

Textual Filiation of Li Shimian's Biography

The Part About the Palace Fire in 1421

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

Li's story draws attention from modern, Western scholarship as well. The late Charles O. Hucker wrote his biography for the *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*.¹ The late Frederick W. Mote, in his *A Research Manual for Ming History*, made him the subject of a demonstrative study for a modern understanding and exploitation of traditional Chinese historiography, especially the official sources.² Mote translated Li Shimian's biography in the standard *Mingshi* (Official History of the Ming), adding rich annotations that give information and thought to

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matters of historical and linguistic importance, and discussed the historiographical issues arising from the sources for the biography.

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

The full account of Li's official career, however, includes three horrific ordeals he had experienced at the height of the Ming. First, he was sent to prison and jailed for some twenty-one months apparently for what he said about current government in 1421. That punishment was related to his response to the Yongle emperor's call for frank criticism in the wake of the great fire that year that burned the three newly built audience halls in the recently proclaimed capital of Beijing. Second, he was almost beaten to death in a palace chamber and then jailed for seventeen months before he was freed by the Xuande emperor (r. 1426-

1435). That incident was the result of his self-initiated memorial in 1426 about the private life and policies of the Hongxi emperor (r. 1425). The Hongxi emperor was the Yongle emperor's son and the Xuande emperor's father. Finally, in 1443, for his failure to comply unconditionally to the demands of the eunuch-dictator Wang Zhen (d. 1449), he was illegally sentenced by Wang to be pilloried in a heavy cangue for three days at the gate of the National University. He was released only when the Zhengtong emperor heard the petition for justice by a thousand and more (some sources say three thousand) National University students in front of the Forbidden City. The substance of these ordeals and inquires into their causes have since captivated the historian and obsessed many a storyteller, who conveniently added inferences to create a compelling thriller.

The life of Li Shimian as an official in the imperial court and in the capital is indeed worth studying. His encounters bear on the political and intellectual history of earlier Ming times, our understanding of which is still considerably guided by the preferences of traditional historiography. When the filiation of the texts that inform Li's biography is scrutinized, however, discrepancies and contradictions in the official accounts about him become obvious. And when these discrepancies and contradictions are explained, we are obliged to modify our views on the character of the emperors whom Li served and on the larger picture of the officialdom in which he was an active member. Li's ordeals in the Hongxi and Zhengtong reigns have been studied by Hucker and Mote, respectively. The present paper focuses on his first ordeal, which has received little scrutiny in past scholarship. Clearing up the confusion surrounding Li's memorializing the Yongle emperor shows what actually happened, what really mattered, and what the imperial style of statecraft was like. Mote has examined "the filiation of texts going back to Li's first biographies and other works dating from his time."³ I continue by following his advice that we reconstruct a past event by studying each bit of relevant data from its source.

THE PROBLEM

Historiographical issues arising from Ming and Qing (1644-1911) accounts concerning Li Shimian's 1421 encounter with the Yongle emperor's

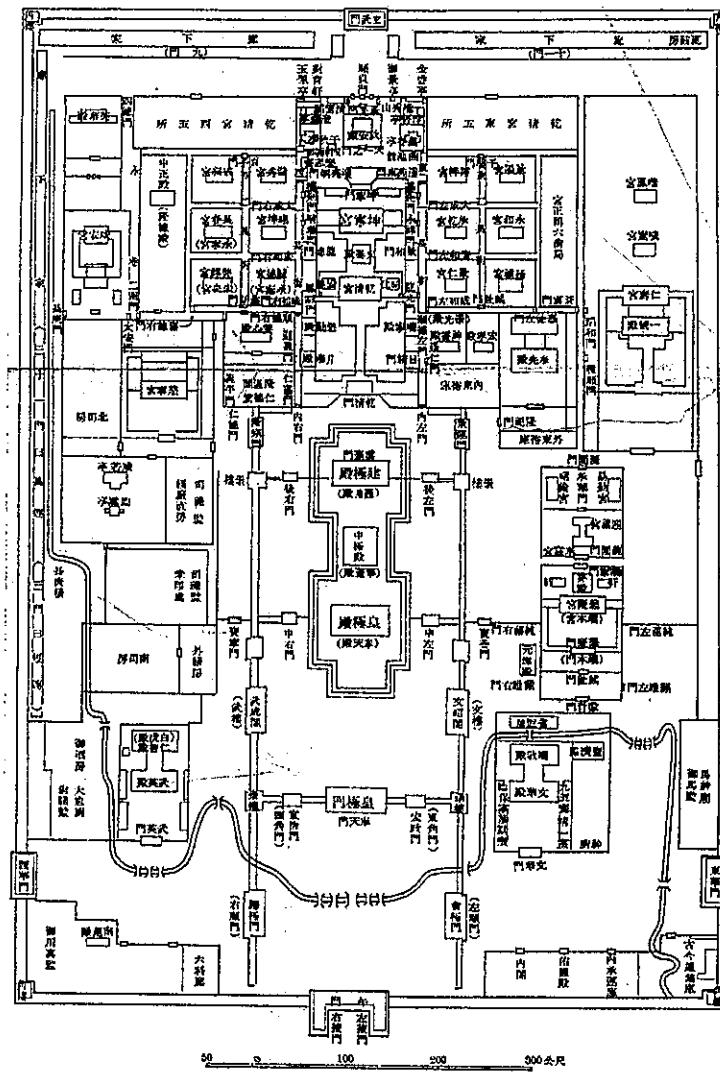
wrath appear as complicated as the encounter itself. Chronological entries in *Guoque* (History of the Ming Deliberated), the "Benji" (Annals) section of *Mingshi*, *Ming tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror of the Ming), as well as Li's biographies in *Ming Yingzong shilu* (Veritable Records of the Ming [Emperor] Yingzong), other sections of the *Mingshi*, and other sources show discrepancies and contradictions in the documentation of Li's presentation of his memorial and its aftermath.

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

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

The above narrative, typical of most conventional historical narrative, first of all lacks temporal precision, even if we grant the credibility of the emperor's later reaction to Li's words.⁵ We don't learn precisely when Li submitted his memorial, when he was sent to prison, or when he was released. The context of the incident cannot be sufficiently clear

圖禁宮代明



1. Three main audience halls destroyed by fire in 1421. "Mingdai Gongjin tu" (Plan of the Forbidden City in the Ming Dynasty), in Zhu Xie, *Ming Qing liangdai gongyuan jianzhi yange tu kao* (Study of the Maps and Diagrams of the Buildings in the Imperial Palace During the Ming and Qing Dynasties) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), folding map following p. 90. The three halls that burned in 1421 from south to north at the center of the palace compound were Fengtian, Huagai, and Jinshen, today known as Taihe, Zhonghe, and Baohe, respectively.

when we don't know the wording of the edict that enticed Li to be so outspoken and thorough in his response. We are not informed of the issues he addressed, other than those two identified in the *Mingshi*, and thus are not able to consider other reasons that would elicit the subsequent slander. The magnitude of Li's punishment also is not clear. If he was not the only official who responded to the call for criticism, what did the other critics say and what happened to them? Also worth looking at are the reasons for Li's great sense of responsibility and for his tardy rescue.

To answer these questions, we indeed have to go beyond this portion of the *Mingshi*. For the timing-related questions, the source of the *Mingshi*—Li's biography, or necrology, in the *Ming Yingzong shilu*, the veritable records of the Zhengtong, Jingtai, and Tianshun reigns—is equally uninformative.⁶ The "Annals" of *Mingshi* in the Siku quanshu ([Qing] Imperial Library of Four Treasures) version of the work, on the other hand, chronicles a sequence of three events giving a rough configuration of the encounter. First, on day *gengzi* of the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421), fire burnt the three [newly completed] audience halls of Fengtian, Huagai, and Jinshen, and an edict was issued calling for frank criticism against governmental faults and failures. For speaking about the inconveniences of having the capital moved to Beijing, ministerial secretary Xiao Yi (1384–1423) was executed.⁷ Second, on day *xinsi* of the eleventh month of Yongle 19 (1421), reader-in-waiting Li Shimian memorialized fifteen current concerns. He offended the emperor and was sent to jail. Third, on day *gengzi* of the seventh month of Yongle 21 (1423), Li Shimian was released from prison and restored to his former post.

This chronology has Li submitting his memorial more than half a year after the great fire and after the execution of Xiao Yi, who spoke against establishing Beijing as the capital, as is similarly outlined in Li's *Mingshi* biography. This timing, however, contradicts virtually all other sources, especially the *Ming Taizong shilu*—the veritable records of the Yongle reign—which dates Li's memorial to a few days after the fire. The important information here is the execution of Xiao Yi, which goes completely unmentioned in the *Veritable Records* (and indeed in surviving contemporary Ming writings by writers who should have had knowledge of the matter). That information on Xiao Yi is reliable—the earlier *Guoque* chronicles it as well, and in fact, Xiao Yi's memorial survives.⁸ (See figure 2.)

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2. Beginning of Xiao Yi's memorial, 1421. "Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu" (A Response to the Edict Calling for Honest Opinions), *Chongke Waxian ji* (Reissue of Stocking Thread Writings) (1740) in *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu*, Jibu 31 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe chubanshe, 1997), *juan* 1, pp. 6a-b.

However, the *Guoque* account differs critically from the *Mingshi* account by chronicling the misfortune of Xiao Yi after that of Li Shimian. After entering the submission of memorials by Li Shimian and expositor-in-waiting Zou Ji (fl. 1380s-1420s; d. 1422) and a lengthy memorial indiscriminately attributed to both men, the *Guoque* lists the names of the other officials who also memorialized at the time and states that the emperor read their memorials and gave them approvals. The account of Xiao Yi's encounter then follows.⁹ The sequence listed in the *Guoque* thus presented is in accord with that of the *Ming Taizong shilu*,

except that the latter is silent on Xiao Yi. But the *Guoque* also remains helplessly imprecise about the dates of Xiao's act and his execution.

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

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

Two additional important dates are

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

This chronology shows that Li was not immediately punished for what he wrote; rather, he got into trouble much later when he was tied to some presumably graver controversy. This can be ascertained by a scrutiny of the imperial responses to the fire and the subsequent criticism, which also give context to Xiao Yi's misfortune.

THE YONGLE EMPEROR'S RESPONSES

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

The opening lines of the imperial pronouncement nevertheless indicated that the emperor was not ready to take the blame all by himself. He justified himself by first stating that in instituting the dual-capital system he was emulating the ancients. As emulation of classical precedents was a praiseworthy act that convention would sanction, he in effect maneuvered to foreclose criticism against what many thought was the crux of the matter—the construction of Beijing as the capital. He ended with a statement that lured conscientious and outspoken officials to their

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dooms: a modest confession that he indeed did not really know the cause of this calamity and thus was eager to be enlightened. He added that the officials, "all whom I trust and who are one with me in matters of joy or distress, when finding what measures I have implemented that are really inappropriate, should speak out unreservedly and discuss them entry by entry, so that I can possibly correct the defects in order to return Heaven's goodwill."¹³ (For the text of the Yongle emperor's edict, see figure 3.) That statement was tantamount to the emperor calling for reform in the areas suggested by the twelve questions. Yet, thus conceded, it was imperial prerogative to regard criticisms beyond this scope as relevant or not.

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

A. Exemption of arrears in tax and levies

Exemption of (1) tax arrears before Yongle 17 (1419), salt and grass collections to be delivered in that year, and tax grains and grass for Yongle 18 (1420) from areas hit by natural disasters; (2) undelivered requisitions of steel and iron, dyestuffs, hemp for mats, timber and plants;

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哩等貢方物賜以都加蘇哩冠帶襲衣紗綾文錦紗羅線絹
賜其從人有差○甲辰翰林院侍讀李時勉侍講鄒緝等言便
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3. Yongle emperor's edict issued on the tenth day of the fourth month of 1421. *Ming Taizong shilu*, juan 236, pp. 2263-2264. Photographic reprint of manuscript exemplar in the Guoli Beiping tushuguan (Taipei: Zhongyang

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yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1961-1966). The text of the emperor's edict begins in the ninth column of page 2263 and runs to the tenth column of page 2264.

[replacement of] draft animals that died; granary-bound grains, salt levies, and undelivered pearls from Guangdong; and also (3) levies on raw gold and silver (except for annual silver levies established by the old quota).

B. Suspension of purchases

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

C. Relief and rehabilitation

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

D. Judiciary discipline

(11) Strict adherence to the *Da Ming lü* (Great Ming Code) with respect to trials and sentencing guidelines; prohibition against deliberate misinterpretation of the law by improper citation of regulations stated on imperial placards; (12) pardon and reinstatement to duty of military officers who committed crimes punishable by lashing, pole-beating, labor sentence, exile, resettlement, and sundry types of the death penalties, and those demoted and exiled to render service or stand sentry on the borders; (13) pardon and reinstatement to duty of officials and functionaries

who incurred losses or went against regulations in their purchases of materials for the construction projects; and (18) immediate release of inmates serving as station guards upon completion of a sentence.

E. Administrative discipline

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

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

LI SHIMIAN'S MEMORIAL

It is thus intriguing that Li Shimian should have been punished for his response when such was solicited by the Yongle emperor. An examination of the documents at issue is imperative. The result is perplexing: two different memorials have been attributed to Li, but one of them was also

attributed to Zou Ji. *Guoque* and *Mingshi* differ with each other while *Ming Taizong shilu* differs with both with respect to authorship. Apparently the earlier historians were not sure about some of the crucial facts.

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

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

Thus it is clear that Li Shimian and Zou Ji memorialized separately. Both men might have submitted their memorials on the same day, thereby giving rise to the confusion in the *Veritable Records*. The compilers of the *Veritable Records* appear to have lost rigor in discrimination when they recorded two or more related documents that differed little in content. Considering Li's memorial the more important—no doubt from a retrospective view of what subsequently happened to Li—the

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compilers excerpted language from Li's memorial exclusively, but they also registered the names of the others who presented memorials on the same issues. This gave rise to the ambiguity in the sentence ascribing authorship.

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

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

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

1. Officials and sub-officials (functionaries) in the empire cannot all be good. Although time and again investigating censors and surveillance officials were ordered to conduct reviews of them for promotion or demotion, the bureau [in the Ministry of Personnel responsible for

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

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

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

4. In recent years, soldiers have done their best for the construction projects in Beijing. Their families at home have no means of earning a living and are short of food and clothing. They are to be pitied. It is appropriate that military officers [in the soldiers' hometowns] be instructed to give soldiers' families special care, tendering them consolation and compensation. The soldiers' monthly salaries should be increased, conscript labor demands on male adults of their families should be reduced, and their families should be exempted from tax.
5. In recent times, military hierarchies are not well tuned and military preparations are lax. It is appropriate to instruct military officials inside and outside the court to bring order to the troops and to give them scheduled drills and training so they can meet exigencies.

Li Shimian was fundamentally positive when he recommended tightening the code of official conduct—especially through a more effective operation of the state's surveillance apparatus—in order to achieve a more efficient and hence less imposing and excoriating government. He could be construed as having implied criticism of the construction of Beijing when he mentioned the sufferings of the soldiers and common people involved. But that criticism did not, at least not overtly, suggest opposition to making Beijing the imperial capital, which necessitated massive construction projects. In fact, Li celebrated the founding of Beijing in a fine piece of rhymed prose, a celebrated rhapsody that became a standard selection in Ming literature.²² [See figure 4 for the beginning of Li Shimian's "Beijing fu" (Rhapsody on Beijing).] Li was



4. Opening of Li Shimian's "Beijing fu" (Rhapsody on Beijing), *Gulian wenji*, photographic reprint of the manuscript exemplar in the *Wenyuange Siku quanshu zhenben sanji*, vol. 301 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), *juan* 1, p. 1a.

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more directly critical on the issue of receiving too many foreign envoys too frequently. However, his wording is rather mild compared with that of Zou Ji.

As will become clear, Li differed from Zou Ji (and Xiao Yi) in that he addressed the issues from economic more than from political considerations. He asserted the financial strains caused by the construction of Beijing, but he did not challenge the rationale and legitimacy of the project. His concern about economic issues explains his plea for a better canal transportation. Likewise, his plea for better treatment of the families of the soldiers working in Beijing was to ensure a more attentive work force for the construction projects. Indeed, this point need not have been raised if he anticipated a cessation of the building work. What he really worried about was an immediate re-building of the burnt palaces, a task that was not inconceivable and one that the contractors and supervisors would certainly delight in undertaking. However, Li Shimian's concern was that a building project of this magnitude might prove too much for the people to bear and for the court to endure. In this regard, Li was indeed thinking of the welfare of the state, and it is no wonder that the imperial approval of his memorial came in response.²³

ZOU JI'S MEMORIAL

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

The full text of Zou's memorial, as mentioned above, is preserved in *Mingwen heng*.²⁵ Zou did not first enumerate his points, but rather he

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

1. Building Beijing as the capital is to provide the imperial successors a foundation and the people a place to revere. [Understandably it is good decision.]²⁶ But it has brought worry to Your Majesty for almost twenty years since the construction began [that is, as soon as Yongle usurped the throne]. The work and the resources drawn for the construction are tremendous. . . . The ministers are unable to fully understand Your Majesty's intent so that plans are misconstrued and costs have risen without limit at much exploitation of the people.
2. Superfluous officials and appointees, hundreds in number, in and outside the capital, draw salaries for doing nothing. That is a drain of money and grain [rendering the state even unable to] dole out relief to the helpless poor.
3. A million people are laboring for the government all year round. They are unable to provide protection [and welfare] for their parents and wives and children . . . nor can they work their fields in a timely fashion. . . . Yet, the government continues to increase levies upon them to the extent that they have to chop down their mulberry trees and date trees for firewood and peel the bark of mulberry trees for paper-making material.²⁷ That [demand for labor] deprives the laborers who are fulfilling their labor service duties of their means of livelihood.
4. On top of that, government officials and functionaries

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

5. [One phenomenon in Beijing is especially menacing.] Since the construction of Beijing began, those in charge of the building projects . . . have commanded craftsmen and petty persons to use their assumed power to force the local inhabitants to vacate their houses and resettle in other places. The vacation was to begin immediately; houses were torn down even before the victims could actually move out. . . . Helpless orphans and widows could do nothing but wail and weep. Such orders came on extremely cold days as well as on extremely hot and rainy days. The victims' wives and children were exposed to the elements. They were stunned by the haste and the coercion and did not know where to go. When

they managed to move to a new place, no sooner had they built their new houses but they were forced to move again. There are cases when after moving three or four times, resettlement still could not be made. Nevertheless, no construction went on for a month or even a whole season on the site of the original dwelling places that these victims were forced to vacate. . . . Petty men carrying out the construction have oppressed the people relentlessly to this extreme extent. Yet Your Majesty is barred from the knowledge of it.

6. Greedy officials and corrupt functionaries are everywhere. . . . An appointment to the construction projects is a key to a livelihood [that is, a way to fortune]. They extort and make demands on the people to no limit. Officials and functionaries in the sub-prefectures and counties meet the demands of their counterparts [from the capital] without delay. Honest and clean officials who refused them were slandered and defamed by charges of tardiness and lack of cooperation [in the unresponsive imperial court]. . . . Thus local governments immediately bow to officials dispatched from the court. Open bribery of higher officials and exploitation of lower officials for the gratification of the higher flow just like commercial exchanges. No one questions the custom of corruption. . . . How can there be no complaints from the people against such exploitation?
7. People in the provinces of Shandong, Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi are hard hit by successive famines, floods, and droughts. They have to live on bark, grassroots, and blighted grain. But the government has no surplus grain in reserve to send them relief. Involuntary migration of the old and the young ensues. Men have to sell their wives and children to stay alive. . . . Still, labor service imposed on them does not stop.
8. Buddhist monks and Daoist priests numbering ten thousand or more crowd the capital, consuming rice a hun-

dred piculs and more each day. . . . That is [a striking] instance of wasting the food supply to support the useless.

9. Military officers [in the construction projects] are arrogant and undisciplined, not doing their jobs but traveling around bringing trouble to the good people [because] they are not sincere in rendering services to the state.
10. Annual manufacturing of silk brocades and minting of coins [as gifts] to foreign countries and lands in the northwest and purchases of horses and other commodities drain the financial resources of the state and the people. . . . The great numbers of horses thus purchased are of inferior quality. People obliged to raise these horses [suffer so much that they have to] sell their wives and children to make up their losses.
11. The court allows people of the borderlands [i.e., envoys] to enter the Middle Kingdom and bestows on them saddles and horses, bow and arrows, living quarters, cattle and sheep, clothes, kitchen utensils, and tents. These people are enemy agents spying on China. . . . [That they ask to stay in the capital] is something to be suspected. . . . The appropriate thing to do is send the envoys back immediately after they are given court audiences. They should be kept from staying in the Middle Kingdom so that our posterity can be free from potential trouble.
12. Praying conducted in Daoist temples renders a waste of the state's financial resources and represents an unrestrained expenditure in the budget.
13. [Zou Ji sums up the above with this statement.] These several things all are bad enough to cause damage to a harmonious air in the empire. They cause the court to lose the minds and hearts of the people and to go against the will of Heaven. Complaints and curses arise truly because of them.
14. [Zou Ji continues, relating these malpractices to the great

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

15. [Zou Ji becomes sporadically repetitious as he goes on.] Your Majesty must respond to Heaven with substantive things but not with formality. You should promptly decree an end to the construction works and that craftsmen and workers who have been [drafted] be disbanded and returned to their ordinary, peaceful lives. 20
16. There should be termination of horse purchases from foreign countries. 21
17. Foreign tributary envoys should be rewarded but sent home [upon completion of their missions]. . . . Those who wish to stay should first settle themselves outside the borders for three or four years while the court deliberates their future unpressured. These people are unfathomable and do not understand what favor and friendship are. They come only because they are greedily seeking our commodities and rewards. Once they feel they are not satisfactorily treated, they will do harm to us. 22
18. It is appropriate to dismiss superfluous officials and functionaries and have them return to their home places. Even those who are employable should depart and then be recalled when vacancies become available. 2
19. Seek out the worthies, make appointments by recommendation, and assess officials strictly [based on their performance]. When proven guilty, [bad officials] should be punished and not simply pardoned. The censors and 2

the surveillance officials should carry out the investigations. . . . Honest and capable officials with prominent achievements should be commended and given promotion.

20. [Then Zou Ji interpolates with a piece of sermonizing to drive home other points, some of which he already made.] In general, the state takes as priorities earnest implementation of education and [social] transformation, enrichment of social custom, encouragement of honesty and a sense of shame, and extolling the good and the kind. When the good are encouraged and the bad are punished, the sense of honor can be raised and the habits of treacherousness and greed will end by themselves.
21. [Then he proposes what to do to implement these priorities.] There are National University students who are only-sons and who were sentenced to banishment for pleading leave to take care of their parents. They should be pardoned and sent home to fulfill their duty. There are also students who took leave for this cause who later joined the government after their parents died but were mistakenly charged for breaking the law. Their cases jeopardize the substance of government and produce no lesson for posterity. [They too should be pardoned.]
22. Praying in Daoist temples should be stopped. The practice is absurd.
23. Despite the recent general amnesty, minor offenders are not pardoned because judicial officials have inflexibly constrained themselves to following the written ordinances. These offenders should be pardoned and given an opportunity to reform themselves. But offenders who were officials in the capital should be demoted to posts outside the capital.²⁸
24. Tax exemptions should be given, and non-urgent levies of all sorts should be suspended.
25. Local government should give relief to famine-stricken people. Rich households should be encouraged to donate

grain to help the government cause. Government should ensure that when there is a successful harvest, the lenders are reimbursed.

26. [Zou Ji then digresses to make a summary justification of his requests and proposals, which amount to a Confucian-style political discourse.] All these proposals are important measures for the empire. They are what will protect and stabilize the imperial house, regain the hearts of the people, regain the mandate of Heaven, and ultimately assure the eternal destiny of the state. If all are implemented now, the people will become joyous and harmony can be reached. When the minds and hearts of the people are one, the foundation of the state becomes more secure. If Your Majesty wishes to do things for the good of the populace and for the everlasting foundation of the imperial descendants, nothing is greater than implementation of these proposals.
27. [Zou Ji continues with additional discourse of a general nature.] What a state depends on for its longevity are Heaven's mandate and the people's hearts. And existence of Heaven's mandate always depends on the people's hearts. There has never been a case when the state lost the hearts of its people and yet could retain the Heavenly mandate. There has never been a case when people gave their hearts to a state that Heaven did not do the same. If one desires to harmonize the people's minds and hearts, he must earnestly implement education and moral transformation, must practice rites and modesty, and must let the people fulfill their livelihood in the villages and towns. When education and moral transformation prevail, people know the instruction [of the proper relationship of] father and son, ruler and servitor. They also know the justice of exalting their ruler and getting close to their superiors. Thus, when they are given jobs and are sent for service, they will not complain even when they are worked hard. When they can meet the

needs of their livelihood and have sufficient food and clothing, they will understand the sense of honor and will think of bringing happiness to their wives and children and protection to their relatives and clans. In this way theft and robbery will die out as will the habit of scrambling [for profits] and intimidation of others. Consequently, the people's minds and hearts will be peacefully obedient and Heaven's mandate can be made secure, which bring lasting benefits to the state that no other measures can.

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

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

As for officials who defend the borders, let them be

ordered to tighten the discipline of their troops, to be careful in patrolling the beacon towers and forts, and to guard against thieves and robbers. Such should also be considered as preventive measures.

28. [Zou Ji then recapitulates the key points.] Now that Heaven's intent has been thus revealed and the calamities that have occurred are of such an extreme, there should be no further construction work [undertaken in Beijing] that would increase the burden on the people. Your Majesty should return to Nanjing and pay visits to the imperial mausoleum there, to report the causes of the fire and thereby nourish your own person. Rest for a few years and resume [the construction] only when Heaven's goodwill returns.
29. Your Majesty should not listen to the petty men who ask for reconstruction and thus allow yourself to be misguided again. These petty men do not understand the great measures that bring worry and difficulty to the state. They only wish to flatter you and follow your orders in hopes of procuring your grace and their own personal fortune. If you continue to listen to them again, thinking that they will do you no harm, then you will be further misguided. That in all likelihood is not advantageous to the state.
30. [Zou Ji ends his advice and pleading with a cliché-ridden conclusion.] I cannot restrain my genuine loyalty. Risking execution by the ax, I present my foolish opinions in response to the brilliant edict. Offending the imperial awe, I could not cease trembling for fear my punishment is on the way. I only hope that Your Majesty takes pity on my rashness and foolishness and attends in small measure to my words.

Zou Ji's memorial is clumsily structured. But its lack of literary charm rather more affirmed his sincerity and earnestness. He simply spoke what occurred to him as important to the welfare of the state—

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lightening the people's burdens and thereby reducing their complaints. His redundancy actually has in several places set up safety valves. As he made it clear at the beginning, the decision to build Beijing as the capital was well intentioned and justified, and only the poor execution of the plan caused the misery. In the end, he too did not propose a final return of the capital to Nanjing or a permanent cessation of reconstructions in Beijing. The need for the emperor to give serious consideration to the timing of and resources for the reconstructions was his entire motive, as was the case with Li Shimian.

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

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

People in general are at ease with their homelands and uneasy about living a migrant life in a faraway place. More so for these foreign tribes, whose customs and natures are different [from those of the Chinese]. It is unreasonable [to think] that they betray their masters when leaving their native places to live in faraway China.²⁹

Zou's offense was his ultra chauvinistic, even jingoistic attitude, which on some points ran counter to the imperial positions and policies. But on this issue the emperor had good understanding. Previously he had shown disagreement with but appreciation of an official who had proposed the same policies.³⁰

To sum up, the substance of Zou Ji's memorial is not exaggerated but rather solid, and the tone of it is in accord with the cultivation of a Hanlin veteran. He is not offensive, and certainly was not so considered, even in his strongest charges. However, on the whole the memorial is much stronger than that of Li Shimian, and yet he was not punished for what he said. The *Guoque* errs in saying that Zou was sent to jail sometime after he submitted his memorial and that soon thereafter he was pardoned but not appointed to office again.³¹ As was recorded in the *Veritable Records* and in *Mingshi*, Zou, in fact, soon received a promotion instead.³² Thus, it is hard to believe that Li Shimian would have been jailed for speaking in a milder way than Zou Ji spoke and that Xiao Yi was executed for saying much less.

XIAO YI'S MEMORIAL

Xiao Yi was not much studied by Ming and Qing historians and is overlooked in modern scholarship as well. A native of Lean, Jiangxi, he received his *jinshi* degree in Yongle 13 (1415). According to a short biography, he was a bureau secretary in the Ministry of Personnel when he memorialized.³³ Prior to that he had submitted a joint memorial with his colleague Chen Gen (fl. 1380-1420) for which they were sentenced to exile.³⁴ For their courage "to speak what others dared not," "those in power" came to their rescue and returned them to their offices.³⁵ Later, in the wake of the palace fire, Xiao memorialized cessation of the construction, circumspection in giving official titles, and other matters. He was sent to jail and died there [for what he said]. Both his literary learning and moral integrity were celebrated. His writings were collected into a work entitled *Waxian yigao* (Posthumously Published Stocking Thread Writings) and later reissued as *Waxian ji* (Stocking-Thread-Writings).³⁶

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juan of this posthumously published collection.³⁷ (See figure 2 above.) It is given the title "Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu" (Memorial in Response to the Call for Frank Criticism). An editorial note appended to the title indicates that the piece had been added at a later date but not found in the original version of the collection. The line next to the title contains Xiao's official title at the time of his submission. He was a secretary in the Bureau of Civil Appointments in the Ministry of Personnel. Xiao Yi's memorial is much shorter than that of Zou Ji. It deals only with two issues: the foreign-envoy issue and the Beijing-as-the-capital issue. However, the focus is on matters of policy making more than on policy execution. To see why Xiao Yi infuriated the aging and brittle, but never sclerotic or enervated, Yongle emperor, let us study the wording of Xiao's memorial.

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

In detail, Xiao's first concern refers to the huge expenditure lavished on the foreign envoys coming with their horses. The costs of their travel and rewards to them that the court provided all came from the populace [public money]. But the horses they submitted as tribute were mostly so weak and skinny as to be usable. The Ming court in fact no longer needed these horses now that it had a rich stock of horses. Xiao asked for a halt to such frequent tributes and that tributary missions be permitted to come once every three to five years, adding that this would also confine the envoys' continuous harassment and demands that the envoys habitually make while on the road. This repeats Zou Ji's points eleven and seventeen.

Xiao was especially strong on the issue of accommodating envoys in the capital. He pointed out that these envoys were richly rewarded by the emperor, some of them even appointed to offices. Many who came from Jiaozhi (northern Vietnam) were assigned jobs in the capital and given salaries. He argued against this practice in wordings more chauvinistic and offending than Zou Ji's.

I earnestly say that it is not certain that the court can enlist the service of these people who [behave like] dogs and hogs, even though Your Majesty associates them closely with benevolence and justice. [Then he cited historical precedent as did Zou Ji.] During the times of the emperor Wudi (r. 265—290) of the Jin dynasty, some official [i.e., Jiang Tong] memorialized that the various barbarians living in the provinces be resettled in the borderlands while the court tightened security control on the movements of the barbarians across the borders. This could put into operation the ancient system of dealing with people from faraway places and consequently forestall the barbarians bringing disorder to China. Emperor Wudi did not heed such advice, and later there was the turmoil caused by the Five Barbarians. This was the result of a good plan not implemented early on.³⁸

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

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

Your Majesty should thus think of a good way out. Taizu (r. 1368—1398) made Nanjing the capital. Nanjing has the advantage

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of a coiling dragon and a crouching tiger [that is, the geo-strategic advantage of being protected by the Yangzi river and the Zhongshan mountains], strong enough to be the foundation of an everlasting dynasty. Your Majesty, continuing Taizu's aspiration, established two capitals for Your tours of inspection. That truly is an appropriate continuation of Taizu's government. Given what has happened, though, You need to obey the wishes of Heaven. Perhaps when the coolness of autumn returns, You should return to Nanjing, pay visits to the mausoleum of Taizu, and be at rest with the populace in the empire. Wait until the resources of the people become somewhat more developed before You further consider plans for the reconstruction. This is the best of plans [for appeasing Heaven]. But if Your Majesty assuredly intends to stay in the north, then You should temporarily hold audiences in the Fengtian Gate, earnestly cultivate a government of justice to show your obedience to Heaven, and take time to plan [for the reconstruction projects]. This is the second alternative. [This similarly repeats Zou Ji.]³⁹

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

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

Xiao ended his plea with conventional rhetoric, much like that used by Zou Ji. He said he deserved the death penalty for submitting such an offensive memorial but hoped that he would be pardoned. If his foolish loyalty were accepted, great fortune would follow for the state that was founded by the Progenitor, and great blessings would follow for the populace. Great calamities would thus be turned into great celebration.

Viewed as a whole, Xiao Yi's memorial is rather "empty." Unlike Li Shimian and Zou Ji, he did not substantiate his charges with examples. But his wording is largely mild, and his rhetoric is not much different from the conventional, except that he was more scathing than Zou in denigrating the foreign envoys, many of whom were actually foreigners with particular expertise serving the court. Xiao did not even object to an eventual rebuilding of Beijing. He only expressed worries about the burden on the populace required for an immediate rebuilding of the palaces. It is thus, as it must have seemed to Xiao and his colleagues, inconceivable that such a speech should have sounded so offensive as to court death for its author.

The risk for a minor official who steps beyond the line to talk openly about great concerns of the state certainly cannot be discounted. Xiao Yi indeed was the only memorialist not from the ranks of the speaking officials or Hanlin advisors. Even so, the outcome was unexpected. No doubt, Xiao Yi angered the ministers and the interest groups who pushed for a quick rebuilding from the ashes. They could incense the emperor easily and would only be glad to do so. The emperor also had cause to be infuriated by the implied charge that he had decided to build Beijing as the capital based on bad advice. The Yongle emperor obviously felt he had been wronged; in fact there had been a midway review of the construction work in which he had received unanimous ministerial approval for the continuation of the project.⁴⁰

What brought Xiao disaster appears to have been the timing of his memorial. Here *Mingshi* and *Guoque* offer glimpses, unintentional but revealing, into the dark side of the imperial mind. *Mingshi* has the following description of the background of Zou Ji's memorial. The emperor was genuinely frightened by the fire and was thus sincere in inviting reflective criticism that might lead to an understanding of what had caused the calamity. But when the officials who responded directed their criticism largely at the practice of government at various levels, the emperor was displeased. Meanwhile, some high ministers also pandered to the emperor's wish (to stand by his decisions about Beijing) and slandered the critics. The emperor, now angered, turned to denounce the critics' slandering. He issued an edict strictly prohibiting further

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criticism of the same sort and warned that future offenders would not be pardoned.⁴¹

Mingshi errs in the summary account that follows. It says that as a result reader-in-waiting Li Shimian and expositor-in-waiting Luo Rujing (1372–1439) were sent to jail. Censors Zheng Weihuan (1415 *jinshi*), He Zhong (1411 *jinshi*), Luo Tong (1412 *jinshi*) and Xu Rong (1406 *jinshi*) and supervising secretary Ke Xian (fl. 1420s–1450s; did not attain *jinshi* status) were demoted to posts in Jiaozhi. Only Zou Ji, bureau secretary Gao Gongwang (1415 *jinshi*), and Hanlin bachelor Yang Fu (1406 *jinshi*) were found not guilty.⁴² This is not completely correct. Luo Rujing simply was not involved this time. He was, however, punished by the Yongle emperor's successor Renzong (r. 1425) in another incident in which Li Shimian almost met his death.⁴³

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

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

In their responding criticism the officials all spoke of the inconvenience of moving the capital to Beijing. Xiao Yi was especially sharp and biting. The emperor was furious. He had Xiao Yi put to death by mutilation. He said [justifying himself], "[With respect to moving the capital to Beijing and the expanded construction there] I have had confidential conferences with the high ministers for months. What additional inconvenience is there?" Upon this imperial response, the speaking

officials [supervising secretaries and censors] then impeached the ministers [for their advice to the emperor]. The emperor appeared at the Wumen (Meridian Gate) and had the speaking officials and the ministers argue for the case there. The ministers scolded the speaking officials saying that they were bookish scholars ignorant of important concerns of the state. Whereupon, minister of revenue Xia Yuanji (1366-1430) reported that it was the duty of the supervising secretaries and censors to speak out. In responding to the event of meeting the imperial call for criticism, it was the ministers' fault that they were unable to offer aid to the throne. The emperor was pleased hearing that; he pardoned both sides.⁴⁴

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

It is not unlikely that Xiao Yi was doomed for being suspected as a participant in a concerted opposition. Submitting his memorial in the train of memorials by Li Shimian, Zou Ji, Luo Tong, and Gao Gongwang—all Jiangxi natives—and repeating Zou conspicuously, although only in two counts, Xiao's pronouncement easily appeared not as appropriate commentary but rather as part of a cliquish maneuver based on geographic interest. Indeed, of the ten officials named in the *Veritable Records* as memorializing in response to the imperial call of 1421, half were natives of Jiangxi.⁴⁵

The timing of Xiao Yi's memorial can be determined also by

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

Supervising secretary Ke Xian and investigating censors He Zhong, Zheng Weihuan, Luo Tong, etc., were promoted [that is, rank-wise] to positions as sub-prefects [because of the following consideration].⁴⁶ Ke Xian and the other responding officials were unreserved and forthright in their criticism. The emperor accepted their opinions with approval. But their words offended minister of works Li Qing (fl. 1400-1420s) and other high officials who, being unsettled, asked the emperor to punish them. The emperor, however, lectured Li Qing and his colleagues with respect to their requests [to the following effect]. He, the emperor, had asked for frank criticism because of his respect for Heaven. It would be an offense against Heaven if he were to punish the critics now. Would that do? He was ready to hear about his faults. Rulers in ancient times all approved of honest and frank opinions. What kind of ruler did Li Qing and his like take him to be when they asked him to punish the critics? Moreover, if the charges against them were correct, they, being high ministers, should reform themselves accordingly. On the other hand, if the charges were groundless, that would do them no harm. If these critics were punished, their reputations would be enhanced because of the faults of the emperor and his ministers. Li Qing then retired feeling ashamed. Still, the emperor was afraid that Li Qing and his cohorts would seek revenge, so he appointed these critics to positions in the provinces.⁴⁷

Here, the accommodating and reasonable sovereign appears to be

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

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

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THE CASE OF LI SHIMIAN

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

Although it sounds cliché-like to explain Li's enthusiasm this way, Li's contemporaries seemed rather receptive to this line of thinking. Luo Rujing from Jiangxi, another of Li's fellow *jinshi* and Hanlin bachelor, is also said to have been thankful for the Yongle emperor's dramatic show of respect, care, and favor to him. The emperor was so serious about the instruction for the bachelors, in whom he had invested much for the training of high-caliber officials, that he often gave them unscheduled tests. Once Luo Ruojing was ordered to recite a classical essay he had been, or was supposed to have been, taught. Luo failed the test. The emperor ordered his immediate departure from Beijing and demotion to a position in Jiangxi. However, a few days later the emperor recalled Luo. Whereupon, it is said, Luo studied hard, and to repay the imperial kindness, he memorialized the succeeding emperor Renzong on fifteen concerns of current government.⁵¹ Li Shimian at that very time also submitted his memorial that proved offensive to the emperor Renzong.

Li's action was likewise explained as a response for the imperial favors given to his deceased parents and his wife.⁵² The time-honored concept of "bao" (reciprocity) seems to have been working at court with great, but sometimes uncertain, effect.⁵³

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

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

However, Li may also have been emulating his Hanlin seniors in their concern about the affairs of the state. Yang Rong, the capable and most trusted grand secretary in Yongle times, who later would recommend Li be restored to his former position, had set the right example.

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When Yang was chancellor of the Hanlin Academy, he had submitted a ten-point memorial on accumulated defects in government. His memorial was given no acknowledgment from the palace, which meant that the emperor disapproved of it. But that did not deter Yang's expressing concern about governmental affairs. Thus he too memorialized after the palace fire of 1421. And the ten proposals he presented for quiet remedial action were approved and implemented. The Hanlin officials of those times were still understood and looked upon as active courtiers rather than as passive consultants offering advice on-demand only.

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

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

Li Shimian's sentence was meted out late for other reasons, though by no means unrelated to his earlier encounter. He was implicated under very precarious circumstances when the intimidating effect of Xiao Yi's

execution was felt. What got him "implicated" most likely was tied to the emperor's foreign policy, in this case the imperial expedition against the Mongols. The campaign was a highly volatile issue of the day. Not even an esteemed veteran like minister of revenue Xia Yuanji was spared punishment when he expressed his reservation. Xia Yuanji's biography identified the bad official who pandered to the imperial preference on the issue of the construction of Beijing and the subsequent controversies between the speaking officials and the ministers. That "bad official" was censor-in-chief Chen Ying (dates unknown; not the Chen Ying, also a censor-in-chief, who was executed in 1411). Xia's biographer suggests that Xia was sympathetic to the position (shared by Xiao Yi and Li Shimian) that moving the capital to Beijing was a wrong decision.⁵⁶ The speaking officials indicted the ministers because the ministers endorsed the presumably wrong imperial decision but did not even express self-criticism after the great palace fire. Thus it was no coincidence that Li was sent to prison five days after Xia was jailed for his lack of support for the imperial position with respect to an expedition against the Mongols, a stand which also caused the imprisonment of the minister of punishments Wu Zhong (1372-1442) and the suicide of the minister of war Fang Bin (minister of war 1409-1421, d. 1421).⁵⁷ The emperor had begun financial preparations for this campaign against the Mongols a fortnight prior to Xia Yuanji's imprisonment (on the day *xinyou* in the same month) when he ordered eunuch Yang Shi (dates unknown) and censor Dai Cheng (fl. 1420s-1430s) and others to audit the accounts of reserves throughout the empire. Li Shimian's punishment appears to be related to this issue, all the more obviously in light of the fact that in 1425 Xia Yuanji reciprocated by coming to Li's defense when the dying Renzong emperor threatened his life.⁵⁸ In other words, Li Shimian was implicated when opportunities arose for those high ministers who had lost face—because of proposals that Li had made in his memorial—to take their revenge.

For understandable reasons Li Shimian was not earlier rescued. The enthusiasm of Jiangxi courtiers in response to the call for criticism rendered Li obviously helpless. No Jiangxi minister, not even the great Yang Shiqi (1365-1444), could find it prudent to speak on Li's behalf. In fact, Jiangxi figures had grown less prominent and influential at the

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center of the court. Unlike during early-Yongle times, the Hanlin Academy and the grand secretariat later in the Yongle era were no longer team-packed with Jiangxi leaders. The esteemed and trusted Hu Guang (1370–1418), whom Li Shimian respected, had been dead for some years.⁵⁹ The one-time kingpin of the most senior and closest imperial advisors, Xie Jin, for whom Li had shown affection and admiration, had died even earlier, in disgrace and obscurity.⁶⁰ Li's mentor, Hu Yan (1361–1443) of Jishui, to whom Li owed his readmission to the Hanlin Academy, had been chancellor of the National University for many years, which meant that he was away from engaging in court politics despite the genuine respect the emperor had for him.⁶¹ The two other incumbent senior literary officials of Jiangxi origin who could have had access to the throne were Jin Youzi (1368–1431) and Yang Shiqi. The relationship between Jin and Li is not certain but was at best only cordial, for there is no writing between them extant to suggest a close friendship. Jin otherwise was known as a quiet and accommodating man of ever increasing modesty.⁶² Yang Shiqi no doubt could have helped his "old friend," but his veteran experience would have discouraged him from being open or acting at inopportune times.⁶³ Half of the memorialists, as noted above, were his fellow Jiangxi natives. An open petition on Li's behalf would have been damaging to all concerned. We may suspect that Yang Shiqi lobbied Yang Rong, the Fujianese grand secretary, to have Li rehabilitated. Yang Rong and Li were friendly, and Yang Rong had the emperor's ear at that time. (For a representation in painting and calligraphy of the continuing association among Yang Rong, Li Shimian, and several significant players from Jiangxi and Fujian at court in the decades after the palace fire of 1421, see figures 5 and 6.⁶⁴)

All sources agree that it was on the emperor's acceptance of Yang Rong's recommendation that Li was released in the seventh month of Yongle 21 (1423) and restored to his former position. Yang Rong's involvement in this matter was first recorded in Yang's "verified record of conduct" (*xingshi*), written by Jiang Yi (1404 *jinshi*) and appended to Yang's literary collection.⁶⁵ According to this source, in Yongle 19 (1421) the day (*renyin*) after the great palace fire (on *gengzi*), the emperor called for information about problems in society and solutions to them. Yang Rong responded first; he memorialized ten proposals to relieve the

5A-5F. *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, after Xie Huan (ca. 1370-ca. 1450), Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1437. Handscroll, ink and color on silk; image 37 x 243.2 cm, overall with mounting 37.5 x 1278.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.3). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

5A. Servants and attendants.



5C. Seated right to left: Wang Zhi (1379-1462, from Jiangxi), Yang Shiqi (1365-1444, from Jiangxi), and Yang Rong (1371-1440, from Fujian).

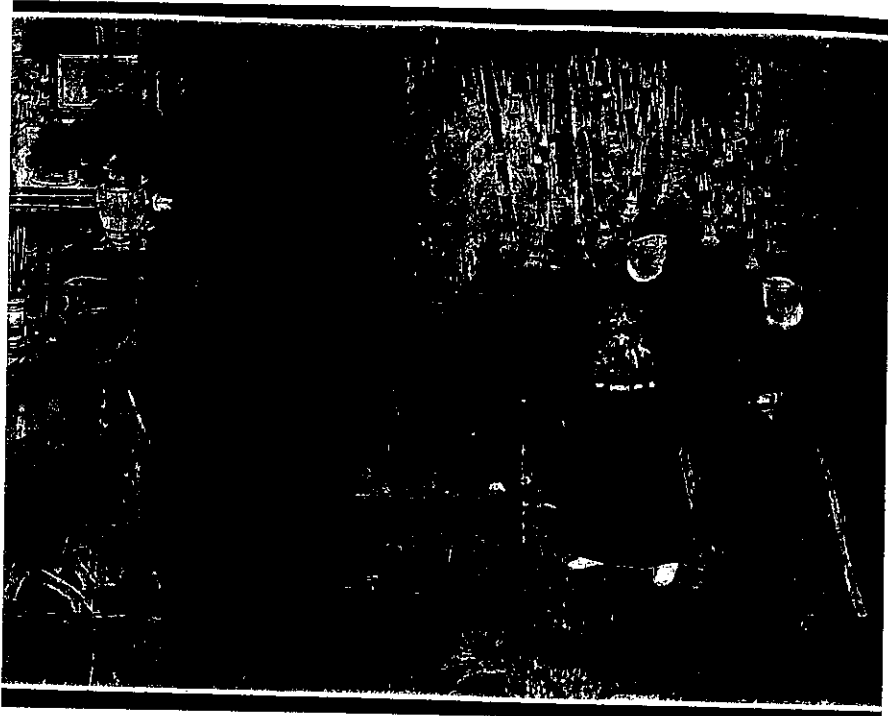




5B. Seated right to left:
Wang Ying (1376-1450, from
Jiangxi), Yang Pu (1372-
1446, from Hubei), and Qian
Xili (fl. early fifteenth cen-
tury, from Jiangxi).

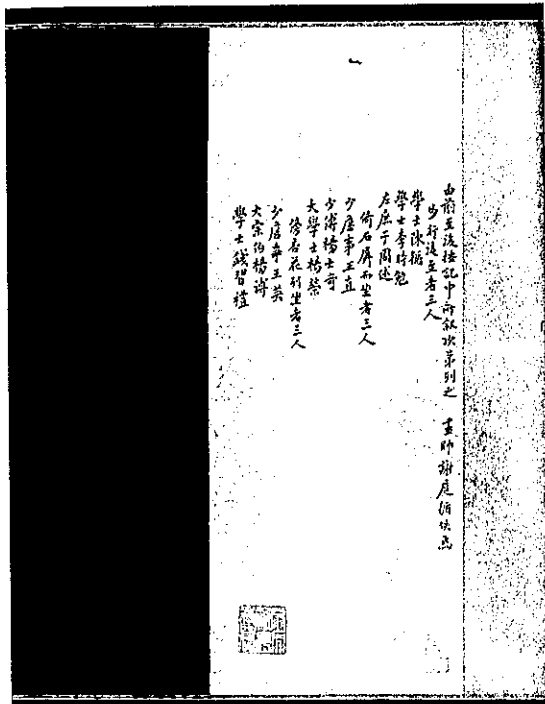


5D. Standing far
right: Zhou Shu (fl.
early fifteenth century,
from Jiangxi).



5E. Walking right to left: Chen Xun (1385-1462, from Jiangxi) and Li Shimian (1374-1450, from Jiangxi).

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



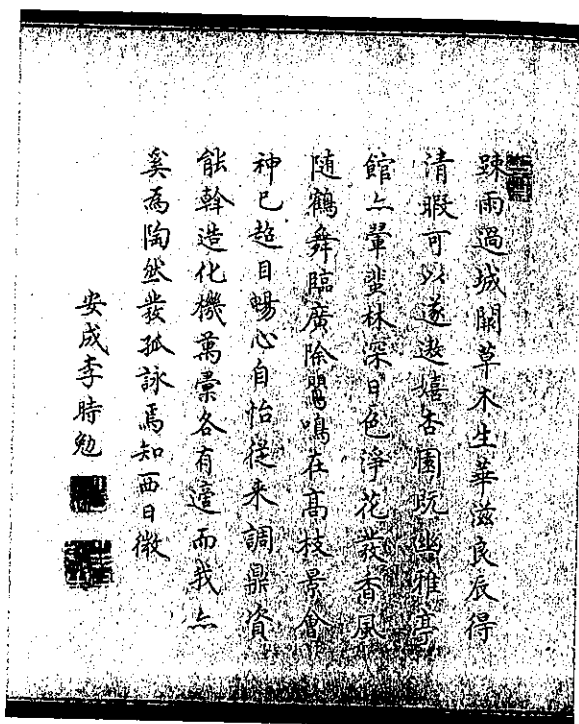
5F. Colophon identifying the scholars depicted in the painting.

oughly competent for their jobs but that they were not wicked and evil. The emperor was placated and pursued the issue no further.

Jiang Yi's summary account of events in 1421 and 1423 is misleading in some places. It cannot be referring to the lack of punishment for Li Shimian and company after their memorials in the fourth (and perhaps also the fifth) month of 1421. Jiang Yi's account therefore must be referring to events leading up to Li's release in 1423. Although Jiang Yi does not claim that Li's reappointment to the Hanlin was due to Yang Rong's recommendation, this ascription made in other sources could not have been far from the fact. Yang Rong's biography shows that he had gained firmer imperial confidence for what he did during the palace fire. He saved the books and documents stored in the palaces by ordering the imperial guards to move them immediately to the Donghuamen (Donghua Gate).⁶⁶ Jiang Yi's account does reveal one important fact, namely that Li Shimian's antagonists included minister of rites Lü Zhen.

The matter is also recorded in Yang Rong's tomb inscription by

6. Text of Li Shimian's colophon for *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*, probably written in a later hand. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1989 (1989.141.3). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. For a translation of this colophon see Appendix One.



Yang Shiqi. Yang Shiqi makes it clear that Yang Rong's memorial was in response to the fire in the three palaces and that he submitted it jointly with Jin Youzi. Yang Shiqi credited the punishment of Xia Yuanji to Lü Zhen as well, but that of Li Shimian to an unknown source. Yang Shiqi's wording on the charges against Li is precise: "Reader-in-waiting Li Shimian has once presented opinions about concerns [of the state]. Someone also charged that in that event Li was deliberately 'selling uprightness.'"⁶⁷ This meant that Li had promoted his own sense of justice at the expense of the reputation of others, including even that of the emperor. This charge and that by Lü Zhen, as Yang Shiqi implied, were calculated to incense the already angered emperor. In both cases, Yang Rong defended both Xia Yuanji and Li Shimian with tactful (mild and roundabout) analyses.⁶⁸ The reflective memorial that Yang Rong co-authored with Jin Youzi on the palace fire episode, which stood for the collective opinion of the grand secretariat, no doubt also was worded mildly.

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Mingshi (Official History of the Ming) also depicts Yang Rong's character and conduct in relation to his success in public life. Here the record emphasizes that when discussing official matters he was enthusiastic and vigorous and would tolerate no mistakes from others. But when someone angered the emperor to unpredictable results, he often came to the rescue by guiding the emperor to peace and reason with subtle words. That was the way he obtained a lighter sentence for censor-in-chief Liu Guan (1385 *jinshi*) and helped free Xia Yuanji and Li Shimian. Yang Rong is quoted as having once uttered these memorable lines: "There is propriety in serving an emperor, and there is a right way in presenting remonstrance. To prevail by a fluke and then get into trouble, I don't do that" (*Shijun youti, jinjian youfang, yi xingzhi quhuo, wu buwei ye*).⁶⁹ Thanks to Yang Rong's pleasing deportment and seasoned engagement, the Yongle emperor remained the more clearheaded.

From the above study, it is clear that Li Shimian was sent to jail in the eleventh month of 1421 for something other than what he memorialized in the fourth month of the year. The allegation that his punishment was due to his opposition to building Beijing as the capital and a liberal foreign policy is dubious. Quite on the contrary, all sources record the imperial reception of his requests and proposals even though there are some minor differences in the records about the extent of their implementation. The *Veritable Records* say the emperor received them with approvals. Peng Liu in Li's record of conduct says that because much of what Li said was considered correct with respect to current defects in imperial policy, an edict was issued to related offices for their implementation.⁷⁰ Wu Jie (1397-1481), Li Shimian's other eminent student, who composed his tomb inscription, notes that thirteen of the fifteen proposals Li made met imperial approval.⁷¹ Li's biography in *Guochao xianzheng lu* (Record of the Outstanding Predecessors of Our Dynasty) states that fourteen of them were sent for implementation.⁷² That being the case, we are given another important perspective from which to view the Yongle emperor's sense of propriety and way of governing. The execution of the long-tongued Xiao Yi and, as well, the imprisonment of Li Shimian patently betray the Yongle emperor's style of statecraft.

APPENDIX ONE

Li Shimian's colophon to "Xingyuan yaji" (Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden)

(See figure 6 for the Chinese text of this poem.)

- A brief shower swept over city-wall towers;
 Grass and trees stand luxuriant and moist.
 This fine morning I am free
 4. And can take a pleasurable jaunt.
 This apricot garden, removed and elegant;
 Its pavilions and halls, too, resplendant and magnificent.
 Groves deep, sunlight subdued;
 8. Flowers lush, fragrance wind-wafted.
 Cranes dance overlooking the paved courtyard;
 Orioles sing perched on a high branch.
 Surroundings just right, spirits already high;
 12. Views satisfying, heart easily relaxed.
 Ever it has been, the talent for "stirring the cauldron"
 Can handle the mechanisms of creation and transformation.
 Each and every thing has its appropriate place,
 16. So what is left for me to do?
 Lightheadedly I begin to sing to myself
 Unaware the western sun's grown small.

NOTES

1. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 865-868. See also Li Shimian's encounters with the emperors Renzong (r. 1425) and Xuanzong (1426-1435) in Charles O. Hucker, *The Censorial System in Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 113-115, 148-149.
2. Frederick W. Mote and Howard L. Goodman, *A Research Manual for Ming History*, Research Manual Series (Princeton: Chinese Linguistics Project, 1984).
3. Mote and Goodman, *A Research Manual for Ming History*, p. 3.
4. For the text of Li's biography, see Zhang Tingyu (1672-1755) et al., *Mingshi* (1736; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), *juan* 163, p. 4421. For Mote's translation, see Mote and Goodman, *A Research Manual for Ming History*, pp. 8-9.
5. This narration of the imperial response to Li's memorial may have been drawn

- from Yin Shu (1445 *jinshi*), Li's student who wrote his biography. See Yin Shu, "Gulian Li xiansheng xiaozhuan" (Brief Biography of Li [Shimian] Gulian), in *Gulian wenji* (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian), by Li Shimian in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 12, pp. 18a-21b. This information is not found in Li's record of conduct written by another of his student, Peng Liu (1391-1458), or in Li's epitaph by Wang Zhi (1379-1462), Li's fellow *jinshi* and bachelor and longtime colleague in the Hanlin Academy. See Peng Liu, "Xingzhuang" (Record of Conduct) and Wang Zhi, "Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao" (Tomb Inscription for the Late Director of the National University Li [Shimian]), in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, *juan* 12, pp. 4a-15a, esp. pp. 7b-8a; and pp. 15a-18a, respectively. However, the text of the biography by Yin Shu concerning accounts in the Yongle period is missing, that is, blank, in the Siku quanshu edition of Li Shimian's literary collection, *Gulian wenji*. See Li Shimian, *Gulian wenji*, 11 *juan* plus appendix [1784], photographic reprint of manuscript copy in the Wenyuange copy of Siku quanshu. A Ming edition of the *Gulian wenji* does not append the piece by Yin Shu. See Li Shimian, *Shi Zhongwen Gulian wenji* (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian, Posthumous Title Zhongwen), 10 *juan*, ed. Dai Nan (Li Yong, 1474), microfilm of original in the National Central Library, Taipei.
6. *Ming Yingzong shilu* was compiled under the supervision of Li Xian (1408-1466), Chen Wen (1405-1468), and Peng Shi (1406-1475). Li Xian died before the compilation was completed in 1467. Both Chen Wen and Peng Shi were Jiangxi natives, and Peng was also Li Shimian's valued student in the National University. Li Shimian's death was reported to the court on day *jiashen*, fourth month of the first year of the Jingtai reign (1450). See *Ming Yingzong shilu*, photographic reprint of the manuscript exemplar in Guoli Beiping tushuguan (1467; Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1961-1966), *juan* 191, p. 3954.
 7. See *Mingshi* in Siku quanshu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 7, p. 9b.
 8. Xiao Yi, "Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu" (A Response to the Edict Calling for Honest Opinions), *Chongke Waxian ji* (Reissue of Stocking Thread Writings), 20 *juan* (1740) in Siku quanshu cunmu congshu, Jibu 31 (Tainan xian Liuying xiang: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1997), *juan* 1, pp. 6a-8b. Xiao Yi's collected writings are discussed further in note 36 below.
 9. Tan Qian (1594-1658), *Guoque* (History of the Ming Deliberated), 104 *juan* (ca. 1653; Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1958), *juan* 17, pp. 1181-1182.
 10. *Ming Taizong shilu*, photographic reprint of the manuscript exemplar in Guoli Beiping tushuguan (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1961-1966), *juan* 243, p. 2297.
 11. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 261, p. 2389.
 12. The lead expression for the questions is "yizhe"; each count is phrased as a rhetorical question ended with the word "yu" and is linked to the next by the word "huo." *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, pp. 2263-2264, under day *renyin* in the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421).
 13. *Ibid.*, *juan* 236, p. 2264. The Chinese for this passage reads as follows: "Xia li

- yu min, shang wei yu tian. Zhen zhi minmei, wei jiu suoyou. Er wenwu qunchen shou zhen weiren, xiuqi shi tong. Zhen suo xing guo you bu dang, yi tiaochen wu yin. Shu tu quangai, yi hui tianyi." For this text in *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, p. 2264, lines 6-8 for the Chinese characters, see figure 3.
14. For the text of this edict, the terms of which are excerpted, see *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, pp. 2266-2268.
 15. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, pp. 2264-2266, under day *jiachen* in the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421).
 16. Zou Ji, "Fengtiandian zai shangshu" (Memorial Submitted on the Fire in the Fengtian Hall), *Mingwen heng*, ed. Cheng Minzheng, 98 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 6, pp. 33a-41b.
 17. Cheng Minzheng, "Li Zhongwen gong jiasheng xu" (Preface to Li [Shimian] Zhongwen's Family History), *Huangdun wenji* (Bamboo Mound Collected Writings), in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 34, p. 10a.
 18. Peng Liu, "Xingzhuang," (Record of Conduct), in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, *juan* 12, p. 4a-15a, esp. pp. 7b-8a, first cited in note 5 above. This piece is appended to the collection of Li's literary works. The text of its headings (or requests or proposals) in the *Siku quanshu* edition of this collection is somewhat corrupted so that one or two of the headings are missing. Fortunately, a full list of the headings is contained in Liao Daonan (1521 *jinshi*, d. 1547), *Diange cilin ji* (Notes on the Forest of Words [of the Hanlin Academy] and the Halls and Offices [of the Grand Secretaries]), 20 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 6, pp. 30a-32a, in a long entry about Li Shimian, which is equivalent to a concise biography. This information is not found in Huang Zuo (1490-1566), *Hanlin ji* (Records of the Hanlin [Academy]), 20 *juan* [1566] in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987). The wording of several items is slightly different, but no alteration of meaning was intended or can be construed.
 19. Liao Daonan, *Diange cilin ji*, *juan* 6, p. 30b.
 20. See *Mingshi*, *juan* 163, p. 4421.
 21. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, pp. 2264-2266, under day *jiachen* in the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421).
 22. Li Shimian, "Beijing fu" (Rhapsody on Beijing), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 1, p. 1a-7b.
 23. Immediately following the statement signifying the imperial endorsement of Li's proposals, the *Veritable Records* lists the other officials who also responded to the call for proposals. They were supervising secretary Ke Xian (fl. 1420s-1450s; did not attain *jinshi* status); investigating censors He Zhong (1411 *jinshi*), Xu Rong (1406 *jinshi*), Zheng Weihuan (1415 *jinshi*), and Luo Tong (1389-1469; 1412 *jinshi*); bureau secretary in the Ministry of Punishment Gao Gongwang (1415 *jinshi*); and Hanlin bachelor Yang Fu (1406 *jinshi*). They, too, gained the approval of the emperor for their memorials. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, p. 2266.
 24. See Zou Ji's biography in *Mingshi*, *juan* 164, pp. 4435-4438.
 25. See note 16 above for reference to the full text of Zou Ji's memorial.

26. In Zou Ji's memorial, asides and interpolations in square brackets are those of the author of the present article.
27. The Chinese term that I translate here as "paper-making materials" is *chuliao*. This term can also be taken to mean material for paper money.
28. This refers to the general amnesty proclaimed early in 1421 to commemorate the founding of Beijing as the capital and to recognize the populace's contribution to the construction projects. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 233, p. 2250, under day *wuyin* in the first month of Yongle 19 (1421).
29. For this quotation, see Zou Ji, "Fengtiandian zai shangshu," *Mingwen heng*, *juan* 6, p. 37b, source first cited in note 16 above.
30. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 134, pp. 1641-1642, under day *guimao* in the eleventh month, Yongle 10 (1412).
31. See Tan Qian, *Guoque*, *juan* 17, p. 1181.
32. In the winter of the same year (1421), Zou Ji was promoted to the position of left mentor [in the Secretariat of the Heir Apparent] and concurrent expositor-in-waiting; he died in office in the ninth month of the following year. See *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 242, p. 2292, under day *gengzi* in the tenth month, Yongle 19 (1421). See also *Mingshi*, *juan* 164, p. 4438.
33. Xie Min (Eighteenth century) et al, eds., *Jiangxi tongzhi* (Jiangsu Provincial Gazetteer), 162 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 52, p. 26b. In this source the "Table of Examination Candidates" lists Xiao Yi as a *jinshi* of Yongle 4 (1406).

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

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

34. Chen Gen, who earlier memorialized with Xiao Yi, has a biography preceding a selection of his poems in Cao Xuequan (1574-1674), comp., *Shicang lidai shixuan* (Selective Anthology of Poetry from Shicang), 506 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 373, pp. 11a-b. According to this biography, Chen was a Fujianese from Changle county. A student of the Classics during Hongwu times, he was appointed a secretary in the Ministry of Personnel upon recommendation. On the occasion of a natural calamity, he memorialized with his colleague Xiao Yi. They were jailed. Xiao died in prison and Chen was exiled to Jiaozhi. [Note that the following is erroneous narrative. There is no collateral evidence to show that Chen also submitted a memorial in this case.] Chen submitted another memorial and was restored to his office. He went on to serve and on one occasion reviewed the soldiers in the garrisons in Liaodong. He also managed his lineage in an orderly way.

35. If what is stated in Xiao Yi's biography about Xiao and Chen is true, the phrase "those in power" could be referring to Yang Shiqi (1365-1444) and Yang Rong (1371-1440). They each were helping their respective fellow Jiangxi and Fujian provincials.
36. Xiao Yi's literary collection is listed as *Waxian yigao* in his biography in Ling Dizhi, comp., *Wanxing tongpu* (1579), cited in note 33 above. But it is catalogued as *Waxian ji* in Huang Yuji (1629-1691), *Qianqingtang shumu* (Catalogue of the Qianqingtang Library), 32 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 18, p. 19b. A Qianlong 5 (1740) edition of this work, a new block-cut edition entitled *Chongke Waxian yigao*, is now included in the *Sikuquanshu cunmu congshu* series (Tainan xian Liuying xiang: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 1997), cited first in note 8 above.
37. Xiao Yi, *Waxian yigao*, *juan* 1, pp. 6a-8b.
38. *Ibid.*, *juan* 1, p. 7b.
39. *Ibid.*, *juan* 1, p. 8a.
40. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 182, pp. 1964-1965, under day *renyin* in the eleventh month of Yongle 14 (1416).
41. *Mingshi*, *juan* 164, p. 4438, in the biography of Zou Ji.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Luo Rujing has no biography in *Mingshi*. See his epitaph by Wang Ying, "Luo gong mubei" (Epitaph for the Honorable Luo [Rujing]), *Guochao xianzheng lu* (Record of the Outstanding Predecessors of Our Dynasty), ed. Jiao Hong (1541-1620) (1616; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1987) *juan* 51, p. 6a.
44. *Guoque*, *juan* 17, p. 1181. The problem with the *Guoque* chronology is that it packs both incidents into the same day, which is an obvious error, in addition to the above-mentioned confusing attribution of the memorial that has proved to be Zou Ji's. It is also incorrect in saying that a while after Li Shimian and the other officials submitted their memorials, which ran afoul of the emperor's wishes, they (no one is specified) were jailed for slandering the court and that they were soon pardoned and released but not reappointed.
45. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 236, p. 2266, under day *jiachen* of the fourth month of Yongle 19 (1421). The Jiangxi natives named were Li Shimian (from Anfu), Zou Ji (from Jishui), Xiao Yi (from Lean), Luo Tong (investigating censor from Jishui), Gao Gongwang (bureau secretary in the Ministry of Punishment from Yongfeng). The others were Ke Xian (supervising secretary from Jiande, Nanzhili), He Zhong (investigating censor from Jiangling, Huguang), Xu Rong (investigating censor from Jintan, Nanzhili), Zheng Weihuan (investigating censor from Cixi, Zhejiang), and Yang Fu (Hanlin bachelor from Changxing, Zhejiang).
46. A censor is ranked 7A, a supervising secretary 7B, and a sub-prefect 5B; hence the word "promotion" (*sheng*) is used in the *Veritable Records*. For the ranks of these officials, see *Mingshi*, pp. 1767, 1805, 1850, respectively.
47. *Ming Taizong shilu*, *juan* 237, p. 2274, under day *yichou* of the fifth month of Yongle 19 (1421).
48. Huo Tao, "Yu Xiao Ziyong shu" (Letter to Xiao Ziyong), *Mingwen hai* (Sea of

- Ming Prose), 480 *juan*, comp. Huang Zongxi (1610-1695) in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 172, p. 1aff, esp. p. 4a.
49. Wang Zhi, "Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao" (Tomb Inscription for the Late Director of the National University Li [Shimian]), *Gulian wenji* (Collected Writings of [Li Shimian] Gulian), by Li Shimian in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 12, p. 15b. This source was first cited in note 5 above.
 50. Peng Shi, "Gulian xiansheng citang ji" (Record of the Memorial Shrine for [Li Shimian] Gulian), in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, *juan* 12, pp. 25b-28b, esp. p. 26b.
 51. This draws on the necrology of Luo Rujing in *Ming Yingzong shilu*, *juan* 60, pp. 1151-1152, under day *jihai* in the tenth month of Zhengtong 4 (1439).
 52. See Li's record of conduct by Peng Liu, in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, *juan* 12, p. 4a-15a, esp. pp. 8a-b, first cited in note 5 above.
 53. For a modern discussion of this concept, see Lien-sheng Yang, "The Concept of 'Pao' as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), pp. 291-309.
 54. Huang Zuo, *Hanlin ji*, *juan* 8, pp. 24b-25a; also Liao Daonan, *Diange cilin ji*, *juan* 16, pp. 20a-b. Both sources were first cited in note 18 above.
 55. Huang Zuo, *Hanlin ji*, *juan* 8, p. 24b.
 56. See Xia Yuanji's biography in Xiang Dushou (1562 *jinshi*), *Jinxian beiyi* (Modern Personalities for the Record) 42 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 8, pp. 2b-8b, esp. p. 5a.
 57. According to *Mingshi*, *juan* 7, pp. 100-101, Xia's sentence came on day *bingzi*, Li's five days later on day *xinsi*.
 58. See Xia Yuanji's biography quoted above in note 56, *Jinxian beiyi*, *juan* 8, pp. 6a-b.
 59. On this point, see Li Shimian, "Yu Hu xueshi shu yi" (To Academician Hu [Yan], First Letter), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 8, p. 31a.
 60. Li Shimian wrote a poem for Xie Jin when Xie departed for his demoted posts in Guangxi and Jiaozhi; see Li Shimian, "Song Xie xueshi buzheng Guangxi jianxing Jiaozhi shi shi ping Jiaozhi li junxian" (Farewell to Academician Xie [Jin] on his Departure to Take Up Provincial Administration Work in Guangxi and Concurrently in Jiaozhi; at that time, Jiaozhi Had Been Pacified and Commanderies and Districts Established There), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 11, p. 2a.
 61. On this point, see Li Shimian, "Yu Hu xueshi shu yi" (To Academician Hu [Yan], First Letter), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 8, p. 31b.
 62. *Mingshi*, *juan* 147, p. 4127, in the biography of Jin Youzi.
 63. For the friendship between Li Shimian and Yang Shiqi, see Li Shimian, "Dongli xu wengao xu" (Preface for Continuation of [Yang Shiqi] Dongli's Collection of Prose Writings), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 4, p. 37a, *juan* 12, p. 3b. Yang Shiqi wrote a *xiangzan* (encomium on a portrait) for Li Shimian, which is included in Li's collected writings *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 12, p. 3b under the generic title "Xiangzan."

64. For a discussion of versions of Xie Huan's (ca. 1370-ca. 1450) painting *Xingyuan yaji* (Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden), see Maxwell K. Hearn, "An Early Ming Example of Multiple: Two Versions of *Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden*," *Issues of Authenticity in Chinese Painting*, ed. Judith G. Smith and Wen C. Fong (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), pp. 220-256.
65. See Jiang Yi, "Yang gong xingshi" (The Honorable Yang [Rong]'s Verified Record of Conduct), in *Wenmin ji* (Collected Writings of [Yang Rong] Wenmin), by Yang Rong in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *fulu yi*, pp. 15a-b.
66. Noted in Yang Rong's biography in *Mingshi*, *juan* 148, p. 4139.
67. See Yang Shiqi, "Yang gong muzhiming" (The Honorable Yang [Rong]'s Tomb Inscription), *Dongli ji xuji* (Continuation of [Yang Shiqi] Dongli's Collected Writings), 62 *juan* in *Siku quanshu* (1549; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 36, p. 7b.
68. The source drawn on here is the tomb inscription (*muzhiming*) for Yang Rong written by Yang Shiqi, "Yang gong muzhiming" (The Honorable Yang [Rong]'s Tomb Inscription), *ibid.* It is also included in, *Mingwen heng*, ed. Cheng Minzheng (see note 16 above), *juan* 86, p. 15ff, esp. pp. 18b-19a. The event is mentioned in other biographies of Yang Rong as well; for example, in Xiang Dushou, *Jinxian beiyi*, 42 *juan*, *juan* 6, pp. 9a-b (see note 56 above); *Mingshi*, *juan* 148, p. 4141; and Li Qingfu (eighteenth century), *Minzhong lixue yuanyuan kao* (Study on the Origins of Confucianism in Fujian) in *Siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 85, p. 9b, which duplicates *Mingshi*.
69. *Mingshi*, *juan* 148, p. 4141.
70. Peng Liu, "Xingzhuang" (Record of Conduct), in *Gulian wenji*, by Li Shimian, *juan* 12, p. p. 4a-15a, esp. pp. 7b-8a.
71. Wu Jie, "Gulian xiansheng gaishi qianzang mubeiming" (Stele Inscription for the Change in Title and Reburial of [Li Shimian] Gulian), *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 12, p. 28bff, esp. p. 29b. This tomb inscription was written upon Li's reburial in or after Chenghua 9 (1473), on the request of Li's grandson, Li Yong.
72. "Jijiu Li Zhongwen Shimian gong zhuan" (Biography of National University Chancellor, the Honorable Li Zhongwen Shimian), *Guochao xianzheng lu*, ed. Jiao Hong, *juan* 73, p. 7a. (Jiao Hong's work was first mentioned in note 43 above.) The fate of Li's memorial is not mentioned in some other earlier accounts. For example, Wang Zhi, in the epitaph that he composed for Li Shimian (see "Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao," *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 12, p. 15aff, first cited in note 5 above), says only that Li memorialized both Emperor Taizong and Emperor Renzong and that both emperors heeded most of his remonstrance. Peng Shi, author of the record of Li's memorial shrine (see "Gulian xiansheng citang ji," *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 12, p. 26b, first cited in note 50 above), notes that the memorial dealt with fifteen current concerns but says nothing about their implementation. The account on this issue in Li's biography by Yin Shu (see "Gulian Li xiansheng xiaozhuan," *Gulian wenji*, *juan* 12,

pp. 18a-25b, first cited in note 5 above) cannot be known, as mentioned above in note 5, because the text concerning this issue in the Siku quanshu congshu version of the piece is missing.

GLOSSARY

- Anfu 安福
 bao 報
 Baohe 保和
 Beijing fu 北京賦
 Benji 本紀
 bingzi 丙子
 Cao Xuequan 曹學佺
 Changle 長樂
 Changxing 長興
 Chen Gen 陳艮
 Chenghua 成化
 Cheng Minzheng 程敏政
 Chengzu 成祖
 Chen Wen 陳文
 Chen Xun 陳循
 Chen Ying 陳英 (瑛)
 Chongke Waxian ji 重刻襪線集
 Chu Hung-lam (Zhu Honglin) 朱鴻林
 chuliao 楮料
 Cixi 慈溪
 Dai Cheng 戴誠
 Dai Nan 戴難
 Da Ming li 大明律
 daqing 大青
 Diange cilin ji 殿閣詞林記
 Donghuamen 東華門
 Dongli ji xuji 東里集續集
 Dongli xu wengao xu 東里續文稿序
 Fang Bin 方賓
 Fengtian 奉天
 Fengtiandian zai shangshu 奉天殿災上疏
 Gao Gongwang 高公望
 gengzi 庚子
 guichou 癸丑
 guimao 癸卯
 Gu jijiu Li xiansheng mubiao 故祭酒李
 先生墓表
 Gulian Li xiansheng xiaozhuan 古廉李
 先生小傳
 Gulian wenji 古廉文集
 Gulian xiansheng citang ji 古廉先生祠
 堂記
 Gulian xiansheng gaishi qianzang mubei-
 ming 古廉先生改諡遷葬墓碑銘
 Guochao xianzheng lu 國朝獻徵錄
 Guoque 國榷
 Hanlin 翰林
 Hanlin ji 翰林記
 He Zhong 何忠
 Hongxi 洪熙
 Huagai 華蓋
 Huaian 淮安
 Huangdun wenji 篁墩文集
 huangsi 荒絲
 Huang Yuji 黃虞稷
 Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲
 Huang Zuo 黃佐
 Hu Guang 胡廣

- Huguang 湖廣
 huò 或
 Huo Tao 霍韜
 Hu Yan 胡儼
 jiachen 甲辰
 Jiaping 嘉靖
 Ji'an 吉安
 Jiande 建德
 Jiangling 江陵
 Jiang Tong 江統
Jiangxi tongzhi 江西通志
 Jiang Yi 江鍊
 Jianwen 建文
 Jian Yi 蹇義
 Jiao Hong 焦竑
 Jiaozhi 交趾
 jiashen 甲申
 jiasheng 家乘
 jihai 己亥
 Jijiu Li Zhongwen Shimian gong zhuan
 祭酒李忠文時勉公傳
 Jin 晉
 Jingtai 景泰
 Jining 濟寧
 Jinshen 謹身
 jinshi 進士
 Jintan 金壇
Jinxian beiyi 今獻備遺
 Jin Youzi 金幼孜
 Jishui 吉水
 juan 卷
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- Liao Daonan 廖道南
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 Li Yong 李顥
 Li Zhongwen gong jiasheng xu 李忠文
 公家乘序
 Luo gong mubei 羅公墓碑
 Luo Rujing 羅汝敬
 Luo Tong 羅通
 Lü Zhen 呂震
Mingshi 明史
Ming Taizong shilu 明太宗實錄
Ming tongjian 明通鑿
Mingwen hai 明文海
Mingwen heng 明文衡
Ming Yingzong shilu 明英宗實錄
Minzhong lixue yuanyuan kao 閩中理學
 淵源考
 muzhiming 墓誌銘
 Nanzhili 南直隸
 Peng Liu 彭琉
 Peng Shi 彭時
 poke 掇剋
Qianqingtang shumu 千頃堂書目
 Qian Xili 錢習禮
 renyin 壬寅
 Renzong 仁宗

- Shangfa budang, ducai wangfei, er guoyong
wudu yu. Gongzuo wudu, zhengxu fan-
shu, er minli diaobi yu 賞罰不當，
蠹財妄費，而國用無度歟。工作無
度，徵需繁數，而民力凋敝歟
sheng 陞
shengtong 生銅
shexiang 麝香
Shicang lidai shixuan 石倉歷代詩選
Shijun youti, jinjian youfang, yi xingzhi qu-
huo, wu buwei ye 事君有體，進諫
有方，以幸直取禍，吾不為也
Shi Zhongwen Gulian wenji 謚忠文古廉
文集
Siku quanshu 四庫全書
Song Xie xueshi buzheng Guangxi jianxing
Jiaozhi shi shi ping Jiaozhi li junxian
送解學士布政廣西兼行交趾事時平
交趾立郡縣
Taihe 太和
Taizong 太宗
Taizu 太祖
Tan Qian 談遷
Tianshun 天順
Tumu 土木
Wang Ying 王英
Wang Zhen 王振
Wang Zhi 王直
Wanxing tongpu 萬姓統譜
Waxian ji 襪線集
Waxian yigao 襪線遺稿
Wenmin ji 文敏集
Wenyi 文毅
- Wenyuange 文淵閣
Wudi 武帝
Wu Jie 吳節
Wumen 午門
Wuxing 吳興
wuyin 戊寅
Wu Zhong 吳中
Xiang Dushou 項篤壽
xiangzan 像贊
Xiao Yi 蕭儀
Xia Yuanji 夏原吉
Xie Huan 謝環
Xie Jin 解縉
Xie Min 謝旻
xingshi 行實
Xingyuan yaji 杏園雅集
Xingzhuang 行狀
Xingzi 星子
xinsi 辛巳
xinyou 辛酉
Xuande 宣德
Xuanzong 宣宗
Xu Rong 徐瑤
Xuzhou 徐州
Yang Fu 楊復
Yang gong muzhiming 楊公墓志銘
Yang gong xingshi 楊公行實
Yang Pu 楊溥
Yang Rong 楊榮
Yang Shi 楊實
Yang Shiqi 楊士奇
Yangzi 揚子
yichou 乙丑

Ying qiu zhiyan zhao shu 應求直言詔疏	Yu Xiao Ziyong shu 與蕭子雍書
Yingtian 應天	Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉
Yin Shu 尹恕	Zhengtong 正統
yisi 乙巳	Zheng Weihuan 鄭惟桓
yizhe 意者	Zhonghe 中和
Yongfeng 永豐	Zhongshan 鍾山
Yongle 永樂	Zhongwen 忠文
yu 歟	Zhou Shu 周述
Yu Hu xueshi shu yi 與胡學士書一	Zou Ji 鄒緝

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