

periencing a major earthquake on the way. On December 4, 1652, he led the way back home, with his father and mother behind in separate palanquins and his cousin bringing up the rear (fig. 17). From the middle of Guizhou to the middle of southern Huguang, the journey was especially hazardous because they happened to encounter an ambitious campaign by Sun Kewang against Qing positions in Huguang,¹³ so they had to avoid the main travel routes (see map 6). Finding the border region between Huguang and Jiangxi impassable because of bandits, they proceeded from Xiangtan by boat the rest of the way, experiencing the perils of that mode of transportation in crossing Dongting Lake in particular. They arrived back in Suzhou on July 12, 1653.]

12

SOARING PHOENIX OR CAGED PANTHER?

FATHER AND SON

CHOOSE OPPOSITE SIDES

IN THE TURBULENCE of mid-century not all fathers and sons had such ideal relations as the Huangs (see Chap. 10). In any society tensions can arise between disciplinarian fathers and self-assertive sons in their late teens or early twenties, and those can be worsened by social and political ruptures. In Chinese culture especially, the strong emphasis on obedience to fatherlike rulers and to rulerlike fathers and on the reconciliation of any conflicts between family and state loyalties could cause dramatic dissension among leading figures in the social-political elite. One such case had far-reaching consequences for the history of the Ming-Qing dynastic struggle—that of the mogul of China's maritime trade zone, the pirate cum marquis Zheng Zhilong (1604–61), and his eldest son, a brilliant organizer and military strategist now famed in history, propaganda, drama, and folklore, Zheng Chenggong (1624–62; figs. 18 and 19).¹

The father, himself physically strong and rebellious as a young man, left the home of his own father, a minor Ming official in Quanzhou Prefecture, in his late teens to learn the ropes of international maritime trade in Macao, where he worked in some capacity for the Portuguese. In 1621 he moved to Japan, where he became an aide to the Chinese merchant, smuggler, and pirate Li Dan, who dominated the flourishing Chinese shipping trade at the key ports of Hirado and Nagasaki.² Li's death in 1625, as well as the increased friction between Chinese authorities on the seaboard and the Dutch East India Company,^{*} gave Zhilong momentous opportunities. He responded with an astute knowl-

^{*}See Chaps. 4 and 13.



Figure 18. A Chinese portrait of Zheng Chenggong. It is probably a version of the portrait described by Yan Xing as “the treasured holding of Zheng’s eighth-generation descendant, Yuchun” (“Zheng Chenggong yirong jinkao” [A Present-Day Inquiry into Zheng Chenggong’s Physical Appearance], *Tainan wenhua*, 5.1 [February 1956]: 7). The long earlobes, which originally signified wisdom in Buddhist iconography, came to be a conventional feature in Chinese portraits of extraordinary figures.

edge of the highly competitive, often belligerent maritime commercial scene along the East Asian coast; he knew the political interests on various sides, the coastal weather and geography, and not least, the social and economic conditions peculiar to the people of littoral Fujian.³

Within a few years of successfully commandeering Li Dan’s organization, Zhilong eliminated his competitors in the Zhangzhou-



Figure 19. A European portrait of Zheng Chenggong. Although the conventions of illustration differ greatly, the soft, winsome features and civilian attire are ironic in both the Chinese and European portraits of a man who was famed as a stern disciplinarian and brilliant military strategist. (Because of the engraving techniques of European illustrators, their approximations of Chinese script often turned out backward when printed in Europe, as here.)

Quanzhou area, persuaded the Dutch to leave the Chinese coast and the Pescadores in return for undisturbed use of Taiwan as a trade depot, and bullied the Ming government into giving him an appointment as a naval commander in charge of keeping the peace on the southeastern seaboard—if by self-serving means, then so be it. Having added official sanction to his position, Zhilong even more confidently gave preferential treatment to his own ships, levied his own import and export taxes on others, collected protection fees from fishermen, merchant marines, and their agents, organized exclusive manufactories and commodity-delivery systems, and built on the tendency of that economically precarious region to generate large, tightly organized, combative lineages.⁴ Zhilong garnered immense wealth, lived like a prince, and made the Zhengs of Anping a force to be reckoned with in both national and international politics.⁵

During his sojourn in Hirado, Zhilong mated with the daughter of a samurai family,* and she bore his first son, Zheng Sen (called Fukumatsu in his Japanese home)—the future Zheng Chenggong. Zhilong went back to China, apparently even before the birth, and he did not send for his son until six or seven years later. The mother was not brought to the Zheng home in Fujian until 1645; there she was secondary to Zhilong's formal wife, a Chinese woman surnamed Yan, by whom he sired five other sons. By that time Zhilong, now an aspiring pillar of the Ming establishment, had been grooming his firstborn for an influential political career by providing him with the classical education that Zhilong himself had shirked as a young man. When the Zheng organization became the main military support of the Longwu regime, centered at Fuzhou, the Longwu emperor, himself still childless, was so impressed with the twenty-one-year-old Zheng Sen that he bestowed on him the imperial surname, Zhu, and a new personal name, Chenggong, thereby symbolically adopting him.[†]

The next year, 1646, heavy blows came the way of our prodigy,

*The Tagawa, retainers to the Matsuura daimyo of Hyōgo Prefecture. The woman later bore a second son, named Shichizaemon, by a Japanese man. Zheng Chenggong remained in warm contact with his Japanese half brother for the rest of his life.

†From this circumstance arose the name by which Zheng Chenggong has been most commonly referred to in popular sources: Guoxingye (Lord of the State Surname)—Koxinga, or Cocksinja, in European writings, Kokusenya in Japanese. On the Longwu court and the Zhengs' role therein, see Chap. 8.

thereafter most often referred to in histories as Zheng Chenggong. The Longwu regime was crushed by the Manchus, and the emperor slain.⁶ Zhilong, heedless of emotional dissuasions from his eldest son and others, responded to Qing inducements by surrendering to the enemy. Chenggong's mother, to whom he was deeply attached, committed suicide during the first of repeated Qing raids on the Zheng home base in Anping County. It is not difficult to see a strong psychological element—among the economic, political, and ideological ones—in Chenggong's subsequent implacability toward his father and toward the Qing.

During the next several years Chenggong worked hard to build his own following and to establish leadership over more senior figures in the Zheng clan organization. He reinforced his military command center, Zhongzuo Base, on Xiamen Island in Xiamen Bay, which controlled sea access to the Zheng home to the northeast and Haicheng to the southwest (see map 7). Haicheng had been the most important maritime entrepôt in Fujian since 1567, when it was designated by the Ming government as the only port for legitimate private overseas trade.⁷ Chenggong's ability to thwart Qing efforts to secure the maritime Southeast grew steadily, and in 1653, after suffering a sharp blow from his amphibious forces, the Qing court decided that a major effort to summon Chenggong to allegiance was in order. They realized that to defeat him by force in his own domain—in a watery environment with which they were not at all familiar—would entail enormous expenditures and losses. Thus, a great deal was staked on their diplomatic offensive, in which Zheng Zhilong and his family members in Beijing were made uneasy intermediaries.

The extant Chinese historical writings on Zheng Chenggong were mostly secondary and prone to fabrication until 1927, when a dilapidated manuscript was discovered in the Zhengs' former home village, Shijing. It turned out to be a detailed primary record of Chenggong's affairs. However, because front and back parts of the manuscript had surrendered to time, it has not been possible to ascertain the original temporal span nor the original title.⁸ The author's identity fortunately is clear: Yang Ying, who served for many years as one of Chenggong's revenue officers and who apparently had subsidiary duties as a chronicler. From his account we get an intimate view of a well-run seaboard regime, of the de facto autocrat of that regime, and of the strategies that made the regime and its head so formidable.

[1st month (February) of 1653]. Zhou Jiwu*—having been deputed by Grand Preceptor and Duke of Pingguo [Zheng Zhilong][†]—arrived at Xiamen from Beijing and transmitted a message from Zhilong informing the prince [Zheng Chenggong] that the Qing court wished to talk peace and ordering him to engage in such talks. The prince deputed Li De with a return letter to the grand preceptor, which said in part: “It has been several years since your son went southward,[‡] and he has already become a person beyond the pale. Zhang Xuesheng [the former Qing governor of Fujian] had no reason to start trouble arbitrarily [in the raids of 1651].[§] Your son could not but respond in kind. Now that he is riding a tiger, it’s hard to get off; troops that have been gathered are hard to disperse.”

[8th month (September–October)]. Li De, Zhou Jiwu, and others, having been deputed by the grand preceptor, the Duke of Pingguo, to present a letter in the duke’s own hand to the prince, arrived and stated: “The Qing court wishes to confer land in exchange for peace. They wish to depute two high officials to present the seal of, and the documents bestowing the title of, Duke of Haicheng, authorizing the settlement of your followers in the lands of [Haicheng] Prefecture.^{||} The mission would be guaranteed by [the current viceroy for Zhejiang and Fujian] Liu Qingtai. They have sent us in advance to ascertain your willingness. After we report back, they will order the court envoys to come and make the presentation.” The prince said, “The Qing court wants to trick me, eh? One way or another we’ll use the situation to extract plenty of supplies to feed the troops.”

*Zhou Jiwu, Li De, Wang Yu, and others mentioned as go-betweens were personal aides and servants of Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Chenggong.

[†]The author consistently refers to Zhilong by the highest titles that he received under the Ming Longwu emperor. Out of respect for the father of his leader, the author observes the taboo against using Zhilong’s personal name, even in transcribing edicts from the Qing court.

[‡]From fallen Fuzhou to the Zheng family stronghold in the Anping-Xiamen area.

[§]See below, in the next letter.

^{||}Chenggong had recently inflicted a painful retaliatory defeat on Qing forces in Haicheng. See the following letter.

Then he wrote a return missive to the Duke of Pingguo and ordered Li De to gallop [day and] night to the [Qing] capital to report. The missive said: “For eight years now I have failed to serve at my father’s knee. But then, since my father no longer regarded his son as such, I did not presume to consider myself a son. Consequently our inquiries after one another utterly ceased; not one word has gone between us. Circumstances have been so extraordinary as to alienate even flesh and blood.

“Since ancient times, the principle that the greater righteousness [in serving one’s ruler and state] extinguishes one’s duty to family⁹ has been the instruction of men in sensible, not unstable, states of mind. When your son first learned to read, he straightaway respected this meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. I had been contemplating that principle for some time when, in the winter of 1646, Father’s carriage entered the Qing capital and committed me to acting on it.

“Out of the blue I have received your stern directive that your son’s capacity for loyalty be brought to reinforce filiality. As before, you transmit the oral edict of the Qing court, including talk about my having been an earl and a marquis [under the Ming, which would warrant] an expeditious elevation in rank. But if the Qing have lost credence with the father, how can the father’s words bear credence with the son? When the Manchu prince [Bolo] entered the pass [to Fujian], my father had long since retreated home to avoid the situation. They then used ingratiating phrases and clever language delivered by envoys who came to woo you in entourages of horses and carriages that went back and forth no fewer than ten times. They went as far as to bait my father with a princely title and control over three provinces. At first they said that once you had come to the provincial capital, you could go home again; later they said that after you entered the national capital, you could assume command of the three provinces. Now it’s been several years. Let’s not speak of the princely title or the assumption of command*—now, even if you wanted to pass through your old neighborhood, you couldn’t. How can their words be believed?

“When my father was in the Ming court, was he not the exalted Duke of Pingguo? Now that he’s serving the Qing court, how is it that he’s behind others? But it is that way even for those who went over to

*Zhilong was not even elevated to the status of a marquis until the plan to make Chenggong a duke was initiated.

the Qing first.* How much more so for the last to submit? Also laughable was that early on, your son sent Wang Yu to enter Beijing only because he had heard rumors about your circumstances and thought to have someone look into them. But Wang was abruptly put into prison and subjected to extremely cruel floggings. What could one Wang Yu have perpetrated? But seeing how they barked at shadows like that, the rest could be known.

“Nevertheless, in 1649 [I thought it safe] to sail into Guangdong Province to operate some colonies for a few years.¹⁰ I never expected that they would take advantage of your son’s being far away to recklessly initiate hostilities. They attacked and destroyed our base, Zhongzuo [fig. 20], devastated our lands, took spoils from our soldiers and people, captured and raped our womenfolk, and robbed us of over 900,000 gold taels, several hundred pounds of pearls and jewels, and many hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain. The valuables stolen from our soldiers and common people are incalculable. When they heard that your son was about to return, they begged for mercy from Fourth Junior Uncle [Zheng Hongkui].[†] Fortunately for them, he gave them some room to get away, so they were able to make it back alive. But having returned, they again treated us with suspicion and involved us in disputation.”

“All our generals and soldiers had such painful thoughts about the country’s shame and our family’s loss that their anger made their hair stand on end under their caps. That is why the military actions in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou prefectures ensued. The taking of [the former viceroy] Chen Jin’s head and the repeated defeats of [Commander in Chief] Yang Minggao were assuredly in the natural course of getting back what one puts out. Not only that: troops from various neighboring foreign countries, such as Japan and Kampuchea,¹² should arrive any day now. They, too, wish to practice the greater righteousness of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

*That is, no matter how trusted the earlier, non-Manchu allies became, they never could attain the status of the Manchu leaders. Nor would those who surrendered in North China ever be trusted as much as those who submitted to the Manchus in Liaodong.

[†]See Chap. 8, n. 4. In truth, Chenggong was enraged with Hongkui for letting the Qing raiders go from Xiamen. Because Hongkui was his uncle, he couldn’t have him executed, as he did the other generals and officials involved (including some relatives). But he did force Hongkui to relinquish military command, after which Chenggong, despite his youth, was nonpareil in the family organization.



Figure 20. The Zheng stronghold, Zhongzuo Base, on Xiamen Island.

"If I am to believe both my father's command and the Qing edict, then there is a contradiction: The edict that my father has transmitted says one thing, whereas the copy that I've obtained of the decree to be presented by Minister Liu Qingtai says another. There are thorny discrepancies between the former and the latter. We are already in full control of the seaboard. The resources of the eastern and western seas that we have propagated afford more than enough supplies for our offensive actions. Why should we be willing to revert from sitting and enjoying this surfeit to being constrained by others?"

"Speaking in terms of Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi, the pros and cons [of the Qing effort to control these three provinces directly] are clear. Does no one at the Qing court understand this? The maritime provinces are several thousand li from the capital. The route is dauntingly long, exhausting for both men and horses. And their unfamiliarity with the environment once they arrive results in most of them dying off. Troop shortages are sure to make these regions hard for the Qing to hold. Increasing troop strength would necessitate recruitment from other regions. If that were done, it would surely prove difficult to sustain so many troops with provincial supplies. And if food for troops were not provided, then the regions certainly could not be held.

"To waste money and supplies trying to hold unholdable soil would bring harm but no advantage. Before, when my father had command over Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi, the lands and seas were as peaceful as could be, and the court did not have to expend so much as one arrow. Besides troop supplies, there was enough to send surpluses to the capital. The court enjoyed this service, and the people benefited. That brought advantage and no harm. If the Qing court is unable to learn from the astute calculation of my [Ming] dynasty, and instead sends its troops to labor in faraway ventures, year after year wasting unrenowable resources, how will they ever manage recovery later on?"

"Perhaps they now intend to use an empty title to authority over three provinces—a title with which they previously baited the father—to turn around and bait the son. Your son truly does not categorically doubt his father's words, but under these particular circumstances, it is hard to believe them. If Liu Qingtai could actually take responsibility and truly confer control over the territory of three provinces on me, then the lands and seas could be free of the scourge of outlawry, and the Qing court would have no need to worry in looking southward—indeed, it would be their great good fortune. . . .

"Besides, at present we have several hundred thousand troops, and conditions would make them hard to disperse. If dispersed, they would form disruptive groups among themselves and cause unrest in the area. Keeping them together entails numerous expenditures—a big ten thousand taels each day. Without the territory and revenues of a province, it would be like the old scheme that they used to bait my father. The father having been deceived before, how can the son allow himself to be deceived again later?"

"The Ming dynasty has conferred the imperial surname and a princely title on your son.* His official status already being the highest possible, how could the Qing add to it? Anyway, your son's concern for official titles has always been thin; much less is he interested in going through the hierarchy of conferrals again. I say this to someone who should know. Otherwise, if I were to display an empty, meaningless title while acquiescing in what actually was a disaster, then people's minds would tend to revolt against such falsity, and Jiangnan, too, would be hard to keep secure for long."

[1st month (February–March) of 1654]. The grand preceptor, Duke of Pingguo, again sent Li De to present a letter in his own hand and to state upon arrival: "The Qing court is deputing two envoys named Zheng and Jia to present the seal of the 'Duke of Haicheng,' as well as permission to lodge our troops in the four prefectures of Xinghua, Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, and Chaozhou.† They will reach the provincial capital [Fuzhou] at the end of this month." Our prince then appointed Chang Shouning, his deputy adjutant who kept the seal of the Army That Manifests Righteousness, as chief emissary and Zheng Qifeng of the Bureau of Processional Paraphernalia as his second. They were to proceed to the Fujian capital to receive the Qing envoys, [ostensibly] because of the grand preceptor's express wish that loyalty and filiality be fully reconciled. But the prince summoned Shouning and instructed him, saying, "On the matter of the peace negotiations, my will is already

*According to Yang Ying's record, Chenggong did not receive the title Prince of Yanping through an emissary of the Yongli emperor until the seventh lunar month of that year, 1654.

†The region comprising present-day Putian, Jinjiang, and Longxi in southeastern Fujian, and Chaoan in the extreme eastern part of Guangdong.

set, and you are not to discuss the matter. Your responses to the Qing emissaries should be just a show of decorum; you are not to detract from our dynasty's integrity. Resistance or compliance will be carried out according to times and circumstances. Avoid bringing shame on your mission, that's all."

The Shunzhi emperor's edict [of his intention to bestow the title] Duke of Haicheng:

Considering that military forces have become heavily concentrated in the remote Fujian maritime region, We feel that it is time to endow a noble lineage to bring peace to that border territory. You,* Zheng Chenggong, are the son of our dynasty's hereditary Marquis of Tongan, Zheng Zhilong. In the past when the Great Qing troops went down into Fujian, Zhilong led the way in coming to allegiance. Although this was recorded, at the time he was not rewarded commensurately with his merit. Prince Mergen,¹ being suspicious and listening too easily [to loose talk], was remiss in providing complete, benevolent nurture. This made you fearful and wary, and you hung back, preferring the outer sphere.

Reflecting on the greatness of the bond between fathers and sons and on the heavenly naturalness of their reciprocal kindness and filiality, We wonder how the son could wish to be inimical, now that the father has become a meritorious [Qing] official. But the road between you and the capital has been long and obstructed, and you have not been able to communicate your true feelings upward. When Li De and the others arrived with your family letter, I ordered the ministers of the Inner [Three] Departments to carefully interview the messenger and learn your truest feelings. We thought empathetically, How can any distinction be drawn between new subjects and old subjects if We are to treat all with heartfelt sincerity?

Even if the maritime sector is pacified, our defense commands will need talent. Rather than choosing someone else, would it not be better to employ you? Moreover, in making recommendations, your father, Zhilong, has not demurred in [pointing out exceptional ability among] his own relatives, and he has energetically vouched for you.¹ Thus, We [proclaim Our intent

*The word "you" is used only in the imperial edicts quoted here, which speak condescendingly from emperor to subject. Usually in formal or semiformal prose, terms of address were more politely indirect. This translation reflects some of that, but it also resorts to using "I," "you," "my," "your," and so forth, for readability in English and at many points where there are no such words in the text.

¹This sentence and the paragraph above (there are no paragraph divisions in the

to] raise your noble title and bestow powers commensurate with those of others who have earned merit in establishing the Qing state. We especially congratulate you on continuing your family's hereditary status.

With the bestowal of the herewith mandated decree and seal, you shall be enfeoffed as the Duke of Haicheng, with command over Quanzhou and contiguous areas and emoluments according to precedent. All measures for defending against or eradicating sea pirates off the Fujian coast shall be at your discretion. All seagoing vessels shall be subject to your management, inspection, and collection of taxes. All current personnel shall remain under your control as before, until the time when their accomplishments can be recorded. The numbers of your people coming to allegiance should be reported in a memorial to facilitate their orderly placement.* Evaluations of local officials, civil affairs, litigations, and revenues shall, of course, be handled by the viceroys and governors.¹

Receive this grand commendation responsibly, and strive to make recompense with all your heart's powers. The serenity of the seacoast shall be your accomplishment. . . . Do not disregard Our command! . . ."⁴

3rd month [April–May]. As the prince was setting out for [Anping (present-day Anhai), the place appointed for the] peace talks, he took advantage of the situation to dispatch his various chief and regional commanders to locales in the prefectures of Fuzhou, Xinghua, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou to collect assessments and voluntary contributions.⁴ Fearing that the Qing authorities would send troops to interfere, he wrote to Viceroy and Governor Liu Qingtai, saying: "My several hundred thousand soldiers are leaning on their armor waiting for peace. Although the talks may take a while, their stomachs absolutely cannot go empty. I presume that it is all right for some of them to go into various locales and do what they deem necessary to raise revenues and sustain troop supplies. . . ."

That month, having received [Liu Qingtai's uneasy] response, the prince personally led his great forces on an inspection tour to find out whether people complied with or resisted demands that they contribute supplies and to decide on corresponding measures of mollification or

Chinese text) respond to Chenggong's previous point that the Qing had reneged on their promises of rank and power to Zhilong and at the same time warns Chenggong that the father will be held hostage for the son's future actions.

*This is in response to Chenggong's claim that his large army could not be disbanded.

¹This makes clear to Chenggong that his role will be solely naval and that he will act in coordination with the regular civil bureaucracy on land.

⁴A euphemism for moneys and goods extorted from well-to-do local families.

chastisement. . . [Then, before he returned to Xiamen in the 4th month, Chenggong led naval forces in punishing the populace in locales on and near Haitan Island, southeast of Fuzhou, for intercepting Zheng ships.]

5th month [June–July]. The prince, stationed at Zhongzuo Base, again sped a letter to Qingtai, [announcing that he would need to be offered] three provinces before he would move toward peace. Liu Qingtai sped a letter back, which said: “From afar I received your second missive, thinking that it would assuage this humble person’s dismay, not that it would be further evidence of vacillating behavior. This humble person* hastened into Fujian and wrote to you extremely candidly, hoping to come to an early agreement about the seaboard, early fulfill the Sage [Emperor]’s charge, and early effect some outcome to the problem of loyalty and filiality between your respected father and his son. How could it be that Your Honor’s reply is still a thousand li off the mark?

“All affairs under heaven consist of principles and circumstances—that is all. Your respected father has been elevated to noble status above the great ministers, and your grandmother is entering her frailest years.[†] Consider that the limited territory of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou, though not yet the final resting place of Your Honor’s generation, is still the locus of your ancestors’ tombs. That Your Honor’s military actions in such a small area might bring injury to their surface deprives your respected father’s spirit of as much as fifteen minutes’ peace even in his dreams and your grandmother of as much as fifteen minutes’ enjoyment in sleeping or eating.[‡] If Your Honor intends to carry on serenely among the billowing waves, can you credibly assert that this is calculated to earn you riches and high titles? That would be utterly devoid of feeling or reason.

“A further consideration is that the Manchu commanders have been ready to fight [literally, ‘sleeping on their spears’] for some time. At present, Great Qing troops are stationed at the Zhangzhou border, and strong forces, knives drawn, are to the south of Quanzhou—some of

**Buning* is a common term of polite self-reference. Here, like the corresponding term of polite address, “Your Honor” (*zuxia*), it is used almost sarcastically.

[†]This reminds Chenggong that not only his father but his paternal grandmother as well are in Beijing, subject to any action of the Qing court.

[‡]This reminds Chenggong that Qing forces have desecrated Zheng graves before, and they can do it again.

them unwilling to wait any longer. This humble person’s official charge is to emphasize reconciliation, whereas the Manchu commanders’ forte is attack. If Your Honor continues with this mindless braggadocio, how can this humble one impede their attack by continuing to insist on reconciliation? . . .

“Moreover, the things that Your Honor said in your family letter and in the missive to me have been sufficient to arouse condemnation in the official community and to provoke anger in the Sage Intelligence. This humble person hesitated to recopy those letters for formal submission. But because of your words he cannot but bare his feelings to you from a long-suffering heart: Saying that for a long time you were not conscious of having a father not only violated natural kindness but it also leaves cause for criticism from future generations. Your respected father was an important official of the late Ming. When his state was lost, he chose a new ruler. It was not a matter of betraying [Ming imperial] favor and serving its enemies. . . . Why does Your Honor extinguish a changeless familial bond to pursue an unnecessary righteousness? The old saying that loyal officials must be sought among filial sons would seem to have no basis.

“As for presenting you with three provinces, where did that preposterous talk come from? Now the center and periphery of all under heaven have been at peace for ten years. Your Honor’s hegemonic sway in the watery realm could be ignored. Nevertheless, we wish to include you to expand the force of the Great Unity. Who would dare to lightly discuss the transfer of a submissive part of the national map with its wholly legitimate resources and revenues? There has never been such a policy nor such a border strategy.

“Also laughable, if one goes by what Your Honor says, is your statement that without three provinces you’ll leave us and be loyal to another.* But if you were to get three provinces, would you necessarily cast off the other and be loyal to us? All such talk is false pretense, contrary to common sense, discernibly not Your Honor’s true mind. . . . Whether in instructing your clan members or in planning with your experienced elders, Your Honor must be open and sincere and not conceal your head to change faces. There must be no more useless, unrepeatable claptrap about impossible things, which only foments

*Presumably the Ming Yongli emperor, who was a virtual prisoner of Sun Kewang at Anlong in far southwestern Guizhou at the time (see Chap. 15).

controversy. In the end you will lose this opportunity by failing to act properly.

“This humble person’s words will stop here, his mind’s energies exhausted. On another day, seeing your respected father in the ranks of officials at court, I can assure him that I have not been at fault. Whether to advance or not will be decided by the Manchu commanders and leaders. Success or failure will have to do with Your Honor, his father, and his brothers as a group. Although this humble one shoulders official responsibility in this matter, should he carry all the blame? Only Your Honor can judge that.”

Draft imperial edict to Zheng Chenggong, Duke of Haicheng (imperial seal applied on the 28th day of the 6th month [August 10, 1654]):

Throughout history, brave and sterling figures who have understood their times and encountered rulers who treated men with sincerity have bared their innermost feelings and observed compliance, swearing to be loyal and to never take a second allegiance. Only then could they establish success in affairs and become exalted in both their persons and their reputations. None who have looked around in doubt or suspicion could be said to have understood their times or known heaven’s command.

Having received aid and nurture from heaven, We now hold a realm that extends vastly in all directions. Could it be at all difficult to secure the maritime sector with just a partial deployment of troops? But the people of mountainous Fujian are my naked babes, whom We cannot bear to subject to military labors. Moreover, considering that your father, Zheng Zhilong, came early to Qing allegiance and has been commendably loyal and obedient, the benevolence and rewards given to him have been extended to you in the form of a ducal title verified with a decree and a seal. To enable you to station troops in the four prefectures of Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, Huizhou, and Chaozhou, supplies for your waterborne units have been allocated to support the officers and soldiers of your organization. Our treatment of you might well be called most conscientious. You naturally should shave your head, be wholly loyal, and desist from calculating [your own advantage].

But according to your memorial, even though you are willing to receive the decree and seal, you are not yet willing to shave your head.* You look forward to being delegated authority over all of Fujian, and on the pretext

*In the Manchu style, signifying allegiance to the Qing. See Chap. 1, n. 20.

of undertaking military actions, you also speak of colonizing Zhoushan Island and drawing supplementary revenues from nearby prefectures like Wenzhou, Taizhou, Ningbo, and Shaoxing.* These words are ridiculous; your demands are insatiable. You make yet another excuse, saying that Qing officials and troops have not yet withdrawn from the four prefectures. But you have not yet come to allegiance, so what sense would there be in our prior withdrawal?

If you, suspicious and hesitant, have never really intended to submit, then you should state that clearly and openly, differentiating the two poles of obedience and disobedience with one sentence. But if you honor Our original edict and act in accord with what it requires, that means you accept the decree and seal, shave your head, and come to submission—the matter is finished. Should you fail to submit, then think and plan very carefully to avoid future regrets.¹⁵

7th month [August–September]. The prince received reports at Zhongzuo Base that the Qing court had sent reinforcements into Fujian, so again he deputed his chief and regional commanders to go into Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, Fuzhou, and Xinghua prefectures to collect taxes and contributions. Because the peace talks were not yet set, the caitiffs’ troops did not dare hinder such activities. So the prince energetically sent even more [revenue agents].

[8th month,] 19th day [September 29]. Li De, Zhou Jiwu, and others arrived at Zhongzuo Base and stated: “[Your younger brother,] Master [Zheng] Du, who is accompanying two Qing high officials, has arrived in the provincial capital. They want you to . . . send some of your officers to invite them before they will come down farther.” The prince knew that he would have to shave his head before he could receive the proclamation [of investiture as Duke of Haicheng], so he was not willing to send any officers. Instead, he ordered Zhou Jiwu to go back and invite them, carrying a letter, which said: “This lowly wanderer of the seaborde has planted his staff beyond the pale of normal society, and he has long had no thought of earning a meritorious name in human affairs. He never expected that after his family’s tomb sites were desecrated, grand injunctions would arrive one upon another, reinforced with the silken missives of an emperor ‘treating him with heartfelt sincerity.’ By rights, how could I refuse? With humble gifts in hand, I wait expectantly for your vehicle. Some inner feelings have not yet been fully

*All are in Zhejiang Province, along the south side of Hangzhou Bay and the contiguous seacoast.

disclosed and require face-to-face discussions. My thoughts are in suspense as I await your early arrival. The cessation of hostilities in the Southeast virtually depends on one statement from the envoys. Men far and near will then hold the same loyalty, and subtle thoughts will gain expression across ten thousand li.”*

24th day [October 4]. [The Qing emissaries] Ye Chengge and Ashan arrived in Quanzhou and ordered Zhou Jiwu to go [to Chenggong] and say: “If you do not shave your head, then you cannot receive the proclamation. If your head is not shaven, then we need not even meet.” The prince scoffed at this and sent no reply but directed the envoys to wait in Quanzhou for something to report.

[9th month,] 4th day [October 13]. The prince sent Lü Tai, one of his rites functionaries, along with Li De to enter Quanzhou and present gifts to the Qing envoys. To dazzle them, Lü and Li emptied out the jewels that foreign countries had sent [Chenggong], but the two emissaries declined to accept any gifts, for the peace talks had not been joined. . . .

7th day [October 16]. The two emissaries ordered the inner imperial guardsman Master Du [Chenggong’s first younger brother] and Master Yin [Chenggong’s fourth younger brother] to visit the prince. When Master Du saw his elder brother, he knelt, tears streaming down his face, and declared, “Father has interceded for you again and again in the capital. If you don’t go this time around, the security of the whole family will be hard to protect. Please force yourself to accept the proclamation.” But the prince replied: “You ordinary sons have never understood affairs of the world. Since ancient times, when dynasties have changed, those who have subordinated themselves to others have never come to a good end—the single exception being Emperor Guangwu of the Han.[†] Father having erred earlier, why should I enter the same trap later? For every day that I don’t accept the proclamation, Father has one day of glory at court. Were I to feebly accept the proclamation and shave my head, then the fates of father and sons alike would be hard to predict. Don’t say any more. Am I so inhuman as to forget our father? This sort of thing is not easy—not easy!”

*Chenggong is saying that he needs to dicker over some things in private before he can accept the deal that they are offering.

[†]Who accepted the Xin dynasty of Wang Mang but was later able to restore the Han dynasty. See Chap. 8, n. 7.

Each day he had them entertained with theatricals and wine to gladden their hearts and keep them from raising the peacemaking matter again.

21st day [October 30]. The prince deputed an officer, Lin Hou, to accompany Master Du back; they again carried a letter and gifts to the emissaries. But the emissaries were even less willing to accept them than before. The prince’s letter read: “Splendid banners have come so quickly across ten thousand li! That I was unable to respectfully greet them fills my bosom with regret. Last month the messenger Li De came and informed me that the Minister’s pennon had reached the provincial capital.* Just as I was about to depute a special officer to serve your needs fully, the report came that your party had already arrived in Quanzhou.

“Recently my second youngest brother came to see me. This awkward person[†] charged him with conveying my intentions, and I agreed with him to set a date for our meeting. By that time the Minister had personally brought his pennon to Anping once again. The nocturnal, starlit travels of the Honored Minister were too abrupt; as for this awkward one, I did not hasten to grease my cart axles and thus missed meeting and receiving you. Hopefully, these lapses in protocol can be excused. . . .

“This awkward person is planning to fully disclose his inferior thoughts in a face-to-face talk—things that cannot be expressed in writing. An auspicious date for sweeping the marble guest couch has already been divined. The poor gifts sent previously were not accepted. But again I have prepared some offerings to somewhat fulfill the role of host, still praying that you will assess and accept them. Pen in hand, I look forward to your arrival.”

The two emissaries wrote back, saying: “. . . On the 18th and 19th Li De and Huang Zhengming[‡] came [to Anping] and said that you

*The chief emissary, Ye Chengge, was a vice-minister of one of the Six Ministries. He had previously been assigned to Jiangning, where he had vigorously prosecuted persons suspected of having contact with seaborne Ming loyalists.

[†]Chenggong’s conventionally polite term of self-reference throughout this letter.

[‡]Zhilong’s nephew by marriage, thus, Chenggong’s maternal cousin, whom the Qing had also enlisted to help in the mediation.

would neither accept the proclamation nor shave your head. We, your juniors, thus returned to Quanzhou on the 20th. Now we have received another letter saying that an auspicious meeting date has been divined. We cannot tell whether the two messengers, Huang and Li, were wrong in what they said before or whether the Gentleman now has reconsidered shaving his head and accepting the proclamation. . . . If we meet, it will just be a matter of making the emperor's vastly generous and virtuous intentions broadly known, submitting the Gentleman's written expression of gratitude for favor after he has shaved his head, and discussing the disposition of your fine officer corps, as well as defense measures and troop levels for the four prefectures—nothing more. Why mention anything else? It seems that the Gentleman again has inappropriately gone into extraneous matters.

"We junior ones bear [the weight of] the court's command on our small persons. The Imperial stipulation is that we return to the capital within the 10th month. How dare we delay any longer and test the law with our bodies? We humbly implore you to make one decisive statement soon, so that we can gallop speedily to report on our mission. . . ."

On the night of the 24th [November 2], Masters Du and Yin, Zhou Jiwu, Huang Zhengming, and others came again and tearfully, beseechingly, said, "If the two emissaries are disappointed this time and go back, the greater plan will be hard to sustain. After we report the results of our mission, there will surely be little reason to keep us alive, and the Old Master, the grand preceptor will also be in difficulty." The prince replied, "No matter how much is said or how much things change, my mind is made up. Say no more!"

The Duke of Pingguo [Zhilong] wrote a letter to [his younger brother, Chenggong's uncle] the Duke of Dingguo [Zheng Hongkui], telling him to persuade the prince to accept the proclamation and informing Dingguo that the Qing court wished to give him a noble title, too. At this time Dingguo wrote a letter in return, which read: "After the winter of 1646, when I tearfully parted from Elder Brother's visage on Sea Tortoise River,* your younger brother lived quietly with the various

*Which debouches east of the family home at Shijing.

generals on our islands, willing that his eyes be pierced through by the sight of your return. After some rumors came from Suqian,* he did not expect that the route northward through Jianning would be obstructed and that news of you would fall into a long silence. . . .

"[After the incident of 1651, when Qing forces ravaged Xiamen,] your younger brother, because of a bad foot ailment, chose a place on White Beach [not far from the brothers' home at Shijing] and built a crude thatch cottage there. All his warships, large and small, were converted for fishing and trade. He has lived at peace in that place for three years now. . . .

"In the first month of the new year I successively received Elder Brother's instruction, a copy of an imperial edict, and a letter from a Minister Liu presenting a decree: I could remain where I was and not go to the capital; though already included among [the Qing] marquises and earls, I would be elevated further. Your younger brother has borne this foot ailment, which grows worse daily, for over ten years. It is not something he just began speaking of today. Whenever he moves a few short steps, two persons must support him between them. So any thoughts of gaining a meritorious name have long since turned to ash. Everyone in the world, especially Elder Brother, knows that in the summer of 1646, I turned in my seal, took the Buddhist tonsure, and resigned from office. Anyway, your younger brother received magnanimous treatment from his own [Ming] dynasty, under which he held high positions and titles. So he cannot rightly betray that former benevolence out of greed for new glories. In sum, I wish to stay quietly at White Beach nursing my ailment, satisfied with my allotment from heaven and at peace with my surroundings—that's all. . . .

"As for Eldest Nephew, your younger brother has been at White Beach and the nephew at Zhongzuo Base. Not only are the two places far apart but your younger brother's afflicted foot makes it hard for him to walk even a little, and the nephew's military movements are indefinite, so we've seen each other very seldom. But in this case, when Elder Brother's letter arrived, his younger brother, despite his affliction, went by boat and made every effort to persuade Eldest Nephew. Eldest Nephew just said, 'The greater righteousness lies in extinguishing concern for one's kin. Since early on, I've pursued this principle, and my

*A strategic city on the Grand Canal in far northern South Zhili (Jiangnan), through which Zhilong probably passed when being taken to Beijing.

plans to realize it are decided.' He never would listen to you, the elder brother. Why would he be willing to listen to me, the younger?

"I am sending an officer with this return missive posthaste, hoping you will convey [to the Qing leadership] your younger brother's sentiments. Should my retirement place at White Beach again be disturbed by the Qing, then your younger brother will have to sail off to a more distant place to avoid them. Even if it means incurring danger on the surging waves, I will do so gladly.

"The road is long, and my pen is short, so I haven't said all that I'd like to. Gratified by your luminous understanding, I look up to you in overwhelming admiration."

29th day [November 7]. With Master Du, Li De, Zhou Jiwu, Huang Zhengming, and [Zheng Zhilong's wife, Chenggong's formal but not actual mother] Madam Yan, the two Qing emissaries hastened back to the capital to report on their mission. The peace talks had not come about. . . .

The prince wrote a parting letter to Master Du, which read: "After being separated for several years, elder and younger brothers were able to be together only a few days before you were suddenly taken away again: this is a matter of heaven, a matter of fate. Younger Brother, his thorough persuasions reinforced with poignant sobs, can be said to have tried everything to the utmost. But your elder brother for his part held steadfastly to true virtue. Not only could considerations of profit or loss never move my heart, but it would not change my determination even if an ax or sword were applied to my neck. Why? The right course was decided long ago; I have already thought it through. Your elder brother's present feelings all were expressed in his return letter to our father. What Younger Brother has heard of that letter should enable you to understand.

"In general it was simply that if the Qing court trusted your elder brother's words, then he would become a man of the Qing; if they did not, then he would remain a servant of the Ming. What else was there to discuss? . . . The envoys used just one word throughout: *threaten*. If

one uses threats, then it should be with weapons, not the way Ye Chengge and Ashan did. Besides, is your elder brother someone who can be threatened? . . .

"When panthers live in the deep mountains, every other animal fears them. Once they enter the barred trap, they wave their tails and beg for mercy, knowing they are powerless. But the phoenix soars eight thousand feet high, going anywhere it wishes in the vast reaches of the universe, above and free from the common world. Your brother's reputation has been known among the Chinese and the barbarians for some time now, and he is experienced in using troops. How could he relinquish being a free phoenix to become a caged panther?

"Younger Brother must now take good care of Father and Mother. In that, completely follow the filial path. But do not worry hereafter about your elder brother. Indeed, the Han had its Ziyu but also its Kongming; and Chu had its Wu Shang but also its Zixu.¹⁶ Your elder brother may not be up to [following such historical examples], but Younger Brother must do his best.

"I bid you adieu now, not saying all that I would."

The prince's letter to the grand preceptor read: "In 1648 your son sent Wang Yu to the capital to inquire after Father's welfare and activities; as a result, Father was surrounded by guards, and Wang Yu was barred from contact with him. Since that time, I haven't dared communicate a single word. Not only were no messengers willing to go but we also feared causing trouble for you. At the end of 1652, Zhou Jiwu and the others suddenly arrived and presented Father's letter. Your son was both surprised and suspicious, . . . so he sent Li De to the capital to investigate whether you were there. To tell the truth, I'd heard that you were no longer alive. I composed a missive, explaining a bit how I've always felt. Actually, from the start, talking peace was never on my mind. Otherwise, if I had welcomed being summoned and reconciled, why would I have expressed myself like that? This could be known without my pointing it out.

"Unexpectedly there arrived the Qing court's command that I accept one prefecture and the title Duke of Haicheng. Your son could do little else but hold back his troops to show good faith. The command that I take four prefectures arrived after that. Again, your son could not

but receive the edict to show good faith. As for requesting more territory, it arose from the need to settle my several hundred thousand troops and to make definite, thorough plans for relief after hostilities. How could it be said that my 'words were ridiculous' or that I 'arrogantly made insatiable demands'? Again unexpectedly, the territory in question was not increased; even the four prefectures eventually became just an enticing illusion [literally, "a picture of a cookie"]. That they wanted to repeat the same trick they had used to trap my father before was not outside my usual expectations of them. Then all at once the proclamation about shaving my head came down, and in my armies the men's hair stood on end! . . .

"The Qing court uses head shaving as a petty excuse. In the whole world where is there a man who would rush to declare himself the servant of a state before he had received lands? Where in the world is there a man who would shave his head with alacrity before declaring himself the servant of a state? Where in the world is there a case of one side not being concrete in its offers and the other side being concrete in its response? Where in the world can an unbelieving mind get anywhere by expecting to be believed? And where in the world are those who do not trust with the heart but expect to place trust in men's hair?! . . .

"Before I received the first edict, the Manchus were still quite courteous. Only after that did they begin to pressure and threaten me arbitrarily. The ambassadors being like that, the attitude of the court can be known. Could one not feel imperiled? Could one not be awakened? Besides, your son's name is well known among both the Chinese and the barbarians. If he were to handle things lamely, he would be disesteemed by the Qing court, and he would also become the laughingstock of the world. Generally speaking, the Qing court treats my father with superficial decorum, but they actually look on him as just a valuable commodity. This round of imperial decrees and the behavior of the emissaries show very clearly that the court wishes to use the father to intimidate the son. One threat leads to no end of threats. But your son is hardly someone who can be intimidated!

"Moreover, when my father went to see the Manchu princes, he had already made himself the target of their drawn bows. That he has survived to the present is but a great good fortune. The hopefully slight chance that my father will see misfortune at their hands is a matter of heaven and fate. If that should happen, your son could only take revenge

in mourning dress and bring closure to the matter of loyalty and filiality. . . . At this time he can do no more than feed his horses and sharpen his weapons, awaiting enemy attack. What else is there to say? What else is there to say? . . ."

[The following year Zhilong fell prey to charges of colluding with Chenggong and was stripped of his titles and imprisoned. In November 1661 he was executed, along with all the members of his family in Beijing. Chenggong, who had found it prudent to move his base to Taiwan,* learned in short succession of a case of disobedience in his own son, of the capture and probable demise of the Yongli emperor in the extreme southwest,[†] and of his father's execution. In a state of delirium probably induced by acute distress and some pestilential disease, he died on June 23, 1662, at the age of thirty-seven.]

*See Chap. 13.

[†]See Chap. 15.