The Luchuan-Pingmian Campaigns (1436–1449) in the Light of Official Chinese Historiography*  
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1. Introduction

The history of the Ming Luchuan-Pingmian Pacification Commission 麓川平缅宣慰司, namely the old Mengmau kingdom 孟卯 (or Mung-Mau) of the Mau-Shan rulers 木撫, has to be viewed in the context of the history of Burma (or Myanmar) and Yunnan 雲南. Modern Burma during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries was not a unified state, but rather was partitioned into several small kingdoms which appear to have been in perpetual conflict. The Mau-Shan chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian seemed to have family ties with the chieftain of Mengyang 孟養 (the region around Mohnyin in Upper Burma); the chieftains of Mian- 
dian 緬甸 (Ava-Burma, around modern Mandalay) and Mubang 木邦 (Mongkawny, around modern Hscnwi in eastern Burma) were also related to one another.¹ It is said that during the Yuan period (1280–1368) the land under the joint Luchuan-Pingmian Pacification Commission was subordinate to the chieftain of Mianbian but probably it was the other way round.²

In February 1382 (Hongwu 15, 2nd moon) Yunnan was conquered by the Ming troops, commanded by the Marquis of Yingchuan, General Fu Youde 順川

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1 It is mentioned in the joint memorial of Wang Ji 王驥, Jiang Gui 蒋貴 and Mu Ang 沐昂, submitted in March 1444, that the relationship between Mianbian and Mubang was that of an uncle and nephew. Mubang needed the salt from Mianbian who in turn depended upon the water from Mubang. They were neighbours and on friendly terms with one another. See Yingzong shilu 113.2283–84 (Zhengtong 9, 2nd moon, bingwu: Mach 15, 1444).

2 On August 23, 1384 (Hongwu 17, 8th moon, renshen) the Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan paid tribute. During the Yuan period Luchuan was subordinate to Burma (Mianbian). See Gnoque 17.645. Kubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294) invaded Burma from Yunnan in 1287 (Zhiyuan 24). According to DMB the Shan people gained dominance in this region during the 13th century. After the fall of Pagan in 1287 (Zhiyuan 24), they established many tribal states in the region stretching from Brahmaputra to the Mekong. Even the petty kingdom which established its capital at Ava after 1364 was continuously ruled by Shan kings. See DMB II.1208.
侯傅友德 (d. Dec. 20, 1394) and the two Vice Generals, Marquis of Yongchang, Lan Yu 永昌侯藍玉 (d. March 22, 1393) and Marquis of Xiping, Mu Ying 西平侯沐英 (1345–1392). It is said that when the Mau-Shan chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian, Si Lunfa 思倫發 (d. 1399), heard the news that the imperial troops had captured Dali 大理 and marched to Jinchi 金齒 (modern Baoshan 保 山), he was frightened and decided to submit to the Ming court. Consequently, in April 1382 the Pingmian Pacification Commission, an Aboriginal Commission (tusi 土司) of first rank, was established and Si Lunfa was appointed the Pacification Commissioner (xuanwei shi 宣慰使), rank 3b. In August 1384 Si Lunfa sent a tribute mission to Nanjing 南京 to surrender the seal of the Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan issued by the defunct Yuan court. As a result the Hongwu Emperor 洪武 ordered that the Pingmian Pacification Commission was to be promoted to the Pingmian Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commission.

3 Fu Youde, later promoted to Duke of Yingguo, committed suicide. See DMB 1.466–71; Mingshi 129.3799–3803. Lan Yu, promoted to Duke of Liangguo, was executed. See DMB 1.788–91; Mingshi 132.3863–66. Mu Ying, the adopted son of the founder of the Ming dynasty, was the Grand Defender of Yunnan, a hereditary post. See DMB II.1079–83; Mingshi 126.3756–59.

4 According to Chinese sources Si Lunfa, the first Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan-Pingmian, was the father of Si Xingfa and Si Renfa. According to DMB, Si Ke 思可 (or Si Kefa 死可伐), the great-grandfather of Si Renfa, was recognized as a native chief of Luchuan under the Yuan regime. Beginning in 1348 Si Ke started to enlarge his domains in defiance of the Mongol emperor’s orders. After repelling a Yuan army sent to chastise him, however, he dispatched his son Mansan 滿散 to Dadu 大都 (modern Beijing) to apologize. The Mongols could do no more than accept his apology. In the early years of the Ming period, Mansan’s son, Si Lunfa, then ruling chieftain, made Luchuan powerful enough to invade Yunnan. See DMB II.1208–09. However, on the rulers of Luchuan-Pingmian or the Mengmiao kingdom on the Yunnan-Burma frontier zone, the Mau-Shan and Chinese sources do not coincide completely. See Elias, 9, 20–25. According to the Mau-Shan sources Si Lunfa was probably Tailing, the son of Chau-Ki-Pha (see Elias, 20). My thanks are due to Prof. Dr. Barend J. Terwiel from the Department of Thailand, Burma, and Indochina of Hamburg University who kindly provides me with the Mau-Shan sources.

5 For the conquest of Yunnan, see Mingshi 313.8063; Mingshi jishi benmo 12.45–56; Cambridge History of China, 143 ff.

6 Mingshi 314.811; Guoque 7.616; Taizu shilu 143.2247 (Hongwu 15, 2nd moon+, yisi: April 9, 1382). Tusi, translated here into Aboriginal Commission, was the generic term for the various ranks of Pacification Commissions, such as xuanwei si, xuanfu si and anfu si, zhaotao si as well as the Chieftain Commissions, called zhangguan si and manyi zhangguan si, established in the southern provinces, inhabited predominantly by various indigenous tribes, and in borderlands. It was the traditional policy of China to appoint local kings or chieftains, who had submitted or had acknowledged the supremacy of China, to be the tribal satraps to rule their own peoples. They were granted letters patent, credentials and seals. Throughout the Ming period there were quite a few rather serious tribal revolts which led the Ming court resorting to armed intervention. The Luchuan-Pingmian Pacification Commission was one of such Aboriginal Commissions of higher rank.

7 Mingshi 314.811; Guoque 8.645 (Hongwu 17, 8th moon, renshen: Aug. 23, 1384); Taizu shilu 164.2534 (Hongwu 17, 8th moon, gengwu: Aug. 21, 1384).
(Pingmian junmin xuanwei shisi), the status of which was a bit higher than the xuanwei shisi and which had jurisdiction over the civilian and military population.⑧

A few weeks later, on September 14, the Pingmian junmin xuanwei shisi was renamed the Luchuan-Pingmian junmin xuanwei shisi, signifying that Luchuan, which was annexed (or ruled) by Si Lunfa during the Yuan period, was incorporated into the tribal principality of Pingmian.⑨ With this action the Ming court officially recognized Si Lunfa to be the rightful tribal satrap of the land under the joint Luchuan-Pingmian Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commission. The name Luchuan reappeared in the official Chinese chronicles.

The larger land under Luchuan-Pingmian corresponds roughly to the modern Longchuan 瑞川 and Ruili 瑞麗 districts (24°N/98°E), covering the river valley of the Upper Shweli (Ruili River 瑞麗江 or Longchuan River 隆川江) and the adjacent mountainous region of Gaoligong shan 高黎貢山 (on the frontier of Yunnan and Upper Burma). The headquarters of the joint Pacification Commission was located in modern Ruili — a border town on Yunnan-Burma frontier, now a flourishing commercial centre. However, the territory under the influence of Si Lunfa covered the region east of Bhamo (Bamo 八莫), between the Upper Irrawaddy River, called Da jinsha jiang 大金沙江 (lit. the great golden sand river), and the Upper Salween (or River Nujiang 怒江), practically the south-western Yunnan province and the eastern part of Upper Burma.

In Chinese sources it is explained that the character fa 發 or fa 法, in the Shan word bwa or pha, means „king“.⑩ Prof. B. J. Terwiel points out to me that fa, in Shan word, means „sky“ and si 思, stands for seua, means „tiger“, which is often the first syllable. Nevertheless the Ming court interpreted the Shan word bwa or pha for „king“ and integrated the native word into the personal name of the chieftain. As a result, all the chieftains of Luchuan-Pingmian had the last name fa 發 (issue, manifest), whereas chieftains of other tribal principalities, such as Mubang, were given the Chinese character fa 法 (laws).

Nevertheless, Si Lunfa was not satisfied with the combined land under Luchuan-Pingmian and the title of Pacification Commissioner (xuanwei shi) granted

⑧ Mingshi 314.8111; Taizu shilu 164.2535 (Hongwu 18, 8th moon, bingzi: Aug. 27, 1384). A junmin xuanwei shishi, sometimes abbreviated to xuanwei shi, had a higher status than the mere xuanwei shisi. It was established when a prefecture or a sub-prefecture, under civil administration, was abolished. Thus a junmin xuanwei shisi was an aboriginal commission which had jurisdiction over the military and civilian population under it.

⑨ Mingshi 314.8111; Taizu shilu 164.2538 (Hongwu 17, 8th moon, jiawu: Sept. 14, 1384). In Taizu shilu it is stated that Luchuan and Pingmian shared a common border. During the Yuan period two Routes (lu 路), namely Luchuan Route and Pingmian Route, were established to rule the indigenous tribes. Owing to the fact that Si Lunfa had sent envoys and paid tribute, the Ming court entrusted him to rule Luchuan as well.

⑩ See Mingshi jisith bennmo 30.1.
him, for the Ming court had taken some smaller tribal principalities, previously under the control of his clan, to establish new aboriginal commissions and had appointed his subordinates to be the heads of these aboriginal commissions. Thus in January 1386 (Hongwu 18, 12th moon) Si Lunfa led his people to invade Jingdong prefecture, causing the native Prefect (zhifu 知府), Etao 俄陶, to flee to Baiyai chuan 白崖川. The Commissioner-in-chief (dudu 都督), Feng Cheng 馮誠, was appointed to command a division of soldiers to suppress the tribal revolt but was defeated, apparently due to unfavorable weather and heavy fog. According to the official record, in this armed conflict the Ming lost a Chilarch (qianhu 千戶), Wang Sheng 王昇, but apart from this amazingly no other deaths were reported. Following this humiliation and the report of the Censor (yushi 御史), Li Yuanming 李原名, made after his return from Pingmian, in which he said that the natives were cunning and that not a word of theirs could be trusted, in May 1387 the emperor sent an imperial despatch to the Marquis of Xiping, Mu Ying, ordering him to impose a strict prohibition against travel to Pingmian. In February 1388 (Hongwu 21, 1st moon), when Silunfa incited several tribal heads to join forces with him to invade the stockade, Moshale zhai 摩沙勒寨, which was subordinate to the Malong talang dian Chieftain Commission 馬龍他郎甸長官司 (in Xinhua Sub-prefecture 新化州), Mu

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11 According to Tianxia jinguo libing shu 31.61, during the Ming period a total of seven xuanwei si was established in Yunnan and among them Luchuan was the most powerful and important. During the Zhengtong period, when Si Renfa revolted, Luchuan was demoted to xuanfu si and renamed Longchuan. According to the record in Ming Tongjian, at the close of the Hongwu reign (1368–98) when the Ming court helped to restore Si Lunfa, ousted by his subordinate, back to his post of xuanwei shi (Pacification Commissioner) the land, formerly under his control, was partitioned into Mengyang prefecture, Mubang prefecture and Mengding prefecture which were subordinate to Yunnan province. Furthermore, four Chieftain Commissions, namely Lujiang, Ganai, Dahou, and Wandian, were established and placed under Jinchci Guard (see below note 24). During the Yongle reign Mengyang and Mubang were both promoted to xuanwei si (Pacification Commissioner). See Ming Tongjian 22.907 (Zhengtong 3, 6th moon, guiyou). Si Lunfa was ousted by Daoganneng in October 1397 (see below notes 18–20). According to Ming Tongjian, Mengyang (in Upper Burma, west of Luchuan), Mubang (in eastern Burma, south of Luchuan) and Mengding (in modern Gengma Daizu Wuzu Autonomous County in Yunnan, south-east of Luchuan) were under the chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian before he was ousted. Thus the dissatisfaction was clear and the seeds of the latter revolt were sown.

12 Feng Cheng, the son of Feng Guoyong, was promoted to the Left Commissioner-in-chief of the Right Army (youjun zuo dudu 右軍左都督) for the military merits gained in Yunnan. See Mingshi 129.3795–99. Feng Guoyong or Feng Sheng (ca. 1330–Feb. 22, 1395), see DMB 1.453–55. Mingshi 3.42; Mingshi 314.8111–12; Guoque 8.660; Taizu shilu 176.2673 (Hongwu 18, 12th moon, guichou: Jan. 26, 1386).

13 Mingshi 314.8112; Guoque 8.670; Taizu shilu 182.2739 (Hongwu 20, 5th moon, gengshen: May 28, 1387).
Ying sent the Commissioner-in-chief, Ning Zheng 宁正 (d. 1396), to re-capture the stronghold. It is reported that the imperial troops defeated them and cut off more than 1,500 heads. An angry Si Lunfa mobilized a force of 300,000 tribal men, strengthened by more than 100 elephants, to challenge the Ming authority by invading Dingbian county 定边县 (in Chuxiong Prefecture 楚雄府). Most of the tribal chieftains and peoples in south-western Yunnan province joined forces with Si Lunfa, and Mu Ying had to mobilize 30,000 men from other places before marching to rescue Dingbian. With the help of firearms (huochong 火铳) and the “supernatural arrows” (crossbows?) called shenji jian 神机箭, the Ming troops managed to suppress the revolt. It is reported that Mu Ying’s troops chopped off 30,000 heads and captured 10,000 surrendered tribal soldiers. After this strong armed intervention, apart from small episodes, temporary peace was achieved and the Mau-Shan Chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian sent regular tribute missions to the Ming capital. In October 1397 when Si Lunfa was ousted by his subordinate, Dao Ganmeng 刀幹孟, the former fled to Yunnan prefecture 雲南府 (Kunming city 昆明) to lodge a complaint and Mu Chun 沐春 (d. October 1398), the Marquis of Xiping, who was the incumbent Regional Commander of Yunnan, escorted him to Nanjing. The Ming court gave him asylum and promised to help him. Consequently, two months later, in December 1397, an imperial decree was issued to nominate Mu Chun to be the Commander-in-chief and He Fu 何福 (d. September 1410) and Xu Kai 徐凱 were to be his assistants. They led a punitive army, mobilized from the Weisuo Garrisons 衛所 under Sichuan Regional Military Commission 四川都指揮使司, Guizhou 貴州 Regional Military Commission and Yunnan Regional Military Commission, to suppress Dao Ganmeng and defeat the usurper. Subsequently, in January 1398 Si Lunfa

14 Ning Zheng, see Mingshi 134.3905-06. Malong talang dian Chieftain Commission, transformed into Xinhua sub-prefecture in 1495, in modern Xiping 新平, Eshan Yizu Autonomous County 僜山彝族自治县, south-west of modern Kunming city.

15 Mingshi 3.45; Mingshi 314.8112; Guoque 9.680; Taizu shilu 188.2812-13 (Hongwu 21, 1st moon, xinsi: Feb. 13, 1388). See also the biography of Mu Ying in Mingshi 126.3758. However in Tianxia junguo libing shu 31.4 it is stated that in Hongwu 21 when the head of the baizi 百夷 (Mau-Shan), Si Lunfa, revolted the Marquis of Xiping, Mu Ying, sent the Commissioner-in-chief, Feng Cheng, to lead an army against the rebels and the bandits faced a great defeat. Compare with above note 11.

16 On the Ming firearms and weapons, see Mingshi 92.2263-66.

17 Mingshi 314.8112; Guoque 9.683; Taizu shilu 189.2858-61 (Hongwu 21, 3rd moon, jiachen: May 6, 1388).

18 See Mingshi 3.54; Mingshi 314.8113; Taizu shilu 255.3679 (Hongwu 30, 9th moon, wuchen: Oct. 10, 1397); see also Tianxia junguo libing shu 32.5. According to official sources it is said that a Buddhist monk from Yunnan succeeded in converting Si Lunfa to Buddhism. As Si Lunfa placed the monk above the rank of other tribal heads of Luchuan-Pingmian, Dao Ganmeng was angry and ousted Si Lunfa.

19 Taizu shilu 255.3688 (Hongwu 30, 11th moon, guiyou: Dec. 14, 1397); see also Mingshi 4.60 and Mingshi 126.3760. According to Mingshi the Ming troops, under the command of
was escorted back to Luchuan-Pingmian, where he died not long after, probably in 1399 (Jianwen 1).  

Si Xingfa思行發 succeeded his father to the post of Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan-Pingmian during the Jianwen reign (1399–1402), a time when the Ming court was preoccupied with the internal crisis. In February 1403 (Yongle 1, 1st moon), not long after Zhu Di朱棣 (1360–1424) was enthroned, on advice of the Regional Commander (zong bingguan總兵官) of Yunnan, Mu Sheng沐晟 (1368–May 2, 1439), the land under Luchuan-Pingmian was partitioned and five new Chieftain Commissions (zhangguan si長官司), namely Zheledian者樂甸, Dahou大侯 (modern Yunxian雲縣), Ganyai卦崖, Wandian彎甸 (or Xidian細甸), and Lujiang潞江 (modern Yongchang永昌), were established and placed under the direct command of the Yunnan Regional Military Commission. The policy of the Ming court on this south-west corner of the Ming empire and border zone was to divide larger tribal principalities into smaller

Mu Chun, escorted Si Renfa to Jinchí, a Garrison town in the north-east of Luchuan-Pingmian, and ordered Dao Gangmeng to come to welcome the rightful chieftain back. As there was no reply He Fu and Qu Neng霍能 commanded 5,000 soldiers, crossed the Gaolinggong mountain and killed Dao Mingmeng刀名孟, a headman under Dao Gangmeng, at Nanlan. Later, with the reinforcement of 500 cavalry troops under Mu Chun, they crossed Nujiang (Upper Salween) at night, reaching the opposite bank in the morning to attack the tribal stockades and overwhelm them. It is reported that a total of 70,000 tribal men surrendered and Dao Gangmeng begged for capitulation but was refused. The emperor ordered Mu Chun, the eldest son of Mu Ying, to command the troops, mobilized from Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan, to destroy the rebels. Before the campaign was launched Mu Chun passed away at the age of 36 sui. In fact Mu Chun was killed in the combat against Dao Gammeng on October 12, 1398 (Hongwu 31, 9th moon, jihi). After his death the imperial troops were placed under the command of He Fu who finally removed the usurper Du zhihui shi, abbreviated to dusi, is translated into Regional Military Commission. There were a total of 21 Regional Military Commissions established within the Ming domain under which were the Weisuo Garrisons and Aboriginal Commissions (tusi).

20 See Taizu shilu 255.3691 (Hongwu 30, 12th moon, yisi: Jan. 15, 1398).

21 Si Xingfa (identified from Mau-Shan source as Chau-Tit-Pha or Tau-Lwei, the son of Taipeng) was the second Pacification Commissioner (II. ca. 1400–1413) who ruled Luchuan-Pingmian 13 years before he „abdicated“ in favour of his younger brother, Si Renfa. See below note 26. During the Jianwen reign there was a civil war going on and the Prince of Yan finally destroyed his nephew, Jianwen, and was enthroned as the Yongle Emperor.

22 Zhu Di or Emperor Yongle, 3rd Ming emperor and the co-founder of the Ming dynasty, was the fourth son of Zhu Yuanzhang. See DMB II 355–365.

23 Mu Sheng, second son of Mu Ying, inherited the title of Marquis in 1399 and became the Regional Commander and Grand Defender of Yunnan. He committed suicide in 1439, see below, note 47. His biography is given in Mingshi 126.3760–61.

24 See Taizong shilu 16.295 (Yongle 1, 1st moon, yinwen: Feb. 8, 1403). Zheledian zhangguan si, see Mingshi 46.1195; Dahou zhangguan si, reorganized into a tribal sub-prefecture (yuyi zhou夷州) in 1428, see Mingshi 46.1191; Ganyai zhangguan si, see Mingshi 46.1193; Wandian zhangguan si, reorganized into a tribal sub-prefecture in 1405, see MS 46.1195; Lujiang zhangguan si, promoted to anfu si in 1418, see Mingshi 46.1189. Ref. to above note 11.
ones in order to rule by achieving a balance of power among the chieftains. This was certainly against the will of Si Xingfa and the seeds of the later revolt were sown.

In March 1403 the Ming court granted an exemption of the additional silver raised from Luchuan-Pingmian. Originally Si Lunfa had to pay the Ming court 6,900 taels (ca. 8,970 ounces) of silver per annum, known as chaifa yin 差發銀 or „money in lieu of labour“. This amount was later increased to 18,000 taels (ca. 23,400 ounces). The high taxes, in addition to the local products, paid as tribute by the local chieftains could be a reason for the tribal revolts as well.

Si Xingfa seemed to be a more submissive tribal satrap of Luchuan-Pingmian than his father; nevertheless, the Yongle Emperor 永樂 was an energetic and powerful monarch; the fame of the Ming empire had reached its apex during the Yongle reign (1403–1424). From the official records we know that Si Xingfa paid tribute to the Ming court almost every year during the early Yongle reign. However, in 1411 (Yongle 9, 7th moon) Si Xingfa offended the Ming court by not observing the ceremony due to an imperial envoy. It is reported that he failed to welcome the imperial envoys at the outskirts of Luchuan-Pingmian. Whether he did it deliberately to insult the imperial envoy or as a token of protest, we do not know. Probably because of this lack of respect, Si Xingfa was removed from the tribal office in early 1413 (Yongle 11, 1st moon). However, in the official history

25 Guoque 13.896; Taizong shilu 17.311 (Yongle 1, 2nd moon, dingmao: March 12, 1403). Both in Guoque and Taizong shilu it is stated that later it was further increased to 18,000 taels. Probably it means that the tax arrears amounted to 18,000 taels. See below note 32.

26 In May 1407, May 1408 and in July, 1409 Luchuan-Pingmian sent tribute missions to China. In return the Ming court delegated the palace eunuch, Yun Xian (visited Luchuan in 1409 and in 1433), to pay a visit to Si Xingfa, bringing him the imperial letter patent and presents. See Mingshi 314.8114; Taizong shilu 93.1235 (Yongle 7, 6th moon, bingchen: July 27, 1409). In August the same year Yun Xian reached Luchuan. See Taizong shilu 117.1489 (Yongle 9, 7th moon, xinj: Aug. 11, 1411). In the History of the Shan it is stated: „Tailung, after a reign of fifty years, was succeeded by his son Chau-Tit-Pha (Sining fa?), or Tau-Lwe, as he was also called, who appears to have carried on certain negotiations with the Chinese during the part of his reign, and in the 16th year of it (Rai-ngi 3 = 773, B.E. 1411 A.D.) to have gone on a visit to the governor of Yunnan. The Shan history indeed chronicles that he went to Mung-Kuye (Kunning?), the capital of Mithila (Yunnan?), to consult with the Emperor, and that during an interview with the latter, in which he was accompanied by his son Chau-Ngan-Pha (identified as Si Renfa in Chinese), he was given a cup of spirit to drink, which so completely intoxicated him that the Emperor, at the instigation of a Minister named Mau-ji, obtained from him his royal seal and thus rendered his country tributary. In Plek-si 5, or two years after this event (i.e. 1413), Chau-Tit-Pha returned to Mung-Mau (i.e. Mengmao) [...]. In the following year (i.e. 1414) Chau-Tit-Pha died and was succeeded by his son Chau-Ngan-Pha, [...]),. See Elias, 20–21. If the conversion of the Shan date by Elias is correct, the year 1411 corresponds to Yongle 9. If Tailung was Si Lunfa (died 1399), than Chau-Tit-Pha or Tau-Lwe should have been Si Xingfa who was removed from office in 1413 (Yongle 11) and succeeded by his younger brother of Si Renfa (see note 27). If Chau-Tit-Pha was in Yunnan the man he met could not have been the emperor himself but Mu Sheng (1368–May 2, 1439), the Grand Defender of Yunnan.
of the Ming court it is recorded that Si Xingfa abdicated in favour of his younger brother, Si Renfa 思任發 (Thonganbwa or Chau-Ngan-Pha, fl. 1400–1445 or January 1446), the third Mau-Shan chieftain of the Luchuan-Pingmian during the Ming epoch.27

The dissatisfaction of the third Mau-Shan chieftain with the Ming court and the conflicts with his neighbours grew from 1413 to 1435 (Yongle 11 to Xuande 10). During the 22 years the tribal kings of Mubang, Miandian and Luchuan-Pingmian repeatedly lodged complaints to the Ming court accusing that the other one had invaded his land. Apart from sending imperial envoys to persuade them not to encroach upon their neighbours lands, no military action was taken.28 In fact during the Yuan dynasty (1280–1368) and the early Hongwu reign (1368–1398) Mengyang, Mubang, Mengding 孟定, Lujiang, Ganjai, Dahou, and Wandi were all subordinate to the chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian.29 Therefore from Si Renfa’s point of view, he was only reclaiming the lost territory of the House of Si.

On February 7, 1435 Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮 (1427–1464), the Yingzong Emperor 英宗, was enthroned at the age of hardly 8 years.30 By this time Si Renfa had ruled Luchuan-Pingmian for 22 years and the Ming court had fought a losing war in Annan 安南 (modern North Vietnam), the Jiaozhi Commandery 交趾郡 of the Sui dynasty (518–618), which had been re-annexed by China in 1407 (Yongle 5) and relinquished again in 1427 (Xuande 2).31 Si Renfa saw the weakness of the Ming court and took advantage of it by petitioning in March 1436 for the exemption of 2,500 taels (ca. 3,250 ounces) of silver, the amount of tax ar-

27 Mingshi 314.8114; Guoque 15.1087; Tuizong shilu 136.1659 (Yongle 11, 1st moon, bingwu: Feb. 26, 1413). Si Renfa, the 3rd Mau-Shan chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian or Mengmian kingdom during the Ming period, was depicted in Ming official histories as a very recalcitrant chieftain. His biography is given in DMB II 1208–14. DMB gives his death year as 1445, which, according to this study is a mistake. In Ming Tongjian 22.907 (Zhenglong 3, 6th moon, guiyou) it is stated that during this time (1438) Si Lunfa had passed away and his son, Si Xingfa who succeeded him had also passed away. The second son, Si Renfa inherited the post of the Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan-Pingmian. According to the History of the Shans Si Renfa was Chau-Ngan-Pha, the son of Chau-Tit-Pha. See Elias, 9, 21ff. Concerning the death of Si Renfa there are several versions. Not only does the Mau-Shan version differ from the Chinese version, but also the various Chinese sources differ from one another. See below notes 84–86 and the sixth paragraph of this paper.

28 Mingshi 314.8115; Guoque 19.1282; Xuanzong shilu 133.350 (Xuande 1, 1st moon, jiyou: Feb. 21, 1426).

29 See above note 11 and note 24.

30 In September 1449 Yingzong Emperor, who reigned over Zhengtong (1436–1449) and Tianshun (1457–64) period, was taken hostage by the Oirat chieftain, Esen: DMB 1.289–94.

31 In Yongle 5, 5th moon, jiazi (June 16, 1407) Annan was pacified and on the 6th moon, guirui (July 5) the Jiaozhi province was established in Annan, see Mingshi 6.84. In Xuande 2, 10th moon, wuyin (Nov. 12, 1427) Jiaozhi was abandoned, see Mingshi 9.118. See also Cambridge History of China 7, 229–31.
ears accumulated during the previous 10 years, reasoning that Mubang had invaded his land and the population of Luchuan-Pingmian was small, and he could not pay the designated amount of taxes. The emperor granted his approval despite official objection.  

Not long after, in November 1437, the tribal Magistrate (zhizhou 知州) of Nandian sub-prefecture 南甸州 (north of Longchuan), Dao Gonghan 刀貢漢, sent a petition to the throne complaining that Si Renfa had invaded Luobusi zhuang 羅卜思莊 and 278 villages under his jurisdiction. He begged the Ming court to send an imperial official to persuade Si Renfa to return the annexed land to him. Therefore the emperor entrusted the Regional Commander of Yunnan, Mu Sheng, to make an investigation. On June 28, 1438 Mu Sheng’s memorial reached the throne in which it is stated that Si Renfa had repeatedly invaded Nandian, Ganyai, Tengchong 腾衝 (a Garrison town north of Luchuan-Pingmian and in the mountainous region of Gaoligong shan), Lujiang and Jinchí. At the same time that the emperor told Mu Sheng to seize an opportunity to arrest and kill the unruly chieftain, the Ming court dispatched an edict to warn him. On July 14, 1438 Mu Sheng again reported to the throne that Si Renfa appointed local chieftains of the neighbouring regions subordinate to him without asking for the approval of the Ming court and that some of these men joined forces with him to invade Jinchí. At this point the Ming court considered the rebellious character of Si Renfa incorrigible, and decided to restore China’s authority in the southwestern corner of the empire and an imperial edict was sent to the chieftain of Mubang, Han Menfa 罕門法, ordering him to help the Ming surround Si Renfa. Those who favoured sending troops probably had no idea that the southern military campaign launched to catch an unruly Mau-Shan chieftain and his eldest son would last over a decade, and would involve four punitive military campaigns. The first of these started in December 1438 and the fourth was forced to

32 Mingshi 314.8115; Yingzong shilu 15.282 (Zhengtong 1, 3rd moon, bingzi: March 27, 1436). In Yingzong shilu it is stated that the tribal principality of Luchuan-Pingmian had to pay the Ming court 500 taels of silver per annum as "money in lieu of labour", known as chaifa yin. From Xuande 1 (1426) to 7 (1432) only a total of 1,350 taels were paid and the amount of arrears was 2,150 taels. In Mingshi, it is given that 2,500 taels of chaifa yin owed by Luchuan-Pingmian was exempted. Compare with above note 25.

33 Mingshi 314.8116; Mingshi 315.8140; Yingzong shilu 35.683–84 (Zhengtong 2, 10th moon xinwei: Nov. 12, 1437).

34 See Guoque 24.1554; Yingzong shilu 43.832 (Zhengtong 3, 6th moon, jiwei: June 28, 1438).

35 See Mingshi 10.130; Guoque 24.1555; Yingzong shilu 43.844 (Zhengtong 3, 6th moon, yihai: July 14, 1438). In Mingshi 315.8140 it is stated that the tribal Magistrate of Nandian sub-prefecture, Dao Gonghan, reported to the throne that Si Renfa of Luchuan had occupied Lubusí zhuang and a total of 278 villages under his control. The editor of Mingshi commented that consequently the Luchuan campaign was launched.

36 See Mingshi 315.8145; Guoque 24.1555; Yingzong shilu 43.848 (Zhengtong 3, 6th moon, gengchen: July 19, 1438). On decision-making for the war against the chieftain of Luchuan-Pingmian, see Lo Jung-Pang, 60–62.
stop shortly before the Yingzong Emperor was taken hostage by the Oirat chief-tain, Yexian 也先 (Esen, died 1455) in September 1449.37

The details of the four southern campaigns are recorded in Mingshi, chapter 314, the corresponding chapter of Mingshi gao, and Mingshi jishi benmo, chapter 30. Many informative records are scattered in Ming shili, Guoque, Ming Tongqian (ca. 1870), the chapter on Yunnan in Tianxia jingguo libing shu, Dian-kao, and Nanzhao yeshi. Several memorials directly or indirectly dealing with the Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns are recorded in the Huangming jingshi wenbian. These are the memorials of Wang Ji 王驥, Liu Qiu 劉球 and Chen Jingzong 陳敬宗.38 A relatively good account on the Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns is given in the biography of Si Renfa in DMB II.1208–14 and a short account of these southern expeditions is also mentioned in Cambridge History of China, pp. 314–16. The genealogical record of the House of Si is to be found in the collected historical material on Yunnan, edited by Fang Guoyu.39 The following description of the four southern punitive military expeditions sent against Si Renfa and his son, Si Jifa, are based on data collected from these sources. The Mau-Shan sources from Introductory Sketch Of The History Of The Shans In Upper Burma and Western Yunnan by N. Elias serve to fill a few gaps of the Ming sources.

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37 On Esen, the son of Tuohuan or Toghon (d. 1439/40), see DMB I.416–20. On the Tumu débâcle, see Mingshi jishi benmo 32.13–18; Mote, 243–72; Cambridge History of China, 322–25. On emperor Yingzong, see above note 30.

38 These are the „Fu He Wenyuan shu“ and „Luchuan zou jie shu“ by Wang Ji, „Xiu sheng shishi shu“ and „Jian fa Luchuan shu“ by Liu Qiu and „Zeng da sima Wang gong zongdu nanzheng zoukai xu“ by Chen Jingzong. For He Wenyuan, Wang Ji and Liu Qiu, see below notes 54, 56, 60.

39 See Fang Guoyu, 477–481. The original genealogical record of the House of Si 思氏 is written in Dai language (or Thai), kept by the House of Han 罕氏, the chieftain of the Mengding Aboriginal Commission (located in the south-east of Luchuan). When Fang Guoyu visited the Han family in 1936, Han Dingguo 翰定圃 showed the author the genealogical record of the House of Si and translated it orally for the author who recorded it in Chinese word by word. The title of the book is called Mung-ma-tsie-lan-hin-si-ri-tsai, in Chinese Mengmao Si jia guan 猛卯思家官, which means the „Genealogical Record of the chieftain of the House of Si“. Fang Guoyu translates it into Luchuan Si shi pudie 黎川思氏譜牒 (The Genealogical Record of the House of Si). Mengmao, previously under Luchuan, was also known as Da Mengmao 大猛卯 (Greater Meng Mao). Prof. W. Franke draws my attention to this material. There are some discrepancies between the records of the Ming official history and the genealogical record of the House of Si. More on Luchuan-Pingmian readers are to refer to Gong Yin, 156–182. The author supplements the three chapters on the Aboriginal Commissions of Yunnan from Mingshi (chapters 313–315) with interesting material from other sources.
2. The First Southern Punitive Campaign

The first punitive military expedition was led by the Right Commissioner-in-Chief (you dudu 右都督), Fang Zheng 方政 (d. January 17, 1439), \textsuperscript{40} Assistant Commissioner-in-chief (dudu qianshi 都督僉事), Zhang Rong 張榮, \textsuperscript{41} and the Assistant Grand Defender concurrently the Right Commissioner-in-chief (xietong zhenshou you dudu 協同鎮守右都都), Mu Ang 沐昂 (d. July 26, 1445). \textsuperscript{42}

The imperial troops, mobilized from various Weisuo Garrisons, were divided into several contingents and taking different routes they proceeded to Yunnan. On December 8, 1438 (Zhengtong 3, 11th moon), when the troops led by Mu Sheng, Fang Zheng and Mu Ang, supervised by the palace eunuch, Cao Jixiang 曹吉祥 (d. August 10, 1461), \textsuperscript{43} reached Jinchí, a Garrison town on the eastern side of Lujiang River (modern Nujiang), they saw that Si Renfa had erected palisades along the river. Well aware of the impassable and perilous land west of Lujiang, the territory under the control of Si Renfa and his sons, Mu Sheng, the Regional Commander of Yunnan, attempted to reach a peaceful solution. He sent the Commander Che Lin 車琳 and others to persuade Si Renfa to surrender. The latter agreed and thus, to avoid a direct confrontation, Mu Sheng dropped the plan of crossing Lujiang. However, his subordinate Yang Ning 楊寧, a secretary from the Ministry of Justice, was doubtful that Si Renfa would give up so quickly. To avoid a possible blunder Mu Sheng assigned Yang Ning to supervise the transport of military provisions in Jinchí. Several times Mianjian 緬檢, a general of Si Renfa, challenged the Ming troops, exasperating Fang Zheng, the Right Commissioner-in-chief from the capital, who, grew impatient, wanted to build 60 boats to cross the river to teach the tribal troops a lesson. Mu Sheng stopped him. Seeing that his colleague from Yunnan had no real intention to fight with Si Renfa, Fang Zheng took his troops and, accompanied by his son Fang Ying 方瑛 (1415–

\textsuperscript{40} Fang Zheng, who also took part in the campaign to conquer Annam during the early Yongle reign, was posthumously conferred the title Earl of Weiyuan in Zhengtong 5, 8th moon (1440). See Mingshi 107.3219; DMB II.1210.

\textsuperscript{41} Zhang Rong's biography appears to be not available. He was appointed the assistant Commander in the 1st campaign against Si Renfa.

\textsuperscript{42} Mu Ang, the third son of Mu Ying, was a younger brother of Mu Sheng. See Mingshi 126.3762; DMB II.1082.

\textsuperscript{43} Cao Jixiang, an influential palace eunuch during the Zhengtong, Jingtai and early Tianshun reigns, was executed for his coup d'état against Emperor Zhu Qizhen. See Mingshi 304.7774–77; DMB II.1298–1299. Weisuo is the combined term for wei zhihui shishi and shouyu qianhu suo, translated into „Military Guard“ and „Independent Chilarchy Command“ respectively. According to the „Military Treatises“ of the Ming Dynastic History from around the year 1585, a total of 772 provincial Weisuo Garrisons were established at strategic locations of the Ming empire. Officially in a Military Guard there were 5,600 regular soldiers and in a Chilarchy Command 1,200. When there was a military operation soldiers from these Weisuo Garrisons under the nearby Regional Military Commissions were mobilized.
crossed the river at night without permission, defeated the enemy and pursued him as far as Luijiang, a town on the west bank of the river. At this time Si Renfa and his troops had retreated to a stockade, called Jinghan zhai 景罕寨 (in Yongchang prefecture 永昌府). One contingent of the troops led by Tang Qing 唐清 defeated the enemies and the Commander Gao Yuan 高遠 and his men continued to pursue their enemies as far as the mountain ranges of Gaoligong shan. According to official reports, in this operation the Ming troops beheaded a total of more than 3,000 tribal soldiers.

After the initial victory, Fang Zheng and his army continued to pursue the enemy deep into Si Renfa’s territory. On January 17, 1439 (Zhengtong 4, 1st moon), when Fang Zheng attacked Si Renfa’s old stockade (probably in Pingmian, modern Longchuan) the latter retreated further into his territory to lure the imperial troops to follow him. As Fang Zheng thought that he could defeat Mianjian, and did not want to miss the chance to seize the chieftain for the Ming court, a coveted merit, he led his troops to pursue the Mau-Shan chieftain as far as his home base, Shangjiang 上江 (probably in Luchuan, modern Ruili) in the southwest corner of Yunnan province. By this time Fang Zheng’s troops were exhausted and his military provisions probably also cut off. He sent for reinforcement from the main camps on the eastern bank of Luijiang but it is said, Mu Sheng just sent a small number of soldiers to strengthen Fang Zheng for he was angry with his colleague for crossing the river without his order. Fang Zheng, realizing that Mu Sheng was not eager to come to rescue him, further pursued Si Renfa, to Kongni 空泥 and fell into an ambush of the elephant phalanx of his enemy. In this critical moment Fang Zheng told his 24-year-old son to escape, an advice he followed, leaving his father and the Ming troops to be destroyed. By the time the news of the débâcle reached Mu Sheng it was late spring and the hot summer was approaching, so he immediately dismantled his camps on the eastern bank of Luijiang and led his troops back to Yongchang (the Yongchang Garrison in modern Baoshan), then proceeded to Yunnan prefecture. On the way, arriving

44 Fang Ying, as a 23 years old sheren 舍人 (son or other male family member of hereditary military officer), followed his father in the first campaign to suppress Si Renfa. He was a capable military Commander famous for suppressing tribal revolts. It is reported that during his career as a Commander he had conquered almost 2,000 tribal stockaded villages in which over 40,000 Miao tribes were captured and killed. In 1454, for his military merit in pacifying the tribal revolt in Sichuan, he was conferred the title, Earl of Nanhe 南和伯, and was killed in a battle five years later at the age of 45 sui. See Mingshi 166.4486–88; DMB II.1105.

45 Mingshi 314.8116; Guoque 24.1561; Yingzong shilu 48.934 (Zhengtong 3, 11 moon, renyin: Dec. 8, 1438). See also Mingshi jishi benmo 30.1–2.

46 The details are recorded in Mingshi 10.130; Mingshi 314.8116; Guoque 24.1564 (Zhengtong 4, 1st moon, renwu: Jan. 17, 1439), and Mingshi jishi benmo 30.2, but not in Yingzong shilu 50 (Zhengtong 4, 1st moon). The probable reason is that the Ming court did not want to record the defeat of imperial troops by a Mau-Shan chieftain in their basic chronicles.
at Chuxiong prefecture (between modern Kunming city and Baoshan), Mu Sheng met the imperial envoy who reprimanded him for the defeat of Fang Zheng. Greatly upset, Mu Sheng then sent 45,000 men to reinforce the imperial troops, but on May 2, 1439 (Zhengtong 4, 3rd moon) he committed suicide by taking poison at the Elu yi 峨嵋驛, a postal relay station located 70 li (ca. 24 miles) from the West Gate of the fortifications of Chuxiong. It is said that Mu Sheng feared that the emperor would blame him for the defeat of the imperial troops which resulted in the death of the Right Commissioner-in-chief from the capital, but the reason was surely more complicated. As a Regional Commander and the Grand Defender of (zhenshou 鎮守) Yunnan, a hereditary post for the Mu clan, he probably could not take the insult of the imperial envoy who accused him wrongly and, feeling that he had lost face could not go back to his home in Yunnan prefecture.  

However, in the official obituary written for Mu Sheng recorded in Yingzong shilu it is stated:

In Zhengtong 3 when Si Renfa, the bandit of Luchuan, revolted [the court] ordered Mu Sheng to command the troops, [mobilized from the military] districts in Yunnan, Sichuan and Guizhou, to destroy him. [When the troops] arrived at Lujiang, [Mu Sheng] supervised the soldiers to construct boats. Under the cover [of the darkness] of the night they crossed the river to attack the bandits’ stockades and destroyed them; they pursued [the enemy] till Gaoligong shan, defeated several stockades [on the way] and chopped off 3,000 heads. Because of illness Mu Sheng retreated and died at Elu yi in Chuxiong.  

According to this official version, which obviously lacks foundation, it was Mu Sheng who crossed Lujiang at night to pursue the enemy, instead of Fang Zheng, and no mention is made of Mu Sheng ending his life by taking poison.

According to unofficial sources Si Renfa, the second son of the Mau-Shan king, grew up in the residence of the powerful Mu family in Yunnan prefecture

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47 In Mingshi 314.8116 it is stated that Mu Sheng feared the consequences of the crime and died suddenly. In Nanzhao yeshi II.59 (pp. 217–18) it is stated that Mu Sheng committed suicide by taking poison for he was afraid that he would receive death sentence for the defeat of his Commander-in-chief. In Guoque it is also stated that Mu Sheng committed suicide by taking poison. See Guoque 24.1568–69 (Zhengtong 4, 3rd moon, dingmao: May 2, 1439), the comments of Tian Rucheng 田汝成, Tan Qian and Zhang Zhichun 張志淳 on the defeat of Fang Zheng and the death of Mu Sheng. In Tianxia junguo lubing shu 32.26 it is stated that in Zhengtong 4 Mu Sheng and Fang Zheng were sent to suppress the unrest in Luchuan. The whole imperial troop was destroyed by Si Renfa and Fang Zheng was killed. The people were very sad and Mu Sheng took his own life by taking poison. The court officials petitioned to relinquish Luchuan but this was not reported to the throne. The petition was probably intercepted by the palace eunuch in power, Wang Zhen.

48 See Yingzong shilu 53.1025–26 (Zhengtong 4, 3rd moon, dingmao: May 2, 1439).
and Mu Sheng had no serious intention to suppress his childhood friend. However, Tan Qian, the author of *Guoque*, commented that Mu Sheng was the Grand Defender of Yunnan and the court should not have sent Fang Zheng, Zhang Rong, and the two palace eunuchs, Wu Cheng 呉誠 and Cao Jixiang, to Yunnan to suppress Si Renfa, thus interfering with his authority. The Mu family would have known the tribal affairs and their complicated mutual relationships in Yunnan and Burma better than any Commanders and eunuchs from the central court.

After the first defeat of the imperial troops, Si Renfa became even bolder, and marched his troops across Lujiang to invade the prefectures located in the southeast of Luchuan-Pingmian, such as Jingdong and Mengding. While he captured Dahou sub-prefecture he killed the Magistrate, Dao Fenghan 刀奉漢, and then proceeded southwards to plunder Menglai 孟賴 and Menglian 孟璽. At the same time he sent envoys to present horses and elephants, gold and silver to the Ming troops with a letter to the Regional Commander of Yunnan asking for imperial pardon. The emperor agreed to forgive him but at the same time was planning another punitive campaign.

A month after the death of Mu Sheng, in June 1439 (Zhengtong 4, 5th moon), his younger brother, Mu Ang, succeeded him to the post of Regional Commander and Grand Defender of Yunnan. In December 1440 (Zhengtong 5, 11th moon), Mu Ang submitted a petition requesting at least 120,000 men for the southern campaign to pacify Luchuan-Pingmian, arguing that the land was remote and dangerous, but currently the strength of his troops was just over 46,000 men. He suggested the mobilization of the Garrison troops under the three Regional Military Commissions, Huguang, Sichuan, and Guizhou, for the second expedition, to be divided into three divisions, each commanded by capable Commanders. One division was to take the route to Wandian, one to Mangshi 慘市 (in modern Luxi 勐西, east of Longchuan) and one to Tengchong. The imperial forces after reaching the three bases, close to Luchuan-Pingmian, were to attack Si Renfa and his men from different directions simultaneously. However, the old Duke of Ying-

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49 See *Guoque* 24.1564 (Zhengtong 4, 1st moon, *renwu*: Jan. 17, 1439). In *Ming Tongjian* 22.911 (Zhengtong 4, 1st moon, *renwu*) it is stated that the original name of Si Renfa was Si Ren 思任. Before he inherited the post of Pacification Commissioner of Luchuan-Pingmian he was subordinate to the Pacification Commissioner of Mengyang, Dao Binyu 刀賓玉 (probably he was Dao Yubin 刀玉賓), who sent Si Ren to the Duke of Qianguo, Mu Sheng. Thus Si Ren was brought up by the prominent Mu clan, the Grand Defender of Yunnan (Mithila), who lived in Yunnan prefecture (Kunming or Mung-Kyei). This information is not recorded in *Yingzong shilu* 50.959.


51 *Mingshi* 314.8117; *Mingshi jishi benmo* 30.2; *Yingzong shilu* 72.1396 (Zhengtong 5, 10th moon, *guxi*: Nov. 8, 1440); *Yingzong shilu* 72.1398-99; *Guoque* 24.1595 (Zhengtong 5, 10th moon *bingxu*: Nov. 11, 1440).
guo, Zhang Fu 英國公張輔 (1375–Sept 1, 1449),\textsuperscript{52} was against the plan, arguing that a divided force would be weaker and more isolated. He suggested appointing a high official to be the Regional Commander, solely in charge of the military operation. In spite of the advice of Mu Ang who was more familiar with the tribal affairs in Yunnan the Ming court gave the order to implement Zhang Fu's proposal.\textsuperscript{53}

However, on February 7, 1441 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon) the Vice Minister of Justice, He Wenyuan 何文淵 (d. May 7, 1459), submitted a petition to the throne persuading the court to revoke the order for it was not worth the trouble of sending troops to capture its chieftain, Si Renfa. In the memorial, recorded in Yingzong shilu, he put forward this argument:

Luchuan-Pingmian, located in the southernmost corner of the empire, is just a tiny bullet (a small land). Its territory covers merely a couple of hundreds [square] li (100 li = ca. 33 miles), with a population of not much over 10,000 people. There is no problem for our large troops to conquer it. However, the land we procure is not inhabitable for us (too hot), the people we capture are of no use [to us either] (do not know Chinese culture).\textsuperscript{54}

籦川之在南陲。彈丸耳，彌里不過數百。人民不滿萬餘，大軍易克，然得其地不可居，得其民不可使。

The Grand Secretary (da xueshi 大學士), Yang Shiqi 楊士奇 (1365–April 2, 1444), agreed with He Wenyuan;\textsuperscript{55} however, the party advocating war, led by the old Minister of War (bingbu shangshu 兵部尚書), Wang Ji 王騫 (1378–May 30, 1460),\textsuperscript{56} and the old Duke of Yingguo, Zhang Fu, maintained that over the 60 years the father and sons had been ruling Luchuan-Pingmian they had repeatedly rebelled against the Ming authority. If Si Renfa were not arrested and executed, the tribal chieftains of Mubang, Cheli 車里 or 徹里 (in modern Jinghong 景洪 on the border of Burma), Babai dadian 八百大甸 (Lan Na kingdom in North Thailand), and Miandian be tempted to follow his example. It would not be a

\textsuperscript{52} Zhang Fu was later killed during the Tumu débâcle when the Yingzong Emperor was taken hostage by the Oirat chieftain, Esen. See DMB I.64–67; Mingshi 154.4219–25.

\textsuperscript{53} Guoque 24.1599; Yingzong shilu 73.1426 (Zhengtong 5, 11th moon, dingmao: Dec. 22, 1440).

\textsuperscript{54} See Yingzong shilu 75.1459 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon, jiaxin: Feb. 7, 1441); Mingshi jishi benmo 30.3. He Wenyuan, a jinshi of 1418, was the father of He Qiaoxin 何喬新. See Mingshi 183.4851–52; DMB I.505.

\textsuperscript{55} Mingshi jishi benmo 30.3. Yang Shiqi, a Grand Secretary from 1421–1444, see MS 148.4131–38; DMB II.1535–38.

\textsuperscript{56} Wang Ji, a jinshi of 1406, is described in Mingshi as tall and big, good at riding and shooting. See Mingshi 171.4555–60; DMB II.1349–51. Not all historians agree as to the three successive campaigns (2nd, 3rd, and 4th) which Wang Ji carried out in the years from 1441 to 1449 in western Yunnan and Upper Burma against Si Renfa and his son. Wang Ji was 63 years old when the second campaign was launched.
good strategy for the court to show weakness to a chieftain of a small tribal principality. Hence, the young Yingzong Emperor agreed to launch the second campaign.

3. The Second Southern Punitve Campaign

The second punitive military expedition was led by the Earl of Dingxi 定西侯, Jiang Gui 蒋胄 (1380–Feb. 13, 1449), the Vice Commissioner-in-chief (chudu tongzhi 都督同知), Li An 李安, the Assistant Commissioner-in-chief (chudu qianshi 都督僉事), Liu Ju 劉聚, and the Minister of War, Wang Ji.

On February 8, 1441 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon) while Jiang Gui was nominated the Commander-in-chief of the Operation for Pacifying the Southern Barbarian (pingman jiangjun 平蠻將軍), Li An and Liu Ju were appointed his first and second assistants; the Minister of War, Wang Ji, was appointed the Supreme Commander of Military Affairs (zongdu junwu 總督軍務) to superintend the southern punitive campaign. An imperial order was given to mobilize a total of 150,000 soldiers from the Weisuo Garrisons under the Regional Military Commissions of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Huguang as well as from Capital Guards in Nanjing for the operation against Si Renfa. However, three days after the appointment of the Commander-in-chief, Liu Qiu 劉球 (1392–1443), the Academician Expositor-in-waiting of the Hanlin Academy (Hanlin yuan shijiang 翰林院侍講), presented a memorial trying to stop the second campaign. Liu pointed out to the court that Si Renfa and the remnants of the bandits were already hiding in the southern frontier zone. He wrote:

Now that the remnants of the bandits are seeking refuge in the southern-most frontier [zone], to destroy them would not show our military power, to let them run free would not be an act of cowardice. For what purpose is another decision made to mobilize a large troops and station 120,000 soldiers in Yunnan to urge them to surrender. 

今麓川殘寇避居南徼, 譎之不為武, 釋之不為怯, 奈何復議大舉, 欲鎮十二萬兵於雲南, 以急其降。

57 Mingshi 314.8117; Mingshi jishi benmo 30.3; Guoque 25.1602–03; Yingzong shilu 75.1459–61 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon, jiaiyin: Feb. 7, 1441).
58 Jiang Gui, a subordinate to Yanshan Guard 燕山衛 who rose to become a Commander-in-chief, was an illiterate man but very capable. See Mingshi 107.3211–12, Mingshi 155.4258–59, DMB I.290.
59 Mingshi 10.132; Mingshi 314.8117; Guoque 25.1603; Yingzong shilu 75.1463–64 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon, yima: Feb. 8, 1441).
60 Liu Qiu, a jinshi of 1421, who strongly opposed the Luchuan-Pingmian campaigns, was assassinated by Ma Shun 馬順 in the Prison of the Embroidered-uniform Guard. He pointed out that during the successive wars 70% to 80% of the soldiers were killed. See Mingshi 162.4402–06, DMB II.1348.
61 See Guoque 25.1604; Yingzong shilu 75.1468 (Zhengtong 6, 1st moon, wumu: Feb. 11, 1441); Liu Qiu, „Jian fa Luchuan shu“, HMJSWB 4.94, mentioned in Mingshi 314.8117.
In an excerpt of Liu Qiu’s memorial, recorded in *Mingshi jishi benmo*, he argued further:

Luchuan is located in wild and remote corner [of the empire]. Whether they rebel or submit is of no importance to China. [The northern barbarians, such as] Tuohuan (Toghon) and [his son], Yexian (Esen), currently annexing various tribes and invading the northern frontier zones, [are more dangerous than the southern chieftains.] but those decision makers are ignoring the wolves to attack the dogs and pigs; relinquishing [the land] just lying in front of one’s doorstep to seek for the [land] in the remote frontier. This is not a good policy. I beg to stop sending troops to Luchuan and concentrate [our forces] in the north-west [frontier regions].

Nevertheless, the court ignored the memorial of Liu Qiu, it was believed because the infamous palace eunuch, Wang Zhen 王振 (d. Sept. 1, 1449) who was in power, favoured a military solution to put down the tribal unrest. Liu Qiu’s prudence proved to be correct, for eight years later the imperial troops led by the Yingzong Emperor were defeated by Esen in the North, at *Tumu* fortress 土木堡.

The second adventurous military campaign was officially launched on February 27, 1441 and the Ming court decided to reinforce the imperial forces with tribal troops from around Luchuan-Pingmian. Thus four days later, an imperial order was directed to the chieftains of Mubang, Miandian, Cheli, and Babai dadian as well as the tribal officials of Weiyuan 威遠 (modern Jinggu 景谷), Dahou, and Shidian 施甸 (modern Shidian), telling them to mobilize their troops to surround Si Renfa, and military credentials and tallies were issued to them for this purpose.

The mobilization of troops and preparation took some time and the first good news came three months later. In the memorial of Mu Ang, recorded on June 1, 1441, he reported to the throne the victory gained. He told the court that earlier they sent Li Fu 李福, the Assistant Regional Commander, to lead a troop of 8,000 men to attack Luchuan-Pingmian and they destroyed 12 stockades of the bandit forces and chopped off 150 heads. Mu Ang asked for permission to postpone the campaign till autumn for the summer of Yunnan was too hot to fight and

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62 This is probably another memorial submitted by Liu Qiu, see *Mingshi jishi benmo* 30.3. Tuohuan and Yexian were two powerful Oirat chieftains. See above note 37.

63 Wang Zhen, a native of Yuzhou 襄州, was killed by the Mongols at *Tumu* fortress, near Huailai 畑來 when Emperor Yingzong was taken hostage by Esen. He, a strong advocate for the Luchuan-Pingmian campaign, was depicted in official histories as a notorious palace eunuch. DMB II.1347–49; *Mingshi* 304.7772–74.

64 *Yingzong shilu* 76.1484–85. (Zhengtong 6, 2nd moon, jiaxu; Feb. 27, 1441).

65 *Guoque* 25.1605; *Yingzong shilu* 76.1488 (Zhengtong 6, 2nd moon, wuyin; March 3, 1441).
this was approved. How far the official report is close to the truth is difficult for us to verify but one can imagine that a troop of 8,000 men could certainly behead more than 150 men in such a confrontation. The casualties of the Ming troops were not mentioned.

Three months later in the memorial of Hou Jin 侯縉 (d. 1450), the Vice Minister of War, recorded on September 12, 1441 (Zhengtong 6, 8th moon), we learn that Si Renfa had sent his subordinates, Dao Lingdao 刀伶道 and 11 other tribal headmen to lead a force of 30,000 men, strengthened by 80 elephants, to Dahou sub-prefecture, planning to attack Jingdong and Weiyuan. The Chinese then sent Hou Jin, Ma Xiang 馬驤 and Lu Yue 盧鉉 to command a division of the imperial troops to meet Dao Lingdao and using firearms and arrows they defeated the tribal troops, killing 352 of them and taking many tents, guns and cannons.

Eight months had passed and as the imperial troops still had not defeated the main force of Si Renfa, Wang Ji proposed to divide the imperial troops into two divisions to besiege Luchuan-Pingmian from the front and rear, a plan which was approved on October 27, 1441. Thus the Right Assistant Regional Commander (canjiang 参將), Ran Bao 冉保, was assigned the mission to lead one division and taking the eastern route to recapture the tribal stockaded villages in Xidian and Wandian, then march to Zhenkang 鎮康 and Mengding where he was to assemble the tribal troops from Mubang and Cheli with the intention to encircle Si Renfa. Wang Ji and the Regional Commander, Jiang Gui, were to take the central route to Shangjiang, the base of Si Renfa, but they were to wait at Tengchong for the troops of Ran Bao and others before marching south to launch a joint attack. A fortnight later, on November 14, the imperial forces with a strength of 20,000 men, led by Wang Ji and Jiang Gui, reached Shangjiang from the central route. However, on November 18, on crossing the river (probably Longchuan river or Luchuan river 長川江) they fell into an ambush set by Si Renfa. After a hard fight it is reported that the troops under the command of Wang Ji and Jiang Gui managed to chop off over 1,000 tribal heads, forcing the rest of Si Renfa’s men to retreat to their stronghold in Shangjiang where they were besieged by Wang Ji’s troops. On the next day (November 19) the troops led by Cao Jixiang, a palace eunuch, and Gong Ju 宫聚, the Left Assistant Regional Commander, arrived to reinforce Wang Ji. Three days later, when the troops commanded by the palace eunuch Xiao Bao 順保 and Gong Ju, arrived from Xiajiang 下江 and Jiaxiangshi 夾象石, the combined Ming forces attacked Si Renfa’s

66 Guoque 25.1609; Yingzong shilu 79.1562-63 (Zhengtong 6, 5th moon, wushe: June 1, 1441).
67 Guoque 25.1615; Yingzong shilu 82.1653 (Zhengtong 6, 8th moon, xinmao: Sept. 12, 1441).
68 Mingshi 314.8116; Guoque 25.1616, Yingzong shilu 84.1673 (Zhengtong 6, 10th moon, bingzi: Oct. 27, 1441).
69 Guoque 25.1617.
bastion simultaneously. In this armed confrontation bullets, arrows and stones were flying as dense as rain drops. Incidentally, on that day (November 22) there was a strong wind from the south and so the Chinese troops set fire to Si Renfa’s stronghold, which was made of palisades. The fire is said to have lasted a day and a night. In this critical moment Si Renfa’s men tried to escape through a water-gate but were attacked by the Ming troops. According to the report of the Ming chronicle the tribal chiefs or the ‘‘bandit generals’’ who joined forces with Si Renfa, such as General Dao Fangjia 刀放戛 and his son were killed in combat, General Dao Zhaohan 刀招漢 and his elder son, after killing their wives and younger sons and setting fire to their houses killing the rest of the family members, fled, and General Dao Mengxiang 刀孟項 (or 刀門項) was taken prisoner. As reported during this battle Si Renfa lost a total of 50,000 men and only just over a thousand of them, including Si Renfa, managed to flee. Hence, the Ming court considered that the tribal stockade of Shangjiang was pacified.70

After the victory in Shangjiang, on December 17, 1441, the imperial troops led by Wang Ji marched to Jiaxiangshi, crossed Xiajiang, and through the Gaoligong mountain reached Tengchong. The Left Vice Regional Commander (zuofu zongbing 左副總兵), Li An, was ordered to station in Tengchong while Wang Ji and other Commanders took the way via Nandian to Luobusi zhuang. The front army (vanguard), made up of 8,000 men and led by the Guard Commander (zhihui 指揮), Jiang Hong 江洪, marched to Mulong shan 木籠山 (Hotha?). The fortifications of Si Renfa were built on top of a high hill (probably Mulong shan). The tribal troops, an armed force of over 20,000 men, were divided into seven contingents and deployed around. Wang Ji assigned Gong Ju and Liu Ju to command the left and right wings of the imperial armies to climb up the hill to attack Si Renfa, while he himself led the central army to attack from the flank. It is reported that the imperial troops beheaded several hundreds men and the enemies were defeated. After this victory the Ming troops marched to Ma’an shan 马鞍山 (in the north of Longchuan) to destroy Si Renfa’s troops and elephant phalanxes. In this onslaught the Chinese claimed that the casualties of the enemy amounted to several ten thousands and the news shocked the people of Luchuan.71

In January 1442 Wang Ji marched straight to the main base of Si Renfa which was located on a high cliff with two sides facing the river and was strengthened by 30 li (ca. 10 miles) of palisades, surrounded by a moat. While the Chinese sent

70 Mingshi 314.8117; Mingshi jishi benmo 30.3. For more details, see Wang Ji’s report to the throne, recorded in Yingzong shilu 86.1726–27 (Zhengtong 6, 11 moon+, xinishe: Dec. 31, 1441; see also Gwoke 25.1618–19.

71 In Mingshi 314.8117–18 it is given Zhengtong 7 (1442); in Mingshi jishi benmo 30.3–4 it is Zhengtong 6, 11th moon; see Gwoke 25.1618–19 (Zhengtong 6, 11th moon+, dingmiao. Dec. 17, 1441). It is not recorded in Yingzong shilu. Ma’an shan is situated in the north of the fortifications of Pinglu (平麓城, also known as Mengmao cheng 猛卯城) where the Longchuan xuanfu si was located. See Mingshi 46.1194.
3,000 men to reconnoitre the surroundings of the main base, the elephant phalanx of Si Renfa launched an ambush from the muddy trenches, but they were defeated by the Ming troops. Si Renfa then sent a contingent, taking a short cut from Moni zhai 摩尼寨 in Yongmao 永毛 to Ma’an shan, where they reached the rear guard of the combined Chinese forces. Wang Ji then sent Fang Ying, now promoted to the Regional Military Commissioner (du zhihui 都指揮), to lead 6,000 men to attack the stockade of Si Renfa. At this time the division under the command of the Left Assistant Regional Commander, Ran Bao, leading the combined tribal soldiers mobilized from Mubang, Cheli and Dahou, had arrived from the eastern route to reinforce the imperial troops. It is reported that during the battle at the base of Si Renfa over 2,390 enemies were beheaded. The Ming Commanders-in-chief then assembled their troops to attack Luchuan from different directions. Firewood was gathered to burn down the tribal stockades and countless enemies were killed but Si Renfa, his two sons, their wives and other family members escaped by a secret route, crossed the Irrawaddy and fled to Mengyang in Upper Burma. On the fall of the main stronghold of Luchuan-Ping- mian the Chinese recovered a total of 32 seals, including the seal of the Chilarchy Commander of the Tengchong Garrison, and other imperial credentials and letters patent collected by the recalcitrant Mau-Shan chieftain, Si Renfa, and his eldest son, Si Jifa. Thus the Ming court considered Luchuan-Pingmian pacified and ordered the imperial troops to withdraw. For the military merits gained Wang Ji and other Commanders received generous rewards. 

Si Renfa and his family sought refuge in Mengyang, the territory which had been ruled by his father during the Yuan period, but the Ming court was determined to destroy his power there as well so the tribal principality, Luchuan, was set as a reward. Imperial orders were given to persuade the chieftains of Mubang and Miandian to catch Si Renfa and to deliver him to the Ming Commanders in exchange for the land of Luchuan. In the "Monograph of Luchuan-Pingmian" it is not recorded how, but not long after, Si Renfa was arrested by the king of Ava-Burma, Bulalang-[Mahasheng-Yisula] 卜剌浪馬哈省以速刺 (Bhureng Narapati?). The Burmese king took him and his family as hostages and demand-

72 See Mingshi 314.8118; Mingshi jishi bunmo 30.4; Guoque 25.1620 (Zhengtong 6, early 12th month: Jan. 1442). The details of the battle are depicted in the memorial of Wang Ji and Jiang Gui, recorded in Yingzong shiulu 88.1774–76 (Zhengtong 7, 1st month, jichou: March 9, 1442). On January 26, 1442 after Wang Ji and Jiang Gui had pacified Luchuan they withdrew the troops from Yunnan. See Guoque 25.1620. According to Yingzong shiulu the 32 seals taken by Si Renfa were the official seals of Tengchong Chilarchy Command and seals from other local governmental offices.

73 According to Mingshi 315.8129–31 this represents the combined names of three Ava-Burmese chieftains who reigned from the Hongwu to the Jingtai period (1368–1456). The Ava-Burmese king, Bulalang (probably he was Swasawke, 1368–1401) was appointed the Pacification Commissioner of Central Burma (Mianzhong 續中) in 1394 (Hongwu 27). He was the father of Naluota 那羅塔 and Mazhesu 馬者速. Mahasheng and Yisula were the
ed land from the Ming court but the Chinese hesitated to keep their promise and so the king of Ava-Burma delayed in handing over his chief prisoner of war to the Ming authority.74

While Si Renfa was in the hands of Ava-Burma, his eldest son, Si Jifa, who had escaped from Luchuan, continued his activities in the south-west corner of Yunnan with his brothers. In early 1443 (Zhengtong 8, 1st moon, gengwu) he sent his younger brother, Zhaosai 招賽, accompanied by other headmen, to pay tribute to the Ming court and beg for pardon for his father and himself. However, at the same time he sent his men to attack Mangshi but they were defeated by the Ming troops. Finally they fled via Irrawaddy to Mengyang and so the Ming troops retained Zhaosai and other tribal envoys as hostages in Yunnan prefecture, before sending them to serve in the Embroidered-uniform Guard (Jinyi wei 錦衣衛) at the capital. As soon as Si Jifa saw that the imperial troops had withdrawn he recaptured Luchuan and made it his base to go against the Ming authority by invading the nearby petty tribal principalities previously under the control of his grandfather. Consequently another southern campaign was launched against Si Jifa.75

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two sons of Mangdela 莽得剌, appointed the Pacification Commissioner of Miandian in 1427 (Xuande 2). In 1447 (Zhengtong 12) the two brothers, Mahasheng and Yisula, were both appointed Pacification Commissioners of Burma. However, in Ming shilu, Guoque and other sections of Mingshi their names were often mixed up. The names, Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula, are combined and referred to as a single person but sometimes only part of the combined names is mentioned. As the rulers of Ava-Burma during this time changed rather frequently the Ming court was probably not aware of all the changes and might have confused their names. In this paper when Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula is referred to as a single person, the parts left out in the sources are indicated by [ ] Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula was probably a combined name of at least two kings of Ava, Minrekyawswa (r. 1440-43) and Thi-ha-thu or Bhureng Narapati (r. 1443-69). See DMB. II.1211. Geoff Wade, who has translated the collected material on Indochina from Ming shilu, points out to me that he feels that Ma-ha sheng-yi-su-la was a single person, probably the Burmese king, Maha Thi-hathura (1469-81), although the Burmese chronicles and the Chinese chronicles differ.

74 When Si Renfa fled to Mengmeng 孟蒙 he was again attacked by the chieftain of the Mubang Pacification Commission. The tribal troops of Mubang pursued him to Jinsha Jiang (Upper Irrawaddy). Si Renfa and his family crossed the river and fled to Mengguang 孟廣 (Mogaung?). The Pacification Commissioner of Miandian, Bulalang (Bhureng Narapati, the king of Ava-Burma) also sent troops to attack Si Renfa. The Emperor promised the chieftains of Mubang and Miandian that the one who could arrest Si Renfa and hand him over to the Ming court would be rewarded with the land of Luchuan. See Mingshi 314.8118 or Mingshi gao 188.27. According to the „Monograph of Burma“ in Mingshi gao Si Renfa was already caught and imprisoned in Ava by the Burmese in Zhengtong 8 (1443). See Mingshi gao 189.3 or Mingshi 315.8131. The sources is taken from the report of Wang Ji, recorded in Yingzong shilu 107.2172–73. (Zhengtong 8, 8th moon, dingchou: Sept. 8, 1443). However, according to the memorial of Mu Ang, Si Renfa sought refuge in Ava-Burma in 1442. See Yingzong shilu 94.1901 (Zhengtong 7, 7th moon, renwu: August 29, 1442).

75 Mingshi 314.8116; Mingshi 315.8140; Guoque 25.1639; Yingzong shilu 103.2017–18. (Zhengtong 8, 1st moon, gengwu: Feb. 13, 1443). Jinyi wei, translated into Embroidered-
4. The Third Southern Punitive Campaign and the death of Si Renfa

The third punitive military expedition was led by Wang Ji, then the Earl of Jing-yuan, and Jiang Gui, the Marquis of Dingxi. In March 1443 (Zhengtong 8, 2nd moon), the imperial troops under the command of Wang Ji and Jiang Gui reached Jinchi, not far away from the west bank of Lujiang, prompting Si Jifa to send his son, Aizhun, to the Ming troops to negotiate peace terms. As the court was determined to destroy Si Renfa and his son, the plea was ignored and Aizhun was to be delivered to the Ming capital, Beijing. Subsequently Wang Ji sent an envoy to the king of Ava-Burma telling the latter to deliver Si Renfa to the Ming authority. According to the official version recorded in the Chinese annals, though Bulalong-Mahasheng-[Yisula] promised that he would deliver his prisoner to the Ming authority, he was in fact unwilling to do so. Therefore Wang Ji led his troops to Tengchong to join the armed forces with Jiang Gui and Mu Ang. The combined imperial troops, then divided into five divisions, marched to meet the Burmese troops at an appointed place on the Irrawaddy. The chieftain of Mubang led over 10,000 men to the scene but they just stationed themselves by the river bank to watch the confrontation between the imperial troops and the Burmese soldiers. Wang Ji, realizing that the Burmese troops were strong and that it would be difficult for him to gain a victory, and, moreover, not wanting to have an extra enemy or lose face lest he should be defeated, just sent Jiang Gui to destroy a few hundred of the Burmese boats before retreating.

However, in Wang Ji’s report, presented to the throne in March 1444, the old Minister of War exaggerated the extent of his military operation on the Yunnan-Burma frontier zone. He said that the imperial troops with the help of Mubangs’ tribal troops marched to attack Burma and they gained successive victories. The Ava-Burmese insisted that the Chinese keep their promise and cede the land of Luchuan (or Mengmou in modern Ruili) to Mubang and the land Jiali or Xieli (Kale on Chindwin River, north of Kalawa), under the chieftain of Mengyang, to them before they would hand Si Renfa over. They actually brought Si Renfa to the boat so as to show him to the Chinese troops but then led him away later. Furthermore the Ava-Burmese deliberately told Wang Ji that they had made peace with Si Jifa. When the old Earl heard the news he quickly redirected his army and marched to Zhelan to attack the base of Si Jifa who again managed.

uniform Guard, was one of the 24 Superior Imperial Guards. Modern works on Jinya wei, see Wu Han 83-93, Ding Yi, Wei Qingyuan.

76 Yingzong shilu 108.2189 (Zhengtong 8, 9th moon, jiazi: Oct. 5, 1443); Yingzong shilu 109.2201 (Zhengtong 8, 10th moon, bingxu: Oct. 27, 1443).

77 Mingshi 314.8118; Mingshi jishi bemen 30.4. According to a memorial of Wang Ji, Mongol soldiers stationed in the capital Garrisons were enlisted to take part in the Luchuan campaign. See Yingzong shilu 101.2032 (Zhengtong 8, 2nd moon: wuzi: March 3, 1443).
to escape to Mengyang but left his family behind. Consequently Si Jifa’s wife, children and subordinates, a total of over 90 people, were taken as prisoners of war.\(^7\)

In May the old Earl, Wang Ji, escorted Si Jifa’s son, Han’gai 函蓋, and other prisoners of war to Beijing. The court decided to send Han’gai and four men to the Directorate of Imperial Horses (yuma jian 御馬監) to rear horses and 12 men were banished to outside the pass (probably Gubei kou 古北口, north of Beijing) to serve in frontier Garrisons as convict soldiers. Zhaoaisi, his mother and wife were retained in Yunnan as hostages. The tribal envoys (toumu 頭目), Dao Muli 刀木立 and others, were sent back to pacify the people of Luchuan-Pingmian and to help Gongxiang 欽項, also a tribal envoy of Luchuan, to track down Si Jifa and his father for China.\(^7\)

Finally in November 1444 the joint tribal principality of Luchuan-Pingmian was partitioned. A smaller Pacification Commission of second rank, designated Longchuan xuanfu si 隆川宣布司, was established in place of it and a former subordinate of Si Renfa by the name of Gongxiang, who first surrendered to the Ming troops, was appointed the new Pacification Commissioner.\(^8\) Longchuan, located north of modern Ruili (ca. 97°30’E/24°N), was the seat of the Luchuan-Pingmian Pacification Commission of first rank, the old Mengmau kingdom.

The Ming court avoided a direct combat with the remnant forces of Si Renfa, led by his sons, for the Chinese could not be certain which side the chieftains of Ava-Burma and Mubang would take. In April 1445 when the emperor received the report that the chieftain of Ava-Burma had sent a dispatch written on a leaf asking the Chinese and Han Gaifa 罕蓋法, the chieftain of Mubang, to meet him at Gongzhang 貢章 (Katha, a town on Irrawaddy river) for the extradition of the ring-leader, Si Renfa, His Majesty entrusted Mu Ang, the Regional Commander of Yunnan, and Yang Ning 楊寧, the Right Minister of War in Nanjing concurrently the Grand Adjutant (canzan jiwu 参贊機務), to deal with the matter discreetly, telling them not to be deceived by the Burmese.\(^9\) Finally, four months later, in August 1445, after several negotiations, an agreement was reached. The Chinese delegates were to meet the chieftain of Ava-Burma, Bulalah-Mahasheng-[Visula], at Gongzhang in the coming 10th moon to get the prisoner and the land Miaosang 瑪麗 (?), occupied by Mubang, was to be ceded to Ava-Burma.\(^10\)

\(^7\) Mingshi 314.8118; Guoque 26.1661; Yingzong shilu 113.2283–84 (Zhengtong 9, 2nd moon, bingwu: March 15, 1444).

\(^7\) Yingzong shilu 116.2334–25 (Zhengtong 9, 5th moon, xinhai and guichou: May 19, 21, 1444).

\(^8\) Mingshi 314.8118–19, 8121; Guoque 26.1674; Yingzong shilu 121.2439–40 (Zhengtong 9, 9th moon, jihai: Nov. 3, 1444).

\(^8\) Mingshi 314.8118–19, 8121; Guoque 26.1674; Yingzong shilu 121.2439–40 (Zhengtong 9, 9th moon, jihai: Nov. 3, 1444).

\(^8\) See Guoque 26.1682; Yingzong shilu 127.2537 (Zhengtong 10, 3rd moon, wuzi: April 21, 1445).

\(^8\) Guoque 26.1687; Yingzong shilu 131.2609–10 (Zhengtong 10, 7th moon, gengyin: Aug. 21, 1445).
vertheless, during this time Si Jifa and his brothers were still active on the Yunnan-Burma frontier zone. It was reported that the official seal of the new chieftain of Longchuan Pacification Commission was stolen by Si Jifa’s followers, Dao Pan-nang 刀怕囊 and Dao Muli.\textsuperscript{83}

The historical records concerning the death of Si Renfa are rather controversial. According to one official version, recorded on January 14, 1446 in \textit{Yingzong shilu}, Si Renfa was executed by Wang Zheng, the chiliarch of the Yunnan Guard (in modern Kunming city), in Mianidian.

The Chiliarch of Yunnan [Guard], Wang Zheng, executed the bandit from Luchuan, Si Renfa. Earlier the Regional Commander [of Yunnan], the Duke of Qianguo, Mu Bin, and others sent [Wang] Zheng, the Chiliarch of the Yunnan [Guard], to give money and deliver an imperial edict to the son of the [late] Pacification Commissioner of Burma (Mohnyintado?, 1427-40), Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula (Narapati 1443-69) to admonish him and demanded the extradition of Si Renfa. However, Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula still hesitated to hand over [his chief prisoner] immediately. Incidentally the sky became gloomy for two days and the soothsayer (sorcerer?) announced that the heavenly troops had arrived. On hearing the rumour Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula was frightened, so he delivered Si Renfa, his subordinates, wife and children, a total of 32 people to [Wang] Zheng. By then Si Renfa had not eaten for several days and [Wang] Zheng, afraid that Si Renfa was going to die [of a natural cause], had him beheaded at the [market] town (in Ava-Burma or Yunnan?). The head was put in a box, which together with [the left ears of other slain] prisoners of war, were hastily sent to the dynastic capital.\textsuperscript{84}

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雲南千戶王政誅麓川賊思任發. 先是總兵官黔國公沐斌等遣政寬救幣諭賓緬甸宣慰爾丁卜刺浪馬哈省以速刺. 某思任發. 卜刺浪馬哈省以速刺猶豫不即遣. 遣晝晦二日. 衛者曰天兵至矣. 卜刺浪馬哈省以速刺懼. 於是發思任發及其妻孥部屬三十二人付政. 時思任發不食已數日. 政慮其即死. 遂戮于市. 函首及俘裱獻京師.
\end{flushright}

More than half a year later, recorded in the same work on August 29, 1446, we are told:

The Pacification Commissioner of Mubang, Han Gaifa, the son of the late Pacification Commissioner of Mianidian, Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula, sent the tribal envoy, Dao Lumeng, and others to escort the Chiliarch Wang Zheng and his men to the capital (Beijing) to deliver Si Renfa’s head and the left ears of the slain prisoners of war. They presented

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\textsuperscript{83} Mingshì 314.8.121; \textit{Yingzong shilu} 131.2610 (Zhengtong 10, 7th moon, gengyin: Aug. 21, 1445); \textit{Yingzong shilu} 138.2749 (Zhengtong 11, 2nd moon, jià: March 23, 1446). The Ming court had in fact not destroyed the power of the House of Si in Luchuan in south-west Yunnan and Mengyang in Upper Burma.

\textsuperscript{84} See \textit{Yingzong shilu} 136.2704-05 (Zhengtong 10, 12th moon, bingchen: Jan. 14, 1446); \textit{Guoque} 26.1694. Similar account is recorded in \textit{Mingshi jishi benmo} 30.5; \textit{Ming Tongjian} 23.954 (Zhengtong 10, 12th moon, bingchen) and \textit{Diankao}, Oart II.53 (303).\end{flushright}
miscellaneous utensils made of gold or silver, ivory, local brocaded cloth, and other things [to the Ming court as] tribute.\textsuperscript{85}

木邦宣慰罕蓋法。緬甸宣撫子。卜剌浪馬哈省以速刺。暹邏孟刀路孟等。偕千戶王政等。獻思任發酋及諸俘馘。至京師并賞金銀什器象牙土錦等物。

In the „Monograph of Luchuan-Pingmian“, recorded in the Ming Dynastic History, the version varies slightly. It is stated:

Not until in the year [of Zhengtong] 11 (1446) did [the chieftain of] Miandian send Si Renfa, his wife and children, a total of 32 people, to Yunnan prefecture. On the way Si Renfa refused to eat and was going to die. The Chiliarch Wang Zheng beheaded him, put his head in a box which was sent to the dynastic capital.\textsuperscript{86}

十一年緬甸始以思任發及其妻孥三十二人獻至雲南。思任發於道中不食。垂死。千戶王政斬之。函首京師。

Did the proud Mau-Shan king, Si Renfa, went on a hunger strike as a protest of his extradition or was he already dead when the Ming troops came to get him? Wang Zheng, who was only a Chiliarch, would not have dared to execute Si Renfa, whom the court had been hunting for in the past eight years, arbitrarily. If Wang Zheng had received order to kill him on the way to Yunnan, a possibly explanation is the Ming court was afraid that Si Jifa and his brothers would come to rescue their father and ordered the immediate execution. Tan Qian commented in his Guaque that it was really unnecessary for Wang Ji to launch another military operation to catch an old man who had been hiding in Ava-Burma for over four years. The military operations had by no means exhibited the power of the Ming court.\textsuperscript{87}

After the death of Si Renfa, his sons, Si Jifa and Si Bufa 思卜發, were still active in Mengyang and on the Yunnan-Burma frontier zone. Si Jifa tried to appease China by sending several tribute missions but the Ming court insisted that he should come personally.\textsuperscript{88} In October 1446 the Ministry of War sent a memo-

\textsuperscript{85} See Yingzong shilu 144.2839 (Zhengtong 11, 8th moon, guima: August 29, 1446).

\textsuperscript{86} See Mingshi gao 188.28; Mingshi 314.8119. Some sources say that the Mau-Shan chieftain was killed by Wang Zheng, some say he was killed by the chieftain of Ava-Burma and only his head was delivered to the Ming court. However, the Mau-Shan chronicle has another version concerning the death of their king. See the „Concluding Remarks“ of this paper and note 112. According to Ming shilu and other sources I have come across Si Renfa was beheaded on bingchen day in Zhengtong 10, 12th moon, instead of in Zhengtong 11 or Zhengtong 12 as given in Mingshi 314.8119; Mingshi 315.8131, 8145.

\textsuperscript{87} Guaque 26.1694. Si Renfa sought refuge in Ava sometime in Zhengtong 7 and was delivered to the Ming Commander in Zhengtong 10, 12th moon.

\textsuperscript{88} Guaque 26.1699, see the imperial edict directed to Mu Bin and Yang Ning recorded in Yingzong shilu 140.2778 ff. (Zhengtong 11, 4th moon, wuwu: May 16, 1446). See also Yingzong shilu 143.2825 (Zhengtong 11, 7th moon, rensen: July 29, 1446). The emperor gave an ultimatum to Si Jifa and ordered him to come and pay tribute to the Ming court personally. If he failed to come troops would be sent to extirpate him.
rial to advise His Majesty not to cede the land under Mengyang to Ava-Burma until Si Jifa was caught, and pointed out that since the culprit had repeatedly sent envoys to pay tribute to China his repentance was probably sincere. The Ministry suggested to entrust the Regional Commander of Yunnan, Mu Bin, with the task of soothing Si Jifa and persuading him to come to the Ming court immediately. Were he to hesitate to make the journey and give excuses the Ming court then would send an envoy to instruct the chieftain of Ava-Burma to seize Si Jifa and present him in exchange for Jiali, the land under the ruler of Mengyang. Consequently the Ming court sent an imperial edict to the Pacification Commissioner of Ava-Burma, Bulalang-Mahasheng-Yisula, and asked him to send his tribal troops to occupy Jiali and then march north to Jinsha jiang 金沙江 (Upper Irrawaddy River) to surround Si Jifa.\(^8\) In April 1447 Mu Bin reported to the throne that he had sent a Chiliarch by the name Ming Yong 明庸, to persuade the son of the bandit, Si Jifa, to pay tribute to the Ming court personally but the bandit’s son was suspicious because his brother, Zhaosai, and his son, Aizhun, were still in the hands of the Ming authority, and refused to come out from his hiding-place. Moreover, it was reported that not long before, Si Jifa had plundered Ava-Burma and had taken away cows, horses, gold and silver belonging to Bulalang-[Mahasheng-Yisula]. Mu Bin then suggested to the throne to assemble the tribal troops from Min-dian, Mubang and other tribal principalities in Yunnan to help to surround Si Jifa who was taking refuge in Mengyang. The combined tribal troops were to attack the fugitive from different routes on an appointed date, and the Regional Commander of Yunnan, Mu Bin, and other Commanders would lead a total of 10,000 men to assemble in Tengchong and serve as reinforcement.\(^9\) The petition of Mu Bin was approved, and the Ming court was preparing to launch another military operation on the Yunnan-Burma frontier zone to catch Si Jifa. Two days later Mu Bin reported to the throne that Si Jifa had sent his men to present 150 taels of silver to him, the palace eunuchs and other officials. Were he to reject Si Jifa’s money the latter might get suspicious. The emperor told Mu Bin to use the silver to buy grain for the imperial troops.\(^10\) In early July 1447 Zhaosai, who probably had submitted to the Ming authority, was sent to serve in the Embroider-

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\(^8\) *Yingzong shilu* 145.2856 f. (Zhengtong 11, 9th moon, gengchen: Oct 5, 1446). However, in *Diankao* it is stated that though the Ming court had ceded the land of Mengyang to the eldest son of Bulalang, Yinquiameng 銀起莽, the latter was not able to rule it for Si Jifa and Si Bufa had occupied the land. See *Diankao*, Part II:53 (303).

\(^9\) *Mingshi* 314.8119; *Guoque* 26.1718; *Yingzong shilu* 152.2976–77 (Zhengtong 12, 4th moon, *jihai*: April 22, 1447). Tengchong, located in the north of Luchuan-Pingmian and in western Yunnan province, is still rather far away from Mengyang in Upper Burma. The Chinese Commanders-in-chief were probably afraid to proceed to Mengyang to confront the Mau-Shan troops. The policy of using the „barbarians to control the barbarians“ is manifested here.

\(^10\) *Yingzong shilu* 152.2977–78 (Zhengtong 12, 4th moon, *xinhou*: April 24, 1447).
ed-uniform Guard and his subordinates were sent to the Elephant-breaking Command (Xunxiang suo 驯象所), a unit under the Embroidered-uniform Guard, to train imperial elephants. A house and monthly income in grain were granted to Zhaosai. The Embroidered-uniform Guard was one of the most prestigious division of Superior Imperial Guards Garrisoned at the capital. Its headquarters functioned as a central intelligence agency and soldiers served as praetorian guards. Zhaosai and his men were kept under close scrutiny and treated rather generously by Ming standards.

In early December 1447 the imperial troops under the command of the Regional Commander of Yunnan, Mu Bin, and others reached the Garrison town, Tengchong. When Si Jifa heard the news that Mu Bin had persuaded the chieftains to send troops to besiege and to arrest him, he quickly sent his men to pay tribute to the Ming court. The emperor, however, sent an order to Mu Bin telling him that it was the bandit’s tactic to delay the approach of the imperial troops. Si Jifa was dangerous and should be delivered to the Ming court without delay or troops would be sent to annihilate him. However, in March 1448 Si Jifa again sent his subordinates to pay tribute and presented the Ming court with elephants and horses. The court kept the presents but told the senior and junior headmen of the various tribal principalities in Yunnan that the one who could “accompany” Si Jifa to the Ming court would be granted promotion and reward. Si Jifa, having the protection of the headman of Mengyang, still refused to come. In March 1448 the Ming troops, commanded by Mu Bin, the Duke of Qianguo, marched to the Irrawaddy River. The imperial troops gathered at Gongzhang but due to many problems, such as the heat of the oncoming summer, not enough boats to cross the river, shortages of military supplies and soldiers, Mu Bin petitioned to postpone the military operation until the autumn. The emperor ordered that the Garrison troops from the inland provinces be mobilized and arrive in Yunnan in September 1448 (Zhengtong 13, 8th moon). It is said that since Mu Bin could not gain any merit – in other words the Grand Defender of Yunnan failed to capture Si Jifa – the Ming court decided to send Wang Ji, then Minister of War, to Yunnan. It is stated that this was Wang Ji’s third southern military campaign to Luchuan. Concerning

92 Mingshi 314.8119; Yingzong shilu 154.3019 (Zhengtong 12, 5th moon, yimao; July 7, 1447). On 2, August, 1447 it was approved to grant Zhaosai and the tribal envoy (taomeng), Dao Muli, each 200 jin (ca. 266 pounds) of husked rice and 100 jin of firewood per month. See Yingzong shilu 155.3032 (Zhengtong 12, 6th moon, xinsi; Aug. 2, 1447). Xunxiang suo was a unit under Jinyi wei, see Mingshi 76.1862.
93 Guoque 26.1731; Yingzong shilu 159.3103 (Zhengtong 12, 10th moon, yiyou; Dec. 8, 1447).
94 Guoque 27.1736; Yingzong shilu 163.3159–60 (Zhengtong 13, 2nd moon, yichou; March 13, 1448).
95 See Guoque 26.1737; Yingzong shilu 163.3170–71 (Zhengtong 13, 2nd moon, jima; March 27, 1448).
the fourth southern campaign, however, some modern historians doubt whether Wang Ji really did participate as he was at that time almost 70 years old.96

5. The Fourth Southern Punitive Campaign

Si Jifa was harboured by Dao Bianman 刀變變, the chief headman (da toumu 大頭目) of Mengyang, who had ousted Dao Mengbin 刀孟賓, the rightful ruler, namely the Pacification Commissioner of Mengyang. On April 5, 1448 the Ming court sent an edict to warn Dao Bianman, in which four reasons were given to justify the fourth punitive campaign. The imperial edict, recorded in Yinzong shilu, enumerated the four points:

The Mengyang [Pacification Commission] is in fact a governmental office established by the [Ming] court and you Dao Bianman and the others dare to disobey the court’s order. The first reason for sending troops is that the fact that Si Jifa is the son of a bandit you still harbour him and do not arrest him [for me]. The second reason for sending troops is that in the past when Si Renfa invaded Mengyang and ousted Dao Mengbin, your Pacification Commissioner, [we gave him asylum], and he now is living in comfort in Yunnan. [How could] you form an alliance with your enemy? The third reason for sending troops is that the successive Regional Commanders of Yunnan and other officials, [appointed by the Ming court], have been ruling your land for generations (from time immemorial). They have received my order to fetch the bandit’s son [from Mengyang] but you [dare] to disobey my instructions. The fourth reason for sending troops is that you all only think that because of the dangerous journey obstructed by hills and rivers, the imperial troops cannot reach you easily. You also think that because of the hot climate, infected by malaria, the imperial troops could not station there longer [...]. Don’t you know that in the past Ma Yuan (14 B. C. – 49 A. D.) erected a copper boundary-post in the remote [south] (probably at Ma Yuan cheng in Gengma Dazu and Wuzu Autonomous County in Yunnan); despite the perilous journey he was unhurt. Zhuge Liang (181–234 A. D.) crossed the Lu-river in the 5th moon (June or July) and was not injured by the hot [summer]. They could all destroy the southern barbarians and open up land and gain territory [for China]. Moreover, [we] are absolutely certain that our generals will triumph over [you]. You should know this from our previous campaigns to Luchuan.97

孟養乃朝廷開設衝門, 繼刀變變等敢拒朝命。一可伐思機發係賊子。爾等故縱不致。二可伐爾孟養昔被思任發侵奪其地。逐爾宣慰刀孟賓。見在雲南優養。爾等與錄為黨。三可伐雲南總兵等官世世管屬爾地。縛奉詔命接取賊子。爾等不從調度。四可伐爾等不依以為山川道路險阻。官軍不至遂逢。又以風水病疫炎熱。官軍不可久居 [...]. 殊不知昔要越標銅柱險阻無傷。諸葛亮五

96 Mingshi 314.8119; DMB II.1350.
97 Yinzong shilu 164.3173–74 (Zhengtong 13, 3rd moon, wuzi: April 5, 1448); see also Guo-que 27.1737; Mingshi 315.8150–52.
A fortnight later, on April 19, the Supreme Commander and various Commanders-in-chief of the southern campaign were officially appointed and the Earl of Jingyuan, Wang Ji, became the Supreme Commander of Military Affairs whose duty was to oversee the imperial troops in the campaign to exterminate Si Jifa. The Vice Commissioner-in-chief, Gong Ju, was appointed Commander-in-chief (zong-bing guan 總兵官) and the holder of the seal of the Commander-in-chief of the Operation Against the Southern Barbarians. Zhang Yue 張軒 (d. 1458) and Tian Li 田禮 were to be the Left and Right Vice Commanders-in-chief respectively. Fang Ying and the Vice Regional Military Commissioner of Guizhou, Zhang Rui 張銳, were to be the Left and Right Assistant Commanders-in-chief respectively. The ousted chieftain of Mengyang, Dao Mengbin, who was taking refuge in Yunnan prefecture, was to be their guide. The Yingzong Emperor gave order to the chieftains of Mubang, Miandian, Nandian, Ganyai, and Longchuan telling them to assemble their tribal soldiers and to wait for the imperial command, to get ready their boats and store up military supplies for the imperial troops. Subsequently a combined force of 130,000 Chinese and native soldiers was mobilized from the Capital Guards stationed in Nanjing and from the Weisuo Garrisons under the four inland and southern Regional Military Commissions, namely Yunnan, Huguang, Sichuan and Guizhou.98

In March 1449 the imperial troops under the command of Wang Ji, Gong Ju, and others assembled at Tengchong. Following the tributary of Da yingjiang 大盈江 (a tributary of Irrawaddy) they traveled down to Ganyai Chieftain Commission 干崖長官司 (in modern Jiu yingjiang, about 60 km south-west from Tengchong and north-east of Hotha) where boats were built for them to sail down Da yingjiang to the pass at Nanya mountain 南牙山 (near the Ruins of Sampa-nago, the Old Bhamo, on the border of Yunnan-Burma). There they left their boats and marched to Shaba 沙壩 (in Upper Burma) where new ones were built for the imperial troops to sail to Upper Irrawaddy. The strongholds of the „bandit chief“, Si Jifa, made of palisades, were located on the western bank of the river. With 200 boats, supplied by the Burmese chieftain, Wang Ji built a floating bridge to cross the river to attack the strongholds which were eventually captured. The Chinese troops obtained more than 400,000 piculs of grain to supplement their military supplies.99 The imperial soldiers were hungry and after filling their stomachs they pursued Si Jifa and his men to Guiku shan 鬼哭山 (Kankkwei mountain or Gangaw Taung, west of Katha) where the main base of Si Jifa was located. The Mau-Shan chieftain in Mengyang had two major strongholds built

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98 Mingshi 314.8119, Guoque 27.1738; Yingzong shilu 164.3181–83 (Zhengtong 13, 3rd month, renynin April 19, 1448).
99 One picul = 133.3 pounds or 60 kg.
on top of two hills and on both sides of the major strongholds two flank strongholds were constructed and these were strengthened by seven smaller fortifications. The combined Chinese troops attacked Si Jifa’s base from different routes. According to the official account of this battle countless enemies were killed and the strongholds destroyed, but again Si Jifa and his younger brother, Si Bufa, managed to escape. When the victorious news reached the court Yingzong Emperor ordered Wang Ji, Gong Ju, Zhang Yue, and Tian Li back to Beijing, the capital; Fang Ying and Hou Jin were to stay in Yunnan to see to the military matters and Zhang Rui was to return to Guizhou Regional Military Commission. The prisoners of war were escorted to the capital and the Pacification Commissioner of Miandian, Bulalang-Mahasheng-YSula, received an imperial decree granting him the right to rule Mengyang. A further order was given to catch the fugitives, Si Jifa and his followers. However, Mingshi gao and Mingshi jishi benmo give the following version of the story:

At this time the imperial troops had crossed Mengyang and reached Mengna. Mengyang is located more than 1,000 li (ca. 333 miles) away from Luchuan in the west [bank] of the Golden Sand River (Upper Irrawaddy). [When the news reached] the various groups of tribal peoples they were taken aback; frightened they said, „Since ancient times the Han-Chinese have never crossed the Golden Sand River. Now that the imperial troops are here, it is really the power from the Heaven.“

時王師踰孟養至孟那．孟養在金沙江西去麗川千餘里．諸部皆震驚曰：自古漢人無渡金沙江者．今王師至此．真天威也．

But after Wang Ji and his troops had withdrawn the tribal peoples supported Silu思祿, a younger son of Si Renfa, to be the ruler of Mengyang and continued to disturb the frontier zone. Wang Ji, seeing that he could not destroy Silu and his supporters, finally made a peace treaty with him. As reported in Chinese chronicles a stone tablet was erected on the Upper Irrawaddy river to mark the boundary. On it was stated:

Not before the stone is rotten and the river has dried up are you all allowed to cross [the Irrawaddy].

石爛江枯．爾乃得渡．

Silu was frightened and so he agreed. Consequently the imperial troops withdrew and the news of the victory was reported to the Imperial Ancestral Temples and the Luchuan-Pingmain campaign was officially ended.

\[\text{OE 39 (1996) 2}\]

100 See Yingzong shilu 175.3372–73 (Zhengtong 14, 2nd moon, jisi: March 12, 1449); see also Mingshi 314.8120.

101 Mingshi gao 188.29; see also Mingshi 314.8120; Mingshi jishi benmo 30.5.

102 Ibid.

103 See Mingshi 314.8120; Mingshi jishi benmo 30.5; Diankao, Part II.54 (304–05). According to the record in Diankao, in Zhengtong 13, 12th moon (early 1449) the imperial troops under Wang Qi marched to the Irrawaddy River and when they reached Mengyang and Meng-
However, in July 1449 Zhan Ying 詹英, the Instructor of the Confucian School of the Huichuan Guard 會川衛 in Sichuan, submitted a memorial to the throne and lodged complaints against Wang Ji and Gong Ju for their voracious behaviour and arrogant way of treating their subordinates and soldiers. In Zhan Ying’s memorial, recorded in Yingzong shilu, the following matters, giving further insights into the southern punitive campaign, were reported:

The Earl of Jingyuan, Wang Ji, the Commissioner-in-chief, Gong Ju, and other Commanders, who only care for satisfying their own greed, could not comprehend the imperial intention. Five to six hundred men were enforced to carry and transport their luggage, which amounted to 200 to 300 pieces. Coloured silk and other goods, which they had brought along, were secretly distributed (sold) to Regional Military Commissioners and other officials so that big profits were made [from the illegal businesses]. They violated the ancestor’s instruction by executing the sentence of castration without the permission; in the name of presenting [eunuchs to the emperor they castrated young men] but in fact these were kept to serve themselves. When the troops were on the march there was no discipline at all; [for instance] all the 150,000 soldiers of the huge armed forces started on the same day causing many of them to be trampled to death, yet not the slightest sympathy was shown. Concerning transporting grain there was also no proper plan. Each soldier had to carry 0.6 dan (ca. 80 pounds) of husked rice and other heavy loads. [Under this circumstances] how to nurture one’s strength. So much so that many of them could not bear the hardship and committed suicide. Furthermore, in the name of transporting grain, more than 1,000 horses were assigned [to do the job]. It seems that they did not know a better use of the horses! [When the imperial troops] reached the territory of the enemies on the bank of Irrawaddy River, no victory was gained in the armed confrontation; [on the contrary many Chinese soldiers] were killed by the bandit’s troops. Nevertheless, the Regional Military Commissioners and army officers presented the surrendered fishermen as prisoners of war captured alive. Like that the imperial troops were forced to withdraw and the land was divided and ceded to Mubang and Miandian. They were actually defeated by the enemies but reported victory instead. It is clear that they were cheating His Majesty to obtain the coveted rewards. Wang Ji and Gong Ju have been trifling with the imperial law and are incorrigible; [because of them the imperial troops] suffered [heavy] losses and were in a disadvantage position. In view of their crimes they ought to be sentenced to death but still death is too mild a punishment for them.104

na 孟那 all the chieftains were frightened. However, Si Jifa was nowhere to be found. The tribal peoples of Mengyang nominated the younger son of Si Renfa, Si Hong 思洪 (Si Hongfa?), to be their ruler. Thereupon, Wang Ji concluded a treaty with Si Hong and erected a stone tablet in the Irrawaddy River as the boundary. If the version of the story is true, then the Chinese had agreed to let the offspring of the Mau-Shan chieftain rule the land west of the Irrawaddy.

104 Yingzong shilu 179.3464–65 (Zhengtong 14, 6th moon, dingmao: July 8, 1449); see also Guoque 27.1768.
The memorial of Zhan Ying was redirected to the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Justice pending a decision, and at the same time a censor was sent to Yunnan to investigate the case. By then Wang Ji had been sent to suppress the unrest of the Miao bandits in Huguang (Hunan, Hubei) and Guizhou provinces. Thus the emperor appeared to forgive the old general and the case was allowed to lapse. As for Zhan Ying, the emperor praised him for his insight but assigned him to serve under Gong Ju. When the news reached Zhan Ying he was frightened and dared not go to serve under Gong Ju, the very man he had tried to impeach. It is reported that Zhan Ying went into hiding instead. 105

At that time Zhu Qizhen, the Yingzong Emperor, was only 21 years old and the court was under the influence of the notorious palace eunuch, Wang Zhen, who, it is said, intervened in the case and stopped the investigation. He sent Zhan Ying to serve in the troops under Wang Ji instead of under Gong Ju as directed by His Majesty. 106 From the memorial of Zhan Ying we have a different evaluation of the glorious fourth military operation, launched to capture Si Jifa. It may not have been the victory that Wang Ji, the war party, and some of the Ming officials claimed.

6. On the death of Si Renfa and Si Jifa

The various versions of the death of Si Renfa (Thonganbwa or Chau-Ngan-Pha), recorded in different sources, give rise to much controversy. The Mau-Shan version differs from the official version of the Ming court, given in the „Monograph of Luchuan-Pingmian“ of Mingshi and its predecessor, Mingshi gao. The source of the „Monograph of Luchuan-Pingmian“ is based on the statement dated Zhengtong 10, 12th moon, on bingchen day (January 14, 1446) of Yingzong shilu, whereas the version concerning the extradition of Si Renfa, leading to his death, given in the „Monograph of Mubang“ and the „Monograph of Miandian“ of Mingshi and

105 Yingzong shilu 179.3466 (Zhengtong 14, 6th moon, dingmao: July 8, 1449). The revolt of the Miao broke out on May 4, 1449 and Wang Ji was sent to suppress the Miao. See Mingshi 10.138.

106 See Mingshi 171.4559. But according to Yingzong shilu he was sent to serve Gong Ju, instead of Wang Ji. See Yingzong shilu 179.3466.
Mingshi gao, based on the statement dated Zhengtong 11, 8th moon, on renjin day (August 29, 1446) of Yingzong shilu, is in contradiction with the earlier statement of the same work.

According to the statement given in the "Monograph of Mubang Pacification Commission" from Mingshi gao it is stated:

In the year of [Zhengtong] 11 (1446) Han Gaifa and the Pacification Commissioner of Miandian, Bulalang-[Mahasheng-Yisula] sent their envoys, Dao Lumeng, and others, [accompanied by] the Chilarch, Wang Zheng, to deliver the head of Si Renfa and the [left] ears of various [slain] prisoners of war to the capital and paid tribute [to the Ming court]. They asked for the land of Luchuan but the Ministry of War only agreed to cede the land of Mengzi to Mubang, giving the reason that the Longchuan Pacification Commission had been established to replace Luchuan Pacification Commission.107

However, according to the account given in the "Monograph of Miandian Pacification Commission" of Mingshi gao it is reported:

In Zhengtong 11 (1446) the Pacification Commissioner of Mubang, Han Gaifa, and the [two] sons of the late Pacification Commissioner of Miandian, Mahasheng and Yisula, sent envoys, Dao Lumeng, and others to accompany the Chilarch, Wang Zheng, and others to present the head of Si Renfa and the [left] ears of other [slain] prisoners of war to the Ming capital. [The tribal envoys] presented miscellaneous utensils made of gold or silver, ivory, and local brocaded cloth, and other things as tributes to the Ming court. [In return for their co-operation] the emperor appointed [both] Mahasheng and Yisula Pacification Commissioners of Ava-Burma.108

Nevertheless in an imperial rescript, sent in August 1446 for the purpose of admonishing and warning Si Jifa, Emperor Yingzong told the son of the late Mau-Shan chieftain to pay tribute to the Ming court personally. He could leave his family in Mengyang under the protection of the chieftain. The emperor added:

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107 See Mingshi gao 189.18. Compare with above notes 84, 85 and 86. At this time Si Renfa was dead more than half a year.

108 See Mingshi gao 189.4; Mingshi 315.8131. See Yingzong shilu 144.2839 (Zhengtong 11, 8th moon, renjin: August 29, 1446). According to Mingshi, it was in Zhengtong 12. Mahasheng and Yisula were brothers, probably the sons of Mangdela who was made the Pacification Commissioner of Ava-Burma in Xuande 2 (1427). During the Yongle period two Pacification Commissions were established in Burma. See Mingshi 315.8130.
Because your father, Si Renfa, was rebellious and did not behave the right way. [He repeatedly committed crimes by] invading and looting his neighbours. The court was forced to send generals and troops to chastise him and kill your species. [Nevertheless], your father was beheaded by the Burmese who came and presented his head [to us].

爾父思任發悖逆不道。殺掠鄰近。朝廷不得已命將帥兵往問其罪。殺爾黨類。爾父為細人斬首來獻。

Finally two months later, in a memorial submitted by the Ministry of War, it is stated:

Han Gaifa, the Pacification Commissioner of Mubang under Yunnan, presented golden silks and ceded land to Pacification Commissioner of Miandian, Bululang-Mahasheng-Yisula, in exchange for the rebellious bandit, Si Renfa, then beheaded him and gave his head to the imperial Commander who sent it [to the Ming court]. The court had issued edicts to praise [their deeds] and rewarded them (Mubang and Ava-Burma).

兵部奏: 雲南木邦宣慰罕蓋法，先將金帛及割地與緬甸宣慰卜刺浪馬哈省以遽剿，易反賊思任發。斬首級，付官軍來獻。已蒙朝廷各賜敕費賞。

According to this account it was the chieftain of Mubang who beheaded Si Renfa. In Nanzhao yeshi the following information is given:

[In Zhengtong 7], 10th moon (1442) [the Ming court] again sent Wang Ji and Jiang Gui to suppress Luchuan and Miandian. As Si Ren (Si Renfa) had fled they took his wife and children as prisoners of war. In Zhengtong 9 (1444) Si Ren was harboured by Miandian. In Zhengtong 10 (1445) the fortifications of Tengchong were constructed and in Zhengtong 13 (1448) Wang Ji defeated [the bandit of Luchuan] in Mengyang. In Zhengtong 14, 4th moon (1449) Wang Ji arrested the recalcitrant leader of the Miao, Chongfu, who was escorted to the capital and executed. In Jingtai 3 (1452) when Wang Ji gave Miandian the land of Mengyang as a reward, the Burmese were pleased and arrested Si Ren’s wife and sons. As at that time Si Ren was dead [the Burmese] chopped off his head and presented it, together with his wife and sons, to [the Ming authority].

十月復命王驃蔣貴征麗川緬甸。思任發。俘其妻子而還。九年緬甸匿思任。十年築隴衝城。十三年王驃敗賊於孟養。十四年四月王驃擒叛苗蟲富。鑑送京師伏誅。景帝景泰三年王驃賞緬甸孟養地。緬人喜乃擒思任妻子。時思任已死。並斬其首以獻。

According to this piece of information from the unofficial Chinese sources Si Renfa’s head was chopped off from his corpse by the Burmese in Ava and delivered to the Ming authority in 1452.

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110 See Yingzong shilu 145.2856−57 (Zhengtong 11, 9th moon, gengchen: Oct. 5, 1446).
111 See the supplemented Nanzhao yeshi II.61 (219). Si Renfa probably had several wives and children. The year of Si Renfa’s death could not have been in 1452 but six years earlier.
However, according to the Mau-Shan version the account differs from the Ming sources. The following interesting information is taken from the Introductory Sketch of the History of the Shans in Upper Burma and Western Yunnan:

He (Chau-Ngan-Pha, i.e. Si Renfa) had two brothers named Chau-Si-Pha, and Chau-Hung-Pha, with whose assistance he invaded and subdued the Shan states to the east and south-east of his country, and then marched on to Tai-li (i.e. Dali), which state he also conquered. Here he was reinforced by the armies of all the chiefs he had subdued so far, and decided, with this enormous host, to attempt the conquest of Mithila (Yunnan). He started accordingly from Tai-li, but was met by a Chinese force under the walls of the capital (Mung-kyei) and was defeated; he then fell back first on Tai-li, afterwards on Wan-Chang (Yongchang, i.e. Jinch'i), and eventually retired into Mau territory (Luchuan-Pingmian), followed by the inhabitants of all the places he had subdued, who preferred to cast in their lot with him, rather than endure the vengeance of the Chinese. On arriving near his capital (Mengmau), he found the inhabitants panic stricken and flying to Ayudia and in many directions; his army broke up and joined in the flight, whilst he himself, accompanied by his brother Chau-Si-Pha (Chau-Hung-Pha had died just previously) sought an asylum at Ava. The Chinese followed however, took up a position north of the city of Ava and demanded the surrender of Chau-Ngan-Pha from the Burmese-king. The latter replied that one of his nobles called Ming-ngei-kyo-dwen was in rebellion at Zei-mei-thin (Yemethen near Enlay), and that if the Chinese Commander would first subdue and bring this rebellious noble to the capital, he would deliver to him the Mau king. The Chinese general consented and despatched a portion of his army to Zei-mei-thin. The place was surrounded, and Ming-ngei-kyo-dwen captured and brought to Ava, but on hearing of his arrival Chau-Ngan-Pha finding his end inevitable took poison and died. His body nevertheless was given up to the Chinese Commander, who had it disembowelled and dried in the sun, and immediately afterwards returned with it to Yunnan (B.E. 807 or 1445 A.D.).

112 See Elias, 21–22. The version given in Harvey, 99 conforms to the Shan’s version but gives further details. It is stated: „He (Mohyninthado 1427–40) was succeeded by his sons Minrekyawswa 1440–3 and Narapati 1443–69. Their kinsmen for a time gained Kale and Mohynin and proceeded to capture the Maw-Shan chief Thonganbwa when he was being hard pressed by the Yunnan government. Narapati refused to surrender him, denied his own liability to tribute, and in 1445 drove off the Yunnan levies at Kaungtong in Bhamo district. But when in 1446 they appeared in strength before Ava, he yielded. Thonganbwa committed suicide, so only his followers and his body could be given up. The Chinese removed the inside, dried the body in the sun and at the fire, thrust an iron spit through it and took it away.“
7. Concluding Remarks

According to the information given in *Yingzong shihu*, to the best of my knowledge, the imperial troops led by Wang Qi and Jiang Gui did not reach Ava during the third southern punitive campaign. Obviously Wang Ji was afraid that he and his troops would be trapped by his enemies lest he ventured too far west from their main base at Tengchong. The Burmese king agreed to surrender Si Renfa at Gongzhang. Thus the farthest point Wang Ji reached was Katha, over 160 miles north of Ava in the west of Bhamo. In the Chinese sources which I have consulted neither the deal between the Burmese king and the Chinese Commander for the extradition of Chau-Ngan-Pha (Si Renfa) nor his suicide, as depicted in the Mau-Shan chronicles, is mentioned. Did Si Renfa actually committed suicide in Ava or was he killed by the Burmese king and his body or head was delivered to the Ming authority? Was the Ming court trying to put the blame for the death of Si Renfa on the Burmese king to appease his son (or brother), Si Jifa? Was this the reason that one of the offspring of Si Renfa, who later ruled Mengyang, took revenge by killing the chieftain of Ava-Burma and his wife early in the Jiajing reign (1522–1566)?

As the Chinese annals and equally the Shan chronicles, as far as I am aware, are not free from alterations or censorship to serve their respective purposes, it is difficult for us to judge from these sources who actually beheaded Si Renfa or how he actually died. The following interpretations might be plausible explanations.

In the eyes of the Chinese Si Renfa was only a minor chieftain ruling the south-west corner of the Ming empire but the Ming court had to send three punitive military campaigns within eight years just to get his head or corpse from the Burmese. No matter whether the Mau-Shan chieftain was executed or committed suicide in Ava it was anyhow not a very glorious event for the Ming court, under the influence of Wang Zheng and Wang Ji, to enter the truth in the *Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty*. For this reason and probably also because Si Renfas’ sons and supporters were still active in Mengyang and Luchuan, the Ming court preferred to push the responsibility to Wang Zheng, only a Chilarch of the Yunnan Guard, and gave an excuse by saying that Si Renfa had not eaten for several days and was on the point of dying. Whether Si Renfa was executed by the Burmese or Wang Zheng was equally a rather infamous event for the descendants of the proud Mau-Shan king to record the fact in their chronicles, thus preferring the version that Si Renfa committed suicide in Ava before he was handed over to the

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113 In Jiajing 6 (1527) the chieftain of Mengyang, Si Lun思倫 (Sawlon), the son of Si Lu思祿, attacked Mengmi 孟密 (Momeik) in Mubang. He conquered Miandian and killed the chieftain, Mangjisui, and his wife. See *Mingshi* 315:8132. Mangjisui was probably Shwen-an'kyawshin (1502–1527), assassinated by Shan chief, Thohanbwa, see Maung Htin Aung, 337. The book on the early history of Burma is recommended to me by Prof. Dr. Vu Duy-Tu.
Ming Commanders. That Si Renfa or Chau-Ngan-Pha died in the winter of 1445-46 is confirmed by the Shan and Chinese. The Chinese and the Burmese sources are full of discrepancies, such as in the Shan source Si Jifa was Si Renfa’s brother instead of his sons, etc. Much work still has to be done on the Sino-Mau-Shan-Burmese relations during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.

The fate of Si Jifa is as controversial as that of his father. Some sources say that he was killed in combat in early 1449. According to the official history Si Jifa escaped to Mengyang in early 1449 but was caught by the chieftain of Ava-Burma. In April 1454 the chieftain of Ava-Burma asked the Chinese to revert the land to him and the Ming ceded Yinjia 银戛 to Burma, so Si Jifa and his family, a total of six people, were delivered to the Ming troops at a village on Upper Irrawaddy. Si Jifa was immediately escorted to the capital where he was executed. However, Ava-Burma let Si Bufa, the younger brother of Si Jifa, go free. He and his son, Si Hongfa 思洪发 (Thohanbwa) continued to rule Mengyang without the official approval of the Ming court. They sent tribute missions to China but the court kept a close eye on the matter. Early in the Jiajing reign one of the descendants of Si Renfa, then ruling Mangyang, managed to take revenge. In 1527 (Jiajing 6) he led an army that marched south to invade Ava-Burma, killing the chieftain, Mangjisui 芒纪威 (Shwenankyawshin) and his wife. In practice the descendants of Si Lunfa continued to rule Mengyang, with or without the approval of the Chinese emperor, till the fall of the Ming empire in 1644 and after.

See Gouque 27.1757-58 (Zhengtong 14, 2nd moon, jisi: March 12, 1449). In Zhengtong 13, 10th moon Si Jifa was lost but some said that he was killed in combat, see also Mingshi fushi benmo 30.5.

See Mingshi 11.147; Mingshi 314.8120; Yingzong shilu 239.5223 (Jingtai 5, 3rd moon, gengchen: April 26, 1454); see also Diankao, Part II.54 (305-06). In Diankao it is stated that in Jingtai 5 the Burmese arrested Si Jifa and escorted him to the Ming capital (Beijing) where the prisoner was executed. Since then Mengyang and Miandian became bitter enemies.

Mingshi 315.8132, 8152. According to Mingshi, in Jingtai 2 (1451) the younger son of Si Renfa, Si Bufa, sent envoys to pay tribute to the Ming court and begged for the right to rule Mengyang, previously under his clan. The Ming court replied that Mengyang had been given to Miandian and the imperial order could not be altered. The editor commented although the Ming court officially refused to return Mengyang to Si Bufa he was in fact ruling the land and Miandian could not take it away from him. When Si Bufa died he was succeeded by his son, Si Hongfa, who ruled Mengyang from the Tianshun (1457-64) to the Chenghua (1465-87) reigns and sent tribute envoys to the Ming court as if he was the rightful ruler of Mengyang. See above note 113.

Compare with the Mau-Shan source given in Elias, 22-25. Accordingly after Chau-Ngan-Pha (Si Renfa) death, in the winter of 1445-46, Chau-Si-Pha was then placed on the throne of Mogaung (in Mengyang) and Chau-Ngan-Pha’s queen went at the same time to Khamti with her two children, Chau-Hung II., aged 10, and Chau-Hup, aged 2; on arrival there a third, named Chau-Put, was born, and one of these three became Tsautbwa (chief ruler) of Khamti (Mengyang).
Commission of first rank was abolished in Zhengtong 6 (1441). Three years later, in November 1444 (Zhengtong 9, 9th moon), the tribal principality was further partitioned. In the northern part, the land previously under Pingmian, Longchuan Pacification Commission of second rank was established and a submissive chieftain, Gongxiang, previously a subordinate of Si Renfa, was nominated to be the new Pacification Commissioner of Longchuan.\(^{118}\) The southern part, the land previously under Luchuan (or the old Mengmau), was probably occupied by Mubang or one of the former subordinates of Si Renfa.\(^{119}\) The Ming court had in fact established Yunyuan prefecture 雲遠府 in 1382, renamed Mengyang Prefecture in 1403, before changing it to Mengyang Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commission in early Yongle reign. Similarly Mubang prefecture 木邦府 was established in 1382 before it was reorganized into a Military-cum-Civilian Pacification Commission, signifying that the Ming court attempted to incorporate Mengyang and Mubang, inhabited by the Shan tribes, into full Chinese territory under Yunnan province but failed.

Immediately after the death of the Yingzong Emperor, in 1465 (Chenghua 1), the grandson of Si Renfa, Si Mingfa 思命發, was sent to the Ming capital, probably by his father, Si Bufa, to negotiate peace terms with the new emperor. However, on the advice of the then Regional Commander of Yunnan, Mu Zan 沐瓊, Si Mingfa was taken hostage. He was finally sent to serve in the Dengzhou Guard 登州衛, under the Shandong Regional Military Commission, and a monthly pay of two dam 石 (ca. 266.6 pounds) of grain was granted to him. Hence, officially Luchuan-Pingmian was destroyed.\(^{120}\)

The extravagant wars waged in the south-western frontier region of Yunnan during the Zhengtong reign claimed many lives on both sides and impoverished the local governor of Yunnan and the Ming court. According to the memorial of Liu Qiu, 70 to 80 percent of the imperial soldiers were killed in the campaigns against Luchuan-Pingmian.\(^{121}\) The figures given in the Ming sources concerning

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\(^{118}\) See above note 80.

\(^{119}\) For three years after Chau-Ngan-Pha’s death, Mung-Mau (Mengmau) was again without a king, but at the end of that time an uncle (probably a descendant of an uncle is meant) of the late Chau-Wak-Pha, called Chau-Lam-Kon Kam-Pha, and the nearest relative to Chau-Ngan-Pha, was placed on the throne (Rai-saw 40 = 1448, i.e. Zhengtong 13). In the fourth year of his reign a large force from China invaded his country, defeated his troops, and compelled him to take a flight or seek a refuge with the Burmese at Ava. After five years’ of exile he returned to his country and died in Rai-si 53 = 1461A.D. (i.e. Tianshun 5). He was succeeded in the same year by his son Chau-Hum-Pha. See Elias, 22-25.

\(^{120}\) See Mingshi 314.8121. In Chenghua 1, 2nd moon, jiachen (March 23, 1465) Si Hongfa, then ruling Mengyang, sent a tribute mission, led by taomeng and other chiefs to China and presented elephants, horses, gold and silver utensils, etc., to the Ming court. In return they were granted clothing and brocade. See Xianzong shilu 14.327. Nevertheless the information given in Mingshi, Chenghua 1, is not recorded in Xuanzong shilu 13-24 and Guoque 34 or in Ming Tongjian 30.

\(^{121}\) See Liu Qiu’s „Xiu sheng shishi shu”, HMJSWB 4.91.
how many tribal soldiers and civilians were killed in the four campaigns may have been exaggerated but were certainly not small. In fact the Ming court could have stopped the war after the second campaign when Si Renfa had fled to Ava-Burma and Si Jifa repeatedly sent his younger brother and son to beg for peace and presented tributes. However, this was disregarded by the hard core of the war faction in the Ming court, who were determined to have Si Renfa and his son dead or alive. They were more concerned over their personal ambitions and the matter of "losing face" to the tribal chieftains in the south-west corner of the Ming empire than the national defence of the northern frontiers. The first of the four successive southern military campaigns started 14 years after the last of the five famous northern military expeditions to Mongolia, launched by the great grandfather of Yingzong, the Yongle Emperor, and only 11 years after relinquishing Annam.\textsuperscript{122} The four southern punitive campaigns to Yunnan-Burma, followed by another northern expedition which ended in the Tumu débâcle in September 1449, mark the decline of the great Ming empire.

\textsuperscript{122} On the five northern expeditions, see Franke 1–54.
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DMB = Dictionary of Ming Biography
HMJSWB = Huangming jingshi wenbian


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