yunsui had worked for this cause since he was appointed to the post in 1737.¹⁴⁹ From 1742 to 1748, he initiated the Jinsha River project, attempting to remove all dangerous shoals in the river in order to make it navigable. The project served to integrate Sichuan and Yunnan economically and culturally. Many commodities of Sichuan, chiefly rice and salt, found new

'*guolu*' bandit members in Sichuan are vagrants from Fujian, Guangdong, Huguang and Shaanxi provinces (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 251, p. 6a-6b)."

¹⁴⁹In 1737, Zhang was only the Governor-General of Yunnan, since Zhang Guangsi was the Governor-General of Guizhou. He was changed to Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou in 1747 after Zhang Guangsi was transferred to Sichuan to direct the first Jinchuan campaign. See earlier in this section.

markets in Yunnan.¹⁵⁰ But, the project itself was only partially successful.¹⁵¹

Guizhou province was well-known for its poverty, isolation and sparse population. Until the Yongzheng period, this province had not been well explored by Han Chinese. Because of the poor transportation conditions, the province had been beyond the reach of merchants, and had maintained a low-level of autarky. Since the 1730s, the Qing pale in Guizhou had greatly expanded because of the newly-conquered Miao area in southeastern Guizhou. The military buildup in the area was massive, it became a base which attracted further immigrants to Guizhou. The establishment of the mining industry, especially that of lead and zinc, drew hundreds of thousands people to the province.

In the early Qianlong period, Zhang Guangsi initiated the Chishui River project which was aimed at dredging the river of Chishui in order to open a waterway leading to the Yangtze River via the Chuan 川 river. Like the Jinsha project, this one was not a total success either due to the rapid currents of the Chishui River. Nevertheless, this project recruited a great number of people to the area, and opened a gateway for the merchants of Sichuan and other places to Guizhou. Sichuan rice and salt thus began to go to Guizhou where a dearth of salt supply had long been a problem. The increasing of ties between Guizhou and Sichuan

¹⁵⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 269, pp. 47a-b.

¹⁵¹Pan Xiangming "Qing Dai Yunnan de Jiaotong Kaifa."

accelerated the local commercialization. As one official put it: "Now the provincial capital, prefecture and county towns are crowded with shops, full of commodities, and merchants are becoming more and more numerous. On all ceremonial occasions of both commoners and gentry, such as weddings, funerals and worship, people contend to pursue pompous display. The social trend is getting increasingly extravagant."¹⁵² One of the ramifications of the economic development in the border areas between Guizhou and Sichuan was the mushrooming of brewhouses opened by immigrants from adjacent provinces.¹⁵³ In the nineteenth century, this place became home to many famous liquors, including that of Maotai.¹⁵⁴

From the Zhandui Incident of 1745 to the conclusion of the second Jinchuan campaign, the Southwest had undergone five campaigns which were either carried out on the territory of the region or in places close to the Southwest such as the Qianlong Tibetan expedition of 1750 and the Burmese campaign of 1768-69. These frequent military undertakings rendered a considerable impact on the local society, giving the fledging economy some strong stimuli for further thriving.

First, the frontier campaigns meant employment opportunities for many, since the military hired a huge

¹⁵²*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 311, pp.48a.

¹⁵³*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 311, pp. 48a.

¹⁵⁴For more information on the commercial developments in Guizhou, see Lombard-Salmon, pp. 197-209.

number of laborers to transport military supplies to the front. It was not corvée labor, for it was paid by the state. More particularly, it paid very well.¹⁵⁵ In the second Jinchuan campaign, approximately 462,000 laborers were recruited to serve the campaign.¹⁵⁶ Sometimes, laborers outnumbered the soldiers in certain spots. During the Second Jinchuan campaign, there was a well-known fiasco on the Qing side, the Muguomu defeat, during which thousands of Qing soldiers along with their commander-in-chief Wenfu were wiped out in an offensive by the Jinchuan people. In that battle, there were several thousand non-military personnel in the Muguomu camp. The huge number of non-military people impaired the fighting power of the Qing army during this defeat.

To be sure, not all these laborers were engaged in transportaion, many of them were craftsmen of various

¹⁵⁵According to the official report, the rate of the payment was "very high and generous *kuanyu youwo* 寬裕優渥." (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 321, pp. 45a-b). Besides, laborers were also provided with grain ration for their trip of carrying provisions and other materials to the front. Late during the second Jinchuan campaign, laborers were even provided with food for their return trip (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1056, pp. 12a-13a). Since the payment for laborers was one of the most convenient ways for officials to embezzle military taels, the rate of the payment tended to rise. Even with embezzlement taken into consideration, laborers were still considerably highly paid. So it was a gainful job for laborers. During the first Jinchuan campaign, all laborers were given, before they were hired, two taels of silver as money to settle their families. When their contract expired, they were given another one tael under the same name. This practice continued in late campaigns. Fuheng noticed that the Miao people in Guizhou province were eager to be hired as laborers during the Burmese campaign, as the wage of labor was much higher than what they gained from cultivating (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 831, pp. 15b-16b).

¹⁵⁶*pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an*, preface.

professions, who were hired by the military for different purpose. For instance, there were the people who were responsible to set up military camps, the ones to carry cannons, the ones to clear snow, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, ferrymen, mariners, boatmen, doctors, veterinarians, painters, mounters and so on and so forth.¹⁵⁷ The scale of recruitment of laborers was unprecedented. It attracted more immigrants, especially single males, lumpenproletarian type of people, to the region. Among the laborers hired by the military, there were many of them who had recently moved to Sichuan. These people were called "guest laborers (客夫 kefu)."¹⁵⁸ During the second Jinchuan campaign, when Hunan and Hubei provinces were asked to send soldiers to Sichuan, the provincial officials had to recruit new soldiers in Sichuan and then equip them with money from Hunan and Hubei.

Second, the military campaigns in the Southwest created a huge demand for local products, thus providing a great stimulus for the economy in the region. Merchants no longer needed to ship grain to the lower Yangtze valley, rather they could cash-in locally by trading with the military. Besides grain, the huge number of military forces consumed a great deal of various commodities. In a recently published collection of the archives of the military expenditures of

¹⁵⁷*Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an*, vol. 2.

¹⁵⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1000, pp. 35b-36a.

the Jinchuan campaigns,¹⁵⁹ some original documents reveal that the military campaigns were very bountiful to the local economy. The army not only purchased military materials, but also numerous other commodities needed for ordinary household life, such as rope, containers, brushes, paper, etc. The consumption of the Qing military forces at the frontier was beyond the expectation of everyone. Qianlong was astonished to find that at the very frontline of the second Jinchuan campaign, the supply of all kinds of luxury consumer goods, such as liqueur, dried sea food, etc. was plentiful. The officials at the front could hold lavish banquets as they wished.

Plus, many non-military commodities were purchased in large quantity by the military officials as rewards and gifts for soldiers. This illicit practice was called "*shanghao* 賞號" which means "materials for reward." The most common *shanghao* were all kinds of silk and satin. This practice was initiated by Fuheng when he commanded the first Jinchuan campaign. But he used his own allowance to purchase rewards for soldiers. This practice survived the first Jinchuan campaign and the officials, both civilian and military, tended to use military funds to buy rewards,

¹⁵⁹The title of this compendium is *Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an* 平定兩金川軍需例案 (Collected archives related to the military expenditures of the two Jinchuan campaigns). It was first edited by Zheng Qishan 鄭棲山, a scholar of the late Qing. And it was proof-read and annotated by Zhang Yuxin 張羽新, a Chinese Tibetan scholar, when it was published in 1989 by Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suowei Fuzhi Zhongxin 全國圖書館文獻館微複製中心 in Beijing.

instead of digging into their own pockets. The expenditures for these types of goods were rather enormous, further augmenting the already sizable military purchases on the local market to an unlimited extent.¹⁶⁰

During the campaigns, thousands of merchants went along with the armies to where the battlefield was.¹⁶¹ Besides the merchants, throngs of artisans also found plentiful opportunities during the campaigns. As stated earlier, civilians, including laborers and merchants, often outnumbered military personnel at the front. It was not only the armies who counted on the commodities supplied by the merchants, but the laborers also needed the merchants to provide with them daily necessities.¹⁶² By the late stage of the Jinchuan campaign, because the laborers had consumed too much rice en route, it was ordered that they would be given money to buy rice from the merchants, instead of consuming the provisions that they were transporting.¹⁶³ By the end of the second Jinchuan campaign, one official wrote

¹⁶⁰Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1008, pp. 15a-b; Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an, vol. 2, pp. 142a-b.

¹⁶¹This phenomenon began in the three Zunghar campaigns of the Kangxi period. The merchants who followed the Qing expeditions not only provided the troops with provisions, but also helped invigorate the local economic life along the route from Xi'an to the far Northwest.

¹⁶²One interesting anecdote is that a merchant from Shaanxi commissioned some artisans in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province, to make swords for self-defense, then transported them to Dajianlu to sell to the laborers. It shows that the frontier campaigns drew people from all areas to shape new networks of business.

¹⁶³On one occasion during the late second Jinchuan campaign, one team of laborers transported 250 dan of rice to the front each day, but they consumed 150 dan out of these 250 dan. So Qianlong ordered to have laborers buy their own provisions from merchants with money allocated by the officials. Gaozong Shilu, vol. 969, pp. 20a-21a.

that "the merchants were crowded along all the routes of the campaign (*shanggu yunji* 商賈雲集)." Along the road from Dajianlu to the Jinchuan front, a string of stations were built for the transportation teams to rest. Centered at these stations, tens of thousands of merchants set up their own tents and booths to live and to trade.¹⁶⁴ One may imagine that the whole frontline was turned into many small commercial towns crowded with these "guest people." One official described the situation as "*kemin fucou*, 客民輻輳", which means that "guest people" congregated on these spots. Some of these "guest people" might have settled down in the area after the campaign. It is well-known among historians that the commercial enterprises in Sichuan during the Qing were mainly controlled by outsiders, namely merchants based in other provinces, such as Shaanxi and Shanxi.¹⁶⁵ The early Qing military campaigns in the Southwest may have contributed to attracting merchants to this region and helping outsider merchants launch their business.

For big merchants, the frontier campaigns represented a good chance to expand their fortunes. It was well-known in this period that it was a lucrative business for merchants to be contracted by the government to transport rice and

¹⁶⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 965, pp. 14b-15a.

¹⁶⁵Madeleine Zelin, "The Rise and Fall of the Fu-Rong Salt-Yard Elite: Merchant Dominance in late Qing China," in Joseph Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin ed. *Chinese Local Elites and Pattern of Dominance*; S. A. M. Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China: Viceregal Government in Szechwan, 1898-1911*, p. 15. Adshead calls those outsider merchants "carpet-bag capitalists."

other military supplies to the front. The procedure was that merchants received a sum of money from the Qing officials for both rice and transportation costs. Then the merchants hired laborers themselves and handed the contracted amount of rice to the military units at the front. From the military's point of view, this procedure, although more costly than that of the officially organized transportation, was the more efficient way to have the provisions delivered to the frontlines. The government tended to use this method more, especially during the second Jinchuan campaign. As one might expect, merchants' embezzlement of state money went rampant. They swallowed the official tael without delivering the provisions according to the contract. After the second Jinchuan campaign, several hundred merchants were put in jail for their arrears.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, this mechanism of contracting the transportation of the provisions to merchants greatly enhanced the interest of these merchants in the peripheral areas of the Southwest. They did their own business while they transported the military provisions. Some regular commercial routes were thus built up and they survived the era of Qing frontier expansion.

The frontier campaigns also provided the local elites in the Southwest with a good chance to get an official title which they otherwise would have had to earn painstakingly through passing the examinations. This short way was the

¹⁶⁶*pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu li'an*, vol. 2, pp. 168a-171b.

"*juanna* 捐納," which means to donate for an honorific title. In reality, *juanna* was a synonym of office-selling. The practice was first employed during the campaign against the Wu Sangui Rebellion in the 1670s and the 1680s.¹⁶⁷ After that, it was suspended and the Qing throne tried its best to abstain from using it for it would erode the morale of bureaucracy. Nevertheless, during the second Jinchuan campaign, *juanna* was used again in Sichuan in order to raise funds for military expenditures. As a matter of fact, *juanna* was a smart way to tap the resources from a region which had not been heavily taxed by the state. It was more feasible in a region such as the Southwest where many resources had been retained in private hands. For commoners with a certain amount of properties in the Southwest, *juanna* was certainly a welcome way to gain prominence in their localities.¹⁶⁸ Since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the Southwest had not produced many degree-holders through the examinations. If it was because the region was less populated before the Qianlong period, the scarcity of degree-holders in Sichuan during this period can possibly be explained by taking into account the practice of the *juanna* system. Also it was beneficial for the local governments, for they could fully manipulate the disposition of the money from this practice.

¹⁶⁷See Section 2 of Chapter II.

¹⁶⁸Actually, before the Qing state used *juanna*, some big merchants, such as salt merchants in Jiangsu, had donated huge amounts of money in the name of supporting the second Jinchuan campaign. They were usually rewarded by the state with some honorific titles accordingly.

They would not submit this amount of money to the central government, or even report how they spent the money. It was estimated the income from *juanna* in Sichuan during the second Jinchuan campaign reached 10 million taels.

It is a conventional wisdom that military operations would exhaust the local resources and destroy economy. Nevertheless, campaigns of the Qianlong period, which were solely yet generously financed by the state excheques, lubricated and stimulated the local economy by pouring military tael into the local market. It was totally a different situation from that during the Ming-Qing transition¹⁶⁹ and the Wu Sangui Rebellion in the early Kangxi period.¹⁷⁰ During the first Jinchuan campaign, when Fuheng was sent to Sichuan to direct the campaign, the emperor hinted his desire to stop the campaign. Qianlong was looking for him to present some appropriate reasons for the throne to withdraw from the campaign. One of the reasons the emperor suggested to him to use was that the people in Sichuan were suffering from the war and the local economy was impaired. Once Fuheng arrived in the locality, he felt it would be difficult to use this as an excuse to conclude the campaign. He reported that the province was not in a state of "exhaustion."¹⁷¹ During the second Jinchuan campaign which lasted for five years, and with more than 60

¹⁶⁹See Sections 1 and 2 of Chapter I.

¹⁷⁰See Sections 1 and 2 of Chapter II.

¹⁷¹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 333, pp. 37a-b.

million taels spent in the Southwest, society at large certainly gained more than suffered.¹⁷²

Perhaps the most serious drawback that was brought about by the campaigns was that the opportunities created by the campaigns attracted too many lumpenproletarian to the region. The end of the second Jinchuan campaign in 1776 was not accompanied by any forceful, efficient measures to disperse and settle the dismissed laborers, or soldiers. It left society with a huge number of jobless people all of a sudden. The social order seriously deteriorated.¹⁷³ However, this drawback was outweighed by the creation of a unique socio-economic structure. This structure was created by the dual dynamics of the continuing developments in repopulation, economic growth and cultural reconstruction, and the catalytic effect of the Qing frontier campaigns. The frequency and magnitude of these campaigns forged the developments of the previous periods into a new structure, unique from the rest of Qing China.

4. Emperor's New Granary

¹⁷²There is one account in a local gazetteer to illuminate the role played by military campaigns in development of the economy: "At the beginning of the Qing, settlers lived in something like a wilderness. In the Shunzhi and Kangxi periods, the land was empty and the population small. Commerce was primitive and simple. In the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns, military campaigns were conducted in the Southwest. The treasury disbursed coins and brought money in from outside the province. A mint was established; money became widely used in commerce and industry." (*Hejiang Xian Zhi* 合江縣志, 2.25, cited in Entemann, p. 81)

¹⁷³For elaboration of this aspect, see Section 4 of Chapter VI.

If Qianlong had attempted to retreat from the Yongzheng emperor's active frontier strategy when he was first enthroned in 1735, he found that Yongzheng's schema to keep the Southwest as a source of rice supply a very useful strategy in equipoising the economic order in the country. He inherited readily this strategy and applied it skillfully to meet his changing needs in different times.

As argued in the previous chapters, the major concern of the Qing government to apply a fairly low taxation rate to the Southwest was to retain the resources locally in case of any frontier emergency. By this time, this rationale had been so adeptly applied no further justification was needed. It had become a common understanding that "it is bound to store resources in the frontiers (*biandi liyi beizhu* 邊地理宜備貯)," and that "Sichuan is on the frontier, so that it is imperative to store [grain] (*Chuan sheng di chu bianjiang, jizhu jinyao* 川省地處邊疆，積貯緊要)." ¹⁷⁴ On one occasion in 1749 when the Provincial Administration Commissioner of Sichuan, Gao Yue 高越, applied for more funds to buy rice to support the first Jinchuan campaign, Qianlong endorsed the rejection of the Ministry of Revenue to this motion on the grounds that the campaign had already ended. The emperor said: "It is beneficial to all provinces to store the surplus in society." ¹⁷⁵ To be sure, one should read "all provinces" with a grain of salt. This kind of

¹⁷⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 193, p. 7a.

¹⁷⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 337, pp. 28b-29a.

policy was never applied to the Jiangnan area. As in the previous periods, the Qianlong period did not witness a more relaxed extraction of resources from Jiangnan. While the central government often granted tax deductions and exemptions to the Southwest during this period, the throne was extremely harsh in pursuing the clearance of the arrears from Jiangnan during this period. If the Qing policy towards the Southwest can be interpreted as a special treatment, it should certainly be considered against the grand background of the frontier needs in the region, as has been argued in the last chapter.

As in the Yongzheng period, the effect of a *de facto* special economic zone in the Southwest continued to be a reality in the Qianlong era. Surplus rice was abundant in the region due to the low taxation policy of the Qing central authorities. From the beginning of the Qianlong period, the central government adopted some more active measures to channel the surplus rice from this region into national circulation in order to better serve the needs of the Qing state. First, the throne tightened control on the inland customs between the provinces¹⁷⁶ and used them as a lever to monitor the direction, volume and speed of rice circulation. During normal times, the government levied certain duties on all grain traffic. This system was

¹⁷⁶During the Qing, there were several inland customs stations along the Yangtze River: Kuiguan 夔關 in Sichuan, Jingzhou 荊州 in Hubei, Jiujiang 九江 in Jiangxi, and Hushuguan 潯墅關 in Jiangsu.

initiated during the Yongzheng period, and improved in the early Qianlong period. As regulated by the Qing authorities in 1737 and 1738, customs stopped levying duties on rice and other grains including beans when shipments were heading to a place of devastation.¹⁷⁷ This became one important instrument to encourage the private sector's assistance in disaster relief. In later years, except during a six-year period from 1742-48, during which all duties on grains were exempted categorically,¹⁷⁸ this policy was enforced throughout the rest of the Qianlong period until 1795.

Second, the state used its purchasing power to control rice prices in different times of the year. State purchasing power was very useful in controlling the price of rice on the market. While the surplus rice was mainly in private hands, the state played a role to counterbalance the merchants' control of the rice market by purchasing grain with state taels in harvest season. This official purchase of grain had two functions. First, the participation of the state in the market when grain was in good supply would keep the market strong, so that farmers would not lose too much profit.¹⁷⁹ At this moment, not only was the local government in Sichuan ordered to purchase grain to store in official granaries, but also the other provincial governments,

¹⁷⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 43, pp. 11b-12a; vol. 73, pp. 3b-4b.

¹⁷⁸The reason for this unconditional exemption during these years was that the throne hoped to lower the rising rice prices. But it did not work. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 329, pp. 26a-27a.

¹⁷⁹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 544, pp. 5b-6b.

typically that of Hubei, were ordered to buy grain from Sichuan to maintain their own granaries.¹⁸⁰ The grain garnered in the granaries was never levied as a part of taxation. The money spent in purchasing grain for official granaries was allotted from local governmental expenditures. In so doing, not only the official tael from Sichuanese government, but also that from other provincial governments flowed into the society in Sichuan. Second, the government would sell the grain it had bought during the harvest season when rice became scarce on the market and the price began to rise. This usually happened on two occasions. One was several months before a harvest. Another was when other regions suffered a serious rice shortage. At these times, the sudden increase in demand on the rice market in Sichuan would bring the price up. During these occasions, the government would sell the grain stored in the official granaries to balance the price and to maintain social order.¹⁸¹

During this period, the surplus rice in the Southwest continued to play a critical role in rice shortage remedy in the middle and lower Yangtze River Valley. In normal times, the rice shipments of merchants from the upper Yangtze valley provided a sufficient supply to the rice markets in the lower Yangtze valley. But in times when an area in the lower Yangtze valley was hit by a natural disaster, the

¹⁸⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 544, pp. 5b-6b.

¹⁸¹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 507, p. 16b.

state would join in transporting the rice purchased and stored before hand by the provincial government in Sichuan to the disaster areas. This was a common scenario during this period. For instance, when eastern Zhejiang was suffering a drought in 1751, and the Huai 淮 and Yang 揚 areas in Jiangnan were inflicted with a deluge in 1753, the throne ordered the state granaries of Sichuan to transport several hundred thousand *dan* of rice to relieve the disasters. In order not to disturb the local market in Sichuan, the throne sometimes let the provincial government handle the matter in secret. The state also urged merchants to go to disaster-inflicted areas by providing information and instructing merchants to put disaster relief ahead of profit-making.¹⁸²

Another development in rice circulation during this period is that the surplus rice of Sichuan began to flow to the other two southwestern provinces, Yunnan and Guizhou. This is one of the indications of the integration of the economic system in the three provinces of the Southwest. Before, Guizhou province largely depended on importation of rice from Guangxi province to feed local residents and the armies. The major avenue for rice traffic was through the

¹⁸²For example, Hubei province had a rice shortage in 1751 due to waterlogging while Jiangnan was suffering a drought. Merchants with rice from Sichuan and Hunan were not willing to stop in Hankou to sell rice as they knew the price in the lower Yangtze valley was higher. The officials in Hubei had to persuade the passing merchants to sell part of their cargo in Hubei at the local price (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 386, pp. 20b-21b).

Miao area of Guzhou. Safeguarding the rice supply to the province probably constituted one important reason for the Qing provincial authorities to have suppressed the Miao Rebellion so ruthlessly and to insist on installing the military colonies in the area in the post-rebellion period.¹⁸³ Yunnan was also a province with a paucity of grain output. In the beginning of the Qianlong period, Ortai proposed to open a canal to connect the Chuan 川 River and some of the rivers in Yunnan so that the Sichuan rice could be shipped to Yunnan via the Chuan River and the canal.¹⁸⁴ This idea later materialized as the Jinsha project was initiated by Zhang Yunsui. Primarily due to this project, Sichuan rice began to find a new outlet in Yunnan.¹⁸⁵

It is apparent that the central government consciously exploited the surplus rice of Sichuan to serve its purposes during the period of frontier expansion. This strategy was, however, not necessarily in accord with the interests of the provincial viceroys in the Southwest. They had their own calculations. What they desired most in order to derive maximum benefits from this situation was to open office-selling through accepting donations of grain, i.e. *juanna* system. As mentioned in the previous section, the *juanna*

¹⁸³See the first section of this chapter.

¹⁸⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 40, pp. 7b-9a.

¹⁸⁵In 1749, the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Zhang Yunsui wrote in his memorial: "Since the Jinsha River has been opened recently, the rice of Sichuan flows (to Yunnan). Rice prices used to be the highest in Dongchuan 東川 and Zhaotong 昭通 two prefectures of Yunnan province. Now it is gradually reduced." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 311, p. 46a.

system was a lucrative business for local officials, especially in the area where surplus rice was abundant. For their own interests, the provincial officials were not enthusiastic in encouraging the exportation of the surplus rice to other areas. They occasionally complained to the throne that the congregation of merchants in Sichuan to purchase rice raised the local price and proposed banning its export. The officials from other rice export provinces also made the same plea.¹⁸⁶ Each time, the throne categorically turned down these complaints and blamed them as selfish. Yet the provincial governments had their own methods and tactics for subtly acting against the will of the central government now and then. The action to stop merchants from buying rice was called "e di 遏籴 (to stop the purchase of rice)." In this period, e di also meant to ban the exportation of rice from an officials' own pales. Qianlong on many occasions reiterated that he was against e di.

On January 6, 1756, the emperor issued the following rescript forbidding the action of "e di". It reads:

Harvest is different from province to province each year. It is up to merchants and peddlers to transport [rice] from the place of surplus to the place of dearth in order to help in relief [of shortage]. The local officials have always been selfish and only consider earning credits for themselves, without concern for the general interest [of the country]. Although [I] have forbidden [the local official] from preventing

¹⁸⁶For instance, the Governor of Hunan Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀 complained in 1755 that the rice price in Huguang went up because merchants purchased too much rice to ship to Zhejiang. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 503, pp.22b-23b.

merchants from buying rice [under their jurisdiction], there always are some officials who comply with the rule verbally but violate it in action. Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces are both suffering from minor disasters this year. Since the local output of grain becomes less, the two provinces would expect to receive assistance from neighboring provinces. I am indeed worried that some base officials would turn their backs on the principles of relieving disaster and helping neighboring provinces and inhibit merchants from purchasing rice in their areas. If this is the case, the shopkeepers in the disaster area would be more inclined to hoard up rice, and the local bullies would make trouble. So that it will be more difficult for the people in the disaster area to get fed. Thence I order that the Governors-General and Governors in Sichuan, Huguang, Jiangxi, Henan, and Shandong provinces strictly restrain their subordinates and make it public that all merchant shipments, no matter how big in size, be allowed to load and pass freely, that *e di* be forbidden, and that any local rowdy who would interfere with the transportation be seriously punished. You Governors-General and Governors should enforce the above matters with real efforts, in compliance with my intention to treat every area of the country with equal benevolence.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, one should not be mistaken that this open-minded attitude of the emperor towards the marketing mechanism was universally valid. In another rice producing area, Manchuria, this policy was not applicable, for example. As the original region of the Manchus, Manchuria had been specially treated since the founding of the dynasty. To keep the rice price low in Manchuria, the Qing throne was not inclined to encourage the exportation of rice from Manchuria, except on a few occasions when Zhili province or Shandong province was inflicted with a natural calamity. In each of these cases, a special permit was acquired from the central government in order to lift the

¹⁸⁷Gaozong Shilu, vol. 502, pp. 10a-b.

ban on the export of rice from Manchuria.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, the central government's policy towards Sichuan's surplus rice should not be interpreted as evidence that the Qing state was suddenly under the influence of certain liberal trends in commanding the economic order of the country in the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁸⁹ It was always a cardinal principle of Qing politics to treat different regions differently. The Qing state was never hostile in general to the marketing system, but felt that it should be subject to political needs.

Although the surplus rice of Sichuan often played a role in disaster relief, it was designed in the first place to prepare for frontier emergencies. This strategy had been fully exploited during the frontier campaigns of the period. When the campaigns started in the Southwest, hundreds of thousands of troops moved to the region. The need for provisions ran high. The throne simply imposed an embargo on rice exportation, and forced all merchants to sell rice to the Qing forces. Not until the campaigns ended, was the ban lifted. State power was wielded in a timely fashion to draw resources from private hands into serving the operations of the state. During the two Jinchuan campaigns, the Qing throne ordered such embargoes on the export of the Sichuan rice to other places. In the second Jinchuan

¹⁸⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 287, pp. 6b-8a; vol. 747, pp. 7a-8a.

¹⁸⁹Helen Dunstan makes this argument in her article "Safely Supping with the Devil: the Qing and Its Merchant Suppliers of Copper."

campaign, the Governor-General of Sichuan Wenshou even ordered the banning of the export of all other grains besides rice.¹⁹⁰ Since most rice was exported through water route of the Yangtze River, the Qing authorities simply checked the Kuiguan customs to stop the outflow of rice. It was obviously very effective.

On October 4, 1772, when the second Jinchuan campaign was picking up the momentum, Qianlong issued an edict ordering an embargo of rice from Sichuan. This document demonstrates this strategy *par excellence*:

According to Wenshou's memorial on the matter of purchasing 300,000 *dan* of rice to garner in the official granaries in order to prepare for military needs, both summer and autumn harvests in Sichuan are bountiful. So it is bound to buy rice on time to fill the granaries which have been depleted. Back in the seventh month, Zhou Huang 周煌 reported to me when he was given an audience that Sichuan was well-known for its abundant production of rice, that the provinces in the lower River Valley all benefited from the rice from Sichuan, and that merchants and peddlers transported a great amount of rice out of Sichuan. [He proposed that] it seemed necessary to put some sort of restrictions on the circulation. At that time I thought that we had never forbidden the exportation of rice from Sichuan to other provinces, for it is a principle to cut off the excess and make up the deficiency. Therefore, it was not a good idea to conceive of anything like an embargo on behalf of the livelihood of the people in a single province. Nevertheless, now I think that the harvests are good in the provinces of Huguang, Jiangxi, Jiangnan so that rice is not in short supply, and they do not depend upon the rice from Sichuan. It is not necessary for merchants to ship it around. More importantly, both west and south branches of the Jinchuan campaign troops are purchasing the provisions; the county and prefecture governments are also obliged to purchase

¹⁹⁰But Qianlong was not happy about this. He condemned Wenshou for doing so and ordered lifting the ban on the other grains, *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 995, pp. 25a-26a.

300,000 *dan* of rice. If we continue to allow merchants to transport rice out, I am afraid that the local rice dealers would hoard up rice and raise the price to take advantage, and that the people's daily life would be afflicted. Under such a circumstance, the surplus rice has to be retained in Sichuan province. I thence order Wenshou to carefully manage to impose an embargo in Kuizhou 夔州, Hanzhong 漢中 and other passes, and not to allow merchants and peddlers to ship rice to other provinces to make profits, in the hope that this measure would be beneficial to both the civilians and the military in Sichuan.¹⁹¹

According to this document, the Qing throne's policy towards the surplus rice in Sichuan had two major components. First, the Qing state encouraged the private sector of society, namely merchants, to transport the surplus rice of Sichuan to join the national circulation in peacetime. To be sure, this was not a policy universally applied. Second, during times of emergency, the Qing state would have no difficulty imposing an embargo and forcing merchants to only trade with the military in the war zone. As discussed in the last section, the Qing authorities had found through experience that it was a more efficient method to contract merchants to prepare the military provisions, including purchase and transportation. So the embargo would not hurt the businessmen. On the contrary, the campaign was a more stable and bigger opportunity for merchants to make profits, as argued before.

Nevertheless, an embargo would hurt the people who relied on the rice supply from Sichuan, typically the lower

¹⁹¹Gaozong Shilu, vol.916, pp. 17b-18a.

Yangtze valley.¹⁹² This was a drawback of the Qing rice circulation strategy. Once a rice market with stable sources had formed, a considerable amount of the population would count on market rice. Wartime embargoes certainly brought great hardship to those people, especially when a campaign lasted for years such as the second Jinchuan campaign in which the embargo persisted for three years. In a sense, the assurance of a rice supply in the campaign fields meant cutting the supply to rice markets in other areas. This was the case during the two Jinchuan campaigns. Each time when the conclusion of the campaign approached, the throne urged the provincial government in Sichuan to lift the embargo immediately.¹⁹³ In 1775, Jiangnan was afflicted with a drought. When the throne was concerned with a possible rice shortage, the second Jinchuan campaign ended, and the acting Governor-General of Sichuan Wenshou lifted the embargo

¹⁹²During the Qianlong Zunghar campaign and Muslim campaign in the late 1750s, the surplus rice from Sichuan had been ordered to be transported to Gansu to support the massive military buildup in the Northwest. At the same time Gansu also imported large amount of coins and horses from Sichuan as needed for the military affairs. It was during this time that the Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu Yang Yingju proposed to restore the Governor-General of Sichuan and Shaanxi. Perhaps he considered that it was more convenient to draw the resources from Sichuan to support the Qing Northwest exploitation if Sichuan and Shaanxi were under the same supreme viceroy. But the Northwest-bound rice transportation was not a constant phenomenon. The area of Hanzhong, Shaanxi province, was also bountiful in rice production. So the Sichuan rice did not find good market north of Sichuan.

¹⁹³In early 1749, Qianlong said: "As for the rice of Sichuan, it was banned from being exported to Hunan and Hubei because of the military campaign. Is it necessary to ban it now? It should be ordered to let it be shipped out." *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 337, pp. 28b-29a.

timely.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, merchants began to head to the lower Yangtze valley shortly before the campaign was officially called off. Qianlong was very satisfied upon hearing the report that the rice supply was sufficient in Jiangnan in spite of the previous year's drought. He composed a poem to record this event. In this poem, Qianlong revealed his content with his strategy in the maneuvering of rice in Sichuan, as well as his satisfaction with Wenshou's prompt response to his call by lifting the embargo before the campaign finally ended.¹⁹⁵

5. Conclusion

The middle of the eighteenth century was the heyday of Qing frontier undertakings. Despite his initial desire to retreat from Yongzheng's frontier activism, Qianlong was soon stuck in dealing with a string of grand frontier campaigns—the Zhandui incident, the first Jinchuan campaign, the Tibetan expedition, the Zunghar campaigns, the Muslim campaign, the Burmese campaign and the second Jinchuan campaign—which turned out to be more sizable and more expensive than all the previously frontier campaigns of his

¹⁹⁴Wenshou was very shrewd in this regard. He allowed merchants to go down to the lower Yangtze Valley in December 1775 (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 993, p. 31a), when the Jinchuan campaign was still going on but the Qing victory was around the corner. Then in March, 1776, he lifted the embargo officially (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1002, 3b-4a). His timely handling of the matter won him a reward. He was soon appointed the formal Governor-General of Sichuan on March 26, 1776 (*ibid*, vol. 1002, p. 11b).

¹⁹⁵*Sichuan Tongzhi*, vol. 16, pp. 4b-5a.

grandfather and father. To be sure, not all these frontier campaigns were of same nature and significance. The most critical campaigns among all these campaigns were the Zunghar campaigns in the 1750s. The Zunghar campaigns eliminated the most dangerous enemy of the Qing dynasty so that the whole Qing frontier strategy could be remade. Nevertheless, the confidence aroused by the triumph of the Zunghar campaigns and the abundance of the state fisci drove the Qing throne to go for more frontier wars in the rest of the period.

The decades of military campaigns had a strong impact on the socio-economic life of the Southwest. The demarcation of the two strategic regions-the Northwest and the Southwest-was eventually confirmed, and was embodied in the restoration of the two respective Governors-General for Sichuan and Shaanxi. Meanwhile, as one tangible aftermath of the frequent frontier campaigns, the military establishment in the Southwest had reached its highest point in this period. Not only was the military dominant in the local political scene, it also greatly influenced the dynamics of economic development in the region. With huge amounts of state funds flowing to the Southwest to support the frontier campaigns and the military buildup, various groups, including the military and civilians, benefited from the situation. The provincial, as well as the military, officials tried to maintain the status of the region as a

strategic stronghold in order to keep the steady financial support. Meanwhile, the local economy became much more commercialized due to the stimulation from the extensive demands of the military and the campaigns. The low taxation and the opportunities to be hired by the state to serve the frontier campaigns drew wave after wave of immigrants to the already overpopulated Sichuan. An immigrant society was thriving around this time in the Southwest frontier.

At the same time, the central government of the Qing dynasty continued the Yongzheng strategy of manipulating the surplus rice in the Southwest to function as an important disaster relief method during the peacetimes through intervening into the marketing system. Coincident with the heyday of the Qing frontier expansion, the first four decades of the Qianlong reign was also the peak time for the Sichuan rice market, which had been fostered by the Qing special taxation policy to the Southwest. The Sichuan rice market played an enormously important role in guaranteeing the supply of rice to the Jiangnan area and other places which shouldered much heavier burdens of revenue contributions to the Qing state.

Chapter VI.

The End of An Era: Denouement of the Frontier Expansion (1776-1795)

1. Two Gurkha Campaigns and the Settlement of the Tibetan Affairs

The Qianlong period witnessed the greatest frontier expansion of the Qing empire. Nevertheless, a close study of the Qianlong frontier strategy will tell that the postbellum period of the two Jinchuan campaigns was a period in which the throne gradually shifted its attention from frontier affairs to domestic issues. As argued in the previous chapter, the Qianlong Zunghar campaign in the 1750s was a turning point in the Qing frontier enterprise. Since the most dangerous enemy to the empire had been annihilated, the Qing dynasty showed much less interest in launching any sizable frontier expedition than before. By the end of the Qianlong era, most frontier problems had been settled. In 1782, an internal unrest occurred in Burma. Some frontier officials suggested the throne to launch an expedition into Burma to take this opportunity. But Qianlong disapproved it.¹ Still haunted with the disastrous memory of ten thousand Qing soldiers along with their commander-in-chief Mingrui perishing in the tropical jungles during the Burmese campaign of 1768-69, Qianlong was not zealous to have another expedition to annex the country. In 1788, pressed by

¹Gaozongq Shilu, vol. 1159, pp. 14a-17b.

economic difficulties brought in about the Qing sanction of border trade between China and Burma, the Burmese authorities sent a tributary mission to Beijing seeking to submit to the Qing throne. The Qing throne thus accepted the submission from Burma. The formal tributary relationship of Burma to the Qing was established.²

Also in 1788, the Qing forces invaded Vietnam from Guangxi and Yunnan provinces to quell internal unrest in that country.³ Although the military advance in Vietnam was foiled by the Vietnamese counterattack in 1789, the new ruler of Vietnam Nguyễn Văn-Huê 阮文惠 (Juan Wenhui in Chinese, later changed to Juan Guangping 阮光平) submitted himself to the Qing court. Out of the same concerns which prevented the Qing from launching an expedition into Burma, the Qing dynasty accepted Nguyen's submission and acknowledged him as the new ruler of Vietnam.⁴ In 1794, Fukang'an was appointed Governor-General of Yunnan and

²Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp.127-128.

³During the eighteenth century, Vietnam was under the Lê dynasty (1427-1788) though many parts of the country were controlled by local lords. In 1771, a big uprising led by three Nguyen brothers upset the status quo. In 1786, the Lê dynasty was toppled by the Nguyen brothers. At this point, the Qing throne ordered an invasion into Vietnam to restore the toppled Lê dynasty. In the invasion, the Guangxi route of the army was the main force, the Yunnan route was the auxiliary force. The chief commander of the invasion was Sun Shiyi 孫世毅, the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi.

⁴The Qing dynasty realized that Le Duy-Ki 黎維祁 (Li Weiqi in Chinese), the ruler of the Lê dynasty could not maintain order. Therefore, it changed to back Nguyễn Văn-Huê. Nguyễn Văn-Huê went to Peking to meet the Qianlong emperor in 1790. Qianlong granted him the title of the King of Vietnam. But Nguyen called himself the Quang-trung emperor in Vietnam. Le Duy-Ki and his family and subordinates sought refuge in China. They were organized into a Vietnamese branch attached to the Chinese Bordered Yellow Banner with Le Duy-Ki as the head.

Guizhou in order to deal with any possible emergencies in Vietnam, as the political situation in Vietnam was not stable yet.⁵ But this measure was defensive in nature. The Qing had not much interest in being more aggressive in border areas between China and Vietnam. The virtual retreat of the Qing influence from Vietnam cleared the way for a rising colonial empire, France, in Indo-China.

The relationship between the Qing throne and the Tibetan authorities reached a more secure stage after the suppression of the 1750 rebellion by the younger son of Poluonai. Since the pacification of the rebellion, the Qing reinforced its military presence in Lhasa and its political control of the Tibetan government. From Qianlong's perspective, Tibet was already part of the Qing empire under the official administration of his bureaucracy.⁶ The seventh Dalai Lama Kalsang Gyatso was a devoted Lamaist with little interest in political power. After he returned Lhasa from his exile in Taining, Sichuan in 1735 until his demise in 1757, he made no attempt to compete with the Qing Ambans in controlling political power. The succeeding eighth Dalai Lama Jambal Gyatso (1758-1804) was born in 1758 and was enthroned as the new Dalai Lama in 1781 after the sixth Panchen Lama died of smallpox in Beijing in November 27, 1780.⁷ In 1786,

⁵Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, pp. 135-140.

⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1292, p. 25.

⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1122, pp. 9a-10b. The sixth Panchen Lama went to Peking to meet the Qianlong emperor in 1780. Qianlong granted him a huge amount of treasures.

when the provincial government asked the throne to approve its plan to repair the Huiyuan monastery, which was built in the Yongzheng period to house the seventh Dalai Lama in exile,⁸ and had been seriously damaged by an earthquake, the emperor instructed that the plan be downsized. He reasoned that this refuge was no longer useful since the Zunghars had been annihilated, and the Tibetan situation had been stable.⁹

While the Tibetan domestic situation stabilized, its foreign relationships evoked new crises for the Qing dynasty by the end of the Qianlong period. As Tibet's neighbor, Nepal rose to power in the 1770s and began to expand its influence in the Himalayan region. In 1769, a new dynasty was founded by the Gurkhas (廓爾喀 Kuoerka in Chinese documents), which is known as the Gurkha dynasty.¹⁰ Since trade between Nepal and Tibet was essential to the economic life of the Gurkha dynasty, some disputes between the two sides which had accumulated over the years ultimately paved the way to a conflict. The chief grievance of the Gurkhas by the 1780s was that the Tibetans banned the importation of coins minted in Nepal because of their declining quality.¹¹

⁸See Chapter 4, section 3.

⁹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1249, pp. 1a-2b.

¹⁰Gurkha were an ethnic people of west Nepal. They rose to power from the sixteenth century. In 1769, Prithvinarayn Shah of the ruling house of Gurkha overthrew the Malla dynasty and established a new dynasty: the Gurkha dynasty. See D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, pp. 18-57, 198-224; also Rishikesh Shaha, *Modern Nepal: A Political History 1769-1955*, vol. 1, pp. 23-28.

¹¹Around the middle of the seventeenth century, a trading agreement was reached between Pratap Malla, the king of the Malla dynasty of Nepal and

Another problem was that Tibet increased duties placed on Nepali commodities transported into Tibet. Meanwhile, the Gurkhas kept complaining that the salt imported from Tibet was always mixed with sand.

The situation became more complicated because of the involvement of British forces in the trade activities between India and Tibet via Nepal. Since the middle of the Qianlong period, the British, who had colonized India (British seized Bengal in 1763), began to penetrate into the areas adjacent to India. In 1767, a military expedition led by G. Kinloch was sent by the East India Company to Nepal, but the expedition never reached the core part of the Gurkha kingdom.¹² In 1774, the Indian Governor Warren Hastings (1732-1818) sent George Bogel to Tibet. During his meeting with the sixth Panchen Lama, Bogel suggested that British India and Tibet join hands to check the expansion of the Gurkha dynasty, as it had increased influence on the Indian-Tibetan trade. But the Panchen Lama only agreed to report his message to the Qing central government.¹³ In 1783, Hastings again sent Captain Samuel Turner to go to Tibet to negotiate a trade agreement between British India and Tibet.

Tibet. It stipulated that Tibet would not levy any charges or duties on goods imported from Nepal and that Nepal would mint coins for Tibet, for which Tibetans paid with silver (See Section 4 of Chapter I). But over a period of time, Nepal debased the value of the coins minted for Tibet in order to maximize its profit. See Rishikesh Shaha, Modern Nepal: A Political History 1796-1955, vol. 1, p. 29; p. 39; D. R. Regmi, Modern Nepal, vol. 1, p. 427-428.

¹²Rishikesh Shaha, Modern Nepal, vol. 1, pp. 33-35.

¹³For a detailed account of Bogle's mission, see Francis Younghusband, India and Tibet, pp. 13-25.

Turner managed to reach an agreement with the Tibetans in the spring of 1784. However, this agreement did not significantly enhance the relationship between British India and Tibet.¹⁴ While little progress was achieved in opening Tibet, the British turned to Nepal as a go-between for Indian-Tibetan trade.

The British efforts bore fruit in 1788 when the Gurkha dynasty changed its attitude towards the British and began to negotiate with the British on trade matters. The improvement in Gurkha-British relations became one of the prerequisites for the Gorkha decision to raid Tibet for the first time in 1788, since they could be ensured that the British would not attack them while they were engaged in a Tibetan campaign.¹⁵ In March, 1792, during the second Gurkha campaign, another treaty of commerce was signed between Nepal and the East India Company. This again prevented the British from siding with the Chinese in the war between Nepal and China.¹⁶

The catalyst of the war was a conflict over the inheritance of the deceased sixth Panchen Lama. When the sixth Panchen Lama died during his Beijing visit in November 27, 1780, one of his brothers, Hutuktu Chungpa (or Drungpa Trulku), the Regent of Tashi Lhunpo monastery which was

¹⁴D.R. Regmi, Modern Nepal, vol. 1, pp. 390-392; Yonghusband, pp. 26-32.

¹⁵Feng, Mingzhu, "Kuoerka zhi Yi de Qianyin Houguo: Jian Lun Shiba Shiji Mo Qingting yu Xizang ji Ying shu Yindu Zhengfu de Guanxi;" Also see Rishikesh Shaha, Modern Nepal: A Political History 1769-1955, vol. 1, pp. 60-61.

¹⁶Rishikesh Shaha, Modern Nepal, vol. 1, p. 61.

customarily the residency of Panchen Lama, took all the treasures in the monastery into his own possession. Another brother of the deceased Panchen Lama, Samarpa, who was an incarnated Lama of the Red sect of Lamaism, did not get any inheritance. Outraged with his brother, Samarpa went to Nepal in 1786 and urged the Gurkhas to invade Tibet.¹⁷

In the spring of 1788, the Gurkhas invaded Tibet.¹⁸ The Tibetan authorities appealed to the Qing court for assistance. In August, Qianlong ordered Chengdu General Ehui 鄂輝¹⁹ to lead an expedition to Tibet. He also sent the former Amban Bazhong 巴忠 to Tibet to assist in settling the incident. Before the Qing armies engaged the Gurkha invaders, Bazhong let the Tibetans reach a peace agreement in May, 1789. Meanwhile he reported to the court that the Gurkhas had surrendered. But he concealed that the Tibetans promised in the agreement to submit 9,600 tael of silver to the Gurkhas annually.²⁰ The emperor was satisfied to hear that the enemy was beat back and the lost territory was recovered. After this incident, the throne ordered a redefinition the responsibilities of the two Ambans, urging

¹⁷*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 525; Rishikesh Shaha, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, p. 54; D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, pp.429-431.

¹⁸About the first Gurkha campaign, see Rishikesh Shaha, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, pp. 54-57; Sato Hisashi, "Daiichiji Guluka Sensô ni tsuide," in *Chyûsei Chibetto Shi Kenkyû*, pp. 521-596; Wei Yuan, *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 5.

¹⁹Ehui was from the Manchu White Banner. He began his military career as a lesser officer in Sichuan. He participated in the second Jinchuan campaign (1771-76). He was appointed Chengdu General twice (1777 and 1786). His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 333-334; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 328.

²⁰Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, p. 142.

them to be more forceful in overseeing Tibetan political affairs.

Two years later, in 1791, the Gurkhas reinvaded Tibet again under the excuse of seeking the payment promised by the Tibetans in the 1789 agreement. The Gurkha troops smashed the Tibetan resistance and looted Tashi Lhunpo monastery. Upon hearing the news of the Gurkha invasion, Bazhong committed suicide, knowing he had cheated the throne. Qianlong realized that the matter had not been settled with the previous incident. He was determined to solve this frontier problem once and for all this time. On November 22, 1791, Qianlong ordered Fukang'an 福康安 (d. 1796),²¹ the son of Fuheng and the former Governor-General of Sichuan, and veteran frontier general Hailancha 海蘭察 (d. 1793)²² to lead a sizeable expedition of 100,000 soldiers to

²¹Fukang'an participated in the second Jinchuan campaign and distinguished himself as a capable commander. In 1780, he was appointed Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou. Then in 1781 he was transferred to Governor-General of Sichuan, concurrently holding the post of Chengdu General. Later, he was one of the commanders-in-chief of the campaigns against the Muslim Rebellion in Gansu in 1784, and against the Lin Shuangwen Rebellion in Taiwan in 1787. Fukang'an became the most important frontier viceroy and military commander in the last two decades of the Qianlong reign. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 326-328; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 330; Hummel, pp. 253-255.

²²Hailancha was from the Manchu Bordered Yellow Banner. He became involved in frontier campaigns since the Qianlong's Zunghar campaigns in the 1750s. Like Fukang'an, he was also one of the chief commanders of the second Jinchuan campaign, the campaigns against the Muslim Rebellions and the Lin Shuangwen Rebellion. He established a long-time relationship of cooperation with Fukang'an through all those campaigns. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 204-206, *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 331; Hummel, pp. 273-274. Hummel comments: "Hai-lan-ch'a was one of the ablest generals of the Ch'ing period. He was a brave warrior and a clever strategist, and though he rose from the ranks, he became the equal of others who belonged to noble families. Among the contemporary commanders he paid respect only to A-kuei, and worked under Fu-k'ang-an

expel the Gurkhas from Tibet.²³ Five days later, Fukang'an was entitled as the Generalissimo. In the spring of 1792, the Qing expedition arrived in Tibet via Qinghai. In June, 1792, the Qing armies invaded Nepal, approaching Kathmandu. Pressured by the triumphant advance of the Qing armies, the Nepali king began to seek a settlement. On the Qing side, despite a string of successes on the battlefield, casualties were fairly heavy. In addition, the approach of snowfall and the great distance of the troops from the base areas of Lhasa and Sichuan forced the Qing commanders to settle the war shortly. So in September, Fukang'an accepted the terms offered by the Gurkhas and subsequently led a withdrawal from Nepal on October 6, 1792. After the Qing triumph, the Qing established the tributary relationship of Nepal to the Qing court. Since then Nepal continued sending tributary missions to Beijing every five years until 1908. The Gurkhas were deprived of the right of minting coins for the Tibetans, and other trade privileges.²⁴

The two Gurkha campaigns convinced the Qianlong emperor that the only effective way to maintain stability in Tibet was to render more direct control of the region through the

only after the latter gave him due recognition. Yet Fu-k'ang-an's military exploits are believed by many to have been due entirely to Hailan-ch'a." pp. 273-274.

²³About Qianlong's rationale to launch the expedition, see *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1403, pp. 29a-30a.

²⁴About the second Gurkha campaign and the settlement, see Rishikesh Shaha, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, pp. 57-71; D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, vol. 1, pp. 435-487; Sato Hisashi, "Dainiji Guluka Sensô ni tsuide," in *Chyûsei Chibetto Shi Kenkyû*, pp. 597-740; Wei Yuan, *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 5.

hands of the Qing Ambans. Sometime before the second Gurkha campaign, the Qing throne had come to realize that the eighth Dalai Lama was a naive and susceptible person with no strong will and political insights, and that he was surrounded and influenced by his relatives and subordinates who showed some tendencies to swing away from the tracks set by the Qing authorities.²⁵ This situation aroused the concerns of the Qianlong emperor. With the Mongol tribes in the North still constituting a menace to the Qing dynasty during the late years of the Qianlong era,²⁶ the aging emperor felt that it was imperative to further tighten central control on Tibet. Therefore, in 1793, after more than two years' deliberation, the Qing throne issued the well-known "The Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government."²⁷ This document has long been regarded as a hallmark of the pinnacle of Chinese control of Tibet, for it placed the Tibetan political and religious hierarchies under strict supervision of the two Qing Ambans. Not only did they have the authority over all important affairs in Tibet, including personnel, judicial, and financial affairs, but they also held a tight rein on the Tibetan armies. The Qing

²⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1361, pp. 11a-13b.

²⁶The potential threat from the Mongol tribes was even detected by the Korean envoys to China during the 1780s and 1790s. The Korean king and officials correctly pointed out that the Qing efforts to uphold Yellow Sect Lamaism was in order to appease the Mongols. See Wu, Han ed. *Chaoxian Li Chao Shilu zhong de Zhongguo Shiliao*, vol.11, p.4700; p.4703; pp.4706-07; p.4882.

²⁷The full text of "The Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government" can be found in *Wei Zang Tongzhi*, vol. 12. The original Tibetan version is kept in Tashi Lhumpo.

central government also took over the handling of all foreign relations, including foreign trade, for Tibet through the two Ambans. More particularly, according to this document, it was the Ambans who presided over the procedure of "Golden Urn Lotting" which was to decide a candidate for the future Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, to whom the Qing throne would formally confer the title thereafter. Since this time on, this system became the only legitimate way to procreate a Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama.

Since the Kangxi emperor ordered the first Tibetan expedition to expel the Zunghar invaders from Tibet in 1720, the Qing dynasty had gone through protracted process to reach this full control of Tibetan affairs in 1793, backed by the military might displayed in the two Gurkha campaigns. Since the promulgation of "The Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government" in 1793, Tibet had been subject to the rule of the Qing dynasty for more than one century until the Qing dynasty was toppled in 1912. From 1793 to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Qing dynasty had kept the *status quo* in Tibet. No major campaign were conducted as what had occurred in the eighteenth century, though there were several occasions throughout the nineteenth century on which the Qing military forces were called upon to solve border conflicts in Tibet.²⁸

²⁸In 1815, when the Gurkhas engaged in a border war, the Gurkhas asked the Qing Ambans in Lhasa for assistance. The Governor-General of Sichuan Saichong'a 赛冲阿 led several thousand Qing troops to march to Tibet for help. But the Qing throne did not sanction the operation. In 1841,

In addition to the fact that Tibet was finally under the full control of the Qing dynasty, there were a number of ramifications generated by the settlement of 1793. One of them was that the Chinese ceased to pursue their interests in the Himalayan region, including Nepal. As stated in the beginning of this section, the Qing interest in frontier expansion was declining after the Zunghar empire was eradicated. The two Gurkha campaigns and the Vietnamese campaign were the only frontier operations in the late Qianlong period. These campaigns sought to stabilize the existing frontier, not to expand the Qing empire. Although the Gurkha dynasty subjugated itself to the Qing dynasty as a tributary country, the Qing state tended to ignore this remote subject throughout the nineteenth century. This attitude of the Qing dynasty frustrated the Nepali attempt to procure diplomatic gains between adroitly dealing with the two powers surrounding it, China and British India.²⁹ Meanwhile the British ambition to penetrate into Tibet was

the Gurkhas invaded the Tibetan border areas. The Qing Ambans sent the Tibetan armies to the spot and defeated the Gurkha invaders. In 1855, there was another border conflict between the Tibetans and the Gurkhas. The Ambans led the counterattack but failed to recover the territory occupied by the Gurkhas due to the demise of the eleventh Dalai Lama in 1855. In 1883, another incident occurred. The Gurkha merchants living in Lhasa were looted by Tibetan outlaws. The Gurkhas prepared to mount a border war after a frustrating negotiation. Amban sent his official to the border to negotiate with the Gurkhas. Eventually, a war was avoided with the Tibetan side paying 183,000 tael of silver to the Gurkhas as the compensation to the properties damaged in the looting. The Amban managed to gather 104,000 tael. The remaining amount was procured from Sichuan. Wu Fengpei and Zeng Guoqing, *Qing Chao Zhu Zang Dacheng Zhidu de Jianli yu Yanq*, pp. 78-81.

²⁹Rishikesh Shaha, *Modern Nepal: A Political History 1769-1955*, vol. 1, p. 70.

also frustrated by the 1793 settlement. Not until the late nineteenth century, did Britain find a chance to penetrate into Tibet when Qing control of Tibet became weak and nominal. In order to establish more contact with China for the sake of the growing British commercial interests, Britain had to go through another route, the route of sea. As for the Southwest, with the stabilization of the Tibetan situation, the military presence in the Southwest gradually lost its validity and began to change its nature. Therefore, the importance of the Southwest as a strategic stronghold ceased to be the reality with the arrival of the nineteenth century.

The end of the two Gurkha campaigns hallmarked the conclusion of the continuing Qing efforts at frontier expansion since the beginning of the Qing dynasty. After the second Gurkha campaign, the Qianlong emperor composed the famous essay "In Commemoration of the Ten Campaigns (御製十全記 *Yu Zhi Shiquan Ji*)" on November 16, 1792.³⁰ Qianlong was proud of his unprecedented military *éclat*, he portrayed that his missions in consolidating the frontiers of the empire as fully successful. Shortly before the first

³⁰The ten campaigns include two Zunghar campaigns, one Muslim campaign in Chinese East Turkestan, two Jinchuan campaigns, one Taiwanese campaign to crackdown on Lin Shuangwen's rebellion, one Burmese campaign, one Vietnamese campaign and two Gurkha campaigns. Noticeably, Qianlong purposely excluded from the list of *éclat* the three campaigns against domestic rebellions, a campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion in Shandong in 1774 and two campaigns against the New School Muslim Rebellions in Gansu in 1782 and 1784. The essay is in *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1414, pp. 7b-12a.

Gurkha campaign, the Qianlong emperor sent Imperial Guardsman Amida 阿彌達, the son of Agui 阿桂, to Qinghai to reexplore the origins of the Yellow River. When the Kangxi emperor began to be interested in frontier expansion in the early the eighteenth century, he sent Imperial Guardsman Laxi to explore the source of the Yellow River in 1704. Laxi found the origin of the Yellow River was the Stars Sea.³¹ But Amida furthured the exploration and found that the real source of the Yellow River was Altan Gol, the river of gold.³² to the southwest of the Stars Sea.³³ Thus Qianlong completed the geographic exploration initiated by the Kangxi emperor.

When the Qianlong emperor abdicated the throne to his son, Yuyan 顥琰, known as the Jiaqing 嘉慶 emperor, in 1796, he must have been very content to have given a much expanded and secured empire to his successor. Coincidentally, right after the Qianlong emperor's abdication, three major commanding officials of the two Gurkha campaigns, also the senior viceroys of the Southwest and the Tibetan affairs, the Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Fukang'an, the former Governor-General of Sichuan Sun Shiyi 孫士毅 (1720-1796)³⁴ and the current Governor-General of Sichuan Helin

³¹See section 1 of Chapter III.

³²Altan Gol is Mongol. Its Chinese transliteration is Aletan Guole 阿勒坦郭勒.

³³*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1160, pp. 34b-43a.

³⁴Sun Shiyi was from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. He became distinguished in directing the logistics for the Qianlong Burmese campaign. He was appointed Governor of Yunnan in 1779. And he became the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi in 1786. During his tenure in

和琳³⁵ passed away one by one within several months in 1796.³⁶ The next year, in 1797, another champion of the Qianlong frontier operations, the commander-in-chief of the second Jinchuan campaign, Agui also passed away.³⁷ Then in 1798, the long-time viceroy of the Southwest and the commander-in-chief of the two Gurkha campaigns, Ehui, died.³⁸ Without a doubt, the demise of these experienced military leaders surely challenged the Qing efforts in the ongoing campaign against the Miao Rebellion in Hunan and Guizhou provinces,³⁹ and the campaign against the White

the latter position, he took charge of Vietnamese affairs in the late 1780s. Sun was appointed Governor-General of Sichuan in 1791 and he was in charge of the logistics when the second Gurkha campaign took place. He was instrumental in drafting the "Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government" which consolidated Qing's control of Tibet. When the Miao Rebellion occurred, Sun was again in charge of the logistics at the front. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 332-333; *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 330; and Hummel, pp. 680-682.

³⁵Helin was the younger brother of Heshen. He was one of the chief-commanders of the second Gurkha campaign. After the campaign ended, he was appointed Amban and spent two years in Tibet. He was transferred to Governor-General of Sichuan in 1794. Many believed that his many honors from the throne were merely because of the status of his brother. His biographies are in *Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 319; Hummel, pp. 286-287.

³⁶As his father Fuheng, Fukang'an died of malaria while commanding the campaign against the Miao Rebellion in Guizhou in the summer of 1796 (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1494, pp. 44a-45b). Sun Shiyi died of illness in Sichuan while commanding the campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion in the late summer of 1796 (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1495, pp. 2b-4a). The Governor-General of Sichuan Helin died of malaria too in the Guizhou campaign against the Miao Rebellion in the autumn of 1796 (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1495, pp. 9b-12a).

³⁷Agui died in October, 1797 at age of eighty. He participated in commanding the two Gurkha campaigns while he was presiding the Ministry of War (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1497, pp. 5a-6a; his biography in *Qing Shi Liezhuan*, pp. 330-332).

³⁸*Qing Shi Liezhuan*, p. 334.

³⁹The Miao Rebellion at the end of the Qianlong era was a protest against Han Chinese migration into the Miao areas and against the oppression of Qing officials over the Miao people. Since the Yongzheng period, Han Chinese began to settle down in the Miao areas on the border between Guizhou and Hunan provinces. In the years 1732-1736, a Miao

Lotus Rebellion in five provinces of central China, including Sichuan. It took a while for the Qing empire to adjust its military mechanism, so well built for frontier operations, to domestic campaigns against sectarian and ethnic rebellions, and to produce new military leaders skillful in wrestling with internal rebels, instead of frontier foes.⁴⁰ A new era had come. Qianlong had the chance to witness the twilight of the new era from his retirement, but he soon passed away himself in 1799 at the age of eighty-eight. It was up to his successors to reorient the national strategy in a new century.

2. Aftermath

In many senses, for the Southwest, the last two decades of the Qianlong period (1776-1795) was overshadowed by the two Jinchuan campaigns. The two Jinchuan campaigns, especially the second one, was the most expensive campaign in Qing history until the end of the eighteenth century. As

rebellion occurred and it was brutally suppressed by Zhang Guangsi. Subsequently, the Qing military colonies were established in those areas. Towards the end of the Qianlong era, the conflicts between the native Miao people and the Han Chinese settlers and Qing officials reached the point of an open rebellion. The Qing dynasty immediately organized a mighty campaign against this rebellion by sending heavy troops from the Southwest and the adjacent provinces to the area. The rebellion was put in check in 1796. But the area was not completely pacified until 1802. About the Miao Rebellion in the Qianlong-Jiaqing period, see Lombard-Salmon, un exemple d'acculturation chinoise, pp. 239-248; Wu Xinfu Miaozu Shi, pp. 395-420.

⁴⁰Philip Kuhn implies this aspect of the end of the eighteenth century in Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: "Campaigning in Central Asia was a different matter from coping with widespread social disintegration in rural China." p. 38.

argued in the previous chapter, the two campaigns were not of great significance for the Qing frontier strategy in spite of the massive human cost and immense financial expenses. They turned out to be merely campaigns to show off Qing military might and to provide the Qing military commanders opportunities to earn their personal fortunes. Nevertheless, the protracted campaigns left a significant legacy in the region, which influenced both the characteristics of local society and the relationships between region and the central government throughout the remaining Qianlong period.

After the second Jinchuan campaign ended in 1776, the provincial government of Sichuan and the commissioners from the central government spent years clearing out the expense accounts of the campaign. That proved to be a very difficult task due to the extensive misuse of military funds during the campaign. The throne might not have anticipated that it would never be made clear how the 61.6 million taels were consumed in this campaign, which was two times the total expenses used in the campaigns to eliminate the Zunghar empire in the 1750s and the Muslim campaign thereafter. By the same token, it will probably never be known how much of the 61.6 million taels was spent illicitly. But the emperor had to yield to the *fait accompli*. Since 1778 to 1785, the throne exempted a total 6.86 million taels of various debts owned by the soldiers, merchants, laborers, which amounted

to one tenth of the total expenses of the second Jinchuan campaign.⁴¹ The throne did not render tight-fisted control over the military's expenditure during the campaign, Qianlong did not either insist on carrying out a thorough investigation of the accounts and arrears in the postbellum period. Ultimately, all accounts passed the rather loose scrutiny and almost all debts were either exempted or put into an open-ended process of repayment.⁴² Not a single official was punished for embezzlement during the years' scrutiny. The only people who had been put in jail were hundreds of merchants and their family members who failed to pay off their debt. But after their properties had been confiscated to pay for the debts, they were released in 1779 with almost one million taels of debt unpaid.⁴³

The message delivered through this treatment of the Jinchuan expenditures was that the central government had no intention to alter a schema that Qianlong and his predecessors, Kangxi and Yongzheng, had been following since

⁴¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1070, pp. 45a-b; vol. 1082, pp. 16b-18b; vol. 1095, pp. 13b-14a; vol. 1132, pp. 18a-19a; vol. 1134, pp. 6a-7a; vol. 1141, pp. 3a-4a; vol. 1156, pp. 15a-b; vol. 1197, pp. 13b-14a; vol. 1219, pp. 22b-23a. Also in Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an, vol. 1, pp. 79a-93a; vol. 2, pp. 200a-206a.

⁴²It was ruled that there was totally 393,679 tael of debts to be repaid by various parties. But by 1785, fourteen years after the campaign, 257,522 tael remained unpaid. Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an, vol. 2, pp. 200a-206a.

⁴³The total debts owed by merchants amounted to 3.13 million tael in the second Jinchuan campaign. In 1779, the provincial government of Sichuan asked to release all merchants in prison. For the remaining debts, half of them would be paid by the officials who had been in charge of the matter of hiring the merchants, and other half would be deducted from the *yanglian* allowance of the Sichuanese officials. See Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an, vol. 2, pp. 168a-171b.

the early eighteenth century. That schema was that the Qing state put economic calculations behind strategic considerations in the Southwest. Indeed, the Southwest was still treated as a frontier stronghold during the last two decades of the Qianlong period. Even though the trend was that the era of the Qing's frontier undertakings was to end, nobody was farsighted enough to foresee it in the years following the second Jinchuan campaign. All was kept in the old tracks in the Southwest.

Chengdu was still the headquarters of the whole Southwest and Tibetan frontiers. During the late years of the Qianlong period, the three frontier viceroy posts, the Amban stationed in Lhasa, the Governor-General of Sichuan and the Chengdu General, became equivalent in a sense. In other words, they were positions for same group of people to rotate between one another, for they required similar experience. And they were almost monopolized by the Manchus. For instance, Helin, the younger brother of Heshen 和坤, was transferred from Tibetan Amban to Governor-General of Sichuan. Ehui was promoted from Provincial Military Commander of Yunnan to Chengdu General. Later he was transferred to the post of Tibetan Amban and then to Governor-General of Sichuan. Techenge 特成額, the son of Celeng, who was the Governor-General of Sichuan in the 1748-1750, and led the Qianlong Tibetan expedition in 1750, was appointed Chengdu General in the late 1770s. During his

tenure, he was acting Governor-General of Sichuan three times.⁴⁴ The only exceptions are Li Shijie 李世傑 and Sun Shiyi, both Han Chinese holding the position of the Governor-General of Sichuan. Li was a Guizhou native and was Governor-General of Sichuan twice in the 1780s. But in 1788, during the first Gurkha campaign, the Qianlong emperor overtly expressed his doubt of Li, since "he is Han Chinese" as well as other things.⁴⁵

Compared with the earlier periods, in the end of the Qianlong period, more definitive obligations were designated to the post of Governor-General of Sichuan. Under Qianlong, the one who held the post was commanded to take full charge of Tibetan affairs and to be responsible for any military actions in Tibet. The Chengdu General, the highest Manchu official in the region, which was first installed in 1776,⁴⁶ was not only in charge of all Manchu troops stationed in the Southwest, but also all the Green Standard armies in Sichuan.⁴⁷ He was given the same power and rights as the Governor-General of Sichuan. In the case of military action, usually the Governor-General of Sichuan would take care of the supply of provisions, while the Chengdu General would be

⁴⁴*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 314, biography of Celeng.

⁴⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1295, pp. 2a-b.

⁴⁶See section 3 of Chapter V for details.

⁴⁷Other Manchu Generals stationed in other major cities were not designated the same right to command the Green Standard Army. This special right of the Chengdu General was maintained to the end of the Qing dynasty. Because of this, the Chengdu General was regarded as more prestigious than other Manchu Generals. The Manchu compound in Chengdu was magnificent (Zhou Xun, *Shu Hai Congtan*, pp. 126-127).

the commander-in-chief leading military actions. It is in Chengdu, in the yamen of the Governor-General of Sichuan and of the Chengdu General, that the secretaries who specialized in Tibetan language and learning were appointed as an indispensable component of the bureaucracy.

The century's long frontier operations and the Qing strategy of putting strategic importance before economic gains made a profound impact on the behavioral pattern of the military and the bureaucrats in the Southwest. As the urgent needs of the battlefield allowed no time for the central government to deliberate on requests for financial support, the central government always tended to allocate more money than needed to the front. The stream of money from the state fiscs into the Southwest helped foster an impression that it was handy to squeeze funds from the state as long as the local officials appealed in the name of frontier defense or military need. By the end of the Qianlong era, the Qing dynasty was facing a turning point in its frontier undertakings. With the annihilation of the Zunghar empire, and the consolidation of Qing control of Tibet, the focus of the empire was shifting from frontier to domestic issues. Only a handful people in the center clearly sensed this shift. Down in the Southwest, inertia and a craving for fortune took the lead propelling people to continue to play the card of frontier expansion. They were too familiar with the stories of the Jinchuan campaigns and

subsequent account-clearing of the Jinchuan expenditures. The impression was so fresh, so encouraging, that the military commanders and local officials in the Southwest expected the same scenario to be repeated again and again.

Similar scenarios did unfold in the postbellum period. As one measure to consolidate the Qing conquest of Jinchuan area, military colonies were set up in the Jinchuan area after the second Jinchuan campaign. Three years later, the Qianlong emperor was startled to know that the military colonies had spent over 700,000 taels in three years to pay for labor, stipends to native soldiers, transporting of provisions, etc. He said it was "not understandable." And he commented: "It is a permanent disposition to set up the military colonies in the newly conquered frontier (Jinchuan). If each year over hundreds of thousands of tael are spent there, the pacification of Jinchuan would mean that the state will ever pay more (to maintain the colonies than to conquer the area). It does not make any sense at all."⁴⁸ Although the central government was not willing to let the situation get out of control, it actually had very little to do with the illicit spending of state funds in the Southwest.

One instance in 1791 illuminates this tendency well. When the provincial government of Sichuan submitted an expense account for the construction the military drill

⁴⁸Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1086, pp. 14a-15a.

ground and arsenal in the Jinchuan area, the Ministry of Works in Beijing found the money used in this project, 4,600 taels, was nearly two times that of the permitted amount, 2,500 taels. But the account was quite general, and no detailed information was given. The Governor-General of Sichuan Ehui was asked to give explanations of the account, but he failed to respond to the request of the Ministry of Works three times. Eventually, the Ministry of Works had to submit the case to the throne for royal intervention. However, the pursuit of the case did not yield any results after one year of investigation.⁴⁹ It is not enough to characterize the officials involved in the case only as perfunctory. The Southwest was notorious for its oversized expenditures in the name of military operations, and the central authorities were, to a degree, forced into a position of acceptance towards these sorts of cases from the region.

During the two Gurkha campaigns, taels of silver from the state fiscs again poured into the Southwest. The total expenses of the two Gurkha campaigns was more than 10 million taels. In 1794, Sun Shiyi was ordered to take charge of the account clearance for the second Gurkha campaign. Sun asked to retain both Fukang'an, who was transferred to Yunnan, and Helin, who was to go to the capital for an audience, in Sichuan to coordinate the matter.⁵⁰ Sun was a

⁴⁹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1379, pp. 5b-6b; vol. 1409, pp. 15a-16a.

⁵⁰Qing Shi Liezhuan, p. 333.

frugal person, but Fukang'an and Helin were very notorious for their extravagant manner in spending military funds. But, not long after they started this difficult task, the Miao Rebellion set out. All of the three had to go to the front and leave the accounts of the Gurkha campaign unclear. The expenses for the two domestic campaigns against the Miao Rebellion and the White Lotus Rebellion in the Qianlong-Jiaqing period were even higher, amounting to 200 million taels, and the abundant state treasuries were exhausted by the campaigns.

The steady flow of money to the Southwest was a concern for the responsible officials in the central government. The call for disarmament was periodically heard in the court. Qianlong himself also tried to downsize the military build at every feasible chance available.⁵¹ Nevertheless, in 1782, before any substantial action was taken in this direction, the throne ordered an increase in military forces nationwide by 60,000 armies. The three provinces of the Southwest were the prime recipients of this increase, accounting for 12,506 troops. This motion of the emperor was seemingly contradictory to his earlier concern about the oversized military expenditures in the Southwest. However, he was more concerned about the quality of the Qing military forces.

⁵¹For instance, in 1779, Qianlong directed a reduction in military forces in Sichuan in order to have enough fund to support the military colonies in Jinchuan, since it turned out to be more expensive than the throne expected. But he cautioned to do it in a slow pace so as not to stir up any unrest. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1089, pp. 12a-13b.

Over a period of time, many vacancies in the armies were never filled up, and those vacancies' stipends went to the pockets of officers. Qianlong's intent was to officialize those embezzled stipends as a "money to nourish honesty (*yanglian yin* 養廉銀)" for the officers, and at the same time to allocate another 3 million tael from the state fiscs to recruit 60,000 new soldiers to strengthen the military. The emperor's rationale was that the state fiscs were full, and revenue had doubled since he was first enthroned. Therefore, the increased expenditure would not affect the economic equilibrium of the nation, as he deemed.⁵²

The case of the 1782 military enlargement is, to a degree, an extension of the *huohao guigong* reform of the Yongzheng period⁵³ to the military realm. It was also an important milestone in the evolution of the Qing system of administering military expenditures. A thorough study of the case is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, what is at stake is that the throne, backed by the affluence of the state fiscs, was more inclined to put military power and the quality of the armies ahead of economic concerns.

Spoiled by the favorable financial policy of the Qing state, the military in the Southwest frontier was becoming a breeding ground of corruption by the late Qianlong period.

⁵²*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. vol. 1141, pp. 21b-24b; vol. 1143, pp. 16a-17b; vol. 1147, pp. 4a-7a; vol. 1163, pp. 27a-32b.

⁵³For an excellent study on this reform, see Madeleine Zelin, The Magistrates' Tael: Rationalizing Fiscal Reform in Eighteenth-Century Ch'ing China.

The frontier undertakings had been made a profitable business for both military officials and soldiers. Cases of misappropriation of military funds were not uncommon during this period. One infamous case is that of Shi Zuorui 石作瑞, the censor of Jianchang 建昌 Circuit of Sichuan province, who appropriated 500,000 taels of military funds.⁵⁴ In 1786, the Governor-General of Sichuan Fule 富勒 was dismissed due to his implication in the case of his subordinate's embezzlement.⁵⁵ The 1780 case of Li Shiyao 李侍堯, the Governor-General of Yunnan, was another notorious scandal. Li used his power to force his subordinates to send him bribes, which amounted to a strikingly huge sum. When his vicious deeds were exposed, the throne was stunned with the degree of corruption in the local government of Yunnan. As a measure to reinforce central control over Yunan, in 1780 Fukang'an was appointed Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou. Nevertheless, it was later revealed that Fukang'an was even more corrupt himself.

Fukang'an, rumored to be an illegitimate son of the Qianlong emperor,⁵⁶ was well-known for his prodigality and unrestrained expending of money to reward soldiers. By the very end of the Qianlong era, when the Miao Rebellion

⁵⁴Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, p. 230.

⁵⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1254, pp. 18a-19b.

⁵⁶Fukang'an's father Fuheng had a younger sister who was a concubine of the Qianlong emperor. So Fuheng's wife often had the chance to go into the inner palace. It was said that she was once forced to make love with the emperor, and then gave birth of Fukang'an. See Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, p. 230.

erupted in Guizhou and Hunan provinces, Fukang'an and Helin played the same game they did many times before in handling the frontier crisis. They held lavish banquets everyday without fighting the rebels but urging the central government to allocate huge amounts of funds to the localities. As a convenient way to obtain fame, promotion and wealth, frontier generals like Fukang'an and Helin knew too well how to manipulate the situation to serve their own purpose. But this time they miscalculated. Both Fukang'an and Helin died of malaria in the mountainous areas overspread with miasmas of the Hunan-Guizhou border before they achieved their goal. The Jiaqing emperor later harshly criticized Fukang'an for his venal deeds, and ordered his tablet removed from the Qing ancestors' temple.⁵⁷ People in the Jiaqing era even equated Fukang'an with Hesheng in their responsibility for the decadence of the Qing politics in the late Qianlong period, asserting that Hesheng corrupted domestic affairs, while Fukang'an corrupted frontier affairs.⁵⁸ True or not, the Qing frontier undertakings ultimately corrupted their own troops and commanders by the end of the eighteenth century when the grand enterprise was finally called off.

3. The Dwindling of the Southwest Granary

⁵⁷*Qing Shi Liezhuang*, p. 328.

⁵⁸Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, p. 231.

The century-long military operations in the Southwest had a great impact on the socio-economic development of the region. First and foremost, the Qing deemphasis of revenue contributions from the Southwest is the key to understanding the whole dynamic of economic life in the Southwest. By the late Qianlong period, this situation persisted, though the era of Qing frontier undertakings was near the end. Given the fact that the region was still a frontier stronghold, which was reinforced by the two Gurkha campaigns and the two domestic campaigns at the end of the Qianlong era, it seems that the time was not yet ripe to modify or reverse the policy which had been in place since the Kangxi period. The regular taxation, mainly land and head taxes, was, in keeping the pace with the economic development, not increased in the Southwest. The total revenue levied from Sichuan was still 660,000 taels, as same as in the early Qianlong era. This rate was kept until the White Lotus Rebellion (1796-1805).⁵⁹ Compared with that for the Jiangnan area and other provinces in China proper, this rate was very low. The phenomenon of a "frontier economic zone" continued to exist until the end of the Qianlong period (1795).

Parallel to the Qing lax attitude towards the main revenue collection from the Southwest, the Qing state also did not hold a tight-fisted stance towards the other financial gains from the region, especially the two special

⁵⁹Liang Fangzhong, pp. 398-399; Zhou Xun, *Shu Hai Congtai*, pp. 19-24. Also see Chart III in Chapter V.

commodities of the Southwest which were monopolied by the state: salt and copper. While the Southwest had a reputation that it rarely had any arrears of regular taxes, the arrears of salt and copper were substantial. In 1781, Yunnan province had 320,000 taels of arrears of salt gabelle;⁶⁰ Sichuan had 280,000 taels of arrears of salt gabelle.⁶¹ In 1795, the throne exempted Yunnan of 497,700 taels of arrears of copper tax.⁶²

The *laissez-fair* policy of the central government towards the economic life of the Southwest aroused rampant illicit economic activities in the late Qianlong period. Since the middle of the 1780s, smuggled salt from Sichuan began to be widely sold in Hubei and other provinces. Another serious problem was the widespread of devalued coins in the three provinces of the Southwest during the late Qianlong era.⁶³ While Yunnan and Guizhou accumulated huge amounts of arrears in officially-contracted copper and lead, the two essential metals used in coin-minting, a large quantity of copper and lead went into private hands for the illegal minting of coins.⁶⁴ The coins cast in the private mints were lighter in weight and of poor quality compared

⁶⁰Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1123, pp. 7a-8a.

⁶¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1124, pp. 22b-24a.

⁶²Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1472, pp. 13a-b.

⁶³There are numerous records on the issue of devalued coins in the Southwest in Gaozong Shilu, from vol. 1106 to vol. 1470.

⁶⁴According to the Qing rule, 90 per cent of copper procured in Yunnan mines must be purchased by the state at modest price, only 10 per cent could be sold in market at a higher price (Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1106, pp. 19b-21b).

with the standard official coins. The biggest market for the privately-minted coins was Sichuan province, where commercial activities were much more vigorous than in Yunnan and Guizhou. Because of the local government's slack control, the devalued coins had been smuggled into Sichuan and had been in wide use there for a long time. What was even worse was that the official mints in the Southwest, under the acquiescence of the local governments, also cast devalued coins in order to gain profits. Qianlong believed seventy to eighty per cent of the total devalued coins were made by official mints in the Southwest. Sometimes coins made by the official mints were even in poorer quality than those that were made by the private mints.

When the Qing central government became alarmed by the seriousness of the issue in the last few years of the Qianlong reign, things had gone too far to reverse them overnight. In 1794, in Sichuan province alone, some 1,100,000 *jin* of devalued coins were confiscated, while only several dozens to several hundreds *jin* of devalued coins were confiscated in other provinces.⁶⁵ The suddenly tightened control on coin-minting, as feared by the throne, would add one more catalyst to the already agitated society on the eve of the great White Lotus Rebellion, for many

⁶⁵Gaozongq Shilu, vol. 1446, pp. 23a-24a.

people who had lived on this illegal business suddenly lost their means of subsistence.⁶⁶

While illicit economic activities loomed large in the Southwest, the Qing central government kept counting on the surplus rice of the local markets of Sichuan to relieve rice shortages in the lower Yangtze valley and other places. During the last two decades of the Qianlong period, some clouds began to rise to shadow the system which had been functioning well from the Yongzheng period onwards. What was at stake was that the rice market began to dwindle over the course of the period.

Despite some early signs of weakness in the market, the Qing state continued to utilize the strategy to relieve the lower Yangtze valley from grain shortage with surplus rice from Sichuan in years of disaster. The scenario described in the Chapter 5 about the Qing state's manipulation of the rice circulation continued to unfold during the last twenty years of the Qianlong period. The means of manipulation include encouraging merchants to purchase the surplus rice at the market in Sichuan, and to ship it to the lower Yangtze valley to sell, using the state's purchasing power to balance the price in market and restraining local officials along the Yangtze River from stopping the rice

⁶⁶Wei Yuan pointed out this linkage between the crackdown of private minting and the White Lotus Rebellion in his *Sheng Wu Ji* (vol. 9).

shipments in their own areas without letting them go down to the lower Yangtze valley.⁶⁷

There were three critical times during the period that rice shipments from the Southwest played an important part in disaster relief and military emergencies. The first time was in 1778-79, when Anhui province was hit by a serious flood. Coincidentally, Hubei province also suffered drought in some areas. The Qing central government, as in previous times, ordered the provincial government of Sichuan to send the grain stored in the official granaries to the lower Yangtze valley and to inhibit Hubei and other provinces along the Yangtze River from stopping merchants' rice shipments to Jiangnan. From the central government's perspective, Jiangnan was more important than Hubei. So Jiangnan was given priority to receive the relief rice from Sichuan.⁶⁸ The second time was in 1785, when Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces suffered from poor harvests. Again Hubei province also had bad year. The throne took pains to orchestrate the relief efforts to guarantee that both Hubei and Jiangnan area received sufficient rice supplies. Again as on the previous occasion, the rice from Sichuan was preserved exclusively for Jiangnan. Meanwhile the throne ordered rice shipped from Jiangxi and Hunan provinces to

⁶⁷See Section 4 of Chapter V.

⁶⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1063, pp. 11a-12b; vol. 1064, pp. 7a-8a; vol. 1064, pp. 15a-16b; vol. 1065, p. 27b; vol. 1066, pp. 16a-17a; vol. 1066, pp. 18a-b.

meet the needs of Hubei.⁶⁹ It seems that the throne weighed the surplus rice of Sichuan over all other sources. The third time was during the Lin Shuangwen Rebellion in Taiwan in 1787. Sichuan rice was sent to Taiwan and Fujian province to support the campaign against the rebellion.⁷⁰

A noteworthy new development during this period is that the Qing state began to drop its prohibition of the export of surplus rice from Manchuria. As mentioned in the last chapter, the surplus rice of Manchuria was under much tighter control of the Qing state. Except in sporadic cases, it was forbidden for merchants to ship the rice from Manchuria to other places in China proper until the 1780s. Ostensibly, the liberal attitude of the Qing government towards the Sichuan rice market was not applicable in the case of Manchuria because of the political significance of Manchuria to the Qing dynasty. During the last two decades of the Qianlong period, however, this prohibition had been largely removed. The throne often ordered against banning grain shipments by sea from Manchuria to Tianjin and Shandong peninsula. Usually, the Manchurian rice was designated to relieve rice shortages in the northern provinces, such as Zhili, Henan and Shandong.

The rationale underpinning this change in policy towards the marketing of superfluous rice in Manchuria was that the throne came to realize the limits to utilizing the

⁶⁹*Gaozong Shilu*, *passim* from vol. 1236 to vol. 1263.

⁷⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1286, pp. 18b-19a; vol. 1291, p. 4a.

Sichuan rice market. Towards the end of the Qianlong era, since 1780, Sichuan had begun to feel the weight of the large quantity of rice exports to the lower Yangtze valley. In 1780, 40 to 100 percent of the grain stored in the official granaries in Sichuan was sold on the local market in order to lower the rising rice prices caused by the over-purchase of merchants from the lower Yangtze valley. But the regular ratio for selling grain in the official granaries each year on market was only 30 percent.⁷¹ This shows that the rice on market for exporting was not sufficient to meet the demands. At the same time, the tariffs collected at customs in Jingzhou 荆州 of Hubei province declined because the rice shipments from Sichuan decreased compared with the previous years.⁷² These may be the first signs of strains on the rice market of Sichuan.⁷³

Then came the two Gurkha campaigns in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The needs of the frontier warfare again overweighed the task of relieving rice shortage in the lower Yangtze valley. During the first Gurkha campaign, the slow transportation of provisions from Sichuan to Tibet impeded a timely repulse against the invaders. The provisions sent to the front were carried by soldiers on foot. Even though the

⁷¹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1101, pp. 19a-20a.

⁷²*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1114, pp. 7a-8a.

⁷³Later the local officials explained to the throne that the reason for the tight market of rice that year was that some areas in Sichuan suffered from natural disasters. However, if one takes the later developments in the decline of the rice market into consideration, the slack year of 1780 was not an isolated case.

main force of the Qing expedition entered Tibet via Qinghai quickly, the lagged transportation of the provisions delayed the progress of the campaign. Therefore, right after the campaign, the emperor ordered a study of the feasibility of storing rice in the Qing outposts alongside the route connecting Dajianlu and Lhasa.⁷⁴ If this motion was realized, a considerable portion of the surplus rice in Sichuan would go to the western frontier of Sichuan, and the expenses in transporting the rice to these outposts would be extremely high. So after deliberation, the provincial government of Sichuan and the Amban in Tibet asked the throne to allow the storage of wheat and highland barley, which were produced locally in these outposts.⁷⁵ Although there is no way to prove it, it is possible that the provincial government of Sichuan had sensed more keenly the bleak future of the rice reservoir in Sichuan.

By the last years of the Qianlong period, namely, in the 1790s, the throne began to be informed of a steady decline in the Sichuan rice market. Since 1790, less rice shipments arrived in the lower Yangtze valley. And the custom's tariffs levied at the Jingzhou pass declined year by year.⁷⁶ Then the customs in Hushuguan 許墅關 of Jiangsu province and Jiujiang 九江 of Jiangxi province all experienced the same problem due to less rice shipments from

⁷⁴*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1326, pp. 10a-13a.

⁷⁵*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1328, pp. 2a-b; vol. 1331, pp. 3b-4a.

⁷⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1412, pp. 33b-35a.

the upper Yangtze valley, including Sichuan, Hunan and Hubei.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the grain price in some areas of Sichuan began to rise.⁷⁸ The single most important cause for the decline of rice market of Sichuan was overpopulation in the Southwest by the end of the Qianlong period.

Population pressure was an increasingly serious problem in Sichuan in the late Qianlong period. It is very possible that the total population in Sichuan exceeded 10 million by this time.⁷⁹ By the 1760s, impact of rapid population growth had been apparent in local economy. Prices of daily necessities, including that rice, had hiked largely.⁸⁰ Although the government had already ceased to encourage immigration into the province, people from adjacent areas, sometimes also from long distances, still kept pouring into the province, envisioning that it was a fertile and prosperous paradise. Therefore, a considerable floating population without a regular livelihood congregated in the province. And some of them continued to move to Yunnan and Guizhou to find places to settle down. New immigrants were no longer welcome in Sichuan. In 1787, there was a case that the provincial government of Sichuan sent yamen officers to

⁷⁷*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1428, pp. 11a-b; vol. 1452, pp. 10a-11a; vol. 1467, pp. 6a-7a.

⁷⁸*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1490, pp. 12a-b.

⁷⁹According to a study by Wang Di, the population in Sichuan in 1786 (the fifty-first year of the Qianlong reign) was 10.21 million; in 1791 (the fifty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign) 11.7 million. See Wang Di, "Qing Dai Sichuan Renkou, Gengdi ji Liangshi Wenti."

⁸⁰Ba Xian Archives, the thirteenth date of the seventh month of the twenty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign, in *Qing Dai Qian, Jia, Dao Ba Xian Dang'an Xuanbian*, p. 319.

escort some thirty people from Anhui province back home.⁸¹ This never happened in the previous periods. It indicates the degree of tension caused by the population problem.

One major consequence of the overpopulation of Sichuan was a decrease of arable land *per capita*. According to a recent study, in 1728, arable land *per capita* in Sichuan was 13.69 *mu*. In 1753, it was 9.51 *mu*. But it was only 4.90 *mu* in 1783.⁸² According to the same study, given the level of productivity of the time, 4 *mu* of land could provide the minimum grain for one person each year. By these figures, the arable land in Sichuan did not produce much more than what was needed to maintain minimum subsistence of the existing population in the province by the late Qianlong period. The reason that there was still a considerable amount of surplus rice put into market for circulation nationwide lies in the fact that many people were living in poverty. As Catholic missionaries observed, some peasants in the province, especially in hilly areas, led a life of low standard, relying largely on corns as their main foodstuff during the 1770s and the 1780s.⁸³

The dwindling tendency of the rice market continued after the Qianlong period. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Sichuan gradually lost its capacity to export large quantities of rice to the lower Yangtze valley

⁸¹Gaozong Shilu, vol. 1278, pp. 31a-32a.

⁸²Wang Di, "Qing Dai Sichuan Renkou, Gengdi ji Liangshi Wenti."

⁸³J. Marchal, Vie de M. L'Abbé Moÿe de la Société des Missions-Étrangères, p. 222.

while its own population kept increasing at a striking rate.⁸⁴ By the middle of the nineteenth century, rice was no longer an export commodity in Sichuan.⁸⁵ Although the decline and the ultimate disappearance of the rice market of Sichuan was not caused by the conclusion of the frontier expansion, rather it was the population increase, it is not coincidental that the peak time of the Sichuan rice market occurred at the peak time of the Qing frontier expansion in the eighteenth century. This study has suggested some correlations between the two occurrences.

The one-century long frontier undertakings played a part in shaping the unique economic structure in the Southwest. The central government's policy of low rates of taxation left much surplus in southwestern society, of which rice was a leading commodity. The thriving of the rice trade since the early eighteenth century in Sichuan had long-lasting effects on the local social and economic life. It fostered other commercial activities and helped form the networks of commerce between the province, even the whole Southwest, and other parts of China, chiefly the lower Yangtze valley. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that the high level of commercialization of the economy in Sichuan in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries

⁸⁴According to Wang Di, there were 20.7 million people in Sichuan in 1812. It had almost doubled from 11.7 million in the early 1790s.

⁸⁵Wang Di, *"Qing Dai Sichuan Renkou, Gengdi ji Liangshi Wenti."*

originated from the unique dynamics of the eighteenth century.

Sichuan was a place with distinguishably extraordinary geographic characteristics, which in some ways were contradictions themselves. In local gazetteers, words like the following were often used to describe the contradictory features of the region: "the province is surrounded and isolated by many a mountain range, but all kinds of goods under Heaven flow into the area."⁸⁶ This statement well summarized the unique geographic features and the human efforts to overcome the natural barriers in the region. During the eighteenth century, the frontier operations, the rice trade, and the transport of copper from Yunnan and lead from Guizhou opened or brought vigor to many routes to connect the region both with itself and other parts of China. The infrastructure for further commercial activities was thus built in the Southwest along with the unfolding of the frontier explorations and expansion of the eighteenth century. There were two major transportation arteries, the land route through north Sichuan via the Baoxie 褒斜 Pass to Xi'an and the water route of the Yangtze River. Basically, the land route was mainly used to serve political and military needs. But water route of the Yangtze River was more used for commercial purpose. One reason for this probably is that the state could command a huge number of

⁸⁶Chongxiu Chengdu Xian Zhi, vol. 1.

horses but not water transportation vehicles. Ships were all privately owned. In the long run, the water route would gradually surpass the land route to play a more important role in the developments of the region until the railroad was introduced in the twentieth century.

Another factor which also contributed to high level of commercialization in the Southwest, and was also related to the Qing frontier expansion, was the border trade. There were two major sites for border trade. One was the border trade between the Chinese and the Tibetans, which was centered in the Dajianlu area. Another was the border trade between the Chinese and Burmese and Vietnamese, which was scattered along the borders between Yunnan and the two countries. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Yue Shenlong was first appointed the Provincial Military Commander of Sichuan by the Kangxi emperor, the area west of Dajianlu was hardly known to the central government. Dajianlu itself was not a town in a strict sense. The trade activities between the Chinese and the Tibetans at that time were very limited. The staples of the trade were only Chinese tea and the Tibetan horse and herb medicines. But by the end of the eighteenth century, Dajianlu had thrived as a sizable commercial town, people were calling it "small Chengdu." The trading connections between the Han Chinese and the Tibetans had considerably expanded. The trading items were much more than tea and horses. Also, through

Tibet as a transfer place, the trade between China and India, Nepal and other south Asian countries developed. But not until the 1780s when Burma and Vietnam concluded tributary agreements with Beijing did the border trade in Yunnan with the two countries began to thrive.

4. Militarization of the Society

Many historians have correctly pointed out that the social order in the Southwest, especially in Sichuan province, had largely deteriorated by the end of the Qianlong era. It paved the way for the eruption of the great White Lotus rebellion in 1795. The causes for the decline of the social order include all the classical elements leading to a rebellion: inefficiency of the Qing political control, officials' corruption, population pressure and economic hardship, as enunciated by many historians.⁸⁷

While this study does not challenge the existing scholarship on the origins of the White Lotus Rebellion, it should be stressed, however, that the one-century-long militarization of the Southwest had a considerable part to play in the ultimate advent of the upheaval. What

"militarization" means in this context is not only the

⁸⁷The relative discussions are in Wei Yuan's *Sheng Wu Ji*; Suzuki, *Chyugoku shi ni oreru kakumei to shyukyo*; Robert E. Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796," Ph. D. diss. Harvard University; Chu, Yung-deh Richard, "An Introductory Study of the White Lotus Sect in Chinese History with Special Reference to Peasant Movement," Ph.D. diss. Columbia University; Yu, Songqing, *Ming Qing Bailianjiao Yanjiu*; and Dong, Caishi, "Shi Lun Chuan Chu Bailianjiao Nongmin Da Qiyi."

building-up of military bases for frontier operations in the region, but also the militarization of the society, which was a by-product of the Qing frontier undertakings in the eighteenth century. Basically, there are two implications in the term "militarization" used here to characterize the social conditions in the Southwest by the end of the Qianlong era.

First, it refers to the militant character of the populace living in this region. It was a conspicuous feature of the Southwesterners to be rather militant and law-breaking. Many a bureaucrat of the region noticed this propensity of the local people. They usually attributed it to the fact that most people in the Southwest were immigrants, instead of natives. The lack of a congenial lineage leadership in one given area gave rise to many conflicts among the people of different geographical origins. Nevertheless, this militant character can also be attributed to the Qing frontier undertakings since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The frequent mobilization of society for frontier operations would have played a role in shaping this character of the Southwesterners. During each frontier operation, tens of thousands civilians were levied to be transportation laborers. They had numerous chances to be exposed to military life. There are data to support the assumption that a certain portion of civilians had received some military

training in order to prepare a reserve force for the Qing frontier defense. For instance, in 1785, the Governor-General of Sichuan, Li Shijie, petitioned the central government to select sixty percent of the local militia⁸⁸ to practice shooting along with the regular soldiers. He maintained that Sichuan was a frontier province, but soldiers stationed in county towns were not sufficient, so that it was necessary to train civilians as an auxiliary force.⁸⁹ The Qing government later would well regret providing military training to the civilians in the Southwest when the White Lotus Rebellion started in 1795. But this trend of militarization had long been underway in the Southwest. It constituted one part of the *mise-en-scène* of the rebellion at the end of the eighteenth century.

The second implication of the militarization was that the floating population, which had lost their livelihood due to the end of frontier campaigns, tended to be extremely violent and bellicose. They readily chose some militant and unlawful means to earn their lot. This second aspect of the "militarization" of society even more directly led to the eruption of the big White Lotus Rebellion in the middle of the 1790s.

The frontier campaigns congregated a huge number of military-related population in the Southwest. One aftermath

⁸⁸The term he used is *minzhuan* 民壯 (civilian stalwarts). It usually means people recruited into local military service.

⁸⁹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1241, pp. 7b-8a.

of the two Jinchuan campaigns was that many of the soldiers who had deserted became a serious social problem for the Southwest. Long before the second Jinchuan campaign ended, thousands of soldiers fled military camps and dispersed into society. According to Qing records of 1779, three years after the campaign was concluded, there were 1,241 deserted soldiers at large in that year.⁹⁰ This may well be a much reduced number since it was not uncommon for military officials to conceal the fact that soldiers had deserted their units, as the officials would continue to collect the stipend of the empty rosters. Since the end of the second Jinchuan campaign, the throne issued orders repeatedly to oblige the local governments to have those deserters caught. Nevertheless, positive results were few and far between. After having changed the deadline again and again, the Qing throne had to call off the fruitless campaign in 1784, eight years after the second Jinchuan campaign. In 1785, in an annual examination of the bureaucracy in Sichuan, only 40 out of 150 officials in Sichuan were not punished for unsatisfactory handling of this matter.⁹¹

After the second Jinchuan campaign, the Qing established direct administrative control over the area of both Great and Small Jinchuan, and set up military colonies in these areas. Initially, 6,000 Qing soldiers were stationed in the area. But by the end of the Qianlong reign,

⁹⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1074, p. 12b; vol. 1081, pp. 7b-9a.

⁹¹*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1231, pp. 2b-3b.

the number declined to 2,600.⁹² The downslide of the Qing military presence in the area does not suggest the Qing political control over the area was diminishing. The other developments over the course of time had at one time reinforced Qing rule in the area. First, the Han Chinese immigrants began to penetrate into the area at the call of the Qing local authorities.⁹³ This was a result of the overpopulation problem in the core area of Sichuan province. Meanwhile, it was also an adroit tactic to assimilate the aboriginal people living in the area. With a large number of the Han Chinese moving into the Jinchuan area, some native people emigrated to avoid being enslaved by the Han Chinese.⁹⁴

Second, the Qing government found that the Jinchuan natives were superb soldiers. In the postbellum era, the Qing throne made good use of those warriors by nature by recruiting them whenever there was a military operation. During the postbellum era, they were sent to Gansu to suppress the New School Muslim Rebellion in 1782 and 1784, to Taiwan to suppress the Lin Shuangwen 林爽文 Rebellion in 1787, and to Tibet to join the two Gurkha campaigns in the 1790s. The Jinchuan soldiers proved to be instrumental in bringing about victories in these operations, but they were

⁹²In a 1792 edict of the Qianlong emperor, the emperor ordered the local authorities to reduce the number of troops in Jinchuan military colonies. *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1075, pp. 25b-26a; vol. 1277, p. 7b.

⁹³*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1418, pp. 5b-6b.

⁹⁴J. Marchal, Vie de M. L'Abbé Moÿe de la Société des Missions-Étrangères, pp. 198-199.

only paid half of what the Green Standard soldiers were paid, sometimes even less than that.⁹⁵ To the Jinchuan soldiers, however, the meager payment and honorific titles awarded by the Qing dynasty were good enough for them to maintain a decent status in their own localities. The employment by the Qing state of the Jinchuan natives in military operations therefore served to strengthen the ties between the Qing state and the newly annexed area. This strategy of recruiting ethnic soldiers in warfare seemed to work well during this era. Ultimately, not only the Jinchuan natives, but also other tribes in western Sichuan (the Kham area) were also recruited by the Qing state. Having long been troubled by the frequent raids of the local peoples on the official transportation caravans on the road connecting Sichuan and Tibet, the Qing throne considered it a way to lure the natives away from looting.⁹⁶

While the recruitment of the Jinchuan natives was beneficial to the Qing state, it meant diminished chances for the ever-growing unemployed population in the Southwest. One of the aftermaths of the two Jinchuan campaigns is that a huge number of former soldiers and laborers lost their livelihood once the second Jinchuan campaign ended in 1776. The two Gurkha campaigns did not mobilize southwestern

⁹⁵The annual stipend for a regular Green Standard soldier was six taels of silver, but only three taels for a Jinchuan native soldier. See *Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1459, pp. 43b-44b. The pension given to the families of dead Green Standard soldiers was fifty taels, but only 25 taels for Jinchuan native soldiers (*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1425, pp. 19a-b).

⁹⁶*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1309, pp. 51b-52a.

society to the extent as the two Jinchuan campaigns did. The task of transporting the military materials and provisions were chiefly carried out by the regular military forces and the Tibetan laborers recruited in the pale of Tibet. So the laid-off laborers of the Jinchuan campaign did not have their chances when the Gurkha campaign started.

The early part of the Qianlong period witnessed the greatest migration from all other provinces into Sichuan, and continued spreading into Yunnan and Guizhou. As argued earlier in this study, the core area of Sichuan had been fully populated by the early period of the Qianlong reign. Many new immigrants found it very difficult to procure a livelihood. Coincidentally, the frequent frontier campaigns during the early Qianlong period, especially the two Jinchuan campaigns, drew a considerable amount of the floating population into military service, either as rank-and-file soldiers or as transportation laborers. In the second Jinchuan campaign, 125,500 armies were sent to the front; and 462,000 laborers were hired in the Southwest to support the campaign.⁹⁷ This situation alleviated population pressures for the time being. Nevertheless, in the long run, it was not good news for the Qing state, for it created a false image that the Southwest was full of opportunities and blind migration into the region was further encouraged.

⁹⁷Zheng Qishan, ed. *Pingding Liang Jinchuan Junxu Li'an*, vol. 1, pp. 3a-b.

The end of the Jinchuan campaigns left tens of thousands of people with their subsistences in jeopardy. If one takes into account the people who lost their livelihood as either a direct or indirect result of the ending of the campaigns, such as unemployment due to the downsizing in lodging, transportation and other businesses, along with the conclusion of the military operations, and the deserted soldiers, the total number of people at the marginal line of poverty in the Southwest reached a fairly high number. Some of these deserters, along with the transportation laborers who lost their livelihood after the campaigns were called off, went into the mountainous areas in the northeastern Sichuan province. Because this area was on the border between Sichuan and Hubei and between Sichuan and Shaanxi, governmental control of the area was peripheral. It became a reservoir of potential rebels. Many of these people were recruited by White Lotus groups.⁹⁸

But most jobless people remained within society in the Southwest. The imminent consequence was the increase of crime in the localities. In 1781, five years after the second Jinchuan campaign, the Qing local authorities in Sichuan found themselves facing a surge of banditry. As early as in the Yongzheng period, there was a criminal organization called "*guoluo*"^{國羅}, " or simply "*guo*," emerging

⁹⁸Xiao Yishan, *Qing Dai Tongshi*, vol. 2, p. 297.

in Sichuan,⁹⁹ but it did not constitute a big threat to the local social order yet. Nevertheless, by the 1780s, the situation became much exacerbated. The bandits went on armed pillage sometimes with hundreds in one group. Alarmed by the frequent reports of such cases, the throne ordered that the provincial government take decisive action to extinguish the bandits. To enjoin the local officials not to be perfunctory, and to show the determination of the central government, the throne dismissed the Governor-General of Sichuan Wenshou 文綬 and exiled him to Ili for his ineffective charge of the matter.¹⁰⁰ In spite of the harsh punishment given to the bandits caught by the Qing authorities, the cases of pillaging and killing did not decline in the succeeding years. Each year the cases of capital punishment in Sichuan were much more numerous than those of other provinces. And the number of "virtuous women," who were killed or committed suicide when raped, was higher in Sichuan than in any other province during the period. This is an indication of serious unbalance of sex ratio. Since the disbanded soldiers and the majority of migrants were male, one can assume that many of them had no chance to get married. The existence of a large number of

⁹⁹See Section 3 of Chapter V. Wei Yuan thought that the "guo" banditry was organized by the deserted soldiers from the second Jinchuan campaign (Wei Yuan, *Sheng Wu Ji*, vol. 9). Although "guo" banditry certainly existed in the years long before the second Jinchuan campaign, Wei Yuan was insightful to point out the role played by the Jinchuan campaigns in the rapid growth of the banditry in the 1770s and the 1780s.

¹⁰⁰*Gaozong Shilu*, vol. 1140, pp. 13a-14a.

single young males was ever a potential threat to social order, especially when they were deprived of livelihood.¹⁰¹ Correspondently, crime in Yunnan and Guizhou was also on the rise during these years because of the spread of gangsters to those provinces.

One noticeable phenomenon is that the name of "guo" tended to be mentioned less often approaching the end of the Qianlong era in 1795. It does not mean that the bandits were annihilated or disbanded.¹⁰² When the Lin Shuangwen Rebellion occurred in Taiwan 1787, which was the first large scale uprising by a Triad (an anti-Qing secret society), some captured members of the Triad confessed to the Qing authorities that the Triad originated in Sichuan. It is plausible that some members of the "guo" bandits moved to the South and participated in the formation of the Triad. However, the more important reason for the withdrawal of the gangsters from the scene is the rampant expansion of the millenarian popular religion "White Lotus" in the Southwest in the last decade of the Qianlong era. The popularity of the White Lotus movement drew the gangsters in it. Therefore, the "guo" bandits lost their power for the time being.

¹⁰¹Elizabeth Perry suggests, in her masterly case study of rebellions in the Huai River valley in the nineteenth century, that "bare sticks (unmarried males in popular term)" were a major source for rebellious movements. Perry, Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945, pp. 51-52.

¹⁰²The "guo" bandits resurfaced in the localities of Sichuan after the White Lotus Rebellion as the Society of Old Brothers (*Gelao Hui* 哥老會).

The White Lotus teachings were a centuries old popular millenarian religion. They were an amalgam of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Manicheism, and other religious elements. The syncretical characteristic of the White Lotus was shaped gradually during its long evolution since its first appearance in the Southern Song dynasty. Overmyer argues that the syncretism in elite intellectual trend during the Song and the Yuan Dynasty influenced such development in folk religion.¹⁰³ Since the mid-Ming, the Maitreya tradition became the most important component of the White Lotus tenets. The shift was correspondant with the enhancement of the importance of women in the White Lotus movement. During the Ming and Qing periods, the White Lotus sects had spread to most parts of China proper. The major adherents of the White Lotus were peasants, craftsmen, miners, transportation employees and the "floating population" which had no reliable livelihood or stable profession. Compared with the bandit organization, the "guo," the White Lotus was more attractive to the same pool of potential followers. The mechanism of mutual aid, the equal chance for women to participate in the movement and its eschatological ideology proved to be far more appealing than the simple scheme of looting of the gang of "guo."

Around the middle of the Qing dynasty, the center of White Lotus activities was in the area of Xiangyang 襄陽

¹⁰³Daniel L. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China, p. 134.

county, Hubei province. The core figure of the sect was Liu Song 劉松. He spent years building up a network of the sect in several provinces in central China. Suzuki Chusei maintains that the religious commitment was instrumental in the great White Lotus uprising in 1796. He points out that the leaders of the uprising were not a group from the lowest strata of society.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, at the bottom level of the sectarian network, it lacked rigidity in its tenets and disciplines. Chances rose to pretentious persons to form centers of power. The religious theme became attenuated while the movement was expanding.

White Lotus groups had a long history in the Southwest. In 1746, a serious incident of a White Lotus uprising occurred in Yunnan. The leader of the sectarian uprising was Zhang Baotai 張保泰.¹⁰⁵ It is the first time during Qing history that the throne was alarmed by sectarian activities. After the uprising was put down, the Qianlong emperor ordered a ban on all sects of the White Lotus and investigation into White Lotus activities in Sichuan and Yunnan. The sect active in Sichuan at this time was called the Iron Boat (Tiechuan 鐵船). The 1746 edict ordered that the vegetarian halls and sutra-study halls set up by the sect in the provinces be transformed into public property, and all that their printed materials be burnt.¹⁰⁶ But since

¹⁰⁴Suzuki Chusei, *Chyugoku shi ni oreru kakumei to shyukyo*, p. 173.

¹⁰⁵For a study of this uprising, see Suzuki Chusei *Sennen okku-teki minshu undo no kenkyu*, pp. 243-266.

¹⁰⁶*Shengxun*, Qianlong, vol. 251, p.3.

then the state had not paid too much attention to the problem. What concerned the throne more was still frontier emergencies. In 1775, in a memorial by the acting Governor-General of Sichuan, Wenshou, on preventing White Lotus groups from expanding in Sichuan, the emperor commented: "To carry out these measures forcefully. But it is not the urgent matter in Sichuan at present."¹⁰⁷ Although as early as 1774, local officials had become aware of the potential danger of the White Lotus in the Southwest, it seems that they had not yet had a clear idea of the mechanism of the movement. In some cases, they arrested missionaries from les Missions-Etrangères de Paris, a French-based Catholic seminary, as chiefs of the White Lotus. Or they forced those Catholic priests to confess that they were affiliated to White Lotus groups. According to what was observed by the Catholic priests, from the 1760s on, the White Lotus began to develop in Sichuan. It was subject to persecution by the Qing local officials.¹⁰⁸ But since 1775, the activities of the White Lotus had been intensified. According to the report of the Catholic priests in Sichuan, the province had been turned to a place of killing and pillage by the followers of the White Lotus.¹⁰⁹

The great White Lotus Rebellion which lasted for ten years from 1796 to 1805 taught the Qing dynasty a good

¹⁰⁷Gaozong Shilu, vol. 977, pp. 23a-b.

¹⁰⁸La mission du Su-Tchuen, p. 149.

¹⁰⁹J. Marchal, Vie de M. L'Abbé Moÿe de la Société des Missions-Étrangères, pp. 258-259.

The great White Lotus Rebellion which lasted for ten years from 1796 to 1805 taught the Qing dynasty a good lesson on how to dispose appropriately of unwanted military personnel. To be sure, it was the same sort of people who became sources for both rebels and the Qing military forces, including local militia. For many of them, subsistence was the major motive to be recruited by either side. The mishandling of the disarmed soldiers and the dismissed laborers after the second Jinchuan campaign created a huge pool for the rebellion. In the latter part of the rebellion, the Qing began to organize local militias to cope with the rebels. It proved to be a very effective measure. Besides other advantages, the local militia absorbed the underemployed population in society, thus cutting off the supply of manpower to the rebellion.

After the rebellion was suppressed, the central government realized that any inadequate disposition of the militias would rekindle another uprising. Therefore, the throne carefully planned and arranged the disposition of the disbanded militia. The measures adopted included recruiting some of them into the regular military system, sending them back to their hometown with a handsome settlement fee, and allocation of land to subsidize their settlement.¹¹⁰ It was due to these efforts that the dispersed militia members did not institute a new unrest potential to the Qing dynasty.

¹¹⁰Sichuan Tongzhi, vol. 20.

The utilization of local militia in putting down a rebellion was not invented during the Taiping Rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century. It was first used in the Qing campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion. Nevertheless, the mechanism in controlling the local militia in this period was quite different from that of the Taiping period. In this period, militias were always under the control and command of the regular military forces, and functioned only as an auxiliary force. It was never an independent political force. It served the Qing state well, both in fighting with the rebels and in absorbing potential unrest elements in society.

5. Conclusion

The end of the Qianlong period (1777-1795), coincidental with the end of the eighteenth century, was a crucial moment in Qing history. One of the major themes of the eighteenth century, the frontier undertakings, was exiting from the historic stage. Along with the two Gurkha campaigns during this period, came the final settlement of the Tibetan affairs. "The Twenty-Nine Article Ordinance of Government" put a concluding mark to the century-long endeavors of the Qing dynasty in placing Tibet under its control. With the stabilization of the Tibetan affairs, the strategic importance of the Southwest was fading away. The

Southwest frontier was thus facing a transition in the new century.

The aftermath of the century-long frontier undertakings did not fade away instantly in the Southwest. The impact of the military buildup on the society persisted. It took time for the whole region to reorient itself in a new era of different themes and dynamics. Nevertheless, one negative ramification of the Qing frontier undertakings, the corruption of the military and the frontier bureaucracy, loomed large during this period. The gravity of the problem had accumulated over a long period since the beginning of the Qing exploration of the Southwest frontier. Although the central authorities had taken pains to prevent this problem from occurring, the very mechanism of the Qing frontier strategy unwittingly fostered the escalating growth of the malady.

During this period, one major by-product of the Qing low-taxation policy towards the Southwest, the rice market in Sichuan, began to decline due to population pressures. For decades since the Yongzheng period, surplus rice on the Sichuan market served the Qing dynasty well as a functional means to safeguard the equilibrium of economic life in the nation. However, the very policy of low-taxation also drew migrants to the region and ultimately terminated the rice trade of Sichuan. In spite of the dwindling and eventual vanishing of the rice market, the commercial networks and

mechanisms built over the period at the peak time of the rice trade would continue to nourish economic prosperity in the region.

The deterioration of the social order in the Southwest in the last two decades of the Qianlong period has been noted and studied by many historians. In general, people tend to agree that the deterioration of social order was a typical characteristic of a migrant society and it reflected the decline of Qing political control on the eve of the great White Lotus Rebellion. While not attempting to challenge these arguments, this study puts emphasis on the impact of the frontier campaigns on the society of the Southwest. It is the militarization of the society brought about by the century-long frontier operations which prepared a large pool of potential rebels for the forthcoming rebellion.

Epilogue

The eighteenth century ended tragically with the eruption of two great rebellions - the Mian Rebellion of 1795 and the White Lotus Rebellion of 1796-1805 and the demise of many a prominent Qing frontier general. The sixty years' prosperous Qianlong reign ended in a sudden eclipse, when the Qianlong emperor abdicated the throne to his son, Yuyan, known as the Jiaqing emperor. The ten-years long rebellion inflicted an unprecedented blow on the Qing dynasty. After the rebellion, the glory and momentum of the frontier expansions which had been undertaken by the three emperors in the first half of the Qing dynasty, namely, Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, had vanished. In spite of the eventual restoration of peace and order in 1805, the Qing dynasty had suffered substantially in many aspects, chiefly in the financial field. The recovery from the protracted rebellion was slow and lacked innovation. Had the Jiaqing emperor been an equal of his predecessors of the eighteenth century, he might have embarked on a sweeping fiscal reform to relieve the empire from the serious financial crisis brought about by the one-decade exhausting civil war.

In the postbellum period, the Qing dynasty had neither the need nor the strength to be as active as the three great emperors of the eighteenth century in frontier undertakings. The strategic importance of the Southwest, therefore, significantly declined. The nineteenth century was a century of maritime competition. When Qing armies clamored to push into Katmandu during the second Gurkha war in 1792, the British were bystanders watching the drama unfold. There is great irony in the fact that Qianlong did not distinguish between the significance of the Gurkha tributary mission and the Macartney mission which both arrived at the forbidden city in the same year of 1793. But soon all was reversed. If the Qing dynasty could not take an offensive stance, it would be forced to take a defensive position and to cope with a series of challenges which were not anticipated at all by the triumphant eighteenth-century monarchs. Nevertheless, it was inertia that took the lead in the postbellum period in the first half of the nineteenth century. The fiscal advantages enjoyed by the Southwest were not taken away by the Qing central government in order to create a more balanced revenue collection system, though the strategic importance, which had been the justification for granting such a benefit to the Southwest, had gone away with the conclusion of the Qing frontier expansion.

The Southwest was left to live with the beneficial legacy of the eighteenth century's frontier expansion in the

first half of the nineteenth century. The low taxation rates continued to exist for the three provinces of the Southwest. In spite of the considerable developments during the Qianlong period, both Yunnan and Guizhou remained as a region of low productivity in the country. But it was absurd to place the province of Sichuan in the same group as Yunnan and Guizhou in the nineteenth century. It was too well-known to everybody that Sichuan was one of the most productive and abundant regions in the country. Entering the nineteenth century, the military domination in local society gradually receded in front of a rising gentry class which had very close ties with the merchant class or was involved in commerce itself. Yet the new elites readily enjoyed the benefits of the eighteenth century's legacy. Even though overpopulation in Sichuan had counteracted the fruits of economic development, the extremely low tax obligations still placed the region in an advantageous position for maintaining economic prosperity.

Meanwhile, the Southeast, or the Jiangnan area, was shouldering an extremely heavy tax burden and a high portion of the tributary rice as it had been doing for several centuries. The outcry for fiscal reform was raised again and again since the early Ming dynasty but always dribbled away in the ocean of inertia. It took tremendous risk to upset the *status quo* and alter the existing practices. And it required a leadership with vision to map out a new scheme.

In 1814, the Governor-General of Sichuan, Baoxing 寶興, proposed levying a surcharge of two taels of silver for each tael of regular tax for the purpose of raising funds for frontier defense. The Revenue Minister of the time, He Linghan 何凌漢, rebutted this proposal. He argued that even though this surcharge would not mean a big burden for the people in Sichuan because Sichuan only had 660,000 taels of silver of land tax, which was the lightest in the country, this proposal ran counter to the principle of preserving the wealth among the people (*cang fu yu min* 藏富于民). Therefore, it should not be taken into consideration.¹ The throne backed He's position. Thus, the *status quo* was once again sanctioned by the central government.

As this study shows, "to preserve the wealth among the people" had been a guideline underscoring the Qing fiscal policies towards the Southwest since the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Qing throne began to realize that the Southwest was of great strategic significance. It became the single most important justification for the Qing authorities to de-emphasize the revenue contribution from this region, though economic recovery and further thriving in the Southwest, especially in the core area of Sichuan, had long been recognized by the central authorities. A wealthy and prosperous Southwest was very instrumental for the Qing dynasty during the entire eighteenth century. It

¹*Qing Shi Gao*, vol. 374, p. 11556.

well supported the Qing's frontier campaigns in the Northwest, the Southwest and Tibet, as well as in Vietnam and Burma. Meanwhile, the Qing state would utilize the superfluous wealth, more particularly, surplus grain of Sichuan province, to equipoise the national grain supply. Therefore, "to store wealth in the people" had once been a successful policy. But after the Tibetan political situation stabilized in the 1790s, the strategic focal point of the empire was no longer in the Southwest. Often in history out-of-date rationales survive the changed circumstances and continue to direct policy-making. Such was the case for the Qing during the first half of the nineteenth century.²

What broke up the inertia and forced the Qing dynasty to make some changes in its fiscal obligation map was the outbreak of the grand Taiping Rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century. The Taiping Rebellion, which was started in 1850 in Guangxi province, was the most fierce rebellion of the entire Qing dynasty. After the Taipings took the strategic tri-cities of Wuhan in the middle Yangtze Valley in the beginning of 1853, the whole lower Yangtze valley was open to the towering advance of the rebels. Lacking preparedness and morale, the Qing armies abandoned the vast and critical lower Yangtze valley areas to the rebels within

²There was only one tax increase in Sichuan in 1800 for supporting the campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion during the more than one-century time span from the 1720s to the 1850s (Ramon Myers, "The Usefulness of Local Gazeteers for the Study of Modern Chinese Economic History: Szechuan Province during the Ch'ing and Republican Period"). See also Zhou Xun, Shu Hai Congtan, pp. 21-22.

a few months. In May, 1853, the Taiping seized Nanjing. Immediately after that, one expedition of the Taipings went across the Yangtze River and occupied Yangzhou. Thus the Grand Canal was paralyzed. Although the Taipings did not launch an offensive to east of Zhenjiang until 1860, the most productive area in the country could no longer function as before to supply the Qing state with opulent grain and cash. This was the first time in the entire Qing history for any rebel to disturb the Jiangnan area. Setting aside the political impact, the fiscal difficulties brought about by the Taiping's triumphant progress in the lower Yangtze Valley shocked the Qing throne.

Not only was the regular transportation of revenue to the central government threatened by the rebels, what was more challenging was that the Qing state had to manage to procure additional funds to sustain the enormous campaign to battle. The situation was new to the Qing state. Unlike all the previous campaigns, which occurred in either frontiers or regions with no great fiscal obligations, this time the throne's number one granary was directly hit by the rebels. It was under such circumstances that the other granary of the Qing empire, which had enjoyed too little fiscal responsibility since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, the Southwest, more accurately, Sichuan province, had to be brought to the fore to shoulder the task.

Right after the Taiping Rebellion erupted in Guangxi province in early 1851, Sichuan was designated as the "Assistant Province (*xieji sheng* 協濟省)." It was a name given to provinces where there was no direct contact with the rebels but had the responsibility of supplying the campaign with monetary, material and manpower support. Therefore, it became critical to keep the region safe and stable. This consideration can be read clearly in a memorial by Luo Pingzhang 駱秉章 (1793-1867), the early patron of the Hunan army and the Governor-General of Sichuan of 1861-1867:

Sichuan is the number one important province in the western territory of the country, with difficult topography and rich residents. It has been always deemed critical in the security of the county. If Sichuan is stable, then Gansu, Shaanxi to its north, Yunnan, Guizhou to its south, Hubei, Hunan to its east, all these provinces can rely on it as a barrier, and as a supplier of materials. If Sichuan is lost, then Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi could no longer expect any military funds, Hubei and Hunan could no longer collect *lijin* on commodities from and to Sichuan, and Shaanxi and Henan would also be in dangerous position exposed to [rebels'] attack.³

Another leading figure of the Hunan Army and the Governor of Hubei Hu Linyi 胡林翼 (1812-1861) also emphasized the importance of keeping Sichuan intact:

The wealth of Sichuan is five times of that in the Huai River valley, ten times of that in Jiangxi province, and twenty times of that in Hubei province. If Sichuan is lost to the rebels, then it would be difficult for anybody to eliminate this rebellion. And the throne would not send the crack armies (to quell the rebellion) at this point. Therefore, it is a great

³ Luo Wenzhonggong Zougao 駱文忠公奏稿 (The collection of memorials by Luo Bingzhang), vol. 1, p. 23.

disaster to lose Sichuan, and a great fortune to keep Sichuan in safety.⁴

Based upon such a consensus, the Qing dynasty made its utmost efforts to safeguard Sichuan from being invaded by the rebels. The local militia was established right after the Qing throne's call for organization of militia in 1853. When the province was threatened by the penetration of rebels in 1860, the provincial government seized command of the local militia. Thus a tighter control by the provincial government was taken over the local militia in Sichuan. During the Taiping Rebellion period (1850-1868), to ensure capable leadership for the province, the turnover of the Governor-Generalship in Sichuan was fairly frequent, approximately only one year tenure for each Governor-General before an able and high-handed viceroy Luo Bingzhang was appointed to the post in 1860. Luo went to Sichuan with a portion of the Hunan Army. He held the position for seven years until he died in 1867.

During the upheavals of the mid-nineteenth century, the Southwest was also engulfed by the waves of rebellion. In Yunnan, there were two great Muslim uprisings and a score of other ethnic minority uprisings. In Guizhou, there was the Miao Rebellion and many other ethnic minority rebellions. However, the Qing provincial authorities in Sichuan managed to protect Sichuan from being swamped by rebels. In 1859 and 1862, the Qing armies drove the rebels led by two Yunnanese

⁴Hu Wenzhong Gong Quanjì 胡文忠公全集 (The comprehensive collection of Hu Linyi), vol. 16.

Li Yonghe 李永和 and Lan Chaoding 藍朝鼎 to Shaanxi province. Then from 1861 to 1863, Luo Bingzhang successfully trapped Taiping general Shi Dakai 石達開 (1831-1863) and his elite army in the bend of the Dadu River, eliminating this dangerous enemy.

While the Qing took the pains to ward off the rebels from Sichuan, it desperately tapped the wealth deposited in the province to support the unprecedentedly expensive and protracted campaign to put down the Taipings. From this time, Sichuan became the biggest supplier for the campaign. At this point, the increased fiscal burden did not take the form of a tax increase. In the beginning, the provincial government levied the taxes of later years in advance in the name of "borrowing" in order to meet the huge demands. Before long, the provincial officials of Sichuan had to place some surcharges on regular taxes in order to stabilize the source for extra income. In so doing, the real tax burden on the population of Sichuan was suddenly doubled.⁵

Besides the doubled land tax, another way for the Qing to squeeze the wealth in Sichuan was through forced "endowment (*juanshu* 捐輸)." The endowment system had been applied in Sichuan during the Jinchuan campaigns of the Qianlong era and the campaign against the White Lotus Rebellion from 1796 to 1805. Yet these were not comparable in scale with that during the Taiping Rebellion era. Unlike

⁵*Wenzong Shilu*, vol. 118, pp. 31a-b.

before, the implementation of the "endowment" during the middle nineteenth century was not on a voluntary base, rather it was charged on mandatory term along with the land tax. Sometimes it was as high as five times of the regular land tax.⁶

The third channel to tap the wealth in Sichuan was through the system of *lijin* 厘金, or tax of commodities, which had been initiated in 1853 in the campaign suppressing the Taipings in Yangzhou. In a sense, the introduction of the *lijin* was a long overdue reform to the Qing fiscal strategy. With the elaborate development of the commercial economy, the Qing dynasty should have extended its taxation scope to commodities long before 1853. This reform, however, was also forced by the Taiping Rebellion when raising fund for military expenditure became so imperative. Once this system obtained the endorsement of the Qing central authorities, it was soon introduced to other provinces. Around 1856, the *lijin* was first established in Sichuan. Sichuan soon became one of the most important contributors of *lijin* income in the whole nation. About one million taels of silver were levied each year from Sichuan during the Taiping Rebellion era.⁷

By supplying the anti-rebellion campaign with huge amounts of fund, materials and manpower, Sichuan played a

⁶Luo Wenzhong Gong Zougao, vol. 3, p.2.

⁷This amount includes *lijin* levied on salt. See Luo Yudong, Zhongguo Lijin Shi, pp. 415-423.

critical role in saving the Qing dynasty from the avalanche of the mid-nineteenth century. During the post-Taiping Rebellion era, the province continued to function as a supporting province supplying funds for the expensive projects of modernization initiated by the upstarts of the Self-Strengthening movement. Since the early 1870s, Sichuan sent 1.8 million taels of silver as "assisting fund (*xieyin* 協銀)" to aid military campaigns and other projects in Xinjiang each year.⁸ Once the rich deposit of Sichuan began to be tapped by the central government, it was not easy to reverse course.

The abrupt deprivation of the long-time privilege in tax obligations had a profound impact on the local society in the Southwest. The reaction to the changes from the local elites as well as commoners was strongly negative. This became one of the most important elements in the fermenting of the popular protest movements at the end of the Qing dynasty. What became evident was the formation of a self-consciousness of regionalism vis-à-vis the exactions of the central government. It was this sentiment that served as a cohesive force in uniting all walks of life to fight for local interests in the great Railway Right Recovery Movement of 1910-1911. Not only so, the grievances against the Qing exactions also provided the revolutionaries with a sound excuse to launch their charges against the ailing dynasty.

⁸Zhou Xun, Shu Hai Congtan, p. 22.

The popular protests and uprisings ignited by the revolutionaries eventually joined together to help overthrow the Qing dynasty in 1912.

In 1661, when the gentry class in Jiangnan mounted a protest against the Qing exaction of high taxes, the response of the Qing state was a merciless suppression, hundreds of gentry members were beheaded. Since then, the Jiangnan area had undertaken the ever-heavy fiscal burden without raising another loud outcry for relief until the post-Taiping Rebellion period.⁹ Nevertheless, the Southwesterners did not wait too long to let out their grievances, which had the consequence of toppling the Qing dynasty in 1912. The historical contrast may leave one wondering if the Qing state made some vital mistakes in the timing of adjusting its fiscal policies towards the Southwest along with the changed circumstances in the region.

⁹James Polachek, "Gentry Hegemony: Soochow in the T'ung-chih Restoration."

Conclusion

For a long time, one of the meanings for the study of the premodern era was to demonstrate the progressiveness of modernity. Contrasted with the modern era, premodern periods are usually treated as being dominated by irrationality. Is modernity equal to rationality? Since the first glimpse of modernity on the horizon, mainstream intellectual trends had repeatedly printed a positive answer to this question. However, with the twentieth century, which, for most parts of the world, stands for the modern era, approaching its conclusion, the optimism of earlier times is seriously questioned. It has become undeniably clear that there are two opposing trends connoted in modernity: rationalism and irrationalism.

During modern times, rationalism is based upon a solid foundation of modern sciences and humanities. The growth and maturation of capitalism have instilled tremendous vigor into modern rationalism. Nevertheless, the modern era has also witnessed the rampage of irrationalism. Catastrophes, which were caused by irrationalism in modern times, are also unprecedented in history. However, when the origins of these modern catastrophes are traced, the most convenient scapegoat is the vestiges of premodern era. Misled by a

belief that modernity is a synonym of progressiveness, it has long been taken for granted that the premodern era was doomed with ignorance and irrationality. With the myth about modernity dissolving, it is also the time to rediscover meanings in studying premodern periods.

This study has showed how the Qing dynasty of China adjusted its attitude and policies towards a specific region in accordance with the changed political and diplomatic strategies during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. It exemplifies how a premodern state responded to its problems and crises under the guidance of pragmatism, or, rationalism in a sense, for to regulate policy and strategy to comply with the changed situation is to act rationally. As seen in this study, it was the interest of the empire that always took a lead in the decision-making process, not any iron-clad ideology. This study has embraced a broad range of issues, but it endeavors to bring the following arguments to the fore.

First, this study suggests that economic importance and strategic importance were the two key factors for the Qing state to differentiate its attention towards various regions. As is well recognized, the state had different priorities in its national politics in each particular period. One embodiment of this scheme was that the state treated various regions differently in accordance with its priority in each given period. This is not a new

contribution of this study. More than a half century ago, Chi Ch'ao-ting first raised his theory of "Key Economic Area" in Key Economic Areas in Chinese History. He noted: "In each period of Chinese history certain regions received more attention than others."¹ While he is correct in pointing out the different degree of attention paid by the central government to different regions, and the critical role played by the key economic areas, his theory fails to tell of another key element in the central government's hierarchicalization of the different regions in the empire. That key element is the strategic importance certain areas possessed in certain periods.

If the rationale underscoring the state's policies towards the key economic area was to maximize economic gains in order to guarantee a steady revenue income to the state fiscs, the state would not utilize this same rationale towards the strategic important areas. For the strategically important areas, the goal of the state was to make sure that the areas were adequately equipped and supplied in order to be able to respond to frontier emergencies quickly and effectively. For those areas, the state put obtaining maximal economic gains behind the objective of ensuring security and strength. In this case, the conventional wisdom, that the state was always revenue-thirsty, and that it was always a priority for the state to strive to maximize

¹Chi Ch'ao-ting, Key Economic Areas in Chinese History, p. 2.

economic gains, are not applicable. On such occasions, the amount of tax contribution did not affect how much attention and support a strategically key area would receive from the central government.

Like the economic concerns of the state, strategic considerations had long been an issue of magnitude for the central authorities in China. In any given period or situation, this consideration existed and functioned to justify the state's attention towards the various areas. With a change of circumstances, a certain region would lose its advantage of receiving more attention due to a shift in the strategic focus of the state. By the same token, a region of no importance could enhance its position if it became strategically significant. The change in the position of the Southwest in Qing strategic considerations well reflects this dynamic. As revealed in this study, the Southwest caught the attention of the central authorities simply because of its strategic significance. Although the Southwest, more accurately, Sichuan, had been one of the key economic areas in history prior to the Qing, this position was lost after the protracted Ming-Qing transition. The insignificance of the Southwest's economic contribution to the central government led to the degradation of central attention towards it. This was the case in the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the dramatic transition of the Qing's diplomatic strategy by the turn of the eighteenth century

altered this situation. The central authorities began to view the Southwest differently. With the unfolding of the Qing Tibetan maneuvers, the Southwest rose to become one of the most important areas for the Qing empire. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the demarcation of the Southwest and the Northwest in administrative terms exemplified this new strategic prestige. This change brought to the area significant consequences. State policies provided vigor to economic growth, and played a big role in helping shape the socio-economic characteristics of the region.

Second, this study reveals the correlations between the political priorities of the Qing state and socio-economic development in the rise of the Southwest as a strategically important region. More particularly, this study tries to shed some light on the origins of the Sichuan rice market and its function during the eighteenth century. It shows that the Qing central authorities should not always be depicted as hostile towards marketing systems. The case recovered by this study is of great significance: the strategic importance of the Southwest not only made the central government yield its gains in revenue-collecting, but also fostered an affluence of surplus rice in the region. What is interesting is that the state did not try to control the surplus rice through political means, instead, the state encouraged marketing systems to help circulate the surplus rice to the lower Yangtze valley to relieve rice

shortages. This phenomenon, certainly a by-product of the Qing's frontier endeavors in the Southwest, proves that the Qing state did not always stand as an obstacle to marketing systems.

While more and more students of Qing history recognize the considerable developments in commercialization in the Qing period,² the role played by the state remains in question. In Fernand Braudel's terms, the Qing state was, "since everything was controlled by a ubiquitous, efficient and bureaucratic government, in theory opposed to economic privilege..."³ He further elaborates this point:

The two outstanding features of western development were first the establishment of the higher mechanisms of trade, then in the eighteenth century, the proliferation of ways and means. What was happening outside Europe in this respect? The most aberrant case is that of China, where the imperial administration blocked any attempts to create an economic hierarchy. Only the very lowest levels of trading worked effectively, the shops and markets of city and small town.⁴

This study argues that the Qing state, under the guidance of pragmatism, was flexible as well as skillful in utilizing and manipulating the marketing system under certain circumstances. Certainly there were regional differences, too. For the key economic areas, such as the Jiangnan area, the Qing state would not let market mechanisms take a lead, the high rate of taxation was a hard obstacle on the way to

²One leading work of this sort is the two volumes study on Hankou by William Rowe.

³Fernand Braudel, The Wheels of Commerce, p. 131.

⁴ibid. pp. 136-137.

the further commercialization of the economy in the Jiangnan area. Nevertheless, the state had no intention of hindering or impairing the marketing systems in the Southwest. This conspicuous inconsistency in the Qing's attitude towards the market economy was in accordance with its differentiation of the regions according to their role in Qing strategic consideration.

Third, this study demonstrates that one of the important themes in the rise of the Southwest as a frontier stronghold is the contention between the throne and viceroys. It was a chronic problem in the Qing frontier undertakings. The concerns of the central government over the overgrowth of provincial viceroys' influence were constant and profound. During the first half of the Qing dynasty, the monarchy had paid considerable attention to controlling provincial viceroys and chief military commanders in the Southwest. The rise and fall of many a prominent general and viceroy in this region exemplifies this theme. To a great extent, the Qing authorities had been quite successful. In so doing, the Qing state had shown tremendous flexibilities towards the rules and conventions of the dynasty. Personal maneuvers were sometimes more important than the bureaucratic routines, as long as the interest of the empire was ensured.

Fourth, this study presents a picture of how military operations functioned beneficially for the local economy in

the Southwest during the eighteenth century. To be sure, the military buildup as well as campaigns, were supported by the state fiscs. This was one of the fundamental differences from the Ming military system. It turned out that this reform of the Qing had an immense impact on both the military and society at large. In the beginning of the era under observation in this study, the warfare and militarization during the Ming-Qing transition razed the Southwest to utter ruin. The Wu Sangui Rebellion in the 1670s and 80s once again threw the region into chaos and devastation. On these two occasions, the military operations only attributed to depopulation and destruction of the economy, as was the case for most of the wars in history. Nevertheless, the Qing frontier undertakings and campaigns during the eighteenth century provided the region with an entirely different dynamic, and instilled tremendous vigor into the economy.

It was not unknown in history that military buildup brought about prosperity. The prerequisites for this outcome were that the region itself was not a war zone, and that there were resources coming from outside the region. This was the case during the eighteenth century's military buildup in the Southwest. With the steady flow of state revenue into the Southwest, combined with the low rate of taxation, the region would benefit instead of suffer from the military operations. The foundation for the flourishing

of the commercial economy in the nineteenth-century Southwest was actually laid down during the eighteenth century, the era of the frontier adventures. While G. William Skinner looked at late nineteenth-century Sichuan and deduced his famous diagram of "marketing towns," he grasped correctly the particular structure of the local economy. Nevertheless, this phenomenon was initially and significantly affected by a particular historic development in the early Qing: the strategic importance of the region shielded the region from being heavily, or more precisely, regularly taxed; and the state's high-handed taxation policy in the lower Yangtze valley created a perfect market for the abundant surplus of the region.

While this study tries to contribute to a reevaluation of a premodern oriental monarchy, it does not attempt to lead to a conclusion that the premodern state, the Qing dynasty in this case, was guided by rationalism. The reality was more complex than a simple judgment, especially when the definition of a concept varies. As this study shows, the Qing state adopted different policies towards various regions. It was more "liberal" in some cases, but more "traditional" in other cases. And, the Qing state was not always able to adjust its policies towards different regions in accordance with the changed situation. As the epilogue of this study reveals, the Qing kept the same taxation policy towards the Southwest even when this region was no longer a

strategically critical area in the nineteenth century. For a state, retardation in responding to a shifted circumstance and in reorienting its new strategy would work against it in due course. This retardation could be caused either by lack of vision or by lack of strength. For the Qing dynasty in the early nineteenth century, both contributed to maintaining the *status quo* in the Southwest.

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