

**Linguistic and poetic features of
Yue poems in 17th century Guangxi**
– Evidence from a newly discovered trilingual collection

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Thesis

This paper investigates the book *Jyut Fung Zuk Gau* 粵風續九 "Odes of Yue, Sequel to Nine Songs" (JFZ9 hereafter) of 1662 and analyses the poem *Tong Soeng* 塘上 "On the pond" in JFZ9. Theses of this paper are:

1. Goulou Yue (勾漏粵語) is the most likely Han variety used in *Tong Soeng*. It predates the *Fanwan Cyutjiu* 分韻撮要 (1782) dictionary, which is commonly thought of as the earliest written record of Yue.
2. The Yue is influenced by the surrounding Zhuang. The rhyme scheme of this poem is not that of typical Han poetry but reflects the practice of the tradition of Zhuang poetry.

Four steps of the investigation:

1. Analyse the text.
2. Analyse the modern phonetic and lexical features of four existing varieties of Han-Chinese spoken in the region.
3. Compare rhyme schemes and phonetics of the four varieties.
4. Investigate the population dynamics of the region.

Background

- About JFZ9 (Jyut Fung Zuk Gau)
 - Is a Han, Zhuang and Mien trilingual collection of folk songs
 - From Xún-zhōu prefecture 潯州府 in central Guangxi
 - By four collectors, among them Wu Qi 吳淇 is the chief editor
 - Published in 1662
 - But gradually got lost during the next centuries
 - Li Diao-yuan 李調元 reprinted an modified edition in 1778 under the title *Jyut Fung* 粵風 (JF hereafter) and his name
 - In 2001 the original JFZ9 was rediscovered and republished

	JFZ9 (Jyut Fung Zuk Gau)	JF (Jyut Fung)
Year	1662	1778
Author(s)	4 collectors, 1 editor	1 editor
No. of entries	5 volumes, 120 poems.	4 volumes, 111 poems.
Contents	Comments on poems; Folklore; Articles with extra information	Deleted most of them
Texts		Replaced some characters of the poems of JFZ9 with alternative ones

Studies before 2001 are based on JF.

Version Comparison

Research Question

Which variety of Han is included in the volume “Odes of Yue”?

The five volumes of JFZ9 and their languages

1. Odes of Yue 粵風 - Han
2. Songs of Yao 獠歌 - Mien
3. Songs of Lang 狼歌 - Zhuang
4. Songs of Zhuang 獞歌 - Zhuang
5. Miscellaneous Songs 雜歌 - All three languages above

Study object

Tong Soeng 塘上 "On the pond" in the vol. "Odes of Yue".
It's a ballad in 4 verses, every verse contains 7 syllables.

Text:	嫩	鴨	行	游	塘	柵	上
Gloss:	tender	duck	walk	swim	pond	fence	on
	嬌	娥	尚	細	不	曾	知
	fine	maid	still	young	not	yet	know
	天	旱	蜘蛛	結	夜	網	
	sky	dry	spider	weave	night	web	
	想	晴	只	在	暗	中	絲
	want	sunny	only	in	dark	midst	silk

Wu-xuan

Great Yao Mountains

Da-teng Valley



Counties of Xún-zhōu:

1. Gui-ping 桂平: prefectural capital
2. Gui-xian 貴縣 (now Gui-gang 貴港)
3. Ping-nan 平南

Surrounding areas:

Wu-xuan county 武宣

Da-teng Valley 大藤峽

Great Yao Mountains 大瑤山

Xún-zhōu prefecture 1662

(XZfz [Xun-zhou Gazette],
1826)

Text analysis

Among the three counties of Xún-zhōu, the poem was possibly collected near the prefectural capital Gui-ping.

It could be known by analysing the imagery, rhetoric and place names of poems related to *Tong Soeng*:

妹 相思

sister longing

妹有真心弟也知

sister have true heart brother also know

蜘蛛 結 網 三 江 口

spider weave web three river mouth

水推不斷是真 絲

water push not ripped be true silk

登船起離 三 江 口

Tanka boat off leave three river mouth

只爲無風浪來遲

only for no wind wave come late

月明 今 網船頭撒

moon bright grasp web boat head cast

情人水面 結 相思

lovers water surface weave longing

- Place names

Three river mouth 三江口: Metonymy of the city Guiping, for it's located at the mouth of three big rivers - Xún 潯江, Qián 黔江 and Yù 郁江.

- Imagery and rhetoric

Identical imagery: “spider silk” and “spider weave silk/longing”.

Identical rhetoric: Homophonic pun of “silk” *si^{A1} 絲 and “longing” *si^{A1} 思. Notice that the position of these keywords is the same - the last syllable of the last verse.

Tong Soeng follows the same pattern. It indicates that these songs come from the same oral transmission, thus from the same region.

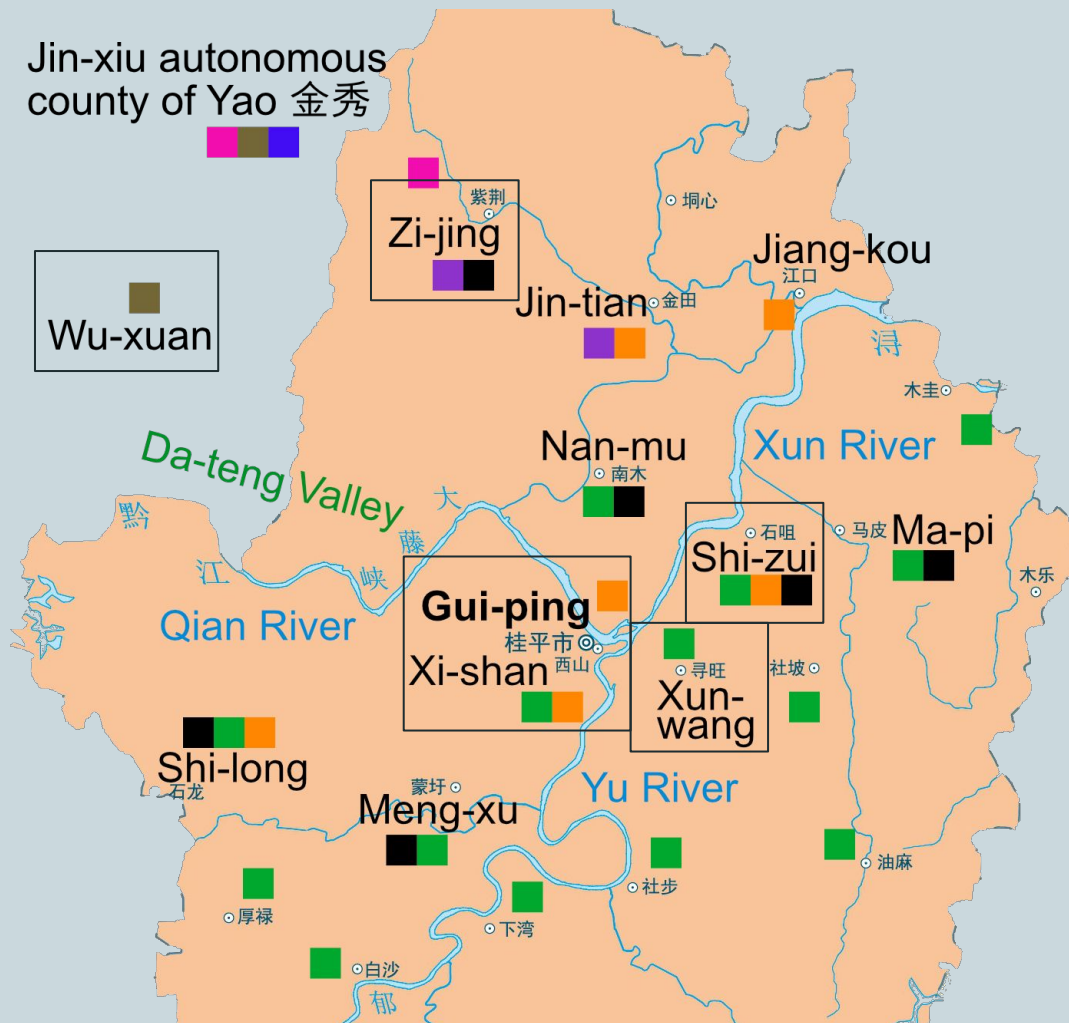
- Other place names

The Han poem *Baak Sek Saan* 白石山 “White Rocky Hill”.

The hill was in the south of Guiping, according to the historical works *Dian Yue Yaozuan* 殿粵要纂 (1599-1602) and *Dushi Fangyu Jiyao* 讀史方輿紀要 (1630-1660). The hill is still there today.

Modern distribution of languages in Guiping

- Goulou Yue
- Guiping Cantonese
- Zhuang
- Hakka
- Mien
- SW Mandarin
- Lakkia



Phonetic features

- Compare four Han varieties spoken in the region:
 - Goulou Yue of three locations: Xun-wang, Shi-zui and Xi-shan.
 - Cantonese (Yue) of the Guiping downtown. Cantonese is the prestige variety among Yue dialects. Locals call it “speech of the downtown”(街話).
 - Hakka of Zi-jing.
 - Southwestern Mandarin of Wu-xuan.

Goulou Yue

(Xi-shan. M, youth.)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上
nyn ap ʔɛaŋ jɛu tɔŋ lan ʃaŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 會 知
ki:u ŋɔ ʃaŋ lɛi pət tɛaŋ tɛi
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網
tʰin hɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mɔɛŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲
tɕjaŋ tɛi tɛi tsɔi ɛm tɛuŋ li
want sunny only in dark midst silk

(Shi-zui. F, mid-aged.)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上
nyn ap hɛaŋ jɛu tɔŋ ɛaŋ ɛaŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 會 知
ki:u ŋɔ ɛaŋ θai pət θaŋ tɛi
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網
tʰin hɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mɔɛŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲
θjaŋ θiŋ tɛi θɔi ɛm tɛuŋ θi
want sunny only in dark midst silk

(Xun-wang. M, youth.)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上

nyn ap ʔεaŋ jəu tœŋ tɕ^hjək ʃεaŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 會 知

ki:u ŋɔ ʃεaŋ θəi pət θeŋ tɕi
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網

t^hin ʔɔn tɕi tɕy kit jɛ mœŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲

θjaŋ θeiŋ tɕi θɔi ɛəm tɕoŋ θi
want sunny only in dark midst silk

Features of rhymes:

- 上 “on” /εaŋ//aŋ/ = 尚 “still”
/εaŋ//aŋ/
≠ 網 “web” /œŋ/ ≠ 想 “want”
/jaŋ/
- 知 “know” /i/ = 蜘蛛 “spider” /i/ =
絲 “silk” /i/
- 絲 “silk” /i/ = 思 “longing” /i/

Guiping Cantonese

(GP downtown)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上
nyn ap haŋ jəu tʰɔŋ tɕʰɛk ʃœŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 會 知
ki:u ŋɔ ʃœŋ sei pət tsʰɛŋ tɕi
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網
tʰin hɔn tɕi tɕy kit jɛ mɔŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲
sœŋ tsʰɪŋ tɕi tsʰɔi ɛm tɕɔŋ sɿ
want sunny only in dark midst silk

Features of rhymes:

- 上 “on” /œŋ/ = 尚 “still” /œŋ/
= 想 “want” /œŋ/ ≠ 網 “web” /ɔŋ/
- 知 “know” /i/ = 蜘蛛 “spider” /i/ ≠
絲 “silk” /ɿ/
- 絲 “silk” /ɿ/ = 思 “longing” /ɿ/

Hakka

(Zi-jing. M, mid-aged.)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上
nun ap haŋ iu t^hoŋ tsa? ɔŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 會 知
kiaŋ ŋɔ ɔŋ sei put ts^hən ti
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網
t^hiən hən tɛu tɛu kiət ia mɔŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲
θioŋ tsiaŋ tɛi ts^hɔi am tɛoŋ θu
want sunny only in dark midst silk

Features of rhymes:

- 上 “on” /ɔŋ/ = 尚 “still” /ɔŋ/
= 網 “web” /ɔŋ/ ≠ 想 “want” /iɔŋ/
- 知 “know” /i/ ≠ 蜘蛛 “spider” /u/ ≠ 絲
“silk” /u/
- 絲 “silk” /u/ = 思 “longing” /u/

Southwestern Mandarin

(Wu-xuan)

嫩 鴨 行 游 塘 柵 上
nən ja hɪn jou tʰaŋ tsa ɕaŋ
tender duck walk swim pond fence on

嬌 娥 尚 細 不 曾 知
kiaʊ ŋo ɕaŋ li pu tsʰən tɕi
fine maid still young not yet know

天 旱 蜘蛛 結 夜 網
tʰiɛn han tɕi tɕy kɛ jɛ vaŋ
sky dry spider weave night web

想 晴 只 在 暗 中 絲
ɕiaŋ tsʰiŋ tsi tsæ ŋan tɕoŋ sɿ
want sunny only in dark midst silk

Features of rhymes:

- 上 “on” /aŋ/ = 尚 “still” /aŋ/
= 網 “web” /aŋ/ ≠ 想 “want” /iaŋ/
- 知 “know” /i/ = 蜘蛛 “spider” /i/ ≠ 絲
“silk” /ɿ/
- 絲 “silk” /ɿ/ = 思 “longing” /ɿ/

Lexical features

Two words are noticeable:

**ha:ŋ*^{A2} 行 for “walk”

**sei*^{C1} 細 for “young”

These are **not used in SW Mandarin** of this region.

But commonly used in GL Yue, GP Cantonese and Zi-jing Hakka.

Rhyme scheme

➤ Foot rhyme scheme of Han poems in 4-verses ballad:

- The last syllable of the 1st, 2nd, 4th verses rhyme.
- No rhyme at the 3rd verse.
- No switch of rhymes.

Example: *Baak Sek Saan* “White Rocky Hill”,
vol. Yue, JFZ9.
IPA in Guiping Cantonese

爲 情 每 日 弟 心 孤
wɛi ts^hŋ mu:i jət tɛi sɛm ku:
for affection every day brother heart lonely

白 石 山 高 隔 路 途
pak ʃɪk ɛan kəu kak lu: t^hu:
white rocky hill high apart road path

娘 在 深 房 高 枕 睡
nœŋ ts^hɔi ɛəm fŋ kəu tɛəm ʃo:i
lady in deep room high pillow sleep

問 娘 得 夢 見 兄 無
mən nœŋ tək mŋ kin hŋ mu:
ask lady could dream see brother not

➤ None of the four tongues fit the foot rhyme scheme of Han poetry.

GL Yue (Xun-wang)

nyn ap ʔɛaŋ jəu tœŋ tɛ^hjək ʃɛaŋ

ki:u ŋɔ ʃɛaŋ θai pət θaŋ tɛi

t^hin ʔɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mœŋ

θjaŋ θiŋ tɛi θɔi ɛəm tɛuŋ θi

(lacks the rhyme of the 1st verse)

GP Cantonese

nyn ap haŋ jəu t^hɔŋ tɛ^hək ʃœŋ

ki:u ŋɔ ʃœŋ səi pət ts^haŋ tɛi

t^hin hɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mɔŋ

sœŋ ts^hiŋ tɛi ts^hɔi ɛm tɛuŋ sɿ

(no rhyme)

Hakka

nun ap haŋ iu t^hɔŋ tsaʔ (ɛɔŋ)

kiau ŋɔ ɛɔŋ sei put ts^hən ti

t^hiɛn hən tɛu tɛu kiɛt ia (mɔŋ)

θiɔŋ tsiɑŋ tɛi ts^hɔi am tɛɔŋ θɥ

(no rhyme or (wrong rhyming verses))

SW Mandarin

nən ja hɪn jou t^hɑŋ tsa (ɛɑŋ)

kiau ŋɔ ɛɑŋ li pu ts^hən tɛi

t^hiɛn han tɛi tɛy kɛ jɛ (vɑŋ)

liɑŋ ts^hiŋ tsi tsæ ŋan tɛɔŋ sɿ

(no rhyme or (wrong rhyming verses))

➤ Waist-Foot rhyme scheme in Kam-Tai poetry

Zhuang epic from northwestern Guangxi. Line 46-52. Total: 467 lines

waist foot

↙ ↓

46 koən fuk ləp fu: **liən**
before suddenly dark suddenly light

47 θəw fuk **ʔjən** fuk **ʔji:**
all at once suddenly Heaven suddenly Earth

48 **vi:** yo: ləp yo: **xəm**
not know night know evening

49 ʔbou yo: **təm** yo: **θa:ŋ**
not know short know tall

50 ʔbou yo: **va:ŋ** yo: **yei**
not know crosswise know straight ahead

51 **va:ŋ** **tei** vi: **ɕaŋ** **ɕa:u**
Emperor not yet Create

52 **ca:** **pa:u** vi: **ɕaŋ** **ɕi:**
Family Treasure not yet Establish

An example from JFZ9, vol. “Songs of Lang”.

Old Zhuang Script: 齊 同 勺 护 肚

Standard Zhuang: gyaez doengz youq ndaw **dungx**

Gloss (partially translated
from the original Chs.): think of / companion / at / inside / stomach

雙 逢 運 如 慈

song fwngz unq **lumj** ceiz

two / palm / numb / as / sticky rice cake

Rhyme schemes help us to read the Old Zhuang Scripts (Saw Ndip).

➤ *Tong Soeng* combines waist-foot and foot rhyme schemes.

The phonetic and lexical features of Goulou Yue fit the most.

GL Yue (Xun-wang)

nyn ap ʔɛaŋ jəu tœŋ tɛ^hjək ʃɛaŋ

ki:u ŋɔ ʃɛaŋ θai pət θaŋ tɛi

t^hin ʔɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mœŋ

θjaŋ θiŋ tɛi θɔi ɛəm tœuŋ θi

GP Cantonese

nyn ap haŋ jəu t^hɔŋ tɛ^hək ʃœŋ

ki:u ŋɔ ʃœŋ səi pət ts^haŋ tɛi

t^hin hɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mɔŋ

sœŋ ts^hiŋ tɛi ts^hɔi ɛm tœuŋ sɿ

(lacks the rhyme of the last verse)

Hakka

nun ap haŋ iu t^həŋ tsaʔ ɛəŋ

kiau ŋə ɛəŋ sei put ts^hən ti

t^hiən hən tɛu tɛu kiət ia məŋ

θiəŋ tsiəŋ tɛi ts^hɔi am tɛəŋ θu

(lacks many rhymes)

SW Mandarin

nən ja hɪn jou t^həŋ tsa ɛəŋ

kiau ŋə ɛəŋ li pu ts^hən tɛi

t^hiən han tɛi tɛy kɛ jɛ vaŋ

ɦiaŋ ts^hiŋ tsi tsæ ŋan tɛəŋ sɿ

(lacks the rhyme of the last verse. and
the lexical features don't fit.)

GL Yue (Xun-wang)

nyn ap ʔɛaŋ jɛu tɔŋ tɕ^hɲɛk ʃɛaŋ

kju ŋɔ ʃɛaŋ θai pət θaŋ tɛi

t^hin ʔɔn tɛi tɛy kit jɛ mɔɛŋ

θjaŋ θiŋ tɛi θɔi ɛɛm tɔŋ θi

Open question:

Could /mɔɛŋ/ rhyme with /θjaŋ/? If so, it'll be a perfect waist-foot rhyme. Could we find an example?

The combination:

- Waist-Foot rhyme scheme:
 - 1st - 3rd verses
 - Switch rhymes

- Foot rhyme scheme:
 - No foot rhyme in the 3rd verse.
 - The foot rhymes of the 2nd and 4th verse rhyme.

Population dynamics

From 1467 to 1620 there was a native chiefdom (土司州) called Wu-jing chiefdom 武靖州 in the north of Gui-ping, populated by Zhuang and ruled by a Zhuang chieftain. The seat of the court was in present day Wu-jing village in Jin-tian 金田.

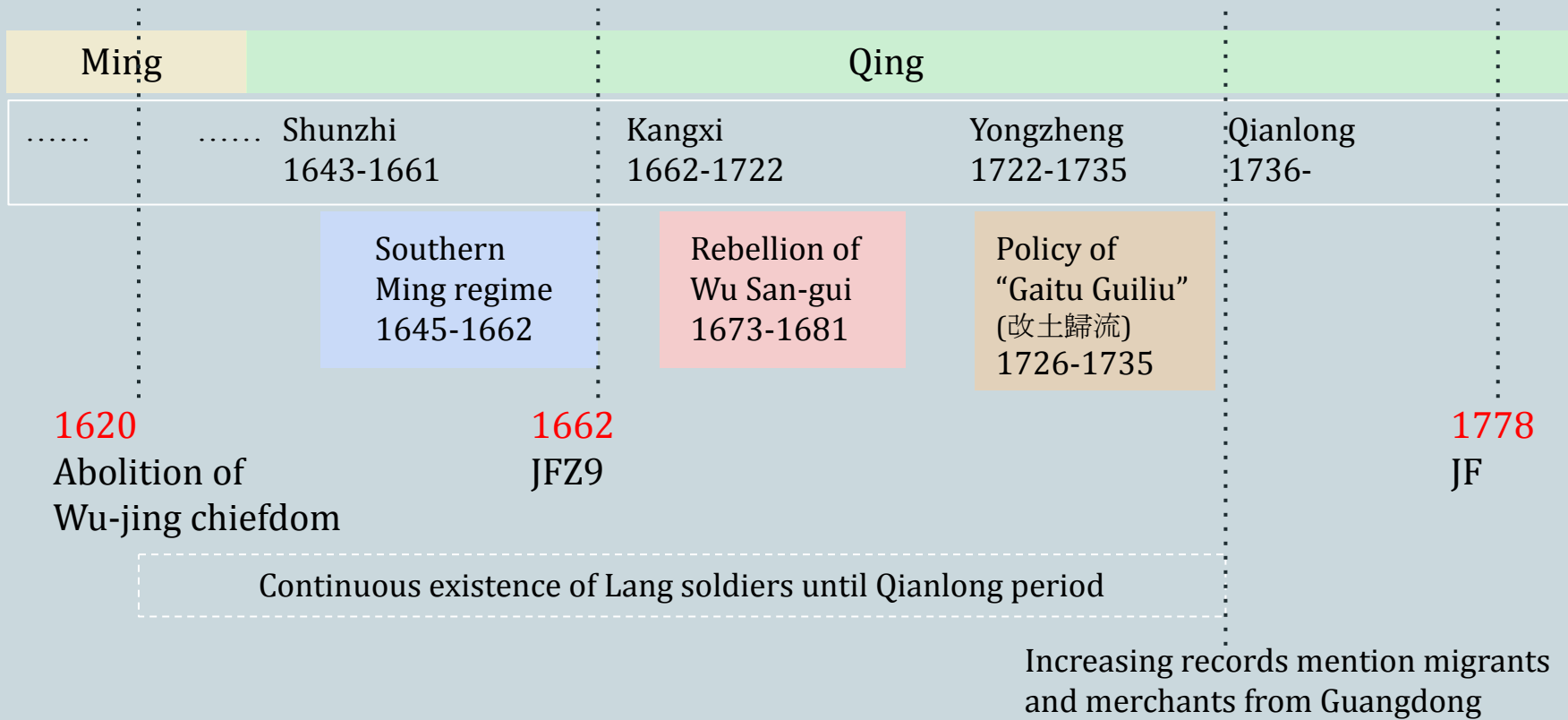
Only around the 1730s did large-scale migration of Cantonese and Hakka arrive in this region.

Historical terms:

Lang soldiers (狼兵): Zhuang soldiers under command of native chieftains

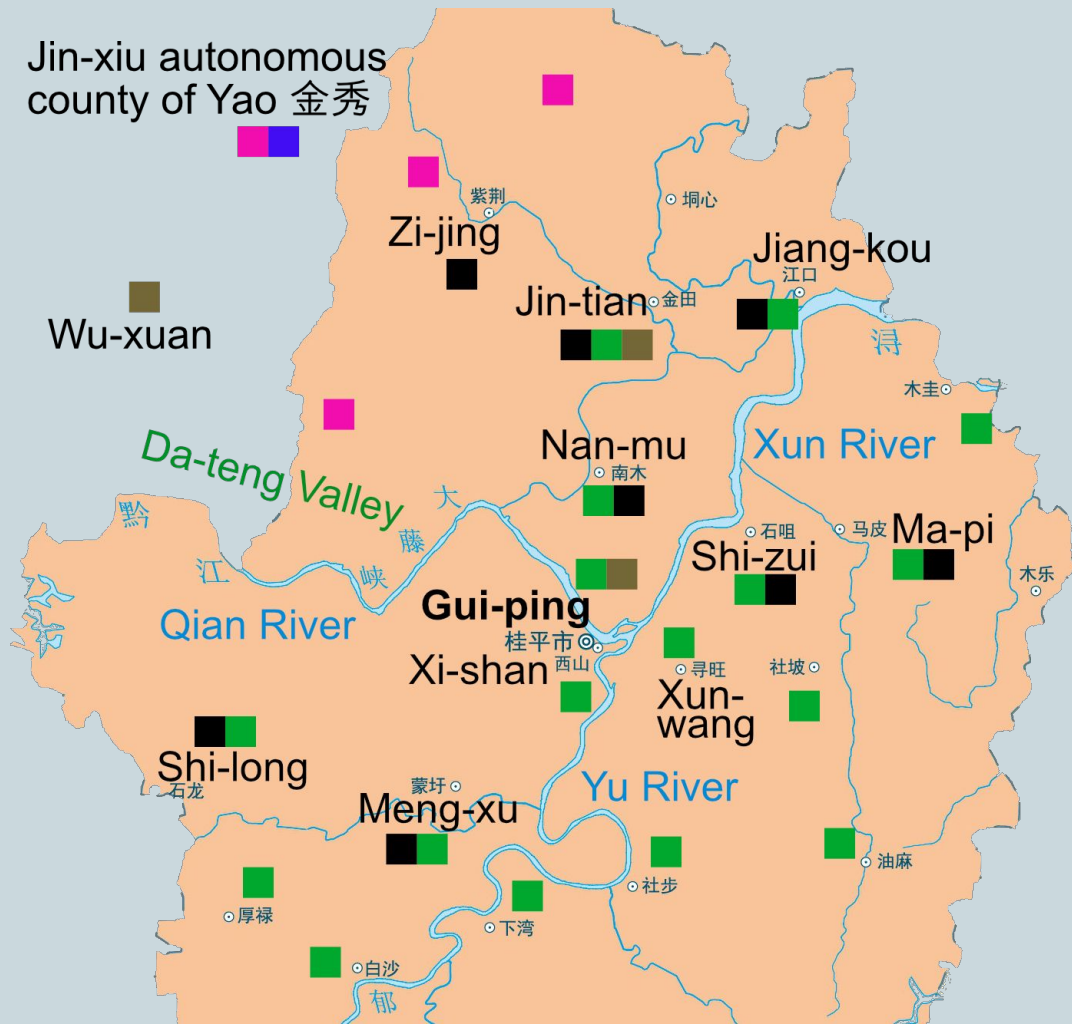
Zhuang (獞): Zhuang commoners

Both are ethnic Zhuang in modern context.



(DSFYJY, 1630-1660. WZFFZ, 1770. XZFFZ, 1826. Tang, 2007, 2011, 2011, 2014.)

A suggestion on historical distribution of languages in Guiping 1662



- Goulou Yue
- Zhuang
- Mien
- SW Mandarin
- Lakkia

Appendix: An anomaly and what does it tell us?

Vol. “Miscellaneous Songs”
Section “Songs of Tanka”

登 船 起 離 三 江 口
Tanka boat off leave three river mouth

只 爲 無 風 浪 來 遲
only for no wind wave come late

月 明 今 網 船 頭 撒
moon bright grasp web boat head cast

情人 水 面 結 相思
lovers water surface weave longing

今 semantic: “Today”; phonetic: /kɛm^{A1}/ in Yue.

The semantic reading doesn’t fit the context and the metre.

However, reading it as an Old Zhuang Script, which

corresponds to the standard Zhuang word *gaem* /kɛm^{A1}/,

means “hold, grasp”, would be more appropriate.

Statistics of the vernacular character 今 in JFZ9

Total no.	Position	Glossary
4	3 * Lang; 1 * Zhuang	hold; grasp

Conclusion

Through this analysis of *Jyut Fung Zuk Gau*, the earliest linguistic record of the Guiping area from the mid-17th century, we conclude that Goulou Yue is included in the book. It also shows that Zhuang exerted considerable influence on local Yue poetry.

It is hoped that this paper will shed light on the historical linguistic landscape that helps us better understand language contact and cultural interaction in the Lingnan area.

Thank you for your attention!

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