the throne among the Liu clan, he was defeated by Liu Xiu who
was expanding his power in the Hebei plain. This was
because Liu Xiu was able to gather the influential families of the
Hebei plain, whereas Liu Yong could not in the Huaibei plain.

Since the Warring States Period, the Huaibei plain possessed
vast superiority in population, economic power, and etc. over the
Hebei plain. However, judging from the above-mentioned situation,
it is evident that the area had gradually lost its advantage. It
was the collapse of the Yellow River dikes that caused the decline.
The influential families had evacuated the area to escape inunda-
tion caused by unrepaid dikes. Obviously, resistance against
the bandits was no longer possible, moreover, there was no
potential for Liu Yong to expand his power.

The collapse of the Yellow River dikes had an influence on the
society not as a direct cause of Wang Mang’s fall, but as a primary
factor for Liu Xiu to establish the Later Han dynasty.

The System of Autumn Assizes and Its Regulations during
the Qing Dynasty: Analysis of Qianlong and Jiaqing period

by Takuji TAKATÔ

The Autumn Assizes (qiushen 秋審) in the Qing 清 were the
institution whereby the advisability of carrying out or reducing
the punishments of criminals imprisoned for the death penalty
in every district of China was considered with every case being
judged on its own merits. Only over the course of time with the
accumulation of precedents, criteria were established to aid in
judgment and in particular it appears that the Autumn Assize
regulations (Qiushen tiaokuan 秋審条欽) utilized from the Qianlong
乾隆 period (1736-1795) to the end of the Qing dynasty played an
important role in administering this task. However the Autumn
Assize regulations underwent changes over the course of time and
the system of criteria were not fixed. This being so, important
turning points commanding attention are the 32nd year of the
Qianlong reign (1767) and the seventh year of the Jiaqing 嘉慶 reign (1802).

Thus in 1767, with the deletion of the wording regulating judge-
ment of the Autumn Assizes in the Da Qing lü li 大清律例 (Penal
Code of the Great Qing Dynasty), its position outside the scope of
the provisions of the Penal Code of the Da Qing lü li was
confirmed. On the other hand, in the same year, by way of pro-
viding local officials with fixed standards in order to prevent
errors in their judgments, communication of the Autumn Assize
regulations was instituted. A further notification of the regulations
was given in the 49th year of the Qianlong reign (1784), but until
a third proclamation was made at the end of the Qing dynasty,
in the second year of the Xuantong 宣統 reign (1909), the fact that
they had been announced was not confirmed. This may be con-
dered to be influenced by an imperial edict of 1802. This edict
consisted a rejection of a memorial to the throne requesting
communication of the Autumn Assize criteria. In this edict, the
Jiaqing emperor indicated that he considered that if the Autumn
Assizes were restricted to fixed regulations, it would not be
possible to hand down flexible judgments for each and every case.
Nevertheless, the Autumn Assize regulations continued from 1802
onwards to be compiled as bylaws of the Board of Punishments
(xingbu 刑部) and it was not uncommon for them to circulate
outside the Board.

In this way, the Autumn Assize regulations, deemed necessary
were requested in order to deal with errors by local officials, but
it was difficult to maintain compatibility between the imperial
instruction to be flexible in judgment and the concept of the
Autumn Assizes. Accordingly, as the Qing court took pains to
reconcile the two, the history of the Autumn Assize regulations
followed an uncertain course from practice to rejection and back
to practice.