

Biographies, Series 69: Qiu Jun [js. 1454, 1421-1495]¹
列傳第六十九: 丘濬

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Qiu Jun, his polite name being Zhongshen, was a man of Qiongsan. He was bereaved of his father while still young, so his mother née Li taught him to read; whatever happened to come to his sight, he would immediately be able to recite it from memory. His household was impoverished and without texts. He would walk several hundred *li* in order to borrow books, and only once he had acquired them would he be content.² He eventually secured first place in his provincial examination, and thereafter acquired his *jinshi* in 1454.³ He was made a Hanlin Bachelor and received an appointment as a Junior Compiler. Once Jun took up office in the Hanlin Academy, the extent of his learning and knowledge grew increasingly broad. He became especially well-versed in the precedents of the [Ming] state, and assumed the exercise of effective statecraft as his personal responsibility.

[181.4808] 丘濬，字仲深，瓊山人。幼孤，母李氏教之讀書，過目成誦。家貧無書，嘗走數百里借書，必得乃已。舉鄉試第一，景泰五年成進士。改庶吉士，授編修。濬既官翰林，見聞益廣，尤熟國家典故，以經濟自負。

Between January 1465-January 1466, armies were mobilized in Guangdong and Guangxi. Jun submitted notes to Grand Secretary Li Xian, in which he described at great length strategic conditions; they consisted of several thousand words, one following after another. Xian approved of his strategies and reported them to the [Chenghua] emperor, who thereupon ordered that they be transcribed and shown to Regional Commander Zhao Fu as well as Grand Coordinator and Censor-in-chief Han Yong. Yong and others managed to defeat the outlaws; and while they did not exhaustively see to the implementation of his strategies, Jun secured for himself an illustrious

¹ Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., comp., *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1974), 181.4808-4810. Annotations added by the Zhonghua shuju editors are neither included nor translated in this translation. Throughout, I have benefited greatly from the following dictionary: Paul W. Kroll, *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2017). Translations of official titles generally follow those offered in: Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1995). In converting lunar dates, I have employed the following online tool: Academia Sinica Center for Digital Cultures 中央研究院數位文化中心, “Liangqian nian Zhong-Xi li zhuanhuan 兩千年中西曆轉換,” <https://sinocal.sinica.edu.tw/> [last accessed 25 January 2022].

I should like to thank here Immanuel Spaar and Devon Throness for their assistance in preparing this translation.

² Qiu relates his experiences in exquisite detail within a tract entitled “Cangshu shishi ji 藏書石室記”. See: Qiu Jun 丘濬, *Qiongtai shiwen huigao* 瓊臺詩文會稿, in *Qiu Wenzhuang gong congshu* 丘文莊公叢書, vol. 2 (Taipei 臺北: Qiu Wenzhuang gong congshu jiyin weiyuanhui 丘文莊公叢書輯印委員會, 1972), 19.23a-26a.

³ Unless the precise date is established (such as the date in which Qiu achieved his *jinshi*), when lunar years are cited I will generally provide in the text proper the Gregorian month-month span which coincided with that lunar year.

reputation among officialdom for this.⁴ Once his term of appointment was completed, he was made an Expositor-in-waiting. He participated in the compilation of the *Yingzong shilu*, and for this he was promoted to the post of Academician Expositor-in-waiting. And once the *Xu Tongjian gangmu* was finished, he was promoted to the post of Academician; he was then transferred to become Chancellor of the Directorate of Education. At the time, students in the institution maintained a writing style that was obscene and unconventional; Jun, in presiding over the provincial examination in the Southern Metropolitan region as well as serving as examiner for the metropolitan examination, vigorously restrained them. Thereafter, in instructing students in the Directorate of Education he admonished them with especial earnestness and sharpness, which saw the style of writing return to propriety. He was then promoted to Right Vice Minister of Rites while also being tasked with managing Chancellory affairs.

成化元年，兩廣用兵，濬奏記大學士李賢，指陳形勢，纒纒數千言。賢善其計，聞之帝，命錄示總兵官趙輔、巡撫都御史韓雍。雍等破賊，雖不盡用其策，而濬以此名重公卿間。秩滿，進侍講。與修英宗實錄，進侍講學士。續通鑑綱目成，擢學士，遷國子祭酒。時經生文尚險怪，濬主南畿鄉試，分考會試皆痛抑之。及是，課國學生尤諄切告誡，返文體於正。尋進禮部右侍郎，掌祭酒事。

Jun, in considering that Zhen Dexiu's *Daxue yanyi* had neglected to prepare and present on content related to 'governing the state and bringing peace to the realm', exhaustively selected extracts from a broad host of texts in order to supplement it. When Xiaozong came to the throne, he submitted his own text.⁵ The emperor praised his work and awarded him gold currency while ordering the relevant department to see to its publication.⁶ For this he was especially promoted to the post of Minister of Rites while also being tasked with managing affairs in the Household Administration of the Heir Apparent. He participated in the compilation of the *Xianzong shilu* as Vice Director-general. Between February 1491-January 1492, [the *Xianzong shilu*] was completed, whereupon he was promoted to Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent with a concurrent posting as a Grand Secretary of the Wenyuan Pavilion, in which capacity he participated in administrative affairs. For ministers to enter directly into the Grand Secretariat began first with Jun, at which time he was seventy-one [*sui*] of age. Jun later considered that those matters recorded in his [*Daxue*] *yanyi bu* could all be applied to the administration of

⁴ Two pertinent strategic treatises are preserved in his collected works: "Liang Guang yongbing shiyi 兩廣用兵事宜" and "Guangdong beiyu Yaokou shiyi 廣東備禦猺寇事宜". See in respective order: Qiu Jun, *Qiongtai shiwen huigao*, in *Qiu Wenzhuang gong congshu*, vol. 2, 21.38b-45b, 45b-51a. Li Xian 李賢 (*js.* 1433, 1408-1466) recalls Qiu's contributions in his own collected works: *Gurang ji* 古穰集 (Siku quanshu 四庫全書 ed., 1778), 2.19a. "Jiaojin Liang Guang shiyi 繳進兩廣事宜." For detailed analysis of Qiu's proposals, see: Chu Hung-lam 朱鴻林, "Qiu Jun yu Chenghua yuannian (1465) Dateng xia zhi yi de guanxi 丘濬與成化元年 (1465) 大藤峽之役的關係," *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報, no. 47 (2007): 115-133.

⁵ That is, the *Daxue yanyi bu* 大學衍義補 ("A Supplement to the Exposition on the Meaning of the Great Learning"). The most exhaustive treatments of this massive statecraft manual and how it came to be written remain: Chu Hung-lam, "Ch'iu Chun (1421-1495) and the Ta-Hsueh Yen-I Pu: Statecraft Thought in Fifteenth-Century China" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1983); Lee Cheuk-yin, "Ch'iu Chün (1421-1495) and His Views on Government and History," 2 vols. (PhD diss., The Australian National University, 1984).

⁶ Cf. *Xiaozong shilu* 孝宗實錄 (Taipei 臺北: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1961-1966), 7.134-135. Qiu submitted the *Daxue yanyi bu* on 5 December 1487.

affairs, and so requested that the most important of them be selected and made into memorials, after which point they could be sent down to the Grand Secretariat for discussion and implementation. The emperor approved of this.⁷

濬以真德秀大學衍義於治國平天下條目未具，乃博採群書補之。孝宗嗣位，表上其 [181.4809] 書，帝稱善，賚金幣，命所司刊行。特進禮部尚書，掌詹事府事。修憲宗實錄，充副總裁。弘治四年，書成，加太子太保，尋命兼文淵閣大學士參預機務。尚書入內閣者自濬始，時年七十一矣。濬以衍義補所載皆可見之行事，請摘其要者奏聞，下內閣議行之。帝報可。

The next [lunar] year, Jun submitted a memorial in which he explained: “Your official observes that during the Chenghua era [r. 1465-1487], tailed comets were witnessed three times streaking across the Three Enclosures.⁸ As well, the earth quaked on five or six hundred instances. In recent times, tailed comets were seen in Tianjin, earthquakes occur and thunderous cracks pierce the sky without cessation, and bizarre birds chirp continuously in the Palace. In the 240 years covered in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, tailed and tailless comets are mentioned only on three occasions, earthquakes on five, and birds on two. Now, we have witnessed such phenomena multiple times in the span of only twenty years. How gravely frightening this is! I implore Your Highness to put into effect the benevolent care of Heaven Above and to recall the hardships experienced by [Your] ancestors. [I implore You] to rectify [Your] self and cleanse [Your] heart-mind so as to first establish the root and then accordingly manage governmental affairs. See diligently to the favoring of that which should be venerated and be not deceived by heresy; see to the frugal management of finances and do not go to the point of exhausting the state; make appointments fairly and do not become misguided in taking advice with partiality. Prohibit clandestine meetings of obeisance; clarify the principles of righteousness; be vigilant in prudent virtue; and tend assiduously to governmental affairs. With this, those adherents who seek to curry favor with You and who bring disorder to government through heterodoxy will not dare wantonly exercise their villainy. Heaven’s inauspicious portents will accordingly abate.”⁹ He therein listed twenty-two contemporary cases of mismanagement. The emperor adopted [his recommendations]. Between January 1493-February 1494, [Qiu Jun] was excused from court audiences owing to disease afflicting his eye.

明年，濬上言：「臣見成化時彗星三見，徧掃三垣，地五六百震。邇者彗星見天津，地震天鳴無虛日，異鳥三鳴於禁中。春秋二百四十年，書彗孛者三，地震者五，飛禽者二。今乃屢見於二十年之間，甚可畏也。願陛下體上天之仁愛，念祖宗之艱難，正身清心以立本

⁷ For the memorial, entitled “Yuze Daxue yanyi bu zhong yaowu shangxian zou 欲擇大學衍義補中要務上獻奏”，see: Qiu Jun, *Qiongtai shiwen huigao*, in *Qiu Wenzhuang gong congshu*, vol. 2, 7.14a-17a.

⁸ This consisted of three celestial ‘enclosures’, or constellations, in the night sky: *Ziwei yuan* 紫微垣 (Purple Tenuity), *Taiwei yuan* 太微垣 (Grand Tenuity), and *Tianshi yuan* 天市垣 (Heaven’s Marketplace). For further details and discussion, see the following: Kroll, *A Student’s Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, rev. ed., 576; Li Zhiliang 李之亮, “‘Sanyuan’ kao ‘三垣’ 考,” *Zhengzhou daxue xuebao* 鄭州大學學報 (*Zhexue shehui kexue ban* 哲學社會科學版) no. 1 (1989): 12-14, 29.

⁹ The memorial should date to roughly November 1491; it may also be found in the following late-Ming work, but in greater detail: Huang Guangsheng 黃光昇, *Zhaodai dianze* 昭代典則 (Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshu guan 商務印書館, 2017), 22.906-907.

而應務，謹好尚不惑於異端，節財用不至於耗國，公任使不失於偏聽，禁私謁，明義理，慎儉德，勤政務，則承風希寵、左道亂政之徒自不敢肆其奸，而天災弭矣。」因列時弊二十二事。帝納之。六年以目疾免朝參。

During Jun's tenure, he inspired the emperor with his generous magnanimity, and with loyalty and sincerity he changed the customs of scholars. But on the other hand, in considering his disposition, he was highly constricted in temperament. On one occasion, with Liu Jian he was discussing affairs with much hostility, to the point that he threw his cap to the ground. As well, if the proposals of speaking officials were inappropriate, he would confront them face-to-face. He also was not on good terms with Wang Shu, to the extent that he would not exchange with him even a single word. During the grand review of officials between January 1493-February 1494, Shu memorialized that 2,000 individuals ought to be dismissed. Jun instead requested that those who had not yet reached their three-year term should be renewed in their posts, and that those who had no obvious evidence of being covetous or violent should not be dismissed, thus retaining in all ninety individuals. Shu struggled mightily against him, but to no avail, and thus requested dismissal. Moreover, a certain Administrative Assistant in the Imperial Academy of Medicine Liu Wentai once went to and from Jun's home, and because he lost his office he denounced Shu. Shu suspected that Wentai had in fact received direction from Jun, and speaking officials in a great frenzy claimed that the document had come from Jun's hand. But, shockingly, it was Shu who was dismissed; observers greatly distrusted Jun for this. Supervising Secretary Mao Cheng, Censors Song De and Zhou Jin, and others submitted memorials impeaching Jun, claiming that he could not occupy the office of chief minister; the emperor did not look into these matters. The [lunar] year afterward, he was made Junior Guardian [of the Heir Apparent]. In 1495, he died at the age of seventy-six [*sui*]. He was bestowed with the title of Grand Mentor [of the Heir Apparent] and was given the posthumous title Literary and Solemn.

濬在位，嘗以寬大啟上心，忠厚變士習。顧性褊隘，嘗與劉健議事不合，至投冠於地。言官建白不當意，輒面折之。與王恕不相得，至不交一言。六年大計群吏，恕所奏罷二千人。濬請未及三載者復任，非貪暴有顯跡者勿斥，留九十人。恕爭之不得，求去。太醫院判劉文泰嘗往來濬家，以失職訐恕，恕疑文泰受濬指，而言者嘩然言疏稿出濬手。恕竟坐罷，人以是大不直濬。給事中毛瑄，御史宋惠、周津等交章劾濬不可居相位，帝不問。踰年，加少保。八年卒，年七十六。贈太傅，諡文莊。

Jun was contented and resolute, with his residence being supremely sunken and cramped; for forty [lunar] years he did not relocate. By natural disposition he was fully committed to learning; when he was old in age and his right eye had lost its sight, he still continued to read without end. In discussions and debates he was highly forceful and impassioned; those listening were struck with fright and astonishment. As for when he participated in the compilation of the *Yingzong shilu*, there were those who said that Yu Qian's death should be described as coming about due to disloyalty. Jun said: "In considering the *jisi* incident,¹⁰ but for Mr. Yu the dynasty would have

¹⁰ This refers to the Tumu Incident 土木之變 of 1449, a great debacle that witnessed the ignominious capture of the Yingzong 英宗 Emperor (r. 1436-1449, r. 1457-1464) during an abortive campaign against the Mongols in the northern steppes. Owing to the brisk installation of the Jingtai 景泰 Emperor (r. 1450-1457) and thorough defensive

been imperiled.¹¹ For this matter to be forever settled, that he was falsely accused must be made clear.” Such was his commitment to upholding propriety. During the Zhengde reign [r. 1506-1521], upon the recommendation of a Regional Inspector, a shrine for him was bestowed in his native place. It was entitled “The Exalted Worthy”.¹²

[181.4810] 濬康介，所居邸第極湫隘，四十年不易。性嗜學，既老，右目失明，猶披覽不輟。議論好矯激，聞者駭愕。至修英宗實錄，有言于謙之死當以不軌書者。濬曰：「己巳之變，微于公社稷危矣。事久論定，誣不可不白。」其持正又如此。正德中，以巡按御史言賜祠於鄉，曰「景賢」。

preparations spearheaded by Yu Qian 于謙 (*js.* 1421, 1398-1457), the subsequent Mongol assault on Beijing was fended off and the Ming court emerged revitalized.

¹¹ Qiu’s phrasing seems to echo a famous passage in the *Analects*, in which Confucius praises Guan Zhong (d. 645 BCE) for saving Chinese civilization from being subsumed by ‘barbaric’ non-Chinese customs. This phrasing, most likely deliberate on Qiu’s part, thus appears to make a case for recognizing Yu Qian as a praiseworthy savior of Chinese civilization akin to Guan Zhong. The original passage in the *Analects* reads: “But for [Guan Zhong], we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoning on the left side” 微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣。See: James Legge, trans., *Confucius – Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean: Chinese Text; Translation with Exegetical Notes and Dictionary of All Characters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893; rpt., New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), 282.

¹² For further details pertaining to the shrine and its history, see: Tang Zhou 唐胄, comp., *Qiongtai zhi* 瓊臺志 (1519), 26.2b. Much of the gazetteer’s frontmatter is illegible; the latest identifiable date in the prefaces is 1519.