

The Rise of Loyal and Righteous Figures in the Qing Dynasty and Their Culture of Violence

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Abstract— *This article discusses the sacrifice ceremony of Zhaozhongci in Qing dynasty by method of dual-subject of system and text. On the one hand, it clarifies the evolution of the system, and explains the formation and development context of text group of "Loyalty Characters". On the other hand, it proves the internal and external changes of the sacrifice ceremony system of Zhaozhongci by describing writing connotation and spiritual transformation of "Loyalty Characters". The development trend of the increasingly flourishing of sacrifice ceremony system and text of Zhaozhongci as well as its interaction with politics, society, culture and psychology reveals that sacrifice ceremony of Zhaozhongci has certain position and influence in many aspects in the late Qing Dynasty. Based on such understanding, the author further explores the generation, development and spread of violence culture through the "Death" and "Violence" in the text, attempting to present the aspect of violence psychology that is increasingly pervading in the society of the late Qing Dynasty.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the late Qing Dynasty, a vast array of texts emerged, documenting the deeds of loyal and righteous figures and their martyrdom. The scale of the figures and events involved was unprecedented in previous dynasties, a phenomenon closely tied to the establishment of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites during the Qing Dynasty. The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites, initiated during the Yongzheng era, were designed to honor loyalty and valor, commemorating subjects who sacrificed their lives for the sovereign and the state. Those included in the rites were not limited to nobility, generals, ministers, scholar-officials, or gentry, but extended to soldiers, commoners, women, servants, and other ordinary individuals. Notably, the inclusion of a large number of people was an institutional and scale innovation unseen in earlier dynasties. The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites constituted a long-standing system rather than a temporary or localized commemorative activity. It grew increasingly prosperous, spreading from the central government to local regions, and from Beijing to the far reaches of the empire.

This development paralleled the wars and rebellions from the High Qing to the late Qing period, becoming a remarkable phenomenon in the sacrificial culture of the late Qing. The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites were not merely an institutional presence; they also gave rise to a diverse and rich array of texts, including imperial edicts, "Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan" (Biographies of the Loyal and Righteous from the Zhaozhong Shrine), memorials, official documents, local gazettes, inscriptions, essays and poetry, Zhaozhonglu (Records of Loyalty and Valor), regulations, genealogies, epitaphs, and even newspapers. These form a collective body of texts centered on the symbol of "loyalty and righteousness." The potential information embedded in these diverse texts far exceeds the institutional framework and its political implications. Exploring broader dimensions such as society, culture, and psychology through these materials can undoubtedly yield a richer historical understanding.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the events and essence documented in texts related to the Zhaozhong Shrine represent the most extreme form of "violence," a

culture of violence and death symbolized by "loyalty and righteousness." Synchronized with the expansion of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites from the High Qing to the late Qing, one can discern a trend in the rise of "loyal and righteous" writing and a culture of violence. Corresponding to this cultural phenomenon were the increasingly prominent internal and external rebellions and violent activities in 19th-century China. The connections and dynamics among these political and social activities, sacrificial culture, and social psychology undoubtedly warrant attention and reflection. This article, by examining the institutional and textual evolution of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites, elucidates the context of the formation and development of the textual collective of "loyal and righteous figures" in the Qing Dynasty. It further attempts to use the concept of "violence" to capture this narrative trend in the late Qing and the contemporaneous violent mindset it reveals.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT, PRACTICE, AND LOCALIZATION OF THE ZHAOZHONG SHRINE SACRIFICIAL RITES

2.1 Emperor Yongzheng's Political Rewards and Propaganda

Emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735) ascended the throne amidst a fierce struggle among princes for the succession, and the legitimacy of his rule was repeatedly questioned by his political opponents. The victory in the Qinghai campaign in the second year of his reign (1724) played a crucial role in solidifying his position and stabilizing the political situation, enabling him to launch a political counterattack against his rivals. In October of that year, he issued an edict ordering the construction of the "Biaojiang Zhongxun Ci" (Shrine for Honoring Loyal and Meritorious Officials) in the capital, dedicated to the civil and military officials, as well as officers and soldiers, who had died in service to the state since the founding of the dynasty.¹ Emperor Yongzheng's initiative to establish this new sacrificial rite to promote loyalty and integrity served a dual purpose. On the one hand, it was a means to leverage the favorable situation created by the Qinghai victory to strike at his political enemies. On the other hand, while ostensibly rewarding loyal merit through generous rewards and commendations for the officers and soldiers who had distinguished themselves in battle, and providing substantial compensation and accolades for the fallen and

their families, it was actually a way to publicize the Qinghai military achievement. This served to elevate and establish his own historical standing, aiming to prove the legitimacy of his succession and consolidate his imperial authority.

The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites, through their physical form, provided a concrete space for commemorating the Qing Dynasty's military prowess and constructed a format for recalling the dynasty's military achievements. From then on, the Zhaozhong Shrine in the capital became a tangible symbol in Beijing of the Qing Dynasty's great accomplishments and the emperor's recognition of loyal service, thereby highlighting the significance of the ethic of loyalty to the ruler.

2.2 Emperor Qianlong's Military Campaigns and Bestowed Favors

In order to distinguish himself from Emperor Yongzheng's severe and stringent political style, Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) upon his ascension declared a governing principle of "tempering severity with leniency." He sought to rule with benevolence to win over the people's hearts and to heal the divisions and estrangement between ruler and officials resulting from past factional struggles within the court[1]. Within this political atmosphere, he deliberately utilized and promoted the few policies of his father, Emperor Yongzheng, that showed generosity and favor towards his subjects. He repeatedly bestowed additional favors upon and expanded the scope of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites. By providing tangible personnel benefits, he deepened the collective connection and identification of these individuals with the ruler and the state, encouraging continued sacrifice for the nation. (Refer to Table 1.) He extolled these rites as a "kuangdian" (unprecedented grand ceremony) for rewarding merit, bestowing upon them the highest praise.

¹ In the sixth year of the Yongzheng reign (1728), the shrine was completed and officially named "Zhaozhong Shrine."

Table 1: A Table of the Institutional Evolution of the Zhaozhong Shrine Sacrificial Rites During the Qianlong Reign

1st Year of the Qianlong Reign (1736)	An imperial edict was issued ordering the investigation and reporting of the family members of those enshrined in the Zhaozhong Shrine, granting them promotion and care.	Qinding Daqing Huidian Zeli, vol. 84, p. 640
3rd Year of the Qianlong Reign (1738)	Officials and soldiers who died in service at the Western Route, Zhuozishan Mountain, and Qizishan Mountain (all during the Yongzheng reign) were to be enshrined in the Zhaozhong Shrine.	Qing Gaozong Chun Huangdi Shilu, vol. 66, p. 72
4th Year of the Qianlong Reign (1739)	An imperial edict was issued ordering that personnel who died in service at the Northern Route military camps during the Yongzheng reign be posthumously added to the Zhaozhong Shrine.	Qing Gaozong Chun Huangdi Shilu, vol. 86, p. 346
13th Year of the Qianlong Reign (1748)	It was approved through deliberation that for hereditary officials of the Eight Banners who had long had no descendants, a spirit tablet for the original titleholder should be established in the Zhaozhong Shrine to receive offerings, thereby manifesting their meritorious service.	Qinding Daqing Huidian Zeli, vol. 84, p. 641
25th Year of the Qianlong Reign (1760)	An imperial edict was issued ordering that servants of officers and soldiers who died in battle be granted special favors and have their cases deliberated for compensation. In addition to being enshrined in the Zhaozhong Shrine, their sons and younger brothers were permitted to leave the bond-servant registers and become commoners.	Daqing Huidian Shili (Guangxu chao), vol. 449, p. 152
39th Year of the Qianlong Reign (1774)	During the Wang Lun Incident, Fang Yi, the nephew of Fang Guangsi, the Chief of Police in Tangyi County; Wu Wenxiu, the nephew of Wu Li, the Instructor; and the servant Wang Zhong all followed the officials in resisting the bandits. They either died in the line of duty or, following their masters, cursed the bandits and were brutally killed after refusing to submit. All of them, despite holding no official position, were enshrined in the Zhaozhong Shrine.	Qing Gaozong Chun Huangdi Shilu, vol. 968, p. 1207
58th Year of the Qianlong Reign (1793)	Hailancha (?-1793) died of illness at home. According to regulations, he was not eligible for enshrinement in the Zhaozhong Shrine. However, the Qianlong Emperor, considering that Hailancha had "served in the military camps for many years and had been wounded in battle," granted him special posthumous favors as a high minister who had served in the military camps. An edict was issued bestowing the favor of enshrining him in the Zhaozhong Shrine.	Qing Gaozong Chun Huangdi Shilu, vol. 1425, p. 68

Moreover, the Qianlong Emperor proclaimed his "十全武功" [2]. The violence and death brought by numerous campaigns continuously provided abundant material for the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites. The Qianlong Emperor implemented these rites throughout this series of wars, during which the practice of enshrining officials and soldiers who died in battle became an established Qing Dynasty custom for granting posthumous compensation and honors [3]. Through prolonged operation and practice, the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites became fully institutionalized. During the sixty years of the Qianlong reign, the rites were conducted with great stability, held semi-annually in spring and autumn (the second and eighth months of the lunar calendar) without interruption.

While the Qianlong Emperor's enthusiasm and emphasis on the sacrificial rites were certainly politically motivated or aimed at promoting his military achievements, his methods were notably more magnanimous and nuanced, demonstrating a greater grasp of his ministers' psychology. The Qianlong Emperor's bestowal of favors upon those who served and died for the state and ruler, as well as their families, reached an extreme, strengthening the interactive dynamic between the emperor and his subjects within the rites. The emperor's care for the deceased loyalists and their families provided both psychological and tangible incentives, while simultaneously serving as exemplary education (models of loyalty and courage) and a source of psychological pressure. The numerous wars and rebellions of the

Qianlong era were not only opportunities to enact the sacrificial rites but also arenas to test the integrity and resolve of his subjects. Both high ministers and common soldiers were forced to make choices when facing life and death. The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites provided a normative form and framework (applicable to both ruler and ministers), and their influence is undeniable. Those who survived through dishonorable means faced the severest punishment, while the deceased were granted the highest sacrificial honors and grace. Whether an individual was granted enshrinement in the Zhaozhong Shrine became an indicator of the emperor's evaluation of that person and their deeds.

The emperor's grace and the memory of their fathers' and grandfathers' loyalty had a similarly emotive and normative impact on family members and descendants. According to regulations, they were required to participate in the biannual Zhaozhong Shrine ceremonies. This was both an act of reverence and remembrance for their ancestors' deeds and a response of gratitude for the emperor's favor. They were expected to participate respectfully and behave appropriately. Regardless of the true psychological state of these family members, this form of participatory ritual served as a reminder when they might one day face their own life-or-death decisions. This was not merely a top-down political performance but a normative, collective interaction. The long-term practice and shared participation in this cultural form, where ruler and ministers interacted and perceived each other within this arena, established a certain psychological foundation for the Qianlong Emperor and his subjects. It played a significant role in sustaining the martial spirit and ethos of loyalty and righteousness within the military forces as the Qianlong Emperor repeatedly pursued his military exploits.

2.3 Localization: The Establishment of Provincial Zhaozhong Shrines and Army-Specific Zhaozhong Shrines

In the seventh year of the Jiaqing reign (1802), on the eve of suppressing the Sichuan-Shaanxi-Hubei sectarian rebellions, the Qing government, following the established practice since the Yongzheng and Qianlong eras, began the process of enshrining fallen officers and soldiers in the Zhaozhong Shrine. However, due to the immense number of casualties, the Zhaozhong Shrine in the capital faced the dilemma of insufficient space to accommodate additional spirit tablets. Consequently, the Jiaqing Emperor proposed the widespread establishment of Zhaozhong Shrines in various prefectures (including sub-prefectures and independent departments), thereby extending this form of ruler-subject interaction to the local populace. The localization of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites

commenced with enshrinements related to the Sichuan-Shaanxi-Hubei incident and the Miao uprisings in western Hunan. This was subsequently followed by cases such as Cai Qian's uprising in the southeastern seas and the Tianlijiao incident in Zhili and Henan provinces. During the Daoguang reign, events like the campaign to pacify Jehangir, the Zhang Bing incident in Taiwan, and the Opium War continually provided impetus for the ongoing development of Zhaozhong Shrines. Driven by the Jiaqing Emperor's active promotion, the geographical distribution of Zhaozhong Shrine construction expanded from the southwestern and northwestern provinces to the southeastern coastal provinces and even to the northeastern regions beyond the Shanhai Pass.

The trend of internal rebellions reached its climax with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement. The Xianfeng Emperor (1831-1861) issued edicts decreeing that civil and military officials, gentry, and their families who had died loyal to the Qing since the start of the Taiping uprising should receive additional posthumous honors beyond the standard compensations. These honors included bestowing posthumous titles, enshrinement in Zhaozhong Shrines, or the erection of memorial arches to commemorate their chastity and martyrdom. This was a strategy to rally popular support and cope with the crisis, positioning the Zhaozhong Shrine once again as a crucial spiritual rallying symbol for the Qing Dynasty. The Taiping Rebellion lasted over a decade, resulting in enormous military and civilian casualties. With strong encouragement from the central government, a fervent wave of Zhaozhong Shrine construction swept across various regions. Regardless of whether an area was remote or a core economic zone, activities related to building or repairing Zhaozhong Shrines emerged everywhere. Among these, the most extensive was the General Zhaozhong Shrine in the provincial capital of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. After the recovery of Zhejiang Province, local authorities established a General Bureau for Investigating Loyalty and Righteousness. Through organized investigation and documentation, over 200,000 individuals, including deceased officials, gentry, soldiers, local braves, and their female family members, were enshrined. From the Jiaqing-Daoguang period through the Xianfeng-Tongzhi era, the scope of identities eligible for enshrinement in Zhaozhong Shrines continuously expanded. By the Tongzhi and Guangxu reigns, the General Zhaozhong Shrine in Zhejiang began including female family members in attached sacrifices and opened enshrinement fully to local figures, with the numbers often reaching tens or even hundreds of thousands [4]. Regardless of whether these vast numbers of war dead enshrined in Zhaozhong Shrines died voluntarily,

accidentally, or under duress, their deaths were shaped through enshrinement and documentation into an image of loyalty, righteousness, and martyrdom for the Qing regime.

Another noteworthy phenomenon during the localization of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites was the emergence of army-specific Zhaozhong Shrines. In the third year of the Xianfeng reign (1853), the Xiang Army, which was formed relatively early, saw its founder Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) take the lead in advocating for the construction of a Xiangxiang Loyalty and Righteousness Shrine dedicated specifically to the militia forces. Subsequently, the Xiang Army (also known as the Chu Army) successively established shrines in Jiangxi, Jiangning (Nanjing), Huguang (Hubei and Hunan), as well as in the Guanzhong region and Xinjiang. Following the precedent set by the Xiang Army, the legalization of privately established army-specific Zhaozhong Shrines gradually became normalized. The Huai Army, formed somewhat later, eventually surpassed others in this regard. The Huai Army participated in nearly every military campaign of the late Qing Dynasty, earning a reputation as the empire's most formidable force. Concurrently, casualties within the Huai Army mounted daily, naturally leading to an increase in the construction of Huai Army Zhaozhong Shrines. Furthermore, numerous other military factions, each with its independent regimental designation and identity, also established their own dedicated Zhaozhong Shrines. The considerations and orientations for site selection for late Qing army-specific Zhaozhong Shrines differed significantly from those for prefectural and county-level shrines. During the Tongzhi and Guangxu reigns, the Chu and Huai Armies fought across the nation and garrisoned key strategic points. For soldiers who died in battle or from illness and could not be returned to their ancestral homes for burial, it became common practice for each army to purchase local public cemeteries for interment. The Zhaozhong Shrine, attached to the army's public cemetery, then served as the central sacrificial site. The construction of army-specific Zhaozhong Shrines and public cemeteries formed an inseparable whole. This not only highlighted the "private" nature of these shrines but also demonstrated the profound psychological and emotional significance they held for local military forces.

III. THE FORMATION OF A TEXTUAL COLLECTIVE ON LOYALTY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

3.1 The Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan System: Writing "Loyalty and Righteousness" and Death

The establishment of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites was profoundly significant. Concurrent with the deliberation of the rites, a corresponding system for composing biographies was also established, producing a body of officially authored texts. The compiled historical record was the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan. This work was created by "翰林院分派各員詳查實錄、國史、方畧各館檔案，移取兵部清冊，各為立傳，彙成一編，垂諸永久" [5]. The biographical writing in the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan followed a set of formulaic narrative plots and writing paradigms. A typical biography would begin with the person's place of origin, background, moral conduct, meritorious service over the years, and the circumstances of their death in battle or martyrdom. It would also include memorials requesting posthumous compensation, imperial edicts, and records of posthumous titles and honors bestowed.

A distinctive feature of the biographical writing in the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan was its focus on ordinary individuals and the plot of facing death. The Qing state made a grand display of the sheer numbers involved; the scale of individuals enshrined was unprecedented in the history of sacrificial shrines. The vast majority were minor civil and military officials, soldiers, and other ordinary people. These individuals, whose only notable deed was their sacrificial death and who had no other accomplishments, would not have qualified for biographies in the standard national histories. Yet, thanks to the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan, they could leave their names and virtuous examples to posterity. Secondly, the narrative core of the texts associated with the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites was the account of facing death. The writing promoting the deeds of loyal and righteous figures, centered on the Zhaozhong Shrine rites, invariably described either dying in battle or choosing to die by one's own hand. The essence of these accounts was simply the choice to end one's life through the violence of the enemy or through one's own act of violence. It could be said that what the system and its texts encouraged, beyond the culture and significance of loyalty to the ruler, was implicitly the ultimate expression of such loyalty: the most extreme form and outcome of violence.

The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and the writing about loyal and righteous figures constituted a construction of a culture of death. Firstly, it promoted a specific perspective on death, distinct from the ultimate concerns offered by religions, such as reincarnation, the Western Pure Land, or the concept of a true void hometown, which aimed to assuage worldly fears and imaginings of death. The Zhaozhong Shrine rites, in contrast, focused on secular values and expectations.

Leveraging the traditional Chinese view of history, it held out the possibility of enduring recognition through the imagination of official historical positioning and evaluation. By juxtaposing death with permanence as a rhetorical point and incentive, it sought to extend its ethical influence beyond the scholar-official class. Secondly, the state provided a specific way to die: dying for loyalty to the ruler and the country, which would be rewarded with the state's care and collective commemoration. This form of death, however, could only occur through acts and situations of violence. In employing the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites to promote loyalty and integrity, the practice undoubtedly embedded the genes of a culture of violence and death within its political operations and ethical endeavors.

3.2 The Textual Collective on Loyal and Righteous Figures

The cultural policies of the Qianlong reign were interconnected. The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites were not merely a component of the ritual system; they also involved verifying facts concerning personal histories, circumstances of death, and bestowals of posthumous honors, as well as their chronological order. This necessitated consulting various archival documents, including the original military records of the dead from the Ministry of War, the short biographies compiled by the Hanlin Academy, and the Baqi Tongzhi (Comprehensive Gazetteers of the Eight Banners). On the other hand, the writing of the biographies for the Zhaozhong Shrine also drew upon the military rosters from the Ministry of War and the records held by the Veritable Records, National History, and Military History offices. It is evident from this that the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and their associated writings were closely intertwined and mutually influential with Qing Dynasty archives and officially compiled administrative manuals, ritual books, and historical texts. This is particularly noteworthy in the realm of "biographical writing."

During the early Qing Dynasty, in order to successfully govern the Han Chinese territories, the state implemented numerous cultural policies, among which officially compiled historical texts held a significant position. Biographies of individuals constituted a major part of this official historiography. Among the seventeen historical texts compiled during the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong reigns, sixteen focused on figures from the Qing dynasty itself. This indicates a clear trend in the early Qing towards historical compilation activities characterized by writing biographies of contemporary figures. Within these biographies dedicated to Qing subjects, "loyalty and steadfastness to the ruler" emerged as a prominent criterion and a goal for moral

transformation. Although the Shengchao Xunjie Zhuchen Lu (Record of Officials Who Died Loyal to the Previous Dynasty), compiled in the 40th year of the Qianlong reign (1775), did not concern Qing figures, it served as a precursor to the later compilation of the Guoshi Erchen Zhuan (State History Biographies of Twice-Serving Officials) and the Guoshi Nichen Zhuan (State History Biographies of Rebellious Officials). In its portrayal of loyal officials from the Ming dynasty, it repeatedly emphasized the motif of "dying for one's duty." This is remarkably consistent with the writing style and language found in the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan. The paramount importance of "loyalty to the ruler" was undoubtedly the shared core value across this entire series of official biographies, with "death" and "violence" serving as their ultimate, external behavioral standards; there is a clear line of continuity between them.

In contrast to the writing about loyal Ming figures were those Ming officials who surrendered to the Qing and those who surrendered and later rebelled. In the 41st year of the Qianlong reign (1776), an imperial edict ordered that the biographies of Ming officials who had surrendered to the Qing, originally within the general state history biographies, be separated into a distinct category titled Guoshi Erchen Zhuan. In the 54th year of the Qianlong reign (1789), another edict mandated the extraction of those with records of rebellion from the Guoshi Erchen Zhuan to form a separate work, the Guoshi Nichen Zhuan. The intention behind these actions was clearly to demonstrate the emperor's standards and ideology concerning loyalty.

The Qianlong Emperor deliberately undertook the extensive compilation of biographies of Qing figures and the promotion of their deeds of loyalty and patriotism. The writing about "loyal and righteous figures" became a significant category within the official biographies compiled by the Qing state. In the late Qianlong period, biographies of civil and military officials who had died for the state from the founding of the dynasty down to the Qianlong reign were compiled into the Guoshi Zhongyi Zhuan. The composition and sheer number of figures included were unprecedented in any previous dynasty. The Eight Banners gazetteers complemented the state history. The Baqi Tongzhi (Chuji), compiled between the 5th year of the Yongzheng reign and the 3rd year of the Qianlong reign (1727-1738), already included a section on "Biographies of the Loyal and Valiant" within its biographical chapters. Li Fu (1673-1750), in his preface to the "Biographies of the Loyal and Valiant," stated: "逮我世宗憲皇帝御極，尤加意致命諸臣……。祠祀既建，忠烈益昭，人心共勸。" [6] The revised edition from the

Qianlong reign, published during the Jiaqing reign, was the Qinding Baqi Tongzhi. In this version, the "Biographies" section was reorganized into "Treatises on Personalities," and the "Biographies of the Loyal and Valiant" was renamed "Biographies of the Loyal and Righteous." Through these examples, the clear contours of the Qing state's historical compilation activities and ethos dedicated to promoting loyalty and righteousness become evident.

In summary, it is clear that the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan and the various other official writings on loyal and righteous figures were part of a continuous tradition, with a very close interactive relationship between the institutional framework and the texts themselves. The Qianlong Emperor not only perfected the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and ensured their long-term practice, but he also utilized and expanded them. Within his broader political agenda of promoting civil governance and compiling extensive collections of texts, he fostered the formation of the official corpus of writing on "loyal and righteous figures," centered on works like the Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan, the Guoshi Zhongyi Zhuan, and the "Biographies of the Loyal and Valiant/Righteous" sections within other official histories.

The prolonged and steadfast practice of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and the writing about its loyal figures indeed constructed a complete set of available forms and modes of participation. This system was rich in the culture and resources of loyalty, including ritual activities and performances, a widely used vocabulary and texts, countless exemplary figures and situational models for remembrance and dissemination, as well as both spiritual and tangible incentives. Its influence can be described as a form of latent, long-term psychological construction. The texts, in relation to the rites, not only endowed them with meaning and enriched their content but also amplified their dissemination and impact on an intellectual and psychological level. The culture of death and violence embedded within the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and the writings on loyal and righteous figures would also attach themselves to this psychological influence and be transmitted. While the impact of this form of transmission was initially limited to a certain scope, it already possessed the potential and energy for further expansion. The catalyst for this expansion was the localization of the sacrificial rites during the Jiaqing reign.

IV. TEXTUAL PROLIFERATION AND ITS WRITING OF DEATH AND VIOLENCE

The most direct textual change corresponding to the localization of the Zhaozhong Shrine was the massive

emergence of local texts on loyalty and righteousness. These became the mainstream of Zhaozhong Shrine-related writing and grew increasingly diverse, synchronously reflecting the frequent local wars and rebellions and the sharply rising death toll in the mid-to-late Qing Dynasty. Among the deceased figures documented, martyred merchants, gentry, militia members, and common men and women became new, increasingly common, and essential subjects. This highlights the extensive and brutal scale of wartime death and violent injury, which also had a more direct impact on the perceptions and psychology of the general populace.

Local rebellions in the late Qing, culminating in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement, reached a peak in terms of war scale, violence, and death. The existing Guoshi Liezhuan (State History Biographies) and Zhaozhong Shrine Liezhuan became inadequate to handle the sheer volume. The number of martyrs dying in a single city or locality often reached tens of thousands, and for an entire province, the figure could be as high as several hundred thousand. The format and scale of state historiography were utterly incapable of meeting the fervent desire of local people to record the deeds of their local loyal and righteous figures, preventing their names from being forgotten, and were insufficient to bear the weight of such profound emotion and memory. Consequently, provincial-level Zhaozhonglu (Records of Loyalty and Righteousness) and Zhongyilu (Records of Loyalty and Righteousness) began to be compiled. During the Tongzhi reign, such records from various provinces were successively compiled and published, for example, the Guangxi Zhaozhonglu, Zhejiang Zhongyilu, and Hunan Baozhonglu Chugao (Draft History of Honoring Loyalty in Hunan). Compilations even appeared at the county level, such as the Kuangdian Chanyou Lu from Dali County in Shaanxi. Thus, the deaths and actions of a vast number of ordinary people flooded into these texts on loyalty and righteousness, simultaneously demonstrating that such texts had a broad basis in social reality and popular psychology.

Changes in the writing of local gazetteers occurred even earlier than the appearance of Zhaozhonglu. During the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, records related to the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and corresponding biographies of loyal and righteous figures had already been gradually incorporated. Early examples appear in the southern Shaanxi region, one of the first areas where the Zhaozhong Shrine was localized. Local gazetteers from this area included many accounts of the loyal and righteous deeds of ordinary local people. For instance, the Daoguang era Liuba Ting Zhi (Gazetteer of Liuba Subprefecture) records the story of Wang Lunyuan:

增生，性慷慨。嘉慶五年，賊匪過境，執之，掄元曉以大義，賊怒連刺七刃，至死罵不絕口。[7]

By the Guangxu reign, a wave of local gazetteer compilation emerged, and the related writings expanded significantly. These ordinary individuals, unlike officials and gentry, did not have rich military achievements or backgrounds. The only material available for writing about them was their loyal and righteous behavior before facing death, which typically involved resisting the enemy, preferring death over surrender, or committing suicide. Moreover, these accounts often depicted exceptionally brutal death processes. From the Daoguang to the Guangxu reigns, a paradigmatic model for writing about local loyal and righteous figures gradually took shape.

The writings on loyalty and righteousness by military factions operated within a different context compared to those by local elites. Faced with the deaths of numerous members due to war and illness, military factions often relied on the emotional support among comrades-in-arms and between commanders and soldiers. Through activities such as petitioning for shrine construction (or donating for the establishment of public cemeteries) and the associated writings, military leaders and generals addressed the emotional and psychological needs of their troops, thereby sustaining the fighting capacity of their forces. For example, the regulations of the Huai Army's Zhaozhong Shrine and the Anhui Association Hall in Hubei declared, "淮軍自統帥以及官弁，皆與祠內奉祀將士有生死不渝之義" [8]. As Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) stated in his "Record of the Anhui Public Cemetery and Memorial Hall," "死之卹也愈厚，則生之聚也益堅" [9]. The motivation behind such statements is clearly articulated. They placed greater emphasis on the connection of shared memory and emotion, recalling the camaraderie among officers and soldiers and expressing feelings of grief and pity—an emotional tone not previously seen in official texts. This kind of emotional expression distanced itself from the state's discourse and the mode of ruler-subject interaction, gradually weakening the link between army-specific Zhaozhong Shrines and the national ethos of loyalty to the ruler. It can be said that both local military groups and local elites, operating on the basis of the collective psychological needs of society, altered the intrinsic meaning of the sacrificial rites and their texts through their utilization, reinterpreting the practical significance of the Zhaozhong Shrine rites.

The popular newspapers of the late Qing period also frequently carried reports related to the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites. Consider, for example, a report on the Zhaozhong Shrine ceremony in Hubei Province published

in the Shenbao on the 13th day of the 8th lunar month in the 21st year of the Guangxu reign (1895):

鄂省昭忠祠不下數處，如曾軍、霆軍，皆奉旨建立，祭祀以時.....。本月初五日，各祠致祭之期，酋事者先在漢口雇得福興菊部諸伶，在某祠登臺扮演，時則天高氣爽，風和日晴，祠中兩面高搭看臺，俾觀劇者便於坐立；伶人亦興高采烈，笙歌嘹亮，高唱入雲，誠一時盛事也。[10]

This news report shows that the images and emotions of loyalty, righteousness, valor, grief, and solemnity that should have been present in texts related to the Zhaozhong Shrine had completely vanished, presenting a completely different scene. "Souls of the dead" had replaced "loyal souls," and religious ceremonies had replaced official sacrifices. What the report on the sacrifices seemed to aim for was to present the grand occasion of the Zhaozhong Shrine ceremonies, rather than to interpret their ethical significance. The way it evoked memory was a form of reconstruction, yet this reconstruction did not involve writing about death (loyalty and righteousness) but sought to downplay death (ghosts and spirits). This difference undoubtedly provides a social perspective and interpretation from a different viewpoint. Specifically, it seemed intent on using religion and festivity to shake off the imagery of death inherent in the Zhaozhong Shrine, and the attendant psychological terror. The more joyful the atmosphere and the louder the music rose into the clouds, the heavier, perhaps, the emotional burden it sought to eliminate. This kind of reconstruction of death memory is not only a recollection and commemoration of past deaths but can also be a psychological projection of the present terror of death. Violence and death are both past events and ongoing processes. From this, we can perceive within the text the socio-psychological impact left by war and death, as well as the contemporary psychological fear of facing death.

The Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and the writing about massive death events constructed a kind of collective memory that allowed for emotional catharsis or provided emotional support. However, this construction of memory carried ancillary psychological and cultural influences. Specifically, the writing about loyal and righteous figures for the Zhaozhong Shrine contained a large amount of violence and death, especially the numerous and varied local texts that emerged. The local public memory constructed by the writing about local loyal and righteous figures was built upon a foundation of violent writing and death imagery piled up from the deaths of hundreds of thousands of lives in a single locality. Ma Xinyi (1821-1870), the Governor of Zhejiang, wrote in his preface to the Zhejiang Zhongyilu: "上而疆臣闔帥，下而

一命之吏、一介之夫，以及婦女童孺，罔不激於義憤，雖斷首剖心，九死而靡悔。” [11] Sun Shaokang (1886-?) recalled in his "Record of Visiting the Zhejiang Provincial Zhaozhong Shrine": “賊猝至，男婦不及避者，或唾罵死、格鬪死、溺死、縊死，武舉人顯清手刃賊數十人以死，無一屈者。” [12] Such descriptions were even more common in local gazetteers. For example, the Guangxu era Libo Xian Zhi records the circumstances of martyrdom: “有奮勇當先而死者……，有城陷巷戰而死者，有被擒不屈而死者，有厲聲罵賊而死者，有投河、投池、投井、赴火、服毒、自刎而死者，吁！皆忠也。” [13] Without the strict constraints of official writing, such texts, continuously supplied with material, freely depicted various figures and deeds. They deliberately showcased the loyal and righteous spirit of local people who resolutely faced death, and portrayed in detail the brutality of violence and death on both sides. This context of violence was indispensable for highlighting "loyalty and righteousness."

Moreover, such a vast quantity of writings, encompassing individuals from such a wide range of social backgrounds, revealed political and social significance different from the past, and its impact on the psychological and cultural level was also profoundly different. The writing on loyalty and righteousness produced in the late Qing, forged through experiences of the terror of death and the practice of violence, underwent a qualitative change not only in the words themselves but also in the structure of the close connection and mutual influence between the text and social reality. Descriptions similar to those detailing the horrors of slaughter and circumstances of death were ubiquitous. From the perspective of collective social memory, this sensitivity and focus on violence may stem not only from the memory of the "past" but also from the writer's own perception of and psychological projection onto the current reality. For instance, Liu Kunyi (1830-1902) stated in his preface to the Jiangxi Zhongyilu: “然伏莽未盡除，異類未盡馴，防軍未盡解，士民習於戰鬪，睚眦忿爭，輒相攻擊，守土之吏心惴惴焉，常若有意外之虞。” [14] This passage describes the post-war social tensions in Jiangxi, a situation where various localities were 陷入 collective violent confrontation, which was also the social reality inhabited by numerous writers and readers. Considering the psychological element of "violence" in writings on loyalty and righteousness alongside the textual descriptions of violent social situations, it can be said that in certain specific regions from the mid to late Qing Dynasty, corresponding situations and psychologies of collective violent confrontation existed over a long period; both were

ongoing. In other words, the social, psychological, and cultural influence of violence was spreading, not ending. [15]

Furthermore, there was also a category of pictorial publications, such as the Jiangnan Tielei Tu published during the Xianfeng reign. The pictorial themes in this work were invariably violent scenes of massacres, rapes, looting, and kidnappings by the Taiping forces, with corpses strewn across the land. These images both accused and propagandized against Taiping violence, while also implying the legitimacy and necessity of violence on the other side. [16]

The textual collective on loyal and righteous figures, which gradually took shape during the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods, further spread into local texts during the Xianfeng, Tongzhi, Guangxu, and Xuanton reigns. New types of texts on loyalty and righteousness continuously emerged, at one point even proliferating throughout society. Simultaneously, through the renewal and reinterpretation of these texts, their spirit and intrinsic meaning gradually transformed. The culture of violence implicit within them also interacted closely with the situations of social violence, highlighting its broad and profound socio-psychological impact.

V. CONCLUSION

This article, through a detailed examination of the context surrounding this group of texts, argues that the system of historiographical biography was an extremely important component of the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites, and also a distinctive feature that set these rites apart from others. Therefore, this article pays particular attention to the institutionalization of the rites and their associated writings during the Qianlong reign, connecting this process to the broader cultural project of compiling numerous texts under the Qianlong Emperor. Of special note is the formation of a textual collective centered on "loyal and righteous figures," which undoubtedly amplified the cultural influence of the "loyalty and righteousness" symbol.

The writing of texts possesses a determining quality. Through texts, the set of cultural forms provided by the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites had their meanings and standards fixed. The interplay between the institutional system and the texts, each reinforcing the other, thus expanded their influence. On the other hand, texts are also reconstructible. As the sacrificial rites spread to local areas, the texts related to the Zhaozhong Shrine diversified correspondingly, with local writings becoming the mainstream. Local groups used these texts to reinterpret the practical significance of the rites, and consequently, the

Qing government lost its discursive authority over their interpretation. It was precisely because the Zhaozhong Shrine sacrificial rites and their related texts were fully utilized by local groups for memory and emotion that the rites experienced significant development from the mid to late Qing Dynasty. The extensive construction of Zhaozhong Shrines in local areas and the massive production of related texts, which even became subjects for media reporting and reproduction, all demonstrate that the Zhaozhong Shrine held a certain position and exerted influence in the political, social, cultural, and psychological spheres of the late Qing period. Based on this understanding, the author observes elements of a culture of violence, particularly the cultural phenomenon of the rise of texts focused on writing about violence. This reveals the dissemination of a culture of violence within them, which likely had a certain degree of influence in intensifying violence, as a mentality of violence increasingly spread throughout late Qing society.

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