

Chapter 7

The Six Xie Jinshi: A New Generation of Elites

The Confucian credentials of this Uyghur family were really confirmed when Xie Wenzhi's sons and nephew competed successfully for the *jinshi* degree. That accomplishment may even have provided a rationale for their contemporaries to describe so vividly the virtuous "actions" of members of that family. But regardless of the authenticity of the acts of the "san jie" generation, it is clear that the six *jinshi* degree holders represent the political and social apex of this family in Yuan China. In this chapter we examine the lives of Xie Yuli, Xie Zhijian, Xie Zhedu, Xie Chaowu, Xie Liechi, and their cousin, Shanzhu during and immediately after the Yuan dynasty (see their genealogical chart on p. 273).¹

Xie Zhijian, Xie Chaowu, Xie Liechi, (Xie) Shanzhu

Three of Wenzhi's sons followed careers that were very typical of *Semuren* political elites, but do not appear to have used their education or family background to significantly alter their identities as *Semuren* or their standing among the Chinese literati. We know very little about Wenzhi's second son, Xie Zhijian 楔直堅 apart from some of the offices he held. He achieved the *jinshi* degree in 1324, after which the court promoted him with the

¹ The Nanchang Prefectural gazetteer (*Nanchang Fuzhi*) and the Liyang County gazetteer (*Liyang xianzhi*) both contain extensive information about exam dates and degrees and official appointments to office for all of the Xie family members discussed in this chapter. This data is also conveniently summarized in Chen Menglei, et al., comp., "Shizu dian" 氏族典, in *Gujin Tushu Jicheng* 37.4537-38, and 5248.

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honorary title Gentleman of the Fourth Class (*Chengwu lang*) and sent him to be an Agent (*darughachi*) of Susong county 宿松縣 in Anqing Prefecture 安慶路, 250 miles upriver from Liyang.²

Wenzhi's fourth son, Xie Chaowu 偁朝吾, obtained his *jinshi* degree in 1321. According to the gazetteer for Nanchang Prefecture, his name was inscribed on "a memorial pillar in the center of the city that honored families who had five *jinshi* holders."³ Like his brother, the court awarded Chaowu the honorary title of Gentleman of the Fourth Class (*Chengwu lang*), and assigned him to be a Vice Prefect (*tongzhi*) of Ji Prefecture (*Jizhou* 濟州) in southwest Shandong (located in the region of the Yuan capital, Dadu, and thus within the bounds of the Central Secretariat). He was eventually promoted to the honorary rank of Grandee of the Twenty-fourth Class (*Fengyi Dafu*), and sent south as a Vice Prefect (*tongzhi*) of Xun Prefecture (循府) in southern Jiangxi Province.⁴

Wenzhi's youngest son, Xie Liechi 偁烈箴 (d. 1358), had a distinguished if short career as a *Semuren* official. He was the last of the six Xie siblings to obtain the

² Primary sources that contain information on Zhijian include *Gui Zhai wenji* 11.12a–b; and *Liyang xianzhi* (Qing ed.).

³ Fan, *Nanchang fuzhi* 17.23b. The memorial pillar that honored families that had produced five *jinshi* degree holders (*wugui fang*) was probably an imperial register of local families who had obtained that achievement. Such was the case with several families in the Song period who were so honored, and who used that title on their family halls. See Zhang Qiyun 張其昀 and Lin Yin 林尹, *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典, 10 vols. (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua yanjiusuo, 1962–68), Vol. 1, 659–60, which cites the Song dynasty Fan (范) and Li (李) families as examples of this practice.

⁴ The general chronology of Chaowu's career as a *Semuren* official can be determined by comparing records in the *Liyang xianzhi* (Qing Jiaqing edition) 10.3b; Chen Zuolin, comp., *Jinling tongzhuan* 9.3a; and the *Nanchang fuzhi* (Ming edition) 17.23a. The Nanchang gazetteer erroneously lists Chaowu as a degree candidate in 1347 and 1350.

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jinshi degree, doing so in 1330. His Chinese courtesy name (*zi*) was Shide 世德. His biography notes that after he achieved his *jinshi* degree “the regional governor placed their names on a list and honored the family for having the five *jinshi*,” presumably the same list in Nanchang on which his elder brother’s name was inscribed.⁵

After achieving his degree, Xie Liechi was promoted to the honorary rank of Gentleman of the Eighth Class (*Congshi lang*), and assigned to be a Compiler (*daizhi*) in the prestigious Hanlin Academy. It was a great honor for a new graduate to be assigned as an official in that academy, and this posting indicates that Liechi had literary talent and was familiar with the Confucian classics and doctrine that were valued by the Chinese scholars who dominated that academy at the Yuan court. Xie Liechi was eventually sent to southeast China as an Agent (*darughachi*) at Chaozhou Prefecture (潮州路, in southeast Jiangxi).

At some point in Emperor Toghon Temür’s reign (r. 1341–1368), Liechi was sent north to Henan Superior Prefecture (*Henan fulu* 河南府路) where he was assigned the position of Registrar (*jingli*).⁶ A Registrar was an important but low-ranking official, who had overall responsibility for the running of the administrative offices in the prefectural offices. This assignment may have been in connection with Prime Minister Toghto’s public works

⁵ Shao Yuanping 劭遠平, *Yuanshi leibian* 元史類編 [Categorized Yuan history], 10 vols. (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1968) 40.14a, is the most comprehensive biographical entry for Xie Liechi, in a chapter devoted to “those exemplifying virtuous conduct” (旌德). In addition to the gazetteer sources, cited above, see also Chen, et al., *Gujin Tushu Jicheng* 37.45477 for information on Liechi.

⁶ Henan fulu was located at the city of Luoyang in northwest Henan–Jiangbei Province.

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project to rechannel the Yellow River and dredge the Grand Canal, which he started in 1351.

Xie Liechi eventually returned to Jiangxi in some official capacity, presumably to deal with the Red Turban rebellion that first arose in the 1330s and which had spread through parts of the southeast.⁷

In the *Zhizheng* era [1341–1367] the Red Turbans rebelled, and officials at the court sent [Liechi] to go and be in charge of the east gate [of the prefectural city].... He offered a sacrifice of wine at his ancestors' grave, then assembled his wife and children and told them: "If this city cannot be defended, then you should wait until the proper time and then drown yourselves in the city pond, so that you will not be defiled." Then the city fell to the bandits. Liechi threw himself into the pond and died, and 11 members of his family, his wife, his concubine, and his children, all followed him in death. The next day, the Daoist [a certain Chen Baiyun] dredged up their bodies from the pond, prepared coffins and buried them.⁸

These rebels were part of a large movement in the late-Yuan that spread through south-central China. Many different rebel groups were all lumped together under the name "Red Turban". We do not know anything more specific about Xie Liechi's duties there at the time of that incident.

Liechi achieved a certain posterity for his efforts; as we have seen, his biography was included in the chapter dedicated to Yuan officials who demonstrated exemplary courage in their assignments in the recompiled Yuan

⁷ Frederick W. Mote describes this group as the "northern Red Turbans"; see his "The Rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330–1367," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 37–43.

⁸ Shao, *Yuanshi leibian* 40.14a.

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dynastic history, *Yuanshi leibian*. More interesting is his legacy in present-day China. According to the Grand Dictionary of Placenames, a “Xie Family Pond” (偃家池) is still located in the northwest corner of the county seat of Xinjian County (新建縣, near Nanchang), in Jiangxi Province. That pond was located near a building called the Xie Family Building and was given the title Loyal and Meritorious (*zhonglie*) by the Yuan court to honor Xie Liechi.⁹ It may be the same pond in which Liechi and his family perished.

Liechi’s contribution to his family may not, however, have ended with his death in Jiangxi. According to a much later gazetteer from Yunnan Province, Liechi’s descendants “led followers and moved to Yunnan” in the first years of the Ming dynasty.¹⁰

(Xie) Shanzhu 善著 was the son of Xie Wenzhi’s brother, Yuelunzhi. The exact nature of Shanzhu’s relationship to his uncle is unclear, but it seems fairly certain that he also used Xie as a family surname like his uncle and cousins, and like his kinsmen was interested in Chinese cultural modes.¹¹ He used and was known by a

⁹ Zang Lihe 臧勵齋, comp., *Zhongguo gujin diming da cidian* 中國古今地名大辭典 [Dictionary of ancient and modern placenames in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1933), 784. I have no idea if this building or the well still exist.

¹⁰ I am indebted to Professor Yao Jide for supplying me with this information from a 1947 edition of the Yao’an County Gazetteer (姚安縣志). According to this record, Liechi’s descendants converted and moved to Huase Village (花色村), in Yao’an County, Yunnan, in the early years of the Ming. Xie family members still live in Yao’an and other parts of central Yunnan Province where they are prominent members of the Muslim Huizu community. The history of that branch of the Xie family is beyond the scope of this book.

¹¹ Both the *Nanchang fuzhi* and *Liyang xianzhi* (cited above) record his name as Xie Shanzhu. Ouyang Xuan, however, referred to him only as Shanzhu in his history of the Xie family. See *Gui Zhai wenji* 11.12b. But since Ouyang then went on to report a conversation that he had had

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Chinese-style courtesy name, Shiwen 世文. The important point for our story, of course, is the fact that Shanzhu, who seems to have been taken in by Xie Wenzhi at Jiangxi, also attained the *jinshi* degree and was one of the celebrated six *jinshi* of this family (the *liugui*).

Shanzhu achieved his *jinshi* degree in 1327, three years before Liechi. He was then promoted to the honorary rank of Gentleman of the Fourth Class (*Chengwu Lang*), and his first official assignment was in south-central China as a Vice Prefect (*tongzhi*) of Tianlin Circuit (天臨路, in Huguang Province, present-day Changsha). Curiously, this was the same place that Xie Wenzhi had been assigned as a Director General, sometime after 1314.¹² He was eventually promoted to be a Compiler of the Third Class (*bianxiu*) in the Hanlin Academy, and served concurrently as a Vice Prefect of Xiangtan Prefecture (湘潭), in present-day Hunan. These postings to the Hanlin Academy indicate that Shanzhu was acquainted with Chinese and Mongolian languages, and probably also fluent in the Confucian classics and other literature favored by the Chinese literati.

We know something about Shanzhu's personal life because he was mentioned in a foreword to a poem written by a fellow *Semuren*, the well-known writer and poet Sadula.¹³ The subject of Sadula's seven-character *shi*-style

with Shanzhu concerning the reasons for the family having taken Xie as their surname, we may surmise that he did, in fact, use it as well.

¹² When Xie Wenzhi was sent there it was known by its old name of Tanzhou Circuit 潭州路. The name was changed to Tianlin Circuit in 1329. See Tan, *Zhongguo lishi dituji*, Vol. 7, 32; and *Yuanshi* 63.1527–28. I am indebted to Frederick Mote for this information.

¹³ Sadula (薩都剌, 1272–1355) was a Muslim poet who was a cohort of Shanzhu's in the 1327 *jinshi* examination, and served in a number of positions at the central court, including the Hanlin Academy, and as regional or local administrator in various areas in China. He is best remembered today for his poetry. In addition to an extant collection of his poetry, cited below, Sadula's poetry has been collected and studied

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poem, a Buddhist hermit who lived on Eagle Peak, does not directly concern us here. But in the poem's introduction, where Sadula explained his chance encounter with the hermit, we get a glimpse of Shanzhu's personal life and his friendship with Sadula. According to Sadula:

I was selected to go as an official to Fujian, and I had occasion to pass through Jianyang, where I met my examination classmate Xie Shiwen [Shanzhu], who invited me to visit his family. And so I climbed up the path that led through the canyon [on Eagle Peak]. Suddenly I heard the sound of music and someone chanting poetry coming through the dense growth of trees and bamboo. I asked Shiwen about it and he replied that it was a Buddhist monk who lived up on Ling mountain. After awhile I met him in his hut. He has the appearance of a crane, floating through the clouds. He wrote a poem on a piece of parchment that was like the wind in the forest. I started on my journey south, and Shiwen was also about to leave for his post as editor [in the Hanlin Academy]. The man who lived on Eagle Summit saw me off at the top of the stream....¹⁴

When Sadula was sent to Fujian Province to be in charge of the Surveillance Bureau there in 1335, he was invited to visit his friend, Xie Shanzhu, on his way south to

by Liu Shijun 刘世俊, Zhang Yingsheng 张迎胜, and Ding Shengjun 丁生俊, ed., *Sadula Shixuan* 萨都刺诗选 [Anthology of poems of Sadula] (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin chubanshe, 1982). His poems have also been collected in Wang Shupan 王叔磐, et al., ed., *Yuandai Shaoshu Minzu shixuan* 元代少数民族诗选 [Anthology of Yuan Dynasty minority people's poems] (Hohote: Nei Menggu Renmin chubanshe, 1981), 165–210, where he is mistakenly identified as a Mongol.

¹⁴ Sadula, “Zengbie Jiufeng shangren bingyin,” 赠别鹳峰上人并引 [Presented to Monk Jiufeng on parting, with introductory note], in *Sa Tianxi shiji* 萨天锡诗集 [Collected poems of Sa Tianxi] (Sibu congkan ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1929), 66b–67b.

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his new post. Shanzhu was living in Jianyang 建陽 at the time, a city in Fujian Province that was the center of private book publishing in the Song and Yuan periods.¹⁵

Sadula's description of climbing up a mountainside amid dense jungle indicates a place that was perfect for recluses or hermits. The text is not clear as to whether Shanzhu lived on or near the mountain in question, or just why he was living in Jianyang. It is likely that he was not, himself, living as a recluse. But Shanzhu certainly knew about the learned monk who was living in reclusion on top of Eagle Peak, the subject of Sadula's poem. What is interesting for our purposes is the sense that Shanzhu was involved in some way with a group of literati in Fujian, as well as his stated connection with the *Semuren* poet Sadula.

Given the fact that Shanzhu was about to head back north to the capital as an official in the Hanlin Academy, Sadula's remarks about the hermit monk, at the end of the introduction to his poem, seem to be a pointed commentary to his friend. Sadula reveals that the Buddhist monk was a relative of none other than Ouyang Xuan and that the monk had also been a member of the Hanlin Academy off and on during the 1320s. Since we have already seen Ouyang Xuan's connection to the Xie family – in the case of Ouyang Xuan and Xie Zhedu – this is especially interesting, and may indicate even closer personal ties between the Xie family and Ouyang.

¹⁵ On Jianyang as a center of Chinese literati writing and publishing activities, see Lucille Chia, "The Development of the Jianyang Book Trade, Song–Yuan," *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (June, 1996): 10–48; her more recent work, "Mashaben: Commercial Publishing in Jianyang from the Song to the Ming," in *The Song–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 284–328; and Cynthia J. Brokaw, "Commercial Publishing in Late Imperial China: the Zou and Ma Family Businesses of Sibao," *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (1996): 49–92.

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The poem's preface is also interesting for what it reveals about Shanzhu's activities in political and social elite circles, and his connections to other prominent *Semuren* and Chinese. We are given a sense that this was a meeting between two old friends, each of whom was climbing the ladder of success. Shanzhu's appointment to the Hanlin Academy would have been an important step up for him. Likewise, Sadula would have wielded enormous political power and prestige in Fujian in his tenure in the Surveillance Bureau. Both men were also acting as typical literati in the Chinese tradition. Shanzhu was possibly re-entering society from a time in private life, and Sadula recorded his visit to Eagle Mountain in the time-honored format of the *shi*-style narrative, meant to connote his own feelings about life as an official.¹⁶ In a sense, then, both Sadula and Shanzhu symbolize the larger issue of *Semuren* who participated in the partially overlapping, sometimes contradictory arenas of political and cultural power in the ways possible by the 1330s.

Xie Yuli and Xie Zhedu

These last two Xie siblings were the most successful of the famous six *jinshi* in their dual roles as members of political and social elites, at least if the large number of contemporaneous encomia is any measure. Their stories provide a rare glimpse into the intersection of public and private spheres of prominent *Semuren* individuals in the last decades of the Yuan dynasty. We first examine Xie Yuli, and conclude the chapter with the most prominent family member of that generation, Xie Zhedu.

¹⁶ According to Frederick Mote, this poem, while in a lyric mode, was written in the irregular *gu-shi* style form often used for narrative poems.

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Xie Yuli as a Member of the Political Elite

Xie Yuli 楔玉立 had a successful career as a *Semuren* official, and he was also a well-known man of letters.¹⁷ Though the oldest of the Xie siblings, he passed his *jinshi* degree three years after his younger brother, Xie Zhedu, in 1318. He adopted the Chinese-style courtesy name (*zi*) of Shiyu 世玉, and his first assignment was as an assistant staff writer in the Office of the Imperial Library (*Mishujian zhuzuo zuolang*). This office was responsible for maintaining the collections of books, paintings, maps and other documents housed at the Yuan court, and officials prepared compilations of documents for the Yuan emperors. According to the extant Records of the Imperial Library, Yuli was appointed to this office on the fifth day of the eighth (lunar) month of 1318, and he served there for approximately 10 months.¹⁸ Sometime thereafter, Yuli was promoted to the honorary rank of Grandee of the Twentieth Class (*Chaoqing Dafu*), and assigned to serve concurrently as a Compiler (*daizhi*) in the Hanlin Academy and as a Compiler of the Third Class in the Imperial History Bureau (*guoshiyuan bianxiu*). We can infer from these postings that Zhedu was already highly regarded for his intellectual abilities.

¹⁷ In addition to the gazetteer sources already cited above, biographical information about Xie Yuli is found in the following primary sources: He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, *Min shu* 閩書 [Gazetteer of Fujian] (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin chubanshe, 1994) 53.30; Wang Xuan 王軒, *Shanxi tongzhi* 山西通志 [Gazetteer of Shanxi Province] (1892 ed.; rpt. Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1969) 8.34a; and his biography in Gu Sili's anthology of Yuan poetry *Yuanshi xuan* (see note 40, below, for more information on this anthology).

¹⁸ See the official memoir of the Yuan Imperial Library Bureau, Wang Shidian 王士點 and Shang Qiwen 商企翁, comp., *Yuan Mishujian zhi* 元秘書監志 [Account of the Yuan Imperial Library Bureau] (1342; rpt. Jiangsu Guangling Guji keyinshe, 1988) 10.4a. For information on this position and the Imperial Library, see Farquhar, *Government of China*, 137 and 162 n. 63.

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After serving in those capacities in the capital, Yuli was sent out to a series of local and provincial supervisory positions. At some point between the years 1341–1368 (during Emperor Toghon Temür's reign) he was sent to Hedong and Shanxi provinces in central China as an official in the Regional Investigation Bureau (*suzheng lianfangsi*).¹⁹ His most important postings as a local official, however, were all in Fujian Province. I have not been able to reconstruct a precise chronology of his various postings in Fujian, but a variety of official and private sources all confirm that he spent a good part of his career as a *Semuren* official there.

We know from a tomb inscription for the Fujian native Zheng Li 鄭禮 (1299–1370) written by the famous Chinese writer Su Boheng 蘇伯衡 (1329–1392?) that Yuli served as Magistrate (*shouzhang*) of Anxi County (安溪縣), in Fujian Province, about eighty *li* upriver from Quanzhou.²⁰ According to this text, when the young Mr. Zheng was sent to Anxi as an assistant magistrate he had to report to Xie Yuli, who was his immediate superior in office. Unfortunately, we are not given any details about Yuli's position or personal life in this text. However, another eulogy text, this one written by the well-known

¹⁹ Li Kan 李侃, *Shanxi tongzhi* 山西通志 [Gazetteer of Shanxi Province] (1474 ed., microfilm copy) 8.34a.

²⁰ Su Boheng, “Gu Yuan Chengdelang Zhedongdao xuanweishisi Dyuanshuaifu dushi Zheng gong muzhiming” 故元承德郎浙東道宣慰使司都元帥府都事鄭公墓誌銘 [Tomb inscription of the former Master Zheng, Gentleman of the First Class, General Secretary in the Regional Military Bureau in the Pacification Office for the Zhedong area in Yuan China], in *Su Pingzhong wenji* (Sibu congkan ed., rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1922), 25a–26b. Su Boheng was a member of the famous coterie of Confucian literati from Jinhua who served as advisors to Zhu Yuanzhang. He was appointed to the Ming Hanlin Academy in 1378 on the recommendation of Song Lian (see below).

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writer Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–81), in honor of the official Xiang Disun 項棣孫 (1296–1366), refers to Xie Yuli in his position as a prefect in Quanzhou.

When Mr. Xiang was in Quanzhou, the people had hard lives, and corpses of those who had starved lay on the roads.... Mr. Xiang knew of these affairs and was getting worried, so he said to the Prefect Xie Yuli to establish a public contribution fund [to aid the poor and needy]. The heads of large shops and businesses gave gold that could be used to purchase grain to relieve the suffering of the people, and the entire prefecture obtained relief in this way.²¹

This is an important piece of evidence that demonstrates Xie Yuli's activities as an official in Quanzhou. Xiang Disun held the important post of Supervisor of Maritime Trade at Quanzhou in the late Yuan era, and referring to Yuli by name in this text indicates that the author expected his readers to know who Yuli was.

We know that Yuli was appointed to be the Agent (*darughachi*) who oversaw Quanzhou district in 1349, and it was in that position that he achieved his greatest success

²¹ Song Lian, “Yuangu Yanpinglu zongguan Xiangjun muzhiming – youxu” 元故延平路總管項君墓誌銘 – 有序 [Tomb inscription for Gentleman Xiang, former official in Yuan Yanping Prefecture – with preface], in *Song Xueshi wenji* 宋學士文集 [Collected works of Song Lian] (Sibu congkan ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1937) 34.456–59. Song Lian was an important Confucian thinker and writer from Jinhua in the late Yuan, and was part of the group of Chinese literati that Zhu Yuanzhang relied on for advice in the first decades of his Ming dynasty. Among other things, Song Lian was one of the *Yuanshi* compilers appointed by Zhu Yuanzhang. See Frederick W. Mote, “Sung Lien,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368-1644*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), Vol. 2, 1225-31, for more information.

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and renown as an official.²² By the Yuan period, Quanzhou (on the Fujian coast) already had a long history as one of China's most important port cities, dating back as far as the Tang dynasty. Moreover, as a major port of entry, Quanzhou was also home to a large community of foreigners. The city and the surrounding region had played an important role in the Mongol conquest of south China, and Quanzhou continued to be an important port and regional center in southeast China in the Yuan.²³

According to a local gazetteer from the area, Yuli established a reputation as a responsible official in Quanzhou, and was involved in many different activities that benefited the local population.

In the mid-Zhizheng era [1341–1368] he was promoted to the position of Director of Quanzhou. He built up the city's walls, dredged the rivers, instituted schools, repaired bridges, and gave relief to the poor. He [also] examined maps and records, and sought out the oral history [of Quanzhou], and asked Wu Jian, who lived at Sanshan, to compile the “Supplementary Gazetteer of Qingyuan” 清源續志 to supplement the history of the area.²⁴

²² There is disagreement in the sources as to Xie Yuli's precise position at Quanzhou. The *Min shu* records Yuli as a Director (*jian*) of Quanzhou, while all other sources report that he was an Agent (*darughachi*).

²³ Edward H. Schafer, *The Empire of Min* (Rutland: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1954), provides a good history of the region. See also Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²⁴ He, *Min shu* 53.30b. He Qiaoyuan, a native of Quanzhou, compiled the *Min shu* in 1640. See Wolfgang Franke, *An Introduction to the Sources of Ming History* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968), 247, for a description of this gazetteer. Qingyuan was the ancient name for the area.

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Yuli was obviously an active and effective overseer who initiated a number of public works projects and tried to better the lives of the people in Quanzhou. Among the many public works that Yuli was responsible for during his tenure at Quanzhou was the rebuilding of the Quanzhou mosque (called the Qingjing Mosque). According to the Quanzhou prefectural gazetteer:

The repair of the mosque Ch'ing-ching-ssu was one of his [Xie Yuli's] achievements. In the 12th year of Chih-cheng (1352 A.D.) he carried on the repair of the wall of Ch'üan-chou. Up to his time the wing wall [翼城] that You [sic] Chiu-kung 游九功, chief of the district, had constructed in the third year of Shao-ding of the Sung (1230 A.D.), surrounded the southern outside of the exterior wall [外城 羅城] which faced the southern port of Ch'üan-chou. Hsieh Yü-li removed the part of the exterior wall which went side by side with the wing wall and reinforced the wing wall to the height of twofold altitude, i.e. 2 *chang* and 1 *ch'ih*. By this construction the moat surrounding the outer side of the old exterior wall was included within the reinforced wall so that it became usable as a canal, after it was dredged.²⁵

Maejima summarizes an inscription written to commemorate the repair of the Qingjing Mosque 清淨寺 in Quanzhou. That inscription, which was composed by the same Wu Jian whom Xie Yuli had asked to compile the new gazetteer of Qingyuan, is important for the evidence it provides about the Muslim community in Quanzhou in the late Yuan, as well as for information on Xie Yuli.²⁶ It is

²⁵ Translation from Shinji Maejima, "The Muslims in Ch'üan-chou at the End of the Yüan Dynasty," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 31 (1973): 44-45, citing the *Quanzhou fuzhi* (Qianlong ed.) 11. I have not been able to consult the original Quanzhou gazetteer.

²⁶ The Qingjing Mosque still exists in Quanzhou. For a description and photograph of that mosque, see *Zhongguo mingsheng cidian* 中国名胜

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thanks to Wu Jian that a number of documents and epigraphic texts survive that shed light on aspects of the history of Quanzhou, including a “Record of the Mosque” that he compiled in 1349.²⁷ Very little is known about Wu Jian 吳鑾 apart from the fact that he came from Fuzhou (referred to in these sources by its formal name of Sanshan 三山).²⁸ As one of Yuli’s main advisors at Quanzhou, Wu Jian produced several written documents that were commissioned by Yuli, or produced during Yuli’s tenure there as Agent.

The Qingjing Mosque appears to have been an important institution for the community of Muslims who lived at Quanzhou. The mosque was staffed by a number of Arabs and Central Asians, at least some of whom appear to have made the *hajj* and who were leaders of the Islamic community there. According to Maejima, that community of Muslims was still active in Quanzhou in the early decades of the Ming; he cites an inscription in the wall of this same Qingjing Mosque, dated 1407, in which the Yongle Emperor commended the leader of the community there, a certain Milihaizi 米里哈只 (Mir Hajji).

Xie Yuli also commissioned the compilation of the first gazetteer of Quanzhou in the Yuan period. According to Maejima, the “Supplemental Gazetteer of Qingyuan,” which Wu Jian compiled on orders from Yuli, and which

词典 [Guidebook to famous places in China] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1981), Vol. 2, 505. I thank Nancy Steinhardt for this information.

²⁷ *Qingzhen siji* 清淨寺記. See Maejima, “Muslims in Ch’üan-chou,” 37, for that inscription.

²⁸ The gazetteer for Sanshan is one of the surviving Song-era gazetteers; Liang Kejia 梁克家, *Chunxi Sanshan zhi* 淳熙三山志 [Gazetteer of Sanshan] (1174–90; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1976). For information on this gazetteer, see also Etienne Balazs and Yves Hervouet, *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 149.

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was published in 1351, was the first local gazetteer for Quanzhou published in over one hundred years.²⁹ For his achievements as an official in Quanzhou, a memorial shrine was erected in Yuli's honor in Quanzhou, and his old friend, Wu Jian, wrote the inscription: "[I]n the tenth year of Chih-cheng (1350 A.D.) of the Yüan, people of the district raised a shrine for Hsieh Yü-li, Darhachi at that time, and erected there a monument with the inscription by Wu Chien of San-shan."³⁰ This honor that was bestowed on Yuli during his lifetime by the elite of Quanzhou is evidence that he was held by them in high esteem. In spite of his high standing at Quanzhou, Yuli did not settle there. Instead, he chose to remain active as a *Semuren* official, and continued to lead the peripatetic life of the official.

At some point around 1352 Yuli was sent even further south as an investigation official. This appears to have been a demotion since he was assigned as an assistant official (*qianshi*) in Huguang. He was eventually promoted when he was sent to Haibei and Hainan as a Commissioner in the Regional Investigation Bureau.³¹ This probably occurred in the mid-1350s, but we do not know the precise dates of his tenures in any of these offices, nor his exact duties. The regional Investigation Bureaus were branches of the censorate that were meant to extend the power of the central censorate over all areas of China. Since Yuli was one of two Commissioners in charge of the Investigation Office that oversaw the entire Haibei-Hainan region of south China, he would have had enormous power, and it was most certainly a promotion in office. However, Yuli

²⁹ Maejima, "Muslims in Ch'üan-chou," 40–42. See Maejima's informative discussion of Quanzhou gazetteers.

³⁰ Maejima, "Muslims in Ch'üan-chou," 46, citing the "Comprehensive Gazetteer of Min" (八閩通志) 59. I have not been able to consult this gazetteer.

³¹ His duties at Haibei and Hainan are described in Chen, *Jinling tongzhuan* 9.3a.

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may not have viewed his promotion as entirely positive since by that time the Mongols were really starting to lose control in the south. Curiously, this part of Yuli's career is shrouded in mystery; none of the sources comment on his time in south China, or the end of his life.

Yuli's peripatetic life as an official in south and southeast China also contributed to his work as a poet. We know this because of the themes that he used in some of his poetry. A few of his poems were considered important enough to be included in a comprehensive anthology of Yuan poetry. Yuli's reputation among his peers as a learned man is also confirmed by his promotion to the Hanlin Academy, which was then dominated by influential Chinese.

Xie Yuli as a Member of the Social Elite

We know about Xie Yuli's close relationship to his aristocratic Chinese contemporaries via the poems and essays that many of them wrote in his honor. For example, the respected writer Gong Shitai 貢師泰 (1298–1362) wrote two poems honoring Yuli. Gong had a long career as a scholar and official in the late Yuan period. He was appointed to various important positions at the court, including the Hanlin Academy, the State History Office, and the Ministry of Personnel. He was a Vice Minister in the Ministry of Personnel (*libu shilang*) in 1352, the same year that Yuli's brother, Xie Zhedu, was a Minister of that same bureau (see below).³²

Gong's poems evoke a picture of friendship between these two men. His first poem, titled "On the Departure at the Quanzhou Post Station of Prefect Xie

³² Primary sources pertinent to Gong include his official biography, *Yuanshi* 187.4294–96; and the extensive introduction, chronology and biography included with his collected works, *Wan Zhai ji* 玩齋集 (Siku Quanshu ed.; rpt. Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1972).

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Yuli,” makes it clear that Gong knew Yuli when they both lived in Quanzhou, and that Yuli left his position as Prefect to take up some other post, presumably at the court. “I urge the official to decline [involvement in] government affairs, for ten thousand *li* dense clouds will follow the man of responsibility,... Let’s release goldfish and go buy some farewell wine, Lake Zheng below the Luoyang Bridge is calm.”³³

Gong’s other poem for Yuli, titled “Sent to the [Hanlin] Writer Xie Yuanlu at the Ancestral Shrine of the [Four] Seas and [Five] Mountains,” is more difficult to interpret than the previous one, but it verifies Xie Yuli’s appointment to the Hanlin Academy.³⁴ We also know from this poem that Xie Yuli adopted an additional literary style name, Yuanlu. The context of the poem seems to be the Yuan court, where Yuli was serving when the poem was written. “The Son of Heaven goes behind the vermilion screen, and officials in the ancestral temple serve [him] in the Jade Hall; incense wafts throughout the hall and has no escape, and their prayers that issue forth through the north gate are written down [by Yuli?]....”³⁵ This may reflect the fact that Gong sent his poem to his old friend who was now an official at court, whereas the previous poem was more private in nature, between two friends.

Another Chinese writer, Zhang Zhu 張翥 (1287–1368), also wrote a poem for Yuli. Zhang Zhu was an important court official from north central China. He served in a series of high-level positions at the Yuan court,

³³ Gong Shitai, “Quanzhouyi bie taishou Xie Shiyu” 泉州驛別太守偁世玉, in *Wan Zhai ji* 4.35b. For comments on the Luoyang Bridge at the northern end of Quanzhou bay, see Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959), 597.

³⁴ Gong Shitai, “Song Xie Yuanlu yingfeng daici haiyou” 送偁元魯應奉代祠海嶽, in *Wan Zhai ji* 3.6a

³⁵ Gong, *Wan Zhai ji* 3.6a.

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including a turn as an imperial tutor, an Erudite at the office of Imperial Sacrifices, and at least two different postings to the Hanlin Academy. He was also a member of the team that compiled the Song, Liao and Jin dynastic histories. Zhang's obscure poem, entitled "Sent to Xie Yuanlu Who Was Sent to Xiangnan Peak in Nanhai," corroborates Yuli's assignment as a *Semuren* official in the Haibei and Hainan Regional Investigation Bureau.³⁶ Nanhai was located in the far south (at present-day Guangzhou), and was, coincidentally, in the same area where his grandfather, Qara Buqa, was killed as a *Semuren* official in 1284.

Zhang's poem is interesting because he paints a picture of south China as a wild frontier area full of hidden dangers. This attitude was typical of Chinese literati from the north, and Zhang was no exception, coming as he did from Qinning Prefecture, Shanxi Province. But in the face of the breakdown of Mongol authority in the region, this perception may have had some basis in fact. Zhang expressed his concern for his friend's future in typical fashion, by writing a poem for him. "In the Tiankai period the area of Red Peak [i.e. south China] was incorporated [into the realm. This area in the south adjoins a great wild area. Those who serve in office there maintain the law and rites, and the gods clearly and diligently guard our country's frontiers... Take care that you, official and man of letters, pray with sincerity, [or] in your wish to govern with justice, evil may fall upon you."³⁷

This poem corroborates Yuli's transfer to south China, specifically Hainan, as a *Semuren* official. Also of note, Zhang's phrase "official and man of letters" to describe Xie Yuli is in keeping with the traditional Chinese

³⁶ Zhang Zhu, "Song Xie Yuanlu jiang Xiangnanyou Nanhai" 送偃元鲁降香南岳南海, in *Tui An ji* 蜕菴集 [Collected works of Zhang Zhu] (Siku Quanshu ed.; rpt. Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1972) 4.27b–28a.

³⁷ Zhang, *Tui An ji* 4.27b–28a.

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ideal of the scholar-official, clear indication that he had attained that status among his Chinese peers. Finally, the poem is important because it shows us the friendship between Yuli and Zhang. We do not know where they became acquainted, the extent of their friendship, nor even when Zhang wrote this poem. Nevertheless, the fact that such an important person as Zhang took the time to write a poem to Yuli indicates not only that Yuli had developed a wide network of friends and acquaintances among the most prominent Chinese of the day, but also that at least some of those relationships were carried on by exchanging poems over long distance.

Yuli was certainly capable of participating in that kind of pure literati exchange because he had mastered the art of writing *shi* poetry. Some of his own poems have been preserved in the Qing anthology of Yuan poetry, *Yuanshi xuan*, under the title “Collected Poems of Mr. [Xie] Shiyu.”³⁸ This collection itself is unfortunately no longer extant, but some poems of Xie Yuli and his younger brother Xie Zhedu, along with their biographies, were included in *Yuanshi xuan*. The purpose of this anthology was to prove to a Qing period audience that Chinese culture had flourished during the non-Chinese Yuan Dynasty, and the compiler, Gu Sili, felt the best way to do that was to

³⁸ See “Shiyu ji” 世玉集 in Gu Sili 顧嗣立, ed. *Yuanshi xuan* 元詩選 [Anthology of Yuan Dynasty poetry] (microfilm of 1720 edition). Xie Yuli’s poetry is located in the “geng” 庚 section of this large work. I am indebted to Martin J. Heijdra for supplying a copy of this text for me. See Lynn, *Kuan Yün-Shih*, 67ff., for the history of this anthology and its role in Ming and Qing literary criticism. The poets represented all adopted the *shi* style, as a sign of their erudition and adherence to that classical style that epitomized poetry of the Tang period. Revival of *shi*-style poetry also had the effect of distancing those poets from their contemporaries who were writing plays, poetry, and other literature in vernacular language. Both Xie Yuli’s and Xie Zhedu’s poems have also been reprinted in Wang Shupan, ed., *Yuandai shaoshu minzu shixuan*, 137–44.

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present a comprehensive collection of poetry from the Yuan period as evidence of the high literary achievement of the time. Fortunately for us, the works of several *Semuren* poets, including those of the Xie family, were included in the collection.

Eleven of Yuli's poems, along with a lengthy biography of Yuli, were included in *Yuanshi xuan*. His biography in that collection is important because it is the most comprehensive for Yuli in any primary source. Just as important, however, for our purposes, are Yuli's poems themselves. Some of them confirm, directly or indirectly, statements made about Yuli's career in his biography or other sources. They also demonstrate that Yuli was a competent writer of *shi*-style poetry.

As we can see from the titles of Yuli's poems, they are related to his travels, and they range from descriptions of places where Yuli visited, to historical persons, to scenes of natural beauty. All of his poems were written in five or seven character stanzas, in traditional *shi* style. True to that style, Yuli used highly stylized language, and larded his poems with frequent allusions to figures or ideas in the Chinese classics and history. The titles of his poems include: "Pond in the Hermit's Garden in Jiang," "Poem upon Climbing up to the Pavilion of Virtuous Breezes," "Wandering along Qin Creek," "Respectfully Appended to the Ode to Boyi written by Fan Wenzheng," "The Grottos of Qingyuan," "The Duke of Lu's Pavilion," "A Visit to the Tianshi Palace," "The Stone Drum Academy," "On the Road to Ji Prefecture," "Luohan Peak," and finally "Pavilion of Heavenly Breezes and Sea Clouds."³⁹ Space limitations prevent me from commenting on all of his poems, but even a brief look at some of them will convey the overall sense of his poetry.

³⁹ Xie Yuli, "Shi Yu ji," in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, geng, 1a–4a.

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The first poem in the anthology, “Pond in the Hermit’s Garden in Jiang,” has an introduction attached that provides some background to the poem and fills in a few of the gaps in our knowledge of Yuli’s life.⁴⁰ According to the introduction, Yuli wrote this poem in 1345 as he was passing through Jiang village. The occasion was Yuli’s return to public life after a time in exile, and the tenor of this long poem is longing for the past. The introduction sets the mood of the poem:

On my way through Jiang I climbed up to the garden pond. The pavilion and hut that were there earlier were all gone. By the swiftly moving stream I set up a lone pavilion and planted some flowers, and it looked as before, as a flowing spring and lotus flowers in the pond. There was a bank of willows and dark shade along the stream, flowers along the path and a few shoots of bamboo in the courtyard, and a gentle breeze blew through them. I had thoughts of the other world, and set them down in this poem.⁴¹

Yuli’s long poem that follows this introduction adopts themes laid out in the introduction. The author contrasts the progression of time in the world, marked by the succession of dynasties and generations of people, with the changelessness of life in the mountains, marked by the scenes of nature, the old pavilion in Jiang, and the old man who lived there. These are classic themes in Chinese poetry, where the retired official has been recalled to active duty, and accepts the call with deep reservation and longing for the life of the recluse. More directly on point, however, we must ask where this particular poem fits in with what we know of Yuli’s public life. None of the primary sources

⁴⁰ 絳守居園池. The first stanza of the poem says the old name of Jiang village was Fan 藩. I have not been able to determine the location of this place.

⁴¹ Xie Yuli, “Shi Yu ji,” in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, geng, 1b.

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make any comment on Yuli's having been forced out of office or into exile, yet the preface to this poem says this was the case. All that we can deduce is that his demotion must have occurred before he went to Quanzhou, since we know that he took up his post at Quanzhou in 1349. The poem does not reveal any details of Yuli's period of exile, but we get the clear sense from it of his longing for that life in reclusion, and regret in having to re-enter public life again. Here, he echoes the familiar pattern of the morally upright man who withdraws from daily affairs to preserve his integrity so common in imperial China.⁴²

One other poem may refer to Yuli's public life as an official. His poem "On the Way to Ji Prefecture" may have been written when Yuli was being transferred from Quanzhou south, to a new official position as an assistant official in Huguang.⁴³ Two different Ji Prefectures existed in Yuan China, and the poem does not specifically assign the context to either one. As Wang Shupan and his fellow compilers comment, it seems likely that the setting was Ji'an, in Jiangxi Province, and that Yuli went through Ji'an on his way to Huguang.⁴⁴ Certainly the feelings evoked in each of the three sections of this poem are consistent with departure from a familiar place into the unknown, accompanied by a longing to escape from reality. A feeling of isolation pervades the first section of the poem: "With snow on the mountains and clouds layering the hills I look toward Ji Prefecture. Clear green frost sparkles everywhere around me."⁴⁵ These themes of isolation in nature continue in the next sections of the poem, and the reader is left with

⁴² On reclusion in imperial China, see Alan J. Berkowitz, "The Moral Hero: a Pattern of Reclusion in Traditional China," *Monumenta Serica* 40 (1992): 1-32; and Mote, "Confucian Eremitism in the Yuan Period."

⁴³ Xie Yuli, "Jizhou dao zhong" 吉州道中, in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan, geng*, 3b.

⁴⁴ See Wang Shupan, *Yuandai shaoshu minzu shixuan*, 137 n. 1.

⁴⁵ Gu, *Yuanshi xuan, geng*, 3b.

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a feeling that Xie Yuli wishes to escape from the world. Again, his feelings of frustration make sense given the breakdown of Mongol political authority and concomitant chaos and uncertainty at that time.

Several of Yuli's poems were written after a visit to a temple, the mountain retreats of writers or recluses, or even historical sites. These poems share themes of nature, the supernatural, or a general longing for the past, and contain references that would only have been understood and appreciated by a very well read audience. For example, the poem "Wandering along the Jin Creek" commemorates a visit to the site of the ancient Jin ancestral temple. It is a long poem filled with scenes of an old temple situated on a mountain, and with dense descriptions of the surroundings. The last two stanzas bring home for the reader the real effect the scene had on the author: "I hear the sound of a drum on the very top of Green Mountain, and [saw] an immortal floating in a white cloud; it disappeared before long, [and then] only the sound of a crane's cry was [heard] high in the sky."⁴⁶

The appeal to literati tastes is nowhere more directly expressed than in Yuli's short essay titled "Appended to the Poem 'Boyi Odes' Written by Fan Wenzheng":

Wenzheng is an erudite of the ages, his refined and loyal spirit has not departed. His name is as weighty as the mountains, and his writings are still relevant. Tall, ancient trees reach up to Heaven, and lightly scented flowers waft their fragrant scent in wave upon wave. I came to his ancestral temple to pay him homage, wishing to wash in the river.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Xie Yuli, "Wandering Along the Jin Creek" 遊晉溪, in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan, geng*, 2b.

⁴⁷ The text reads: 敬題范文正公所書伯夷頌卷尾. See Wang Shupan, et al., *Yuandai shaoshu minzu shixuan*, 139–40, for helpful annotations of this poem. Wenzheng was the posthumous honorific title of the Northern Song scholar-official Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052). Fan

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The title of this essay establishes an image of Yuli as a traditional literatus of the time; the very fact that he invokes the famous Song scholar-official and reformer Fan Zhongyan (Wenzheng) in his poem would have been ample proof to any contemporaneous Chinese reader of Yuli's understanding and appreciation of the Chinese literati tradition, and that he felt secure enough in his own identity to express his own thoughts about Fan in writing.

A few of Yuli's poems seem much more rooted in mystical visions or fantasies of longing and these themes, too, would have appealed to many Chinese literati readers. One such poem, in which Yuli evokes the mystical world, is "The Qingyuan Grotto" (清源洞). The setting for this poem appears to be Quanzhou (known by its old name Qingyuan), but Yuli paints his old haunt in very otherworldly tones.

Spirits and fairies go into the grotto and do not
reappear, while in Qingyuan purple hats [officials?]
are raised up against the cold. To the south of Quan
[Quanzhou?] lies the immeasurable land of the
Buddha, and in the sea off Min [Fujian] lies the
supreme mountain Penglai. In the moonlit night a
phoenix [flies] and pipes make a crying sound
(*yinyin*), in the autumn breeze a crane [flies] and the
pendants on my belt tinkle....⁴⁸

was one of the most famous Song literati, not least because of his attempts to reform the imperial government and the long success of his clan's charitable estate. For more on Fan, see James T. C. Liu, "Fan Chung-Yen," in *Sung Biographies*, ed. Herbert Franke (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), 321-30; and Denis Twitchett, "The Fan Clan's Charitable Estate," in *Confucianism in Action*, ed. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 97-133.

⁴⁸ Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, geng, 2b.

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These poems are filled with obscure references to people and places that could only be appreciated by someone who had been well schooled in classical Chinese prose, poetry, and history.

It is obvious that Yuli was thoroughly versed in the various *shi*-style poetic forms, was fluent in classical Chinese literature and history, and understood Chinese cultural tastes. Yuli was also a member of a smaller fraternity of *Semuren* individuals whose poetry was well enough known to merit inclusion in Gu's anthology of Yuan poets. Yuli's ability to write this kind of poetry, and his appreciation of literati conventions and tastes, also reflect the larger strategy of his extended family, whereby he "used Confucian studies to launch his career."⁴⁹ The nature and content of Yuli's poems reveal him as a highly literate man who could and did participate in this form of elite cultural activity during his life. Yuli's younger brother, Xie Zhedu, was even more astute in adapting to the predominant Chinese culture while also occupying positions of great power as a *Semuren* official.

Xie Zhedu as a Member of the Semuren Political Elite

The Uyghur Xie family reached their greatest success in Yuan political and social circles with Wenzhi's third son, Xie Zhedu 契哲篤. Zhedu was the first Xie family member to obtain the *jinshi* degree, and he eventually served in the highest levels of Yuan government as Minister of Personnel, where he was involved in determining fiscal policy, among other things. Zhedu also made a name for himself as a Chinese-style literatus, and is an important figure in the long-term history of the Xie family, because it was through

⁴⁹ His biography in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, geng, 1a, is the only source that provides this interesting attribute: "Yuli yi ruye qi jia" 玉立以儒業起家.

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his direct descendants that the Xie family continued to exist in China long after his time.

Xie Zhedu first held office as a junior member of the Longxing Prefecture (*Longxing lu* 龍興路) Municipal Affairs Office (*lushi si*) in present-day Nanchang, Jiangxi. Since his family lived in Jiangxi at the time, this appointment may have been entirely due to his father's influence there. He also held this office before 1315, when he took and passed the *jinshi* exams. Zhedu had some prominent Chinese cohorts in that exam, such as Ouyang Xuan, Xu Youren, Huang Jin, and the *Semuren* poet Ma Zuchang. After he obtained the degree, Zhedu was promoted with the honorary title Grandee of the Nineteenth Class (*Zhongxun Dafu*) and the position of Magistrate of Gaoyou Prefecture (高郵州, northeast of Nanjing). The Gaoyou gazetteer reports that he was a good administrator, diligent in his duties, and noted especially for repairing dikes that protected the northern part of the prefectural city of Gaoyou. Zhedu was also nominated for a position in the Nanjing administration in 1329, but does not appear to have filled that position.⁵⁰ This may have been because in the same year he was appointed to an even more important position in the Office of Imperial Sacrifices in the Southern Pavilion (*Nantai*) office of the Censorate.⁵¹

Sometime thereafter, Zhedu was promoted to the position of Assistant Surveillance Commissioner for

⁵⁰ Zhang Xuan 張鉉, *Jinling xinzhì* 金陵新志 [New gazetteer of Jinling] (1308–11 ed.; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshu guan, 1977) 6.27. Jinling is the old name for Nanjing.

⁵¹ Most of the primary sources report Zhedu's appointment to the Southern Censorate, which was probably the Branch Censorate for the Several Jiangnan Regions, having jurisdiction over the southeast provinces Jiangzhe, Jiangxi, and Huguang. Its offices were located in Jiankang (modern Nanjing). However, one source reports Zhedu's appointment to the Western Branch Censorate (see my discussion of Yu Ji's poem, below).

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Guangdong. The sources report that Zhedu was “falsely accused” or impeached while he was there, and then Zhedu resigned his office and moved to Liyang County, where his father had retired. A tomb inscription written for Zhedu’s wife by the prominent Chinese writer Huang Jin, provides a detailed account of the Xie family at that time:

Zhedu was sent to manage the affairs of the Guangdong Pacification Office, [but] was impeached. To avoid [those who] opposed him he gave up his seal of office and resigned. He then went with his wife to Jiangdong, where his father [Xie Wenzhi] had purchased land in Liyang, at Sandy Creek in Yongcheng village. He [Zhedu] honored his ancestors and his own family there by reverently arranging the ancestral graves, offering wine and praying aloud, saying, “May my new wife assist my sons in maintaining our family’s tombs, in sacrificing to the filial [i.e., Zhedu’s father, Wenzhi], and in maintaining her respect. I pray that my offspring will all resemble my wife in her virtue.”⁵²

We are not told the nature of the accusation against Zhedu, but it may have been due to policies enacted by the Prime Minister Bayan to impose strict divisions between Chinese and non-Chinese people. Bayan was convinced that there was too much fraternization between these two groups, which he felt went against Qubilai Qan’s original intentions. One example of Bayan’s policies was his termination of the civil service exams in 1335. Since Zhedu was obviously one of the *Semuren* who found Chinese culture and the Chinese literati congenial, he may have

⁵² Huang Jin, “Weijun furen Weiwushi muzhiming” 魏郡夫人偉吾氏墓誌銘 [Tomb inscription of the Uyghur Mistress of Wei Prefecture], in *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji* [Collected works of Mr. Huang Jin of Jinhua] (Sibu congkan ed.; rpt. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1922) 39.18a. See further comments on Zhedu’s wife, and this inscription below.

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been criticized by zealous officials who were carrying out Bayan's program.

As I have already discussed (see Chapter 5), it is not clear why Zhedu's father, Xie Wenzhi, decided to move to Liyang in his retirement, rather than to Jiangxi where his sons had taken their *jinshi* degrees and where they had already established a name for themselves. One would think that there might have been some pull to return to Shandong where he grew up, but that was clearly out at this point. For whatever reasons, however, this passage makes clear that Wenzhi and his family engaged in the kinds of activities that would ensure their identity with Liyang, the most important of which was relocating their ancestral graves. It also reveals the extent to which the Xie family accepted Confucian conventions about family rites. It would be overly cynical to attribute these acts solely to a calculated strategy to build or reinforce the family's identity as Chinese-style social elites, but relocating the ancestral graves to their new home was certainly an effective way to integrate into Liyang society. One manifestation of that success is that Xie men from Zhedu's generation on were known as "Liyang natives" (溧陽人).

In Zhedu's case, his identity as a Liyang person was also reinforced by the fact that he purchased land and built his own residence there after he was forced into retirement. The sources do not tell us why Zhedu did not simply settle into his father's residence. It is possible that the family compound had grown too small for him and his family. Zhedu retired from his position in Guangdong sometime in the 1330s, and his father died in 1340. Zhedu may also have wanted to establish his identity in the community as a person of means, and purchasing his own property and building his own residence would certainly have accomplished that goal, and contributed to the other forms of cultural and social capital his family had already accrued to that point. Perhaps the clearest evidence that Zhedu

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understood this process is the fact that he borrowed the sobriquet “Family of the three virtuous ones and six *jinshi*” for his new residence and attached hall (*Sanjie Liugui Tang*), and hired a local Chinese tutor for his sons.⁵³

Sometime after 1341, Zhedu was called back into official duty, this time to the court in Dadu where he was appointed to the position of Minister of Personnel (*libu shangshu*). He was one of three ministers in charge of this important office that controlled the selection, appointment and evaluation of all civil service officials, and it was during his tenure in that position that he became involved in a major reform of the Yuan currency system in 1351.

Paper money had been introduced in the Song period, but it was the Mongols who perfected the system, and historians have long remarked on the success of the Yuan government in developing and maintaining a stable paper currency over the duration of the dynasty. This represented a significant development in the power of the central government vis-à-vis regional or local powers, who often minted their own currency in attempts to assert their authority. The Mongols were naturally concerned about competing centers of authority, and very early recognized the importance of establishing a uniform system of currency in maintaining their control over China.⁵⁴ As early

⁵³ Xie Wenzhi also used at least the first part of that sobriquet, “three virtuous ones,” for his residence in Yuzhang town, Jiangxi, and perhaps the same full sobriquet that his son used in Liyang. As we have seen, some poems and essays written in Wenzhi’s honor referred to his Jiangxi residence by the full name “Hall of Three Worthies and Six *Jinshi*.” Since Wenzhi’s sons and nephew all obtained their *jinshi* degrees while he was living in Jiangxi, it is possible that Wenzhi himself used that full title for his residence and hall.

⁵⁴ On the Yuan currency system and fiscal history, see especially: Lien-sheng Yang, *Money and Credit in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952, 1971); Herbert F. Schurmann, *Economic Structure of the Yüan Dynasty: Translation of Chapters 93 and 94 of the *Yüan Shih** (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956);

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as 1236 the Mongols, on the advice of their Jurchen advisor, Yelü Chucai, issued paper currency in North China. It was called the *jiaochao* exchange note, using the same name as the old Jurchen Jin paper currency. We do not know how long it was issued, or whether it was actually circulated and used throughout north China. In fact, a variety of paper currencies were produced and circulated in north China up to Qubilai's accession in 1260. When Qubilai came to power as the supreme Qan, he implemented a currency reform that was a major innovation; three paper currencies were issued, two based for the first time in Chinese history on silver reserves. Of these latter two silver-based currencies, the one known as the *Zhongtong yuanbao jiaochao* ("primary treasury exchange note of the *Zhongtong* era [1260–1263]") proved to be the most stable. It quickly became the major form of paper currency in China, and it circulated in China until the end of the Yuan dynasty. When the Mongols completed the conquest of south China, they also introduced the *Zhongtong* currency there, and the population was allowed to exchange their old Song notes for the Mongol currency.

There were, however, three subsequent changes, or additions, to the Mongol currency system after 1260. A new paper currency, the *Zhiyuan chao*, was introduced in 1287–1288, and yet another paper currency, the *Zhida yinchao*, was issued in 1309–1310. The latter, however, was abolished after 1312, and until 1350 both the

Herbert Franke, *Geld und Wirtschaft in China unter der Mongolen-Herrschaft: Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Yüan-Zeit* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1949), esp. 34ff.; Hok-lam Chan, "Appendix 3: The Yüan Currency System," in *The Government of China Under Mongolian Rule*, David M. Farquhar (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990), 445–56; and Nancy S. Steinhardt, "Currency Issues of Yüan China," *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 16 (1980): 59–81. The main primary source that deals with Yuan currency is the chapter on food and money in *Yuanshi* 93, "Shi Huo zhi" 食貨志.

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Zhongtong and *Zhiyuan* notes circulated throughout Yuan China. In 1350 yet another currency was introduced into the system. That later paper currency was confusingly called the *Zhongtong jiaochao* (also known informally as the *Zhizheng chao* to avoid confusion), apparently in an attempt to hearken back to the good old days of Qubilai Qan's era. By the late 1340s there was an increasingly tight supply of money in circulation, and problems such as counterfeiting were on the rise. As Hok-lam Chan notes, this was also the beginning of a period of massive inflation, and the start of the downward slide of the stability of the Yuan economy.

The major impetus for currency reform at that time, however, was the activist Prime Minister Toghto. Toghto served twice as Prime Minister, his first appointment (1340 to 1344) coming after the conservative Bayan. His first administration exemplified a reaction to Bayan, and promulgation of policies that included Chinese literati in government. Among other things, Toghto reinstituted the civil service exams, and provided funds and personnel to complete the drafting of the Song, Liao and Jin dynastic histories.⁵⁵ His activist government was opposed by conservative elements, and Toghto resigned in 1344 after a series of rebellions broke out across China.⁵⁶ Returning to office in 1349, he immediately set about to restore activism to the central government. One manifestation of Toghto's activism was the spate of public works projects that he initiated, for which increased state funding was required. In 1350, Toghto came up with the idea of issuing a new paper currency as a way to finance his projects. Wu Qi 武祺, an

⁵⁵ On this issue, see Hok-lam Chan, "Chinese Official Historiography at the Yüan Court: The Composition of the Liao, Chin, and Sung Histories," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 56–106.

⁵⁶ See Dardess, *Conquerors and Confucians*, esp. 75ff. Toghto's second administration is discussed in detail by Dardess at pp. 95–118.

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official in the Ministry of Revenue, and Xie Zhedu, Minister of Personnel at the time, both backed Toghto's plan.⁵⁷ In discussions at the court over the issue, Zhedu added his own suggestion that the government increase the minting of copper coins in addition to the new paper currency. An entry in the dynastic history reveals details of these discussions at the court, including Zhedu's contributions to the plan:

Toghto, Chief Councilor on the Right in the central government, assembled the ministers of the Central Secretariat to discuss adopting a new currency.... The Minister of Personnel, Xie Zhedu, and the General Secretary of the Office of the Left, Wu Qi, both supported the plan to introduce the new currency. Xie Zhedu said "The currency exchange must be changed so that one guan of paper currency corresponds to 1000 copper coins, and the standard of basis is now the paper currency."... [after much argument and dispute by other ministers] Xie Zhedu and Wu Qi said: "Since there are many counterfeits of the *Zhiyuan* paper currency, it must be changed."⁵⁸

Xie Zhedu was obviously sympathetic with Toghto's realist, or pragmatic approach to government, and a member of the "reform" faction of Confucianists who allied themselves with him. Zhedu's alliance with Toghto's faction is also made clear by the career of his eldest son, Xie Boliaoxun, who was given a post in the office that oversaw the education of the heir apparent, the *Duanben Tang* (an office that Toghto created in 1349 as a sop to conservative Confucianists at the court; see below). Finally, the assignment of Zhedu's brother, Xie Liechi, to north

⁵⁷ For information on Wu Qi, see Ke Shaomin, *Xin Yuanshi* 113.1a–4b, pp. 1937–38.

⁵⁸ *Yuanshi* 97.2483–85. Franke includes an extended translation of this passage in his study; see his *Geld und Wirtschaft in China*, 95–98.

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China at that time may also have been related to Toghto's power bloc at the court.

The sources are less clear about Xie Zhedu's career trajectory after 1350. Several sources report that Zhedu was transferred to the Ministry of Works (*gongbu*) after his tenure in the Ministry of Personnel, but we have no information on his activities or dates that he served in that ministry. Zhedu was assigned to the position of Minister on the Right in the Jiangxi Provincial Secretariat after his stint in the central government, and one source even indicates that he was appointed concurrently as an Assistant Grand Councilor and Junior Lord in the Agriculture Office in Jiangzhe Province.⁵⁹ Since we don't know the dates of these postings, it is unclear if they were related to Toghto's dismissal in 1355, or whether they reflect Toghto's policy of assigning loyal and trusted men to the provinces to insure that his various public works projects were carried out.⁶⁰

At any rate, by the time Zhedu settled once again in Liyang he had joined the ranks of the Chinese social elite: he owned land, he established a soon-to-be famous study hall attached to his personal residence that attracted students, and he contributed to the cultural life of the area

⁵⁹ See Zhao Pang 趙昉, below.

⁶⁰ One famous example of Toghto's public works projects was the re-channeling of the Yellow River south of the Shandong peninsula. According to Dardess, Toghto's plan was opposed by several conservative officials, who wanted to carry out a simpler, far less costly plan of building dikes on the banks of the existing riverbed. Among the officials who toured the area and disagreed with Toghto's plan were the Minister of Works and the Grand Minister of Agriculture. Toghto's plan was approved by the emperor, in spite of the resistance of these officials and the warnings from conservative Confucianists that popular rebellion would break out in the area once the project was begun. While the sources do not mention Zhedu in connection with this project, his assignment to the Ministry of Agriculture in Jiangzhe may have been connected to Toghto's plans.

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by his own literary achievements and the ongoing achievements of his sons. Since Zhedu was so clearly allied with Toghto, he was assuredly popular among at least some prominent Chinese personnel there, as reflected in the large number of encomia written about him and his family by such luminaries as Huang Jin, Yu Ji, Liu Ji, Guo Junyuan, Xu Youren, Su Tianjue and Kong Keqi.

Xie Zhedu as a Member of the Social Elite

One of the most interesting pieces of evidence that sheds light on Xie Zhedu's personal life, and the lifestyles that many *Semuren* such as Zhedu adopted, is the eulogy composed for Zhedu's wife when she died in 1341. This "Tomb inscription for the Uyghur Mistress of Wei Prefecture" was written by the well-known Chinese writer Huang Jin 黃潛 (1277–1357), the famous Confucianist from Jinhua.⁶¹ Zhedu was married to a woman named Yuelunshihudu 月倫石護篤 (Yelunq Qutuq?), the eldest daughter of a prominent Uyghur *Semuren* by the name of Talima Jierde, of the Gusulu clan (古速魯達里麻吉而的).⁶² They married in 1317, when she was 17

⁶¹ Huang Jin, "Weijun furen Weiwushi muzhiming," in *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji* 39.17a–18b. For biographical information on this woman's family, see her father's tomb inscription, composed by Wei Su 危素 (1303–1372): "Yuan gu zishan dafu Fujiandao xuanweishi duyuanshuai Gusulu gong muzhiming" 元故資善大夫福建道宣尉使都元帥古速魯公墓誌銘 [Tomb inscription of former Duke Gusulu, Pacification Commissioner and Military Commander in Fujian Circuit and Grandee of the Seventh Class in Yuan China], in *Weitaipu wenxujì* 危太朴文續集 [Supplemental collected works of Wei Su] (Wuxing Liushi Jiayetang ed.; rpt. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986) 5.1a–4a. Ch'en Yuan includes Zhedu's wife as one of the *Semuren* women trained in Confucian studies, placing particular emphasis on her sinicization; see his *Western and Central Asians in China*, 281–82.

⁶² According to Thomas Allsen, Talima is a form of the Uyghur personal name Tarim, which was taken from the name of the Tarim River. Thomas Allsen, personal communication. Talima Jierde (1268–

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years old, and the marriage has all the signs of an alliance between two important Uyghur families. It turns out that Xie Wenzhi, Zhedu's father, had helped out Talima Jierde after a flood had devastated the area of Raozhou where he lived, when Wenzhi was the Magistrate of Guangde Circuit in Jiangxi Province. Talima Jierde was a member of a prominent Uyghur family who had distinguished themselves by their loyal and effective service to the Mongols as *Semuren* officials.

Yuelunshihudu was an intelligent woman of many resources, and she appears to have been an important addition to the Xie family and an excellent wife for Zhedu. First, she was lauded because she had achieved a high level of education. Interestingly, she was most familiar with Chinese works dealing specifically with women and women's history, such as the *Classic of Filial Women* (*Nü Xiaojing*) and the *Biographies of Virtuous Women* (*Lienü zhuan*), as well as other more standard classics, including the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing*) and the *Analects* (*Lun Yu*). Zhedu's wife was obviously raised in a family that valued Chinese culture, and her tomb inscription shows just how thoroughly she absorbed those cultural values into her own life from the models of virtuous and filial women portrayed in the classics that she was reading. It is worth quoting for the sense that it conveys of Zhedu's wife's actions as a model wife, and for the spirit of Zhedu's family.

The wife of Hsieh Chê-tu, now minister of the board of civil office, has passed away. He has personally written an epitaph for her shrine. The son, Hsieh Poliao-hsün, and others have transmitted the request of the minister that I append a note. ... The lady bore the name Yüeh-lun-shih-hu-tu ..., and her *tzü* was Shunchên 順貞. She came from the Wei-wu clan. Her forefathers, from her great-grandfather on up, served

1329) served as an Agent (*darughachi*) for the Mongols in north and south China.

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their own country. She demonstrated her intelligence as a child. As she grew up she became familiar with book learning and could recite the *Hsiao-ching*, *Lun-yü*, *Nü-hsiao-ching*, and *Lieh-nü-chuan*. When she came across passages on heroic acts by women in histories of earlier times, she would read them over and over again with admiration. At the age of seventeen, she joined the family of Hsieh. This family belonged to the T'u-chüeh nobility. From T'ang times on, members of the clan served the Wei-wu, and so they were subjects of that people.⁶³...

Xie Zhedu was from a great family in Gaochang, and his wife herself also came from a line of great power and influence, enabling her, through her feminine virtues, to succeed in the role of spouse to an eminent gentleman. She served [her mother-in-law] the Mistress of Gaochang Commandery, with utmost filial devotion. She provided fine delicacies, warm and cold, with unobtrusive delicacy. She was sincere in dealing with her sisters-in-law, and they had harmonious relations and there was no gossip. She directed the maidservants in the general duties of women's work, such as preparing silk and linen, and in all the work she led by her own example. Her mother-in-law said of her 'You, the newly-married wife [of my son], are so filial and respectful that I hope only to grow old in your company.' ...

[In 1328] When [her husband, Xie Zhedu] was transferred from the Court of Imperial Sacrifices to the Western Branch Censorate [at present-day Xian], his wife remained alone at Dadu....

Later, she moved her family to the south, and when the Minister [her husband] was transferred to the Southern Branch Censorate [at present-day Nanjing], she attended to her mother-in-law at Gaoyou where both fell ill to fevers. The mistress, in spite of her

⁶³ This portion of Huang Jin's eulogy is taken from Ch'en Yuan, *Western and Central Asians in China*, 281–82, citing Huang Jin, *Jinhua Huang wenji* 39.7a.

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own illness, with effort attended her mother-in-law, serving her rice gruel and medicine, but she did not recover. The mistress grieved for her day and night, the sounds carrying well beyond the women's quarters. She mourned in accordance with the regulations set forth in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, carrying out all the ritual arrangements, her grief and sense of loss unabated from the time of her first passing.⁶⁴

This passage reveals several things about both *Semuren* families involved in this new marriage. Not only was Zhedu's new wife steeped in the Confucian classics, and understood the proper roles of the filial wife and daughter-in-law, but her new mother-in-law also seems to have expected that type of behavior from her daughter-in-law. From the tenor of this inscription it appears that both of these prominent Uyghur *Semuren* families had thoroughly adopted Chinese patterns of social behavior, and were virtually indistinct from their Chinese elite counterparts. Those qualities would have appealed to a person like Huang Jin, the author of the eulogy, who was also no doubt interested to present the Xie family in the best possible light by underscoring the impeccable moral character of the wife of his colleague and friend. After all, Zhedu was Minister of Personnel when Huang Jin wrote this inscription, and was probably sympathetic to the pragmatic Confucianism espoused by Huang and fellow Jinhua literati.⁶⁵ Yet in spite of the formulaic nature of such texts, the character of these *Semuren* families comes through.

⁶⁴ Huang Jin, *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji* 39.7b–8a. I am grateful to Frederick Mote for his help in translating this portion of Huang Jin's text.

⁶⁵ John Langlois makes this point in his discussion of Huang Jin and utilitarian Confucianism in the late Yuan. See his "Political Thought in Chin-hua under Mongol Rule," esp. 178–85.

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Perhaps just as important, Zhedu's marriage to a woman from another prominent Uyghur clan reveals details about marriage alliances between some prominent Uyghur families. I have already alluded to this strategy in Chapter Four. Wang Meitang, in a recent study on the Lian family, has described marriage ties between three Uyghur clans: the Lians, the Gusulus, and the Xies.⁶⁶ According to Wang, Lian Xishu's daughter married Talima Jierde of the Gusulu family, the same man who was the father of Xie Zhedu's wife. A more direct connection between the Lian and Xie families was made when Lian Xixian's great-grandson, Lian Yaoyao 廉咬咬, married Xie Zhedu's daughter.⁶⁷ One further interesting connection between the Gusulu and Xie families was the fact that Zhedu's son, Xie Boliaoxun, was asked to write an introduction to Talima Jierde's eulogy (see my discussion of Boliaoxun below). The evidence from these three prominent *Semuren* families points to the fact that marriage alliances among prominent Uyghur *Semuren* were ways to maintain a sense of group solidarity and may also have been important means by which to maintain their own standing within the larger *Semuren* status group in China.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Wang Meitang, "Yuandai neiqian weiwuerzu shijia." I am indebted to Fang Jun for providing me with a copy of this paper. The ancestors of the Lian family were members of the first wave of Uyghur migrants to the Mongol empire, and adopted strategies very similar to the Xies, including using a Chinese-style surname. See my comments on the Lian family above.

⁶⁷ Wang Meitang, "Yuandai neiqian weiwuerzu shijia," 3–4. Zhedu's daughter's marriage is confirmed in the tomb inscription written by Huang Jin, "Weijun furen Weiwushi muzhiming," *Jinhua Huang xiansheng wenji* 13a.

⁶⁸ This raises questions about marriage patterns among *Semuren* in general: Whom did they marry? Where did they live? Were similar marriage patterns practiced by *Semuren* of national and local prominence? Hong Jinfu's and Wang Meitang's studies of these few cases provide tantalizing suggestions that marriage alliances among *Semuren* were routinely practiced. Much more research, especially

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Zhedu's marriage to Yuelunshihudu highlights multiple narratives of identity that framed the lives and worldviews of Uyghur *Semuren* like the Xie family. Zhedu's identity as a Confucian-oriented *Semuren* official would have been strengthened by marrying a woman who shared his Confucian orientation, and as we have seen, all the evidence points to his wife's deep familiarity with the Chinese tradition. It would also have been important for Zhedu to be married to a woman who could be the ideal mother, teaching his sons the Chinese cultural tradition. Again, Yuelunshihudu would have been the ideal partner to this rising star. Since Zhedu's home life at Liyang was praised as a model of Confucian family values and propriety by a prominent Liyang writer (see below), and if his wife acted at all like the model mother, who was responsible for instilling in her children the important social norms, then it seems clear that Wenzhi made the right choice.

At the same time, this marriage also enabled Zhedu to maintain connections with his own ethnic group. We do not know the level of cultural adaptation or sophistication of the Gusulu family, but if they found Chinese culture as congenial as the Xies, then the marriage between these two Uyghur families becomes less important as a statement of ethnic solidarity, and more important as an alliance of like-minded *Semuren* families. This was almost certainly the case with the marriage between Zhedu's daughter and Lian Yaoyao. Since Zhedu's social connections influenced his political power, it would have been to his advantage to maintain his ties to other powerful *Semuren*.

One of the most important primary sources we have for Zhedu's activities at Liyang is a vivid description of his family life written by the prominent Liyang writer Kong

diachronic studies of *Semuren* families in China, needs to be done, however, to definitively answer these questions.

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Keqi 孔克齊 (fl. 1350s; a.k.a Kong Qi).⁶⁹ Kong Qi came from an eminent family, descended from the sage Confucius, but his own father was a lowly clerk and had to live frugally. According to Paul Smith, this made Kong Qi particularly aware of the exigencies of life in general.⁷⁰ As a result, Kong Qi began a record of his impressions of life in Liyang and southeast China in response to the breakdown of social and political order that began in the 1350s. It is a curious mix of essays that reveal the hopes, intrigues and workings of this locality, and in which Kong rants against immoral behavior and social chaos of the time.

Kong Qi's rather detailed description of Zhedu's family life at Liyang was entitled simply "Mr. Xie Zhe of Gaochang." By the time Kong had made his visit sometime in the 1350s, Zhedu had managed to build a reputation in Liyang as the head of an exemplary family, known for its members' propriety and literary accomplishments. It was Zhedu's family regimen that caught Kong's attention, for, as Smith makes clear, Kong believed that the family unit was the ultimate guaranty against disorder: "The family was the only hope for long-term multi-generational protection, by protecting property, transmitting core values to young men and women, and restraining their natural unruliness."⁷¹ Of all the people in Liyang, Zhedu's family stood out as the exemplary model for Kong, and thanks to that, we have a unique record of Zhedu's personal life there.

⁶⁹ Kong Keqi is usually known as Kong Qi; the "Ke" 克 part of his name was the generational name used in all names of the 55th generation lineal descendants of Confucius. Wang Deyi, et al., *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin*, Vol. 1, 43–47, points out the use of these generational names in the Yuan era descendants of Confucius. I am grateful to Frederick Mote for this insight.

⁷⁰ See Paul J. Smith, "Fear of Gynarchy," for information on Kong and his family, as well as descriptions of Liyang and southeast China in the last decades of the Yuan dynasty. I draw from Smith's article for the following discussion.

⁷¹ Paul Smith, "Fear of Gynarchy," 52.

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Xie Zhedu, also known as Shinan (世南), used [his knowledge of] Confucianism to advance his career. In Jiangxi where he lived, he and five of his brothers all attained the *jinshi* degree, and this brought them great honor. ... Shinan had nine sons, all of whom were highly talented. At this time his eldest son, [Xie] Dao [Xie Boliaoxun] was still a young man, not yet an adult, and his second son was only 15 or 16 years of age. Every day at dawn all the sons would stand outside the door of the inner quarter of the house to present themselves to their father and mother. If they did not have anything to report then none of them would dare to go in, and this was repeated in the evening. One day I paid a visit to Zhedu's study hall (書館) and a guest was staying there.... I saw Zhedu's sons and younger brothers all in correct order. They all seemed to be of good disposition, they wore elegant and refined clothing and they studied assiduously everything in nature.⁷²

When Kong Qi wanted to have a personal audience with Zhedu, he was told that he would have to follow a certain procedure set by Zhedu's strict rules, which he laid down in order to preserve order in his house.

“If there are officials who approach the gate and inquire about entering, then those in charge send them in. After awhile other people are admitted. All of the students here do not dare go in in a disorderly fashion.” At first I doubted this, but then I was told: “there is really a logic to [Zhedu's] household; just as the servants cannot enter without a reason, likewise his sons cannot enter without a reason. Since I am staying in the hall, I have seen that students who are residing outside observe this rule.”... I had to admit

⁷² Kong Qi, “Gaochang Xie Zhe” 高昌契哲, in *Zhizheng zhiji* 至正直記 [True records from the Zhizheng era] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 116–17. I am grateful to Paul Smith for pointing out Kong's essay to me.

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that [Zhedu's] rule had a logic to it, and I came to admire him greatly and tried to adopt his admonitions.... The restraint [in family life] brought about by Zhedu's regulations is not accomplished all of a sudden. [Thus Zhedu] goes into the village every day and with great respect teaches others.⁷³

Kong's essay is interesting because he reveals Xie Zhedu's activities as a Liyang literatus. We know from this essay that Zhedu had established a study hall that was important enough that other prominent Chinese studied or visited there (curiously, Kong never refers to Zhedu's hall by the sobriquet "Hall of the Family of Three Worthy Ones and Six *Jinshi*"). He also tells us how Zhedu organized his own family! Kong paints a picture of the ideal household, where Zhedu enforced strict rules regarding his sons' behavior. As Smith argues, this was one of the few living examples in Liyang of what family life should be like, which would, in Kong's view, bring substantial real benefits to people in an age of social and political chaos. He would have known something of these benefits, being a direct descendant of Confucius. But interestingly, Kong says, "In my own household the rules have been passed down from our ancestors, but are only applied to sons and younger brothers who live outside of the household, and does not extend to those people living within [the household]." ⁷⁴

⁷³ Kong, *Zhizheng zhiji*, 116–17.

⁷⁴ Kong, *Zhizheng zhiji*, 117. As Scott Pearce reminds us, outsiders often use tradition more rigorously than natives. See his "Form and Matter: Archaizing Reform in Sixth-century China," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, ed. Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 149-78. I thank Scott Pearce for this reference.

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Kong also tells us that Zhedu “used Confucianism to advance his career.”⁷⁵ This same phrase was also used to describe Zhedu’s father, Xie Wenzhi, and brother Xie Yuli! The term “Confucian enterprise” (*ruye*) generally meant those things (texts) that Confucianists studied and became experts in, and this phrase conveys the image of these Uyghurs as experts in Confucian texts and ideology (probably also members of the Neo-Confucian Daoxue movement of the time?) who understood the importance of this position to their social mobility.

Kong was certainly aware that the Xies were Uyghur *Semuren*, as we can see by the reference to Gaochang in Kong’s title of his essay. His high regard for the Xie family is thus especially remarkable since he lambasts the behavior of *Semuren* in other essays of his. Identifying Xie Zhedu as a *Semuren* undoubtedly served Kong’s purposes, but it also acts to highlight once again the multiple networks of power that defined life for *Semuren* like Xie Zhedu; anyone who came from Gaochang would automatically have been part of the *Semuren* network, but this Uyghur and his family were also members in good standing of the social elite built around Chinese cultural (and textual) tradition.

Zhedu did not try to hide or excise his Uyghur or *Semuren* identity, and judging from Kong’s piece, his association with Gaochang obviously did not do him any harm. In fact, it may have invoked images of a highly cultured, polyethnic family, and it was probably also a way for Zhedu and other Xie family members to assert their ties to other prominent Uyghur *Semuren* individuals and families.

But lest we think that Xie Zhedu was only known in Liyang, other prominent Chinese writers from different

⁷⁵ The text reads: “Yi ruyue qijia” 以儒業起家. Kong, *Zhizheng zhiji*, 117.

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parts of the country also wrote pieces in his honor, such as poems and essays that mention his appointment to local or regional office, or that document Zhedu's family and private life. Some of these provide unique information on Zhedu, and all of them illustrate the high esteem in which Zhedu was held by his Chinese contemporaries. In this regard, they furnish evidence of the extent to which the Xie family, and especially their most famous member, Xie Zhedu, traversed the different worlds of politics and culture, and functioned as a type of national literati in China .

For example, the Jiangxi scholar Zhao Pang 趙昉 (1319–1369) wrote a preface to a poem that marked Zhedu's appointment to an office that is nowhere else recorded, as a Vice-Minister in the Bureau of the Supervisor of Agriculture (*sinong shaoqing*).⁷⁶ This preface is an important piece in Zhedu's history as a *semu* official and as a member of the cultural elite. First, none of the official sources document Zhedu's appointment to this position in the agriculture office in Jiangzhe province in the late Yuan. The Mongols implemented the Office of Grand Supervisors of Agriculture to promote agriculture in north China after their conquest was complete. Originally known as the Office for the Encouragement of Agriculture, established in 1261, it became the Grand Supervisor of Agriculture in 1271. After the conquest of south China was completed, branches of this office were set up there.

⁷⁶ Zhao Pang, "Fu Sinong shaoqing" 赴司農少卿 [Sent as Vice-Minister in the Bureau of the Supervisor of Agriculture], in *Dongshan cunghao* 東山存稿 [Collected works of Zhao Pang] (Siku Quanshu ed.; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1971) 2.51a–52b. Zhao was known mainly for his erudition in the classics and likely knew the Xie family, having studied under a scholar who lived in Yuzhang, Jiangxi Province, the same place where Xie Wenzhi lived. Zhao did not hold office during the Yuan, but was one of the compilers of the *Yuanshi* in the first year of the Ming. Zhao was a prolific writer and several of his works exist in anthologies.

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However, rather than promote new agricultural developments, the office in south China was focused on stopping the growth of large landlords at the expense of government and private lands. According to Zhao's preface, Zhedu was assigned to be Junior Lord in the agriculture office concurrent with his position as Assistant Grand Councilor in the Jiangzhe provincial government. We get some idea of his duties from this preface:

[He] is in charge of arranging the affairs of fields and villages... tells everyone to cultivate trees and shrubs, to dredge out drains and ditches, to build public roads, and to loan out oxen and grain [to those in need].... In the Zhizheng era [1341–1368] this system of ranks of officials in the Grand Office of Agriculture was begun, and the officials managed both high officers and subordinate officials.... the master Xie [Zhedu] looks after both elites and commoners (士民), and his virtue is often praised [by the people], who sing songs of joy at their situation as they work in the fields.⁷⁷

This preface tells us a great deal about Xie Zhedu and Yuan government. First, as we have seen above, Zhao gives us an exact date for his appointment in the Jiangzhe provincial government, something that was not reported in any gazetteer or other official source. Second, Zhao's review of the history of the agriculture office provides details on an obscure aspect of regional government in Yuan China, and some idea of what the tasks and responsibilities an official of Zhedu's rank may have been.

Another important literatus from south China who wrote in honor of Xie Zhedu was a Confucian scholar sympathetic to Daoism, Yu Ji 虞集 (1272–1348), who wrote a seven-character *shi*-style poem to honor Zhedu's

⁷⁷ Zhao Pang, *Dongshan cungao* 2.51a–52b.

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promotion to the rank of censor.⁷⁸ Yu Ji had a long career as an official at the highest levels of government in the Yuan dynasty. He was appointed to be a director of the National University and also served in the Hanlin Academy. In 1329 he was appointed as a Writer-Academician in the Kuizhang Pavilion (*Kuizhang ge shishu xuesheng*), where he directed the compilation of the Yuan legal code, the *Jingshi dadian* (“Great Institutions of Statecraft”).⁷⁹

Yu Ji’s poem, titled “In Honor of Xie Shinan’s Appointment to the Western Censorate,” is a paean to Zhedu.⁸⁰ In this short poem, Zhedu is portrayed as

⁷⁸ Yu Ji was also from Jiangxi Province and studied under the equally famous Wu Cheng. He was an eminent Confucian thinker and writer, but is especially interesting because of his support of a school of Daoism, Xuanjiao, that had been created by an edict issued by the Mongols. For information on Yu Ji and his role in Confucian-influenced Daoism in Yuan China, see K’o-K’uan Sun, “Yü Chi and Southern Taoism during the Yüan Period,” in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 212–54; and John D. Langlois, Jr., “Yü Chi and his Mongol Sovereign: The Scholar as Apologist,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 38 (1978): 99–116.

⁷⁹ The Academy of the Kuizhang Pavilion (*Kuizhang ge*) was established by the emperor Togh Temür (Wenzong, r. 1328–29, 1330–33) in 1329 to house his collection of Chinese art and books. Wenzong was very interested in Chinese culture, and strove to be educated in the classics. To that end he employed Chinese scholars to give lectures, and it was in this environment that the legal code *Jingshi dadian* was compiled by Chinese and *Semuren* scholars. For more information on this academy and the details concerning the compilation of the law code in 1331, see Jiang Yihan 姜一涵, *Yuandai Kuizhangge ji Kuizhang renwu* 元代奎章閣及奎章人物 [Yuan Dynasty Kuizhang Pavilion and personnel] (Taipei: Liangjing chuban shiye, 1981); Ch’en, *Chinese Legal Tradition Under the Mongols*, 33–35; and Farquhar, *Government in China*, 131.

⁸⁰ Yu Ji, “He Xie Shinan chu Xitai yushi” 和饒世南除西臺御史 [In honor of Xie Shinan on his assignment to the Western Censorate], in *Daoyuan yigao* 道園遺稿 [Collected works of Yu Ji] (Siku Quanshu ed.; rpt. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1974), 3.10a. The

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exceptionally well versed in the culture and the law of the day, and perfectly suited for his job in the censorate:

For ten years at the Phoenix Well
First in the exams, and now a seventh-grade official.
Who can match his ability in eliminating the
heterodox from that which he reads,
His knowledge of literature and the law approaches
that of the gods.
Commoners and officials all met up with him often in
the countryside,
He came and went from the court without ceasing.
Accused men come from myriad distances to his
office,
In their official vestments they lay before him their
written petitions.⁸¹

This poem is interesting for several reasons. First, it reflects one of Zhedu's early official assignments, although the poem is not dated, and we only get a general sense of Zhedu's duties as an official in the censorate (relayed by stock images of the wise official that were commonly used in *shi*-style poems). Of more importance is the fact that such an important figure as Yu Ji wrote a poem that lauded Zhedu's knowledge and abilities. We cannot necessarily deduce from this poem that Yu Ji and Zhedu were personal friends. But it does reveal Zhedu's prominent reputation. The important point here, as with the other poems that we have analyzed, is that Xie family members were known by some of the most important Chinese writers and thinkers of their time. They had established reputations as men learned in the Confucian tradition, who were able to implement that learning in the public arena.

Western Pavilion of the Censorate (*Xitai yushi*) to which Zhedu had been assigned was located in Nanjing, and was in charge of the censorate in the four western provinces of Shaanxi, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. See Farquhar, *Government of China*, 243.

⁸¹ Yu Ji, *Daoyuan yigao* 3.10a.

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It is also interesting to note that one of Zhedu's sons was appointed as an official in the Kuizhang Pavilion. Some of his more notable colleagues in the Kuizhang Pavilion included Ouyang Xuan and Xu Youren 許有壬 (1287–1364), who also wrote a poem in Zhedu's honor. The poems and essays written for Zhedu, if taken as a corpus, outline the intellectual and cultural community in which the Xies moved.

Last, but certainly not least, Xie Zhedu also participated in that most classic of Chinese literati activities, and a basic demand on all in official life, poetry writing. Like his elder brother, Zhedu wrote *shi*-style poems; three of them were included in the *Shi Yu ji* collection of Yuli's poetry that has been preserved in the comprehensive *Yuanshi xuan* (Anthology of Yuan Dynasty Poetry).⁸² All three of Zhedu's poems are short poems written in the *shi* style favored by Yuan literati writers. They do not reveal much at all about Zhedu, or even about the subjects of the poems. They do, however, help fill in our picture of Zhedu as a Chinese-style literatus.

Two of Zhedu's poems, written as prefaces to be attached to paintings of nature, especially capture his image as Chinese gentleman. The first, "Colophon to Zhao Qianli's 'Painting of the Night Tide,'" is interesting not for its content but for what it reveals about Zhedu's activities as a Chinese-style *shidafu*, writing colophons to accompany paintings, in this case, a painting made by a descendant of the long-defunct Song ruling house. Zhedu's poem reads, "The sound of wind and the dashing of waves against myriad piles of snow, striking the shore and falling in the silver moonlight. Wild geese take flight over the river in

⁸² This section of the *Yuanshi xuan* is titled "Xie canzheng Zhedu" 偁參政哲篤 [Assistant Grand Councilor Xie Zhedu], followed by a brief biographical sketch of Zhedu. Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, *geng*, 4a. For background on this work, see my discussion above of Xie Yuli's poetry in the *Yuanshi xuan* anthology.

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the autumn, and there are no clouds in sight, only a clear moon hanging in the sky.”⁸³ Had a Chinese person written this, it might have been interpreted at the time as lingering sense of loyalty to the Song Dynasty. Since Xie Zhedu was the author, however, it is more likely that he was proving his artistic credentials and knowledge of Chinese history to his Chinese peers. In any event, however we interpret the poem, the fact that Zhedu wrote poetry to accompany these kinds of paintings indicates his activity as a cultured gentleman.

Zhedu's third poem in this collection was another colophon meant to accompany a painting of bamboo, and is similarly evocative of a visual scene.⁸⁴ “The roots of the old trees that are bent at an angle are coiled about a huge rock, and a clear frost coating the bark encases the green moss. Those unusual and rare painters of old are no longer, and who can appreciate their work now?”⁸⁵ While these poems do not reveal much of Xie Zhedu's life as a political elite, they do reveal his familiarity with Chinese poetic modes and painting. The fact that he wrote poems quite like those of any Chinese literatus, and which were thought good enough to include in this anthology of Yuan era poetry, also implies that he was conversant in this important marker of Chinese culture.

⁸³ Xie Zhedu, “Ti Zhao Qianli yechao tu” 題趙千里夜潮圖, in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, geng, 4a. Qianli was the courtesy name (*zi*) of Zhao Boju 趙伯駒, a seventh generation grandson of Song Taizu, the founder of the Song Dynasty. Zhao Boju was known as a painter of landscapes and people in the Song period. This poem is also punctuated and annotated in Wang Shupan, et al., *Yuandai shaoshu minzu shixuan*, 144.

⁸⁴ “Ti Shang Defu Li Zundao zuo shutu” 題商德符李遵道作樹圖 [Colophon to the painting of bamboo done by Shang Defu and Li Zundao], in Gu, *Yuanshi xuan*, “Shi Yu ji,” 4a.

⁸⁵ Xie, “Ti Shang Defu Li Zundao zuo shutu,” 4a–b.

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Conclusion

Xie Wenzhi's sons were the fourth generation of this Uyghur family to live permanently in China. By the time they were adults they had come a long way from their ancestors who first migrated to China under the supervision of the Mongols. Because of the path laid out by their father as a successful *Semuren* official and member in good standing in the communities into which he settled, every one of Wenzhi's sons had successful, if sometimes short, careers as officials and reputations as learned men who got along well with the most prominent of their Chinese contemporaries. Xie Wenzhi's decision to ultimately settle in southeast China was undoubtedly one of the most important sources of his family's well-rounded success.

Long before he retired and settled in Liyang, Wenzhi was aware of the potential benefits of associating more fully with Chinese culture and the Chinese literati. He carefully constructed an identity for himself and his family as cultured elites who had just as much in common with other Chinese literati as they did with their *Semuren* peers.

By the time his sons reached maturity, the Xie family had lived in China for four generations, and had sustained their status as powerful members of the *Semuren* political elite amidst a changing set of conditions that included the integration of south China into the larger Mongol empire, and changes in Mongol administration and Yuan society that allowed more Chinese to participate as political elites. But the quality of life in China also went into decline, especially in the last decades of Mongol rule (especially evident in the works of late Yuan writers like Kong Qi, who laments the breakdown of social order in southeast China). No doubt sensitive to these changes and to the possibility that their political relationships with the Mongol ruling elite may endanger their personal power and security, Xie Wenzhi's sons built on their father's success as a patron of Chinese community life and social values,

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seeking ways to secure their futures that would complement their Semuren status. They did so by acquiring status as members of the social elite, who were recognized and accepted within the community of wealthy, renowned southern Chinese literati. Their success in this strategy can be measured by the wide recognition this family received as the “Family who had the Three Virtuous Ones and Six *Jinshi*.”

Unfortunately, by the time the last of these six Xie siblings died the long declining Yuan dynasty was on the verge of collapse. The social and political order began its final slide into collapse by the mid-1350s, just when their sons were entering service as *Semuren* officials. By 1356 Zhu Yuanzhang had captured Nanjing and made it his capital and base of operations. Places like Liyang were feeling the effects of the chaotic situation, and this is reflected in the histories of the next generation of Xie family members. Only three Xie men in that next generation received the *jinshi* degree; Zhedu’s son, Xie Boliaosun 傑百遼孫 (1319–1360) in 1345, and two of Xie Shanzhu’s sons, Zhengzong 正宗 in 1345 and Arslan 阿兒思蘭 in 1348. One of Zhedu’s sons, Xie Si 傑斯, had a prominent career as a high official in the first decades of the new Ming government.⁸⁶ Xie Boliaosun emigrated to

⁸⁶ His first office after being admitted into the Yuan civil service via the *yin* inheritance privilege was as a magistrate in Suzhou, where he was when Zhu Yuanzhang took control of the area in 1366. Xie Si was made a vice director in the Ming Ministry of War (*bingbuyuan wailang* 兵部員外郎) in 1368, and then a Secretary of Seals in the Office of Palace Seals (*shangbaosi fubaolang* 尚寶司符寶郎). He was sent in that capacity as a Ming envoy to the Koryo court in 1370, and he retired from office in 1380. See Lienche Tu Fang, “Hsieh Ssu,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), Vol. ?, 559–61; and Gui Qipeng 桂栖鵬 and Shang Yanbin 尚衍斌, “Tan Mingchu zhongchao jiaowang zhongde liangwei shizhe –

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Korea sometime in the last years of the Yuan where he and his son became officials at the Koryô court. A branch of the Xie family, descendants of Boliaosun, still live in Korea today.⁸⁷ The six Xie *jinshi* were the last Xies who served their entire careers under the Mongols.

Xie Changshou, Xie Si” 谈明初中朝交往中的两位使者 - 楔长寿，楔斯 [A Discussion of contacts between two envoys in the early Ming - Xie Changshou and Xie Si], *Minzu yanjiu* 1995.5: 65-69.

⁸⁷ For a history of Xie Boliaosun and his descendants in Korea, see Shang Yanbin 尚衍斌, “Weiwuer Xieshi jiazuo yanjiu” 畏兀儿楔氏家族研究 [Research on the Uyghur Xie clan], in his *Yuandai Weiwuer yanjiu* 元代畏兀儿研究 [Research on Yuan Dynasty Uyghurs] (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1999), 253-62.