Epistolary Culture in the Southern Ming Period

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I, Qian Su, hereby confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Abstract

This study examines the evolution, function, and social meaning of letters during the Southern Ming period (1644-1683). Existing scholarship focuses on letters in the social context of the late Ming and early Qing period, either analysing letter collections or using letters as historical sources to explore the life experiences of literati. I show that many of these letters cannot be simply identified as Ming or Qing letters, due to the turbulence that characterized the dynastic transition from the Ming to the Qing. Concentrating on the period of the Southern Ming regime allows the epistolary culture of the period to be assessed as the regime moved from establishment to decline; letters, due to their capacity to fuse materiality, literary, and social concerns in a written conversational exchange, provide key insights into this period of cultural transition.

I examine Southern Ming letters from both material and literary perspectives. The first half of this study investigates the material composition of letters and epistolary processes of exchange, including networks of correspondents. I argue that the Southern Ming epistolary activities continued to be carried out under a Ming identity, although many correspondents were technically Qing subjects as a result of adopting the hairstyle and clothing of the new Qing dynasty.

The second half of this study explores how letters helped to form emotional communities for correspondents who suffered after the collapse of the Ming dynasty, showing how both Southern Ming loyalists and Qing subjects displayed ambivalence in their correspondence with one another. I argue that letters were a medium for Southern Ming correspondents to remain emotionally connected to the Ming dynasty. Letters provided comfort and facilitated monitoring, helping those identifying as Southern Ming loyalists to resist pressure to conform to the new Qing regime. I show that the letters exchanged between Southern Ming loyalists and Qing subjects evidence the evolution of their relationship from political opposition to increasing interdependence as the Qing regime became more firmly established. At this stage, letters were a critical mechanism for Southern Ming loyalists to exercise agency to survive, as they were relatively powerless in the political field dominated by Qing subjects.

Keywords: Epistolary Culture, Chinese Letters, The Southern Ming, Ming Loyalists, Materiality, Social Networks

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I would also like to thank those Chinese literati who maintained their epistolary activities during the Ming-Qing transition and afterwards, as well as those correspondents, collectors, and publishers who preserved manuscripts and texts of the Southern Ming letters. Without the sources they provided, I would not have been able to carry out this study.

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Contents

Introduction

This study focuses on epistolary culture in the specific social context of the Southern Ming period (1644-1683), examining the evolution, functions, and social meanings of the Southern Ming letters. Whether in Chinese or English language scholarship, Chinese letter-writing is still an under-researched field. The letter is not simply a written conversation, it can reflect social situations, unique ethos, and people's mindsets, especially in the middle and late seventeenth century when China was in a special era of dynastic transition. I argue that the Southern Ming letters are textual objects written and composed under the Ming identity, which constantly interacted with the Ming-Qing transition and afterwards. They were a medium for the Southern Ming correspondents to maintain and present their Ming identity, rather than only a tool for exchanging information, even if many of their writers gradually became technically Qing subjects under the pressure of the Qing regime. I also argue that the letters were an irreplaceable tool for the Southern Ming people to maintain an emotional bond—that could be negotiated according to their benefits—with the Ming dynasty.

Although most of the epistolary research on mid-to-late seventeenth-century China chooses the term "late Ming and early Qing period", I use "the Southern Ming" to redefine many of these letters in such an era. It is because, after 1644, many people still considered themselves to be Ming subjects. However, since the Ming Beijing government had collapsed, we cannot vaguely classify these letters as "Ming letters". Likewise, although the Qing rule of China began in 1644 and many original Ming subjects lived in the Qing territory, they never identified themselves as Qing subjects. So I choose to classify these letters according to their writers' own allegiances rather than generally putting them into the category of "Qing letters". The Southern Ming is a term put forward by modern scholars to distinguish several Ming regimes established in the south after the fall of the Ming Beijing government in 1644.[1] I follow Qian Haiyue's definition that the Southern Ming period lasted for forty years.[2] I choose 1683 as the end year of the Southern Ming period as it is a convenient cut-off date, partly because it did represent the end of any Ming resistance but also because the latest correspondence I discuss dated from the early 1680s. Simultaneously, I use the term "the Southern Ming people" in this study simply to refer more clearly to those

[1] Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming 1644-1662* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984); Qian Haiyue 錢海岳, *Nanming shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006); Gu Cheng 顧誠, *Nanming shi* (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2011).
[2] Qian Haiyue, *Yili* in *Nanming shi*, p.1.

correspondents who identified themselves as Ming subjects or Ming loyalists after 1644.

The origin of Chinese letters lies in the need to convey information in physical absence. In the early days of letter exchanges, approximately the third century BCE, bamboo or wood were used as writing supports to send textual messages.[3] Although most Chinese elites regarded letters as a minor genre, it is undeniable that the mass production of paper from the second century onwards provided a more convenient way of transmitting letters, making the epistolary exchange prevalent among the ordinary people and the elites.[4] Perhaps because of the increased need for physical-absent dialogues, the textualisation of the etiquette of face-to-face communication, and the desire of letter-writers to circulate their letters among a broader readership, the social significance and value of epistolary writing was continually reinforced in its interaction with social evolution. The exchange of letters was indispensable to people's social activities, which led to the emergence of letter guides for learning letter-writing skills. Although these guides had been compiled and published since early medieval China, they were heavily commercialised in the twelfth and seventeenth centuries.[5] By contrast, the publication of letter collections in the mid-late seventeenth century gave private letters not only the utility of being learned from by a broader readership but also the opportunity to be appreciated for their literariness in the public. The letter was thus valued by some literati. They attempted to elevate its status as a literary genre in the cultural field, emphasising its important role as a means of transmitting information and expressing emotions.[6]

Although the literati's attention to the letters gradually shifted from highlighting their materiality to emphasising their literary values, this does not mean that the evolution of epistolary materiality has taken a back seat or come to an end. As the most direct presentation of the textualised social etiquette, the material composition of letters went through the simple bamboo slips, wooden tablets, or silk of early medieval China to the elaborate paired letters of the Song dynasty and the relatively streamlined formal card and subsidiary letters of the Ming dynasty. The importance attached to etiquette never disappeared as the material composition changed from one period to the next. Textualised etiquette became the letter-writing convention, and along with the attached items, they project the nature of the relationship between senders and recipients. The epistolary process of exchanges was largely influenced by imperial decrees and social stability. In both early medieval and pre-modern China, the official postal system could

[3] *Zhongguo fashu quanji 1* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009), p.127.
[4] Zhao Shugong 趙樹功, *Zhongguo chidu wenxue shi* 中國尺牘文學史 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1999), p.5.
[5] ibid, p.73; Antje Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2013), p.139.
[6] David Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, 28 (2006), 125-157.

only deliver governmental decrees and items.[7] Although the transmission of private letters was largely dependent on servants, monks, or travellers, commercialised private postal industries had existed for at least several periods of relatively stable social conditions in the seventeenth century.[8] With the help of letter exchanges, people expanded and maintained their social networks. It was a crucial way for them to communicate with the outside world, as well as to express and orientate themselves in different fields.

Therefore, letters are a medium for transmitting information and emotions, a commodity circulating in the book market, and a projection of the interaction with the evolution of society like the dynastic transition, unique ethos, or specific social situations. This endows letters a broader social value: the evolution of epistolary culture is closely related to the evolution of Chinese society. However, perhaps influenced by the traditional attitude towards the letter—which is a minor genre in the field of Chinese literature—scholars do not pay as much attention to it as to poetry and more prestigious prose genres. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, scholars have undertaken sporadic research on Chinese letters. Ellen Widmer discusses the intertwined attitudes (supportive and ambivalent) of male compilers of letter collections towards female letters and argues that female correspondents showed a strong tendency to support and educate the next generation of female talents, in order to resist male compilers' ambivalence.[9] Zhao Shugong explores the literary characteristics of *chidu* 尺牘 (private letters) from the pre-Qin period (-221 B.C.) to the Qing dynasty (1616-1912).[10] David Pattinson examines the epistolary form of *chidu* in the late Ming and early Qing period, particularly investigating the letter collection *Chidu xinchao* 尺牘新鈔 (New Selection of Letters) compiled by the Qing official Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612-1672).[11]

Works on letters in the mid-late seventeenth century mainly discuss letter collections, placing them in the social context of the late Ming and early Qing period, such as Pattinson, Cai Yanmei, and Zou Wenyan.[12] Scholars have noticed the important role of

[7] Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.32; Timothy Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.640.
[8] ibid; Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8*, p.641.
[9] Ellen Widmer, 'The Epistolary World of Female Talent in Seventeenth-Century China', *Late Imperial China*, 2 (1989), 1-43.
[10] Zhao Shugong, *Zhongguo chidu wenxue shi*.
[11] David Pattinson, 'The Chidu in Late Ming and Early Qing China' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Australian National University, 1997).
[12] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China'; Cai Yanmei 蔡燕梅, 'Kangxi shiqi mingmo qingchu chidu zongji bianxuan yanjiu' 康熙時期明末清初尺牘總集編選研究 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Fudan University, 2013); Zou Wenyan 鄒文燕, 'Li Yu shuxin yanjiu' 李漁書信研究 (unpublished master's thesis, Yangzhou University, 2017).

letters in social communication and believe that letters are a tool for constructing social networks. Pattinson explores the letters written to Qing official Yan Guangmin 顏光敏 (1640-1686), examining his epistolary network and the topic categories of these letters. He points out that one of the groups that Yan exchanged letters with was Ming loyalists.[13] Bai Qianshen used letters to reproduce the social and entertainment activities of Ming loyalist Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-1684).[14] Huang Qiang and Wang Jinhua focus on the social activity of Ming loyalist Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1680), which was investigated based on Li's letters.[15] Suyoung Son discusses how Zhang Chao 張潮 (ca. 1650-2707) defended his ownership as a publisher of a published book through letters. She argues that although those letters containing the controversial debate were addressed to a specific recipient, they also became a tool for speaking out to the public.[16] Compared with the above case studies, Ellen Widmer provides a new research angle. She focuses on the collective epistolary activities of Chinese women, although her corpus is limited to the letter collection *Chidu xinyu* 尺牘新語 (Modern Letters).[17] In another article, she argues that letters are a window into the lives of Ming-Qing women in society and their families—some of them were well educated, yet their letters, which were perhaps well written, were likely to have been considered as a lesser form of writing by their families or the compilers of letter collections.[18] In more studies involving Chinese letters in the seventeenth century, letters are used as historical materials, showing the epistolary role in expressing the attitudes and emotions of the correspondents. Zhao Yuan, Kong Dingfang, and He Guanbiao all cite a large number of letters when discussing the relationship between Ming loyalists and the Qing dynasty after the Ming-Qing transition.[19]

However, in contrast to Western epistolary studies—which have focused on materiality for more than a decade—the answer to "what are Chinese letters" of many existing scholarship is mainly about explaining "what is *chidu*" from the perspective of the

[13] David Pattinson, 'Epistolary Networks and Practice in the Early Qing: The Letters Written to Yan Guangmin', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, ed. by Antje Richter (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp.775-826.
[14] Bai Qianshen 白謙慎, *Fu Shan de jiaowang he yingchou: yishu shehui shi de yixiang ge'an yanjiu* 傅山的交往和應酬: 藝術社會史的一項個案研究 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2016).
[15] Huang Qiang 黃強 and Wang Jinhua 王金花, 'Li Yu jiaoyou kaobian' 李漁交遊考辯, *Mingqing xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 2 (2006), 168-180.
[16] Suyoung Son, 'Between Writing and Publishing Letters: Publishing a Letter about Book Proprietorship', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, pp.879-899.
[17] Widmer, 'The Epistolary World of Female Talent in Seventeenth-Century China'.
[18] Ellen Widmer, 'Letters as Windows on Ming-Qing Women's Literary Culture', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, pp.745-774.
[19] He Guanbiao 何冠彪, *Sheng yu si: mingji shidafu de jueze* 生與死: 明季士大夫的抉擇 (Taibei: Liaojing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1997); Kong Dingfang 孔定芳, 'Ming yimin de shenfen rentong jiqi fuhao shijie' 明遺民的身份認同及符號世界, *Zhongguo shehui kexue yuan yanjiusheng yuan xuebao*, 3 (2005), 121-128; Zhao Yuan 趙園, *Mingqing zhiji shidafu yanjiu: zuowei yizhong xianxiang de yimin* 明清之際士大夫研究: 作為一種現象的遺民 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2014).

genre.[20] Most above-mentioned scholars have discussed the concept of Chinese letters and examined formats and topics, but their works still talk about the stylistic characteristics of the letter and focus on the text, not as a textual object composed of various material elements. Such a research tendency has led to relatively few studies on the materiality of Chinese letters. A recent study that opens up in the material perspective is Antje Richter's work on early medieval Chinese letters. She examines the writing supports of letters, the letter function as calligraphical works, the epistolary stage of delivery, and the letter formats.[21] *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, a collection of essays edited by Richter, presents a broader perspective on understanding the materiality of Chinese letters. Y. Edmund Lien analyses archaeological remains, manuscripts, and received texts of Han and Tang Dunhuang letters. He also explores the transmission of official documents.[22] Amy McNair discusses calligraphy in the Tang dynasty (618-907).[23] Suzanne E. Wright investigates different kinds of decorated letter papers.[24] Xiaofei Tian examines gifts attached to letters in early medieval China.[25] These studies show that scholars have noticed that letters are exchanged in material forms and deeply interact with the evolution of the era when they are written. However, epistolary materiality in the Ming-Qing period still needs further exploration.

By contrast, works on the materiality of English letters are more abundant in the scope of the materials concerned. Under the guidance of the "material turn", they have begun to regard the letter text as a material culture research object with "social materiality".[26] As James Daybell summarises, such works have "reconstructed the epistolary process in its entirety, from the materials, tools and technologies of writing associated with letters, methods of composition and dispatch through to reception, reading and archiving correspondence", they also have "examined physical features and characteristics of manuscript letters".[27] The material components of letters that scholars have explored include but are not limited to handwriting, paper, manuscript layout, seals, and other materials, as well as the spaces of letters that project social

[20] Deng Shaoji 鄧紹基 and Li Mei 李玫, 'Chidu wenlue lun' 尺牘文略論, *Shanxi shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)*, 24 (1997), 36-39.
[21] Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*.
[22] Y. Edmund Lien, 'Reconstructing the Postal Relay System of the Han Period', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, pp.17-52.
[23] Amy McNair, 'Letters as Calligraphy Exemplars: The Long and Eventful Life of Yan Zhengqing's (709-785) *Imperial Commissioner Liu Letter*', ibid, pp.53-96.
[24] Suzanne E. Wright, 'Chinese Decorated Letter Papers', ibid, pp.97-134.
[25] Xiaofei Tian, 'Material and Symbolic Economies: Letters and Gifts in Early Medieval China', ibid, pp.135-186.
[26] James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.11.
[27] James Daybell, 'The Materiality of Early Modern Women's Letters', in *Women and Epistolary Agency in Early Modern Culture, 1540-1690*, ed. by James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (London and New York: Routledge, 2016) p.55.

meaning, specific recipients, and "the material conditions and contexts in which letters were produced, disseminated and consumed".[28] In *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, Daybell focuses on the physical features of letter manuscripts between 1512 and 1635, and the meaning they produced in the lives and social interactions of their correspondents. He argues that material readings "represent a mode of analysis that complements traditional historical and literary approaches" in the analysis of early modern English letters, which "pay attention to the 'social materiality' of the letter" and projecting the meaning in the field of social and cultural practices when they were produced, disseminated, and consumed in different material conditions.[29] He also studies women's letters in an article through the key areas of scribal status and the mechanics of composition, handwriting, paper, manuscript space and signatures.[30] Ella Sbaraini examines suicide letters from 1700 to around 1850, analysing how letter writers "used space and other materials to convey meaning" and arguing that "these letters were epistolary documents usually meant for specific, known persons".[31] Although these studies focus on English letters, they lead to a broader understanding of the letter in materiality, which provides a theoretical basis for me to explore the Southern Ming letters in material terms: first, all the physical features related to the letters, including original letters, transcripts, manuscript spaces, printed copies, handwriting, paper, and other components that can be directly presented in the physical form; second, it also includes the practice of letters in various fields such as society, culture, politics, and gender, and the meanings they bring. This makes the research on the materiality of letters involve the material composition, the epistolary process, the interaction between cultural communication and letter exchanges, gender-based discussions, the important role of letters in individual life and social activities.

I argue that Chinese letters should be comprehensively defined and analysed from both material and literary perspectives. In contrast to previous scholars, I no longer identify the letter simply by genre but divide it into various material elements, such as the envelope, stationery, texts, and attached items. The names of different Chinese letters, such as private letters "*chidu*" and "*shuzha* 書札", are based on the original writing supports—bamboo slips or wooden tablets. All the letters convey information and are written on certain material carriers for exchange. The materiality of letters functions importantly in maintaining, completing, and assisting this written conversation. Although the letter appeared for delivering messages, what it exchanged is not only the

[28] Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, p.11.
[29] ibid, pp.229-230.
[30] Daybell, 'The Materiality of Early Modern Women's Letters', pp.55-77.
[31] Ella Sbaraini, 'The Materiality of English Suicide Letters, c.1700-c.1850', *The History Journal*, 65 (2022), 612-639 (p.612).

written parts but also more material components that convey information other than the texts. This means that letters are a cultural medium that requires the participation of physical carriers, textual information, formats, bearers, and even commercial publishing. I focus on the social function of the Southern Ming letters, showing that they are textual objects that profoundly interacted with the Ming-Qing transition in the fields of politics, military affairs, cultural exchanges, social ethos, and identity dilemmas.

My discussion from the literary perspective pays more attention to self-expression in the Southern Ming letter texts, but it is closely combined with the exploration of materiality. I focus on the analysis that in a period of difficulties in the evolution of epistolary culture, how the letter texts and other material aspects functioned in preserving the Ming culture and responding to the ethos of *Jingshi zhiyong* 經世致用 (Make full use of whatever measures will benefit the running of the dynasty)—discussing statecraft in private letters. Furthermore, I will show that they made the Southern Ming letters a vital tool to balance the political and personal interests and relationships between the Southern Ming and the Qing correspondents.

Methodology and Classification of Corpus

In order to analyse the Southern Ming letters from material and literary perspectives, I conducted a review of the Southern Ming letters in the following stages: (1) compiling a corpus of the Southern Ming letters and assessing the material composition of the letters; (2) exploring the epistolary stages of writing, transmission, reception, preservation, circulation, and dissemination in the Southern Ming period; (3) constructing Southern Ming epistolary networks; (4) examining the Southern Ming emotional communities based on the letter texts; (5) analysing the fashioning of the self in the correspondence between the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects.

I established a corpus of 3046 Southern Ming letters, including 223 manuscripts (see the table in the Bibliography for the sources). All the letters in this corpus were selected from about 7,000 letters written or published after 1644. They were compiled in anthologies, letter collections, calligraphy collections, and related historical sources (private historiography and diaries) containing letter texts, written by people who identified themselves as Ming subjects or Ming loyalists between 1644 and 1683. I also included all the Qing letters written to the Southern Ming people that I have been able to locate. This is because the epistolary circle of the Southern Ming correspondents was not only confined to the Southern Ming people but also included Qing subjects. It

should be noted that many Southern Ming letters were lost due to the turmoil, so most of the letters in my corpus are printed letters. Unlike manuscripts, published letters were edited. However, changes to the letter texts caused by the editing process have a minimal impact on the findings of this study. It is because a letter is chosen for publication as the compilers, editors, or other people who are involved in the publishing process believe that its content is inherently of some value. In this case, they are bound to retain most of the text or what they consider to be significant, making only minor editing in details—fixing typos or deleting a few lengthy and meaningless words—to present the content more accurately and clearly.

To understand the letters from a material point of view, I disassembled the material composition of the letters in a database and recorded them in an Excel spreadsheet through different headings. This work can supplement relevant information to enrich our understanding of the social context of the Southern Ming letters, laying the foundation for the analysis of letters and the presentation of arguments that follows in this dissertation. Eventually, I set up ten headings composed of two parts: (1) information about correspondents, including names, identities, and life experiences of senders and recipients; (2) information about letters, including titles, writing dates, letter texts, and items sent with letters. Here I have translated the headings as *Titles*, *Sender*, *Identities and Life Experience of the Sender*, *Recipient*, *Identities and Life Experience of the Recipient*, *Writing Date*, *Texts*, and *Items* (sample entries below).

Title	Sender	Identities and Life Experiences of the Sender	Recipient	Identities and Life Experiences of the Recipient	Writing Date	Texts	Items
To Sun Wuyan **《與孫無言》**	Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696)	style name: Saoyu, Wenshan, Jiezi; pseudonym: Caipu; from Fanyu Town, Guangdong province; one of the three great masters of Lingnan; once carried out anti-Qing activities and later avoided political troubles as a monk; restored his status as a Confucian scholar after his middle age 初名邵龍，又名邵隆，號非池，字騷余，又字翁山、介子，號菜圃，漢族，廣東番禺人；與陳恭尹、梁佩蘭並稱"嶺南三大家"，有"廣東徐霞客"的美稱；曾與魏耕等進行反清活動，後避禍為僧，中年仍改儒服；著作多毀於雍正、乾隆兩朝	Sun Mo 孫默 (1610-1683)	style name: Wuyan; pseudonym: Fu'an; from Xiuning Town, Nanzhili; lived in Yangzhou Prefecture and had a lot of friends; always a poor man; wanted to return to hometown in his last years but could not make it 字无言，号桴庵，南直隶休宁人；客居扬州，交游甚广，但始终都只是一个穷老布衣；年老后想回到黄山居住，王士禛、施闰章等作诗以送，但是最终没能成行	around 1666 约1666年	recent trips; weeping bitterly at the death of Emperor Chongzhen; asking Sun Mo if he has returned to Huangshan 自遠出行近況；哭先皇帝事(崇禎)；詢問孫默是否已經回到黃山	*Poems for Crying the Past Emperor in Mountain Huashan on the Nineteenth Day of March* (4 pieces) 《三月十九日華山哭大行皇帝詩》四章
For Li Wensun from Jishui Town **《與吉水李文孫書》**	Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664)	style name: Shouzhi; pseudonym: Muzhai; academic name: Mr. Yushan; from Suzhou Prefecture, Nanzhili; finished third place in the final exam of the Imperial Examination in the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty (1610); a Vice Ceremony Minister in the Chongzhen period of the Ming dynasty; one of the leaders of the Donglin Group; a Ceremony Minister in the Hongguang period of the Southern Ming dynasty; a Vice Ceremony Minister in the Qing dynasty 字受之，號牧齋，晚號蒙叟，東澗老人，學稱虞山先生；南直隸蘇州府常熟縣鹿苑奚浦人；明萬曆三十八年探花，官至禮部侍郎，東林黨的領袖之一；南明弘光朝禮部尚書；後降清，為禮部侍郎	Li Wensun 李文孫	from: Jishui Town, Nanzhili 南直隸吉水人	Between 1644 and 1683 1649年到1664年之間	mention about the phenomena of individual history writing, and point out some errors of these books; speak highly of the historical book which was written by Lin Wensun; tell Li that he should use a historical way to record the time and dates of some letters which were mentioned in his book; correct some errors of Hongguang's edict; mentioned how the writers in the past wrote history books; lamented what he had experienced over the years, and tell Li that he never forget to write history books 提及時下一些私家撰史的弊病和謬誤，並感慨；稱讚李文孫寫史之可信；認為其書所收錄的"監、撫二書"的日期尤為重要，應按照史家紀年紀事的方法詳細記錄；勘誤弘光詔書等；感慨作史，並用典故說明觀點；感慨自身遭際，表明自己于他事都已經看淡，唯獨不忘記作史	

To reconstruct of the Southern Ming epistolary network and explore the nature of social relationships between senders and recipients, I set up the columns titled *Sender*,

Identities and Life Experiences of the Sender, *Recipient*, and *Identities and Life Experiences of the Recipient*. These columns are vital to understanding specific events or emotional expressions that were mentioned in their letters by co-analysis of the impact of their life experiences. The identity includes their courtesy names, hometowns, careers, family members, friends, and what positions they took in the Ming, the Southern Ming, or the Qing governments. However, a small number of given names and life experiences of a small group of senders and recipients remain impossible to verify. Some of these names were not shown in the titles of letters, while we do not have any information about the life experiences of the rest, so we do not know who they were.

To simplify and classify the trivial things and different expressions of similar activities from various letters into several main categories, so as to clearly see the daily activities of the correspondents and figure out what kinds of events they cared about in the Southern Ming period, I set up the headings of *Titles*, *Writing Date*, and *Texts*. they show the information of original titles when these letters were published, the specific letter contents, letter-writing dates and places, items sent with the Southern Ming letters, and the sources of these letters. The letter text is recorded concisely by phrases, and various similar events are grouped into one category. For example, when the writer mentioned that they were out yesterday or their experience of going out a few months ago, then such incidents were recorded as "trip or travel" in the column of *Texts*. Likewise, if the writer discussed a meeting with the recipient on a certain day in their letter, this type of event was recorded as "meeting" in the text box. The Southern Ming letter exchanging activity was not only carried out the written parts like envelopes and stationery but also included attached items. In order to analyse these items to demonstrate the gift economy entwined with Southern Ming epistolary networks, I listed the mentioned items in the column titled *Items*.

To examine the material composition of Southern Ming letters, I took the 223 manuscripts from among all the letters and collected images of the format and material composition of letters from letter guides published between the Song dynasty (960-1279) and the late Ming period (1576-1644). This can show how the material composition of the Southern Ming letters formed, whether they were connected with the Song letters, and whether they contributed as a linking connection to the material evolution of Chinese letters. This work is also significant in analysing the interaction between the various material components and Southern Ming politics, military affairs, culture, and mindsets.

Reconstructing Epistolary Networks

Previous Chinese epistolary networks focused on individuals, exploring whom the correspondents socialised with through letters. Starting from examining the letter texts, Huang Qiang, Wang Jinhua, Pattinson, Bai Qianshen, and Zhu Mingjian construct individual epistolary networks by sorting out senders and recipients and consulting relevant historical materials.[32] Another method of studying epistolary networks is the recently emerging research direction—Digital Humanities. Based on digitalised letters, the study by Li Hui and Hou Junming builds Star-Structure epistolary network models centred on individual correspondents. The example they choose is Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872), a minister of the late Qing period. They visualise Zeng's social networks and explore whom he corresponded with, such as which people Zeng communicated with most frequently.[33] The China Biographical Database Project (CBDB) has built a digital corpus of Ming letters. A beta version of this project was released in May 2023, which currently includes 1650 Ming writers and 54,391 Ming letters, but most of these letters were written in the middle Ming period. This project is an extremely significant contribution to the digital humanities of Chinese history. It is an effective tool for scholars engaged in Ming-related studies to visualise the social networks of Ming literati by using this digital corpus.[34]

According to the existing research methods and feasibility, I choose to construct the Southern Ming epistolary networks by examining letter texts and sorting out the letter exchanges between senders and recipients. It is because exploring epistolary networks is only one part of my thesis, and they are limited networks that can be traced without the investment in time needed to map networks digitally. I aim to explore a large number of correspondents, not a specific letter writer. The territorial division in this period hindered the transmission of letters, which caused them to be mostly exchanged within local regions. For instance, in the early Southern Ming period, the Qing dynasty controlled the northern region, making it difficult for northern Ming loyalists to exchange letters with the southern correspondents. In one region, some letters were passed between several readers in addition to the original recipient, and thus the

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[32] Huang Qiang and Wang Jinhua, 'Li yu jiaoyou kaobian'; Pattinson, 'Epistolary Networks and Practice in the Early Qing'; Bai Qianshen, *Fu shan de jiaowang he yingchou*; Zhu Mingjian 朱銘堅, 'Jinyuan zhiji de shiren wangluo yu xunxi goutong—yi zhongzhou qizha nei yu lü xun shuxin wei zhongxin' 金元之際的士人網絡與訊息溝通——以《中州啟劄》內與呂遜書信為中心, in *Beida shixue* 北大史學 *20* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2017), pp.286-310, 428-429.

[33] Li Hui 李惠 and Hou Junming 侯君明, 'Gudai shuxinti wenxian de shejiao wangluo moxing' 古代書信體文獻的社交網絡模型, *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxueyuan xuebao*, 3 (2018), 164-172; More relevant studies see Huai Jingqiu 隗靜秋, Yan Jiaxin 嚴佳馨, and Wang Qiran 王琦然, 'Youxiang Shulin nuli lai—jiyu zhang yuanji shuxin wangluo de gonggong jiaowang yanjiu' 猶向書林努力來——基於張元濟書信網絡的公共交往研究, *Weilai chuanbo*, 30 (2023), 69-80.

[34] See https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb/csa-ming-letters-project.

recipient of a letter might become the sender, manifesting multi-node networks. Such recipients might function as central correspondents in a region and would drive regional changes like in the letter topics. Moreover, the interaction of Southern Ming letters was not only at the level of personal life but also involved politics and military affairs in the early Southern Ming period and presented nostalgia for the Ming dynasty and correspondents' ambivalence in the middle and late periods, projecting a collective emotional transition over time. In other words, the Southern Ming epistolary networks were not only a link between correspondents but also a connection between Southern Ming information delivery and emotional sharing.

Therefore, to construct regionalised Southern Ming epistolary networks, I mostly consider the Southern Ming correspondents based on geography rather than individual networks, but several central correspondents who were the significant nodes in regional networks and a couple of the individual networks that connected different regions are also examined. It is because I focus on exploring the change of letter topics in different networks, those central correspondents might play a leading role in such shifts. My construction of the Southern Ming epistolary networks is based on the division of the formal Ming territory between 1644 and 1645. The occupation of the north by the Shun and the Qing armies blocked the communication between the north and the south from 1644 to 1645, meaning letter exchanges in the north and the south could only be carried out within their respective regions.[35] Likewise, in the spring and summer of 1645, the Qing army went south and occupied most of the southeast area, forcing the Southern Ming government to gradually move towards to the southwest.[36] The Ming-Qing frontier was located in Jiangxi province, which caused the communication between the southeast and southwest regions to become extremely difficult, thus forming southeastern and southwestern epistolary networks.

I should point out that the Ming-Qing frontiers changed rapidly. Even in 1645, the issue of territorial ownership in Jiangxi was complicated. I chose such regionalised division to more intuitively demonstrate the phenomenon that the territorial division in the early Southern Ming period prompted the three regions to quickly form their epistolary networks, and even in the middle and late Southern Ming periods, they were not completely integrated into a whole. Thus, the boundary lines of the maps of the Southern Ming epistolary networks are approximate, because the purpose of drawing them is to show the regionalised networks caused by territorial division, rather than the precise changes of the Ming-Qing frontiers. To visualise the construction of

[35] Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p.47.
[36] ibid, pp.56-58.

regionalised epistolary networks, as well as a small number of cross-regional connections, I drew a general map of the Southern Ming epistolary networks, maps of northern, southeastern, and southwestern networks, and two correspondents' movements that can show their connection of different networks: Qian Chengzhi 錢澄之 (1612-1693) and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682).[37]

Emotional Communities

The complex emotions contained in Southern Ming letters presented a collective emotional expression. The concept of "emotional community" is a particularly useful way to explore this expression. It can dig out the deep-seated reasons why the Southern Ming people refused to be Qing subjects after the Ming fall. It is significant for exploring the complex attitudes of the Southern Ming correspondents towards the Qing dynasty, and the political cooperation and personal interests pursued between them and Qing subjects.

The term "emotional community" was first proposed by the historian Barbara H. Rosenwein. In *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, Rosenwein defines it as "groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value—or devalue—the same or related emotions."[38] She argues that "emotional communities are not constituted by one or two emotions but rather by constellations-or sets-of emotions. Their characteristic styles depend not only on the emotions that they emphasize—and how and in what contexts they do so—but also by the ones that they demote to the tangential or do not recognize at all."[39] She suggests emotions are the form and product of social relations, they are derived from similar values and norms, and emotions in turn shape the way norms are expressed.[40] She examines emotional communities in a broad and flexible way. They can coexist in different regions and are not limited to a political group or a group of people in a certain area, even two people can form an emotional community.[41] She also focuses on distinguishing the inner differences in the same emotion, which are caused by the nuances of individuals' understanding of similar values and norms.[42] Rosenwein's research on emotional

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[37] All these maps are in Chapter Three and draw on *The Southern Ming 1644-1662* written by Struve, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 7-Yuan-Ming shiqi* 中國歷史地圖集 7·元明時期 (Chinese Historical Atlas 7-the Yuan and Ming Dynasties), and *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 8-Qing shiqi* 中國歷史地圖集 8·清時期 (Chinese Historical Atlas 8-the Qing Dynasty). Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p.5; *Ming shiqi quantu (er)* in *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 7-yuanming shiqi* (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1996), p.42; *Qing shiqi quantu (yi)* in *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 8-qing shiqi*, ibid, p.4.

[38] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2006), p.2.

[39] ibid, p.26.

[40] ibid, pp.30, 109, 201-202.

[41] See Rosenwein's analysis of Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus in Chapter 4 that they composed an independent emotional community. ibid, pp.2, 30, 66, 100-129.

[42] ibid, p.192.

communities has provided a theoretical foundation for many scholars. Loosely following her study, Angelos Chaniotis examines how the Greek initiates, citizens, and pilgrims consciously evoked emotions through specific rituals and formed an intimate relationship with God, and thus they formed emotional communities.[43] Ali Anooshahr focuses on how the Indian physician Muhammad Yusufi Haravi tried to use emotional duties and kinship bonds to transform Mughal elites into an emotional community.[44]

Drawing on the theories and methodologies of Rosenwein and relevant existing studies, first, I analyse the deep connection between emotions and society. The evolution of society, such as the dynastic transition, changes in mindsets or customs, and emerging social ethos will lead to the emergence or reinforcement of certain common emotions. After forming an emotional community, although people follow similar norms and actions to display these emotions, simultaneously, their different understandings of such emotions will in turn shape the specific forms of emotional expressions. Second, whether there is the same emotional community in different regions is one of my focuses. Because of the impact of territorial division in the early Southern Ming period on epistolary activity, the southeast, southwest, and north regions showed relatively independent but occasionally linked epistolary networks. Correspondents in these networks were united by a particular value—the Ming identity, in all probability, this would drive them to share common emotions. Finally, Rosenwein's elaboration of the nuances of the same emotion inspired my inquiry into whether there are secondary emotions under the primary emotions of the Southern Ming emotional community. I argue that common emotions are actually primary sentiments that can construct a community, and they may generate secondary emotions in specific social situations. These secondary emotions may transform over time, but they do not change the primary emotions. On the contrary, the two are strongly connected and interacted, and thus they mutually shape the norms of the emotional expression. A certain action brought about by primary emotions will be modified or adjusted by secondary emotions to eventually achieve a balance: it can both follow the basic principles of primary emotions and become the behavioural norms that maintain secondary emotions. Secondary emotions also screen and solidify people of one emotional community. Some insiders may no longer identify with the transformed secondary emotions and thus leave this community. Other insiders may generate a deeper understanding of primary emotions and enhance their maintenance after experiencing such transformations; or although they still identify with the primary emotion, they gradually change their initial understanding of

[43] Angelos Chaniotis, 'Emotional Community through Ritual: Initiates, Citizens, and Pilgrims as Emotional Communities in the Greek World', in *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean: Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*, ed. by A. Chaniotis (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2011), pp.264-290.
[44] Ali Anooshahr, 'Letter-Writing and Emotional Communities in Early Mughal India: A Note on the *Badāyi' al-Inshā*', *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 44 (2021), 1-15.

it, so that the norms they originally adhere to will be modified with life experiences and personal pursuits.

However, for exploring the Southern Ming emotional community, I suggest that it is not enough to examine the connection between emotions and society, the possibility of the coexistence of common emotions in different regions, and the interaction between primary and secondary emotions. This is because the emotional connection between the Southern Ming people was not always carried out by letter exchanges, although letters were an important medium for maintaining emotional bonds. Some Southern Ming correspondents would leave their hometowns or follow the Southern Ming regime to different regions, and they would also hold private events or visit places of Ming significance to mourn the Ming dynasty. Many such actions were shared through letters, so this prompts me to explore the Southern Ming emotional community in conjunction with spatial theory. Scholars who study early modern emotions through spatial analysis argue that there is an interactive relationship between emotion and space.[45] Space, such as theatres, stages, church interiors, battlefields, villages, and households, is a projection of the relationship between human behaviour and the surrounding environment. They are not only places for people to move but more importantly, a collection of social relations, behavioural norms, and cultural implications.[46] Benno Gammerl argues that "spatially defined emotional styles" can diverge "emotional patterns and practices prevail in distinct spatial settings".[47] Although people seem to autonomously choose a particular emotional style, in essence, they are influenced by different notions of subjectivity and the external factors as different places encourage people to produce, handle, and express different emotions.[48] Scholars who study emotion and space offer me a way of thinking about the Southern Ming emotional community: the expressions in letters that refer to experiencing a certain space and acquiring specific emotions are likely to be ways to help maintain the emotional community. By describing the places correspondents visit in their letters, the writers "share" such specific spaces that produce their common feelings with their recipients, and these external influences also profoundly affect their understanding, communication, maintenance, and continuation of common emotions.

Therefore, drawing on and developing the concept of emotional communities, I

[45] Katie Barclay, 'Space and place', in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. by Susan Broomhall (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp.20-23.
[46] ibid. In the fourth section of this book, Samantha Owens, Sing D'arcy, Alicia Marchant, Elise M. Dermineur, Katie Barclay introduce the interaction between emotions and theatres, stages, church interiors, battlefields, villages, and households. *Early Modern Emotions*, pp.228-237, 242-247.
[47] Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles—Concepts and Challenges', *Rethinking History*, 16 (2012), 161-175 (p.164).
[48] ibid, (pp.164-166).

examine the Southern Ming emotional community from the following perspectives: (1) the common primary emotions and the secondary emotions transformed over time that the Southern Ming emotional communities expressed through words, phrases, and sentences of letter texts from 1644 to 1683; (2) norms of common emotions and consequent ways of behaving; (3) the coexisting emotional communities formed by regionalised epistolary networks and different emotional transition time points of their secondary emotions; (4) the important role of letters as a medium in maintaining the Southern Ming emotional communities; (5) the external influence of space; (6) how the Southern Ming emotional communities responded to Qing pressure to convert their allegiances.

Self-Fashioning

I adopt the concept of self-fashioning to analyse the letter exchanges between the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects, focusing on how the two hostile political groups created different personas to seek the other party's help in politics, daily life, and reputation. As Stephen Greenblatt suggests, people may deliberately use some ways to form and express their identities.[49] Self-fashioning is a strategy of hypocrisy or deception that hints at one's intentions, which implies some loss of self.[50] In this way, correspondents make their letters a tool for creating personas to achieve their goals.[51] As Sara Jayne Steen argues, the construction of different personas is a conscious creation, a strategy of the powerless.[52] For the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects, the powerless not only refers to the unequal status and rights, such as between nobles and commoners, between men and women, or between educated elites and illiterates, but also to morality and reputation: those original Ming subjects who served in the Qing government were criticised by the Southern Ming people because they gave up Ming loyalism. Thus, while using this concept, I combine the Confucian ethics of "loyalism" to explore why they created different personas, that is, in which fields they were in a state of being powerless.

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[49] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.1.

[50] ibid, p.9.

[51] Sara Jayne Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', *English Literary Renaissance, Woman in the Renaissance II*,18 (1988), 78-95 (p.80); Pauline Nestor, 'New Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Self-Fashioning: Women, Letters and the Novel in mid-Victorian England', *Literature and History*, 19 (2010), 18-35 (p.20); Kimberley Braxton, "I fear you will burn my present letter on recognizing the handwriting': The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', *Brontë Studies: The Journal of the Brontë Society*, 44 (2019), 82-94 (pp.82-83, 92).

[52] Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', (p.89). It is important to note that Greenblatt's discussion of self-fashioning is not limited to people in lower positions. However, this study focuses on those who were powerless in different fields. For example, although those Qing subjects who were originally Ming subjects were dominant in the political circle, they encountered moral condemnation for their perceived betrayal of the Ming dynasty, which made them powerless in morality.

I also consider the specific methods the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects adopted to fashion the self in order to achieve their goals through letters. Scholars have studied how self-fashioning was used as a strategy. Their research methods are mainly textual and material. The analysis of texts focuses on self-description, examining how writers create personas through literary devices such as rhetoric or tone.[53] Research from a material point of view explores a wide range of matters: paper, print technology, the periodical form, or combines space theory and gender issues, such as retail store furnishings in commercial sales.[54] My approach is to examine both textual and material aspects of letters. Works on Western letter-writing provide me with relevant references. In the analysis of created personas of Patrick Branwell Brontë, for example, Kimberley Braxton focuses on the expressive tone, multiple literary forms, the number of commas, and the handwriting style, discussing how Branwell used the conventions of the letter form to fashion multiple personas to cover up and deny his failures in his reality.[55] The frequent use of a word that demonstrates a particular characteristic can also help the letter writer shape a particular persona.[56] When facing different recipients, the material elements of the letter writers choose and the approaches to their self-expression are also different.[57] I draw on these methods but adjust according to the actual situation of the Southern Ming and the Qing letters. Since most of the letters in my corpus are preserved in the form of printed texts, I primarily explore the fashioned self in terms of the expression tone and the choice of words and phrases. Nevertheless, the creation of personas of the Southern Ming and the Qing correspondents is not limited to the literary level, and the different material composition is also an important mechanism of showing a low-status image, which is the predominant persona presentation of the letters in the Southern Ming period that can be examined through the 223 manuscripts I studied. I notice that the letter format also functions in presenting personas, such as the date-writing method's role in creating an alternative political identity.[58] Thus, I consider the following matters in my analysis: (1) exploring which personas were created by the correspondents through examining the handwriting style, the expressive tone, certain types of words or phrases that can highlight the characteristic of created

[53] Weightman FMC, 'Authorial Self-Fashioning in a Global Era: Authorial Prefaces to Translated Editions of Contemporary Chinese Fiction', *Prism: Theory and Modern Chinese Literature*, 17 (2020), 57-78; Samraghni Bonnerjee, 'The Self-Fashioning of Identity: Incongruity and Self-Fashioning in the Life-Writings of Elsie Knocker', *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, 38 (2023), 331-353.

[54] Marc Caball, 'Gaelic and Protestant: A Case Study in Early Modern Self-Fashioning, 1567–1608', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 110C (2010), 191-215; Mark Neuendorf, 'Psychiatry's 'Others'? Rethinking the Professional Self-Fashioning of British Mental Nurses c. 1900–20', *Medical History*, 63 (2019), 291-313; Alun Withey, 'Enabling Politeness: Perfumers and Male Self-Fashioning in Britain, c. 1750–1800', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 46 (2023), 259-278.

[55] Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', (p.82-94).

[56] Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', (p.87).

[57] Nestor, 'New Opportunities for Self-reflection and Self-fashioning', (p.20); Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', (p.83).

[58] Braxton also points out that the composition of letters provides their writers a mechanism to creatively present themselves. Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', (p.92).

personas, and the way of material composition; (2) analysing the political and private reasons for fashioning the self, and whether the Southern Ming and Qing correspondents achieved their goals.

Regimes in the Southern Ming Period

The Southern Ming was a transition period from the Ming dynasty to the Qing dynasty. In the late Ming period, frequent natural disasters and rebels led the last Ming emperor, Zhu Youjian 朱由檢 (1628-1644) (Emperor Chongzhen 崇禎帝), into a crisis of being difficult to maintain his rule. In order to solve the imperial financial problems, Emperor Chongzhen issued a series of decrees, one of which was the abolition of official postal couriers. In 1630, Li Zicheng 李自成 (1606-1645), who worked as a courier at the Yinchuan post station 銀川驛 in Shaanxi, was abolished. Over the next fourteen years, Li Zicheng built up his military force, and on 25 April 1644, he led his army into the Ming capital of Beijing and established the Shun dynasty.[59]

While the Ming army was confronting the Shun army, a new threat had arisen outside the north-east boundaries of the Ming territory. The Qing regime was established by ethnically Manchu people as early as 1616. On 27 May 1644, under the banner of avenging Emperor Chongzhen, the Qing army entered the Shanhai Pass 山海關 with the help of the Ming official Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612-1678). A month later (6 June), they stormed the city of Beijing, drove Li Zicheng, who had been emperor of China for only one and a half months, and his army out of the city, and became the new ruler of China. In the following year, the Qing army was busy fighting against the Shun army in the north and gradually occupied the provinces of Henan, Hebei, Shaanxi, and Shanxi.[60]

This gave the Ming forces, who had fled to the south, a chance to maintain the Ming rule. On 19 June 1644, Ming officials embraced Zhu Yousong 朱由崧 (1607-1646), a Ming prince, and established the first Southern Ming regime, the Hongguang 弘光 regime, in Nanjing 南京. However, this court lasted for only one year before it was defeated by the Qing army. Nevertheless, the Southern Ming officials soon supported the accession of another Ming prince, Zhu Yujian 朱聿鍵 (1602-1646), to the throne on 18 August 1645 in Fuzhou 福州. The newly established Longwu 隆武 regime, like

[59] Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8*, p.593; Huang Weiping 黃衛平, *Dashun shigao* 大順史稿 (Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 2010), pp.8-155.
[60] Gu Cheng, *Nanming shi-shang* (Beijing: Guangmin ribao chubanshe, 2011), pp.19, 22, 55-63.

its predecessor, only lasted for one year and collapsed on 6 October 1646 after the Qing army killed its emperor.[61] However, the Qing army was stuck in fighting the Southern Ming army in Jiangxi for the next few years and could not immediately attack the Yongli 永曆 regime established on 11 December 1646 in Guangzhou 廣州. This regime, led by Zhu Youlang 朱由榔 (1623-1662), a timid and untalented Ming prince, miraculously held out in the southwest for sixteen years.[62] Much of this was due to the Southern Ming army defeating the Qing army many times with the efforts of loyal officials such as Qu Shisi 瞿式耜 (1590-1650) and He Tengjiao 何騰蛟 (1592-1649). It was also due to the addition of the Shun forces in the summer of 1645, which strengthened the Southern Ming army. Furthermore, it benefited from the Southern Ming navy led by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624-1662) which fought against the Qing army along the southeastern coast.[63] Nevertheless, in 1662, the Qing army still occupied the southwestern region, and on 11 June of the same year, they captured and killed Emperor Yongli, who had fled to Burma.[64] However, this was not the end of the Southern Ming period, as the forces led by Zheng Chenggong's family continued to use the Yongli reign title and held on to it in Taiwan for another twenty years. It was not until 1683 that Zheng's grandson Zheng Keshuang 鄭克爽 (1670-1717), surrendered to the Qing dynasty as the last prince of the Ming dynasty, and the Southern Ming period came to an end.[65]

As a result, the Southern Ming period was not the only regime that existed between 1644 and 1683. The Shun army and the Qing regime co-existed with it during the Ming-Qing transition. The early Southern Ming period was from 1644 to 1652. I assume the end of the early period was 1652 because it was the key node of the Southern Ming regime from its establishment and operation to the decline.[66] The middle Southern Ming period was from 1653 to 1662; this period ended when the last Southern Ming emperor Zhu Youlang died. The late Southern Ming period was from 1663 to 1683, the year ended with the occupation of Taiwan by the Qing army. The Southern Ming regime was the continuation of the Ming regime, which was ruled by the Han people.

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[61] ibid, pp.39, 137-143, 183-186, 222-225.
[62] ibid, pp.288-291, 342-357.
[63] ibid, pp.266-324; Gu Cheng, *Mingmo nongmin zhanzheng shi* 明末農民戰爭史 (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2012), pp.311-315; Huang Weiping, *Dashun shigao*, pp.171-174.
[64] Gu Cheng, *Nanming shi-xia*, pp.694-730.
[65] Zheng Chenggong was given the surname *Zhu* 朱—the surname of the Ming emperors—by Emperor Longwu, so his successors were technically Ming princes. Qian Haiyue, *Yili* in *Nanming shi*, p.1.
[66] In 1652, Emperor Yongli was welcomed by Sun Kewang 孫可望, a general of the former Daxi 大西 army (this military force was originally established in the southwest by Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 to overthrow the Ming regime), to the Anlong 安隆 Thousand Household Office 千戶所 (later renamed Anlong Prefecture 安龍府) in Guizhou. From then on, the Yongli government was controlled by Sun Kewang, and Emperor Yongli became a puppet. Such a change of the actual controller of the Yongli government indicates that the Southern Ming regime entered a period of decline. Gu Cheng, *Nanming shi-shang*, pp.479-483.

Definition of Political Identity in this Dissertation

In this study, I use the term "political identity" to distinguish the Southern Ming people from Qing subjects. Political identity is a term proposed by politics and anthropology for the study of modern politics, nationalism, citizenship, identity, and so on.[67] Although the mid-late seventeenth-century China was still in the imperial age, the Ming (including the Southern Ming) and the Qing were two different regimes, and there was a strong identity problem among the Southern Ming people. Therefore, I critically use this term which focuses more on the interpretation of subjectivity. Specifically, political identity refers to which dynasty the Chinese believed that they belonged to after the Ming-Qing transition, rather than the territory they lived in or judging them by their appearance because the Ming and the Qing regimes had different requirements for people's clothing and hairstyles.

The political identities in the Southern Ming period included the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun. However, since the Shun regime was very short-lived, and the Southern Ming correspondents had less communication with the Shun people, the political identities focused upon in this study are the Ming identity and the Qing identity, which are choices of political adherence that exist on the psychological level, not according to whether people chose Ming or Qing hairstyle and clothing. This is because, with the occupation of the Ming territory by the Qing army, most surviving Ming subjects had to accept the Qing order. In this study, the Ming identity refers to those who identified themselves as Ming subjects, whether they lived in the Southern Ming or the Qing territories. Ming subjects after 1644 are referred to as the Southern Ming people for the sake of distinguishing as the Ming regime was moved to the south. However, not all the Southern Ming people lived in the Southern Ming territory. Judging by their identity recognition, those who were called "*Ming yimin* 明遺民 (Ming loyalists)" in previous studies on the late Ming and early Qing period were in fact the Southern Ming people. I follow Struve's definition of "Ming loyalists":

> The term "Ming loyalist" could apply meaningfully to anyone who pointedly altered his or her life patterns and goals to demonstrate unalterable personal identification with the fallen order. The term need not be restricted to men who worked actively for a Ming revival or who clearly harboured seditious intentions.[68]

[67] Leonie Huddy, 'From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory', *Political Psychology*, 22 (2001), 127-156; Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein ed., *European Identity* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Florian Stoeckel, 'Contact and Community: The Role of Social Interactions for a Political Identity', *Political Psychology*, 37 (2016), 127-156.

[68] Lynn A. Struve, 'Ambivalence and Action: Some Frustrated Scholars of the K'ang-his Period', in *From Ming to*

Struve explained this term from the level of personal identification, which is consistent with the subjectivity I focus on when using the term political identity. I also reference Jennifer W. Jay's definition of "*yimin* 遺民 (surviving subject)" in her research on Song loyalists. Jay argues that both hermits and martyrs who did not die immediately when the dynasty fell (lived for a while and then died for it) were "*yimin*", which refers to the loyalists.[69]

The Southern Ming people focused on in this study are Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists. Ming martyrs Peng Qisheng 彭期生 (1614-1646), Huang Daozhou 黃道周 (1585-1646), Xia Wanchun 夏完淳 (1631-1647), Hou Tongzeng 侯峒曾 (1591-1645), and Hou Qizeng 侯岐曾 (1594-1646) died in the early Southern Ming period, only Qu Shisi survived until the late mid-Southern Ming period. Peng Qisheng, from Haiyan 海鹽 in Zhejiang, was an official in the late Ming period. In 1644, at the time when the Ming Beijing government just collapsed, he was stationed in Ji'an 吉安 in Jiangxi. On 4 July the following year, when he learnt of the failure of the Hongguang regime, he came to Ganzhou 贛州 to raise troops and prepare to resist the Qing army. However, the eventual loss of Ganzhou around mid-July 1646 prompted him to commit suicide for the Ming dynasty.[70] Huang Daozhou, from Zhangzhou 漳州 in Fujian, was also an official in the imperial court during the late Ming period but did not hold an important position. After the establishment of the Longwu regime, he was appointed as the prime minister and served in the Ministry of Rites, Personnel, and War. However, in 1646, he was captured by the Qing army and was killed on 20 April of the same year because he failed in an anti-Qing action.[71]

Xia Wanchun was from Huating 華亭 in Songjiang 松江 (modern Shanghai). After his father Xia Yunyi 夏允彝 (1596-1645) died for the Ming dynasty in the summer of 1645, he engaged in a clandestine revolt against the Qing regime with another Southern Ming supporter, Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647). In the following year, however, they were both captured by the Qing army. After Chen Zilong committed suicide, a Qing official tried to intercede for Xia Wanchun as he was only seventeen years old. However, such intercession was scolded by Xia, prompting Xia to be killed by the Qing

Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth Century China, ed. by Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p.327.

[69] Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China* (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1991), p.6.

[70] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu 7* (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2002), p.201; Peng Sunyi, *Qiantai jielue* in *Congshu jicheng xubian 278* (Taibei: Xinwen feng chuban gongsi, 1988), pp.1a-15b.

[71] Hong Si, *Huangzi nianpu* in *Huang Daozhou nianpu* (Fuzhou, Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp.29-37.

army in the same year.[72] The Hou brothers from Shanghai in Songjiang, who were relatives of Xia Wanchun and Chen Zilong, were also important figures in the fight against the Qing regime during the early Southern Ming period. Hou Tongzeng, the elder brother, was a late Ming official. He briefly served the Hongguang regime in the early Southern Ming period but soon returned to his hometown because he was disillusioned with the infighting in this court. At the end of July 1645, when the Qing army was attacking Jiading 嘉定, he spent all his money recruiting thousands of people to fight against the Qing army in this city but failed. After the Qing army entered Jiading, he committed suicide by jumping into a river.[73] Since then, his younger brother Hou Qizeng lived in their hometown to take care of their family. In 1647, when Chen Zilong's secret anti-Qing plan was exposed, Chen escaped to Hou's house, and Hou hid him in the house of his son-in-law, Gu Tiankui 顧天逵. Unfortunately, the Qing soldiers found out about this and arrested Hou Qizeng and Chen Zilong. Both of them were killed in Songjiang.[74] Qu Shisi, originally from Changshu 常熟 in Suzhou 蘇州, was an official during the late Ming period but was dismissed from his post before the Ming fall. In 1644, he was recruited by Emperor Hongguang and travelled to Guangxi as an official. However, on 26 July 1645, when he arrived at Wuzhou 梧州, the Hongguang regime had collapsed. A year later, after the defeat of the Hongwu government, he, together with other Southern Ming officials, embraced Emperor Yongli on 16 November 1646 as the new ruler of the Southern Ming regime. In 1647 and 1648, he defeated the Qing army four times, but on 29 November 1650, he was captured by the Qing army and was killed for refusing to surrender to the Qing regime.[75]

Ming loyalists Gu Yanwu, Qian Chengzhi, Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611-1671), and Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696) all took part in the revolt against the Qing regime. Gu Yanwu was from Kunshan 昆山 in Suzhou. After serving in the Hongguang government shortly in 1644, he travelled around the southeast. In 1657, he went to the north. For the next twenty-five years, he travelled and lectured in Shanxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, Hebei, and Henan provinces, rarely returning to his hometown. During this period, although he was recommended several times by Qing officials to enter the Qing court or was invited to participate in Qing's compilation of Ming historiography, he never accepted.[76] Qian Chengzhi had a similar life experience. Between 1644 and 1646,

[72] *Libu Xia Yuangong zhuan* and *Xia Yunyi zhuan* in *Xia Wanchun ji jiaojian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), pp.519, 528.
[73] *Hou zhongjie gong quanji-nianpu xia* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2016), pp.3.5b-15b.
[74] *Hou Qizeng riji-qianyan* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2006), pp.479-480.
[75] Qu Guoxing, *Qu Shisi nianpu* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1987), pp.24, 44-52, 55, 79, 86, 93, 100, 164.
[76] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011),

Qian, along with Huang Daozhou, supported the Longwu government in the southeast. In 1648, two years after this government failed, he travelled to the southwest to serve the Yongli court. However, in 1651, he realised that the failure of this regime was a certainty and thus returned to his hometown, Tongcheng 桐城. Since then, he lived in the Qing territory as a Ming loyalist.[77] Fang Yizhi followed the Southern Ming government to the southwest as well. In 1644, Fang was in Beijing, witnessing the Ming fall and being captured by the Shun army. On 15 May of the same year, he fled to Nanjing but was falsely accused of betraying the Ming dynasty by Ruan Dacheng 阮大鋮 (1587-1646), an official of the Hongguang government. Also in that year, after being released from prison, Fang Yizhi travelled all the way west. After arriving in Guangxi, he served in the Yongli government for several months but eventually left because he could not bear the infighting. Nonetheless, he still cared for and supported this regime until 1652, when his close friend Qu Shisi died, and then he returned to the southeast and resided as a Buddhist monk in Jiangxi. In the winter of 1671, Fang died on his way to Guangdong, because he was implicated in a case that had taken place there.[78] In contrast, Qu Dajun, who was from Guangzhou 廣州 in Guangdong, supported the restoration of the Ming rule until the late Southern Ming period. In 1649, Qu travelled to Zhaoqing 肇慶 to serve the Yongli regime but soon returned to his home because his father died. In 1650, the Qing soldiers attacked Guangzhou, and in order to avoid accepting the Qing order, Qu chose to be a Buddhist monk, an identity that could keep him away from worldly affairs. Between 1652 and 1669, he travelled to the southeast and the north, visiting Ming loyalists many times and secretly organising memorials to Emperor Chongzhen and Ming martyrs with them. In 1659, and again between 1673 and 1676, he took part in revolts against the Qing regime but both failed. Thereafter, until the year he died, he lived in his hometown, concentrating on works of history, literature, and scholarship.[79]

Unlike the above-mentioned Southern Ming supporters, most Ming loyalists gradually lived in the Qing territory during the Southern Ming period and did not openly support the Southern Ming regime. The painter Wang Shimin 王時敏 (1592-1680) simply retained his Ming identity after 1644 and lived in his hometown, Taicang 太倉.[80] A similar example is the Confucian scholar Su Qifeng 孫奇逢 (1584-1675). In 1644, because his homeland was occupied by the Qing army, he moved from Rongcheng 容

pp.15-85.

[77] Qian Weilu, *Qiangong yinguang fujun nianpu* in *Suozhi lu* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2006), pp.184-217.

[78] Fang Shuwen, *Fang Yizhi xiansheng nianpu* (Wuhu: Anhui shifan daxue chubanshe, 2018), pp.102-234.

[79] Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu* (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2006), pp.35-156.

[80] *Fengchang gong nianpu* in *Wang Shimin ji* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2016), pp.770-803.

城 to Huixian 輝縣. Since then, he taught for a living as a Ming loyalist and repeatedly refused to be a Qing official.[81] However, there were a few Ming loyalists who secretly rebelled against the Qing regime when living in its territory, such as Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-1684) and Wang Hongzhuan 王弘撰 (1622-1702). In 1644, Fu Shan became a Taoist priest to avoid the Qing's order to shave hair. He also wore a red Taoist robe as a metaphor for showing his Ming identity, because the surname of Ming emperors was *Zhu* 朱, which means red. In June 1654, he was imprisoned for secretly contacting the Southern Ming general Song Qian 宋謙 and was released from prison in July of the following year. In the summer of 1656, he travelled to the southeast, where he socialised with several Ming loyalists. Since then, he lived in his hometown, Taiyuan 太原. He focused on writing historiography, medical books, and scholarly works. During this period, he was invited by Qing officials to be a Qing official many times. In 1678, he was even forced to participate in a Qing examination, but eventually, he still refused to serve the Qing court.[82] Similarly, in 1650, Wang Hongzhuan travelled to the southeast and communicated with local Ming loyalists. Upon his return home the following year, he concentrated on history, scholarship, and literary works. Like Fu Shan, Wang was also invited to serve the Qing court and was forced to take the Qing examination in 1678. Ultimately, he refused to become a Qing official.[83]

The Qing identity refers to those who regarded themselves as Qing subjects, including Manchu people, Han bannermen[84] who fought with the Manchus before 1644, Han people who were born after 1644, and Han people who were original Ming subjects but accepted Qing rule and lived in Qing territory without resistance after 1644. The groups involved in this study are Han people who were born after 1640, and Han people who were original Ming subjects but accepted Qing rule and lived in Qing territory without resistance after 1644. Although the Qing rule of China started in 1644, those people who were born after 1640, such as Yan Guangmin, were too young to recognise themselves as Ming subjects but accepted the Qing identity as they grew up. They proclaimed the Qing as the rulers of what they saw as the former Ming empire and conquered a fair bit of the north in 1644, so I classify them as Qing subjects. For people

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[81] *Sun Xiafeng xiansheng nianpu* in *Congshu jicheng xinbian 102* (Taibei: Xinwen feng chubanshe, 2008), pp.31-494.

[82] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2016), pp.289-402.

[83] *Fulu san* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji* (Xi'an: Xibei daxue chubanshe, 2015), pp.1116-1118.

[84] The Han bannermen were one of the Qing armies that were organised in different colours. Some of these soldiers submitted to the Qing regime in the late Ming period and thus became Qing subjects. Some were taken captive to the northeast by the Qing army during the Ming-Qing transition. They were predominantly Han people, with a small number of Jurchen people and Mongols who were former Ming officials. Yao Nianci 姚念慈, 'Luelun baqi minggu he baqi hanjun de jianli' 略論八旗蒙古和八旗漢軍的建立, *Zhongyang minzu daxue xuebao*, 6 (1995), 26-31.

who were born before 1640 but chose to be Qing subjects after 1644, the situation is relatively complicated. There is a significant difference between someone like Wei Yijie 魏裔介 (1616-1686), who was twenty-eight when the Ming fell, but who only passed the Metropolitan examination at the beginning of the Qing period, or Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634-1711) who was only ten years old when the Ming fell, and someone like Zhou Lianggong who was a Ming official. Wei Yijie and Wang Shizhen identified themselves more as Qing subjects than Zhou Lianggong. They quickly accepted the fact that the Ming dynasty was replaced by the Qing regime and served in the Qing court by contributing their governing talents. Zhou Lianggong's situation was complicated. Although he became a Qing official, he still had nostalgia for the Ming dynasty and maintained friendships with many Ming loyalists. Like Zhou Lianggong, Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582-1664) and Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609-1672) who were former Ming officials but served the Qing dynasty are also discussed in this study. However, their situations were different from Zhou. Zhou remained a Qing official in the Southern Ming period (apart from when he was dismissed a couple of times), but Qian and Wu served as Qing officials for only a short period and later returned to their hometown to secretly engage in supporting the Southern Ming regime. They regretted their decision to cooperate with the Qing court afterwards. Their adherence to the Ming dynasty was profoundly expressed in their poems and letters, and they even became the central figures of Southern Ming epistolary networks. Although they were morally suspect by having served both the Ming and Qing regimes, their expressions of nostalgia and adherence to the Ming dynasty in letters should not be denied.

Structure of Dissertation

The first chapter answers the question of "what Chinese letters are" from the perspective of material composition and analyses the linking connection of the Southern Ming letters between the Ming and the Qing epistolary culture. This chapter is the foundation of this study. It explains the various material aspects of Chinese letters from the perspective of material media, textual information, and material components of presenting the etiquette and projecting the nature of the relationship between correspondents, rather than only regarding the letters as a genre. The material composition of Southern Ming letters followed the form of Ming letters. After being used and transformed by the Southern Ming correspondents, such material composition method was adopted by Qing subjects, which means that although the Ming dynasty collapsed politically, as one representation of the Ming culture, the Southern Ming letter-writing still dominated the epistolary field of the Qing dynasty. The material composition of Southern Ming letters intersected with the epistolary stages of writing,

transmission, reception, preservation, circulation, and dissemination, which is vital in the analysis of the second chapter. The letter texts and other information that embody physical forms project the epistolary function of the cross-regional exchange of political and military information and can help reconstruct the Southern Ming epistolary networks in the third chapter. The emotional changes of Southern Ming emotional communities can be examined through the letter texts, which are the focus of the fourth chapter. How the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects used diverse material components of their letters to create different personas that are discussed in the final chapter cannot be separated from the exploration of materiality. The connecting role of Southern Ming letters in the evolution of Chinese epistolary culture in the mid to late seventeenth century is also the primary point that helps further discussions in the other chapters. It reveals the key to the evolution of Chinese letters in the fields of information exchange, letter writing, commercialisation of letter texts, and social functions.

The second chapter explores the function of Southern Ming letters in conveying news, rehabilitating reputations, expanding readerships, and showing nostalgia for the Ming dynasty through letter collections in a relatively turbulent social situation. This chapter aims to supplement the exploration of the materiality of Chinese letters in the Southern Ming period, from recreating its epistolary stages, the interaction between letter writing and Southern Ming affairs, and the meaning of published Southern Ming letters. In the early Southern Ming period, the fight between the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun armies for the original Ming territory made it difficult for these letters to cross the frontiers of different territories. The Southern Ming letters also suffered the risk of being snatched when entering the Qing territory, prompting a letter originally written to one recipient to circulate in a broader readership after it was successfully delivered, which could prevent Southern Ming military and political news from being blocked. Such an approach made senders consider including more topics than usual in their letters because of the difficulty of getting the letters to the recipients. They would presuppose the group and reading experience of their readers when composing the letter, making it a tool to rehabilitate their damaged reputations because of the poor information delivery. As Qing control over the former Ming territory stabilised, the book market revived, making many Southern Ming letters compiled into letter collections. These collections cleverly avoided the Qing ban on private publications of Ming-related books and became a safer alternative to preserving Ming culture.

The third chapter explores the regionalised and individualised networks of Southern Ming letters. Driven by the motivation of communication, the Southern Ming correspondents formed epistolary networks in the southeastern, southwestern, and

northern regions. Simultaneously, some correspondents travelled between different regions, making their networks play a vital role in connecting multiple regions. In the early Southern Ming period, letter networks functioned crucially in the transmission of Southern Ming military and political news between different regions and territories. However, as the Qing government continued to expand its territory, the sharing of political and military topics in this network was gradually replaced by a commitment to preserve Ming history and literature. Such a change reflected the evolution of the Southern Ming regime from prosperity to decline, the identity struggle of the Southern Ming people in the Qing territory, and the Qing government's control over the discourse power of Ming loyalists. The analysis of the Southern Ming epistolary networks is the basis for the discussion of the Southern Ming emotional communities and the complex attitudes (a spectrum between rejection and acceptance) of Ming loyalists towards the Qing regime. The connection between the Southern Ming emotional communities was achieved through letter activities. The central correspondents in the regional network triggered the common emotional tendency, communicating and interacting across regions through individual networks that connected different regions so that the Southern Ming correspondents formed their common emotions.

Drawing on Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities, the fourth chapter analyses the important role of loyalism in the construction, deepening, continuation, and resistance of the Southern Ming emotional community. Loyalism is both emotional and moral, which functioned as an emotional connection that generated the emotional transitions of the Southern Ming emotional community from anticipation and disillusionment of the Southern Ming regime to nostalgia for the Ming dynasty. The transition time points were different in the regionalised epistolary networks. This chapter also discusses the different understandings of Ming loyalism of Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists, as well as the irreplaceable role of letters in comforting the Southern Ming people who suffered from the Ming fall. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on how the Qing regime exerted pressure on the Southern Ming emotional community to transfer its loyalty, and the strategies this community used for resistance. This projected that the Southern Ming people were under the confrontation between Ming loyalism and Qing loyalism, which caused the ambivalence of political identity that will be discussed in the final chapter.

The fifth chapter focuses on the function of Southern Ming letters in presenting the ambivalence of the rival political groups, the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects, exploring how they sought benefits from each other through epistolary exchange. I argue that they used letters to adjust the nature of their relationships, separating friendships from politics, and thus avoiding political complicity. The Southern Ming

people refused to cooperate with the Qing court in politics, which made the Qing correspondents avoid talking about political topics focusing rather on shared cultural experiences to build friendships with them. In this process, both parties fashioned the self. Drawing on Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning, this chapter discusses why they chose such approaches, what images they constructed, and whether they achieved what they wanted. Moreover, this chapter examines the reasons for their ambivalence. Both the Southern Ming and Qing subjects weighed political identity and benefits after 1644. The Southern Ming people sought a stable life in the Qing territory, while the Qing correspondents who were Ming subjects sought fame and a moral justification for their allegiance to the Qing court.

In sum, this study interprets the social evolution, ethos, and mindsets of the late Ming and early Qing period from the perspective of the epistolary studies, presenting the interaction between letters and Southern Ming politics, military affairs, society, history, literature, and other fields, so as to provide both material and literary perspectives on the analysis of pre-modern Chinese letters. By demonstrating the social meaning of the Southern Ming epistolary culture, this study contributes to the analysis of the materiality of Chinese letters, the interaction of epistolary activities with the Southern Ming period, the overall examination of epistolary networks, the critical interpretation of loyalism of Ming loyalists, and the opportunism of Qing subjects.

Chapter One

The Material Composition of Chinese Letters

What is a Chinese letter? Existing scholarship has had discussions on its various angles.[1] Whether it is tracing the origin of *chidu* or interpreting other terms of letters, however, scholars have tended to focus on the texts, paying relatively little attention to materiality. Letters are not simple conversations written on paper, but the rich rhetoric and expressions they use contain both verbal and physical languages, which embody bilateral interaction with society.[2] I argue that understanding Chinese letters on a material level can explain what a letter is from a broader perspective. Originally, a letter appeared as a material medium for exchanging information, and the terms used to designate them were based on its material form, such as *bahangshu* 八行書 (letters written in eight columns). From the pre-Qin period (221 B.C.) to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the material composition of letters gradually evolved. Senders used different material elements of letters to convey information, express emotions, demonstrate the etiquette of writing conversations, and project the nature of relationships with their recipients. The Southern Ming letters, which this study focuses on, are a connecting link between the Ming and the Qing epistolary culture, enabling Chinese epistolary culture to continue its evolution in a relatively turbulent era.

Section One　Understanding Chinese Letters from the Material Perspective

The information conveyed by letters cannot be exchanged without specific material carriers. As early as in the Spring and Autumn period (770 B.C.-476 B.C.), the ancient Chinese used bamboo or wooden slips for long-distance transmission.[3] Since then, whether it is the form, the naming method, or the material composition, it is closely related to the materiality of letters and has formed a conventional paradigm during many centuries of epistolary evolution.

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[1] Deng Shaoji and Li Mei, 'Chidu wenlue lun'; Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, pp.34-37; Fu Mei 付梅, 'Beisong chidu yanjiu' 北宋尺牘研究 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Nanjing University, 2014), pp.7-12.

[2] Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), p.16.

[3] Zhao Shugong, *Zhongguo chidu wenxue shi*, p.5.

1. Material forms, naming methods, and material composition

Chinese letters were generated as a tool for delivering messages. Their material forms followed the evolution of Chinese writing carriers from bamboo or wooden slips to the wide use of paper from the second century CE.[4] Even centuries after paper had superseded wood and bamboo as the material on which letters were written, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), one of the leading literary figures of the Northern Song period (960-1127), and Ming loyalist Fang Yizhi were still emphasising the correlation between the different terms of letters and their early writing supports.[5] The materiality occupies an extremely important position in the evolution of Chinese epistolary culture. It is the vehicle through which information is transmitted, and it is also a tool used by correspondents to display the etiquette of writing conversations in physical-absent communication.

Letters were referred to by a number of different terms across the imperial period, which reflect the close association between the material composition of early letters and the naming of their terms. Private letters were usually called *chidu*, meaning a wooden slip about a foot long. East Han scholar Xu Shen 許慎 (about 58-147) explained that the character *du* 牘 means *shuban* 書板 (the board for writing).[6] Even as late as the mid-Qing, the Qing poet Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798) also examined *chidu*. Although Yuan specifically pointed out that when Qing subjects referred to *chidu*, they only regarded it as a genre, yet the term *chidu* actually came from its original material form, that is, wooden slips.[7] However, *chidu* is neither the only term used to refer to letters, nor the only one that reflects the material history of the letter. In *Tongya* 通雅 (Understanding Elegance), Fang Yizhi described private letters named *zhejian* 折簡 (the folded letter) and *shuangshu* 雙書 (the paired letter).[8] The folded letter refers to folding a rectangular piece of paper in half multiple times to make it easier to fit in the envelope. The paired letter, popular in the Song dynasty (960-1297), consists of a greeting card and one or more small letters with texts. Other terms like *shujian* 書簡 (writing and bamboo slip), *jiandu* 簡牘 (bamboo slip and wooden tablet), and *jianjian* 箋簡 (paper and wooden tablet), all based on the specific manifestation of their material forms.[9] Even the official letters were also named in a material way, such as *zhazi* 劄

[4] ibid; Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.17.
[5] Ouyang Xiu, *Yu Chen yuanwai shu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1102-wenzhong ji* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.68.8a; Fang Yizhi, *Tongya* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 857* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.31.1a.
[6] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jingbu 223*, ibid, p.7.13b.
[7] Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan suibi* in *Congshu jicheng sanbian* (Taibei: Xinwen feng chubanshe, 1997), p.27.1a.
[8] Fang Yizhi, *Tongya* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 857*, pp.31.1a-11a.
[9] ibid; Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1478* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.5.12b; Wang Hongzhuan, *Shushi* in *Wang hongzhuan ji-shanzhi chuji*, p.561; Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan suibi* in

子 (wooden tablet), *lubu* 露布 (unsealed stationery), and *tiaoci* 條刺 (write on the wooden tablet point by point).[10]

Although since at least the Wei Jin Southern and Northern dynasties 魏晉南北朝 (220-589), literati's focus on letters shifted from emphasising the materiality to the genre, this does not mean that our understanding of Chinese letters can only stay at the genre level. In the actual transmission, aspects that can be called "the letter" are not only the text and its physical carrier (usually stationery), but a collection of various material elements. It has an envelope for enclosing stationery, letter formats showing the writing etiquette, and diverse attached items such as a poem, an anthology, money, or food to maintain the relationship between senders and recipients. There is an early example of this in the Han dynasty. In the *Xiongnu zhuan* 匈奴傳 (Biography of the Xiongnu) in the *Shiji* 史記 (The Scribe's Records), Western Han historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 B.C.-87 B.C.) wrote that "the Han court sent a letter to Chanyu, [the Khan of the Xiongnu], ... [this letter] contained items and texts. 漢遺單于書，……所遺物及言語云云。"[11] In the later times like the Tang and the Song dynasties,[12] material aspects such as attached items were also exchanged accompanied by the letter texts, which project information other than words. When discussing what a Chinese letter is, we cannot ignore the social functions of these material elements in epistolary activity. Their existence makes letters not only a tool for information exchange but also a medium for maintaining relationships and social bonds.

2. Material Composition of a Chinese letter

This study understands Chinese letters from the material term and pays attention to their material components, providing an angle that might be overlooked when tracing the origin of terms from the perspective of the genre. Letters first need a specific material as the carrier of textual information, usually the envelope and stationery. Second, the written part is composed of words, which here we call the letter texts. Finally, a letter also consists of other material elements that can reveal the writing etiquette and nature of the relationship between correspondents, such as formats and attached items.[13]

Congshu jicheng sanbian, p.27.1a.

[10] Fang Yizhi, *Tongya* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 857*, pp.31.1a-11a. For works on *zhazi*, see Lik Hang Tsui's article *Bureaucratic Influences on Letters in Middle Period China: Observations from Manuscript Letters and Literati Discourse*. *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, pp.363-397.

[11] Sima Qian, *Xiongnu* in *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p.2219.

[12] Wang Shizhen 王使臻, 'Dunhuang yishu zhong de tangsong chidu yanjiu' 敦煌遺書中的唐宋尺牘研究 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Lanzhou University, 2010), p.91; Fu Mei, 'Songren chidu zhong de kuizeng huodong yanjiu-yi beisong mingjia weili' 宋人尺牘中的餽贈活動研究——以北宋名家為例, *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxueyuan xuebao*, 3 (2021), 58-69.

[13] James Daybell points out that material strategy is new to the scholars now researching epistolary practice in

(1) A material medium for textual information

The physical carriers for conveying textual information in Chinese letters are envelopes and stationery, but they are general terms for various types of materials used to carry words and sentences. Specifically, both of them have undergone the evolution from diverse items—bamboo slips, wooden tablets, silk, fish, and geese, to pieces of paper.

Before paper was invented and widely used by ordinary people, the material form of letters was basically bamboo slips and wooden tablets, which were called "*jian*" or "*du* 牘".[14] The earliest known letters on wooden tablets are two family letters from the late Warring States period 戰國 (?-221 B.C.)—written by Qin soldiers Heifu 黑夫 and Jing 驚.[15]

Heifu's and Jing's Family Letters[16]

These wooden tablets are narrow and long, and they are harder and more difficult to be destroyed than silk and paper.[17] Silk are more expensive but are undoubtedly effortless

historical letters. James Daybell, 'Social Negotiations in Correspondence between Mothers and Daughters in Tudor and Early Stuart England', *Women's History Review*, 24 (2015), 502-527.

[14] Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1478*, p.5.12b; Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan suibi* in *Congshu jicheng sanbian*, p.27.1a.

[15] *Zhongguo fashu quanji 1*, p.127; Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.18.

[16] *Zhongguo fashu quanji 1*, p.127.

[17] Yuan Fei, *Jianzhi pu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 590* (Taibei: Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.1a.

to carry.[18] Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien points out that silk as the writing support can be traced back to the sixth or seventh century BC.[19] Using silk as stationery is recorded in *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han): "The emperor hunted in Shanglin Garden and got a wild goose with a letter written on silk tied to its paws, saying that Su Wu and others were living near a lake. 天子射上林中，得雁，足有系帛書，言武等在某澤中。"[20] Although in this story, silk was the physical support of letter-writing, literati seemed to be more interested in the wild geese that delivered it. After the paper was widely used as stationery, some literati named it "*yanshu* 雁書 (goose letter)"[21] to express that they were fond of this story. A similar symbol of the physical carrier of the letter is the fish. A story about using fish as envelopes to deliver letters comes from the poem *Yinma changcheng kuxing* 飲馬長城窟行 (Journey to Water the Horses in the Water Cave of the Great Wall) written in the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220). It reads: "A guest came from far away and gave me two carp. [I] called the children to cook the carp, and [in the belly of the carp], there was a letter [written on] a piece of plain stationery with a length of one foot long. 客從遠方來，遺我雙鯉魚。呼兒烹鯉魚，中有尺素書。"[22] In the scene described in this poem, the carp functioned similarly to the envelope because it wrapped the stationery with the message. The authenticity of this story might be doubted as poetry contains a certain creation. However, as with the record of wild geese, it was handed down to later generations and became a synonym for letters. Northern Song poet Yan Shu 晏殊 (991-1055) referred to letters as "*yushu* 魚書 (fish letters)" in one of his poems: "I want to send you a letter, but the rivers and mountains all look the same, so it might be easy to get lost. 魚書欲寄何由達，水遠山長處處同。"[23] In the poem written to lament the difficulty of sending letters, the Southern Ming official Qu Shisi 瞿式耜 (1590-1650) used the term "*yushu yanbo* 魚書雁帛 (letters delivered by fish and geese)", which is the same one chosen by Ming loyalist Li Yu in his *Xianqing ouji* 閒情偶記 (Occasional Records of Leisure Feelings).[24] Such examples show that later literati liked these stories and used them to refer to letters in a kind of literary allusion.

Although envelopes and stationery were made of paper after the middle East Han period

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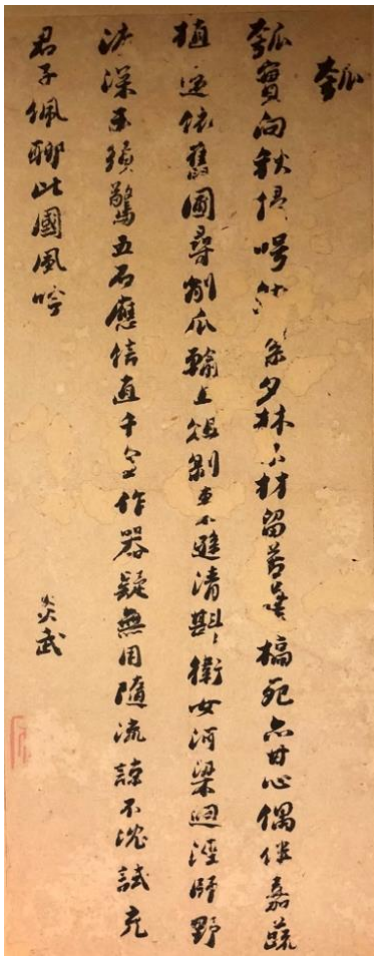
[18] ibid.
[19] Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p.116.
[20] Ban Gu, *Li Guang Su Jian zhuan* in *Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p.1877.
[21] Yan Jidao, *Su zhongqing* in *Yan Shu ciji Yan Jidao ciji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016), p.185.
[22] *Yinma changcheng ku xing* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1329-wenxuan zhu* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.27.19a.
[23] Yan Shu, *Wuti* in in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1087-yuanxian yiwen* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.8b.
[24] Qu Shisi, *Qu Shisi ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p.226; Li Yu, *Xianqing ouji* in *Li Yu quanji 3* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2010), p.199.

as such material was prevalent,[25] literati did not completely abandon the use of wooden or bamboo tablets as the writing support. On the contrary, these relatively inconvenient "stationery" would be given unique value by later literati in a specific period or under the promotion of certain factors, making them popular in the paper market. During the Yuanfeng 元豐 reign period (1078-1085) of the Northern Song dynasty, the official Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) often wrote the titles of Buddhist scriptures on gold-painted bamboo tablets and sent servants to Jiangshan Temple 蔣山寺 to obtain scriptures. Some literati therefore followed his approach and began to write letters on "gold-painted bamboo tablets instead of stationery 用金漆版代書帖".[26] However, they were worried about the leakage of information, so they put two tablets together and sealed the edges with pieces of paper. Such a composing method was called "*jianban* 簡版 (bamboo tablets)", "*paizi* 牌子 (sheets)", or "*jianpai* 簡牌 (bamboo sheets)". Its form became more and more elaborate, and it even could be sealed by "*jiannang* 緘囊", a cloth bag woven with double strands of silk.[27] In some specific periods, frequent wars and territorial division forced correspondents to choose special envelopes. From 1645 to 1650, Qu Shisi used wax to wrap his family letters for escaping the inspection of the Qing army and smoothly crossed the Ming-Qing frontier. His family letters are called "*lawan shu* 蠟丸書 (wax pill letters)".[28] We can speculate from the name that Qu sealed his letters in hot wax and squeezed it into a ball before the wax cooled. However, this was only a method adopted in the special period and was not widely implemented.[29]

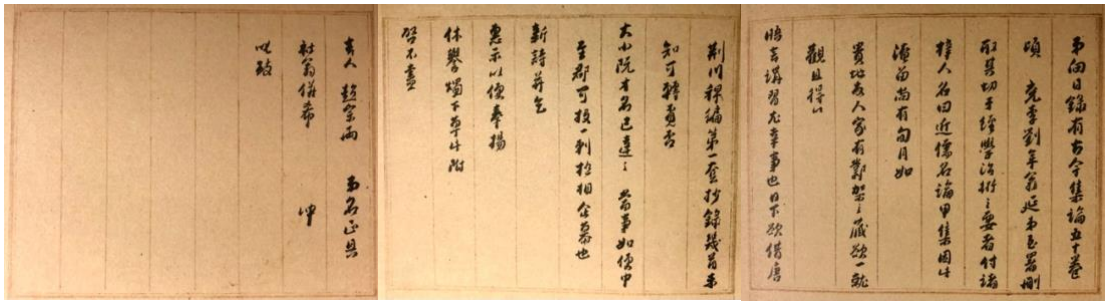
The invention of papermaking and the prevalence of cheap paper provided a more convenient material—paper—for epistolary activities. Although the paper was invented in the third century BCE, it was widely used as a writing material after Cai Lun 蔡倫 (61-121), a eunuch of the Eastern Han dynasty, improved the production method of the paper in the first century AD.[30] The stationery form is divided into *sujian* 素箋 (plain stationery) and *Huajian* 花箋 (decorated stationery). Plain stationery was the most commonly used in letter writing.[31] It did not require dyeing or other complex processes

[25] Zhao Shugong, *Zhongguo chidu wenxue shi*, p.5.
[26] Lu You, *Lao xue'an biji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p.28; Yu Yue, *Chaxiang shi congchao* in *Yu yue quanji 21* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2018), p.617.
[27] ibid.
[28] Qu Shisi, *Wuzi you sanyue nianjiu ri shu* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.265.
[29] In 1659, Wei Geng 魏畊 (1614-1662), a Southern Ming official who followed Zheng Chenggong, also wrapped letters in wax pills to convey to Emperor Yongli, who was in Burma at the time, the secret military operations along the southeast coast. Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu*, pp.73-74.
[30] Yuan Fei, *Jianzhi pu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 590*, p.1a; Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.20.
[31] Wang Yu 王宇, 'Mingqing jianzhi yanjiu' 明清箋紙研究 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Nanjing University of the Arts, 2019), p.15.

that could engrave patterns. A piece of paper could be used directly to write letters, although some of them were printed with vertical red columns.



Gu Yanwu's Letter to Yan Guangmin[32]

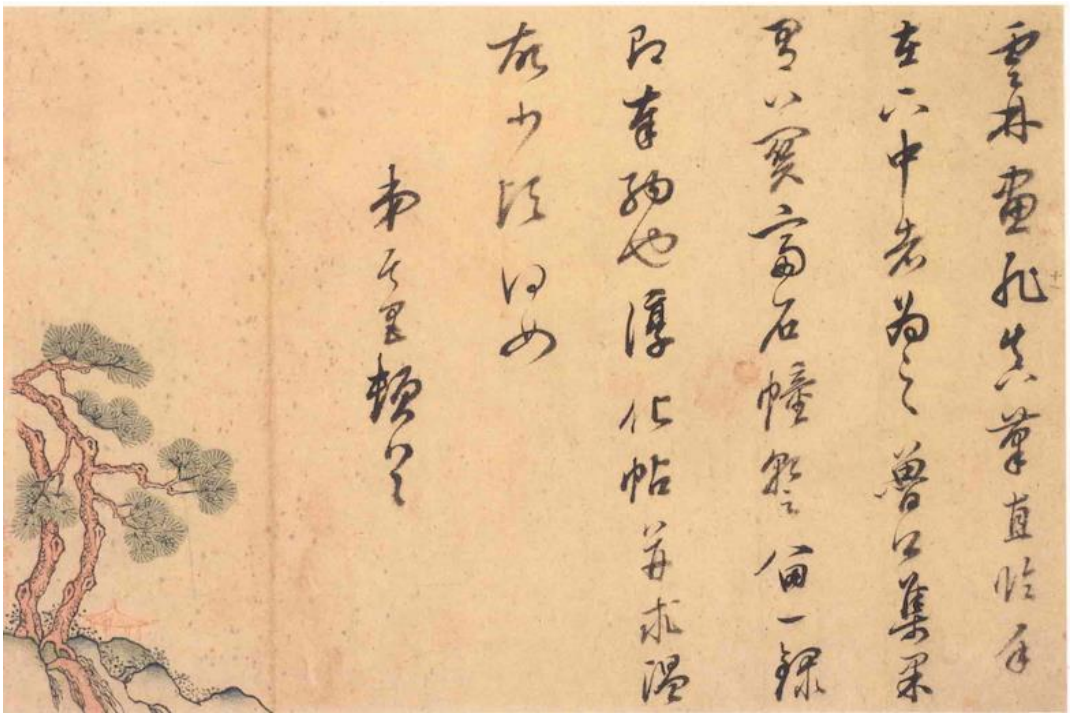


Gu Yanwu's Letter to Yan Guangmin[33]

Decorated stationery is divided into patterned and dyed decorations.[34] From the third century onwards, dyed stationery appeared. A century later, colours of paper were more

[32] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu wenxian chubanshe, 2006), p.217.
[33] ibid, pp.176-178.
[34] See Wright's work for more types of decorated stationery from the early East Han period to the Qing dynasty. Wright, 'Chinese Decorated Letter Papers', pp.97-134.

diverse, such as "*tiaohua zhi* 桃花紙 (peach blossom paper)" and "*wuse huajian* 五色花箋 (five-colour flower paper)".[35] In the Tang dynasty (618-907), the female poet Xue Tao 薛濤 produced dyed stationery in red colour, which were particularly welcome by literati.[36] As Wright suggests, woodblock-printed designs drove the mass production and use of decorated stationery during the Ming dynasty.[37] Since then, the paper used as envelopes and stationery became more diverse. Ming official Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636), who was also a painter and calligrapher, chose such pattered stationery to write a letter to one of his friends.



Dong Qichang's Letter[38]

In the Southern Ming period, Hu Zhengyan 胡正言 (1584/5-1674) and Li Yu, who were both Ming loyalists and masters of stationery production, had made popular patterned stationery. Around 1644, Hu Zhengyan started to produce sets of patterned stationery which introduced innovations based on patterned stationery from previous dynasties, and he published them twice with the title of *Shizhu zhai jianpu* 十竹齋箋譜 (Stationery Book of Ten Bamboo Studio) probably in 1644 and 1645.[39]

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35 ibid, p.100.
36 Yuan Fei, *Jianzhi pu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 590*, pp.2a-3b.
37 Wright, 'Chinese Decorated Letter Papers', p.105.
38 This stationery was produced by Right Arsenal 右軍庫 in the Ming dynasty. *Zhongguo chidu wenxian shang-mingdu qingjian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), p.12.
39 Wright, 'Chinese Decorated Letter Papers', p.115; Wang Yu, 'Mingqing jianzhi yanjiu', p.31.

Patterned Stationery from *Stationery Book of Shizhu Studio*[40]

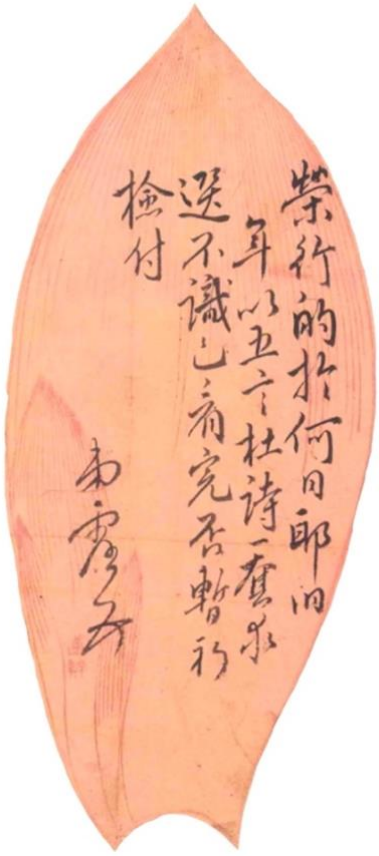
Dyed stationery was produced in different colours, mainly red, green, and blue. Wu Weiye, who served both the Ming and the Qing regimes, used this type of stationery when writing letters to his friends after returning to his hometown Taicang in the southeast region in 1656.

Wu Weiye's Letters[41]

The production process of Ming-Qing paper not only had the stages of dyeing and printing but also a certain degree of innovation in its shape, which made it convey both

[40] Hu Zhengyan, *Shizhu zhai jianpu* (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2017).
[41] Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun xinzha jiyi-juan 1-3* (Shanghai. Rongbao zhai, 2016).

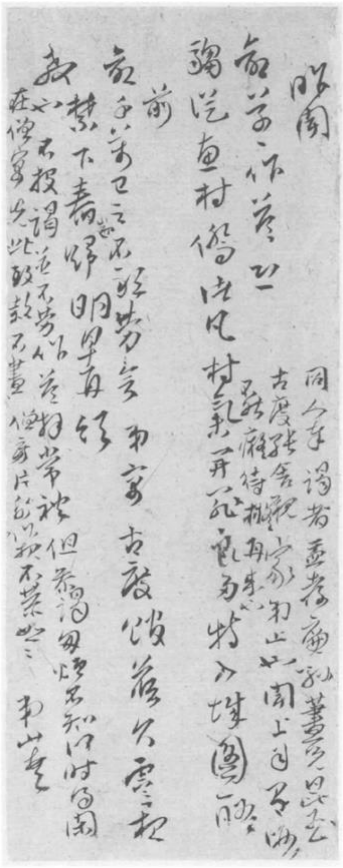
information and aesthetic value. Different from the square and symmetrical forms, a letter from a Qing official, Li Hongshu 李鴻霔, to a Qing official, Yan Guangmin 顏光敏 (1640-1686), used a piece of paper in the shape of a lotus petal.



Li Hongshu's letter to Yan Guangmin[42]

In contrast, informal stationery was also used for letter exchange. The source of such stationery was closely related to the specific circumstances of the sender at the time when writing letters. Ming loyalist Fu Shan 傅山 (1607-1684), for example, used a piece of paper he got from the monastery—where he was staying—when he wrote to his friend Wei Yi'ao 魏一鰲 (1613-1692), a Qing official.[43] Fu wrote more than he initially thought he would, and thus he particularly mentioned in this letter that this piece of paper was too narrow to allow him to write down the entire contents and had to shrink his handwriting to complete his letter.

[42] *Zhongguo chidu wenxian shang-mingdu qingjian*, p.26.
[43] Fu Shan, *Fu Shan zhi Wei Yi'ao* in *Pangxu zhai cang mingdai mingren chidu* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2016), p.105.



Fu Shan's Letter to Wei Yi'ao[44]

(2) Texts for sending information

As a tool for transmitting messages over long distances, letters convey information composed of texts for correspondents who cannot meet in person to receive the news of daily life and social activities, or even political and military affairs from their senders in different regions.

The text is the major presentation of the letter as a communication tool. In the view of the elite, the original purpose and function of the Chinese letter text was to record current affairs.[45] Based on such a function, a letter could be submitted to the superior or even the king, which made it evolve into a genre of discussing political affairs such as *shuzhuang* 熟狀 and *zhazi* (the letter sent to the emperor).[46] As Zhao Shugong points out, since the middle East Han period, the epistolary activity entered the civilian class, and letters privately exchanged among the cultural elite became popular, which generated private letters named *shu* and *chidu*.[47] Correspondents showed the enthusiasm for expositing viewpoints in their letters. A large number of discussions of

[44] ibid.
[45] Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1478*, p.5: 12a.
[46] Fang Yizhi, *Tongya* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 857*, pp.31.1a-11a.
[47] Zhao Shugong, *Zhongguo chidu wenxue shi*, pp.3-5.

literary ideas, scholarly views, and social affairs appeared in the letter texts, enriching the type of topics and promoting the evolution of the letter as a genre with aesthetic appreciation value. Liu Xie interpreted the letter texts as "*xinhua* 心畫 (heart painting)", highlighted its function of presenting one's thoughts and emotions.[48] Qing scholar Pan Lei 潘耒 (1646-1708) pointed out that the letter texts were "*xinsheng* 心聲 (voices of the heart)".[49] Furthermore, letters began to be included in anthologies, which was especially prevalent in the Ming and Qing dynasties. At least in the early Ming period, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), whose *shu* and *shujian* had been published as separate genres within his collected works.[50] Although they were not called *chidu*, they were basically the same thing—private letters. When compiling and publishing anthologies, outstanding literati such as Qian Qianyi and Hou Fangyu 侯方域 (1618-1654) specially set out a category for their letters, including those letters with aesthetic values or unique arguments. Simultaneously, the letter texts were commercialised to be compiled as letter collections. They were collected and edited, the compilers sometimes omitting those part of the letter which they deemed not to have literary value.[51] Thus, the literariness of the letter texts had been greatly magnified. When people referred to the letter, they pointed to the text and regarded it as a genre parallel to poetry and prose, while ignoring other material aspects that made up the letter.

Although in the evolution of Chinese epistolary culture, the text, as a material element that can directly convey messages and express emotions, has gradually replaced the value of other material aspects and become a synonym for the letter, when discussing "what is a Chinese letter", we shall regard the text as a part of the material composition of letters, as the information it conveys is important, but it cannot exist independently without other materials like stationery.

(3) Material aspects for presenting the writing etiquette and projecting the nature of the relationship

Chinese letters also compose of material aspects that are used to show the writing etiquette and project the nature of the relationship, which are an integral part of a letter. Although material aspects such as *jianqi* 箋啓 (the card with the letter of the paired letters in the Song dynasty), *zhengqi* 正啟 (the formal card of the Ming letters), the formats of the envelope and the letter text, and the attached items do not convey specific messages directly like the text, their presence makes the letter, a written conversation,

[48] Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1478*, p.5.12b.
[49] Pan Lei, *Chidu lanyan xu* in *Siku jinhui shu congkan jibu 35-chidu lanyan* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), p.4b.
[50] Pattinson, 'The Chidu in Late Ming and Early Qing China', pp.99-107.
[51] ibid.

embody the function of face-to-face interaction and convey people's emotions.[52] A letter integrates the texts, the format, the material composition, and other material forms to present the writing etiquette and project the nature of the relationship between correspondents, making it a tool for maintaining social bonds.

① *Jianqi* of the paired letters

In the Song dynasty, *shuangshu*—the paired letters—was a popular composing method among literati.[53] According to the Southern Song poet Lu You's 陸游 (1125-1210) essay on the paired letters in his book *Lao xue'an biji* 老學庵筆記 (Literary Sketches of Old Studying Room), the paired letter is divided into *jianqi* (the card with the letter) and *xiaojian* 小簡 (the small letter). The card with the letter is a material element specially used to demonstrate etiquette.

> During the Xuanhe Reign, although the custom had been advocating flattery, there were still [people] who preferred to be simple. After a long time, there was a letter that was sent with both the parallel-prose style cards with letters and handwritten letters. The card with the letter took a major position and the handwritten letter was called the small letter, but each of them had an envelope. Later, the bearer sometimes would lose one of such letters and could not deliver both of them. So an envelope was added to seal them together and it was called the paired letter.
> 宣和間，雖風俗已尚諂諛，然猶趣簡便，久之，乃有以駢儷箋啟與手書俱行者。主于箋啟，故謂手書爲小簡，然猶各爲一緘。已而或厄于書吏，不能俱達，於是駢緘之，謂之雙書。[54]

It shows that in the composition of paired letters, the card with the letter, which is used for greetings, congratulations, and introducing names, occupied the main position, and the letter which exchanges messages and topics was only a subsidiary. In *Yunlu manchao* 雲麓漫鈔 (The Random Transcription between the Clouds and the Foot of the Mountain), Song poet Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛 recorded that the card with the letters was similar to the visiting card, but the difference was that it had greetings,

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[52] Zha Wang, *Chidu xinyu xu* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu jibu 396-fenlei chidu xinyu* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), p.1a; Peng Dayi, *Shantang sikao* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 976* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), pp.132.10a-10b.

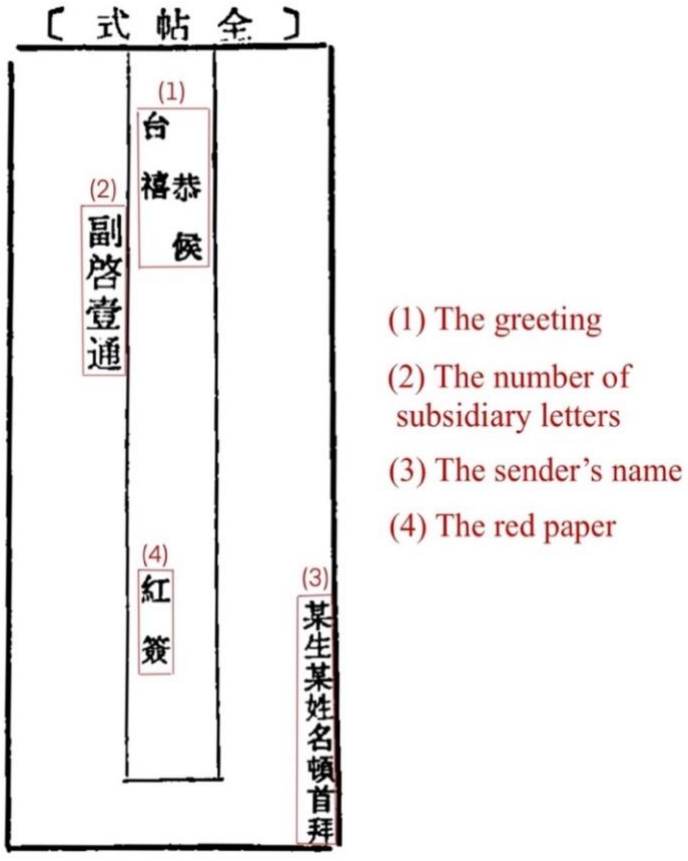
[53] In his study of calligraphic forms of Chinese letters, Peng Lizhi points out that the paired letters in the Song dynasty were influenced by the form of combining three letters together (*sanfu* 三幅) in the late Tang period. Peng Lizhi 彭礪志, 'Chidu shufa: cong xingzhi dao yishu' 尺牘書法：從形製到藝術 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Jilin University, 2006), p.107; Fu Mei, 'Beisong chidu yanjiu'; Song Kun 宋坤, 'Songdai shuangshu shuyi wenshi yanjiu' 宋代雙書書儀文式研究, *Dang'an yu shehui*, 1 (2015), 141-145.

[54] Lu You. *Lao xue'an biji*, p.27.

congratulations, and blessings. It was composed of three pieces of paper, and each one had a different topic.[55]

② *Zhengqi* of the Ming letters

In the Ming dynasty, the material component used to present etiquette still existed, but it was streamlined to a certain extent and was named *zhengqi* (the formal card). In Song dynasty, the card with letters of the paired letters could add pieces of paper up to three sheets within two or three topics. However, in the Ming dynasty, there was only one piece of paper used as the formal card which narrowed greetings into one phrase, and the position of the senders' names was changed as well.[56] These made the formal card more like a visiting card without letter contents. The following is a paradigm of the formal card from *Zhemei jian* 折梅箋 (The Stationery of Folding the Plum), a letter manual compiled by Ming novelist Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) and was published around 1600.



The Sample of the Formal Card from *The Stationery of Folding the Plum*[57]

[55] Zhao Yanwei, *Yunlu manchao* (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), pp.51-52.
[56] Feng Menglong, *Zhe meijian* in *Feng Menglong quanji 10* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), p.1.
[57] ibid.

In the middle of a formal card is a long, narrow, and red sheet with greeting terms written on the top. On the right side of this sheet are the sender's name and one or more gestures of respect, such as "*bai* 拜 (make a bow with hands folded in front)" and "*dunshou* 頓首 (make a ceremonious nod)".[58] The left side of the sheet marks the amount of *fuqi* 副啓 (the subsidiary letter), where the text is written. Throughout this paradigm, it does not convey any specific information about the letter topics, such as whether it is a letter asking for help or a letter discussing a literary work. However, its formats reflect the writer's respect and courtesy to the recipient. In particular, the use of *bai* and *dunshou* is a literal presentation of greeting postures and gestures when meeting in person. Such material elements are essential to compose a letter because the letter exchange is not only for sending information but also for maintaining the relationship between correspondents who cannot meet each other.

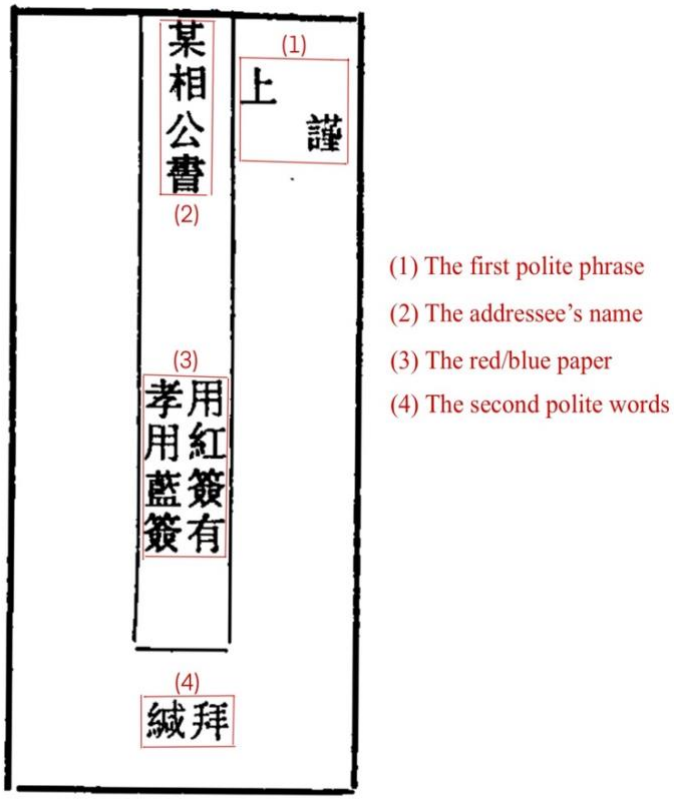
③ Formats for presenting the writing etiquette: examples based on letters written in the Ming and the Southern Ming periods

Correspondents regard the letter as a written conversation with their recipients. This prompted the format of the letter essentially become the textualised etiquette of face-to-face communication. Although these formats are all conventions in letter writing, it is flexible for writers to choose whether to write them all down, which is mostly based on correspondents' personal preferences, the letter contents, the specific circumstances at the time of writing these letters, and the relationship between the sender and the recipient.

The envelope

As the first material aspect of a letter to be seen by the recipient, the envelope is the important step in presenting the etiquette by the sender. Although there is no specific topic of the letter on the envelope, the conventional terminology of every written part project respect and politeness to the recipient. The letter guides on how to write envelopes are few. At present, there is only one description with unified pictures in *The Stationery of Folding the Plum*.

[58] Gary Schneider argues that specialised epistolary rhetoric can authenticate the sincerity of correspondents, such as the letter's "body language". Gary Schneider, 'Affecting Correspondences Body Behavior and the Textualization of Emotion in Early Modern English Letters', *Prose Studies*, 23 (2000), 31-62.



The Envelope Sample of *The Stationery of Folding the Plum*[59]

An envelope generally consists of four elements: the first polite phrase, the addressee's name, the red or blue paper, and the second polite phrase. The first polite phrase is to show the politeness of giving the letter to the addressee. The phrase "*jingshang* 謹上" means "sincerely giving this letter to someone". Senders can only write recipients' courtesy names on the narrow and long red or blue paper. The blue paper is only applicable when the recipient is in mourning, otherwise, writers should use the red one.[60] The second polite phrase is composed of two characters such as "*baijian* 拜緘", which represents a respectful gesture: silent fist and palm salute, then bending over. The back of the envelope is for sealing, but it is flexible for senders to seal or unseal the letter, as well as to add or not add their names before the sealing phrase. If senders choose to seal the envelope, the sealing phrase they write at the top has two characters such as "*jinfeng* 謹封 (reverently sealing this letter)". If they choose to leave the envelope unsealed, the sealing phrase also has two characters such as "*shufeng* 恕封", to tell the recipient that this letter has not been sealed and forgive the sender for not sealing it.[61]

[59] Feng Menglong, *Zhemei jian* in *Feng menglong quanji 10*, p.3.
[60] ibid.
[61] ibid. However, Feng did not indicate under what circumstances a letter might be left unsealed. Perhaps the sender would choose such a way when having a trusted messenger make a close delivery.

Names of the sender and the recipient

As a non-face-to-face dialogue, the letter strives to use some conventional formats and different characters to make up for the inability to meet and express respect for each other. It is typically demonstrated through the five methods of writing the sender's and recipient's names in the Southern Ming letters. Three of them place the recipient's name, the sender's name, or both of their names before the beginning of the letter; the other two ways are written after the end of the text and contain the sender's name or both the sender's and the recipient's names. Identity, respectful characters or phrases, and respectful acts are commonly added before or after these names.

In Qian Qianyi's 421 letters written in the Southern Ming period, forty-two included names before the beginning. Although these letters do not account for a huge proportion of all Qian's letters in this period, compared with other Southern Ming correspondents, this number is relatively large. Qian presents plenty of ways to compose these names. The two letters he wrote to Du Canglue 杜蒼略 contain Du's name and identity with an honorific title, "my respected friend and older brother Canglue 蒼略友兄執事"[62] and "my respect virtuous friend and big brother Canglue 蒼略賢良友兄執事"[63]. He also respectfully put both his name and the recipient's name with ceremonial characters or phrases such as *bai* and *dunshou*. A case in point is his letter replied to Gong Yunqi 龔雲起 in 1645. Qian started with "I, Qian Qianyi, who has had a profound friendship with your family for generations, make a ceremonious nod and bows to send this letter to the assistant of the great Staff Officer Mr. Zhongzhen 通家侍生錢謙益頓首拜上大參謀仲震先生幕府".[64] A more common method of writing names is to put them at the end of the last sentence of the text. The usual way is to sign only the sender's name or both the sender's and the recipient's names. Among the letters written by ninety Southern Ming correspondents to the Qing official Yan Guangmin, fifty-five letters composed names through this method. They only have the sender's name with ceremonial phrases, such as two letters written by Sun Zhiwei 孫枝蔚, nine letters written by Gu Yanwu, two letters written by Qu Dajun, and twenty-two letters written by Cheng Sui 程邃.

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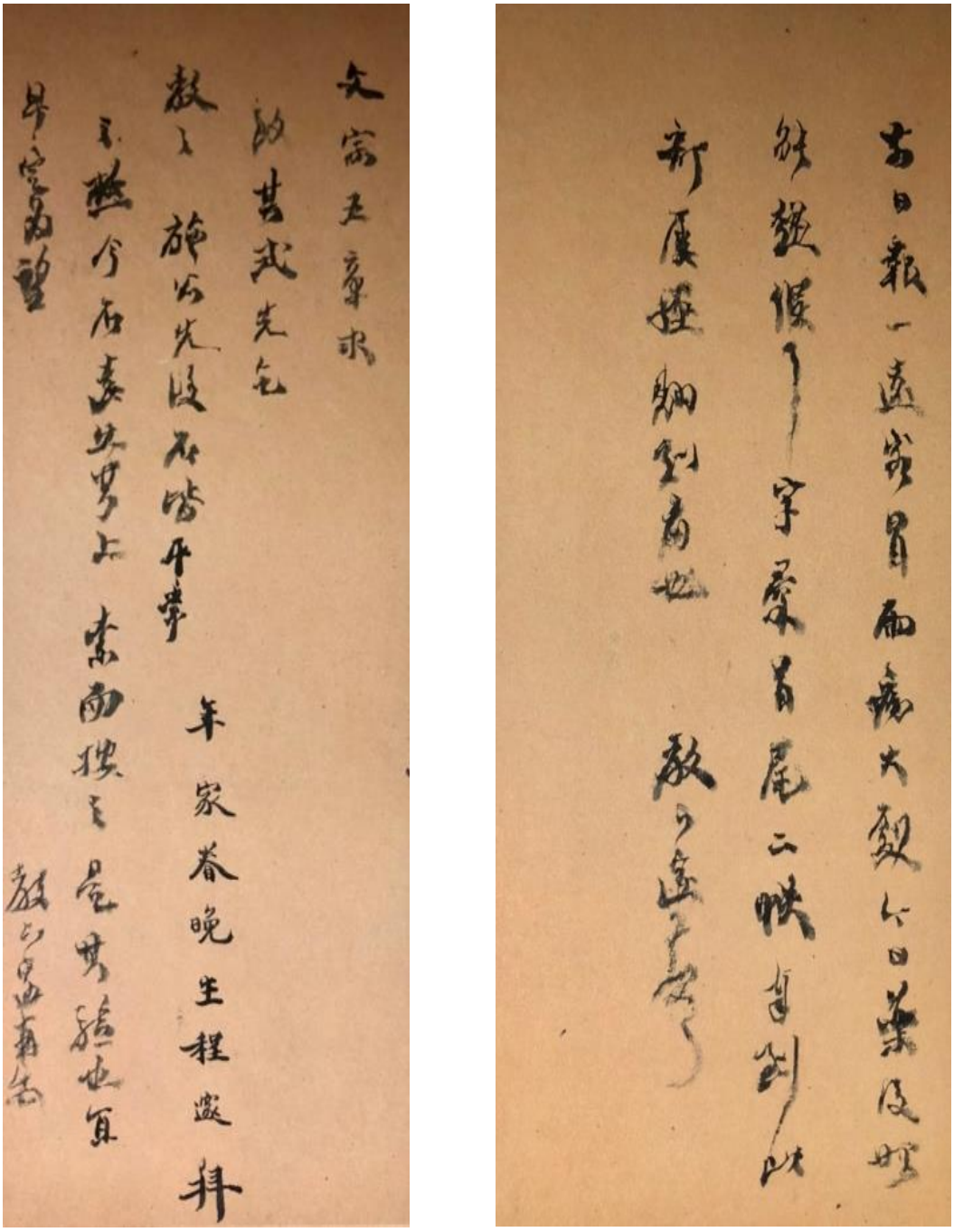
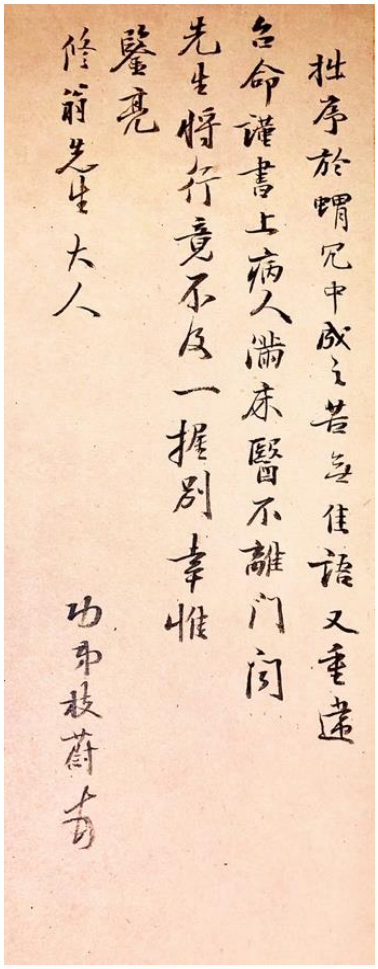
[62] Qian Qianyi, *Da du canglue lunwen shu* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 6* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), p.1306.
[63] ibid, *Zaida du canglue shu*, p.1309.
[64] Zhongzhen is the courtesy name of Gong Yunqi. Qian Qianyi, *Da gong yunqi shu* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 7*, p.890.



Chen Sui's Letters to Yan Guangmin[65]

One of Sun Zhiwei's letters put the recipient's name above the sender's name and adding ceremonial phrases.

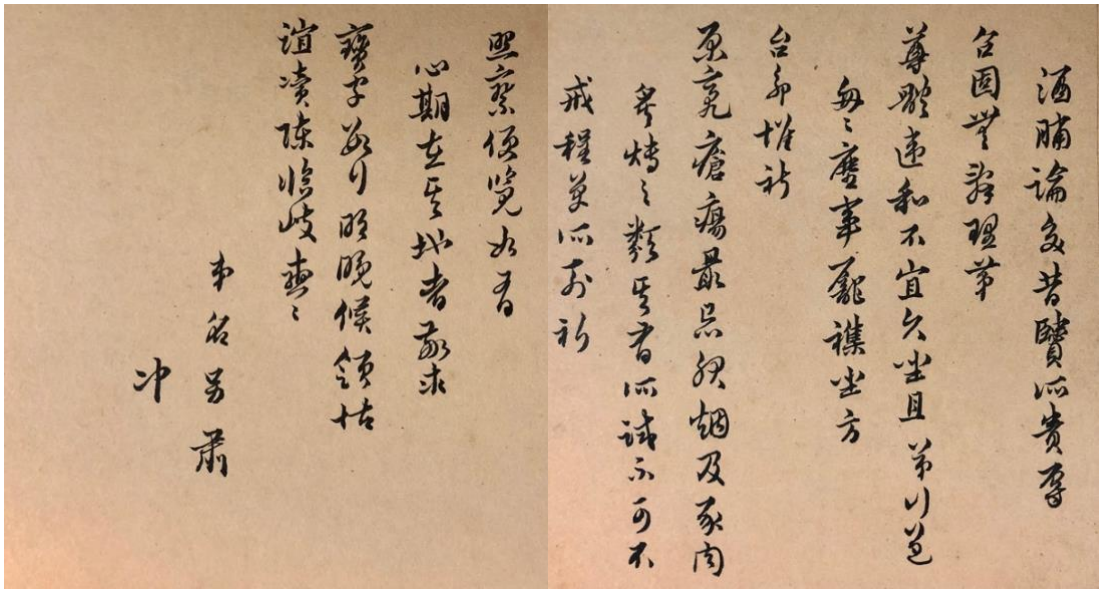
[65] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, pp.217-219.



Sun Zhiwei's Letter to Yan Guangmin[66]

Although the method of placing names is entirely based on senders' preferences, by counting the above and other Southern Ming letters, we can see that Southern Ming correspondents were more inclined to put names at the end of the main text. However, correspondents sometimes abbreviated their names when exchanging letters with close friends or family members. This is a mechanism for deepening social bonds between senders and recipients because it is relatively less formal and more like an intimate approach. In many of Fu Shan's letters to one of his friends Wei Yi'ao, Fu only wrote two characters "*dishan* 弟山 (your little brother Shan)"; while Southern Ming official Qu Shisi's family letters even have no signature.[67] By contrast, in the subsidiary letter (*fuqi*, which will be detailed in the next section), there is no actual name either before the main body or after the epilogue of the letter, but instead, a substitute phrase such as "*ming zhengju* 名正具 (My name is written on the formal card)" will be used.[68]

[66] Sun Zhiwei, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, p.81.
[67] Fu Shan, *Yu Wei Yi'ao shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, pp.201-215; Qu Shisi, *Qu Shisi shuzha er* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu 7*, pp.148-151.
[68] Fang Zhengru, *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu 7*, p.77.



Ni Huiding's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[69]

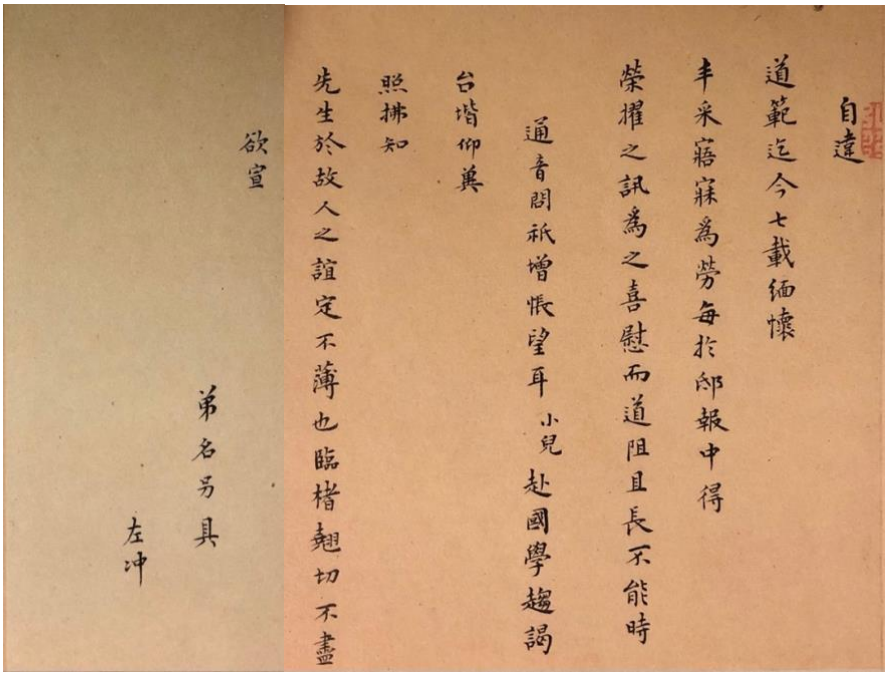
The only way to write the substitute name in a subsidiary letter is to place it between the last sentence of the main text and the termination phrase. This phrase have many variations, such as "*diming dansu* 弟名另肅 (your younger brother's name is written separately)",[70] "*diming xinle* 弟名心勒 (your younger brother's name is written in my heart)",[71] "*diming youju* 弟名宥具 (please forgive not to write your younger brother's name)",[72] and "*jianming dansu* 賤名單肅 (my base name is written separately)".[73]

Taitou and pingque

"*Taitou* 抬頭 (one to three characters higher than the former column when starting a new column)" and "*pingque* 平闕 (change and skip)"[74] in the body of the letter are courtesy formats that show the writer's respect for the recipient, the monarch, and the things related to them. *Taitou* refers to a writing method in which the back column is one to three characters higher than the previous column, and they are called "*yitai* 一抬 (one character higher)", "*ertai* 二抬 (two characters higher)", "*santai* 三抬 (three characters higher)", and "*sitai* 四抬 (four characters higher)".[75] The first two were commonly used in the Southern Ming letters. When mentioning the recipient's

[69] Du Jun, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, pp.108-109.
[70] Ni Huiding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, p.252.
[71] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, p.227.
[72] ibid, p.228.
[73] Mao Xianshu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, p.17.
[74] *Ping* means writers must start a new column no matter this column still has space to write or not. *Que* means writers must leave blank spaces in this column then keep on writing this letter and don't need to start a new one.
[75] Bai Qianshen, 'Gudai chidu de shehui gongneng he yishuxing' 古代尺牘的社會功能和藝術性, in *Lishi wenxian* 歷史文獻 *18* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), p.507.

name and related books, literary works, events, and objects, regardless of whether there is space in the column that correspondents are writing at the time, they will start a new column and raise one character than the previous one. *Ertai* is usually used in matters related to the court, such as replying to political institutions of the court. *Santai* and *sitai* do not appear in the manuscripts collected for this research. Looking up letters from other periods, we can understand that it is used when mentioning the emperor and related things. The following letter was sent to Yan Guangmin by a Ming loyalist Wang Hongzhuan who used *taitou* six times when mentioning Yan. The following is the manuscript and the translation.


自違
道範迄今七載緬懷
丰采寤寐為勞每於邸報中得
榮擢之訊為之喜慰而道阻且長不能時
通音問祇增悵望耳 小兒 赴國學趨謁
台堦仰冀
照拂知
先生於故人之誼定不薄也臨楮翹切不盡
欲宣
弟名另具
左冲

Wang Hongzhuan's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[76]

Since I did not see

自違

your demeanour, there past seven years, I miss

道範。迄今七載。緬懷

your manner which worries me day and night. Every time I learn from the newspaper that

丰采。寤寐爲勞。每於邸報中得

you have been promoted, I am happy and gratified about it. However, the road is blocked and far away from us that we cannot exchange

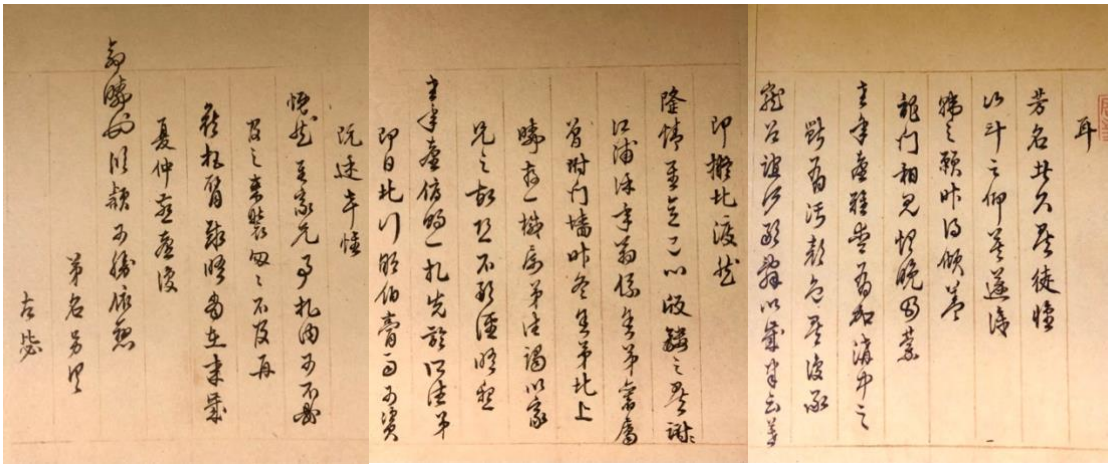
榮擢之訊。爲之喜慰。而道阻且長。不能時

messages and greetings, which only increases the sense of melancholy staring. My

[76] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 4*, pp.44-45.

son is going to the Imperial College to visit
通音問。祇增悵望耳。小兒赴國學趨謁
you, with respect and respect, hoping to be taken care of by
台堦。仰異
you. (I) know that
照拂。知
you will not treat me dignifiedly because of (our old) friendship. When (I) wrote this letter, (I) hoped eagerly and I could not write down
先生於故人之誼。定不薄也。臨楮翹切。不盡
all that I wanted to say.
欲宣。[77]

Whenever Wang Hongzhuan spoke of Yan Guangmin, Yan's appearance, news about Yan, and Yan's actions, Wang would use *yitai* to present his politeness and respect. In another letter from Yu Guozhen 余國禎 to Yan Guangmin, Yu chose *ertai* when talking about reporting to the court. The following is the manuscript and the translation.



Yu Guozhen's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[78]

[I] have heard of
耳
your name for a long time. Only [I] have is my admiration for
芳名者久已。徒懷
you but never have the opportunity to meet
山門之仰。莫遂識
you face-to-face. Yesterday, [I] knocked

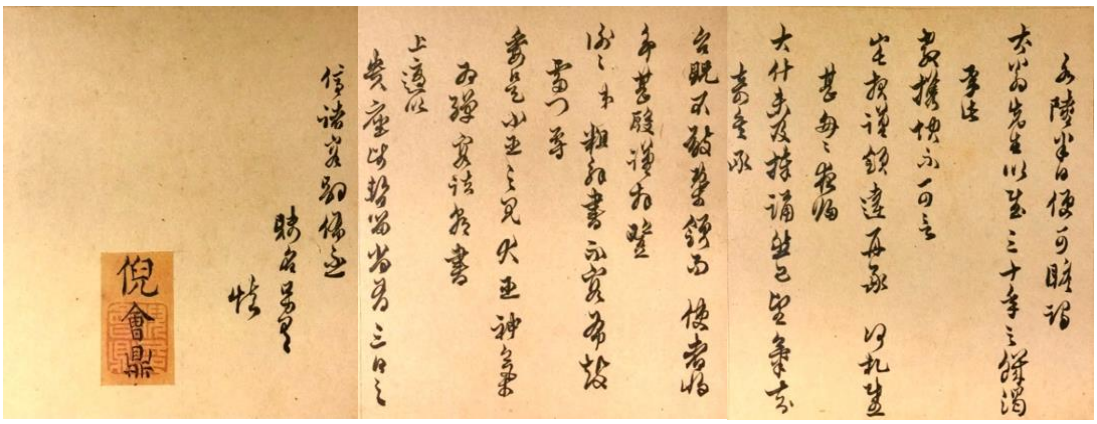
[77] ibid.
[78] Yu Guozhen, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, pp.5-7.

韓之顧。昨得傾蓋
your dragon door, it was too late for us to meet each other. [I] have received a lot of concerns from
龍門。相見恨晚。乃蒙
you, and [I am] a beast in the ditch which will tarnish
老年臺雅愛有加。溝中之
your brilliance. Again, [I] receive
獸。有污顏色矣。復承
your calling, how dare [I] refuse this friendship. When this year is going to end,
龍召，誼何感辭。以歲聿云暮。
[I] will plan to go north, but
即擬北渡。然
your great kindness and deep affection have been engraved in my heart. Thank you.
隆情至意。已心版鏤之矣。謝謝。
Elder Xu from Jiangpu is my little brother's old subordinate,
江浦徐年翁。係舍弟舊屬。
And he used to be my student. Last winter, my little brother went to north,
曾附門牆。昨冬。舍弟北上
and [he] wrote a letter then told me to visit him, but because of my
時。存一椷。屬弟往謁。以家
elder brother, [I] dare not meet him easily. [I] beg
兄之故。恐不敢輕晤。墾
you to write a letter to him first. I, your little brother,
年臺俯賜一札。先於所往。弟
will go to the north soon, the rains of Prince Xun can help
即日北行。郇伯膏雨。可資
[someone's] sad impasse. [I would be] lucky if
阮途。幸惟
you could be so generous. As to things related to [my] elder brother, it is no need to
慨然。至家兄事。札內可不必
mention it in letters. [I] need to finish this letter in a hurry and cannot wait for
及之。束裝匆匆。不及再
you. The day when [we] meet together shall in the next year,
候。把臂聚晤。當在來歲
the middle of summer when reporting to
夏仲。燕臺復

the court. [I] cannot help miss [you] when writing this letter.
命時也。臨穎可勝依戀。[79]

Like Wang Hongzhuan, when referring to Yan Guangmin and related things, Yu Guozhen wrote on a new column with one character higher. In the last sentence before the epilogue of this letter, he put two characters higher when mentioning the report to the government which were above the top margin of the ruled lines printed on the stationery. From the perspective of aesthetics, writing in the margins was acceptable, as compliance with the format was important, and it was a part of the aesthetic appeal.

The format that has the same effect as *taitou* is *pingque*. Bai Qianshen points out that *ping* means that whenever encountering recipients' names or something directly related to them, writers need to start a new column, even if there can still write more characters on the previous one.[80] *Ping* is commonly used together with *taitou*. When mentioning affairs related to the recipient, for respect consideration, a new column will be started with one to four characters higher than the previous one. *Que* means to leave one or two characters in front of recipients' names without beginning a new column. *Pingque* widely appears in the Southern Ming letters. The following manuscript from Ni Huiding to Yan Guangmin is a typical example.



Ni Huiding's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[81]

Half a day by water and land trips, [I] can sincerely see
水陸半日，便可瞻謁
you, my respected elder, to comfort the hunger and thirst who have not seen each other for 30 years.
太翁先生，以慰三十年之饑渴。

[79] ibid.
[80] Bai Qianshen, 'Gudai chidu de shehui gongneng he yishuxing', pp.504-505.
[81] Ni Huiding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, pp.248-250.

Accept your
承此
letter, [I am] so happy that it is beyond words.
大教，快不可言。
I have received the news of your house respectfully, and again [I[received ○[82] your letter which moves me
宅報謹領達，再承○何札，感
very much. Hurrying back at night,
甚。匆匆夜歸，
[I] have not read it by holding it on [my[hands, but [I] have already known by a glance
大什未及捧誦，然已望氣知
that it is peculiar. Undertake
奇矣。承
your rewards, I dare not take them all. However, ○ the messenger will
台貺，不敢概領。而○使者將
set off soon, sincerely bow to accept,
命甚殷，謹拜登，
thank you. I, your little brother, is crudely explained the book, it's not good to place the drums in the front of
謝謝。弟粗解書，不容布鼓
the thundering's door, humiliated
雷門，辱
so much, and it is (called) the little witch that saw the big witch. [My] spirit
委，是小巫之見大巫。神氣
has been exhausted, please allow [me] to write them down tomorrow
爲殫，容詰朝書
then give them to you. It happens to that
上。適以
your master [asked me] to have a temporary stop. There are three days left
貴座師暫留。尚有三日之
to stay [here], please allow me to talk about other things later. Not to mention all of them.
停，諸容別佈。不一。[83]

[82] The use of *que* is marked as ○ in the translation.
[83] Ni Huiding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, pp.248-250.

Compared with other letter formats, the convention of *taitou* and *pingque* is more restrictive. The ways of writing senders' and recipients' names discussed earlier, and termination phrases, postscripts, and supplements that will be discussed below can all be varied based on correspondents' personal preferences and relationships, or they can be added, changed, or deleted according to the letter contents. However, *taitou* and *pingque* are different. Correspondents cannot add or delete them or write in another way, otherwise, it will become an extremely disrespectful attitude to their recipients. This can also explain why a letter writer like Yu Guozhen would rather write characters outside the printed top margin of the stationery to insist on the format of *taitou* and *ping*.

The termination phrase, postscripts, and supplements

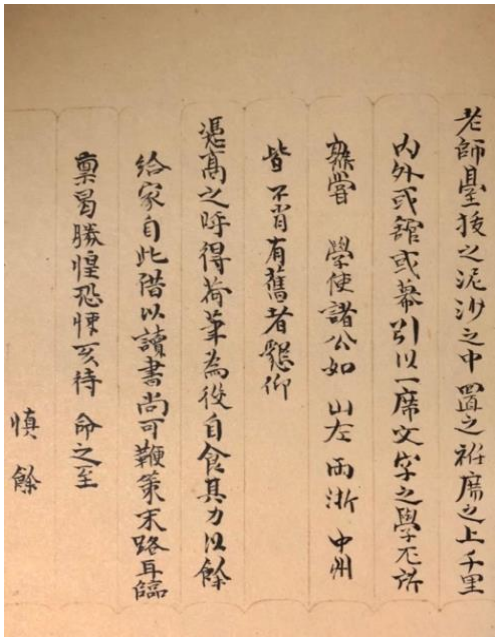
The termination phrase is placed at the end of the letter and after the signature, which means that the letter has been completed.[84] This type of phrase originally came from the Tang and the Song letters. It was chosen to prevent others from adding contents to the letter and the commonly used term was "*jinkong* 謹空 (discreetly empty)".[85] By the late Ming and the Southern Ming periods, in comparison, the term was varied and had evolved into one of the conventional formats of letter-writing. Nonetheless, it still meant to imply that anything written to the left of this term was not written by the author. According to the records in *The Stationery of Folding the Plum*, termination phrases like "*zuochong* 左冲 (end on the left)"[86], "*shenyu* 慎餘 (treat the rest carefully)", "*zuoyu* 左玉 (the jade on the left)", "*cunjing* 存敬 (keep respect)", "*zuojie* 左潔 (the left is clean)", and "*yusu* 餘素 (the rest is white)" all means it is the end of this letter.[87]

[84] Liu Jiu'an, *Shitan chidu de yange ji kuanshu* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2016), pp.9-10.

[85] Fang Yizhi, *Tongya* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 857*, p.31.6a; Peng Lizhi, 'Chidu shufa: cong xingzhi dao yishu', p.124.

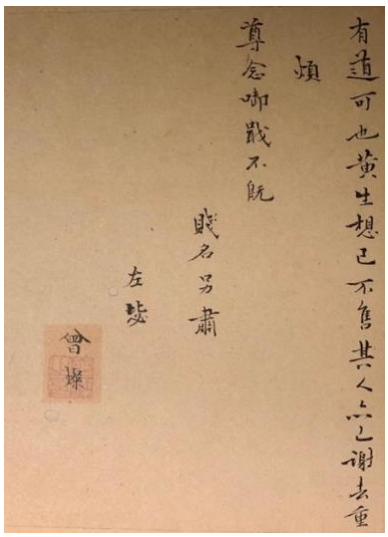
[86] *Zuochong* was the most commonly used termination phrase in the Ming, the Southern Ming, and the Qing letters. In Liu Jiu'an's point of view, "*chong* 冲" refers to "*zhong* 終", because the character "*zhong*" contains the meaning of death, which is a bit unlucky from the literati's point of view, so they changed it to another character. However, Peng Lizhi doubts this, believing that *chong* is an honorific with the meaning of "*kong* 空 (empty)". Liu Jiu'an, *Shitan chidu de yange ji kuanshu* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, pp.9-10; Peng Lizhi, 'Chidu shufa: cong xingzhi dao yishu', pp.125-129.

[87] Feng Menglong, *Zhe meijian* in *Feng Menglong quanji 10*, p.2.

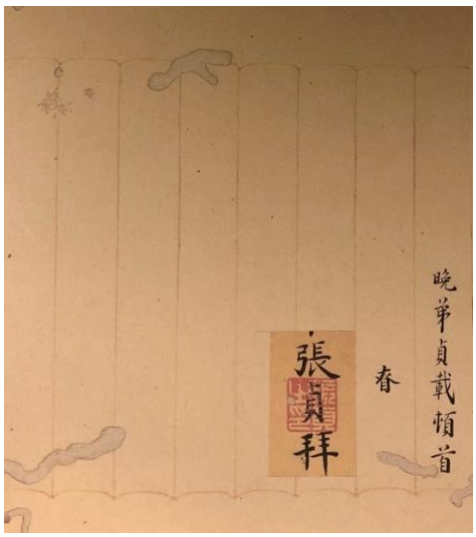


Bai Mengding's 白夢鼎 Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[88]

In practice, however, correspondents were more casual in writing these phrases which were evidenced in making additions or deletions. Many correspondents preferred to use a single character as termination phrases, such as "*shen* 脤" and "*bi* 毖" which are similar to the commonly used character "*shen* 慎".



Zeng Can's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[89]

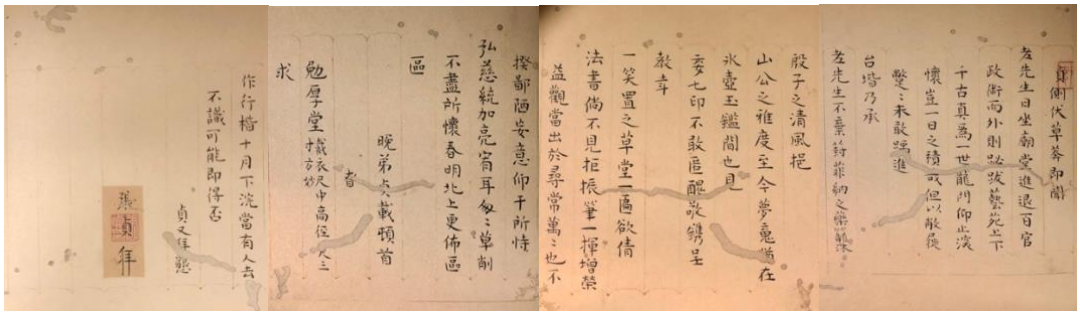


Zhang Zhen's 張貞 Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[90]

Postscripts and supplements are not contained in every Southern Ming letter. Most postscripts are placed above the signature after the epilogue of the letter, but there are

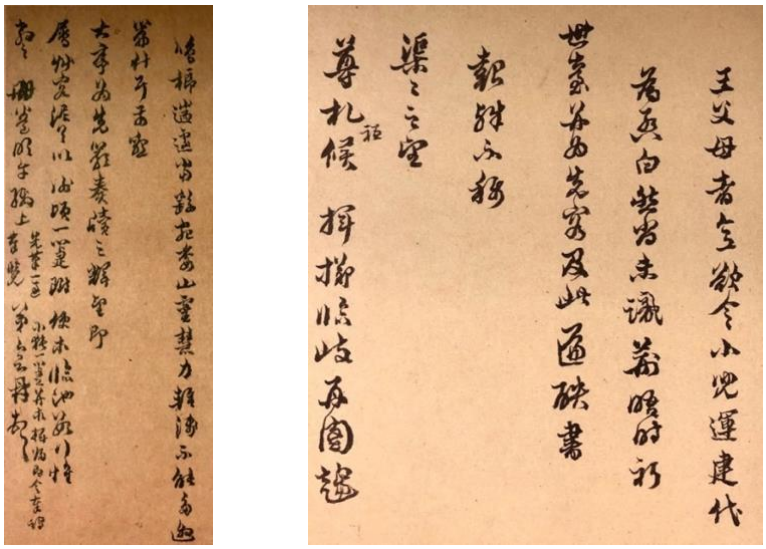
[88] Bai Mengding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, ibid, p.115.
[89] Zeng Can, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 4*, p.67.
[90] Zhang Zhen, ibid, p.190.

still some of them written above or after the termination phases. Letter manuscripts to Yan Guangmin from Ming loyalists Zhang Zhen 張貞 quote below is a typical example. Zhang's postscript is placed on the right side of the termination phrase "*shen* 眘".



Zhang Zhen's Letter to Yan Guangmin[91]

This way of writing postscripts indicates that the termination phrase might occasionally have lost its original function of preventing others from adding sentences during the Southern Ming period but only existed as a part of the epistolary format. The supplement is written in the gaps between two columns of the main body and appears as smaller handwritten sentences and characters.



Ni Huiding's Letters to Yan Guangmin[92]

However, supplements do not usually appear in those letters written in a very formal way, presumably because adding sentences in the gaps of the main text might cause unsightly reading experiences and make the letter text look like it was not written carefully enough. If one letter needs to be supplemented, its writer will add sentences

[91] ibid, pp.187-190.
[92] Ni Huiding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, pp.261, 277.

after the main body as postscripts. Therefore, postscripts and supplements are practically two ways of performing the same function, both for expressing or telling something that has not been mentioned in the main text.

④ Items sent with letters: examples based on the Southern Ming letters

Chinese correspondents not only exchanged the written parts of letters but also sent items. Although the item does not directly convey the message like the letter text, it is an important part of the material composition of Chinese letters that reveals and maintains the nature of the relationship between senders and recipients. As early as in the pre-Qin period, items had been delivered attached to letters.[93] In her works on the letters written in the Wei Jin Southern and Northern dynasties, Xiaofei Tian analyses the role of letters in interpreting valuable gifts in creating social bonds from the perspective of gift exchange between power holders and those in low positions, which shows a glimpse of items attached to early medieval Chinese letters.[94] Fu Mei's research on gift exchanged among literati in the Song dynasty covers a relatively wide range of items and is not limited to valuables, but she only examines outstanding figures: Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1645-1105), Su Shi, and Ouyang Xiu.[95] By exploring the Southern Ming letters, I notice that the exchange of items with Chinese letters took place not only between those with high or low power but also between ordinary people. Prominent contradictions in social stability and political opposition caused by dynastic transition and territorial instability made the significance of the exchange of items all the more important. Food, wine, fruits, vegetables, money, poetry, essays, anthologies, letters, crafts, and clothing would be sent with their letters. These items were sometimes a mechanism of cultural communication or a first aid to solve life difficulties. Thus, I use "items sent with letters" instead the term "gift exchange" which Xiaofei Tian and Fu Mei suggest, to refer to a broader scope of the attached items of Chinese letters and highlight their accompanying existence with the letter, although many of them cannot be enclosed in envelopes.

Various types of items project the different nature of relationships and open a window for exploring the living conditions of correspondents. Cultural works such as poems, anthologies and scholarly monographs were tools for the Southern Ming people to maintain cultural relations. Most Southern Ming correspondents were well-educated literati. A large part of their communication with others was in the cultural field, which was also the way for them to enter this circle to demonstrate their talents in literature, history, and scholarship. Many Southern Ming correspondents sent their literary works,

[93] Yuan Mei, *Suiyuan suibi* in *Congshu jicheng sanbian*, p.27.1a.
[94] Xiaofei Tian, 'Material and Symbolic Economies: Letters and Gifts in Early Medieval China', (pp.135-186).
[95] Fu Mei, 'Songren chidu zhong de kuizeng huodong yanjiu-yi beisong mingjia weili', (pp.58-69).

historiographies, or scholarly monographs to outstanding literati and requested them to write prefaces or comments to gain recognition in the cultural circle. In the letters I studied, the Southern Ming correspondents recorded 37 times that they had sent poems after 1644. In fact, the practical quantity of delivered poems is larger than the records, which is evidenced in the example of Fu Shan and Gengdao 畊道. Fu sent a set of letters in 1644 that contained seventeen poems by different authors.[96] This set of poems was probably written in a poetic gathering, then all the poems were copied by Fu Shan and delivered to their authors. Likewise, in 1657, both Zhou Ding 周鼎 and Ming loyalist Gui Zhuang 歸莊 (1613-1673) sent a poem to Gengdao.[97] These poems were probably two of their long-distance poetry exchanging activities. Such poetic exchange were frequently mentioned in the Southern Ming letters. Senders like Qu Shisi, Gui Zhuang, Gu Yanwu, Chen Weisong 陳維崧 (1625-1682), Chen Xi, Li Qing 李清, Mao Xiang 冒襄 (1611-1693), Lin Zhifan 林之蕃, Du Jun, Yu Huai 余懷 (1616-1696), Sun Qifeng, Zeng Can 曾燦 (1622-1668), Shen Qian 沈謙 (1620-1670), and Monk Jinshi 釋今釋 (1614-1680) all told their recipients that they had received or would send poems. Similarly, the Southern Ming correspondents also exchanged anthologies, books, and pieces of writing. According to my statistics, they delivered anthologies 66 times, including poetry anthologies, individual anthologies, historical records, and literary collections of the Ming dynasty; they delivered books 25 times, including Buddhist scriptures and others' anthologies; 26 times for pieces of writing, including prefaces, epitaphs, proses, and essays.

Showing their concern for scholarly and literary thoughts by exchanging such works with letters is of deep significance. The maintenance of cultural relations in the Southern Ming period had a special meaning of preserving the Ming culture. The exchange of cultural items was not only a personal act of devotion to cultural undertakings but also a means of disseminating Ming-related works, which projected the nostalgia for the Ming dynasty of the Southern Ming correspondents after suffering the Ming fall. Gu Yanwu, who experienced the demise of the Ming dynasty and the constant failure of the Southern Ming regime, began to sum up the reasons for the failure of the Ming dynasty. Some of his ideas like pragmatism had far-reaching influence in the Southern Ming and the early Qing societies; they were first presented and circulated through his letter exchanges and attached works such as *Rizhi lu* 日知錄 (Daily Records of Knowledge).

[96] Fu Shan, *Shixian shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, pp.295-305.
[97] Zhou Ding, *Zhi Gengdao shitie*; Gui Zhuang, *Zhi Gengdao shitie*, ibid, pp.307-309.

Items such as money, food, clothes, and gifts (expensive or handmade items) attached to letters were media for the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects to maintain a relationship of mutual help, and these items were also projections of the living conditions and urgent needs of correspondents. Although many Southern Ming correspondents were outstanding figures in literary circles, there were still trivial sides presented in their letters. They were ordinary people in their everyday life, who suffered a lot in the Ming-Qing transition. In 1645, Hou Qizeng 侯岐曾 (1594-1646), for instance, lost his older brother and nephews in fighting against the Qing army.[98] Living in the Qing territory, they often encountered financial difficulties, and some of them would even face political crises from the Qing government at any time because of their secret support for the Southern Ming regime. Furthermore, compared with in the late Ming period, the quality of their daily life in the Qing period suffered a serious blow because they adhered to the Ming identity. Their official careers were cut off which caused them to lose their sources of income. They could only rely on the land left by their families for a living, and even worse, some of them had lost all of their property. On 5 July 1646, Hou Qizeng said in a letter to his friend Defu 德符: "Eight members of [my] impoverished family are lucky enough to be alive recently, only because we still had lands to sell, but [what will happen in the future] is hard to say. 邇日寒家八口幸而苟存，只為此時尚有產可斥耳，然亦難言之。"[99]

The mutual aid of food could help Ming loyalists to maintain a stable life and get through hard times to a certain extent. It was special as there were distance constraints on how far food could be delivered. In most cases, they could only be delivered within a short distance and were exchanged between family members and close friends who lived in the same village and town, or places nearby. Between May and July in 1646, Hou Qizeng sent yellow croakers, vegetables, and sugar canes to his first son and nephew who lived in Songjiang Prefecture as him. By comparison, between April and July 1646, Hou sent five letters to his younger cousin Yang Tingshu 楊廷樞 (1595-1647) who lived in Suzhou, none of them attached food.

The condition of recipients can determine what items their senders would deliver with letters to some extent. In a letter written on 22 September 1650, Qu Shisi told his son Qu Xuanyu 瞿玄錥 that he would attach ten pieces of clothing and thirty-two taels for travel expenses when sending this letter.[100] Qu Xuanyu left his hometown Suzhou, a prefecture that already belonged to the Qing regime, and had been travelling for nearly

[98] Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, pp.482, 487, 489.
[99] ibid, *Yu defu*, p.534.
[100] Qu Shisi, *Gengyin bayue nianqi ri shufu yu'er* in *Qu Shisi ji*, pp.271-272.

five months to visit his father, who was serving the Southern Ming government in Guangxi province at the time.[101] Under such a condition, clothes and travel expenses were exactly what he needed in particular. Another example is Hou Qizeng, who attached money to his sons and sons-in-law four times in 1646.[102] The reason that he sent money is probably related to the poor financial situation of his sons' and daughter's family. On 30 June 1646, he wrote a letter to his third son Hou Xuanhan 侯玄涵 and attached thirty silver taels.[103] Compared with Hou's other two children, who once got seven silver taels and three silver taels, Hou Xuanhan received the most. Although Hou did not mention why he sent much more money to his third son, it is suspected that Hou Xuanhan's living conditions might be the worst of his three children. Another possible reason is that Hou Xuanhan needed to support Xia Yunyi's relatives as he married Xia's daughter and Xia had died as a result of supporting the Southern Ming government.

Sending food, clothing or money with letters indicated that letter-writers helped and cared about each other in their lives. In contrast to poems or jades, food and money are relatively less elegant, they are essential in daily life. With a greater focus on the sharing of items rather than on a specific purpose, a more equal and natural relationship was presented: when their recipients were family members and close friends, correspondents did not need to choose expensive items. However, not all these items could be sealed together with letters in envelopes like a single poem or essay, and how such items sent with their letters was barely mentioned. What can be speculated is that these items should be "bundled" together in some way when they were delivered, letting bearers know which item was attached to which letter. Nevertheless, how exactly it was achieved in this period primarily depended on the practical post method. If senders chose to deliver their letters through servants, monks or travellers, they could give letters directly to bearers and simply tell them which items their letters were sent with. If they chose to send letters through individual newspaper offices, a private industry that we will detail in Chapter Two, senders and bearers would mostly have no chance to meet. It is because posting letters were only one of the services in this industry, and the newspaper offices might set up positions like managers and bearers. In this circumstance, when a manager received plenty of letters with attached items, he was likely to take some approaches, such as recording which recipients those items would be given to so that the bearer would not be confused.

The items exchanged among the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects also suggest that there was a relationship of mutual help between the two groups with opposite

[101] ibid.
[102] Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, pp.508, 510, 532.
[103] ibid, p.532.

political standpoints. What they exchanged were usually expensive or handmade items as gifts, and their motivations were to present a unique purpose to please the other party and achieve their goals. On 21 June 1667, Qing official Gong Dingzi 龔鼎孳 (1616-1673) wrote a letter to Ming loyalist Mao Xiang, mentioning that a cup from overseas and a piece of Jin cloth would be sent with his letter.[104] Other correspondents like Qing official Zhou Lianggong gave Ming loyalist Ni Yuchun 倪玉純 self-produced brushes and ink to request for Ni's calligraphy works.[105] Since some of the Qing officials were their friends and relatives, and others took political positions where they lived, it was a way for the Southern Ming correspondents to maintain a secure and decent life in the Qing territory. This will be one of the focal points of the discussion in Chapter Five.

Section Two The Southern Ming Letters: A Connecting Link of the Ming-Qing Epistolary Culture

The Southern Ming letters continued the material composition of the Ming letters and became a preservation of the Ming culture in the epistolary field. Simultaneously, in the forty-year overlap between the Southern Ming and the early Qing periods, the Southern Ming correspondents dominated the early Qing epistolary activity through their letter exchanges with Qing subjects.

1. Adherence to the material composition of Ming letters

The Southern Ming letters followed the material composition and writing formats of Ming letters, but some minor changes would occur in the actual letter exchange. The material composition of Southern Ming letters generally took two forms: (1) the envelope, the formal card, and the subsidiary letter; (2) the envelope and the general letter. Many letters attached items like a poem, an anthology, or money. It is almost the same in the general letter and the subsidiary letter, the only difference being whether they contained the senders' and recipients' names. The general letter must be composed with the sender's name or sometimes attached with the recipient's name. In contrast, there is no name in subsidiary letters.

[104] Mao Xiang, *Shu-you xinchou* in *Mao Pijiang quanji* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2014), p.976.
[105] Zhou Lianggong, *Laigu tang ji* in *Siku jinhui shu congkan jibu 184* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), pp.20.13b-14a.

(1) The paired letters: the possible origin of the formal card and the subsidiary letter

The material composition of the formal card and the subsidiary letter might be traced back to the paired letters in the Song dynasty. The previous section has presented that the paired letters consisted of the card with the letter and the small letter, which are similar to the composition of the formal card and the subsidiary letter in the Ming dynasty, but were modified in formats. Although at present, no record can exactly demonstrate the links between the two types of letter composition, by comparison, it shows a possible relationship of evolution between them.

The card with the letter is written to convey the writer's name, identity, position, and greetings to the recipient. The small letter is also called "*shoushu* 手書 (the handwritten letter)", which might be the root of the subsidiary letter. In the Song dynasty, a complete small letter had twelve pieces of paper, which was called "*diefu xiaojian* 疊幅小簡 (the multiple-piece small letter)".[106] Only one topic could be written on each piece of paper and no repetition was allowed. In practical letter-writing activities, however, senders did not need to strictly follow this rule. The number of small letters varied from three to ten and different topics could be written on one sheet. The following is an introduction to the simplified form of a multiple-piece small letter named "*titou zhazi* 提頭箚子 (letters with senders' names at the beginning)".

> This is a variant of the multiple-piece small letter as the multiple-pieces small letter is cumbersome. Since then, only one piece of paper is used to write a letter, and each topic starts with a new column. ... It is called letters with the senders' names at the beginning. The organisation of topics is like a multiple-piece small letter.
> 此疊幅簡之變式。蓋疊幅既繁。後只用紙一幅。開寫每一段一提頭。……謂之提頭箚子。條目鋪敘一如疊幅。[107]

Such multiple-piece small letters only needed one piece of paper. Letter writers must change the column and add their names at the beginning whenever they started a new topic as this is the convention. This letter-writing method changed formats instead of replacing papers when shifting topics, avoiding excessive use of paper.

Such records demonstrate that both cards with letters and small letters had more than

[106] Liu Yingli, *Xinbian shiwen leiju mohan quanshu-jiaji* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu-zibu 169* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), p.4.1a.
[107] ibid, p.4.9a.

two topics, and their original rules could be changed in practical letter-writing activities. Likewise, a form of letter compositions that appeared in the late Ming and Southern Ming periods, also had two parts—the formal card and the subsidiary letter. It indicates that the material composition of the Southern Ming letters had a large probability of evolving from the inheritance of the paired letters.

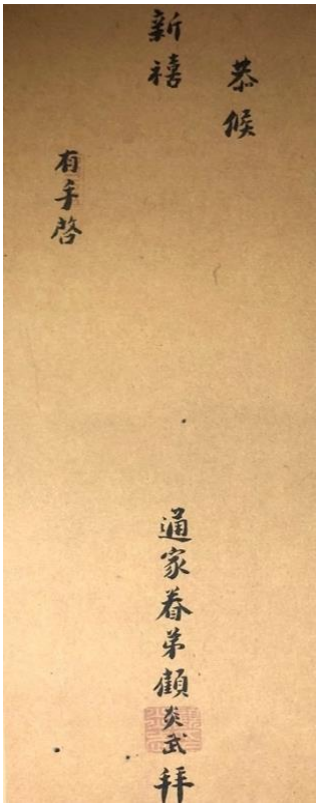
(2) The formal card

Different from the card with the letter in the Song dynasty, the Ming formal cards only had one piece of paper which has been shown in the previous section. Although the format of the Southern Ming formal card mostly followed the Ming formal card, if comparing the two, we can see that it had slightly changed from the late Ming to the Southern Ming period.[108]

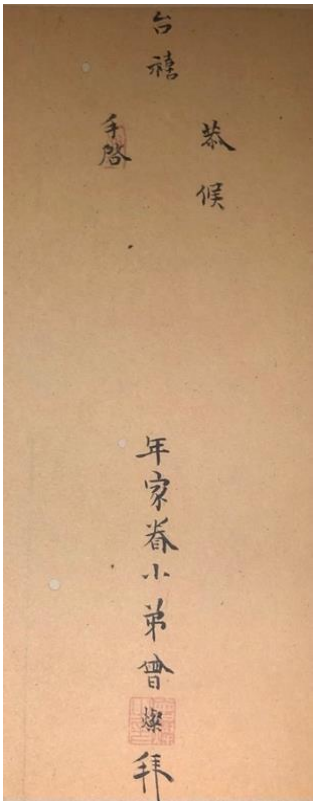
The Southern Ming formal card composed of three parts like in the late Ming time: the greeting, the number of subsidiary letters, and the sender's name. Since the formal card had no texts, only a few Southern Ming formal cards were preserved. Most of them were compiled in the *Yanshi jiacang chidu* 顏氏家藏尺牘 (Letter Collections of Yan's House).[109] They were written by Ming loyalists Gu Yanwu, Zeng Can, and Yu Guozhen 余國楨 to Qing official Yan Guangmin. The greeting phrases "*taixi gonghou* 恭候台禧 (reverently wishing you happiness)" or "*xinxi gonghou* 恭候新禧 (reverently wishing you a happy new year)" were put on the top middle and one character lower on the right, with the number of subsidiary letters on the left which was usually lower than the greeting phrase. The sender's name was placed at the bottom of the middle which composed of identity, name, and a polite gesture "*bai* 拜 (make a bow with hands folded in front)".

[108] For the format of the formal card in the late Ming period, see the sample and discussions of *zhengqi* in Section One of this chapter.

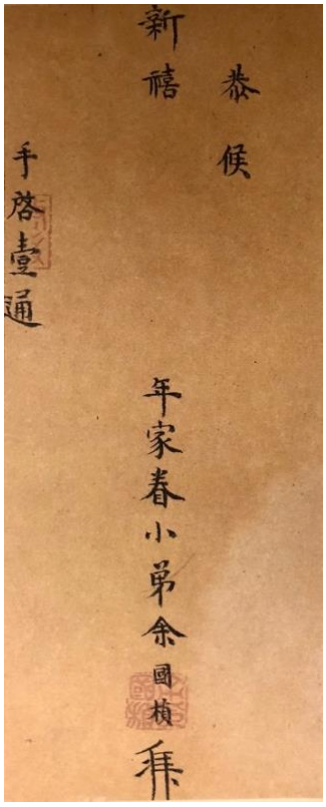
[109] Qing official Yan Guangmin preserved a large number of letters sent to him by Ming loyalists and Qing subjects. The manuscripts of these letters were handed down by his family. See Pattinson's study on letters written to Yan Guangmin. Pattinson, 'Epistolary Networks and Practice in the Early Qing', p.775.



Gu Yanwu's Formal Card[110]



Zeng Can's Formal Card[111]



Yu Guozhen's Formal Card[112]

Compared with the Ming formal cards, the most obvious change was the disappearance of the red paper. In *The Stationery of Folding the Plum*, there was a narrow strip of red paper placed in the middle of the card and the greeting phrases should be written on top of it. However, none of the above formal cards had seen such a strip of paper. The writing position of the sender's name had also changed. According to the Ming sample, the sender's name was placed at the bottom right, but during the Southern Ming period, it was written at the bottom of the middle. The final difference was the new terms of the subsidiary letter. The Southern Ming correspondents seemed to prefer to name subsidiary letters as "*shouqi* 手啟 (the handwritten letter)" or "*shouzou* 手奏 (the handwritten letter to seniors)" rather than "*fuqi*".

There were also relatively simplified formal cards exchanged by the Southern Ming correspondents.

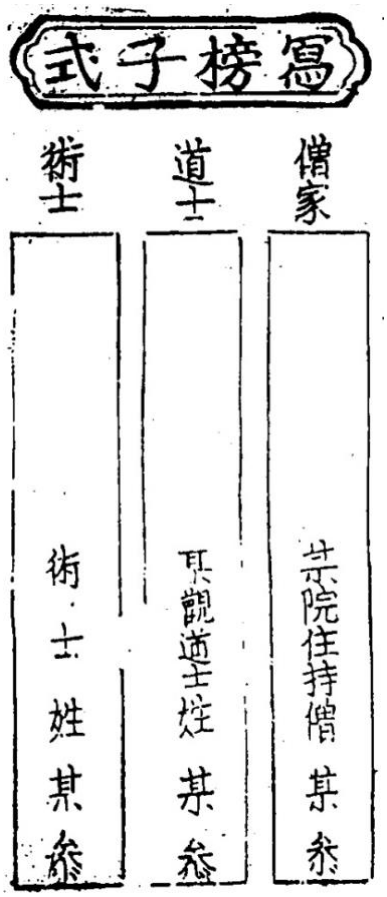
[110] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, p.185.
[111] Zeng Can, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 4*, p.71.
[112] Yu Guozhen, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, p.8.

Du Jun's Formal Card[113]

This formal card was sent by Ming loyalist Du Jun 杜濬 (1611-1687) to Yan Guangmin. Du's card only has the sender's name which is placed at the bottom of the middle as other formal cards in the same period but deleted the greeting and the number of subsidiary letters. However, such an example is few, so it is difficult to infer whether this simplified formal card was commonly used in the Southern Ming period, or whether it was related to the nature of the relationship between the sender and the recipient. Nevertheless, at least we can suspect through it that by the time of the Southern Ming period, the formal card was no longer always written in a "formal" way, and a simplified version would also be acceptable.

This letter-writing method might not have appeared suddenly in the Southern Ming period. A type of visiting card called "*bangzi* 榜子" in the Song dynasty adopted a similar format.

[113] Du Jun, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, p.110.



Formats of Three Visiting Cards in the Song Dynasty[114]

Liu Yingli, who compiled a letter manual in the Song dynasty, only gave samples of such visiting cards of Buddhist monks, Taoists, and sorcerers, but pointed out that people of other identities, such as officials and educated elites, would also choose this method to exchange their names.[115] This is evidenced in Qing scholar Yu Yue's 俞樾 (1821-1907) *Chaxiang shi xuchao* 茶香室續鈔 (The Further Transcriptions from the Tea Fragrance Room). It records that in the early Shaoxing 紹興 reign period (1131-1162) of the Song dynasty, officials sent their official titles and names through this type of visiting cards.[116] The complicated composition and lengthy writing of the paired letters in the Song dynasty might not be approved by Ming subjects. Therefore, although the latter retained the method of composing paired letters—the formal card and the subsidiary letter—visiting cards with only identity and name were adopted as the writing method of the formal card rather than the card with the letter which contained multiple topics.

From the paired letters in the Song dynasty to the formal card and the subsidiary letter

[114] Liu Yingli, *Xinbian shiwen leiju mohan quanshu* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu zibu 169*, p.4.19b.
[115] ibid.
[116] Yu Yue, *Chaxiang shi congchao* in *Yu Yue quanji 21*, p.618.

in the Southern Ming period, it can be seen that the written parts in the material form of letters show an evolutionary trend from complexity to simplification. This trend represents a significant increase in the usefulness of letters and a deliberate deletion of polite phrases that were originally highly valued. It is probably because most Southern Ming correspondents had mastered this letter material paradigm before 1644. Although they still followed the basic norms of etiquette as the Ming letters, they would rather pay more attention to the practicality of formal cards than strictly obey the convention.

Even though Southern Ming letters were more streamlined compared to the Song letters, they still received criticism. As Wang Hongzhuan judged in 1682, "now people's [letter] exchanges use subsidiary letters and [are sent] with cards containing their names, ... [they] already use envelopes but then protectively jacket the envelopes, both of which are superfluous and costly. It is not an ancient [letter] practice and should be simplified. 今人往來用副啟，別具名簡，……既用封，又用護封，俱屬繁費，非古，省之可也。"[117] In Wang's perspective, the formal card and *hufeng* 护封 (protective outer envelope) needed to be removed.[118] Such a point of view might be influenced by the social ethos of practical utility in the late Ming and early Qing period, which was a reaction to a tendency of abstract philosophical speculation in the late Ming.[119] In the late Ming period, the literati formed poetry societies which also discussed statecraft, while focusing on publishing books of practical value for political, military, and social life.[120] By the early Qing period, Gu Yanwu advocated pragmatic ethos. Fu Shan, Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635-1704), and Zhu Zhiyu 朱之瑜 (1600-1682) worked on the practical utility of scholarship.[121] Many of these scholars were Ming loyalists, Gu Yanwu and Fu Shan, for instance, were close friends of Wang Hongzhuan. Although there are no specific examples to testify to whether the pragmatic ethos prevailed in the Southern Ming epistolary field, the attitude of Wang Hongzhuan to this elaborate and costly practice, and the simplified writing choice carried out by Du Jun on his formal card, do project that the pragmatic ethos might have influenced their methods of letter-

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117 Wang Hongzhuan, *Shushi* in *Wang hongzhuan ji xia*, p.562.

118 I have not seen any protective outer envelope in the physical form from the Ming or the Southern Ming periods. According to Wang Hongzhuan's description, this should be a type of the envelope. The protective outer envelope is also mentioned in the Ming novel *The Plum in the Golden Vase* 金瓶梅詞話: "[His-men Ch'ing] then summoned Shu-t'ung and had him cut open the protective outer envelope with a pair of silver scissors, after which he tore open the inner envelope, unfolded the enclosed note. [西門慶]就叫書童把那銀剪子剪開護封。拆了內函封袋，打開副啓。" David Tod Roy trans., Xiaoxiaosheng, *The Plum in the Golden Vase Volume Three: The Aphrodisiac* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), p.368; Lanling xiaoxiao sheng, *Jin ping mei cihua* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2000), p.679.

119 Yang Xumin 楊緒敏, 'Mingdai jingshi zhiyong sichao de xingqi ji dui xueshu yanjiu de yingxiang' 明代經世致用思潮的興起及對學術研究的影響, *Jiangsu shehui kexue*, 1 (2010), 235-240.

120 Jun Fang, 'Literati Statecraft and Military Resistance during the Ming-Qing Transition: The Case of the Possibility Society (Jishe)', *The Chinese Historical Review*, 19 (2012), 87-106.

121 Zhang Jinfan 张晋藩, 'Qingchu jingshi zhiyong de sixiang yu shixue de xuefeng' 清初經世致用的思想與實學的學風, *Anhui shifan daxue xuebao* (renwen shehui kexue ban), 35 (2007), 292-297.

writing, making them less focus on writing formal cards gorgeously and elegantly to show their superior literary skills but display courtesy words concisely.

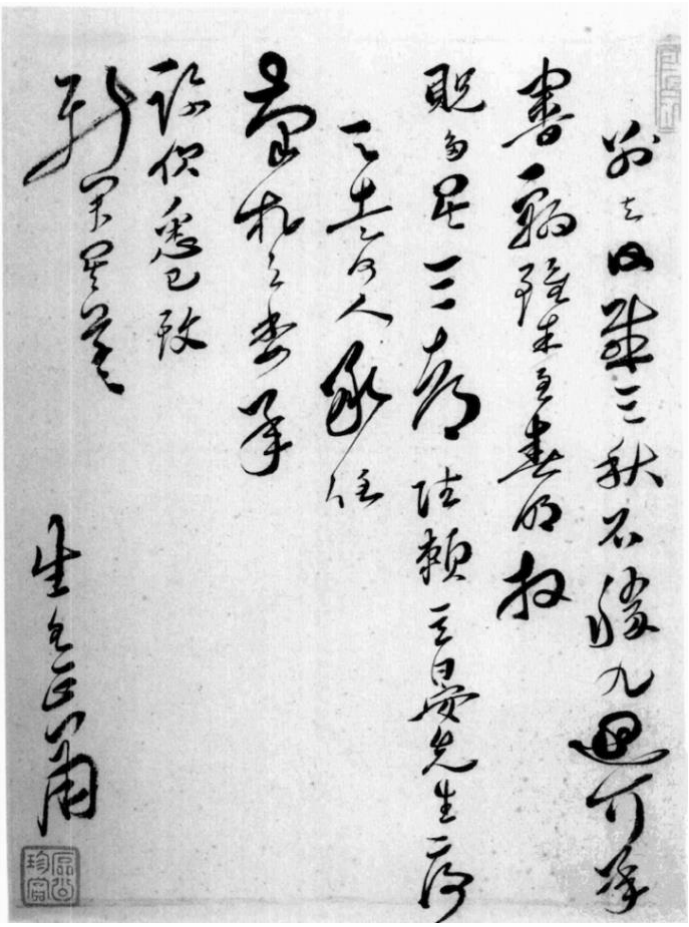
(3) The subsidiary letter

In the Southern Ming period, the composition of the formal card and the subsidiary letter was widely used in the actual letter exchanges. As can be seen from the *Letter Collections of Yan's House* which preserved dozens of formal cards and subsidiary letters, among the eighty-seven letters that the Ming loyalists wrote to Yan Guangmin, there are thirty-four letters composed in this way. Such material composition was followed by the Ming letters. As Ming poet Wang Shizhen 王世貞 (1526-1590) mentioned:

> The subsidiary letter is [one of the material composition] of the letter, … [correspondents] are afraid to add their names on, … or [correspondents] have no taboos but must hide their names. The number of letters will even be one, two, three, or four.
> 尺牘之有副啓也。……不敢具姓名。……或無所忌諱。必欲隱其名。甚至有稱副啓一。副二。至三至四者。[122]

Compared with the general letter, the sender's name would never appear in the subsidiary letter, which was motivated by avoiding troubles (usually political persecution). It has similarities with the small letter of the Song dynasty in the text, which is composed of several topics. Likewise, it was not necessary to complete all the topics in actual letter-writing activities, but whenever subsidiary letter-writers changed topics, they did not need to start a new column and add their names before topics like the Song letter-writers did. Sometimes half of the stamp would be stamped to the right of the first several characters of the subsidiary letter, and the other half would be on the formal card because they were glued together.[123] This means that anonymity would not be an issue with these subsidiary letters. Such differences provide us with an effective way to recognise whether a letter was a subsidiary letter or not.

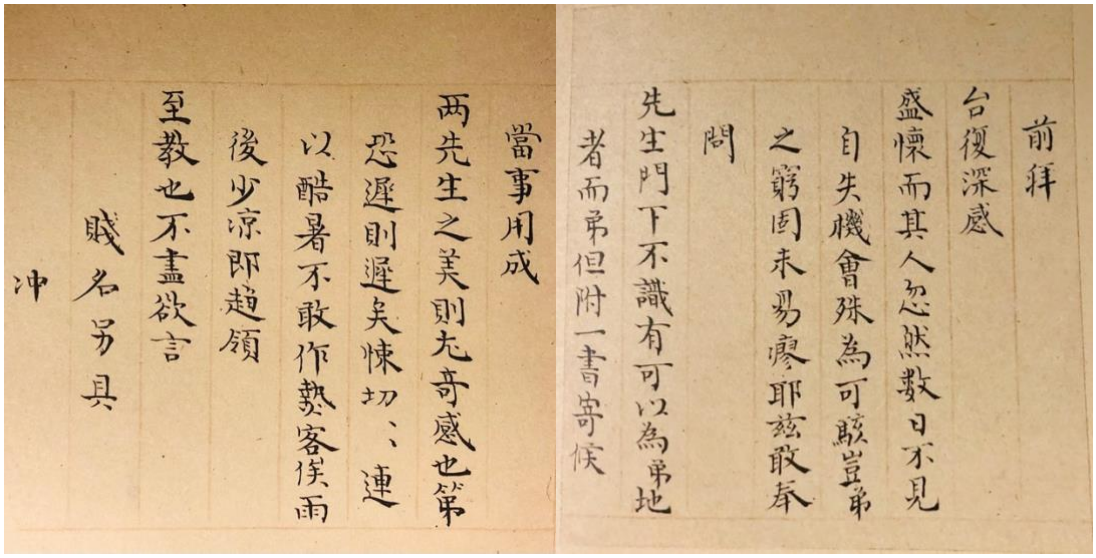
[122] Wang Shizhen, *Gu bugu lu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 1041* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), pp.27a-27b.
[123] Liu Jiu'an, *Shitan chidu de yange ji kuanshu* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.8.



Lu Guangzu's 陸光祖 (1521-1597) Subsidiary Letter[124]

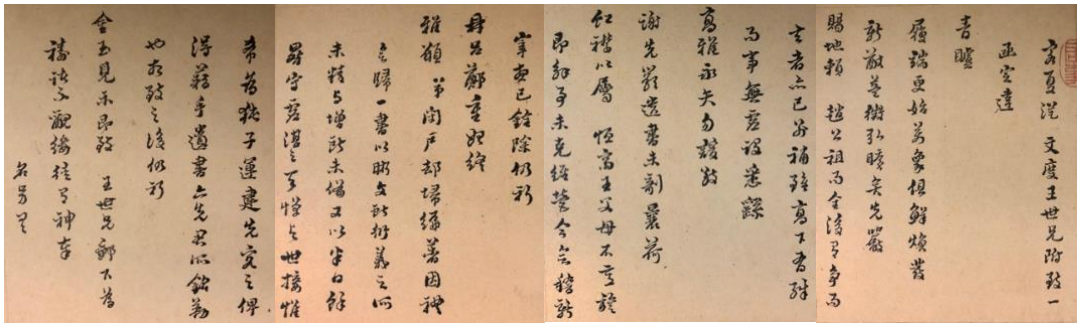
In the Southern Ming period, subsidiary letters still prevailed among correspondents. Around 1682, Wang Hongzhuan pointed out that the Southern Ming correspondents who chose subsidiary letters were the same as that in the Ming dynasty—they wanted to avoid getting into trouble.[125] Compared with the Ming dynasty, such a function was more practical in the Southern Ming period. Especially in the middle and late Southern Ming periods, most of the Southern Ming correspondents were Ming loyalists, and they lived in the Qing territory and had discussions about the Ming or the Southern Ming periods in their letters. For the Qing regime, these topics would cause social instability, so the Qing ruler controlled the people's right to speak in his territory to a certain extent (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three). Thus, it was particularly important to hide the writer's name in the letter texts.

[124] Lu Guangzu, *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu 4*, p.63.
[125] Wang Hongzhuan, *Shushi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji-shanzhi chuji juanyi*, p.562.



Du Jun's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[126]

Nonetheless, the Southern Ming correspondents also chose such letter composition for displaying a more elegant and polite way in the letter exchanges. Of the ten letters that Ni Huiding 倪會鼎 wrote to Yan Guangmin, eight are composed of a formal card and a subsidiary letter.[127] All these letters talked about trivial things, greetings, and emotional expressions, and none of them mentioned political affairs.



Ni Huiding's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[128]

Another example is Mao Xianshu 毛先舒 (1620-1688). He wrote two letters to Yan, and one discussed his scholarly thoughts and another one asked Yan to look after his son who had gone to Beijing to take the Qing imperial examination.[129] Although Mao was a Ming loyalist, his political relations were relatively simple. He did not take any official position in the Ming government, nor was he serving the Southern Ming regime which means he was an insignificant Ming loyalist. His letter did not mention affairs related to Southern Ming politics which caused no political troubles to his recipients,

[126] Du Jun, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, pp.108-109.
[127] Ni Huiding, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, pp.248-277.
[128] ibid, pp.255-258.
[129] Mao Xianshu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, pp.10-20.

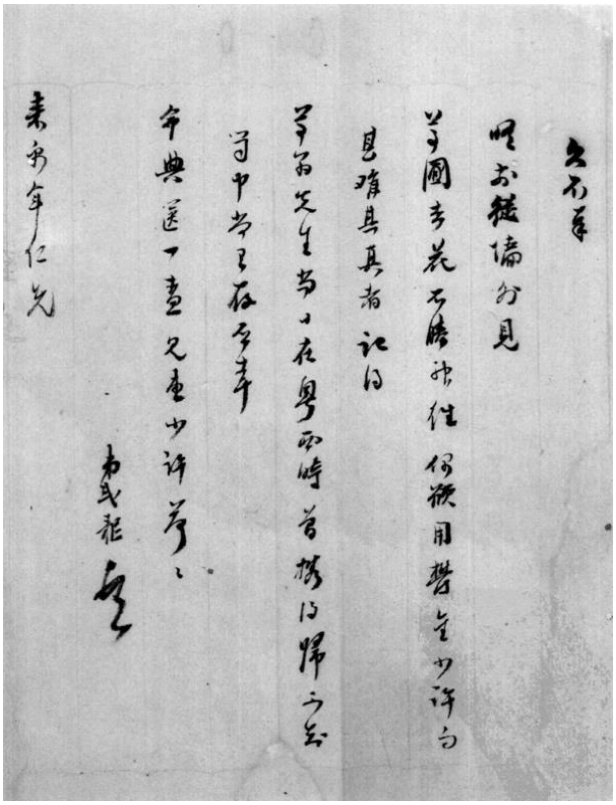
but he still chose this way to compose his letters. Even Gu Yanwu, a Ming loyalist who was once jailed on suspicion of connection to the anti-Qing force, in his twenty-nine letters to Yan Guangmin, seventeen letters consisting of formal cards and subsidiary letters. Only one of them told of his political grievances and others were all about everyday life, trips, and literary activities.[130]

2. Guidance to the early Qing epistolary culture

Despite the fact that the Qing dynasty was founded by an ethnic minority, the Manchus, it had developed its epistolary culture before replacing the Ming dynasty. According to Zhuang Sheng's work, compared to the Han letters, Manchu letters are less literate in their wording and never use *taitou* to show respect for the monarch and the recipient.[131] Although Zhuang's focus is those letters written by Manchu rulers to the Korean government and Ming officials Yuan Chonghuan 袁崇煥 (1584-1630) and Liu Xingzuo 劉興祚 (?-1630), we can surmise from the format and rhetoric of these official letters that private Manchu letters probably carried over similar characteristics, in contrast to the way Han letters were written.

However, in the Southern Ming period, which was also the early Qing period, most correspondents still used the material composition of Ming letters. Around 1645, for example, Qu Shisi wrote a letter to an unknown Southern Ming man and followed the format of the Ming letters. In this letter, when Qu mentioned his recipient, he chose a character, *zun* 尊 (honour), that could show politeness and started a new column to continue his writing, which is *taitou* in the Ming letter format. His way of placing the names of the writer and the recipient was also the same as the Ming letters.

[130] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, pp.174-230.
[131] Zhuang Sheng 莊聲, 'Qingchao ruguan qian wenshu ticai de yanbian' 清朝入關前文書體裁的演變, *Yuanshi ji minzu yu bianjiang yanjiu jikan*, 1 (2018), 227-256.

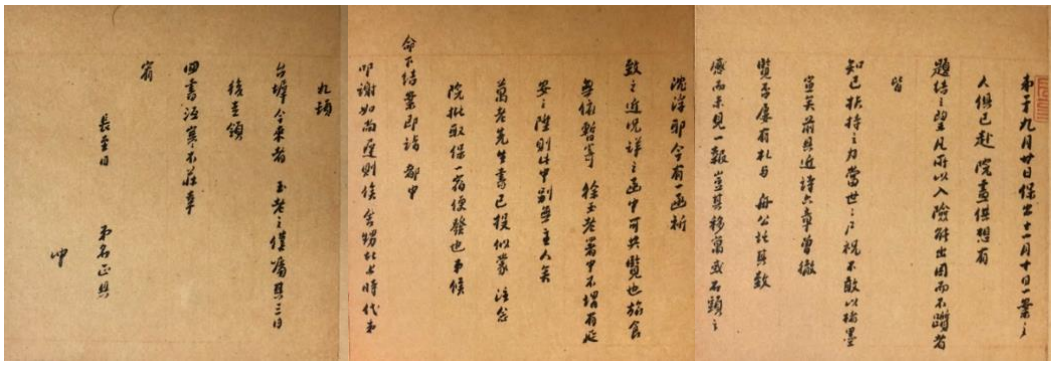


Qu Shisi's Letter[132]

This is a kind of preservation of Ming culture. Such an awareness had profound significance and far-reaching influence in the early Qing period, leading to the continuation of the Ming epistolary culture in the Qing dynasty. Although Qing subjects, especially those born after the 1640s, could obtain letter-writing skills from the late Ming letter collections, the material composition and formats of these collections were not flexible. Letter collections published in the late Ming period provided many useful writing paradigms and elegant terms that could enhance the aesthetic appreciation of the letter texts.[133] However, the commercialisation of these collections would inevitably result in their over-reliance and overuse by learners. This might cause the universal use of those terms that were originally unique, losing their "*huotao* 活套 (flexible replacement)"[134] function that compilers and editors intended to provide. Learning letter-writing skills in the actual letter exchange was a way to break away from rigid paradigms, and those Southern Ming people who had mastered letter-writing skills were suitable "teachers". It was also difficult to draw on the etiquette of composing a letter in the material terms from letter collections—only *The Stationery of Folding the Plum* provided a sample of material composition in the late Ming period.

[132] Qu Shisi, *Qu Shisi shuzha yi* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu 7*, p.147.
[133] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.133).
[134] Feng Menglong, *Zhe meijian* in *Feng Menglong quanji 10*, pp.1-2.

Although, as I will discuss in later chapters, Qing subjects did not correspond with the Southern Ming people only to learn letter-writing skills, we do see that they followed the material composition of the Ming letters. This means that the Southern Ming letters at least provided relatively flexible ways for Qing subjects as guidance. Between 1645 and 1650, Qu Shisi wrote fourteen letters to his relatives and friends in the Qing territory. All of his recipients had changed into Qing clothing and hairstyles under the order of the Qing government. However, like Qu, their correspondence probably still retained the format and material composition of Ming letters. Even in the late Southern Ming period, when the Qing rule of China had stabilised, the Southern Ming people still wrote letters to Qing subjects with the material paradigm of Ming letters. Between 1666 and 1673, Gu Yanwu sent at least twenty-nine letters to Qing official Yan Guangmin, the formal card, the subsidiary letter, *taitou*, *pingque*, the termination phrase, postscripts, and supplements are no different from Ming letters.

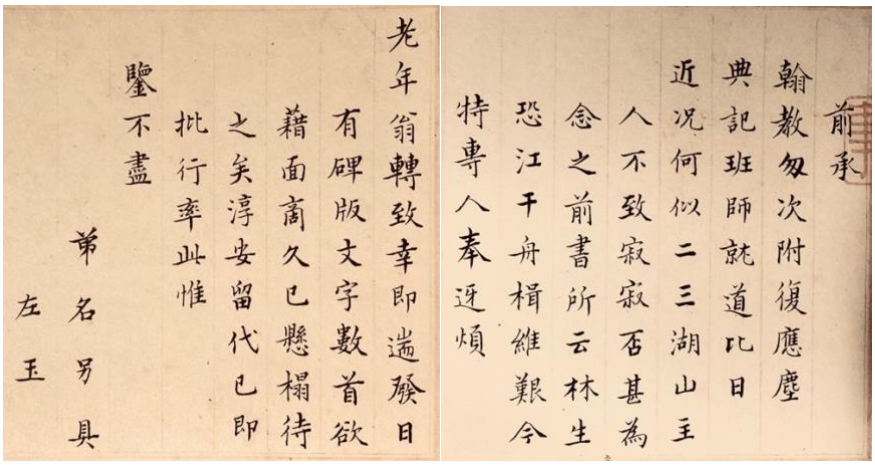


Gu Yanwu's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[135]

Furthermore, perhaps in an attempt to stabilise their rule over the Han people, the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty, despite winning political victories, did not have the ambition to promote Manchu culture in the Han cultural field. On the contrary, they showed a strong willingness to promote Han culture. Unlike the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), who placed the Han people on the lowest social status, the Qing rulers allowed the Han people to serve in the Qing government and continued the Ming imperial examination system for selecting officials. They also promoted Confucianism, making it the official ideology.[136] This allowed the former Ming subjects to dominate the cultural field in the early Qing period. Ming loyalist Gu Yanwu, for example, had a profound influence on the early Qing cultural circle. Gu was a well-known and outstanding scholar and literati, who travelled around and gave lectures in the north. He maintained friendships with many Qing officials through correspondence. Moreover, many early Qing officials were originally Ming subjects, such as Li Zhifang

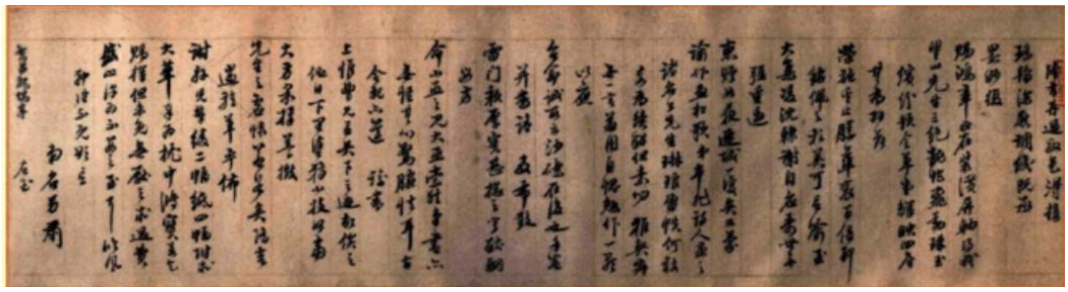
[135] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, pp.209-211.
[136] Jonathan Spence, *The K'ang-his Reign* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 9*, p.179.

李之芳 (1622-1694). He passed the Ming imperial examination in 1642, but in 1647, he again took part in the imperial examination held by the Qing government and thus became a Qing official. In his letters to Yan Guangmin, like Gu Yanwu, Du Jun, and other Southern Ming people, he composed his letter of a formal card and a subsidiary letter, as well as Ming letter formats.



Li Zhifang's Subsidiary Letter to Yan Guangmin[137]

Those Qing subjects who wanted to be recognised by the cultural circle and seek help from original Ming subjects who served the Qing court like Li Zhifang would actively choose to follow their material composition and formats to conduct letter exchanges. Their letters might become models, which expanded the scope of the Ming epistolary culture and enabled more Qing subjects to learn such a paradigm. In 1679, a Qing man Han Wei 韓魏 (1643-?) wrote a letter to Qing official Mei Qing 梅清 (1623-1697) and attached his anthology, hoping to get Mei's comments.[138]

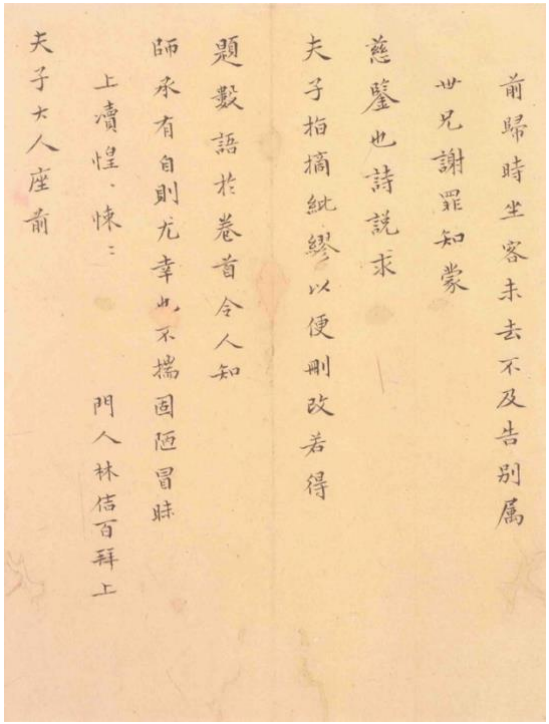


Han Wei's Letter to Mei Qing[139]

The half seal on the right side of this letter shows that this is a subsidiary letter. Not only that, this letter uses the format of *taitou* and a termination phrase "*zuoyu* 左玉",

[137] Li Zhifang, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, pp.36-37.
[138] Han Wei, *Han Wei zhi Mei Qing* in *Xiaomang cangcang zhai cang qingdai xuezhe shuzha* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2013), p.16.
[139] ibid.

which are exactly the same as the Ming letters. Han Wei was born in 1643, and his education was carried out in the early Qing period which made him a Qing subject. According to this letter, however, it is not difficult to infer that he was familiar with the format and material composition of Ming letters. It indicates that the spread of Ming epistolary culture through the Southern Ming letters had guided Qing subjects and become their letter-writing paradigm. Outstanding correspondents in the cultural and political circles were the disseminators and promoters of the Ming epistolary culture, making the evolution of Chinese epistolary culture withstand the disruption of the Ming-Qing transition. Even those who were born in the 1660s, that is, after the Southern Ming regime had completely disappeared in mainland China, Qing subjects still used the Ming material composing method when exchanging letters with each other. A letter written by a Qing man Lin Ji 林佶 (1660-?) is a typical example. The recipient of this letter cannot be verified, but from the letter text, we can speculate that it might be sent to a Qing official who once presided over the Qing imperial examinations. When Lin Ji wrote terms such as "*fuzi* 夫子 (master)" and "*shi* 师 (teacher)" that referred to his recipient, he used the format of *taitou*. His signing method is also the same as that of Qu Shisi's letter manuscript.

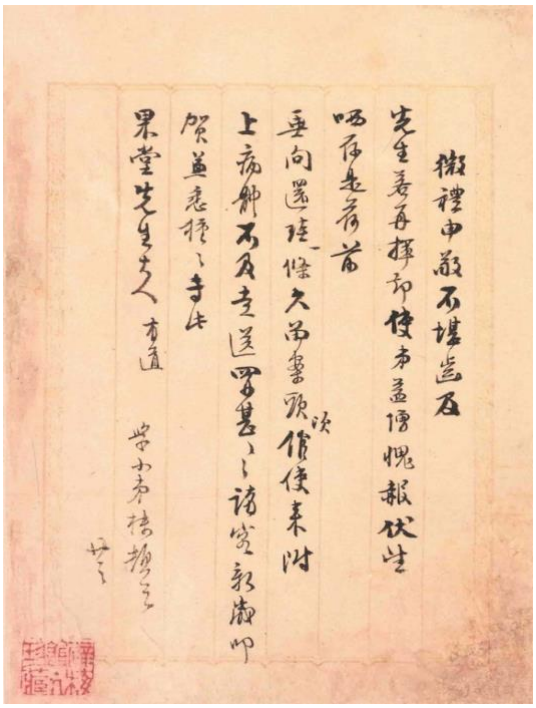


Letter Manuscript of Lin Ji[140]

Not only that, Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697-1758), who was born in 1697, wrote letters to his friend Shen Tong 沈彤, which are similar to the Ming and the Southern Ming letter

[140] *Zhongguo chidu wenxian shang-mingdu qingjian*, p.28.

formats. When referring to his recipient, Hui started a new column to show the etiquette, and the placement of his inscription was also the same.



Letter Manuscript of Hui Dong[141]

All in all, Chinese letters are composed of the material medium for textual information, the text for sending messages, and other material aspects for presenting the writing etiquette and projecting the nature of the relationships between senders and recipients. The material composition of Southern Ming letters simplified the form of the paired letters in the Song dynasty, and it followed the Ming form of the formal card and the subsidiary letter, projecting the consciousness of preserving the Ming epistolary culture. The Southern Ming letters functioned as guidance for Qing subjects to adopt such material composition, prompting Ming epistolary culture to be continued in the Qing dynasty. However, the social situation between 1644 and 1683 fell into relative chaos due to the confrontation between the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun regimes. Territorial competition and frontier checkpoints cut off the originally routes between different regions, causing a serious blow to the delivery of Southern Ming news and thus some Southern Ming correspondents were vilified by rumours. Such situations had a profound impact on the epistolary stages, making the Southern Ming letters become an irreplaceable medium in cross-frontier exchanges, rehabilitating reputations, and spreading nostalgia for the Ming dynasty through publishing letter collections.

[141] ibid, p.38.

Chapter Two

The Epistolary Process and the Ming-Qing Transition

The forty years of the Southern Ming dynasty were a transitional period from the Ming to the Qing dynasty. The turmoil caused by the battles between different regimes and the Qing's replacement of the Ming impacted the epistolary stages of writing, transmission, reception, preservation, circulation, and dissemination. This chapter explores the dynamic interactions between different letter stages and how the Ming-Qing transition and the resulting social situation from turmoil to gradual stability disrupted the normalisation of the Southern Ming epistolary process. I argue that in the early Southern Ming period, the change in the stability of letter delivery was essentially brought about by the war and territorial divisions caused by the tripartite confrontation between the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun armies, which prompted correspondents to presuppose their readership to justify their reputation through their letters. However, in the middle and late Southern Ming periods, the normal letter exchanges that the Southern Ming correspondents craved were provided by the Qing government with its gradual control of the former Ming territory. Furthermore, with the Qing government banning the private publication of Ming-related books, letter collections became an ingenious and safer alternative for those people who intended to preserve Ming culture.

Section One Letter Transmission and Social Stability

The Southern Ming letter-exchanging activities were carried out in a relatively turbulent era. Frequent battles and territorial divisions brought about the uncertainty of social stability, which strongly impacted the fundamental epistolary function of communication. It was more difficult for correspondents to choose a suitable bearer that could reliably deliver their letters. The competition for the Ming territory between different regimes made the delivery routes uncertain and blocked, and letters were at the risk of being lost and intercepted.

1. Barrier and invasion: cross-frontier delivery

Although the stage of letter writing preceded letter transmission, considering the relatively turbulent era of the early Southern Ming period, it is necessary to first pay

attention to the impact of the division of the Ming territory on the letter transmission. It is because it would affect the purpose and method of senders when writing their letters, as well as their selection of recipients. In 1644, there were three opposing regimes in China: the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun. The Ming Beijing government was first broken by the Shun army on 25 April 1644.[1] However, after less than two months, on 6 June, the Qing army defeated the Shun government and gradually took control of northern China.[2] On 19th of the same month, the Southern Ming Hongguang government was established in Nanjing.[3] From then on, the Ming territory was divided into the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun territories. Over the next forty years, the Southern Ming territory continued to shrink from the south to the southwest, which made most of the lost territory under the control of the Qing government, and only a small number of areas were occupied by the Shun army for a short period.

Under such a circumstance, letters could not always be delivered successfully, as everyone who tried to cross the Ming-Qing frontier or the Ming-Shun frontier would be checked. As Southern Ming official Peng Qisheng, who was stationed in Ganzhou in Jiangxi, mentioned in a letter written on 22 May 1646: "When the messenger [who delivered the report to Emperor Longwu] was preparing to return to Wulin, I asked him to take my family letter, ... Unexpectedly, when he arrived in Wulin, my hometown had been occupied by the Qing army, [so] this letter was not delivered. 奏事人去。曾附以家書。……不謂信使赴武林而吾鄉已陷(逆虜)矣。此信遂不得達。"[4] Although Peng did not explain clearly why that letter could not be delivered to his hometown, from his description, we can infer that the territorial division might have driven the Ming and the Qing armies to set up checkpoints at the frontier to prohibit people who served the hostile regimes to pass through. This prompted the Southern Ming correspondents to spend a lot of time on the method of hiding letters, looking for reliable delivery routes, and selecting bearers who might be possible to send letters successfully.[5] The checks on those who would cross the frontiers might be extremely strict, which made private letters that originally only needed to be sealed in envelopes to be hidden in unpredictable ways. In 1647, a letter sent by the family of Qu Shisi was tucked into an umbrella handle by the bearer.[6] Likewise, one of Qu's family letters written between October and November 1648 was sealed in a wax pill.[7]

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[1] Struve, *The Southern Ming*, pp.15-16.
[2] ibid, p.47.
[3] ibid, p.19.
[4] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu*, pp.201-202.
[5] Richter suggests that, since early medieval China, the trustworthiness of bearers has become extremely important. By contrast, the requirements for bearers in the Southern Ming period were not only a matter of trust, but more importantly, whether they could pass through the Ming-Qing frontier. Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.41.
[6] Qu Shisi, *Jichou chun sanyue niansi ri liushou gongshu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, pp.267-268.
[7] ibid, *Wuzi jiuyue shuji*, pp.263-265.

Family letters were at risk of being intercepted as well. On 5 May 1649, Qu Shisi complained that: “Since Jiangxi was re-controlled by the Southern Ming government in the first month of 1648, it has been more difficult to travel in this area, and the checkpoint has become more and more strict. 況自戊子正月，西江反正之後，途路益難，盤詰益緊。”[8] Such a situation drove the Southern Ming correspondents to pay more attention to the selection of routes and bearers. On 27 November 1648, Qu Shisi wrote a letter to his friend Gu Yushu 顧玉書, mentioning that he planned a delivery route that would smoothly travel from Guangxi to his hometown Changshu: “Because of two actions of Jin Shenghuan and Wang Deren, the [Southern] Ming regime has regained control of Jiangxi. If any Jiangxi man who tries to find gaps in the frontier and could travel to Guangdong, [you] can give him your letter and [ask him] to send it to me for a try. If [this post method succeeds and] can frequently exchange letters, we can continue to deliver letters in this way. 茲因金、王兩動，西江反正，江人以間道入粵，遂附之同行，姑且試之。此後若可頻通往來，當續寄也。”[9] Although Qu’s several attempts had ended in failure, we can still see his efforts in the selection of routes and bearers. He dispatched servants (or subordinates) Zhang Ying 張英 and Zhou Yi 周誼, monks, and travellers Luo Zhiyu 羅之煜 to send letters.[10] All these people were carefully selected by Qu because bearers with diverse identities could provide different degrees of possibilities for the successful delivery of letters. Servants or subordinates were loyal to Qu and would try their best to send letters, which can be proven by the fact that Qu’s servant Zhou Yi stayed where the route was blocked and waited for a tiny opportunity to cross the Ming-Qing frontier.[11] As a group that was detached from political restraints, monks had a special status that would gain respect from people of all positions, which allowed them to be less checked when crossing the frontiers. Luo Zhiyu’s hometown was in Jiangxi, and he might be able to pass the inspection more successfully in the name of returning home.

The social instability caused by territorial battles seemed to interrupt the transmission of letters and impact the performance of its role as a communication tool, but to a certain extent, such instability magnified the information exchange function of the Southern Ming letters in the political field. In other words, between 1644 and 1652, the Southern Ming letters played a more crucial role at the political level. Although judging by the epistolary process, sending a letter from the Southern Ming territory to the Shun or the Qing territory only finished a normal epistolary stage of letter delivery, its function of

[8] ibid, *Jichou chun sanyue niansi ri liushou gongshu ji*, p.267.
[9] ibid, *Yu gu yushu shouzha sifeng (si)*, p.277.
[10] ibid, *Jichou chun sanyue niansi ri liushou gongshu ji*, pp.267-268.
[11] ibid, p.267.

exchanging military and political information in different territories would put this letter at risk of being looted after entering the Shun or the Qing territory. In the perspective of the Qing and the Shun regimes, the information a Southern Ming letter conveyed made it valuable, as it was sent from the Southern Ming territory or was exchanged between the Southern Ming correspondents, which might contain governmental topics of the Southern Ming court. In his letter written on 5 May 1649, Qu Shisi mentioned that one of his family letters had been intercepted by a Shun general.

> [Pan Zhong] came from my hometown on 26 September and arrived at Baoqing in the eleventh month [of this year]. Then he was caught by Hanyang Marquis Wang Jincai. Wang was going to kill Pan with the excuse that Pan did not have an officially approved ticket for travel. Pan had no choice but took out my family letter from the handle of his umbrella. However, even though Wang had my family letter, Pan Zhong was still in custody for three months. It happened that the Military officer Wu Qilei sent a letter to the governor and clearly explained everything, then reluctantly letting Pan back, but they still refused to release my family letter. Pan Zhong is from the Chu area. Although he lived in my house for several months, how could he know everything about my family or relatives?
> [潘忠]八月二十日自家中來。十一月到寶慶。爲漢陽侯王進才獲住。以身無炤票。[12]幾欲殺之。不得已。乃從傘柄中取出家書示之。而彼既留家書。並羈管潘忠不放。凡三個月。而適有兵科吳其雷遣人送書堵制臺。認識明白。乃勉強放歸。究竟家書仍不肯發。潘忠。楚人也。雖住吾家幾月。而家中一切大小事情。並眷屬人口。彼烏知之。 [13]

Pan Zhong carried Qu's family letters and set off from Changshu to Guilin 桂林 in 1649, but was eventually arrested in Baoqing 寶慶 Prefecture in Huguang which was stationed by the Shun general Wang Jincai.[14] Although Pan was finally released, Qu's family letter was detained. According to the last sentence of Qu Shisi's complaint, it is clear that Wang Jincai withheld this letter and the bearer Pan Zhong for finding out who Qu's relatives were (because they had become Qing subjects) and what happened in

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[12] I did not find any historical record of "*zhaopiao* 炤票". Based on the contents of this letter, it might be a form of official approval for travel. In the Ming dynasty, anyone who left his or her hometown beyond a hundred *li* (50 kilometres) was required a government route certificate. "*Zhaopiao*" was probably one of such route certificate. Li Dongyang and Shen Shixing, *Daming huidian* (1587 Woodblock Edition), p.167.2a; Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8*, p.619.

[13] Qu Shisi, *Qu Shisi chidu* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu*, pp.148-149.

[14] Wang Jincai had already cooperated with the Southern Ming regime in 1649, and he was granted the title of Xiangyang Marquis 襄陽侯 by Emperor Yongli. The "Hanyang Marquis" written in this letter should be a clerical error. Huang Weiping, *Dashun shigao*, pp.331-332.

Qu's hometown (as it had occupied by the Qing army).

Qu's family letters were intercepted by the Qing regime as well. Judging by his letters written between 1644 and 1650, he lost at least three family letters in the Qing territory. In one of his letters, Qu complained:

> On 3 April this year, there was a person called Pan Zhong from Wugang who travelled from Changshu. According to his description, you said to him that a monk carried my letter, but this letter was snatched away. I do not believe it! How could there be any accident [in the short distance] between Nanjing and my hometown when letters had been handed over to Xing Kun?
> 乃今年二月廿二日，有武岡人潘忠者，自嘗熟來，據云：汝曾語彼，僧人寄書被人搶去。吾不信也！豈有書既交邢坤之手，只南京到家，反有有差池之理乎？[15]

Although Qu's letter sent by a monk had passed the checkpoint of the Ming-Qing frontier, it was snatched after being handed over to another bearer called Xing Kun in Nanjing. Nanjing and Qu's hometown Changshu were in the same province and had become the Qing territory since the summer of 1645.[16] Qu was a key figure in the Yongli government who had led the army to defeat the Qing's offensive three times in 1647.[17] The Qing government could not catch him but could supervise or even threaten his family members living in Qing territory. In September 1648, Qu's house in Changshu was searched by the Qing government, and his family members were intimidated.[18] In this case, it is reasonable to speculate that the delivery of his family letters might have been secretly monitored by the Qing government. Once his letters, which might record the military and political secrets of the Southern Ming court, entered the Qing territory, they would have the possibility to be intercepted. This speculation can also be confirmed in a letter sent on 7 April 1646, written by Ming loyalist Hou Qizeng to his friend Yang Tingshu. Hou told Yang about the living conditions and literary works of some Ming loyalists. Before finishing this letter, he particularly added: "These sentences must not be spread out, and you must immediately destroy this letter as soon as you have read it. 此等语不敢浪传笔墨，一见即毁之。"[19] After the Qing regime took control of Hou's hometown Songjiang in 1645, he secretly

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15 Qu Shisi, *Jichou chun sanyue niansi ri liushou gongshu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.267.
16 Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p.19.
17 Qu Guoxing, *Qu Shisi nianpu*, pp.79, 86, 93.
18 Qu Shisi's family members were eventually secretly protected by the Qing official Hong Chengchuo 洪承疇 (1593-1665), who passed the imperial examination in the same year as Qu Shisi in the late Ming period. Qu Guoxing, *Qu Shisi nianpu*, pp.109-110.
19 Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, p.498.

supported the Southern Ming government to oppose the Qing court. He asked Yang, who was also involved in the activities against the Qing, to burn the letter because he knew that their letters might be intercepted by the Qing government. Thus, Hou's example can explain why Qu Shisi's letters were delivered from west to east and passed the Ming-Qing frontier successfully but were lost after entering the Qing territory.

Letters written by the Southern Ming correspondents were not only of great significance to the Qing regime but more importantly, they connected the message transmission between the Southern Ming people in different regions and became an irreplaceable medium for correspondents to carry out military and political activities. This made those Southern Ming letters written with political news that crossed the Ming-Qing frontier or secretly exchanged in the Qing territory circulate among relatives and friends of both senders and recipients after completing the stages of transmission and reception. This will be discussed in the next section.

2. The restoration of letter transmission in the Qing territory

Until around 1649, Qu Shisi was still looking for routes and bearers who could deliver letters successfully, but his hometown had been under the Qing rule since as early as 1646. It had gradually begun to move towards a stable social situation which enabled people to resume normal social activities.

On 28 October 1646, Qu Shisi wrote to his family and said: "The situation in my hometown is probably rather peaceful this year. There are also rumours here that [the crops] in the south are growing very well, the price of rice is especially cheap, and the people there are fine. However, I do not understand how they could be willing to shave their hair after gaining three hundred years of grace from Emperor Hongwu 洪武帝 (1328-1398) [of the Ming dynasty]? 家中光景，想今年反覺太平，此間亦有傳來謂南方甚熟，米價甚賤，人民反相安，只未知三百年受太祖高皇帝之隆恩，何以甘心薙髮？"[20] He knew that under the rule of the Qing court, the southeast area had already avoided most of the wars, and people's lives were relatively peaceful. This provided the most critical guarantee for letter delivery, which is also manifested in the re-emergence of the records of the non-governmental industry with letter delivery service named *baofang* 報房 (private newspaper houses and official newspaper offices) in this region, and the restoration of confidence for epistolary transmission among correspondents.

[20] Qu Shisi, *Bingxu jiuyue er'shi ri shuji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.253.

The private industry of newspaper houses can be traced back to the Song dynasty. A Song man Zhao Sheng 赵升 recorded in *Chaiye leiyao* 朝野類要 (*Court and Folk Encyclopaedia*) that "the so-called court investigations, provincial investigations, and government investigations, are all eager in compiling brief news personally. Presumably, there is a ban on leaking such secrets, hence reconditely calling them news. 其有所謂內探、省探、衙探之類，皆衷私小報，率有漏洩之禁，故隱而號之曰新聞。"[21] In the late Ming period, privately written brief news gradually evolved into an industry combining disseminating news, messages, and particularly, letter delivery. According to Timothy Brook, it was not until the 1660s that private newspaper houses provided letter delivery service,[22] however, as I will demonstrate below, this service had been around since at least the 1620s—before the Ming fall. Although there is no exact record explaining why the letter delivery was provided by private newspaper houses, we can speculate several possible reasons from its business nature and post methods among ordinary Ming people. The law of the Ming dynasty stipulated that no private letter could be sent by *yizhan* 驛站 (the official post station), but only servants, friends, relatives, monks, or travellers could deliver such letters.[23] Staffs of private newspaper houses, as an intermediary who had been engaged in transcribing news and messages from various regions and then reselling them to other areas in a short period of time, were likely to have more familiarity with the traffic routes in different regions than ordinary people, such as roads, routes, waterways, and secret shortcuts. It provided the possibility of conducting the letter delivery business. After the staff of these houses completed the news transcription in one place, they could take the private letters along the way and send them to another.

Records of the epistolary business in the Ming dynasty are few. I have only found brief descriptions in three letters of the Ming official Yao Ximeng 姚希孟 (1579-1636), which were all written from 1621 to 1630: "I sent a letter through the private newspaper

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[21] Zhao Sheng, *Chaoye leiyao* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 050* (Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), p.4.8a.

[22] Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1999), p.189.

[23] According to the stipulations in *Daming huidian* 大明會典 (Code of the Ming): "Regulations in the twenty-sixth year of the Hongwu Regin, all official horse watering stations and delivery offices are only for delivering messengers, rapid reporting on military information, and transferring military supplies. 洪武二十六年定，凡天下水馬驛、遞運所，專一遞送使客、飛報軍情、轉運軍需等項。" However, Richter believes that in early medieval China, although the government forbade official couriers to deliver private letters, it might have been common for the official postal system to send private letters. Brook also points out that in the late Ming period, official couriers would sometimes deliver private letters, even if the court did not allow it. The same was true in the Southern Ming period. Peng Qisheng, mentioned earlier, was the one who asked the official courtier to deliver his family letter but failed. Nonetheless, throughout the ways of letter transmission during the Southern Ming period, this phenomenon was a minority, and most private letters were delivered through unofficial means. Li Dongyang and Shen Shixing, *Daming huidian*, p.145.1a; Richter, *Letters and Epistolary Culture in Early Medieval China*, p.32; Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8*, p.640.

house, and [I] guess it had arrived. 有一書付報房，想已到矣。”[24] This letter was sent in 1630 to his family. Yao was originally from Wuxian 吳縣 in Suzhou and took a Ming official position in the capital Beijing in the 1620s.[25] The letters he sent by private newspaper houses were all delivered to his hometown, and his recipients were either officials or family members living there. According to Yao's records, it can be deduced that such houses had provided a service of letter exchanges since at least the late Ming period primarily between the southeast areas and the capital Beijing.

However, after the collapse of the Beijing government in 1644, the southeast area struggled with wars and chaos, causing these houses to be unable to provide normal letter delivery services to the public. With the control and domination of this area by the Qing regime in 1645, society gradually began to be restored, and the records of private newspaper houses reappeared in family letters of a Ming loyalist Wang Shimin on 24 August 1666.

> [I] have not received your letter for a long time and am very worried about you. So I will again [go to] Zou's private newspaper house and send this letter. It is estimated that there will be no problem [with the delivery].
> 因久不得汝信，懸挂之極，故復從鄒報房郵寄此信，想當無誤。[26]

During this year, Wang Shimin wrote ten letters to his fifth son Wang Bian 王抃, who went to Beijing to take the Qing imperial examination, and at least four of these letters were delivered through private newspaper houses—probably the "Zou's newspaper house" he mentioned. Wang lived in his hometown Taicang in Suzhou, which was the same prefecture as Yao Ximeng's hometown. It means that such houses in the southeast area had resumed normal operations under the rule of the Qing dynasty at least since 1666. Furthermore, in another letter written on 10 October of the same year, Wang said that "the private newspaper house does not allow people to send [a letter with] a lot of sheets of paper 以報房不能多寄紙札",[27] which suggests that these houses might have had rules for their epistolary service. They set a certain limit on the amount of stationery in one letter, although Wang did not specify the maximum number of sheets that could be sent. Throughout Wang Shimin's descriptions, we can see his trust in delivering letters by private newspaper houses. Although it was not an universal choice to deliver a letter through such houses as their business scope might have restrictions, their businesses still continued to operate because people living in the southeast and

[24] Yao Ximeng, *Gengwu zijin jijia* in *Wenyuan ji* (Mingdai chongzhen nianjian da yintang kanben), p.27.25b.
[25] *Yao Ximeng zhuan* in *Mingshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), pp.3813-3814.
[26] Wang Shimin, *Bingwu (liu)* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.172.
[27] ibid, p.181.

Beijing areas had resumed their social activities. Compared with other methods of letter transmission, private newspaper houses were relatively complex, because the delivery process probably involved multiple people: the front desk receiver who handled letter delivery service, the long-distance bearer, the receiver at the office at the recipient's location, and the bearer who finally reached the recipient. Therefore, the recovery of this business can also indicate that other simple post methods such as sending letters by servants, friends, relatives, monks, and travellers, might also have been restored to normal long before these houses restarted their operations in the Qing territory.[28]

Nonetheless, it was not just the private newspaper house that was called *baofang* in this period. The *titang* 提塘 (Official Newspaper Office) which operated by the imperial court was also referred to as the *baofang* because it delivered official documents, decrees, and *dibao* 邸報 (gazettes).[29] It probably also secretly provided the illegal business of delivering private letters to Qing officials. In 1665, Ming loyalist Gu Yanwu bought a house in Zhangqiu 章丘 in Shandong.[30] After several years, he decided to ask the magistrate of Zhangqiu to rent it out and sent a letter to his nephew Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1631-1694) to help him request the rental certificate. "When you arrive in Beijing 吾甥到京," he wrote, "please write a letter [to the magistrate] for me and send it through the official newspaper office. 幸爲我特作一書致之，從提塘發去。"[31] Xu Qianxue was a Qing official, so it was possible for him to send private letters through official newspaper offices, but for ordinary people, it seemed difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, from the very few historical records, we cannot conclude that the *baofang* mentioned by the Southern Ming correspondents were undoubtedly private. What Wang Shimin talked about was obviously the private one, as he had specifically pointed out its owner's surname, Zou. In comparison, the situation of Gu Yanwu is relatively complicated. In the late spring of 1673, before leaving Beijing,[32] Gu wrote a letter to Yan Guangmin, a Qing official in Beijing, saying that his family letters could be delivered through *baofang*.

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[28] Showing examples of publishers collecting letters in the 1660s, Brook argues that by the early Qing period, there was already a degree of confidence that private correspondence could reach its destination. Brook, *Communications and Commerce* in *The Cambridge History of China vol. 8*, p.641.

[29] In the Qing dynasty, official newspaper offices opened *baofang* where they were stationed. During the Shunzhi 順治 (1644-1661) and Kangxi 康熙 reign periods (1662-1722), the term *baofang* had not been used in official decrees. It was not until 1763 of the Qianlong 乾隆 reign period (1736-1799) that it was officially used in the *Daqing huidian* 大清會典 (Code of the Qing). However, it is likely that ordinary people also called these offices *baofang*, as they were set up to copy gazettes. This will also be evidenced by the example of Gu Yanwu below. Huang Zhuoming 黃卓明, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan* 中國古代報紙探源 (Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1983), p.109; Liu Wenpeng 劉文鵬, 'Qingdai titang kao' 清代提塘考, *Qingshi yanjiu*, 4 (2007), 87-91 (p.89).

[30] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.46.

[31] Gu Yanwu, *Da Yuanyi sheng* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.244.

[32] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.66.

> If there is a letter sent to me, please deliver it to the Li residence in the north of Dezhou. The family letter can be sent through the newspaper office, it will arrive in three or four days.
> 如有札寄示，乞寫德州北李宅，家報付報房封遞，三四日可達。[33]

This *baofang* might be private, because Dezhou is in Shandong, and the route from Beijing to Suzhou must pass through Shandong. A private newspaper house would be probably opened in Shandong as a place for its messengers to rest, eat, and conduct other business during their travels. This speculation can be corroborated by another letter written by Gu Yanwu. Around 1663, Gu addressed to the Qing official Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1619-1683), who was living in Ningguo Prefecture 寧國府 (modern Anhui), and said: "I have moved to Huaxia, [you] can send letters [to me] to Huayin newspaper office. 弟已移寓華下，嗣音可寄華陰報房。"[34] *Huaxia* is another name for Huaxian 華縣 in Shaanxi, which is located in the west of Huayin. Gu moved to Huaxian in 1663, if he sent this letter through the private newspaper house, he would most likely say "*baofang*" or mention its surname as Wang Shimin did because there might be more than one such house opened in the same county. However, he particularly chose a county's name to refer to the *baofang*, which means that it might be the one operated by the Qing government.[35]

Gu Yanwu's letters show that after at least 1663, the government-run newspaper office had resumed the business of delivering letters. Not only that, but it also got the trust of the Southern Ming correspondents in terms of reliability and timely manner of delivery. Gu Yanwu had a great deal of confidence in sending letters through official newspaper offices, and he was not anxious or worried about whether his letters would be lost. In his letter to Yan Guangmin which was quoted above, Gu mentioned that its bearers would only take three to four days to travel from Beijing to Dezhou. In the letter to his nephew Xu Qianyuan, Gu told Xu that his letters had been sent from the official newspaper office and that Xu would pick it up whenever he was available.[36]

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[33] Gu Yanwu, *Yu Yan Xiulai shouzha* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.295.
[34] Gu Yanwu, *Yu Shi Yushan* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 43-jiangshan yong cankao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), p.2.6b.
[35] According to Ge Gongzhen's study, *Ronglutang* 榮祿堂 (The Room of Honour and Money), a paper shop in Beijing in the early Qing period, set up a private newspaper house outside the Zhengyang Gate 正陽門 to transcribe and sell gazettes. This house was probably named by the owner himself, such as *Ronglutang* or the owner's family name. Huang Zhuoming also points out that in the Qing dynasty, there were many private newspaper houses in Beijing. Each of them with its own name, such as *Juxing baofang* 聚兴报房 (Newspaper House of Gathering Prosper), *Jiwen baofang* 集文报房 (Newspaper House of Gathering Literary Talent), and *Duji baofang* 杜记报房 (Du's Newspaper House). This shows that if it was a private newspaper house, it would use other names rather than the name of the city or the town. Ge Gongzhen 戈公振, *Zhongguo baoxue shi* 中國報學史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), p.29; Huang Zhuoming, *Zhongguo gudai baozhi tanyuan*, p.168.
[36] Gu Yanwu, *Da Yuanyi sheng* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.244.

A successful letter exchange depended on both the social connection between people and territorial stability. Although the Southern Ming correspondents were still adherent to the Ming identity, they never refused to carry out their letter exchanges in a stabilised society provided by the Qing regime. It might be because the Southern Ming correspondents and Qing subjects were deeply tied in the inextricable social bonds. Many of their relatives and friends served the Qing court after 1644, and they could not completely sever ties with them. For instance, Gu Yanwu's nephews, Xu Qianxue, Xu Bingyi 徐秉義 (1633-1711), and Xu Yuanwen 徐元文 (1634-1691) all achieved a top three position in the Qing imperial examinations and then became the Qing officials, but Gu never cut off his kinship with them because of the different political stance. Moreover, as I will discuss in the next section, the interrupted information exchanges in the early Southern Ming period caused great hindrance and damage to their lives and reputations. Such difficulties prompted them to yearn for a stable living environment, which was not achieved by the Southern Ming regime, but the Qing's control of the hometowns of the Southern Ming correspondents and recovery of the activities in the fields of politics, economy, culture, and so on.

Section Two　Letter Circulation Generated by Territorial Division

The information exchanged by the Southern Ming letters was not only delivered to a specific recipient but to many other people in the common social circle of the sender and the recipient. As Qu Shisi said in his family letter written in February 1647: "I should send letters to my relatives and friends, but it is difficult to deliver them. You can tell them all the affairs I have written about in this letter. 吾于至親至友，理應各寄數行，而爲途中難以攜帶。汝只得將我書中顛委，具以告之。"[37] The blocked routes due to the territorial division and the scrutiny of the Qing or the Shun checkpoints to bearers caused difficulties in the letter transmission from one territory to another. It drove the Southern Ming correspondents to send less letters but circulate delivered letters in a broader readership.

Expanding the readership could reduce the information blockage in the Qing territories. Since 1645, with the Qing's occupation of the Ming territory from the southeast to the southwest, some Southern Ming people gradually became Ming loyalists living in the Qing territory. Simultaneously, the Qing court regarded the Southern Ming regime as "*weichao* 偽朝 (illegitimate regime)"[38], which suppressed the possibility for Ming

[37] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue zaishu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.262.
[38] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2016), p.319.

loyalists to publicly talk about the Southern Ming affairs or conduct activities in support of this regime, as these would expose them to political persecution from the Qing government. Thus, the channel through which they could obtain relevant news and messages was extremely limited. In this case, those letters conveying the Southern Ming military and political affairs became the irreplaceable media. Especially between 1644 and 1652, many correspondents were loyal to the Southern Ming government but scattered all over China. Their letters carried significant information on whether the Southern Ming regime could continue the rule of the Ming dynasty. In the summer of 1645, when the Qing army was about to break into Songjiang, the local Southern Ming correspondent Hou Tongzeng wrote to his friend Huang Chunyao 黃淳耀 (1605-1645), who was supporting the Southern Ming regime:

> [I] send you a letter from Yang Wencong that [I] just received. The important things are the same as what you said, but [I] never heard [such things could happen in reality]. ... Return Wencong's letter to [me] immediately after you read it, as [I] want to send it to Xia Yunyi.
> 適接楊龍友一緘呈覽，要皆彼法中語，然可謂聞所未聞也。……龍友札覽畢即見還，欲寄與瑗公耳。[39]

Hou Tongzeng received a letter from the Southern Ming official Yang Wencong 楊文驄 (1596-1646), he lamented to Huang Chunyao that he was shocked by the news written in this letter. Although Hou did not specify exactly what affairs Yang's letter conveyed, judging from his actions in sending this letter to Huang Chunyao and Xia Yunyi who were participating in anti-Qing activities around Suzhou and Songjiang, we can speculate that the topic of this letter should be related to Southern Ming military and political affairs. The original recipient of this letter was Hou Tongzeng, but it was also delivered to two additional recipients. In the period of territorial division and regime confrontation, the Southern Ming letters changed their fundamental dyadic transmission between a sender and a recipient. They were circulated among a broader readership under the joint action of senders and recipients to reduce the possible impact of message blocking.

Circulated letters connected those correspondents who were loyal to the Southern Ming regime but lived in different areas and territories. Yang Wencong's letter connected Hou Tongzeng, Huang Chunyao, Xia Yunyi, and perhaps other relatives and friends that Hou did not mention, such as his sons and nephews, or his younger brother Hou Qizeng.

[39] Hou Tongzeng, *Yu Huang Taoan jinshi shu* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58-hou zhongjie gong quanji*, p.9.5b.

While establishing a link for information exchanges, these letters helped correspondents establish political connections. In the early Southern Ming period, it was dangerous to carry out activities against the Qing regime in the southeast. The Qing army occupied this area in the summer of 1645, driving many local Ming loyalists to flee from there and scatter in different regions. On 28 February 1646, Hou Qizeng wrote in his diary: "Now [people who secretly supported the Southern Ming government] were worried that their whereabouts would be exposed, [so they] only wrote letters on a small piece of bamboo paper every day and night to exchange information secretly. 時惟恐聲跡少露，朝夕密通往來，止裁竹紙一小幅。"[40] In this case, circulating one letter among more readers to share the Southern Ming news might be frequently like Hou Tongzeng did after receiving Yang Wencong's letter. In 1647, Xia Yunyi's son Xia Wanchun, Hou Tongzeng's youngest son Hou Xuanzhen 侯玄瀞, and Hou Qizeng's co-father-in-law Gu Xianzheng 顧咸正 handed over letters to Xie Yaowen 謝堯文 and Sun Long 孫龍, who specialised in secret contacts with the Southern Ming army in the east sea area of Zhejiang.[41] According to Hou Tongzeng's letter discussed above, it can be speculated that their collective action had a large possibility to be completed under the combined effect of letter circulation. A letter that conveyed the information about contacting the Southern Ming Navy might be circulated among Ming loyalists to gather anti-Qing fighters. They used letters to update the Southern Ming news in a timely manner. Such a letter functioned as a central medium for political communication among Ming loyalists who lived in the Qing territory and shared secret support for the Southern Ming regime.

The awareness of the possible circulation of the Southern Ming letters would prompt their writers to choose a writing method that various topics needed to be taken into account. This is evident in Qu Shisi's letters to his relatives and friends living in the southeast area during his garrison in Guilin. In two of his family letters, Qu expressed his willingness to circulate letters among relatives and friends. One of them was written on 27 November 1648. Qu asked his friend Gu Linsheng 顧麟生 to share this letter with Xiaotong 小童, Jianwu 肩吾, and Junhong 君鴻 who might be their common friends, and he also told Gu to read the letter he sent to his eldest son.[42] Such a willingness prompted Qu Shisi to enrich the types of topics in one letter. While reporting safety to his family, Qu wrote extensively on military deployments and political strategies of the Yongli government and analysed the various situations the court would face in the southwest.

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[40] Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, p.486.
[41] Gu Cheng, *Nanming shi*, p.332.
[42] Qu Shisi, *Yu Gu Yushu shouzha sifeng (si)* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.277.

This letter contains seven topics: (1) military and political affairs of the Southern Ming regime after Qu left his hometown and served in the Yongli government; (2) Qu explained why he thought that Guilin was relatively peaceful and complained that those villains were alarmists, which made Emperor Yongli always frightened and wanted to flee; (3) Qu signed with emotions that he often encountered disasters in Guilin; (4) Qu complained that he had to fight against more bandits and rebels than the Qing army in the past two years; (5) the travel of Emperor Yongli; (6) Qu lamented his hardships after 1644 and believed that these experiences improved his knowledge; (7) Qu mentioned correspondence with family and friends and asked his recipient to show this letter to them. We can see that Qu Shisi intended to use this letter to convey more information about the Southern Ming affairs to his southeast relatives and friends, and he also attached his feelings and mindsets after experiencing these affairs. All his fourteen family letters in the early Southern Ming period include various topics. From Southern Ming military operations and the attitude of Emperor Yongli to his complaints, Qu almost recorded everything he saw, heard, and felt during his lifetime in serving the Yongli government. Although Qu's family lived in the Qing territory, most of them were Ming loyalists. Whether they were people who secretly supported the Southern Ming regime, or they were worried about Qu Shisi who was their family member and was confronting the Qing army, such situations would make them concerned about the Southern Ming affairs in the southwest region. However, the only way they could get the relevant news was from Qu's family letters. Although Qu only told his recipients to show letters to others in two of his family letters, we can infer that his willingness might prompt the circulation of his other letters among a broader readership of Ming loyalists in the southeast.

Section Three Reader Presupposition for Rehabilitating Reputation

The poor information delivery caused by the confrontation between the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun regimes impacted the reputation of the Southern Ming correspondents. Amid the hampered delivery of news and messages, it was more difficult to distinguish authentic from fake news because they were passed on by word of mouth or hearsay. Such information did not present the whole picture of a matter and would affect the judgment of senders and recipients of social affairs. Changeable news led to rumours, which made some Southern Ming correspondents to be slandered. In 1644, when the Ming Beijing government was overrun by the Shun army, some original Ming subjects who lived there were accused of defecting to the Shun regime. After escaping from Beijing, they either heard the rumour about themselves or suffered

slander and imprisonment because of it. Such gossip caused by a lack of access to more reliable information prompted the Southern Ming correspondents to justify themselves and clarify the truth through letter exchanges.

In order to express grievances to a broader readership, the Southern Ming correspondents would thoughtfully select their recipients. A case in point is Ming loyalist Fang Yizhi. Fang was captured by the Shun army in 1644 when it invaded Beijing.[43] He soon fled to Nanjing but was reprimanded by Ruan Dacheng for not being a Ming martyr, and Ruan intended to list him as a rebel.[44] Since then, Fang had to flee to southwest China, but he never gave up defending himself. He wrote letters to at least five addressees between 1645 and 1649, including Qing official Li Wen 李雯 (1609-1647), Ming loyalist Zhang Zilie 張自烈 (1597-1673), and Southern Ming officials Jin Bao 金堡 (1614-1680), Cheng Yuan 程源, and Zhu Tianlin 朱天麟, telling them about what he suffered during his time in Beijing and how he was framed and excluded by the officials of the Hongguang government. Judging from his recipients, we can find that they covered two identities in the late Ming and early Qing period: Qing subjects and the Southern Ming people (including the Southern Ming officials and Ming loyalists). This means that Fang had carefully selected his recipients to defend himself against his grievances. His motivation for sending letters to Qing subjects—most of them were his friends—was to prove his pure Ming loyalism to those original Ming subjects but served the Qing court after 1644. Even though he was politically hostile to the Qing regime, he did not hope to be seen by this regime as someone who had betrayed the Ming dynasty. The purpose of choosing to express grievances to the Southern Ming officials and Ming loyalists was because Fang identified himself as a Ming subject, that is to say, he considered himself a member of the Southern Ming people. If everyone in this group believed that he had served the Shun regime, he would never be recognised. It also explains why the number of letters he wrote to the Southern Ming people was more than those to Qing subjects.

As Nestor suggests, the letter form enables the hypothesis of a dialogue,[45] the Southern Ming correspondents meticulously chose and designed those topics, characters, and phrases that could maximise the sympathy and understanding of their recipients to justify their reputation.[46] In a letter sent to Zhang Zilie, Fang Yizhi defended himself

[43] Fang Shuwen, *Fang Yizhi xiansheng nianpu*, p.103.
[44] ibid, pp.104-107.
[45] Nestor, 'New Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Self-Fashioning', (p.23).
[46] In his study of autobiographical letters in early China, Matthew Wells argues that letter writers would use rhetorical strategies to craft self-images at crucial moments in life. Matthew Wells, 'Captured in Words: Functions and Limits of Autobiographical Expression in Early Chinese Epistolary Literature', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, pp.622-642.

by recounting in detail his hardships after 1644.

> Even if I die ten thousand times, I would never do such a humiliating thing in Beijing. Everyone who has returned from the north knows [that I will definitely do so]. At that time, Mi Shoudu, Han Lin, and Wang Zibai all saw me [at the cost of] abandoning my wife and children and fleeing to the south to tell the generals about the situation of the Shun army. I went to Nanjing in the fifth month. Ruan Dacheng took control of government affairs in September and slandered me, a chaste woman, as a prostitute. What calumny! What calumny! Ah, the hatred Ruan had towards me as someone from the same prefecture made him always hold grudges in his heart. … In 1638, literati like Gu Gao and Wu Yingji, who were from the same poetry society in Suzhou Prefecture, regarded Ruan as the leader of the rebellion and exposed him. He thought it was me who did this. ... Once [Ruan Dacheng] took control of [the Hongguang] government affairs, … he wanted to kill all the good men and outstanding literati, and how he could just kill me? … Although people were afraid of his arrogance when I was treated unjustly, all of them sighed secretly, thinking that [I had suffered] an extraordinary injustice. … When Wu Bangce was arrested and imprisoned by Ruan, Ruan tried to force him to perjury himself so as to have me killed. However, Wu still did not stop telling the truth even though both his ankles were broken. ... This is really a strange thing, so I am suffering an extraordinary injustice for thousands of years.
>
> 智萬死不屈於北都，北來之人無不人人知者。當時米吉土、韓雨公、汪子白諸人所親見，決我棄妻子南奔，告諸督鎮以賊狀。五月至南都，九月阮大鋮用事，而節婦詈爲淫婦矣，冤哉冤哉！嗟乎，同郡之仇，君所夙恨。……戊寅歲，吳下同社顧子方、吳次尾輩，以其爲逆黨之魁宿而揭之，彼以爲出自我，……一旦柄用，……欲盡殺天下善人名士，何獨於智？……然弟被無妄時，人雖畏懾虐焰，然無不暗中太息，以爲奇冤也。……吳邦策逮下北獄，必欲左證殺智，然至兩踝斷，而正論不撓。弟何以得此？要之事久論定，公道人心自在也。……此真千古一奇事，故智受千古一奇冤耳。[47]

This letter is about a thousand characters in length but only focuses on expressing Fang's grievances. He chose the topic of telling his sufferings of being severely tortured by the Hongguang government. The characters and phrases he used were full of grief

[47] Fang Yizhi, *Ji Zhang Er'gong shu* in *Fushan wenji* (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 2014), pp.266-268.

and anger, which could arouse readers' sympathy. First, he stated that he was wronged and then elaborated that Ruan Dacheng deliberately framed himself for joining the Shun regime as there was hatred between them. He chose a strong tone to describe his loyalty to the Ming dynasty, as well as his support for the Southern Ming regime. Then he narrated in detail the tragedy he suffered after leaving Nanjing, telling Zhang Zilie that he never shaved his hair or dressed as a Qing man although he experienced a lot of hardships. Eventually, he emphasised that he would be loyal to the Southern Ming dynasty from beginning to end. If making a close reading of this letter, we can see that Fang used the word "*yuan* 冤 (treat unjustly)" four times and wrote "*ku* 苦 (suffering)" seven times to show that he was in great misfortunes both physically and mentally because of the injustice he was treated, and the destruction of his family and dynasty he suffered. He specifically selected characters and phrases that could gain sympathy and resonance from his recipient, such as "*qixue* 泣血 (crying bloody)", "*wansi* 萬死 (ten thousand of death)", "*tongxin* 痛心 (grief)", "*hen* 恨 (hate)", "*buxing* 不幸 (unfortunate)", "*fubing* 扶病 (with the sickness)", and "*gushen* 孤身 (alone)". He compared himself to a "*jiefu* 節婦 (chaste woman)", and Ruan Dacheng's framed accusation against him was like he was taken from being a "festival woman" to being a "*yinfu* 淫婦 (prostitute)". He even said that his grievances were the same as Bigan 比干, who was suspicious of the monarch of the Yin dynasty 殷朝 (about 1300 B.C.- about 1046 B.C.) and cut open his chest to show his heart for proving his innocence, indicating that what he encountered was "an extraordinary injustice for thousands of years". All these characters, phrases, sentences, and metaphors can arouse the sympathy of readers on an emotional level. Fang Yizhi might presuppose the reading experiences of his recipients, hoping to describe his hardships in a way that could obtain what he expected from his readers. Especially when the recipient of this letter was Zhang Zilie, a Ming loyalist who might also have suffered from gossip after 1644, such descriptions and metaphors would undoubtedly resonate with him.

The efforts of the Southern Ming correspondents to justify themselves were not limited to these. They self-selected their letters for publishing, trying to rehabilitate their reputations among a future readership.[48] Fang Yizhi's anthology *Lingwai gao* 嶺外稿 (Manuscripts Written in the South of the Five Ridges), which was compiled by his three sons and was published shortly after his death, includes a total of seventeen letters. Seven of these letters were written to express grievances to different recipients and describe how he and his father worked hard to support the Southern Ming regime.

[48] By examining the letters written by the publisher Zhang Chao, Son suggests that letters are sometimes not only written to specific recipients but to draw the attention of the public so that writers can defend their rights. Son, 'Between Writing and Publishing Letters: Publishing a Letter about Book Proprietorship', pp.879-899.

Judging by the fact that Fang's descendants quickly sorted out and published these letters, Fang Yizhi had consciously self-copied and preserved them before sending letters, and it is possible that he selected these letters and asked his sons to compile them into his anthology.

Section Four　An Alternative Way: Letter Collections and Nostalgia Orientation

With the conquest of mainland China by the Qing regime, the Southern Ming people gradually resumed stable social activities. Their miseries of encountering the Ming-Qing transition aroused nostalgia for the Ming dynasty. In the epistolary field, many letters written by Ming subjects, Ming martyrs, and Ming loyalists were included in letter collections. From 1660 to 1683, approximately ten letter collections entered the book market. In 1660, Ming loyalist Li Yu published *Chidu chuzheng* 尺牘初徵 (A First Levy of Letters), and his also compiled *Gujin chidu daquan* 古今尺牘大全 (Complete Letters Ancient and Modern) in the 1660s; in 1663, 1667, and 1668, three versions of *Chidu xinyu* 尺牘新語 (Modern Letters) were published, compiling by Ming loyalists Xu Shijun 徐士俊 (1602-1681) and Wang Qi 汪淇 (1604-?); in 1662, 1667, and 1670, Qing official Zhou Lianggong compiled and published *Chidu xinchao* 尺牘新鈔 (New Selection of Letters), *Cangju ji* 藏弆集 (The Collection of Letters), *Jielin ji* 結鄰集 (The Collection of Neighbours);[49] *Xiexin ji* 寫心集 (Writings of the Heart) was published in 1680, compiling by Chen Mei 陈枚; *Chidu lanyan* 尺牘蘭言 (Congenial Letters) was published in 1681, compiling by Huang Rong 黃容 and Wang Weihan 王維翰. Most compilers, editors, and preface authors of these letter collections were Ming loyalists, but we can also see a few Qing subjects made efforts in the publishing process.

Widmer and Pattinson have shown that letter collections published in seventeenth-century China were not only a tool for beginners to learn letter-writing skills but also a window into the memories of cultural figures in the early Qing period and the recently collapsed Ming dynasty.[50] I focus on the orientation of nostalgia towards the Ming dynasty which is projected in the paratexts of the letter collections published during the Southern Ming period. Driven by the compilers, editors, and preface authors, it was

[49] Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), p.516.
[50] Ellen Widmer, 'The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A study in Seventeenth-Century Publishing', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 56 (1996), 77-122; Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China'.

strong but was hidden under the orientation of focusing on emotional expressions. It influenced the way in which these letter collections were compiled and edited, as well as the interpretation of the values of the letter texts. Pattinson argues that these collections were commercially successful because they demonstrated the thinking and actions of cultural society at the time and the collective memory of the Ming dynasty.[51] I will further suggest that such letter collections were a relatively safe alternative to the ban on publishing Ming-related historiography and literary works in the early Qing period. It avoided works that dealt with direct expressions of the Ming or the Southern Ming affairs, while simultaneously serving as a medium for nostalgia of the Ming dynasty, and thus conformed to the mindset of many literati at the time who were not entirely subservient to the Qing dynasty.

1. A relatively safe alternative

The restoration of social stability in the Qing territory led to the gradual recovery of the publishing industry. However, as early as 1648, the Qing court began to suppress those literati who showed Ming loyalism or those who identified themselves as Ming loyalists in their publications. Such a prohibition was essentially a conflict between the old and new identities arising from the dynastic transition, and the contradiction between the Qing court and Ming loyalists in their view of "whether the Southern Ming regime was the continuation of the Ming dynasty". Judging by the Qing's official attitude, it praised Ming martyrs and those who showed loyalty to the Ming dynasty, but it never recognised the legitimacy of the Southern Ming government.[52] The Qing court forbade the support of Ming loyalists to this regime and listed their historiographical and literary works that were written in the context of the Southern Ming period as works of disobedience.

In April 1648, publishers Mao Chongzhuo 毛重倬 (1617-1685), Xu Tingqing 胥庭清, Shi Shujun 史樹駿, and Miao Huiyuan 繆慧遠 resumed the business of compiling and publishing Eight-Legged Essay 八股文, but they only wrote *Ganzhi jinian fa* 干支紀年法 (Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches) and avoided recording the reign title of the Qing dynasty in prefaces.[53] Chinese literati used two methods of

[51] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.125).

[52] See the letter written by the Qing government to the Southern Ming official Shi Kefa 史可法 (1602-1645). This letter praised the loyalty of the Southern Ming people to the Ming dynasty, saying that the Qing ruler treated the former Ming clan and people very kindly. The Qing government also claimed that the Qing people hated Li Zicheng as much as the Southern Ming people and hoped that the Southern Ming people would cooperate with the Qing regime to defeat the Shun army as soon as possible. *Qing shizu shilu xuanji* in *Taiwan wenxian shiliao congkan 4-61* (Taibei: Taiwan datong shuju, 2009), pp.6-8.

[53] Hu Qiguang, *Zhongguo wenhuo shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006), pp.127-128; Shan jinheng, *Li Yu nianpu* in *Li Yu quanji 19*, p.20.

date writing. The first was to choose the imperial reign title—such as "the seventeenth year of the Chongzhen reign period 崇禎十七年 (1644)"—because every emperor would promulgate a different reign title after ascending the throne. The second was to write directly the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches. Since this is a sixty-year cycle (each year had a different term), a term as simple as "*Jiashen* 甲申" would have made it easy for contemporaries to understand that the author was referring to the seventeenth year of the Chongzhen reign period. Although both methods of date writing appeared in the Southern Ming period, only using the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches had the significance of demonstrating writers' adherence to the previous dynasty. This approach came from the poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427) of the Jin dynasty (266-420). After the Jin fall, Tao refused to use the reign title of the new dynasty when writing poems and essays to show that he remained loyal to the Jin dynasty.[54] By the Southern Ming period, it had become a kind of convention that identified someone as a subject from the Ming dynasty and determined to be an adherent. The purpose of Mao Chongzhuo, Xu Tingqing, Shi Shujun, and Miao Huiyuan is likely to be the same.[55] These publishers were convicted for doing so in the same year, as they were considered by the Qing ruler to be "obedient outwardly but disobedient inwardly 陽順陰違"[56]—being disloyal to the Qing dynasty.

Although southeastern China had become the Qing territory in 1648, the Southern Ming government still existed in the southwest. Many Ming loyalists living in the southeast could not travel to the southwest because of various reasons such as the strict scrutiny when crossing the Ming-Qing frontier, but for them, the Southern Ming regime was a continuation of the Ming dynasty, and its existence gave them the political basis to identify themselves as Ming subjects. In other words, they did not see any difference between the Southern Ming and the Ming dynasties, which prompted them to present their psychological allegiance by avoiding writing the reign title of the Qing dynasty. Feng Shu 馮舒 (1592-1649) was also punished due to using such a chronological method. His *Huaijiu ji* 懷舊集 (The Collection of Nostalgia) did not include the Qing's reign title, and he was suspected of ridiculing the Qing regime. Feng was thus executed in 1649.[57] The cases of Feng and Mao were not unique in the early Qing period. In 1648, Huang Yuqi 黃毓祺 was killed because of writing poems supporting Ming memory.[58] In 1660, Zhang Jinyan 張縉彥 was exiled because his preface to a

[54] Hou Qizeng, *Zixu* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong-hou qizeng riji*, p.483.
[55] What Mao Chongzhuo did was similar to Ming loyalists. Although they lived in the Qing territory and adopted Manchu hairstyles and clothes, they did not psychologically accept the Qing identity.
[56] Hu Qiguang, *Zhongguo wenhuo shi*, p.128.
[57] ibid, pp.128-129.
[58] ibid, p.128.

poem collection was considered disrespectful to the Qing dynasty, which hinted of inciting the restoration of Ming rule.[59] In the same year, those people who involved in helping Zhuang Tinglong 莊廷鑨 write a private Ming historiography were also convicted.[60]

These cases brought the Qing ruler a sense of crisis. As an alternative rule to the Ming regime, the Qing government should not allow people to feel strong nostalgia for the previous dynasty, as it might cause a great possibility to destabilise its rule. In 1652 and 1663, the Qing government twice promulgated the prohibition on privately publishing books.

> Decree approved by Emperor Shunzhi in 1652: Private publishers could only publish books on Neo-Confucianism and politics that are useful for writing essays. Other books with trivial and obscene words, as well as all the writing works by students in private schools and manuscripts written by people in Societies, were strictly forbidden. Those who disobeyed will be severely punished.
> 順治九年題准：坊間書賈，止許刊行理學、政治有益文業諸書。其他瑣語淫詞，及一切濫刻窗藝、社稿，同行嚴禁。違者從重究治。[61]

> Decree approved by Emperor Kangxi in 1663: In the future, if there is any person who privately publishes trivial, obscene, and morally destructive books, the officials in charge of surveillance in Beijing and the provinces must find out what book it is and who compiles it, and then write down the exact name and submit it to their respective departments for deliberation of culpability.
> 康熙二年議准：嗣后如有私刻瑣語淫詞、有乖風化者，內而科、道，外而督、撫，訪實何書，系何人編造，指名題參，交與該部議罪。[62]

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[59] ibid, pp.129-130.

[60] This historiography *Mingshi jilue* 明史楫略 (A Rough Compilation of History of the Ming) was not written by Zhuang Tinglong himself. Zhuang was a rich man who still wanted to obtain a good reputation in the literati circle after losing his sight. He therefore paid for the manuscript of the Ming historiography that had been handed down in his neighbour's family house but had not yet been published. This manuscript was written by Zhu Guozhen 朱國禎, a deceased Ming official. After buying it, Zhuang asked the literati in the southeast to proofread and supplement it with the history of the Chongzhen reign period. Eventually, he renamed it *A Rough Compilation of History of the Ming* and made himself the author. But Zhuang died when this historiography was just completed. Zhu Youming 朱佑明, a wealthy man from Nanxun 南潯 in Zhejiang, learnt of this, he sponsored Zhuang's family to publish it, requesting that the name of his study must be engraved on every page. In 1660, *A Rough Compilation of History of the Ming* was published, but in the following year, it caused the conviction of everyone involved because of a revelation by a man called Wu Zhirong 吳之榮. ibid, pp.130-136.

[61] *Qinding xuezheng quanshu jiaozhu* (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2009), p.32.

[62] ibid.

From the above cases, we find that between 1648 and 1660, incidents that were disrespectful to the Qing regime—or were considered disrespectful to it—continuously occurred. This also proved why the Qing ruler issued bans twice, as the one issued in 1653 had lost its effect. Although the Qing government did not specify what words, phrases, or sentences would undermine morality as such regulations seemed deliberately vague, from the cases mentioned above, we can glimpse its attitude—it forbade those who implied to show allegiance to the Ming (including the Southern Ming) regime in their historical or literary works after 1644. However, in contrast, compilers of letter collections did not promote their works as being related to the Ming or the Southern Ming. But throughout the publication dates, compiling methods, and emotional orientation of these collections, they were one of the mechanisms used by literati to maintain ties with the Ming dynasty.

Compilers like Ming loyalists Li Yu and Wang Qi selected letters written by Ming subjects and Ming loyalists in their collections.[63] Even Zhou Lianggong, a Qing official, also invited Ming loyalists to select letters, edit texts, and write comments for compiling his letter collections. Zhou was first a Ming and, briefly, a Southern Ming official, but entered the Qing court in 1645. Many of his friends were Ming loyalists, such as Yu Huai, Du Jun, and Ji Yingzhong 紀映鐘 (1607-1681).[64] Their focus on Ming historiographical and literary works might have influenced Zhou. Not only that, but he presented great sympathy for Ming loyalists[65] and even implied a potential consciousness of giving them a voice throughout his compiling purpose. For instance, *New Selection of Letters* included 415 letters written by Ming subjects and 221 letters written by Ming loyalists; *The Collection of Letters* included 207 letters written by Ming subjects and 246 letters written by Ming loyalists; *The Collection of Neighbours* included 118 letters written by Ming subjects and 252 letters written by Ming loyalists.[66]

In this way, compilers, editors, and preface authors might hint at their efforts of preserving works written by Ming loyalists in a political environment in that the Qing regime seemed to recognise Ming loyalists but in fact, prohibited them from performing acts of displaying their adherence to the Ming identity. As discussed above, the use of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches was a means by Ming loyalists to present their Ming loyalism. Although this method of chronology was not only used by Ming

[63] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.154).
[64] See the chronological biography of Zhou Lianggong. Zhu Tianshu and Meng Han, *Zhou Lianggong nianpu changbian* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 2021).
[65] Pattinson, 'The Chidu in Late Ming and Early Qing China', p.109.
[66] Since the identities of a small number of letter writers in these letter collections cannot be verified, I only count the number of letters written by those correspondents who identified themselves as Ming subjects and Ming loyalists.

loyalists, in the early Qing period, Ming loyalists such as Hou Qizeng and Feng Shu made it clear that they refused to write any Qing reign title after 1644.[67] As I will show in detail in Chapter Five, such an approach was common among Ming loyalists at the time. There was a similar manifest in letter collections. In *New Selection of Letters*, one of Zhang Yi's 張怡 (1608-1695) letters used *Dingyou* 丁酉 (1657) instead of the Qing reign title.[68] Yin Minxing 尹民兴, who was also a Ming loyalist and his letters were included in *The Collection of Letters*, chose only *Yiyou* 乙酉 to refer to 1645.[69] In the same collection, Ming loyalist Yu Huai wrote the year 1646 as *Bingxu* 丙戌.[70]

All these letters were included in Zhou Lianggong's collections. Not to mention that Zhou himself was a Qing official, and his letter collections were published not far from 1648, which means he and his editors must have known that Mao Chongzhuo was convicted for not writing the Qing reign title. Even so, they did not delete the letters, instead, they not only compiled them but also added comments with an approving attitude. In his letter, Zhang Yi described that he dreamed of travelling in the south (where the Southern Ming regime established) and felt suffering. At the top of this letter, the commenter wrote: "Such an action is definitely a righteous act. 咸(感)義此舉。"[71] In response to Yu Huai's views on poetry writing, the commenter praised: "The straightforward argument is very satisfactory. 快論殊暢人意。"[72]

It can be seen that letter collections had become an alternative way for displaying people or affairs related to the Ming and Southern Ming periods. They neither resisted the Qing army like Huang Daozhou, who gathered troops in the early Southern Ming period, nor did they need to suffer bans for directly mentioning Ming topics. This provided a safer way for literati trying to preserve the Ming in the cultural field. At the same time, compilers, editors, and preface authors noticed and enhanced the emotional expressions of the letter texts. Their emotional orientation through paratexts hinted at nostalgia for the Ming dynasty. It was not only a choice to conform to the social ethos but also an approach of trying to cater to a readership that was not completely subservient to the Qing regime.

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[67] Hou Qizeng, *Zixu* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong-hou qizeng riji*, p.483; Hu Qiguang, *Zhongguo wenhuo shi*, p.128.
[68] Zhang Yi, *Yu Liu Gongyong* in *Chidu xinchao* (1662 Woodblock Edition), p.5.12a.
[69] Yin Minxing, *Yu Li Huaixi* in *Cangju ji* (1667 Woodblock Edition), p.4.8b.
[70] Yu Huai, *Yu Jiang Ruxu*, ibid, p.6.14a.
[71] The first character is hard to recognise, it should be "咸". I have marked up both characters for reference. *Yu Liu Gongyong* in *Chidu xinchao*, p.5.12a.
[72] *Yu Jiang Ruxu* in *Cangju ji*, p.6.14a.

2. The orientation of emotional expressions and nostalgia

Adding paratexts to letter collections was not an invention of compilers and editors in the Southern Ming period. It can be traced back to those letter collections published in the late Ming period, such as two versions of *Rumian tan* 如面談 (Talk Like Face to Face) and *Stationery of Folding Plum*. As Pattinson argues, many of these letter collections aimed to bring letters written by outstanding figures in cultural and political circles together and guide beginners to gain letter-writing skills.[73] Most of their paratexts are prefaces, selection rules, and general notes, and only a few of them are marginalia. They orientated their readers to appreciate the ornate diction of letter texts.[74]

By the Southern Ming period, the Ming fall resulted in the collective pain of Ming subjects. In the cultural field, outstanding literati made efforts to write, compile, and publish literary works or historiography, showing their ambitious to preserve Ming culture and driving ordinary literati to pay attention to and buy these works. Many scholars have noticed that such social ethos was essentially generated in nostalgia for the Ming dynasty.[75] As Philip Alexander Kafalas argues, nostalgia is a powerful way to remember a past self to establish individuals in a present time.[76] Nostalgia proved that people after 1644 were more willing to get closer to the cultural products that contained Ming memory. From the 1660s, newly published letter collections were different from those in the late Ming period. They downplayed the focus on the ornate diction and proposed aesthetic orientation of appreciating the emotional expression.

Such a tendency began with Ming loyalist Li Yu, who had multiple identities like dramatist, short story writer, compiler, and publisher. In 1660, Li published *A First Levy of Letters*. Although this collection still embodied the compiling method which was similar to those late Ming collections in dividing the category of letters by different topics, it revealed a potential motivation of orientating his readers to pay attention to appreciating letters, not just learning how to write. Furthermore, he showed a compiling attitude that followed the life choices of Ming loyalists. Letters under the indexing system of *Wenyi lei* 文藝類 (Literature and Art), *Shishi* 時事 (Current Affairs),

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[73] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.133).
[74] Feng Menglong, *Fanli* in *Zhemei jian*, p.2; Ling Dizhi, *Fanli* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu jibu 313-guochao minggong hanzao* (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1997), p.2a; Shen Jiayin, *Hanhai zongmu* in *Siku jinhui shu congkan jibu 20* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2005), pp.1a-4a.
[75] Philip Alexander Kafalas, 'Nostalgia and the Reading of the Late Ming Essay: Zhang Dai's Tao'an Mengyi' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1995); Chi-hung Yim, 'The Poetics of Historical Memory in the Ming-Qing Transition: A Study of Qian Qianyi's (1582-1664) Later Poetry' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1998); Lynn A. Struve, 'Chinese Memory Makes a Martyr: The Case of Huang Chunyao (1605-1645)', *History and Memory*, 25 (2013), 5-31.
[76] Kafalas, 'Nostalgia and the Reading of the Late Ming Essay', (p.5).

Xianqing 閒情 (Leisure), *Shidao* 釋道 (Buddhism and Daoism), and *Shizhi* 仕止 (Stop Official Careers) are less of practical uses as model letters but closely related to the choices of Ming loyalists: to become a hermit, a Buddhist, or a Taoist; to express their emotions and share life conditions after 1644. This demonstrates that Li had been aware of Ming loyalists' mindsets when compiling letter collections. His approach was likely to inspire later compilers. Of those letter collections published afterwards, only *Modern Letters* and *Writings of the Heart* retained the method of dividing the category by topics. Nevertheless, all the letter collections, including *Modern Letters* and *Writings of the Heart*, proposed to separate from the practical use to varying degrees through the form of paratexts, guiding the readership to appreciate the emotions of letter texts.

Compilers, editors, and preface authors believed that the emotional expression was the key to epistolary aesthetics.[77] The preface author Zha Wang 查望 of *Modern Letters* opposed the deliberate overusing of ornate diction and criticised the neglect of the original motivation of writing a letter, which was to share emotions.

> Most of the people who wrote letters in ancient times focused on emotions. However, today's letter writers mainly focus on words. [They] do not recognise that emotions come from words, and words come from emotions, but they only take effort to learn and write flowery diction, ... What is the use of writing a letter, if its meaning is incomprehensible?
> 大都古之爲尺牘者。以其情也。今之爲尺牘者。以其文也。不知情生於文。文生於情。而但以雕飾爲工。……若啟緘盈尺。了不解人意。亦安用。[78]

Likewise, the title of Chen Mei's *Writings of the Heart* projected a similar compiling purpose. Even Zhou Lianggong also described his first letter collection as an unprecedented attempt in expressing and promoting emotions.[79] In *Selection Rules* of *New Selection of Letters*, he specifically pointed out his motivation for adding marginalia in letter texts that he and his editors attempted to demonstrate correspondents' unique writing skills to express the emotions, showing what the commenters felt when reading these letters, so as to help his readers obtain aesthetic and emotional resonance.[80]

The emotional orientation is essentially the deep imprint of nostalgia cast on the

[77] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.146).
[78] Zha Wang, *Chidu xinyu xu* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu jibu 396-fenlei chidu xinyu*, pp.2a-2b.
[79] Zhou Lianggong, *Chidu xinchao xuanli* in *Chidu xinchao*, p.2a.
[80] ibid, p.6b.

epistolary stages of preservation and dissemination by letter compilers, editors, and preface authors after they suffered the Ming-Qing transition. Emotion is a key word that cannot be avoided when discussing the Southern Ming period. The heavy blow caused by the dynastic transition to the literati aroused their inner grief for the collapse of the Ming dynasty. Although most of their fundamental motivation for compiling letter collections was profitability,[81] the indignation of the Qing conquest made them accumulate strong emotional appeals in their hearts, which projected onto their new reading-oriented emphasis on these letter collections. Compilers, editors, and preface authors did not directly express the specific emotions they promoted and praised, but by interpreting marginalia, compiling methods, selecting notes, and prefaces, it can be seen that they tried to orientate readers to nostalgia.

A letter written by Chen Xiaoyi 陳孝逸 (1616-?) to Tao Yaosheng 陶堯生 was included in the *New Selection of Letters*, which described that although Chen survived the Ming-Qing transition, he still felt painful. This letter was later compiled into *Modern Letters* with Xu Shijun's comments: "[Chen Xiaoyi's] heart has died, but he is still alive. How could he still be happy? His passionate temperament can be seen [in this letter]. 心死而身生，何樂有？此生節意氣激昂，俯仰如見。"[82] Xu Shijun's description means that Chen Xiaoyi stopped studying for the Qing examination and lived in reclusion. His thoughts on statecraft had completely vanished with the collapse of the Ming dynasty. Although such a comment did not explicitly mention the Ming dynasty, for those readers who had experienced the Ming fall, Xu did not need to point it out directly. Only the four words "*xinsi* 心死 (heart death)" and "*shensheng* 身生 (alive)" would naturally trigger readers' special emotions towards the Ming—mourning its demise and lamenting that they had lost the dynasty— thus arousing their nostalgia.

Compilers, editors, and preface authors attempted to construct a readership centred on their letter collections. Once readers accepted and recognised such emotional orientations, a new standard of appreciation for letter texts could be established, and as long as compliers continued to select letters according to this standard, they could lead the epistolary market and achieve commercial success. Paratexts are the best channel for proclaiming such standards. It allows compilers, editors, and preface authors to frame the reading communication between letter texts and readers, providing their readers with a new textual interpretation, while also guiding them to the expected reading experience.

[81] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (pp.138-140).
[82] Chen Xiaoyi, *Yu Tao Yaosheng* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu jibu 396-fenlei chidu xinyu*, p.12.9b.

Nonetheless, the meaning projected by this approach is far from being as simple as nostalgia. It indicates that the Chinese society, which experienced the Ming-Qing transition, had produced a social tendency of confrontation between "the new" and "the old". It also implies that after suffering the dynastic transition, the psychological acceptance by original Ming subjects for the new dynasty was still at a low degree. Many literati did not show enthusiasm and support for the Qing dynasty. Instead, they actively worked hard to preserve and publish the letters written by Ming subjects and Ming loyalists. Letter collections published by Zhou Lianggong and Wang were a great success among the elite—both of them had three versions.[83] Around 1670, Du Jun mentioned the commercial success of Zhou Lianggong's first letter collection:

> The woodblock used to print letters had not yet been completed, but people who wanted to buy the collection had already arrived and were eager to take a look at it first. After the collection was published, it was disseminated quickly and widely every day. [Readers] were even more eager to read the second letter collection than the first one. Now the third collection is about to be published, and those who want to find out whether it has been completed, like a man in hunger and thirst, cannot wait at all.
> 尺牘鏤板未竟，而四方求者已接跡於坊間，爭以先觀者爲快。及書成，而日傳萬紙，想望二集益甚於初。今三集將出，暇文之士探其成者，又如飢渴之不能少待。[84]

It proves that elites presented a strong willingness to buy such works. As Ming loyalists who dominated the cultural circle at the time, they probably made up a large portion of buyers, especially when these letter collections included many letters written by Ming subjects and Ming loyalists. The publishing of Ming-related letters might have successfully led the epistolary market and thus formed a readership centred on these letter collections as there was indeed a potential incomplete subservient of the Qing regime among the elite. The existence of the Southern Ming regime made those people who still considered themselves Ming subjects feel suffering in being Qing subjects, especially when the Qing dynasty became their new ruler and adopted mandatory decrees requiring them to shave their hair and change their clothing. These collections were just in line with their psychological consolation for their Ming identities, as they could share their yearning and loyalty to the Ming dynasty with letter writers when reading the texts to psychologically suppress their Qing identities which they had to accept for survival.

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[83] Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (p.136).
[84] Du Jun, *Xu* in *Jielin ji* (1670 Woodblock Edition) p.5a.

3. Emphasising morality: a protective strategy for letter collections

Perhaps to protect these letter collections that hinted nostalgia from the risk of being banned, compilers, editors, and preface authors adopted a strategy of emphasising the morality of the included letter texts. This approach made letter collections safer because it complied with the terms of the Qing ban—only allowing private publishing houses to publish morally beneficial books.

Zhou Lianggong suggested that the letter texts he chose could give readers moral inspiration, which can be proved by many of the letters included in his collections.[85] In *Fu Wang Tieshan shi* 復王鐵山師 (Reply to Teacher Wang Tieshan) which was compiled in *New Selection of Letters*, Ming loyalist Hu Jie 胡介 (1616-1664) lamented that although he suffered hardships because of the dynastic transition in his youth, he never changed to maintain his identity as a Ming man in the Qing dynasty.[86] Ming loyalist Chen Hongxu refused to serve the Qing court in a letter replying to a Qing official and this letter was also published in this collection.[87] In *The Collection of Letters*, the last words of Wang Wei 汪偉 and Shen Jiayin 申佳胤 (1603-1644) written in their family letters in 1644 showed their determination that they would be Ming martyrs.

> Wang Wei: I was born at an untimely time as I suffered the fall of my dynasty. [I] was a lecturer in the Heir Apparent with no power to help the court. My status is low, even if I speak reasonable words, my little advantage will not be used by [the court]. [All I can do] is to be a martyr [of the Ming dynasty].
> 汪偉：我生不辰，丁此國難，講讀之官，既無事權，可以爲朝廷。位卑言高，一得之長，亦不見用。惟有一死以自靖而已。[88]
>
> Shen Jiayin: I have received a deep grace from the [Ming] dynasty, and I swear to repay it with my death.
> 申佳胤：吾受國厚恩，誓以死報。[89]

Praises for loyalism were added in the marginalia. On the top of the original text of Shen Jiayin's letter, the commenter wrote: "This letter must be praised in the future. □

[85] Zhou Lianggong, *Fanli* in *Chidu xinchao*, pp.2b-3a.
[86] Hu Jie, *Fu Wang Tieshan shi*, ibid, pp.5.24b-25a.
[87] Chen Hongxu, *Zaishang sili ligong kenci jianbi shu*, ibid, pp.3.23a-24a.
[88] Wang Wei, *Yibi shizi* in *Cangju ji*, p.1.20b.
[89] Shen Jiayin, *Yizha shizi* in *Cangju ji*, p.1.22a.

語定足千秋。”[90] Du Jun, a Ming loyalist who wrote the preface to Zhou's third letter collection, also emphasised that Zhou's first collection *New Selection of Letters* was successful because his compiling motivation was to show loyalty and filial piety.[91] Zhou Lianggong was still a Qing official when publishing his letter collections, so he needed to be very careful to find justification for these collections to be publishable—especially when many of the letters he compiled were written by Ming subjects and Ming loyalists. Furthermore, from the above quotation, we can see that he was thoughtful in his praise of the loyalty of Ming loyalists. His main focus was Ming martyrs. He and his commenters did not directly point out that such loyalty was to the Ming dynasty but only emphasised the loyalty itself. This somewhat blurred the characterisation of loyalism as something that needed to be expressed to a specific object. The deliberate vagueness made it difficult for readers, especially those who stared at private publications and checked for defamatory remarks against the Qing regime, to group his letter collections with those historiographical and literary works that directly express Ming loyalism.

Like Zhou Lianggong, Li Yu, Xu Shijun, Wang Qi, and Pan Lei also believed that letter collections were a moral tool that could promote Confucian principles.[92] It was a wise approach to adhere to morality as much as possible, as it might cleverly avoid these collections being suspected of inciting support for the Ming dynasty. This was true judging by the factors. In 1669, Zhou Lianggong was impeached on corruption charges and lost his official position, but his letter collections were not banned.[93] Not only that, all the above-mentioned collections were still sold in the book market until 1775, although afterwards, they were banned as they included letters written by Qian Qianyi, Gong Dingzi, and Gu Yanwu who were "*erchen* 貳臣 (ministers who served two dynasties)" or had opposed the Qing regime.[94] Compared with historiographical and literary works that directly expressed Ming loyalism, letter collections were circulated and disseminated in a safer way in the early Qing period. In a mechanism that not only catered to people's nostalgia at the time but also avoided the prohibitions of the Qing government, they preserved the letters written by Ming subjects and Ming loyalists.

As a result, the writing, transmission, reception, preservation, circulation, and

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[90] ibid.
[91] Du Jun, *Xu* in *Jielin ji*, p.5a.
[92] Pan Lei, *Chidu lanyan xu* in *Siku jinhui shu congkan jibu 35-chidu lanyan*, pp.7a-9b; Xu Shijun and Wang Qi, *Chidu xinyu diyi juan mulu* in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu jibu 396-fenlei chidu xinyu*, p.1a; Pattinson, 'The Market for Letter Collections in Seventeenth-Century China', (pp.146-147).
[93] Zhu Tianshu and Meng Han, *Zhou Lianggong nianpu changbian*, p.202.
[94] Yao Guanyuan, *Qingdai jinhui shumu (buyi)* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1957), pp.1.68-69, 77, 80, 132, 170, 173, 335, 339, 340; Lei Mengchen, *Liangjiang* in *Qingdai gesheng jinshu huikao zongmu* (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1989), pp.68-69.

dissemination of the Southern Ming letters were deeply influenced by the Ming-Qing transition. Battles in the early Southern Ming period blocked the delivery route, but they gradually recovered with the control of China by the Qing regime. The division of territory made the received Southern Ming letters circulate among a broader readership, showing the function of transmitting Southern Ming news in different regions and territories, which also prompted letter writers to include more topics when writing one letter. Rumours caused by poor message transmission drove the Southern Ming correspondents to use letters as an important medium for rehabilitating their reputations. They presupposed their readerships, trying to justify themselves among more identities and future readers. The stabilised social situation in the middle and late Southern Ming period led to the reappearance of letter collections that provided an emotional orientation generated by nostalgia for the Ming dynasty. Amid Qing prohibitions on publishing Ming-related works, they became a safer alternative for people to maintain Ming ties at the time. In essence, it was produced by the conflict between the new and old dynasties in the epistolary field. This prompted the Southern Ming correspondents to exchange letters under their Ming identity, and they established epistolary networks in southeastern, southwestern, and northern regions. These regionalised networks carried out both internal communication in the field of politics, military affairs, and culture, and cross-regional interactions under the connections of individual epistolary networks.

Chapter Three

Southern Ming Epistolary Networks

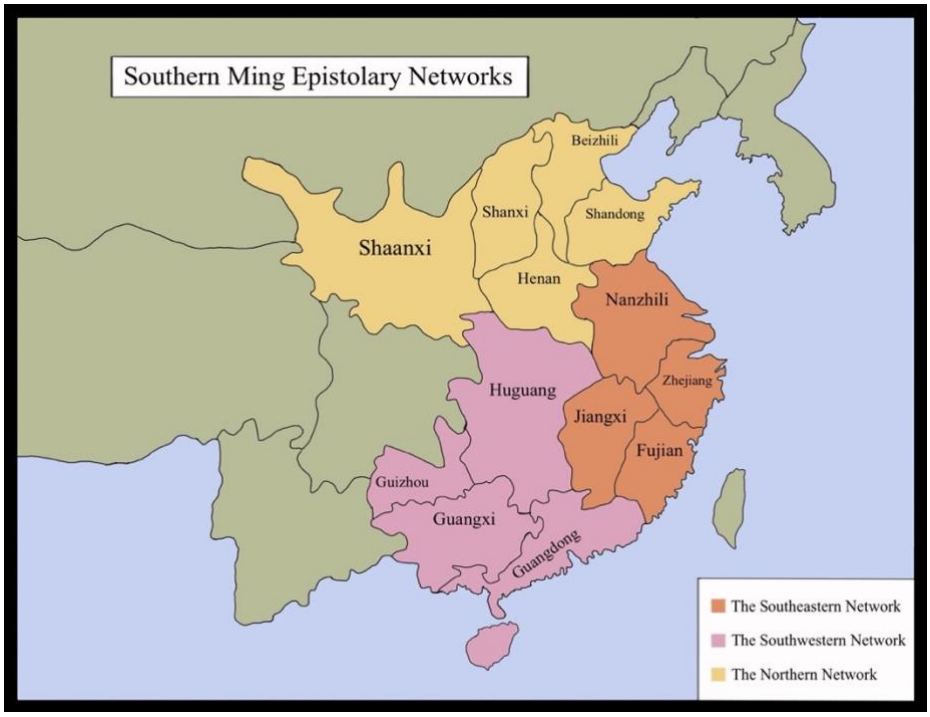
The social situation from chaos to stability brought about by the Ming-Qing transition profoundly affected the Southern Ming epistolary process. In particular, the division of former Ming territory forced the transmission of Southern Ming letters to be limited to certain regions. I argue that the Southern Ming epistolary networks were regionalised and individualised due to the territorial division of the Ming, the Qing, and the Shun regimes, the frequent replacement of the Southern Ming monarchs, and the personal movements of the Southern Ming correspondents. Between 1644 and 1683, the Southern Ming correspondents formed epistolary networks in the southeast, the southwest, and the north. Each regional network was centred on a small number of correspondents and exhibited regional characteristics based on the local situation. Simultaneously, some correspondents left their hometowns and went to the southeast or the southwest to support the Southern Ming government. Their movements made their letter exchanges connect multiple regional networks rather than be limited to a certain one. In this case, while focusing on regionalised networks and their central correspondents, I also explore those individual networks that functioned as links between different regional networks.

Furthermore, I argue that the Southern Ming epistolary networks achieved their goals of supporting the Southern Ming regime by exchanging Southern Ming political and military information. However, because the regions where these networks were located gradually became the Qing territory, the Southern Ming correspondents had to hide their discussions on such topics and only exchanged literature, history, and scholarship related to the Ming or the Southern Ming, showing a shift from concern for the Southern Ming affairs to Ming-related cultural preservation. Therefore, this chapter analyses how letters became a significant tool for conveying Southern Ming political and military information, examines the role of individual epistolary networks in linking regional networks and sharing the awareness of preserving the Ming culture, and explores the reason for changing the letter topics in the Southern Ming epistolary networks.

Section One　Regionalised Epistolary Networks

From 1644 to 1646, China was in a stage where the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the

Shun regimes fought fiercely for the original Ming territory. On 25 April 1644, the Shun army broke through the city of Beijing, forcing the Ming regime to move southward. On 19 June of the same year, the first Southern Ming reign, the Hongguang government, was established in Nanjing.[1] At the time, most of the southern region was still the Southern Ming territory. On 6 June 1644, the Qing army defeated the Shun government and gradually gained rule in the north which formed a confrontation between the north and the south with the Southern Ming regime.[2] In the spring and summer of 1645, the Qing army marched southward. It successively broke through Yangzhou, Songjiang, Hangzhou, and other southeast prefectures in three months, and it occupied Nanjing on 16 June.[3] The Longwu government that succeeded the Hongguang court only lasted approximately one year and three months. After Emperor Longwu was killed on 6 October 1646, the Southern Ming government moved westward and crowned Zhu Youlang as Emperor Yongli in Zhaoqing in Guangdong on 14 December of the same year, who maintained his rule for sixteen years in the southwest.[4]



Regionalised Southern Ming Epistolary Networks[5]

[1] Struve, *The Southern Ming*, pp.15-16.
[2] ibid, p.47.
[3] ibid, pp.56-58.
[4] ibid, p.97-101.
[5] This map is hand-painted by me, referring to the maps of *The Southern Ming 1644-1662* written by Struve, *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 7-yuanming shiqi*, and *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 8-qing shiqi*. The following maps of the northern, southeastern, and southwestern epistolary networks all refer to these maps. It should be pointed out that the names of provinces used in maps follow the Ming names, as this study focuses on the Southern Ming period. The specific boundaries of regionalised networks changed with the gradual occupation of the formal Ming territory by the Qing army, but this did not have a huge impact on the regionalisation of the epistolary networks. Therefore, in order to more clearly display the divisions of different networks, the boundaries of Southern Ming epistolary networks in all maps still follow the boundaries of provinces. Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p.5; *Ming shiqi quantu*

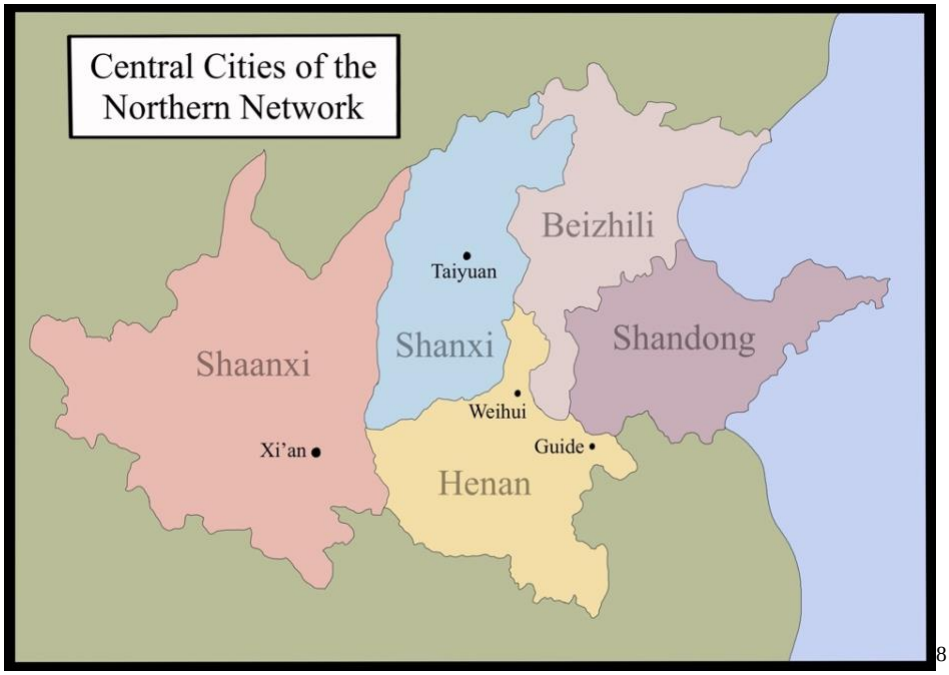
The regionalisation of the Southern Ming epistolary networks was emerged during this period. The Southern Ming correspondents in different territories could not freely cross the Southern Ming and the Qing frontiers, which prompted their correspondence to be more concentrated in the areas where they lived. Even though the social situation gradually stabilised after 1646, and mainland China completely became the Qing territory in 1662, networks in different regions did not fuse but were only connected through the individual epistolary networks of several correspondents who travelled around these regions. Thus, the Southern Ming epistolary network was regionalised into northern, southeastern, and southwestern networks.

The northern epistolary network was established under the influence of the confrontation between the northern and southern frontier of the Southern Ming and Qing regimes. After June 1644, northern provinces such as Beizhili (modern Beijing and Hebei), Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi gradually became the Qing territory, recovering the epistolary activities with the stability of the social situation. In 1646, Ming loyalist Fu Shan who lived in Taiyuan Prefecture in Shanxi wrote a letter to his local friend Dai Tingshi 戴廷栻 (1618-1691), mentioning that he had received letters and a poetry collection sent from Beijing by his teacher Yuan Jixian 袁繼咸 (1593-1646) in the spring and summer of this year.[6] It indicates that from the spring of 1646 at the latest, letter exchanges in the north had shown signs of revival under the Qing rule. However, this did not mean that correspondence between the north and the south had also returned to normal. In the spring and summer of 1644, the division of the Ming territory interrupted the transmission of news between the north and the south, so that the epistolary activities of northern Ming loyalists could only be carried out locally. According to the diary of the Southern Ming official Qi Biaojia 祁彪佳 (1603-1645) on 1 June 1644, the news of Emperor Chongzhen's suicide and the collapse of the Ming Beijing government on 25 April did not reach the southeast area until 1 June, which was more than a month later.[7] It is therefore that from 1644 to 1645, the confrontation between the Ming and the Qing regimes seriously blocked the exchange of information between the north and the south. In the early Southern Ming period, Ming loyalists living in the northern region focused on restoring their local letter exchange and formed the northern epistolary network.

(er) in *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 7-yuanming shiqi* (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1996), p.42; *Qing shiqi quantu (yi)* in *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji 8-qing shiqi*, ibid, p.4.

[6] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Tingshi shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, pp.183-184.

[7] Qi Biaojia, *Jiashen rili* in *Qi Biaojia rili xiace* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2016), p.740.

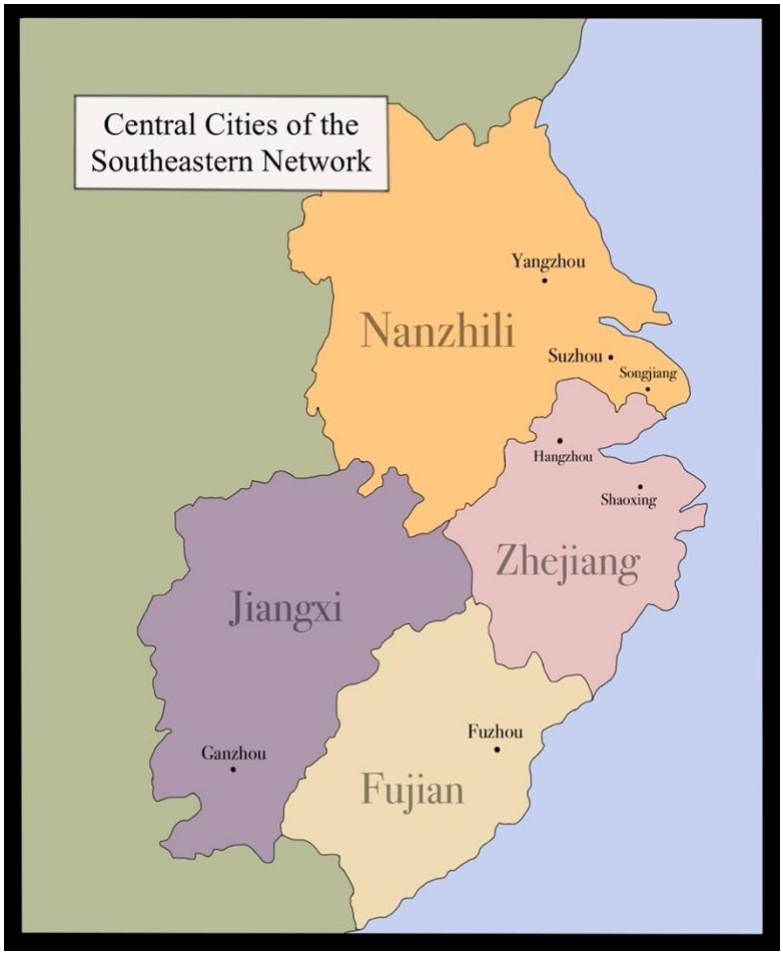


[8]

The Northern Epistolary Network		
Central Provinces	**Prefectures**	**Central Correspondents**
Henan	Weihui	Sun Qifeng
	Guide	Hou Fangyu
Shanxi	Taiyuan	Fu Shan, Dai Tingshi
Shaanxi	Xi'an	Wang Hongzhuan

When northern Ming loyalists were resuming their epistolary activities, the Southern Ming people in the southeastern region were making efforts to revive the Ming rule. It is not only because they followed the Southern Ming government and actively contacted like-minded people through correspondence but also because the southeast was the cultural centre of the empire and less disrupted in the late Ming than the north. These prompted the frequent local letter exchange, and compared with the northern network, there were more correspondents and letters in the southeastern region. It is because the Hongguang and the Longwu governments were established in this area, making it under the Southern Ming rule from the summer of 1644 to 1645, which ensured the relatively normal letter activities and established the southeastern epistolary network before the Qing army came.

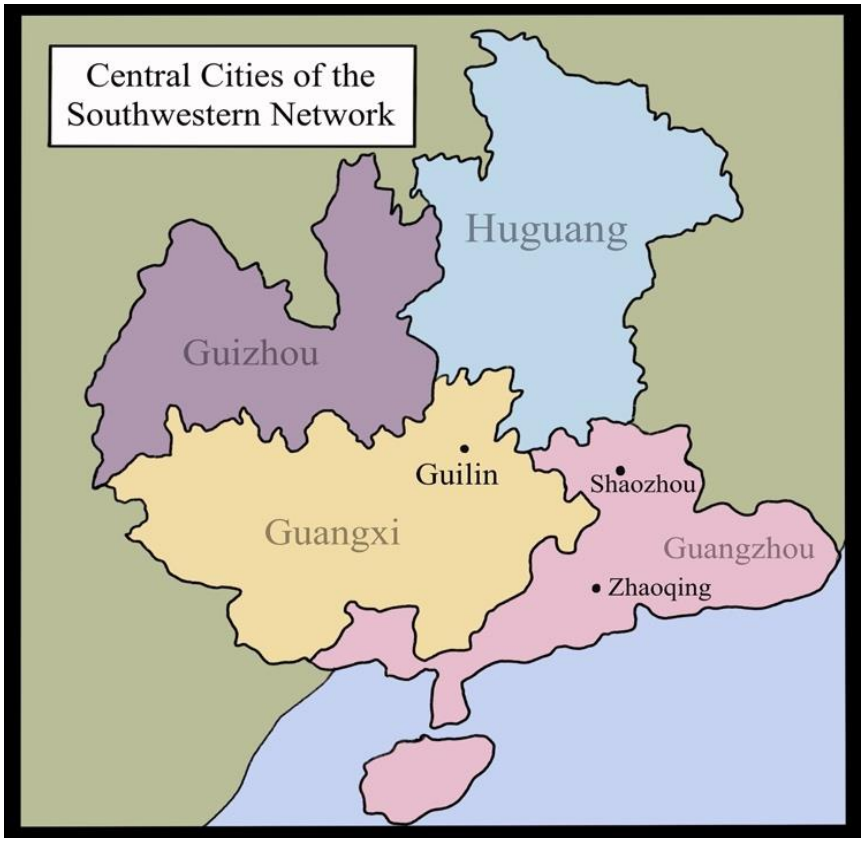
[8] It should be noted that the different colours refer to different provinces in the northern, southeastern, and southwestern networks.



The Southeastern Epistolary Network		
Central Provinces	**Prefectures**	**Central Correspondents**
Nanzhili	Songjiang	Hou Tongzeng, Hou Qizeng, Xia Yunyi, Xia Wanchun, Chen Zilong
	Suzhou	Huang Chunyao, Lu Yuanfu, Qian Qianyi, Wu Weiye, Wang Shimin, Gui Zhuang
	Yangzhou	Mao Xiang
Zhejiang	Hangzhou	Shen Qian, Mao Jin, Mao Xianshu
	Shaoxing	Ni Yuanzan
Jiangxi	Ganzhou	Peng Qisheng
Fujian	Fuzhou	Huang Daozhou

Nevertheless, with the fall of the Hongguang government in 1645 and the Longwu government in 1646, Nanzhili 南直隸 (modern Jiangsu, Shanghai, and Anhui), Zhejiang, and part of Jiangxi had since become the Qing territory. After then, although

the continuous being defeat of the Southern Ming regime led to the reduction of its territory from east to west, the southwest region remained under the rule of the Yongli government for sixteen years. However, the territorial division disrupted the letter exchange, as its normal transmission largely depended on unimpeded roads that connected different places. Under the east-west confrontation between the Southern Ming and the Qing regimes, most routes were severely blocked, which made the southwestern network become an independent epistolary network from 1645. Around November 1648, Southern Ming official Qu Shisi, who was stationed in Guilin in Guangxi, said in a letter that after he received a letter sent by his family last year on 18 August 1648, he never received any letter from his hometown Changshu.[9] The Qu family also dispatched a servant from Changshu in Nanzhili to Guangxi. Although he waited for a month in Ji'an in Jiangxi, he was still unable to cross the Ming-Qing frontier and had to return to Changshu.[10] Simultaneously, the rule of the Yongli government over the southwest region prompted frequent intra-regional letter exchanges, and most of the correspondents were Southern Ming officials who travelled from east to west.



[9] Qu Shisi, *Wuzi jiuyue shuji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.264.
[10] ibid.

The Southeastern Epistolary Network		
Central Provinces	**Prefectures**	**Central Correspondents**
Guangxi	Guilin	Qu Shisi
Guangdong	Zhaoqing	
	Shaozhou	Jin Bao

In addition to the above regional networks, there were epistolary networks centred on certain individuals who travelled around in the Southern Ming period. Their movements were all over the north, southeast, and southwest regions where the Southern Ming epistolary networks were located. By exchanging letters with local correspondents, they lamented the grief after the Ming-Qing transition, shared life in the Qing territory, and discussed the topics of history, literature, Neo-Confucianism, and Buddhism of the Ming and the Southern Ming periods, which linked the regionalised networks into a whole.

Individual Epistolary Networks	
Connected Regional Networks	**Correspondents**
southeast, north	Gu Yanwu
southeast, southwest, north	Qian Chengzhi
southeast, southwest	Fang Yizhi
southeast, north	Qu Dajun

Their movements made them part of different regional networks at different times. These networks enable interactions through their efforts, prompting the geographically separated epistolary networks to show similar features in the Southern Ming period. Since many of their letters have not been preserved, we can only glimpse through their functions based on their life experiences. I will mainly focus on Gu Yanwu, Fang Yizhi, and Qian Chengzhi. Partly because the quantity of their preserved letters during the Southern Ming period is larger than other correspondents, but also because their letters connected different regionalised networks and interacted deeply with the Southern Ming affairs.

Section Two　Letter Exchanges and the Southern Ming News

In the early Southern Ming period, frequent wars paralysed the transmission of official post stations, which could not deliver government documents and decrees in time. The sluggish transmission of official information drove the Southern Ming correspondents to exchange political and military strategies through private letters. Although the letter delivery was not always successful, compared with those imperial decrees that required official couriers, the bearers of private letters were more flexible. With the help of letters, the Southern Ming correspondents actively contacted those people who were interested in serving the Southern Ming regime but scattered in different regions, making the Southern Ming epistolary networks an important tool for exchanging military and political information and contacting military operations.

Between 1644 and 1652, when regime confrontation was fierce, cutting off normal official post routes was a common approach to prevent the exchange of information within hostile regimes. As Southern Ming official Li Qing recorded the situation after the Qing army captured Yangzhou in 1645, "there was no boat crossing in the river, and the message delivery between the north and the south was cut off. It was not until the twenty-ninth day that the Ministry of War began to re-receive news, but the ordinary people still knew nothing about it. 大江中無一舟渡，南北聲絕，遲至二十九日，兵部始得報，民間猶未知也。"[11] The Southern Ming and the Qing armies set up garrison troops and checkpoints on the frontiers, which caused the transmission to be cut off and one would hardly expect the Qing to allow the Ming postal system to operate into its territory. Such a circumstance made it impossible for Southern Ming military and political news to be transmitted successfully to the north through the official post station. In a letter to his family members written on 28 October 1646, Qu Shisi complained about the difficult transmission of government appointments in the winter of 1645.

> I had not seen any official gazettes for a long time. I resumed my official position only a month and saw one gazette on 29 January. It said that Qu became an assistant official and Yan would supervise Guangxi province. If examining its date, it was written on 14 or 15 December [of last year], but I just saw it two and a half months later. Did not this delay crucial affairs?
> 吾久不見邸報，復任剛一月，十二月十三日見報一本，內有瞿某召入佐樞，晏某巡撫廣西之旨。察月日乃是九月廿六、七者，相距已兩個半月而今始見，豈不誤事？[12]

[11] Li Qing, *Nandu lu* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1998), p.274.
[12] Qu Shisi, *Bingxu jiuyue er'shi ri shuji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.252.

It took two and a half months for Qu to receive the order of appointing officials from the Southern Ming government establishing in the southeast area at that time. According to Qu's records in the same letter, on 26 April 1645, he set off from his hometown Changshu in Nanzhili, and on 27 June of the same year, he took office in Wuzhou in Guangxi.[13] In other words, his entire trip took less than two months. Qu's wife and old mother went to Guangxi with him, which might largely slow down his journey. However, the government appointment that was delivered through the official postal system, took more days than his trip from the southeast area to the southwest region. In fact, in the spring and summer of 1645, the Hongguang government in the southeast had been defeated by the Qing army, so Qu Shisi's appointment should be issued by the successor Emperor Longwu in Fuzhou in the southeast. However, travelling from Fuzhou to Guilin had to go through Jiangxi and Huguang provinces. Jiangxi was the frontier area of the war between the Southern Ming and Qing armies at that time, and Huguang was occupied by the Shun army (it had just defected to the Southern Ming regime for more than a month, and the Southern Ming's management of it might not be stable).[14] Although we cannot know how this decree was passed on in two and a half months, what we can be sure of is that it must have crossed the Ming-Qing frontier.

Due to the territorial contention and checkpoints, whether in the southeast area or the southwest region, even urgent government orders and military deployments were often delayed. The poor official delivery prompted Southern Ming correspondents to rely more on private letter exchanges for cross-frontier information transmission. Letters are more private than the transmission through the official postal system. In the early Southern Ming period, its delivery method was relatively difficult to be intercepted. Whether officials or ordinary people, their letters should be delivered by unofficial bearers such as relatives, friends, travellers, and monks.[15] As discussed in the previous chapter, these people had different identities and did not always choose the same routes when crossing the frontiers. This made it comparatively difficult for the Qing or the Shun regime to block the transmission of all the private letters, but for the Southern Ming correspondents, such a circumstance made their letter a mechanism to achieve the cross-frontier delivery of Southern Ming military and political information. Throughout the early Southern Ming letters, it can be seen that correspondents relied heavily on private letter exchanges.

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[13] ibid, p.251.

[14] Gu Cheng, *Nanming shi*, p.211; Gu Cheng, *Mingmo nongmin zhanzheng shi*, pp.311-315; Huang Weiping, *Dashun shigao*, pp.171-174.

[15] There were cases of illegal use of the official post system, but it was difficult to carry out this delivery method in the early Southern Ming period. See discussions of official newspaper offices in Section 2 of Chapter Two.

The most intensive exchange of military and political information was the southeastern network. It is because the Southern Ming regime was first established here, and many Southern Ming correspondents such as Huang Daozhou, Ni Yuanzan 倪元璐, Huang Chunyao, Xia Yunyi, and Chen Zilong all followed this regime. As the central correspondents of the southeastern network, their letters connected with other local people who expected to revive the Ming dynasty. From 1645 to 1646, Huang Daozhou sent at least twelve letters to Ni Yuanzan, Huang Chunyao, Zu Tai 祖臺, Cao Yuansi 曹遠思, Meng Changmin 孟長民, Du Muyou 堵牧游, and Yin Minxing 尹民興, who were mutual supporters of the Southern Ming regime. Between the autumn and winter of 1645, Huang wrote a letter to friends who we only know by their courtesy names of Zhongqiu 仲球 and Shushi 叔實, focusing on the analysis of the current war situation, the preparation of military expenses and strategic deployment of the Southern Ming army.[16] On 14 December 1645, he sent another letter to his friend Ni Yuanzan, mentioning the force of the Prince Lu 魯王 Zhu Yihai 朱以海 (1618-1662) that worried Emperor Longwu.[17] On 12 January 1646, a Jiangxi official named Zu Tai also received Huang's letter. In this letter, Huang put forward a proposal for military deployment.[18] With Huang Daozhou's letters as the centre, many southeastern correspondents with the same ambition of reviving the Ming rule were connected. They shared mutual political demands and goals, and they exchanged Southern Ming military and political messages through their letters—the infighting within the Southern Ming government and the dilemma of military expenses. They discussed and formulated countermeasures according to the current political situation, thus making efforts to support the Southern Ming regime. Huang Daozhou is only one example in the southeastern network. Other correspondents, such as Chen Zilong and Xia Yunyi, also wrote letters to their friends, relatives, and colleagues to convey the military and political news of the Southern Ming regime, which made them become central correspondents in the southeastern network. However, because of the frequent wars in this area in the early Southern Ming period, not all of their letters were preserved.

In the southwestern network, the central correspondent who used letters to deliver military and political news was Qu Shisi. Although what we can read so far is only his family letters, from chronological biographies and letters of Fang Yizhi and Qian Chengzhi, as well as privately written Southern Ming historiography, we can glimpse that as an official of the Yongli government, Qu Shisi's correspondence played an important role in linking other Southern Ming officials and those who supported the

[16] Huang Daozhou, *Zhi Zhongqiu Shushi zha* in *Zhongguo shufa quanji 56* (Beijing: Rongbao zhai chubanshe, 1996), pp.239-242.
[17] Huang Daozhou, *Yu ni xianru shu* in *Huang Daozhou ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2017), p.960.
[18] Huang Daozhou, *Zhi Zu Tai zha* in *Zhongguo shufa quanji 56*, pp.244-245.

Southern Ming regime in the southwestern network. According to *Suozhi lu* 所知錄 (The Records of What I Know), after Emperor Yongli came to the throne in 1646, he dispatched Peng Yao 彭耀, an official of the Ministry of War, to Guangzhou to promulgate an imperial edict. However, Peng was killed by the official Su Guansheng 蘇觀生 (?-1647). After that, Su Guansheng sent troops to Zhaoqing and intended to harm Emperor Yongli. In order to solve this political crisis, the formal Grand Maester Chen Zizhuang 陳子壯 wrote a letter to Qu Shisi, requesting to kill Su Guansheng.[19] This shows that in the southwest region, the military and political contacts between ministers were carried out through private letters. Similarly, Qian Chengzhi, who was serving in the Yongli court, exchanged letters with Qu Shisi and conveyed important military and political affairs in the Yongli government. In 1649, Qian wrote a letter to Qu, analysing the current political situation in detail.[20] In 1648, correspondent Fang Yizhi, who followed the Southern Ming regime from the southeast to southwest, also shared his concern about the Yongli situation in his correspondence with Qu.[21]

During this period, a small number of the Southern Ming correspondents discussed the current affairs of the Southern Ming dynasty in letters and exchanged letters with correspondents in the southeast and southwest regions, allowing regionalised epistolary networks to be connected. In 1645, for instance, when Fang Yizhi was in Guangdong and Guangxi in the southwest region, Huang Daozhou in the southeast sent a letter to Fang's father, asking him to persuade his son to serve in the Southern Ming court.[22] Like Fang Yizhi, most of these correspondents were originally from the southeast region, and after 1646, they went to the southwest to support the Yongli government as the southeast region became the Qing territory. A typical correspondent is Qian Chengzhi who was originally from Tongcheng 桐城 in Anqing 安慶 Prefecture in Nanzhili.

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19 Qian Chengzhi, *Yongli jinian shang* in *Suozhi lu*, p.61.

20 This letter was included in Qian Chengzhi's anthology entitled *Shangl iushou Xianggong* 上留守相公 (To Sir Who Stayed behind for Garrison), and its recipient was Qu Shisi. Qu was stationed in Guilin from 1648 to 1650, and Qian called him an official who stayed behind for the garrison. Qian Chengzhi, *Shang liushou xianggong shu* in *Cangshan ge ji* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), pp.377-379; Qian Chengzhi, *Yongli jinian shang* in *Suozhi lu*, ibid, p.65.

21 Fang Yizhi, *Ji gebu Yuncong Hegong* in *Fushan wenji*, p.260.

22 Fang Shuwen, *Fang Yizhi xiansheng nianpu*, p.113.

Movements of Qian Chengzhi between 1644 and 1651[23]

Between 1644 and 1648, in order to support the Southern Ming government, Qian Chengzhi left his hometown and travelled around southeast areas. During this period, he had letter activities of discussing military and political affairs with correspondents in the southeast area, such as Huang Daozhou, Xu Fuyuan 徐孚遠 (1599-1665), and Southern Ming officials who were stationed here. Between January and February of 1646, Qian wrote to Huang Daozhou, proposing a strategy to use Southern Ming general Zheng Chenggong's army to regain the Ming territory and recover Beijing.[24] However, because the Hongguang and Longwu governments were quickly defeated by the Qing army, Qian had to flee from Fujian to Guangdong in 1648 to follow the Yongli government. From 1649 to 1651, he travelled around Zhaoqing, Guangzhou, and Shaozhou 韶州 of Guangdong, and Wuzhou, Guilin, Pingle 平乐 of Guangxi, and corresponded with the Southern Ming people such as Qu Shisi, Jin Bao, and Fang Yizhi.

[23] This map is produced based on the chronological biography of Qian Chengzhi and his movements in southeastern and southwestern epistolary networks (beginning in Zhenjiang and ending in Tongcheng). Qian Weilu, *Qiangong yinguang fujun nianpu* in *Suozhi lu*, pp.184-217.

[24] Qian Chengzhi, *Ji Huang Shizhai gebu laoshi shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, pp.368-370.

As a witness to the establishment and fall of the Hongguang and Longwu governments in the southeast region, Qian Chengzhi's letters connected the communication between the southeastern and southwestern networks on the Southern Ming affairs. His topics projected a tendency of summing up lessons and getting rid of ills for the Southern Ming regime. Before going west, Qian had served the Longwu court. As we can see from his *The Records of What I Know*, he was familiar with the infighting, decision-making, and military operations of the Longwu government. Some of the suggestions he put forward through his letters written in the southwest region were born after learning the lessons of the Longwu's failure. Between April and May of 1649, Qian Chengzhi, who was in Guangdong at the time, wrote to Qu Shisi, analysing the situation of the Yongli government in detail and pointing out that the most important thing at the moment was not to find talents, but how to let the existing courtiers do their best and wholeheartedly assist the emperor.[25] He believed that if officials deliberately exaggerated their analysis of the pros and cons of political or military affairs to obtain positions, and tried their best to show their concern for the society and the people, then they might not have the ability to benefit the dynasty after they became officials. This would result that those talented people gradually losing their original ambition to serve the court, while those without talent pursued fame and fortune, and the government would be difficult to implement any orders.[26] Such a malady had similarities with what he experienced in the Longwu government. In *The Records of What I Know*, Qian Chengzhi recorded the arrogance of Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 (1604-1661) and his henchmen in the Longwu court. Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Hongkui 郑鴻逵 (1613-1657) became extremely arrogant and rude because of their contribution to assisting Emperor Longwu. Zheng Zhilong first competed with prime minister Huang Daozhou for the seat at an imperial banquet, but he failed.[27] After then, he ordered his party members to impeach Huang for being pedantic and not capable of being a prime minister.[28] He also tried to let his students enter the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs and the Ministry of Revenue but was refused by Emperor Longwu, which made him resentful and deliberately pretended to be sick.[29] Qian Chengzhi's experience in the Longwu court prompted him to be deeply aware of the importance of selecting officials who did not seek personal gain but made contributions to the court. As a result, in his letter to Qu Shisi, he learned from Zheng's lesson and strongly suggested that Qu must pay attention to those people or officials who could contribute to the court.

[25] ibid, *Shang liushou xianggong shu*, p.377.
[26] ibid, pp.377-379.
[27] Qian Chengzhi, *Longwu jinian* in *Suozhi lu*, p.20.
[28] ibid.
[29] ibid.

Qu Shisi's letters also carried out interactions between the southeastern and southwestern networks. Although he never returned to his hometown since 1645, his family letters were circulated within a certain range on the southeastern network, allowing his relatives and friends to obtain military and political affairs in the southwest region. On 27 November 1648, in a letter to his friend Gu Linsheng, Qu told secret matters of the Yongli government: "The alarmist words of those little men frightened the weak emperor to be extremely frightened. [So he] entered Quanzhou [of Guilin] in the second month of 1647 and then went to Wugang [of Shaoyang prefecture in Huguang province] in the fourth month. The treacherous ministers took control of the government, and it seemed as if the sun in the sky was dimmed. ... The change of circumstances in the eighth month caused [the emperor] to flee again. It is better to kill the villain who harmed the dynasty! ... These two years, instead of being trapped by the Qing army, we were trapped by the bandits. 而小輩危言，偏中驚心之弱主。二月入全，四月入武，權奸用事，天日為昏。……而八月之變，又至蒙塵，誤國之賊，可勝誅哉！……兩年來不困於虜，反困於寇。"[30] With the help of his personal epistolary network, Qu avoided to some extent the poor news transmission caused by the border confrontation between the Southern Ming, the Qing, and the Shun territories between the southeast and southwest regions. Meanwhile, his letters might also provide a large amount of crucial information about the Southern Ming government to Ming loyalists who were in the southeastern Qing territory but secretly supported the Southern Ming regime, so that they would not be blocked.

All the letters mentioned above were sent from the Southern Ming territory, but this does not mean that Ming loyalists living in the Qing territory did not share the Southern Ming military and political news through their letters. These letters made Southern Ming epistolary networks which established in the Qing territory and functioned in secretly supporting the Southern Ming regime. A case in point is Hou Qizeng, who lived in the southeast. Beginning in the spring and summer of 1645, the Qing army, which had occupied the northern region, went all the way southward, resulting in most of the southeast region becoming Qing territory after 1646. In 1646, Hou exchanged letters contained Southern Ming affairs with Ming loyalists Hou Xuanhan, Qiu Minzhan 丘民瞻, Gu Tiankui, Xia Wanchun, Gu Xianzheng, Chen Zhouchu 陳周儲, Shen Huangyu 沈皇玉, Ni Boping 倪伯屏, and Li Chegong 李車公. On 21 March, Hou sent a letter to his third son Hou Xuanhan and said: "I heard that there were indeed more than a dozen people in Nanjing who did not shave their hair and were secretly trying to be inside contacts [for the Southern Ming regime]. They were all killed

[30] Qu Shisi, *Yu Gu Yushu shouzha sifeng (si)*, p.276.

because they were exposed. Later, four or five thousand volunteer soldiers surrounded Nanjing, and now they have been completely annihilated by the Qing army. It really made me cry. 南都聞果有未剃髮者數十人，密圖內應，事露伏誅，遂有義兵四五千人圍城，今已被敵殲盡，可為痛哭者此也。”[31] However, compared with the period when the southeastern network was still in the Southern Ming territory, these letters used cryptic phrases and sentences when talking about the Southern Ming court, and they were difficult to be carried out a large-scale circulation and were only passed on among relatives and close friends. This is because southeastern correspondents needed to protect their personal safety in the Qing territory.[32]

Since the beginning of the Southern Ming period, the northern region had been the Qing territory, which caused those topics related to the Southern Ming regime that appeared on the northern network to be not preserved. Nonetheless, we can get a glimpse of them through the case of "Taoist in a Red Robe 朱衣道人案" in which Fu Shan was involved in 1654.[33] On 13 March 1654, Southern Ming official Song Qian was arrested in Wu'an 武安 of Henan, and his confession spread to Fu Shan.[34] In his memorial to the Qing emperor, Ren Jun 任濬, the official of Ministry of Criminal Justice, wrote that Song Qian had sent letters to Fu Shan: "Fu Mei confessed: 'I heard that a man named Song came to ask my father to treat him last year, and he gave my father a gift and a letter, but [my father] did not accept.' 傅梅供稱：'聽得去年有個姓宋的來請小的父親看病，送禮壹分，書壹封，不曾受他的。'"[35] Although Fu argued that he never met Song or conspired activities against the Qing regime with him when Fu was released from prison, he wrote a poem lamenting that he could be alive and accompany his old mother, but he was ashamed of not firmly made efforts to revive the Ming rule, which implied his guilt towards the Southern Ming regime.[36] It shows that Fu and Song should have had secret contacts, and the possible method they used should be exchanging letters. In fact, starting around 1650, as the social situation in the Qing territory gradually stabilised, some Southern Ming correspondents began to travel, visit, and survey in secret to support the Southern Ming regime. They probably had letter exchanges with Southern Ming correspondents in different regional networks, which made their individual networks became an essential tool for trying to revive the Ming

[31] Hou Qizeng, *Ji Hong yizi* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong-hou qizeng riji*, pp.493-494.
[32] As discussed in the previous chapter, on 7 April 1646, in a letter to his friend Yang Tingshu referring to various matters of Ming loyalists, Hou Qizeng specifically exhorted that Yang should immediately destroy this letter after reading it. ibid, *Ji yang weidou*, p.498.
[33] Fu Shan wore a red robe after he became a Taoist after the Ming fall, implying that he was still a Ming man. It is because the Ming emperors' surname was "Zhu 朱", which means red. Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.319.
[34] ibid, p.321.
[35] ibid, p.323.
[36] Fu Shan, *Shansi bingzhong wangcun qiaozuo* in *Fu Shan quanshu 1*, p.152.

dynasty in the Qing territory. In 1656, Fu Shan travelled to the southeast area to secretly examine the possibility of following the Southern Ming regime.[37] The same is true for Qu Dajun from Guangzhou. After 1644, he travelled to the southeast, southwest, and north to secretly contact Southern Ming officials.[38] Since his works were banned and destroyed in the Qing dynasty, most of his letters are not preserved. But throughout his preserved letters, they are full of regret for the fall of the Ming dynasty, and many of his recipients were Ming loyalists.[39] We can infer from it that perhaps, like Fu Shan, Qu Dajun also secretly supported the Southern Ming regime and had correspondence with Ming loyalists to analyse the political and military situation, but those letters, as Hou Qizeng had requested, might destroyed after reading.

While the Southern Ming correspondents conveyed military and political news through letters, they also shared their individual choices of whether they should support the Southern Ming regime or not after encountering such affairs. Especially those central correspondents in different regional networks, their attitudes towards the Southern Ming regime revealed in their letters influenced the choices of their recipients. On 28 August 1644, Huang Daozhou in the southeastern network wrote to Huang Chunyao, telling him about the situation two months after the establishment of the Hongguang government. Huang Daozhou highlighted that although he was old and humble, he should not stay out of it: "I am a person of low status and do not know any news of the court. The dynasty has not yet stabilised and the enemy is fierce, although [I] am old and sick, and I do not know when I will pass away, how can [I] sleep peacefully. 僕身處於五未。無緣知中朝動靜。雖病老不關人世。至於乾坤締造。耕鑿未安。鹿豕嗷嗷。安能並付雲高枕乎。"[40] Such an attitude might deeply influence Huang Chunyao. In the following two or three years, he corresponded with his friends Hou Tongzeng, Hou Qizeng, and Xia Yunyi, and most of their discussions were about how to assist the Southern Ming government to restore the formal Ming territory. His choices affected other Southern Ming correspondents as well. The correspondence between Huang Chunyao and Hou Tongzeng in 1645, and the letter of condolence written by Chen Zilong to Xia Yunyi in 1646, revealed how they encouraged each other to focus on the rejuvenation of the Ming dynasty.[41] As a tool for transmitting military and political news, Southern Ming epistolary networks connected those correspondents with mutual political appeals, and they used epistolary networks to strengthen, stabilise,

[37] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, pp.336-338.
[38] Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu*, pp.73-74, 136-145.
[39] Qu Dajun, *Wengshan wenwai* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu 1412* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), pp.16.3a-4b.
[40] Huang Daozhou, *Zhi Yunsheng shouzha* in *Baojin zhai beitie jishi* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2009), p.106.
[41] Hou Tongzeng, *Yu Huang Taoan jinshi shu* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58-hou zhongjie gong quanji*, pp.9.4a-6a; Chen Zilong, *Bao Xia kaogong shu* in *Chen Zilong quanji xia* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2011), pp.831-835.

and continue their belief in following the Southern Ming regime. Letters could greatly function in the intercommunication of Southern Ming affairs because the writing method of the letter text is powerfully inclusive. Although conventional formats such as polite phrases and gestures need to be followed when writing a letter, the choice of topics is free. However, with the continuous reduction of the Southern Ming territory, the letter topic on Southern Ming epistolary networks shifted from discussing political and military affairs to sharing daily life and exchanging works of Ming culture.

Section Three The Ming-Qing Regime Alteration and the Change of Letter Topics

Since the Qing army advanced southwards in 1645, the Southern Ming territory had been shrinking from the southeast to the southwest. The location of the northern and southeastern networks became the Qing territory. Especially in the middle and late Southern Ming period, those central southwestern correspondents who originally firmly supported the Southern Ming regime became disillusioned due to frequent infightings within the court, so they chose to leave the Yongli government and return to their hometowns which had been the Qing territory to live as monks or hermits. Such circumstances drove the Southern Ming correspondents who were used to being keen on discussing Southern Ming affairs through their letters to turn to focusing on the writing of the Ming and the Southern Ming historiography, planning to compile Ming literary works, and studying Confucianism or Buddhism theories. They intended to show their attitude towards life as a loyalist of the previous dynasty, regardless of worldly affairs in the Qing territory. I argue that the alternation of the Ming and the Qing regimes caused the change in the letter topics of Southern Ming epistolary networks. It made correspondents aware of the fact that the Southern Ming regime would eventually fail and brought them speech restrictions on talking about the Southern Ming regime even though they lived as Ming loyalists.

1. New central correspondents and preserving the Ming

Since 1645, the failure of the Hongguang and Longwu governments caused many central southeastern correspondents to become Ming martyrs. Those surviving local Southern Ming correspondents were forced to accept the Qing order and become Qing subjects. Although they psychologically regarded themselves as Ming loyalists, the alteration of the Ming and the Qing regimes push them to seek other ways to maintain their connection with the Ming dynasty. Their status as literati prompted them to open

up the cultural preservation of the Ming, which generated the change of the letter topics in the southeastern network.

With the death of the old central correspondents who used letters to exchange Southern Ming news and the emergence of the new central correspondents with a strong sense of preserving the Ming culture, the southeastern network showed a collective "silence" in the discussion of Southern Ming politics and military affairs. Its letter topics turned to sharing the daily life of Ming loyalists in the Qing territory, and how they actively looked for ways to preserve the cultural memory of the Ming dynasty. New central correspondents were mostly famous scholars or outstanding figures in the late Ming and early Qing literati circle, such as Wang Shimin, Mao Xiang, Gui Zhuang, and Zhang Dai. They ignored the ban on the private publication of Ming or Southern Ming historiography, attached great importance to writing them, and compiled literary works of Ming subjects and Ming loyalists, which drove other correspondents in this network to pay attention to and discuss similar topics.

Surprisingly, the most special central figure who led Ming-related cultural works in this network was Qian Qianyi, an original Ming official who had served both the Southern Ming and the Qing regimes. Qian worked for the Qing regime from 1645 to 1646 and was criticised by many Ming loyalists in the early Southern Ming period. However, he self-presented to be a Ming loyalist after resigning from the Qing court and returning to his hometown to live in reclusion. His awareness of preserving the Ming culture, and his senior status in the literati circle, making him a node in southeastern network to connect other Ming loyalists and carry out cultural works, which led the letter topics to turn to the fields of history and literature. Due to Qian's great reputation in the literati circle, many literati who devoted themselves to writing Ming and Southern Ming historiography specifically sent their works to him, asking for his advice. Around 1656, Qian wrote a letter to Pan Chengzhang 潘檉章 (1626-1663) who was from Wujiang 吳江 in Suzhou, praising Pan's historiography of *Guoshi kaoyi* 國史考異 (Examining the Doubts of the Ming History) and instructing him to look for old or fragmentary books as supplementary sources.[42] Qian Qianyi's encouragement and support of writing private historiography were not limited to the time and space of the Ming dynasty. Between 1650 and 1656, he wrote a letter to Ming loyalist Xu Shipu 徐世溥 (1608-1657), referring to Xu's *Jiangbian jilue* 江變紀略 (Records of the Political and Military Affairs in Jiangxi), a Southern Ming historiography, and correcting the mistake that the false prince was the emperor's son-in-law.[43] This book

[42] Qian Qianyi, *Yu wujiang Pan Litian shu* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 6*, pp.1319-1320.
[43] ibid, *Da Xu Juyuan shu*, pp.1312-1315.

records how Southern Ming officials Jin Shenghuan 金聲桓 (?-1649) and Wang Deren 王得仁 fighting against the Qing army in Nanchang 南昌 in 1647, which illustrates that Qian especially encouraged those literati who were committed to recording the historical facts of the Ming and the Southern Ming periods. From 1650, Qian discussed similar topics with Ming loyalists Yan Kaizheng, Wu Yan, Li Qing, Wang Shimin, Li Wensun 李文孫, Wang Youding 王猷定 (1598-1662), which invisibly promoted the function of letters of preserving the Ming in the historical field.

In addition to Qian Qianyi, Ming loyalist Zhang Dai, who was also in the southeastern network, became a central correspondent in compiling Ming historiography. Around 1678, after completing *Shiku shu* 石匱書 (The Book Preserved in the Stone Box), Zhang sent a letter to his friends Li Changxiang 李長祥 (1609-1673), clarifying his purpose of writing this book: "After the Donglin Party caused the [Ming] fall, the action of harming the society still exists today. [These people] are deliberately going to make historical writers praise the members of the Donglin Party. This is what makes me cry and sigh. 今乃當東林敗國亡家之後，流毒昭然，猶欲使作史者曲筆拗筆，仍欲擁戴東林，此某所痛哭流涕長太息者也。"[44] Zhang aimed to criticise those members of the Donglin Party 東林黨 who he believed had undermined the Ming dynasty, and he attempted to reflect on the reasons for the collapse of the Ming dynasty through his book. Judging by Zhang's words, we can realise that, as a member of the southeastern network, Zhang was familiar with the phenomenon that Qian Qianyi, who was one of the members of the Donglin Party, and his friends were writing Ming and the Southern Ming historiography. Although Zhang and Qian had different opinions about the merits and demerits of the Donglin Party, their purposes of preserving the Ming by writing historiography were the same.

In the southeastern network, the action of preserving Ming poems and works of Ming loyalists was eager, which made this network a mechanism of planning, discussing, sharing, and circulating literary works. In a letter reply to one of his relatives Zhang Yiru 张毅儒, who was also a Ming loyalist, Zhang Dai put forward his opinions of the selecting methods on the poems for compiling *Mingshi cun* 明詩存 (The Preservation of the Ming Poems).

> I have read *The Preservation of the Ming Poems* that you sent, and I can see that you have put a lot of effort into collecting and selecting these poems. However, peeping at your aims, you chose a poet more urgently than

[44] Zhang Dai, *Yu Li Yanweng* in *Langhuan wenji* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe chubanshe, 1985), p.147.

> choosing a poem. Thus, most of the poets included in this collection are not good, and many poets are missing. Simply reading this collection of poems, [we can see that it is more like] the preservation of Ming subjects, not the preservation of Ming poems. ... If those who cannot write poems are deleted, those who can write poems will be kept; if those who can write poems will be included, then all Ming subjects who can write poems will be preserved in this collection. This still does not lose your original purpose of preserving poets to preserve the Ming dynasty.
> 見示《明詩存》，博搜精選，具見心力。但窺吾弟立意，存人爲急，存詩次之。故存人者詩多不佳，存詩者人多不備。簡閱此集，大約是明人存，非明詩存也。……不能詩之人刪，則能詩之人存；能詩之人存，則能詩之明人亦與俱存，仍不失吾弟存人與存明之本意也。[45]

Zhang Dai understood that Zhang Yiru wanted to "*cunming* 存明 (preserve the Ming)" by preserving the Ming poetry. Such an awareness led to the commercialisation of Ming-related works, and the process from compiling to publishing carried out through epistolary networks. In a letter to Zhou An'qi 周安期, Qian Qianyi said that "after the Ming-Qing transition, I fear that the Ming poems might be submerged 鼎革之後，恐明朝一代之詩，遂致淹沒", inviting Zhou to collect and compile Ming poems with him.[46] Qian might have shared his plan with his friends and circulated it through the southeastern network. In his letter to Ming loyalist Lu Xian 陸鉉, Wang Shimin asked Lu about Qian's selection of the Ming anthology.[47] Wang's inquiry was probably learned by Qian Qianyi, and they might also exchange letters to talk about Ming poetry and prose since then, but the only evidence that can be seen so far is a letter from Wang to Qian. In this letter, Wang praised Qian's contribution to organising his friends and students to compile and commercialised Ming literary works.[48] As a matter of fact, Qian Qianyi made more efforts in preserving the Ming poems and prose through his epistolary network. Between 1657 and 1664, Qian mentioned in a letter to Peng Shiwang 彭士望 (1610-1683) that he hoped Peng could sort out the manuscripts of Ming loyalists such as Xu Shipu, so as to make their works pass down to future generations.[49] He attached the proofreading of Gui Youguang's 歸有光 (1507-1571) *Zhenchuan xiansheng wenji* 震川先生文集 (The Anthology of Mr. Gui Youguang) with his letters to help Ming loyalist Gui Zhuang edit his grandfather's literary works.[50]

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45 ibid, *Yu Yiru badi*, pp.140-141.
46 Qian Qianyi, *Yu Zhou An'qi* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 7*, p.236.
47 Wang Shimin, *Zhi Lu Xian-qiyi* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.273.
48 ibid, p.270.
49 Qian Qianyi, *Da Peng Dasheng shu* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 6*, pp.1333-1334.
50 ibid, *Yu Gui jinshi lun jiao zhenchuan ji shu*, pp.1335-1337.

In his letters written to the publisher Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599-1659), Qian expressed his intention to compile an anthology for the literati Huang Chunyao who died for the Ming dynasty.[51] Southeastern correspondents like Qian Qianyi and Zhang Dai who were interested in preserving Ming works would inform their recipients of their plans through correspondence. Afterwards, their recipients became senders and wrote letters to other recipients to pass on such incidents, so that more correspondents in the southeastern network could learn about the news of compiling the Ming poetic collection and anthology.

Unlike the southeastern network, which focused on both Ming and Southern Ming cultural works, the northern and southwestern networks paid more attention to the discussion of recording the Southern Ming history. This is related to the identity of the local central correspondents, their experiences, and the different cultural fields they focused on. As the northern region had been the Qing territory since 1644, Ming loyalists in the north did not have the opportunity to publicly participate in activities to support the Southern Ming regime. Although there showed no change on the letter topics in the northern network, the awareness of preserving the Ming culture still emerged. Ming loyalists like Fu Shan, Sun Qifeng, and Wang Hongzhuan shared historical and scholarly ideas through their letters. However, these central correspondents focused less on literature. Fu Shan mainly studied historiography, Taoism, and medicine. Sun Qifeng focused on Neo-Confucian and historiography. Only Wang Hongzhuan had insights into poetry and essays in addition to his studies of Neo-Confucian, Book of Changes Studies 易學, and historiography. Despite the differences in their focus, as northerners, they experienced the fall of the Ming dynasty and the transformation of their identities earlier than most of the southeastern and southwestern correspondents. Like the southeastern correspondents, they ignored the Qing's ban on writing Ming historiography, showing a stronger desire to discuss the affairs and Ming martyrs in the north and to complete historiography or biographies with the help of the epistolary network. In a letter written to Dai Tingshi, Fu Shan said that he was going to share with Dai the military and political affairs in Shanxi that he recorded after 1644, and he hoped that Dai, who was in Beijing at the time, could send the records of what he had seen and heard about the Shun army's attack on Beijing.[52] Sun Qifeng also expressed his wish to write Southern Ming historiography. In his letter to Jin Xiaosun 金肖孫 (? -1671), he particularly mentioned the tragedy that befell his hometown when the Shun army came in 1644. He hoped that Jin would write down his experiences and send them to him as a source for his historiography.[53] The epistolary networks of Fu

[51] Qian Qianyi, *Yu Mao Zijin-di sishi wu tong* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 7*, p.315.
[52] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Tingshi shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.183.
[53] Sun Qifeng, *Ji Jin Ruizhi* in *Xiafeng xiansheng ji* (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), p.49.

Shan and Sun Qifeng had served as an important tool before they started writing their books. The historical events they discussed or mentioned in their letters were not simply for lamenting with their recipients about the sufferings they had encountered, but rather, they used their letters to connect more people with the same experiences and obtain information that could help them complete their historical works. Their epistolary networks in the northern region probably served much more than that. Like Qian Qianyi in the southeastern network, their letters might have played a role in supporting or influencing other northern correspondents in their efforts to preserve Ming culture. Dai Tingshi, also a northern correspondent and close to Fu Shan, wrote biographies of some Ming officials who fought the Shun or the Qing armies to death.[54] Although Dai's letters were not preserved, from the correspondence between him and Fu Shan, it can be surmised that his motivation for writing such biographies might have been inspired by Fu.

In contrast, as the central correspondent in the southwest, Qu Shisi did not write historiography himself, but his epistolary network triggered the historical writing of his recipients. On 1 July 1649, Qu was overjoyed when he learned that his grandson, Qu Changwen 瞿昌文, had come to see him after overcoming all the hardships in travelling, but he still asked Qu Changwen to write a diary for recording his seven-month journey.

> During your ten days on the boat, you can write a daily record of your experiences from the time you left home to the time you arrive in Wuzhou. Keep it for the future, which can be regarded as a serious literary sketches.
> 汝水上十日，可將出門後，至抵梧前，一路光景，備寫一日紀路程，留之他年，可當正經小說一部，且吾欲據以入告，表汝一段至性，以風厲海內也。[55]

The literary sketch is one category of private historiography.[56] He believed that a diary detailing the journey from Changshu to Guilin would become a credible historiography of the Southern Ming period for future generations. Qu Xuanyu 瞿玄錡, who came to see his father Qu Shisi a year later, received the same task. In a letter written on 22 September 1650, Qu Shisi asked for a trip record: "The situation in my hometown has changed again in half a year. You write a written report on the ship, recording what happened in our hometown before the third month [of this year], and what you

[54] Dai Tingshi, *Banke ji* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 64* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010).
[55] Qu Shisi, *Jichou wuyue nian'er ri chenke shufu changwen sun* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.269.
[56] Tan Fan, *Shuyu de jiedu xiaoshuo shi yanjiu de teshu lilu* in *Zhongguo gudai xiaoshuo wenti wenfa shuyu kaoshi* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2013), p.11.

experienced and heard during the trip. Send it to me by official postal ship [before you arrive]. 家鄉事半年來又是一番光景，今且就三月前及途中所經所見，于上水船中略節寫一篇送我看，先從提塘船上寄來。”[57]

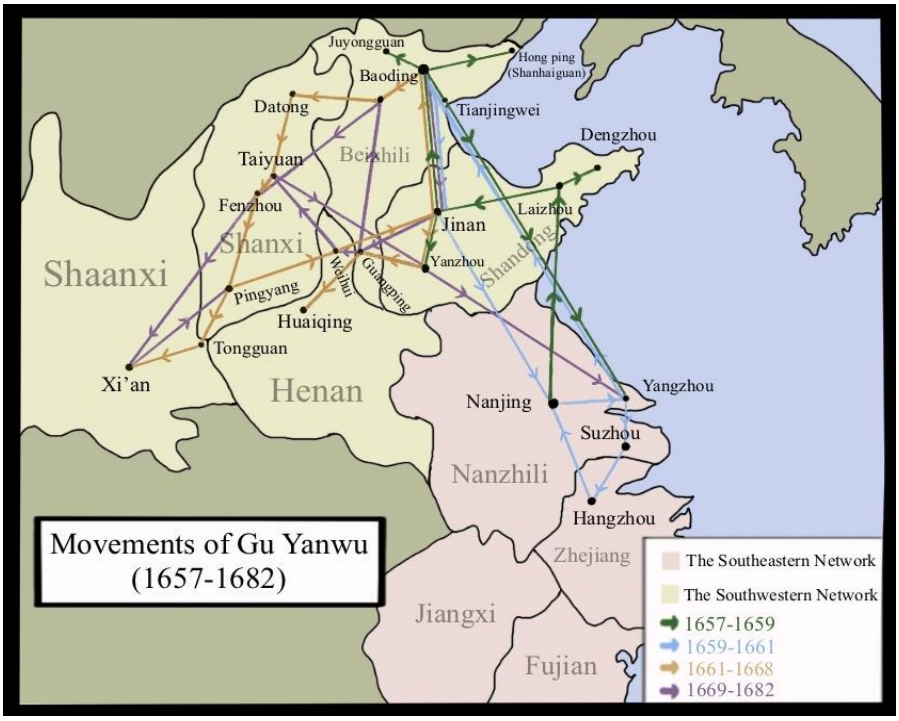
Although southwestern correspondents like Qu Shisi were still in the midst of political struggles between the Southern Ming and the Qing regimes at that time, their awareness of recording what they experienced and writing Southern Ming historiography had sprouted. Qu's letters played a more direct role than that of an influence—a coercive demand. His identities as a grandfather and a father made it difficult for his correspondents, a grandson and a son, to refuse his request. Nonetheless, we cannot simply conclude that his correspondents were merely fulfilling a task without a sense of preserving Ming culture. It is because although the Southern Ming regime was the continuation of the Ming dynasty, there is a difference between focusing on Southern Ming-related works and preserving Ming cultural works before 1644. In essence, Qu Shisi revealed a sense of responsibility, especially in the letter to his grandson, he directly indicated that recording the journey was to preserve true history for future generations. For Chinese literati, writing for posterity is an admirable endeavour, not to mention the fact that Qu Changwen's experience was unique. He travelled from the Qing territory to the Southern Ming territory and inevitably encountered many hardships when crossing the Ming-Qing frontier. To write down his journey was no longer simply to fulfil the task from his grandfather, but more to show to the world his heroic deeds of risking his life to visit his grandfather, as well as the true affairs that he saw on this journey that others never had the chance to know. Therefore, such a sense of responsibility might convey to Qu Changwen through this letter, evoking his awareness of preserving the Ming culture. Eventually, he completed the *Yuexing jishi* 粵行紀事 (Records of Travelling to Guangxi) based on his journey.

A similar sense of responsibility were present in both northern and southeastern networks. In the letters of the northern correspondents Fu Shan and Sun Qifeng discussed above, they particularly pointed out that they wanted to leave a true history for future generations.[58] Southeastern correspondent Hou Qizeng wrote that he recorded all his experiences after 1645 in his diary, "for future generations to compile and examine 以備後人輯考".[59] Many literati noticed that the complex political situation and changing governments in the Southern Ming period disrupted the compilation of official dynastic historiography. Under such a circumstance, they hoped

[57] Qu Shisi, *Gengyin bayue nianqi ri shufu yu'er* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.272.
[58] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Tingshi shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.183; Sun Qifeng, *Ji Jin Ruizhi* in *Xiafeng xiansheng ji*, p.49.
[59] Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji zixu* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, p.483.

that their historiography or diaries would one day become authentic historical materials for compiling the official Southern Ming history. Qian Chengzhi emphasised that his *Records of What I Know* included the Southern Ming political and military affairs that he witnessed when he was serving the Longwu and Yongli regimes.[60] The purpose of Li Qing's writing *Sanyuan biji* 三垣筆記 (Notes of The Jobs) was also because the relevant Southern Ming records written by literati at the time were difficult to distinguish between true and false, and there were many mistakes.[61] He believed that his historiography, which recorded the affairs he experienced in Southern Ming court, could "mark the truth of beauty, evil, and virtuousness [incidents] in the past ten years 誌十年來美惡賢否之真".[62]

In works such as historiography or diaries, the affairs that occurred in the Southern Ming period were recorded, and letters were used to obtain the approval and suggestions of other literati who were interested in this cause, which also prompted correspondents from different regional networks to achieve cross-regional cultural exchanges with the help of individual networks constructed by those correspondents who travelled around. A case in point is Gu Yanwu, who connected the northern and the southeastern networks in the cultural field.



Movements of Gu Yanwu from 1657 to 1682[63]

[60] Qian Chengzhi, *Fanli* in *Suozhi lu*, pp.11-12.
[61] Li Qing, *Zixu* in *Sanyuan biji*, p.3.
[62] ibid.
[63] This map refers to southeastern and northern epistolary networks, as well as the chronological biography of Gu Yanwu. Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.15-97.

From 1657 for the following twenty-five years, Gu left his hometown Suzhou in the southeast and headed north, travelling around Shandong, Beijing, Hebei, Shaanxi, and Shanxi provinces, but he rarely returned to the southeast region.[64] During his lifetime in the north, Gu corresponded frequently with northern correspondents Fu Shan, Wang Hongzhuan, Chen Xian, Dai Tingshi, and Sun Qifeng. Nevertheless, Gu still maintained letter exchanges with the correspondents in the southeast, such as Ming loyalists Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695), Gui Zhuang, Lu Shiyi 陸世儀 (1611-1672). He discussed methods of writing historiography, literary works, and scholarship with both southeastern and northern correspondents. With the motivation of *mingdao* 明道 (explain the morality) and *jiushi* 救世 (save the world),[65] Gu completed his *Daily Records of Knowledge*, a book written to reflect on the reasons for the collapse of the Ming dynasty. From 1670 to 1680, he mentioned this book in six of his letters and delivered it with four of these letters to ask for suggestions. His recipients included Wang Jianchang 王建常 in the northern network and Huang Zongxi in the southeastern network. In this way, his reflections on the Ming fall and his awareness of preserving Ming culture circulated among correspondents in the north and south along with his letters. Gu's epistolary network thus connected literati from the north and the south to conduct cultural exchanges.

Correspondence is a bidirectional interaction. After recipients obtains the senders' information, they become senders when replying, and in turn send new information to the original senders. Through letter exchanges, Gu Yanwu's scholarship, historical writing methods, and literary quality might be inspired by both the southeastern and northern literati circles. Simultaneously, he would also influence his recipients in different regions. In 1660, he exchanged letters with Pan Jianzhang from Wujiang in the southeast region, discussing Pan's *Guoshi kaoyi Examine Errors of the Imperial History*.[66] Meanwhile, he often shared historical views with northern correspondents, and in 1679, he even wrote letters including historical topics to the Qing officials who were compiling the Qing organised Ming historiography, such as Tang Bin 湯斌 (1627-1687), Ye Fang'ai 葉方靄 (1629-1682), Pan Lei, Xu Yuanwen. Since Gu Yanwu's letters closely linked the southeastern and the northern networks, his concern for cultural works might also function in the change of letter topics.

[64] Between 1650 and 1657, Gu Yanwu was framed and attempted assassinations by relatives, squires, and servants who robbed his family property, and his houses were looted and burned many times. Gu had no choice but to avoid disaster and go north after 1657 and had rarely returned to his hometown since then. ibid, pp.24-33.
[65] Gu Yanwu, *Chuke rizhi lu zixu* in *Rizhi lu jishi* (Taibei: Shijie shuju, 1962), pp.1-2.
[66] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.36-38.

2. Letter topics and the Southern Ming regime from establishment to decline

The shift in the letter topics projected the change of the Southern Ming regime from prosperity to decline. This is particularly evident in the southwestern network. Compared with the southeast region which was quickly occupied by the Qing army, the Yongli government in the southwest lasted longer. It allowed southwestern correspondents to witness the persistent failure of this regime. The correspondent recorded what they saw and felt in letters and exchanged them with other correspondents through the southwestern network, which affected the mindsets, views, and decisions of southwestern correspondents. In early February 1647, Qu wrote in his family letter:

> Commander Chen Bangchuan was determined not to let the emperor stay in Guilin. When he was in Pingle, [he] secretly told [the emperor] the danger of staying in Guilin every day. He stimulated the emperor to leave, and the emperor did leave! ... I tried my best to dissuade [the emperor] but was unsuccessful, ... In this case, [I] asked to be stationed [in Guilin]. ... Now the emperor is still stationed in Quanzhou, and I am trying to keep him. If [he] is willing to be stationed in Quanzhou, I will continue to support him; if [he] chooses to go to the Chu area, [I] can only ask for resignation and will never fight for the dynasty again!
> 無奈總鎮陳邦傳苦不要上居桂林，在平樂日以危言密奏，激上之行，而上果行矣！……餘力爭之不得，……因請留守，……今上猶駐全州，余苦留之，若肯駐全，余尚一往；如必入楚，則惟有乞老臣骸骨，斷不能相從戎馬之中矣！[67]

Qu Shisi sent a total of fourteen family letters between 1644 and 1650, and similar complaints and intentions of returning home accounted for nine of them. Although he was still an official in the Yongli court, his mindset had been struggling between leaving and staying. He might reveal his struggle to Qian Chengzhi in their correspondence. Between August and September of 1650, Qian Chengzhi wrote a letter to persuade him to stay and try his best to run the Southern Ming government.[68] As Qu told his family members that in his view, there was no Ming rule after the fall of the Beijing government in 1644,[69] Qian also believed in this letter that the Southern Ming dynasty was nothing but an empty shell.[70] Such a similar opinion means that they had

[67] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue chushi zaishu* in *Qu Shisi ji*, pp.261-262.
[68] Qian Chengzhi, *Youji liushou shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, pp.382-383.
[69] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue chushi zaishu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.260.
[70] Qian Chengzhi, *Youji liushou shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, pp.382-383.

exchanged questions about whether the Yongli government could maintain its rule, and they both agreed that it was already in jeopardy and could not revive the Ming dynasty. Despite this, Qian still wrote this letter to comfort Qu, hoping that Qu would not give up supporting the Yongli government because of grievances from other officials.

The above example shows that those Southern Ming correspondents who had mutual experiences in the southwest region would produce similar views when exchanging ideas and emotions through letters. It prompted them to make the same decision—leaving the Yongli government and living in their hometown as hermits. Such a choice led the subject of political and military affairs to be replaced by sharing daily life and preserving the Ming culture, thus generating the collective change of letter topics in the southwestern network. Judging from the time point of this transformation, the southwestern network was later than the southeastern network, starting around 1650. Compared with the concern about the Ming-related history and literature that emerged in the southeast, the southwestern network was more inclined to discuss Buddhist topics. It is because many original central correspondents in the southwest region died around 1650, such as Qu Shisi. Although the Yongli government did not end this year, from the perspective of other southwestern correspondents, this government had entered a period of irreversible decline. Correspondents who were not originally from the southwest regions, like Qian Chengzhi and Fang Yizhi, returned to their hometowns in the southeast region, which reduced the number of people in this network. Eventually, there was only one central correspondent, Jin Bao.

Around 1650, Jin chose to be a monk in Guilin after suffering the infighting of the Yongli court.[71] Becoming a monk could present to the public that he was separated from worldly affairs, and thus he no longer cared about politics and military affairs of the Southern Ming or the Qing regimes. He went to Leifeng Monastery 雷峰寺 in Guangzhou, and then he lived in Pidanzhen Monastery 辟丹震寺 in Shaoguan 韶关 of Guangdong. Most of his letter topics, before he left the Southern Ming government, were similar to Qu Shisi, mainly sharing and discussing affairs of the Yongli court. However, from 1650 onwards, such topics completely disappeared from his correspondence, replaced by his daily life as a monk. He talked with other monks about travel expenses and whether they should meet in person or travel together. He focused on publishing Buddhist works as well, and most of his letters conveyed the topics of ordinary greetings, the weather conditions of his residence, the construction of the monastery and pagodas, and stories about Buddhist figures.[72]

[71] Qian Haiyue, *Liezhuan di sanshi wu-jin bao* in *Nanming shi 8*, p.2762.
[72] Shi Dangui, *Bianxing tang ji* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 46* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), pp.21.1a-26.37b.

The decline of the Southern Ming regime directly affected the letter topics of southwestern correspondents. They no longer concentrated on discussing the Southern Ming affairs, which was possible because it was difficult for them to obtain accurate information after they left the court, or they felt disillusioned as the Yongli government was unable to maintain the rule of this regime. Judging by the change in the focus of their letters, we can see that the gradual demise of the Southern Ming regime was not only reflected in the rapid replacement of emperors, the movement of government establishment from southeast to southwest, and the continuous shrinking of the Southern Ming territory but also reflected in the gradual weakening of the attention paid to this regime in the Southern Ming epistolary networks. Such a transformation was one of the concrete manifestations in the field of letters during the Ming-Qing transition. As witnesses of the regime alternation, the change of letter topics of the Southern Ming correspondents shows a collective projection of the cognition and mindsets on the transition of the Southern Ming regime from prosperity to decline.

3. Letter topics and the change of territory

The change from the Ming to the Qing in the territory where the regionalised Southern Ming epistolary networks were located led to the shift in the letter topics. Changes in territory brought about changes in identity. Since 1645, the Southern Ming correspondents intended to seek a balance in the identity as they saw themselves as Ming subjects but having to accept that they were Qing subjects. Although the Southern Ming government still existed in the southwest, for correspondents in the north and southeast, it was unknown whether this government could revive the Ming dynasty and regain the territory occupied by the Qing regime. In order to survive in the Qing territory, they had to shave their hair and change clothes. At the same time, however, they called themselves “Ming loyalists” and highlighted this identity to maintain the connection with the Ming dynasty on a psychological level. Under the impact of such complex identity struggles, the Southern Ming correspondents living in the Qing territory avoided talking about Southern Ming affairs, and they turned to emphasise their life attitude of not caring about worldly affairs, declining political cooperation with the Qing court, sharing their nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, and focusing on exploring Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism.

After 1647, southeastern correspondent Lu Yuanfu sent a letter to another Ming loyalist Ge Zhi 葛芝 (1618-?), lamenting the inability to continue the Southern Ming regime between 1645 and 1646, as well as their helplessness because they could only live as Ming loyalists.

> [The Southern Ming emperors were killed in] 1645 and 1647, and the southeast region has had no hope since then. Fortunately, Mr. Zhang Shouxian was living in reclusion. He was a talented person and was looking forward to [the restoration of the dynasty] as a loyalist. However, he passed away so suddenly.
> 乙酉丁亥兩番慘毒。東南正氣盡矣。幸張受先先生尚存隱。然管葛以系遺民之望。不謂溘然長逝。[73]

Similarly, between 1645 and 1680, when Wang Shimin, who lived in Taicang Prefecture, wrote to a Ming loyalist called Lu Xian, Wang referred to himself as a Ming loyalist and believed that the Ming dynasty was the "the previous dynasty". He missed and regretted the overthrow of the Southern Ming regime in the southeast area: "I am aging and my days are wasting away. [I am] a remnant of the old dynasty, so guilty that I dare not face the passaging of the times, ... the loss of [dynasty] can be remembered, and it is also [made people] heartbroken and frightened. 不肖某馬齒虛度，故國遺民，自愧腼焉視蔭，……東南半壁，獨委爲豐年化國，其故可思，亦可痛可駭甚矣。"[74] Although they partly followed the Qing order, they still adhered to the Ming identity. This put them in a dilemma—neither could they truly become Qing subjects, but they could not return to their Ming lives. In order to reconcile this contradiction, they chose to avoid talking about political or military affairs, only concerned about their personal life and cultural exchanges to stay away from the Qing political circle. Such a choice prompted a change in the focus of their letter topics. Looking at the letters of Lu Yuanfu and Wang Shimin in the Southern Ming period, there are much more mundane affairs. Even if there are a few mentions of political topics, it is because the decrees of the Qing government impacted largely their daily life. In 1666, for example, Wang Shimin wrote that he was anxious about paying taxes when writing to his fifth son Wang Bian.[75]

The Southern Ming correspondents also changed their focus from Southern Ming affairs to discussions on Buddhism in response to the change of territory and identity, hoping to use religious beliefs to get rid of worldly ties with the Qing dynasty. Throughout the Southern Ming period, we can find that lots of Ming loyalists with famous reputations had been invited by the Qing court to serve as Qing officials, such as Gu Yanwu, Wang Hongzhuan, Sun Qifeng, Chen Xi, Hou Fangyu, Fang Yizhi, and Fu Shan. In order to avoid political cooperation, living in reclusion became many of their choices. For example, Fu Shan chose to be a Taoist, while Fang Yizhi and Jin Bao

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[73] Lu Yuanfu, *Yu Ge Duanwu lun sanghun shu* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian-lu juyin xiansheng wenji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), p.468.
[74] Wang Shimin, *Zhi Lu Xian-qi'er* in *Wang Shimin ji*, pp.274-275.
[75] ibid, *Bingwu (yi)*, p.148.

turned to be monks. Correspondents like Wang Shimin claimed to be lay Buddhists and corresponded with Buddhist monks. Talking about Buddhist topics in letters could tell the recipients that the letter writers had stayed away from worldly matters. As Jin Bao said to the Qing official Liu Chiping 劉持平, "living in a remote mountain is like sitting at the bottom of a well, and I do not know anything from the outside world. Occasionally, I hear some news but they are all absurd and unbelievable. 住深山如坐井底，都不聞外間事。偶有所聞，皆荒唐不足信。"[76] The demise of the Ming dynasty caused a great impact on the identity of these Ming subjects who could not accept the Qing identity. The Southern Ming epistolary network provided them with a channel to declare their identities as monks, Taoists, and lay Buddhists to the outside world, helped them to cut off secular identities and connections, and thus avoided cooperation with the Qing court to a certain extent.

4. Restrictions on speech as Ming loyalists in the Qing territory

The shift on the letter topics of the Southern Ming epistolary network reflects that the life of Ming loyalists in the Qing territory was subject to certain restrictions on speech. For Ming loyalists, it was not an easy task of living in the Qing territory, as they suffered the inconsistency in their identities and the Southern Ming regime that they believed continued the Ming rule was regarded as an "illegitimate regime"[77] by the Qing government. The fate of those who supported such an illegitimate regime was obvious to all. As a result of the "Taoist in a Red Robe" case, Fu Shan was sent to prison because he was suspected of having secret contacts with Southern Ming official Song Qian, and he was released after more than a year.[78] Similarly, on 21 March 1646, Hou Qizeng mentioned in a letter to his third son Hou Xuanhan that four or five thousand volunteer Southern Ming soldiers tried to break through the city of Nanjing to fight against the Qing regime but failed.[79] In 1661, people in Jintan 金壇 of the southeast region were suspected of having secret contacts with the Southern Ming navy that also suffered political persecution from the Qing government.[80] The Qing court did not allow the people under its rule to have any form of connection with the Southern Ming regime, and they had to admit the fact that the Ming dynasty had collapsed. People could be Ming loyalists, but they were forbidden to be supporters of the Southern Ming regime. Since the Qing government never recognised the legitimacy of the Southern Ming regime, the Southern Ming correspondents living in the Qing territory had to follow

[76] Shi Dangui, *Liu Chiping futai* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 46-bianxing tang ji*, p.24.9a.
[77] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.319.
[78] ibid, pp.321-333.
[79] Hou Qizeng, *Ji Hong yizi* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong-hou qizeng riji*, pp.493-494.
[80] Ji Liuqi, *Jintan dayu* in *Mingji nanlue* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), pp.500-503.

such an attitude. This directly led to the discussion on the topic of Southern Ming affairs quickly disappearing after the areas of regional epistolary networks became the Qing territory.[81]

It demonstrates that while the Qing government provided a stable environment for the letter exchange to Ming loyalists, it also brought a large degree of political control, which did not allow them to speak freely about Southern Ming affairs when writing letters and also cut the way they got news in the remaining Southern Ming territory to a largely extent.[82] During the forty years of the Southern Ming period, those Southern Ming letters exchanged in the Qing territory were at risk of being confiscated. This drove the Southern Ming correspondents to avoid topics that might attract the attention of the Qing government or bring political crises to both parties when writing letters. In the first section of Chapter Two, we discussed that the Southern Ming letters had a large possibility to be intercepted or snatched by the Qing regime in its territory. Both Southern Ming official Qu Shisi and Ming loyalist Hou Qizeng had such experiences, as their letters often included topics related to Southern Ming politics and military affairs.[83] These letters would be regarded by the Qing regime as evidence of collusion with the "illegitimate regime", thus causing them to suffer political persecution from the Qing government. It also explains why after 1646, the letter topics in the southeastern network had a greater sense of change than before.

Gu Yanwu, who lived in the north since the middle and late Southern Ming period, had similar worries. In 1679, in a letter to his nephew Xu Yuanwen, Gu shared his method of writing historiography, but before finishing this letter, he specifically told his nephew that what he said was only a private conversation among family members, which should not be told to others.[84] At that time, Xu Yuanwen was working in the Qing Imperial Historical Academy to compile the official Ming historiography. Nevertheless, such an identity did not make Gu Yanwu relax his vigilance but was still careful and prevented his letter from being read by a third party. These examples proved that the restrictions on speech brought about by living in the Qing territory had a profound impact on the selection of the letter topics in the Southern Ming networks. It was essentially a choice made by the Southern Ming correspondents after weighing the pros and cons of

[81] See the discussions in the first part of this section for examples.
[82] In fact, such control was universal, especially in the field of literati culture. As Struve observes, the political transition of the Ming-Qing regimes hastened literati culture in the late Ming period to turn to cultural conservatism, respecting the authority of objective knowledge and textual evidence. In other words, the Qing government's restrictions on literati forced them to focus more on the study of Classics and seldom openly talked about social affairs and politics. Struve, 'Chinese Memory Makes a Martyr', (p.5).
[83] Qu Shisi, *Jichou chun sanyue niansi ri liushou gongshu ji* in *Qu shisi ji*, p.267; Hou Qizeng, *Hou Qizeng riji* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong*, p.498.
[84] Gu Yanwu, *Yu Gongsu sheng shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.107.

individual survival in the Qing territory.

In conclusion, from 1644 to 1683, the Ming identity generated the establishment of the Southern Ming epistolary network, and the division of the Ming territory made this network present regional features in the southeast, the southwest, and the north, but they also conducted cross-regional interactions under the link of individual epistolary networks established based on the movements of some correspondents. The turbulent situation in the early Southern Ming period made southeastern and southwestern networks a tool for transmitting information on current affairs, allowing correspondents in different regions and territories to learn military and political news of the Southern Ming regime. It also exchanged upcoming military operations and political decrees promulgated by the Southern Ming government, which profoundly affected correspondents' political choices after suffering the Ming-Qing transition. Although the northern network established in the Qing territory was weak in the transmission of Southern Ming information, it carried out the communications of cultural works and secret Southern Ming affairs with the southeastern network after the Qing army occupied this region.

However, with the gradual control of the former Ming territory by the Qing regime, the location of the Southern Ming epistolary network became part of the Qing territory, which forced the Southern Ming correspondents to be Qing subjects at least outwardly. The persistent failure of the Southern Ming regime, the change of identity from Ming subjects to Qing subjects, and the restrictions on speech from the Qing government prompted a collective change on the letter topics in each regional Southern Ming epistolary network. In order to maintain the connection with the Ming dynasty, correspondents devoted themselves to compiling Ming and Southern Ming historiography and literary works of the Ming dynasty and Ming loyalists, striving to realise the preservation of the Ming in the cultural field. Simultaneously, they avoided talking about worldly affairs and strongly emphasised that they had become hermits. Epistolary networks provided the Southern Ming correspondents with the function of displaying and announcing their Ming identity to construct political identity that was independent of the Qing identity. In this way, they presented their self-identity to the outside world and shared the common emotions generated from Ming loyalism, thus establishing the Southern Ming emotional communities to resist the assimilation of the Qing regime in the emotional field.

Chapter Four

The Southern Ming Emotional Community

Chinese letters embody the function of expressing emotions. In the Southern Ming period, emotions were transmitted through epistolary networks, connecting correspondents in different regions and territories. After experiencing the Ming fall, the loyalty of many correspondents to this dynasty not only did not disappear but became stronger under the emotional pressure from the Qing regime. Letters, as media for communication, provided Southern Ming correspondents with a mechanism to form a community that identified themselves as Ming subjects or loyalists to replace the fragile Southern Ming regime and maintain social bonds by sharing similar emotions to against the Qing conquest.

Drawing on Rosenwein's theory of emotional communities,[1] I argue that motivated by their common Ming loyalism, the Southern Ming correspondents generated anticipation for the Southern Ming regime, but after realising that this regime could not revive the Ming rule, they became disillusioned. Nevertheless, loyalism, which is both an emotional characteristic and a moral principle, constrained the action of Southern Ming correspondents and prompted them to show similar norms, thus projecting their adherence to the Ming identity.[2] Not only that, although the Southern Ming correspondents lived in different territories, their observance of similar norms led to the same emotional community that existed in different regions.[3] The emotional transformation time points of southeastern, southwestern, and northern epistolary networks changed with the variation in the regime, and the specific emotional presentation would be different as well. Furthermore, while exchanging letters to provide emotional comfort, the Southern Ming emotional community monitored correspondents within the community, urging them to abide by the norms and acts of being loyal to the Ming dynasty, to resist the emotional pressure of Qing loyalism. This chapter focuses on the Southern Ming letter texts to examine how and why the emotions

[1] Rosenwein points out that emotional communities are formed by sets of emotions, which related to certain values, needs, and goals, expressing the similar norms such as following ritual acts. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, pp.13, 26, 49, 203.

[2] Rosenwein believes that some emotion words not only express feelings but also show moral states. Gammerl suggests that people's choices of emotional style are constrained by social norms. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p.49 ; Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles', (pp.167-168).

[3] Rosenwein argues that the same emotional community might coexist in different regions. She studies different emotional communities (she calls them "subordinate") of the same Christian emotional community through emotions on inscriptions in different regions. By contrast, the coexistence of the Southern Ming emotional communities in different regions, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, is formed by the Ming and Qing territorial division and the resulting regionalisation of Southern Ming epistolary networks. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, pp.2, 62.

of the Southern Ming emotional community changed over time and analyse the time points of these emotions in regionalised epistolary networks. It also discusses the different choices of Southern Ming correspondents due to their different understandings of loyalism, demonstrates the important role of the letters in comforting each other after experiencing the Ming fall, and explores how the Qing regime put pressure on them to change the adherence to the Ming dynasty of the Southern Ming emotional community and how the latter resisted such pressure.

Section One　Emotions and Emotional Transitions Over Time

The emotional transition of the Southern Ming correspondents interacted with the Southern Ming regime from the establishment to decline. Between 1644 and 1683, the Southern Ming emotional community went from anticipation to disillusion of the Southern Ming regime. Such an emotional transition led most correspondents to feel nostalgia for the Ming dynasty and rejection of the Qing regime. I argue that these emotions were essentially a secondary extension of the primary emotion of Ming loyalism, showing different emotional styles of the Southern Ming emotional community over time. Not only did they not change the Ming loyalism of this community, but they even shaped the emotional expression and behavioural norms of the primary emotion. These secondary emotions had different transition time points in different epistolary networks, showing regional characteristics in the southeast, the southwest, and the north.

1. Loyalism: anticipation, disillusionment, and nostalgia

Although during the Southern Ming period, the correspondents showed different emotional characteristics, the origin of these emotions was their loyalty to the Ming dynasty. Loyalism is one of the Confucian templates, which contains a sets of moral principles.[4] In the dynastic transition, the norm of "never serving the emperors with two surnames 不仕二姓" comes first. It originated from the Shang dynasty (about 1600 B.C.-about 1040 B.C.). As Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-about 597), a literati in the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-581), described: "not serving the emperors with two surnames, this is the integrity of Boyi and Shuqi. 不屈二姓，夷、齊之節也。"[5] Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊 were originally the princes of Guzhu Kingdom 孤竹國,

[4] Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics: Masculine Morality in Seventeenth-Century China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), p.18.
[5] Yan Zhitui, *Wenzhang* in *Yanshi jiaxun* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), p.145.

one of the vassal states in the late Shang period. After the first emperor of the Zhou dynasty (1046 B.C.-256 B.C.), Ji Fa 姬發, defeated the Shang regime, they lived in reclusion but eventually starved to death because they refused to eat any Zhou food.[6] Since then, their deeds became the understanding of later generations on how a person who lost his dynasty retained his loyalty to it, and such moral norm that explains loyalism was engraved in the cultural memory of Chinese people. In the subsequent dynasties, there were also people who took this as their code of conduct and lived as hermits, such as Tao Qian in the late Eastern Jin period and Song loyalists Xie Ao 謝翱 (1249-1259), Gong Kai 龔開 (1222-1307), and Wang Yuanliang 汪元量 (1241-about 1317) after the collapse of the Southern Song dynasty.[7]

Although loyalism is both emotional and moral, emotional loyalty dominated during the Southern Ming period. Moral codes need to be followed, while emotions are voluntary. Moral loyalty was beyond emotional ones when the Ming dynasty still existed, as the dynastic order was in place. The order meant compliance, which demanded much more morality. However, after the Ming fall, not all the Southern Ming people lived in the Ming territory, and the Ming order could not practically be demanded of them. Even in the Ming territory, the Ming order was hardly strictly enforced by the Southern Ming court, because it was busy with infighting. For Ming loyalists living in the Qing territory, they could have renounced their Ming allegiance—especially in the middle and late Southern Ming periods, many of them realised that the Ming regime could not be restored—but they still adhered to the Ming identity. Ming loyalists such as Qu Dajun and Bai Mengding held private ceremonies to commemorate Emperor Chongzhen or Ming martyrs.[8] Such acts, which were illegal for the Qing regime, were cherished and taken seriously by them. This actually went beyond moral requirements to emotional identification.

However, this does not mean that by the Southern Ming period, moral loyalty was lost, because emotions motivate people to express similar norms and values. People who were deeply educated by Confucian principles resulted in a moral code of maintaining Ming loyalism. In a letter written for refusing cooperation with the Qing court, Gu Yanwu emphasised that the last words of his mother were asking him to "read, live in reclusion and never serve another dynasty 讀書隱居，無仕二姓".[9] Loyalism generated their adherence to the Ming identity, which also became the norm of the

[6] Sima Qian, *Boyi liezhuan* in *Shiji*, p.1688.
[7] Zhao Yuan, *Mingqing zhiji shidafu yanjiu: zuowei yizhong xianxiang de yimin*, p.18.
[8] Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu*, pp.54, 68, 79-80; Bai Mengding, *Xiegong dun songchun shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.319.
[9] Gu Yanwu, *Yu shiguan zhujun shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.105.

Southern Ming community. In letters, they emphasised themselves as loyalists of the Ming dynasty and attempted to establish a traceable historical evolution for this emotional community. They found the historical roots and reliance for their identity as Ming loyalists by compiling the historiography of Song loyalists to maintain their independence in Qing society. Gu Yanwu, for instance, wrote a preface to *Guang song yimin lu* 廣宋遺民錄 (The Expanded Biography of Song Loyalists), which was written by Ming loyalist Zhu Mingde 朱明德. As Zhao Yuan argues, Ming loyalists actively compiled the history of loyalists in order to demonstrate their aspirations. Their purpose was to use the compilation of the history of Song loyalists as a metaphor to imply their identity as loyalists, which was also a means of speaking for themselves.[10] By compiling such biographies, the Southern Ming correspondents distinguished themselves from those who were original Ming subjects like them but chose to be Qing subjects after 1644. Therefore, Ming loyalism was the basis for the close construction, integration, and continuation of the Southern Ming emotional community, which shaped their moral norms, prompted them to form a firm adherence to the Ming identity, and generated their common emotions in the Southern Ming period.

(1) From anticipation to disillusionment: in the early Southern Ming period

Compared with loyalists in the previous periods of dynastic transition, Ming loyalists showed the highest loyalism.[11] Before the Southern Ming period, there was one dynasty that moved to the south and continued its rule. In 1127, the Northern Song dynasty collapsed. The Song royal family moved southward, establishing the new capital in Hangzhou and maintaining its rule for 152 years, which was named the Southern Song dynasty by historians.[12] Although the fall of the Ming Beijing government was sudden in 1644, the new government was quickly established in Nanjing in the same year and controlled southern China. Such a similarity made Ming loyalists think that the Southern Ming regime could continue the rule of the Ming dynasty like the Southern Song dynasty. This prompted them to transfer their loyalty to the Ming dynasty to the Southern Ming regime, showing their idealised anticipation.

In the early period of the Southern Ming's confrontation with the Qing, most of the Southern Ming correspondents confirmed and asserted that the Southern Ming emperors could lead them back to recover all the former Ming territories. These letters were written by Southern Ming officials and the people living in the Southern Ming

[10] Zhao Yuan, *Mingqing zhiji shidafu yanjiu: zuowei yizhong xianxiang de yimin*, p.24; Tom Fisher, 'Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44 (1984), 83-122 (p.120); Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China* (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1991).
[11] He Guanbiao, *Sheng yu si: mingji shidafu de jueze* (Taibei: Liaojing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1997), pp.17-19.
[12] *Songshi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).

territory. Their approach to showing such emotions was to directly tell their recipients of their anticipation and allegiance to this regime or praised the new emperors. In 1644, when the Ming government in Beijing had just collapsed, Hou Tongzeng sent a letter to Xia Yunyi, revealing a strong desire for the Ming dynasty to restore its rule.[13] Likewise, in the same year, Gui Zhuang wrote to Shi Kefa 史可法 (1602-1645), the Minister of War of the Hongguang court, and expressed only one topic that he was extremely willing to devote himself to support the Southern Ming regime.[14] Such expectation and allegiance never ended even though the Hongguang government fell in June 1645. On 18 August 1645, the second emperor Zhu Yujian, whose reign was named Longwu, ascended the throne, which made the correspondents regain their anticipation for the Southern Ming regime. On 22 May 1646, Peng Qisheng sent a letter to his family and showed his high degree of trust in Emperor Longwu.

> Emperor Longwu is generous and open-minded. He is very eager to get help from wise men and loves people like loving his sons. Also, he experienced misery and sorrow, … Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Huguang provinces are still under our control. Our existing territories can still maintain rule, and it will not be impossible to restore the rule in the future.
> 隆武主上豁達大度。求賢若渴。愛民如子。且備嘗幽憂患難。周知疾苦。……江浙。閩廣。雲貴。川楚猶在。偏安有餘。恢復一統亦非不可爲之事。[15]

Peng Qisheng spoke highly of Emperor Longwu and believed that one day he could lead the army to recapture occupied territory from the Qing government. Their expectations and loyalty were not limited to verbal praise, but more to their support for the Southern Ming government in terms of policies, decrees, and military operations. In 1646, Qian Chengzhi sent four letters to Huang Daozhou, discussing the current situation of the Southern Ming tactics and making suggestions for reviving the Ming dynasty.[16] Qian also wrote three similar letters to Xu Fuyuan and two unverified recipients in the same year.[17] Although they did not directly express their support for the Southern Ming regime or say any inspiring pronouncements like Peng Qisheng, their active act of advising this government indicates their confidence in the Southern Ming regime.

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[13] Hou Tongzeng, *Yu Xia Yuangong libu* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58-hou zhongjie gong quanji*, pp.1a-b.
[14] Gui Zhuang, *Shang Shi gexue shu daixiong er'de* in *Gui Zhuang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), pp.312-313.
[15] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushu guan cang mingdai chidu*, p.206.
[16] Qian Chengzhi, *Ji Huang Shizhai gebu laoshi shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, pp.368-370.
[17] ibid, pp.370-376.

By the time the above-mentioned letters were written, those provinces that Peng referred to still belonged to the Southern Ming dynasty. This also explains why many other Southern Ming correspondents like him had strong expectations for this regime at the time. In their view, the Southern Ming regime still controlled southern China under the rule of the new monarch, who could continue the Ming rule like the Southern Song dynasty did five hundred years earlier. Driven by such a motivation, their expectation was also accompanied by their disapproval of the actions that did not recognise the Southern Ming regime, prompting them to never admit that the Ming dynasty had collapsed and denounce the Shun and Qing regimes.[18] In 1645, Qian Chengzhi wrote a letter to a Qing prince, condemning the Qing government as a dishonest and unjust person:

> [Your] letter said: "The Qing regime became the ruler of China by defeating the Shun bandits, not by taking the [territory] of the Ming dynasty."... It is a pity that your regime [acted] with righteousness when it began [to help the Ming dynasty] but did not end with righteousness [acts]. It is as if a robber breaks into the house, kills the master, and takes his house. The servants are worried that they will not be able to beat the robber, so they ask a vigorous man for help, and the strong man resolutely agreed to avenge. [However] after taking revenge, all the master's stuff is taken away by this man. As a result, the servants have made meritorious deeds but have no merits, and the strong men are personally loyal but have no personal loyalty.
> 來諭云："大清取天下，取之於闖賊，非取之於本朝也。"……惜乎貴朝以義始，不以義終也。譬如大盜入室，戕其主人，竊踞其第。有幹僕力恐不敵，求救於壯士，壯士毅然許爲同仇，……仇以報矣，而主人所有盡歸壯士。則是幹僕有功而無功，壯士有義而無義也。[19]

In 1644, after the Ming Beijing government was destroyed by the attack of the Shun army, the Qing army invaded Beijing under the banner of revenge for the Ming Emperor Chongzhen. Immediately thereafter, however, the Qing ruler claimed that the Ming dynasty had come to an end, declaring himself the ruler of China in defiance of Emperor Hongguang, who had ascended the throne in Nanjing and formed a new Ming government. For Qian Chengzhi, who supported the Southern Ming regime, such an approach was tantamount to a treacherous villain. Although Qian's reply did not directly express his expectation and loyalty to the Southern Ming court, his every

[18] As Rosenwein argues, the characteristic styles of emotional communities include the denial of some emotions. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p.203;
[19] Qian Chengzhi, *Yu wushui wei jia se'an gexue fu beilei shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, p.392.

character and the purpose of writing this letter were to argue that the Southern Ming regime was the continuation of the Ming dynasty. In other words, his position in writing this letter was based on supporting and safeguarding the Southern Ming regime, and he believed that it was the dynasty to which he should be loyal.

However, whether it was Qian Chengzhi, who argued for the orthodox status of the Southern Ming regime, or Peng Qisheng, who praised Emperor Longwu for his hard work, there was a certain degree of blindness in their expectations, although they were true and frank. The eagerness of Southern Ming correspondents for revenge and the social turmoil at the time made them lose their objective judgment of the monarch's ability. In their point of view, as long as there was an emperor in charge of the overall situation, he could undoubtedly run the government and regain the Ming territory. Such a perspective was common among the Southern Ming correspondents, as most of them had never been senior officials of the Ming government. Qian Chengzhi, who served the Longwu government, had never held an official position before 1644.[20] Huang Daozhou had a political career in the late Ming period, but he spent most of his time doing clerical work and was twice dismissed from office.[21] However, in the Southern Ming government, he was given important positions in the Ministry of Rites, Personnel, and War.[22] Like Qian and Huang, before entering the Southern Ming court, many Southern Ming correspondents did not have a lot of experience as officials, not to mention the Southern Ming government continued the political infighting of the late Ming court, which made the situation in the court extremely complicated. They believed that the succession of the monarch was the most important thing, and as officials, they must implement the monarch's order and defeat the Qing and the Shun armies under his leadership. This caused them to give the emperor a layer of supreme brilliance in their hearts before they met him. Throughout the early Southern Ming period, the strong expectation that the Southern Ming government would restore the Ming rule was basically generated by such blind judgments.

The poor information transmission of the official post system prompted most of the news and messages to be delivered orally or by private letters, which led to the information exchanged within a lot of personal tendencies. Most of the news was learned periodically rather than a complete picture, which would affect the personal judgment of senders and recipients. The three letters written by Huang Daozhou to his friend Ni Yuanzan between 23 July and 14 December in 1645 are typical examples. In the letter dated 23 July, Huang wrote that although he had left the court of the dull

[20] Qian Weilu. *Qiangong Yinguang fujun nianpu* in *Suozhi lu*, pp.177-184.
[21] See chronological biography of Huang Daozhou. Hong Si, *Huangzi nianpu* in *Huang Daozhou nianpu*, pp.1-27.
[22] ibid, pp.28-29.

Prince Lu 璐王, Zhu Changfang 朱常淓 (1608-1646), he still thought that Prince Lu's accession to the throne was justified.[23] However, on 24 September, he sent to Ni Yuanzan and said: "Prince Lu could not be advised 璐藩不可輔", and then he praised Prince Tang 唐王, Zhu Yujian, whom he had just met and became Emperor Longwu afterwards.[24] Even though, in the letter written on 14 December, Huang worried that the Longwu regime would have troubles because of the difficulty of reconciling with Prince Lu, Zhu Yihai, who wore a crown himself.[25] The rapid change in Huang's attitude suggests that although such news conveyed through letters contained expectations of the Southern Ming regime, they were more an expression of correspondents' personal thoughts and feelings after learning the latest information. When writing a letter that included political and military affairs, the Southern Ming correspondents would inevitably add their opinions and judgments, showing their attitudes with various emotions. However, because of the difficulties of information delivery, correspondents were provided with news that was constantly updated, and their thoughts and resulting emotions changed. In this way, support for the monarch in the one letter might become opposition in the later letter as the information was updated. This made it difficult for the Southern Ming correspondents to make rational judgments from a holistic perspective and blindly follow the government, especially when they were pinning their hopes on it in the early Southern Ming period.

Nevertheless, the uncertainty of the Southern Ming correspondents about the success of the Southern Ming regime led to the different possible outcomes of their expectations of this regime.[26] As the social situation changed, their anticipation soon mixed with opposite sentiments. They entered a phase of rational thinking about whether this regime could revive the Ming rule and began to express their doubts about its ability to defeat the Qing army. It is because they had experienced the demise of the Hongguang reign, the first Southern Ming regime, and noting that the subsequent Longwu and Yongli regimes were untenable. Due to the rapid replacement of the Southern Ming governments and serious political infighting, and many officials were only concerned with chasing profits and did not consider restoring the Ming rule. Coupled with the continuous loss of territories and the difficulties of the army in fighting against the Qing regime, many correspondents who originally supported the Southern Ming regime were gradually worried whether the Southern Ming regime could maintain its rule, and some even wanted to leave and refused to serve the court.

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[23] Huang Daozhou, *Yu Xianru shu* in *Huang Daozhou ji*, p.957.
[24] ibid, p.958.
[25] ibid, p.959.
[26] Gammerl argues that imperfect knowledge of the individual actors in their choices of a certain emotional style may lead to failure and unforeseen results. Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles', (p.168).

On 28 August 1644, Huang Daozhou sent a letter to his friend Huang Chunyao, talking about his concern to Emperor Hongguang. “It has been two months since the new emperor took the throne, but the red edict and other documents were still not promulgated. Even official newspapers are only written with a few lines, and we cannot know the situation inside the court. 新立啓運。已踰兩月。而紅詔不頒。一切文檄皆不見下。即邸報亦遼闊數行。無緣知中朝動靜。”[27] In another letter that Huang sent to Zu Tai in 1646, he lambasted those officials who were busy with infighting and did not unite against invaders. He also severely criticised those “little men” who only cared for their interests and deplored the loss of territory because of them: “The corruption of the country started with several little men who did not work well and made rumours,…then the territory of the country was taken away. 天下之壞。始於一二失職小人。造言顛倒。……斷送河漢。”[28] After 1646, more and more Southern Ming correspondents, such as Peng Qisheng and Qu Shisi, had similar queries in their letters. In a letter written to his family on 22 May 1646, Peng Qisheng said that he used to think that the Southern Ming regime, as a continuation of the Ming dynasty, would not be taken away by the Qing dynasty any time soon, but at the time writing this letter, his confidence in the regime was no longer as great as it used to be.[29] Qu Shisi’s attitude towards this regime was even more negative. On 14 February 1647, he signed a letter to his family that:

> Others saw that within two years I had been [promoted] from a supervising secretary to the provincial governor, then the grand commander, then the minister, and eventually the prime minister. It seemed that [my] official luck was extremely good! From my point of view, it is clear that [the government needs to] catch someone [playing] as a marshal and someone [playing] as a captain on the stage, in order to pretend to be in a [good] situation and force [them] to bear something. In fact, after the Chongzhen Reign, where is the [Southern Ming] court? Where is the [Ming] world?
> 人見我兩年內自給諫而府丞，而巡撫，而侍郎，而拜相，似乎官運利極矣！以我觀之，分明戲場上捉住某爲元帥，某爲都督，亦一時要裝成局面，無可奈何而逼迫成事者也。其實自崇禎而後，成甚朝廷？成何天下？[30]

In Qu Shisi’s view, he was promoted rapidly during the two years of serving the

[27] Huang Daozhou, *Zhi Yunsheng zha* in *Baojingzhai beitie jishi*, pp.103-104.
[28] Huang Daozhou, *Zhi Zu Tai* in *Zhongguo shufa quanji 56*, p.246.
[29] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushu guan cang mingdai chidu*, pp.205-206.
[30] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue chushi zaishu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.260.

Southern Ming government because the court did not have enough loyalists willing to serve. The political struggles he experienced during this period made him emotionally complain that there was no court after 1644.

Similar doubts stayed with many correspondents, which generated their disillusionment. Qu Shisi had been very dissatisfied with the Southern Ming government from 1647. In two family letters sent in the middle of November 1648 and on 11 July 1649, he clearly stated that he wanted to leave the Southern Ming court and return to his hometown.

> Now that I am stationed in Guilin, I not only need to take care of the east and west areas, and to [maintain] contacts with Supervisor He [Tengjiao], but also to manage the administrative staff for the east area. [They] only want to flatter those [Qing people] who have shaved their hair and ignore the political discussions in the court. I cannot stand it anymore. [I] do not want to get along with them, and I am also impatient to argue with [them] all day long. On the contrary, it is better [for me] to stay outside of the court, so that it will not stick to me if there is any mistake, and [I] can still be an innocent person.
> 吾之留守桂林，不止要照管東西，通何督師之氣脈，亦爲東邊用人行政，惟知奉承薙髮之人，全不顧朝綱清議，太看不得。與之同流合污既不能，終日爭嚷又不耐，反不如身居局外，即有差處，不得粘到我身上，猶得清清白白做一人也。[31]

Qu also said that he would shave off his hair, put on robes, and be a wandering monk, no longer thinking about human affairs.[32] Fang Yizhi, Qian Chengzhi, and Jin Bao, who followed the Southern Ming government to the southwestern region, had similar disillusionments and appeals to leave the Yongli government. Fang Yizhi, for example, was repeatedly recommended by the Southern Ming officials to serve the Yongli court after he left in the winter of 1646,[33] but he never agreed and wrote letters to express his abhorrence of the serious political infighting.

Such a sentiment was because of the infighting of the Southern Ming government. They entered this court originally aimed to provide the emperor with suggestions of how to fight against the Qing army and continue the Ming rule. However, as Qu Shisi complained in his family letter written on 14 February 1647, the officials in the Southern Ming court established in Guangxi were only concerned about gaining

[31] Qu Shisi, *Wuzi jiuyue youshu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.266.
[32] ibid, *Jichou liuyue chuer ri zaifu changwen*, p.271.
[33] Fang Shuwen, *Fang Yizhi xiansheng nianpu*, p.120.

political benefits but never made any efforts to restore the rule of the Ming dynasty.

> Now [the Southern Ming government] relies on a corner of the territory, and it happens to be a time when [resources] are empty and scarce. [Under such circumstances,] if there is someone who wants to do the restoration of the Central Plains, even those who are talented will be helpless, not to mention being as inferiors as they are... The people from Sichuan, Huguang, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces are also useless. Although they are serving the court, they have ordinary abilities but strong passions for fighting for officialdom. Junior officials want to be the seniors, and senior officials want to be the grand commanders. What they plan every day is nothing more than [their] fame. They say that [the opportunity in] the world only has one moment, if you miss this moment, you cannot regain it. They never think that the world might still have a peaceful future in their chests, and there might still be a date for recovery in the Central Plains!
> 今以一隅疆土，又當空匱詘乏之時，乃欲行恢復中原之事，雖真有才智之士，亦將束手，況庸劣無能如予者乎？……川、楚、滇、黔四省人才，亦俱倉卒難致，其見在朝廷者，幹濟則平常，爭官則犀銳，部曹則想科道，科道則想督撫，畢智盡能，朝營暮度，無非爲一身功名之計，其意蓋謂世界不過此一刻，一刻錯過便不可復得矣！彼其胸中，何嘗想世界尚有清寧之日，中原尚有恢復之期也哉！[34]

Similar remarks also appeared in his family letter around November a year later,[35] and both of them reflect Qu's extreme disappointment with the Southern Ming regime, as such a court situation was not what those correspondents like him who committed themselves to retake the Ming rule expected. In addition, Southern Ming monarchs never received education on how to be an emperor.[36] It led to the fact that even if competent officials provided advice, they might not be recognised and accepted by the monarch. While the Southern Ming government was struggling with infighting, it suffered from the crisis of the Qing's territorial expansion. Those correspondents who followed the Southern Ming court witnessed how the Qing army took away the Ming territory step by step, but this court did nothing. Under such pressure, correspondents gradually realised that Southern Ming's failure was inevitable. They could not become the hero who would help the monarch restore the Ming rule, which made them feel disillusioned.

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[34] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue chushi zaishu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.261.
[35] ibid, *Wuzi jiuyue shuji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.263.
[36] ibid, *Dinghai zhengyue zhaojiang daozhong ji*, p.258.

It should be noted that the process of this collective emotional transition among the Southern Ming correspondents was accompanied by individual variations, which were caused by correspondents' different understandings of the evolutionary stages of the Southern Ming regime. A case in point is Southern Ming official Zhang Huangyan 張煌言 (1620-1664). In 1660 and 1662, he sent letters to Zhang Weishan 張維善 and Southern Ming general Zheng Jing, Zhang still had great confidence in the Southern Ming regime, believing that the rule of the Qing dynasty would not last long and that the Southern Ming navy would soon regain the lost territory.[37] However, by that time, the Southern Ming regime had already lost most of its territory in mainland China and could only retreat to Taiwan after 1662. In contrast, as early as 1645, Fang Yizhi revealed his disillusionment in a letter to Li Wen and left the Southern Ming government to be a monk for approximately twelve years.[38] By comparing the sentiments of Zhang and Fang, it can be found that up to 1662, Zhang never thought that the Southern Ming regime had entered the stage of decline and still maintained allegiance that arose at the beginning of the establishment of the Southern Ming regime. Therefore, correspondents' understanding of when the Southern Ming dynasty declined varied. Such differences directly led to the fact that the evolution of individual and collective emotional transitions did not exactly coincide in time. As discussed above, in 1662, Zhang was still loyal, but Fang had become disillusioned.

(2) Nostalgia: in the middle and late Southern Ming periods

An emotional community requires similar norms for expression,[39] but I suggest that these norms are not always fixed. They might be modified as secondary emotions transformed. The disillusionment, for instance, might drive the Southern Ming correspondents to leave the Southern Ming government. However, it does not mean secondary emotions will replace the primacy of the primary emotions in the community. They only adjust the original norms and actions under the interaction with the primary emotions or promote some new ways to express it. In this case, no matter how many varied secondary emotions accompany an emotional community when interacting with social affairs or dynastic transition, or how these accompanying emotions affect people's lives, their primary emotions never change. The same is true in the middle and late Southern Ming periods. Although the Southern Ming regime failed to live up to their anticipation, it did not mean that their Ming loyalism and the resulting moral principles that motivated them to form a community were also disappeared. Their norm of never serving monarchs with different surnames triggered by loyalism still restrained

[37] Zhang Huangyan, *Yu weizhen zhang weishan shu* and *Da yanping wang shizi jing shu* in *Zhang Cangshui quanji* (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2002), pp.153-154, 178.
[38] Fang Yizhi, *Ji Li Shuzhang* in *Fushan wenji*, pp.227-233.
[39] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p.109.

their actions in the middle and late Southern Ming periods. Like Zhang Huangyan, a few correspondents continued to support the Southern Ming regime until they were killed by the Qing army. But more correspondents left this regime and returned to their hometowns controlled by the Qing government to live in reclusion but still followed the moral requirements of loyalism: even if they lived in the Qing territory, they still adhered to the Ming identity. They thus arose a new secondary emotion—nostalgia for the Ming dynasty.

Nostalgia was presented by their reflections on the Ming dynasty which focused on examining the reasons for the Ming fall, and they would even use condemnatory expressions to present this sentiment. In 1681, Bai Mengding said in a letter that:

> Emperor Chongzhen tried his best to govern the dynasty and was extremely diligent. [We] can say that he was a wise monarch. However, in the seventeen years of [the Chongzhen Reign], he appointed 54 prime ministers. Among these 54 people, were there no talents who could stabilise the government and manage social chaos? But [eventually all of their governance] did not work at all. Why? Some people said that the prime minister must appoint someone who were reputed scholars. Haven't these fifty-four people received it? Ah, the emperor censored government affairs too much and officials extremely valued their reputation, which made even virtuous people could not make any achievements.
> 毅宗勵精圖治。皇上宵旰。可謂明主。而十七年間用宰相五十四人。此五十四人中。豈無定治勘亂才。而卒無一效。何哉。或曰宰相須用讀書人。五十四人豈盡不讀書者哉。嗚呼。上好察而下好名。雖賢者亦無能爲也矣。悲夫。[40]

Bai Mengding's affection for Emperor Chongzhen is a mixture of praise and condemnation. He regarded Emperor Chongzhen as a wise monarch, but he also argued that Emperor Chongzhen censored government affairs too much, revealing a kind of blame with regret. Using the tone of condemnation of anger or regret to reflect on the reasons for the failure of the Ming dynasty, Ming loyalists presented their pains for the Ming fall through this special way of emotional expression.

Most of the time, the Southern Ming correspondents expressed their nostalgia directly. When recalling the Ming fall, they repeatedly used "*tilei* 涕淚 (weep to tears)", "*hen*

[40] Bai Mengding, *Xiegong dun songchun shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.319.

恨 (hate)", "*can* 惨 (tragic)", "*du* 毒 (cruel)" to present their grief.[41] They also preserved their interpersonal exchanges as a kind of Ming memory by recalling their social activities with friends and relatives during the late Ming and Southern Ming periods, or by including these letters in anthologies.[42] However, nostalgia is an emotional action performed after something is over,[43] which means that the Southern Ming correspondents believed that they had lost the Ming dynasty, although, in the middle and late Southern Ming periods, this regime still existed. This makes the words and sentences in their letters recall the past accompanied by a sense of extinction that makes people feel distressed. Such a change in sentiment was manifested in the changes in their tone of address and expression towards the Ming dynasty. In the early Southern Ming period, when mentioning the Ming dynasty, correspondents mostly used the term "*benchao* 本朝 (our dynasty)". By comparison, since the 1670s which was the end of the Southern Ming dynasty, even Ming loyalists who never cooperated with the Qing court began to address the Ming as "a dynasty that has ended 故國". In the letters written by the three Ming loyalists Qian Chengzhi, Lu Yuanfu, and Chen Xi between 1679 and 1683, they all referred to the Ming dynasty as the "*qiandai* 前代 (the prior dynasty)"[44] or "*xianchao* 先朝 (the previous dynasty)".[45] Wang Shimin called himself "a loyalist of the previous dynasty 故國遺民" when writing a letter to Ming loyalist Lu Xian.[46] They also revealed feelings of sadness and melancholy. In 1683, Qian Chengzhi sent a letter to a friend surnamed Yan and said: "Talk about the past, as if in a dream or the previous life. ... You contacted me, an old friend, while you were resting, [which means] you are thinking of whether there is still an old loyalist of the former dynasty living [in reclusion] in [a house built by] wild rice stems and reeds. 暢敘往事。如夢中。如隔世。……先生清讌之暇。屈指故舊。亦念此菰廬中尚有前代一老遺民否。"[47] In order to create a lonely and bitter reading atmosphere, he regarded himself as "a remnant of the previous dynasty", described his experiences in

[41] See Chen Weisong's 陳維崧 (1625-1682) letter to Zheng Qishan 張芑山 around 1660, Wei Xi's 魏禧 (1624-1681) letter to Fang Yizhi, and Lu Yuanfu's 陸元輔 (1617-1691) letters to Ge Zhi 葛芝(1618-?). Chen Weisong, *Yu Zhang Qishan xiansheng shu* in *Sibu congkan jibu 378-chen jialing wenji* (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2016), pp.1b-2a. Wei Xi, *Yu Mu dashi shu* in *Fushan wenji*, pp.573-574; Lu Yuanfu, *Yu Ge Duanwu lun sanghun shu* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian-lu juyin xiansheng wenji*, pp.468-469.

[42] See Mao Xiang's *Tongren ji* 同人集 (The Collection of Like-minded Literati), which compiled six letters written by his uncle Xu Chengxuan 许承宣. Mao Xiang, *Mao Pijiang quanji*, p.997.

[43] Shunchen Xiang argues that nostalgia in the Chinese literary context refers to the display of the ultimate passing of the past. Shunchen Xiang, 'The irretrievability of the past-nostalgia in Chinese literature from Tang-Song poetry to Ming-Qing san-wen', *International Communication of Chinese Culture*, 2 (2015), 205-222.

[44] Qian Chengzhi, *Ji yanmou* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu 1401-tianjian chidu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), p.3.10.

[45] Lu Yuanfu, *Yu Peng Yunke shu* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian-lu juyin xiansheng wenji*, pp.473-474.

[46] Wang Shimin, *Zhi Lu Xian qi'er* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.274.

[47] Qian Chengzhi, *Ji Yanmou* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu 1401-tianjian chidu*, p.3.10a.

terms of “a dream” and “the previous life”, and compared his residence to a hermit house built of wild rice stems and reeds.

Nostalgia guided correspondents’ social activities, prompting them to focus on cultural undertakings related to the Ming and the Southern Ming. On 4 May 1681, Bai Mengding held a poetry party with his friends Fan Guolu 范國祿 (1624-1696) and Du Jie 杜芥 (1617-1693), who were also Ming loyalists, to “*songchun* 送春 (say goodbye to the Spring)”.[48] This date was not chosen by coincidence but was metaphorical. 4 May was the seventeenth day of the third month of that year on the Chinese calendar, which was the same day when the Emperor Chongzhen committed suicide in 1644. Say goodbye to the Spring was a traditional custom on the last day of the Chinese Lunar Spring. Such a special writing date and the topic they talked about imply that they held this party to commemorate Emperor Chongzhen and to consciously evoke their nostalgia for the Ming dynasty.[49] On the same day, Bai sent two copied poems to a recipient whom we cannot verify, and he recorded in the margin at the end of the poems by smaller characters that at this party, he and his friends talked about some old stories of the last reign of the Ming dynasty, the Chongzhen reign period (1628-1644).

> Fan Guolu is very familiar with the affairs of prime ministers in the Chongzhen reign period. ... I pawned my clothes to buy drinks that day. Although the drinks were not enjoyable, [our] chat was delightful. Fan Guolu talked about one year in the Chongzhen period when one of the prime ministers did well, one did not, and one did very ordinarily. He was extremely clear about those prime ministers and government affairs at that time.
> 十山譚崇禎宰相事甚悉。……是日予典衣貰酒。酒不暢而談大暢。十山言崇禎某年。某相某相良。某相否。某相平平。列如指掌。[50]

Such poetry meetings held to recall the Ming dynasty are less recorded, but as discussed in the previous chapter, those Ming-related literary works, historiographies, and scholarship largely emerged in the middle and late Southern Ming periods.

Nostalgia would even prompt Ming loyalists to temporarily put aside their political hostility towards the Qing regime and provide assistance to a certain extent when they

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[48] Bai Mengding, *Xiegong dun songchun shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.319.
[49] In his study of the emotional community in the Greek world, Chaniotis discussed the role of ritual in consciously arousing common feelings for the gods in the cult community. Although poetry parties in the Southern Ming period were not a religious regulation or a government decree, they also functioned vitally in actively recalling certain emotions. Chaniotis, ‘Emotional Community through Ritual’, pp.264-290.
[50] Bai Mengding, *Xiegong dun songchun shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.319.

noticed that the Qing government was carrying out Ming cultural undertakings. Although Gu Yanwu rejected the Qing's invitation to compile *History of the Ming*, he still exchanged letters with Qing officials who participated in the compilation work several times to share his method of writing historiography and advised them to focus on the copies of Ming gazettes.[51] Gu's choice was common among Ming loyalists at that time. Around 1679, Ming loyalists Wang Hongzhuan, Chen Xi, Gui Zhuang, Zhang Yi, and Huang Zongxi all received invitations to participate in the compiling of the Ming historiography from Qing officials Cao Rong 曹溶 (1613-1685), Tang Bin, Shi Runzhang, Pan Lei, Li Tao, Xu Qianxue, and Xu Yuanwen. Although they declined the invitation except for Chen Xi, they more or less provided their views on compiling methods to the Qing officials through letter exchanges.[52] This shows that it was difficult for Southern Ming correspondents to refuse or stay out of any work related to the Ming dynasty because they were emotionally tied to this dynasty.

The Southern Ming correspondents expressed their nostalgia not only through words but also travelled in person to places containing Ming significance, such as the Mausoleum of the Ming Emperor 明孝陵 in Nanjing, and Shanhai Pass, a pass that once separated the Qing army from the former Ming territory in the north. From 1651 to 1661, Gu Yanwu visited the Mausoleum of the Ming Emperor seven times.[53] As Gammerl suggests, "the subject's decisions are neither completely free nor completely determined", and the external influences can shape the development of emotional styles of a certain group.[54] The Southern Ming correspondents might imagine the affairs that happened in the Ming period when visiting these places and experienced the remaining Ming memories to deepen the emotional connection between themselves and the Ming dynasty.[55] More importantly, they wrote down their experiences of visiting places with Ming significance in letters and shared the resulting emotions with their recipients, enabling such spaces to be "transmitted" through words and function as an auxiliary element of epistolary networks in maintaining the exchange of emotions. During his travels from 1666, Qu Dajun sent a letter to his friend Sun Mo 孫默 (1613-1678), who was also a Ming loyalist, and shared his trip to the Hua Mountain 華山 in Shaanxi to express his mourning of the last Ming monarch of the Beijing government, Emperor

[51] Gu Yanwu, *Da Tang Jingxian shu*, *Yu Ye Ren'an*, *Yu shiguan zhujun shu*, and *Yu Gongsu sheng shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.103-107.
[52] Fisher demonstrates that although Huang Zongxi refused to cooperate with the Qing regime, he still promised to provide relevant materials for the Qing government to compile the Ming historiography. He even requested a position for his son in this undertaking and did not feel unethical. Fisher, 'Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing', (p.116).
[53] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.25-38.
[54] Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles', (pp.166-168).
[55] See works of Owens, D'arcy, Marchant, Dermineur, and Barclay. They argue that certain places encourage people to express emotions. *Early Modern Emotions*, pp.228-237, 242-247.

Chongzhen.[56] Hua Mountain had a deep connection with the Ming dynasty. Ming emperors respected Taoism, and Taoist culture originated from Hua Mountain.[57] For Qu Dajun, Hua Mountain was a symbol of the Ming, carrying the Ming cultural memory that evoked his nostalgia. Not only that, but the day when Qu wrote this letter also had a special meaning. He particularly mentioned that the day he reached the Great Lingzhang Peak 巨靈掌峰 of the Hua Mountain happened to be "the nineteenth day of the third month", which was the day when Emperor Chongzhen passed away in 1644.[58] He believed that Sun Mo, who was near Huang Mountain 黃山 in Anhui at the time, must have wept bitterly on this day, which motivated him to write this letter to Sun and attached memorial poems for Emperor Chongzhen.[59]

2. Epistolary networks and emotional transition time points

In the last chapter, we discussed that the Southern Ming correspondents formed regionalised networks in the southeast, southwest, and north because of territorial division. Central correspondents not only delivered news but also emotions. These emotions would resonate with the other correspondents in the same network. It prompted correspondents in different networks to express similar sentiments of Ming loyalism and followed the moral code of adhering to the Ming identity, implying that the Southern Ming emotional community coexisted in different epistolary networks. The time points of emotional transitions varied across these networks from anticipation to disillusionment and eventually nostalgia.

Compared with southwestern and northern networks, the anticipation of the Southern Ming regime in the southeastern network did not last long, because the Hongguang and Longwu governments maintained their rule in this region for only two years. Nonetheless, from 1644 to 1645, southeastern correspondents had the most ardent expectations for this regime. Huang Daozhou, Hou Qizeng, and Peng Qisheng all expressed in letters that they firmly believed that Emperor Hongguang or Emperor Longwu would regain the occupied Ming territory.[60] However, some correspondents who entered the Southern Ming government had cast doubt on it as early as 1644. A

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[56] Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu*, p.102.
[57] Wang Yi'e 王宜峨, 'Huashan yu daojiao' 華山與道教, *Daoxie huikan*, 1 (1982), 89-96; Wang Sen 王森, 'Qinhan zhi mingqing huashan cimiao dili fenbu yu kongjian bianqian' 秦漢至明清華山祠廟地理分布與空間變遷 (unpublished master's thesis, Guangxi Normal University, 2013); Wang Peng 王鵬, 'Mingdai huangshi yu daojiao guanxi yanjiu' 明代皇室與道教關係研究 (unpublished master's thesis, Shandong Normal University, 2018).
[58] Qu Dajun, *Wengshan wenwai* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu 1412*, p.16.3a.
[59] ibid.
[60] Huang Daozhou, *Yu Ni Xianru shu er* in *Huang daozhou ji*, p.958; Hou Qizeng, *Ji zhi zi* in *Mingqing shanghai xijian wenxian wuzhong-hou qizeng riji*, pp.490-491; Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushu guan cang mingdai chidu*, pp.201-207.

typical example is Huang Daozhou. Of the fourteen letters I studied written by Huang between 1644 and 1646 (the year he died), nine of them refer to his anger at the inaction of the court, his sadness at the lack of talented officials, and his potential dissatisfaction with Emperor Hongguang. In the seventh month of 1644, Huang sent a letter to Meng Changmin 孟長民, a friend who might support the Southern Ming regime with him, and sighed: "It has been sixty days since the establishment of the [Hongguang] government in Nanjing on the fifteenth day of the fifth month [of this year]. The new reign title has not been promulgated. People inside and outside the [court] are panicking, [as] they do not know what the officials in the court are planning to do. [Officials] neither recruit troops to attack the Shun army nor do they try to regain the [loyalty] of the officials and subjects. 自五月十五日鐘陵立國以來。亦且六十日。渙號未布。中外皇皇。不知中朝諸公作何舉止。既不徵兵討賊。又無以大收臣民之心。"[61] Nevertheless, the disillusionment that came with doubts is relatively less to be seen in the southeastern network. This is because from the summer of 1645, as the Qing army occupied Nanzhili, Zhejiang, Fujian, and part of Jiangxi, the Qing government's control of speech in this area and the search for those who secretly supported the Southern Ming regime made most of the people hardly dared to discuss Southern Ming affairs in their letters. Such a circumstance makes it difficult to explore if disillusionment ever existed in the southeastern network. Despite this, starting from 1645, the southeastern network gradually entered a period of nostalgia. Most of the Ming and Southern Ming literary works, historiographies, and scholarship were written and compiled by southeastern correspondents. Nostalgia became extremely strong when a large number of literati paid attention to Ming-related cultural activities and undertakings, which made it lasted until the end of the Southern Ming period.

In contrast, disillusionment in the southwestern network were more obvious and lasted longer than in other networks. It gradually disappeared until around 1650, when the central correspondent Qu Shisi died and others like Qian Chengzhi and Fang Yizhi left the Yongli government. Even so, such a sentiment came later than the southeastern network and started with doubts. Doubts first appeared in Qu Shisi's three family letters written in February 1467, but Qu still believed that Emperor Yongli was worth looking forward to.[62] Qu Shisi was originally from the southeast, and it was not until 1645 that he took office in Wuzhou in the southwest. Although he received news of the failure of the Hongguang and Longwu governments between 1645 and 1646, unlike southeastern correspondents, the southwest region where he was stationed still belonged to the Southern Ming territory. In other words, for him, the Southern Ming regime still had a

[61] Huang Daozhou, *Da Meng Changmin shu* in *Huang Shizhai xiansheng wenji* (1714 Woodblock Edition), p.5.14b.
[62] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue zhaojiang daozhong ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.258.

chance to revive the Ming rule, which made it difficult for him to doubt the Southern Ming government as early as 1644 as southeastern correspondents. However, we have little evidence for nostalgia in the southwestern network, because fewer Ming loyalists stayed in the southwest than that in the southeast and the north. Also, by the 1650s, those still with the Ming could not really be nostalgic because for them the Ming was still there, and the remaining Ming regime was under so much pressure that preserving writings and letters would have been extremely difficult. After 1650, only Jin Bao, who became a monk, remained in this region and became the central correspondent. Perhaps in keeping with his identity as a monk, he had to show a marked indifference to worldly affairs, so that nostalgia seldom escaped from his letters, and most of the matters with which he was concerned related to Buddhism.

At least outwardly, there was almost no emotional change in the northern network. Since 1644, due to the gradual occupation of this area by the Qing army, the control of correspondents' speech began earlier than in other regions. Because of the confrontation between the Qing and the Southern Ming armies between 1644 and 1645, the letter exchanges between the north and the south were disrupted, which caused northern correspondents such as Fu Shan, Wang Hongzhuan, and Sun Qifeng, almost expressed no expectations, doubts, or disillusionment in their letters. However, this does not mean that northern correspondents were not concerned about the Southern Ming affairs. In 1654, in a letter from Fu Shan to Dai Tingshi, Fu implicitly asked whether the Southern Ming actions against the Qing regime had been successful, but at the same time, Fu said it had been a month since it happened when he knew about it.[63] It can be seen that although the correspondents in the north still had expectations for the success of the Southern Ming regime, the reality of living in the Qing territory made it difficult for them to get the exact news related to the Southern Ming in the first place, and thus it was impossible for them to show an obvious emotional transition. In contrast, nostalgia in the northern network started earlier and lasted longer. Fu Shan, Wang Hongzhuan, and Sun Qifeng had been committed to Ming-related cultural undertakings since the early Southern Ming period. After Fu Shan's teacher, Yuan Jixian died in 1646, Fu began to collect Yuan's poems (but most of them were not found), and his motivation might be compiling and publishing them. In the same year, Fu wrote to Dai Tingshi, mentioning that he planned to write Southern Ming historiography and asked about the situation in which the city of Beijing was captured by the Shun army in 1644.[64] Likewise, Sun Qifeng focused on the compilation of Southern Ming historiography as well. On 17 January 1650, Sun sent a letter to Xie Yuanming 謝元明 from Shangyu

[63] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Fengzhong* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.169.
[64] ibid, *Yu Dai Tingshi shu*, pp.183-184.

上虞 in Zhejiang and said that his *Jiashen danan lu* 甲申大難錄 (Records of Catastrophe in 1644) was written for recording Ming officials who died in 1644 when the Shun army broke through Beijing.[65] Sun also sought to carry forward the Neo-Confucianism of the Ming dynasty.

Throughout the time points at which emotional transitions occurred in southeastern, southwestern, and northern epistolary networks, it can be seen that territorial division played a key role in generating or promoting the shifts. Different territories would lead to different emotional transitions in regionalised networks that changed over time. The monitoring of the social activities of Ming loyalists by the Qing regime prompted Southern Ming emotional community to hide their possible emotional expressions towards the Southern Ming regime. Nevertheless, these regionalised emotional communities demonstrate that different epistolary networks provided the foundation for the establishment and connection of the same emotional community in multiple regions.

Section Two Different Understandings of Ming Loyalism

Fisher and Zhao Yuan argue that Ming loyalists tried to find a way of life in the early Qing period that would maintain their principles. Many of them did not demand that their descendants should also adhere to the Ming identity as they did.[66] By comparing Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists, I further argue that even though they were in the same emotional community because of their common Ming loyalism, their different understandings of this sentiment were the underlying reasons that prompted their different life choices.[67] Some Southern Ming people were willing to die for the Ming dynasty—committing suicide or being captured and killed by the Qing army.[68] In contrast, most of the Southern Ming people decided to live on and became Ming loyalists who insisted on their political identity as Ming subjects.

In the perspective of Ming martyrs, the demise of the Ming dynasty means that their

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[65] Sun Qifeng, *Fu shangyu Xie Yuanming* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia-rilu* (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2003), p.20.
[66] Fisher, 'Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing'; Zhao Yuan, *Mingqing zhiji shidafu yanjiu: zuowei yizhong xianxiang de yimin*.
[67] Rosenwein emphases that although people's emotions in one community might be the same, the ways they conceive and express these emotions are different. Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists showed similar differences, however, as I will show below, what made them different is not about their personal characteristics, preferences, or knowledge, but their pursuits, which affected their expression of loyalty. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p.192.
[68] Frederic Wakeman Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1985), pp.598-600.

allegiance to the Ming dynasty would soon be changed by the new dynasty, that is, the new monarch would demand them to be loyal to the new regime. They could not accept their loyalty to be tarnished or modified, nor could they accept that the moral principle of "never serving the monarch with two surnames" was violated. This drove them to commit suicide or fight to the death for the Ming dynasty. On 22 May 1644, Peng Qisheng wrote his last words in a family letter and said: "I will choose to die for [the Ming] dynasty, and if the city cannot be kept, I will die with it. 我惟以身殉封疆。城亡與亡而已。"[69] In 1647, Xia Wanchun who was arrested by the Qing army and faced the death penalty, sent a letter to his mothers.[70]

> My body is left by my father; my body is for the emperor to use. [I] did not fail my two mothers by dying for my father and the emperor. ... There is no one who is immortal, the most important thing is to die meaningfully. My father is a loyal minister, I am a filial son, [I] died with a smile, having accomplished what I should do.
> 淳之身，父之所遺；淳之身，君之所用。爲父爲君，死亦何負於雙慈！……人生孰無死，貴得死所耳。父得爲忠臣，子得爲孝子，含笑歸太虛，了我份內事。[71]

From his expressions of "I died with a smile" and "having accomplished what I should do", we can see that his emotions about his own death were positive and joyful. He believed that his death should be meaningful, and his so-called meaningful death was to die for the monarch, referring also to the Ming dynasty. Whether it is Xia Wanchun or Peng Qisheng, they both showed a willing attitude towards death, thinking that they should do so. They stated that they would rather lose their lives than let their loyalty be tarnished, which presented absolute Ming loyalism unadulterated by other emotions. Qu Shisi, who was killed by the Qing army in 1650, expressed a similar view. On 28 October 1648, Qu specifically wrote a letter to denounce his sons for shaving their hair and changing clothes to be Qing subjects:

> What is disgusting is that four generations of our family have passed the Ming imperial examinations, which makes our family well-known, and the quality of loyalty and filial piety has been passed down from generation to generation. [However], when you encountered such a crisis, you did not think of a strategy to avoid disaster but willingly did the same things as everyone else.

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[69] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushu guan cang mingdai chidu*, p.207.
[70] Xia Wanchun had two mothers, one was his biological mother (his father's concubine), and the other was his father's wife.
[71] Xia Wanchun. *Yuzhong shangmu shu* in *Xia Wanchun ji jiaojian*, pp.413-414.

> [You changed clothes and shaved off hair] that humiliated the family. You insisted that it was a measure. Other things can be expedient, how can it be done in this way? Those well-educated friends in our hometown eagerly [martyred for the dynasty] and will win a good reputation through the ages. Didn't they really hate to live but were willing to die? It is [because this matter] would damage their reputation, [so they would choose to die] rather than being alive. Even if you die [for this], I will not blame you. [Our] family has declined, what else are you reluctant to leave? [You] did not look for a secret place to hide early but instead did what [the Qing court] expected. This means you cannot tell right from wrong.
> 可恨者，吾家以四代甲科，鼎鼎名家，世傳忠孝，汝當此變故之來，不爲避地之策，而甘心與諸人爲虧體辱親之事。汝固自謂行權也，他事可權，此事而可權乎？邑中在庠諸友，轟轟烈烈，成一千古之名，彼豈真惡生而樂死乎？誠以名節所關，政有甚于生者。死固吾不責汝，第家已破矣，復何所戀？不早覓隱僻處所潛身，而反以快讎人之志，謂清濁不分。[72]

Qu Shisi blamed his sons for accepting the Qing order. He believed that his sons should be like those people who became martyrs of the Ming dynasty and wanted them to keep their Ming loyalism instead of living a miserable life. He also said that he would never blame them even if they died in the fight against the Qing oppression. In particular, Qu compared the choice of Ming martyrs to "*qing* 清 (pureness)" and compared his son's acts to "zhuo 浊 (turbidity)". Through the metaphor and comparison, he expressed his belief that loyalty should be as clean as pure water. The similarity between Qu Shisi, Peng Qisheng, and Xia Wanchun in the understanding of loyalism indicates that whether living in the southeast or the southwest, they all believed that their Ming loyalism should be pure and could not be mixed with temporary compromises.

However, as Fisher argues, the behaviour of Ming loyalists "fell somewhere between these two extremes of Confucian fundamentalism and expedient opportunism".[73] Their hairstyles and clothes could no longer adhere to the Ming style, as long as they maintained their political identity to the Ming and their moral principles and secretly supported the Southern Ming regime or engaged in Ming-related cultural works. But in essence, such choices were because they believed that Ming loyalism needed to take a backseat to survival. Their quest to survive outweighed their adherence to loyalty,

[72] Qu Shisi, *Bingxu jiuyue ershi ri shuji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, pp.252-253.
[73] Fisher, 'Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing', (p.85).

which led to the fact that their Ming loyalism was not absolute but could be negotiated in the way it was expressed. In a letter to Ming loyalist Chen Chenqian 陳臣謙, Wang Shimin said that he felt ashamed because he did not die like Ming martyrs. He believed that his difficulty in maintaining the daily family expenses was caused by his greed for survival and regarded his life after 1644 as "*tousheng* 偷生 (stolen life)", which means to drag out an ignoble existence.[74] Despite the fact that Wang's description seems to belittle himself, as he was filled with condemnation in his heart and denounced his behaviour to his friends, he still chose to live in the Qing territory. For Ming loyalists, the fear of death outweighed their Ming loyalism. While not all Ming loyalists understood loyalism in this way—Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629-1683) and Fang Yizhi, for example, maintained a relatively absolute loyalty[75]—there were very few such loyalists. As Fu Shan criticised, many Ming loyalists chose to survive not because they truly decided to support the Southern Ming regime secretly, but because of opportunism—they could continue to be the Ming officials if one day the Southern Ming regime restored the rule of the Ming dynasty.[76] Although Fu Shan's views were extreme as not all Ming loyalists had such a speculative idea, as correspondents like Qu Dajun had secretly supported the Southern Ming regime,[77] his opinion indeed expressed the true thoughts of many Ming loyalists after 1644. They were saddened by the fall of the Ming dynasty, but they did not want to lose their interests, such as survival, family property, relatives, stable living environment, and normal social activities, because of supporting the Southern Ming regime. Most of them did not want to dedicate their lives to the Ming dynasty but only modified this emotion like the Song loyalists,[78] making it a kind of persistence that existed in their hearts and did not endanger their lives.

Different understandings of Ming loyalism shaped the different requirements that Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists made on their descendants. Ming martyrs reinforced their own and their family's identification with the Ming identity and made requests in family letters for future generations to stick to that identity. They instructed their descendants never to serve in the Qing court. Although this seems to be similar to the choice of Ming loyalists, it essentially projects a fusion of love that Ming martyrs had for their offspring, so they could not bear to order descendants to die. In Peng Qisheng's letter mentioned above, he said to his family members: "If the restoration of the Great Ming dynasty

[74] Wang Shimin, *Zhi chen chenqian* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.275.
[75] See Fisher's work on Lü Liuliang and my discussion of Fang Yizhi in Section Four of this chapter. Fisher, 'Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing'.
[76] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Tingshi shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.183.
[77] Wu Qingshi, *Qu Dajun nianpu*, pp.73-74, 136-145.
[78] Jay's research on Song loyalists debunks their absolute loyalty to the Song dynasty and argues that Song loyalism was essentially a deliberately reinforced sentiment. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties*.

cannot be achieved, let sons return to [our] hometown to farm in the hills where [our] ancestors once lived. [Then] stretch the heirs, read poetry and books, but do not take the imperial examination. Be it so. 如大明之正統光復不可期。兒輩誅鋤草茅。以力耕守先人之丘壠。以延子若孫。誦詩讀書。不工制舉。斯已矣。”[79] Likewise, on 14 February 1647, Qu Shisi wrote to his family, telling his children and grandchildren to study and follow morality and never take the Qing imperial examination.[80]

On the contrary, the suggestion of Ming loyalists on life choices for their descendants even deviated from their adherence to the Ming identity. Although they refused to cooperate with the Qing court, they never asked their offspring to maintain the Ming identity as they did, and even actively requested Qing officials to help their descendants obtain positions in the Qing government. They showed active support for sons and relatives to participate in the Qing imperial examinations. It might be because, in their view, obtaining an official position could give them a stable income to sustain their lives. This is consistent with their understanding that survival was more important than Ming loyalism. Whether it was Wang Shimin, who once lamented that he was a loyalist of the previous dynasty, Fu Shan, who used the red Taoist robe as a metaphor for implying his Ming identity, or even Gu Yanwu, who travelled north and south to secretly support the Southern Ming regime, they all make suggestions for their descendants to enter the Qing court. In 1666, when his fifth son Wang Bian went to Beijing for taking the Qing imperial examination, Wang Shimin specially divined the success or failure of his son, and on 10 October, he wrote a letter to comfort Wang Bian: “In the south [the number of people taking the imperial examination] is like [there are as a lot of water in the sea], [you] are after all going from the south to the north [to take the examination], so it should be easier [for you] to be admitted. 南場如海，畢竟南人居北，進取較易。”[81] In the letter written on 11 November, he persuaded his son to do fortune-telling and see which subject would be more likely to be tested.[82] In the same letter, he also said that he was willing to dedicate his treasured rubbing of the “*Cao E Bei* 曹娥碑 (Cao e stele)” inscription to support the Qing official career of his son.[83] Similarly, Fu Shan wrote to Shanxi official Wei Yi’ao and requested care for the

[79] Peng Qisheng, *Peng Qisheng shuzha* in *Shanghai tushuguan cang mingdai chidu*, p.207.
[80] Qu Shisi, *Dinghai zhengyue chushi zaishu ji* in *Qu Shisi ji*, p.260.
[81] Wang Shimin, *Bingwu ba* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.179.
[82] ibid, *Bingwu jiu*, p.182.
[83] Cao e (130-143) was an Eastern Han girl from Shangyu 上虞 in Zhejiang. Her father drowned in a river. Cao, who was only fourteen years old at the time, cried along the river and searched for her father’s body for seven days before she finally threw herself into the river and died. In 424, she was reburied by the county magistrate Du Shang 度尚. Du erected a tombstone for her and asked his student Handanzi 邯鄲子 to write an inscription to praise Cao’s virtues. The Cao e stele preserved today was rewritten by the calligrapher Cai Bian 蔡卞 (1048-1117) in the Song dynasty. Ming literati valued it as a calligraphical work. ibid, p.189; *Xiaonü Cao e* in *Hou*

participation of his younger brother Fu Mei 傅梅 and his son in the Qing imperial examination.[84] Although the difference in this decision is also related to the incompetence of the Southern Ming regime, fundamentally, Ming loyalists' purpose of survival had long been different from that of Ming martyrs. Their loyalty had been included in the concessions made to the Qing dynasty in order to save their lives, which is also projected into the choices they made for future generations. This brings up a problem—which will be detailed in the final chapter—their understanding that survival preceded Ming loyalism led to occasional disloyalty to the Ming dynasty, which projected their ambivalence in life in the Qing territory.

Section Three Emotional Comfort through Written Conversation

Loyalism and the ensuing anticipation, disillusionment, and nostalgia were all mechanisms for the Southern Ming emotional community to comfort each other and reconcile the pain of the Qing conquest. After the Ming-Qing transition, the living conditions of the Southern Ming people changed dramatically. In the Ming dynasty, Fu Shan, Wang Shimin, Qian Chengzhi, Fang Yizhi, Zhang Dai, and Hou Qizeng could enjoy a cheerful and affluent life. However, after 1644, the loss of family property and the political persecution brought about by their allegiance to the Southern Ming government broke their originally peaceful life. In his letter to Dai Tingshi, Fu Shan said that after the fall of the Ming Beijing government, his financial situation was unprecedentedly bad, he did not have any decent clothes to wear when going out, and he was disgusted and hated by his relatives because he was a Ming loyalist.[85] Likewise, another Southern Ming correspondent Qian Chengzhi lost his wife, son, and most of his family property in 1644 and 1645.[86] In contrast, those Ming subjects who adopted to be Qing subjects were superior to Ming loyalists in many aspects such as income, occupation, and political status, as many of them became Qing officials and could offer helps to Ming loyalists who suffered political persecution or life difficulties in the Qing territory.

This caused a huge psychological gap for Ming loyalists. They urgently needed to seek a spiritual balance for such a gap, that is, neither a rich life, a stable career, nor a superior political status could make them give up their Ming loyalism. As Hu Jie lamented in a

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hanshu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), p.1888; *Kuiji jun gushu zaji* (Shanghai: Lu xun quanji chubanshe, 1941), pp.63-64; Tu Long, *Chen Meigong kaopan yushi* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu zibu 1185* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), p.1.19a.

[84] Fu Shan, *Yu Wei Yi'ao shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.203.

[85] ibid, *Yu Dai Fengzhong shu*, pp.191-195.

[86] Qian Weilu, *Qiangong yinguang fujun nianpu* in *Suozhi lu*, pp.184-191.

letter to his teacher Wang Tieshan: "I encountered hardships and witnessed so many changes in my youth, but I never changed [my Ming identity in the Qing dynasty] for seeking riches and honour. 少更患難。長閱滄桑。……未嘗輕動於富貴也。"[87] They encouraged themselves to adhere to their Ming identity and told their recipients that this insistence was meaningful because they were different from those original Ming subjects who violated their allegiance to the Ming dynasty in order to pursue wealth in the Qing time. The Qing conquest brought them suffering, but they did not want to lose this feeling. Instead, they frequently mentioned and emphasised it in their letters. They regarded such a feeling as a kind of admirable relief to themselves and to Ming loyalists who also embodied this sentiment. They strove to elevate the moral status of the Southern Ming emotional community, showing that those insiders all withstood the temptation of the higher Qing political status and the benefits that came from it.

Southern Ming epistolary networks established and maintained this emotional community. Correspondents use letters to share common sentiments, gain mutual recognition, and make these emotions be exchanged and circulated through the epistolary process. This prompted the personal emotions of every correspondent to interact and intersect with others in this community and constructed them as a whole. The letter became a tool for forming the emotional community in the Southern Ming period because of its features — the writing method of Chinese letters focuses on emotions.[88] Under the requirement of emotional expression in letter writing, Southern Ming correspondents were full of rich and diverse emotions like grief, sadness, anger, melancholy when talking about those incidents that could imply their identity.[89] Their emotions not only represent their attitudes towards different regimes and personal experiences in this period, but also represent the common emotional sense of belonging — the Ming dynasty—and the collective self-identified identity—Ming loyalists. Such an emotional community constructed by letters helped the Southern Ming correspondents to break away from their identity as Qing subjects. Those Southern Ming correspondents from different regions also had closer ties because they were in the same emotional community. In Gu Yanwu's epistolary network, there were not only correspondents like Gui Zhuang, who was one of his friends from his hometown but also correspondents like Fu Shan, Wang Hongzhuan, Sun Qifeng, Dai Fengzhong, and Chen Xi who belonged to the epistolary network in north China. Their correspondence discussed life choices, as well as topics about planning to write Ming history. The same emotions prompted correspondents in various regions to build social

[87] Hu Jie, *Fu Wang Tieshan shi* in *Chidu xinchao*, p.5.25a.
[88] Zha Wang, *Fenlei chidu xinyu xu* in *Siku jinhui shu congkan jibu 396-fenlei chidu xinyu*, p.2.
[89] Hu Jie, *Fu Wang Tieshan shi* in *Chidu xinchao*, p.5.25a; Wang Shimin, *Zhi Chen Chenqian* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.275; Lu Yuanfu, *Yu Ge Duanwu lun sanghun shu* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian-lu juyin xiansheng wenji*, p.468.

bonds and share common appeals.[90]

Furthermore, letters can be written more freely, which provides correspondents with the possibility of expressing emotions directly.[91] Correspondents can use an elegant register as refined as prose to make their points or a colloquial register as crude as vernacular to express their feelings. Whether being firmly supportive of the Southern Ming regime or becoming doubted and disillusioned were all revealed when the Southern Ming correspondents were narrating social events, political struggles, or political conflicts of the Southern Ming regime in their letters. Moreover, letter writing is a textual dialogue. As Richter argues, dialogicity can help readers enter into an intimate personal relationship and be more empathetic to the letter writers' point of view, even if these letters might be written for a broader readership.[92] A case in point is Qian Chengzhi. In 1646, Qian travelled to Ganzhou under the official duty of the Southern Ming court and wrote letters to share his emotions with other Southern Ming officials. In a letter to Xu Fuyuan between March and April, Qian said: "I do not know when and where we will meet. I am so sad when writing this letter. 吾兩人相見正不知在何時，於何地也？臨楮酸咽。"[93] In expressing his sadness, Qian incorporated into this emotion the pain of not being able to meet with Xu Fuyuan. Apart from directly expressing such regret, Qian particularly used a formulaic phrase—"*linchu suanye* 臨楮酸咽". As early as the Wei Jin Southern and Northern dynasties, similar expressions like "*linzhi gangeng* 臨紙感哽 (learning over the paper, I am choking with grief)" had appeared in the letters of Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361).[94] By the time of the Southern Ming period, such phrases had become a conventional way of conveying sadness.[95] The specific emotion—grief— was thus intimate and dynamic, and any reader of this sentence can feel that he or she is having a dialogue with Qian, resulting in emotional resonance. This makes the letters a suitable tool for sharing emotions among the Southern Ming correspondents.

[90] Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent believe that letters formed and sustained emotional bonds between people in different areas of Europe. Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections: Emotional Exchange Among Siblings in the Nassau Family', *Journal of Family History*, 34 (2009), 143-165.
[91] Anna M. Shields also points out that letters can directly express emotions. Anna M. Shields, 'The Inscription of Emotion in Mid-Tang Collegial Letters', in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, p.686.
[92] Antje Richter, 'Literary Criticism in the Epistolary Mode', *The Journal of Epistolary Studies* 1 (2019), 5-37 (p.32).
[93] Peng Qisheng, *Zai ganzhou yu Xu Angong shu* in *Cangshan ge ji*, p.376.
[94] Antje Richter, 'Beyond Calligraphy: Reading Wang Xizhi's Letters', *T'oung Pao*, 96 (2011), 370–407 (p.392).
[95] Similar phrases can be found in a letter written by Gu Yanwu. Gu Yanwu, *Yu di dayun* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.245.

Section Four　Emotional Pressure and Resistance

From the moment it was formed, the Southern Ming emotional community was in jeopardy. Since the stable life of most Ming loyalists was provided by the Qing regime, they suffered from the emotional pressure of pledging loyalty to the Qing dynasty from the Qing regime. The Qing regime forced them to accept the new order, which touched on the emotional traits and norms of the Ming recognition. It triggered their resistance to the Qing loyalism. Simultaneously, this emotional community monitored the morality and codes of conduct of insiders, preventing them from accepting cooperation with the Qing court.

1. Qing loyalism

As the replacement for the Ming dynasty, the Qing regime also longed for and needed the loyalty of the people as the emotional and moral basis for stable rule. Ming loyalists' adherence to the Ming identity might have cause the instability of the Qing rule, especially from 1644 to 1683, when the Southern Ming regime still existed. To the Qing regime, such loyalism was a huge threat. Not only that, Ming loyalists dominated the literati circle and the independent way of speaking to the public—writing books and handing them down to future generations. Although the Qing government banned many Ming-related works, it could not fundamentally destroy their disapproval of the loyalty to the Qing regime.[96] In order to subtly replace Ming loyalism with Qing loyalism, the Qing ruler invited Ming loyalists to cooperate with the Qing government in such matters as compiling the *History of the Ming*. The Qing ruler aimed to take advantage of the special sentiment of Ming loyalists towards the Ming dynasty and to put pressure on them to be loyal to the Qing regime under the pretext of cooperating with the Qing government to promote the Ming ritual system or engage in Ming cultural undertakings. This was a kind of cooperation that appeared to take place in the cultural field but had political significance. It could help the Qing regime to set a model for a large number of ordinary literati who were originally Ming subjects and admired Ming loyalists.

This was done three times between 1644 and 1683, and each of them was carried out with the participation of many original Ming officials who served the Qing court after 1644. The first time was in the 1650s, many Qing officials began to recommend and even force the Southern Ming people to cooperate with the Qing regime at the behest of the Qing court. In the summer of 1651, Ming loyalist Hou Xun 侯恂 was invited several times by original Ming officials who surrendered to the Qing dynasty. They

[96] Hu Qiguang, *Zhongguo wenhuo shi*, pp.125-135.

asked him to help the Qing ruler hold a traditional sacrificial ceremony named *luoji* 裸祭 (to irrigate the ground with wine to welcome the gods).[97] Henan governor Wu Jingdao 吳景道 also recommended Hou but only received his rejection. After learning that Hou's son Hou Fangyu had supported the Hongguang government, Wu intended to convict Hou's family but eventually gave up under the mediation of Song Quan 宋權 (1598-1652), a retired Qing official who was original Ming official. However, Wu still ordered Hou Fangyu to take the imperial examination in Henan in exchange for his father's escape from prison.[98] Another example is Mao Xiang, who was recommended by the Qing officials after 1644 when he lived as a hermit in his hometown. Although Mao withdrew from political life, his reputation lived on. Thus, the Qing officials recommended him to serve the Qing court, but he refused with the excuse that his parents were old and needed care.[99]

Before making recommendations, some Qing officials would write letters to Ming loyalists to expressly or implicitly test their possibility of cooperating with the Qing regime. In the autumn of 1652, Wu Weiye, who lived in the southeast region, received a letter from Qing official Chen Mingxia 陳名夏 (1601-1654) requesting a preface. Chen praised Wu's ability to write Eight-Legged Essay,[100] which was a style specially created for the imperial examination, and those who passed the examination would get an official position and serve the court. Thus, this letter should be Chen's attempt to test Wu's attitude towards the Qing court before sending the explicit invitation. Wu probably guessed Chen's purpose, so he did not agree to write a preface to Chen's anthology.[101] At that time, Wu was still immersed in the pain of the collapse of the Ming dynasty. On 16 April of the following year, he and many Ming loyalists privately held a sacrificial ceremony for the last Ming Emperor Chongzhen at the Zhonglou 鐘樓 (Bell Tower) in Taicang. After that, he went to Nanjing to search for the relics of the Ming dynasty and particularly visited Qing official Ma Guozhu 馬國柱, asking Ma not to recommend him to the Qing court.[102] However, those Qing officials ignored his request. From 1652 to 1653, Wu was recommended by Qing officials Chen Mingxia, Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1593-1676), and Chen Zhilin 陳之遴 (1605-1666).[103] In the autumn of 1653, he received an imperial edict from the Qing court, clearly requiring

[97] Wang Shulin and Wu Lin, *Hou Chaozong nianpu xinbian* in *Hou Fangyu quanji jiaojian xia* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2013), p.1252.
[98] ibid.
[99] *Mao Xiang* in *Qingshi gao juan wubaiyi-yiyi er* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), p.13851.
[100] Chen Mingxia, *Da Wu Jungong xiansheng* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 16-shiyun ju wenji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010), p.15.23b.
[101] Feng Qiyong and Ye Junyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu* (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2007), p.193.
[102] ibid, p.213.
[103] ibid.

him to enter the Qing court as an official.[104] As former Ming ministers, these Qing officials maintained relationships with many Ming loyalists. Gong Dingzi, Cao Rong, Wu Weiye, and Mao Xiang had social activities before 1644, and this might be the reason that the Qing court asked them to recommend and invite Ming loyalists.

The second one took place between 1678 and 1679. For recruiting scholars for the compilation of the *History of the Ming*, Emperor Kangxi ordered officials to recommend outstanding Confucian scholars to take the imperial examination of *Boxue hongci* 博學鴻詞 (Scholars of Erudite Confucianism).[105] Qing official Cao Rong, who was once a Ming subject, was one of the officials in charge of this work. During these two years, there were letters exchanged between the Qing officials and Ming loyalists about whether to take the exam. Wang Hongzhuan's chronological biography records that after he knew that the Qing court ordered him to take this examination, he repeatedly declined the officials in charge of the matter to go to Beijing to take this examination, and his rejecting letter was written to Qing official Yan Guangmin in the mid-to-late 1670s.[106] Fu Shan's chronological biography also contains such records, but, like Wang Hongzhuan, most of these letters were not preserved.[107]

The third pressure was the compilation of the Ming historiography in 1679. Qing officials such as Tang Bin, Cao Rong, Xu Qianxue, Xu Yuanwen, Pan Lei, Shi Runzhang, and Ye Fang'ai were all appointed to participate in this work, which prompted them to ask for advice from those outstanding historians like Ming loyalists Gu Yanwu, Wang Hongzhuan, and Chen Xi, and invited them to join in.[108] Their experiences indicate that the Qing official invitations to Ming loyalists led directly to frequent correspondence between Qing subjects and the Southern Ming people. Letters are tools for expressing emotions. When the Southern Ming people constructed an emotional community based on their epistolary networks, Qing subjects also tried to use letters to share emotions with them, attempting to change Ming loyalism. People in the Southern Ming emotional community knew that the Qing regime exerted such emotional pressure on them, thus, while refusing to cooperate with the Qing court, they resisted and monitored insiders, maintaining the moral principles of Ming loyalism.

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[104] ibid, p.214.
[105] *Shengzu shilu* in *Qing shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), p.71.910.
[106] *Huayin xianzhi wang hongzhuan zhuan* in *Wang hongzhuan ji xia*, p.1117.
[107] Dai Mengxiong, *Fu zhengjun zhuan* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.40.
[108] See chronological biographies of Gu Yanwu and Wang Hongzhuan. Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*; Kang Naixin, *Wang Zhenwen xiansheng yishi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*; Zhao Lisheng, *Wang Shanshi nianpu* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*.

2. Resistance and monitoring the loyalist community

As Rosenwein argues, the characteristic styles of emotional communities "depend not only on the emotions that they emphasize, … but also by the ones that they demote to the tangential or do not recognize at all".[109] As far as the Southern Ming emotional community was concerned, what they identified with was Ming loyalism, so they opposed being loyal to the hostile regime, that is, the Qing and Shun. Since the Shun regime lasted only one year, and its remaining troops joined the Southern Ming army in 1645, it can be said that the Qing regime was the political enemy of the Southern Ming people for most of the Southern Ming period. Despite this, their emotions towards this regime were complicated. Many of their relatives and friends became Qing subjects. They lived in the Qing territory and could not separate themselves from the Qing society. Although Ming loyalists modified their acts of how to present their Ming loyalism and showed a kind of concession, however, such concession disappeared when suffered pressure from the Qing court, as it intended to replace their Ming loyalism with Qing loyalism.

Using emotions to construct a community that could keep separate from the identity of "Qing subjects", was a kind of confrontation by the Southern Ming correspondents to the Qing regime. With the gradual disappearance of the Southern Ming territory in mainland China, correspondents were given the identity of "Qing subjects" as they lived in the Qing territory. Such an identity, which contradicted them to identified themselves as Ming loyalists, prompted them to seek a way to construct an identity that could break from the Qing identity. However, under the rule of the Qing government, they could not directly express their identity demands, thus the "emotions" transmitted through letters became the representation of their common identity. Southern Ming epistolary networks linked single correspondents into a whole for promoting and strengthening their collective Ming identity, so as to jointly resist the pressure from the Qing dynasty. A typical example is Wang Shimin. During the Southern Ming period, he maintained a friendship of comfort and encouragement with many Ming loyalists through correspondence. In a letter to Xiong Kaiyuan 熊開元 (1599-1676), who became a monk after 1644, Wang recalled the slander he had received in the early Southern Ming period, trying to justify his reputation.[110] In two letters to Ming loyalist Lu Xian, Wang expressed his great concern for the compilation of Ming poems and anthologies.[111] Wang also lamented his hardships in the Ming-Qing transition with Ming loyalists Monk Hongchu 釋弘儲 (1605-1672), Feng Quan 馮銓, and Liu

[109] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, p.26.
[110] Wang Shimin, *Zhi Xiong Kaiyuan* in *Wang Shimin ji*, p.222.
[111] ibid, *Zhi Lu Xian*, pp.273-274.

Qiaocai 柳翹才, and shared his sadness and hopeless.[112] In these letters, Wang Shimin did not always directly express his loyalty or nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, but the affairs he cared about, the life experiences he mentioned, and even his sufferings were all his emotional projections. These emotions were unique and embodied rebellious significance in the social situation in that the Qing regime strongly required the subjects under its rule to show their loyalty to the Qing dynasty from words to actions.

The common loyalty and nostalgia of the Ming dynasty that the Southern Ming correspondents shared in their letters represented a kind of antithesis to the sentiment of Qing loyalism. We can see that most of their letter topics were basically showing and declaring how they remained loyal to the Ming dynasty after its fall, regardless of whether they lived in the Southern Ming or the Qing territory. This ran counter to the allegiance of original Ming subjects that the Qing court tried to obtain after it became the ruler of China. In their letters, they spoke about the reasons for refusing to be Qing subjects and their efforts of insisting on the Ming identity, trying to gain the recognition and understanding of their recipients.[113] With the emergence of a large number of Ming loyalists, their letters became a display tool for sharing self-identification and expressing nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, and thus their emotions were vented, released, understood, and resonated. In successive correspondences, they received responses from their recipients who were also senders with the common nostalgia. Through epistolary activities, the Southern Ming correspondents spread their sentiments of adhering to the Ming identity and nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, thus establishing an emotional connection that was opposite to the attitude of recognising the Qing identity and being loyal to the Qing dynasty. Inspired by this emotion, when the Qing government forced Ming subjects to shave Manchu hair and change Manchu clothes, the implementation of this decree encountered fierce resistance in the southeast region. In 1645, the people of Songjiang fought desperately against the Qing army, resulting in countless casualties.[114] Hou Tongzeng and Huang Chunyao, who often talked about Southern Ming affairs in their letters and stated that they would still adhere to the Ming identity even if the Qing army occupied their hometown, also died in the battle.[115] Although this area eventually became a part of the Qing territory, from then on, no matter in the southeast or the north, Ming loyalists who refused to shave their

[112] ibid, *Zhi Liu Qiaocai*, *Zhi Feng Quan*, and *Zhi Jiqi*, pp.300-301; 307-308; 325-327.
[113] See letters written by Gui Zhuang, Chen Hongxu, and Qian Chengzhi. Gui Zhuang, *Ci tixue qianshi geibian jietie* in *Gui Zhuang ji*, p.505; Chen Hongxu, *Zaishang sili ligong kenci jianbi shu* in *Chidu xinchao*, pp.3.23b-24b; Qian Chengzhi, *Fu Lu Yiwang shu* in *Tianjian wenji*, pp.83-85.
[114] Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-Ting Loyalists: Confucian Leadership and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century China* (New and Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), pp.278-341; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, pp.591-680; Jun Fang, 'Literati Statecraft and Military Persistence during the Ming-Qing Transition: The Case of the Possibility Society (Jishe)', *The Chinese Historical Review* 19 (2012), 87-106 (pp.94-98).
[115] ibid; See nine letters from Hou Tongzeng to Huang Chunyao in 1645. Hou Tongzeng, *Yu Huang Taoan jinshi shu* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58-hou zhongjie gong quanji*, pp.9.4a-6a.

hair continued to emerge. They either chose to be Taoist priests or Buddhist monks,[116] or they fled Qing territory and followed the Yongli court to the southwest. In 1650, for instance, Fang Yizhi was taken to the execution ground after he was captured by the Qing army in Guangxi. The Qing general gave Manchu clothes and a knife and forced him to choose one. Fang chose the knife, expressing that he would rather die than shave his hair or change into Manchu clothes. Eventually, he was released by the Qing general.[117]

Not all correspondents in the Southern Ming emotional community could be as firm as Fang Yizhi. Motivated by maintaining solid loyalty, the Southern Ming emotional community monitored correspondents, presenting a kind of self-restraint under the moral requirement of loyalty to prevent their adherence to the Ming identity from being transformed by the Qing regime. Gammerl indicates that communities impose a certain degree of sanctions by compulsion on those with inappropriate emotional styles.[118] However, the Southern Ming emotional community was a loose group rather than an official one as it formed through the epistolary networks. The monitoring of its insiders was not coercive but was more persuasive through letters to avoid any cooperation with the Qing regime. The writing tone might be very strong, making it more incline to moral condemnation. On 1 November 1652, Hou Fangyu heard that a Qing official recommended Wu Weiye to serve in the Qing court. He immediately wrote a letter to persuade Wu to think carefully and said that his choice would affect many literati at that time and later generations. Hou listed three reasons why Wu Weiye should not cooperate with the Qing regime:

> You were valued by Emperor Chongzhen when you were not married, which put you at the forefront of the imperial examination. This is the first reason why you shall not [be a Qing official]. After a few years, you got the official position of a Grand Master, and you were among the important ministers of the [Ming dynasty]. This is the second reason why you shall not [be a Qing official]. ... You are the leader of the wise literati today. You have gained a lot in wealth and glory [and surpassed many others], and the official position you gained in the Ming dynasty was enough [nobility]. You got [these] when you were young, even if you become a Qing official now, can you surpass that? ... This is the third reason why you shall not [be a Qing official].
> 學士以弱冠未娶之年，蒙昔日天子殊遇，舉科名第一人，其不可者一也。後不數歲，而仕至宮詹學士，身列大臣，其不可者二也。……為海內賢

[116] Buddhist monks did shave their hair completely, but that was a way of avoiding having the Manchu hairstyle.
[117] Fang Shuwen, *Fang yizhi xiansheng nianpu*, p.156.
[118] Gammerl, 'Emotional Styles', (p.166).

士大夫領袖。人生富貴榮華，不過舉第一人，官學士足矣。學士年少皆已為之，今即再出，能過之乎？……其不可者三也。[119]

Moreover, he argued that the Qing emperor might not trust Wu. Wu was "an old remainder of the previous dynasty 前代之遺老", and the Qing dynasty had its loyal officials, so there was no need for Wu to serve this regime.[120] Although Hou wrote this letter driven by the purpose of persuading, according to the viewpoints he listed, the group of Ming loyalists he represented did not want Wu to cooperate with the Qing court.

Condemning those original Ming subjects who served the Qing court after 1644 was another way of monitoring, as it made the correspondents realise that if they gave up their Ming loyalism, they would encounter rejection and moral condemnation from the Southern Ming emotional community. Qian Qianyi was an official in the Hongguang government between 1644 and 1645 but cooperated with the Qing dynasty after 1645. In 1646, struggling with deep remorse, he decided to resign from his Qing official position, return to his hometown to live in reclusion, and try to be a Ming loyalist. However, Qian's return was severely scolded by the gentry in his hometown, so before returning to his hometown, he had to write a letter to the gentry, telling about how hard he served the Hongguang government, and implying that he was deceived by the Qing court before cooperating with it.[121] Nevertheless, his letter did not arouse the recognition of Ming loyalists. It was not until he secretly supported the Southern Ming government and was recognised by Emperor Yongli that he was truly adopted by Ming loyalists.[122]

Examples of Wu Weiye and Qian Qianyi demonstrate that although the Southern Ming emotional community was a loose group, their emotional bonds were strong which linked them as a whole rather than as independence. They paid close attention to the infiltration of Ming loyalists circle by Qing subjects, making efforts to persuade those Ming loyalists who had shaken their attitudes and showed signs of willingness to cooperate with the Qing court to stop those actions that might betray the Ming identity in this community. For the Southern Ming correspondents, the Qing was both ruler and enemy. They wanted to resist, but they did not have enough military strength and lacked a strong Ming regime. Under such circumstances, they must rely on a mechanism that could combine an individual's wish into an overall appeal to resist the persuasion from

[119] Hou Fangyu, *Yu Wu Jungong shu* in *Hou Fangyu quanji jiaojian*, p.170.
[120] ibid.
[121] Qian Qianyi, *Yu Yizhong xiangshen shu* in *Qian Muzhai quanji 7*, pp.823-825.
[122] Fang Liang, *Qian Qianyi nianpu* (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 2012), p.169.

the Qing regime to a single correspondent or block possible persecution. What they chose was to connect with other Southern Ming correspondents through letters and thus established their epistolary networks. However, this did not mean that letters had become a weapon that could directly fight against the Qing regime, but that epistolary communication activities could help them share common emotions in each exchange and gain recognition with other correspondents to form mutual connections based on it.

For the Southern Ming emotional community, the monitoring was a mechanism that restrained internal personnel and resisted the external. It shaped the morality, values, emotions, norms, ethics, and behaviours by intervening or even controlling insiders to form a resistance that refused to cooperate with the Qing regime. Essentially, such monitoring was more like a kind of emotional pressure based on being loyal to the Ming dynasty. Not all Southern Ming correspondents had absolute allegiance to the Ming. As discussed earlier, most of Ming loyalists believed that Ming loyalism could only be maintained when they were safe, and they would make behavioural concessions in order to survive or stabilise their lives.[123] This made the maintenance of the Southern Ming emotional community had the possibility of collapsing. The monitoring with emotional pressure could maintain this emotional community at least in the generation of Ming loyalists, because they did not require future generations to do the same. Furthermore, insiders might be cowardly in the resistance. Such a feeling could not be suppressed by oneself and therefore required the monitoring of other correspondents in the emotional community. As people who had experienced the Ming-Qing transition, they valued the moral judgments made about them by future generations. They monitored each other, and perhaps there was also a fear that other's choices of allegiance to the Qing dynasty would affect and weaken their loyalty to the Ming dynasty and eventually prompt them to go down in history as a symbol of infamy because they gave up their identity as Ming loyalists.

To the Southern Ming correspondents, the approach of linking others through their Ming loyalism based on their epistolary networks was successful. This is because the Southern Ming regime was established quickly after the fall of the Ming Beijing government, which left them with a glimmer of hope to restore the Ming rule. It was also because their adherence to the Ming identity was still maintained even though the Southern Ming started to decline after the 1650s. Ming loyalism, along with other

[123] In his study of Confucius, Charles Wing-Hoi Chen demonstrates that in the Confucian period, the Confucian standard for whether a gentleman can accept an official position was not absolute, but conditional. He argues that Confucius's standard was based on moral principles and whether the emperors he served could live up to his ideals. Although this is not the same as the principle of Ming loyalists, through Chen's analysis of Confucius, we can see that the Confucian standard can be adjusted or modified, which might be adopted by Ming loyalists as a historical reference for their Ming loyalism in the Qing territory. Charles Wing-Hoi Chen, 'Confucius and Political Loyalism: The Dilemma', *Monumenta Serica* 44 (1996), 25-99.

accompanying emotions, was a spiritual comfort when they became technically Qing subjects. However, this was not what the Qing ruler expected. The Qing regime tried to redirect their loyalty to the Ming toward the Qing. Although the Southern Ming emotional community resisted, it still resulted in harm to correspondents causing them a dilemma in their emotional attitude towards the Qing regime. They declared themselves hermits who did not care about worldly affairs, but they also became friends with Qing subjects to seek help. As a result, the Southern Ming emotional community presented interwoven sentiments of rejection and potential acceptance of the Qing regime, which prompted them to fashion the self when writing letters to Qing subjects not only to refuse cooperation but also to seek help. Simultaneously, Qing subjects also created different personas in their correspondence with the Southern Ming people under the fulfilment of the political tasks and the goal of justifying their reputation.

Chapter Five

Self-Fashioning and Ambivalence

The Southern Ming people were ambivalent when living in the Qing territory. Existing scholarship examines this ambivalence mainly by exploring the personal choices of Ming loyalists in the early Qing, their views and attitudes as revealed in their literary and historical works,[1] but seldom analysed exclusively from the perspective of letters. The letters exchanged between the Southern Ming and the Qing correspondents intuitively show how they balanced their political identities and personal interests under the influence of the Ming-Qing transition. The Southern Ming insisted on their Ming identity in order to gain a good reputation but did not want their interests to suffer as a result. Qing subjects were anxious to get rid of moral condemnation or were eager to enter the cultural circle led by the Southern Ming people. Drawing on the concept of self-fashioning,[2] I argue that in their correspondence, their ambivalence led them to create different personas to adjust the nature of the relationship between the two hostile political groups and simultaneously seek benefits and help from one another. It made letters significant in the depoliticised communication between the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects.

Section One Letters as a Mechanism for Political Cooperation and Gaining Benefits

As written conversations, letters can use different material parts to fashion the textualised self, so as to achieve the purpose of writing this letter.[3] Between 1644 and 1683, due to the opposition in political identity, social status, and moral evaluation between the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects, neither side gained absolute supremacy in all fields. This prompted the letters exchanged between them to be filled

[1] He Guanbiao, *Sheng yu si: mingji shidafu de jueze*; Bai Yijin 白一瑾, 'Lun qingchu erchen he yimin jiaowang beihou de shiren xintai' 論清初貳臣和遺民交往背後的士人心態, *Nankai xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 3 (2011), 64-71; Zhang Hui 張暉, 'Wenti yu yimin xinjing de zhanxian——yi qian chengzhi de wannian zhushu weili' 文體與遺民心境的展現——以錢澄之的晚年著述為例, *Zhongshan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)*, 51 (2011), 10-20; Zhu Zebao 朱澤寶, 'Ming yimin xingxiang chongsu de weiguan kaocha——yi jiang cai weili' 明遺民形象重塑的微觀考察——以姜埰為例, *Wenxue pinglun congkan* 2 (2016), 13-23; Xue Yiwei 薛以偉, 'Erchen yu ming yimin jiaoyou yuanyin tanxi—yi erchen wei shijiao' 貳臣與明遺民交遊原因探析, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 100 (2017), 86-93.

[2] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*.

[3] Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', 78-95; Nestor, 'New Opportunities for Self-Reflection and Self-Fashioning', 18-35; Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', 82-94.

with created personas, which projected their appeals in political cooperation and gaining benefits.

1. Personas in political cooperation

The personas created by the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects because of political cooperation are opposite to the impression they gave to the public. The Southern Ming, who had a central and leading position in the cultural circle, deliberately portrayed themselves to refuse to cooperate with the Qing government. However, Qing subjects, on the contrary, fashioned themselves with the Ming identity and strongly recognised the Ming culture. Choosing specific words, phrases, and sentences, and repeatedly emphasising a certain quality in a persona were the ways they used to imprint their fashioned self on the minds of their recipients.

(1) Fashion a reclusive, old, sick, and incompetent self

The political success of the Qing regime did not mean it had gained the support of all the original Ming subjects. In order to achieve a more stable rule, the Qing court offered them political positions and was committed to persuading those literati who were not Ming officials but were well-known in the literati circle to become its supporters and collaborators. In this way, the Qing regime intended to present a friendly image to more Ming subjects and thus gain their allegiance to the Qing rule. From about 1645 onwards, the Qing government tried various methods to invite the Southern Ming people to enter the Qing court on the pretext of recruiting talents. One of the ways was to ask those officials who were originally Ming officials and later served the Qing court to recommend Ming loyalists to compile the Ming historiography or force them to take the Qing imperial examinations. These actions pushed the Southern Ming correspondents to deliberately fashion the self.

Creating a persona of a reclusive person who did not care about worldly affairs was one of the common methods, as it could help the Southern Ming correspondents to distance themselves from any political ties with the Qing regime. Gu Yanwu was an outstanding scholar who was invited by Qing officials to participate in Qing's project of compiling Ming historiography. In 1679, Gu wrote a letter to the officials of the Qing History Academy and said:

> In the summer of 1645, my mother was sixty years old. She fled to Yulianjing of Changshu county to avoid the military chaos. She said to me: "Although I am a woman, I have enjoyed the grace of the [Ming] dynasty in my life, and my loyalty to it cannot be insulted." [Later] when she heard that both Beijing

> and Nanjing had been captured by the [Qing army], she went on a hunger strike and died in her room on 19 September. The last words she left for me were: read, live in reclusion and never serve another dynasty. It has been thirty-five years since then, and every time [I] think about it, my clothes are wet with tears.
> 乙酉之夏，先妣時年六十，避兵於常熟縣之語濂涇，謂不孝曰："我雖婦人，身受國恩，義不可辱。"及聞兩京皆破，絕粒不食，以七月三十日卒於寓室之內寢，遺命炎武，讀書隱居，無仕二姓。迄今三十五年，每一念及，不知涕之沾襟也。[4]

Gu recalled the last words of his mother before she starved herself to death in the summer of 1645 to explain why he chose to be a hermit. In another letter replied to Qing official Ye Fang'ai 葉方藹 (1629-1682), Gu mentioned these words again.[5]

The image of a hermit usually appears together with the image of a man who was sick and old. Gu told those Qing official that he was almost seventy years old and might die at any time, and he had long since lost the ambition of achieving the outstanding fame.[6] Similarly, In 1646, Xue Suoyun 薛所蘊 (1600-1667), a Ming official who entered the Qing court, recommended Ming loyalist Sun Qifeng to serve the Qing government. Sun replied to Xue, describing himself as an old man who was sick, expressing that he had lost all ambition in worldly affairs and had chosen to be a hermit: "From now on, I will spend my life as a fisherman and woodcutter. 從此混跡漁樵。苟全性命".[7] Ming loyalist Wang Hongzhuan chose the same way as Gu and Sun. In the 1670s, Wang sent a letter to Qing official Yan Guangmin who had invited him to serve the Qing court: "Since I returned to my hometown, … my illness has been increasing day by day, so I have to close my door and see no guests. 弟自西歸以來，……且衰病日增，唯閉門卻埽。"[8] In another letter replied to Qing official Tang Bin, Wang lamented his sufferings of ageing and illness.[9] Elaborating on health as a rhetorical strategy for self-expression and image-creating is a method of letter writing that can be traced back to early medieval China.[10] As Richter argues, "they point to an understanding of authorship as deeply rooted in the somatic".[11] As a presentation of the textualised self

[4] Gu Yanwu, *Yu shiguan zhujun shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.105.
[5] ibid, *Yu Ye Ren'an shu*, and *Yu shiguan zhujun shu*, pp.104-106.
[6] ibid, *Yu shiguan zhujun shu*, p.106.
[7] Sun Qifeng, *Yu Xue Xingwu* in *Xiafeng xiansheng ji*, pp.32-33.
[8] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yu Yan Xiulai libu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.429.
[9] Wang Hongzhuan, *Fu Tang Jinxian shijiang* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.925.
[10] Antje Richter, 'Health and Illness in the Paratext: Five Authorial Prefaces and a Letter from Early and Early Medieval China', *Nanyang Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture*, 2 (2022), 85-108.
[11] ibid, (p.86).

with a long tradition of epistolary writing, subjects centred on illness and health provided the Southern Ming correspondents with a strategy of creating personas that could be more easily accepted by Qing subjects.

Reclusion, old age, and illness were all approaches in which the Southern Ming people presented themselves as a person that was useless for the government service.[12] They focused on fashioning themselves as pedantic and incompetent people to undermine any image of "useful Confucianists 有用儒者"[13] given to them by Qing subjects. A case in point is Sun Qifeng. Sun had become outstanding in the academic circle since the late Ming period. After 1644, he was recommended by the Qing officials many times, which earned him the reputation of "Sun Zhengjun 孫徵君 (Mr. Sun who has been invited many times to be an official)". Nevertheless, Sun never accepted to pledge allegiance to the Qing regime. When he learned that Xue Suoyun's relatives and friends recommended him to the Qing court, he particularly sent a letter to Xue and said:

> I am an old, sickly, and decaying Confucian scholar, alive for the time being. Mr. Chen, your relative, recommended the hermit according to the imperial edict of [the Qing ruler]. He [recommended] me, who is shallow, and [I] was so surprised that I did not know what to say. ... Such an honour and grace, I know it was your idea without asking. … [I] have always been superficial and stubborn, and I know my [abilities] very well. Others treat me with the [attitude] towards a man of virtue, [I] should take the initiative to classify myself as a person without talent, let alone [I] am not a sage in the first place. [Now I am] almost seventy years old, and I am sicker every day. I cannot hear or see clearly. I walk falteringly, and [often] I have to lie in bed. It is even difficult for me to go to the town, so it is really impossible for me to serve the court.
>
> 某衰病腐儒。暫偷視息。令親陳老公祖。奉詔舉逸。謬及謗陋。暫竦何言。……此段殊恩曠典。不問而知出先生意。……向來硜硜一念。自知甚明。且人以賢者相待。自宜退處於不肖。況原非賢者之身乎。年近七旬。日病一日。耳目昏聵。蹣跚偃臥。夏峰即城中。難於一往。勢必不能赴闕。[14]

This quotation implies that the Qing officials' recommendation might regard Sun

[12] By analysing autobiographical letters in early China, Wells argues that such letters show metonyms for the writers, which present their specific qualities to their recipients. It is essentially a similar view that letters can be used for self-fashioning, reinforcing to readers a particular characteristic of the letter writers. Wells, 'Captured in Words: Functions and Limits of Autobiographical Expression in Early Chinese Epistolary Literature', pp.622-642.
[13] Tang Bin, *Da Gu Ningren shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.436.
[14] Sun Qifeng, *Ji Xue Xingwu* in *Xiafeng xiansheng ji*, p.45.

Qifeng as "a man of virtue". However, in Sun's description of himself, he was a non-sage man who was old and sick and even had trouble getting into town. Likewise, in 1669, when Sun Qifeng's son was recommended by Weihui 衛輝 prefect Cheng Nianyi 程念伊 to be a Qing official, in order to refuse the invitation, Sun wrote a letter to Cheng on 8 June, describing his son as a man with little talent and knowledge who was of no use to the Qing court.[15]

The Southern Ming correspondents would choose specific words and expressions to reinforce such a self to their Qing correspondents. In his letter to Cheng Nianyi, Sun Qifeng highlighted his uselessness: "I am pedantry, stupid, old, and decaying. I have been repeatedly involved [the court's] decree to recruit talented people, [I] think that I have no ability to serve the court. 某迂拙衰腐。濫叨弓旌大典屢矣。自愧無能報稱朝廷異數。"[16] The characters "*yuzhuo shuaifu* 迂拙衰腐 (pedantry, stupid, old, and decay)" were used by Sun to emphasise that his abilities were outdated to the Qing regime.[17] He attempted to break the image of a talented person that the Qing court gave to him and cut off the possibility of cooperating with this regime at the political level. Likewise, after 1644, Fu Shan became a Taoist monk and proclaimed his attitude of not caring about worldly affairs. In the summer of 1678, he was ordered by the Qing court to take the imperial examination Scholars of Erudite Confucianism.[18] Dai Mengxiong 戴梦熊, the magistrate of Quyang 曲阳 who was in charge of sending Fu Shan to Beijing, recalled in "Fu Zhengjun 傅徵君 (Mr. Fu, A Scholar Who Was Invited Many Times to be the Qing Official)": "In 1678, … I remember that after [Fu Shan] was recommended, he wrote letters [to me] hundreds of sentences long, in which [he] worried that his ageing would make him unable to be a [Qing] official. 康熙戊午，……余憶應召之後，以長箋見寄，纍纍數百言，慮其衰老不復能把握也。"[19] This shows that the persona of old age conveyed by Fu left a deep impression on Dai, so that recalling this incident many years later, Dai still remembered such a characteristic. Although it was more like an extremely exaggerated way of expression deliberately chosen for emphasising his incompetence,[20] it implied a certain degree of truthfulness, as Fu was 71 years old at the time. However, this was actually his strategy to make the recipient more convinced of his created persona. In 1679, when writing to Qing official Cao Rong, Fu used such a method again, describing himself as "an old and sick man

[15] ibid, *Yu Chen Nianyi*, p.1249.
[16] ibid, *Yu Cheng Nianyi*, p.71.
[17] Steen also indicates the significance of frequently using specific adjective in creating a certain persona. Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', (p.87).
[18] *Shengzu shilu* in *Qing shilu*, p.71.910.
[19] Dai Mengxiong, *Fu zhengjun zhuan* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20-fulu si*, p.40.
[20] In her study of Branwell, Braxton points out that letter writers adopt created personas to deny to others their real situations. Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing', (p.84).

who is on the verge of death 老病將死之人".[21]

For creating an image of useless, the Southern Ming correspondents would find many excuses to present themselves as people who were busy with mundane affairs and writing books. When Ming loyalist Chen Hongxu 陳弘緒 (1597-1665) wrote to a promoted official of the Qing dynasty surnamed Li, he explained three reasons why he could not serve in the Qing court: (1) his mother was over eighty years old, and he must stay at home to take care of her; (2) if he took the political position, the graves and old houses of his grandparents would be left unattended; (3) he had been well-educated since he was a child, so now he hoped to concentrate on scholarship and aspired to write.[22] Monk Jinshi, Fang Yizhi, Qian Chengzhi, Qian Qianyi, and other Southern Ming correspondents all chose explicit or implicit excuses of avoiding worldly affairs or focusing on writing books in their correspondence with Qing subjects.

(2) Fashioned Ming identity and collective recognition

After 1644, when writing letters to the Southern Ming people, Qing subjects showed a strategy of deliberately underplaying Qing identity or emphasising Ming identity and Ming culture.[23] They intended to create a persona as a Southern Ming person who suffered hardships and sorrows during the Ming-Qing transition, and who had an ambivalent attitude to the Qing rule.

In order to obtain the cultural recognition, Qing subjects chose the terms that could highlight their Ming identity to imply that their identification and valuation of Ming culture were the same as the Southern Ming correspondents. In a letter written to invite Ming loyalist Huang Zongxi to participate in the compilation of the *History of the Ming* organised by the Qing government, Qing official Cao Rong referred to the Ming historiography as "*guoshi* 國史 (the historiography of our dynasty)": "The historiography of our dynasty has not been compiled until today, literati are all expecting for it. 國史蹉跎至今。海內有餘望焉。"[24] Judging from Cao's political standpoint, "the historiography of our dynasty" should be the Qing historiography. However, in order to make Huang Zongxi feel that they had the same sense of belonging

[21] According to Yin Xieli's notes in the *Newly Compiled Chronological Biography of Fu Shan*, whether this letter was written by Fu cannot be verified at present. I still quote it to show Fu's self-fashioning, because he did describe himself as an old and sick man in his letters to Qing official Dai Mengxiong, but these letters were not preserved. Thus, it is possible that Fu used this way to create such a self-image when writing letters to Qing official Cao Rong. Fu Shan, *Yu Cao Qiuyue shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.237.

[22] Chen Hongxu, *Zaishang sili ligong kenci jianbi shu* in *Chidu xinchao*, pp.3.23b-24b.

[23] Greenblatt argues that self-fashioning suggests deception and contains some loss of self. Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p.9.

[24] Cao Rong, *Yu Huang Taichong* in *Juanpu Cao xiansheng chidu juanshang* (Woodblock Edition of Hanhui ge in the Qing Dynasty), p.58b.

to the Ming dynasty, Cao, who was a Qing official, did not hesitate to use such a method to shape himself as a man with the Ming identity. Qing subjects were fully aware of the collective emotional tendencies displayed by the Southern Ming correspondents. As Qing correspondents who were originally Ming subjects, they realised that creating a Ming image might enhance the possibility that they could help them enter the Southern Ming emotional community. Cao Rong attempted such a way more than once. In his letter to Ming loyalist Zhang Yi, Cao referred to Zhang as "a friend from our previous dynasty 故國故人", implying that they were once Ming subjects and had the same identity.[25] Not only that, but in the two letters Cao sent to Huang Zongxi and Zhang Yi, he chose the same date-writing method as many Southern Ming correspondents, that is, whenever mentioning the year after the Ming fall, they would only write Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches without recording reign titles of the Qing dynasty. In his letter to Zhang Yi, Cao Rong used the reign title of the Ming dynasty "*Wanli* 萬曆" when mentioning an incident in the late Ming period. In his letter to Huang Zongxi, when referring to 1644, however, he only wrote "*Jiashen* 甲申" and deliberately left out the reign title "*Shunzhi*" of the Qing dynasty.[26] Both of Cao Rong's letters were written to invite Huang Zongxi and Zhang Yi to participate in the Qing compilation of the *History of the Ming*. Although most of those invitations were politely rejected by Ming loyalists, it projected that when writing letters to the Southern Ming people, Qing subjects tried to hide their true purposes in the letter topics—making the Southern Ming people give up their Ming identity and being loyal to the Qing regime. Qing subjects knew that a blunt statement of their motivation would not only be rejected by the Southern Ming people but might even bring about a violent revolt, as in the case of the resistance against the Qing in Songjiang in 1645. Therefore, they adjusted topics according to their recipients' preferences, personalities and concerns, which made them focused on conveying those affairs that Ming loyalists cared about, to imprint them an image of the common recognition of Ming identity.

The created Ming identity and the inclusiveness of various letter topics brought Qing subjects the possibility of gaining emotional resonance and identity recognition from the Southern Ming people. Although Qing subjects exchanged letters with Ming loyalists as friends, it is undeniable that they disagreed fundamentally in their attitudes to Qing rule. Those Qing subjects who were original Ming subjects were educated by the same culture as Ming loyalists, however, their social and cultural activities were essentially based on the Qing identity. In this case, their choice of self-fashioning downplayed the contradictions that might arise from different political identities.

[25] ibid, p.58a.
[26] ibid, *Yu Zhang Yaoxing* and *Yu Huang Taichong*, pp.57b-59a.

Although Ming loyalists were aware of the expression of "the historiography of our dynasty" and "a friend from our previous dynasty", as well as the use of Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, were all the mechanisms for the Qing correspondents to create personas, these actions conveyed a message from the Qing court to Ming loyalists: the Qing regime respected their insistence of Ming identities and was willing to follow their ways to communicate with them. Such an attitude could provide the Southern Ming correspondents with good impression of the Qing regime and the possibility of accepting it.

In order to reinforce such a message and further demonstrate that they recognised the Ming identity, Qing subjects presented a persona of strongly praising and supporting the spread of Ming culture. They noticed the concerns of the Southern Ming people for the history, literature, and scholarship of the Ming dynasty and the Southern Ming period, and showed a high level of recognition and support for compiling these works. In a letter to Gu Yanwu, Tang Bin praised Gu's *Daily Records of Knowledge*: "[The opinions] in your book are accurate and are beneficial to the morality. [I] respect and admire, respect and admire! It is a pity that [I] cannot get and read the full version of *Daily Records of Knowledge*. I do not know when [I can] listen to your teachings face to face and hear that I have never heard of before. 大刻精確，有裨世道，敬服，敬服！惜不能得《日知錄》盡讀之，何時面聆台教，聞所未聞乎？"[27] *Daily Records of Knowledge* is a scholarly notebook, and it was written under Gu Yanwu's thoughts about governing society and expounding morality, implying the reflection of the Ming fall.[28] Although such praise was meant to show politeness, it is undeniable that Tang Bin did present a strong supportive attitude towards the cultural works written by Ming loyalists. Tang even participated in the compilation of Ming scholarship. After becoming a student of Sun Qifeng, he wrote a Neo-Confucian work *Luoxue bian* 洛學編 (The Collection of Thoughts of Luoyang Scholar*s*) under Sun's guidance. In a letter written around 1667, Tang told Sun that he had decided to temporarily suspend his original annotation works and focused on compiling *The Collection of Thoughts of Luoyang Scholars*.

> I continue to write *The Collection of Thoughts of Luoyang Scholars* that you asked me to do. Recently, I have suffered from too many [versions] of

[27] Tang Bin, *Da Gu Ningren shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.437.
[28] Bu Jinzhi 步近智 and Zhang Anqi 張安奇, 'Luelun mingqing shixue sichao jiqi xianshi yiyi' 略論明清實學思潮及其現實意義, *Xueshu yuekan*, 1 (2001), 68-73 (p.69); Tian Feng 田豐, 'Luelun gu yanwu de renyi guan—yi rizhi lu zhengshi tiao wei zhongxin' 略論顧炎武的"仁義"觀——以《日知錄》"正始"條為中心, *Kongzi yanjiu*, 6 (2016), 125-131 (p.126); Lei Ping 雷平, 'Cong kaozheng shengyu jingji dao jingji shengyu jingshi—siku tiyao zhong de gu yanwu xueshu xingxiang jiqi houshi yanbian' 從"考證勝於經濟"到"經濟勝於經史"——《四庫提要》中的顧炎武學術形象及其後世演變, *Xueshu jie*, 9 (2021), 182-189 (p.118).

> commentaries on the [Chinese] Classics, and [their] interpretations are different. Although I have read them repeatedly, I still have no understanding. I originally wanted to focus on the previous Confucian theories, ... [but] this cannot be done without years of effort. Now, according to your order, I am going to put aside the [Chinese] Classics temporarily and engage in the thoughts of Luoyang scholars. However, there are few books in the prefecture where I live, and I am afraid there might be omissions. Also, [you] have not instructed me about the compiling and selecting methods of [this book]. If [you] have a draft, please send it to me for reference.
> 承諭《洛學編》。某近苦經書訓註太繁。論說不一。雖反覆翻閱。終無心得。欲斟酌先儒之說。……此非數年工夫不能草草脫稿。今奉先生命。欲暫輟經書。從事洛學。但敝州書籍甚少。恐有遺漏。且義例體裁未奉明示，如有稿本，乞發下參酌。[29]

"Luoxue 洛學 (Thoughts of Luoyang Scholars)" is a school founded by Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), Neo-Confucians in the Northern Song dynasty. The origin of *Luoxue* can be traced back to the Han dynasty, and its theoretical ideas continued to the Ming dynasty. *The Collection of Thoughts of Luoyang Scholars* is a book that records the evolution of Neo-Confucianism from the Han to the Ming dynasties. Its compiling purpose was to let the thoughts of those Luoyang scholars be inherited and disseminated after 1644. As a Confucianist who became a Ming loyalist in the Qing territory, Sun might have instructed Tang to write this book probably because he hoped to record and preserve the development of thoughts of Luoyang 洛陽 scholars in the Ming dynasty. The interest of Ming loyalists in Ming culture was notable in the Southern Ming period. Tang was clearly aware of this purpose, but he remained actively involved in the compilation of this book.

However, there was a caution hidden in the supportive attitude of Qing subjects towards the works of Ming loyalists—they wanted to gain the approval of Ming loyalists but were not willing to give up their Qing identity to do so. Their support for cultural works was cautious, focusing more on those books that were written for statecraft or enforcing morality and rituals. Both *Daily Records of Knowledge* and *Luoxue bian* are in such categories. It was probably because Qing subjects were aware of the ban of the Qing government on private publication—only books that could help with the imperial examinations and promote morality could be published. Nonetheless, this does not

[29] Tang Bin, *Sanshang sun zhengjun xiansheng shu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu jibu 1312-tangzi yishu* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), p.5.6b.

mean that Qing subjects shied away from the historiography compiled to record the Ming-Qing transition. They opportunistically created an image of supporting Ming loyalists in writing biographies for Ming martyrs. This was in line with both the Qing government's ethical publishing policy and Ming loyalists' desire to pass on the deeds of Ming martyrs to future generations. Sun Qifeng, for example, was supported by Tang Bin when he wrote historiography and biographies in praise of those Ming martyrs after 1644. On 15 November 1666, he recorded that "[I] wrote a biography for the chaste and strong Mrs. Tang whose surname was Zhao 爲節烈湯恭人趙氏立傳。"[30] Zhao was Tang Bin's mother who died when the Shun army invaded their hometown. Although she did not die during the confrontation between the Ming and the Qing regimes, her deeds presented that when facing the forces that invaded the Ming dynasty, her unyielding spirit originated from the morality of being loyal to the Ming dynasty was similar to those Ming martyrs who were never loyal to the Qing regime, which could resonate with the Southern Ming correspondents. This kind of resonance might be transferred to Tang Bin when he talked about his mother so that Ming loyalists like Sun Qifeng would have recognition with Tang. Through letter exchanges, the Qing correspondents used the Ming culture as a means to impress the Southern Ming correspondents and built a bridge of recognition between different political positions with the common Ming culture and identity. They supported, recognised, and praised the history, literature, and scholarship related to the Ming and the Southern Ming, which led the Southern Ming correspondents to cross this bridge, allowing them to feel the friendly attitude of the Qing court.

In this case, the correspondence between them transformed from only sharing cultural ideas to the stage of using letters to exchange cultural works, such as poetry collections, anthologies, historiography, and gifts. Those accompanying items became a tool to help Qing subjects stabilise and deepen the role of the Ming persona, prompting the nature of the relationship between them and the Southern Ming people to move towards a closer friendship with the possibility of private emotional sharing. However, such a shift in relations did not begin in the mid-to-late Southern Ming period, but as early as the early period. Qing official Gong Dingzi often exchanged poems with Ming loyalists. In 1646, when Gong passed through Huaiyin 淮陰 on his way home for the funeral of his father Gong Fusu 龔孚肅, he sent poems to Ming loyalist Yan Ermei 閻爾梅 and got Yan's poems in reply.[31] In 1648, Gong wrote four birthday poems to Ming loyalist Ji Yingzhong.[32] Yu Huai, Du Jun, Mao Xiang and other Ming loyalists also maintained frequent poetry exchanges with Gong. More examples occurred in the late Southern

[30] Sun Qifeng, *Yu Ma Yusun* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia-ripu*, p.1099.
[31] Gong Dingzi, *Nianpu* in *Gong Dingzi quanji* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2014), pp.2584-2585.
[32] ibid, p.2587.

Ming period. Tang Bin, who worked on the compilation of *History of the Ming* after 1679, sent a copy of *Ming taizu benji* 明太祖本纪 (The Biography of the First Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang) to Ming loyalist Wang Hongzhuan, who was knowledgeable in the field of history. After Wang received it, he replied to Tang that "*The Biography of the First Ming Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang* gets you to arrange the order of [emperor's] life experience, it should be the first [ranked] piece of prose in all ages, not just in one generation. It is a great honour to have you send me this draft. 《明太祖本纪》得先生敘次，當爲古今第一篇文字，不僅雄於一代而已，稿本賜示，幸甚。"[33] The motivation of Tang to deliver his piece of writing work to Wang might because he intended to take this opportunity to show Wang his efforts in preserving the history of the Ming dynasty. As one of the officials in charge of the Ming historiography project appointed by the Qing court, what Tang wanted to demonstrate was not his talent or knowledge in writing the biography but to imply to Ming loyalists that the Qing court he represented had great respect for the Ming dynasty and Ming loyalists. Through this draft, Tang also wanted to convey that the Qing court's attitude in writing *History of the Ming* was modest. It did not carry out this work as a victor but faithfully recorded everything that happened in the Ming dynasty and hoped to obtain corrections from Ming loyalists like Wang Hongzhuan who were well-versed in compiling historiography before this work finished. Such an attitude was likely to win the favour of the Southern Ming correspondents, as they were working hard to preserve the Ming history.

The exchange of writing works between Tang Bin and Wang Hongzhuan is a microcosm of the correspondence between Qing subjects and Ming loyalists in the late Southern Ming period. Whether it was exchanging gifts or maintaining frequent correspondence, Qing subjects tried to make their friendship with the Southern Ming people become closer and develop in the direction of a confidant who could talk to each other without secrets. In his letter to Qing official Wei Xiangshu 魏象樞 (1617-1687), Wang Hongzhuan thanked Wei for his essay: "Thank you very much for not giving up contacting me and sending me your excellent works even though you are far away from me. 遠承不棄，辱賜鴻篇。"[34] In addition to historiographies, literary works, and scholarship, Qing subjects and the Southern Ming correspondents also exchanged daily necessities such as brushes, cups, and clothing. On 21 June 1667, Qing official Gong Dingzi wrote a letter to Ming loyalist Mao Xiang, mentioning that *yangbei* 洋杯 (a cup from overseas) and *jinzhi* 晉織 (a piece of Jin cloth) would be sent with his

[33] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yu Tang Jingxian taishi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.922.
[34] ibid, *Fu Wei Huanxi da sikou*, p.921.

letter.[35] In 1671, Gong sent Mao *hanyu zhi* 漢玉巵 (jade wine cup of the Han dynasty), *woluo* 倭羅 (Japanese silk fabrics), *anxi xiang* 安息香 (benzoin), and *chensha* 辰砂 (cinnabar).[36] Another Qing official Zhou Lianggong gave Ni Yuanzan self-produced brushes and ink to request for Ni's calligraphy works.[37] The phenomenon of sending writing works and gifts to each other means that the nature of the relationship between the Qing and the Southern Ming people had changed compared with their correspondence that only discussed historical, literary, and scholarly thoughts. They became closer, with a growing desire to participate and share in each other's cultural products and private lives. They were willing to send their valued works for advice and give precious or handmade gifts for maintaining their friendship. During the forty years of the Southern Ming period, the correspondence between the Qing and Ming loyalists was frequent, which laid the foundation for the development of their friendship and broke their barriers in opposite political stances. In his letter to Tang Bin, Wang Hongzhuan sighed: "[I have] received your letters several times, [which made me] feel more deeply the loss of parting. 屢接瑤函，益深離索之感。"[38] Gu Yanwu even received two letters from Tang on the same day in 1679.[39]

The common life experience in the Ming-Qing transition provided Qing subjects with another way to gain a deeper friendship with the Southern Ming people. They expressed their misfortunes after 1664 and created a persona with complex emotions about the Ming's collapse and the Qing rule. They attempted to stir up the emotional resonance of the Southern Ming correspondents, seeking an opportunity to go deep into the Southern Ming emotional community.[40] Their methods to achieve the goal were to write emotional words, phrases, and sentences, share a similar experience of the Ming-Qing transition, and lament their misfortunes and life depression living in the Qing territory. In 1654, Qing official Gong Dingzi wrote a letter to Ming loyalist Mao Xiang, regarding Mao as his "friend forever": "There are very few people in the world who have a life-and-death relationship with me like you. 海內性命之交如老盟翁者，更復幾人。"[41] In Gong's opinion, he and Mao Xiang both experienced the fall of the Ming dynasty and had to live in the Qing territory, which could be considered as a fateful friendship that he rarely had. In his letters written between 29 January 1652 and

[35] Gong Dingzi, *Shu* in *Mao Pijiang quanji*, p.976.
[36] ibid, p.977.
[37] Zhou Lianggong, *Yu Ni Angong* in *Laigu tang ji*, pp.20.13a-14b.
[38] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yu Tang Jingxian taishi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.922.
[39] Gu Yanwu, *Da Tang Jingxian shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.103.
[40] Bai Yijin argues that nostalgia for the Ming dynasty and sentimental encounters with the common experience of the Ming-Qing transition were strategies used by Qing subjects in their dealing with Ming loyalists. However, her study is mainly from the perspective of poetry. Bai Yijin, 'Lun qingchu erchen he yimin jiaowang beihou de shiren xintai', (p.66).
[41] Gong Dingzi, *Shu* in *Mao Pijiang quanji*, p.972.

24 July 1666, Gong seemed dissatisfied with his life serving the Qing court, so he expressed a strong sense of melancholy to Mao.

> 29 January 1652: As soon as I entered the [Qing court], I was decadent and frustrated, completely different from the past.
> 1652 年 1 月 29 日：弟一入此間，頹唐潦倒，無復向時。[42]

> 24 July 1666: [I] received two letters from you when I was in Chang'an, ... I deeply felt your sincerity as my confidant. It happened to be a time when I was sad, . . . disheartened, . . . and it was always difficult [for me] to write a complete sentence [in a letter].
> 1666 年 7 月 24 日：長安兩接手教，……深感知己，情言殷摯。適值弟傷心之時，……百念灰冷，……總不能成一語也。[43]

In the twelve letters written by Gong Dingzi that were included in Mao Xiang's anthology, such expressions of lamentation, dissatisfaction, and sorrow can be seen frequently. Similarly, when writing to Ming loyalist Zhu Maoshi 朱茂時 (1595-1683), Cao Rong also revealed his anguish of life after being a Qing official, describing that he was like a bird with highland aspirations but eventually fell into the countryside.[44] Such emotional topics resonated with the Southern Ming correspondents. They lamented what they suffered after 1644 to the Qing correspondents which were usually shared with close friends and relatives. On 2 November 1670, Mao Xiang sent a letter to Gong Dingzi and expressed his deep sadness that his daughter-in-law died after taking medicine for a year.[45] Through Mao's acts of sharing the pain of his family's death with Gong, it is clear that their friendship was profound.

2. Personas in seeking help

The Southern Ming people had an upper hand in the morality and the cultural circle, but they were powerless in the political field. By contrast, although Qing subjects were the beneficiaries of the interests in the political circle, some of them who were original Ming subjects damaged their reputation because of serving the Qing regime. Others who were born in the 1640s were also powerless in the cultural circle they were eager to enter, as it was dominated by the Southern Ming people. For gaining benefits from each other, both the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects used the ways of material

[42] ibid, p.970.
[43] ibid, p.974.
[44] Cao Rong, *Yu Zhu Kuishi* in *Juanpu Cao xiansheng chidu juanshang*, p.32a.
[45] Mao Xiang, *Da Gong Zhilu xiansheng* in *Mao Pijiang quanji*, p.387.

composition, handwriting styles, and emotional expressions to create different personas through their letter exchanges.[46]

(1) The Southern Ming people: being powerless in the political field and social status

Refusing to cooperate with the Qing court did not mean that the Southern Ming correspondents completely severed all ties with Qing subjects. During the Ming-Qing transition, they lost family members, suffered financial difficulties, and were politically persecuted by the Qing government. Such circumstances motivated them to seek help from their Qing correspondents, as this group of people had political advantages which would help them get rid of the political and financial crisis and gain a peaceful and stable life.[47] They created a self-deprecating and flattering persona and actively displayed the Qing identity that they used to dispel.

From 1644 to 1683, some Southern Ming correspondents suffered political persecution as they were accused by the Qing court of having secret connections with the Southern Ming regime. It drove them to request help from the Qing officials through correspondence. In these letters, the Southern Ming people changed the date writing method they had insisted on which could present the Ming identity and referred to the Qing rulers by honorific titles to imply to the Qing court that they had psychologically accepted the Qing dynasty. In 1668, Gu Yanwu was accused of having published *Zhongjie lu* 忠節錄 (*Records of Loyal Men*), an anthology slandering the Qing dynasty, and was arrested and sent to the prison in Jinan 濟南 in the third month of that year.[48] On 27 March, Gu wrote a letter to Qing official Yan Guangmin and recounted the whole story in detail to request Yan to explain for himself that he did not participate in the publishing of *Records of Loyal Men*.[49] He recorded the writing date as "the fifteenth day of the second month in the seventh year of the Kangxi Reign 康熙七年二月十五日 (27 March 1668)".[50] Gu was a staunch supporter of the Ming and the Southern Ming dynasty. After 1662, when there was no Southern Ming government in mainland China, he still carried out secret activities for restoring the Ming regime and only used Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches which could show his Ming identity.[51] However,

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[46] Steen and Braxton notice that the expressive tone, the different handwriting styles, and the composition of letters are crucial approaches in presenting various personas. Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart'; Braxton, 'The Self-Fashioning of Patrick Branwell Brontë in his Epistolary Writing'.

[47] Gao Xiang, 'Expounding Neo Confucianism: Choice of Tradition at a Time of Dynastic Change—Cultural Conflict and the Social Reconstruction of Early Qing', *Social Sciences in China*, 34 (2013), 105-133 (p.125).

[48] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.53-57.

[49] Gu Yanwu, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 2*, pp.191-197.

[50] ibid, p.191.

[51] Gu Yanwu, *Da shu*, *Jiyu xiaogan xiong xiansheng yu*, and *Yu Yuanyi Gongsu liangsheng shu*, in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, pp.249-250, 260, 269.

in this letter to Yan Guangmin, he changed his principle and added the Qing reign title to hint that he was one of the Qing subjects, as it might be more effective for him to gain the approval of Yan and to request Yan for solving his political troubles.

Not only that, but Gu Yanwu referred to the Qing dynasty as "*benchao* 本朝 (our dynasty)". In other letters, whenever Gu mentioned the Qing dynasty, he always used "*chaoting* 朝廷 (the imperial court)", a vague term that does not specifically refer to the Qing court, and he never showed any identification with the Qing regime.[52] Although Gu's change was only intended to court Yan Guangmin and other Qing officials who might read this letter, it meant that his attitude towards the Qing regime, at least superficially, had transformed when he encountered a political crisis from the Qing government. Wang Hongzhuan had the same experience as Gu Yanwu. In a letter written to Qing official Ye Fang'ai, for persuading Ye to take care of his friend Li Tiansheng 李天生 so that Li could obtain an official position in the Qing government, Wang used "*shengjuan* 聖眷 (sage [Emperor's] favour)" to refer to Emperor Kangxi's grace and said: "You have an orthodox official position, and you have won the great favour of the emperor, how can you be indifferent and ignore it? 先生有斯道之任，而又蒙聖眷特隆，詎能恝然，置之膜外乎？"[53] The character "*sheng* 聖 (sagely)" was the subjects' respectful reference to their monarch, which means Wang's use of it in his letter was a way to show that he had identified himself as a Qing subject.

The approaches of Gu Yanwu and Wang Hongzhuan indicate that the Southern Ming correspondents were willing to make temporary compromises or abandon the principle they once adhered to when they had to rely on Qing subjects because they were powerless in their political and social status. Their purpose was to show favour to the Qing court. They tried to express that although they were reclusive Ming loyalists, their attitudes towards the Qing regime were recognition, submission, and respect. They deeply knew that this was the key to gaining the recognition and reassurance of the Qing court. The Qing ruler paid close attention to those reclusive Ming loyalists. This can be evidenced by several major cases related to the Southern Ming regime that occurred in the early Qing period. In 1661, *Tonghai an* 通海案 (the case of connecting the Southern Ming navy), one of the three major cases in this period, was triggered by the secret alliance between Ming loyalists and Zheng Chenggong's navy, trying to invade the Qing territory.[54] This case, like other similar cases, made the Qing court realise that although Ming loyalists had shaved their hair, they might still support the

[52] ibid, *Yu Gongsu sheng shu*, p.107.
[53] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yu Ye Ren'an taishi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.923.
[54] Ji Liuqi, *Jintan dayu* in *Mingji nanlue*, pp.500-503.

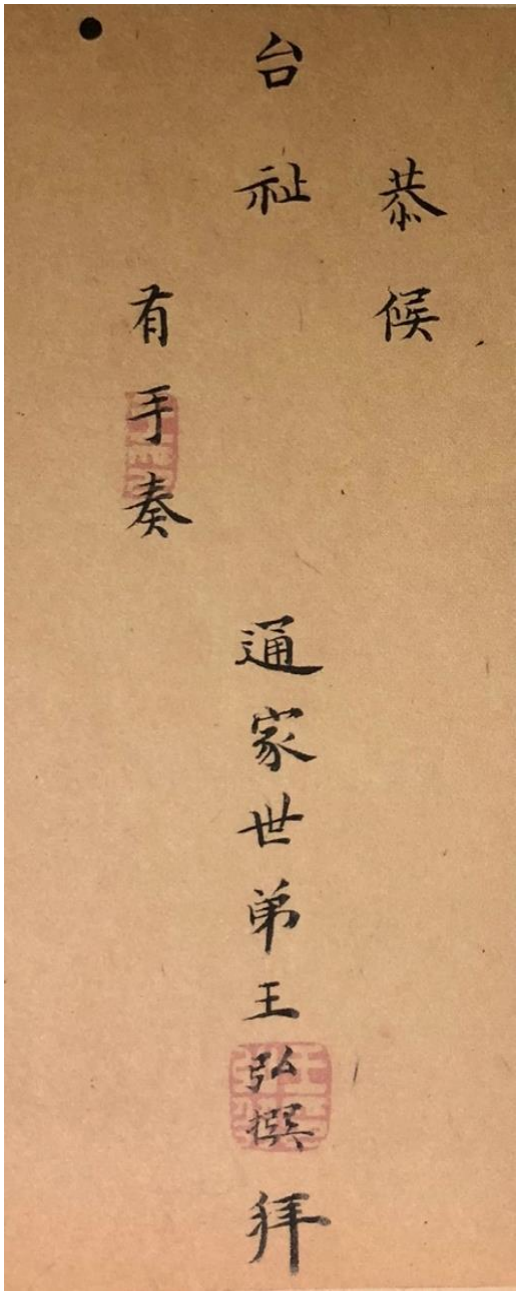
Southern Ming regime stationed in Taiwan in private. The Southern Ming correspondents were aware that the Qing court had doubts, precautions, and monitoring of Ming loyalists, as the way they used to show their Ming identity would inevitably violate the taboo of this regime. Therefore, when seeking help from Qing subjects, they changed their method of date-writing and used respectful names for the Qing court and rulers, to present an attitude of surrender to the Qing regime and attempt to gain the Qing's trust in their acts of obedience.

To gain the favour of the Qing correspondents, the Southern Ming correspondents skilfully used different letter-writing techniques to present low-status images. Their approaches were to redouble their use of polite terms, choose a way of composing letters that showed more respect for the recipient, and adopt a clear and beautiful handwriting style. In 1680, Fu Shan wrote a letter to Qing official Cao Rong, begging for a Buddhist book for a monk called Yuanbi 圓璧. Fu called Cao as "Mr. Qiuweng Bodhisattva 秋翁先生菩薩",[55] indicating that he believed that Cao must be a compassionate person like a Bodhisattva. When signing the signature, Fu wrote twice the etiquette word "*dunshou* 頓首 (bowing and kowtow)",[56] showing his extreme respect for Cao. Likewise, when Ming loyalist Bai Mengding asked Yan Guangmin for help because of his life difficulties, Bai chose the same method to show his respectful attitude to Yan in two of his letters. At the beginning of the first one, Bai wrote: "I received your letter yesterday and read something I never knew before. Thank you respectfully, thank you respectfully. 昨奉塵教。聞所未聞。敬謝敬謝", and the second was started by "*Mengding dunshou dunshou zaibai* 夢鼎頓首頓首再拜 (make ceremonious nods twice and make bows with hands folded in front again".[57]

The epistolary material composition and the clear and graceful handwriting style were also the methods that the Southern Ming correspondents would use for presenting a powerless persona. Such ways could show their politeness for Qing subjects, as well as an intention to please and flatter them. Among the five letter manuscripts sent by Wang Hongzhuan to Yan Guangmin, one of them was written to ask Yan to take care of Wang's son when he was in the National Academy 國學, and the topics of the other four were daily greetings, meetings, and mundane affairs. By comparison, we can find that the requesting letter is significantly different from the other four letters in terms of the material composition and the choice of handwriting style. Wang chose to composed his letters of the envelope, the formal card, and the subsidiary letter, which might be

[55] Fu Shan, *Yu Cao Qiuyue shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.237.
[56] ibid.
[57] Bai Mengding, *Bai Mengding zhiyi* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, pp.108-111.

because compared with the composition method of an envelope and a general letter, he believed there would be more places to present his admiring attitude for Yan by letter-writing formats by adding a formal card.

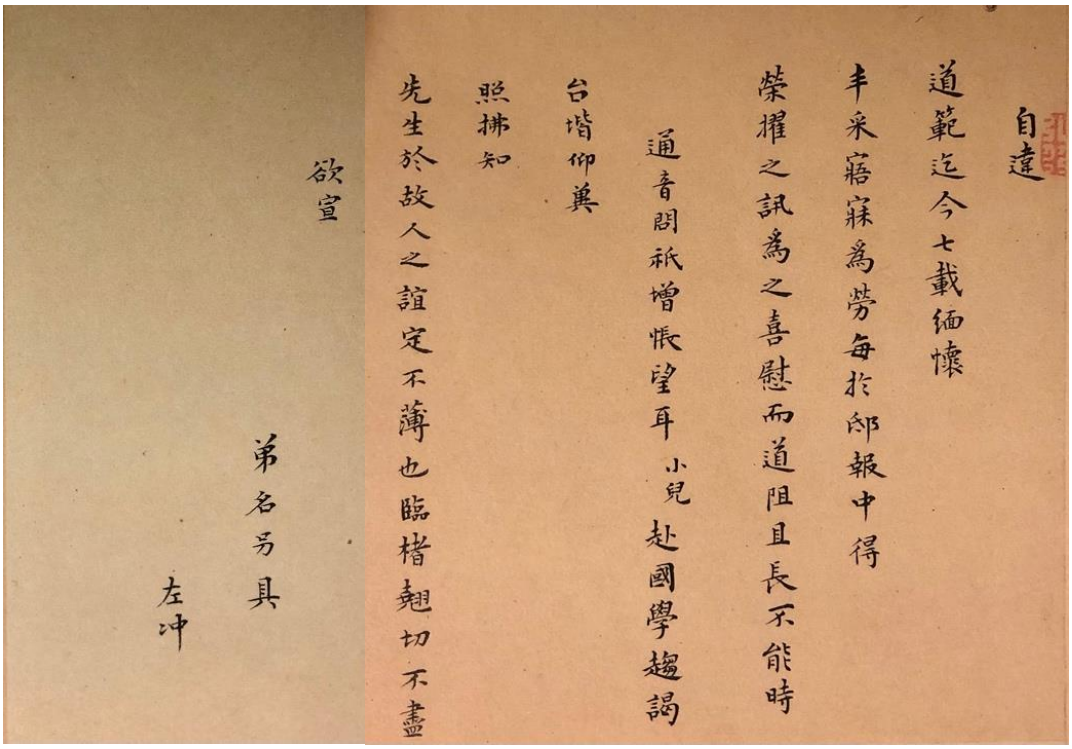


The Subsidiary Letter of Wang Hongzhuan to Yan Guangmin[58]

This formal card clearly shows that there are two places where the greeting phrases of the sender can be displayed. The first one is "*gonghou taizhi* 恭候台祉 (reverently wish you happiness)" which was written on the top middle and one character lower on the right. The second is placed at the bottom of the middle, adding a modest self-address

[58] Wang Hongzhuan, *Wang Hongzhuan zhiyi* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 4*, p.45.

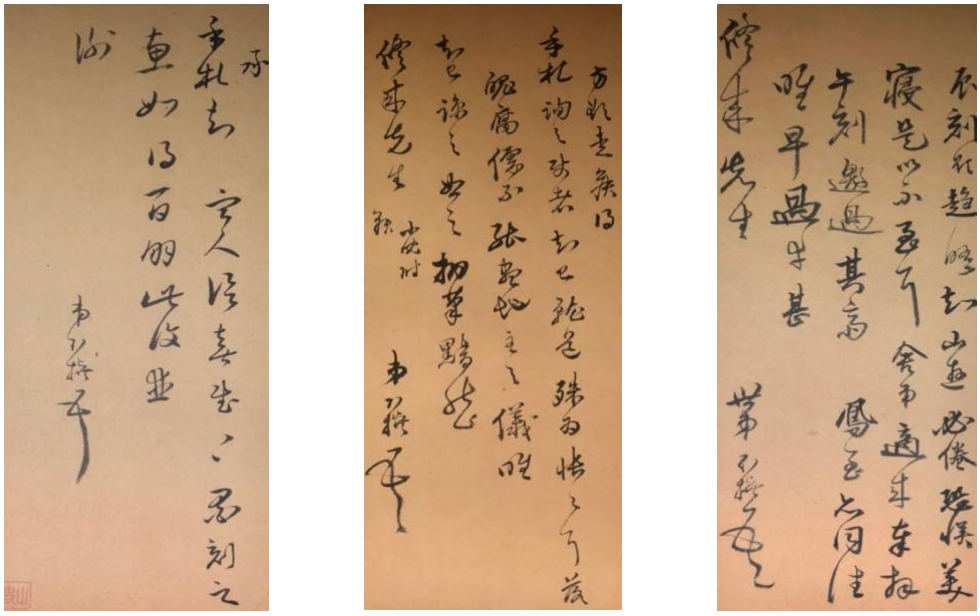
"*tongjia shidi* 通家世弟 (deep friendship from generation to generation, like a younger brother in the family)" before the sender's name follows by a polite gesture "*bai* 拜 (make a bow with hands folded in front)". In this way, Wang could present his respect for Yan more than once from the moment when Yan received his letter. When writing the text on the subsidiary letter, Wang chose a style with beautiful handwriting, and every character can be clearly identified.


自達
道範迄今七載緬懷
丰采寤寐為勞每於邸報中得
榮擢之訊為之喜慰而道阻且長不能時
通音問祇增悵望耳 小兒 赴國學趨謁
台階仰冀
照拂知
先生於故人之誼定不薄也臨楮翹切不盡
欲宣
弟名另具
左冲

The Formal Card of Wang Hongzhuan to Yan Guangmin[59]

An unambiguous handwriting style is more indicative of a writer's seriousness in writing a letter than a scribbled one. Partly because it allows the recipients to obtain a better reading and appreciating experience of letter manuscripts, but also because the greater time spent on the physical creation of the letter texts makes them feel valued by their senders. However, in other letter manuscripts that were not written to ask for Yan's help, Wang's handwriting was relatively scribbled, and some of his characters were even illegible.

[59] ibid, pp.44-45.



Letter Manuscripts of Wang Hongzhuan to Yan Guangmin[60]

In fact, Wang Hongzhuan did not like the material composition of the formal card and the secondary letter, believing that it was cumbrous and costly.[61] However, he did not indicate that he would never do so as the late Ming poet Wang Shizhen did, who also criticised such a compiling way.[62] On the contrary, when writing to Yan Guangmin, he actively used this method. The choice made by Wang Hongzhuan demonstrates that, as a person who wanted to seek help, when his true attitude towards a matter was in contradiction to the tendency recognised by the world, he would give up his inner choices and desperately try to cater to the popularly esteemed way—the material composition of the formal card and the secondary letter was obviously a method to show a more respectful attitude in the view of the world. Such approaches were common in those requesting letters written by the Southern Ming correspondents to the Qing officials, as they shared the same epistolary values. A material composition method that could better present the epistolary etiquette and clearer and more beautiful handwriting could convey to recipients' homage thereby increasing the likelihood that the senders would receive help.

In essence, whether the Southern Ming correspondents chose to write polite phrases as more as possible or used clear and standardised handwriting styles and formats, their intentions were to place themselves in a lower status than the Qing correspondents. Many of them, like Gu Yanwu and Fu Shan, were outstanding figures or even leaders in the literati circle. They created a persona of being polite and respectful because they

[60] ibid, pp.46-51.
[61] Wang Hongzhuan, *Shushi* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.562.
[62] Wang Shizhen, *Gu bugu lu* in *Wenyuan ge siku quanshu zibu 1041*, p.27b.

hoped to satisfy their Qing recipients and to present an attitude that although they were literati and Confucian scholars who had always been honoured by others, they were still willing to bow down to Qing subjects. They portrayed themselves as an image of admirers who extremely adored their Qing recipients, which could bring great satisfaction to their recipients to achieve their purposes. Ming loyalist Mao Xianshu 毛先舒 (1620-1688) mentioned in a letter to Yan Guangmin that his son was going to the capital and hoped that Yan would take care of him. To achieve his goal, Mao praised Yan passionately and expressed his admiration for Yan: "You are the leader among the literati. You are admired by others as you can see clearly and like a precious ruler to measure the talents of others. You are admired by a generation. I am delighted and admire you when I hear your words. 茲先生領袖群倫。人欽冰鑒。金衡玉尺。一代崇瞻。弟聆緒風。亦復欣仰。"[63] Bai Mengding, who asked Yan Guangmin for help, also wrote similar sentences: "You are the contemporary leader and a model for all of us. 老師臺當代之人。吾黨之楷模也。"[64]

To place themselves in a more submissive position, the Southern Ming correspondents were committed to highlighting the self of the weak or humble in their letters. They used characters like "*qiong* 窮 (poor)", "*pin* 貧 (poor)" and "*jian* 賤 (humble)" to express their weakness and poverty, and they tried their best to describe the emotions of loneliness, poverty, and pain in their letters. This was motivated by creating a sympathetic feeling in their Qing recipients to increase the possibility for them to get help from the Qing correspondents. On 18 June 1651, Sun Qifeng portrayed himself as a sick, worried, and suffering person to request Qing official Ma Guangyu 馬光裕 (1611-1671) for a site in which to bury his dead wife.

> I have always been in poor health and often suffer from insomnia. The wind and rain come suddenly at night, and I felt as if my body has suddenly fallen into a water cellar. Since [I] think that my way of getting along with others is already unfamiliar, and my ability to cultivate my morality has also diminished, it was inevitable that I felt something depressed in my heart. ... I can only live in a mountain villa outside the city. I have several thatched cottages to live in and a few acres of land to grow melons, which would be nice to live with my sons. Helpless [I actually] encountered such an unfortunate thing, my old wife died far away from home, and it was really powerless to take her to my hometown after autumn. I heard that you are the most proficient in geomantic omens, [so I wonder if I could] borrow a piece

[63] Mao Xianshu, *Mao Xianshu zhi'er* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 3*, p.18.
[64] Bai Mengding, *Bai Mengding zhi'er* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, p.113.

of land to cover her. [Just] choose an unused land next to your house to temporarily bury my wife.
向因心血不足，常苦不寐。夜來風雨驟至，此身忽陷水窖中，因思處人之道既疏，治心之功復淺，遂不免鬱結於中。……弟之自處，只合於城外山莊，得數間蓋茅之舍，數畝種瓜之田，與諸兒栖息爲上著，無奈罹此不幸，老妻客死，秋後歸榇，力萬不能。聞有令親最精堪輿，即借庇蔭，於先生庄旁，擇一席隙地，暫寄老妻於淺土。[65]

Before making his request, Sun first described himself as a man who could not fall asleep at night, and his heart was full of unresolved worries. After his wife died, he was unable to send her back to her hometown for burial at this moment, then he politely asked Ma Guangyu to provide him with a piece of land where he could temporarily bury his wife. For narrating his difficulties in detail, Sun used characters and phrases "*ku* 苦 (bitterness)", "*fengyu* 風雨 (wind and rain which are metaphors of hardships)", "*yujie* 郁結 (depression)", "*wunai* 無奈 (helplessness)", "*buxing* 不幸 (unfortunate)", "*kesi* 客死 (die far away from home)", and "*liwan buneng* 力萬不能 (powerless)". This made him decorate the sentences before revealing his request full of sadness and grief to arise the sympathy of Ma.

For the Southern Ming correspondents who tried to get help from the Qing officials, their creations were the key to whether they could successfully impress their Qing recipients when they were unable to meet each other. This drove them to exaggerate their hardships to imprint a persona of the weak that might increase the compassion of their recipients. In the letter from Ming loyalist Bai Mengding to Qing official Yan Guangmin, Bai carefully selected topics and deliberately fashioned himself as a poor man: "Since spring, [I] have been suffering from poverty and illness, and I am too tired to be in human shape. I cannot do it even if I want to study day and night. I really have no choice but to go to the southeast region and ask for rice from one or two old friends. 而入春以來。貧病交作。困頓無狀。欲執經朝夕。未能也。頃不得已。欲造吳下。向一二故人乞米。"[66] Such an image of a weak man mixed with poverty and illness could easily evoke the sympathy of his recipient. Exaggeration was also blended with a degree of truthfulness that would be more convincing to the recipient. In another letter to Yan Guangmin, Bai demeaned himself: "[I am] a foolish and lowly man, having not achieved my aspirations. I am willing to be poor and do not want to discuss [the government affairs] again. 愚賤之士。不得志於時。甘心窮惡。無感復言天下之

[65] Sun Qifeng, *Yu Ma Yusun* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia-ripu*, p.138.
[66] Bai Mengding, *Bai Mengding zhiyi* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, p.109.

事。”[67] Like Fu Shan discussed earlier, the self that Bai fashioned incorporated a degree of authenticity. He used “*yu* 愚 (stupid)”, “*jian* 賤 (lowly)”, and “*lao* 老 (old)” to describe himself, which is more exaggerated than the “poor and illness” that he conveyed in another letter. He also implied that he did not achieve what he hoped to achieve in life because of the times in which he lived. In other words, his life in the Qing period was incapable of fulfilling his ambitions.[68] Such characters and hints fused self-deprecation and true thoughts. From the perspective of the reader, Yan Guangmin, he could feel that Bai was indeed no longer able to maintain a stable life—as Bai had decided to give up the pursuit of a political career on the Qing territory—thus generating sympathy and willingness to offer help.

To the Southern Ming correspondents, fashioning the self of being powerless was also a mechanism to avoid potential political persecution. The life difficulties they encountered in the Southern Ming period were essentially caused by political pressure from the Qing regime in many cases. In order to stick to his Ming identity, in 1647, Fu Shan became a Taoist monk and left his family to live separately from them.[69] However, his actions were not understood by his relatives. In a letter to Dai Tingshi, Fu said that his relatives never came to see him and his younger brother and lamented: “Teach me, Dai Tingshi, what I can do when encountering such a matter! 楓兄教我，我奈何哉！如此遭際也。”[70] Although this kind of exclusion was not directly prompted by the political oppression from the Qing regime, it was fundamentally because Fu’s political identity was different from his relatives. At that time, Fu’s relatives had become Qing subjects, but he still regarded himself as a Ming loyalist. Their different identities essentially represented their different political stances. Since the Qing government did not recognise the legitimacy of the Southern Ming regime, as Qing subjects, Fu’s relatives might a disapproving attitude towards political opponents when looking at Fu. Such an attitude would invisibly create a kind of indirect political oppression.

Bai Mengding had no source of income as he was unwilling to take the imperial examination organised by the Qing government after 1644. Compared with Fu Shan, Bai’s life was more difficult. In addition to begging Yan Guangmin for living expenses, in a letter written on 4 May 1681, Bai mentioned that he pawned his clothes in exchange for wine to arrange a poetry party with his friends.[71] Although the Southern Ming correspondents living in the Qing territory actively stayed away from the Qing political

[67] ibid, *Bai Mengding zhi’er*, p.111.
[68] The ambition that Bai Mengding referred to was the imperial examination that could launch a political career. Those who passed the exams would not always get official positions but would have a steady income.
[69] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.323.
[70] Fu Shan, *Yu Dai Fengzhong shu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.192.
[71] Bai Mengding, *Xiegong dun songchun shitie* in *Yuanshi cang mingqing mingren chidu*, p.319.

circle, they were still oppressed and influenced by it in their daily lives. These oppressions and influences contained potential political crises, which were possible to befall someday in the future, such as in 1654, Fu Shan was suspected of secretly participating in activities supporting the Southern Ming regime. Thus, the powerless persona Southern Ming correspondents created might convince Qing subjects that they were no political threat to the Qing court, which could reduce their political oppression and ensure and achieve a stable living condition. Motivated by external and personal factors, fashioning the self into an image of struggling in life became a collective expression of the Southern Ming correspondents. Even those who were still capable to maintain a decent life like Wang Shimin would also lament the loss of family property in letters.[72]

(2) The Qing subjects who were originally Ming subjects: lost moral authority

As original Ming subjects who served the Qing regime, many Qing officials suffered moral condemnation from Ming loyalists. They tried to justify themselves in their correspondence with the Southern Ming people and brought out a more rational and realistic persona. By showing an emotion of helplessness, they covered up their criticised traitorous actions.

Qing subjects focused on praising the Southern Ming people for their ability to govern the dynasty, which paved the way for them to elicit a more rational persona after the Ming-Qing transition. They actively corresponded with those Ming loyalists who declined to cooperate with the Qing court on the pretext of old age or reclusion and highly commended them as the most knowledgeable and capable Confucians in governing society.[73] Qing official Tang Bin once sent a letter to Gu Yanwu and said:

> A few years ago, Wang Hongzhuan came to visit [me] from Shaanxi. [I] asked him which sages he made friends with, [he] immediately said that Mr. Gu Yanwu from Suzhou was of high quality and profound knowledge. Whether it is the government system, the history of the county, or the astronomy, the calendar, river transport, military affairs, and agriculture, he all knows them very well. ... [Gu Yanwu] is really the most useful contemporary Confucian.

[72] Wang Shimin, *Wang Shimin ji*, pp.148-194.

[73] Ying Zhang indicates that Confucian ethical values like loyalism can be freely or even deliberately exploited by turncoats (original Ming subjects but served the Qing court after 1644) to gain political advantage and express themselves. Ying Zhang, *Confucian Image Politics*, p.214.

> 前歲山史自關中見訪，詢及交遊明賢，即曰吳郡顧先生品高學博，國家典制、郡邑掌故、天文曆象、河漕兵農之屬，無不洞悉原委，……真當今第一有用儒者也。[74]

In such compliments, what Tang alluded to was the pity that Gu did not cooperate with the Qing regime. He hinted that an outstanding scholar like Gu with a high ability to govern the society should not be reclusive but contribute his governance to the dynasty. Tang Bin was cautious in his choice of phrases when writing this letter. He did not explicitly use the phrase "the Qing dynasty", but he chose "contemporary" to replace the Qing regime. He also limited the topic to the relative cultural field of discussing talent and knowledge, without mentioning that if Gu wanted to display his thoughts, he had to cooperate with the Qing government. Tang Bin's choice of phrases and topics shows that he tried to avoid topics related to the Qing regime in his letter exchanges with Gu Yanwu. He only talked about the important role of Gu's talents in governing society and benefiting the people, but he did not explicitly say that the society and the people were under the rule of the Qing regime. This method of letter-writing put the focus on Gu Yanwu's intelligence and scholarship to regret the loss he might have caused to the society and the people because of his reclusion, rather than the loss to the Qing regime caused by Gu's rejection of cooperating with the Qing court.

Throughout the letters sent by the Qing correspondents to invite Ming loyalists to cooperate with the Qing court, without exception, they all conveyed the image of fulfilling the talents and benefiting the people.[75] Qing subjects knew that those Southern Ming correspondents refused to serve the Qing government because they could not identify themselves as Qing subjects. Therefore, they never mentioned the benefits of having the Southern Ming people change their identity or hint at the interest in being loyal to the Qing dynasty, as this would fundamentally trigger the resistance of this group of people. The angle of exerting talents and making contributions to society was a way with a higher probability of success to connect with the persona that Qing subjects wanted to create. Many Southern Ming correspondents were knowledgeable, and even Qing officials also actively asked them for advice or became their students. Their writing works were completed for the purpose of establishing theories or analysing phenomena in politics, history, society, ethics, or literature, to maximise their talents. From the perspective of persuading the Southern Ming correspondents to serve the society and the people might be possible to change their rejection attitude towards the Qing dynasty.

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[74] Tang Bin, *Da Gu Ningren shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.436.
[75] ibid; Cao Rong, *Yu Zhang Yaoxing* and *Yu Huang Taichong* in *Juanpu Cao xiansheng chidu juanshang*, pp.57b-59a.

In this way, Qing subjects downplayed the inevitable relationship between the ability to govern the dynasty and the political stance. After 1644, the talents of Ming loyalists could essentially only be used in the Qing society, and if they participated in the governance of the Qing affairs, their political stance had changed from the Ming to the Qing. From the focus of the ability of the governance, Qing subjects intended to elicit their allegiance to the Qing dynasty was the ideal of serving the society and the people, not to obtain personal interests. The Qing correspondents attempted to make the Southern Ming correspondents understand that they did not betray the Ming dynasty but only chose a compromised way to live. While sharing sadness and life difficulties after 1644, Qing subjects implied that it was an inevitable result for the Qing regime to replace the Ming dynasty to rule China, and it was a rational choice to be Qing subjects to use their talents to govern the society and serve the people. In a letter to an unknown friend around 1665, Qing official Wei Yijie particularly explained in detail why he chose to be a Qing official.

> I was originally a person without talent. When I was young, I was taught by my father and read some classics and historiography roughly, and then I came up with the idea of governing society. [I] suffered from the turmoil in the late Ming period and [felt] this dynasty was hopeless. [I am] only a successful candidate in the Ming imperial examination at the provincial level, with little ability [to help the Ming dynasty], so I [decided to] live in reclusion in the mountains and give up caring the worldly affairs like Chen Tuan. [However,] my elders were not willing [for me to do this]. In this case, [I] started again [to take the Qing imperial examination] to obtain an official position, ... [I] dare not waste the knowledge I have learned. I can only use benevolence and righteousness to state my experiences.
> 生本樸陋。幼受先人庭訓。粗涉經史。遂有意于天下事。遭明季搶攘。國事已壞。區區一孝廉。無可爲者。遂欲遁跡青山。絕意世故。如陳希夷之所爲者。老親不以爲然。遂復馳驅功名之會。……不敢喪其所學。唯以仁義王道爲敷陳遭值。[76]

Wei expressed that he wanted to be a Ming loyalist, but after being persuaded by his mother, he determined to become a Qing official in order not to waste the knowledge of governing and managing society that he had learned over the years. Wei Yijie had correspondence with Ming loyalists, and such opinions had a large possibility to be one of the topics. In another letter sent to Sun Qifeng, Wei signed with emotion that he did

[76] Wei Yijie, *Da youren shu* in *Wenyuan ge qinding siku quanshu jibu 1312-jianji tang wenji* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1986), p.9.40b.

not contribute to people and society, and he praised Sun, thinking that he was a talented Confucianist that the society and the people could rely on.[77] Although Wei described himself as an official with mediocre achievements, it might be his way of persuasion—by explaining to Sun that people with shallow talents like Wei had the determination to serve society, to imply that Sun should make the same choice to fully use his governance talents to benefit the people, but not lost such an opportunity due to the change of the dynasty.

Section Two Ambivalence after the Ming-Qing Transition

The self-fashioning of the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects through their correspondence projected their ambivalence after the Ming-Qing transition. They wanted to gain benefits from the fields dominated by the other party, so as to get rid of the disadvantage of being in a powerless position. They both struggled with recognising the Ming or the Qing identities. For the Southern Ming people, it was essentially a complex attitude of rejection and acceptance of the Qing regime. For Qing subjects, it was motivated by the political tasks issued by the Qing government, their desire to justify their reputation, and their eagerness to enter the cultural circle dominated by the Southern Ming people.

1. Rejection and acceptance

The Southern Ming people needed the stable social situation provided by the Qing government to engage in political, social, and cultural activities but refused to cooperate with the Qing court. They struggled between personal gains and losses and adherence to the moral principles of Ming loyalism.

(1) Reasons for the rejection

Creating a persona of incompetence to refuse to be Qing officials was not to achieve benefits or interests from the Qing regime but to obtain spiritual self-consolation, as well as the Qing court's acquiescence for them to maintain their Ming identity. In the early summer of 1645, before the Qing army's entry into Songjiang, local Ming loyalist Hou Tongzeng wrote to his daughter: "In case the Qing army from the north occupied Songjiang prefecture, and the soldiers and ordinary people surrendered, [we] must have no face to sit leisurely and watch [this happen]. 萬一北官入境，士民迎降，必無靦

[77] ibid, *Yu Sun zhengjun Zhongyuan*, pp.10.2b-3a.

顏安坐，瞠目直視之理。”[78] Hou's example represents the view of Ming loyalists. They did not want to blindly obey the Qing order but indented to stay away from it through methods such as living in reclusion. For them, this was a way of sticking to the moral principle of never serving emperors of two dynasties.

Such rejection was prompted by external pressure. As discussed in the previous chapter, the correspondence between the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects was not simply individual-to-individual letter exchange but was under the monitoring of the Southern Ming emotional community. Although it was the active acts of Southern Ming correspondents to fashion the self in their letters to Qing subjects, from the perspective of their motivation, their choices imply a passive factor. In other words, whether to serve the Qing court was not only a personal choice of the Southern Ming correspondents but would be judged by other Ming loyalists. In 1652, when Wu Weiye was being forced to serve the Qing court, his friend Hou Fangyu particularly sent him a letter on 1 November and advised Wu not to be a Qing official.[79] Between 1645 and 1650, Fang Yizhi wrote seven explanatory letters after he was framed for betraying the Ming dynasty.[80] These examples illustrate that if the Southern Ming correspondents cooperated with the Qing court, they would be expelled from the Southern Ming emotional community which was composed of Ming loyalists. However, the strong pressure of the Qing government made them unable to refuse to cooperate straightforwardly. For instance, in the summer of 1651, Hou Fangyu was forced to take the provincial Qing imperial examinations because Henan governor Wu Jingdao threatened to punish his father Hou Xun.[81] The Southern Ming correspondents needed decent and safe excuses to refuse and avoid any possible political cooperation with the Qing regime. In order to stay away from the Qing political circle, they did not hesitate to exaggerate and inaccurately shape their images in letters.

Most of the secret activities of the Southern Ming correspondents aimed at restoring the Ming dynasty were carried out in the Qing territory, which means one of the purposes of their self-fashioning might be to avoid attracting the attention of the Qing court. Many correspondents overtly refused to serve in the Qing court because they were living in reclusion, and they were old, sick, and useless, but covertly, they travelled around to seek the possibility for the Southern Ming regime to seize occupied territory and restore the Ming rule. In the summer of 1656, Fu Shan left his hometown and

[78] Hou Tongzeng, *Yu nüshu* in *Ming bieji congkan 5.58-hou zhongjie gong quanji*, p.9.11a.
[79] Hou Fangyu, *Yu Wu Jungong shu* in *Hou Fangyu quanji jiaojian* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2013), p.170.
[80] Fang Yizhi, *Ji Li Shuzhang*, *Fuyi shan ji zhu chaogui*, *Yu Cheng Jinyi*, *Da Jin Daoyin*, *You da Weigong*, *Ji Zhang Er'gong shu*, and *Ji Zhu Zhenqing xianggong shu* in *Fushan wenji*, pp.227-274.
[81] Wang Shulin and Wu Lin, *Hou Chaozong nianpu xinbian* in *Hou Fangyu quanji jiaojian xia*, p1252.

travelled to Nanjing, Huai'an 淮安, Haizhou 海州 (modern Lianyungang 連雲港 in Jiangsu) in the southeast region, and it was likely that he had contacted those Ming loyalists who still secretly supported the Southern Ming government.[82] Although the relevant letters have not been preserved, from the fact that Fu was involved in a case of secretly exchanging letters with Southern Ming general Song Qian, we can speculate that whether he chose to be a Taoist monk or found excuses to decline to cooperate with the Qing court, he might be for the sake of avoiding the Qing government's attention.

Wang Hongzhuan had a similar experience of travelling to the southeast region as Fu Shan. In 1650, Wang, from Huayin in Shaanxi, went to the southeast region for several years, making friends with local Ming loyalists such as Yao Zongdian 姚宗典. During that period, he often gathered with these loyalists through poetry parties to relieve the sufferings brought about by the collapse of the Ming dynasty, and thus he gained a high reputation in the literati circle.[83] Around 1655, however, Wang presented a self-image of "not well-educated man 淺學寡聞" in a letter to Qing official Zhou Lianggong.[84] The 1650s was the first period when the Qing court ordered to recommended Ming loyalists to be its officials. Although it is difficult for us to know whether Zhou Lianggong's letter to Wang included the topic of recommending the Qing official position, judging from Wang's description, in addition to being self-effacing, his purpose of writing this letter and shaped the self with incompetence might cover up his reputation in the literati circle and to avoid the attention of the Qing court that he might have secretly supported the Southern Ming regime. Wang Hongzhuan travelled to the southeast five times in his life.[85] Although there is no direct evidence that he ever supported the Southern Ming regime, it can be inferred from his contacts with southeastern Ming loyalists Yao Zongdian, northern Ming loyalists Fu Shan and Dai Tingshi, and Ming loyalists Gu Yanwu who travelled from the southeast to the north, that he might have secretly participated in activities to restore the Ming rule.[86] On the contrary, in Wang's correspondence with the Qing officials between 1650 and 1680, the excuses he used included old age, sickness, and lack of knowledge, and incompetence. He kept on portraying himself as a person who was useless to the Qing dynasty and implied that he had no threat to this regime, so as to cover up possible secret support for the Southern Ming government.

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[82] See the chronological biography of Fu Shan. Ying Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, pp.336-338.
[83] *Qianyan* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji shang*, p.2.
[84] Wang Hongzhuan, *Yu Zhou Yuanliang sinong* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.921.
[85] *Qianyan* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji shang*, p.2.
[86] The friendship between Wang Hongzhuan and Gu Yanwu was close. Between 1663 and 1682, Gu Yanwu visited Wang Hongzhuan at least four times and lived in Wang's home. Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.42-85.

(2) The powerless, the dilemma, and seeking for the balance

Although the Southern Ming people refused to recognise themselves as Qing subjects, they could not—or were unwilling to—escape from the Qing rule. Their residences gradually became the Qing territory from 1644 to 1683, and their social activities and cultural communications were carried out with the foundation of the normal letter transmission, delivery routes, and a relatively peaceful society offered by the Qing government. A case in point is Gu Yanwu. In the Southern Ming period, Gu never lived as a hermit but travelled and lectured in Shandong, Hebei, Shanxi, Henan, and many other provinces. All the places he went were in the Qing territory, and the delivery of part of his letters depended on the normal letter delivery service of private newspaper houses which was recovered in the Qing territory.

Moreover, the Southern Ming people maintained their Ming loyalism and a good reputation that would not be criticised by future generations, but they lost their political preferential treatment and status. Their social activities also prompted and carried out by this principle were not recognised by the Qing court. What they wanted could not be fully satisfied in life in the Qing territory, and they might even be imprisoned for it. Meanwhile, the Southern Ming emotional community composed of them collectively refused to cooperate with the Qing court on the surface and monitored the correspondents in this community at all times. However, because it could not solve the political persecution encountered by the Southern Ming correspondents from the Qing court, such pressure of survival forced correspondents to seek the one who could assist them. Under such circumstances, correspondents' original rejection attitude towards the Qing regime would transform with the personal gains and losses they encountered. Although the Southern Ming correspondents fashioned their images as hermits who did not care about politics, incompetent people who were useless to the Qing court, or old, sick, and weak people, they were essentially driven by the purpose of gaining a stable life in the Qing territory. In other words, the self-fashioning carried out in their letters was a means for them to seek advantages and avoid disadvantages. What this method projected was their pursuit of interests, such as maintaining their identity as Ming loyalists, not serving the Qing dynasty, a stable living environment, sufficient living expenses, and the allowance of publishing Ming-related historiographical and literary works without crackdowns or bans from the Qing governments.

As long as their needs could be met, their loyalty to the Ming dynasty could be temporarily obscured, which was evident in their deliberately shaping an image that could curry favour with the Qing correspondents to help them obtain the desired

benefits.[87] As Qing subjects, the Qing correspondents had more advantages in many aspects. They could take the Qing imperial examinations to obtain official positions and fixed incomes, thus gaining social status and political advantages.[88] Qing officials like Yan Guangmin, Cao Rong, Zhou Lianggong, Gong Dingzi, and Wei Yi'ao who were often sought by the Southern Ming correspondents, all had certain prestige and power in the Qing government. What they could provide to the Southern Ming correspondents was not only the necessities of life such as money and clothes, but they could also help Ming loyalists who were in political crisis. The Southern Ming correspondents exactly knew such powers. For them, insisting on the Ming identity brought only psychological comfort, which could not allow them to gain recognition for their political activities supporting the Southern Ming government in the Qing territory. Their social activities based on such an identity were restricted by the Qing government—their privately written Ming historiography being banned by the Qing government. The similar crisis they encountered could not be solved by themselves, so whether encountering political persecution or life difficulties, they would first choose to ask Qing officials for help.

The Southern Ming people thus showed a dilemma. While expressing their regret of not becoming Ming martyrs, they eagerly maintained friendships with Qing subjects and still wanted to get out of the crisis they suffered because of their support for the Southern Ming regime. In 1654, when Fu Shan was arrested and imprisoned for secretly contacting Southern Ming general Song Qian, in order to avoid being found guilty, he insisted that he had no contact with Song to escape the crime. However, Fu was full of remorse and pain for his choice of falsely claiming that he had never supported the Southern Ming regime to get rid of the crime. After he was released from prison in 1655, Fu wrote a letter to Qing official Wei Yi'ao who helped him defend and exonerate himself: "[After all, I am] a shameless person. How can I reflect on myself, [saying that I am honest]. So there was [only] an oral poetic sentence that I made when I was released from prison, which was 'I can see my mother alive, but I have no face to see the [Ming] dynasty'. 總是無恥丈夫，哪堪自對，是有出獄口占之句，曰'有頭朝老母，無面對神州'。"[89] *Quyang fu xiansheng shilue* 曲陽傅先生事略 (Stories of Mr. Fu's from Quyang), which was written by a Qing man called Quan Zuwang 全祖望, also mentioned that Fu's release from prison made him "blamed and hated himself

[87] In her study of Song loyalists, Jay argues that Song loyalism was not absolute but contained compromise. As I mentioned in Chapter Four, the choices of Song loyalists became the historical models of Ming loyalists. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties*, p.245.
[88] Xue Yiwei, 'Erchen yu ming yimin jiaoyou yuanyin tanxi—yi erchen wei shijiao', (p.88).
[89] Fu shan, *Yu Wei Yi'ao* in *Fu Shan quanshu 2*, p.205.

deeply and felt that it would be better to die quickly. 深自叱恨，以爲不如速死之爲愈”.[90]

This demonstrates that the ambivalence of the Southern Ming correspondents struggling between their interests and the Ming identity profoundly affected the way of life they chose after the Ming-Qing transition and the way they got along with Qing subjects. They tried to find a balance that allowed them to obtain a peaceful and stable normal life in the Qing territory, but simultaneously, such a life could maintain their identity as Ming loyalists. Discussing and sharing “*chuchu* 出處 (how to live in the Qing territory)” was one of their methods. It is because there were many Ming martyrs in the early Southern Ming period who were highly praised, which led those surviving Ming loyalists to seek a reasonable explanation for why they chose to shave their hair like Qing subjects. Between 1673 and 1682, Ming loyalist Chen Xi told Gu Yanwu that they had only two options after the fall of the Ming dynasty—“*xingdao* 行道 (implement one’s thoughts)” and “*shoudao* 守道 (stick to the morality)”.[91] In his perspective, Ming loyalists either chose to follow the trend and go along with the world’s opinions in the Qing territory, that is, to cooperate with the Qing dynasty, or they chose to maintain their Ming loyalism and be a Ming loyalist who would never care about worldly affairs.[92]

Although most of the Southern Ming correspondents expressed that they no longer cared about the Qing affairs, the political pressure from the Qing court made them fall into political and life difficulties, which broke their original intentions of seeking the balance when living in the Qing territory. It prompted them once again to adjust their relationship with the Qing court and Qing subjects. The separated friendships from politics in correspondence with Qing subjects was one of the ways they balanced their Ming identities and their interests. Ming loyalist Yu Huai did not break up personal contacts with Ding Peng 丁澎 (1622-1686) when Ding became a Qing official. In their correspondence, Yu even referred to Ding as a “*zhiji* 知己 (confidant)”.[93] Likewise, Ming loyalist Wang Hongzhuan maintained such a friendship with Qing official Yan Guangmin. Yan once wrote to Wang, inviting him to become a Qing official but eventually received a rejection. Nevertheless, the two still maintained the friendship through correspondence, and in one of their letters, Wang requested Yan to take care of his son, who was going to the National Academy that was run by the Qing

[90] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.332.
[91] Chen Xi, *Ji Gu Ningren xiansheng shu* in *Siku weishou shu jikan 8:17-yanshan caotang ji* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1997), p.1.82a.
[92] ibid, p.1.82b.
[93] Chen Mei, *Yu Ding Feitao* in *Xiexin ji* (Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian, 1936), p.215.

government.[94]

The one who repeatedly refused to cooperate with the Qing court but had a close relationship with many Qing officials was Ming loyalist Sun Qifeng. Since 1646, Sun sent six letters to the Vice Prefect of Shuntian Prefecture 順天府丞 Xue Suoyun. In the letter written on 12 February 1650, for example, he lamented the hasty schedule of his trip and regretted not having the opportunity to meet Xue in Beijing.[95] Correspondence between Sun Qifeng and Qing official Ma Guangyu was more frequent. From 1650 to 1668, Sun sent fourteen letters to Ma and often met with him to enjoy banquets or arrange poetry parties. Sun wrote in his diary that on 20 September 1650, "Ma Guangyu, a Qing official from the Ministry of Industry, invited [me] to a banquet with Sun Shaokai from Guangxi, Xu Zhangyun from Hebei, and Chen Shouguang from Henan. 馬玉筍水部招飲，同西粵孫紹開，古燕徐章芸，大梁陳守光", and they wrote poems.[96] On 8 December 1650, Sun recorded that "Ma Guangyu engraved the poems of the four students of Su Shi for me 馬玉筍爲予刻蘇門詩".[97] Not only that, as discussed in the last chapter, the Southern Ming correspondents who refused to participate in the compilation of the *History of the Ming* hosted by the Qing government were still concerned about this work, and they even actively wrote letters to the Qing officials to provide suggestions.

All these examples indicate that the Southern Ming correspondents did not completely want to sever contact with Qing subjects. Their insistence on their Ming identity only remained at the political level and did not affect the level of personal relationships. Such an approach could prevent them from cooperating with the Qing government but could still be helped when they were in trouble because they maintained friendships with Qing subjects through correspondence. Furthermore, the Southern Ming correspondents developed a latent acceptance attitude towards the Qing regime in the process of seeking help from Qing subjects. In frequent correspondence, especially in those letters written between 1662 and 1683, most Southern Ming correspondents called the Ming dynasty "the previous dynasty" rather than using the phrase "our dynasty" as in the early Southern Ming period. It implies that starting from the 1660s, the Southern Ming correspondents gradually regarded the Ming dynasty as a dynasty that had completely collapsed. They showed great concern for the current lives of themselves, their families, and their friends in the Qing territory, which led them to think and plan how to restore their private life to a stable and prosperous condition

[94] Wang Hongzhuan, *Wang Hongzhuan* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 4*, pp.44-45.
[95] Sun Qifeng, *Ji Xue Xingwu jingzhao* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia*, p.25.
[96] ibid, *Ripu* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia*, p.92.
[97] ibid, p.106.

under the rule of the Qing government, because its decrees would strongly affect their family property, such as land and income. In nine letters to his fifth son Wang Bian, Wang Shimin expressed his concern that the Qing government's decree that everyone had to pay overdue taxes might bankrupt his family.[98] It was also difficult for the Southern Ming correspondents to completely sever their relationships with the Qing regime and Qing subjects, as many of their relatives and friends were psychologically loyal to the Qing regime, and some even served in the Qing court. Gu Yanwu's three nephews Xu Qianxu, Xu Bingyi, and Xu Yuanwen, all participated in the Qing imperial examination and then served the Qing court. This made Ming loyalists realise that the Qing's rule over China was already unshakable, and the Ming dynasty would eventually become history with the departure of their generation.

(3) The role of the letter and the following result

Whether it was to show the adherence to the Ming identity or to ask Qing subjects for help when their interests were at stake, letters, as written communication media, functioned in the Southern Ming correspondents' approach to maintain a friendship with Qing subjects but refusing political cooperation with the Qing court. Its inclusiveness of various letter topics, as well as the characteristics of informal and non-public writing, provided a grey area that could avoid official political interactions for interpersonal communication between Southern Ming and Qing subjects. Some of the requests for inviting Ming loyalists to serve as Qing officials were initially transmitted by the Qing correspondents through letters, as were the replies to Ming loyalists' rejections. This kept the communication between the two identities of people on a private level, whether it was acceptance or rejection, they could be negotiated, avoiding formal or mandatory communication methods like official orders.

In 1678, after Emperor Kangxi ordered the opening of the imperial examination of *Scholars of Erudite Confucianism*, some Ming loyalists were recommended as candidates. Since the examination was carried out by the imperial edict, those recommended Ming loyalists did not have the right to refuse.[99] Fu Shan, Chu Fangqing 儲方慶 (1633-1683), and Wang Hongzhuan who were involved in this examination declined many times, but they were still sent to Beijing by their local officials. By contrast, in 1679 when the Qing dynasty presided over the project of compiling the *History of the Ming*, Gu Yanwu and Wang Hongzhuan were also invited to participate in this work. However, Gu was invited by Ye Fang'ai who was the president of the project, and Wang was invited by Tang Bin who participated in this work.[100] Both of

[98] Wang Shimin, *Xilu jiashu* in *Wang Shimin ji*, pp.148-191.
[99] *Shengzu shilu* in *Qing shilu*, p.910.
[100] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, p.80; Wang Hongzhuan, *Fu Tang Jinxian*

their invitations were conveyed by letters, which means they were not directly issued by Emperor Kangxi. In this case, Gu and Wang, who were not persecuted by the imperial decree, could decline the compilation work by letters. The epistolary features representing interpersonal communication rather than official orders provided the Southern Ming correspondents with a suitable way to only maintain private relations but not political ones. For the Southern Ming correspondents, maintaining a friendship with Qing subjects through epistolary activities could allow them to stick to the moral principles of being loyal to the Ming dynasty, and at the same time, it would not cause much loss to their interests.

Self-fashioning due to ambivalence brought complicated results to the help-seeking of the Southern Ming correspondents. From the perspective of whether they got help, they were successful. In 1668, Gu Yanwu was caught in a crisis over publishing a historiography that slandered the Qing dynasty. With the help of Yan Guangmin and other Qing officials, he was released after seven months in jail, and his innocence was restored.[101] Another example is Bai Mengding. Judging from continual letters Bai wrote to Yan Guangmin to beg for relief from life difficulties, Yan should have helped Bai by providing money or food.[102]

However, from the perspective of whether their political crisis could be truly avoided, the self-fashioning of the Southern Ming correspondents failed. The Southern Ming correspondents' dependence on the social activities of the Qing territory provided opportunities for the Qing government to pay attention to or even monitor these correspondents. It led to the fact that although Fu Shan, Gu Yanwu, Sun Qifeng, Wang Hongzhuan, and other Southern Ming correspondents described themselves as old, sick, pedantic, and useless people in their letters, the Qing government still could clearly conclude that such images were only excuses to avoid entering the Qing political circle. This is why during the forty years of the Southern Ming period, the Qing government never stopped inviting, persuading, and forcing Ming loyalists to cooperate with it. After Fu Shan exaggerated his illness to refuse to take the Qing imperial examination, although he was granted the exemption from the examination by Emperor Kangxi, Fu was still awarded a Qing official position after returning to his hometown.[103] Quyang magistrate Dai Mengxiong was ordered to send Fu a plaque with the characters "*fengge pulun* 鳳閣蒲輪 (Wheels of the Palace)"[104] to announce to the world that Fu had

shijiang in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, p.925.
[101] Zhang Mu, *Gu Tinglin xiansheng nianpu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 22*, pp.53-58.
[102] Bai Mengding, *Bai Mengding* in *Yanshi jiacang chidu 6*, pp.108-118.
[103] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.387.
[104] This is the Qing court's praise to Fu Shan, who believed that Fu could become an important minister to assist the imperial court.

become a Qing official, even though Fu did not accept.[105] Likewise, after Wang Hongzhuan refused to be recommended to serve in the Qing dynasty in the 1650s, the Qing court still forced him to take the imperial examination in the third month of 1679.

The Qing government never stopped paying attention to and monitoring Ming loyalists living in the Qing territory, and it severely suppressed those who had connections with the Southern Ming regime. The images they shaped could not conceal their relationship with the Southern Ming regime at all, which made some of them be suppressed and politically persecuted by the Qing government as they had contacts with the Southern Ming officials or secretly engaged in activities supporting the Southern Ming regime, such as Fu Shan and Gu Yanwu. The Qing's close attention to these Southern Ming correspondents would not change because of the incompetent images they portray in their letters. For the Qing rulers, Ming loyalists were socially unstable factors. Deliberately fashioning the self as a hermit is likely to make the Qing court more vigilant about their private activities. Throughout the life experiences, letters, and writing works of Gu Yanwu, Fu Shan, and Bai Mengding, we can see that they did not truly accept the Qing identity. The Qing court clearly understood this. Therefore, no matter how the Southern Ming correspondents shaped themselves as incompetent or weak people in their correspondence with Qing subjects, it never changed the fact that the Qing court still regarded them as a potential political threat. Their images could only be mechanisms used to avoid political persecution and ease life difficulties but could not completely get rid of the potential political crisis from the Qing regime.

2. Political Goals and Personal Appeals

The ambivalence of Qing subjects was generated by the dual motives of political goals and personal appeals. After 1644, as officials of the Qing dynasty, they received political tasks from the court and had to recommend outstanding literati to cooperate with their government. Simultaneously, most of them used to be Ming subjects, and their choice of being loyal to the Qing court was not recognised by Ming loyalists in the early Southern Ming period, which caused them a reputation crisis. This led them to maintain their Qing identity for achieving a high status in the Qing political and social circles, while at the same time trying to obliterate the criticism of their loyalty to the Qing regime by Ming loyalists or to gain the approval of the Southern Ming people who dominated the cultural field.

[105] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.387.

(1) Achieving political goals through letters

As discussed in the previous chapter, after the Qing regime took control of most regions of China, it quickly launched the work of appeasing and winning over the Ming subjects motivated by infiltrating and disintegrating Ming loyalists. This drove Qing subjects to exploit the friendship and the private communication function of letters to achieve their political goals. Their letters were no longer a simple medium for private communication but a mechanism that implied political cooperation.

The epistolary feature of private writing and the inclusiveness of various topics provided the Southern Ming people with a way to separate friendship from politics when exchanging letters with Qing subjects. However, such features also made their letter a tool used by Qing subjects to convey their political views.[106] Personalised writing means that the letter is basically only exchanged between the sender and the recipient, as well as a small number of other possible readers such as family members or close friends. This kind of privacy can prompt them to discuss bold or sensitive topics. In 1679, in a letter sent by Gu Yanwu to his nephew Xu Yuanwen, Gu provided Xu with several methods of how to select historical materials when compiling *History of the Ming*. Gu finished this letter with the sentence "Although this is a method that has been known for a long time, [what I said just now] is only a private conversation among family members, and it shall not be told to others, lest it becomes the talk of troublemakers 此雖萬世公論，卻是家庭私語，不可告人，以滋好事之騰口也".[107] The topics Gu discussed with Xu in this letter might have a certain degree of sensitivity. If these topics were made public, it would be possible to cause controversy among people in Qing society or even bring political crises to Gu. Gu Yanwu's cautiousness demonstrates that topics that were likely to trigger disputes and crises might often appear in letters, which provided Qing subjects with an opportunity to discuss sensitive topics with the Southern Ming correspondents. Especially between 1644 and 1683, the simultaneous existence of the Southern Ming and the Qing regimes in China made discussions such as the choice of supporting which regime a sensitive topic. What the Qing correspondents wanted to transform was exactly the rejection of the Southern Ming people towards the Qing regime. If similar topics could be discussed in the letters exchanged between them, those Qing correspondents would be able to gain a channel to directly persuade the Southern Ming correspondents to change their attitudes towards the Qing regime.

[106] Richter points out that letters can be used to deal with matters that other genres do not allow. Richter, 'Literary Criticism in the Epistolary Mode'.
[107] Gu Yanwu, *Yu Gongsu sheng shu* in *Gu Yanwu quanji 21*, p.107.

However, through their letter exchange, Qing subjects understood that the Southern Ming people were unwilling to mention these topics but actively focused on the history, literature, and scholarship of the Ming dynasty and the Southern Ming period. The inclusiveness of various topics when writing a letter prompted the Qing correspondents to choose to discuss cultural affairs that could imply political factors such as Ming memories and identity selections. Motivated by establishing friendships, they conveyed a more rational view towards the Ming-Qing transition by using their common cultural identity and similar personal and family experiences encountered in the late Ming and early Qing period with the Southern Ming correspondents. Compared with the more direct political oppression in which the Qing court ordered the Southern Ming correspondents to shave their hair or cracked down on the privately written Ming historiography, this way of discussing topics of Ming culture and life experiences through correspondence was more muted, and it focused on infiltrating the Southern Ming people from a perspective of emotions and mindsets that could gain their resonance. Although the methods used by the Qing correspondents were different, their fundamental purpose was the same as the Qing court, which was to disintegrate the Southern Ming correspondents' identification with their Ming identities, their nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, their expectations and secret supports for the Southern Ming government, and their rejection of the Qing regime.

(2) The desire of rehabilitating reputations

The political purpose of the Qing court triggered Qing subjects to create a Ming persona, but they were not only to complete the political tasks but also to achieve their personal goals. Those Qing correspondents encountered condemnation from the cultural circle dominated by Ming loyalists as they were original Ming subjects but did not insist on their loyalty to the Ming dynasty and chose to serve the Qing regime after 1644. In order to get rid of the reputation crisis, they exchanged letters with Ming loyalists to gain the approval.

The Qing correspondents often expressed regret in their poems.[108] However, they were not regretting the act of becoming a Qing official but regretting that they were squeezed out by Ming loyalists because of serving the Qing court, losing their reputation in the literati circle, and bearing eternal infamy. Chen Mingxia mentioned several times the condemnation from Ming loyalists in his letters. When writing to Qing official Lu Zifang 盧紫房, he lamented that he was morally condemned by others because he

[108] Bai Yijin; 'Lun qingchu erchen he yimin jiaowang beihou de shiren xintai'; Xue Yiwei. 'Erchen yu ming yimin jiaoyou yuanyin tanxi—yi erchen wei shijiao'.

chose to serve the Qing court.[109] In a letter to Qing official Song Qiwu 宋其武, he hoped Song could explain to him to the gentries in his hometown: "When I returned to my hometown last year, few people knew about my painstaking efforts. Every day, I hoped that you would explain it to me, but [I] did not expect so many people to [condemn me]. 去歲南歸。苦心絕少知者。日望年兄來里門爲我解嘲。不謂人言如沸。"[110]

Although most of the Ming loyalists lived in the Qing territory, they extremely hated the act of serving the Qing regime and judged it as a choice that violates the morality of being loyal to one dynasty. Even Wu Weiye, who had no choice but to become a Qing official because of the Qing's order, would be criticised as well. In 1653, under the pressure of the imperial edict of the Qing ruler, Wu Weiye decided to go to Beijing and serve the Qing court. Before leaving, the gentry in his hometown held a farewell party for him. However, one of them called Zhang Heng 張南垣, satirised Wu's choice of being the Qing official at that party.[111] Similarly, Qian Qianyi was strongly condemned because he surrendered to the Qing regime in 1645. Even if Qian resigned from his official position, returned to his hometown to be a hermit, and often hinted at his Ming identity in poems, articles, and letters, he still could not be recognised by other Ming loyalists.[112]

The enthusiasm of Ming loyalists for writing the Southern Ming historiography brought to the attention of those original Ming subjects but serving the Qing regime after 1644 the crisis that their reputation would be damaged among the future readership. While recording historical facts, Ming loyalists might reprimand or belittle those original Ming subjects who entered the Qing court. In *Beiyou lu* 北游錄 (Records of the Trip to the North), Ming loyalist Tan Qian 談遷 (1594-1658) commented on Qing official Chen Mingxia who was the former Ming official: "Chen Mingxia's talents were dirty, [he] liked to peruse a good reputation and was interested in governing society. [His] character was sharp, and he was ill-considered. Although [he] recommended a lot of [original Ming officials], his conduct was not good. … [His] recommendations were mostly southerners, [which made] him be feared by northern officials. 名夏才氣骯髒。好爲名高。有志經濟。性鋭慮疎。雖多推薦。人不見德。……所推轂南人甚眾。取忌于北。"[113] Although Tan's evaluation maintains a certain degree of objectivity, it

[109] Chen Mingxia, *Da Lu Zifang yushi* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 16-shiyun ju wenji*, p.15.1a.
[110] ibid, *Ji Song Qiwu nianxiong shu*, p.15.3b.
[111] Feng Qiyong and Ye Junyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, p.214.
[112] It was not until later that he secretly supported the Southern Ming regime that he was gradually accepted by them. Fang Liang, *Qian Qianyi nianpu*, p.169.
[113] Tan Qian, *Chen Mingxia* in *Beiyou lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), p.390.

projects that he did not recognise Chen Mingxia for his choice of serving in the Qing court. Qing officials did not want to see such a comment, as it would make them forever a person whose reputation was damaged in the future readership. They sought many attempts to justify themselves. In Gong Dingzi's descriptions, he became a person who wanted to be a Ming martyr but eventually could not die due to various reasons: "After a while, a lot of big wooden clubs [appeared] outdoors, and [someone] asked noisily if the person [inside] was a Ming official. I replied: 'Yes, I will come to die. ' [Then I] got dressed and came out. 有頃，戶外白梃林立，譁譟入問誰何官者。余曰：'是矣，吾受死。'振衣而出。"[114] Another Qing official, Chen Mingxia, wrote a letter to argue that:

> After Beijing was broken, I tried many ways to commit suicide. However, Fang Yizhi entrusted [me] with important affairs in secret, ... and [he] asked me to survive no matter what happened. … I was not unwilling to die, nor was I a person who would not die because of inaction. [I] did not choose to die, [because] I escaped when the power of the thieves had just risen, and maybe I could return to serve the Ming dynasty in the future.
> 都城既破。僕百計求死。而方密之密托以大事。……囑以委曲存孤。……僕非不能死者也。亦非無所爲而不死者也。不死而逃于賊勢方張之時。或猶可得當以報者也。[115]

However, such self-explanations were hard to convince others. Even those Qing subjects were full of ridicule when describing Gong Dingzi as an "*erchen*"—ministers who served two dynasties. *Mingji beilue* 明季北略 (The Northern Affairs in the Late Ming Period), which was written by Qing man Ji Liuqi's 計六奇 (1622-1687), narrates Gong Dingzi as a man who was opportunistic to survive: "[Among them] there were also the sentences of 'preserve the Qi' and 'preserve the Song'. Gong Dingzi said to people: 'I said this sentence, [as] Zhou Zhong could never think of it'. 又有'存杞'、'存宋'句，龔鼎孳向人曰：'此語出吾手，周介生想不到此。'"[116] Such foreseeable crises motived those who were once Ming subjects but later became the Qing officials to urgently seek the approval of Ming loyalists to defend them and restore their reputations. However, since Ming loyalists closely monitored each other because they were in the same emotional community, the most effective way for the Qing

[114] Gong Dingzi, *Huai Fang Yizhi* in *Gong Dingzi quanji*, p.2582.
[115] Chen Mingxia, *Da Lu Zifang yushi* in *Qingdai shiwen ji huibian 16-shiyun ju wenji*, p.15.1b-2a.
[116] "Qi" was the name of a vassal state of the Zhou dynasty, here referring to Zhou loyalists. Likewise, "Song" refers to Song loyalists. Gong Dingzi meant that he chose to live because he wanted to preserve the Ming. Ji Liuqi, *Congni zhuchen zhou zhong* in *Mingji beilue* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p.606.

correspondents was to infiltrate Ming loyalists to disintegrate this community, which would relieve themselves, as well as the Qing court of threats from Ming loyalists.

These Qing subjects achieved their goals. Ming loyalist Du Jun believed that Gong Dingzi chose to become an official in the Qing government not for personal fame or fortune but for those ordinary people: "The knowledge of a gentleman, [the most important thing is to know] *chu* and *chu*, [which means how to live in the Qing society]. The meaning of *chu* is to protect oneself, and *chu* is to make [profits] for the people. Judging from the current society, the model figure of self-preservation is Mr. Shen Shoumin from Xuancheng, and the model figure of seeking benefits for the people is Mr. Gong Dingzi from Hefei. 君子之學。出處二者而已。出處之道。處以爲身。出以爲民而已。求之當世。處以爲身者。當如宣城沈耕岩先生。出以爲民者。當如合肥龔芝麓先生。"[117] In a tribute to Gong, Du argued that Gong resigned from office and returned home after the Qing regime was stabilised was a kind of righteous deed to know when to leave, implying once again that his official career in the Qing court had nothing to do with personal interests:

> In the autumn of 1666, Mr. Gong completed his mother's funeral and went north. I wrote six poems to see him off. [My] last poem said: "Who can do the best to help the society and the people? After the contribution is done, leaving is the best choice. ... [Looking at] those figures who have been glorious in history since ancient times, the most difficult thing is to know when to stop"... Mr. Gong admired [this poem] very much after reading it, and [he] thought that this was the way to go, and then [he] said that [I] was his true friend.
> 丙午之秋。先生以歸葬太夫人禮畢北行。濬爲詩六章奉送。其末章云。康濟誰能盡。功成退步寬。……古來光史策。知止最爲難。……先生顧深賞之。以爲必如此然後謂之真朋友。[118]

Du's description shows that the friendship between him and Gong Dingzi had reached a level of confidence—Gong had Du's recognition. Even if Gong did not maintain his Ming loyalism, in Du's view, Gong's aim was not to protect his interests but was more beneficial to the society and the people during the period of the dynastic transition. Du argued that such a choice, like those reclusive Ming loyalists, deserved the respect of the people. Gong's writing works gained the support of Ming loyalists as well. His

[117] Du Jun, *Song song litang zhi guan sichuan ancha shi xu* in *Xuxiu siku quanshu 1394-bianya tang yiji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), p.5.2b.
[118] ibid, *Ku Gong Xiaosheng xiansheng wen*, pp.8.7b-8a.

Guoling ji 過嶺集 (The Anthology of Climbing over the Mountains) received prefaces written by Ming loyalists Yu Huai, Du Jun, and Ji Yingzhong. Ji Yingzhong praised Gong's characteristics that he was talented and wrote all the grief he suffered from the collapse of the Ming dynasty into his poems, hinting that Gong's loyalty to the Qing court was the difficulty that he was reluctant to mention.[119] Qing official Shi Runzhang also received prefaces written by Ming loyalists like Wang Hongzhuan. Wang was a strict Ming loyalist who resolutely refused to cooperate with the Qing dynasty and cut off his contact with his friend Li Yindu 李因篤 after he learned that Li chose to serve in the Qing court.[120] However, Wang wrote Shi a preface and particularly praised him.[121]

Such success was not only the result of the one-side effort of Qing subjects but a success under the mutual effect of both the Southern Ming correspondents' potential acceptance of the Qing regime and the Qing's infiltration. The Southern Ming correspondents needed the help of Qing subjects when they encountered political and life difficulties in the Qing territory, which prompted them to actively communicate with Qing subjects through letters. In order to infiltrate the Southern Ming emotional community, Qing subjects who received the request for help were also willing to help those Southern Ming correspondents. Ming loyalist Mao Xiang sent Gong Dingzi requesting letters when his son was going to take the Qing imperial examination. Mao asked Gong, who was an assistant teacher at the Qing Imperial Academy 國子監助教, to take care of his son.[122] Their letters were included by Mao Xiang in his *Chaomin wenji* 巢民文集 (The Anthology of a Man living in a Shabby House). In the category of private letters in this anthology, Mao only collected nine of his letters but three of them were written to Gong, showing Mao's appreciative and cherished attitude towards the friendship between him and Gong.

In addition to helping Mao Xiang, Gong Dingzi also participated in the rescue of Ming loyalist Fu Shan. In 1655, Fu Shan was arrested and imprisoned because he was suspected of having secret correspondence with a Southern Ming general called Song Qian. Gong Dingzi, who was serving as the prime censor of the Senior Censor-in-Chief of the Censorate 都察院左都御史 in the Qing government at that time, made every endeavour to defend Fu, and he eventually succeeded in getting Fu out of prison.[123] Gong also helped Ming loyalists in the cultural field. After Qian Qianyi died in 1664,

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[119] Ji Yingzhong, *Guolin ji xu* in *Gong Dingzi quanji-fulu yi xuba*, p.2592.
[120] *Liezhuan 288-yinyi 2* in *Qingshi gao*, p.501.13859.
[121] Wang Hongzhuan, S*hishi chongsi xiangxian lu xu* in *Wang Hongzhuan ji xia*, pp.1015-1016.
[122] Mao Xiang, *Da Gong Zhilu xiansheng* in *Mao Pijiang quanji*, pp.386-388.
[123] Yin Xieli, *Xinbian Fu Shan nianpu* in *Fu Shan quanshu 20*, p.331.

his son Qian Sunyi 錢孫貽 asked Gong to help revise the poems and essays left by Qian.[124] Other Qing officials like Yan Guangmin, Cao Rong, and Zhou Lianggong, all provided political and life help to Ming loyalists such as Bai Mengding, Zeng Can, Gu Yanwu, and Wang Hongzhuan. It indicates that these two groups had certain needs for each other. The Southern Ming correspondents needed a stable life, and the Qing correspondents needed to relieve their reputation crisis. Such demands prompted them to frequently exchange letters, and eventually, it led the Southern Ming people to obtain the help of Qing subjects, and Qing subjects got many Southern Ming people's approval of their choice to serve the Qing court.

(3) The eagerness to be recognised by the cultural circle

Qing subjects born after the 1640s did not suffer from reputation problems like Chen Mingxia and Gong Dingzi. Nonetheless, they wanted to gain the approval of the cultural circle dominated by the Southern Ming people.

The Qing regime retained the Ming method of selecting officials, that is the imperial examination. This led to the fact that Qing subjects still had to receive the same education as Ming subjects, which inevitably prompted them to seek advice from outstanding scholars and literati. However, the cultural circle of the early Qing period was actually a continuation of the late Ming, and most of the central figures who played a leading role, as well as those ordinary literati who often exchanged historical, literary, and scholarly views, were Ming loyalists. Their historiographies, literary works, scholarship, and even their letter-writing habits to be associated with Ming topics or Ming writing methods. As Qing subjects who were eager to gain the recognition of Ming loyalists, the way they chose to create a persona was highly recognised Ming culture.

However, such an image was only a means to please Ming loyalists, because they were not willing to give up the advantages brought by their identity as Qing subjects. Their ambivalence was not because of the Qing or the Ming identities, nor was it as strong as that of those original Ming subjects but served the Qing regime after 1644. Nevertheless, whether they could be recognised by the cultural circle and whether they could achieve educational opportunities of outstanding scholars or literati would lead to the result whether they could get a better education to pass the Qing imperial examination. In other words, their flattery to Ming loyalists was essentially to gain knowledge and governance to achieve a higher political and social status in the Qing dynasty, as well as the various benefits that followed.

[124] Gong Dingzi, *Nianpu* in *Gong Dingzi quanji*, p.2601.

Driven by such motivation, they actively wrote letters to Ming loyalists, using excuses like asking for knowledge, buying calligraphical works or paintings, and maintaining relationships as friends or teachers and students. Some of them would even visit Ming loyalists in person to receive education. On 7 May 1666, Sun wrote in his diary that "Yan Guangmin from Qufu [of Shandong], ... came to visit [me] with a letter written by Gu Yanwu. ... Yan mentioned two stories of being loyal [to the Ming dynasty] of his ancestors. [I recorded the affairs] of [his ancestors] Yan Yunshao and Yan Rongxuan in The Records of the Selected Loyalists. 曲阜顏光敏，……持顧寧人字來訪。……修來言及先人節烈事二則，顏允紹、顏容暄俱入《取節錄》。"[125] At that time, Yan Guangmin had not yet taken the Qing imperial examination, and Gu Yanwu and Sun Qifeng were both outstanding and famous Confucian scholars and Ming loyalists. In order to obtain Sun's emotional approval, Yan particularly told the deeds of the two Ming martyrs in his family, which provided historical materials for the book compiled by Sun to record Ming martyrs. Since then, Yan Guangmin successfully received Sun's education. After becoming a Qing official, Yan still kept correspondence with Sun, Gu, and many Ming loyalists, such as Sun Zhiwei, who was full of praise for Yan's literary works and requesting for a preface to his anthology when writing letters to Yan.[126] Other Ming loyalists who also praised Yan's poems and anthologies were Wu Maoqian 吳懋謙 and Ji Yingzhong.[127] Although their admiration is somewhat flattering, it still shows that many Ming loyalists had regarded Yan as a member of the cultural circle. The same is true for Gu Yanwu and Pan Lei. Pan was one of Gu's students and had participated in the compilation of Ming historiography hosted by the Qing dynasty. They exchanged at least three letters to discuss the compiling method of Ming historiography. By maintaining the relationship between outstanding scholars and literati among Ming loyalists, and fashioning the self that recognised Ming culture, Qing subjects like Yan Guangmin and Pan Lei received political preferential treatment under the Qing government, and their social status was even higher than that of Ming loyalists they sought advice from, and at the same time, they were praised and recognised by Ming loyalists.

All in all, the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects became increasingly interdependent between 1644 and 1683. They sought benefits from the other, which caused them to create different personas to obtain their interests as the powerless. The Southern Ming people thus showed complex emotions intertwined with rejection and acceptance towards the Qing regime. Such ambivalence stemmed from the fact that they had to live in the Qing territory as Ming loyalists, but because of this identity, they

[125] Sun Qifeng, *Ripu* in *Sun Qifeng ji xia*, p.1078.
[126] Sun Zhiwei, *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, pp.80-82.
[127] *Yanshi jiacang chidu 1*, pp.88-91, 128-129.

suffered political oppression from the Qing court. Letters functioned as a tool to help them express the fashioned self in balancing their interests and morality. In order to refuse to cooperate with this regime, the Southern Ming people created an incompetent persona of an incompetent pedant. Simultaneously, however, Qing subjects intended to fashion Ming identities, presenting an image that catered to the Ming culture, as they had to complete the political task of reversing the Ming identity of Ming loyalists, and they were anxious to rehabilitate their reputation or entered the cultural circle dominated by the Southern Ming people. Therefore, what these personas projected was the irreconcilable contradiction between the interests and moral principles of the two hostile political groups after the Ming-Qing transition.

Conclusion

Based on material and literary perspectives, this study explores the Southern Ming epistolary culture in terms of material composition, the epistolary process, commercial publishing, social networks, emotional communities, self-fashioning, and political identity ambivalence, providing a window into the interaction between the letters and the Southern Ming politics, military affairs, society, and culture. I argue that the Southern Ming letters were a medium for manifesting the Ming identity. They united those who remained loyal to the Ming dynasty to a certain extent and built a refuge for them to separate from the Qing identity and resist the Qing regime during and after the Ming-Qing transition.

The special significance of letters in the Southern Ming period is first because they were a bridge connecting the epistolary cultures of the Ming and Qing periods. Unlike previous studies that mainly trace the diverse terms of Chinese letters from the literary perspective, I suggest a new understanding of Chinese letters through focusing on their material composition. They are composed of a specific material as the carrier of textual information, the letter texts, and other material elements that can reveal the writing etiquette and nature of the relationship between correspondents. The same is true of the material composition of the Southern Ming letters. It had envelopes, the formal card, and the subsidiary letters to be written, texts that convey information, conventional formats for expressing etiquette, and attached items for maintaining relationships. More importantly, such a composing method was a continuation of the Ming letters. Under the extensive use of those Southern Ming correspondents who occupied senior positions in the literati circle, Qing subjects who intended to gain recognition in this circle took the initiative to learn such material composition, which caused Ming epistolary culture to dominate the epistolary field in the early Qing period.

Nevertheless, the Southern Ming letter activities were deeply driven by the Ming-Qing transition. In the early Southern Ming period, the confrontation between the Ming, the Qing, and the Shun disrupted epistolary exchange. The letter delivery suffered scrutiny, interception, or intrusion when crossing the Ming-Qing frontier. This drove the letters originally sent to a single recipient to be circulated to a broader readership. The awareness of circulating letters also affected the topic choice of the writers, which was projected in their attempts of adding more information to one letter. The relatively turbulent social situation damaged the reputation of some Southern Ming correspondents, prompting them to presuppose the readership before writing a letter.

By selecting the identity of their readers, using those words, phrases, sentences, and metaphors that could arouse the sympathy of their readers, and self-selecting letters for publishing, they intended to rehabilitate their reputation from a broader readership. The territorial division cut off the normal operation of the official postal system, making private letters a significant tool for exchanging Southern Ming military and political affairs. Although the war seriously hindered the normal exchange of letters for a period, it inspired their new vitality as written communications in the social, cultural, political, and military fields. This motivated Southern Ming correspondents to establish epistolary networks that were concerned with Southern Ming affairs in the southeast, southwest, and north. Even as their living regions gradually became part of the Qing territory, these networks were still closely linked to Ming-related information.

In the middle and late Southern Ming periods, letter activities followed the evolution of the society from chaos to stability. However, such recovered social stability was provided by the Qing regime as it gradually controlled the formal Ming territory and began its rule. Although the Southern Ming people's adherence to their Ming identities was superficially praised by the Qing ruler, the social instability factors brought about by this persistence, such as the enthusiasm for publishing Ming cultural works, arousing people's nostalgia for the Ming dynasty, and advocating the idea of never serving the Qing regime, had always been the biggest concern for the Qing ruler. Under the control of the voice of the Qing government, the Southern Ming people could not freely discuss Southern Ming politics and military affairs in their letters as they did when they lived in regions still controlled by the Southern Ming regime. To avoid possible political troubles, led by the central correspondents, regional networks showed a turn in the letter topics that focused on discussions about how to preserve Ming culture. These approaches evoked nostalgia for the Ming dynasty. As the publishing industry gradually recovered, the Southern Ming correspondents strived to realise their ambition of preserving Ming culture by compiling or writing Ming-related historiographies, literary works, scholarship, and letters. Of all these publications, letter collections were a comparatively safer alternative. They retained a window to display Ming culture while avoiding encountering Qing bans for directly expressing Ming loyalism. Many letters written by Ming subjects, Ming martyrs, and Ming loyalists were collected and published. Compilers, editors, and preface authors (even Qing subjects who were original Ming subjects) cleverly used paratexts to wrap their nostalgia in emotional orientation and morality.

However, the change in the letter topics and the emergence of nostalgia did not only stem from the Qing's control over the right to speak of the people living in its territory but also from the emotional transformation of the Southern Ming correspondents from

anticipation to disillusionment with the Southern Ming regime. The Southern Ming people's expectation of this regime was generated by their Ming loyalism, which was a primary emotion that prompted them to form an emotional community. In the early days of the Ming fall, the Ming regime established in the south gave them hope of continuing its rule. However, after a period of blind following and praising this regime, many Southern Ming people gradually realised that it was not a regime capable of confronting the Qing dynasty. Doubts and disillusionment motivated their departure and they eventually lived as reclusive Ming loyalists in the Qing territory. Such an emotional transition was different at time points in the three regionalised epistolary networks, but the same was that anticipation and disillusionment were secondary emotions that accompanied the primary ones of Ming loyalism. The interaction between them is dynamic. The norms and actions driven by the primary emotion will lead to different standardised emotional expressions of individuals under certain social conditions, which is likely to produce secondary emotions. Different understandings of "loyalism" in Confucian morality shaped the choices of Southern Ming individuals after 1644, thus distinguishing between Ming martyrs and Ming loyalists. Ming martyrs' belief in Ming loyalism was absolute, and they might live for a period after the Ming fall, but their purpose was to support the Southern Ming regime. In contrast, Ming loyalists' understanding of Ming loyalism was mixed with multiple and complex secondary emotions. They struggled between expectation and doubt, and even if they ended up disillusioned, they would not use death to demonstrate their loyalty to the Ming dynasty, as those martyrs did. This indicates that secondary emotions will adjust the strength and norms of the primary emotion so that Ming loyalists modified their expression of Ming loyalism to make it conditional. Nonetheless, the variability of secondary emotions and their adjustment of primary emotional expressions will not completely replace the dominance of the primary emotion. Emotional pressure from the Qing government—using various means to persuade and even force the Southern Ming people to change their Ming loyalism—was met with resistance from the Southern Ming emotional community. To maintain Ming loyalism, this emotional community constantly monitored its insiders, adopting moral condemnation to persuade and prevent possible cooperation between them and the Qing government. It can be seen that the emotional community established through the epistolary networks became a mechanism for the Southern Ming people to collectively resist the Qing regime, and a haven and regulatory tool to avoid Qing loyalism.

Epistolary activities carried out under the Ming identity and the emotional community established through epistolary networks project the loyalty of the Southern Ming correspondents to the Ming dynasty. However, I argue that they were occasionally disloyal. The Southern Ming correspondents tied a knot on the line that "connected"

them to the Ming dynasty, but it could be tied and untied at any time. Through the letter exchange between them and Qing subjects, we can see that like Qing subjects, the Southern Ming correspondents created different personas in order to obtain benefits, which projected their ambivalence of the swing between morality and interests. Their Ming loyalism was only maintained without political and survival difficulties. This is similar to Qing subjects, whose Qing loyalism must not damage their reputations. In other words, both of them modified the expression of loyalism according to their demands and goals, negotiated it in a direction conducive to gaining benefits, and thus created a new interpretation that could be used as the basis for moral principles and behavioural norms. What they wanted could be obtained from the other party. The Southern Ming people sought help from Qing subjects to get out of the political crisis and life difficulties, and Qing subjects needed the recognition of the Southern Ming people to enter the literati circle or wash away their moral stigma of not adhering to the Ming identity. In this case, both the Southern Ming people and Qing subjects used letters as a tool to separate friendships from politics, while also deliberately obscuring and even occasionally identifying with their differing understandings of Ming loyalism.

In sum, this study analyses the connection role of Southern Ming letters in the late Ming and early Qing period by answering the question, “What are Chinese letters”. It also explores the epistolary process with social turmoil to stability and reconstructs regionalised networks. Furthermore, it analyses the emotional communities constructed by the Southern Ming letters, and the ambivalence of the Southern Ming correspondents projected in their letter exchanges with Qing subjects. I re-examine the interaction between Chinese epistolary culture and dynastic transition, social evolution, and people’s mindset changes in the mid-to-late seventeenth century from the specific era of the Southern Ming, drawing a critical conclusion about Ming loyalism. Chinese letters are a material, social, and cultural aggregation. Driven by the Ming identity, the Southern Ming people carried out letter activities related to the Ming and the Southern Ming in a relatively turbulent era. With Ming loyalism as the dominant emotion, they formed emotional communities based on their epistolary networks that could resist Qing loyalism. However, to most of them, Ming loyalism was conditional rather than absolute. It was not simply a result over time but was the result of disillusionment with the Southern Ming regime, pressure from the Qing rule, and the discovery of being powerless in the political field. Thus, for the Southern Ming people, letters served both as an emotional refuge for their Ming loyalism and as a mechanism for occasionally abandoning their Ming identity.

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Sources Used to Compile the Southern Ming Letter Corpus

The following shows the sources for the 3040 Southern Ming letters that form the corpus underlying this study. I provide the number of letters first, and then the title of the source in *Hanyu pinyin* followed by the Chinese title. A number with * denotes a source for the 223 manuscript letters; all others are printed letters. It should be noted that the total number of letters considered has been calculated to account for multiple copies of a single item (105 printed letters overlap with manuscripts; 9 printed letters overlap with anthologies and letter collections included in the following). More letters written in the late Ming and early Qing period are placed in primary sources, as they are difficult to be verified whether they were written between 1644 and 1683.

Number of Letters	Source
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