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The soldier as a sage: Qi Jiguang (1528-1588) and the neo-confucianization of the military in sixteenth-century China

Noordam, B.

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The Soldier as a Sage:
Qi Jiguang (1528-1588) and the Neo-Confucianization of the Military in Sixteenth-Century China

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Promotiecommissie:	Prof. dr. R.E. Breuker (*Universiteit Leiden*) Prof. dr. M. 't Hart (*Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Huygens Instituut*) Dr. P.A. Lorge (*Vanderbilt University, Nashville Tennessee, USA*) Prof. dr. B. Schoenmaker (*Universiteit Leiden*) Dr. L.M. Teh (*Universiteit Leiden*)

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Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents Chris Noordam and Fia Noordam-van Barneveld for supporting my ambitions and standing by me, especially during the last very difficult phase of completing the dissertation in less than ideal personal circumstances. This book is for you.

Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

Het onderzoek waarop deze dissertatie is gebaseerd richt zich op de Chinese militaire aanvoerder Qi Jiguang (1528-1588) en het belang van het Neo-Confucianisme voor het succes van zijn carrière. Het (Neo-)Confucianisme wordt door onderzoekers vaak neergezet als een ideologie die een afkeer heeft van oorlog en het militaire bedrijf in het algemeen. De hegemonie van deze ideologie als orthodoxe leer van de dominantie civiele elite wordt dan vaak opgegeven als reden voor de militaire zwakte van de Ming (1368-1644) dynastie, de dynastie waarin Qi Jiguang actief was. Echter, Qi Jiguang schreef commentaren op belangrijke Neo-Confucianistische geschriften en bekritiseerde Confucianisten uit zijn eigen tijd die civiele (*wen*) en militaire (*wu*) eigenschappen niet verenigden in hun persoon. De vraag doet zich voor hoe Qi Jiguang deze eigenschappen wel kon verenigen in zijn persoon en of deze succesvolle overbrugging van civiel en militair in verband gebracht kan worden met de latere militaire heropleving van de Ming dynastie gedurende de late zestiende eeuw, toen een gemengde groep civiele en militaire bestuurders beschikkende over verenigde militaire en civiele identiteiten de dynastie tijdelijk een nieuw elan gaven. Om de wortels van dit fenomeen nader te onderzoeken met als invalshoek de carrière van Qi Jiguang, is het van groot belang om de precieze invloed van het (Neo-)Confucianisme op de institutionele en culturele vorming van de civiele en militaire werelden te onderzoeken.

In het eerste hoofdstuk wordt de ontwikkeling van de belangrijkste Chinese denkrichtingen geschetst en dan met name hun opvattingen over de balans tussen de civiele en militaire eigenschappen van de staat en van het individu. Tevens laat het hoofdstuk zien dat deze denkrichtingen een aantal archetypische identiteiten voorstonden met elk een andere mix van *wen* en *wu*. Dit waren de Confucianistische gentleman met een strikte ethiek van oprechtheid en geritualiseerde gedragingen, de schrandere generaal met listige en intelligente strategieën en de klasseloze dolende ridder, die onrecht actief bestrijdt buiten de invloed van staat en gezag om. Gedurende de negende eeuw zou daar nog een vierde bijkomen: de geleerde generaal, welke men het beste kan verstaan als een versmelting van de Confucianistische gentleman met de schrandere generaal.

In het tweede hoofdstuk wordt vervolgens geanalyseerd hoe deze denkrichtingen en hun archetypische identiteiten de wording van civiele en militaire domeinen in de staat en de samenleving beïnvloedden tijdens de Han (206 v.C. – 220 n.C.) en de Tang (618-907) dynastieën,

om vervolgens vast te stellen dat er tijdens de opvolgende Song (960-1278) dynastie een breuk optrad in de tot dan toe cyclische wordingsprocessen van deze domeinen. Hoewel tijdens de Han en de Tang civiele en militaire elites zich gedurende de tijd van elkaar afsplitsten, had dit meer te maken met de structurele noodzaak om permanente legers aan de grenzen te onderhouden, waarvoor meestal alleen nomadische "barbaren" en Chinezen uit lagere sociale klassen te rekruteren waren. Het Confucianisme was in deze tijd nog niet de dominante ideologie van de civiele elite en stond nog relatief open voor invloeden uit andere denkrichtingen. Tijdens de Song, daarentegen, werden de civiele en militaire elites vrijwel meteen vanaf het begin op een verschillende manier en uit verschillende sociale groepen gerekruteerd. Tevens was de oude aristocratie grotendeels vernietigd, waardoor de Song als het ware met een schone lei begon en nieuwe elites kon creëren zonder vermenging met "barbaarse" krijgers van de steppe, waarvan de Song nu grotendeels afgesneden was door het ontstaan van niet-Chinese gecentraliseerde rijken in het noorden. Er kwam een ruwe tweedeling tot stand tussen een civiel zuiden, waarin de elite weinig zelf militaire activiteiten ter hand hoefde te nemen dankzij een redelijk effectief leger, en een gemilitariseerde noordelijke grensstreek, waarin feitelijk erfelijke militaire families de grens beveiligden, zonder al te grote sporen op de civiele cultuur na te laten. De Mongoolse overheersing tijdens de Yuan (1271-1368) dynastie bracht geen blijvende verandering in dit patroon. Intussen was een zuidelijke variant van het Confucianisme, het Neo-Confucianisme, tijdens de Yuan de officiële orthodoxie geworden van het rijk welke men moest inprenten om gerekruteerd te worden als civiele bureaucraat via het examenstelsel. Dit Neo-Confucianisme had een strikte moraalleer welke versmelting met meer militair-georiënteerde geïdealiseerde identiteiten, zoals dat van de dolende ridder en de schrandere generaal, in toenemende mate problematiseerde voor de Confucianistische gentleman. Tijdens de vroege Ming dynastie zette de geïnstitutionaliseerde scheiding tussen militaire en civiele elites door en werden militairen uit huishoudens gerekruteerd die op erfelijke basis waren belast met militaire dienst.

In hoofdstuk drie wordt geschetst hoe tijdens de vijftiende eeuw dit erfelijke systeem door een catastrofale nederlaag en om structurele redenen in verval raakt, terwijl de samenleving van het Ming rijk grote sociaaleconomische veranderingen doormaakt, gepaard met demografische groei. Vooral in het zuiden van het rijk leidde dit tot opstanden en geweld, soms ook gepleegd door etnische minderheden aldaar, terwijl het erfelijke leger daar een dun gespreide aanwezigheid had. Anders dan de Song, werd het zuiden tijdens de Ming gekenmerkt door een relatief militair

vacuüm. Deze omstandigheden leidden tot een zekere militaire crisis die zich uitte in een gebrekkige rekrutering van nieuwe erfelijke soldaten, waardoor erfelijke officieren niet meer de beschikking hadden over functionerende eenheden. Verder werkte het oorspronkelijke vroege Ming ideaal van het zelfvoorzienende leger niet: de beoogde erfelijke militaire kolonies die hun eigen voedsel produceerden en daarmee in hun levensonderhoud konden voorzien werden in toenemende mate ondermijnd door desertie en privatisering van de landbouwgronden in de handen van officieren, eunuchen en favorieten van de keizerlijke familie. Zowel in het zuiden als in het noorden werd daarom steeds meer beroep gedaan op huurlingen, plaatselijke milities, en troepen van etnische minderheden, die of vanuit de staatskas of via plaatselijke ad hoc belastingen betaald moesten worden. Omdat de erfelijke officieren niet de autoriteit hadden om deze maatregelen te nemen, leidde deze stand van zaken tot een toenemende bemoeienis van civiele ambtenaren met militaire aangelegenheden. Tegelijkertijd nam de hoeveelheid succesvolle civiele examenkandidaten toe, terwijl het bestuur niet genoeg werkgelegenheid bood. Tevens verloor het orthodoxe Neo-Confucianisme, de kennis van welke getest werd in deze examens, aan ideologische kracht. Men leerde het om de examens te halen, niet om in moreel opzicht te verbeteren, en dit verzande vaak in ingeoefend leren. Daardoor ontstond er behoefte aan een ideologie die morele zelfontplooiing weer voorop zou stellen en tevens voluntaristisch activisme ten behoeve van de ordening van de maatschappij zou legitimeren.

Hoofdstuk vier laat zien dat de Neo-Confucianistische filosoof en civiele bureaucraat Wang Yangming (1472-1529) het Neo-Confucianisme een nieuwe interpretatie gaf die de nadruk legt op innerlijke morele cultivering en het in praktijk brengen daarvan, in plaats van het uitgebreid bestuderen van literatuur. Hij stond daarbij in een traditie van eerdere Neo-Confucianisten, die de nadruk van morele cultivatie verschoven van de bestudering van (ethische) principes in de externe wereld naar zelfreflectie en meditatie, waaronder Chen Xianzhang (1428-1500), Zhan Ruoshui (1466-1560), en hun Song-voorganger Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1192). Chen, Zhan, en Wang hadden meester-discipel verhoudingen en hun respectievelijke volgelingen onderhielden vaak nauwe banden met elkaar gedurende de zestiende eeuw. De leer van Wang in het bijzonder werd gekenmerkt door een grotere rol voor subjectiviteit en maakte het eenvoudiger de strikte ethische code van de Neo-Confucianistische gentleman met het militaire bedrijf te combineren. Verder was deze leer sociaal inclusiever omdat het potentieel onderkend werd van alle mensen om zich moreel

te kunnen verbeteren. Daarnaast lag er binnen deze leer een minder grote nadruk op de noodzaak van elitaire boekengeleerdheid om dit doel te bereiken.

In hoofdstuk vijf is te zien hoe Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianisme bekend werd in de context van zijn succesvolle carrière als militaire aanvoerder. Wang's activistische carrière bood een model voor het oplossen van de militaire crisis die in de loop van de vijftiende eeuw ontstaan was in het zuiden van het Ming rijk. Wang bedacht oplossingen voor het rekruteren en organiseren van huurlingen legers, ad hoc belastingen om zijn campagnes te financieren, militaire strategieën en inlichtingen, disciplinering en aanmoediging. Nog belangrijker was dat hij zijn militaire oplossingen integreerde met civiele bestuurlijke oplossingen om opstanden blijvend te pacificeren en de maatschappij moreel te verbeteren volgens de Neo-Confucianistische ideologie. Tevens paste hij deze maatregelen toe op etnische minderheden in de overtuiging dat deze het potentieel hadden om de culturele normen van de Han Chinese meerderheid assimileren. Daarin volgde hij Chen Xianzhang. Hoewel Wang niet de eerste civiele bureaucraat was die militaire en civiele bestuurlijke oplossingen combineerde, was zijn model waarschijnlijk veel invloedrijker, omdat de literaire neerslag van de praktische aspecten van zijn carrière verspreid werden samen met zijn Neo-Confucianistische leer gedurende de zestiende eeuw.

In hoofdstuk zes wordt bestudeerd in hoeverre de leer van Wang Yangming een invloed had op de civiele bureaucratische elites tijdens het midden van de zestiende eeuw. Door de militaire crisis van de vijftiende eeuw was er de behoefte ontstaan aan een soort civiele bureaucraat die tevens militaire competenties in zijn persoon verenigde. In de loop van de zestiende eeuw ontstond er inderdaad een dergelijke elite van civiele bureaucraten met een mix van *wen* en *wu* kwaliteiten en een onderzoek van hun achtergrond toont aan dat een meerderheid aanhanger was van Wang Yangming's leer, en in mindere mate ook die van Chen Xianzhang en Zhan Ruoshui. Een uitzondering vormen die civiele bureaucraten die al waren opgegroeid in het gemilitariseerde noorden dat gekenmerkt werd door de blijvende militaire dreiging van de Mongolen, in tegenstelling tot het zuiden waar pas veel later de noodzakelijke militarisering van de civiele elite plaatsvond. Belangrijk in de context van Qi Jiguang's toekomstige carrière was dat dit patroon ook te ontwaren viel in de ad hoc militaire organisatie van Hu Zongxian (1512-1565), een civiele bureaucraat die in het midden van de zestiende eeuw de campagne tegen Wokou-piraten leidde aan de zuidoostelijke kust. Veel van zijn ondergeschikte civiele bureaucraten waren volgers van Wang Yangming's leer en tevens beschikte hij over een informele staf van literati met

vergelijkbare ideologische opvattingen. De militaire campagne gaf aan literati zonder officiële positie de kans om binnen het kader van Wang Yangming's ideeën hun activistische impuls tot uiting te brengen.

Hoofdstuk zeven laat zien hoe Qi Jiguang Wang Yangming's leer omarmde en in nauw contact stond met de volgelingen van Wang's Neo-Confucianisme in de formele en informele organisatie van Hu Zongxian. Dankzij deze connecties kwam hij ook in het zicht van Hu Zongxian, zelf een Wang Yangming volgeling. Qi's literaire productie laat zien dat Wang's ideeën hem de rechtvaardiging gaven om binnen het bestek van een Neo-Confucianistische levensstijl het militaire metier en de strategieën van de listige Sunzi te legitimeren, een sentiment dat hij deelde met civiele bureaucraten en literati. In de loop van Qi's carrière in de verschillende provincies die getroffen werden door de Wokou aanvallen is te zien dat hij als erfelijke officier onder het toezicht stond van civiele bureaucraten die tevens aanhangers van Wang Yangming's ideeën waren, en die hem hielpen met rekrutering en financiering van zijn troepen. De val van Hu Zongxian in ongenade veranderde dit carrièrepatroon niet en later verwierf Qi een belangrijke militaire post aan de noordelijke grens onder patronage van de invloedrijke staatsman Zhang Juzheng (1525-1582). Hoewel deze laatste de Wang Yangming beweging probeerde in te dammen, verleende hij civiel-militaire talenten uit deze beweging wel politieke steun bij hun inspanningen het rijk militair te versterken.

In hoofdstuk acht wordt beargumenteerd dat er twee factoren zijn die leidden tot het ontstaan van een robuust netwerk van Wang Yangming volgelingen, waar Qi Jiguang uiteindelijk de vruchten van plukte. Ten eerste was er in de beweging een sterke nadruk op de rol van vriendschappen als hulp-, en verificatiemiddel bij morele zelfontplooiing. Aangezien de rol van externe maatstaven voor morele ontwikkeling was verkleind door de nadruk op innerlijke morele cultivatie, werden vriendschappen belangrijker in het bewerkstelligen van persoonlijke ethische vooruitgang. Ten tweede legitimeerde Wang Yangming's leer onconventionele levensstijlen door de nadruk op oprechtheid in handelingen die juist tot uiting kwam in het vermijden van conformisme aan een extern opgelegde standaard. Deze mentaliteit leidde tot de hernieuwde populariteit van de waarden van het dolende ridder archetype, waarin hechte broederschap en een strijd tegen onrechtvaardigheid centraal stonden. In de literaire nalatenschap van Qi Jiguang is duidelijk te zien dat hij zijn vriendschappen beschreef in de discourse van Wang's Neo-Confucianistische leer en dat van de dolende ridder.

In hoofdstuk negen wordt vervolgens beargumenteerd dat deelname aan dit netwerk van volgelingen Qi Jiguang ook toegang gaf tot de rijke kennis circulatie die hierin plaatsvond. Het netwerk speelde in de zestiende eeuw een belangrijke rol in het consolideren en verspreiden van kennis omtrent staatsmanschap. Militaire theorieën en handleidingen, strategieën voor civiel bestuur, civiele techniek, cartografie en etnografie van grensgebieden werden in dit netwerk verzameld, geordend, nieuw gecreëerd en verspreid. Een belangrijk resultaat van deze circulatie was de *Chou hai tu bian*, een grote handleiding waarin cartografische kennis en gecombineerde civiel-militaire oplossingen voor de Wokou crisis verzameld werden. Uit de inhoud blijkt dat de campagnes van Wang Yangming een belangrijke inspiratiebron vormden voor de anti-Wokou maatregelen.

In hoofdstuk tien, tenslotte, worden de militaire handleidingen van Qi Jiguang bezien als een product van deze kennis circulatie. Een analyse van de inhoud laat zien dat Qi in grote mate voortbouwde op de militaire ideeën van Wang Yangming op het gebied van rekrutering, organisatie, het belang van training en de noodzaak een grondig opgeleid officierscorps te creëren. Deze speerpunten werden door Qi Jiguang uitgebreid en gedetailleerd verder ontwikkeld. Verder voegde Qi Jiguang hoofdstukken toe die het inboezemen van moed en de morele disciplinering van de officieren behandelen. Deze beide hoofdstukken leunden sterk op Wang Yangming's ideeën omtrent morele zelfontplooiing en vormen een bewijs dat deze Neo-Confucianistische leer een belangrijke rol speelden in de beoogde training en disciplinering van Qi Jiguang's troepen. Op deze manier kwamen in Qi Jiguang's handleidingen de praktische militaire oplossingen en de ethische leer van Wang Yangming samen in een geïntegreerd geheel. Deze handleidingen zouden een belangrijke invloed blijven uitoefenen tijdens de latere Qing (1644-1912) dynastie en in buurlanden zoals Korea. Qi Jiguang's carrière en militaire theorie bouwden dus in belangrijke mate voort op de nalatenschap van Wang Yangming. Als gevolg van deze nalatenschap werd een versmelting van civiele en militaire identiteiten en levensstijlen mogelijk in de zestiende eeuw en dit droeg bij aan de cohesie van een gemengde elite die de dynastie in de late zestiende eeuw een nieuw militair elan gaf. Qi Jiguang's opmerkelijk succesvolle carrière als erfelijk militair officier werd voor een belangrijk deel mogelijk gemaakt door deze ontwikkelingen.

Curriculum Vitae

Barend Noordam was born on 25 September 1981 in Zeist, the Netherlands. He commenced studying history at the Utrecht University in 1999, before transferring to Leiden University in 2002 where he eventually obtained his MA degree in 2007. His thesis analysed the military efficacy of the Chinese "Self-Strengthening Movement" of the late nineteenth century during the Sino-French War in Tonkin (1884-1885), which was supervised by Prof. Peer Vries and Prof. Petra Groen. Starting in 2005, he studied Languages and Cultures of China at Leiden University, which resulted in him obtaining a BA degree in 2009. The BA included a year spent at the Beijing Language and Culture University with a scholarship jointly provided by the Dutch and Chinese governments.

He was a recipient of a Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft scholarship to commence his PhD research at the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" under supervision of Prof. Antje Flüchter at Heidelberg University in Germany. In 2011 he transferred back to Leiden University to become part of the NWO (Dutch national research organization)-funded "Eurasian Empires Program", which was a cooperation with the University of Amsterdam and Nijmegen University. While part of this program he was supervised by Prof. Jos Gommans and Prof. Anne Gerritsen, resulting in the present dissertation. During 2014/2015 he spent a year at Academia Sinica at the Research Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences, after receiving the Academia Sinica Scholarship for Doctoral Candidates in Humanity and Social Science. While in Taiwan, he was supervised by Dr. Cheng Wei-chung.

Publications include articles on the Sino-French War in Tonkin, military intelligence gathering by the Dutch East India Company on the Chinese coast in the seventeenth century and the role of the Jesuits as cultural mediators of European military technology at the Chinese court in Beijing. Presently he is a recipient of the Freie Universität Berlin-Hebrew University of Jerusalem Joint Post-Doctoral Fellowship and conducting research on the role of ancient military knowledge and the cooperation between scholars and military men in the production of new military manuals in sixteenth and seventeenth-century (northwest-central) Europe and China.

Stellingen (Prepositions)

I

Qi Jiguang was far from a "lonely general"; the very success of his career can to a great extent be explained with reference to the personal connections he cultivated with civil officials and literati belonging to the Wang Yangming movement. His eventual fall from grace was because of very similar reasons to those of civil bureaucrats: the loss of patronage opportunities, factional strive and enmity of the emperor.

Cf. Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981), 156-157.

II

Qi Jiguang's manuals should not be understood as a "singleton technique" produced either by a culture that seeks truth in revelation rather than in experiment, or one where the state micromanages all research. In fact, Qi Jiguang's manuals are the product of a relatively open network of circulating knowledge, produced and commented upon by military professionals, private scholars, interested amateurs, and civil bureaucrats.

Cf. Geoffrey Parker, "The Limits to Revolutions in Military Affairs: Maurice of Nassau, the Battle of Nieuwpoort (1600), and the Legacy," *The Journal of Military History* 72.2 (2007), 369.

III

The notion that Qi Jiguang's manuals are a proof of continuity in military drill practices because China never lost its classical culture begs the question why these manuals were written. A continuity of classical culture could only be turned into an advantage on the battle ground when it was accessible, via personal connections with the scholastic community, to a practical military man with the authority to effect concrete changes on the training field, and who could therefore appropriate and reapply its lessons.

Cf. Tonio Andrade, "The Arquebus Volley Technique in China, c. 1560: Evidence from the Writings of Qi Jiguang," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 4 (2015): 134-136.

IV

As with the invention of musketry volley fire in early modern Europe by Dutch military thinkers, who were inspired by military ideas of Greek and Roman authors, Wang Yangming and Qi Jiguang derived practical lessons from ancient Chinese authors and applied them to their own circumstances. Classical learning therefore functioned as more than a mere source of authority and legitimation for innovation.

V

The sixteenth-century Chinese vogue for leadership with combined civil and military talents is mirrored in the statecraft writings of the period, which concern both civil and military affairs. Intellectual history which only considers civilian mentalities and civilian governance is akin to contemplating the function of a horse cart without realizing the importance of the horse.

VI

The military revolution debate can only be resolved when the field of Area Studies continues to pick up the gauntlet. Scholars affiliated to Area Studies should continue to approach the debate with the help of their specialist language skills.

VII

The added value of researchers who study a culture alien to their own is their ability to identify and critically question phenomena which researchers studying their own culture take for granted.

VIII

Far from facilitating research, digital humanities and its attendant mass digitization of primary sources increase a researcher's workload, because they progressively remove the excuses for the researcher to not use all the possible resources he or she should use to answer his or her research questions accurately.

IX

Institutionalized area studies by their very corporate nature and interests tend to reify the notion of the alterity of their objects of study and make the dialogue with global history more difficult than it needs to be.

X

Being a historian of premodern times is akin to being a detective investigating a crime scene in which victims, witnesses and perpetrators are all long dead. It is only possible to interrogate remains of lives lived long ago without an interpersonal dialogue being possible to verify the findings.

XI

The phenomenon of binge watching television series comes from the innate need of humans to give meaning to their existence by reflecting on the possibilities of lives unlived and choices not chosen. Narrated lives are a substitute for life experiences not experienced.

XII

Conformity is the result of an individual's undeveloped ability to reflect on self and society and the resultant inability to perceive alternative ways of being. The duty and value of the humanities lie in developing this reflexive ability.

Introduction

> *Wen* and *wu* are a unified Way, [but] nowadays it has been lost for a long time. The ancient archery rites still preserve this implication. Compare two men going up and down the steps, going forward in the sequence of geese according to military ranks. They do not step more than five or six paces on the way. When all the arrows miss the bull's-eye, one seeks the cause within oneself and on account of the loss one contemplates. The victorious one, who does not brag about his achievements and does not condemn [the other], has achieved virtue. Archery is indeed the skill of military men, but when it is practiced by the scholar it will for this reason combine the Way of *wen* and *wu*. As for the archery of later generations, the error of the impractical Confucians has only then divided *wen* and *wu*.
>
> 文武一道，今亡久矣. 其古射禮中尚存此意。比耦登降，鴈行之次，部曲之制，不愆於五步、六步之道也。失諸正鵠，反求諸己，因敗而思也。勝者不矜其功而不伐，至德也。射則武人之技耳，而爲士者習之，所以合文武之道也。若夫後世之射，乃迂儒之謬，文武分矣。[1]

This reflection on the relation of *wen*, which can mean "civil", "culture", or "literature", to *wu*, "martial" or "military", was written by Qi Jiguang 戚繼光 (1528-1588), a military officer who had a successful career serving the Chinese Ming dynasty. He appears to lament the loss of the unified practice of both *wen* and *wu* in his time, a situation he seems to blame on the "error of the impractical Confucians". The text is part of a larger commentary he wrote on the *Daxue* 大學, or *Great Learning*,[2] one of the most important texts that had to be mastered by civil service examination candidates in order to enter civil officialdom. It was also one of the *Four Books* (*Sishu* 四書) together with the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), purporting to document the sayings of Confucius, the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子), containing the ideas of the most important later follower of Confucius, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸), which like the *Great Learning* was a chapter culled from the Confucian classic the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記). Together they constituted the core canon of Neo-Confucianism as consolidated by the Song dynasty thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). During the Ming, this Neo-Confucianism had become the orthodoxy upheld by the empire, and it held on to this exalted position during the succeeding Qing dynasty. For a military officer during the Ming, this canon was not required reading. Officers succeeded their fathers as part of a

[1] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 265.
[2] Idem, 239-271.

hereditary system of succession, and although a military examination system existed, the majority of officers did not owe their positions to a successful navigation of this route.[3] Why did Qi Jiguang in the sixteenth century choose to argue for a unification *wen* and *wu* by way of a commentary on a quintessential Neo-Confucian text? Why does he criticize the "unpractical Confucians" by using Neo-Confucian canon and implicitly argue for a merging of the civil and the martial by the *shi* 士, a group often termed "scholars" or "literati", who by this time denoted a social elite of literate men with knowledge of Confucian writings who constituted the main source of civil service examination recruits?[4]

Qi Jiguang, son of a military officer serving the Ming dynasty, was born in the first half of the sixteenth century and would spend most of his youth in Shandong province. His father was assigned to the coastal garrison of Dengzhou, a coastal town in the north of the province and before long Qi Jiguang was to step in his father's footsteps. Qi and his father stood in a long family tradition of military service to the empire. A remote ancestor had voluntarily joined the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang as he conquered his realm in the fourteenth century, and he had been rewarded with a hereditary officer's rank. Like most of the army, Qi's ancestor was then absorbed in a self-perpetuating military recruitment pool conceptualized by Zhu Yuanzhang; henceforth every designated army man would have his household registered under the "military" rubric and it would be expected to furnish the military labour demands of the empire in perpetuity. Although this system probably never fully worked as intended, it seems that far into the fifteenth century the main body of manpower for military campaigns was still drawn from this labour pool.[5] However, in 1449 an offensive against Mongols ended in disaster near a place called Tumu. There, a large imperial army - said to have numbered 500,000 men – was defeated by a Mongol force and failed to protect the emperor against being captured.[6] The empire survived, the dynasty continued, but the hereditary army had been dealt a heavy blow and it would never again recover to be the main fighting force of the polity. Instead, the empire would rely more and more on mercenaries,

[3] Yuan-kang Wang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 27.
[4] Anne Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 48.
[5] James Ferguson Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang, Chinese Military Official: A Study of Civil-Military Roles and Relations in the Career of a Sixteenth Century Warrior, Reformer, and Hero" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1968), 16, 19-22.
[6] Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90.

aboriginal armies and local militia to keep the peace, and often these forces would be led by civilian bureaucrats, not military officers.[7] It was these conditions of institutional marginalization and profound socio-cultural gap between Qi Jiguang and his civil peers that made his successful military career and acculturation to the civilian elite an unlikely success story.

Geopolitically, the century after 1449 saw the retreat of the empire into a defensive posture, aptly symbolized by the construction of the present-day Great Wall. Qi Jiguang grew up at the end of this relatively tranquil century, which would end with a new double military crisis: a renewed Mongol threat in the north and the depredations of a coalition of pirate raiders at the south-eastern coastal littoral. Although the hereditary military had been marginalized, Qi Jiguang's successful military exploits proved that it could still produce capable leaders. Qi's career was forged in the fires of active military service in different theatres, and the lessons he learned were written down in various training manuals penned by him in the course of the sixteenth century. Without a doubt, these manuals belong to the most influential military writings produced in Chinese military history and they retained practical value for several centuries afterward.[8]

Qi Jiguang success was unlikely for several reasons. He was a product of a military system that had partially broken down and which had been partially replaced as a source for manpower and effective military leadership by other parts of society. The Ming was also an unlikely dynasty to foster such a military talent. By the Ming dynasty, the status of the military seemed to have reached its nadir, a situation that seemed to have been continuation of a trend started during the Song dynasty. What both Song and Ming had in common was a native Han Chinese origin of the ruling elite and a spotty record of military excellence. Traditionally, the Chinese Ming dynasty has been seen as militarily weak empire, sandwiched in time between the much larger Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing dynasties. For much of late imperial Chinese history, which I define as the period starting with the Song and ending with the Qing (i.e. 960-1912), it therefore seems successful military expansion was only possible when its ruling elite and dynasty had imported itself from outside the realm. Much of the blame for this state of affairs has been placed on the aforementioned weak state of the hereditary Ming army (and that of the Song before it), whose

[7] David M. Robinson, "Military Labor in China, circa 1500," in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour in Europe and Asia, 1500-2000*, edited by Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 47-48.

[8] For example, in the late nineteenth century against internal uprisings, see Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), 122-124.

quality has been thought to precipitously decline after the beginning of the fifteenth century. Another factor connected to this decline was the socio-cultural distancing between civil and military elites, and concomitant lack of positive appreciation for the martial in civil literati discourse.[9] This reached an extent quite comparable to the situation as it existed during the Song dynasty, where military commanders where often recruited from non-literati families with a tradition of martial service to the empire and whose social-cultural difference from the civil official elite was notable.[10] It was exactly within this unlikely setting that Qi Jiguang rose to the top of the military hierarchy.

Another factor which made Qi Jiguang unusual was his engagement with Confucianism. Ever since Europeans first came into sustained contact with China from the sixteenth century onwards, the country and its inhabitants have been portrayed as militarily weak and unwarlike. This started with the Portuguese, and it was perpetuated by the Jesuits who both inherited the civilian anti-military bias of the Chinese literati they interacted with, and who also wished to positively portray China as a peaceful civilized country to their audience back home. The Chinese themselves also "bought" this stereotyping later on, when in the late nineteenth century intellectuals like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were looking for the reasons of their country's disadvantaged position vis-à-vis the West. The diagnosis - by late imperial Chinese and Westerners alike - of this "problem" often boiled down to the perceived lack of a warrior spirit, which was then often linked to the dominance of the civil bureaucracy over the military and the simultaneous ideological hegemony of the civilian ethic. No doubt, the comparatively unimpressive military record of the Song and Ming dynasties, eras in which a civil bureaucratic dominance indeed took shape and which saw an absence of "alien" conquest elites to balance the *wen-wu* divide, contributed to this impression. Two studies of Chinese grand strategic thought and praxis during the Song and Ming, written by Alistair Johnston and Yuan-kang Wang respectively, have nuanced this image by arguing that both dynasties were mostly driven by either cultural or structural realist assumptions. In short, when the ruling elite perceived themselves to be strong militarily vis-à-vis external enemies, military solutions were more often than not preferred. Yet, what both studies reify is the nominal anti-war ethos of the civilian elite. Johnston, for example, distinguishes a

[9] For example, as part of court activities, see David M. Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 220.
[10] Yang Li, "The Emperor's Generals, a Study of the Sanya Commanders in the Northern Song (960-1126)" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2004), 216-219, 230.

cultural realist *para bellum* attitude to grand strategy from a Confucian-Mencian paradigm, which "[…] sees warfare as aberrant and usually avoidable through good government, and prefers, when conflict is unavoidable, accommodationist and defensive strategies."[11] Nevertheless, it is exactly this civilian anti-war ethos which Qi Jiguang probably initially embraced via his father, who emphasized values like filial piety, frugality, and faithfulness in his initial education towards literacy.[12] Thus, perhaps the most famous professional military man of late imperial China was an unlikely adherent of an ideology highly critical of the pursuit of war.

Finally, Qi Jiguang was an unlikely hereditary military officer, because he was literate. In fact, Qi Jiguang seems to have been a very different kind of military man than many of his other well-known colleagues from both the Song and Ming dynasties. In contrast to the Song dynasty's Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142) and Lü Wende 呂文德 (d. 1269), and his contemporary Li Rusong 李如松 (1549-1598), he left a significant written legacy including a collection of belles-lettres. In it, we can see his commentaries on quintessential Confucian classics and his poetry. Qi Jiguang at an early age already had an ambition to learn reading and writing. His teacher, a local scholar and philanthropist, probably found this unlikely. He exclaimed: "You are a hereditary official and now you will have the good fortune to serve as an official. You wish to become a military man, but you do not discontinue your schooling; this child I can teach. Why should I not accomplish your ambition?/汝世官，今幸仕矣，不廢學而願师人，孺子可教也．吾盍成汝志?"[13] Unlike Yue Fei, Lü Wende, and Li Rusong, Qi Jiguang did seem to have completely acculturated to the civil bureaucrat class and their ethos. Yue Fei only appeared so in order to cultivate a good image for posterity, but never gained a high standing among the civil elite. Lü Wende feigned civil sensibilities in order to hide his contempt, and Li Rusong openly flaunted disrespect for his civil bureaucrat colleagues.[14] There is no evidence that Qi Jiguang merely applied a shallow veneer of self-fashioning and he was never disloyal to the dynasty. The only full-length scholarly work in a

[11] Hans van de Ven, "Introduction," in *Warfare in Chinese History*, edited by Hans van de Ven. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 4-5.
[12] Fan Zhongyi 范中义, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan* 戚继光评传 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2003), 45-46.
[13] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 127.
[14] Fang Cheng-hua, "Military Families and the Southern Song Court – The Lü Case," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 33 (2003): 57; James T.C. Liu, "Yueh Fei (1103-41) and China's Heritage of Loyalty," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31.2 (1972): 292-293; Kenneth M. Swope, "A Few Good Men: The Li Family and China's Northern Frontier in the Late Ming," *Ming Studies* 49 (2004): 47-48; Hellmut Wilhelm, "From Myth to Myth: The Case of Yüeh Fei's Biography," in *Confucian Personalities*, edited by Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), 154.

western language solely devoted to Qi, a dissertation dating to the late sixties of last century, highlights his generally cordial relations with his civil superiors and offers evidence that the respect was mutual.[15] In addition, Chinese historian Fan Zhongyi claims that Qi Jiguang was a genuine Confucian general, because he made the unprecedented move of including Confucian ethics in his military training methods.[16] An unlikely move perhaps?

Recent scholarly treatments of the military history of the Ming dynasty have argued for a rehabilitation of the dynasty's strength during the late sixteenth century. Foremost among the scholars advocating this is Kenneth Swope, who in a spate of articles and books has argued that Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng deliberately extended his patronage to both talented hereditary military officers and military-minded civil officials in order to bolster the empire's armies, a policy which was continued during the reign of his student, the Wanli emperor. Swope, in my view, convincingly showed how this policy gave the dynasty a new lease of military life, allowing it to weather many successful crises around the turn of the century.[17] However, Swope's argument begs the question of how this talented group of military and civil officials – Qi Jiguang, his civil colleagues, and his subordinates foremost among them – found its genesis in the first place?

To answer this question, we have to go back to the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Ming empire was plagued by a simultaneous wave of piracy attacks in the southeast, and steppe nomad incursions from the north. Qi Jiguang built his initial career successes on fighting the pirates, before being transferred to the north to bolster the Great Wall there against the Mongols. An important part of the group of civil and military officials later coming under patronage of Zhang Juzheng was forged in the fire of these campaigns. In my view, a crucial characteristic of this group was its mixed civil and military pedigree. What sets it apart from civil-military cooperation during the Song dynasty was the mutual acculturation of its members. Officers like Qi Jiguang not only engaged in practices normally associated with the literati, but civil bureaucrats and scholars serving *ex officio* also showed a keen appreciation of martial skills and values, as shown by recent research done by Kai Filipiak, Kathleen Ryor, and Wang Hung-tai.[18] In addition, this group

[15] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang."
[16] Fan, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan*, 368.
[17] Kenneth M. Swope, "The Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Emperor, 1592-1600: Court, Military, and Society in Late Sixteenth-Century China" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001).
[18] Kai Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials Handling Military Affairs in Ming Times," *Ming Studies* 66 (2012): 1-15; Kathleen Ryor, "*Wen* and *Wu* in Elite Cultural Practices during the Late Ming," in *Military Culture in Imperial China*, edited by Nicola Di Cosmo (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 219-242; Wang Hung-tai 王鴻泰, "Wugong, wuxue, wuyi, wuxia: Mingdai de shiren de xiwu fengshang yu yilei jiaoyou" 武

produced an impressive amount of statecraft writing pertaining to military organization and tactics, geography, and governance practices. The civil-military rapprochement thus had a significant cultural component, indicating a change of attitude of civil bureaucrats towards military pursuits and lifestyles in general. As Wang Hung-tai has shown, this became a relatively widespread elite phenomenon especially in the populous south, where sword fighting among other martial practices reached new heights of popularity.[19] In addition, the literary genre dealing with the Robin Hood-esque knights-errant attained a prominent place in the elite imaginaries of the Ming, judging by the publication boom of the sixteenth century.[20] This state of affairs was no doubt stimulated by the existence of a security crisis in the mid-sixteenth century as the empire was beset by the synchronous trepidations of piracy and nomad incursions in both north and south. A sense of crisis permeated the writings of the civil elites, who started advocating a new kind of leadership which was well-endowed both civil and military talents and abilities.[21] Clearly, the civil ethos had opened up to more martial leanings during the sixteenth century.

In this reappraisal of the importance of the martial ethos, the question how it was able to coexist with civil ethoi, or more specifically, (Neo-)Confucianism, has been sidestepped in modern scholarship. Reviewing the military strategic preferences of the Ming dynasty, both Alastair Iain Johnston and Yuan-kang Wang arrive at the conclusion that it was shaped by more pragmatic realist considerations with the Confucian civil ethos serving as a rhetorical flourish to legitimate more peaceful accommodationist policies when the dynasty was in a militarily weak position. Similarly, Kenneth Swope considers Qi Jiguang's Confucian leanings as an exception rather than indicative of a general trend during the later Ming dynasty. On the other hand, Chinese historians like Fan Zhongyi take seriously the Confucian content of Qi Jiguang's military thought, but do not consider why it manifested itself during the sixteenth century.[22] To be sure, there were famous Confucian scholars who did manifest martial leanings in the course of their lives. In the late

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功、武學、武藝、武俠: 明代士人的習武風尚與異類交游, *Zhongyang lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 85.2 (2014): 209-267.

[19] Wang Hung-tai 王鴻泰. "Wodao yu xiashi – Mingdai Woluan chongji xia Jiangnan shiren de wuxia fengshang" 委刀與俠士一明代矮亂衝擊下江南士人的武俠風尚. *Hanxue yanjiu* 漢學研究 30.3 (2012): 63-98.

[20]Roland Altenburger, "*Jianxia zhuan* (Tales of Knights at Arms): On the Formation and Tradition of the Classical Anthology of Knight-Errantry Stories," *Asiatische Studien* 54 (2000): 314.

[21] Ryor, "*Wen* and *Wu* in Elite Cultural Practices," 221-225.

[22] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995); Wang, *Harmony and War*; Swope, "The Three Great Campaigns," 66.

sixteenth century, the Korean king who found his state invaded by the Japanese under Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣 秀吉 (1536-1598), expressed a desire that his own countrymen would follow their example:

> I think if sons of second wives are allowed to proceed [to government posts], and state and private-owned slaves and the base become commoners, then the common people will all practice martial affairs. If you test it during the examinations, then the *yangban* will all practice martial affairs. Even if Hideyoshi dies, between Japan and our country is an enmity as inexhaustible as heaven and earth. How can I be restricted by the previous regulations even more at this time? I have heard of the local customs of Kyŏngsang province. People who have two sons, if one son can read and write, then he will attend the local Confucian academy; if the other son engages in martial affairs, then he will be at the training courtyard and be regarded as a slave. In the present the country is mistaken like Kyŏngsang province. In the past Lu Xiangshan taught his children to practice martial affairs, Wang Yangming was good at horsemanship and archery, our country only grasps books in order to teach the children and we divide civil and martial into two Ways, this really serves no purpose.
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> 予意庶孼許通公私賤爲良 ，則常人皆習武矣；試於生進，則兩班皆習武矣。假使秀吉死， 日本乃我國，與天地無窮之讎，此時豈可更拘前規乎？聞慶尚道風俗，人有子兄弟，一子能文，則坐於堂上；一子業武，則坐於庭中， 如視奴隸。國家之有今日，慶尚道誤之也。昔陸象山教子弟習武，王陽明善騎射，我國只持冊子，以教子弟，岐文武為二道，甚無謂也.[23]

The king decries the practice of Kyŏngsang, the province most affected by the Japanese invasions, which encouraged a division between civil and military roles. Instead, he wanted to liberate the social mores (which did not allow the children other than those of the first wife of the aristocrat *yangban* class to hold official posts) and institutional restrictions to stimulate the spread of military expertise. As foils, he points to two famous Confucian scholars, Song-era Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139-1192) and Ming-era Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), who combined both Confucian learning and military expertise in one person. Like Qi Jiguang in the opening quote above, he felt the need to engage within the Confucian field in order to have examples to legitimate this combination. To both Qi Jiguang and the Korean king, (Neo-)Confucianism had to be engaged in

[23] Various, *Chosŏn wangjo shillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄, *Volume 25*, 43:15. Quote via: Chang K'un-chiang 張崑將, *Yangmingxue zai Dongya: Quanshi, jiaoliu yu xingdong* 陽明學在東亞：詮 釋、交流與行動 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2011), 123.

the sixteenth century in order to build a bridge between *wen* and *wu*. This further begs the question to what extent Confucianism had an impact on civil-military relations and identities, and whether something had changed within this ethos that permitted the building of this bridge.

In order to answer these questions, exemplified by the, perhaps unlikely, career of Qi Jiguang, I will look at the development of civil-military relations and identities in Chinese history up to and including the advent of the Ming dynasty in the first and second chapters. The first chapter will look at the different layers of meaning and the values associated with the Chinese terms *wen* 文 (civil) and *wu* 武 (military, martial). The chapter will further trace the development of socio-cultural identities that embodied these terms and their values. In the second chapter, special focus will be on the transition from the Tang to the Song dynasties, when a martial-dominated empire gave way to one considered to be dominated by a civil elite. The question what role Confucianism played in this development of civil-military relations will be central to this chapter. This role will be further highlighted by weighing the influence of the civil and military socio-cultural identities on the civil elites of the Song empire. In the third chapter I will consider the "crisis" of the mid-Ming dynasty (ca. 1450-1550), which manifested itself in a progressive deterioration of military institutions. During this time the military branch of the government failed to ensure peace and stability in the southern regions of the empire, and it was left to civil bureaucrats to conceptualize a new system to deal with this shortfall.

In chapters four and five I will turn to question of how the civil bureaucrats, presumably inculcated with Neo-Confucianism, applied their civilian orientation to military problems and how this affected Neo-Confucian thought itself. I will focus on the attempts of certain members of the civil elite, primarily Wang Yangming, to find a solution to this predicament. In chapter six I will follow the spread of these solutions and their accompanying Neo-Confucian reorientation among important members of mid-sixteenth century civil bureaucrat elite, especially those tasked with military duties. This included Hu Zongxian 胡宗憲 (1511-1565), who would lead the effort to suppress the piratical disturbances during the mid-sixteenth century, an effort Qi Jiguang was part of.

In the seventh chapter I will turn to Qi Jiguang as he found himself in the midst of this renewed military effort to pacify southern parts of imperial realm against disruptive incursions by pirates. In this chapter I will show how Qi engaged himself with Wang Yangming's ideas and followers among the civil elite engaged in the suppression of the disturbances along China's

southeastern coast. In chapter eight I will consider the development of personal ties between Qi Jiguang and members of the civil and military elites in the south. In the course of his tour of duty, he cultivated personal relationships with civil bureaucrats and members of the literati elite. What role did Neo-Confucian thought play in his formation of these relationships, and, related to this, how did Qi Jiguang reconcile civil and military identities in the course of this formative stage of his career? I will address this question by drawing a connection between the solutions conceived by some of the civil bureaucrats within the context of Neo-Confucian thought as highlighted in chapter three and the campaigns Qi Jiguang himself was a part of.

In the ninth and tenth chapters I will look at the military thought of Qi Jiguang and analyze to what extent it built upon the Neo-Confucian solutions proposed earlier in the sixteenth century. I will first consider to what extent Qi's military ideas can be considered part of broader Neo-Confucian discourse on statecraft, and second, in what way this ideology came into play in the military manuals he wrote to improve the military of the empire at both the southeastern maritime and northern steppe frontiers. This is an important connection to be made, I will argue, because the creation of the lasting artificial and a-historical *bingjia* 兵家 category of military writings during the Han dynasty's drive to classify all knowledge has tended to obscure the connections between military thought and other intellectual currents on the one hand, and the social connections between the authors of military works, civilian statecraft and political-moral writings on the other. Furthermore, I will address the question of how this knowledge circulated amongst the civil and military elites of the empire. Was there a dialogue between the Neo-Confucian civilian ethos and his own military ideas, or did these two realms of though remain unbridged in his thought, if not in his life?

Together these chapters show that, primarily under influence of Wang Yangming's ideas, the military and the civil elite were able to bridge the socio-cultural divide between the two. It will also show how Qi Jiguang's military ideas and praxis entailed the Neo-Confucianization of the military profession.

A Note on the Sources

Besides the official dynastic histories and legal codes, this study mainly relies on two types of sources: military writings in the shape of manuals and encyclopedias, and the collected works of literary writings of literati, military men, and civil officials. The latter collected works, referred to

as *bieji* 別集, *wenji* 文集, or *quanji* 全集, compiled the prose and poetry of individual authors and these could span the genres of "[…] (1) prefaces to the collection; (2) memorials and other official writings; (3) congratulatory poetry for public occasions; (4) prefaces; (5) commentary on events and diaries; (6) letters; (7) commemorative biographies for tombstones, tomb tablets, encomia, and accounts of conduct; (8) poems; (9) family instructions; and (10) miscellaneous."[24] Almost all of these genres have the potential shed light on the personal connections between officials and literati, and on the nature of their relationship. Correspondence with letters, for example, was one of the key methods with which friendships were maintained and scholarship was conducted.[25] These collected works could either be collected by the author himself and published during his life, or could be collected and published posthumously by family or friends. The main drawback of these sources is the fact that they were the result of an opaque selection process by the compiler, and thus we cannot see which interpersonal relations were highlighted or repressed by the very act of selecting the material for the collection. Another drawback is the fact that we do not know the exact circulation of these collected writings, which makes it hard to estimate their contemporary impact. It can be assumed with some caution, however, that the collected writings of some of the famous Neo-Confucian thinkers and their prominent disciples circulated relatively widely. Despite these drawbacks, collected writings still remain the richest sources for tracing interpersonal networks in premodern Chinese history.

Military writings comprise the other main category of sources used in this study. The drawback of these writings is their prescriptive nature. The actual practice of Chinese warfare in the premodern period is hard to ascertain, because we lack descriptive sources and eyewitness accounts, like diaries of soldiers. As Herbert Franke has posited, much of this has to do with the nature of literacy and the use of classical Chinese. Military officers and their soldiers by and large tended to be illiterate and did not leave a large literary record behind. Most writing on war was thus done by literati and civil officials, who tended to use "[…] detached and stylized accounts in the official sources." Furthermore, classical Chinese, according to Franke, lacked the vividness of a colloquial language and the writers tended to rely on literary clichés to the detriment of realistic

[24] Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual. Revised and Enlarged* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 597-598.
[25] Yan Ke, "Scholars and Communications Networks: Social and Intellectual Change in 17th-Century North China" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1998), 291-292.

detail.[26] Unfortunately, even a military man like Qi Jiguang did not leave vivid accounts of military praxis in his collected writings. In his memorials to the emperor and reports to colleague officials he does include lists of logistical requirements, marching orders, and numbers of enemies slain. These give us some insight in daily military practice, but for the most part I had to rely on prescriptive manuals. In defense of using these as representative sources for studying the practical side of the military it must be said that the manuals used in this study belonged to the most widely circulating military manuals of the sixteenth century, if we look at the numbers of surviving examples today. Furthermore, they were written by authors who had practical experience with military matters and often led military forces in combat personally. With some caution, therefore, it can be assumed that the prescriptions written down in these manuals were to a large extent shaped by the practical experiences of the authors concerning what was realistically feasible.

[26] Herbert Franke, "Warfare in Medieval China: Some Research Problems," in *Proceedings on the Second International Conference on Sinology, Vol. 5* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1989), 807.

Chapter 1 – The Making of *Wen* and *Wu*

Earliest Beginnings

The Chinese twin concepts of *wen* (usually associated with the civil and culture) and *wu* (usually associated with the military and the martial) and their changing significance and meanings across Chinese history constituted the main discourse of Chinese civil-military relations for millennia. The semantics associated with them reveal much about Chinese thinking about war, the place of the military within successive Chinese polities and the cultural constructs – ideal types – against which the representatives of *wen* and *wu* were measured. The Chinese had by Ming times a long literary tradition reaching back for two millennia, and the oldest texts often had the greatest authority. In practice this meant that thought pertaining to civil and military relations ascribed to, for example, Confucius (551-479 BCE) continued to frame discussions up until the end of the imperial age in 1912. The meanings of *wen* and *wu* that will be applied throughout this dissertation are, first of all, in an *institutional* sense their designations of two different branches of government and their accompanying spheres of action and hierarchically structured institutions with associated personnel. By extension, it could thus probably also refer to "methods, institutions and policy choices" that were used to enact either *wen* or *wu*. Peter Bol ascertained at least the usage of the term w*en* in this way by the time of the Jürchen Jin (1115-1234) empire.[27] Second, they will also be used in a *socio-cultural* sense as identity markers, as people could be characterized by "having *wen*" or "possessing *wu*".[28] These two sets of meanings, institutional and socio-cultural, are the ways Chinese themselves have used *wen* and *wu* throughout history, as I will demonstrate below in more detail. So, in order to understand the variety of meanings, interpretations and normative assessments of both terms better, it is instructive to explore the still little-researched history of the emergence and evolutions of both. There is, I argue, also a third *de-facto* layer to *wen* and *wu*, namely their associated *activities* outside of the sphere of state activity. These could be, for example, the writing of *belles-lettres* and calligraphy in the case of *wen*, and the practice of martial

[27] Peter K. Bol, "Seeking Common Ground: Han Literati under Jurchen Rule," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987): 488-489.
[28] Kam Louie and Louise Edwards., "Chinese Masculinity: Theorizing *Wen* and *Wu*," *East Asian History* 8 (1994): 139-140.

arts in the case of *wu*. Both could sometimes come into conflict with the state. In the case of *wen*, certain writings could be labelled as heterodox and persecuted by the state.[29] Chinese states were also at times understandably wary of the undue militarization of society outside of the state's jurisdiction. This could take the shape of the performance of martial arts in the context of illicit armed groups engaging in banditry or as part of heterodox religious movements. Proceeding from these three layers, I will weigh the importance of Confucianism in shaping this variety of meanings, interpretations and normative assessments of *wen* and *wu*, and weigh its contribution to the divergence of *wen* and *wu* during the Song. Extending the analysis of this divergence to the Ming dynasty, I will elucidate the historical context of Qi Jiguang's engagement with Neo-Confucianism in terms of institutional and socio-cultural history.

The Genesis of *Wen* and *Wu* as Spheres of State Activity

Strangely, considering the importance of both concepts in Chinese thinking and discourse, research about the genesis and historical evolution of both is rare. This applies even more to *wu*, which is no doubt owing to the overwhelming interest of scholars in favour of Chinese civil culture and accomplishments as opposed to its military and martial counterpart. The most systematic treatment of both is by the Polish scholar Krzysztof Gawlikowski.[30] In addition to him, scholars such as John Fairbank and Peter Bol have tried to address the changing significances of *wen* and *wu* in Chinese history.[31]

To understand *wen* and *wu* as concepts we have to consider the context of their origin during the long Zhou (c. 1046-256 BCE) dynasty. Most of the earliest thought dates from the Zhou dynasty and is contained within literary works. Originally the Zhou was organized along feudal

[29] This happened, for example, to the sixteenth-century thinker and writer Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602) who criticized the state ideology of the Ming empire. See Li Zhi, *A Book to Burn & a Book to Keep (Hidden). Selected Writings*, edited and translated by Rivi Handler-Spitz, Pauline C. Lee, and Haun Saussy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), xv-xx.

[30] Krzystof Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: Wen 文 and Wu 武 in Chinese Classical Thought (Part One)," *Annali* 47.4 (1987): 397-433; Krzystof Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: Wen 文 and Wu 武 in Chinese Classical Thought (Part Two)," *Annali* 48.1 (1988): 35-62; Krzystof Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle (*Wu*) Concept." *Cina* 21 (1988): 105-122.

[31] Peter K. Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992); John K. Fairbank, "Introduction: Varieties of Chinese Military Experience," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, edited by Frank Kiernan Jr., John K. Fairbank, and Edward L. Dreyer. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 2-9.

lines. By the Spring- and Autumn Period (771-476 BCE) and, especially, the succeeding Warring States Period (476-221 BCE) the passing of time had diluted the significance of the ties of kinship between the suzerain and his high nobility, and the former had become a largely powerless figurehead presiding over a number of polities increasingly at-odds with each other. It is exactly in these circumstances of military and social upheaval that the first inklings of what would later be known as Chinese philosophy, appeared. The distinctive character of this philosophy is that it was almost exclusively concerned with solving the problems of political and social chaos that the Warring States had unleashed. Chinese philosophy was therefore less concerned with metaphysical and epistemological concerns, but more so with the way society and state should be organized and the role the individual should play within it. In this period that we find the genesis of such "schools" of thought as Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, Legalism and the Strategists. According to Mark Edward Lewis, only Confucianism and Mohism constituted traditions transmitted through sustained interaction between masters and their disciples, the others were created *post-facto* by grouping transmitted textual traditions together.[32] These philosophical traditions would play an important role in defining, interpreting and assessing *wen* and *wu*, a topic to which I will turn shortly.

Mostly predating these philosophical writings, however, was a corpus of texts collectively referred to as the "classics" (*jing* 經), which were valued by large parts of the (intellectual) elite because they purportedly recorded different aspects of the "golden age" of early Zhou (and the preceding Xia and Shang dynasties') politics, society, and culture. In addition, Confucius himself was said to have edited the transmitted versions. They perhaps contain some of the oldest transmitted written materials in Chinese literary history. However, they are only mentioned by name in the late third century BCE and are associated with Confucius as editor only in the second century BCE during the Han dynasty. Because Confucius wanted to restore the moral order of this golden age, these classics came to hold a special significance in his tradition, and the history of their transmission and editing is likely to have coloured the contents.[33] The five most important classics were known as the *Wujing* 五經 or *Five Classics*, which contained bits and pieces of

[32] Mark Edward Lewis, "Warring States: Political History," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, edited by Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 591.
[33] Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2001), 16-19.

information relating to the earlier period of Zhou history, especially relevant concerning the dynasty's social and political organization. These were the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), the *Classic of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經) and the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書 or *Shujing* 書經). However, as we shall see later, this canon was mutable and at times more texts were considered classics and added to these five. These classics were important especially for the Confucian-inclined scholars, as they purported to depict the early Zhou society and mode of governance, which for Confucius was an ideal state present-day China should aspire to return to. A Confucian had to safeguard the values observed within the classics and implement them in society. The early Zhou state was characterised by a strict social hierarchy between the ruler and subject, man and woman, senior and junior friends, and so on. Rites and rituals were important prescribing the performative aspect of this social reality, and were intended to shape and govern behaviour. These documents also probably took their first coherent shape during the mid-Han dynasty, and as such it is hard to tell how accurately they depict conditions existing a full millennium earlier in Chinese history. Important is that the Confucian-inclined scholars themselves believed they did and the texts became a co-opted depository of ideas and ideals pertaining to state, society and the individual.[34] Nevertheless, despite the appropriation of the classics by the later Confucians of the Han by positing Confucius as their editor, they probably contain ideas predating the Confucian philosophical tradition. What light do they shed on *wen* and *wu*?

It was in the classics that the first conceptualizations of *wen* and *wu* as two distinct spheres of state appeared. The characters for *wen* (文) and *wu* (武) already appeared on oracle bones belonging to the Shang dynasty (c. 1600 – 1046 BCE), which preceded the Zhou. There they appeared to carry the meanings of "favouring peace" and "brave in waging war" respectively, amongst others. In the literary tradition of the classics, the concepts came to life with the stories of King Wen 文王 (r. 1099-1050 BCE) and his son King Wu 武王 (r. 1046-1043 BCE), the two founding monarchs of the Zhou dynasty. King Wen was said to have ruled his domain by *wen* (the way of culture), whilst his son succeeded in conquering the Shang dynasty and founding the Zhou

[34] Michael Nylan, "A Problematic Model: The Han "Orthodox Synthesis," Then and Now," in *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics*, edited by Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng, and John B. Henderson (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 33.

by *wu* (the way of coercion).[35] This description, which appears in the classic *Record of Rites* seems to indicate a dichotomy - a contrasting - of *wen* and *wu* as two different principles according to which a ruler could act, establishing them as each other's antithesis. However, analysing a different classic, the *Book of Documents*, Christopher Reed concludes that the examples of King Wen and King Wu also indicate a complementarity of the concepts they embodied. *Wu* was meant to be a punishment for those who resisted the virtuous ruler, and his virtue rested in the enactment of benevolent social policies, or *wen*.[36] If good governance was thus endangered, it was legitimate to employ military means. It also provided a pretext for regime change, because the Zhou legitimated its termination of the rule of its suzerain the Shang on the basis of the latter's tyrannical governance of the population.[37]

The *Record of Rites* and the *Book of Documents* were not the only classics that could be consulted on the interpretation of *wen* and *wu*. In the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, or *Zuo's Tradition*, a work of history dealing with the Spring- and Autumn Period and purportedly composed before 389 BCE, we get probably the oldest clear definition of the scope of the sphere of *wu* as enumerated as the seven virtues of King Wu. Furthermore, the *Zuo zhuan* was another source that would at one time or another be considered a classic.[38] Paraphrasing Gawlikowski's translation, these were the repression of cruelty, the removal of all weapons, the preservation of the greatness (of the ruling house), the consolidating of (the ruler's) merit, the ensuring of peace to the people, the harmonizing of the multitude (of states) and the ensuring of abundance. With repression of cruelty was meant the ending of killing and the practice of leaving bodies unburied. This amounted to cruelty because it destined the souls of the deceased to become wandering spirits. The second value, the removal of all weapons, is more straightforward and refers to ending military actions. The third, the preservation of greatness, tied the *wu* sphere to the legitimacy and fortunes of the dynasty, upholding the greatness of the ruler and his dynasty. The fourth, consolidating merit, means to bring into effect the ruler's merit through the liquidation of all opposing forces. Gawlikowski further explained the differences between the third and the fourth value: "Whereas the element number 3 referred to prestige and influence obtained by ensuring peace and justice, by proper

[35] Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle," 105; Louie and Edwards, "Chinese Masculinity," 140.
[36] Christopher Clark Rand, "The Role of Military Thought in Early Chinese Intellectual History" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1977), 23.
[37] Jean Levi, "Morale de la stratégie, stratégie de la morale: le débat chinois sur la guerre juste," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 38 (2015): 114; Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 138.
[38] Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 477.

administration of the state, of the people and spirits as well, the element number 4 refers rather to elimination of an opposition and to increasing practical political influence."[39] The fifth, the ensuring of peace to the people, and the sixth, the harmonizing of the multitude (of states) refers to creating a tranquil and secure domestic and international environment by the use of military force. In the context of the Spring- and Autumn Period the latter probably referred to the peaceful coexistence of the numerous regional power centres under the hegemony of the ruling house, but in the later imperial age this shifted to maintaining the position of the succeeding empires as the world's hegemon by preventing outside aggression against China, but also aggression between foreign states themselves. The seventh, ensuring abundance, seems strange to modern western eyes as a task belonging to the military realm. Gawlikowsky interprets it as follows: "On the one hand it seems to refer to the old concept which emphasized the necessity of performance of work on the land at the proper time. Such an adjustment to seasons and natural time-changes was considered a substantial element of << martiality >> [sic]."[40] This early elaborate definition of *wu* is a state-centred one, demonstrating that this institutional layer of its meaning was already present from an early period in Chinese history. This early definition of *wu* manifests it as a series of tasks meant to ensure social and political stability and does not include any overly aggressive expansionistic leanings.

Like the concept of *wu*, *wen* was mentioned as a concept in opposition to *wu* for the first time in *Zuo's Tradition*, but the word had a pedigree that went back in the past much further. One of the original meanings of *wen* was probably "pattern" or "form" and referred to the design of, for example, pottery and textiles. Gawlikowsky further speculates that from these meanings a link could be made with "peace" or "favouring peace". A design, in order to work, or to be experienced as beautiful, had to possess a harmonious coming together of colours and forms. Peace is intimately linked with the notion of harmony. Furthermore, *wen* was seen in opposition to naturally endowed characteristics, hence it is similar to "culture", the form or pattern of human existence. From here the link with writings and literacy can proceed from both angles: written characters themselves constitute a design in themselves, and written sources (especially the ones later recognized as classics) were a repository of the proper human cultural forms and thus civility. This aspect of *wen* is connected by Gawlikowski to the Confucians, as well as to their program of bringing peace to

[39] Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle," 110.
[40] Idem, 109-111.

the realm through the teaching of these cultural forms.[41] According to Bol, the meaning of *wen* in relation to writings came to refer to at least two phenomena by the time of the Jürchen Jin. First of these was *wen* as meant in the sense mentioned above, that group of writings and their study which contributed to the understanding of proper civil governance. Second, it came to refer to the practice of literary prose and poetry, calligraphy, and painting. Bol, however, does not make clear when this divergence in the meaning took place, or whether contemporaries themselves were conscious of these layers in the meaning of *wen*. Even so, while Confucianism usually stressed ruling through *wen* in the first sense, not all *wen* was necessarily Confucian in content.[42] How important were these Confucians, however, in shaping the discourse surrounding *wen* and *wu*? I will now turn to the contribution of the philosophical traditions to the evolution of Chinese thought pertaining to these two concepts, and gauge the influence of Confucianism within this group of philosophical traditions.

What were these philosophical traditions? Gawlikowski defines *wen* and *wu* against a backdrop of relatively rigidly drawn boundaries between the different "schools", or traditions mentioned above. However, the recognition of distinct schools of thought seems to have been a product of the Han dynasty, when the multifaceted philosophical production of the Warring States was parcelled up in different schools of thought. This was pioneered by historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 135 – 86 BCE) who endeavoured to depict the Chinese past into a comprehensive and coherent history, the *Shiji* 史記 or *Historical Records*. In fact, recent research has posited the notion that many literary works predating the Han dynasty only gained separate cohesive forms during the middle years of the Han (possibly during the reign of usurper Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE – 23 CE) and his short-lived intervening Xin dynasty, 9 – 23 CE), and prior to that they probably existed as oral traditions or snippets within larger literary depositories. They were up until that time not self-contained arguments in a book-like format, but formed part of a continuum of texts that interrelated with each other in complex ways and it would therefore be anachronistic to parcel them out in clearly defined schools of thought, as is often still assumed by modern scholars.[43] Instead, I would more cautiously regard the schools of thought as theoretical tendencies,

[41] Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: Wen 文 and Wu 武 in Chinese Classical Thought (Part One)," 398-403.
[42] Bol, "Seeking Common Ground," 490-491.
[43] See for examples of this new view Michael Hunter, "Kongzi Sayings, Deselected" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012); Esther Klein, "Were There "Inner Chapters" during the Warring States? A New Examination of Evidence about

which were grouped together much later on the basis of perceived ideological consistency. Presumably later during imperial times, the Chinese themselves did start to conceive of Chinese thought as belonging to these constructed schools. I follow Yuri Pines in this regard, who states regarding two of the philosophical traditions: "Both terms "Legalism" and "Confucianism," even if inaccurate (especially the former), may be heuristically useful insofar as we employ them in the same way that they were used by the Han and later archivists: as a classification label for certain texts that share a common perspective on some of [sic] major political and social questions."[44] Before I turn to the contribution of these philosophical traditions to the *wen* and *wu* discursive field, it is thus important to keep in mind that these traditions to a large extent were not reflected in the social reality in which their texts originated, and that rather than a lack of interaction between closed monolithic systems, we should assume intellectual cross-fertilization.

The fluidity of the boundaries between philosophical traditions notwithstanding, is it possible to discern broad trends in thought pertaining to *wen* and *wu* as spheres of state activity? Christopher Rand analysed this thought and concluded that there were three main tendencies considering the proper balance of importance between *wen* and *wu*: syncretism, militarism and compartmentalism. The oldest one was the syncretic view, which he chronologically places during the early Zhou dynasty and the Spring and Autumn Period, and could be found in the classics. The above-cited *Zuo zhuan* is considered by Rand to reflect this viewpoint, which entailed *wen* and *wu* to exist as a continuum of possible state policies to ensure its continuing ability to function.[45] The syncretic view was a-moral and assigned no ethical judgments to solving problems of state by either military or non-military options. The newer philosophical traditions abandoned this syncretic balance, however, and tended towards the marginalization of either *wen* or *wu.* A distinctively militarist viewpoint came into being during the Warring States period, and it is associated with two thinkers conventionally assigned to the Legalist tradition, Hanfeizi 韓非子

the *Zhuangzi*," *T'oung Pao* 96 (2011): 299-369; John Makeham, "The Formation of Lunyu as a Book," *Monumenta Serica* 44 (1996): 1-24; Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[44] Yuri Pines, "Review of Zhao Dingxin. *The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, xx + 447 pp." *Early China* 39 (2016): 316

[45] Mark Edward Lewis, in the context of martial ethics, also notes that the classics *Zuo zhuan* and *Shijing* often offer viewpoints contrary to later Confucianism. See Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 43.

(mid-3rd c.) and Shang Yang 商鞅 (390–338 BCE).[46] They tended to favour that states be governed through a strict system of laws, rewards and punishments. The first empire, Qin (221-206 BCE), was ruled according to its precepts and the dynasty was notorious for its draconian implementation of Legalist ideas. These two Legalists (but not all Legalists) not only held that *wu* should trump *wen*, they also had their own ideas about the proper contents of *wen* and *wu*, equating the former with rewards and the latter with punishments. In contrast to the Confucians, the Legalists favoured *wu* over *wen* and so warfare came to be seen as a form of punishment meted out to opponents of the established order. Hence, *wu* was associated with the law and its enforcement in general. This association was later broken, and the enforcement of the law, certainly during the Ming dynasty, became part of the domain of *wen* state activities. Yet the conceptualization of war as a form of punishment against enemies inside and outside the empire remained strong. The Han dynasty, for ideological reasons, had to move away from the Legalist ideology of its predecessor, but in practice Legalist ideas continued to inform methods of governance.[47] Moreover, these thinkers saw warfare as a means to end conflict by striving for the ultimate unification of all warring states and advocated organizing their polities for this purpose.[48]

Opposing this viewpoint was the compartmentalist way of viewing *wu* in relation to *wen*. To this group belonged those thinkers later considered to be the Confucians, but it also included thinkers categorized as Daoist and Mohist. What united this diverse group was the notion that *wu* should only be applied in extreme circumstances, for example self-defence or the removal of unethical rule. The latter focus on ethics would continue to play an important role within the Confucian-inclined thought on war. A further result of this focus was that war, or rather its prevention, was conceived of as a task not merely of the *wu* sphere within the state. The enemy's warlike intentions could also be undermined by *wen* activities, by convincing the opponent of the justness of your cause and the virtue of your rule through politics, diplomacy and sheer example.[49] In Mencius' (372 – 289 BCE) thought, for example, it was assumed that the display of *de* 德, or

[46] Christopher C Rand, "Li Ch'üan and Chinese Military Thought," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39.1 (1979): 108-109; Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 26-27, 42-43.
[47] Edward L. Dreyer, "Continuity and Change," in *A Military History of China*, edited by David A. Graff and Robin Higham (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002), 23; Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle," 108, 114.
[48] Rand, "Li Ch'üan," 108-109.
[49] Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle," 111; Richard J. Smith, "The Employment of Foreign Military Talent: Chinese Tradition and Late Ch'ing Practice," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15 (1975): 113-138, 114-115.

virtue, by the ruler would entice enemies to submit to the Chinese world order. It would therefore be a mistake to assume that the *wu* sphere within the state was always conceived to be coterminous with all activities related to war in the broadest sense, because *wen* could also have its legitimate place within it. A second result of this focus is that it contributed to the notion that *wu* served *wen*, the military sphere served virtuous *wen* government and was thus in some way subordinate to it. Above all, war was a means to protect virtuous civil *wen* rule and punish those who threatened it.[50] Some Confucian-inclined thinkers would take this position even further to reduce the importance of *wu* and in theory even rejected it as a necessary sphere of state activities.[51] This was done for example by Mencius in whose text the following advice to a ruler of one of the Warring States was recorded:

> "Now if you practice benevolence in your government, then all the officials in the world will want to find a place in your court, all tillers to plow in your fields, and all merchants to store their goods in your marketplaces, all travelers to journey on your roads, and all those who hate their rulers to lay their complaints before you. Such being the case, who can stop you from achieving the end?"[52]

One has to see this quote in the context of the frequent destructive conflicts of the Warring States Period, when no obvious winner was in sight yet. It can be surmised that it was Mencius' hope a permanent peace could be attained when all states relinquished their *wu* activities and competed with each other in benevolent governance instead. In later imperial times, however, writings such as these were used to admonish bellicose rulers and expansionist policies, as well as providing arguments for a restriction on the size of the military and its related spending. In reality, many Confucian-inclined thinkers recognized the need for a *wu* sphere of state activity to complement the *wen* sphere,[53] presumably because subduing enemy aggression through virtuous and exemplary government was not a very practical ideal. Yet the anti-militarist strain of thought remained influential throughout imperial history and it was often used as a rhetorical tool to plead for marginalization of the army and its activities.[54] Thought concerning the proper place of *wen* and

[50] Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 148-179.
[51] Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 127-130.
[52] *Mengzi* 孟子 – *Mencius*, translated by Zhao Zhentao 趙甄陶, Zhang Wenting 張文庭 and Zhou Dingzhi 周定之 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1999), 20-23.
[53] Gawlikowski, "The Origins of the Martial Principle," 113.
[54] Dreyer, "Continuity and Change," 23; D.L. McMullen, "The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung and T'ang Attitudes to the Military," *T'ang Studies* 7 (1989): 65-66.

wu in what we now regard as the Confucian school of thought was thus not unanimous in its verdict. However, for the most part it tended to assign to *wu* a subordinate or non-existent legitimate role as a sphere of state activity.

There is one group of thinkers that has not been addressed yet in this survey, the tradition of thought that would become associated with the label of "Strategists". Unlike the Confucians, Mohists, Daoists, and Legalists, they were not concerned with the totality of social-political organization and man's place within it, but focused on the specifics of warfare itself. Hence, their thought tended to be more specialist in lieu of the more generalist tendencies of the abovementioned four traditions. Both Gawlikowski and Johnston detect the influences of these four traditions in the principal surviving writings of the Strategists, which include *Sunzi's Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法), *Wuzi* 吳子, *The Methods of the Sima* (*Sima fa* 司馬法), *Weiliaozi* 尉繚子, and the *Six Secret Strategies* (*Liu tao* 六韜).[55] It is Rand's hypothesis that many of these works display a conciliatory stance towards the ethical objections of the compartmentalists, which would explain the influences of their thought detected within the articulated ideas of the Strategists. The Strategists can therefore not be considered as an extension of the militarist leanings of Hanfeizi and Shang Yang.[56] Probably as a reaction to the destructive Warring States Period, an ideological tendency developed that warfare by the military should be avoided when possible. This ideology can most famously be seen in the *Sunzi Bingfa*, *Master Sun's Art of War*, purportedly written by general Sun Wu 孫武 (544 – 496 BCE), and categorized as being part of the Strategists school of thought. In this text, it is stated that the best way to wage war is to disrupt the war plans of the enemy, resorting only in case of failure to the implementation of military force.[57] These statements by Sunzi, and similar ones by other Strategists, have contributed to a picture of Chinese military thought as preferring evasive and non-military solutions to conflicts. Johnston, however, argues that, whilst war was indeed seen as inauspicious, it was also deemed unwise not to prepare for it. Human conflict was seen by many of the Strategists as essentially inevitable. Lip service was paid to Rand's compartmentalists[58] by assuming that war would be initiated by the other side first,

[55] Krzystof Gawlikowski, "The School of Strategy (*bing jia*) in the Context of Chinese Civilization," *East and West* 35.1-3 (1995): 176-181; Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 40-45.
[56] Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 179-180.
[57] See for example Ralph D. Sawyer and Mei-chün Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 160-161.
[58] Rand seems to imply the Strategists included ethical concerns in response to the compartmentalists, however Lewis seems to posit the military considerations of Confucians, Daoists, Legalists, and Mohists were a response to

making it legitimate for a ruler to defend his state against aggression. Non-military means of disrupting the enemy plans were seen as a necessary step, but not *a priori* as a sufficient one. In fact, according to Johnston, most Strategists advised the eventual deployment of superior military force in order to defeat the opponent. Furthermore, once the enemy has constituted itself as a security threat, any moral restraints do not apply anymore and the ethical leeway for the response is quite wide.[59] In conclusion, the military texts of the Strategists do not seem to favour *wu* over *wen*, but regard war as an inevitable fact of life and on that basis argue the best way to proceed with it.

The Confucians, or *Ru* 儒, were by many modern scholars assumed to have won this discursive battle on the proper place of *wen* and *wu*, based on the fact that Confucianism would become the state orthodoxy during the Han dynasty after the tumultuous Warring States and the short-lived unification under the draconian Legalist Qin empire (221-206 BCE). However, the extent of its hegemonic status has been the subject of doubt by recent scholarship. The standard narrative is that Emperor Wu 武 (r. 141-87 BCE) of the Han dynasty exalted Confucianism as the state ideology by appointing scholars selected according to Confucian criteria to enforce an imperial monopoly over classical learning, organized in an academy, which allowed the state to control content and dissemination of learning from 135 BCE onwards. However, the uniformity of Confucian learning, the consistency of state support for it during the Han, and its efficacy has been called into question by Michael Nylan.[60] Moreover, in practice Legalism provided many of the principles of rule, anti-Qin rhetoric and the moral vilification of Shang Yang and Hanfeizi notwithstanding. In 81 BCE it was still possible to defend Legalism in court debates, for example. However, later it became necessary to keep one's Legalist leanings under wraps, even if the state in practice followed its precepts. This situation would continue to hold until the end of imperial China.[61] Furthermore, in terms of identity, at the start of the Han the *Ru* did not invariably see themselves as belonging to one particular school, but perhaps more as classicists and scholars who

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the ideas of the Strategists. However, later on he suggests that the ideas of Sunzi were a result of a dynamic interaction with Daoist concepts. See Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 11, 124.

[59] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 106-107

[60] Nylan, "A Problematic Model," 17-56.

[61] Yuri Pines, "Legalism in Chinese Philosophy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 27, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/chinese-legalism/.

were the heirs of all Chinese thought.[62] Some texts within this transmitted tradition of thought carried more prestige, especially the classics reflecting the values of the old Zhou nobility as it had existed at the beginning of the dynasty. Because of the position of these classicist scholars as caretakers of the entirety of classical thought, including the other "schools", Confucian orthodoxy as it developed over the centuries could interact relatively freely with other ideas and philosophical tendencies and often did.[63] Therefore many "Confucians" displayed syncretic tendencies and freely used ideas properly categorized as being part of other schools.[64] The umbrella-like quality of *Ru* as a category in ancient Chinese texts themselves has contributed to the idea of a hegemonic and monolithic Confucianism. In fact, as Nylan argues: "In China, the term "Ru" 儒 was used to describe the classicist who made the study of antiquity his chief pursuit. But the same term, quite confusingly, was also used in ancient texts more narrowly to describe committed followers of Confucius, who adhere in their conduct to the specific ethical Way of antiquity supposedly prescribed by the Master."[65] Only in Warring States and Han texts was there a clear distinction made between these committed followers of Confucius and the more career-oriented and general classicist "vulgar" *Ru*. In texts composed after the Han this distinction disappears and *Ru* could refer to a wide variety of learned people with diverging aspirations.[66] As Confucianism was thus far from a monolithic movement and its canon was mutable. It would therefore follow that a specific "Confucian" attitude to war and the military was also subject to flux. We have also seen that a specific Confucian identity is also hard to postulate, let alone assigned a hegemonic presence, at the start of the Han dynasty.

What I will contribute below to the debate on the development of *wen*-*wu* relations, then, is to apply the sceptical position of Nylan (and others) concerning the nature and influence of the Confucian movement and ideology on the formation of imperial Chinese *wen* and *wu* institutional utilizations and socio-cultural identities. I will therefore weigh the influence of Confucianism and other philosophical traditions on this process. Before I consider the historical development of the divergence of the institutional and socio-cultural aspects of *wen* and *wu* in social reality during the Song dynasty, I will first turn to the normative socio-cultural models of identity and personal

[62] Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 3-4.
[63] Ibidem.
[64] Nylan, "A Problematic Model," 33.
[65] Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 364.
[66] Idem, 365.

comportment straddling the line between *wen* and *wu* the Warring States' philosophers bequeathed on imperial China. This will in turn allow me to gauge the influence of these models, including the Confucian one, on social reality in the next chapter.

Wen and *Wu* as Aspects of Socio-Cultural Archetypes

What socio-cultural models did the important philosophical traditions of the Warring States period offer that could shape the identities of the officials populating the *wen* and *wu* spheres of state activity? Mohism, the chief competitor of the Confucian philosophical tradition, offered a template of a society organized for defensive warfare, which would provide universal benefits for its members defined in utilitarian economic terms. The movement disappeared abruptly after the Qin unification, perhaps because its mission to defend beleaguered states had become obsolete. Their writings would only be subject to renewed interest during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912).[67] Daoism did not offer suitable models, because the philosophical tradition emphasized a minimal state and a primitive society. In addition, Daoism stressed an individualistic ethic of spontaneous self-deployment counter to conformity to social convention.[68] Legalism, finally, took a dim view of human nature, which was especially characterized by Hanfeizi as fundamentally self-interested and conflicting with the needs of the state. To govern, therefore, everyone needed to be subjected without exception to a set of impersonal laws and their associated rewards and punishments.[69] Within this world view, the ideal official would probably have been a disciplined bureaucrat impartially meeting out rewards and punishments. Personal moral agency would have been irrelevant. The Legalists, especially Shang Yang and Hanfeizi strove for a state organized for war, and the civil side of government's main function was to facilitate the mobilization of the entire population for agricultural production in peacetime and military activities during war. In the Legalist thought of these two thinkers, the actual contents of *wen* as a sphere of state activity was therefore extremely limited. The cultural contents of the *wen* the Confucians stood for, like the emphasis on the written textual tradition and the esteem accorded to rites and rituals and their

[67] Chris Fraser, "Mohism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 27, 2017, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/mohism/.
[68] James T. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 12-13; Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 148-149.
[69] Paul R. Goldin, "Han Fei's Doctrine of Self-interest," *Asian Philosophy* 11.3 (2001): 151-154.

associated need for specialists, were seen as detracting the state from its proper purposes.[70] Despite wishing to compartmentalize and marginalize *wu* as a sphere of state activity, both Mohism and Daoism had their reservations about the useful contents of *wen* as well. According to Mohism, the proper function of *wen* government should be the utilitarian provision of economic well-being to the largest number of people. Cultural refinements, like music and other traditionally upper-class patterns of consumption were a waste of resources. Contrary to the Confucian philosophical tradition, which tried to promote the use of *wen* to make *wu* as superfluous as possible, Mohism advocated a society militarized for defensive warfare. In effect, *wu* would counteract the *wu* of others.[71] Daoism, as already noted, advocated a simple and spontaneous life in accordance with one's natural tendencies. At most, the philosophical tradition allowed for the existence of a minimal state ruling over small primitive communities, whose inhabitants in the best case were even ignorant of the few laws and regulations that were in place.[72] Therefore, for reasons of a philosophical nature, especially pertaining to the contents of *wen* and *wu* as spheres of state activity, these three traditions did not have a lot to offer concerning the identity formation and moral comportment of the personnel that would populate the worlds of *wen* and *wu* in service of the state (or even outside of it) post-imperial unification. There were three traditions that did, however, and to these I will now turn.

The Junzi

The first of these is the Confucian tradition itself. The socio-cultural exemplar it bestowed on imperial China was the ideal of the *junzi* 君子, often translated as "gentleman". Originally this term referred to well-bred aristocratic elites of the Zhou. With the rising influence of Confucius' teachings and the destruction of the Zhou nobility after the interstate wars of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods,[73] however, it lost its implications of nobility by birth and came to refer to men of moral cultivation and upright character. Already in the *Lunyu* can be found the core elements which would define the Confucian *junzi* in later ages (although not always all to the same degree): a stress on humaneness, honesty, and uprightness; an ability to voluntarily serve

[70] Yuri Pines, "A "Total War"? Rethinking Military Ideology in the *Book of Lord Shang*," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 5 (2016): 104-105; Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 32-33.
[71] Fraser, "Mohism"; Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 170.
[72] Steve Coutinho, *An Introduction to Daoist Philosophies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 71-74; 126-129.
[73] Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 94-95

the people and the state; possessing wisdom and courage; putting the common good above private interests; engaging in self-cultivation; being able to transform others.[74]

Peter Lorge speculates that since after the Spring and Autumn Period the old Zhou nobility lost the monopoly on martial exploits in favour of mass conscripted armies of commoners, Confucianism rose to the fore as an ideology emphasizing rule through moral superiority.[75] However, the Confucian social ideal type of the *junzi* as advocated by Confucius still included martial abilities like archery and charioteering.[76] Even Confucius, who saw the behavioral norms, rituals and codes of conduct of the early Zhou nobility as an ideal that should be universalized and emulated by everyone regardless of their social background, paid scant attention to the martial aspects of this early Zhou noble military culture. The only hints we get at their preservation is in the so-called *liuyi* 六艺 "six-arts" the true *junzi* was supposed to possess and which Confucius was said to have taught his disciples. These were rites, calculation, music, charioteering, archery and history. The inclusion of archery and charioteering in this list makes it clear that Confucius, who said of himself to be ignorant in matters pertaining to warfare, did wish to preserve these martial components of the Zhou nobility in the Confucian ideal of the gentleman. In the *Analects*, said to preserve discussions and conversations between Confucius and various disciples and rulers, the six arts are not mentioned as a coherent set yet, although they are discussed separately. They also make an appearance in the *Zhouli* 周禮, *Rites of Zhou*, a work which appeared during the Han, but which was long thought to be of a much earlier date and enjoyed the status of a classic.[77]

The legitimation of the rule through moral superiority against a backdrop of militarization and the right of the strongest was perhaps one of the attractions of the *junzi*-ideal. Another one, in the context of state-subject relations, was the exultation of the moral autonomy of the individual in relation to the power of the ruler. In the words of Pines:

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[74] Yao Xinzhong, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 214-216.
[75] Peter Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 51.
[76] Xinzhong Yao sees these arts more as a reflection of the skills needed to perform the ritual practices of the *Ru* 儒, a group of ritual masters who later evolved into the Confucian scholars. See Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 20. I personally believe these six skills were really resulting from a later Chinese idealized perception of the early Zhou nobility way of life. As seen in the introduction, the sixteenth-century observer Qi Jiguang certainly did see archery as a necessary *wu*-component of the Confucian identity.
[77] Karel van der Leeuw, *Het Chinese Denken* (Leiden: Shilin, 2012), 111-112.

> In a nutshell, Confucians believed that only morally and intellectually cultivated "superior men" (junzi 君子) deserve elite status: in an orderly state, these men should become the core of the ruling bureaucracy. The status of junzi is entirely self-made: it is attainable only by those men who are able either to refine their innate moral goodness (Mengzi 孟子) or overcome their innate badness (Xunzi 荀子). Their debates aside, Confucian thinkers were unequivocal: neither the ruler nor the state can create a superior man or rob him of this status. Membership in the elite is determined by the superior men's individual qualities alone. This perspective eventually allowed elites a considerable degree of autonomy from the state apparatus.[78]

Confucian conceptualization of society was hierarchical, with everyone assigned defined roles according to their positions in familial, state, and friendship hierarchies. However, these relations were supposed to be reciprocal as well. A subject, for example, owed loyalty to his ruler. On the other hand, the ruler had to reciprocate this with rule on the basis of propriety.[79] The possibility of moral autonomy within the Confucian philosophical tradition might, I argue, explain its attraction to the Chinese imperial elites serving in the bureaucracy, as well as those not serving in any official capacity. Within Legalism and Mohism the role of the individual was much more constrained, and Daoism was an unsuitable ideology to rule the Chinese empires as they took shape from the Qin onwards.

Confucianism overall was an ideology which stressed rule through *wen*. But, as we have seen, Confucians generally conceived as *wen* a very broad range of cultural activities. How were these connected to the civil sphere of governance? As Gawlikowsky posits it: "[…] *wen* was used for those elements of culture which are "decorations" or "patterns" of humans, and at the same time constitute their human, i.e. "cultural nature", for the social obligations (*yi*), social norms and etiquette (*li*), for music (*le*), for virtues (*de*) […]".[80] Important here is the implied fusion of both outward appearance of human society, as expressed through rites and other performative acts, and its proper order. For Confucians, these two meanings of *wen*, or rather their inseparability within the conceptualization of *wen*, explains its central importance within the self-perception of the developing Confucian literati elites. The proper form and content of human society were in an inseparable and direct relationship with each other. The social hierarchies posited by the Confucians were reflected in the codes of conduct and norms of behaviour which were the most

[78] Pines, "Review of Zhao Dingxin," 316-317.
[79] Zhao, *Introduction to Confucianism*, 34-35.
[80] Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: *Wen* 文 and *wu* 武 in Chinese Classical Thought, Part One," 401.

important constituent element of the Confucian rites. For a modern western audience, a close equivalent to the ancient Chinese concept of *wen* can be the thinking in terms of a dichotomy between man-made culture and nature. *Wen* here functions as the ancient Chinese idea of culture which is added to one's innate biological characteristics. According to Gawlikowski, this idea of culture was very restricted and for Confucian-inclined thinkers it only included the cultural phenomena found in the classics mentioned above, which purported to reflect early Zhou society as idealized by Confucius and his followers, and later writings by other Confucians. Only during the Han dynasty, when Confucianism became sole state orthodoxy in name, all other philosophical currents were appropriated by the Confucians and their literary heritage came under the rubric of *wen* as well. As a consequence of this focus on the scriptural aspects of culture, a link between *wen* and literary production and pursuits was thus established. In this context Gawlikowsky states that "Early Confucians did not separate clearly studies of books, i.e. literary knowledge, from culture and virtue."[81] But if we follow Nylan's objections to the interpretation of the Confucian-turn of the Han, perhaps the self-styled Confucians already belonged to a larger group of classicists who already considered a broad range of literary pursuits as *wen*. This contributed to the already unclear definition of *wen*, reflected by the existence of its myriad meanings and associations, which was caused by the paucity of contemporary Chinese discussions on the nature of the concept. Gawlikowski posits that the meaning of wen was considered "obvious" by the Chinese, and therefore elicited little scholarly discussion.[82]

Essential, however, for a classicist, a conscious follower of the Confucian ideal, or an official serving in the *wen*-sphere of state activity (and these categories probably overlapped in many cases), was the skill of literacy. Thus, if we assume, on the basis of Nylan's revisionism, a big amorphous group of classicists, many of whom were in service of the state from the Han onwards, then the ideal of the *junzi* committed to restoring the values of the golden age of the early Zhou and before on the basis of the study of the classics must have made a suitable fit. In addition, the ideal of the *junzi* contained an element of *wu* in socio-cultural terms as well, although this was a different kind of *wu* as that had come to characterize the military officer, a topic I will turn to now.

[81] Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: *Wen* 文 and *wu* 武 in Chinese Classical Thought, Part One," 408.
[82] Idem, 408-409.

The Sagely General

Although the Strategists formed a very loose tradition, as we have seen above, a number of the associated texts would retain their influence to the point that they were canonized as a separate military canon during the early Song dynasty. This tradition of military thinking would also continue after the imperial unification.[83] Five of these canonized works, which were already mentioned above, can be dated to the Warring States period with some certainty and I refer to these works when discussing the Strategists in this section. Ultimately, these Strategists did not constitute a more unified tradition like that of the Confucians or the Mohists, because of the lack of an integrating author or authors, and also for reasons of the more specialized and limited nature of their field of knowledge.[84] Nevertheless, the Strategists' military thought reflect the formation of the more centralized and bureaucratized Warring States with their disciplined predominantly-infantry armies. The mode of combat shifted from more individual displays of courage and honour by the earlier Zhou aristocracy to a battle of wits between two specialized military commanders, with their disciplined formations consisting of trained peasants stripped of any individual agency. Whereas the earlier Zhou chivalrous martial ethos emphasized an honest test of skills and bravery,[85] the newer Warring States ethos entailed deception and stratagem. In the words of Mark Edward Lewis:

> The commander sought to present a picture to his adversary which was the exact inverse of the truth. At the same time he sought to know the truth of his opponent's situation, to take precautions against it, and to strike at his opponent's weaknesses or manipulate his strengths into their opposite weaknesses. Warfare became a match of fraud and deceit in which victory hinged on duping the opponent while penetrating his prevarications. The ultimate level of this duel in the manipulation of circumstances lay in the control of the foe's perceptions; this is what was meant by "victory through attacking an opponent's deliberations.[86]

[83] Sawyer and Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 1-2.
[84] Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 184-185.
[85] For example, one was not to take advantage of any of the opponent's difficulties in order to gain an easy victory. See Frank A. Kierman, Jr., "Phases and Modes of Combat in Early China," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, edited by Frank A. Kierman, Jr., John K. Fairbank, and Edward L. Dreyer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 42-45; Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 36-39.
[86] Idem, 98, 104-10, 124.

Already during the Warring States this new martial ethos came under attack of thinkers later associated with Confucianism. Xun Kuang 荀況 or Xunzi 荀子 (c. 313-c. 238 BCE), for example, contended that good governance by a virtuous ruler over a population of unified will would annul the efficacy of the stratagems of the Strategists. However, Legalist thinkers Hanfeizi and Shang Jun held a similar opinion, although their idea of virtuous rule obviously differed from the Confucian conceptualization of it.[87]

Further ethical elements in the Strategists that could indicate a sensitivity towards the compartmentalists' objections towards *wu* was a stress on the moral fibre of the military commanders, manifested for example in the Strategists' advocating of humane treatment of the soldiers. In addition, morally virtuous government would contribute to the security of the state, presumably by way of social stability, and also secure resources for the state.[88] In fact, the majority of the Strategists' views on the contents of the *wen*-sphere of government seem to have been an amalgam of the ideas developed within the Mohist, Legalist, and Confucian philosophical traditions. These include the provision of material welfare for the population, governance by a bureaucracy employing a clear system of rewards and punishments, and inculcation of the population with moral virtues sometimes buttressed by the rule of a monarch who set a personal example through morally virtuous conduct. The combination of two or three of these themes can be traced in the *Taigong's Six Secret Teachings, Methods of the Sima*, *Wuzi*, and the *Weiliaozi*.[89] The ideas about the content of *wen* that were developed within the Strategists' philosophical tradition, in so far as it commented on this, did not radically diverge from those conceptualized by other traditions. This inclusiveness of *wen*-notions of rule might have contributed to, or at least not hindered, the continued importance of these texts after the creation of the Han empire, an empire which did not rely on the dictates of a single philosophical tradition.

The Strategists, presumably for the lack of a unity in their tradition, did not develop a completely coherent military ethos for the military commander. Filipiak compared the ideal characteristics of a general in the Warring States-era Strategist treatises, but there were differences of moral categories and emphasis among all of them.[90] In contrast to the civil ethos and its

[87] Idem, 66-67, 127.
[88] Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 107. Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 180-184.
[89] Sawyer and Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 33, 118-119, 203, 232-234
[90] Kai Filipiak, "Military Codes of Virtue: Aspects of *Wen* and *Wu* in China's Warring States Period," in *Civil-Military Relations in Chinese History: From Ancient China to the Communist Takeover*, edited by Kai Filipiak (London: Routledge, 2005), 36-39.

Confucian influences, the ethos of the military is under-researched and as a result largely unknown. Taking the *Seven Military Classics* as representative for the normative model of the military officer is problematic for several reasons already touched upon previously. Nevertheless, Kai Filipiak singles out four values that appear in many of the texts, and these include benevolence, wisdom, courage, and trustworthiness. These values differ from their civil ethic interpretations by emphasizing meanings more suitable to the military enterprise. Benevolence, for example, refers to the commander's ability to integrate his army by sharing in the hardships of his men and leading by example. It, moreover, pleads for a limit to the destruction visited upon the vanquished populations of the enemy. Wisdom stresses the strategic and tactical abilities of a commander.[91] In other ways, the contents of these military classics was in opposition with some of the more moralistic parts of the civil ethos. Especially the *Taigong's Six Secret Teachings, Sunzi's Art of War, Wuzi,* and *Weiliaozi* advocated deceit and stratagems with were in direct opposition with Confucian virtue, and Mencius disdained military specialists for this reason. In his view, a ruler's virtue would unite the people behind him and would make recourse to stratagems and deceit unnecessary. Furthermore, these military thinkers advocated a kind of mass-warfare of disciplined large formations combined with stratagems and deceptions, which dispensed with the chivalric and heroic aristocratic values of the old Zhou nobility with its emphasis on individual martial achievements and honour.[92] Since the Confucian philosophical tradition was wedded to the values of the Zhou nobility as transmitted through the classics, there was a potential conflict here concerning the proper moral values that should be the content of *wu*.

What could have attracted the Chinese imperial elites to strive to adopt this military ethos? First of all, some of the Strategists, like the *Methods of the Sima*, postulated a clear separation of civil and military realms with its own associated values out of sheer necessity. Within this realm, the military commander would have nearly limitless authority. The *Taigong's Six Secret Teachings* emphasized that the commander, once in the field, should be free from the authority of the ruler, so that valuable opportunities would not be lost and other officials would not be able to challenge his authority on the basis of personal relations with the ruler. Furthermore, in some of the texts associated with the Strategists the commander was considered to be a sage, *sheng* 聖.[93] In the

[91] Filipiak, "Military Codes of Virtue," 39-43.
[92] Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 98, 103, 127-131.
[93] See for example *Sunzi's Art of War*: "`Unless someone has the wisdom of a Sage, he cannot use spies; […].'" Quoted in Sawyer and Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 185.

Confucian philosophical tradition, the sages were a category containing the mythical first rulers of China, like Yao 堯, Shun 舜, who had both set an example of virtuous conduct. Confucius himself would be eventually be regarded as a sage as well in this tradition. But the Confucians did not have the monopoly on the definition of the sage: The Legalists, for example, considered another set of mythical cultural heroes sages for their contribution to material advancement of culture. Julia Ching, on the basis of etymological research of the term concluded that the origin of the sage should be sought in the shamanistic component of the royal authority of the early Zhou kings. These alone were permitted to communicate with the highest deity, Heaven (*Tian* 天), and function as the relay between the natural and supernatural worlds. The character consists of the components denoting "mouth", "ear", and "king", which could refer to a monarch who listens (or perceives in general) and talks (or transmits).[94] In its basic meaning a sage was someone could perceive the Way of Heaven and transmit it for the benefit of the world. How Heaven was perceived at the time of the writing of the Strategist's texts is unclear. Originally Heaven was the supreme God of the Zhou pantheon, but by the time of Confucius and Mencius it had acquired a new layer of meaning denoting "fate" or "destiny" - the unfolding of existence beyond one's control - and the source of a specific moral order.[95] According to Rand, who also based himself on other Warring States' texts besides the Strategists, the ideal military commander was posited as a sage in the same Chinese tradition as a conduit between the natural and the supernatural:

> We find that the premier military leader was not merely a physically strong and aggressive man; it was possible for him to have neither of these qualities. What he did possess was a supernatural capacity to fathom an enemy's circumstances and foresee the outcome of a confrontation. He had, in other words, a sagely wisdom which we would normally associate with Taoist or Confucian paragons of wen. Some figures secured their military prescience through the contemplation of esoteric texts.[96]

According to Rand, the equation of the military commander with a sage reflected a rough parity that existed between the travelling *wu*-specialists, of whom the Strategists are the surviving written

[94] Julia Ching, "The Ancient Sages (sheng): their Identity and their Place in Chinese Intellectual History." *Oriens Extremus* 30 (1983-1986): 2-6, 12, 14.
[95] Rodney L. Taylor and Howard Y.F. Choy, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, *Part II: N-Z* (New York: The Rose Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 511-512, 603-605.
[96] Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 58-59.

remains, and their *wen*-specialist colleagues who were equally mobile. Both offered sagely advice on different spheres of governance travelling from court to court and giving advice to rulers whilst insisting on a freedom and autonomy to implement their ideas on the basis of the sagely credentials.[97] By the time of the Warring States the Strategists represent a kind of military specialization, but the common discourse and lifestyle they shared with other itinerant *wen*-specialists cast doubt on any socio-cultural rift that might have formed between them and the rest of the intellectual elite. In conclusion, then, we could say that the Strategists offered an attractive - if fragmented – model of a military specialist with a certain moral autonomy as well, similar to the Confucian *junzi*. A further consequence of the sagely model was that the ideal military commander had to possess literacy as well, in order to contemplate military writings. The ideal military commander also combined *wen* with *wu*, although the extant five Strategists' texts dating from the Warring States period give no evidence that they saw this necessity as a specific socio-cultural *wen* aspect of the sagely military commander.

The Knight-Errant

The third socio-cultural archetype and moral exemplar which survived into the imperial age and would have its influence on the identity formation of *wen* and *wu* officials and (non-state actors) diverges from the previous two, because it is not rooted in a philosophical tradition of the Warring States. This ethos was closely associated with martial activities and belonged to the so-called knight-errant, or *xia* 侠 (there are many compound variations on this term, the most frequently used being *youxia* 游侠 to stress their *you* 游 "itinerant" nature). With Confucianism thus emphasizing rule through moral suasion and emulation of a perceived golden age during the early Zhou dynasty and before, the knights-errant were men of action and left no philosophical canon. Instead, their legacy lived on in literary depictions and their ideals could be surmised from their acts. Knights-errant had a moral code quite close to the chivalry of the Confucians, yet different also in other ways. The most important one was the Confucian commitment to particularity in social obligation: one's family and one's ruler came first. In contrast, knights-errant regarded everyone as equally important and for this reason it has been speculated that they were in fact an outgrowth of Mohism, which advocated universal reciprocal social obligations. James Liu discards

[97] Idem, 62-63.

this theory on the basis that the knights-errant fought for personal justice on a voluntary basis, whilst Mohists were embedded in a strict hierarchical structure and were dedicated to the avoidance of violence on principle. Another view holds that the *xia* originated from the socially and politically displaced Zhou nobility, which was destroyed in the course of the Warring States period. However, Liu discards this thesis as well, on the basis of a lack of references to *xia* in pre-Warring States sources and the reference to their low social status in the extant primary sources.[98]

Other smaller differences were the Confucian's preference for moderation in praxis in contrast to the knights-errant celebration of non-conformist behaviour. Knight-errant chivalry stressed the need to protect the weak against the strong and actively redress injustices, more often than not by the use of martial exploits.[99] Lien-sheng Yang describes their ethos and quotes the Han dynasty scholar Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145 – c. 86 BCE):

> The knights-errant were distinguished by their absolute reliability, which was their professional virtue. As described by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in his *Historical Memoirs*: "Their words were always sincere and trustworthy, and their actions always quick and decisive. They were always true to what they promised, and without regard to their own persons, they would rush into dangers threatening others." This is the way they responded to friends who really appreciated their worth. Always seeking to right wrongs, the knights-errant proved most helpful to people who desired to secure revenge.[100]

As such the knight-errant was an ideal-type which actually stressed non-state "governance" through *wu* instead of the *junzi*'s pursuit of *wen*-governance.

Another big difference with the *junzi* was knight's lack of moderation in behaviour, which partly sprang from their universalizing instead of particularistic ethics. The *junzi* could not always be sincere in his words, because it could conflict with what was right according to his moral code. According to Yang, a son was allowed to lie in order to hide his father's acts out of filial piety. One was also not allowed to sacrifice one's life when the parents were still alive for the same reason. The knight-errant had to respond to every act of kindness or malice in kind, the *junzi* turned the other cheek to a morally inferior man.[101]

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[98] Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, 2, 10-12.
[99] Idem, 1-12.
[100] Lien-sheng Yang, "The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in *Excursions in Sinology*, by Lien-sheng Yang (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 6.
[101] Yang, "The Concept of *Pao*," 306.

Knight-errantry with its almost anarchic tendencies was naturally not a very suitable ideology for a state official, although the knights did accept service in the private forces of powerful patrons during the Warring States period.[102] The Qin and Han empires attempted to suppress knight-errantry: it would not do for an empire to have Robin Hood-esque vagabonds roaming around dispensing justice in the name of an implied moral autonomy existing separately from that of the justice meted out by the empire. For the Legalist Qin empire, agriculture and war were the only two activities beneficial to a state, and Hanfeizi perhaps for this reason argued that Confucians and knights-errant contributed to disorder by not strengthening the state in these respects.[103] Legalism envisioned the universal military service of the entire agricultural population of a state in a combined civil-military existence, which left no place for the military as a specialized profession.[104] Yet, the ideology of knight-errantry and its adherents never completely disappeared and lived on in society and the arts. While Confucianism is often associated with elite literate culture, knight-errantry seems to have had a more diverse social base.[105] However, the celebration of knights-errant in poetry and other literary works meant that it certainly had its appeal to the literate elite as well and would continue to serve as a moral exemplar to follow in spirit, if not in practice.[106] The attractiveness of this socio-cultural identity might have lain in its combination of moral autonomy, an itinerant and free lifestyle, social inclusiveness, and an emphasis on martial activities.

The Rujiang

Much later in Chinese history, against the backdrop of the mid-Tang dynasty, there developed a new model-exemplar. This was a type of military commander that shared civil elite values with the capacity to command troops into battle, the scholar-general, or *rujiang* 儒將. This new ideal of the general was thus already nascent in the late Tang empire, when some scholar-officials expressed their preference for military commanders who went out in the field as generals, and returned to the civil fold as a bureaucrat. These should be either loyal full-time military officials, or civil officials who had enough competence to function in both the *wen* and *wu* state spheres.[107]

[102] Rand, "The Role of Military Thought," 236-237.
[103] Han Feizi, *Basic Writings*, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 106.
[104] Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, 131.
[105] Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, 2-4.
[106] Idem, 71; Yang, "The Concept of *Pao*," 295.
[107] McMullen, "The Cult of Ch'i T'ai-kung," 76.

According to Liu, an important element of this model general was his ideological affinity: "[…] within the realm of learning, the "scholar-general" should, by definition, give priority to Confucian ethics and scholarship, rather than to statecraft, laws, Taoist teachings, Buddhist doctrines, or other kinds of learning."[108] However, I argue that this connection with Confucianism was not prevalent yet. One important historical exemplar for the *rujiang* was Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234), a late Han military commander and statesman who was also known for his Daoist leanings.[109]

We have seen how *wen* and *wu* had both different meanings and differing importance in the various Chinese philosophic traditions. Furthermore, these traditions yielded a number of ideal archetypes one could model one's identity on, which also included a mix *wen* and *wu* virtues. The knight-errant, together with the *junzi,* the sagely general, and the *rujiang* would retain their attraction on the social and political elites of imperial China - both in and out of state service - after the Warring States period, as we shall see in my consideration of the development of the institutional and social-cultural aspects of *wen* and *wu* in social reality from the Song to the Ming dynasties. These archetypes and their popularity among the civil elite are one way to gauge their oft-posited pacifist bias. Another is surveying what we can know about the ideological inculcation of this civil elite and the significance of a Confucian anti-war tendency as part of it. Both phenomena will be examined in the next chapter, however, I will first briefly look at the course of *wen* and *wu* relations during the Han and the Tang dynasties, before considering why the Song formed a discontinuity in this regard.

[108] Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, "Ho Ch'ü-fei and Chu Hsi on Chu-ko Liang as a "Scholar-General"," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 25 (1995): 77-94, 78.
[109] Wills, *Mountain of Fame*, 106.

Chapter 2 – The Separation of *Wen* and *Wu*

Developmental Cycles of Imperial Civil-Military Relations before 960

Instead of gradually drifting apart as during previous dynasties, during the Song a definitive separation of *wen* and *wu* in institutional and socio-cultural terms took shape, which carried over into succeeding dynasties. If we look at the preceding long-lasting Han and Tang dynasties, this separation in both cases developed gradually along largely similar lines, but was not a fixture over imperial governance right from the beginning, in contrast to the Song. In institutional terms, the Han dynasty, which succeeded the Qin after a brief reign of less than two decades, followed the precedent of universal military service of its peasant subjects. This system, nevertheless, began to lose its importance over the course of the dynasty, because the geopolitical reasons it has been created for changed when the Warring States were unified in a single empire. The nature of conflict changed therefore: internal conflicts between sedentary Han armies would continue to occur, but the most important external enemies of the empire were nomadic and thus cavalry-based armies. Therefore, the army with its recruitment based on universal subscription of peasant levies did not meet the changed military circumstances. The military centre of gravitas moved towards the frontiers, were permanent commands were set up, staffed by volunteers, criminals or non-Chinese nomads who mostly served indefinitely. This new arrangement was cheaper to maintain than a system of universal conscription, and it also reduced the risk that internal militarization entailed, namely that of internal elites forming private armies composed of trained peasants and other dependents.[110]

The Tang dynasty, which was led by an aristocratic elite of mixed Han Chinese and Turkic descent, went through roughly the same developmental cycle.[111] The Chinese component of this army would consolidate itself into the so-called *fubing* 府兵 system, the backbone of the early Tang armed forces, that would operate alongside nomad cavalry forces. The details of its early organization are unclear, but in its mature form it entailed Chinese farmers who were assigned

[110] Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 16-17, 24-25; Mark E. Lewis, "The Han Abolition of Universal Military Service," in *Warfare in Chinese History*, edited by Hans van de Ven (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 36-39, 41-48, 52-61.
[111] Mark Edward Lewis, *China between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 81.

land to farm (or at least receive the income from) in exchange for military service. They were organized in units, which rotated in turn to the capital for the military-part of their occupation, while the rest of the time they were engaged in farming. The officers, often partly or completely from a non-Chinese background, were kept in the political centre, which kept them from establishing personal ties with their Chinese *fubing* troops.[112] Again, the locus of conflict shifted to opponents outside of the confines of the empire, often of a nomadic nature. In the course of the eighth century there was a shift from military centralization towards frontier decentralization, for reasons of military efficiency. Frontier governorships were established staffed, initially, by Han Chinese aristocrats or holders of a degree of the newly established examination system, but later they were succeeded by commanders of non-Chinese origins.[113] The troops they commanded also became enlisted on a more permanent basis from amongst the landless, supplemented by conscripted peasants. The *fubing*, in the meantime, were undermined by socio-economic changes as well. Wealthy landholders were consolidating large landed estates at the expense of the small-holding farmers who had formed the basis of the *fubing* labour pool. The nature of the officer's class also underwent changes: whereas during the early Tang civil and military officials were drawn from the same mixed aristocracy, during the eighth century the literate and more culturally refined would prefer civil careers over military assignments, leaving the latter to become the preserve of lower social classes.[114]

Wen and *wu* identities in the socio-cultural sense tended to drift apart over time because of this similar institutional dynamic. What can we know about the shape *wen* and *wu* identities took, and can we posit an influence of Confucianism on this process? If we look at the Han, the majority of the bureaucratic appointees was selected on the basis of recommendation by other officials. Despite the much-vaunted declaration of Confucianism as state orthodoxy during the Han, the state

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[112] Albert E. Dien, "The Role of the Military in the Western Wei/Northern Chou State," in *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, edited by Albert E. Dien (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 332, 336, 346; David A. Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300-900* (London: Routledge, 2002), 114; Lewis, *China between Empires*, 84-85.

[113] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Introduction," in *Military Culture in Imperial China*, edited by Nicola Di Cosmo (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4-5

[114] Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*, 208-216; David A. Graff, "The Reach of the Military: Tang," *Journal of Chinese History* 1 (2017): 244-253; David A. Graff, "The Sword and the Brush: Military Specialisation and Career Patterns in Tang China, 618-907," *War and Society* 18.2 (2000): 9-19; Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "What is the Meaning of `War' in an Age of Cultural Efflorescence? Another look at the Role of War in Song Dynasty China (960-1279)," in *War in Words: Transformations of War from Antiquity to Clausewitz, edited by* Marco Formisano and Hartmut Bohme *(Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 93.*

also exerted very little control over the actual contents of its learning and inculcation of officials. From 134 BCE onwards it was possible to enter the civil bureaucracy on the basis of service within the Imperial Academy, an institution staffed with specialists on one of the *Five Classics*, which was created to ensure the transmission of these texts. Furthermore, irregular examinations were held by the emperor in the palace, in which he would select advisors amongst candidates on the basis of their answers. However, the number of people selected on these grounds remained small.[115] Further evidence that Confucianism was far from hegemonic is provided by the intellectual leanings of parts of the serving and non-serving civil elites at the end of the Han, many of whom sought a cure to the ails of their predicament in either Daoism or Legalism.[116]

For the Tang there is also a lack of compelling evidence that Confucianism permeated the civil bureaucracy and encouraged a socio-cultural divergence between *wen* and *wu*.[117] At the beginning of the dynasty, most appointees were again selected by recommendation. The later re-implementation of the examination system only recruited a minority of civil officials. Did these examinations provide an inherent anti-military bias derived from Confucian ideology? If we look at the content of the examinations, it is clear that a candidate's ability to compose *belles-lettres* was tested primarily, and that knowledge of the classics was secondary most of the time. Far from being a monopoly of Confucian ideology, the examinations also allowed testing Daoist thought. Neither was there an interpretative orthodoxy pertaining to the classics in force during the Tang.[118] We also know that the number of texts that were recognized as a classic was still in flux at this time, with Tang texts referring to a number of nine.[119]

The evidence that Confucianism disinclined civil elites from warlike pursuits and contributed to a broadly shared anti-war sentiment is sparse. There is a stronger case to be made for a social, and to a lesser extent, cultural divergence between *wen* and *wu* elites because of institutional changes resulting from the pressures of warfare with nomadic enemies. From the

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[115] Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000), 5.
[116] John E. Wills, Jr, *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 102.
[117] Jonathan Karam Skaff, "Tang Military Culture and its Inner Asian Influences," in *Military Culture in Imperial China*, edited by Nicola Di Cosmo (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 171-179; Howard J. Wechsler, "The Confucian Impact on early T'ang Decision-Making," *T'oung Pao* 66.1-3 (1980): 9-10, 32-35.
[118] Elman, *A Cultural History*, 8-12; Hans H. Frankel, "T'ang Literati: A Composite Biography," in *Confucian Personalities*, edited by Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchet (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), 65-68, 83.
[119] Nylan, *The Five Confucian Classics*, 18.

review of historiography, we can surmise a relative "barbarization" of *wu*, but also its differentiation from *wen* in geographical terms. Already during the Qin and early Han, *wen* and *wu* seem to have been regional specialities. The eastern part of the Yellow River plain around Luoyang was the centre of textual learning, and in the course of the dynasty it would become the political heart of a demilitarized interior standing in sharp contrast to a militarized northern and north-western frontier. The northwest once again witnessed the genesis of a militarized conquest elite driving the unification in the shape of the Sui and Tang empires. However, in the course of the Tang, the demilitarized interior seems to have shifted more towards the south of China instead of mostly towards the east as during the Han. This was the consequence of a long-term process of a geographical shift in demographics which started occurring after the fall of the Han.[120] What changed during the Song dynasty that made the *wen*-*wu* divide permanent and how did this relate to geographical, institutional and socio-cultural factors?

A Broken Cycle: The Tang-Song Transition and *Wen* and *Wu*

Beginning with the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960, after six decades of political fragmentation after the end of the Tang empire, *wen* and *wu* would quite quickly during the dynasty be set up as two separate realms in institutional and socio-cultural terms, instead of gradually drifting apart as during previous dynasties. Furthermore, in this section I will argue that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a redefinition of Confucianism rose to the fore, which further bolstered the socio-cultural *wen* and *wu* divide by redefining literati identity, a change which would become permanent during the Ming empire when it had come to dominate the content of the civil service examination system.

The politically fragmented period prior to the establishment of the Song was characterized by a dominance of military men, and ended with one of the regimes in the north achieving hegemony, which was then instrumentalized to conquer the independent polities in the south. The newly unified Song dynasty that emerged in 960 was initially dominated by a military elite as well, and I would argue that there is no reason to assume that the new dynasty could not have followed the same trajectory of development. During the earlier tenth century, for example, there were many military officers who gained an appreciation of civil literati culture and encouraged their sons to

[120] Lewis, *China between Empires*, 6-7.

engage in literati learning.[121] I argue, based on the historical precedents set by the Han and Tang empires, that this group probably would have formed the nucleus of a renewed complementary *wen-wu* ruling elite, at least during the early part of the dynasty. The founder of the Song dynasty, himself a military man, even concluded a deal with his senior military subordinates to relinquish their military commands in return for an elevated status of them and their families by marriage into the imperial clan.[122] However, the dynasty was characterized from nearly the beginning to the end by a marked dominance of the civil bureaucracy over its military counterpart and this was the result of institutional choices that were made during the early part of the dynasty.[123] Most of the institutional measures to ensure this were old wine in new bottles, as Graff has argued. However, the degree to which they were implemented seem to have reached a new high under the Song.[124] But did these institutional changes alone make this rift between *wen* and *wu* a lasting one after the Tang straight into the Ming? I will argue below that a trio of interlocking circumstances provided the Song dynasty with a kind of "blank slate", which, I argue, facilitated breaking a cyclical continuity of *wen* and *wu* developments characterizing earlier Chinese military history. Furthermore, two conscious institutional changes institutionalized this break in continuity.

The first of these was permanent shift of the demographic and economic centre of the empire southwards away from the flow of the Yellow River, which had been the core area of Chinese polities since the Zhou dynasty, towards the Yangzi Valley and beyond. This shift, as already noted above, had been a long-term development, but it was accelerated by the Huang Chao rebellion.[125]

The second was the destruction of the old Tang aristocracy, which meant the Song elites would have a new composition. The destruction of the aristocracy at the end of the Tang dynasty *de facto* destroyed the hereditary manpower pool from which both military and civil officials had been drawn.[126]

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[121] Fang Cheng-Hua, "Power Structures and Cultural Identities in Imperial China: Civil and Military Power from late Tang to early Song Dynasties (A.D. 875-1063)" (PhD diss., Brown University, 2001), 128-133.
[122] Peter Lorge, "The Northern Song Military Aristocracy and the Royal Family," *War & Society* 18.2 (2000): 44.
[123] John Richard Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers: Perception and Management of the Military in Northern Sung China (960 -ca. 1060)" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1981), 228-229; Edmund Henry Worthy, Jr., "The Founding of Sung China, 950-1000: Integrative Changes in Military and Political Institutions" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1976), 4.
[124] Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*, 244-247.
[125] Adam Fong, "Ending an Era: The Huang Chao Rebellion of the Late Tang, 874-884," *East-West Center Working Papers* 26 (2006): 9-10.
[126] Elman, *A Cultural History*, 12-15.

The third was the isolation of the Song from the steppe and nomad groups by the emergence of several hybrid empires to the north of the dynasty. These were hybrid in the sense that they combined Chinese imperial institutions with non-Chinese elements, but featured a non-Chinese ruling elite. This meant that the Song would lack the infusion of non-Chinese groups with martial specialties. In contrast with the Tang dynasty, Song control did not reach as far to the north and the northwest and these former Tang-territories were now ruled by the non-Chinese Tangut Western Xia (1038-1227) and Khitan Liao (907-1125) empires. The Liao would later be conquered and succeeded by the Jürchen Jin (1115-1234), and both were constituted by groups of conquerors originating from the steppe.[127] The Jin would even drive back the Song behind the Huai River after 1127, which runs between the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. For the entirety of its existence then, large parts of the North China plains and the north-western interface with the steppe were outside of the control of Song governance, despite attempts to reconquer these areas.[128] At the same time the ethnic barriers between Chinese and non-Chinese seemed to be hardening. On the one hand, Mark Elliot (via Karl Wittfogel and Feng Chia-sheng) hypothesizes that non-Chinese conquest regimes like the Liao, Jin, and later the Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing as well, legitimized their rule on the basis of their superiority in *wu* and the superiority of *wu* over *wen*. This only worked, however, if they could maintain their ethnic identity, group cohesion, and martial abilities to impress and intimidate their larger group of Chinese subjects.[129] Amongst the literate elite of the Song, on the other hand, the political chaos and militarism of the mid-to-late Tang and the transition to the Song created an anti-foreign backlash and a return to indigenous practices and systems of thought. The study of the classics rose in importance again for the morality and ideology contained therein and the distinction between "barbarian" and Chinese would come to revolve around the possession of these attributes. The theoretical possibility that non-Chinese could cross this boundary by becoming classicists was generally not acknowledged, however.[130]

The first deliberate institutional shift was a change in recruitment practices, which during most of the Song would be implemented through an enlarged examination system, recruiting a

[127] Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 10-13.
[128] Charles Hartman, "Sung Government and Politics," in *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 5, Part 2: Sung China, 960-1279*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 28.
[129] Mark C. Elliot, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 5.
[130] Shao-yun Yang, "Reinventing the Barbarian: Rhetorical and Philosophical Uses of the *Yi-Di* in Mid-Imperial China, 600-1300" (PhD diss., University of California, 2014), 1, 90-91.

majority of the empire's civil bureaucrats from amongst the wealthy landholders of the traditionally less militarized south of the realm. The civil examination system instituted during the Tang, but continued in much greater scope during the Song dynasty effectively divorced *wen* and *wu* elites from each other, and the wen elites increasingly disdained *wu* lifestyles as well as anything to do with manual labour. Gawlikowski explained this as a backlash of a newly empowered meritocratic elite against the values and lifestyles of an older closed aristocratic elite, which had dominated the imperial power structures for so long.[131] The replacement of this aristocratic elite by a new meritocratic one was no doubt aided by its near-annihilation during the violent transition between the Tang and Song dynasties. As Nicolas Tacket has demonstrated, the new elites of the Song empire had provincial origins different from the empire-wide aristocracy which had dominated Tang politics until 880.[132] A side effect of this development, which radically reformed the power structures of the empire, was a demotion of the military as a sphere of *wu* activities. Henceforth, to become part of the elite - or rather: to have one's elite status confirmed – one needed to successfully pass the civil service examinations. For the military, despite the infrequent existence of military service examinations, there was no comparable incentive. With the divorce of *wen* and *wu* social groups, the *wen* side as part of the settlement gained all the cultural capital and prestige, leaving *wu* with meagre scraps of infrequent recognition in times of crisis. During the Song dynasty military officers were often drawn from the lower social classes and not appointed on the basis of merit, and the soldiers received little remuneration and were often used as a pool of menial labour instead of an army.[133] The civil examination system created a civil elite that was inculcated with a shared knowledge of norms and values that were derived from a limited number of classical texts. According to Harriet Zurndorfer, the preferred texts displayed the Confucian traits that tended to downplay martial accomplishments for civil virtuous rule and admonished against pro-active military policies.[134] The Song bifurcation between recruitment practices of the *wen* and *wu* branches of government institutionalized differing selection criteria. Although not formalized like during the Ming, the Song military was often

[131] Krzystof Gawlikowski, "The Concept of Two Fundamental Social Principles: *Wen* 文 and *wu* 武 in Chinese Classical Thought, Part Two," 37-39.
[132] Nicolas Tacket, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), 231-34.
[133] Fang, "Power Structures," 276-277; Michael Charles McGrath, "Military and Regional Administration in Northern Sung China (960-1126)" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1982), 215.
[134] Zurndorfer, "What is the Meaning of `War' in an Age of Cultural Efflorescence?," 96.

recruited on the basis of heredity. To ensure the continuation of a military skillset, the Song made use of the artisan-like transmission of military skills and knowledge from father to son.[135] The Song court also tried to increase the level of professionalism of Song officers by instituting a military examination system which tested the mastery of a written canon of military texts. Yet, the men which this system trained more often than not used their proven literary credentials to gain posts in the civil bureaucracy.[136]

The second institutional shift was a conscious restriction on the exercise of military power by officials. Quite soon after establishing control, the initial Song emperors undertook measures to constrain the power of their military elites. As a result of the looming and threatening precedent of the An Lushun rebellion, the founder of the Song dynasty was quick to assert control by civil officials over the Bureau of Military Affairs and he instituted a rotating command system which was designed to counteract the forming of bonds of personal loyalty between generals and their soldiers.[137] The elite troops were withdrawn to the centre of the empire and put under control of the central government institutions. This left the frontier commanders with inferior troops. In addition, local militias and non-Han units under loose control of the dynasty were established in the inland and frontier areas of the empire.[138] Finally, the *wu*-branch would be increasingly subjugated to civilian bureaucratic oversight, which would ultimately reduce military officials to simply executing the tasks civil officials forwarded to them.[139] Exchange between the two branches did not happen to any meaningful degree anymore, like it had during the early Tang. Civil officials did not aspire to military posts, and military men could never expect to be put in a position of authority within the civil bureaucracy. Some civil officials through their positions in the civil bureaucracy did involve themselves in military matters, but mostly as commanders in the rear directing strategic affairs.[140] They by and large did not lead troops personally in the field and did not possess any relevant degree of martial arts expertise.[141] This barrier between the two branches when it came to service also existed on the socio-cultural level. Military officers could

[135] Fang, "Military Families and the Southern Song Court," 51-53.
[136] Fang Cheng-hua 方震華, "Wenwu jiujie de kunjing – Songdai de wuju yu wuxue" 文武糾結的困境─宋代的武舉與武學, *Taida lishi xuebao* 臺大歷史學報 33 (2004): 37-39.
[137] Dreyer, "Continuity and Change," 33-34
[138] Peter Lorge, "Military Institutions as a Defining Feature of the Song Dynasty," *Journal of Chinese History* 1 (2017): 272-273; McGrath, "Military and Regional Administration," 10, 39, 166-167, 216.
[139] Idem, 323.
[140] Fang, "Power Structures," 256-257.
[141] Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts*, 118.

not hope to associate the families associated with civil officials and the latter often disparaged the former's lack of cultural and moral refinement. Civil officials conceived of themselves as inhabiting a moral universe different from their military counterparts: whereas they served out of integrity, their martial colleagues were only motivated by material gain.[142]

Not all modern scholars are in agreement about the speed and comprehensiveness of the shift between *wen* and *wu* during the Song dynasty.[143] First of all, the eclipse by a southern non-military elite of civil degree holders of the military elite was a process that did not happen suddenly with the establishment of the Song, but unfolded slowly during the northern phase of the dynasty (960-1127) and became fully-fledged only during the southern phase (1127-1278).[144] The highest ranks of officers did tend to be northerners belonging to a militarized class of local magnates. Some of them were associated with the imperial family by marriage, and the majority formed a *de facto* hereditary pool of military leadership. On account of their close ties with the imperial family, these military officers were often well-off and politically powerful. In theory, they were selected on the basis of meritocratic principles, but in practice the court recruited them from amongst a limited labour pool. Members of this pool were often provided with protection privileges, like *yin* 陰, which meant they could pass their positions on to descendants. Furthermore, although there was more bureaucratic restraint on their autonomous power, this was compensated by general high social status and ample material rewards. Only during the second half of the dynasty, the Southern Song (1127-1279), did the military suffer a significant loss of status and power. This phase of the dynasty was characterized by the loss of the northern areas to Jürchen invaders, which uprooted the northern military aristocracy. With the establishment of the Southern Song, the military was not able to restore its previous strong ties with imperial family.[145] This lack of a stake in the established order might have motivated the defection of key military officers to the Mongols in the thirteenth century, leading to the conquest of the empire. An important general, Lü Wende 呂文德 (d. 1269) built up a network of family members in military functions at the frontier, buttressed by friendships with key civil officials. However, with the right incentives, the Mongols were able

[142] Fang, "Power Structures," 323-326.
[143] Elad Alyagon nuances the civil-military binary by pointing out that recent Chinese research demonstrates the existence of career paths in between both branches. Furthermore, seen from the perspective of the whole of Song society, both civil and military officials can be seen as elites. See Elad Alyagon, "Inked: Song Soldiers, Military Tattoos, and the Remaking of the Chinese Lower Class, 960-1279," (PhD diss., University of California, 2016), 5-6.
[144] Lorge, "The Northern Song Military Aristocracy," 46-47.
[145] Li, "The Emperor's Generals," 213-228.

to persuade this group of officers to defect.[146] The rank-and-file soldiers were the real victims of *wen – wu* divide. The military almost became a mere penal institution into which criminals and other undesirables were increasingly recruited, often as cheap manual labour instead of military manpower. One recent treatment of the topic even refers to the entire system as the "penal-military complex".[147]

Institutionally then, the new arrangements of the Song empire led to the social divergence of *wen* and *wu* elites. How did this divide impact the socio-cultural identity of *wen* and *wu* officials? I will first turn to the influence of Confucianism on the civil elite of the empire. The civil and military officials became two distinct socio-cultural groups during the Song, each with their own recruitment system into government service and geographical origin. On the basis of these phenomena it is possible to declare the Chinese elite "unwarlike", but only if we only regard the literati, and their corollary in government service, the scholar-officials, as the elite. Furthermore, this characterization can only be applied to the literati's own identity and personal comportment, which can be traced in idealized depictions of scholar-officials in contemporary literature. According to Song Geng, the bodily rhetoric of the Confucian in Song (and also Yuan and Ming) literature put the mind above the body and, for example, featured scholars who suppressed their heterosexual desires: "By repression of the body and cultivation of the mind, it is hoped that the control of the world by knowledge, virtue and righteousness can be achieved." Song contrasts this late imperial image of the Confucian with the behaviour of Confucius himself, as depicted in the *Lunyu*. Here he appears as an archer, horseman, hunter, and a traveller.[148] However, an anti-war Confucian bias is much harder to detect in strategic policy formulations by the scholar-officials. Yuan-kang Wang analysed the behaviour of the Song empire towards its external enemies, and came to the conclusion that Confucian aversion to war mostly came into play to justify accommodationist policies towards enemies when the empire was weak. When the empire was strong, offensive military action was often proposed by the civil officials. Wang concludes the Song elites usually acting according to structural realist assumptions, i.e. putting the survival of the state first and striving for the increase of its relative power vis-à-vis rival states.[149] Wang thus

[146] Fang, "Military Families and the Southern Song Court," 66-68.
[147] Alyagon, "Inked," 114-116.
[148] Song Geng, *The Fragile Scholar: Power and Masculinity in Chinese Culture* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 96.
[149] Wang, *Harmony and War*, 74-76, 99-100.

disregards the role of normative ideologies in the shaping of military policies. Arthur Waldron, however, contends that the military behaviour of the Song can be explained by reference to both Confucian and Legalist thinking about war and peace. From the perspective of the Song, the armies were not engaging in offensive war, but recovering territories lost to northern non-Chinese regimes. Moreover, this could be further legitimized by Confucianism and Legalism as a "just" war of punishment.[150] When we look at the contents of the civil service examinations, it is possible to discern that for most of the dynasty its content was not dominated by Confucian works with the strongest anti-war message. During the early years of the dynasty the Tang stress on abilities in *belles-lettres* was continued, although during the later Northern Song and Southern Song the study of the classics regained relevance, this time including the texts attributed to Confucius and Mencius.[151] Men thus entered the civil official elite based on either their skills in literary *wen* or classicist *wen*, the same bifurcation Bol noticed when studying the Jin literati. However, what was being regarded as a classic was still in flux, as during the Song thirteen works were commonly regarded as such, in contrast to Han and Tang times.[152] Neither was the bureaucracy entirely staffed by self-styled Confucian *junzi.* Until the last decades of the dynasty, pragmatic statesmen with little patience for Confucian philosophizing like Jia Sidao 賈似道 (1213-1275) could still rise to the apex of the civil bureaucracy.[153] On the other hand, influential military commanders like Yue Fei and Lü Wende acculturated to the civil official elite in matters of etiquette and behaviour, but neither seem to have genuinely subscribed to Confucianism either, as we saw in the introduction.

On the basis of the strategic thinking of the Song civil elite we can either conclude that Confucianism had either not led to an overwhelmingly pacifist bureaucracy because it was not hegemonic, or that realist pragmatism and/or idealist Legalism continued to be important influences on the bureaucrats' ideological leanings. Both conclusions are not mutually exclusive either. What can we know about the influence of the Strategists and knight-errantry on the *wen* and *wu* elites during the Song?

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[150] Arthur Waldron, "Reviewed Work(s): Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics by Yuan-kang Wang," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 70.4 (2011): 1146-1148.
[151] Elman, *A Cultural History*, 15-17, 26.
[152] Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, 18.
[153] Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao (1213-1275): A "Bad Last Minister"?," in *Confucian Personalities*, edited by Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), 233-234.

Five of the Stratagists' text dating from the Warring States and two later ones were canonized as the *Seven Military Classics* (*Wujing qishu* 武經七書), which were slightly altered to stress civil virtues. Some passages that argued for a sharing of power between the ruler and his (military) officials were deleted and the language was simplified.[154] The were canonized by the civil bureaucrats during the early Song dynasty to serve as the texts with which military officers were to be examined in an examination system.[155] Through the *de facto* heredity of many military positions, the military might have lacked an incentive to ameliorate their deficiencies in the area of literacy. Indicative of this trend is the fact that the three most important military treatises to appear in the late Tang and early Song dynasties, the *Tai bai yin jing* 太白陰經 (*Secret Classic of Venus*), the *Hu qian jing* 虎鈐經 (*Classic of the Tiger Seal*), and the *Wujing zongyao* 武經總要 (*Essentials for the Military Classics*) were all written and compiled by literati and civil bureaucrats, not by professional military men, although the author of the *Hu qian jing* apparently embarked on a largely unsuccessful military career for a while.[156] This lack of literacy on the part of professional military men meant that new developments in thought would not be penned by seasoned veterans, but by "armchair generals" with theoretical knowledge. This would ensure that treatises by post-Han literate commanders like Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220)[157], Zhuge Liang,[158], and early Tang statesmen like Li Jing 李靖 (571-649)[159] would remain part of a mostly discontinued lineage of military knowledge forged in the heat of battle until the times of Qi Jiguang. According to Fang, military writings had come to be regarded as inauspicious by the majority of the literati at the end of the Tang dynasty, but there would be attempts by small groups of literati and individuals to increase military learning (if not praxis in the shape of martial arts) among their peers.[160] Whilst

[154] Zhou Xingtao 周兴涛. "`Wujing qishu' queding ji gaidong 《武经七书》确定及改动. *Kunming xueyuan xuebao* 昆明学院学报 34.4 (2012): 64, 68-69.
[155] Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 1-2.
[156] Marcia Butler, "Reflections of a Military Medium: Ritual and Magic in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Chinese Military Manuals." (PhD diss., University of Cornell, 2007), 17-18, 36-37, 42-44; Herbert Franke, "Siege and Defense of Towns in Medieval China," in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*, edited by Frank Kierman Jr., John K. Fairbank, and Edward L. Dreyer. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 196; Rand, "Li Ch'üan and Chinese Military Thought," 111-112.
[157] Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, "Introduction," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, edited by Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 9; Xu Baolin 许保林, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan* 中国兵书通览 (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1990), 151-154.
[158] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 127-130.
[159] Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*, 192.
[160] Fang, "Power Structures, 33-35, 292-295.

during the Tang there is some evidence that military commanders used the Strategists' texts out of their own volition,[161] the Song military exams produced degree holders with knowledge of these writings who mostly did not serve in the military hierarchy. Herbert Franke notes in this context that the most successful generals of the Song dynasty did not hold a military degree.[162] Under such conditions military learning assumed a marginal position, and presumably most knowledge was passed on orally within the military itself. Yue Fei was one of the exceptions, probably because he was a scion of a modest but literate family.[163] The tradition of the Strategists and the sagely general thus passed into the hands of a mostly non-practicing literati elite, some of whom did continue to write commentaries on these texts.[164]

As for the tradition of knight-errantry, it seems to have disappeared as a mainstream genre in *belles-lettres.* Liu explained this phenomenon as a result of the Neo-Confucian bias of literati during the Song. More recent scholarship has suggested, however, that this was more due to a geographical shift in the location of literati activity. These became predominantly southerners, who had little affinity with the knight-errantry traditions of the north. This ethos of knight-errantry would continue to live on amongst the military elite of the Song along the northern frontier, but was much less visible because it was hardly preserved in writings for posterity.[165] According to Elad Alyagon, further evidence of a military ethos should perhaps be sought in the famous novel *The Water Margin* (*Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳), which was published during the Ming, but perhaps is based on older oral traditions. It depicts the militarized northern society of the Northern Song, where an important exemplar was constituted by the *haohan* 好漢, a "good fellow". The ethics it showcased included a thirst for violence, a bond of brotherhood between its adherents, heavy drinking, generosity towards friends, and a disinterest in sex and women.[166] The similarities with knight-errantry thus ran deep.

As with the Han and Tang empires, the prime mover driving the socio-cultural separation of *wen* and *wu* identities seems not have been Confucianism, but rather institutional factors and

[161] David Andrew Graff, "Early T'ang Generalship and the Textual Tradition (Volumes I and II) (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1995), 546
[162] Herbert Franke, *Studien und Texte zur Kriegsgeschichte der südlichen Sungzeit* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), 55-56.
[163] Wills, *Mountain of Fame*, 171.
[164] Yates, "Early Modes on Interpretation," 75.
[165] Yang, "The Emperor's Generals," 228-230.
[166] Alyagon, "Inked," 238-240.

geography. The Song dynasty was internally a very stable empire. It was ravaged by the occasional local rebellion, but none was ever life threatening for the polity. In contrast to the preceding Han and Tang, the Song was not brought down by centrifugal power imbalances between centre and frontier in combination with internal disturbances. It was brought down by a decades-long war of attrition with its diverse northern rivals in the thirteenth century. Incidences of major inland disturbances happened during the chaotic breakdown of central authority of the transition from Northern to Southern Song, which were eventually suppressed by the 1130s.[167] In contrast to the military history of the frontiers, little research has been done on non-frontier related instances of internal uprisings, which might colour our understanding of this topic. An exception is the uprising by tea merchants which reached southern inland provinces like Jiangxi, which have been studied in some detail by Huang. The Song dynasty gave licenses to tea merchants which allowed them to trade and transport the valuable and heavily-taxed commodity within the empire, but they supplemented their income with illegal private trade in collusion with the tea producers. In times of bad harvests and scarcity, the government would crack down hard on this private trade in order to safeguard the official quotas of the government-licensed monopolies. The tea merchants themselves availed of private military forces to protect their lucrative trade activities, and these forces clashed with government forces in several uprisings during the northern and southern phases of the dynasty.[168] Other than these occasions, however, and the upheavals that took place during the 1120s, the southern inland and coastal regions of the empire seemed to have been relatively untouched, a situation James Liu attributes to Song governance practices and relatively light taxation on peasants.[169] Only with the penetration of the Mongols in the southern inland areas in 1170s did there arise a phenomenon called "literati-turned-warriors", when a number of southern civil bureaucrats, like Jiangxi province's Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283), took up arms and

[167]Ari Daniel Levine, "The Reigns of Hui-tsung (1100-1126) and Ch'in-tsung (1126-1127) and the Fall of the Northern Sung," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 619-643; Tao Jing-shen, "The Move to the South and the Reign of Kao-tsung (1127-1162)," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 662-666.

[168] Huang K'uan-chong 黃寬重. "Nansong chashang Lan Wenzheng zhi luan" 南宋茶商賴文政之亂, in *Songshi yanjiu lunji kanxing hui* 宋史研究論集刊行會, edited by Liu Tsu-chien 劉子健 (Tokyo: Tong peng she chuban, 1989), 133, 138-139.

[169] Liu Tzu-ch'ien 劉子健. "Baorong zhengzhi de tedian" 包容政治的特黙, in *Liang Song shi yanjiu huibian* 兩宋史研究彙編, by idem (Taipei: Lian jing chuban gongsi, 1986), 47.

recruited men to fight against the invaders in southern provinces like his area of origin.[170] An explanation for the relative lack of involvement of local elites in military affairs can thus be sought in the apparent lack of a need for them to do so, besides purely socio-cultural factors. In the absence of comprehensive research, I speculate that this lack of necessity was also facilitated by the state's ability to extract resources: whereas the Song extracted an equal share of income in taxes from agricultural activity as the Ming empire did, but the Song extracted nine times as much from non-agricultural sectors of the economy. It leads Charles Hartman to conclude that: "But, that any state could extract such a burden from its population without generating substantial resistance demonstrates both its organizational efficiency and a general consensus on its goals and objectives between governors and governed."[171] Although, once again, comprehensive research is missing, I posit it allowed the Song empire the upkeep to maintain its military forces, without recourse to militias organized by local elites outside of state purview. Sukhee Lee, who studied the Ming Prefecture (Mingzhou 明州) in the southern coastal province of Zhejiang during the Southern Song, noted that with two rare exceptions, the local elite, which participated in the civil service examinations, did not involve itself in militia organizations, because the state was able to provide military security through its official forces.[172]

The picture that emerges is thus that the civil bureaucrat elite mostly had to involve themselves with the strategic policy side of military affairs, and that the social elites from which these bureaucrats were drawn only rarely had to concern themselves with military affairs in their locales. Despite Peter Lorge's claim that this civil involvement "militarized" these civil bureaucrats,[173] it would seem that it did not lead to an embrace of the same socio-cultural identities

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[170] Lin Shuen-fu, "The Fall of the Southern Song," in *The Cambridge History of Literature, Volume I: To 1375*, edited by Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 545-547. Horst Huber notes that Wen Tianxiang's thought was indebted to Zhu Xi. See: Horst Huber, "Wen T'ien-hsiang (1236-1283): Vorstufen zum Verständnis seines Lebens" (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität zu München, 1983), 14-15. Wen Tianxiang's writings, however, provide no evidence of his personal engagement with Strategist thought or knight-errantry, so it is unknown to what extent he was able to reconcile these *wu*-identities and philosophies with his Neo-Confucian inclinations. See: Jiang Guozhu 姜国柱, "Wen Tianxiang qi ren ji qi junshi sixiang" 文天祥其人及其军事思想, *Donghua ligong xueyuan xuebao* 东华理工学院学报 23.1 (2004): 30-35; Wen Tianxiang 文天祥, *Wen Tianxiang quanji* 文天祥全集 (Beijing: Shijie shujuban, 1936).

[171] Hartman, "Sung Government and Politics," 23-24.

[172] Sukhee Lee, "Negotiated Power: The State and Elites in 12th – 14th Century China" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009), 78-91.

[173] Peter Lorge, "The Rise of the Martial: Rebalancing *Wen* and *Wu* in Song Dynasty Culture," in *Civil-Military Relations in Chinese History: From Ancient China to the Communist Takeover*, edited by Kai Filipiak (London: Routledge, 2015), 141-142.

as the military, as can be gleaned from the disappearance of knight-errantry as a lofty ideal among the literati. So far, the *wen-wu* divide can be adequately explained by institutional and geographic factors giving rise to socio-cultural differentiations. However, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a philosophical movement would take root amongst these southern social elites, which would become the civil ideological orthodoxy of the late Mongol Yuan and Ming empires. It is to the implications of this philosophical movement for the civil elite conceptions of institutional and socio-cultural *wen-wu* relations that I will now turn, as this is the intellectual backdrop against which Qi Jiguang would have to fashion his own identity.

Neo-Confucianism and the *Wen-Wu* Divide

During the Southern Song a movement manifested itself, which put moral self-cultivation at the centre of Confucian learning and eventually eclipsed all other forms of Confucian scholastic identity by the time of the Yuan empire. This movement's message and canon was consolidated by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). In lieu of the hitherto growing number of classics, the movement eventually put forward a smaller canon of Four Books, which included the recorded sayings of Confucius (*Lunyu* 論語) and the text attributed to Mencius. Nylan posits one reason why Zhu Xi advocated these Four Books was because its smaller corpus made a homogenized interpretation easier.[174] One of the prime attractions of this movement, termed Neo-Confucianism by modern scholars, was that it legitimized the moral leadership in society of its followers. Its rise probably cannot be explained without reference to the civil service examinations, which increasingly produced a surplus of degree holders during the course of the Song dynasty. Even though there were many more successful candidates then available posts in government, literati valued their degrees, because it gave them social and cultural capital. Hilde de Weerdt has demonstrated that the movement's ideas were in part able to spread because of the knowledge circulation network that came in existence as a result of the examination system. The state had mostly withdrawn during the Southern Song from imposing examination standards and providing an empire-wide system of schooling. This was thus organized on local and regional levels by the literati themselves. At the same time, private publishers fed the book market with anthologies of successful

[174] Nylan, "A Problematic Model," 23-24.

examination teachers, course materials and annotated examination writings. The Neo-Confucians were part of this decentralized process of examination preparation and were able to integrate their moral message with their examination-oriented teaching activities. When in the thirteenth century one of the reigning emperors supported Neo-Confucianism, its teachings would gain significance in the higher levels of the examination system as well.[175] The growth of this movement was also tied to greater elite activism out of purview of the state. According to Peter Bol, exactly because state service was not a viable survival strategy for everyone anymore, members of the elite turned to ways to secure their positions in local society by involving themselves in community projects like famine relief granaries and educational establishments.[176]

This redefinition of Confucian learning and identity, known then as *daoxue* 道學 ("learning of the Way") I argue, narrowed the scope of activities and circumscribed the identity of the Confucian gentleman in such a way that caused a further distancing between the civil and military realms. This redefinition became so successful that it became the content of the civil service examination curriculum in the thirteenth century, and this redefinition would remain the sole state-sponsored Confucianism in this way until 1905.[177] This orthodoxy was based on the ideas of Zhu Xi, who consolidated the earlier ideas of the brothers Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) amongst others, and popularized them. The resulting ideology would be known as Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. Key point of this redefinition was the idea that, in the words of Bol, "[…] each individual was innately endowed with the patterns of the integrated processes of heaven-and-earth. It was only necessary, then, that men realize the "pattern of heaven" (*t'ien-li*) that was in their own nature, for this was the real foundation for a moral world."[178] This Neo-Confucianism shifted attention away from studying the textual tradition and the cumulative culture as the source of principles to the study of the patterns, or principles of heaven and earth. These principles had to be found by oneself with the mind, and only a select number of texts could guide one in this endeavour. Key to learning was the "investigation of things" (*gewu* 格物) to discover these principles, realize their coherence and conform oneself to them. Even though in theory, the

[175] Hilde de Weerdt, *Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127-1279)* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 378-380, 383-387.
[176] Peter K. Bol, "The `Localist Turn' and `Local Identity' in Later Imperial China," *Late Imperial China* 24.2 (2003): 5.
[177] Some modern scholars refer to the general revival of classical learning during the Song as Neo-Confucianism. I, however, use Neo-Confucianism here in its narrow meaning as the intellectual lineage consolidated by Zhu Xi.
[178] Bol, *"This Culture of Ours"*, 2.

study of texts had been dethroned as the most important focus of learning, in practice reading remained important. Certain texts were thought to contain the kind of moral knowledge Neo-Confucians sought, and could facilitate the process of apprehending principles. Zhu Xi consolidated these in a new canon, which would become the main curriculum of the civil examination system from the thirteenth century onwards. In addition to the *Five Classics*, these were the *Analects* by Confucius, Mencius' writings and two chapters from the classic the *Book of Rites*. These chapters were the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Great Learning* and all together would be known as the *Four Books*. The new canon would be completed with Zhu Xi's own commentary.[179]

Despite Neo-Confucianism moving away from mastering *wen* as the source of morality and ethics, bookish learning remained an important avenue for discerning the principles behind them. Zhu Xi's synthesis would become the basis of the movement and dominate the civil service examination system curriculum until the end of the imperial age. At the same time, this curriculum was narrowed down even more to a narrow set of texts identified with Confucianism. According to Bol, the literati associated with the movement also cultivated a certain identity manifested in outward clothing and behaviour. Seeking to demonstrate the moral worth of their philosophy and dedicating themselves to the defence of the cultural essence of the Chinese civilization, this group turned more and more away from practical affairs and military matters towards philosophy.[180] I posit that with the rise to hegemony of this Neo-Confucian within the social elite from which the civil bureaucrats were drawn, we can start speaking of a Confucianized *wen* elite. The classicist *ru* had become a Confucian *ru*, and its *wen* had been narrowed down to the exclusion of purely literary refinement or other philosophical traditions. It contended with other ideological currents, like the so-called *Yongjia* 永嘉-school, which advocated a more utilitarian approach to learning, but ultimately the morally strident Neo-Confucianist movement of Zhu Xi won out.[181]

The creation of a new narrow canon of texts in the course of the twelfth century as the basis for Confucian learning created, I contend, a tension with military theory and praxis with had hitherto not existed to such an extent. The Confucian identity that arose within the Neo-Confucian movement of the twelfth century was based on a narrow range of texts, the *Five Classics, Four*

[179] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism*, 105-106, 172-179.
[180] Fang, "Junwu yu ruye de maodun," 54.
[181] De Weerdt, *Competition over Content*, 384.

Books, and Zhu Xi's own writings, which articulated a Confucian value system which was in the end based on the values of the old nobility of the early Zhou dynasty, which Confucius had tried to revive. One scholar even contends that only with the rise of *daoxue* can we speak about Confucianism as a phenomenon *an sich*.[182]

Neo-Confucianism did have different aspirations, however. Whereas the key exemplar in the past had been the *junzi*, Neo-Confucianism exhorted its adherent to become sages. What was a "sage" exactly in the Neo-Confucian ideology? Like the military sage of the Strategists, the Confucian sage had perceptive abilities transcending that of ordinary men. In its most profound sense the sage was someone who could perceive Heaven and its principle (*tianli* 天理) and on the basis of that perception could implement this principle and the moral insights that came with it for the benefit of humanity as a whole. Heaven had evolved from an anthropomorphic deity during the Zhou to an abstract ultimate principle underlying reality during the Song dynasty.[183] By his very nature, a sage was therefore a legitimate leading actor in society. His perception of the heavenly principle gave him the moral authority to intervene in-, and shape the world around him and in theory also commanded the respect of his non-sagely peers.[184] The sage within Neo-Confucian discourse was also a very different and altogether more accomplished human being than the gentleman, or *junzi*, originally advocated by Confucius.[185] Sages had created *wen* in the sense of culture and had invented important civilizational achievements like agriculture and systems of water management. In fact, the essential duty of the Confucian was transmitting this *wen* to other people and succeeding generations, but an even higher accomplishment was of course to belong to the same category of people who had actually created w*en* in the first place, a main goal for Neo-Confucians as they had appeared during the Song. These included a number of mythical emperors of the remote past, King Wen and King Wu of the Zhou dynasty and of course Confucius himself.[186] This sage hood was in practice limited to a lucky few, however. Zhu Xi's metaphysics posited a bifurcation in reality between principle, *li* 理, and matter *qi* 氣. In his scheme, every

[182] Anne Cheng, "What Did It Mean to Be a *Ru* in Han Times?" *Asia Major* 14.2 (2001): 101.
[183] Kandice J. Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group: Culture and Society in Sixteenth Century China," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1987), 284-285.
[184] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 68-69.
[185] Stephen C. Angle, *Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21-22.
[186] Kenji Shimada, *Die neo-konfuzianische Philosophie: Die Schulrichtungen Chu Hsis und Wang Yang-mings*, translated by Monika Übelhör (Berlin: Verlag von Dietrich Reimer, 1987), 19-20, 26-27, 42.

principle was present in everything and everyone in the shape of the universal and multifaceted *tianli*, but the *qi* determined which facet – particularized *li* - of the *tianli* would be manifested in matter (or energy) in our everyday perceived world. The kind of *qi* that made up an individual also determined his or her moral capacity. Unfortunately, the *qi* of a person could be unclear or contaminated, which prevented persons thus endowed to achieve sagehood. Only people with clear uncontaminated matter could become sages according to Zhu Xi.[187] This endowment of *qi* and the way it determined one's potential for sagehood was referred to as *cai* 才, or "talent".[188] This Neo-Confucianism thus legitimized a distinction between morally superior and inferior men, which to a great extent was therefore predetermined. How did this relate to socio-cultural identities with a strong *wu*-inclination? I will gauge this by looking at the Cheng-Zhu point of view on the Strategists and knights-errant.

The moral values associated with both socio-cultural identities contrasted and clashed greatly with *wu*-identity and ideologies, as for example the military canon of texts which was formed in the early eleventh century in an attempt by the Song government to consolidate military knowledge and instruct military and civil officials. This attitude can be detected in Zhu Xi's attitude towards the military canon, which can be gauged from the following discussion of Duke Wen of Jin (697-628 BCE), a ruler of one the many *de facto* independent polities existing under the umbrella of the Zhou dynasty during the Spring and Autumn Period. He used crafty stratagems to draw out his enemy's forces, and compares them unfavourably with the *Sunzi* and *Wuzi*:

> Question: "Wen of Jin `being crafty and not upright'. Many commentators consider summoning the king as the craftiness of Wen of Jin. The commentary says 'he attacked [the state of] Wei in order to draw out Chu's [another state Duke Wen was often at war with] army, and plotted in secret in order to obtain victory.' This doctrine was successful." [Zhu Xi] said: "When Jin of Wen undertook affairs, many went like this. He was not willing to engage in upright engagements. Lü Bogong [Lü Zuqian 吕祖谦 (1137-1181)][189] discussed this part very well, but his explanation is excessively crafted. However, looking at the sections one by one, all are like this. Jin of Wen using the army is exactly in the spirit of the practice of Sun and Wu [Sun Wu and Wu Qi] of the Warring States Period."

[187] Kidder Smith, Jr. et al, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 170-172.
[188] P.J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000), 47; David W. Tien, "Metaphysics and the Basis of Morality in the Philosophy of Wang Yangming," in *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, edited by John Makeham (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 296-300.
[189] This was a scholar and contemporary of Zhu Xi. See Julia Ching, "Lü Tsu-ch'ien," in *Sung Biographies*, edited by Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), 744-747.

問：「晉文『譎而不正』，諸家多把召王為晉文之譎。集注謂『伐衛以致楚師，而陰謀以取勝』，這說為通。」曰：「晉文舉事，多是恁地，不肯就正做去。呂伯恭博議論此一段甚好，然其說忒巧。逐節看來，卻都是如此。晉文用兵，便是戰國孫吳氣習。」[190]

This discussion is preserved in the "Essay on Duke Wen of Jin being crafty and not upright" *Jin Wen gong jue'erbuzheng zhang* 晉文公譎而不正章, part of the "Master Zhu's categorized pronunciations" (*Zhuzi yu lei* 朱子語類) collection of his question and answer sessions with his disciples. The exemplar of the sagely general in the tradition of the Strategists was thus frowned upon.

The martial exemplar of the knight-errant came under similar criticism from Zhu Xi's precursors. For one of the Cheng brothers, the knights-errant and especially their values were a negative force for society. Whilst discoursing about the proper role of friends in relation to the family obligations of a Confucian, one of the Chengs remarks the following:

> You cannot promise friends to die for them; like the knights-errant of the Warring States, you are no longer there for your parents, yet you are avenging and vigilant on account of [other] people. This is extremely unprincipled.
> 不可許友以死；如戰國游俠；爲親不在，乃爲人復警，甚非理也. [191]

In another recorded saying, one of the Chengs explains why one should not try to emulate the knights-errant:

> There are things that are not allowed; like those of knight-errantry, if, as soon as their family has died, they thereupon avenge on account of [other] people and kill themselves, then they bring chaos to the people.
> 有不可者；如游俠之徒以親既亡．乃爲人報仇而殺身，則亂民也。[192]

Knight-errantry was thus a danger to social stability and also ran contrary to the family-centred values of the Confucians. The narrow Confucian identity proclaimed by leading thinkers of the

[190] Zhu Xi 朱子, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, *volume 2*, edited by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1006.
[191] Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤, *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 210.
[192] Idem, 1231

Neo-Confucian movement thus precluded much engagement with military thought and martial values and lifestyles.

Finally, the third martial socio-cultural exemplar, the *rujiang*, which had appeared during the Tang empire was subject to same moral restraint. In the context of the *wen*-*wu* bifurcation, I posit that this model arose precisely because there was a felt need amongst the civil officials for a class of military men who shared their identity, possessed a loyalty to the *wen*-centre of power instead of the *wu*-frontier, with an ability to militarily solve the problems the dynasty was facing. It was clear that the Song empire would need to strengthen the military to face the threats emanating from its northern neighbors, but fears for the danger of too much military autonomy had to be assuaged by ensuring their loyalty through an acculturation towards the civil elites. From the mid-eleventh through the mid-twelfth centuries many scholar-generals were thought to actually have risen to the occasion and conformed to this ideal-type, especially during the military emergencies arising during the transition from Northern to Southern Song.[193] After this timeframe there was a decline. One reason for this decline were the high moral standards the scholar-general had to aspire to, which I will argue below, most likely owed much to the rise of Neo-Confucianism during the Southern Song.

The ideal of the scholar-general, which we should now perhaps consider as Confucian-general, as articulated by Zhu Xi, amongst others, created a morally inflexible model that was almost impossible to live up to. Zhuge Liang, although championed by Zhu Xi at first as a *rujiang*, later Zhu's readings of his conduct showcased the irreconcilable differences between the value systems of the Neo-Confucians and certain *wu*-practices. It is here that we see the early Zhou noble values, adopted by the Confucians and the Neo-Confucians as the content of the *junzi*'s morality, clash with the more pragmatic *wu* conceptualizations of the use of military force. Zhuge Liang's warlord leader, Liu Bei (161-223) was once asked by governor Liu Zhang, controlling a remnant province of the Han empire, to help stop an attempted invasion by another warlord. Liu Zhang had a reputation for being a virtuous ruler, who had no ambition for expansion and merely tried to keep his realm peaceful. Liu Bei, however, planned to use the pretext of defending Liu Zhang's province as a stratagem to seize the province for himself. Zhuge Liang was implicated in the attack, which turned out to be successful, but Zhu Xi condemned this action for its lack of righteousness. If

[193] Yang Dequan and James T.C. Liu, "The Image of Scholar-Generals and a Case in the Southern Song," *Saeculum* 37 (1986): 184.

Zhuge Liang had really been a sage, he would not have participated in this military action.[194] According to *wu* values, the recourse to deceit and hidden agendas was probably to be applauded. It led to the extension of Liu Bei's powerbase and the spread of his awesomeness across a greater area. The recourse to subterfuge probably decreased the costs in terms of lives and resources. Yet, even though from a military strategic perspective it was a wise move, for Zhu Xi the action was not a righteous one. A further objectionable feature of Zhuge Liang's character was his limited learning. As learning was intimately tied with moral character in Zhu Xi's thought, this limited his potential as an exemplar of the Confucian-general.[195] Probably the difficulty of achieving this ideal motivated Zhu Xi to discourage military officers to engage in Confucian learning.

The very strict moral standards applying to the status of Confucian-general meant that very few military men were ever awarded this status in the official histories of the Song and Ming, both composed when Neo-Confucianism had achieved hegemonic status. In the official history of the Song dynasty this designation was only awarded to one general. For the entirety of Ming history, only two generals were regarded as such: "Wang K'o 王恪 (late 13th cent.) for being prudent, respectful, clever, and diligent; and Chang K'o-ta 張可大 (fl. 1602) for his love of learning, ability to compose poetry, and sincere and upright behavior."[196] To be recognized as a Confucian within the Neo-Confucian movement, whilst at the same time being engaged in the military, was an uphill battle which severely limited the acceptable praxis and values within the field of martial affairs.

This could be seen in the case of those few literati who chose a military career for themselves. The new Confucian identity that was fashioned seems to have been at odds with that of those scholars who had made a career in government service by involving themselves in military affairs. During the Southern Song and the precarious military situation at the frontier, this had become an attractive option for some. Fang traced the career of the Zhao family, who built a career lasting three generations as civil bureaucrats in military service. They did not just confine themselves to strategizing at the rear, but actively engaged in learning martial arts, led from the front, and performed martial prognostication. Their meritorious services gained them protection privileges for sons, enabling positions in the civil bureaucracy. However, they were criticized for their close relations with military officers, involvement in factionalism at the court, and were

[194] Tillman, "Ho Ch'ü-fei and Chu His on Chu-ko Liang as a `Scholar-General'", 85.
[195] Idem, 87
[196] Idem, 94

socially relatively isolated amongst the other bureaucrats. Fang posits that the influence of Neo-Confucianism may have contributed to this distancing, as it encouraged engagement with moral philosophy instead of practical military affairs.[197]

On the other side of the *wen-wu* balance, military officers that engaged in moral philosophy were frowned upon by Zhu Xi. In a section named "Discussing the military" (*lun bing* 論兵), Zhu Xi makes a telling observation about military officers acculturating to the literati elite. This shows that not all military men disdained the literati refined lifestyle and were willing to bridge socio-cultural gaps during the Song:

> Today's high ranking military officers are entirely without purpose, [they] are merely similar to a wealthy family's arrogant juniors, and that's it. They wear scholar's robes and broad belts, discuss the Way and principles [i.e. Confucian philosophy], talk about poetry and literature, and write good calligraphy. When there is trouble and they are dispatched in this condition, what is their benefit in relation to the affair?
> 今日將官全無意思，只似人家驕子弟了。褒衣博帶，談道理，說詩書，寫好字. 事發遣如此，何益於事？[198]

This is a clear criticism of the empire's officer corps by perhaps the most influential Neo-Confucian scholar. Surprisingly, he does not seem to welcome the acculturation of military men to the socio-cultural standards of the literati. He seems to depict this state of affairs as a vainglorious pursuit, which moreover hurts the efficacy of military officials with regards to their proper jobs. In Zhu Xi's view officers were not to dabble in philosophical pursuits as well, indicating a socio-cultural divide between the spheres of the military and civil officials which was apparently desired by Zhu Xi. Unfortunately, no systematic research has been done on the thoughts of other Song Neo-Confucians on the *wen wu* divide, but Zhu Xi was one of the leading thinkers within the movement and certainly one of the most influential. In this context, we should remember Bol's assessment that the Neo-Confucians were creating a distinct and visible identity for themselves, which included certain garb and praxis. Apparently a military profession did not mesh with this identity, providing a further explanation for the tensions between Confucianism and martial endeavours which Fang Cheng-hua detected in the thirteenth century when Neo-

[197] Fang Cheng-hua 方震華, "Junwu yu ruye de maodun – Hengshan Zhao shi wan Song tongbing wenguan jiazu" 軍務與儒業的矛盾 - 衡山趙氏與晚宋統兵文官家族. *Xin shixue* 新史學 17.2 (2006): 36-51.
[198] Zhu Xi 朱子, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, *volume 4,* edited by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 2440.

Confucianism was finally reaching acceptance in broad communities of literati and, eventually, even the state itself.[199] Ironically, Zhu Xi himself was a war hawk when it came to his stance towards accommodation with the northern steppe enemies.[200] He was not averse to war at all when part of China's cultural heartland was occupied, he just seemed to think that its execution should be left to men who in his eyes could not aspire to moral fibre anyway. I posit that this could be an extension of his ideas on *qi*: not everyone could have uncontaminated *qi*. Some were therefore predestined to other, less lofty, life pursuits, like the military. It made no sense for them to pretend otherwise. In this way, Neo-Confucianism lent philosophical legitimation to the *wen-wu* divide.

Such a demilitarized identity could only arise, I speculate, because these southern elites did not have to involve themselves with military affairs. However, two notable exceptions within the Neo-Confucian movement saw the need to involve themselves with military affairs exactly because an internal uprising in the south occurred. During the twelfth century, two of Zhu Xi's philosophical opponents within the Neo-Confucian movement were the southerners Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1192) (also known as Lu Xiangshan, whom we met in the introduction) and his brother Lu Jiuling 陆九龄 (1132-1180) hailing from Jiangxi province, who advocated the primacy of the heart-mind,[201] *xin* 心 instead of that of external principle as posited by Zhu Xi, and he questioned the worth of book learning to discover it, because all principle was in one's *xin*. Furthermore, the Lus disagreed with Zhu's postulation of a dualism between principle *li* and matter *qi*, and claimed that everything originates from the heart-mind, including principle.[202] Thus, the Way of Heaven is within us and does not exist external to human nature. Besides these philosophical differences with Zhu Xi, both Lu Jiuyuan and Lu Jiuling engaged in martial activities and decried the neglect of these by the literati. Lu Jiuling was himself actively engaged in internal pacification activities against internal uprisings of the tea bandits:

[199] Fang, "Junwu yu ruye de maodun," 53-54.
[200] Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, "The Rise of the *Tao-hsüeh* Confucian Fellowship in Southern Sung," in *The Cambridge History of China*, *Volume 5: Sung China, 960-1279 AD, Part 2*, edited by John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 752.
[201] Because in the Chinese cultural tradition the *xin* is both the seat of emotions and reason, affection and cognition, it is often cumbersomely rendered as heart-mind by western scholars. See for example: Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 67.
[202] Idem, 110.

In the fifth year of his *jinshi* he was transferred to Guiyang's army to teach and instruct, but because of the advanced age of his parents and the long distance it was changed and he was appointed to Xingguo's army [located in Jiangxi]. Before he could take up his post, Hunan's assembled tea bandits plundered Luling and caused a ruckus in the neighbouring prefectures. The people's hearts were shocked and frightened. In the past, there had been a "justice society" in order to prepare against bandits. The prefect followed the crowd and they invited him to be the leader. Jiuling's disciples were all unhappy. Jiuling said: "Civil affairs and military preparation are one and the same. The ancients had high ranking officials to mount punitive expeditions who would become commanders. If you were the head of a township, then you commanded five chariots. If the literati are ashamed of this, then knights-errant and local bullies will assert themselves." Thereupon, he led the affairs and managed the stores and defence according to guidelines. Even though the bandits did not arrive, the prefectures and counties relied on him as important. If there was spare time, then he practiced archery with the countryside's young. He said: "This is definitely a man's business. In a bad year, there are ones who plunder and steal openly passing by your door and you must mutually guard against this. They will say that this family shoots and hits many targets and there will be none who court death for themselves."

五年進士第調桂陽軍教授以親老道遠改興國軍. 未上會湖南茶寇剽廬陵聲搖旁郡. 人心震懾. 舊有義社以備寇. 郡從衆請以九齡主之. 門人多不悅. 九齡曰文事武備一也. 古者有征討公卿即為将帥. 比閭之長則五兩之率也. 士而恥此則豪俠武斷者專之矣. 遂領其事調度屯禦皆有法. 寇雖不至而郡縣倚以為重. 暇則與鄉之子弟習射. 曰是固男子之事也. 歲惡有剽劫者過其門必相戒. 曰是家射多命中無自取死. [203]

The Lu brothers provide evidence that not all Southern Song literati regarded martial activities as unbefitting a Confucian gentleman. In the course of the tea bandit uprisings in the southern interior of the empire, a literatus like Lu Jiuling asserted, referring to the practice of the ancients, that it was the duty of literati to lead both civil and military efforts to quell it. Lu Jiuling argued that it was important to not let the martial realm become the playground of local strongmen of questionable moral fibre, including the knights-errant. Thus, the Lus embrace of military activities did not mean the acceptance of this *wu*-focused socio-cultural exemplar. The Lu brothers did have to fight against the prejudices of other literati, however, who found their martial activity unsuitable and shameful for their social group. Some of them cited a passage from the *Lunyu*, for example, in which Confucius declined to give military advice to a Warring States ruler on grounds of ignorance, as evidence that these pursuits were unbefitting for a gentleman. Despite these

[203] *Song shi* 宋史, edited by Tuotuo 脫脫 et al (SKQS), 4314: 9-10.

prejudices, Lu Jiuyuan also had a military officer among his disciples.[204] By the twelfth century, thus, the socio-cultural barrier between *wen* and *wu* was becoming difficult to surmount, even for civil officials and non-serving literati. Neo-Confucianism with its primary moral considerations in lieu of more pragmatic considerations had an ideological bias marginalizing the socio-cultural *wu*-component of *junzi* identity, an identity that was becoming hegemonic under official and literati alike, fitting with the generally demilitarized nature of southern society.

Further evidence of the lack of a need for the southern learned elites to engage in military affairs is provided by Robert Hymes' research on Fuzhou during the Southern Song, which was the prefecture the Lu brothers came from. Hymes posits that the Southern Song government in theory availed itself of even more centrally directed forces on the local level in the south, which were evenly spread across different administrative units. Surprisingly, he holds a pessimistic position on the ability of these government forces to ensure stability, citing a lack of evidence. In his view, many of these units were only capable of low level policing functions and were sometimes even the cause of local unrest themselves, owing to practices like plundering and pillage. On the other hand, Hymes' survey of elite activities in the field of voluntary militia organization yields a number of elite families specializing in this pursuit, including the Lus. However, these voluntary militia activities mostly took place during the chaotic transition from the Northern to the Southern Song in the 1120s and 1130s, and later during the Mongol advance at the very end of the dynasty. A notable exception was constituted by the rare incidences local rebellions spiralled out of control, like the Tea bandit uprisings noted above. Crucially, Hymes notes that the bulk of voluntary militia activity took place in areas where administrative borders did not naturally coincide with defensible natural frontiers. This meant that groups of armed bandits could easily escape persecution in one administrative area by fleeing towards a neighbouring administrative unit.[205] In all, I would posit that Hymes' treatment of local military organization in Fuzhou generally supports my notion that the Southern Song was generally capable of providing local social stability by means of its central apparatus, without relying overly much on militia forces organized outside of its direct control.[206] Only in those rare moments of general dynastic

[204] Robert Wallace Foster, ""Differentiating Rightness from Profit:" The Life and Thought of Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1193)" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1997), 95-98.
[205] Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-Chou, Chiang-Hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 136-150.
[206] Taiwanese historian Huang K'uan-chong has also pointed out that regional armies under control of the central government, but paid by the provinces, were organized during the Southern Song with express purpose to suppress

breakdown and in those few areas of structurally limited local governance did southern elites feel the need to engage in military affairs. Presumably, this state of affairs left the Neo-Confucians free to engage in other, more elevated, pursuits.

Of course, not all thinkers in the Neo-Confucian movement toed Zhu Xi's line to the same extent. Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133-1180) and Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213-1280), for example, defended Sunzi's ideas and their compatibility with Confucianism. For example, apologists like them would posit that the pragmatic beneficial stratagems of Sunzi could be compatible with Confucian righteousness, particularly when the interests of the empire were under threat.[207] Again, as with Lu Jiuyuan and his martial leanings, it should be noted that for both Zhang and Huang their personal circumstances might have played a part in their defence of Sunzi. Zhang Shi was a scion of military leader from Sichuan province, a frontier province facing the Jürchens, who advocated war.[208] Huang Zhen served as an official near the end of the Southern Song when it was increasingly beleaguered by the Mongols.[209] However, it was Zhu Xi's synthesis of Neo-Confucianism that would survive in the succeeding dynasties and become the measurably hegemonic system of thought under the literati and civil officials, as we shall see below.

Neo-Confucianism and the *Wen-Wu* Divide during the Yuan and Early Ming Empires

The Mongol Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty reunified the northern and southern parts of the Chinese cultural heartland in one dynasty, after defeating both the northern Jurchen-led empire and the southern Song by 1278. The resulting power structure heavily disadvantaged the southern elites of the former Song empire. The Mongol power structure bypassed the Chinese literati-*cum*-officials and employed foreigners from Western and Central Asia as bureaucrats. Most of the top positions

internal disturbances in southern regions. These operated in Guangxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Fujian, and Henan. These were needed to protect the empire's resource-rich areas and the salt and tea monopolies, and guard against aboriginal uprisings. Similar arrangements did not happen during the Ming, except as temporary expedients during crises like the Wokou raids. See: Huang K'uan-chong 黃寬重, *Nansong difang wuli – Difangjun yu minjian ziwei wuli de tantao* 南宋地方武力 - 地方軍與民間自衛武力的探討 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 2002), 7-8.

[207] Ping-cheung Lo, "Warfare Ethics in Sunzi's *Art of War*? Historical Controversies and Contemporary Perspectives," in *Chinese Just War Ethics: Origin, Development, and Dissent*, edited by Ping-cheung Lo and Sumner B. Twiss (London: Routledge, 2015), 68-69. The author notes in the same passage that not all the *Military Classics* received the same kind of critical scrutiny. The *Methods of the Sima*, for example, was often viewed as compatible with Confucian ethics.

[208] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism*, 88.

[209] Christian Soffel, "Huang Zhen 黃震," in *The Encyclopedia of Confucianism, 2-Volume Set, Volume I*, edited by Xinzhong Yao (London: Routledge, 2003), 270.

in both the civil and military branches were held by either the Mongols or this second group of foreigners. Moreover, the Mongols made a distinction between northern and southern Chinese, the former originating from areas formerly ruled by non-Chinese dynasties, and the latter belonging to the former realm of the Southern Song. The northern Chinese were favoured vis-à-vis their southern counterparts and by a policy of preferential treatment were awarded more official positions in comparison to their smaller population size.[210]

The military constituted of Mongol warriors who were posted in critical areas in the north, whilst Chinese soldiers under Central and Western Asian leadership operated in the south, which was less suitable for Mongol cavalry. One crucial innovation the Mongols introduced was registering the military households as a permanent category, which in practice meant that every household was expected to provide military labour in perpetuity to the empire. In practice, this system had a number of drawbacks. The Mongol soldiers registered in this way had to shift from a pastoral steppe economy to the demands of agricultural labour, which clashed with the military requirements of horse-riding and archery. Many households did not adjust well and there were incidences of Mongols selling their landed property in order to afford their weaponry.[211] In terms of authority it seems that military officials were more powerful than those of the Song. For example, the rotation of officers between different units to prevent the development of ties with the men seems to have been scarcely attested during the Yuan dynasty.[212]

In this situation of disenfranchisement, the southern Chinese elites, including the followers of Neo-Confucianism turned to other occupations in medicine or the arts. The situation slightly changed in 1315 when the Yuan reinstituted the civil service examinations, but it produced a number of degree holders merely sufficient for eleven percent of the bureaucracy.[213] However, Neo-Confucianism survived, because its propagation was no longer necessarily tied to the civil service examination system since the Southern Song. Perhaps because study for the examinations provided only a dim chance to enter officialdom, elite learning had become a strategy demonstrate

[210] Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 219-221.
[211] Idem, 221-222.
[212] Gunther Mangold, "Das Militärwesen in China unter der Mongolen-Herrschaft" (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität zu München, 1971), 51-54.
[213] Benjamin A. Elman, ""Where Is King Ch'eng?": Civil Examinations and Confucian Ideology during the Early Ming, 1368-1415," *T'oung Pao* 79 (1993): 29-31.

elite status in a more local setting. Another strategy for the southern elites to retain their status was to become patrons of local temples.[214]

The Yuan dynasty suffered from an instable leadership after the death of Khubilai Khan (1215-1294), owing to customs which allowed both lineal collateral succession to the throne. This praxis encouraged factionalism at the centre, which translated to contending Mongol pretenders to the throne and their armies frequently clashing in the north. At the same time, much of its Mongol military strength had been wasted on largely fruitless campaigns in Central Asia.[215] At the same time, the fourteenth century witnessed natural disasters, droughts, floods, and famines, which created a fertile seedbed for uprisings, which could not be prevented on account of the severely depleted treasury. Without strong leadership and funding, the military control of the various Chinese militia and armies that had hitherto successfully kept control of the south faltered.[216] Uprisings broke out in the south of the empire, some of which took advantage of weak central power to carve out their own political domains. After a long struggle, a southern regime emerged victorious under leadership of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398), the first emperor of the Ming dynasty. After the expulsion of the Mongols from China, a new native dynasty thus once again reigned. At the end of the fourteenth century this dynasty once again adopted the civil service examination system to recruit civil bureaucrats who would be inculcated with Neo-Confucianism. Below I will trace the institutional developments between this emerging Neo-Confucian bureaucracy and the empire's military and elucidate the context in which Qi Jiguang's career should be situated.

Despite being a Han-Chinese dynasty in origin, which, contrary to previous imperial regimes, had largely conquered and unified the realm from the south, it did not immediately facilitate the southern elites and also did not immediately return to the pattern of civil-military relations of the Song dynasty. In fact, in many ways the initial organization of the empire resembled the institutional matrix of the Mongols more closely, a resemblance which was matched by the martial behaviour of its first few emperors. As David Robinson has shown, in practice and official discourse, the first few reigns stressed a martial activist rulership reminiscent of Central

[214] Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati*, 53-54.
[215] Barfield, *Perilous Frontier*, 222-225.
[216] John Dardess, "Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule in China," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, edited by Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 576-577, 580, 585.

Asian practices.[217] The military forces were registered in military households based on Mongolian precedents, and Zhu invested his most successful military commanders as a kind of nobility at the top of the imperial structure. These nobles could pass on their titles to their descendants. To ensure loyalty he did separate field from command from permanent unit command, which meant that officers would only lead their assigned forces in combat operations during the timeframe of a campaign itself and command other forces during peacetime. Zhu also tried to prevent military and civil officials from intermingling in order to prevent them from forming a combined threat to his power.[218] The Ming founder intended to reinstitute the civil service examinations to draw in the local elites to buttress his power, but his experience with the results led him to interrupt its operation during his reign. One of the main problems was the dominance of the southern elites amongst the successful graduates of the system, which posed the danger of creating an unbalanced imperial government which would perhaps overly stress southern interests. Another problem was the ideological content of the examination, to which I will return in the third chapter. The curriculum of the examinations had changed during the Yuan to stress the Neo-Confucian program, an innovation Zhu Yuanzhang had copied from the preceding dynasty. The Mongols themselves had elected the Neo-Confucian content, because, as Benjamin Elman posits, their adherents had become the most influential elite constituency by the early fourteenth century.[219] During the first few reigns of the Ming, the examination system would only generate a minority of the officials serving the dynasty. Only from 1425 would this change when quotas were established for northern and southern China.[220] It can thus be seen that the Ming dynasty tried to unify a highly diverse legacy of more Central Asian notions of rulership and military organization with the southern Neo-Confucian-inclined elites.

The Yuan and the Ming, by introducing hereditary households for the military, thus further institutionalized the socio-cultural divide between *wen-wu*, and based the selection of civil bureaucrats on their mastery of a moral philosophy with values that severely limited the possibility of combining *wen* and *wu* in one's identity. During the Ming, the old geographical divide between *wen* and *wu* elites would continue, with most of the military establishment stationed in the north,

[217] See: David M. Robinson, *Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).
[218] David Robinson, "Why Military Institutions Matter for Ming History," *Journal of Chinese History* 1 (2017): 316-317; Romeyn Taylor, "Ming T'ai-tsu and the Nobility of Merit," *Ming Studies* 2 (1976): 59-61.
[219] Elman, *A Cultural History*, 33.
[220] Elman, ""Where Is King Ch'eng?"," 39-42.

and the civil bureaucrats mostly recruited from amongst southern elites. In the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, however, a number of socio-economic, demographic, and political developments would start to undermine the viability of the *wen-wu* arrangements. Historical events would change the geographic parameters on which the *wen-wu* socio-cultural and institutional separation had been based, and this crisis would lead to an intellectual redefinition of moral philosophy and socio-cultural exemplars, as I will argue in the coming chapters.

Chapter 3 – The Emergence of a Problem: The Crises of the Mid-Ming

Chronological Overview

Ming history is often divided into three main periods (early Ming, mid Ming, and late Ming respectively) by modern scholars. Although the exact demarcation might vary by a few decades between scholars, these periods roughly equate to the first, second, and third centuries of Ming rule. Timothy Brook, for example, demarcated these periods based on socio-economic developments, resulting in a tripartite division of 1368-1450, 1450-1550, and 1550-1644. What characterises these periods is the move away from a self-sufficient agricultural order, with a minimal state levying modest taxes in kind and corvee labour, to an increasingly commercialized, monetized and diverse economy, giving rise to an increasingly differentiated and dynamic society, featuring tremendous demographic expansion and incidences of social inequality.[221] What I propose is to couple the socio-economic tripartite division closely to a tripartite military division of Ming history, leading to a slight shifting of the internal demarcations of Ming history suggested by Brook. I will thereupon argue that the early Ming military system successfully reproduced the institutional stability of the Song army by using a similar panoply of checks and balances, whilst institutionalizing the manpower supply by adopting the Yuan's hereditary solution. However, the Ming inherited a severely economically damaged empire, and therefore never developed the same resource extraction capability as the Song, as we will see below. And although the early Ming probably extracted more taxes in the shape of agricultural produce than the Yuan empire, it still chose to make its military self-sufficient, which meant that the army was burdened with the additional task of supporting itself.[222] Once Ming society and economy started to grow again in the mid-Ming period, in combination with an overstretched army beset by structural weaknesses, this military system entered a crisis during the mid-Ming period. Especially in the south of the empire, where the hereditary military presence had been thin on the ground in comparison to the Song, this would lead to a situation in which the declining military was increasingly unable to deal

[221] Timothy Brook, *The Confucions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998), 1-13.
[222] Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 107-108. Arthur Waldron notes that the Yuan could extract enough resources to pay their hereditary military forces, which therefore did not have to engage in self-supporting farming, unlike their Ming counterparts. See: Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*, 81-82.

with the disruptions caused by socio-economic dynamics and demographic changes. Whereas in the north this crisis led to accrual of power by increasing the bargaining position of local military commanders vis-à-vis the dynasty, in the south the domestic nature of the problem and sparse presence of hereditary military forces led to the initiative shifting to civil officials and non-commissioned literati to provide leadership in finding a solution to both the civil and military aspects of this crisis of governance.

In chapter four, I will argue that the personal example of the famous Ming philosopher Wang Yangming embodied the most comprehensive integrated approach to the solution of this problem, which would have an exemplary influence on the renewed southern crisis presented by the Wokou pirates during the 1550s. The Wang Yangming-inspired solutions of the southern military crisis would then be exported to the north to help bolster the northern frontier during the 1570s. It was the stability that owed a great deal to these solutions which then, I posit, inaugurated the late phase of the Ming empire. This phase was thus certainly partly built on the foundations of the military revival detected by Kenneth Swope, but I argue that this revival had its ideological and socio-cultural origins already during the mid-Ming southern campaigns of Wang Yangming and the southern anti-Wokou activity of the first half of the sixteenth century. Before turning to these matters, in this chapter I first will give a brief overview of early Ming military history, and then proceed to a thematic treatment of those issues which contributed to the military crisis of the mid-Ming as it infolded after the middle of the fifteenth century.

The imperial blueprint and military system Zhu Yuanzhang had created would continue to function relatively well during the first third of the dynasty. In a sense, it continued the models of the Song and Yuan dynasties, not those of the Han and Tang (despite rhetoric to the contrary[223]). Like the Yuan military, the Ming soldiery was recruited from hereditary households and led by hereditary officers. A strong force would be maintained at the northern frontier to face the Mongol threat, but this did not mean the centre was neglected. Possibly to prevent a repeat of the Han and Tang debacles, which witnessed the emergence of strong frontier militarization, a strong army was kept near the capital at all times, consisting of units from all over the empire, which rotated there

[223] Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1983), 194-196.

in turn for training purposes.[224] In addition, as we will see below, the Song tactic of keeping unified military power out of the hand of any one official was replicated during the Ming. Despite this. the military side of government seems to have had the upper hand during the early phase of the dynasty. On top of the hereditary military officials-pyramid was a so-called nobility of merit. This mostly consisted of the earliest military companions and fellow-leaders of the original Ming rebel armies, although there was at least one who joined the rank on the basis of non-military accomplishments. This nobility of merit, together with the highest echelons of the normal hereditary military officers, were, however, not tied to the imperial dynastic house through marriage ties, a situation diverging of that existing during the Northern Song.[225] Instead, these ties were mostly established with middle-, and lower ranked hereditary officer families stationed around the capital.[226] Even during the military activist early phase of the dynasty,[227] then, the Ming emperors tried to prevent creating a powerful group of in-laws belonging to a *de facto* military aristocracy. In that sense, the military elites of the empire were in a more distant position vis-à-vis the throne than those of earlier dynasties had been, a fact that might explain their later relatively rapid marginalization in imperial politics during the fifteenth century.

The early Ming military activist order was, perhaps surprisingly, built on the foundations of a minimalist state, which required the compulsory collaboration of local elites in matters of governance. The Yuan-Ming transition had been devastating for the economies of the southeast and north of the empire, and perhaps for this reason Zhu Yuanzhang opted for a small-state solution that rested on commodified resource extraction from a predominantly agricultural economy with a strong obligatory participation of the local elites in the processes of governance. Peter Bol suggests that Zhu Yuanzhang, influenced by his Neo-Confucian advisors from Zhejiang, heirs to

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[224] Foon Ming Liew, *The Treatises on Military Affairs of the Ming Dynastic History (1368-1644): An Annotated Translation of the Treatises on Military Affairs Chapter 89 and Chapter 90, Part One* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Natur-, und Volkenkunde Ostasiens e.V., 1998), 50-55.

[225] Thomas P. Massey, "The Lan Yu Case and Early-Ming Military and Society as Revealed in the *Yuzhi Nichen Lu* (Imperial Record of Rebellious Ministers) of 1393," *Ming Studies* 1998:1 (1998): 53-54. However, Romeyn Taylor contends that the early Ming military nobility was possibly consciously modelled on the Mongol Yuan nobility. See: Romeyn Taylor, "Social Origins of the Ming Dynasty, 1351-1360," *Monumenta Serica* 22.1 (1963): 61.

[226] David M. Robinson, "The Ming Court," in *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644)*, edited by David M. Robinson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), 22.

[227] As pointed out by Timothy Brooke, Edward Dreyer, and, recently, David Robinson, the early Ming emperors behaved more like activist Central Asian rulers with strong martial proclivities, instead of according to Neo-Confucian ideals of a Chinese ruler who sought peace and stability through virtuous civil rule. See Brook, *The Troubled Empire*, 79-81, 86; Edward L. Dreyer, *Early Ming China: A Political History, 1355-1435* (Stanford, California: California University Press, 1982); Robinson, *Martial Spectacles*.

Zhu Xi's thought, sought to make the Neo-Confucianism local voluntarist leadership program into legislation for the entire empire. This would oblige local communities to self-supervising rule in areas of moral inculcation of the youth through schooling, the management of relief granaries, the collection of taxes for the central government, and even juridical authority, all under the nominally non-intrusive supervision of a small official bureaucracy.[228] Military concerns seem not to have been a part of these self-rule obligations yet, the military sphere of government was to be left to the self-supporting military.[229] In this sense, the arrangements of Zhu Yuanzhang were a top-down realization of a Neo-Confucian utopia, which also freed the literati from getting their hands dirty with military and martial activities. Only local magistrates, the lowest ranks of the local official civil bureaucracy, were sometimes obliged to maintain a band of armed militia in areas known for recurring banditry and piracy.[230] I would even dare to posit that the founding emperor arranged this autarky of the military realm exactly to free him and his successors from the traditional Confucian criticism that activist military rulership harmed the people's livelihoods. How would this be a concern, if the military was self-sufficient anyway?

This blueprint of Zhu Yuanzhang's empire probably never fully worked as intended, but it seems that the hereditary military was at least able to handle the majority of empire's military activities until the mid-fifteenth century, when the mid-Ming period is usually posited to start.
The mid-Ming is bookended by two periods of intense military crises, which both shared a northern and simultaneous southern component. While the early Ming dynasty could still be characterized as having strong martial inclinations with a strong, politically influential and esteemed military, this changed after 1450. Especially during the reign of the ambitious Yongle (r. 1402-1424) emperor, the Ming would launch expeditions against the Mongols in the north, support large-scale maritime expeditions to south- and southeast Asia and invade Vietnam. Foon Ming Liew argues that these activities undermined and exhausted the military means of the empire.[231] This might have contributed to the combined north-south military crisis of 1448-1449, when attempts to deal with a new unified Mongol threat led to the destruction of much of the original hereditary army

[228] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 258-259.
[229] Romeyn Taylor already noted in 1963 that Zhu Yuanzhong separated civil and military populations and provided the latter with economic means of self-sustenance. This meshes well with my idea – building on Peter Bol's notions – that the founder of the Ming was creating a Neo-Confucian demilitarized utopia. See: Taylor, "Social Origins of the Ming Dynasty," 1-5.
[230] Thomas Griggs Nimick, "The County, the Magistrate, and the Yamen in Late Ming China," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1993), 146-147.
[231] Liew, *The Treatises on Military Affairs*, 83-84.

and the capture of the reigning emperor.[232] At the same time, internal revolts in the south revealed the shortcomings of the original military system in place there. Around 1550 a similar situation of simultaneous north-south threats would emerge, which would be subdued around 1570. In this mid-Ming period, which I therefore place between 1450 and 1570, a solution would have to be conceived to revamp the military in both north and south. As we shall see below, in the north the crisis was solved for a century after 1450 by resorting to a defensive posture featuring the building of the Great Wall, which was no doubt facilitated by the internal collapse of the unified Mongol threat itself.[233] In the south the problem was more persistent due to its internal nature and would manifest itself in repeated internal uprisings and turmoil. Two climactic periods of military crises in the south would be 1516-1525 and 1556-1565[234] and I will argue in later chapters that the solutions conceived during these two crises were interlinked and later exported to the north.

Hence, the origin for the late Ming revitalization of the Ming military after 1570 posited by Kenneth Swope should be sought, I argue, in the military developments of the second half of the mid-Ming period. Below I will argue that, because the conflicts in the south were internal in nature, we should look at the socio-economic changes that distinguish the early Ming from the mid-Ming as posited by Brook, and integrate an analysis of the military consequences of these changes with a consideration of the quest for its solution, which after 1570 contributed to the stability buttressing late Ming efflorescence until a renewed combination of internal and external military crises ended the dynasty in 1644.

Therefore, I propose then to look at the interplay of long-term socio-economic developments, structural weaknesses of the military itself, and the disruptive policies of some of the early military activist emperors, which conspired to render the original military arrangements insufficient by the start of the mid-Ming. These developments undermined the demilitarized Neo-Confucian social utopia and necessitated the engagement of Neo-Confucian inculcated literati and civil officials with military affairs. This latter phenomenon, I will argue, in combination with socio-economic changes also prompted a widely felt need for a reinterpretation of Neo-Confucianism, so that it fit the social reality of the mid-Ming better. I will touch upon this point at

[232] Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*, 87-90.
[233] Idem, 93-94, 102-107.
[234] Kai Filipiak, "" Saving Lives" - Lü Kun's Manual on City Defense," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 1 (2012): 139-140.

the end of this chapter, however, I will first turn to the long-term socio-economic changes causing the mid-Ming crisis of the military.

Socio-Economic Changes

One of the most notable socio-economic changes affecting the Ming dynasty was its demographic growth. There is a lot of disagreement amongst scholars on the probable population size of the empire, especially during its last two centuries, but it is certainly possible that in the almost three centuries of the dynasty's existence it grew from approximately 75 million subjects in 1368 to 175 million in 1644.[235] Although cities increased in absolute size during this period, relatively speaking urbanization did not increase and did not reach the levels witnessed during the Song dynasty.[236] Parallel to the growth of the population, the economy started to grow and diversify. From the 1450s onwards the initial idea of the Ming empire as an agricultural polity with small government became obsolete with the development of commerce and the attendant rise of merchant and artisanal classes.[237] Hu Juren 胡居仁 (1434-1484), a Jiangxi-based Neo-Confucian scholar living during this shift from the early Ming to the mid-Ming period, noted during his lifetime that peasants were leaving the fields to shift their occupations to merchants and artisans.[238] With it came a shifting of social identities; the old landholding elite which produced most of the examination candidates, now had to compete with new socio-economically successful groups in society who also wanted to be part of the elite and began to copy the behaviour of the older elite. This created the "anxiety" about social fluidity, which Kathleen Ryor has noted, caused by rising social inequalities, shifts in social identities and competition for elite status. Taste and cultural refinement now became contested areas where one could prove one's membership of the proper elite.[239] This was a

[235] Martin Heijdra, "The Socio-Economic Development of Rural China during the Ming," in *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchet and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 437-438.
[236] Yi Xu, Bas van Leeuwen, and Jan Luiten van Zanden, "Urbanization in China, ca. 1100-1900," *Centre for Global Economic History*, *CGEH Working Paper Series*, *Working Paper No. 63* (2015) http://www.cgeh.nl/urbanization-china-ca-1100%E2%80%931900 (accessed July 13, 2017): 14-15.
[237] Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "Review Essay: Old and New Visions of Ming Society and Culture," *T'oung Pao* 88 (2002): 152-154.
[238] I-fan Ch'eng, "Development and Frustrations of Statecraft in Mid-Ming China: As Reflected in the Experiences of the Gu Family of Jiangnan during the Sixteenth Century," (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1988), 123.
[239] Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 147-148.

development that in the future had to be reconciled with the Neo-Confucian ideology, which reflected the mores of an agricultural society, buttressed by a landowning gentry who were steeped in its learning. Neo-Confucian intellectuals were distressed by the tendency of a commercializing economy to promote selfish desires.[240]

These socio-economic changes affected the military security of the empire in a number of ways. One of these was the subversion of the traditional social order, leading to the rise of social inequities and the attendant danger of local disorder. This can be illustrated by reference to the functioning of the commodity-based taxation system of the early Ming and its increasing problematic operation in the mid-Ming and beyond. The implementation of taxation was devolved to the local communities themselves, according to the minimalist state ideal described above. This was the so-called *lijia* (里甲) system, which had been envisaged by the founder Zhu Yuanzhang as a way to keep to central bureaucracy lightweight and non-intrusive in local society. It entailed the local self-governance and tax administration by units of 110 families. The ten wealthiest of these would rotate leadership among them and were responsible for the collection and the transferring of the entire *lijia*'s taxes in kind to the local magistrate, which was the lowest level of the state bureaucracy.

This arrangement started to suffer under the strains of social inequities arising during the mid-Ming. According to Martin Heijdra, especially the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were characterized by economic stabilization and population growth. This development owed a lot to the implementation of better agricultural techniques and the relative absence of major internal rebellions and external wars. Land was a commodity that could be freely traded and its possession was concentrated in fewer hands. As more and more agricultural land came in the hands of large landowners, the farmers on their lands were often reduced to a kind of serfdom. As these landowners were often wealthy and influential members of community, they were able to shirk their fiscal responsibilities owing to their ability to bribe officials. Many also managed to attain degrees through the examination system, granting them tax exemptions.[241] The remaining farmer households had to deal with increased taxation (paid in kind) and demands of corvee labour services whilst at the same time experiencing an increase in population numbers and a reduction in available land. Many farmers fled their lands to escape taxation, adding their numbers to a

[240] Ch'eng, "Development and Frustrations," 122-124.
[241] Heijdra, "The Socio-Economic Development, 554-564.

mobile population which was outside the state's purview and prone to rebellions or acts of organized violence.[242]

Of course, patterns differed amongst geographical areas, but a common theme is that in the "south", by which I mean all Chinese areas south of the Yangzi river, including the south-eastern provinces affected by piracy, socio-economic tensions tended to be higher than elsewhere and more often explode into violence. A survey done by James Tong poignantly makes this clear, and it should come as no surprise considering that the bulk of the population and population growth took place there.[243] The discovery of two periods of intense collective violence in the south noted above, 1516-1525 and 1556-1565, are a result of his statistic research. In the meantime, the south was also economically much more significant than the "north" and produced the most literati and other influential thinkers. So how did this connection between violence and socio-economic importance come about during the mid-Ming?

An answer can be found in the climatic and topographic natures of both the north and the south, and the ways in which these shaped labour relations and power structures in the long-term. According to Mark Edward Lewis, in the north, along and around the Yellow River, agriculture tended to be the domain of small-scale family holdings and landlords had a relatively small role as owners of land. In addition, the southern organization of families into lineages owning large estates collectively was mostly absent here. In addition, rainfall tended to follow an uneven pattern, and therefore floods and droughts (and therefore famines) were common occurrences. The climatic conditions allowed the cultivation of wheat, millet, sorghum, and soybeans. [244] The south, in contrast, had a more predictable supply of water and therefore suffered much fewer famines. Production focused on rice, but also more commercial products like silk, tea, and oils. An important difference in terms of labour relations and political power was the fact that in the south land ownership was in the hands of great lineages, which rented out land to tenant farmers. The power of the local land-owning elite over the landless tenants tended to increase further in the south, because of its leading role in constructing and maintaining water management techniques for sake of facilitating agricultural activities. Whereas in the north along the flow of the Yellow

[242] Kai Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit (1368-1644): Auswirkungen militärischer und bewaffneter Konflikte auf Machtpolitik und Herrschaftsapparat der Ming-Dynastie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 202-203, 213.
[243] James W. Tong, *Disorder under Heaven: Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991).
[244] Lewis, *China between Empires*, 7.

River, only the state was able to muster the resources to build large water-control measures like dikes, in the south agriculture would develop in the hilly and valley-straddled broken terrain of the south. Here, the local elite would take the lead in draining swamps, extending cultivatable land in others ways, and building and maintaining irrigation and other water management structures providing the socio-economic base of the south.[245] Lewis concludes: "By playing a key role in the technologies of land reclamation and agriculture, southern landlords built up more extensive estates and dominated local society to a higher degree than did great families in the north. This regional difference continued to the very end of imperial China."[246]

Lewis describes a long-term trend starting with the beginning of Chinese migration to the south in the chaotic waning years of the Han empire. The devastation of the Yuan-Ming transition had turned back the clock a little, by causing the massive depopulation of areas in the southeast and north of the empire.[247] Perhaps this allowed Zhu Yuanzhang to implement his *lijia*-system, in lieu of the Song system featuring heavy commercial taxation. As the socio-economic fabric of the Ming recovered, however, especially in the south the solidarity buttressing the *lijia*-system came under pressure and social inequities came to the fore, as seen above. In addition, new actors in the economy arose, like artisans and merchants, whose accommodation to the rigid early Ming mode of governance would increasingly pose a challenge, also in military terms.

A significant flash-point between state interests and the emerging interest groups of the mid-Ming socio-economic transformation was the former's strict management of maritime trade. Ever since the Han empire, this trade had had to be accommodated in the so-called "tributary system", which ritually confirmed the Chinese emperor's superior position in the world order by obliging tributary states to send embassies with gifts for the emperor, who would then bestow gifts of equal or greater value on the envoys. As Harriet Zurndorfer notes, during the Song and Yuan empires extensive international maritime trade had been allowed parallel to this formal tributary system, but the Ming founder took the step of restricting it to an exclusively state-managed institution. In addition, merchants from tributary states were allowed, via a license, to trade goods in certain locations, but were not allowed to settle permanently.[248] In all other cases, a "maritime

[245] Idem, 7-14.
[246] Idem, 13.
[247] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 257.
[248] Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "State of the Field. Oceans of History, Seas of Change: Recent Revisionist Writing in Western Languages about China and East Asian Maritime History during the Period 1500-1630," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 13.1 (2016): 63-65.

prohibition" (*haijin* 海禁) was in place, and this was intended to be a permanent fixture of Ming maritime policy, an unprecedented development. The reason of this strict attitude towards foreign maritime trade is not exactly known. It might be because Zhu Yuanzhang wished to contain the development of a maritime-oriented economy and population. Ivy Maria Lim posits that it served a "[…] a dual purpose - the achievement of coastal security by limiting private Sino-foreign contact, and the creation of a state monopoly over foreign imports such as spices, aromatics, silver and other exotica under the tribute trade system."[249] This system was not always as strictly enforced, however. Local officials saw in extra-tributary trade opportunities for additional taxation, and some emperors were more inclined towards relaxing trade regulations than others.[250] The Zhengde (r. 1505-1521) emperor was an example of the former, his successor the Jiajing (r. 1521-1567) an example of the latter.[251]

The feasibility of the enforcement of *haijin* would be increasingly undermined by the socio-economic changes described above, although emperors like Jiajing were unwilling to waver from long-standing imperial maritime policy. This would come into conflict with the burgeoning population of south-eastern coastal provinces like that of Fujian, where an already strong tradition of dependence on trade and fishery-based livelihood was strengthened during the mid-Ming period by a lack of arable land and land-based occupational opportunities.[252] A consequence would be the Wokou piracy crisis of the mid-sixteenth century, which I will describe in more detail in the chapters six and seven. Another factor that would lead to increasing challenges for civil and military governance was a by-product of these socio-economic developments: interethnic conflict in the south.

Interethnic Conflicts in the South

[249] Ivy Maria Lim, "From *Haijin* to *Kaihai*: The Jiajing Court's Search for a *Modus Operandi* along the South-eastern Coast (1522-1567)," *Journal of the British Association for Chinese Studies* 2 (2013): 5.
[250] Lim, "From *Haijin* to *Kaihai*," 5-10.
[251] James Geiss, "The Chia-ching Reign, 1522-1566," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1*, edited by Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 471, 490-493; John E. Wills, Jr., "Maritime Europe and the Ming," in *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions*, edited by John E. Wills, Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 24-25.
[252] Chang Pin-tsun, "Maritime Trade and Local Economy in Late Ming Fukien," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, edited by E.B. Vermeer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 63-65.

Whereas a pro-active military policy against the northern frontier nomads ended after the Tumu debacle, the Ming state would expand further in the south and southwest of the empire, both by military and bureaucratic means, and by demographic growth which forced Han Chinese settlers to move further and further south and southwest. In this process, they would come into increasing contact with non-Han ethnic groups and encroach upon their territories. Non-Han ethnic groups already present within the frontiers of the empire, often referred to as "aboriginals" in modern literature, also increasingly competed with Han Chinese over resources and land. Inevitably, this would have consequences for military developments as well. Aboriginal groups were both an opportunity and a challenge for the military of the Ming empire. Some aboriginal groups would be utilized for their military prowess, whereas others resisted Han domination by military means. A related problem was that of acculturation: could and should these aboriginal groups be assimilated as Han Chinese, or should they be allowed a coexistence?

As already briefly touched upon above, most aboriginal groups in the empire's south and southwest were organized according to the *tusi* 土司 and *tuguan* 土官 systems. Generally speaking, the aboriginals were granted a certain degree of autonomy under chiefs invested by the Ming court, in exchange for loyalty and tranquillity. In the case of the Miao 苗 aboriginals (a group which lived in southwestern provinces like Guizhou), by the 1500s a distinction had emerged between "raw" or "uncooked" *sheng* 生 aboriginals on the one hand, and "cooked" or "ripe" *shu* 熟 on the other. Although the raw Miao still outnumbered their cooked counterparts and were headed by their native Aboriginal Officials (*tuguan*) directly subordinated to the Ministry of War, the Ming empire had been able to strengthen its grip on the population and extended a mixed Han and Miao bureaucracy in the shape of the Aboriginal Office (*tusi*) system, which was subordinated to the Ministry of Personnel. Their subjects had been assimilated to the point of them having been entered into the population registers, obliging them to pay taxes and perform corvee labour. Hence, at the one imperial frontier which shifted decisively in favour of the dynasty it was possible to detect a process of cultural and political assimilation taking place.[253] The *tusi* system was intended as an intermediate solution between aboriginal autonomous governance and eventual full integration into the empire, and it required the chieftains to pay taxes, maintain civil order, and supply military

[253] Bian Li 卞利, *Hu Zongxian chuan* 胡宗宪传 (Hefei: Anhui daxue chubanshe, 2011), 57; Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 547.

levies when so required by the empire.[254] A famous southwestern minority from Guangxi province, the Lang 狼, were from the mid-fifteenth century onwards increasingly requested by Chinese officials to serve as troops in campaigns. The Lang, which means "wolf", would gain a fearsome reputation as the *lang bing*, or "wolf troops".[255] Yet, this was also a process of give-and-take: the imperial centre needed these chieftains for the maintenance of local order, and the chieftains could bolster their position vis-à-vis local challengers by relying on imperial endorsement.[256]

These aboriginals could be a military challenge as well. Leo Shin notes that in Guangxi, the competing interests between local chieftains, Han settlers, and civil officials desiring to extend central state control "[…] meant that warfare was seldom a distant concern."[257] However, wars between aboriginals and the Ming empire could also be a result of internecine squabbling amongst the former as a result of the extension of imperial influence of the latter. In the mid-fifteenth century, for example, wars broke out between different factions of the Yao 瑶 ethnicity in Guangxi province who vied for the hereditary chieftain titles handed out by the court. In the end the imperial state got involved, when one side of the Yao supported a losing side in a throne succession crisis in 1457, for which they were subjected to a punitive expedition instigated by the winning side of said crisis in 1465.[258]

Related to the increased encroachment on the aboriginals by the Han population and the Ming state, was the question of ethnic barriers and whether they could be overcome. In other words, could aboriginals be assimilated as Han Chinese and how should this shape civil and military policy? In theory, barbarians would be attracted to superior Chinese civilization and the moral virtue of the emperor and therefore willingly submit and adopt Chinese ways. Cultural chauvinism could thus work to leave the empire open for the inclusion of barbarians, even if under the expectation of eventual sinicization.[259] But to what extent was there an imperative to sinicize? It seems that theoretically it was just assumed that acculturation was inevitable because Chinese

[254] Jeffrey G. Barlow, "The Zhuang Minority in the Ming Era," *Ming Studies* 1989.1 (1989): 19.
[255] Leo Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 148.
[256] Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*, 74.
[257] Idem, 12.
[258] Faure, David. "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming and Their Impact on Yao Ethnicity," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, edited by Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2006), 177, 180-181.
[259] John K. Fairbank, "A Preliminary Framework," in: John King Fairbank (ed), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA 1968), 2-3, 11.

civilization was self-evidently superior. It also implied that it was possible to "become Chinese", indicating a certain fluidity in ethnic categorization in Chinese thought.[260] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Chinese literati held different views on the matter. One school of thought held that barbarians could become Chinese, and could be transformed into civilized people. "Civilized" was hereby mostly defined in terms of lifestyle, including the adoption of social and ritual practices associated with the Chinese population and the adoption of a settled agricultural mode of living. The opposing view held that transformation was not possible for certain barbarians (especially Mongols and other nomads), and assigned them the same status as birds and animals in the natural order. This bias against nomadic peoples was strengthened by a pragmatic disdain for mobile populations, which, in the words of Peter Perdue, could not be "[…] counted, taxed or drafted for military and public works."[261] Perhaps the southern and southwestern aboriginals were viewed in a slightly different light, because they were at least not nomads. And, as we have seen, the *tusi* system was set up in part with a long-term view towards assimilation. However, in the wake of the Tumu debacle, the court's rhetoric stressing a unitary and universal empire had changed. In its stead blew a new wind stressing the need to separate and segregate Chinese and barbarian from each other. Whereas in the north this would ultimately lead to the building of the Great Wall, in the south it seems to have manifested more in the increased reinforcement of ethnic boundaries by differentiating and segregating the groups from each other.[262] A famous scholar of the late fifteenth century, Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1420-1495), wrote an important work on statecraft proposing appointing more native chieftains in lieu of direct governance by imperial officials, and he in general suggested limiting contact between Han and non-Han.[263] As we have seen in the previous chapter, during the Song attitudes towards non-Chinese hardened, but remained ambivalent about their potential to become Chinese. Zhu Xi's thought, the hegemonic voice from that preceding dynasty, however held rather rigid views. According to him, the *qi* of the barbarians was such that it was hardly possible for them to morally improve.[264] In light of the demographic and bureaucratic expansion of the Chinese state, the question rises whether such a rigid segregating ideology would be viable in the sixteenth century, a matter I will return to in the following chapters.

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[260] Richard J. Smith, "The Emploment of Foreign Military Talent: Chinese Tradition and Late Ch'ing Practice," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1975 (15), 113-138.
[261] Peter C. Perdue, "Nature and Nurture on Imperial China's Frontiers," *Modern Asian Studies* 2009 (43), 252.
[262] Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*, 160, 165.
[263] Idem, 164.
[264] Yang, "Reinventing the Barbarian," 377.

The Crisis of Military Organization

The larger socio-economic changes sweeping the empire did not fail to affect the military branch of government as the early Ming went over into the mid-Ming period during the fifteenth century. This would manifest itself in a military crisis around 1450, most notably in the areas of manpower shortages and a related decline of the authority of the military leadership. The institutional structure this authority was based on started to buckle under both the weight of its structural shortcomings and the increased pressure exerted on it by external and internal threats to the dynasty. To further highlight this process, I will divide this section in four, dealing with the crisis of military labour, the crisis of military leadership, the military crisis of the north, and the military crisis of the south respectively.

The Crisis of Military Labour

As we have seen previously, when the first Ming emperor successfully established his empire in 1368, he settled his victorious armies down in the military garrison-colonies, with their families enrolled in the military household registers to support this system of recruitment in perpetuity.[265] The first generation of these soldiers and officers had actually joined Zhu Yuanzhang in four different ways which cannot but have influenced their social status and motivation to serve after the establishment of the dynasty, although research about this is sorely lacking. The first way in which military personnel had joined the founder was voluntarily as a member of Zhu's rebel army from the 1350s onwards. Qi Jiguang's ancestor had joined in this way.[266] The second major pathway was constituted by enemy soldiers (usually belonging to rival non-Mongol Yuan warlords) surrendering and being integrated in the rebel army, with the amount of coercion applied in each case probably varying significantly. The members of the third and fourth groups can be assumed to have been the least motivated soldiers, considering they were instituted by sentencing criminals

[265] The hereditary military households and the *weisuo* have received much attention by Chinese scholars in recent years. For more information about these institutions, see: Liang Zhisheng 梁志胜, *Mingdai weisuo wuguan shixi zhidu yanjiu* 明代卫所武官世袭制度研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2012); Zhang Jinkui 张金奎, *Mingdai weisuo junhu yanjiu* 明代卫所军户研究 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2007). In Taiwan, there is the large volume of articles and books published by Yu Chih-chia. As a starting point, see: Yu Chih-chia 于志嘉, *Mingdai junhu shixi zhidu* 明代軍戶世襲制度 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng, 1987).

[266] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 5.

to military service and gang pressing a certain percentage of eligible males of a certain territory into the army ranks.[267]

These men were the settled in military colonies often far from home, which were, in theory at least, supposed to be self-sufficient. Through the practice of agriculture, they would provide for their own upkeep, ensuring that the state would not have to burden the population with heavy taxes to keep a large military establishment in existence. The organization followed Mongolian Yuan precedents, and was enshrined in the so-called *weisuo* 衛所 ("Guards and Battalions") system of local garrisons posted at strategic positions throughout the realm. The heaviest concentration of these was along the northern border, where the Mongolian threat was deemed to be the most serious one for the continued existence of the empire. Within the hierarchy of ranks, only the lower ones were inheritable. Higher ranks were only assigned to a person on a temporary basis and were thus circulating amongst the military elite. In this way, the state attempted to prevent the emergence of personal bonds between officers and their troops and thus the rise of powerful military potentates who could be a threat to the dynasty.[268] The highest military rank was the defence circuit commander, who were mostly appointed at the places with the highest security risk for the dynasty, which mostly meant the northern frontier. They had wide-ranging authority, including unlimited command, military justice and the training of border troops.[269]

In this way, the Ming empire tried to freeze part of the *wu* potential in service of the state, but the system fell into decline during the fifteenth century. Already during the reign of the first Ming emperor the theoretically self-sufficient and self-replicating army, as David Robinson characterized it, started suffering from problems that belied its social structure and certain abuses of officer authority, which started to undermine the viability of the system. First of all, desertion quickly became a problem as many soldiers were not motivated enough to serve under the sometimes-harsh conditions that existed in the military colonies, where an estimated 70% of the available manpower pool had to till the land to keep themselves and the combat-ready remaining 30% nourished and equipped, a condition that was not shared by the preceding Song and Yuan armies. Officers were often willing to turn a blind eye as well to soldiers willing to shirk their

[267] Robinson, "Military Labor in China," 44.
[268] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 76-77.
[269] Idem, 60.

duties in return for the payment of bribes.[270] The first problem was further exacerbated when the officers, whose ranks were to a large extent hereditary as well, seem to have started asserting undue authority over their rank-and-file. The rank-and-file for example was forced to do agricultural work activities on the colony land assigned to the officers. The latter also profited from the system by systematically underpaying their troops. As noted in the previous chapter, these abuses and systemic failures were probably part of the reason why so many civil bureaucrats and scholar-literati heaped a lot of scorn and disdain on the military, and this was probably partly justified. The factors behind the later decline of the *wu*-branch of government should therefore not be strictly seen in extra-military terms as unwanted encroachment by the civil bureaucracy, but perhaps more as an internal structural problem. Of course, there were extra-military factors at work as well: the court and the central government were wont to use the army soldiers as a labour force for grand defence and infrastructure projects, like imperial palaces, city walls and the famous Great Wall, as well as for the sake of transporting large amounts of rice from south China to the capital and its surroundings.[271]

Further social inequities arose after the middle of the fifteenth century as the mid-Ming period started, when the military started to be influenced by the same long-term socio-economic and demographic developments the rest of the Ming empire was experiencing around this time. In the words of David Robinson: "As one of the largest and most important imperial institutions in Ming China, the military was sensitive to developments in many quarters, from demographic trends (including not only population size but migration and family structure), economic transformation (including the growing size of regional markets and the spreading use of silver), shifting labor supplies, bureaucratic imperatives (such as commuting corvée labor and tax obligations into silver payments), and logistics needs (such as supplying large numbers of men far from economic centers for extended periods of time)."[272] In this sense, the military households were part of a continuum of developments that also affected other non-military households with hereditary labour obligations.[273] Robinson points in the correct direction by reminding us that

[270] According to Cheng Wei-chung, by the mid-sixteenth century most of Fujian's *weisuo* had declined in strength to just 20% of the prescribed number of soldiers. See: Cheng Wei-chung, "War, Trade and Piracy in the China Seas (1622-1683)" (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2012), 3-4.
[271] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 44-57.
[272] Idem, 53.
[273] Heinz Friese, for example, points out that other kinds of hereditary households increasingly bought out their labour obligations in exchange for cash. See: Heinz Friese, *Das Dienstleistungs-System der Ming-Zeit (1368-1644)* (Hamburg: Kommissionsverlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), 90-116.

armies can never fully be understood outside if the context of the society from which they sprang and the polity they are associated with. Hence, to some extent these changes affecting wider society probably also held true for the military households and their agricultural activities, as Filipiak has suggested.[274] Some officers in charge of military colonies changed these into private estates and the soldiers assigned to them became their workforce, who could be employed for construction activities, agriculture and other menial tasks. Thus, even more deserted, and the effective combat strengths of the military households declined further.[275]

In addition to these regular forces, the early Ming availed itself of other sources of military labour. They were recruited by way of the already narrated aboriginal chieftaincies, *tusi.* Some of these were recognized as "martial" groups, not unlike the discourse of European colonial powers describing some of the ethnic groups in their conquered territories from the eighteenth century onwards. These martial minorities were then often hired as military forces under their own leaders and deployed across the empire.[276] As the empire would look for replacement sources of military labour, the importance of these aboriginal military units would increase during the mid-Ming period, a phenomenon I will return to in the next chapters. The increasing scope of the Ming military labour market, as the original hereditary elements of it contracted, also meant that the original military leadership of the dynasty, which based their authority on their command of this labour force, was increasingly undermined. This, in turn, strengthened a trend towards marginalization that had already begun during the early Ming as a result of deliberate purges by the early emperors, to which I will now turn.

The Crisis of Military Leadership

The military leadership was never during any period of the dynasty a unified coercive force-wielding institution within the empire. At the beginning of the dynasty there was actually a division of military power between two separate forces, which were meant to operate as checks on each other. In addition to the regular army officers and the merit nobility, this other force was actually led by the members of the imperial family. The founder Zhu Yuanzhang enfeoffed his sons with

[274] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 223.
[275] Idem, 213, 222-223; Albert Chan, *The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 48.
[276] Kenneth M. Swope, "All Men Are Not Brothers: Ethnic Identity and Dynastic Loyalty in the Ningxia Mutiny of 1592," *Late Imperial China* 24.1 (2003): 86.

areas bordering on the northern frontiers, where the bulk of the regular army was also stationed guarding against possible Mongol attacks. They were meant to support the regular army in the event of invasions from the north, but obviously also had a balancing function towards the power of the generals and their troops.[277] The strong military leadership that could potentially have been provided during the entire dynasty by both the imperial in-laws and the merit nobility would be undermined, however, already during the early Ming as a result of the agency of the emperors. The merit nobility, of whom 66 had been ennobled by Zhu Yuanzhang, were also the subject of purges during his reign, and 39 were executed before 1398. Further purges would follow under the Yongle emperor, reducing the surviving number to three. The founder feared coup d'états from his successful subordinates, military and civil official alike, and these men were executed, probably based on trumped up charges. Moreover, Zhu Yuanzhang, in a bid to protect his own power, had also enacted policies to keep the military and civil officials physically separated.[278] Although both civil and military officials would suffer slanderous indignities with often lethal consequences, the mostly military merit nobility would not recover in number, whereas the civil bureaucrats lost their Prime Minister position for the remainder of the dynasty. This function would be abolished by Zhu Yuanzhang: he in the end chose to be his own Prime Minister. However, the remaining vacated positions in the civil bureaucracy would be filled up again with new literati, whilst the merit nobility would not be replaced.[279] The trimming of the civil and military bureaucratic pyramids thus, in my view, affected the latter one most. The imperial princes' political function would be curtailed in the beginning of the fifteenth century during the reign of the Yongle emperor. Yongle himself had been a prince entrusted with a military command along the northern frontier, but as a son of the founder he probably felt put aside by the choice for his nephew, the Jianwen (r. 1398-1402) emperor (the son of the founder's already deceased first son), as the successor of Zhu Yuanzhang. He was able to use his military authority to wage a civil war which resulted in a coup d'état and bloody purge. Yongle would enfeoff some hereditary military officers as his new merit nobility, but they no longer commanded their own troops, but were assigned troops from the *weisuo* in case of a campaign. Furthermore, positions in the military merit nobility were

[277] Richard G. Wang, *The Ming Prince and Daoism: Institutional Patronage of an Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-9.
[278] Romeyn Taylor, "Ming T'ai-tsu and the Nobility of Merit." *Ming Studies* 2 (1976): 59.
[279] John D. Langlois, Jr, "The Hung-wu Reign, 1368-1398," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 139-149, 169-181; Taylor, "Ming T'ai-tsu," 61.

increasingly supplanted by the imperial princes. In addition, Yongle would employ eunuchs in various military command and surveillance functions as a check on disloyal elements. During and after the reign of the Yongle emperor, the princes were stripped of their military power as well, and were *kaltgestellt* (sidelined) on their fiefdoms.[280] As such, two important groups were removed from the military leadership equation during the early Ming. In the meantime, the ability of the emperors themselves to provide effective military leadership declined as well.

This process could be perhaps partly be ascribed to the civil bureaucratic elite, who were able to assert more influence over the less headstrong and often less able emperors which followed Xuande (r. 1425-1435), possibly the last Ming ruler who possessed real military talent and had experience in the field.[281] While conquerors like the Hongwu and Yongle (who practically reconquered the dynasty by usurping power) emperors could dictate policy basically on their own terms, their successors were increasingly indoctrinated by civil official-run institutions like the Hanlin Academy. This academy, while technically an extra-bureaucratic institution meant to provide the dynastic family with a private group of elite Confucian scholars to lecture them in the meaning of the classics and other writings, it was also drawn from the same pool of manpower as the regular civil bureaucracy and probably shared the same basic ideological outlooks and political interests.[282]

Meanwhile, the "normal" hereditary military officials did not enjoy the same degree of institutional political leverage as their civil equivalents and could not match the bureaucrats in literary refinement.[283] In addition, their authority was gradually eroded by the military labour crisis narrated above. The lack of literary attainments presumably invited increasing civil official meddling in military affairs requiring a certain degree of literacy. The *wu*-branch seems to have only been able to recover some of their prestige when later emperors expressly empowered the branch out of martial interest or as a counterweight to the civil bureaucracy, like the Zhengde and

[280] Hok-lam Chan, "The Chien-wen, Yung-lo, Hung-his, and Hsüan-te Reigns, 1399-1435", in *The Cambridge History of China. Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I*, edited by Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 206-214; Robert B. Crawford, "Eunuch Power in the Ming Dynasty," *T'oung Pao* 49 (1961): 127-128; Charles O. Hucker, "Ming Government," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by: Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 26; Wang, *The Ming Prince*, 10-11.
[281] Chan, "The Chien-wen, Yung-lo, Hung-his, and Hsüan-te Reigns," 285.
[282] Robinson, "The Ming Court," 23-24.
[283] Kenneth M. Swope, "A Few Good Men," 3.

Wanli (r. 1572-1620) emperors respectively.[284] In the absence of this sort of leadership, the military fate of the empire would fall more and more in the hands of the civil bureaucracy.

In institutional terms, the military and civil bureaucracies as the highest level of government, and the regional and local levels of governance below it, were parcelled out between three different institutions, which were each replicated on these subsequent lower levels of the administrative hierarchy, namely that of the province, prefecture, sub-prefecture and county. The three institutions were the civil bureaucracy, the censorate (concerned with investigating the functioning of bureaucracy and army) and the military. Both the civil bureaucracy and the censorate were staffed by civil officials, who were mostly recruited through the much-vaunted civil service examinations system, whilst the military men – both officers and common soldiers - were recruited through a system of hereditary military households.[285] As can be seen, the system was rigged in favour of the civil bureaucrats, an interest group which monopolised two of the three main branches of government. The dichotomy fits better when describing the social identity of the persons involved in the three different branches, with the civil bureaucrats and censors out of the necessity of passing the civil service examinations automatically having achieved literary merit, whilst the military men were predominantly illiterate but – in theory at least - in possession of martial skills.[286]

However, by the mid-Ming, the military had become a legitimate sphere of interest and activity for a civil bureaucrat (and by extension also for the literati in general they were drawn from), owing to structural weaknesses in the original military institutions. These literati no doubt had to reconcile this military interest with the dominant Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. The founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, had already formalized the civil bureaucracy's involvement in military affairs in 1380 by dividing responsibilities between an army-staffed Military Commission and a civilian-staffed Ministry of War, one of six ministries of the outer court civil

[284] Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials Handling Military Affairs," 1-15; David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Robinson, "The Ming Court"; Kenneth M. Swope, "Bestowing the Double-Edged Sword: Wanli as Supreme Military Commander," in *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644)*, edited by David M. Robinson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 61-115; Swope, "The Three Great Campaigns."

[285] Charles O. Hucker, "Governmental Organization of the Ming Dynasty," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 21 (1958): 12-16, 19-20.

[286] The Ming founder did intend to select military officials through military examinations as well, and he stressed that this examination should test knowledge of strategy and planning, which implies literacy. See Elman, ""Where Is King Ch'eng?"," 31-32.

bureaucratic institutions. The military commission was solely involved in tactical command and training of the troops, whilst the Ministry of War handled everything from logistics, weapons production, promotion and demotions and grand strategy. This division of labour was partly rational in that the tasks the Ministry of War handled required a certain degree of literacy, which was as a rule not found amongst the military labour pool. On the other hand, it fit the founder's almost fanatical preoccupation with preventing any organized group of civil and military dignitaries uniting against the throne and overthrowing Ming rule. The whole system of Ming governance as it appeared at the end of Zhu Yuanzhang's reign was an intricate system of checks and balances, characterised by overlapping institutional jurisdictions and a lack of concentration of authority in central functions. All ministries, for example, were headed by two officials of the same rank instead of just one, and the post of Prime Minister, the highest bureaucrat and official supervising and coordinating all six ministries, was also abolished in 1380. Undoubtedly the result of Zhu Yuanzhang's paranoia and his desire to concentrate all executive power in the hands of the emperor himself, the result was a sluggish but extremely reliable and resilient system of government that never once rose in rebellion against the throne and dynasty.[287] It also cemented the intrusion of civil bureaucrats in army affairs, and necessitated the involvement of these same bureaucrats in the *wu* sphere of state activity. In addition to the outer court civil bureaucrats, the inner court group of servants the eunuchs at some point during the dynasty also formed a military unit and increasingly got involved with army affairs as time went on.[288]

The Military Crisis in the North

Matters came to a head in the north, when an emperor unaccustomed to military leadership was captured by the Mongols and his army destroyed at Tumu in 1449. To stave off this crisis in the north, the empire shifted to a defensive stance vis-à-vis the Mongols and eventually would start the construction of the Great Wall. The defeat did not mean the end of the hereditary military officer corps, which was able to hold on to power in the north by changing the military labour relations to a new reality, partly by exploiting good connections to the imperial family. Fully congruous with developments in landownership and tenancy in the wider non-military part of society, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw a concentration of former military colony land

[287] Hucker, "Ming Government," 74-76.
[288] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär*, 78-79.

into the hands of a number of hereditary officers. This especially seems to have happened along the northern frontier, where officers (along with eunuchs and relatives and favourites of the imperial family) were able to turn the lands originally assigned to the military garrisons for revenue generating purposes into their own private landed estates.

Thus, mirroring social changes in the rest of the empire, the hereditary officer class also seems to have stratified in different groups. The social divisions within the military seem to have become more significant during the mid-Ming, as the military wound down in a defensive posture and relinquished some administrative functions to the civil branch. Although in terms of geographical area, the pattern of social changes probably differed greatly across the Ming empire, it seems that a group of officers were able to transform the military colony system to their advantage in certain parts of the realm during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, for example across certain northern defence zones along the steppe. Especially in the north officers recruited by way of the hereditary household system managed to turn the lands assigned to the garrisons for agricultural production purposes into a form of private landholdings and, in addition, some of the hereditary soldiers – supplemented with men recruited from outside of the system - were turned into household retainers not entire unlike Medieval West-European developments.[289] The Ming founder had intended for the (higher) officers to be rotated between different commands to prevent the emergence of personal bonds of loyalty between officers and men, but in the high-risk north with the Mongols an ever-present threat, it was often deemed inadvisable to disrupt unit efficiency and cohesion for the sake of political reliability.[290]

The landed officers for their part did not entirely shirk their military duties and used their wealth to hire so-called "housemen" or "housesoldiers", *jiading* 家丁 or *jiabing* 家兵, essentially those parts of the landless labour force that were willing to perform military service for the sake of a hereditary military officer-*cum*-patron. They fit into the context of larger changing socio-economic patterns that could be pin-pointed across Ming society characterized by an expanding landless labour force from the fifteenth century onwards as noted above, combined with a slowly but steadily monetizing economy which increasingly facilitated the exchange of (military) labour for currency encouraging the emergence of mercenaries. These housemen quickly became some

[289] John A. Lynn, "The Evolution of Army Style in the Modern West, 800-2000," *The International History Review* 18.3 (1996): 515-516; Robinson, "Military Labor in China, 50-53.
[290] Swope, "A Few Good Men," 9-10.

of the most effective military groups at the disposal of the dynasty, which had already come to rely more and more on local militias and mercenaries as well after the decline of hereditary military garrison system as a fighting force. The court even handed out subsidies to these officers for the sake of sustaining these *jiading* forces. Even so, Robinson posits that the shrunk hereditary military did continue to operate, but increasingly as a labour force for non-military purposes, a development which was not entirely surprising considering that original division of labour entailed that less than a third of a given garrison was on military duty and therefore presumably well trained for martial endeavours.[291]

Furthermore, in order to deal with the decline in combat readiness of the hereditary military households, the Ming empire was forced to rely more and more on mercenaries and local militia. In contrast with the hereditary households, they were not self-sufficient and had to be paid a salary by other means. Although many details of financing the mercenary armies are still unknown, this mostly seems to have been done by directly paying them from the empire's coffers, or relying on a contribution system, which demanded of local communities to raise funds.[292] On a grassroots level, the officials on the lowest level of the bureaucracy – the county magistrates – were expected to encourage militarization of the local population. This grassroots militarization was also intended to produce militias capable of defending their localities during uprisings and periods of bandit activity.[293]

With these new measures, tapping new segments within a developing military labour market, coupled with a defensive posture, the northern military was able to hold the line against the Mongol threat for another century until 1550. The situation in the south would prove to be more precarious.

The Military Crisis in the South

Meanwhile, contemporaneous to the Tumu defeat, a large-scale internal uprising broke out in the south. It brought to light the decline of the Guards and Battalions system and its limitations in dealing with large scale unrest and rebellions. Kai Filipiak analyses this peasant rebellion led by Deng Maoqi 鄧茂七 (d. 1449) in 1448-1449 in Fujian province. One of the benefits of his article

[291] Robinson, "Military Labor in China," 47-53.
[292] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 228-230.
[293] Filipiak, "" Saving Lives"," 158-161.

is that it sheds light on the socio-economic changes that were affecting the southern part of the empire in this century.

As part of the "south", Fujian was actually one of the poorer, but also one of the most socio-economically dynamic provinces because of its maritime trade and mining activities.[294] Fujian in the course of the fifteenth century was also affected by the now familiar concentration of landed estates in the hands of fewer wealthy landowners at the expense of a now increasingly landless mass of tenants. Many of these landowners were also able to convert their holdings from taxed state lands (官田, *guantian*) into taxfree land (民田, *mintian*) owing to influential connections within the bureaucracy or imperial favour. Many of the beneficiaries of this massive private land accumulation were, according to Filipiak, local landowners, officials, eunuchs, members of the nobility, and the imperial clan, including the emperor himself. The tax responsibilities now became increasingly burdensome on the remaining free peasants, a process that was strengthened by the parallel evasion of many wealthy landowning families of the *lijia* (里甲) mutual responsibility system.[295]

In the course of time many of these wealthy families were able to shirk their tax duties and shift the burden further on the poorer families.[296] The result was that many poor farmers chose to become tenants, artisans, workers for wages, or took refuge into audacity and became bandits or illegal mine exploiters in the mountains. Fujian was furthermore a special case, because there existed a combination of landowners long native to the area, wealthy farmers and merchants, who amongst themselves often sold the rights to the rent of certain pieces of land without selling the ownership itself, a practice which was often subject to abuses leading to even heavier financial burdens for the tenants.[297]

The resulting economic tensions led in 1448 to an outbreak of tenant farmer-initiated violence led by Deng Maoqi, which quickly spread across many parts of the province and even briefly linked up with a contemporaneous mineworker's rebellion in neighbouring Zhejiang province. It is possible to discern a response in three phases to the rebellion. At first local *weisuo*

[294] Eduard B. Vermeer, "Introduction," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, edited by E.B. Vermeer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 5-7.
[295] Kai Filipiak, "Der Bauernaufstand des Deng Maoqi 1448/1449 als Ausdrück einer Zäsur in der Geschichte der Ming-Dynastie," *Monumenta Serica* 54 (2006): 121.
[296] Benjamin Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 16-17.
[297] Filipiak, "Der Bauernaufstand des Deng Maoqi," 122-124.

were mobilized under their officers to deal with the crisis. These were not able to quell the rebellion and three separate units numbering 300, 2,000 and 4,000 respectively were defeated and annihilated by the rebels.[298] Thereafter the government responded by appointing and sending high-ranking hereditary officers from the capital to take charge of local *weisuo* troops in Fujian. Significant in the course of the conflict was the inadequacy of the local troops to contain and defeat the rebellion. The Fujian *weisuo* forces were painfully defeated by the rebels on several occasions, according to contemporaneous reports owing to lack of discipline on the parts of the troops and authority on the part of the officers. By way of a third phase, the court was prompted to tap into a new source of troops, namely the garrison troops defending the second capital Nanjing (the Yongle emperor had made Beijing the primary capital in 1421). These were augmented by troops that were normally deployed for transport duties (probably along the Grand Canal), bringing the force up to a strength of 47,000 men. These were commanded, not only by hereditary officers and members of the merit nobility, but also by members of the censorate. Already during this campaign, it is therefore possible to detect the increasing encroachment of *wen* officials and even eunuchs on matters that should normally have been merely *wu* affairs. Censors were not only tagging along to check on the progress of the armed forces and write up reports, but were also leading some contingents of troops. In addition, eunuchs were known to be dispatched to take charge of the firearms division in the capital.[299] Eunuchs had been in charge of the firearms divisions in the capital, and their inclusion in this campaign in this function should not be considered unusual.[300]

The decline of the hereditary military system was thus noticeable in these mid-fifteenth century campaigns. In my own view this decline seems most noticeable in the usurpation of military prerogatives by civil officials and eunuchs, and not so much in the state of the *weisuo* itself. Local Fujian forces showed deficiencies in actual operations, but the solution for their defeat was the deployment of additional *weisuo* units from elsewhere in the empire's "south", in this case Nanjing. No large-scale recourse had to be taken yet to tapping into new military labour pools. However, in my view it does show that the local *weisuo* forces were not numerous enough anymore to deal with internal uprisings. Kai Filipiak seems to agree with contemporary assessments that the Fujian garrison troops were undisciplined and their commanders lacking in command authority.

[298] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 191-193.
[299] Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven*, 102.
[300] Filipiak, "Der Bauernaufstand des Deng Maoqi," 127-131, 134-138.

I, on the other hand, see the failure of the local *weisuo* also as a systemic failure of the military organizational structure itself. The fragmentation of authority and jurisdiction of the military officers, which had been a deliberate policy of Zhu Yuanzhang, meant that they were only able to get into action in a piecemeal fashion, with detachments not larger than 4,000 soldiers (and often smaller) fighting a numerically much stronger rebellion which spread across the jurisdiction of several garrisons and even spilled over into other neighbouring provinces. This brings into memory the shortcomings of the Song local military organization in Jiangxi we saw in the previous chapter, an organization which was unable to defeat bandits willing to cross administrative borders because of a lack of authority to do so. In my view, population growth and the dissociation between labour and land possession meant that conflicts in the south of the empire quickly overpowered the strictly segmented and compartmentalized military hierarchy and authority in the provinces. Added to that was the shift of many military forces from the south to the north during and after the Yongle reign, which left a comparative lacuna of military security in the southern and inner reaches of the empire, as Filipiak argued.[301]

An attempt to compensate for this relative military lacunae in the south was sought in the formation of local militia, recruited by the local magistrates. One problem of this solution was that it devolved power into the hands of local strongmen and martial arts experts, who could also use their militia organizations as a launching pad for rebellion. Deng Maoqi's rebellion itself had started out like this. There was thus fear that arming the local population for local security could help undermine this security even further. Moreover, the cost of funding these organizations added another burden to the local population. Another solution was to leave the formation of militia to the local elites,[302] which put the southern Ming literati in the same position as Lu Xiangshan had been in during the Song dynasty, only on a grander scale. As I will argue in the next chapters, the heartland of the literati and the majority of the civil bureaucrats in the south was increasingly under threat, and out of sheer necessity they would have to militarize their lifestyles in order not to lose control of the situation. They would also have to find a solution for funding the new military organizations which would have to augment and replace the old self-supporting hereditary military.

Financial Aspects of the Military System

[301] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär*, 189.
[302] Filipiak, "" Saving Lives"," 157-160.

The organizational changes in the fifteenth century as the early Ming gave way to the mid-Ming, which were to a great extend stimulated around 1450 by the disastrous Tumu defeat, would in turn strain the finances of the Ming empire. As already noted in the previous chapter, the Ming was much less a resource extractor than the Song had been, with the former mostly relying on agricultural taxes, whilst the latter was able to extract nine times the amount of non-agricultural taxes in comparison with its Ming successor, on top of its comparable agricultural resource extraction.[303] Notably, the annual revenue of the Ming that is being measured for this comparison belongs to the year 1578, a period when the financial reforms of Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582) where in full swing.[304] According to Ray Huang, the Ming empire's taxation system was inferior to that of the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties in many respects, and this could have been a result of the Neo-Confucian "small government" ideology which Zhu Yuanzhang embraced to organize his polity, as Peter Bol contends.[305] According to Huang, the Song dynasty was more flexible in taxing developing sectors of the economy in lieu of predominantly relying on agricultural taxes paid in kind. In addition, the Ming only minted coins during forty years of its existence, whereas the Song did during the majority of its existence. Even the Yuan was known to demand its taxes in grain, but based on assessments of the grain's value in copper coins, which demonstrated the continued relevance of applied monetary exchange standards by the empire's bureaucracy. A related issue was that of professionalism, which Huang posits was increasing during the Tang and Song eras, but declined during the Ming when civil officials would increasingly leave it to non-commissioned hired functionaries below the formal bureaucratic hierarchy.[306]

This weaker resource extraction capability was not a problem as long as the military remained a self-sufficient part of the governmental apparatus. Zhu Yuanzhang, as noted, had intended for the hereditary military to provide its own upkeep and for this reason every individual soldier was assigned a plot of agricultural land. Half of its produce would go towards supporting the immediate family-dependents of the soldier, and half would be handed over to the state as tax.

[303] Hartman, "Sung Government and Politics," 23.
[304] Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 267.
[305] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 258-261.
[306] Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance*, 316.

Although Robinson does not state this very clearly, it seems that this latter half was meant for the remaining military costs incurred by the empire. The fragmentary data that is available on account of modern research indicates a a sharp decrease between 1403 and 1424 (which coincides with Yongle's military activist reign), an incomplete recovery during the less adventurous Hongxi (1424-1425) emperor, followed by another radical decrease by the end of the activist Xuande (1425-1435) emperor. Robinson paraphrases Japanese research in this context: "One Japanese scholar has documented a dramatic drop from approximately 20 million *shi* (62 million bushels or 1.3 million tons) to 5 million *shi* (325,000 tons) in the two decades between 1403 and 1424. After a brief rise to 9 million *shi*, by 1434, the figure seems to have dropped to 2 million."[307] Robinson does note that it is not entirely clear if these numbers refer to merely the half received by the central administration, or whether it also includes the half meant to be redistributed locally within the garrisons themselves to support the soldiers. Surprisingly, Robinson does not draw any conclusions from the timing of the fluctuation in tax revenue income. To me it would seem that more militarily activist rulership equated to less tax income, perhaps because military campaigns kept the soldiers from their agricultural duties.[308]

In line with the initial non-monetized nature of the taxation system, the wages of the soldiers were set in amounts of rice. However, this did not account of regional variations. Rice thrived well in the south, whereas beans and grains were cultivated in the north. Plots of land assigned to soldiers also varied in size across the geographical reach of the Ming empire: in the south where lands were much more productive, soldiers generally received less land than in the north were good agricultural land was scarcer. Some kind of conversion system was in place to reckon northern soldier's wages in the local produce. It seems that even the half cultivated by soldiers for the benefit of their own consumption, was first collected in local state-controlled granaries and store houses. Robinson does not explain why, but by the early fifteenth century the wages were already not entirely paid in agricultural produce. Parts of it were commuted into paper money, spices, and cotton textiles, although paper money never really caught on during the Ming dynasty and was discarded later as a means of payment. Instead, silver became increasingly common from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. The payment of wages in commodities was not always a practical system, especially in the case of long-term deployment of units away from their

[307] Robinson, "Military Labor in China," 59.
[308] Idem, 59-60.

own granaries and storehouses. Transport of perishable goods like grain and rice was not always feasible over long distances. To solve this conundrum, a patchwork of solutions was adopted. On the short term, "guest" units could receive travel wages from other garrison's granaries and store houses, but for long term deployments resort had to made to constructing new granaries and store houses, which then sometimes had to be supplied from the original ones far away, or from the capital region. Sometimes a lack of resources could also be compensated by relying more on commercial taxes in areas with a well-developed mercantile economy, especially in the south of the empire.[309]

The increasing problems with desertion, the erosion of landed property in the hands of the hereditary military garrisons and the partial replacement of the hereditary military by militia, mercenaries, housemen, and non-Chinese forces during the fifteenth century would mean that the financial pressure on the dynasty to support its military operations would increase. Next to that, the system of granaries and store houses, so intimately connected to a wage payment system in kind, would also face problems with the relative decline of the theoretically self-supporting military. At the core of the problem, this self-supporting military was increasingly replaced by military units that did not contribute towards their own upkeep at all, but had to be funded in new ways. The empire in the sixteenth century thus faced the problem of how to finance and organize the delivery of wages to its military. A last problem the dynasty faced at the end of the fifteenth century was a failure of its ideology, buttressed by the examination system, to provide for guidance in the troubling times caused by all the changes enumerated above.

A Crisis of Ideology

The socio-economic changes also had significant effects on the literati stratum of society, the segment the civil bureaucrats were drawn from. As Benjamin Elman has pointed out, by the institution of the civil service examination system the government in essence created its own labour pool of potential civil bureaucrats.[310] When the examinations therefore became the main entrance into civil government service in lieu of hereditary privileges and aristocratic descent during the Song dynasty, it could be said that succeeding empires defined and shaped the *wen-*

[309] Idem, 59-62.
[310] Elman, *A Cultural History*, 69-70.

labour market to an extent that they could not shape its *wu* counterpart, even though the Ming founder's adoption of the hereditary household system was probably an attempt at imperial control of this volatile labour pool. By instituting the civil service examinations as the main entrance to the bureaucracy, successive dynasties were able to dictate the terms of entrance and thus the sections of society the manpower would be drawn from. Conversely, through a process of socio-cultural reproduction, the resulting labour market would bring itself into being through voluntary socio-cultural reproduction of its members seeking employment in the imperial bureaucracy.[311] As we have seen, Zhu Yuanzhang again adopted an innovation that was in effect derived from Mongolian Yuan dynasty precedents, namely the institution of the Neo-Confucianism according to the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy as the main content of the examinations. Whereas the succeeding Mongol Yuan dynasty had decided to keep the ex-Song southern Han Chinese out of government, instead relying on northern Chinese, Jürchen and other groups of Central Asian and Western Asian origin, by 1315 the examination system was instituted again for the first time based on this orthodoxy in order to draw Han Chinese into government service once again. The curriculum that had to be studied included the Five Classics, Four Books, certain dynastic histories and the interpretations of the Five Classics and Four Books by the three abovementioned Song Neo-Confucians, the interpretation of which had been touched upon in their commentaries.[312]

The Ming founder had only reluctantly co-opted the literati in his government, realizing that without them he lacked adequate personnel to run the bureaucracy his empire required. Nevertheless, coming from a humble peasant background he apparently distrusted and felt at unease with the high-class literati from elite backgrounds. For him, the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy and its associated curriculum was a means with which to control the ideological conformity of his literati-*cum*-officials. He even went so far as to censor bits of the philosophical work of Mencius, especially those parts that emphasized the inherent goodness of human moral character, which he disagreed with.[313] Another reason might have been Mencius' position that the people could legitimately overthrow the rule of a morally corrupt ruler, the inherent goodness of human beings enabling them to make a sound judgment on this matter.[314] The tendencies towards strict

[311] Benjamin A. Elman, "Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50.1 (1991): 15-16.
[312] Idem, 37.
[313] Daniel Bryant, *The Great Recreation: Ho Ching-ming (1483-1521) and His World* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 33-34.
[314] *Mengzi* 孟子 (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1999), 207-213.

ideological control by the emperor were reinforced by his usurping son, the Yongle emperor. He had deposed the intended successor of Zhu Yuangzhang, his grandson Zhu Yunwen the Jianwen (r. 1398-1402) emperor, who had tried to curb the military power of his uncles at the northern frontier and had actually sought more rapprochement with the civil literati-*cum*-officials as well. Many of these civil officials and scholars were killed after the Yongle emperor conquered the then-capital Nanjing. The usurping emperor took measures to further systematize and standardize the curriculum that formed the core materials to be studied for the civil service examination system. In order to do this, he authorized the compilation of two digests which contained approved commentaries on the Confucian classics as well as Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian learning. Furthermore, the Yongle emperor was notorious for his crackdown on literati who swayed too far from the ideological orthodoxy which was instituted by the court.[315]

All of this enforced ideological conformism created a barren intellectual climate during the early Ming. Literati had two choices: either conform to the stipulated Confucian orthodoxy to have a chance to enter the bureaucracy, or renounce ambitions towards a bureaucratic career altogether and engage in private scholarship and other *wen*-pursuits outside of state service. In the course of time this strict intellectual straightjacket started to cause resentments and these combined with socio-economic changes caused some literati to re-examine the dynasty-imposed orthodoxy. It also induced an intellectual climate in which pragmatic learning for examination success trumped the quest for personal moral improvement and sagehood, the original aim of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. The founding emperor had stipulated that no changes could be made to the institutional structure of his empire, which included for example the size of the civil bureaucracy. As the population increased, so did the number of people who wanted to acquire a position within this bureaucracy, with as an obvious consequence the enlargement of the labour pool of graduates who had successfully negotiated the first level of examination system. The members of this labour pool had an increasingly small chance to actually succeed in the higher levels which gave access to positions within the bureaucracy.[316] Consequently, while the absolute numbers of highly trained literati increased, so did the frustration with the inflexible ideological contents of the examinations they had to pass with a very slim margin of success. I contend that an ideology like (Neo)-

[315] Bryant, *The Great Recreation*, 88. See also: Peter Ditmanson, "Venerating the Martyrs of the 1402 Usurpation: History and Memory in the Mid and Late Ming Dynasty," *T'oung Pao* 93 (2007): 110-158.
[316] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 97-99.

Confucianism was not always merely a convenient layer of outwardly professed conformism to its thought adopted for pragmatic reasons, but in many cases was genuinely adhered to and actively shaped a person's moral imperative. Undoubtedly already right after Zhu Xi's time many of the literati-*cum*-scholars conforming to Neo-Confucianism did so for pragmatic reasons, for example for the cultural and political capital it could bestow on the local level. Others doubted the validity of external investigations and book learning, and proposed a more inward turn for moral cultivation, like Lu Jiuyuan. Nevertheless, during the Ming, when Cheng-Zhu learning had become orthodoxy, many were probably genuinely attracted to the Neo-Confucian message and their numbers must have multiplied considerably with the increase of civil service examination candidates during the mid-to-late Ming. Neo-Confucianism actively encourages its adherents to engage with society and order it according to the moral principles it advocates, including the strict sense of hierarchy and notions of righteousness. For many thousands of first level-examination graduates, as well as many other groups who sympathized with the Neo-Confucian program, but did not even have a chance at realizing their ambitions to be part of the governmental apparatus for various reasons, there was therefore a lack of a legitimate outlet to satisfy their urge to realize their moral imperatives in the society around them. How could one then realize one's moral imperative in these circumstances?

I would argue the result was a "second crisis of classicist learning", which would develop along surprisingly similar lines to the first one during the Song. Again, debate centred around what constituted the correct Confucian or classicist learning and what role the transmitted classics had within this process. Similar to Ancient Style proponents of the Song, around the turn of the fifteenth century Archaist and other movements took shape with adherents advocating a return to the writing styles of the ancients in order to appropriate and imitate their way of thinking. Others would seek to continue the Neo-Confucian project of "learning to be a sage", a mission now corrupted by the examination system, which stimulated Cheng-Zhu learning for utilitarian examination success in lieu of moral improvement.[317]

By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, therefore, especially the southern parts of the Ming empire were undergoing a process of complex socio-economical changes, which led to a more violence-prone and instable southern inland and maritime zone. At the same time, weaknesses within the military institutions set up during the dynasty's foundation had eroded its

[317] Miaw-fen Lu, "Practice as Knowledge: Yang-ming Learning and Chiang-hui in Sixteenth-Century China" (PhD diss., University of California, 1997), 30-31.

manpower base in exactly these areas of the empire. Finally, the examination system's limitations failed to accommodate the demographic growth and ideological leanings of an increasing number literati (most in the south), some of whom were looking for alternatives to satisfy their quest for leadership roles within society. Moreover, these southern literati would have to reconcile their ideology with martial and military activities after centuries of being able to lead demilitarized lifestyles. In addition, new groups rose to the top of society, which were looking for a moral sanction and moral guidance vis-à-vis the hegemonic Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. One of these was constituted by the merchants. Their dilemma was concisely summarized by Richard Lufrano: "They also hoped to remain upstanding members of a society dominated by a governmental and educational elite whose notions of respectability - transmitted through edicts, lectures, and morality books—lagged behind the rapid economic changes and whose values conflicted with the reality of their lives. This establishment urged them from birth to quash their ambitions and to accept their lot in life."[318] But other groups also sought this moral sanction, and in the next chapter it will become clear that the hereditary military were among them. It is against this southern backdrop that a new Neo-Confucian interpretation emerged entangled with solutions to civil and military governance problems. In the next two chapters I will look at the career and thought of a man who played an instrumental role in solving the first of the two greatest periods of military crises of the south (1516-1525) during the mid-Ming. He was a civil bureaucrat and Neo-Confucian philosopher who crossed the *wen-wu* divide to become a successful military commander during the first crisis. In the process, he redefined Neo-Confucian learning and socio-cultural identity to such an extent that it became possible for the second figure, a hereditary military man, to cross the *wen-wu* divide in the opposite direction during the second crisis (1556-1565). These two men were Wang Yangming and Qi Jiguang. In the next chapters I will turn to their stories.

[318] Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 1.

Chapter 4 – Bridging the *Wen-Wu* Divide: Wang Yangming

As the mid-Ming progressed and the crisis outlined in the previous chapter became more pertinent in the south until reaching a crescendo twice during the first half of the sixteenth century, two men saw the need to cross the *wen-wu* divide from opposite starting points in order to battle their respective crises. What I will argue is that these two men are linked in terms of Neo-Confucian philosophy, military thought, and personal connections, even though they never met each other in person. Wang Yangming came closest to formulating a comprehensive approach to all the problems outlined in the previous chapter, and Qi Jiguang would be a beneficiary of these solutions and develop them further in some ways. What I will argue from this chapter onwards, thus, is that Wang Yangming's military campaigns and the Wokou-crisis were intimately linked in terms of a shared Neo-Confucian philosophical activist approach *cum* civil-military governance solutions, which provided the cement and substance of personal relationships and knowledge circulation networks enabling this continuity. A core contention of my research is that the socio-cultural, intellectual, and military aspects of the anti-Wokou campaign therefore cannot be understood without reference to the preceding campaigns by Wang Yangming, which in many ways provided a multi-facetted blueprint for the solutions to the conflict in the empire's south several decades later. I will argue that the anti-Wokou campaign's policy solutions mirrored Wang Yangming's in many of the areas I singled out in the previous chapter as suffering from a mid-Ming crisis of imperial governance. A second contention is that Qi Jiguang's military solutions were part of this same tradition. Previous scholars have asserted that Wang Yangming's personal example would become an important model for succeeding generations of aspiring officials wishing to bridge the *wen-wu* divide.[319] I, however, will demonstrate in the following chapters that Wang Yangming's philosophy itself - in addition to the involvement of his direct (and indirect) followers in military crisis and his practical civil-military policies - characterizes Wang Yangming's influence on later sixteenth-century military developments at both the southern and northern frontiers as exceeding that of a mere personal exemplar.

[319] Chen Baoliang 陈宝良, "Mingdai de wenwu guanxi jiqi yanbian – jiyu zhidu, shehui ji sixiangshi cengmian de kaocha" 明代的文武关系及其演变 - 基于制度、社会及思想史层面的考察, *Anhui shixue* 安徽史学 2 (2014): 16; Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials," 11-12; Wang, "Wugong, wuxue, wuyi, wuxia," 222.

In this chapter, I will start tracing this link Wang Yangming and the mid-sixteenth century anti-Wokou campaigns by considering the life and thought of Wang Yangming and its consequences for the *wen-wu* divide. In the following chapters I will continue with an appraisal of Wang's concrete military praxis and a demonstration of how this fusion of Neo-Confucianism and military activism was eventually appropriated by Qi Jiguang and his *Umfeld* (social surroundings). Furthermore, I will dwell on the concrete practical approach to military problems applied by both Wang and Qi, and analyse in which ways they might be diachronically connected. In this chapter, it is not my intention to give a grand exposition of Wang Yangming's thought, but I will turn briefly to the consequences of his thoughts on the heart-mind in the realm of moral self-cultivation, especially those who would have an impact on the development of military thought later on in the sixteenth century. These will be treated in detail in the last chapter.

Wang Yangming's Mad Ardour

In most modern scholarship, the contribution of Wang Yangming to the development of Neo-Confucian thought has taken centre stage.[320] But he was more than a scholar with an ideological reform-agenda. One of the main reasons he rose to prominence was his successful career as both a civil administrator and military commander, successes that cannot be disentangled from the spread of his philosophical reinterpretation, as I will argue below.

Wang Yangming, or Wang Shouren 王守仁 as he was known by birth, was a southerner born in Yuyao 餘姚 County in the province of Zhejiang. He came from a family which had produced examination degree holders in the past, including his father.[321] A striking aspect of the early life of this man, who would, as I will argue later, provide a pathway towards a philosophical

[320] The most recent exception to the rule, which, importantly, integrates and connects Wang's moral philosophy with his concrete civil-military policies as an official is George Lawrence Israel, *Doing Good and Ridding Evil in Ming China: The Political Career of Wang Yangming* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Earlier works in western languages are Chang Yü-chüan, *Wang Shou-jen as a Statesman* (Peking: The Chinese Social & Political Science Association, 1940), and Tu Wei-ming, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth (1472-1509)* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1976). A comprehensive Chinese article on Wang Yangming's practical civil-military governance solutions is Fan Zhongyi 范中义, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang" 王守仁的军事思想, *Mingshi yanjiu* 明史研究 9 (2005): 220-230. A recent Taiwanese doctoral dissertation dwells extensively on the practical aspects of Wang's philosophy: Wang Chi-hua 王繼華, "Wang Yangming shijian zhexue yanjiu" 王陽明實踐哲學研究 (PhD diss., Chinese Culture University, 2009).

[321] Chang Yü-chüan, *Wang Shou-jen as a Statesman* (Peking: The Chinese Social & Political Science Association, 1940), 2-4.

reconciliation of Neo-Confucianism with martial identities for many participants of the anti-Wokou campaign, was his initial lack of interest in Neo-Confucian learning. Instead, his early life testified to his interest in almost all other major philosophical traditions and associated identities the mid-Ming empire had on offer. These included the Strategists, certain martial arts, and, although Wang himself never referred to the knights-errant in his own extant writings, a contemporary would consider his early behaviour indicative of knight-errantry as well. In addition to his martial pursuits, Wang Yangming also engaged with Daoism, Buddhism, and *belles-lettres* writing as routes to self-realization, before eventually returning to Neo-Confucianism in the early sixteenth century.

Before Wang acquired the highest civil service examination degree, and therefore the entrance ticket to an official career, in 1499, he had spent much time studying the Strategists, and mastering the arts of horse-riding and archery, mostly against his father's wishes. He rather saw his son studying and preparing for the civil examinations. However, as a youth Wang Yangming was already known to have imagined himself a great general, and he practiced this by letting his playmates assume various military formations. This interest would intensify in 1485, when he started studying archery, horsemanship, and military strategy. The following year he would even spend some time at the northern frontier amongst the nomads north of Beijing, amongst whom he would continue building his martial expertise. Perhaps not surprisingly, Wang Yangming idolized a scholar-general who served the Han dynasty, Ma Yuan 馬援 (14 BCE – 49 CE), known for his desire to serve away from the court at different northern and southern frontier areas, and also known for his creative use of military stratagem to suit changing circumstances. Finally, Wang's military inclinations came to the forefront in his first assignment as a civil official. This entailed the construction of a tomb for Wang Yue 王越 (1423-1498), a civil official recruited through the civil service examination system with significant military accomplishments, who played an important role in stabilizing the northern frontier against the Mongols in the half-century after the Tumu disaster. Like Ma Yuan, Wang Yue was known for his creative application of military stratagem. It is not unlikely that Wang Yangming was inspired by Wang Yue's credentials as a civil official with military accomplishments. Whilst constructing this tomb, Wang again organized his workforce according to military principles. Moreover, as a result of this activity, Wang might have gained access to Wang Yue's military writings through his family members. As a result of his experience at the northern frontier, Wang also compiled a memorial to the emperor with

suggestions on how to improve the military security in the area, the contents of which I will briefly touch upon in the section following below.[322]

Military and martial concerns were thus an important early part of Wang Yangming's life. His unconventional interests did not end there, however. He engaged in Daoist and Buddhist studies as well: the former might have been prompted by his fragile health in order to find a solution in the pursuit for immortality, the latter might have been to cultivate detachment from the world.[323] A third pursuit was literature. Wang did this in the context of the Archaist movement, which advocated a return to the ancient prose of the Han dynasty and before, and the poetry of the Tang. An underlying assumption of this movement was that the literature of these periods represented an ideal *wen* based on unchanging laws, or *fa* 法, which reflected the proper natural principles of the world. Internalizing these was a process of immersion in-, and self-realization through mastering the proper cultural forms drawn from this circumscribed cultural tradition. These *fa* were initially something existing external to the individual, which then had to be internalized. Thereafter, a person properly cultivated in this way, would be able to express himself spontaneously in the ideal language of the sages.[324] According to Bol, the logic worked as follows:

> […] the way a person wrote inevitably revealed the values that guided him; thus one could infer the qualities of the person and how he would act from the style of his writing. So studying the "ancient wen" in functional terms we might say to study the "ideal culture" was really about learning the values of the sages and making them one's own.[325]

This movement, which did not restrict itself to purely Confucian writings, had its origin during the late Tang and Song dynasties, but had lost out to Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism by the end of that dynasty. During the mid-Ming disenchantment with the official orthodoxy it regained ground, however.

All these pursuits did not occur in a chronological fashion, but he would eventually abandon all of them in favour of returning to Neo-Confucianism. His disenchantment with *belles-lettres* would follow his realization that it boiled down to a competition between literati about

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[322] Tu, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action*, 31-41; Waldron, *The Great Wall of China*, 98-104.
[323] Kandice Kandice., ""Goodness Unbound" – Wang Yang-ming and the Redrawing of the Boundary of Confucianism," in *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts, and Hermeneutics*, edited by Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng, and John B. Henderson (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 124.
[324] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 52-55; Bryant, *The Great Recreation*, 415-425; Kenneth James Hammond, "History and Literati Culture: Towards an Intellectual Biography of Wang Shizhen (1526-1590)" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1994), 136-160.
[325] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 53.

stylish writing, and his eventual abandonment of Daoism and Buddhism followed his disappointment with their lack of concern for this-worldly affairs. His criticism of his martial and military preoccupations would only come later in life, when he thought of them as frivolous pursuits.[326] Yet, all these preoccupations would leave their mark on his developing Neo-Confucian philosophy and the inspiration his future followers would take from his personal example. Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466-1560), a Guangdong-born Neo-Confucian philosopher, who would become a friend and mentor of Wang during his "conversion" to Neo-Confucianism, saw the latter's martial and military pursuits as indicative of a spirit of knight-errantry. Furthermore, Wang's father recognized his son's ambition to memorialize the emperor early in his life on military frontier affairs as a manifestation of a kind of "mad ardour", or *kuang* 狂. Wang Yangming would later consider *kuang* to be a desirable quality in men pursuing the road to Neo-Confucian sagehood. According to Miaw-fen Lu, the *kuang* (in Confucian discourse) stood in opposition to the *xiangyuan* 鄉愿, who were the "good careful people from the villages."[327] According to both Confucius and Mencius, the latter were bad moral exemplars, because their outward moral excellence was only a show put on for the outside world to conform to other people's notions of virtue, and one that was not backed up by a sincerity of will. *Kuang* behaviour showed that one was unconcerned by the judgment of society and this was a necessary step towards achieving sagehood. As I will argue later, it would also be one of the aspects of Wang's philosophy and personal example that would provide his later followers with a means to build a bridge between *wen* and *wu* whilst still claiming a Neo-Confucian identity for themselves. Furthermore, while Wang turned away from Daoism and Buddhism, he did claim that in their original form the two held some claims to moral truth, but were incomplete because they were only concerned with the self and not society at large. On this basis, some accommodation could be reached between the different religions-*cum*-philosophies, as we shall see later.[328] Wang Yangming's early life thus bore witness to a desire to expand the constricted Neo-Confucian identity.

However, Wang in the end returned to Neo-Confucianism, because it validated and encouraged the this-worldly commitment he apparently sought. Earlier in his life, Wang had been

[326] Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 37-38; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 49; Tu, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action*, 28-31.
[327] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 296.
[328] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 48-51 Hauf, ""Goodness Unbound"," 124-129; Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 296; Tu, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action*, 38-39, 74.

inspired by the Neo-Confucian quest to become a sage, but he had become discouraged after he failed to discover the *li*, or principle, of bamboo by investigating it according to Zhu Xi's *gewu*. To him, it confirmed the notion that only a select few could become a sage, and that he himself simply was not one of them. His return to Neo-Confucianism, then, was went hand-in-hand with an intellectual process in which he redefined the conditions under which one was able to become a sage within the ideology. This started in 1505 or 1506, when he met the abovementioned Zhan Ruoshui, who himself was a student of the Guangdong-born Neo-Confucian philosopher Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500). Chen and Zhan were the two most important Neo-Confucian innovators of the mid-Ming before Wang Yangming's rise to fame, especially in relation to the trend of steering the path of moral self-cultivation away from the investigation of external phenomena towards a stress on internal cultivation. Wang never met Chen Xianzhang personally,[329] but it would not be unreasonable to assume that he partook of Chen's life and thought via his friend and mentor Zhan Ruoshui.

The discontent with Neo-Confucianism had not at first sprung from its philosophical content *per se*, but rather the unfortunate consequences of turning its mastery in writing into a formal requirement to enter the bureaucracy. Probably for many literati sincerely learning to become a sage became pragmatic learning to make a career, and the philosophy became ossified and immune to change. As a response to the imposed stifling ideological orthodoxy of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, in the course of the fifteenth century a renewed quest for personal sagehood was undertaken by some literati. As posited by Bol and others, frustrations with the reality of the civil service examination system and its attendant ideological inflexibility and intellectual barrenness thus led to a number of literati to find sagehood for themselves as a way to implement their moral imperatives. Amongst the early ones to attempt this were literati like Wu Yubi 吳與弼 (1392-1469) and Hu Juren, the latter channelling his sagely imperatives into the building of local institutions in the shape of private academies, foreshadowing a greater turn to the local level by literati during the sixteenth century.[330] Sagehood, also for more conservative Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians like Hu, could have a performative social activist component. And this latter

[329] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 40-43, 84-86.
[330] Bol, "The "Localist Turn"," 1-4; John W. Dardess, *Ming China, 1368-1644: A Concise History of a Resilient Empire* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012), 88-89.

component was more and more in demand as the mid-Ming and its attendant crises in civil and military governance unfolded.

If Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism could still inspire a quest for sagehood, as indeed it also did for Wang Yangming, how do we explain the turn towards inner moral self-cultivation? I think the answer is twofold. On the one hand, this inward turn made sagehood achievable (at least in theory) for everyone, regardless of occupation. On the other hand, this inner turn facilitated social activism to a much greater extent. It attained both of these by marginalizing bookish learning, an outcome of the search for principle posited by Cheng-Zhu learning as also existing external to the self, as a path to moral self-cultivation. The problem with the investigation of external affairs through book learning was that it could degenerate into "vulgar learning", i.e. the acquisition of knowledge divorced from the objective of moral self-cultivation and the acquisition of knowledge for the selfish and pragmatic reason of examination success. Instead, the intent of Zhu Xi and his predecessors was that the study of the inside and the outside world proceed simultaneously and the efforts should be linked, because the goals were linked. Reflecting on the external helped cultivate the internal, and would point the way on how to be a virtuous person in the midst of society. "Vulgar learning" threatened to destroy this link between self and society. [331] This link was essential for the Neo-Confucian, because the whole premise of the philosophy was that human and nature, individual and universe, self and society, formed a unity.

This mystical [332] slant was a key feature of a metaphysical superstructure that Neo-Confucianism added to the original Confucianism of the Warring States period, which tended to be uninterested in metaphysics to the point of seeming secular. Probably under influence of Daoist and Buddhist thought, but also motivated by a need to be competitive with both of these religions-*cum*-philosophies, the emerging Neo-Confucian movement developed its own metaphysics, borrowing its vocabulary mostly from the *Classic of Changes*. This included the duality between *li* and *qi*, which I briefly touched upon in the second chapter. In short, all the possible principles, or *li*, of the world, including moral ones, were already present in the smallest speck of dust and in the mind of the most enlightened human being, but it was *qi* - matter, energy, or vitality – and its

[331] Youngmin Kim, "Rethinking the Self's Relation to the World in the Mid-Ming: Four Responses to Cheng-Zhu Learning," *Ming Studies* 44 (2001): 13-16.
[332] I agree with Wm. Theodore de Bary, who states that "[…] the possibility of a distinctive Confucian mysticism can by no means be ruled out." See: Wm. Theodore de Bary, "Introduction," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 13.

quality – from clear to turbid - which determined how much of this *li* was allowed to shine through and determine the final shape of something or someone. To translate this into Platonist terms: *li* contained all the principles behind all possible shapes and forms, but the quality of the *qi* determined which form or shape would be the outcome. This included morality and a given individual's ability to perceive it and thus behave according to it. If an individual's *qi* was murky, or turbid, it would hinder his ability to perceive the *li* of morality within himself and outside of himself and act according to it. The quality of the *qi* of different people could vary, and so did their potential to become a virtuous person, *junzi*, or even a sage. Moral self-cultivation thus boiled down to an effort to "clear up" one's *qi* in order to reflect the Principle of Heaven, or Principle of Nature (*tianli*) like a mirror. This duality between *li* and *qi* was necessary to explain why humans, who according to Mencius were innately good, were capable of evil. This could then be explained by positing that their *li* was good, but the quality of their *qi* could obscure this goodness and induce them to engage in evil behaviour. This evil behaviour was usually seen in terms of selfish desire, or *yu* 欲. Thus, self-cultivation was directed towards eliminating any kind of selfish desire, after which one would become aware of forming a unity with the everyone and everything around oneself. In this aspect, the influence of Buddhism could be seen to a great extent, except that the elimination of desire was not meant to lead one to a detachment from this world in a quest for the otherworldly extinction of the self, but rather to the creation of a morally superior human who could and should take the lead in ordering this world.[333]

The techniques for moral self-cultivation to enable one to become such a morally superior human that Zhu Xi eventually consolidated in his Neo-Confucian learning included a number of different exercises with intellectual and spiritual components. One of these, "mastering quietude", or *zhujing* 主静, was a mental exercise enabling one to concentrate and unify one's effort as prerequisite of all other steps. Other exercises focussed on recognizing good and evil psychic phenomena and banishing the latter. Meditation, or "quiet sitting" (*jingzuo* 静坐) was a necessary period of quietude in a daily cycle alternating with activity, meant to nourish one's energies for a new period of activity. The already mentioned *gewu*, "investigation of things", was a group of exercises meant to make one discover principle inside and outside the self, in the end achieving

[333] Ch'eng I-fan, "Development and Frustrations of Statecraft in Mid-Ming China: As Reflected in the Experiences of the Gu Family of Jiangnan during the Sixteenth Century" (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1988), 58-88; Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 46-49.

enlightenment as a sage by realizing a kind of mystic unity between oneself and the rest of the universe. A final step included putting one's self-cultivated moral knowledge in practice, both a validation of, and moral imperative resulting from this self-cultivation. These exercises all contributed towards clearing up one's *qi*.[334] Meditation, in particular, was meant to calm the heart-mind by marginalizing the impact of aroused emotions and desires. This settled one's *qi*, making it easier to perceive principle.[335] Meditation probably became part of the Neo-Confucian movement through the influence of Daoism and Buddhism, although Neo-Confucians themselves traced it back to Confucius and Mencius, who discussed mental quietude and nourishing the heart-mind.[336] Recently, Chinese scholar Chen Lihua has argued that Zhu Xi might have integrated meditation within his consolidation of Neo-Confucianism under the influence of his teacher Li Tong 李侗 (1093-1163). He advocated a method of meditation called *mozuo chengxin* 默坐澄心, or "sitting quietly and calming the heart-mind".[337] But Zhu Xi recognized that merely meditation entailed the danger of a slide into quietism, and it therefore had to be supplemented by inquiry and study of external phenomena, including the principles behind phenomena one encountered within one's daily life. *Gewu* was a primary component of this external side of self-cultivation, which entailed studying (in sequence of declining importance) the *Four Books*, *Five Classics*, and the official dynastic histories. Zhu Xi believed these books had one correct interpretation and that arriving at it yourself would be an enlightening experience. Furthermore, these books were meant as an anchor against dangerous excessive subjectivism through personal intuition, which was Zhu Xi's main caveat with Lu Jiuyuan's philosophy. However, bookish learning was but one aspect of *gewu* and Neo-Confucianism still necessitated an engagement with society, the outside world. Yet, despite Zhu Xi's best intentions, by mid-Ming times Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism had mostly degenerated to book learning, rote memorization, and intellectualism divorced from societal engagement. Part of the problem, as per Wang Yangming's diagnosis, was perhaps to be sought amongst the assumptions underlying Zhu Xi's philosophy itself. *Gewu* as an external search had the tendency to make one gather and compile facts related to a given principle whilst losing the

[334] Smith et al, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching*, 171-173.
[335] Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 49.
[336] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 218.
[337] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 201; Chen Lihua 陈利华, "Lun Li Tong zai Zhuzi lixue chuangli Zhong de zuoyong yu yingxiang" 论李侗在朱子理学创立中的作用与影响. *Hefei xueyuan xuebao* 合肥学院学报 30.1 (2013): 16.

sense of the essential unity of things.[338] Moreover, as already touched upon earlier in this chapter, enshrining Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism as state orthodoxy meant that it was vulnerable to infiltration by people studying it with insincere intentions.

Chen Xianzhang, Zhan Ruoshui, and Lu Jiuyuan

Because of unintended consequences of philosophical doctrine and particular historical circumstance, the mid-Ming interpretation of Zhu Xi's *gewu*, primarily the bookish search of principles external to self, had to be dispensed with. At least this was the conclusion of three men who would become the greatest Neo-Confucian thinkers of the mid-Ming period. Chen Xianzhang, Zhan Ruoshui, and Wang Yangming would each play their part in tilting the focus of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation further away from bookish external study towards the inner world. Chen adjusted Cheng-Zhu thought by stating that, although principle still existed in external phenomena as well, there was no point in studying separately. The Cheng-Zhu assumption that *li* existed in a network of relationships with one another in different external phenomena and the self, and that these could be studied separately to arrive at a realization of the unity of all after accumulation of knowledge in this way, was refuted by Chen. He did this by redefining the function of *dao* 道, or "the Way", within Neo-Confucianism. During the Warring States, *dao* had often been referred to a virtuous way of governance, however defined, in the various philosophical traditions. This virtuous rule would line up with the *dao* of Heaven, further manifested on earth by the correct enactment of etiquette, decorum, propriety, and ritual by humans on earth. By extension it thus also referred to the idealized virtuous way of life of people. Within in the developing Cheng-Zhu tradition, *dao* eventually came to mean a kind of universal principle, prior even to the universe, that lay behind the functioning of all. It had become the way of the universe as a whole, the principle of the working of principle in the universe. It determined the way *qi* functioned in the universe, and thus also in our world. Zhu Xi even seemed to go further than that, because some of his writings hint that for him the *dao* was the universal principle that determined how *li* and *qi* would work together to embody the way of the world and the universe.[339] What Chen contended,

[338] De Bary, "Introduction," 7; Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 49-52.
[339] Deborah Sommer, "Dao 道 (The way, a path)," in *The Encyclopedia of Confucianism, 2-Volume Set, Volume I*, edited by Xinzhong Yao (London: Routledge, 2003), 177-179; Zhang Dainian, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, Translated by Edmund Ryden (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2005), 391-409.

in contrast to the Cheng-Zhu tradition, was that this all-encompassing principle of the *dao* could not be inferred by studying principle external to the self. The *dao* was not to be likened to a network of *li*, but should rather be conceived of as an "unbounded whole". In the words of Youngmin Kim:

> Chen, however, believed that according to such a conception, *li* simply became the objective of perceptual knowledge and verbalization but did not capture its essence. According to Chen, the Dao is more like an unbounded, inclusive whole rather than a systematized network of multitudes. Unconditioned by coarse materiality *(cuji),* the Dao transcends the realm of bounded things. Thus, if we confine our attention to particular things in order to understand the Dao, or try to conceptualize it in a specific manner, we lose the most important feature of the Dao: its unity. In other words, our intellectual attempt to understand the Dao is doomed to fail since the attempt itself is against the essential nature of the Dao.[340]

To grasp this unity, one would have to move away from relying on the senses and perceptual knowledge, which would lead to a fragmented understanding of the world. Instead, this unity had to be perceived by a turn to one's inner self. *Gewu* thus played no role in Chen's study of the external world, instead he would mostly come to rely on meditation, "quiet-sitting" in its Neo-Confucian guise, as his approach in this regard.[341]

Zhan Ruoshui and Wang Yangming would move even further away from Chen's position and either deny the existence of *li* outside of the self, or posit their irrelevancy to moral self-cultivation. Instead, both would contend that principle could be only found in the *xin*, in one's heart-mind. Therefore, modern scholarship often categorizes them as belonging to the *xinxue* 心學, or "learning of the heart-mind/school of the heart-mind"-branch of Neo-Confucianism, continuing a trend begun by Lu Jiuyuan during the Southern Song. When I use the term *xinxue* throughout this dissertation I use it to refer to this tendency in thinking within Neo-Confucianism started by Lu Jiuyuan and continued by Chen Xianzhang, Zhan Ruoshui, and Wang Yangming during the Ming dynasty. As we have seen in the second chapter, Lu Jiuyuan's position came with a certain scepticism towards book learning. Zhan's solution to the often misguided and fragmentary bookish quest for external principle was redefining the sum of one's experiences with the outside world, as well as one's inner, as being the same *xin*. The heart-mind was thus not an

[340] Kim, "Rethinking the Self's Relation," 22-23.
[341] Ibidem; Paul Yun-Ming Jiang, *The Search for Mind: Ch'en Pai-sha, Philosopher-Poet* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1980), 60-61.

organ of perception, cognition, and emotion within the self, but was one's whole experienced world. By expanding the concept of *xin* to encompass one's whole experienced world, the distinction between inner and outer simply ceased to exist. The outside world was not a repository of external *li* anymore, it just functioned as a trigger to activate the *li* in one's mind as it came into contact with-, and experienced the outside world.[342] Of the trio Chen, Zhan, and Wang, Zhan Ruoshui valued book learning the most. Study of the classics, for example, would also - as an experienced part of the world - be encompassed within one's *xin* and thus serve to trigger *li* in one's mind.[343] Zhan would also hold fast to the term *gewu*, but he no longer saw it as one part of moral self-cultivation. Instead, he redefined it as the totality of inner self-rectification *and* external moral engagement with the world,[344] uniting inner and outer commitments to moral self-cultivation.

For Wang, on the other hand, the *xin* remained within one's body. However, the outside world only existed to the extent the *xin* was engaged with it. The world as we experience it is the only world that can be said to exist, and it is entirely a function of your *xin*'s operation. All the *li* were already present in the self, otherwise one's sense of filial piety, an important virtue within Confucianism as a whole, would cease to exist with the death of one's parents.[345] Therefore you did not have to look for particularized *li* embedded in the *qi* of external phenomena to gain an understanding of the world. Like Chen, he was sceptical about the value of book learning for the process of moral self-cultivation. *Li* were all already present in the individual's mind, and did need to be sought in the *Four Books, Five Classics*, and the official dynastic histories. At best, they were descriptions and/or testimonies of the lives of previous sages, but the unicity of their experiences could not always be easily transplanted from their lives to the present. In fact, Wang cautioned that in case the Neo-Confucian canon contradicted the moral impulses of the *xin*, the former should be ignored. In this respect, he stood in the tradition of his Southern Song predecessor, Lu Jiuyuan.

Like in the case of Chen Xianzhang, the exact influence of Lu Jiuyuan on Wang Yangming is hard to gauge, although contemporaries of Wang already associated both men and their ideas

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[342] Kim, "Rethinking the Self's Relation," 30-34.
[343] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 86.
[344] Julia Ching, "A Contribution on Chan's Thought," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 41-42; Chaoying Fang, "CHAN Jo-shui," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 40.
[345] Monica Uebelhör, "Die Auflösung des konfuzianischen Bildungsbegriffs bei Wang Yang-ming," *Asiatische Studien* 34.1 (1980): 9.

with each other. In Wang's chronological biography, *nianpu* 年譜, Lu is not mentioned until 1509 in the context of Wang's life. Nevertheless, Wang would later in his life often defend Lu's ideas during debates, although he did find them "unrefined". Moreover, he wrote a preface to Lu Jiuyuan's collected works. What we can say at most, modern scholar Tu Wei-ming concludes, is that Wang ideas developed in opposition to Zhu Xi's and eventually came to resemble those of Lu Jiuyuan.[346] Yet, the similarity between both men ran deeper than their respective philosophies. Both were active in military pursuits, not just armchair theorizing, but engaging in martial arts as well. As we have seen in the introduction, the reputation of Lu and Wang as Neo-Confucians successfully reconciling their identities with military activities would reverberate in late sixteenth-century Korea, showing that this association between *xinxue*-philosophical tendencies and martiality was also made outside of the borders of the Ming empire. Although probably unprovable, I would suggest not automatically dismissing Wang taking Lu Jiuyuan as a personal example in this respect.

Wang Yangming's Unity of Knowledge and Action

Lu and Wang's quite similar conceptions of the *xin*, I argue, pushed (or justified the tendency of) both men towards activism and a reconciliation with military pursuits, especially when compared with Zhu Xi's ideas on this matter. In the core, this boils down to the way Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan, and later Wang Yangming conceptualized the ontology of the heart-mind. For all of them it did not refer to a physical organ in the body, like the heart. Nevertheless, according to at least Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming it consisted of *qi*. According to David Tien, many have misunderstood Zhu and Wang in this regard. Zhu's focus on the obscuration of *li* by desires excited on account of *qi*, has led to the misconceived idea that he construed *xin* as to be entirely constituted by *qi*. On the other hand, Wang Yangming's ideas have often been misrepresented to mean that *xin* is entirely constituted by *li*. Lu Jiuyuan, in contrast, is himself unclear on the matter. For him *xin* is universal *li*, and he does not make clear what causes humans to be led astray by selfish desires.[347]

In fact, both Zhu and Wang agreed that all phenomena in the world were a result of the interaction between *li* and *qi*, including the *xin*. Zhu Xi, whilst vehemently confirming the

[346] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 181-184; Tu, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action*, 153-157.
[347] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 12-13; Tien, "Metaphysics and the Basis of Morality," 296.

fundamental unity of *xin*, distinguishes it into two parts: *daoxin* 道心 ("heart-mind of the way") and *renxin* 人心 ("heart-mind of humanity"). According to Kirill Thompson, *daoxin* "expresses the awareness associated with the moral-intellectual side, that is, one's discernment and cognition", whereas *renxin* is the affective side of "one's moods, feelings, desires, senses, and so on."[348] In other words, *daoxin* has spiritual concerns, whereas *renxin* has material ones. By way of an example of their functioning, *renxin* would be conscious of hunger and give rise to a desire to eat, but *daoxin* would be conscious about the propriety of quenching this desire at a certain moment.[349] Confusion arises in modern scholarship to what extent these two aspects of *xin* can be approached as two distinct phenomena, despite Zhu Xi's claim of unity, a confusion that already arose during Zhu's own lifetime. For example, Philip Ivanhoe contends that the *daoxin*, according to Zhu Xi, is universal *li* (or *tianli*) and exist separately from-, and prior to reality and its phenomena. *Renxin* is then *daoxin*'s manifestation in reality of *li* embedded in *qi*, with the latter's obscuration of the former giving rise to selfish desires and other undesirable notions which would lead us astray from moral behaviour and the realization we are one with the rest of humanity and the universe as a whole. Because *qi* obscures some of the *li* of our *renxin* then, we cannot rely on it completely and as a result we have to engage in the study of principle external to ourselves.[350] Other scholars have interpreted Zhu Xi's ideas differently from Ivanhoe, for example interpreting *daoxin* to simply be the *li* and the *renxin* the *qi* of the heart-mind. However one interprets Zhu Xi's ideas about the ontological basis of the heart-mind, his recipe for moral improvement remained the same: the *renxin* should be made to be guided by the *daoxin*, because without this guidance the former's interaction with the material world would submit it to the corruption of selfish desires. Moreover, the *renxin* should be improved in order to increase its ability to manifest the *daoxin* in the world.[351]

Both Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming came to disagree with this apparent bifurcation between *daoxin* and *renxin*. In their view, there was only one *xin* which contained the universal *li*. Although in the case of Lu it is not known whether he considered the *xin* to consist of *qi* as well, Wang did hold on to this ontological scheme and agreed with Zhu Xi whilst blaming later followers

[348] Kirill O. Thompson, "Opposition and Complementarity in Zhu Xi's Thought," in *Returning to Zhu Xi: Emerging Patterns within the Supreme Polarity* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2015), 160-161.
[349] Zhang, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, 451.
[350] Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Lu Xiangshan's Ethical Philosophy," in *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, edited by John Makeham (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 256-257.
[351] Taylor and Choy, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 314-315, 590; Zhang, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, 449-451.

of Zhu for distorting his views and regarding *xin* and *li* to be separate. Wang, however, did posit that the *daoxin* was simply corrected *renxin*. In other words, in contrast to Zhu, Wang held that the *renxin* could not only be made to manifest *daoxin*, it could do it to the extent that it would become *daoxin*.[352] Moreover, it could become this without resorting to the ineffectual study of particularized *li* external to the self. Instead, Wang Yangming was entirely confident in the ability of the heart-mind to rectify itself and removing the corrupting influences of selfish desires arising from its *qi*. This confidence in the potential of the heart-mind to rectify itself, and not a fundamental ontological discrepancy between Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming's posited *xin*, was the main difference between the two philosophies. According to David Tien, Wang Yangming had this confidence because he thought the heart-mind possessed "clear intellect" (*lingming* 靈明), which consisted of the purest and clearest *qi*. The possession of this *lingming* made it possible for the heart-mind to rectify itself, allowing the universal *li* to manifest itself and illuminate the world around oneself. Thus, the key to moral self-cultivation is first getting rid of selfish desires clearing up one's *qi*, instead of engaging first in study of the external world as Zhu Xi had recommended. With clear *qi* a person would act in line with their innately moral mind and become sincere (誠 *cheng*).[353] External *gewu*, needed to gain an understanding of *li* according to Zhu Xi, preceded "making one's thoughts sincere" (*chengyi* 誠意). According to Ivanhoe this meant in practice embodying "the *li* in every thought, feeling, and action." Wang Yangming thus turned this on its head: all the *li* were already present in the heart-mind and accessible by self-rectification (i.e. get rid of selfish desires). By declaring external *li* irrelevant for moral self-cultivation, in Wang Yangming's scheme *gewu* became null and void and one immediately proceeded with making one's thoughts sincere.[354] Since this entailed manifesting *li* in one's mental and physical behaviour, moral self-cultivation tended to flow together with activism much more readily than within Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. That is not to say that practices like meditation lost their relevance. Instead of studying the Zhu Xi-subscribed canon of writings, Wang thought meditation was a good method to start one's moral self-cultivation with. Presumably agreeing with Zhu Xi's idea that after calming the heart and settling down the *qi*, the *li* would more easily shine through, Wang advocated meditation to make selfish desires manifest themselves more clearly, thus simplifying

[352] Taylor and Choy, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 590; Tien, "Metaphysics and the Basis of Morality," 300.
[353] Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 64; Tien, "Metaphysics and the Basis of Morality," 299, 304-307.
[354] Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 50-51.

the task of weeding them out. Yet, Wang was wary that meditation would become an end in itself, instead of a means to an end. For him, meditation was merely a means to get rid of selfish desires and as a result acquire a calm nature. By this he meant a state wherein the heart-mind would not be misled by distractions during both states of activity (*dong* 動) and stillness (*jing* 靜). After all, the business of a sage was to translate his inner sageliness into a manifestation of virtue in the outside world, i.e. taking responsibility for managing the affairs of the family, state, and world.[355] Meditation was but a technique to acquire this calm nature, which then had to be maintained during engagement with the outside world. This calm nature thus depended on moral intention, if those had been rectified and were sincere, the heart-mind would remain in peace, even when either meditating, or responding to external stimuli. In a properly rectified heart-mind, then, no distinction would exist between "stillness" and "activity", regardless of the activity the person was engaging in.[356]

This ultimate concern with sincerely manifesting virtue in the world led Wang posit his doctrine of the "unity of knowledge and action" (*zhixing heyi* 知行合一). Wang's reasons for positing this theory show why he was so concerned with the acquisition of a calm nature. In the words of David Nivison:

> Wang feared that if a man's moral acts do not spring directly from the response of his character to the needs of the situation, he will act for calculated, ulterior, and morally corrupting motives; or he will be morally paralyzed (like King Hsüan of Ch'i in *Mencius*) and not act at all; or still worse he will take pride in this knowledge unrealized in action as a thing in itself.[357]

Therefore, in order for moral acts to spring directly from the response of the character to the needs of the situation, the calm nature had to be acquired after calming the heart-mind and weeding out selfish desires.

The doctrine of *zhixing heyi* was also an integral part of Wang Yangming's pedagogical vision. The underlying assumption was that true moral knowledge could only be acquired through

[355] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 69-74.
[356] Idem, 112.
[357] David S. Nivison, *The Life and Thought of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng (1738-1801)* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), 68.

experience. To learn to be a sage thus involved manifesting virtuous principles in real life in concrete everyday situations. In the words of Ivanhoe:

> One will never attain real knowledge of morality unless one works on real problems. And the only real problems – those that engage one's heart and challenge one to become aware of and work to eliminate the selfishness that stand in the way of moral imporvement [sic] – are those that one confronts (or avoids) in every day, in one's own life.[358]

A corollary of the doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action is a basic bifurcation between "real knowledge" – knowledge of something -, and "ordinary knowledge", or knowledge about something. The former is knowledge that has arisen out of personal experience and, according to Ivanhoe, "brings together both cognitive and affective types of knowing."[359] The latter is knowledge that is not acquired through concrete experiences, but instead mediated through, for example, a book. What makes "real knowledge" so relevant in the context of Wang Yangming's ideas about moral self-cultivation? Again, quoting Ivanhoe: "In cases requiring moral action, one not only knows what to do but finds oneself properly motivated to do so. In genuine cases of real knowledge, an agent simply spontaneously moves toward the proper end."[360] This knowledge cannot be mediated through book learning, for a consequence of Wang's philosophy was that knowledge of the proper way to engage the outside world could be entirely found in oneself, in the *xin*. By relying on the rectified *xin*, one would know how to act as a sage in any given situation.

Wang's philosophy would eventually become most famous for his later doctrine following *zhixing heyi*, namely "extending the innate knowledge of the good" (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知). *Liangzhi* was a term originally conceived by Mencius, and it referred to his idea that human nature is originally disposed towards the good. A person with a properly rectified mind would always, in any given situation, spontaneously extend this innate knowledge of the good, as "real" moral knowledge would always automatically go together with action. Real *liangzhi* should occur as a reflex, spontaneous and pre-reflective. However, Wang admitted that the program of action it should go together with would still often need deliberation and reflection. The more one engaged in this, though, the clearer and better discerning one's *liangzhi* became. This extension of *liangzhi*,

[358] Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 66.
[359] Idem, 62.
[360] Idem, 63.

following this innate knowledge of the good in one's thoughts and in the world, was the effort one had to make in order to become a sage, and the more you did it, the better you became at it and external stimuli would cease to disturb you.[361] In this sense, Wang again turned Zhu Xi's ideas on their heads. For Zhu Xi, the external world was initially a place to harvest knowledge of *li* external to the self, after which once could proceed to make oneself sincere on the basis of that knowledge. The direction was thus from outer to inner. For Wang Yangming the direction was from inner to outer: once the heart-mind was rectified and the intentions made sincere, moral action would spontaneously follow engagement with the outside world, and this would in turn contribute to the quality of one's *liangzhi*. Inherent in extending the innate knowledge of the good was the social responsibility of the sage, which had mystic overtones: "For the gentleman who extends *liang-chih* naturally comes to regard others as he does himself, to look upon the country as his family, and Heaven and Earth and all things as one."[362] Wang still maintained that people had different endowments from birth, and that therefore these differences would translate into different levels of effort needed to achieve sagehood. Nevertheless, it was achievable for all, and I posit, the relative irrelevance of book learning in the effort made it *de facto* more attainable for all.

This redirection of the quest for *li* from external authority to internal authority augured the exaltation of moral subjectivity, although Wang would not have seen it in this way. After all, every *xin* contained the same universal *li*. However, the shift of moral authority away from written sources allowed Wang to build a bridge between his Neo-Confucian identity and his functioning as a military commander, in which he relied on Strategist writings. George Israel has recently brought to light how Wang built this bridge in light of his wider philosophy, especially when using military stratagems as advocated by Sunzi's *Art of War.* According to Israel, essential for the sagely application of the military arts as demonstrated by Wang Yangming was his possession, first, of the "unmoved mind" *bu dong xin* 不動心 which, as we have seen above, was to be achieved through forms of meditation. This state was characterized by a detachment from ego and considerations of personal interest and would allow one to act effortlessly according to the (moral) demands of unfolding situations. These actions would then be guided by the *liangzhi*, or innate knowing of the good, which would be enabled after reaching this mental state.[363] According to

[361] Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 104-119.
[362] Idem, 119.
[363] The Chinese scholar Guan Minyi already pointed out this use of the "unmoved mind" by Wang Yangming in a military context in an earlier article, but Guan did not point out how it allowed Wang to use Sunzi. See: Guan Minyi

Israel, because Wang Yangming was able to achieve this mental state, "[…] he was able not only to see clearly where things ought to go, but also had the wherewithal to marshal the authority necessary take things in that direction, in concrete terms by achieving a Sunzian mastery of the factors confronting the country, seeking out its true nature, and formulating an effective response."[364] Thus a sage in Wang Yangming's thought could engage in military praxis without endangering his moral integrity, because they were guided by *liangzhi*. Key here was thus this shift of the source of moral authority and judgement to the subjective self, a shift that would have important repercussions for the status of the Strategists within Neo-Confucian discourse, as I will argue in chapter seven. Furthermore, Guan Minyi pointed out that Wang Yangming desired all his ranks in the army to have a similar "unmoved mind" divorced from considerations of selfish desire or self-preservation. The ideal soldier was not to think of rewards when advancing against the enemy, and not to worry about punishments when retreating.[365] I could find no evidence how, or even if, Wang Yangming attempted to inculcate this mindset in his troops, but as I will show in chapter ten, Qi Jiguang would articulate a set of moral instructions for exactly this purpose several decades later.

The development of Wang Yangming's thought was not a sudden occurrence, but unfolded simultaneously during his career as a civil bureaucrat and military commander. In this context George Israel has made an important contribution to the debate by pointing out Wang's bridging of Neo-Confucian philosophy and military praxis. In the next chapter I will turn to Wang Yangming's military campaigns themselves, and put them in the context of evolving Ming practise during the crisis of the mid-Ming as detailed in the previous chapter. I will also highlight where Wang Yangming's philosophical renewal intersected with his solutions for military crises, and argue that Wang stood in a tradition of Neo-Confucian evangelization of areas affected by military crises. This evangelization was what distinguished his campaigns from other efforts in the empire's south, and might possible have taken its inspiration from his spiritual forebear Chen Xianzhang. While agreeing with Israel's thesis, I will therefore also advance my own position that Wang Yangming's bridging of *wen* and *wu* in theory and praxis not only had a strong influence on later sixteenth-century military activities in the empire's south, but also that Wang was not an

管敏义, "Cong Ping Ning fan zhi yi kan Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang" 从平宁藩之役看王守仁的军事思想, *Ningbo daxue xuebao* 宁波大学学报 11.2 (1998): 5-7; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 195-202.
[364] Idem, 202.
[365] Guan, "Cong Ping Ning fan zhi yi kan Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang," 5.

unprecedented phenomenon. The connection between *xinxue*-inclined philosophy tendencies and military activities could also be seen in the lives and careers of Liu Jiuyuan, Chen Xianzhang, and to a lesser extent, Zhan Ruoshui. Furthermore, in chapters seven and eight I will posit other aspects of Wang's philosophy which allowed a bridge to be built between *wen* and *wu*, which Israel did not touch upon in his study.

Chapter 5 – Wang Yangming at the Frontier

In the previous chapter we saw how Wang Yangming's philosophy could be used to legitimate *wu*-praxis against the backdrop of Neo-Confucian morality. In this chapter I provide an overview of the concrete military practices that were legitimated in the process. A few modern works exist that have delved into this more practical side of Wang's life, but none with reference to the list of problems mid-Ming governance was facing outlined in chapter three. My aims in this chapter are thus to first show how Wang Yangming engaged with these specific problems, and second, to argue that this engagement was part of a more general tendency within *xinxue*, predating Wang. Finally, I will argue that Wang's followers were as much engaged with spreading knowledge of his practical solutions as with his philosophical teachings and that these became a source of inspiration for succeeding generations of civil and military officials. Wang's practical career had an exemplary legacy as well, something which has received relatively little attention because of the tendency of modern scholars to focus on his intellectual accomplishments.

Re-Centring Wang Yangming's Military Exploits

As part of his official career, Wang would be involved in four major military campaigns waged in the south of the empire, which for the most part took place during or shortly after one of the two periods of intensified collective violence posited by James Tong, namely 1516-1525. His first campaign took place roughly between late 1516 and 1518, and was waged in the borderlands between four southern provinces: (southern) Jiangxi, Fujian, Huguang, and Guangdong. The conflict he was sent to suppress there bore many of the hallmarks of the crisis outlined in the third chapter: socio-economic tensions over land and other resources, interethnic conflicts between Han Chinese and She 畲 and Yao aboriginals, and a degenerated hereditary military system which also lacked the authority to flexibly operate across provincial boundaries. The second conflict mostly took place during 1519 and was a rebellion of the imperial prince of the Ning 宁 fiefdom, Zhu Chenhao 朱宸濠 (r. 1499-1521), which took place in northern Jiangxi. Again, the usurping prince was able to generate support because drought and taxation pressures were causing hardships amongst the population of northern Jiangxi, and as a result he offered exempts on rents and taxes

in exchange for support. Therefore, Zhu Chenhao's rebellion had a socio-economic component as well. Moreover, he sought to employ itinerant martial arts experts and military units comprised of Guangxi's "wolf soldiers" and other southern aboriginal groups. The last two campaigns took place in 1527-1528 in Guangxi province, and mostly revolved around a conflict of authority between local aboriginal Yao groups and the centralized administration of the empire.[366]

Modern scholars, with the exception of Guan Minyi and George Israel, often study the development of Wang's philosophy separately from his (military) activities on the frontier. In reality they developed side-by-side, and many philosophical insights were most likely inspired by service on the frontier in military and interethnic contexts, as Wing-tsit Chan has speculated.[367] This phenomenon should perhaps not be considered an entirely baffling occurrence. It was, in fact, on the frontier and in the midst of aboriginal society where Wang Yangming's version of *xinxue* was born. In the early 1500s Wang Yangming had angered a leading eunuch at court and was banished to the southwestern Guizhou province and lived among aboriginal Miao, amongst others, for a while.[368] The southwestern frontier at this time had been a militarized area since the beginning of the dynasty. According to John Dardess: "The Ming implanted a network of military roads, post stations, forts, and garrisons (together administered by "pacification commissions"). These power nodes recruited natives as soldiers, maintained surveillance over the people of the southwest generally, and intervened with violence to suppress native raiders and settle native disputes."[369]

It was in this environment where Wang Yangming's thinking took one of its most important turns and he claimed he had attained enlightenment. Surrounded by a non-Han society, he came to the conclusion that the principles of things did not exist independently outside of the heart-mind, but *were*, in fact, identical with the heart-mind.[370] Thus the principles buttressing civilization by extension were not to be discovered by studying external phenomena, but by cultivating one's own heart-mind. The symbolic significance of this discovery amidst a society lacking the trappings of Han Chinese civilization can hardly be overstated and it is surprising that it goes mostly uncommented upon in contemporary scholarship.[371] One cannot help but wonder

[366] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 53-54, 69-70, 85-86, 154, 283-284, 334; Leo K. Shin, "The Last Campaigns of Wang Yangming," *T'oung Pao* 42 (2006): 105, 107.
[367] Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, XXV.
[368] Chan, "WANG Shou-jen," 1409-1410.
[369] Dardess, *Ming China*, 6.
[370] Chan, "WANG Shou-Jen", 1410.
[371] An exception is Wing-tsit Chan, see Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, XXV.

whether the image of the lone statesman-*cum*-philosopher wandering into a society and culture alien to his, devoid of all the amenities of refined life (apparently he initially had to reside in a straw hut), and consequently discovering the principle of civilization within himself, was not in the end a deviously smart example of *post-facto* literary self-fashioning. Whether genuine or not, the close connection between Yangming-*xinxue* and life among the non-Han frontier population points towards the potential of this new Neo-Confucian interpretation as a missionary frontier ideology. This connection is lacking in the *xinxue* of his Song dynasty predecessor Lu Jiuyuan and his contemporary Zhan Ruoshui, and seemingly foreshadows the activist evangelical zeal that the ideology would often engender in its more ardent adherents.[372] Wang Yangming himself committed himself to *jiangxue* 講學 (lecturing about learning in Neo-Confucianism), using the government schools established by the dynasty as part of the military garrison outposts as his platforms during his temporary exile in Guizhou, and he succeeded in gathering a number of aboriginal followers at the southwestern frontier.[373] In addition, many of his military campaigns would be directed against restless non-Han populations in the south of the empire during which he also availed himself of aboriginal military units on his own side.[374] It is thus no exaggeration to posit that his brand of Neo-Confucianism was forged in the fire of intra-cultural clashes and cooperation in the context of military activities.

In the early sixteenth century, Wang Yangming was but the latest of a line of civil bureaucrats who had been tasked with solving military crises in the empire's south during the mid-Ming period. After the southern Deng Maoqi rebellion, which, as we saw in chapter three, was still repressed by the hereditary soldiers and their officers, the leadership in the southern military theatre was increasingly taken over by civil officials with military authority. Their solutions to the military crises ran the gamut from brutal armed suppression to appeasement and accommodation. Civil official Xiang Zhong 項忠 (1421-1502) was an exponent of the former, suppressing a rebellion in Huguang province by force in the early 1470s.[375] Wang Yangming chose a middle way between these two extremes and generally sought a combination of appeasement and suppression, and civil and military governance solutions, to achieve lasting solutions, though the

[372] John Dardess sees Wang and his followers as evangelizers of Neo-Confucianism, see: Dardess, *Ming China*, 89-93.
[373] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 56-57.
[374] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 334.
[375] Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials," 6.

precise balance between these four elements would differ between the four campaigns. This depended on his assessment of the motives behind the rebellion against legitimate imperial authority. George Israel has argued that these assessments were intimately linked with Wang's philosophical convictions, i.e. whether he perceived rebellion and banditry to be fuelled by illegitimate selfish desires, or whether they were caused by unjust imperial governance or socio-economic hardships. In the former case Wang tended to rely more on the military instrument. In general, he tried to "awaken" a pang of guilty consciousness by way of moralizing proclamations amongst the areas and populations affected by disorder and entice people to give up their illegal behaviour and reform themselves. In this way, he attempted to sow discord among enemy ranks and separate those who had become followers of rebellion by coercion and involuntary choice from the hardcore bandits and rebels. The remaining hardcore Wang would then judge as irredeemable and he would proceed to exterminate them in order for them to not form a threat to virtuous subjects of the empire. Being a Neo-Confucian did not automatically make Wang an appeaser who believed in the power of virtue alone to bring rebellious subjects to heel. Instead, his mixed approach was inspired by his realization that amnesty did not work as a permanent solution in the absence of military force and rewards and punishments to back it up.[376] The carrot, in other words, did not work without the stick. In terms of his philosophy Wang was convinced that, although all people (including aboriginals)[377] possessed the same *li* in their heart-minds, in practice some had such contaminated *qi* that moral admonitions and appeasement would not be sufficient and coarser methods, like for example extermination, would be necessary. In Israel's words:

> Thus, Wang Yangming's philosophy of self-cultivation and explanation for people's differing capacities for sagehood broadly parallels his scale for measuring levels of civilization. And the closer to sagehood and individual might be or the more civilized a people, the more they can be expected and allowed to act as autonomous agents; the more obscured and less well-endowed an individual might be or the more uncivilized a people, the more they will require various forms of legitimate coercion, or benevolent intervention.[378]

[376] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 55-58, 77-78, 89-90
[377] According to Wang, aboriginals possessed the same *liangzhi* as Han Chinese, nevertheless they were closer to animals than Han Chinese because their *qi* had been clouded more by selfish desires. See: Shin, "The Last Campaigns of Wang Yangming," 116.
[378] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 325.

During and after the four campaigns, therefore, Wang Yangming would diagnose the "disease" and prescribe a "medicine" consisting of differing balances of *wen* and *wu*. The more "civilized", therefore, Wang Yangming assessed a rebellious group of subjects to be, the more he would rely on civil governance solutions that appealed to their better moral natures,[379] as we shall see below. Yet, Wang was not the only civil official to rely on a combination of civil and military governance solutions, so in what way can we consider him a departure from previous practices? Did his Neo-Confucian commitments play a part and thus have an impact on these practices?

Filipiak notes that Wang Yangming was one of the most famous examples of a civil bureaucrat that advocated for an integrated civil-military solution to the challenges posed by demographic growth and the socio-economic tensions, interethnic conflict, and volatile migration this caused in the south of the empire. He mentions precursors to Wang Yangming, Mu Wenhui 目文會 (dates unknown, fl. in the late fifteenth century) and Yuan Jie 原傑 (1417-1477), who tried integrated civil-military approaches as well in 1476 in the south. These included the formation of new administrative units, setting up of military posts and schools, land redistribution and registration of the population.[380] However, a more analogous precursor to the meeting between philosophical renewal, frontier pacification, ethnic governance problems, and military activities might already be seen during the 1460s in Wang Yangming's spiritual ancestor, Chen Xianzhang, also known by his sobriquet Baisha 白沙. It is more analogous, in my view, because his philosophical reinterpretation of Neo-Confucianism was the glue and inspiration binding a network of officials together in finding an integrated civil-military approach to interethnic socio-economic and political conflicts. In addition, as we shall see below, this Chen Xianzhang's activist Neo-Confucian reinterpretation led this network to try and inculcate Neo-Confucian values and behaviours in local society. Since Zhan Ruoshui was a student of Chen Xianzhang, Wang Yangming might have been inspired by Chen's example via his friend,[381] for Wang Yangming endeavoured during his campaigns to combine his civil and military solutions with a strengthening of Neo-Confucian values in society.

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[379] Idem, 340-341, 345-350.
[380] Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials," 5-6.
[381] I did not find concrete evidence for this in Wang Yangming's writings, however the personal connection between Zhan and Wang makes possible a connection between Chen and Wang, and the former a possible source of inspiration for the latter. See: Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, 2 vols (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992).

In the seventeenth century, a literatus from Guangdong named Huang Shijun 黃士俊 (fl. 1607),[382] wrote a commemoration of the rebuilding of a local temple dedicated to Chen Xianzhang. In it, he made the following observation:

> [Chen Xianzhang] was subordinate to the Right Minister of War, the venerable gentleman Zhang, the Supreme Commander of Guangdong and Guangxi; he took the military as woof and the civil as warp [i.e. he took both *wen* and *wu* as the foundation]; he pondered the excessive turmoil caused by war faced by Jiangmen […]
> 屬右司馬張公督兩粵，緯武經文，念江門當兵燹之餘 […][383]

Jiangmen was (and is) a city in Guangdong province and part of Xinhui county, where Chen lived. The troubles alluded to in the above quote must refer to the Yao - an aboriginal group we encountered in chapter three - wars that disrupted the area in the 1460s and which Chen indeed witnessed. Huang Shijun further states that Chen "belonged to" Supreme Commander Zhang, however Huang must have made a mistake during the composition of his commemoration. The Supreme Commander in charge of both Guangxi and Guangdong provinces during this episode was either Han Yong 韓雍 (1422-1478), or his successor Zhu Ying 朱英 (1417-1485). Probably Huang Shijun refers here to Zhu Ying, since he, according to David Faure, was noted to be "more popular" with Chen than Han Yong.[384] The office of Supreme Commander or *zongdu* 督都, was in itself a symptom of-, and a response to the military crisis outlined in the chapter three. It was a further development of the post of Grand Coordinator, *xunfu* 巡抚, which combined the authority to coordinate the affairs of the provincial commissions of the censorate, military and civil bureaucracy, as well as a direct line of communication to the throne and the power to impeach officials under his authority, the latter of which was acquired by concurrent appointment as a high-ranking censor. Grand Coordinators were envisaged as temporary positions of combined authority in a certain area (usually not exceeding one province, or an area which lay in the border regions of neighbouring provinces), which was given in case of a (military) emergency.[385] The Supreme

[382] Steven B. Miles, "Imperial Discourse, Regional Elite, and Local Landscape on the South China Frontier, 1577-1722," *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008): 112.
[383] Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章, *Chen Xianzhang ji* 陳獻章集, *Volume 2* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 950.
[384] Faure, "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming," 182.
[385] Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, Volume 1* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, Inc., 1985), 255.

Commanders could exercise the same authority over an area of up to five provinces. These new offices thus temporarily overruled the checks and balances maintained through a deliberate fragmentation of authority instituted by the founding emperor, an override which was increasingly necessary as demographic and socio-economic changes started to outstrip the ability of the old institutions to keep a lid on local disturbances. The size of these disturbances would increasingly take a supra regional form as the mid-Ming unfolded. It is therefore not surprising that the institutions of Supreme Commander and Grand Coordinator appeared more frequently after about 1450,[386] providing officials the opportunity to more effectively devise and implement a truly integrated civil-military approach to governance.

It also provided ambitious activist Neo-Confucian reformers like Chen Xianzhang a convenient link to influence policy and the implementation of their Neo-Confucian ideas on a large scale, provided they were able to establish productive ties with a Grand Coordinator or a Supreme Commander. Chen Xianzhang, unlike Wang Yangming, was not a serving official or military leader, but according to Faure he "[…] taught a philosophy of the mind as well as practical administration […]."[387] As we have seen above, this practical angle of his studies included military aspects as well, although his surviving writings do not provide any further information in this direction. Nor is it possible on the basis of these writings to ascertain his attitude towards the *Seven Military Classics* or knight-errantry.[388] Chen counted amongst his disciples many influential locals, including subordinates of the Supreme Commander, with whom he devised governance solutions with a strong Neo-Confucian agenda of moral improvement. This group included Guangxi province's Tao Lu 陶魯 (1434-1498), a civil bureaucrat with considerable military accomplishments as well, and Jiangxi province's Ding Ji 丁積 (fl. 1478), a civil bureaucrat with a tax reformist agenda. Together they formulated policies aimed at culturally assimilating the Yao. Tao Lu's military contribution was the recruitment and training of a militia outside of the *weisuo*, which was considered an innovation in that area at that time. Yet, he considered the civil policy of assimilation the ultimate goal. This entailed, first, the registration of Yao households in the *lijia*-system, which, thanks to Ding Ji, had shed its burdensome manual labour corvee obligations

[386] Jun Fang, *China's Second Capital – Nanjing Under the Ming* (London: Routledge, 2014), 71-74.
[387] Faure, "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming," 171.
[388] Chen also endeavoured to add archery practice to the regimen of learning he subjected his disciples, including Zhan Ruoshui, to. He was warned, though, that it might interpreted by the government as a preparation for eventual rebellion. See: Huang P'ei and Julia Ching, "CH'EN Hsien-chang," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 154.

(which were often abused by arbitrary local officials) in exchange for a more attractive regularized payment in cash. Furthermore, Chen and Ding wrote a popularized version of Zhu Xi's ritual family instructions, which taught the proper execution of weddings, burials, and sacrificing, amongst other things.[389] Thus cultural assimilation and the spread of Neo-Confucian prescriptions rode on the back of civil-military governance solutions inspired by its activist "philosophy of the mind"-tendencies.

Chen Xianzhang's activities surrounding the Yao disturbances thus showed many of the hallmarks that would come to characterize Wang Yangming's campaigns, and, as I will argue, the campaigns Qi Jiguang was part of later. Wang Yangming's last campaign even took place in the same area in Guangxi Chen Xianzhang had been involved in half a century earlier, and Wang was politically supported by Chen's disciples during incidences of strife within the bureaucracy.[390] Nor did the entanglements stop there. The above alluded to similarities between Chen and Wang's Yao campaigns included the exercise of great authority by a Grand Coordinator (or Supreme Commander) in combination with a commitment to a Neo-Confucian activist philosophy of the mind, the exchange of ideas in the realm of military and civil governance solutions, cooperation between officials and literati *ex officio*, the raising of militia commanded by officials with combined civil and military competences, the reform of the taxation system, an ideological inclusivity marked by an openness towards the possibility of cultural assimilation of ethnic minorities, and a commitment to the moral improvement of the population. It seems to have been Wang Yangming's military acumen that ensured his being recommended to the military leadership of the four campaigns. Because of his acquaintance with the then Minister of War Wang Qiong 王瓊 (1459-1532), who was convinced of Wang Yangming's talents as an official, he was recommended and appointed to lead these campaigns as Grand Coordinator or Supreme Commander.[391] Therefore, like his predecessor working with Chen Baisha in Guangxi, he benefitted from the wide civil, military, and censorial powers this institution granted him. Like Qi Jiguang would later, Wang had attracted the attention of the metropolitan bureaucracy by

[389] David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007), 95-98.
[390] Faure, "The Yao Wars in the Mid-Ming," 182. Faure also notes (p. 178) that a third campaign in 1537 was led by Guangdong native Weng Wanda 翁萬達 (1498-1552), who also happened to be a follower of Wang Yangming. See: Ma Chor-kin 馬楚堅, "Weng Wanda shengping yu sixiang (1498-1552)" 翁萬達生平與思想 (1498-1552) (PhD Diss., University of Hong Kong, 1998), 45-55.
[391] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 37.

composing a memorial suggesting policies dealing with the nomadic threat from the northern steppe.[392] This memorial was written before his conversion to Neo-Confucianism and from it we can glean his early military thought. An additional source for this early phase of his thought is his commentary on the *Seven Military Classics*, which also predates his renewed interest in Neo-Confucian learning. Modern scholars Fan Zhongyi, Sumner Twiss, and Jonathan Chan studied these writings, and especially the latter two came to the conclusion that Wang's ideas seem to have been heavily influenced by *Sunzi's Art of War*, whilst George Israel claims some elements of the *Wuzi* and the *Weiliaozi* also played a part.[393] Below I will summarize the most important findings of these modern scholars, and also add the ideas Wang later articulated in his memorials dealing with his campaigns. Important to note is that in his discussions of strictly military matters, Wang did not make an explicit link between these affairs and his brand of Neo-Confucianism, although his convictions could have shaped the type of military policies he preferred. A key contribution of Qi Jiguang would be his explicit application of Neo-Confucian thought in the context of the military ideas outlined in his manuals, as we shall see in chapter ten.

Recruitment

Wang Yangming usually resolved to raise his own army of village militia troops because of the limitations of the hereditary *weisuo* garrisons. In the southern areas, the *weisuo* troops were already greatly diminished in actual strength and were furthermore mostly tasked with coastal defence duties and were therefore not free to be culled from their assigned garrisons to attend to tasks further inland. Compared to their involvement in the Deng Maoqi rebellion in the century before, Wang Yangming did not find the hereditary *weisuo* military units useful enough to rely on for his purposes. Already by his time it was also common to mobilize aboriginal troops from other provinces, but they were considered by Wang Yangming to be too slow to be put into action effectively. Village militias had found widespread use from the Hongzhi 弘治 (r. 1487-1505) Emperor's reign onwards, but Wang judged them too fickle to be a reliable instrument aiding in the suppression of rebellions. Wang wanted to raise and train a militia elite force and his need for

[392] Idem, 45, 48-49.
[393] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang," 228; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 48-49, 92, 196; Sumner B. Twiss and Jonathan K.L. Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," in *Chinese Just War Ethics: Origin, Development, and Dissent* (London: Routledge, 2015), 154.

quality recruits formed another reason he would rather not use the hereditary garrison troops, whose pre-selected nature made severely restrained Wang's prospects of fielding an army of high quality crack troops. According to Chinese military historian Fan Zhongyi, the primacy of the process of recruitment was thus from the first a priority within the military thought of Wang Yangming. During his first campaign, for example, he requested the officials of each county (*xian* 縣) in his area of operations to select between four- to six hundred of their courageous men under thirty who were also versed in martial arts.[394] It is unfortunately impossible to gain precise statistics or even rough estimates of the average population per county in the south of the empire, because it was measured in the big clusters of households, with the number of households potentially varying between 55 and 164.[395] However, even with a conservative estimate of a total Ming population of around 50 million with most of them living in the southern provinces, it becomes clear that even smaller counties probably contained several thousands of subjects, even if we are only counting the officially registered ones. According to James Tong, in 1584 a medium-sized county could contain 30,000 inhabitants, thus these recruitment numbers, even allowing for a significant population growth between the beginning of the sixteenth century and 1584, would mean Wang Yangming intended to skim the military labour pool for the cream of the crop of martial talent in order to use them as his personal model troops.[396]

In institutional terms, Wang relied heavily on the censorial branch of the provincial governments to facilitate his recruitment drive, largely bypassing the faltering hereditary military. When it came to recruiting an army, he used his wide-ranging powers and ordered a censorial institution called the Military Defense Circuit, *bingbei dao* 兵備道, of which most provinces had multiple on prefectural or multi-prefectural level, to conscript soldiers and put hereditary military *and* civil officials deemed capable in charge of them. The existence of this institution, staffed by provincial censorial officials, was probably a post-1450 development, which was symptomatic period for civil bureaucratic and, especially, censorial intrusion into military affairs.[397] This intrusion was initiated on the northern frontier, but had penetrated by this time to the empire's south as well. The conscription for Wang Yangming's army probably aimed for militia, local "police" personnel attached to the censorial commissions and village men known for their strength,

[394] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang," 225; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 58-61.
[395] Tong, *Disorder under Heaven*, 32.
[396] Idem, 3.
[397] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat und Militär in der Ming-Zeit*, 131-231.

bravery and general martial potential.[398] Eventually the force he would use in the south during all his campaigns would mostly consist of soldiers drawn from all groups of the civilian population mentioned above, including militia, "police" and everyone possessing and willing to wield martial abilities in the service of the empire. Added to these were some *weisuo* soldiers drawn from their garrisons in the region of operations and, significantly, "reformed subjects", *xinmin* 新民, who were former bandits had been pacified and previously been offered amnesty. Especially this last group seems to have been rather numerous.[399] The common denominator binding them all together was the fact that they were recruited within the region itself. Another change was the devolution of authority for recruitment and command downward to provincial level and below, and its apparent transfer away from the *wu*-branch of government. Gone were the days that the Ministry of War designated a metropolitan-level hereditary military officer to command a number of *weisuo* soldiers gathered together for the occasion to quell provincial or multi-provincial unrest. Instead, the Ministry of War appointed a civil Grand Coordinator who ordered the censorial sub-provincial Military Defense Circuits to recruit military forces from a variety of sources from within their regions of jurisdiction and also select and appoint commanders from both *weisuo* garrisons and the civilian bureaucracy in the area.[400] It is also not entirely clear if the *weisuo* commanders commanded soldiers in their original *weisuo* units, or whether these original units were mere recruitment pools for new to-be-formed units. The overall picture that emerges is an increasing marginalization of the role of hereditary officers in suppression of unrest, the commanding of forces on the battlefield (a function now shared with *wen* officials) and a related diminishment of the number of hereditary military forces actually deployed in the course of the campaign in relation to forces of a different origin. Still, it could have been worse in the case of the deployment of aboriginal troops from outside the province who would have likely brought their own commanders. This latter scenario seems to have been the only other option, which Wang Yangming wanted to avoid for reasons of speed, or lack thereof. It is thus clear that Wang had to enlarge the scope of the military labour market to include sections of the population hitherto not tapped into, a symptom of the breakdown of the original military institutions in the southern part of the empire.

[398] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 61.
[399] Idem, 93, 109.
[400] Idem, 245. These included *wen* officials from provincial, prefectural and county-levels of the administration, as well as *wu* officials from the provincial commissions and local *weisuo* units.

An overall related goal of these recruitment policies was to reduce the burden of expenses on the local population by hiring a smaller number of elite troops in theatre, instead of bringing in more expensive troops from outside the afflicted area. Keeping the number smaller also meant little damage was done to local agriculture. This was a policy Wang had already articulated in his earlier memorial dealing with the northern frontier, and which is congruent with Sunzian and Confucian ideas.[401]

Training

The primacy accorded to practical training was another cornerstone reflected in Wang's ideas of raising a capable militia. According to Wang, the regular hereditary troops had for a long time not implemented proper training and drilling, which was essential in his view to make a unit operate as one body whenever orders were given. Moreover, the training that was done was all style over substance. Instead, men who were already had similar talents and abilities were supposed to be organized in units together, in order to make the best use of them. Therefore, this reemphasis on drilling and practical training was to be preceded by a selection process during which every recruit's physical traits and skills would lead to a pairing with the most suitable choice of weapon.[402] The importance of training had been articulated in military classics like the *Wuzi* and *Weiliaozi*, for reasons of instilling cohesion in the troops and ensuring battlefield effectiveness.[403] The criticisms directed at Ming practices and the proposed solutions, however, were specific to Wang Yangming.

Military Leadership

Wang also proposed in his first memorial a series of measures meant to ensure the steady supply of military leadership talent in times of peace, including ideas on how to raise moral excellence of the officer corps. These measures were meant as a solution for his perceived deficiencies of the military examinations outlines above. His proposed solution was to recruit from amongst the

[401] Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 154-155, 161.
[402] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang," 226.
[403] Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 203-204, 235.

hereditary officers and literati who had engaged in bookish learning of the military arts, and teach both groups fighting techniques as well as military strategy and leadership. Thus, he required these men to be both versed in *wen* and *wu*, which in this context meant physical and literary accomplishments. In other words, Wang sought to unite the bookish armchair literatus-*cum*-general with the illiterate (but martially accomplished) hereditary military men and forge a pool of talent from them which had the advantages of both and the shortcomings of neither. This would have closed the gap between theory and praxis which had come to exist by the Song dynasty (and had persisted into the Ming). Significant, in my view, is that Wang did not advocate the military officers to become well-versed in the Neo-Confucian *Four Books*, he only mentions the classics in his memorial. It would therefore be premature to conclude that Wang at this early stage of his career advocated to inculcate Neo-Confucianism in the officers, and at most prescribed a classicist content.[404]

Two other aspects that were important to Wang Yangming in this respect concerned the relationship of the military officers to the civil authority they were serving and were probably interrelated in Wang's mind. First of all, he advocated that an officer's loyalty, *zhong* 忠, was more important than his skillset and abilities. Without this loyalty, an officer, no matter how capable otherwise, would first choose to defend his own life and the security of his family instead of risking his neck for the ruler. With this emphasis on loyal military leadership, Wang's second point becomes feasible. This point concerns the overhaul of the balance of authority between military and civil branches of government. As we have seen, by the sixteenth century various groups had gained control of various parts of the military administration. Eunuchs served as the eyes and ears of the emperor himself, civil bureaucrats controlled logistics, promotion and demotion, censors could supervise and meet out punishments and certain civil bureaucrats even raised their own armies and took command in the field themselves. This was partly the result of the negligence of the hereditary officers themselves; as their status and influence in the imperial project diminished after the end of the pro-active military policies of the Yongle emperor, they were often more interested in carving out landed estates for themselves in lieu of keeping the strength and integrity of the formations under their control intact. As we have seen, this resulted in a particularly institutionally restricted kind of officer corps, who had hardly any authority even when

[404] Chang, *Wang Shou-jen as a Statesman*, 172; Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 154.

commanding soldiers in the field. Wang wanted to change this situation. In his view, successful leadership could only follow non-interference from other sources of government authority and unified power and freedom of action in the hands of the officers. In short, officers should no longer be "held back at the elbow" *chezhou* 掣肘, or impeded by other government branches.[405] This was a privilege Wang also requested for himself when he was in command of an operation.[406] The whole system of punishments and rewards also needed to be rebalanced: the court should attach more value to experienced and courageous officers and punish their minor mistakes more lightly.[407]

As we have seen in the first chapter, the stress on a well-educated and sophisticated officer corps, which was allowed to operate with autonomous authority once on the battlefield, was articulated in the military classics. This desire can be assumed to have acquired extra poignancy during the mid-Ming and its erosion of hereditary military authority.

Military Operations and the Military Intelligence Staff

During his military campaigns Wang also took pains to organize a private *ad hoc* staff tasked with broad concerns pertaining to military operations and military intelligence. These were sought amongst the local hereditary military officers and other locals who were respected, like venerable elders. These men were meant to supply advice and intelligence on the bandits, local geography, and strategy. In addition, they were to act as go-betweens betwixt Wang and local society.[408] This staff allowed Wang to employ people with specific knowledge and skillsets, whilst circumventing the regular bureaucracy.

Deception

This stratagem was heavily indebted to Wang's early reading of *Sunzi's Art of War.* Sunzian stratagems would serve him well during his campaigns. A famous example dated from the

[405] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 163, 168-169; Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 227.
[406] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 315.
[407] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang", 227.
[408] Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 161-162.

campaign against the usurping prince of Ning. Wang deliberately sent out messengers to be captured by the opposing forces, carrying falsified messages which were meant to give the impression the imperial loyalists were already poised to invade the prince's heartland. This made the prince cautious in moving his forces, buying Wang precious time to build up his own forces. In his commentary on the military classics Wang defended Sunzian deception as not amounting to the morally reprehensible act of lying, but rather as preventing the enemy from seeing clearly his employed strategy.[409] The case of his deception employed against the Prince of Ning seems hard to justify on these grounds, however. Perhaps at this time he could invoke his doctrine of moral subjectivity based on *liangzhi*, a doctrine he had not developed yet at the time he wrote his commentary on the military classics.

Rewards, Punishments, and Discipline

Wang emphasized the use of rewards and punishments to ensure proper discipline and order within the ranks, a theme repeatedly iterated in the military classics.[410] Israel traces Wang's ideas in this regard specifically back to the *Wuzi* and *Weiliaozi*. In particular, Wang wanted his soldiers to fear his punishments more than the enemy.[411] Wang did add his own admonition that these rewards and punishments had to be implemented promptly and without delay in order to be effective. A reward bestowed after too much time had passed would not be felt as a reward anymore, and a similar situation held true in the case of punishments. The punishments themselves were quite severe. In the case of retreating or disobeying orders, the hapless soldier would immediately lose his head. Wang Yangming's concern with pacification and endeavoring to spare the civilian population the burdens of military disruptions, the same severe punishment was meted out to those soldiers who preyed on the commoners and caused disruptions in the local social fabric. Again, this was a concern that could be found in Confucianism and *Sunzi's Art of War*. Wang also advocated that a commander should not shrink back from punishing those intimately related to him, in order to make his subordinates guard against infractions. Another concern for Wang, which we can relate more directly to the specific mid-Ming context of the campaigns, was stopping

[409] Idem, 162-163.
[410] See for example: Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, 249, 263.
[411] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 92, 196.

officers from pocketing the pay meant for the soldiers. Severe punishments for these infractions were instituted as well. Wang also meant to enforce a few collective punishments. If one unit of 50 men lost in battle, one of its two constituent squads would lose their heads over it.[412]

Morale and Courage

In many of the military classics, especially the *Wuzi* and *Weiliaozi* mentioned above, moral and courage are mostly seen as an outcome of a balance between the allegiance nourished by rewards and the fear engendered by punishments. In this regard Israel nevertheless makes a sweeping claim which is not backed up by the sources. Israel seems to imply that Wang thought the innately good moral nature of the heart-mind, or *xin*, would have a significant impact on the morale and courage of the soldiers:

> For Wang, should the cause be both righteous and a matter of life and death for the emperor and the country, then individuals should rise to the occasion uncoerced, or at least with minimal coercion. This was simply the natural response of people's righteous sentiments *(yi li zhi xin)* rising in communal solidarity in the face of an immanent [sic] threat to the whole, not in the modem sense of the nation, but rather in the very Confucian sense of that fabric of personally meaningful social order most exemplified through devotion to one's ruler. On the other hand, should the enemy's cause be wrong or bad, and driven by material or selfish interests *{gong li zhi xin* then it would be easy to snatch away their fighting spirit.[413]

It is certainly possible that Wang thought along these lines, but in his extant writings I could not find a discussion which featured this connection between moral sentiments and military action. I shall argue in chapter ten that Qi addressed exactly this moral dimension of warfare, and connected Wang's *xinxue* with the problematic surrounding the inculcation of courage in the troops.

Organization

Wang's military thought elevated troop organization to a level of high importance. This was first of all a game of numbers. The building blocks of the army were units of 25 soldiers, designated

[412] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang", 227-228; Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 164.
[413] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 197.

wu 伍, which can be translated as "squad". Using this basic building block, the units would grow progressively larger through stages of 50, 200, 400, 1200 and 2400 men. Each of these divisions was to be led by an officer progressively higher in rank, supported by assistant commanders in the larger formations. In this organizational scheme, Wang differed markedly from the established practice of the old hereditary *weisuo*. These took a unit of ten plus one leader as the basic building block, and then proceeded through stages of 55 (plus a commander), 112 (commander already included), 1120 (commander already included) and 5600. According to Fan Zhongyi, the goal of Wang's innovation was to make sure the different army units connected well with each other and would act in battle similar to limbs belonging to the same physical body and the different ranks within the hierarchy would be entrusted with each other. What Fan does not make clear, however, is in which way a simple shifting of the numbers could have helped Wang accomplish these two goals. In comparison with the old *weisuo* organizational structure, Wang's scheme did have more intermediate units below a thousand men strong, which would have meant more officers guiding fewer men in battle. I argue this had the benefit of bestowing better organizational flexibility and command oversight in the heat of battle. Another feature of this organizational scheme was its utilization of a system of official tokens - *fu* 符 (or tallies) granted to the officers with which they could identify the soldiers in their units as genuine members of the military hierarchy when they called up for duty. The officers of every subsequent organizational layer would receive one of these *fu*. In case the order was given for a given unit to move, these tokens were checked against a duplicate of these tokens in the office of Wang Yangming himself. In this way, it was thought it would be possible to be on guard against traitors and fake soldiers.[414] Wang's writings are not entirely clear on how this could help to weed out these traitors. His following sentence seems to shed most light on its intended function at the lowest *wu*-level of organization:

> After the organization and selection has been settled, every five men are given a card [*pai* 牌] on which the 25 names and surnames of the *wu* are together fully listed, in order to make them associate and familiarize [with each other]. We call this the *wu*-token.
> 编选既定，仍每五人给一牌，备列同伍二十五人姓名，使之连络习熟，谓之伍符。[415]

[414] Chang, *Wang Shou-jen as a Statesman*, 190; Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang", 226; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 93.

[415] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 541.

These tallies thus took the shape of some kind of cards which could be written on. It seems that Wang wanted both the men within a given unit as well as the command hierarchy one level up and the highest commanding authority to have knowledge of the men serving in that exact unit. Instead of giving each squad of 25 men one tally, every five men received one with the names of the entire *wu* listed on it. That the men were expected to become familiar with one and another probably means their close association was intended to be a deterrent against infiltration.

The inspiration for this system seems to have come from the *Weiliaozi*:

> The orders for binding the squads say: "Five men form a squad, share one tally and receive it from the office of the commanding official. The squads' losses or gains conform to it. If the squad gains and does not lose, there are rewards. If the squad loses without gaining, the members will be killed and the families injured.
> 束伍之令曰：五人為伍，共一符，收於將吏之所，亡伍而得伍當之。得伍而不亡有賞，亡伍不得伍，身死家殘.[416]

In the *Weiliaozi* this system is explicitly coupled with a regimen of collective rewards and punishments, a connection Wang does not make in his writings. Nevertheless, Wang seems to have been solely responsible for reviving these ideas during the Ming dynasty, as I could find no antecedents before Wang's time. The official dynastic history of the Ming provides no evidence of a similar system being utilized before the early sixteenth century, and neither does the *Da Ming Lü* 大明律 (*Laws of the Great Ming*), which was the dynasty's law code compiled at the end of the fourteenth century, which included rules and regulations for military personnel as well.[417] A final source I consulted is the *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian* 皇明經世文編 (*Collected Statecraft Writings of the Imperial Ming*), which was edited in 1638 by Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647).[418] This was the largest compilation of statecraft writings edited during the Ming, and it appeared near the end of the dynasty. Included were the ideas of around 400 officials serving the empire from its earliest beginnings until the late Ming times during which it was compiled. Their ideas

[416] *Weiliaozi* 尉繚子(CSCS), 43.
[417] Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 546.
[418] *Da Ming lü* 大明律, edited by Liu Weiqian 劉惟謙 et al (XXSKQS); *Huang Ming jingshi wen bian* 皇明經世文編, 8 vols, edited by Chen Zilong 陳子龍 et al (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002); *Mingshi* 明史, edited by Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al (SKQS).

were put in chronological and thematic order, and military affairs have a significant presence among them.[419] Although not exhaustive, these sources can be assumed to have compiled and recorded the most influential ideas concerning army recruitment and organization, and Wang's ideas certainly seem to have blazed a new trail in this area. They are significantly more sophisticated than the ideas of civil official Sun Ru 孫孺 (dates unknown), who - in the context of the empire's south – had proposed in 1494 to make service in militia a part of the corvée obligations of civil households. Concerning recruitment and registration he had the following ideas: "Select those who are able-bodies of age and strength, record their age and description in the registration book and leave it with the officials." 選年力精壯者以充籍其年貌在官.[420]

I posit that the reason this system worked was because Wang Yangming recruited and organized men from the same geographical areas in corresponding units. Therefore, considering the fact that many of these were selected from men with pre-existing martial proclivities and thus presumably belonging to a common military labour market, many can be assumed to already have been acquainted with one and another. This also helps put into context Wang's dictum that the sentiments between officers and men would need to resemble that of elders and juniors of the same family.[421] I posit that the transplantation of the social structure and values from civilian life to the military realm should have been facilitated under these conditions. As I will argue in chapter ten, Qi Jiguang would further build on these principles and elaborate them.

Financing

The question of how Wang Yangming financed his campaigns has unfortunately received little attention, and therefore not much is known about it. According to Twiss and Chan, Wang had no qualms about using the resources belonging to those groups he had deemed irredeemable in their evils. Therefore, a certain amount of plunder and pillage was admissible under certain conditions. His rationalization for this behaviour was that these resources were probably illegally exacted from the good people in the first place, and that using them prevented burdening these same good people

[419] William Stewart Atwell, "Ch'en Tzu-lung (1608-1647): A Scholar-Official of the Late Ming Dynasty" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1974), 81-82.
[420] *Ming shilu* 明實錄, volume 30 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo, 1966), 1702, via: Filipiak "`Saving Lives'," 158.
[421] Fan, "Wang Shouren de junshi sixiang", 226; Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 93.

further.[422] During the first campaign, the central imperial and concerned provincial treasuries were unable to cover the necessary expenses. Therefore, Wang resorted to levying salt tax on merchants from Guangdong, who were allowed to import salt to the areas affected by banditry. He also resorted to centralizing the income from customs tax levied on goods traded between the provinces under his purview, in the process attempting to weed out corruption by reducing the customs locations and streamlining the procedures.[423]

Based on this sparse information, I have to cautiously conclude that during Wang's campaigns the old arrangements described in chapter three were no longer sufficient to defray the costs of military operations. In line with Song dynasty-practices, Wang relied more on taxation on commercial goods in lieu of the land tax, in addition to plundering the enemy.

Civil Governance

Both during and after a given campaign, Wang Yangming tried to implement a number of civil governance solutions applied, as we have seen, according to his estimation of the level of civilization of the affected population. Wang employed two measures during his campaigns in areas he already deemed sufficiently civilized, which I will detail below.

The first was the implementation of a mutual security and surveillance system imposed on the civilians, the so-called *baojia* 保甲 system, which Wang called the *shi jia pai fa* 十家牌法 ("ten-family card-method"). This was a method originally championed by the statesman Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) during the Northern Song. It entailed the division of the population in a certain area in groups of ten families, the members of which would have their names and other general characteristics recorded on a card, or *pai* 牌 (note the similarity with Wang's army recruitment and organizational system), which would then circulate amongst these families in turn. They would bear responsibility for making sure that no new faces would appear in their group of ten families. In case members were missing, or new faces had appeared, it was there duty to report it to an official. It was thus utilized by Wang Yangming to weed out bandit infiltrators from a certain area affected by disorder. In case of transgressions, the whole group would be collectively punished. In addition, Wang prescribed moral persuasion to induce good behaviour. The system

[422] Twiss and Chan, "Wang Yang-ming's Ethics of War," 166-167.
[423] Chang, *Wang Shou-jen as a Statesman*, 141-149.

had become so important by the end of the dynasty that it had spread over half of the empire. Despite other Ming officials experimenting with it before Wang, it seems to have taken off as a regular measure starting in his own period of activity.[424]

The second measure was the community covenant (*xiangyue* 鄉約), a Neo-Confucian approach towards organizing sub-bureaucratic government by and for a community of people themselves, including dispute mediation and resolution, defence and the maintenance of the proper hierarchical social order.[425] It had been popularized by Zhu Xi himself, but it was only widely implemented first during the Ming dynasty. Zhu's aims were as follows:

> Through systematic and regular mutual exhortation and observation, common ritual, and organized charity, supported by written registers of membership and the recording of good and bad deeds, a moral and social order reminiscent of the classics but missing in Chu's own time was to be achieved.[426]

Again, Wang was not the first to implement it during the Ming, but the measure really seems to have taken off during and after his time as an official and his version of the *xiangyue* would become one of the most influential during mid-sixteenth century. Moreover, Zhan Ruoshui was also known to have been involved in the foundation of one. An important purpose of a *xiangyue*, thus, was to bind a community of people together with a covenant of rules aimed to improve moral behaviour. Wang intended the *xiangyue* to be built upon his *shi jia pai fa* and, reminiscent of Chen Xianzhang's to spread Neo-Confucian moral behaviour on the back of military activity, to aid in his "civilizing mission".[427] In the words of Kandice Hauf: "Wang's covenant was meant to regulate many facets of life, including settling of disputes, educating people about proper marriage and funeral customs, and mutual aid, especially in helping to pay for funerals and weddings."[428]

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[424] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 62-65.
[425] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 253.
[426] Conrad Schirokauer and Robert P. Hymes, "Introduction," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, edited by Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 23.
[427] George Israel uses the metaphor of the "civilizing mission" for Wang's aims, see: Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 47. Yonghua Liu, "The World of Rituals: Masters of Ceremonies (*Lisheng*), Ancestral Cults, Community Compacts, and Local Temples in Late Imperial Sibao, Fujian," (PhD diss., McGill University, 2003), 11-15, 292-293; Schirokauer and Hymes, "Introduction," 22-23.
[428] Kandice Hauf, "The Community Covenant in Sixteenth Century Ji'an Prefecture, Jiangxi," *Late Imperial China* 17.2 (1996): 10.

After the campaigns were over these measures were meant to stay in effect. In the aftermath Wang would also recommend reorganizing the regular governance of the affected areas according to his assessment of their level of civilization. After his first campaign, for example, he judged the ethnic tensions between aboriginals and Han to mask socio-economic tensions between different groups. Israel speculates that Wang knew that many Han simply fled their registered status within the old *lijia*-system and appropriated an aboriginal label with all the exemptions from tax and corvée services that entailed. In this case Wang advocated creating new counties, registering the populations as regular subjects, and extending regular bureaucracy and governance. In the case of his third campaign, Wang judged the Yao not ready for regular governance and advocated a policy of gradual assimilation, which entailed leaving the old indirect forms of governance through aboriginal chiefs intact. He did try to intersperse the Yao with more regular Han settlers, giving the area a broader taxable base of the government and opening up vistas for assimilation. Next to that, he suggested providing the Yao with Confucian schools in order to spread knowledge of proper rituals.[429]

The Legacy of Wang's Military Praxis

Wang Yangming offered a comprehensive system of civil and military measures to solve the crises of southern governance – socio-economic pressures, ethnic tensions, lack of military leadership and military labour, financial shortages, ideological draught – in the early sixteenth century. In terms of the balance of *wen* and *wu*, Wang saw the latter as a measure of last resort, as was usual within Confucianism. In line with his own philosophy, he made the resorting to *wu* depend entirely on his perception of the moral qualities of his enemies, the extent to which their selfish natures irredeemably clouded the innate goodness in their heart-minds. He coupled his military campaigns with a "civilizing mission" to morally reform the stricken regions, which made his efforts transcend those of other civil officials and which put him in a tradition together with Chen Xianzhang. Wang's example further shows that inherent structural deficiencies, especially in the empire's sparsely garrisoned south increasingly subjected to socio-economic and demographic dynamics, the need arose for officials with combined *wen* and *wu* talents. As will have become clear, many of his practical civil and military measures were not his own original invention.

[429] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 53-54, 69-70, 83-84, 118, 377-380.

However, his legacy would be insured for a number of reasons. First of all, he brought all these innovations together in one comprehensive program, and was able to implement them owing to his commissions as Grand Coordinator and Supreme Commander. Second, I suspect they enjoyed widespread fame because of the simultaneous spread and fame of Wang's Neo-Confucian reorientation. Third, Wang's followers, disciples, and admirers would contribute to the spreading of these ideas. The first collection of his writings, both philosophical, and concerning practical civil and military governance, already appeared in 1536 (and would see many later editions).[430] These were all conditions that did not apply to other officials and literati who were working on similar comprehensive solutions, including Chen Xianzhang.

Nor was the circulation of Wang's ideas restricted to the sixteenth century. A certain Chen Longzheng 陳龍正 (fl. early 17th century), aided by Fan Liangshu 樊良樞 (fl. early 17th century), compiled two treatises on Wang's *baojia*-system and his *xiangyue* community compact methods.[431] Another treaty on the *baojia*-system circulated under Wang's own name, as well as a treatise on his more specifically military solutions.[432] Both Chen and Fan lived in the seventeenth century during the waning years of the dynasty and apparently thought Wang's ideas still relevant for their present predicaments. In chapter nine I will turn to the influence of Wang's specifically military thought on later sixteenth and seventeenth-century developments.

More immediately, however, was the influence of Wang's ideas on the coming southern military crises of the mid-sixteenth century, the menace caused by the *Wokou*-pirates. A foreword, written by Wang Daokun 汪道昆 (1525-1593), to a collection of Wang Yangming's memorials, probably meant to aid prospective civil bureaucrats to be posted in the south, reflects the relevance of Wang's exemplary career for newcomers in the business of governing the empire:

> Preface to the memorials of the supervisor's office of southern Gan [southern Jiangxi Province]
> High ranking senior officials using memorials to the emperor by the famed of this present age would do no better than use those of Mr. Yangming. He possessed civil and military talents and his meritorious activities commenced in southern Gan. Nowadays, of those which are praised and put down in writing, the examples of southern Gan are in the majority. I once served Mr. Wu Yaoshan and we discussed the author's career. When

[430] Wing-tsit Chan, "WANG Shou-jen," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976),1416.
[431] Xu Baolin 许保林, *Zhongguo bingshu zhijian lu* 中国兵书只见录 (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1988), 143.
[432] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu zhijian lu*, 142-143.

he engaged in official affairs, he used the minister [Wang Yangming] to explain himself in a letter to the emperor. His affairs were knowledgeably written down and clarified, like Mr. Yangming's.

南贛督府奏議序

公卿大夫以奏議名當世者，宜莫如陽明先生。先生具文武才，其勳業由南贛起。今所稱載，則在南贛者居多。余嘗侍堯山吳公，論作者之軌。公則以人臣敷奏，務深切著明，陽明先生是已.[433]

Wang Daokun was involved in the anti-piracy campaigns of the mid-sixteenth century as a civil official and against this backdrop became a friend of Qi Jiguang. We will meet him again in future chapters as a member of Qi's network of civil and military officials. For now, his example shows the importance Wang's example had for succeeding generations of officials, including Qi Jiguang.

I contend that it is no accident that different versions of *xinxue* have a similar tendency towards military activism. This tendency can already be traced in the life and career of Liu Jiuyuan and Liu Jiuling during the Southern Song, continuing with Chen Xianzhang and his followers, before reaching its apogee with Wang Yangming and his adherents. In all three cases, a *xinxue* philosophy was articulated, stimulating a shift away from book learning towards (martial) activism amidst failing military governance and socio-economic tensions in the empire's southern provinces. During the Ming it would become heavily associated with a "civilizing mission" among the empire's southern aboriginal populations as well. In the next three chapters I will show how widespread Wang Yangming's *xinxue* philosophy was under the civil and military official leadership of the southern anti-Wokou campaigns, whilst in chapter nine I will argue for the importance of Wang Yangming's practical military solutions among this same group as well. It will become clear that Wang's integrated civil-military solution had a more important legacy in the later sixteenth century than any of the other earlier Ming civil officials pioneering an integrated approach, proving the resonance of the synergy between Wang's governance praxis and moral philosophy among sixteenth-century literati and soldiers. This synergy was lacking amongst the pioneering civil officials preceding Wang, with the possible exception of Chen Xianzhang.

[433] Wang Daokun 汪道昆. *Taihan ji* 太函集, *Volume 1* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 435-436.

Chapter 6 – The Dissemination of *Xinxue* among Ming Military Commanders

Wang's message was enthusiastically spread by his disciples during the first half of the sixteenth century, most famously by means of *jiangxue* gatherings. Amongst other proselytizing techniques, different groups of disciples aimed at different audiences. Kandice Hauf distinguishes three, each with a different geographical origin and audience. The first group came from Jiangxi province and aimed their activities at fellow scholars. These were Luo Hongxian 羅洪先 (1504-1564), Ouyang De 歐陽德 (1496-1554), Nie Bao 聶豹 (1487-1563), and Zou Shouyi 邹守益 (1491-1562). According to Hauf they were mostly concerned with metaphysical and philosophical discussions and had the most distinguished careers as civil officials. The second group consisted of the disciples from Zhejiang, Wang's native province, who were most active in spreading Wang's teachings. These were Qian Dehong 錢德洪 (1496-1576) and Wang Ji 王畿 (1498-1583). According to Julia Ching, Wang Ji and Qian Dehong were both tasked by Wang Yangming to find and instruct new disciples for the movement.[434] Especially Wang Ji was already simplifying his language to reach a wider audience. The third and last groups was associated with Taizhou 泰州 prefecture in the Southern Metropolitan province. Its membership came from various, mostly southern, provinces like Jiangxi, Hubei, Fujian, Guangdong, and Yunnan. What bound them to Taizhou was its status as their leader Wang Gen's 王艮 (1483-1541) home. Among this group were such luminaries as Luo Rufang 羅汝芳 (1515-1588), He Xinyin 何心隱 (1517-1579), and Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602). They aimed their teachings at mass audiences of commoners of all social and professional backgrounds.[435] As I will show in the remaining chapters, prominent members of these three groups would all play a role in the southern military campaigns against the Wokou that Qi Jiguang was a part of, something that has not been touched upon in modern research. A keen observer will have noticed that all of these men, the heirs to Wang Yangming's thought, were southerners. So, before I proceed to Qi Jiguang himself, I will first present evidence that southern civil officials with *xinxue*-leanings tended to combine such with military interests and activities.

[434] Julia Ching, "WANG Chi," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1351-1352.
[435] Yu-yin Cheng, "The Taizhou School (*Taizhou Xuepai* 泰州學派) and the Popularization of *Liangzhi* 良知 (Innate Knowledge)," *Ming Studies* 60 (2009): 46; Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 36.

Second, I will show that this correlation extended to the anti-Wokou campaign Qi Jiguang became a part of.

Military Leadership by Civil Officials and *Xinxue* Affiliation

Kathleen Ryor, whilst discussing the socio-cultural intermingling of civil and military officials during the mid-to-late sixteenth century, quotes a Chinese literatus from Zhejiang, Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578-1642), who made some observations on this phenomenon in the early seventeenth century. According to him, a number of civil officials made fame for themselves during the Jiajing and Longqing 隆慶 (r. 1567-1572) emperor's reigns by engaging in military affairs. These were Wang Chonggu 王崇古 (1515-1588), Yang Bo 楊博 (1509-1574), Liu Tao 劉燾 (1511-1598), Tan Lun 譚綸 (1520-1577), Tang Shunzhi 唐順之 (1507-1560), Zhao Zhenji 趙貞吉 (1514-1576), and Zhao Shichun 趙時春 (1509-1576).[436] The former two were northerners hailing from Shanxi province. Yang Bo stood in the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian tradition and was a follower of the Cheng-Zhu adherent Xue Xuan 薛瑄 (1389-1464), another northerner from Shanxi. Yang Bo generally disagreed with Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian redefinition, although he seemed to respect his practical military accomplishments.[437] It is unknown how Yang reconciled his Cheng-Zhu leanings with his military activities, but as we have seen in the second chapter, it was possible to build this bridge by recourse to utilitarian necessity. Moreover, we have seen that northern Chinese, by virtue of their geographical location, rarely neglected the martial side of existence. The other five were all *xinxue* adherents. Liu Tao was a northerner and scion from a hereditary military family hailing from the Northern Metropolitan province, but he was a follower of Chen Xianzhang. He was fond of engaging in *jiangxue* with Wang Yangming's followers.[438] Tang Shunzhi, from the Southern Metropolitan province, studied Wang Yangming's philosophy under guidance of Wang Ji and cultivated warm relations with Luo Hongxian.[439] Tan Lun hailed from

[436] Ryor, "*Wen* and *Wu*," 223-224.
[437] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 97; Khee Heong Koh, *A Northern Alternative: Xue Xuan (1398-1464) and the Hedong School* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 178-183.
[438] Chang Yi-hsi 張藝曦, "Mingdai Yangming huaxiang de liuchuan jiqi zuoyong – jian ji Qingdai de fazhan" 明代陽明畫像的流傳及其作用──兼及清代的發展, *Sixiang shi* 思想史 5 (2015): 134.
[439] Ray Huang, "T'ANG Shun-chih," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1253.

Jiangxi province and became a follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy through his association with disciples like Chen Jiuchuan 陳九川 (1494-1562), who was a friend of Zou Shouyi.[440] Zhao Zhenji was a northerner from Sichuan province who was a self-taught follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy, because his parents did not allow him to study with the master.[441] Zhao Shichun was a northerner from Shaanxi, who admired Zou Shouyi, and was otherwise in close contact with Luo Hongxian, Nie Bao, and Qian Dehong. It seems he was also a follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy, although his grasp of the concept of *liangzhi* was apparently shallow.[442]

As can be seen, followers of Wang Yangming's philosophy formed a disproportionally large group within the higher echelons of the civil bureaucracy who were noted for their military accomplishments. Hauf implies that there were three broad ideological orientations within the bureaucracy at this time: orthodox Cheng-Zhu adherents, Wang Yangming enthusiasts, and "examination" Confucians, presumably referring to those who insincerely went through the Cheng-Zhu curriculum for pragmatic reasons. Furthermore, the followers of Wang admired Chen Xianzhang[443] and were presumably entangled socially and politically with adherents of both Chen and Zhan Ruoshui, considering the shared background of all three philosophical movements. This would substantiate Chen Baoliang, Kai Filipiak, and Wang Hung-tai's claims that Wang Yangming became an exemplar for officials with combined *wen* and *wu* capabilities. As I will show below, many of these men would become involved in the anti-Wokou campaign.

The Anti-Wokou Campaign and Its *Xinxue* Leadership

When coastal disturbances started to arise after the sharpening of the maritime prohibition, at various times a Grand Coordinator was appointed to solve the problem. This happened in 1529,

[440] Hauf, "The Jiangyou group," 138; Hu Changchun 胡长春, *Tan Lun pingzhuan* 谭纶评传 (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2007), 30-31.
[441] Lienche Tu Fang, "CHAO Chen-chi," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 120-121; Zhang Kewei 张克伟, "Ming ru Zhao Zhenji zhi xing lü shilu ji zhuzuo" 明儒赵贞吉之行履实录及著作, *Xihua daxue xuebao* 西华大学学报 30.5 (2011): 15.
[442] John W. Dardess, *A Political Life in Ming China: A Grand Secretary and His Times* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 16; Du Zhiqiang 杜志强, "Longdong wenren Zhao Shichun yu Ming Jiajing nianjian shirenqun – jiyu shehui diwei, diyu fenbu, xueshu wenhua de san zhong kaoliang" 陇东文人赵时春与明嘉靖年间士人群———基于社会地位、地域分布、学术文化的三重考量, *Hebei xuekan* 河北学刊 36.1 (2016): 210.
[443] Hauf, "The Jiangyou group," 38, 41.

1531, and 1547, and the officials concerned were Wang Yaofeng 王堯封 (dates unknown), Hu Lian 胡璉 (1469-1542), and Zhu Wan 朱紈 (1494-1549). The first one requested to be dismissed quite soon after his appointment on account of illness, and the second one seems to have adopted a rather passive wait-and-see approach to piracy until the central court lost interest in the problem soon after and dismissed him.[444] Zhu Wan was appointed much later in 1547 and proved to be a more persistent investigator and problem solver. To his dismay, he found out the problem was rooted locally: the gentry and local officials were actively stimulating and/or covering up illegal trading activities:

> The local gentry, Zhu Wan's "pirates in gowns and caps," exploited their already advantageous position in society to profiteer from the trade. On the one hand, by the use of threats, cajolery and even marriage alliances, the gentry were able to thoroughly dominate and manipulate the merchants and commoners who handled the trade. They were also able to buy protection and used their influence and wealth to bribe local officials and cover up their complicity. Zhu Wan exposed many such offenses and even named names in his reports, most of which, for unclear reasons, gained little response at court. Local resistance to Zhu Wan's efforts began as soon as he made clear his intentions of eradicating smuggling and enforcing the prohibition law, but he found in his opponents a formidable obstacle.[445]

Because of this lack of support, Zhu Wan used his power to crack down on the lower level symptoms of the problem: the merchant-*cum*-pirate bands. However, he realized that the smuggling networks could easily be re-established as long as the powerful gentry remained untouched. More worryingly, they had leverage through connections at court and managed to have him dismissed on account of censorial officials accusing him of exceeding authority, law violations, and pursuing self-interest. In the end Zhu committed suicide in his prison cell, but not before compiling "his reports and memorials for publication in order to preserve for posterity his views on the events which had transpired during his tumultuous two years as grand coordinator."[446] These were to provide the first in-depth Ming-era analysis of the socio-economic conditions and changes pertaining to the south-eastern coastal areas.[447]

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[444] Roland Louis Higgins, "Piracy and Coastal Defense in the Ming Period, Governement Response to Coastal Disturbances, 1523-1549" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1981), 126-135.
[445] Roland L. Higgins, "Pirates in Gowns and Caps: Gentry Law-Breaking in the Mid-Ming," *Ming Studies* 10 (1980): 33-35.
[446] Higgins, "Pirates in Gowns and Caps," 35.
[447] Idem, 34.

For a number of years the court did not undertake any action, until 1554, when coastal disturbances could no longer be ignored. This time four Supreme Commanders were appointed in rapid succession, with the last one eventually coordinating the effort against Wokou for several years until 1562. The first three, Zhang Jing 張經 (1492-1555), Zhou Tong 周琉 (dates unknown) and Yang Yi 楊宜 (dates unknown), were found ineffectual and were eventually dismissed. Factional strife at the court also seems to have played a part. Zhao Wenhua 趙文華 (? – 1557), an official serving in Beijing's central bureaucracy and a protégé of Xu Jie's powerful competitor, Grand Secretary Yan Song 嚴嵩 (1480-1567), had played a part in impeaching them. He also impeached the Zhejiang Grand Coordinator Li Tianchong 李天寵 (? - 1555) on grounds of alcoholism and dereliction of duty. This allowed him to push forward Hu Zongxian, hailing from the Southern Metropolitan province, as Supreme Commander of Zhejiang and Fujian (later comprising even more provinces) and his co-provincial Ruan E 阮鶚 (1509-1567) as Grand Coordinator of Zhejiang.[448]

This appointment would be of momentous significance to Qi Jiguang's career, for as I will show below, Hu Zongxian was a follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy and his private and official functionaries were all intricately linked together in a network of personal relations within this philosophical movement. Hu Zongxian himself fits the mold of Wang Yangming's activist career almost to a fault. Hailing from Zhejiang's Huizhou Prefecture 徽州府, Hu had served as a magistrate in several counties before serving in the capital for several years as a censorial official starting in 1548.[449] He embarked on his career, however, as an observing official in the Ministry of Justice in the late 1530s and it is during this time in Beijing that he met Zou Shouyi. It is possible that through this interaction with Zou Shouyi he converted to Yangming learning, a subbranch of *xinxue*, although he might have been influenced by Wang's brand of *xinxue* earlier in his life. During his time as leader of the anti-piracy effort in Zhejiang, he sold his own property to fund the publication of Wang Yangming's writings. In the preface, he wrote that he had admired the master's way for a long time.[450]

[448] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast*, 16-17, 76-79, 84, 290; Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 30-34.
[449] Chaoying Fang, "HU Tsung-hsien," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 631-632.
[450] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 8-9.

The template of Wang Yangming's frontier service was also followed with regard to interethnic cooperation by Hu Zongxian. The close association between Yangming Neo-Confucianism and frontier governance would thus extend into the middle of the sixteenth century and play a significant role during the important anti-Wokou pirate operations, as exemplified by Hu Zongxian's career, amongst others. The later Supreme Commander's personality and life is hard to reconstruct owing to a paucity of sources, primarily applying to those written by the man himself. It is therefore nearly impossible to gauge the man's self-perception and intended self-fashioning. His affiliation with *xinxue* is scarcely commented upon in modern scholarship. Yet the known details about his life and career show remarkable similarities to those of Wang Yangming. For many of these details we are indebted to his son Hu Guiqi 胡桂奇 (? - ?), who in the late sixteenth century wrote a biography of his father which was probably meant to rehabilitate Hu Zongxian's reputation after his fall from grace in 1562 owing to allegations of corruption. This biography, the *Hugong xingshi* 胡公行實 (*Life Story of Mr. Hu*), was probably written during the Wanli emperor's reign when Wang Yangming was finally gaining currency as a great scholar deserving a legitimate place in the Temple of Confucius.[451] This was the highest honour achievable for any Confucian scholar and it was finally granted in 1584. It is possible Hu Guiqi deliberately modelled his father's life and his achievements on Wang Yangming's example. Like his illustrious predecessor, Hu Zongxian dabbled in martial pursuits such as equestrianism and archery and he was also fond of studying the military classics.[452]

In addition, he would spend time quelling aboriginal unrest by the Miao as a censorial official in the early 1550s, help pacify and reconstruct post-rebellion society and forge working relationships of a military nature with those Miao who remained loyal to Ming suzerainty. Hu Zongxian was dispatched to the southwestern border areas of the provinces of Huguang, Guizhou and Sichuan as a censorial official, recommended by a metropolitan official, in order to discipline the troops and enforce punishments and rewards, who had so far performed dismally against the Miao aboriginal insurgents.[453] The unrest among the Miao was nothing new, both the mixed Han and Miao *tusi* and the more autonomous Miao *tuguan* were accused of exploiting their court-granted elevated status to increase their wealth and property at the expense of others.[454] As part of

[451] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast*, 78-79.
[452] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 5-6.
[453] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 61-63.
[454] Idem, 57.

his *wen*- duties Hu Zongxian therefore advocated extending amnesty and providing juridical redress of grievances in addition to more straightforward military action and annihilation. After pacifying the area, Hu would also work diligently at re-establishing the school system and the provincial examinations, although it is unclear to what extent the Miao profited from these policies in comparison to their Han co-provincials.[455]

Hu's experience would be rounded off with a successful stint in the north facing the Mongols, forging his identity as a *wen* and *wu*-capable frontier official.[456] And like Wang Yangming, Hu Zongxian would later be endowed with inter- and intra-provincial authority as a Grand Coordinator (and later even Supreme Commander) in order to effectively tackle the large scale Wokou problem at the south-eastern maritime frontier. Important for the later Wokou suppression campaigns were the ties Hu Zongxian established with the Miao and his appraisal of their martial capabilities.[457] Indeed, the south-eastern seaboard would witness the deployment of many Miao and also Zhuang 壯 aboriginal troops in service of Hu Zongxian (he recommended their deployment even before he was given his assignment in the southeast).[458] Hu's intimate relations with his aboriginal commanders is attested by his recorded comforting of Miao leader Peng Jinchen 彭藎臣 (1510-1560, of the Baojing Pacification Office 保靖土司 in Huguang province) after his defeat at the hand of the Wokou. Ivy Maria Lim also notes that he extended this personal style of leadership to military personnel, with whom he shared their living conditions on occasion.[459]

Also, like Wang Yangming before him, Hu Zongxian relied on a private staff (*mufu* 幕府) to help him plan and execute his campaigns, which included both officials, non-commissioned gentry-cum-literati, and former officials serving ex officio. Their occupations included "military advisors and secretaries, and merchants, fighting men, interpreters and other technical specialists."[460] This group had a geographical and social cohesion. Among the officials, many were south-easterners who were serving in other south-eastern provinces because of the rule of avoidance. Nevertheless, the existence of social ties with the societies they administered cannot be

[455] Idem, 64.
[456] Fang, "HU Tsung-hsien," 631-632.
[457] Fang, "HU Tsung-hsien," 632.
[458] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 81.
[459] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast*, 84-85.
[460] Merrilyn Fitzpatrick, "Local Interests and the Anti-Pirate Administration in China's South-East 1555-1565." *Ch'ing-shih Wen-t'i* 4.2 (1979): 2-3.

entirely discounted. Furthermore, according to Merrilyn Fitzpatrick, "[…] many of the people associated with the mu-fu had ties and obligations to each other which existed prior to or outside of their relationship with the mu-fu. Because of the geographical concentration of their home districts, many had same-locality (t'ung-hsiang) ties and marriage ties. Among those of scholar-official status, there were the ties of graduation in the same year (t'ung-nien), and common cultural and intellectual interests."[461] One of those common interests is not mentioned by Fitzpatrick: a shared adherence to xinxue.

In her article Fitzpatrick lists all official and non-official private staff members serving in Hu's mufu. Of the non-official members, I have been able to identify five of the twelve as followers of either Wang Yangming or Zhan Ruoshui's philosophies. The famous painter, Zhejiang's Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593), was among them. Xu Wei is mostly known to us as a famous painter, writer and calligrapher. He was in a way a product of the frontier: his mother was a Miao slave girl and his father was Han Chinese. Typical of the age of examinee-oversupply he lived in, his aspirations to join the officialdom had not been realized despite surpassing literary excellence. Martin Huang argues that (partly) this inability to realize his ambitions through the examination system had made him feel emasculated and caused him to take a dim view of the value of literati men. Instead, he started to extoll the virtues of military men like Qi Jiguang and attempted to make a military career for himself. He therefore dabbled in military affairs and joined Hu Zongxian's staff.[462] Xu's engagement with Yangming learning seems to have stimulated his interest in engaging in concrete military affairs. The facet of this new learning which seems to have attracted Xu Wei most was the moral imperative to turn inward cultivation into outward societal action. Like Wang Yangming, Xu Wei disapproved of bookish intellectualism which did not translate itself into action to the benefit of society. As Edward Luper posits, Wang Yangming "[…] argued that action was the natural expression of an impulse towards benefitting society."[463] Xu likewise argued that scholars studied the ways of kings and emperors without knowing how to put it into practice. It should not come as a surprise that Xu Wei took Wang Yangming's career as an activist scholar and military leader as an example.[464] Like Qi Jiguang, he also claimed sagehood was in

[461] Fitzpatrick, "Local Interests and the Anti-Pirate Administration," 9-10, 16.
[462] Martin W. Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 54-55.
[463] Edward Isaac Luper, "Muddy Waters: Political Tensions and Identity in the Writings of Xu Wei (1521-1593)" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2015), 44.
[464] Idem, 43-47.

theory accessible to all, including those with martial pursuits: "[…] the doctors of horses, makers of sauce, and those starting to master a foot-long club and small arms, all are sages."[465] He actively mingled with hereditary military officers like Qi Jiguang, who in turn became patrons of his art.[466]

Another famous writer and *mufu*-member was Zhejiang's Mao Kun 茅坤 (1512-1601), who was knowledgeable about military matters and probably aligned to the *xinxue*-orientation. He belonged to a wider literary current that advocated Tang-Song prose in opposition to the rigid ancient pre-, and early Han prose forms advocated by the archaists. Under influence of *xinxue* this group valued the independence of their own subjectivity, rejected conventions, and adopted unassuming and plain language approaching that of the common people.[467] Mao Kun was the ancestor of Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594-1640), the author of the largest Chinese military encyclopaedia published in pre-modern times, the *Wubeizhi* 武備志.[468] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾 (1505–80), from Nan Zhili, was a cartographer and military strategists who was a follower of both Zhan Ruoshui and Wang Yangming. He would later play a key role in the compilation of the statecraft activities undertaken by Hu Zongxian and his staff to suppress the Wokou.[469] Rounding off this list of five, are Tang Shu 唐樞 (1497-1574) and Tian Rucheng 田汝成 (fl. 1526), both hailing from Zhejiang. Tang Shu was a follower of Zhan Ruoshui, who was later also influenced by Wang Yangming's philosophy. Tian Rucheng served as an official in Guangxi and Guangdong, and had experience with suppressing aboriginal disturbances. He wrote extensively on his experiences with the hereditary *tusi* and advocated a stronger state presence in the southwestern frontier areas of Guangxi and Guangdong. He also disagreed with Wang Yangming's strategy of appeasement for he believed more in a coercive policy of suppression. Despite this disagreement he was among Wang's disciples at a memorial service in 1543 on the occasion of his death.[470]

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[465] Idem, 49.
[466] Ryor, "*Wen* and *Wu* in Elite Cultural Practices," 221.
[467] Zhang Mengxin 张梦新, *Mao Kun yanjiu* 茅坤研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 87.
[468] E-tu Zen Sun, "MAO Yüan-i," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Volume 1*, edited by L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1053-1054.
[469] Stanley Y.C. Huang, "CHENG Jo-tseng," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 204-208; Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 1; 205
[470] John E. Herman, "The Cant of Conquest: Tusi Offices and China's Political Incorporation of the Southwest Frontier," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, edited by Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2006), 142; Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1456; Wolfgang Franke and L. Carrington Goodrich, "T'IEN Ju-cheng," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-*

Hu Zongxian's *mufu* seems to have generated a strong attraction to literati who wished to engage in martial activities. Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (1500-1582), the purported writer of the famous Ming dynasty novel *Journey to the West* (*Xiyou ji* 西游記), which narrates the journey of Tang dynasty Buddhist monk to India, shared the same aspiration, but in the end he did not follow through with it. Like Xu Wei, Wu Cheng'en encountered difficulties navigating the upper levels of the examination system. Interestingly, Wu was in close contact with many *xinxue* adherents like Wan Biao, Luo Hongxian and Hu Zongxian himself.[471]

An even stronger *xinxue*-influence can be detected amongst the officials in Hu Zongxian's *mufu*, three of six were adherents of Yangming-philosophy. One of them was Tang Shunzhi, whom we already met above. Ruan E, who was manoeuvred in the Grand Coordinator vacancy of Zhejiang by Zhao Wenhua, was a second important player. Ruan E was a student of Ouyang De and he was known for his strategic prowess.[472] The third was Hu Song 胡松 (1503-1566), who, together with Hu Zongxian, was busy compiling and publishing Wang Yangming's collected writings during this period of Wokou disturbances.[473] For those officials and non-officials in Hu Zongxian's *mufu* that I have not been able to identify as *xinxue*-adherrents I have also not been able to find evidence pointing in the opposite direction, i.e. that they were were definitely not followers of either Zhan Ruoshui or Wang Yangming. It is thus possible that these ideological commitments were shared to an even greater extent.

Modern scholars have not noticed these interpersonal connections between the campaigns of Wang Yangming and Hu Zongxian. Some seventeenth century Ming writers were, however, aware of the influence of Wang Yangming's military ideas on Hu Zongxian. There are four prefaces extant of Wang's commentary on the military classics written by Hu Zongxian, Mao Zhendong 茅震東 (dates unknown), Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633) and Sun Yuanhua 孫元化

1644, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1286-1288; Yao Caigang 姚才刚, "Ganquan houxue Tang Shu "tao zhenxin" shuo shenxi" 甘泉后学唐枢 "讨真心" 说探析, *Zhexue yuntai* 哲学动态 1 (2016): 52-57.

[471] Xue Mei 薛梅, "Wu Cheng'en yu xinxue renwu jiaoyou kaozheng" 吳承恩与心學人物交游考证, *Hubei daxue xuebao* 湖北大学学报 35.2 (2008): 81-82.

[472] Chen Jiru 陳繼儒. *Chen Meigong quanji* 陳眉公全集, *volume 38* (SKJHCK), 12; Alison Hardie, "Self-representation in the Dramas of Ruan Dacheng (1587-1646)," in *Writing Lives in China, 1600-2010: Histories of the Elusive Self*, edited by Marjorie Dryburgh and Sarah Dauncey (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 75.

[473] Cai Shumin 蔡淑閔, "Yangming xuepai zhi jianli yu fazhan" 陽明學派之建立與發展, in *Zhongguo wenxue zhi xueli yu yingyong – Ming Qing yuyan yu wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui*, edited by Department of Applied Chinese, Ming Chuan University (Taipei: Department of Applied Chinese, Ming Chuan University, 2011), 267-270.

(1582-1632).[474] Mao Zhendong is an obscure figure who was possibly related to Mao Kun and Mao Yuanyi. Xu Guangqi and his disciple Sun Yuanhua are two well-known Christian converts who were both engaged with military statecraft solutions during the dynasty's problematic encounter with the Manchu in the seventeenth century.[475] All four preface writers valued Wang's commentary greatly, and Sun Yuanhua's in particular highlights the text's continued relevance for the troubled seventeenth century:

> Thereupon I contemplated Wencheng's [Wang Yangming] punitive campaign against the revolt of the fiefdom [belonging to the Prince of Ning] and the pacification of troublesome bandits at that time, which led to his official honours filling [i.e. being known] heaven and earth and his wisdom and resourcefulness being considered the best within the army. All of this, however, came from the leftover threads [expression of modesty] of this treatise and indeed its casual implementation. Then afterwards Mister Xiangmao [Hu Zongxian] put to death Xu Hai and captured Wang Zhi. Those many intensely contending with Wencheng, how could they know that he [Hu Zongixan] did not "get inspired" by this treatise? I then desired to request it and read it, but many times it was not allowed: "Eminent senior official mister Lumen [Mao Kun] and mister Xiangmao were successful civil service examination candidates of the same year and were amicable towards one another. When they went into the tent [of a commanding officer] they approved of the stratagems and plans and achieved them. They have been passed down to the present for four generations, but they warned each other that it was a secret that could not be shown to people." I say: "No! No! At present the troubles of Liaodong [with the Manchu] have not ceased and the misfortunes of Sichuan [the peasant rebellions] are also ubiquitous. The concerned authorities wish they could rise up mister Wencheng and mister Xiangmao from their graves and employ them. But the two gentlemen cannot be regained, yet fortunately the secret teachings of the two gentlemen exist, so that they can be widely disseminated. We have to read the treatise and then follow these men - Wencheng will not have died in the past and Xiangmao will again be seen in the present."
>
> 因思文成當年討逆藩，平劇寇，功名蓋天地，智略冠三軍，不過出此編之緒餘而小試之耳。即厥後襄懋公誅徐海、擒汪直，幾與文成爭烈者，亦安知不從此編得力哉？余遂欲請而讀之，生生不許，曰："先大夫鹿門先生與襄懋公同榜，相友善，入其帳中讚謀畫而得此，傳至今四世矣，相誡秘不人。"予曰："否！否！方今遼事未息，川禍又遍，當局者恨不能起文成、襄懋兩公於九泉而用之，然兩公

[474] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1604-1608.

[475] Yi-long Huang, "Sun Yuanhua: A Christian Convert Who Put Xu Guangqi's Military Reform Policy into Practice," in *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-Cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)*, edited by Catherine Jami, Peter Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 225-262.

不可得，猶幸之兩公秘授在，則廣傳之，未必無讀其書即繼其人者，而文成不死於昔，襄懋再見於今也。”[476]

Morbid overtones aside, the recognition of Wang Yangming's military ideas and their successful implementation beyond his own times lingered on in the waning years of the empire. Of note was the secrecy surrounding Wang's commentary alluded to by Sun Yuanhua, which could point out the continuing attempts by the state to control such knowledge. This would then in turn highlight the importance of military knowledge exchange networks like the one studied in the ninth chapter in the formulation of new military ideas. On the other hand, it could also be a literary flourish to increase the cultural capital attached to the possession of such a commentary by a well-known Neo-Confucian thinker.

There are hints that the campaigns of 1529, 1531, and 1547 had connections with Wang Yangming's movement. A Wang Yaofeng shows up with Tian Rucheng at the same memorial service of 1543.[477] Hu Lian was a teacher of Zou Shouyi, who prepared him for the provincial examinations.[478] The evidence is strongest in the case of Zhu Wan. His career showed many similarities with Wang's: he suppressed bandits and was involved with military defence and aboriginal affairs in Sichuan province. Zhu's collected writings were prefaced by Huang Wan 黃綰 (1480-1554), a direct follower of Wang from Zhejiang. Huang Wan also wrote a preface for Wang's collected works. Huang Wan praises Zhu in his preface for the latter's self-discipline and Roland Higgins argues that Zhu Wan's behaviour was in line with Wang's philosophy.[479] In contrast, of Hu Zongxian's immediate predecessors, Zhang Jing, Zhou Tong and Yang Yi, I could find no links with *xinxue*. Neither did Hu's patrons Yan Song or Zhao Wenhua seem to belong to a *xinxue*-movement. Why, then, did they extend their patronage to Hu? I posit that Hu Zongxian brought something new to the table during his campaign: a network of literati – both in and out of office - with a relatively uniform ideological commitment. An ideological commitment that attracted men of dual *wen* and *wu* competencies, the kind of official the empire needed in the south at this juncture. These men, more likely than not, all consciously followed the model of combined

[476] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1606.
[477] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1455.
[478] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 50-51.
[479] Higgins, "Piracy and Coastal Defense," 155-156.

civil and military excellency that Wang Yangming's life offered, and were influenced by his form of Neo-Confucianism, which was undoubtedly in no small measure indebted to Wang's famous military exploits for its quick and largescale dissemination among civil and military elites alike. I will now turn to the impact of this network on Qi Jiguang's burgeoning career at the south-eastern coast.

Chapter 7 – *Xinxue* and Qi Jiguang

Thoughts at the mountain pass temple

The sagely government of the present day extends across Heaven and Earth,
this precipitous high hill for what reason is it still named a border pass?
During my journey I wear a scarf and blanket which feel thin because of the autumn cold,
under the moon the meditation clock enters my dreams.
Cold water winding in small streams make a sound by the ancient trees,
fine mists are broken by daybreak and completely clears the mountains.
All my life passing flocks of gulls ridiculed me,
a single piece of sole loyalty with greying hair on both temples.

關嶺寺有感

聖治於今天地寬，
危岑何事尚名關。
客中幙被因秋薄，
月下禪鐘入夢間。
寒水遶溪喧古樹，
晴煙破曙滿空山。
平生却遣羣鷗笑，
一片孤忠兩鬢斑。[480]

This poem, probably written by Qi Jiguang in his later life, perhaps during his time of service on the northern frontier from the late 1560s onwards, conveys an image of self-sacrifice and steadfast loyalty in the face of some ridicule. Yet, the reasons for lampooning a military officer for priding himself on loyal service would appear not to be difficult to find in the context of the mid-sixteenth century Ming empire. If not the low esteem accorded the military in many literati writings or the deployment of troops as a cheap manual labour force, then the unequal status vis-à-vis civil officials and the harsh punishments often meted out by the latter to military officials would seem to be important negative incentives to those aiming for a military career.[481] The reality of this state of affairs can be gauged from Grand Secretary Xu Jie's 徐階 (1503-1583), who served during the

[480] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光. *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 10.
[481] Lynn Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644-1662* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984), 2-6.

1550s and 1560s, correspondence with his fellow civil officials. Serving in the influential capacity of personal advisor to the Jiajing emperor, he advised his fellow civil bureaucrats to refrain from overly mistreating their military colleagues during the military crises which faced the empire in the middle of the century. As unearthed by John Dardess, Xu Jie discussed this state of affairs with the emperor:

> The ruler thought it impossible to give the generals complete freedom of action; but if they kept on being humiliated and abused, they couldn't cooperate in the dynasty's defense. […] it's now bookish ex-students who plan and have charge, and they don't produce good results. […] The regional commanders, military men, have regional executive authority, yet the prefectural, subprefectural, and county officials disrespect them. The assistant regional commanders and mobile corps commanders can issue orders, yet the grand coordinator will flog them and yell at them as they kneel, which is too demeaning.[482]

Xu Jie's analysis of the nature of civil-military relations clearly shows the limited authority military officials enjoyed, as well as the intrusions of scholars in their affairs. In addition to this institutionalized abuse of the military by their civil colleagues, the danger of impeachment by the censorial branch of government for reasons of tactical misconduct or deficient training and recruitment practices was another potentially lethal threat.[483]

In this atmosphere of civil dominance and ever-looming maltreatment and punishment, stressing one's loyalty was probably of prime importance for any career-minded officer, who otherwise must have felt quite vulnerable and alone in the line of service. Indeed, one of the most recent extensive treatments of Qi's career in a western scholarly language even carries the title *Ch'i Chi-kuang, the lonely general*. This chapter-length exposition by Ray Huang dating back to 1981, starts off by taking Qi's miserable fate after an exceptionally successful career as a rather poignant example of a more general misère surrounding military personnel trying to attend to their duties surrounded by a civil bureaucracy which operated according to principles often detrimental to the military profession. According to Ray Huang, the military by its nature had to rely on certain strategies none of which "[…] could have met with the approval of civil officials preoccupied with the dogmas of restraint and moderation, and whose sense of history, virtually timeless as it was,

[482] Dardess, *A Political Life in Ming China*, 74-75, 98-99.
[483] Charles O. Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), 75-81.

made them most reluctant to accept the merit of any drastic action based on physical force, which to them led only to temporary and localized gains."[484]

Yet, as I will argue in this chapter, Huang presents a too monolithic interpretation of the civil bureaucracy's attitudes towards their military colleagues and Qi Jiguang was also not as lonely as he fashions himself in his poem. The image of the solitary loyal subject serving the empire on its borders was after all something of an important trope in (late) Ming frontier poetry, one that was shared by many military and civil officials serving on the outer edges who took the time to convert their experiences into literary self-fashioning. The frontier was a place where martial and official identities almost naturally tended to coalesce, and as I will argue below, this was especially true during the sixteenth century. The frontier was the outer rim and at the same time a contested zone where empires almost always had to stake their claims, and military force was an essential part of any imperial toolbox.

The central contention of this chapter will be that Qi Jiguang built his career in exactly this setting of a contested frontier, and that he succeeded by building this career on personal ties with civil bureaucrats, in contradiction to his self-fashioned loneliness. Central to this building of personal ties was a shared ideological commitment, which accommodated affinity with martial identities and new notions of friendship. I will contend that Qi Jiguang managed to benefit from the appearance of the more inclusive Neo-Confucianism expounded by Wang Yangming and his followers, which decentered the literati as the sole bearers of cultured learning and opened the gates to participants from other social groups. The phenomenon of Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianism leading to a lowering of social boundaries has, for example, already been noted in the context of merchant activities,[485] but it remains unexplored in the case of the empire's hereditary military. Furthermore, this Neo-Confucian reinterpretation partially appeared in the context of (military) activism during inter-ethnic frontier conflicts, which would provide an attractive exemplar for identity and conduct during the sixteenth century. Below I will first present the evidence that Qi Jiguang was indeed a follower of Wang Yangming's *xinxue*, and second, show how Qi used this *xinxue* to bridge *wen* and *wu* and legitimate the military profession against the

[484] Huang, *1587,* 156-157.
[485] See for example: Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 32.

backdrop of Neo-Confucian moral philosophy. Moreover, I will highlight the significance of Qi's engagement with Hu Zongxian's *xinxue* network for the advancement of his career.

Qi Jiguang's Ideas

The activist reinterpretation of the ideology by Wang Yangming - achieving fame due in no small part to his successful functioning as a military commander in several campaigns - seems to have returned the military profession to the gaze of at least some of the scholarly elites and civil officials. Yet, little research has been done on the role of hereditary military officers within this *xinxue*-philosophy. Qi's engagement with Yangming learning is confirmed by the introduction written by Qi's son for his father's *nianpu*, a genre containing a chronological reckoning of Qi's life and career:

> His appearance was dignified, his bearing was clear and embellished, he had a prominent nose and a square chin, the sound of his voice carried far, his disposition was composed, he had magnanimity, and he had full abilities in both *wen* and *wu*. He untiringly turned his filial piety [to his family] into his faithfulness [to the dynasty]; he did not manage his family members' livelihoods and he happily engaged himself with the classics. He was especially good at poetry and writing classical Chinese prose; he was an indirect [i.e. he did not learn from Wang Yangming himself] follower of Yangming and he greatly expounded innate knowing of the good. In his heart, he was transparently clear as if he was pure and chaste, and he took command of the refined and the vulgar having a Confucian's spirit and appearance.
> 狀貌莊嚴，丰神朗潤，隆準方頤，聲語洪遠，資性沉毅，有大度，具文武全才，孜孜以孝爲忠;不治家人生業，喜事經書，尤長詩翰古文;私淑陽 明，大闡良知，胸中澄徹如冰壺秋月，坐鎮雅俗有儒者氣象. [486]

From this quote, we can see that Qi Jiguang, according to his son, was indeed a follower of Yangming's philosophy, possessed civil and martial talents, and behaved like a Confucian in his dealings with other people in the course of his official career.

As we have seen in the second chapter, the emerging Neo-Confucian movement of the southern Song distanced itself more and more from military affairs during the thirteenth century and its members focused mainly on philosophical pursuits. An important part of the reason may

[486] Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 1-2.

have been the need of the movement to cultivate a certain identity vis-a-vis contending interpretations of Confucianism in the empire. For them it was important to communicate to the world that the career path in service of the bureaucracy was subordinate to a quest for moral perfection and even sagehood. With the movement's path towards ideological hegemony, it probably also discouraged those genuinely inclined towards Confucianism to build a career on such pragmatic statecraft-derived pursuits as military merit. As Fang Cheng-hua has argued, in the course of late Song history those literati who had come to rely on military exploits as a gateway to a successful career found themselves increasingly struggling to reconcile this fact with the changing requirements of a legitimate Confucian identity.[487] This divergence between military action and literati lifestyles would persist in the Yuan dynasty, when Mongol rule mostly disenfranchised them from active participation. What had changed then by the sixteenth century that a hereditary officer like Qi Jiguang felt emboldened to dabble in *daoxue* and seek recognition as a sage, defying the opinion of one of the most influential Neo-Confucians of them all? It was Zhu Xi himself after all who had contended that the military officers should be discouraged from pursuing the path of sagely learning and instead focus on their martial calling in service of the polity. I posit that the explanation can be sought in the ideological openness and social flexibility of the budding Yangming movement and its reinterpretation of Neo-Confucianism.

To start with this advantage of social flexibility, I will elucidate Qi Jiguang's background and explain why *xinxue* could be attractive to a scion of a relatively poor hereditary military family growing up during the socio-economic conditions of the mid-Ming. The shift from hereditary military garrison supported by agricultural colonies to a system where officers turned into landowners with their own force of personal retainers from the mid-fifteenth century onwards has only been traced in detail for certain northern regions like Liaodong, a region where in any case officers enjoyed more freedom from government intervention and continuity in their posts because of the high-risk nature of the frontier. Qi Jiguang himself was born into the household of a hereditary military officer as well, and was chosen to follow in his father footsteps. His father's garrison was located in Dengzhou 登州 (modern-day Penglai 蓬萊), a city in the province of Shandong, an area which interestingly neither really belonged to the northern frontier, nor should be seen as part of the south-eastern coastal littoral. Shandong was an "in-between" province of

[487] Fang, "Junwu yu ruye de maodun," 36-51.

sorts and in the sixteenth century Qi Jiguang was drawn into the conflicts originating on both frontiers. In 1550 he was involved in the defence of Beijing against a Mongol raid launched by Altan Khan (1507-1582) and his successful efforts won him praise and he was noted as a talent by some in the ranks of the civil bureaucracy.[488] Before that he had been suppressing piracy along the coast of Shandong. In short: he had had experience with both kinds of frontier problems in the course of his early career, a factor which might explain his later successes at both frontiers. Through Qi Jiguang's writing we can get a sense of the social circumstances pertaining to the hereditary military households in Shandong and his views on the acquisition of landed estates by some members of the hereditary officer class in the mid-to-late sixteenth century. Qi describes himself as originating from a rather impoverished military family, not even possessing a cart drawn by horses for transportation.[489] If honest in this depiction of himself and his family's economic conditions, it seems that not all hereditary military officers were able to transform themselves into wealthy landholders by as late as the mid-sixteenth century.

In a passage that was published in his literary collection titled *Zhizhitang Ji* Qi makes the following somewhat bitter observation concerning his colleagues and contemporaries:

> Those of this generation serving as warriors accumulate gold and silk, extend their lands and residences, and have extravagant official honours. They protect their heads and necks and from time to time migrate [i.e. abandon their official posts]. Nowadays people call them the most intelligent. Making the utmost mental and physical effort when attending to one's official duties - doing all one can – and amidst fortune and misfortune being committed to the people while good luck is not in step [with this]; for sake of the empire forsaking one's family while nobility cannot be conferred, and with certainty becoming a deceased person worshipped for some time in a temple: nowadays people call them the most stupid. […] Shall I act intelligently? People desire this, but my heart-mind's conscious does not desire this. Shall I act stupidly? My heart-mind desires it, but people do not commend it. I have no choice and would rather not violate my heart-mind; is this acting stupidly? Stupid and also foolish? I should be called "the stupid foolish master". I have accepted the wisdom of that which I chose.
>
> 世之為武夫者，積金帛，廣田宅， 侈功名，保首領，與時遷移，今人謂之上智。竭心力，治職事，盡其在我，利鈍付人，時運不齊，為國忘家，不能封侯，必期廟食，今人謂之下愚。[...] 吾將為

[488] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 22-24.
[489] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 127.

> 智乎?人欲之，而吾心之知不欲也。吾將為愚乎？ 吾心欲之，而人不與也。必不得已，吾寧無違吾心，其為愚乎?愚而又愚乎？宜號曰“愚愚子″。吾儕當知所擇矣。[490]

Important to point out in this quote is Qi Jiguang's obedience to his heart-mind. This coupled with his wish to suppress his desires gives us a hint that the general shaped his moral beliefs according to Neo-Confucian doctrine, and Wang Yangming's ideology in particular. Obedience to innate moral intuition and a suppression of selfish desires were thus rhetorical tools Qi appropriated in order to distance himself from his self-serving colleagues and gain a veneer of respectability. But who was the intended audience for this display of Neo-Confucian frugality? I posit that this was the Neo-Confucian literati themselves. The above quoted statement seems like an attempt of Qi to declare his allegiance to the Neo-Confucian "project" and a conscious distancing from corrupt inherited military practices.

How could this revamped Neo-Confucianism be used to vindicate a military man's position within the imperial Chinese polity? Here I would argue that the appeal of Wang Yangming and *xinxue* in general extended beyond the exemplary function of Wang himself, but had a close relationship with the contents of the philosophy itself. The *xinxue* program "democratized" the ideal of sagehood, something admitted by Wang Yangming himself who stated that people with occupational backgrounds could aspire to be sages. This was an attractive ideal in a society which saw rapid socio-economic changes in addition to demographic growth. One such a group was the merchant class, a group whose profession was often disdained by Confucians. Merchants, whose numbers and importance in society grew, could now turn to Wang Yangming's ideas to claim moral respectability for themselves. Wang Daokun for example, a civil bureaucrat and scion of a merchant family, was greatly influenced by Wang's ideas and became in the word of one scholar an "apologist" for the merchant profession.[491] Wang Daokun was perhaps not entirely by accident also one of Qi Jiguang's closest friends.

Significant in the context of Ming civil-military relations was the fact that Qi Jiguang tried to use Wang Yangming's ideas to legitimate the *métier* of military men within the empire. In my view, this appropriation of Wang's ideas by Qi shows the suitability of this revamped Neo-

[490] Idem, 245-246.
[491] Qitao Guo, *Ritual Opera and Mercantile Lineage: The Confucian Transformation of Popular Culture in Late Imperial Huizhou* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005), 42-44, 48.

Confucianism for building a bridge between *wen* and *wu*, in contrast to the older Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy. I will further show that the significance of this bridge extended far beyond the singular example of Qi Jiguang, as it was grasped by other *xinxue*-adherrents as well. An intriguing passage in Qi's literary collection *Zhizhitang Ji* shows how he benefitted from the democratization of sagehood to legitimize the use of force and the military profession, and I contend that part of the explanation should be sought by considering the implications of this philosophical discourse derived from *xinxue*:

> Master Sun Wu's [Sunzi] *Art of War*'s prose and meaning are both refined. Even if a sage uses soldiers, there lies no wrongdoing in this. It is not [that it is] not good, but in the end [it] is not ranked as Confucian. Let's suppose that someone is a sage and this man uses Sun Wu's methods. The *Military Classics* will then have a sage's implementation. Suppose you read the *Six Classics*, recite them and serve as a sage, but in your behaviour you ridicule and feign [the *Six Classics*], then the *Six Classics* will be [the same as] Sun Wu. On the contrary, what do you think of this person, the one using them? Therefore, owing to these variations in applying knowledge, if it lies with the gentleman, then it is called implementing rightful authority and if it lies with a vile person, then it is called implementing skills. The knowledge is the same, but the gentleman and the vile person for this reason differ. Why? Presumably if you follow the establishment of your heart-mind with non-rectification, from this difference it will manifests itself. How very strange!
> 孫武子《兵法》，文義兼美，雖聖賢用兵，無過於此。非不善也，而終不列之儒。設使聖賢，其人用孫武之法，《武經》即聖賢之作用矣。苟讀《六經》，誦服聖賢，而行則狙詐，《六經》即孫武矣。顧在用之者，其人何如耳。故因變用智，在君子則謂之行權，在小人則謂之行術。均一智也，而君子、小人所以分者，何也？蓋由立心不正，則發之自異耳。奚足怪哉![492]

According to this segment, there was nothing wrong or a-moral with *wu*-related activities as long as a sage implemented them. Military strategic thinking like that of Sunzi, often criticized for being immoral by Neo-Confucians like Zhu Xi, was just as virtuous (or rather a-moral) as the Confucian classics. The morality did not lie in the texts themselves, but in the action of those who employed it. If a sage engaged in military action guided by the military classics, then by its very nature it was a morally virtuous and legitimate action. Furthermore, reciting the Confucian classics did not automatically make one a virtuous person either. The moral authority shifted thus from the text itself to the moral agency of the person using it, an important consequence of *xinxue* as discussed in chapter four. It is unknown if Qi Jiguang used Sunzi's ideas on deception on the battlefield like

[492] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 262.

Wang Yangming did in deceiving the Prince of Ning his army was near. However, in a memorial Qi Jiguang defended the actions of a subordinate officer who had ignored the orders of a civil official. Using Sunzi's notion that a ruler should not interfere with the work of a military commander once he was active on the battlefield, Qi Jiguang defended the apparent disobedience of his military protégé.[493] This was a far-reaching acceptance of one of Sunzi's most controversial positions in the eyes of many Confucians. The justification for Sunzi for a military commander to refuse interference from a ruler was based on "[…] a claim for the existence of an extraordinary military realm, where the moral will of the emperor, the regular ethical values of society, as well as the normal bonds of duties and responsibilities that upheld the social hierarchy could be abandoned and where the authority of the military commander was supreme."[494] Within the framework of Wang Yangming's ideas, Qi Jiguang was thus able to reconcile Sunzi with his Neo-Confucian identity and defend the autonomy of the military vis-à-vis the civil bureaucracy.

Nor was Qi Jiguang the only one who reappreciated Strategist writers like Sunzi in light of Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianism. This positive re-evaluation of the worth of the military classics can also be traced in the writings of another follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy, Hu Zhi 胡直 (1517-1585), a student of both Luo Hongxian and Ouyang De:[495]

> I once sighed forlornly that the ancient military administrative *Methods of the Sima* was not passed on, and Sun [Wu] and Wu [Qi] were only used to debate deception and to insistently state the *Military Classics* were not kingly [i.e. according to Confucian notions of benevolent rule] and appropriate to use. There was an elder who said with a smile: "You are no different. Well now, the *Tradition of the Changes* [a treatise elucidating the classic the *Book of Changes*, attributed to Confucius] warns against paying no attention to great affairs, and Confucius esteemed good stratagems that have success. The military puts stress on planning victory and puts little worth on planning not to be victorious, this even the Yellow Emperor and the Taigong were not able to go against, how much more is it so for later generations? Just at the moment of a plunder attack of treacherous barbarians, […] the ones commanding the troops have no unconventional plans and secret designs to achieve victory over the enemy. Thus saying "I act according to the kingly way" [Confucian benevolent government], this is largely inhumane. The difference of Sun [Wu] and Wu [Qi] to the Yellow Emperor and the Taigong was not a difference of their methods, but a difference of their heart-minds. The

[493] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Qi Shaobao zouyi* 戚少保奏議 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 78-79.
[494] Ven, "Introduction," 7-8.
[495] D.W.Y. Kwok, "HU Chih," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 624-625.

> difference between the public and the selfish of the heart-mind corresponds to the difference of the ways between the [virtuous] king and [unvirtuous] overlord, so how will you be able to dispose of the method?"
> 直嘗慨古軍政”司馬法”不傳， 而孫, 吳獨以辯譎徼稱”武經”，非王者宜用． 有長老先生哂曰: “子無異也．夫”易傳”戒機事不密，孔子貴好謀有成．兵家多算勝，少算不勝，此雖黃帝，太公不能違也，而況後世乎? 方猾夷之剽攻，巨盜之盤噬，［…］而將兵者不有奇算密畫以取勝敵，乃曰我為王道，是不仁之大也．黃帝，太公之異孫，吳，非異其法，異其心也．心之公私，即道之王伯分焉，子惡得廢其法乎?”[496]

Central to Hu Zhi's argument in favour of the worth of the *Seven Military Classics* was the validity of their stratagems and methods once they were applied by persons with the right heart-mind. The methods advocated by the military classics were not to be construed as being contrary to Confucian notions of kingship, as even such paragons of virtue as the Yellow Emperor, the Taigong and Confucius - sages from the remote past – were implied by Hu Zhi to have used them if the need had arisen, in order to protect the people. It would have been inhumane not to use these methods, if the result would have been an inadequate military response. This view on the morality of using the classics contrasts with the more cautious views of Neo-Confucians who stood more in the Cheng-Zhu tradition. In the seventeenth century, a scholar named Lu Shiyi 陸世儀 (1611-1672) for example had the following reservations about using the *Seven Military Classics* as part of the military examination system:

> *Sunzi*, *Wuzi*, *Methods of the Sima*, etc. of the *Seven Books*, generations have called them the *Military Classics*. Undoubtedly, the experts discussing the military shall nearly put them on par with the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*. This is entirely mistaken. Of the *Seven Books,* only the *Methods of the Sima* approaches orthodoxy. Even if the *Sunzi* evaluates deception, those who study military matters still also have to exhaust the variations of military matters [i.e. study every aspect] after rectifying the techniques of their heart-minds. As for the *Wuzi*, it is base, and the remaining, like *Weiliao*, are profoundly coarse and rough. The *Six Secret Teachings*, *Three Strategies* and the *Questions and Replies of Duke Wei* all are forgeries and are all not worth looking at, but later generations' decrees have commanded to take them and examine the military officers [with them]. Is this appropriate? Amongst the military officers there are no [real/accomplished] men.
>
> The primary taboo when it comes to [training] military officials is to harm their techniques of the heart-mind through education. If their techniques of the heart-mind are incorrect, then the more they are used, the less

[496] Hu Zhi 胡直, *Hu Zhi ji* 胡直集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), 166.

useful they are. Using the *Seven Military Classics* in examining military officials is [exactly] harming their techniques of the heart-mind.

孫吳司馬法等七書，世謂之武經．蓋談兵之家幾以之配四書五經矣．此大謬不然．七書中惟司馬法近正．《孫子》雖權譎，然學兵者，心術既正之後，亦不可不盡兵之變。至《吳子》，則淺矣，其餘若《尉繚》甚粗畧．《六韜》、《三畧》、《衛公問答》皆偽書，皆無足觀，而後世功令率以之課武弁. 宜乎？武弁中無人也.

武臣第一不可，教壞他心術。若心術不正，愈有用，愈不可用。課武臣而以武經七書，教壞他心術矣.[497]

For Lu Shiyi, the morality seems to lie more in the writings themselves, and he was wary of advocating their use as examination materials for military officers. Even for persons who had morally rectified their intentions, military classics like *Sunzi's Art of War* would be difficult to use. Lu seems to imply that even a person with a rectified heart-mind would need to exhaustively study different possible military scenarios in order to know when deception would be appropriate to use. In addition, they were a moral danger to officers who had not inoculated themselves against their inappropriate methods by way of Confucian conditioning.

Another seventeenth-century literatus in the Cheng-Zhu tradition with objections to the moral content of the Strategists was Zhang Lüxing 張履祥 (1611-1674) from Zhejiang province. He even criticized Wang Yangming using their ideas: "When Yangming used the army he often used deceptive schemes to gain victory, but Confucians do not act like this." 陽明用兵多以詐謀取勝，儒者不為也.[498] Zhang was an ardent critic of Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming's philosophies, who thought both tended to produce arrogant and deceitful people. Furthermore, the lack of emphasis on external *gewu* was an illegitimate shortcut in the process of moral self-cultivation.[499] Moral subjectivism was thus an important point of Zhang's criticism vis-à-vis *xinxue*.

Especially Lu Shiyi did not entirely contradict the position of Hu Zhi and Qi Jiguang on the uses of the military classics – after all a sage had to go through moral rectification before he

[497] Lu Shiyi 陸世儀, *Si bian lu jiyao* 思辨録輯要, edited by Zhang Boxing 張伯行 (SKQS), 17:1.

[498] Zhao Yuan 赵园, *Zhidu. Yanlun. Xintai – (Ming Qing zhiji shidafu yanjiu) xubian* 制度•言论•心态——《明清之际士大夫研究》续编 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2006), 126.

[499] Zhang Tianjie 张天杰 and Xiao Yongming 宵永明, "Zhang Lüxiang you Wang fan Zhu de xinlu lichen jiqi dui Wangxue de pipan" 张履祥由王返朱的心路历程及其对王学的批判, *Xibei daxue xuebao* 西北大学学报 40.5 (2010): 156-158.

could use them –, but it is notable that both Hu and Qi refrain from ethical criticism of the methods advocated in works like the *Wuzi*. Qi Jiguang even regards them as no different from the Confucian *Six Classics*, a position frowned upon by Lu Shiyi.[500] A scholar like Lu was not disinclined towards military activities; a biography notes that he studied martial arts.[501] However, it seems the case that the moral subjectivity of the Wang Yangming-school had the potential to legitimate a wider variety of possible military methods and activities. I argue that these new attitudes towards the military canon constitute one manifestation of a "liberating effect" of *xinxue* at work vis-à-vis martial activities, which no doubt had positive consequences for the relationship between Neo-Confucian scholar-officials and the military branch of Ming government. It can be assumed that these new attitudes also legitimated the engagement with military thought by Neo-Confucian scholars, and I hold that this can therefore provide an explanation the close connection between military activism and the new Neo-Confucian ideology.

Qi Jiguang's Career: *Xinxue* in Practice

Qi Jiguang manifested Wang Yangming's philosophy in the midst of his military career as well, at least if we can believe the narration of his son in his chronological biography. He related an event that purportedly happened during Qi's service in the south, when he was engaged in quelling the Wokou disturbances. Qi Jiguang was just crossing the Zhejiang frontier into Fujian and met two literati, whom I have not been able to identify:

> The 26th the day of wushen (8-9th month) he took a shortcut into Fujian from Pingyang, and around this time Tu Zhongwei and Ye Buyi were debating correct quietude and discussing innate knowledge of the good. They had never experienced talking with a soldier. Regarding soldiers' conduct, they were familiar with their ways. Master Ye marvelled at them and inquired: "How do you achieve not having distracting thoughts?" My father said: "Thoughts are not allowed to arise." Ye again asked: "How do you have time for quietude?" My father said: "You consider the time of quiet sitting as quietude? If you consider this quietude,

[500] Lin Cunyang 林存阳, "Lu Shiyi zhixue quxiang yu dui li de tiren" 陆世仪治学取向与对礼的体认, *Liaocheng daxue xuebao* 聊城大学学报 1 (2002): 66-67.
[501] Rufus O. Sutur, "LU Shih-i," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, Volume 1 A-O*, edited by Arthur W. Hummel (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 548.

then at the time you encounter stimuli, where does the quietude go? I do all day long, one after the other, and I dare not give rise to loathing on account of my exhaustion. I merely perceive achieving activity and quietude as not being two [separate] conditions. For example, during battle, I merely know that exterminating bandits is my task, so again, how can I leisurely and at ease contemplate? If you cause yourself to be moved by distracting thoughts, then you become flustered, and I am for this reason without fear and hence each time I am effective.

二十六日戊申，自平陽　從間道入閩，比時途中惟與葉布衣論正静，講良知，未嘗言兵。兵之行止，悉中規矩，葉子奇之，曰：“得無有雜念　乎?”家嚴曰：“念不可起。”葉又曰：“静時如何?”曰：“君認默坐時爲静乎？若以是爲静，則遇感應時静着何處？予　終日紛紛，不敢起憎厭與勞倦，只見得動、静無二境。譬之臨陣時，止知剿賊爲務，又何暇易慮？使雜念一動，便即張皇，予所以無懼而輒效者，以此也.”[502]

It seems that Tu Zhongwei and Ye Buyi were surprised that a military man like Qi was able to reconcile Neo-Confucian moral self-cultivation with a military lifestyle. How could one achieve a calm nature in the midst of the battlefield? The key, according to Qi, was (echoing Wang Yangming's ideas on the subject narrated in chapter four) that one should remain calm irrespective of external activities or non-activities, and this means the heart-mind should be calm. No matter whether one engaged in meditation, or a military campaign, in both instances one should not be aroused and preserve a calm nature. This is in line with Wang's philosophy, with posits that a calm heart-mind was necessary for *liangzhi* to be discerned and successfully extended.

Qi's son perhaps included this anecdote to show his father was sincerely putting Wang's philosophy into practice, and lecturing literati about it for good measure. We have seen that Qi Jiguang had already served on the northern frontier against the Mongols, and accrued experiences against pirates at the coastal areas of his native province of Shandong. In the course of the 1520s coastal disturbances started to undermine the stability of the south-eastern coastal areas, including those of the Southern Metropolitan province, Zhejiang, and Fujian. In the 1550s and 1560s these disturbances would reach their climax as the Wokou crisis, which would see pirate raids reaching overland into Jiangxi and spreading southward along the coast to Guangdong. The immediate cause of this unrest could perhaps be sought in a government crackdown on the hitherto relatively relaxed tribute trade, which under the Zhengde emperor had been allowed to semi-legally expand beyond its original scope. A number of disturbances caused by Portuguese and Japanese traders

[502] Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 82.

and the succession of Zhengde by the more xenophobic Jiajing emperor eventually caused the suspension of tribute trade and a strict enforcement of the hitherto lax *haijin*. This might have encouraged wealthy Chinese merchants to renege on debts accrued with Japanese, who as a result tried to collect their outstanding debts by force. Another result of the renewed enforcement of *haijin* was the metaphorical throwing of a lit match into a dry haystack. As we have seen in chapter two, demographic growth and the resultant pressure on landed resources had made much of the coastal population dependent on trade, smuggling, and fishery. These disadvantages groups now all had no choice but to turn to illicit activities to provide in their livelihoods. Contemporary Ming observers therefore already knew Wokou were no longer Japanese by majority, but mostly Chinese combined with other foreign groups dependent on trade with China, like Ryukyans. In time these would coalesce in armed bands who raided coastal settlements and even inland areas like Vikings.[503] In the mid-1550s Qi would become part of the campaign to exterminate these groups. In comparison with Wang's campaigns, therefore, the focus of the military campaigns shifted to the coastal areas of the south-eastern seaboard. Nevertheless, there are signs that the Wokou disturbances coincided with non-maritime incidences of banditry, a phenomenon that has attracted relatively little attention from modern historians. Especially in Fujian, the Wokou raids of the 1550s tended to coincide with coalescing of so-called "mountain bandits" (*shankou* 山寇) in armed bands that rose in revolt. Qi Jiguang's campaigns also aimed to suppress these disruptive elements.[504] I argue that we should see the Wokou crisis of the mid-sixteenth century as part of a continuum of southern violent upheavals stretching across the mid-Ming period. As I shall show below and in the remaining chapters, the failure of the old hereditary military system necessitated the formation of a new combined civil-military elite which had to devise new solutions to this problem, and Wang Yangming and his followers would play an essential role in this process during the first half of the sixteenth century. Qi Jiguang's own career provides strong evidence of the mutual benefits of civil-military *Annäherung* against the backdrop of the *xinxue* network in the process of devising these solutions. A hereditary military official like Qi benefitted from their patronage and protection from impeachments, whilst the civil officials and non-serving literati could make use of the military expertise of a hereditary military official loyal to the Neo-Confucian

[503] Lim, "From *Haijin* to *Kaihai*," 6-11.
[504] Liu, "The World of Rituals," 48.

moral cause. Below I will trace Qi's career and highlight the instances in which it benefitted from interventions by people in the *xinxue* network.

Zhejiang

We can follow the unfolding of Qi's career, as fashioned by Qi himself and his son, in his *nianpu* and a piece of prose writing preserved in his literary collection, titled *Min hai jishi* 閩海紀事 (*Fujian Ocean Chronicle*).[505] The latter text narrates Qi's service from 1555 until 1563. A reading of the important junctures of his career during this time reveals that *xinxue*-adherents were involved in almost all cases. This pattern can only not be proven for the very beginning of his career. Qi Jiguang was dispatched to Zhejiang in 1555 on the basis of a recommendation by two censorial officials, namely He Xi 何熙 (dates unknown) and Yong Chao 雍焯 (dates unknown), whose ideological affiliations I have not been able to ascertain.[506] Qi served for a while as a manager of hereditary military farmland, probably on account of his literacy. After a year he was transferred to a new post in which he was to assume a more active combat posture.

It must have been around this time that we can find the earliest evidence of Qi's involvement in *xinxue*-circles. Although the exact order of events cannot be ascertained, at some point Qi was brought to the attention of Hu Zongxian. This either allowed him to be embedded in Hu's network of officials, or his embeddedness in this network in the first place allowed Qi access to Hu Zongxian. Without exact dating of the passage I will cite below, this chicken-and-the-egg situation might never be resolved, but in any case, the Wang Yangming-network of followers played an important role in his future career. Ivy Maria Lim, based on evidence gathered from Qi Jiguang's *nianpu*, argues that Hu Zongxian already knew Qi in the autumn of 1556, liked him, and promoted him to a higher position within the anti-Wokou military organization. Lim is also of the opinion that the personal relationship between Hu and Qi was important in the formative stages of the latter's career, but she argues that it is hard to ascertain how intimate the two were on a personal level.[507] Qi's adherence to *xinxue*-ideology can thus serve to throw a new light on the constitution of his early career and the important role of connections with civil officials and literati therein. An

[505] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 121-126.
[506] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 24; Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 16.
[507] Ivy Maria Lim, "Qi Jiguang and Hu Zongxian's Anti-*wokou* Campaign," in *The Maritime Defence of China: Ming General Qi Jiguang and Beyond*, edited by Y.H. Teddy Sim (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 34-35, 40-41.

enlightening passage which Julia Ching cited in a biographical sketch of a Ming scholar-official dating from 1976,[508] but which has never shown up in any treatment of Qi Jiguang or the Ming military in general, gives us a treasure trove of information about his early career:

> The gentleman [Qian Dehong] was also good at recognizing a person's abilities. The gentleman told the Minister of War Hu Meilin [Hu Zongxian] who was just then putting remote areas in order: "We must for present times explain military command." He recommended that they read the former master's [Wang Yangming] *Memorials* and *Official communications*. In the 34th year [of the Jiajing reign] [1555] Wonu [`Japanese' pirates] burned and looted the countryside. Zhushan [Qian Dehong] wrote *Discussion about assembling and training village militia* and recommended it. To start with, he recommended disciple-soldiers, present-day Army Commander Qi Jiguang and Commander Liang Shouyu. The soldiers relied on their abilities to achieve great successes. Meilin [Hu Zongxian] thanked the gentleman and said: "At first I suspected your Confucian disciples were not well-versed in military strategy, only afterwards did I recognize the good military command of the officers."
>
> 君善識人, 大司馬胡梅林方尹姚, 君曰:"必爲當今明將." 勸其讀先師《奏疏》、《公移》. 三十四年倭奴焚掠鄉居緒山作《團練鄉兵議》, 以贊成之. 首薦門下士, 今都督戚繼光、總兵梁守愚, 卒賴其力以成大功梅林謝君曰: "始疑公儒門, 不嫻將略, 乃知善將將也". [509]

This quote comes from a biography of Qian Dehong written by his fellow-disciple Wang Ji, who claimed descent from the same ancestor as his master. His own relatively short civil career was spent mostly at the Ministry of War. Intriguingly, one of his sons would choose a military career instead of a civil one, by opting to sit through the military examinations. A sign, perhaps, of the growing significance of the military as an alternative career path within the *xinxue*-movement.[510] Because Hu Zongxian does not seem to know Qi Jiguang during the events narrated by Wang Ji, I hold that this must have taken place sometime in 1555 or 1556, when Qi had just come to the south-eastern coast. This means that Hu Zongxian's cognition of Qi Jiguang can be related, I contend, with Qi's following close association with Wang Yangming-adherrents during his career in the south-east.

Wang Ji's description of his fellow-recruiter's life and work yields many interesting insights, which all shed light on the basis of Qi Jiguang's successful career. First of all, it reveals

[508] Julia Ching, "WANG Chi," 1351-1355.
[509] Wang Ji 王畿, *Wang Ji ji* 王畿集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 591.
[510] Ching, "WANG Chi," 1351-1352.

the fact that Yangming-scholars did in fact have disciples belonging to the hereditary military. That this phenomenon was not limited to Qi is vindicated by the mention of another military officer within the same text. Other research points to the fact that Qian Dehong was not the only follower of Wang with military disciples. Zou Shouyi spread his master's teachings in the capital by making pleas for giving attention to *daoxue* and convening meetings for this same purpose. He also tutored a man named Li Cai 李材 (1529-1606), an ambitious scholar who deliberately sought to model his career on Wang Yangming's and for this reason chose the military profession. Later on, he would take this modelling even one step further and attempt to launch his own reinterpretation of Neo-Confucianism. In this sense he took Hu Zongxian's emulation of Wang even further. Nie Bao brought a military officer of the Embroidered Uniform Guard in the capital to the fold when Nie was serving prison time, and this officer named Dai Chuwang 戴楚望 (dates unknown) was his guard. Dai corresponded with other first-generation followers as well, and tried his best to protect Nie and others in the sometimes-forbidding environment of the capital penitentiary facilities.[511] Another perhaps more famous military disciple was the hereditary officer Wan Biao 萬表 (1497-1556), who associated with Qian Dehong, Wang Ji and Luo Hongxian among others.[512]

Second, Wang Ji's biography of Qian Dehong highlights the relevance of personal connections between officials and non-commissioned scholars in advancing careers. Qian apparently was personally acquainted with Hu Zongxian. Prominent first generation Yangming followers like Zou Shouyi and Qian Dehong were well acquainted, and a disciple like Hu Zongxian serving in powerful government positions offered opportunities to push the career of promising talents (and fellow disciples) like Qi Jiguang. This is an example of shared ideological commitments facilitating networks of patronage within and outside of government service, highlighting the significant role retired officials could play in personnel selection and promotion. This network thus transcended the civil-military binary and offered career opportunities for the hereditary military.

A third point that I would like to raise is the role these networks performed as channels for (military) knowledge circulation, a phenomenon that will be highlighted in the ninth chapter.

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[511] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 58-60.

[512] Lin Shangzhi 林尚志, "Cong wujiang shijia dao xueshu mingzu: Mingdai Zhedong rujiang Wan Biao (1498-1556) zhi yanjiu" 從武將世家到學術名族: 明代浙東儒將萬表 (1498～1556) 之研究 (MA thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2009), 119-140.

With Hu Zongxian's attention successfully drawn, Qi was placed under Grand Coordinator of Zhejiang Ruan E's command, a man we have already met in the context of *xinxue*. Qi would be work together with another hereditary military officer, Yu Dayou 俞大猷 (1503-1579), who was a scion of a Fujianese hereditary military family. Although he did embrace a Neo-Confucian identity, his allegiance was initially with a particular branch of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism originating from Fujian.[513] This branch was known to have held fast to orthodoxy in the face of the popularity of the Wang Yangming-movement during the sixteenth century.[514] There are signs he was positively inclined towards *xinxue*, although he was not always as positive about its followers in his own time. In a letter to a certain Xu Fengzhu, he describes his attitude towards the teachings and latter-day followers of Wang Yangming, and he expresses some misgivings about the latter:

> Correspondence with Xu Fengzhu
> For a period of time, Master Yangming implemented the Way and passed it on to later generations. Whether it was to recommend for him to be ennobled, or whether it was to recommend for him to be placed in the Confucian temple for worship, one after another the memorials submitted to the emperor were exceedingly many, [but] honestly none were like the famous master's personal and in-depth words, nor written as clearly. From then on and afterwards, literati with aspiration for the Way without exception were inspired and aroused. All turned the famous master into Confucian orthodoxy and established the benevolence of the red flag [a metaphor for Wang Yangming]. Who was not known to make an effort! Solemnly they extend thanks to Master Yangming, [but] later on they did not arrive for the benefit of the villagers: how dare they forget the famous lord's teaching of no [social] distinctions? They do not undertake it honestly and with heartfelt sincerity. I won't say more.
> 與徐鳳竹書
> 陽明夫子道行於一時，傳於來世。或薦之復爵，或薦之從祀，先後章疏甚多，實未有若名公言之親切而著明也。自此而後，志道之士，無不感發而興起者，皆名公爲道統立赤幟之惠也，其誰不知勉歟！謹爲陽明夫子先致謝，他日不至爲鄉人者，敢忘名公無類之教耶？不任誠悃。不宣.[515]

This letter's contents display a high regard for Wang Yangming's teachings and writings, but Yu Dayou is not satisfied by the activities of those of the social elite claiming to follow his example.

[513] Fan Zhongyi 范中义, *Yu Dayou chuan* 俞大猷传 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2015), 4-7.
[514] Zhou Tianqing 周天庆, "Lun Mingdai Fujian Zhuzi xuepai de lixue shi yiyi" 论明代福建朱子学派的理学史意义, *Xiamen daxue xuebao* 厦门大学学报 202.6 (2010): 67-68.
[515] Yu Dayou 俞大猷, *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 529.

For a hereditary military man like Yu, the one criticism that carries so much weight with him that he singles it out, concerns the social equalization implied by Wang Yangming's ideology, but not borne out enough by the social elites. In this letter, he appears to criticize them of hypocrisy.

During his service in Zhejiang, Qi Jiguang also met Tan Lun, at that time a magistrate of a county, during a military campaign. Tan Lun would become a lifelong supporter and friend in the civil bureaucracy. The two would become fast friends and for many years continued to cooperate both at the northern frontier and the south-eastern seaboard.[516] When he was serving in the north he was Qi Jiguang's civilian superior as Supreme Commander in the early 1570s. During a speech to his subordinate soldiers in the north he describes his long-time associate Tan Lun (as translated by Pak Shun Ng):

> You might wish to stay alive, but as for me, I have no qualms about life or death. Not only do I think this way, the Supreme Commander and the Grand Coordinator are also prepared to die on the battlefield for the country. If you do not believe [in our resolve], I have known the Supreme Commander for fifteen years. When he is on the battlefield, he is always riding unaccompanied in front of others. I know very well his goals and ambitions. He would rather sacrifice his life than be criticised by low-ranking staff. He once told me, `I don't have a character that would survive in the capital.'[517]

From this quotation, we can clearly see the strong bonds of mutual trust that had come to exist between some military and civilian officials during this time. Also evident is Tan Lun's activist martial bent, which contrasts with his attitude towards service in the capital. Tan Lun was a man of action, who made his career at the frontier and would rather stay out of the political snake-pit that was Beijing. An eighteenth-century compilation of Tan Lun's memorials contained a preface written by the editors and compilers of the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, comparing his achievements with those of Wang Yangming:[518]

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[516] Chaoying Fang, "T'AN Lun," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1243-1246; Thomas G. Nimick, "Ch'i Chi-kuang and I-wu County," *Ming Studies* 1995.1 (1995): 19.

[517] Pak Shun Ng, "Qi Jiguang's `Oral Instructions from the Podium'," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 3.2 (2014): 168.

[518] The *Siku quanshu* is the largest collection of Chinese literature of the imperial age in existence. It was commissioned in the eighteenth century by the Qianlong 乾隆 emperor (r. 1735-1796) of the Qing dynasty (1636/44-1912). See: Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 273-277.

> From beginning to end his military service approached thirty years, and he accumulated merit for beheaded enemies numbering 21,500. His honour was not below that of Wang Shouren [Wang Yangming] and Confucians look back and speak highly of Shouren, and by using Shouren [as an example], the ones assisting in gathering followers and lecturing about learning [*jiangxue*] became numerous.
> 終始兵事垂三十年積首功二萬一千五百計其功名不在王守仁下而儒者顧艷稱守仁則以守仁聚徒講學羽翼者衆也.[519]

It is unclear whether the compilers were aware of Tan Lun's own ideological leanings, but it is instructive to note the strong association still felt far into the Qing dynasty between Wang Yangming's example and martial activism by civil officials, an association that seems to have carried a positive evaluation in this instance.

Qi's association with Ruan E also allowed him to get himself heard with Hu Zongxian. Qi wanted to retrain troops in 1557 and Ruan E made sure the suggestion was sent up to Hu. Unfortunately, the plans had to be shelved because of pressing military emergencies. In 1559, Hu gave Qi permission to recruit and train troops in Yiwu 義烏 county in Zhejiang province. Hu also sends a memorial to the throne praising Qi Jiguang for his meritorious services. Hu made the magistrate there, Zhao Dahe 趙大河 (1508-1572)[520], into Qi's military censor. Zhao Dahe is mentioned in Wang Yangming's *nianpu* as belonging to a group of *tongzhi* 同志, or "like-minded friends" belonging to the movement of Yangming followers.[521] According to Lu Miaw-fen, this term indicated a group of friends that was "[…] bounded by the same resolve to engage in sagely learning."[522] Intriguingly, and thereby hinting at the close-knit connections and cohesion that existed within this network, a contemporary biography of Zhao Dahe, written by his relative Zhao Yongxian 趙用賢 (1535-1596), notes that he read Wang Yangming's writings and, like Qi Jiguang, became a follower of Qian Dehong.[523] For a military officer like Qi it was very important to have a well-inclined military censor backing him up. The function of these censors was reporting the

[519] Tan Lun 譚綸, *Tan Xiangmin zuoyi* 譚襄敏奏議, 3-4.
[520] Chen Xuewen 陈学文, "Mingdai kang Wo jianjun Zhao Dahe pingshu yi Zhao Yongxian zhuanxie de muzhiming wei zhongxin" 明代抗倭监军赵大河评述以赵用贤撰写的墓志铭为中心, *Jiangsu keji daxue xuebao* 江苏科技大学学报 9.2 (2009): 10-16.
[521] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1337.
[522] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 223.
[523] Zhao Yongxian 趙用賢, Song shi ji ji 松石齋集, 19:285.

officer's conduct to the throne, impeaching officers who were in violation of regulations, being an interface with other local civil bureaucrats, and requisitioning the logistics the officer needed.[524]

Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong

In 1561 the disturbances moved northwards to Jiangxi province, and the Grand Coordinator there, Hu Song, requested assistance from Hu Zongxian. Tan Lun, who had worked with Qi Jiguang in the past, thereupon sent a letter to Hu Song recommending Qi Jiguang.[525] This is another clear instance of the network functioning to support its members in the official bureaucracy. In Jiangxi Qi Jiguang was supported by the military censor Xu Chi 徐栻 (1519-1581).[526] He once requested an imperial edict to have Wang Yangming worshipped in the Confucius temple.[527] After the operations are finished, Hu Song praised Qi Jiguang in a memorial to the throne.[528]

In 1562 Qi Jiguang was ordered to enter Fujian in order to combat the Wokou there. At the border he was met by Wang Daokun, who would be assigned to be his military censor in that province by Tan Lun. From 1563 onwards, Fujian would become a permanent posting for Qi Jiguang, serving first under Tan Lun, and later under Wang Daokun as Grand Coordinator of Fujian.[529] This year was not fortuitous for the *xinxue*-network on the coast. Hu Zongxian was charged with corruption and abuse of power and lost his commission of Supreme Commander. Most modern research holds that this was the result of a struggle of power at the court between Xu Jie and Hu's patron, Yan Song.[530] With Hu Zongxian's administration ending, his *mufu*, or private staff, also ceased to exist, but many civil officials aligned with *xinxue* seem to have been able to escape persecution. Indeed, Qi's own narrative of his time in Fujian, the *Min hai jishi* specifically dwells upon his meetings with *xinxue*-officials and literati. Among them are Ma Sen 馬森 (1507-1580), a Fujianese Wang Yangming-follower, his co-follower You Zhende 游震得 (dates unknown), and the Chen Xianzhang-follower Liu Tao, whom we have already met in chapter six.

[524] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang, Chinese Military Official," 168-174.
[525] Idem, 47.
[526] Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 72.
[527] Yang Zhengxian 楊正顯. "Wang Yangming "nianpu" yu congsi Kongmiao de yanjiu" 王陽明《年譜》與從祀孔廟之研究. *Hanxue yanjiu* 29.1 (2011): 164-165.
[528] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang,"; 46-47; Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 71-72.
[529] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 58, 64.
[530] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast*, 78-79.

Specifically, Ma Sen played an important role in bringing Liu Tao and Qi Jiguang in contact with each other.[531] Both Tan Lun and You Zhende reported Qi's merit to the throne during his time in Fujian.[532]

Although not narrated in Qi's *nianpu* or *Min hai jishi* during this period, the commander came into contact with Guo Zaoqing 郭造卿 (1532-1593), a literatus from Fuqing prefecture in Fujian who was known for his prose and poetry. He was connected to several members of Wang Yangming's movement, highlighting both the importance and closely-knit nature of relations within this network:

> Guo Zaoqing, courtesy name Jianchu, was a man from Huanan. As a successful candidate in the lowest level of the civil service examinations he was thought highly of by his father's friend Ma Sen (courtesy name Gongmin), and [it] caused him to be taught by the school of Luo Hongxian (courtesy name Wengong). As Wo rose up in Fujian and migrants came from Wu and Yue [Nan Zhili and Zhejiang], Junior Guardian Hu Zongxian and Li Sui (courtesy name Xiangmin) courteously sent for him. When Xinan's Minister of War Wang Daokun was pacifying Fujian, he courteously made him [Guo Zaoqing] his distinguished guest of honour once he saw his marvellous writings and his high competence. And when Protector-general Qi Jiguang was in Fujian he had merit pacifying Wo. He offered wagons and cavalry to Zaoqing and deeply trusted him with his heart-mind.
>
> 郭造卿，字建初，化南人。為諸生器於父友馬恭敏森，令受業羅文供洪先之門。閩中倭起，客遊吳越，胡少保宗憲、李襄敏遂禮致之，新安汪司馬道昆撫閩，一見奇其文而高其行，禮為上賓，而戚都護繼光在閩，有平寇功，枉車騎於造卿，甚委心焉。[533]

In this excerpt from Fuqing's gazetteer we can recognize many names associated with Wang Yangming's movement. It makes clear how membership of its network opened many doors in terms of education and career opportunities, if outside of the official bureaucracy. It is implied that Hu Zongxian, Li Sui, Wang Daokun, and Qi Jiguang all used Guo Zaoqing as part of their private staffs. As with many other of the *xinxue* network members, Guo Zaoqing combined literary accomplishments with military merit, and was even offered command over military forces by Qi Jiguang. Since these forces are referred to as "wagons and cavalry", it would seem that Guo's

[531] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 122, 124-125.
[532] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 59; Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 95
[533] *Fuqing xianzhi* 福清县志 (Beijing: China National Publishing Industry Trading Corporation, 1997), 14:1451.

service later on the northern frontier is alluded to, where these kinds of forces were used. Indeed, we know that Guo would later serve in Qi Jiguang's private staff, and would write on military frontier affairs.[534]

Between 1564 and 1567, Qi would campaign into Guangdong, during which time he seems to remain under command of Grand Coordinator Wang Daokun. In 1567 Qi was requested to serve in the north, although Wang Daokun wanted to keep him in the south.[535] It seems that with his shift northwards, a new phase in Qi's basis of his career started. Instead of being buttressed by the help of *xinxue*-followers in the civil bureaucracy, he came under the patronage of the most powerful official at court. This same official also attempted to suppress the Wang Yangming-movement. What had happened in the meantime in the political landscape and how did it affect Qi's career?

Northwards

The strong association between Wang Yangming's philosophy and military activism by literati in the sixteenth century should not surprise us. According to Miaw-fen Lu, Wang's military campaigns gained him both political and cultural capital in the form of political connections and links with educational institutions in the areas in which he had been active and the prestige gained by his meritorious service. The latter was then capitalized upon by his disciples by establishing the link between Yangming's learning and his (activist) merit. In other words: his successes as a military leader served as proof of the virtue of his reinterpretation of Neo-Confucianism. Yangming learning was thus for the most part sold on the back of military success.[536] Qian Dehong, for example, wrote a history of Wang's campaign against the Prince of Ning, which was published after Wang's death.[537] Furthermore, after a brief period of attempting to reconcile his ideas with those of Zhu Xi, Wang gave up this pretence and claimed he had recovered the true way of learning.[538] This implicit opposition to Zhu Xi became an identity dividing line according to Bol: "[…], the differences between Wang Yangming's and Zhu Xi's teachings made it clear that that

[534] Wan Ming 万明, "Cong Qi Jiguang de wenhua jiaoyou kan wan Ming wenhua shiyu xia de "wu chen hao wen" xianxiang" 从戚继光的文化交游看晚明文化视域下的 "武臣好文" 现象, *Ludong daxue xuebao* 26.4 (2009): 5.
[535] Millinger, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 57-79; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 124-126.
[536] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 59.
[537] Julia Ching, "CH'IEN Te-hung," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 243-244.
[538] Idem, 54-58.

[sic] there were now in fact two kinds of Neo-Confucianism. Some associated Zhu Xi-ism with the status quo and established authority, against which activist scholars who wanted to make their mark on the world could agitate."[539] Bol further posits that the Yangming movement should be understood as phenomenon which arose outside of court patronage and the examination system and was a reaction to the status quo from the literati of the southeast of the empire.[540] Therefore, I argue that military activism was one of the ways in which this reaction could manifest itself.

How did the centre respond to this challenge? Both the Jiajing emperor and a portion of the court officials tried to declare the teachings of Wang as heterodox and suppress his movement by demolishing private academies propagating his teachings. The same also happened at one point to Zhan Ruoshui and his ideas and following. The ideas of Wang were criticized for their moral subjectivity and branded as "empty talk" and his tendency towards unconventionality was framed as glory seeking by his detractors. Lu Miaw-fen concludes that in the end the debate at court was not about the virtue of Wang's ideas themselves, but merely about their political implications. According to Lu, what was at stake was in effect Neo-Confucianism bursting out of the grip of imperial ideological control.[541] In my view, Lu makes an artificial distinction here: it was the very nature of Wang's ideas which made them a political problem. Yet, the court debate on Wang's ideas and virtues was not the most important one during Jiajing's reign. It was not until the 1570s that the most severe suppression of Wang Yangming's ideas occurred under the Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng.[542] As a Grand Secretary, Zhang formally had an advisory role as top of the regular bureaucracy. However, the Jiajing emperor and his successor, the Longqing emperor, both relied on the Grand Secretaries for governance and thus their de facto power was very significant during most of the sixteenth century.[543]

When I review the impact of the repression of the Wang Yangming movement and the private academies during the Wokou crisis, it seems this hardly hindered the activities of Hu Zongxian's activities as a Supreme Commander – if at all. Hu Zongxian and Hu Song published Wang Yangming's writings, and, as chapter nine will show, promoted their own campaign against the Wokou within the lineage of Yangming statecraft activities and ideas. When Hu Zongxian does

[539] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 99.
[540] Ibidem.
[541] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 64-74.
[542] Idem, 71.
[543] Dardess, *A Political Life*, 35-36.

get disgraced and relieved from his post, it seems to be as a result of a factional struggle at court, and quite unrelated to ideological concerns. During the Wokou crisis, the two most important Grand Secretaries were Yan Song and aforementioned Xu Jie. The two were rivals and each commanded a network of civil and military officials who fought the Wokou. Yan Song had the most successful network, containing Hu Zongxian and, by extension, his entire official and non-official staff. As long as they were fighting a threat like the Wokou pirates, Xu Jie was pragmatic enough to cooperate with Yan Song. Xu Jie's network would conduct operations from the Nan Zhili province northwards, whilst Yan Song's would handle operations from Zhejiang southwards. Around 1562, however, Hu Zongxian was relieved of his post on charges of power abuse and in 1565 he was again implicated in a corruption charge when Yan Song definitely fell from power. Both instances have been mostly ascribed to Xu Jie's scheming in both modern and contemporaneous accounts.[544] The irony is that Xu Jie was closely associated with many of Wang Yangming's prime disciples and was an active within *jiangxue* circles.[545] In this case, it seems factional politics trumped ideological commitments.

This picture of the seeming irrelevance of ideological commitment remains consistent when Zhang Juzheng took over the reigns as Grand Secretary in the 1570s. On the one hand, he cracked down hard on the manifestations of Yangming learning outside of the bureaucracy in the shape of private academies and societies, but on the other hand he was patron to many of the military talents who were associated with the movement and who had served in the campaigns against the Wokou. Qi Jiguang and Tan Lun belonged to this group. This close association with Zhang Juzheng might explain the surprising absence of any reference to Qi's association with Qian Dehong and the Yangming movement in his collected literary works, the *Zhizhitang ji*. Since this was published during the 1570s,[546] it is possible Qi exercised a modicum of self-censorship. The preface to his *nianpu* does clarify this connection, but this was written, compiled and published by one of his sons after his death in 1587,[547] when the Wang Yangming movement was no longer facing state suppression. It seems state suppression was mostly aimed at *xinxue*-adherents who were operating outside of state purview in private academies and societies. Officials with a record

[544] Ivy Maria Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast of China: The Impact of Japanese Piracy in the Sixteenth Century* (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2010), 134-135, 139-144.
[545] Dardess, *Ming China*, 7. Yan Song's ideological affiliations, on the other hand, I have not been able to ascertain.
[546] Fan, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan*, 350-352.
[547] Qi Zuoguo 戚祚國, *Qi Shaobao nianpu* 戚少保年譜 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 1-3.

of loyal and effective service could continue their careers, as long as they did not use them as a platform to launch ideological attacks on state orthodoxy. Some would continue to try, however, like abovementioned Li Cai. That the imperial centre was suspicious of the subversive potential of *xinxue* was not entirely paranoid.

Qi Jiguang weathered all these suppression attempts with success. After 1567 he was ordered to serve on the northern frontier to reorganize the defences *in situ*. Building on his reputation and successive promotions he had acquired in the south, he would eventually command 100,000 troops at a critical position north of Beijing, an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of a military official at this stage of the Ming dynasty. He improved the physical defences of the Great Wall and organized combined-armed units consisting of battle carts armed with canon, cavalry, and infantry. As I will argue in chapter ten, Qi introduced many of his organizational innovations he conceived in the south in his northern army. During much of his time in the north he was under patronage of the powerful Grand Secretary Zhang Juzheng, whom we met in the previous chapter as an important reformer of the empire's finances. His reform zeal extended to the military as well, and for this reason he extended his protection to talents like Qi.[548] It stands to reason that his close association with Zhang and his own possible downplaying of his *xinxue* connections allowed him to keep exercising his extensive authority.

When Zhang Juzheng passed away and the Wanli 萬曆 emperor (r. 1573-1620) came of age and asserted himself to assume the reins of government himself after coming to resent the influence of his erstwhile mentor Zhang, he also progressively purged Zhang's protegees from officialdom. Qi fell victim to this as well late in his career and was deprived of his important command and transferred to remote Guangdong. Here he became ill of health and resigned, although the emperor did not allow him to end his career with a clean record and sent a decree officially dismissing him from service. Qi died soon after.[549] This sad end of the by now truly "lonely general" only goes to show how important personal relations were in maintaining one's career at this time, and it points towards the undoubtedly invaluable role the *xinxue* network played in buttressing Qi's initial meteoric rise.

[548] Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1981), 174-185.
[549] Huang, *1587,* 184.

We have seen how Qi Jiguang seems to have benefitted strongly from his association with *xinxue* literati early in his career. In this chapter I have argued that *xinxue* was able to build bridges between *wen* and *wu* socially and culturally, and its popularity during the sixteenth century can explain the upsurge of literati interest in military and martial affairs. Yangming-thinking could strengthen the legitimacy of the position of the military and martial action in realm, but it could also facilitate the formation of personal ties between military men and literati in and out of government and thereby help buttress Qi Jiguang's career. Furthermore, it facilitated the spread of military knowledge among literati and military men, who used their shared commitment to Yangming learning as channels for knowledge transfer, which was needed during the many crisis the Ming empire faced during the sixteenth century, a facet I will return to in the next chapters. In chapter nine I shall return to the influence of Wang Yangming's governance solutions on the anti-Wokou campaign. In chapter ten I will argue that Qi built his military ideas on those of Wang and took them a step further by integrating the latter's philosophical message in his training methods. However, there are two additional reasons why an association with the *xinxue* network was so beneficial. The first is a new esteem accorded to the notion of friendship. An additional reason was the renaissance of the value system of the knight-errant, with its strong emphasis on reciprocal brotherhood ties, within its ranks. In the next chapter I will explore the ways in which friendship and the moral exemplar of the knight-errant – known for operating outside of bounds of imperial authority - struck a chord with a group of Wang Yangming's followers. In addition, within the knight-errantry tradition forms of social bonding were articulated, the discourse of which was again traceable within Qi Jiguang's writings.

Chapter 8 – Cementing the *Xinxue* Network: A New Discourse on Friendship

In this chapter I will delve deeper into the subject of the formation of personal ties, by highlighting the changing discourse about Neo-Confucian notions of friendship generated within Wang Yangming's movement. Wang Yangming unleashed a movement which infused new value in the bond of friendship within the traditional Confucian scheme of social relations which, I argue, in its turn facilitated Qi Jiguang's formation of friendship ties with members of the civil bureaucracy. Moreover, I will argue that this new Neo-Confucianism fused well with-, and in its turn influenced the resurgence of the traditional knight-errant archetype, which would again become an ideal to live up to among different social layers of the empire during the sixteenth century. The role of *xinxue* in propagating an internal subjective approach to morality instead of holding fast to external markers and appearances, opened up the fusion of literati norms of comportment with the knight-errantry ethos, as I will argue below.

The New *Xinxue*-Discourse on Friendship

A probing of Qi Jiguang's thought reveals that he took stock of a changing discourse on the meaning and significance of friendship (*you* 友) during the sixteenth century as well as *xinxue*. The ideas of Wang Yangming and his followers seem to have taken central stage in the discourse surrounding the Neo-Confucian redefinition of the term in this epoch. In the coming paragraphs, I will address the question in what ways these new ideas about friendship facilitated Qi Jiguang's formation of amical relationships with colleagues in both the civil and military hierarchies of the empire's bureaucracy.

Within Confucian thought, the role of friendship in the web of ideal social hierarchical relationships has often been an ambiguous and marginalized one. This ambiguity and marginalization has also carried over to some modern scholarly studies of the phenomenon. Confucian conceptions of the moral social order stress the importance of the five relationships, or bonds, which had to be observed by the individual. These were the relationship between ruler and minister (or the ruled in general), father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother and friends. These relationships were conceived to be hierarchical, but also reciprocal. For example,

the minister was expected to be loyal to his ruler, but this in turn obliged the ruler to perform his duties towards his subject as a ruler. Similarly, a son was expected to be filial towards his father, but his father was expected to reciprocate this by performing the duties of a good parent.[550] As Norman Kutcher notes, the relationship between friends stands out, because it was neither a state-based nor a family-based relationship and it moreover included the element of voluntariness. To further demarcate the distinctiveness of friendship as a bond, the ruler's governing of his state was conceived to be as modelled on his patriarchal functioning as head of his family.[551] Kutcher's ultimate position is that the friendship bond was the only one conducive to equality between the two parties, and therefore could contain the seeds of a phenomenon ultimately detrimental to the envisioned socio-moral Confucian order. These views are further echoed by Martin Huang, who directs attention to the ways in which befriending the wrong people could damage the family. In the sphere of the state too, he notes that personal friendships were thought to have been at the root of political factionalism in the imperial bureaucracy.[552] Not everyone agrees on the potentiality of equality in Confucian friendships, however, as some modern scholars have argued that friendships were closely modelled on hierarchical relationships within the sphere of the family.[553]

Xiufen Lu, reviewing Kutcher's position and those of other scholars before him, fiercely criticized the notions that friendships in a Confucian context were either of necessity conceived of in familial hierarchical sense, or was one with a necessary potential for equality (and thus was a potential hazard for society and empire).[554] Lu refutes the former position by arguing for a distinction between "social custom shaped by kinship ties" and the content of Confucian philosophy itself. For example, the argument that in Chinese contexts of amical relationships, kinship terminology was often used to designate friends, does not prove that friendships were experienced as an extension of hierarchical kinship relations. Refuting the latter position, Lu argues that the absence of equality in friendship (a notion he suspects is tied to a specific western frame of thought), and thus the necessary presence of hierarchy, does not preclude the existence of a Confucian kind of friendship which was not detrimental to society. According to Lu, there would often be an implicit hierarchy between friends based on status in society and birth order.

[550] Lu Xiufen, "Rethinking Confucian Friendship," *Asian Philosophy* 20.3 (2010): 233.
[551] Norman Kutcher, "The Fifth Relationship: Dangerous Friendships in the Confucian Context," *The American Historical Review* 105.5 (2000): 1615-1616.
[552] Martin W. Huang, "Male Friendship in China: An Introduction," *Nan Nü* 9 (2007): 2.
[553] Lu, "Rethinking Confucian Friendship," 226, 229-230.
[554] Idem, 225.

What promotes Confucian friendship according to him is a mutual appreciation for each other's achieved moral excellence. Applying his reading of Confucius' writings, Lu argues that the fact that all humans are assumed to be endowed with a special fate (*ming* 命) by nature means that Confucian friends would appreciate each other for their moral cultivation efforts, regardless of social station and life experiences. Kutcher is accused of focusing on a small segment of the Confucian literary heritage which merely focuses on the "wrong" kinds of friendship.[555] Lu then proceeds to reconstruct his perceived essence of Confucian friendship based on his own reading of Confucius' and Mencius' writings.[556]

The problem with Lu's approach lies in the fact that he tries to reconstruct an essentialized un-changing notion of friendship in a Confucian setting, which completely ignores the historical context. Therefore, despite some of his criticisms of other scholars noted above being of substance, he is not able to successfully historicize his subject. Norman Kutcher is more sensitive to the passage of time, and cognizant of the idea that Confucian ideas about friendship probably fluctuated and shifted in meaning across history. In contrast, Xiufen Lu's prescriptive reconstruction would ironically not be out of place amidst other Neo-Confucians' commentaries and treatises on friendship. Instead, following Kutcher and others producing a quite recent body of research on friendship in Chinese history, one comes across an interesting historicized picture. It lays bare a rift between pre-Song times and the period Neo-Confucianism first emerges in force during the southern Song empire. A second period of change seems to have been the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, although this change seems to have not crystallized into a permanent universally recognized reconceptualization of friendship and the earlier Song discourse seems to have reasserted itself again afterwards.[557]

Significant in the shift from pre-Song times to the hegemony of the Neo-Confucian discourse regarding friendship, was a further downplaying – if not outright denial – of the emotional function of friendship in favour of more utilitarian views, a trend evident in the writings of someone as exalted as Zhu Xi. One was to make friends with like-minded or morally superior people, who would then help perfect one's inculcation with (Neo-) Confucian values. According to Kutcher, the emerging Song Neo-Confucian discourse stressed service to the state and service

[555] Xiufen Lu then claims there are many other writings extolling the virtues of friendship, but does not back this claim up with proof. See Idem, 235.
[556] Idem, 229, 233-243.
[557] Kutcher, "The Fifth Relationship," 1620-1621.

to the family, and friendships could distract one from these paramount concerns. What is more, the wrong kind of friendships could also tempt one into engaging in morally odious behaviour, like gambling. One result of this shift during the Song dynasty, was also the disappearance of the notion that one could die for a friend (as one could for one's parents) or share property with them, further proof of friendship's marginalization.[558] In chapter two we have already seen the criticism of knight-errantry by Neo-Confucians during the Song dynasty, which can perhaps be seen as a result of this chivalrous ideology promoting ties of brotherhood between friends. An institutional reason for this limited conceptionalization of friendship could have to do with the increasing importance of the examination system as an access route to political power from the late Tang dynasty onwards. Within the context of this system of vertical and horizontal amical relationships formed between peer students within the same year cohort and between examiners, teachers and students. This tied the need to form relationships intimately with the pragmatic and utilitarian desire for success in the examinations and its resultant career in state service.[559] The research tying this reconceptualization of friendship during the Song to the examination system fails to explain, however, why there was a shift in ideas about friendship in the sixteenth century. I would argue that the emergence of *xinxue* as a popular form of Neo-Confucianism next to the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy institutionalized by the examination system would to a great extent explain this shift. We will see below that within the group of Wang Yangming-followers friendship achieved renewed importance vis-à-vis older Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, because many of them can be assumed to have adopted this philosophical re-orientation for reasons other than examination success.

As mentioned above, the sixteenth century has been thought of as the second period in imperial Chinese history in which a shift in the (Neo-) Confucian discourse about friendship occurred. Whereas during the Song the emerging Neo-Confucian movement showed a clear tendency to relegate friendship to a subordinate and inferior position vis-à-vis the other four relationships, the rise of Wang Yangming's influential re-interpretation of *daoxue* thought and practice was accompanied by a rise in the esteem of amical relationships within the intellectual discourse. This shift was first recognized by Joseph McDermott in an article which studies the changes within friendship discourse in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As one of the first

[558] Kutcher, "The Fifth Relationship," 1616, 1620.
[559] Huang, "Male Friendship in China," 3.

to fill the gap in scholarly studies on friendship in a Chinese context, he reflects on its sparsely studied nature: "Perhaps the reason for this fate can be traced to its lack of a long - lasting social or political base. It never acquired and bequeathed land, it never had buildings constructed, and it never became the central concern of a Chinese organization. Furthermore, its moral standing has often been open to question."[560] He notes a change in the later days of Ming imperial rule, when, according to him, friendship was seen in the eyes of some as a "moral basis for criticizing Chinese imperial rule."[561] The first Neo-Confucian thinker McDermott analyses in his article is He Xinyin, a follower of the left-wing Taizhou school of Wang Gen and thus a follower of Yangming thought. Hailed by McDermott as "Perhaps the earliest Ming re-evaluation of the political dimension of friendship", He Xinyin's vision seems to have exalted the status of the ruler-subject and friend-friend relationships vis-à-vis the other three, which were solely focused on the family.[562] According to He Xinyin, the very particularity of the three family bonds prevented them from being much use to ordering the world. This had to be done on the level of the ruler who formed relationships with his subjects in official governmental positions on the one hand. On the other hand, complementing this vertical axis was to be the horizontal axis represented by the amical community of evangelical Neo-Confucians like himself, spreading "teachings based on benevolence" consciously modelled on the received life of Confucius himself.[563] He Xinyin's belief in the importance of friendship could have been based on his confidence in the potential of the mind, *xin*, to draw the different human sides in the five relationships closer to one another, ultimately resulting in intimacy and equality within all five, qualities normally only found in friendship.

By singling out He Xinyin as an early example of a Neo-Confucian re-centring friendship amongst the traditional bonds, the question presents itself whether Wang Yangming's following as a whole contributed to this change in discourse and should be considered a starting point for this phenomenon? Miaw-fen Lu analysed the role of friendship within the Yangming movement and she posited that it formed the glue keeping the members together and that it therefore

[560] Joseph P. McDermott, "Friendship and Its Friends in the Late Ming," in *Family Process and Political Process in Modern Chinese History*, *Part 1*, edited by Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1992), 67.
[561] McDermott, "Friendship and Its Friends," 68.
[562] Idem, 79.
[563] Idem, 80.

constituted the basic social framework facilitating the dissemination of Yangming ideas.[564] Several of Wang Yangming's most prominent followers' views on friendship are singled out by Miaw-fen Lu, including Wang Ken, Ouyang De, Luo Hongxian, Wang Ji and Luo Rufang. Their rhetoric hardly diverged from the already established orthodoxy that friendships mainly existed to help one perfect one's moral nature, but in praxis friendship became a much more important bond within the emerging Yangming movement of the sixteenth century, and many followers actually elevated it over the other four relationships in theory. This was a stark departure from the position of Song Neo-Confucians, who emphasized the benefits of friends in pursuing moral excellence, but still firmly ranked friendship as the fifth and last of the bonds in the scheme of things. There was even a tendency to abbreviate the system by only referring to the three cardinal guides (*sangang* 三綱) of social order, namely the ones between ruler and subject, father and son and husband and wife. This abbreviation completely omitted brotherly order and friendship. Why did the valuation of friendship rise to such unprecedented levels within the Yangming movement? The answer needs to be sought in both the philosophy the movement expounded, and the socio-political circumstances in which it took place.

As noted before, the emergence of Yangming philosophy marked a decidedly moral subjective turn within the history of Confucianism. To become a sage, one had to activate one's innate knowing of the good (*liangzhi*) and extend it into the world. Furthermore, the *Five Classics* and *Four Books* declined in importance as vehicles for discovering morality. The focus of cultivating good virtue shifted inward and relied less on external written sources of authority. One of the problems that arose as a consequence was that of verification. One's *liangzhi*, when it appeared, was an infallible guide for virtuous decision making, but how could one know if the decision was really based on *liangzhi* instead of a judgement clouded by selfish desires? The answer was that aspiring sages should rely on and actively seek out verification by friends.[565] Hence, the nature of the philosophy itself increased the necessity and importance of the fifth bond. As regards the correct path to enlightenment, Wang Yangming had declined to write a clear guide for his followers, and the achievement of sagehood came to rely on oral instruction, often within the context of social gatherings.

[564] Lu Miaw-fen 呂妙芬, *Yangming xueshi shequn – Lishi, sixiang yu shijian* 陽明學士社群 - 歷史，思想與實踐 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindai lishi yanjiusuo, 2000), 295-298.
[565] Lu, *Yangming xueshi shequn*, 313-314.

Another element buttressing the bond of friendship originating in Song Neo-Confucian philosophy, but amplified by the Yangming movement, was the notion of the fundamental unity of the universe. One of the characteristics of enlightenment was actually being able to experience the wholeness of the universe and the interconnectedness of all the phenomena within it. Literally the totality of things, including human beings and lifeless objects, were thought to form one unified body (*yiti* 一體). As everything is connected in nature, so is everything in human society. The holistic conceptualization made no fundamental distinction between what a modern human being would call "nature" and "culture". Humans did not stand apart from other phenomena, but were in constant interaction with everything around them. Translated in social terms this paradigm shifted from *sein* to *sollen* (from is to ought) and exhorted humans to realize their interconnectedness with one another and cultivate the correct human relationships.[566] Perhaps this sentiment enticed Wang Yangming's followers to strengthen their social ties through the bond of friendship. I would argue that the reorientation of learning and thought away from a pragmatic and utilitarian focus on the examination system towards a moral brotherhood of all men divorced from the needs of career building and geared more towards the emotional need of peer recognition of moral achievement, explains the rise in importance of friendship in the sixteenth century and impact on Qi Jiguang career, to which I will now turn.

Qi Jiguang's thinking about friendship can be seen in his own collection of literary writings, the 止止堂集, or the *Collection of the Zhizhi Hall*. In one of his sacrificial prayers compiled in this collection, eulogizing a deceased friend who was a Brigade Commander (*wanhu* 萬戶), Qi Jiguang is seen to hold friendship in high regard:

> Alas! The way of friendship has not been manifested on earth for a long time! As for the sincere rectification of the heart-mind, without friends it [the sincere rectification] cannot be clarified; cultivating oneself and managing the family well, without friends they [oneself and the family] cannot be put in order. Governing the country and pacifying all under Heaven, without friends this cannot be achieved. Only friendship will do to illuminate he relation between fathers and sons. Only friendship will do to illuminate the order between older and younger brothers. Only friendship will do to illuminate the differentiation between husbands and wives. Only friendship will do to illuminate the righteousness between ruler and subjects. Admonishing, criticizing, viewing, and emulating virtue cannot be attained without friends. Not forgetting old promises is

[566] Idem, 314-315.

the guiding principle of the way of friendship. The ones with scant kindness and numerous resentments: the world always has them as well. Alas! The way of friendship has not been illuminated for a long time!
嗚呼！友道之不明於天下也久矣！誠意正心，匪友弗闡； 脩身齊家，匪友弗飭;治國平天下，非友弗臻。父子之親也，惟友足以明之，兄弟之序也，惟友足以明之;夫婦之別 也，惟友足以明之；君臣之義也，惟友足以明之。箴砭觀摩，德非友弗成，久要不忘，友道之經。寡恩叢怨者，世亦 比比。嗚呼！友道之不明於天下也久矣！[567]

This particular military leader, named Wang Chang 王長, participated in the south-eastern maritime frontier defence of the 1550s. This highlights the opportunity of developing and fostering Neo-Confucian friendships among the army leadership during military service. Another interesting phenomenon highlighted by this sacrificial prayer is the existence and articulation of these friendships betwixt hereditary military personnel and aboriginal leadership. These were not exactly two Ming era social strata in which one would expect friendship, conceptualized in a very Neo-Confucian way, to be in evidence. The title of Brigade Commander was exclusively conferred to the hereditary chieftains of the south-, and southwestern aboriginal tribes inhabiting the external and internal frontier zones of the empire, so it would seem Wang Chang had an aboriginal background as well.[568] Moreover, this prayer highlights the importance of friends in moral cultivation, an importance Qi Jiguang endorses.

The Renaissance of the Knight-Errant and Identity Eclecticism

Yangming ideology offered another path through which Neo-Confucianism and martial lifestyles could find each other. This pathway was opened through a stress on the value of *kuang* 狂, which in the context of *xinxue* came to mean a kind of unconventionality expressed through certain kinds of behaviour, but prompted by sincerity of mind. Following the doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action, any behavioural act would in theory be justified as long as it was the result of a sincere extension of the innate good. In practice, this opened the theoretical floodgates for, now, legitimate unconventional behaviours, justifiable by upright sincerity. This tendency of unconventionality was, I suspect, further strengthened by the performative needs of opposition to the older Cheng-

[567] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 191-192.
[568] Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, Volume 1*, 562.

Zhu Neo-Confucianism. According to Miaw-fen Lu, the *kuang* (in Confucian discourse) stood in opposition to the *xiangyuan* 鄉愿, who were the "good careful people from the villages."[569] According to both Confucius and Mencius, the *xiangyuan* were unsuitable moral exemplars, because their outward moral excellence was only a show put on for the outside world, and one that was not backed up by a sincerity of will. Translated to the society of sixteenth-century China, this notion of a dichotomy between outside pageantry and inner sincerity made for an excellent performative and rhetorical tool with which to undermine Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy. One of Wang Yangming's main criticisms of this orthodoxy was its posited existence of principle outside of the mind. This could lead to a confusion between behaviour and intention, which was especially problematic in the moral sphere. For example, an act of filial piety should only be considered legitimate if it was a spontaneous outcome of a sincere intention, an extension of innate goodness. Instead, Wang Yangming contended, Cheng-Zhu's doctrine lent moral legitimacy to outward moral posturing, which was not backed up by virtuous intent.

I posit that the high esteem accorded to sincere unconventionality by followers and offshoots of the Yangming movement coincided and merged with a positive re-evaluation of martial culture and lifestyles in the late Ming. Chen Baoliang already noted that Wang Yangming's personal example inspired many to combine knight-errantry with a Neo-Confucian identity, but I argue that his philosophy itself furnished the philosophical tools to legitimate this combination.[570] As can be seen from the example of Qi Jiguang's ideas about the *wen wu*-divide, Yangming ideas on sagehood could furnish tools of legitimation and justification for these martial pursuits. The notion of *kuang* provided another, as it significantly enlarged the scope of acceptable behaviours (and thus lifestyles) for a Neo-Confucian. Giovanni Vitiello mentions that traditional Confucianism in the late Ming offered a too narrow-minded morality for the rapidly developing society, and therefore many sought a kind of syncretic identity by combining Confucianism with other sources of systematic ethical thought.[571] One of these sources would be the value system associated with the knight-errant tradition. As we saw in chapter one, these *youxia* seem to have emerged during the tumultuous Warring States Period and were a group of wandering men of

[569] Lu, "Practice as Knowledge," 296.
[570] Chen Baoliang 陈宝良, "Mingdai zhishi ren qunti yu xiadao guanxi kaolun – jian lun ru, xia, dao zhi bian jiqi hudong" 明代知识人群体与侠盗关系考论———兼论儒、侠、盗之辨及其互动, *Xinan daxue xuebao* 西南大学学报 37.2 (2011): 40-43.
[571] Vitiello, "Examplary Sodomites," 207-210.

martial ability who used their skills to mete out justice in an atmosphere of growing state power and societal upheavals caused by wars which were increasing in frequency. The social background of these knights-errant varied and was of little relevance to their moral code, which emphasized universalism in the approach to inter-human relationships and egalitarianism in their conceptions of social justice. In the typical real and fictitious *youxia* stories we can often see the knights-errant right the wrongs perpetrated by the rich and powerful and representatives of the state on the weaker members of society. Other important elements of the *youxia* moral code included physical and moral courage, a personal loyalty to friends instead of a customary one towards the ruler, altruism and a contempt of wealth, and last but not least, a quest for fame, honor and freedom of unconventional expression.

There were a number of differences between the *youxia* moral code, and its Neo-Confucian equivalent. Yet, I would argue that the Yangming re-interpretation actually diminished these differences. Invoking the Weberian concept of *Wahlverwandtschaft* or "elective affinities",[572] I argue that Confucianism and its more martial knight-errantry counterpart merged into a new (sub-) culture of militarized literati in the course of the sixteenth century. James Liu highlights the traditional differences between the *youxia* and the *ru*. First of all, in Confucian ideology, moral obligations had a distinctly particularistic character. Whereas in the *youxia* tradition universal justice took centre stage, for the *ru* this was hierarchically conceived in the five bonds and the societal division between scholars, peasants, artisans and merchants. However, as we have seen, in the Yangming movement the primary focus on obligation towards ruler and family shifted in favour of friendship based on shared moral aspirations. In addition, with the rise of the rhetoric emphasizing scholars, peasants, artisans and merchants all sharing the same *dao*, the inherent democratizing potential of the school of the heart-mind *ipso facto* undermined the particularistic tendencies of traditional Confucianism. Second, the primacy of moderation and conformism in behaviour was replaced by the esteem accorded to *kuang* unconventional (sometimes translated as "wild") behaviour. Third, the knight-errant was supposed to be true in word and action, which meshed well with Wang Yangming's doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action. Sincerity of intent had to be expressed in sincerity of behaviour. Last, but not least, the use of force to obtain justice could be legitimized as a proper moral action for a Neo-Confucian sage, as demonstrated

[572] On the interpretations of this concept, see Andrew M. McKinnon, "Elective Affinities of the Protestant Ethic: Weber and the Chemistry of Capitalism," *Sociological Theory* 28.1 (2010): 108-126.

by Qi Jiguang himself. In addition, as James Liu points out, martial pursuits like archery and charioteering (later equestrianism) were part and parcel of the Confucian ideal gentleman. Thus, the differences between both moral codes were marginalized, and in other ways both the knight-errant and the Confucian already shared some similarities, including a disdain for wealth (one may recall here Qi Jiguang's previously quoted literary self-fashioning as a warrior practicing repression of desires), a thirst for fame and a concern with preserving individual honour.[573]

The context in which this elective affinity was activated facilitated its flowering. Next to the stifling orthodoxy of the state-sanctioned Cheng-Zhu learning, the "ever more depressing, and oppressive, reality of contemporary politics (incompetent emperors and the corrupting influence of eunuchs)"[574] posited by Martin Huang should be considered as well. In this context Yangming-learning, which inherent moral subjectivity encouraged moral autonomy vis-à-vis ancient teachings and imperial authority, would have found fertile ground. Again, this moral autonomy fit well into the mould of the social activist role of the knight-errant as dispensing justice in the absence of good governance from the centre was a shared aspiration. After all, the Neo-Confucian program of social intervention had already in Song times started where active state intervention stopped and knights-errant's main occupation was righting social wrongs on the local level. Taiwanese historian Wang Hung-tai posits that we should not consider Wang Yangming as a *youxia*, because he did not choose to embrace its way of life,[575] but there is evidence that his followers compared him favourably to this ideal-type. Wang Ji, while addressing a discussion assembly (*jianghui*), described the man in the following way:

> The former master's [Wang Yangming] learning changed altogether three times and then he began to enter into enlightenment. Once more he changed and that which he achieved was the start of transformation and pureness. His few petitions were brave, determined, confrontational, and strident: he exceeded knights-errant in lack of inhibition. With regard to learning, there was nothing he did not study minutely; his taste was overflowing in his poetry and prose. He actively engaged with Sunzi and Wuzi, and although his aspiration lay with statecraft, his talents were also that which he gave free reign to.
> 先師之學，凡三變而始入於悟，再變而所得始化而純。其少稟英毅凌邁，超俠不羈，於學無所不窺，嘗泛濫於詞章，馳騁於孫吳，雖其志在經世，亦才有所縱也。[576]

[573] Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, 7-9.
[574] Huang, *Negotiating Maculinities*, 43.
[575] Wang, "Wugong, wuxue, wuyi, wuxia," 213.
[576] Wang Ji 王畿. *Wang Ji ji* 王畿集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 33.

After detailing the many phases Wang Yangming's ideas passed through and enumerating the multi-facetted nature of his talent, the praising of his lack of inhibition should be of note. This lack of restraint should be considered together with the preceding statements about his "brave" and "confrontational" petitions, which all point to his unbridled critical and reform-minded spirit vis-à-vis the empire, its institutions and the ultimate source of its authority, the emperor himself. Note that Wang Yangming's surpassing the knights-errant in this sense is meant as a positive evaluation. Wang actually achieved fame for this exact bearing by refusing the indulge the reigning Zhengde 正德 (r. 1505-1521) emperor, who wanted Wang to set a rebellious member of the imperial family free (who had just been captured by Wang Yangming in a notable military campaign) in order to capture this prince himself in a wasteful exercise of martial posturing. The basis of the comparison with the attitude of the knight-errant is exactly this unbridled opposition to official state authority in the name of a greater good. This no doubt resonated with the activist Neo-Confucians of the later Ming dynasty, who, as guardians of morality, civilization and culture, saw it as an important part of their duty to correct the flaws of their ruler. Such was the consequence of a system in which moral and political authority was divided between different groups.[577]

The resurrection of the knight-errant as a positive role model has been considered by modern scholars as phenomenon of the late Ming.[578] Harriet Zurndorfer, for example, has noted that it became an important subject in the fictional narratives of writers and that these writers were also connected with the "the highest echelons of the Ming military elite, civil officials, and generals responsible for running the Korea campaign […]."[579] I posit, however, that this re-evaluation was already apparent around the middle of the sixteenth century in the writings of the followers and friends of Wang Yangming. Wang Ji used the spirit of knight-errantry to refer to positive character qualities in both Wang Yangming, as shown above, but also when referring to Tang Shunzhi:

> I recently heard that you, my brother, engaged in military affairs and your temperament spread wide and manifested. The duty of ruler and minister and friends is to personally and mutually pledge an oath to wish

[577] Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 98-99.
[578] Allan H. Barr, "The Wanli Context of the `Courtesan's Jewel Box' Story," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.1 (1997): 110.
[579] Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "Wanli China versus Hideyoshi's Japan: Rethinking China's Involvement in the Imjin Waeran," in *The East Asian War, 1592-1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, edited by James B. Lewis (London: Routledge, 2015), 205.

to share life and death. I regard this to esteem bringing about the spirit of a knight-errant. The knight-errant attaches importance to promises and thinks lightly of life and death and in the end attains a good reputation - it also truly differs the least bit from the crucial inherent characteristics and motives of the sage, and that's all.

昨聞兄請兵，意氣橫發，君臣朋友之義，以身相許，誓欲與同生死。竊意此尚從俠氣帶來。俠者之重然諾，輕生死，終涉好名，與聖賢本色作用未免毫釐，亦在機上辨之而已。[580]

This description of Tang Shunzhi by Wang Ji is a very clear indication of how close the ideal of the sage and the values associated with knight-errantry had approached each other in the context of military activities. Of these military activities in the context of Tang Shunzhi's life, Wang Ji also writes the following in the same letter: "How could you stop at being a superb military commander: the eternal learning of the sages is also not separate from this! /豈止用兵如神，千古聖學亦不外於此矣![581] Here Wang Ji establishes the legitimacy of the military occupation within the sphere of sagely activities.

Perhaps, as Wang Hung-tai argues, Wang Yangming did not actively embrace a *youxia* identity and his interest in military affairs was mainly of a pragmatic nature. Nevertheless, in addition to Wang Ji and Tang Shunzhi, also some members of the more radical Taizhou-branch of his followers embraced a dual identity of Neo-Confucian and knight-errant. This group included the already mentioned He Xinyin, but also the founder Wang Gen and followers Wang Bi 王襞 (1511-1587), Wang Dong 王棟 (1502-1581) and Yan Jun 顏鈞 (1504-1596).[582] Many prominent thinkers in this group were characterized during the late Ming as "wild Chanists" (*kuang Chan* 狂禪), because of their unconventional blending of Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism. The "Chan" here refers to the Chinese pronunciation of the more famous Japanese "Zen", a form of Buddhism stressing meditation in lieu of scriptural studies.[583] According to Vitiello, this syncretism was part of a larger trend during the late Ming to revitalize Confucianism by fusing it with other religions, ideologies, and lifestyles. He also mentions that this fusion was also attempted with knight-errantry,

[580] Wang Ji 王畿. *Wang Ji ji* 王畿集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 267.
[581] Idem, 267.
[582] Zuo Dongling 左东岭, "Kuangxia jingshen yu Taizhou chuantong" 狂侠精神与泰州传统, *Kongzi yanjiu* 孔子研究 3 (2001): 104-112.
[583] For more on these "wild Chanists", see: Mao Wen-fang 毛文芳, "Wan Ming `kuang Chan' tan lun" 晚明「狂禪」探論, *Hanxue yanjiu* 19.2 (2001): 171-200.

and among prominent members of the Taizhou branch, this seems to have been a widespread phenomenon, as shown by Zuo Dongling.[584] I argue that the more general trend towards syncretism in Confucianism had a tendency to express itself in a fusion between the latter and knight-errantry in the particular case of Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian movement. Wang Daokun also fused Neo-Confucian identities and knight-errantry in the figure of the merchant. He would write a number of biographies of merchants which emphasized their possession of the associated moral qualities resulting of this synthesis.[585] Xu Wei would also write many stories about knights-errant, people he admired.[586] Nor was this tendency restricted to Wang Yangming's brand of *xinxue*. Liu Tao, a follower of Chen Xianzhang whom we have already met in chapter six, also embraced the ethos of the knight-errant.[587] This infiltration of a more martial moral code of Neo-Confucianism can be detected as well in the context of Qi Jiguang's career and friendships. Wang Chang, the aboriginal leader on behalf of whom Qi wrote a sacrificial prayer, is described in the following way by his friend:

> Thereupon you exclusively kept carrying on your father's trade. You indulged yourself in wild knight-errantry [*kuang xia*] and thereupon became a fellow-official. In 1555 we shook hands at parting and twelve autumns passed. In the past, you were repeatedly called to arms, you threw yourself into public affairs and went to Fujian. Altogether, you were honourable without exception, using the lessons of the past.
> 迺廑保其箕裘。台恣狂俠，遂成乎宦遊。乙卯握別，越十二秋。台曾屢檄，趣公閩詣，共有均榮，用訓夙昔.[588]

So here we are presented with an aboriginal official who combined two value systems with a very martial lifestyle, cultivating Neo-Confucian friendship with a hereditary Han military officer. Crucially, Qi characterizes Wang Chang's combination of the two value systems as *kuang xia* 狂俠, which I propose to render as "wild knight-errantry", following the translation precedent set by "wild Chanist". I posit that in this instance we can see the potential of the Confucian value of *kuang*, or sincere unconventionality, to encourage a mixing between Neo-Confucianism and

[584] See note 107 above; Vitiello, "Exemplary Sodomites," 209-210.
[585] Lien Chi-yuan 連啟元, "Ruxia zhi bian: Wang Daokun dui Huizhou renwu `ruxia' xingxiang de lunshu yu xing su" 儒俠之辨： 汪道昆對徽州人物「儒俠」形象的論述與型塑, *Mingdai yanjiu* 明代研究 19 (2012): 121-140.
[586] Huang, *Negotiating Masculinities*, 54.
[587] Chen, "Mingdai zhishi ren qunti yu xiadao guanxi," 42-43.
[588] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 192.

martial identities. This friendship was forged on the frontier amid military action, as the mention of the year 1555 makes it very likely that they were both active in the southeast fighting the Wo pirates. Nor does this seem to have been an isolated occurrence. As we have seen above, Hu Zongxian also cultivated intimate personal relationships with his aboriginal colleagues.[589] There can hardly be a more striking example of the potential of Yangming ideology to blur social and ethnic boundaries and provide moral sanction for a variety of pursuits and identities.

A further element promoting friendship and the archetype of knight-errantry among the *xinxue* network contributing to the anti-Wokou campaign was the mobility and detachment from family caused by the associated career and lifestyle. Concerning this detachment, many of these men were away from house and hearth for a considerable time and had to rely on each other for their lives and careers' successes. As part of Wang Yangming's movement they were already accustomed to seek verification and validation for their moral fibre within the context of associations and bonds of friendship within the movement itself, which was represented by the network during the campaign. As for mobility, we have seen that many *xinxue* followers joined Hu Zongxian's private staff out of their own volition. As such, they were symptomatic of a late Ming "social and geographic mobility" posited by Anne Gerritsen, when because of socio-economic changes the opportunities for men to travel and interact increased compared to the Yuan and early Ming dynasties.[590] These conditions would, I argue, create the ideal circumstances for bonds of friendships and the brotherhood of knight-errantry to develop among the participants of the anti-Wokou campaign.

In a poem written by Qi Jiguang when he was serving at the northern frontier he affirms the importance of friendship and its close connection with the chivalric spirit associated with knight-errantry:

A poem composed when gathered above the river Luan

Standing alone I cherish ones who know me, because of the many quandaries I sigh over the feelings of officials.
Who in ancient times and the present day has chivalric spirit? Heaven and Earth are one fortress of sorrows.
Despite the great distance I have yet thrown away my writing brush, for a long time I have admired volunteers for military service.

[589] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast of China*, 84-85.
[590] Anne Gerritsen, "Friendship through Fourteenth-Century Fissures: Dai Liang, Wu Sidao and Ding Henian," *Nan Nü* 9 (2007): 37.

The gentlemen [we] all are learned sword fighters, we dedicate ourselves to service to our own country and have renewed our pact.

集灤上賦詩

獨立懷知己，多岐嘆宦情。

古今誰俠氣，天地一愁城。

萬里猶投筆，千年羨請纓。

君俱學劍者，報國有新盟。[591]

He wrote this poem in 1570, when the frontier defences were brought to alert status in response to a feared Mongol attack. The poem commemorates the assembling of the military units and their commanders near the river Luan in Hubei province and it poetically reflects and expresses the importance of friendship to the good functioning of Qi's career. He seemingly accords the "chivalric spirit", *xiaqi* 俠氣, a central place as a force for positive change within the "fortress of sorrow", which was his contemporary social reality. The "fortress of sorrow" should be understood here as human society which continues to concern and cause sorrow for the ones governing it. It would seem the knight-errant could fulfil a useful function next to the Neo-Confucian sage in society. Stressing his choice for a military, martial, career Qi mentions having thrown away his writing brush, which was a literary trope denoting giving up civil one's civil accomplishments and future career for the military profession. The implied rigours of this choice prompted Qi to fashion himself as "standing alone", and therefore he posited ties of friendship as being of crucial importance. Qi needed to rely on "ones who know me" (*zhiji* 知己), intimate soul mates, and in the *youxia* tradition denoting friends or patrons who really appreciated the knight-errant for his moral qualities.[592] According to Anna Shields, during mid-to-late Tang times the term still carried this meaning of a patron who knew the talent and potential of his client, but in later times it came to denote a close friendship.[593] It is possible that Qi Jiguang in his poem referred to the appreciation for a knight-errant's moral integrity, considering his evocation of the spirit of the *youxia* in the second line.

[591] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 42.
[592] Vitiello, "Exemplary Sodomites," 217-218.
[593] Anna M. Shields, *One Who Knows Me: Friendship and Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 98-99.

Friendships and philosophy were two pillars on which Qi Jiguang's career were built. The democratization of the sagehood ideal and the moral subjectivity of Yangming learning went hand in hand with the adoption of martial identities and the cultivation of friendships outside of the narrow focus on empire and family, which had been the hallmark of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Whereas Qi used *xinxue* to legitimize the role of the military man in the polity, his close friend and colleague Wang Daokun would use the same ideology to serve as "apologist" for the merchant profession. In addition, both Wang and Qi were attracted by the ideals associated with the tradition of knight-errantry. A similar fusion of civil and martial identities can be observed with many of Qi Jiguang's civil bureaucrat friends and superiors as well. Known Yangming followers like Hu Zongxian, Ruan E, Tan Lun, Zhao Dahe, Xu Wei, Tang Shunzhi and Wang Daokun all served during the piracy suppression campaign of the 1550s and 1560s and embraced martial endeavours in addition to their civil functions. In this atmosphere of military activism, Qi made the beginning of a successful career and nurtured friendships which would continue to bloom as his life progressed. In addition, the prominent place the value of *kuang* would assume in more radical branches of Wang Yangming's movement created an additional bridge between *wen* and *wu*, as it provided literati and military men to assume the identities of both the Confucian gentleman and knight-errant. I therefore posit that, next to the devaluation of external investigations and texts as sources of moral principles (thus paradoxically re-legitimizing the Strategists and their texts as proper study materials for the Confucian gentleman), the esteem accorded to *kuang* increased the number of bridges Wang Yangming's *xinxue* allowed to be built between *wen* and *wu* to two. Qi Jiguang and his social surroundings were thus able to legitimize and perform their friendships through the model of social intercourse knight-errantry offered, in which intimate friendship and brotherhood between men were important aspirations. Ultimately, this lead to a syncretism which made the fusion of the identities of Confucian gentleman, Sunzian general, and knight-errant socio-culturally acceptable during the late Ming. This contrasted with the more restrained and narrow identities allowed by Song Neo-Confucianism, which barely provided scope for the *rujiang* Confucian-general ideal, and which downright rejected knight-errantry. Meanwhile, beyond creating and constituting a community of officials and literati cultivating *wen* and *wu* qualities, the *xinxue*-network on the southeastern coast had another important function as well: as a platform for military knowledge circulation. In the next chapter I will turn to exactly this phenomenon and its impact on the Qi Jiguang's systematization of knowledge in his two military manuals.

Chapter 9 – Military Knowledge Circulation and the *Xinxue*-Statecraft Network

This chapter will explore the location of Qi's military writings within the established tradition of Chinese military thought and assess their indebtedness to the commander's access to circulating military knowledge within the network of Neo-Confucian civil and military officials. In the first chapter, we have seen that statecraft as a genre had, like military writings, led a semi-independent life often associated with different ideological positions and leanings until the late Tang and early Song dynasties. My hypothesis is that statecraft became more and more a corollary of Confucianism, as the latter gained status as the state orthodoxy through its promotion as the sole avenue into state service via the examination system. The rise of Neo-Confucianism during the Southern Song seems to have brought a distinct Neo-Confucian statecraft to the fore, with a strong component of local voluntarism. In this chapter I will briefly trace the development of Neo-Confucian statecraft during the Ming dynasty before arguing that the military activities on the south-eastern coast during the mid-sixteenth century featured a strong input of *xinxue*-scholars. I will thereupon argue that the associated military and statecraft writings, the line between which would become blurred, have to be considered part of Neo-Confucian statecraft as well. By way of establishing the background of this argument, I will posit that the artificial Han-era category of *bingjia*, or *School of the Strategists*, should be disregarded as it obscures the social and intellectual cross-fertilization between military and Neo-Confucian thinkers and their thought. It is my contention that the formation of Qi Jiguang's military writings should be understood specifically within the context of Wang Yangming-influenced Neo-Confucian statecraft, a notion which I will fully explore in chapter ten. But first, we must establish to what kind of military writings dating from previous dynasties and epochs in Chinese history turned, before we can assess the impact of both *xinxue* moral philosophy in general and the pragmatic solutions applied by Wang Yangming on Qi Jiguang's military ideas.

Military Writings as a Problematic Category

As we have seen in the first chapter, the first known examples of Chinese military thought arose during the later Zhou dynasty, with the most important examples emerging during, perhaps

understandably, the Warring States Period. These included the vaunted *Art of War* by Sun Wu and the *Wuzi* 吳子 by Wu Qi 吳起, often considered the two foundational texts in the tradition of Chinese military writing. As noted in the first chapter, these two works and other texts were then during the Han dynasty categorized as belonging to a distinct category of *bingjia*, suggesting a structural and ideational coherence within the diverse literature which in reality probably amounted to no more than a mutual engagement with military matters. But textual production certainly did not stop with the end of the Warring States and the beginning of the unified imperial era in Chinese history. From a survey of the monumental *Siku quanshu* compilation, it becomes clear that over the span of Chinese history until the moment of the *Siku quanshu*'s commission, at least 1,340 distinct works of military thought existed at one time or another.[594] However, until now no attempt has been made to analyse this amorphous group of texts and divide them in "lineages" of ideas and genres. Some of them were small treatises on wall defence, some concerned divinatory practices and some were huge all-encompassing encyclopaedia of military science. We however know very little about the socio-cultural background of the authors, the connections with Confucian, Daoist or Buddhist thought and their published numbers and circulation in knowledge networks.

In the second chapter I have described the formation of the three great manuals of the Tang-Song transition and the formation of the canon of the *Seven Military Classics*. Fortunately, these ten works are a bit better known, and it can be assumed that these texts had the deepest impact on central policy formulation, as all these were attempts at reorganizing and systematizing military knowledge by the state. At the same time as these works were being created, a slow bifurcation took place between a largely illiterate professional military class and a literate scholastic community devoted to state service increasingly selected through an examination system. A problem presents itself for the researcher: since most military men could not read the important works on their own profession, we know very little of the praxis in reality. Presumably a lot of knowledge on military strategy, martial arts and tactics circulated orally within the military ranks and also in civilian society. As Benjamin Israel observed, a lot of martial knowledge must have circulated in society, because else Wang Yangming would not have been able to recruit so many skilled men within civilian society.[595] Other scholars like Peter Lorge also assume that at least

[594] Chen-Ya Tien, *Chinese Military Theory: Ancient and Modern* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1992), 21-22.
[595] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 60-61.

since the Warring States Period, all sorts of military knowledge probably circulated outside of the purview of the state, [596] even though there were attempts to keep it secret from the civil population by the state at times. Even if these texts were read, they were thus often not mentioned openly in other writings.[597]

From this short overview, we can already draw the conclusion that military knowledge could circulate in different forms, both oral and written, and that these forms were tied to different socio-cultural contexts of circulation. Furthermore, military thought did not constitute a consistent monolithic ideological program as seen in the first chapter, as the category to which it assigned by Han scholars was an artificial *post-facto* reconstruction and reorganization of the intellectual world existing in the centuries before them. Therefore, the tendency to treat military knowledge as a separate category has had the unfortunately result, in my view, to obscure the entanglements between it and other scholarly intellectual pursuits. In addition, the scholars concerning themselves with, for example, Neo-Confucian intellectual pursuits and those engaged with military thought probably both came from the same literate social environment, making intellectual entanglements more likely. Below, I will explore this link by considering the development of military thought in relation to the burgeoning field of Neo-Confucian statecraft.

(Military) Statecraft and Its Development in the Neo-Confucian Context

Wang Yangming's philosophical reorientation of Neo-Confucianism stressed social activism, especially through his doctrine of the unity of (moral) knowledge and (moral) action. This orientation towards social activism was further exemplified by the great significance Wang and his followers attached to one particular member of the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*; namely the *Great Learning*, or *Daxue* 大學. This part of the *Four Books* canon, thought to be based on Confucius' own teachings by succeeding generations of Confucian literati, makes the connection between moral self-cultivation and the ultimate task or even duty of ordering society.[598] In the second chapter we have seen that the initial Neo-Confucian movement as it appeared in the southern Song dynasty was characterized by social activism as well. There was a turn away from

[596] Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts*, 55-56.
[597] Joseph Needham et al, *Science and Civilization in China, Volume 5: Chemistry and Chemical Technology. Part VI: Military Technology: Missiles and Sieges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 88-89.
[598] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 221-222.

a Confucian identity which associated itself with military and martial abilities and values, accompanied by a turn towards local voluntarism. As military activities during the Song dynasty tended to be a more state-centralized affair than during the middle and late Ming dynasty and were perceived as tasks for the central government (coupled with a tendency to disdain martial activities), the Neo-Confucian movement largely turned its back to the centre and concerned itself with the local as a way to ensure and perpetuate the elite status of its adherents in local society. This was inherent in the message of the movement itself, which disavowed status as an official as a requirement for local leadership. Instead it was those who had learned the true way, i.e. those with moral qualifications, who had the right to claim this leadership.

Furthermore, with the institution of the examination system, hereditary status and the automatically guaranteed succession of power through the generations of a family was largely abolished and, as Bol contends, families therefore had to strengthen their local power base.[599] Therefore the Neo-Confucian program fitted this new social reality so well and the local voluntarism should be seen as a means of seizing this local leadership status. This local voluntarism could take the form of "statecraft", or *jingshi*, something Kandice Hauf takes to literally mean "to regulate the world",[600] although in the context of Southern Song Neo-Confucianism "*state*craft" should probably be considered a misnomer for the local voluntarist contents of its ideas. This had already for a long time within Confucianism been the corollary of the ideology, an expression of the this-worldliness of its message in opposition to the otherworldliness of Daoism and Buddhism. Neo-Confucianism continued this tradition of statecraft, which during the Song could take the form of communal projects like building academies, establishing famine-relief granaries and creating and maintaining diverse infrastructure. Military matters were not entirely neglected, as we have seen in the case of Lu Jiuyuan and Lu Jiuling in the second chapter. However, it was a domain of activity frowned upon. Furthermore, even Lu Jiuling did not want to leave matters of military defence to people such as knight-errants, instead the literati should involve themselves with it. This implied dichotomy in the identities between literati and knight-errant seems to have been more marginal during the mid-sixteenth century. Wang Yangming followers like Xu Wei, Qi Jiguang, Tang Shunzhi, and Wang Ji sought to embody both identities. Neo-Confucianism was a "small government"-ideology and therefore much emphasis was put on local leadership and local

[599] Bol, "The "Localist Turn"," 4-5.
[600] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 221.

solutions. These solutions, as articulated by Zhu Xi amongst others, also included community covenants obliging its participants to mutual moral monitoring and rectification.[601] The Wang Yangming movement would be paired with a renewed surge of statecraft activities, both within and outside of the official governing institutions. Several of Wang Yangming's first generation followers, whom we have already encountered, dabbled in statecraft. Luo Hongxian was concerned with reforming the tax system of his native county when he was retired from government service; Zou Shouyi, Nie Bao and Luo Hongxian were concerned with setting up community covenants, *xiangyue*, in various counties in their native region, which was Ji'an 吉安 prefecture in Jiangxi province.[602]

In contrast to modern scholarship on the late Ming dynasty, the history of statecraft during the early Ming has received relatively scant attention. An important reason for this is perhaps the relatively lower production of statecraft writings and their survival until the present day in comparison with the wide circulation and survival of texts from the late Ming owing to the printing boom of the sixteenth century. An exception to this state of affairs are Hung-lam Chu's research of the fifteenth century statecraft work *Daxue yanyi bu* 大學衍義補 (*Supplement to the Meaning of the Great Learning*) by Qiu Jun丘濬 (1420-1495). From its title it can be seen that it was "marketed" as an addition to Chen Dexiu's 陳德修 (1178-1255) treatise (*Daxue yanyi* 大學衍義) from the Southern Song-era, but Hung points out that the contents are very different. Where Chen Dexiu focuses on the moral rectification of the ruler and as such signified a return of Neo-Confucian statecraft concerns back to political centre, Qiu Jun compiles practical solutions to myriad aspects of governance. His work received imperial sponsorship and Qiu Jun wrote it in such a way that it addressed the emperor himself as the audience.[603] Furthermore, the topics were arranged in such a way that they reflected the spheres of activity of the Six Ministries.[604] The *Daxue yanyi bu* drew from an eclectic range of written sources. In Hung-lam Chu's words:

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[601] Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, "Introduction," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, edited by Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), 22-27.
[602] Gerritsen, *Ji'an Literati*, 161.
[603] Hung-lam Chu, "Ch'iu Chün (1421-1495) and the `Ta-hsüeh yen-i pu': Statecraft Thought in Fifteenth-Century China," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1984), 2-3, 60.
[604] Chu, "Ch'iu Chün," 61-62.

> "They include the standard Confucian Classics; writing by ancient philosophers of both Confucian and non-Confucian schools; exegesis and elaboration on both classic and philosophical writings; histories ancient and contemporary, standard and chronological in style, political and institutional in nature; comments on historical events by writers contemporary with as well as after the events; memorials addressing concrete problems; administrative handbooks, including gazetteers; military handbooks; and others as well."[605]

Chu notes that Qiu Jun showed a preference for adherents of the Neo-Confucian movement, but that he did not shy away from appreciating the ideas of even their ideological opponents, like Wang Anshi, who advocated a big-government approach.[606] This particular example of Neo-Confucian-influenced central statecraft would retain enormous influence in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, setting a standard for statecraft compilations later in the dynasty. It demonstrated that non-Neo-Confucian thought could remain alive within its statecraft tradition, and that military theory could be part of this tradition as well.

In the mid-sixteenth century, the new tradition of compiling large statecraft treatises would be continued by three new publications. In short succession, these were carried out by Huang Xun 黃訓 (dates unknown), Zhang Han 張瀚 (1511-1593) and Ruan E, and Wan Biao.[607] *Xinxue*-adherents were thus involved in two of the three statecraft compilations, indicating the vitality of this concern within the new direction of Neo-Confucianism. Military concerns took up considerable space in these treatises. The statecraft tradition was thus very much alive within the *xinxue*-movement, and it concerned itself with military affairs as well. The latter was not altogether surprising considering earlier developments within the statecraft tradition, however it seems that the content of *xinxue*-ideology itself emancipated certain strands of military thought from non-*xinxue* Confucian critiques. This could already be detected when considering Qi Jiguang's attitude to the *Seven Military Classics* as seen in chapter seven. This same attitude towards the *Seven Military Classics*, especially that towards the problematic contents (from a Confucian point of view) of *Sunzi* and *Wuzi*, could also be gleaned from the views of others in the *xinxue*-tradition.

[605] Idem, 65.
[606] Idem, 66.
[607] William Stewart Atwell, "Ch'en Tzu-lung (1608-1647): A Scholar-Official of the Late Ming Dynasty" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1974), 82.

I will now turn to the development of statecraft within the *xinxue*-network Qi Jiguang was a part of, and especially highlight the important role military knowledge would come to play in it by the mid-sixteenth century.

Converging *Xinxue*-Networks and (Military) Statecraft during the Wokou-Crisis

Wang Ji once described his master and drew a link between his interest in the military classics and statecraft activities: "He actively engaged with Sun [Wu] and Wu [Qi], and although his aspiration lay in statecraft, his talents were also those which he indulged in" 馳騁於孫吳，雖其志在經世，亦才有所縱也.[608] In this sentence Wang Ji makes clear that military activities could be viewed as belonging to the domain of statecraft within Wang Yangming's movement, but also he saw it as giving expression to one's naturally endowed talents. As we have seen, these talents (*cai*) depended on one's quality of *qi*. Wang Ji seems to evaluate *qi*-endowed military talents as a positive phenomenon and its subordination to statecraft activities as an aside.

In her monograph on literati activism during the late Ming dynasty, historian Joanna Handlin Smith expressed her puzzlement at the relatively widespread phenomenon of literati engaging in military affairs.[609] This engagement, which was reflected in a writing and publication boom of assorted new military writings and commentaries on older classics, on the one hand can simply be construed to reflect the new vigour of the printing press from the sixteenth century onwards.[610] Earlier literati interest in this direction might have been obscured by the scarce possibilities of publication and transmission during earlier phases of the dynasty. Furthermore, in my tentative reading of Wang Ji's description of Wang Yangming's life, the latter's engagement with military classics like *Sunzi's Art of War* could simply be seen as an extension of his statecraft aspirations. As such, military activities could be legitimated within (Neo-)Confucianism as simply a part of the moral obligation to order society. A third reason I would like to posit is the increasing necessity of military writings to aid literati and civil bureaucrats in their bureaucratic and sub-bureaucratic government of realm. We have seen in the third chapter that the decreasing ability of

[608] Wang Ji 王畿, *Wang Ji ji* 王畿集 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 33.
[609] Joanna F. Handlin, *Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lü K'un and Other Scholar-Officials* (Berkeley, California: California University Press, 1983), 209-210.
[610] Joseph P. McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culure in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 46.

the hereditary military to ensure military security against internal rebellions and external enemies meant a corresponding increase in the importance of mercenaries, rural militias and aboriginal troops which supplemented and often even replaced them. These non-hereditary troops were usually under the authority and command of civil bureaucrats and not the hereditary military officials. This change was both because of internal structural reasons pertaining to the military system established at the beginning of the dynasty, and external factors.

Within the Neo-Confucian movement, and certainly within its *xinxue*-branch, knowledge circulated about the more practical affairs of managing society. Significant here is also the cooperation between *xinxue* adherents in and out of office: when an in-office official set up a *xiangyue* community covenant in his county where he served as a magistrate, he asked Nie Bao to write a preface emphasizing the importance of the participation of the local elites in upholding it.[611] This was of course a concern for a bureaucracy that had a fleeting individual presence by design. Magistrates, for example, would only serve three years in a single position in order to prevent the development of local ties and interests. This kind of cooperation also extended to sharing knowledge pertaining to military campaigns and frontier control. Qian Dehong, when he was no longer in any official function, transmitted knowledge about raising militia to Qi Jiguang. Can we trace a broader process of (military) knowledge circulation as a part of statecraft within the sixteenth-century *xinxue*-movement?

Recently, Kai Filipiak has noted that the south-eastern campaigns against the *Wokou* stimulated a boom in cartographical and military works of the frontier area. He notes that many of the authors shared an interest in martial arts and he speculates that they may have taken Wang Yangming as an exemplar. Included in this group are the hereditary military officers Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou, and Liu Xian 劉顯 (? -1581) and the literati and civil bureaucrats Zheng Ruoceng, Tan Lun and Tang Shunzhi. With the exception of Liu Xian, who left no writings to explore, I have been able to identify Qi, Zheng, Tan, Tang (and perhaps Yu as well) as adherents of a form of *xinxue* Neo-Confucianism. And they were all part of an anti-Wokou operation which was already led by Yangming-followers Hu Zongxian, Ruan E and Hu Song. Filipiak characterizes this group of six as a network. What I will argue below is that this network extended much further and that it

[611] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 272.

was in fact a *xinxue*-network comprising followers of Chen Xiangzhang, Zhan Ruoshui and Wang Yangming, and that it included many first-generation followers of these men.

Within this combined *wen* and *wu* pool of talent, knowledge thus circulated and was compiled and written down. Much of this activity seems to have taken place within the ranks of those associated with either Wang Yangming, or his friend Zhan Ruoshui's teachings. The affinity between activism, martial identities and *xinxue* which I explored in the previous three chapters was on full display during the sustained campaign to pacify the south-eastern maritime frontier. The ideology brought together military hereditary men, civil bureaucrats and literati with diverse interests and talents outside of government service.

A significant amount of knowledge circulated and transmitted within *xinxue*-circles had a bearing on military matters, which had already started with Wang Yangming, himself. In the course of the practical application of his skills and knowledge during multiple military crisis in the south of the empire, he also generated new military knowledge and sought the application of new military technologies. In a recent monograph, Tonio Andrade elucidated the process of knowledge circulation which accompanied the introduction of European firearms in the campaign against the Prince of Ning. Wang gained access to knowledge about Portuguese guns from befriended civil officials who also had a history of leading military campaigns against armed uprisings in the empire's southern inland areas. One of these, Tang Long 唐龍（1477-1546) used these Portuguese guns in battles against bandits in both north and south China, and another official called Lin Jun 林俊 (1452-1527) fought bandits in Jiangxi province using these weapons and cast them for Wang Yangming once he heard of the Prince of Ning's uprising. Zou Shouyi later commemorated this process of transfer in a poem. Of this phenomenon, Andrade concludes that "[…] elite officials, being at the center of wide nets of patronage and friendship, helped spread information about Portuguese cannons widely." I have not been able to ascertain what Wang's contemporaries like Lin Jun and Tang Long thought of his philosophy. However, concerning the diffusion and innovation related to cannon, Andrade notes the roles played by his followers, including the later efforts at gun founding by Weng Wanda, whom we will meet below, and the descriptions by Qi Jiguang and Zheng Ruoceng.[612] I posit that the development of personal ties between *xinxue*-adherrents, in addition to their attitudes towards military affairs and martial identities, could only

[612] Tonio Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016), 138-142.

have facilitated the process of military technology and knowledge circulation. I will now elucidate this connection between *xinxue*-networks and military knowledge circulation in the case of the anti-Wokou campaign.

An examination of the ties between the first-generation followers of Wang Yangming and the people involved with the maritime frontier campaign of the 1550s and 1560s reveals more than only Qian Dehong passing along his military knowledge. Wan Biao, a hereditary military officer whom we already encountered in the sixth chapter, was literate and had passed the military examinations. He was known to be in contact with Wang Ji, Luo Hongxian, Qian Dehong and Tang Shunzhi and was thus probably in a good position to pass on his military knowledge to prominent people involved in *xinxue* circles. The knowledge he obtained and wrote down pertained to more than mere military affairs. One of his longer-term responsibilities was overseeing part of the tribute grain shipment from the south to the capital, and in this capacity, he proposed improvements to the administration of the system as well as the conservation of rivers. In military terms, he was drawn in the Wokou upheavals and contributed personal funds towards establishing his military units which also included Buddhist monks from the famed Shaolin monastery, well known for its martial arts traditions. His knowledge of the causes of-, and solutions to the *Wokou* problem he wrote down in a treatise named *Hai kou yi* 海寇議, or *Treatise on the Ocean Bandits.* This treatise was probably consulted by none other than Hu Zongxian.[613] Zou Shouyi had helped Wang Yangming in the suppression of the rebellion by the Prince of Ning,[614] and Hu Zongxian also asked Zou Shouyi to join his private staff as an advisor, no doubt owing to his experience as a participant in Wang Yangming's pacification campaigns. Tang Shunzhi widened his scope of interest to include geometry, astronomy, weaponry, military strategy and mathematics. His military ideas crystalized in a big military manual entitled *Wu bian* 武編, or *Military Writings*. He served in the Ministry of War and was detached to aid Hu Zongxian in his campaigns against the Wokou, which he was known to supervise from the front on horseback and clad in armour.[615] Luo Hongxian had skills as a cartographer and taught Zheng Ruoceng, who would use his abilities to chart the maritime frontier regions. He declined Hu Zongxian's offer to join the campaign in person,

[613] Lienche Tu Fang, "WAN Piao," in in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1337-1339.
[614] Julia Ching, "TSOU Shou-i," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1310.
[615] Huang, "T'ANG Shun-chih," 1253-1255.

but it is significant that these contacts existed. Nor did this knowledge sharing network on the basis of *xinxue*-ties restrict itself to the south and the endemic upheavals in that macro area of the empire. An official serving at the northern frontier, Weng Wanda, who also advocated European firearms as a solution for the empire's military problems, had become acquainted with Wang Yangming and his philosophy as well.[616] Mao Kun was also acquainted with Zhejiang's Wang Zongmu 王宗沐 (1523-1591) and his writings, which included the military title *Bing shi* 兵事 (*Military Affairs*). I was unable to trace this title, but Ray Huang notes in his short biography of Wang Zongmu that he indeed wrote about military frontier affairs. Furthermore, Wang Zongmu was a follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy and a prolific author on many different statecraft topics, including the northern frontier dealt with in the (41) *San zhen lu* 三鎮錄 (*Records of the Three Garrison Posts*).[617]

Arguably, the pinnacle achievement of the *xinxue*-circulation of knowledge was the huge cartographical survey and technical summary of the anti-Wokou campaign compiled by Zheng Ruoceng, whom we met in chapter six. It details policy proposals, strategies, and background information concerning the Wokou, and it was sponsored by Hu Zongxian. These proposals did not only cover purely military matters, but also campaign finances.[618] It was not the work of one man. The *Chou hai tu bian* lists 79 names of contributors to the end result. A list of consulted literature is also provided. This includes all the official dynastic histories compiled until that time, institutional histories and encyclopaedias from the Tang empire onwards, gazetteers and cartographical surveys from the Song and especially the Ming of the areas affected by Wokou raids (including many written by members of the 79 contributors), and miscellaneous texts like military manuals.[619] There are, however, two features which betray the *Chou hai tu bian* in my view as a fruit of predominantly *xinxue* labour: the pride of place accorded Wang Yangming's campaigns, especially the one against the Prince of Ning, and the membership of the 79.

The lessons learned by Wang Yangming in the earlier sixteenth century during his management of several military campaigns would still retain their relevance in the eyes of the leadership of the anti-piracy effort decades later. Significantly, Wang Yangming himself is quoted

[616] Ma, "Weng Wanda shengping yu sixiang (1498-1552)," 45-55.
[617] Ray Huang, "WANG Tsung-mu," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 2*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1440-1441.
[618] Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast*, 77, 102.
[619] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 972-985.

around fifteen times on various issues, again showing the continued importance of his ideas for the officials and literati leading the anti-piracy campaign of the 1550s and 1560s, almost three decades after he had passed away. In addition, his colleague and contemporary Hu Shining 胡世寧 (1469-1530) provided an equal number of quotes to the contents of the *Chou hai tu bian*. Together with Wang, he had been the principal architect of the downfall of the Prince of Ning and the failure of his rebellion, one of the military campaigns against a would-be usurper belonging to the imperial family Wang had participated in.[620] Apparently, Hu and Wang discussed the latter's practice of lecturing about learning (*jiangxue* 講學), as shown by the following passage preserved in Wang's collected writings:

> Shouren [Wang Yangming] once said Hu Shining valued lecturing about learning [*jiangxue*] little, and Shining said: "I hate that you only value lecturing about studying [*jiangxue*] a lot."
> 守仁嘗謂胡世寧少講學，世寧曰 ： "某恨公多講學耳。"[621]

Not everyone Wang cooperated with thus held his emphasis on lecturing about his philosophy and its resulting praxis in high regard, yet Hu Shining had played an important part in Wang's successful campaign and presumably by virtue of this association was referenced in the *Chou hai tu bian*. He was mostly cited concerning his ideas about recruiting local stalwarts to keep them away from a bandit's existence.[622] This work of statecraft in any case served to highlight Wang's practical statesmanship accomplishments and not his philosophy, which was still controversial in the political centre around the time of the *Chou hai tu bian*'s publication, a point that I raised in chapter seven.

Among the contemporary importance of Wang's ideas was their usefulness combatting the continuing lax discipline of the armies of the Ming empire. Wang's contributions were to be taken as guidelines for the present day: "This means that rewards and punishments are important affairs of the military; they have to be implemented according to the precedents that were recorded/此言

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620 Andrea S. Goldman, *Opera and the City: The Politics of Culture in Beijing, 1770-1900* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 311.
621 Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1543.
622 See for example: Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾. *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 672.

賞罰爲兵家之要務，當照律例所載而行."[623] A Fujian magistrate furthermore argued for the timelessness of Wang's ideas: "Like in recent years Mister Wang Yangming's memorial explaining rewards and punishments, though already past events, still one should not forget their previous merit and therefore they can always clearly advise on the punishments/若近歲王陽明公申明賞罰疏，雖已事之後，猶不忘前功，斯可以永昭勸懲者也."[624] Wang's advice on unravelling bands of pirates by positive incentives also made it to the pages of the *Chou hai tu bian*:

> The Minister of War Wang Shouren [Wang Yangming] said: "Distribute the announcement that it will not be inquired about whether they were forced to follow [the bandits]. Even those thieves that have once received title and rank, the ones who are able to escape and return [to our side] all avoid decapitation. The bandit followers who surrender are given rewards. [It] causes inside and outside residents as well as the local leaders, etc, in all directions to propagate [it], dissolving and breaking up the gangs.
> 兵部尚書王守仁云：「出給告示，凡脅從皆不問。雖嘗受賊官爵，能逃歸者皆免處斬。賊徒歸降者給賞。使内外居民及鄉導人等四路傳播，以解散其黨。」[625]

This was the first phase of Wang Yangming's campaign strategy, enticing the bandit group to break up, leaving only a core group of bandits against which military action could be undertaken. It served to contain violence, by ensuring local officials would not use excessive violence to gain big tallies of dead "bandits" to claim rewards of merit.[626]

In a further section, Wang laments the lacklustre implementation of the practice of offering amnesty to the bandits by officials. According to him, the main problem was constituted by the fact that officials were indifferent whether former bandits remained reformed after amnesty had been given and were deaf to the complaints of the local common people when they aired their grievances about it. This lead to a loss of confidence in the ability of the officialdom to provide good governance and also contributed to the swelling of the ranks of the bandits. The added danger was also that reformed bandits who were faking their return to virtue and who were acting as local militia became a fifth column filled with informers working for the bandits still in open revolt and

[623] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1543.
[624] Idem, 755.
[625] Idem, 782.
[626] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 72.

who were prone to desert again to the other side in the case of setbacks.[627] The problem here was the reverse one of officials using excessive violence. These instances were a result of officials lacking sufficient military strength to enforce peace by military means, leading to an excessive offering of rewards. Wang thus recognized the need for additional control measures, one of which was a disciplined army.[628]

The *baojia* 保甲 system was cited in the *Chou hai tu bian* as well.[629] There was, however, awareness that the *baojia*-system had its limits, also among followers of Wang Yangming's learning himself. The following quote from the *Chou hai tu bian* attests to this, and also shows that Wang's military exploits remained a popular topic for those discussing military affairs well into the 1550s and 1560s:

> Training village militia
> Supreme Commander Hu Zongxian said: "Recently the ones idly talking about military affairs speak of Mister Yangming's *baojia* method, [but] hardly realize this method stops at providing security to newly incorporated people and provides defence against the petty thievery of bandits. From ancient times to now, I have not heard that this system defends the outside borders.
> 練鄉兵
> 總督尚書胡宗憲云：近日虛談兵事者，動以陽明先生保甲之法爲言，殊不知此法止爲安新附之民，禦鼠竊之盜耳。自古及今，未聞以此制禦外裔也。[630]

Considering the attainment of good generals in the field, a magistrate of Fujian province lamented the situation that caused a bifurcation between physical martial skillsets and theoretical military knowledge, caused by the inability of the military examination system to produce enough officers with strategic and tactical knowledge *and* practical experience. Therefore, it often depended on civil bureaucrats to handle these more theoretical dimensions of warfare. These civil bureaucrats would then have to select talented men outside of the regular officialdom to assist them, particularly men well-versed in the various skillsets. According to this magistrate, these skills included astrology, geography, but also military strategy and martial arts. "On the same day when Mr. Wang Yangming at home grasped military [matters], on each occasion he was able to recruit

[627] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾. *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 786.
[628] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity", 58-60.
[629] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾. *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 831.
[630] Idem, 705.

talent by implication of this idea 此王陽明先生於居家握兵之日，每能延攬以寓此意," concluded the magistrate.[631]

A *shengyuan* 生員 local licentiate (i.e. someone who has passed the lowest level of the civil service examinations) brought up Wang's campaign examples when discussing the benefits of recruiting a private advisory staff among the talented non-officials of provinces and sub-provincial administrative units. During the discussion, it was mentioned that these private staff members could include local village leaders and people who had passed different levels of the examination system. These would have to be selected on the basis of their character; abstruse, impractical and presumptuous personalities were to be of little use. The *shengyuan* added:

> From the moment Mr. Wang Yangming entered officialdom to the point when he wielded military power, he used his followers and students and advisors of the office. Later on, when he came across the disturbance of the traitorous [Prince of] Ning, [people] like Long Guang and Huang Shou all, whether as secret agents, hidden spies, or top-secret messengers, usually performed it as trusted subordinates and thereupon were able to succeed so far as to be conferred honours.
> 陽明王先生自入仕以至秉鉞，動隨生徒，顧問幄帷。後遇逆濠之變，若龍光、黃受諸人， 或 爲 間諜，或潛伺察，或通機密，皆以平日腹心爲之，遂能成功，至於封拜. [632]

On the basis of this quotation it is thus possible to posit that Hu Zongxian's private staff (*mufu*) took its direct inspiration from Wang Yangming's practice earlier in the century.

Logistics and financing was another of Wang's policies given a place within the *Chou hai tu bian*. Throughout the empire state granaries had been erected since the time of the founding emperor, in order to collect tax in kind. They were administered by local officials who oversaw the collection of the tax.[633] By Wang Yangming's time, these granaries apparently still existed and he expected them to furnish him with the resources necessary to wage his campaigns. *Chou hai tu bian* records Wang devising policies to utilize them and force cooperation by the local officials managing them.[634]

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[631] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾. *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 682-683.
[632] Idem, 741.
[633] Charles O. Hucker, "Ming Government," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91.
[634] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾. *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 716-717.

In this example, Wang Yangming's concern with not disrupting local society as a consequence of military deployments can be clearly seen. He was adamant that the armies would be rationed and paid for by funds allotted by the state, and in order to prevent different layers of government blocking access to these funds (probably by siphoning off by local officials for their own gain) he advised monitoring the provisions and funding that came in by his subordinates. In no way were the commoners supposed to be burdened by the costs of compensating for corruption. In an adjoining section, Wang Yangming stipulates the amount of provisions the different units of soldiers were supposed to receive and he exhorted that since these provisions were not inexhaustible, the soldiers were not to indulge in extravagance and lazy behavior. This advice was once again taken as a model for the campaigns of the 1550s and 1560s.

Another aspect of the campaign which displayed the influence of Wang Yangming's advise as reflected in the *Chou hai tu bian* concerned the rewards and punishments for the soldiers. Wang Yangming noted that violations would occur if the law was not implemented and enforced. The necessity of implementation of the law was in his mind linked to the personality and career background of the military officers. He distinguished between two kinds of officers: the first kind was honest and their martial courage had been justifiably written down in the records. These people, Wang Yangming noted, did not come from influential families and had not risen through the ranks through social connections. Moreover, they could be entrusted with authority. The second group was different, and presumably embodied the opposite personality traits and career background. This group was liable for committing acts of molestation during marches, made use of powerful connections in order to claim meritorious service for themselves and falsely claim rewards based on no exertion at all. Wang's recipe for this second group was harsh and simple: defeat in battle, for example, meant losing your head. For Wang, the basis of defeating the enemy and encouraging the troops lay with the implementation of these kinds of laws.[635] The reason Wang Yangming emphasized punishing the officers hinged on his belief that displaying lenience towards them would lead to the rank-and-file's disobedience.

A second exhortation he made concerning rewards and punishments was the need for different layers of the military hierarchy to implement them and enforce them on their subordinates. Wang noted that many officers did not dare punish their men for cowardice, laxness and disobedience during combat. His solution was to punish the officers who were unwilling to enforce

[635] Idem, 744.

the regulations in front of the army. This would have to be done by the layer of the hierarchy directly above the one being punished. A similar use of public spectacle as a tool of deterrence was advised in the case of the disposal of enemy combatants captured in battle. They were to be executed in sight of the local population in order to coerce their brethren to lay down arms. A final point made by Wang Yangming was his stress on the immediate imposition of punishments and rewards. A reward that was not awarded immediately after the meritorious action it was allocated for would not be experienced as a reward by the soldiers. Similarly, if one waited too long after a transgression with its punishment, it would not be considered a punishment anymore by the one who was receiving it. The immediacy of implementation of rewards and punishments was valued as beneficial advice for the conduct of the anti-*wokou* campaign by the *Chou hai tu bian*.[636]

The segment of Wang Yangming's views on reward and punishment closed with a detailed list of the rewards and punishments given to the soldiers in different situations and contexts on the battlefield. By way of conclusion Wang added that his general idea was that the soldiers would have to come to fear him more than the enemy, and this could presumably only be achieved by draconian punishments (many offenses had lethal legal consequences) combined with the lure of attractive rewards.[637]

Compiled under sponsorship of Hu Zongxian and published by Hu Song, I would argue that the *Chou hai tu bian*, based on the numerous references to Wang Yangming and Hu Shining highlighted in this chapter, referenced the campaigns of Wang as a kind of blueprint for the campaign of the mid-sixteenth century, probably for reasons of ideological affinity. No other military campaign waged during the Ming period prior to the mid-sixteenth century received any attention in the *Chou hai tu bian*. Many names associated with the *xinxue* network, whom we have already met in chapters six and seven, show up in its pages, recorded giving advice and opinions about different aspects of the south-eastern frontier pacification campaign. These were mostly southern literati devising solutions to a southern military problem in the sixteenth century. From Shaoxing 紹興 prefecture in Zhejiang province hailed, in addition to Qian Dehong, Wang Ji and Xu Wei, a province which also was the home to Mao Kun and Wan Biao. Jiangxi-literati, as already noted, also constituted an important group, which included Luo Hongxian, Zou Shouyi, Tan Lun, and Luo Rufang. The Southern Metropolitan Province Nan Zhili yielded Tang Shunzhi, Zhao Dahe,

[636] Idem, 745.
[637] Idem, 746.

Hu Zongxian, Wang Daokun, Zheng Ruoceng, Ruan E, and Hu Song. Fujian supplied Yu Dayou, which makes Shandong's Qi Jiguang seem relative isolated cases by contrast.[638]

The intensity of statecraft activity in *xinxue* circles should not surprise us, since for Wang Yangming one should proceed from self-cultivation to social activism.[639] Statecraft should therefore be seen as a natural element of the concerns of those who took Wang Yangming and Zhan Ruoshui, and Chen Xianzhang's teachings seriously. The intimate relation between the philosophy of Wang Yangming and statecraft related activities is further evidenced by the publishing activities the pair of Hu Zongxian and Hu Song further embarked on. Around the same time they brought out the *Chou hai tu bian*, they were also involved with the publication of a new edition of Wang Yangming's writings (1557) and his chronological biography (1563).[640] Although this is hard to prove, it is hard not to suspect that the prominent group of *xinxue* adherents involved in the anti-Wokou campaign tried to gain favor for their ideology by showcasing the practical statecraft results of its activist consequences in such a prestigious book project as was the *Chou hai tu bian*. This same tactic would be used later in the 1560s and 1570s when Wang's followers tried to get official state recognition for their master as a true Confucian by getting him officially inducted in the Confucian temple. In Hung Lam-chu's words: "Wang's supporters […] concentrated on what was irrefutable: his accomplishments in state commissions, a manifestation of credible teaching through verifiable deeds."[641] That the prestige attached to the book like the *Chou hai tu bian* could be very substantial was proven by the attempt of Hu Zongxian's descendants to retroactively claim his authorship for the work and purge any reference to Zheng Ruoceng's role in its compilation.[642]

In addition to its contents, the *Chou hai tu bian* also provides a list of names of 79 scholars, civil bureaucrats and military officers which contributed towards its creation. Prominently placed at the beginning are first generation Wang Yangming disciples as Luo Hongxian (whose

[638] This survey was aided immeasurably by Harvard University's *China Biographical Database Project* (CBDB), http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb/home. Consulted on 16-02-2017.
[639] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 46.
[640] Cai Shumin 蔡淑閔, "Yangming xuepai zhi jianli yu fazhan" 陽明學派之建立與發展, in *Zhongguo wenxue zhi xueli yu yingyong – Ming Qing yuyan yu wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui*, edited by Department of Applied Chinese, Ming Chuan University (Taipei: Department of Applied Chinese, Ming Chuan University, 2011), 267-270.
[641] Hung-lam Chu, "The Debate over Recognition of Wang Yang-ming," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 48.1 (1988): 69.
[642] Huang, "CHENG Jo-tseng," 207.

cartographic work formed the basis of all maps in the *Chou hai tu bian*),[643] Wang Ji, and Zou Shouyi. They are listed along with Hu Zongxian, Hu Song, Tang Shunzhi, and members of Hu Zongxian's private staff Mao Kun and Xu Wei. The more radical left-wing follower of Wang Yangming, Luo Rufang, is also mentioned.[644] Earlier we have also seen that Qian Dehong and Wan Biao contributed their knowledge to the anti-Wokou campaign, although they apparently were not involved directly in the creation of the *Chou hai tu bian*. It is clear, therefore, that some of the most important Wang Yangming disciples - representing the Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Taizhou traditions outlined in chapter six - and later followers were drawn into the orbit of Hu Zongxian's military campaign along the southeastern maritime frontier and engaged in statecraft activities. Filipiak was thus correct in positing a network, but I contend that this network was merely the tip of the iceberg and reached back to the most prominent early followers of the three *xinxue*-philosophers. Fully 21 of the 79 contributors I could positively identify as either Zhan Ruoshui's or Wang Yangming's followers (or heavily influenced by their ideas), including many prominent members. The remainder might also be related to these groups, but I could not find any evidence for or against. Only one contributor, Yang Bo (see chapter six), can be definitely identified as not belonging to a *xinxue*-current. I have provided a full list of the 21 in the appendix.

I posit that Qi Jiguang's military manuals should be seen as part and product of this productive south-eastern *xinxue*-statecraft tradition of the first half of the sixteenth century. The existence of the *Chou hai tu bian* and the knowledge of which militarily engaged literati-*cum*-officials were closely associated with Qi Jiguang during the 1550s and 1560s in the south allows to me to tentatively reconstruct the formation of *xinxue* military statecraft and its impact on Ming military knowledge production in general. To achieve this, I will analyse the sources of written military knowledge that this group consulted and what prominence their own military writings would achieve in terms of circulation and influence on later thought. I will start with the access to past military knowledge first.

Access to the Past in the Present ca. 1550: Military Knowledge and Its Circulation

[643] Idem, 206.
[644] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 983-985.

The question of which past sources of (military) knowledge were available to literati-*cum*-officials at any time during, for example, the Ming dynasty has never been attempted. This is unfortunate, for such a survey could answer many pertinent questions. Amongst them, the oft-posited but rarely researched cultural continuity of Chinese civilization, the relative importance of different written works in different periods and places, and the degrees of access to (military knowledge) in different socio-political networks. Especially the latter problematic concerns me here in particular, because it the answer would tentatively show what kind of prior written military knowledge was available to Qi Jiguang. This would also enable us to see his own original contributions in a much clearer light.

An indication of the sometimes-problematic knowledge circulation during the late Ming is given by the example of the compilation of its largest statecraft collection, the seventeenth-century *Huang Ming jingshi wen bian* mentioned in chapter five. According to its chief compilator Chen Zilong, the Ming empire lacked government policies which collected the writings of important officials after their deaths, nor did it dispatch agents to buy and collect relevant books. Chen also bemoaned a relative dearth of wealthy families who compiled the writings of important family members. What was crucial for Chen Zilong's success in his compilation endeavours? William Atwell argues that it was his connections within a network of like-minded literati, the seventeenth-century Donglin 東林 association and friends in general.[645] According to John Dardess, the Donglin association was a group of Confucian literati who strove for empire wide ethical revitalization in the early seventeenth century, and it also constituted a political faction in Beijing. The latter tried to put followers in key government positions in order to improve the moral fibre of imperial governance.[646] For Qi Jiguang in the mid-sixteenth century the same conditions, characterized by his membership of an idealistic empire wide group of Neo-Confucian literati, must have applied. In the case of military writings, access must have been even more precarious in light of the government policies limiting their circulation. As such it is legitimate to look at a wider group of like-minded literati and officials around Qi Jiguang and make an inventory of their access to military writings. What, then, can we know about Qi Jiguang's access to these texts?

[645] Atwell, "Ch'en Tzu-lung," 85-86.
[646] John W. Dardess, *Blood and History in China: The Donglin Faction and Its Repression, 1620-1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 1.

This is a question I will answer by looking at the writings of a number of literati and officials who had strong military interests and wrote military treatises themselves.

My argument in this section will proceed from the assumption that the group of scholars, scholar-officials and military men involved with the piracy suppression campaign and associated with Hu Zongxian formed a relatively homogeneous ideological group extending across social and official hierarchical layers. From this proceeds my assumption that it is possible to treat the *Chou hai tu bian* as a relatively comprehensive snapshot of the written knowledge available to and circulating within this group. Third, by combining the insights of military knowledge circulation gleaned from this work with the range of works known to be available to some of the group members heavily involved in military affairs, an even more detailed picture can emerge of the state of military knowledge circulation in the mid-sixteenth century. My approach to this is a minimalist one: only when a (military) text is mentioned or quoted in the literary collections of the sample group investigated in the context of military discussions, do I assume that this text was possibly part of the knowledge circulation process. Finally, the sources mentioned in the *Chou hai tu bian* will be included in the survey as well. I will first briefly elaborate on the sample group of authors I have selected for the survey and my reasons for doing so. Second, I will give an overview of the kinds of sources of military thought I have found, and categorize them by genre and antiquity.

The authors whose writings I have sampled to come to an understanding of which sources they used to in their production of new military knowledge are as follows: Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou, Tang Shunzhi, Tan Lun, Wang Daokun, Qian Dehong, Hu Zongxian, Xu Wei, and Mao Kun.[647] In addition, I have investigated Zheng Ruoceng's *Chou hai tu bian* as representative of the military knowledge circulation of the entire anti-Wokou effort under Hu Zongxian. All the authors were both involved in the military campaigns of 1550s and 1560s and were known to have made a considerable contribution to the production of new military knowledge. Although Qian Dehong and Wang Daokun did not contribute to the *Chou hai tu bian*, they can be assumed to have had an impact on Qi Jiguang's developing military thought and for this reason they have been included in this survey. I have checked the extant literary collections and military writings of these men and compiled the titles of works and traced back the quotations of other works they used in the context of discussions about military affairs.

[647] See Appendix B for a fuller consideration of my applied methodology.

The first group of sources, perhaps not surprisingly, consists of the *Seven Military Classics*,[648] which include the *Sunzi bingfa*[649], *Wuzi*[650], *Weiliaozi*[651], *Sima fa*[652], and the *Liu tao*, probably dating from the Warring States. In addition, it includes *Huangshi gong san lüe* 黃石公三略 (*Three Strategies of Huang Shigong*)[653] and *Tang Taizong Li Wei gong wendui* 唐太宗李衛公問對 (*Questions and Replies between Tang Taizong and Duke Li Wei*), the former probably dating to the Western Han and the latter to the tenth or eleventh century.[654] These treatises contain advice on a wide range of topics, including strategies, tactics, organizational principles, recruitment, equipment, discipline and disciplinary measures. Most members of the group refer to all seven, or at least one of the classics.

The second group consists of a number of sources that have often been utilized as military treatises, dating from a period up to and including the Yuan dynasty, but were not part of the military canon. The *Huangshi gong su shu* 黃石公素書 (*Pure Book of Huang Shigong*)[655], a military treatise that was probably written by Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043-1121) during the Northern Song.[656] The *Guigu zi* 鬼谷子 (*Master of the Ghost Valley*), a purportedly Warring States-era treatise on the art of persuasion – but probably dating from the late fourth century -, which is sometimes regarded as a military work.[657] The *Wo qi jing* 握奇經 (*Classic of Grasping the Unconventional*)[658], a treatise mainly dealing with army formations and their movements during battle. It contains parts purportedly dating back to the Zhou and the Han, but it only first

[648] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 13-14; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Zhizhitang ji* 止止堂集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 272.
[649] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1211; Wang Daokun 汪道昆, *Taihan ji* 太函集, *volume 2* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 1235; Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 576; Xu Wei 徐渭, *Xu Wei ji* 徐渭集, *volume 3* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 897.
[650] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1231; Xu Wei 徐渭, *Xu Wei ji* 徐渭集, *volume 2* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 508.
[651] Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 75.
[652] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1301.
[653] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1211.
[654] Sawyer and Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 283-284, 313.
[655] Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 239.
[656] Xu Baolin 许保林, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan* 中国兵书通览 (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1990), 142-143.
[657] Michael Robert Broschat, "`Guiguzi': A Textual Study and Translation" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1985), 5, 26; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 202; Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1223.
[658] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1261; Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 623.

showed up in Song-era catalogues.[659] A work dating to the Southern Song, entitled *Chaoye qian yan* 朝野僉言 (*All Kinds of Talk from Court and Commonality*)[660], which was a part of a bigger treatise on city defence, the *Shoucheng lu* 守城錄 (*Record of City Defense*).[661] The treatise named the *Bei zheng lu* 北征录 (*Record of the Northern Campaign*), an early thirteenth-century work on military frontier affairs, which was rediscovered in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century after having been lost for a while. This work is divided in two smaller treatises, which are now published together as *Cuiwei nan zheng lu, bei zheng lu he ji* 翠微南征录北征录合集 (Combined Collection of Cui Wei's Record of the Southern Campaign and Record of the Northern Campaign)[662].[663] The *Bai jiang zhuan* 百將傳, or *Biographies of One Hundred Generals.*[664] This latter work consists of the biographies of generals serving from the eleventh century BCE to the ninth CE and was composed during the Northern Song dynasty by a scholar named Zhang Yu 張預 (dates unknown).[665] As can be surmised, some of these were tied to a specific historical and military context, like the *Cuiwei nan zheng lu, bei zheng lu he ji*. The dispersion of these texts among the group is much more limited, with Tang Shunzhi taking the lead in the utilization of these texts.

The third group is formed by the three most important military treatises to appear in the Tang and early Song dynasties, the *Tai bai yin jing* (*Secret Classic of Venus*)[666], the *Hu qian jing* (*Classic of the Tiger Seal*)[667], and the *Wujing zongyao* (*Essentials for the Military Classics*)[668]. Like the first group of the *Seven Military Classics*, this group of texts was relatively well-dispersed

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659 Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 207-209.
660 Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1378.
661 Idem, 253-255.
662 Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1211.
663 Hua Yue 華岳, *Cuiwei nan zheng lu, bei zheng lu he ji* 翠微南征录北征录合集 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2014), 1-5.
664 Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 13-14; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 344.
665 Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 332.
666 Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1277; Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 718.
667 Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1301.
668 Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 73; Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1261; Yu Dayou 俞大猷, *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 570; Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 975.

among the group. In many ways, these were encyclopaedic elaborations of the classics, which included large sections on military rituals. In the words of Marcia Butler: "In contrast to the conceptual, rather abstract prescriptions of the older treatises, these manuals contain detail on all aspects of warfare as the middle imperial Chinese understood it. The manuals document in detail, and, in some cases, for the first time in Chinese history, the content of certain rituals and the procedure for their performance." [669]

The fourth group consists of state-sanctioned and privately compiled histories, encyclopaedias, compendia, and law codes. These contain information on a variety of subjects, and cannot be considered purely military works. They date from the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. Two administrative histories compiled during the Tang and the Yuan dynasties respectively, were the *Du zhi tongdian* 杜氏通典 (*Mister Du's Comprehensive Statutes)*[670] and *Wenxian tongkao* 文献通考 (*Comprehensive Investigation of Literary Sources*)[671]. These works gave an overview of the administrative history of the Chinese empires up until their compilation date and also included information on military organization and regulations. From the Tang dynasty the *Du zhi tongdian* also included the now-lost *Li Jing bingfa* 李靖兵法 (*Li Jing's Art of War*)[672], ascribed to a famous early Tang general who lived from 571 to 649, and the also lost *Jiao she jing* 教射經 (*Classic of Teaching Archery*)[673] by Wang Ju 王璩 (a contemporary of empress Wu Zetian 武則天, 625-705).[674] The *Du zhi tongdian* and *Du zhi tongdian* were wider in scope than the official standard histories (*shi* 史) of the succeeding dynasties, which were also examined according to the *Chou hai tu bian*.[675] A further source containing important military information was the *Daxue yanyi bu*[676], the great statecraft work of the fifteenth century written by Qiu Jun. The Southern Song administrative compilation *Shantang xiansheng qunshu kao suo* 山堂先生群

[669] Butler, "Reflections of a Military Medium,"
[670] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1301; Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 975.
[671] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 975.
[672] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1215.
[673] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1332.
[674] Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*, 192-195; Sawyer and Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 313-320; Stephen Selby, *Chinese Archery* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2000), 196-197.
[675] Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 524-526.
[676] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 875.

書考索 (*Mister Shantang's Deep Investigation of All Kinds of Books*)[677], which is only partly extant at present.[678] The *Da Ming Huidian* 大明會典 (*Collection of Laws and Institutions of the Great Ming*)[679], a descriptive work of Ming laws and institutions (including the military), which was compiled at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[680] The *Da Ming Lü* 大明律 (*Laws of the Great Ming*), which was the dynasty's law code compiled at the end of the fourteenth century, which included rules and regulations for military personnel as well.[681]

The fifth group concerns a contemporary body of writings which together constitute evidence of "horizontal" knowledge circulations between contemporaries, covering both northern and south-eastern military topics. Not all the authors could be identified by me as members of my posited *xinxue*-network, but they did contribute to the military statecraft circulation by means of their writings. This category also contains a number of titles which do not correspond to existing works anymore, but they will be displayed in the table. The *Jiubian tu* 九邊圖 (*Charts of the Nine Borders*)[682], which might be the same as the *Jiubian tu lun* 九邊圖論 (*Discussion and Charts Pertaining to the Nine Borders*)[683] (1538) by Xu Lun 許論 (1487-1559), who also collaborated in the compilation of the *Chou hai tu bian.*[684] Another important work in this group is Wei Huan's 魏煥 (dates unknown) work on the northern frontier, *Huang Ming jiubian kao* 皇明九邊考 (*Investigation of the Imperial Ming's Nine Borders*) (1541).[685] The third was the the *Jiubian tushuo* 九邊圖說 (*Illustrated Handbook of the Nine Borders*) [686], which had been compiled by the

[677] Mao Kun compares Tang Shunzhi's literary achievements in a positive way with this important statecraft encyclopaedia, indicating Mao familiarity with it. See: Mao Kun 茅坤, *Mao Kun ji* 茅坤集, *volume 2* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2012), 486.
[678] Wen Zhiba 温志拔, "`Qunshu kao suo' de `kao suo zhi gong' jiqi xueshu shi yiyi" 《群书考索》的 "考索之功" 及其学术史意义, *Huzhou shifanxue yuanxuebao* 湖州师范学院学报 38.3 (2016): 52.
[679] Wang Daokun 汪道昆, *Taihan ji* 太函集, *volume 2* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 834; Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 974.
[680] Timothy Brook, "Communications and Commerce," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 652; Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 884.
[681] Idem, 546.
[682] Yu Dayou 俞大猷. *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 555.
[683] Wang Daokun 汪道昆, *Taihan ji* 太函集, *volume 2* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 732.
[684] Kai Filipiak, "Zum Aufschwung der nördlichen Grenzhistoriographie in der Ming-Zeit," in *China und die Wahrnehmung der Welt*, edited by Antje Richter and Helmolt Vittinghoff (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 115.
[685] Filipiak, "Zum Aufschwung der Nördlichen Grenzhistoriographie," 114-115.
[686] Wang Daokun 汪道昆, *Taihan ji* 太函集, *volume 3* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 1865.

Ministry of War itself around 1569.[687] The inclusion of the cartographic and ethnographic works on the northern frontier should not surprise us, since many members of the group had served or would serve in the theatre during their careers.

The sixth group was also contemporary body of work created by Yu Dayou prior to his involvement in the anti-Wokou campaigns. Yu Dayou's *Jian jing* 劍經 (*Sword Classic*), a short manual on staff fighting techniques. It was named after the sword, and not the staff, because the technique described therein was apparently known as the *Jingchu changjian* 荊楚長劍, or "Jingchu long sword"-technique. Historian Meir Shahar speculates that this manual circulated independently before 1562, when it found its way into the *Ji xiao xin shu*.[688] Furthermore, his publications with Zhao Benxue 趙本學 (1478-1544), a civilian scholar of military affairs, reveal his activities writing commentaries on-, and supplements to the *Art of War* and the *Wujing zongyao*.[689] The, latter, the so-called *Xu wujing zongyao* 續武經總要 (*Supplement to the Comprehensive Essentials of the Military Classics*) was a treatise on military formations and movements which had been authored by Yu Dayou and Zhao Benxue and marketed as an addition to the famous Song military manual.[690]

Four decidedly non-military works turn up in Qi Jiguang's *Ji xiao xin shu*, in the context of archery and other training activities. These were the writings of Confucius, Mencius, the Warring States period Confucian Xun Kuang's 荀況 (310-235 BCE) *Xunzi* 荀子 and the *Lienü zhuan* 烈女傳 (*Commentary on Virtuous Women*),[691] by the Western Han dynasty scholar Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE). This was a collection of moralistic biographies of virtuous women.[692] These sources provide both examples for practical instruction and moral exhortation. Tang Shunzhi paraphrases the *Classic of Changes*.[693]

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[687] Zhao Xianhai 赵现海, "Mingdai Jia-Long nianjian Changcheng tuji xuan hui kao" 明代嘉隆年间长城图籍撰绘考, *Neimenggu shifan daxue xue bao* 内蒙古师范大学学报 39.4 (2010): 34

[688] Meir Shahar, "Ming-Period Evidence of Shaolin Martial Practice." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61.2 (2001): 374-375.

[689] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu zhijian lu*, 136-139.

[690] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 209-212, 399-402.

[691] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 67, 216.

[692] Bret Hinsch, "The Textual History of Liu Xiang's Lienüzhuan," *Monumenta Serica* 52.1 (2004): 95.

[693] Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1300.

Last, but not least, was Wang Yangming's commentary on the *Seven Military Classics*, called the *Xinjuan biaoti wujing qishu* 新镌标题武经七书, or *Newly Published and Captioned Seven Military Classics*[694].

What can be concluded from this survey of the sources of military knowledge available to a number of figures involved in the *xinxue*-network? First of all, despite the hundreds of military treatises known to have been composed before and during the sixteenth century, only a comparatively small number seems to have circulated through this group. The *Seven Military Classics* were an important foundation of military thought, and the three Tang-Song manuals were also an important reference. A scholar like Tang Shunzhi referred to a broader range of treatises, but even the sources available to him did not exceed far beyond the number of ten. Second, specialist military treatises were but one category of sources consulted. The field of military knowledge spanned different genres, including official surveys of statutes and institutions, large compendia and statecraft writings. Third, there was horizontal sharing of knowledge, but only knowledge produced by members within the network. The large production of new military texts during the Jiajing to early-mid Wanli eras is otherwise not reflected by the sources these men consulted. Fourth, the only exception to the third conclusion is the new departure in northern frontier historiography, to which a number of persons investigated above seem to have had access to. This last phenomenon can be explained by reference to the fact that many of the military and civil officials involved in the anti-Wokou campaign were later transferred to the northern frontier to continue their careers there, including Qi Jiguang himself. Finally, many of the contemporary texts circulating in this group were the result of private scholarship initiatives, and not state sponsorship. This was noticeable, for example, in the northern frontier historiography in which all but one treatise was the result of private initiative. This one exception was the *Jiubian tushuo*.[695]

To return to the concerns raised at the beginning of this chapter, it seems clear that it is severely limiting to consider military thought as a separate category divorced from other literati concerns. Instead, a strong connection existed between military concerns and the statecraft writings of the *xinxue*-network, and Qi Jiguang's writings can best be seen as a product of this same connection. They were not written in isolation. I cannot but conclude on this survey that Qi had access to only a relatively narrow base of older written military knowledge on which he could

[694] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 13-14.
[695] Zhao, "Mingdai Jia-Long nianjian Changcheng tuji xuan hui kao," 26.

base his own ideas. Departures from this older knowledge therefore shall be assumed to have been his original contribution, or of those in his social *Umfeld* (social surroundings). Furthermore, the survey of literati writings reveals that a multiplicity of genres could serve as a source for military thought, further diminishing the *bingjia*-category as a helpful analytical tool.

Despite an explosion of the number of published military works during the late Ming, we should thus be careful to overstate their reach, impact, and importance. This holds even more true considering the fact that many of the written collections analysed can be assumed to have belonged to the highest socio-political level of the literate elite. If their access to the written Chinese cultural tradition was still relatively limited, how much more would this have held for the levels below them? However, I will argue below that the military writings the *xinxue*-group produced were at the forefront of the sixteenth-century spike in military knowledge production and dissemination, a process we will now turn to.

The Importance of *Xinxue* Military Writings in Sixteenth-Century Military Knowledge Production

A further indication of the importance of the role of *xinxue*-literati participation in military affairs was the contribution they made to the spectacular growth of written military knowledge during the sixteenth century. In order to gauge their importance, I will use a bibliographical compilation of all extant Chinese military treatises in the world. Chinese scholar Xu Baolin has compiled a bibliography of the military titles across Chinese history surviving until this very day in different locations, and those titles which are known to have existed at some point in time. He notes that 777 treatises have survived from the Ming dynasty, but a personal recounting of his list reveals 781 titles.[696] Xu Baolin has included the names of the authors, the titles of the works, and – where available – the year of publication. A survey has led me to divide them in different classifications as shown in table 2.

Table 1: Categorizing Ming military texts

Category	*Number*
Commentaries/new editions of the *Seven Military Classics*	156

[696] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu zhijian lu*, 132-254.

Commentaries/new editions of *Mr. Zuo's Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals*	8
Commentaries/new editions of other works dating to the Zhou dynasty	3
Commentaries/new editions of works dating after the Han up to-, and including the Song dynasty	40
Commentaries on the *Histories*	8
Commentaries/new editions of Zhuge Liang 诸葛亮 (181-234) and works ascribed to him	5
Commentaries (and new editions of them) on various generals	17
Commentaries/new editions of various pre-Ming texts combined	7
Commentaries/new editions of various texts combined, including the Ming	27
Subtotal 1	*271*
New works pre-Jiajing (1368-1521)	14
-Variants	23
New works Jiajing, Longqing, and early-to-mid Wanli (1521-1610)	96
-Variants	159
New works late Wanli to the end of the dynasty (1610-1644)	79
-Variants	86
Unknown (including variants, reprints, and commentaries)	53
Subtotal 2	*510*
Total	***781***

On the basis of the titles some tentative conclusions can be drawn. Similar as pertaining to the surviving military writings dating from the Song dynasty, a great number of titles are commentaries on-, or variant titles of the *Seven Military Classics*.[697] An impressive 34.7 % of the surviving texts are new editions of-, and commentaries on military treatises produced prior to the Ming. Of these 57.56 % are solely related to the *Seven Military Classics.* 242 of the surviving Ming texts can be considered new works, with the remaining 268 appearing to be variants of them.

[697] For statistics related to the Song dynasty, see: Hilde De Weerdt, *Information, Territory, and Networks: The Crisis and Maintenance of Empire in Song China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 168-169.

A caveat is that original military thought might be found in commentaries on the classics, and that "new titles" might actually contain nothing but quotes and paraphrases from older military works. Research of the scope necessary to address this problem is nevertheless logistically impossible within the constraints of modern academia.

Based on my survey, it is also possible to discern distinct peaks in the production of "new titles". The periodization of text production during the Ming can be parcelled up in three rough slices. From the beginning of the dynasty until the start of the Jiajing period (roughly 150 years) there seems to be relatively little innovation. Then, with the troubles with the Mongols and the upheavals in the south and southeast of the empire causing a troublesome sixteenth century, text production increases leading to a veritable "military treatise explosion" lasting until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Then a second, slightly smaller, explosion occurs in the final decades of the dynasty, presumably related to the growing Manchu threat and concurrent peasant rebellions. This broad panoply of texts has not been systematically studied, so even tentative conclusions are perilous at best. I will endeavour a tentative conclusion regarding the circulation of *xinxue*-military thought. The question of circulation is also hard to assess accurately, but it is telling that Qi Jiguang's works have the highest number of surviving variants of any original text in the corresponding "New works Jiajing, Longqing, and early-to-mid Wanli (1521-1610)"-category. A caveat I have to mention in this context is that some of these variants were reprints dating to the later Qing and Republican periods, thus any conclusions drawn about circulation transcend the Ming period alone. Furthermore, intentional acts of book destruction, as committed by the ruling Manchus during the Qing dynasty for example, could have unduly distorted the record. More than 50 works of Qi Jiguang - carrying titles and variant titles of his known manuals - in the "variants"-section seem to be versions of his two manuals, the *Ji xiao xin shu* and the *Lianbing shi ji*, accounting for a full third of all surviving variants of all "new titles" dating from the sixteenth century. Other works produced by the network had less impressive circulation, judging by the surviving numbers, but still impressive considering that most of the new treatises produced in the same period have only survived in single or double copies. Tang Shunzhi's *Wu bian*, for example, has nine surviving variants. The nearest competitors in the category "New works Jiajing, Longqing, and early-to-mid Wanli (1521-1610)" are Zhao Shizhen's 趙士楨 (1553-1611) *Shenqi pu* 神器譜 (*Manual of Divine Weapons*) with three variants, He Liangchen's *Zhen ji* 陣紀 (*Record of Battle Arrays*) with four variants, *Dengtan bijiu* 登壇必究 (*Necessary Research for Mounting the*

Platform) by Wang Minghe 王鳴鶴 (dates unknown) with five variants, and the *Caolu jinglüe* 草廬經略 (*Classical strategies from the Thatched Hut*) by an unknown author with six variants surviving. The authors of all four are quite obscure and it is impossible to discover social links between them and the network Qi Jiguang belonged to.[698] Nevertheless, the first and the latter two treatises show strong influences of Qi Jiguang's ideas,[699] and all four postdate Qi's manuals with the possible exception of the *Zhen ji*.[700] The *Zhen ji* quotes Qi Jiguang and Yu Dayou.[701] Another important new work, which featured the input of many members of the *xinxue* knowledge circulation network, was of course the *Chou hai tu bian*. Above I elaborated on its importance as the main statecraft achievement of this network and its *xinxue* and Wang Yangming connections in particular. Four variants of this work are recorded by Xu Baolin in his overview.[702]

Qi Jiguang's works were thus part of a proliferation of military texts during the Jiajing-period's Wokou-crisis, many of the most prominent of which were produced by men who were in some way related to his network. Judging by the numbers that survived, Qi Jiguang's works were by far the most influential of any of his sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colleague-authors. The *xinxue*-network as a whole made an impressive contribution to new military knowledge production during the sixteenth-century peak. Furthermore, this contribution was isolated and uninfluenced by all the other "new titles" appearing in the same period, but based on a relatively narrow range of older texts and (as can be assumed) practical experience. Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou, Hu Zongxian, Tang Shunzhi, and Zheng Ruoceng all wrote their ideas amidst a large ongoing military campaign. Unlike many of their contemporaries, this clears them of charges of armchair generalship. Moreover, their works survived in the highest numbers, and the manuals that did not demonstrably belong to this network, but survived in high numbers as well, all showcase strong influences from,

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[698] He Liangchen 何良臣 (fl. 1565), the sixteenth-century author of the *Zhen ji*, which is a close analogue to Qi Jiguang's manuals in style and content. About the author little is known, unfortunately. He appears to have been a talented poet in his locale, before he threw away his writing brush and embarked on a military career, which included fighting against Wokou in the southeast.[698] He does not seem to have been part of Qi Jiguang's social *Umfeld*, however, as references to him and his work cannot be found in the writings of the larger network Qi was a part of. The *Zhen ji* itself appeared around 1565 and contains references to a number of other military treatises. The author hailed from Shaoxing prefecture in Zhejiang province, similar to Wang Yangming and his first followers. See: He Liangchen 何良臣, *Zhen ji* 陣紀 (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1984), 1-4.

[699] Filipiak, *Krieg, Staat, und Militär*, 265; Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 160; Zurndorfer, "Wanli China versus Hideyoshi's Japan," 208.

[700] Shahar, "Ming-Period Evidence," 410.

[701] He Liangchen 何良臣, *Zhen ji* 陣紀 (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1984), 24, 100-101， 107。

[702] Xu, *Zhongguo bingshu zhijian lu*, 132-254.

fore mostly, Qi Jiguang's thought. Did it, however, matter to the contents of these works that their author was part of a larger network of civil bureaucrats, military officers, and literati that were to a greater or lesser extent affiliated with a movement unleashed by Wang Yangming? In the next chapter I will explore the influence of specifically *xinxue*-ideas and praxis on the military thought birthed by Qi Jiguang. I will argue that Qi's main contribution was elaborating on the organization and disciplinary framework of Wang Yangming's military ideas, and translating Wang's philosophy to the context of a military manual. In the guise of Qi Jiguang's manuals, Neo-Confucianism would enter the genre of the military manual.

Chapter 10 – Neo-Confucianism Enters the Military Manual: Consolidation & Innovation

In this final chapter, I will zoom in on the contents of the military manuals themselves, and the ways they benefitted from both Wang Yangming's military praxis and the content of his philosophy itself. In the previous chapter, I have probed the question of the availability of previous Chinese military knowledge to Qi Jiguang and the civil and military officials in his social *Umfeld*, which was a crucial precondition to be able to assess the significance of Wang Yangming-derived ideas within Qi Jiguang's developing method. After a brief consideration of the military manuals themselves, I will give a detailed treatment of two major ways in which Qi Jiguang innovated on Wang Yangming's ideas. The first one concerns the praxis of the interrelated activities of recruitment, organization, and disciplining. The second one concerns the ideational adaptation of Wang's philosophical ideas into the concrete contents of a military manual.

The Manuals

Perhaps Qi Jiguang's most famous heritage is constituted by his two military trainings manuals, repectively the *Ji xiao xin shu* 紀效新書 (*New Book on Discipline and efficacy*) and the *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (*Practical Record of Training Troops*). In the last chapter I have argued for regarding Qi's manuals as part of a *xinxue* statecraft tradition arising from the necessity of a military solution to the Wokou crisis at the south-eastern maritime frontier. The question I must now turn to relates to the extent to which it is possible to trace Wang Yangming's influence within the contents of these manuals. First of all, I will argue that the main features of Wang Yangming's military thought are reflected and consolidated in the content of Qi Jiguang's manuals. Wang never wrote a military manual consolidating his thought in a coherent whole, but I posit that one can view Qi's manuals, especially the *Ji xiao xin shu* which reflects southern conditions, as the closest possible equivalent.

If we consider Wang's military ideas in relation to the *Seven Military Classics*, it becomes clear that the former are a detailed interpretation and translation of the ideas of the military canon to the specific circumstances of the early sixteenth century disturbances in the southern provinces

of the empire. Specifically, how does one recruit, train and keep together an army of rural mercenaries in the absence of a regular professional government military? This was a situation that both Wang (and later Qi Jiguang) faced and when they turned to the military classics for help, and they extracted largely the same lessons from their tersely formulated contents. Wang Yangming thus had to tap into new reservoirs of *wu*-manpower as a result of the demilitarization of the southern interior. In addition, his military solutions were integrated with a number of civil solutions. Qi Jiguang faced the same situation. In the last chapter we have seen what kind of older military knowledge he had access to, and it all pertained to different political and institutional conditions. The *Seven Military Classics*, the eclectic mix of military treatises Tang Shunzhi consulted, the three great Tang-Song manuals, and the sultry administrative encyclopaedias-cum-institutional histories-cum-law codes mostly reflected the organizational contexts of highly centralized polities. Even the material closest in time to Qi, the Ming statutes, reflected the normative institutional situation of the early Ming, when the hereditary military was still functional.

There was thus a real practical reason for Qi to turn to Wang's ideas: they were born in roughly the same conditions Qi faced in the mid-sixteenth century. And as we have seen in chapter seven that in conjunction with Qian Dehong bringing Qi Jiguang to the attention of Hu Zongxian, Qian also wrote *Discussion about assembling and training village militia* and was implied to have advocated it. Considering Qi's later reliance on (and advocating of) raising local village militias in lieu of relying on mercenary and aboriginal troops brought in from more distant places, it would not be farfetched to assume Qi's initial cognition of the potential of this part of the military labour market dates from this fateful course of events early in his career. Qian Dehong, in the event, was known to have been an historian of Wang's military exploits. He, for example, wrote a history of Wang's campaign against the Prince of Ning.[703]

The specific tactical nature of the threat Qi faced did seem to have been a bit different from that of Wang's situation. In fact, through the scattered hints in Wang's writings we can only get a limited view of the concrete tactics he used, and which weapons were utilized by his soldiers. The most detailed instruction that was included in Wang's collected writings dates back to his first campaign and shows that he intended to divide up his force in a conventional main force of 800 men, and an unorthodox mobile force of 400. The members of the main force are described as

[703] Israel, "On the Margins of the Grand Unity," 198.

dashou 打手 ("fighting hands"), which probably means anyone with martial skills. The unorthodox group was supposed to include a *dui* 隊 (25 men) of archers, eight musketeers, and twenty local guides - presumably to aid in ambushes and tactical manoeuvres in an unknown terrain. The rest of the instruction details the amount of gunpowder needed and the numbers, shapes and colours of different command flags and recognitions signs.[704] Another instruction to authorities in Jiangxi in the aftermath of the Prince of Ning-rebellion advises the formation of units with spears, bows and arrows, muskets, and swords.[705]

In the case of Qi Jiguang more detailed information is available about the enemy tactics and weapons he faced, and the counter measures he devised. Whereas many of the Wokou were Chinese in origin, they seem to have benefitted from Japanese weapons and tactics. They were predominantly organized in small infantry units characterized by close teamwork. Individual fighters used large twin swords, bows and arrows, and javelins which were thrown with great skill. The Wokou thus had an advantage in the range of their weapons, training, and the cohesion of their units. In response Qi divided built his units of squads of twelve men, which consisted of two groups of five soldiers, a commanding officer, and a logistical soldier. These squads were also to utilize teamwork: a screen of four men - two with shields and swords flanked by two with bamboo trees with upper branches still attached – were to provoke the enemy units into attacking, and provided a safe retreat for four spearmen. These were to provide the main striking force against the Wokou. These four, in turn, were back up by trident-carrying soldiers.[706] Some of the men in these squads were also carrying muskets, who, in defensive actions or ambushes, could be brought together in lines or deeper multi-layered formations.[707] They were to give salvo fire on command, and could provide continuous salvo fire when deployed in layers, as recently argued by Tonio Andrade.[708]

A variant of this basic organizational and tactical system would later be "exported" to the north as Qi Jiguang was reassigned to this frontier after 1567. The units would no longer be

[704] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 550.
[705] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *volume 2* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1151.
[706] Huang, *1587*, 165-168.
[707] Ch'i, Chi-kuang*, Praxis der chinesischen Kriegführung*, translated by Kai Werhahn-Mees (München: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1980), 32-33, 50.
[708] Tonio Andrade, "The Arquebus Volley Technique in China, c. 1560: Evidence from the Writings of Qi Jiguang," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 4 (2015): 115-141.

restricted to infantry, but also included battle wagons and cavalry. Nevertheless, these would also be crewed and mounted, respectively, by the same squads of twelve. What did change, however, was the importance of firearms. If we look at the pages of the *Lianbing shi ji*, we see that Qi intended to arm all his squads with muskets and fire arrows, in addition to the spears, tridents, and swords they were already equipped with. The battlewagons were equipped with two light canons, and served by the crew of a squad of twelve. A battalion of the battlewagons could connect and form enclosed *ad hoc* fortresses, which sheltered the infantry and cavalry. After advance warning posts had alerted the defending units about the routes a Mongol incursion would take, these combined-arms battalions would be dispatched to block them. By means of salvo fire coordinated by audio signals, the Mongol formations were meant to be put in disarray, after which the infantry and cavalry would launch storm attacks using roughly the same cold steel weapons, tactics, and formations employed against the Wokou.[709]

The manuals in which these organizational and tactical details are narrated were published in 1562, 1571, and 1584. The 1584 publication concerns a reorganized version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* in fourteen chapters instead of eighteen, which reflected the organizational structure of the *Lianbing shi ji* to a greater degree.[710] The original *Ji xiao xin shu* was organized in chapters thusly:

(1) Recruiting and organizing the squads
(2) Crucial and clear orders to exercise against the enemy
(3) Collective punishments and military law applying before entering combat
(4) Crucial prohibitions for the soldiers
(5) Orders and prohibitions for the instructors in the art of war
(6) Rewards and punishments for comparing martial skills
(7) Orders and prohibitions for battalions on the march and camping in the field
(8) Training the battalion formations with flags and drums
(9) The battalion on the march
(10) The theory of long-range hand-held weapons for brief usages
(11) Comprehensive theory of rattan shields
(12) The theory of short-range hand-held weapons for long usages
(13) Methods of archery

[709] Huang, *1587*, 174-181; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 11-41.
[710] Fan, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan*, 329-348.

(14) The essentials of the classic of boxing
(15) Illustrated explanation of arranging walls and all apparatuses
(16) Illustrated explanation of flags and drums
(17) Defending
(18) Organizing naval forces[711]

The first nine chapters are detailed descriptions of rewards and punishments, disciplinary and moral admonitions, organizational matters, explanations of orders and their signalling by means of flags and musical instruments, and tactical dispositions. These are elucidated for both units encamped or on the move. The latter nine chapters are illustrated guides on different practical aspects of martial arts, illustrations of weapons and other equipment, and detailed chapters on city wall defence, defence, and naval warfare.

The *Lianbing shiji* was organized in a slightly different way and this organization was partly reapplied to the organization of the 1584-version of the *Ji xiao xin shu*:

(1) Recruiting and organizing the squads (for battlewagons, cavalry, and infantry)
(2) Training courage (rewards and punishments, prohibitions)
(3) Training eyes and ears (i.e. responding to orders delivered via flags and musical instruments)
(4) Training hands and feet (training in the handling of weapons)
(5) Training battalion formations, part 1
(6) Training battalion formations, part 2
(7) Training battalion formations, part 3
(8) Training battalion formations, part 4
(9) Training officers[712]

More space was given to the tactical formations, presumably because they were more complex in the context of the northern frontier and its use of the combined-arms of cavalry, infantry, and battle wagon. Moreover, all the weapons training was compiled in one chapter, as were the items instructing the soldiers in the different orders, rewards and punishments.

Finally, the organization of the newer version of the *Ji xiao xin shu*:

(1) Recruiting and organizing the squads
(2) Training eyes and ears (i.e. responding to orders delivered via flags and musical instruments)

[711] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu* 紀效新書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1996), 9-10.
[712] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 1-14.

(3) Training hands and feet, part 1 (training in the handling of weapons)
(4) Training hands and feet, part 2 (training in the handling of weapons)
(5) Training hands and feet, part 3 (training in the handling of weapons)
(6) Comparing martial skills
(7) Battalion formations
(8) Battalions on the move
(9) Battalions camping
(10) Practical combat
(11) Courage (rewards and punishments, prohibitions)
(12) Naval forces
(13) Defence
(14) Training officers[713]

In comparison to the earlier edition of the *Ji xiao xin shu*, this version omitted the chapters on unarmed fighting techniques and archery. Peter Lorge posits that these omissions were the result of Qi Jiguang's ongoing experiences as a trainer and commander. The introduction of more effective firearms, like muskets, meant that the character of combat changed so much that skills in unarmed combat were increasingly useless for soldiers to have. Similarly, the greater destructive power of the musket made the bow obsolete and training in archery superfluous.[714] Other items, not present in the earlier editions of the *Ji xiao xin shu*, but present in the *Lianbing shi ji*, were added though. As I will show later on in this chapter, the *Lianbing shi ji* showcased a number of innovations in the area of mental disciplining, which were clearly indebted to Wang Yangming's *xinxue*. These innovations would find their way back into the new version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* later on. The biggest impact of *xinxue* can be seen on the chapters about courage and training officers. These three manuals did not just reflect separate northern and southern conditions of warfare but were also clearly interlinked and can be taken as successive stages in Qi Jiguang's thought about military praxis.

Within these pages of regulations and disciplinary measures one can find many of the concerns already expressed by Wang Yangming. Concerning training, Qi Jiguang disavowed

[713] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 1-7.
[714] Peter Lorge, "The Martial Arts in Qi Jiguang's Military Training," in *The Maritime Defence of China: Ming General Qi Jiguang and Beyond*, edited by Y.H. Teddy Sim (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 59-63, 66-69.

"flowery" martial arts techniques that were meant for show purposes. Instead, he emphasized practical moves with concrete results.[715] One great contribution of Qi Jiguang's manuals is their attempt to bridge the gap between praxis and written knowledge. His manuals record many martial arts in detail for the first time, and some chapters show that he had help from (civilian) martial art instructors to help him understand the techniques.[716] Another source of information was Tang Shunzhi, who provided him with spear fighting techniques.[717] This shows that *xinxue* literati could be involved with martial arts as well. The distinction between the armed outlaw bands feted in, for example, the *Shui hu zhuan* and the refined law-abiding civil literati elite was blurring. Another concern shared by Wang and Qi was the well-being of the civil population, which needed to be protected against predatory soldiers. Qi was of the opinion that such soldiers had forfeited their lives and were thus to be subjected to execution to act as a deterrent against harming the population by his army.[718] A last shared concern with Wang was the importance Qi attached to the training of a new generation of literate, but also morally virtuous military commanders, which, as we have seen in chapter five, was already expressed by Wang Yangming.[719] Qi Jiguang would take this idea and elaborate it as a fully realized blueprint as a supplementary chapter to the early editions of his *Lianbing shi ji*, named the *Chu lian tonglun* 儲煉通論*, Well-rounded Argument about Rearing and Training*.[720] In it, he argued for rearing a literate group of officers through a military analogue to the civil examination system, which would include the Confucian classics as part of the curriculum. Such a system more or less already existed in the military examinations (*wuke* 武科), which had been instituted already during the Song dynasty and later reinstituted in 1478, but it was an optional career choice for military officers.[721] The innovative aspect of Qi Jiguang's proposal was making passing these military examinations an obligatory career step for all officers, which would have led to a professionalization of the corps. It would also have meant exposure to the

[715] Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts*, 177.
[716] Clifford Michael Gyves, "An English Translation of General Qi Jiguang's `Quanjing Jieyao Pian' (Chapter on the Fist Canon and the Essentials of Nimbleness) from the `Jixiao Xinshu' (New Treatise on Disciplined Service)" (MA thesis, University of Arizona, 1993), 23, 35.
[717] Filipiak, "The Effects of Civil Officials Handling Military Affairs," 10.
[718] Ch'i, *Praxis der chinesischen Kriegführung*, 73.
[719] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 286, 452, 460.
[720] Fan, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan*, 339.
[721] Hucker, " Governmental Organization," 19-20.

Neo-Confucian canon and thus a potential mass-acculturation of the military officers to the ideology of the civil elites.

In almost every way, therefore, Qi's manuals were an elaboration of Wang's military principles as highlighted in chapter five. Now I will turn to the first of Qi's innovations: organization.

"Binding the Squads" and Collective Responsibility

For both Wang and Qi, the division of men in units and the binding of the squads was entangled with the process of recruitment and selection. The consolidation of the newly formed units and the commander's control over them was achieved in Wang's scheme by giving a practical elaboration of *Weiliaozi*'s advice in the shape of using shared tallies and cards. Afterwards the recruits would be divided in the unit structure that was outlined above, with the smallest unit – the squad – consisting of 25 men. Then the procedure was for the commander to select from amongst each squad the most talented one to serve as the leader. From amongst this group of squad leaders would then be chosen the most talented people for the next level in the unit and command hierarchy. Each of these command levels had the authority to punish the level right below them. The two crucial ideas connected to the concept of binding the squads in the *Weiliaozi* are first the use of tallies to identify units and their achievements and losses with, and second the collective responsibility forced upon the units by means of a punishment and reward scheme. The *Weiliaozi* is the only military classic to advocate this concept. Perhaps Wang intended to put up a system of collective responsibility. He is, however, not explicit about its function in this direction.

The system Wang set up made it possible to have access to the identities of the enlisted men on multiple levels of command hierarchy. If the squad leader, for example, was corrupt and allowed fake or enemy soldiers to infiltrate his squad, the platoon leader above him presumably had the right to penalize them for exactly this reason. This right to punish is mentioned directly in the same context as the tally-system by Wang, which points to this intended function. Of course, the overall commander-in-chief had access to the complete troop registry and could presumably intervene as the ultimate authority, in case this system of checks and balances failed on the lower levels of the hierarchy. The explicit instruction for the men to become familiar with each other should be seen as an extra pillar of this system. Presumably this was meant to encourage a kind of

mutual responsibility amongst the rank-and-file, who were parceled up in groups of five. Although it is not mentioned specifically in Wang Yangming's writings, the squad leader could hold track of the personnel in each of the five five-man groups under his command, and presumably hold these individual groups responsible for the actual identities of the men comprising their ranks.

Qi implemented a similar system, which operated in a similar way: the soldiers were organized in a squad of ten with an officer and logistical soldier added. A card (*pai*) would be created which recorded the names and distinctive features of all the men, and at certain intervals these men would be compared with the information about them available on the cards.[722] Qi is explicit about what should be recorded on these cards: unit designation with all the names of the fellow-soldiers in the unit, age and description of the person, immutable physical characteristics, size and power, and hometown.[723]

This method, which he probably adopted from Wang Yangming, was connected to an elaborate system of collective responsibility buttressed by collective rewards and punishments outside of the sphere of corruption and infiltration prevention and training regimes. In this sense Qi far surpassed Wang's use of the system and he followed the *Weiliaozi* more closely. Unlike Wang, Qi Jiguang himself alluded to the influence of the *Weiliaozi* by using its unique phrase "binding the squads" (*shu wu* 束伍) in his own manuals. As a result, Qi would create the most comprehensive system of collective responsibility in Chinese military history up to that point. One of the most important techniques for ensuring unit cohesion was the application of often harsh "guilt by association" (*lianzuo* 連坐) punishments to battlefield transgressions, but also to violations of the regulations in non-combat situations (outside of training). I would argue that this was the most essential innovation of Qi's military method and it would buttress the successes of his troops, instilling discipline and creating group spirit. It was an innovation that, I contend, very likely sprang out of the direction which Wang's ideas had already ventured into and I posit that the sheer magnitude of its implication in Qi's military manuals represented a new departure in Chinese military thought.

The idea of collective punishment in the military domain was not an entirely new one. I understand collective punishment here as the kind of retribution which was not only exacted on the offender himself, but also on nominally innocent people by virtue of their relationship (kinship

[722] Ch'i, *Praxis der chinesischen Kriegsführung*, 22-31.
[723] Idem, 28.

or otherwise) with said offender. As seen above, the *Weiliaozi* had already articulated its principles, although it was the only military classic to do so. My survey of the military classics, the three Tang-Song manuals and the regulations laid down by the Hongwu and Yongle emperors reveals the existence of two kinds of collective punishment. The first kind entailed the extension of the punishment of the offender to his family. The second kind entailed the extension of the punishment of the offender to the military sub-collectivity he was a part of. Above we have already seen that the *Weiliaozi* utilized both kinds of punishment in combination. In general, it can be said that these kinds of collective punishments were only applied in an extremely rare number of cases, often only in the context of concrete combat performance, before the publication of Qi's manuals. This does not preclude the earlier systematization and proliferation of military collective punishments in Chinese history, as many military writings have been lost over the centuries. During the late Song and especially during the late Ming, there were booms in military (statecraft) theorization, a systematic study of even the surviving examples would go far beyond the scope of this study. However, the canonized nature of the military classics, as well as the state-sponsored compilation of the three Tang-Song treatises and the official status of the Hongwu and Yongle regulations accords them a special authority within the body of military writings. In addition, and as pointed out in Hilde de Weerdt's recent monograph on Song statecraft writings, the majority of the military thought formulated during the Song consisted of either commentaries on the military classics or private ventures by literati and non-literati alike, often operating outside of the official purview of the court.[724] The same can probably be said of the many writings recorded as dating from the late Ming dynasty, although unfortunately research into this problematic is lacking. These Song and Ming works on the one hand reflected elite pre-occupation with military affairs of the dynasties, but on the other hand the concrete influence of these writings on actual praxis is hard to detect owing to the often non-official and private nature of their scholarship. For example, even such monumental works as the *Chou hai tu bian* and Tang Shunzhi's *Wu bian* originated as private initiatives, how much more so would this have been the case for the myriad lesser-known military treatises that appeared during the late Ming? In other words, the writers were often probably not in a position to implement their ideas.

In the case of Qi Jiguang's ideas, it can be assumed that the gap between theory and praxis was small. He had an army at his disposal, and was sponsored later in his career by a powerful

[724] De Weerdt, *Information, Territory, and Networks*, 429-437.

benefactor at the court, Zhang Juzheng (see chapter three), who used him to implement army reforms.[725] Furthermore, by regarding Wang Yangming and his followers as a semi-coherent group in which statecraft (and thus military) knowledge circulated and considering the *Chou hai tu bian* as the most comprehensive statement of their military statecraft tendencies, I tentatively posited the military writings which influenced them and, by extension, Qi Jiguang, in the previous chapter. I enlarged the scope of the survey by including the private writings on the military by his military and civil official colleagues. None of these writings I identified as possible sources for Qi's military ideas have the same elaboration of a collective punishment system in terms of complexity.

Although the idea of collective punishment in the context of the army has a long pedigree as can be surmised from the existence of the *Weiliaozi*, evidence of its application and the extent thereof is scant. It is known that a late Tang general, Zhu Wen 朱溫 or Zhu Quanzhong 朱全忠 (852-912), instituted a form of collective punishment and applied them to the troops under his command. He was originally a warlord in the chaotic late Tang period, but later he defected to the empire and was rewarded with an important post in the administrative structure. However, he later deposed and killed the Tang ruling family and started the first (short lived) post-Tang dynasty, the Later Liang or *Hou Liang* 後梁.[726] As far as we know he was the first general in Chinese history to make collective punishments the basis of his disciplinary regime in practice. This he termed "pulling out the squad and beheading them", or *ba dui zhan* 拔隊斬. The *Supplementary History of the Five Dynasties* (to which the Later Liang belonged), written during the Song dynasty, records the following about Zhu Wen's methods:

> Taizu's [Zhu Wen's posthumous name] usage of the army was [based on] severe laws. Following every battle, squads with leaders who had died or with ones who did not return with the others; all would be beheaded. This was called "pulling out the squad and beheading them" following this battle.
> 太祖之用兵也法令嚴峻．每戰逐隊主帥或有歿而不返者其餘皆斬之．謂之拔隊斬自是戰.[727]

[725] Zurndorfer, "Wanli China versus Hideyoshi's Japan," 208.
[726] Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare*, 244.
[727] Tao Yue 陶岳, *Wudai shi bu* 五代史補 (SKQS), 1.

Further information about Zhu's methods is scant, but this description indicates that he held entire squads responsible for the survival of its leaders and the membership of its ranks. We thus know the principle was practiced at the end of the Tang dynasty by at least one general. Other evidence seems to suggest that Zhu was quite unique in this regard. In addition to the author of the *Supplementary History of the Five Dynasties* remarking on the severity of his laws, the three large encyclopedic manuals dating from the Tang and Song dynasties do not elaborate much on systematic collective punishments. Most of the punishments they prescribe are supposed to be meted out to the individual offenders. A few collective punishments are prescribed, but they certainly form no integrated method. For example, the *Wujing zongyao*, a manual we can be reasonably sure to have circulated amongst the *xinxue* statecraft network, states the following:

> When following an attack, a unit is endangered and the platoon in front, to the rear as well as to the left and the right serving as support do not support with the result that [the endangered unit] is captured, all the units are beheaded. Also behead still attending entourage.
> 一、逐隊部被攻危急，前後及左右隊部當救不救，因致陷者，全隊部皆斬。亦斬，但 隨從坐起.[728]

> Losing the flags, drums and the insignia of the high official, the whole platoon is beheaded. Or those which are captured by the enemy, behead their whole platoon as well.
> 一、失旗鼓旌節者，全隊斬。或為賊所取者，亦全隊斬。[729]

The other military treatises, compendia, statutes, and statecraft writings I enumerated in the previous paragraph yield similar prescriptions. In contrast with Zhu Wen's policies, these instructions seem to be less about keeping the squads together in terms of manpower and instilling collective responsibility for the leader's life, than about preserving certain items and ensuring support for neighbouring units. The intended effect might have been the same nevertheless, namely instilling a sense of collective responsibility during battle. The authors of the *Wujing zongyao* prescribed using collective punishments in order to promote intra-unit cohesion during battle, however, we do not know to what extent these few prescriptions were really conformed to in the praxis of the Song military. One other kind of collective punishment had a jurisdiction which

[728] Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 and Ding Du 丁度, *Wujing zongyao* 武經總要 (CSCS), 413.
[729] Ibidem.

extended beyond the sphere of military enlistment and could be applied to family members of individual soldiers:

> If soldiers have private interactions with bandits, or talk about written documents and memorials, behead them and extinguish their families.
> 一、吏卒與賊私交通，或言語書疏者，斬沒其家。[730]

During the Southern Song, an official named Li Gang 李綱 (1083-1140) proposed a new set of military regulations to bolster the strength of the army, which included collective punishments. This set has not survived to the present day, however, and Li Gang was also not able to put his ideas in practice.[731]

Wang Yangming himself seems to have closely followed the *Wujing zongyao*, but he refrained from applying the punishment prescribing the annihilation of the families of offenders. In one of his collected decrees he prescribes the following collective punishments for his troops:

> Always when facing battle opposing an enemy and one platoon is defeated, both squads are all beheaded. If adjacent platoons do not come to their aid, the adjacent platoons are all beheaded.
> 凡臨陣對敵, 一隊失, 全五皆斬。鄰隊不救, 鄰隊皆斬.[732]

Wang Yangming thus does not significantly develop the system of collective punishments any further than already established theory (and perhaps practice) dating back to the Tang and Song dynasties. I argue that Qi Jiguang makes his most profound contribution in this area by extending collective punishments to a great many spheres of his soldier's enlisted life. The term he uses for this, "guilt by association" (*lianzuo*), appears both in the *Ji xiao xin shu* as well as the *Lianbing shi ji* around forty and thirty times respectively. For an example of its application outside of the battlefield, I have selected the following quote of camp regulations applying to the army when on the march:

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[730] Idem, 414.
[731] Ji, *Zhongguo junshi zhidu*, 154.
[732] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *Volume 1* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 551.

> Foremost give primacy to solemn silence, always when in normal times there are ones who make noise, with a bundle lash them forty times and [the ones] suffering guilt by association.
> 第一肅靜為主，凡有平時喧嚷者，捆打四十，連坐。[733]

Similar collective punishments where handed out for a great variety of offenses, including the loss or negligence of equipment, the failure to nourish the horses well enough, rowdy behavior outside of the battlefield and disturbance of the civilian population. Punishments could vary from lashings to beheading for more severe offenses, with the latter usually applying to misconduct during battle. In some instances, the officers commanding the offenders were held responsible as well, all the way up to the highest level, which meant that it was a system of horizontal and vertical collective responsibility as well. A good example comes from the fourteen-chapter version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* and was applied to punish soldiers and officers responsible for the incorrect discharge of muskets. Qi Jiguang describes a situation in which the musketeers are firing their weapons in different ranks at the enemy:

> Every time you see a smoke ring going up, then these are ones who fire up in the air; if one lowers the hands and fires, on the ground there is blown up dust. All of these are removed and heavily punished, beheaded facing the battle array and squad leaders suffer guilt by association. If all squads have this, the banner leader suffers guilt by association; if all banners have this, the platoon leader suffers guilt by association up to and including the battalion commander.
> 凡望烟圈向上，即是向天放者;若低手向下，地下擊起塵土者， 是俱拿出重治，臨陣斬首，隊長連坐。隊隊有之，旗總連 坐。旗旗有之，哨官連坐，至把而止。[734]

In this way, Qi Jiguang had designed a very elaborate system of mutual responsibility, buttressed by collective punishments (and rewards as well), which was definitively a new departure in Chinese military thought in terms of complexity. Qi was certainly not the first military commander to make use of collective punishments, but his methods made use of this principle of disciplining to an extent not seen in the military writings that can be assumed to have been accessible to him. This system, combined with the praxis of every layer in the command hierarchy selecting their own subordinates, meant that Qi was consciously trying to maximize the cohesion and esprit de

[733] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu* 紀效新書 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1996), 72.
[734] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書：十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 150.

corps of his troops. An extra layer of cohesion might have been enabled by the small recruitment pool Qi Jiguang used at first. As we have seen, Wang Daokun was heavily influenced by Wang Yangming's philosophy and it is therefore possible he was knowledgeable about his military ideas as well. If Wang Daokun had instituted the tally system and the system of rewards and punishments and identification connected with it, it is not unlikely Qi Jiguang would have a solid basis to further develop his own ideas by using a force as template which had already been "bound" according to Wang Yangming's prescriptions.

Another reason Qi Jiguang might have come to rely on collective punishments and collective responsibility in his military thought was perhaps owing to the influence of the *baojia* system that had been re-advocated by Wang Yangming, as described in the previous chapter. *Lianzuo* as a concept and praxis had been associated with this system and the precise use of this terminology in the context of Qi's military writings could point to influence from this direction. It is not unthinkable that such praxis as applied to villagers would find its way to the militias recruited from amongst them and commanded by Qi Jiguang among others during the 1550s and 1560s. From there these ideas could then be applied to the non-militia troops guarding the northern frontier as per the prescriptions in the *Lianbing shi ji*. In the previous chapter we have already seen that Wang Yangming's *baojia*-system was already recommended in the *Chou hai tu bian* as measure that could fruitfully be implemented during the Wokou crisis. Evidence of a link between *baojia* collective punishment practices and its eventual incorporation into Qi's military doctrines can also be found in the same statecraft treatise. Tan Lun, who Qi Jiguang claimed was the origin of his ideas on militia training therein advocates forming militia within the *baojia*-system: "For the benefit of today's plans, we might as well commend this discussion timely for the training of militia, set up using the method of *baojia*/爲今之計，莫若稱此議練鄉兵之時，立爲保甲之法. "[735] Slightly later in the same discussion he mentions *lianzuo* as a method to collectively punish families who had committed crimes while they were part of a *baojia*-mutual surveillance organization.[736] Another discursive link between Qi Jiguang's military doctrines and the *baojia*-system is his reference to the tokens binding his units together as *pai* 牌, a similar term used to refer to the tokens the civilian mutual surveillance organizations received in order to facilitate their

[735] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 831.
[736] Idem, 832.

operation. This also aided in the application of *lianzuo*, because these *pai* and the enforced mutual cognizance of the soldiers it enforced made it impossible for them to shift blame on to others.[737]

The inspiration for Qi's elaborate system of collective punishments and collective responsibility therefore, I argue, has to be sought with the *xinxue*-network and its knowledge circulation. Although Wang Anshi intended his *baojia*-system to have a militia component as well,[738] no detailed scheme of punishments has survived to indicate the role *lianzuo* would have played in these military organizations. Neither did it circulate within the pool of written knowledge of the *xinxue*-network which I have uncovered earlier in this chapter. If we accept Wang Ji's testimony that Qi received Qian Dehong's ideas on militia organization – probably derived from Wang Yangming -, then the system outlined in the manuals was probably a further development of ideas found in the *Weiliaozi*. If we, however, accept Qi's own testimony that Tan Lun was the origin of these ideas, then a connection with Wang Yangming's *baojia*-system seems probable, also taking into account the discursive similarities between methods advocated in the manuals and as part of the *baojia*-system. Moreover, the two origins do not exclude one another and could have cross-fertilized before becoming part of Qi Jiguang's organizational doctrines. More importantly, both ultimately lead back to Wang Yangming and his theory and practice in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

How was Qi Jiguang able to implement such a draconian system? The answer, I think, can be found in the practical context of Qi's recruitment activities. From his own description in the *Ji xiao xin shu* it becomes clear that each rank was allowed to select the men serving immediately under them. If we couple that with what we know of Qi's original recruitment base, it becomes clear that many of the squads were probably pre-existing units consisting of friends, acquaintances and family already. These pre-existing social bonds gave these soldiers a real stake in preventing collective punishments to befall their entire units on their behalf. Like Wang Yangming, Qi Jiguang also recruited outside of the official military household system and his *Ji xiao xin shu* reflects his narrower access to the population of one county. The *Ji xiao xin shu* purports to be a factual and practical account of his experiences recruiting, training and leading men from Yiwu

[737] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 4.
[738] Deng Guangming 邓广铭, "Wang Anshi dui Bei Song bingzhi de gaige cuoshi jiqi shexiang" 王安石对北宋兵制的改革措施及其设想, in *Songshi yanjiu lunwenji* 宋史研究论文集, edited by Cheng Yingliu 程应镠 and Deng Guangming 邓广铭 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 311.

義烏 county in Zhejiang province. His first group of recruits originated from an already functioning Yiwu militia unit, hence the men were probably already largely acquainted with each other, were used to fighting together and many might already have been friends or even related by blood. Many groups in Yiwu county were organized in clans, extended lineages, and fought side-by-side with fellow clan members.[739] Research by Thomas Nimick, furthermore, has shown that this militia unit was originally trained and led by Wang Daokun, whom we have already met in the fifth chapter.[740] He once served as Yiwu's magistrate and would later meet Qi Jiguang and become fast friends with him when he was appointed as Qi Jiguang's surveilling military censor during the latter's activities in Fujian province. Furthermore, it seems Zhao Dahe, another friend and civil bureaucrat colleague of Qi, had led this militia in the past as part of his official duties of magistrate of the county. It thus seems likely that Qi was able to get access to this labour pool through his personal connections within the civil bureaucracy, ultimately gaining him the permission to recruit there from Hu Zongxian in 1559.[741] Qi probably chose this county, not only because he could benefit from personal connections, but also because the men there had already been trained and were experienced in combat. The fact that these military activities had taken place under purview of Wang and Zhao, two civil bureaucrats influenced by Wang Yangming's ideas, could mean that the militia had already been influenced by Wang's praxis as detailed in chapter five. If this was indeed the case, then Qi Jiguang was in a very real sense building on the foundation Wang had laid.

Lianzuo was also an essential tool to condition the heart-minds of the soldiers with. Qi Jiguang explains the connection between the two in both the *Lianbing shi ji* and the newer version of the *Ji xiao xin shu*. Qi starts by quoting a desideratum related to the steadfastness of the troops, that had been used to describe the well-disciplined army of Southern Song general Yue Fei: "Shaking a mountain is easy, [but] shaking Yue's army is difficult/撼山易，撼岳家軍難."[742] Proceeding from this, Qi explained the reasons why Yue Fei's army was so unshakeable: the mass of soldiers was of a singular heart-mind, and therefore they were able to exert their strength

[739] Thomas G. Nimick, "Ch'i Chi-kuang and I-wu County," *Ming Studies* 1995.1 (1995): 19.
[740] Nimick, "Ch'i Chi-kuang," 21.
[741] Idem, 20.
[742] Edward Harold Kaplan, "Yueh Fei and the Founding of the Southern Song (Volumes I and II)" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1970), 232-236; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 221.

together. Qi compares this state to a file of men carrying a heavy tree trunk together on their shoulders: although the trunk is much heavier than a single man, when many men work together with singular purpose the trunk can be lifted and moved. In terms of an army, this could be achieved, amongst other measures, by *lianzuo*:

> The present-day method of rewards and punishments [associated with] drilling, commands, the system of control, regulations, and guilt by association [*lianzuo*]; all are like carrying a length of wood or stones on the shoulders.
> 如今操練的賞罰號令節制規矩連坐之法，都是抬木石的繩扛一樣。[743]

It is unclear whether Yue Fei himself used collective punishments. Although his army was known for its exceptional discipline, no detailed set of instructions has survived from which we can deduce the methods of rewards and punishments. The best contemporary document we have of Yue Fei is a heavily romanticized novel written by his grandson half century later.[744] While these sources allow us to gain a basic overview of Yue Fei's military ideas, the presence and extent of collective punishments cannot be ascertained.[745] Yue Fei might have been an important reference for Qi Jiguang for another reason. By Ming times he had become a popular subject of vernacular novels and plays. He had become a positive exemplar for military men to aspire to:

> The vernacular literature played up his moral integrity, simple life, self-denial of personal wealth, discipline of his troops in the same manner, and concern for the welfare of the common people. These were exactly what the masses found to be lacking among many Ming generals and soldier.[746]

In the popular Ming imagination, then, Yue Fei had come to embody many of the values that Qi Jiguang cherished in accordance with his Neo-Confucian beliefs. The concern for the common people and the inculcation of this in his own troops also resonated with Qi's own aims. But the conditioning of his soldier's heart-minds did not stop with *lianzuo*. In both the *Lianbing shi ji* and

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[743] Idem, 222.
[744] John E. Wills, Jr., *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 170-171; Yue Ke 岳珂, *Eguo Jintuo zubian* 鄂國金佗稡編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989); Yue Ke 岳珂, *Eguo Jintuo xubian* 鄂國金佗續編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989).
[745] See for a modern overview: Gong Yanming 龔延明, "Ping Yue Fei de junshi sixiang" 评岳飞的军事思想, *Zhejiang daxue xuebao* 浙江大学学报 30.3 (2000): 33-40.
[746] Liu, "Yueh Fei," 296.

the newer version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* it is possible to discover the integration of *xinxue* Neo-Confucian philosophy in the military manuals.

Neo-Confucianism Enters the Military Manual

In chapter nine we have already seen that Neo-Confucian moral imperatives entered the statecraft genre, aimed at the person of the emperor himself. In the first chapter the overview of the genesis of military thought in the Chinese textual tradition touched upon the entanglements of Confucianism and other philosophical traditions with military thinking. In the case of Qi Jiguang's manuals, I will argue below, we can detect a penetration of Neo-Confucian ethical thought into the military ideas of the military commander.

In the past paragraphs, I have argued that Qi Jiguang's *Ji xiao xin shu* as it first appeared in its eighteen-chapter format in the 1560s was actually the embodiment of Wang Yangming's recommendations as laid out in his various writings which were probably transmitted by Qian Dehong. Qi developed the mutual responsibility system, derived from the *Weiliaozi* and/or the *baojia*-system, too a much greater extent and also followed other departures from established military thought which were recommended by Wang. Another one was for example Wang's emphasis on selecting soldiers according to the weapons they were supposed to wield. This might sound like common sense to a modern observer, but previous Chinese selection practices as written down in military manuals either stressed selecting soldiers for different tasks according to very general and undefined moral characteristics like "courage", "righteousness" or "loyalty", or made use of very complicated physiognomic characteristics. The former was prevalent in the military classics, the Tang era manual *Tai bei yin jing* contains examples of the latter.[747] In written discourse thus, Qi Jiguang's (and by extension Wang Yangming's) ideas were a significant departure from earlier texts. Qi's selection practices did contain some references to physiognomic practices, but these were only used to determine a recruit's vitality. Other selection was done on the basis of mental and physical characteristics. For example, the soldiers wielding the rattan shields had to be lithe - quick on their feet -, but also crafty, presumably because they were tasked with drawing the enemy out of their defensive formations.[748] But Qi's manuals represent a last

[747] Li Quan 李筌, *Tai bai yin jing* 太白陰經 (CSCS), 141-143.
[748] Huang, *1587*, 169.

very significant departure from earlier theory that I would like to highlight in this chapter: the infiltration of Neo-Confucian values in general, and *xinxue* ideas in particular into the military manuals of Qi. This was not yet apparent with the eighteen-chapter version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* published around 1560-1561, but the *Lianbing shi ji* of 1571 and the revised fourteen-chapter version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* both contain the same chapter on training officers *Lian jiang* 練將. Qi Jiguang relies on ideas derived from Yangming Neo-Confucianism to shape and discipline the mentalities of the officers in his army. On a more fundamental level, I will argue that Qi's manuals advocate a certain approach relying on theories about the heart-mind and applying them to training the soldiers, and especially the officers. I will turn to this phenomenon first, before analysing some of the discursive Neo-Confucian tactics Qi uses to finetune the moral compass of the officers in his *Lian jiang*-chapters.

In previous military thought, especially that expounded in the influential *Seven Military Classics*, the psychology of soldiers and officers was often discussed in terms of *qi* 氣, a term which throughout Chinese history acquired many different meanings. In general, *qi* seems to have been regarded as the "psycho-physical foundation or energy of life". Courage was therefore also a manifestation of *qi*. Furthermore, this *qi* of courage had to be regulated by moral concerns in order not to cause chaos. Ralph Sawyer, for example, quotes Confucius himself advocating the tempering of courage with righteousness, lest society would fall victim to chaos. Sawyer further remarks that in later military theorizing as contained in treatises like the Song-era *Wujing zongyao* and Ming-era *Caolu jinglüe* did not progress beyond this conceptualization.[749] Nor was this view at odds with later Song-era Neo-Confucianism. In the Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian dualistic view of the universe, *qi* was the matter in which all phenomena manifested themselves according to the *li*, or principles. In this conceptualization, even the mind itself was manifested as *qi*, and it would seem that the psychological states of soldiers were seen as manifestations of different kinds of *qi*. Yu Dayou, a hereditary military officer, demonstrates this Neo-Confucian thought:

> Well now, *qi*, is thus equally produced from heaven and earth, yet they are divided by *yin* and *yang*. Like this, if on earth also only righteous *qi* is nourished and vigorous *qi* is not given free rein to, then why also the endless wearisome and aggrieved chatter of the *junzi* of the Way? However, people born from heaven cannot

[749] Fan, *Qi Jiguang pingzhuan*, 204-205; Ralph D. Sawyer, "Martial Qi in China: Courage and Spirit in Thought and Military Practice," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 11.1-2 (2008-2009): 2-3, 15.

all be virtuous. That which we call righteous *qi* unfortunately is maintained by the *junzi*; the common people get rid of it. That which we call vigorous *qi* is certainly that which is very slight in *junzi*.
夫其氣也，均天地之所生也，而有陰陽之分。如此，苟使天下亦惟以正氣爲養，而血氣不以逞焉，亦何勞憂道君子之喋喋哉？但天生人，不能皆賢。其所謂正氣者，不幸而君子存之，庶民去之。其所謂血氣者，固君子之所甚薄。[750]

The problem, in military terms, was thus to generate this righteous *qi* within the heart-minds of the officers and men, and combine it with the vigour already present in them. Therefore, the righteous *qi* of the *junzi* had to be nourished outside of this social group and combine with the vigorous *qi* of the military. Yu Dayou only pointed towards the problem in his writings, but Qi Jiguang formulated a solution by way of Wang Yangming's *xinxue*. Within *xinxue* the mind became central within Neo-Confucianism as the sole repository of principle. Within Qi's thought a new departure is detectable in his conceptualization of training courage, the primacy of which he places with "training the mind" 練心 *lian xin*. Interestingly, this discussion is lacking in the eighteen-chapter version of the *Ji xiao xin shu*, but is present in the *Lianbing shi ji* and the later reworked fourteen-chapter *Ji xiao xin shu*. The following quote on courage, or "gut *qi*" 膽氣 *dan qi*, exemplifies his ideas on the matter:

Explaining courage. Well now, people have their body, but first have their heart-mind. *Qi* is emitted outside and its root lies in the mind. Therefore, those who send outward their whole heart-mind create genuine *qi*; the ones investigating [external] things and emitting it create false *qi*. If you train the heart-mind, then the *qi* will become robust. Mengzi said: "We, virtuous, raise our flood-like *qi* and cultivate the heart-mind." He also said: "If the will is primary, then the *qi* is moved, if the *qi* is primary, then the will is moved. Today when the men tumble and run, this is [because of] *qi* and it moves contrary to the heart-mind." This is the inner *qi* of the heart-mind and the *qi* outside the heart-mind. Therefore, if the ones emitting the whole heart-mind create genuine *qi*, then the emitted *qi* will create true courage.
膽氣解. 夫人有此身，先有此心。氣發于外，根之于心。 故出諸心者，爲真氣;格于物而發者，爲客氣。練心則 氣自壯。孟子曰："我善養吾浩然之氣，養心也。"又 曰："志一則動氣，氣一則動志。今夫蹶者、趨者，是 氣也，而反動其心。"是心者内氣也，氣者外心也。故出諸心者爲真氣，則出于氣者爲真勇矣。[751]

[750] Yu Dayou 俞大猷, *Zhengqitang quanji* 正氣堂全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2007), 67.
[751] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 201.

For Qi Jiguang, then, true courage could only be attained when one projected one's mind entirely outward. If one merely investigated courage as an external phenomenon, then it could only lead to the creation of false, or non-genuine *qi*. The heart-mind had to be in control and stimulate the *qi*, not the other way around, because only in this way was true courage attained. I argue that in this discussion of the origin of courage we can see the underlying debate between the Cheng-Zhu and *xinxue* search for principles: whether these should be sought in the heart-mind alone, or in their independent external existence from the self. For the false search for courage in external phenomena, Qi uses the term *gewu*, by which he implicitly criticizes the related Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian doctrine. This would explain the new focus on training the mind, instead of training *qi*, which had been the main current of military thought before the mid-sixteenth century. This current had not changed under influence of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, presumably because this orthodoxy also held the mind to be manifested by *qi*, and not the sole source of principles. Qi Jiguang did not develop his ideas in isolation. Earlier both Tan Lun and Xu Wei discussed training-, or "governing the mind" *zhi xin* 治心 as the approach to create a courageous and steadfast army.[752] Tan Lun's ideas on the matter are preserved within the *Chou hai tu bian*:

> Maritime circuit vice-censor Tan Lun said: "During today's battles the soldiers flee once they see the enemy and often they abandon their commanding officer and pay no attention to him, it seems indeed that the officers do not know the military arts and the soldiers are not regularly trained. Well now, officers have an unsteady heart-mind, the soldiers have unsteady hands and feet. If the hands and feet are in good health, then if you want to hold, you hold; if you want to run, then you run. Everything goes your way. If you cause the hands and feet to be atrophied and paralyzed, then how will they act in response even if the heart-mind desires to act? Therefore, select officers and train soldiers, you cannot lack either of them.
>
> He also said: "In general, discussing training soldiers is indeed not only training the skills and engaging in the methods for advancing and retreating. The essence and greatest importance lies with training the heart-mind, and its method and greatest quality lies in controlling the sections, and the sections are like the sections of a bamboo shoot. Step by step control them and then the men's heart-minds are uniform. Advancing will not be the result of good fortune, retreating will be without speed and hurry, and they will be constantly established in an unassailable position.

[752] It seems that Tang Shunzhi also incorporated some Neo-Confucian ideas about moral self-cultivation in his *Wu bian*. In a section on observing the qualities of the soldiers, he recommends the following:
"Calm their heart-minds, polish their will, and wait until that fondness for evil which their frame of mind harbours has been expelled successfully; selfish desire will thereby be attacked" 澄其心，淨其志，伺人之心情有所愛惡去就，欲從而攻之. See: Tang Shunzhi 唐順之, *Wu bian* 武編 (CSCS), 1223.

海道副使譚綸云：“今之戰，卒望敵而走，往往棄主將不顧，蓋由將不知兵與兵不素練耳。夫將猶之心也，士卒猶之手足也。手足無恙，則欲持而持，欲行而行，無不如意。使手足而痿痹也，則心雖欲爲，其能以相應乎？故選將、練兵，缺一而不可.”

又云：“凡言練兵者，非但練其藝與坐作進退之法耳。其要莫先於練心，其法莫善於節制，節者如竹節之節，節節而制之，即人心齊一，進非倖成，退無速奔，而常立於不敗之地矣.”[753]

Tan Lun advocated training the mind as a solution to the problem of incompetent leadership and undisciplined soldiers. According to his ideas, training the heart-mind was the first step towards creating a steadfast mass of soldiers. In Xu Wei's theorizing a similar tendency can be seen to regard the mind as primary over *qi*. He explained the relationship between the two by using the analogy of water and waves:

> The heart-mind is water and *qi* are waves, arousal and resolve is the wind. Arousal and resolve then become tremor and quick vigour, the most extreme consequence of the wind is being defeated by it and this is weakness. Therefore, if you desire to stop the waves, make tranquil the water [i.e. the heart-mind] and you might as well be like getting rid of the wind [i.e. desires like arousal and resolve]; if you desire to reject the arousal of the *qi* rather than the courage and resolve of the heart-mind, you might as well facilitate it by governing it [the heart-mind].
>
> 心水也，氣波也，鼓且決者， 其風也，鼓且決而至震蕩且奮迅者，風之極也，而敗焉者，其溺也。故欲止其波，澄其水，莫若去其風； 欲斥其氣之鼓，與其心之敢決，莫若易之以治。[754]

But how did this mental training regime function in practice? Tan Lun's words give us a hint: it would be inculcated by the very act of controlling the section. Since Tan's ideas on this matter were one of the origins of Qi's theory of training village militia (indeed, Tan goes on to elaborate a system of divisions of the army in the *Chou hai tu bian* similar to Qi Jiguang's system), it can be assumed Qi held a comparable view since he dwells upon the system of controlling the sections at length in his manuals. Then the whole system of controlling the sections, including the whole regime of collective responsibility and collective punishments it was based on, was meant to train the heart-minds of the soldiers. It certainly must have instilled a sense of belonging to a greater

[753] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 700.
[754] Xu Wei 徐渭, *Xu Wei ji* 徐渭集, *Volume 3* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 891.

whole in the individual soldier, and enforced a collective military ethic of self-surveillance and surveillance of the team members.

A few Chinese scholars have noticed the particular Wang Yangming-derived philosophical ideas in Qi Jiguang's manuals, but none have tied this phenomenon to the larger social context Qi operated in, or even asked the question why Wang's ideas in particular were adapted to the military context instead of Cheng-Zhu orthodox Neo-Confucianism. Furthermore, the question how *xinxue* should be operationalized in the daily praxis of the military has been left unexplored.[755] According to Qi Jiguang, training the heart-mind and its *qi* should be achieved by a combination of training (presumably on the drilling ground), moral exhortation and encouragement, and good treatment of the soldiers by their officers. The latter came down to setting a good example and sharing in the life and hardships of the soldiers themselves. Moral exhortations were spread throughout the military manuals, and included instructions for situations outside of training and combat.[756] For one did not train *xin* and *qi* merely on the drilling ground, but in one's every act in daily life. However, these elements still had to be supported by a system of rewards and punishments, of which *lianzuo* was an important component, as we have seen. These rewards and punishments had to be absolutely impartial; intimacy or blood-ties with the commander should not be reasons to escape disciplining. Punishments also provided another avenue for moral exhortation and encouragement. In some cases of lighter offenses, soldiers could escape corporeal punishment if they were able to recite certain lemmas of Qi Jiguang's manuals, or at least verbally reproduce their broad meaning. Qi thus intended that his troops would know parts of his manual by heart. This suggests that he counted on literacy on the part of the soldiers, a quality that Ming soldiers and even officers were notorious for lacking. From the prefaces of the *Lianbing shi ji* and the newer version of the *Ji xiao xin shu* it becomes clear how he meant to achieve this. To take one example, all soldiers were expected to be thoroughly acquainted with the chapter titled *Training eyes and ears*, on responding correctly to command signals. Every banner

[755] Guo Yujiang 郭玉江 and Zhang Jianfeng 张建丰, "Lun Yangming xinxue dui Qi Jiguang wuxue lilun de yingxiang" 论阳明心学对戚继光武学理论的影响, *Lantai shijie* 兰台世界 28.15 (2013): 58-59; Wang Lihua 王丽华, "Qingxing de Fojiao xuanyangzhe – Qi Jiguang" 清醒的佛教宣扬者———戚继光, *Huabei zhiye jishu xueyuan xuebao* 淮北职业技术学院学报 15.2 (2016): 98-100; Zhang Changnian 张长念, "Qi Jiguang wuxue sixiang de "Ru dao" yu "Shi xin"" 戚继光武学思想的 "儒道" 与 "释心", *Shoudu tiyu xueyuan xuebao* 首都体育学院学报 27.6 (2015): 512-515.

[756] For example, if soldiers came into a dispute with civilians, the soldiers were always to be punished first, whether they were the aggrieved party or the perpetrators. See: Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 237.

(*qi* 旗) unit, which was comprised of four squads and 48 soldiers and officers in total, was expected to contain at least one literate member who was supposed to read out the chapter aloud for the other to be able to memorize it. Hence, in case of a transgression, soldiers could reduce the number of times they were hit by a cane if they were able to recite from memory a number of sections of the chapter. They did not have to deliver a word-for-word exact replication of the contents, as long as they were able to convey the cardinal principles (*dayi* 大義). In this manner Qi Jiguang circumvented the problem of literacy, whilst at the same time encouraging his men to learn his military method, including its moral exhortations, by heart.[757] With the above narrated measures Qi Jiguang intended to operationalize *xinxue* in the context of daily practice.

The officers were subjected to an even more overt form of *xinxue* moral inculcation. By the 1570s, when Qi composed his *Lian bing shi ji*, he explicitly wrote down his instructions for the moral reformation of the officers in his *Lian jiang*-chapter, which was added word-for-word to his revised *Ji xiao xin shu* of 1584. It was supposed be distributed to the higher-lever officers in his armies.[758] This provided the desired military ethic with a rich flavour of Neo-Confucian morality with elements of *xinxue*-thought. An officer had to start his moral reformation, or rectification, by rectifying 正 zheng his "intentions", or "techniques of the heart-mind" 心術 *xinshu*.[759] This seems a variation on the *Daxue's* precept for the fourth step in learning, "rectifying the mind", *zheng xin* 正心. This included cultivating a stoic detachment from emotions. For Wang Yangming, however, the mind did not have to be rectified, but rather its intentions, and this was the first step in his schemata for self-cultivation, as we have seen in chapter four. In Qi Jiguang's *Lian jiang* it also appears as the first step:

> Lemma 1. Rectifying intentions.
>
> The officer has a foundation; this is the intention. The people's various kinds are different. That which is similarly bestowed, is the heart-mind. […] Well now, the officers, conforming to the kindness of the ruler above them, agreeing to interact with colleagues on their own level, and being served by the multitudes of

[757] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 10-12, 210-215; Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 7-10; 216-221.
[758] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Ji xiao xin shu: shisi juan ben* 紀效新書: 十四卷本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 11.
[759] According to Zhang Dainian it means "methods of thinking" or the "attitude of the inner mind". See: Zhang, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, 442. Perhaps Qi chose this expression instead of the more regular *zhengxin* 正心 to avoid association with the Wang Yangming-school. The *Lianbing shi ji* was published during the height of Zhang Juzheng's repression of the movement.

> the rank-and-file below; how can they best be able to deal with flattery, fawning, wealth, and solicited favours? Only by having rectified their intentions, being just and honourable, by implementing matters sincerely with a sincere heart-mind and with pure faithfulness and pure filial piety. Contemplating and bearing in mind constantly to be faithful to the ruler, to be respectful to friends, to hold dear the army, to hate the enemy, to strengthen the soldiers, to face up to difficulties and go forth and do all we can.
>
> 第一．正心術
>
> 將有本，心術是也。人之為類，萬有不同。所同賦者，此心也。[…] 夫為將者上副君父之恩，中契僚寀之交，下服三軍之眾，豈奉承阿諛、財帛惠徠而盡能之乎？惟有正此心術，光明正大，以實心行實事，純忠純孝，思思念念在於忠君、敬友、愛軍、惡敵、強兵，任難上做去，盡其在我.[760]

People are different, but they share one thing: the heart-mind. According to Qi service in the military proceeded first from rectifying the intentions which proceed from the heart-mind. Only then was one able to serve to the best of one's ability. He goes continues his plead showcasing other traces of *xinxue* in his ideas:

> For example, a man who did not rectify his intentions, on ordinary days he occupies an officers position and drags out an ignoble life seeking personal gain, taking refuge in deceitful actions, refusing to engage in sincere matters, being disloyal to ruler and father; but in the stillness of night the good conscience [*liangxin*] emerges he ponders, contemplates and he is terrified, he only fears his crimes being revealed.
>
> 譬如心術不正之人，平日居將位偷生謀利，避難巧為，不干實事，不忠君父，清夜良心發見，思慮驚恐，只怕犯出。[761]

Qi assures the reader that these consequences of a life ill-lived are not as relevant to consider as living a morally upright life right now. Why? By relying on the Mencian paradigm that man is innately good, and Wang Yangming's extension of this paradigm with his own ideas on the innate knowledge of the good - good consciousness *liangzhi* 良知 - or its more colloquial cognate *liangxin* 良心.[762] In essence, the good consciousness functions as a kind of moral self-surveillance. *Liangxin* will make your life on earth nightmarish if you behave in immoral ways.

A further sign of the influence of *xinxue* can be found, I argue, in the syncretic tendencies towards religion found in Qi's manual, tendencies that were also inherent in Wang's own thought

[760] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 155-157.
[761] Idem, 157.
[762] Yu-Yin Cheng, "The Taizhou School (*Taizhou Xuepai* 泰州學派) and the Popularization of *Liangzhi* 良知 (Innate Knowledge)," *Ming Studies* 60 (2009): 47.

as seen in chapter four. Historians Ray Huang and Herbert Franke[763] have claimed that Qi Jiguang relied on a mix of different ideas from different religions to morally persuade his men into a disciplined mindset. I would, however, argue that amongst these religions, Neo-Confucian concepts take centre stage in this scheme of persuasion.[764] Qi does invoke Buddhist concepts of retribution, hell, and transmigration of the soul, but he asserts that these are manifestations of the heart-mind as well:

> How can rewards for good deeds, retribution, hell, and reincarnation be real?! Reincarnation is also in our heart-mind, hell is also in our heart-mind.
> 善報惡報地獄輪迴豈真有哉！輪迴亦在我心上，地獄亦在我心上。[765]

Wang Lihua has argued on the basis of this that Qi Jiguang did not truly believe in Buddhism, but merely used it to stimulate his soldiers.[766] However, I disagree with this assessment. As we have seen in chapter four, Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian had certain syncretic tendencies. Wang himself certainly did not believe Buddhism and Daoism were completely false, instead they had an incomplete grasp of principle. There was therefore no reason why Qi Jiguang should not have added principles like reincarnation and hell to his method of moral cultivation, as long as they were useful. I also hold that we should not read the above passage as indicating that Qi Jiguang thought reincarnation and hell were illusions residing in our heart-mind. Instead, I would argue that, as the heart-mind is the repository of all *li*, the *li* of reincarnation and hell are naturally among them as well and thus really existing. Not taking in account the syncretic tendencies of Wang Yangming's *xinxue* have thus led to incorrect assessments of the place and importance of religious ideas in Qi Jiguang's military manuals. In addition, Qi Jiguang befriended Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 (1517-1598) in Fujian, and discussed philosophy with him. Lin was the founder of a new religion which combined Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism in one. In this, he was probably heavily influenced by Wang Yangming's ideas. Lin's grandfather had actually worked with Wang during the suppression of a Yao rebellion in Guangxi, and also shared philosophical conversation with

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[763] Franke, *Studien und Texte*, 73; Huang, *1587*, 186-187.
[764] Felix Siegmund, based on his reading of Qi Jiguang's commentary on the *Seven Military Classics*, also disagrees with Ray Huang that Qi was interested in cosmology. See: Felix Siegmund, "Qi Jiguang's 戚繼光 *Wujing qishu zhaiti* 武經七書摘題: A Few Notes on a Synopsis of the Military Classics." *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 19 (2015): 35-36.
[765] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 157.
[766] Wang, "Qingxing de Fojiao xuanyangzhe," 98-100.

him. This influence then carried over in the education of Lin Zhao'en himself. According to Lin, all three religions ultimately sprang from the same source, and this is the heart-mind itself.[767] It is therefore more fruitful to see Qi Jiguang's seemingly indiscriminate invocation of the creeds of different religions and philosophical systems as part of this syncretic tendency inherent in *xinxue*.[768] As we have seen in chapters seven and eight, this syncretism also affected identities. The Neo-Confucian sage, the Strategists' sagacious military commander, and the knight-errant could all be exemplars combined in one person.

This reliance on Neo-Confucian *xinxue* doctrine was further supplemented by inculcating a very stoic view on life and death:

> The third. Illuminating death and life.
>
> The life of men, amidst the universe and the unseen world they suddenly have their body; its life and death, once gone it will not return. This matter of life and death, one can say it is big. Therefore, every kind of vigorous *qi*, there is not one which doesn't love life and fear death. Yet, death and life are predestined, [they are] not arbitrary within in the midst of extreme misery and fighting. […] Moreover, look at the high ranking military officers, did they not from a young age, as low officials, go into battle and kill bandits, rising rank by rank to earn [the rank of] high-officer? Surely if battle is able to excessively kill people, nowadays there would also be no men successful in obtaining high ranks and still be alive. Furthermore, there are brave soldiers who have experienced battles and have scars all over their bodies, shoulders and faces, and have yet enjoyed an advanced age. Therefore, as the saying goes: "Men are suffering insects, our destiny depends on Heaven." Furthermore, when you are led to an appropriate death, a temple has been built to offer sacrifices to ancestors and you enjoy animals killed as a sacrifice for you [as the deceased ancestor] for all generations, this is living on after death. The locality's young men and women publicly praise you and if one day they hand it down from one to another, this is one day of being alive in the world.
>
> 第三．明死生
>
> 人之生也，於大塊冥冥之中忽有此身；其死生，一去不復再返。是生死之事，可謂大矣。故凡血氣之類，莫不愛生畏死。但死生有數，不專在水火兵戈之中。[…] 且看那個將領不是自少年為下官

[767] Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 71, 107; He Shan-meng 何善蒙, "Lin Zhao'en "San Jiao heyi" de zongjiao sixiang qian xi" 林兆恩 "三教合一 " 的宗教思想淺析, *Feng Jia renwen shehui xuebao* 逢甲人文社會學報 12 (2006): 212.

[768] For more on the syncretism of Lin Zhao'en, see: Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). For more on the connection between Lin Zhao'en and Wang Yangming's philosophy and followers, see: Cheng Chih-ming 鄭志明, "Lin Zhao'en yu wan Ming Wangxue" 林兆恩與晚明王學, in *Wan Ming sichao yu shehui biandong* 晚明思潮與社會變動, edited by Danjiang daxue zhongwenxi 淡江大學中文系 (Taipei: Honghua wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1987), 89-140.

> 上陣殺賊，一級一級掙到大將？果是陣上能死人，如今也無人等得到大將還活在世。又有勇士屢經戰陣刀痕遍體披面，尚且享有高年。故諺云：“人是苦蟲，我命在天。”況使死得當，立廟祭祀血食百世，是死後還活，地方士女口碑一日相傳，是一日活在世間。[769]

As Kandice Hauf pointed out, it is difficult to decide if Confucianism is also a religion or only a this-worldly socio-political program. There are certainly theistic aspects to how Confucians defined Heaven, *tian* 天 across the centuries. At first it seems to have been an anthropomorphic god-like being, but later on it became a more impersonal force of nature which governed the universe. Later on, the idea was articulated that, just as Heaven bestowed its favour and a moral mandate on the ruling house, it also did this on individuals. 命 *ming* thus became the "fate" of the individual, determined by Heaven. In this conceptualization, since Heaven determined your life, death, wealth and status, it became futile to concern yourself with these things. Only the pursuit of a moral life should be of concern, everything else flowed from that. This is also how Wang Yangming considered the relationship between Heaven, fate and the individual's life on earth.[770] This fatalistic way of considering life on Earth can be discerned in Qi's exhortations in the quote above. Furthermore, another incentive to choose the moral high ground and do one's duty was having one's name remembered for generations after your own life. Again, this points to a (Neo-)Confucian exhortation as being the leading inspiration for the moral disciplining of the officers. As Kandice Hauf states, within Confucianism there was no real conception of an afterlife, reincarnation or hell. All what mattered was an idea of "social immortality". This was of course expressed in the ancestor worship and the need for this to be carried on through the generations. It was the duty of the living to preserve the memories of the dead. In return, merit accumulated by ancestors good have an impact of the life of their descendants. In that sense, you were expected to live a morally upright life in order to safeguard the future prosperity of the family. Finally, this social immortality could best be achieved by having such great achievements, that society itself would keep remembering you.[771] It could be said that Qi Jiguang succeeded admirably in this aim. Ray Huang and Herbert Franke's views on the role of multiple Chinese religions in Qi Jiguang's

[769] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 159-163.
[770] Hauf, "The Jiangyou Group," 288-289.
[771] Idem, 291-292.

works are therefore incorrect. Qi Jiguang clearly built his argument of moral persuasion on a Neo-Confucian basis.

From South to North, from State to State, from Dynasty to Dynasty

I consider Qi Jiguang's manuals a detailed elaboration of Wang Yangming's ideas, both in praxis and in philosophy. The *Seven Military Classics* themselves considered a wide range of topics, including grand strategy from the state level, tactics in the field, recruitment, organization and disciplinary techniques. Yet these matters were often described (or rather: prescribed) in a very general and succinct way, without getting into details overmuch. This might also explain the reason why these seven works were selected as the military canon in the first place: the knowledge contained within this repository was of mostly timeless value and of nearly universal applicability. This also means that by relying on these texts, we do not get a very detailed look into the day-to-day practicalities that went into raising and running an army. For example, whilst all the classics advocate good training as well as punishment and reward schemes for disciplinary purposes, none actually offers detailed training schemes for different weapon systems or an elaborated system of rules and regulations. For those officers who passed the military examinations from the Song onwards (and scholar-officials and literati interested in military affairs) this meant that either they had to improvise based on the prescriptions of the classics, or there was a current of oral knowledge pertaining to these matters which they could conform their practices to. Concerning the regulations, we know that the Ming founder put down instructions in writing, including military law, and his son the Yongle emperor promulgated his own set of military regulations in 1414.[772] It has, however, not been researched to what extent these instructions were disseminated amongst the military and the ones supervising them, nor is it therefore known how well officials conformed to these rules during the Ming dynasty. It is possible that some degree of conformity was upheld across the lifespan of the empire, but the sheer diversity of institutional branches encroaching on the military sphere (eunuchs, censors and other civil bureaucrats) could well have further increased the variation of practices across the military establishment rather than keep it uniform. Qi Jiguang's

[772] Ji Deyuan 季德源, *Zhongguo junshi zhidu: junshi fazhi juan* 中国军事制度：军事法制卷 (Dengzhou: Daxing chubanhe, 1997), 214; John D. Langlois, Jr., "Ming Law," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 174.

own writings indicate that practices differed even along the same frontier area. In 1567 Qi wrote a memorial about the situation on the northern frontier and made the following observations:

> This boundary and this border area are no less than Qin and Yue [two polities dating from the Warring States era who had no dealings with each other], the verbal commands are not unified and the signal beacons are not connected. Although there is a declaration of support, rarely can there be relief.
> 彼界此疆，不啻秦越，號令不一，烽堠不 通，雖有聲援，鮮克有濟.[773]

It appears that the defenses along the always critical northern frontier were quite disorganized and disconnected. It appears that Qi Jiguang's two manuals were an attempt to reorganize, rationalize and standardize the military establishment, both in the north and in the south of the empire. In another memorial from 1572, when he had already been stationed at the northern frontier for a while, he further stressed the need for a clear training regime:

> I humbly [want to] shed light on the aspect of training: the arts are easy to familiarize with, but hard to refine. The people's heart-minds are transformed with difficulty, but easily confused. Nowadays the techniques of the art of training do not need more than an odd number of years to bring results, why wait several years to achieve results?
> 竊照教練之方，技藝易熟而難精，人心難轉而易惑。 今練習技藝之術，不過歲餘收效，何待數年有成？[774]

Qi Jiguang was thus deeply concerned with the lack of standardization of different aspects of the military across the empire, and, for example, wished to reform the training methods. I argue that his manuals were an attempt to collect, explain and organize into a coherent whole a range of tried and proven training methods, disciplinary regimes, systems of commands and battlefield tactics and disseminate them across the empire by means of the format of the printed manual. These manuals were meant to be a mutually-supporting body of military science, although Qi Jiguang admitted that some ideas were underdeveloped and he seemed wary its future understanding would be hampered:

[773] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Qi Shaobao zouyi* 戚少保奏議 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 87.
[774] Idem, 152.

> Amongst all the above clauses there are many who have incomplete ideas, which do not go beyond the mutually supporting explanations of *Ji xiao xin shu*, *Lianbing shi ji*, and *Chu lian tong lun*, and this seems like attaching importance to redundancy. However, briefly stated, I fear that there are no students who develop it and come up with new ideas and therefore there will be ones who attach importance to the words and not to the ideas, and there will be ones who will attach importance to the ideas and not to the words. The students can only choose this themselves.
> 以上每一款內，多有不盡之意，不出乎《紀效新書》、《練兵實紀》、《儲練通論》、互相發明，似為重贅。但略言之，恐無以發揚學者生意，故重其言而不重其意者有之，重其意而不重其言者有之，學者惟自擇之。[775]

These manuals were in themselves an admission that studying the military classics was not sufficient. A combination of military technological change, a growing number of inner and outer threats to the empire partly caused by demographic changes and economic vicissitudes and the greater availability of commercial printing had made these manuals both possible and necessary. They translated the universal principles of the *Seven Military Classics* into clear concrete practices written down in a more colloquial and understandable style. In the previous chapter we have already seen that the manuals were an influence on manuals that were written later during the Ming dynasty. However, none appear to have had the same dissemination and application in both time and space as Qi Jiguang's brainchildren. The succeeding Qing dynasty faced internal rebellions in the nineteenth century amidst a failure of its own traditional military institutions. Once again, Qi Jiguang's manuals were applied to raise and train new armies of peasant militia to bolster the strength of the empire.[776] Qi's methods would also spread beyond the borders of the Ming empire. After the devastating war with the Japanese at the end of the sixteenth century, the Koreans became interested in the drill and musket tactics advocated by Qi in his manuals. Eventually, the manuals themselves would be translated and adapted to Korean circumstances.[777] Thus, the beleaguered Korean king whom we met in the introduction would in the end be vindicated, when his successors adopted military manuals advocating the unification of the Way of *wen* and *wu* in the shape of Qi

[775] Qi Jiguang 戚繼光, *Lianbing shi ji* 練兵實紀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 192.
[776] Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies*, 124-126; Y.H. Teddy Sim and Sandy J.C. Liu, "Zeng Guofan's Application of Qi Jiguang's Doctrines in Crushing the Taiping Uprising," in *The Maritime Defence of China: Ming General Qi Jiguang and Beyond*, edited by Y.H. Teddy Sim (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 93-103.
[777] Hyeok Hweon Kang, "Big Heads and Buddhist Demons: The Korean Musketry Revolution and the Northern Expeditions of 1654 and 1658," *Journal of Chinese Military History* 2 (2013): 141.

Jiguang's manuals, the military embodiments of a philosophical reorientation that was fathered by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming.

Conclusion

The relationship of Confucianism to the oft-posited inherent Chinese bias against war has been obscured by an inexact understanding of Confucianism itself, and an oft-assumed, but hard to prove dominance of this ideology throughout Chinese history. In fact, Confucianism was open to myriad influences and often coexisted with other philosophical traditions. This had an impact on Chinese thought about the significance of war and peace, civil and military governance, and civil and martial ethics and identities as well, thought that shaped, and was in turn shaped by, institutional arrangements and the socio-cultural background of identity formation. For example, the *Five Classics* contained ideas about the proper place of civil governance and military action that tended to give both an equal footing in the Chinese moral universe. Institutionally speaking, the creation of a civil service examination system geared much of the literate and wealthy elite towards civil pursuits to the neglect of martial affairs. This led to a more permanent socio-cultural rift between the civil and military elites of succeeding empires. Yet, the contents of the examination curriculum would not solely elevate a Confucianism averse to war until the early fourteenth century. In the course of the 13th century, the Chinese made a choice what Confucianism was to entail, and the result was the rise to hegemony of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism. Ironically, this choice would then be institutionalized under Mongol rule. Two core features of this Confucianism that concern us here were a focus on moral concerns and an elevation of the *Four Books* over the *Five Classics* as the core curriculum. This necessitated the mastery, by the prospective elite, of those works within the Confucian mainstream that marginalized the place of the military and the martial to the biggest degree hitherto.

Civil-military relations up to the Song did not see a permanent socio-cultural separation of the two branches and neither was this separation a permanent fixture of the identities, value patterns and lifestyles of the ruling elites of the succeeding polities up to 960. Thereafter, the founding of the Song saw a permanent separation in those two senses, which was institutionalized by the implementation of the aforementioned civil service examination system. This system also provides us for the first time in Chinese history with a reliable way to gauge the spread and content of the civil ethos among the Song empire's elites. Before this time, the influence of Confucian ideas about warfare and martial praxis, and even the contents of Confucian learning itself, cannot be accurately judged and any statement about the significance of a Confucian anti-war bias prior

to the Song dynasty has to be treated with scepticism. The examination system did institutionalize a division between a literate civil elite, which was inculcated with a limited, if still changeable, set of texts, from which the empire's dominant civil bureaucracy was recruited. At the same time, the military branch consisted of mostly illiterate *de facto* hereditary military officials, who presumably benefitted from oral circulating knowledge. The implementation of the military examination system did not remedy this division, and separated the study of military texts from the mainstream of literati learning. The eventual victory of the Neo-Confucian program saw a further narrowing of literati learning and identity, to the detriment of military interests and practices. The strict moral imperatives of this program also further marginalized the moral *Salonfähigkeit* (social acceptability) of military knowledge and identities. This was accompanied by general elite antipathy towards literature celebrating martial accomplishments, most notably in the form of the knight-errantry literature, an antipathy that probably found its basis in the chaotic war-ridden centuries preceding the establishment of the Song. This can, furthermore, assumed to have been strengthened by the moral biases of Neo-Confucianism.

The Yuan period saw an interregnum by non-Chinese elites and the side-tracking of the indigenous scholarly elites until late in the dynasty. The Ming saw the eventual return to power of these scholarly elites, which coincided with the decline of the hereditary military of the dynasty. The partial power vacuum in the empire's southern interior, which had been mostly absent during the Southern Song, in combination with socio-economic changes probably necessitated the engagement of these elites with military affairs. In the empire's south therefore, censorial officials had taken over a large section of the sphere of military activity previously under control of the hereditary officers. According to Filipiak this followed similar patterns that had earlier emerged at the northern frontier, where personnel belonging to the provincial censorate took care of logistical matters like weapon maintenance and repair, maintenance and repair of walls and other defensive installations and the construction of beacons and guard towers. In addition, their intrusion into the *wu*-domain eventually went so far as training soldiers and even leading them into battle. Concerning the southeast, Filipiak speculates that they were also instrumental in taking care of judicial matters within the army and surveying and inspecting military activities. The simultaneous dissatisfaction with the examination system gave rise to a more activist interpretation of Neo-Confucianism, which was more suitable for those disenfranchised by the limited opportunities for self-realization offered by the system. The "democratization" of Neo-Confucian ideals of self-

realization are probably a sign that this ethic was now born by larger segments of the population. A great variety of social groups sought to reconcile their identities with the moral system of Neo-Confucianism, and Wang Yangming's redefinition facilitated this process. The close association of this redefinition with military activism drew in some members of the hereditary military, and its moral subjectivity paved the way for Confucian identities which were more inclusive of martial practices, values and lifestyles. It also emancipated the status of military writings from the rigid moral code of Neo-Confucianism. At the same time the increasing importance of friendship within the redefinition, and its compatibility with knight-errantry ideals, facilitated the formation of social bonds between military men and civil bureaucrats and *ex officio* scholars. Against the backdrop of *weisuo* decline, marginalization and official corruption, the exemplar of Wang Yangming's career comes into focus as an attractive model for bureaucrats serving during the vicissitudes of the later Ming dynasty. Wang's example furnished one with a toolkit of solutions to governance problems, incorporating both civil and military approaches to coping with societal disruptions.

In contrast to the apparent tendency within Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian movement of the Southern Song to eschew military affairs for ethical and metaphysical pursuits, Wang Yangming's immediate generations of prominent followers bridged the gap between both concerns. What seems to have made them different from Song literati in general and Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucians in particular was their willingness to mix military affairs with the adoption of martial identities and lifestyles. Literati like Tang Shunzhi and Tan Lun practiced martial arts; Xu Wei, Wang Daokun, and Luo Rufang embraced knight-errantry. This ethos, formerly associated with northern China, was now flourishing in southern China, in contrast to the Song dynasty.

The network formation enabled by this ideological reorientation also created a positive environment for the sharing of (military) statecraft knowledge, which was facilitated by an increase in publishing activities. A quantitative analysis of late Ming military knowledge production reveals the continuing primacy of the *Seven Military Classics* canonized during the Song dynasty, and the importance of the contribution of knowledge sharing network that came into being during the south-eastern piracy crisis, which saw a heavy involvement by officials and scholars associated with Wang Yangming, Zhan Ruoshui, and (to a lesser degree) Chen Xianzhang. Their philosophical redefinitions and their followers were shaped to a large degree amidst military uprisings and engagement with various groups of aboriginals at the Ming empire's southern internal frontiers. Perhaps these conditions stimulated an internalization of civilization's values in

the relative absence of its material presence. Military service at the south-eastern maritime frontier and the various southern internal frontiers thus went hand-in-hand with the emergence of a particular activist strain of *xinxue* Neo-Confucianism with fertile crossover opportunities with martial identities and military traditions of thought, just like it briefly had in the twelfth century in Jiangxi with the brothers Lu Jiuyuan and Lu Jiuling.

The campaigns Wang undertook in southern provinces of the empire to quell uprisings by aboriginal and Han Chinese in the early sixteenth century would become a significant influence on the anti-piracy campaign waged in the mid-sixteenth century, an affair spanning multiple provinces that would bring Qi Jiguang to prominence as a successful military commander. The *magnum opus* of the *xinxue*-network was the *Chou hai tu bian*, which gave a prominent place to the military activities of Wang Yangming, and makes it possible for us to identify the members of the network and their access to older military knowledge. The accessibility of this knowledge can be further analysed by viewing the military statecraft production of the network, which shows that the new military knowledge was based on a relatively narrow range of military writings from across Chinese history, whilst any horizontal access to contemporary military writings was mostly contained within the production of the network itself. Qi Jiguang's military manuals were a product of this military knowledge circulation, and featured a program of moral inculcation which was heavily indebted to Wang Yangming's reading of the *Great Learning* and are an example of the infiltration of Neo-Confucian ethics into the tradition of Chinese military writing. Furthermore, the manuals were an attempt to synthesize oral and written traditions of knowledge circulation. Finally, the key innovation of Qi Jiguang's method, its highly-elaborated system of collective responsibility through collective punishments, is highly likely to be derived from Wang Yangming's implementation of ideas from the *Weiliaozi* and his revival of the *baojia*-system of mutual civilian surveillance, coupled with moral exhortation derived from Confucian moral precepts. We should take these Neo-Confucian elements seriously, because Qi Jiguang chose to include them in his manuals during the height of the persecution of the Wang Yangming-movement by Zhang Juzheng. Furthermore, these manuals were the result of years of practical experience and geared towards maintaining this praxis, so it would be unwise to regard the *xinxue*-stylings in Qi's manuals as a mere exercise in self-fashioning.

Considering the influence of Qi Jiguang's ideas on Chinese military developments in both theory and practice, the importance of his Neo-Confucian ideology on military revitalization of

the later Ming dynasty should be re-evaluated as highly significant. At the same time, the relationship between Confucianism and the military of the late Ming dynasty needs to be examined in greater detail after the sixteenth century in order to ascertain the development of the relationship between moral ideology and the identity of civil and military officials alike. This will then shed further light on civil-military relations of the seventeenth century, and the course of knowledge formation and circulation. Until this research is done, we will lack an important facet in our understanding of the development of civil-military relations during the late Ming dynasty.

The history of the militarization of the literati elites of sixteenth-century can only be understood with reference to the philosophy of Wang Yangming in particular, and *xinxue* in general. Its innate moral subjectivism and downplaying of the absolute moral value of external phenomena like canonized Confucian writings, meant that whole generations of mainly southern literati and military men were able to reconcile their identities and ethics with each other. Wang Yangming's teaching allowed for building a bridge between *wen* and *wu*, a bridge Qi eagerly crossed. It also allowed for a syncretism applied to both traditions of thought and socio-cultural identity. Buddhism and Daoism could to a certain extent be reconciled with Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucianism, and be integrated in the moral inculcation method of the military under aegis of the latter. Civil and military officials could aspire to combine the identities of the Neo-Confucian *junzi* and sage, the sagely general, and the knight errant in one individual.

Qi Jiguang enjoys a good standing among modern military historians, and is often held up as an example of Chinese military innovative thinking to counteract persistent perceptions of lacklustre Chinese martial proclivities. In the final analysis, the unlikely irony is that Qi's accomplishments cannot be seen apart from his engagement with that oft-maligned origin of a posited Chinese a-military culture, Neo-Confucianism.

Appendix A – Zhan Ruoshui and Wang Yangming-Followers Contributing to the *Chou hai tu bian*

Hu Zongxian.

Tang Shunzhi.

Hu Song.

Luo Hongxian.

Li Sui 李遂 (1504-1566). He was the father of Li Cai, and a student of Ouyang De.[778]

Zou Shouyi.

Wang Ji.

Zhao Zhenji.

Luo Rufang.

Tan Lun.

Li Chunfang.

Cai Runan. 蔡汝楠 (1516-1565). He wrote an afterword for Wang Yangming's collected writings.[779]

Tang Shu.

Yan Na 嚴訥 (1511-1584). According to John Dardess, he was an admirer of the ideas of Wang Yangming. Later in life he became disillusioned with the shallowness of the mass movement.[780]

Mao Kun.

Wang Shenzhong 王慎中 (1509-1559). He was friends with the Jiangxi-group of Wang's followers, and he belonged to the *xinxue*-influenced Tang-Song prose movement.[781]

Xu Chi

[778] Julia Ching, "LI Ts'ai," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, *Part 1*, edited by L.C. Goodrich and Chao-ying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 874.
[779] Wang Shouren 王守仁, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集, *volume* 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 1588.
[780] Dardess, *A Political Life in Ming China*, 149-150.
[781] Wang Wenrong 王文荣, "Wang Shenzhong yu Mingdai xinxue" 王慎中与明代心学, *Shangrao shifan xueyuan xuebao* 上饶师范学院学报 25.4 (2005): 27.

Gui Youguang 歸有光 (1507-1571). His prose was influenced by *xinxue*. He believed that the "way of the sages" was within the heart-mind and the classics were merely an external proof of their existence. He was friends with the Jiangxi-followers of Wang Yangming.[782]

Yu Dayou.

Qi Jiguang.

Xu Wei.

[782] Huang Xiangjin 黄湘金, "Gui Youguang yu xinxue guanxi chutan" 归有光与心学关系初探, *Xinan jiaotong daxue xuebao* 西南交通大学学报 7.1 (2006): 74-78.

Appendix B – Methodology of Studying Military Literature

The authors selected for the survey were chosen on the basis of their known cooperation in the production of military knowledge during the anti-Wokou campaigns. With the exception of Qian Dehong and Wang Daokun, all were listed in the *Chou hai tu bian* as contributors. Qian Dehong and Wang Daokun were known contributors to Qi Jiguang's military ideas.

I consider the *Chou hai tu bian* as the most comprehensive contribution to the military knowledge production of the *xinxue* network, and it also brings together the knowledge of a wide range of literati and officials. The edition of the work that I used included a list of sources consulted by the authors, out of which I was able to extract the specifically military-oriented material.[783] In addition, the edition I consulted was a modern punctuated version which indicated when book titles were cited in the text by bracketing them in the Chinese style like this: 《》. I took care to check whether these book titles were really cited in the context of a discussion of military topics. I conceived of the definition of "military topic" in a broad way, ranging from grand strategy, deception, and morale, to weaponry, logistics, and tactics. An additional methodology I used was checking the quotations from military classics as they appeared in the text, and retracing them to their particular source. Almost always the quotations are preceded by *bingfa yue* 兵法曰 (best rendered as "the art of war:") and most often these could be traced back to *Sunzi's Art of War*, although sometimes another military classic was the original source. The quotes I was able to check by entering them into *The Electronic Version of Siku Quanshu (Wenyuange Edition)* and ctext.org, two online digital repositories of classical Chinese primary source materials.[784] Finally, I also took care to check whether a work generally regarded as a non-military source was nevertheless cited or mentioned within a discussion about a military topic.

I repeated this process for the modern compilations of all the writings of Qian Dehong, Yu Dayou, Wang Daokun, Xu Wei, and Mao Kun. The writings of Tan Lun, Qi Jiguang, and Tang Shunzhi were all spread between different publications (for example Qi Jiguang's literary collection and military manuals are published separately), so I examined them separately. In addition, some of Tan Lun and Tang Shunzhi's writings were not available in modern punctuated editions, which made the examination more ponderous. In the case of Hu Zongxian I benefited

[783] Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾, *Chou hai tu bian* 籌海圖編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 973-983.
[784] See http://www.sikuquanshu.com/ and http://www.ctext.org/ , both accessed January 20, 2018.

from the work of his modern biographer, Bian Li, who was able to trace Hu Zongxian's consulted military writings in his scattered surviving written legacy.[785] Last but not least, I did not cite every single instance a military work, or a non-military work in a discussion about a military topic, in my overview. It is my intention here to provide an overview of which sources were at all used in discussions about military topics, but not the relative frequency with which they were consulted by all concerned authors.

[785] Bian, *Hu Zongxian chuan*, 14

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Abbreviations

CSCS	*Chuanshi cangshu* 傳世藏書 (Haikou: Hainan guoji xinwen chuban zhongxin, 1995)
SKJHCK	*Siku jin hui shu congkan* 四庫禁毀書叢刊 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000)
SKQS	*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983)
SKWSSJK	*Siku weishou shu ji kan* 四庫未收書輯刊 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000)
XXSKQS	*Xuxiu siku quanshu* 续修四库全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002)
CBDB	Peter Bol et al, *China Biographic Database Project* https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb/home

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