

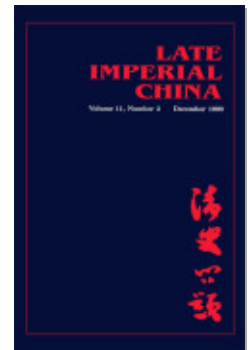


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Late Imperial China, Volume 11, Number 2, December 1990, pp. 1-31 (Article)



Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/late.1990.0000>

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WHAT MADE FOSHAN A TOWN? THE EVOLUTION OF RURAL-URBAN IDENTITIES IN MING-QING CHINA*

David Faure

Cities and towns appear in the current Chinese social and economic history literature in four non-exclusive, but recognizably discreet, contexts. First, as "central places," they are discussed as nodes in networks through which trade flowed, and the central question in that literature is how open or closed those networks were for the exchange of goods and information.¹ Second, as urban centers, they are looked upon as spatial areas that, at least potentially, might give rise to particular lifestyles, and the question raised by this point of view is whether the Chinese city represented a contrast to or a continuum of rural life.² Third, as foci of merchant activities, they are discussed as points of interaction between the market and the state. The essential question in this context is whether the merchants as a group were capable of standing up to official intervention in the regulation of commerce.³ Fourth, with reference to the rise of a bourgeoisie in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the question has to be asked also why despite a vigorous urban economy in earlier centuries, China did not produce a bourgeoisie of its own prior to the proliferation of Western ideas in its cities, a question that relates to political ideology and the self-image of the urban population.⁴ This paper deals primarily with the fourth question. It is not disputed here that towns acted as commercial centers, that town dwellers might develop new lifestyles, and that merchants might stand up to the bureaucracy. The question I am concerned with is how members of the town leadership might reflect upon the status of their town and themselves. It is my contention that in the Ming and Qing town, leaders realized that the prosperity of their towns was rooted in the economy, but

*This paper was first presented at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., March 17-19, 1989. The author is grateful to Helen Siu, Frederic Wakeman and Rubie Watson for their comments.

¹G. William Skinner 1964-65, 1971.

²G. William Skinner 1977, F. W. Mote 1977, William T. Rowe 1989.

³Susan Mann 1987, William T. Rowe 1984.

⁴Marie-Claire Bergere 1989, especially p. 23 and Marianne Bastid-Bruguere 1980, especially pp. 569-71.

they found it to their advantage, none the less, to wear the ready cloak of the literati. In other words, the bourgeoisie of the Chinese town, as a bourgeoisie, did not make an impact on the state's political ideology that might give itself recognition. Rather, it was the literati culture that stamped its identity on the commercialism that emerged in this period. In documenting the self-perception of the town leadership, one sees, therefore, the dissipation, rather than assertion, of mercantile influence on political ideology, even as merchants held jealously onto their local autonomy.

Two views on Foshan

This paper discusses the communal organization of Foshan, near Guangzhou, as it grew into one of the "Four Big Towns" of Ming and Qing China.⁵ The word "town" is used here as a ready translation for the character *zhen*, which was often employed for describing Foshan in late imperial times. As it was used in the Ming and the Qing, the character designated centers of population known for commerce and industry, the military connotations of the Tang and Song notwithstanding. The history of a town such as Foshan is of particular interest in the context of studies of urban change in China because of its obvious distinction from the *cheng*, the seat of official administration. In keeping with its nature as a town, rather than a county capital, Foshan was never walled, and throughout the Ming it was not the seat of any governmental *yamen*; the Wudoukou Police Office (*si*) that had charge of the town was located in nearby Pingzhou.⁶ One might expect that the relative autonomy and initiative for trade exhibited in towns such as Foshan could leave some marks upon the developing political structure of Ming and Qing China. However, one has to see how the town leaders described their position.

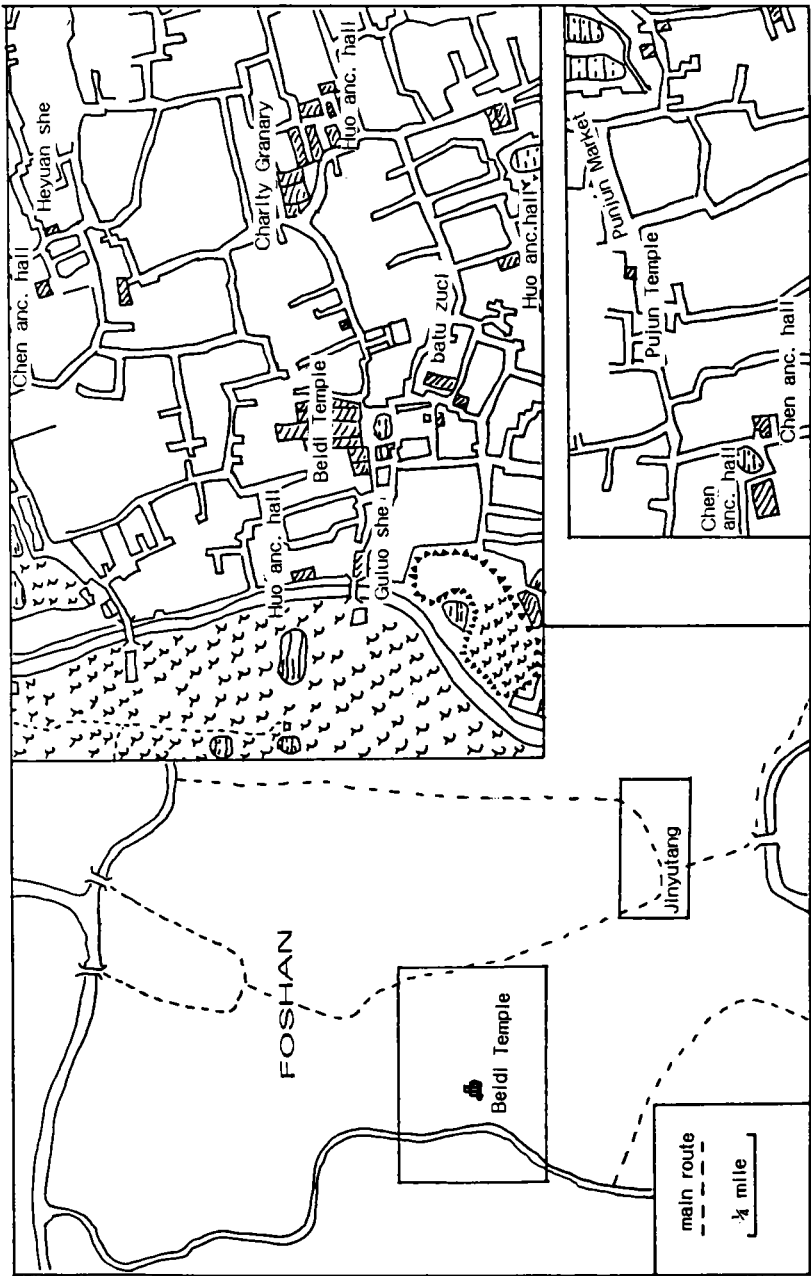
A prominent view on the status of Foshan was expressed by Chen Yanzong,⁷ editor of the Qianlong edition of the *The Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*. In an essay of his included in the local history entitled, "An Argument Concerning the Town of Foshan" (*Foshan zhen lun*),

⁵ Liu Xianting 17th century:193.

⁶ *Foshan zhongyi xiangzhi* (hereafter *FZX*) 1752, 2/5b quoting the county history as its source states that the Wudoukou Police Office was built in Foshan in 1452, but adds that the statement is unfounded. On 3/7b it notes that the Wudoukou Police Office, which was in charge of Foshan, was originally located at Pingzhou, and was moved to Foshan only in 1664.

⁷ Chen Yanzong (1709-78) was a *juren* in 1741 and a member of one of Foshan's oldest lineages, the Chen lineage at Jinyutang. His biography may be found in *FZX* 1830, 9/18a-b. A copy of his lineage genealogy, the *Jinyutang Chenshi zupu* (Genealogy of the Chen Surname at Jinyutang), is held in the Foshan Museum.

Town of Foshan



Chen posed a question: not quite what made Foshan a town, but what made Foshan so special among the districts of Nanhai county. Surely, he argued, Foshan was given pride of place not because it was the richest of them all, nor because it was located on the confluence of the West River and the North River, which made it a great gathering place [*duhui*], nor because merchants flocked to it, even though that gave it a reputation equal to Zhuxian of Henan Province, Hankow of Hubei, and Wucheng of Jiangxi. What made Foshan special was that it was a place of “loyalty and righteousness” [*zhongyi*]. “Because it is known for its loyalty and righteousness, goods are plentiful, for this is how Heaven rewards it. Because even when goods are plentiful, righteousness has not been abandoned, the land has been fertile. [The people] are born near the market [*shi*] and yet literature thrives, for their nature has not been moved by their profit. Their houses are located close to the market and yet they achieve success in the official examinations, for they pride themselves on their learning and not on their profit.”⁸

Chen Yanzong knew well enough that Foshan became a town because there was trade, and that there was trade because the town lay on the confluence of two of the three main tributaries that flowed into the Pearl River. What he was saying was that the reputation could not rest on such a claim alone. No self-respecting scholar, such as Chen was, could identify himself with a town that was merely a trading center. Chen, whose family had lived in Foshan from the early Ming, was proud of being part of it because it fostered loyalty, righteousness, a literary culture and success in the imperial examinations. Embodied in Chen’s essay are both the concept of the town as a trading center and of it as a recognized locale identified with the literati, and clearly he favored its literati pretensions. His position was the culmination of three centuries of cultural development that can be documented.

Loyalty and Righteousness

The term “loyalty and righteousness” in the context of Foshan refers to the name “Neighborhood of Loyalty and Righteousness” (*Zhongyi xiang*) that was awarded to the town by the Ming emperor in 1452 in recognition of the resistance that Foshan mustered when attacked by the rebel Huang Xiaoyang in 1449. Ever since that time, the event had stood out as a landmark in its history. The temple of the Northern Emperor (*Beidi*), known in Ming official circles as the True Warrior (*Zhenwu*), who protected Foshan in this incident, was awarded at the same time the title Temple of Efficacious Response (*Lingying ci*), and in the next century, a hall that came to be known as the Temple of Flowing Fragrance (*Liufang ci*) was built to house the spirit tablets

⁸ FZX 1752, introductory chapter, 25a-b.

of the twenty-two elders who were given the credit for staging the resistance. From as early as we know about it, in 1513, the hall in commemoration of the elders was considered an integral part of the Beidi Temple.⁹

In the fifteenth century lineages centered on ancestral halls did not yet dominate the Pearl River delta.¹⁰ At the time of the Huang Xiaoyang uprising, although Foshan was already recognized as a populous center of trade and industry, it was thought of variously as the nine *she*, the eight *tu* or the twenty-four *pu*, none of which necessarily suggests any connotation of a town.¹¹ The *she* were communities that gathered around earth god shrines,

⁹For an account of the history of Foshan, see Huang Jianxin and Luo Yixing 1987. The earliest reference to the 1513 "repair" of the hall in commemoration of the defenders of Foshan is in Huo Qiu, "Lingying ci tiandi du'e shiji" (An Account of the Land and Ferry Quota at the Lingying Temple), in *FZX* 1752, 10/23b-27b. It is referred to in that essay as a *tang* and not as a *ci*, as it came to be known, thus making it unclear whether spirit tablets were deposited there. The earliest reference to regular sacrifice to the defenders is given in Lu Mengyang, "Shiji zhongyi ji," (An Account of Loyalty and Righteousness of Benefit to Generations), in *FZX* 1752, 10/19a-23a. Huo Qiu was a *juren* in mid-Zhengde (c. 1510) and Lu Mengyang a *jushi* in 1538. For Huo's biography, see *FZX* 1752, 8/8a, and an entry on Lu may be found in *Guangdong tongzhi* 1822, *juan* 69:1164.

¹⁰David Faure 1989:14-21.

¹¹Aside from entries in the genealogies, what we know of Foshan up to the time of the Huang Xiaoyang uprising is principally derived from five essays included in the various editions of the *FZX*. Of these five essays, Tang Bi, "Chongjian zumiao ji" (An Account of the Rebuilding of the Ancestral Temple) and the unsigned "Qingzhen tang chongxiu ji" (An Account of the Repairs of the Qingzhen Hall), *FZX* 1752, 14b-16a and 16a-19a respectively, were written before the Huang Xiaoyang uprising. Chen Zhi, "Zumiao lingying ji" (An Account of Loyalty and Righteousness at the Ancestral Temple), *FZX* 1752 10/11b-14b was written in 1450, immediately after the defeat of Huang. Chen was an official serving under the assistant administration commissioner of Guangdong who inspected the Foshan area after the uprising and personally saw some of the defense that was mounted in Foshan. On the basis of his report, Jie Ji wrote the memorial, "Zouqing jiquan zhongyi shu" (Petition on the Encouragement of Loyalty and Righteousness) included in *FZX* 1752, 10/1b-3a, and this memorial resulted in a report from the Ministry of Rites in 1453 included in *FZX* 1923, 8/4a-5b. Chen referred to the defense organization in Foshan as the *pu*, and Jie referred to the "people of the eight *tu* who were led by" the elders of Foshan who came later to be enshrined. Jie's memorial makes very clear that the request to the throne was for regular sacrifice to the Northern Emperor and for maintaining his temple in good repair, as well as honors for the Foshan elders named and remission of corvée due from their families. The Ministry of Rites document records an edict that granted the official sacrifice to the Northern Emperor, with no reference made for any award for the elders. As the elders survived the uprising, there was obviously no reason to institute sacrifice to them immediately, even though Chen's essay noted that the names of the elders were to be appended to the stele that recorded his essay. *FZX* 1923, 8/19b-20b records a stele bearing the names of the elders, but that dates only from 1623. The word "*she*" does not appear in any of these documents. However, the supremacy of the nine ancient *she* (*gujiushe*) is noted in the *FZX* 1752 1/7a-b, and the *Nanhai Foshan Huoshi zupu* (Genealogy of the Huo Surname of Foshan in Nanhai) 1848, 1/33a. *The Genealogy of the Huo Surname* notes that a board above the Fuli *she*, one of the nine, was dated 1488. Pages 1/33a-34b of this

the *tu* was a unit in the *lijia* registration of the early Ming, and the *pu* was a unit in the local defense organization that was established during the Huang Xiaoyang uprising even though the term was later used to designate a district within Foshan. Essentially, in the aftermath of the uprising, the registered households in the *lijia*, known collectively as the Eight *Tu*, came to be looked upon as the leaders of Foshan, and were given charge of the Beidi Temple. The combination of *lijia* registration with territorial religious unions was a formula that characterized inter-village management in the whole of the Pearl River delta; there was nothing necessarily urban about it.

That the Eight *Tu* embraced a wider area than the nine *she*, we can be quite certain. The designation "the nine ancient *she*" did not include even some of the oldest *she* in Foshan, for instance, the Heyuan *she* behind the Beidi Temple, or the two *she* near Pujun *xu*, possibly Foshan's oldest market.¹² We can also be certain that there had always been some ordering among the nine *she*. Hence, the list always began with the Guluo *she*, where the iron foundries that made Foshan a center of the iron industry used to be located, and they were dominated by people of the Huo surname. The Eight *Tu* included member households from all these *she*. However, as a *lijia* unit, the *tu* was made up not of territorial units but of member households. The *she* and the *tu* arrangements crisscrossed, but one suspects that the rotation of tax-collection duties required in the *tu*, and the rotation of worship as one would expect in the *she*, were in many ways mutually supportive.

The registration of the Foshan households into the *lijia*, and the imperial award of the term "loyal and righteous", were facets of the extension of the state into the local community in the early Ming. Concomitant with these developments was the elevation of the Northern Emperor from being one of numerous deities worshiped in the temple to the leading deity of Foshan.¹³ His ascendance was recognizable before 1449, for it was noted in an essay that predated the Huang Xiaoyang uprising that it was to him in particular that commercial disputes were brought. In 1429, two local men had found omens at the temple compelling enough for them to donate money to purchase the land adjacent to it on which the iron foundries were located so that the iron-

genealogy also include a discussion of the nine *she*.

¹²The Xian surname of Heyuan was one of the oldest surnames in Foshan. See *Lingnan Xianshi zhongpu* 1910, 3/6/1b-2b, 3/17/1a. The Pujun *xu* was originally known as the Tapo *xu* (FZX 1752, 3/20a), and the Tapo Monastery was the original site of Foshan. The Pujun *xu* belonged to the Chen surname at Jinyutang (*Jinyutang Chenshi zupu* 10 xia/10b-11b).

¹³The "Chongjian zumiao ji" refers to the Beidi Temple as *zumiao* (the ancestral temple), and notes that it was given this name because it was considered the leading temple of Foshan. The Northern Emperor (referred to in the essay in his official name as True Warrior) stood out among other deities in the temple because he was efficacious.

smiths might be evicted and the land donated to the temple.¹⁴ Aside from the awe in which the Northern Emperor was held by the early Ming emperors, recognition for his efficacy in the defense of the town from the rebels gave his temple legitimate leadership in the town's pantheon of deities.¹⁵ Documents that recorded the award of his title were tireless in pointing out that he was efficacious precisely in Foshan's pursuit of "loyalty and righteousness." One feature of the centrality of the Beidi Temple in Foshan social life was its physical grandeur and its representation in local records. In the Qianlong *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*, the map of the town shows it in a prominent position, and it is listed under the section "Official Residences" whereas other temples appear under a section on "Temples." A travelers' handbook entitled *The Streets of Foshan* published in 1830 begins with a crude drawing of it and an account of its history.¹⁶ As Chen Yanzong's essay indicates, the temple of the Northern Emperor stamped on Foshan the presence of the deity, and through the legend of his efficacy in Foshan's defense against the rebels, the loyalty of its people to the emperor and righteousness among themselves. This was the pre-emption of the local deity by the state, standard practice in town or country in Ming and Qing China.

Town Management: the Pu and the Tu

The evolution of the *pu* from a unit of defense into a geographic portion of the town is the first hint we have of an incipient urban character for Foshan. One has to visualize the clustering of houses in Ming-Qing villages: narrow lanes leading into narrower lanes each time a new house was built. The standard defense measure was for a nest of small streets to barricade itself behind strong wooden shutters that would be closed at night. As an account written in 1450 described it: "The rebels made known that they wanted to attack Foshan. The elders went to the ancestral temple [i.e. the Beidi Temple in Foshan] to ask the deity by divination if they would come. The deity said it was certain that they would. Therefore, the elders gathered together the people of their *xiang*. They selected the strong and the brave, prepared their weapons, dug ditches, set up wooden barricades on a circumference of more than ten *li*, and along it set up thirty-five [or twenty-five] *pu*, each *pu* establishing a leader, who was put in charge of over three hundred men. They slaughtered animals, drank from their blood, and swore to the deity, asking

¹⁴ The incident is noted in the "Chongjian zumiao ji" and in the genealogy of one of the men involved. For the genealogical account, see Huang Jianxin and Luo Yixing 1987:30.

¹⁵ Compare James L. Watson 1985.

¹⁶ *Foshan jielüe* 1830.

him to smite those who were not of one heart and who would withdraw when the enemies appeared.”¹⁷ It seems clear that the *pu* of 1449 was such a street-cluster defense establishment.

The problem is that the two extant versions of the account of 1450 refer not to twenty-four *pu* but respectively to twenty-five or thirty-five *pu*. I do not think it likely that this is a transcription error. The 1752 *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* is emphatic that there were originally only twenty-four *pu*, expanding to twenty-five at the time that record went to press.¹⁸ However, in that case, the *pu* of 1752 were not those of 1449. After all, there is no reason to suppose that all the villages in the vicinity of the Beidi Temple were or were recognized to have been engaged in the resistance. Two *she* communities at Zhaxia *pu*, for instance, continued into the Qing to sacrifice independently to a martyr of 1449 who was not counted among the twenty-two elders.¹⁹ Moreover, the record we have of the involvement of Zhaxia illustrates how *post hoc* interpretations might blur the public memory: the 1752 edition of *The Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* excludes the Bimin *she* from the list of the original nine *she*, while the 1923 edition refers to it as one of them.²⁰ In addition to communities that set up defense independently of the Beidi Temple, we must consider also the possibility of those communities that dispersed during the turmoil, and perhaps others that defected to the rebels. Without some idea of the geography of Foshan in 1449, it is true that any discussion of the extent of the *pu* organization must be speculative, but the discrepancy in the record warns against equating the later *pu* with the earlier use of the term.

More telling is the absence of written accounts of any lasting effort among the *pu* in the joint management of the town until 1795, when they were involved in the establishment of a charity granary (*yicang*) in Foshan.²¹ Although throughout the Ming no government official or troops were stationed in Foshan, it seems that the only efforts to coordinate defense were *ad hoc*. In 1553, during a year of famine, Xian Guiqi, a senior degree-holder from another early Ming Foshan family, provided grain for congee to be distributed to the famished, and seeing his example, “property-owners in the twenty-four *pu* made congee for their neighbors.” He also “sent people to guard the grain boats and the rice market, and only then was business possible.” The in-

¹⁷ Chen Zhi, “Zumiao lingying ji,” in *FZX* 1752, 10/12a.

¹⁸ The version of Chen Zhi’s essay as recorded in the 1752 edition of the *FZX* gives the number as thirty-five, and that in the 1830 and 1923 editions as twenty-five.

¹⁹ *FZX* 1752, 3/14a-b.

²⁰ *FZX* 1752, 1/7a and *FZX* 1923, 8/20a.

²¹ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 119-24. I am assuming that the management arrangement recorded in 1812 was in place when the granary was founded.

cident is significant, for in the commemorative essay of the event dated the same year, not only do we have an account providing the earliest reference to Foshan as a rice market, but also we see that the *pu*, collectively, were relegated to a passive role in a crisis situation, even though the stele that was set up to record the event was signed by various persons in their capacities as “scholars and people” (*shimin*) of the “twenty-four *pu* of Foshan.”²²

The next attempt to build some common organization for defense came in 1614, under the leadership of yet another senior degree-holder, Li Daiwen, who was also descended from an early Ming Foshan family. Li organized for Foshan the Battalion of Loyalty and Righteousness, the local defense corps for the entire town that survived, on and off, until the mid-nineteenth century. Over the years he also contributed actively to other public projects, repairing the Bridge of General Welfare in 1623, the main road to Guangzhou in 1634, the “screen wall” (*zhaobi*) of the Beidi Temple in 1641, and the Wenchang Academy in 1642, in which his own portrait was installed in 1645 shortly after his death. The local records argue that the militia (*tuanlian*) of the *pu* began only in 1628, when the imperial government authorized it, even though it would be more consistent with the trend we have been observing to interpret that as recognition of the militia rather than its foundation. A military garrison was finally stationed in Foshan in 1647.²³

The involvement of native sons who became senior-ranking bureaucrats and who returned home and took an interest in the affairs of the town has to be discussed in some detail. However, before that is done, it needs to be pointed out that in the absence of other town-wide management before the end of the Ming, it was the *lijia* organization, the Eight *Tu*, that was the institutional representative of Foshan. How this representation worked is of extreme importance in understanding what corporate nature the town might or might not have had, and so it is to this question we must first turn.

It is significant that a special relationship existed between the Chen lineage of Foshan, a leading member of the Eight *Tu*, and the Northern Emperor, the deity at the temple. “Every year on the fifteenth day of the second month, on the occasion of the sacrifice to the Northern Emperor as required by imperial edict, the day before [the sacrifice], the gentry and elders array the insignia and adorn children in colorful clothes to receive the deity at the Chen surname ancestral hall at Jinyutang, and at the second drum, they escort [the deity] on his return to the Temple of Efficacious Response (*Lingying ci*).”

²²Lu Mengyang, “Shiji zhongyi ji,” in *FZX* 1752, 10/19a-23a.

²³Li Daiwen became a *jinshi* in 1604 and rose to be a vice minister in the Ministry of Revenue and director-general of Grain Transport. He probably died in or shortly after 1642, for his biography in *FZX* 1752, 8/6a-7b, noted that he died the year that he returned to Foshan from his official posting. For his contribution to Foshan, see *FZX* 1752, 3b-6a.

Thereafter, the local officials and the gentry and elders sacrificed to him, and then "the deity would again come out of the temple."²⁴ It should be noted that the Chen ancestral hall at Jinyutang belonged to the lineage of which Chen Yanzong, the editor of the 1752 *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*, was a member. Moreover, there was no dispute about the procedure here. The regulations of the Eight *Tu* included in an appendix of the *Genealogy of the Chen Surname at Heyuan* make it quite clear that on the fourteenth, the deity would be received at the Chen ancestral hall at Jinyutang and be escorted back to his temple, and on that night, there would be the sacrifice as required by edict, and cakes would be given both for that sacrifice and for a gathering.²⁵

Another occasion when sacrifice was specially offered to the Northern Emperor fell on his birthday. The 1752 *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* description gives a sense of the community feeling the occasion evoked. "The people of the *xiang* go to the Temple of Efficacious Response [*Lingying ci*] solemnly to pay their respect. Every street neighborhood [*fang*] is decorated and stages the opera. This is known as the Festival of the Double Third, and several tens of teams of people beat [drums] and blow [the *suona*], making a noise that can be heard more than 10 *li* away. Day and night, the deity is paraded without there being a moment of peace. The deity's sedan chair is even carried into narrow lanes and humble houses. Knowledgeable people say this is sacrilege, and an inappropriate way to worship the deity. However, the practice has been pursued for a long time, and the deity is comfortable with it and does not consider it wrong. The deity is the most elevated among heavenly deities, but in Foshan he is no less than close [*qin*, that is, like a relative]. The local people look upon the Temple of Efficacious Response as their ancestral hall. That is to say they look upon the deity as their grandfather and grandmother. It is human nature that when a man sees a grandchild jump in disrespect, he not only does not lose his temper, but in fact shows how pleased he is . . . The deity looks upon the people of this place in the same way."²⁶ The record goes on to say that on the next day, the deity would be escorted back to the temple from the Huizhen Hall, a side hall at the Beidi Temple, where he would be given a change of clothes. However, the account is really continued in the regulations of the Eight *Tu* recorded in the Heyuan Chen genealogy, for after the deity was taken back to the Huizhen Hall of the temple, a delegation of the Eight *Tu* would escort him from there to the religious celebration (*jiao*) that was held in the name of the

²⁴ FZX 1752, 6/3b-4a.

²⁵ Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu 4/43a.

²⁶ FZX 1752, 6/3b-4b.

temple. To do that the delegation were to "dismount from their horses at the ancestral hall for all the Chen surnamed lineages in Foshan at Shuibian."²⁷ On this day, cakes were served and a feast of vegetarian food was provided in connection with the religious celebration which was to be attended by only one person from each *jia*. The Northern Emperor was returned to his temple on the 30th day of the third month.²⁸

On both occasions, the Eight *Tu*, and particularly the Chen lineage, were given the positions of honor above the other townspeople. One has to see that these celebrations made the claim of the Eight *Tu* on the temple quite visible. There were other temple festivals in Foshan, notably at the Tianhou Temple in Zhaxia and at the Longmu Temple, but neither was given the centrality that the Beidi Temple commanded. The stature of the Northern Emperor in Foshan and the privileges of the Eight *Tu* in having access to him confirmed each in their positions of authority.

The hold that the Eight *Tu* might have on the Beidi Temple, and hence, symbolically, on Foshan, is also expressed in two documents written in 1739 to commemorate the completion of the Zanyi Hall, which also came to be known as the "Ancestral Hall of the Eight *Tu*" (*batu zuci*). One of these essays, written by Wei Wan, magistrate of Nanhai, is reprinted in the Foshan local histories. The other, a stele inscription, is, appropriately enough, because of the Chen surname's special connections to the Beidi Temple, included in the *Genealogy of the Chen Surname at Heyuan*.²⁹ Wei, writing as the official, saw the connection in terms of tax-registration. He likened the *lijia* to the well-field system of old, and attributed the origin of the town to registration by the ancestors of the households in the Eight *Tu*.³⁰ The stele inscription

²⁷The *Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu* 43 refers to this hall as the Shuibian Chen Dazong. It would seem that this was the ancestral hall for all the Chen lineages in Foshan noted as the Xibian *xiang* by the Fenshui River on 1/53a, and in that case, would be a different place from the Jinyutang Chen surname ancestral hall where the deity was deposited on the fourteenth of the second month. If this interpretation is correct, the implication of the arrangement is that the two major lineages of the Chen surname at Foshan, that is, the lineage settled at Heyuan and that settled at Jinyutang, shared their claim on the Northern Emperor.

²⁸*Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu* 4/43a.

²⁹Heyuan was a *pu* in the immediate vicinity of the Beidi Temple.

³⁰"The starting of a *tu* and establishing registered status (*ji*) is something that is common to all provinces. However, Foshan *xiang* of Nanhai county in Guangzhou Prefecture of Guangdong is different. In this one *xiang* of Foshan are started eight *tu*, registered in eighty *jia*. It is wealthy in tax and abundant in registered males [*ding*]. The people are benevolent and virtuous. Moreover, because the land is favorable, because it is where the dragon rests and the tiger settles, and where the water goes round [the settlement] and the hillcrests are aligned in a bend, candidates who are placed first in the official examination are produced one after the other. It is also a famous town [*zhen*], where the boats and carts of merchants from the four quarters congregate. All this is due to the starting of the

went into greater detail. It rested the organization of the town on the claim that at the time of the Huang Xiaoyang uprising, Foshan was registered as the Eight *Tu*, including a total of eighty *jia*. All along, the Eight *Tu* did not have the benefit of an office, and an office was now needed for two reasons. First, it was necessary to derive a common fund to support the activities of the Eight *Tu* in temple festivals, in the neighborhood drinking ceremonies sanctioned by law (*xiangyin*), and the provision of fees needed for tax collection. Second, it was necessary to provide for collective worship in the town in the same way as a lineage might provide for common worship in its ancestral hall.³¹ The inscription noted that the tablets of the ancestors of the families in the Eight *Tu* were set up in this hall. This would mean that by 1739, while the Eight *Tu* still maintained its ritual dominance in festivities at the Beidi Temple, it was also, willingly or not, dissociating itself from the Temple of Efficacious Response (*Liufang ci*), the temple of the twenty-two elders. By setting up a separate locale where the ancestors were remembered collectively, the descendants of the *lijia* recognized that they did not necessarily have prior claim to the leadership established by the elders of 1449.

All this description may seem tedious, but it is necessary to be very precise about the involvement of the Eight *Tu* in the affairs of Foshan to capture the undertone of the tension that grew in the 1700s between the Eight *Tu* and the senior degree-holders. The ostensible element in the conflict lay with the Eight *Tu*'s handling of the Beidi Temple's funds, particularly, in the apparent wastage of the funds on meals. It is interesting that Chen Yanzong, who obviously sided with the literati of the town, nonetheless chose to defend the local practice of parading the Northern Emperor on his birthday. It was not a point of dispute between the literati and the Eight *Tu* that the deity had to be appeased. The clash between the two was a clash of style as much as of power, and the outcome of it was to determine if the town, as a town, could have a political character.

A Social Division: New-Comers to Foshan

In his "Argument concerning the Town of Foshan" already cited, Chen Yanzhong's reference to Zhuxian, Hankow and Wucheng may be translated

tu and establishing the registered status at the right place and time." (Wei Wan, "Zanyi tang ji," in *FZX* 1752, 11/12a-13a.) The attribution of the success of a settlement to a good choice of *fengshui* by the founders is a very common pattern in foundation myths in the villages of the Pearl River Delta. Such myths stress the debt owed by the living to the founders, and hence provide a justification for the claims made by descendants of the founders on the locality.

³¹ "Dingjian gongguan pushe beiwen" (Stele record of the establishment of the shops for the public office), in the *Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu* 4/38a-b.

in the following terms: "In these places, merchants and peddlers from far and near rub shoulders. They are similar to Foshan in this respect."³² The idea of merchants from far and near mingling would be in agreement with the idea that trade was fundamental to the town. The ready acceptance of outsiders in the town contrasts sharply with the restriction of settlement rights within villages. The admission of an outsider into the village, as a villager in full rights, involved granting him access to common resources (house plots, burial sites, fuel, etc.). A town would be less threatened by the admission of outsiders because the control that indigenous inhabitants exercised over common resources had been diluted by sheer numbers, even though one can see that there might be other reasons for maintaining the distinction between indigenous townspeople and newcomer residents.

Outsiders did settle in Foshan. The 1752 *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* estimates that the population of the town amounted to 30,000 households, a figure that would certainly have been quite unimaginable unless the editor had accepted the rightful presence of outsiders.³³ However, not all immigrants necessarily considered themselves Foshan residents. We may begin with biographies: "Liang Junwei . . . from Shuiteng *xiang* of Shunde county, came to Foshan in the Kangxi era to start a workshop, known as Liangwei Hao, and subsequently stayed there."³⁴ A genealogy of the Hu surname in the vicinity (exact location unclear) notes: "No one from this branch has lived in other districts [*qiaoyu taxiang*] from the Ming dynasty to the Shunzhi era in this dynasty. In the third year of Kangxi, the entire population here was forced to move, but everyone returned out of his feelings for this place when the evacuation order was rescinded. Our ancestor in the eleventh generation, Jingceng, stayed in Mingfeng (*li*) in Foshan. Only four persons are now left in that line."³⁵ The passage is undated, but because it continues to discuss the experience of various members of the lineage into the sixteenth generation, it can be understood that some groups in this lineage resided in Foshan for five or six generations.

We may also look at contemporary descriptions. The *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* of 1752 notes: "Most places in Guangdong are proud of the reputation of their lineages, and newly settled lineages are often uncomfortable with their new abodes. Our *xiang* [that is, Foshan] is unique in not having this unwholesome custom. [In Foshan], powerful lineages, isolated [*jiling*] households, and newcomers who have moved here suddenly are all on good terms and are not suspicious of one another. Thus,

³² FZX 1752, introduction chapter/24a.

³³ FZX 1752, 3/28b.

³⁴ FZX 1923, 14/41a-b.

³⁵ *Hushi sifang pu* (Genealogy of the four branches of the Hu Surname) n.d., 1/1b-2a.

although there are many lineages, they each have their own doorways and territories."³⁶ Nonetheless, the following passage from the *Comprehensive Records of the Foshan Charity Granary* (late eighteenth century) also indicates that outsiders did maintain their distance: "This town includes people from all the five directions. All the rich people from Shunde that have set up their shops here come with a few members of their families, and they live behind closed doors. They do not mingle with the literati leaders of this town, because they are afraid that people would know that they are rich. This is why the literati leaders of this town have not discussed matters with wealthy households who are outsiders."³⁷

We may then consider the institutional arrangements. There were provisions in the *lijia* for the registration of outsiders. The standard practice, which was followed in Foshan, was to append new households (known as the *zihu*, "offspring household") to those that were already registered (*zonghu*, "main household"). Such additions to the *lijia* registration would include, naturally, subsidiary households that splintered off from registered households as well as new-comers. However, the list of households registered under the main household of the Chen surname at Heyuan, possibly in the late nineteenth century, which is the only list that I have seen, includes twenty-six households, of which fourteen were Chens and all but one were surnames that were also registered as "main households" in earlier years.³⁸

Another place where the presence of outsiders had to be acknowledged was in the rules for the compilation of the local history. The rules for the 1752 edition of the *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* began with the statement that outsiders (*qiao*) and natives (*tu*) would be treated equally in the selection of entries for the biographical chapter, with the provision that the places of origin of outsider households would be acknowledged.³⁹ Also, it includes the ancestral halls of eight surnames (out of twenty-one) that had not appeared in the *lijia* registration as "main households" and this indicates that some outsider households were seen as belonging to the community, even though they were not originally registered in the *lijia*. Moreover, the history of settlement in Foshan can be supple-

³⁶ FZX 1752, 6/9a.

³⁷ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike*, 342, quoting the *Fozhen yicang zonglu* (Comprehensive Records of the Foshan Charity Granary) ch. 2. The term "literati leaders," of course, is a translation for *shenshi*. It is not clear in the context if the holding of a degree was implied. In eighteenth century Foshan, one may suppose it was; in most villages, it probably was not. See David Faure 1986:221-22 n. 7. for a discussion of the use of the term.

³⁸ *Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu* 4/45b-46a gives an undated list of the households registered under the Chen surname at Heyuan, and 4/38b-42a a complete list of the households in the Eight *Tu* of Foshan in 1739 with which it may be compared.

³⁹ FZX 1752, introductory chapter/4a.

mented by the chapter on lineage history in the Republican *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*. It added to previously-published lists a total of twenty-four lineages, some duplicating surnames that had already appeared. Of particular relevance to the argument here is a supplement recording the places of origin of these lineages and their removal to Foshan: thus, "Huang *shi*, lineage from Jiangxia, moved from Chencun to Shixiang of Foshan in the time of Kangxi."⁴⁰ Significantly, every one of these lineages is noted as having produced some person who had attained official status.⁴¹

As elsewhere, by the eighteenth century outsiders in Foshan also maintained their identity through their guildhalls (*huiguan*). The Daoguang edition of the *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*, in its list of guildhalls, includes those of Fujian, Shanxi and Shaanxi, Hunan, Hubei, and Jiangxi. The Fujian guildhall is noted specifically as having been founded by the paper merchants. An inscription commemorating the repair of the Ginseng and Medicine Guildhall shows quite clearly that all but one of the six persons in charge of the repair were outsiders to Foshan,⁴² and the possibility must be allowed that some of the other guildhalls noted also included many outsiders, even though they did not all necessarily come from the same place of origin. This inscription also notes that the Ginseng and Medicine Guild was set up in the middle of Qianlong, a claim that was likewise made for the Shanxi and Shaanxi Guildhall by the inscription on its repair in 1812.⁴³

The division between indigenous households and outsider households was formalized in the academies that were maintained. In 1641, Li Daiwen had built the Wenchang Academy dedicated to the God of Literature where every year on the third day of the second month the indigenous literati leaders sacrificed to the god. In 1672, the outsider literati leaders built a second Wenchang Academy in Foshan, and on a day early in the month, they sacrificed.⁴⁴

Where settlement meant physical relocation of one's family, registration, building an ancestral hall, perhaps the renunciation of settlement rights else-

⁴⁰ FZX 1923, 9/6a.

⁴¹ Not all the names of officials and degree-holders noted in this list are included in the chapter on degree-holding in the same local history, and not all the surnames found in the degree-holding chapter are included in the list. These discrepancies suggest that some of the degrees were obtained by lineage members from outside Foshan.

⁴² The sixth is noted as a native of a place, the characters for which are illegible, within the Wudoukou of Nanhai. Because Foshan also came under the Wudoukou, the possibility that this place of origin could be Foshan must be left open. See *Ming-Qing Foshan beike*, 143.

⁴³ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike*, 126

⁴⁴ FZX 1752, 3/6a, 7b; the distinction between the two groups of literati leaders possibly indicates that the outsiders took their official degrees outside of Nanhai county.

where that had been home, in addition to social involvement, it is easy to see that there were many aspects to the integration of outsiders. That some outsiders integrated, others merely resided, and many did not think of Foshan as permanent home should be expected. Yet, when a substantial number of immigrants could become acceptable residents of Foshan even when they were not integrated into the *lijia*, the position of the Eight *Tu* was obviously affected.

Dissent: the Eight Tu and the Literati

The position of the Eight *Tu* changed from the mid-sixteenth century, when it was the only recognized collective body of Foshan, to the mid-eighteenth century, when it was relegated to a purely ritual organization. This change has to be understood in the context of the growth of Foshan and the inclusion of many outsiders, only some of whom had tagged onto the *lijia* registration as "offspring households." Essentially, the Eight *Tu* could not extricate itself from its image as a grouping that was based on land and household taxation. As such, it had little to do with the trading side of Foshan. The patrons who could provide support in times of need, or protection against bandits and officials, were the senior literati, degree-holding members of the Foshan community, some of whom had descended from households within the Eight *Tu*. The 1752 *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan*, written at a time when leadership in Foshan had clearly passed to the literati, provided a history that gave the literati a continuity from the mid-sixteenth century through the social service that individual members had contributed.

The late Ming, the time of Li Daiwen, was crucial in determining the historical character that the town might take, and by the time of Chen Yanzong in the eighteenth century, the involvement of the senior literati had been established. Between Xian Guiqi's leadership in the famine of 1553 and Li Daiwen's success in becoming a *jinshi* in 1604, the local history essentially mentioned as major public service only the repair of the Bridge of General Welfare by Huo Yuxia in 1559 and his cousin in 1568.⁴⁵ One reason the record is so bare, of course, is the shortage of essays commemorating important events, and it is no accident that previous repairs of the bridge were noted by Li Daiwen in a commemorative essay. None the less, the point should not be missed that the writing of commemorative essays was a literati habit. There were many bridges repaired well before the mid-sixteenth cen-

⁴⁵ FZX 1752, 3/3b-4a.

tury and since.⁴⁶ These occasions went unrecorded and were omitted from the local history.

However, there was more to the noting of the repair of a bridge than a record of social contribution. Huo Yuxia was the son of the eminent imperial official, Huo Tao (1487-1540), who was not a native of Foshan. The family had its ancestral hall in nearby Shitou Village, but took an active interest in trade and property in the town.⁴⁷ The story was that Huo Tao greatly respected Liang Zhuo, and sacrificed at his grave every time he passed it.⁴⁸ Huo Yuxia and Xian Guiqi, who were contemporaries, were both students of Zhan Ruoshui, who as a student of Chen Baisha, would have ranked on a par with Pang Song, a native of Foshan who was Huo Tao's contemporary.⁴⁹ In this way, it was intellectual descent that characterized the first generation of the literati lineages of the sixteenth century, and Huo Yuxia was included in the local history as the figure from whom achievement came to be reckoned in terms of public affairs involvement. Thus, Chen Yanzhong was emphatic that his was not the first local history of Foshan, but the second, the first having been edited by a relative of Li Daiwen with the latter's approval.⁵⁰ One can also see, along Huo Tao's example, how an outsider's family could barge into the Foshan leadership through the stress on intellectual pedigree in a way that it could not through registration in the *lijia*.

Hence, one can understand why Chen Yanzong's list of Foshan lineages begins with the Li lineage (of Li Daiwen), followed by the Chen (his own), the Liang lineage (including Liang Zhuo, the first *jinshi* of Foshan, very powerful in the Ming but much less so in the Qing), the Xian (of Xian Guiqi), and then the Huo (no relatives of Huo Tao) and others.⁵¹ The ordering of pedigree in this list is a sharp break from the ordering that can be detected in the Ming. Characteristic of these lineages is that they were all descended from early incumbents in the town.

In the course of the seventeenth century literati accounts like these became

⁴⁶ FZX 1752, 3/17b for other bridges in existence in the mid-eighteenth century, some of which must have been built much earlier.

⁴⁷ David Faure 1989:17-18.

⁴⁸ FZX 1752, 8/5a.

⁴⁹ FZX 1752, 7-*shang*/3b-4a and biography of Xian on 8/8a-9a.

⁵⁰ FZX 1752 introductory chapter/8a-13b, and biography of Pang Jingzhong, one of the donors for the publication of the history, in 8/11a-13a.

⁵¹ FZX 1752, 6/9a-12b; 4/1b lists Liang Zhuo (*jinshi* of 1514) as the second *jinshi* from Foshan, coming after Xian Guang (*jinshi* of 1496), but Xian's biography on 8/1b-2b notes that his grandfather had moved out from Foshan to Shunde county. The *Xianshi jiapu* (Genealogy of the Xian Family) 1910, which was compiled by the Xian surname settled at Heyuan (*pu*) at Foshan, that included Xian Quiji among its members, claims (on b:1/2a-b) that Xian Guang's great grandfather had settled in Shunde and that his branch left a separate genealogy.

increasingly prominent in chronicles shaping the image of Foshan's leadership. By contrast, the reputation of the Eight *Tu* suffered because of its ineffectiveness in providing patronage in the town's dealings with officialdom. It was ineffective even in the negotiation over the land tax, which fell within its purview. In 1581 the Magistrate of Nanhai imposed a remeasurement tax (*dinggong*), but the credit for some action to remove the tax in 1616 was given to Li Daiwen, *jinshi* and senior official, who was also given credit for compiling the local "Complete Guide to Taxation and Labor Service" (*Fuyi quanshu*).⁵² The ineptitude is revealed in several eighteenth century records of tax negotiation: between 1777 and 1786, three *tu* negotiated individually with the Nanhai magistrate. Each requested the magistrate to forbid the inclusion of additional households into the *tu*, thereby increasing the total tax quota assigned the *tu* as a whole, and to restrict the charges of magistracy functionaries to a fixed scale that had been implemented in nearby villages.⁵³ The Republican *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* notes that in the 1860s the Eight *Tu* maintained its tax-collection function, but only for those portions of the tax that had fallen within the *lijia*.⁵⁴

Even though member households of the Eight *Tu* were also engaged in the trade and industry of Foshan, it seems that this body was not involved in any way in matters arising from commercial taxation. For instance, since at least 1519 a tax had been charged on iron, and the foundries were required to hold government licenses.⁵⁵ In the Ming, the one case of a commercial dispute that is extant, dated 1635, concerns extortion in government purchases.⁵⁶ In the early Qing, while the Feudatories were in control of Guangzhou, commercial taxes rose sharply. The Feudatories farmed out the rights of taxation to private individuals, among whom were "brokers" (*yahang*) in the Foshan iron industry who demanded payment from artisans. The record of a dispute dated 1693 notes that the brokers were banned after the Feudatories were defeated, but that "illegal brokers" later resumed their extortion.⁵⁷ It is significant that in both cases the suit was filed directly by iron foundries with recognized trade specialization. In the 1635 case, fourteen households who referred to themselves as "householders of iron-wire and iron-lock makers" petitioned the Nanhai magistrate in their own names, and they explained that they were considered two separate trades (*hang*) in Foshan. They referred

⁵² FZX 1752, 3/3b, 8/7b.

⁵³ Pian Shangang (Katayama Tsuyoshi) 1987.

⁵⁴ FZX 1923, 4/3a-5a.

⁵⁵ On the iron industry in Foshan, see Luo Yixing 1985a, and Cao Tengfei and Tan Dihua 1985.

⁵⁶ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike*, 13-15.

⁵⁷ Luo Yixing 1985b.

to extortion by unprincipled members of the nail-makers' trade, while in the notice issued by the Guangdong Administration Commissioner in response to the suit, reference was made also to such trades as frying-pan molders, iron-stove molders and wrought-iron makers. In the 1693 case, the petitioners to the Nanhai magistrate were the "frying-pan molders Li, Chen and Huo." Li, Chen and Huo were powerful surnames in Foshan,⁵⁸ including among them such persons as Li Daiwen and Chen Yanzong. Obviously, trade specializations demarcated common interests among the artisans of Foshan, and it is significant that in these petitions, they presented themselves directly and not as clients of the literati in their lineages, nor as affiliates of the Eight *Tu*.

Suggestive also is a notice of 1659 by the Guangdong administration commissioner, in response to a petition presented by various potters' households (*yaohu*) and headmen of the *li* (*libao*), to forbid private levies on earthenware pots made in Shiwan. The petitioners were not headed by members of the literati. On the other hand the commissioner's reply was addressed to the potters' households, the managers of the *lijia* units (*lipai*), and the catch-all category, the *xiang* people of Shiwan, and it was inscribed on stone by a group of people headed by the holder of a *juren* degree. In this case, it seems that although the literati were not involved in the petition, they were nonetheless held in some position of esteem as transmitters of imperial commands, or perhaps as guarantors of their fellow townsmen's behavior.⁵⁹ The two cases on the iron industry suggest that in the seventeenth century the tradespeople of Foshan acted very much on their own in dealing with the officials, but this case from Shiwan shows that some officials already made room for a role for the literati.

The ascendancy of the literati in matters of community policy came in the eighteenth century, and can be followed through several cases that are extant on matters brought to the attention of the government. In 1731, a petition sent to the Nanhai magistrate complained of the domination by the Huo surname (descendants of Huo Tao) of the main ferry-pier of Foshan. It was signed in the names of the literati leaders of the entire town of Foshan.⁶⁰ The main ferry-pier, the Fengshui Pier, was regarded very much as the common property of all Foshan, and hence the involvement of the literati leaders in the incident. A distinction, none the less, may be detected between issues that concerned community interests at large and those that concerned only

⁵⁸ Several cannon cast in Foshan in the Daoguang era, the inscriptions on which are included in *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 508-09, bear the signature "Li, Chen and Huo." The surname Li in this context would have included Li Daiwen's lineage.

⁵⁹ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 20-22. It should be noted, however, that Shiwan, which came under the jurisdiction of the Huangding Police Office, was not part of Foshan.

⁶⁰ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 36-38.

particular merchant groups. In 1739, a similar petition, concerning a pier that had been established by shop-keepers and businesses, was presented under the names of two merchants.⁶¹ In 1779, a petition from the cotton dealers of Foshan to the Guangdong administration commissioner was presented in their own names.⁶² In 1784, the Foshan community joined in concert to petition the provincial government to ban a saltpeter workshop that had opened at Zhaxia in Foshan. The movement was apparently started by a *juren* degree-holder, whose petition gave a reasonable and lengthy analysis of the harm that the workshop had brought the town. Within the next month, another petition was presented on the same subject by a member of the *lijia*, the petitioner signing himself as such (that is, as *limin*). In another ten days, three more petitions were presented, separately by the white wax guild, the paper guild and the iron frying-pan guild, arguing that the saltpeter workshop was damaging to trade. These petitions, coming from people representing different interests in the town, were very effective in presenting what may be considered a community view on the issue.⁶³

Another revealing case involved a petition campaign waged by the same *juren* in company with twenty-one members of the literati and four "elders." Their goal was to improve the road leading to the Fengshui Pier by displacing various small shops located along this thoroughfare. When some shop owners tried to protest, the magistrate sided with the literati, and in 1787 even permitted the installation of a stele confirming the public status of the land in dispute. Significantly, the ruling of 1787 makes clear that matters connected with the management of the temples, the hiring of staff, the dredging of the river and the collection of rent at the Fengshui Pier fell within the purview of the managers of the Beidi Temple and persons who were nominated by them. We have here, therefore, a very clear case of the control of resources in Foshan through the control of the management of the Beidi Temple, with the literati being in the dominant position in these matters by the late eighteenth century.⁶⁴

The experience of the rice merchants of Foshan, recorded in two documents dated respectively 1790 and 1833, also exemplifies the increasing influence of the literati. In between the two incidents recorded in the documents, in

⁶¹ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 38-40.

⁶² *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 343.

⁶³ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 83-86.

⁶⁴ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 86-89, quoting the *Fozhen yicang zonglu*. The rent that was collected at the Fengshui Pier amounted to 217 taels in 1790, no mean sum. The accounts of that year, included in a stele inscription in *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 93-95, do not include expenses at the Beidi Temple. Presumably, those expenses would have come out of income from the temple's assets, which were substantial.

1795, the literati leaders had established the Charity Granary of Foshan, an institution that gave them a stake in the price of rice in the town,⁶⁵ and so it was not fortuitous that they could act forcefully on behalf of the rice merchants in 1833 while they were totally uninvolved in the incident of 1790.

In 1790, three shopkeepers, on behalf of all rice merchants in "all the seven markets of Foshan," petitioned the Guangzhou prefect concerning the amount of rice they might be allowed to keep in store. Trouble had arisen from the staff in the Huangding Police Office (*si*) who had charged the rice merchants with hoarding. The merchants proposed, and the prefect accepted, that the rice shops might be permitted to stock to a limit of 200 *shi* of grain each. No literati leader was involved in this incident.⁶⁶

In 1833, a dispute arose between the rice merchants and the literati leaders over reports on the price of rice to the government. Apparently, the reports by the rice merchants of Foshan were used as standard prices in Guangdong. The practice had been for the merchants to report the current market prices, less 10 to 20 taels. In 1831, which was a year of high prices, the prices were under-reported by 30 to 40 taels. The merchants in charge of making the reports alleged that they had been instructed to make this allowance by the staff at the *yamen*. In a notice issued to the rice merchants, however, the "literati leaders and elders of Foshan" pointed out to them that as Foshan prices were quoted in silver dollars, which circulated at a premium above the treasury tael, in which government prices were quoted, they had no excuse for under-reporting at all. The notice demanded that in the future the merchants quote exact current Foshan prices, and suggested that "if the staff at the *yamen* had other views, they [i.e., the rice merchants] notify the managers of the Dakui Hall [Hall of the Eminent, that is the literati leaders' meeting place] to summon the literati leaders of the entire town to reason with them." By 1833, the literati leaders had founded the Foshan Charity Granary, and not only were they putting themselves forward to intercede between merchants and *yamen*, but they were also insisting that the price of rice was a subject of their concern.⁶⁷

The point here is not that the literati leaders were now given exclusive influence in litigation or petition, but that through the eighteenth century they had become more prominent. One reason for this development can simply be the larger number of degree-holders as time went on. Even so, the town leadership in the eighteenth century was no longer identified as

⁶⁵ On the establishment of the charity granary, see *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 96-100.

⁶⁶ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 90-92; Foshan shi bowuguan 1981:49, explains that the Taiping Sands (*sha*), where the stores were located, came under the jurisdiction of the Huangding Police Office.

⁶⁷ *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 343-44.

lijia households. The dispute over the control of funds at the Beidi Temple between the literati and the *lijia* demonstrates quite decisively that the shift had come about.

The dispute can be quickly outlined. As early as 1627, members of the senior literati had perceived the need for a meeting hall (*huiguan*) for themselves. Until then, they had met at the Beidi Temple, and they had no claim to a permanent organization. Consequently, donations were raised to build a hall, given the name of Jiahui Hall.⁶⁸ This hall was located on the "right-hand side" of the Beidi Temple.⁶⁹

It should be recalled that since 1513 a hall in commemoration of the twenty-two elders who defended Foshan had stood on the other side of the Beidi Temple. Moreover, the land on which the Jiahui Hall was built had originally been a Guanyin temple that had been taken over in 1522 and had since been the community school (*shexue*). In 1624, donations had been raised to rebuild the school, the exercise being supported by the same people who three years later set up within the school the Jiahui Hall. Hence, the establishment of the Jiahui Hall implied the demonstration of a right to the Beidi Temple, and it is significant that the commemorative essay on the repair of the community school recorded that its endowment included the land "behind the temple" from which the iron foundries had been evicted two centuries earlier. The land had belonged to the Beidi Temple, and so, presumably, would have been under the control of the Eight *Tu* had their management over it been maintained. One can perceive in these arrangements already some element of dispute.⁷⁰

In the next few decades, notably in 1641 and 1685, the literati were involved in the repairs of the Beidi Temple. However, in 1720 the literati made a direct attack on the management of the temple by the Eight *Tu*. In that year, they petitioned the Nanhai magistrate to demand the return to the temple of various properties whose revenues they charged, had been misappropriated by the property manager. The magistrate acceded to the request. In 1728, no doubt in reaction to this decision, an individual who described himself as a descendant of the twenty-two elders who were enshrined in the Temple of Efficacious Response (*Liufang ci*) next to the Beidi Temple petitioned the Nanhai magistrate. He wanted one of the properties—a shop—that had been

⁶⁸In the Qing, the hall was referred to as the Dakui Hall, the word "*kui*" giving the connotation of outstanding success in the imperial examinations.

⁶⁹The building of the Jiahui Hall is recorded in Pang Jingzhong, "Xiangshi huiguan ji (An Account of the Guildhall for Officials from this *xiang*)," *FZX* 1752, 10/41a-42b.

⁷⁰On the rebuilding of the community school, see Huo Conglong, "Xiu Chongzheng shexue ji (An Account of the Repair of the Chongzheng Community School)," in *FZX* 1752, 10/28b-29b.

returned to the temple to be set aside to provide for sacrifice to the elders. It is significant that the magistrate thereupon called a meeting of the literati leaders and recorded that the proposal was accepted by them before he ruled on the issue. In 1738, in a case presented to the Nanhai magistrate, it was argued that the managers of the *lijia* had, from 1726 to 1735, forged expenditures. In his response, the magistrate demanded that the funds of the temple not be wasted in feasting but be spent on a charity school. In 1739, the Eight *Tu* built its own hall, the Zanyi Hall, across the road from the Beidi Temple. In effect, they were relinquishing their special rights to the Temple of Efficacious Response (*Liufang ci*). The final blow came in 1757, when the police chief of Wudoukou ruled that the funds of the Beidi Temple were not to be used by the Eight *Tu* for their regular feasts. The chief manager, who was described as a literati leader, was to be in charge of the funds if such misuse continued, for, after all, as the official noted, the Beidi Temple was the ancestral temple not only for the Eight *Tu*, but for the whole of the town of Foshan.⁷¹

When the literati leaders came together to establish the charity granary of Foshan in 1795, this new service must have symbolized their direct involvement in the welfare of the town, and the granary matched its symbolic importance. It was established as a supplement to the communal granary (*shecang*), but in a time of famine it could produce almost ten times as much relief grain as the communal granary. Its considerable property, including land near the principal pier of Foshan, shops and agricultural land, was managed totally by the literati leaders of the twenty-four *pu* in rotation. These literati leaders by no means limited themselves to the management of the granary: in 1790, when the granary was being planned, they established the foundlings' society of the town, and in 1841 they set up an armory with funds drawn from the granary.⁷² The granary was the culmination of a long history of the assertion of literati authority over the town.

Conclusion: What Made Foshan a Town

The gradual emergence of the literati as the dominant power of Foshan may be variously interpreted. Into the nineteenth and twentieth century, it was a popular theme in administrative and literati writings that the officers of the *lijia* were as corrupt as they were uneducated. They made excessive demands on the local population, and they appropriated public funds. In

⁷¹ The various documents recording these events may be found in *FZX* 1752, 10/45a-46b, 49b-51b, 60a-62a, 11/4a-6a, 8a-12a, 12a-13a, *FZX* 1830, 13/16b-18a, and *Ming-Qing Foshan beike* 33-36.

⁷² *Ming-Qing Foshan beike*, 96-100, 390-441.

Foshan, I think we have this history in a somewhat different light. The emergence of the literati as leaders of Foshan society involved a clash of power as well as a clash of culture. They had emerged from families that were registered in the *lijia*, but by the eighteenth century had renounced their humble origins. The *lijia* was disdainfully regarded from a height that was only gradually reached by a minority of the population in the late Ming and the early Qing. The Qianlong *Local History of the Loyal and Righteous Xiang of Foshan* was a record of the new culture. Compiled in the midst of the dispute between the literati and the Eight *Tu*, it presented the literati point of view. Foshan, therefore, had to be regarded as more than a mundane place for trade. It had to be honored as a source of literati inspiration.

In these circumstances, the question should be asked if the literati culture that was introduced into the town reflected its character. That many among the literati were related to the merchants of Foshan, that some might even have been merchants themselves in the first place, and that the merchants could hold their own should not affect the answer, for this is not a question of the domination of one group over another. What had come over the town was a culture that was not uniquely urban, but was thought of in terms of lineages and imperial examination degrees. The town was a *xiang*, its corporation a temple and then a granary. One would overdraw the case to argue that an urban culture of sorts did not emerge (but this is subject for another paper), but the political culture that emerged did not see the town set apart from the rest of society, and merchants did not, via the town, gain a foothold in the national political process. If Foshan ever had a bourgeoisie, to borrow a term from Fernand Braudel, it constantly "defected" to the literati, just as the bourgeoisie of Western Europe defected to the aristocracy.⁷³ Foshan remained, therefore, commercially a town, but politically a *xiang*, an administrative unit, just as the rest of China, politically, remained in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, administrative units.

Glossary

batu zuci 八圖祖祠

Chen Baisha 陳白沙

Beidi 北帝

Chen Yanzong 陳炎宗

Bimin she 庇民社

Chen Zhi 陳贊

⁷³Fernand Braudel 1973:725-34.

Chencun 陳村

cheng 城

“Chongjian zumiao ji”
重建祖廟記

ci 祠

Dakui tang 大魁堂

ding 丁

dinggong 定弓

“Dingjian gongguan pushe beiwen”
鼎建公館鋪舍碑文

duhui 都會

fang 坊

fengshui 風水

Foshan jielue 佛山街略

“Foshan zhen lun” 佛山鎮論

Foshan zhongyi xiangzhi
佛山忠義鄉志

Fozhen yicang zonglu
佛鎮義倉總錄

Fuli she 富里社

Fuyi quanshu 賦役全書

Guangdong tongzhi 廣東通志

Guangyang zaji 廣陽雜記

Guanyin 觀音

gujiushe 古九社

Guluo she 古洛社

hang 行

Heyuan she 鶴園社

Hu 胡

Huang shi 黃氏

Huang Xiaoyang 黃蕭養

Huangding si 黃鼎司

huiguan 會館

Huizhen tang 會真堂

Huo 霍

Huo Conglong 霍從龍

Huo Qiu 霍球

Huo Tao 霍韜

Huo Yuxia 霍與瑕

Hushi sifang pu 胡氏四房譜

ji 籍

jia 甲

Jiahui tang 嘉會堂

Jiangxia 江夏

jiao 鰲

Jie Ji 揭稽

jiling 畸零

jinshi 進士

Jinyutang Chenshi zupu

金魚堂陳氏族譜

juren 舉人

kui 魁

li 里

Li Daiwen 李待問

Liang Zhuo 梁焯

Liangwei hao 梁偉號

libao 里保

lijia 里甲

limin 里民

lipai 里排

Lingnan Xianshi zongpu
嶺南冼氏宗譜

Lingying ci 靈應祠

Lingying ci tiandi du'e shiji
靈應祠田地渡額事記

Liu Xianting 劉獻廷

Liufang ci 流芳祠

Lu Mengyang 盧夢陽

Ming-Qing Foshan beike 明清佛山碑刻

Mingfeng li 鳴鳳里

Nanhai Foshan Huoshi zupu
南海佛山霍氏族譜

Nanhai Heyuan Chenshi zupu
南海鶴園陳氏族譜

Pang Jingzhong 龐景忠

Pang Song 龐嵩

Pingzhou 平州

pu 鋪

Pujun xu 普君墟

qiao 橋

qiaoyu taxiang 僑寓他鄉

qin 親

“Qingzhen tang chongxiu ji”
慶真堂重修記

sha 沙

she 社

shecang 社倉

shengyuan 生員

shenshi 紳士

shexue 社學

shi 市

“Shiji zhongyi ji” 世濟忠義記

shimin 市民

Shitou 石頭

Shiwan 石灣

Shixiang 石巷

Shuibian Chen dazong 水便陳大宗

Shuiteng 水藤

si 司

suona 嗩吶

Taiping sha 太平沙

tang 堂

Tang Bi 唐壁

Tapo xu 塔坡墟

Tianhou 天后

tongzhen shenqi 通鎮紳耆

tu 圖

tu (natives) 土

tuanlian 團練

Wei Wan 魏館

Wenchang 文昌

Wucheng 吳城

Wudoukou si 五斗口司

Xian 洗

Xian Guang 洗光

Xian Guiqi 洗桂奇

xiang 鄉

“Xiangshi huiguan ji”

鄉仕會館記

xiangyin 鄉飲

Xianshi jiapu 洗氏家譜

Xibian xiang 西便巷

“Xiu Chongzheng shexue ji”

修崇正社學記

yahang 牙行

yamen 衙門

yaohu 窯戶

yicang 義倉

Zanyi tang 贊翼堂

“Zanyi tang ji” 贊翼堂記

Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水

zhaobi 照壁

Zhaxia pu 柵下鋪

zhen 鎮

Zhenwu 真武

zhongyi 忠義

Zhuxian 朱仙

zihu 子戶

zonghu 總戶

“Zouqing jiquan zhongyi shu”

奏請激勵忠義疏

zumiao 祖廟

“Zumiao lingying ji” 祖廟靈應記

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