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Uniting the ancestors :: Cheng Minzheng (1445-1499) and the creation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin'an Cheng (Xin'an Chengshi Tongzong Shipu)/

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Uniting the Ancestors: Cheng Minzheng (1445-1499) and the Creation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng (Xin’an Chengshi Tongzong Shipu 新安程氏統宗世譜)

A Thesis Presented

by

Neil E. McGee

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Uniting the Ancestors: Cheng Minzheng (1445-1499) and the Creation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng (Xin’an Chengshi Tongzong Shipu 新安程氏統宗世譜)

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To the love of my life, Susan Ruth Crandall McGee, and my own extended family
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1482, Cheng Minzheng 程敏政 (1445-1499) and the leaders of forty three lineage groups who shared his same surname held a meeting near the county seat of Xiuning 休寧 in China’s Huizhou 徽州 Prefecture. Each lineage head brought with him a copy of his family’s private genealogy to share with the others. Together, and under the guidance of Cheng Minzheng, they compared these documents to “rationalize the discrepancies and attack the contradictions” (lixiao fachuan 理消伐舛) of how they were all related. Over the course of the rest of the year, a document of twenty sections was carved onto woodblocks and a new genealogy was produced with Cheng Minzheng’s preface at the beginning of it. In the preface, he declared, “Now, for those of prosperous rank and government service who came before us, our pride will spread to the four directions and be praised by later generations without end. Our past generations brought great merit to the family name in the beginning, were greatly loyal in protecting the family name since, and are as greatly eminent as those of the various family names in the towns of the realm in this present day. For this reason, and because of my unworthy assistance to the numerous lineage branches, a unified record of our ancestors can be fulfilled and a genealogical record can be completed. Isn’t this wonderful!”¹ The new genealogy contained the names of thousands of Cheng descendants and the locations of fifty-three generations of Cheng family grave sites. When it was complete, the forty-four

¹ Xin’an Chengshi Tongzong Shipu xu 新安程氏統宗世譜序, Huangdun wen ji 篆墩文集 (Hereafter HDWJ). Siku Quanshu zhen ben ed. j23:26a-b.
lineage heads convened during the festivities of the following New Year in the ancestral hall that Minzheng’s family had built and reported the endeavor to their ancestors. They called the document the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* (*Xin’an Chengshi Tongzong Shipu* 新安程氏統宗世譜).

Upon first reflection, the notion of Chinese family members gathering together to compare notes on family history is not overly remarkable. Indeed, the tradition of tracing descent and compiling genealogies dates to the earliest period of Chinese history. However, what stands out immediately in these events of 1482 is the sheer magnitude of the endeavor. Forty-four lineage heads, each from different locations in the Huizhou region and beyond, all agreed to convene and share the intimate details of their private lineage histories with one another. Moreover, these lineage heads gathered at the behest of only one individual among them, Cheng Minzheng, and they deferred to his leadership in the effort to compare their records and compile a new genealogy. The *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* was the first of its kind and included the largest number of Cheng ancestors ever recorded. The compilers were very likely well aware of a long tradition of recording “composite” local genealogies of the “Great Lineages” of Xin’an.

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2 See the sacrificial announcement *Jigao xiankao Xingyi gong wen* 祭告顯靠襄毅公文 in HDWJ, j. 51:21b-22a.

3 The list of the forty-four branches who participated in the compilation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* can be found at the end of the lengthy table of contents in the *Collection of Cheng Family Exemplars* (*Cheng shi yi fan ji* 程氏貽範集). The list included Cheng lineage branches from Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Henan, and Guangdong provinces.

4 After a detailed search through numerous library catalogs, on-line databases, and bibliographic catalogs of Chinese genealogies, including but not limited to Taka (1960 and 1982) and Telford (1983), I was unable to find listings specifically for a “comprehensive genealogy” (*tongzong shipu* 統宗世譜) dated earlier than that of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* in 1482.

5 A study of this tradition and a history of the Huizhou region in general can be found in Zurndorfer (1989). As Zurndorfer notes on p.15, “Xin’an” is an old reference to Huizhou prefecture dating at least as early as the Yuan dynasty (1234-1367).
But their effort in the compilation of a “comprehensive genealogy” for their single surname was entirely novel.

To be sure, the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng has not completely escaped the notice of historians of China. In his study of the Xiuning City Wu, Keith Hazelton argued that an important subclass of lineage emerged in the late imperial period that was unique to the Lower Yangzi River region. He hypothesized that there was an emergence of “higher-order lineages” in Huizhou that proceeded “smoothly and, to all appearances, quite naturally” because the formation of such large-scale lineages “required only that representatives of the constituent groups meet to compare traditions and reconcile gross contradictions between them.”

He suggested that a preliminary step in the formation of such higher-order lineages was the compilation of a comprehensive genealogy, and that the Xin’an Cheng had engaged in such a formative process. Hazelton’s study was largely giving credence to views of Chinese kinship organization that rely too heavily on a strict anthropological terminology. However, his recognition of the Cheng family meeting and their comprehensive genealogy remains unaddressed. Why did these forty-four lineage groups hold a meeting and create a “comprehensive genealogy”?

Scholarship on the history of Huizhou Prefecture and the activities of lineage groups during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) offers us some telling clues. The seminal

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7 Terms such as “higher-order lineage” were established in a book on kinship organization in late imperial China by Ebrey and Watson (1986) and were primarily based on earlier definitions established in an article by James Watson (1982). Debate on the usefulness of an anthropological terminology in English to define the expression of Chinese kinship (see Twitchett 1982 and Johnson 1983) gave way to research that now forces us to throw out strict conventions in the expression of Chinese family (see, for examples, Sangren 1984, Faure 1989, Wolf 1989, and Cohen 1990). The latest work on Chinese kinship (for example, Szonyi 2002) relies on a more conditional interpretation of Chinese kinship and an approach based on directly observed kinship practice.
studies by Ye Xian’en and Zhang Youyi on social and economic conditions during the Ming and Qing dynasties emphasize the role of commercial networks, kinship ties, and bondservitude (dian pu) in the practices of lineage groups seeking land tenure in rural Huizhou. Ye and Zhang were a strong influence on the work of Harriet Zurndorfer, who plots the powerful connections between commercial wealth and academic achievement by Huizhou elites and the degree to which competitive economic forces helped shape the development of the prefecture from Song (960-1279) to Qing times (1644-1911). Studies of lineage groups in Huizhou and elsewhere in the empire detail how “patrilineal structures” were “consciously and deliberately organized” and discuss how these structures adjusted to and were transformed by rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural forces during the Ming dynasty. Indeed, a distinct picture is beginning to emerge of the period when there was an increased interest in “collective action and local leadership roles” on the part of the literati elite and local gentry who were “open to the creation of higher order collectivities, thus enlarging their field of action and importance.”

Clarifying the fine shades of stratification within Chinese traditional society is a significant challenge, but we should understand the differences and layers between terms such as ‘literati elite’ and ‘local gentry.’ It must be said right away that any attempt to

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10 See, especially, Chapter 4 of Dardess (1996) and Chapter 2 of Wang (2002). Joseph McDermott’s unpublished paper (1997) on the Shanhe Cheng family of Huizhou, who participated in the compilation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng, is another study that provides exceptional detail on the changes in structure and management of a lineage organization across several generations during the Ming.
equate the gentry of China with the landed equivalent in the case of England or the rest of Europe would be inaccurate. Certainly the Chinese gentry owned land, but focusing on land as the sole criteria for identifying a ‘gentry’ in China would neglect the many different ways in which this group thrived and continued to have success across dynastic transitions. Some scholars suggest that Chinese elites must instead control a combination of certain material, social, personal, or symbolic resources to maintain dominance in a society. However, such definitions still fail to provide a proper context for social reality. For our purposes here, it is perhaps most important to realize that Cheng Minzheng was a member of a small literate population in his day who had at his disposal significant material wealth, high position at the imperial court, a lengthy and successful formal education, and an extensive knowledge of a highly developed Neo-Confucian tradition. Consequently, he was most likely the best equipped among the lineage heads of the forty-four Cheng family groups to control the symbolic power of compiling a genealogy on the scale of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’ an Cheng*.

Cheng Minzheng himself certainly moved among the highest levels of the literati elite during the mid-Ming dynasty. He received his metropolitan degree (*jinshi* 進士) in 1466, and his achievement at the examinations (he placed second on the first register of successful examinees that year) guaranteed him an immediate post to the Hanlin Academy in the imperial capital. As a court historian, Minzheng participated in

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12 See the definition for ‘elites’ in Esherick and Rankin (1990), p.11.

13 The scope of this study does not permit a suitable discussion of Neo-Confucian movements from Song to Ming times and their impact on social developments in China, however two recent studies (Birge 2003 and Bol 2003a) might serve as a point of reference.

14 For convenience, I date the mid-Ming dynasty from 1450-1550.

compiling many of the well-known historical works of the dynasty, including the
*Veritable Record of the Yingzong Emperor* (*Yingzong shi lu* 英宗實錄), the
*Comprehensive Geography of the Ming Empire* (*Da Ming yi tong zhi* 大明一統志), and
the *Principal Topics of the Comprehensive Speculum of Resources for Ruling* (*Zizhi tongjian gang mu* 資治通鑑綱目). His efforts won him repeated imperial favor, and by
1475 he was expounding his views on the *Book of Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書) and the
*Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhong yong* 仲庸) at the annual Lecture on the Confucian Canon
(*Jing yan* 經筵). Not long after, he was assigned to serve in the imperial household as
Tutor to the Heir Apparent (*Tai zi jiang du* 太子講讀). He served in that post only a
short time, however, before the death of his father, Cheng Xin 程信, brought him back to
his native home of Xiuning in 1479 to observe the proper three year mourning period and
to take on a new role as the head of his lineage.

It is at this point in Cheng Minzheng's career when the scope of his activities
appears to extend beyond the recording of the history of the realm and the expounding of
Confucian Canon. After his father's death, Minzheng begins to take a deeper interest in
the recording of important places and events in his native Xiuning County and in the
extensive literary achievements of many distinguished men from the Huizhou region at
large. Accounts such as *A Record of the Temple of the God of Walls and Moats in Jiqi
County* (*Jiqi xian cheng huang miao ji* 績溪縣城隍廟記), *A Record of the Shanhe
Cheng Family's Monastery of Requited Kindness in Qimen County* (*Qimen Shanhe
Cheng shi hao ci an zi yu ji* 祁門善和程氏報慈亷祠宇記), and *A Record of the Temple

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16 The complete text of these lectures can be found in HDW1, j. 6-8.
of Flourishing Morality in Xiuning County (Xiuning xian fang xing si ji 休寧縣方興寺記) indicate he traveled throughout the region and took particular note of the compelling places in his locality.\textsuperscript{17} Accounts such as these eventually served as the source materials for Cheng Minzheng’s compilation of the first local history for Xiuning County in 1491 and set a precedent on the content included in later Huizhou prefectural histories.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, Cheng Minzheng spent many years gathering together an extensive collection of the notable speeches, memorials, essays, personal accounts, and poetic works of hundreds of prominent Huizhou men and, in 1497, submitted his collection to the court for inclusion in the imperial archive.\textsuperscript{19} Indeed, Cheng Minzheng was certainly one member of the Ming literati elite who was very much concerned with his local identity.

The focus of this study is an inquiry into only one facet of Cheng Minzheng’s local activities during the mid-Ming dynasty. A larger investigation into how other prominent men in the empire asserted themselves in the locality and a study of the discourse on local identity occurring among the Ming elite must follow. However, I think a preliminary picture can be presented based upon Cheng Minzheng’s lineage building activities in 1482. To illustrate these activities, I have carefully translated several relevant biographies and specific documents related to the creation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng. In doing so, I believe we can critically assess the ways in which literate men asserted themselves in the locale and understand

\textsuperscript{17} See HDWJ 14:7b, 14:12b, 14:25b.

\textsuperscript{18} Xiuning zhi 休寧志 1491. See also the Huizhou prefectural histories (Huizhou fu zhi 徽州府志) of 1502 and 1566.

\textsuperscript{19} The only reprint of Xin’ an wen xian zhi 新安文獻志 in the United States is available at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University. I am indebted to the staff in the Kress Rare Book Room at Columbia for assisting me to view the copy.
how they came to preside over local organizations and activities during the mid-Ming dynasty.

The remainder of this introduction provides as background a general history of the domestic economy and foreign trade during the mid-Ming and its impact on the Huizhou region. In the Chapter Two of this study, I translate the earliest biographies of both Cheng Minzheng and his father, Cheng Xin 程信 (1404?-1479), as well as their official biographies in the *History of the Ming Dynasty* (*Ming shi* 明史). The goal in the second section is to explore the careers of these two men and to provide a perspective on their public lives so that we might have a solid context from which to assess the lineage building activities of 1482. In Chapter Three, I focus on the creation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* itself, starting first with a careful translation of one of Cheng Minzheng’s “critical discussions” (*bian 辨*) for rationalizing the discrepancies between two important Cheng lineage branches. I then continue with an annotated translation of the preface (*xu 序*) to the comprehensive genealogy and engage in a detailed examination and collation of the six versions of the preface that survive in subsequent editions of Cheng lineage genealogies from the Huizhou region and beyond. Finally, I will conclude in Chapter Four with a summary of this study of the creation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng*.

An Overview of Economy, Trade, and Huizhou Prefecture, 1450-1550

The late fifteenth century marked a significant turning point in the economy of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). For the most part, the empire was settled. The major wars of transition from the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1234-1367) and the consolidation of the frontiers of the Ming were a memory by the time of Cheng Minzheng’s birth in 1445.
Prosperity was beginning to creep into the lives of the populace. Within a span of one hundred years after Minzheng was born, the economic landscape would be transformed, and commerce in all the major cities of the empire would explode. Economic development and expansion of commerce would even extend deeply into the rural countryside, especially in the Huizhou region of the Cheng lineage branches.

Economic development and the expansion of commerce during this period (roughly spanning 1450-1550) is the focus of this overview. Prior scholarship on the economy of pre-modern China has focused largely on developmental cycles in specific regions of China's vast geography. I make no attempt to confront that body of literature here. Rather, I rely on the work of these scholars to illustrate the broader transformations taking place in this period and reaffirm that there was a renewal of a Jiangnan economic macrocycle during these one hundred years of the Ming dynasty. I aim here to present an overview of the national domestic economy and foreign trade in this period, and then to address how these developments directly affected the Huizhou region. In so doing, we might have a better historical context in which to interpret the lineage building activities of Cheng Minzheng during 1482.

Domestic Economy

After usurping the throne in 1402, Zhu Di, the Yongle emperor (r. 1403-1424), would greatly alter the economic approach of "frugality and simplicity" established by his father, Zhu Yuanzhang, the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368-1398), at the start of the Ming dynasty. His invasion of Annam (Vietnam), repeated campaigns against the Mongols in

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20 Mark Elvin (1973), Robert Hartwell (1982), and G. William Skinner (1977, 1985) have led the way with extensive studies of China's past economy.

the north, and construction of Zheng He's (1371-1433) fleet of ships called for frequent increases in the conscription of manpower and materials from his population. By the end of his reign, and after his monumental relocation of the imperial capital from Nanjing to Beijing in 1421, his efforts at expanding the empire would precipitate grave constraints on the early Ming economy.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the empire retreated from its extravagant spending and began to formalize a more rational financial system. The Xuanzong emperor's reign (1426-1435) established firm and organized control over the ten-unit community tax system (lijia 里甲). Moreover, the central government developed a solid system of land and population surveys and enforced clearly defined procedures for levying taxes on land and service to collect national obligations from the populace. The payment of taxes by those who owned land was mainly carried out with contributions of grain while other households, usually families who did not own land, met their obligations with corvee labor duties to the state.22

To illustrate the function of the economy in the mid-fifteenth and into the early sixteenth centuries, some brief descriptions of the national uses of grain, the transportation system of the empire, state salt monopolies, and changes in fiscal policy are necessary. One principle use of grain supplied by the land tax was to feed military outposts in the south of the empire after the campaigns into Annam, and in the north for garrisons stationed in defense against residual Mongol invaders. Another more prominent use was to supply tribute grain to the imperial bureaucracy in the capital at

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22 The “summer tax” was in wheat and the “autumn tax” was in husked rice. However, in other cases, commodities such as hemp, cotton, or silk could be substituted for taxes in grain. See Huang (1998), p. 131, and pp. 126-138 for broader discussions on the land tax and service levy.
Beijing. Grain traveled mainly along a complex system of inland waterways on its way to the south, while the Grand Canal, which had been restored during the Yongle reign, served for shipments to the north. One important economic component in the transportation of grain involved the state salt monopoly. Salt was an important commodity controlled by the central government and its production and trade was strictly controlled and regulated. Under a bartering system known as the kai zhong fa 開中法, merchants dealing in grain had the option of exchanging their cargoes at key ports along the Grand Canal for licenses to acquire stocks of salt.

The kai zhong bartering system had the effect of stimulating commerce throughout salt producing regions, especially in Huainan. However, since the government gradually increased the number of salt licenses in exchange for grain, it eventually became less lucrative for merchants to participate in the trade. In 1492, to entice more merchants to participate, Ye Qi (Minister of Revenue from 1491-1496) legalized the payments in silver for salt licenses in lieu of grain. The legalization of silver payments had the effect of dramatically expanding and accelerating commerce in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Indeed, it marked the definitive transition


24 Brook (1998) presents an overview of land transport in this period on pp. 608-612, and both F.W. Mote (1999), pp. 646-653, and Brook (1998), pp. 597-603, offer excellent discussions on the restoration and function of the Grand Canal during the Ming dynasty. In a later publication, on pp. 34-56, Brook (1999) provides excellent detail on both land and water transport in Ming China, with examples of a Persian embassy’s travels to Beijing by land and a Korean merchant’s travels home by waterway.

25 See Huang (1998), pp. 139-144, for further details on the state salt monopoly.

26 The kai zhong bartering system was re-established from Song dynasty (960-1279) economic practices and carried out in the Ming, first in the Yunnan region in 1389, and again in Guizhou in 1419. See Martin Heijdra (1998), p. 514.
in Ming China’s monetary practices from paper, copper, and in-kind transactions to a standard currency system wholly replaced by silver in the form of ingots.

At the beginning of the Ming dynasty, warfare had limited the new empire’s ability to mine copper and silver, and depleted stores made it difficult for the government to mint a stable coinage. In response, the Ming government issued paper currency, a practice begun during the Song dynasty and continued during the Yuan. Early Ming officials made several attempts to keep paper in circulation by forbidding the use of gold and silver as a medium of exchange. Furthermore, some taxes had to be paid in paper and official salaries were paid partly in paper and partly in grain. However, as commerce increased under the kai zhong fa during the mid-fifteenth century, officials began to complain about being paid in grain and pressed to be compensated in silver. By this time, mainly due to the poor fiscal management policies of early economic ministers, the value of paper currency had decreased staggeringly, and by 1450 was largely considered worthless.27

Silver was now the dominant medium of exchange in late fifteenth century China, and the expansion of commerce throughout the empire brought more and more silver into circulation. The government even began to accept tax payments in silver, and thus began the so-called “Single Whip Reform” where obligations to the state could be met by the populace with a single stroke.28 However, mines that had once produced large amounts of silver in China had become difficult to work or were exhausted altogether. Consequently, other sources of silver were needed. In particular, in the late fifteenth century, the Chinese began to provide Japan with its surplus copper in exchange for silver

extracted from newly developed Japanese mines. Continuous expansion in commerce and consumption steadily fueled Ming China’s need for silver, and by the middle of the sixteenth century silver from as far away as Mexico in the New World began flowing into China for all manner of trade – domestic and foreign.  

Foreign Trade

Strong resentment toward Mongol rule under the Yuan dynasty had done grave harm to the traditional trade on China’s northern and western borders during the Ming dynasty. To some extent, it can be said that contact with northern nomadic peoples and with Inner Asian states to the west had been on a steady decline since the mid-Song dynasty. However, Ming rulers did maintain relations to the northeast with the Jurchen and enjoyed a close tributary relationship with the Choson dynasty of Korea. In fact, three times annually since the beginning of the Ming dynasty, the Choson court sent congratulatory missions with lavish gifts to Beijing. These missions often included large groups of Korean merchants dealing in ginseng, furs, paper, and brushes.

However much the trade to the north and west suffered during the Ming, it was more than adequately compensated for with maritime trade to the south and east. The Yongle emperor’s sponsorship of the voyages of Zheng He in the early 1400s served to stimulate trade in the early part of the century with not only Southeast Asia, but also with India, East Africa, and Central Asia. Imported commodities of primary concern in the


30 Renewed interest in the shift from China as an empire of the northern plains to the southeastern coast is discussed in Smith and von Glahn (2003), especially pp. 2-11.


South and Southeast Asia trade included cloves, pepper, and sappan wood, while Chinese porcelain and silk were exported to Africa and the Middle East. Indeed, the dull-blue porcelains of Jingdezhen and the fine silks of Hangzhou, both products of the Jiangnan region, appeared in the courts of Arabian sultans and were even sold to Europeans by the mid-fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{33} To the east, as mentioned above, a lucrative copper export trade had been initiated with the Japanese. The principle exchange for all these commodities was, of course, silver.

By the time the Portuguese established the first European trade port at Macao in 1513, the demand for Chinese goods in Europe was enormous. From their South American colony at Acapulco, the Spanish shipped silver bullion to their Philippine port at Manila to pay for Chinese exports. Combined, the Portuguese and Spanish traders sought all manner of products, including all qualities of silk, velvets, brocades, and embroidery, ivory, bed ornaments, tapestries, carpets, horse-trappings, precious gems, and gunpowder.\textsuperscript{34} As the export trade accelerated, so too did the massive inflow of silver to China. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the silver from foreign trade fueled commerce and consumption throughout the Ming empire and transformed the economy, right down to the rural locale.

**Huizhou**

The Huizhou region, located at the southern tip of modern Anhui province, had the distinct circumstance of being located near to major population centers in the greater Jiangnan region while simultaneously being separated from these centers by mountains and highlands. Like the dialect variations found in the isolated mountains and valleys of

\textsuperscript{33} Brook (1999), pp. 121, 206-207.

\textsuperscript{34} Brook (1999), pp. 205-206.
modern Sweden and Norway, so too were there language barriers between natives of Huizhou and neighboring prefectures. However, two major rivers in the region served as important transportation routes connecting this mountainous region to the rest of the empire in important ways. The Dagong River flowed to the west toward Jiangxi Province and the major porcelain producing center at Jingdezhen, while the Xin’an River flowed east to the tea-market town of Tunxi (located within Minzheng’s home county of Xiuning). The Xin’an River continued beyond Tunxi into Zhejiang Province and served as a major route for goods headed to the city of Hangzhou.35

The dynastic transition from Yuan to Ming had a devastating affect in Huizhou, and when peace was restored in 1368, it was largely a place of desolation. A marauding band of rebels called the Red Turbans took advantage of the chaos to wreak havoc on the region. It is said they killed the entire population of Xiuning City over the course of one year alone.36 Thus, the beginning of the fifteenth century must have been a period of population recovery in the region with little development beyond the most basic of agriculture. But into the fifteenth century, the population began to increase due in part to regional migration, and Huizhou began to gain a reputation for several notable products. Tea, in particular, held a place of pride among the locals. Several premium quality Huizhou teas with names such as “surpassing gold,” “tender mulberry,” and “splendid flower” were highly valued outside the region.37 Timber and other wood products was another agricultural output that distinguished Huizhou. The hilly terrain lent itself well to

35 Brook (1999), p. 126. See also Zurndorfer (1989), pp. 126-130, for exceptional details on how Huizhou’s environment shaped the character of its commercial market system.


the cultivation of mostly coniferous trees, including pine, fir, and cypress, of which the latter was particularly prized for its use in making furniture and constructing buildings. Lower slopes were suitable for growing bamboo, and tung trees produced oil which was used for lacquer and varnish.\textsuperscript{38}

Presumably, migration and the natural progress of time brought a gradual increase in population to Huizhou, and land for agriculture began to become scarce by the mid-fifteenth century. Consequently, more and more residents turned to marketing their agricultural products and creating commercial networks throughout the greater Jiangnan region. Huizhou became widely known for its successful merchants, and began to attract the attention of the central government. Along the waterways throughout the Lower Yangzi River region, Huizhou merchants exchanged their agricultural goods for grain at the end of the fifteenth century; and making their way to the Huainan region, especially to Yangzhou, these merchants engaged in the lucrative salt trade there. The reinstitution of the \textit{kai zhong fa} in 1492 placed Huizhou merchants in a tremendously opportune position to convert their salt holdings into silver and to continue to expand their efforts into vast networks of various commercial enterprises. By 1494, the Ming government applied tax pressures on Huizhou merchants and issued additional requisitions for varnish and tung oil required by the Ministry of Works that could no longer be deducted from local land tax obligations.\textsuperscript{39} Furthermore, in 1515, the Ministry of Works also instated a further surcharge of twenty thousand pine trees on the region.\textsuperscript{40} Rather than having the

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, pp. 57-58, and Zurndorfer (1989), pp. 70-71.

\textsuperscript{39} Previously, the central government accepted tax payments in premium teas and collected tax contributions of tung oil and lacquer instead of grain. This change in policy meant the Huizhou merchants would need to pay their tax obligations much more in silver. See Brook (1999), p. 127.

\textsuperscript{40} Zurndorfer (1989), p. 49.
effect of curtailing Huizhou dominance in the salt trade and other areas of regional commerce, however, the increase in tax pressure only stimulated commercial entrepreneurship among Huizhou natives. For example, by the middle of the sixteenth century, in nearly every major metropolitan center of commerce, from Beijing to Guangzhou, there dwelled highly literate Huizhou merchants who meticulously operated successful pawnshops.

Coda

Clearly, the year 1482, in which Cheng Minzheng initiated his lineage building activities with his Cheng family agnates, was still in the beginning of a dynamic pattern of economic development, not only in his native county of Xiuning in Huizhou, but also throughout Ming China. This pattern of development exemplifies the macroeconomic cycles described by scholars of China’s pre-modern economy and structure. Ming fiscal policy started out in confusion and disorganization in the early fifteenth century, matured and became formalized by 1450, and gradually ceased to be effective at controlling an ever rapidly expanding domestic economy through the end of the Ming dynasty in 1644. The domestic economy shifted from an emphasis on grain and salt to a proverbial frenzy for silver derived primarily from foreign maritime trade. At the height of this dramatic economic development, it appeared that everyone had something to gain from commerce and consumption, even in the isolated mountain region of Huizhou.
CHAPTER 2

THE BIOGRAPHIES OF CHENG XIN AND CHENG MINZHENG

The important details of the background and professional careers for both Cheng Xin and Cheng Minzheng can provide a broader context from which to assess their ability to assert themselves in the locality. These details are best revealed by reading through their official biographies. However, a great deal of caution must be used when forming a picture of an individual’s life based on Chinese biographies. To what extent can Chinese biographies be believed?

A look into the tradition of Chinese historiography and the writing of biography in China helps to point us in the right direction. Scholarship on the history of historical writing in China is fairly limited and often difficult to follow. However, the earliest efforts to present a clear study must begin with *Chinese Traditional Historiography*, by Charles S. Gardner. Gardner was among the first historians of China to provide a synthesis of how Chinese historiography differed from the Western tradition. He suggested, “It is the function of the Chinese historian to collect the facts and to subject them to a process of discreet filtering which may only suppress those of insignificant importance and present those of greater moment to speak for themselves without interference.”\(^{41}\) He notes that Chinese historians were more interested in long quotation rather than in any systematic analysis or interpretation of the facts, as was the emphasis in the West after the Enlightenment. Later scholarship has sought to clarify the nature of Chinese historiography and defend the genuine techniques used by Chinese historians

\(^{41}\) Gardner (1938), p. 69.
over the ages. However, it is only when scholars begin to assess some of the intellectual movements in China’s long history that we begin to obtain a better perspective on the relationship between the Chinese historian and Chinese historiography. For example, Peter Bol’s *This Culture of Ours* examines the changes in intellectual and philosophical outlook during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1126) dynasties, and David Nivison delves into the role of the historian during the philological movement of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

But rather than attempt to address the nature of traditional Chinese historiography, it is perhaps better to discuss its purpose within the context of the Chinese case. The classical Chinese conception of history was that it was a record of events. The early Chinese historian would have rejected the notion of historical events being open to interpretation. He would likely have considered the effort to examine the facts as a subjective exercise better suited to writing an essay (*lun* 論) instead of writing on objective historical events. However, the presentation of historical fact cannot be made without some sort of judgment regarding what is suitable for inclusion into the record. Consequently, by Song times we begin to see Chinese historians such as Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) and Sima Guang (1019-1086) engage in compiling new histories of prior periods in Chinese history, such as the *New History of the Tang Dynasty* (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書) and the *Comprehensive Speculum of Resources for Ruling* (*Zi zhi tong jian* 資治通鑑). Both of these texts rather liberally present the facts in terms the authors deemed,

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42 See, for example, Yang Liansheng (1961), Pulleyblank (1961, 1964).


44 By ‘essay’ here, consider the type written by Jia Yi (200-168BCE) regarding the fall of the Qin dynasty (221-207BCE). Dubs (1946), p. 29.
on the one hand, useful for future rulers in governing the empire, and, on the other hand, useful for demonstrating what they considered to be morally appropriate behavior for a ruler and his subjects. Thus, as Chinese historical writing continued in subsequent periods, the narrative of history in the Chinese case takes on a prescribed political or didactic purpose despite a commitment on the part of the historian to subscribe to principles of truth and objectivity.\footnote{Chan (1975), p. 679.}

To begin to understand the extent to which Cheng Minzheng’s biographies can be believed, we need to learn more about the writing of Chinese biography itself. Of the twenty-five Dynastic Histories, such as the New History of the Tang Dynasty mentioned above, all of them contain large collections of individual biographies. In fact, in most cases, the total number of individual biographies contained within the Histories is greater than the sum of all other sections combined.\footnote{For example, in the History of the Ming Dynasty (Ming shi), the total number of chapters (juan) totals 332. Of these chapters, 197 are made up of biographies (liezhuan) of notable Ming men. However, in terms of actual pages, the chapters of biographies make up sixty percent of the entire History. See Nivison (1962), p. 457.} Moreover, if we consider that official histories also included those from provincial, prefectural, and county administrative levels, the same situation remains true – biographies make up the vast majority of information contained within all official Chinese histories. But the official histories are not the only sources for biographical material. ‘Men of letters’ throughout Chinese history have compiled their own private historical works which included biographical entries. The Buddhist and Daoist religions both have had a long tradition of keeping extensive hagiographic collections in their canon. Furthermore, Chinese families have kept lineage genealogies at least since Song times which include lengthy writings about
the life and accomplishments of important ancestors.\(^{47}\) When considered in sum, the amount of biographical material in Chinese historical sources is staggering.\(^{48}\)

The notion that genealogies served as a source for information about an individual brings us to the topic of the origins and content of the Chinese biography. The first use of biography in historical writing is in the Grand Historian’s Record (Shiji 史記), completed around 90 B.C.E. by Sima Qian (c.145 - c.86 B.C.E.). His use of “connected traditions” (liezhuan 列傳) formed a large section of his history, and it appears he was adopting a form of writing used to venerate ancestors in the Chinese family cult.\(^{49}\)

Indeed, as time progresses, the sources for official biographies were connected to funerary ritual. For example, it was popular even after Qing times (1644-1911) to inscribe on a stone tablet a “grave record” (mu zhi ming 墓誌銘) of laudatory remarks about the deceased, which would be buried with the coffin. A “grave notice” (mu biao 墓表) was a larger stone tablet which included similar or additional remarks and was installed at the front of the grave as an identifying marker. Finally, in the ancestral temple, the most senior surviving family member would recite a “sacrificial announcement” (jiwen 祭文 or jigao 祭告), which often included the most important information about the deceased, that would be written down on paper and burned in offering to the ancestors. Such records, notices, and announcements were often copied and included with other information about the deceased, and stored in the ancestral


\(^{48}\) I’ve not even mentioned the existence of a tradition of autobiographical writing in Chinese history, which has only recently attracted attention by historians of China. For that subject, see Wu (1990).

\(^{49}\) Twitchett (1962), p. 25, goes on to say, “The form of the earliest authentic memorial inscriptions (which date to the first century A.D.) is virtually identical, and Mr. Piet van der Loon has adduced what seem irrefutable arguments against their having been influenced by the model of the Shih-chi.”
temple. Some of the information contained in these commemorative writings would inevitably find their way to an official historian and into the individual’s official biography.\(^{50}\)

The historian, most often a degree holding member of the imperial bureaucracy, was responsible for compiling biographies for the official histories; and the biographical information he used was derived almost exclusively from records compiled by private individuals. These individuals, usually sons, close relatives, or sometimes notable friends of the important person, would prepare a document called an “account of conduct” (xingzhuang 行狀). Oftentimes these accounts would be submitted to the authorities for the specific purpose of becoming an official biography, or, in other cases, as means to justify the granting of posthumous titles, the erection of memorial stele or arch, or other benefits.\(^ {51}\) Using the “account of conduct,” commemorative writings, and often even a privately compiled biography from a friend of the individual, the historian produced a somewhat formulaic official biography. The beginning invariably gave the person’s full “personal name” (ming 名), his “public name” (zi 字), and any known “style names” (hao 号) he might have used. His place of origin is given, as well as any distinguished ancestors from whom he claimed descent. Next, certain incidents, often about how certain distinguishing characteristic became manifest in childhood, were added. An account of the subject’s public career followed, including results from the civil service examinations, lists of written activities in which he might have engaged while serving in

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\(^{50}\) See Nivison (1962), p. 459, and Twitchett (1962), pp. 24-25. Hargett (1996), pp. 433-434, suggests some very interesting ideas about the use of such sources in Song times, and their connection with the history of writing local histories. Indeed, Cheng Minzheng’s collected works, Huangdun wen ji 篐埜文集, include no fewer than 8 juan of mu zhi ming, mu biao, jigao, and other commemorative writings.

the official hierarchy, important experiences he might have had while in office, promotions (or demotions) in rank and title, and circumstances leading to his retirement or death. The biography usually concludes with mention of any posthumous titles he may have received, as well as any distinguished literary works he authored.

The formulaic structure of a biography often makes it difficult to obtain any sense of depth in personality of the individual. This is largely because the historian was primarily interested in providing only the essential information that would have been of interest to his audience. That is, the historian was usually a member of the highest level of elite in Chinese society, and as such he was part of a governing group that was highly educated and heavily indoctrinated with the acceptable ways of interacting with his peers. Therefore, his biographies would contain only information that was pertinent from the point of view of his own social group. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that the historian would likely have been under intense pressure from the surviving relatives, protégés, colleagues, and peers of the subject on the one side, and under serious scrutiny by his seniors, superiors, and the dynastic house under which he served on the other side when compiling a biography. Consequently, he often had to include his own judgment on a subject’s career and personality which usually resulted in a document that was overly formal and strongly stereotyped to meet his reader’s expectations. The result is that we must proceed with caution when reading official biographies, because they tell us almost nothing about the personal lives of individuals and usually include judgments based solely on the public life of a person.

52 Twitchett (1962), p. 28.


However, the public life of an individual can tell us a great deal about the interests and the activities in which he participated. Consequently, I have included in this section translations of the two earliest biographies for both Cheng Xin (1404?-1479) and Cheng Minzheng (1444-1499) which appear in the first prefectural history of Huizhou in 1502.\(^\text{55}\) The details in these early biographies are often unclear or overly obscure. Therefore, I have also included translations of the official biographies of the two men from the History of the Ming Dynasty (Ming shi 明史), which have been subjected to the scrutiny of later Chinese historians and which clear up many of the obscurities.\(^\text{56}\) The biographies of Cheng Xin are presented first, followed by those of Cheng Minzheng.

**The Biography of Cheng Xin – Huizhou fuzhi 1502**

Cheng Xin. His public name was Yanshi. He was from Xiuning, outside the wall of the city. His grandfather at an earlier time was garrisoned at Hejian.\(^\text{57}\) Xin was recommended for advancement and in the 7\(^{\text{th}}\) year of the Zhengtong reign period (1442), he received his jinshi degree. He was appointed as Supervising Secretary in the Office of Scrutiny for Personnel.\(^\text{58}\) During the 7\(^{\text{th}}\) month of the 14\(^{\text{th}}\) year of the reign (1449), His Majesty, the Yingzong emperor (r.1435-1449 and 1456-1487), led an expedition to the north. Together with the court officials, Xin submitted a memorial to warn him to stop. It was not reported. In the 10\(^{\text{th}}\) month, the emperor was captured. Subsequently,

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\(^\text{55}\) Huizhou fuzhi 徽州府志 1502.

\(^\text{56}\) According to Wolfgang Franke (1968), the Ming shi was the most carefully compiled of all the dynastic histories. Preparation for its compilation began as early as 1645, and it was completed early in 1736 (p.48). Thus, official historians had plenty of time to clarify and confirm key details in the record, such as places and the specific names of officials referred to only by their titles.

\(^\text{57}\) Modern Hebei province.

\(^\text{58}\) Hucker (1985), no. 587. Hereafter, titles from Hucker will be noted in the format, H587.

\(^\text{59}\) H3616
barbarians invaded and raided. Xin was ordered to become Provincial Military Commander to defend the capital city. He sent up memorials [regarding] five matters.

During the first year of the Jüingtai reign period (1450-1455), Xin was promoted to Left Supervising Secretary. At that time, Heaven displayed abnormal manifestations. Xin sent up a memorial [suggesting that the emperor] be firm and resolute on ten matters.

During the third year of the reign (1452), in spring, there was a great deal of snow and constant clouds. Once again, Xin sent up a memorial [regarding the need] to mitigate disasters. He was promoted to Vice Commissioner in the Provincial Administration Commission and Superintendent of Shandong. He managed the military granary at Guangning and increased the military provisions.

In the following year (1453), his grandmother died. He did not observe the proper period of mourning, for which he was transferred to the position of Vice Minister of Sichuan. At the border offices in Songpan Prefecture, he engaged in battle with Yi bandits. He destroyed many fortifications of the Black Tigers.

During the first year of the Tianshun reign period (1457), he was promoted to Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud. In the second year of the reign, he

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60 H6482
61 H6868
62 H14770
63 H7121
64 H7250
65 It should be noted here that, according to the biography in the Ming shi, Xin did leave office to observe the proper mourning period. See p. 36.
66 Modern Sichuan province.
67 H6202
was promoted to Left Assistant Censor in Chief of the Censorate. He made a tour of Liaodong and increased military granaries and fortified local encampments. Because he was courageous, he refreshed [the observance of] military discipline.

During the 4th year of the reign (1460), he led officials of the Outer Censorate to impeach the Frontier Generals on account of their greed. [It was ruled that Xin] was the one who was filled with avarice, for which he was transferred to the position of Vice Minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud in Nanjing. After a year, he was summoned to return [to the court]. He was promoted to the position of Right Vice Minister in the Ministry of Justice. [From this point on] he guarded his integrity and was sincere and honest. After a while, his mother died and he left office to grieve.

During the first year of the Chenghua reign period (1465), there were troubles in the two Provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi, and in Sichuan. His Majesty ordered that he return to office and once again take up his position as Right Vice Minister of the Ministry of War. He sent up a letter requesting to be excused. After he was refused, again there were troubles in the counties of Jingzhou and Xiangyang in Shaanxi. The

68 H7183
69 Modern Liaoning province.
70 H7605
71 H4631
72 H6201
73 H5091
74 Note that this was a double demotion for Xin. Not only was he reduced to a ceremonial rank, but he was also sent away from the capital in Beijing to the secondary capital of Nanjing.
75 H5278
memorials and correspondence that he submitted piled up like mountains, and day after day he did not rest in sending them.

During the second year of the reign (1466), he was promoted to the position of Left Vice Minister. At that time, because of a foot ailment, he returned to his family residence. He was recalled to his duties and forced himself to attend to matters. He was permitted to avoid the frequent [meetings at] the court.

During the third year of the reign (1467), in Sichuan and Guizhou, the Shanduzhang barbarians rebelled at Daba\textsuperscript{76} and caused disorder. Xin was advanced to the position of Minister of War and Military Superintendent.\textsuperscript{77} He pacified the area and destroyed various encampments. He captured and killed one thousand enemies. He captured copper drums numbering in the tens. Furthermore, he secretly discovered there were more than nine surnames who collaborated together and supported the rebels. He returned to lead his army to attack them and they were all captured. Thus, the region and the neighboring prefectures were changed [in administration] to Luzhou and a garrison [was installed] at Dujiang.\textsuperscript{78} Then he made the Daba [region] to be [administered as] Taiping Province. He established a civil official to control them.\textsuperscript{79} Xin returned [to the capital] in triumph. His Majesty concurrently proclaimed that he be made Superintendent of the Court of Judicial Review\textsuperscript{80} and that he be conferred with gifts of silver, colored silk, as well as sheep and wine for his efforts. On four occasions he wrote documents

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\textsuperscript{76} Modern Yunnan province.

\textsuperscript{77} 116484

\textsuperscript{78} Modern Sichuan province.

\textsuperscript{79} Apparently, these indigenous peoples were previously allowed to govern their own regions. However, after this rebellion, Xin restructured the region to be administered by the Ming administrative apparatus.

\textsuperscript{80} 115986
informing [the court] of his illness and to request to retire from office. He was not permitted [to retire].

During the seventh year of the reign (1471), in spring, because of Heavenly omens, [the emperor] requested opinions on the matter [from the court]. Xin sent up a document to discuss military affairs. As for the ways in which the military could be expanded, there were four [items]. As for the ways in which the armies could be restructured and reformed, there were five [items]. In this year, he was transferred to the position of Grand Adjutant of Nanjing. He was granted dispensation to avoid coming [to the court] to offer his thanks. During imperial audiences, he was given the dispensation to have people assist him [to walk and stand]. His Majesty issued an oral proclamation and dismissed him.

During the eighth year of the reign (1472), a comet appeared. Xin together with the military commanders and six officials sent up a memorial of appropriate suggestions on thirty matters. Many were recorded and made commands.

During the tenth year of the reign (1478), his old illness flared up. He earnestly [requested] to retire from his duties. His Majesty conferred upon him a document with the imperial seal of commendation. He returned to live in Xiuning. When he died, his years were sixty-three. He was posthumously conferred with the title Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent. He was posthumously titled, Xiangyi. His Majesty ordered there to be an officer to plan his burial ceremony. His Majesty sent an official to preside over his burial sacrifices.

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81 H6891
82 H6252
83 "High and Resolute"
Xin served as an official for more than forty years. His conduct was upright and from beginning to end he was not disloyal. His character was filial and friendly. When he was young, he put his own strength to the plow in order to support his mother. Alongside the funeral hut and grave, there was a field with the auspicious signs of silkworms with full cocoons as well as magic mushrooms. Furthermore, he set aside five hundred mu of his fields on Golden Sand Ridge for the benefit of those many family and kinsmen who were impoverished. As for his writings, there is the Qingzhou ji contained in the Gaoyuzhuang ji, the Yidong ye, and the Nan zhenglu. In each case there were a number of juan. As for his sons, there is Minzheng who elsewhere has an account. And there is Minde. His personal name was Kejian. He was distinguished for his talent and scholarship. He was known for his skill in the four forms of calligraphy. He was a Weapons Supervisor under the program of Appointment by Protection. He was appointed to the Household of the Heir Apparent. He presided poorly and was transferred to the position of Administrative Assistant of Qizhou and died.

The Biography of Cheng Xin – Ming Shi

Cheng Xin. His public name was Yanshi. His forbearers were registered at Xiuning. During the Hongwu reign period (1368-1398), they were garrisoned at Hejian. Because of this, they made their home there. Xin was recommended for advancement. During the seventh year of the Zhengtong reign period (1442), he received

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84 A program that allowed high level officials to appoint family members to nominal government duties. See H7988
85 H80
86 H4425, also County Judge
87 Modern Hubei province.
88 Modern Hebei province.
his jinshi degree. He was appointed as Supervising Secretary\textsuperscript{89} in the Office of Scrutiny for Personnel.\textsuperscript{90} When Jing Di (the Jingtai emperor, r. 1450-1456) took the throne, Xin recommended the promotion of Xie Xuan (1389-1464)\textsuperscript{91} and three other men.

When Esen (d.1455)\textsuperscript{92} attacked the capital, Xin led an army to secure the western wall. Xin sent word to His Majesty on five matters. Provincial Commissioner in Chief\textsuperscript{93} Sun Tang (1392-1471) made an attack on Esen, but lost the advantage. Sun desired to enter the city wall, but Xin did not let him in. The provincial army from atop the city walls fired arrows and artillery to assist him. Sun fought with the aid of increased strength, and Esen consequently withdrew.

During the first year of the Jingtai reign period (1450), Xin requested to go to the aid of the starving people in the capital region. Once again he was appointed to Hejian as Education Official\textsuperscript{94}. As for the students [of Hejian], because they were being used in the army, Xin ordered that they cease being transferred [into the army], and his orders were all reported [to the throne] and accepted. He was advanced [to the position of] Left Supervising Secretary.

Because of [abnormal] heavenly manifestations, His Majesty [called on the court for suggestions of] reform. Xin submitted a document on ten matters. His words were respectful of Heaven. As a result, he beseeched the emperor [saying he was] sincere and

\textsuperscript{89} H587

\textsuperscript{90} H3616

\textsuperscript{91} For a biography on Xie Xuan from the Ming ru xue an 明儒學案, see Julia Ching (1986), pp.90-96.

\textsuperscript{92} See the biography of Esen in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.416-420.

\textsuperscript{93} H7311

\textsuperscript{94} H2696
filial, and [would be] a true friend [to the emperor] in order to respond to Heaven’s will. The emperor gladly took him in.

During the second month of the next year (1451), Xin was sent to Shandong as Right Administration Vice Commissioner. He supervised the military field rations. The Grand Coordinator of Liaodong, Kou Shen (1393-1461) memorialized the throne [to suggest] that those who stole rations of one picul and on up should be put to death. Furthermore, he established the use of a new deca-peck having a larger capacity than the old measure. As for the new measure, Xin inspected and examined it. Xin was set on destroying [the use of new measure], saying, “How can we suppress the people to death?” Because of this, Shen was not pleased.

Xin subsequently because of his grieving left office. When the mourning period was finished, he was transferred to the position of Administration Vice Commissioner of Sichuan. He brought order to the management of rations at Songpan. Together with Vice Minister Luo Qi (d.1458), he destroyed various strongholds of the Black Tigers.

During the first year of the Tianshun reign period (1457), Xin went to the court to receive a gift. At this time, [the court recorders] were about to prepare the records of those who presented memorials during the Jingtai reign. They specially selected Xin to

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95 H6868
96 H2731
97 Modern Liaoning province.
98 The text does not specify for whom Xin left office to grieve. However, from his biography in the Huizhou fuzhi of 1502, we can infer he left office to grieve for his grandmother.
99 Modern Sichuan province.
be Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud.\textsuperscript{100} The guard horses of the capital were old and mostly sent to be plow horses. At set times Xin levied a requisition for horses. The generals of the Three Great Training Divisions,\textsuperscript{101} Shi Heng (d.1460),\textsuperscript{102} Sun Tang, and Cao Qin (d. 1461), were all favored due to their prowess in fighting. They protested to various military officials and said that the Chief Minister [Xin] was harsh and zealous. They requested that Xin’s office be attached to the Department of War. Xin said, “The Eminent Emperor\textsuperscript{103} ordered the Court of the Imperial Stud [to be in charge of] the quantity of horses. He did not set others to be in charge of this. If this position were to be attached to the Department of War, and horses sent out to be plow animals, the Court of the Imperial Stud would not be able to know about it. If there were an emergency, horses could not be supplied, and then who would be to blame for this?” The emperor affirmed this, and [returned] the attachment [in the administrative structure] of the Court of the Imperial Stud as it had been.

In the following year (1458), he was made Assistant Censor in Chief.\textsuperscript{104} The Grand Coordinator of Liaodong and Regional Commissioner,\textsuperscript{105} Xia Lin, was unrestrained and did not obey the law. His Assistant,\textsuperscript{106} Hu Ding, accused him of forty crimes. When Xin heard of this, he sent Xia to the prison for those with brocade clothes. Men Da said Xin should not do this and memorialized the throne on Xia’s behalf. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{100} H6202, H6204
\item \textsuperscript{101} H8009
\item \textsuperscript{102} See the biography for Shi Heng in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.1202-1204.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Refers to Ming Taizu, the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368-1398).
\item \textsuperscript{104} H929
\item \textsuperscript{105} H2731, H7199
\item \textsuperscript{106} H917
\end{itemize}
emperor rebuked Xin and ordered that the facts of the case be set forth. At this time, Kou Shen had just been put in charge of the Censorate. To rectify a former grudge, Kou impeached Xin. Xin was brought in and an edict was issued that he be imprisoned. He was demoted to Vice Minister of the Court of the Imperial Horse in Nanjing.

During the fifth year of the reign (1461), Xin was summoned and made Right Vice Minister of the Ministry of Justice. He returned home to grieve for his mother.

During the first year of the Chenghua reign period (1465), he was transferred to the Ministry of Armaments, and subsequently he was made Left [Vice Minister].

In Rong County, Sichuan, the Shandu Man people had rebelled numerous times. They occupied nine counties, including Hejiang. The court deliberated and sent out a large army to quell them. The Earl of Xiangcheng, Li Qin, was appointed Regional Commander. Palace Eunuch, Liu Heng, was made Superintendent. The court advanced Xin to Minister and Military Superintendent. When they arrived at Yongning, they divided the armies into separate columns and advanced. The Commander in Chief, Rui Cheng, advanced from Rong County. The Vice Minister and Censor in Chief of Guizhou, Chen Yi (1469-1538), and the Assistant General, Wu Jing, advanced from Mang Bu. The Commander in Chief, Cui Min, advanced from Bingnao in

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107 H7183
108 H5091
109 H7146
110 H6148
111 H866
112 H5042
113 H6484
114 H7335
The Earl of Nanning, Mao Rong (d.1470), advanced from the Lizi Pass. The Regional Commissioner of Sichuan and Vice Minister, Wang Hao (1417-1473), and the Assistant General, Cai Yong, advanced from Duchuanpu. From the left and right they [all] moved to make the attack. Generals Luo Qianzhong and Mu Yi advanced from Jin’e Pool; and Xin, together with Qin occupied the center column. All through the region, they engaged in battle for six days. They smashed more than seven hundred fifty strongholds, including the ones called Dragon’s Back and Leopard’s Tail.

In the following year (1466), they arrived at Daba.\textsuperscript{115} They set fire to one thousand four hundred fifty strongholds. Throughout all the campaigns, they beheaded more than four thousand five hundred rebels. Those they captured were beyond counting. They suppressed those nine families who did not serve [the empire]. They transferred the Lüzhou\textsuperscript{116} Guard to Duchuanfu and established additional barriers and fortresses. They changed the name and command of Daba to the Chief’s Office\textsuperscript{117} of the Taiping River. They divided up the Shanduzhang territory and set up officials to establish order and control it. The emperor sent down a letter with the imperial seal to commend their effort and recorded their merit. Xin was given the additional title of Gentleman of the Temple of Great Rationality, and held the same office as Bai Xie in the Department of War. It is said an official impeached Xin and his superiors [because] their merit [in the battles] was not true. Xin on four occasions sent up documents to beg to retire from office. It was not permitted. Xin desired to have a reason [to retire] but was prevented from doing so by Kui. Xin was not contented and on several occasions claimed he was ill.

\textsuperscript{115} Modern Yunnan province.
\textsuperscript{116} Modern Sichuan province.
\textsuperscript{117} H149
During the sixth year of the reign (1470), in spring, there was a drought. In response, the emperor made an edict saying that it is appropriate to relax four areas where there were military hostilities, and of those armies that were poorly managed, they should be put into good order. The edict briefly talked about the robbing and pillaging in Yansui and the two Guans\textsuperscript{118} year after year. [The edict also said] it is appropriate to select high officials to take control. The refugees of the four directions mostly gather at Jing and Xiang. It is thus appropriate to make plans to care for them early on. [The edict also said] the army in the capital drills and exercises without a plan. The improvement in their military prowess is not up to expectations. His Majesty’s words at many points insulted Kui. Kui memorialized to undermine Xin. Xin was transferred to the position of Grand Adjutant\textsuperscript{119} in the Department of War in Nanjing.

During the following year (1471), Xin retired from official life. At the end of the year, he died. He was conferred with the posthumous title Junior Guardian of the Heir Apparent.\textsuperscript{120} He was given the posthumous title Xiangyi.\textsuperscript{121}

Xin had ability and strength. He was recognized for great physical stature. During his campaigns against the southern Man, he governed and ruled in a proper manner. Until the time when he withdrew his troops, he never acted on his own authority and slaughtered a single person. He said, “When presiding over punishment and reward, a person has great authority. There is no way but to avail oneself of [the help of] other people. I was fortunate in my undertakings. I promptly carried things through myself

\textsuperscript{118} Modern Guangdong and Guangxi provinces

\textsuperscript{119} H6891

\textsuperscript{120} H6252

\textsuperscript{121} “High and Righteous.”
and was not one to be dependent on subordinates.” In Nanjing, he defended his subordinates and was willing to advance [his own] funds to support matters of the granary for the prisons. Xin said, “As for defense and alertness, they are that which the important official uses with constant caution. If this is the way it is done, he will maintain his duty.” As for the things he discussed he was right about them.

For his son, Minzheng, see the biographies of literary men.

The Biography of Cheng Minzheng – Huizhou fuzhi 1502

Cheng Minzheng. His public name was Keqin. He was from Xiuning County outside the city wall. He was the Minister and Lord Xiangyi, Xin’s son. He was born precocious. People compared him to Kong Wenfeng and Li Changyuan.122 When he was ten years old, he followed [his father] Xin, who participated in governing in Sichuan. A senior minister recommended him to the court as a child prodigy.

When he was summoned to the civil service exam, [he was tested on] poems titled ‘Sacred Festival’ and ‘Auspicious Snow,’ and the meaning of the Classics. For each one, he wrote with ease. When an edict appointed him to the office of Reader at the Hanlin Academy123 and provided him with food and a stipend, the Great Scholar, the lord Li Wenda of Nanyang,124 gave his daughter to him to marry. When he was the age of capping, he was presented for further office.

In the second year of the Chenghua reign period (1466), he received his jinshi degree and rank. On the first register, he was the second man. He received the title of

122 Kong Wenfeng is the public name of Kong Rong (153-208), and Li Changyuan is the public name of Li Mi (722-789). Both individuals were considered classical examples of child prodigies.

123 H2154

124 This is the public name for the Grand Secretary, Li Xian (1408-1466). See Li’s biography in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.819-822.
Junior Compiler\(^{125}\) of the Hanlin Academy. He participated in compiling the *Veritable Record of the Yingzong Emperor*. In the fifth year of the reign (1469), in spring, he participated in supervising the examination of the successful candidates in the Ministry of Rites. At that same time, the emperor desired to carve and distribute the *Da Ming yi tong zhi*, the *Hongwu zheng yun*, and the *Zi zhi tong jian gang mu*.\(^{126}\) On each one, Minzheng participated in the collating and correcting. Subsequently, he participated in compiling the sequel to the *Zi zhi tong jian gang mu*. When that document was completed, he was transferred to the positions of Left Secretariat of the Heir Apparent\(^{127}\) and Left Adviser.\(^{128}\) Furthermore, he took up assembling the great affairs of the Artistic Ancestor, Tai Zong (976-997), of the Song dynasty. At this time, historians had not been able to make a detailed record. Subsequently, [Minzheng] explained many doubts of the past. Then, he took hold of the *Song shi chang bian* by Li Tao of the Song dynasty, the *Yuan shi* by Ouyang Xuan and others of the Yuan dynasty, and the Basic Annals of the *Song shi* and he corrected and reassembled them all. His depth of elucidation pushed aside the errors of Chen Jing and Hu Yigui. Separately, he authored the *Song ji shou zong kao* in three volumes.

During the eleventh year of the Chenghua reign (1475), in spring, during the final examinations of *jinshi* candidates, [Minzheng] served as official over the list of examinees. Presently, the emperor promoted him to the position of Expositor-in-

\(^{125}\) H4635

\(^{126}\) This last text is Zhu Xi’s revision of the *Zi zhi tong jian*.

\(^{127}\) H1524

\(^{128}\) H8193
Waiting in the Classics Colloquium. Subsequently, he was also assigned to serve as Expositor- and Reader-in-Waiting to the Heir Apparent. Shortly thereafter, he left office to grieve upon his father’s death. When the mourning clothes were put away, he returned to the court.

During the 22nd year of the Chenghua reign (1486), in fall, he presided over the prefectural examination in Yingtian Prefecture.

During the 23rd year (1487), he was transferred to become the Lesser Supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent and Chancellor at the Hanlin Academy.

During the first year of the Hongzhi reign period (1488), he participated in compiling the Veritable Record of the Xianzong Emperor. In the second month, the various princes left the [Imperial] Gallery. The emperor ordered Minzheng to lead and be attendant on them to the Right Gate of Obedience and to serve as Prince of Yong’s Tutor. On the third day [of the second month], the Classics Colloquium began. The emperor ordered Minzheng to serve as Expositer-in-Waiting. As on prior days, he served as Expositor in the Wenhua Palace. In a special event, the emperor bestowed upon Minzheng a woven gold and red robe and a gold belt, cap, and shoes. At that same time, in the Palace of Study, he was presented with the Zhi an bei lan. The emperor ordered Minzheng to look into the details of it. Minzheng brought to light that in it there were

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129 H5215
130 H1249
131 H715
132 Modern Henan province.
133 H79, H80.
134 H2704
135 Prince Yong was the younger brother to the emperor. His personal name was Yu _IPV_.
many stolen passages. In the *Zijing bian* of Zhao Shanliao of the Song dynasty and the *Mu min zhong gao* of Zhang Yonghao of the Yuan dynasty there were some cases where the author plagiarized the section headings and in other cases completely stole the words. He said, "Certainly the cases of plagiarism [in the *Zijing bian*] are many but do not come up to the cases of plagiarism [in the *Mu min zhong gao*] that are few. Even more so, how can we put 'Zhi an' as the title but not reach the virtue of the gentlemen. The School of the Mind refers to Shang Yang of Qin, who was among Confucius' followers. If we establish trust in this argument, then the texts are late. As for Wang Anshi's (1021-1086) prior knowledge, he put to rest heretical principles and other arguments and also is not removed the original argument at the root of the contending source. The emperor made an edict declaring that the Scholarly Officials were wildly presumptuous, but did not mete out punishments and they returned to their books.

At that time, the emperor ordered the court officials to convene. There followed the sacrifice at the Temple of Confucius and the Various Worthies. Minzheng sent a memorial to the throne [requesting] his desire to make a big correction to the sacrificial code and to examine the fine details.¹³⁶ [The court officials] had a discussion, but were divided as to what was right. At that time, although he had not [fully] carried out his words, the gentlemen argued the propriety of it. Previous to this, the officers of the Censorate sent a memorial to the throne requesting to pull back the licentious and advance the Worthies. Moreover, each one [which was to be pulled back and advanced] was pointed out. Minzheng was among those who were to be advanced. Because of this, there were those who were jealous of him. Soon after, the Imperial Censor put an end to

¹³⁶ Minzheng’s memorial is preserved as *Zou kaozheng sidian* 泰考正祀典 in HDWJ j. 10:2b-12a.
the matter and impeached Minzheng. The emperor ordered [Minzheng] to retire from office and there were those who encouraged his self criticism.

Minzheng replied with his answer in writing, saying that, as for the lord Ouyang [Xiu] (1007-1072) and Zhu Wengong (1130-1200),¹³⁷ in their time, each met with misrepresentation and slander. In his time, lord Ouyang was [a member of] the party in power. Thus, due to his [position of] strength he could dispute the charges. Wengong was [a member of] the opposing faction. Thus, he could not dispute the charges. This was because he was afraid his friends would meet with guilt from a perversion of the law. How much more so is this case where above there is an old mother and below there is a weak son.

After, he returned to his studies in Xiuning County at Nanshan. The Director,¹³⁸ Liu Su, the Supervising Secretary,¹³⁹ Yang Jian, and the jinshi Xia Shao all lived improper and luxurious lifestyles as if they had the means of one thousand households. Time and again, they sent a document to the throne to indict Minzheng.

His Highness became aware of this and ordered [Minzheng] by letter to return [to the court]. There were those who sent documents to prevent him from serving in office. Minzheng wrote a letter in reply stating, “Since ancient times, the sages and the worthies certainly did not require serving in office to become eminent. They also did not regard negligence as an attainment. Thus, although Yichuan’s (1033-1107)¹⁴⁰ decision had unyielding resolve with regard to returning to office, he [still] did not take his leave. If

¹³⁷ Wengong is the public name for Zhu Xi (1130-1200).
¹³⁸ H3565
¹³⁹ H587
¹⁴⁰ Yichuan is the public name for Cheng Yi (1033-1107).
the prince is truly at a distance, than the vassal cannot but not take his leave. Huishu was from a family who were officials for generations. He could not but come to serve in office. How is it that at that time there were unimportant and important matters between these two lords. But, it was Yichuan [who] took up deciding it [the matter]. Now if we apply this to Wengong, the one who is summoned will surely defer to Nanxuan. The one who is summoned will surely act. These are both cases of the distant vassal and the hereditary vassal’s different propriety. Though, he did not dare send up this comparison to Shengong and Nanxuan. However, in his time, he (Zhu Xi) received the state’s kindness. It is fitting that there be no difference in this situation.” Afterward, [Minzheng] returned to his official post as before.

The emperor commanded [Minzheng] to teach the Hanlin Bachelors at the Hanlin Academy. Subsequently, he was transferred to the position of Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices. As before, he simultaneously became Expositor-in-Waiting and Chancellor of the Hanlin Academy and was in charge of the Academy’s affairs. At the same time, he compiled the Jade Register. At that time, he sent up a memorial to request to engage in compiling the Song Ruyang. At that same time, he engaged in the sacrifice in the Temple of Confucius and the emperor ordered the lower court officers all to convene. Minzheng sent a document to the throne stating, “When

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141 Huishu is the public name for one of possibly seven Song literary figures. The reference here is perhaps to Ye Wending 葉文靖 (1153-1208).

142 The hao 號 of Zhan Fumin 詹阜民, who served as Vice Minister from 1163-1190.

143 H5419

144 H6138

145 The Jade Register is the genealogy of the royal house.
ascending Mt. Gui\footnote{Located in Modern Anhui province.} to engage in the sacrifices, the order presently starts at the eastern veranda. This is inferior to Sima Guang’s (1019-1086) method of the Rites, and superior to Hu Anguo’s method of the Rites. This is appropriate.” The emperor followed it.

Subsequently, [Minzheng] grieved upon his mother’s death. Because the compilation of the \emph{Da Ming hui dian} was in progress, Minzheng was summoned and made Assistant Director-general.\footnote{HH7156} Minzheng sent a document to the throne requesting to end his mourning. The emperor permitted it. When the mourning ended, he returned to the court. Before he arrived, he was transferred to the positions of Supervisor of the Household of the Heir Apparent\footnote{H79, H80} and Scholar of the Hanlin Academy.\footnote{H2704} After his audience with the emperor, he was transferred to the positions of Right Vice Minister in the Ministry of Rite and Assistant Director-general of the Legal Code. The remainder [of his ranks and titles] was restored. As before, he was in charge of the Household of the Heir Apparent and served as Tutor to the Heir Apparent.

During the 12\textsuperscript{th} year of the Hongzhi reign (1499), in spring, [Minzheng] presided over the examination of the presented scholars in the Ministry of Rites. It was not yet the time when the scholars were to receive their results [of the exam] when a Supervising Censor accused Minzheng of selling the themes [of the exam] to [some of] the examinees. The emperor ordered him imprisoned. Because he was implicated, Minzheng wrote a request to retire from office. Furthermore, he placed blame on himself and took responsibility [for the matter]. He begged to make an explanation to the Imperial Censor.
When he was finished, they agreed to discuss his words. The officials once again accused him. Minzheng thereupon made a request in the court to dispute the matter. He put forth his explanation and submitted the previous request. The emperor ordered Minzheng to retire and thoroughly upbraided him. He had not yet set out when he died. Minzheng was fifty five years old. He was posthumously granted the title of Minister of the Department of Rites. He was bestowed with burial sacrifices.

Minzheng had long eyebrows and a long beard. His bearing and manners were correct. He was prolific in writing and there was nothing he did not study. He was the eldest leader of his generation. He examined the work of the two masters, Zhu [Xi] and Liu [Dajun] (1031-1082). At first he differed with [their ideas], but later on he agreed with them. He wrote the *Dao yi bian* in six *juan*. He happily came in contact with literati. Those who went to his home often said it was pleasant. There were those who wept for him were not able to fathom his limits. Although he met with [misfortune], many said that when he arrived at being seized and imprisoned that his words and movements were like on ordinary days.

Furthermore, as for his writings, they became regarded as high in achievement. In his middle years, he called himself Huangdun. Of his writings, there are: *Huang chao (Ming) wen heng*, *Su shi shou hang ying xian zou dui lu*, *Xin’an wenxian zhi*, *Yongshi shi*, *Song yi min lu*, *Zhenxi shan xin jing fu zhu*, *Cheng shi tong zong pu*, *Cheng shi yi fan ji*, *Song ji shou zong*, and the *Kao dao yi bian*. Huangdun’s various writings altogether numbered about a thousand *juan*. He also carried out compiling the *Yi li yi jing*. He firmly fixed the text of the edition of the Great Learning. For his son, Xun, see the successful military career section of *liejuan*. 
Cheng Minzheng. His public name was Keqin. He was from Xiuning County. He was the son of Xin, Chief Minister of the Ministry of War in Nanjing. At ten years of age he accompanied his father who was an official in Sichuan where Grand Coordinator Luo Qi (d. 1458) regarded him as a child prodigy and favored him. The Yingzong emperor (r. 1435-1449 and 1456-1487) summoned him to the exam and was pleased with him. The emperor ordered him to study at the Hanlin Academy and he was supplied with food and a stipend. The scholars Li Xian (1408-1466) and Peng Shi (1416-1475) both liked and valued him, and Xian’s daughter became his wife.

In the second year of the Chenghua reign period (1466), he received his jinshi degree and grade. He was conferred with the titles Junior Compiler, Assistant Advisor of the Imperial Calendar, and Lecturer of the Eastern Palace. In the Hanlin Academy, Minzheng was the leader in the area of problem solving and erudition, Li Dongyang (1447-1516) was the leader in the area of graceful and refined writing, and Chen Yin (1436-1494) was the leader in the area of disposition and honesty.

When the Xiaozong emperor (r. 1488-1505) succeeded to the throne, he graciously selected Minzheng to be Vice Supervisor of the Household of the Heir.

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150 H2731

151 Peng Shi served as Grand Secretary from 1457-1475. See Peng’s biography in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.1119-1120.

152 H4635

153 H8193

154 H944

155 Li Dongyang served as Grand Secretary from 1502-1513. See Li’s biography in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.877-881.
Apparent, Academician Expositor in Waiting of the Classics Colloquium. As the son of a famous statesman and because of his ability and high skill in literature, Minzheng was often considered to be condescending and he was envied by others.

In winter of the first year of the Hongzhi reign period (1488), Imperial Censor Wang Song (jinshi 1475) and others because of a rash of floods impeached Minzheng and force him to resign from office. In the fifth year of the reign (1493), he was restored to official rank and subsequently became Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and Academician Reader in Waiting, and he supervised affairs at the Hanlin Academy. He advanced to Right Vice Director in the Ministry of Rites and specialized in preparing reports for the Grand Secretary.

In the twelfth year of the reign period (1499), Minzheng and Li Dongyang presided over the civil service exam. The juren Xu Jing (d. 1519) and Tang Yin (1470-1524) prepared the same answers to the exam questions. Because of this, Hua Mao (jinshi 1497) accused Minzheng of selling the exam questions. At that time, the roll of

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156 H79, H80
157 H5217
158 H1249
159 H8167
160 Presumably Minzheng had jurisdiction over the region where there was flooding, but this is not clear from the text.
161 H6138
162 H6326
163 H5278
164 H4193
165 Tang Yin was a famous painter of the Ming dynasty. See his biography in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, pp.1256-1259.
successful examinees was not yet released. The emperor ordered that Minzheng should not read the scroll. As for those that were recorded, the emperor ordered Dongyang to meet with the examination officials to revise the results. The two men [Xu Jing and Tang Yin] were not selected of all the names on the scroll and Dongyang made it known that they did not complete the exam. Minzheng, Mao, Jing, and Yin were all sent to prison. Jing was charged with offering a bribe to Minzheng. Yin was charged with begging for the answers from Minzheng, and was demoted in rank to Subofficial Functionary. Minzheng was forced to resign from office. Moreover, Mao was dropped to the rank of South Chamberlain for the Imperial Stud for improperly reviewing the records. Minzheng was indignant and angry when he was released from prison. He became ill and died. Later he was venerated as Chief Minister of the Ministry of Rites. Some people said that while Minzheng was in prison, Fu Han wanted to claim his position and ordered Mao to send a memorial to the throne to recommend this. But this matter was kept secret and no one is able to clarify it.

Summary

The details of the background and professional careers of both Cheng Xin and Cheng Minzheng provide an important context from which to assess their ability to assert themselves in the Huizhou and, indeed, the Ming empire. Cheng Xin appears to have risen from obscurity and passed the jinshi examination somewhat later in life (he was thirty-eight years old), and he advanced in position and rank to eventually reach the highest level for an official in the Ministry of War. His son, Cheng Minzheng, was not distinguished for a successful military career, but was a man noted for his scholarly and

\[166 \text{ H3586} \]
\[167 \text{ H6201} \]
ideological accomplishments. Cheng Minzheng was one of the most distinguished historians of his time and was regarded as a leading figure in the interpretation and explication of the Confucian Canon. It is perhaps because of Minzheng’s formal education and extensive knowledge of the Confucian tradition that he understood the importance of establishing local institutions for the protection and promotion of kin. Consequently, it is quite clear that these two men were certainly well-equipped to initiate and control the symbolic power of creating and compiling the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng.
CHAPTER 3

THE COMPREHENSIVE GENEALOGY OF THE XIN’AN CHENG

We now turn our attention to the issue of the creation of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng itself. In his efforts to create the genealogy, Cheng Minzheng relied on a number of sources. As a court historian, he had access to the imperial record and the dynastic histories and used these narratives to construct the history of the Cheng surname in the Huizhou region as discussed in his preface to the Comprehensive Genealogy. Almost certainly, the primary historical source for the early history of the Cheng was the History of the Southern Dynasties (Nan shi 南史). However, Cheng Minzheng also relied on details provided in the genealogical record of other Cheng lineages. He frequently corresponded with the heads of different lineage branches to establish connections and to request to view their private genealogies. Once he had the opportunity to view these genealogies, he embarked upon the enterprise of rationalizing the connections among the different lineage branches. The sum of his efforts to rationalize the various Cheng genealogies is reflected in a series of “critical discussions” (bian 變) that survive in his collected works, Huangdun wenji. Further evidence of his lineage building activities is found in the accounts (ji 往) of separate

168 The Nan shi was compiled during the seventh century. Other historical sources on which Cheng Minzheng likely relied were compiled during the Song dynasty, such as the local history of the Xin’an region from the 12th century, Xin’an zhì 新安志 dated 1175. See also Zurndorfer (1989), pp. 20-25.

169 Several letters of correspondence between different Cheng lineages can be found in HDWJ, juan 53.

170 HDWJ, juan 12.
meetings of the various Cheng family lineage branches to clarify discrepancies and decide how they were all related.\textsuperscript{171}

To best illustrate the product of Cheng Minzheng’s effort to compile the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng, I have translated the longest and perhaps most notable of his critical discussions found in his collected works.\textsuperscript{172} This particular critical discussion is important because it represents Cheng Minzheng’s effort to connect the Cheng lineages of Huizhou with the Cheng lineages of Henan. It was important for Cheng Minzheng to make this connection in order for him to claim descent from the same Henan Cheng lineage as the famous Song dynasty philosophers, Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107).\textsuperscript{173} The text is essentially a litany of Cheng descendants with Cheng Minzheng’s historical notes on places, events, and individual achievements. Therefore, to aid the reader in following the logic through so many names, I have included Table 1 on page 56.

In addition, I have translated the complete preface (\textit{xu 序}) of the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng. The preface outlines the history of the Cheng surname in the Huizhou region and elsewhere in the empire and provides some hints about why Cheng Minzheng thought it necessary to compile such an extensive genealogical register. Moreover, the document displays Cheng Minzheng’s talents as a historian and is an excellent example of his eloquent writing style. The preface itself is extant in six

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{171} See especially HDWJ \textit{juan} 18:13a-15b.
\item \textsuperscript{172} All of Cheng Minzheng’s critical discussions can be found in HDWJ \textit{juan} 12. In addition, all of the critical discussions Cheng Minzheng used to link the different Cheng family lineage branches can be found in the \textit{Collection of Cheng Family Exemplars} (Cheng \textit{shi yi fan ji} 程氏貞範集).
\item \textsuperscript{173} Some examples of the philosophical contributions of the Cheng brothers are translated in deBary (1999), pp.689-694. For an analysis of their contributions, see Bol (1992), pp. 300-342.
\end{itemize}
different editions; two in separate versions of Cheng Minzheng’s collected works, and
four in the surviving lineage genealogies of later Cheng family branches. Of these six
surviving editions, the earliest edition dates to 1506 and the latest edition was included in
the genealogy of a modern Cheng family living on Taiwan in 1985. In order to
compare the six editions, a detailed collation was appropriate. Consequently, my
collation notes follow the full translation of the preface.

The ‘Critical Discussion’ (Bian)

‘A critical discussion of the Henan Cheng family newly residing in Xiuning and the
Jiankang suburban Cheng family formerly residing in Xiuning and the reasons for their
migration and adoption of an heir’

Of Wenjian’s (988-1056) older and middle sons and nephews there were eighteen
people. At the end of the Jingkang reign period (1126) only Wenjian’s great grandsons,
Liwen and Fuwen, and Yichuan’s sons, Duanzhong and Duanyan, followed Gaozong
(r. 1127-1162) in his Southern Crossing and came to live in Chizhou and Jiankang.
The rest all remained behind and resided at Yiluo and were unable to travel along with
them. However, there were those who, in their fleeing the chaos, were scattered to the
four directions and nothing can be known about them.

174 The sources of the six extant editions in chronological order are: Huangdun wencui 伏倉文萃 (1506),
Xiuning Sun Wu er xi Chengshi zongpu 休寧蘇洛二溪程氏宗譜 (dated between 1522-1566), Xiuning
Shuaikou Chengshi xubianben zongpu 休寧蘇口程氏續編本宗譜 (dated between 1567-1572), Xin’an
Chengshi tongzong shipu 新安程氏統宗世譜 (dated between 1736-1795), Huangdun wenji 伏倉文集
(included in the Siku quanshu 四庫全書 of 1782), and the Jiangsusheng Funingxian Chengshi zongpu 江蘇
省阜寧縣程氏宗譜 (1985). See the Bibliography for complete citations for each of these sources.

175 Yichuan is the public name of Cheng Yi (1033-1107)

176 The Southern Crossing marked the flight of the Song dynasty court from Kaifeng in Henan province, to
Hangzhou in Zhejiang province when the Northern Jurchen invaded north China in 1127.

177 Chizhou is located in modern Guiqi County in Anhui province. Jiankang is the former name for
Nanjing.
Since the settlement in Chizhou and Jiankang, descendants became numerous until there were eleven branch-lineages. The imperial court also repeatedly appointed them to government office and the record refers to a resurgence of the family line. Thus, Duanyan’s son, Yang, begat Jianzhi, who became a Huizhou Auxiliary Academician and corresponded with Master Zhu Xi (1130-1200). Jianzhi begat Yuan. Yuan begat Zhensun. Zhensun’s sons were Zhengxue and Zhixue. Zhengxue begat Zhi. His estate was located at Xiuning in the suburbs. The Little East Gate Cheng family was particularly prosperous. Moreover, [the head of the family] used his money to purchase his title as Commandant of Xiuning. When he became old, and because they lived close to each other, some member of this Henan Cheng family newly resided in Xiuning because Ma Guangzu (jinshi 1227) protected Jiankang. They established the Mingdao Academy and [students] were selected from the Chizhou branch. Yichuan’s fifth generation descendant, Yensun, took responsibility for maintaining sacrifices to Mingdao.

Presumably, Duanzhong’s son, Cheng, begat Jiezhi. Then Jiezhi’s son, Tao, was Yensuns’ father. During that time, a ritual official determined that from Jiezhi to Yensun, these three generations had [only] one descendant. It was appropriate for the three generations to all continue. Mingdao’s eldest son, Duanyi, and eldest grandson, Ang, later met with Yensun. The previous generation lacked sons. Government Officer Yao Xide then selected Wenjian’s seventh generation descendant of the Jiankang branch, Youxue, to continue his line.

178 H 996.

179 H 7957.

180 Cheng Mingdao is the public name of Cheng Hao (1032-1085).
Presumably Fuwen begat Shuren; Shren’s son, Anqing, begat Zicai who was then Youxue’s father. This is why the Henan Cheng family from Jiankang begins with Zhongzhuang. Fourteenth generation descendant Yun’s second son, Nanjie, presumably moved to Xiuning’s suburb from Huangdun. Nanjie’s son, Xuan, begat Chengjing. Chengjing’s son, Su, begat Zhao. Zhao’s son, Quan, begat Xian. Xian’s son, Yongji, separated [from the lineage group] and lived at the Little East Gate. Yongji begat Yü. Yü’s son, Jiushi, begat Sigong. Sigong’s son, Liusan, lacked an heir and adopted Zhixue’s son, Rongxiu, to continue his line. Rongxiu begat Wenfen and Jiying. Zhi lived in Xiuning and lacked a son and, thus, Jiying was adopted to continue his line. These are the Cheng family of Huangdun who formerly lived in Xiuning.

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Chizhou suffered the most warfare and the city was entirely destroyed. Because of this we now do not hear about Cheng family descendants from Chizhou and Jiankang. The Cheng family of the suburban Little East Gate was formerly divided into thirteen branches. Since the warfare, all that remains is three branches. The remainder was dispersed and unable to return to their native places and we do not hear about them after Jiying.

For the most recent generations, all Cheng family members are named in genealogies and many biographical records of them have been handed down. Of them there is one genealogy that refers to the Henan branch descended from Jiezhi. This genealogy says that Jiezhi begat Lie. Lie begat Guihao. Guihao begat Hai. Hai begat Xing. Xing begat Deyong. Thus the Henan branch is descended from a third generation single descendant of Jiezhi. During the Song dynasty there was already a request to move and continue the line of Mingdao that was living in Jiankang.

181 Modern She County in Anhui province.
Now to return to the genealogy with the name Lie and examine it. Yichuan’s eldest grandson, Yi, begat Yuanzhi. Yuanzhi’s son, Jian, begat Shuhao. Shuhao’s son, Mei, begat Xing. Xing’s son was Deyong. These are the actual ancestors of the Henan branch. However, we do not know their reason for moving from the south to the north. Presumably, in the supplemental genealogies, by mistake Jian is Lie, Shuhao is Guihao, and Mei is Hai. But this is not known for sure. The rhyme books originally lacked a Lie character. In addition, Shuhao can be compared with Shuhai and Shuyi, and Mei can be compared with Chuan, Mu, Qi, and Ci and this provides sufficient evidence to connect them.

Another genealogy refers to the Xiuning branch as descended from Wenjian’s eighth generation descendant Zhi, and also refers to their being descended from Rongxiu. Zhi formerly lived in Xiuning. At that time the [locations of the] graves were still preserved in the supplemental genealogies, it was not known if Yichuan’s sixth generation descendant, Zhengxue, lacked an heir and if Zhi was actually the one adopted to continue his line. Zhi also lacked an heir and Jiying, a descendant from the suburbs, was adopted to continue his line. The two genealogies were remiss in not recording this. Thus, I consider them to be Wenjian’s descendants. They should regard Rongxiu as Zhi’s adopted son. Also, in subsequent genealogies, one should not repeat the characters ‘rong’ and ‘ying’ and ‘xiu’ and ‘ji’ because they are similarly written and could mistakenly be placed among those individuals descended from Zhi.

In the above discussion of the genealogies, a different edition was long ago mixed into the genealogical chart. However, that genealogical chart is already lost. The members of the lineage have not dared to carve woodblocks to pass on a potentially false
line of Maocheng. Following the loss of their woodblocks, they only [retained] the names in memory. This is why the discussion would rather benefit from a general genealogy of the Cheng family. However, it also must not dare to start with these genealogies. For this reason, I gathered what the gentlemen of the remaining branches say about the [lineage’s origins].

During the Yuan dynasty, the Hu branch descendant, Dou, from Longshan\(^\text{182}\) in Kai-hua came to Shuaikou.\(^\text{183}\) Kinsmen from a vast distance held a family meeting. In the preface of the genealogy produced from this meeting it says: “During the Yuan-feng period (1079-1085) of the Song dynasty, Qi from the Jingde branch compiled a genealogy of thirty \textit{juan}. At that same time, Xuan from the Hexi branch had it carved on woodblocks. This edition was actually fifteen \textit{juan}. The two editions’ sequence of generations was not the same. The details only concern the kinship lines for these two people. It was as if someone from another branch recorded it and was remiss with the truth. For this reason, later generations of descendants each produced family records which have contradictions with the two editions. In the subsequent warfare, these Cheng ancestors met an unlucky fate in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Now in Xin’an, I have inquired about the various branches of the lineage to bring them together, and have compared and examined each branch’s record to determine the discrepancies in the lines of descent. On another day, I will set this down in a book and woodblocks. Then one copy of this edition will be sent to each of the families near and far away as the true history [of our lineage]. Because of these words, from now on in later generations there will not be

\(^{182}\) Anyang city in Henan province.

\(^{183}\) Xiuning County, Anhui province.
those who have not heard of them, even though our predecessors did not maintain identical records. Unfortunately their records were not able to be finished.

I have compiled a comprehensive genealogy based upon the Leping [county] Shicheng genealogy which says: Zhongzhuang’s fourteenth generation descendant Zhirou’s son, Zhen, begat Kuan. Kuan’s son, Lu, begat Chuyi. Chuyi’s son, Lang, begat Chengguan. Chengguan’s son, Zhongshe, begat Bowen. Bowen’s sons were Ruoji and Ruoying. Ruoji begat Qizong, who was the Grand Official of Jianyang and a friend of Master Zhu Xi. Recently I saw the Leping Hangqiao old genealogy at Xianggong. The jinshi Kai says: Zhirou’s son, Qin, begat Chuyi. Chuyi’s son, Lang, begat Qi. Qi’s son, Lü, begat Gongchen. Gongchen’s son, Bowen, begat Ruoji and Ruoying. Zhirou’s younger brother, Zhixiang, begat Guang. Guang’s son, Zhengyuan, begat Chengxian and Chengxiu. Chengxian’s son, Pu, begat Zha. Zha’s son was Zhen, who was an Attendant Esquire and the Duke of Gangmin. Chengxiu’s son, Zhongxing, begat Hai. Hai’s son, Shun, begat Ruyu. Ruyu’s son was Qizong. The genealogies are not the same. Thus, they are suspect. The Hangqiao old genealogy is the correct one. It is prudent to rerecord [all of] this and not dare make use the wrong genealogies in the comprehensive genealogy. When it is completed, then I will make a summary of this.

Written by Minzheng on the first day of the second lunar month of the jia chen year of the Chenghua reign period (February 12, 1484).
Table 1: The Line of Descent According to Cheng Minzheng’s Critical Discussion

Huangdun Branch  Jiankang Branch  Xiuning Suburb Branch

Yun

Wenjian

Yichuan

Nanjie

Liwen

Cheng

Zhengxue

Xuan

Fuwen

Jiezhi

Li

Chengjing

Wuren

Tao

Su

Anqing

Yensun

Zhao

Ziexi

Yuan

Quan

Yongxue

Zhensun

Xian

Jianzhi

Zhi

Yongji

Yu

Zhixue

(Yi)

Zhuxiu

Xiaoni

Jiying

(Liusan)

(Rongxin)

Wenfen

Jiying

Translation of the Preface to the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng:

When the system of enfeoffments was not carried out and the rules of large and small lineages were not established, all under Heaven was long without hereditary family lines. However, as for the rules of small lineages, there are no restrictions on those who came first. As for the descendants of the gentry and the clans of the Odes and Rites, they often ignore and disregard the rules. What do they do instead? Nowadays they assemble the differences and similarities of a hundred or a thousand years into a single record and
join the proper order of the spirit tablets of a hundred or a thousand people into a single family line. Those who see this surely think it is astonishing. Those who hear about this surely think it is suspicious. They truly regard these affairs as that which cannot be questioned. As for their accuracy, it cannot be assessed. Consequently they are at ease with keeping this old custom unchanged.

Our Cheng surname originated from the Great Officer of Zhou, Xiufu. He assisted in the reinvigoration of the reign of Duke Xuan (827-780 BCE) and was enfeoffed as the Count of Cheng. His descendants thus used the name of that state as their surname and made their offerings at Anding.\textsuperscript{184} After them, the state [of Cheng] was dissolved and there was one who went to the state of Jin who was called Ying. His fief was established at Zhaogu\textsuperscript{185} and he was conferred with the title of Loyal and Sincere Lord. Once again, they made their offerings at Guangping.\textsuperscript{186} After the Loyal and Sincere Lord, at the beginning of the Han (206 BCE-9 CE), there was one who rose up with the generals of Zhao to defeat the Qin (221-207 BCE), and he was the Lord of Lijian, Hei. He passed the title to his son, the Filial Lord, Xi. In the next generation, his inheritors lost their noble rank. After again becoming the Lord of Lijian\textsuperscript{187} at the end of the Han dynasty (23-220), [the family] followed the Sun family [who founded the Wu dynasty, 222-280] and settled in the Jiangdong region. With the defeat of Cao Cao

\textsuperscript{184} Modern Anhui province.

\textsuperscript{185} Modern Shandong province.

\textsuperscript{186} Modern Anhui province, Yutai County.

\textsuperscript{187} Jiangdong is an earlier expression to refer to the modern Jiangnan region.
(155-220), the one who was bestowed with a rank at Jianye,\(^{188}\) this was the Lord of Duting, Pu (d. 215).\(^{189}\) His son, Zi, inherited his fiefdom.

At the beginning of the Jin dynasty (317-420), the family lost their noble rank. After the Lord of Duting, there was Yuantan. During the disorder of the Yongjia reign period (307-312), the prince of Langye rebelled at Jianye and was made the Prefect of Xin’an. There was kindness in his governing and he was asked by the people to remain. He was bestowed with rank and the rule of a prefecture, and he made his home at Huangdun.\(^{190}\) After the Prefect, there was the General of the Liang dynasty (502-557), the Robust and Loyal Lord, Lingxi (514-568).\(^{191}\) In the disorder of Houjing (c.548-555), he raised an army to protect the villages and the province. For this, he was enfeoffed at Zhong’an County.\(^{192}\) The Lord’s son was Wenji, and his grandson, Xiang, inherited his noble rank. But Wenji was made a general and died for the state at the hands of the [Northern] Zhou (557-580). For this he was made the Stern and Mournful Lord of

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\(^{188}\) Modern Nanjing.

\(^{189}\) Keith Hazelton (1984) notes that “Ch’eng Min-cheng corrected some long-standing errors in the account of the early history of the Chiang-nan Ch’eng. The thrust of one of his ‘critical discussions’ (pien) was that although Hsin-an prefect Yuan-t’an was the first Ch’eng in Hui-chou, he was not, as then commonly believed, the first Ch’eng in Chiang-nan. . . . This error, he argued, stemmed from an account in the Yuan-ho hsin-tsuan (812), the last great T’ang period genealogical conspectus. This error was perpetuated by Ou-yang Hsiu in a stele inscription, and was subsequently incorporated in most Ch’eng genealogies, notably the eleventh century edition by Ch’eng Ch’i. Min-cheng, however, had come across an earlier Ch’eng genealogy for which Ch’i has sought in vain, and discovered that the account there revealed a critical five-character lacuna in the Yuan-ho hsin-tsuan entry. The restored text implied that the ancestor of the Chiang-nan Ch’eng was Ch’eng P’u, a supporter of Sun Chien and his son Sun Ch’uan (r. 222-252), ruler of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period. With the establishment of the Wu capital at Chien-ye . . ., Ch’eng P’u was given an estate there, thus becoming the first ‘Chiang-nan Ch’eng.’” (p. 187). See also HDWJ 12:3a-5a.

\(^{190}\) Modern Anhui province, She County.


\(^{192}\) Modern Hunan province.
Zhong’an. His descendants were numerous and later generations prospered. Thus, they changed the place where they made their offerings to Xin’an. After Xiang, the family divided into northern and southern family lines.

In my critical discussions,¹⁹³ I begin with the northern [family line’s] becoming a broad lineage. Sun Hao (242-284) was made Provincial Governor of Dingzhou. There was also another who resided at Boye in Zhongshan. Hao begat Rihua (d.788). During the disorder of An and shi,¹⁹⁴ Rihua distinguished himself in the battle north of the [Yellow] river and was made Military Governor of the River Crossing Army. When Rihua died, his son Huaizhi succeeded him in the same office. He went to court and was conferred with the title of Prince Who Brought Back the Cities and Prefectures. His elder cousin, Huaixin, succeeded him in this office. When Huaixin died, his nephew, Quan, succeeded him in this office. Quan was conferred with the title of lord Xingguo. Presumably, all four generations of this Cheng surname group had [possessed land in] the two provinces of Cang¹⁹⁵ and Jing.¹⁹⁶ When Quan did not desire to retain the border towns as his own, once again he requested to attend the court. Thus, the Cheng family’s army began to disperse. This is the northern family line.

During the disorder of the Sui dynasty (616-618), there was Fu who together with Wang Hua (586-648),¹⁹⁷ raised an army to secure the six prefectures. He was bestowed

¹⁹³ These critical discussions (bian 㖼) are found in HDWJ 12.
¹⁹⁴ The rebellion of An Lushan, 756-788.
¹⁹⁵ Modern Hebei.
¹⁹⁶ Modern Zhilin
with temple sacrifices. During the [Northern] Song dynasty (960-1126), he was posthumously titled Lord of Fuli. In the disorder of Huang Chao (c.845), there was Zongchu who was the Military Governor of Jingyuan, who formed an army to quell the bandit. He was killed in battle and was granted the title of Grand Minister. His son was the Gold and Purple Lord, Xun, who also used local troops to protect and defend the garrison at Mount Xingyin and guarded the three provinces of Ju, Rao, and Xin. He passed his titles on to his son Yanguang. Yanguang became Grand Censor and was at the same time in charge of the garrison at Baisha. He passed his titles to his son Kerou. Presumably, all three generations of this Cheng surname group were defenders of virtue and mercy. There was one called Yun who raised an army at Xiuning and defended Dongmi cliff in order to fend off Chao. He assisted Tao Ya (c.893) and was made the Overall Commander of Infantry and Cavalry of Shezhou and at the same time guarded Kaihua. His younger brother, Xiang, became Minister in the Ministry of Works and protected of Wuyuan. His son, Zhongfan, became Minister in the Ministry of Personnel and protected Qimen and Fuliang (Counties). Xiang’s son, Zhongjie, became Vanguard General and Protector of She’nan. [Zhongjie became General of the Main Army and protected Xiuning. Yun passed his titles on to his younger brother, Tao. Tao passed his titles on to his adopted son Xü. Xü enjoyed temple sacrifices at Long mountain in Kaihua. He was bestowed with the title of Assisting (Lord) of High Eminence. He passed his titles on to his nephew, Geng. Geng passed his titles on to his grandson, Huaiyan. Presumably, all five generations of this Cheng surname group were protectors of Dongmi cliff. Xiang passed his title on to his son, Quanli. Quanli became Assistant Censor and at the same time was in charge of the garrison at Wuyuandu. He passed his

198 See Zumdorfer, pp. 28-29, 233. Shezhou is the Tang administrative designation for Huizhou.
titles on to his younger brother, Quangao. Quangao passed the title on to his son, Dun. Presumably, all four generations of this Cheng surname group were protectors of Wuyuan. At the time when the Song court went to Jiangnan (1127), the Cheng family armies began to disperse and [the generations above make up] this southern family line.

Since the Song dynasty, Zhongshi and Zhongzhuang were both given the title Prince and were granted temple sacrifices and the family line increased its glory. Yunrông increased the family line even more and some [members] became moral leaders. The greatest of them were the Scholar of the Wenming Palace, Yu, and Great Teacher and Minister of the Central Documents, the lord Wenjian, Lin (988-1056). After that, there was merit twice at the same time with the two Masters, Mingdao (Cheng Hao, 1032-1085) and Yinchuan (Cheng Yi, 1033-1107), who through their Study of the Way passed on their sagacity to enlighten later generations. In our [Ming] dynasty, a special record was made of them and their descendants were made Learned Scholars of the Five Classics in the Hanlin Academy, and their status was remembered through sacrifices.

The prosperity of the northern branch [of the family] was like this.

During the Song dynasty, the Scholar of the Xianmo Gallery, Maihua; the Scholar of the Literary Palace, the lord Zhuangjie, Shuda; Superior over the Documents in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the lord Wenjie, Dachang (1123-1195); Chancellor, the lord Zhenghui, Zhuo; Prime Minister, the lord Wenqing, Yuanhuang; Attendant Esquire in the Ministry of Works, Yuanyue; the Scholar of the Duanming Palace, Mi (1164-1242); all began [their careers] in Xin’an. The Attendant Esquire in the Ministry of Justice, the lord Gangmin, Zhen, and the Attendant of the Huichuang, Zhi, all participated in government affairs. The lord Zhangqing, Kequn and the Scholar of the Longtu Gallery, Yu, came
from the area between Bo and Qu. The two Master’s (Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi’s) descendants also migrated in the ‘Southern Crossing’ (of the Song court, 1127) and came to reside in Chizhou. Then they migrated to Xin’an. After that, Cheng family women who were married into the Zhu family, one gave birth to Weizhai and others gave birth to the six masters: Wengong (Zhu Xi, 1130-1200), Zhengsi, Dengyong, Qianecun, Yueyan, Huiyan, and Linyun. Also, all of this line of the Zhu family studied the same school of thought as the aforementioned two Masters (Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi) and became eminent scholars. After a while, the scholars received from the Imperial Will the titles of lord Wenxiao and Grand Historian and continued their scholarship during the Yuan dynasty.

From our original ancestors’ many households at Anding, there was the Lord of Zhongmin, Guosheng, along with our predecessor, the Junior Tutor of the Imperial Heir, the lord Xiangyi, was illustrious in our [Ming] dynasty. He prospered in the Jiangnan region. But for this we do not have a genealogical document. This being the case, how can I correct all of their roots and connect their branches and make a plan for the inexhaustible lives of our descendants? In the Han, Jin, Sui, and Tang dynasties, because of their social position and usefulness to the state, there have been ancient enfoeelinenls that have been handed down as exemplars. The Cheng surname is one of the leading Great Surnames. Since the family’s origins south of the Yangzi river, they gradually went through transformations and, therefore, the Cheng family surely maintained its meritorious accomplishments. Thus, the genealogical document was not lost in the fires of the [Mongol] soldiers. The hereditary ranks and hereditary offices of the descendants can be seen through the past ages, and the rules of the lineage never stopped being followed among them.
During the Zhaosheng reign period of the Song dynasty (1094-1097), the Governor of Boyang, Qi, wrote a general genealogy. Later generations relied on it, dividing off and joining in editions for their own clans. He carefully selected people who could go into the record, but when he died, there were those [family branches] who had not yet been assembled into it. During the Zhengtong reign period of our dynasty (Ming, 1436-1449), the retired scholar of Yi County, Wenshi, worked at putting them into the genealogy, but did not complete it. I have not inspected it. Presumably, he had the intention to record all of this. Twenty years have passed. Because I have nearly completed attaining reasons for the discrepancies of the various genealogies, I have fixed in writing a disputation on the genealogy of thirty seven entries, with a set of instructions of ten entries. But I still dare not be satisfied.

During the eighteenth year of the Chenghua reign period (1482), in spring, after the mourning clothes were put away, I brought out my document in order to report it to the various family members. The family members approved of it. Each brought their genealogy and came to a meeting. [At the meeting], we put the record into good order and attacked the contradictions. It took more than six months to make a correct edition and all together a document of more than twenty sections was made. Of those who attended the meeting, there were forty-four branches. The names entered into the genealogy included more than ten thousand people. The graves of our ancestors number fifty-three generations. All of us together reported this in our predecessor’s temple and called the document the Xin’an Cheng Family Comprehensive Genealogy. Jiujin had it carved [onto woodblocks] and Minzheng’s humble words appear at the beginning of it. Now for those who came before us of prosperous rank and government service, our pride
will spread in the four [cardinal] directions, and be praised by later generations without end. Our past generations brought great merit to the family name in the beginning, were greatly loyal in protecting the family name since [in between], and are as greatly eminent among the various family names in the towns and the realm in this present day. For this reason, because of my unworthy assistance to the numerous lineage [branches], a unified record of our ancestors can be fulfilled, and a genealogy can be completed. Now isn’t that wonderful!

Because of this, all of our family members will not forget their origins on the basis of this document, can earnestly honor their ancestors, and respectfully carry out their duty to the family. They will be secure in their patrimony, recite the words handed down by the ancestors, and not be remiss in protecting the burial sites, and preserve their names and status without being confused. Because the rules of the family are now established, then social relationships will be more illustrious, and the family reputation will be more renowned. Those who ask about the family line can be told it is old and not obscure. Those who respect it will be many and they will not want to be separate from the line. Oh, how there will be joy for this entire family without end! Those who are astonished with be at ease. Those who disbelieve will be assured. All families of future generations of the whole world can look to the example of the Cheng family! I present this genealogy for all to see.

Collation of the Preface to the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng:

To aid in my translation of the Preface to the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng, I compared six extant editions and prepared a detailed collation of the documents. My notes are included herein. I begin by presenting a digital reproduction of
my base document, *Xiuning Shuaikou Cheng shi xu bian ben zong pu* 休寧率口程氏續編本宗譜 (dated 1567-1572), complete with notations blocked out and itemized. It should be noted, due to the limitations of digital reproduction, the notations within the base document are not always in sequential order and in some cases are repeated. Repeated notes indicate a consistent condition in a specific source document. For example, text blocked out with the notation “a” in the base document indicates that text is no longer extant in the source document *Xin’an Cheng shi tong zong shi pu* 新安程氏統宗世譜 (dated 1706).

After the digital reproduction, I have provided my notations. The source documents for the notations are identified as follows:

①: *Xiuning Shuaikou Chengshi xubianben zongpu* 休寧率口程氏續編本宗譜, dated 1567-1572. This is the base document for the collation.

②: *Xin’an Chengshi tongzong shipu* 新安程氏統宗世譜, dated 1736-1795. This source is only mostly extant. Text that is no longer extant is indicated on the digital reproduction of the base document with the notation “a”.

②: *Huangdun wen cui* 筠墩文萃, dated 1506.

③: *Huangdun wen ji* 筠墩文集, dated 1772-1782.

④: *Xiuning Sun Wu er xi Chengshi zongpu* 休寧蟀浯二溪程氏宗譜, dated 1522-1566.

Whenever possible, I have chosen to follow the Daizōkyō format of collation notation.

Thus, the notation

3. = 往往 ①⑤

indicates the blocked out text itemized as number 3 on the base document reads as “往往” in source documents ① and ⑤ (identified above).
Image 2: Preface to the Xin’er Cheng shi tong zong shi pu, as it appears in the Xiuning Shuiku Cheng shi xu bian ben zong pu, no. 1, Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.

Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
preface to the Xin an Cheng shi tong zong shi pu

as it appears in the Xuning Shuihuan Cheng shi xu huan bon zong shi pu, no. 2. Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
Image 4: Preface to the Xin’ian Cheng shi tong zong shi pu 新安程氏統宗世譜 as it appears in the Xiuning Shuaikou Cheng shi xu bian ben zong pu, no. 3. Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
Image 5: Preface to the Xin an Cheng shi tong zong shi pu as it appears in the Xiuning Shuiku Cheng shi xu bian ben zong pu, no. 4, Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
Preface to the Xinian Cheng shi tong zongpu, as it appears in the Xiujuan Shuankou Cheng shi xu bian, hen zongpu, no. 5, Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
之俾敏政言其故于編首鳴呼是豈徒以問閟之盛驕四方泰後代
而巳惟先世有大功以得姓于其始有大忠以保姓于其間有大惠
烈于鄉邦以著姓于今日故以敏政之不肖而得衆族之賢者輔之
遂使統宗之志可究而騐成豈非幸歟凡我宗人其因是而母
忘本原之思篤尊祖敬宗睦族之義守其世業誦其遺書保其體
魄之歲而不失謹其名分之稱而不紊宗法既立則桑倫益明風教
蓋興可諧者雖久而弗晦也可齊者雖多而弗離也若然又豈獨一
宗之幸而已騐者安疑者釋天下後世之有家者將不取法于程氏

赐进士及第奉训大夫左春坊左谕德同修

成化十八年歳次壬寅冬十一月既望

也哉奉斯譜者其共業之

Image 7: Preface to the Xin’an Cheng shi tong zong shi pu 新安程氏統宗世譜 as it appears in the Xiuning Shuaikou Cheng shi xu bian ben zong pu, no.6. Harvard-Yenching Library Collection.
Notations:

1. = 新安程氏統宗世譜序②③④⑤
2. = 能載①
3. = 往往①⑤; =往`` ②
4. = 知④
5. = calligraphic variant (hereafter c. v.)②
6. = 於③⑤
7. = c. v.①
8. = [亦] ②⑤
9. = 於④:
10. = c. v. ①
11. = (者) text ④ adds 者
12. = [佐] text ⑤ omits 佐
13. = [之] ⑤
14. = 陳③; Chen dynasty (557-588 C.E.)
15. = [靈洗] ⑤
16. = 陳③
17. = [為將] ⑤
18. =平 ④
19. = c. v. ①②③④
20. = 繁 ③
21. = [皓] ④
22. = 于①
23. = 城 ③⑤
24. = [邢]
25. = 番 ①
26. = c. v. ②⑤
27. = 源 ④
28. = c. v. ①①②③; 殭 ④⑤
29. = 衛 ⑤
30. = 岩 ③
31. = [繁] ②
32. = “②⑥; 七⑤
33. = “②④; 七⑤
34. = “②④
35. = [都镇传其弟全阜全阜传其弟通熊程氏凡四世守婺源] ②
36. = c. v. ⑤
37. = 後 ③
38. = 祀 ③⑤
39. = [道学] ⑤
40. = 祀 ②③⑤
41. = 於 ③④⑤
63. = 與 ⑤
64. = (言) ⑤
65. = c. v. ②
66. = c. v. ③
67. = 諱 ⑤
68. = [] ⑤
69. = [] ⑤
70. = [] ②③; 成化 (明惠宗年號) 十八年 ⑤
71. = (國史 經筵官兼 太子講讀官休寧賀郭嗣孫敏政謹述) ①④⑤
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to carefully translate important biographies and key documents related to the creation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* in order to illustrate Cheng Minzheng’s local interests and lineage building activities in 1482. The biographies of both Cheng Xin and Cheng Minzheng provide a context from which we might assess why their particular lineage branch came to preside over the forty three other lineage branches who participated in the compilation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy*. Both men were well educated and successful in their careers—Cheng Xin in military affairs and Cheng Minzheng in literary accomplishments. The combination of formal education and high office would have made them the best equipped of all the Huizhou Chengs to carry out the endeavor of compiling a ‘comprehensive genealogy.’ Moreover, they owned many acres of land in the Huizhou region and they or members of their immediate lineage likely participated in the lively commercial economy of the time. As land owners and entrepreneurs, their economic interests would have been subject to the increasing pressures of competition emerging throughout the Ming empire of their day. Participation in a large scale genealogical enterprise would have allowed them to forge stronger alliances between Cheng families to better protect, and possibly expand, their branch family’s interests.

Cheng Minzheng’s literary accomplishments also made the creation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* more viable. He was a distinguished
scholar in the Neo-Confucian tradition and presented important lectures to his fellow government officials at the annual Classics Colloquium. In addition, he contributed notable philosophical interpretations of that tradition in his own right. Establishing a direct family connection to the forefathers of Neo-Confucianism would have brought significant prestige and status to all Cheng families participating in the compilation of the Comprehensive Genealogy. Consequently, he had a vested interest in connecting his own family line to that of the famous Song dynasty philosophers Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi. The critical discussion in this thesis examines Cheng Minzheng’s subjective logic for connecting his branch family to the Henan Cheng.

Furthermore, Cheng Minzheng was an accomplished historian. As we learned from his biographies, he not only participated on many occasions in the compilation of the key historical texts of the empire, but also succeeded in explicating histories that had remained unclear to learned men prior to his time. Moreover, he had a strong interest in recording the local history of his native Xiuning County and of the Huizhou region at large, and as a court historian Cheng Minzheng would have had access to the imperial archives where he could investigate the details of prominent men in history who shared his same surname and regional connection. As a result, the preface to the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng demonstrates Cheng Minzheng’s prowess as a historian and provides his own firm interpretation of the history of the Cheng lineage.

Finally, my effort to collate the six extant prefaces to the Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng confirms that Cheng Minzheng’s version of Cheng family history had a lasting impact on subsequent Cheng lineages. The preface remains

\[199\] For a discussion of Cheng Minzheng’s contributions to Ming Neo-Confucianism beyond his lectures at the annual Classics Colloquium, see Chen (1999 and 2000).
little changed after more than five hundred years. Although Cheng Minzheng’s own lineage branch of the Peiguo Cheng appears to have faded in prominence after the death of his son, Xun, other Cheng families perpetuated his depiction of Cheng family history long afterwards. Indeed, the latest extant preface that survives in the genealogy of the Funing Cheng family living on Taiwan and published in 1985 confirms that Cheng Minzheng’s creation of the *Comprehensive Genealogy of the Xin’an Cheng* in 1482 succeeded in bringing great merit to his family name during his day, great loyalty in protecting his family name since, and continues to be greatly eminent among Cheng families in this present day.
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