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Commissioner Li and Prefect Huang: Sino-Vietnamese Frontier Trade Networks and Political Alliances in the Southern Song

INTRODUCTION

From the 900s to the 1200s, political loyalties in the upland areas along the Sino-Vietnamese frontier were a complicated matter. The Dai Viet 大越 kingdom, while adopting elements of the imperial Chinese system of frontier administration, ruled at less of a distance from their upland subjects. Marriage alliances between the local elite and the Ly 李 (1009–1225) and Tran 陳 (1225–1400) royal dynasties helped bind these upland areas more closely to the central court. By contrast, both the Northern and Southern Song courts (960–1279) were preoccupied with their northern frontiers, investing most of the courts' resources in that region, while relying on a small contingent of officials situated in Yongzhou 邕州 (modern-day Nanning) to pursue imperial aims along the southern frontier. The behavior of the frontier elite was also closely linked to changes in the flow of trade across the Sino-Vietnamese borderlands, and the impact of changing patterns in trade will play a role in this study. Broadly speaking, this paper focuses on a triangular region, the base of which stretches from the Song port of Qinzhou 欽州 to the inland frontier region at Longzhou 龍州 (Guangxi). (See the maps provided in the Introduction to this volume.) These two points at either end of the base in this territorial triangle meet at Yongzhou, which was the center of early-Song administration for the Guangnan West circuit (*Guangnan xilu* 廣南西路). I will use the term Upper Tongking Gulf to describe the region, although that term conventionally refers only to the modern-day northern Vietnam (Bac Ky).

This article focuses on the Huang clan, who were among the indigenous inhabitants of the Upper Tongking Gulf region, which, broadly defined, straddled the regions claimed by both Vietnamese and Chinese authorities. In this article I highlight various factors that shaped the Huang clan's important roles in the frontier management policies

of both the Chinese and Vietnamese courts, from the founding of the independent Dai Viet kingdom (the Dai Co Viet 大瞿越 kingdom until 1054) to the Mongol conquest of the Southern Song. I argue that the Huang clan's importance began as facilitators of trade, but later shifted to service in a series of strategic alliances, once the Upper Tongking Gulf region had been superseded by Guangzhou as the Song empire's primary entry point on the South China Sea trade network. With cessation of this trade, the Huang lost a strong basis for its maintenance of local autonomy. However, the Huang's fortunes changed again with the emergence of Mongol military aggression along the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, at which time the Huangs' military service and local reconnaissance on behalf of the Song and Tran courts offered a new opportunity for heightened status.

In my description of the Upper Tongking Gulf region, the activities of its native inhabitants are as important as our delineations of the geographical contours. William Zartman writes that "borderland reality is a moving machine at any moment, and it changes its movements as it moves through time, in motion both synchronically and diachronically... Three dimensions need to be handled in the analysis (of a specific borderland region) – time, space, and activity."¹ These dimensions all played roles in considering the Sino-Vietnamese frontier region. Furthermore, there were changing local influences exerted by actors at the Song and Dai Viet courts, as well as changes in the role played by the frontier as a center for economic production and exchange. In periods of heightened trade importance for this region, the indigenous leaders of local communities resisted outside efforts to influence their administration of populations under their control and the trade activities within their region. In times when the trade importance of the region declined, this same local elite sought to balance their weakening power bases with multilateral alliances extending to both sides of the frontier. When the southern frontier of the Song empire came under direct threat from advancing Mongol armies, the local elite took on new roles in service to Song and Dai Viet authorities, yet they were forced to remain flex-

¹ William Zartman, ed., *Understanding Life in the Borderlands: Boundaries in Depth and in Motion* (Athens, Ga.: U. of Georgia P., 2010), p. 9. Also cited in the introduction of James Anderson and John Whitmore, eds., *China's Encounters on the South and Southwest: Reforging the Fiery Frontier over Two Millennia* (Leiden: Brill), forthcoming. For related recent scholarship on the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, see Zsombor Rajkai and Ildikó Bellér-Hann, eds., *Frontiers and Boundaries: Encounters on China's Margins* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012). See also Momoki Shiro, "Local Rule of Dai Viet under the Ly Dynasty: Evolution of a Charter Polity after the Tang-Song Transition in East Asia," *The Asian Review of World Histories* 1.1 (2013), pp. 45–84.

ible in their engagement with outside powers. It is in this balancing of loyalties that the Tai-speaking local elite of the inland Tongking Gulf region behaved in a manner similar to frontier elite elsewhere in the world in other periods of history. As Zartman noted in his comparative study, “whenever there have been political communities so large that distinctions could be made between the power center and a periphery far enough away from it to be able to enjoy some degree of difference and autonomy, relations between center and periphery tended to be counterbalanced by relations between neighboring peripheries or by relations within the autonomous periphery.”²

The second half of this study is marked by a shift from trade as the most significant factor in shaping the Huang clan’s relations with distant courts to more strategic concerns of political and military survival, such as the matter of late-Song local intelligence gathering, a topic recently studied by the historian Huang Kuan-chung 黃寬重.³ However, the Huang clan would serve both Vietnamese and Chinese authorities in the protracted period of conflict with the Mongols. As described above, direct contact with local leaders extended across the Sino-Vietnamese frontier. The Southern Song official Li Zengbo 李曾伯 (1198–1265) noted that the administrator of the “loose-rein” prefecture of Siming 思明 (southern Guangxi), Huang Bing 黃炳 (Hoang Binh),⁴ a Huang clan leader, had long maintained contact with the Dai Viet court, having married all his daughters into the Ly ruling family. These close ties would have a lasting impact on the political loyalties of the region’s inhabitants. An illustrative example of the influence may be found in the autumn of 1256. Facing the first Mongol invasion of Dai Viet, a member of the Vietnamese royal house prince Tran Doan tried to flee the kingdom. He was captured by prefect Huang at Siming prefecture and returned to the Dai Viet court. Later, while retreating from the Mongols’ second attempted invasion in late 1285, the Yuan commander Toghan pulled his troops back to Siming, only to be surrounded and attacked by descendants of Huang, still loyal to the Tran court. The cooperation of Siming prefect Huang Bing and his clan with the Dai Viet court provides a window through which we may glimpse the actual implementation of local frontier alliances and

² Zartman, introduction to *Understanding Life in the Borderlands*, pp. 2–3.

³ Huang Kuan-chung 黃寬重, “Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi: yi “ke zhai za gao” suojian Song Meng Guangxi zhanyi wei li” 晚宋軍情蒐集與傳遞, 以可齋雜藁所見宋、蒙廣西戰役爲例, in *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 27.2 (June 2009), pp. 133–66.

⁴ On loose-rein administrations, see n. 42, below.

evaluate the military and logistical assistance offered by local leaders in this region.

We also see in Huang Bing's service to the Song and the Dai Viet courts a shift in the Huang clan's regional status, which, I argue here, was strongly influenced by changes in the primary trade routes passing through the region. Changes in the trade networks that existed in the Tongking Gulf region had a direct influence on the status of the coastal (as well as the inland) indigenous elite residing between the Song and Dai Viet states. Through the early-Song period, the coastal area between Jiaozhi and Qinzhou shifted from the status of a regional to a local trade hub, as the primary trade route shifted eastward to Guangzhou. Subsequent to this shift, the largely autonomous Huang clan of the Upper Tongking Gulf (Longzhou-Qinzhou-Yongzhou) region became simultaneously more dependent on interactions with both Song local representatives and the Dai Viet court and more integral to trade activities and local intelligence-gathering that were being conducted in their home region. These local elite were mutually dependent on the two neighboring authorities, but they were increasingly indispensable in the resolution of problems that plagued both the Song and Dai Viet along this section of the two states' shared frontier.

THE SINO-VIETNAMESE FRONTIER IN THE FIELD OF BORDERLANDS HISTORY

In a theoretical approach to frontier actors, we can now consult the growing field of frontier history to construct a comparative study. In such a study there is also the issue of multiple meanings for the most salient terms. The term "frontier" has acquired problematic overtones in the history of its usage. Hugh Clark has written that the term "carries cultural connotations, often clouded with moral overtones of superiority, of civilization versus barbarism or savagery."⁵ If we proceed directly from Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 address to the American Historical Association on the closing of the U.S. frontier, we see the term used in this manner. However, later U.S. historians and scholars of fields beyond U.S. history have employed the term frontier in a less restrictive way. The use of the terms "borderlands" and "contact zones" as substitutes for frontier has also become quite common in recent scholarship. I do not wish to abandon the older term, but instead

⁵ Hugh R. Clark, "Frontier Discourse and China's Maritime Frontier: China's Frontiers and the Encounter with the Sea through Early Imperial History," *Journal of World History* 20.1 (2009), p. 2.

I've modified its definition to fit new historical situations. The U.S. historians Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett wrote is a recent survey that borderlands history was "(anchored) in spatial mobility, situational identity, local contingency, and the ambiguities of power," and I wish to follow borderlands historians in exploring these aspects of the Sino-Vietnamese frontier in the late-tenth through the mid-thirteenth century.⁶ I consider the Upper Tongking Gulf to be a specific subregion that is geographically discrete but socially and economically integrated within the larger Sino-Vietnamese frontier by various means.

In their survey, Hämäläinen and Truett describe how historians in this field worldwide are formulating new questions regarding the shifting parameters of borderlands history; in doing so they reference the challenges such histories pose to the nationalist narratives of the respective neighboring states, as well as the identities and loyalties of the historical actors involved.⁷ My study follows in the same line of inquiry, but I wish to add to our consideration the impact that trade and trade networks have on a frontier region. I focus on a trade network extending from inland routes to the coastal and maritime routes of the Tongking Gulf, eventually linking with South China Sea and Indian Ocean trade webs. In the examination of these factors I am guided by the recent work of Hugh Clark on China's maritime frontier. Clark has identified three frontier models at work during China's imperial past: 1. the "expanding continental frontier," which is evident in the efforts of the Song and Ly at state expansion by the early-eleventh century; 2. the "static continental frontier," which better describes the same period along the Song northern frontier, but may be observed in the south if we move to the local level in the Upper Tongking Gulf region; and 3. the maritime frontier, which, as mentioned above, had an impact on indigenous communities farther inland.⁸ As Clark writes, China's frontier regions, including the southwest region, were not "empty spaces."⁹ They were inhabited by communities with their own economies and patterns of interaction, so that outsiders entering the region had to contend with the existing social order to make effective contact with local elite. Maritime trade through the Tongking Gulf necessarily involved the coastal and upland communities as the acquisition agents for trade items, or as the creators of channels for passing articles along

⁶ Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 98.2 (2011), p. 338.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁸ Clark, "Frontier Discourse and China's Maritime Frontier," p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

to larger economic centers. This point about maritime connections will be discussed below.

THE YONGZHOU-QINZHOU-DAI VIET TRADE
TRIANGLE THROUGH THE EARLY-SONG PERIOD

As noted by Li Tana, Jiaozhi 交趾 (Giao Chi) served as southern East Asia's dominant trade node from the fall of the Nam Viet kingdom to Han forces in 111 BCE until 728, when the opening of the Dayu Mountain 大庾嶺 route eased the passage of Tang inland trade through the Guangzhou region.¹⁰ Even at the height of Tang power, Jiaozhi was the region's most important trade node, the primary routes of which connected to the empire's interior by sea.¹¹ As the *Old Tang History* (*Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書) states,

Jiaozhou Protectorate controlled (the movements) of all of the surrounding barbarian (kingdoms). The various kingdoms located beyond the southern region of the South China Sea avoided landing to the south and southwest of Jiaozhou, but instead paused in their travels in central Jiaozhou before proceeding north. From time of the emperor Wu of Han, they came to offer tribute to the Chinese empire, and they necessarily took the route from Jiaozhi.¹²

The Arab merchant traveler Ibn Khordabeh (ca. 850-911) wrote in his account titled *Treatise of Roads and Provinces* that "el-Wakin (or Long Bien 龍編; modern-day Hanoi) was the primary sea port of foreign trade for South China."¹³ Modern scholars have also contended that Jiaozhi in Tang times was China's most prosperous trading port in the south.¹⁴

However, the early-Song court did not include the trade with the Dai Co Viet kingdom (still known to the Song court as Jiaozhi) in the purview of the Shibo 市舶 (Maritime Trade Supervisorate), and

¹⁰ Li Tana, "Jiaozhi (Giao Chi) in the Han Period," in Nola Cooke, Li Tana, and James A. Anderson, eds., *The Tongking Gulf through History* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania P., 2011), pp. 37-52.

¹¹ Fang Tie 方鐵, "Tang Song liang chao zhi zhongnan bandao jiaotong xian de bianqian" 唐宋兩朝至中南半島交通線的變遷, *Frontlines in the Social Sciences* (*Shehui kexue zhanxian* 社會科學戰線) 2011.4, pp. 101-11.

¹² Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946), comp., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975) 41, p. 1375.

¹³ Billy K. L. So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China: The South Fukien Pattern, 946-1368* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2000), p. 17; and Cen Zhongmian 岑仲勉, *Zhongwai shi di kaozheng* 中外史地考證 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2004), p. 376.

¹⁴ Kuwabara Jitsuzō 桑原騰藏 and Lian Yang 楊鍊, *Tang Song maoyi gang yanjiu* 唐宋貿易港研究 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1963), p. 69.

Guangzhou (Nanhai 南海) was closed to maritime trade with Dai Co Viet merchants.¹⁵ This policy was directly connected to changes in trade patterns along the Song's volatile northern frontier. Although the overland Silk Road trade entering China's northwest region had played an important role through the late Tang, trade through the Hexi Corridor had been obstructed by the Tangut kingdom of Xi Xia. The early-Song court under Song Taizong sought to emphasize maritime links through Guangzhou to compensate for the elimination of these overland routes.¹⁶ The Shibo system of early Song directed most South Seas maritime trade through Guangzhou, but the early Northern Song court was reluctant to abandon completely the goal of reuniting the Dai Co Viet kingdom with the Chinese empire, so trade between the two states was restricted to the nearby ports of Lianzhou 廉州 and Qinzhou and administered by local officials stationed in Ruhong garrison 如洪寨.¹⁷ Due to the related influences of the Song court's regional security considerations and Kaifeng's restrictions on trade development, the volume of cross-frontier trade became limited. During the reign of the Shenzong 神宗 emperor (1067–1085), following the 1075 border war with the Ly court, the Song court abandoned the goal of reunification, and relations between the two states gradually switched to a focus on economy and trade.¹⁸ In 1079, in order to improve the trade flow to Lianzhou and Qinzhou, the Jiangdong Postal Station 江東驛, under the jurisdiction of Qinzhou, replaced Ruhong garrison as the central market (*boyichang* 博易場) for the region.¹⁹ This period was also distinguished by the establishment of a fixed border between the Dai Viet and Song spheres of influence. After the Zhenghe 政和 reign period (1111–1118), Song Huizong 徽宗 ordered a full liberalization of border trade in Guangxi, now including Yongzhou, and bilateral trade was greatly developed.

The historian Zhang Jinlian clearly outlines the period, one in which the Upper Tongking Gulf region emerged at the center of a

¹⁵ For recent scholarship on development of the Shibo Maritime Trade Supervisorate during the Tang-Song period, see Deng Gang, *Maritime Sector, Institutions, and Sea Power of Premodern China* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), and Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

¹⁶ Chen Gaohua 陳高華 and Chen Shangsheng 陳尙勝, *Zhongguo haiwai jiaotongshi* 中國海外交通史 (Taipei: Wenjin, 1997), p. 83.

¹⁷ Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, "Songchao yu Jiaozhi de maoyi" 宋朝與交趾的貿易, *Zhongguo shehui jingji shi yanjiu* 中國社會經濟史研究 (2009) 2, p. 27.

¹⁸ James Anderson, *The Rebel Den of Nung Tri Cao: Loyalty and Identity along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier* (Seattle: U. of Washington P., 2007), pp. 150–51.

¹⁹ Huang, "Songchao yu Jiaozhi de maoyi," p. 28.

newly significant trade route. According to Zhang, with the founding of the Dali kingdom in 937 the Red River 紅江 route was cut off from the Song empire, and so there developed a new route via Yongzhou between modern-day Southwest China and Jiaozhi. Located midway along the sea route between Guangzhou and Jiaozhi, Qinzhou became increasingly prosperous at the same time that trade contacts between Guangzhou and Lianzhou deteriorated. With these changes, Yongzhou and Qinzhou soon occupied the center of Sino-Vietnamese exchanges.²⁰ In the context of regional trade, following the shift in South China maritime links, the overland route to the Dai Co Viet kingdom via the “*jimi*” prefecture of Siming 思明 (near modern-day Chongzuo 崇左, southern Guangxi) gained significantly in importance. As part of the more extensive Yongzhou–Dai Co Viet connections, overland routes through Cao Bang 高平 and Lang Son 諒山 were complemented by Vietnamese coastal links to the port at Qinzhou. By the Southern Song period (when the Song court was installed in Lin’an 臨安), China’s contacts with South Seas kingdoms were almost entirely channeled through Guangzhou and Quanzhou, yet the local Song authorities still utilized Qinzhou. Li Zengbo, as administrator of Guangnan West circuit in the late Song, made contact with the Vietnamese Tran court through merchants who travelled along the coastal Tongking Gulf route to Qinzhou, at which point all communications and trade passed northwest to Yongzhou. By the time when the Mongol military entered the Song’s southern and southwestern frontier regions, the coastal Qinzhou route and the overland route passing through Siming prefecture were the primary contact points between the Song and Dai Viet power centers.

I contend in this article that, as with the native inhabitants of the frontier region described above, the Huang clan’s historic role in its local administration followed the rise and fall of the area’s volume of trade. Due to changes in overseas trade as well as increased contacts by Song and Dai Viet representatives with the surrounding indigenous communities, the local Huang clan leaders of the Upper Tongking Gulf region adjusted to the increased scrutiny by seeking links with both the Chinese and Vietnamese courts and filling local positions that protected access to empire-wide and regional transportation links. However, these linkages followed a long period of limited engagement with imperial authorities, during which the Huang leadership acted in a largely autonomous manner.

²⁰ Zhang Jinlian 張金蓮, “Songchao yu Annan tongdao shitan” 宋朝與安南通道試探, *Dongnanya zongheng* 東南亞縱橫 (2005) 10, p. 65.

In her study of premodern native chieftaincies in Southwest China, Jennifer Took described as the “Huang valleys” the area in which the Huang clan was most influential, including the modern-day Guangxi districts of Ningming 寧明, Longzhou, Chongzuo, and Fusui 扶綏.²¹ During the Tang period the Huang clan dominated this region.²² Took argues that there were two stages of local resistance in the early- and late-Tang periods, respectively, that featured both the Huang and Nung clan leaders. In the second stage, known as the Xiyuan 西原 Rebellion, local leaders Huang Qian Yao 黃乾曜 and his son Huang Shaoqing 黃少卿 attacked Longzhou and Qinzhou, precisely within the region of the clan’s past strength and the increasingly important entry points for coastal and overland trade arriving from the Dai Viet and points south.²³ By the end of the rebellion, the Huang clan had been significantly weakened, while the Nung clan had gained in strength and influence.²⁴ I question whether or not the late-Tang time period necessarily marked the end of Huang authority, although I agree with Took that the Huang lost influence in the western half of Guangnan West circuit, as that administrative region was constituted in the early Song. However, the Huang’s local authority in the area I have termed the Upper Tongking remained quite strong through the 1075 border war, or at least through the local chieftain Nung Tri Cao’s 儂智高 third rebellion earlier, in the 1050s. Actual submission to Song authority did not occur until this period.

Sino-Vietnamese frontier local elite in the early Song through emperor Shenzong’s reign remained in charge of both economic and political affairs. As the *History of the Song Dynasty* (*Songshi* 宋史) notes, Guangnan West circuit’s southwestern region came under the control of the Nung clan by the 1040s only after wresting regional control from the competing Tai-speaking Wei 韋, Huang 黃, and Zhou 周 clans.²⁵ The passage of regional trade through this area was important, but production of gold and cinnabar brought significant wealth to the local elite, who controlled the extraction and distribution. As I mentioned above, the Huang clan remained strong in the eastern areas of Guangnan West circuit even after the rise of the Nung clan to the west.

²¹ Jennifer Took, *A Native Chieftaincy in Southwest China: Franchising a Tai Chieftaincy under the Tusi System of Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 46.

²² Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, comp., *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji, 2007) 383, p. 2587.

²³ Took, *Native Chieftaincy*, p. 47; see also Ma, *Wen xian tong kao* 383, p. 2587.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Toghto 脫脫 et al., *Songshi* 宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983; hereafter, *SS*) 495, p. 14214.

When Nung Tri Cao's forces in his first rebellion defeated the Upper Tongking Gulf local leader Huang Deqing 黃德卿 and his followers, the Nung clan temporarily took control of this region, but the Huang were not entirely displaced.

Huang clan members had served both the Dai Co Viet and Song courts since the earliest days of these dynasties. As noted in *Songshi*, in late 995 when the coastal upland chieftain Bo Van Dung 卜文勇 from the Dai Co Viet frontier township of Trieu Duong 潮陽 (located in modern-day Tien Yen and Van Ninh prefectures of Vietnam's coastal Quang Ninh province) was accused of murder, he fled with followers to Ruxi 如昔 garrison on the Song side of the frontier. In the account in *Viet su cuong muc tiet yeu* 越史綱目節要, the group also engaged in cross-border pillaging of neighboring villages.²⁶ The garrison's local commander Huang Lingde 黃令德 offered the refugees official protection.²⁷ Ruxi was situated on the coast in the littoral zone that oversaw shoreline trade passing between Qinzhou and the Dai Co Viet, as well as the riverine trade conducted between the hilly interior region of the Upper Tongking and the coast near the Sino-Vietnamese frontier. The region under these two local leaders' jurisdiction, therefore, comprised a large part of the coastal trade route from the trade ports of the Dai Co Viet kingdom to the Song empire. The Dai Co Viet ruler Le Hoan had, since taking the throne, sought to exercise control over the activity along this important route, but he was forced to rely on local authority, as demonstrated by the fact that he ordered the Trieu Duong township's militia leader Huang Thanh Nha 黃成雅 to take an official dispatch to Ruxi garrison to request the release into Vietnamese custody of the fugitives. Huang Lingde, however, refused to turn them over. As I have written elsewhere, what "this situation suggests is that, if circumstances required, local loyalties, and perhaps even parochial ties like kinship, could still outweigh the force of royal orders for local officials in this frontier region."²⁸

Eventually, the Song court intervened when its official envoy Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟 arrested the entire group, and asked Huang Thanh Nha and his delegation from Trieu Duong take custody of the prisoners,

²⁶ Dang Xuan Bang, *Nha su hoc Dang Xuan Bang va bo Viet su cuong muc tiet yeu* (*The Historian Dang Xuan Bang and His Essential Digest of the Outline History of the [Great] Viet Kingdom*), annot. Hoang Van Lau (Hanoi: Nha xuat ban Khoa hoc xa hoi, 2000), p. 74.

²⁷ *SS* 488, p. 14063; cited in Anderson, *Rebel Den*, pp. 52–53. See also James Anderson, "Slipping through Holes": The Late Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Sino-Vietnamese Coastal Frontier as a Subaltern Trade Network," in Cooke, Li, and Anderson, *Tongking Gulf*, p. 96.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

warning the Vietnamese official to treat them with leniency.²⁹ In this period of the Dai Co Viet kingdom, prior to the founding of the Ly dynasty, the Vietnamese leadership relied on negotiation through the local elite to resolve such matters, and the Song authorities, despite the official scolding Chen Yaosu reportedly offered the Dai Co Viet delegation in the *Songshi* account, were not able to influence affairs without local consensus.

The Vietnamese ruler Le Hoan's death in 1005 quickly led to civil war between his sons, and coastal frontier communities once again sought to rearrange the local political order, which resulted in a second wave of refugees. In 1006 the Guangzhou prefect Ling Ce 凌策 made the following report to the Song court:

All of Le Hoan's sons are competing to take over as ruler, and the general populace will most certainly rebel. Huang Khanh Tap 黃慶集 and another local leader, Huang Tu Man 黃秀蠻, are among several thousands of people who disobeyed the Vietnamese court's troops, and the Huang forces were massacred by court troops for challenging Le authority. Survivors have arrived at the border to surrender and pay allegiance to the prefectural government of Lianzhou. The Huang leaders petitioned the Lianzhou prefectural authorities to dispatch two thousand men to Jiaozhou to calm the upheaval, while Huang Khanh Tap and others showed their desire to be assigned to the vanguard of this force.³⁰

The *Songshi* account notes that the Song court quickly offered Huang Khanh Tap a minor official post and moved the local leader and his followers to a post in modern-day southern Hunan, far from the site of coastal unrest.³¹ After Le Long Dinh, the victorious new ruler of the Dai Co Viet kingdom, took the throne following a bloody struggle for power with his brothers and their supporters, the Song official Chao Ye 超曄 noted to the Song emperor that the local leader Huang Khanh Tap had from the start avoided participating in the rebellion, but instead had "come to China to be transformed by Chinese culture 歸化." Chao contended that the number of Huang Khanh Tap's followers was still quite large, and if these people were to be sent back to their home region, they might face a massacre. The emperor then ordered that Huang Khanh Tap be given the petty official position of "grade three

²⁹ SS 488, p. 14063.

³⁰ SS 488, p. 14065. Also see Anderson, *Rebel Den*, pp. 56–57, and idem, "Slipping through Holes," p. 97.

³¹ Ibid.

lictor (*lisanban* 隶三班),” and that he be given a post at Chenzhou 郴州, located today within Hunan province, and that he be permitted to enter the court to present tributary offering.³² The fact that Chenzhou was a strategic military command for the southern reaches of the Song empire must have played a role in Huang Khanh Tap’s posting, but the sources do not elaborate, nor do we know whether or not he was followed by his own armed supporters.

Other members of the Huang clan were similarly honored by the Song court in this period. In the spring of 1008, Le Long Dinh sent a Vietnamese tribute mission, including Trieu Duong township’s militia leader and former Le Hoan envoy Huang Thanh Nha, to present tribute at the Chinese court on the occasion of the Song emperor Zhenzong’s 真宗 (r. 998–1022) claim to have received Daoist “celestial writings 天書.” The Song ruler organized a large banquet in the Pavilion of Cherishing Brightness (Hanguangdian 含光殿). The emperor knew that Huang Thanh Nha would be seated at the far end of the banquet table, and he wished to bestow favor upon this former native official by heightening the Dai Co Viet envoy’s official position at court.³³ The emperor consulted with his grand councilor (*zaixiang* 宰相) Wang Dan 王旦 about this protocol matter. Wang Dan replied:

In ancient times, Zi Chan 子產 visited the court of the Zhou ruling house. The Zhou ruler gave his party a large feast, following the highest level of ritual. Zi Chan, however, firmly declined this observance of high ritual. Thereafter, he was treated to a lesser observance of ritual before returning home. [Today] the emperor and his court’s spirit of harmony has reached the far-off lands, and we treat our guests with special care, so that there will be no grounds for uneasiness.

At that point, the emperor raised Huang Thanh Nha’s rank to grade five in the Department of State Affairs (Shangshusheng 尚書省). It appears from the sources that rulers from both sides of the frontier had reasons to grant representatives of the Huang clan special status in this pre-Ly period.

With the rise to the throne of the second Ly ruler Ly Phat Ma 李佛瑪 (Thai Tong 太宗) in the Dai Co Viet court, the frontier region of Lang Chau 諒州 (Lang Son) came under increased scrutiny. While Phat

³² SS 488, p.14065. See also Anderson, *Rebel Den*, p. 58.

³³ SS 488, p.14066. See also James Adams Anderson, “Frontier Management and Tribute Relations along the Empire’s Southern Border: China and Vietnam in the 10th and 11th Centuries,” Ph.D. diss. (University of Washington, 1999), pp. 179–80.

Ma sought a special bond with his chosen local Lang Chau prefect Than Thieu Thai 申紹泰 through a marriage alliance in 1029, the Ly ruler also dispatched his son into the frontier region on a series of punitive expeditions against the rebellious followers of local leader Giap Dan Nai 甲但乃 of Ai Chau 愛州.³⁴ The frontier around Lang Chau and to the north had become quite volatile. In the spring of 1036, as reported in *Songshi*, the indigenous inhabitants of Giap Dong 甲峒, Lang Chau, Mon Chau 門州, To Mau Chau 蘇茂州, Quang Nguyen Chau 廣源州, Dai Phat Dong 大發峒, and Dan Ba Huyen 丹波縣 attacked and plundered the Yongzhou prefectures of Silingzhou 思陵州, Xipingzhou 西平州, Shixizhou 石西州, including all of the aboriginal settlements.³⁵ The intruders robbed the inhabitants of their horses and cattle, and set fire to their dwellings before leaving. Whether or not the local unrest was sparked by the Ly military expeditions is not commented upon in the official Chinese and Vietnamese sources. The Yingzong 英宗 emperor (r. 1064–1067) ordered that those persons responsible be interrogated. He also ordered that the leaders of the attack be captured and that the punishment of their wrong-doing be made known to all his subjects. The *Songshi* account makes no further mention of this event. By this time the local chieftain Nung Tri Cao and his mother A Nung were preparing to establish their own autonomous polity in the frontier region, having at that point suppressed the Huang clan's influence in the western half of Guangnan West circuit. From 1041 until 1049, both the Song authorities at Yongzhou and the Vietnamese court were preoccupied with the inland Nung clan's activities. However, despite the unrest, Song authorities continued to seek local allies along the frontier. In early 1050, local officials in Yongzhou enticed Vi Thieu Tu 韋紹嗣, Vi Thieu Kham 韋紹欽, rivals of the Huang clan, and over 3,000 people from the coastal Vietnamese prefecture of To Mau Chau to enter and reside in the region under Song supervision.³⁶ When the Vietnamese ruler Ly Phat Ma protested to Kaifeng, regarding the resettlement of his frontier subjects, the Song court halted their movement and had the people returned to Dai Co Viet. However, the Song emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023–1063) then ordered Phat Ma to suspend the border trade, in order to prevent plunder and intrusions on both sides of the frontier.

³⁴ Dang, *Nha su hoc Dang Xuan Bang va bo Viet su cuong muc tiet yeu*, p. 91.

³⁵ *SS* 488, p. 14067. See also Anderson, *Frontier Management*, p. 205.

³⁶ *SS* 488, p. 14068.

Shortly thereafter, Nung Tri Cao and his followers launched their third and final effort to establish a separate frontier kingdom. Quelling it would lead eventually to a confrontation between the Ly and Song states, and the resolution of this subsequent conflict would result in a firm boundary between the two states and the late Northern Song relaxation of most trade restrictions.³⁷ More open trade would paradoxically reduce the strategic importance of the Upper Tongking Gulf (Qinzhou–Longzhou–Yongzhou) trade zone. With an increased volume of trade passing from the Dai Viet by sea to Guangzhou, the overland routes across challenging terrain and occasionally hostile communities proved to be less inviting. A more peaceful Song-Viet frontier allowed the authorities in each power-center to divert their attention from this region to trouble spots within their respective domains.

Following the final defeat of the rebel Nung Tri Cao and his followers in 1055, members of the Song general Di Qing's 狄青 military leadership were given positions of local authority in the region, including Huang Shanzhang 黃善璋, who eventually took an officially sanctioned position as leader of the Yongping 永平 garrison.³⁸ Huang Shanzhang's genealogy is vague, but it seems likely that he came from the same long line of Huang local leadership from which Huang Bing, the local leader mentioned at the beginning of this article, was descended. Huang Shanzhang's position of leadership resulted from his service to the Song army that quelled the political ambitions of his western neighbors, who were the followers of Nung Tri Cao. The Northern Song official Sima Guang 司馬光 contended that the Song court feared that when Tri Cao launched his first two rebellions against the Ly court, the disruption would interrupt the frontier trade market activities, denying Kaifeng the items entering the empire through these routes.³⁹ The Southern Song period would bring new challenges, particularly after the Mongol military began to advance into the region. At this point, however, the Huang clan leaders were no longer dominating local trade, and only retained their status as frontier elite through close relations with both Song and Dai Viet authorities.

³⁷ *SS* 488, p. 14070.

³⁸ Xiao Dehao 蕭德浩 and Zheng Huang 黃錚, *Zhong Yue bianjie lishi ziliao xuanbian* 中越邊界歷史資料選編 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian, 1993), vol. 1, p. 54.

³⁹ Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sushui jiwèn* 涑水記聞 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1982) 13, p. 139.

COMMISSIONER LI AND PREFECT HUANG

In the later years of the Southern Song dynasty, Li Zengbo's administrative task as a local representative of imperial power was a difficult one, but perhaps no more so than the tasks of his predecessors. In the early Song period, the court's primary source of frontier anxiety was the north, and most of the government's resources were committed to conflicts with the Khitans and, to a lesser degree, the Tanguts. Lack of official commitment and resources led to a "piecemeal" approach to Song management of its southern and southwestern frontier, so that local administrators were obliged to tailor their relations with native elite to conform with local conditions.⁴⁰ The frontier prefectures, including Yizhou 宜州, Qinzhou 欽州, and Rongzhou 融州 (in modern-day Guizhou), were administered from the administrative center at Yongzhou, and these three prefectures also served as points of trade contact between representatives of the Song empire and the indigenous communities of the southwest frontier region. Given earlier tensions in the regions, particularly the 1075 border war between the Dai Viet kingdom and the Song empire, the local military presence in central Guangxi was increased late in Shenzong's reign. Historian Fang Tie contends that after the Nung Tri Cao Rebellion, the Song court came to believe that the revolt had some connection with the Dai Viet kingdom, and that the Dali kingdom was also complicit.⁴¹ Subsequently, the emperor ordered Di Qing, the general responsible for defeating Nung Tri Cao's forces, to divide up Guangnan West circuit, so that the various, locally administered (or, "loose rein, *jimi* 羈糜") prefectures of Yong 邕, Yi 宜 and Rong 容 would fall into separate circuits.⁴² Military officials assigned to the defense of these regions would simultaneously handle the civilian administration of the circuit, while acting as the prefecture's military directors-in-chief (*bingma dou jian* 兵馬都監). In Yongzhou, the Song court established a military commandary (*jiedushi* 節度使) that held jurisdiction over the region of the Left and Right Rivers; the Left River Command was responsible for guarding the empire against the Dai Viet kingdom, and the Right River Command was responsible for

⁴⁰ Wang Wenguang 王文光, Long Xiaoyan 龍曉燕, and Chen Bin 陳斌, *Zhongguo xinan minzu guanxi shi* 中國西南民族關係史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2005), p. 331.

⁴¹ Fang, "Tang Song liang chao zhi zhongnan bandao," p. 107.

⁴² One of the most influential policy changes of Tang emperor Taizong's 太宗 reign (r. 627–649) was the establishment of "loose rein" subordinated area-commands and prefectures (*jimi fu zhou* 羈糜府州) along the frontier. Taizong's chief minister Wen Yanbo 溫彥博 (573–636) proposed it as a way to acculturate the nomadic northern peoples to the empire's customs and ways of life; see Anderson, *Rebel Den*, p. 26.

guarding against intrusions from the Dali kingdom.⁴³ Located between the Left and Right rivers were more than sixty “loose rein” aboriginal settlements, so the Chinese court sent 5,000 men to maintain the local garrisons. If there had been an attack from either the Dali or Dai Viet kingdoms, the Song response would have been coordinated from Yongzhou. No attacks from these neighboring kingdoms occurred, yet the Song preparations were in place.

Native militia filled the ranks of frontier defense in the Southern Song. The Song official Zhou Qufei 周去非 (1135–1189) noted in *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 that in his day the Yongzhou prefecture commanded 5,000 troops; 3,000 were stationed in the four garrisons at Hengshan 橫山, Taiping 太平, Yongping 永平, Guwan 古萬, as well as Qianlong township 遷隆鎮, and 2,000 were in the prefectures, guarding the garrisons.⁴⁴ The garrisons were located in the Huang clan’s home region, and the local militia would have been drawn from their ranks. A local militia from coastal Qinzhou played an important role in protecting this local trade port on the periphery of official Song territory; the coastal defense was supplemented in the Southern Song period with two local patrol units (*xunjian* 巡檢) along the shoreline, consisting of 500 men. At the Ruxi 如昔 garrison local militia were posted, and at the Dizhuo 抵棹 garrison, located at the mouth of the modern-day Beilunhe 北侖河 River, there were more native troops. These garrisons were also located in Huang clan territory. Zhou Qufei wrote approvingly of Song troop strength in the region that “when there are no problems [in the countryside] these armies guarded the garrisons, and when there were issues to deal with, the troop numbers are sufficient to probe and resolve these matters.”⁴⁵ By this point the use of native militia had also increased considerably, and Huang clan members in their home region were not exempt from such service. However, the Huang’s response to a full-fledged invasion from the southern borderlands would never be tested.

Zhou Qufei described the financing of frontier defenses, including local militias, in *Lingwai daida*,⁴⁶ as follows:

In the time of our dynasty’s founders, the court was indifferent to the affairs of the Right River area of the Guangnan region, and border defenses (along the northern frontier?) was an urgent mat-

⁴³ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁴ Zhou Qufei, *Lingwai daida* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1999), p. 129.

⁴⁵ Zhou, *Lingwai daida*, p. 129.

⁴⁶ Zhou, *Lingwai daida*, pp. 129–32.

ter, so for years the court gave more than 1.1 million strings of copper cash, with various commandaries of the empire contributing in the form of taxes to maintain an a strong army reserve, which was sufficiently powerful. Before the Jin invasion [of the Northern Song], the annual payments had already ended, but [following the Jin invasion] the Guangnan West circuit Salt Commission took payment in the amount of 400,000 strings of cash, as well as local taxes (*jing* 經) and court taxes (*zong zhi qian* 總制錢) in the amount of 100,000 strings of cash, so that the area gradually recovered financially and the local armies became self-sufficient once again.

After the Northern Song court had fallen to the Jurchen invaders, southern defense measures became an official priority, particularly measures to protect access to the horse trade from Dali. However, it took the Mongol invasion of the southern region to reprioritize the funding of southern defenses completely.

With an increasing number of hostile encounters between Song and Mongol armies, the Song court struggled to cope with an advancing enemy in the South under very difficult circumstances. Guangxi's geographical environment involved a unique topography that featured numerous steep hills located very close to rivers, undulating ridges and peaks, passes, and unfamiliar channels. Defenses were difficult to sustain. As Huang Kuan-chung notes, good military intelligence in such an unrelenting terrain was absolutely necessary.⁴⁷ The circulation of intelligence information involved strengthening communication channels between the Song court at Lin'an and the office of the Guangnan 廣南 military commissioner in Jingjiang 靜江 prefecture (modern-day Guilin), and secondarily the communication between Yongzhou and Jingjiang.

Having ignored the southern frontier for most of his reign, the Lizong 理宗 emperor (r. 1224-1264) was finally forced to take a strategic interest in developments throughout this region. In early 1239 the Song court received a memorial from Chen Longzhi 陳隆之 (fl. 1240s), the military commissioner in Sichuan who reported that Mongol forces had plans to sweep down the Dadu River in an invasion of the Dali kingdom, after which the Mongols would be free to attack the Song's "soft underbelly." Consequently, the court ordered Xu Qingsou 徐清叟, then serving as Guangnan's military commissioner, to prepare the

⁴⁷ Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi," p. 136.

southern frontier to brace against the expected assault.⁴⁸ Following the Mongols' probing attacks on Dali several years later, the Song court was compelled to make the defense of Guangnan West circuit a much higher priority. In 1244 Mongol armies captured Jiuhe garrison (Jiuhe *zhen* 九和鎮), killing its defender the Dali prince Gaohe 高和 (or 高禾). In response, imperial troops from Jinghu 荆湖 circuit (modern-day central Hunan) were ordered in 1245 to relocate to Guangnan West circuit to fortify its defenses.⁴⁹ When Mongol troops made no additional advances into the region, many of these troops were returned to their home region.

Li Zengbo, who had earlier served as military commissioner to Huainan 淮南 East and West circuits (modern-day central Jiangsu and Anhui), was a leading choice of the Song court as an effective local administrator. Li's selection indicated how important the defense of Guangnan had become for the Song's survival. In 1249 the court appointed Li Zengbo as military commissioner for Guangnan residing at Jingjiangfu Military Prefecture, as well as transport commissioner (*zhuan yun shi* 轉運使) for the circuit, with oversight of the region's fiscal as well as military matters. According to Li Tianming, the court charged Li with the following tasks: to dispatch spies for intelligence gathering throughout the region with a particular focus on fostering strong cooperation between the Sichuan and Jinghu circuits; to forge a formal alliance with the Dali in order to provide the Song with a vital buffer zone; to repair city walls and irrigation works while reequipping local militia; to dispatch reliable local commanders to strategic garrisons, including Hengshan and Yongping, as a means of forging ties with indigenous elite; and, finally, to organize militia groups consisting of both Han settlers and native communities to produce a first line of defense against the anticipated Mongol invasions.⁵⁰

In 1257 the Song emperor specifically ordered Li Zengbo to assemble troops stationed between Yongzhou and Yizhou and to take control of local militias from the "loose rein" aboriginal settlements in that region. In late autumn of that year, Li Zengbo took the additional position as pacification commissioner (*an fu dashi* 安撫大使) for Jinghu South circuit.⁵¹ This appointment was likely intended to coordinate bet-

⁴⁸ Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 and Huang Huai 黃淮, *Lidai mingchen zouyi* 歷代名臣奏議 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1989), j. 338; cited in Li Tianming 李天鳴, *Song Yuan zhan shi* 宋元戰史 (Taipei: Shihuo, 1988), p. 639.

⁴⁹ Li, *Song Yuan zhan shi*, p. 640.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 640-41.

⁵¹ Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi" p. 134. See also *SS* 420, p. 12574.

ter the local defenses of Guangnan and Jinghu, once the Dali kingdom were to fall to the Mongols and no longer provide an opportunity for a separate alliance. In the summer of 1260 Li Zengbo left these positions to be transferred back north, where he remained until his death four years later, but Li learned much from these years of frontier service. As Huang Kuan-chung notes, when Li Zengbo served as the administrator of Jingjiangfu Military Prefecture, the Guangxi situation was quite dire, and he had to bear the heavy responsibility for the defense of Sichuan and Jinghu South circuit. In the course of fighting with the Mongols, and recovering Xiangyang, he came to understand the Mongols very well.⁵² One of the lessons learned was to rely on the native elite, including the Huang, for military support and local knowledge in dire situations.

During the late Southern Song period, intelligence gathering along the southern frontier became a critical concern for the court at Lin'an (Hangzhou), and the strategy for intelligence gathering involved borderlands cooperation. In the spring of 1255, after the Mongol forces had conquered the Dali kingdom, the Song court began to request intelligence from the Tran court on the movements of Mongol troops in the region.⁵³ In the autumn of 1257, following a request from Lin'an for better intelligence, Li Zengbo instructed the Guangxi military commissioner Yin Yingfei 印應飛 (j. 1241) to send envoys to the Dai Viet kingdom. Yin Yingfei sent Liao Yangsun 廖揚孫 (n.d.) to the Tran court "using books and currency to gain access to the rulers of Jiaozhi 以書幣遣之入交."⁵⁴ Huang Kuan-chong notes that in order to gather intelligence, Li Zengbo in this instance turned to the petty merchants who traveled between the aboriginal settlements from Yongzhou to Qinzhou to sell their wares.⁵⁵ Li Zengbo, along with his fellow local representatives of the Song empire, desperately sought support in the effort to prevent the Mongols from opening a southern front in their campaign to topple the Song state, and the indigenous leadership of the Upper Tongking Gulf occupied a strategic route that linked the Song with the potential allies in the Dai Viet kingdom. At the dynasty's end, it seems that the Jingjiangfu Military Prefecture was the lynch pin to the southern resistance to the Mongol advance. When Jingjiangfu was finally overrun in 1276,

⁵² Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi," p. 136.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 142.

⁵⁴ Li Zengbo 李曾伯, *Kezhai zagao* 可齋雜藁 (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1983) 5, p. 19.

⁵⁵ Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi," p. 142.

all the remaining loyal prefectures and commandaries of the Guangnan East and West circuits submitted to the Mongol invaders.⁵⁶

As the leader of the Huang clan's home region in this period, Huang Bing's administrative service to the distant northern court became increasingly important to Song authorities during a time when local alliances were shifting along with the Mongol armies' advance. Until 1249, Song authorities at Yongzhou were using gold to buy local horses for their cavalry from indigenous traders along the frontier region.⁵⁷ However, following the first Mongol invasion of Dai Viet in the 1250s, Mongol commanders made their own inroads with these indigenous communities and they were also able to develop good relations with many indigenous leaders in the Yunnan–Guizhou region.⁵⁸ This fact created a great deal of frustration at the Song court and caused the Song leadership to fear a greater threat from Mongol incursions if military intelligence about local aboriginal leaders and their actions were to be cut off. In fact, Mongol success in cultivating local ties caused the Guangnan horse trade to dry up after 1255.⁵⁹ There were other indigenous leaders, such as Xu Zhongyi 許忠義 (d.u.), who chose, as Huang Bing did, to cooperate with the Song in repelling Mongol advances. Li Zengbo was forced to call upon these remaining native allies, including the Huang clan at Siming, to shore up local defenses and to seek out vital local military intelligence. The Huang clan's role in local trade may have diminished, but their authority within the Song empire was renewed through this new role.

The military situation Li faced during his search for local allies was dire. When Li Zengbo served as the chief military officer for both the Jinghu Southern and Guangnan West circuits, Mongol soldiers twice invaded Guangxi. In summer of 1258, in an initial assault, Mongol horsemen rode through Temo circuit, home region of the Nung clan, into Song territory to engage Song forces at Yongzhou's East Gate 東門 and Kunlun 崑崙 Pass before retreating back to Yunnan. Li Tianming estimates that the Mongol advance caused the mass defection of more than 7,000 of the approximately 26,000 local troops garrisoned in Guangnan West. Sickness took many more; by the winter of the same year the garrison at Yongzhou lost 3,000 men to illness.⁶⁰ The 1258 invasion of the Mongols also caused shock in the Dai Viet kingdom.

⁵⁶ Li, *Song Yuan zhan shi*, p. 1507.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1641.

⁵⁸ Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi," p. 147.

⁵⁹ Li, *Song Yuan zhan shi*, p. 1641.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1622–23.

On December 7, the Mongol army captured the Dai Viet kingdom's Phu Linh Chau 富令州 prefecture, and pushed forward to capture Song's Longzhou and Anding (today part of Du'an 都安 county). At this stage in the war, Li Zengbo gave the order to Huang Bing and another native official, Li Zongcheng 李宗城 (d.u.), to meet with and debrief two Dai Viet officials (one surnamed Nguyen 阮 and the other Tran 陳) regarding Mongol military movements, as well as to take a statement from a local Song witness Wang Dai 王載. All of this information was presented in detail to the emperor Lizong.⁶¹ Following Huang Kuan-chung once more, we know that Li was frequently gaining such information indirectly from Mongol troops themselves via native persons traveling between Dai Viet and Yongzhou.⁶² Huang Bing, because his family was married into the Tran royal household, was well-placed for providing the necessary contacts for Li Zengbo and his fellow Song representatives.

Even after the fall of the Song, the Huang clan, then in the service of the Vietnamese court, continued to serve the anti-Mongol cause. In the aftermath of the second Yuan invasion of Dai Viet in 1285, many Yuan troops died while retreating through the Huang clan home region, including the Tangut general Li Heng 李恆 (1236–1285) who had played an important role as military commander in the final battle with the remnant forces of the Song. Li was famously struck by a poisoned arrow upon arriving in Siming prefecture.⁶³ Even after the southern frontier had finally been pacified by Yuan forces, the Huang clan proved unapologetic. When the local leader Huang Shengxu 黃聖許 was able to assemble military forces from both sides of the frontier, he launched a rebellion in 1292 with 20,000 supporters. After the Mongol court sent the military commander Cheng Pengfei 程鵬飛 (j. 1287) to put down the unrest, Huang fled southward into the Dai Viet kingdom.⁶⁴ In the fall of 1318, the local frontier leaders Huang Fafu 黃法扶 and He Kai 何凱 launched another revolt that required the intervention of Mongol troops.⁶⁵ However, local resistance from the Huang clan in Siming did not continue forever. In 1329 the local elite Huang Keshun 黃克順 (d.u.) would serve the Yuan court as route commander (*zongguan* 總官) for the Siming prefecture, and that year brought tribute to the court at

⁶¹ Li, *Ke zhai za gao* 5, pp. 16–17.

⁶² Huang, "Wan Song junqing souji yu chuandi," pp. 144–145.

⁶³ Song Lian 宋濂 et al., eds., *Yuanshi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1976) 417, p. 277.

⁶⁴ Wang Sen 汪森, *Yue xi congzhai* 粵西叢載 (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1987) 27, p. 11a.

⁶⁵ Huang Chengshou 黃成授, *Guangxi minzu guanxi de lishi yu xianzhuang* 廣西民族關係的歷史與現狀 (Beijing: Minzu, 2002), p. 92.

Dadu.⁶⁶ However, as Kathlene Baldanza notes in a forthcoming publication, the area of Dai Viet–Qinzhou trade would face further unrest in the early-fifteenth century when four coastal aboriginal settlements proclaimed loyalty to the newly established Le court, causing the Ming authority a great amount of consternation.⁶⁷ As stated above, loyalty on the Sino-Vietnamese frontier was a complicated matter, and this remained the case well into the modern era.

CONCLUDING POINTS

An examination of the behavior of local actors on the Sino-Southeast Asian frontier must consider the contingencies implicit in relations between the local elite and their larger neighbors. In their introduction to a collected volume, editors Pamela Crossly, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton bring out the theme of “tension between unity and diversity”; it suggests that local actors appropriated or rejected state-generated symbols of authority, depending on conditions in the borderlands.⁶⁸ My own study of the attempt by the Tai-speaking chieftain Nung Tri Cao and his followers to carve out an autonomous domain between the Song and Ly spheres of influence also explores a breakdown in the negotiated loyalties of a certain frontier elite who were in the service of two distant courts.⁶⁹ The bilateral relations between local, frontier elite leaders and the distant courts of the Song and Dai Viet states must be examined within the context of multiple regional relations fostered among clan leaders along the frontier. David Atwill’s reference to Stanley Tambiah’s notion of the “galactic polity” in understanding multi-layered local relations among non-Han and Hui communities leading into the nineteenth-century Panthay Rebellion has some application in this earlier period.⁷⁰ The regional identity of the Upper Tongking Gulf communities first nurtured in the early-Song era depended upon the strategic importance of trade through the region, which gave its inhabitants a greater sense of confidence to act politically with some

⁶⁶ Wei Yuan 魏源, *Yuanshi xinbian* 元史新編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1995) 13, p. 9a.

⁶⁷ Kathlene Baldanza, “A State Agent at Odds with the State: Lin Xiyuan and the Ming Recovery of the Four Dong,” in Anderson and Whitmore, *China’s Encounters on the South and Southwest*.

⁶⁸ Pamela Kyle Crossley, Donald Sutton, and Helen Siu, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 2006), p. 3.

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Rebel Den*.

⁷⁰ David G. Atwill, “Trading Places: Resistance, Ethnicity and Governance in Nineteenth-century Yunnan,” in Robert J. Antony, *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, E. Asia Program, 2002), p. 246.

degree of autonomy. Their larger Song and Dai Viet neighbors may have lacked the local organization and consolidation of authority to easily thwart the independent actions of the Huang clan members at this time, but concern for the disruption of these important trade links also played a role in local negotiations among the three parties.

This article might help us see a bit more clearly the connection between the Huang clan's strategic position in the frontier management policies of both the Song and Ly/Tran courts, and the way that the Huang were obligated to position themselves in loyal service to both the Song and Tran authorities, once their position at the center of a north-south trade artery was lost and maritime connections with the Song shifted eastward to Guangzhou. In the early Song, when both the Northern Song regime at Kaifeng and the southern regime of the Ly/Tran (first at Hoa Lu and later Thang Long) were in search of their respective political footings, the Huang were more at liberty to act aggressively in challenging rivals in the region and dominating inter-regional trade markets for their own benefit. Although Jiaozhi's status as the main entry point for South Seas trade had already begun to decline in the late Tang, this transition to Guangzhou was not completed by the time of the Song founding. Shortly after the transition had been made, the 1075 border war between the Song and Ly courts resulted in a negotiated boundary between the two states with a fresh emphasis on trade relations, and thus the Huang clan's status was sharply curtailed.

In this study of the Huang clan's engagement with both Song and Ly/Tran courts, we have moved away from the outdated Turnerian notion of frontier as a division between civilization and barbarism. Yet, a new depiction of relations still requires further refinement. More consideration should be given to the impact of long-distance trade that passed over the frontier both south to north and west to east. We must also produce a clear, more detailed, picture of the material concerns of these communities to better understand how particular clan leaders maintained political dominance for extended periods in their home regions. The more such factors have been satisfactorily explored, the more authoritative our frontier-focused studies of these communities will be.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SS *Songshi* 宋史