

BASIC ANNALS OF MING T'AI-TSU

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BASIC ANNALS
OF
MING T'AI-TSU

TRANSLATED BY
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The T'ai-tsu Emperor 1368-1398

*Collection of the National Palace Museum
Taipei, Taiwan. The Republic of China*

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typeset, punctuated and provided with a bibliography, a chronology, and an index of personal names. This edition also contains additional material usually appended to each chapter which illustrates some of the issues of accuracy and interpretation that must be resolved as far as possible if a truer account of the dynastic founding is to emerge. Index references to the *Veritable Records of Ming T'ai-tsu* are to the National Peking Library manuscript copy that has been supplemented from other copies and photolithographically reproduced in Taiwan by the Institute of History and Philology under the editorship of Professor Huang Chang-chien 黃彰建. This edition includes an introductory discussion of the several manuscript copies or fragments of the *Veritable Records* and, in several appended volumes, a detailed comparison of this with other copies.

The basis of the map that accompanies this translation is the *Ming ti-li-chih t'u* 明地理志圖, photographed and assembled by Professors Edward L. Farmer and Lawrence Kessler from the *Litai yü-ti-t'u* 歷代輿地圖, 1906-1911. The *Ming ti-li-chih t'u* was published in Taipei in 1966 by the Chinese Materials and Research Aids Service Center, Inc. Translation of official titles generally conforms to those given in Charles O. Hucker, "Governmental Organization of the Ming Dynasty," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 21 (1968).

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The Basic Annals of Ming T'ai-tsu

A Discussion of the Text

The founding of the Ming dynasty in 1368 not only restored the imperial throne to a Chinese ruling family after a century of foreign rule, but also completed the last successful peasant revolution before 1949. Chinese imperial institutions, policy, and style were modified for centuries both by the example of the military and political megalomania of the Mongols, and by the precedents set by the Ming founder as a popular warrior-hero and foil to the civil-bureaucratic elite with their assumption of moral superiority-through-learning and their pride in metaphysical obscurantism. China, with all its immense wealth and population, had been incorporated into the world-empire of the Mongols. The rulers in the Chinese northern frontier capital of Ta-tu (Pei-ching) were also the rulers (but generally more in name than in reality) of all the other Khanates as well, the Jagatai in Central Asia, the Ilkhanate in Persia, and the Kipchak in Russia. History, in Chinese perspective, had thereby been turned inside out. As the Ming founder is said to have expressed it on the eve of his campaign against the Yüan strongholds in north China in 1367,

From ancient times, the sovereigns have ruled the world. The Middle Kingdom has occupied the center in order to control the barbarians and the barbarians have dwelt without in obedience to the Middle Kingdom. It was unheard of for barbarians to occupy the Middle Kingdom and rule the world. Since the overthrow and passing of the Sung regime, the Yüan have caused the northern barbarians to come in and rule over the Middle Kingdom and all the world. Within and without (the Middle Kingdom), none failed to make his submission. Could this have come about by the unaided strength of man alone? We may be sure that it was so ordained by Heaven. At that time, the (Yüan) rulers were intelligent, their officials were incorrupt and they were able to hold the