Ch'i Chi-kuang — A Ming Military Official as viewed by his contemporary Civil Officials

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What do civil officials respect in a military man; what do they see in him worthy of their praise and recommendation?

Ch'i Chi-kuang[1] (1528—1587) was a hereditary military official who rose to high military office as a result of his leadership in the defense of the southeast seacoast against the Wo raiders. He was later transferred to command the defense areas of Chi-chou north of Peking to guard against Mongol inroads. Ch'i eventually rose to one of the highest military posts in the Ming empire and received one of the highest honors — the title of Junior Guardian.

The view of Ch'i that is expressed below is based on a content analysis of memorials found in Ch'i’s chronological biography in which his sons have collected over fifty fitness reports in part or in toto, in which Ch'i was either recommended for promotion or praised for exploits or for fine character. These are the comments of provincial and metropolitan officials reporting to the central bureaucracy and the emperor the extent to which this particular military leader fulfills those qualifications which they think necessary in a man who is a leader of the court’s military arm.

For this examination of what his reporting civil contemporaries had to say about Ch'i, I have divided his career into three periods based on the geographical areas in which he served and on the type of military activity in which he participated: his early career in his native Shantung, his middle years fighting the Wo raiders on the seacoasts of Chekiang and Fukien, and his later years guarding the Chi-chou sector of the Great Wall.

I. Ch'i Chi-kuang in Shantung 1550—1555: The Young Officer of Promise

His talent and wisdom shine like the stripes of a tiger; he ought to attain the achievement of a scholarly general.

His determination and carriage flourish like a hawk on the wing; he may be expected to become an extra-ordinarily great leader[1].


1 Ch'i Tso-kuo, Ch'i shao-pao nien-p'u ch'i-pien [The Adjusted and Edited Chronological Biography of Ch'i the Junior Guardian], 12 chuan, Hsien-yu, Fukien, 1878, ch. 1, p. 14. Unless otherwise noted, all citations are from this source, signified by NP.
At the age of sixteen in 1544 Ch'i inherited the military rank of 4a and a billet in Shantung. He passed his military chu-jen examination in the Autumn of 1549 and the next Autumn was in the capital sitting for his military chin-shih at the time of the Keng-hsü Incident. He came to the notice of high officials then as a result of a number of pertinent suggestions he made as to the defense of the capital.

The first seven memorials of recommendation cover the years when he was in his native Shantung. They were received by the Ministry of War during the six year period 1550—55, the first one being received two months after the Keng-hsü Incident, and a year to the month after Ch'i had won his military chu-jen degree. They were written by seven different persons: four censors, two lower officials of the Ministry of War, and the Shantung grand coordinator. Specific in praise and criticism, all considered him a young officer of promise. Five mentioned his ability at mounted shooting and three mentioned both his strict military discipline and his decided incorruptibility.

Aside from these references to his military ability, leadership, and character, three interesting comments were made which pertain to what these civil officials saw of particular importance in Ch'i. The first comment is on literacy, one censor writing that "He has given up literature for a military career, but understands syntax thoroughly." The second comment was on personal behavior: "Previously he was shamefully with the stream of the vulgar... His ambition is firm in purpose. Today he is particularly separated from the ordinary." The third combines the first two: "His talents and wit are amply combined in literary (civil) matters. His deportment is not of the type of the military class." The second shows that this memorialist was close enough to Ch'i to observe his character. The first and third also imply personal contact, and both are concerned with this young official's ability in wen, both literally and figuratively.

The concluding words of each of the four censors' evaluations of Ch'i affirmed the general opinion that here was a promising young military official: "Remarkably learned in military affairs, he amply possesses his father's character." "We may begin to see the achievement of administrative talent." "In this officer we may have the rarity of a great leader."

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1 NP, ch. 1, p. 13. I see no evidence of Ch'i's "having given up literature for a military career." This may have been true, but it also may have been a way of the censor explaining his literacy, unusual for a military official. On the other hand, perhaps Ch'i didn't want to be a military official and was forced into it because he was the eldest male child in a hereditary military family.

2 NP, ch. 1, p. 13.
3 NP, ch. 1, p. 17.
4 NP, ch. 1, p. 13.
6 NP, ch. 1, p. 17.
“All praised him as a leader of outstanding ability. The Minister of War specially selected and promoted him."

In 1555 Ch'i was ordered to the Chekiang Regional Military Commission with the billet of managing the military farmlands and in the following year he was given a command post.

II. Ch'i Chi-kuang the Warrior 1556—1567: Field Command on the Seacoast

The Wo raiders fear him as they would a tiger. Fukien and Kwangtung respect him as they would a god.

(From a censor’s report)

The next twelve years of Ch'i's life were probably his most exciting. He began this period with the rank of 3a, a junior military official in Chekiang Province, and ended it with the rank of 1b, a member of the Five Chief Military Commissions, the highest military organization in the Ming government. He began it with appointment to his first command post, that of Ning-po, Shao-hsing and T'ai-chou area assistant commander on the Chekiang coast, and ended it after having command of Fukien and one-half of Chekiang, by being appointed to an important post in the capital to assist in training the Capital Army.

The fitness reports of these twelve years were sent in by civil officials of four different positions: the supreme commander and grand coordinators of the areas in which he operated, censors, and regional inspectors. Fitness reports from twelve different men in these four positions were received at the Court at the rate of one and one-half per year.

The message that the memorialists seemed to be sending in to the Emperor during this period was that Ch'i was their most outstanding military leader and was the man to do the job on the coast. It was even advocated that he be given sole responsibility for the military affairs of the entire south-east.

What made Ch'i the outstanding field commander of the 1560's? As the memorialists saw it, it was a matter of leadership, military ability, loyalty, and bravery, all of which resulted in his many victories which in turn enhanced his prestige. The qualities appearing most frequently in the eighteen fitness reports were:

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<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Victories</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Prestige</td>
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<td>among the people 5</td>
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<td>among the Wo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military skill</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Loyalty</td>
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Victories
One hundred shots. One hundred hits.

This quotation is not meant to hark back to Ch'i's earlier heralded skill at mounted shooting, but is a figurative phrase used by a censor in describ-

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8 Ibid.
9 NP, ch. 6, p. 4.
10 For the occurrence of the other ten, see the chart on p. 114.
11 NP, ch. 6, p. 2.
ing Chi's victory at Hsien-yu in Fukien. The memorialists were impressed with the thoroughness of Chi's victories. In the report of the victories near T'ai-chou and Wen-chou in Chekiang it was said of Chi, "He captured and destroyed to the last man several thousand thieves." Later at Fu-an and Ning-te in Fukien, it was said, "Chi smashed the nest and destroyed them to the last man." The Kiangsi grand coordinator attributed the same doggedness to Chi. After Chi had won a battle at I-yang in Kiangsi the grand coordinator wrote, "New bandits gathered again and drifted towards Chien-ch'ang and attached it. Again in a day or so Chi destroyed them and traced out their nest so that there were no remnants." The memorialists were obviously impressed.

**Prestige**

Two other large bodies of people were also impressed, the local populace who were able to live in peace, and the Wo who lived in fear of his name. The common people love him as their father and mother. South and north they quarrel as to who will welcome him with a jug of broth.

The memorialists' comment about Chi's relations with the civil populace are rather vague and tend to fall into cliches, such as, "All the T'ai-chou people rely on him as their Great Wall. The people of eastern Chekiang truly depend on him to defend the frontier." While he was still an area assistant commander at Ning-po, Shao-hsing, and T'ai-chou, it was reported that, "His merit is established repeatedly in eastern Chekiang; moreover his reputation is heard beyond the seas." The eastern barbarous thieves dread his prestige. He is called "Chi the Tiger."

His record of victories soon became known among the Wo. Most of the memorialists made it quite clear that the very presence of Chi in the area meant less Wo activity. Once it was noted that, "His prestige is terrifyingly bright, and because of it the robbers and thieves are discouraged."

**Bravery**

He daringly is the first to mount the walls and attack.

Bravery was a quality which Chi neither lacked nor lacked the opportunity to display. Some memorialists just made the statement that he was brave, but most of them included qualifying statements such as, "He braved dangers in order to completely save a threatened city," "On seeing the thieves, he treats his own person lightly and is the first to advance," "His bravery is

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12 NP, ch. 1, p. 37.  
13 NP, ch. 3, p. 23.  
14 NP, ch. 2, p. 41.  
15 NP, ch. 5, p. 19.  
16 NP, ch. 2, p. 35.  
17 NP, ch. 1, p. 37.  
18 NP, ch. 5, p. 19.  
19 NP, ch. 2, p. 41.  
20 NP, ch. 2, p. 37.  
21 NP, ch. 1, p. 37.  
22 NP, ch. 1, p. 36.  
23 NP, ch. 2, p. 35.
such that he breaks through the enemy lines." This bravery was probably one of the most important qualities that Ch'i possessed, for it was one aspect of leadership that any soldier admires.

Military Skill
One of the aspects of leadership for which Ch'i was often praised was his military skill in strategy and tactics. Although one memorialist was a bit extreme in insisting that "His use of troops is as that of the gods," and another, obviously unacquainted with the military mind wrote that Ch'i was "extensively familiar with the mysteries of strategy," others spoke knowledgeably about his "deep accomplishment in military tactics," his being "experienced in surprise and frontal attack," and his adaptability to changing circumstances.

Leadership
Ch'i has always possessed a general's ability — that deep rumbling of thunder for which the times hope. By the plans he conceives the soldiers never complain of overwork and the people do not have any increase in levies. By his decisions in the field the bandits hide themselves and the coast enjoys peace.

The memorialists were primarily interested in the fact that Ch'i had disciplined troops and had a protective eye out for the civil populace. An early memorial by the grand coordinator of Chekiang commented that, "In managing subordinates he attains the essentials of order and respect." This general comment becomes more specific in the days when Ch'i leads troops regularly against the Wo raiders. Three memorialists describe his discipline as "strict and clear," one adding, "and his subordinate ranks absolutely obey his orders." A supreme commander states, "His orders are carried out; what he forbids is stopped; and the morale of his troops is in good order." Other comments are concerned with the complement of strict discipline: his "rewards and punishments are accepted with trust." On meet-

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23 NP, ch. 1, p. 38.
24 NP, ch. 5, p. 19.
25 NP, ch. 6, pp. 5-6.
26 NP, ch. 1, p. 36.
27 NP, ch. 3, p. 1.
28 NP, ch. 3, p. 23.
29 NP, ch. 6, p. 24.
30 NP, ch. 1, p. 21.
32 NP, ch. 2, p. 41.
33 NP, ch. 2, p. 35.
34 NP, ch. 6, p. 2.
ing soldiers there is loyal friendship without distrust. The general picture we receive is of a military leader who disciplines his troops through a judicious application of punishment and reward, and who keeps them busy fighting the Wo raiders rather than directing their energies against the civil populace.

Loyalty

He is loyal and ready to die for his country.

The memorialists did not feel obliged to explain how Ch'i was loyal or why he was loyal. They must have thought that their review of his deeds was enough to show his loyalty, for in none of the eight memorials which mentioned his loyalty was there an elaboration. He was usually “loyal and ______”.

There were two memorials during this period which used descriptive terminology and vocabulary quite different from the rest. These were both written by T'an Lun who had been T'ai-chou prefect when Ch'i had been the area assistant commander in that area, and who in 1563 as Fukien grand coordinator, had recommended Ch'i for the post of Fukien area commander. These two memorials were written shortly after Ch'i was given that post. T'an lauded Ch'i with descriptions such as, “He is an experienced general, of decorum and literary polish,” and “He is rooted in humanity and righteousness, using them as weapons of war. He esteems the Book of Poetry and the Book of History, and speaks of rites and music.” Only one other person, a regional inspector, even mentions Ch'i in any category other than military. He wrote, “He uses literary and military skills together and in his studies he is deeply learned. He uses wisdom and bravery jointly and he does not put on appearances.” Is this window dressing, or do they say this because perhaps they know Ch'i personally, and Ch'i really is such a man? Why is T'an Lun saying this at this particular juncture? Is he trying to make Ch'i sound like more than a man of merely military ability?

Ch'i's actual warrior days may have ended in late 1563 when he was elevated from a field command to command of Fukien's and one-half of Chekiang's field commanders. From this time to the end of his career we read more of what his subordinate officials do in the field than of what Ch'i does. However, Ch'i's years on the seacoast end in glory, for in 1566 and 1567 numerous memorials were received by the central government requesting Ch'i for duty in different areas of the empire. It was decided that his skills and training talents were needed in the north, so he was transferred to the Capital Army.

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35 NP, ch. 2, p. 35.
36 NP, ch. 4, p. 33.
37 This may be an indication of a cliche.
38 NP, ch. 4, p. 33.
39 NP, ch. 5, p. 19.
40 Ibid.
III. Ch'i Chi-kuang "Guardian" on the Great Wall 1568—1582: Military Administrator of the Northern Defense Area.

In selecting and making a thorough study of several hundreds of thousands of generals, it is obvious that he is the great general of our time.41

(From a Ministry of War report)

Ch'i stayed with the Capital Army only a few months, for in 1568 he was sent to be superintendent of military training for three defense areas in the immediate vicinity of the capital. A year later he was made concurrent area commander for the Chi-chou defense area which extended along the Great Wall from Shan-hai Pass one hundred and eighty miles to the west and which guarded numerous strategic passes only seventy miles north of Peking.

In the next thirteen years twenty-five fitness reports were sent in on Ch'i, the majority of them (sixteen) by supreme commanders. There were five holders of this post at Chi-chou, Liao-tung, Ch'ang-p'ing, and Pao-ting during Ch'i's tour of duty: T'an Lun, Liu Ying-chieh, Yang Chao, Liang Meng-lung, and Wu Tui, all except Wu Tui serving roughly a three year tour. All indications are that these were some of the most talented men in the government. The post was a most sensitive one because of its proximity to the capital. The government put there some of its best men to assure the defense of the capital. T'an Lun went almost directly from this position to be minister of war, as did Liang Meng-lung and Wu Tui. Liu Ying-chieh was shunted off to three different ministries in the southern capital after he had served four months as minister of justice. Yang Chao, although passed over for the position of vice-minister of the Ministry of War, became minister of works. Thus all five of the holders of the post became ministers. However, two officials who had held the post in the decade preceding 1567 had lost their heads, in part because of their performance there. So as the Chi-chou, Liao-tung, Ch'ang-p'ing, and Pao-ting supreme commanders mounted the Great Wall they looked down on potential trouble and death on both sides. In the light of this they undoubtedly realized that having an efficient military administrator under them was a very important matter.

The T'an Lun Period 1568—1570

His loyalty and sincerity are as solid as metal and stone.42

T'an and Ch'i had been cooperating in defense efforts ever since their early days at T'ai-chou. In T'an's memorial on Ch'i he touches on all but two of the important topics (except defense and building towers) that come up in this last period of Ch'i's career. He runs through the gamut of Ch'i's prestige, military discipline, ability in tactics, loyalty, his adept military training, and his honesty — all of which receive further comment by the later supreme commanders.

Three comments in particular stand out in this memorial. T'an is the only one to mention Ch'i's sincerity (and this is the first time that it has been

41 NP, ch. 11, p. 26.
42 NP, ch. 8, p. 53.
mentioned since 1559, then by a Chekiang censor), and he initiates, for the northern frontier, the description of Ch'i as having both civil and military ability (this was mentioned once on the seacoast by a regional inspector).

The Liu Ying-chieh Period 1570—1574

This is a loyal official of whose skill the country does not have two. He is as the frontier’s ten thousand li Great Wall.

In Liu’s three years of duty on the Wall ten memorials were submitted on Ch'i: six by himself, one by his subordinate and later successor, grand coordinator Yang Chao, one by a vice-minister of the Ministry of War, who was inspecting the frontier, and two by regional inspectors who were examining troop rosters.

Liu’s six memorials are of uneven length, emphasis, and quality. In the early years he commented on Ch'i in specific instances in four memorials, then he sent in a long and very complimentary memorial requesting the yin privilege for Ch'i. This memorial received a lengthy Ministry of War reply and the reward of promotion to senior chief military commissioner rather than the yin privilege. His last memorial is a parting word about Ch'i’s great ability.

In his memorials Liu stressed Ch'i’s loyalty, training, his civil and military ability, tactics, prestige, and discipline; in only two memorials did he mention towers, defense, or honesty.

Liu’s first memorial described the work that Ch'i was doing on the frontier building towers and repairing walls, and he was impressed by the way Ch'i moved about in his area of responsibility.

The second memorial was one of praise in connexion with a victory at Chia-ku, and Liu complimented Ch'i on his civil and military natural gifts, his loyalty, his ability, and experience.

The next two were in general praise of Ch'i and in rather flowery language: “His mercy penetrates the army, and his awe carries to all the routes,” yet Liu comments on his ability in ambush tactics, and one of the memorials is occasioned by a victory at K'u-lung tower.

Liu’s most lengthy memorial also displays his fullest appreciation for Ch'i and is the one which elicited Ch'i’s promotion to the highest rank in the Ming military system. Because it combines so many of the things that civil officials had been saying about Ch'i Chi-kuang for years, it is worth quoting in full.

Chi-chou has not experienced a Mongol invasion for seven years. It has followed the dynasty’s plans; the entire preparations for offense and defense are in order. With united hearts the civil and military together have accomplished managing a peaceful frontier. The fact that officials and soldiers have obeyed orders is indeed the work of their commanding general.

43 NP, ch. 11, p. 12.
44 NP, ch. 11, p. 1.
45 NP, ch. 11, p. 9.
46 Ibid.
It is said that the merit of guarding surpasses that of killing and taking prisoners. I say that the merit of no offense surpasses that of offensive victory. Now superintendent Ch'i combines civil and military ability and enjoys the respect of both the Chinese and Mongols. He truly is familiar with ancient and modern military tactics and puts them to use in his own mind. He understands the conditions of the barbarians in the south and the north and arranges flexible plans. As for offense: he has separate training, joint training, horse reinforcements, and infantry reinforcements. As soon as he summons them, carts and cavalry numbering several tens of units gather like clouds in the period of one or two days. As for defense: he has intelligence agents, watchful beacon-mound posts, moats with deep precipices, and guns. As soon as he directs, you look around and then there are over one thousand lofty towers standing firmly within several thousand li. He regulates matters of state as he regulates his family, and for twenty years his heart and strength have resisted shirking the labors of sweat and blood. He regulates the masses as he regulates a few, and several hundreds of thousands of regular troops are coordinated in accomplishment as if from the power of his arms and fingers. When the Mongols made a great invasion in the past they went back and forth for two months but did not dare to enter. These are truly troops which suppress without fighting. When the Mongols made successive small surprise invasions on several occasions, they were finally captured. Surely this is the spirit of fame which is sufficient to intimidate others.

But as these peaceful days continue for a long time, who is able to recognize the great pains taken in the skillful workmanship of those few who are skilled in the military arts? Since the civil and military paths have become divided, the general’s power is excessively disrespected. Now we are enabled to see again the splendors of the Han generals. He is an honest, loyal-hearted man, unmoveable under great stress. His heart can be compared to refined gold — after a hundred melttings its color shines the more.

When we consider the present work of this great official, he has made the frontier safe, which is the result of his victories in battle and firmness in defense. When we consider him in terms of the future, should the barbarians make a rebellion, he can be expected to plow up the enemy’s court and sweep their nests.

What should be done is to break with precedent and appoint him to office with the yin privilege. Today be lenient and increase his rank and bestow clothes on him in order to make known that he is one to whom you show special favor.

In his last memorial before being transferred from his supreme commander’s post, Liu highly praised Ch'i’s abilities, honesty, and loyalty.

During this period the Chi-chou, Liao-tung, Ch'ang-p'ing, and Pao-ting frontier was visited by a vice-minister of the Ministry of War, and on

47 NP, ch. 11, p. 10.
two different occasions by regional inspectors. The memorial of the vice-minister was about the key position of Chi-chou, the numbers of troops in its ranks, and the progress in repair work and building work. The two regional inspectors' reports were straightforward, the first merely commenting that “deserters are few in number . . . and the ranks are filled up sufficiently,” and the second saying much the same and adding that Chi is “to be relied upon in emergencies.”

The Yang Chao Period 1574—1577

He has the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of armed troops all in his mind. Of Supreme Commander Yang Chao’s four memorials on Chi Chi-kuang, the first was a request for firearms on the frontier, and a routine request for merit for Chi now that his towerbuilding program was completed. In the other three memorials there were three comments on his loyalty, two on his civil and military ability, and two on his successful military training. In one, Yang made a specific comparison of Chi to two early Chinese generals, the first time that any memorialist had done so: “He has both civil and military abilities, as did Yin Chi-fu. He is reliable and loyal as was Kuo Tzu-i.”

During this period the defense area was visited by a frontier inspector and a regional inspector. The regional inspector, memorializing jointly with the grand coordinator, reported on the capture of a Mongol chieftain and praised Chi’s daring and bravery, civil and military plans, and military discipline. The frontier inspector, a censor-in-chief, reported about conditions along the frontier and made an interesting opening comment, “Superintendent Chi’s fame is high in Fukien” — some ten years since Chi had set foot in the south.

The Liang Meng-lung Period 1577—1581

He is the meritorious official of the age. Only two of Liang’s five memorials are presented at length in the Chronological Biography. His mention of defense preparations twice, training once, and building towers once, were the only ones of our selected items about which he wrote.

His first memorial was about troop preparations along the frontier; his second was a long memorial about frontier defenses in which he also requested the yin privilege for Chi — it was not awarded.

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48 *NP*, ch. 11, p. 25.
49 *NP*, ch. 11, pp. 34-5. Kuo Tzu-i defended the T’ang capital against An Lu-shan. Yin Chi-fu was involved in the ninth-century B. C. restoration of King Hsüan of the Chou Dynasty.
50 *NP*, ch. 11, p. 26.
51 *NP*, ch. 11, p. 7.

In 1579, over two years after Liang requested the yin privilege for Ch'i, the supervising secretary of the Ministry of Works submitted a memorial on frontier conditions in which he praised the efforts of Ch'i. In reply to this memorial the emperor awarded Ch'i the title of Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent.

Liang's next memorial, only one month later, written in conjunction with two regional inspectors, brought Ch'i the title of Junior Guardian. Although the memorial was short, a lengthy Ministry of War reply shows that the title of Junior Guardian was awarded for Ch'i's merit in reinforcing Liaotung.

In 1581 when Ch'i finally got the yin privilege, it was only after a Liang memorial praising Ch'i's repair work along the frontier, and a memorial by a specially dispatched ministry official and a regional inspector who examined the work.

Liang's last memorial again recommended that Ch'i be rewarded. The final fitness report recorded in the Chronological Biography, but for which there was no text, came from another frontier inspector, a chief supervising secretary. It received an imperial decree in reply which made Ch'i's yin privilege hereditary.

Although none of Supreme Commander Wu Tui's memorials are included in the Chronological Biography, the Ming History reports that Ch'i was impeached twice and recommended once more before his death. Our filial editors were either unable to obtain these or saw fit to exclude them — even the one of recommendation — and we can only wonder how many others they excluded.

IV. Conclusion I

One of the side products of a study such as this is a great number of statistics: who wrote fitness reports, from what positions, how often, who mentioned what qualities how many times, etc. The following data are based on thirty-three years of fitness reports (1550—82) and on fifty memorials, seven from Ch'i's days in Shantung, eighteen from his days on the seacoast, and twenty-five from his days on the Great Wall (See Appendix). Eighteen were written by supreme commanders, nine by grand coordinators, seven by censors, nine by regional inspectors, and seven by others.

There seems to be no set reporting schedule on Ch'i. A civil official of the Ming government reported on him in twenty-two out of a total of thirty-three years. Conversely, although fifty memorials were sent in at a rate of one and one-half per year, in eleven out of the thirty-three years, no memorials were sent at all. The longest period in which there was no report was early in Ch'i's career, in the four years 1551—55; the second longest was in the years 1566—69.

Except for his early career when four of the seven fitness reports were sent in by censors, senior civil officials did the greater part of the reporting, nine of eighteen on the seacoast and sixteen of twenty-five on the Great Wall. There was no memorial from a senior military official while Ch'i was a junior official.
The shift in reporting that takes place from censors to the regional inspectors during Ch’i’s coastal days begs for explanation. In the first eleven of the eighteen fitness reports from the seacoast, two were made by a supreme commander, six by a grand coordinator, and three by censors. In the last seven, one was sent in by a grand coordinator, and six by regional inspectors. No censor reported on Ch’i after the ninth month of 1562. No regional inspector sent in a report on Ch’i until the ninth month of 1564. He was made regional commissioner in the eleventh month of 1563. This suggests that regional inspectors reported on military officials with regional military commissioner rank 2a and above.

Only three regional inspectors filed reports on Ch’i at the Great Wall, but five other inspectors were sent out from the capital so that Ch’i was reported on in eight outside inspections in the ten years 1572—82.

**Conclusion II**

The question which prompted this inquiry was “What do civil officials respect in a military man; what do they see in him worthy of their praise and recommendation?”

The chart below summarizes the answer. It tallies the number of times sixteen different items were commented on by the memorialists in the three phases of Ch’i Chi-kuang’s career. In the shift in emphasis within these items we can see the qualities which were singled out for praise in the different stages of the lifetime of a Ming military official. In the early years in Shantung during a period of relative peace, military leadership, honesty, and ability in mounted shooting were frequently mentioned; while on the seacoast engaged in intensive fighting against the Wo raiders the memorialists most frequently commented on his leadership, loyalty, bravery, strategy and tactics, his victories and his prestige; in his administrative position at the Great Wall, the praise was for leadership, military training, defensive preparations, his tower building program, and for loyalty, honesty, and civil and military ability.

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<th>Wall</th>
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<td>Mounted shooting</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive attitude towards civilians</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military knowledge</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military skill in strategy and tactics</td>
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It is not particularly significant that praise of Ch'i's mounted shooting drops off (5-1-0), although this should retire some of the clichés that suggest that the only qualities looked for in a military official are bowmanship and strength. The change in praise of victories (0-10-5) only reflects the military situation, but that praise of honesty went from (3-1-6) perhaps shows that in times of relative peace this in an important factor, while in times of battle, it becomes less significant as long as the official is winning battles (0-10-5). As comments about Ch'i's bravery and prestige declined (0-10-2) and (0-12-5), compliments about his honesty and civil and military ability increased (3-1-6) and (0-1-8). This may reflect the fact that more responsibility and more money handling went with higher position. After his appointment to senior chief military commissioner in 1574, six of the eight references to his having both civil and military ability occur.

Conclusion III

What can we conclude about civil official's views of this military official? We have been witness to a number of very complimentary remarks about Ch'i Chi-kuang which show at least that the talents of a good military leader were appreciated by competent civil officials.

The ideal military man of the past was the "scholarly (or Confucian) general" (ju-chiang), the man who combined equal parts of civil (cultural) and military talents. In Fu Wei-lin's comment on Ch'i Chi-kuang's biography in the Ming-shu he wrote:

> At the end of the Ming, when people spoke of generals who had both civil and military abilities, many chose Ch'i Chi-kuang. He certainly could be considered a scholarly general.\(^{52}\)

Contrary to Fu Wei-lin's view we find in Ch'i's fitness reports praise of hard cold skill: skill in mounted shooting, leadership, military knowledge, military prowess on the battlefield, and military administration and training. It is the unusual fitness report which portrays Ch'i as the man with cultural talents and knowledge of the Classics.

Thus the memorialists were not looking for Confucian qualities in this military official. The items which scored low in the fitness reports are almost as telling as those that scored high; such qualities as sincerity and wisdom were rarely mentioned. In getting a specific job done, expertise was more important, and Ch'i was considered one of the best of military experts.

If it had been important for these civil officials to find such qualities in a man, it would seem that had they found them they would have mentioned them, and had they not found them they would have mentioned their lack. Because in the vast majority of memorials neither case was mentioned, it must not have been important that they should find these qualities in Ch'i. Most of the memorialists were more interested in technical skills and in a certain basic moral character necessary in order that the government might

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\(^{52}\) Fu Wei-lin, *Ming-shu* [A History of the Ming], 6 vol. reprint of the 171 ch'uan seventeenth century compilation in ts'ee 3929-58 of Chi-huo ts'ung-shu, Shanghai, 1936. For this quotation, see ch. 141, p. 2820.
put its trust in Ch'i. They seemed to be more interested in his abilities as
general (chiang) than his talents as scholar (ju).

Ch'i Chi-kuang, a hereditary military official, was not considered less of
a man for it. His reputation as a victorious field commander was known
among the people, his position as senior commissioner-in-chief was high
among his comrades, his power as a long-time appointee at Chi-chou was
influential in the government, and his prestige as one of the great military
men of the empire was well recognized by his fellow civil officials.

The conclusions of this analysis of the criteria of "praise and blame" in
the career of a sixteenth century military official provide support for James
T. C. Liu's contention that,

Over the centuries the government persistently valued functional quali-
lities higher then moral qualities. The Confucian emphasis upon moral
qualities made little headway against this tendency, except in the form
of negative injunctions designed to establish certain minimum stan-
dards of morality and conduct.

Certainly functional qualities were the criteria for the respect, praise, and
recommendation of Ch'i Chi-kuang.

In a society which supposedly dis-esteems the military, Ch'i won the praise
of high civil officials; in a society which supposedly esteems moral qualities
in a leader, Ch'i won the praise of high civil officials without major stress on
his morality; in a society which supposedly looked to leadership by the
generalist, Ch'i was praised as a specialist. This should remind us that
although the moral generalist might have been the ideal, the not-immoral
specialist was not bereft of high praise for his service to the Court.

APPENDIX

The Positions of Civil Officials and the Dates of their
Fitness Reports concerning Ch'i Chi-kuang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supreme Commanders</th>
<th>Grand Coordin.</th>
<th>Regional Inspectors</th>
<th>Censors</th>
<th>Other</th>
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