

## PREFACE

In the preface to my first book I noted that it took a decade to complete the journey from dissertation to monograph. This book has taken twice as long. The early career challenges I then confronted—learning to teach, gaining tenure, raising children, and repairing a late Guangxu-era house—gave way to other distractions. The children are grown and writing manuscripts of their own; the house has been remodeled by professionals. Editing a journal, chairing a department, advising graduate students, and expanding my horizons to comparative early modern and world history have all slowed the progress of the second monograph.

This study began as an effort to understand how the founding of the Ming dynasty influenced the course of modern Chinese history. I assumed that the creation of a strong imperial state must have had a profound impact on social and cultural life. I was also curious about how the imperial state's role might have changed as its vigor declined and other forces asserted themselves. My goal was to move forward from study of the dynastic founding to investigate the largely-ignored fifteenth century. The first step was to be a study of the social legislation of the early Ming dynasty, the founder's blueprint for the new social order. I hoped the inquiry would provide a baseline for exploration of the "black hole" of the middle Ming. Since the mid-1970s I have worked on translating and analyzing a number of Zhu Yuanzhang's codifications and pronouncements on social order. Preliminary thoughts on the problems discussed here have been explored in conference papers and articles, the most important of which are cited in the text. This study, and the translations appended to it, sum up what I have done so far. I am not optimistic about my ability to complete the task. The first monograph took ten years, and the second, twenty years. According to this curve, the third monograph might be projected to take thirty years (by adding one more decade) or even forty years (by doubling each time). In either case I doubt that I will make it.

My approach to the Ming founder's social legislation makes little effort to place the codes in the context of Chinese legal history. Nevertheless, I hope that the translations will be of some utility to students of the law. I also regret to report that Yang Yifan's studies of Chinese codes and of the *Grand Pronouncement* came to my attention only after most of the writing was done. I have put some citations in the text to alert readers to their existence but have not fully exploited all they have to offer. Mention should also be made of William C. Jones' new translation, *The Great Qing Code* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). It will greatly advance the study of

Chinese law. Unfortunately it arrived too late to be consulted in the preparation of this manuscript.

The bulk of the work was carried out during a sabbatical leave in 1984-85 when I was fortunate enough to hold a fellowship from the Wang Institute of Graduate Studies. I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Wang Institute for their generous support. I also wish to acknowledge support received upon a number of occasions from the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota.

The intellectual debts I have accrued in the course of this study cannot be adequately expressed in the spare citations of scholarly publications. I have benefited enormously from discussing and arguing with my closest colleagues, Ann Waltner and Romeyn Taylor. Professor Taylor was kind enough to read and comment on an earlier version of this study. I am also grateful for the constructive, encouraging, and sometimes detailed, comments of several anonymous readers. I have learned a great deal from graduate students, particularly Chang Jerlang, Ho Yun-yi, Lin Tai-yung, Anita Andrew, John Ness, Hsu Pi-ching, Jennifer Downs, Yao Yusheng and Jiang Yonglin. My greatest debt is to Jiang Yonglin who arrived as a visiting scholar at the Law School just as I was struggling to revise the translations which are appended to the text.

Over the years I got support and encouragement from many quarters. Brian McKnight, Kwang-Ching Liu, the late Robert Somers, and James D. Tracy invited me to give conference papers and Denis Twitchett asked me to submit a contribution to a symposium on Chinese law. Portions of this latter article, which appeared in *Asia Major*, are incorporated into the text as are some tables and bits of language from my other articles. Encouragement and help of various kinds was received from Stephen Young, Wallace Johnson, Fu-mei Chang Chen, William C. Jones, Jack Langlois, Wan Ming, and Audrey Eyler. The staff of the East Asian Library of the University of Minnesota, particularly Richard T. Wang, Yuan Zhou, Emiko Weeks, and Wang Yuh-shiow provided assistance with sources over the years. Peter Bol suggested that I submit the manuscript to E.J. Brill where my inquiries met efficient and positive replies from Dr. F. Th. Dijkema, Patricia Radder, Gert Jager and Gera van Bedaf. I am obliged to Andrew Miller for editorial help and Rick McKinney for assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication. All of the above can take some share of credit for whatever is worthwhile in this book; responsibility for the errors and shortcomings is mine alone.

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Edward L. Farmer