

When the outer court(13) found out that the Eight [Tigers] were enticing the emperor into carousing and pleasure-seeking, the grand secretaries(14) Liu Chien [1443 - 1526], Hsieh Ch'ien [1450 - 1531] and Li Tung-yang [1447 - 1516](15) immediately remonstrated; but -----

crucial administrative organ beginning in Hsüan-tsung's reign (1426-36), with the "Three Yangs." (See Hucker, *Cens. Syst.*, pp. 40-41, 161-63; also H.L. Chan's forthcoming chapter in CHC.) Only later in the dynasty did the generic term *nei-ko* 内閣 come to be used as a regular office name (Nei-ko). See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 21 for *wai-t'ing* in general.

(14) *ta hsüeh-shih*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 29, and also DMB:939. These officials, based in the Hanlin academy, grew from a preceptorial role into that of overall administrative executive by the mid-fifteenth century. (See preceding note.)

(15)

KEYED READING: MS 181, pp. 4812 f., 4818 f., 4822 f. These are from the biographies of the three ministers, respectively. The first, Liu Chien's biography, is the most informative concerning this event. We learn that the three were a strong bloc of anti-eunuch dissent and remonstrance in the previous reign. They had been trusted by Hsiao-tsung, who, just before his death, asked them to watch over his smart but fun-loving son, the future emperor Wu-tsung.

RESEARCH TOPIC: Collate speeches of the three that were anti-eunuch. (For example MTC:1468 gives a speech of Liu Chien denying posthumous rites to the eunuch Li Kuang in 1498. Further, MTC:1535, Liu Chien tries to force on Wu-tsung the deceased emperor's anti-eunuch policies. See also MTC:1542 and 1551-52.) What kinds of justifications and reasonings did the three ministers use? Furthermore, what can one say about their motives: were they for personal benefit, or simply for the salvation of the young emperor's respectability in the eyes of the civil government? Did the remonstrations involve a strict anti-eunuch position, or could these ministers be conciliatory? In the examples cited just above, was Liu Chien acting alone or was he supported? What does the historian's placement of the three biographies together tell us about how they might have been perceived as a bloc? (I refer the reader once again to F.W. Mote's chapter on the Ch'eng-hua reign, in vol. 7 of CHC. It discusses the bases of eunuch antipathy within officialdom.)

the emperor took no heed. Minister(16) Chang Sheng, supervising secretaries(17) T'ao Hsieh, Hu Yü, Yang Yi-ying, Chang Kuei, censors(18) Wang Huan, Chao Yu and the Nanking supervising secretaries and [Nanking] censors Li Kuang-han and Lu K'un, etc. one after another submitted memorials in protest. Again the emperor took no heed.

- (16) *shang-shu*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ." p.32.
- (17) *chi-shih chung*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p.52. Each ministry had an adjunct Office of Scrutiny (totaling six). The supervising secretaries were the chiefs thereof, with various subdivisions in their titles. This was an important Ming office and reflected historical changes in the censorial system. See Hucker, *Cens. Syst.*
- (18) *yü-shih*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 48. The term applies to any functionary in the Ming Censorate (Tu ch'a-yüan), but is usually qualified by titles describing a particular commission. See Hucker, *Cens. Syst.*, esp. pp. 47-52.

KEYED READING: MS 188, pp. 4978-79

Our main text gives only little indication of the immensity of the storm of protests. This keyed reading is from Lu K'un's biography (the last person mentioned here). As we learn from the keyed reading, the "etc." following his name refers to no less than thirteen circuit censors whom he led in protest! Moreover, Lu's speech is quite stern. Again, what does it show about motives? How might it help answer the question posed in the research topic, note #15?

RESEARCH TOPIC: Since the MS is often only a shorthand, one might collate data that deal specifically with this huge tide of protest. Try to reconstruct the affair analytically and in more detail. MTC:1552 ff. will supply full speeches and chronology, the latter especially helpful to the problem raised in note #20. What might be learned that would contribute toward our understanding of the attitudes of civil officials at this time? How well and for how long were their channels of influence working at court?

An assistant astrologer(19) [in the Directorate of Astronomy] Yang Yüan reported about a stellar aberration, and the emperor became quite disturbed. Liu Chien, Hsieh Ch'ien and the others again all memorialized one after another, requesting that Liu Chin

(19) *wu-kuan chien-hou* (lit.: supervisor of the augur periods for the five chief astrologers). Hucker, "Govt. Org.," p. 37, mentions only the Directorate of Astronomy (Ch'in-t'ien chien), and not any of its thirty-nine officials, of whom Yang was one, and the officially unranked technicians. The phrase *wu-kuan* goes back to pre-Han texts, referring to the Five Processes (*wu-hsing*), five offices, five colors, five seasons and five directions (including that of center), etc. In this case it is merely a technical usage, indicating the way the Directorate's posts were organized and named. The five chief astrologers (*wu-kuan chung*) ranked just underneath the head of the Directorate, the *chien-cheng*.

KEYED READING: 1) MS 162, pp.4418-19
2) MS 74, pp. 1810-12

Here we have a good example, like that of Li Shih-mien's protest, of an intriguing event. But these two MS "keys" show all too little.

RESEARCH TOPIC: How should one investigate the "stellar aberration" protest? First analyze further the structure of the Directorate. See TMHT 2, p. 80, and MHY 39, pp. 688-89 for additional materials beyond that of the Keyed Reading. What are some unusual administrative features of the bureau? How highly ranked were its officials, and especially the position held by Yang? Next check MJCC for biographical material. Hok-lam Chan's biography of his father, Yang Hsüan, DMB:1511-13, is quite informative and imparts a heavy tone to the events being narrated here. Check Chan's cited sources; are there any not included in MJCC? Third, go to MTC and MSL for a reconstruction of the "event." MTC gives at least two prior examples of the Directorate's criticism of the throne (hint: circa 1504-05). What exactly was the subsequent "aberration?" How were Yang's reports timed in relation to it? (See his later appearance in Liu Chin's biography.) How might we characterize his role in the "storm of protest," given his family's career patterns, his job rank, his political connections and the avenues of Ming protest? Reflect back on the "incident of 1443."

be executed. Minister of revenue Han Wen [1441-1526](20) led all

(20) *hu-pu shang-shu*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ." pp. 32 & 33.

KEYED READING: MS 186, pp. 4915-17 and 18, p. 200
Here the reader begins to get a feel for the emotional tension underlying the court struggle. Note especially the tragic quality of Han's decision to throw in his lot with the other protesters.

RESEARCH TOPIC: 1) Han Wen seems to have been the leader of yet another bloc of officials, based in the Ministry of Finance. Han was an elder statesman with an impressive, sometimes stormy civil career, noted for speeches on economic reforms. (See his protest about the amount of spending at Wu-tsung's wedding.) Make "keyed readings" into the MS biographies of his colleagues. Pay note to those who were punished along with him and compare this bloc with the others already mentioned. Did this one utilize a eunuch informant? Were there regional factors? (See also MS, p. 7835; and the appropriate sections of MTC. Use DMB: 494-98, and Ting, pp. 70-71 for ideas.)

2) Han availed himself of traditional court augury in constructing his protest. What, if any, was the link between Yang Yüan's effective augury previously and Han's speech? Was their timing premeditated or just coincidental? Very revealing is the mention in Chan's DMB article (see preceding note) of a supporter of Yang. Who was that ally? To which ministry was he attached? Could astrological beliefs themselves have been the precipitating factor that broke the emperor's defenses and caused him to weep for fear? If so, why not the previous protests by Liu Chien, et al.? (Remember that the boy-emperor loathed his lectures on the classics. See MTC:1558-59 and MS 16, pp. 199-200.)

Collate portent speeches occurring at the end of the previous reign by surveying small sections of the MTC or MSL. Compare the results with the affair of 1506 being discussed here. (For example cf. MTC:1466 and an earlier augury by Liu Chien; MTC:1555-65 for the chronology of events surrounding the portent of 1506.) Chart the appearances of the Directorate of Astronomy; look for changes in frequency and in the ad hoc alliances which it maintained with other bureaux or bureau heads. Try to characterize the role of court astrology just in this short period. How can these researches help answer the questions raised in note #15?

the great officials in following suit.

The emperor had no recourse. He sent chief eunuchs from the Directorate of Ceremonial(21) Ch'en K'uan, Li Jung, and Wang Yüeh to the Grand Secretariat to discuss assigning Liu Chin and his associates [i.e. the Eight Tigers] to Nanking. After several parlays, Liu Chien and the others staunchly refused [to let them off so lightly]. Secretary Hsü Chin [1437-1510](22) said, "If you go too far, there will be an incident." Liu Chien did not agree.

Now Wang Yüeh was one who always spoke out honestly. He and the other eunuch directors Fan Heng and Hsü Chih bitterly resented the Eight Tigers. They all reported to the emperor what Liu Chien had said,(23) further adding that the grand secretaries' opinions were -----

(21) Ssu-li chien; mentioned in note 13. See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 25; also Ting, pp. 6-15. (There were 12 chief eunuchs, or directors, *t'ai-chien*, one for each directorate, but *t'ai-chien* was also used loosely for any eunuch.)

(22)

KEYED READING: MS 186, pp. 4925-26

It is interesting that Hsü acted cautiously here, whereas previously he had practically taunted Liu Chin. Try to find a fuller version of the speech cited in biographies of the other grand secretaries or in the MTC. Unfortunately, it is not in this keyed reading.

(23)

KEYED READING: MS ??

Where would one turn for filling in the information on Wang Yüeh? He has no biography in the eunuch section and little is known about him. Yet he was an important figure in one of the anti-Liu Chin cliques.

RESEARCH TOPIC: Wang Shih-chen's "Chung-kuan k'ao" (extensively quoted in Ting, pp. 69-78) details these events. In it the anti-Liu Chin role of Wang Yüeh and his allies seems stronger than that described in the Liu Chin biography. (Wang

right. Just at that time Liu Chien and the others had arranged with Han Wen and all the nine chief ministers(24) that the next morning they would prostrate themselves at court and protest face-to-face with the emperor. But the minister of personnel Chiao Fang [1436-1517](25) immediately reported [all this] to Liu Chin.

Shih-chen, p. 4155; see also the opinion in *K'ao-cheng*, p. 27a.) Also Li Tung-yang appears to have been thrust into a pro-Liu position, because Liu Chin's clique could not believe that he wrote the strongly worded petition and lobbied to keep him in the Grand Secretariat. (They were accustomed to his being publicly non-committal; Wang Shih-chen, p. 4156.) See also MS 186, p. 4944 for an indication of the type of affirmation given Wang Yüeh by civil officials.

Try to reformulate the specific event here, i.e. the intricate political struggles surrounding the deliberations over Liu Chin. Use information in the biographies of the officials listed in previous keyed readings, as well as Wang and Ting. Can one paint a synthetic view of the shape of the different anti-Liu blocs? How did they interact, if at all? Why did they fail at this juncture? Were Wang Yüeh and Li Tung-yang the crucial weak links in that failure, or are there not enough data to justify such a judgment?

Are there other times when Wang, Fan and Hsü act together? See MSL, "Wu-tsung shih-lu," 24, p. 622, where these three eunuchs are mentioned en bloc by Liu Chin as part of a large traitorous faction. Where the MS and MTC narrate Liu's listing of the faction, see below, this group of three goes unmentioned. See also Wang Ao, p. 12b.

(24) *chiu ch'ing*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p.65.

(25) *li-pu shang-shu*; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 32.

KEYED READING: MS 306, pp. 7834-35; browse 7835-43
Chiao's biography is quite short, but the other biographies following act as second-level keyed readings to which we are directed by the MS compilers. Why is this group biography an extremely important keyed reading for this study? Note the "encomium" on p. 7839.

RESEARCH TOPIC: We have examined anti-Liu blocs; now one

Liu became terribly alarmed and that night led Ma Yung-ch'eng and all the other Eight Tigers to prostrate before the emperor in a semi-circle and weep. The emperor's feelings were touched, whereupon Liu said,

The one harming all of us(26) is Wang Yüeh. He has banded together the grand secretaries and plans to control your highness' movements to and fro. Therefore he must first eliminate [those that he] fears. Moreover, what harm could ever come to the affairs of the empire from [sporting] with falcons and dogs? If the Directorate of Ceremonial had the right man for the job, then would the civil officials(27) dare to act like this?

might note any pro-Liu literatus bloc(s). Look at the individuals mentioned as being punished at the fall of Liu Chin (last paragraph of the present translation). What patterns of cohesiveness emerge? How do the persons mentioned there differ as a group from those described in this keyed reading, the section on "Collaborators with Eunuchs?"

Describe the way in which one specific office acted as a factional nucleus; which one was it? See Franke, p. 17 for Chiao's role in this office and the compilation of the *Hsiao-tsung shih lu*. See DMB: 233-34 (and elsewhere). Below we shall see regional alliances acting as nuclei for partisan politics. Have there been signs of it so far in our readings? (See Ting, pp. 75-78.)

- (26) The term "nu-teng" 奴等 is literally "we slaves (servers)." It functions as an idiom meaning "us," with the possible sense of abject servility, depending on the context. This was the accepted and customary form of address used by eunuchs when speaking to the emperor. The speech is paraphrased in the classical language, but the colloquial tenor of the original is still somewhat preserved. (Note that Wang Ao's section on Liu Chin, p. 11b, is entitled, "Liu Chin nu.")
- (27) *tso-pan kuan*; This is a common term referring to the physical separation of the officials before the emperor in the audience ceremony. The civil were on his left, below, with the different ministries represented in ranks. The military were below and to his right. See Map #6. Wang Shih-chen (p. 4161) gives a fuller speech, the one here being somewhat disjunct.

The emperor was greatly angered and immediately ordered Liu Chin to take control of the Directorate of Ceremonial, Ma Yung-ch'eng to take charge of the Eastern Depot, and Ku Ta-yung the Western Depot;(28) during the night he had Wang Yüeh, Fan Heng and Hsü Chih arrested and exiled into the Nanking eunuch guard.(29)

At dawn all the officials entered court, and as they were about to kneel before the emperor they knew that the entire affair had [unexpectedly] changed.(30) Thereupon Liu Chien, Hsieh Ch'ien and -----

(28) Tung-ch'ang and Hsi-ch'ang, respectively; See Hucker, "Govt. Organ.," p. 65.

KEYED READING: MS 74, pp. 1820-22 & 18, p. 200

What is particularly interesting about this set of eunuch offices? These two posts were the offices of secret police activity, always a key position grabbed by ascendant eunuch cliques. The brutality wielded by these organizations reached a high pitch on many occasions.

RESEARCH TOPIC: See Ting, pp. 26-34, Wei, pp. 22 ff., and the very informative account by Shen Te-fu, pp. 153-54. Crawford, p. 121 lists Ch'iu Chü instead of Ma; and he shows Ku as taking control of the Eastern Depot. Is this correct according both to information in the keyed reading and to Shen Te-fu? There does seem to be a discrepancy. TMHT, MTC or MHY might also supply information for ironing out the problem.

In the second of the keyed readings the compiler seems to imply that the filling of these posts sealed the downfall of the anti-Liu forces. What does this add to the question raised in note #5 about the political nature of eunuch offices? Note the way in which eunuch control of the Eastern Depot was already controversial in the previous reign when a different eunuch clique was in control of it (MTC:1452-53).

(29) *ching-chün* 淨軍; *ching* means to cleanse, purify; it is short for *ching-shen*, a euphemism for castration or a castrated man. A principle agency employing eunuchs at Nanking was the guard unit at the the Founder's Tomb, *hsiao-ling*. Service there was considered to be punishment and exile from court.