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Preceding the main articles in this number of the *East Asian Library Journal* is Helene van Rossum’s introduction to an exhibit of items selected from the papers of diplomat John Van Antwerp MacMurray (1881–1960) on display in Princeton University’s Seeley G. Mudd Library from 28 September 2007 to 18 January 2008. MacMurray (Princeton University Class of 1902) was secretary to the United States Legation in Beijing from 1913 to 1917, counselor of the embassy in Tokyo from 1917 to 1919, chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs from 1919 to 1924, and then United States minister to China from 1925 to 1929. His penchant for careful and detailed record keeping of both his personal and career activities is reflected in his diaries, letters, copies of documents, and a very large collection of photographs and photographic negatives. Determined to preserve the legacy of their father’s life and diplomatic service, MacMurray’s heirs have contributed both his papers and his photographs to Princeton University. Scholars of East Asian politics, history, diplomatic life, modernization, military history, culture, photography, and many other topics now have a particularly rich, delightful, and largely unexplored resource at hand.

The three main articles in the current number of the journal originally were presented as papers in the panel “Books in History, History in Books,” organized for a conference in honor of Frederick W. Mote held in October 2005 at Princeton University. In a short essay that precedes the articles, Martin Heijdra describes the genesis of the panel and introduces its participants.

The panel presentations marked some elements of the legacy of Mote’s influence on research conducted by his students and young associates and showed that Mote’s passion for and commitment to the
preservation—and utilization in research—of books, documents, and archival materials has been taken up in earnest by a new generation of scholars of East Asia. Each of these published articles amplifies the way in which intellectual legacy has been handled in the writing of Chinese history and the way in which something of the past handed down by an ancestor or a predecessor shapes significantly knowledge and understanding of the past.

Tai-loi Ma’s article spotlights one aspect of his ongoing study of Xu Bo (1570–1642), a late-Ming literatus and poet from Fujian. Xu Bo was a quietly determined book collector who built a library that included a collection of local histories unprecedented in its size and scope. Xu utilized his collection of local histories in his own scholarly research and sealed the legacy of his methodology by teaching those research techniques to his son and by carefully cataloguing his book collection. Tai-loi Ma’s own pursuit of extant works from Xu Bo’s now dispersed library demonstrates astute and subtle bibliographic detective work.

Also part of a much larger study, Lynn Struve’s article details a Ming-loyalist clan’s determination to publish—during the era of tumultuous and treacherous Republican politics—the politically and personally sensitive writings of Xue Cai (1595–1655), one of the clan’s late-Ming forebears. Struve’s narration of the publication of Xue Cai’s casual writings, biji, handed down in its manuscript form for nearly three hundred years, vividly details and astutely analyzes the context and content of the writing of Xue Cai’s journal, the significance of the reemergence this manuscript to historical view, and reasons for its publication finally in 1939 with its contents “shuffled.”

Hung-lam Chu unravels one of several incidents with puzzling consequences for the career of Li Shimian (1374–1450), a renowned and much storied official early in China’s Ming dynasty. Following patterns of methodology used by his advisor at Princeton, Chu, as he himself states, “reconstruct[s this] past event by studying each bit of relevant data from its source.” This is done in light of the fact that, again in Chu’s words, “our understanding of [earlier Ming times] is still considerably guided by the preferences of traditional historiography.” What he uncovers is that inclusion of details in both official records and unofficial
records of the palace fire of 1421 was a highly selective process, not merely an unfiltered documentation of facts as they unfolded. And where details in the records were purposefully left unstated, determination of fact becomes largely a matter of intelligent speculation. Chu’s study shows that careful, comparative reading of the records—the transmitted legacy—of Yongle-era history during the construction of the capital in the north compels a reevaluation of the Yongle emperor’s style of statecraft.

Nancy Norton Tomasko
September 2007
News and Notes

Website for the East Asian Library Journal

The address for the website of the East Asian Library Journal is: http://www.princeton.edu/~ealj. The site gives this journal, which is very solidly committed to publishing studies related to the history of printed and written culture in East Asia, its first toehold in what many assert is the inevitable future of print culture—the world of virtual access to print. We hope that, in turn, our site can function as a virtual mode of access by which to draw readers into the world of printed and written materials from China, Japan, and Korea in their hold-in-the-hands tangible forms.

On the site you will find guidelines for submitting manuscripts for publication in the East Asian Library Journal, links to book-related websites and organizations, lists of the contents of current and up-coming numbers, and information on how to subscribe to the journal and how to order previous issues. A list of articles in previous issues gives access to the first page of the text and one or more figures from each article. Heather Larkin, Princeton Class of 2006, who designed the website, has just returned from participating in a study of zebra behavior in Kenya and will teach in Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture, Japan during the 2007–2008 academic year.

First Impressions: The Cultural History of Print in Imperial China (Eighth–Fourteenth Centuries)

Lucille Chia, University of California Riverside, and Hilde De Weerdt, University of Tennessee, organized this important conference on early printing in China held 25–27 June 2007 at the Fairbank Center of East Asian Research, Harvard University. Presenters, who also served as lead discussants for the paper of one fellow participant, were Timothy Barrett (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), Maggie
Bickford (Brown University), Lucille Chia (University of California Riverside), Joseph Dennis (Davidson College), Hilda De Weerdt (University of Tennessee at Knoxville), Ronald Egan (University of California Santa Barbara), Charles Hartman (State University of New York, Albany), T. J. Hinrichs (Cornell University), Liu Hsiang-kwang (National Chengchi University), Joseph McDermott (Cambridge University), Anne McLaren (University of Melbourne), and Takatsu Takashi (Kagoshima University). Ann Blair (Harvard University), Peter K. Bol (Harvard University), and Cynthia Brokaw (Ohio State University) served as general discussants and offered remarks to conclude the conference. Conference organizers are planning the publication of a volume of the conference papers.

Conference on Printing Culture in Jianyang, Fujian (Jianyang keshu wenhua yantaohui)

The Fujian Provincial Literature Association (Fujiansheng wenxue xuehui), headed by Chen Qingyuan, organized a one-day conference on printing culture in Jianyang, Fujian, held on 24 August 2007 in Jianyang. This conference followed on the heels of the fifth annual International Conference on Ming Dynasty Literature and Culture (Mingdai wenxue yu wenhua guoji xueshu yantaohui), this year held under the auspices of the Ming Dynasty Literature Association of China (Zhongguo Mingdai wenxue xuehui), headed by Zhang Peiheng, Fudan University professor of Chinese literature, and the Fujian Provincial Literature Association from 21–23 August 2007 in Wuyishan City, Fujian.

Dunhuang Manuscripts and Paintings: An International Symposium Honoring James and Lucy Lo

The Tang Center for East Asian Art and the Buddhist Studies Workshop co-sponsored a one-day public symposium on Dunhuang manuscripts and paintings, held on 28 September 2007 at Princeton University to celebrate James and Lucy Lo’s more than sixty years of contributions to the study of art from the Silk Road. Speakers were Chen Huaiyu
The Princeton University Library Collection of Dunhuang and Turfan Materials is being digitized for inclusion in the data base of the International Dunhuang Project. Chen Huaiyu has compiled a catalogue of the more than fifty Chinese-language fragments in Princeton University Library’s collection, which will be published in an upcoming issue of the East Asian Library Journal.


For more on this exhibit on display at Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University from 28 September 2007 to 18 January 2008, see an extended description written by exhibit curator Helene van Rossum, which immediately follows News and Notes.


On display from 16 October 2007 to 24 February 2008 at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford will be an exhibit of late-twentieth-century and contemporary Chinese prints drawn from its newly formed collection of these materials. A fully illustrated catalogue of the museum’s print collection will be available. For more information, see the museum’s website: www.ashmolean.org.

Over a Hundred Years of Collecting: The History of East Asian Collections in North America

The opening of University of California Berkeley’s new C. V. Starr East Asian Library and Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies was marked with a three-day conference (18–20 October 2007) that reviewed the history of the collecting of materials from East Asia that has led to
establishment of East Asian libraries or collections in over eighty colleges and universities in North America. Representatives from over twenty East Asian collections were present for the dedication of the facility, the plenary session, discussions, tours, and festivities. A publication of conference proceedings is planned.

**Book 2007: The Fifth International Conference on the Book**

The theme of the International Conference on the Book held this year in Madrid, Spain, from 20 to 22 October 2007 was “Save, Change or Discard—Tradition and Innovation in the World of Books.” Presentation categories included a diverse gamut of topics related to the past, present, and future of writing, editing, designing, publishing, printing, manufacturing, archiving, distribution, and utilization of books. The small number of presentations on these activities in East Asia suggests that there is room for expansion of the “international” scope of this annual, large-scale conference. See the website www.book-conference.com for more information on the presentations and publications related to this conference.

**Washi Culture Conference**

The Washi Culture Conference (Washi Bunka Koenkai) held its annual meeting in Green Hall on the campus of Showa Women’s University, Tokyo, on 9 December 2007. The theme of this year’s conference was “The Tradition of Processing Ryoshi.” Presentations on aspects of the production and use of these Japanese papers for writing and drawing were: “Processing of Ryoshi During the Heian Era” (Hisae Oyanagi, paper-craft artist); “Techniques for and the Beauty of Washi Dyed Using Plant Dyes” (Yukio Yoshioka, Yoshioka Dye Studio); “Preparing Gold Leaf and Gold Powders Used for Ryoshi” (Yuji Tsukioka, industrial artist); “History of Processing Paper and Decoration by Expert Mounters” (Masahiro Handa, Tohoku Industrial Art University); “Development of Ryoshi Processing Techniques” (Yasuo Kume, Chairman of Washi Cultural Meeting). Information of publication of the proceedings is forthcoming.
The Fairbank Center has announced the 2008–2009 competition for its post-doctoral fellowship co-sponsored by the Harvard-Yenching Library. Research topics given priority are those related to print culture and/or library studies. Application deadline is 1 February 2008. For more information consult the center’s website: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~fairbank/fellowships/harvard_yenching.html. Contact address is: Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Attn: Harvard-Yenching Post-doctoral Fellowship, CGIS South Building, 1730 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Books and Articles of Note


Brokaw, Cynthia J. Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods. Harvard East Asian Mono-


Chia, Lucille. “Publications of the Ming Principalities: A Distinct Example of Private Printing.” *Ming Studies* 54 (Fall 2006), pp. 24–70. This first significant study in English on this topic offers a careful guide to reading and analyzing the data the author presents comparing book production by Ming principalities with that done by the government and by commercial publishers in the same era. The tables, charts, statistics, and illustrations are signature attentions to detail readers now expect from this historian.


extended “trends-in-research” or “state-of-the-field” essay on studies in the history of the book in late-imperial China is in itself a welcome sign of the greater attention that the history of the book and printing in East Asia has begun receiving by scholars outside Asia in the past ten or so years. The basis for the author’s analysis could have been expanded with reference to the body of studies that have been appearing in the East Asian Library Journal and its predecessor title the Gest Library Journal since its inception in the winter of 1986.

Takahashi, Mina, ed. Hand Papermaking. 22.1 (Summer 2007). 48 pp. Eleven articles. Illustrations. Paper samples. ISSN: 0887-1478. This issue of the specialty periodical published twice a year by Hand Papermaking, Inc, a non-profit organization, focuses on Japanese papermaking. Beginning with an article on the transmission of Korean papermaking to Japan, the topics presented address the definition of washi, tools and techniques in Japanese papermaking, how washi is used, how papers are dyed, and Japanese papermaking outside of Japan. The editor, who first studied Japanese papermaking in Japan from 1987–1989, traveled in Japan for six months in 2006 to meet her former teachers and understand the current developments in the work done by artisans in this field. She returned with encouraging news that the number of papermaking studios remains stable at around three hundred fifty with new papermakers joining the profession each year. See the Hand Papermaking website, www.handpapermaking.org, for more information and a complete list of the contents of the current and previous issues of Hand Papermaking.

chart; glossary of specialized terms (very brief); and table of Chinese dynasties. This bibliography compiles secondary published literature on the history of the book and printing in Imperial China (including Central Asia, Korea, and Japan). Over two thousand entries are organized topically and arranged chronologically by date of publication within topics. Each topic is given a brief introduction, and individual entries provide bibliographic detail. Some entries include commentary on the scope of the material presented, titles of chapters, names of individual authors in the case of multi-author works, or a brief critique. Works not personally inspected by the compiler are so designated.

1. MacMurray on an outing near Beijing, sitting on a donkey and holding his beloved dog Ting. Black and white photograph, probably taken ca. 1915 by Lois Goodnow, his future wife. 13 x 7.7 cm. John van Antwerp MacMurray Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.
Capturing China, 1913–1929
Photographs, Films, and Letters of American Diplomat John Van Antwerp MacMurray

HELENE VAN ROSSUM

Drawing from over one thousand six hundred photographs taken in China between 1913 and 1917, the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University hosts an exhibition based on the collection of the American diplomat John Van Antwerp MacMurray (1881–1960). (See figure 1, opposite.) In addition, the exhibit features 8mm films shot by MacMurray in 1928. The exhibit, curated by Helene van Rossum and Daniel J. Linke, will be on public view from 28 September 2007 to 18 January 2008 in the Weiss Lounge at Mudd Library. A lecture by Arthur Waldron, University of Pennsylvania professor of history, will be held on Saturday, 20 October 2007 at 3 pm in the Computer Science Building (directly opposite Mudd Library), Room 104, followed by a reception in Mudd Library. Lois MacMurray Starkey, MacMurray’s youngest child will offer additional remarks about her father’s career and photography. Lecture and reception are open to the public.

MacMurray, Princeton Class of 1902, was secretary to the American Legation in Peking from 1913 to 1917 and served as minister to China from 1925 to 1929. In between, he was counselor of the embassy
in Japan (1917–1919) and chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department (1919–1924). He also was a member of the American Commission to the International Conference on Limitation of Armaments in Washington, serving as principal adviser on Pacific and Far Eastern Affairs (1921–1922). MacMurray was a strong believer in international law, and in 1922 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published his compilation of all treaties and agreements concerning China made between 1894 and 1919. His recommendations to enforce existing treaties rather than make concessions to the Chinese Nationalists, however, alienated him from his superiors and ultimately led to his resignation in 1929.

The revolutionary turmoil of the young Chinese republic sharply contrasts with MacMurray’s photographs of timeless landscapes, noted sites, and rural scenes taken between 1913 and 1917 and, as well, with his films of 1928–1929. (See figure 2, 3, and 4.) Letters, diaries, and other

documents from the MacMurray Papers provide a context for the photographs and films on display. Topics include Yuan Shikai, president (1913–1915) and later self-declared emperor (1915–1916), whose American advisor, Frank Goodnow, taught MacMurray when he studied international law at Columbia University. In 1915 when Goodnow visited Yuan in China, he brought his family with him. MacMurray was smitten with Goodnow’s daughter Lois and the following spring while on home leave married this Bryn Mawr senior, who returned with him to Peking.

In addition, the exhibit documents issues MacMurray addressed during his second stay in Peking while serving as diplomatic minister to China. Topics include contacts with warlords, the outbreak of the civil war in 1927, and the disagreements with his superiors at the State Department. During this time he frequently consulted with the ministers
of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Japan, who, like MacMurray, had served in Peking a decade before and who were known informally, according to the memoirs of the Italian minister Daniele Varè, as “Ye Olde Firme.” The exhibition concludes with a notable memorandum that MacMurray wrote in 1935 concerning the situation in the Far East. Suppressed at the time, but later applauded for its analysis and insight, it was published in 1992 with an introduction by University of Pennsylvania historian Arthur Waldron.

Included in the exhibit are photographs and correspondence documenting MacMurray’s relationship with I. V. Gillis (1875–1948), the naval attaché at the United States Legation in Peking when MacMurray met him late in 1913. (See figure 5.) After leaving the Navy, Gillis remained in China
and became a consultant for the American engineer Guion M. Gest for whom he purchased old and rare Chinese books and manuscripts that would be the genesis of Princeton University’s Gest Oriental Library. Visitors can also view the films that MacMurray shot in 1928 and 1929 which include a trip along the Yangtze river in January and February 1928, as well as various street scenes in Peking and Kalgan. The Kalgan footage contains the departure of Roy Chapman Andrews’s expedition into Mongolia in April 1928, which included a crew of thirty-seven people, eight jeeps, and one hundred fifty camels, all escorted by Chinese cavalry. MacMurray, who had arranged passage with local warlord Chang Tso-lin (Zhang Zuolin), accompanied the expedition on its way out of Kalgan.

After his resignation from the Foreign Service in 1929, MacMurray became director of the Walter Hines Page School of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University, but in 1933 he re-entered the Foreign Service as minister to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, followed by an ambassadorship to Turkey (1936–1942). After an additional two years at the State Department in Washington, MacMurray retired in 1944.
The John Van Antwerp MacMurray papers at the Seeley G. Mudd Library document his career in the Foreign Service and the State Department as well as his personal life and views, as expressed in his diaries and letters to family and friends. The collection, which includes the papers of his father Junius Wilson MacMurray (1844–1898), a Civil War veteran and later professor of military history at Cornell and Union College, was given to Princeton University in 1965 by his children. This spring, his surviving children, Lois MacMurray Starkey and Frank G. MacMurray, Princeton Class of 1940, donated the photographs and films on which much of this exhibition is based. A finding aid to the 1965 donation can be found among the Public Policy Papers at the Seeley G. Mudd Library at http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/wh246813m.
From a very early stage in his career Frederick W. Mote was closely involved with books as loci of civilization, and he played major roles in East Asian libraries in general and the Gest Library in particular. Soon after he joined the Princeton faculty in the Department of Oriental Studies as an assistant professor in 1956, he, together with Howard C. Rice Jr. and James Shih-kang Tung, organized a book exhibition on Europe’s discovery of China called *East & West*, on display at the Princeton University Library from 15 February to 30 April 1957. For a checklist of this exhibition, see http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/Misc/East-West.pdf.

On a national level, Professor Mote frequently stressed the importance of strengthening existing Chinese library resources in the United States, for example when he was chairman of the American Council of Learned Societies’ Committee on Studies of Chinese Civilization. He went on record with his opinion that there are aspects of library management and bibliographic skills special to the Chinese field and that efforts should be made to include such skills in training new librarians while human resources were still at hand to transmit such knowledge to the next generation of scholars. In 1977 he invited Qu Wanli, author of the 1974 catalogue of Chinese rare books in the Gest Library, to co-teach a semester-long course on Chinese rare books, which with much foresight anticipated many topics now common in the field of the history of the

For Professor Mote, the book itself, as well as its content, is part of history, as a social and material product of its time and also in the way books have come down to us. Thus, when asked to organize a panel for the memorial conference for Professor Mote in October 2005, as the last graduate student to defend a dissertation on Ming history under Mote’s direction and the current Chinese bibliographer of the East Asian Library at Princeton University, I found it highly fitting to make “Books in History, History in Books” the focus of the panel. I invited four scholars to speak on aspects of this broad topic. Mote’s first graduate student, Hok-lam Chan, reported on the contemporary historical role of a rather unknown Ming document, “Ming Taizu’s ‘Record of Exposed Wrong-doings’ (Jifeilu): A Registry of Crimes and Transgressions Committed by the Imperial Princes”; a fuller version of Hok-lam Chan’s paper has been published as “Ming Taizu’s Problem with His Sons: Prince Qin’s Criminality and Early-Ming Politics” in *Asia Major* 20.1 (2007). The remaining three papers are published here in the current number of the *East Asian Library Journal*. The presentation by Chu Hung-lam, also one of Mote’s graduate students, “Textual Filiation of Li Shimian’s Biography: The Part about the Palace Fire in 1421,” carefully compares the biographical records that Mote used for teaching research methods in Ming history. Mote’s generous help to non-Princeton scholars of Ming history is evident in Lynn Struve’s “Ancestor Édité in Republican China: The Scrambled Journal of Xue Cai (1595–1665).” And rounding out the panel, another non-Princeton scholar who has since become a Princeton University insider as the director of the East Asian Library at Princeton, Ma Tai-loi, reflects on topic “The Collecting, Writing, and Utilization of Local Histories during the Late Ming: The Unique Case of Xu Bo (1570–1642).”

Taken together, the papers from the “Books in History, History in Books” panel exemplify the importance of paying attention to all aspects of East Asian book history—from form to content and from creation to transmission—when studying the history of this region.
The Collecting, Writing, and Utilization of Local Histories During the Late Ming
The Unique Case of Xu Bo (1570–1642)

TAI-LOI MA

The traditional Chinese bibliophile par excellence was probably Huang Pilie (1763–1825), best known for his collection of rare Song (960–1279) editions.¹ However, Ming (1368–1644) book collectors seem to have been more practical in building their collections. Many recognized the importance of collecting ordinary contemporary publications. For example, the Tianyige Library of the Fan family in Ningbo in Zhejiang province actively collected local histories and lists of successful candidates of civil service examinations.²

The poet Xu Bo (zi Xinggong, Weiqi, 1570–1642) did not have the resources of the Fan family whose patriarch Fan Qin (1506–1580) retired as a vice minister of the Ministry of War.³ Nevertheless the Hongyulou Library of the Xu family owned a large number of local histories, and Xu Bo and his younger son Xu Yanshou (1614–1662) often used local histories in their scholarly research. Xu Bo was also involved in the compilation of local histories, and Xu Yanshou carried on this
Xu Bo of Minxian (present day Fuzhou in Fujian province) was a man of many talents but was best known as the leader of the Fujian school of poetry in the late Ming. Unlike most famous book collectors, Xu Bo was not a wealthy person nor did he ever enter government service. His father Xu Ang (1513–1591) was a lowly tribute student (gongsheng) whose highest position was that of county magistrate. Xu Tong (1561–1599), Xu Bo’s elder brother, was a poet who received his juren degree in 1588 and died rather young without taking any government post. They also had a younger brother who did not accomplish much. Xu Bo’s most important relative was Xie Zhaozhe (1567–1624), the famous bibliophile and scholar. Xu’s half-sister was Xie’s stepmother. Xu Bo and Xie Zhaozhe were very close, and because Xu was actually three years younger than Xie, their relationship was more like that of cousins than that of uncle and nephew. Although Xu and Xie are mentioned often in tandem in studies on the literary scene in Fujian or book-collecting, their family connection is usually overlooked. When it is mentioned, Xie Zhaozhe is sometimes described simply as the son of Xu Bo’s sister.

Xu Bo was mentioned very briefly but succinctly in the collective biography of literary figures in the Mingshi (Official History of the Ming).

The literary scene in Fujian: . . . During the mid-Wanli period (1573–1620), Cao Xuequan (1573–1646), and Xu Bo came to prominence, and Xie Zhaozhe and Deng Yuanyue (1555–1604) joined them. As a result, literature was revived. . . . [Xu] Bo, zi Xinggong, was a native of Minxian. His elder brother [Xu] Tong became a juren during the Wanli period. [Xu] Bo died a commoner. He was erudite and a master of clerical-style calligraphy. He accumulated books in the tens of thousands in (his library) the Aofeng Academy (Aofeng shushe).

Because of his longevity, Xu Bo was well respected in literary circles and exerted considerable influence, especially among poets from Fujian. However, while the imperially sponsored collectanea Siku quanshu includes the poetry collection of Xu Tong Manting ji (The Curtain
Pavilion Collection), it does not include *Aofeng ji* (The Turtle Peak Collection), the poetry collection of Xu Bo. As a result the *Aofeng ji* became so rare that even the famous bibliophile Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958) mistook it as a banned book.⁹

Xu Bo’s life was rather uneventful. He devoted his life to learning and traveled extensively. Although in general Xu Bo was not regarded by modern scholars as an itinerant scholar (*shauren*, literary “recluse scholar”) who constantly sought patronage from high officials and rich people, the difference between Xu Bo and the more famous Chen Jiru (1558–1639) or Wang Zhideng (1535–1612) was one in degree only.¹⁰ Much of Xu Bo’s livelihood depended on the kindness of his friends in high places.

In the long history of book collectors in China, Xu Bo left the most written records about his collections. There are two versions of his library catalogue and three published compilations of his colophons.¹¹ There is a printed edition of his poems, selected by himself and published with funds from Nan Juyi (1565–1643), when Nan was the grand coordinator of Fujian province.¹² His collected essays were never published but the original manuscript in Xu Bo’s own handwriting survives at the Shanghai Library.¹³ Many books from his library have survived wars and other natural and human disasters and can be found in libraries in China, Taiwan, and Japan. About thirty of these books have colophons written by Xu Bo, Xu Tong, and Xu Yanshou and only a few of these colophons are included in the previous compilations.¹⁴ In addition, the collected works of Xu Bo’s elder brother Xu Tong, of his son Xu Yanshou, and of his grandson Xu Zhongzhen (b. 1611) all are extant, although for the works of Xu Yanshou and Xu Zhongzhen only unique copies exist.¹⁵ No other Chinese book collector has been as “fortunate” as Xu Bo with respect to the amount of surviving documentation.

Of the two different versions of the *Hongyulou shumu* (Catalogue of the Hongyulou Library), the recently published photo-reprint of a manuscript in the National Library of China is more authentic than the typeset edition of 1957.¹⁶ (See figure 1.) The manuscript lists 5,335 titles of which 338 are local histories in the broad sense, including special treatises on mountains, rivers, academies, and monasteries. The authors are not always mentioned in the catalogue, so it is impossible to ascertain
the dates of compilation for all the local histories. It is obvious, however, that most of them were compiled in the Ming dynasty. Of these 338 titles, 88 titles (or more than one-fourth) are on Fujian province. These titles are further grouped by prefecture, whereas there is no such subdivision for the other provinces. Obviously Xu Bo was very interested in the history of Fujian, his home province.

If we do not include the special treatises, only five local histories from Xu Bo’s library can now be located, and all but one of these are in Japan. All these books bear Xu Bo’s collector seals, and they are also recorded in the Hongyulou shumu. Among those in Japan, the most valuable is undoubtedly a unique copy of Shouning daizhi (Draft History of Shouning [County]) in the Diet Library (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan). It was written by Feng Menglong (1574–1646) when he was magistrate of Shouning county in Fujian.\(^{17}\) (See figure 2.) In recent years two photo-reprint editions and two typeset editions of the Shouning daizhi have been published, yet Xu Bo is not mentioned in any of the prefaces composed for these new editions.\(^{18}\) It is almost certain that Xu Bo received this book from Feng Menglong himself, because the two men were acquainted. The manuscript of Xu Bo’s prose works now in the Shanghai Library contains two letters to Magistrate Feng of Shouning.\(^{19}\) Xu Bo also wrote a preface to Feng Menglong’s collection of poems, which apparently was never published.\(^{20}\) The other three local histories now in Japan are a 1542 edition of the Shanyin xianzhi (History of Shanyin County), a 1574 edition of the Xuzhou zhi (History of Xuzhou), and a 1578 edition of the Tongzhou zhi (History of Tongzhou). These local histories are in Kunaishō Shoryōbu.\(^{21}\)

The survival of the 1520 edition of the Fuzhou fuzhi (History of Fuzhou Prefecture) in 40 juan is particularly interesting. According to the Zhongguo guji shanben shumu (Union Catalogue of Chinese Rare Books), only two copies of this book exist, one at the National Library of China and the other at the Fujian Normal University Library.\(^{22}\) The latter library’s mimeographed catalogue for in-house use only indicates that its copy originally lacked chapters (juan) 1 to 15. These missing chapters were later copied from the copy in the National Library of China.
2. Feng Menglong, *Shouning daizhi* (Draft History of Shouning County) (1637). Image from Ma Youyuan, “Feng Menglong yu Shouning daizhi” (Feng Menglong and the Draft History of Shouning [County]), *Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu* 3 (1990), p. 178. Two of Xu Bo’s seals are stamped at the bottom of the first column on the right: “Xu Bo zhi yin” (Seal of Xu Bo) and “Xinggong fu” (Master Xinggong). Original in the Diet Library, Tokyo.
In the compilation of Xu Bo’s colophons, there is a piece written in 1612 about the 1520 edition of the *History of Fuzhou Prefecture*:

These twelve volumes (ce) of the old prefectural history were collected by my late father. In 1597 Magistrate Liu of Gutian wanted to study the history of the county and borrowed two volumes from my late brother. Three years later my brother passed away, and Magistrate Liu has not returned the books. I sought help many times from Vice Magistrate Li Yuanruo and got one volume back. But volume ten was lost. Ten years passed and I did not have the time to copy the missing parts. This year, during the compilation [of a new prefectural history], I have been able to copy the missing volume and complete the work. This history was published in 1520, less than a hundred years ago, yet few established families now own it. In the future, it will be even more difficult to acquire. My descendants should value this book. Written by Xu [Bo] Xinggong in midsummer of 1612.\(^21\) (See figure 3; and for this text, see Appendix, text 1.)

Indeed, when a new edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* was compiled in 1754, the editors mentioned that they had consulted three earlier editions and that the 1520 edition they used was from Xu Bo’s family. They did not mention the sources or locations of the other two editions. It is apparent that the other two editions were commonplace, whereas the 1520 edition had become extremely rare by 1754. A catalogue of Fujian local histories published in 1935 stated that Xu’s copy was in a private library in Lianjiang in Fujian province.\(^24\) This copy has not been mentioned in any of the catalogues published since then.

*Zhongguo guji shanben shumu* (Union Catalogue of Chinese Rare Books) shows that the Fujian Provincial Library owns a few books that include Xu Bo’s colophons, but there is no indication that the Fujian Normal University Library owns any. When I visited Fuzhou in November 2004, I discovered that the incomplete exemplar of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* in Fujian Normal University Library is actually the Xu Bo copy. Because the first fifteen chapters were lost, the colophon was also missing. Incredibly the librarians had not noticed that chapters 31 to 34 also were copied (as described by Xu Bo in his colophon written in 1612). Throughout
3. Text of the colophon that Xu Bo’s wrote in 1612 in his copy of the 1520 *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture). Miao Quansun, ed., *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba* (Revised Compilation of Colophons from Hongyulou) (Qiaofanlou, 1910; Qiaofanlou, 1925; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1969), juan 1, p. 10b (p. 20). Xu Bo’s original manuscript colophon was lost from his copy of this prefectural history, which is now held in the Fujian Normal University Library.
the book, Xu Bo had written many comments, often in red ink, correcting factual errors or simply voicing his opinions. (See figure 4.) Various seals of Xu Bo and his father were stamped in each volume, usually on the first page. (See figure 5.) Later owners, including Lin Zexu (1785–1850) of Opium War fame, have also stamped their seals in this copy.

Most of the books from the Hongyulou Library only have seals to indicate their previous ownership. A small portion contains colophons by Xu Bo or his family members. The rarest are books with extensive comments by Xu Bo. So far I have located only two books that bear extensive comments: the 1520 edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* in Fujian Normal University Library and a 1540 edition of the *Wenxin diaolong* (Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons) in Peking University Library.25

It is important to note that all five of the local histories described above—Feng Menglong’s *Shouning daizhi* (Draft History of Shouning [County]), the 1542 edition of the *Shanyin xianzhi* (History of Shanyin County), the 1574 edition of the *Xuzhou zhi* (History of Xuzhou), the 1578 edition of the *Tongzhou zhi* (History of Tongzhou), and the 1520 edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture)—are mentioned in the *Hongyulou Library Catalogue*.26 It is likely that more local histories from the Hongyulou Library are still extant, however, most library catalogues, including those of rare books, do not mention collector seals. Thus, except by chance, it is nearly impossible to locate books once owned by Xu Bo.

Xu Bo stated in his 1612 colophon to the 1520 edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture) that he was involved in the compilation of a new edition of this history. No modern library catalogue or catalogue of local histories mentions Xu Bo as a contributor to this 1612 local history. The 1612 edition is very rare and only the Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan (formerly Naikaku Bunko) has a copy. Fortunately, in the East Asian Library of the University of Chicago I was able to consult a photocopy of this Kokuritsu Kōbunshokan copy. More recently a typeset edition of the 1612 edition was published in Fuzhou (without any indication that it was based on the copy in Japan).27 This work lists the prefect Yu Zheng (1562 *jinshi*) as the main sponsor (*zhuxiu*) and two high officials as chief editors (*zongcai*). In addition, there were two editors (*zuanxiu*) and eight assistant editors (*fenzuan*). Xie Zhaozhe
was one of the editors, and Xu Bo was the last of the eight assistant editors. It is difficult to know exactly how much Xu Bo contributed to the 1612 edition. If one were to compare Xu Bo’s hand-written comments in the 1520 edition in the Fujian Normal University Library collection with the text and comments in the 1612 edition, one might be able to see the extent of Xu Bo’s influence on the later edition. Publication of a facsimile edition of the 1520 edition with Xu Bo’s comments should facilitate such a study.

Xu Bo was involved in the compilation of a history of Jianyang county twelve years prior to his work on the 1612 History of Fuzhou
Prefecture. In a colophon to You Dingfu ji (Collected Works of You [Zuo] Dingfu [1053–1123]), Xu Bo said,

In 1600 Magistrate Wei of Jianyang asked me to compile the county history and to include the families of You, Liu, Zhu, Cai, and Xiong as the “five prominent families.” Members of the You clan copied down facts related to their ancestors and sent them to me for inclusion. . . . Recorded by Xu [Bo] Weiqi in early summer of 1605.28 (For this text, see Appendix, text 2.)

In the preface to this history of Jianyang county, Magistrate Wei
Shiying (1595 jinshi) stated that nine people were involved in the writings. Xu Bo was listed as the fourth person. Jianyang was (and is) quite far away from the provincial capital of Minxian (present day Fuzhou), six hundred li according to the 1600 county history. Xu Bo must have had sufficient reputation to have been invited to travel that distance for such a task.

Xu Bo’s son Xu Yanshou was on the staff of his fellow townsman Wu Yanfang in 1659 when the latter was appointed magistrate of Zhongmou in Henan province. One of the first enterprises Wu Yanfang undertook was to compile the county history. In the preface of this county history, Wu stated that he edited what Xu Yanshou wrote and that he improved on the wording after discussion with Xu. He ended the preface with an acknowledgement of Xu Yanshou’s contribution to this county history, which was completed in six months. Xu Bo participated in the compilation of two local histories, one for his home prefecture Fuzhou and the other for a county within Fujian province. On the other hand, while Xu Yanshou would have had no knowledge of Zhongmou prior to his going there, as an aide assigned to such a task he was obligated to do this work regardless of knowledge or preparation.

Nowadays people often rely on local histories to obtain biographical information of minor historical figures. The pioneering scholars in the Republican period (1911–1949) were often praised highly for utilizing these resources. Yet Xu Bo was doing precisely that late in the sixteenth century. In his colophon to the Guangyue yinghua (An Anthology of Outstanding Poems) compiled by Xu Zhongli (early-Ming era), Xu Bo explained that he noticed a collector’s seal in this book and then used the prefectural history to identify that obscure person.

This [book] belonged to a family in my town, that of Mr. Gao Nanhuo (Xiaozhong). In the spring of 1597, I acquired it by chance in a bookstore. I repaired it and kept it safely in a box. The blocks from which this book was printed were already very worn, but I have not seen a recarved edition. I hope to have it block-printed and circulated. At the beginning there is a seal [that reads] “Gaoshi Weiyi” (Gao Weiyi). According to the “Filial Acts” section of the prefectural history, [Gao] Weiyi’s
personal name was Jun, and he lived at the beginning of this dynasty. [Gao] Nanhuo was a descendent of his. Written by [Xu Bo] Xinggong on the fifth day of the fifth month, 1598.\textsuperscript{31} (For this text, see Appendix, text 3.)

Xu Bo also taught this research technique to his son Xu Yanshou. In 1638 father and son went to Suzhou where the son acquired a copy of the book \textit{Shulin waigao} (Additional Writings from Shulin), which had some pages missing. Later Xu Yanshou was able to identify the author. This is no small feat, especially for a youngster of twenty-four.

In the winter of 1638 I accompanied my father to Suzhou. By chance I obtained the book \textit{Shulin waigao} during a trip with my friend Lin Ruofu to a rundown store. There is no authorship statement, and the book lacks the preface and some pages at the end. I read the poems carefully and learned that the author was from Ningbo in the Yuan dynasty. After I came home, I checked the \textit{Ningbo fuzhi} (History of Ningbo Prefecture). [Yuan] Shiyuan [the author, fl. 1341] was mentioned in the literary biographies section. So I copied [his biography] here at the beginning of the text. Recorded by Xu Yanshou.\textsuperscript{32} (See figure 6; and for this text, see Appendix, text 4.)

While Xu Bo often consulted local histories for information, he also realized their shortcomings. He pointed out that many people were not mentioned in local histories and that some biographies failed to notice genuine accomplishments. In his colophon to Chen Shan’s \textit{Menshi xinhua} (New Notes Taken While Killing Lice), Xu Bo lamented that many people were not recognized in local histories.

Chen Shan of Luoyuan [in Fujian province] became a \textit{jinshi} in 1160 when Liang Kejia (1128–1187) was the top candidate. He ended his government career as an instructor in the Imperial Academy. None of the county or prefectural histories has ever included his biography nor do they mention his \textit{Menshi xinhua}. So we know that many people from the past have been buried in oblivion. . . . Recorded by Xu [Bo] Weiqi, the twelfth day of the second month of 1619.\textsuperscript{33} (For this text, see Appendix, text 5.)
6. Yuan Shiyuan, *Shulin waigao* (Additional Writings from Shulin) (Zhengtong [1436-1449] era) with colophon by Xu Yanshou. A brief biography of Yuan Shiyuan is in the first two columns on the right; Xu Yanshou’s colophon is in columns three through seven. Photograph of the original in Fujian Provincial Library, no. Jz.5/10.
In another colophon, Xu Bo criticized the category to which the author of the book *Jujing mantan* (Random Chats from the Chrysanthemum Path) was assigned in a prefectural history:

The recently compiled prefectural history places [Shi Pan] in the section “Xunliang zhuan” (Biographies of Good Officials) but does not mention his erudition. It seems not to have given a full picture of his career. . . . Recorded by junior scholar Xu Bo in the summer of 1636.³⁴ (For this text, see Appendix, text 6.)

Shi Pan, who was from Changle county in Fuzhou prefecture, received his *juren* degree in 1546. His biography was included in the “Good Officials” section in the 1612 edition of the *Fuzhou fuzhi* (History of Fuzhou Prefecture), so it is almost certain that Xu Bo was referring to this particular edition.³⁵ It is significant to note that while Xu Bo was one of the assistant editors of the 1612 edition (see above), his opinion was not followed in this case perhaps because of his low ranking.

In his colophons Xu Bo often mentioned how he obtained a particular book. He bought some, received some as gifts from friends, and sometimes made acquisitions through exchanges. There is one particularly illuminating letter in his unpublished collected works. It was written to his very close friend Cao Xuequan when Cao was a high-ranking official in Sichuan province from 1609 to 1613.

I have been looking for the *Sichuan tongzhi* (Provincial History of Sichuan) for a long time but still cannot locate one. It will be regrettable if I cannot get a copy while you are serving in Sichuan. Please have an especially high-quality copy printed and sent to me. It will be a great gift.³⁶ (For this text, see Appendix, text 7.)

Most local histories were published by local governments and had a very small circulation. In general they were not available at bookstores elsewhere because the general public outside of the locality would not have been interested in them. The best way to get them was on site or through friends. The *Xushi jiacang shumu* (Catalogue of the Xu Family Library) lists two different editions of the *Jianyang xianzhi* (History of Jianyang County).³⁷ We may safely assume that Xu Bo got them while he
was in Jianyang in 1600. But most of the local histories in his collection probably were obtained by pleading with his friends, as his letter to Cao Xuequan so succinctly described. Some might have come from the authors or compilers themselves as it was likely the case of Feng Menglong’s *Shouning daizhi*.

Xu Bo was not a passive book-collector. In spite of his limited resources, he was able to amass a large number of books including many local histories. He recognized the unique information provided by local histories and made full use of it in his own scholarly research. But he also understood that local histories might not be the perfect source or the only source. He used other sources to supplement or correct the information in local histories. No doubt there were collectors who owned more local histories than Xu Bo, but he was probably the only book collector who actively used local histories for research and who actually participated in the compilation of local histories. His son Xu Yanshou carried on this family tradition, mining information from local histories and compiling one local history. Xu Bo was involved in so many aspects of local histories and his activities were so well documented that we should recognize his unique role as a key figure in the preservation and utilization of Chinese local histories long before modern scholars realized their unique importance.

**Addendum**

As mentioned in the text above, it is difficult to identify books previously belonging to Xu Bo because most modern library catalogues do not mention collector seals. Recently I located two additional local histories in Japan that previously belonged to Xu Bo.

Wu Zhongli, in his article “Riben cang guben Ming Ningxia zhi kaoping” (On a Unique Copy of a Ming Edition of the *History of Ningxia* Extant in Japan), states that this copy of the *Ningxia zhi* previously belonged to one Xu Weiqi of Fujian. Presumably Wu’s assertion is based on some seals of Xu Bo. There is a photographic reprint of this edition in a collection of local histories of Ningxia compiled by Wu Zhongli. Unfortunately, this publication is of such poor quality that it is impossible to detect any collector’s seal. It is interesting to note that
Wu cannot identify Xu Weiqi as Xu Bo but is able to say that Xu was from Fujian. It is quite likely that the seal in question reads, “Minzhong Xu Weiqi cangshu yin” (Collector’s seal of Xu Weiqi of Minzhong). Xu Bo used this seal to stamp at least three local histories in his library: *Shanyin xianzhi* (History of Shanyin County), *Xuzhou zhi* (History of Xuzhou) [both of the above works are mentioned in the text above], and *Zhuozhou zhi* (History of Zhuozhou).

In 2004 Ren Peilin did a study on the various editions of the local history of Zhuozhou held in the National Library of China. One item he examined was a microfilm copy of a 1609 edition found in Japan. The earliest collector stamp on it reads, “Minzhoug Xu Weiqi cangshu yin” (Collector’s seal of Xu Weiqi of Minzhong). As was the case with Wu Zhongli, Ren Peilin could not identify Xu Weiqi as being Xu Bo. This local history is also in the Diet Library.

It is remarkable that these two local histories, as well as the five mentioned in the main text, all are recorded in Xu Bo’s library catalogue. It is very likely that the catalogue was compiled intermittently until a very late state of Xu Bo’s collecting career even though the catalogue has a preface dated 1602 when Xu Bo was in his early thirties.

**APPENDIX: CHINESE TEXTS**

**TEXT 1**

舊府志十二冊，先君向所儲也。萬曆丁酉，古田令劉君欲考本邑事，向先兄借二冊去，越三載，先兄歿，劉令亦不以見還。余邀托古田丞李君元若轉索，得其一，而第十冊竟無有也。蹉跎十載，未遑鈔補，今歲因纂修之便，乃補一帙，復成完書。此志刻在正德庚辰，未及百年，故家鮮有藏者。自今以往，愈不可得矣。子孫其慎重之哉！王子仲夏，徐興公書。 [Xu Bo in *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba* (Revised Compilation of Colophons from Hongyulou), comp. Miao Quansun (1925; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1969), juan 1, p. 10b.]

**TEXT 2**

庚子歲，建陽令魏公命修縣志，將以游，劉，朱，蔡，熊作五世家，游氏子孫抄錄祖先事實，送余采擇。⋯乙巳孟夏，徐惟起記。 [Xu Bo in *Chongbian Hongyulou tiba*, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 39a.]
TEXT 3
此吾鄉高南顧孝忠先生家藏者。萬曆丁酉春，偶從肆中得之，重加裱飾，秘之箧中。板已模糊，遲來未見刻石，梓而傳之，尚竊有志。卷首“高氏唯一”印章。唯一名均，見《府志.孝行傳》，國初人。南顧其裔孫也。戊戌端午，興公題。 (Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 65b.)

TEXT 4
崇禎戊寅冬，予侍家大人客姑蘇，偶同友人林若撫子聞門敗肆中得《書林外稿》一冊，不署姓名，前缺序文而卷末復脫數版。細閱其詩，知為元人鄞產也。及摘歸，考《寧波府志》，士元載于文學傳，因錄于簡端。徐延壽譔。 [Xu Yanshou in Shulin waigao (Additional Writings from Shulin), by Yuan Shiyuan, 7 juan (Ming edition).]

TEXT 5
羅源陳善，登紹興庚辰梁克家榜進士，官終太學錄，郡縣志自古未有為之立傳，亦不談及《掖甕新話》，可知古人湮沒者多矣。…已未花朝，徐惟起譔。 (Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 27b.)

TEXT 6
近修郡志，列公於《循良傳》，不談及公淹博，似未盡公之生平。…崇禎丙子夏，後學徐棪譔。 [Xu Bo colophon in Jujing mantan (Random Chats from the Chrysanthemum Path), by Shi Pan, 14 juan (1591).]

TEXT 7
《四川通志》弟久覓而不可得，有兄弟蜀而不得一部，殊為闕典，當為我刷一副精絕者見寄，不啻十朋之錫。 [Xu Bo, “Ji Cao Nengshi dacan” (Letter to Administration Vice Commissioner Cao [Xuequan] Nengshi), Hongyulou ji (Collected Works of Hongyulou), author manuscript, Shanghai Library, ce 6.]

Notes
2. Luo Zhaoping, Tianyige cang Mingdai difangzhi kaolu (Bibliography of Ming Local Histories from the Tianyige) (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1982), p. i.


5. Xu Tong, “Xiankao Yongning fujun xingzhuang” (Biography of My Late Father the Magistrate of Yongning), Manting ji (1601), photographic rpt. of the original in the Naikaku Bunko (Tokyo: Takeo Hiraoka, 1976), juan 18, pp. 31b–40a.

6. Chen Qingyuan, “Xu Tong nianpu jianbian” (Brief Chronological Biography of Xu Tong), in Xu Tong ji (Collected Works of Xu Tong) (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2005), vol. 2.

7. For example, in Xu Bo’s (Hsü Po) biography in the Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), vol.1, p. 597, Lienche Tu Fang describes Xie Zhaozhe as “son of an elder sister of the [Xu] brothers,” and not “stepson of the half-sister of the Xu brothers.”


10. Two recent studies on shanren are Zhang Dejian, Mingdai shanren wenxue yanjiu (Study of the Literature of the Shanren of the Ming Dynasty) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2005), and Feng Baoshan, “Shanren xiaoshi” (A Short History of “Shanren”), Xungen (Root Exploration) 4 (2005), pp. 84–94.

11. Until recently most people have relied on a typeset four-chapter version of Xu Bo’s library catalogue published by Shanghai’s Gudian wenxue chubanshe in 1957. See Xu Bo, Xushi Hongyulou shumu (Catalogue of Xu [Bo]’s Hongyulou) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957). The typeset version differs in major ways from the facsimile of a seven-chapter manuscript in the National Library of China. Since 1994, three facsimile editions have been published. See the following: Xu Bo, Xushi jiacang shumu (Catalogue of the Xu Family Library), photographic copy of an 1827 manuscript copy held in the National Library of China in Mingdai shumu tiba congkan, ed. Feng Huimin et al., vol. 2 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1994); in Xuxiu siku quanshu, vol. 919 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995–1999), pp. 105–327; and in Zhongguo zhuming cangshujia shumu huikan Ming Qing juan, ed. Lin Xi et al., vols.10–11 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005).


13. Xu Bo, Hongyulou ji (Collected Works of Hongyulou), 7 ce, author manuscript, Shanghai Library. For a bibliographic reference to this work, see Shen Jin, Zhongguo zhenxi guji shanben shulu (Bibliography of Chinese Rare books) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2006), p. 542.

14. There are three published compilations of Xu Bo’s colophons. Zheng Jie’s


18. Photo-reprint editions of the *Shouning daizhi* were published by Shanghai guji chubanshe in 1993 and Beijing tushuguan chubanshe in 2003. Typeset editions were published by Fujian renmin chubanshe in 1983 and Jiangsu renmin chubanshe in 1993.


20. There is no record that any collection of Feng Menglong’s poems was published during his lifetime. Some modern scholars have compiled collections of Feng Menglong’s essays and poems with various degrees of success. See Ma Tai-lai, “Ping Jiejun jizhu Feng Menglong shiwen chubian” (Review of Jiejun’s
22. Ye Pu and Zhang Mengjing, comp. Fuzhou fuzhi, 40 juan (1520). For bibliographic reference to this work, see Zhongguo guji shanben shumu: Shibu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), juan 10, p. 102b.
25. Liu Xie (ca. 465-ca. 522), Wenxin diaolong (Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons), 10 juan, 3 ce, (Wang Yiyuan Sishuxuan, 1540), rare book number 3487. For a bibliographic reference to this copy of this work, see Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 502.
26. Xu Bo, Xushi jiacang shumu (Catalogue of the Xu Family Library), photographic copy of an 1827 manuscript copy held in the National Library of China in Xuxiu siku quanshu, vol. 919 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-1999), juan 2, pp. 31a, 37b, 42a, 43a, and 45a.
29. Wei Shiyong, Preface to Jianyang xianzhi (History of Jianyang County) (1600; Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1991), pp. 4a-b. For the distance between Jianyang and Minxian, see ibid., juan 1, p. 2b.
30. The 1659 edition of the Zhongmou xianzhi (History of Zhongmou County) is extremely rare and has not been reprinted. I consulted the copy in the National Library of China. Fortunately, Wu Yanfang’s preface was included in a number of later editions of the county history, for example the 1936 edition. See Wu Yanfang, Zhongmou xianzhi (History of Zhongmou County) (1936; Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1968), preface, p. 5b.
31. Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 65b.
32. This copy of Yuan Shiyuan, Shulin waigao, 7 juan (Ming edition) is in the Fujian Provincial Library. This colophon, not included in any of the previous compilations, is transcribed in Ma Tailai, ed., “Hongyulou tiba shize” (Ten Colophons from Hongyulou), Wenxian, 3 (2005), p. 35.
33. Xu Bo in Chongbian Hongyulou tiba, comp. Miao Quansun, juan 1, p. 27b.
34. This colophon is included in a copy of Shi Pan, Fujing mantan, 14 juan (1591) in the Henan Provincial Library. The colophon is not included in any of the previous compilations of Xu Bo’s colophons.
36. Xu Bo, “Ji Cao Nengshi dacan” (Letter to Administration Vice Commissioner Cao [Xuequan] Nengshi), Hongyulou ji (Collected Works of Hongyulou), author manuscript, Shanghai Library, ce 6.
37. Xu Bo, Xushi jiacang shumu, juan 2, p. 37a.

**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aofeng ji</td>
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Zheng Jie  鄭杰
Zheng Zhenduo  鄭振鐸
Zhongmou  中牟
Zhongmou xianzhi  中牟縣志
Zhu  朱
Zhuozhou zhi  涿州志
zhuxiu  主修
Zhu Zhan  朱旃
zi  字
zongcai  總裁
zuanxiu  纂修
It was 1939, two years after the disastrous Battle of Shanghai and the infamous “Rape of Nanjing,” which epitomized the Japanese conquest of the Yangzi-delta region. In a badly damaged economy and traumatized society, one long-established lineage in Changzhou, halfway between Nanjing and Shanghai, nevertheless managed to accomplish something of utmost importance to it at the time: publication of two works, respectively, by two of its patrilineal ancestors of the Ming dynasty (1363–1644). Earlier in the year members of the lineage had found the means to fund the lithographic reproduction of the Xuezi yongyu (Common Sayings of Master Xue), a collection of wise thoughts by the famous Ming scholar, philosopher, and statesman Xue Yingqi (1500–1573?), from an exemplar of the original 1569 edition that had been passed down in the family. (See figure 1.) Then, despite a shortage of paper (not to mention food and other consumer goods) in the occupied areas and the destruction of major publishing sites in the metropolises, Xue family members heroically followed that project with a lead-type, cord-bound first publication of a text entitled Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji (Jottings of Mr. Xue Xiemeng), the personal journal of a less prominent
1. The 1939 reproduction of the *Xuezi yongyu* (Common Sayings of Master Xue) by Xue Yingqi, showing features that were easily added to the 1569 edition by the lithographic process.

1A. Left, the first recto page of the calligraphed new preface by
Qian Zhenhuang, and right, the colophon, which announces the year of the reprinting. Photographs of the exemplar in the collection of The East Asian Library and The Gest Collection, Princeton University, no. 1319/4400.
The beginning of the original preface with two added items:
a statement printed in the upper margin that the book on which this edition was based is the common property of Xue Yingqi’s lineal descendants and, at the bottom of the first column on the right, the seal of Xue Tao, the probable custodian of that exemplar in the 1930s.
forebear, Xue Yingqi’s great-great grandson Xue Cai (1595–1655).\(^3\)
Under such daunting conditions, in the midst of a great national emergency, why did this Xue lineage expend precious resources on these undertakings? Clues present themselves mainly in the paratexts to the *Xue xiemen xiansheng biji*—the preface and two postscripts—as well as in the organization of the text itself, which appears to have been extensively altered under those motivations.

**Xue Cai: His Background and Journal Writing**

When Xue Cai began, in the spring of 1642, to keep the journal that we now know as the *Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji*, he was well into middle age and had much to reflect on in his heritage as well as in his own life. That reflection was characterized by ambivalence—between upstanding loyalty and pride-of-association on one hand and shame and disgust on the other. He was very proud of the achievements of his ancestors and their stalwart service to the Ming state at crucial points in its history. Not only had Xue Yingqi served with integrity under pressures from the much-maligned grand secretary Yan Song (1480–1565), he also had fostered among his students one Gu Xiancheng (1550–1612). The latter, aided by Gao Panlong (1563–1626) and Xue Yingqi’s younger grandson (Xue Cai’s grandfather), Xue Fujiao (1589 *jinshi*), had founded and guided the reformist Donglin movement through successive crises in the latter decades of the Wanli reign (1573–1620). Xue Yingqi’s elder grandson (Xue Cai’s granduncle), Xue Fuzheng (1607 *jinshi*), had served with such distinction in suppressing a rebellion as regional inspector of Sichuan that he was accorded the rank of vice minister in the Court of the Imperial Stud. In view of this family history, Xue Cai’s father (who died when Xue Cai was in his mid-twenties) had received an honorary ministerial title.\(^4\)

Moreover, having handily passed the *jinshi* examination in 1631—in thirty-third place among 349—as a candidate from Wujin district of Nan Zhili, Xue Cai had helped to perpetuate the outstanding record of Wujin in supplying “advanced scholars” and officials to the Ming government.\(^5\) He had earned a seat at a special table, so to speak, in the highly exclusive club of *jinshi* degree-holders and had become, thereby, strongly invested in the culture of the civil service examinations. Beside
him at that table were three maternal uncles, the youngest not far from
him in age despite the generational difference: Liu Xizuo (1624 jinshi),
Liu Yongzuo (1619 jinshi, d. 1646), and Liu Mianzuo (1631 jinshi)—who
were to become known as the “Three Loyal Lius” (Liushi sanzhong). Liu
Mianzuo had already died righteously while fighting bandits as a magis-
trate in Jiangxi; the older two brothers, both active in Fushe (Restoration
Society) circles, were currently serving in provincial positions in Huguang
and Fujian where piracy and rebellion were rampant. Eventually they too
would become martyrs for the Ming state.6

Xue Cai’s own proclivities as a scholar were more literary than
those of his stellar forebears, and his governmental service certainly was
more middling. Like many scholar-officials (jinshen) of his time, he was
keen on accessing the prestige and privileges of the jinshi degree but not
so keen on assuming onerous administrative positions. He truly idolized
the Chongzhen emperor (r. 1628–1644) and was committed to serving
him in some capacity, but he did not see himself as strong leadership
material. Xue reputedly performed well in a decent succession of rela-
tively comfortable posts—in the Directorates of Education in Beijing and
Nanjing and in the Nanjing Ministry of Justice. His last and most
harrowing appointment, which he undertook reluctantly in 1637, was as
prefect of Kaifeng, where the prefectual city also served as the provincial
capital of Henan. Unfortunately, Xue Cai’s posting to Kaifeng corre-
sponded with a period of fierce attacks on Henan by the roving-rebel
armies of Zhang Xianzhong (1605–1647) and Li Zicheng (1605–1645),
and he soon came into conflict over tactics and strategy with the generals
and high officials deputed by Beijing to pacify the Central Plain.7 Angry
and frustrated to the point of illness, Xue Cai begged for permission to
resign, but when that was denied, he abandoned his post and returned
home in the winter of 1638–1639.8 This experience engendered in him
both a sense of personal failure and great bitterness toward Ming officialdom,
which he felt had become ridden with venal, self-serving, opportunistic
appointees.

Back in Wujin, Xue Cai resumed the role of local notable and
fond paterfamilias, staying as convenience dictated either in his Wujin
city residence or in his rural home, apparently relying on ample landed-
income.9 Among the activities that he undertook as a fairly typical man
of scholar-official status was to place in order and edit the books, papers, and writings of his patrilineal forebears, a task he hoped his son, Xue Jizhen (dates unknown, who had just reached marriageable age), could carry forward in the future. In this context, he may have resumed journal-keeping out of a felt obligation to inform his descendants of their family heritage and from a desire to leave something intimate of his own—partly an apologia—by which they might gain an empathetic sense of him and those who had shaped his life. In any case, the biji (jottings) that he began to write in 1642 differ from a record that he kept in earlier years mainly of his occasional literary compositions. (See figure 2.)

When the sections of the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji are read in chronological order (see discussion below), one can discern that Xue Cai began the journal in an avuncular, reminiscent mood, jotting down some stories about his own literary associates and friends but mainly sharing edifying remembrances of his elders—a boyhood doctor, his teachers, and especially his great grandfather, great grandmother, grandfather, father, and his grandfather’s famous colleagues in the Donglin movement. He rather pompously associates his own male forebears with the special greatness of the Ming and maintenance of the dynasty’s esprit de corps in times of challenge from scurrilous eunuchs and northern barbarians. The mood darkens in the winter of 1642–1643, when Xue learns of the horrendous destruction of Kaifeng city by flood the previous autumn, at which time maneuvers by the besieging rebels and would-be Ming relief forces caused a rupture in nearby dikes on the Yellow River. Stricken with grief at this news, which deepens Xue’s guilt over deserting his post at Kaifeng, he writes several remembrances of figures he had admired and cultural assets he had treasured during his tour of duty in that city. By the fourth month, however, Xue had largely regained his upbeat outlook: he writes, for instance, a paean to the Chongzhen emperor, cherishing the glimpse he had caught of him when serving in Beijing, praising his conscientiousness in seeking the right men for office, and expressing confidence in certain of his recent appointees. Another darkening occurs in mid-summer 1643, the records from which entirely concern ominous strange phenomena—celestial and terrestrial, human, animal, and spectral—which Xue interprets as signs of an impending, untoward “change of the age” (shibian). But by the eighth
Two successive pages of the manuscript entitled *Xue Cai shiwen gao* (Manuscript Text of Xue Cai’s Poetry and Prose) (n.p., n.d.) probably written in Xue Cai’s own hand. The manuscript as a whole shows that Xue Cai was a journal-keeper in the years before the commencement of the *Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji* (Jottings of Mr. Xue Xiemeng). While Xue commonly wrote of everyday affairs and
occasionally included dream recollections (e.g., beginning in the eighth column of the left-hand page), copies of his literary compositions predominate. Bold brush markings, here and throughout the manuscript, suggest that someone was making selections for an edition of Xue’s poems. Photograph of the exemplar in the National Library of China, Beijing, no. 13971, used with permission.
2b. Enlargement of a portion 2a. This manuscript text was written on paper grid-ruled in red, the lines of which are faintly visible. Two tear-shaped marks in the upper margin at the left were made in red ink.
month he is back in a typical, pedantic biji (jottings) mode, setting forth his views on history, editing, calligraphy, and contemporary attitudes, with little indication of personal anxiety.\textsuperscript{17}

A temporal hiatus and qualitative break occur in the journal, however, between the eighth month of 1643 and the second month of 1644, an interval that corresponds not only with dramatic increases in roving-rebel potency to the north and west of Jiangnan, but also with the terminal illness and death of one of Xue Cai’s paternal uncles, Xue Xianyue, who had assumed greater importance in Xue Cai’s life after the death of his father. Xue Xianyue, a National University student, after failing to place in the metropolitan examination of 1624, had returned home disillusioned, forsaken his scholar’s attire, and withdrawn from scholar–official life to “roam with abandon among the lakes and hills.” When Xue Cai attained jinshi status, we are told, he implored his uncle to dress in his official robes again. But Xue Xianyue refused, saying that a period of chaos had already begun and that he, unlike his son or nephew, at least could be buried in classical Han-Chinese dress (rather than in that of barbarians) and face his forebears without shame. Xue Xianyue died in the first lunar month of 1644.\textsuperscript{18}

Early in the spring of that year, Xue Cai clearly starts to feel besieged, fearing the unrest among common people in his home area and the real possibility of rebel invasion from Jiangxi. Responding to reports of horrible deaths inflicted on men of his class in rebel-seized parts of the country—the worst being that of his uncle Liu Mianzuo at the hands of Zhang Xianzhong’s creatures in Yongzhou, Huguang—Xue begins to write in his journal more frequently. Whereas in the previous two years he had written seasonally, then at intervals of one or two months, hereafter he usually writes every few days, or daily, even twice a day. And his stance shifts continually between public-style moralistic comment on people’s political and military behaviors and revelation of extremely personal feelings and cares, between self-exculpation for his behavior and confession of his inescapable guilt.

Also at this point in time, the journal begins to exhibit its most distinctive feature: records of dreams that in their frequency, length, vividness, and intensity well surpass those that Xue Cai had noted before.\textsuperscript{19} In all, the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji recounts forty-seven spates
of dreaming by Xue himself and two by others close to him; only three of these occur before the end of 1643. Xue Cai’s remarkable dream recollections constitute the principal value of the journal for present-day historians, offering rare insights on the subjective consciousness of a fairly typical member of the late-Ming political class as the structures of his world crumbled around him, forcing him to seek not only physical refuge but also an alternative social and creedal identity.

Interestingly, Xue Cai seems to dream most memorably when he is away from home. He records no dreams during the most shocking period of 1644—from the third month when he learned of Li Zicheng’s direct attack on Beijing, through the sickening receipt of news about the suicide of the Chongzhen emperor and the deaths of the empress, princesses, and princes in the North, and through the faction-ridden establishment of a rump Ming court in nearby Nanjing. Declining to serve Nanjing’s newly enthroned Hongguang emperor (r. 1644–1645) or even to advise the Wujin magistrate, Xue Cai instead retreated into the Wujin hills, and by the beginning of the eighth month he was residing on the southern side of Tai Lake (Taihu), on West Dongting Island (Dongting xishan), whose resident Daoists had impressed him on previous visits. From this point onward, with one brief exception, Xue lives away from home through the end of the journal in the third lunar month of 1646 and, we know from other sources, at least through the fourth lunar month of 1647.

The journal informs us intimately about transformations in Xue Cai’s outlook and spiritual mood during three of five discernible phases in his life after the late summer of 1644. First, in the ten months he spent mainly on West Dongting Island, Xue Cai tried to assess the often faulty information that reached him about the continuing rebel threat, the intentions of the Manchus who had taken over Beijing and most of North China, the actions—and inactions—of the Hongguang court, and the eventual Manchu-Qing (1644–1911) penetration of Jiangnan and elimination of the Nanjing government. During this time, Xue contemplated but then eschewed “leaving the world” via clerical Daoism. Second, most incredible were the three and one-half months after the devastating death, from a torturous illness, of Xue Cai’s beloved daughter. He and immediate family members transported her coffin across Tai
Lake in the midst of the Manchu invasion of the delta, and Xue ended up residing in the Buddhist monastery near which, somewhat by force of circumstance, he eventually buried her. During this time, Xue’s obsessive concern over the karmic debt in his family line and its effect on his daughter’s transmigration, as well as his deepening friendship with the head monk at the Sheng’en Monastery (Sheng’ensi) overlooking Tai Lake from the Xuanmu hills (Xuanmushan) in southwestern Wu district (Wuxian), led Xue to a heartfelt appreciation of Buddhist salvation.

Third, in the three and one-half months after the final propitiatory rites for his daughter, Xue apparently remained in the vicinity of the Sheng’en Monastery, desperate for signs of effective resistance to the Manchu-Qing juggernaut but receiving mostly news of successive massacres of cities that had thwarted the Qing armies and of the deaths and humiliations of many acquaintances who had refused to submit to the Manchus.

Through these phases, certain characteristics of Xue Cai’s dreams especially reveal his state of mind. Xue, for instance, frequently dreams of being in the presence of authority figures—rulers, examiners, teachers, his father, or other senior, male family members—in situations that make him feel ignored, rejected, ashamed, or out of place. He dreams remarkably often about the examination system and its representatives, in ways that expose it all as a wasteful sham. Certainly his sense of needing to flee but finding no path of escape is palpable in several dreams, which exhibit blockages in the homologous forms of locked doors, obstructed gates, mountain chains, and piles of stones. Class issues also are vivified, as dream images and situations impugn the integrity of Xue Cai’s scholar-official peers but also show his fear of contact with the unwashed masses or reduction to their living standard. And the association of upper-class personal fastidiousness with moral cleanliness is manifested inversely in dreams where soiling or dampening, particularly of the feet, correlate with feelings of sham or shame. Most revelatory, however, are the dreams that explain, in effect, why Xue Cai, disillusioned with Confucian culture, ultimately turned to Buddhism rather than Daoism.22

It must have been not long after the fifteenth day of the third lunar month of 1646, the date of the last dated item in the journal, that Xue took the tonsure and became a Chan monk. Interacting occasionally with many other Ming literati who had fled into the Xuanmu hills—an area
dotted with small Buddhist abbeys as well as prominent monasteries—
Xue remained there at least until the fourth month of 1647, when it was
rumored that Manchu troops were coming into those hills to get him and
several other Ming-loyalist figures. The last phase of Xue’s life, from
this point until his death in 1665, is very sparsely documented, but it
seems that he made his way back to his home area and lived unobtrusively
as a literatus–monk, supported by his family (which had gone relatively
unscathed in Wumu) and unmolested by the Qing authorities.

Xue Cai’s Legacy in the Qing Period (1644–1911)

Among contemporaries in the first decades of the Qing dynasty, memo-
ries of Xue Cai were molded somewhat by the cultural-historiographical
stereotype of the yimin (“remnant subject”) Chan-Buddhist monk, that
is, as a survivor from the previous dynasty who wrote wistfully poignant
poems and behaved in mildly eccentric ways, expressive of a detached
mentality born of pain and disillusionment. Xue’s journal, as he prob-
ably intended, remained in the possession of his patrilineal descendants
who, working as secretaries and teachers and leaving the ancestral home
in Wumu to live wholly in the conurbation of Wujin and Yanghu, did
not enter the civil service, achieve higher-level examination success, or
exercise prominent local leadership until the nineteenth century. Whether
any of them read the journal, or if they did what they made of it, we are
not given to know.

The reemergence to historical view of Xue Cai’s oeuvre and
certain of his descendants is related to the development of the “Changzhou
school” of Han Learning into a major intellectual and political force early
in the nineteenth century under the leadership of Li Zhaoluo (1769–
1841) and Liu Fenglu (1776–1829). Li had drawn inspiration from the
late-Ming Donglin movement and from the statecraft scholarship of
certain Ming-period forebears from Changzhou, especially Xue Yingqi.
This may have been a factor in the special favor Li Zhaoluo accorded to
one young government student who became his pupil (and who lived for
a time in the home of Liu Fenglu), Xue Ziheng (dates unknown), and
who eventually made his own mark in late-Qing classical studies. In
1831 Xue Ziheng, a patrilineal descendant of Xue Yingqi and Xue Cai,
approached Li Zhaoluo on behalf of his father, whose own father, Xue Yingpu (fl. ca. 1800), had left behind a collection of Xue Cai’s prose and poetry that he had gathered from lineage members more than twenty years earlier. Fearing that if the collection lay neglected much longer Xue Cai’s works would become scattered again, the family wished to publish it. Thus, editing assistance and a preface were duly sought from the renowned Li Zhaoluo.27

Li Zhaoluo agreed with apparent alacrity to lend a hand, not only out of regard for Xue Ziheng and the legacies of Xue Yingqi and Donglin activism in his pupil’s patrimony, but also in response to an emphasis on loyalty that was rising among the scholarly elite in the early nineteenth century. This had been fostered by imperial ideology in the middle-to-late Qianlong reign (1736–1795), during which Ming loyalty had been generalized into a timeless value of loyalty to one’s state, and by challenges to confidence in the Qing order during the decades spanning the turn of the nineteenth century.28 Indeed, around the time when he wrote so admiringly in his preface about Xue Cai’s enduring local reputation for maintaining the high principle of not serving another dynasty, Li Zhaoluo was closely engaged in establishing a memorial shrine and pavilion for “loyal and righteous” (zhongyi) figures from Changzhou.29 And when a portion of a collection of Xue Cai’s prose and poetry appeared sixty-five years later, in 1896, as the Duishan xiansheng qianji chao (Selected Literary Writings of Mr. Duishan, First Part), it was in a series of works by former, upstanding men from Changzhou, the Changzhou xianzhe yishu (Posthumous Publication of the Writings of Changzhou Forebears), published by one of that prefecture’s most famous sons in the history of modern China, the great official, industrialist, entrepreneur, and leader in China’s “self-strengthening” movement, Sheng Xuanhuai (1844–1916).30

The long hiatus between Li Zhaoluo’s preface of 1831 and the appearance of only the qianji (first part)—never, it seems, the houji (latter part)—as late as 1896 is unexplained, though it is certain that the Xues of Wujin, like others in the literate stratum of the lower Yangzi region, suffered catastrophic losses to their book collections during the Taiping Rebellion of 1850–1864.31 It was partly those losses to domestic upheaval and partly a felt need to re-gird Chinese culture after successive defeats
by the British, French, Russians, and Japanese from 1840 to 1875 that led the most prominent of the self-strengtheners, Viceroy Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909), to write an immensely popular guide to the best editions of the most important traditional Chinese books, the *Shumu dawen* (Answering Bibliographical Questions). This work, from its first publication in 1876 through the Republican period, would see numerous editions and emendations, the most important of which down to the present day has been the *Shumu dawen buzheng* (Supplementation to and Correction of ‘Answering Bibliographical Questions’) by Fan Xizeng (1900–1930) of the Nanjing Library of National Studies (Nanjing guoxue tushuguan). Preserved in Fan’s work, which appeared posthumously in 1931, was an influential appendix (probably of 1875) by Zhang Zhidong entitled “Quan keshu shuo” (Exhortation to Print Books), in which he urged men whose financial means exceeded their scholarly talent to gain lasting repute by editing, printing, and reprinting old books. This had become a distinct enthusiasm among private book collectors during the Guangxu reign (1875–1908), and the earlier motivation to publish the works of writers from China’s proud history under conditions of threat to the Qing-ruled country and Qing-patronized civilization were stirred again, under a new sense of threat, after the Manchu dynasty itself had become an anathematized thing of the past.  

**The “Shuffled” Journal in Republican China**

When the full force of the Taiping Rebellion hit Changzhou in 1856, Xue Cai’s journal was held by a member of a branch line in the Xue clan, Xue Lipu (dates unknown), who, in fleeing his home area, suffered the destruction and dispersal of more than half of his books. But the journal was recovered by a maternal relative of the Xues, one Feng Fang (dates unknown), who passed it on to his son, “not daring to leak it to the world,” we are told. Not until 1916, after the Republican Revolution, did Feng’s son see his way clear and, by happenstance, find an opportunity to return the journal to one of Xue Cai’s lineal descendants, Xue Yunzhong (dates unknown).  

Implied here is that the custodians of the journal feared making it public during the Qing period because of the numerous condemnatory and pejorative references therein to the Manchus—
references of the sort that had prompted successive “literary inquisitions” under Qing rule. This is made explicit in the second postscript, of 1927, by a younger descendant, Xue Tao (fl. 1930s), which also provides the basis to conclude that publication of the journal with many of its entries out of chronological order—that is, in what I call “shuffled” form—was the work of Xue Tao, not a condition of Xue Cai’s original manuscript.

The most direct indication that Xue Tao was responsible for changing the sequence of entries in the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji (Jottings of Mr. Xue Xiemeng) occurs toward the end of his postscript to the work. There he remarks that the journal, having made it through three hundred years of military conflagrations without significant deterioration, surely has been protected by Xue Cai’s spirit in Heaven. In view of this, he adds, “[D]espite my poor abilities, [I] cannot but use my own judgment to arrange [the work] in order [zhe jia quanci] and, further, to have woodblocks carved [for its publication].” Less-direct indications of Xue Tao’s editorial role lie in how the emphases of his postscript reflect ambient political and historiographical values of the Republican period and how those emphases correlate with departures from the chronological sequence of entries in the published journal.

For half a century after the overthrow of the Manchu-Qing order in 1911–1912, despite official policies to protect and assimilate the ethnic Manchus and banner men, the Chinese historiographical temperament, while carrying forward many characteristics of the scholarship that had been fostered under that order, was decidedly anti-Manchu and anti-Qing. And that meant being historiographically pro-Ming, that is, treating sympathetically the last era of indigenous Han-Chinese rule before China had fallen again to an alien kind. Especially lionized were figures and movements that had tried to reform, support, and defend the Ming in its last several decades, that had led resistance to the Qing conquest, and that had kept alive among the populace non-reconciliation to barbarian rule. In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the Xues of Wujin naturally were sanguine to remind the public of their descent from one of the greatest Ming scholar-statesmen, Xue Yingqi, and there was a real bonus for them in being able to show, with a text as moving as Xue Cai’s biji (jottings), that they had a bona fide Ming loyalist in their ancestry.
Elation at feeling free to share Xue Cai’s sentiments widely, after almost three hundred years of presumed suppression, is palpable not only in the descendants’ postscripts but also in the preface that was solicited later from a prominent, traditionalist scholar from Changzhou, Qian Zhenhuang (1875–1944). In one biography at least, Qian is portrayed as someone who had not welcomed the fall of the Qing: he had been one of the very last men to earn the jinshi degree in imperial China (1903) and had served in the Qing Ministry of Justice. Nevertheless, he wrote fulsomely of Xue Cai, comparing him to the canonical Bo Yi, scion of ancient Shang-dynasty royalty, who had died in the wilds rather than submit to the conquering Zhou in the eleventh century BCE. And Qian Zhenhuang compared Xue Cai’s journal to a quasi-legendary anti-Mongol text, the Xinshi (Heartfelt History), purportedly by the famous Southern Song loyalist-painter Zheng Sixiao (1241–1318), who was thought to have hidden the work in a well in Jiangnan where it remained (in an iron box) until its timely rediscovery late in the Ming.

By 1939 when publication actually was accomplished “amidst the flames of warfare,” the late-Qing patriotic impetus to print and reprint old books, after the Taiping destructions and under pressures from foreign powers, had been revitalized by the Japanese invasion and the huge losses which that had caused to major book collections. The celebrated writer and bibliophile Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958), who personally had lost almost two thousand old books to fire in August of 1937 during the Battle of Shanghai, was at this time leading a campaign to link preservation of the country (now from Japanese aggression) to preservation of the citizenry’s cultural heritage. Thus, the Xues’ project to publish Xue Cai and republish Xue Yingqi at this particular point can be seen as a response to the identification of Ming loyalism with Chinese patriotism and of old-book publication with national salvation.

The ready association that scholars made between late-Ming and early-twentieth-century political and military developments also dovetailed with the current historiographical epistemology which, combining the legacy of evidential research (kaozheng xue) from the Qing period with Western ideas of scientific inquiry, was distinctly positivistic. It was important to find more facts and fill in gaps, and, as in the Western historiography of the time, the most important factual gaps to be filled
were in the histories of states. For many in the Republican period, most compelling was the history of the end of the Ming state, including the Southern Ming courts and the Ming-loyalist resistance. The praise-and-blame mode was alive and vigorous: the consuming question was who had aided, directly or indirectly, and who had resisted, physically or psychologically, the loss of Han-Chinese sovereignty to the Manchus.

Qian Zhenhuang in his preface and Xue Tao in his postscript to the *Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji* exhibit two ends of a certain spectrum in Republican-period historical positivism: deflating abstemiousness in accepting historical testimony, on one side, and over-enthusiasm at the discovery of new evidence, on the other. Qian Zhenhuang, referring to Xue Cai the journal-writer as an “old monk in the hills,” quickly discerns and frankly addresses the inaccurate, hearsay nature of most of his comments on current events, even fingering some of them as “greatly laughable.” Where Xue Cai’s opinions of certain contemporaries depart from the conventional judgments on them in later histories, Qian attributes the differences to Xue Cai’s lack of full information. Xue Tao, on the other hand, disregards Xue Cai’s paucity of direct knowledge of most of the political and military matters about which he writes in the journal. Rather, he hails the work as a “history” (*shi*)—a “painful history” (*tongshi*)—comparable to the most respected contemporaneous histories of the end of the Ming, Wen Bing’s (1609–1699) *Liehuang xiaozhi* (Brief Study of the Chongzhen Reign) and Gu Yanwu’s (1613–1682) *Sheng’an [huangdi] benji* (Basic Annals of the Hongguang Reign). Xue Tao prizes the journal not only for supplementing the known facts and viewpoints of its time, but also for immortalizing the spirit of the conquest generation. As for the numerous passages in which Xue Cai recorded his dreams, which did not match with the positivistic values of the day, Xue Tao writes apologetically, saying, “The indignation filling his chest had no outlet, so he used mysteriously vague, trance-like language to vent it.” In other words, he characterizes the dream contents as code for loyalist expression.

Attitudes such as these in Republican-period historiography deeply affected twentieth-century interpretation of the end of the Ming, and in some cases, as in the *Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji*, they worked to actually alter the face of primary materials from the target period. As the title of
the present article suggests, these attitudes led to extensive rearrangement of the order of the journal segments, principally by transposing many items from the front to the back. A comparison of the text as published with the text as reconstructed, that is, with the dated segments in chronological order, reveals patterns that substantiate the Republican-period mentality sketched above. It is not possible to compare the published version with Xue’s manuscript, because the latter was irretrievably lost, probably at some point between Xue Tao’s editorial work *circa* 1927 and Qian Zhenhuang’s preface-writing of 1939.\(^47\)

Allowed to remain among entries in the first two years of the journal are adulation of Ming emperors from Wanli to Chongzhen (see figure 3) and praise for outstanding leaders of the Donglin movement; an account of how Xue Cai’s lineage elders had contributed to the Donglin struggle to restore the good esprit of the Ming dynasty—in which respect, we are told, the Ming was superior to all previous dynasties; recollections of Xue Yingqi’s insights on political trends; inflated association of Xue forebears with the assurance that the Ming would continue to be a great, natively ruled dynasty; and a paean to the Chongzhen emperor followed by the only dream-reference retained in the front of the work: Xue’s mention that in his dreams he still recalls the thrill of catching sight of the emperor during a court ceremony.

Also retained are Xue Cai’s expressions of grief when he learns of the destruction of Kaifeng city by flood (which in the Republican period was still wholly blamed on the roving rebels, not on the Ming government troops). These are accompanied by memories of local stalwarts who had sacrificed themselves in defense of the prefecture and city from the rebels when Xue Cai had been prefect there; of historical sites, cultural treasures, and architectural monuments now presumed damaged or destroyed; and of exceptional cultural figures of Kaifeng, whose lives Xue Cai now presumed to have been ruined or terminated. In short, retained upfront in the journal—and moved to earlier positions within the first fascicle—are matters of public, political import in a Ming-loyalist vein, as well as observations that associate Xue Cai with righteous opposition to nefarious elements that were thought to have undermined the great Ming.\(^48\)

Removed from their chronological positions in the first two years
of the journal and placed in the latter part of the second fascicle are fifty-seven notes on the following matters: domestic reminiscences about Xue’s elders and their politically unimportant relatives, friends, and associates (this includes an account of how Xue Cai was reared by his beloved great-grandmother after his mother died when he was just six); dreams of ghost-like appearances of Xue Yingqi and Xue Cai’s boyhood tutor, who deliver advice and predictions; memories of notable Buddhists and Daoists whom Xue Cai had known, including comments on their abilities to cure diseases and treat maladies; credulous notes on occult matters, strange occurrences, and ominous reports of sightings of weird phenomena; lamentations on the decline of contemporary mores, especially growing laxity about widow remarriage, which reveal Xue Cai to have been a real hard-liner on widow chastity; and extensive miscellaneous notes on scholarship, which might suggest that Xue was absorbed in pedantry while his dynasty was in crisis. In short, placed in the background are things about the private sphere and things that expose Xue’s “superstitious” side, as well as habits and social values that, in China of the “New Culture” and “May Fourth” period, were less than progressive.49

Of course, such entries remain available to the reader in the latter part of the publication. But the transpositioning implicitly devalues aspects of Xue Cai’s thought and consciousness that he himself did not discriminate against, indeed, that occupied a single plane of importance to him as a writer of biji (jottings). He might well have written differently if he had intended to write a history—a shi (historical narrative) or a jilüé (abbreviated record). Moreover, the rearrangement obscures the changes in Xue Cai’s mood and concerns over time, as his sociopolitical world collapsed around him and his moral and spiritual values transmogrified within. These are matters of interest to present-day historians whose zeal for factual coverage has been cooled by postmodern hermeneutics and whose sense of the political has spread into fields of inquiry (such as gender relations) beyond the actions of governments. Moreover, the current emphasis on cultural history has elevated the significance of how groups and individuals in the past experienced and interpreted their milieux. Thus, close examination of works like the Xue Xiemen xiansheng biji, which prima facie may not seem to hold much of value to historians
3. First recto-page (left) and the colophon (right) of the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji (Jottings of Mr. Xue Xiemeng) (1939). The first recto-page shows the abbreviated running title as well as the blank spaces that respectfully precede all
of China early in the twenty-first century, can reveal treasures hidden behind early-twentieth-century alterations.

However, we should resist the arrogance of presentism in exposing the motives and handiwork of those who sacrificed to bring Xue Cai’s journal into print. For one thing, reduplication as a printed work saved it, however modified, for the world to read—and for modern readers thereby to be challenged to understand what it was like to live through one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of a complex civilization. The survival story of the text itself may also help readers who are interested in book history to understand the social, political, and material factors that could mitigate for or against the preservation of a personal record of a forebear by a struggling lineage during the Qing period. Furthermore, just as early twentieth-century approaches to history underwent change, so will those of today. We cannot know how future generations of scholars will look upon the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji (Jottings of Mr. Xue Xiemeng), but it will be available to them, thanks to the traditional value of loyalty to lineage and state as it was invigorated by national crisis and found media for expression in the publishing sector of Republican China.

Notes

My thanks go to Diana Wenling Liu, Tai-loi Ma, Nancy Norton Tomasko, Cheng-hua Wang, and Robert Eno for helping in the completion of this article.


2. The 1939 reproduction of Xue Yingqi, Xuezi yongyu (Common Sayings of Master Xue), 12 juan, adds only a calligraphic preface by Qian Zhenhuang (1875–1944; for biographies of Qian Zhenhuang, see note 39 below); a notice that the 1569 original from which this 1939 edition was produced is the common property of Xue Yingqi’s lineal descendants (zusun); and the seal of the particular descendant who probably was the custodian of that copy, Xue Tao (fl. 1930s), editor of the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji, as discussed below. The Ming Longqing (1567–1572)-period edition has been reprinted in the Xuxiu Siku quanshu (Zibu, Rujia lei), vol. 940 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), pp. 1–
The 1939 photo-lithographic edition of Xuezi yongyu is held by only three repositories in the WorldCat system, including the East Asian Library of Princeton University (see figure 1). On the technique of lithography, which permitted this sort of identical reproduction of texts without the original woodblocks, and which also made easy the addition of non-print features, such as calligraphed prefaces, see Michael Twyman, Early Lithographed Books (London: Farrand Press and the Private Libraries Association, 1990), esp. the introduction and chapters 7, 10–12. On the development of lithographic printing in China, particularly in Shanghai, see Christopher A. Reed, Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937 (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), chapter 2.


It is not clear where the publishing work was done, though the preface-writer for both publications, Qian Zhenhuang, was then residing in Shanghai. In this article, I assume that the Xue Xiemeng xiansheng biji was published in 1939, the year of its preface, though this is not absolutely certain. I have found no listing for this book in any of the likely volumes of the Minguo shiqi zong shumu (Comprehensive Bibliography of the Republican Era), 1911–1949 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1986–1994). In any case, it was published in two fascicles (not divided into juan) with the running title Xue Xiemeng biji [hereafter in the notes, Biji (Jottings)]. Six repositories in the WorldCat system hold this work, but most of the catalog entries contain errors. Least important is that the year of Xue Cai’s jinshi degree is incorrectly given as 1630, whereas there was no metropolitan examination in that year (the correct date is 1631). More serious is that some bibliographers have noted only the easy-to-calculate Republican-era year of one of the postscripts and, neglecting to note, or deal with, the 1939 date of the preface, have entered a publication date of 1928. One bibliographer did note the jimao date of the preface but, ignoring the postscripts, tentatively assigned the preface not to 1939 in the sexagenary cycle but to 1879. Caveat lector!

Xue Cai’s zi is Xiemeng; his hao Suixing. Because he lived at Duishan (Pile Hill) for a time after taking the tonsure, he changed his hao to Duishan, and for his Buddhist name he eliminated the upper two parts of his personal name Cai, leaving only the character mi, and called himself Midui (Rice Pile). For contemporaneous biographies of Xue Cai that include accounts of his ancestry, see Zhang Youyu (1622 jinshi), “Suixing gong zhuan” (Biography of the Honorable Suixing), prefatory to Xue Cai, Duishan xiansheng qianji chao (Selected Literary Writings of Mr. Duishan [Xue Cai], First Part) (see note 30 below for a discussion of this work); and Chen Jisheng (fl. 1644–1661), “Xue
Taipu” (Vice Minister of the Imperial Stud Xue [i.e., Xue Fuzheng]), Tianqi Chongzhen liangchao yishi (Surviving Poems from Two Reigns, Tianqi [1621–1627] and Chongzhen [1628–1644]) (n.p., 1655), xiaozhuan (brief biographies), in Mingdai zhuanji congkan, no. 12 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1991), pp. 153–154.


5. Wujin was the number-one district in Nan Zhili for supplying officials to the Ming state, and it was outstanding in examination success empire-wide throughout the Ming and Qing periods. See Benjamin A. Elman, Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch’ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 95–97. For Xue Cai’s jinshi listing, see Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, comp., Ming-Qing like jinshi timing lu (Namelist of Scholars Who Advanced in the Ming and Qing Metropolitan Examinations), in Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan xuji, vols. 785–790 (Taipei, Yonghe: Wenhai chubanshe, 1981), p. 2607.

6. Liu Mianzuo, the youngest of these maternal uncles, had passed the metropolitan examination in the same year as Xue Cai, though lower, in the third class (Ming-Qing like jinshi timing lu, p. 2609). On all three, see Zhang Tingyu (1672–1755), ed., Mingshi ([Official] Ming History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 294; and Zhao Jishi (1628–1706) and Lu Yi (1629–1708), comp., Xu biaozhong ji (Continued Record of Model Loyalists) (n.p., preface 1698) in Mingdai zhuaniu congkan, vols. 64–65, juan 5, pp. 59a–63b.


8. For additional biographical information on Xue Cai, in addition to the sources cited in note 4 above, see Dong Sigu (1838 jinshi), Tang Chenglie (1831 juren) et al., comp. and ed., Guangxu Wujin Yanghu xianzhi (Guangxu-era Gazetteer of Wujin and Yanghu Districts), 31 juan (1879; 1906 republication), vol. 185 of Xinxiu fangzhi congkan (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1968), juan 21, pp. 82a–b; and Guan Jiezong, comp., Kaifeng fuzhi (Gazetteer of Kaifeng Prefecture), 40 juan (n.p., 1695), juan 22, p.12a.

9. The Wujin district city was conjoined with that of Yanghu district to the east. This conurbation, often called Wu-Yang or Yang-Wu, also served as the prefectural seat of Changzhou. Xue’s rural home was in a village called Wumu.

10. Xue Cai, Biji (Jottings), vol. 2, pp. 32a–33b.

11. A manuscript of over two hundred pages, probably in Xue Cai’s own hand,
fragmentary at beginning and end, is preserved under the title Xue Cai shiwen gao (Manuscript Text of Xue Cai’s Poetry and Prose) (n.p., n.d.) at the National Library of China. See the Beijing tushuguan guji shanben shumu, 5 vols. (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987), vol. 4, p. 2458, number 13971, and Figure 2.

15. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 2b–4b.
17. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 29a–37a.
18. Chen Jisheng, “Xue Taipu” (Vice Minister of the Imperial Stud Xue [i.e., Xue Fuzheng]), p. 154; first cited above in note 4.
19. For the onset of this dreaming, see Xue Cai, Biji (Jottings), vol. 1, pp. 9a–15a.
20. Specifically, Xue went to the Luli hills (Lulishan) of West Dongting Island. See Xue Cai, Biji (Jottings), vol. 1, p. 33a.
21. Ye Shaoypuan (1589–1648) of Wujian, another scholar-official convert to Buddhism who lived on the lam in the area of the Xuanmu and Wu hills (Wushan), records meeting Xue Cai and communicating with him several times from the fifth lunar month of 1646 to the fourth lunar month of 1647. See Ye’s diary, the Jiaxing rizhu (Daily Notes of [My] Movements [Commencing in] 1644), in his collected works, the Wumengtang ji (Collection from the Hall of Midday Dreams), 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 946–992, passim.

In this article, the year given is the closest approximation in the Western, solar calendar to the Chinese year, which begins on lunar New Year’s day and which usually falls late in January or early in February of the solar year.
23. Ye Shaoypuan, Jiaxing rizhu, vol. 1, p. 992. Ye also was named as an object of the rumored raid.
24. Chen Jisheng, in his “Xue Taipu” (Vice Minister of the Imperial Stud Xue [i.e., Xue Fuzheng]), p. 154, recounts visiting Xue Cai in Wumu, where he had “made an abbey of his home”; Zhang Youyu in his “Suixing gong zhuan” (Biography of the Honorable Suixing), p. 1b, mentions that Xue stayed in a “rustic monastery”; while Chen Zuolin (1837–1920) records that he lived reclusively near Dinhui Gate (Dinhuaimen) in Nanjing. For this last source, see Chen Zuolin, Mingdai jinling renwu zhi in Mingdai zhuanji congkan, vol. 150 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1991), unpaginated (reprint p. 393).
25. For remnants of Xue Cai’s post-conquest poems and rather formulaic brief comments on Xue himself, see Chen Tian (1849–1921), Mingshi jishi (Notes on


27. Li Zhaoluo, “Duishan xiansheng wenji xu” (Preface to the Collected Prose Writings of Mr. Duishan), Duishan xiansheng qianji chao (Selected Literary Writings of Mr. Duishan, First Part), preface, p. 1a. This source is discussed in detail in note 30 below.

28. On the several steps taken under the Qianlong emperor, beginning early in the 1770s, to assure that the history of the Ming-Qing transition would reinforce Qing loyalism, see Lynn A. Struve, The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619–1683: A Historiography and Source Guide (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1998), pp. 60–74. On literati responses to the political crises of the Qianlong-Jiaqing transition, which spanned the turn of the nineteenth century, see Elman, Classicism, Politics, and Kinship, chap. 9.


30. The Duishan xiansheng qianji chao (Selected Literary Writings of Mr. Duishan, First Part), not divided into juan, comprising thirty occasional works by Xue Cai from before 1644 (prefaces, biographies, birthday congratulations, funerary commemorations, etc.), can be found in the ji section of the (woodblock) Changzhou xianzhe yishu (Posthumous Publication of the Writings of Changzhou Forebears), comp. Sheng Xuanhui, reprinted in the Congshu jicheng xubian, wenxue section, vol. 187 (1895–1899; Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1989). A houji (latter part) in fourteen juan, mostly of Xue's writings from after 1644, was planned but never appeared. See Li Zhaoluo, “Duishan xiansheng wenji xu” (Preface to the Collected Prose Writings of Mr. Duishan), p. 1b. Items marked by a different hand in the manuscript Xue Cai
shiwen gao (Manuscript Text of Xue Cai’s Poetry and Prose) (see note 11 above), as though they were being selected for a literary publication, do not correspond with items in the qianji (first part).

On Sheng Xuanhuai, his role as a member of the Changzhou gentry, and his work on the Changzhou xianzhe yishu, the 330 juan of which appeared between 1895 and 1899, see Albert Feuerwerker, *China’s Early Industrialization: Sheng Hsüan-huai (1844–1916) and Mandarin Enterprise* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 86–87.

31. On the Taiping rebels’ destruction of people, books, and libraries, and the consequent emphasis during the Tongzhi reign (1862–1874) on recovering extant books and publishing replacement copies of the classics and basic histories, see Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies of Harvard University, 1984), pp. 248–252. The first postscript (dated 1928) to *Biji (Jottings)*, by Xue Cai’s descendant Xue Yunzhong (dates unknown), mentions eight titles by Xue Cai, in addition to the Duishan ji (Collected Writings of Duishan) that had “long since been published,” and the second postscript (dated 1927), by another descendant, Xue Tao, says that Xue Cai’s writings, apart from his *Biji (Jottings)*, had been extensively “selected and recorded” in other scholars’ compilations. Whether because of book losses over time or because of limited bibliographical resources, I have been able to locate, in addition to the remnants cited in note 25 above, only one poem, in *Mingshi zong* (Comprehensive Anthology of Ming Poetry), comp. Zhu Yizun (1629–1709) (n.p., 1701), juan 68, p. 12b, and one preface to a Chongzhen-period collection of examination essays, *Lige chuandeng* (Enlightening Transmission from the Pigweed Pavilion), held at the Library of Congress.

32. On Zhang Zhidong and his *Shumu dawen* (Answering Bibliographical Questions) and on Fan Xizeng and his *Shumu dawen buzheng* (Supplementation to and Correction of ‘Answering Bibliographical Questions’), see Xu Peng’s introduction to the 1983 edition of the latter work, published in Shanghai by the Shanghai guji chubanshe. For Zhang Zhidong, “Quan keshu shuo” (Exhortation to Print Books), see ibid., pp. 341–342. Also see Cheuk-woon Taam, *The Development of Chinese Libraries under the Ch’ing Dynasty, 1644–1911* (Shanghai: n.p., 1935; San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1977), pp. 75–76.

33. See Xue Yunzhong, postscript to *Biji (Jottings)*, by Xue Cai, dated 1928.

34. Xue Cai, *Biji (Jottings)* is consistent in reverentially leaving a blank space above all references to the Imperial Ming (see Fig. 3). But strangely, in a few instances a space also is left before references to the Imperial Qing. The very first reference to the Manchu regime [Xue Cai, *Biji (Jottings)*, vol. 1, p. 27a] is respectful: “Da Qing guo” (the Great Qing state). It occurs at a time (sixth day of the seventh lunar month, 1644) when Xue Cai saw the Manchus as aiding the Ming by extirpating the roving rebels in the North. But after Xue perceives that the Manchus are turning on the Ming and intending to seize the South as well as the North (the end of the eleventh month, 1644), he consistently uses the pejorative *lu* (slave-barbarians) in referring to them. Strangely
again, however, this character or its cognates seem sometimes to have been elided from the text. For passages that are the most condemnatory of the Manchus and the Qing regime, see Xue Cai, *Biji* (Jottings), vol. 2, pp. 1b–3b, 9a–10a. For a synthetic work on literary persecutions of the Qing period, see Guo Chengkang and Lin Tiejun, *Qingchao wenzi yu* (Literary Persecutions of the Qing Period) (N.p.: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1990).

35. Xue Tao, second postscript to *Biji* (Jottings), by Xue Cai, p. 2a. The wording directly after this point also indicates, unless he was writing metaphorically, that Xue Tao had in mind a woodblock edition.

36. Reconstruction of the original temporal sequence of the entries, for the purposes of my own study of the work, has been unavoidably inexact, since Xue Cai often wrote more that one note before appending a date, and the date given is sometimes general, such as “spring 1642.” As mentioned earlier, he wrote most frequently—daily or even twice a day—under the most intensely dangerous and disturbing circumstances.


38. For a general exposition on the historiography of the Ming-Qing transition in twentieth-century China, see Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict*, part one, chap. 4; first cited above in note 28.

39. The biography of Qian Zhenhuang in Zhang Weixiang’s *Qingdai Piling mingren xiaozhuan gao* (Short Draft Biographies of Famous Personages from Changzhou in the Qing Period), juan 10, pp. 76–77, is Qing-loyalist in tone. See also Jiangsu sheng Wujin xianzhi bianzuan weiyuan hui, comp., *Wujin xianzhi* (Gazetteer of Wujin District) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1988), pp. 933–934.


43. On the relation between modernity and nationalism in Chinese historiography,

44. Qian Zhenhuang, preface to *Biji* (Jottings), by Xue Cai, p. 1b.

45. For bibliographical discussion of these works, see Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict*, Part Two, items 1.A.29 (pp. 194–195) and 1.C.23 (pp. 233–234), respectively.

46. Xue Tao, second postscript to *Biji* (Jottings), by Xue Cai, p. 2a.

47. Xue Tao remarks in his postscript on how marvelously the ink and paper of the *Biji* (Jottings) had stood the ravages of three hundred years (p. 2a). Yet Qian Zhenhuang in his preface, writing probably from information supplied by Xue Bingchu (dates unknown), the Xue lineage member who brought the print-ready journal to him, says that it had been prepared from a transmitted copy (*chuanchao ben*) and that Xue Bingchu still hoped to find the original manuscript. See Qian Zhenhuang, preface to *Biji* (Jottings), by Xue Cai, p. 2a. No evidence appears, in Qian’s preface or elsewhere, about what had happened in the intervening years to Xue Tao, to the document from which he worked, or to his apparent plan to publish the *Biji* (Jottings).

48. In the first three years of Xue’s journal entries, nine dated segments, comprising twenty notes, are shifted out of chronological order. The editorial aim is not clear in each of these cases, but segments brought forward are marked by the emphases mentioned above, as well as by negative comment on persons who surrendered to and collaborated with the enemy and reports on important official documents, copies of which Xue Cai had seen. Segments shifted back in the reading order include reports on politico-military developments that proved to be untrue, expressions of uncertainty about Qing intentions which hold out some hope for negotiations, and one strange dream.

49. In the absence of the original manuscript, there is no way to ascertain whether certain entries were left out entirely. But since Xue Tao was not moved to elide some of the truly preposterous stuff that remains in the *Biji* (Jottings), it is difficult to imagine what he might have decided to obliterate.

**Glossary**

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Duishanji 堆山集
Duishan xiansheng qianji chao 堆山先生前集鈔
Duishan xiansheng wenji xu 堆山先生文集序
Fan Xizeng 范希曾
Feng Fang 馮昉
Fushe 復社
Guan Jiezhong 管竭忠
Guangxu Wujin Yanghu xianzhi 光緒武進陽湖縣志
Gao Panlong 高攀龍
Gu Xianchng 顧憲成
Gu Yanwu 顧炎武
hao 號
Hongguang 弘光
houji 後集
ji 集
Jiangnan 江南
Jiang Tong 蔣彤
Jiaxing rizhu 甲行日注
Jiayetang 嘉業堂
jilüe 纪略
jimao 己卯
Jingzhong xinshi 井中心史
jinshen 縉紳
jinshi 進士
juan 卷
Kaifeng 開封
Kaifeng fuzhi 開封府志
Kaiming shudian 開明書店
kaozheng xue 考證學
Lieuang xiaozhi 烈皇小識
Lige chuandeng 藝閣傳燈
Liu Chenggan 劉承幹
Liu Fenglu 劉逢録
Liu Mianzuo 劉綿祚
Liu Shengmu 劉聲木
Liushi san zhong 劉氏三忠
Liu Xizuo 劉熙祚
Liu Yongzuo 劉永祚
Li Zhaoluo 李兆洛
Li Zicheng 李自成
lu 虜
Lulishan 角里山
Lu Yi 盧宜
mi 米
Midui 米堆
Mingdai Jinling renwu zhi 明代金陵人物志
Mingshi 明史
Mingshi jishi 明詩紀事
Mingshi zong 明詩綜
Ming yimin juan 明遺民卷
Nanjing guoxue tushuguan 南京國學圖書館
Nan Zhili 南直隸
qianji 前集
Qian Zhenhuang 錢振鏞
Qingdai Piling mingren xiaozhuan gao 清代昆陵名人小傳稿
Qingnu xuecan xiaozhuan 清儒學案小傳
Quan keshu shuo 勸刻書說
Sheng’an [huangdi] benji 聖安 [皇帝] 本紀
Sheng’ensi 聖恩寺
Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣懷
shi 史
shibian 世變
Shiji 史記
Xue Cai’s Journal
Textual Filiation of Li Shimian’s Biography
The Part About the Palace Fire in 1421

HUNG-LAM CHU

Li Shimian (1374–1450) was considered, almost indisputably, the greatest National University chancellor during the Ming dynasty. By his loyalty to the throne and his uprightness as a scholar-official, he also exemplified the highest type of Hanlin official, who was usually known rather for his high literary cultivation. Li was a man of unquestionable moral integrity, symbolized by his insistence on lofty ideals and the ultimate prevailing of justice, and his biography is found in all histories of the Ming dynasty and in practically all collections of biographies of Ming personalities. Several misfortunes in his life are favorite entries in miscellaneous writings in Ming and Qing times.

Li’s story draws attention from modern, Western scholarship as well. The late Charles O. Hucker wrote his biography for the *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644.* The late Frederick W. Mote, in his *A Research Manual for Ming History*, made him the subject of a demonstrative study for a modern understanding and exploitation of traditional Chinese historiography, especially the official sources. Mote translated Li Shimian’s biography in the standard *Mingshi* (Official History of the Ming), adding rich annotations that give information and thought to
matters of historical and linguistic importance, and discussed the historiographical issues arising from the sources for the biography.

Li Shimian was a native of Anfu county in Ji’an prefecture of Jiangxi province, the native place of many of the highest officials in early Ming times. He became a jinshi in 1404, placing in the very first palace examination held in the Yongle reign (1403–1424). In the following year he was selected a member of the celebrated class of bachelors to receive further scholarly and literary training in the Wengyuange (Pavilion of Literary Depth) under the tutelage of the famous Xie Jin (1369–1415) and other eminent advisors to the Yongle emperor. After serving initially as a secretary in the Ministry of Punishment for several years, he became a compiler in the Hanlin Academy, eventually rose to the rank of a full-fledged academician some years later, and was elevated to head of the Hanlin Academy in 1438. Three years later, he was appointed chancellor of the National University in Beijing. He served in that position until he retired in 1447 and departed Beijing with the greatest honors that the emperor, the court officials, and the university students ever accorded a retiring chancellor in the Ming. He died at home soon after learning of the capture of the Zhengtong emperor (r. 1436–1449; and under the Tianshun reign title, r. 1457–1464) in the Tumu debacle of 1449. When the disastrous news reached him, Li Shimian sent a memorial to the succeeding Jingtai emperor (r. 1450–1456) urging him to strengthen military preparations and elevate the morale of officialdom. The new emperor answered him with gratitude. After he died, Li was first canonized Wenyi (cultivated and resolute) and then Zhongwen (loyal and cultivated). His lived a full life, enviable even to the most successful scholar-officials.

The full account of Li’s official career, however, includes three horrific ordeals he had experienced at the height of the Ming. First, he was sent to prison and jailed for some twenty-one months apparently for what he said about current government in 1421. That punishment was related to his response to the Yongle emperor’s call for frank criticism in the wake of the great fire that year that burned the three newly built audience halls in the recently proclaimed capital of Beijing. Second, he was almost beaten to death in a palace chamber and then jailed for seventeen months before he was freed by the Xuande emperor (r. 1426–
That incident was the result of his self-initiated memorial in 1426 about the private life and policies of the Hongxi emperor (r. 1425). The Hongxi emperor was the Yongle emperor’s son and the Xuande emperor’s father. Finally, in 1443, for his failure to comply unconditionally to the demands of the eunuch-dictator Wang Zhen (d. 1449), he was illegally sentenced by Wang to be pilloried in a heavy cangue for three days at the gate of the National University. He was released only when the Zhengtong emperor heard the petition for justice by a thousand and more (some sources say three thousand) National University students in front of the Forbidden City. The substance of these ordeals and inquiries into their causes have since captivated the historian and obsessed many a storyteller, who conveniently added inferences to create a compelling thriller. The life of Li Shimian as an official in the imperial court and in the capital is indeed worth studying. His encounters bear on the political and intellectual history of earlier Ming times, our understanding of which is still considerably guided by the preferences of traditional historiography. When the filiation of the texts that inform Li’s biography is scrutinized, however, discrepancies and contradictions in the official accounts about him become obvious. And when these discrepancies and contradictions are explained, we are obliged to modify our views on the character of the emperors whom Li served and on the larger picture of the officialdom in which he was an active member. Li’s ordeals in the Hongxi and Zhengtong reigns have been studied by Hucker and Mote, respectively. The present paper focuses on his first ordeal, which has received little scrutiny in past scholarship. Clearing up the confusion surrounding Li’s memorializing the Yongle emperor shows what actually happened, what really mattered, and what the imperial style of statecraft was like. Mote has examined “the filiation of texts going back to Li’s first biographies and other works dating from his time.” I continue by following his advice that we reconstruct a past event by studying each bit of relevant data from its source.

The Problem

Historiographical issues arising from Ming and Qing (1644–1911) accounts concerning Li Shimian’s 1421 encounter with the Yongle emperor’s
wrath appear as complicated as the encounter itself. Chronological entries in *Guoque* (History of the Ming Deliberated), the “Benji” (Annals) section of *Mingshi*, *Ming tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror of the Ming), as well as Li’s biographies in *Ming Yingzong shilu* (Veritable Records of the Ming [Emperor] Yingzong), other sections of the *Mingshi*, and other sources show discrepancies and contradictions in the documentation of Li’s presentation of his memorial and its aftermath.

Our inquiry begins with Mote’s translation of the opening part of Li’s biography in *Mingshi*. The immediately relevant passage reads as follows:

> He was by temperament resolute and outspoken, warm-heartedly genuine in looking upon the whole world as his responsibility. In the nineteenth year [of the Yongle reign, 1421] the three palaces burned; the emperor issued an edict calling for frank criticism. (See figure 1 for a diagram of the Forbidden City and the location of the three palaces that burned.) Li submitted a memorial which, section by section, dealt with fifteen current concerns. Chengzu had already determined that he would make Peking the capital and just at that time was summoning people to come there from afar. Thus Li Shimian’s saying that the construction work was wrong, and that it was not appropriate to have people from distant states who had come to offer tribute residing in clusters in the capital, ran afoul of the emperor’s wishes. After some time, the emperor went on to read the other issues discussed there, most of which hit squarely on current defects. He threw it to the floor, then repeatedly picked it up to examine it again, and in the end implemented many of its proposals. Subsequently, Li was slandered and sent to prison. After more than a year he gained his release, and on the recommendation of Yang Rong was restored to his official position.⁴

The above narrative, typical of most conventional historical narrative, first of all lacks temporal precision, even if we grant the credibility of the emperor’s later reaction to Li’s words.⁵ We don’t learn precisely when Li submitted his memorial, when he was sent to prison, or when he was released. The context of the incident cannot be sufficiently clear
1. Three main audience halls destroyed by fire in 1421. “Mingdai Gongjin tu” (Plan of the Forbidden City in the Ming Dynasty), in Zhu Xie, Ming Qing liangdai gongyuan jianzhi yange tu kao (Study of the Maps and Diagrams of the Buildings in the Imperial Palace During the Ming and Qing Dynasties) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), folding map following p. 90. The three halls that burned in 1421 from south to north at the center of the palace compound were Fengtian, Huagai, and Jinshen, today known as Taihe, Zhonghe, and Baohe, respectively.
when we don’t know the wording of the edict that enticed Li to be so outspoken and thorough in his response. We are not informed of the issues he addressed, other than those two identified in the Mingshi, and thus are not able to consider other reasons that would elicit the subsequent slander. The magnitude of Li’s punishment also is not clear. If he was not the only official who responded to the call for criticism, what did the other critics say and what happened to them? Also worth looking at are the reasons for Li’s great sense of responsibility and for his tardy rescue.

To answer these questions, we indeed have to go beyond this portion of the Mingshi. For the timing-related questions, the source of the Mingshi—Li’s biography, or necrology, in the Ming Yingzong shilu, the veritable records of the Zhengtong, Jingtai, and Tianshun reigns—is equally uninformative. The “Annals” of Mingshi in the Siku quanshu ([Qing] Imperial Library of Four Treasures) version of the work, on the other hand, chronicles a sequence of three events giving a rough configuration of the encounter. First, on day gengzi of the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421), fire burnt the three [newly completed] audience halls of Fengtian, Huagai, and Jinshen, and an edict was issued calling for frank criticism against governmental faults and failures. For speaking about the inconveniences of having the capital moved to Beijing, ministerial secretary Xiao Yi (1384–1423) was executed. Second, on day xinsi of the eleventh month of Yongle 19 (1421), reader-in-waiting Li Shimian memorialized fifteen current concerns. He offended the emperor and was sent to jail. Third, on day gengzi of the seventh month of Yongle 21 (1423), Li Shimian was released from prison and restored to his former post.

This chronology has Li submitting his memorial more than half a year after the great fire and after the execution of Xiao Yi, who spoke against establishing Beijing as the capital, as is similarly outlined in Li’s Mingshi biography. This timing, however, contradicts virtually all other sources, especially the Ming Taizong shilu—the veritable records of the Yongle reign—which dates Li’s memorial to a few days after the fire. The important information here is the execution of Xiao Yi, which goes completely unmentioned in the Veritable Records (and indeed in surviving contemporary Ming writings by writers who should have had knowledge of the matter). That information on Xiao Yi is reliable—the earlier Guoque chronicles it as well, and in fact, Xiao Yi’s memorial survives. (See figure 2.)
However, the Guoque account differs critically from the Mingshi account by chronicling the misfortune of Xiao Yi after that of Li Shimian. After entering the submission of memorials by Li Shimian and expositor-in-waiting Zou Ji (fl. 1380s–1420s; d. 1422) and a lengthy memorial indiscriminately attributed to both men, the Guoque lists the names of the other officials who also memorialized at the time and states that the emperor read their memorials and gave them approvals. The account of Xiao Yi’s encounter then follows. The sequence listed in the Guoque thus presented is in accord with that of the Ming Taizong shilu,
except that the latter is silent on Xiao Yi. But the Guoque also remains helplessly imprecise about the dates of Xiao’s act and his execution.

Collateral evidence from the Ming Taizong shilu nevertheless allows us to make a reasonable inference that the whole case reached its grand finale upon Xiao’s execution. The chronicles there must remain authoritative when it comes to the dates concerned. It helps to list these dates here.

1. On day gengzi of the fourth month, the eighth day of that month in the Yongle 19 (1421), fire burnt the three palaces.
2. On day renyin (two days later, on the tenth day of the month), the emperor issued a call for criticism from the civil and military officials.
3. On day jiachen (two days after that, on the twelfth day of the month and four days after the fire), reader-in-waiting Li Shimian and expositor-in-waiting Zou Ji and other officials memorialized the throne.
4. On day yisi (the following day, the thirteenth day of the month), the emperor issued an edict proclaiming relief to the populace in relation to the construction of Beijing.
5. On day guichou (eight days later, the twenty-first day of the month and thirteen days after the fire), a team of twenty-six court officials headed by minister of personnel Jian Yi (1363–1435) were dispatched to various places in the empire to “soothe and pacify” the soldiers and common people.

Two additional important dates are

6. Day xinsi in the eleventh month of Yongle 19 (1421), Li Shimian was sent to prison based on [some unspecified] implication.¹⁰
7. Day gengzi in the seventh month of Yongle 21 (1423), Li Shimian was released from prison and restored to his former position of Hanlin reader-in-waiting.¹¹

This chronology shows that Li was not immediately punished for what he wrote; rather, he got into trouble much later when he was tied to some presumably graver controversy. This can be ascertained by a scrutiny of the imperial responses to the fire and the subsequent criticism, which also give context to Xiao Yi’s misfortune.
The substance of the imperial call for criticism issued two days after the palaces burnt consists of twelve rhetorical questions posed as possible causes for incurring the displeasure of Heaven, which brought about the destructive fire. The emperor asks whether one or more of the following “faults and failures” are responsible for the calamity: (1) the emperor’s slighting and neglecting the rites of making offerings to the spirits; (2) the emperor’s perverting the observance of the ancestral laws and the administration of governmental affairs; (3) a lack of differentiation between the good and the evil caused by mean persons remaining in office and good persons refusing to serve; (4) right and wrong not distinguished when innocent people are jailed without cause; (5) loyal advice barred by successive slanders and evil doings and by those who compete to flatter and ingratiate themselves; (6) disasters in rural areas brought about by excessive taxes and levies and relentless exploitation of the people; (7) excesses in the national expenditure caused by improper rewards and punishments, subtle waste, and reckless expenditure; (8) decent livelihood for the people denied by exorbitant taxes and unfair demands of corvée labor; (9) military supplies and soldiers’ salaries drained by ongoing military operations and wrong ways of drafting and dispatching soldiers; (10) resources of the populace withered by excessive labor service and frequent drafts calls and demands for goods and services; (11) crafty people playing up to those in power and functionaries manipulating the law; and (12) officials being mean, weak, and incompetent. In fact, this is a list of self-indictments that in their own ways inform us of the scope and magnitude of the impact that the construction of Beijing had brought upon the populace.

The opening lines of the imperial pronouncement nevertheless indicated that the emperor was not ready to take the blame all by himself. He justified himself by first stating that in instituting the dual-capital system he was emulating the ancients. As emulation of classical precedents was a praiseworthy act that convention would sanction, he in effect maneuvered to foreclose criticism against what many thought was the crux of the matter—the construction of Beijing as the capital. He ended with a statement that lured conscientious and outspoken officials to their
dooms: a modest confession that he indeed did not really know the cause of this calamity and thus was eager to be enlightened. He added that the officials, “all whom I trust and who are one with me in matters of joy or distress, when finding what measures I have implemented that are really inappropriate, should speak out unreservedly and discuss them entry by entry, so that I can possibly correct the defects in order to return Heaven’s goodwill.”¹³ (For the text of the Yongle emperor’s edict, see figure 3.) That statement was tantamount to the emperor calling for reform in the areas suggested by the twelve questions. Yet, thus conceded, it was imperial prerogative to regard criticisms beyond this scope as relevant or not.

What ensued nevertheless proves that the Yongle emperor’s enumeration of “faults and failures” was by no means mere political gesture. Both emperor and court officials were serious. The multitude of criticism submitted two days after the imperial pronouncement (the twelfth day of the fourth month) no doubt harped upon the lavish constructions in Beijing, a topic to which we shall return later for further analysis. But the Yongle emperor responded positively. The next day (the thirteenth day, yisi, of the fourth month) he issued a substantial edict proclaiming twenty measures of relief and reform, thus substantiating the otherwise cliché-sounding statement in the Veritable Records that he approved the points of the critics. Despite his insistence on sharing the responsibility of governmental failures with officialdom, as reflected in his introductory queries about whether the fires occurred because of his lack of personal virtues or because of his appointing the wrong persons to certain official positions, he ordered a halt to all measures that caused inconveniences to the people affected and all work that was not urgent. Active terms of this edict intended to ameliorate or rectify the problems include the following points, classified here according to their nature and numbered in order of mention in the emperor’s edict.¹⁴

A. Exemption of arrears in tax and levies

Exemption of (1) tax arrears before Yongle 17 (1419), salt and grass collections to be delivered in that year, and tax grains and grass for Yongle 18 (1420) from areas hit by natural disasters; (2) undelivered requisitions of steel and iron, dyestuffs, hemp for mats, timber and plants;
3. Yongle emperor’s edict issued on the tenth day of the fourth month of 1421. *Ming Taizong shilu, juan* 236, pp. 2263–2264. Photographic reprint of manuscript exemplar in the Guoli Beiping tushuguan (Taipei: Zhongyang
The text of the emperor's edict begins in the ninth column of page 2263 and runs to the tenth column of page 2264.
[replacement of] draft animals that died; granary-bound grains, salt levies, and undelivered pearls from Guangdong; and also (3) levies on raw gold and silver (except for annual silver levies established by the old quota).

B. Suspension of purchases

(4) Postponement of purchases of all kinds of materials except those for urgent military use; suspension of (5) tea levies on shipments to Shaanxi and Sichuan; (6) the manufacture of cash money and purchases of writing paper; (7) sundry purchases for envoys going to foreign countries, the minting of copper cash [for that purpose], purchases of musk (shexiang), pig copper (shengtong), and crude silk (huangsi); (8) voyages of ships to foreign countries and the purchases of horses from [states] in the west and north; and (20) the building of ships for voyages to foreign countries. (This last point is mentioned twice).

C. Relief and rehabilitation

(9) Food relief for those in flood-stricken and drought-stricken areas; (10) incentives of a one-year exemption from sundry labor services and the cancellation of all unpaid taxes offered to households that had fled or emigrated from their native places; and (14) relief and compensation to soldiers and craftsmen who were injured or who had died while on duty and exemption of sundry labor services to their families.

D. Judiciary discipline

(11) Strict adherence to the Da Ming lü (Great Ming Code) with respect to trials and sentencing guidelines; prohibition against deliberate misinterpretation of the law by improper citation of regulations stated on imperial placards; (12) pardon and reinstatement to duty of military officers who committed crimes punishable by lashing, pole-beating, labor sentence, exile, resettlement, and sundry types of the death penalties, and those demoted and exiled to render service or stand sentry on the borders; (13) pardon and reinstatement to duty of officials and functionaries
who incurred losses or went against regulations in their purchases of materials for the construction projects; and (18) immediate release of inmates serving as station guards upon completion of a sentence.

E. Administrative discipline

Arrests by provincial surveillance-officials and central inspecting-censors and banishment accompanied by family members for military servitude on distant borders when confirmed guilty (15) of local officials, functionaries, and errand-runners [from the court and other offices] who are greedy and corrupt, law-breaking, or deliberately maltreating the common people; and (16) of functionaries and escort soldiers, runners, and jailers who cling to local government offices and bribe their superiors for creation of lawsuits or lobbied for a reward; (17) report by local elders to the court for arrest, prosecution, and punishment of officials and functionaries who illegally go down to the villages to exact levies and make other collections; and (19) redemption of unfulfilled quotas from [households] breeding horses for the imperial stud in Beijing and the military guards.

The Yongle emperor was admirably responsive here. As mentioned above, more than simply refraining from an immediate rebuilding of the burnt palaces, eight days later he endeavored to work for an intelligent and respectable administration by launching an empire-wide fact-finding commission and prompt remedy of inequities. Reading these measures against the memorials by Li Shimian and Zou Ji, the claim that thirteen or fourteen of Li’s proposals were acted upon appears not to have been far-fetched.

Li Shimian’s Memorial

It is thus intriguing that Li Shimian should have been punished for his response when such was solicited by the Yongle emperor. An examination of the documents at issue is imperative. The result is perplexing: two different memorials have been attributed to Li, but one of them was also
attributed to Zou Ji. Guoque and Mingshi differ with each other while Ming Taizong shilu differs with both with respect to authorship. Apparently the earlier historians were not sure about some of the crucial facts.

The Ming Taizong shilu contains an excerpt of a memorial attributable to Li Shimian, to Zou Ji, or the other officials who spoke at the time, although the wording of the lead sentence suggests that either it was a joint memorial whose principal author was Li or it was one solely by Li.\textsuperscript{15} But, whatever the case, it is a specific, five-point document, not one dealing with fifteen concerns, as is said of Li’s memorial in Mingshi and the other sources. Guoque follows the chronology and the wording of the Veritable Records. However, the memorial excerpted in the Guoque is much longer and substantially different from that in the Ming Taizong shilu. It is very similar to the one included in the Mingshi. However, the Mingshi states that it belongs solely to Zou Ji, including it in Zou’s biography as the most important document Zou produced in his lifetime.

It is now apparent that two memorials, rather than two versions of a single memorial, in actuality appear in the sources. The following evidence confirms that Li Shimian was the author of the one excerpted in the Veritable Records and Zou Ji was the author of the one drawn upon by Guoque and Mingshi. The full text of Zou’s long memorial (2858 words) is included in Cheng Minzheng’s (1445–1499) Mingwen heng (Standard Writings of the Ming)—a late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth-century anthology of celebrated Ming essays—and is ascribed solely to Zou.\textsuperscript{16} Cheng Minzheng assuredly was correct in this ascription because he had read almost all writings of a biographical nature about Li Shimian when he helped put into order the content of the “family history” (jia sheng) of Li Shimian. In his preface to this history, Cheng Minzheng makes it clear that Li Shimian’s memorials submitted in the reigns of Yongle and Hongxi had been lost.\textsuperscript{17}

Thus it is clear that Li Shimian and Zou Ji memorialized separately. Both men might have submitted their memorials on the same day, thereby giving rise to the confusion in the Veritable Records. The compilers of the Veritable Records appear to have lost rigor in discrimination when they recorded two or more related documents that differed little in content. Considering Li’s memorial the more important—no doubt from a retrospective view of what subsequently happened to Li—the
compilers excerpted language from Li’s memorial exclusively, but they also registered the names of the others who presented memorials on the same issues. This gave rise to the ambiguity in the sentence ascribing authorship.

Let us examine Li Shimian’s memorial here. The excerpts in the Veritable Records are obviously summaries or highlights, but they are the only surviving texts of any meaningful length. Li’s memorial was otherwise known only by its headings. Even his earliest biographer, Peng Liu (1391–1458), his student who wrote his record of conduct, could say no more about the content.¹⁸

The fifteen headings appear in the form of requests or proposals. They are (1) cessation of the construction works [in Beijing], (2) suspension of foreign tributary missions, (3) elimination of superfluous officials, (4) distribution of famine relief, (5) circumspection in process of selection and recommendation [of persons], (6) strict implementation of job assessment and examination, (7) clearing up of criminal cases, (8) [punishment and] dismissal of corrupt officials, (9) dispatching Mongol officers in the army to places [outside the capital], (10) disbanding and repatriation of Buddhist monks and Daoist priests [in the capital], (11) elimination (or reduction) of purchasing agents, (12) abolition of appointment of soldiers to clerical positions, (13) elimination of exile of students who broke the law to take care of their parents, (14) improvement of transportation in the Canal, and (15) improvement of the treatment of the soldiers.¹⁹

Of these items, two are specified in Mingshi, namely, the construction of Beijing as the capital and the policy of universal reception of foreign missions.²⁰ The wording, even in headings, hints at a measure of disapproval, but the excerpts in the Veritable Records make Li Shimian’s statements sound less abrasive. The following translation of the excerpted memorial shows how Li framed his argument and worded his advice.²¹

1. Officials and sub-officials (functionaries) in the empire cannot all be good. Although time and again investigating censors and surveillance officials were ordered to conduct reviews of them for promotion or demotion, the bureau [in the Ministry of Personnel responsible for
handling the reviews] did not give the reviews of the officials careful scrutiny. Those careful and honest officials who did not resort to flattery or playing up to officials in power were given ordinary comments. On the other hand, those officials who were corrupt, wicked, and tricky but good at currying favor and flattery were given satisfactory comments. There is a lack of punishment [for the bad] and a lack of encouragement [for the good]. I recommend that each year all provincial surveillance commissions send honest senior officials to tour all the local governments under their jurisdiction to evaluate the conduct of officials there. Investigating censors are also to confirm the reviews and make reports. Officials confirmed diligent, careful, honest, and capable, with obvious accomplishments in their administration, are to be rewarded and elevated to strengthen their resolve. Those confirmed greedy and corrupt, who exacted high taxes (*poke*, meaning “lashed and beat” the people economically) but neglected their duties, will be immediately demoted and punished as a warning [to the unscrupulous]. In cases where good officials are not recommended and evil ones not impeached, thereby resulting in confusion of the worthy and the unworthy, when the truth is revealed in future investigations, the original reviewing officials will be held responsible and punished for their negligence.

2. Year after year and one after the other, envoys from barbarian states from all directions come to pay tribute. [The provisions the court gives them] truly wear down [the financial strength of] the state [literally the “middle kingdom”]. It is suitable to inform the ocean [i.e. foreign] states unambiguously that those near us come only once every three years and those far away come only once every five years. This will prove convenient both to the government and to the people.

3. Counties, sub-prefectures, and prefectures in the prov-
inces of Jiangxi, Huguang, Zhejiang, and metropolitan Yingtian are distressed by the annual long-distance shipments of tax grains to Beijing. It is appropriate to build granaries on the waterfronts of the canal at Huaian, Xuzhou, and Jining for mid-way storage and to have relay shipments to Beijing delivered by other methods. This can somewhat lighten the financial burdens of the people.

4. In recent years, soldiers have done their best for the construction projects in Beijing. Their families at home have no means of earning a living and are short of food and clothing. They are to be pitied. It is appropriate that military officers [in the soldiers’ hometowns] be instructed to give soldiers’ families special care, tendering them consolation and compensation. The soldiers’ monthly salaries should be increased, conscript labor demands on male adults of their families should be reduced, and their families should be exempted from tax.

5. In recent times, military hierarchies are not well tuned and military preparations are lax. It is appropriate to instruct military officials inside and outside the court to bring order to the troops and to give them scheduled drills and training so they can meet exigencies.

Li Shimian was fundamentally positive when he recommended tightening the code of official conduct—especially through a more effective operation of the state’s surveillance apparatus—in order to achieve a more efficient and hence less imposing and excoriating government. He could be construed as having implied criticism of the construction of Beijing when he mentioned the sufferings of the soldiers and common people involved. But that criticism did not, at least not overtly, suggest opposition to making Beijing the imperial capital, which necessitated massive construction projects. In fact, Li celebrated the founding of Beijing in a fine piece of rhymed prose, a celebrated rhapsody that became a standard selection in Ming literature.²² [See figure 4 for the beginning of Li Shimian’s “Beijing fu” (Rhapsody on Beijing).] Li was
Opening of Li Shimian’s “Beijing fù” (Rhapsody on Beijing), *Gulian wenji*, photographic reprint of the manuscript exemplar in the Wenyuange Siku quanshu zhenben sanji, vol. 301 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), juan 1, p. 1a.
more directly critical on the issue of receiving too many foreign envoys too frequently. However, his wording is rather mild compared with that of Zou Ji.

As will become clear, Li differed from Zou Ji (and Xiao Yi) in that he addressed the issues from economic more than from political considerations. He asserted the financial strains caused by the construction of Beijing, but he did not challenge the rationale and legitimacy of the project. His concern about economic issues explains his plea for a better canal transportation. Likewise, his plea for better treatment of the families of the soldiers working in Beijing was to ensure a more attentive work force for the construction projects. Indeed, this point need not have been raised if he anticipated a cessation of the building work. What he really worried about was an immediate re-building of the burnt palaces, a task that was not inconceivable and one that the contractors and supervisors would certainly delight in undertaking. However, Li Shimian’s concern was that a building project of this magnitude might prove too much for the people to bear and for the court to endure. In this regard, Li was indeed thinking of the welfare of the state, and it is no wonder that the imperial approval of his memorial came in response.²¹

Zou Ji’s Memorial

The Yongle emperor’s accommodation of criticism becomes the more evident when we look at Zou Ji’s long and repetitive memorial. Zou Ji was a native of Jishui, Jiangxi. During Hongwu times (1368–1398) he was recommended for service as a classical scholar. He first served as school instructor of Xingzi county in Jiangxi, and during the Jianwen reign (1369–1402) he was promoted to instructor in the National University. When the Yongle emperor ascended the throne, he was promoted to expositor-in-waiting. When the heir apparent was established, Zou Ji was given concurrent appointment as left companion to the heir apparent. Several times he was appointed acting chancellor of the National University. By the time he submitted the memorial in question, he had been an expositor-in-waiting for nineteen years.²⁴

The full text of Zou’s memorial, as mentioned above, is preserved in Mingwen heng.²⁵ Zou did not first enumerate his points, but rather he
presented them one after another in a circuitous fashion, extending his memorial to a total of 2858 words. This memorial is quoted at length in Zou’s biography in *Mingshi*, not inappropriately because it was the most memorable work of his official life. In giving prominence to this document, *Mingshi* also takes it as the most representative and informative piece of writing from the side of the critics. The following excerpts, based on the version in *Mingwen heng*, translate most of the text of Zou’s main charges to reflect his concern and the problems facing the construction of Beijing in the 1410s as he saw them.

1. Building Beijing as the capital is to provide the imperial successors a foundation and the people a place to revere. [Understandably it is good decision.]

2. But it has brought worry to Your Majesty for almost twenty years since the construction began [that is, as soon as Yongle usurped the throne]. The work and the resources drawn for the construction are tremendous. . . . The ministers are unable to fully understand Your Majesty’s intent so that plans are misconstrued and costs have risen without limit at much exploitation of the people.

3. Superfluous officials and appointees, hundreds in number, in and outside the capital, draw salaries for doing nothing. That is a drain of money and grain [rendering the state even unable to] dole out relief to the helpless poor.

4. A million people are laboring for the government all year round. They are unable to provide protection [and welfare] for their parents and wives and children . . . nor can they work their fields in a timely fashion. . . . Yet, the government continues to increase levies upon them to the extent that they have to chop down their mulberry trees and date trees for firewood and peel the bark of mulberry trees for paper-making material. [demand for labor] deprives the laborers who are fulfilling their labor service duties of their means of livelihood.

4. On top of that, government officials and functionaries
ever increasingly exact excessive taxes and levies from the people. [Here is one outrageous case.] In the last two years, there were orders for the purchase of blue and green dyestuffs. Levies for the purchases, to hundreds of catties, were imposed on people in places where such dyestuffs are not produced. Unable to pay in kind, those levied had to earn paper money for the purchases and buy goods from other places. [That drove up the market prices for dyestuffs.] A catty of daqing (celadon blue?) thus cost the equivalent of 16,000 strings of cash in paper money. Yet when the dyestuffs were delivered to the government, most of it was rejected as substandard. The deliverers then had to purchase other materials to meet the quota. Eventually, it took the equivalent of 20,000 strings of cash in paper money to pay for one catty of dyestuff. That quantity, however, is not even adequate to paint a single pillar or a single rafter. Later, [when the court learned of the problem], officials were sent to make purchases from places of production. But despite this, demands of purchases from prefectural and county governments continue because craftsmen over-estimate the amount of material needed [for their work] to make a profit of their own.

5. [One phenomenon in Beijing is especially menacing.] Since the construction of Beijing began, those in charge of the building projects . . . have commanded craftsmen and petty persons to use their assumed power to force the local inhabitants to vacate their houses and resettle in other places. The vacation was to begin immediately; houses were torn down even before the victims could actually move out. . . . Helpless orphans and widows could do nothing but wail and weep. Such orders came on extremely cold days as well as on extremely hot and rainy days. The victims’ wives and children were exposed to the elements. They were stunned by the haste and the coercion and did not know where to go. When
they managed to move to a new place, no sooner had they built their new houses but they were forced to move again. There are cases when after moving three or four times, resettlement still could not be made. Nevertheless, no construction went on for a month or even a whole season on the site of the original dwelling places that these victims were forced to vacate. . . . Petty men carrying out the construction have oppressed the people relentlessly to this extreme extent. Yet Your Majesty is barred from the knowledge of it.

6. Greedy officials and corrupt functionaries are everywhere. . . . An appointment to the construction projects is a key to a livelihood [that is, a way to fortune]. They extort and make demands on the people to no limit. Officials and functionaries in the sub-prefectures and counties meet the demands of their counterparts [from the capital] without delay. Honest and clean officials who refused them were slandered and defamed by charges of tardiness and lack of cooperation [in the unresponsive imperial court]. . . . Thus local governments immediately bow to officials dispatched from the court. Open bribery of higher officials and exploitation of lower officials for the gratification of the higher flow just like commercial exchanges. No one questions the custom of corruption. . . . How can there be no complaints from the people against such exploitation?

7. People in the provinces of Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi are hard hit by successive famines, floods, and droughts. They have to live on bark, grassroots, and blighted grain. But the government has no surplus grain in reserve to send them relief. Involuntary migration of the old and the young ensues. Men have to sell their wives and children to stay alive. . . . Still, labor service imposed on them does not stop.

8. Buddhist monks and Daoist priests numbering ten thousand or more crowd the capital, consuming rice a hun-
dred piculs and more each day. . . . That is [a striking] instance of wasting the food supply to support the useless.

9. Military officers [in the construction projects] are arrogant and undisciplined, not doing their jobs but traveling around bringing trouble to the good people [because] they are not sincere in rendering services to the state.

10. Annual manufacturing of silk brocades and minting of coins [as gifts] to foreign countries and lands in the northwest and purchases of horses and other commodities drain the financial resources of the state and the people. . . . The great numbers of horses thus purchased are of inferior quality. People obliged to raise these horses [suffer so much that they have to] sell their wives and children to make up their losses.

11. The court allows people of the borderlands [i.e., envoys] to enter the Middle Kingdom and bestows on them saddles and horses, bow and arrows, living quarters, cattle and sheep, clothes, kitchen utensils, and tents. These people are enemy agents spying on China. . . . [That they ask to stay in the capital] is something to be suspected. . . . The appropriate thing to do is send the envoys back immediately after they are given court audiences. They should be kept from staying in the Middle Kingdom so that our posterity can be free from potential trouble.

12. Praying conducted in Daoist temples renders a waste of the state’s financial resources and represents an unrestrained expenditure in the budget.

13. [Zou Ji sums up the above with this statement.] These several things all are bad enough to cause damage to a harmonious air in the empire. They cause the court to lose the minds and hearts of the people and to go against the will of Heaven. Complaints and curses arise truly because of them.

14. [Zou Ji continues, relating these malpractices to the great
fire and its implications.] Fengtian Hall is the central hall where court audiences are held [and] orders promulgated. . . . That the fire first destroyed this hall signifies a disaster of unprecedented magnitude, an extraordinary incident truly evidencing Heaven’s condemnation and anger. Your Majesty must reverse the disaster by self-reflection and criticism, by a profound examination of the causes of the calamity, by spreading wide your favor [to the populace], and by political reforms to alleviate the burdens on poor and destitute people and bring new life to them.

15. [Zou Ji becomes sporadically repetitious as he goes on.] Your Majesty must respond to Heaven with substantive things but not with formality. You should promptly decree an end to the construction works and that craftsmen and workers who have been [drafted] be disbanded and returned to their ordinary, peaceful lives.

16. There should be termination of horse purchases from foreign countries.

17. Foreign tributary envoys should be rewarded but sent home [upon completion of their missions]. . . . Those who wish to stay should first settle themselves outside the borders for three or four years while the court deliberates their future unpressured. These people are unfathomable and do not understand what favor and friendship are. They come only because they are greedily seeking our commodities and rewards. Once they feel they are not satisfactorily treated, they will do harm to us.

18. It is appropriate to dismiss superfluous officials and functionaries and have them return to their home places. Even those who are employable should depart and then be recalled when vacancies become available.

19. Seek out the worthies, make appointments by recommendation, and assess officials strictly [based on their performance]. When proven guilty, [bad officials] should be punished and not simply pardoned. The censors and
the surveillance officials should carry out the investigations. . . . Honest and capable officials with prominent achievements should be commended and given promotion.

20. [Then Zou Ji interpolates with a piece of sermonizing to drive home other points, some of which he already made.] In general, the state takes as priorities earnest implementation of education and [social] transformation, enrichment of social custom, encouragement of honesty and a sense of shame, and extolling the good and the kind. When the good are encouraged and the bad are punished, the sense of honor can be raised and the habits of treacherousness and greed will end by themselves.

21. [Then he proposes what to do to implement these priorities.] There are National University students who are only-sons and who were sentenced to banishment for pleading leave to take care of their parents. They should be pardoned and sent home to fulfill their duty. There are also students who took leave for this cause who later joined the government after their parents died but were mistakenly charged for breaking the law. Their cases jeopardize the substance of government and produce no lesson for posterity. [They too should be pardoned.]

22. Praying in Daoist temples should be stopped. The practice is absurd.

23. Despite the recent general amnesty, minor offenders are not pardoned because judicial officials have inflexibly constrained themselves to following the written ordinances. These offenders should be pardoned and given an opportunity to reform themselves. But offenders who were officials in the capital should be demoted to posts outside the capital. 38

24. Tax exemptions should be given, and non-urgent levies of all sorts should be suspended.

25. Local government should give relief to famine-stricken people. Rich households should be encouraged to donate
grain to help the government cause. Government should ensure that when there is a successful harvest, the lenders are reimbursed.

26. [Zou Ji then digresses to make a summary justification of his requests and proposals, which amount to a Confucian-style political discourse.] All these proposals are important measures for the empire. They are what will protect and stabilize the imperial house, regain the hearts of the people, regain the mandate of Heaven, and ultimately assure the eternal destiny of the state. If all are implemented now, the people will become joyous and harmony can be reached. When the minds and hearts of the people are one, the foundation of the state becomes more secure. If Your Majesty wishes to do things for the good of the populace and for the everlasting foundation of the imperial descendants, nothing is greater than implementation of these proposals.

27. [Zou Ji continues with additional discourse of a general nature.] What a state depends on for its longevity are Heaven's mandate and the people's hearts. And existence of Heaven's mandate always depends on the people's hearts. There has never been a case when the state lost the hearts of its people and yet could retain the Heavenly mandate. There has never been a case when people gave their hearts to a state that Heaven did not do the same. If one desires to harmonize the people's minds and hearts, he must earnestly implement education and moral transformation, must practice rites and modesty, and must let the people fulfill their livelihood in the villages and towns. When education and moral transformation prevail, people know the instruction [of the proper relationship of] father and son, ruler and servitor. They also know the justice of exalting their ruler and getting close to their superiors. Thus, when they are given jobs and are sent for service, they will not complain even when they are worked hard. When they can meet the
needs of their livelihood and have sufficient food and clothing, they will understand the sense of honor and will think of bringing happiness to their wives and children and protection to their relatives and clans. In this way theft and robbery will die out as will the habit of scrambling [for profits] and intimidation of others. Consequently, the people’s minds and hearts will be peacefully obedient and Heaven’s mandate can be made secure, which bring lasting benefits to the state that no other measures can.

[At the same time,] wicked and petty persons who dupe people with trickery and heterodox ways must be ruthlessly suppressed and eliminated. They are not to be given opportunities to confuse what the people should be taught. [The court should] abide by its rewards and punishments and be consistent in its orders, so that people [i.e., officials] have [laws] to abide by and will not be perplexed. The court should give rewards in a regulated way but not to excess. Budgets should be approved according to constant procedures but not willfully spent. This done, the foundation of the state will be solidified, and the cost of the state’s expenditures will be easily supplied.

When government officials are given their full salaries to nourish their sense of honor, when the populace is able to be at peace on its farmland, and when officials and functionaries are not greedy, cruel, and harmful in their administration, then natural disasters will not arise and great peace can be achieved. When human hearts are in harmony, Heaven’s mandate belongs to You and the foundation of the state naturally becomes solid. This [harmonizing the people’s minds and hearts] is really the best of measures, certainly the major one for achieving protection and security for the empire and for averting natural disorders.

As for officials who defend the borders, let them be
ordered to tighten the discipline of their troops, to be
careful in patrolling the beacon towers and forts, and to
guard against thieves and robbers. Such should also be
considered as preventive measures.

28. [Zou Ji then recapitulates the key points.] Now that
Heaven’s intent has been thus revealed and the calamities
that have occurred are of such an extreme, there should
be no further construction work [undertaken in Beijing]
that would increase the burden on the people. Your
Majesty should return to Nanjing and pay visits to the
imperial mausoleum there, to report the causes of the
fire and thereby nourish your own person. Rest for a
few years and resume [the construction] only when
Heaven’s goodwill returns.

29. Your Majesty should not listen to the petty men who ask
for reconstruction and thus allow yourself to be mis-
guided again. These petty men do not understand the
great measures that bring worry and difficulty to the
state. They only wish to flatter you and follow your
orders in hopes of procuring your grace and their own
personal fortune. If you continue to listen to them again,
thinking that they will do you no harm, then you will
be further misguided. That in all likelihood is not advan-
tageous to the state.

30. [Zou Ji ends his advice and pleading with a cliché-ridden
conclusion.] I cannot restrain my genuine loyalty. Risk-
ing execution by the ax, I present my foolish opinions in
response to the brilliant edict. Offending the imperial
awe, I could not cease trembling for fear my punishment
is on the way. I only hope that Your Majesty takes pity
on my rashness and foolishness and attends in small
measure to my words.

Zou Ji’s memorial is clumsily structured. But its lack of literary
charm rather more affirmed his sincerity and earnestness. He simply
spoke what occurred to him as important to the welfare of the state—
lightening the people’s burdens and thereby reducing their complaints. His redundancy actually has in several places set up safety valves. As he made it clear at the beginning, the decision to build Beijing as the capital was well intentioned and justified, and only the poor execution of the plan caused the misery. In the end, he too did not propose a final return of the capital to Nanjing or a permanent cessation of reconstructions in Beijing. The need for the emperor to give serious consideration to the timing of and resources for the reconstructions was his entire motive, as was the case with Li Shimian.

Problems in personnel appointment, in budget auditing, and in performance reviews gave rise to corruption and oppression of the committed labor force and the supporting population. Zou categorically blamed the ruthless construction-site foremen and purchasing agents for the people’s misery. He wanted to clear Beijing of unnecessary government employees; he wanted to punish bad officials and let good officials prevail. In these points his charges would offend only the high ministers and interest groups involved but not the emperor. The Yongle emperor was himself versed in the rhetoric of this kind of criticism and was not unused to hearing remonstration of this sort. It was largely cliché, not particularly welcome but nonetheless acceptable.

The emperor could have been displeased when Zou suggested that conditions became graver with the large expenditures for religion and diplomacy. While he could discount the charge that he lavished favors on monks and Daoist priests as commonplace Confucian ideological opinion, he might have been uncomfortable with the adamant opposition to his favorable treatment of the foreign envoys. But Zou Ji’s argument was not altogether irrational or unfounded. History warned the emperor to be vigilant against such alien inhabitants, and Zou Ji’s reasoning on this point was not totally awry:

People in general are at ease with their homelands and uneasy about living a migrant life in a faraway place. More so for these foreign tribes, whose customs and natures are different [from those of the Chinese]. It is unreasonable [to think] that they betray their masters when leaving their native places to live in faraway China.29
Zou’s offense was his ultra chauvinistic, even jingoistic attitude, which on some points ran counter to the imperial positions and policies. But on this issue the emperor had good understanding. Previously he had shown disagreement with but appreciation of an official who had proposed the same policies. To sum up, the substance of Zou Ji’s memorial is not exaggerated but rather solid, and the tone of it is in accord with the cultivation of a Hanlin veteran. He is not offensive, and certainly was not so considered, even in his strongest charges. However, on the whole the memorial is much stronger than that of Li Shimian, and yet he was not punished for what he said. The Guoque errs in saying that Zou was sent to jail sometime after he submitted his memorial and that soon thereafter he was pardoned but not appointed to office again. As was recorded in the Veritable Records and in Mingshi, Zou, in fact, soon received a promotion instead. Thus, it is hard to believe that Li Shimian would have been jailed for speaking in a milder way than Zou Ji spoke and that Xiao Yi was executed for saying much less.

**Xiao Yi’s Memorial**

Xiao Yi was not much studied by Ming and Qing historians and is overlooked in modern scholarship as well. A native of Lean, Jiangxi, he received his jinshi degree in Yongle 13 (1415). According to a short biography, he was a bureau secretary in the Ministry of Personnel when he memorialized. Prior to that he had submitted a joint memorial with his colleague Chen Gen (fl. 1380–1420) for which they were sentenced to exile. For their courage “to speak what others dared not,” “those in power” came to their rescue and returned them to their offices. Later, in the wake of the palace fire, Xiao memorialized cessation of the construction, circumspection in giving official titles, and other matters. He was sent to jail and died there [for what he said]. Both his literary learning and moral integrity were celebrated. His writings were collected into a work entitled Waxian yigao (Posthumously Published Stocking Thread Writings) and later reissued as Waxian ji (Stocking-Thread-Writings). The memorial that Xiao Yi submitted in 1421 is found in the first
juan of this posthumously published collection.37 (See figure 2 above.) It is given the title “Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu” (Memorial in Response to the Call for Frank Criticism). An editorial note appended to the title indicates that the piece had been added at a later date but not found in the original version of the collection. The line next to the title contains Xiao’s official title at the time of his submission. He was a secretary in the Bureau of Civil Appointments in the Ministry of Personnel. Xiao Yi’s memorial is much shorter than that of Zou Ji. It deals only with two issues: the foreign-envoy issue and the Beijing-as-the-capital issue. However, the focus is on matters of policy making more than on policy execution. To see why Xiao Yi infuriated the aging and brittle, but never sclerotic or enervated, Yongle emperor, let us study the wording of Xiao’s memorial.

After a routine introductory that rationalized the imperial call for criticism after the devastating fire, Xiao Yi began by referring to the Yongle emperor’s pledge in his self-indicting twelve-point edict. He said he would skip those points already memorialized upon by other officials but would instead address two concerns that had not been addressed, that is, fully addressed. He quoted the edict verbatim on these two concerns—that is, the seventh point on improper rewards and punishments, insidious corruption, and reckless expenditure causing excesses in national expenditure; and the tenth point on excessive labor service and frequent drafts and demands that withered the resources of the populace (Shangfa budang, ducai wangfei, er guoyong wudu yu. Gongzuo wudu, zhengxu fanshu, er minli diaobi yu).

In detail, Xiao’s first concern refers to the huge expenditure lavished on the foreign envoys coming with their horses. The costs of their travel and rewards to them that the court provided all came from the populace [public money]. But the horses they submitted as tribute were mostly so weak and skinny as to be usable. The Ming court in fact no longer needed these horses now that it had a rich stock of horses. Xiao asked for a halt to such frequent tributes and that tributary missions be permitted to come once every three to five years, adding that this would also confine the envoys’ continuous harassment and demands that the envoys habitually make while on the road. This repeats Zou Ji’s points eleven and seventeen.
Xiao was especially strong on the issue of accommodating envoys in the capital. He pointed out that these envoys were richly rewarded by the emperor, some of them even appointed to offices. Many who came from Jiaozhi (northern Vietnam) were assigned jobs in the capital and given salaries. He argued against this practice in wordings more chauvinistic and offending than Zou Ji’s.

I earnestly say that it is not certain that the court can enlist the service of these people who [behave like] dogs and hogs, even though Your Majesty associates them closely with benevolence and justice. [Then he cited historical precedent as did Zou Ji.] During the times of the emperor Wudi (r. 265—290) of the Jin dynasty, some official [i.e., Jiang Tong] memorialized that the various barbarians living in the provinces be resettled in the borderlands while the court tightened security control on the movements of the barbarians across the borders. This could put into operation the ancient system of dealing with people from faraway places and consequently forestall the barbarians bringing disorder to China. Emperor Wudi did not heed such advice, and later there was the turmoil caused by the Five Barbarians. This was the result of a good plan not implemented early on.18

Having thus spoken, Xiao Yi then asked the emperor, whom he lauded as an understanding and resolute sovereign, to observe the matter in detail and handle it with care, so that no trouble would be left to future times. He assured the emperor that in so doing the court not only would be free from reckless expenditure but also would foster long-term safety and order.

Xiao’s second concern was the construction of Beijing. He noted that construction of Beijing had been going on for forty-five years [obviously counting from the time the Yongle emperor was first invested as a prince there in 1370]. Supplies for the works there came from the whole empire, so that the resources of the populace could not but be exhausted. The heaven-descending fire was a serious warning to the emperor [on the Beijing-as-the-capital issue].

Your Majesty should thus think of a good way out. Taizu (r. 1368–1398) made Nanjing the capital. Nanjing has the advantage
of a coiling dragon and a crouching tiger [that is, the geo-
strategic advantage of being protected by the Yangzi river and
the Zhongshan mountains], strong enough to be the foundation
of an everlasting dynasty. Your Majesty, continuing Taizu’s
aspiration, established two capitals for Your tours of inspection.
That truly is an appropriate continuation of Taizu’s government.
Given what has happened, though, You need to obey the wishes
of Heaven. Perhaps when the coolness of autumn returns, You
should return to Nanjing, pay visits to the mausoleum of Taizu,
and be at rest with the populace in the empire. Wait until the
resources of the people become somewhat more developed be-
fore You further consider plans for the reconstruction. This is
the best of plans [for appeasing Heaven]. But if Your Majesty
assuredly intends to stay in the north, then You should tempo-
rarily hold audiences in the Fengtian Gate, earnestly cultivate a
government of justice to show your obedience to Heaven, and
take time to plan [for the reconstruction projects]. This is the
second alternative. [This similarly repeats Zou Ji.]

Xiao added that what he feared most was that there were many petty
men, who, fearing no natural disorders descending from Heaven, would
ask for a quick reconstruction.

To recapitulate, Xiao reminded the emperor again of the fact that
it had taken forty-five years to complete the construction projects,
which, however, were ruined in a single day. Then he continued with
such force that it might well have infuriated Yongle. “If Your Majesty
again were to give credence to [proposals for the rebuilding of the burnt
palaces] and wish to go along contrary to Heaven’s wish, that is some-
thing I dare not want to know about.” But, given the emperor’s intel-
ligence and insight, he trusted that His Majesty would avail himself to the
best plan.

Xiao ended his plea with conventional rhetoric, much like that
used by Zou Ji. He said he deserved the death penalty for submitting such
an offensive memorial but hoped that he would be pardoned. If his
foolish loyalty were accepted, great fortune would follow for the state
that was founded by the Progenitor, and great blessings would follow for the
populace. Great calamities would thus be turned into great celebration.
Viewed as a whole, Xiao Yi’s memorial is rather “empty.” Unlike Li Shimian and Zou Ji, he did not substantiate his charges with examples. But his wording is largely mild, and his rhetoric is not much different from the conventional, except that he was more scathing than Zou in denigrating the foreign envoys, many of whom were actually foreigners with particular expertise serving the court. Xiao did not even object to an eventual rebuilding of Beijing. He only expressed worries about the burden on the populace required for an immediate rebuilding of the palaces. It is thus, as it must have seemed to Xiao and his colleagues, inconceivable that such a speech should have sounded so offensive as to court death for its author.

The risk for a minor official who steps beyond the line to talk openly about great concerns of the state certainly cannot be discounted. Xiao Yi indeed was the only memorialist not from the ranks of the speaking officials or Hanlin advisors. Even so, the outcome was unexpected. No doubt, Xiao Yi angered the ministers and the interest groups who pushed for a quick rebuilding from the ashes. They could incense the emperor easily and would only be glad to do so. The emperor also had cause to be infuriated by the implied charge that he had decided to build Beijing as the capital based on bad advice. The Yongle emperor obviously felt he had been wronged; in fact there had been a midway review of the construction work in which he had received unanimous ministerial approval for the continuation of the project.

What brought Xiao disaster appears to have been the timing of his memorial. Here Mingshi and Guoque offer glimpses, unintentional but revealing, into the dark side of the imperial mind. Mingshi has the following description of the background of Zou Ji’s memorial. The emperor was genuinely frightened by the fire and was thus sincere in inviting reflective criticism that might lead to an understanding of what had caused the calamity. But when the officials who responded directed their criticism largely at the practice of government at various levels, the emperor was displeased. Meanwhile, some high ministers also pandered to the emperor’s wish (to stand by his decisions about Beijing) and slandered the critics. The emperor, now angered, turned to denounce the critics’ slandering. He issued an edict strictly prohibiting further
criticism of the same sort and warned that future offenders would not be pardoned.  

*Mingshi* errs in the summary account that follows. It says that as a result reader-in-waiting Li Shimian and expositor-in-waiting Luo Rujing (1372–1439) were sent to jail. Censors Zheng Weihuan (1415 jinshi), He Zhong (1411 jinshi), Luo Tong (1412 jinshi) and Xu Rong (1406 jinshi) and supervising secretary Ke Xian (fl. 1420s–1450s; did not attain jinshi status) were demoted to posts in Jiaozhi. Only Zou Ji, bureau secretary Gao Gongwang (1415 jinshi), and Hanlin bachelor Yang Fu (1406 jinshi) were found not guilty. This is not completely correct. Luo Rujing simply was not involved this time. He was, however, punished by the Yongle emperor’s successor Renzong (r. 1425) in another incident in which Li Shimian almost met his death.

What the wording of *Mingshi* may suggest, however, parallels what Xiao Yi’s memorial reveals about the time and the timing of his memorializing. Xiao memorialized only two issues in the wake of the initial memorials, each of which had addressed many points. The text of *Mingshi*, if reliable, reveals that Xiao memorialized after the Yongle emperor’s warning edict was issued. By ignoring the imperial command, Xiao Yi was challenging imperial authority and was thus also susceptible to charges that he was exploiting the difficulties of the state for purposes of self-aggrandizement—in current parlance, he was fishing for personal acclaim.

*Guoque* indeed dates Xiao Yi’s execution as following the presentation of memorials by Li Shimian, Zou Ji, and the others. Its wording of the Xiao incident, however, is rather intriguing.

In their responding criticism the officials all spoke of the inconvenience of moving the capital to Beijing. Xiao Yi was especially sharp and biting. The emperor was furious. He had Xiao Yi put to death by mutilation. He said [justifying himself], “[With respect to moving the capital to Beijing and the expanded construction there] I have had confidential conferences with the high ministers for months. What additional inconvenience is there?” Upon this imperial response, the speaking
officials [supervising secretaries and censors] then impeached the ministers [for their advice to the emperor]. The emperor appeared at the Wumen (Meridian Gate) and had the speaking officials and the ministers argue for the case there. The ministers scolded the speaking officials saying that they were bookish scholars ignorant of important concerns of the state. Whereupon, minister of revenue Xia Yuanji (1366–1430) reported that it was the duty of the supervising secretaries and censors to speak out. In responding to the event of meeting the imperial call for criticism, it was the ministers’ fault that they were unable to offer aid to the throne. The emperor was pleased hearing that; he pardoned both sides.  

It appears that the emperor hated Xiao Yi not merely because he considered Xiao an opportunistic busybody who kicked up dirt when the dust of invited criticism had already settled. More than his disrespect for the imperial order to end memorializing on the issue, Xiao was determined to show that he held the emperor responsible for poor judgment in the first place. There was a difference between ending the (re)construction of palaces in Beijing and abandoning Beijing as the capital altogether. Xiao favored the latter option. In his articulation he also implied a lack of filial respect for the founding emperor on the Yongle emperor’s part. That was simply too much for the emperor, because the decision to build Beijing as the capital had been openly supported by the great civil and military officials, support which remained unchanged even during the mid-point review of the building project.

It is not unlikely that Xiao Yi was doomed for being suspected as a participant in a concerted opposition. Submitting his memorial in the train of memorials by Li Shimian, Zou Ji, Luo Tong, and Gao Gongwang—all Jiangxi natives—and repeating Zou conspicuously, although only in two counts, Xiao’s pronouncement easily appeared not as appropriate commentary but rather as part of a cliquish maneuver based on geographic interest. Indeed, of the ten officials named in the Veritable Records as memorializing in response to the imperial call of 1421, half were natives of Jiangxi.

The timing of Xiao Yi’s memorial can be determined also by
clarification of the accounts in *Mingshi*. Reviewing the entire event in retrospect, *Mingshi* maintains that except for Zou Ji and two or three other officials, all those who memorialized in this case were punished, mostly by demotion to the provinces. The *Veritable Records*, however, states the outcome differently. There, all memorialists were given imperial approvals for what they said. Thus what *Mingshi* counted as “demotion” in the *Veritable Records* appears as the Yongle emperor’s considerate and protective act to shield the critics from likely revenge from the vindictive high officials. The *Veritable Records* chronicle and explain the event thus:

Supervising secretary Ke Xian and investigating censors He Zhong, Zheng Weihuan, Luo Tong, etc., were promoted [that is, rank-wise] to positions as sub-prefects [because of the following consideration]. Ke Xian and the other responding officials were unreserved and forthright in their criticism. The emperor accepted their opinions with approval. But their words offended minister of works Li Qing (fl. 1400–1420s) and other high officials who, being unsettled, asked the emperor to punish them. The emperor, however, lectured Li Qing and his colleagues with respect to their requests [to the following effect]. He, the emperor, had asked for frank criticism because of his respect for Heaven. It would be an offense against Heaven if he were to punish the critics now. Would that do? He was ready to hear about his faults. Rulers in ancient times all approved of honest and frank opinions. What kind of ruler did Li Qing and his like take him to be when they asked him to punish the critics? Moreover, if the charges against them were correct, they, being high ministers, should reform themselves accordingly. On the other hand, if the charges were groundless, that would do them no harm. If these critics were punished, their reputations would be enhanced because of the faults of the emperor and his ministers. Li Qing then retired feeling ashamed. Still, the emperor was afraid that Li Qing and his cohorts would seek revenge, so he appointed these critics to positions in the provinces.

Here, the accommodating and reasonable sovereign appears to be
showing great understanding and intelligence. The date of the appointments as recorded in the *Veritable Records* reveals that in this case, the compilers of the official records had maintained their sense of objectivity rather than deliberately casting the late emperor in a good light. This directive came a month or so after Li Shimian’s and Zou Ji’s memorials. Nothing yet had happened to Li. Nothing untoward would ever happen to Zou. This shows that the emperor was receptive to strong but honest criticism. But it also suggests that he considered that once a point had been made, open repetition of that point was self-serving in nature and troublemaking in effect. Most probably, Xiao Yi memorialized sometime before the imperial directive, and his execution came as a summary warning to potential controversialists, while the dispatch of the earlier memorialists to provincial positions served to protect them from revenge on the part of ego-wounded high ministers. The Yongle emperor, of course, would not be pleased by suggestions to renounce Beijing as the capital and to give up a foreign policy that promoted active engagement. The execution of Xiao Yi—for more than one reason a heavy-handed punishment—effectively put further critics to silence.

The case of Xiao Yi was concealed by the chief editors (if not also by the compilers) of the *Veritable Records*. Perhaps they considered the execution too dishonorable an act for an emperor of Yongle’s stature. But the event was exploited by Huo Tao (1487–1540) during the Jiajing reign (1522–1566) to demonstrate the correctness of the Yongle emperor’s actions and to suggest that the Jiajing emperor’s actions were similarly correct. In a letter to a friend also surnamed Xiao, Huo Tao said the opposition within the court facing the Yongle emperor did not stop until he executed Xiao Yi. If the matter were to be viewed in the context of Yongle-era events, the Yongle emperor truly appeared to have been rejecting remonstration. However, viewing that event from the perspective of their own times (i.e. the Jiajing era), then one must judge differently about whether the Yongle emperor was right or wrong.48 Huo Tao was alluding to those court officials who opposed the Jiajing emperor’s cause in posthumously elevating the status of his father. He cited the ill-fated Xiao Yi’s case to demonstrate the importance of the decisiveness and resolve of an emperor at the expense of humane consideration and established ritual codes.
The Case of Li Shimian

We come back to the question why Li Shimian was so enthusiastic and so thorough in the expression of his recommendations. The authors of both Li’s record of conduct and Li’s biography in *Mingshi* made no mention of Li’s motive for the 1421 memorial. In a somewhat traditional and didactic way, Wang Zhi (1379–1462), Li’s fellow Jiangxi native, fellow *jinshi* and Hanlin bachelor, and eventually longtime colleague in the Hanlin Academy, did propose a somewhat general account for Li’s motivations. In the epitaph that he composed for Li, Wang Zhi related Li’s open gratitude for the extraordinary favors the Yongle emperor extended to him in appointing him Hanlin bachelor, in returning him from the Ministry of Punishment to the Hanlin Academy for the compilation of the veritable records of the Hongwu reign, and in his subsequently making him reader-in-waiting.\(^{49}\) Li worked hard and now spoke his mind as a means to repay the throne. In a like manner, Peng Shi (1416–1475), Li’s student at the National University and a grand secretary when he composed the commemoration essay for Li’s shrine, said that Li was so honest and forthright in presenting his memorial on fifteen current concerns precisely because of his gratitude for the favorable education and training that the Yongle emperor had given him.\(^{50}\)

Although it sounds cliché-like to explain Li’s enthusiasm this way, Li’s contemporaries seemed rather receptive to this line of thinking. Luo Rujing from Jiangxi, another of Li’s fellow *jinshi* and Hanlin bachelor, is also said to have been thankful for the Yongle emperor’s dramatic show of respect, care, and favor to him. The emperor was so serious about the instruction for the bachelors, in whom he had invested much for the training of high-caliber officials, that he often gave them unscheduled tests. Once Luo Ruojing was ordered to recite a classical essay he had been, or was supposed to have been, taught. Luo failed the test. The emperor ordered his immediate departure from Beijing and demotion to a position in Jiangxi. However, a few days later the emperor recalled Luo. Whereupon, it is said, Luo studied hard, and to repay the imperial kindness, he memorialized the succeeding emperor Renzong on fifteen concerns of current government.\(^{51}\) Li Shimian at that very time also submitted his memorial that proved offensive to the emperor Renzong.
Li’s action was likewise explained as a response for the imperial favors given to his deceased parents and his wife.\textsuperscript{52} The time-honored concept of “bao” (reciprocity) seems to have been working at court with great, but sometimes uncertain, effect.\textsuperscript{51}

Huang Zuo (1490–1566) in his *Hanlin ji* (Records of the Hanlin [Academy]) offers some other reasons for Li Shimian’s voluble memorials.\textsuperscript{54} Hanlin officials in the Ming experienced decreasing importance in offering advice to the throne. The tendency began when they were distanced from the throne, beginning from the Yongle reign when grand secretaries were appointed. The position of Hanlin officials used to be described as that of close attendant to the emperor. But over time there came to be overall dereliction of duty and negligence on the part of these officials. The extent of their willful abandon and self-debasement betrayed itself when imperial instruction grew to be considered consultation from the throne and when routine or superficial imperial replies to their memorials grew to be regarded as evidence of harmonious interaction between the emperor and his officials. Hanlin officials were expected to present opinions in connection with current concerns, and by way of that, “slightly expressed their loyalty,” but that only got them into trouble.\textsuperscript{55} What Huang Zuo described was the common practice and the general mood of the Hanlin officials at some later times. But their declining relevance as top advisors was discernible already when Li Shimian entered the Academy.

Huang Zuo’s account made it clear that Li immediately presented his deeply felt opinions about concerns of the empire when the 1421 edict calling for criticism was issued. Huang’s emphasis of this fact seems to suggest that Li Shimian acted in the way he did in order to reclaim the relevance of his office in its participation in state affairs. Huang’s wording expresses his considerable insight into court politics, in fact quite directly when he indicated the futility of such a presentation by pointing out that Li was accordingly sent to prison for two years and was lucky not to have died there.

However, Li may also have been emulating his Hanlin seniors in their concern about the affairs of the state. Yang Rong, the capable and most trusted grand secretary in Yongle times, who later would recommend Li be restored to his former position, had set the right example.
When Yang was chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, he had submitted a ten-point memorial on accumulated defects in government. His memorial was given no acknowledgment from the palace, which meant that the emperor disapproved of it. But that did not deter Yang’s expressing concern about governmental affairs. Thus he too memorialized after the palace fire of 1421. And the ten proposals he presented for quiet remedial action were approved and implemented. The Hanlin officials of those times were still understood and looked upon as active courtiers rather than as passive consultants offering advice on-demand only.

In short, Li Shimian was doing what he thought a Hanlin official should rightly do. He was claiming the right of someone of his background—a favored jinshi given enriched elite training in the literature of government and chosen for literary service to the court. High ministers or the speaking officials or even the grand secretaries had no monopoly on concern for the state and the populace nor on proposing ways to improve the welfare or lighten the suffering of the people. It was the duty of all officials, and all the more of the Hanlin officials whose writings were intended to bring splendor to the state, to speak truthfully. Hence, it was Li’s sense of moral as well as professional obligation which drove him to speak out with precision and thoroughness.

Was Li Shimian’s 1421 memorial then appreciated by, or acceptable to, his contemporaries? The above study has shown that Li had received no overt punishment for what he said in the memorial. Thus the allegation that he met trouble for his opposition to making Beijing the capital is a weak argument. He did not oppose the transfer of the capital to the north. Li Shimian and Zou Ji, and to a certain extent Xiao Yi also, opposed only the immediate rebuilding of the burnt palaces. That stance could have been construed as silent opposition to the Beijing-as-the-capital issue. But it also might not have been so construed. Officials were split on the idea of returning the capital to Nanjing. Despite the inclination of the civil and literary echelons of officialdom and of the Renzong emperor himself to return to Nanjing for good, Beijing remained the imperial capital.

Li Shimian’s sentence was meted out late for other reasons, though by no means unrelated to his earlier encounter. He was implicated under very precarious circumstances when the intimidating effect of Xiao Yi’s
execution was felt. What got him “implicated” most likely was tied to the emperor’s foreign policy, in this case the imperial expedition against the Mongols. The campaign was a highly volatile issue of the day. Not even an esteemed veteran like minister of revenue Xia Yuanji was spared punishment when he expressed his reservation. Xia Yuanji’s biography identified the bad official who pandered to the imperial preference on the issue of the construction of Beijing and the subsequent controversies between the speaking officials and the ministers. That “bad official” was censor-in-chief Chen Ying (dates unknown; not the Chen Ying, also a censor-in-chief, who was executed in 1411). Xia’s biographer suggests that Xia was sympathetic to the position (shared by Xiao Yi and Li Shimian) that moving the capital to Beijing was a wrong decision. The speaking officials indicted the ministers because the ministers endorsed the presumably wrong imperial decision but did not even express self-criticism after the great palace fire. Thus it was no coincidence that Li was sent to prison five days after Xia was jailed for his lack of support for the imperial position with respect to an expedition against the Mongols, a stand which also caused the imprisonment of the minister of punishments Wu Zhong (1372–1442) and the suicide of the minister of war Fang Bin (minister of war 1409–1421, d. 1421). The emperor had begun financial preparations for this campaign against the Mongols a fortnight prior to Xia Yuanji’s imprisonment (on the day xinyou in the same month) when he ordered eunuch Yang Shi (dates unknown) and censor Dai Cheng (fl. 1420s–1430s) and others to audit the accounts of reserves throughout the empire. Li Shimian’s punishment appears to be related to this issue, all the more obviously in light of the fact that in 1425 Xia Yuanji reciprocated by coming to Li’s defense when the dying Renzong emperor threatened his life. In other words, Li Shimian was implicated when opportunities arose for those high ministers who had lost face—because of proposals that Li had made in his memorial—to take their revenge.

For understandable reasons Li Shimian was not earlier rescued. The enthusiasm of Jiangxi courtiers in response to the call for criticism rendered Li obviously helpless. No Jiangxi minister, not even the great Yang Shiqi (1365–1444), could find it prudent to speak on Li’s behalf. In fact, Jiangxi figures had grown less prominent and influential at the
center of the court. Unlike during early-Yongle times, the Hanlin Academy and the grand secretariat later in the Yongle era were no longer team-packed with Jiangxi leaders. The esteemed and trusted Hu Guang (1370–1418), whom Li Shimian respected, had been dead for some years. The one-time kingpin of the most senior and closest imperial advisors, Xie Jin, for whom Li had shown affection and admiration, had died even earlier, in disgrace and obscurity. Li’s mentor, Hu Yan (1361–1443) of Jishui, to whom Li owed his readmission to the Hanlin Academy, had been chancellor of the National University for many years, which meant that he was away from engaging in court politics despite the genuine respect the emperor had for him. The two other incumbent senior literary officials of Jiangxi origin who could have had access to the throne were Jin Youzi (1368–1431) and Yang Shiqi. The relationship between Jin and Li is not certain but was at best only cordial, for there is no writing between them extant to suggest a close friendship. Jin otherwise was known as a quiet and accommodating man of ever increasing modesty. Yang Shiqi no doubt could have helped his “old friend,” but his veteran experience would have discouraged him from being open or acting at inopportune times. Half of the memorialists, as noted above, were his fellow Jiangxi natives. An open petition on Li’s behalf would have been damaging to all concerned. We may suspect that Yang Shiqi lobbied Yang Rong, the Fujianese grand secretary, to have Li rehabilitated. Yang Rong and Li were friendly, and Yang Rong had the emperor’s ear at that time. (For a representation in painting and calligraphy of the continuing association among Yang Rong, Li Shimian, and several significant players from Jiangxi and Fujian at court in the decades after the palace fire of 1421, see figures 5 and 6.)

All sources agree that it was on the emperor’s acceptance of Yang Rong’s recommendation that Li was released in the seventh month of Yongle 21 (1423) and restored to his former position. Yang Rong’s involvement in this matter was first recorded in Yang’s “verified record of conduct” (xingshi), written by Jiang Yi (1404 jinshi) and appended to Yang’s literary collection. According to this source, in Yongle 19 (1421) the day (renyin) after the great palace fire (on gengzi), the emperor called for information about problems in society and solutions to them. Yang Rong responded first; he memorialized ten proposals to relieve the
5A–5F. *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, after Xie Huan (ca. 1370–ca. 1450), Ming dynasty (1368–1644), ca. 1437. Handscroll, ink and color on silk; image 37 x 243.2 cm, overall with mounting 37.5 x 1278.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.3). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

5A. Servants and attendants.

5C. Seated right to left: Wang Zhi (1379–1462, from Jiangxi), Yang Shiqi (1365–1444, from Jiangxi), and Yang Rong (1371–1440, from Fujian).
5b. Seated right to left: Wang Ying (1376–1450, from Jiangxi), Yang Pu (1372–1446, from Hubei), and Qian Xili (fl. early fifteenth century, from Jiangxi).

5d. Standing far right: Zhou Shu (fl. early fifteenth century, from Jiangxi).
people. The emperor approved them and ordered their implementation. At that time, Hanlin reader-in-waiting Li Shimian and a number of other officials had been maligned through unfounded charges (rumors and slanders). The emperor, angered, wanted to punish these officials. Yang Rong rescued them with effort, and they were spared. Then, in the winter of that year, minister of war Fang Bin committed suicide, and minister of revenue Xia Yuanji and minister of works Wu Zhong were sent to jail. At that time, minister of rites Lü Zhen (1365–1426) was attending the emperor and several times spoke evil of Wu Zhong and the others, saying that they were wicked, evil, slandering, and deceiving. The emperor grew even angrier. One day he summoned Yang Rong for reports on the activities of these officials. Yang said in the strongest terms that they harbored no ill intentions. He asserted that they had said what they said only because they worried about the insufficiency of the grain supply for the anticipated expedition into Mongol territories. Yang Rong commented that Xia Yuanji and Wu Zhong might not be thor-
oughly competent for their jobs but that they were not wicked and evil. The emperor was placated and pursued the issue no further.

Jiang Yi’s summary account of events in 1421 and 1423 is misleading in some places. It cannot be referring to the lack of punishment for Li Shimian and company after their memorials in the fourth (and perhaps also the fifth) month of 1421. Jiang Yi’s account therefore must be referring to events leading up to Li’s release in 1423. Although Jiang Yi does not claim that Li’s reappointment to the Hanlin was due to Yang Rong’s recommendation, this ascription made in other sources could not have been far from the fact. Yang Rong’s biography shows that he had gained firmer imperial confidence for what he did during the palace fire. He saved the books and documents stored in the palaces by ordering the imperial guards to move them immediately to the Donghuamen (Donghua Gate). Jiang Yi’s account does reveal one important fact, namely that Li Shimian’s antagonists included minister of rites Lü Zhen.

The matter is also recorded in Yang Rong’s tomb inscription by
Yang Shiqi. Yang Shiqi makes it clear that Yang Rong’s memorial was in response to the fire in the three palaces and that he submitted it jointly with Jin Youzi. Yang Shiqi credited the punishment of Xia Yuanji to Lü Zhen as well, but that of Li Shimian to an unknown source. Yang Shiqi’s wording on the charges against Li is precise: “Reader-in-waiting Li Shimian has once presented opinions about concerns [of the state]. Someone also charged that in that event Li was deliberately ‘selling uprightness.’” This meant that Li had promoted his own sense of justice at the expense of the reputation of others, including even that of the emperor. This charge and that by Lü Zhen, as Yang Shiqi implied, were calculated to incense the already angered emperor. In both cases, Yang Rong defended both Xia Yuanji and Li Shimian with tactful (mild and roundabout) analyses. The reflective memorial that Yang Rong co-authored with Jin Youzi on the palace fire episode, which stood for the collective opinion of the grand secretariat, no doubt also was worded mildly.

Mingshi (Official History of the Ming) also depicts Yang Rong’s character and conduct in relation to his success in public life. Here the record emphasizes that when discussing official matters he was enthusiastic and vigorous and would tolerate no mistakes from others. But when someone angered the emperor to unpredictable results, he often came to the rescue by guiding the emperor to peace and reason with subtle words. That was the way he obtained a lighter sentence for censor-in-chief Liu Guan (1385 jinshi) and helped free Xia Yuanji and Li Shimian. Yang Rong is quoted as having once uttered these memorable lines: “There is propriety in serving an emperor, and there is a right way in presenting remonstrance. To prevail by a fluke and then get into trouble, I don’t do that” (Shijun youti, jinjian youfang, yi xingzhi quhuo, wu buwei ye). Thanks to Yang Rong’s pleasing deportment and seasoned engagement, the Yongle emperor remained the more clearheaded.

From the above study, it is clear that Li Shimian was sent to jail in the eleventh month of 1421 for something other than what he memorialized in the fourth month of the year. The allegation that his punishment was due to his opposition to building Beijing as the capital and a liberal foreign policy is dubious. Quite on the contrary, all sources record the imperial reception of his requests and proposals even though there are some minor differences in the records about the extent of their implementation. The Veritable Records say the emperor received them with approvals. Peng Liu in Li’s record of conduct says that because much of what Li said was considered correct with respect to current defects in imperial policy, an edict was issued to related offices for their implementation. Wu Jie (1397–1481), Li Shimian’s other eminent student, who composed his tomb inscription, notes that thirteen of the fifteen proposals Li made met imperial approval. Li’s biography in Guochao xianzheng lu (Record of the Outstanding Predecessors of Our Dynasty) states that fourteen of them were sent for implementation. That being the case, we are given another important perspective from which to view the Yongle emperor’s sense of propriety and way of governing. The execution of the long-tongued Xiao Yi and, as well, the imprisonment of Li Shimian patently betray the Yongle emperor’s style of statecraft.
A brief shower swept over city-wall towers;  
Grass and trees stand luxuriant and moist.  
This fine morning I am free  

4. And can take a pleasurable jaunt.  
This apricot garden, removed and elegant;  
Its pavilions and halls, too, resplendent and magnificent.  
Groves deep, sunlight subdued;  

Cranes dance overlooking the paved courtyard;  
Orioles sing perched on a high branch.  
Surroundings just right, spirits already high;  

12. Views satisfying, heart easily relaxed.  
Ever it has been, the talent for “stirring the cauldron”  
Can handle the mechanisms of creation and transformation.  
Each and every thing has its appropriate place,  

16. So what is left for me to do?  
Lightheadedly I begin to sing to myself  
Unaware the western sun’s grown small.

Notes


4. For the text of Li’s biography, see Zhang Tingyu (1672–1755) et al., Mingshi (1736; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), juan 163, p. 4421. For Mote’s translation, see Mote and Goodman, A Research Manual for Ming History, pp. 8–9.

5. This narration of the imperial response to Li’s memorial may have been drawn
from Yin Shu (1445 jinshi), Li’s student who wrote his biography. See Yin Shu, “Gulian Li xiansheng xiaoazhujuan” (Brief Biography of Li [Shimian] Gulian), in *Gulian wenji* (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian), by Li Shimian in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 12, pp. 18a–21b. This information is not found in Li’s record of conduct written by another of his student, Peng Liu (1391–1458), or in Li’s epitaph by Wang Zhi (1379–1462). Li’s fellow jinshi and bachelor and longtime colleague in the Hanlin Academy. See Peng Liu, “Xingzhuang” (Record of Conduct) and Wang Zhi, “Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao” (Tomb Inscription for the Late Director of the National University Li [Shimian]), in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, juan 12, pp. 4a–15a, esp. pp. 7b–8a; and pp. 15a–18a, respectively. However, the text of the biography by Yin Shu concerning accounts in the Yongle period is missing, that is, blank, in the Siku quanshu edition of Li Shimian’s literary collection, *Gulian wenji*. See Li Shimian, *Gulian wenji*, 11 juan plus appendix [1784], photographic reprint of manuscript copy in the Wenyuange copy of Siku quanshu. A Ming edition of the *Gulian wenji* does not append the piece by Yin Shu. See Li Shimian, *Shi Zhongwen Gulian wenji* (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian, Posthumous Title Zhongwen), 10 juan, ed. Dai Nan (Li Yong, 1474), microfilm of original in the National Central Library, Taipei.

6. *Ming Yingzong shilu* was compiled under the supervision of Li Xian (1408–1466), Chen Wen (1405–1468), and Peng Shi (1406–1475). Li Xian died before the compilation was completed in 1467. Both Chen Wen and Peng Shi were Jiangxi natives, and Peng was also Li Shimian’s valued student in the National University. Li Shimian’s death was reported to the court on day jiashe, fourth month of the first year of the Jingtai reign (1450). See *Ming Yingzong shilu*, photographic reprint of the manuscript exemplar in Guoli Beiping tushuguan (1467; Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1961–1966), juan 191, p. 3954.

7. See *Mingshi* in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 7, p. 9b.

8. Xiao Yi, “Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu” (A Response to the Edict Calling for Honest Opinions), *Chongke Waxian ji* (Reissue of Stocking Thread Writings), 20 juan (1740) in Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, Jibu 31 (Tainan xian Liuying xiang: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1997), juan 1, pp. 6a–8b. Xiao Yi’s collected writings are discussed further in note 36 below.


12. The lead expression for the questions is “yizhe”; each count is phrased as a rhetorical question ended with the word “yu” and is linked to the next by the word “huo.” *Ming Taizong shilu*, juan 236, pp. 2263–2264, under day renyin in the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421).

13. Ibid., juan 236, p. 2264. The Chinese for this passage reads as follows: “Xia li
yu min, shang wei yu tian. Zhen zhi minmei, wei jiu suoyou. Er wenwu qunchen shou zhen weiren, xiuqi shi tong. Zhen suo xing guo you bu dang, yi tiaochen wu yin. Shu tu quangai, yi hui tianyi.” For this text in Ming Taizong shilu, juan 236, p. 2264, lines 6–8 for the Chinese characters, see figure 3.

14. For the text of this edict, the terms of which are excerpted, see Ming Taizong shilu, juan 236, pp. 2266–2268.

15. Ming Taizong shilu, juan 236, pp. 2264–2266, under day jiachen in the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421).


17. Cheng Minzheng, “Li Zhongwen gong jiasheng xu” (Preface to Li [Shimian] Zhongwen’s Family History), Huangdun wenji (Bamboo Mound Collected Writings), in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 34, p. 10a.

18. Peng Liu, “Xingzhuang,” (Record of Conduct), in Gulian wenji, by Li Shimian, juan 12, p. 4a–15a, esp. pp. 7b–8a, first cited in note 5 above. This piece is appended to the collection of Li’s literary works. The text of its headings (or requests or proposals) in the Siku quanshu edition of this collection is somewhat corrupted so that one or two of the headings are missing. Fortunately, a full list of the headings is contained in Liao Daonan (1521 jinshi, d. 1547), Diange cilin ji (Notes on the Forest of Words [of the Hanlin Academy] and the Halls and Offices [of the Grand Secretaries]), 20 juan in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 6, pp. 30a–32a, in a long entry about Li Shimian, which is equivalent to a concise biography. This information is not found in Huang Zuo (1496–1566), Hanlin ji (Records of the Hanlin Academy), 20 juan [1566] in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987). The wording of several items is slightly different, but no alteration of meaning was intended or can be construed.


20. See Mingshi, juan 163, p. 4421.


22. Li Shimian, “Beijing fu” (Rhapsody on Beijing), Gulian wenji, juan 1, p. 1a–7b.

23. Immediately following the statement signifying the imperial endorsement of Li’s proposals, the Veritable Records lists the other officials who also responded to the call for proposals. They were supervising secretary Ke Xian (fl. 1420s–1450s; did not attain jinshi status); investigating censors He Zhong (1411 jinshi), Xu Rong (1406 jinshi), Zheng Weihsuan (1415 jinshi), and Luo Tong (1389–1469; 1412 jinshi); bureau secretary in the Ministry of Punishment Gao Gongwang (1415 jinshi); and Hanlin bachelor Yang Fu (1406 jinshi). They, too, gained the approval of the emperor for their memorials. See Ming Taizong shilu, juan 236, p. 2266.

24. See Zou Ji’s biography in Mingshi, juan 164, pp. 4435–4438.

25. See note 16 above for reference to the full text of Zou Ji’s memorial.
26. In Zou Ji’s memorial, asides and interpolations in square brackets are those of the author of the present article.

27. The Chinese term that I translate here as “paper-making materials” is *chuliao*. This term can also be taken to mean material for paper money.

28. This refers to the general amnesty proclaimed early in 1421 to commemorate the founding of Beijing as the capital and to recognize the populace’s contribution to the construction projects. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, juan 233, p. 2250, under day *wu* in the first month of Yongle 19 (1421).

29. For this quotation, see Zou Ji, “Fengtiandian zai shangshu,” *Mingwen heng*, juan 6, p. 37b, source first cited in note 16 above.

30. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, juan 134, pp. 1641–1642, under day *guimao* in the eleventh month, Yongle 10 (1412).

31. See Tan Qian, *Guoque*, juan 17, p. 1181.

32. In the winter of the same year (1421), Zou Ji was promoted to the position of left mentor [in the Secretariat of the Heir Apparent] and concurrent expositor-in-waiting; he died in office in the ninth month of the following year. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, juan 242, p. 2292, under day *gengzi* in the tenth month, Yongle 19 (1421). See also *Mingshi*, juan 164, p. 4438.

33. Xie Min (Eighteenth century) et al., *jiangxi tongzhi* (Jiangsu Provincial Gazetteer), 162 juan in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 52, p. 26b. In this source the “Table of Examination Candidates” lists Xiao Yi as a *jinshi* of Yongle 4 (1406).

Xiao Yi’s biography in Ling Dizhi (1565 *jinshi*), comp., and Ling Shuzhi, ed., *Wanxing tongpu* (Comprehensive Record of the Myriad Surnames), 140 juan (Wuxing: Ling Dizhi, 1579), juan 29, pp. 17a–b, makes Xiao Yi a *jinshi* of Yongle 13 (1415). This biography, short as it is, is somewhat longer than that in Xie Min, ed., *jiangxi tongzhi*, juan 81, p. 32a. Yongle 13 (1415) is possible considering Xiao’s position when he memorialized in 1421.

In Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, *Ming-Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* (Index to the Stele Records of Presented Scholars in the Ming and Qing) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), p. 2434, Xiao Yi’s name is included among the second-class candidates in the list of the class of 1415.

34. Chen Gen, who earlier memorialized with Xiao Yi, has a biography preceding a selection of his poems in Cao Xuequan (1574–1674), comp., *Shicang lidai shixuan* (Selective Anthology of Poetry from Shicang), 506 juan in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 373, pp. 11a–b. According to this biography, Chen was a Fujianese from Changle county. A student of the Classics during Hongwu times, he was appointed a secretary in the Ministry of Personnel upon recommendation. On the occasion of a natural calamity, he memorialized with his colleague Xiao Yi. They were jailed. Xiao died in prison and Chen was exiled to Jiaozhi. [Note that the following is erroneous narrative. There is no collateral evidence to show that Chen also submitted a memorial in this case.] Chen submitted another memorial and was restored to his office. He went on to serve and on one occasion reviewed the soldiers in the garrisons in Liaodong. He also managed his lineage in an orderly way.
If what is stated in Xiao Yi’s biography about Xiao and Chen is true, the phrase “those in power” could be referring to Yang Shiqi (1365–1444) and Yang Rong (1371–1440). They each were helping their respective fellow Jiangxi and Fujian provincials.

Xiao Yi’s literary collection is listed as Waxian yigao in his biography in Ling Dizhi, comp., Wanxing tongpu (1579), cited in note 33 above. But it is catalogued as Waxian ji in Huang Yuji (1629–1691), Qianqingtang shumu (Catalogue of the Qianqingrang Library), 32 juan in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 18, p. 19b. A Qianlong 5 (1740) edition of this work, a new block-cut edition entitled Chongke Waxian yigao, is now included in the Sikuquanshu cunmu congshu series (Tainan xian Liuying xiang: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1997), cited first in note 8 above.

Xiao Yi, Waxian yigao, juan 1, pp. 6a–8b.

Ibid., juan 1, p. 7b.

Ibid., juan 1, p. 8a.

Ming Taizong shilu, juan 182, pp. 1964–1965, under day renyn in the eleventh month of Yongle 14 (1416).

Mingshi, juan 164, p. 4438, in the biography of Zou Ji.


Guoque, juan 17, p. 1181. The problem with the Guoque chronology is that it packs both incidents into the same day, which is an obvious error, in addition to the above-mentioned confusing attribution of the memorial that has proved to be Zou Ji’s. It is also incorrect in saying that a while after Li Shimian and the other officials submitted their memorials, which ran afoul of the emperor’s wishes, they (no one is specified) were jailed for slandering the court and that they were soon pardoned and released but not reappointed.

Ming Taizong shilu, juan 236, p. 2266, under day jiachen of the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421). The Jiangxi natives named were Li Shimian (from Anfu), Zou Ji (from Jishui), Xiao Yi (from Lean), Luo Tong (investigating censor from Jishui), Gao Gongwang (bureau secretary in the Ministry of Punishment from Yongfeng). The others were Ke Xian (supervising secretary from Jiaode, Nanzhili), He Zhong (investigating censor from Jiangling, Huguang), Xu Rong (investigating censor from Jintan, Nanzhili), Zheng Weihuan (investigating censor from Cixi, Zhejiang), and Yang Fu (Hanlin bachelor from Changxing, Zhejiang).

A censor is ranked 7A, a supervising secretary 7B, and a sub-prefect 5B; hence the word “promotion” (sheng) is used in the Veritable Records. For the ranks of these officials, see Mingshi, pp. 1767, 1805, 1850, respectively.

Ming Taizong shilu, juan 237, p. 2274, under day yichou of the fifth month of Yongle 19 (1421).

Huo Tao, “Yu Xiao Ziyong shu” (Letter to Xiao Ziyong), Mingwen hai (Sea of

49. Wang Zhi, “Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao” (Tomb Inscription for the Late Director of the National University Li [Shimian]), Gulian wenji (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian), by Li Shimian in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 12, p. 15b. This source was first cited in note 5 above.


51. This draws on the necrology of Luo Rujing in Ming Yingzong shilu, juan 60, pp. 1151–1152, under day jihai in the tenth month of Zhengtong 4 (1439).

52. See Li’s record of conduct by Peng Liu, in Gulian wenji, by Li Shimian, juan 12, p. 4a–15a, esp. pp. 8a–b, first cited in note 5 above.


54. Huang Zuo, Hanlin ji, juan 8, pp. 24b–25a; also Liao Daonan, Diange cilin ji, juan 16, pp. 20a–b. Both sources were first cited in note 18 above.

55. Huang Zuo, Hanlin ji, juan 8, p. 24b.

56. See Xia Yuanji’s biography in Xiang Dushou (1562 jinshi), Jinxian beiyi (Modern Personalities for the Record) 42 juan in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 8, pp. 2b–8b, esp. p. 5a.

57. According to Mingshi, juan 7, pp. 100–101, Xia’s sentence came on day bingzi, Li’s five days later on day xinsi.

58. See Xia Yuanji’s biography quoted above in note 56, Jinxian beiyi, juan 8, pp. 6a–b.

59. On this point, see Li Shimian, “Yu Hu xueshi shu yi” (To Academician Hu [Yan], First Letter), Gulian wenji, juan 8, p. 31a.

60. Li Shimian wrote a poem for Xie Jin when Xie departed for his demoted posts in Guangxi and Jiaozhi; see Li Shimian, “Song Xie xueshi buzheng Guangxi jianxing Jiaozhi shi shi ping Jiaozhi li junxian” (Farewell to Academician Xie [Jin] on his Departure to Take Up Provincial Administration Work in Guangxi and Concurrently in Jiaozhi; at that time, Jiaozhi Had Been Pacified and Commanderies and Districts Established There), Gulian wenji, juan 11, p. 2a.

61. On this point, see Li Shimian, “Yu Hu xueshi shu yi” (To Academician Hu [Yan], First Letter), Gulian wenji, juan 8, p. 31b.

62. Mingshi, juan 147, p. 4127, in the biography of Jin Youzi.

63. For the friendship between Li Shimian and Yang Shiqi, see Li Shimian, “Dongli xu wengao xu” (Preface for Continuation of [Yang Shiqi] Dongli’s Collection of Prose Writings), Gulian wenji, juan 4, p. 37a, juan 12, p. 3b. Yang Shiqi wrote a xiangzan (encomium on a portrait) for Li Shimian, which is included in Li’s collected writings Gulian wenji, juan 12, p. 3b under the generic title “Xiangzan.”
64. For a discussion of versions of Xie Huan’s (ca. 1370–ca. 1450) painting Xingyuan yaji (Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden), see Maxwell K.
65. See Jiang Yi, “Yang gong xingshi” (The Honorable Yang [Rong]’s Verified Record of Conduct), in Wenmin ji (Collected Writings of [Yang Rong]
Wenmin), by Yang Rong in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), fulu yi, pp. 15a–b.
67. See Yang Shiqi, “Yang gong muzhiming” (The Honorable Yang [Rong]’s Tomb Inscription), Dongli ji xuji (Continuation of [Yang Shiqi] Dongli’s
Collected Writings), 62 juan in Siku quanshu (1549; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 36, p. 7b.
68. The source drawn on here is the tomb inscription (muzhiming) for Yang Rong written by Yang Shiqi, “Yang gong muzhiming” (The Honorable Yang
[Rong]’s Tomb Inscription), ibid. It is also included in, Mingshi heng, ed. Cheng Minzheng (see note 16 above), juan 86, p. 15ff, esp. pp. 18b–19a. The event is mentioned in other biographies of Yang Rong as well; for example, in Xiang Dushou, Jinxian beiyi, 42 juan, juan 6, pp. 9a–b (see note 36 above); Mingshi, juan 148, p. 4141; and Li Qingfu (eighteenth century), Minzhong lixue yuanyuan kao (Study on the Origins of Confucianism in Fujian) in Siku
quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), juan 85, p. 9b, which duplicates Mingshi.
69. Mingshi, juan 148, p. 4141.
71. Wu Jie, “Gulian xiansheng gaishi qianzang mubeiming” (Stele Inscription for the Change in Title and Reburial of [Li Shimian] Gulian), Gulian wenji, juan 12, p. 28bff, esp. p. 29b. This tomb inscription was written upon Li’s reburial in or after Chenghua 9 (1473), on the request of Li’s grandson, Li Yong.
72. “Jijiu Li Zhongwen Shimian gong zhuan” (Biography of National University Chancellor, the Honorable Li Zhongwen Shimian), Guochao xianzheng lu, ed. Jiao Hong, juan 73, p. 7a. (Jiao Hong’s work was first mentioned in note 43 above.) The fate of Li’s memorial is not mentioned in some other earlier accounts. For example, Wang Zhi, in the epitaph that he composed for Li Shimian (see “Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao,” Gulian wenji, juan 12, p. 15aff, first cited in note 5 above), says only that Li memorialized both Emperor Taizong and Emperor Renzong and that both emperors heeded most of his remonstrance. Peng Shi, author of the record of Li’s memorial shrine (see “Gulian xiansheng citang ji,” Gulian wenji, juan 12, p. 26b, first cited in note 50 above), notes that the memorial dealt with fifteen current concerns but says nothing about their implementation. The account on this issue in Li’s biography by Yin Shu (see “Gulian Li xiansheng xiaozhuan,” Gulian wenji, juan 12,
pp. 18a–25b, first cited in note 5 above) cannot be known, as mentioned above in note 5, because the text concerning this issue in the Siku quanshu congshu version of the piece is missing.

Glossary

Anfu  安福  
bao  報  
Baohe  保和  
Beijing fu  北京賦  
Benji  本紀  
bingzi  丙子  
Cao Xuequan  曹雪倅  
Changle  長樂  
Changxing  長興  
Chen Gen  陳艮  
Chenghua  成化  
Cheng Minzheng  程敏政  
Chengzu  成祖  
Chen Wen  陳文  
Chen Xun  陳循  
Chen Ying  陳英（瑛）  
Chongke Waxian ji  重刻襯線集  
Chu Hung-lam (Zhu Honglin)  朱鴻林  
chuliao  楸料  
Cixi  慈溪  
Dai Cheng  戴誠  
Dai Nan  戴難  
Da Ming li  大明律  
daqing  大清  
Diange cilin ji  殿閣詞林記  
Donghuamen  東華門  
Dongli ji xuji  東里集續集  
Dongli xu wengao xu  東里續文稿序  
Fang Bin  方賓  
Fengtian  奉天  
Fengtiandian zai shangshu  奉天殿災上疏  
Gao Gongwang  高公望  
gengzi  僥子  
guichou  癸丑  
guimao  癸卯  
Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao  故祭酒李先生墓表  
Guilian Li xiansheng xiaozhuan  古廉李先生小傳  
Guilian wenji  古廉文集  
Guilian xiansheng citang ji  古廉先生祠堂記  
Guilian xiansheng gaishi qianzang mubei-ming  古廉先生改諡遷葬墓碑銘  
Guochao xianzheng lu  國朝獻徵錄  
Guoque  國榷  
Hanlin  翰林  
Hanlin ji  翰林記  
He Zhong  何忠  
Hongxi  洪熙  
Huagai  華蓋  
Huain  淮安  
Huangdun wenji  篆墩文集  
huangsi  荒絲  
Huang Yuji  黃虞稷  
Huang Zongxi  黃宗羲  
Huang Zuo  黃佐  
Hu Guang  胡廣
Huguang 湖广
huo 或
Huo Tao 霍韬
Hu Yan 胡巖
jiachen 甲辰
Jiajing 嘉靖
Ji'an 吉安
Jiande 建德
Jiangling 江陵
Jiang Tong 江統
Jiangxi tongzhi 江西通志
Jiang Yi 江鎭
Jianwen 建文
Jian Yi 建義
Jiao Hong 焦竑
Jiaozhi 交趾
jiashen 甲申
jiasheng 家乘
jihai 己亥
Jijiu Li Zhongwen Shimian gong zhuan 祭酒李忠文時勉公傳
Jin 晉
Jingtai 景泰
Jining 濟寧
Jinshen 謹身
jinshi 進士
Jintan 金壇
Jinxian beiyi 今獻備遺
Jin Youzi 金幼孜
Jishui 吉水
juan 卷
Ke Xian 柯暹
Lean 樂安

Liao Daonan 廖道南
Liaodong 遼東
Ling Dizhi 溝迪知
Ling Shuzhi 溝述知
Li Qing 李慶
Li Qingfu 李清馥
Li Shimian 李時勉
Liu Guan 劉觀
Li Xian 李賢
Li Yong 李願
Li Zhongwen gong jiasheng xu 李忠文公家乘序
Luo gong mubei 羅公墓碑
Luo Rujing 羅汝敬
Luo Tong 羅通
Lü Zhen 呂震
Mingshi 明史
Ming Taizong shilu 明太宗實錄
Ming tongjian 明通鑑
Mingwen hai 明文海
Mingwen heng 明文衡
Ming Yingzong shilu 明英宗實錄
Mingzhong lixue yuan yuan kao 閩中理學淵源考
muzhiming 墓誌銘
Nanzhili 南直隸
Peng Liu 彭琉
Peng Shi 彭時
poke 推勘
Qianqingtang shumu 千頃堂書目
Qian Xili 錢習禮
renyin 王寅
Renzong 仁宗
Shangfa budang, ducai wangfei, er guoyong wudu yu. Gongzuo wudu, zheng xu fan-shu, er minli diaobi yu 賞罰不當， 蠹財妄費，而國用無度斃。工作無度，徵需繁數，而民力凋敝斃

Sheng 陞
Shengtong 生銅
Shexiang 鬆香
Shicang lidai shixuan 石倉歷代詩選
Shijun youti, jinjian youfang, yi xingzhi qu-huo, wu buwei ye 事君有體，進諫有方，以幸直取禍，吾不為也
Shi Zhongwen Gulian wenji 諸忠文古廉文集
Siku quanshu 四庫全書
Song Xie xueshi buzheng Guangxi jianxing Jiaozhi shi shi ping Jiaozhi li jun xian 送解學士布政廣西兼行交趾事時平交趾立郡縣
Taihe 太和
Taizong 太宗
Taizu 太祖
Tan Qian 談遷
Tianshun 天順
Tumu 土木
Wang Ying 王英
Wang Zhen 王振
Wang Zhi 王直
Wanxing tongpu 萬姓統譜
Waxian ji 襪線集
Waxian yigao 襪線遺稿
Wenmin ji 文敏集
Wenyi 文毅
Wenyuange 文淵閣
Wudi 武帝
Wu Jie 吳節
Wumen 午門
Wuxing 吳興
Wuyin 戊寅
Wu Zhong 吳中
Xiang Dushou 頃篤壽
Xiangzhan 像贊
Xiao Yi 蕭儀
Xia Yuanji 夏原吉
Xie Huan 謝環
Xie Jin 解缙
Xie Min 謝旻
Xingshi 行實
Xingyuan yaji 杏園雅集
Xingzhuang 行狀
Xingzi 星子
Xinsi 辛巳
Xinyou 辛酉
Xuande 宣德
Xuanzong 宣宗
Xu Rong 徐瑢
Xuzhou 徐州
Yang Fu 楊復
Yang gong muzhiming 楊公墓志銘
Yang gong xingshi 楊公行實
Yang Pu 楊溥
Yang Rong 楊榮
Yang Shi 楊實
Yang Shiqi 楊士奇
Yangzi 楊子
Yichou 乙丑
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<tr>
<td>yizhe 意者</td>
<td>Zhonghe 中和</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yongfeng 永豐</td>
<td>Zhongshan 鍾山</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yongle 永樂</td>
<td>Zhongwen 忠文</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yu 歙</td>
<td>Zhou Shu 周述</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu Hu xueshi shu yi 與胡學士書一</td>
<td>Zou Ji 鄒緝</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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About Our Contributors

Hung-lam Chu earned his Ph.D. in East Asian Studies from Princeton University in 1984 under the supervision of Frederick W. Mote and Willard J. Peterson. Until 1989 he was a research staff member in Princeton’s Department of East Asian Studies for the Ming Bibliographic Project. He was editor of the Gest Library Journal from the time of its launch in 1986 until 1989 and thereafter served on the advisory board of the journal. He co-organized with Professor Mote the exhibition “Calligraphy and the East Asian Book” and co-authored with him the catalogue for that exhibit, first published as volume 2, number 2 of the Gest Library Journal (Spring 1988) and then by Shambhala (Boston and Shaftesbury) in 1989.

Hung-lam Chu is a former fellow of the Institute of History and Philology at the Academia Sinica in Taipei, a former fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., and currently is a professor in the Department of History at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He specializes in the history of Ming China, the intellectual and institutional history of late-imperial China, and classic Neo-Confucian texts of Song and Ming times. His publications include some sixty research papers in Chinese and in English and three monographs in Chinese: Mingru xuean dianjiao shiwu (Elucidation of Errors in the Punctuated Editions of Huang Zongxi’s Cases of Learning of Ming Confucians; Taipei 1991); Zhongguo jinshi ruxue shizhi de sibian yu xixue (The Substance and the Practice of Confucian Learning in Late-Imperial China; Beijing 2005); and Mingren zhuzuo yu shengping fawei (Studies in the Works and Life of Ming Personalities; Guilin 2005). He is currently writing a book on the Classics-mat imperial lectures in the Ming court and editing a volume on the statecraft ideas and practices of the Ming founder, Zhu Yuanzhang.

Martin J. Heijdra is the Chinese bibliographer of The East Asian Library and The Gest Collection at Princeton University. A past president
of the Society for Ming Studies, his research interests and publications relate to Ming socioeconomic history and, more recently, to the history of the East Asian book.

Tai-loi Ma is director of The East Asian Library and The Gest Collection at Princeton University. Previously he served as the curator of the East Asian Library at the University of Chicago and a deputy university librarian at the University of Hong Kong Libraries in charge of its Fung Ping Shan Library. He received his Ph.D. in Chinese history at the University of Chicago. Although he is well known for his discovery of a contemporary record of Song Jiang’s (fl. 1119) surrender to the Song government as well as a comprehensive bibliography of Lin Shu’s (1852–1924) translated works, Ma Tai-loi’s main interests are Ming history and literature. He participated in a month-long Ming History Workshop at Princeton in 1980 directed by Frederick W. Mote and was in correspondence with Professor Mote for the next twenty odd years.

Lynn Struve is professor of history and of East Asian languages and cultures at Indiana University, Bloomington, where she has taught since 1977. Since completing doctoral work in the History Department of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1974, her research and publication has centered on the political, intellectual, and cultural history of the seventeenth century in China, particularly the fall of the Ming and the establishment of the Qing dynasty. Her monographs are: The Southern Ming, 1644–1662 (1984); Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers’ Jaws (1993); and The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619–1683: A Historiography and Source Guide (1998). In addition, she has edited two volumes: The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time (2004) and Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition: East Asia from Ming to Qing (2005). She got to know Fritz Mote when he engaged her to undertake writing of the “Southern Ming” chapter of the first Ming volume of the Cambridge History of China, thus enabling her to partake of the excellent library resources and scholarly company in East Asian Studies at Princeton during the years 1979–1981. Mote remained generous in supporting and advising Lynn Struve after that time, and they corresponded on scholarly questions until shortly before his death.
Helene van Rossum studied modern history at the University of Amsterdam and archive studies at the University of London. She has worked at Princeton University’s Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library since 1998, where she has processed various collections, including the papers of former Princeton University president Robert F. Goheen, about whom she prepared an exhibition in 2006. She prepared an exhibition currently on display at Mudd Library on John van Antwerp MacMurray, whose photographs and papers she also processed. Helene has published several children’s books in Dutch and in English.
The Friends of the Gest Library is a group of private individuals dedicated to the idea that an East Asian library resource like the Gest Oriental Library (the East Asian Research Library at Princeton University) must be known, supported, and encouraged in order to enrich both the aesthetic knowledge of East Asia and the growth of scholarship and contemporary information concerning that part of the world. Many individuals have already been active for years in guiding the Gest Library, and contributing their time and resources ad hoc. In 1986 they formed the Friends of the Gest Library in order to broaden the Library’s support and foster communication among other interested parties.

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