



2. The Problems of Late Ming

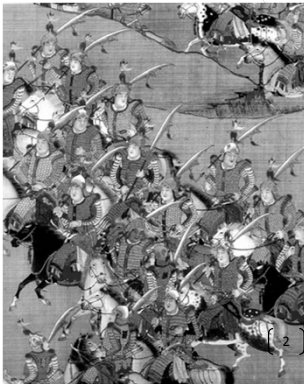
Case Study Wanli Emperor 萬曆 (1563-1620)

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Approach

- What were the social, cultural, and intellectual attitudes of late Ming?
- In what ways did these contribute to the decline of Ming?
- How did the emperor exercise absolutism?
- How are these factors a constraint on the Wanli emperor's leadership in foreign affairs?



2





A. PHILOSOPHICAL & INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

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Neo-Confucianism

- Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200)
- Song Dynasty
- Li理 - independent essence
- cultivation via detailed study of ancient texts
- commentaries on the Four Books (四書)
- required reading for all who hoped to pass the civil service examinations.



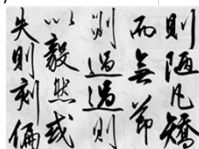
Ming scholar-official & visionary Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529)

- served with distinction in officialdom
- 1506 wrote a memorial criticizing the emperor for protecting a corrupt eunuch.
- beaten with forty strokes; exiled to a remote region of southern China.
- While in exile, Wang had a breakthrough experience much like what the Buddhists called enlightenment.
- **principle and mind could not be separated**



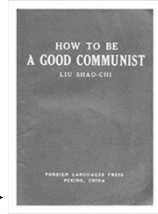
Reflection and action

- guided by intuitive knowledge 良知 (achieved through careful thought and meditation. [Buddhist overtones])
- "I have said that knowing is the intent of acting and that acting is the work of knowing and that knowing is the beginning of acting and acting is the completion of knowing."
- "the unity of moral knowledge and social action." 知行合一
- building up the local community through the use of the Community Compact 鄉約 (xiangyue).

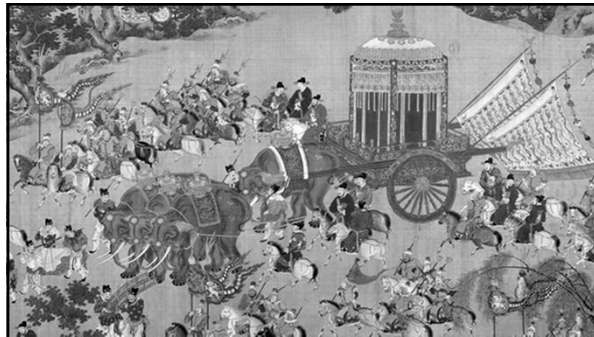


Implications of Wang's new views were profound

- Common people can cultivate goodness (Mencius)
- Anti elitism
- His followers refused to dress in the silk robes and caps of scholar-officials.
- Mass appeal: literacy rate up, other paths to development
- Major influence on all Chinese reformers



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B. POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS OF WANLI

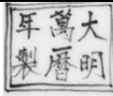
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Confucianism: Political implications

- rationalism and objectivism of the Sung dynasty (960-1279)
- turned inward in Ming times.
 - ethical conduct was the root of good government
 - stress on moral principles
- technology was a matter for craftsmen and inferiors.



Radical followers of Wang



- Stressed intellectual independence
- Cause of factionalism in imperial politics & intellectual world (Martin Huang, 4)
- Morals - Instrument of factional attacks between rival groups of scholar-officials. (Fairbank)
- inspired to criticize the emperor's errant ways
- combatted the sinister eunuch influence.
- Ironical: but peak of Debauchery among elites

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First Grand Secretary, Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582)

- strict and frugal moralist, who was also Wanli's tutor
- Tax register reform (failed)
- Repair Grand Canal
- Attack sinecures
- Enforce austerity
- Solvent central treasuries
- Scandal over his personal wealth traumatic to Wanli.



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Factional court politics hampered reforms

- GS Shen Shih-hsing 申時行
 - Spent more time manoeuvring than reforms
 - Gd people caught up
- A. Argument over appointment of Yellow River engineers
 - Broadening or deepening?
- B. How to deal with Manchus?
 - Officials Denounced each other.
 - Others passed decisions upwards
- C. How to deal with Mongols
 - 1583, Victimized Gen Qi Jiguang 戚繼光
 - Hero of Wako Threat
 - Seen as ally of Zhang

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Heir controversy

- Wanli (1563-1620) wanted to name concubine's son as heir.
- Provoked moralistic outcries of court officials
- Wanli pursued passive-aggressive behaviour
- Stone walled his bureaucracy & their prerogatives
- 萬曆怠政
- Stuffing stagnated
- Neglected audiences
- Memorials untouched
- ceased to govern [?]



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Wan-li's psychosis

- pressure of moralistic scrutiny and the paralyzing boredom of ritual.
- substituted morality for law
- Reaction against **Confucian rites**
- an irrational but effective defence
- **Disease Theory**
- Ming expert Cao Guoqing 曹國慶: Wanli genuine health problems. Jaw and teeth.
- Fan Shuchi 樊樹志: multiple problems – poor health.



黄仁宇 Ray Huang
万曆十五年
1587, a Year of No Significance

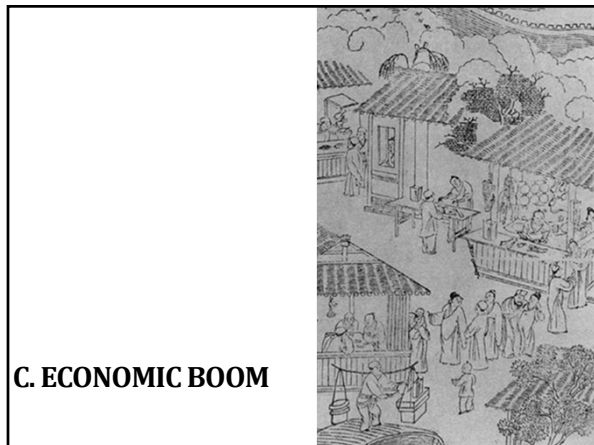
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Long term malaise - factionalism

- The scholars in government banded together to fight corrupt officials and the eunuchs for control of the government.
- The Ming government factionalized
- eventually one party, the Tung-lin, prevailed
- But the Tung-lin still had to fight the eunuchs
- latter half of the rule of the Wan-li emperor (1572-1619) was characterized by this struggle.
- The eunuchs eventually prevailed in the struggle, but the government was torn apart in the process

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Interregional economy - Food Production

- Land prices dropped
- New crops are introduced from the Americas
- sweet potatoes, maize, peanuts.
- Advancements irrigation and seed-sowing.
- China pop 1368-1614 doubled
- cash Industrial crops: vegetable oils, sugar cane, tobacco.
- Pressure on resources
- Traditional & Mkt: Coexisted in integrated fashion

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Interregional economy – Fabric production

- Specialized production
 - Jiangnan produced fabrics
 - Guangxi produced grains
- Jiangnan had to import raw materials & Labour
- Grain mkt
 - enable commodity production of textiles
- Labour moved from growing cotton to weaving
 - Suzhou textiles industries
 - absorbed the bulk of hired labour
- Rapid commercialization
 - Shandong & Henan economies
 - taxes paid in silver

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Global export of Chinese goods

- Insatiable Japanese for Chinese silk
- Ten fold profit selling yarn to Japanese
- Pent-up demand in Japan:
- Closure of Chinese ports to the Japanese (1523)
- Korean ports closed (1539)
- illegal middlemen
 - Portuguese and Chinese merchants
 - Fujian and Zhejiang coasts.

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Global export of Chinese goods

- 16% of late Ming porcelain went to Europe
- Rest of porcelain went to SEA & Japan !!!



New World silver

- Potosi, Bolivia (1556)
- Spanish conquest of Philippines
- Luzon (1571)
- Silver became cheap
- Funded Spanish crown's European wars
- By late 1590s, there were 15-40 Chinese ships trading with Luzon
- Returning ships only carried silver coins
- Customs revenue at Haicheng (Fujian) 29,000 tls in 1594



Silver 'cob' of 8-reales, Bolivia
Ferdinand VI of Spain (1746-1759)

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1581 Land Taxes

- From 1581 → No payment in kind
- Even peasants had to pay in silver their taxes
- Chinese domestic demand pushed up \$



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Effects - Age of Plenty & overconsumption

D. SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Flow of Silver in Chinese

economy

- Tremendous social change
- Social mobility,
- Commercial desired Gentry status
- commerce funded scholarship
- **Economic changes, urbanization and a mini Renaissance (1520-1580)**

- **Confucian morality**
- Erode Confucian disdain for commerce.
- Yuan Huang: Ledgers of merit; moral self cultivation
- Philanthropy – restoring monasteries
- Redeem the elite rich's spending for pleasure

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Travelling as recreation

- cultural refinement for Gentry
 - Restless mobility
 - Private travel
- Guide books
- Depended on courier guides
- Courier services & tribute Grand canal boats
 - promoted illegal pte letter & **small goods delivery**
- Later Commercial networks carried letters and parcels 1588

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Chairman Mao Goes to Anyuan (1967)



Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818)



yorkchengyork
北高峰 >

♥ 34次赞

yorkchengyork 会当凌绝顶，山高我为峰。
@sammi0w Thanks for running up this mountain with me. #ALPocalypse #华语小chim *delete the previous post by accident. ...*

所有4条评论

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Merchants and gentry compete for status

- Numerous and newly wealthy sought status; more things to buy
- Anxiety about reliability of established status
- resolve anxiety – buy more things [?!]
- Redistribution of wealth from wealthy to artisans
- Established elites also manufactured goods to sell in market – reproducing paintings of famous masters
- Tang Bohu 唐伯虎** -



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Gentry: arbiter of Taste

- Gentry – agents of change
 - denounced crass, vulgar fashion of lesser classes
- high cultural taste
 - produced texts – how to act elegant
- Burden of connoisseurship
 - Imply standards governing social interactions of gentlemanly life
- Main issue - deplorable transgression of status boundaries



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Educated women as Courtesans 秦淮八艳

- Literary, companionate relationship
- Fashion supplied by markets – dressed as elites
- Liu Shi 柳如是 – acquired by an retired Chief Grand secretary
- Courted romantic love as an escape from loss of official ship and sense of powerlessness
- impact of court factions

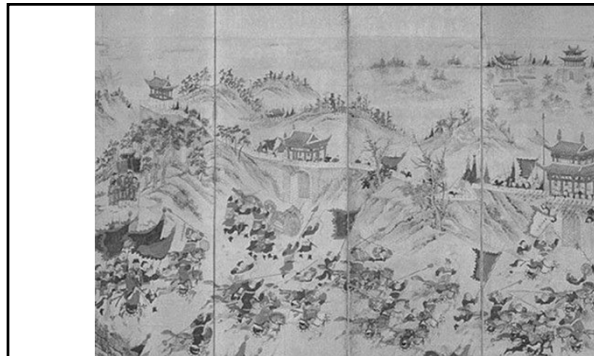


Pederasty

- Distinguished those at the very top. E.g. Zhang Dai
- *"Zhang Dai, a man whose family hailed from the realm of Shu, had the courtesy name Taoan. As a youth he was a real dandy, in love with the idea of excess: he loved exquisite shelter; he loved pretty maidservants; he loved handsome serving boys" (Spence, 272)*
- Nan-se 男色 – indifferent to self cultivation & loyalism
- Social protest against Neo Confucianism homilies – abstinence movement.
- Moneyed pleasures gone: famine struck Hangzhou 1640; Manchus attacked it 1645

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E. FOREIGN AFFAIRS & MILITARY LEADERSHIP

(32)

Three Expeditions of Emperor Wan Li 萬曆三大征

- Ningxia Rebellion (1592)
- Imjin War (1592-1598)
- Miaojiang Rebellion (1599-1600)



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Why turned to military affairs?

- Curb power of civil officials; restrain bureaucratic factions
- Circumvent Ming bureaucratic process
- Demonstrated Wanli's leadership; distancing him from the intrigues of the court.
- 1580 to 1600 the Ming was as powerful as it had been since Yongle's reign (Swope)
- to his willingness to override his civil officials and put the most effective generals in charge
- "fought his bureaucracy so that his generals could fight the dynasty's enemies." (Lorge)

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Summary

- Wang Yang Ming's Unity of Mind & Action
- Factional politics
- Wan-li's psychosis
- 萬曆三大征
- Age of Plenty & overconsumption
- Global Export & Interregional Economy
- Silver
- Status Anxiety - Gentry

[35]
