


RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Where Diasporas Met: Hunanese, Cantonese, and the State in Late-Qing Guangxi

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## Abstract

Drawing on physical and textual records of Hunanese and Cantonese active in Guangxi, as well as state archival sources, this article traces the expansion of these two diasporic cohorts in Guangxi from the early nineteenth century, through the mid-century wars, and into the postwar era, when they reintegrated this southwestern frontier province into the late-Qing empire.

**Keywords:** migration; diasporas; Qing

In January 1866, the opera aficionado and Hunan native Yang Enshou 楊恩壽 jumped at the chance to watch Cantonese operas performed at Beiliu. Yang had arrived in this southeastern Guangxi county the previous May with his brother, the new acting county magistrate. Yang assisted his brother as a private secretary, processing legal casework and, until a third brother arrived from Hunan, overseeing the Qing internal customs station at Beiliu. In the latter role, Yang worked closely with the Cantonese merchants whose riverine trade he taxed, but as an opera fan, Yang hobnobbed with gentry representatives of the Yuedong huiguan 粵東會館, or Guangdong native-place association. *Huiguan* leaders hired a troupe from Guangdong to stage operatic performances celebrating renovation, after destruction during rebel occupation of the city in 1857, of the *huiguan* and an affiliated temple. Throughout mid-January and again the following month, Yang watched operas, attended banquets, and received gifts in his interactions with the Cantonese *huiguan* leaders.<sup>1</sup> Although Yang Enshou's avid interest in opera serendipitously smoothed his relationship with *huiguan* leaders at Beiliu in early 1866, this relationship reflects the broader, interactive roles of two diasporic cohorts—Hunanese and Cantonese—in driving the reconsolidation of Qing state control in Guangxi after the mid-nineteenth-century warfare that almost destroyed the dynasty.

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<sup>1</sup>Yang Enshou, *Tanyuan riji* 坦園日記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1983), 116–84.

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The reintegration of the Qing state in the postwar era succeeded in large measure because members of these two diasporic cohorts perceived opportunities for socioeconomic enhancement by spending decades in Guangxi and possibly settling there. Hunanese and Cantonese led the Qing reconquest of Guangxi, crucible of the Taiping kingdom and base of the Triad Dacheng 大成 regime (1855–1861). In the postwar era, members of these two cohorts colonized the Qing bureaucracy in Guangxi, particularly as lower-level and supernumerary officials who received their assignments through purchase. Likewise, Hunanese and Cantonese merchants substantially expanded their preexisting commercial networks in Guangxi. Because the postwar Qing state heavily relied upon commercial taxes, through paying internal customs duties, like those that Yang Enshou collected in Beiliu, and the new commercial tax, the *lijin* 釐金, merchants supported local and provincial administrations in Guangxi.<sup>2</sup> Thus, office purchase and commercial taxes both benefitted Hunanese and Cantonese men seeking socioeconomic advancement and bolstered a revived state that was increasingly reliant on these new sources of revenue.

Drawing on physical and textual records, some in library collections but many others found only through fieldwork in Guangxi, as well as state archival sources, this article traces the expansion of the Hunanese and Cantonese diasporic cohorts in Guangxi from the early nineteenth century, through the mid-century wars, and into the postwar era, when they reintegrated this southwestern frontier province into the late-Qing empire. Migration, broadly defined to include bureaucratic labor migration and commercial “sojourning” as well as permanent settlement, made possible the Qing reconquest and reconsolidation. Although this experience of increased integration in the late-nineteenth century was not shared by all regions of the empire, it succeeded in Guangxi because many Hunanese and Cantonese had incentives to bring the state back in to Guangxi, where they carved out careers in provincial administration and profited from trade.<sup>3</sup> Geographical mobility and state building in postwar Guangxi thus provide a contrast to the forced migrations associated with the formation of the first empire and the reconsolidation of a twentieth-century nation-state, which Anthony Barbieri-Low and Dominic Yang describe elsewhere in this special issue (XXX). In postwar Guangxi, Hunanese and Cantonese migration increased in a context where opportunistic members of these two diasporic cohorts both turned state policies toward their own ends and became state agents. This process more readily fits into the notion of “state-induced” migration, including migration “informed by state policies” that Korolkov and Hein, also in this special issue (XXXX), discuss in their analysis of early empires, particularly on frontiers such as Guangxi. Due to the confluence of Hunanese, Cantonese, and Qing interests, this peripheral province was vertically

<sup>2</sup>Stephen R. Halsey, *Quest for Power: European Imperialism and the Making of Chinese Statecraft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 95; *Beiliu xian zhi* 北流縣志 (1880), 3:8b, 7:18a–b; Takayanagi Shōichirō 高柳松一郎, *Zhongguo guanshui zhidu lun* 中國關稅制度論, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, vol. 735 (Taipei: Wenhai, 1972), 44.

<sup>3</sup>Consider the contrasting peripheralization of an interior region—the Yellow River–Grand Canal confluence—and integration of a peripheral region—Xinjiang—in the postwar era. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society, and Economy in Inland North China, 1853–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 122; James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 132–33.

reconnected to the imperial center through horizontal integration with its two neighboring provinces to the east.<sup>4</sup>

### Prewar Patterns

Hunanese and Cantonese diasporas expanded dramatically during and after the warfare of the mid-nineteenth century. In some older destinations, the cohorts gained new influence, for example Cantonese in the budding treaty port of Shanghai and Hunanese in the former Taiping capital of Nanjing.<sup>5</sup> Other destinations were novel ones, whether Australian goldfields for Cantonese or Xinjiang yamen for Hunanese.<sup>6</sup> Guangxi differed from these other destinations because of its geographical proximity to Hunan and Guangdong, the two routes by which the Qing empire and its predecessors had incorporated this southwestern province. The older route followed Hunan's Xiang River, a major tributary of the Yangzi, and via the Ling Canal in northeastern Guangxi connected to a tributary of Guangdong's West River (See [map 1](#)). Officials posted to Guangxi and civil service examinees traveling to the capital generally followed this route. From the sixteenth century, however, the West River had become an increasingly important route, the main economic link between Guangxi and more highly commercialized parts of the empire.

The two routes connecting Guangxi to political and economic cores shaped the spatial distribution of the two diasporic cohorts that dominated trade in the province. By the early nineteenth century, Cantonese controlled long-distance commerce at ports in the West River basin, covering most of the province, especially in eastern and southern Guangxi along the main corridor from Wuzhou to Xunzhou, but also far into the southwest. Hunanese had a strong presence in the northeastern corner of Guangxi, which included the provincial capital, Guilin, and their influence extended westward along the northern border with Guizhou. Cantonese and Hunanese trade diasporas met along the Li River, connecting Guilin with Wuzhou, and along the Liu River, linking Xunzhou to Liuzhou. Cantonese trade was centered on resource extraction: primarily rice to feed cash-cropping farmers in the Pearl River delta, but also timber and other mountain products. In northeastern Guangxi, Hunanese textile merchants and craftsmen dominated many market towns.<sup>7</sup>

Increasingly over the course of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, Cantonese and Hunanese migrants, both temporary and permanent, sought their fortunes in Guangxi; most migrants were males. Undergirding the network of elite Cantonese merchants extending their influence into the province were much larger numbers of apprentices, petty traders, shop owners, laborers, and boatmen. This

<sup>4</sup>On interprovincial integration, see Elisabeth Kaske, "Fund-Raising Wars: Office Selling and Interprovincial Finance in Nineteenth-Century China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 71.1 (2011), 73, 77.

<sup>5</sup>Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 59–62; Chuck Wooldridge, *City of Virtues: Nanjing in an Age of Utopian Visions* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 120.

<sup>6</sup>John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2007), chap. 3; Eric Schluessel, *Land of Strangers: The Civilizing Project in Qing Central Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), chap. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silk, and Silt: Environment and Economy in Late Imperial South China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 263–64; Zhong Wendian 钟文典, ed., *Guangxi jindai xuzhen yanjiu* 广西近代圩镇研究 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 1998), 68, 371–72.



MAP 1. Guangxi and the Hunanese and Cantonese Homelands<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>CHGIS, Version: 6. (c) Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies of Harvard University and the Center for Historical Geographical Studies at Fudan University, 2016.

riverine trajectory formed one of the largest Chinese trade diasporas in late imperial times, comparable to those associated with Shanxi caravan traders across the northern frontiers, Huizhou salt merchants in Jiangnan, and Hokkien overseas migrants.<sup>9</sup> Hunan merchants were generally not known as members of a powerful trade diaspora. Conversely, Jiangxi merchants dominated long-distance commerce in Hunan, transforming it into a major exporter of rice to supply Jiangnan. Thus, the bulk of trade in Hunan flowed northward along the Xiang and Zi Rivers to Lake Dongting, and down the Yangzi. Compilers of local gazetteers projected an image of Hunanese as rooted farmers who ceded commercial and industrial expertise to Jiangxi immigrants. Belying this image were Hunanese who migrated to the southwestern provinces as economic colonizers, parallel to Jiangxi merchants in the Hunanese homeland.<sup>10</sup> Although most of Guangxi served as a breadbasket for Guangdong, some rice-deficient areas relied on rice supply from Hunan, for example, Huaiyuan County in north-central Guangxi. By the early twentieth century, local sources in several locales note Hunanese craftsmen in various trades. The presence of Hunanese as stone carvers on commemorative stelae in Huaiyuan and elsewhere suggests that such craftsmen were already prominent in Guangxi during the prewar period.<sup>11</sup>

Cantonese and Hunanese diasporic formations thus converged in Guangxi. The Nanling Mountains separating Guangdong and Hunan inhibited large-scale direct trade between the two provinces. Consequently, Cantonese-Hunanese trade went through Guangxi, via the Ling Canal. In the prewar era, Hunanese rice, shipped through Guangxi, was only second in importance to Guangxi rice in supplying the Pearl River delta.<sup>12</sup>

Migrants from both provinces were active in Guangxi well before the mid-nineteenth-century wars. For example, genealogies of lineages in home communities of Hunan and Guangdong show lineage members active in Huaiyuan County. The genealogy of a lineage in Hunan's Xupu County, in Baoqing Prefecture, celebrates the deeds of Xiang Anyin 向安吟 (1777–1869) in caring for his migrant father and brothers. His two older brothers, born in 1765 and 1766, had moved to Guangxi as young adults. Xiang made annual trips in winter to visit them. Later, having received word that his father and eldest brother were sick in Guangxi, he went to care for them and after they died brought their coffins back from Huaiyuan. In 1839, Xiang convinced his second brother, then still in Guangxi, to return to Xupu, where they co-resided. This brother's wife presumably remained in Guangxi, as the genealogy notes that she was buried in Lingui County, seat of Guilin Prefecture, after her death. Their son, born 1807, established a family in Guangxi.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup>On trade diasporas, see Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2–3.

<sup>10</sup>Peter C. Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 93–94, 99–100, 112; Meng Zhang, “Financing Market-Oriented Reforestation: Securitization of Timberlands and Shareholding Practices in Southwest China, 1750–1900,” *Late Imperial China* 39.2 (2017), 112, 125.

<sup>11</sup>Zhong, *Guangxi jindai xuzhen yanjiu*, 163, 225–26; “Shuyuan beiji” 書院碑記 (1823), North Gate, Danzhou, Sanjiang, Guangxi.

<sup>12</sup>Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth*, 25; Chen Chunsheng 陈春声, *Shichang jizhi yu shehui bianqian: 18 shiji Guangdong mijia fenxi* 市场机制与社会变迁：18世纪广东米价分析 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin, 2010), 32.

<sup>13</sup>[Hunan Xupu] *Xiangshi zupu* 向氏族譜 (1877), 附恭廷公軼事 in biographies, and 584a–586a.

At roughly the same time as the Xiangs were active in Huaiyuan and Lingui, several members of a Guan lineage, based in Guangdong's Nanhai County, seat of Guangzhou Prefecture, were active in the market town of Guyi in northern Huaiyuan County near the Hunan border. Guan Fenglai 關鳳來 (1750–1816) traded in Guyi and was buried there after he died, though his wife was buried back in Nanhai after her death some fifteen years earlier. Their son followed his father to Guyi, where he married a Guyi woman and settled. That several other lineage members are recorded as having perished as merchants in Guyi in the late-eighteenth or early nineteenth century hints that others traded there and later returned home, in turn suggesting chain migration, sharing of information about opportunities, and a strategy of migration and economic specialization.<sup>14</sup>

Although the Hunanese Xiangs and Cantonese Guans were conceivably economic competitors in Huaiyuan, cooperation was possible. Donors identified with both provinces appear on a stele commemorating the 1794 renovation of Five Sages Temple (Wushenggong 五聖宮) in the market town of Pumiao. Located just below Nanning, this town lay within the Cantonese sphere of dominance. Nonetheless, names of at least nine donors from Hunan appear intermixed with their counterparts from the core Pearl River delta counties of Nanhai and Shunde.<sup>15</sup> Government documents generated by the Qing state's crackdown on secret societies in the early nineteenth century also show cooperation. For example, a Li Yonghuai 李泳懷 from Hengyang, seat of Hunan's Hengzhou Prefecture, was a petty trader in northeastern Guangxi's Gongcheng County. In the fall of 1815 Li heard from an acquaintance, Liang Laosan 梁老三, from the industrial town of Foshan, Nanhai, that Liang's nephew and several other men were forming a brotherhood. In an initiation ceremony, held in an abandoned temple with a makeshift altar enshrining Guandi 關帝, Li and Liang became the group's leaders.<sup>16</sup>

*Huiguan*, supporting wealthier members of the Cantonese and Hunanese diasporic cohorts in early nineteenth-century Guangxi, allow us to map out spheres of relative influence. A string of Yuedong huiguan covered most of Guangxi before the mid-century wars, radiating from Wuzhou to Longzhou below the Vietnam border, to Baise near the Yunnan border, to Liuzhou in north-central Guangxi. The most prominent *huiguan* in this network was outside Wuzhou at the market town of Rongxu, a major transshipment center for Guangxi rice to Guangdong. Converted from a Guandi temple in 1714, this *huiguan* underwent a major renovation in 1788. The hundreds of donors on the 1788 commemorative stele are categorized as locally based or as belonging to one of thirteen trade networks, each assigned designated dock space at Rongxu. Constituents of each trade network include Pearl River delta-based firms and firms clustered along particular West River tributaries in Guangxi. Of fifty-one firms in the Meicheng 美成 group, for instance, aside from a few identified with places in the delta, others are based in the Liu River corridor: ten at Guiping (seat of Xunzhou

<sup>14</sup>*Guanshi zupu* 關氏族譜 (1889), in *Beijing tushuguan cang jiapu congkan*, *Min Yue (qiaoxiang) juan* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan, 2000), vol. 27–28, 455, 1211–12, 1441.

<sup>15</sup>“Chongxiu Wushenggong miaoyu beiji” 重修五聖宮廟宇碑記 (1794), Wushenggong, Pumiao, Guangxi.

<sup>16</sup>Zhongguo renmin daxue Qingshi yanjiusuo and Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan, ed., *Tiandihui* 天地會 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin, 1988), vol. 7, 368–69. For a similar example, in Yangshuo in 1821, 399–400.

Prefecture), eight at Wuxuan, six at Xiangzhou, eleven at Liuzhou, and three at Guyi, where the Nanhai Guans were active.<sup>17</sup>

A distinct Cantonese network, covering northeastern Guangxi, was centered on the Yuedong huiguan at Pingle Prefecture, on the Li River. This *huiguan* existed since at least 1725, when its patrons claimed that it had originated in the late Ming as a Tianhou 天后 temple. On a set of stelae recording an 1815 renovation, like at Rongxu in 1788, patrons are categorized into one group with no locale indicated and another group whose constituents are organized geographically, beginning with a street at the prefectural seat and radiating outward to include most of the Li River and its tributaries. One subgroup is made up almost entirely of firms based in the delta: thirteen from Nanhai (seven of them specifically Foshan), ten from Xinhui County, and one each from Shunde and Panyu, the latter county sharing jurisdiction of Guangzhou with Nanhai. Another subgroup consists of fifty-four firms based at Shazi, a market town on the route linking Pingle with Gongcheng County, on the Hunan border.<sup>18</sup>

A smaller network of Hunan huiguan 湖南會館 was concentrated in northeastern Guangxi. The most prominent *huiguan*, located in Guilin, served Hunanese bureaucrats as well as merchants. It was originally founded in 1782 as an “academy” named after Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (Lianxi 濂溪), the Neo-Confucian icon and the only Hunanese to have received state canonization since the eleventh century.<sup>19</sup> A retired Hunanese official funded the creation of the academy, intended as a lodge for Hunanese serving as officials, many in Guilin awaiting assignment, and private secretaries. In 1798, Hunanese merchants enlarged this building, changing its name to Hunan huiguan. Among the expanded *huiguan* constituents, officials and private secretaries maintained their presence by designating the main hall as Lianxi Pavilion, and here annually sacrificing to Zhou Dunyi. In 1835 they raised money to maintain these rituals, under the *huiguan* constituency Lianxi Association. Donors for this project consisted of one group of twelve officials and another group of private secretaries. Among the officials, one was a former county magistrate, most were expectant officials in the provincial capital awaiting appointments or duty assignments, and others were sub-officials, that is, holders of county, department, or prefectural posts below magistrate or prefect. Of the eight officials whose native place I can identify, seven hailed from the three prefectures of northeastern Hunan: Yuezhou, Changde, and the provincial capital prefecture, Changsha. Thus, though now sharing this native-place association with merchants, Hunanese maintained a large enough niche within the Guangxi bureaucracy to make their Lianxi Association viable.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup>“Chongjian Yuedong huiguan beiji” 重建粵東會館碑記 (1788), Yuedong huiguan, Longxu, Wuzhou, Guangxi; Mai Sijie 麥思杰, “Cong liangtong ‘Chongjian Yuedong huiguan timing beiji’ kan Qingdai Rongxu de shangye” 從兩通《重建粵東會館題名碑記》看清代戎墟的商業, *South China Research Resource Station Newsletter* 38 (January 2005): 1–19.

<sup>18</sup>“Chongxiu huiguan bing xitai beiji” 重修會館並戲臺碑記 (1815), Yuedong huiguan, Pingle, Guangxi.

<sup>19</sup>Stephen R. Platt, *Provincial Patriots: The Hunanese and Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>20</sup>“Lianxi hui beiji” 濂溪會碑記 (1835), Qixing gongyuan, Guilin, Guangxi; *Luchuan xian zhi* 陸川縣志 (1924), 7:16a; *Shanhua xian zhi* 善化縣志 (1877), 22:2a; *Pingjiang xian zhi* 平江縣志 (1874), 43:17a; *Wugang zhou zhi* 武岡州志 (1873), 43:3b; *Baling xian zhi* 巴陵縣志 (1872), 16:37b; *Changsha xian zhi* 長沙縣志 (1871), 22:28b, 65b; *Qingdai jinshen lu jicheng* 清代縉紳錄集成, edited by Institute for History of Science and Technology and Ancient Texts, Qinghua University Library (Zhengzhou: Daxiang, 2008), hereafter QDJSLC, vol. 10, 399.

Due to the Qing law of avoidance, officials were necessarily extra-provincials—Guangxi natives could not hold such posts. Yet Hunanese by no means dominated the lower levels of Qing bureaucracy in Guangxi before mid-century. On a published list of officials holding substantive appointments, as opposed to acting (*shu* 署) or interim (*dai* 代) appointments, in the winter of 1848–49, there are 122 subordinate department and county posts.<sup>21</sup> Of these, Hunanese held only three (2.46 percent), compared to at least eighteen (14.75 percent) sub-officials from Zhejiang, nine of them from Shanyin County alone, home to the largest regional cohort of sub-officials and private secretaries. In addition, another twenty-nine were registered residents of the imperial capital prefecture, Shuntian, many of whom in turn likely had Zhejiang origins.<sup>22</sup>

This pattern of Zhejiang dominance would not hold, partly due to the high turnover in officials and sub-officials as a direct result of the warfare. For example, one of the nine Shanyin men on the 1848–49 list was a sub-department magistrate in Xiangzhou who would be killed along with his two sons when the Taiping army entered the area in 1851.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, two of the Hunanese listed here would during and after the warfare of the 1850s rise to become magistrate of He County in northeastern Guangxi. One of these Hunanese was a donor on the 1835 Lianxi Association stele.<sup>24</sup> A *jiansheng* from Changsha, in the early 1840s he served as a sub-department magistrate in Xiangzhou and at a corresponding post in far western Guangxi in the late 1840s, before being appointed as He County magistrate in 1856, during the fighting. Another one of the three Hunanese on the winter 1848–49 list is Yan Zhengqi 嚴正圻, a *jiansheng* from Xupu County, serving as a sub-county magistrate in Yishan County. By 1862, he was magistrate of He County.<sup>25</sup>

Even before the mid-century wars, then, Cantonese and Hunanese diasporic formations were expanding, as sojourning merchants extended their commercial networks and bureaucratic labor migrants carved out lengthy careers. Rather than disrupting this pattern, the mid-century wars and Qing reconstruction would provide unprecedented opportunities for further expansion.

### Cantonese Rebels and Hunanese Mercenaries: The Mid-Century Wars in Guangxi

The rebellions that shook Guangxi in the 1850s were largely led by groups of people who could be considered members of a migrant Cantonese underclass. Most familiar are the founders of the Taiping regime. Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 and other leaders from Hakka villages north of Guangzhou recruited followers from among Hakka migrants and their descendants in the mountains of Xunzhou Prefecture. The early stages of the Taiping–Qing war consisted of campaigns in the Xunzhou area and the Taiping occupation of Yongzhou Department, before the failed Taiping siege of Guilin in April 1852 and subsequent advance along the Xiang River and eventually

<sup>21</sup>I exclude sixteen officials whose names are illegible or not given, as well as subordinate officials for independent departments and native chieftaincies.

<sup>22</sup>QDJSJLC, vol. 19, 345–51; James H. Cole, *Shaohsing: Competition and Cooperation in Nineteenth-Century China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 104; 118–29.

<sup>23</sup>Su Fengwen 蘇鳳文, *Guangxi zhaozhong lu* 廣西昭忠錄 (1889), 1:13a.

<sup>24</sup>Zuo Shiju 左世渠.

<sup>25</sup>QDJSJLC, vol. 16, 185, vol. 19, 348; *Hexian zhi* 賀縣志 (1934), 3:20b–21a.



to Nanjing, the Taiping capital from 1853 to 1864.<sup>26</sup> The Taiping campaign through Hunan set in motion the creation of the Hunan Army, which would later lead the Qing reconquest of Guangxi and other parts of the empire, from Jiangnan to Xinjiang.

In Guangxi, after the departure of the Taipings, the main threat to Qing rule was posed by the Dacheng regime, founded in central Guangxi by a coalition of Cantonese Triads, Cantonese river pirates, and Guangxi local strongmen. The regime originated downriver with 1854 Triad uprisings in which rebels occupied much of the Pearl River delta and laid siege to Guangzhou.<sup>27</sup> After abandoning the siege, in May 1855 Triad forces moved upriver, and in September they captured the seat of Xunzhou Prefecture, making it the capital of their new regime. Atop this regime sat five Cantonese kings, including the primary leaders of the delta uprising, Chen 陳開 and Li Wenmao 李文茂, and a Cantonese river pirate already operating in Guangxi, Liang Peiyou 梁培友. From Xunzhou, strategically located at the intersection of navigable rivers linking most of Guangxi, Dacheng forces advanced in multiple directions. Li Wenmao led an army upriver, conquering Liuzhou in March 1857 and pushing into Huaiyuan County. To the east, forces under Liang Peiyou and Chen Kai took Wuzhou in September 1857, and then advanced northward along the Li River, capturing Pingle in May 1858. The two Dacheng armies now converged on Guilin, threatening to occupy the entire province.<sup>28</sup>

Both within the delta and in Guangxi, some Cantonese elites, including degree-holders, supported Chen Kai's uprising. Most leaders of the uprising, however, generally represent relatively marginalized, underclass Cantonese. Chen Kai, Li Wenmao, and Liang Peiyou hailed from Heshan County, on the south side of the West River, a county whose residents formed a small minority of merchants in Cantonese commercial networks in Guangxi. Many of these leaders were also already highly mobile on the West River, as boatmen, laborers, mercenaries, or pirates. As an important node in commercial networks, Xunzhou was a natural base for a Cantonese rebel regime, and throughout the prefecture rebels found ready recruits in the Cantonese diasporic underclass.<sup>29</sup> Conversely, Cantonese commercial elites became targets for extortion and violence. A year or so before he joined the Dacheng regime, the Cantonese pirate Liang Peiyou submitted a demand to the Yuedong huiguan at Wuzhou that constituent shops pay ten thousand taels for protection against plunder by Liang's forces.<sup>30</sup> When Pingle fell to rebels, a woman from Guangdong's Gaoming County married to the son of one of the main patrons of the 1815 Yuedong huiguan renovation committed suicide reportedly (and conventionally in postwar martyrologies) after she berated the rebels.<sup>31</sup> Thus, although the Hunanese-led Qing reconquest of Guangxi involved the suppression of a Cantonese rebel regime, there were nonetheless many opportunistic

<sup>26</sup>Jen Yu-wen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 64, 76–77.

<sup>27</sup>Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839–1861* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 139–48.

<sup>28</sup>*Pingle xian zhi* 平樂縣志 (1884) 6:33a–b; Qin Baoqi 秦宝琦, *Zhongguo dixia shehui* 中国地下社会, vol. 2, *Wan Qing mimi shehui* 晚清秘密社会 (Beijing: Xueyuan, 2009), 182–83.

<sup>29</sup>E.g., *Guixian zhi* 貴縣志 (1894), 6:7b–8a, 8:22b.

<sup>30</sup>Foreign Office: Kwangtung Provincial Archives, held at the National Archives, Kew, London, Great Britain, FO 931/1487. For matching the “Guangdong huiguan” in this document with the “Yuedong huiguan,” *Cangwu xian zhi* 蒼梧縣志 (1941), 5:42a–b.

<sup>31</sup>*Gaoming xian zhi* 高明縣志 (1894), 13:97a; “Chongxiu huiguan bing xitai beiji.” On postwar martyrologies, see Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in Nineteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 135, 164–65.

members of the Cantonese elite and underclass willing to cast their fortunes with the Qing.

In the suppression of the Dacheng regime and in its aftermath, imperial control over Guangxi was achieved along the two routes by which Hunanese and Cantonese had extended their influence in Guangxi during the prewar period: via the Ling Canal into northeastern Guangxi and along the West River into southeastern Guangxi. As Guilin became vulnerable to attack in the summer of 1857, two Hunanese mercenary forces moved into Guangxi, Jiang Zhongjun 江忠濬 leading southwestern Hunanese “Chu braves” (Chu *yong* 楚勇) and Jiang Yili 蔣益澧 commanding eastern Hunanese “Xiang braves” (Xiang *yong* 湘勇).<sup>32</sup> After shoring up defense of the provincial capital, these two distinct Hunanese forces, now designated as “armies” (*jun* 軍), set out to attack the Dacheng regime on two fronts. The Chu Army advanced into Huaiyuan County and the Liu River basin, preparing to attack Xunzhou via Liuzhou. Commanding this army was Xinning County native Liu Changyou 劉長佑, who would through this military campaign rise through the Guangxi bureaucracy as provincial judge, lieutenant governor, and, by 1860, governor. Liu largely relegated field command duties to fellow Xinning native Liu Kunyi 劉坤一, who would become the Guangxi lieutenant governor in 1862. The Xiang Army would move downstream along the Li River to recover Wuzhou, and then turn upstream along the main trunk of the West River to attack Xunzhou from the east. Leading this army was Xiangxiang County native Jiang Yili, who held the position of provincial judge. On this front, one of Jiang’s most important tasks was to open and maintain the primary economic link into Guangxi, the riverine route from Guangdong via Wuzhou.<sup>33</sup>

The British-French occupation of Guangzhou during the Second Opium War and the 1859 incursions into Guangxi of a Taiping army under Shi Dakai 石達開 delayed the Qing campaign against the Dacheng regime. When the Hunanese armies were able to turn their full attention to this campaign, it proceeded quickly, along the same two riverine routes by which the Dacheng regime had expanded. In the spring of 1861, Jiang Yili’s Xiang Army, supported by Cantonese braves and naval forces from Guangdong, pushed from Wuzhou upriver toward Xunzhou from the east, while Liu Kunyi’s Chu Army recovered Liuzhou and advanced toward Xunzhou from the northwest. On the main trunk of the West River, a decisive victory in a naval battle, in which Cantonese forces played a key role, paved the way for the Qing recovery of Xunzhou on August 21.<sup>34</sup> Over the next five years, Liu Changyou and his fellow Chu Army commanders led mopping-up operations against Dacheng remnants and their Guangxi supporters.<sup>35</sup>

The Qing reconquest of Guangxi was Hunanese-led; however, it relied on supplies from both Hunan and Guangdong, and Guangdong naval units played a crucial role in the riverine campaign. Because Wuzhou had long been a key site for taxing riverine trade, it was a natural location to administer the new commercial tax, the *lijin*, which in

<sup>32</sup>Su Fengwen 蘇鳳文, *Ping Gui jilue* 平桂紀略 (1889), 2:11b; Wang Kaiyun 王闈運, *Xiangjun zhi* 湘軍志 (Taipei: Wenyuan, 1964), 12:2a–b; Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 114.

<sup>33</sup>Liu Changyou 劉長佑, *Liu Wushen gong (Changyou) yishu* 劉武慎公 (長佑) 遺書, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, vol. 245–50 (Taipei: Wenhai, 1974), 1:8a, 2:44a; Su, *Ping Gui jilue*, 4:3b.

<sup>34</sup>Jian Youwen (Jen Yu-wen) 簡又文, *Taiping tianguo quanshi* 太平天國全史 (Kowloon: Mengjin shuwu, 1962), vol. 2, 938.

<sup>35</sup>Liu Changyou, *Yishu*, 1:7a; *Xinning xian zhi* 新甯縣志 (1893), 26:42a.

turn supported the Qing suppression of rebellion and maintenance of order thereafter. In the 1850s, a station to administer the *lijin* at Wuzhou was monthly collecting some twenty thousand taels, nearly half the money needed to support the Xiang Army in Guangxi for a month in 1861. Guangdong, along with Hunan, continued to be an important financial resource for the conquest of the Dacheng regime in the early 1860s.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the Hunanese and Cantonese diasporic cohorts were poised to expand their interests in Guangxi during the postwar period.

## Diasporic Cohorts and State Building in Postwar Guangxi

### *Colonizing the Provincial Administration*

In the postwar era, Hunanese and Cantonese became the preeminent cohorts among officials, sub-officials, and private secretaries within the Qing bureaucracy in Guangxi. In the process, the families and emigrant communities from which they came developed strategies based on the export of male migrants with specialized skills.<sup>37</sup> Shaoxing Prefecture, particularly Shanyin County, largely monopolized this niche in many locales during the prewar period; however, war and reconstruction created opportunities in Guangxi for Hunanese and Cantonese. Many of them built decades-long careers in the province as expectant officials staffing the bureaus that proliferated in the postwar era and performed state functions ranging from collecting the new commercial tax, the *lijin*, to enforcing social order.

Like other kinds of migrants, most Hunanese and Cantonese who staffed the Qing bureaucracy in Guangxi made decisions to spend long periods of time away from home in the interest of opportunities for socioeconomic advancement, ranging from the prestige attached to even minor offices to the profits derived from extralegal surcharges.<sup>38</sup> As with other kinds of migrants, chance might determine their destinations, in this case the vicissitudes of a military campaign or evolving state policies for assigning bureaucrats to specific provinces. Nonetheless, choice became an increasingly important factor in determining where a bureaucrat would serve. Because it was more proximate and thus more familiar than such emerging destinations as Xinjiang or Australia, Guangxi provided a place where bureaucrats would find many fellow provincials developing economic and family ties between Guangxi and emigrant communities in Hunan and Guangdong.

Hunanese and Cantonese initially filled voids in the Guangxi bureaucracy during the expedencies of reconquest and reconstruction. The two cohorts were especially prominent in Xinning Department (not to be confused with Hunan's Xinning County), in the southwestern prefecture of Nanning. The Xinning magistrate perished when rebel forces captured the department seat in 1860. He was followed by a succession of sixteen magistrates on interim or acting appointments. Half of them are identified as men of Guangdong, two of them as Hunan men.<sup>39</sup> Their careers reveal opportunities to rise

<sup>36</sup>Liu Changyou, *Yishu*, 1:8b.

<sup>37</sup>G. William Skinner, "Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China: A Regional Systems Analysis," in Carol A. Smith, ed., *Regional Analysis*, Volume I: *Economic Systems* (New York: Academic Press, 1976), 335.

<sup>38</sup>Robert J. Antony, "Subcounty Officials, the State, and Local Communities in Guangdong Province, 1644–1860," in *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China*, edited by Robert J. Antony and Jane Kate Leonard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 41.

<sup>39</sup>*Xinning zhou zhi* 新寧州志 (1878), 3:13a–b.

through war and early reconstruction by means of office purchase and military merit. The first successor to the martyred magistrate was Shunde County native Liang Ruitang 梁瑞堂, as interim magistrate in 1861. This appointment was one step in a trajectory that took Liang from sub-official to official, a rare occurrence in the prewar era.<sup>40</sup> A holder of the purchased *jiansheng* degree, in 1850 Liang arrived in Guilin as an expectant prefecture commissary of records (*jingli* 經歷). Appointed commissary of records for Pingle Prefecture in the summer of 1851, Liang did not take up his post until a year later, after Taiping armies had left the area on their march into Hunan.<sup>41</sup> Over the next several years, Liang served as interim magistrate of three jurisdictions in southwestern Guangxi, including Xinning. For his efforts in suppressing rebels in the southwest nominally loyal to the Dacheng regime, Liang won recommendation for promotion to the substantive post of county magistrate. Liang received appointment as Tianbao County magistrate, arriving at the post in 1870. In this capacity, he would donate 7.2 taels for renovation of the Yuedong huiguan at Baise. By the early 1880s, Liang was in Baise as first class sub-prefect, capping a career in Guangxi of over three decades.<sup>42</sup>

In 1866–67, another Cantonese with Shunde origins, Huang Zhilin 黃趾麟, served as interim magistrate of Xinning Department. Huang was part of the preexisting Cantonese diaspora in Guangxi; in the summer of 1860 he led a local militia at a market town in Luorong County east of Liuzhou. Impressed with Huang's role in repulsing a rebel attack, Liu Changyou recruited Huang into his camp, where he helped to secure Xunzhou after its recapture from the Dacheng regime. While serving as Liu's deputy, Huang accumulated minor ranks of office, and eventually landed in the Xinning post.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the Cantonese Huang gained office through military merit, the Hunanese Li Yingqian 李應乾, a tribute student from Hengyang County, purchased his way into office. Li appears under the county magistrate category on a list of administrators who had purchased office and been assigned in September–October 1873 on a probationary basis (*shiyong* 試用) to Guangxi. In 1875, he became acting magistrate of Xinning.<sup>44</sup>

After these sixteen interim and acting magistrates, the first substantive appointment, in early 1877, went to Dai Huannan 戴煥南, of Ningxiang County, Changsha Prefecture. Eighteen years earlier, Dai had joined a Hunan Army unit led by a fellow Ningxiang native, as had at some point Huannan's younger brother and other lineage members.<sup>45</sup> After relieving Shi Dakai's siege of Baoqing Prefecture and subsequent campaigns in Gansu and Sichuan, this force entered Guizhou in 1870 to suppress the Miao rebellions. In this campaign, Dai became magistrate of the southeastern county of Qingping for his role in conquering the county seat. After completing his term, a transfer to another Guizhou magistracy was pending, but Dai's brother had been recommended to the higher-ranking post of prefect in Guizhou. Due to the

<sup>40</sup>Antony, "Subcounty Officials," 39–40.

<sup>41</sup>*Like tiben* 吏科題本, held at First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, 11786–039/GX2.8.5; *QD/SLJC*, vol. 23, 307.

<sup>42</sup>*Like tiben*, 11786–039/GX2.8.5; *Junjichu quanzong* 軍機處全宗, held at First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, 4650–009/TZ8.9.25; *Xinning zhou zhi*, 273; *Zhen'an fu zhi* 鎮安府志 (1892), 4:44a; *QD/SLJC*, vol. 30, 194, vol. 37, 515; *Baise ting zhi* 百色廳志 (1891), 6:38b; "Chongxiu Yuedong huiguan beiji."

<sup>43</sup>Fieldnotes, Zhongdu, Luzhai, Guangxi, July 3, 2017; Liu Changyou, *Yishu*, 1:36a, 3:22b, 42a; *Shunde xian zhi* 順德縣志 (1929), 10:2b; *Xinning zhou zhi*, 273–274.

<sup>44</sup>*QD/SLJC*, vol. 33, 509; *Hunan tongzhi* 湖南通志 (1885), 151:23a.

<sup>45</sup>The Ningxiang native who led this force was Zhou Dawu 周達武.

Qing state's law of avoidance, as the brother holding the lower bureaucratic rank, Dai Huannan would have to serve in a different province, and hence was reassigned to Guangxi. After an acting appointment as magistrate of Fuchuan County in 1875–76, Dai took up the Xinning post in 1877. His nine years at this post brought both stability to Qing administration of the department and opportunity for Dai to create a record of accomplishment, aided by his role in supervising compilation of the department gazetteer. Presumably it was also during his stint in Xinning that Dai married his second wife, some twenty years his junior and the daughter of a Nanning Prefecture school student. After another posting in Guangxi, Dai left the service in 1890 and retired to Ningxiang.<sup>46</sup>

Like many of their compatriots, these four Cantonese and Hunanese magistrates in the 1860s and 1870s arrived at Xinning through a combination of military merit and office purchase. In the immediate postwar era, the former factor was crucial, and as a result the progression of military campaigns shaped bureaucratic careers. After the Qing order in Guangxi stabilized, during the Guangxu era (1875–1908), the latter factor became more important, allowing Cantonese and Hunanese to expand their presence in the lower echelons of the Guangxi bureaucracy.

Seasonal lists of officials in the Qing bureaucracy reveal that Guangdong and Hunan men held a fluctuating and moderately disproportionate number of magistrate posts at the county/department level, with Hunanese tending to hold more. For example, in the summer of 1888, of 44 identifiable county and department magistrates, only 3 were from Guangdong, compared to 6 (13.64 percent) from Hunan. For the spring of 1908, of 59 such posts, 11 (18.64 percent) magistrates were from Guangdong, compared to 9 from Hunan, though, above this level, Hunanese accounted for 2 of 10 identifiable prefects, the only independent subprefecture head, and 1 of the 2 independent department magistrates.<sup>47</sup> These two provincial cohorts, especially the Cantonese, held a consistently and disproportionately high number of sub-official posts by the closing decades of the Qing. Lists for sub-officials in subordinate department and county posts in the winter of 1893–94 and fall 1897 illustrate this pattern (Table 1).<sup>48</sup>

Local sources from emigrant communities in Hunan and Guangdong suggest that bureaucratic service in Guangxi became an important means of socioeconomic advancement for particular Hunanese and Cantonese locales and lineages, seizing expanded opportunities that the Qing reconsolidation of Guangxi provided. The 1893 gazetteer of Xinning County, home of the Chu Army leaders Liu Changyou and Liu Kunyi, contains a long list of native sons who were assigned to other provinces as local officials and sub-officials, many of them in Guangxi. Of these, some rose through military merit, such as one who in 1876 served as acting sub-department magistrate of Yulin, neighboring Beiliu. Others are identified as *jiansheng*, suggesting that they purchased office, such as one who was acting magistrate of Tianbao County in 1880.<sup>49</sup> In fact, the two newly prominent paths to office—military merit and office

<sup>46</sup>QDJSLC, vol. 38, 359; [Hunan Ningyuan] *Daishi zongpu* 戴氏宗譜 (1936), 2下:東田甫房世系錄:3a–b, 5:9a–10a; *Ningxiang xian zhi* 寧鄉縣志 (1941), biographies, 45:5b; *Fuchuan xian zhi* 富川縣志 (1890), 4:6b; Jen, *Taiiping Revolutionary Movement*, 309–10; Robert D. Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou: The “Miao” Rebellion, 1854–1873* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 158.

<sup>47</sup>These counts (of 44 and 59) exclude illegible/omitted names, native chieftaincies, and independent departments and subprefectures. QDJSLC, vol. 48, 413–19, vol. 85, 409–15.

<sup>48</sup>QDJSLC, vol. 54, 384–90, vol. 61, 404–10.

<sup>49</sup>*Xinning xian zhi*, 5:20a, 25b; *Yulin zhou zhi* 鬱林州志 (1894), 10:25b; *Zhen'an fu zhi*, 4:48a.

**Table 1:** Sub-county/Sub-department Officials in Guangxi: Largest Provincial Cohorts

Winter 1893–94		Fall 1897	
Province of origin	Number of posts	Province of origin	Number of posts
Guangdong	34	Guangdong	32
Hunan	21	Hunan	21
Jiangxi	13	Zhejiang	15
Zhejiang	12	Sichuan	13
Sichuan	11	Shuntian	8
Shuntian	9	Jiangxi	8

purchase—were often used in tandem, as editors of the 1877 gazetteer of Shanhua County, based at the seat of Changsha Prefecture, acknowledge in their list of Shanhua men who attained substantive appointments through these means. They observe that since the military mobilization of the Xianfeng era (1851–61), among the numerous people in this category, some first purchased (*juan* 捐) office and were later recommended (*bao* 保) based on meritorious achievements, while others utilized the office purchase system after having already been recommended; difficulty in distinguishing between the two paths compelled editors to place them in a single category.<sup>50</sup> Through these two pathways to office, aspiring officials combined opportunistic circumstances and investment strategies.

In Guangdong, the prosperous, core county of Shunde became a surprising source of lower-level administrative personnel. Previously, during late-Ming times, followed by a relative decline in the eighteenth century, the peripheral delta county of Gaoming had specialized in channeling its native sons into the Guangxi sub-bureaucracy. Gaoming revived this strategy during the nineteenth century, but in the postwar era Shunde families newly embraced it.<sup>51</sup> The 1929 Shunde gazetteer includes a list of county natives who, since compilation of the 1853 edition of the gazetteer, served as civilian administrators by paths (primarily office purchase and military merit) other than the “regular route” of the civil service examinations. Within this category, of twenty-four who served as magistrates, seven were assigned to Guangxi. Among a total of twenty-seven sub-county magistrates (*xunjian* 巡檢) listed, fourteen served in Guangxi, as did nine of nineteen county jail wardens (*dianshi* 典史) listed.<sup>52</sup> For Shunde, the proportion of magistrates assigned to Guangxi as opposed to other provinces was unprecedented during the Qing, suggesting that the postwar Qing state acquiesced to Cantonese serving as officials in a province colonized by Cantonese commerce. Equally notable is the fact that a place like Shunde now celebrated the careers of native sons who served as sub-officials.

<sup>50</sup>*Shanhua xian zhi*, 22:1a.

<sup>51</sup>Steven B. Miles, *Upriver Journeys: Diaspora and Empire in Southern China, 1570–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 66; and *ibid.*, *Opportunity in Crisis: Cantonese Migrants and the State in Late Qing China*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2021), chap. three.

<sup>52</sup>*Shunde xian zhi*, 10:1a–8b. On the “regular” vs. “irregular” routes to office, see T’ung-tsu Ch’ü, *Local Government in China under the Ch’ing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 18–19.

Shunde natives in the sub-bureaucracy included members of one eminent family, direct descendants of the Hanlin academician and wealthy landowner Long Tinghuai 龍廷槐 (1749–1827). In the postwar era, ten of Tinghuai's descendants pursued careers as sub-officials in provinces neighboring Guangdong: two in Jiangxi, three in Fujian, and five in Guangxi.<sup>53</sup> For example, in 1882, one of Tinghuai's great-grandsons, the *jiansheng* Long Mingxun 龍銘勳, became the jail warden of Gui County, south of Xunzhou, a post he held off and on into the 1890s. For Mingxun the title of this post was prestigious enough for him to request that it be granted to an uncle to whom Mingxun had been posthumously assigned as heir. By the end of the century, Mingxun was serving at the corresponding post in Luorong County, a post he held for years.<sup>54</sup> In the next generation, at least three of Long Tinghuai's descendants, all of them *jiansheng*, worked in Guangxi as acting sub-officials, one as a jail warden and the other two as sub-county magistrates.<sup>55</sup> For these postwar offspring of an eminent Shunde scholar-official, sub-officialdom had become a family strategy.<sup>56</sup>

As was the case during the Qing reconquest, in later decades patronage may have helped to extend the Guangxi careers of administrative staff. Since the eighteenth century, Guangxi governors had enjoyed the power to transfer both magistrates and sub-officials to politically sensitive posts in “miasmic” places in western Guangxi. Patronage of provincial officials likely explains why, in the 1890s, a father and son in a different branch of the Shunde Long lineage both had their careers extended when, after having served as sub-county magistrates at jurisdictions in eastern Guangxi, they were transferred to corresponding posts on the western Guangxi frontier.<sup>57</sup>

As central as Hunanese were in the reconquest of Guangxi, they did not dominate the postwar provincial administration in the way that they did in other parts of the empire. That said, Liu Changyou's patronage was key during his terms of governor in 1860–1862, amidst the reconquest, and in 1871–1875, during the second decade of reconstruction. For the remainder of the nineteenth century, no other Hunanese served as Guangxi governor. But the lieutenant governor played a key role in evaluations of officials that determined their chances of transfer or promotion to other posts within the province. Two Xinning, Hunan natives held this post through most of the first decade of revived Qing rule—Liu Kunyi in 1862–1865 and the early leader of Chu Braves, Jiang Zhongjun, in 1867–1869. Their immediate successor was Cantonese, a Nanhai County native who served until 1872. Shared provincial origins

<sup>53</sup>[Shunde Daliang] *Longshi zupu* 龍氏族譜 (1922), 14:33b–34a, 48a; *QDJSLJC*, vol. 54, 327–33, 343–51; *Shunde xian zhi*, 10:5b, 6b, 7b.

<sup>54</sup>*Longshi zupu*, 14:34a; *QDJSLJC*, vol. 44, 198, vol. 51, 205, vol. 66, 402, vol. 85, 410; *Shunde xian zhi*, 10:7b.

<sup>55</sup>*Longshi zupu*, 14:1a–b, 44a–b, 49b–50a, 66a, 74a; *Shunde xian zhi*, 10:6a–b; *Zhaoping xian zhi* 昭平縣志 (1934), 4:19a.

<sup>56</sup>Elisabeth Kaske, “The Price of an Office: Venality, the Individual and the State in 19th Century China,” in *Metals, Monies, and Markets in Early Modern Societies: East Asian and Global Perspectives*, edited by Thomas Hirzel and Nanny Kim (Berlin: Lit, 2008), 302–3.

<sup>57</sup>*QDJSLJC*, vol. 39, 214, vol. 44, 195, vol. 51, 203, vol. 51, 384, vol. 61, 405, vol. 64, 229, vol. 66, 403; *Longshi zupu*, 17:12b, 23a; *Shunde xian zhi*, 10:6b; R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China 1644–1796* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 98–99; Zhang Zhenguo 张振国, “Qingdai difang zuozha guan xuanren zhidu zhi biange” 清代地方佐杂官选任制度之变革, *Lishi dang'an* 3 (2008), 64–65.

were perhaps a factor in the 1890s, when the Cantonese Huang Huaisen 黃槐森 was lieutenant governor from 1892 to 1895, and governor from 1897 to 1901. Two Hunanese held the lieutenant governor post for all but six months between 1895 and 1900.<sup>58</sup> Less visibly but conceivably more crucially, yamen staff orchestrated appointments of fellow provincials. In an 1884 memorial, a Guangxi native serving as a censor charged that members of a Huang 黃 lineage based in Guangdong's Zhaoqing Prefecture monopolized two sections of clerkships in the office of personnel within the yamen of the Guangxi lieutenant governor. Furthermore, he claimed, these Huangs accepted bribes for manipulating the lists of officials upon which the lieutenant governor made recommendations for appointment, which in turn were forwarded to the governor.<sup>59</sup>

The most important factor in channeling Hunanese and Cantonese administrators to Guangxi in the last four decades of Qing rule was the increasingly elaborate office-purchase system, particularly the new option of choosing the province of assignment. To meet the fiscal demands of military reconquest of much of the empire in the 1850s, the ensuing reconstruction, and, in the 1880s, the Sino-French War and Yellow River floods, the Qing state expanded and renewed a series of donation campaigns whereby aspiring officials could purchase the *jiansheng* degree and various shortcuts to office.<sup>60</sup> Under these measures, many aspiring officials purchased the option of being sent to the provinces on "informal assignment" (*fenfa* 分發), as an unsalaried expectant official. Informal assignment provided opportunities for income through various temporary duty assignments in the numerous government bureaus that proliferated in the late-nineteenth century. Consequently, purchase of informal assignment became an especially popular form of office purchase.<sup>61</sup> There were hundreds and in some cases thousands of expectant officials in each of the provincial capitals awaiting duty assignments or appointments to posts.<sup>62</sup> An additional policy adjustment, perhaps initiated in the 1850s but fully implemented in the 1860s, opened a path for men who had already purchased assignment to a randomly selected province as additional personnel to purchase the bonus of choosing the particular province (*zhisheng* 指省) to which they would be assigned.<sup>63</sup>

The presence of Hunanese and Cantonese in the lower echelons of the Qing administration in Guangxi, many of them in careers that spanned decades, in and of itself represents an important migrant trajectory, even if most did not permanently settle in the province. Beyond this, administrative personnel overlapped with fellow provincials who represented contemporary diasporic trajectories. Migrants from particular emigrant communities in Hunan or Guangdong targeting specific destinations in Guangxi shaped these trajectories. Take for example Hunan's Xupu County. We have seen

<sup>58</sup>You Zhikai 游智開 and Li Xingrui 李興銳. Qian Shifu 錢實甫, *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao* 清代職官年表 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 2, 1703–1739, vol. 3, 1926–1959; Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces*, 91–93.

<sup>59</sup>*Junjichu dang* 軍機處檔, held at National Palace Museum, Taipei, 127447/GX10.R5.7.

<sup>60</sup>Kaske, "Fund-Raising Wars," 87; Xu Daling 許大齡, *Qingdai juanna zhidu* 清代捐納制度 (Beijing: Hafo Yanjing xueshe, 1950), 76.

<sup>61</sup>Kaske, "Fund-Raising Wars," 84, 100.

<sup>62</sup>Pierre-Étienne Will, "Expectant Officials in Provincial Capitals in the Nineteenth Century," revised version of unpublished "Being an Official: The Sale of Public Offices and Its Effects in Comparative Perspective," paper presented at the Harvard Fairbank Center Workshop, April 25, 2009, 20. Many thanks to Professor Will for sharing this paper with me.

<sup>63</sup>Kaske, "The Price of an Office," 294–295; Xu, *Qingdai juanna zhidu*, 90.



Xiang Anyin's family active in Guangxi's Huaiyuan County in the prewar era. Soon after, Xupu native Xia Yongshun 夏永順 followed his father in moving to Yongfu County in the mountains between Guilin and Liuzhou, and then further moved to reclaim land in eastern Rong County, between Liuzhou and Huaiyuan. When in 1857 bandits invaded the area, Xia led a militia in fending off two attacks, an act for which he received an honorary title. During war and reconstruction, several Xupu natives served as officials in Huaiyuan and Rong. One *jiansheng* who purchased 9b rank in 1860 was acting jail warden, and then substantive sub-county magistrate of Huaiyuan. At some point, most likely in the 1860s, a Xupu *jiansheng* who purchased the post of county registrar (*zhubu* 主簿) served as Huaiyuan assistant magistrate, stationed at Guyi. When he died in office, his wife and son transported his coffin back to Xupu.<sup>64</sup>

Yan Zhengqi, one of the three Hunanese on the winter 1848–49 list discussed above, in 1867 served as magistrate of Rong County, where residents remembered him as Yan the Flayer for his avariciousness and brutality. In the following decade, Yan's landsman Xiang Xianjun 向先濬 held the post of Huaiyuan County magistrate. Xiang began his career as a protégé of Xupu native Yan Zhengji 嚴正基, son of the famed strategist Yan Ruyi 嚴如煜 and likely a cousin of Yan Zhengqi, when Zhengji was in charge of logistics in Qing fighting against the Taipings in the early 1850s. In 1859, Xiang won military merit in the defense of Baoqing Prefecture against Shi Dakai's Taiping army. Xiang was appointed as magistrate of Xiuren County in eastern Guangxi, before reassignment to Huaiyuan in 1874. There, at least in Xupu records, Xiang won great acclaim for preventing the imminent slaughter of villagers in one area wrongly accused of a crime, such that "when merchants from Xupu arrive in Guangxi, people still ceaselessly spoke of" Xiang's act. Together, the subjects of these scattered accounts, from Xia Yongshun to later sojourning merchants, suggest a migrant "groove" between Xupu and the neighboring Guangxi counties of Huaiyuan and Rong.<sup>65</sup>

If Hunanese assigned to northern Guangxi posts found fellow provincials in their jurisdictions, Cantonese serving in most Guangxi jurisdictions, but especially along the rivers in eastern, central, and southern Guangxi, encountered many more of their landsmen. And when one Cantonese among the hundreds of expectant officials awaiting duty assignments was placed in charge of *lijin* collection, he worked closely with the fellow Cantonese whom he taxed. One example is the Nanhai County *juren* Liao Xiang 廖翔. After serving as an acting magistrate in Guangxi and then going into mourning for his father, Liao was back in the provincial capital in 1877, awaiting his next post. In this capacity, he was assigned to oversee *lijin* collection at the point where the Left and Right Rivers, flowing from Longzhou and Baise (both sites of prominent Yuedong hui-guan), converged above Nanning.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup>*Rongxian zhi* 融縣志 (1936), 2:103; *Xupu xian zhi* 溆浦縣志 (1921), 18:15a–16a, 24:1b–2a.

<sup>65</sup>*Rongxian zhi*, 2:90, 142; *Xupu xian zhi*, 20:11a, 14a–b; *QDJSLJC*, vol. 38, 355; Daniel McMahon, "Identity and Conflict on a Chinese Borderland: Yan Ruyi and the Recruitment of the Gelao During the 1795–97 Miao Revolt," *Late Imperial China*, 23.2 (December 2002), 53, 57. On migrant grooves, Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900–1936* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 85.

<sup>66</sup>*Nanhai xian zhi* 南海縣志 (1911), 15:12a; [Nanhai] *Liao Weize tang jiapu* 廖維則堂家譜 (1930), 11:41b.

*Expanding Commercial Networks and Bolstering State Capacity*

During the postwar period Hunanese and Cantonese dramatically expanded their commercial networks in Guangxi, a development materialized in the construction and renovation of *huiguan* and in the commemorative stelae that are an important source for this article. In the midst of the Qing-Dacheng war, Hunanese in Guilin, one of the few cities in Guangxi still under Qing control, initiated Hunan *huiguan* renovation projects. In January 1859, Hunanese merchants—including a Hengzhou guild in the timber trade—purchased additional burial grounds outside the city to meet the needs of impoverished members of their growing diasporic community, particularly in the context of a protracted war.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to these less eminent Hunanese, martyrs from the two Hunanese armies—the Chu and the Xiang—would be enshrined in a dedicated space at the *huiguan*.<sup>68</sup> In the summer of 1859, over 130 individuals, firms, and guilds donated funds to decorate the Hunan *huiguan* with lanterns for deity parades. The donors, including guilds in the timber, leather box, hemp, varnish, and bamboo basket trades, are categorized by the three prefectures of the Xiang River basin from Dongting Lake to the Guangxi border: Changsha, Hengzhou, and Yongzhou.<sup>69</sup>

This stele does not indicate what deity was paraded at the Hunan *huiguan* in Guilin after the addition of lanterns in 1859. Nonetheless, it is clear that in postwar Guangxi at least one Hunanese deity was on the ascent. In 1892, Hunanese brought a wooden idol of Li the Excellent (Li *zhenren* 李真人) from Hunan to enshrine in a newly dedicated temple within Guilin's Hunan *huiguan*. Thought to be a Yuan-era native of Changsha, this deity had risen to prominence during the nineteenth century, in part for his role in repulsing the 1853 Taiping attack on Changsha.<sup>70</sup> After the 1892 enshrinement in Guilin, Changsha natives serving in the Guangxi bureaucracy established Li *zhenren* temples in their jurisdictions, at Lingyun in the far northwest in 1894 and at Luchuan in the southeastern corner in 1899.<sup>71</sup>

Reconstruction of Cantonese *huiguan* did not begin until after the demise of the Dacheng regime, but soon reached an unprecedented scale, as seen in the 1873 renovation of the Yuedong *huiguan* at Pingle. The author of the commemorative essay for this project was the eminent Cantonese scholar-official Xu Qiguang 許其光, a native of the core Pearl River delta county of Panyu, who in the early 1870s was in the pool of expectant officials in Guangxi carrying out duty assignments. In his essay, Xu narrates the difficult recent history of the *huiguan*, noting its destruction when Pingle fell to rebels in 1857–58. Xu then mentions his fellow Panyu native, Chen Taichu 陳泰初, appointed as Pingle prefect in 1858 after the Qing had recovered the city. Chen sent a letter to Xu discussing his plans to rebuild the desecrated *huiguan*. Before these plans came to fruition, Chen became ill during mopping-up operations and died at his post. Xu Qiguang then relates that when he first came to Guangxi in 1870 and visited Pingle, he saw a desolate city overgrown with weeds, and only a pile of rubble at the *huiguan* site.

<sup>67</sup>Untitled stele, 1859 (XF8.12), Qixing gongyuan, Guilin, Guangxi.

<sup>68</sup>*Lingui xian zhi* 臨桂縣志 (1905), 16:149.

<sup>69</sup>Untitled stele, 1859 (XF9.6), Qixing gongyuan, Guilin, Guangxi.

<sup>70</sup>For another deity credited for the defense of Changsha, see Eric Schluessel, “Exiled Gods: Territory, History, Empire, and a Hunanese Deity in Xinjiang,” *Late Imperial China*, 41.1 (June 2020), 113–57.

<sup>71</sup>*Hunan tong zhi*, 242:12b; *Lingui xian zhi*, 15:123; *Luchuan xian zhi* 陸川縣志 (1941), 6:33a; *Lingyun xian zhi*, 凌雲縣志 (1942), unpaginated.

Three years later, while escorting a shipment of supplies, Xu found the *huiguan* rebuilt in resplendent fashion.<sup>72</sup>

In his essay, Xu provides the name of only one of the twenty “local men” (*liren* 里人) designated as project managers, Huang Zhongbi 黃中璧. Huang was a Gaoming County native who had become a registered resident of Pingle and passed the Guangxi provincial examinations in 1867. Huang’s western strategy was typical of Cantonese in the postwar era, another way in which Cantonese colonized the Qing administrative apparatus in Guangxi; of the twenty-five *juren* that Gaoming County produced between 1856 and 1893, fourteen earned their degrees in the Guangxi provincial examinations as registered residents of Pingle and other Guangxi locales.<sup>73</sup> Huang was one among many migrant and socially ascendant Cantonese merchants in Pingle.

The set of four stelae commemorating the 1873 renovation lists several hundred donors. The first 186 names are apparently all individuals or firms based at urban Pingle: mostly merchants, we can assume, but also “gentry” such as Huang Zhongbi. Also included are divisions of the prefectural and county yamen staff, suggesting at least a close working relationship between Qing administrative functionaries and Cantonese merchants, and possibly a Cantonese contingent in the two Pingle yamen. This group is followed by patrons arranged by over twenty surrounding locales that composed the trade networks of this *huiguan*, and at least several of which had their own Yuedong *huiguan*, including Guilin, Wuzhou, and Shazi, each with fifty or more donors.<sup>74</sup>

This proliferation of Hunanese and Cantonese *huiguan*, like those in Guilin and Pingle, shaped local communities throughout Guangxi, particularly in the north. Cities and larger market towns might have one *huiguan* serving each of four major provincial cohorts, from Guangdong, Hunan, Jiangxi, and Fujian.<sup>75</sup> Such was the case in Pingle, where in the early 1860s the prefect placed each *huiguan* in charge of managing one of four new granaries in the city.<sup>76</sup> In Daxu, on the Li River south of Guilin, control of this market town’s thirteen wharves, connecting the river with the main commercial street running parallel to it, was divided disproportionately among *huiguan*. Here, the large Hunan *huiguan* was supreme, and a majority of street residents claim descent from Hunan migrants; the Guangdong *huiguan* was the smallest.<sup>77</sup> In the town of Piaoli, upriver from Guyi, there was a balance of power between two *huiguan*, each controlling a wharf. The Hunan *huiguan*, in existence by 1887, served what was a slight majority of merchants in the town; however, the temple festival associated with the Yuedong *huiguan* became the main festival for the entire town, suggesting Cantonese

<sup>72</sup>“Chongjian huiguan bing xitai bei” 重建會館並戲臺碑 (1873/74), Yuedong *huiguan*, Pingle, Guangxi; *Like tiben*, 11282–033/XF9.11.25; *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan cang Qingdai guanyuan lili dang’an quanbian* 中國第一歷史檔案館藏清代官員履歷檔案全編 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue, 1997), vol. 26, 294, 296; *Panyu xian zhi*, 48:9a.

<sup>73</sup>*Tongzhi liunian juxing dingmao ke Guangxi xiangshi timing lu* 同治陸年舉行丁卯科廣西鄉試題名錄, 2b; *Gaoming xian zhi*, 12:26a–28b.

<sup>74</sup>“Chongjian huiguan bing xitai bei.”

<sup>75</sup>Tang Ling 唐凌, “Lun shangye huiguan beike ziliao de lishi jiazhi: ji yu 17–20 shiji Guangxi jingji yimin huodong de fenxi” 论商业会馆碑刻资料的历史价值-基于17~20世纪广西经济移民活动的分析, *Guangxi minzu yanjiu* 106 (2011), 152.

<sup>76</sup>*Pingle xian zhi*, 2:21b; Fang Bingkui 方炳奎, *Modun ji* 磨盾集 (1867), in *Qingdai shiwenji huibian*, vol. 690 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2010), 57a–58a.

<sup>77</sup>Fieldnotes, Daxu, Lingchuan, Guangxi, July 5, 2012.

economic influence.<sup>78</sup> In other places, Cantonese dominance impressed British commercial and diplomatic agents. Authors of a 1901 commercial report explain that for the 1873 reconstruction of Wuzhou's Yuedong huiguan, destroyed when the city fell to Chen Kai's forces in 1857, merchants reportedly raised 40,000 taels, of which 35,000 paid for construction and another 3,000 taels covered "revelry, theatrical performances, and what not at the opening ceremonial," reminiscent of the operas that piqued Yang Enshou's interest at Beiliu.<sup>79</sup> In 1897 a British consular agent conducting a survey described Liuzhou as "the cleanest city I have seen in China," with "many excellent stores kept by Cantonese where all kinds of foreign goods can be obtained." Liuzhou's Yuedong huiguan, in particular, was one of the "most lavishly ornamented" temples he had ever seen.<sup>80</sup>

The expansion of *huiguan* bolstered the Qing state in postwar Guangxi, with these institutions playing an increasingly important role in state finance and local security. Following initial experiments with collecting the new commercial tax, *lijin*, at Wuzhou in the mid-1850s, after recovering the city in 1858 Qing authorities instituted *lijin* collection at Wuzhou and used a portion of the proceeds to fund military protection of the city and its commerce. Demobilized after participation in the 1861 riverine campaign that recovered Xunzhou, a unit of Cantonese braves operated patrol boats that protected commercial traffic at Wuzhou, in turn funded by the *lijin*. From the early 1870s, Cantonese leaders of Wuzhou's Yuedong huiguan took over financing and management of this force.<sup>81</sup>

At Pingle, the Cantonese prefect Chen Taichu helped to establish *lijin* taxation on the Li River after arriving at his post in 1858. Chen's Cantonese biographers credit him with appreciating the importance of riverine trade as a financial source for pacifying Guangxi.<sup>82</sup> In the early 1860s, one of Chen's successors as Pingle prefect similarly advocated commerce as a source of tax revenue in the war-torn province of Guangxi. Defending the new commercial tax against its critics, this prefect argued that *lijin* not only produced much more revenue than did the land tax in Guangxi, but also that, rather than burdening lowly porters and peddlers, collection stations were located at important markets and targeted "wealthy merchants and big traders."<sup>83</sup> In the river ports of Guangxi, then, *lijin* collection was a cooperative relationship between institutions of migrant elite merchants and gentry representatives, on one hand, and Guangxi officials, or the state, on the other.<sup>84</sup>

Networks of Cantonese and Hunanese *huiguan* supported growing diasporic communities in Guangxi during the last four decades of the Qing and into the

<sup>78</sup>Fieldnotes, Piaoli, Longsheng, Guangxi, June 30, 2012; "Yuwangong" 禹王宮, stele, 1887, Hunan huiguan, Piaoli, Longsheng, Guangxi; Zhong, *Guangxi jindai xuzhen yanjiu*, 394.

<sup>79</sup>Inspectorate General of Chinese Imperial Customs, *Decennial Reports, 1892–1901* (Shanghai: Statistical Department of the Inspectorate General of Customs), 334.

<sup>80</sup>*Report of the Mission to China of the Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, 1896–1897* (Blackburn: The North-East Lancashire Press Company, 1898), F. S. A. Bourne's Section, 120–22.

<sup>81</sup>Luo Yudong 羅玉東, *Zhongguo lijn shi* 中國釐金史, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan xubian*, vol. 612 (Taipei: Wenhai, 1979), 358; *Cangwu xian zhi* 蒼梧縣志 (1874), 10:8a–b, 17a–b, 12:31b–32b; *Cangwu xian zhi* (1941), 2:19b.

<sup>82</sup>*Panyu xian zhi*, 48:8b; Chen Weizong 陳偉宗, "Xuzeng Taipusi qing teshou Guangxi Pingle fu zhifu Jiantian Chengong fujun xingzhuang" 卹贈太僕寺卿特授廣西平樂府知府見田陳公府君行狀 (n.d.), *xinshu jielüe*, 4a–b.

<sup>83</sup>Fang Bingkui, *Modun ji*, 25a–27b.

<sup>84</sup>Luo Yudong, *Zhongguo lijn shi*, 19; see Goodman, *Native Place*, 130.

Republican era. For this period, we lack statistical evidence of the kind available for scholars of contemporary overseas migration. Nonetheless, anecdotal evidence can be found through fieldwork in almost any community along the rivers of Guangxi. One also finds it in early twentieth-century Hunanese and Cantonese genealogies. The genealogy of a Jiang 蔣 lineage in Daozhou, in Yongzhou Prefecture, contains only vague descriptions of migration destinations. One lineage member, born in 1852, had four surviving sons; editors note that they all migrated (*yiju* 移居) to Guangxi. Likewise, the two brothers and three sons of another lineage member, born in 1876, headed for Guangxi.<sup>85</sup> These sparse entries only allow us to surmise that chain migration was an important factor in decisions to migrate. The 1923 genealogy of a Shunde County Chen lineage is more specific. Chen Haochang 陳浩昌 (1849–1930) took a Cantonese wife but also had a concubine; Chen and his concubine were buried outside the north gate of Liuzhou. Haochang's eldest son, who was assigned as heir for Haochang's brother, also had Liuzhou connections. This son, Chen Yerong 陳業榮, born in 1882 and still alive at time of compilation, married a local woman who died in 1911 and was buried outside the Liuzhou north gate. Both of Yerong's sons married Liuzhou women.<sup>86</sup> Profuse but scattered, anecdotal references of the kind found in these genealogies add up to the conclusion that the Hunanese and Cantonese diasporas in Guangxi expanded in tandem with contemporary developments: the rebuilding of the Qing state, Hunanese and Cantonese colonization of the Guangxi bureaucracy, and the accelerated growth of commercial networks in the postwar era.

### Conclusion

In early October 1866, the opera enthusiast Yang Enshou received word from Guilin first of the impending arrival of the private secretary hired to replace him, and then of his brother's transfer to Xuanhua County, seat of Nanning Prefecture. Yang and his brother thus prepared to leave Beiliu County, the brother to his new Guangxi post, and Enshou back home to Hunan. Yang Enshou's experience in Guangxi illustrates some of the ways in which the Hunanese and Cantonese diasporic cohorts, and the reach of the Qing state, were quickly expanding in the early postwar era. Several months before his departure, Yang recorded that a gate guard on the county yamen staff, a fellow Hunanese, had taken a local woman as concubine; though homely, she commanded a high price. Alluding to a legend related in an early Qing travel account about sojourners drinking from a particular spring and becoming enamored of Guangxi women, Yang writes that he knows of numerous officials, private secretaries, merchants, and servants who had acquired servant girls, affirming for him the veracity of this legend. Yang here pokes fun at native women and sojourning men, but his account suggests one way in which diasporic Hunanese colonized postwar Guangxi, establishing an ethnic and sexual hierarchy. Likewise, in his diary Yang occasionally remarks enviously on expensive Cantonese products for sale in Beiliu and Wuzhou. On his homeward journey, Yang was reminded of the growing Qing state infrastructure when personnel from the *lijin* bureau inspected his boat upon arrival at Wuzhou.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup>[Hunan Daoxian] *Jiangshi zupu* 蔣氏族譜 (1922), 3:44a–b, 52b–53a, 7:52b, 8:51b.

<sup>86</sup>[Shunde Maqi] *Chenshi zupu* 陳氏族譜 (1923), 3:18a–b, 24b, 27a.

<sup>87</sup>Yang, *Tanyuan riji*, 162, 181–85.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the growing Hunanese and Cantonese diasporas met at Beiliu and elsewhere in Guangxi. Through colonizing the bureaucracy, expanding commercial networks, constructing family ties, and settling, geographically mobile Hunanese and Cantonese drove the process of political integration, solidifying Qing control of this province on the southwestern frontier. At the same time, building on preexisting patterns, Hunanese and Cantonese seized opportunities for socioeconomic survival, maintenance, and advancement in wartime and postwar Guangxi. Interactions within this broader diasporic encounter could be violent, evidenced by the mid-century rebellions. During the Qing reconquest and reconstruction of Guangxi, however, Hunanese and Cantonese migrants also collaborated, bringing the state back into Guangxi, but in ways that made the state work for them.