

Study on Gu Cheng and Guizhou Province Construction

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Abstract: Gu Cheng was one of the important generals guarding Guizhou in the early Ming Dynasty. With the trust of the rulers and outstanding military and political ability, Gu Cheng was able to keep Guizhou for a long time. Gu Cheng adopted the strategy of combining grace and power to govern Guizhou, and achieved good governance results. In the eleventh year of Yongle (1413), Gu Cheng led the army to put down the rebellion of the chieftains and contributed to the establishment of Guizhou province. Gu Cheng played a key role in Guizhou's development and eventual establishment as a province.

Gu Cheng was an important military general in Guizhou in the early Ming Dynasty. From the eighth year of Hongwu (1375), when he entered Guizhou, to the twelfth year of Yongle (1414), when he died, he kept Guizhou all the time. At present, the academic circles have paid attention to the role of Gu Cheng in the establishment of Guizhou province. However, due to the limited use of the literature on Gu Cheng, the research is not enough. Therefore, the author intends to start with the life of Gu Cheng to reveal his historical contribution to the development and construction of Guizhou province.

1. Life of Gu Cheng

Before joining Zhu Yuanzhang's camp, Gu Cheng had been living in Jiangdu. Yuan to Zhizheng fifteen years (1355), heard Zhu Yuanzhang crossing the Yangtze River, then join Zhu Yuanzhang military Group. Because of the courage, to Sichuan peace, Gu Cheng has risen to the commanding officer and transferred to the Chengdu guard. In the eighth year of Hongwu (1375), Gu Cheng was promoted to the rank of commander of Guizhou Wei and entered the Guizhou region. At that time, Yunnan was still in the hands of King Liang of Yuan Dynasty, and Guizhou was the object of contention between Yuan Dynasty and Ming Dynasty, and its strategic position was prominent. "The ethnic minorities often revolted, so Gu Cheng frequently sent troops to suppress the rebellion, captured and killed many enemies."^[1]Under the tough military attack of Gu Cheng, "all the barbarians were intimidated, Willing to pay taxes, the barbarians called Gu Cheng a tiger, so as to stop the children crying."^[2]

In September of the fourteenth year of the Hongwu(1381), Zhu Yuanzhang "appointed Fu Youde, Marquis of Yingchuan, as the general of the Southern Expedition, Lan Yu, Marquis of Yongchang, as the deputy General on the left, and Mu Ying, Marquis of Xiping, as the Deputy General on the right, and led the soldiers to the expedition to Yunnan."^[3]At that time, Gu Cheng was the military commander of Guizhou Wei. "As the vanguard of the army, he followed Fu Youde's expedition to Yunnan and captured Puding, and Fu Youde ordered him to stay."^[2]Puding was an important

transportation hub between Yunnan and Guizhou at that time, and it was also the throat of the march of the Zhengnan army, and the garrison of Gu Cheng reflected the affirmation of Gu Cheng's military ability by Fu Youde, the commander of the Ming army. Gu Cheng stationed in Puding, "order the soldiers to erect a fence as a defense."^[4]In the face of a large number of re-assembled enemies, Gu Cheng did not attack, In view of the many enemies, he stood by and finally defeated the strong enemy. "Promoted to General Zhao Yong and served as the commander of Puding Defense for generations."^[5]In addition to military strikes, Gu Cheng "focused on pacification and granting favors, and the ethnic minorities thus became obedient.In the summer of Hongwu's 25th year, Gu Cheng came to Beijing, Promoted to zhenguo general, Guizhou provincial commander."^[4]In the 29th year of Hongwu, "Promoted to General Piao Ji, Right army governor General. In the same year, Gu Cheng hung up the South General Seal, led the army to defeat the Shuixi rebellion, Captured the leader of the bandits, Jingde, and beheaded him, The rest of the bandits surrendered."^[4]Gu Cheng was promoted to the governor of the right army and led the army to suppress the rebellion, which was the beginning of his overall responsibility for Guizhou's military.

Hongwu thirty-one year (1398), the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang died. In the same year, Emperor Jianwen Zhu Yunwen, who succeeded to the throne, summoned Gu Cheng to the capital and acted as the governor of the Right Army. In the first year of Jianwen (1399), in July, the Jingnan army began to rise, and Emperor Jianwen took Geng Bingwen, Marquis of Changxing, as his general and commanded hundreds of thousands of troops to attack Prince of Yan. Gu Cheng, as the Right Commander, followed the Changxing Marquis and was determined to fight, but was defeated and taken over.The Prince of Yan was glad to untie his bondage and said: "You are an old courtier of the previous dynasty, and my father, the emperor, has presented you to me. The Prince of Yan and Gu Cheng talked about the cause of the uprising, and both of them wept. Afterwards, the Prince of Yan sent Gu Cheng to Beiping to assist the prince in defending."^[2]Gu Cheng went to Beiping. "At that time, Yao Guangxiao was ordered to assist the prince in defense, and the prince highly relied on him. However, Yao Guangxiao did not understand military affairs and his ideas were much different from those of Gu Cheng."^[4]In the face of the urgent situation of the Ming army siege, the prince of Zhu Gaochi chose to listen to Gu Cheng's views on military dispatch. However, because Gu Cheng was a surrendered general, the ministers believed that Gu Cheng should not be given full-time power. Zhu Gaochi not only did not adopt this suggestion, but also ordered him to unify the army and grant him armor, swords, and other items. Gu Cheng refused one by one and expressed his desire to only seek military advice, which fully demonstrated Gu Cheng's political wisdom. And his advice, "all the plans fit, all the applications work."^[4]The Ming army that besieged the city several times eventually returned in vain, and Gu Cheng's planning undoubtedly played an important role.

After the Battle of Jingnan, Gu Cheng was rewarded for his meritorious service in helping the prince defend the city. Hongwu 35 years (1402) September: "Right Governor Gu Cheng became a Fengtian Yiyun Tuicheng Xuanli Wuchen, a special promoted Ronglu official, Zhu Guo, the Right Governor of the Rear Military Governor's Office, the Marquis of Zhenyuan, A salary of 1500 stones, inherited by descendants."^[6]This is a peak of Gu Cheng's achievements during his lifetime. In October of the same year, Zhu Di "Command Gu Cheng, to guard Guizhou."^[6]In the spring of the first year of Yongle, upon learning that Gu Cheng had arrived in Guizhou, ethnic minorities happily came out to meet him. The rebels surrendered one after another, and Guizhou achieved peace."^[4]From the first year of Yongle (1403) to the twelfth year of Yongle (1414), Gu Cheng adopted a strategy of combining power and grace, which basically maintained stability in Guizhou. Although located in the frontier, he did not forget to offer suggestions and received recognition and commendation from Zhu Di.^[6]The most important thing is that during the period of Gu Cheng's

garrison in Guizhou, he led the army to suppress the rebellion and contributed to the establishment of Guizhou province. "In the eleventh year of Yongle (1413), Sinan and Sizhou fought against each other. Zhu Di ordered Gu Cheng to lead 50000 soldiers to capture the rebellious chieftains and escort them to Beijing. So, the region was divided into eight prefectures and four states, and Guizhou Province was established to govern seventy-five chieftains."^[7]In May of the 12th year of Yongle (1414), Gu Cheng died in Guizhou at the age of 85 years. When news of Gu Cheng's death reached Beijing, Zhu Di posthumously conferred the title of Duke of Xia on Gu Cheng. After Gu Cheng's death, his children and grandchildren were well taken care of.

2. The Reasons for Gu Cheng's Long Stay in Guizhou and His Strategy for Ruling Guizhou

In terms of military ability, Gu Cheng was obviously a general with both wisdom and courage, which is reflected in many historical records. For example, in the sixth year of Hongwu (1373), Gu Cheng led the army to expedition Wang Xuanbao, a demon thief in Chongqing, "Xuanbao escapes, but his uncle is captured. Gu Cheng orders the sergeant to take Xuanbao's uncle and call out: the official army has left, Xuanbao where are you? Xuanbao responded to the shout and was killed on the spot."^[5]In the fourteenth year of Hongwu (1381), when the Ming Army attacked Yunnan on a large scale, Gu Cheng was ordered to stay in Puding. Facing the siege of tens of thousands of enemies, Gu Cheng grasped the right time, resolutely attacked, and won the initial victory. At this time, the south gate was still besieged by the enemy, "Gu Cheng killed the eighteen men he had captured alive, but released one man and said to him, "I will kill you at night when I beat the drum. When the enemy heard the official army beating drums and firing cannons, they all ran away in fear, and the siege was fully relieved."^[1]Gu Cheng not only has courage, but also has a plan, which is an important reason why he can win successive battles. In the decades of guarding Guizhou, Gu Cheng led the army many times to put down the rebellion of the chiefdoms and ethnic minorities around the territory, which was feared by the people and called him "Gu Tiger". Jin Youzi evaluated him in the ancestral temple inscription written for Gu Cheng: "Courageous and resourceful, he is able to anticipate the enemy's actions and win. He will only strike the enemy when he is fully confident. For this reason, he was greatly admired by the ethnic minorities. In the development of Guizhou, Gu Cheng's contribution is obvious."^[8]

Gu Cheng's ability to stay in Guizhou for a long period of time, in addition to possessing outstanding military skills, was also related to the fact that he was deeply trusted by the ruler. When he first started to follow Zhu Yuanzhang, Gu Cheng was chosen as a personal soldier to escort Zhu Yuanzhang's security. At this time Gu Cheng has been "loyal and honest without fault" recorded in historical materials.^[9]"Hongwu first year (1368) awarded the General of Wu Lue, escort Zhu Yuanzhang tour of the north, returned to Chenzhou, the boat can not move, the boatmen have no way. Gu Cheng carried the boat forward. Zhu Yuanzhang was very happy and promoted Gu Cheng to be the commander of Jianchengwei."^[5]Gu Cheng served as Zhu Yuanzhang's personal guard, which enabled him to be in contact with Zhu Yuanzhang from time to time, thus leaving a deep impression on Zhu Yuanzhang. Afterwards, he conquered Sichuan and Guizhou and won many battles. Especially in the 14th year of Hongwu (1381), when he was stationed in Puding, Gu Cheng defeated the enemy, which was witnessed by the officials and returned to the court, thus further deepening his impression in Zhu Yuanzhang's mind. However, due to the lack of constraints away from the capital, the always loyal Gu Cheng also made mistakes. In July, the 23rd year of Hongwu (1390), "Gu Cheng was denounced by his subordinates for his corruption and use of jade and other items. Considering Gu Cheng's past merits, Zhu Yuanzhang did not punish him, but only ordered the Ministry of War to record Gu Cheng's crimes as a warning for the future."^[3]Later, Zhu Yuanzhang still trust Gu Cheng as always, Gu Cheng also diligent in the job. In the 29th year of Hongwu (1396), Gu Cheng was promoted to the position of Governor of the Right Army for his achievements. In addition to the deep trust of Zhu Yuanzhang, Zhu Di also particularly valued him.

In the first year of Jianwen (1399), Gu Cheng accompanied Geng Bingwen's army to attack Zhu Di and was captured at Zhending. Zhu Di because know Gu Cheng is the old minister and released him, Gu Cheng grateful, dedicated to assist Yan Shizi guard Beiping. Jianwen four years (1402) after the end of the war, Zhu Di rewarded, Gu Cheng for defending the city and many of the merits of the war with the marquis. In the same year, Gu Cheng defended Guizhou with the title of Marquis of Zhenyuan. During his stay in Guizhou, Gu Cheng wrote several letters of advice. The history books record that "Gu Cheng played and spoke on political affairs, suggesting that Zhu Di should elect a crown prince earlier to differentiate the ranks. The generals and soldiers in the north who have meritorious service, since they have been given rewards, should be bound by the national code."^[6]In addition to suggesting that Zhu Di should establish a crown prince early and to discipline his generals with a code of law, Gu Cheng also spoke about the military affairs of the border. He believed that the minorities in Yunnan and Guangdong and the Japanese pirates on the southeast coast were not enough to worry about, and that the biggest threat to the Ming Dynasty was the Northern Yuan, so he suggested that the borders should be carefully fortified.^[6]The above suggestions have been greatly affirmed and praised by Zhu Di.

During the period of guarding Guizhou, Gu Cheng carried out Zhu Yuanzhang's ideology of governing with both might and virtue. For the enemies who resisted the rule of the Ming Dynasty, Gu Cheng resolutely suppressed them, while for those who surrendered and returned to the country, he carefully pacified them. Such as Hongwu 29 years (1396), "in November, he was ordered to serve as the general officer, wearing the seal of the General of the South. He led the army to conquer the rebellious minorities in Wukai and other places. Among them, those who surrendered were appeased and the minorities returned to the fold."^[8]In addition, Gu Cheng more often took the method of killing the rebellious leader and appeasing the rest of the people. For example, "Hongwu Thirty-one years (1398), Puding Xibao and Gongzhou, Guangjingu, Laoli, Jinshifan, Xiantang barbarians rebelled again, Gu Cheng once again led the army to quell the rebellion, killed the rebel leader, and pacify the rest of the crowd."^[4]The History of the Ming Dynasty, Gu Cheng Biography, remembered him: "Hundreds of Miao villages were pacified, leading rebels were executed, and the remaining people were appeased. The extensive application of kindness and trust has led to the submission of the ethnic minorities."^[7]The long-term strategy of combining grace and authority established Gu Cheng's prestige in the hearts of the minorities, and this prestige played a significant role when Gu Cheng returned to Guizhou in the fourth year of Jianwen (1402)."At first, when Gu Cheng left for Beijing, the minorities thought that Gu Cheng would not come back, so they ran out to rob, and the Guizhou army could not control them. When Gu Cheng returned to Guizhou, he released the arrested criminals and asked them to bring the news of Gu Cheng's return to the rebels. Soon, the rebels returned to the fold and Guizhou was once again stable."^[8]In addition to successfully applying Zhu Yuanzhang's thought of governing Guizhou with both might and virtue, Gu Cheng was also good at dealing with the contradictions among the ethnic minorities in Guizhou. "Yongning Chief Xuanfu was murdered by his brother, his men were in chaos. Gu Cheng captured Xuanfu's brother and sent him to Beijing for punishment. According to custom, Xuanfu's wife was made to take over his position. Xuanfu's men bowed down and obeyed."^[4]"When conflicts arose between Wusa and Shuixi, Gu Cheng ordered commanders Cai Li and Liu Biao to chastise them, kill a bull and sacrifice it to the sky, and make a vow of peace."^[5]

3. The role of Gu Cheng in promoting the establishment of Guizhou province

In February of the eleventh year of the Yongle era, the Ming dynasty established the province of Guizhou. The most immediate reason for the establishment of the province in Guizhou was the fight between Tian Zongding and Tian Chen, among others. Historical records show that Tian Zongding, the prefect of Sinan, was tyrannical and killed innocents indiscriminately, and had conflicts with his adjutant Huang Xi, who attacked each other. Although the Ming Dynasty hated Tian Zongding, but considering the fact that Tian Zongding's family had been managing Sinan for generations, they

chose to protect him and reappointed Huang Xi as the governor of Chenzhou. Tian Chen, the prefect of Sizhou, was also in conflict with Tian Zongding, so he joined hands with Huang Xi to attack Tian Zongding. Huang Xi gained power and oppressed the people. Tian Chen called himself the Lord of Heaven, his wife was the landlord, and his subordinates, Wende and Yang Guanghai, called themselves the ministers of civil and military officials. Huang Xi was a general and led an army with Tian Chen to attack Sinan. Tian Zongding fled."^[6]

Tian Chen and Huang Xi joined forces to attack Sinan, but Zongding was unable to resist, so he went to the capital to face Zhu Di. Zhu Di repeatedly ordered Tian Chen and Huang Xi to come to Beijing to mediate, but all resisted not to come. And contact officials in the palace, intending to rebel. Things were exposed, Zhu Di made Jiang Tingzan to pacify them, and Gu Cheng to lead an army of 50,000 to go to conquest. Tian Chen and Huang Xi were finally captured by Gu Cheng.^[6] Soon after, Zhu Di gave his opinion on how to handle the situation: The state appointed Tian Chen as the prefect of Sizhou and Tian Zongding as the prefect of Sinan, hoping that they would manage the people well, but they oppressed the people and should be executed. Guizhou Province and its departments should be established to manage the Sizhou and Sinan regions.^[6] Obviously, in the whole process of handling the "Ertian Incident", Gu Cheng acted as a key role in pacifying the rebellion of Tian Chen and others. He laid the foundation for Zhu Di's execution of Tian Chen and Tian Zongding and the establishment of Guizhou Province.

After the establishment of Guizhou province in February of the eleventh year of Yongle (1413), a large-scale rebellion led by Puliang broke out in Guizhou. Zhu Di sent officials to pacify them, and in August of the same year, he ordered "Gu Cheng to act as a general officer, and Liang Fu to act as a deputy general officer, and to lead the 30,000-strong official army deployed by the two provinces of Huguang and Guizhou, as well as by the three guards of Wuchang, in order to go to conquer the rebels."^[6] In the first month of the twelfth year of Yongle (1414), "Gu Cheng beheaded Pu Liang, the leader of the Sizhou rebels."^[6] Taking half a year, Gu Cheng finally quelled the rebellion. In March of the same year, "the Ming dynasty divided the places of Sinan and Sizhou under Guizhou Province into eight prefectures."^[6] It can be seen that Gu Cheng played an important role in the establishment of Guizhou Province and the initial formation of Guizhou's political regions.

4. Conclusion

From the eighth year of the Hongwu reign (1375) to the twelfth year of the Yongle reign (1414), Gu Cheng adopted the tactics of both grace and authority to stabilise the situation in Guizhou and provide a more peaceful environment for the development of Guizhou in the early Ming Dynasty. Gu Cheng led his troops to capture Tian Chen and others who resisted the Ming Dynasty, which contributed to Zhu Di's determination to establish Guizhou Province. The pacification of the rebellion led by Pu Liang ensured the initial formation and stabilisation of Guizhou's political region. In short, Gu Cheng played a crucial role in the establishment of Guizhou Province.

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