

**Chieftains into Ancestors:  
Imperial Expansion and Indigenous Society in Southwest China**

**Edited by  
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## The *Tusi* that Never Was: Find an Ancestor, Connect to the State

David Faure

In the process known as the “replacing the native official with the magistrate” (*gaitu guiliu*), the hereditary posts of *tusi* (native officials) were abolished, and the territories over which they ruled were brought within the purview of magistrates appointed by the imperial government. In the southwestern provinces, the process might be traced to the hundred and fifty years from the Bozhou rebellion (1600) to the appointment of Manchu official E’ertai to governorship and governor-generalship in Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi between 1725 and 1732. During that century and half, the imperial government broke the back of *tusi* power. It did not end the hereditary system by which *tusi* were appointed, but the ones who survived, and the many which were created, became far less powerful and controlled far less territory, than their predecessors did in the Ming dynasty. As China historians have well recognized, the process brought the southwest into the imperial state. (Giersch 2006; Herman 2007, Wen 2008)

A process marked by intrigue and war, tied on the one hand to imperial policies set in Beijing and interpreted at the provinces, and, on the other hand, by *tusi* negotiating among themselves, not only through alliances with government forces, military and civil, but also succession battles within their own immediate kin and family, is necessarily complicated. This paper is less about the complications of power relationships than about a particular process within them. The long-time association of *tusi* with the imperial state had, over the centuries, brought about a fundamental split

with southwestern native society. The *tusi*, in order to remain *tusi*, demonstrated his prowess not only by serving the imperial state, but by pretensions that he could rank among the imperial elite. Yet, the southwest had to be governed by *tusi* only because it was predominantly populated by indigenous people who were untrained in the ways of the emperor's subjects. The *tusi* and his kins, therefore, came to attend schools which taught in classical Chinese, as his subordination population continued to be represented as uncouth savages. Moreover, because every *tusi*'s successors had to be appointed anew by the imperial government, they, as well as the imperial government, maintained in writing a continuous genealogy for the lineage, spanning centuries, a document which most of their subjects, being untaught in written Chinese, would not have possessed. (Faure 2006)

Yet, for a number of reasons, the division between ruler and ruled even within *tusi* territory remained porous. An expanding economy in the early Qing -- thanks to the export of timber and minerals -- which pulled in labour and merchants from surrounding provinces, would have provided opportunity in plenty for the indigenous population to integrate with migrants well versed in the imperial traditions. Unceasing succession contests within *tusi* regimes, too, meant that, every so often, history had had to be retold. That does not prevent the local history producing a new pedigree. What it might imply, however, is that in retelling history, but the process create the historical memory by reinterpreting foundation legends which, in themselves, earmark the integration of *tusi* domain into the imperial state.

### **Native officials of the Cen surname**

The Cen surname was among the most reputable *tusi* surnames. It was the surname of the powerful *tusi* in the upper reaches of the West River to the far west of

Guangxi province. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the *tusi* prefects of Tianzhou were strong allies of the Ming dynasty. They supplied men to serve the Ming military, while the Ming dynasty government, despite repeated intrigues and assassinations, supported the claims of the *tusi* to their titles. The history of the Cen lineage of Tianzhou is the most obvious example of this close collaboration. In 1527, Cen Meng, Tianzhou prefect, was murdered by his father-in-law, the *tusi* sub-prefect of Guishun, who belonged to another lineage of the same Cen surname. Meng was succeeded by his son, and, despite a long period of turmoil during Meng's life time, the lineage perpetuated into Qing, and, for the rest of the Ming dynasty at least, continued to supply men to the military command. (*Mingshi* 1974 [1739] 8247-8253; Guangxi minzu yanjiusuo 1965: 1-29; Gong 1992: 1095-1097)

In the close vicinity of Tianzhou were two other *tusi* lineages of the Cen surname, and they served respectively as the prefects of Zhen'an and the sub-prefects of Guishun. The two lines traced a common origin from Cen Tianbao, who in 1368, the first year of the Ming dynasty, surrendered to the Ming emperor. That the line had begun from before the Ming can be attested to by the presence of several ancestors bearing Mongolian-styled names before Tianbao's time, while the occurrence of temples dedicated to Tianbao found commonly in local communities also suggests that the influence of the lineage had, at one time, been extensive. Since the sixteenth century, however, the lineage had lost its edge against its neighbours, for its prefectural city fell several times to attacks mounted by nearby *tusi*. (*Zhen'an fuzhi* 1892 6: 1a-10b; *Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1968 [1848]: 42)

The history of Guishun is detailed in its local history, of which extant are a manuscript copy dated 1848, and a woodblock edition, dated 1899. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi*, ms, 1968 [1848], and 1899) Both record that the sub-prefects of Guishun



were descended from Cen Yongfu, Tianbao's grandson. The significant development here, in the establishment of contact between the territorial regime of the *tusi* and the Ming dynasty state, was the award of a seal by the Ming government in 1499 to Yongfu, upon which his territory came to be known as Guishun native (*tu*) sub-prefecture. The 1848 local history notes the local reaction to the award. It was said that the people of the sub-prefecture held a great feast on the occasion, set up the registration division known as the 8 *jia*, and built a new village. A note appended to the record indicates that this village was located 50 *li* from the "old city" and could house ten thousand people. There was a pond in the middle of the village, and guns were mounted on the village walls. There used to be a stele, the record notes, the content of which we are not told. Reference is made, too, to military service away from the sub-prefecture, probably an indication that, like many other indigenous people in the southwest, the Cen surname were serving as mercenaries for the Ming government. In 1575, the *tusi* hired scholars knowledgeable in the classics (*tongjing boshi*). Towards the end of the Ming dynasty, they were caught up in cross-border wars with Vietnam. The wars seem to have considerably weakened the Cen surname in the area, until by 1680, succession became problematic because the heir in line was only 9 *sui* and power fell to his grandmother, Madam Shen, and then his mother, Madam Yang. By 1701, in the face of another succession dispute, it was the Qing officialdom – the text does not make clear who – who decided on succession. In 1731, on the excuse that the *tusi* had failed to investigate a local incident in which the god Pangu was invoked, the Governor General of Yunnan and Guangxi, E'ertai, implemented *gaitu guiliu*. The office was abolished by the Qing dynasty in that year. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1968 [1848]: 43-49)

There were *tusi* bearing other surnames in the vicinity. According to the Guishun

local history, of which a manuscript copy dating to 1848 is extant, Cen Yongfu was himself preceded by *tusi* of the Zhang surname. The Zhang surname *tusi* were descendants of a certain Zhang Tianzong who had probably never existed. The creation of a myth around him was, probably, necessitated by circumstances of the nineteenth century and changing ideas about *tusi* rule.

### **Native officials of the Zhang surname**

Zhang Tianzong's history begins at the end of the Song dynasty, when the Song emperor had to flee from the Yuan and, in Jiangxi province, Wen Tianxiang had raised loyal forces in his support. One Zhang Tianzong, a Wen Tianxiang follower, fled into Guangxi as the Yuan wiped out the Song, and in 1276 came upon Naqian *dong* where he settled and became known as *dong* lord (*dongzhu*). The details matter. The word *dong* suggests a land form, consisting of flat land surrounded by hills in these upper reaches of the West River; describing Zhang as *dong* lord, rather than *tusi* by one or other imperial title indicates that that Zhang had not yet submitted to the Chinese empire. Yet, reference to his allegiance to the Song emperors documents his loyalty to its tradition. Submission was not the problem within the context: Zhang Tianzong had come from the imperial state, which had been usurped by the Yuan.

Settlement involved agriculture, the legend goes on, for the *dong* lord sent for grain seeds from outside the *dong*, planted them in the fifth month and they ripened in the autumn. Over the next two years, he built the dykes needed for flood protection. By the sixth year, he was proclaimed by the multitude (*zhong*) as *dong* official. The *dong* lord also established what we might think of as government. That involved dividing the *dong* into three *ting*, each consisting of ten households and supervised by a *tingzhang*. Land was worked collectively by the *ting*, and proceeds were divided

among member households. He laid down the rule that each year in the fifth month, there should be the Ox Soul Festival, an effort to prepare the ox for spring ploughing, and in the tenth month, the prognostication with chicken bone for the fortunes of the coming year. He also opened other *dong* for settlement, an effort which involved agriculture, killing pythons, building a fort at Naqian using bamboo for its walls, and he designated the *dong* heads of the five *dong* so created. Naqian was the pivot of that development, not only for the centrifugal effort of Zhang Tianzong, but also for the land that the pivotal settlement was able to keep for the general welfare. Land that fell outside the purview of the *ting* was kept for sustaining the elderly, for helping people with marriages, for sustaining the disabled, and for funerals. This was a description of a government on top of a village alliance, where one *dong* lord controlled more resources than other *dong* lords.

Zhang Tianzong died in the 39th year after settlement and was revered as the *she* god [god of the territorial shrine]. By this stage, the Ming dynasty influence should be clear in the story: it was exemplified in households collected into a territorial unit focused at a *she* shrine. If that is not clear enough, however, the succession to be traced in the next stage of the history should leave no doubt. Zhang Tianzong was succeeded by his son Zhang Yuan, just as every other of the five *dong* lords was succeeded by his own son. In the 42nd year after settlement, the multitude offered their arch *dong* lord, Zhang Yuan, cap and sash, following “Song custom”. By year 50, he set up village schools. By year 57, before he died, he was venerated as a *she* god. In year 60, he died, and was succeeded by his son *shenxian*, literally, fairy. Why he was fairy is explained in the next line. He was the first *dong* lord of the Yuan dynasty and he went into the hills to learn the *dao*, leaving his son Biao in charge of *dong* affairs. Fairy’s whereabouts were soon unknown and the multitude made Biao the

next *dong* lord.

Into the Ming came also change in the *dong* lord's dynasty. Biao died in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Hongwu (1380) in the Ming, succeeded by his son Long. The names are not to be missed: the character Biao is made up of the radical *hu* (tiger) and three strokes on the side. Biao's name, therefore, indicated Tiger, the animal motif equivalent of Long, dragon. Long built the first government office (*yamen*) at Naqian. But by Yongle 7 (1409), the Cen surname, who were to depose him, had built their own government office at nearby Gulong. The Cen surname were lords of Dongzhou, explained in the story as an area outside the five *dong* of the Naqian alliance to which residents had been led by a bear. In Yongle 9 (1411), the Dongzhou lord appointed his own son, Yongfu, to be lord of Shun'an, that is to say, Naqian. In the following years, Cen Yongfu killed Zhang Long and the other five *dong* lords of the alliance. When Yongfu died, his son set himself up as the official (*guan*) of the *dong*. After two more successors, in 1499, the *dong* official, Cen Zhang, was given a seal by the imperial government in recognition of his service, and the name of Shun'an *dong*, at which Cen Yongfu's descendants had been officials, was changed to Guishun native sub-prefecture. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1968 [1848]: 37-42)

This very interesting account embodies many of the elements which made up frontier society. The essential ingredients seem to have been: (1) that legitimacy to rule had been established by a claim to descent from an area held under the Chinese imperial regime -- here, the progenitor was a Song loyalist; (2) a genealogy of descent follows, detailing, generation by generation, the ruler of the local regime; (3) the infiltration of Han scripts and texts, noted in this instance in the person of Zhang the fairy and the recruitment of scholars of the classics; and (4) the decline of the regime leading to *gaitu guiliu*. In a nutshell, that would have been local history as seen from

the Chinese imperial angle, this time, written by the natives.

### **The earth god and his revelations through spirit writing**

The historiography of the Zhang Tianzong legend is woven into the graves that now lie in a graveyard at Guishun. The graveyard is, in all likelihood, a recent undertaking. Graves located in a cluster are found all over China; the ones related to Zhang Tianzong were set up, no later than 1885 but possibly earlier -- the records do not permit a more precise dating as will be evident from the discussion below.

Tianzong's grave is located in the middle of the front row, indicating his preeminent position as patriarch. A couplet on his gravestone, set up in 1864, reads:

His deeds have been buried, but his glory and achievement are traceable for  
eight generations,

His spirit remains, at the basin [of sand] he had written, words of wisdom to  
last a thousand springs.

The gazetteer notes that a temple dedicated to him had stood outside the East Gate of the sub-prefectural city. That accords with the reference in the gazetteer that after his death he had been revered as the *she* god.<sup>1</sup> (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1968 [1848]: 41)

Retained in the gazetteer is an essay commemorating the building of the graveyard. In 1883, a certain Shi Xuechong, who was serving in the private secretariat of the military commander, having read of Zhang Tianzong's exploits in the gazetteer, and knowing of the existence of the grave site near the "old city", found the grave

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<sup>1</sup> I visited the graveyard in July 2008. Stele inscriptions referred to in this chapter, unless otherwise specified, were transcribed on that visit.

mounds overthrown with grass. His essay noted that on his initiative, donations were collected from officials and members of the gentry to repair the site. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 6: 49a-50a) A stele dated 1885 recording the event may still be found at the graveyard entrance. Heading the list of donors is the acting Guizhun sub-prefect and the local army commander. Among the donors were also a number of shops and five of the districts of Guishun: Huatong, Sili, Podou, Luli and Huzhai. Since the 1850s, these districts were known as *tuan* (militia regiment) and were recorded as such on the stele.

Two other features at the graveyard stand out for their peculiarity. There were two graves for Zhang Tianzong and every member of his family buried there, one of them dated 1864 and the other 1884. Moreover, recall the couplet on Zhang Tianzong's gravestone: "at the basin [of sand] he had written, words of wisdom to last a thousand springs." The Chinese term that has been translated here for this line is "*fujī*", usually translated as "spirit writing," a process by which the spirit moves the writing rod loosely lodged on the diviner's index fingers over a basin of sand, his message thereby written in characters on the sand to be read by persons trained to read such writing. The words of wisdom have not been left behind, but a broken stele now held at the local museum has recorded the series of events referred to. The stele records a history that is essentially identical to the account given in the gazetteers, but it adds to the story, significantly, a "god-person" (*shenren*) who advised Zhang Tianzong and his refugee community how they might survive on wild plants in the early stages of their settlement at Shun'an. The text identifies this god-person as the Guangfu Great King, a term which might indicate the local earth god, noting, furthermore, that the king had on his two sides, a virgin boy who held his demon-slashing axe, and a virgin girl, who held his Harm Removing Mantra (*chuhai jing*).

Zhang Tianzong had offered the community's leadership to the King, but the King had refused, and, instead, appointed Zhang to be in control. Of the events closer at hand, in 1859, on the 9th day of the Second Month, at an altar set up in the Guangfu Temple, the *dong* lord, Zhang Tianzong, had descended to write the account as given, and in 1863, he had written again to inform his followers of his birthday (on the 28th day of a month which was obliterated from the stele). The stele has been broken where the date of the inscription might have appeared, yet we know from the grave stones that a year after his second appearance by spirit writing, at least one set of graves for Zhang and his family had been set up.<sup>2</sup>

The record of the various occasions when Zhang Tianzong detailed his history through spirit writing casts the account of the 1848 gazetteer into some doubt. The gazetteer has been dated with reference to the date found in its preface, written by compiler He Fuxiang, a local man, degree holder, who had served outside Guishun. He's preface states specifically that there was a yet earlier text, dated in 1828, which had recorded the biographies of *tusi* of the Cen and Zhang surnames. His own preface of 1848 refers to Zhang Tianzong as the first effort to open the area for cultivation (and, implicitly, for civilisation). (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1968 [1848]: 1-4) There is no doubt that He Fuxiang had known about Zhang Tianzong. He had left another essay on Zhang the Fairy, Tianzong's grandson, who went into the hills to practice the ways of the immortal. The essay notes Tianzong by name, and records that the fairy's spirit was commemorated on a stone stele on which his name and his portrait had been carved, that stele being housed in a pavilion within a cavern behind the Buddhist monastery, the Binshan si. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 6: 44a-b) Knowing now from

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<sup>2</sup> The stele was seen in the Jiuzhou Zhuangzu shengtai bowuguan (Old City Zhuang Living Conditions Museum) at Jingzhou.

these various sources that locally, Tianzong had been regarded as an earth god, that the custom had been to maintain sacrifice to spirits in caverns, and that Tianzong had appeared in spirit writing to record his own history, we should find it incongruous that the history had been ready-made by 1848 when the spirit writing sessions stretched to 1863. Gazetteer compiler He Fuxiang knew about Zhang Tianzong in 1848, but not to the detail shown in the biography of Tianzong included in that gazetteer. Most of that text was probably written considerably later than 1848. In other words, although the preface for the gazetteer was written in 1848, some of the content was probably written well after that date.

A comment must also be made about graves. In these parts of Guangxi, hardly any early grave had a tombstone, except for the graves of the Cen surname *tuxi*. Several magnificent graves belonging to the Cen surname stand close enough to the present Zhang Tianzong grave site for us to assume that the people who buried Zhang would have known about them. It is hard to understand why there were two graves to each person buried, now all lying in the same grave yard. They could have been moved together to the present grave site from separate locations but that has not been indicated in the 1885 stele now located at the entrance to the grave site. One might assume that the graves are empty, but no-one knows for sure, and what the burial consisted of must remain speculation. We turn, therefore, to the circumstances surrounding the burial, for they are all that we can rely on for an understanding of the graves.

### **The circumstances**

The *gaitu guiliu* policy enforced by E'ertai in the 1730s brought an end to *tusi* rule in quite a few areas of the upper reaches of the West River, as it did also to some



other parts of the southwest. Nevertheless, by no means were all *tusi* positions abolished. In the areas held by the Cen surname, Tianzhou remained under *tusi* administration, along with four sub-prefectures (Xiangwu, Dukang, Shangying and Xialei) that came under the purview of Zhen'an prefecture. In 1729, when the Guishun *tusi* was abolished and Guishun was administered as a sub-prefecture, it, too came under Zhen'an. However, by 1886, Guishun was promoted to a directly administered sub-prefecture, and had under its purview a sub-prefecture and a native sub-prefecture (Xialei). (Gong 1992: 1119-1120; *Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 1: 1b-2b)

The changes signal administrative reshuffling, but the records have skimmed over the politics involved. The little information available comes in the biographic sketch given of officials and prominent community leaders since the abolition of the *tusi*. Luo Weixiang, the first sub-prefect appointed, is praised in the gazetteer for registering the land. No mean feat, for that had meant, as his biography explains, the sub-prefecture's land had been divided into such categories as public land, private land, men's land, shaman's land, medicinal land and diviner's land. Weixiang permitted individual registration, putting a tax on the land, rather than, one might presume, the provision for service as indicated by the category names. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 5: 1b)

Subsequent sub-prefects were known for judicial fairness, for building the sub-prefectural city, and, especially, for promoting scholarship. The effort was reflected in examination successes. In 1736, Guishun obtained its first *juren* degree, and during the rest of the eighteenth century, two more *juren* and 16 *xiuca*i degrees. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 4: 4b-5a)

The mood changed in 1853. The then sub-prefect, Ke Shun, in the face of increasing unrest, organised a militia. His successor from 1856, Jiang Huai-wu,

“recruited braves for training, and in spare moments, spoke to them about loyalty and righteousness; the people enthusiastically offered their service.” Sub-prefect Jiang, having deterred the bandits, sought out models of virtuous women and filial sons, set up charity schools all over the sub-prefecture, revived the local academy, held the village drinking ceremony, and inspected the villages. Wherever he went, he met with the righteous members of the gentry and the able-bodied young men. (*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 5: 4a-5a)

In retrospect, the gazetteer chroniclers noted that this wave of disorder began in 1848, when bandits skirting Guishun clashed with forces led by the magistrate of adjacent Tianbao county, killing the magistrate before withdrawing into Guishun. It was also reported that “boat bandits” had, by 1850, arrived from Xunzhou, where the Taiping Rebellion was only just breaking out, and looted the towns by the rivers, so that “below Baise, travellers were wary.” (*Baise tingzhi* 1882 8/27b) It should be clear from these descriptions, however, that the local militia had not yet been organised. In the circumstances, the only substantial local support for government forces remained the men who could be mustered by the Tianzhou native sub-prefect, Cen Naiqing, and those were gathered around Baise rather than the southern edges of the Youjiang basin where Guishun was located. Meanwhile, violence intensified. In 1851, bandits burnt the police post (*xunjian chu*) at Huren and occupied Huatong market to the south of Guishun sub-prefectural city. Another band of bandits attacked Xinxu market to its north. Sub-prefect Ke Shun was noted as having defeated some bandits, but more telling were the efforts of the acting prefect of Zhen’an, Luo Fugao, in recruiting the bandits at Huatong into government service. (*Zhen’an fuzhi* 1892 22/16a-b) Zhen’an prefectural city itself came under attack, and Guishun sub-prefectural city was rife with news that bandits might attack.

It is credible, therefore, that the militia were organised in Guishun only by 1853. Sub-prefect Ke Shun, who coordinated the effort, was active fighting the bandits. In all this turmoil, firmly on the side of the government were the forces coordinated by the officials themselves, who besides Ke Shun, were the prefect of Zhen'an, Xing Fu, and the native sub-prefect of Tianzhou, Cen Naiqing. The militia did not simply play a defensive role; by 1855, they participated in government-directed action far away from their home villages. Many were little distinguishable from the bandits: officials recognized that secret societies (known as "halls" *tang*) among them were readily formed and as readily disbanded as they shifted between fighting the bandits and looting on their own. (*Guishun zhili zhou zhi* 1899 5: 47b; Su 1889)

Within Guishun sub-prefecture, by 1854, Xinxu market seems to have fallen into the hands of numerous bandit bands. Less the image is given that Guishun was necessarily a victim, it might be noted also that numerous bands marauding surrounding villages were identified as having had a Guishun affiliation. Events took a serious turn by 1857 when connections came to be built up between the local bands and the Taiping. In 1860, the Taiping prince Shi Dakai, fought into Baise and left many bands which had come from down river in Xunzhou prefecture, among whom Little Zhang San was regarded as a headman. It was around this time that we have a clear description again of the power configuration around Guishun city: at Jiuzhou, the bandit Wu Yazhong had set up an office in the market; the head of the Dongliang militia, Guo Qianshan had recruited the Xialei bandit Wang Shilin into his ranks, after Wang attacked Guishun city and was repelled; Wang Shilin, however, had never given up his bandit's ways, and demanded payment of protection money as he held Huatong market; while Little Zhang San and others took Guishun city in 1863 and were driven out by government troops only by the next year, with the help of surrendered bandit,

Huang Zehong. (*Baise tingzhi* 1882 8: 27b-34b; *Guishun zhili zhou zhi* 1899 5: 48a-49a)

In this confusion, a band headed by one Wu Yazhong came to wield power in the very vicinity of Guishun city. Wu Yazhong was a native of Xinning zhou. His father had, in 1852, set himself up as a prince, but had in 1862 been defeated by government troops and killed. Yazhong escaped and camped in Langjiaxu market to the east of the sub-prefectural city. By the end of 1865, as the strength of the Taipings was sapped by protracted war, the governor of Guangxi was finally able to despatch to the Youjiang area commander Feng Zicai and his recruits, whereupon Huang Zehong broke out of Guishun sub-prefectural city. The sub-prefect, who had been held virtual captive since Little Zhang San had taken the city, recruited to his aid Wu Yazhong, who looted as soon as he entered the city sending its citizens fleeing. Government forces succeeded in driving out Yazhong, who left to lay siege to Baise in 1866, but returned by 1867 to occupy Xinxu market, Lanjiaxu, Jiuzhou and Luli, as they made their main camps at Santai and Ande. In 1868, Feng Zicai directed his forces against Little Zhang San and Wu Yazhong, driving them into Vietnam. In the following year, taking his forces into Vietnam, he defeated Yazhong's band and killed Yazhong. Only then did the gazetteer declare that the decades of turmoil from the "hall" bandits were over.

(*Guishun zhilizhou zhi* 1899 5: 49a-52a)

It may be recalled that one of the dates on the gravestones in Zhang Tianzong's family graveyard was 1864. The graveyard was located in Jiuzhou. The grave of his two wives was set up by the Upper and Lower Jiuzhou Militia. Moreover, when the graveyard itself and the second set of gravestones were set up, in 1884, the donors came from precisely the area where Wu Yazhong had camped towards the last years of his career.

### **The episode of Liu Yongfu and the Black Flag Army**

From an unexpected quarter, more information might be had of Wu Yazhong's band, set up so decidedly in the area in which Zhang Tianzong's graves were located. One of Wu Yazhong's followers was Liu Yongfu, who, in defeat, retreated into Vietnam. His band remained intact through the 1870s, operating within Vietnam, and, by 1882, when the Sino-French War broke out over the area, he was to become famous as the local recruit who successfully routed French troops on numerous occasions, and in 1885, returned as a hero from Vietnam to Guangxi with his followers. Interestingly for the history of the area, Liu left an account of his life. It was not altogether a reliable history. Written in 1938, it was billed as an oral account given to an admirer who made his notes of the record available to three different writers to turn into a manuscript, only the third of whom succeeded. Its fictional style and correspondence to the gazetteer record suggest that more than the oral account had been readied for the press. Nevertheless, the account was insightful in that it obviously reflected knowledge of the terrain and sensitivity to how the bandit bands might have operated. It also provided Liu Yongfu's family background and gives a realistic sense of the buccaneers attracted into this frontier region from the more populous parts of China.

Born into a poor family in Guangdong, Liu Yongfu worked on the farm as a boy. Yet, this was not the experience of the long-settled family. The family was scattered on the Guangdong-Guangxi migration paths, so that from an early age, he had been taken by his relatives, primarily his step-brother, to work on the hill lands of Guangxi. In 1857, by age 21 *sui*, he was determined to join the Taipings. In the next year, he went with other youths from his village to Nanning, where he thought of joining the

Prince of Yanling's band, in which Wu Yazhong became heir to the prince. The party of village lads of which Liu Yongfu was a part, however, were very much on the periphery, as the bandits were fighting as much among themselves as with government troops, Yongfu's biography noted that as his daily rations dwindled, he, along with other Wu Yazhong followers, joined Wang Shilin. Of the alliance between Wang Shilin and the Dongling Militia at Guishun, the biography noted insightfully that the militia head was a Guangdong native and had been opposed to the natives. That animosity led to the rout of Guishun even as the militia, and the bandit recruits led by Wang Shilin, defended the city against the attack of other bandits.

There were ups and downs in Liu Yongfu's career before he joined Wu Yazhong again, but by then, in 1865, he headed a band of an allegedly two hundred men. Wu Yazhong at the time camped at the town of Ande in Guishun, and because each band would have been signified by its own banner, Liu Yongfu conducted the ceremony at the Ande Beidi temple where he adopted the black flag as his insignia. The temple, as we now know, is located at the spot that the local people refer to as the yamen (administrative office) of Nong Zhigao, the eleventh-century indigene who wrought havoc in Song dynasty south China as he took an expedition down the West River and into Guangdong, laying siege to Yongzhou (present-day Nanning) and Guangzhou. (See Gao Yaning in this volume.) Belief in his, and his mother's prowess, plays a central role in local ceremonies, and an annual ceremony has continued to the present day whereby he was invited from this temple to join a procession through the market. Six flags are now hung on the walls of the temple: insignia for six different groups of villages in the vicinity. The black flag is not one of them, although Liu Yongfu's initiation ceremony is widely known. The surrounding villages are ethnic Zhuang; Liu Yongfu's background suggests that he was Han, like many people living in the market.

The procession of the Zhuang, carrying their banners, marching through the market would have been a show of strength, and significantly, the black flag is not in it. (Li Jianer 1976[1938]; Xu 1989)

Zhang Tianzhong's graveyard is located so near Liu Yongfu's early operations, and the duplicate graves were constructed so close to Liu's return from Vietnam, that one is tempted to draw a connection between the two events. The records are totally silent on that. All that can be said is the two dates recorded for the graves, 1864 and 1884, coincided with the end of intense local militarisation. We do not know for certain if the militia were really connected with setting up the graves, but we do know that the donors came from areas with local militia connection.

#### **Conclusion: significance of the *tusi* who never was**

The Ming and Qing records provide a great deal of information on the succession of *tusi*, their wars against one another, their service in support of the Chinese empire and even their local politics. Very much less is known about the people they governed. The impression one can obtain from the Chinese records puts an emphasis on the maintenance of military garrisons on the routes into Vietnam and continuous immigration of people with some claim to a Han ethnicity. What is very interesting in the Zhang Tianzong legend is the enactment of the *tusi*, a century after the *tusi* had been abolished, among people who were taking up arms under imperial sanction. Pervasive knowledge that the area had been subject to *tusi* administration goes without saying. It must have been commonly known, too, that many *tusi* traced their roots to a Han origin.

In 1746, the Guangdong-Guangxi Governor General, Ce Leng, memorializing on the abolition of a native police chief (*tu xunjian*) in one of the fortress settlements

(*zhai*) in Guishun, noted that the Cen-surname police chief had died without heirs, the end of nine generations of single descent. (*Zhen'an fuzhi* 1892 2:32a-b) That fact was very convenient for him, for there being no claimant to the post, he faced no opposition to his proposal. Set in context, genealogy tracing would seem to have consisted of noting multiple lines of descent in the early episodic stages of lineage legends to weave inter-settlement connections, but single-line within individual settlement. This would have been rather typical of unilineal descent genealogies being traced backward (X is the son of Y, is the son Z, etc.) An examination of the Cen genealogy as preserved should reveal the pattern: single lines were traced except for ancestors designated as *tusi*. This was a record of succession which facilitated Ming administration.

We can hypothesize that for most of the Ming and Qing, most of the people subjected to the *tusi* had no genealogy. Practically none had as much as an ancestral grave. In that situation, the sense of state and community would have been traced via the *tusi's* single line of descent to the head of the line who was the first to have been appointed *tusi*. A challenge to legitimacy by appointment would, therefore, reasonably have been exercised by predicating an earlier *tusi* from whom the head of the line had seceded. The people who could do so had indeed established their own legitimacy for a connection to the state, at the cost of internalising the imperial logic which argued that authority had to emanate from the centre.



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Glossary	
Biao	彪
Ce Leng	策楞
Cen Naiqing	岑乃青
Cen Tianbao	岑天保
Cen Yongfu	岑永福
Cen	岑
Ceng Meng	岑猛
chuhai jing	除害经
dong	峒
dongzhu	峒主
E'ertai	鄂尔泰
Feng Zicai	冯子材
fuji	扶箕
<i>gaitu guiliu</i>	改土归流
guan	官
Guangfu	广福
Guo Qianshan	郭谦山
He Fuxiang	何福祥
hu	虎
Huang Zehong	黄泽宏
<i>jia</i>	甲

Jiang Huai-wu	蒋槐午
Ke Shun	克顺
Langjiayu	郎家墟
<i>li</i>	里
Liu Yongfu	刘永福
Luo Fugao	罗福杲
Luo Weixiang	骆为香
Nong Zhigao	依智高
Pangu	盘古
she	社
shenren	神人
shenxian	神仙
Shi Xuechong	石学重
<i>sui</i>	岁
tang	堂
ting	亭
tingzhang	亭长
tongjing boshi	通经博士
<i>tu</i>	土
<i>tusi</i>	土司
tuxunjian	土巡检
Wang Shilin	王士林

Wen Tianxiang	文天祥
Wu Yazhong	吴亚终
Xing Fu	兴福
yamen	衙门
Yanling	延龄
zhai	寨
Zhang San	张三
Zhang Tianzong	张天宗
Zhang Yuan	张渊
zhong	众