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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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Citation

Noordam, B. (2018, October 18). *The soldier as a sage: Qi Jiguang (1528-1588) and the neo-confucianization of the military in sixteenth-century China*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/66264>

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Issue Date: 2018-10-18

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 鄒守益 (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 disproportionately 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 Xianzhang⁴⁴³ 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

⁴⁴⁴ Roland Louis Higgins, "Piracy and Coastal Defense in the Ming Period, Government 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 周琬 (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 彭盡臣 (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 Merrillyn 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 Merrillyn 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

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*-adherents I have also not been able to find evidence pointing in the opposite direction, i.e. that they 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 姚才剛, "Ganquan houxue Tang Shu 'tao zhenxin' shuo shenxi" 甘泉后學唐樞 "討真心" 說探析, *Zhexue yundai* 哲學動態 1 (2016): 52-57.

⁴⁷¹ Xue Mei 薛梅, "Wu Cheng'en yu xinxue renwu jiaoyou kaozheng" 吳承恩與心學人物交游考證, *Hubei daxue xuebao* 湖北大學學報 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 Zongxian] 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，入其帳中讀謀畫而得此，傳至今四世矣，相誠秘不人。”

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.