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THE EARLY-QING DISCOURSE ON LOYALTY

史 Wing-ming Chan 陳永明

The drastic shift of the Mandate of Heaven in seventeenth-century China provoked an identity crisis among the Chinese literati and forced them to reconsider their socio-political role in an era of dynastic change. Under the influence of Neo-Confucianism, from the time of the Song dynasty (960–1279), the principle of loyalty that emphasized officials' absolute submission to the throne had gradually come to dominate intellectual discourse concerning the emperor-minister relationship.¹ As a result of imperial indoctrination, the demand upon the ruled to observe the principle of loyalty was further intensified and it became an orthodox ideology governing the behavior of scholar-officials during the Ming (1368–1644).² Notwithstanding late-Ming criticisms of the political misrule resulting from despotism,³ it was generally believed that loyalty, as one of the important Confucian virtues, was the most essential moral quality of an official.⁴ It was not until the downfall of Ming order and the establishment of Qing (1644–1911) rule in 1644 that this Confucian faith shared by the Chinese, in particular by the Han literati, underwent a severe ordeal.

In the past decades, the impact of Ming–Qing dynastic change on the formation of Qing thought drew the attention of scholars of Qing intellectual history.⁵ For instance, a number of historians have attempted to examine how and to what extent the social milieu of seventeenth-century China contributed to the founding of Qing scholarship.⁶ Apart from the interrelation

² Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 (1672–1755) et al., comp., *Mingshi* [History of the Ming dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), *juan* 289, p.7407, and Abe Takeo, *Shindai shi no kenkyū* [Studies on Qing history] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1971), pp.48–51.

³ *Wanli dichao* [Capital bulletin of the Wanli period], reprint ed. (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling Guji Keyinshe, 1991), vol.3, *juan* 卷 6, Wanli year 45, month 10, pp.2383–8, and *Wanli qijuzhu* [The Wanli diaries of activities and repose] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 1988), vol.9, Wanli year 36, month 7, pp.86–9, 947–50.

⁴ As Chen Hanming observes, the influence of loyalism on the late-Ming politics was fully reflected in the Donglin 東林 movement. Criticizing administrative abuse the Donglin elite blamed the eunuch faction in the court instead of the emperor and, faced with political persecution, most of them were prepared to die for their loyalty for the throne. See Chen's analysis in *Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi: Sui Tang Song Yuan Ming Qing juan* [History of Chinese political thought: the Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing periods] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), pp.597–8.

⁵ Wang Chengmian, "Mingmo shidafu zhi jueze—lun jinnian Ming–Qing zhuanjie shiqi zhi yanjiu" [The choices of late-Ming scholar-officials: on recent studies of the Ming–Qing transition], *Shibuo yuekan fukan* 15.9–10 (April 1986): 435–45.

⁶ Hou Wailu, *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* [A general history of Chinese thought], /●VER

¹ For a discussion on the changing concept of loyalty of the Song, see Wang Gung-wu, "Feng Tao: an essay on Confucian loyalty," in *Confucianism and Chinese civilization*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp.188–210. See also James T. C. Liu, "Yüeh Fei (1103–41) and China's heritage of loyalty," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31.2 (Feb. 1972): 291–7; Kwang-ching /Liu, "Socioethics as orthodoxy: a perspective," in *Orthodoxy in late imperial China*, ed. Kwang-ching Liu (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990), pp.90–100; and Richard Davis, *Wind against the mountain: the crisis of politics and culture in thirteenth-century China* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), pp.5–25.

/vol.5 (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1956), pp.3–36; Yamanoi Yu, *Min-Shin sbisōshi no kenkyū* [Studies on Ming–Qing thought] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1980), pp.250–66; Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China: ethics, classic, and lineage discourse* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp.44–97.

⁷ Zhang Binglin's 章炳麟 (1869–1936) perspective on Southern Ming history is a typical example of the nationalist approach. For a discussion of Zhang's Southern Ming studies, see Lauko Laitinen, *Chinese nationalism in the late Qing dynasty: Zhang Binglin as anti-Manchu propagandist*, in Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 57 (London: Curzon Press, 1990), pp.81–9.

⁸ See Ian McMorran (Mai Mulun 麥穆倫), “Ming–Qing dingge zhi ji zhongjun kao” [Research on loyalty in the Ming–Qing transition], trans. Cheng Wei, in *Faguo Hanxue* [Sinology in France], vol.1, ed. Denys Lombard and Li Xueqin (Beijing: Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 1996), pp.46–56.

⁹ Hilary J. Beattie, “The alternative to resistance: the case of T'ung-ch'eng, Anhwei,” in *From Ming to Ch'ing, conquest, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, ed. Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven, Conn. & London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp.239–76; Frederic Wakeman, *The great enterprise: the Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth century China* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), pp.267–90; 415–47; 640–6; Wakeman, “Localism and loyalty during the Ch'ing conquest of Kiangnan: the tragedy of Chiang-yin,” in *Conflict and control in late imperial China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1975), pp.43–85; Ho Koon-piu, “Should we die as martyrs to the Ming cause?—scholar-officials' views on Martyrdom during the Ming–Qing transition,” *Oriens Extremus* 37.2 (1994): 123–51; and He Guanbiao (Ho Koon-piu), *Sbeng yu si: Mingji sbidafu de jueze* [Life or death: choices of the late-Ming literati] (Taipei: Lianjing Chuban Shiye Gongsii, 1997), pp.15–22.

¹⁰ McMorran, “Ming–Qing dingge zhi ji zhongjun kao,” pp.53–4.

between socio-political development and academic activities, the response of Han literati to the Manchu invasion and conquest has also aroused considerable discussion in the field. Various approaches and different perspectives have been introduced to explain the moral choices of individuals, especially the martyrs and loyalists, in a momentous period of dynastic transition. Recent research findings derived from a modern interpretation of the available sources not only bring new insights to the study of the complicated mentality of the educated class but also deepen our understanding of cultural development in late imperial China. Although some of these findings may require further examination, on the whole they have refuted the biased arguments that were advanced by the nationalist historians and that prevailed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁷

In his study of loyalism in the Ming and Qing periods, Ian McMorran has classified traditional Chinese loyalism into two categories: “absolute loyalism” and “rational loyalism.” The former stresses the absolute supremacy of the ruler and the total submission of his subjects, while the latter emphasizes a “conditional” ruler–ruled relation based on the correct principles of government. By analyzing the words and deeds of the well-known historical figures, he further suggests that as a result of indoctrination, the idea of absolute loyalism retained its dominance in Chinese thought during the Ming–Qing transitional period in spite of the widespread criticism of late-Ming misrule.⁸ In contrast to this assertion, many recent findings have indicated that during the Manchu invasion, collaboration rather than resistance was a popular choice among Han scholar-officials.⁹ However, citing Wei Xi's 魏禧 (1624–81) writing on revanchism, McMorran argues that the former Ming officials' compromise with the Manchus after the fall of Beijing in 1644, at least to some contemporaries, could be considered an alternative to revenge for the Ming dynasty on the late-Ming rebels.¹⁰ To a large extent, McMorran's argument is problematic though “revenge for the Ming” was one of the collaborators' justifications for their deeds and it was usually mentioned in the Manchu propaganda for their invasion. On the one hand, whether collaboration with the alien regime in the name of avenging the defunct dynasty was generally accepted as an act of loyalty is highly debatable. Up to now, no available source suggests that Wei's ideas had any influence on the early-Qing discourse on loyalty. On the other hand, the argument also ignores the fact that to many Han Chinese of the time, the submitting Ming officials were responsible for the total failure of the resistance movement headed by the princes of Ming lineage.

When the resistance movement collapsed in 1662, living as an eremite was the only alternative for those loyalists who identified themselves as Ming “remnants” (*yimin* 遺民) and refused to compromise with the new government. In the discussion of Ming *yimin*, most historians have noted the classification proposed by Frederick Mote in his study of the eremites in the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). According to Mote, there were two types of Confucian eremitism in Chinese tradition: “compulsory” and “voluntary.”

While compulsory eremitism was imposed as a moral duty in the name of loyalty on the survivors of a fallen dynasty, voluntary eremitism was an individual decision taken for personal reasons.¹¹ Mote's assertion is not an innovation as since the early Kangxi 康熙 (1663–1722) period, Qing scholars who were interested in the official Ming history project had seriously criticized the previous biographies of hermits (*yinyi zhuan* 隱逸傳) in the so-called standard histories for mixing up loyalist *yimin* with those Taoist hermits, advancing the opinion that in the *Ming History* that was being compiled, biographies of the former should be separated from those of the latter and placed in a new category entitled *yimin zhuan* 遺民傳, “‘remnant’ bio-graphies”.¹² The differentiation between compulsory and voluntary eremitism in early Qing history is significant, especially in the discussion of the Han literati's response to Qing rule, but sometimes, the line between these two categories is not clear, and in some cases it is hard to tell whether an individual's decision to live in seclusion was definitely a political or just a personal choice of life-style. Willard Peterson has pointed out that at least two kinds of hermits should be excluded from classification as loyalist *yimin*. Firstly, for those “who had retired before the fall of the Ming after repeated failure in the examinations or from a preference for private rather than public life,” their eremitism might come from personal considerations and have nothing to do with their political stance. In addition, there were early-Qing figures who had never served the Ming dynasty and their abstention from the new government was simply due to “a parent's having died for the Ming cause.” In this sense, eremitism was an act of filial piety rather than an expression of loyalty to the preceding ruling house.¹³

From a historical perspective, the political sentiment of the *yimin* is exceedingly complicated and except for a small number of hard-liners, the attitude of these loyalists toward the new regime did not remain unchanged in the first few decades after the establishment of Qing authority in Beijing in 1644. The socio-cultural development of the new empire and the proper government policies, which contributed to Manchu–Han reconciliation, accounted for the loyalists' changing view on the legitimacy of Qing rule. Until the mid-Kangxi period, there were diehard Ming loyalists who adhered to their anti-Qing stance by emphasizing the ethnic difference between the Han Chinese and the Manchus.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the majority of the *yimin* witnessed a period of socio-economic recovery resulting from Qing rule, which presented a great contrast to the chaos of the Ming society they had experienced. It is important to note that despite personally refusing to cooperate with the Qing, most of them did not oppose their descendents' attending civil examinations and serving the new court.¹⁵ The early Qing Sinification was highly selective but it is undeniable that the Manchu rulers' patronage of Chinese cultural activities “gradually eroded Han Chinese resistance and encouraged support of the dynasty.”¹⁶ This was evinced in the changing attitude of the prestigious and influential *yimin*, such as Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–95) and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–82), who insisted

¹¹ See Mote, “Confucian eremitism in the Yüen period,” in *The Confucian persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp.208–9.

¹² Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705–55), *Jieqi-ting ji* [Collected writings from the Jieqi Pavilion] (Taipei: Huashi Chubanshe, 1977), vol.2, *waibian* 外編, *juan* 42, p.1299.

¹³ Peterson, “The life of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682),” part 1, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968): 144.

¹⁴ Ian McMorran, “The patriot and the partisans: Wang Fu-chih's involvement in the politics of the Yung-li court,” in *From Ming to Ch'ing*, pp.134–66; Thomas Fisher, “Accommodation and loyalism: the life of Lü Liu-liang (1629–1683),” parts 1–3, *Papers on Far Eastern History* 15 (1977): 97–104; 16 (1977): 107–145; 18 (1978): 1–42.

¹⁵ Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi* [Chinese intellectual history in the last three hundred years] (Shanghai: Shanghai Yinshuguan, 1937), vol.1, Preface, pp.1–2.

¹⁶ Evelyn Rawski, *The last emperors: a social history of Qing imperial institutions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), p.6.

¹⁷ The cases of Huang and Gu will be discussed in the third part of this paper.

¹⁸ Zhang Erqi, *Hao'an ji* [Collection of writings from a wormwood house] (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1991), Annex, p.266.

¹⁹ Lynn Struve, "Ambivalence and action: some frustrated scholars of the K'ang-hsi period," in *From Ming to Ch'ing*, pp.321–65.

on their status as Ming subjects but gave tacit consent to the legitimacy of Qing rule in the later part of their life.¹⁷ Zhang Erqi's 張爾岐 (1612–78) regret for not taking office due to his moral obligation to the preceding dynasty, to a certain extent, also reveals an aspect of the complex mentality of the Ming *yimin* in the early Qing.¹⁸

Unlike the *yimin*, those Han Chinese who grew up in the first few decades of the Qing dynasty bore no moral obligation to the fallen Ming and most of them found little difficulty in identifying themselves as Qing subjects. To them, the Manchus were no longer invaders but rulers of "All under Heaven" and the Qing house was the only legitimate authority of their time. Like their predecessors in previous dynasties, these Qing subjects considered serving as an official in government a normal career pattern for the educated elite and did not see any problem in taking office under a Sinicized alien regime. Of course, this is not to say that the history of resistance had no influence on them. It is evident from the oral and written accounts of the Ming survivors that history had left its impress on the minds of the Qing Chinese. The moving deeds of the late-Ming martyrs, who were regarded as the embodiment of Confucian virtue, won the heartfelt sympathy of the public, though the anti-Qing nature of the resistance movement prevented its participants from gaining official recognition from the new government during the Shunzhi 順治 (1644–62), Kangxi, and Yongzheng 雍正 (1723–35) periods. As a result of the imperial denial of Southern Ming history, many early-Qing scholars suffered psychological discomfort caused by a hidden tension between a desire to recognize the Qing legitimacy and sympathy with the late-Ming loyalists and, until the late seventeenth century, there was an ambivalent feeling among the Han literati.¹⁹ The disagreement between political and cultural identities required reconciliation and eventually elicited a discourse on how to interpret the deeds of the Ming martyrs from the perspective of Qing subjects, which brought increasing pressure to bear on the Qing house to review its official policy of evaluating the Southern Ming martyrs in the mid-Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–95).

With reference to the written works of the historical figures concerned, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the early-Qing discourse of the Han literati in regard to the Confucian teachings of loyalty, especially in relation to the personal ethics of being a scholar-official, and to see how these traditional Chinese ideas were interpreted and applied by their believers in different times. Within this discourse, the statements of three social groups are worth noting, namely the collaborators, the Ming loyalists, and the Qing subjects. Their statements not only account for a complex interweave resulting in the formation of the Qing concept of loyalty but also reflect the dialectic relationship between individuals and their historical context.

Collaborators and Early-Qing Public Opinion

During the conquest period, Neo-Confucian teachings on loyalty were tested by the challenges of social disintegration and alien invasion. Faced with ceaseless Southern Ming (1644–62) factionalism and successive Manchu military victories, many Chinese literati found themselves in an acute dilemma of conflicting values: should they uphold Confucian principles and cleave to the disintegrating empire at any cost or collaborate with the invading alien dynasty and thereby help avoid unnecessary bloodshed and bring an end to the disorder of the late Ming? Making a decision was no easy task and either choice required ethical justification, which would reflect one's social responsibilities and moral obligations.

The consideration of the large number of Ming scholar-officials who submitted to the Manchus during the conquest period of 1644–62 has recently led historians to note the discrepancy between theoretical ideal and historical reality in an epoch of general crisis. According to the Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucian teachings, the monarch-minister relationship that stresses the unquestioning loyalty of the latter to the former is the chief component of the “Three Cardinal Bonds” (*san gang* 三綱) and “Five Human Relationships” (*wu lun* 五倫) which embody “Heavenly Principles” (*tianli* 天理), and under no circumstances should these supposedly fixed relationships be ignored.²⁰ Ironically, in contrast to this doctrine of loyalism, when Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606–45) seized Beijing in April 1644, most of the Ming officials in the northern capital surrendered themselves to the rebels and even took office in the new court.²¹ As soon as the Manchus established the Qing dynasty after defeating Li in the same year and conquered the south in the following two decades, the vast majority of the social élite chose to accept and collaborate with the alien regime.²² The political realignment of these former Ming subjects considerably shaped the history of the Ming–Qing transition and remains an interesting topic for the study of early-Qing thought.

Wan Sitong 萬斯同 (1638–1702), a prominent early-Qing historian, was disappointed by the fact that in spite of a long period of government indoctrination, the moral consciousness of the literati in the late Ming was deeply affected by the social environment and, when in dire straits, it was extremely difficult to expect the majority to observe moral principles.²³ For those Chinese who experienced the historical catastrophes caused by wars and rebellions, the mid-seventeenth century was indeed a period in which “the heavens split and the earth cracked open.”²⁴ The upheaval not only destroyed public order but also resulted in moral disintegration in the society. In the face of human disaster, the orthodox Neo-Confucian ideology of loyalty eventually lost its dominance. It is understandable that in response to the Manchu advance, individual survival, personal career opportunities, and

²⁰ Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–85) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), *Er Cheng ji* [Collected works of the two Chengs (Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi)] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), vol.1, *juan* 2a, p.43, and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), *Zbuziyulei* [Categorized words of Master Zhu], ed. Lijingde (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), vol.2, *juan* 24, pp.599–600.

²¹ According to Ji Liuqi 計六奇 (b. 1622), of those scholar-officials who were in Beijing, twenty committed suicide while about four thousand surrendered. See Ji Liuqi, *Mingji beilüe* [An outline of the northern Ming] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), *juan* 20, p.472, pp.473–5, 481–2; *juan* 21a, pp.503–48; and *juan* 22, pp.598–641. See also Wu Han, comp., *Cha oxian Li chao shiluzhongde Zhongguo shiliao* [Sources on Chinese history in the Veritable Records of the Korean Yi dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980), vol.9, pp.3735–7.

²² As Martin Martino (1614–61), the Italian Jesuit who visited China in the mid-seventeenth century, observes, the Chinese in the south did not at first refuse to cooperate with the Manchu regime, the local resistance movement later being incited by the government hair-cutting order. See *Bellum Tartaricum, or the conquest of the great and most renowned empire of China*, English trans. (London: John Crook, 1654), p.127.

²³ *Sbiyuan wenji* [Writings from a stone garden], in Zhang Shouyong (1876–1945), comp., *Siming congshu di si ji* [Zhejiang collectanea, series four] (Siming Zhangshi Yueyuan Kanben, 1936), *juan* 5, pp.3b–4a.

²⁴ The Chinese terms *tian beng di lie* 天崩地裂, *tian beng di xian* 天崩地陷, and *tian beng di jie* 天崩地解 were widely employed by early-Qing writers to describe the social disintegration during the Ming–Qing transition. Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–92), *Wang Chuanshan shi wenji* [Collected prose and poetry of Wang Fuzhi] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), vol.1, *wenji wenji* 文集, *juan* 2, 28. Huang Zongxi, *Mingru xue'an*, in *Huang Zongxi quanji* [Complete works of Huang Zongxi], ed. Wu Guang et al., vol.8 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1992), *juan* 60, p.838.

²⁵ For example, in defense of his decision to surrender to the rebels in 1644, Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1616–73) said that he originally planned to die for the Ming cause but his concubine did not allow him to do so. *Mingji beilüe*, *juan* 22, p.631.

²⁶ Li Tiangen, *Juehuo lu* [Record of a torch] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1984), vol.2, *juan* 10, p.478.

²⁷ Ji Liuqi, *Mingji nanlüe* [An outline of the southern Ming (regimes) of the Ming dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), *juan* 4, pp.231–2.

²⁸ He Guanbiao, “Lun Ming *yimin* zhi chuchu” [On the issues for Ming survivors of taking office or withdrawing from the public], in *Mingmo Qingchu xueshu sixiang yanjiu* [Studies of Ming–Qing transition thinking] (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 1991), pp.53–124, at 90–5. As John Langlois points out, the Chinese elite in the early Qing found in culturalism a justification for serving the alien regime. See Langlois, “Chinese cultural-ism and the Yuan analogy: seventeenth-century perspectives,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40 (1980): 355–98. The Chinese elite’s acceptance of the Mongol rule in China during 1279–1368 may provide useful analogies to the understanding of the Qing case. For discussions of the Yuan case, see Langlois, “Political thought in Chin-hua under Mongol rule,” in *China under Mongol rule*, ed. John D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp.137–85; Wang Mingsun, *Yuan dai de shiren yu zhengzhi* [Scholar-officials and politics of the Yuan dynasty] (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 1992), pp.275–94; 309–22; Xiao Gongqin, “Lixue yu Yuan dai zhengzhi” [Neo-Confucianism and Yuan politics], in *Xiao Gongqin ji* [Collected works of Xiao Gongqin] (Harbin: Heilongjiang Chubanshe, 1995), pp.437–58; and Yao Shuyi, *Yuan dai wenrenxintai* [The mentality of Yuan literati] (Beijing: Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe, 1993), pp.13–101.

²⁹ After the Qianlong period, Chinese historians, influenced by the official interpretation of the conquest history, were convinced by the affirmation that political realignment in the dynastic transition was an immoral action condemned by the public. Even in the twentieth century, the Marxist-nationalist historians also tend to adopt such a viewpoint. Xie Guozhen’s 謝國楨 (1901–82)

family safety were factors affecting the political choices of the collaborators.²⁵ However, it is an oversimplification to conclude that their collaboration was nothing more than a pursuit of self-interest.

The rationale for the collaboration of Han Chinese with the Manchus was complicated. In defense of their decision to surrender to the Qing in 1645, Zhao Zhilong 趙之龍 (d.1654), the Southern Ming count, and his colleagues in Nanjing argued the following:

Are there any of our governors-general who are not loyalists and filial sons? [Yet, we] know that this [the collapse of the Ming dynasty] is Heaven’s Will and nothing can be done about it. Surrendering to those who have the Mandate of Heaven to save millions of lives [from wars] is what benevolent gentlemen with lofty ideals should do and what great men consider when making their choices.²⁶

Regardless of whether these were the true motives behind the collective action of Zhao and his followers, to a certain extent “following Heaven’s Will” and “working for the best interests of the people” provided sound arguments for the Han Chinese to justify their compromise. These rationalizations implied that in a time of cataclysm, the welfare of the people should always be placed ahead of any political principle. In most cases, the political choices of the collaborators were a mixture of private and public considerations. At least, apart from self-interest, one of their concerns was how to save the society from violent wars. Disappointed in the corrupt Southern Ming regimes and their unruly forces, many local elite came to believe that collaboration with the new authorities was the only way to end the calamity and quickly restore social order.²⁷ Moreover, from a culturalist perspective, some true believers in Confucianism might also have regarded their service to the newly-founded polity to be a means to educate the “barbarians” into developing an appreciation for Confucian values and thereby facilitate the conversion of the alien rulers to the Chinese way of rule.²⁸

Although later, following the high Qing, the collaborators were generally criticized, or even condemned, for their disloyalty to the Ming, it is a misconception that their attitude of compromise had garnered little support from the public at that time.²⁹ On the contrary, as we are going to discuss, the available materials indicate that during this turbulent period, collaboration, as a way to avoid wars and disorder, was an acceptable option, which was tolerated and even endorsed by the society at large. In addition to the huge number of collaborators in the conquest period, the contemporaries’ admiration for some collaborators’ contributions to social welfare also refuted the post-Qianlong perception that all collaborators in the dynastic transition were generally condemned by the public for their “shameless deeds.” For instance, Qiu Junsun 丘俊孫 (1606–86), who as county magistrate negotiated with the Qing troops and saved the people of Luhe 六合 county, Jiangsu, from a massacre after their surrender,³⁰ and Wang Zhonghui 王仲樞 (1599–1667), who successfully saved Gaotang county 高唐, Shandong, from war,³¹ were highly honored for their wisdom and benevolence. Nevertheless,

according to the epitaphs and biographies written by their contemporaries, Qiu and other former Ming officials like Zhu Jiazheng 朱嘉徵 (1602–84) and Fang Rujing 方如京 were admired by the public for their outstanding local services during the Qing.³²

The close association between some collaborators and the Ming loyalists further indicates that during the dynastic transition, people tended to take a sympathetic and relatively less dogmatic perspective in considering the moral deeds of those former Ming officials who involuntarily collaborated with the Qing government under political pressure. The post-1644 social networks of Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664) and Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609–72) provide two valuable case studies which reveal the attitudes of early-Qing literati toward these collaborators.

Qian Qianyi was a controversial figure who began his official career under the Ming and became an influential scholar-official in the mid-seventeenth century. When the Qing armies entered Nanjing in 1645, he surrendered himself to the Manchus and served the new regime in Beijing during 1646–47.³³ It was believed that his compromise might enable him “to defend fellow literati suspected of loyalist activities.”³⁴ Qian’s service in the Qing court was short-lived and after his submission, he retained certain connections with the resistance movement. Resigning from office, he retired to his home county, Changchu, Jiangsu, but was soon accused of assisting the resistance movement and was subsequently imprisoned in 1648.³⁵ Due to a lack of evidence, he was released from prison in the same year. This period of incarceration did not prevent him from keeping in touch with the Ming loyalists and he maintained these relationships until his death.³⁶ Consequently, despite his taint of collaboration,³⁷ Qian did not fail to win the friendship of men of moral integrity, including Huang Zongxi and Gui Zhuang 歸莊 (1613–73), who were the eminent loyalists of the time.³⁸

Wu Weiye was best known for his paintings and poems. He was a leader of the late-Ming literati and one of the founders of the literati grouping called the Fushe 復社 (Restoration Society).³⁹ Being a Ming official, he planned to

³⁵ Batai 巴泰 et al. comp., *Shizu Zhanghuangdi shilu* [Veritable records of the Shunzhi reign], in *Qingshilu* [Veritable records of the Qing dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985–87), vol.3, *juan* 38, Shunzhi year 5, month 4, p.307.

³⁶ The available sources concerning Qian’s involvement in the resistance movement are very limited. Yet, according to the investigation of Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969), Qian was involved in anti-Qing activities in South China during the late 1640s and early 1650s. See Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuan* [A separate biography of Liu Rushi] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1980), vol.3, pp.882–1197.

³⁷ Wakeman asserts that by 1646, “Qian Qianyi’s reputation for personal compromise was notorious” (Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, vol.2, p.718). This assertion is subject to debate. According to the research findings of Xie Zhengguang, in spite of the criticism of his collaboration, Qian in fact retained his reputation in the society before the Kangxi period. See Xie, “Tanglun Qingchu shiwen dui Qian Qianyi pingjia zhi zhuanbian” [A study of the changing appraisals of Qian Qianyi as reflected in early-Qing poetry], *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 21 (1990): 261–70.

³⁸ Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.1 (1985), pp.374–5, and Gui Zhuang, *Gui Zhuang ji* [Collected works of Gui Zhuang] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1982), vol.2, *juan* 8, pp.470–2.

³⁹ For the political activities of Fushe, see Xie Guozhen, *Ming-Qing zhibi dang she yundong kao* [Research on factual movements in the Ming–Qing transition] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982), pp.119–52, and William Atwell, “From education to politics: the Fushe,” in *The unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp.333–65. The Fushe was highly related to the late-Ming Donglin 東林 movement. For a study of the Donglin movement, see Xie Guozhen, *Ming-Qing zhi ji dang she yundong kao*, and Heinrich Busch, “The Tung-lin Academy and its political and philosophical significance,” *Monumenta Serica* 14 (1949–55): 1–163; and Charles Hucker, *The Ming dynasty: its origins and evolving institutions* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1978), pp.132–62.

/Nanmingshilu [A brief history of the Southern Ming] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1957) is a typical example. For a criticism of this approach, see Lynn Struve, “Southern Ming history in twentieth-century China,” unpublished conference paper, International Conference on the History of the Ming-Ch’ing Period,” Hong Kong University, 1985, pp.1–67.

³⁰ Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10 (1993), pp.253–5. According to Huang, Wang retired from office after 1644.

³¹ Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10, pp.258–9.

³² Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10, pp.412–15, and Wei Xiangshu, *Hansong-tang quanji*, *juan* 8, pp.413–15.

³³ L. C. Goodrich and J. C. Yang, “Ch’ien Ch’ien-i,” in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch’ing period (1644–1912)*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (1884–1975) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943) [hereafter referred to as *Eminent Chinese*], vol.1, pp.148–50, and He Zhiqing, “Qian Qianyi,” in He Lingxiu and Zhang Jiefu, eds, *Qingdai renwu zhuangao* [Draft biographies of Qing figures], *shangbian* 上編, vol.6 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1991), pp.210–24.

³⁴ Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, vol.1, pp.595–6.

⁴⁰ Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji* [Complete works of Wu Meicun (Wu Weiye)] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), vol.3, *juan* 57, p.1132. To some historians, Wu's account was just an "after-the-fact rationalization." See Sun Kekuan, "Wu Meicun beixing qianhou shi" [The poetry of Wu Meicun (Weiye) before and after his journey north], in *Guoli zhongyang tushubuguan guankan* 7.1 (Mar.1974): 3–13, and Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp.934–42.

⁴¹ Tu Lien-che, "Wu Wei-yeh," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, pp.882–3, and *Qingdai renwu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.6, pp.233–43.

⁴² Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, vol.1, *juan* 10, p.260; *juan* 15, p.398; *juan* 16, p.428; vol.2, *juan* 20, p.531; *juan* 22, p.585; vol.3, and *juan* 57, p.1132.

⁴³ Feng Qiyong and Ye Junyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu* [A chronological biography of Wu Meicun (Wu Weiye)] (Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1990), pp.278–547, and Tan Qian, *Beiyong lu* [Record of travels in the north] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960), *jiyou* 紀郵, pp.59–129; *jiwen* 紀文, pp.269–71. According to Quan Zuwang, Li Hongchu became a Buddhist monk in 1633 but he was associated with the resistance movement in Zhejiang during the Ming–Qing transition. Quan, *Jiqiting ji*, vol.1, *juan* 14, pp.176–7.

⁴⁴ Feng Qiyong and Ye Junyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp.542–5.

⁴⁵ Wang Yingkui 王應奎 (1683–1759/60), in *Liunan suibi* [Historical notes on Liunan] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju), *xubi* 續筆, *juan* 2, p.165, and Gong Wei 龔煒 (b.1704), *Chaolin biji* [Scholarly jottings from Chaolin] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), *juan* 3, p.76.

⁴⁶ For example, in early-Qing factionalism, the collaborators' personal histories always provided their political opponents with a handle against them. See *Shizu Zhanghuangdi sbilu*, in *Qing sbilu*, vol.3, *juan* 20, Shunzhi year 2, month 8, pp.176–7. According to Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727–1814), some collaborators tended to avoid mentioning their early life under the Ming. Zhao, *Yanpu zaji* [Miscellaneous notes made while airing (books) on eaves] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982), *juan* 2, p.39.

⁴⁷ *Shizu Zhanghuangdi sbilu*, in *Qing sbilu*, vol.3, *juan* 17, Shunzhi year 2, month 6, pp.150, 155.

⁴⁸ Although the exact number of Ming loyal-

take his own life when the Ming house fell in 1644 but was prevented from doing so by his mother. Owing to official pressure from Beijing, according to his own words, he took office under the Qing against his own will during 1654–57.⁴⁰ In 1657, on the occasion of his mother's death, he took the opportunity to resign and return home.⁴¹ As his later writings show, Wu deeply regretted having served the Qing and condemned himself for failing to uphold the principle of loyalty.⁴² Yet, his short-term service in the new court did little to influence to his friendship with Ming loyalists like Tan Qian 談遷 (1594–1658), and the Buddhist monk Jiqi 繼起 (Li Hongchu 李洪儲, 1604–72).⁴³ His confessional poetry also moved the literati of his time.⁴⁴

From the cases of Wu and Qian, it would appear that during the Shunzhi and early Kangxi periods, instead of rigidly applying Neo-Confucian moral principles, early-Qing scholars tended to adopt a humanistic approach in tackling the vexatious issue of loyalty. Of course, despite the public sympathy for their difficult situation, those former Ming officials who served in the Qing court could not escape from being commented on and pilloried by the moralists for betraying the previous dynasty.⁴⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the collaborators were usually ashamed of having served two dynasties.⁴⁶ It is important to note the political realignment of these "former ministers" (*jiuchen* 舊臣) later was also unacceptable to Qing state orthodoxy based on Neo-Confucian ethics though their collaboration had contributed significantly to the victory of the Manchus and the legitimacy of Qing rule, and during the dynastic transition had been recognized by the conquerors as an act according to "Heaven's Will" (*tianming* 天命).⁴⁷ Needless to say, when the Qing empire had completed its military conquest of China and moral restoration became central to the social agenda in the late seventeenth century, the collaborators' justifications for serving two dynasties no longer merited imperial recognition or popular support.

Ming Loyalists and Their Reflections upon Loyalism

Surrounded by a huge number of collaborators, the Ming loyalists were obviously a political minority. They formed only a small proportion of the Han Chinese population.⁴⁸ As Lynn Struve suggests, the term "Ming loyalist"

/ists may never be known, the available sources do provide some clues. According to the records of the *Qinding shengchao xunjie zhuchen lu* [Records of all officials (and subjects) who died out of loyalty to the fallen dynasty, authorized by the emperor (Qianlong)], comp. Shu Hede 舒赫德 [1710–77] et al. (Qianlong edition, repr. Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1969), and the *Ming yimin zhuangji suoyin* [Index of the biographies of Ming *yimin*], ed. Xie Zhengguang (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1992),

/the number of Ming martyrs was about three thousand seven hundred while the number of Ming *yimin* was about two thousand. See also He Guanbiao, *Sheng yu si: Mingji sbidafu de jueze*, pp.15–28.

⁴⁹ Lynn Struve, "Ambivalence and action," p.327.

⁵⁰ The available sources indicate that some of the anti-Qing activists took part in the resistance movement due to political ambition and personal interest rather than loyalism. See the biographies of "Twice-serving Ministers" and

should apply only to those who “pointedly altered his or her life patterns and goals to demonstrate unalterable personal identification with the fallen order.”⁴⁹ By this definition, not all anti-Qing activists can be classified in this category. At least, those political opportunists who joined the resistance movement out of personal ambition should be excluded.⁵⁰

Unlike the collaborators, the staunch loyalists insisted upon the principle of loyalty in the historical tragedy of the Ming demise.⁵¹ They firmly refused to give up their pro-Ming stance in spite of the fact that their desperate struggle for the restoration of the dynasty proved fruitless because neither could it prevent the Ming empire from disintegrating nor could they save themselves from a tragic fate.⁵² Apart from those participating in the Ming restoration movement, a number of loyalists offered their resistance in the form of martyrdom for the Ming cause⁵³ or by withdrawing from active public life in order to avoid collaboration with the conquerors.⁵⁴ Despite employing different ways to defend the same principle, all of them paid a high price for their Confucian faith. During the years 1645–62, many loyalist activists involved in anti-Manchu activities were arrested and executed by the Qing. Those who were lucky enough to escape death or imprisonment fled their home counties. Moreover, when the Southern Ming forces were finally crushed and Qing rule was consolidated, to express their unshakable loyalty to the preceding dynasty and to signify a form of passive resistance to alien domination, the Ming survivors, who were usually known as the Ming “remnants” or *yimin*,⁵⁵ had no option but to renounce their former gentry status and official careers. Refusing any possibility of compromise or cooperation with the newly-established authorities, some became peasants, pedlars, or medicine men while others chose to live as Taoist hermits or Buddhist monks in order to escape harassment by the new regime.⁵⁶

In memory of the history of resistance and its martyrs, many loyalists in their retirement began to recount Southern Ming events based on their personal experiences and other available sources. From the mid-seventeenth until the second decade of the eighteenth century, except for the eight-year Oboi 驚拜 regency of 1661–69, which represented the most extreme expression of Manchu-oriented rule, the Qing government adopted a lenient state policy toward these writings on Southern Ming history.⁵⁷ This provided

/central China may serve as case studies of their activities. See Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists: Confucian leadership and social change in seventeenth-century China* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.342–3, and Ono Kazuko, “Settō no rejisutansu” [The Zhedong resistance movement], in *Minmatsu Shinsbo no sbakai to bunka* [Society and culture of the late Ming and early Qing], ed. Ono Kazuko (Kyoto: Kyōtō Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1996), pp.61–104.

⁵³ According to *Qinding shengcbao xunjie zhuchen lu*, apart from those who were captured and executed by the Qing government, most of these people committed suicide when the Qing troops moved southward.

⁵⁴ Quan Zuwang, *Jieqiting ji, waibian* 外編, vol.2, *juan* 8, p.757.

⁵⁵ In the seventeenth century, the term *yimin* denoted those loyalists who remained loyal to the fallen dynasty. For the origin and development of the term, see He Guanbiao, “Lun Ming *yimin* zhi chuchu,” pp.102–5, n.2.

⁵⁶ Shao Tingcai 邵廷采 (1648–1711), *Sifutang wenji* [Collections of writings from a hall of reflection] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 3, pp.211–12; Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880–1971), *Mingji dian qian fojiao kao* [Research on late-Ming Buddhism in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1962), pp.200–62; and Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp.674–80. According to Wei Zuhui, some loyalists even fled mainland China and took refuge in Korea and Japan. See Wei Zuhui, “Ming *yimin* dong du shulie” [A brief account of the eastward migration of Ming survivors (to Japan)], *Mingsbi yanjiu luncong* [Symposium of studies on Ming history] 1 (1982): 152–72. For the biographies of Ming *yimin*, see Xie Zhengguang and Fan Jinmin, comp., *Ming Yiminlu huiji* [Compiled biographies of Ming *yimin*] (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue Chubanshe, 1995). For a case study of the life and thought of the Ming *yimin* after the resistance movement, see He Guanbiao, “Lun Ming *yimin* zhi chuchu,” pp.53–124.

⁵⁷ Lynn Struve, “Southern Ming history and Southern Ming historiography,” unpublished conference paper, International Conference on Southern Ming Historiography, Shanghai, 1991, pp.4–5.

“Traitors” compiled by Xu Zi 徐孳 (1810–62) in *Xiaotian jizhuan* [Biographies of (an era of) little prosperity] (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 1977), *juan* 63–4, pp.711–53.

⁵¹ Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608–47), *Chen Zilong wenji* [Collected works of Chen Zilong] (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1988), *juan* 9, pp.490–5; Zhang Jiayu 張家玉 (1615–47), *Zhang Jiayu ji* [Collected works of Zhang Jiayu] (Guangzhou: Guangdong Gaodeng Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1992), *juan* 3, pp.88–90;

/and Zhang Huangyan 張煌言 (1620–64), *Zhang Cangshui ji* [Collected works of Zhang Cangshui] (Shanghai: Guji Chubanshe, 1985), pp.2, 34, 50.

⁵² For an analysis of responses of the diehard Ming loyalists to alien invasion, see my article “Kangkai fu si yi, conrong jiu yi nan—lun Nanming zhuchen de jueze” [It is easier to die a hero’s death than to tread the path of virtue calmly—on the choices of the Southern Ming diehards], *Jiuzhou xuekan* 6.3 (Dec. 1994): 61–76. The resistance movements in

⁵⁸ A number of accounts of Southern Ming are extant. A considerable number of these come from *yimin*. See Xie Guozhen, *Zengding wan Ming shiji kao* [Studies on late-Ming histories, revised and enlarged edition] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1981). See also Xie Guozhen, *Ming-Qing biji tancong* [Collected conversations on Ming-Qing scholarly jottings] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1962), and Lynn Struve, "Uses of history in traditional Chinese society: the Southern Ming in Ch'ing historiography," PhD. diss., University of Michigan, 1974.

⁵⁹ Zha Jizuo 查繼佐 (1601–76), *Zuiwei lu* [The records that condemned me] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1986), *liezhuan* 列傳, *juan* 9, p.1466.

⁶⁰ For instance, Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630–96) was proud of his association with the Ming martyrs in Guangdong. Qu Dajun, *Huang Ming sichao chengren lu* [Records of martyrdom in the four imperial Ming courts], in Ye Gongchuo 葉恭綽 (1880–1968), comp., *Guangdong consbu di er ji* [Guangdong collectanea, series 2] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1947), vol.6, *juan* 8, 294b–5a, and vol.7, *juan* 10, 361b–2a. See also Ou Chu and Wang Guichen, eds, *Qu Dajun quanji* [Complete works of Qu Dajun] (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1996), vol.3, pp.157–9.

⁶¹ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.1, pp.410–14, and *Mingshi*, *juan* 245, pp.6360–4.

⁶² *Mingshi*, *juan* 255, pp.6573–92, and Earl Swisher, "Liu Tsung-chou," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.532–3.

⁶³ Quan Zuwang, *Jieqitingji*, vol.1, *juan* 11, pp.131–141; Tu Lien-che, "Huang Tsung-hsi," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.351–4; and Chen Zuwu, "Huang Zongxi," in He Lingxiu and Zhang Jiefu, *Qingdai renwu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.2 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), pp.376–86.

⁶⁴ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2 (1986), pp.1–110. For the discussion on the writing date of this work, see Wu Guang's article in the same volume, pp.550–4, and his *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo hui kao* [Collected monographs on Huang Zongxi's works] (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 1990), pp.89–92.

⁶⁵ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2, pp.111–208. See also Wu's discussion in the same volume, pp.554–73, and *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo hui kao*, pp.93–114.

a fairly open atmosphere and favorable conditions for the development of private historiography regarding the Ming–Qing transition. As a result, a number of primary accounts were compiled in the form of "rustic history" (*yesbi* 野史) or "scholarly jottings" (*biji* 筆記).⁵⁸ Influenced by the personal sentiments of the authors, these writings intentionally conveyed a sense of deep sorrow for the dynastic change and considerable respect for the resistance activists despite their eventual failure.⁵⁹ In some senses, the memory of the Ming martyrs and the glorification of their moral deeds also connoted a strong message of self-recognition, that is, the authors' self-affirmation of their own strenuous efforts in carrying out a mission to defend Confucian virtues during this "period of darkness."⁶⁰

Loyalist studies of Southern Ming history included their reflections on the causes of the Ming collapse and the Qing success. In examining the events of the past, they could not avoid such critical questions as: "Why did the resistance movement of 1644–62 fail despite the wholehearted support of the loyalists?" "Who should be held responsible for the disasters?" and, more importantly, "Why did the Ming empire lose the Mandate of Heaven?" As a result of their deep reflection, they were forced to conclude that late-Ming politics was indeed a conglomeration of court factionalism and administrative abuse, which eventually led to the fall of Beijing and the total failure of the Southern Ming resistance. Although "pernicious cliques" (*nidang* 逆黨) in the late Ming were usually blamed for demolishing the political order of the dynasty and corrupting the people's morals, the loyalists were also frustrated by the weak and incapable imperial rulership which directly gave rise to political chaos and opportunism. Thus, a complex sense of both love and hatred characterized their narratives of this history. I would suggest that the writings of Huang Zongxi and Wang Fuzhi reflect well the prevailing sentiments shared by most of the loyalist scholars.

Huang Zongxi was a native of Yuyao 餘姚, Zhejiang. He was the son of Huang Zunsu 黃尊素 (1584–1626), a victim of late-Ming political factionalism who was framed by his opponents and died in prison in 1626,⁶¹ and the student of Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578–1645), a noted and respected Neo-Confucian scholar, who committed suicide by fasting to death after the Qing troops occupied Nanjing.⁶² Under the influence of both his father and his teacher, Huang took part in the resistance activities of Nanjing and Zhejiang during 1645–49 but was deeply frustrated by the grim reality of the situation. As an active member of the highly-politicized literati society Fushe, he could not free himself from the factional politics of the Hongguang court in Nanjing. Soon, when Ruan Dacheng 阮大鍼 (1578–1646), the follower of the eunuch clique and political opponent of the Fushe, came to power in 1645, Huang was persecuted for his anti-Ruan stance and forced to flee for refuge. After the fall of Nanjing, he joined the Southern Ming Lu court in Zhejiang and served as the vice-president of the Censorate for three years. Realizing the hopelessness of the resistance movement and worried about the safety of his mother following the promulgation of a Qing order to arrest Ming loyalists

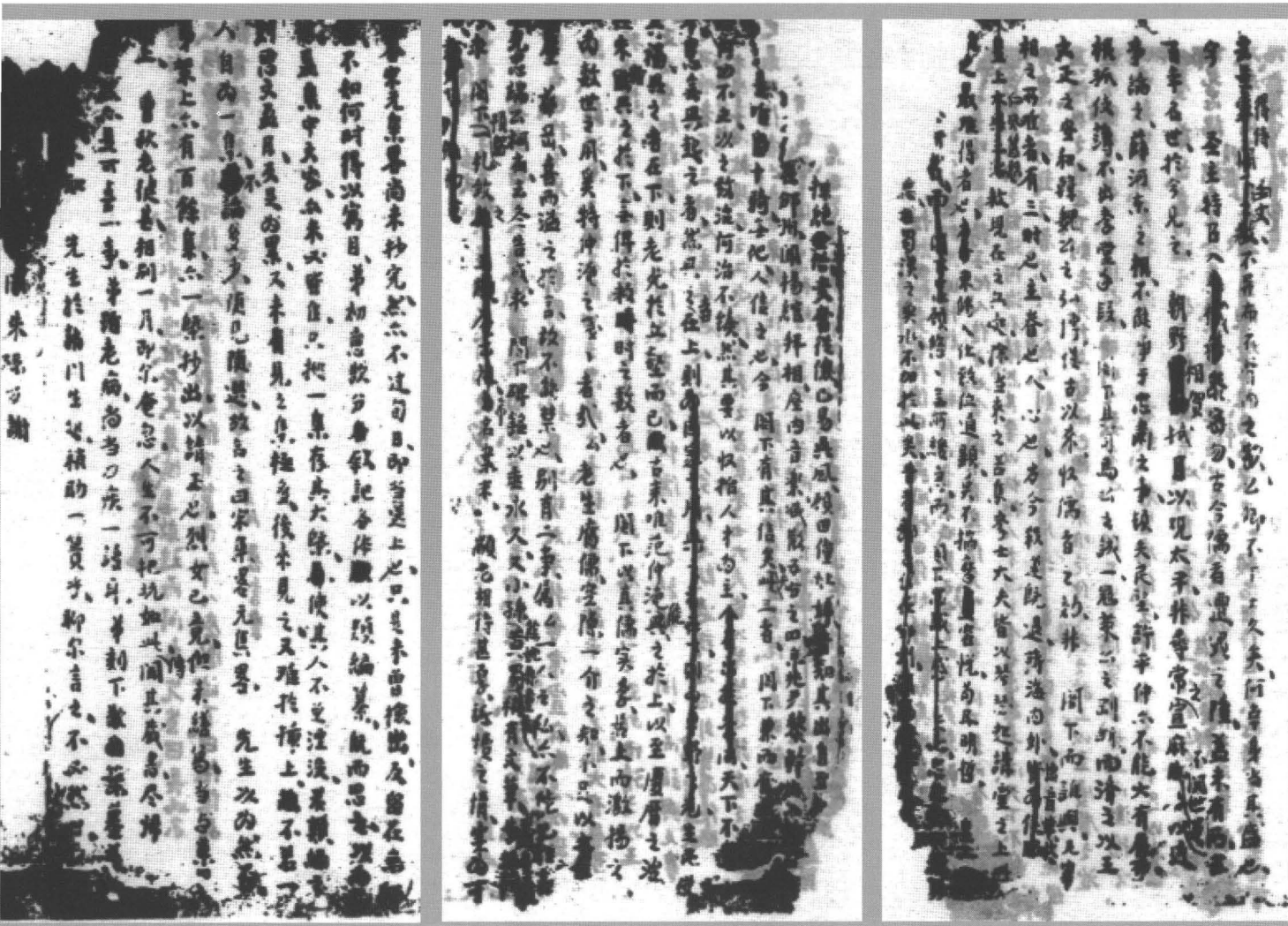
and their families, Huang decided to abandon his political activities and retired to his home county when the Lu regime came to an end in 1649.⁶³

During his retirement, Huang devoted much of his time to the study of Ming history and thought, compiling a large number of books on these topics. Among these were three works concerning the Southern Ming history, namely *Hongguangshiluchao* 弘光實錄鈔 (Copies of the Veritable Records of the Hongguang [Reign], 1658),⁶⁴ *Xingchao lu* 行朝錄 (Records of the Peripatetic Courts, c.1683),⁶⁵ and *Siju lu* 思舊錄 (Record of Thought about Past Acquaintances, 1692 or 1693).⁶⁶ These works aimed at preserving a reliable account of the history of the resistance. They clearly reflected the author's ambivalence in evaluating the performance of the Southern Ming regimes. On the one hand, Huang, from a pro-Ming perspective, had no doubt about the political legitimacy of the "peripatetic courts," though under

⁶⁶ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.1, pp.338–96. See also Wu's discussion in the same volume, pp.437–41, and *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo hui kao*, pp.79–88.

Figure 1

Letter from Huang Zongxi to Xu Qianxue, reflecting Huang's changing attitude toward the Qing house (from Wu Guang, ed., Huang Zongxi Nanlei zazu gao zhenji [Manuscripts of Huang Zongxi's miscellaneous writings] [Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1987], pp.159–61)



⁶⁷ *Xingcbao lu*, *juan* 2, in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2, p.125. Huang's pro-Ming perspective is obviously evinced in his using the Southern Ming chronology.

⁶⁸ Preface to *Hongguang shilu chao*, in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2, pp.1–2.

⁶⁹ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2, *juan* 1, p.121; *juan* 3, p.131; and *juan* 5, p.168.

⁷⁰ S. H. Ch'i, "Wang Fu-chih," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, pp.817–19; Chen Zuwu, "Wang Fuzhi," in *Qingdai renwuzhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.6, pp.267–79; and Ian McMorran, "The patriot and the partisans: Wang Fu-chih's involvement in the politics of the Yung-li court," in *From Ming to Ch'ing*, pp.133–66.

⁷¹ *Yongli shilu*, edited and annotated by Ou Jianhong, Chen Zhisen and Wang Chenmu (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1982), Editors' Preface, pp.1–2.

⁷² Xie Guozhen, *Zengding wan Ming shiji kao*, pp.527–37.

⁷³ Wang, *Du Tongjian lun* [treatise on reading the *Comprehensive Mirror*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), vol.2, *juan* 14, pp.431–2; *juan* 16, pp.539–40; vol.3; and *juan* 26, p.919.

⁷⁴ *Yongli shilu*, *juan* 22–3, pp.192–204.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, *juan* 24–6, pp.205–23.

⁷⁶ Zhang was the descendant of an eminent Shaoxing lineage. Before 1644, he enjoyed an extravagant life. Yet, after the fall of the Ming house, he became a hermit. He devoted the later part of his life to writing history of the Ming. See Zhang Dai, *Langxuan wenji* [Collected works from Heaven's library] (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1985), *juan* 1, pp.17–18; *juan* 4, pp.154–67; and *juan* 5, pp.199–201. See also Fang Chao-ying, "Chang Tai," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.53–4, and Lü Yingfan, "Zhang Dai," in Wang Sizhi, ed., *Qingdai renwuzhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.5 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1988), pp.321–5.

⁷⁷ Zhang Dai, *Sbiguisbu houji* [Writings stored in a stone case, continued] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), *juan* 5, pp.49–63. See also Zhang's *Langxuan wenji*, *juan* 3, pp.151–2.

⁷⁸ Over the past decades, early-Qing criticisms of late-Ming despotism have been much discussed by historians. See for example, Xiao Gongchuan's 蕭公權

the attack and pursuit of the Qing forces, they were short-lived and their activities confined to southeast China.⁶⁷ On the other hand, however, he could not deny that from its inception, the resistance movement was bound to fail due to its inherent corruption and the conflicts among its political factions.⁶⁸ While Huang whole-heartedly acknowledged the Southern Ming Longwu 隆武 Emperor (Zhu Yujian 朱聿鍵, 1623–62, r.1645–46) for his brilliance and respected the Ming martyrs for their courage and selflessness in fulfilling their commitments to the defunct dynasty, he also bitterly reproached traitors to the cause for their shameful behavior and severely criticized the Hongguang 弘光 Emperor (Zhu Yousong 朱由崧, 1607–46, r.1644–45) for his depraved and dissolute life.⁶⁹

Wang Fuzhi was descended from a respectable family of scholars in Hengyang 衡陽, Hunan. He obtained the degree of *juren* 舉人 in 1642, two years before Beijing fell to the rebels. Hopeful of restoring the Ming, he raised an army in Hengshan 衡山, Hunan, in late 1648 but was soon defeated by the Qing forces. He then joined the Ming remnants in Guangdong and Guangxi provinces and was appointed a junior official in the Yongli 永曆 (1647–61) court for several months. Shortly thereafter, Wang's efforts were frustrated by court factionalism and he came to realize that the situation was far from what he had hoped for. Faced with the witch-hunt launched by his political opponents and disappointed by court politics, he decided, in 1650, to withdraw from the anti-Qing movement and retired to live as a hermit in his native place.⁷⁰

In the later part of his life, Wang pursued his studies and wrote several books on Chinese philosophy and history. Most of these were not published until the late nineteenth century. Among them, a history entitled *Veritable Records of the Yongli [Reign]* (*Yongli shilu* 永曆實錄) and presented in an annals-biography (*ji zhuan* 紀傳) style was compiled between 1673 and 1678.⁷¹ The sources of this work were the author's personal experiences and materials he collected during his service in the court.⁷² The *Veritable Records* was dedicated to the memory of Prince Gui 桂 (Zhu Youlang 朱由榔), 1623–62, the Yongli Emperor, r.1646–62) and the anti-Qing activists at the Yongli court. Like the writings of Huang Zongxi, Wang's accounts commingled strong emotions of lament and indignation. By using the Yongli reign title in his chronology, Wang implied that the Southern Ming, rather than the Qing, was the legitimate government of China. This was consistent with the author's radical political stance, an uncompromising ethnocentrism opposed to any form of alien rule.⁷³ Nonetheless, although insisting upon the legitimacy of Yongli, he could not see any hope for its success. While praising his upright colleagues who devoted their lives to saving the dynasty,⁷⁴ Wang unsparingly condemned the corrupt cliques at court, who he indicated were to be blamed for the political deterioration suffered during the Yongli reign and the total collapse of the resistance movement in south China.⁷⁵

Compared with the writings of Huang and Wang, the criticisms of the Southern Ming regimes by Zhang Dai 張岱 (1579–1684?) were much more

radical. Zhang was a loyalist historian who served the Lu regime for two or three months in 1645. Losing his confidence in the Southern Ming regime, he abandoned his family properties in Shanyin 山陰, Zhejiang, and took to the mountains as a hermit.⁷⁶ Severely censuring Prince Fu 福 (the Hongguang Emperor) for his profligacy and other princes for their incompetent leadership, Zhang, in a famous work entitled *Sbiguisbu bouji* 石匱書後集 (Writings Stored in a Stone Case, Continued), reached the sad conclusion that the Ming dynasty fell in 1644 due to its loss of Heaven's blessing. He further affirmed that in spite of their desperate struggle, the Southern Ming courts were doomed to failure and none of them could claim to be a legitimate regime.⁷⁷

Notwithstanding the passion for the previous dynasty, loyalist criticism of the Ming house extended from the weak Southern Ming leadership to the autocratic Ming institutions and included a sweeping condemnation of Ming despotism, which was considered to be the historical root of the socio-political chaos following the Wanli 萬曆 period (1573–1619).⁷⁸ The abhorrence of autocratic rule was fully reflected in Huang Zongxi's critical work, *Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄 (Waiting for the Dawn).⁷⁹ In his discussion of the basic principles of humane governance, Huang, drawing arguments from the ancient Confucian principle that "all the world's goods are shared" (*tianxia wei gong* 天下爲公) and "the people are more important than the ruler" (*min gui jun qing* 民貴君輕),⁸⁰ indirectly criticizes the Ming autocrats:

In ancient times all-under-Heaven was considered the master, and the prince the servant. The prince spent his life working for all-under-Heaven. But now the prince is the master, and all-under-Heaven is but the servant. Because of the prince, no one can find peace and happiness anywhere. In order to get whatever he wants, he maims and slaughters all-under-Heaven and breaks up their families—all for the aggrandizement of his personal fortune. Without the least feeling of pity, the prince says, "I'm just establishing an estate for my descendants." Yet when he has established it, the prince still extracts the very marrow from people's bones, and takes away their sons and daughters to serve his own debauchery. It seems entirely proper to him. It is, he says, the interest on his estate. Thus the one who does the greatest harm in the world is the prince.⁸¹

After a comprehensive examination of the Ming political system, Huang says in his concluding remarks that "The origin of misrule under the Ming lay in the abolition of the prime ministership by [the founder] Gao Huangdi 高皇帝 (Taizu 太祖, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, 1328–98, r.1368–98)."⁸² The abolition of the prime ministership in 1380 marked the beginning of the Ming autocracy, placing as it did the power of government decision-making solely in the hands of the emperor.⁸³ This over-concentration of power gave the eunuchs, who increasingly gained access to the imperial house, an opportunity to seize absolute authority in periods of weak emperorship and allowed them to make use of their power to develop their connections with court factions.⁸⁴

This condemnation of despotism naturally led to a reconsideration of the ruler–minister relationship and challenged the Cheng–Zhu doctrine of absolute

/(1887–1981), *Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi* [A history of Chinese political thought] (Taipei: Zhongguo Wenhua Daxue Chubanshu, 1980), vol.2, pp.604–31, and William T. de Bary, "Chinese despotism and the Confucian ideal: a seventeenth-century view," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp.163–203. See also de Bary, "Introduction," in *Waiting for the dawn: a plan for the prince—Huang Tsung-hsi's Ming-i Tai-fang lu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.1–85.

⁷⁹ According to Wu Guang, this work was finished in 1663 and originally named *Dai fang lu*. See Wu's investigation in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.1, pp.422–7. See also Wu, *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo hui kao*, pp.1–10.

⁸⁰ As Xiao Gongchuan has noted, Huang was inspired by the ancient Confucian ideas of *Mengzi* 孟子 [Mencius] and *Shu jing* 書經 [The book of documents]. See Xiao, *Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi*, vol.2, p.607.

⁸¹ Huang Zongxi, *Mingyi daifang lu*, in *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.1, "Yuan jun" 原君, pp.2–3. The English translations are cited from William T. de Bary with modification. See de Bary, *Waiting for the dawn*, p.92.

⁸² Huang Zongxi, *Mingyi daifang lu*, "Zhi xiang" 置相, p.8, and de Bary, *Waiting for the dawn*, p.100. Lynn Struve, in her study of Huang Zongxi's thought, argues that Huang's ideas were mainly an intellectual legacy of prolific late-Ming thought. See Struve, "Mingyi daifang luyu Mingruxue'an de zai pingjia" [A re-evaluation of the *Mingyi daifang lu* and *Mingruxue'an*], trans. Teng Fu, in *Huang Zongxi lun: guoji Huang Zongxi xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* [On Huang Zongxi: Proceedings of the international conference on Huang Zongxi], ed. Wu Guang (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1987), pp.288–93. See also Ono Kazuko, *Minki tōsha kō: Tōrintō to Fukusha* [A study of the late-Ming factions: the Donglin Party and the Restoration Society] (Tokyo: Dōmyōsha, 1996), pp.291–8.

⁸³ Shen Shixing 申時行 (1535–1614) et al. comp., *Ming Huidian* [Collected statutes of the Ming dynasty] (1936; reprinted., Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1989), *juan* 2, p.3.

⁸⁴ Huang, *Mingyi daifang lu*, “Zhi xiang,” pp.8-9, and “Yanchen” 奄臣, pp.44-6. Obviously, Huang’s views had affected his student Wan Sitong and when Wan participated in the official Ming history project, these opinions were duly included in the *Mingshi*. See *Mingshi*, *juan* 72, pp. 1729-30. Of course, modern historians may not agree with Huang’s analysis. Henry Tsai, taking an institutional approach, argues that from its beginning, eunuchism was intentionally established as part of Ming monarchic absolutism and, in fact, the Ming eunuchs were both pawns and victims of that system. Henry Tsai, *The eunuchs in the Ming dynasty* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp.221-30.

⁸⁵ Huang, *Mingyi daifang lu*, “Yuanchen” 原臣, pp.4-5, and de Bary, *Waiting for the dawn*, pp.94-5.

⁸⁶ The rejection of absolute loyalism could also be found in the writings of other *yimin*. For example, Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-84) advances that belief the world is not the private property of the ruler. Besides, Fu suggests that a literatus should choose his own master and take office only when his political ideals can be implemented. See *Fu Shan quanshu* [Complete works of Fu Shan] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1991), vol.1, *juan* 38, p.724, and vol.2, *juan* 44, p.915.

⁸⁷ Gu was also an eminent *yimin* in the early Qing. For details of his biography, see Peterson, “The life of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682),” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968), part 1: 114-56, part 2: 201-47; Fang Chao-ying, “Ku Yen-wu,” in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.421-6; and Chen Zuwu, “Gu Yanwu,” in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.2, pp.352-64.

⁸⁸ Zhang Mu 張穆 (1805-49), *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* [A chronological biography of Gu Tinglin (Yanwu)], in *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu huibian* [Compiles chronological biographies of Gu Tinglin (Yanwu)] (Hong Kong: Chongwen Shudian, 1975), *juan* 3, p.258.

⁸⁹ Gu, *Yuanchaoben rizhi lu* [Original manuscript of a record of daily learning] (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe, 1979), *juan* 17, p.379. For a study of Gu’s political ideas, see Ku Wei-ying, “Ku Yen-wu’s ideal of the emperor: a cultural giant and political dwarf,” in *Imperial rulership and cultural change in*

loyalism. Huang, attempting to redefine the role of a minister, further argued that

The reason for ministership lies in the fact that the world is too big for one man to govern so governance must be divided up among officials. Therefore, when one goes forth to serve, it is for all-under-Heaven, not for the prince; and it is for all the people, not for one family. When one acts for the sake of all-under-Heaven and its people, one cannot agree to do anything contrary to the Way even if the prince explicitly forces one to do so And if it is not in keeping with the true Way, one should not even present oneself to the court—much less sacrifice one’s life for the ruler. To act solely for the prince and his dynasty, and attempt to anticipate the prince’s unexpressed whims or cravings is only what a eunuch or palace maid will do. “When the prince brings death and destruction upon himself, if one follows and does the same, one simply does what a mistress or some such favorite will do.” That is the difference between one who is a true minister and one who is not Whether there is peace or disorder in the world does not depend on the rise or fall of dynasty, but on the happiness or distress of the people If those who act as ministers ignore the “plight of the people,” then even if they should succeed in assisting their prince’s rise to power or follow him to final ruin, they will still be in violation of the true Way of the Minister.⁸⁵

In other words, Ming despotism was an outcome of the ruler’s selfish motives and insatiable desire for power, which were opposed to fundamental Confucian principles of rulership. Demand upon ministers to give their absolute loyalty to the private interests of the ruler was, therefore, also a violation of Confucian ethics. To Huang, the proper relationship between the ruler and his ministers should be one established on a solid foundation of a reasonable division of labor and fair sharing of responsibilities. Loyalty, in this sense, was a ethical concept that denoted the moral quality of an official in discharging his duties according to a reinterpretation of Confucian principles of ministership, which was different from the prevailing orthodox Cheng-Zhu doctrine.⁸⁶

Huang’s ideas were largely shared by his *yimin* circle of friends, such as Gu Yanwu, who also wrote extensively on government and economics.⁸⁷ In 1676, when Gu read the manuscript of *Waiting for the Dawn*, he agreed with Huang’s critical perspective and considered the book an excellent guide for governance.⁸⁸ In his discussion of traditional dynastic changes, Gu also attempted to distinguish “the fall of a dynasty” (*wang guo* 亡國) from “the fall of all-under-Heaven” (*wang tianxia* 亡天下). He advanced the view that the former was only the business of the ruler and ministers concerned, and had nothing to do with the public. The latter, however, was a public affair, relating as it did to the survival of human civilization and the welfare of all people.⁸⁹ To him, the perpetual transmission of Chinese culture and the livelihood of all-under-Heaven were much more important than the rise or fall of a dynasty. They should be the chief concern of literati.⁹⁰

From the angle of intellectual history, the historical significance of these loyalists’ reflections upon loyalism came from their consensus on the general

interests of the people. It allowed the loyalists a relatively rational approach to the consideration of a political legitimacy based on culturalism. To a certain extent, it also offered an ethical justification for their later reconciliation with the new court in the mid-Kangxi period. Of course, loyalists' criticisms of Ming despotism and its baneful influence on late-Ming politics did not necessarily imply their open departure from a pro-Ming political stance. Nor did these critiques indicate their liberation from the orthodox Cheng-Zhu ideology of absolute loyalism. In fact, it is a misunderstanding that anti-despotic ideas had a substantial impact on the social behavior of the *yimin* during this time. At least, as their deeds show, most of them, even Huang Zongxi and Gu Yanwu, regarded as the most "progressive" thinkers of the time, were, in practice, bound by a strong passion for the previous dynasty and conformed to the traditional stereotype of a loyalist.⁹¹

In the early Qing, the misfortune of the Ming *yimin* elicited the sympathy of the people and their moral courage was admired by their contemporaries as an embodiment of Confucian virtue.⁹² Because of their moral probity, they enjoyed high prestige in the society despite their avowed withdrawal from public life. For those *yimin* who devoted their reclusive lives to study and teaching, their distinguished academic achievements also added to their fame as eminent scholars. For example, Sun Qifeng 孫奇逢 (1585–1675), Huang Zongxi, and Li Yong 李顥 (1627–1705), the so-called "three great masters" of early-Qing thought, were well known for both their integrity and scholarship.⁹³ To many Chinese, the *yimin* were the transmitters as well as defenders of Confucian culture and its traditional values. This social image gave the *yimin* a stereotyped role and put an additional moral burden on them.⁹⁴ Being conscious of their moral obligations and social image, they became intensely cautious about the social consequences of their deeds and worried about being unable to live up to social expectations. Given this, it was hardly possible for them to make any open compromise with the Qing court, for such an action might raise popular doubts as to their moral integrity as well as incurring the risk of ruining their good name. Such misgivings were evinced in Gu Yanwu's advice to his best friend Li Yindu 李因篤 (1631–92), who was recommended by the Qing officials to the emperor in 1678.⁹⁵ In a letter to Li, Gu reminded Li of his *yimin* status and warned him that the acceptance of a government position at court would cause irreparable damage to his reputation.⁹⁶

The hostile attitude of *yimin* toward the alien regime was, however, softened by the cultural policy of the Kangxi period. During the Kangxi reign, the burgeoning reputation of the *yimin* aroused imperial concern. Having attempted to cultivate its popularity after the military victory over the Southern Ming in 1662 and the fall of Manchu conservatism in 1669, the Qing government gradually adopted a lenient policy toward the Ming loyalists and repeatedly attempted to absorb them into the bureaucracy.⁹⁷ In 1678, three years before the suppression of the Three Feudatories Rebellion, the Kangxi Emperor ordered an examination for those of "broad learning and vast

/traditional China, ed. Frederick P. Brandauer and Chün-chieh Huang (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp.230–47.

⁹⁰ *Gu Tinglin shi wen ji* [Collected prose and poetry of Gu Tinglin] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1983), *wenji* 文集, *juan* 3, pp.48–9, and *yuji* 餘集, pp.166–7.

⁹¹ For the Ming *yimin*, the legendary personages Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊, the Shang 商 (c.1600 BC–c.1123 BC) subjects who chose to starve themselves to death rather than eat the food of the Zhou 周 dynasty (c.1122 BC–256 BC), were model loyalists. See Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10, p.566, 568. For the biographies of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, see Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c.145 BC–c.86 BC), *Shi ji* [Historical records] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), vol.7, *juan* 61, pp.2121–9.

⁹² Shao Tingcai, *Sifutang wenji*, *juan* 3, pp.211–12.

⁹³ Sun Jing'an, *Ming Yimin lu* [Records of Ming *yimin*] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1985), *juan* 15, pp.116–17, and *Ming Yiminlu buji*, vol.1, p.265.

⁹⁴ Ye Mengzhu 葉夢珠, an early-Qing scholar in Shanghai, has given a valuable account of how social expectation shaped the social behavior of intellectuals during this time. Ye, *Yueshi bian* [An account of experiences] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1981), *juan* 4, pp.83–4.

⁹⁵ Wu Huaqing 吳懷慶 (d. 1928), *Guanzhong san Li nianpu* [Chronological biographies of the three Shaanxi Li (Li Yong, Li Bo and Li Yindu)] (Xi'an: Shaanxi Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1992), *juan* 7, pp.346–7. See also Zhao Kan, "Li Yindu," in *Qingdai renwuzhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.5, pp.305–11.

⁹⁶ *Gu Tinglin shi wen ji*, *wenji*, *juan* 4, pp.75–6. As Gu's other writings show, he believed that a former official should not take office under the new dynasty. See Gu Tinglin, *Yuanchaoben rizhi lu*, *juan* 17, pp.387–8, 410–11.

⁹⁷ *Qingshi gao*, vol.12, *juan* 109, p.3183.

⁹⁸ Maqi et al. comp., *Shengzu Renbuangdi shilu*, in *Qing shilu*, vol.4, *juan* 71, Kangxi year 17, month 1, p.910, *juan* 80, Kangxi year 18, month 3, p.1023. The *Mingshi* Office was first established in 1645 but, at that time, the Qing government was preoccupied with other domestic affairs and paid little attention to the compilation of the Ming history. See *Sbizu Zhanbuangdisibilu*, in *Qing shilu*, vol.3, *juan* 16, Shunzhi year 2, month 5, pp.141–2. Li Chin-hua, *Mingshi zuanxiu kao* [A study on the compilation of the Ming dynastic history] (Peiping [Beijing]: Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies Monograph Series no.3, 1933). As Yang Lien-sheng observes, the compilation of a history of the preceding dynasty had two propaganda uses. Firstly, it announced the end of the former dynasty and the orthodox line of succession of the new dynasty. Secondly, it attracted the loyalists of the fallen dynasty into government service because “the compilation of a good history was considered the duty of such a loyalist.” See Yang, “The organization of Chinese official historiography: principles and methods of the Standard Histories from the T’ang through the Ming dynasty,” in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.48.

⁹⁹ For a study of the Kangxi *Boxue hongru*, see Hellmut Wilhelm, “The Po-hsueh Hung-ju examination of 1679,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 71 (1951): 60–76, and Yang Haiying, “Kangxi Boxue hongru kao” [A study on the *Boxue hongru* of the Kangxi (reign)], *Lishi dang’an*, 1996.1 (Feb. 1996): 97–102.

¹⁰⁰ This was evinced by Huang Zongxi’s and Gu Yanwu’s attitude toward the official *Mingshi* project. Despite having refused direct participation, Huang encouraged his favorite student Wan Sitong to work for the project and sent his third son Huang Baijia 黃百家 (1643–1709) to assist Wan. Moreover, Huang also showed his support by providing sources and advice regarding the compilation to Wan and the *Mingshi* editors. *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.11 (1993), pp.290, 68–70; and vol.10, pp.205–6, 211–15, 529–44. See also Huang Binghou 黃炳垕 (1815–93), *Huang Lizhou xiansheng mianpu* [A chronological biography of Huang Lizhou (Huang Zongxi)], in *Huang Zongxi quanji*,

erudition” (*boxue hongci* 博學鴻詞) be conducted and, in the following year, he announced the reopening of the Ming History Office (*Mingshi guan* 明史館).⁹⁸ Both measures aimed at attracting the eremites into government service. Although only a few celebrated loyalist scholars responded to these recruitment efforts and the majority of the best-known *yimin* rejected the government’s enticements,⁹⁹ the emperor’s friendly gesture did mollify to an extent the Han Chinese and further pacify the anti-Qing sentiment of the *yimin*.¹⁰⁰

The Kangxi period marked a turning point in the history of Manchu-Han reconciliation. Under the leadership of a tireless emperor, the government had greatly impressed the Han literati by its socio-cultural achievements. The suppression of the Three Feudatories and the consolidation of Qing rule in 1681 brought a long period of peace to the mainland. Post-war economic development took place and the livelihood of ordinary people was much improved. Witnessing this rapid social recovery and cultural advancement, the *yimin* could not deny the contributions made by the alien regime, especially when they compared Qing achievements with the late-Ming administrative abuses and factionalism they had experienced.¹⁰¹ The flourishing empire also challenged the ethnocentric prejudice of the diehard Ming remnants. Moved by the “sage-emperor” and his “rule of virtue,” many *yimin* in the Kangxi period underwent a psychological struggle and gradually gave tacit consent to the legitimacy of Qing rule in spite of intentionally keeping a distance from the government.¹⁰² Therefore, by the late seventeenth century, their abstention from the Qing government should not be considered simply as being either a denial of Manchu legitimacy or a passive protest against alien rule.¹⁰³ The political compromises of Ming loyalists inevitably

/vol.12 (1994), p.47. In the case of Gu Yanwu, his nephews Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1631–94) and Xu Yuanwen 徐元文 (1634–91) came to hold high positions in the *Mingshi* Office and his disciple Pan Lei 潘耒 (1646–1708), having passed the *boxue hongci* examination, also took part in the *Mingshi* project. In response to the inquiries of the Xu brothers, Pan, and other *Mingshi* editors, Gu provided some sources and made suggestions for the compilation of the history. See *Gu Tinglin shi wen ji, wenji*, *juan* 3, pp.51–7, *juan* 4, pp.79–80.

¹⁰¹ For example, in 1690, Huang Zongxi was impressed by the Qing government’s efficiency in sending relief to flood victims in Zhejiang. *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10, pp.136–8.

¹⁰² Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jinsanbai nian xueshu shi*, vol.1, preface, p.1. He Guanbiao, “Ming *yimin* dui chuchu zhi jueze yu huiying — Chen Que ge’an yanjiu” [The choice and response of the *yimin* to the problem of taking office or

/withdrawing from public: a case study of Chen Que], in *Ming-Qing renwu yu zhusu* [Ming-Qing figures and writings] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Educational Publishing Co., 1996), 95–140; Wang Sizhi and Liu Fengyun, “Lun Qingchu ‘yimin’ fan Qing taidu de zhuanbian” [On the changing attitude of Ming ‘remnants’ towards the Qing], *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 1989.1 (Jan. 1989): 128–37; and Zhou Xuejun, “Ming-Qing Jiangnan rushi qunti de lishi biandong” [Historical changes in Jiangnan intellectual groups in the Ming-Qing period], *Lishi yanjiu*, 1993.1 (Feb. 1993): 83.

¹⁰³ According to the studies of Willard Peterson, in some cases the early-Qing eremites refused to serve the new dynasty simply because their parents had died for the Ming cause and thus their primary justification for abstention from the Qing government was “filial piety rather than loyalty to a ruling house.” Peterson, “Life of Ku Yen-wu,” pt 1, p.144. To a certain extent,

required them to reinterpret their moral obligations to the defunct dynasty and to redefine their relationship with the new power-holders. To strike a balance between insisting on their *yimin* status and accepting Qing legitimacy, they finally came to the solution that they would keep themselves away from government office but allow, or even encourage, their descendants to take official careers in the Qing bureaucracy to serve the public.¹⁰⁴ By then, as Huang Zongxi argued, the Ming *yimin* asserted that their moral obligations to the defunct dynasty should be restricted to not taking official positions under the new order.¹⁰⁵

The Ming loyalist struggle for self-identity in the second half of the seventeenth century reinforced Cheng–Zhu teachings on loyalty. Despite their criticism of late-Ming politics and Ming despotism, most of the *yimin* throughout their lives did comply with Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucian principles regarding the emperor–minister relationship. Their tacit consent to Qing legitimacy was accompanied by a presupposition that they would “not serve the new dynasty.” If their anti-despotic ideas had challenged the orthodox doctrine of absolute loyalism, it was only on the theatrical level, and it had little influence in practice.

Qing Subjects and the Formation of a Shared Qing Perspective on Loyalty

The life experience of the educated Han Chinese who reached their majority under Qing rule was different from that of their predecessors. For them, the Manchus were legitimate rulers rather than invaders. They saw themselves as Qing subjects and did not feel they owed anything to the Ming. Although they were living under alien rule, by identifying with the prevalent culture, they had no difficulty in justifying their participation in the Manchu government, which had adopted a policy of Sinification before its troops advancing through the Great Wall in 1644, becoming fully Sinicized during the Kangxi reign.¹⁰⁶ Encouraged by Kangxi-era cultural policy, many Chinese literati then took part in the civil examinations and accepted office in the government just as their predecessors had done under the Ming.

For some historians, 1644, the year the Ming house in Beijing collapsed, was a watershed that delineated the difference between Ming and Qing subjects: those who reached their majority before 1644 were to be regarded as Ming subjects (or Ming *yimin* under Qing) whilst those after 1644 were Qing subjects.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, such an assertion is problematic in so far as it fails to explain the political identity of two particular categories of historical figures. On the one hand, there were resistance activists who reached their majority during the transitional period 1644–62. They considered themselves Ming subjects and were regarded by their contemporaries as Ming loyalists. Xia Wanchun 夏完淳 (1631–47), who joined the resistance movement at the

/this assertion can also be extended to the Ming loyalists and explain their eremitism while accepting the Qing legitimacy. I have discussed this point in an article entitled “Lun Huang Zongxi de ‘jun chen zhi yi’ guannian—jian ping suowei Huang shi ‘wanjie ke ji’ shuo” [On Huang Zongxi’s “principle of monarch–minister relationship” and the so-called “questionable virtue in old age” of Huang], in Wu Guang, Ji Xueyuan and Zhu Huancan, eds, *Huang Lizhou sanbainian ji* [In memory of Huang Zongxi on the 300th anniversary of his death] (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe, 1997), pp.135–50. See also He Guanbiao, *Sheng yu si: Mingji shidafu de jueze*, pp.71–96.

¹⁰⁴ According to Chen Que 陳確 (1604–17) and Dai Mingshi 戴名世 (1653–1713), after 1644, although the Ming remnants insisted on their *yimin* status, many of their descendants participated in civil examinations under the new dynasty. Chen, *Chen Que ji* [Collected works of Chen Que] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), vol.1, *Wenji Wenji*, juan 6, p.172, and Dai, *Dai Minsbi ji* [Collected works of Dai Minshi], ed. Wang Shumin (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1986), juan 7, p.209. A number of materials indicate that from the mid-Kangxi period onward, increasing numbers of *yimin* adopted a supportive attitude toward their children taking office in the Qing bureaucracy. As Qian Mu and He Guanbiao have noticed, many *yimin* did not in fact disagree with their sons serving the Qing. See Qian, *Zhongguojinsanbai nian xueshu shi*, vol.1, preface, p.1, and He, “Lun Ming yimin zidi zhi chu shi” [On the children of Ming remnants taking office], in *Mingmo Qingchu xueshu sixiang yanjiu*, pp.125–67.

¹⁰⁵ *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.10, p.411.

¹⁰⁶ Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China*, p.45.

¹⁰⁷ Willard Peterson, “The life of Ku Yen-wu,” pt 1, p.144, and Chun-shu Chang and Hsiieh-lun Chang, “K’ung Shang-Jen and his *T’ao-Hua Shan*: a dramatist’s reflections on the Ming-Ch’ing dynastic transition,” *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 9.2 (1978): 315.

¹⁰⁸ When Xia was captured by the Qing in 1647, he refused to surrender and was executed. Xia's loyalist attitude was obvious in his poems. See *Xia Wanchun ji jianjiao* [Collected works of Xia Wanchun], annotated by Bai Jian (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1991), esp. *juan* 1, pp.1–2; *juan* 4, pp.171, 174, 178, 198; and *juan* 5, pp.235, 238. For a biography of Xia, see Lin Yongkuang, "Xia Wanchun," in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, vol.2, pp.238–43.

¹⁰⁹ *Hansongtang laoren nianpu* [Chronological biographies from the Hall of Winter Pines], in *Hansongtang quanji* [Complete works from the Hall of Winter Pines] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1996), appendix, pp.683–4. See also Qian Yiji 錢儀吉 (1783–1850), comp., *Beizhuanji* [Collection of epitaphs and biographies] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), vol.1, *juan* 8, pp.186–94; M. Jean Gates, "Wei Hsiang-shu," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol. 2, pp.848–9; and Wang Zhengyao, "Wei Xiangshu," in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.5, pp.191–9.

¹¹⁰ See Qian Yiji, *Beizhuanji*, vol.1, *juan* 11, pp.245–52; Fang Chao-ying, "Wei I-chieh," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, pp.849–50; and Wang Zhengyao, "Wei Yijie," in Wang Sizhi, ed., *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.1 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp.165–72.

¹¹¹ Qian Yiji, *Beizhuanji*, vol.4, *juan* 43, pp.1179–87; C. Martin Wilbur, "Shih Jun-chang," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, p.651; and Wu Boya, "Shi Runzhang," in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.6, pp.261–6.

¹¹² Qian Yiji, *Beizhuanji*, vol.4, *juan* 45, pp.1261–6; Fang Chao-ying, "Wang Wan," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, pp.840–1; and Zhang Xiaohu, "Wang Wan," in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.1, pp.206–10.

¹¹³ Qian Yiji, *Beizhuanji*, vol.7, *juan* 76, pp.2177–80; E. S. Larsen, "Chu Chih-hsi," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.178–9; and He Ping, "Zhu Zhixi," in Wang Sizhi and Li Hongbin, eds, *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.8 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1995), pp.277–81.

¹¹⁴ Qian Yiji, *Beizhuanji*, vol.2, *juan* 16, pp.447–75; Fang Chao-ying, "T'ang Pin," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, pp.709–10; and Zhang Xiaohu, "Tang Bin," in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao*, *shangbian*, vol.5, pp.209–17.

age of fifteen *sui* in 1645, was one such figure.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, for those Han Chinese who reached their maturity in the Ming but had not served under Ming, they experienced no particular guilt in identifying with the Qing after 1644. Wei Xiangshu's 魏象樞 (1617–87) participation in the Qing government may serve to illustrate this point. Wei earned his *juren* degree at the age of twenty-six *sui* in 1642, two years before the fall of the Ming, although he was unable to attend the *jinsbi* 進士 examination in Beijing in 1643 due to the death of his father. In 1645, a year after the establishment of the Qing dynasty, he took the examination and received his *jinsbi* degree. In the later years of his life, Wei recorded these details in his chronological autobiography without any hint of ambivalence. Furthermore, throughout his life, Wei was appreciated by the contemporaries for his integrity and contributions to the suppression of the Three Feudatories Rebellion. Nobody ever questioned whether he was right in serving the Qing.¹⁰⁹

The career paths of many other well-known Qing officials such as Wei Yijie 魏裔介 (1616–86),¹¹⁰ Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618–83),¹¹¹ Wang Wan 汪琬 (1624–91),¹¹² Zhu Zhixi 朱之錫 (1624–66),¹¹³ and Tang Bin 湯斌 (1627–87),¹¹⁴ who were born in the 1610s and 1620s, also provide similar counter-evidence against the assertion that the year 1644 can be taken as a significant cut-off date. Their service under the Qing court was never criticized as being a betrayal of the previous dynasty. These cases strongly suggest that, in the second half of the seventeenth century, at least to the public, the dominant factor determining one's status as either a Ming or Qing subject was whether one had taken office under the Ming, rather than one's date of birth. In other words, it was felt that those who had not served the Ming government had no obligation to be loyal to the Ming dynasty.

In contrast to Ming subjects who suffered social chaos due to the tumultuous demise of the Ming house, Qing intellectuals enjoyed, and in fact appreciated, a better life resulting from the newly flourishing socio-economic conditions together with the stable political situation offered by Qing rule.¹¹⁵ The prosperous environment and their fortunate experiences of peace shaped significantly their interpretation of the conquest history. Being Qing subjects, they generally shared a pro-Qing political stance and saw the Ming–Qing dynastic change as an inevitable shift in Heaven's Will, something that occurred with considerable frequency in Chinese history.¹¹⁶ However,

¹¹⁵ This is evinced by many writings of the early-Qing literati. In fact, not only those who had a successful official career admired the exploits of the empire. Even those who were frustrated in officialdom also acknowledged the contributions of the Qing regime to a stable and prosperous society. For instance, Quan Zuwang, who left officialdom in 1737 when he failed to get a place in the Hanlin Academy, wrote several poems in 1749–51 to glorify early-Qing history. Quan, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.1, *juan* 1, pp.1–20.

¹¹⁶ Gu Yingtai 谷應泰 (1620–90), *Mingsbi jishi benmo* [Narratives of Ming history from beginning to end] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1977), vol.1, Author's Preface, p.1; Xu Bingyi 徐秉義 (1633–1711), *Mingmo zhonglie jishi* [True accounts of the late-Ming martyrs] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1987), *fanli* 凡例, p.1; Wen Ruilin 溫睿臨 (1705 *juren*), *Nanjiang yishi* [Neglected history of the southern frontiers] (Hong Kong: Chongwen Shudian, 1971), Author's Preface, pp.1–2; Quan

educated under Confucianism and moved by the romance of the resistance movement, which was colored by many heroic deeds, they also acknowledged the Ming loyalists, especially the late-Ming martyrs, for their courage and integrity in insisting on the Confucian ideal during the “dark period” of the late Ming.¹¹⁷ It was particularly ambivalent for those descendants of the resistance activists, who honored their predecessors for loyalty to the Ming while they themselves attended civil service examinations and took office under the alien reign.¹¹⁸ Consequently, since the founding of the Qing dynasty, among the Chinese literati, there had been a general psychological discomfort generated by the hidden tension between a desire to recognize the Qing legitimacy and to sympathize with the late-Ming loyalists. The disagreement between political and cultural identities required reconciliation and eventually created a discourse on how to interpret the deeds of the Ming martyrs from the perspective of the Qing subjects.

Although the compilation of the official *Ming History* project began in 1645, the second year of the Shunzhi reign, conquest history was a taboo to many Chinese scholar-officials in the early Qing because any expression of sympathy for the resistance movement might be taken to imply a de facto recognition of the “rebellious” stance. Thus one could easily lay oneself open to factional attack and, more importantly, arouse imperial suspicion. In 1658, Gu Yingtai published his *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末 (Narratives of Ming History from Beginning to End). It was one of the earliest writings by a Qing historian on the history of the Ming dynasty. Three years later, Gu was impeached by the censor Dong Wenji 董文驥 for his account of the peasant rebellions of 1644, accused of ignoring the Manchu contribution to the suppression of Li Zicheng. As Dong’s impeachment was not supported by adequate evidence, the Shunzhi Emperor, following an investigation, dismissed the charge against Gu.¹¹⁹ In 1663, under the Oboi regency, a period during which the new government adopted harsh measures against all anti-Manchu ideas and activities, another case regarding the writing of Ming history broke into the open. A work entitled *Mingshi jilüe* 明史輯略 (A Brief Compiled History of the Ming), initiated by Zhu Guozhen 朱國禎 (1557–1632) and revised under the name of Zhuang Tinglong 莊廷鑑 (d. c.1660) with additional materials covering the late- and Southern Ming, was printed in 1660 by the Zhuang family. By using the Southern Ming reign titles in its chronology, referring to the Manchu emperors by their personal names, and depicting the pre-1644 Manchus as but one tribe under Ming rule, the book was taken as obviously treasonable by the new dynasty. When the case was reported to the court by the opportunist Wu Zhirong 吳之榮, a former magistrate of Gui’an 歸安 who had failed to levy blackmail on the Zhuang family, all those involved in the compilation and printing of the book, together with their family members, were arrested and sentenced to death or exile.¹²⁰ The cases of Gu and Zhuang were reminders to late seventeenth-century Chinese literati, in particular those in the Court, of the sensitive nature of conquest history, which required handling with particular care.

/Zuwang, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.1, *juan* 29, p.374; *waibian*, *juan* 25, p.998; and Wang Youdian 汪有典 (d.1868), *Quan Ming zongyi biezhuàn* [Separate biographies of loyalists in the whole Ming dynasty] (1868; reprint ed., Jiangsu Guangling Guji Keyin She, 1991), *juan* 5, p.25a–b; *juan* 26, p.21a.

¹¹⁷ In Quan Zuwang’s words, the deeds of the Ming martyrs were the embodiment of the Confucian “righteousness of the cosmos” (*tiandi jian zhi zhengqi* 天地間之正氣). Quan, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.1, *juan* 23, p.282.

¹¹⁸ The Xu brothers, Xu Qianxue, Xu Bingyi, and Xu Yuanwen, were typical examples. Their father had served the Southern Ming regime in Nanjiang in 1645 and they were also the nephews of Gu Yanwu, the best-known Ming *yimin* in early Qing. See Qian Yiji, *Beizhuan ji*, vol.1, *juan* 12, pp.300–24, and vol.2, *juan* 20, pp.682–92. See also Tu Lien-che, “Hsü Ch’ien-hsüeh,” in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.310–12; Li Man-kuei, “Hsü Yuan-wen,” *ibid.*, p.327; Liu Jianxin, “Xu Qianxue,” in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.8, pp.149–63; and Wang Hongjun, “Xu Yuanwen, *ibid.*, vol.5, pp.149–57.

¹¹⁹ Li Xinda, “Gu Yingtai,” in *Qingdai renwu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.6, p.282.

¹²⁰ Gu Yanwu, *Gu Tinglin shi wen ji*, *juan* 5, pp.114–16, and Jie An, *Zhuangshi shi’an benmo* [Narratives of the Zhuang incident from beginning to end] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Shudian, 1983). See also L. C. Goodrich, “Chuang T’ing-lung,” in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.1, pp.205–6, and Zhang Jiefu, “Zhuang Tinglong,” in He Lingxiu and Zhang Jiefu, eds, *Qingdai renwu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.4 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), pp.352–7.

¹²¹ Qinchuan jushi, ed., *Huang Qingming-chen zouyi* [Memorials of prominent officials of the Imperial Qing] (Beijing: Ducheng Guoshiguan; reprint ed., Taipei: Wenhai Chubanshe, 1967) vol.2, *juan* 9, pp.918–21, and *Qingshi liezhuan*, vol.2, *juan* 8, p.518.

¹²² Xu Qianxue, *Danyuan wenji* [Collection of writings from a tranquil garden] (1697; reprint ed., Taipei: Hanhua Wenhua Shiye, 1971), vol.2, *juan* 10, pp.524–5. See also *juan* 14, pp.727–8.

¹²³ Tu Lien-che, "P'eng Sun-yü," in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, p.616.

To avoid imperial suspicion of their motives, from the beginning of the Qing, the scholar-officials who called for official recognition of the activities of the Southern Ming martyrs emphasized the moral education dimension of the issue. In his 1655 memorial concerning the compilation of the Ming biographies of the official Ming History, Tang Bin affirmed that the resistance loyalists had demonstrated how ministers should behave in conditions of extreme difficulty, thereby establishing models of behavior for the public. He argued that despite their uncompromising attitude toward "Heaven's Will," these loyalists were different from rebels from among the Qing population for, being Ming subjects, the former had a moral obligation to defend the fallen dynasty. To Tang, the Southern Ming martyrs, along with the late-Ming martyrs who died for the imperial house during the peasant rebellions in or before 1644, had performed their duty according to Confucian teachings on loyalty. Drawing examples from the standard histories, Tang pointed out it was a traditional practice in Chinese history that when a new dynasty compiled the history of the previous dynasty, biographies of the former resistance activists would also be included, regardless of the political attitudes of these figures. Therefore, he argued, the Office of Ming History should not hesitate to record the words and deeds of Southern Ming loyalists.¹²¹

After 1669, under Kangxi's cultural policy in which moral restoration became a significant government task, Tang's arguments were further developed by Han scholar-officials who took part in compiling official Ming history. In discussions as to how Southern Ming loyalists should be dealt with, Xu Qianxue, nephew of the famous *yimin* Gu Yanwu and one of the officers-in-charge of the Ming History Office in the Kangxi period, said:

The resistance diehards opposed to the Zhou were loyal to the Shang [dynasty]. So, when the Yuan 元 dynasty [1260–1368] recounted events of the Song, [Song loyalist] ministers like Zhang Shijie 張世傑 [d.1279], Lu Xiufu 陸秀夫 [1238–79], Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 [1236–83], and Xie Fangde 謝枋得 [1226–89] were admired; when [the Ming dynasty] compiled history of the Yuan, [Yuan loyalists like] Yu Que 余闕 [1303–58], Fu Shou 福壽 [d.1356], Shimo Yisun 石抹宜孫 [d.1359], and Puyan Buhua 普顏不花 [1295–1358] were praised. Facing the advances of the [Qing] armies, the subjects of the Ming dared to resist. It may be said that they were ignorant of Heaven's Will. Yet, each man has his own allegiance and should fulfill his own duty just those diehards [of the Shang] did in ancient times ...¹²²

In other words, from the angle of moral education, moral quality rather than political stance was the most important criterion for determining whether a historical figure should be included in the standard history. Therefore, Xu suggested to the emperor that the *Ming History* include the biographical memoirs of the late-Ming loyalists and that the virtues of these former officials be fully recognized by the government. Xu's proposal won the support of his colleagues in the Ming History Office. Peng Sunyu 彭孫通 (1631–1700), who participated in the *Ming History* project after his success in the *boxue hongci* examination,¹²³ shared these views and went a step further by advocating that these biographies in the *Ming History* should be put under a separate

category entitled “the loyal and righteous” or *zhongyi* 忠義 so as to highlight the loyalists’ moral achievements.¹²⁴ Wang Hongxu 王鴻緒 (1645–1723), who was in charge of the Ming History Office for more than ten years (1694–1709) and continued his work on Ming history after his dismissal in 1709,¹²⁵ even suggested that to promote moral education among the people and to demonstrate the government’s support for Confucian values, the heroic deeds of the late-Ming loyalists should be mentioned not only in the biographies concerned but also in the basic annals of the *Ming History*.¹²⁶

This ethical perspective provided solid ground for the Qing scholars to justify their interests in the study of late-Ming figures and acted as an encouragement for them to work on the topic. When Xu Bingyi 徐秉義, a member of the famous Xu clan in Kunshan 昆山, Jiangsu, was absent from office during 1682–94, he devoted much of his time to collecting historical materials relating to the Ming martyrs.¹²⁷ Like his elder brother Xu Qianxue and younger brother Xu Yuanwen, Bingyi had served in the Ming History Office for several years and, during this time, he developed a keen interest in the topic. In 1694, after twenty years of hard work, he completed a collection of biographies of the seventeenth-century Ming martyrs entitled the *Mingmo zhonglie jishi* 明末忠烈紀實 (True Accounts of the Late-Ming Martyrs). As Xu states in the “explanatory preface” (*fanli*), the main objective of this book was to give a comprehensive and reliable account of the historical figures who died as martyrs to the Ming cause and prevent their deeds from being forgotten by the people.¹²⁸ The order of the biographies was carefully considered. Over five hundred records of male martyrs were arranged into eighteen *juan* according to the period of martyrdom while hundreds of biographical sketches of the female martyrs were incorporated in the last two *juan* along with geographical references. For the narrative itself, special emphasis is put on the moral courage of these late-Ming or Southern Ming figures, whose were considered to be the embodiment of Confucian virtues of loyalty.¹²⁹ Obviously, to Xu, remembering the Ming loyalists did not imply any recognition of the rightness of their political stance but rather identification of their Confucian values, the “Three Cardinal Bonds and Five Constant Virtues” (*san gang wu chang* 三綱五常), that they had defended.

Apart from the Chinese élite in the court, those Qing historians who were outside the literary circle of the upper social stratum also attempted to recount Southern Ming history from an ethical perspective. Among them, Wen Ruilin’s work entitled *Nanjiang yishi* 南疆逸史 (Neglected History of the Southern Frontiers) and Quan Zuwang’s Southern Ming biographical epitaphs are excellent examples that demonstrate how the history of the mid-seventeenth century was depoliticized in the early eighteenth century.

Wen Ruilin was a native of Wucheng 烏程, Zhejiang. Some members of the Wen clan had resisted the Manchu invasion and committed suicide during the conquest period. Shortly after, when Qing rule was consolidated, the Wen family immediately gave up identifying with the fallen dynasty and sent its children to attend the new local examinations. Obtaining his *juren* degree in

¹²⁴ Peng Sunyu, *Songguitang quanji* [Complete works from the Hall of Pines and Cinnamon], in *Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu*, vol.1317, *juan* 35, p.270.

¹²⁵ Qian Yiji, *Beizhuan ji*, vol.2, *juan* 21, pp.705–10; Tu Lien-che, “Wang Hung-hsi,” in *Eminent Chinese*, vol.2, p.826; and Wang Aiping, “Wang Hongxu,” in *Qingdai remu zhuangao, shangbian*, vol.8, pp.164–9.

¹²⁶ Liu Chenggan 劉承幹 (1882–1963), comp., *Mingshi li’an* [Precedents from the compilation of the *Ming History*] (printed 1915), *juan* 2, pp.30b–31b.

¹²⁷ Zhu Xizu 朱希祖 (1879–1944), *Mingji shiliao tiba* [Prefaces and postscripts to historical materials of the late Ming] (Taipei: Dahua Yinshuguan, 1968), p.82.

¹²⁸ Xu, *Mingmo zhonglie jishi, fanli*, p.1.

¹²⁹ In the arrangement of the biographies, Xu might have been inspired by the *Xuejiaoting zhengqi ji* [Collected records of righteousness from Xuejiao Pavilion], a collection of biographies of Ming martyrs compiled by the Zhejiang Ming *yimin* Gao Yutai 高宇泰. In Gao’s book, biographies are arranged in an order according to the periods of martyrdom with references to the Southern Ming regimes. See Gao, *Xuejiaoting zhengqi ji*, in *Taiwan wenxian congkan* [Collectanea of Taiwan literature] (Taipei: Taiwan Yinhang, 1970).

¹³⁰ Lynn Struve, "Uses of history," pp.38–58.

¹³¹ Chen Xunci and Fang Zuyou, *Wan Sitong nianpu* [A chronological biography of Wan Sitong] (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), pp.127–219.

¹³² Wen Ruilin, *Nanjiang yishi, fanli*, p.3. The English translations are cited from Lynn Struve with modifications, see Struve, "Uses of history," pp.44–5.

¹³³ Struve, "Uses of history," pp.47–8.

1705, Wen was unable to rise through the civil examination and never obtained any prestigious position in officialdom.¹³⁰ Wen's interest in Southern Ming history was stimulated by his mentor Wan Sitong, who worked for the official Ming history project during the years 1679–1702 but consistently refused to accept any official position.¹³¹ Through his involvement in the Ming History Office for more than twenty years, Wan Sitong came to realize that the events of the Southern Ming regimes would be greatly neglected in the official *Ming History* due to the political considerations of the Qing house. In order to preserve a reliable history of the Southern Ming, Wan suggested that Wen might work on this topic and produce an unofficial history of the regimes. As Wen recalled, initially, he worried that such a history would be prohibited by the authorities because it would inevitably involve sensitive narratives of resistance activities against the Qing. Yet, Wan Sitong argued:

What era is without the rise and fall of states? Each man has his own sovereign. Whenever a new dynasty emerges, there can be no anger at this; men must follow their convictions When the [Qing] dynasty first established its rule, it began by praising those ministers who had died loyally for their state [under attack by rebels] to arouse public emulation. There simply was no time to pay attention to others who died in this changeover. They could at one and the same time be praised [for their loyalty to their cause] and executed [for resisting the Qing]. What's more, when the History Office was opened, it was ordered that various private accounts be sent to the [Rites] Ministry and that none be disapproved because they violated prohibitions. What harm could there be in collecting and editing them?¹³²

Wen Ruilin was convinced by Wan Sitong's arguments and began actual writing shortly after Wan's death in 1702. The completion date of the work is not clear but evidence indicates that the draft was circulated in Zhejiang in 1738 and further material was added in the following years.¹³³

Although in his writings Wen Ruilin used Southern Ming reign names for dating and referred to the princes by their imperial titles, he, unlike the *yimin* historians, did not see this as a form of *de facto* recognition of Southern Ming legitimacy. He argued that:

In the ancient histories, those accounts of the emperors are called "basic annals" [*benji* 本紀] and those of the ministers the "biographies" [*liezhuan* 列傳]. A basic annal gives a summary of the government orders of a period while a biography only records [the deeds] of a person and the events concerned. Basic annals are distinguished [from biographies]. Yet, the revered Court Historian [Taishi gong 太史公, i.e. Sima Qian] gives his account of Xiang Yu 項羽 [233 BC–202 BC] as a basic annal. It is because he [Xiang] gave commands [to all-under-Heaven] during the time and many [historical] events are recounted in detail there. Now, although the three rulers of Nanjing [the Hongguang emperor], Fujian [the Longwu emperor], and Guangdong [the Yongli emperor] did not have good endings, they were emperors over their territories and set the rules of governance. It is reasonable to record them in basic annals. If [the deeds of these three rulers] are attached in the basic annal of Huaizong 懷宗 [the Chongzhen 崇禎 Emperor], there will be no record in the biographies, let alone the basic

annals. This is not the normal practice in writing the history of an era. Therefore, there are “brief annals” in the first [three] *juan* [of this book]. They are not called “basic annals” thus avoiding giving any offense to our [Qing] dynasty. They are “brief” annals because the available materials are not adequate to provide greater detail.¹³⁴

As the title *Neglected History of the Southern Frontiers* reflects, the author is taking a Qing perspective in his writing. In the preface, Wen explains his stance clearly in a question-and-answer form

Why is this called *Neglected History of the Southern Frontiers*? It is an account of the events under the three [political] entities, the Hongguang, the Longwu, and the Yongli. Why not use “courts” [in the book title]? [It is because they did] not constitute courts. Why is it called “Southern Frontiers?” Their rule was restricted to the South and [they] never reached the North.¹³⁵

To Wen, the main reason for writing the history was to examine the causes of the rise and fall of the Southern Ming regimes and to praise and blame (*baobian* 褒貶) the figures based on their deeds. Stressing the educational functions of history, he believed that by expressing admiration for the loyalists and condemning the traitors, his work would promote Confucian ethics in the society at large.¹³⁶

Quan Zuwang was a descendant of Ming loyalists. According to Quan, members of his family had participated in anti-Qing activities in Zhejiang during 1644–45 and they maintained close relations with the resistance activists until 1662. When the resistance movement was suppressed, they became *yimin* under the Qing.¹³⁷ Like many other descendants of the *yimin*, Quan participated in the Qing examinations and obtained his *jinsbi* degree in 1736.¹³⁸ His intensive research and writing on Ming loyalists can be traced back to the year 1738, when he was mustered out of the Hanlin Academy and quit Beijing for Zhejiang.¹³⁹ After returning home, he devoted much of his time to researching the local history of Zhejiang in the transitional period and relied on writing epitaphs of the Ming loyalists for much of his income. Since the year of 1744 would be the hundredth anniversary of the events of 1644, many descendants of late-Ming loyalists were preparing for commemoration activities and asked Quan to write epitaphs for their ancestors. In response to these requests, he wrote a great number of accurate and sympathetic biographies of the historical figures who were prominent in the local and regional resistance movements.¹⁴⁰

In his writings, Quan revealed not only a considerable level of professionalism but also a passionate sincerity in searching for the moral principles related to human relationships (*renlun* 人倫) through the study of history, which is a responsibility of historians and more than just a personal interest or a way of making a living. In evaluating the Southern Ming figures, he purposely attempted to employ an ethical principle, which can be summarized as one of “not serving two dynasties,” to erase the tension caused by the pro-Ming/pro-Qing political conflict. To Quan, the term “loyalist” simply denotes a person who “would not serve two dynasties” (*bu shi erxing* 不事二姓).¹⁴¹ He argued that if one who had served the former dynasty

¹³⁴ Wen, *Nanjiang yisbi, fanli*, p.4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Preface, p.1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹³⁷ Quan Zuwang, *Jiqiting ji*, vol.2, *waibian*, *juan* 8, pp.758–9, and Quan Zuwang, ed. *Xu Yongsang qijiusbi* [Poetry of the Ningbo elderly, continued] (Siming Wenxianshe, 1918), vol.8, *juan* 24, pp.1a–2a.

¹³⁸ Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, *Ming-Qing jinsbi timing beilu suoyin* [Index of names in the epitaphs of Ming–Qing *jinsbi*] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1989), vol.3, p.2705, and Jiang Tianshu (1903–88), *Quan Xieshan nianpu* [A chronological biography of Quan Xieshan (Zuwang)] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1932), p.57.

¹³⁹ Jiang Tianshu, *Quan Xieshan nianpu*, pp.67–71.

¹⁴⁰ Jiang Tianshu, “Quan Xieshan xiansheng zhushu kao” [An investigation of the writings of Quan Xieshan (Zuwang)], *Guoli Beiping tushuguan guankan* 7.1 (Feb.1933): 31–49, and 7.2 (Mar.1933): 36–67.

¹⁴¹ Quan, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.2, *waibian*, *juan* 42, p.1300.

¹⁴² Ibid., vol.1, 103.

¹⁴³ Ibid., vol.2, *waibian*, *juan* 12, pp.825–8; *juan* 33, pp.1137–8; and *juan* 42, p.1301.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., vol.1, *juan* 22, p.267.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., *juan* 8, p.106. I have discussed this point in my articles “Cultural legacy and historiography: the case of Quan Zuwang (1705–1755),” *Chinese Culture* 34.4 (Dec. 1993): 15–26, and “Quan Zuwang 卞 卞 Nanmingrenwu chuan” [Quan Zuwang and his Southern Ming biographies], in *Lun Zbedong xueshu* [On eastern Zhejiang scholarship], ed. Fang Zuyou and Jin Tao (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1995), pp.424–31.

¹⁴⁶ Quan, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.2, *waibian*, *juan* 12, p.818.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., *juan* 33, p.1128.

¹⁴⁸ For the biographies of Xu Heng and Liu Yin, see Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–81) et al., comp., *Yuanshi* [History of the Yuan dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1976), vol.12, *juan* 158, pp.3716–30; and vol.13, *juan* 170, pp.4007–10.

insisted on the principle of not transferring his loyalty after the dynastic change, he could be regarded as a loyalist no matter whether he was a martyr or an *yimin*.¹⁴² On the contrary, if one violated this principle, one should be considered a renegade and condemned by the public.¹⁴³ Following this principle in his evaluation of historical figures, Quan even criticized Huang Zongxi, the Ming *yimin* who was highly respected by the Qing intelligentsia, for his *Waiting for the Dawn* as the Chinese term “*daifang*” could be interpreted as “waiting for the visit of a new ruler.”¹⁴⁴ In defense of the anti-Qing attitude of the loyalists, Quan repeats the Qing scholars’ assertion that “The diehards opposed to the Zhou were the loyalists of the Shang dynasty.” He further argued that though the loyalists might be arrested and executed for their anti-government activities, grave offenses in the eyes of the newly established authorities, their moral courage should be admired nevertheless. As the embodiment of Confucian virtues, their loyalist deeds should be made known to the public, he argued, and recorded in history.¹⁴⁵

The principle of loyalism that Quan advanced was closely related to his idea of history. Educated in the Confucian tradition, Quan believed that the meaning of history lay in its moral educative function.¹⁴⁶ Moral education, to him, meant the teaching and learning of the Confucian ethics and the art of maintaining the five human relationships (*wu lun*) in society, in particular the relationship between monarch and official, as well as that between father and son. Therefore, in his study of history, he paid special attention to the issues concerning loyalty and filial piety which, to him, were the concrete moral achievements of human beings and the essence of Chinese culture. According to Quan, it is the historians’ responsibility accurately to preserve accounts of those who put these Confucian moral principles into practice.

It is also worth noting that by taking a culturalist approach and emphasizing the significance of loyalism, Quan did not find it difficult to reject the ethnocentric claim made against the alien rule of the Manchus. This is evinced in his comments on the political identities Xu Heng 許衡 (1209–81) and Liu Yin 劉因 (1240–93) of the Mongol Yuan dynasty. Examining the lives of Xu and Liu, Quan says:

Xu Wenzheng 許文正 [Heng] and Liu Wenjing 劉文靖 [Yin] were two great Confucians of north [China] in Yuan times These two masters were never Song subjects, [thus] for them to serve under the Yuan in no way harmed [their good name].¹⁴⁷

Xu took a government position under the alien regime but Liu did not.¹⁴⁸ To Quan, it was simply a matter of personal choice. Liu elected to live as a hermit because he had no confidence in Yuan politics and his decision did not involve any ethnic consideration. In response to the ethnocentric criticisms of Xu, who was a Han Chinese but accepted the Mongol offer, Quan argues that:

Xu Wenzheng and [Liu] Wenjing were people of the Yuan dynasty. Why shouldn’t they serve the Yuan government? The criticisms based on making distinctions between barbarians and Han Chinese [*yixia zhi shuo* 夷夏之說]

ignores the relationship between the monarch and his officials [which is] imposed by Heaven [*tian zuo zhi jun zhi yi* 天作之君之義]. How could a Yuan subject give loyalty to the Song? This is arrant nonsense!¹⁴⁹

These arguments can be considered as a projection of Quan's own pro-Qing political stance.¹⁵⁰ To a certain extent, they also indicate that, by the early eighteenth century, given the political conditions of alien rule, Han literati were attempting to bypass the sensitive topics of ethnicity in their discourse on loyalty.

Notions of Loyalty in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries

The changing concept of loyalty in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries demonstrates the dialectical relationship between individuals and their time. The fall and restoration of orthodox Neo-Confucianism during this period were not simply the result of a government fiat but the result of complex interactions among social groups in that particular environment.

The dynastic change in mid-seventeenth-century China had shaken the social foundations of Neo-Confucian ideology. In a period of political and social turmoil, pragmatism became a governing principle in social action and government policy. To many Han Chinese, collaboration with the Manchus was the sole, rational alternative to disorder. To reduce resistance and seek support from the social élite during the process of the subjugation of China, the Manchu conquerors also rewarded former Ming officials for their collaboration. Consequently, in the first decades of the Qing, the Cheng-Zhu teachings of loyalty failed temporarily to gain imperial support and lost their dominance in the living culture. Although the promotion of loyalty and filial piety was an avowed state policy of the new dynasty, it was merely a cultural tactic employed to pacify the conquered Han Chinese.¹⁵¹ It seemed inconsistent that the newly-established Qing government on the one hand praised the Ming martyrs of 1644 for insisting on remaining loyal to the Ming, but on the other hand called on Ming officials to surrender.¹⁵² To both the Manchu conquerors and their Chinese collaborators, political realignment was an act of "obeying Heaven's Will."¹⁵³

Unlike the collaborators, the Ming loyalists were true believers in Neo-Confucian loyalism. Apart from those who sacrificed their lives for the Ming dynasty during the conquest period, the survivors did not give up their Confucian principles under the aliens. Nonetheless, the post-1644 socio-economic environment and the examination of the causes of the Ming fall gradually softened their anti-Qing attitude. The emphasis on the "welfare of the people" finally made them give tacit consent to the legitimacy of Qing rule, even while it still remained unacceptable for former Ming officials to serve the new regime.

To scholars of Chinese intellectual history, one of the characteristics of late seventeenth-century thought was the rise of "anti-despotic ideas" among

¹⁴⁹ Quan, *Jieqiting ji*, vol.2, *waibian*, *juan* 33, p.1129.

¹⁵⁰ In the past decades, many Chinese historians have tended to consider Quan's sympathy for the late-Ming loyalists as an expression of his anti-Qing attitude. This is a misconception. For an analysis, see my article "Quan Zuwang 'su fu minzu qijie' shuo pingyi" [The issue of Quan Zuwang's political loyalty], *Jiuzhou xuekan* 5.1 (July 1992): 41–52.

¹⁵¹ In fact, before advancing across the Great Wall, the Manchus had adopted a policy of encouraging the Chinese to submit themselves to the Manchus. See, for example, Ledehong et al., comp., *Taizu gaobuangdi shilu* [Veritable records of the Nurhaci reign], in *Qing shilu*, vol.1, *juan* 5, Tianming year 3, month 4, p.70; year 6, month 3, *juan* 7, p.102; Tuhai 圖海 (d.1682) et al., comp., *Taizongwenhuangdishilu* [Veritable records of the Abahai reign], in *Qing shilu*, vol.2, Tiancong year 1, month 5, *juan* 3, p.48; year 3, month 10, *juan* 5, pp.76–80; year 4, month 4, *juan* 6, 95; year 5, month 9, *p.juan* 9, p.135; intercalary month 11, *juan* 10, p.146; year 7, month 6, *juan* 14, p.192; p.194; year 8, month 4, *juan* 18, p.238; Zongde year 1, month 11, *juan* 32, p.404; year 2, month 7, *juan* 37, pp.486–487; year 3, month 4, *juan* 41, p.541; and year 3, month 7, *juan* 42, p.505.

¹⁵² For example, in the first year of the Shunzhi reign, several edicts were issued praising the 1644 Ming martyrs and appealing to the Ming officials. See *Sbizu Zhanghuangdi shilu*, in *Qing shilu*, vol.3, *juan* 5, Shunzhi year 1, month 5, p.57; pp.59–60; *juan* 6, month 7, p.66; *juan* 11, month 10, p.103, and *juan* 11, month 11, p.106.

¹⁵³ *Sbizu Zhanghuangdi shilu*, in *Qingshilu*, vol.3, *juan* 5, Shunzhi year 1, month 10, p.103, and Ji Liuqi, *Mingji nanlüe*, *juan* 2, pp.141–142.

¹⁵⁴ See William T. de Bary, *The liberal tradition in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp.67–90, and Yamanoi Yu, *Min-Shin shisōshi no kenkyū*, pp.250–66.

¹⁵⁵ According to Wu Guang, Huang Zongxi's *Daijfang lu* was published in the Qianlong period but it was widely circulated only after the late nineteenth century. See Wu Guang, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol.2, pp.423–7. See also his *Huang Zongxi zhuzuo hui kao*, pp.1–10.

¹⁵⁶ See *Shengzu Renbuangdi yuzhi wenji*, in *Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu*, vol.1298, *chujī* 初集, *juan* 22, 205–6, and vol.1299, *siji* 四集, *juan* 22, p.541. See also *Qingshi liezhuan*, vol.2, *juan* 6, pp.380–5, and *Shengzu Renbuangdi shilu*, in *Qing shilu*, vol.4, *juan* 81, Kangxi year 18, month 6, p.1036.

¹⁵⁷ As many recent studies note, the Qing adoption of Neo-Confucianism was conditional. While promoting Confucian ideology, the Manchu rulers also attempted to interpret Chinese tradition according to their own interests. This was evinced in the compilation of official historical projects. See He Guanbiao, “Qingdai qianqi junzhu dui guansi shixue de yingxiang” [The influence of Manchu emperors on official and private historiography in the early and high Qing], *Hanxue yanjiu* 16.1 (June 1998): 155–84.

such prominent thinkers as Huang Zongxi.¹⁵⁴ In fact, Huang's advocacy of humane governance, especially his critique of Chinese despotism, presented a critical challenge to dogmatic Cheng–Zhu ideology. However, the historical influence of such anti-despotic ideas should not be exaggerated. Initially, the circulation of Huang's *Waiting for the Dawn* was restricted to the circle of *yimin* in certain regions and it only became widely known in the late Qing and early Republican periods.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, bounded by the heavy burden of defending Confucian culture and its traditional values in practice, most *yimin* could hardly be expected to free themselves from the doctrine of absolute loyalism.

The cultural policy of the Kangxi Emperor after 1669 marked the restoration of Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucian ideology in Chinese historiography. Official praise for the martyrdom of Fan Chengmo 范承謨 (1624–76) and Ma Xiongzhēn 馬雄鎮 (1634–77), the Qing martyrs who died in the Three Feudatories Rebellion, confirmed the government's full-blown recognition of the Cheng–Zhu teachings on loyalty.¹⁵⁶ The state policy of promoting loyalty and filial piety was then implemented after the consolidation of Qing rule. Imperial attempts to employ Confucianism as a means of ideological control was further developed during the Yongzheng reign and this later became a principal guideline for official cultural activities in the Qianlong era.

It was the adoption of Neo-Confucianism that helped the Manchus foster the legitimacy of their rule and win the political fealty of their Han subjects.¹⁵⁷ To those Han Chinese who grew up under the Qing, the early history of the dynasty evinced the fact that the Mandate of the Heaven was in favor of the Qing. Despite their sympathy for the Ming loyalists, they had not served the Ming and so were not obliged to take the political stance of the Ming *yimin*. In order to solve the conflict between appreciation of the Ming loyalists and recognition of Qing legitimacy, Qing scholars attempted to employ an ethical perspective in evaluating the deeds of the Ming loyalists. From Tang Bin to Quan Zuwang, it is obvious that a shared Qing interpretation of Southern Ming history based on the Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucian doctrine of loyalty gradually evolved.

Comparatively speaking, depoliticization and moralization were two noticeable characteristics that distinguished the discourse of Qing subjects from that of the Ming *yimin*. To the latter, the significance of the resistance history was both political and ethical, but to the former, it was only ethical and had nothing to do with politics. The Qing scholars tried to bypass sensitive pro-Ming/pro-Qing political disputes and emphasized instead the personal moral commitment of late-Ming figures as well as the embodiment of Confucian cultural values in their deeds. As part of the tradition, the Han élite never tired of using history to advance what they regarded as an ideal social order and moral behavior. In glorifying the Southern Ming heroes, they argued that admiration for the deeds of the loyalists would promote moral education in the society. And, given these circumstances, there was a general demand in the society for official recognition of the deeds of the Southern Ming loyalists.

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