“Evading Suspicion and Shirking Responsibility”:
The Politics of Official Discord in Qing Taiwan, 1725-1726

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the political and social networks that bound officials in the Qing bureaucracy and their role in concealing abuses and bribery, as well as the Yongzheng Emperor's attempts to inculcate proper political behavior and bureaucratic accountability. The essay begins with a brief discussion of the state of affairs in Fujian and Taiwan under officials appointed by the Kangxi Emperor. It then turns to the Yongzheng Emperor's efforts to revitalize what he perceived to be a moribund bureaucracy in the region through the pursuit of a case of corruption. The trial that resulted from a censor's accusation revealed a complex web of patronage, manipulation, malfeasance, and mutual recrimination among officials and provides us a glimpse into the workings of Qing field administration under pressure from a reformist emperor. The corruption case in Taiwan was important to the emperor not on its own merits, but as an object lesson in proper political behavior and bureaucratic accountability.

Keywords: Yongzheng Emperor, Qing, bureaucracy, China, factionalism, Taiwan

Early in 1724, during the second year of his reign, the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1722-1735) named Chanjibu 禪濟布 as the Manchu inspecting censor of Taiwan (xunshi Taiwan jiancha yushi 巡視臺灣監察御史). At a court audience with the emperor himself on February 29, 1724, Chanjibu and his Han Chinese colleague were bestowed with food and some sable pelts as tokens of imperial favor. Traveling together, the newly appointed inspecting censors reached Fujian Province in the southeast almost three months later and arrived in Taiwan on June 12, 1724.¹

Chanjibu's selection as an inspecting censor was to all appearances an unremarkable appointment to a relatively minor office. After all, Chanjibu was a figure of no special significance or fame, and he never held any major official post. Belonging to the Bordered Blue Banner, Chanjibu possessed no exam degrees and apparently began his career as a Manchu clerk (Ch. bi tie shi, Ma. bithesi 筆帖式) before moving on to a stint as a middle-level functionary in the Six Boards (liubu 六部).² Yet how did this unimportant official of no outstanding talent and without any special connections eventually become the focal point in a political maelstrom that would engulf Taiwan in the early Yongzheng reign?

As it turns out, the cause célèbre which would prove so persistently troublesome to emperor and bureaucracy alike and which defied all attempts at resolution for over three-and-a-half years, began with a simple charge of bribery.
That is, when Chanjibu impeached Magistrate Zhou Zhongxuan for illegally accepting seven hundred taels of silver from a defendant in a criminal case. Ordinarily, this “crime” would hardly even have aroused the attention of the prefect, much less that of the emperor, particularly when the sum involved was so small. Nevertheless, the case would embroil bureaucracies in Taiwan, Fujian, and beyond, make and break several careers, cause the governor-general—and one of Yongzheng’s most trusted administrators—to lose the emperor’s favor, be handed over for resolution to a new governor, and ultimately require the appointment of two imperial commissioners before its denouement. Clearly, the case was after all not just about squabbling or corrupt officials in Taiwan, or even necessarily the bureaucratic administration there.

Qing historians have become increasingly interested in the bureaucratic monarchy’s strategies for crisis management, which challenges the notion that the late imperial Chinese state was characterized by a rigid approach to the issues of governance. Indeed, even routine business associated with Qing field administration regularly raised concerns about the standards of local administration, the bounds of proper bureaucratic behavior, and the difficulties inherent in defining political crime, administrative shortcomings, legitimate policy debates, factional activities, and official bickering.3

This essay is an exploration into the issues of the factionalism endemic to the Qing bureaucracy, of its role in the social and political networks that bound officials together and in concealing abuses and malfeasance, and of the Yongzheng Emperor’s attempts to inculcate proper political behavior and bureaucratic accountability. The essay begins with a brief discussion of the state of affairs in Fujian and Taiwan under officials appointed by the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661-1722). It then turns to the Yongzheng Emperor’s efforts to revitalize what he perceived to be a moribund bureaucracy in the region. The trial that resulted from Chanjibu’s accusation revealed a complex web of patronage, manipulation, malfeasance, and mutual recrimination among officials and provides us a glimpse into the workings of Qing field administration under pressure from a reformist emperor. The

1 Qinggong gongzhong dang zouzhe Taiwan shiliao 清宮宮中檔奏摺臺灣史料 [Taiwan historical sources in the secret palace memorials of the Qing palace] (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2001) 1: 197-200. Hereafter referred to as QGZTS.

2 QGZTS I: 358. One Qing commentator has noted that clerkships often served as a proving ground for promising talents who aspired to higher office, and that many senior officials had once served as clerks. For more on the origins of clerks and a description of a clerk’s duties, see Fuge 福格, Tingyu congtao 聽雨叢談 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 22-23. Yongzheng preferred to reward clerks who were diligent or especially skilled in some area with promotions rather than raise their meager stipends (only twenty-eight taels annually) because he was concerned that to do otherwise would be to remove an incentive for them to attend wholeheartedly to their duties in hopes of advancement. See Yongzhengchao hanwen yuzhi huibian 雍正朝漢文諭旨匯編 [Collected Chinese-language edicts of the Yongzheng reign], 10 vols. (Guilin, Guangxi: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1999), 10: 212-13. Hereafter referred to as YZHYZHB.

3 For example, Thomas Metzger has pointed out that distinguishing the difference between crime and administrative shortcomings in the Qing bureaucracy could be a problematic proposition. See Thomas A. Metzger, The Internal Organization of Ch’ing Bureaucracy: Legal, Normative, and Communication Aspects (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 276-97.
corruption case in Taiwan, it will be argued, was important to the emperor not on its own merits, but as an object lesson in proper political behavior and bureaucratic accountability.

The Changing of the Guard

The inspecting censors passed an uneventful year in Taiwan and were on their second tour of duty when some major changes took place in the latter half of 1725. Gioro Manbao, the governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang, took ill and died late in the year. Manbao's death in November 1725 seems not to have been unwelcome news for the Yongzheng Emperor. As a senior official and an imperial relation long in government service, Manbao should customarily have received a posthumous name (shi 諡) for himself and an indemnity (xu 餅) for his family upon his death. However, while noting that Manbao was a talented and conscientious administrator, Yongzheng also pointed out that he had not cultivated a reputation as someone with integrity.

In particular, the emperor faulted Manbao for allowing the Zhu Yigui 朱一貴 rebellion to have occurred while simultaneously crediting him for his swift response in pacifying the uprising within seven days: “[His] merits and demerits fully offset each other [gongguo zu yi xiangdi 功過足以相抵].” In essence, Yongzheng was damning Manbao with faint praise. If Manbao's merits and demerits offset each other, then the emperor was saying that the governor-general had achieved nothing in his tenure. Moreover, Yongzheng expressed disappointment that Manbao, along with the Shanxi governor and others, had posted agents in the capital to secretly examine the contents of sealed palace memorials and the imperial rescripts they contained. To exacerbate such untrustworthiness, Manbao was found to have long plied the now disgraced Lungkodo 隆科多 with gifts. Although Manbao had died almost three years before Lungkodo's own eventual demise in prison in 1728, for him to have been connected with one of the two most notorious figures in early Yongzheng politics (the other being Nian Gengyao 年羹堯), on top of other misdeeds, was most unfortunate. Such unsavory associations did not go unnoticed at the time, and served only to heighten Yongzheng's misgivings about the governor-general. As the official coda to Manbao's life and career, Yongzheng concluded that Manbao had been “of no benefit whatsoever [hao wu biyi 毫無裨益] to government administration or the people's livelihood but merely ingratiated [himself] with Lungkodo and Nian Gengyao.”

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5 QSLZ 2: juan 12, 36b.

6 QSLZ 2: juan 12, 36b.

7 QSLZ 2: juan 12, 37a.
Manbao’s fourteen-year tenure in Fujian, first as governor from 1711 to 1715, and then as governor-general until 1725, was notable in several ways. First was his length of service. According to Raymond Chu and William Saywell, governors-general “held each of their posts for an average of two years and nine months,” there being essentially no difference between the average length of tenure of Han Chinese and Manchus. For Manbao to have been governor-general for ten years was extraordinary. Even more unusual was his promotion from governor to governor-general in the same province, something that Chu and Saywell point out happened just 15 percent of the time. While we do not know precisely what factors contributed to Manbao’s longevity, it is possible to speculate that as a maritime province with one of the lowest ratios of arable land to population in the empire, Fujian—which administered restive Taiwan as a prefecture—required an administrator with more local knowledge and experience, thus accounting for Manbao’s longer tenure.

But another important aspect of Manbao’s long service, I believe, is that it allowed him to rule the province virtually unchecked and to shield details of its affairs from imperial scrutiny. Especially from late 1722 on, in collaboration with the new Fujian governor, Huang Guocai, who had previously been a director of the Court of State Ceremonial (honglu si 鴻臚寺), Manbao created a network of patronage in the province that, coupled with his long tenure there, effectively kept the emperor out of the loop in terms of information or decision-making. As Silas Wu has argued, the Kangxi Emperor favored harmony and avoided direct confrontation with the bureaucracy over such issues as malfeasance or incompetence, which “clearly show[s] how the emperor played the role of mediator rather than of final judicial arbiter.” Jonathan Spence has also pointed out that Kangxi’s aversion to conflict with the bureaucracy led him to overlook corruption. His failing health and waning energies in the last years of his reign must also have contributed to additional loosening of discipline and enabled Manbao to operate as he pleased.

The Yongzheng Emperor’s accession to the throne, however, marked the beginnings of a harsher reality for these Kangxi-era holdovers. Having no history with these officials and eager to instill stricter discipline and greater efficiency

8 Raymond W. Chu and William G. Saywell, Career Patterns in the Ch’ing Dynasty: The Office of Governor-General (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1984), 39. As the book’s title suggests, governors were not the subject of the study and unfortunately no information is given for them. However, Chu and Saywell do conclude that the average length of tenure for other provincial posts—from magistrate to financial treasurer—was also less than three years. Chu and Saywell, Career Patterns in the Ch’ing Dynasty, 75-76.

9 Chu and Saywell, Career Patterns in the Ch’ing Dynasty, 41.

10 Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao 2: 1577.


12 For an example, see Spence, Ts’ao Yin and the Kang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master, 186.
in the bureaucracy, Yongzheng had no reason to overlook their faults.\textsuperscript{13} To take another example from Spence’s study of Cao Yin 曹寅, Kangxi had “easier standards; as long as Ts’ao Yin and Li Hsü prevented total disaster and collected the surplus revenues regularly, they were left largely to their own devices.”\textsuperscript{14} Dishonesty was simply not a crucial issue for Kangxi. The transition from Kangxi to Yongzheng, then, brought dramatic changes in ruling style, philosophy, and approach to government administration. If Manbao had been mostly left alone as long as he delivered on a set of core areas, as defined by Kangxi, then this would most definitely not continue to be the case under Yongzheng. Lifting the veil that Manbao had drawn across government business in Fujian would take time and effort, but Manbao’s demise and Chanjibu’s deployment gave the emperor an opening.

If a higher degree of difficulty was involved in confronting problems in Fujian when both its province chiefs were in place, then it must have been easier when one of them was no longer there. With Manbao out of the picture, one of the pillars that held up the edifice of corruption that had been built in the province had toppled. Now alone, Governor Huang Guocai, long a willing accomplice to Manbao, could not hope to continue to block out the sky single-handedly. It was no coincidence that just around the time when Manbao became too ill to continue as governor-general, Huang was dismissed from office in September and Mao Wenquan 毛文鈞 appointed governor of Fujian in his place.\textsuperscript{15} Mao quickly vowed to shun the ingrained bureaucratic proclivity for “evading suspicion and shirking responsibility (bixian tuiwei 避嫌推諉)” in order to requite the imperial benevolence that had been bestowed upon him.\textsuperscript{16}

The incapacitation of Manbao in the summer of 1725 and his eventual death was a turning point in the administration of Fujian and a serendipitous opportunity for the Yongzheng Emperor. A veteran field administrator, Manbao

\textsuperscript{13} Huang Guocai, for example, took up the Fujian governorship just one month before Kangxi’s death in 1722, or to put it another way, just one month before Yongzheng became emperor, an official Yongzheng did not know or appoint became a provincial governor. As for having no history with most of the officials, there is one major exception, as revealed in the communications of one of Yongzheng’s retainers. Before he ascended the throne, Yongzheng, then Yinzhen 胤禛, had indirect contact with Manbao through Dai Duo 戴鐸, presumably to court his support in any potential bid for the throne. See Wenxian congbian 文獻叢編 [Collectanea from the historical records office], Palace Museum, 1930-1943 (Reprint, Taipei: Guofeng chubanshe, 1964), 102. However, if Yongzheng had no personal familiarity with the senior officials who now served him, then conversely they also did not know him and would therefore have had no incentive to be candid or particularly cooperative. Yongzheng acknowledged as much when he told Manbao that “you senior inner and outer officials do not yet know Our intentions and tendencies [juxin 居心].” Trust, then, was a two-way street. To a certain extent, even the emperor had to first prove himself to his officials. See YZHZH 6: 16.

\textsuperscript{14} Spence, Ts’ao Yin and the K’ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master, 212.

\textsuperscript{15} Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao 2: 1580. Earlier, Manbao described his illness as beginning in June and worsening through September (YZHZH 6: 16). On October 9, knowing that his recovery was unlikely, Manbao memorialized for the last time, recounting his life and career to Yongzheng, and gave details about his personal and official finances in an apparent attempt to convince the emperor that he had not been an avaricious official (YZHZH 6: 30-33). Huang Guocai was dismissed from office on September 4.

\textsuperscript{16} YZHZH 6: 281.
dominated provincial affairs and appointments initially with the complicity of the lenient Kangxi Emperor, and then eventually with the construction of a patronage network that came to include Governor Huang Guocai. Manbao and Huang drew the ire of the new Yongzheng Emperor not because their conduct and integrity were especially objectionable, although we know they were not exemplary by any means, but because of their management style. Accustomed to lax imperial oversight and the protection of their network, Manbao and Huang governed largely as they saw fit while sharing little about the details of their administration with Yongzheng. While much has been made of Yongzheng’s attention to bureaucratic rationalization and administrative efficacy, it was ultimately this infringement on the emperor’s prestige and authority that resulted in the political demise of Manbao and Huang.

With the two top officials of Fujian out of the way, Yongzheng could move to install new province chiefs who did not have the pernicious habit of deceiving the throne. In this atmosphere of newfound openness, Chanjibu now had some startling revelations for the throne.

**Articles of Impeachment**

At issue were misdeeds that Taiwan County Magistrate Zhou Zhongxuan 周鐘瑄 was alleged to have committed. Memorializing alone without his partner Jing Xiaoxiang 景考祥, Chanjibu reported on November 11, 1725 that Zhou was grasping and avaricious (tanlan bufa 貪婪不法), faults that the magistrate had refused to rectify despite repeated admonitions by his superiors. This was reflected in his handling of a rape case back in May involving a Taiwan county gongsheng 賛生 (tribute student) by the name of Wu Su 吳素, who had raped woman Lin 林氏, the wife of one Chen Qin 陳秦. Zhou ordered the gongsheng to be taken into custody, but released him when a jiansheng 監生 (Imperial College student) by the name of Chen Shichun 陳世淳 presented the magistrate with a gift of some eleven hundred taels. Jing disagreed on the issue of whether a payment was made, however, saying that no definitive evidence had been presented, and therefore refused to report this incident.

Chanjibu found that the accused rapist Wu Su, who had been released shortly after being taken into custody, had underwritten the construction of one hundred zhang 丈 (358m) of the wooden palisade at a cost of four hundred taels. So Wu had essentially been let off by agreeing to pay a fine. At a meeting with his colleagues, Chanjibu received a statement from the prefect, Fan Tingmou 范廷謀, which contained evidence that Wu Su had been sentenced to fund the construction of forty zhang (143m) of the wooden palisade while Zhou’s accounts showed the amount for one hundred zhang. This discrepancy, Chanjibu declared, was clear evidence of corruption on Zhou’s part—meaning that Zhou pocketed the difference. At this point Jing Xiaoxiang, who was also present, made this revealing statement:

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17 *YZHZH* 6: 287.
18 *YZHZH* 6: 288.
When I left the capital, the president of the Board of Revenue (大司農)\(^{19}\) bade me to look after Zhou. Upon arriving in Fujian, the governor-general (Manbao) also asked me to look after Zhou. Moreover, Zhou is a classmate (同門) whom I have never met.\(^{20}\)

Associated with such powerful patrons at the central and local levels, and with Jing through exam ties (the two may have had the same patron or passed exams administered by the same official, thus qualifying as classmates), Zhou was part of a network that Chanjibu was only beginning to discover looked after its own.

Magistrate Zhou hailed from Guizhou and had earned the highest civil service examination degree of jinshi 進士. He could boast of extensive experience in Taiwan, having first served there as the magistrate of Zhuluo 諸羅 County starting in 1714.\(^{21}\) By all accounts, Zhou was a popular and beloved magistrate. His biography in the Taiwan prefectural gazetteer describes him as benevolent and gracious by nature. Zhou is said to have instituted many beneficial measures, including raising funds to construct an extensive network of waterworks and associated infrastructure. He was also a promoter of culture and education, taking the lead in compiling the first gazetteer of Zhuluo County, which was completed in 1717. Widely lauded as an uncommonly sympathetic official of considerable prescience, Zhou had, upon leaving office, received the honor of having his portrait deposited in a shrine dedicated to him for his magnanimity.\(^{22}\) In 1722 he became the magistrate of Taiwan County.\(^{23}\) With its larger and more varied population, Taiwan County was both the economic and political hub of Taiwan, housing the yamen for the intendant, prefect, inspecting censors, and brigade general, among others. In fact, Zhou had been recommended (保舉) for his present post by Manbao and Huang. However, these two patrons were no longer present when Zhou was impeached by Chanjibu in 1725.

Chanjibu recounted that for two months, he repeatedly asked Jing to place his name on a joint memorial to report the matter, but was repeatedly rebuffed. Jing reportedly said, "This is one matter I will not memorialize. Even if you impeached [Zhou], His Majesty would surely turn over the inquiry to the governor-

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\(^{19}\) Jing is referring to Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 (1672-1755), whose illustrious career spanned the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns, serving for extended periods in such senior positions as grand secretary (daxueshi 大學士) and grand councilor (junji dachen 軍機大臣). Jing (and Zhou) were certainly associated with one of the most favored and powerful officials at the capital. For more on Zhang Tingyu, see his biography in ECCP, 54-56; QSLZ 2: juan 14, 21b-36b; Zhao Erxun 趙爾巽, comp. and ed., Qingshigao 清史稿 [Draft history of the Qing], 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 3: juan 288, 10237-40. Hereafter referred to as QSG.

\(^{20}\) YZHZH 6: 288.

\(^{21}\) Yu Wenyi 余文儀, comp. and ed., Xu xiu Taiwan fu zhi 續修臺灣府志, Taiwan wenxian shiliao congkan 臺灣文獻史料叢刊 [Taiwan documentary collectanea], vol. 121 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 160.

\(^{22}\) Yu, Xu xiu Taiwan fu zhi, 189. For the county gazetteer of Zhuluo, see Zhou Zhongxuan 周錦瑄, comp. and ed., Zhuluo xian zhi 諸羅縣志, Taiwan wenxian shiliao congkan 臺灣文獻史料叢刊 [Taiwan documentary collectanea], vol. 55 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958).

\(^{23}\) Wang Bichang 王必昌, comp. and ed., Chongxiu Taiwan xian zhi 重修臺灣縣志, Taiwan wenxian shiliao congkan, vol. 113, 283.
general and governor. They will not act against their own.”

Chanjibu noted that allowing a mere tribute student (gongsheng) to bribe an official so as to avoid rape charges subverted the law and served as a bad example for society. He adduced a number of local rape cases in the intervening months being committed by local degree holders as evidence that lawlessness was on the rise as a direct result of allowing Zhou to remain in office.

What’s more, Zhou had tried to bribe Chanjibu to bury the case. According to Chanjibu, Zhou dispatched a subordinate to meet with one of Chanjibu’s servants, where the sum of 360 taels was presented to cover the costs of “wardrobe procurement” for the censor. Another thirty-six taels were included as a “gift” (liyin). 25

Disagreement or Disharmony?
Chanjibu’s impeachment of Zhou revealed the network of patronage that bound local officials and connected them to high-ranking metropolitan officials at the capital like Zhang Tingyu. If Chanjibu could be believed, he had also demonstrated that a variety of crimes—violations of the Qing Code—had been committed. It is fairly apparent that Zhou was indeed involved in some sort of malfeasance. Either he had taken a bribe to release a rape suspect, or else he had pocketed a portion of the fine paid by the suspect in lieu of physical punishment. As for Jing, his refusal to impeach a guilty official, particularly on the grounds that he had been asked to “look after” that official by others, was also a violation of the Code.

Chanjibu’s account persuaded the emperor that problems were widespread and embroiled practically all the senior officials in Taiwan’s civil bureaucracy just as Chanjibu had described. In addition, it established evidence of criminal wrongdoing within Taiwan’s bureaucracy that no one had previously reported. The fact that Jing refused to cooperate only confirmed the emperor’s fears that Manbao and Huang had indeed been quite successful in creating a system of patronage that enmeshed colleagues and subordinates in a net of reciprocity and obligation and resisted outside scrutiny.

It would be a mistake to assume that a clear conceptual boundary existed in the Qing dynasty when it came to defining the difference between a crime and an administrative shortcoming, or between discord and genuine disagreements over policy or administration. If Zhou had taken a “bribe” to release a suspect but did not keep it for himself, instead applying it toward building critical local infrastructure like the wooden palisade, did he violate the law? While it was not standard judicial practice to free rape suspects without a trial but with only a fine, was Zhou’s action a crime if he applied the silver toward a construction project in need of funds? Viewed in another context, we might even interpret Zhou’s ruling as just one example in the tradition of Qing statecraft that historians have noted for its flexibility, pragmatism, and sensitivity to local conditions as a major

24 YZH2H 6: 288.
25 YZH2H 6: 288.
factor in sustaining the power of the dynasty.\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, it is difficult to discern where personal enmity ended and conscientious commitment to duty began in local administration. Had Chanjibu impeached Zhou because of some personal animosity or was he merely a loyal and dutiful censor devoted to his responsibilities to his office and master? Given the historical evidence that practically all Qing field administrators were probably in formal violation of some statute of the Qing Code or another simply by virtue of having to assume office and maintain a staff, everyone was vulnerable to accusations of peculation or avarice.

Of course, the various reasons for disharmony—from those rooted in purely administrative or pragmatic concerns of duty on the one hand, to those associated with some possibility of ethnic politics on the other—probably overlapped to a great degree.\textsuperscript{27} Even more suggestive, although it would be beyond the power of the historical record to confirm, is the possibility that the recriminations in Taiwan in late 1725 may have been in some way related to Chanjibu's status as a member of the Manchu Bordered Blue Banner. It could not have escaped Yongzheng's notice that having started out as a clerk, Chanjibu was the sole official in this controversy without an exam degree. Historian Chen Jiexian has pointed out that in the early years of his reign, the Yongzheng Emperor favored the practice of assigning bannermen to local postings, undoubtedly because he considered them to be more reliable than non-bannermen.\textsuperscript{28} Whatever the case may be, the Yongzheng Emperor remained committed to an activist approach to correcting the administrative and bureaucratic problems of Fujian.

A Loyal Infiltrator

In his initial reaction to this case, the emperor was reassuring, but also cautioned the censor:

\textsuperscript{26} To take one example, Robert Antony and Jane Leonard have argued that the Qing state was marked above all by the flexibility to accommodate a wide variety of regional differences while maintaining a high degree of “coherence and integration of the imperial bureaucratic superstructure and value system as a whole.” They point out that many Qing “governing strategies and mechanisms were special, irregular, and/or temporary in nature.” They conclude that “it was the acceptance of difference and the imperative to accommodate it that accounts … for the imperial regime's ability to mobilize sub- and extra-bureaucratic elements to share in the operations and funding of local government.” See Robert J. Antony and Jane Kate Leonard, eds., \textit{Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China}, Cornell East Asia Series 114 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2002), 2, 18, and 19.

\textsuperscript{27} For instance, Michael G. Chang has taken note of some of these similar issues—ethnic politics, administrative concerns, and routes into officialdom as distinguishing factors in treatment of officials by colleagues—in his study of Qianlong's approach to water control and his southern tours. See Michael G. Chang, “Fathoming Qianlong: Imperial Activism, the Southern Tours, and the Politics of Water Control, 1736-1765,” \textit{Late Imperial China} 24.2 (2003): 51-108.

\textsuperscript{28} Chen Jiexian 陳捷先, “Chanjibu xuntai shiji kao 禪濟布巡臺事蹟考,” in \textit{Qingshi zabi 清史雜筆 [Miscellaneous Writings on Qing History]}, vol. 4 (Taipei: Xuehai Chubanshe, 1984), 86. Chen also suggests, referring to the example of Tian Wenjing 田文鏡 in Henan Province, that Yongzheng supported even those who had been shown to have been at fault as long as they remained loyal to him and his program of administrative reform, favoring bannermen—who were often without an exam degree—over factions bound by exam ties. See Chen, “Chanjibu xuntai shiji kao,” 86-87.
The matter about which you have memorialized is what you are duty-bound to report. It is quite commendable to act justly (binggong 秉公) and without obfuscation [as you have] in all cases and thus to have not disappointed us in appointing you. You are an ingenuous and prudent (laoshi jinshen 老實謹慎) person. It is better to proceed according to your role as you have done honestly and with the utmost sincerity. Do not again attempt ingenious schemes to deceive and dissemble; they are all doomed to be bungled. [We] urge you to strive to the utmost.29

Chanjibu had risked antagonizing his colleagues by insisting on impeaching the magistrate when they had virtually all been opposed. Moreover, as Jing had so trenchantly pointed out, it was unclear whether Chanjibu would have been ultimately successful in convicting Zhou in any case, since Manbao and Huang would have come to his defense. Because he was an interloper in the Taiwan bureaucracy, it may well be that Chanjibu felt he had little to gain from going along with the others in this affair, thus enabling him to offer a candid report.

Yongzheng must have appreciated the risk Chanjibu took in breaking ranks: the censor was making himself vulnerable to reprisals from colleagues who felt betrayed and exposed—colleagues who might launch a coordinated campaign of retaliation by accusing the self-aggrandizing censor of misdeeds of his own. This was no idle speculation. Yongzheng was well aware of the dangers that confronted an official perceived as being too harsh. Writing to a senior Fujian military commander, Yongzheng once remarked that if the commander insisted on enforcing discipline too severely and inflexibly, then the “scoundrels (xiaoren 小人) would employ every means at their disposal to entrap you in wrongdoing.”30

Thus it is not difficult to see why Yongzheng sought to allay Chanjibu’s anxiety by assuring the censor that his actions were interpreted by the throne as faithful adherence to duty rather than a captious tendency to be disagreeable with colleagues. However, Yongzheng also expressed some lingering doubts. For all his encouraging words, Yongzheng remained leery of Chanjibu’s true intent. To disguise an attack on a fellow official based on personal rancor as a principled stance of dutiful impeachment would not fool the emperor nor would it be tolerated. Yet here is also some hint that Yongzheng found it more difficult than might be expected to draw a clear distinction between disharmony among his field administrators on the one hand, and genuine disagreement over the measure of discipline or faithful adherence to duty despite widespread opposition, on the other.

The Chanjibu imbroglio provided the Yongzheng Emperor with a handy pretext for intervening in the bureaucracy of Fujian. It also allows insight into the constitution of Yongzheng’s imperial authority and political vision of governance by men (renzhi 人治). It was through this specific political controversy that the emperor seized the initiative in implementing his particular ruling philosophy.

29 YZH Zh 6: 291.
30 YZH Zh 7: 880.
At this crucial point in his reign, Yongzheng astutely seized upon the opportunity to articulate a position and define his interests in a manner that best served the construction of his political authority.

In this episode of budding bureaucratic discord, Yongzheng appeared to be on Chanjibu’s side. The emperor had assured Chanjibu that he was merely carrying out his duties and that he should not be intimidated by public opinion or peer pressure. In short, rather than define the case as either an instance of bureaucratic disharmony or bureaucratic wrongdoing, Yongzheng chose to divert the impeachment onto a more routinized—and less political—track by characterizing it as simply a case of censorial oversight.

Meanwhile, Yongzheng was finally receiving more forthcoming reports from senior officials in Fujian and Taiwan. This did not mean that Yongzheng took their words at face value. He made scrupulous efforts to confirm their accounts and even their very reputations as officials through his own inquiries. The emperor solicited the opinion of Gao Qizhuo 高其倬—the governor-general of Yunnan and Guizhou and a favored field administrator—on Mao Wenquan, the new governor of Fujian. But first Yongzheng offered his own perspective:

Public opinion (yulun 輿論) of Mao Wenquan is at odds. His responses and memorials have not been so candid and so We have summoned him to the capital for an audience. He has now arrived but [We] have not yet seen much [of him]. He seems quite seasoned but might be a bit haggard and sly and thus not honest and conscientious. He applies himself vigorously and aggressively and is a smart person (ren mingbai 人明白). Really quite acceptable. Memorialize immediately what you have seen without any obfuscation.

Gao returned a cautiously noncommittal reply in a memorial dated December 16, 1725:

Mao Wenquan has long been a field administrator (waiguan 外官) and has considerable experience; he is truly seasoned. In confronting matters of great import he can be somewhat clumsy. Your humble official has never possessed the wisdom of judging character and worth; my views are mostly improper. But as His Majesty has deigned to inquire, your humble official does not dare to not report frankly according to his views. Your humble official feels that he [Mao] is of middling talent.

This was not an enthusiastic endorsement. Gao’s equivocal tone hinted at Mao’s shortcomings. Mao had considerable experience as a field administrator, but that experience derived more from the accumulation of time rather than of wisdom. He was something of a martinet, yet without the redeeming quality of perspicacity or outstanding administrative acumen. This apparently had an effect on Yongzheng’s
opinion of the governor, particularly as the Zhou impeachment case dragged on.

So far as Mao had not yet proved himself to be unreliable, however, he was a valuable asset to the emperor. In this sense, even average or imperfect officials were not shunned by Yongzheng, who believed that improving administrative efficacy and discipline was not incompatible with a flawed bureaucracy. Rather, what was crucial was how those officials—warts and all—were employed in the governmental machinery. For the Yongzheng Emperor, whose intimate knowledge of the imperfect apparatus of imperial government was derived from the hard reality of an internecine succession struggle for the throne and long years as an imperial prince with administrative duties, pragmatism and balance reigned supreme in his vision of governance. It was irrelevant in this vision whether a particular official was of little talent or quality so long as he possessed some useful ability or trait that could be utilized. Likewise, unless he was truly incorrigible, Yongzheng believed that an official was always susceptible to imperial edification and improvement. By articulating such a position, Yongzheng attempted to impose his philosophy and preferences on the government by occupying the decisive role in making such judgments. Of course, this vision placed the Yongzheng Emperor at the center, where he could capitalize on official discord and the unfolding bureaucratic crisis to promote his various and overlapping aims of administrative reform, bureaucratic discipline, and imperial authority.

By this point too, Yongzheng’s attitude toward Jing Kaoxiang had cooled considerably. The emperor remarked to Mao in passing that “Jing Kaoxiang is not someone We trust; he does not appear to be honest. If he acts inappropriately, memorialize truthfully.”34 With the consensus about Jing shifting to the negative (undoubtedly with help from Chanjibu), the Yongzheng Emperor now warned Jing to be circumspect: “After employing you [in the field], We have learned you have quite an unseemly reputation for egregiousness (bu anjing 不安靜). If this is so, then you have greatly failed Us. Be cautious!”35

Coincidentally, on January 4, 1726, Chanjibu impeached Jing Kaoxiang, who as fellow censor had objected to his handling of the Zhou investigation and for having committed an assortment of unsavory acts. During his tenure in Taiwan, Chanjibu alleged, Jing had entertained an endless stream of friends and relations from Zhejiang and Guangdong at his yamen. Jing also gave merchants and traders unfettered access to his yamen, which they entered and departed at will. In fact, Jing had even taken as a “godson” (gan er 乾兒) the child of one of these merchants, who was involved in a case of forcibly taking another man’s bride as his concubine. Another local ruffian who had beaten a man to death while stealing his land, cattle, and seeds, changed his name and took refuge in Jing’s service as a secretary to avoid prosecution. Jing shielded runners from his yamen whose reckless behavior (fighting, gambling, slaughtering cattle that did not belong to them) ran afoul of the law by sending them away to Fujian when Chanjibu demanded that they appear for

34 YZHZH 6: 490.
35 YZHZH 6: 647.
Chanjibu claimed that these acts were all common knowledge among civil and military officials as well as among the people.

According to Chanjibu, Jing had also brought a classmate's nephew to Taiwan for the express purpose of assuming false residence (maoji 冒籍) in Zhanghua 彰化 County in order to take advantage of its generous quota in the civil service examination. Out of empathic concern for a fellow official in the same situation (tongzhou gongji 同舟共濟), Chanjibu told Yongzheng that he repeatedly implored Jing to mend his ways; however, Jing was oblivious to all of Chanjibu's entreaties. Portraying himself as a concerned official reluctant to impeach a colleague, Chanjibu interpreted Jing's non-action in the worst possible light, arguing that Jing was not in fact looking after Zhou at the behest of superiors such as Zhang Tingyu and Manbao (which implied Jing had no real initiative in the matter) but was actually doing so because of exam ties (which hinted at more active partisan factional interests).

To forestall any counter-accusations and to highlight his own righteousness, Chanjibu informed the emperor that he had turned down two monetary gifts from Manbao and Huang and the Zhuluo magistrate, in one case without even knowing how much silver the package contained. He emphasized the fact that he avoided socializing with local gentry and merchants, ordered servants and staff to observe strict rules of conduct, and punished those who transgressed them. He claims the fact that he did this was well-known to all who resided in the city and was no lie.

The Yongzheng Emperor was quite pleased with Chanjibu. Yet at the same time his satisfaction with the Manchu censor was also been tempered by some apprehension that what might have begun as genuine differences over management
of government affairs had now been given substance by Chanjibu’s memorial as involving some degree of personal antipathy between the two censors after all.

We are deeply gratified. Over the past three years you have maintained quite a respectable reputation, which is why We have twice extended your tour in Taiwan. Recently Jing Kaoxiang memorialized to impeach you, and now you have impeached him. The matter is difficult to determine; We can only transfer you back to Fujian so the two of you can confront (duizhi 對質) each other. The truth will then naturally come to light (shuiluo shichu 水落石出).40

Evidently Jing harbored some dissatisfaction as well and had lodged his own ten-count indictment of Chanjibu. Although his original memorial is no longer extant, we do know four of the charges against Chanjibu. They are 1) providing startup funds to secretaries on his staff to open a pawn shop; 2) accepting gifts from various yamen functionaries; 3) privately issuing passes for merchant seamen; and 4) behaving in a willful and ungovernable (renxing guaizhang 任性乖張) way when inebriated.41 The six other accusations remain unknown.

The veracity of these allegations of misconduct could not be verified or disproved until a formal hearing had been held, but it was clear to Yongzheng that disharmony did indeed plague the bureaucracy in Taiwan. Mutual recriminations of this sort were extremely messy and posed a thorny challenge for the emperor, who knew that the bureaucratic alliances and interests involved would make any effective resolution highly problematic. All in all, however, Yongzheng seemed to have been quite satisfied with Chanjibu’s performance so far. Despite hints that aspects of Chanjibu’s account were open to legitimate dissenting interpretations, the emperor nevertheless ordered Zhou Zhongxuan to be dismissed from office and returned to Fuzhou to await trial. This move was essentially based solely on Chanjibu’s charges, which Yongzheng apparently found to be quite credible. A court edict promulgated on January 9, 1726, makes this point evident:

Many had previously memorialized that Taiwan County Magistrate Zhou Zhongxuan acquitted himself quite well in office; Manbao and Huang Guocai had also memorialized to endorse [him] on several occasions. We had intended to employ him in the capacity of Taiwan intendant or prefect. Now according to Inspecting Censor of Taiwan Chanjibu’s impeachment, he is rather avaricious and relies on ingratiation. It thus appears possible that he had been recommended before because he is an exploitative and scheming person (zuanci yingmou zhi ren 鑽刺營謀之人). Zhou Zhongxuan is hereby relieved of duty, to await investigation at the Fujian prefectural seat [Fuzhou]. His official treasury and assets are to be turned over to said censor to be audited and sealed in conjunction with the Taiwan intendant and prefect. When Gao Qizhuo arrives at the capital, We will promulgate an edict ordering him to preside over the inquiry, when the matter will naturally become clear.42

40 YZH2H 6: 561.
41 YZH2H 14: 549-50.
42 YZHYZHB 1: 158.
The edict concludes with details of selecting a replacement for Zhou and the responsibility of Acting Governor-General Yi Zhaoxiong 宜兆熊 and Mao Wenquan to evaluate the quality of the replacement. If Chanjibu was in fact at odds with Zhou and Jing on personal grounds, this edict seemed to signal an early victory for him.

Gao, mentioned by name in the edict, was then traveling from Guizhou to Beijing for an imperial audience before heading back south to deal with the aftermath of what was coming to be considered by the emperor more and more to be the disastrous Manbao and Huang administration. It was also becoming increasingly obvious that Gao was viewed as the trusted senior field administrator whom Yongzheng could rely upon to cure the general bureaucratic malaise that afflicted Fujian. While Yongzheng kept Mao focused on reviving the moribund provincial administration and pressed the governor to describe its financial and administrative procedures and arrangements, which one gets the sense differed by province and was thus largely a mystery to the throne, he also constantly reined in that reformist enthusiasm by instructing Mao to delay action on sensitive or knotty issues and consult with Gao when the latter arrived in Fujian. For example, Mao had discovered in the course of his audit of the province’s revenues that it included contributions (gongjuan 公捐) made by withholding stipends (fenggong 俸工) in their entirety for all officials serving in the province except for those in Taiwan. This was a practice that Yongzheng had earlier prohibited. Now Mao memorialized to call the continuation of the contributions to the emperor’s attention, portraying the issue as a violation of the emperor’s command. However, Yongzheng had not banned contributions, merely the “voluntary” contribution of entire salaries by withholding them in the first place. Mao was plainly making an oblique request for more funding (for public projects and the like) from the provincial level down to the counties by equating contributions and stipends. Yongzheng ordered Mao to discuss possible additional sources of revenue with Gao but added that voluntary and involuntary contributions were different. Clearly there existed in Yongzheng’s mind a hierarchy of officials, ranked by a combination of reliability, administrative acumen, seniority, sound judgment, and honesty. In 1726 Gao could definitely be counted as belonging to that select cadre of field administrators who enjoyed Yongzheng’s implicit trust.

Aside from continuing to familiarize himself with the many important

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43 YZHZH 6: 658. The cost of procuring the copper required in building warships, for example, had been one rationale for withholding salaries in Fujian. Excluding Taiwan, stipends for all officials in the province totaled some 70,000 taels, which had been appropriated as a contribution under Manbao and Huang to finance public projects before the practice was banned by Yongzheng. Thereafter, the practice ceased, but contributions continued, with 24,000 taels out of the 70,000 total being “donated” and earmarked for projects. The stipend due all officials in Taiwan prefecture totaled only 5100 taels, and it was apparently established administrative procedure for the Danshui 淡水 prefecture and the Zhanghua 彰化 magistrate not to contribute their salaries. Of the 4110 taels left, 2756 were allotted to the inspecting censors to defray the expenses of maintaining a staff and the general upkeep required of their respective yamen. It was this sum of 26,756 taels (the 24,000 taels withheld in Fujian plus the 2756 taels donated for the Taiwan censors) that was contributed and which Mao attempted to equate with the previous practice of withholding the entire stipend allotted for Fujian.
items of business that demanded a governor’s attention, Mao was also expected to demonstrate progress on the matters of most pressing concern to the Yongzheng Emperor. These included formulating a proper response to recent aborigine incursions into settler areas in Taiwan and taking measures to banish fraud, theft, and various other abuses in the salt administration. Of more immediate concern to Yongzheng at the moment, however, was Mao’s investigation of the rumored discord among the members of the Taiwan bureaucracy that he mentioned back in November. Now, three months later, Mao was prepared to elaborate on the matter:

Regarding your humble official’s previous memorial reporting the disharmony among the various officials in Taiwan, I received Your Majesty’s vermilion rescript, ‘investigate conclusively and then memorialize at once.’ Due to the seas that separate Fuzhou and Taiwan, your humble official was unable to immediately comprehend the matter in its entirety and was thus unable to report in detail. Now the matter has been understood only after circuitous investigations. The most serious disharmony (buhe 不和) exists only between Manchu Inspecting Censor Chanjibu and former Han Censor now Salt Distribution Commissioner Jing Kaoxiang. Your humble official has learned that whenever Chanjibu intends to act, Jing Kaoxiang is always obstinately opposed, and has openly impugned Chanjibu’s integrity and denigrated his abilities before others; therefore, Chanjibu harbors especially deep animosity. Of the civil and military officials, Taiwan-Xiamen Intendant Wu Changzuo 吳昌祚, Taiwan Prefect Fan Tingmou, Coastal Defense Subprefect Wang Zuomei 王作梅, Danshui Subprefect Wang Ping 王拼, and promoted Lieutenant Colonel Lü Ruilin 呂瑞麟 all side with Jing Kaoxiang, thus incurring Chanjibu’s displeasure. However, Brigade General Lin Liang 林亮 enjoys cordial relations with Chanjibu, which earns him Jing Kaoxiang’s disfavor. These are the reasons for disharmony. As to the exact circumstances [of the dispute], your humble official does not yet know all the particulars and dares not to be presumptuous.

Here finally was conclusive evidence to Yongzheng’s mind that what fueled the disagreements between officials in Taiwan over the Zhou impeachment, as well as the exchange of accusations of misconduct between Chanjibu and Jing, whose simmering feud lay behind these developments, was not necessarily an issue of bureaucratic discipline but of personal enmity between colleagues. There was of course no clear conceptual boundary dividing the two issues, but certainly the fact that officials had chosen sides in the dispute—in a faction-like list provided by Mao—had to signal at least an alarming disruption of morale in the bureaucracy, if not downright paralysis of the governmental machinery. Mao had also confirmed Yongzheng’s suspicions about Jing, who had turned out not to have been such a reliable and virtuous official after all. That he was now back on the mainland and separated from Chanjibu probably meant that the furor in the Taiwan bureaucracy would begin to abate.

44 YZHZH 6: 660-61, 662-64.
45 YZHZH 6: 661.
The Politics of Official Discord
Now it was clear that the personal animus between the two censors was the root cause of their disagreement over the impeachment of Zhou as well as the charges and counter-charges of criminal behavior, which were simply all ramifications of that enmity. Interestingly, Yongzheng decided to treat the mutual recriminations in Taiwan as an instance of disharmony rather than define it as a crime. What was his purpose in doing so? If Yongzheng hoped to effect reform and instill discipline in a local bureaucracy, he could very well have defined the affair as an administrative problem. That is, he could have investigated the accusations, determined their veracity, meted out punishment according to the code, and cashiered the wrongdoers. However, he chose to address the issue of disharmony, which he viewed as fundamental to the matter but also the most difficult one to tackle. “The situation of disharmony is already manifest before us. But it is difficult to determine right and wrong once disputes break out among people. [We] will personally instruct Gao Qizhuo [regarding this matter] when he arrives.”

As Mao had described, Chanjibu was almost completely isolated and could boast of no bureaucratic allies except for Lin Liang, a military man. As a civil official appointed directly by the emperor with no exam degree and therefore no built-in connections, Chanjibu was out of place and alone. Once he threatened to breach the cozy circle of bureaucratic patronage and mutual protection, it was only a matter of time before he invited a backlash—the fate of most who either carried out their duties too rigidly or who held themselves apart from colleagues. As mentioned earlier, the emperor was not unaware of this phenomenon, and that he intervened at certain critical junctures but not others speaks to the emperor having purposes other than promoting administrative efficacy and attests to the convoluted nature of the politics of official discord.

As it turned out, Mao himself was the first to launch a counterattack. Worded in a language of impartiality and high-mindedness, Mao’s memorial of April 11 stridently protested Zhou’s innocence. Leaving no stone unturned, Mao made extensive inquiries into the affairs of Zhou, including interviews with Provincial Judge Ding Shiyi (Chanjibu’s erstwhile fellow censor), Tingzhou and Zhangzhou Intendant Gao Duo (Taiwan prefect from 1721 to 1725), and Jing Kaoxiang, who had by then been promoted to Salt Distribution Commissioner. Perhaps with the possible exception of Ding, that Mao’s interlocutors would speak favorably of Zhou was no surprise. Based on these accounts, Mao asserted that Zhou was a talented and upright administrator who enjoyed the support and goodwill of the people as the magistrate of Zhuluo and Taiwan alike. After being dismissed from office and placed under guard, Zhou became the object of the people’s concern. They delivered firewood and rice to

46 YZHZH 6: 662.
47 Gao Duo was a Han bannerman belonging to the Bordered Yellow Banner with a jiansheng degree. See Liu Lianbi 刘良璧, comp. and ed., Chongxiu Fujian Taiwan fu zhi 重修福建臺灣府志, Taiwan Wenxian shiliao congkan, vol. 74, 354.
Zhou, and were so outraged with his imprisonment that they even attempted to forcibly free the magistrate from house arrest and transport him to Fuzhou. Troops had to be mobilized to secure Zhou. Mao declared it an incontrovertible fact that Zhou was beloved by the people. Attempting to vindicate Zhou, Mao stated that the sum of some ten thousand taels discovered during the seizure of Zhou's assets were not bribes as Chanjibu claimed but were instead money to be used to purchase rice to replenish government stock. To falsely blame Zhou when the documentation substantiated his story was the height of injustice (yuanyi 冤抑), Mao lamented. On the matter of usurious lending by Zhou, however, Mao was much less sanguine, saying only that more investigation would be needed when Gao Qizhuo arrived. Mao concluded by emphasizing that he felt compelled to speak out against the trumped up charges (gouxian 搬陷) leveled by Chanjibu after learning of the extent of the popular goodwill for Zhou.

However, Yongzheng could not be swayed from his course. “We find it truly difficult to prejudge (yuding 預定) the matter. Right and wrong can only be known after thoroughly examining both sides involved. This view of yours is exceedingly biased.” Mao was undeterred by this mild rebuke. He appeared determined to pursue a strategy of defending Zhou by casting aspersions on Chanjibu and thus prejudice the case before it even reached Gao's hands. To that end, he continued appealing to the throne, hoping to persuade Yongzheng to decide the case without conducting an investigation. Mao bolstered his second attempt by enlisting the help of Acting Governor-General Yi Zhaoxiong, who had replaced Manbao. This joint memorial was clearly designed to tip the balance against Chanjibu by augmenting Mao's claims with Yi's endorsement.

Yi and Mao began by voicing their concern that since Zhou had already been dismissed from office to await the resolution of the case, then Chanjibu should likewise be dismissed and wait quietly for Gao Qizhuo to determine the truth. However, Chanjibu was attempting to further complicate the already convoluted situation (biesheng zhijie 別生枝節), thus endangering the dynasty's frontiers. Painting a very different picture of Taiwan from Jing, who had earlier described it as a peaceful and prosperous region, Yi and Mao pointed out that Taiwan was populated by rootless riffraff without homes or families who were prone to incitement. Even relatively peaceful periods were punctuated with swirling rumors that needlessly struck fear into people's hearts. Only vigilant officials constantly on guard and working together kept the teeming hordes at bay. Chanjibu, however, recklessly ignored this monumental responsibility when he attempted to frame Zhou for a crime. These were all heady charges. Specifically, Yi and Mao accused Chanjibu of mobilizing dozens of thugs to demolish the residences of county functionaries. Based on the accounts of local officials and an affidavit from residents in the area, Yi and Mao concluded that these thugs, whose identities were unknown, worked for Chanjibu. They claim to have captured four of the

48 YZHZH 6: 909.
49 YZHZH 6: 909.
thugs who were on their way to stand trial in Fuzhou. The case would be turned over to the provincial judge [Ding Shiyi], who would preside impartially over the proceedings to arrive at the truth (the truth presumably being that Chanjibu was the mastermind).50

Yongzheng saw through this posturing and was not fooled. His reply was scathing:

While Chanjibu is obliged to quietly await Gao Qizhuo, you are also obliged to obey Our edict and quietly await Gao Qizhuo. Your turning over the case to the provincial judge for an impartial trial is highly irregular. When the truth comes out from Chanjibu, it is likely you will then be unable to conceal the actual situation. This is a major error! Mao Wenquan's performance and responses have been extremely unsatisfactory in their entirety!51

Given that Chanjibu had apparently made an enemy of Mao, there was the distinct possibility that the four who were arrested were only scapegoats who were either paid or coerced to implicate the censor in criminal wrongdoing. The emperor was committed to shielding a loyal and honest censor from being harmed by bureaucratic scapegoating. This may have been to encourage others to speak out about abuses, which they would hesitate to do if doing so meant inviting severe censure and criticism from colleagues. The chilling effect would then restrict the flow of (relatively) unbiased information to the throne from the field administration. It is also possible that Yongzheng found it necessary to protect his handpicked bannerman from being discredited by bureaucrats linked by extensive exam ties to powerful senior metropolitan officials. Imperial pride, anxiety about factionalism, concern for administrative efficacy, and ethnic anxiety may have all played a role to varying degrees. When seen this way, it is unsurprising that Yongzheng appeared to be convinced by Chanjibu's story even as impartiality obligated him to scrupulously maintain a balanced perspective—though it would be difficult to say that Yongzheng did not possess any biases of his own in the matter. Apparently, Yongzheng was prepared to chastise and repudiate all of Mao's accomplishments over this case. If Mao had ever enjoyed Yongzheng's favor, it was evident that this was no longer the case.

Despite Yongzheng's trenchant position that the Chanjibu affair be sorted out by Gao Qizhuo, subsequent attempts to discredit Chanjibu continued, albeit with more restraint. For example, the new junior metropolitan censor who replaced Jing Kaoxiang, Wang Jijing, submitted a memorial containing sensitive information, most likely involving Chanjibu, that the emperor chose to shelve (liuzhong 留中) rather than to consider or act upon in any way.52 Likewise, Yongzheng ignored another report from Mao regarding aborigine violence that placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of Chanjibu, noting that eleven deaths

50 YZHZH 7: 42-43.
51 YZHZH 7: 43.
52 YZHZH 6: 850.
were directly attributable to his foot dragging on a plan of action.\(^{53}\)

The bureaucratic backlash did exact a toll, however much Yongzheng tried
to silence criticism. On March 23, Yongzheng promulgated an edict through
the Grand Secretariat ordering Chanjibu to return to Fuzhou while awaiting trial,
which was to be presided over by the trusted Gao Qizhuo.\(^{54}\) At the same time, lest
Wang be tempted to further muddy the waters, Yongzheng had this to say, “You
are not someone We have gathered to be trustworthy. [We] commend you to strive
to the utmost and to be cautious in all matters!”\(^{55}\) On the other hand, Yongzheng
projected an attitude of solicitous attention toward the beleaguered Chanjibu.
Notwithstanding the emperor’s personal support and some early victories, the
enormous pressure exerted by the influence and prestige of the governor, as a
political enemy, must have been quite oppressive for the censor. However, the
emperor’s words offered comfort and the promise of fair treatment:

If you had not submitted this memorial, things would have almost gotten quite out of hand.
We will turn this matter over to the judgment of Gao Qizhuo. Do not worry; you will no
longer be oppressed by false accusations. Fortunately there was the memorial, otherwise We
would have been deceived by them all. There is no need to feel the least bit of trepidation (yiwei
疑畏). If you suffer any injustice, you will be brought to the capital where We will personally
preside over a retrial (fushen 復審).\(^{56}\)

Yongzheng’s message was clear: he now knew the truth of the matter and his will
would be done through Gao. Although it was not explicit, the implication was
that the trial would turn out the “right” way, Yongzheng even going so far as to
guarantee imperially dispensed justice as the last resort.

Conclusion

Appointing bannermen who owed their positions to nothing but his favor appeared
to be a preferred tactic in the early part of the Yongzheng Emperor’s reign. Chanjibu
was certainly no exception to this rule. The emperor’s eyes and ears faithfully
relayed information on local conditions and practice to the throne that had long
been obscured or suppressed. Jing Kaoxiang had done the same with the ailing salt
administration as well. At least initially, Acting Governor-General Yi Zhaoxiang
and new Governor Mao Wenquan both appeared to be vigorous administrators
poised and eager to reinvigorate a provincial bureaucracy plagued by a miasma of
apathy and complacency. With willing and able officials, Yongzheng’s leadership
and close attention to provincial affairs were repaid with increasing bureaucratic
responsiveness and growing imperial control and understanding, which in turn
enhanced imperial authority.

\(^{53}\) YZH2H 7: 165.
\(^{54}\) YZH2H 7: 136.
\(^{55}\) YZH2H 7: 136.
\(^{56}\) YZH2H 6: 823.
While Chanjibu certainly proved his usefulness in some areas, he also created problems in others. His controversial impeachment of Zhou Zhongxuan not only uncovered unsavory aspects of the magistrate's conduct, but also disturbing attitudes on the part of Jing Kaoxiang and others. Even as political networks of one kind were being dismantled, Jing and Mao Wenquan, for example, had revealed themselves to be part of another held together by exam ties and just as inclined as their predecessors to protect their own. The backlash against Chanjibu revealed to Yongzheng a certain bureaucratic resilience that found ways to remain impervious to imperial prerogative.

This may explain why in spite of his own reservations about Chanjibu's handling of the impeachment—Yongzheng would later admonish Chanjibu's successor to “scrutinize colleagues in a harmonious manner and not make a fool of oneself (chuchou 出醜) like your predecessor Chanjibu” 57—the emperor found it necessary to side with the unpopular censor. Imperial authority would have been diminished if the regular bureaucracy had been allowed to disgrace Chanjibu. In addition, Yongzheng was not categorically opposed to employing officials with major shortcomings as long as they could perform a given role effectively. The throne's responsibility was to place imperfect officials in postings where they could flourish. In this sense, there was no presumptive structural tension between the emperor and his bureaucracy. For Yongzheng, if officials failed to perform or were incompetent, it was his fault for not employing the right person for the right office in the first place, at least theoretically—who would tell the emperor he had made a mistake? This indicates, as Pamela Crossley has pointed out, that

The emperorship and the bureaucracy were organically linked. They not only gave evidence of institutional exchange but, in times of healthy government, each responded to the initiatives of the other. Nor could they be separately legitimated; the bureaucracy justified itself through service to the Son of Heaven, and the emperor justified himself through moral harmony with the bureaucracy.58

Despite tensions inherent in the relationship, there was no immanent opposition between the emperor and the bureaucracy, as Philip Kuhn has suggested for the Qianlong era.59

Therefore, Yongzheng’s move to intervene on Chanjibu's behalf in the impeachment imbroglio was as much a political statement as it was an exercise in administrative rationalization. What began as a routine exercise in censorial oversight quickly became a political issue when personal antipathy between Chanjibu and Jing spilled over and invited a bureaucratic firestorm of mutual

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57 YZHZH 7: 583.
recrimination and blame. It is interesting to note that no clear distinction was made in this case between administrative shortcomings and crimes. It was a matter of some controversy whether Zhou had taken a bribe or there had merely been a misunderstanding over his flexible approach in commuting punishment to a monetary fine. Similarly, no clear boundary existed between genuine differences over discharging one's duties on the one hand, and disharmony among officials for personal reasons on the other. The Yongzheng Emperor decided to pursue the matter as if it were an instance of personal conflict rather than as a criminal case. For example, Prefect Fan Tingmou's call for whoever slandered his reputation to be put to death under the “bare stick” statute of the Qing code went unheeded.60

Mindful of the opacity of provincial operations to outside scrutiny under Manbao and the signs of mounting crisis in a demoralized and unresponsive bureaucracy, the new emperor availed himself of the opportunity presented by an instance of official discord to order a trial to sort out the matter and appoint new leadership to reorganize the province from the top down. Yongzheng promoted or transferred promising officials from other regions and utilized them to investigate local administrative practices and to discipline and reinvigorate the provincial bureaucratic apparatus. The results were modest but gratifying. The most effective approach had not been institutional reform, but steady imperial pressure flexibly applied to influence bureaucratic procedure and motivate officials to conduct business with more care and scrupulousness. Despite the rhetoric that envisioned the emperor's virtue trickling down the ranks of officialdom through his instruction, neither Yongzheng nor the provincial officials expected any magical transformation in the way bureaucratic affairs were handled. Given the necessity of still having to rely on the bureaucracy to carry out other vital functions of government, the emperor and his senior field administrators were satisfied with curbing the most egregious abuses and restoring a general degree of responsiveness and discipline.

This is not to say that what had been accomplished was inconsequential. Assigning an unlettered Manchu censor like Chanjibu to Taiwan gave Yongzheng an alternative perspective from those provided by the degreed Han officials who dominated the local bureaucracy. Plucked from obscurity, Chanjibu was beholden to the throne and stood outside the patronage networks and class ties that bound and protected his Han colleagues. While the fact alone of being a Manchu interloper did not make discord inevitable, Chanjibu's zeal—spurred on by Yongzheng—in carrying out his duties did not endear him and was a recipe for conflict. The subsequent impeachments and mutual accusations of wrongdoing afforded the emperor an innocuous-seeming entrée into the business of the province. That this was important to Yongzheng can be seen in his handling of the dispute. Whereas he might have normally relegated such a comparatively

60 It was intimated during Magistrate Zhou Zhongxuan's defense that Fan Tingmou had also been guilty of accepting bribes, a charge the prefect vigorously denied. Although Fan was disinclined to name Zhou as the source of the libelous accusation, it seems clear from the context that the magistrate was responsible for the charge YZH2H 6: 290.
insignificant case to the judgment of top provincial officials, Yongzheng took a deep personal interest. He exercised the imperial prerogative to define and shape the proceedings, selecting each presiding official and instructing them during court audiences so as to obtain the proper outcome. Chanjibu was ultimately let off with a slap on the wrist, while the local magistrate was convicted of a minor offense and sentenced to death. Yongzheng’s purpose in meting out such harsh punishment was to create an impression of zero tolerance for misconduct to deter future offenses and inspire integrity in the provincial bureaucracy. Then, by showing leniency and commuting the death sentence, the emperor could pacify the official’s powerful political patrons—who were also his senior advisers—without seeming to have backed down. Through the process, moreover, Yongzheng had managed to strengthen his own authority over regional officials.

None of this was easy, of course. Despite his theoretically unlimited power, the emperor could not simply command his way to a solution of any regional problem. As he admitted to some of his officials, Yongzheng did not even always possess the technical and local expertise to fully comprehend all the administrative issues, much less impose a solution. Effective governance meant relying on regional officials who had the knowledge and experience to confront the issues. Governance by men was Yongzheng’s attempt to strengthen imperial leadership while preserving regional initiative in local governance.61 The imperial agenda was unquestionably to clean up the provincial bureaucracy of its accumulated vices and to enhance its efficiency, but the capricious nature of doing so by pressuring officials to be good men bolstered Yongzheng’s authority. Even though Yongzheng refrained from commenting on or interfering with routine policy matters about which he knew little, he nevertheless usually followed that admission with the remark that he would know whether the official’s handling of the issue was fair and impartial. The lack of objective standards by which officials were judged created a sense of randomness and unpredictability that made Yongzheng seemingly omniscient. The very arbitrariness of the emperor’s decisions and judgments reflected his political goals and needs at the time, but also disconcerted officials, who were unsure just how much the throne actually knew. In the end, the self-monitoring that accompanied such uncertainty was more effective than any imperial surveillance.

61 Contrary to his (sometimes unearned) reputation as a harsh and overbearing ruler, Yongzheng did on many occasions defer to his officials in matters of personnel and local knowledge. For example, he once appointed a candidate as prefect despite his own misgiving purely on the recommendation of a senior official. Conversely, he allowed another candidate to be assigned a lesser post based on the advice of a senior official even though he had intended a higher posting for that candidate. See Wang Zhiming 王志明, Yongzheng chao guanliao zhidu yanjiu 雍正朝官僚制度研究 [Research on bureaucratic institutions during the Yongzheng reign] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), 160-61.
ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QGZTS</td>
<td>Qinggong gongzhong dang zouzhe Taiwan shiliao</td>
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<tr>
<td>QSG</td>
<td>Qingshi gao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSLZ</td>
<td>Qingshi liezhuan</td>
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<tr>
<td>YZHYZHB</td>
<td>Yongzheng chao Hanwen yuzhi huibian</td>
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<tr>
<td>YZHZH</td>
<td>Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian</td>
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GLOSSARY

- baoju 保舉
- biesheng zhijie 別生枝節
- binggong 秉公
- bithesi 筆帖式
- bixian tuiwei 避嫌推諉
- bu anjing 不安靜
- buhe 不和
- Cao Yin 曹寅
- Chanjibu 禪濟布
- Chen Qin 陳秦
- Chen Shichun 陳世淳
- chuchou 出醜
- daxueshi 大學士
- Dai Duo 戴鐸
- Danshui 淡水
- duizhi 對質
- Fan Tingmou 范廷謀
- fenggong 奉工
- fushen 复審
- gan er 乾兒
- Gao Duo 高鐸
- Gao Qizhuo 高其倬
- gongguo zu yi xiangdi 巧過足以相抵
- gongjuan 公捐
- gongsheng 貢生
- gouxian 搬陷
- hao wu biyi 毫無裨益
- honglu si 鴻臚寺
- jiansheng 監生
- Jing Kaoxiang 景考祥
- jinshi 進士
- junji dachen 軍機大臣
- juxin 居心
- Lin Liang 老實謹慎
- liubu 六部
- liuzhong 留中
- liyin 禮銀
- Lù Ruilin 呂瑞麟
- Lungkodo 隆科多
- maoji 冒籍
- Mao Wenquan 毛文銓
- Mao Wenquan 毛文銓
- Nian Gengyao 年羹堯
- ren mingbai 任性乖張
- renzhong 人治
- renxing guaizhang 任性乖張
- renxiu 人治
- renzi 人治
- renza 人治
- renzheng 人治
- shi 諡
- shuijiao shichu 水落石出
- tanlan bufa 貪婪不法
- tongmen 同門
- tongzhou gongji 同舟共濟
- waiguan 外官
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