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Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 颜真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Pan Tianshou 潘天寿, *Sleeping Cat* 睡猫图轴, ink and colour on paper (1954), 87 x 76.2 cm (collection of the China Art Gallery, Hangzhou)
TEMPLE LAMENTATION AND ROBE-BURNING—GESTURES OF SOCIAL PROTEST IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA

Ch'en Kuo-tung 陳國棟
translated by James Greenbaum

Translator's Note

The Manchu invasion of the 1640s placed Ming officials throughout the empire in a difficult, and in many cases seemingly impossible, moral position. They and all those who had successfully taken the Ming imperial examinations were forced to choose between loyalty to the defunct dynasty, one that had collapsed due to unbridled corruption and social chaos, and fielty to the invaders who promised harsh but stable rule. A number of elucidating studies of major thinkers and officials like Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 and Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 have been produced, but much research on the differences in regional and group responses to the dynastic change still needs to be done.

In the present article, first published in New Historiography (Hsin shih hsueh 新史學 3.1 under the title “Lamenting in the Confucian Temple and Burning One’s Scholar’s Robes: Two Social Gestures of Licentiates in the Late Ming” (“K’u-miao yu fen ju-fu—Ming mo Ch’ing ch’u sheng yuan ts’eng te she hui hsing tung tso” 哭廟與焚儒服明末清初生員層的社會性動作 [March 1992: 69–94]), the author focusses his attention both on giants of the historical stage at the time, the loyalist Cheng Ch’eng-kung 鄭成功 [1624–62] and the famous writer Chin Sheng-t’an 金聖歎 [1610–61], as well as on more lowly figures, in particular the first-degree holders or bsiu-tsai 秀才 of the Kiangnan 江南 area.

Through his analysis of many cases studies, some celebrated and others contained in relatively neglected local gazetteers and various other disparate sources, Ch’en Kuo-tung examines the patterns of behaviour and group responses to the issues of invasion and loyalty in Kiangnan. In particular, he
draws our attention to two extraordinary actions—one that of “lamenting at the Confucian temple” and the other of “abandoning or destroying one’s scholar’s garb”—that were commonplace at the time and vested with a powerful social and political significance, only to eventually disappear entirely from the repertoire of symbolic public acts of protestation. In so doing he offers valuable insights into the manner in which a specific local administrative and academic community in the late-Ming period organized and staged ritualistic acts that have a profound historical and cultural significance.

In undertaking this translation I hope to make Ch’en Kuo-tung’s penetrating study of the late-Ming first-degree holders accessible to scholars in related fields.

There are three terms to which Ch’en Kuo-tung continually makes reference throughout the article. Two of them are indicated in the title: ‘lamenting in the Confucian temple’ k’u-miao 哭廟, and ‘burning one’s scholar’s robes’ fen juju 焚儒服. Unlike the first two which translate readily into English, the third term, chüan-t’ang 捲堂, raises difficulties. As Ch’en explains, this term covers actions ranging from a student boycott of classes to the winding-up of a temple. A single term embracing this range of meaning does not readily present itself in English and I have employed the serviceable though unsatisfactory practice of using romanisation where necessary.

A modified use of Wade–Giles has been employed for the transliteration of Chinese names and terms with the exception of several common usages which have remained in ‘post-office’ form. All official titles have been translated according to Hucker unless otherwise noted.

Remarks in parentheses () are the author’s, while insertions or footnotes in braces {} are those of the translator, who also supplied the illustrations.


Translation

Cheng Ch'eng-kung occupies a unique position in the Ming–Ch'ing transition and records of his life are often embellished with strange and colourful tales. One such story, rich in theatricality, has him contravening his father’s wishes by raising troops against the Ch'ing in support of the Ming dynasty. As the tale would have it, the night before his rebellion Cheng went to a Confucian temple, bitterly lamented the state of the dynasty and burnt his scholar's robes.

The Taiwanese historian Yang Yun-p'ing 楊雲萍 wrote an analysis of this incident in 1956,1 and published a revised version of his study twenty years later.2 In his work he drew exclusively on Cheng I-tsou’s 鄭亦麟 Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan 鄭成功傳, a biography appended to Cheng’s Ming chi suichiblu 明季遼志錄 which has a preface dated 1702. (This work was long mistakenly ascribed to Huang Tsung-hsi.) Yang’s research is fastidious and he concluded that:

On consideration there is no doubt that this would be ideal subject matter for a novelist or playwright. But whether it can be regarded as an actual historical incident must remain doubtful.3

His doubts over its veracity had caused Yang to re-examine the incident. Although his scholarship is undeniable, when reviewing this incident we should not forget that while life sometimes imitates art, the opposite can also be true. Cheng's burning of his scholar's robes may have indeed been theatrical, yet his life was so full of drama that the possibility of it having occurred cannot be dismissed on these grounds alone. When we evaluate the supposed theatricality of an event one of the criteria should be whether it is unique. For regardless of whether it has a significant effect on those who witness it, if an event is something which happens often, then whether or not it can be termed 'theatrical' must be reconsidered. I intend to re-examine Yang's argument. One of this present article’s main objectives is to show that in seventeenth-century China, particularly in the Kiangnan area, a scholar's burning of his robes was not uncommon, especially around 1644, the year of dynastic transition. At that time it was a recognised social gesture, not a random or aberrant act. I would argue therefore that, given the historical context, Cheng may well have chosen this course of action.

Let us first turn to how Cheng I-tsou describes Cheng's robe-burning:

Although he had had no experience as a military commander Ch'eng-kung achieved a high military rank. His manner and appearance were those of a Confucian scholar. He remonstrated (with his father, Chih-lung 芝龍, against surrendering to the Ch'ing) but his plea went unheeded. Added to this was the anguish he felt following his mother's untimely death. It was in this distressed state that he planned to raise an army and fight. Taking his scholar's cap and robes to the local Confucian temple he burnt them. He bowed to

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1 Yang Yun-p'ing, “Cheng Ch'eng-kung fen ju fu k’ao” 鄭成功焚儒服考, Taiwan yen chiu 臺灣研究 (June 1956): 31–6.
2 Yang Yun-p'ing, “Cheng Ch'eng-kung fen ju fu k’ao”, in Shen Kang-po hsien sheng pa chib juing ch’ing lun wen cbi 沈剛伯先生八秩榮慶論文集 (Taipei: Lien ching, 1976), pp.193–202. Whenever Yang has been cited the reference is to this text.
Cheng I-tsou, “Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan,” in Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan, Taiwan wen hsien ts'ung k'an, no. 67 (Taipei: Taiwan yin hang ching chi yen chiu shih, 1960), p. 5. “Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan,” which was erroneously included in Huang Tsung-hsi's Li-chou i chu ts'ung k'an, reads: “... he took his scholar's robe and hat to a Confucian temple where he lamented and burnt them. Then he made a sacrifice to the campaign standard and assembled his followers. He was filled with indignation and sorrow.”

Yang says that important works relating to Cheng which were published later than Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan, including Hsii Tzu's Hsiao t'ien chi nien, usually make no mention of Cheng burning his robes. Yang seems to have unintentionally overlooked the Hsiao t'ien chi nien, an omission that we have seen led him to make the conclusions he did. See Yang, “Cheng Ch'eng-kung fen ju fu k'ao,” pp. 197–8.

Although Ch'eng-kung enjoyed the special favour of the emperor, he never held a real military command. After hearing that his father had submitted to the Ch'ing, he became distressed and indignant. He removed his scholar's cap and robe and went to a Confucian temple, where he lamented and burnt them. He exclaimed: “Once I was but a child, now I am a subject bereft of my lord. Should I accede to my father's wishes or oppose them? Should I stay or go? Each of these has its merits. I now cast aside my scholar's robes, only Confucius can have a clear understanding of the implications of this act.” He bowed reverently and departed. Later he made a sacrifice to the campaign standard and assembled his followers. He was filled with indignation and sorrow.

In his Hsiao t'ien chi nien, Hsü Tzu records this incident under the first day of the eleventh month of 1646. This version is, by and large, an abridgement of the biography by Cheng I-tsou. As Yang neglected this source in his study we may cite it here.

The significant difference between the two records is that the latter clearly states that Cheng lamented in the temple. (The former says that, “... he was filled with indignation and sorrow” after “... he bowed reverently and departed,” and not that he lamented in the temple.) That is to say that there were two actions: that of lamenting, and that of burning his scholar's robes. If we were to follow Hsiao t'ien chi nien and describe Cheng's actions as just robe-burning we would be at fault. He both lamented and burnt his robes, or we could abbreviate it using the language of the time and simply call it “lamenting in the temple.” (For further detail see below.)

Lamenting and burning one's robes were two common social gestures among the first-degree holders during the late Ming. ( HOLDERS OF THE FIRST DEGREE STRICTLY MEAN THOSE WHO HAD LICENTIATE (HSIUS-T'SAI) STATUS, BUT THE MEANING HERE IS EXTENDED TO INCLUDE THOSE WITH STATUS AS STIPEND STUDENTS, ADDED STUDENTS, SUPPLEMENTARY STUDENTS, ETC.) THE AIM OF THESE GESTURES WAS TO ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION. WHILE ROBE-BURNING DID NOT HAVE TO INVOLVE LAMENTING, THOSE WHO LAMENTED USUALLY ALSO BURNT THEIR ROBES. THESE TWO ACTIONS REPRESENTED DIFFERENT KINDS OF PROTEST. ROBE-BURNING SYMBOLISED A REFUSAL TO HOLD OFFICE; LAMENTING, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS COMMONLY A PROTEST AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICE, OR MORE GENERALLY AGAINST THE INEQUITY OF HUMAN FATE. IN AN AGE IN WHICH NEWS AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATED SLOWLY, THOSE WHO PERFORMED SUCH EXTREME ACTS FOUND IT COMPARATIVELY EASY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AND CONSEQUENTLY THEIR ACTIONS WERE TAKEN QUITE SERIOUSLY.

The most famous case of robe-burning during this period was that of Ch'en Chi-ju (Mei-kung, 1558–1639). While the best known example of both lamenting and robe-burning is, without doubt, that of Chin Sheng-t'an who was involved in the 1661 case of “The Population...
of the Wu District Refusing to Pay the Rice Tax” (hereafter referred to as the “Wu Case”). In addition to these renowned instances there are numerous cases of lamenting and robe-burning which are hardly known about at all.

1. Ch’en Chi-ju’s Robe-Burning

The earliest account of Ch’en burning his robes would appear to be that found in Tsou I’s Ch’i Ch’en yeh sheng 启禎野乘, published in 1644. The next appears in Chi Liu-ch’i’s Ming chi pei liieh 明季北略 of 1671. This item appears to have been copied from the earlier work.7 The Ming shib 明史, Sung-chiang fu chib 松江府志, and the Hua-t’ing bsien chib 華亭縣志 all included a variation of the Ch’i Ch’en yeh sheng version in their biographies of Ch’en.8 As it appears to be the most detailed record of the incident we can examine it for an account of Ch’en’s robe-burning.9 It reads:

His name was Chi-ju 繼儒 (tzu Chung-ch’un 重醇, bao Mei-kung). He was from Hua-t’ing in South Chih-li 南直隸. In his youth he was outstandingly brilliant and fond of study. In his later years he became a master of poetry and belles-lettres. He wrote with extraordinary alacrity. He was made a stipendiary, equal in status to a first-degree holder, before he was capped (at the age of twenty). At twenty-eight he tore up his cap and presented a petition to the Prefect of Sung-chiang which read: “To participate in worldly affairs makes for clamour, to dissociate oneself from them makes for peace. On consideration, to support one’s parents through working in the government, or to do so by personal attendance, amount to the same thing. To spend one’s life in a calculating way is like the image of a flower in a mirror, it is not real. I intend to take the rest of my life into my own hands and spend it happily, communing with nature.” The entire prefecture was startled by these words and he was urged to reconsider, but Ch’en did not listen to the protestations. He withdrew from the official world, attended to his parents in person and lived a simple life. He had a cottage built on the south side of Little Mt K’un 小崑山. There he cultivated bamboo among the white clouds, burnt incense and lived peacefully, his mind at ease.10

The Ch’i Ch’en yeh sheng states that Ch’en was twenty-eight when he tore up his cap, the Ming shib and the Sung-chiang fu chib both state that he was twenty-nine when he burned his scholar’s robes, while the Hua-t’ing bsien chib says that he was twenty-nine when he retired from public life. Whether he was twenty-eight or twenty-nine is not relevant to this discussion. What is of interest is Ch’en’s action. To write that he “tore up his cap,” “burnt his scholar’s robes” or “retired from public life” reflects the different choice of words by his biographers. To say that he took his scholar’s robes and burnt them is the most emphatic description, while saying that he retired from public life understates the incident in the extreme. In other words, the former is a direct account of Ch’en’s action, and it is this record which has led Nelson Wu to say that Ch’en burned his scholar’s cap and gown.11 To say that he
retired from official life emphasises his underlying purpose. If we judge his official petition by his actions later in life, his robe-burning was nothing more than an expression of his disinclination to pursue an official career. It was tantamount to discarding his status as a licentiate and choosing the life of a commoner.

2. Other Robe-Burners

Although Ch'en's use of robe-burning to indicate that he had no interest in holding office may appear somewhat unusual, it is certainly not the only example of such behaviour. There was a student at the National University called Hsü I-sun who did something similar at about the same time. In the Yün-chien chü mu ch'ao 雲間諸抄 of Fan Lien 范濂 it says that:

Hsü I-sun (tzu Ch'ang-ju 長孺, bao Yü-hsieh 興蘭) lost his father when he was ten years old. At the age of seventeen, when he became a National University student, his fame in scholarship was already known in the capital. When she died he abandoned any thought of advancing his career. He discarded his student robes and burnt them, thereby indicating that he would never enter officialdom.

As the preface to the Yün-chien chü mu ch'ao was written in 1593, soon after Ch'en burnt his robes (in either 1585 or 1586), Hsü and Ch'en must have taken their action about the same time. It was an act that was much imitated during the seventeenth century. If the prefecture of Sung-chiang is examined just before the Ming fell, there are, at the very least, the following examples:

Hsia Yeh 夏野 (tzu Tsai-wo 再我) was from the Lou district 廟縣. He lived at Kan-hsiang 千巷 and had licentiate qualifications. He was a good friend of Chiang Yü-shan 蒋漁山 who was from the same village. Hsia burnt his scholar's robes and together they retired from public life.

Chang An-t'ai 張安泰 (tzu K'ang-hou 康侯) was also from the Lou district. He was the third son of the filial Chang I-na 張以訥. An-t'ai was a talented writer and in middle age, as a licentiate, was admitted to the National University. However he abandoned his preparations for the civil examinations.

Yeh Yün 葉淵 (tzu Fan-chiu 蕃久), the son of Yeh Hung-ju 葉宏儒 (tzu Yüeh-hsien 岳心), was from the township of An-t'ing 安亭. While young his father had studied Neo-Confucianism with Shih Hsiao-hsien 史孝咸, from Yao-chiang 姚江. Before Yeh Yün came of age he held a place in the K'un-shan 庫川 district school as a licentiate. Later he discarded his scholar's robes and spent the rest of his life in reclusion.

Ts'ao Hsi 曹谿 (tzu Hung-hsien 虛仙) was from Hua-t'ing. He lived at Kanhsi 千谿 and was a licentiate in the Chia-shan 嘉善 District School in the Ming. When young he had been deemed a great talent. Later he discarded his status.
Huang Tsung-hsi put it: *Tsao and Hu all obtained the first degree before they discarded that status robes and that was a clear-cut renunciation of their status as first-degree robes. To announce that they would not serve they selected an action milder consequently they bore no more than a moral obligation toward the fallen scholar-officials. How each and every one of them dealt with the other two make reference to abandoning a career. Of course, discarding one’s scholar’s robes; and a form of eremitism that required nothing more than not serving has a long tradition from ancient times. Nevertheless, Chang, whose career and went idling through the wilderness on a fishing boat.\textsuperscript{18}

Chu Lu was from the Wu district When he was young he had great talent and became a first-degree holder. \ldots \textsuperscript{19}

Of the six examples given above, one directly mentions robe-burning, two speak of discarding robes, another mentions discarding status, and another two make reference to abandoning a career. Of course, discarding one’s status or career did not invariably involve the burning or discarding of one’s scholar’s robes; and a form of eremitism that required nothing more than not serving has a long tradition from ancient times. Nevertheless, Chang, Tsao and Hu all obtained the first degree before they discarded that status and this indicates that their actions are equivalent to those who burnt their robes. To announce that they would not serve they selected an action milder than burning their robes—but then again, perhaps their biographers had a reason for playing down the details. Hsia, Chiang, Yeh and Chu did burn their robes and that was a clear-cut renunciation of their status as first-degree holders, indicating that they had forgone all thought of official careers.

In the chaos of the end of the Ch’ung-chen reign period the Ming dynasty was overthrown and the Manchu army entered the Shan-hai Pass. \ldots\textsuperscript{18} While this was a momentous event for the entire populace, it was particularly so for the scholar-officials. How each and every one of them dealt with the dynastic transition touched directly on their reputation and integrity. Much research has been done on the actions of those who had already embarked on their official careers, and we need not repeat it here. However, those who held the first degree without having held office had never assumed the obligations of officials or had the responsibility to take part in policy discussions, consequently they bore no more than a moral obligation toward the fallen dynasty. Their most appropriate course of action was to refuse to hold office. As Huang Tsung-hsi put it:

The sorrow of a fallen dynasty, which generation does not experience this? Heartless indeed would be one who could pass by the capital of a fallen dynasty and not be moved by the sadness expressed in the poem Shu-li, who could climb Mt. Pei and not be anxious about one’s parents, who could be affected by the heavens clouding over and raining and not think of one’s deceased spouse, who could hear the pipes of Shan-yang and not long for one’s old friends. \textsuperscript{20} Therefore, those who preserve their loyalty to the fallen dynasty are the principal inspiration for the world. Scholar-officials have their own various obligations. Those who had not attended court nor been invited to the court banquets (the symbols of taking office) have no obligation other than that of not serving the new dynasty.\textsuperscript{21}
Examples of recluse who exemplified this attitude are numerous ("recluse" here indicates both those who had given up their first degree qualifications and those who had abandoned the quest for official position), and they can be found throughout the chronicles of the late Ming. Some examples of those who used the discarding of their robes to announce that they would not hold office are:

Chu Chao-ch'i 朱昭苞 (ming Ming-hao 明鎬), from the Lou district. ... After the change in dynasty he tore up his scholar's robes and lost himself in poetry and wine.23

Wu Chi 吳騏 (tz'u Jih-ch'ien 日千) was from Hua-t'ing. He lived at Wang-hu-ch'ing 望胡涇 and held the first degree under the Ming. ... After the dynastic change he discarded his scholar's robes and withdrew into the mountains.24

Chu Lü-sheng 朱履升 (tz'u Chen-chieh 貞階), also from Hua-t'ing, held licentiate qualifications under the Ming. In his announcement to his ancestral temple he wrote: "In the spring of I-yu (1645) I find myself thirty-three years old. I cast off my scholar's robes and will live simply as a peasant."25

Ch'eng Chih-cheng 程之正 (bao I-ch'i 色奇) was a proper and self-controlled first-degree holder from Chang-p'u 漳浦. After the Ming fell, he went to a Confucian temple, and respectfully rid himself of his scholar's robes. He wandered around the hills and waters for the rest of his life.26

Shih Hsiang 施相 (tz'u Tsan-po 贊伯, bao Shih-nung 石農) was a first-degree holder from Jen-ho 仁和. Sometime after 1645, he discarded his scholar's robes and moved to a house which he had had constructed in the Western Hsi 西鄉 area.27

The five examples given are all of those who discarded their scholar's robes to announce that they would not hold office or that they would return to a private life. Many first-degree holders did this after the Ming dynasty fell. Of the examples cited, three were in Kiangsu, one in Fukien, and one in Chekiang. This demonstrates that robe-burning, or activities similar to it, was not confined to the area around Sung-chiang prefecture, but was common throughout the provinces along the southeast seaboard.

22 See, for example, "T'ang Shih-hsun-chuan" 唐士權傳, in Ch'ing-pu hsien chib, ch.19, p.22b, and in the Sung-chiang fu chib the following: "Ni Yün-chung chuan" 尼雲中傳, ch.56, pp.30a-b; "Mo Ping-ch'ing chuan" 莫秉清傳, ch.56, p.32a; "Chi Nan-yang chuan" 計南陽傳, ch.56, pp.32b-33a; "T'ang Ch'ün-chuan" 唐醇傳, ch.56, p.30a; "T's'ao Hsi chuan" 曹鼎傳, ch.56, p.37a; "Hu Yüan-liang chuan" 胡元謙傳, ch.56, pp.40ab; "T's'ao Ch'ung chuan" 曹重傳, ch.56, pp.42ab; "Ma Shih-ch'iu chuan" 馬士琦傳, ch.56, p.50a; also "T'eng Liang-ts'ai chuan" 鄧良才傳, in Tung-chib Shang Chiang liang hsien chib 同治上江南縣志 (1874), ch.22, p.32a.

23 Author unknown, Yen t'ang chien wen tsu lu 研堂見聞雜錄, included in the Chung kuo chih tai nei luan wai huo li shih ku shih ts'ung shu 中國近代內亂外禍歷史故事 /叢書, Lieh huang hsiao chib 烈皇小腆 (Taipei: Kuang wen, 1964), p.272.

24 Sung-chiang fu chib, ch.56, p.34a. See also Hua-t'ing hsien chib, ch.14, pp.8a&b.

25 Sung-chiang fu chib, ch.56, p.38b.


27 Ibid, p.653.
3. Chin Sheng-t’an and the Wu Case

The term “lamenting in the Confucian temple” implies more than just going to a Confucian temple and bewailing the state of affairs. There were a number of standard practices. The Wu Case of 1661 is directly relevant to understanding these. Chin Sheng-t’an’s actions during this incident are particularly noteworthy for reasons other than that they led to his death. This case, and his involvement in it, created a sensation at the time, yet to describe it as a case of “lamenting in the Confucian temple” is, I would argue, inappropriate, as this was only one part of the complete series of events.28

The origins of the incident can be found in the previous year when Jen Wei-ch’u 任惟初 was appointed as the District Magistrate of the Wu district. Once in office he employed brutal methods to force the local people to pay tax arrears. In some cases the harsh measures resulted in death, enraging the community. Jen incited further anger in the district by illegally appropriating and selling grain which had been stored at the Ever Normal Granary and then forcing the local people to make up the shortfall. Students in Soochow, in their righteous indignation wanted to stage a strong protest.

On the fourth day of the second month of the following year (1661), more than one hundred students in Soochow lamented at the Confucian temple in the prefectural school.29 It so happened that three days prior to this, news of the death of the Shun-chih Emperor 順治 had reached Soochow. Officials in Kiangsu Province had set up a memorial screen

Figure 2

Chin Sheng-t’an (as reproduced in Ch’en Mei-kung Chin Sheng-t’an ts’ai tzu ch’ih tu 陳眉公，金聖嘆才子尺牘 (Taipei: Lao ku wen bua, 1986))

28 There are numerous works dealing with Chin Sheng-t’an’s lamenting. Most of them regard the incident as little more than a response to an oppressive government policy in the early Ch’ing. However, none of them attempts a thoroughgoing study of it. See the third fascicle of Ch’en Teng-yüan 陳登原, Kuo shih chiuwen 國史舊聞 (Taipei: Ming wen, 1981), pp.500-5; Ch’en Teng-yüan, Chin Sheng-t’an chuan 金聖嘆傳 (Shanghai: Shang wu, 1935); Meng Sen 孟森, “Chin Sheng-t’an kao” 金聖嘆考, in


This is identical with the text in K’u miao chi lue 萬妙記略, in Tung-shih 瘋史 2 (Shanghai: Shang wu, 1911). For further reference see Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國楨, Wan Ming shib ch’i k’ao 晚明史籍考 (Taipei: I wen, 1968), p.852.
in the Soochow Prefectural office and were observing mourning rites. The Governor, Chu Kuo-chih 朱國治, the Surveillance Commissioner, Chang Feng-ch'i 張鳳起, Wang Chi 王紀 from The General Surveillance Circuit, and all of the prefectoral and district officials were present. Meanwhile, the students had completed their laments. Led by Ni Yung-pin 倪用賓, whose name was at the head of the signatories, and followed by a crowd of over one thousand, they then submitted a petition at the prefectoral offices. In their petition they demanded Jen's removal from office. Their petition was rejected and the Governor ordered the petitioners arrested. Eleven students were detained on the spot. This sparked the Wu Case and further arrests.

Ku Yu-hsien 顧予咸 (tzu Hsiao-juan 小阮, bao Sung-chiao 松交), a retired Vice-Director of the Ministry of Personnel, was detained in the second wave of arrests. He was accused of having read over the petition before Ni Yung-pin and his followers had presented it at the prefectural hall. In point of fact, he had refused to look at the petition. In their excessive vigour to pursue this incident local officials had made up this charge against Ku. Fortunately, when the case was heard by the authorities in Peking, the Prince of the Deliberative Council ordered him to be released for lack of evidence. Ku wrote about the experience in an essay entitled “Tsao nan tzu shu” 這難自述. He described the temple lamentation in the following way:

It is an old practice in the Wu area. When first-degree holders feel that matters are not being attended to in a just manner they write a declaration of protest and tear their scholar's caps in the courtyard of the Confucian temple. This is called “Lamenting at the Temple.”

This adds to our understanding of this local ritual of protest. Not only did it involve the rending of scholars’ caps. There was also a declaration of protest presented at the temple.

In this instance the term “chüan-t'ang” means to “disband.” The earliest usage of it can be found in the Ch'ui chien lu wai chi 吹劍錄外集 by Yu Wen-pao 俞文豹 of the Southern Sung (1127–1279). This text records an incident that occurred during the third year of the Chia-ting 嘉定 reign period (1210) involving two students of military studies at the National University, K'o Tzu-ch'ung 柯子沖 and Lu Te-hsüan 盧德萱. Guilty of some particular infraction, Chao Shih-kao 趙師翱, the Prefect of Lin-an 臨安, ordered that the two be punished by a beating with bamboo, after which they were to be expelled from the city under escort. Outraged by the harshness of the punishment their fellow students demanded that the government take action against the officials involved and boycotted classes in protest. According to the memorial presented to the court by the instructor of the military branch of the National University, Liu Ching-chih 劉靖之, and others, “On the thirteenth of the eleventh month the two students were taken to the prefectural office, flogged and expelled. The other students decided upon a chüan-t'ang and left.” In this context chüan-t'ang means that all the students refused to attend classes. Subsequently, the emperor issued an edict removing Chao from his position, and ordering the
Educational Officers to “... instruct the students to return to their studies.” This brought the affair to an end.31

Another description of chüan-t'ang can be found in Chou Mi's Kuei bsin tsachib 歌辛齋記. Chou records a story about Yü Hui 余晦, a man who was simultaneously the Director of the Right Office and the Prefect of Lin-an in 1252. On hearing of the death of a student at the National University, he despatched someone to investigate. His findings caused much anger among the students, so much so that “... [T]he students of all the three branches of the university chüan-t'ang then prostrated themselves before the palace walls and presented a petition.”32 Here chüan-t'ang also means that the entire student body boycotted classes.

Yet another example of the expression can be found in the third chapter of the Shui hu chuan 水浒傳. It mentions the ruckus stirred up by Lu Chih-shen 魯智深 at Mt. Wu-t'ai 五台山 when he attacked people and forced the monks to eat dog meat, the result being that:

The monks in the hall began to shout and they all went to their cupboards and fetched their clothing and their begging bowls and left the temple. Such an action is called a “chüan-t'ang—Great Dispersion.” How could the abbot of the temple prevent them?33

In this instance chüan-t'ang clearly means “disbanding.” As chüan-t'ang can indicate both a boycott and dispersion it is clearly a term meaning opposition to injustice. A document or petition written as part of such an action is called a chüan-t'ang wen 捲堂文. Apart from setting out the origins and details of a protest it is also an announcement of a “boycott.”

Other records that deal with the Wu Case make no direct mention of a chüan-t'ang wen. However, one record notes that “... [A]mong the students was a fellow called Chin Sheng-t'an, a man of outstanding talent. ... [D]uring the incident he wrote a lamentation [k'u-miao wen 哭廟文]. He was incarcerated and executed on the same day.”34 Chin Sheng-t'an's written lamentation is the chüan-t'ang wen to which Ku Yü-hsien refers. Although this text does not survive, there is little doubt that the Soochow students' lamentation was a protest against the outrages committed by Jen. With the exception of the above example no other record mentions Chin as the author of the lamentation text. However, in light of what we know about Chin's character, that account is not easily questioned. Ch'iu Wei-yuan's Shu yuan chui 蘇園貳說 says of Chin that “… [H]e detested the world and its ways. When he encountered some outrage he would oppose it vehemently and confront it without counting the cost.”35 That is an accurate portrayal of his personality.

Chin played another important role in this public act of protest. While he was in the temple, he and two other students (Yao Kang 姚剛 and Ting Tzuwei 丁子偉) struck the bell and beat the drum 鳴鐘擊鼓.36 These actions together, or just beating the drum alone, were part of the performance in some other lamentations. (See section 4, below.) As the aim of lamenting was
Hsin ch’ou chi wen, p.1237, states that: “On the fourth day (of the second month) Hsiieh Erh-chang composed the declaration, thereupon Ting Tzu-hui went to his instructor’s office and asked for the key to the temple. He then pasted the text on the temple gate and wept.” Although it is unclear what Hsiieh wrote, evidence from the Hsin ch’ou chi wen indicates that it was definitely put on the temple gate.

Although the leader of the protest was Ni Yung-pin, and the student who actually handed over the petition was Hsiieh Erh-chang, since their action had no direct bearing on the act of lamentation there will be no further discussion of their involvement. (Originally in text but moved to footnote with author’s permission.)

Some Precedents to Lamenting in the Confucian Temple

While the Wu Case may well have been the last instance of protest through lamentation, that of Cheng Ch’eng-kung was certainly not the first. While many first-degree holders used this gesture to express their feelings after the fall of the Ming, there are recorded incidents which predate this period. There are, for example, at least two cases during the late Ming, one in Chekiang and the other in Honan. The Chekiang incident involved a lone protester. Huang Tsung-hsi recorded the case in an epitaph written for the student protester:

Lu Chou-ming (known as Yü-ting), was from the Yin district. He was a son-in-law to Wan Ssu-ta. It so happened that while Chou-ming was a student a classmate brought a case against their teacher. The teacher was not treated justly. Chou-ming went to the Confucian temple where he struck the drum and lamented in great sorrow. He only desisted after his teacher was justly treated.

The incident in Ho-nan involved a group of students acting in concert.

The Yu pien chi lüe 豫變紀略 notes that the servants of an influential family in the Kuei-te area were local bullies. It goes on to say that: ‘... the yamen functionaries, relying on the rich and powerful households for protection, conducted all sorts of misdemeanours. Their power was similar to that of the servants of the gentry households. It was only with the first-degree holders that they had particularly bad relations.” Then, in the fifteenth year of Ch’ung-chen (1642):

A brawl occurred between the yamen functionaries and some students. The Prefect was enraged and took the side of his underlings. In a single day he deprived six first-degree holders of their robes and status. This created a commotion among the other degree-holders in the prefecture, scores or even up to a hundred of whom went to lament in the temple. Holding the memorial tablet of Confucius in their hands they first lamented and then placed it by the prefectural office. The commotion was heard for several li around. The Prefect had to severely punish his functionaries; only then was the matter laid to rest. But from that time on, the first-degree holders were increasingly refractory.
Although the location of the protest is not clearly stated, from the context it is obvious that the "lamenting in the temple" occurred in the Confucian temple attached to the school.

Both of the above were individual or group protests against injustice. However no mention is made either of a chüan-t'ang wen or the destruction of a scholar's robes. This does not necessarily imply that they did not happen. After all, both texts refer to "bitter lamenting in the Confucian temple," a formulation reminiscent of the description of Cheng Ch'eng-kung's actions as recorded in the Hsiao t'ien chi nien. However, while Ku Yü-hsien's description of the protest at the temple does not refer to "lamenting" as such, he may have thought that as an integral part of the protest it required no mention. (Why else would it be called "lamenting at the temple" as such?) Lu Chou-ming's striking of the drum in the Confucian temple is also similar to the action taken by Chin Sheng-t'an. Finally, because the incidents occurred in both Chekiang and Ho-nan, it is evident that such ritualized lamenting was not, as Ku Yü-hsien claims, a phenomenon particular to Soochow and elsewhere in Kiangsu.

As we have already noted, the fall of the Ming weighed heavily on the scholar-officials. Although the demands made of the first-degree holders who were yet to hold office went no further than not serving the new dynasty many of them manifested a more extreme response. Huang Tsung-hsi made the following criticism of them:

Those who have lost all sense of proportion in their reaction are those who go off and plant melons or practise fortune-telling for a living; those who call on Heaven and strike their heads on the ground in grief; those who have given themselves over to alcohol and who pray for death and those who, immuring themselves, dig a hole in the wall to let in food and drink. Many did however resort to extreme behaviour. One such extreme response popular among those who had obtained their first degrees under the previous dynasty was 'lamenting at the temple'. For example:

Hsieh T'ai-chen 謝泰臻 (tzu Shih-yin 時禋) was from Ting-hai 定海 in Chekiang. Huang Tsung-hsi records his protest in the following words:
When the dynasty fell he went to a Confucian temple, beat the drum and lamented bitterly. Thereupon he tore up his robes and burnt them in the temple courtyard.

Chao Chieh-min 趙節愍 (posthumous; personal name not recorded). Ch‘uan Tsu-wang 全祖望 noted of him that, in 1646, after the territory around the Yangtse river was lost to the Ch‘ing, he “put all the examination papers that he had written into his sleeves, then he went to the Confucian temple where he left his cap and robe. … Thereafter he went out to the east of the city and jumped into the river. Among the passers-by were some who had seen his lamenting in the Confucian temple.”

The two records above both mention the protagonists either destroying or abandoning their robes.

Han Yüan 韓苑 (tzu Meng-hsiao 孟小). The Kuang-hsu 光緒 period reprint of the Chiang ningju chih 重刋江寧府志 states that, in 1644, Han “… went to a Confucian temple and lamented bitterly.” After this he refused all food and starved himself to death.

Hsu Yen 許琰 (tzu Chung-y¨ 仲玉) was from the Wu district in Kiangsu. In 1644, when the news of the suicide of the last Ming emperor reached Soochow, he called for the gentry to destroy their households to provide recruits for a righteous army to suppress the bandits (the Ch‘ing). No-one responded so, on the ninth day of the fifth month, along with other first-degree holders, he lamented in the school’s Ming-lun Hall 明倫堂. He subsequently committed suicide.

Ku So-shou 顧所受 (tzu Hsing-chih 性之一, hao Tung-wu 東吳) was from Ch‘ang-chou 長洲 in Kiangsu. The Ming chi nan lue 明季南略 states that in 1645, after Nanking had fallen, he said to his son Shan: “As an aged first-degree holder I have been going to the Confucian temple for over fifty years. Now that things have come to this I am afraid that all of the ritual vessels will be left to wrack and ruin. I had better see what has happened.” Thereupon he went to the temple with his grandson. When they got there, he composed a ch‘uan-t‘ang wen and with it took his leave of Confucius, all the while bowing and weeping.

After this he committed suicide by throwing himself into the pond. This record mentions a ch‘uan-t‘ang wen so Ku Yü-hsien is correct in his observation that the preparation of such a document was an integral part of the lamentation ceremony.

Hsü Fang-lieh 徐芳烈 and the other first-degree holders from Hsiao-shan 蕭山 in Chekiang. After Nanking was lost in 1645, and the newly-enthroned Hung-kuang emperor had fled, Hsü, along with his elder brother Hsü Fang-sheng 徐芳聲, and some other first-degree holders such as Ts’ai Shih-ching 蔡士京 and Ho Chih-chieh 何之杰, banded together with others from their area and lamented bitterly in the Ming-lun Hall. They explained their actions by saying that: “Now that the dynasty has changed we bid farewell to the Confucian temple.”
The six examples given clearly indicate that after the Ming had fallen, students used lamenting as an expression of intense feeling, venting their deep remorse at not being able to remedy the disaster. Lamenting was originally a public protest against inequity. During the period of dynastic change, however, it became a way for first-degree holders to express their grief, or to protest against an unkind fate. Of the examples given above, Chao, Hsü, Han and Ku added to their public lamentation by taking their own lives. [Although it is not mentioned above,] Hsieh Tai-chen also took his life later by jumping into the sea in 1650.

The actions of some students found an echo among those who had already embarked on their official career. Some officials from the vanquished Ming, before deciding to die with the failed dynasty, first went to the Confucian temple to either take their leave of it, lament or burn their robes. For example:

Kung T'ing-hsiang 龍廷祥 (tzu Po-hsing 伯興, bao Pei-ch'ien 佩潛) was from Wu-hsi 無錫 in Kiangsu. In 1643 he became a Metropolitan Graduate. Two years later he was a Secretary at the exiled court of the Hung-kuang 弘光 emperor. When Hung-kuang fled, he dressed in his official robes and cap and bade farewell in the Confucian temple. He then climbed onto the Wu-ting bridge and gazed into the Ch'in-huai River 秦淮河. ... He swore to himself saying: "Those who cling to life to preserve their body are like the waters of this river." Thereupon he drowned himself in the river.\footnote{Ming chi nan lite, pp.240–1.}

T'ang Ch'uan 唐錩 (tzu Tzu-ts'ao 子曹) was from Chin-shan Wei 金山衛 in Kiangsu. "Toward the end of the Ming he was appointed Magistrate of Hsiu-shui 秀水. When he was about to go to take up office Nanking fell, whereupon he burnt his cap and robes, performed the k'o-t'ou, stabbed himself in the heart, coughed up blood and died."\footnote{Sung-chiang fu cbib, ch.55, p.59a.}

These examples serve to show that both at the end of the Ming, and after its fall, lamenting in the Confucian temple became popular among scholar-officials, particularly first-degree holders. Not only were these protests precedents for Chin Sheng-t'an's actions in the Wu Case, they may also have spurred Cheng Ch'eng-kung on to his actions.

5. The Meaning of Robe-Burning and Lamenting

From the above we can see that robe-burning was a relatively simple act. According to its broadest definition it could include comparatively mild acts described variously as "taking leave of one's scholar's cap and gown," or "leaving one's gown and cap in the Confucian Temple." However it also included rather more violent actions such as the burning of robes or the rending of caps and gowns. I have postulated above thatrobe-burning or "taking leave of one's scholar's cap and gown" was a public declaration that henceforth one would refuse to hold office. The origin of this form of protest can be traced to the interregnum of the Hsin 新 dynasty (AD 9–23). The
foreword to the “I min lieh chuan” 逸民列傳, the eighty-third chapter of the *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書, reads:

> Wang Mang 王莽 usurped the throne when the Han was in decline. The righteous anger of cultivated and refined scholar-officials was great. They tore up their caps and destroyed their ceremonial head-dress. Countless numbers of them acted in concert and left the capital. 49

Figures mentioned in relation to the foregoing incident, such as Liang Hung 梁鴻 and Han K’ang 韓康, all became famous recluses.

Although once a part of a ceremony of lamentation, in the seventeenth century robe-burning contained within it a sense of violent protest. Doing away with one’s robes came to denote a refusal to serve and became a spectacle enacted for others. It was not necessarily indicative of a resolve to relinquish status.

The complete ceremonial act of lamentation included composing a declaration of protest (chüan-t’ang wen) to inform Confucius, burning the robes, beating the drum in the Confucian temple and lamenting bitterly. In section three we examined the declaration of protest and found that it could contain both the meanings of disbanding and boycott. In section four we examined the case of Ku So-shou who used such a declaration to bid farewell to Confucius. This was an individual action and implicitly meant that he was announcing, before the commemorative tablet of Confucius, his decision to quit his studies. Regardless of whether it was an individual or a group lamentation the aim of writing a declaration of protest was to announce a withdrawal from study. To both burn robes and lament simultaneously strengthened the theatricality of protest yet, paradoxically, weakened the practice. There were not many who, after carrying out the whole lamentation performance, abandoned forever the status of a first-degree holder. Neither Lu Chou-ming, nor those involved in the incident at Kuei-te, all of whom were first-degree holders, later discarded their scholarly status. Neither did the students involved in the Wu case throw away their status of their own accord. Only death prevented Hsiü Yen, Ku So-shou and others like them returning to their former positions.

Pounding the drum and striking the bell, or just beating the drum, in addition to gathering a crowd and thus expanding the effective range of protest, had the implication of publicly denouncing criminal behaviour. Evidence for this can be traced back to pre-Ch’in 先秦 times. The Kuo-yü 國語 notes that:

> A noble from Sung killed his lord, Duke Chao. Viscount Hsüan of Chao asked his lord, Duke Ling, whether he could lead the army to attack Sung . . . . The Duke assented. Orders were issued in the State Temple, the army officers were summoned and the Music Masters ordered to make preparations. Orders were given that the Three Army’s bells and drums were to be provided. Chao T’ung said, “As this is a great state campaign why are the people not being calmed but the bells and drums provided?” Viscount Hsüan replied, “When a great crime is committed it must be punished. For a small crime
there must be intimidation. A sneak attack would be bullying. That is why bells and drums are provided; to make the crime known ... . (The Sung people have killed their lord; there is no crime greater than this. Clearly ring it out, my only fear is that it will not be heard. It is for Duke Chao’s sake that I prepare the bells and drums.” Then the other states were asked to set ready their armies and rouse their troops. So they went to Sung sounding the bells and drums. ⁵⁰

Further, in chapter eleven of the *Lun yu* 論語 there is a depiction of a minister, Chi 季, who is richer than the Duke of Chou 周公. Chi was continuing to amass his wealth in part through the work of Jan Ch’iu 冉求 (Confucius’ student) who was collecting taxes for him. When Confucius ordered his students to sound the drums and attack Jan Ch’iu, this allusion was understood by everyone.

In short, regardless of whether it involves robe-burning, a declaration of refusal or sounding the bell and beating the drum, the actions pertinent to lamenting are a form of public display. This is different from just robe-burning where the unorthodox action is the announcement. Lamenting in the temple was a symbolic way of expressing an attitude, not requiring any further action.

Finally, it should be noted that as part of this ceremony of “lamenting in the Confucian temple” lamenting, or crying, itself must naturally have had some place. Such lamenting was to be done inside the Confucian temple.

When the Ming dynasty was founded, Chu Yüan-chang 朱元璋 ordered the establishment of schools throughout the empire so that prefectures, sub-prefectures and the districts all had their respective schools. These schools had two sections, the classroom and the Confucian temple. Local gazetteers often record that: “… [The temple was to the left, the school to the right.”⁵² Or, “… [The temple is at the front and behind it the school. So it is throughout the empire.”⁵³ The great hall of the temple was called the Ming-lun Hall. Except for the first and fifteenth of every lunar month when incense was burnt and worship was held for Confucius, the temple was usually locked. Therefore, Chin Sheng-t’an and the others would first have had to ask the teacher for the keys to open the door before they could lament inside it.⁵⁴

This clearly indicates that the fundamental aim of lamenting was to express protest. Furthermore, this phenomenon can only be found from the seventeenth century onward. Ming law originally forbade first-degree holders the right to intervene at will in the affairs of society. In 1382, Chu Yüan-chang promulgated twelve orders to regulate the conduct of first-degree holders. They included the following rule:

From this day forward if any prefectural, sub-prefectural or district first-degree holder has a serious matter which concerns their family, then only father, elder and younger brothers and nephews may, through petitions or applications, approach government offices to sue and/or defend. If the matter is of no great significance then they must restrain themselves and endure it. Government offices must not be approached without good cause.
First-degree holders are not permitted to make public declarations on any civil or military matters. If and when such matters arise all incumbent officials, people of standing, strong men of high ambition, simple peasants, merchants and artisans may all speak, none of them are to be obstructed. First-degree holders alone are not permitted.\(^{55}\)

How could first-degree holders mediate in public matters if they were not even permitted to go to the government offices and argue in the disputes which affected their own family? If they were not permitted to speak out on any issues in the political sphere, how much less could they speak out, risking themselves, to protest an injustice on behalf of someone else? These regulations were strengthened in 1575 when Chang Chü-cheng 張居正 held political power. He went beyond the scope of the original imperial edict given to the officials from the Education Intendant Circuit and added the following provisions:

If first-degree holders become involved in gathering crowds of more than ten, if they abuse those in positions of authority, and if their behaviour is reckless and without propriety, then the leaders must be banished according to regulations. The others, regardless of their number, must be stripped of their status and made commoners.\(^{56}\)

However these regulations were little more than paper decrees. After the Lung-ch'ing 隆慶 (1567–72) and Wan-li 萬曆 (1573–1620) reigns, the customs and manners of the scholars changed. The first-degree holders did not follow the rules and regulations to the letter, but participated enthusiastically in protests directed against both the government and members of the gentry.\(^{57}\) This was particularly so following the death of Chang Chü-cheng when they acted quite brazenly. The 『雲AAFc繫 evacuation』 notes that:

The evil practices of the scholars began after the fifteenth year of the Wan-li period [1587]. . . . [Not only in Sung-chiang, but also often in Chekiang and South Chih-li. It was witnessed in the conspiracy of hatred that was shown toward Minister Ling 凌向書 in Soochow; the conspiracy to accuse Assistant Prefect Wan 萬通判 in Chia-hsing 嘉興; the conspiracy of protests against District Magistrate Chiang 江大尹 in Ch'ang-chou; the conspiracy of abuse directed at Vice-Magistrate Kao 高同知 in Chen-chiang 鎮江; and the conspiracy for the detention of Prefect Li 李知府 in Sung-chiang. These affairs arose spontaneously at the same time, thus signifying a change in the manners and morals of the age.\(^{58}\)

Some cases were so serious that district officials were driven out of their districts.\(^{59}\) In comparison the formalized lamentation of first-degree holders appears to be a rather mild strain of protest.
Conclusion: The Significance of the Lamentation of Cheng Ch'eng-kung

Cheng Ch'eng-kung was a first-degree holder who had attended the National University in Nanking. Lamenting in the Confucian temple was thus commensurate with his status. Burning of his scholar's cap and robes and using a declaration to inform Confucius of his despair was entirely within the tradition of "lamenting." His bowing four times to Confucius also conformed with the late-Ming acts of farewell to Confucian temples. For this reason, Cheng I-tsou represented Cheng's lamentation as completely in accordance with set practice. Moreover, Cheng's Wan-Ming sui chi bi lu was published in 1702, only twenty years after the author's death in 1683, forty years after Cheng Ch'eng-kung's demise in 1662, and fifty-six years after the event itself. Thus, it is a record of an incident by a contemporary and, unless evidence comes to light that Cheng I-tsou concocted the story, Cheng Ch'eng-kung's lamentation should be taken as historical fact.

Yang Yun-p'ing's strongest argument for rejecting Cheng I-tsou's account is based on the remarks by a descendent of Cheng Ch'eng-kung, Cheng Wei-chou (鄭維洲) said that his ancestor had lamented in Ch'üan-chou (泉州). Yang's reasoning is as follows: during the eleventh month of 1646 Cheng Ch'eng-kung left the mainland. On the first day of the twelfth month of that year he rose in Nan-ao (南澳). As Ch'üan-chou had already fallen in the ninth month it would have been impossible for the lamenting to have taken place there. However, Cheng could have lamented elsewhere. Chang-chou (漳州) prefecture, which is south of Hsia-men (夏門), was not entirely in Manchu hands by the twelfth month, so he could well have lamented in either the Hai-ch'eng (海澄) or Chang-p'u (漳州) districts, or even in Chao-an (詔安) district in Nan-ao. There is no reason to doubt the fact that Cheng did indeed "lament."

If we take Cheng's lamenting and robe-burning as fact we must now consider his motive. Cheng I-tsou says that it was because he had failed to dissuade his father from surrendering to the Ch'ing, coupled with the anguish caused by his mother's death. He also indicates that Cheng carried out these actions before he planned his rising—it was his hatred for the enemies of the empire which left him no choice but to oppose his father's decision and launch resistance against the Ch'ing. Before so doing he went to the Confucian temple to give an explanation. Cheng I-tsou records that when Cheng Ch'eng-kung bade farewell to Confucius (that is to say, presented his chian-t'ang wen declaration) he said: "Once I was but a child, now I am a subject bereft of my lord. Should I accede to my father's wishes or oppose them? Should I stay or go? Each of these has its merits." Cheng utilized the act of lamentation to make his position clear to all.

The term ju-tzii 孫子 means a small child. Upon admonishing his father, Cheng was told: "Child, how could you possibly understand such things?" The expression "a subject bereft" kue-ch'en 孤臣 originally meant an ousted...
and powerless minister. Generals in the Righteous Army of the Southern Ming often used the term as a self-description. Chang Ming-chen 張名振 used it in a poem when he wrote: "For a decade I have been a subject bereft on the wide ocean."63 Chi means to support or obey while pei 背 means to disobey. Before Cheng Ch'eng-kung began to raise troops to oppose the Ch'ing he had considered himself a filial son who dutifully followed his father's instructions. Indeed, on occasion he had acted as his father's agent at the Lung-wu 隆武 Ming court.64 When he disregarded his father's wishes and remained in the Southern Ming camp, to continue his opposition to the Ch'ing, he clearly blamed himself for his lack of filial piety. Thus, when he rebelled in Nan-ao, he wrote on a banner the words: "I violate my father's wishes to save the country."65 So as both to meet his obligations to the Lung-wu emperor, and to avenge his mother's untimely death, Cheng had no alternative but to disregard his father's wishes and follow the army. He spoke from his heart and used the formalized act of lamentation to make his dilemma clear to all. By asking Confucius to bear witness to his actions he was calling on his countrymen to do the same. It was a brilliant move as he was able to enact a cathartic ritual to express his despair at the fate of his country. As for burning the robes, this was itself part of the fixed repertoire of lamentation. The general view is that he used it to announce publicly that he was abandoning his literary studies in order to take up arms.66 By saying that he was "respectfully taking his leave of his robes" Cheng was following the set code of lamentation. In order to attract attention Cheng Ch'eng-kung's army commanders often changed their names when they abandoned their studies to take up arms,67 Perhaps Cheng's robe-burning was also his way of expressing his determination to his subordinates. If this was the case then Cheng brought to the ceremony of lamentation a hitherto unknown meaning.

64 The most famous example is probably that of Chiang Feng 蕭鳳, according to the epitaph written for him by Ch'en Yung-hua 陳永華, he was originally surnamed Huang 黃 but "... he changed his name when he began his military career." Within Cheng's army there were many cases of people who changed either their surname, or both surname and given name, upon taking up a military career. There are, at least, the following: Pei Te 裴德 who changed his name to Hsieh Chin-ssu 鄭進盛, Ts'ao Wen-lung 曹文龍 who changed his name to Yang Chao-tung 楊朝棟, Kuo Sui-ti 郭遂第 who changed his name to Hua Tung 華棟, Wang Chi-feng 王起烽 who changed his name to Liu Yu-ts'ai 劉有才, and Hu An-jan 胡安然 who changed his name to Ho Shi-ming 胡世銘. See Huang Tien-ch'üan 黃典權, Chiang Feng mu chi ming yen chu 將軍墓誌銘研究 (Taipei: Chung hua ts'ung shu pien shen wei yuan hui, 1968), pp.50–2. Huang ascribes the motive for this change of name to a desire to avoid harm coming to relatives in the event of their village falling into the hands of the enemy. However, it could also have been done to demonstrate resolution. Fei Shih's 北石 "Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan" which is generally regarded as not being of high value as historical material, nevertheless records Cheng Ch'eng-kung bidding Confucius farewell with the words: "I respectfully take my leave of my scholar's robes, and make known my determination." At the very least this indicates that he agrees that Cheng's burning of his robes was a way of showing his determination to succeed. See various authors, Cheng Ch'eng-kung chuan, p.78.