

# **Solving the world's worst piracy problem in 1809:**

*an introduction to the Jinghai Fenji of Yuan Yonglun and the  
Qing scroll ink-painting “Pacifying the South China Sea” in the  
Hong Kong Maritime Museum*

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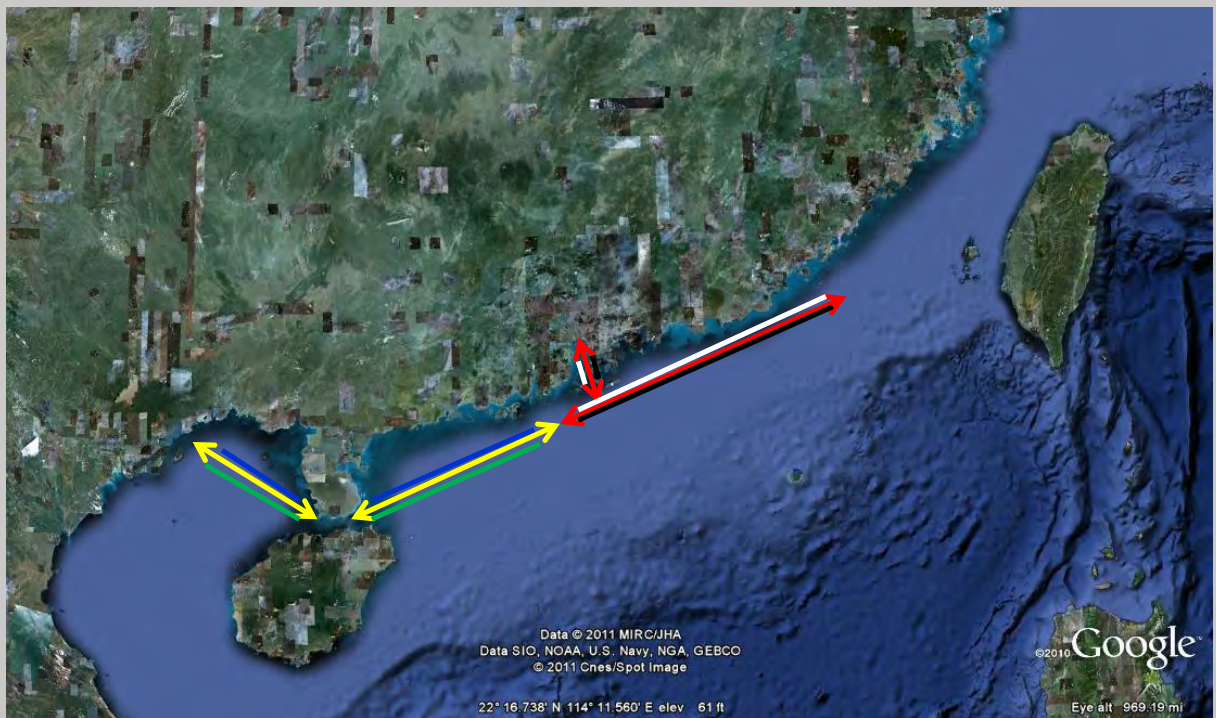


**The HKMM Qing scroll depicts the events of late 1809 to late 1810 or early 1811.**

**Towards the end of 1809 Bailing (百齡) was appointed Governor General of the Liangguang to solve the problem of the Zheng, six fleet *haidao* federation, which had been paralyzing life on the coasts of Guangdong Province since 1807**

**The Qing navy, manned by Han troops of the Green Standard Army, was weak, underfunded, underequipped, ill-trained, often poorly led and as often suborned by the *haidao***

**Bailing faced an awesome task.**



### **Haidao fleet patrol areas, coast of Guangdong, 1807-1810**



**Western Passage:  
Yellow, Green & Blue Flag Fleets**

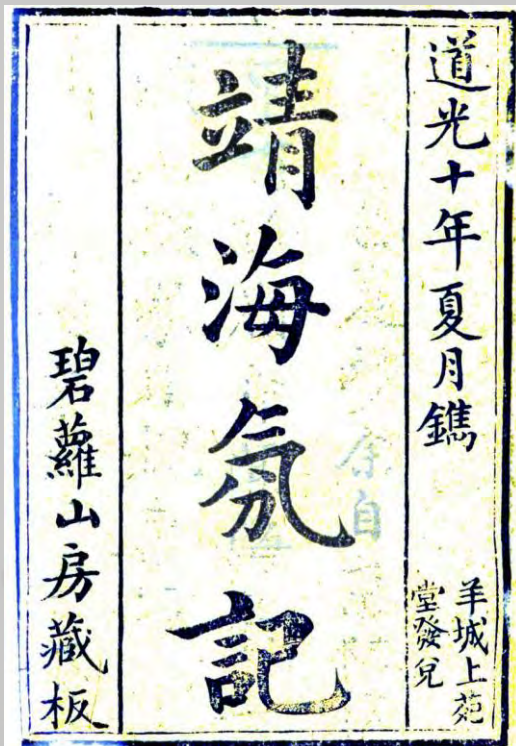


**Middle and Eastern Passages:  
Red, Black & White Flag Fleets**

## Main identified locations mentioned in the Qing Scroll







HISTORY  
OF  
THE PIRATES

WHO  
INFESTED THE CHINA SEA,  
FROM 1807 TO 1810.

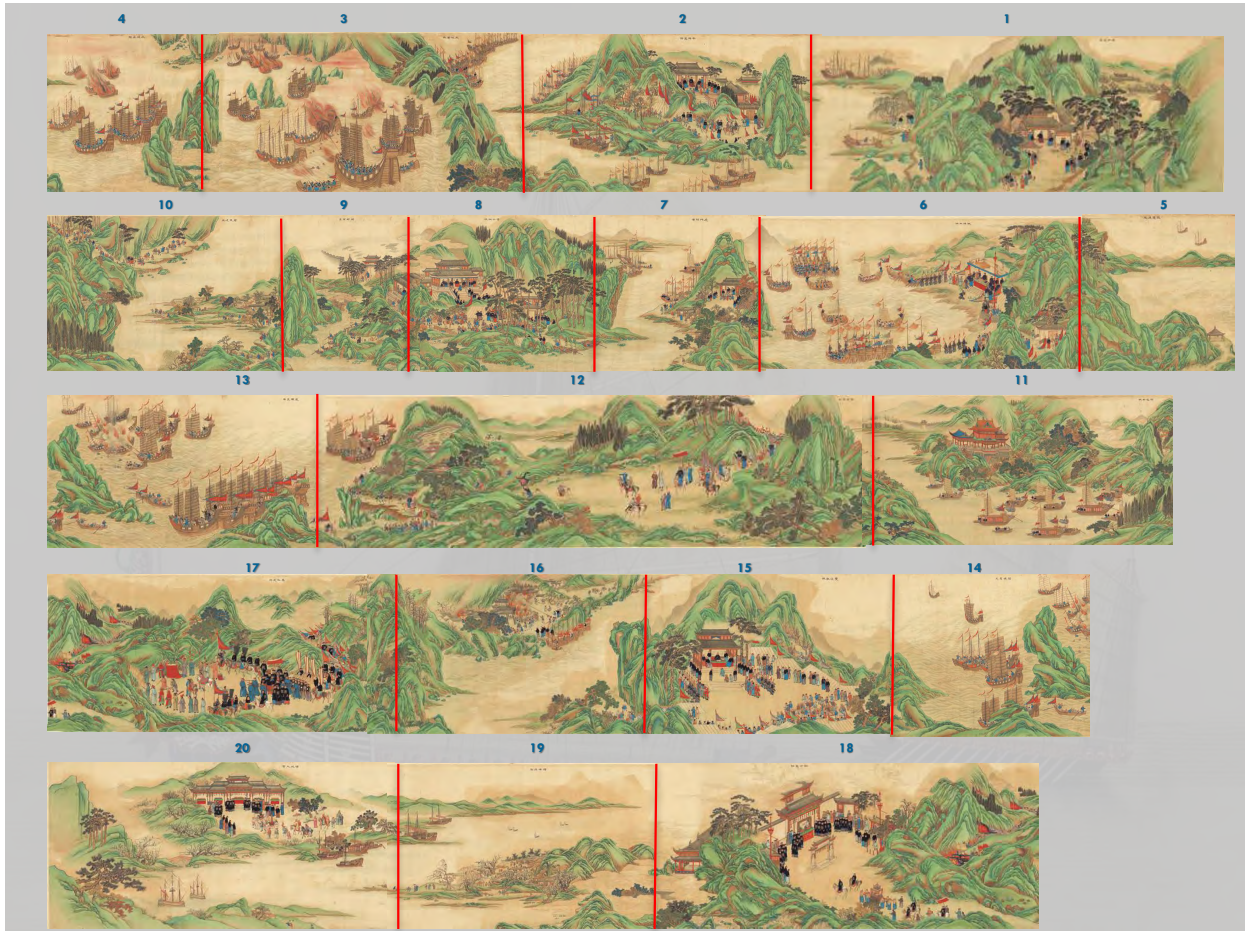
TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE ORIGINAL,  
WITH  
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,  
BY  
CHARLES FRIED. NEUMANN.

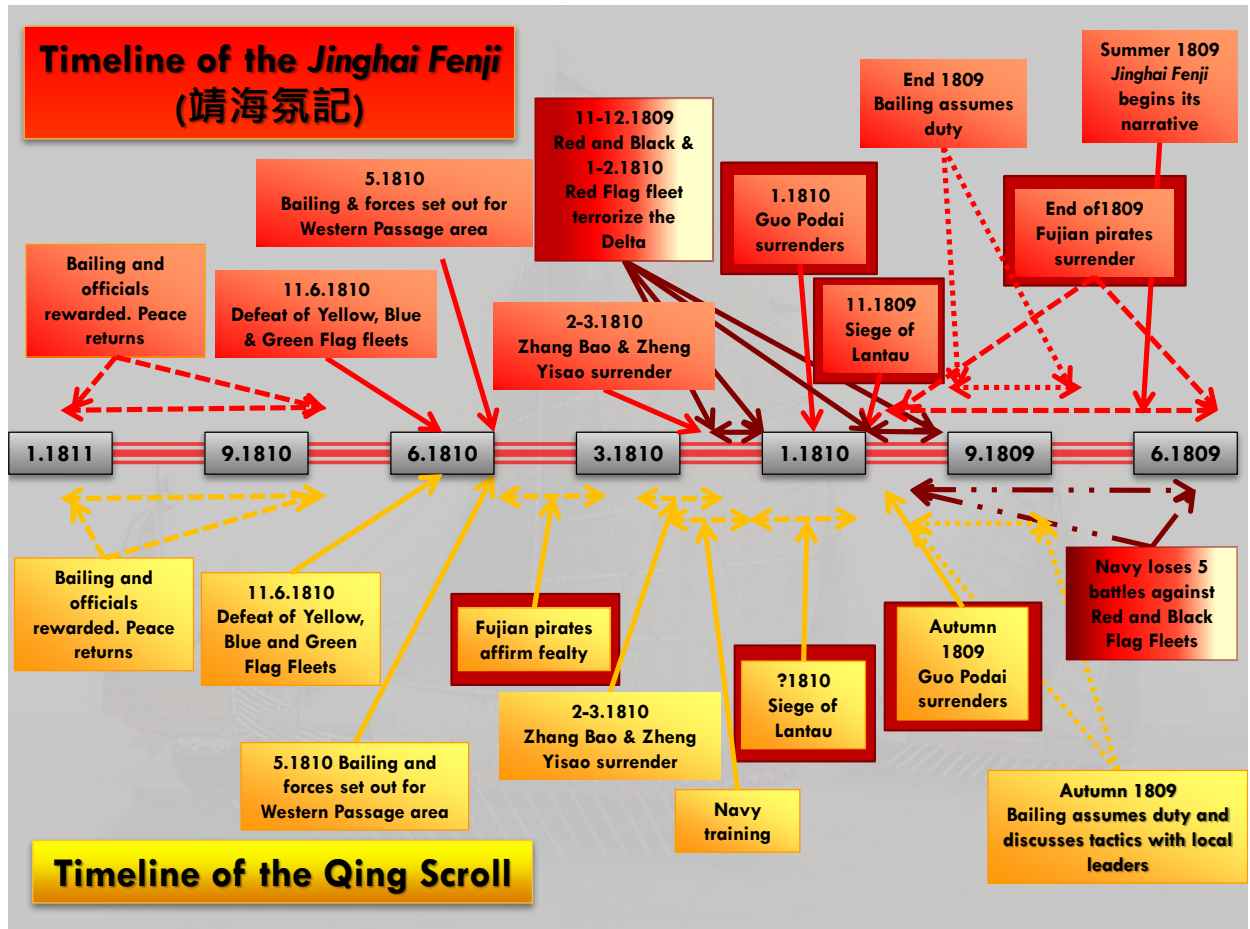
LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR THE ORIENTAL TRANSLATION FUND,  
And Sold by  
J. MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET;  
FARBURY, ALLEN, & CO., LEADENHALL STREET;  
THACKER & CO., CALCUTTA; TREUTTEL & WURTE, PARIS;  
AND K. FLEISCHER, LEIPZIG.  
1831.

The scroll is generally faithful to the narrative of the *Jinghai fenji* (靖海氛記), written by Yuan Yonglun (袁永倫) of Shunde (順德), published in November 1830 in Guangzhou. This, as translated by Carl Neumann the following year, with more recent scholarly work, has been crucial to the following analysis

**The next screen shows the whole scroll – in all 16 metres long – as the story unfolds. The scroll is missing its opening protective wrapper section and title sheet at the start, and at the finish the inscription panel, where the artist and owners' inscribed their comments and impressed their seals and the blank, preservative end roll**

**The story as we have it suggests that the scroll was acquired, perhaps looted, at around the time of the combined western powers expedition in Northern China against the Boxers in 1901 and taken back to Paris by its new owners. It stayed there as part of a coffee table until acquired by the Hong Kong Maritime Museum in 2005**







## Section 1

策定防海

Coastal Defence forces map out their strategy

水師制定海防策略

*Shuīshī zhìdìng hǎifáng cèlüè*

Hiding *haidao*



Providing rice to  
starving people

Bailing in winter uniform  
briefs the gentry and military

Unidentified town

## Section 2

降受海平

Accepting surrender in Pinghai  
 在平海接受投降  
*Zài Píngǎi jiēshóu tóuxiáng*

Surrendered pirates...and ladies

Bailing

Guo Podai

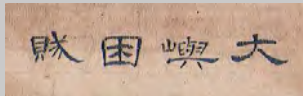


Government ships

Surrendering pirates

## Section 3

Besieging the pirates in Lantau  
 在大嶼山圍剿海盜  
*Zái Dà yǔ shān wéi jiāo hǎi dào*



The government  
 fleet assembles

Fireships attack

Zhang Bao in Tung Chung



Second Part

First Part

Solid hill  
 barrier

The pirates run for cover...which  
 isn't everyone's story

Attacking the *haidao*...no Portuguese ships  
 in sight

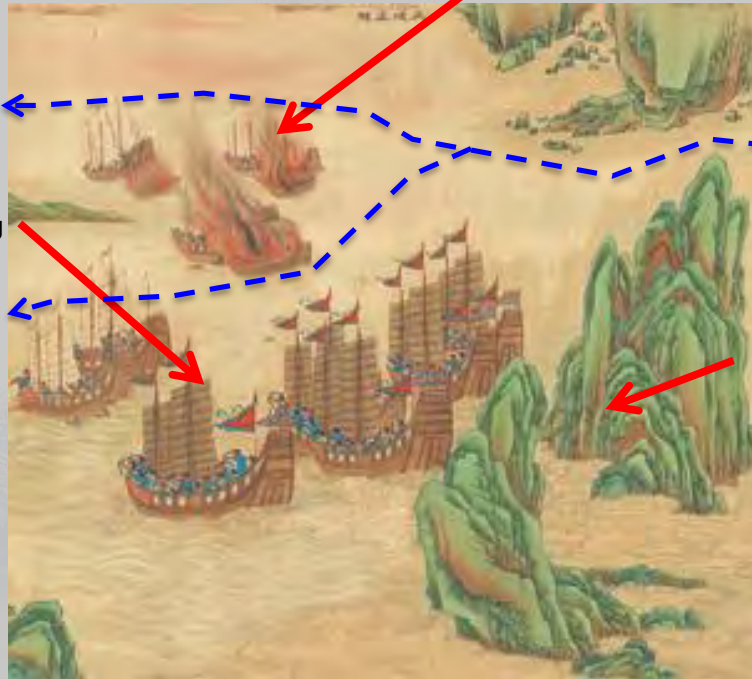
## Section 4



**Fireship attack against the pirates**  
 火船攻擊海盜  
*Huǒchuán gōngjī hǎidào*

A second fireship  
 attack...that no one describes

Chasing Zhang  
 Bao towards Hong  
 Kong

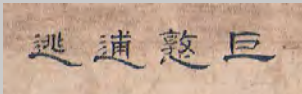


A clear  
 passage by  
 sea from one  
 scene to the  
 next

Chek Lap Kok –  
 no A380 in  
 sight



## Section 5



The pirate chiefs escape arrest  
 海盜首領避過追捕  
 Hǎidào shǒulǐng bì guò zhuībù



Continuation of the clear  
 passage by sea from  
 previous scene

‘All reports – Chinese and Western  
 – say all the Red Flag Fleet got  
 away except 10 (abandoned  
 because leaky) ships. Not two,  
 more like <100 vessels!

## Section 6

水師訓練

Training naval forces  
水師接受訓練  
*Shuǐshī jiēshòu xùnlìan*

Defending ships

Attacking ships

The Force Commander reports

Joking soldiers!

Bailing with his new  
one eye peacock feather

Solid hill  
barrier



## Section 7

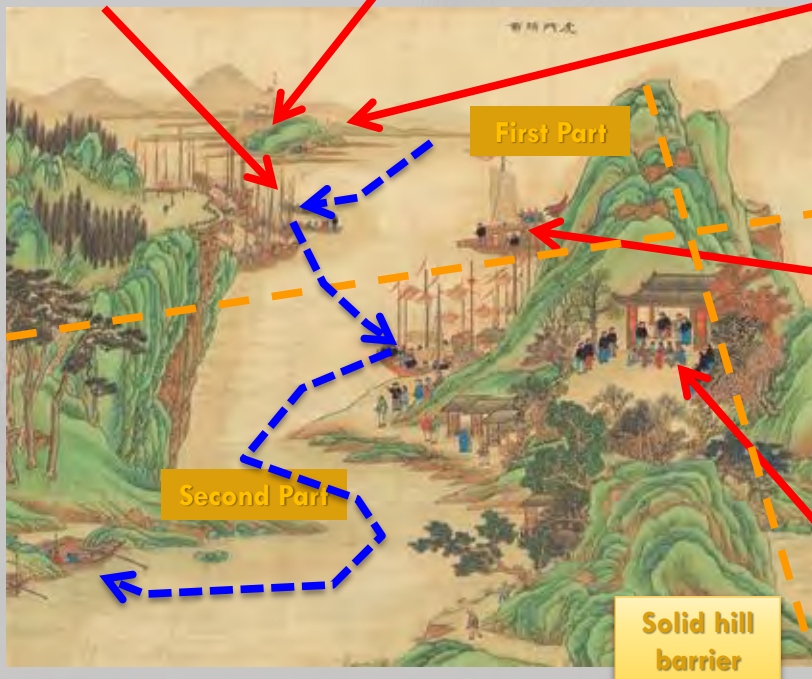
苗門虎

At Humen pirate chiefs are obliged to submit  
海盜首領在虎門被迫歸順  
*Hǎidào shǒulǐng zài Hūmén bèipò guīshùn*

A noisy, alarming welcome  
from the *haidao*

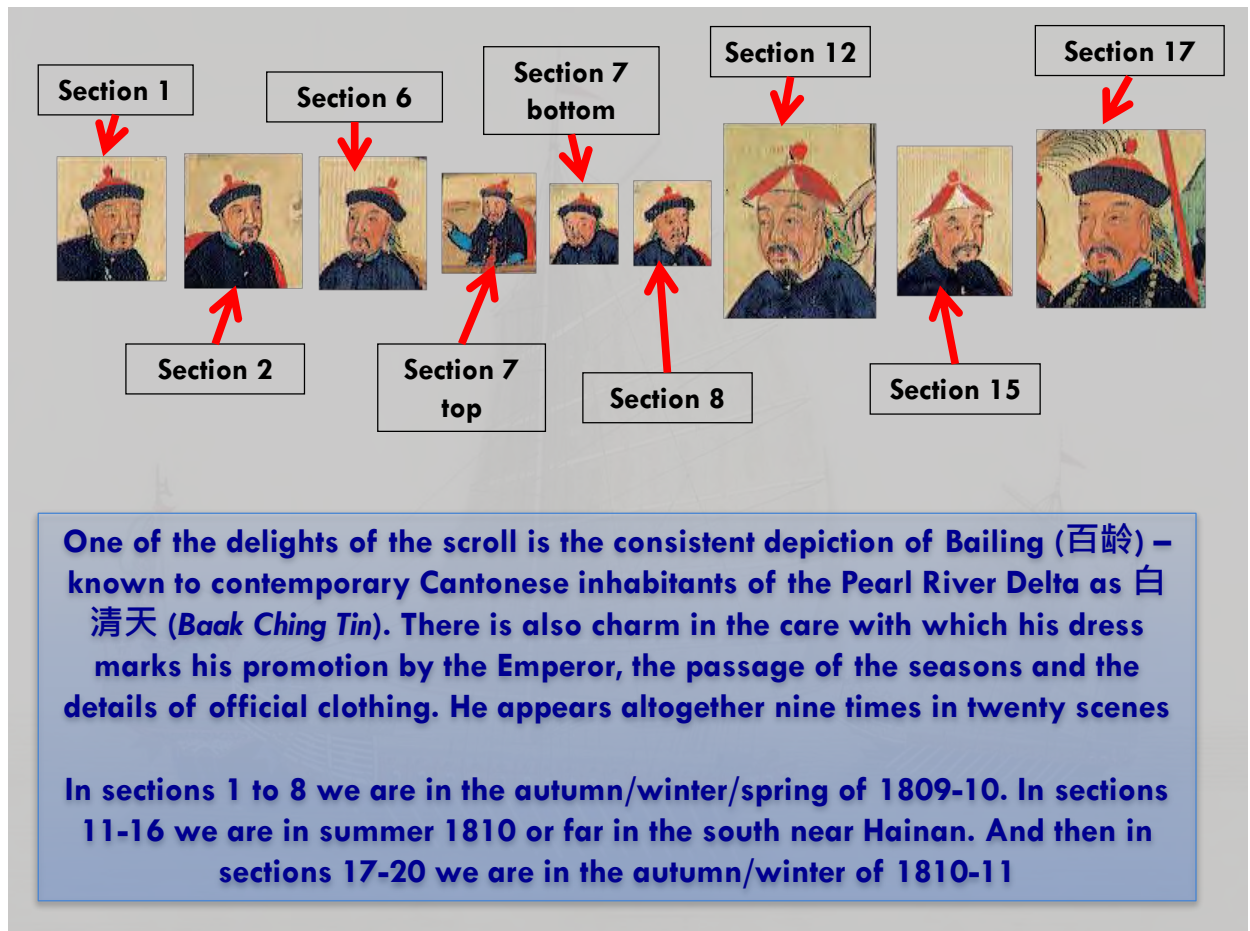
Fort on Hengdang Island, Humen

...maybe the  
western sail that  
caused the  
problem?



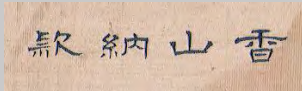
Bailing arrives...and  
fears a trap but  
resolutely presses on

Bailing accepts  
Zhang Bao's  
submission





## Section 8



Accepting the money settlement in Xiangshan  
 在香山接納撫金  
*Zài Xiāngshān jiēnà fú jīn*

Bailing accepts Zhang Bao's surrender

Zhang Bao  
 formally  
 submits and is  
 made a  
 lieutenant in  
 the Qing navy

Surrendered  
*haidao* head  
 out to the  
 paymaster to  
 get the pay-  
 off



*Haidao*  
 arriving to  
 surrender, get  
 paid off and  
 resettled or  
 enlisted

River passage  
 from previous  
 scene

## Section 9

寬宥經開

Forgiving the pirates and their outrages  
寬恕海盜及其惡行  
*Kuānshū hǎidào jíqí èxíng*

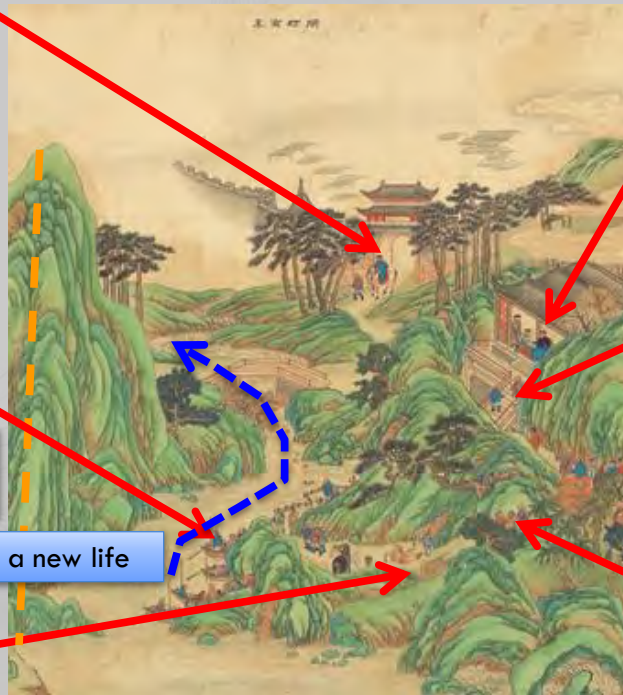
The Emperor's  
forgiveness  
sent from afar

Paid-off *haidao*  
embark for their  
new homes

Steep hill  
barrier

Up river to a new life

Even the horses  
are happy



Officials with  
strings of cash  
making the  
payments

Queuing for  
the pay out

Happy *haidao*,  
now paid off,  
head for the  
boats

## Section 10

主慶眾擄

Captives celebrate their good luck in still being alive  
 俘虜慶幸他們仍然存活  
*Fúlǔ qìngxìng tāmen réngrán cúnhuó*

Haidao under escort head to new homes or to  
 enlistment in the navy

Haidao are welcomed  
 to their new village

Waving  
 farewell to  
 old comrades

Steep hill  
 barrier

Signs of  
 prosperity –  
 a buffalo, a  
 calf, rice  
 paddies  
 and fruit  
 trees



**This is another point where, if the inspiration is the *Jinghai fenji*, the artist, to illustrate the narrative, has borrowed an event from earlier on, after the surrender of Guo Podai, where the narrative reads,**

***“After this period the country began to assume a new appearance. People sold their arms and bought oxen to plough their fields; they burned sacrifices, said prayers on the top of hills, and rejoiced themselves by singing behind screens during day-time.”***



## Section 11

誠輸寇閣

Fujian pirates reaffirm their loyalty and allegiance to the Emperor

福建海盜重新表明效忠朝廷

*Fújiàn hǎidào chóngxīn biǎomíng xiàozhōng cháotíng*

City in the clouds – the benevolence of the Emperor

6<sup>th</sup> grade or more junior officials in summer uniform

Dragon finials on the roof corners – an Imperial palace

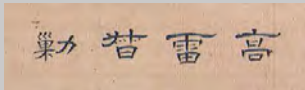
A mysterious pavilion on a hill occupied only by *haidao*

Seven official vessels – all river craft

Steep hill barrier



## Section 12



Getting ready to raze Guolei (possibly today's Zhanjiang)

準備剿平高雷 (可能是今天的湛江)

*Zhǔnbèi chāo jiǎo píng Gāoléi*

(a combination of Gaozhou (高州) and Leizhou (雷州))

Smart soldiers right  
wheel in step

Bailing in summer uniform

Infantry and  
artillery with  
breech loading  
gingals

The regimental colours

Messengers speed  
to a walled town

The rearguard of the  
large army

Hill barrier



## Section 13

洋重捕追

Chasing the pirates seawards  
 追捕海盜至大海  
*Zhuībú hǎidào zhì dàhǎi*

A pirate junk is  
 battered by cannon fire

Pirates are hooked,  
 pulled aboard and  
 tied up

Urged on by  
 drummers, the navy  
 attacks the ships of  
 the Yellow and Blue  
 Flag Fleets

The force embarks  
 and sets sail for the  
 Leizhou/Hainan area



## Section 14

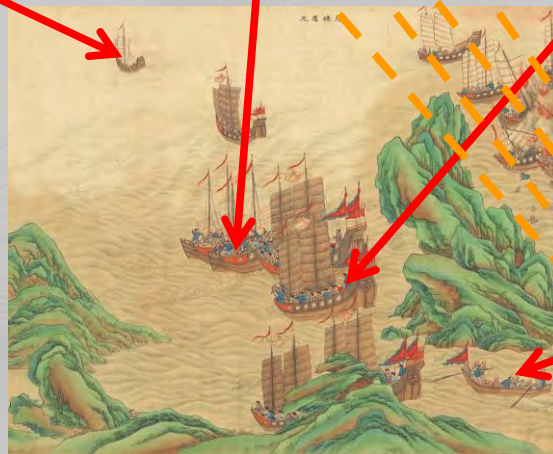
光羣縛擒

Capturing and tying up the pirates  
 擒獲並網綁海盜  
*Gín huò bìng kǔn bǎng hǎidào*

'Frog's Meal' Li  
 Xiangqing escapes  
 to Manila

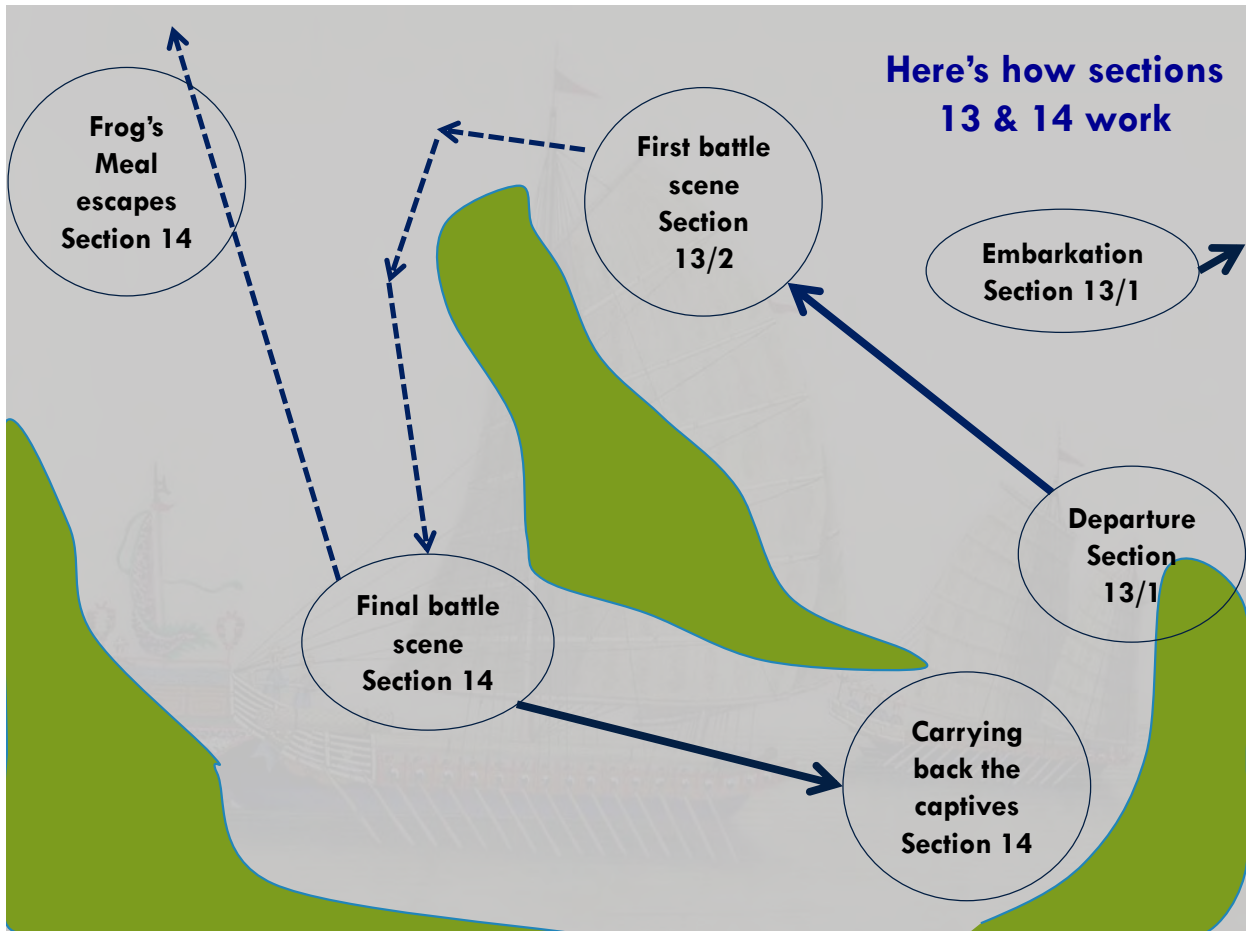
In a murderous assault  
 a pirate is decapitated

Navy ships are urged  
 into battle by drummers



Captured, tied-up  
 pirates being  
 carried away





## Section 15

雙溪獻馘

The people of the two rivers (district) bring the pirates before the magistrate

雙溪居民將海盜帶至縣官面前

*Shuāngxī jūmín jiāng hǎidào dài zhì xiàn guān miàngián*

Bailing sentences 127 *haidao* to death, 9 by the horrific 'death by slicing' (凌遲, *língchí*)

Pirates are sentenced – possibly Wu Shi Er

Tied up pirates await their fates



The fearsome executioners stand guard

Continuous hill barrier

## Section 16

絕島燔巢

Putting the torch to the pirates' inland base  
火燒海盜內陸巢穴  
*Huǒshāo hǎidào nèilù cháo xué*

Barricades are torn down and  
burning brands are used to set  
the village alight

The buildings are  
subject to a  
cannonade

Villagers are driven  
away with their  
bundles of  
possessions

Officials  
supervise the  
destruction  
and eviction



## Section 17

奏凱還師

The naval forces' triumphant return  
水師凱旋回歸  
*Shuǐshī kǎixuán huíguī*

The regimental  
colours and symbols

Riderless horses for  
the spirits of those  
killed in action

Bailing in his full  
official uniform  
with his entourage

The executioners

Bailing's  
military escort

Junior officials





## Section 18

勅策下詔

The Emperor sends his Imperial Edict commending the success of his officials and military forces  
皇帝下詔嘉許朝臣剿匪之功

*Huángdì xiàzhào jiǎxǔ cháo chén jiǎofěi zhī gōng*

A fine jade urn represents fealty to the Emperor and wishes for his long life

One of the most puzzling details – two Europeans in a pavilion

Two of the ex-pirates (Zhao and Guo?) among the officials

A 4<sup>th</sup> Rank official escorts the Emperor's commendation

Provincial officials wait formally to receive the commendation

The Imperial Edict travels in its own palanquin



## Section 19

恬熙市邨

Prosperity and peace return to villages and markets  
村落市集回復繁榮安定  
*Cūnlüè shìjī huífù fánróng āndìng*

Everywhere spring growth  
symbolizes renewed hope

Markets flourish

Peaceful trade  
resumes

Fishermen can  
safely fish

Relatives  
can visit  
safely

A safe, *haidao*  
free coast

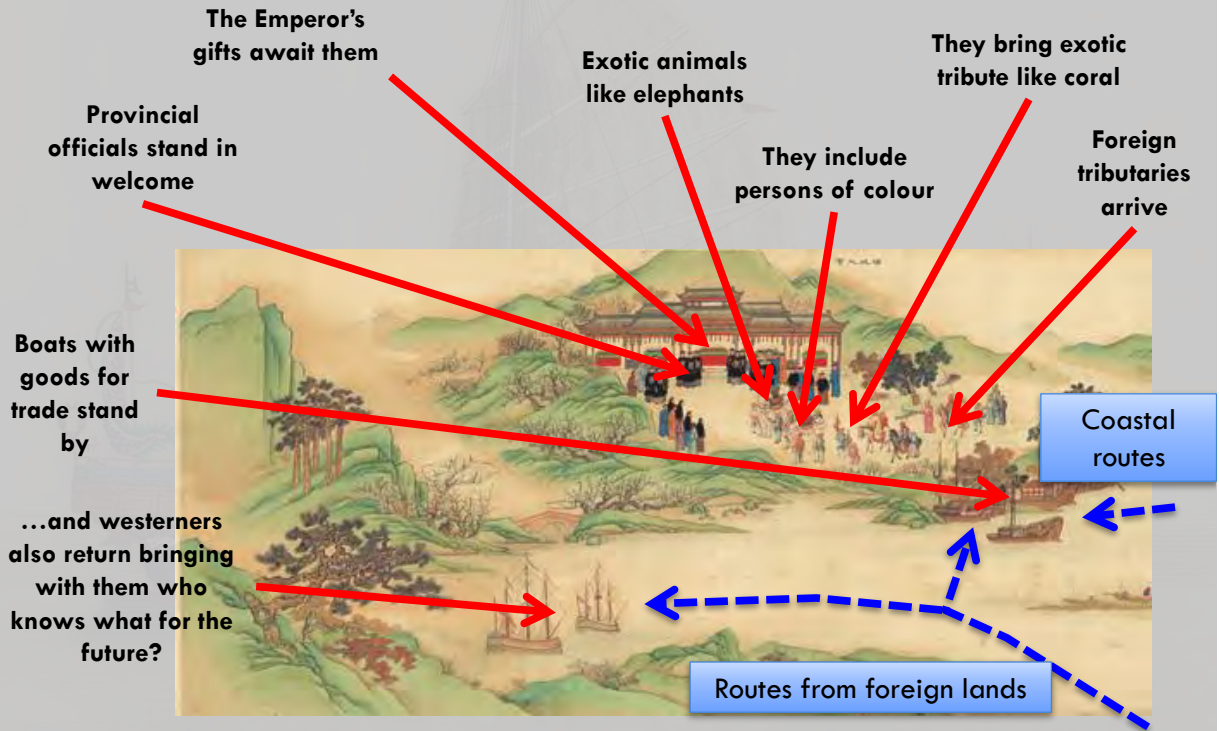
Grain is  
being  
winnowed



## Section 20

貢入航梯

Foreigners again bring tribute by land and sea  
 外國人再次分從水陸兩路紛紛到來朝貢  
 Wàiguórén zàicì fēn cōng shuǐlù liǎng lù fēnfēn  
 dàolái cháogòng



**Here's how the *Jinghai fenji* summarizes the events we have been following:**

*"Bailing was recompensed for his merits. He was created a secondary guardian of the Prince, allowed to wear peacock feathers with two eyes, and favoured with an hereditary title. The services of the different officers and commanders were taken into consideration, and they received adequate recompenses. Zhang Bao was appointed to the rank of Major; Dong Hai Ba, or, the Scourge of the Eastern Sea, and all others, were pardoned, with the permission to retire wherever they wished. From that period till now ships pass and repass in tranquillity. All is quiet on the rivers, the four seas are tranquil, and people live in peace and plenty."*



**The 20 sections of the scroll are packed with colour and action. We have been able to consider only a few of the many fascinating details and what they might mean.**

**A full study of the scroll is a lifetime's work, for there will always be additional nuances to see and details to analyze. There will always be new knowledge emerging from China's archives requiring revisions to our interpretations.**

**The greatest challenge will be to understand the overall narrative, especially as this relates to the meaning of the 11<sup>th</sup> section which, so puzzlingly, in visual terms occupies such a significant, central position and yet in narrative terms is such an apparently isolated one.**

**This is a work in progress about a key episode in the maritime history of the Pearl River Delta and Guangdong Province.**

謝謝 !!

**Acknowledgements:**

**The Trustees of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum - the images of the scroll**

**The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek for the title page of the *Jinghai Fenji***

**Archive.org for the title page of Carl Neuman's translation**

**My quondam Hong Kong Maritime Museum colleagues Ms Catalina Chor, Ms Moody Tang, Ms Phoebe Tong and Ms Jamie Mak for help with Chinese translation**

**The analysis and errors are mine**

**SNGD: 9.4.2015**