

Dynastic Decline, Heshen, and the Ideology of the Xianyu Reforms*

Daniel McMahon**

Graduate Institute for Central Asian Studies
Ching Yun University

ABSTRACT

This article examines the 1799-1805 Xianyu Reforms, a period of governmental reform in the wake of Emperor Jiaqing's purge of the powerful minister Heshen. Previous accounts of this event stress its Confucian form and inability to avert nineteenth-century challenges of dynastic decline. This paper, however, focuses on ideology and how new change offered not an obstacle, but an opportunity. In securing power and advancing reform, the Jiaqing court manipulated a caricatured image of Minister Heshen—and, more broadly, moral/administrative breakdown—in order to define decline and galvanize public sentiment. Creation of a polemic, classics-based vision of Heshen (decline) vs. Jiaqing (revival), reflective of a clash of cosmic forces, legitimated the attack on the minister while offering an alternative to a larger bureaucratic purge. Posing new reforms as the mirror opposite of the “Heshen Regency,” in turn, molded the shape and the focus of new reform, orienting it pragmatically toward select values and broader political incorporation of polity. The Xianyu Reforms, that is, were not shackled by tradition; they used tradition creatively.

Key Words: Qing Dynasty, Emperor Jiaqing (嘉慶), Heshen (和坤), Heshen Regency, Xianyu (Jiaqing) Reforms (咸與維新), dynastic decline, imperial ideology

China's early nineteenth century was a period of political transition and literati concern. Nearly simultaneous Miao, White Lotus, and pirate rebellions had erupted in the late eighteenth century, the culmination of decades of rising discontent and declining administrative efficiency. In the protracted and un-

* This essay was written with the assistance of R.O.C. National Science Council grants 93-2411-H-231-001- and 94-2411-H-231-001-.

** 本文作者電子郵件信箱：daniel@cyu.edu.tw。

expectedly bitter pacifications that ensued many educated Chinese perceived something more. Twentieth century hindsight suggests that these troubles augured the beginning of the end of the Qing dynasty. Contemporaries also confronted this fear.¹

This essay examines one of the most critical and poorly understood episodes of the early century turmoil, the 1799-1805 Xianyu Reforms (*Xianyu weixin* 咸與維新, also called the “Jiaqing Reforms” and “Jiaqing Restoration”). Emperor Qianlong’s 乾隆皇帝 death in 1799 sparked dramatic changes in the Chinese imperial government. His son, Emperor Jiaqing 嘉慶皇帝 (r.1796-1820), heretofore politically marginalized, seized control of government and eliminated his greatest court rival, the powerful first minister Heshen 和珅 (1750-1799). This “minimalist purge” provided a prelude to cautious fiscal, military, and moral reform framed in explicit reaction to Heshen’s rule of government.²

Existing studies of the Xianyu Reforms focus most on upon the Heshen purge and new pacification policy. Their consensus is that the tradition-bound Jiaqing court let slip a critical chance for radical change, thereby giving the rub to anxious literati’s darkest fears. Such interpretations, however, pay little attention to the *ideological* dimensions of the reforms—how the new regime treated contemporary circumstances not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity. The Jiaqing court did not suppress murmurs of doom; rather, it promoted them. Recasting recent history (particularly Heshen’s rule) in a polemic framework of dynastic decline and revival laid a classics-based cultural foundation that mobilized literati discontent, encouraged popular support, and opened alternatives to a destructive bureaucratic purge. This effort, in turn, shaped the specific Confucian form of the reforms, orienting them toward pragmatic ends of social order, fiscal viability, and national solidarity.

1. Concerning the rebellions of the early nineteenth century see, Guan Wenfa, *Jiaqing di*, pp. 373-494; and Dai Yi, ed., *Jianming Qingshi*, V.2., pp.382-477. Concerning contemporary literati fear of dynastic decline, see David Nivison, “Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the Eighteenth Century”; and Mark Elvin, *Changing Stories in the Chinese World*, p.21.
2. For related writing on the Xianyu Reforms, see *Da Qing Renzong rei (Jiaqing) huangdi shilu* (hereafter: DQRRHS); *Qing Renzong yushi wenchu ji* (hereafter: QRYWJ); Nivison, “Ho-shen”; Harold Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor’s Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch’ien-lung Reign*, pp.248-59; Susan Mann Jones and Philip Kuhn, “Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion,” pp.116-19; James Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, pp.35-37; Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch’ing China, 1723-1820*; Guan Wenfa, *Jiaqing di*; Zhang Yufen, “Lun Jiaqing chunian de Xianyu Weixin” and “Jiaqing chaozheng shuping”; and Zhu Chengru, “Lun Jiaqing qingzheng hou zhongyang quanli de chongzu.”

Signs of Decline

By the end of the eighteenth century there were classic signs of dynastic decline. Population growth, with its rivers of unruly migrants to imperial borderlands, had swelled to over 300 million. Expansion of cultivated acreage, labor-intensive farming, and New World crops aided growth for a time, but rents rose, social violence was pervasive, and some literati feared an imminent exhaustion of resources. As observer Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746-1809) put it: "Heaven and Earth's way of making adjustments is flood, drought, and plagues." With uncontrolled population movement and natural disaster came further eruption of border revolt: most alarmingly, the 1795-1797 Miao rebellion in south China and the 1796-1804 White Lotus rebellion in central China. The frustrated Qing pacification that ensued revealed fundamental flaws in the dynasty's military structure, the cost of which nearly bankrupted the imperial treasury.³

Yet there was, contemporaries believed, an even more profound problem. As explicated in Confucian classics such as the *Mencius*, the integrity of the ideal social order was ultimately reliant upon society's leaders. The imputed power of rulers was deemed great as leaders strengthened not just organization that fed and housed, but also the very moral fiber of the recipients of their care. Qing thinkers, wary of the speculative excesses of the late Ming, were little inclined to proclaim the metaphysical implications of these ideas. Still they strained beneath the skin of even the most pragmatic administrative discussion. Good men create a good world: this is their innate power. In equal measure, bad men squander their Heavenly-bequeathed potential, bringing disaster in proportion to their ill-used authority.

Scholar Hong Liangqi is perhaps most famous for rearticulating this view, centering it anew in late eighteenth century literati discourse. "The deterioration of the county government is a hundred times worse than ten or twenty years ago," Hong lamented in 1798.⁴ Where once people had lauded the integrity of

3. Concerning contemporary problems, see Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, esp. pp.218-21. Concerning Hong Liangji's views, see the translation in Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, V.2, pp.176-78.

4. *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (hereafter: HJW) 89:7b; De Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, pp.178-79. Specifically, Hong was referring to wrongful taxation, false reporting, and arbitrary appropriation of state funds.

officials, now they merely grasped for wealth.⁵ Nor was this only a problem of local leaders. In a famous (and nearly fatal) 1799 letter intended for the emperor, Hong pointed out similar failings with even more important imperial rulers. “Governors and governor generals of provinces act only to meet an immediate crisis. None of them are concerned about the role of the official as an exemplar; they simply concentrate on holding on to their own offices.”⁶ Moral deterioration in government, he suggested, now extended to the very top tiers.

A shift had occurred and the result was not just the impassive “flood, drought, and plague” of a disturbed cosmos adjusting itself. There was a threat yet more personal and frightening. Speaking of the White Lotus revolt, Hong Liangji noted that “the county officials were not able to prevent the spread of heterodoxy by exerting good influences on the people, and when sectarianism spread, the officials would . . . make demands on the people and threaten their lives, until the people joined the rebels.”⁷ Poor leadership—failing to “urge on Heaven in its work,” as Emperor Kangxi had once exhorted—had transmogrified regional revolt into a crisis of civilization. It suggested that the Qing state had become its own worst enemy: an agent of a pestilential degeneration.

Hong’s ideas are more notably for boldness than originality. Fellow men of letters harbored similar views, if more discreetly. Yan Ruyi 嚴如煜 (1759–1826), a Hunan native long troubled by the eroding moral climate of the late eighteenth century discussed the idea of decline from a historical perspective. Echoing thinkers reaching back to the Song dynasty, Yan drew upon the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of changes) to explain history as the circulation of positive (*yang* 陽) and negative (*yin* 陰) forces: powers ever grappling in a zero-sum struggle for dominance. Hence, when peace and culture waned, chaos and barbarism inevitably waxed. Yan Ruyi saw this pattern in the deterioration of the provincial borders of western Hunan, southern Shaanxi, and coastal Guangdong. In all three instances, nostalgic early Qing days of cultivated fields, classical study, and harmonious relations were eroded by strife, greed, and poor management, culminating in pervasive moral confusion and the Jiaqing wars. As he reckoned, these new conflicts signified a further (if still correctable) stage in a very alarming

5. De Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, pp.176–77.

6. Susan Mann Jones, “Hung Liang-chi (1746–1809): the Perception and Articulation of Political Problems in Late Eighteenth Century China,” p.166. For the full translation of this letter, see pp.161–76. For an excerpted translation see de Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, pp.172–74.

7. De Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, p.178.

process of decline.⁸

The strongest early nineteenth century support for a classical vision of historical degeneration, however, came from Emperor Jiaqing himself. Enraged by the Hong Liangji's protest, Jiaqing nonetheless affirmed the cultural logic on which Hong's criticism was founded: "Officials had forced subjects to revolt" (*guan bi min fan* 官逼民反).⁹ Here, it is not so remarkable that an emperor of China should chastise his subordinates in government. Far more striking is that, in blaming improper leaders, Emperor Jiaqing openly sanctioned the views of impertinent activists and even rebel generals! The concession says much about the new ruler, even as it set a precedent for the official depiction of the White Lotus revolt and late eighteenth-century field administration. We see, if not the man revealed, then at least his public concern and desired reaffirmation of orthodox ideals.¹⁰

Heshen and Dynastic Decline: Pre-Reforms Views

There is little doubt that this classical rhetoric of moral failure, extending from disgruntled provincial thinkers to disgruntled new monarch, had a political purpose. The opinions inferred—and, after 1799, stated clearly—that the empire's degeneration traced most clearly to the alleged evil of one man: Minister Heshen.

Heshen was one of late eighteenth-century China's most powerful leaders. Starting from humble beginnings as an imperial guardsman in 1776, this notable enjoyed a meteoric rise under the patronage of Emperor Qianlong. A trusted subordinate, Heshen was granted appointments in the Grand Council, Board of Revenue, Grand Secretariat, and Board of Civil Office, often simultaneously holding several top ranking posts in these offices. This authority, later combined with further influence in the Board of Civil Office and Board of Punishments, lent the minister a stature and power second only to emperors Qianlong

8. For Yan Ruyi's *Yijing*-based views on borderland history, see *Sanshengbian fangbei lan* 12: 44a; and Daniel McMahon, "Restoring the Garden: Yan Ruyi and the Civilizing of China's Internal Frontiers, 1795-1805," pp.68-80, 170-77, 290-93.

9. *Kanjing jiaofei shupian*, pp.1-4; Polechek, *Inner Opium War*, pp.36-37. Concerning Jiaqing's criticism of official corruption, with implications for dynasty decline, see DQRHS, *juan* 38 and QRYWJ, *juan* 5.

10. Zhang Yufen, "Jiaqing chaozheng," p.210.

and Jiaqing.¹¹

Office-holding, however, was merely the foundation of Heshen's influence. His authority and close ties to the elderly Qianlong gave him say over virtually every post assignment in the empire, with extraordinary power to make or break official careers. Not unlike Stalin in the next century, Heshen systematically exploited this authority to place favored men in government posts, thereby building a vast network of political alliances. The 1795-1797 Miao frontier pacification led by Helin 和林 and Fukang'an 福康安, respectively the brothers of Heshen and his closest political ally, Fuchang'an 福長安, provide only the most famous example. Heshen demanded that the officials he appointed present him gifts in return for sustained political patronage and protection. Over a decade in this key position explains, in part, why Heshen died so fabulously rich, with (by one estimate) eighty million taels in movable property alone.¹²

Heshen's power waxed as Qianlong drifted into senility and the minister's greatest adversaries (notably the senior official A-Gui 阿桂) died or were forced into submission. Nor was this power challenged by the formal ascendance of the new Jiaqing emperor, enthroned in 1796 but kept at a distance from all but ceremonial decisions of state. The years 1796-1799 saw Heshen at his peak: a "regency" in which he, as key aide to the ailing Qianlong, emerged as the mouthpiece for this monarch's mumblings.¹³

Modern depictions of Heshen in public service are almost always viewed over the shoulder of the 1799-1805 Xianyu Reforms, being colored by the negative rhetoric that emerged from this transition. Heshen's multiple positions, vast influence, and prodigious wealth have all been interpreted as symptoms of a deeper corruption, the impact of which bled the population while turning its leaders toward the satiation of selfish masters in government—Heshen in particular.¹⁴ But was this, in fact, how Heshen's pre-1799 contemporaries understood imperial conditions?

11. For a brief biography of Heshen, see Arther Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp.288-90. See also Nivison, "Ho-shen," pp.210-12; Bartlett, *Monarchs*, pp.232-35; and Elman, *Classicism*, pp.109-10.

12. For related discussions of Heshen's wealth, see Nivison, "Ho-shen," pp.211-12, Bartlett, *Monarchs*, p.234; Zhang Yufen, "Jiaqing chaozheng," p.210; and Feng Zuozhe, *Heshen ping-zhuan*, pp.269-325. Estimates of this wealth range from 100 million to 800 million taels.

13. The term "Heshen Regency" was coined by Harold Kahn. See Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.248-59.

14. As Emperor Jiaqing put it: "how could [the top ministers] spend their own wealth? They necessarily took it from the departments and counties; and the departments and counties necessarily took it from the common people." See DQRRHS 37:45a.

Certainly there was antipathy toward Heshen in the decades prior to 1799. Expression of public discontent, however, was highly circumscribed due to Heshen's close affiliation with Emperor Qianlong, sweep of powers, and legendary ability to exact retribution upon his political opponents.¹⁵ In only rare instances did defiance take the form of open action, such as when the Shandong magistrate Wu Yi (1745-1799) insisted on arresting Heshen-patronized men for disorderly conduct (an act for which Wu was later dismissed).¹⁶ Political defiance, rather, tended to be subtler, perpetrated by a loose alliance of officials under grand counselors A-gui and Zhu Gui 朱珪.

Signs of a broader opposition to Heshen were discreetly expressed in late eighteenth-century literati scholarship. Examples include the (A-gui connected) Changzhou scholar Zhuang Cunyu's 1780s commentary on the *Gongyang Commentary*, in which a discussion of dynastic decline was linked to the arrogance and greed of false rulers—an analysis implying (but not directly identifying) Heshen. “If one is guided by profit in one's actions,” Zhuang wrote, quoting the *Analects*, “one will incur much ill will.”¹⁷ Similar views were expressed in 1793 by the scholar Wang Huizu (1731-1807), who lamented a decline in government morals in which “not even two or three out of ten behaved uprightly,” a consequence of “having picked up their evil ways from their mentors.” Wang dates the beginning of this shift to 1767, roughly the time that Heshen came to national prominence, again implying Heshen's deviance without directly identifying it. Such furtive rumblings of discontent were significant. As Benjamin Elman argues, this “classically-veiled criticism of bureaucratic corruption”—and veiled it was—foreshadowed a resurgence of elite political activism that would grow to greater power and importance with the changes of the Xianyu Reforms.¹⁸

In examining pre-1799 views on Heshen, one should also consider the perspective of Emperor Jiaqing, newly enthroned in 1796 but largely isolated from substantive decisions of state. Elizabethan dramatists would surely have ap-

15. For stories concerning Heshen's efforts to suppress criticism, see Nivison, “Ho-shen,” pp. 213-15.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

17. For a fuller discussion, see Elman, *Classicism*, pp.108-16.

18. Nivison, “Ho-shen,” pp.216-17. Further examples of this type of morally-charged and classics-based political commentary, alluding to the problems of the Heshen administration, was seen in Hunan's elite Yuelu Academy in the late eighteenth century. In this case, the impeccability of the Ancients was contrasted with “those who covet glory, profit, and personal advantage.” See Daniel McMahon, “The Yuelu Academy and Hunan's Nineteenth-Century Turn Toward Statecraft,” pp. 82-85.

preciated the contrasts. Jiaqing was the true son of the Qianlong emperor, yet Heshen was the man with whom Qianlong was intimate. Jiaqing had stood by his father's side through years of staid court ceremonies and ritual functions, yet it was Heshen on whom the old king leaned when it came to decisions of state. Jiaqing was a Confucian moralist, yet the seemingly unscrupulous Heshen wielded power. Jiaqing was trained to be emperor, yet in Qianlong's infirmity it was Heshen who interpreted the retired emperor's will. One was king in name; the other, it seemed, in fact. With such circumstances, it is hard to imagine that Jiaqing *did not* harbor a private resentment. Yet this animosity, if it did exist, was never directly articulated in pre-1799 imperial edicts, nor indeed was it openly mentioned while his father, Emperor Qianlong, was alive.¹⁹

Despite signs of animosity, the true pervasiveness of anti-Heshen sentiment prior to 1799 is yet an open question.²⁰ Rumor and anecdotes aside, official Qing documentation was generally positive in its assessment of Heshen's record, being mindful of this minister's linguistic ability, talent in foreign affairs, and labor as Qianlong's closest aide.²¹ This public respect for Heshen was further reflected in literati writing on or for the minister, although praise might have been tied to hopes of personal advancement and fears of imperial retribution.²² As the openly expressed criticism of Heshen emerged only *after* the 1799 Jiaqing condemnation, it is difficult to determine how much of the subsequent righteous ire was genuine, reflecting previous literati views, and how much simply accommodated a change in the political winds.

There is also question concerning the accuracy of the charges leveled at Heshen, both implicitly prior to 1799 and explicitly from 1799. In his study of the minister, for example, scholar Feng Zuozhe argues that Heshen's accumulat-

19. Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.258-59. Concerning Jiaqing's views, Kahn writes of an official named Yijianga who sent a letter of condolences to Heshen following the death of Qianlong, a "custom strictly reserved for the son of the deceased," while writing nothing to the Jiaqing emperor, Qianlong's son. The Jiaqing emperor was not amused. Indeed he could think of "no greater betrayal of trust or corruption of conscience." The wrongful reversal on which (one assumes) Jiaqing had been brooding for years had again been proclaimed, now very much to Yijianga's disadvantage. See pp.252-53.

20. Elman, *Classicism*, p.114.

21. Heshen was known for his knowledge of Manchu, Han, Mongolian, and Tibetan languages, which he applied to good effect in the Qing's international relations. For a more positive assessment of Heshen's accomplishments, see Feng, *Heshen*, preface p.2, pp.343-46.

22. Emperor Jiaqing personally suggested this view in 1799 when he observed that his officials "did not dare to vex [Emperor Qianlong's] sacred mind and indeed they feared Heshen, so they found excuses to tie their tongues." See DQRRHS 37:35b.

ed wealth was far less than the 200+ million taels than historians have generally claimed.²³ Beatrice Bartlett's study of the Grand Council raises related suspicions. "We have no hard evidence," she writes, "that conclusively links any kind of Grand Council speculation to [Heshen's] supposedly vast accumulations." The accusations that Heshen had delayed military reports, twisted the meaning of imperial edicts, and demanded his own copies of palace memorials likewise proves "difficult to verify" due to a lack of evidence and the (perhaps intentionally) vague nature of some charges.²⁴

An understanding of precisely what Qing contemporaries thought in the late eighteenth century, and how true the views may have been, requires further study. Ultimately, as Feng Zuozhe indicates, no clear answer may be forthcoming. The historical materials on Heshen's life and accomplishments needed to clarify this mystery are "extremely scarce."²⁵ What *is* clear, however, is that imperial problems of social disorder, bureaucratic corruption, poor administrative communication, and flawed policy did exist and could—rightly or wrongly—be traced to Heshen's administration. Such difficulties provided sufficient material to fashion a classical narrative of dynastic doom driven by the folly of human greed. Indeed, contemporary problems generated sufficient animosity to lead a body of disgruntled Qing elite, headed by no less than Emperor Jiaqing, to seek to place Minister Heshen at the heart of this revived story. With the Xianyu Reforms, the sparks of backroom complaints about Heshen were fanned into a far brighter flame of moral indignation.

23. Concerning previous estimates of Heshen's wealth by historians, see Bartlett, *Monarchs*, p. 235; Nivison, "Ho-shen," pp.211-12; and Zhang Yufen, "Jiaqing Chaozheng," p.210. These estimates are based in part on the record in Emperor Jiaqing's *Veritable Records*. This source alleges that Heshen owned some 200 pearl bracelets, gems, numerous residents adorned in imperial style, stashes of gold in the walls of these residences, storehouses of silver, and pawnshops. See DQRRHS 37:49a-50b. Feng Zuozhe has reviewed the range of sources available on the question of Heshen's wealth. He disputes popular claims, drawn from some of these accounts, that the minister had up to 800 million *liang* in riches. Following an evaluation of the reliability of the historical sources, Feng's own conclusion is that Heshen's total property amounted to something less than 100 million *liang* of silver—still a staggering amount. Here again, we see suggestion of the manner that the negative image of Heshen deviated from historical circumstances. See Feng, *Heshen*, pp.269-325.

24. For further discussion, see Bartlett, *Monarchs*, pp.234-38.

25. Feng hypothesizes that the lack of official sources on Heshen is no coincidence. These documents may have been purposely destroyed to punish Heshen and protect the image of Emperor Qianlong, a ruler closely associated with Heshen. It is possible that the destruction of these sources concurrently girded the new image of Heshen created with the Xianyu Reforms. See Feng, *Heshen*, pp.2, 256, 260

A Rhetorical Turn: The Xianyu Reforms Vision of Heshen

When the abdicated Qianlong emperor died on 7 February 1799, Heshen lost his protector and Jiaqing fulfilled his filial duty. Within seven days, Heshen was under house arrest, indicted on a list of twenty charges designed to illuminate how the man, “rebellious and not like a minister,” had “enervated the nation and sickened the people.”²⁶ Out of respect for Heshen’s service to the Qianlong emperor, Jiaqing “benevolently bestowed an order that he commit suicide,” with his titles stripped and wealth confiscated. This sudden strike, commencing (as rumor has it) just hours after Qianlong’s death, sent shock waves through the realm.²⁷

The most powerful ideological attacks on Heshen were presented in a series of imperial edicts in the months following Qianlong’s death. It was here that Emperor Jiaqing set the tone, topics, and limits of a new discourse on this minister. The Qing realm was informed that Heshen was “without father or lord” (having forsaken cardinal Confucian relationships), possessed of a magnitude of greed “rarely seen and rarely heard of,” with “eyes [that see] no master above,” and in a state of having “lost his mind and become blind to goodness.”²⁸ These psychological conditions, inferred to have been present for decades, had resulted in alleged pride, nepotism, embezzlement, “abuse of power and taking of bribes,” misappropriation of imperial authority, poor leadership, and abject failure in the White Lotus military campaigns.

Emperor Jiaqing offered the most damning summation of Heshen’s faults in his twenty charges. Here lurid detail was revealed and opened for public discussion. Criticism of the minister included the wrongful assumption of imperial prerogative by riding a horse through the gates of the Yuanming Palace, the taking of palace maids as concubines, concealment of military reports on rebel pacification, rejection of a memorial recounting an attack on Dalai Lama’s merchants, disobedience of an imperial edict by ordering Mongol princes to the capital, “wresting of profit from the common folk” via pawn shops, building of residences in imperial style, and amassing of an illicit fortune of gold, silver, pearls,

26. Concerning the key crimes of which Jiaqing accused Heshen, see DQRRHS 37:32a–38:9b.

Concerning Jiaqing’s censure of Heshen’s poor military leadership, false reporting, and embezzling, see DQRRHS *juan* 38.

27. DQRRHS 38:4a; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, pp. 60–72. For a more detailed account of Heshen’s final days, see Feng, *Heshen*, pp.252–68.

28. DQRRHS 37:33a–35b.

and estates.²⁹ When Jiaqing presented his justification for Heshen's death sentence, comparing him with previously executed ministers such as Oboi, he argued that the punishment was just as the "the circumstances of [Heshen's] crimes are especially grave."³⁰

Nor was the emperor the only one permitted to speak out. Jiaqing sent copies of his twenty charges to his provincial governors with an "order that they comment on the crimes." The response, such as that by Zhili governor-general Hu Litang 胡李堂, repeated the new imperial rhetoric, often word for word. Hu stated that "Heshen has entirely lost his natural goodness and cannot return to humanity. He is rebellious and not like a minister . . . a completely shameless petty man (xiao ren 小人) who has lost his mind in his madness, with eyes that do not see his master above."³¹ Grand councilor Wang Jie 王杰 (1725-1805) offered similar views when he observed that Heshen had caused Qing officials to have "thoughts only of grasping for bribes and of personal gain . . . taking more and more until they were gulping like whales."³²

In the months after Qianlong's death, concerned literati outside of government likewise seized the opportunity to speak. The scholar Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738-1801) tendered a letter via Wang Jie that excoriated Heshen's destructive impact, writing that "from 1780 through 1798 Heshen dominated the government, and for almost thirty years, officials high and low have covered up for one another and have thought only of grasping for bribes and personal gain."³³ It was also during this period of censure that Hong Liangji submitted his famous letter to Prince Cheng, intended for the emperor's eyes, in which he directly attacked Minister Heshen for "tampering with [governmental] precedent," populating the Qing bureaucracy with his supporters, and perpetrating a web of destructive corruption.³⁴ Emperor Jiaqing disliked Hong's broad call for a purge of Heshen supporters in government, but ultimately tolerated the letter in the spirit of new reform—a rare opening to gentry opinion that, as Benjamin Elman argues, would become "a watershed for moves to reformulate literati prerogative vis-à-vis the state and its imperial institutions."³⁵

In later years, the court would moderate the rhetoric against Heshen and his

29. Ibid 37:47a-50b.

30. Ibid 38:3a-3b.

31. Ibid 37:46b. Also see Nivision, "Ho-shen," p.240.

32. Nivison, "Ho-shen," p.216.

33. Nivision, "Ho-Shen," pp.215-16.

34. For a partial translation of this letter, see de Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, pp.172-74.

35. Elman, *Classicism*, pp.283-90. For this quote, see p.283.

network in government. A basic vision of the man and his impact, however, had been firmly established for the Qing and beyond. In 1842, for example, the statecraft pioneer Wei Yuan 魏源 discussed the deterioration of the Qing military, as evidenced by an ineffective system of finance, poor weaponry, and a lack of official vigor.³⁶ Wei traced the roots of this deterioration to the Miao and White Lotus wars in which Heshen-guided pacification stalled, Heshen-dispatch generals skimmed campaign funds, innocents were viciously slaughtered, and victories were blithely and falsely reported. That is, the reasons Emperor Jiaqing gave for revolt were still deemed generally accurate: imperial subjects had been forced into rebellion by evil officials, foremost of whom was Heshen.³⁷ In 1927, the seminal historian Xiao Yishan 蕭一山 revived essentially the same Heshen narrative for the twentieth century, arguing that “by the beginning of the Jiaqing period the vigor of the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong reigns had been almost completely destroyed by the hand of one man—Heshen.”³⁸

Despite the rancor of the rhetoric, the Jiaqing court placed important limits on its attacks. “The enemy,” as Benjamin Elman observes, “was not a faction but an individual.” Emperor Jiaqing, fearful of the destructiveness of a larger purge, turned his focus almost exclusively on Heshen alone. Some of the minister’s closest associates—Fuchang’an, Fukang’an, and Helin—were criticized for “having crimes, not accomplishments.” But even the worse of them, Fuchang’an, was officially recorded as having only 10-20% the amount of Heshen’s ill-gotten wealth—bad, but only a fraction of the “primal evil” (*yuan e* 元惡) that was Heshen officially depicted.³⁹

As painted in both imperial and literati declarations, Heshen was the source

36. Wei Yuan, *Shengwu ji*. See also comments in de Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, pp.206-08.

37. DQRRHS, *juan* 35 and 38. See also Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.289; Nivison, “Ho-shen,” pp.215-16; Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.254-59. Feng Zuozhe also observes the late Qing emergence of similar negative commentary on Heshen’s wealth and corruption, mainly in the form of popular histories, literati jottings, and oral accounts. See Feng, *Heshen*, p.1.

38. Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai tongshi*, V.2, p.197. This translated reference is found in Nivison, “Ho-shen,” p.217. For discussions of Heshen and his impact, see Nivison, “Ho-shen;” Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.248-59; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, pp.60-76; and Zhang Yufen, “Jiaqing chaozheng,” pp.210-13. Many elements of this narrative continue to the present day. Consider, for example, a recent popular biography of Heshen entitled *An Enormously Greedy and Treacherous Minister: A Complete Biography of Heshen*. The front cover of this book is adorned with a picture of jade, jewels, and a young woman. The heading above the title reads: “grabbing power, grabbing money, grabbing beautiful women.” This negative depiction has also been seen in recent television serials aired in China, such as the 1996 *Prime Minister Liu Luoguo*. See Yehenala Tuhong, *Jutan jianxiang Heshen quanzhuan*; and Feng, *Heshen*, p.1.

39. DQRRHS 38:5a, 7a.

of trouble, the cause of broad corruption and instability, the root of decline. In patronizing this polemic vision, the Qing court advanced not just the demonization of Minister Heshen, but also a strategy of isolating him from former associates. In carefully worded pronouncements, Jiaqing indicated that officials in government had been led by Heshen's example of selfishness and greed. They complied with this example or, if they disliked it, they were too fearful to oppose it. However, with the source of the disruption (Heshen) gone there was little point—and much possible pain—in pursuing vengeance on Heshen's former network. According to formal Confucian logic, these men still had much potential for goodness and a purge, allowing enemy factions to contend, would only impede their ability to embrace the good. Unlike Heshen, who “could not return to humanity,” if these officials “were able to turn to goodness and reform themselves, they could become men who labored for the nation.” The continued opportunity to do this labor, serving without the feared penalty of prejudice or punishment, presumably gave strayed public servants added incentive to implement the new imperial agenda.⁴⁰

The imperial attack on Heshen also served to distance the minister from his strongest supporter: Emperor Qianlong. Jiaqing's edicts, the twenty charges in particular, present Heshen's crimes as not merely transgressions against empire and civilization, but also as a direct betrayal of his patron. Qianlong was at court when the minister, “without fear,” rode through the palace gates. It was Qianlong he deceived by concealing reports, altering memorials, and misreporting funds. It was Qianlong's edict he disobeyed when he summoned the Mongol princes. Indeed, two of Jiaqing's charges directly address the minister's alleged lack of concern (“talking and laughing as usual”) when the old emperor was ill.⁴¹ Heshen, that is, was depicted as truly “without father or lord.” In this view, his actions under Qianlong's patronage thus could be interpreted as illegitimate.⁴²

In the context of the rhetoric recasting the image of Minister Heshen proper note should also be taken of the depiction of his chief counterpart: Emperor Jia-

40. Ibid 37:35a, 38:8b–9a; Nivison, “Ho-shen,” p.241; Elman, *Classicism*, p.284.

41. DQRRHS 37:47a–50b.

42. The rhetorical distancing of Heshen from Emperor Qianlong, indicating that the minister's pernicious activity took place largely without the elder emperor's knowledge, was likely also a court effort to protect Qianlong's image. In this formulation, Jiaqing's father could not be held complicit with, or responsible for, Heshen's deeds (although it is likely he knew of them). Similar effort to protect Qianlong's posthumous reputation is seen in the writing of Heshen's official biography in 1814, during which sources were curtailed and the draft closely scrutinized. See Feng, *Heshen*, p.260. Thanks to Lawrence Zhang of Harvard University for pointing out this connection.

qing. As the Xianyu Reforms commenced and the new king put his house in order, he conspicuously presented himself as everything that Heshen was not. As Heshen (the false king) represented decline, he (the true king) now represented ascension. Heshen was extravagant; Jiaqing was frugal. Heshen was excessive; Jiaqing was moderate. Heshen was corrupt and greedy; Jiaqing was selfless and honest. Heshen promoted friends and family; Jiaqing promoted men of ability. Heshen hid and ignored problems; Jiaqing welcomed word of problems and advanced active measures to correct them. Heshen was arrogant and poorly cultivated; Jiaqing was modest and trained from birth to be a true Confucian gentleman. Heshen abused imperial subjects; Jiaqing embraced them.⁴³ In essence, in this new ideological vision, Heshen was the illness and Jiaqing became the cure.

The Ideological Uses of Minister Heshen

It is unclear if the Jiaqing emperor truly believed Heshen responsible for the myriad problems facing the Qing realm. What is clear is that in demonizing Heshen Jiaqing advanced a purpose that moved beyond restored power and vengeance. The emergent depiction of the Heshen affair was woven into a larger

rhetorical tapestry of orthodox values and moral consequences. Heshen became more than just an evil man drunk on ill-gotten power. He personified the venom that had seeped into the soul of Qing government. That is, a classically-charged literary conflation presented him as, at once, both the poison's human source and the symbolic representation of its existence in all imperial administration. In this way public definition of Heshen as evil became, by extension,

thers. A new appeal to orthodox values, highlighting core beliefs in the context of an attack on a despised and feared strongman, was cheap, feasible, and popular. It perhaps seemed an easy solution. In taking this approach, however, Jiaqing did not fully realize the price that came with the empowerment of literati opinion, an option shunned by his father and grandfather. Enabling literati action in support of imperial ends aided the court in the short term, but opened a door to more aggressive elite public opinion and political participation in the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

Political spin was also needed—and, I believe, intentionally used—to resolve a fundamental problem presented by the forceful elimination of Heshen in government. As the historian David Nivison observes, the danger of political cliques was a constant worry of the Qing emperors. It was commonly believed that factionalism had led to the fall of the Ming dynasty and, indeed, the court had seen this peril first-hand with the bitter machinations of the sons of the Kangxi emperor.⁴⁵ In order to avoid future disruptions, the Yongzheng 雍正 and Qianlong emperors had strictly forbade the formation of political factions. This precedent, as the historical lessons that inspired it, was passed on as part of Jiaqing's imperial legacy.⁴⁶

When the new emperor moved against Heshen, it was critical to marshal sufficient force to act decisively, an understanding leading to vigorous public denunciation of the minister concurrent with private negotiations with his prince brothers. It was equally critical that the purge did not disrupt government or harm reforms ideals. Herein lay the dilemma. To fully root out Heshen's network of influence would entail empowerment of rival literati cliques, but without full control over the destructiveness and self-aggrandizing of these groups. The fear was that these factions would be at each other's throats, struggling to carve up the power left in the vacuum of Heshen's absence. Failure to curtail Heshen's influence, however, allowed the persistence of patterns inimical to public morals and effective administration.⁴⁷ A third plan was needed to curb corruption and bring the government into line.

What Emperor Jiaqing attempted, if without full success, was to fashion an imperial clique that superseded and incorporated all other groups in government.

44. Elman, *Classicism*, pp. 282-305.

45. Concerning the Kangxi emperor's disapprobation of factionalism, including his fears regarding his crazed eldest son, see Spence, *Emperor*, pp. 87, 134-135, 139.

46. For a fuller discussion, see Nivison, "Ho-shen," pp.220-33.

47. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.965-66; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, pp.72-77.

In this effort, the new depiction of Heshen played a critical ideological role as it permitted the realm to be reimagined in relation to two poles: Heshen and moral failing on one side; Jiaqing and moral reforms on the other. That is, the vision of Heshen demonized, combined with clear signs of a shift in imperial power relations, offered a potential avenue to reclaim and redirect former Heshen associates without recourse to a violent purge.

It is in this context, I believe, that we should view Jiaqing's aggressive elimination of Heshen and his closest associates. It is further because of the vociferous public spectacle of Heshen's demise, not in spite of it, that the emperor felt able to extend clemency to virtually all others.⁴⁸ With the minister's death, Emperor Jiaqing offered his bureaucracy, even former Heshen associates, a public choice. They could continue (decline-precipitating) malfeasance and share Heshen's fate, or else turn to the empire, a fresh start, moral righteousness, and a place in the revival of the dynasty. Emperor Jiaqing, that is, offered *ideological incentives* to prompt his officials to implement new reform. The Qing bureaucracy was to be simultaneously scared and inspired to act.

Confucian Correction

As seen in the *Veritable Records*, Jiaqing's attack on Heshen and clemency for his former associates prefaced the emperor's declared vision of the *xianyu weixin* (lit: "the reforms that embrace all"). In this presentation, the problems attributed to Heshen's corruption not just defined the causes of new dynastic decline, but also framed the shape of the ameliorating set of reforms. "If we do not stand up to root out this primal evil," Jiaqing declared, "then [this evil] cannot be eliminated from the affairs of state."⁴⁹ Just as the emperor presented himself as everything that Heshen was not, he likewise presented his regime as everything that Heshen's was not. Twentieth-century historians have tended to dismiss the ostentatious Confucian measures advanced in this context, seeing them as unoriginal, timid, and feudal.⁵⁰ It can be argued, however, that these

48. For the emperor's statements on this matter, see DQRRHS 38:7b-8b, 16b-17b, 40:10b-12b. The gist of this approach was evidenced in the punishment of Fuchangan, Heshen's closest associate. Also facing execution, Fuchangan was brought to kneel before Heshen as this former minister formerly committed suicide. Fuchangan's sentence was then commuted.

49. DQRRHS 38:7b-8a.

50. Historiography from the People's Republic of China, in particular, argues that Jiaqing was too bound by feudal tradition to arrest the "inevitable" Qing decline. His administration lacked proper focus and determination and hence "failed." Zhang, "Lun Jiaqing," p.

scholars fail to fully appreciate either how the Jiaqing court used available cultural resources or why it chose to advocate precisely the reforms that it did.

Coming to power, the emperor was faced with challenges to be resolved with a paucity of resources not seen since the early years of the dynasty. The state was exhausted, its coffers largely empty; the realm was rocked by years of civil war; and the emperor presided over a bureaucracy with lingering loyalty to his greatest political rival. Jiaqing required a means to galvanize the Qing state under his rule, deploying it in ways that would be cost effective and beneficial to the public weal. A return to traditional values, selectively chosen and championed, was politically sensible and true to his reforms's ostentatiously orthodox objectives.

Heshen had been castigated for cronyism and self-interest. Jiaqing conspicuously returned to the classic Confucian ideal of "Men of Ability."⁵¹ At the center of Qing power, the emperor recruited a number of senior ministers, including Wang Jie, Dong Gao 董誥, Zhu Gui, and Nayancheng 那彥成. These men were former servants of the Qianlong emperor noted for incorruptibility, conscientiousness, and long-standing opposition to Heshen.⁵² They oversaw the reform of the Grand Council and guided imperial policy.⁵³ The emperor concurrently reshuffled posts in the field bureaucracy. This included more effective rearrangement in light of available talent, as well as additional recruitment via recommendation and special imperial examinations.⁵⁴

It has been observed that Jiaqing's personnel changes did not clearly improve the effectiveness of the Qing administration. There was simply too little effort to alter existing administrative mores and practices. While this may be generally true, one should observe that the rearrangement of posts was, even from the beginning, intentionally selective rather than comprehensive. The Xianyu Reforms patronage of new men and new community strategies did significantly improve field administration in several critical areas of the Qing empire, most notably the regions of the White Lotus and Miao revolts. This shift was evidenced by the career of three of the most noted field officials of this period: Liu Qing 劉清 (1742 - 1827) in northern Sichuan, Yan Ruyi in southern

54; Zhang, "Jiaqing chaozheng," pp.225-26. See Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.258-59 for a dissenting view.

51. QRYWJ *juan* 9; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, pp.103-14.

52. Polachek, *Inner Opium War*, pp.42-43; Zhu, "Lun Jiaqing."

53. Bartlett, *Monarchs*, pp.238-88.

54. Polachek, *Inner Opium War*, pp.42-43; McMahon, "Restoring the Garden."

Shannxi, and Fu Nai 傅鼐 (d. 1812) in western Hunan.⁵⁵

Heshen had been castigated for being secretive, vindictive, and withholding information from the ailing Emperor Qianlong. Emperor Jiaqing conspicuously returned to the Confucian ideal of open and direct communication. It was not enough that good people be found, the king ordered that these officials come to him with accurate information (a “summons for direct speech”) transmitted through more secure bureaucratic channels and presented without fear of censure. The mandate was emphasized in 1800 with the punishment of Yunnan governor Jiang Lan for failing to report flooding.⁵⁶ It was also seen in Emperor Jiaqing’s unusual tolerance for remonstrance, suggested by his early leniency toward Hong Liangji. He publicly told his ministers to speak up when he made mistakes and some—such as the fearless Wu Xiongguang 吳熊光—actually did.⁵⁷

Heshen had been castigated for being extravagant and self-aggrandizing. Emperor Jiaqing, by necessity, stressed frugality and fiscal responsibility. “Frugality is a virtue,” Jiaqing wrote early in his reign. “Its value lies in abstaining; if the ruler can abstain, then the common people will accumulate wealth.”⁵⁸ Now forbidden were wasteful indulgences such as long imperial tours, opera performances in the capital, and even upkeep of dilapidated inner walls of the Forbidden City.⁵⁹ Also forbidden was the more detrimental practice of gift-giving in government, seen in Jiaqing’s contemptuous refusal of presents on the grounds that giving treasures to officials was nothing less than taking the same treasures from the people.⁶⁰

The Xianyu Reforms, defined by court-promoted visions of national disruption and Confucian reforms, further encompassed not just the imperial government, but also imperial people. Minister Heshen and subordinates such as Fukang’an, it was said, had little sympathy for the purported enemies of the realm. Rebels (and potential rebels) had been little trusted, much maligned, and suffered as targets of roving and predatory armies. The new Jiaqing court, in contrast, argued that this prejudicial perception had harmed “good subjects who were coerced,” alienated “Our Subjects who have been trampled,” and at all

55. The contribution of these three field officials is discussed in the *Qingshi gao*, *juan* 361 (Biography 148).

56. Zhang, “Lun Jiaqing,” p.50; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, pp.108–10; Zhang, “Jiaqing chaozheng,” p.221.

57. *Qingchao xuwenxian tongkao*, p.8870; Jones, “Hung Liang-chi”; Zhang Yufen, “Lun Jiaqing,” pp. 50–51.

58. For Jiaqing’s essays on government spending, see QRYWJ, *juan* 1; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, p.98.

59. QRYWJ 42:504.

60. DQRRHS 47:427–28; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, 86–100; Zhang, “Jiaqing chaozheng,” pp.220–22.

points ensured the failure of White Lotus pacification. Reforms, Jiaqing proclaimed, began with proper solicitude toward Qing folk. “Virtue is only good government and government lies in nourishing the people.”⁶¹

In this Confucian formulation one hears an echo of the clemency and inclusiveness that Jiaqing had offered his post-Heshen bureaucracy—the foundation of an “imperial clique” that embraced all but Heshen. Here again, the emperor moved to circumvent the problem of pervasive deviance by refuting the finality of this deviance and offering a new start in the context of a rectification of classical problems. “Since ancient time,” the emperor wrote, “we have heard of the use of soldiers against enemy nations; we have not heard of the use of soldiers against Our own subjects.” In such proclamations, Jiaqing formally claimed local people as “Our Subjects” (*wu min* 吾民), attributing whiteness to populations that seemed to exhibit near-infinite shades of gray. The mountaineers of the White Lotus revolt areas might have been (as they were called) “stupid,” “confused,” “coerced,” or “seduced.” But, the emperor emphasized, “in the vastness of the world there is nothing you cannot find.” All but a small minority of recalcitrant rebels now officially retained at least residual “goodness.”⁶²

This proclamation of faith in Qing subjects was combined with a promise to both forgive those who had erred and punish those who continued their lawlessness. Here again the court redrew the lines of imperial engagement, depicting circumstances in stark but familiar ideological terms: people could choose to perpetuate dynastic decline (and lose, as Heshen had) or they could choose to fight decline and return to the glory of earlier decades. If they responded to the call to be subjects, as many did, it was promised that soldiers would no longer “harm good people” and only the “truly rebellious” would not be spared. Thus, as “officials [had formally] forced subjects to rebel,” the new officials of the Xianyu Reforms would lead subjects to fight rebellion. As indicated by sources such as the *Veritable Records*, the positioning of this new polity rhetoric on the heels of Jiaqing’s attack on Heshen was no coincidence. The demonized image of Heshen’s predations on Qing people, and its pernicious consequences, allowed the Jiaqing court a powerful backdrop from which to solicit popular support for reform.⁶³

61. *Kanjing*, pp.1-4; DQRRHS 38:16a-18a; QRYWJ *juan* 1; Guan, *Jiaqing di*, p.115.

62. See, for example, HJW 89:14b, 18b; and *Kanjing*, pp.1-4.

63. HJW 89:14b, 18b; *Kanjing*, pp.1-4; DQRRHS *juan* 37 and 38, esp. 38:16a-18b.

Ideology and Implementation

The Xianyu Reforms reforms relied on ideological and largely non-punitive measures to promote public morality and bureaucratic efficiency. As historians have observed, the changes advanced conspicuously lacked either a radical new vision or broad coercive mechanisms. Seemingly for these reasons, little dramatic improvement is seen when viewing administrative behavior and governmental effectiveness for the Jiaqing period as a whole. There is scant evidence to suggest that, for example, former Heshen supporters were either truly cowed or more sincerely identified themselves with reforms ideals. Logically, therefore, the reforms failed.⁶⁴

As this essay suggests, there is yet room for revisionist study. Extant research on this reforms concentrates upon court affairs at the center of imperial power and/or overall trends relevant to the later disruptions of the nineteenth century. Beyond the relevant connections made with the pacification of the White Lotus revolt, little attention has been paid to how changes at court were reflected in fuller implementation in the provinces. Doing so arguably provides a more positive perspective. Consider, for example, the role of new policy in state reconstruction following the Miao and White Lotus revolts: projects at the heart of the new regime's designs to restore dynastic vigor.

Implementation of post-rebellion plans shows the profound impact of reforms ideology and ideals. New leaders were selected at every level. Emperor Jiaqing excoriated Helin and Fukang'an, the Heshen-associated leaders of the Miao campaigns, while reaffirming the moderate Jiang Sheng as Hunan governor. The trusted Nayan Cheng was repeatedly appointed Shaanxi-Gansu governor-general, supervising vast territory of the previous White Lotus revolt. At the sub-provincial level, new talent of noted effectiveness and ideological fervor was also brought to the fore, men such as Fu Nai, Liu Qing, and Yan Ruyi. These personnel changes indicated not just the selection of individuals, but also of pre-existing, and largely anti-Heshen, bureaucratic networks. Consider, for example, Governor Jiang Sheng's patronage of both Yan Ruyi and Fu Nai, as well as the cooperation between Fu and Yan in the early stages of western Hunan's implementation of a tuntian 屯田 military agricultural colonies.⁶⁵

64. See, for example, Zhang, "Lun Jiaqing," p.54; Zhang, "Jiaqing chaozheng," pp.225-26.

65. DQRRHS 38:2b, 5b-6a; Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.584-85; McMahon, "Restoring the

The nature of new Jiaqing administration also experienced significant alterations. The court focus on bureaucratic frugality and a more benign vision of polity underlay a shift toward local mobilization in which communities took on greater responsibility for social welfare and public works projects. This change yielded not only greater power and autonomy for regional elites, but also for the provincial leaders who directly managed them. The case of Viceroy Fu Nai, the architect of the emerging military colony-based “New Order” on the Hunan Miao Frontier, provides perhaps the most striking example. Nor was such empowerment of field action unintentional. Jiaqing regarded Fu Nai as a Man of Talent and personally invested him with both special administrative powers and the right to directly memorialize the throne.⁶⁶

In these new circumstances, it seems, trusted Jiaqing men were given not just greater power to rebuild and educate in line with reforms goals, but also greater flexibility to circumvent the impediments of an entrenched and ideologically unmotivated Qing bureaucracy. The fruit of their regional reconstruction labor, built on the foundation of the Xianyu Reforms, did not save the dynasty. It did, however, conspicuously ease the symptoms that early nineteenth-century Chinese contemporaries understood to be indicative of dynastic decline. Peace and social order in the rebellion-torn regions, fragile as it was, was yet imposed and lasted until the end of the Qing period.

Conclusion

Modern historians tend to judge Emperor Jiaqing from the perspective of nineteenth-century administrative deterioration and imperialist crisis. The 1799–1805 Xianyu Reforms, after all, did not significantly arrest widespread bureaucratic corruption, advance international diplomacy, or establish a radical and effective new vision of imperial rule. Success in implementation was uneven and Qing officialdom was only temporarily and partially pulled from detrimental patterns of administrative behavior. Contemporary literati discussion of imminent dynastic decline and Minister Heshen’s destructive administration only seems to corroborate this view.⁶⁷

If not entirely wrong, such accounts yet fail to provide a balanced picture of

Garden,” chapters 3 and 5; and Daniel McMahon, “New Order on China’s Hunan Miao Frontier, 1796–1812.”

66. McMahon, “New Order.”

67. Nivison, “Ho-shen”; Zhang, “Lun Jiaqing”; Guan, *Jiaqing di*; Zhang, “Jiaqing chaozheng.”

either the emperor or his efforts. That is, as Harold Kahn notes in regard to the purge of Heshen, Emperor Jiaqing was “far more capable of decisive action than even his own chroniclers were willing to admit.”⁶⁸ In the years from 1799, Jiaqing publicly focused his authority upon the goals of restoring government and ordering people. This effort, seemingly straightforward in its traditional Confucian character, was in fact advanced with a profound spin shaped by recent history and new opportunity. Whatever Heshen may have been in fact, his image played a profound role in shaping the Xianyu Reforms, both engaging popular conceptions of dynastic decline and defining solutions that suggested true imperial reforms. The damning depiction of Heshen enhanced the legitimacy of reform, strengthened literati and popular support, as well as offered a potential (if not actual) alternative to a destructive bureaucratic purge. Such ideological manipulation indicates that the Xianyu Reforms’s turn to tradition was a good deal more selective, innovative, and pragmatic than historians generally realize.

Xianyu Reforms ideology helped shape not only late Qing literati discourse, but also events such as the Tongzhi Reforms (1862-1874) six decades later. Here too one finds dramatically voiced concern for moral and political decline, articulated in a metaphysical Yin/Yang framework. Like Hong Liangji in 1798, the thinkers who spoke out (Woren 倭仁, Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠, and Mei Zengliang 梅曾亮, among others) did so from a solid Song Neo-Confucian perspective, asserting that “as the mind dominates nature, so the quality of the officials decides the fate of the Empire.” That is, as the Qing realm was further shaken by crisis, reform-minded leaders echoed that only moral and selfless men of talent could save it. Tongzhi Reforms ideas for reform were more radical than Emperor Jiaqing would have desired. The calculated use of ideology and tradition to legitimate new policy while girding literati support, however, proved remarkably consistent.⁶⁹

68. Kahn, *Monarchy*, pp.258-59.

69. For a discussion of the importance of dynastic cycle thinking for the Tongzhi Reforms, see Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Reforms, 1862-1874*, pp.43-46; and Kwang-Ching Liu, “The Ch’ing Reforms.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartlett, Beatrice S. 1991. *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ching China, 1723-1820*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Da Qing Renzong rui (Jiaqing) huangdi shilu*. 大清仁宗睿(嘉慶)皇帝實錄 1964. (Veritable records of the great Qing Jiaqing emperor). Taipei reprint.
- Dai Yi 戴逸, ed. 1980. *Jianming Qingshi* 簡明清史 (Simplified history of the Qing dynasty), V.2. Beijing Renmin chubanshe.
- De Bary, Theodore and Richard Lufrano. 2000. *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, V.2 (2nd edition). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Elvin, Mark. 1997. *Changing Stories in the Chinese World*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Feng Zuozhe 馮佐哲. 1998. *Heshen pingzhuan* 和坤評傳 (A critical biography of Heshen). Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian.
- Guan Wenfa 關文發. 1993. *Jiaqing di* 嘉慶帝 (Emperor Jiaqing). Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe.
- He Changling 賀長齡 and Wei Yuan 魏源, eds. 1826, 1827. *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編 (Statecraft writings of the Qing period).
- Hummel, Arthur, ed. 1943-44. *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.
- Jones, Susan Mann. 1971. "Hung Liang-chi (1746-1809): the Perception and Articulation of Political Problems in Late Eighteenth Century China." Stanford University dissertation.
- . 1978. and Philip Kuhn. "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion." *The Cambridge History of China, V.10: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*. John King Fairbank and Denis Twitchett, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kahn, Harold L. 1971. *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Liu Kwang-ching. 1978. "The Ching Restoration." *The Cambridge History of China, V.10: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*. John King Fairbank and Denis Twitchett, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McMahon, Daniel. 1999. "Restoring the Garden: Yan Ruyi and the Civilizing of China's Internal Frontiers, 1795-1805." University of California at Davis dissertation.
- . 2005. "The Yuelu Academy and Hunan's Nineteenth-Century Turn Toward Statecraft." *Late Imperial China* 26.1 (June 2005): 72-109.
- . 2008. "New Order on China's Hunan Miao Frontier, 1796-1812." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 9.1 (Spring).
- Naquin, Susan and Evelyn Rawski. 1987. *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Nivison, David S. 1959. "Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the Eighteenth Century." *Confucianism in Action*. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Polachek, James Montel. 1992. *The Inner Opium War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Qing Renzong yushi wenchu ji* 清仁宗御制文初集 (A collection of essays by the Jiaqing emperor).
- Qing Shiyou 清石候, ed. 1827. *Kanjing jiaofei shupian* 勘靖教匪述編 (Discussions on the pacification of the religious bandits).
- Qingchao xuwenxian tongkao* 清朝續文獻通考. 1963. (Continued compilation of essays from the Qing dynasty). Taipei: Xinxing shuju.
- Qingshi gao* 清史稿. 1980. (Draft history of the Qing dynasty). Taipei: Xinwenfeng.
- Spence, Jonathan D. 1975. *Emperor of China: Self-portrait of K'ang-hsi*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Wang Gungwu. 1984. "The Chinese Urge to Civilize: Reflections on Change." *Journal of Asian History* 18.1: 4-15.
- Wei Yuan 魏源. 1842. *Shengwu ji* 聖武記 (Chronicle of imperial military campaigns). Guweitang.
- Wright, Mary Claubagh. 1957. *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Xiao Yishan 蕭一山. 1963. *Qingdai tongshi* 清代通史 (A general history of the Qing period). Taiwan: Shangwu yin shuguan.
- Yan Ruyi 嚴如煜, ed. 1822. *Sanshengbian fangbei lan* 三省邊防備覽 (Guide to the defense of the three-province border). Preface.
- Yehenala Tuhong 葉赫那拉·圖鴻. 1996. *Jutan jianxiang Heshen quanzhuan* 巨貪奸相和坤全傳 (An enormously greedy and treacherous minister: a complete biography of Heshen). Beijing: Zhongyuo renshi chubanshe.
- Zhang Yufen 張玉芬. 1992. "Lun Jiaqing chunian de 'Xianyu Weixin'" 論嘉慶初年的咸與維新 (A discussion of the Xianyu Restoration of the early Jiaqing period). *Qingshi yanjiu* 清史研究 92.4: 49-54.
- . 1999. "Jiaqing chaozheng shuping" 嘉慶朝政述評 (An evaluation of the Jiaqing reign). *Ming-Qing luncong* 明清論叢 (Collected discussions on the Ming and Qing dynasties), V. 1. Zhu Chengru 朱誠如 and Wang Tianyou 王天有, eds. Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe.
- Zhu Chengru 朱誠如. 2002. "Lun Jiaqing qinzheng hou zhongyang quanli de chongzu" 論嘉慶親政後中央權力的重組 (The realignment of central power after Emperor Jiaqing assumed the reins of government). *Ming-Qing luncong* 明清論叢 (Collected discussions on the Ming and Qing dynasties), V.3. Zhu Chengru 朱誠如 and Wang Tianyou 王天有, eds. Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe.

朝衰、和珅及咸與維新之意識型態

米丹尼

清雲科技大學中亞所

摘 要

本文檢視西元 1799 至 1805 年間嘉慶皇帝於剷除和珅後所執行之朝廷改革——咸與維新。以往對此事件之探討係著重其儒家模式及其無力阻擋十九世紀王朝衰退的挑戰，本文則著重於探討其意識型態及畏懼改變所衍生之契機。嘉慶朝爲了穩固權力及促進革新，運用和珅所代表之道德及行政崩散形象來定義衰退，並藉此刺激公眾情緒，經由製造出和珅（衰退）及嘉慶（興起）兩極端對比（反映陰—陽／宇宙力量之衝擊），合理化其對和珅的攻擊，並清除更多的官僚主義。嘉慶朝執行了與和珅時期全然不同之革新，塑造此維新之重點及型式，並藉以選擇價值、重新定位政體。咸與維新不但未被傳統所束縛，反而極有創意地運用了傳統。

關鍵詞：清朝，朝衰，嘉慶皇帝，和珅，咸與維新，意識型態

(收稿日期：2007.8.14；修正稿日期：2007.12.3；通過刊登日期：2008.4.11)