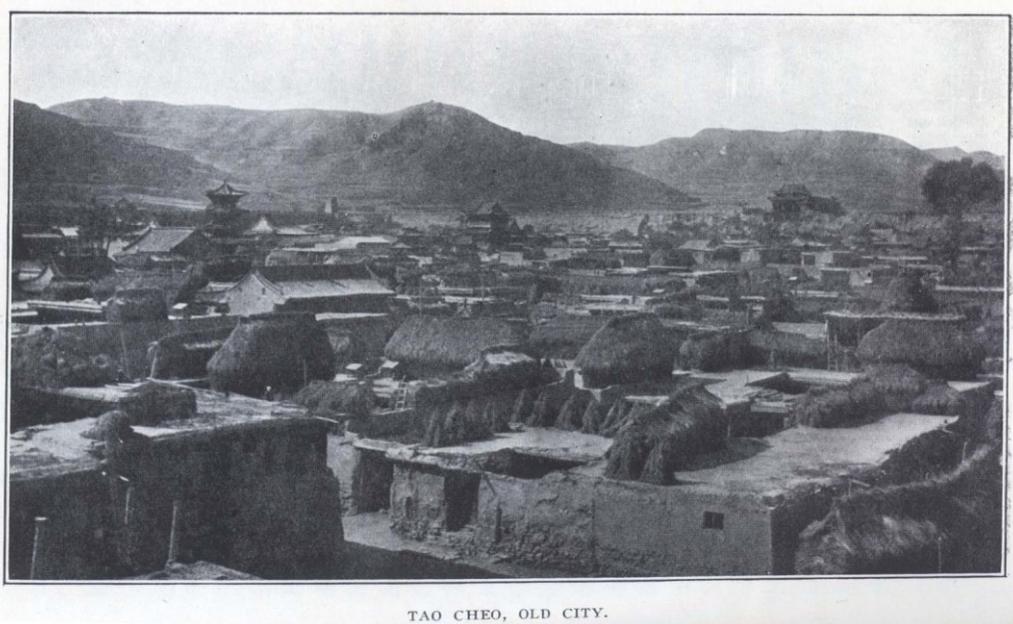


Banquets, Horses, and Blazing-Hot Rebellions:

Qing Frontier Administration and the Muslim Rebellions in Taozhou, 1863-1867



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Photo: The Old City of Taozhou, 1906

-David P. Ekvall, *Tibetan Outposts*, 1907, opp. p. 36.

A Fresh Start For Taozhou

The *Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty* records that on April 1st, 1867 an edict was handed down to the Grand Council in response to a memorial from Yang Yuebin, the Governor General of the provinces of Gansu and Shaanxi. Yang Yuebin had written to report that the Muslims of New Taozhou, a small walled town in southwest Gansu, had rebelled and occupied the town for the second time in as many years. The Taozhou region was proving to be a very vexing problem to the Qing authorities. In the edict, the powers that be in the topmost echelons of Qing imperial governance channeled their anger at Ding Yong'an, a low-ranking Muslim military officer from Taozhou.

Ding Yong'an had previously been fingered as the leader of the first rebellion. Yet when the town peacefully surrendered and lay down its weapons in the spring of 1866, the state had forgiven him his transgressions. Now the government was in no mood for clemency, and the edict read:

The Muslim officer Ding Yong'an has again seized the opportunity to rebel and has occupied the town and resists attack. Truly, even death cannot atone for this crime! First, Ding Yong'an must be cashiered from his position as the vice-commander of the Tao-Min Cooperative Brigade. Then, after he is caught, promptly take him before all the soldiers and execute him as a clear warning to the rest. Taozhou is located to the west of Hezhou and Didao. The Muslims of this region are everywhere and their men are fierce-looking and numerous! How should we advance and exterminate them?¹

Eight months later the Qing's official military forces had again reoccupied New Taozhou, and in the aftermath Ding Yong'an remained very much alive. The authorities

¹ *Qing shi lu*, Tongzhi period 5, juan 197.535-2, 536-1. Hezhou and Didao were strongholds of the Muslim rebellion and Qing authorities did not recapture them until 1872.

in Beijing were not sure what to make of him. The imperial reply to news of Taozhou's surrender read as follows:

The Taozhou Muslims have surrendered. If their entreaty for pacification is not a trick, then there is no harm in granting them a fresh start. But Mutushan² must investigate this matter...and see who in the town should be rewarded. Has the Muslim officer Ding Yong'an committed treason or not? Let Mutushan make a precise and impartial investigation.³

Although Taozhou played only a small role in the great unrest that spread across northwest China from 1862 to 1873, an investigation of this town's history illuminates both the difficulties that the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) faced in governing its border regions and the complex human foibles, treacheries and loyalties that defy easy pigeon-holing by ethnicity, creed, or class. As the example above demonstrates, the state was frequently forced into compromises that defied the ideal legal and administrative framework.

In this light, I present this paper on Taozhou as a case study of the creeping advance of Qing civil administration along the Gansu frontier and of the various elements of local society that hindered it. During the early Qing period, Taozhou served a clearly defined military and economic purpose: It was to be a military check on the power of the Tibetan tribes living to the south and west, and the conduit through which the strategic trade in tea and horses could be conducted. By the 1860s Taozhou's situation had become far more complicated. The threat posed by the Tibetans had receded in significance, but a plethora of increasingly powerful regional Muslim institutions replaced them as the potential locus of social instability or even anti-dynastic ferment. The official tea and horse trade had also faded in significance and had been overtaken by a vastly expanded network of private trade that linked the upland grasslands of the Tibetan Plateau to the commercial centers of Gansu and the rest of the Chinese interior.

² Mutushan, a Manchu military official of the Bordered Yellow Banner. Served as the *fujian* (Regional Vice Commander), posted in Ningxia. (Qian Shufu, 1980)

³ *Qing shi lu*, Tongzhi period 5, juan 213.774-2, 775-1.

Chinese-speaking Muslim merchants based out of the prosperous market town of Old Taozhou conducted much of this trade. Jonathan Lipman describes Old Taozhou in the late 1900s as the center of a “tripartite world” where power was tenuously balanced among the Choni Tibetans to the south and west, the Qing government officials stationed in the new city, and the trading and religious organizations of the Sino-Muslims.⁴ This paper will argue that the roots of this “tripartite world” are to be found in the communal violence which tore the Taozhou region apart from 1863 to 1867.

My main source in this examination of Taozhou’s shift from a dipartite world to a tripartite one is the *Taozhou Ting Gazetteer* of 1907. This project originated in a curiosity to find out what types of information a gazetteer from the Gansu border region might include, and what issues and events were bearing on the minds of local people.

As I read through the gazetteer two things struck me. The first was that the authors of the gazetteer clearly saw themselves as living beyond the pale of whatever they considered “normal” Chinese civilization and that administration of this frontier region required specialized local knowledge. In his preface to the gazetteer the sitting sub-prefectural magistrate of Taozhou (the *tongzhi*), Zhang Yandu, wrote that Taozhou remains,

“A dangerous borderland that truly cannot be compared to the interior...Taozhou serves as the gateway to Tibet. To the west it controls the military affairs of the barbarians. To the east it shelters Huanglong. Since ancient times it has been a strategic communications center on the far frontier...those who govern this town must understand the local conditions and judge well the feelings of the people.”⁵

⁴ Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, p. 153.

⁵ Taozhou Ting Zhi (The Taozhou Sub prefecture Gazetteer, hereafter TZZT), 1907, *chaben* version, p.1-5. “Gateway to Tibet” is my translation of “*xi fan men*”. I am translating “fan” as “Tibetan” for the purposes of this paper. *Huanglong* is the gazetteer’s shorthand for the Huang and Long river sheds of Gansu, i.e the eastern agricultural interior of Gansu province.

Zhang Yandu writes that the purpose of the gazetteer is to serve as a practical manual for future administrators. The gazetteer therefore, provides comprehensive lists of local Tibetan tribes, clans and headmen, and even lists of commonly encountered Tibetan words. The editorial and research staff of the gazetteer also reflected the complex cultural composition of Taozhou. The credits included the names of several Chinese Muslims as well as non-Muslim Chinese.⁶

The second definitive characteristic of this gazetteer is its concern with the event the authors abbreviate simply as the “*tongzhi wu nian bingxian*,” literally the “sacking by soldiers during the fifth year of Emperor Tongzhi’s reign (1866).” This expression becomes shorthand in the gazetteer for the violence that engulfed Taozhou from 1863 to 1867, a period in which the walled town of New Taozhou was attacked no fewer than three times and communal violence see-sawed across the surrounding countryside.⁷

Despite the lapse of forty odd years, the watershed events of 1866 weighed heavily on the minds of the compilers. Moreover, much of their work was dictated by the fact that massive quantities of historical records had gone up in flames, and the researchers (*caifangzhe*) were tasked with recovering what they could and conducting new surveys to replace lost statistics on land and population. In nearly every chapter of the gazetteer, the contributors sought to assess the legacy of the 1866 “bingxian”. And, in what is probably a reflection of the diverse backgrounds of the compilers and the

⁶ I should qualify this by saying that the identification of the compilers is not completely certain. According to a personal discussion with Wang Jianping, a scholar of Sino-Muslim history from Shanghai Normal University, the surnames Ding and Min which appear in the list, are common surnames among Muslims in Taozhou. Whether or not they truly were Muslims, or even if they would have identified themselves as “Hui” (Muslim) is difficult to tell.

⁷ This expression could also be translated as, “the five years of turmoil during Tongzhi’s reign,” but my sense is that it’s referring to the event of one year- 1866. It is important to point out what the Taozhou locals *did not* label the violence of 1866 a “Muslim Rebellion.” Current historiography to the contrary generally identifies this period as the Great Muslim Rebellion of 1862-1873. Although commentators in the gazetteer will often point out the largely Muslim town of Hezhou as the locus of the violence, or identify certain Muslim individuals as having led certain revolts, they never generalize the event as a Muslim Rebellion with concrete dates. “Bingxian” is a remarkably neutral term, suggestive of ravages of both official troops and Muslim bandits.

collaborative process, the gazetteer provides no unified assessment of the events or major personalities, nor does it ever provide a single comprehensive outline of the events.

Thus it remains the task of the historian to sort through the commentaries, poems, biographies and songs, piece together the events of 1866 from the gazetteer, and then tally them with outside sources. To date there has been nothing published in English on Taozhou during the 1860s and secondary literature in Chinese is limited to a couple chronologies in the modern gazetteers of Lintan and Choni counties.⁸ In the process of researching this paper the clarity and simplicity of the event as suggested by the abbreviation “1866, sacked by troops” must be abandoned. In order to tell the story properly, it remains the task of this paper to first summarize the administrative evolution of Taozhou in the years before the sacking, then attempt a short narrative of the event itself.

The Administration and Governance of Taozhou

From the time of its establishment as a military colony in 1379 to the publication of the 1907 gazetteer, the governance of Taozhou reflected its precarious and strategic position on Gansu frontier. The administrative structure of Taozhou was arranged to maximize government supervision and military security. When the Qing government finally shifted the district from military to civilian control in 1748, the form of its new government remained distinct from that of the neighboring counties in the Gansu interior. Yet, the decade of the 1860s revealed the inherent weaknesses of even the most tightly arranged and closely supervised civilian administrative system.

⁸ Jonathan Lipman has discussed Taozhou’s involvement in the Muslim rebellions of 1895 in both his book, *Familiar Strangers* (1997), and in a several articles. However he does not mention the events of the 1860s. Western accounts of Taozhou at the turn of the century also do not mention the events of 1863-1867, and some even insist that before 1914, Old and New Taozhou had never been taken by Muslim rebels (Farrer 1914 v. 2, pp. 101-102. The 1997 Lintan County Gazetteer (formerly Old Taozhou), and the 1994 Zhuoni County Gazetteer both provide chronologies of the events. However, these two publications contradict each other on crucial dates (sometimes diverging by several years), and the Lintan gazetteer gives different dates for the same event in different parts of the book.

According to a stele erected to commemorate the resettlement of Taozhou in the early Ming, the Yuan-Ming transition had left the ancient town of Old Taozhou a barren wasteland. In the fourth year of the first Ming emperor (1371) a thousand military colonist families (*tuntian*) were dispatched from the Nanjing-Anhui region of central China to reclaim the fallow fields of Old Taozhou. Eight years later New Taozhou was founded and an official military garrison (a “*wei*”) with the express purpose of controlling the “Eighteen Tribes of the Tufan” (the Tibetans to the south and west).⁹ Among the original *tuntian* settlers were a good number of Muslims and several of the first military commanders of the new *wei* (the *jun-min zhijun shisi* or “regional military commissioner”) were Muslim.¹⁰ Throughout the Ming, the interests of Taozhou’s traditional *gedimu* Muslim community remained tightly bound to that of the state.

The military administration established in the Ming (the *wei* garrison) persisted into the Qing with only minor alterations to the status of the officers in charge. During the early years of the Qing the highest-ranking officers in Taozhou were two Assistant Brigade Commanders (*shoubei*, rank 5b), stationed in Old and New Taozhou respectively. The officer posted in New Taozhou received the appellation “*zhang-yin* (lit: seal-holding)”, and thus was the senior officer and one who retained overall command. This administrative arrangement persisted despite massive reorganizations of Gansu by Kangxi in 1667, and Yongzheng in 1724 and 1729.¹¹ In fact, of the forty-nine military garrisons that the Qing inherited from Ming in Gansu, Taozhou *wei* survived the longest, outliving the second to last *wei* by nearly twenty-five years. How should we understand its seemingly anachronistic status? Was it simply forgotten?

⁹ TZZ, pp. 229-230, and p. 106.

¹⁰ The garrison seems to have been at about battalion strength (a thousand soldiers, Hucker, p. 533) through the duration of the Ming. A close look at Taozhou’s military government during at least the early Ming is a strong corrective to those historians who see this dynasty as a complete restoration of a pure Han or “Chinese” government. The Military Commissioner-in-Chief of Shaanxi (which included parts of what became Gansu during the Qing) in the early Ming, Mu Ying, was also most likely a Muslim and the descendant of Yuan-period officials of Central Asian origin (a *semu* official). TZZ, p. 555-557, 506-509; and Lipman (1997), p. 188. *Gedimu* refers to the earliest form of local Muslim community organization in China, based on the Sunni Hanafi tradition.

¹¹ Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*, 2005, pp. 315-323.

In order to explain this situation it is necessary to place Taozhou in the larger context of the Qing's expansion into the northwest during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as recognize that the organization of the empire was not static. Qing emperors were constantly rearranging the administration in order to balance the need for defense and security with the desire for low-cost government and efficient revenue collection. It has become a cliché of History 2848 that the Qing government was, “a government of men and not of laws,” in other words, the state ruled through the strategic arrangement and ranking of its officials.¹² In Taozhou, as in Gansu as a whole, the government could quickly increase its security by inserting a relatively high ranking official who was tied more directly, by lines of communication and supervision, to the highest military and civilian officials in the provincial capital.

G. William Skinner refers to this administrative mechanism under the useful rubric of “the span of control,” which Peter Perdue defines as, “the number of subordinate units under a higher-level one.”¹³ Following this definition, a narrow span of control optimizes defense and security because the official has more focused responsibilities and more direct lines of communication with his superiors. Yet establishing a narrow span of control usually also meant increasing the size of the bureaucracy and therefore the costs of government. In the interior of China, and as other parts of Gansu province become more secure, the Qing usually opted for a “wide span of control” with few administrators and a large population.

At its most extreme, a narrow span of control meant direct military rule. Taozhou's status as a military garrison until 1748 is evidence that the state regarded the region as having the utmost strategic importance and was unwilling to risk any form of civilian control. When the Qianlong emperor appointed a Sub-Prefectural Magistrate for Pacifying Barbarians (*Taozhou fufan tongzhi*) to New Taozhou, the region was transformed from a garrison (*wei*) to a civilian sub-prefecture (*ting*), but this new

¹² The semantics of the gazetteer reflect this: the authors of the gazetteer never state that “in 1748 Taozhou *wei* became a *ting*.” Instead they state that the “Seal-holding Assistant Brigade Commander (*zhangyin shoubei*) [of Taozhou] was replaced with a Sub-prefectural Magistrate for Pacifying Barbarians.” It is the rank and title of the official in charge that determines the form of local government.

¹³ Perdue, 2005, p. 319. G. William Skinner, in *The City in Late Imperial China*, p. 314.

arrangement maintained many of the characteristic features of a narrow span of control.¹⁴ According to Skinner, sub-prefectures are to be found in peripheral regions with low population and low economic importance, and this was true in the case of Taozhou. Although the magistrate of the Taozhou sub-prefecture was not independent of the prefect (as was the case with *zhili ting*, independent sub-prefectures), he was of significantly higher rank than the usual county magistrate (the lowest level of Qing civil administration), and the post could only be filled by men with three years prior experience.¹⁵ Another important feature of the post was that the sub-prefect could be directly appointed by the provincial governor (the governor-general, in the case of Gansu), thus allowing for more careful supervision by governor, and avoiding the potentially time consuming nomination process at the Board of Personnel in Beijing.¹⁶

In our case, the Sub-Prefect for Pacifying Barbarians, who had jurisdiction over the 30,546 souls of Old and New Taozhou (1879 population), potentially wielded a good deal of authority.¹⁷ The potentialities of this position are illustrated quite well by the remarkable life of Taozhou's most famous magistrate, Yan Changhuan.

Yan Changhuan was dispatched to Taozhou on no fewer than three occasions during his long career (serving a total of about 10 years in the region). Originally from Jiangxi province he first assumed to the post of sub-prefect in 1841 after passing the metropolitan examinations in Beijing. In 1846 he faced his first true test when the Heicuo Tibetans rebelled, pillaged the countryside south of Taozhou, and attacked the fort of the one of the local Tibetan chieftains, Xun Yang Guocheng of Choni. After Yang Guocheng was killed in the fighting, Yan, in cooperation with the powerful Tibetan

¹⁴ A interesting line of further research would be to search for memorials and edicts relating to the conversion of Taozhou in 1748. How was this decision made? Had Taozhou's importance decreased or increased in the eyes of the state?

¹⁵ Taozhou was incorporated into Gongchang Prefecture in 1724. The rank of a sub-prefect could range from 5a to 6a, a significant step above the county magistrate who nominally ranked 7a (on overall scale of 1a to 9b). Skinner, p. 304.

¹⁶ Skinner, p. 321

¹⁷ The gazetteer lists separate population statistics for Han, Hui (Muslims). Of the total cited above, 20,430 were Han, and 10,116 were Hui. Statistics for the Tibetans are also listed separately. The Tibetan population as of 1907 is listed as 11,599 households. If one multiplies the number of households by the average household sized derived from the Han and Hui figures, an exceedingly rough population estimate of about 70,000 can be derived for the Tibetans of the Choni region. TZZT, p. 292; p. 842.

Prince of Choni, Yang Yuan, and a military force from Xining and Taozhou, led the military expedition out into Tibetan country to exterminate the rebels. The fighting became so heavy that Yan Changhuan was forced to bring in cannons in order to blast the Heicuo Tibetans from their mountain redoubts. The gazetteer records that in the aftermath, “The people of Taozhou were so grateful that they erected a shrine to him even though he was still alive. For the next sixty plus years those passing through Heicuo did not have to carry arms.”¹⁸

Yan was subsequently promoted to prefect in other parts of Gansu, but in 1858 he returned to Taozhou. During this second stint, he was passing through the territory of the Heicuo Tibetans on another matter when his old enemies ambushed, captured and dragged him off to a “dark cell” in Heicuo land (the shrine might have been a bit premature). According to the gazetteer, “[The Heicuo Tibetans] wanted to kill him, but after a while they talked to each other and because his words were spoken with such virtue and authority that he was released.” Evidently because of his skill at dealing with barbarians he was dispatched to the far southern province of Guangxi in 1860, but only three years later he was forced to make the long trek back north to deal with the revolt of Taozhou’s Muslims.¹⁹ The gazetteer recounts the final chapter in Yan Changhuan’s life as follows:

In 1863 Yan was appointed as a Military Defense Circuit Indendant (*bingbei daoxian*) and sent to Taozhou to oversee military affairs. Ma Fang and the other rebel chiefs feared his virtuous reputation and were slightly restrained, and the people depended on him for peace. [Later in the year] when the Nian Rebellion was still hot and relief troops had yet to arrive, the Hezhou rebel forces reached Taozhou. When he heard the news Yan Changhuan was just eating. He suddenly stood up and died unexpectedly of anger. He was seventy-five years old

¹⁸ TZZ, pp. 562-563.

¹⁹ He was appointed the Prefect of Xunzhou in central Guangxi, a very tough post by any measure. One suspects that the Qing government hoped to put his experience to use in pacifying the former Taiping rebels.

at the time, and upon his death the people of Taozhou felt like they were losing their parents.²⁰

Upon the death of Yan Changhuan Taozhou faced a grave dilemma: there were a score of military officers scattered across Old and New Taozhou, but none with a legal mandate to take charge of the civilian population, while simultaneously there was no civilian administrator with the military experience or local knowledge necessary to coordinate the sub-prefecture's military affairs. The gazetteer notes elsewhere that Yan had been specially appointed by the governor-general of Gansu, Xi Lin (a Manchu) to replace the standing magistrate and get Taozhou's affairs under control. On the watch of the magistrate who replaced him, Taozhou's Muslims rebelled again, and successive magistrates played no role in the events of the next four years.²¹ Until the dynasty's final pacification campaign in 1867, the most important actors in the violence around Taozhou were a group of local Muslim officers who had served in the official Green Standard Army before the outbreak of violence. These men were suddenly confronted with the stark and difficult choice between cooperating with a state that at times openly sought, or was rumored to be seeking, the extermination of Gansu's Muslims, or "rebellious" and attempting to protect the interests of their local communities.

1863: Origins of the Troubles

The local gazetteer reports that in 1862, "When central [China] was troubled by the Nian Rebellion, the Muslim bandits of the He-Huang [the Hezhou to Xining region of present day Gansu and Qinghai] region seized the opportunity to incite chaos. The next year, the Taozhou Muslims, following the lead [of Hezhou], rose up."²² The first recorded bloodletting was a battle with the East Village *mintuan*, a locally organized

²⁰ TZZ, pp. 562-564.

²¹ TZZ, p. 513.

²² TZZ, p. 985.

militia, on July 24th, 1863. The East Village mintuan, who were non-Muslim Chinese, lost badly, leaving 483 casualties behind them.

This was indeed a grave start to the communal warfare that would consume the next four years, but why did the Taozhou Muslims rise up? The gazetteer of 1907 is silent on this issue, and in the years preceding the outbreak of violence there are no reports of unrest or communal violence.²³ The nature of the violence when it first broke out, however, allows one to extrapolate a number of tentative conclusions about some of the social forces previously at work in Taozhou.

During the first two years, the violence was mainly limited to the countryside beyond the walled towns of New and Old Taozhou and seems to have been carried out by unofficial militia groups (the mintuan).²⁴ The first battle between Muslims and the East Village mintuan was fairly characteristic of what was to follow. Although the historical sources do not describe who the Muslim forces were or where they came from, it seems safe to assume that they were primarily drawn from Muslim villages and not from the within the walled towns of Taozhou.²⁵ The existence of these local militias also probably dated back well before 1863, and the battle of July 24th was most likely the extension of previous conflicts or feuds. Open warfare between the Qing state and various Muslim organizations across northern Shaanxi and Gansu, together with rumors of massacres of Muslim and non-Muslim civilians, provided an atmosphere in which low-level conflict could escalate very quickly. Coming shortly after an officially recognized “rebellion” had broken out just a short distance to the north (in Hezhou), and in an atmosphere where

²³ The most recent gazetteer from present day Lintan (formerly Old Taozhou) states that, “The Taozhou Hui nationality gathered themselves together because they could no longer endure the class and ethnic oppression. Under the influence of the Hezhou Hui leader Ma Zhan’ao, rose up to oppose the Qing.” (LTXZ, p. 530) This explanation is dictated far more by contemporary political concerns than historical evidence, thus we must look elsewhere for a framework.

²⁴ I’m assuming that the term “mintuan” is the local expression for “tuanlian”, both referring to unofficial local militias.

²⁵ New Taozhou was not attacked by any one until 1864 at the earliest, and, in the absence of reports of violence from within the towns, it seems highly unlikely the Muslim forces could sally forth from a multi-ethnic town that was still in official hands and expect to be let back in at the end of the day.

any violence involving Muslims now constituted rebellion in the eyes of the state, the old feuds of Taozhou had taken on a new implications.²⁶

Taozhou on the eve of the trouble was already a highly militarized region. The Lintan gazetteer of 1997 lists thirty-seven different forts (*bao*) and stockades (*zhai*) constructed for local defense in the late Qing.²⁷ Some of these were maintained by the official military, but the majority was constructed by clan or village associations for local protection. But there are also some important differences between Taozhou and other regions of Gansu with large Muslim populations. As I have pointed out before, many Muslims in the Taozhou area, especially in the old town (where the largest concentration of Muslims was to be found), traced their ancestry back to the Nanjing area and remained more culturally and linguistically tied to the interior of China than to central Asia. It was not rare for Muslim gentry to find education in the Confucian schools or even sit for the county-level Confucian examinations. As a result, the Sufi solidarities- the *menhuan*, that played such a large role in organizing large-scale resistance to the state (and in creating conflicts between each other) in places like Hezhou, Xining and Ningxia were relatively weak in Taozhou. The main Muslim institution of Old Taozhou was the elegant pagoda-style Libaisi Mosque in the center of town which dated back to 1379.²⁸ The position of the Muslim communities in the two towns- living together with non-Muslim Chinese behind the same city walls, created incentives for local Muslims to distance themselves from the perceived violence of outside Muslims. However, these

²⁶ As a basic framework for understanding the violence between Chinese Muslims, the Qing, and non-Muslim Chinese mintuan, I'm indebted to Jonathan Lipman's analysis in *Familiar Strangers*, p. 123-124.

²⁷ LTXZ, p. 526.

²⁸ This mosque appears in the 1907 map of Old Taozhou (the new Protestant Church also appears on the map, located just outside the western gate). The mosques of both Old and New Taozhou are listed on TZZT p. 243. However, the gazetteer overall provides very little information on local Muslims, especially in comparison to the wealth of information on the Tibetans. It does not identify which villages Muslims predominated in, nor spend any time discussing Islam or Muslim customs. Perhaps this is because, unlike the Tibetans who were so obviously different in language and custom, the Muslims were too familiar a presence to elicit any special interest.

incentives may not have existed in the Taozhou countryside, where the Chinese and Chinese Muslim farmers lived in different villages segregated by faith.²⁹

In addition to mintuan, three brigades of official troops were also headquartered in Taozhou. The most important was the Tao [zhou]-Min [zhou] Cooperative Brigade, headquartered in New Taozhou, which, at least on paper, consisted of 300 cavalry, 400 foot, and 300 “defensive soldiers” who were split between Taozhou and Minzhou (a day’s journey to the east). The commanding officer of this unit, a Regional Vice-Commander (*fu zongbing*), in the sources also frequently referred to as the *fujiang* “vice-general”), was the highest-ranking officer in Taozhou. A second brigade, the Taozhou Brigade, was also quartered in the same town, and is listed in the gazetteer as fielding a force of 200 cavalry, 200 foot and 300 defensive soldiers. The third and smallest unit was the brigade stationed in Old Taozhou, and it was made up of only 200 foot soldiers.

The actual strength and the role of these military units in the events of 1863-1867 is quite uncertain. The Taiping and Nian Rebellions elsewhere in China had severely drained the military resources of the Northwest, and it seems unlikely that the local population would have had the resources to maintain almost three thousand soldiers without outside support. It appears that to what extent these forces actually existed they played a primarily defensive role, and only rarely ventured past the city walls. What the historical evidence does more strongly suggest, however, is that many of the soldiers were Muslims and over the four years of violence several of the commanding officers were Muslims as well. It is possible to imagine, then, that the status (or perhaps even the existence of these units) was very much subject to the fortunes of its officers and prisoner to the level of cooperation that could be reached between Muslims and non-Muslims in Taozhou.

²⁹ Robert Ekvall, the anthropologist son of Christian missionaries in the Taozhou region, writes that during the late Qing and early Republic periods, communal violence between the Muslims and the Han Chinese led to increasing segregation into homogenous villages of either Han or Hui. *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border*, 1939, p. 24.

1864: Deepening Violence and Isolation

While Yan Changhuan lived, further large-scale violence seemed to subside. Although it hard to tell to what extent he was personally responsible for this lull, other modern sources do corroborate the 1907 Taozhou Gazetteer's assertion that he was. The modern gazetteer from Choni County (*Zhuoni Xian*), the Tibetan district to the south, records that the Living Buddha of the Gomba Monastery (a branch of the powerful Labrang Monastery) organized a meeting between Yan Changhuan and the Muslim military leaders Ma Fang, Ding Yong'an and Li Fazhen at which a temporary accord was reached.³⁰

In the summer of 1864, however, matters took a turn for the worse.³¹ On July 17th, Muslims defeated the Southwest Village mintuan, leaving over 700 dead.³² In September, the gazetteer reports that for the first time Muslim forces from Hezhou arrived and laid waste a temple near the new town.³³ Sometime within the latter half of this year, there is a curious yet poorly documented development within the town of New Taozhou. According to two different accounts in the 1907 gazetteer, Li Fazhen, a Muslim officer of Tao-Min Cooperative Brigade, "occupied the town and rebelled."³⁴ However, the implications of this so-called "rebellion" are not clear. This very same passage also relates that shortly thereafter a Han Chinese officer named Feng Guangming took up the post of vice-commander (*fuzongbing*) of the Tao-Min Brigade. It does not seem possible that the town could truly be under an occupation hostile to the state and

³⁰ *Zhuoni County Gazetteer*, 1994, p. 18. Although I'm in general suspicious of events described in the modern local gazetteers, in this case the date was unusually plausible, thus I'm willing to grant that this accord may possibly have occurred.

³¹ There is unfortunately no precise date given for Yan Changhuan's death. The 1907 gazetteer is somewhat confusing on this matter. On two occasions it states that he died in 1863 (on the news that Hezhou Muslims were coming), yet elsewhere the gazetteer states that Hezhou Muslims did not attack Taozhou until September of 1864.

³² TZXX, p. 985. Again, it is unclear about who these Muslims were or where they were from.

³³ TZTZ, p. 985. The LTXZ reports that they are part of Ma Zhan'ao's Righteous Army from Hezhou, and that they then attacked the new town. It also states that Ding Yong'an, the Adjutant Vice-Commander of the Taozhou Brigade (*zhongjun dusi*) rebels (p. 530).

³⁴ TZTZ, p. 531.

still allow an enemy officer to enter the town and take responsibility for local military affairs.

Had the town of New Taozhou been taken over by rebels in 1864, one would expect to find a record of this in the correspondence between provincial officials and the capitol. Yet a survey of the year reveals no mention of Muslim rebellion in Taozhou.³⁵ It did, however, turn up information about the other major player in the military affairs of Taozhou- the Tibetan military forces under the control of the Choni Tusi Yang Yuan.³⁶

The Choni Tibetans: shelter from the storm

Beyond the borders of Taozhou, the Qing Dynasty's overall military fortunes in the northwest continued to deteriorate in 1864. In a memorial to the emperor, the provincial treasurer of Gansu, the Mongol bannerman En Lin, reported that the Salar Muslims of Xunhua were on the verge of taking the fortified city of Xunhua (Xunhua Ting), heavy fighting was raging near Guyuan in present day central Ningxia province, and rebel advances elsewhere were threatening to cut off communication to and from the provincial capital. The emperor (represented by his regent, Prince Gong) replied on August 16th, 1864, and authorized the loyal people of Xunhua to "flee," and ordered En Lin to, "transfer the Taozhou Choni Tusi Yang Yuan and whatever sturdy Tibetan troops can be found to the area to guard the strategic passes and make a surprise attack on the Salar nest."³⁷ The Qing planners were clearly desperate to bring more troops to their side, and the Choni Tusi proved a loyal ally throughout the Muslim rebellions in Gansu.

³⁵ I ran several searches for information in the online version of the *Qing shi lu* (using the key words "taozhou," "zhuoni," "Yan Changhuan") for the years of Emperor Tongzhi's reign. I was able to locate sixteen edicts containing useful information about Taozhou. I also skimmed the selection of edicts collected in Ma Saibei's *Qing shilu Musilin ziliao jilu* (Muslim materials from the Qing Veritable Records). One key primary resource which I did not have time to examine, but would probably provide rich detail is the *Qinding pingding Shaan Gan Xinjiang Huifei fanglue* (Record of the Military Campaign Suppressing the Muslim Bandits of Shaanxi, Gansu and Xinjiang).

³⁶ On I'm not sure what basis, most contemporary western sources refer to the Choni Tusi as a "prince." In most current academic scholarship the term "Tusi" is usually translated as "headman" or "Chieftain", but I will stick to the term Tusi.

³⁷ *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (3), juan 109, 406-1, 407-1.

The usefulness of the Tibetan troops from Choni during the 1860s is evidence of the remarkable transition from the early days of the Qing, when Tibetan tribes on the southwest border of Gansu represented a major threat to the province's stability. The Qing's native chieftain system (*tusi zhidu*), although eliminated in most of southwest China by the Yongzheng emperor in the years after 1724, persisted in Gansu and the northwest primarily because it provided a reliable source of mounted auxiliary troops. In the case of Choni, the policy had proved quite successful. Qing officials such as the Sub-Prefectural Magistrate for Pacifying Barbarians at Taozhou could avoid the hassle of trying to govern the neighboring Tibetan hinterland with its rugged terrain and obscure customs. Yet at the same time loyalty to the Qing cause was assured through Confucian schooling for the Tibetan elite, Qing supervision of succession, the ritual exchange of gifts, and the exchange of trade.³⁸

1865: First Rebellion

Edicts from February and March of 1865 chronicle the progress of the Choni Tusi Yang Yuan and his sturdy Tibetan troops as they proceeded northward.³⁹ Unfortunately, the Tibetan cavalry were not present when Taozhou finally entered the Qing records as having fallen into the hands of Muslim rebels. A memorial from En Lin reported that on June 28th, "A force of over a thousand non-local Muslims had stolen through the Minzhou city wall and killed the magistrate. They then spun around and on the 29th

³⁸ This topic really deserves another paper. While the 1907 gazetteer doesn't comment directly on the Tusi system, a careful examination of the source does present evidence that the Qing policies of promoting Confucian education, gift exchange, and the sponsorship of local monasteries were paying off. The various Choni Tusi who died during the Muslim uprisings, for instance, were all "gongsheng"-tribute students/senior licentiates of the Confucian schools. The Choni Tusi also had a Chinese secretary, and overall structure of his administration reflected the forms of local bureaucracy found elsewhere in China. The following sources were particularly useful: Gao Shirong, *Xibei tusi zhidu yanjiu*. (Research on the Tusi system of the Northwest) 1999, p. 152; and, John Herman's "Empire in the Southwest and the Native Chieftains." *JAS* 56.1, for the comparative perspective. A western guest of the Prince of Choni in 1914 described the hodge-podge of gifts collected by the prince, among which was a hanging scroll painted by one of Qianlong's concubines (Farrer, 1914 vol. 2, p. 98).

³⁹ *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (4) juan 127, 25-2; and juan 131, 95-1, 95-2.

scurried up to Taozhou. Then, the Muslim officers of [New] Taozhou, Li Fazhen and Ding Yong'an gathered together their diehard followers and occupied the town."⁴⁰ The government was thoroughly alarmed, and the edict exclaimed, "Taozhou's Muslim atmosphere is blazing hot!"

Clearly the report that two Muslim officers had occupied the town was *causus belli* in the eyes of the state, far off in Beijing. Yet a strange inconsistency in the report—that it was local Muslim officers of Taozhou not the band of murderous Muslims coming from Minzhou—presents an interesting opportunity for speculation. It strikes me that Li Fazhen and Ding Yong'an's behavior may have been guided by the desire to use their Muslim status to protect their local community and negotiate a peaceful surrender to a dangerous and unfamiliar Muslim force. Li Fazhen, however, would not live out the year.

In the same year, the Black-Headed Braves (*hei tou yong*), a non-Muslim Chinese militia force from Didao (located two to three hard days march to the northeast, they had probably been displaced by Muslim forces in that region) stormed into the Taozhou region, ostensibly to aid Taozhou's non-Muslim population resist the Muslims, but instead inspiring a new outpouring of communal violence. Muslim forces descended on the fort of one of the Tibetan chieftains, the Xun Yang Tusi, in the Tao River valley to the south of New Taozhou. Apparently unable to escape to safety on the other side of the river, the Chief was trapped in his fort and killed along with his family and several hundred commoners. This force of Muslims then moved on to the fortified mill, also on the river, killing another hundred people. In turn, the Black-Headed Braves attacked a Muslim stockade. Unable to take the Muslim fort, and frustrated with their failure, they turned to terrorizing the general population.

At this point it appears that the protracted violence had devastated local crops, and in the countryside most people had eaten their way through what stocks they had laid aside. According to the gazetteer, "The bodies of the starved lay in the roads and people could no longer offer food [to the soldiers]." The militia from Didao then began torturing

⁴⁰ *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (4) juan 145, 418-1-2.

with fire the hapless men and women who were unfortunate enough to fall in its path and refuse to provide foodstuffs.⁴¹

In due course, Li Fazhen and a military force from New Taozhou caught up with the Black-headed Braves, and the Braves' two commanders, Cui Yonglu and He Jianwei. The engagement was a pyrrhic victory for the New Taozhou Muslim forces: the Braves left Taozhou territory, but not before Li Fazhen had been knocked from his horse and killed during combat. In considering the career of Li Fazhen, the gazetteer, after considering the ravages of the Black-Headed Braves, states, "Although Li Fazhen, of the Tao-Min Cooperative Brigade, was not without achieving merit, of course there was also much evil."⁴² This assessment, although made forty years later, suggests that at the time the local people (potentially both Muslims and non) may not have considered Li Fazhen an outright rebel, but a man forced to make difficult and perhaps ugly decisions to protect the interests of his community.

1866: Interval

On March 12th, 1866, peace finally returned to Taozhou. An expeditionary force commanded by the Gansu Provincial Military Commissioner Cao Kezhong had managed to skirt the Muslim-held highlands of central Gansu and arrive before the walls of Taozhou. According to his memorial to the throne, New Taozhou's Muslims voluntarily surrendered the city and their weapons, and the official troops were victorious, "without having to bloody their knives. The aftermath has been orderly, proper, and the surrendering Hui all pacified."⁴³ From sources in the gazetteer it appears that most of the Muslim officers who stood accused of treason were pardoned, or perhaps conveniently ignored. Ding Yong'an, the long-time associate of Li Fazhen, became (or perhaps just remained) the adjutant commander of the Taozhou brigade. In a province where state control remained weak and military capabilities thinly stretched, the voluntary surrender

⁴¹ TZTZ, p. 986.

⁴² TZTZ, p. 986.

⁴³ *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (5) juan 174, 137-2, 138-1.

and promised cooperation of a Muslim officer was the best bargain real politics could buy.

The winter of 1866-1867: A Dinner Party Goes Wrong

When the town of New Taozhou was retaken in the spring of 1866, Feng Guangming, the Regional Vice-commander of the Tao-Min Brigade returned to the city along with the victorious provincial troops. Feng Guangming entered the town along with his family, and together with the less than two hundred soldiers at his disposal, took an oath to live or die with the city should the city ever be attacked again. Commander Feng, who was not a Muslim, had been posted to Taozhou in 1865, but “escaped” to the relative safety of Tibetan Choni territory when the town was “occupied” by Li Fazhen and Ding Yong’an. His biographer in the 1907 gazetteer claims that while in Choni he gathered together a new military force from among the Tibetan banners and launched attacks against Muslim “bandits” in the Taozhou area.⁴⁴

The peace held for five months. On November 21st, fighting broke out again between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Taozhou countryside. In the vicinity of Old Taozhou, a patrol commanded by the Taozhou brigade vice-commander was set upon by Muslims and the commander was killed.⁴⁵ The Didao Braves were back at it as well. On December 7th, they captured the You fort and killed numerous commoners and gentry, both Muslim and non-Muslim.⁴⁶ The city remained calm until:

On the night of January, 13th, 1867, the adjutant brigade vice-commander Ding Yong’an invited Feng Guangming for a banquet in his headquarters. Suddenly, guards came to report that bandits had dragged off Ding Yong’an’s

⁴⁴ TZZT, p. 564. I’m not convinced that Feng Guangming escaped. My guess is that the Muslim commanders of Taozhou spirited him out of town when they were forced to deal with the Hezhou Muslim forces. The modern gazetteer actually records that Ding Yong’an lowered Feng Guangming over the city walls at night with a rope to allow him to escape (LTXZ, p. 583).

⁴⁵ TZZT, p. 566.

⁴⁶ TZZT, p. 987.

horse. Ding Yong'an rashly rushed out in pursuit. After a little while several tens of bandits jumped the wall and entered the military office and killed Feng.⁴⁷

It is entirely unclear from either the local sources or the Qing Veritable Records what sparked this sudden surge of violence. The modern Lintan Gazetteer claims that Muslims from Hezhou lead the attack, and this is probably the most plausible explanation (especially because on this occasion the dates match up precisely), but it also seems important to consider the possibility that it resulted from the re-escalation of local feuds. Over the night conflagrations spread across the town and many townspeople were killed. Busily studying in the Confucian school when the alarms went off, the Taozhou education supervisor (*jiaoshou*) was suddenly interrupted by Muslim “bandits.” The supervisor scolded them saying, “I am an official appointed by the Court. How dare you little devils disturb me?” The rest of the story hardly bears repeating. “The bandits were furious and promptly killed his son, raped his wife, gouged out his eyes and slit his throat.”⁴⁸

1867: Final Pacification and the Death of a Horse

Sometime between January 13th and early April of 1867, Ding Yong'an finally managed to get matters in Taozhou enough under control so that the Qing Dynasty could firmly pin the crime of rebellion on him again.⁴⁹ It is my belief that, much like the first occupation of Taozhou, Ding Yong'an's cooperation with powerful outside Muslim groups was most likely a strategic move of necessity designed to protect his community of both Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese as best as possible. The gazetteer of 1907 records (in something of a side-comment attached to a list of officials):

⁴⁷ TZZ, p. 564.

⁴⁸ TZZ, p. 565. Now we know precisely what the expression “ma zei er si” actually means.

⁴⁹ A new magistrate was appointed to Taozhou during the five months of peace. When the second wave of violence broke out, the new magistrate fled to Choni and sought refuge with the Tibetans. He was later exiled to Heilongjiang for his cowardice. *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (5) juan 197, 537-1.

After Feng's death, Ding Yong'an protected Officer Feng's family and helped them seek refuge in Choni. Henceforth he protected the local Han people and suppressed the Hui criminals and for this many Han were privately thankful. However, in the aftermath Ding Yong'an faced some legal problems. Feng Guangming was also posthumously censured for his mistakes. Therefore most people were unwilling to record this matter.⁵⁰

To say that Ding Yong'an was about to face some legal troubles is the understatement of the gazetteer. On the orders of the emperor's regents, provincial officials organized a relief expedition during the spring, and the provincial military commissioner Cao Kezhong and the Manchu general Mutushan proceeded towards the Taozhou in the late spring (along with a large contingent of Tibetan cavalry from Choni). The gazetteer records that after defeating a force of Muslim troops from Hezhou to the southwest of the city, the town was retaken without further conflict.⁵¹ The *Veritable Records of the Qing* record three different edicts remarking on the peaceful surrender of Taozhou, but the one which I quoted in the introduction is by far the most interesting.

Ding Yong'an was lucky that Mutushan had been charged with investigating his case. For several months Mutushan had been arguing for negotiated settlements with Muslim forces. His opponents, however, were deeply suspicious of the Chinese Muslims and many advocated harsh extermination campaigns to wipe out all Muslims (“*xi hui*”, literally, “clean the land of Muslims”). In the month before he was charged with investigating Ding Yong'an, Mutushan memorialized that the Muslims in the Hezhou Didao region of central Gansu exhibited, “awesome military might.” He wrote that in light of recent Qing military setbacks and the strength of the Muslim position, he was sending a delegate to the region to sound out the prospects of a negotiated surrender.⁵² Jonathan Lipman writes that Mutushan prevailed in this policy debate, primarily because in the mid-1860s the state lacked the resources to mount an extermination campaign.

⁵⁰ This fascinating passage is actually written in small letters and attached to the short biography of another, unrelated military official. TZZT, p. 532.

⁵¹ TZZT, p. 987.

⁵² *Qing Shi lu, muzongyi huangdi shilu* (5) juan 211, 744-1, 744-2.

Although I lack materials on the outcome of Mutushan's investigation, it is highly likely that for similar reasons the state did not decide to push the issue too far in Taozhou. The state may also have found that it did indeed have a willing and sincere partner in Ding Yong'an and the other local Muslims. The gazetteer recounts that Ding Yong'an survived the aftermath of the pacification campaign and helped the state to identify the main leaders of Muslim rebellion in the countryside around Taozhou. In a strange twist it reports that when Ding Yong'an's uncle Ding Fuzhe was sentenced to death for his activities in the rebellions, Ding Yong'an was able to convince the authorities to swap his own horse for the personage of his uncle. His uncle survived and the horse was executed. The gazetteer reckoned that the horse (which had been stolen during the banquet) was partially responsible for the events of the second "rebellion."⁵³

Peace on the Middle Ground of Taozhou

“Every year one hoped for a halt to the axes,
 And for an end to the air of treachery.
 In one night Taozhou and Hezhou surrendered,
 But the rebels were never forced to know their guilt.”⁵⁴

As the above poem suggests, there were certainly those in Taozhou who bore a grudge against the Muslim officers who had survived the rebellion. As we have also seen though, there were contributors to the *Taozhou Ting Gazetteer* of 1907 who held a much more nuanced view. Ding Yong'an's cooperation with the state saved Taozhou's Muslim community from the prospect of a protracted war of extermination and the further rendering of Muslim and Chinese relations. Ding Yong'an's cooperation with Muslim rebels probably at least partially protected the non-Muslim residents of New Taozhou town from experiencing the worst excesses of communal violence.

⁵³ TZZT, p. 531-532.

⁵⁴ A poem, TZZT, p. 830.

The settlement reached in Taozhou in 1867 was repeated elsewhere in Gansu. The most dramatic example was the surrender of Ma Zhan'ao of the Hezhou Muslims in 1872. Ma Zhan'ao soundly defeated Zuo Zongtang's army as it attempted to enter Hezhou territory, and then from this position of strength abruptly offered complete surrender. Despite serious reservations on Zuo Zongtang's part, the Qing state accepted the offer.⁵⁵

The Qing state was forced to come to grips with the fact that Muslims had taken their place as a major new locus of power in northwest society, one with such enormous resources in terms of population, wealth and military capabilities that it could no longer be willed away or extinguished by force of arms. In Taozhou, over the next several decades power would remain tenuously balanced between the dynasty's representatives in New Taozhou, the Muslim merchants of Old Taozhou, and the Tibetan nomads. Moreover the satisfactory settlement of 1867, and the memory of the disastrous years of communal warfare it had brought to a close, set the groundwork for an enduring peace in the Taozhou region.

In 1895 another massive round of Muslim rebellions broke out between Hezhou and Xining. The gazetteer recounted that upon hearing the news:

Dissatisfied Taozhou Muslims leapt to their horses and grabbed their spears and it was a great and unruly affair. Among the Han there was talk of tigers and eating snakes (wild rumors), and people panicked and fled the town. The mood of the people was turbulent and the market was empty. However at this time the Muslim and Han gentry...did what was right, took risks, and blocked the way.⁵⁶

Thus Taozhou avoided being dragged into the violence of 1895, and the peace held for another generation.

⁵⁵ Lipman, 1997, pp. 126-127.

⁵⁶ TZZT, p. 990-991.

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Taozhou Chronology

- 1371 (Hongwu 4) *Tuntian* military farmers dispatched to Taozhou area. Taozhou under supervision of Hezhou *wei*.
- 1372 Office of trading tea and horses established in Taozhou (*cha-ma si*), the first of four such offices during the Ming (Hezhou, 1374; Xining 1379; Ganzhou, 1413). Golden Tablet system est. to ensure state monopoly over the trade (Taozhou gets 4 tablets, brings in about 3,050 horses yearly).
- 1379 (Hongwu 12) new city of Taozhou constructed, becomes a *wei*, military official in charge *junmin zhihui shisi*. Old Taozhou refortified, *caoshou* military commander in charge. The *libai shangsi* mosque built in old town.
- 1418 (Yongle 16) Ming emperor grants the Tibetan Prince of Choni titles and inheritance rights (becomes a *tusi*, or “native chieftan”).
- 1449 Golden Tablet system collapses in aftermath of Oirat Mongol invasions. State monopoly over trade broken.
- 1468 (Chenghua 4) Tao-Min Cooperative Brigade est. headquartered in Taozhou. Military officer: Fuzongbing (assistant regional commander).
- 1506 (Zhengde 1) Choni Prince visits Beijing and is given the surname “*Yang*.”
- 1586 (Wanli 14) Old Taozhou military official changed to *shoubei* (commandant).
- 1645 (Shunzhi 2) New Taozhou military official upgraded to *zhangyin shoubei* (seal-holding Assistant Brigade Commander).
- 1669-1694 (Kangxi 8-33) Strict supervision of Tea and Horse trade resumes. Trade limited to official seal holders. *Cha ma* circuit intendants and prefects named.
- 1674 (Kangxi 13) Choni Tusi Yang Chaoliang leads 7,000 Tibetan and Mongol troops to aid Qing in putting down revolt in Hezhou-Lanzhou region.
- 1687 (Kangxi 26) Taozhou *Wei* Gazetteer published.
- 1709 (Kangxi 48) Heavy fighting with Tibetan tribes in Taozhou region.
- 1724 (Yongzheng 2) Taozhou becomes part of Gongchang Prefecture, but remains military district.
- 1725 Yongzheng starts thorough reform of Tusi system in Southwest. Most *tusi* in southwest are removed from power and their realms incorporated into regular civilian administration,
- 1730 (Yongzheng 8) Old Taozhou’s military commander upgraded to *dusi* status (Brigade vice-commander).
- 1748 (Qianlong 13) Taozhou finally enters civilian jurisdiction, becomes a *ting* (a sub-prefect), official in charge is *fufan tongzhi* (Sub-prefectural Magistrate for Pacifying Barbarians).
- 1841 (Daoguang 21) Yan Changhuan appointed as magistrate for first time.

- 1846 (Daoguang 26) Yang Tusi involved in suppressing the Xunhua Salar Muslims. The Heicuo Tibetans of the Choni region rebel and kill the Yang Tusi. Yan Changhuan leads military campaign to suppress the Heicuo Tibetans.
- 1858 (Xianfeng 8) Yan Changhuan, Taozhou magistrate, captured by Heicuo Tibetans yet escapes.
- 1862 (Tongzhi 1) Muslim rebellions start in Shaanxi. Hezhou falls to Muslim control. Magistrate Chen Shouceng returns to post.
- 1863 (Tongzhi 2) Taozhou area Muslims rebel on March 29th. Yan Changhuan recalled from Guangxi and appointed as a special “Military Defense Circuit” in Taozhou. Magistrate Chen Shouceng retires. Yan Changhuan suddenly dies upon hearing the news that Hezhou Muslims are about to attack. Dan Dianchen appointed new magistrate. July 24th, East Village *mintuan* is defeated by Muslims, 483 dead.
- 1864 (Tongzhi 3) July 17th, Southwest Village *mintuan* is defeated, over 700 dead. September, Hezhou Muslims arrive and smash the city temple (LTXZ: reports that they are part of Ma Zhan’ao’s Righteous Army, and attack the new town, Ding Yong’an, the Taozhou *zhongjun dusi* rebels). Li Fazhen, a Muslim from Taozhou becomes *fuzongbing* of Tao-Min Battalion. August 16, edict calls for the Choni Tusi Yang Yuan to lead Tibetan troops against the Salar Muslims. (LTXZ: reports that Choni Tusi Yang Yuan has fallen back to his fort.)
- 1865 (Tongzhi 4) Cui Yonglu and He Jianwei (non-Muslim commanders from outside of Taozhou) arrive to help (LTXZ: they are part of the “Black headed Braves” a *mintuan* from Lintao). Local Muslims sack the Xun Fort, killing the Yang Xiuchun Tusi, many members of his family and several hundred commoners. Countryside of Taozhou (Han and Hui) devastated by Cui and He’s forces. Li Fazhen of Tao-Min Battalion is killed in battle with Cui Yonglu. Feng Guangming takes office as the new *fuzongbing* of the Tao-Min Battalion. According to *Qing Shi Lu*: Memorial from Yang Yuebin reports that: on June 30th, Muslims rebels arrived at Taozhou after killing the magistrate of neighboring Minzhou. The Muslim officers Li Fazhen and Ding Yong’an “gathered together their diehard followers and occupied the town.” The new town is captured by Muslims, Feng was able to escape and took a short-cut to Choni. He raises more troops from among the eastern villages and banners (Tibetans). Fights another battle with Muslims and his adopted son is killed. (see his biography, which also mentions Minzhou, pg. 564) (LTXZ: reports that on June 30 the Hezhou Righteous Army captures Taozhou, the Black Head Braves then also seize opportunity to loot and pillage, then “the Hui, Han, Zang minzu all united to throw out the Black Head Braves”)
- 1866 (Tongzhi 5) March 12, The provincial military commissioner Cao Kezhong pacifies the Taozhou region. *Qing shi lu*, May 21: memorial from Yang Yuebin reports that the Taozhou Muslims had voluntarily surrendered the city and their weapons. Xiong Qiguang appointed magistrate. November 21

Muslims rebel again. The military commander of Old Taozhou, Lei Xingfeng *Dusi* is killed. December 7th, Muslim Commander He Jianwei takes the You Fort killing many gentry and commoners.

1867 January 13th (still Tongzhi 5), Muslim forces slip into New Taozhou while Ding Yong'an, a local Muslim and the Tao-Min Brigade vice-commander (*dusi*) is holding a banquet for Feng Guangming. Muslims rebels steal Ding Yong'an's horse, and Feng Guangming is killed. The Confucian school is burned and the education supervisor (*jiaoshou*) is murdered. (LTXZ: the attackers were from the Hezhou Righteous Army.) Many residents take refuge in Tibetan regions. (Tongzhi 6) *Qing shi lu*, on April 1: has received a memorial from Yang Yuebin reporting that Ding Yong'an had again seized the opportunity to occupy the town. Orders the magistrate from the time of this second rebellion to be cashiered and exiled to Heilongjiang (LTXZ: he had fled to Choni). Wang Yanxiang replaces Xiong Qiguang as magistrate. July 14th, the Mochuan Fort is taken by Muslims. In the autumn the provincial military commissioner returns to pacify the Taozhou region. The Muslim forces are defeated in battle to the south of the new city and flee to Hezhou. According to *Qing shi lu*, an edict issued on November 2, quotes Mutushan's memorial stating that Taozhou had peacefully surrendered.

1868

1871 (Tongzhi 10) New magistrate Chen Tai begins reconstruction in earnest, attracts refugees to reclaim new farmland.

1895 (Guangxu 21) May-June, major Muslim uprising in Hezhou and Xining regions. Taozhou remains calm.

1907 (Guangxu 33) Taozhou Gazetteer published.