

**Chieftains into Ancestors:
Imperial Expansion and Indigenous Society in Southwest China**

**Edited by
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**The past tells it differently: the myth of native subjugation
in the creation of lineage society in south China**

He Xi

Studies of the incorporation of south China into the Chinese state frequently begin with an account of the southern migration of people from north China, their encountering dangerous and troublesome natives in the south, wars launched against the natives by the imperial government, and the eventual subjection of the native people and their conversion to Chinese ways. Focusing on the south-western portions of Guangdong province (Gaozhou and Leizhou), and Hainan province, this chapter tells a different story. It begins with the history of Madam Xian as recorded in the standard Chinese history in the Tang dynasty, and continues with her emergence, along with her consort, Feng Bao, as progenitors of the Feng surname by the eighteenth century. By examining the history of the main locations at which her principal temples have been built, and comparing ritual practices which may still be observed with their historic descriptions, I argue that over a long period of time from the Tang dynasty to the Qing, indigenous society represented itself as part of the dominant Han) tradition and that the image of the subjugation of the natives was a break with the past, originating principally from the Ming dynasty.

Madam Xian and her times

The authenticity of Madam Xian is vouched for by no less an authority than the

History of the Sui Dynasty. According to it, Madam Xian was the daughter of a powerful chieftain in Gaoliang commandery, the area that in the Sui and Tang dynasties included present-day Gaozhou and Leizhou. She married Feng Bao, the Grand Protector of Gaoliang in the Liang dynasty, whose family had come from north China and had been appointed officials from his grandfather. The Feng family exerted little control on the local people, until, after her marriage with Feng Bao, Madam Xian “imposed restrictions on her clan, and made the people follow propriety.” Specifically, “she shared in Bao’s judgements of disputes, and, even if a headman violated the law, and even if he was a relative, no pardon was given.” For that reason, her biography in the *History of the Sui Dynasty* continues, “an administrative procedure was established which none dared violate.”(*Suishu* 1973: 1801)

The Feng family would have been one of those powerful families of south China, that, according to Chen Yinke, came into prominence with the emergence of the Chen dynasty (557-589), the Liang dynasty’s successor. Chen Baxian, the founder of the Chen dynasty, had drawn on their support as he established himself. (Chen 1995: 241-242) Madam Xian and Feng Bao helped Chen Baxian defeat his enemies in present-day southern Jiangxi province. To see why the campaigns in this area had been so important to Chen Baxian, it is important to realize that it lay on the Dayuling road, which connected south China to the Yangzi river. The *History of the Sui Dynasty* records an episode where, after persuading Feng Bao to support Chen Baxian, Madam Xian saw Chen Baxian in person. (*Suishu*: 1801)

The Chen dynasty lasted only 32 years. In a highly poignant story, the *History of the Sui Dynasty* describes how Madam Xian was persuaded to shift her allegiance to the succeeding Sui dynasty:

Upon the fall of the Chen dynasty, Lingnan (“south of the ranges” that is, Guangdong and Guangxi) had not yet pledged its allegiance [to the new dynasty], and several commanderies together submitted to the lady [Madam Xian], giving her the name of “Holy Mother” (*shengmu*), and besought her to defend the region and its people.

Emperor Gaozu dispatched the Area Commander-in-chief, Wei Guang, to pacify Lingnan Guang reached its outskirts and dared not pass. At a former time, Madam Xian had presented a rhinoceros mace from Funan to the emperor of Chen. So, now, when Guang, the Prince of Jin, conveyed a letter from the Chen emperor, in which he proclaimed his realm had fallen and commanded her to surrender, he also sent her the rhinoceros mace and a commander’s seal as evidence. When the lady saw the mace, she knew that Chen had, indeed, fallen. She gathered together several thousand headmen, and cried all day and night. Then, she sent her grandson, Hun, to lead the others to welcome Guang into Guangzhou. Thereupon, the south [Lingnan] was pacified. Hun was bestowed ceremonial honour with prestige equal to a minister (*sansi*) and the lady was awarded the title Songkang *jun furen* (Lady of the Songkang commandery). (*Suishu*: 1802)

The story poignantly reveals the bestowing of gifts as evidence of submission. The presentation of Madam Xian’s gift to Chen by an emissary of Sui, was understood by Madam Xian as indicative of the transference of power. There was much more, therefore, in the rhinoceros mace than a gift, for its presence was indicative of a patron-client, or perhaps, tributary, relationship. Although the story notes that a letter had come with the rhinoceros mace, it was not writing that carried authenticity, but

the irreplaceable material object, which almost had invested in it the relationship set up by gift-giving.

The dynastic histories record that during the Sui dynasty, Madam Xian ‘pacified’ several rebellions. Of particular significance is that they record her wearing official robe and insignia of power accorded to the rank of county magistrate when she escorted the official sent by the imperial court to inspect Lingnan and pronounce the decree on the incorporation of the region into the empire. The forbidding appearance exaggerated her loyalty to the imperial court and her exalted status in the local society. Tribal heads in all of Lingnan paid respect to her. Because of her contribution to the state, Madam Xian was bestowed the title *Qiaoguo furen* (Lady Country Pacifier) and accorded the privilege of building a governor’s office, using the official seal and directing troops in the six prefectures in Lingnan. Her husband, also, was conferred posthumous honors—*Qiaoguo gong* and Governor of Guangzhou. It was noted that Madam Xian made ostentatious display of her awarded honors. In an annual ceremony, she wore the ornaments and the formal dress presented to her by the Sui dynasty empress as well as the gifts bestowed on her by the ruling houses of the Liang and Chen dynasties. (*Suishu*: 1802-1803)

The pacifier of the natives played out her role as representative of local society to the imperial state. She personally announced imperial decrees to the natives. She personally protested to the emperor when the Governor of Lingnan was found greedy and cruel. She warned her posterities that they should be faithful to the emperor. Yet, her loyalty surpassed loyalty to any single imperial household. She herself had served three dynasties. Moreover, she pacified rebels on imperial authority. As the *History of the Sui Dynasty* put it, “she carried the decree in person and claimed to be an imperial envoy.” (*Suishu*: 1803)

The *History of the Sui Dynasty*, which has given us the fullest accounts of Madam Xian's exploits, was compiled in the Tang dynasty. It is important, therefore, to set the compilation record in context for an impression of the relationship between the native chieftain and the imperial state.

The author of the *History of the Sui Dynasty*, Wei Zheng (580-643), played an important role in forming the Tang dynasty's policy towards the Feng clan. Feng Ang, Madam Xian's grandson, held out against Tang advances for a long while and was the last indigenous leader of Lingnan to surrender. (*Xin Tangshu* 1975: 4113) Even after surrender, he was at war with native chieftains of the Ning surname over the control of Xinzhou, a strategic point on the route from present-day Gaozhou to the West River. In 628, on Wei Zheng's advice that Ang might be won over "with restraint and kindness," (Sima (1963)[1084]: 6039) Tang Taizong laid out the terms Ang was to observe in the following decree:

Because you sent [your] sons to the capital [Chang'an] every year, hence, although I heard about your disloyalty, I did not dispatch troops [to attack you].... However, from now on, you shall rest at home and commit to living an easy life. You shall also not send [subordinating] thugs to loot [neighboring] prefectures and counties. You shall continue to order [your] sons to come [to the capital] in turn. You shall also send emissaries to pay tribute to [my] court. Then I shall know your loyalty and shall naturally not be concerned with other people's memorials [against you].... (Xu 1986[596-672]: unpaginated)

Ang's sons, in effect, served as hostages.

Yet, the decree did not curb Feng Ang's ambition. After five years of fighting, he

occupied the southern part of Xinzhou. In 631, Taizong issued another decree, warning Ang not to expand his territory further and ordering him to send his son to Chang'an regularly. (Xu 1986[596-672]: unpaginated) In the same year, Ang went personally to Chang'an to pay tribute to the emperor. (*Xin Tangshu*: 4113) In Chang'an, Ang's son must have been engaged in upper class culture, for in 634, on the occasion of a court banquet that received the Tujue emissary, Ang's son, in response to the emperor's order, composed a poem. The emperor, proud and satisfied with the situation, remarked that "Hu [meaning the Tujue] and Yue [the people of Lingnan] now have become one family." (*Hu-Yue yijia*)(*Jiu Tangshu* 1975 : 17-18)

Another connection between the Feng family and the imperial court came in the person of the eunuch Gao Lishi (684-762). He was Feng Ang's great-grandson. His biographical sketch, engraved on his memorial tablet, recorded that the Feng family succumbed to the state while he was still an infant. (*Quan Tangwen buyi* 1994 1:35 a-b) After Lishi, the Feng clan disappeared from history.

Against this background, Madam Xian was written into the *History of Sui Dynasty* while the Feng clan was at odds with the imperial court. Her purported loyalty was obviously political propaganda. It was propaganda that was found to be worth reviving seven centuries after her death.

Madam Xian's legacy

It should be noted that throughout the Song and the Yuan, Gaozhou seldom made it into the official records. Continuity of the history of Madam Xian may be followed, not in Gaozhou, but on Hainan Island, which throughout the Song had been developing as a major exporter of high-quality incense. (Chen, 1991[13th-14th cent.]:

4:29b-30a) Here, the Song officialdom encountered the Li people. Since the nineteenth century, the Li had given the impression that they were enclosed within the Hainan heartland at Five Finger Mountain. The Song encountered the Li in a totally different part of Hainan, along the northern coast at Danzhou. (He 2006) At this part of Hainan, there can be no doubt that migrants had moved over from Guangdong, primarily from Gaozhou, but the local Li people maintained their own order under their chieftains. Song records speak of one such head person as Madam Wang Eniang, ruler of the 36 tribes (known as *dong*), who, when she died, was succeeded by a daughter.¹ Her daughter then became head of the Song military stronghold of Daning *zhai*. (*Song huiyao jigao* 1957 13081:3b-4a) The position of the headmen as recognized powers on Hainan was symptomatic of the Song government's weakness on the island. It was not the Song, but the Yuan, that built up a military presence on Hainan, and the first major campaigns taken against the Li took place from 1291 to 1293. (*Danxian zhi* 1974[1936] 9:6a) Into the Ming and Qing, there were periodical wars against the Li. (He, 2006)

Madam Xian temples came up prominently in the Danzhou area and along the

¹ Wang Eniang inherited the title “*yiren*” from her mother, who married into the Huang surname. Wang's daughter, who married into the Wu surname, also inherited the title of *yiren*. Huang earned the title by contributing to the pacification of the Li people. In the 20th year of the Shaoxing reign (1150) of the Song dynasty, a Qiongsan local man named Xu Yi distributed Li-style bows and arrows to the chieftains of the Li people, instigating them to revolt. Huang went to the Li territory to announce the emperor's decree, persuading the Li people not to follow Xu Yi. Twenty years later, in the seventh year of the Qiandao reign (1171), the emperor granted the title of *yiren* to Huang after a memorial. See *Song huiyao jigao*: 13081:2b-3a.

several routes into the interior (see map 7.1). (Chen 2001: 77) It is difficult to date the foundation of most of these temples, but the oldest, the Ningji temple at Danzhou, was moved to its present site in 1523. The circumstances are revealing :

The Ningji temple is located to the south of the sub-prefectural city, on the right-hand side of the Confucian academy. In the 2nd year of Jiaping (1523), the vice magistrate, Gu Jie, on the pretext that he had received written instructions from Guangdong Education Intendant, Wei Xiao, that it was located too near the academy, destroyed the Wuxian statues and moved the temple (*Wanli Danzhou zhi* 1618: 8b).

The Wuxian spirits, gods of pestilence, had always occupied the dubious position of heretodox cults from the Song to the Ming. We do not know from this passage if these spirits were sacrificed to along with Madam Xian, but it is significant that in the wave of religious cleansing instituted by Wei Xiao, the Wuxian spirits were removed but not the native chieftain. By the Wanli period (late sixteenth century), we know that another Madam Xian temple was repaired at Ding'an county. (Wang, 1997[661-1722.] 9:15 a-b)

On the mainland, Madam Xian was remembered in temples dedicated to her in present-day Gaozhou and in settlements of the Feng surname which claim to be descendants of her consort, Feng Bao. The two linkages come together in Changpo in Gaozhou. Not without reason, for Changpo was the seat of Gaozhou prefecture from the Song dynasty to the early Ming. According to the *History of the Sui Dynasty*, this area was occupied by the Li people (*Li ren*) in Madam Xian's times. However, by the Ming dynasty, the word "Yao" was frequently used to describe the indigenous people

there. In the Ming dynasty, the Yao came to be known for their “rebellions” (*luan*). The Yao wars had broken out suddenly in the mid-fifteenth century (Faure, 2006) and led, if not to stronger government control, at least to clearer demarcation of the indigenous people as either commoners (*min*) on the side of the state, or Yao, who, by definition of *lijia* registration, were left outside.²

Government records noted the devastation caused by the wars. “The villages were destroyed, white bones lay all over, the lifeless land left overgrown by grass,” its records noted. No doubt, in an act of withdrawing the civil government from a poorly defended military front, in 1468, the county seat of Dianbai was moved from Changpo to the military garrison of Shendian (Shendian *wei*) on the coast. (*Guangdong tongzhi chugao* 1535: 10:21 a-b) One hundred years later, in 1565, when the Madam Xian temple in the Gaozhou prefectural city of Maoming was rebuilt, a contemporary stele recorded that this temple had also been moved from Changpo.³ This is the earliest extant record of a Ming dynasty Madam Xian Temple in Gaozhou, and its location in the county seat is credible.

² Liu 1997: pp.101-102 points out that the status of *min* was obtainable by registering in the *lijia*, which would required paying taxes and providing labour services. The Yao, who were not included in the household registration and did not provide labour services, could have become *min* by registering. The reverse could also be true: *min* who evaded tax or pretended to be the Yao could have been labelled by the government as *jianmin* (treacherous *min*) or *maoyao* (deceitful *Yao*). Hence social identities had been mingled with ethnic labels as ethnic differentiation was mixed up with household registration.

³ Stele entitled “Chongxiu qiaoguo xianshi miao bei,” 1564, preserved in the Madam Xian temple in Gaozhou.

A memorial submitted by Dai Jing (*jinsi* of 1526), Investigating Censor of Guangdong, to argue that the county seat should be returned to old Dianbai, that is to say, Changpo, noted:

The mountains on the eastern, western and northern sides of Gaozhou prefecture are all parts of the Yao mountains. Shizipo, old Dianbai, as well as Zhongdao and Jikou of Xinyi county are of strategic importance In the early days of the [present] dynasty, following the precedence of the Song and the Yuan dynasties, the Dianbai county seat was established to control the road on which the Yao people might come and go. (*Guangdong tongzhi chugao* date: 35:22 a-b)

Dai Jing considered that moving the county seat was wrong, hence he memorialized for resuming the Dianbai county at Changpo.

Nevertheless, Dianbai was never returned to Changpo, which remained desolate for most of the sixteenth century. Dai Jing visited Changpo and left an eye-witness account.

I saw no inhabitant in tens of *li*... only a few people walking on the path, residing in thatched huts, or making a living selling cakes. I approached them, asking about their lives. They shed tears, replying that they feared the Yao bandits marauding and dared not live close to the mountains to cultivate [land] for they were sure to be slaughtered. (*Guangdong tongzhi chugao* date: 35:22 a-b)

Some decades later, the gazetteer of Gaozhou prefecture of Wanli reign (1573-1620) continued:

Of such places as the suburbs by the city walls and Langsha, both formerly included in Dianbai, Anhuai was given six districts, which were transferred to Maoming [county]. The five districts of Xiabo were left in Dianbai. The upper and lower precincts were part of its purview. If rehabilitated, these could be rich farming areas. As the population of this expanse of land was small, migrants from Shaozhou were recruited to live among them. Thereafter, the registration unit, *tu*, was set up. (*Wanli Gaozhoufu zhi* c. 16th century 1:25b)

These two passages outline the history of old Dianbai. The area was much dislocated, but it was never quite depleted of people. One might even think traffic continued on the road through old Dianbai if it was worthwhile for some people to sell cakes on that road on which Dai Jing traveled. Perhaps it was the same road, leading from Gaozhou up to the West River and into Guangzhou and northern Guangdong, which would have brought the migrants from Shaozhou in northern Guangdong.

Nevertheless, as Madam Xian's temple was moved into Maoming city, present-day Gaozhou, and given official recognition, her temple in Old Dianbai was revived. The 1565 stele noted that sacrifice in spring and autumn was conducted there by officials. The Guangdong provincial gazetteer of 1561 records:

The Madam Xian temple is on the hill slope outside the east gate of the prefectural city . . . On Madam Xian's birthday in the second month of the year, the prefect would lead officials to offer sacrifice [to the temple]. There is another temple on the foothill of Baoshan in Old Dianbai. In the twenty-sixth year of the Jiajing reign [1547] the prefect Ouyang Lie visited the old temple site and rebuilt

the temple. Every year the prefect would send ritual officials there to offer sacrifice. At the city moat and training ground, rent was collected from land reclaimed and from the Madashi Market to be used for sacrifice. In Huazhou, Dianbai, Wuchuan and Shicheng, there are temples at which she is sacrificed to. (*Jiajing Guangdong tongzhi* 1561 30:65a-b)

The temple at old Dianbai held land from which rent was collected. Significant also is that Madam Xian's temples might be found in all the surrounding counties in Gaozhou prefecture. This is the earliest Ming dynasty reference available of the spread of her cult.

We have in these records reference to the rebuilding of the social order after the long turmoil of the Yao wars. Gaozhou officials and local people were all involved in it. The 1565 stele made a special reference to the rebuilding of the temple at Maoming city. The stele did not name who the benefactors were. Yet, later steles, set up in the Qing dynasty, traced the history of the temple back to the late Ming, noting that the ancestors of numerous people of different surnames had jointly purchased the plot of land donated to the temple but had registered it under the Xian surname.⁴

It is hard to tell for how long officials maintained regular sacrifice at old Dianbai. The presence of a temple at Maoming city, where the prefectural city was located, must have made it convenient for officials to sacrifice to Madam Xian locally. Other than common people, the Madam Xian temple of Maoming city was visited by officials and local notables, who wrote poetry and engaged in social activities there. Among the temples in the county, the Madam Xian temple in Shendian *wei* was also

⁴ Steles entitled "Juanzu jishi bei" 1749 and "Jishi bei" 1822, both preserved in the Madam Xian temple in Gaozhou.

rising as the Ming military settlement became the county seat of Dianbai. The old temple at Changpo, that is, old Dianbai, slipped from its status as a government-supported centre. It reverted to the Feng surname, descendants of Feng Bao, and that was how we found it when we visited it in recent years.

The Ming records of the Wanli period (late sixteenth and early seventeenth century) continued to dwell on Yao uprisings. However, it would be more correct to read those records as the reflection of an effort to control the road that Dai Jing had traveled on. Official efforts focused on an area known as Luopang (present day Luoding city). Luopang lay astride the route which linked Gaozhou to the West River and had long been known to be inhabited by uncooperative Yao. Showing a sentiment that would have been shared by his contemporaries in Guangdong, the most senior Cantonese official of the Jiajing period, Huo Tao, had written:

The bandits in Luopang and Lushui had brought calamity [to local communities] for seventy or eighty years. Yet, the government is still not willing to discuss pacification. It is able to pacify them but is unwilling to. (Huo 1860 10:2b)

As Dai Jing had found, the route might have been desolate, but it was not devoid of traffic.

By 1576, Lin Yunyi, Governor General of Guangdong and Guangxi, fought the Yao of Luopang. Soon after that, Lin memorialized for opening a road from Guangzhou to the south-western parts of Guangdong via Luopang. He said:

[We] have again built counties and garrisons on the East and West Mountains. So, blood now runs through the pulse in three directions. However, the four hundred

li [124 miles] from the south of Shuangshui River to Gaozhou prefecture was all formerly occupied by bandit lairs. Now the route has to be converted to a courier road. After that, trees can be cut down and the road can pass through. (Ying 1581 26: 47b-48b)

As always, setting up the courier road means maintaining government control. However, a well controlled road would mean peaceful traffic, and, hence, more trade. The road to the West River would open up the southwest of Guangdong. Hitherto, traffic from Guangzhou came by sea to Dianbai, and continued overland to Gaozhou. With the new road, traffic could come down from the West River direct to Gaozhou. Gaozhou would become important as the first station for trade to the south of the mountains of Luopang.

The Feng surname at Changpo

For the Feng surname at Changpo, the people who maintained the Madam Xian Temple even when it ceased to be attended by government officials, we can turn to genealogies.

Nevertheless, of the extant Feng surname genealogies, only one volume comes from a Changpo family. The rest, however, are far from being irrelevant to Changpo's history: some include entries that are themselves derived from Changpo genealogies not available to us, and others have much to say about how Changpo came to be regarded by the Feng surname in the wider context of Guangdong and Guangxi.

The most complete genealogy is the "Gaoliang Feng surname genealogical chart" compiled by Mr Feng Shoulun of Changpo whom we met through our fieldwork and

who was engaged in compiling a Feng surname genealogy for all of China. In his compilation, he included a genealogical chart along with the history of the lineage. (Feng 1990: 45)

The chart is reproduced in Table 7-1. It shows that Feng Bao and Madam Xian were regarded as progenitors of the Feng surname. For six generations starting from the progenitors, the records are complete. Up to the sixth generation, the ancestral names may be corroborated by the official histories. From the ninth to the twenty-second generations, the chart provides only one single line of descent, with many gaps in the ancestral names, while the origin of the occasional posthumous names is unrecorded. Clearly, the record is sparse for these generations. From Jingqing of the twenty-third generation, the chart becomes more elaborate; branch lineages begin to make an appearance. Feng Shoulun acknowledges the source for this record: the biography of Jingqing is recorded in the “Mucuantang Feng surname genealogy” of Xiadong village. Jingqing had resided in Niutian district of Baochang county in Nanxiong prefecture. In 1182, in order to escape from the disaster created by the elopement of an imperial consort, his two sons, Xuanzheng and Xuanhou, migrated along with other people to Gaoliang. At this point, readers familiar with Guangdong genealogies would realize that on top of the history of Feng Bao and Madam Xian has been added the origin myth of many a Guangdong lineage, that is, the origin of the lineage from migration from Zhuji *xiang* of Nanxiong prefecture in northern Guangdong. (Feng 1990: 45)

The “Mucuantang Feng surname genealogy” is not available, but an understanding of the layering of two lineage origin legends in this early period may be gleaned from the Genealogy of the Feng Surname at Chongzuo county in Guangxi province. The Chongzhuo genealogy includes a 1602 essay which records a group of

people “who wanted to compile a genealogy to connect people of the same surname to the same origin, to build an ancestral hall to house the glorious spirits of the lineage and to set up an ancestral trust to provide for annual sacrifice.” (*Guangxi Chongzuo Fengshi zupu* nd, “*Guangxi Chongzuo zupu xu.*”)

The essay also notes how the Feng surname traced their ancestor. They had forgotten the genealogy, but they found an 81-year-old man who had a written copy of it. So, this group of people incorporated themselves into this genealogy as they made another copy of it, in full belief that they were merely filling in missing gaps in a “true history.”

The genealogy did not mention Madam Xian, but noted the origin of the Feng surname from the time of King Wu in the Zhou dynasty, who awarded them the surname. By the time of the Warring Kingdom, the lineage had dispersed, and some descendants, by the Tang dynasty, had settled down in Shibi district in Tingzhou prefecture of Fujian province. The reference to Shibi is notable, for that place was known as the origin of the Hakka people. The essayist probably understood this implication, for he explained that the Fujian progenitor was his progenitor’s “brother,” and the principal line of descent had settled down in Jieyang county, also known as a Hakka homeland. (Leong, 1997: 64)

In recording the history of the principal line of descent, the essayist of 1602 told the story that their ancestors had, at one time, adopted another surname and reverted to the Feng surname later. The significance of the story is such that the related passage should be translated in full:

The principal line came from Dawuchang, and they first settled at Liekeng. They followed their mother as she went over to the Wang surname, and so it was said

there was a Wang Five-two *lang*, and a Wang Five-three *lang*. There were also those who went to live with their paternal uncle (father's sister's husband) and so it was said there was a Lu Number One *lang*, who changed to the Feng surname, and so was known as Feng Twenty-four *lang*. His wife, Madam Wen, gave birth to Feng Yuanjin, who was born in 1484 and who died in 1536, and the Feng [surname] took the place of [the Lu surname]. For that reason, his descendants now serve as *lizhang* [head of the *li* registration unit] of the 17th *tu* precinct of Lantian district, Jieyang county, and they live scattered in Lantian. (*Guangxi Chongzuo Fengshi zupu* nd, "Guangxi Chongzuo *zupu xu*.")

This interesting passage shows that some time between the death of Feng Yuanjin in 1536, and the composition of this essay in 1602, some people of the Feng surname had in their possession a "genealogy" which included names bearing different surnames (Wang, Lu and Feng). Stories relating the remarriage of a female ancestor were designed to explain this anomaly. It was known that Feng Yuanjin, a historic person, and father of people who could be located in registered households in Lantian county, had a father who had changed his name from Lu to Feng.

The presence of different surnames in a lineage where quite a few people were known as '*lang*' may now be interpreted differently in the light of Chen Yonghai's study of Hakka genealogies. The supposed 'genealogy' that these people had in their possession was an ordination record of the Lushan tradition, recording not necessarily succession by birth, but the succession of religious powers. According to Chen, such ordination records were commonly adopted as proto-genealogies when genealogies came to be compiled. (Chan, 1995) In this case, the compiling of a genealogy among this group of people may be dated quite precisely to the end of the sixteenth century.

So far, there is no indication that the people who had been the subject of the 1602 genealogy were resident in Gaozhou. Yet, a common origin of the Feng surname in Gaozhou must have gained ascendance by the eighteenth century for a province-wide Feng surname ancestral hall to be constructed in Guangzhou in 1736. However, from the stele of that year recording the construction effort, it is clear that the principal contributors were not residents of Gaozhou, but scholar gentry from Nanhai county, near Guangzhou. Moreover, there is no sign that Gaozhou lineages took part in the building effort. (*Fengshi zupu* nd: 35-36)

Like other pan-lineage ancestral halls which were built in Guangzhou in the eighteenth century, the Feng Surname Ancestral Hall accepted contribution by shares. For 20 taels, a Feng surname lineage from anywhere, but principally in Guangdong, might contribute a share and provide a representative to attend the organization meeting to be held in Guangzhou. This pan-lineage ancestral sacrifice arrangement adopted Feng Bao and Madam Xian as their progenitors. The stele inscription does not refer to the compilation of a pan-lineage genealogy. Nevertheless, because arrangement was made for each share-holder lineage to deposit the spirit tablets of their branch progenitors on the common altar, in the order of their pan-lineage position and reflecting their respective historic time (specifically, “in the successive order in the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing periods,”) the arrangement of these tablets on the altar would itself reflect the over-arching structure of a pan-lineage. (*Fengshi zupu* nd: 35-36)

Subsequent to the establishment of the Guangzhou common ancestral hall, Feng Bao and Madam Xian were more widely publicized in locally compiled genealogies. The “Genealogy of the Feng Surname at Chongzuo county in Guangxi province” cited earlier, for instance, includes an essay on “The origins of the Feng surname” which

was the source for the genealogical chart constructed currently (as illustrated in Table 7.1). It stresses the descent of the branch from Feng Jing, who settled in Dacun village of Xiadong district in Gaozhou prefecture in 1377 in the early Ming dynasty, among whose descendants a sub-branch moved to Mucuantang. There is obviously here a duplication of a story preserved within different versions of the genealogy, for Feng Jing, like Feng Jingqing also of Xiadong, had likewise migrated to this district from Nanxiong in northern Guangdong.

Another genealogy which traces itself from Mucuantang is the “Feng Surname Genealogy of Zhoucun”. This branch traces itself from ancestor Feng Han, whom genealogist Feng Shoulun notes as Feng Jing’s brother. This genealogy is particularly interesting for the number of prefaces it has collected from earlier editions. In particular, it includes the following story of two of the four grandsons of the progenitor migrating to Xiadong:

Under pressure to provide military ration, the two brothers had to escape. They wore on themselves three statues of deities to whom they offered incense (*pei you xianghuo shenxiang*), known as the three “true ones” [that is, immortals], Huang, Shen and Zhao. They went from Zhoucun village to a place known as Shangshijiao in Fengsan, Shicheng at Lianjiang county. Feng Zhou [ie one of the brothers] changed his name to the Venerable Fu Number One, and Feng Gui [the other brother] changed his to Fu Number Two. When the two venerable gentlemen died, Fu Number One’s descendants moved to Shangshan, and some moved from Shangshan to Beipai, Xiadong and other places. Venerable Fu Number One had two sons. The senior was Fanguang and the younger was Fawang. These two gentlemen both lived in the Ming dynasty. For this reason, I

think the branch at Chongzuo in Guangxi province had moved there from Enping county in Guangdong. It is found in a note in the Chongzuo genealogy that their progenitor was Venerable Fawang, and so there is similarity. However, it is not known where the Venerable Fawang's [other] descendants went. (*Zhoucun Fengshi zupu* nd: "*Jizuan zupu xu*," 1931)

It is significant that in running away from the village, the two brothers had carried with them not ancestral tablets but the statues of three deities. Also, it would seem that it was the discovery of names in common ancestors that suggested common descent to the genealogist. It would seem that the groups that compiled the genealogy had not, prior to the compilation, been part of an over-arching lineage, but that they might have had protective gods with whom they had established a long-term relationship.

The various stories derived from the Chongzuo genealogy illustrate quite succinctly, therefore, the process of genealogical compilation. In the Wanli period, the genealogist had distilled the lineage's history from other genealogies and merged different accounts into a history. However, because Fawang was not included into this compilation, it made up its own. There was no reference to Feng Bao or Madam Xian. Instead, they appealed to ancestors who had the character '*lang*' in their names. By the Qing dynasty, the Feng surname of such villages as Jiupo, Zhoucun and Xiadong, traced ancestry to Feng Bao and Madam Xian, and, in so doing, "re-discovered Jiucheng village in Gaoliang [that is, Gaozhou]." (*Guangxi chongzuo Fengshi zupu* nd: "*Dunsuo zhen jiupo cun pu xu*") This was part of the process which led to scholars of the Feng surname setting up the Feng surname ancestral hall in Guangzhou. Compilation of the genealogy required the merging of lineage legends, including the

Zhujixiang legend which would require the ancestors to have moved from Gaozhou to northern Guangdong and back again. Such genealogical tracing linked one local community of the Feng surname to another. The reconstructed ancestry becomes real in prayers of offering which set Feng Bao and Madam Xian into lines of descent derived from multi-sources:

Primordial ancestor by the posthumous name of Gao, first ancestor of Fengcheng by the posthumous name of Biwan, ancestor Beiyan by the posthumous name of Hong, first ancestor to settle in Guangdong by the posthumous name of Ye, fourth-generation ancestor awarded the imperial title of the Venerable Zhaoguo by the posthumous name of Bao, ancestor Bao's consort, Madam Zhaoguo by imperial award, sons of our ancestor, by their posthumous names of Hua, Kuan, Su Yuandeng, Hui, eldest *lang*, second *lang* ... second generation uncler the venerable Twenty-two and Twenty-three, ancestor by the posthumous name of Twenty-nine.... (*Guangxi Chongzuo Fengshi zupu* nd: “*Jisi zhuwen zhi jizuci zhengkan zhuwen*”)

From the sixteenth century in the mid-Ming dynasty, to the nineteenth century in the Qing, many villages and lineages in Guangdong, Guangxi and even Hainan built up a connection with Feng Bao and Madam Xian, and, as they did so, their genealogies noted that “although it is not definite whether they might move far and near, they would not depart from Jiucheng in Gaoliang.” Comparatively, despite the frequent reference to its name in Guangdong genealogies, Jiucheng itself was quite quiet.

According to Feng Shoulun, who has compiled the genealogical chart for

Jiucheng, the Feng surname of Jiucheng were descended from ancestor Xuanzheng. Xuanzheng belonged to the 24th generation. Xuanzheng's descendents divided into three lines, being respectively descended from ancestor Di'an, Dijian and Dichang, all of the 31st generation. Di'an was the founding ancestor of Jiucheng. (Feng, 1990: 47)

The word “*di*” was used for the act of offering in ancestral halls conducted by aristocrats to their ancestors in ancient times, and the use of the same character for these early ancestral names is, therefore, significant.

Some interesting corroboration may be found by comparing this account with the Genealogy of the Feng surname of Gaoliang obtained at Didong in Jiucheng.

(*Gaoliang Fengshi zupu ji*) This genealogy lists Ye as the first ancestor and Bao as the fourth ancestor. The record continues to ancestor Huaijun in the nineteenth generation, and it falls silent from there until Di'an. From thereon, it records the Didong genealogy, with Di'an appearing as the first generation. It gives the locations and *fengshui* directions of the ancestors' -- including their wives' -- graves. Dates of birth and death are not recorded for early ancestors on this list, but they appear from the eleventh generation until the fourteenth generation, without the titles of the reigning emperors as was the custom in recording dates. Thereafter, we are told that ancestor Dayu of the fifteenth generation was born in the Daoguang period (1821-1845). If, beginning from Dayu, we work backwards, assuming 30 years for each generation, we can estimate that Di'an lived in c. 1400, that is to say, in the early Ming dynasty. Moreover, if it was indeed common practice, as scholars of lineage history argue, that a genealogy would often include the five generations leading to the compiler, the genealogy would have been compiled around 1550. The eleventh generation, from which time dates of birth and death appear, would have lived in c. 1730. It is likely that the dates of birth and death had been made available from records left on

ancestral spirit tablets. That would imply that by 1730, an altar for sacrifice to a large number of ancestors had been set up, perhaps in an ancestral hall. In other words, genealogical tracing began in the mid Ming dynasty, but regular collective sacrifice to the ancestor began only by the mid Qing.

These estimates may be corroborated from the spirit tablets which may now be found in the Jiucheng ancestral hall. Di'an is described on his tablet as belonging to the thirty-first generation, and the latest additions come from the fifty-second generation. Allowing again 30 years for each generation, the twenty generations in between would have added up to 600 years. Again, Di'an would have lived in c. 1400.

Among the notable lineages of Gaozhou, aside from the Feng surname was also the Xian surname. At a distance of 7.5 miles from Jiucheng is Leidong village, occupied by people of the Xian surname. They believe that Leidong was the residence of Madam Xian, and they demonstrate this claim through a ceremony known as "Our aunt (that is, Madam Xian) returning home to see her natal family." Until 1991, Leidong did not have a comprehensive genealogy, only family genealogies known locally as "running-water accounts" (*liushui bu*).⁵ The 1991 compilation, using the

⁵ The Xian surname genealogy explains: "Legend has it that the Xian surname once had a genealogy but no lineage members has ever seen the original nor has anyone heard about its contents. Up to now since the founding ancestor [of the Xian surname] came to reside in Leidong, laying the foundation of the Xian surname, no one had ever compiled and printed a formal genealogy. There are only individually compiled and hand-copied "journals" that are written by different Xian surname persons of different localities or stories that have been passed on through generations... Now lineage members hold hand-written copies whose records are not exactly the same... After thorough investigation and research, [we have] removed the carelessly written

“running-water accounts,” traces the ancestry of the lineage to Xian Jin of the Eastern Jin (317-420) who fought pirates in the area. Settlement in Leidong began with Dishou, and no record exists of the generations between the two. The character “*di*” in Dishou’s name is probably a variation of the character “*di*” in the names of the early ancestors of the Feng surname. The character “*ji*” (foundation) is found in the names of the second ancestors, which fits well with the idea of settlement. From Dishou downwards, the record of ancestors’ names is more abundant. The single “running-water account of birth years” (*Xianshi niangeng liushui bu*) we have collected records the names of male and female ancestors, official titles and grave sites. Dates of birth and death are not recorded for the first seven generations, but they are from eighth-generation ancestor Xian Wu (b. 1732). Again, taking 30 years as a generation, Dishou, founding ancestor, would have lived in c. 1500. As Madam Xian was a married-out daughter, although the Xian surname genealogy records her history, she was not included in the descent lines.

Two ancestral halls are found at Leidong, one in the name of the third-generation ancestor and the other, the fifth-generation ancestor. The 30-year generation reckoning would date the latter to the early seventeenth-century, that is, towards the end of the Ming dynasty. A “running-water account” records that ancestral halls were in existence in the Daoguang era (1821-1845) and that in 1868, a tenth-generation ancestor donated property producing annually 28 *shi* of grain in rent to the ancestral trust. These references indicate that lineage organization was set up rather late, probably towards the end of the Ming or early Qing, from around which time

texts but kept the refined ones, eradicated the false stories but kept the true ones. Hence [we have] obtained the materials for compiling [this genealogy]. (*Xianshi zupu* 1991: *Houji*)

individual households maintained their “running-water accounts.”

Government efforts to give Madam Xian due recognition intensified after the Taiping Rebellion. After the rebellion, repairing temples that were destroyed during the unrest became part of the effort to rebuild social order. In 1863, Gaozhou officials and merchants donated money to rebuild the Madam Xian temple in Changpo.⁶ In the same year, the Sacrificial Hall for the Glorious and Loyal (*Zhaozhong ci*) of Gaozhou prefecture, which was built in 1803 to offer sacrifice to those who died for local causes, was moved into the Madam Xian temple in Maoming. (Yang nd: “Gaijian Gaoyi zhaozhong ci ji”) In 1864, Guo Songtao, acting Governor of Guangdong, memorialized for granting a title to Madam Xian and her five legendary followers. Moreover, Guo proposed to appoint the direct descendants of Feng Bao to offer sacrifice to the deities. (*Guangxu Maoming xianzhi* 1888 2:17a-b) Who the true direct descendants of Feng Bao were was unsettled, but, from gazetteer sources, it would seem that the Feng surname in Changpo possibly acquired the legal recognition as the direct descendants of Feng Bao from the imperial court by the 1860s, for they were put in charge of sacrifice in the celebration of the award of a title to Madam Xian .

In 1870, groups of people of the Feng surname, under the pretext that they were members of one overarching lineage, disputed the ownership of a grave site at Changpo. Interestingly, the dispute had been initiated by members of the gentry of the Feng surname in new Dianbai, and the suit was filed at Maoming city, that is to say, at the prefectural level. According to their petition, prior to the Taiping Rebellion, there had been a grave at Shandou Hill near Changpo at which were located grave stones, stone lions and flag posts. Those objects were destroyed during the rebellion, and, so,

⁶ Stele entitled “*Xiufu jiucheng Xianmiao shenxiang yin*,” 1863, seen in the Madam Xian temple in Jiucheng village, Changpo.

the lineage had collected donations from its branches for their restoration. No sooner had work begun, however, people of the Huang surname appeared, “each holding guns and weapons,” making the counter-claim that the grave had been theirs. The Huang surname claimed that the Feng surname had mistakenly assumed that Changpo village had been known as Shandou, and that Shandou referred to a location in new Dianbai. It must appear anomalous, in any case, that members of the gentry in new Dianbai would have made that mistake. (Zhang, 1996: 29-36) The contest for the location of Madam Xian’s grave in Dianbai or Changpo has persisted to the present day.

On Hainan, Feng surname settlements are now scattered over the entire island. Among the Li indigenous people, Feng is a major surname. Moreover, the several Feng surname genealogies collected on Hainan all trace their origin to Madam Xian and Feng Bao. In view of the wide prevalence of Madam Xian shrines -- or figures of Madam Xian on temple altars -- I suspect that, over the years, the “standardisation of the deities”, to follow James Watson’s term, has been going on. (Watson, 1985) This suspicion may be corroborated by my experience in 2006 in Shihuo village of Chengmai county on the northwestern coast of the island. There is a temple in that village dedicated to Madam Xian, Feng Bao and several ancestors of the Feng surname, known as General Big Tree, the Venerable Jinyong, the Venerable Banshi, and Madam Feng Jiuniang. An elderly villager said that before Liberation, there was a Feng surname ancestral hall adjacent to the temple, but it was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. However, when he was a child, he did not know of Madam Xian’s stories, only that their female deity was an ancestor. A small stele commemorating the repair of a branch ancestral hall in 1797 was also silent about the

villagers being the descendants of Feng Bao or Madam Xian.⁷ However, in the “Feng Surname Genealogy of Big Tree Hall” compiled in 1981, Feng Bao is noted as the progenitor of the villagers. (*Dashutang Fengshi zupu* 1981) This hazy knowledge of Madam Xian as ancestor I also encountered in Xinpo at Qiongsan City, where people of the Liang surname sought an affiliation with Madam Xian by claiming that she was their ancestor’s adopted daughter. They now hold an annual procession in which the villagers dress up as Madam Xian’s troops (known as the Junpo *jie*, the Military Fields festival). Significantly, in conversation, the villagers refer to the deity not as Madam Xian but as Liang Shapo (Old Mother Liangsha, Liangsha being the name of the village’s location), and then equate Liang Shapo to Madam Xian. These tale-telling signs give a sense of the amorphous character of local deities, Madam Xian included. It is telling that despite the reference to woman tribal chiefs on Hainan in the Song dynasty, none but Madam Xian has remained as a target of worship.

On buildings and festivals: the lineage on the ground

The location of Madam Xian’s grave is not a matter that is readily resolved on the basis of extant record. The history of lineage building, nevertheless, can be partially corroborated by the architecture of the complex at Changpo which includes the Madam Xian Temple and the Feng Surname Ancestral Hall standing side by side. It may also be accepted that the association of Changpo with the Feng surname had been long-standing. From the Southern Song dynasty, it had been said that a Feng family village (Fengjia *cun*) was located in Gaozhou. Reference to it may be found in Wang Xiangzhi’s *Yudi jisheng* written in the Jiading period (1208-1224), who added

⁷ Stele entitled “*Wangu liufang bei*” (1797), seen in Shihuo village of Dengmai courtly.

that according to the Song geography text, *Taiping huanyu ji*, Feng An had lived there. (Wang, 1962[1860]: 117:5b) Local people believe that it was located in Changpo. We need not jump to the conclusion that they must have been right. However, it may be recalled that Changpo was the county seat of Dianbai until that was moved in 1468 and that the Madam Xian temple there was given official recognition in the sixteenth century.

The likelihood that the Feng surname and the Madam Xian temple came to be closely connected may be discovered in the temple architectural layout. Both the ancestral hall and the temple have been built to a standard structure: from the front entrance, three compartments, with the objects of sacrifice located on an altar in the last. In Madam Xian's temple, these objects include the statues of Madam Xian, the venerable Feng Bao, the commanders Gan, Zhu and Pan, ferocious deities who had been pacified and recruited by Madam Xian into her service (*Guangxu Gaozhoufu zhi* 1889: 54:2b), and in the side halls, numerous deities including Guanyin, the eighteen Lohan, and Guandi. In the ancestral hall, on the altars are deposited ancestral tablets. On the middle altar are 129 tablets from Feng Bao to the thirty-sixth generation, and on the side altars, 550 tablets from the thirty-seventh to fifty-second generations.

Interestingly, in between the temple and the ancestral hall, somewhat towards the back of the two buildings, is a tiny temple dedicated to Madam Xian and Feng Bao, sitting side by side, known as the Hehe (Harmony in Union) Temple. To understand the function of this building, it is important to compare the temple complex here to the Madam Xian Temple in Gaozhou, that is, the new Dianbai to which the temple was moved in 1535. The Gaozhou Madam Xian Temple consists of two buildings, one in front of the other, with Madam Xian's statue placed on the altar in the front building, and statues of Hehe in the back building. Until it was destroyed in the Cultural

Revolution, towards the left-hand side of the temple building was another temple, dedicated to the local Immortal Pan. Comparing the two, one might argue that it was standard in the Ming dynasty to put Madam Xian on a front altar, and to have at its back, another altar dedicated to Hehe. For this reason, both temple complexes include the front-back arrangement of two temples. Changpo, however, built the ancestral hall when it adopted lineage practices, but in Gaozhou, this did not happen because the temple was maintained by the government. The ancestral hall in Changpo, therefore, must have been built after Madam Xian had been sacrificed to there.

Like most villages in the Gaozhou area, Changpo has its share of temple festivals. One of the most peculiar of these is the “killing of the cow” held during Madam Xian’s birthday on the 26th day of the Eleventh Month. The ceremony was celebrated with the help of a daoist. On the occasion I witnessed it, in 2007, he began by throwing the divining blocks, presumably to determine the deities’ intentions, the cow was brought into the temple prepared for the occasion, and the daoist walked around the compound several times with it. After that, the animal was taken out of the temple and killed with a knife that had been ritually cleansed. The meat was sold to eager villagers who were queuing up for it.

The details of the ceremony are worth noting. The ceremony involved several martial performances by the daoist. It was conducted in front of the statues of the three commanders, Gan, Zhu and Pan, rather than Madam Xian. The local people tell a tale of romance on top of their pacification by Madam Xian. Gan, Zhu and Pan were Madam Xian’s admirers and she had agreed to marry the one who succeeded in defeating her. As it was, she defeated them and they became her followers. According to the villagers, the cow was award for the commanders given by Madam Xian. No beef was offered to Madam Xian, only a pig’s head and chickens, but the cow’s head,

tail and fried beef were offered to the commanders.⁸ When in 1864, Madam Xian was awarded an imperial title, her commanders were likewise awarded. Such commanders by other names were also found in other Madam Xian temples in Gaozhou.

Cow sacrifice was certainly not part of any officially sanctioned ceremony in the village. The following record written by Su Shi, who was exiled to Hainan Island in 1097, is relevant:

Beyond the [southern] ranges, it is the custom to slaughter cows, especially in Hainan.... They have sorcerers as medical doctors, and cows as medicines. Occasionally, there are those who take medicines. Sorcerers become angry with them, and say: The gods are angry, and your illness will not be cured. Then, relatives all turn down medicines and prevent the doctors from entering their houses, and both the patient and the cow die. (Su 1987, [11-12 cent.]: 93:20b-21a)

Obviously, the local people realised that the ritual cow killing was not part of official-sanctioned practice, hence the distinction drawn between sacrifice to the commanders and Madam Xian. The sorcerers in Su Shi's account had also, by 2007, been replaced by daoists.

Another very peculiar ritual in this area is the exorcism of evil spirits on occasions known as the *nianli* (annual custom) during the middle of the First Month every year which the villagers still practice.⁹ The central element of the occasion

⁸ Interviewed with Mr. Deng Pingjia, the manager of the Madam Xian temple in Changpo in January 2007.

⁹ I observed the celebration at several villages and in Gaozhou city in February 2007.

It should be noted that although even the gazetteers use the character *li* (meaning

consists of the daoist performing ceremonies and providing a paper boat to convey evil influences away from the villages. In order to do so, however, villagers in full fan-fare, carry Madam Xian in her sedan chair on a procession to tour all the villages in the neighbourhood. As always, custom dictates which villages are included or excluded. The unit of participation is the neighbourhood of villages focused on the *she* territorial shrine.

In the eighteenth century, Liang Liande of Maoming (*jins* of 1727) had written about these ceremonies from his grandfather's times:

A hundred years have passed since my grandfather led the village people in spring and autumn sacrifice. The *she* was formerly housed in a thatched hut and was rebuilt with a tiled roof when ancestors Quyu moved to the Shuai Hall from the south of the city. Eighty years later, in the Gengwu year of Qianlong (1750), the temples were collapsing and I donated 20 or more taels to repair them. (Liang nd: "Lantian *she* *lixu*")

In other words, the sacrifice must have been conducted from at least the early Qing dynasty. In the following valuable account, Liang describes what happened for the sacrifice at the New Year:

The *she* custom (*she* festival by local regulation) was to sacrifice to the gods at

custom) for the term *nianli*, the character is homophonous with *li*, dangerous spirits, as used in the term *jili*, the sacrifice to wandering spirits conducted annually in the county according to Ming dynasty statutes.

the first full moon. On the 10th day, the gentry and elders in the villages purchase three to five lanterns, and they take with them wine to drink at the temple. I can still remember when I was a child, following my father and brothers, fighting for sweets with other children. Every year, they did that for three days. On the 13th day, we invited the gods' presence and conducted the *jiao*. At the homes of the four leaders of the occasion, their children waved fans and sang songs, literary and literate people wrote poetry in the company of the village elders, and sometimes there were good lines. We had performances, let off firecrackers, walked around under the moon with our lanterns, and many spectators came along. On the 15th, the largest crowds appeared. Everyone would sit on a mat on the floor and drink, and they enjoyed themselves until early morning. This was the pleasure of living in the village. (Liang nd: "Lantian she lixu")

This vivid account shows how pleasure blended with religion in the New Year celebration. On the six days from the 10th to the 15th of the First Month, lanterns, drinking, poetry, the children playing, firecrackers, inviting the gods and *jiao*, all blended for what Liang very briefly touched on as the sacrifice to the gods at the first full moon of the year. So, to his description, we must add what we learn from contemporary observation: the procession of the gods and the celebration of fertility connected with the lanterns, read "*deng*" but to be homophonous with "*ding*" (sons). Families that had given birth to a son during the year offered the "white flower *jiao*" in thanks to the gods, and those who would like to have a son during the year offered the "harmonious *jiao*" (*pingan jiao*). The earth god and his wife made the procession to the village to oversee the *jiao*, to which sometimes the ancestors were also invited (by the presence of an incense burner borrowed from the ancestral altar). Only when the earthgods had completed the rounds, and so cleansed the entire neighbourhood,

would Madam Xian be carried on out on the following morning.¹⁰ The lineage structure blended, therefore, with the territorial on this occasion.

However, the good times did not last, as Liang Liande described it:

Soon, the lanterns dwindled, the performances and firecrackers dwindled, the singing children dwindled and few spectators came. Because there were regulations on how the gods must be sacrificed to, more than ten people withdrew because the expenses had become too heavy. Now, only just over twenty people are involved in sacrifice at the *she*. If four people are called upon every year, they go through a cycle every four to five years. The more often they serve, the heavier the costs become and some people will withdraw.

To revive the arrangement, Liang collected donations:

I recall that my grandfather in his cap and gown led the bare-headed and bare-footed people of the village to perform ritual at the *she* god. How can I bear the thought that we give it all up because we are now poor? My younger brother Lianzan, a man who enjoys doing good in the village, donated 6 *shi* and 5 *dou* of grain to be loaned out at interest as a contribution to the cost of the celebration, but after several years, many people [who borrowed it] did not repay. I took over from the Xinwei year (1751). Until Bingzi (1756), we obtained some sums of money and so that was a little success. So, now, over thirty people are engaged in the festival. With three people for a year, a cycle comes every ten years. We

¹⁰ As observed in my own fieldwork on the *nianli* ritual in Dashuang village, Dong'an town, Gaozhou city in February 2007.

make some changes to the former regulations, but the changes we have made are recorded in the *she* account book. (Liang nd: “Lantian she lixu”)

It might well be that the celebration had its origin outside the literati customs, for only by Liang Liande’s grandfather’s time did a literatus lead the rustics in sacrifice. The passage also shows that even popular customs had their ups and downs, and they had to be maintained by active engagement.

There was also another side to the celebrations that Liang Liande left out which was recorded in the 1890 Gaozhou prefectural gazetteer:

In the Second Month, meat is divided at the *she*. Agricultural work begins again after the *she* celebration. From the Twelfth Month until then, many people celebrated the harmonious *jiao*. They lay out sugarcane and wine at their door, and the sorcerer rushes over with the god, prays, casts the divining block and then departs. The god is known as King Kang. It is not known where he comes from. The village people wear masks, and they go from door to door exorcising ghosts and singing local songs. This is known as the “annual custom” (*nianli*). Officials and members of the gentry dress in their official robes to welcome the god. They find a strong man, who, wearing a red turban[on his head], his face painted red and blue, wearing a dress that slants to one side and is sewn together at the back, and carrying a spear and waving a shield, searches for fierce ghosts and drives them out. This is close to ancient custom. (*Guangxu Gaozhoufu zhi*: 6:12b)

That was the “*nuo*” ritual, still practiced nowadays in nearby Leizhou.

When we compare the records of the Qing dynasty and what we can still see in the field, it can be seen that these celebrations are conducted at the *she* territorial unit and the Madam Xian temple, and a very long historical gap exists between the historic Madam Xian, native chieftain, and Madam Xian the deity, sacrificed to in the temples. Yet, despite the gaps, a continuous thread might be traced which took her and her consort, Feng Bao, through local sacrifices and lineages into the present. Like the sorcerers, now taken over by the daoists, the historical persons had become deities and then ancestors. In this transformation, something is said about the history of local society, and therefore China as a whole.

Conclusion: local narratives in the context of the state

What this something is I shall relate in two short accounts.

Zhang Shi (1133-1180), the philosopher Zhu Xi's close friend, recorded this story about his great grandfather, Zhang Hong. In 1054, Zhang Hong arrived at Leizhou to assume his post as prefect and talked with the local head man. A local tradition he was told shocked him. The head man said the line of descent from the eldest son was the most respected in Leizhou, and that, even uncles had to pay respect to nephews in that line, whether or not the nephew was a little child. Zhang Hong put the violation of respect down to the lack of civilization, and historians might approach the document from the point of view that Zhang represented culture from the centre and the head man the indigenous traditions of the periphery. (*Jiaqing Leizhoufu zhi* 1811: 18:14a-b) Nevertheless, must the story be read in that manner? Just suppose the head man invited to meet the Prefect wanted to impress on the official that the local people, like him, were civilized. Suppose also that they knew the primacy of the

principal line of descent from the eldest son, which was held high in the ideology of the *zongfa*, but were not aware that by the northern Song, the likes of Zhang Hong had been moving away from it, now toeing the line of the new lineage ideology which emphasized the seniority of generations under the possibility of setting up “subordinate lines of descent” (*xiaozong*). The local head man was not necessarily arrogant, simply out of step with the times. How can we tell which version of the story is correct?

For another statement from the locals, outside the Temple of Madam Xian in Hainan and the Temple of the Thunder God in Leizhou, stand several carved stone statues of kneeling semi-naked men with their hands bound. Their features indicate that they were meant to be indigenous people. The statues bear no dates, although some historians argue that they were carved in the Tang dynasty because the story of Madam Xian leading the natives into submission from the time of the Sui dynasty was recorded then. The trouble of this interpretation is that into the Song, it is not clear that in the Tang, submission meant inferiority. Madam Xian was accorded full respect by the Tang dynasty court, her great-grandson was sent to the imperial court as a hostage, where he grew up adept in Tang dynasty literature. The Tang dynasty sent no armies into the region, which continued under the overlordship of Madam Xian. Into the Southern Song, when the indigenous Li people on Hainan Island surrendered to the imperial court, it was recorded that the ceremony of submission consisted of the head men taking a blood oath in front of the Temple of Madam Xian, wearing native costumes, and one of them, Wang Zhongqi, dressed in official silk robe. Wang told the military commissioner that the robe had been bestowed on his grandfather by the imperial court (Zhao, 1987[12-13 cent.]: 2:25b).

Obviously, figures of semi-naked bound indigenous men do not reflect the

relationship portrayed by this description. There were wars, but wars between natives and imperial troops came after the Song dynasty. The stories of native subjugation which put the natives in an inferior status, begging to be spared death, would have belonged to a different age. The significance of the Madam Xian legends is that they break away from the stories of native subjugation. Madam Xian, the tribal chieftain, and her consort, extolled imperial authority as they blended into the celebration of local culture. She did not represent the subjugation model. The Song was a very different society from the Ming and Qing, and the subjugation model was largely a Ming and Qing creation.

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Glossary

Cangwu zongdu junmen zhi 蒼梧總督軍門志

CEN ZHONGMIAN 岑仲勉

Chang'an 長安

Changpo 長坡

Chen Baxian 陳霸先

Chen Jing 陳敬

Chen Yinke weijin nanbei chao shi jiangyan lu 陳寅恪魏晉南北朝史講演錄

Chengmai 澄邁

Chenshi xiangpu 陳氏香譜

Chongxiu Qiaoguo Xianshi miao bei 重修譙國冼氏廟碑

Chongzuo 崇左

Daijing 戴璟

Daning zhai 大寧寨

Danxian zhi 儋縣志

Danzhou 儋州

Dashutang Fengshi zupu 大樹堂馮氏族譜

Dawuchang 大屋場

Dayu 達宇

Dayuling 大庾嶺

Dengmai 澄邁

deng 燈

Di Shou 帝壽

Di'an 帝安

Dianbai 電白

Didong 低垌

ding 丁

Ding Wei 丁謂

Ding'an 定安

dī 帝

dong 峒

Dongfu ping'an jiao 冬福平安醮

Dongpo quanji 東坡全集

dou 斗

Dunsuo zhen jiupo cun pu xu 頓梭鎮舊坡村譜序

Enping 恩平

Fawang 法旺

Feng Ang 馮盎

Feng Bao 馮寶

Feng Gui 馮貴

Feng Jing 馮京

Feng Jiuniang 馮九娘

Fengshi zupu 馮氏族譜

Feng Shoulun 馮守倫

Feng Twenty-four lang 馮念四郎

Feng Ye 馮業

Feng Yuanjin 馮元進

Feng Zhongju 馮仲琚,

Feng Zhou 馮周

Fengjia cun 馮家村

Fengming dazheng gongyi chuicheng bing yuji shanhou zhitu yibao jiuan shu 奉命大
征功已垂成併預計善後之圖以保久安疏

fengshui 風水

Fengxin kaolue 馮姓考略

Five Finger Mountain 五指山

Fu Number One 富一公

Fu Number Two 富二公

Fujian 福建

Gaijian Gaoyi zhaozhong ci ji 改建高邑昭忠祠記

Gan 甘

Gao Lishi 高力士

Gaoliang qijiu wenchao 高涼耆舊文抄

Gaoliang 高粱

Gaozhou 高州

Genealogy of the Feng surname of Gaoliang 高涼馮氏族譜記

Grand Protector 刺史

Gu Jie 顧芥

Guangdong Fengshi jian dazongci xu 廣東馮氏建大宗祠序

Guangdong tongzhi chugao 廣東通志初稿

Guangdong 廣東

Guangxi chongzuo Fengshi zupu 廣西崇左馮氏族譜

Guangxi 廣西

Guangxu Gaozhoufu zhi 光緒高州府志

Guangxu Maomingxian zhi 光緒茂名縣志

Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾

Hainan 海南

Hakka 客家

Han 漢

Hehe 合和

Hengfeng gao 恆峰稿

Hu-Yue yijia 胡越一家

Hun 魂

ji 基

Jiaqing Guangdong tongzhi 嘉靖廣東通志

jiao 醮

Jiaqing Leizhoufu zhi 嘉慶雷州府志

Jikou 𤄎口

jili 祭厲

Jin Yong 進勇

Jingqing 景清

jinshi 進士

Jishi bei 記事碑

Jisi zhuwen zhi jizuci zhengkan zhuwen 祭祀祝文之祭祖祠正龕祝文

Jiupo 舊坡

Jizuan zupu xu 輯纂族譜序

Juanzu jishi bei 捐租記事碑

junpo jie 軍坡節

lang 郎

Lantian she lixu 藍田社例序

Lantian 藍田

Leidong 雷垌

Leizhou 雷州

Li *ren* 黎人

Liang Liande 梁聯德

Liang Shapo 梁沙婆

Liekeng 躡坑

lijia 里甲

Lin Yunyi 凌雲翼

Lingnan 嶺南

Lingyu wengao 嶺隅文稿

liushui bu 流水簿

lizhang 里長

li 里

Lu Number One *lang* 呂一郎

luan 亂

Luoding 羅定

Luopang 羅旁

Lu shui 綠水

Madam Xian 冼夫人

Maoming 茂名

min 民

Mucuantang 木竄塘

Nanxiong 南雄

nianli 年例

Ningji temple 寧濟廟

nuo 儺

Pan 盤

pei you xianghuo shenxiang 佩有香火神像

ping'an jiao 平安醮

Qiaoguo *furen* 譙国夫人

Qiaoguo *gong* 譙国公

Qiongshan 瓊山

Quantangwen buyi 全唐文補遺

Sansi 三司

she 社

Shendian *wei* 神電衛

shengmu 聖母

shi 石

Shibi 石壁

Shihuo 石矐

Shike shiliao xinbian 石刻史料新編

Shiyuan congshu 適園叢書

Shizipo 獅子坡

Shu Liu Zihou niufu hou 書柳子厚牛賦後

Shu shangshu biejia yuanwailang Han Yan zhi gao 署尚書別駕員外郎韓炎制誥

Shuai Hall 帥堂

Sima Guang 司馬光

Siting houji 思亭後記

Song huiyao jigao 宋會要輯稿

Songkang jun furen 宋康郡夫人

Su Shi 蘇軾

Suishu 隋書

Taiping huanyu ji 太平寰宇記

Taizi shaobao Wang Zhongming xiansheng wenji tainchicao chongbian ershiliu juan

太子少保王忠銘先生文集天池草重編二十六卷

Tang gu Kaifu yitong sansi jian neisijian zeng Yangzhou dadudu peizang tailing

Gaogong (Lishi) shendao bei 唐故開府儀同三司兼內侍監贈揚州大督都陪葬泰陵

高公（力士）神道碑

Tang Taizong 唐太宗

Tangshi yushen 唐史餘瀋

Tianxiang zhuan 天香傳

Tingzhou 汀州

tu 圖

Tujue 突厥

Wang Erniang 王二娘

Wang Honghui 王宏誨

Wang Xiangzhi 王象之

Wang Zhongqi 王仲期

Wanli Danzhou zhi 萬曆儋州志

Wanli Gaozhoufu zhi 萬曆高州府志

Wei Guang 韋洸

Wei Xiao 魏校

Wei Zheng 魏徵

Wenguan cilin 文館詞林

white flower *jiao* 白花醮

Wuxian 五顯

Xiadong 霞垌

Xian furen kaolue 洗夫人考略

Xian furen mudi susong cailiao 洗夫人墓地訴訟材料

Xian furen shiliao wenwu jiyao 洗夫人史料文物輯要

Xian Jing 洗勁

Xian Wu 洗梧

Xianshi niangeng liushui bu 洗氏年庚流水簿

Xianshi zupu 洗氏族譜

xiaozong 小宗

Xin Tangshu 新唐書

Xing Menghuang 邢夢璜

Xinjian Qiaoguo chengjing furen miao bei 新建譙國誠敬夫人廟碑

Xinyi 信宜

Xinzhou 新州

Xiufu jiucheng Xianmiao shenxiang yin 修復舊城洗廟神像引

Xu Jingzong 徐敬宗

Xu Song 徐松

Xu Yi 許益

Xuanhou 玄厚

Xuanzheng 玄政

Yang Tinggui 楊廷桂

Yao 瑤

Ying Jia 應欖

yiren 宜人

Yudi jisheng 輿地紀勝

Zhang Junheng 張均衡

Zhang Junshao 張均紹

Zhang Shi 張栻

Zhang Hong 張紘

Zhaozhong *ci* 昭忠祠

Zhiyuan guisi pingli beiji 至元癸巳平黎碑記

Zhongdao 中道

Zhou Rugua 趙汝適

Zhoucun Fengshi zupu. 州村馮氏族譜

Zhu Xi 朱熹

Zhufan zhi 諸番志

Zhuji xiang 珠璣巷

Zhu 祝

Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑒

zongfa 宗法

Table 7-1 Feng Surname Genealog from Generation 1 to Generation 6

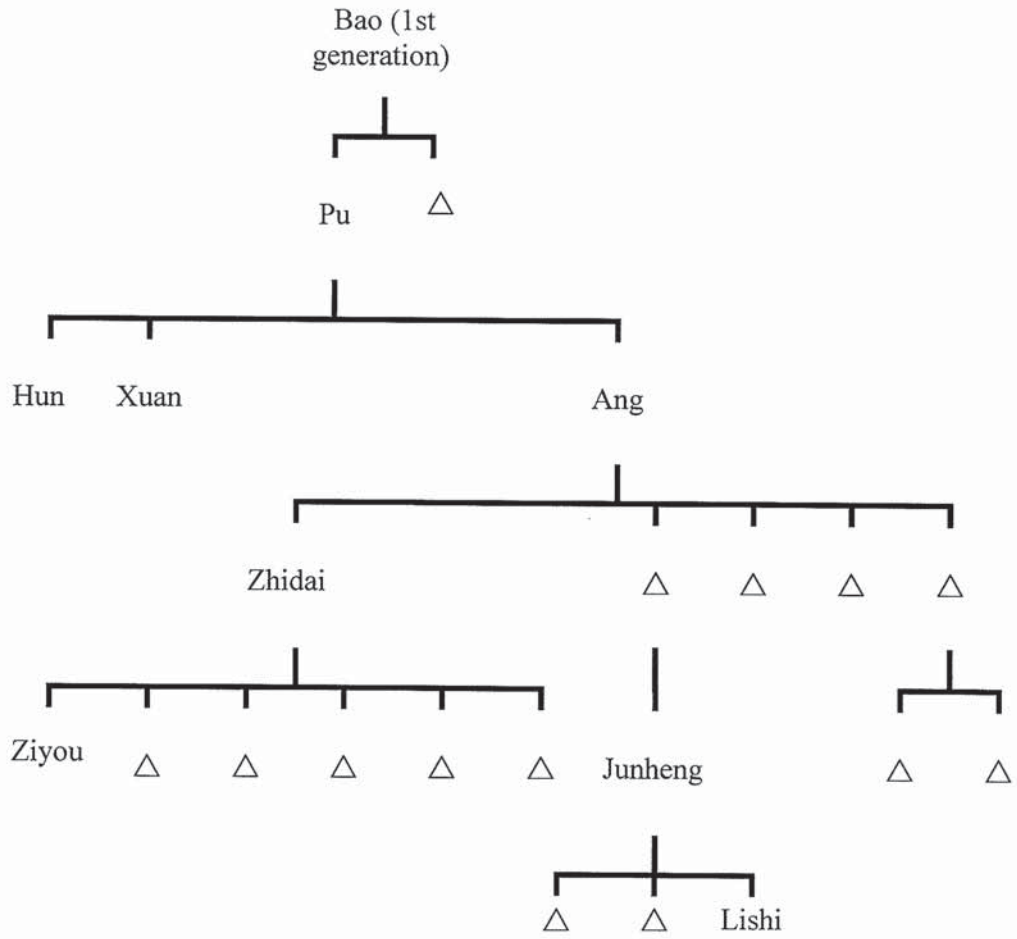
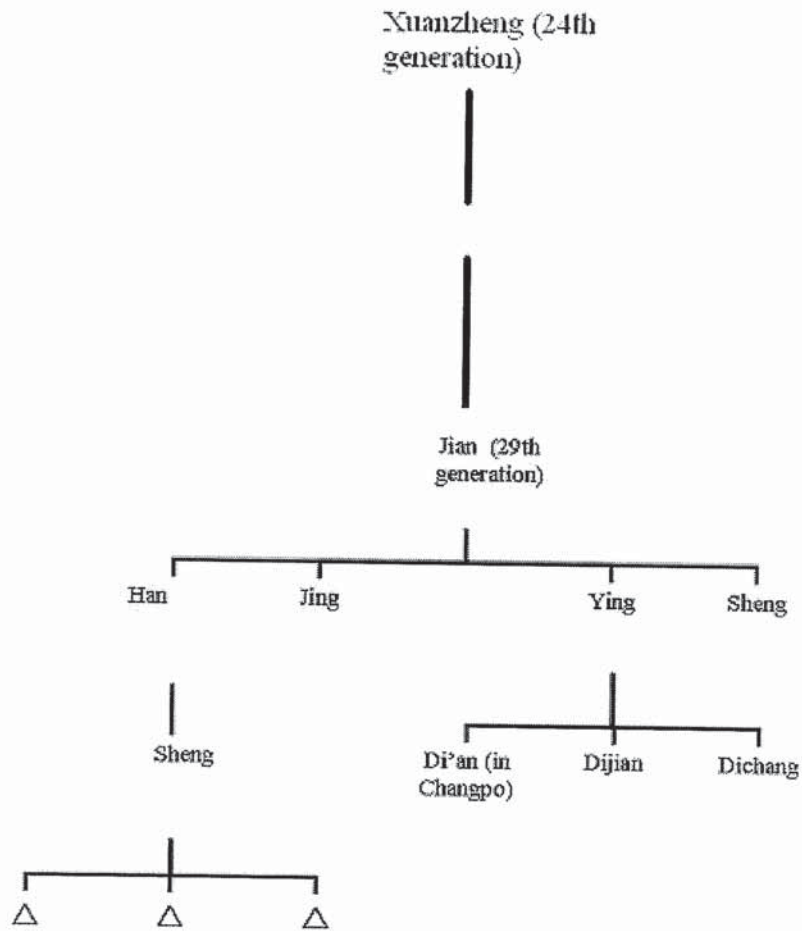


Table 7.2 Feng Surname Genealogy from Generation 24 to Generation 32



Map 7-1. Hainan Island showing locations of Madam Xian temples

